

**THE ARSENITE SCHISM AND THE BABAI REBELLION: TWO CASE STUDIES
IN CENTER-PERIPHERY RELATIONS**

by

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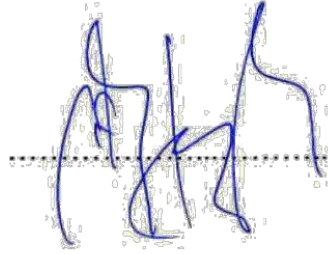
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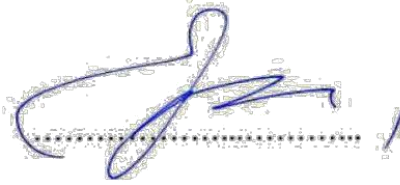
**CENTER – PERIPHERY: THE CASES OF BABAI REBELLION
AND ARSENITE SCHISM**

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ABSTRACT

THE ARSENITE SCHISM AND THE BABAI REBELLION: TWO CASE STUDIES IN CENTER-PERIPHERY RELATIONS

Hüsamettin Şimşir

M.A Thesis, June 2018

Thesis Supervisor: Dr. Fac. Member Ferenc Péter Csirkés

This thesis aims to present an analysis of the interaction between Christians and Muslims in the west of Asia Minor at the end of the 13th and the beginning of the 14th centuries after two religious-social movements in the Byzantine and the Rum Seljuk Empires, the Arsenite Schism and the Babai Rebellion. After the unsuccessful rebellion of the Babais, antinomian dervishes who had migrated to the west of Asia Minor because of a heavy oppression as well as inquisition by the state and had a different religious belief apart from the mainstream religious understanding of the center initiated missionary activities in the regions along the Byzantine border. Accordingly, these dervishes had joined the military activities of the Turcoman chieftains against the Byzantines and interacted with the local Christian population and religious figures. As a result of this religious interaction, messianic and ascetic beliefs were increasingly present among the Greek-speaking population as well as spiritual leaders of western Anatolia. Since such interfaith and cross-cultural interaction had a considerable impact on the course of all these events, this thesis focuses on them to create a better understanding of the appearance of the Hesychasm in the Byzantine spiritual environment in the later period.

Keywords: Babai Rebellion, Arsenite Schism, Hesychasm, Interfaith relationship, 13th century Western Anatolia

ÖZET

MERKEZ-ÇEVRE İLİŞKİLERİ ÇERÇEVESİNDE ARSENİT SKİZMASI VE BABAI AYAKLANMASI MESELELERİ

Hüsamettin Şimşir

Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Haziran 2018

Tez Danışmanı: Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Ferenc Péter Csirkés

Bu tez, Bizans İmparatorluğundaki Arsenit Skizması ile Anadolu Selçuklu Devletindeki Babai Ayaklanması sonrasında, Batı Anadolu bölgesinde Hristiyan ve Müslüman halk arasında vuku bulmuş olan sosyo-kültürel etkileşimlere odaklanmaktadır. Babai Ayaklanması akabinde, Selçuklu merkezi yönetiminin baskısı altında Batı Anadolu'ya göç etmiş olan ve Sünni İslam anlayışı dışında bir din anlayışına sahip olan bu dervişler özellikle Bizans sınırına yakın bölgelerde misyonerlik faaliyetlerinde bulunmuşlardır. Bu gelişme sonucunda, bölgeye göç etmiş bulunan derviş zümreleri, Hristiyan halk ve dini liderler ile etkileşime girmiş ve bu etkileşim sonucunda bölgede bulunan Yunanca konuşan topluluğun dini inanışlarında mesiyani ve münzevi öğeler giderek ağırlığını arttırmıştır. Bölgedeki Hristiyan ve Müslüman dini figürler arasındaki etkileşimi incelemek, sonraki dönemde Bizans ruhban sınıfı arasında ortaya çıkmış olan “İsihizm” tartışmasının daha iyi anlaşılmasına katkıda bulunacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Babai Ayaklanması, Arsenit Skizması, İsihizm, Dinler arası ilişkiler, 13. Yüzyıl'da Batı Anadolu

To “our holy mother ‘western’ Anatolia”

My respects to my family...

I cannot enough explain my deep gratitude to Ferenc Csirkés, who has always encouraged me to study Sufism and relationship between Islam and Christianity. Without his inspiration, attention, and care, this thesis could not have been written. I would like to particularly thank Y. Hakan Erdem, who was a jury member at the same time, and had always supported me in my studies on the frontier environment regarding west Asia Minor in the 13th and 14th centuries. I would also like to thank jury member Ivana Jevtic for her valuable comments on my thesis which contributed a great deal to my understanding of the socio-cultural conditions of the region at that time.

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I greatly appreciate my colleagues İsa Uğurlu, Tunahan Durmaz, İsmail Noyan, Noyan Coşkun, and Talha Katırcı for our valuable discussions at Sabancı University which, also have a deep influence on this thesis.

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INTRODUCTION

“Fetheden de biziz artık fethedilen de

Eriten de biziz eriyen de”

Sabahattin Eyübođlu

General Ottoman and Seljuk history courses offered at the university level are mostly focused on political, economic and military aspects of Turkish history in Anatolia while, interreligious issues are mostly neglected. University courses and recent scholarship often illuminate the wars, political treaties, conquests, territorial changes, and individual narratives of Turkish-speaking people in the Seljuk and Ottoman Empires. Nevertheless, although studies on religious matters in Ottoman history have increased ostensibly in recent years, there are plenty of topics to be covered in the field of interfaith and frontier relationship of Turkish people with other peoples. Indeed, studies on interfaith relationships between Islam and Christianity have made significant process in the last three decades, regarding especially the history of relations between the crusader states and Muslims in the Middle East, while the Anatolian Peninsula has received far less academic attention in this regard. In my opinion, it is quite difficult to elaborate on the history of Anatolian Turks without focusing on their interactions with other cultures and beliefs.

This study is a preliminary work that attempts to analyze first the two rebellious initiatives in the 13th century in two different Anatolian realms, the Arsenite Schism in the Byzantine Empire and the Babai Rebellion in the Rum Seljuk Sultanate. Focusing on these revolts, my aim is to show the relationship between these groups in these two realms and unveil the possible connections between the heterodox parties of these religious environments.

There are several prominent reasons for this choice of study. First, on the assumption that after the failure of the Babai Rebellion, many followers of the rebellious religious leader, Baba Ilyas, fled to the west of Asia Minor to escape the inquisition of the Rum Seljuk state. It seems that the followers of this antinomian dervish had taken refuge in the newly emerging small Turcoman principalities in the west of Asia Minor and facilitated the organization of these petty principalities in the region which deserves further research.

As many heterodox dervishes came to the petty principalities in west Asia Minor, they joined the religious Ghazi warriors active there. The ghazi warriors who had been galvanized by the spiritual influence of these unorthodox figures later took part in many of the conquests in the Balkans and Asia Minor.

The second factor, on the other hand, stemmed from divisions among the Byzantine clergy. In the Byzantine Empire, there was competition and conflict between two groups in church affairs. One group was closer to the Ancient Greek philosophy, while the other part labeled themselves as true defenders of Christianity, an idea which had been nourished by Jewish-influenced religious traditions of the Middle East. In the 6th century, because of religious oppression the pioneers of the first group were under heavy oppression, which culminated in the banning of the School of Athens and ostracizing pagan philosophers in 529 by Justinian.¹

In the 8th century, however, tensions between the two distinct religious groups gave rise to the Iconoclastic movement in the Byzantine Empire. The majority of the Christians in the Empire venerated the icons for centuries without any controversy over the issue of whether icon veneration was acceptable within the boundaries of Christianity. However, the rise of Islam began to turn the tide. After the Islamic conquest in the Middle East, many provinces where Christians had constituted the majority of the population became the subjects of the Caliphate. This facilitated doctrinal exchange between Eastern Christianity and Islam. Thus, the Islamic understanding of iconoclasm deeply affected the development of the dispute on icons in Byzantine society in a later period.² However, the

¹ Edward Watts, "Justinian, Malalas, and the End of Athenian Philosophical Teaching in A.D. 529" *The Journal of Roman Studies* Vol. 94 (2004) 172.

² Alexander Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire Volume 2* (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1980) 661.

other part in the clergy strictly opposed iconoclasm, relying on favorable examples from the life of Christ. As Anagnostopoulos states, this party was especially influenced by ancient Greek philosophy, especially by Aristotelian logic. For instance, the most ardent supporter of icons, “[...] John of Damascus, articulated the value of secular learning for a Christian monk like himself and composed a handbook on the elements of Aristotelian logic [...]”³

The iconoclasm controversy created a turmoil in Byzantine society and its religious sphere. The controversy came to an end with the Second Council of Nicaea where the veneration of icons was accepted within the boundaries of Christianity. Nevertheless, although the moderate party succeeded in protecting its advantage up until the beginning of the 13th century, a similar controversy grew during this century which later culminated in the Hesychasm.

Alexander Vasiliev writes that beginning with the twelfth century, there was a serious separation between the aforesaid two distinct theological groups in the Byzantine spiritual atmosphere.⁴ He uses the term of “zealots” for the first religious group which mostly included ascetic monks living in rural monasteries in the wilderness.⁵ They followed strictly of the ascetic and austere lifestyle and strongly criticized the orthodox-minded clergy in the city centers. On the other hand, the spiritual realm of big cities was mostly controlled by educated clergy. Vasiliev names this group as “moderates” or “politicians” (πολιτικοί).⁶

The power balance between these groups changed after an event of great magnitude, the fourth crusade, which resulted in the sack of Constantinople. Due to the removal of the capital to Nicaea in Asia Minor, where ascetic monasticism and heterodoxy had strong roots mystical and unorthodox doctrines began to increase their influence both on the masses and the state. In my opinion, the heterodox dervishes who increased in number in

³ Thalia Anagnostopoulos, “Aristotle and Byzantine Iconoclasm” *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* (2013) 53. 768.

⁴ Alexander Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire Volume 2* (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1980) 659

⁵ Ibid. 659.

⁶ “Beginning with the twelfth century, there were two irreconcilably opposing parties in the Byzantine church which were struggling for influence and power in the ecclesiastical administration. One of those parties is called in Byzantine sources the “zealots” (ζηλωται), the other the “politicians” (πολιτικοί) or moderates” Ibid. 659.

the western Anatolian region after the unsuccessful Babai rebellion had a strong effect on the augmentation of ascetic movements in the Byzantine Empire.

The third factor derives from my wish to understand the abstract effect of the Turkish conquest of western Asia Minor on the Byzantine religious realm. It is possible to figure out from the primary sources coming from either the Muslim or the Christian side that a process of Islamization of the western Anatolian Greek-speaking population took place during and before the 13th century in the region.⁷ Nevertheless, here I will focus more on to what extent the western Anatolian Greek-speaking migrants to the European side of the Empire from the common folk and the clergy were influenced by heterodox Islamic understanding. Although it is quite difficult to study this issue primarily due to the lack of large numbers of primary sources, I will make a comparative analysis of several Byzantine and Islamic sources which remained from the relevant time period in order to reach a conclusion about the interaction between two distinct unorthodox doctrines and their antinomian leaders in the region.

This thesis is divided into three main chapters in addition to the introduction and conclusion. The first chapter focuses on the reasons behind these two unrests in 13th century Anatolia. The first one is the Babai Rebellion in the Sultanate of Rum and the second one is the Arsenite Schism in the Byzantine Empire. I will suggest that there was an alienation of an important segment of society, which stemmed from similar reasons in both the Byzantine and the Rum Seljuk realms. In the first part of this chapter, I will flash out the political instability in both realms which resulted in the neglect on the part of the respective political leaderships of domestic affairs. Secondly, my aim is to shed light on socio-economic problems that deepened the alienation between the states and a segment of their subjects. The third part of the chapter will investigate the impact of military reorganization on the unrest in the Rum Seljuk as well as Byzantine lands.

The second chapter covers the division between orthodox and unorthodox religious movements under the Byzantines and the Rum Seljuks. It starts with the introduction of heterodox dervishes and their doctrines, which developed in Rum Seljuk territories, discussing its development from the beginning of the 13th century and to the early 14th

⁷Aşıkpaşazade, *Osmanoğulları'nın Tarihi* ed. Kemal Yavuz and Yekta Saraç, (İstanbul: MAS Matbaacılık, 2003) 102.

century. As for the Byzantine side, I focus on the distinction between the zealot party and the moderate party in the clergy. In this chapter, I will elaborate on the relationship between the state and heterodox movements from Manuel I Komnenos' times to Michael VIII Palaiologos' era. Lastly, I am going to analyze the interaction between unorthodox movements that rose in different monarchies in the West Asia Minor.

The third chapter will discuss the increasing penchant for mysticism in the first half of the 14th century in the Byzantine Empire. After providing background information on the migration of heterodox Christian holy men from western Anatolia to the European half of the empire, I will try to explain the connection between Islamic Sufi thought and Hesychasm movement. In the last part of this chapter, I will suggest that, with the acceptance of Hesychast practice by the Byzantine state within the borders of Orthodoxy, the heterodox faction (I will also refer to it to as Zealots) in the Byzantine clergy won a decisive victory against their rival faction, the so-called moderate party.⁸

In conducting this research, I benefit from both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources are general histories covering the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in which the Babai Rebellion and Arsenite Schism took place. The first primary source I use is the chronicle of Aşıkpaşazade who claims to be a descendant of Muhlis Pasha, the son of Baba İlyas, the spiritual leader of the Babai Rebellion. In his work covering the period between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, Aşıkpaşazade narrates the events from the beginning of the rule of Ertuğrul Gazi and his legendary ancestors to the first years of Sultan Bayezid II. In addition to Aşıkpaşazade's chronicle, I used several other Ottoman sources such as Oruç Bey's work. As the main chronicle from the Rum Seljuk era, I have used Ibn-i Bibi's work which covers a time period between 1192 and 1280 and gives valuable information about the development of Turcoman movements on the eve of the Mongol invasion. From the Byzantine side, I have used many sources including Anna Komnene, John Kinnamos, George Akropolites, and George Pachymeres works written between the 1070s and the 1350s. Lastly, in this thesis, have I benefited from works of

⁸Anita Strezova, *Hesychasm and Art: The Appearance of New Iconographic Trends in Byzantine and Slavic Lands in the 14th and 15th Centuries*, (Canberra: ANU Press, 2014) 26.

several travelers who visited west Asia Minor or Constantinople in the 13th and 14th centuries such as Ibn Battutah, the famous Moroccan traveler who visited both Asia Minor and Constantinople in the 1330s and provide with plenty of information about spiritual life and religious structure in the region.

There are many secondary works which discuss political, social, cultural, economic, and military developments in the late Byzantine and early Ottoman periods in general and in 13th-14th century western Anatolia in particular. Angeliki E. Laiou, in her book titled *Constantinople and the Latins, The Foreign Policy of Andronicus II*, deals with the Byzantine position vis-a-vis western powers after the reconquest of Constantinople and its impact on the Byzantine population of Western Asia Minor. She argues that the loss of Asia Minor to the emergence Turcoman principalities in the region was not a natural consequence of the “collapse” of the Byzantine political and military power. Rather, she puts forth that the loss of Asia Minor mainly stemmed from internal matters in the Byzantine Empire.⁹ Divisions and disagreements among churchmen especially after the recapture of Constantinople, the neglect of western Anatolia due to revolts in the region against the Palaiologos dynasty, and landholders’, as well as state officials’ avarice and injustice towards the native population of the area paved the way for the intensification of the activities of Turcoman tribes.¹⁰ She states that particularly the years between 1296 and 1302 were a decisive period for the future of Byzantine western Anatolia. While in 1296 there was still a chance for the Byzantines to keep the region. Especially, after the Catalan disaster, Turkic tribes began subjugating the native population and becoming the real masters of the area.¹¹

Tijana Krstic’s book titled *Contested Conversions to Islam: Narratives of Religious Change in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* focuses on the conversion of the native population to Islam in the Balkans and Anatolia and the interaction between Christians and the Muslim mystical movements. She addresses the relationship between holy men from two different religious environments in western Anatolia and suggests that the Byzantine population in the area was mostly converted by heterodox dervishes, who had offered them

⁹ Angeliki E. Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972) 20.

¹⁰ Ibid. 91.

¹¹ Ibid. 91.

a heavily Christianized form of Islam.¹² Krstic also revisits the question of the development of Sufi orders in the Ottoman Empire from Osman Gazi's era to the 17th century, paying special attention to the Bektashi order's function as state instrument to incorporate heterodox groups into state structure.

Rustam Shukurov's study titled *The Byzantine Turks, 1204-1261* analyzes the Byzantine perception of the Anatolian Muslim population and their relationship with each other. He strongly criticizes Wittek's Ghazi Thesis which relied on an idea of Islamic holy war against Christian infidels as the main ideology of Muslim principalities on the western Anatolian borderlands; Shukurov suggests that Wittek's idea was mainly based on a single inscription from Bursa dated 1337.¹³ In contrast, he states that "no specific Ghazi ideology existed in Anatolia in the eleventh through the thirteenth centuries, where the Turkic principalities and chiefdoms fought against both Christians and neighboring Muslims."¹⁴ On top of it, he analyzes the connection between the Byzantine mystical movement, Hesychasm, and Islamic Sufism concluding that there might have been a strong Sufi influence on the Hesychast doctrine; he supports this with strong evidence, such as widespread bilingualism in the western Anatolian region,¹⁵ Greek converts who denounced Islam and embraced Christianity again,¹⁶ and the presence of Islamic holy men in Constantinople around the time that the Hesychast doctrine appeared.¹⁷

Heghnar Zeitlian Watenpaugh, in his article *Deviant Dervishes: Space, Gender, And the Construction of Antinomian Piety in Ottoman Aleppo* questions the incorporation of antinomian dervishes into state order in a later period, at the end of the 16th century.¹⁸ Although she mostly focuses on a later era, her general division between holy men in Muslim Asia Minor illuminates the reasons for the spiritual separation between urban and rural spheres from the Rum Seljuks to the Ottoman period. Just like Vasiliev distinguishes

¹² Tijana Krstic, *Contested Conversions to Islam: Narratives of Religious Change in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (California: Stanford University Press, 2011) 17.

¹³ Ibid. 5.

¹⁴ Ibid. 5.

¹⁵ Ibid. 361.

¹⁶ Ibid. 368.

¹⁷ Ibid. 375.

¹⁸ H. Zeitlian Watenpaugh, "Deviant Dervishes: Space, Gender, And the Construction of Antinomian Piety in Ottoman Aleppo" *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (2005) 552.

between moderate and the zealot groups in the Byzantine clergy, Watenpaugh pays attention to the relationship between the holy men of the rural environments whom she defines as “tiger or lion riders” to the holy man of the cities who stands on the wall.¹⁹ Allegedly, the lion-riding saint had possessed the mystical secret which he used to galvanize the people around him against the socio-religious order, while those who stands on the wall preached less threatening forms of piety.²⁰

Tom Papademetriou’s study of *Orthodox Hesychasm and Dervish Mysticism in the Late Byzantine and Early Ottoman Periods* focuses on heterodox movements and their antinomian leaders in the late Byzantine and early Ottoman periods. As regards the Byzantine side he questions the relationship between the monastic foundations and the state beginning with Emperor Manuel I Komnenos’ era.²¹ On the other hand, he pays special attention to the Bektashi order and concludes that the state used this heterodox order to absorb antinomian spiritual groups which would challenge the state.²² In addition, he also discusses possible interactions between heterodox holy men from Christian and Muslim sides in western Asia Minor, asking “If the monk and the dervish inhabited the same world at the same time, what happened when they crossed?”²³

Ahmet Yaşar Ocak has published several works concerning the development of unorthodox movements and their relationship with the state and “high Islamic” institutions. In his book titled *Babailer İsyanı, Aleviliğin Tarihsel Altyapısı, Anadolu’da İslam Türk Heterodoksisinin Teşekkülü* he discusses socio-economic reasons for the Babai Rebellion against the Seljuk authorities.²⁴ He concludes that after the defeat of the Babais at the Battle of Malya, Baba Ilyas’ many followers migrated to western Anatolia where they had a strong influence over the spiritual environment and the state structure of the Turcoman principalities including that of the Ottomans.²⁵

¹⁹ Ibid. 552.

²⁰ Ibid. 552.

²¹ Dean Papademetriou and Andrew Sopko (Eds.), *The Church and the Library: Studies in Honor of Rev. Dr. George C. Papademetriou* (Boston: Somerset Hall Press, 2007) 39.

²² Ibid. 61.

²³ Ibid. 65.

²⁴ Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Babailer İsyanı Aleviliğin Tarihsel Altyapısı* (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2000) 55.

²⁵ Ibid 207.

CHAPTER 1

REASONS BEHIND SOCIAL UNREST IN 13TH CENTURY ANATOLIA: THE CASES OF THE BABAIS AND THE ARSENITES

As a bridge between Europe and Asia, the Anatolian Peninsula has welcomed people of different ethnicities for centuries. During the 11th Century, however, the ethnic balance of the peninsula shifted dramatically. Throughout this century, various Turkic tribes which were organized under Seljuk rule poured into the Middle East from the vast steppes of Central Asia. After eliminating the Ghaznavid dynasty from Iran by defeating them at the Battle of Dandanakan, these tribes then directed their attention towards the rest of the Middle East.²⁶ With lightning speed, they “liberated” the Abbasid Caliph in Baghdad from the control of the Buyids in 1055.²⁷ The capture of the Caliphate allowed the Seljuk rulers to label themselves as Sultans, a title legitimized by the approval of the caliph.²⁸ However, the era of Turkic western expansion did not end here. The Seljuks followed corporate notions of sovereignty, which meant that every member of the dynasty, in theory, possessed the right to rule if they were in a strong enough position following the death of the previous monarch. As a result, several princes who had failed in their attempt to capture the throne instead embarked on expedition, and penetrated the eastern frontier of Byzantium, in order to find glory and riches there. Together with other nomadic tribal contingents, they pillaged significant strategic centers in Anatolia, such as Amorium and Ceasaria, wreaking havoc upon the Byzantine Empire. In response to such nomadic

²⁶ Ergin Ayan, “Political Legislation Process During the Foundation of Great Saljukian Empire” *Sosyal Bilimler Araştırmaları Dergisi* (2012) 23.

²⁷ Ibid. 32.

²⁸ Zahir Al-Din Nishapuri, *The History of The Seljuk Turks from the Jami' al-Tawarikh An Ilkhanid Adaptation of the Saljuq-nama*, Edmund Boshword (ed) (Cornwall: Curzon Press, 2001) 41. “And in the year 447 (1055-1056), the Caliph ordered them to give the Friday sermon in Tughril Beg’s name from the pulpits of Baghdad. They struck his name on the coins of the mint and they made his titles *Rukn al-Dawla Abu Talib Tughril Beg Muhammad b. Mikail* and after his name they set the name and titles of *Malik Rahim Abu Nasr Ibn Abi'l-Hayja, Sultan al-Dawla*.”

incursions, the Byzantine Emperor Romanos launched a large-scale campaign in 1071, in the hopes of eliminating Seljuk presence from Eastern Anatolia.²⁹ This mission failed,³⁰ however, following the crushing Byzantine defeat at Manzikert; indeed, Romanos himself was subsequently captured and, imprisoned by Sultan Alp Arslan.³¹ In the wake of this battle, various Turkish chieftains began a slow and steady conquest of Anatolia,³² and gradually, the Seljuks of Rum eliminated the other Turkish principalities in the area and consolidated their own power.

The Seljuks managed to establish their rule in Anatolia. However, in the long-run, they faced serious internal problems. After the consolidation of their power, they came to be alienated from their nomadic tribal base, which insisted upon maintaining their

²⁹ Before the Battle of Manzikert, Romanos had launched campaigns to the east twice with the aim of not only bringing Seljuk presence to an end but also to strengthen his position as an Emperor in the capital. Although Michael Psellos argues that Romanos had lost the Battle of Manzikert particularly because of the disorganization of the army, this accusation is mainly due to his disagreement with the emperor. It seems that the latter was betrayed by the commander of the reserve forces, Andronikos Dukas. Michael Psellos, *Mikhail Psellos'un Khronographia'sı* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1992) 229.

³⁰ It seems to me that, during the battle, Romanos organized his army according to traditional Byzantine battle formation against the nomadic forces, as was described in strategy books, such as the *Taktika*. He divided the army into smaller groups to entrap the enemy between the formations. However, Andronikos Dukas' betrayal and flight undermined this strategy resulted in the encirclement of the Byzantine army. Leo VI, *The Taktika* trans. George Dennis (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks, 2010) 461. "If an infantry force is present, especially in the first engagement, when the army is becoming accustomed to that nation, draw it up according to the method described by us elsewhere, that is, with cavalry lined up behind the infantry. If the troops drawn up for combat against them consist only of cavalry who are ready for battle against their forces, line them up in the manner described in the book of formations. Set apart a numerous and capable force on the flanks. To their rear, the cavalry called defenders or *ekdikoi*, are sufficient. When in pursuit, the assault troops, or *promachoi*, should not distance themselves more than three or four bowshots from the battle line of the defenders, and they should not outrun them. A concerted effort should be made to draw up the battle line, as much as possible, in an open and even place, free of thick woods, marshes, or hollows that could serve as cover for ambushes prepared by the Turks."

³¹ Semavi Eyice, *Malazgirt Savaşı'nın Kaybedeni IV Romanos Diogenes* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1971) 54.

³² Zahir Al-Din Nishapuri, *The History of The Seljuk Turks from the Jami' Al-Tawarikh an Ilkhanid Adaptation of the Saljuq-nama*, Edmund Boshword (ed) (Cornwall: Curzon Press, 2001) 53. Nishapuri writes that after the nullification of the agreement between Emperor Romanos IV Diogenes and Sultan Alp Arslan, the sultan allowed his prominent commanders to invade Byzantine territory. However, he likely does not know about the fate of the defeated Byzantine Emperor after the Battle of Manzikert, or he simply ignores it to justify the reason for the Seljuk conquest of Asia Minor. "When the king of Byzantium reached his country, the Satan of disappointment nested in his heart and the demon of temptation in his brain, and he began to take the road to rebellion and sedition. He procrastinated the money for the treasury. When they revealed this state of affairs to the Sultan, he ordered that, 'The amirs are to penetrate deeply into the dominion of Byzantium and as far as every territory which they seize and obtain is concerned, let each one besides him have access to it or control over it' Amir Saltuq at once took Erzurum and its dependencies and appanages, and Amir Artuq took Mardin, Amid, Manazgird, Malatiya, Khartapirt, and whatever is to this day appended and related to them, and Dansihmand took Qaysariyya, Zamandu, Siwas, Dawalu, Tuqat, Nakisar and Amasiya, and Chawuldur took Mar'ash and Sarus, and Amir Mankujik took the provinces of Erzinjan, Kamakh, Kughuniyya and other governorates."

traditional lifestyles, and who remained intransigent in the face of various measures to dissuade them from continuing to practice pastoralism. In an attempt to increase tax revenues, the Seljuks began to encourage these pastoral nomads to settle in specific areas; however, they ran into difficulties providing enough pasture land in Anatolia for many of these nomads, whose number had increased dramatically following the Mongol invasions of the 1220s.³³ These nomads were forced to live within determined limits, in order not to disturb the sedentary subjects of the Sultanate. However, nomads were not accustomed to living in such conditions and were thus prone to unrest and revolt. In addition, many of them proved unable to earn a livelihood in the territories assigned to them by the Seljuks and subsequently fell into poverty. Ultimately, as a consequence of their eventual destitution, the majority of them gathered around a religious figure and raised the banner of rebellion against the central authorities of their time.³⁴

Turning to the Byzantine side, the origins of the Arsenite Schism lie in the period following the death of the Byzantine Emperor Theodore II Doukas Laskaris, leaving an eight-year-old boy named John Laskaris as heir. Plotters such as Michael Palaiologos who had descended from the notable families of Constantinople that had taken shelter in Nicaea following the Fourth Crusade began to extend their power and finally eliminated the Laskaris Dynasty.³⁵ Nevertheless, this family continued to be regarded as legitimate by much of the Anatolian population of Byzantium. The usurper was a man named Michael, from the Palaeologus family. He attempted to strengthen his position within the Nicaean Empire before finally succeeding in declaring himself co-emperor. However, with the recapture of Constantinople, Michael was able to find an opportunity to eliminate the rights of the Laskarids to the throne; he eventually imprisoned the lawful heir John in a fortress in Bithynia and had him blinded.³⁶ These actions created a wave of unrest in the Anatolian provinces of the Empire. Adding to the instability of the situation, the Patriarch of Constantinople, Arsenios Autoreianos, excommunicated Michael in response to his

³³ Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Babailer İsyanı Aleviliğin Tarihsel Altyapısı* (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2000) 39.

³⁴ Ibid. 126.

³⁵ Teresa Shawcross "In the Name of the True Emperor: Politics of Resistance after the Palaiologan Usurpation" *Byzantinoslavica* 66 (2008) 203.

³⁶ Ibid. 203.

blinding of the lawful heir to the Empire. Due to continuing loyalty to the old dynasty in Anatolia, alongside the unrest generated by his excommunication, Michael launched a program of violent suppression in his Anatolian territories, also targeting those churchmen who supported the Patriarch.³⁷ These actions, along with ever-present economic difficulties, eventually caused a great deal of division within the Empire and led the Anatolian population, especially the peasantry, to gradually fall away from imperial control; indeed, some of them even joined the Turks.

1.1 Political Instability

In order to make a more proper comparison between the two revolts, it is necessary to first look at the political situation in both the Seljuk Sultanate of Rum and the Byzantine Empire at the time. In the first half of the 13th century, the Seljuk-Byzantine border was relatively quiet,³⁸ except for several looting campaigns from both sides and a Seljuk attempt to invade Byzantine territory in 1211,³⁹ which failed after the Byzantine victory at Battle of Antioch on Meander.⁴⁰ Indeed, the Seljuks had captured most of the western Anatolian region in the era of Suleiman Shah who ruled in the 1080s. As Reha Çamuroğlu writes in his book, however, it is the Byzantines themselves who may have initially authorized Suleiman of Kutulmush from the Seljuk dynasty to organize the disorganized Turcoman tribes which had been looting the Byzantine territory ceaselessly and bring them into line.⁴¹ Having the permission of the Byzantine emperor in Asia Minor, Suleiman was able to organize the Turcoman tribes in western Anatolia under his leadership and then declare his independence from the Byzantines. As is put by Clive Foss in his book entitled

³⁷ Ibid. 209

³⁸ The Seljuk-Nicaean border ran along through the river of al-Battal (the Dalaman Çayı flowing into the Mediterranean at the Gulf of Fethiye). It seems that the Meander valley was well-defended against incursions from the Rum Seljuk territory. Şevki Koray Durak, "Byzantine-Turkish Encounter in Western Anatolia in the late Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Centuries" (Masters Thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2001) 24.

³⁹ Charanis writes that while Nicaeans had the possession of the frontier cities such as Laodiceia (near Denizli) and Chonae (Honaz), it was probable that Dorylaeum (Eskişehir), Kutahia, and Claudiopolis (Bolu) were in the hands of the Muslims. Peter Charanis, "On the Asiatic Frontiers of the Empire of Nicaea" *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 8. (1947) 59.

⁴⁰ Rustam Shukurov, *The Byzantine Turks, 1204-1461* (Leiden: Brill, 2016) 365.

⁴¹ Reha Çamuroğlu, *Tarih, Heterodoksi ve Babailer* (İstanbul: Der Yayınları, 1990) 165.

Nicaea: A Byzantine Capital and Its Praises, during the Byzantine civil war of 1081, the city of Nicaea was handed over to Turkish mercenaries by Nikephoros Melissenos, who aimed to be crowned emperor on his march towards Constantinople.⁴² Nevertheless, the western Anatolian region along with the cities in the north and the south shores of Asia Minor was later reconquered by the Byzantines with the aid of the crusaders. After the first crusade in 1095-1099, the Byzantines initiated an aggressive policy known as the “Komnenian Restoration,” reconquering western Anatolia as well as the cities in the southern and the northern coasts of Asia Minor. During the first half of the 12th century, The Rum Seljuks lost all of West Asia Minor to the Byzantines and were in a difficult position, facing the Danishmendids in the east. Nevertheless, after the Battle of Myriokephalon in 1176, this trend began to be reversed. Having secured their western frontier, the Rum Seljuks managed to annex the lands of the Danishmendids in the following years and expanded their borders as far as Malatya in the east in 1178.

The annexation of the Danishmendid territories gave the Seljuks the opportunity to secure their position in Asia Minor and focus on the economic improvement of their realm. In the first half of the 13th century, the sultanate was at the zenith of its political glory. The era of Sultan Kayqubad I was a prosperous time for the Seljuks of Rums for many reasons, ranging from a general improvement in economic circumstances to an increase in Seljuk military strength. In order to augment their revenue, the Seljuks made an effort to control important trade networks through the conquest of several key cities and ports, not only in Anatolia but also on the northern shores of the Black Sea, such as the port of Sudak in Crimea. In addition, Sultan Kayqubad expanded the borders of his empire towards the east, and prosperous cities such as Harran, Van, Ahlat, Bitlis, Adiyaman, and Erzurum pledged or were made to swear their loyalty to his throne. In the cultural realm, the age of Kayqubad is generally considered to be the zenith of Seljukid architecture, Kayqubad wishing to display the wealth of his country through the commission of large-scale construction projects all over the country. For this purpose, he ordered the construction of a Seljuk palace in Konya, Qubadabad Palace, near Lake Beyşehir, and Keykubadiye Palace

⁴² Clive Foss, *Nicaea: A Byzantine Capital and Its Praises* (London: Oxford University Press, 1991) 146.

in Kayseri, which are masterpieces of Seljuk art in Anatolia.⁴³ Nevertheless, towards the end of his reign, new nomadic forces from the east began to appear. The Mongols had recently emerged as a powerful force from Inner Asia and had quickly toppled or invaded every realm they had come across, from Northern China to Persia. In the last years of Kayqubad's rule, the Mongols sent envoys to the Sultanate of Rum to ask for a yearly tribute, which would be considered as a sign of the Sultan's allegiance to the Great Khan of the Mongols and which Kayqubad accepted. Subsequently, however, he was poisoned and died in Kayseri, while preparing for another campaign to the east.⁴⁴ Kaykhusraw (r.1237-1246) was very young when he succeeded his father as the next sultan of the Seljuks of Rum in 1237. After his enthronement, the problems within the Sultanate became more apparent. Turcoman tribes, seeking shelter from the Mongol advance, flocked to Anatolia. At the start of these migrations, Sultan Kayqubad managed to allocate pastures for these nomads in the no man's land between their realm and the Byzantines. However, the human wave of Turcoman migrants proved to be unceasing, and the Sultan soon ran out of available land to settle the newcomers. Furthermore, some local tribes had already started to pursue agriculture in these areas, and therefore they were unwilling to share their lands with the Turcoman pastoralists. Social unrest thus became increasingly likely in eastern Anatolia, a development hardly mitigated by the inexperience of the new sultan Kaykhusraw.

On the other side of the border, the political situation in Byzantium had also become increasingly unstable. The Byzantines were defeated heavily at the Battle of Manzikert in 1071; nevertheless, they were able to recover part of Anatolia during the period known as the Komnenian Restoration.⁴⁵ In the 1150s and the 1160s, the Byzantines were able to not

⁴³ Scott Redford, "Thirteenth-Century Rum Seljuq Palaces and Palace Imagery." *Ars Orientalis* 23 (1993) 220.

⁴⁴ Salim Koca, "An obnoxious murder that left its mark on Anatolian Seljuk History: The poisoning of Sultan 'Alā al-Dīn Kayqubād I." *Türkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi* (2016) 351. As Koca writes, the naming of Kayqubad's second son, Qilij Arslan, as the heir apparent to the Sultanate, may have precipitated his assassination. It appears as though that a palace clique urged Kayqubad's eldest son, Kaykhusraw, to eliminate his father from the throne.

⁴⁵ Alexander Beihammer, *Byzantium and the Emergence of Muslim-Turkish Anatolia, ca. 1040-1130* (Oxon: Rotledge, 2017) 376. "The developments in the Byzantine-Turkish frontier zone in the years after 1116 are known to us only through the narratives of the next generation of Byzantine historians, namely John Kinnamos and Niketas Choniates[...] The two historians start their accounts about Asia Minor with the new emperor's campaigns of 1119/20. In the first expedition, John II marched from Philadelpheia, penetrated the Upper Meander Valley and seized the town of Sozopolis (Uluborlu) built on a steep rock close to the Kapı

only operate in Anatolia and the Balkans, but they also managed to initiate military campaigns in Egypt⁴⁶ and on the Italian Peninsula, although these campaigns fell short of their expectations.⁴⁷ However, the Battle of Myriokephalon in 1176 gradually turned the tide. Although Manuel Komnenos was able to secure peace with the Seljuks in 1179, the Seljuks invaded Byzantine territory and captured several border cities including Cotyaeum (Kütahya) and Sozopolis (Uluborlu), benefitting from the turmoil in Byzantine domestic affairs due to Manuel's death. The catastrophic years after 1180 weakened the Byzantine position in Asia Minor as well as in the Balkans. The Hungarians led by King Béla III invaded Bosnia and the Venetians captured the shores of Dalmatia from the Byzantines. On the top of it, the increasing reaction against Manuel's penchant for western traditions and way of life, and his heir Alexios' mother and regent Empress Maria's Latin origins led to resentment by Greek subjects in Constantinople. Later this turned into a civil war which resulted in the dethronement of the young Alexios and the enthronement of another member of the Komnenian Dynasty, Andronikos. Nevertheless, Andronikos' short reign became increasingly unpopular in Constantinople due to his violent methods to maintain the peace within the Empire. Thus, his dethronement in 1185 began the unsuccessful rule of the emperors of the Angelos Dynasty. The inefficient rule of the Angelos' resulted in a Bulgarian revolt, which ended up in the formation of the Second Bulgarian Kingdom in 1185 and the Sack of Constantinople itself by the Crusaders in 1204.⁴⁸

Mountain. Thence the imperial troops headed southwards towards Attaleia and seized a number of fortified places in the region between Lake Eğirdir and the mountainous areas of the Taurus range further afield.”

⁴⁶ The naval expedition to Fatimid Egypt failed because of the disagreement between the leaders of the allied forces, the Byzantine expeditionary force and the king of Jerusalem. Kinnamos states that the King of Jerusalem might have been afraid of increasing Byzantine influence over the Levant region. John Kinnamos, *Deeds of John and Manuel Comnenus* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976.) 209 “There some battles were waged by the Romans, but nothing succeeded for a reason I am going to relate. It was agreed by the emperor and the Palestinians who joined in the war on Egypt that the Romans would receive a half of the conquered region, and they would have the rest. So at the outset the king, when the Romans reached Egypt first, treacherously decided to come late for the war[...] they did this desiring the Romans to run the risks, so that they might enjoy effortless victory, or were utterly envious of the emperor's lordship over Egypt, I am unable to state.”

⁴⁷ Despite their initial victories in the south of Italy, the Byzantines had to withdraw from the peninsula due to the alienation of the local magnates from their rule and Papal alliance with the Kingdom of Sicily. John Kinnamos, *Deeds of John and Manuel Comnenus* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976) 131.

⁴⁸ The previous violent actions by the Byzantines against European merchants who had lived in the city might have contributed to the sack of Constantinople by the crusaders. Charles M. Brand, *Byzantium Confronts the West 1180-1204* (Vermont: Harvard University Press, 1968) 259. Some of the crusader groups were seeking for revenge: “their memories went back to Manuel's

After the fourth crusade, three small Greek principalities in different regions lay claim to the Roman (Byzantine) heritage, the Despotate of Epirus, the Empire of Nicaea and the Empire of Trebizond. Although Trebizond managed to survive longer than the other two principalities thanks to its geographical advantage, it was Nicaea which restored the patriarchal throne in its capital and conquered Constantinople, bringing the Latin Empire to an end.⁴⁹ However, the real threat for them lay in the west again, due to the threat of a new crusade which would be announced by the Pope. The reconquest of Constantinople was indeed a major achievement; the Latins who had invaded Constantinople in the fourth crusade, however, were enraged by this and subsequently began preparations for a new crusade to bring the Byzantines back into line.⁵⁰ In such a political situation, the Byzantines were forced to station a large proportion of their military forces on their western frontier, and they even transferred the border guards of Anatolia, the *Akritai*, to face a possible Latin invasion from the west. Due to the diplomatic acumen of Michael Palaiologos, however, the attack never came. Having appealed to the Pope to stop the invasion of the Normans by promising that the Orthodox Patriarchate would accept the authority of the Pope and that a cardinal would be present in Constantinople as the symbol of papal supremacy, Michael Palaiologos was able to avert the threat from the west and secure his European flank. His supplication resulted in the Union of Lyons in 1274, whereby the orthodox dignitaries sent by the emperor formally accepted papal supremacy. The political efforts of Michael in 1274 allowed the empire to

imprisonment of the Venetians in 1171 and the Latin massacre of 1182, not to mention such recent events as the Byzantine attack in the previous autumn on the Pisan community.”

⁴⁹ Although the Nicaeans managed to recapture the city, the empire in 1261 was a far cry from its former glory. The island of Crete, the Peloponnese, Trebizond, Thessaly and many of the Aegean islands now remained beyond the empire’s borders. Steven Runciman, *The Last Byzantine Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970) 5. “When the Nicaeans liberated Constantinople and re-established the empire in its proper capital, it was no longer the same empire. It no longer represented the Christian East. It was merely one state among others in Levant; and most of the others were materially more powerful. The imperial title still maintained a curious mystical prestige; Balkan monarchs were eager to have their own titles recognized by the Emperor; and this prestige was backed by the prestige of the great city and its great church and its historic Patriarchate. But even the imperial prestige was fading.”

⁵⁰ Deno John Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael Palaelologus and the West* (Hamden: The Shoe String Press, 1973) 190. “From 1266 until shortly before his death in 1282 Michael was constrained to devote almost complete attention to the defeat of Charles, the fulfillment of whose ambition would have brought about the destruction of the Byzantine Empire and reimposition of Latin rule in Constantinople.”

avert a possible invasion, but his actions only deepened the schism between the state and the Anatolian subjects of the state including the Arsenites, who came to see themselves as the last believers in true, uncorrupted Christianity.

1.2 Socio-Economic Problems

As we have seen, then, the Byzantine Empire and the Rum Seljuks faced threats coming from different directions for most of the first half of the 13th Century. Above all, the Mongol invasion of Iran and Latin threat to the city of Constantinople contributed dramatically to the social disturbances of the Babais and Arsenites, respectively. In order to fully focus on these movements, it is necessary to understand the political context in which they were situated; for both the Byzantines and the Rum Seljuks, the threat of invasion exacerbated the political instability of these empires. However, there is also an economic dimension. At the time of Turcoman incursions into Anatolia, the agricultural productivity of the region was destroyed, and the extent trade networks were severely damaged. After the formation of the Rum Seljuk state, however, newly established centers created an economic boom throughout the Anatolian Peninsula, and trade was fostered all over the Seljuk realm.⁵¹ In contrast to the Anatolian economy of previous centuries, which was dependent on cultivation, the Turks managed to create economically valuable peripheries around the city centers by populating the pasture-lands.⁵² Nomadic migrants who engaged in pastoralism on the empty pastures of the central Anatolian Plateau revived the local economy and supported commercial activities in the region.⁵³ The first half of the 13th century represented a golden age for the economy of the Sultanate of Rum. The state attempted to control important trade nexuses, such as Alaiye, Sinop, and Antalya, and began construction projects along important trade routes, in order to provide merchants with safe and comfortable travel accommodations such as

⁵¹ Jonathan Osmond and Ausma Cimdina, *Power and Culture: Identity, Ideology, Representation* (Pisa: Pisa University Press, 2007) 50.

⁵² Claude Cahen, *Pre-Ottoman Turkey: A general survey of the material and spiritual culture and history c.1071-1330* (New York: Taplinger Publishing, 1968) 156.

⁵³ In this period of time, the red caps, such as the nomadic Turcomans wore themselves, were sold to merchants from western European countries. Also, Cahen says that the carpets which the nomads made from wool were very popular in western markets. Claude Cahen, *Pre-Ottoman Turkey: A general survey of the material and spiritual culture and history c.1071-1330* (New York: Taplinger Publishing, 1968) 161.

caravanserais and *hans*. The letters between the Seljuk Sultan and King of Cyprus as well as the Doge of Venice shows us that a special commercial insurance was granted to the merchants from these realms within the Seljukid lands.⁵⁴ Jonathan Osmond also gives us information on the growth of the Seljuk economy in the first half of the 13th century. Trade networks improved and the accumulation of wealth in the Seljuk realm increased dramatically between 1200-1240, especially during the reign of Kayqubad I:

[...] “Giyaseddin Keyhüsrev, the sixth ruler of the Anatolian Seljuks, conquered Antalya. He intended to organize a Turkish commercial colony in Antalya. [...] Another Seljuk sultan, İzzeddin Keykavus, maintained similar policies and conquered Sinop. During his reign, the Seljuk state signed important agreements with the Lusignan of the Kingdom of Cyprus and the Venetians about the immigration rights of merchants, freedom of movement, and tax reductions. [...] The economic and political power of the Seljuks during the reign of Sultan Kayqubad I has led many scholars to view him as the greatest of all Seljuk Sultans. He introduced a kind of commercial insurance for merchants. The standards of the caravan roads were greatly enhanced through his efforts, and the largest surviving caravanserais were built in this period.”⁵⁵

The Mongol threat in the east ended this positive economic trend. Since the Mongols invaded many significant economic, cultural and religious centers in Transoxiana and Persia, a large number of nomads flocked to the relative safety of Anatolia. As was mentioned earlier, the Seljuk Sultanate initially tried to accommodate them by settling them along the Byzantine frontier, with the aim to dampen the nomadic-sedentary conflict and to weaken the Byzantine defensive system in Western Anatolia. However, it seems that the number of people migrating to Anatolia soon became too overwhelming for the Sultanate to deal with.

In his book *Babailer İsyanı*, Ahmet Yaşar Ocak describes the system of land tenure in the Rum Seljuk lands before the nomadic migrations to Anatolia incited by Mongol expansion and explains how the system deteriorated soon afterward.⁵⁶ As he writes, although it appeared as though the economy of the Sultanate had improved, in fact, the existing land tenure system had been severely damaged by civil wars. He suggests that when the Seljuks arrived in Anatolia, they began to apply the same fief system which they had seen before in the regions of Transoxiana and Byzantine Anatolia, in order to prevent

⁵⁴ Osman Turan, *Türkiye Selçukluları Hakkında Resmi Vesikalar* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2014) 111.

⁵⁵ Jonathan Osmond and Ausma Cimdiña, *Power and Culture: Identity, Ideology, Representation* (Pisa: Pisa University Press, 2007) 53.

⁵⁶ Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Babailer İsyanı Aleviliğin Tarihsel Altyapısı* (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2000) 37.

any further social and economic disruptions in the region.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, Akdağ states that the *iqta* system did not remain very stable during the era of the Sultanate.⁵⁸ Civil wars, for instance, caused its deterioration; indeed, after the death of Sultan Kiliç Arslan II, a civil war erupted between his sons, and soon after this civil war ended another one occurred following the death of Sultan Kayhusraw I, this time between his sons Kayqubad and Kaykawus.⁵⁹ In terms of the conflicts about the land tenure system, Ocak emphasizes that during these struggles the *iqta* system was severely abused and almost became defunct.⁶⁰

In such a troubled era, the arrival of nomadic Turcomans created a burden that the land administration of the Sultanate could not properly manage. In addition, the nomadic notion of land usage and ownership was quite different from that of the sedentary peoples. As is described by Ocak, the newly arrived Turcoman population still followed numerous principles of tribal ownership, according to which land belonged to the community as a whole.⁶¹ Furthermore, although land was not inheritable within the realm of the Seljuks, landholders nevertheless managed to find ways to turn it into a source of family wealth. Several landholders and state administrators managed to transform their assigned *iqta* lands into public *awqaf* “charitable endowments”. By doing this, they were able to pass on their assigned lands to their children and keep the custodianship of those lands in the family.⁶² Legally, the *awqaf* were tax-exempt organizations, and in practice the landholders legally disguised their lands as *waqf* and afterward, continued their family business.⁶³ This transformation of the *iqta* system must have created a great deal of trouble

⁵⁷ Ibid. 38.

⁵⁸ Mustafa Akdağ, *Türkiye'nin İktisadi ve İçtimai Tarihi* (İstanbul: YKY, 1979) 37.

⁵⁹ Even before the death of Sultan Qiliç Arslan II, the fight for the throne among the princes was a common problem in the Rum Seljuk realm. Gregory the Priest states that Sultan Mes'ud's death resulted in a small-scale civil war among his three sons. In the end, Qiliç Arslan managed to ascend the throne but his younger brother Shahinshah had taken refuge in the Byzantine court.

Papaz Grigor, *Urfalı Mateos Vekayi-namesi (952-1136) ve Papaz Grigor'un Zeyli (1136-1162)* translation to Turkish Hrant D. Andreasyan (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1987) 313.

⁶⁰ Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Babailer İsyanı Aleviliğin Tarihsel Altyapısı* (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2000) 36.

⁶¹ Ibid. 38.

⁶² On the issue Cahen gives the example of Ertöküş's *awqaf*. Claude Cahen, *Pre-Ottoman Turkey: A general survey of the material and spiritual culture and history c.1071-1330* (New York: Taplinger Publishing, 1968) “in 613/1216 Ertöküş established various properties as a *waqf* for the benefit of a mosque in Antalya, then recently conquered, and other institutions in the same province or the neighboring one of Burghlu, to the north. He did so probably not in his capacity as an individual owner of these properties but, as we know that he was the semi-autonomous governor of the whole of southern Anatolia because he had authority to dispose of the state lands situated there.”

⁶³ Mustafa Akdağ, *Türkiye'nin İktisadi ve İçtimai Tarihi* (İstanbul: YKY, 1979) 36.

for the arriving nomads, whose numbers increased greatly during the 1220s and 1230s. They could not find sufficient empty land to graze livestock and maintain their nomadic economy. On top of it, the state instituted a burdensome regime of taxation for them. As Werner notes, a nomadic tribe had to pay 24.000 sheep per year as a “voluntary gift” to the tax officers.⁶⁴ According to this calculation, this must have created serious unrest among nomads if we consider that it was around 40-50 sheep to sustain a nomad family of seven.⁶⁵ He argues that every nomadic family must have given 5 sheep to the tax officer yearly.⁶⁶ It was a great risk for the families to reproduce their herds when considering that the average number of animals to slaughter for food was sixteen. Sheep breeding and pastoralism were generally their only economic activity, which, together with their traditional lifestyle, prevented them from engaging in agriculture. Werner concludes that the state’s heavy taxation policy towards nomads might have resulted in a general poverty and starvation, and even mass deaths among them.⁶⁷ Initially, nomads moved to the peripheries of prosperous city centers, and in so doing contributed to the flourishing of the empty pasturelands of the central Anatolian plateau, but their increasing number prevented a healthy symbiotic relationship from forming with the sedentary population of the area. In order to meet their herds’ increasing need for pasturelands, the nomads started to invade the cultivated *iqta* and *waqf* lands of the sedentary population. In addition, due to both their increasing economic destitution and in accordance with their nomadic traditions, the Turcomans began to plunder the cities, towns, and trade caravans of Anatolia in order to provide for their basic needs.

On the Byzantine side, the threat of invasion from the west forced the Byzantine state to collect increasingly heavy taxes in order to field a strong army against the renowned Latin knights. To increase state revenue, Michael instituted a burdensome regime of taxation over all of the provinces. In the western part of the Empire, Michael’s financial policies were, to some extent, bearable because he retained a degree of support for saving the population from the unpopular rule of the Latins. Indeed, the economy of the Latin Empire had been in crisis for most of its lifespan. The Venetians and Genoese maintained

⁶⁴ Ernst Werner, *Büyük Bir Devletin Doğuşu: Osmanlı Feodalizminin Oluşma Süreci* (İstanbul: Alan Yayıncılık, 1986) 50.

⁶⁵ Ibid. 49.

⁶⁶ Ibid. 50.

⁶⁷ Ibid 50.

trade outposts in the region without paying the important customs tax to the Latin ruler. While the latter two maritime states prospered due to the trade passing through the region, the only considerable revenue that the Latin Empire could obtain from this economic activity were heavy taxes collected from local Byzantine peasants. In the last years of Latin rule, “it is well known that the Latin emperor Baldwin II had to sell the lead from the roof of the imperial palace out of sheer poverty.”⁶⁸

By contrast, the situation in western Anatolia was considerably different. In the era of the Laskarid Dynasty, western Anatolia flourished economically.

“Although the Fourth Crusade (1204) had forced many ruling Byzantines to seek refuge and temporary solace in Anatolia, the emperors, churchmen, and the administration of Nicaea, the Byzantine successor state in the west of the peninsula, became excellent stewards of their reduced estates and spent two generations expanding their resources in preparation for the return to Constantinople.”⁶⁹

The state attempted to maintain a subsistence economy by encouraging trade and supporting the development of agriculture. Specifically, emperor John Vatatzes was very concerned with the economic improvement of the countryside. As Nicol states,

“The economy was based not on the needs and the traffic of great cities but upon the land, on agriculture and the breeding of cattle. The emperor himself encouraged his subjects to be self-sufficient by taking a personal interest in the management of his imperial estates.”⁷⁰

Nicaean agricultural prosperity improved in this period of time to such an extent that they were able to export grain and different kinds of agricultural products to the Sultanate of Rum in times of crisis and drought. Gregoras writes that

“an advantage befell the Byzantines in that the Turks were afflicted by a severe famine. All roads which led to the Byzantine realm were filled with the comings and goings of this race of people: men, women, and children. And the wealth of the Turks emptied itself in a great abundance into the hands of the Byzantines. [...]”⁷¹

⁶⁸ Michael J Angold, *The Fourth Crusade: Event and Context* (New York: Pearson Education, 2003) 105.

⁶⁹ Rudi Paul Lindner, *Explorations in Ottoman Prehistory* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2007) 2.

⁷⁰ Donal M. Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972) 25.

⁷¹ Nicephorus Gregoras, *Byzantine Historia*, ed. I. Bekker and L. Schopen (Bonn, 1829), quoted in Deno John Geanakoplos, *Byzantium: Church, Society, and Civilization Seen Through Contemporary Eyes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984) 248.

Further, the emperors of Nicaea pursued anti-aristocratic policies to secure their own position and support the peasants against the exploitation by the landholders. In the heydays of the Empire of Nicaea, peasant investment was encouraged steadily. According to Laiou, the majority of the villagers had the ownership of the vineyards either by inheritance, by purchase or through their own investments.⁷² The Nicaean emperors' propaganda was mainly based on the idea of social justice in the agricultural hinterland.⁷³ Especially, Theodore II Laskaris tried to weaken the power of the aristocracy.⁷⁴ As Angelov states, the Nicaean ruler raised objections against the political importance of kinship; instead, he favored the friendship ties in politics in general.⁷⁵ However, his measures against the aristocracy in the Empire of Nicaea must have created general unrest among aristocrats. According to Angelov however, these measures were the main reason for the dethronement of John IV Laskaris in 1261 by a clique which was set up by aristocrats and headed by Michael Palaiologos, "These reforms upset the Nicaean political elite to the extent of provoking a reaction among a group of disgruntled aristocrats after Theodore II's death: the aristocrats toppled the Laskarid dynasty and installed the first Palaiologan emperor, Michael."⁷⁶

The recapture of Constantinople, however, halted the economic development of the region, as the maintenance of the capital was quite expensive. "The very fact that the Empire lacked the great city of Constantinople, on whose upkeep and defense so much of its wealth might have been consumed, seemed to make for a more even distribution of the resources available."⁷⁷ In 1261 the treasury had a considerable amount of income accumulated thanks to the diligent savings of Nicaean emperors. Runciman states that "the empire was still rich. The thrift of the Nicaeans had left the treasury full. The Italian capture of the carrying trade did not destroy but, rather, enhanced the importance of the

⁷² Ibid. 176.

⁷³ Dimiter Angelov, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought in Byzantium, 1204-1330* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) 228.

⁷⁴ Michael Angold, "Byzantine 'Nationalism' and the Nicaean Empire" *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 1:1 (1975) 57.

⁷⁵ Ibid. 215. "In his political, philosophical, rhetorical and epistolary works Theodore II Laskaris consistently attacked the role of kinship and lineage as a social force[...] In his treatise on friendship he laid out an alternative scheme of social relations which stood in contrast to an empire run by a hereditary aristocracy."

⁷⁶ Ibid. 2014.

⁷⁷ Donal M. Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972) 25.

markets in Constantinople: while Thessalonica, the second city of the Empire, prospered as the chief port of the Balkans.⁷⁸ To defend Constantinople from a possible Latin invasion, it was necessary to repair the city walls, which had been neglected by the city's former rulers, as well as to build a new fleet. The state was thus forced to drain the economic resources of the empire for the provision of the newly conquered capital, impoverishing western Anatolia, whose economic situation had significantly improved during Nicaean rule. Laiou notes that western Anatolia had a secondary position in the eyes of Michael Palaiologos.⁷⁹ He perceived the region as the center of defiance against his own rule, which was conducive to the economic sanctions against its inhabitants. The increasing need for money due to Constantinople's rebuilding program and the Latin threat on the western border both contributed to Michael's devastating taxation policy which impoverished the region and exposed it to nomadic forays into Byzantine territory due to the general weakening of central control.⁸⁰

In addition, as a usurper, Michael felt compelled to strengthen his own position vis-à-vis Byzantine aristocracy. In order to be accepted as the legitimate ruler instead of the lawful heir from the Laskarids, John, Michael began granting *pronoia*, i.e. fiscal rights on cultivated lands, to the various notables. He distributed such *pronoia* with tax exemptions, allowing these landholders to enrich themselves. However, while tax exempted *pronoia* holders were able to create free trade zones in their own territories, the state lost a considerable amount of tax source. Furthermore, the other source of revenue, the customs tax, did not bring the Byzantines enough to meet their increasing expenditures. Laiou argues that even after the recapture of Constantinople, the privileged state of the Italian city-states continued in Byzantine economy.⁸¹ The commercial privileges of the Genoese and Venetians had left the Byzantines to collect but a small amount of customs tax. Laiou asserts that at the time the city of Constantinople was able to collect 30.000 gold coins a year from the customs duties; on the other hand, the small Latin inhabited town, Pera,

⁷⁸ Steven Runciman, *The Last Byzantine Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970) 7.

⁷⁹ Angeliki E. Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins: Foreign Policy of Andronicus II, 1282-1328* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972) 20.

⁸⁰ On a visit to West of Asia Minor sometime after the reconquest of Constantinople, Michael had found the region away from its former prosperity owing to constant nomadic raids. William L. Langer and Robert P. Blake, "The Rise of the Ottoman Turks and Its Historical Background" *The American Historical Review* 37 (1932) 492.

⁸¹ Angeliki E. Laiou and Cecile Morrisson, *The Byzantine Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 225.

managed to have 200.000 gold coins.⁸² In the face of such a financial situation, the Byzantine gold currency, *Hyperpyron*, gradually lost its gold content as far as 12 carats in Michael's heir Andronikos' reign.⁸³ Nevertheless, it had 18 carats of gold during the Nicaean Empire and 15 carats during Michael's rule. According to Laiou, wheat prices doubled between the years of 1266 and 1277.⁸⁴ During this era, the state had to tax its subjects in kind instead of cash due to lack of money.⁸⁵ The once flourishing western Anatolia now became the center of exploitation by the state and its population had difficulty to fulfill their basic human needs. This economic exploitation must have strengthened Arsenite supporters who wished to see the Laskarid Dynasty on the throne for having brought wealth to the region. Also, it is not very difficult to perceive that the severe exploitation of the region had facilitated nomadic expansion towards the west. Nicol expresses the feelings of the western Anatolian Byzantines as follows:

“the people of Byzantine Asia Minor watched the concentrated riches of their former Empire of Nicaea being dissipated in Constantinople. The sympathies of many of them continued to be with the family of Laskarids rather than with that of the usurper Palaiologos. For it was the Laskaris who had maintained the Empire in exile, and it was they who had brought prosperity to Asia Minor”⁸⁶

1.3 Changing Military Organizations

In the Nicaean Empire, the eastern frontier of Byzantium was well-protected. Because the core region of their polity was west Asia Minor, the Nicaean emperors tried two different methods to prevent incursions of Turcoman nomads. One of these strategies was to settle along the eastern border nomadic tribes that had on occasion poured from north of Bulgaria into Thrace. Indeed, it was not a new strategy in the Byzantine military system. From time to time, the Byzantines had taken many nomadic groups into the ranks of the

⁸² Angeliki E. Laiou and Cecile Morrisson, *The Byzantine Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 15.

⁸³ *Ibid.* 15.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.* 16.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* 16.

⁸⁶ Donal M. Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972) 44.

military by enslaving them or distributing agricultural lands to them; such state slave troops in turn invaded and crossed the Danube. For instance, during the reign of Alexios I Komnenos (r.1081-1118), with the aid of their Cuman allies, the Byzantines defeated the Pechenegs who had poured forth from north of the Danube to pillage Byzantine territory. Nevertheless, although the majority of the Pecheneg prisoners were killed after the battle due to a threat of rebellion, it seems that some of the prisoners were spared for the army. Anna Comnena writes in her book *Alexiad* that these Turkic bands were used alongside other nomadic contingents against the invading Normans in the Balkans.⁸⁷ The Byzantines were aware of the advantage deriving from the mobility of nomadic troops against their heavily armored western adversaries. They also used nomadic troops against other nomadic groups possessing the same battle strategies. In the 1050s, although it had resulted in a revolt and devastation of Thrace and Macedonia, Emperor Constantine IX attempted to hire a large number of Pecheneg mercenaries to end the increasing incursions from the Great Seljuk territory during his reign.⁸⁸ The Nicaean emperor John Doukas Vatatzes also attempted to deploy along the eastern frontier Cuman groups who had to leave their lands beyond the Danube due to the Mongol menace. As Shukurov states, in 1242 “some of the Cumans were transferred from the Balkans to Anatolia on the Byzantine and Seljuk border, while others were given lands in Thrace and Macedonia.”⁸⁹ Charanis notes that the total number of Cumans who took refuge in Byzantine territory was close to 10.000, and in Anatolia, these groups exercised considerable influence over the region.⁹⁰ It seems that in the later period these Cumans were assimilated by the native Greek population of the region as they began speaking Greek well and some of them left their lands in order to join Michael Palaiologos’ campaigns in the European half of the empire.⁹¹

The other method which was used by Byzantines to protect their borderlands was the traditional *Akritai* system. In the Empire of Nicaea, the state distributed tax-exempt lands among soldiers along the eastern border. The people who settled along the border guarded

⁸⁷ Anna Comnena, *The Alexiad* trans. Elizabeth Daves (Ontario: In parentheses publications, 2000) 239.

⁸⁸ Alexander Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire Volume 1* (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1980) 325.

⁸⁹ Rustam Shukurov, *The Byzantine Turks, 1204-1461* (Leiden: Brill, 2016) 92.

⁹⁰ Peter Charanis, “On the Ethnic Composition of Byzantine Asia Minor in the Thirteenth Century” *Studies offered in Honour of St. Kyriakes*, (1953) 145.

⁹¹ *Ibid.* 145.

it against the enemy and in the process also defended their own farms, houses and families. During the lifespan of the Empire of Nicaea, the state retained an interest in the economic and military well-being of the *Akritai* and tried to prevent their impoverishment. The *Akritai* were well-respected in the empire, and remained in a good economic condition, thanks to the tax exemptions they were accorded and due to the lands and salaries they were regularly given.⁹² However, after Michael Palaiologos deposed the lawful heir, John, and seized the throne for himself, the *Akritai* were neglected⁹³ by the new government in Constantinople. Their privileges were canceled, and they were obliged to pay for their lands; that is, the status of their lands was changed to *pronoia*.⁹⁴ For Michael, the city of Constantinople, which was protected by the mother of God, was the eternal capital of the Romans and every kind of sacrifice was worthwhile to protect it. Hence, to strengthen its defense system and bring back its former glory, Michael began to divert much of the economic resources of the empire to the maintenance of Constantinople. It soon became clear that the necessary amount of resources to complete such a large-scale construction project exceeded the reserves of the Byzantine treasury. To extract as much revenue as possible, Michael began to severely deplete the Byzantine tax base. The first target for Michael's financial ambitions was the population of western Anatolia because they had been prosperous during the reign of the Laskarids. Michael struggled to weaken the border guards in Anatolia and break their loyalty to the old Laskarid Dynasty, due in part to the economic privileges to which they had since become accustomed.⁹⁵

In addition, with the threat of Latin invasion from the west, Michael decided to transfer these units to the western frontier. However, these irregular soldiers had been

⁹² Ibid. 146. Charanis writes that the *Akritai* was composed of many ethnic groups including Greeks, Hellenized and perhaps non-Hellenized elements of ancient populations, Armenians, Slavs, and Turks. In my opinion, there must have been an important number of Slavs or Hellenized Slavs people among them due to their forced migrations to Asia Minor since the middle Byzantine period.

⁹³ Jakov Babic, "Some Notes on the Early History of the Serbs" *Serbian Studies* 2 (Spring/Fall 1983) 23. In the 13th century a city called Gordoservon "Γορδόσερβον" was situated in the borderline between the Seljuks and the Byzantines.

⁹⁴ D.A. Korobeinikov "How 'Byzantine' were the early Ottomans? Bithynia in ca. 1290-1450" *The Ottoman World and Ottoman Studies. In memoriam of A.S. Tveritinova (1910-1973)*, eds. I.V. Zaitsev and S.F. Oreshkova (2010) 22.

⁹⁵ Pachymeres writes that because of impoverishment, the strength of the border guards vanished. Some of them were slain by the enemy, others migrated to different parts of the empire, while the remaining guards joined the enemy, the Turks. Georges Pachymeres, *George Pachymeres' in 'Relations Historiques' Adli Eserinde Yer Alan Türklerle ilgili Kayıtların Değerlendirilmesi, Bizans Gözüyle Türkler*, Trans. İlcan Bihter Barlas (İstanbul: İlgi Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık, 2016) 30.

fighting for their own lands and families on the eastern border before and had thus no vested interest in the west. Therefore, some of them did not obey the orders of the center and feeling the effects of increasing financial exploitation, they soon raised the banner of rebellion against the Constantinopolitan rule. In 1262, some of the *Akritai* revolted and proclaimed that they would defend the rights of the Laskarid Dynasty against the usurper Michael and his family. Laiou argues that towards the end of the 13th century very few *Akritai* remained in the borderlines and they did not have their former might, prosperity, and bellicosity anymore.⁹⁶ The Christian auxiliary troops within the Ottoman service called *martolos* (from the Greek ἁμαρτωλός, ‘a sinful one’) in the 1280s may probably have been *Akritai* deserters.⁹⁷

“The central government must share part of the blame for the dissolution of the defensive system of the East: Michael VIII, pursuing his western ambitions and trying to break down the opposition of Asia Minor to his rule, had discontinued the pay of the *Akritai*, the frontier guard, and moved the armed forces of Anatolia westward to fight his other wars. In the later years of the thirteenth century, it was the provincial officials who tried to make money by reducing the salary of the frontier soldiers. The rapid advance of the Turks into Asia Minor indicates that very few of these frontier soldiers were left by the later 1290s.”⁹⁸

At the same time, across the border in the Sultanate of Rum, it soon became clear that, although the Seljuks had succeeded in maintaining their dynasty as the ruling class, the state was relying heavily on a nomadic and tribal structure for military support, even well into the second half of the 12th Century. As has already been indicated above, Suleiman Shah managed to make the Turcomans in the west of Asia Minor recognize his own supreme rule thanks to his dynastic ties with the Seljukid Dynasty. However, although he was able to carve out a kingdom in the region, he had to rely on tribes, which acted as semi-independent entities. The state had no certain authority over the Turcoman tribes, especially on those which had been migrating along the border with the Byzantine Empire. From time to time, the tribesmen in the frontier zone arranged raids in enemy territory without the permission of the supreme ruler, the Seljuk Sultan,

⁹⁶ Angeliki E. Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins: Foreign Policy of Andronicus II, 1282-1328* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972) 116.

⁹⁷ D.A. Korobeinikov “How ‘Byzantine’ were the early Ottomans?

Bithynia in ca. 1290-1450” *The Ottoman World and Ottoman Studies. In memoriam of A.S. Tveritnova (1910-1973)*, eds. I.V. Zaitsev and S.F. Oreshkova (2010) 24.

⁹⁸ Angeliki E. Laiou, *Constantinople and the Latins: Foreign Policy of Andronicus II, 1282-1328* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972) 116.

as they had been accustomed to this kind of warlike, traditional lifestyle.⁹⁹ Nevertheless, as Çamuroğlu states, although the Seljuks were not centralized too much and their state was made up of tribal communities and their own soldiers until the 1170s, after the Battle of Myriokephalon this trend gradually reversed.¹⁰⁰ Following this battle, the Seljuks began to rely increasingly upon Islamic law as the foundation for their government and aimed to constitute a household army which would be composed of soldiers from different nations. Göksu states that, in order to accomplish that goal, the state began hiring a great number of mercenary soldiers.¹⁰¹ The dynasty was able to strengthen its position among the Turcoman tribes by eliminating the Danishmends to the east and defeating the Byzantines, to the west. Following these victories, the Seljuks aimed to get rid of their Turcoman military, as the latter was seen as increasingly unreliable and a threat to the dynasty. Göksu notes that, after the Battle of Myriokephalon the Turcomans accused the Sultan of treachery due to his peace negotiations with the Byzantine emperor while being in an advantageous situation on the battlefield, which would be conducive to the total annihilation of the Byzantine imperial army and the vulnerability of western Anatolia.¹⁰² After the battle, however, some of the Turcoman tribesmen did not obey the peace treaty between the Sultan and the Emperor and harassed the Byzantine army on their return to Constantinople.¹⁰³ In addition, Khoniates notes in his book that the enraged Turcoman leaders left the battlefield without the Sultan's permission¹⁰⁴ due to his negotiations with the Byzantines which allowed them to withdraw from the area.

The change in the military organization created a wave of unrest among the Turcoman tribes that had taken part in many of the Seljuks' military campaigns and had shared in the spoils according to their tribal customs. Especially after the annexation of the Danishmend principality, these tribes reacted against the increasing centralization in Rum Seljuk lands. Regarding this issue, Itzkowitz gives a comparison between the Danishmends and the Seljuks. He suggests that the Seljuks represented the governmental and cultural traditions

⁹⁹ Niketas Khoniates, *Historia*, trans. Fikret Işıltan (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1995) 121. Khoniates writes that, despite negotiations and treaties between Emperor Manuel Komnenos and Sultan Qilij Arslan II, nomadic forays into Byzantine territory could not be prevented, which was one of the leading reasons behind Manuel's campaign against Iconium (Konya).

¹⁰⁰ Reha Çamuroğlu, *Tarih, Heterodoksi ve Babailer* (İstanbul: Der Yayınları, 1990) 165.

¹⁰¹ Erkan Göksu, *Türkiye Selçuklularında Ordu* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 2010) 123.

¹⁰² *Ibid.* 123.

¹⁰³ Niketas Khoniates, *Historia*, trans. Fikret Işıltan (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1995) 132.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.* 132.

of High Islam; whereas the Danishmendids still carried the religious spirit of the ghazi warriors who were closer to the Turcoman notion of military and spiritual structure.¹⁰⁵ “The Danishmendids typified the older ghazi spirit of frontier warfare; they had created an eclectic culture infused with mysticism, heterodoxy, and tribal customs.”¹⁰⁶ As Kaymaz argues, in 1185, fifty years before the Babai rebellion, the Turcomans in the former Danishmend territory were already in a state of regular revolt,¹⁰⁷ which posed a serious threat to Seljuk rule in East Asia Minor.¹⁰⁸ It seems to me though, as it would be exercised on the eve of the Mongol invasion again, the Seljuks tried to move these warlike Turcoman groups to western Anatolia in order to get rid of their rebellious initiatives. “The Danishmendids and their followers, now evicted, fled to western Anatolia, where they again took up the frontier fight against the Byzantine Empire.”¹⁰⁹ Peacock notes that the sons of the last Danishmendid ruler, Yaghibasan, were appointed commanders of the Byzantine border region by the Seljuks in the Byzantine border.¹¹⁰ In sum, the unrest among Anatolian nomadic groups before the mass migrations on the eve of the Mongol invasion paved the way for the revolutionary *Babai* movement later.

¹⁰⁵ Norman Itzkowitz, *Ottoman Empire and Islamic Tradition* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 1972) 8.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.* 8.

¹⁰⁷ Nejat Kaymaz, *Anadolu Selçuklularının İnhitâtında İdare Mekanizmasının Rolü* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 2011) 40. “1185-87 yılları arasında, Gürcistan hudutlarından Kilikya ve Kuzey Suriye içlerine kadar uzanan sahalarda mühim bir dalgalanmaya sebep olan Doğu menşeli Türkmen hareketinin öncüleri meyanında zikrettikleri Rüstem adlı şahıstan başkası olmaması gerekir.”

¹⁰⁸ Cahen writes that the question of whether the Turcoman disorder at that time had a religious aspect is unclear. However, it is clear that Turcoman leader Rustam revolted against the Seljuk authorities and “started to massacre the Kurds. Then, without regard for the inhabitants’ region, they extended their ravages from the borders of Georgia to Cappadocia.”

Claude Cahen, *Pre-Ottoman Turkey: A general survey of the material and spiritual culture and history c.1071-1330* (New York: Taplinger Publishing, 1968) 110.

¹⁰⁹ Norman Itzkowitz, *Ottoman Empire and Islamic Tradition* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 1972) 8.

CHAPTER 2

ANTINOMIAN MOVEMENTS IN TWO REALMS

I argue that the socio-economic transformations occurring in the two realms induced similar consequences later on. In these areas, a certain segment of society became alienated from the central administration over time owing to the reasons mentioned earlier, such as the effects of centralization and economic impoverishment. In each situation, the alienated populations of Anatolia, in both the Byzantine Empire and the Sultanate of Rum, began to gather around religious figures who castigated the center for these structural changes, and for what they perceived as an injustice to the periphery. Because of this neglect, people began to increasingly favor religious figures, dervishes, who promised them an end to their predicament and the creation of a more just society. Particularly, in the Seljuk domains, it seems as though these leaders were able to find a suitable environment in which to preach heterodox doctrines, and in the course of time, these doctrines became especially popular amongst western Anatolian Turcoman tribes. It is likely that these ideas originating from the Seljuk-held part of Anatolia also influenced the Byzantine population of the region.

2.1 Unorthodox Holy Men Among the Turkish Speaking Population: Antinomian Dervishes

2.1.a Two types of the Spiritual Leaders: "Riders Versus those who stand on the Wall"

The economic, military and political developments in the 13th-century Rum Seljuk realm indeed gave rise to increasing unrest among alienated Turcoman groups. Beyond this, however, there was also a spiritual dimension. It is a well-known fact that after the conquest of eastern and central Asia Minor, several different ethnic and religious groups migrated to Anatolia. However, it seems that the main body of immigrants from the Great Seljukid lands were Turcoman nomads who settled in different pastures throughout the

Anatolian Plateau, Iran, Iraq, and Syria. These groups generally lived away from the city centers and created peripheries around them which were conducive to flourishing trade activities. Contrary to nomads, however, migrants to cities had a different way of life, culture. These urban dwellers had come from the flourishing city centers of the Great Seljuk Empire in Persia and were able to communicate in Persian or Arabic,¹¹¹ which facilitated contact with significant Islamic centers in the Middle Eastern region.¹¹² Peacock suggests that Seljuk Anatolia was almost a “Second Iran” at that time due to being under the heavy influence of Persian culture. Immigrant men of learning from Persia had transformed Seljuk cities into Perso-Islamic cultural centers.¹¹³ In Rum Seljuk lands, literacy or literary production was in Arabic or Persian, and until the very end of the 13th century, the use of Turkish in literature was very limited.¹¹⁴ In addition, the coexistence of Turkmen nomads and Persianate city culture also rendered the region part of the broader Persianate world, a state of affairs that only changed with Ottoman shift to a more centralized, early modern imperial format from the 16th century. Instead of the nomadic population, who had Central Asian pre-Islamic traditions due to less exposure to the “high-Islamic” urban culture, Muslim urban dwellers adhered to Shari’a-based Islam and its practices. Their religious understanding and intellectual make-up was heavily influenced by Sufi mystics such as Ibn-i Arabi and Mawlana Jalal-al Din Rumi who were in great harmony with the state order and flourishing city life of 12th and 13th century Seljuk Anatolia.¹¹⁵ For instance, the “Mawlawi” order which was founded by

¹¹¹Köprülü writes that the city inhabitants were mainly Turks who intermingled with various elements, such as Arabs, Persians, Kurds and local converts. However, he suggests that all of these elements were under a strong influence of Arab and Persian culture which distinguished them from the nomads.

Mehmed Fuad Köprülü, *Islam in Anatolia After the Turkish Invasion* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1993) 10.

¹¹² Tezcan reports that there was a popular saying among urban dwellers in the 14th century: “Türk iti şehre gelicek Farsça ürer” which can be translated as “When a Turkish dog comes into the city, it barks in Persian”.

This exactly shows the cultural hegemony of Persian in the Rum Seljuk city centers.

Semih Tezcan, “Divan Şiirinde Türkçe Kaygısı” *BİLİG* 54 (2010) 260.

¹¹³ Andrew Peacock, “Court and Nomadic life in Seljuk Anatolia” *Turko-Mongol Rulers, Cities and City Life* 1 (2013) 191.

¹¹⁴ A.C.S. Peacock and Sara Nur Yıldız, “Introduction Literature, Language and History in Late Medieval Anatolia.”

Istanbuler Texte Und Studien Herausgegeben Vom Orient-Institut Istanbul Band 34 Islamic Literature and Intellectual Life In Fourteenth- And Fifteenth-Century Anatolia (2016) 21.

¹¹⁵ Ocak argues that Rumi was hostile to Haji Bektash Veli and his teachings; however, he claims that this hostility is not a direct result of the conflict between him and the Turcoman spiritual leaders. Rather, he suggests that it resulted from the different lifestyles and the nomads’ rebellious initiatives against the central authorities, which Rumi had a good relationship with.

Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Türk Sufiliğine Bakışlar* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1996) 95.

Rumi¹¹⁶ had always remained within the boundaries of Orthodox Islam.¹¹⁷ Watenpaugh defines these dervishes in the cities as “holy men on the wall” and notes that this type of holy man was not dangerous for the state structure.¹¹⁸ One of the basic characteristics of the Middle Period of Islamic history was that Sufism became the leading form of personal piety. An important development in this process was enshrined in works by al-Ghazali, who basically canonized Sufism.¹¹⁹ According to the *Cambridge History of Iran*, “after years of distrust and even persecution by members of the orthodoxy, found its way in a modified form into Sunni orthodoxy itself.”¹²⁰ Indeed, Ghazali’s ideas were strictly opposed by strict orthodox theologians, especially by scholars from the Maliki *madhab*; however, he succeeded to be accepted as the ‘reviver of the religion’ and introduce his doctrine to the Orthodox Islamic understanding later in the 12th century.¹²¹ On the other hand, it seems that although Ghazali systematized Sufism and criticized esoteric beliefs such as *Batiniyya*, he suggests that “[...] after the Prophet’s death the Muslim community was still in need of divine inspiration [...]”¹²², which demonstrates that Ghazali’s spirituality was also influenced by esoterism.

These Sufi organizations were even supported due to their contributions to public order in the cities. The state and the Sufi orders complemented each other in urban environments. While the state used the holy law and power for the maintenance of order, these Sufis “on

¹¹⁶ Werner also notes that Rumi had a negative attitude towards Turcoman nomads and their religious understanding. Rumi reportedly advised one of his followers to hire Greek workers instead of Turcomans saying that Turcomans were good at destroying, while Greeks were good at building. Ernst Werner, *Büyük Bir Devletin Doğuşu: Osmanlı Feodalizminin Oluşma Süreci* (İstanbul: Alan Yayıncılık, 1986) 85.

¹¹⁷ On this issue, Langer notes that the rulers of the Rum Seljuks were strict adherents to Sunni Islam William L. Langer and Robert P. Blake, “The Rise of the Ottoman Turks and Its Historical Background” *The American Historical Review* 37 (1932) 485.

¹¹⁸ H. Zeitlian Watenpaugh, “Deviant Dervishes: Space, Gender, And the Construction Of Antinomian Piety in Ottoman Aleppo” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (2005) 552.

¹¹⁹ “If we realize that in the years from the death of Ash'ari (935) to that of Ghazali (1111) the entire theological system of Islam found its final systematization; that it was also the period of Nizam al-Mulk's Siyasat- Nama and of extremely interesting Shi'a-Sunni polemics; and finally that in the twelfth century the oldest Sufi tariqahs (fraternities) were organized, some of the first great Muslim theological universities were founded.” *The History of Iran, Vol.5 The Seljuk and Mongol Periods* Ed. J.A. Boyle. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968) 283. ¹²⁰ Ibid. 296.

¹²¹ *The Cambridge History of Iran, Volume 1A, The Central Islamic Lands from Pre-Islamic Times To The First World War.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) 153.

¹²² *The New Cambridge History of Islam The Western Islamic World Eleventh to Eighteenth Centuries* Ed. Maribel Fierro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) 69.

the wall” preached their doctrines based on the “Wahdat-al wujud” going back to Ibn’ Arabi, which were primarily concerned with personal sacrifice and tolerance which also contributed to order. Köprülü also juxtaposes this type of holy men with “rural” spiritual leaders and concludes that urban holy men were never persecuted by the central government of the Rum Seljuks.¹²³ According to Köprülü, these urban holy men, including the Mawlawis, favored the Seljuk Dynasty against the nomadic Turcoman chieftains before the Mongol invasion. More significant, he argues that after the Mongol invasion, at least for a while, the Mawlawis preferred the new rule of the Mongols to that of the Turcoman principalities¹²⁴:

“The Mawlawis, starting with Jalal al-Din al-Rumi, regarded the Turkmen *babas* in a bad light and saw them as rivals. After the Mongol invasion, they did not take a position against their new rulers, and for a while even preferred the government of the Mongols to that of the Karamanids”¹²⁵

Furthermore, as Ay states, the second great wave of migrations from the east to Anatolia as a result of the Mongol conquests of the Middle East especially contributed to the development of two different religious understandings within the Rum Seljuk realm.¹²⁶ Thus, a result of the Mongol menace in the first half of the 13th century, the Turcomans significantly increased in number flocking to the empty pastures of Asia Minor in order to maintain their nomadic economic order. Ay observes that, apart from the Turcomans and the Oghuz, other Turkic groups such as Khwarazmians also came to the Seljuk Sultanate. Furthermore, several heterodox Persian-speaking people migrated under the duress of the Mongol threat.¹²⁷ It appears that although many of these groups had recently changed their religion and accepted Islam, this was only a nominal acceptance. They called themselves Muslim, but their belief system still carried many elements from old shamanic and Central

¹²³ Mehmed Fuad Köprülü, *Islam in Anatolia After the Turkish Invasion* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1993) 18-19.

¹²⁴ Nevertheless, it is quite interesting that, after Mongols lost their influence over Anatolia, as Gök argues, the Mawlawis began improving their relationship with the Karamanids. With decisive Karamanid control over Konya after 1328, the Mawlawis supported the Karamanid court, legitimizing their influence in the region. In my opinion, this attitude of the Mawlawis shows that they were ready to support whoever bring state order to the urban environment.

Bilal Gök, “Babailer İsyanı Ve Karaman Beyliği’nin Kurulmasına Etkisi” *Hikmet Yurdu* 11 (2013) 219.

¹²⁵ Mehmed Fuad Köprülü, *Islam in Anatolia After the Turkish Invasion* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1993) 19.

¹²⁶ Zahide Ay, “13. Yüzyılda Anadolu’nun İslamlaşma Sürecindeki İsmaili Etkiler ve Bu Etkilerdeki Vefâilik Boyutu” *Akademik İncelemeler Dergisi, Journal of Academic Inquiries* 11/2 (2016) 5.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.* 5.

Asian nomadic practices. These groups flock into Anatolia, even with their shamans as their spiritual leaders who had transformed into Islamic heterodox holy men as *babas*, as a consequence of Islamic influence.¹²⁸ Many of these religious leaders were also chieftains of their tribes who had both regulated religious issues and maintained order within the tribe. Besides shamanic traditions, the heterodox groups had also embraced the basic principles of Islamic mysticism after they had encountered heterodox brotherhoods and communities along their way to Anatolia, which means that the religious understanding of these groups was not similar to the principles of Sunni-Orthodox Islam.¹²⁹ On this issue, Ocak states that “...Turks entered Islam mostly through the activities of Sufi babas/atas who closely resembled pre-Islamic Turkish shamans. These erstwhile shamans, whose familiarity with Islam was only superficial, later appeared in front of the nomadic masses in an Islamic garb and managed to Islamize them by proffering a simple Islam.”¹³⁰ The religious leaders – referred to as babas or atas- were not appear to be not as peaceful as those who settled in the city centers, such as Jalal al-Din Rumi. In his article, Watenpaugh defines these heterodox holy men as “lion or tiger riders”, in contrast to the “holy men on the wall.”¹³¹ These types of holy men were especially dangerous for the state order due to their potential to rally the rural masses. In the first half of the 13th century, these kinds of holy men who had a very strong position in the eyes of nomadic Turcomans increased in number.¹³²

¹²⁸ In the book of Dede Qorqut, one can see plenty of themes which had remained from the Central Asian shamanic spirituality. In one story, the character, Deli Dumrul, tries to fight against the angel of death, Azrael. The angel disguises itself in human form and challenges Deli Dumrul. After a clash, Azrael beats the character and attempts to take his life. Nevertheless, in the end, the angel is convinced to take his parents’ life instead of his, thanks to Deli Dumrul’s prayer to God. At the end of every story, a respectable holy figure,

Dede Qorqut, appears and prays to Allah to forgive the sins of the character. He probably does it with his musical instrument reminiscent of the old shamans of the pre-Islamic period. His poems include many elements from nature worship. In this respect, I think he can be a common example of this type of holy man.

“Let me pray, my khan: May your rugged black mountains never fall down. May your large shade tree never be felled. May your clear running streams never dry up [...]”

Dede Korkut, *The Book of Dede Korkut* trans. and ed. Faruk Sümer, Ahmet E. Uysal and Warrend S. Walker, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1972) 89-97.

¹²⁹ Zahide Ay, “13. Yüzyılda Anadolu’nun İslamlaşma Sürecindeki İsmaili

Etkiler ve Bu Etkilerdeki Vefâilik Boyutu” Akademik İncelemeler Dergisi, *Journal of Academic Inquiries* 11/2 (2016) 6.

¹³⁰ Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, (ed.). *Sufism and Sufis in Ottoman Society* (Ankara: Turkish Historical Society, 2005) 70-71.

¹³¹ H. Zeitlian Watenpaugh, “Deviant Dervishes: Space, Gender, And the Construction Of Antinomian Piety in Ottoman Aleppo” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (2005) 552.

¹³² “Etrak tavayifini ki nıların ehlimdür yırlü halk-ıla muhalatı az olur. Bir sehel nesne ki fakih-i sefihten ve müfti-yi meftundan istima kılalar, i’tiraz itmeyüp müsellemler tutarlar. Ve ol söze asla inkar itmezler” Yazıcızade Ali, *Tevarih-i Ali Selçuk* (İstanbul: Çamlıca Basım Yayın, 2009) 650.

They had been connected to several different unorthodox Sufi orders and a significant number of them were ready to raise the banner of rebellion, especially when they perceived a weakness in the state structure. Köprülü says that

“[...] the Turkmen *babas*, who wore strange clothing, made prophecies, and lived as those obsessed with divine love (in a mystical sense, *meczubane*) under a form of Islam reminiscent of the old *bakhsi/kam* (terms used respectively by the Altay Turks and Kirghiz for shaman) inspired the Oghuz clans, in a language they could understand, with mystical but simple and popular versions of Islam that conformed to their old ethnic traditions. These nomadic Turkmen clans were the only vigorous element that could carry out a religious or political movement against the multi-factional armies of the Seljuk emperors, who followed a policy of pursuing the form of Sunnism that was the official creed of the state in Anatolia.”¹³³

In sum, Watenpaugh compares the holy men on both sides as follows: “...the lion-riding saint was associated with itinerant, antisocial, threatening forms of mysticism, while the saint on the wall seemed to index settled, orthodox, less threatening forms of piety.”¹³⁴

2.1.b First Phrase: Strong Center - Weak Periphery

As is stated in the previous chapter, the relationship between the state and the orthodox Sufi orders was relatively peaceful. Although it is difficult to trace this mutual relationship back due to the lack of sources, we know that the Rum Seljuk Sultans assigned rich endowments to Sufi orders in the cities centers during the 12th and 13th centuries.¹³⁵ Köprülü deduces that the construction of the Mas’udi lodge in Amasya in 1150 cannot have been an isolated event.¹³⁶ On the other hand, the type of holy men among the nomadic population, “the tiger riders”, in the absence of an invasion or turmoil within the society, could not find an appropriate environment to increase their effectiveness during the 12th and beginning of the 13th century. Until the Battle of Köseadağ in 1243, the state mechanism was capable enough of coping with any rebellious initiatives, as was

¹³³ Mehmed Fuad Köprülü, *Islam in Anatolia After the Turkish Invasion* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1993) 11.

¹³⁴ H. Zeitlian Watenpaugh, “Deviant Dervishes: Space, Gender, And the Construction of Antinomian Piety in Ottoman Aleppo” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (2005) 52.

¹³⁵ In Eflaki’s *Menakib ’ul Arifin*, it is quite possible the close connection between the urban Sufis with the state organization. Plenty of times, the Rum Seljuk Sultans, and notables send money to the Mawlawis in order to get their blessings. Ahmed Eflaki, *Ariflerin Menkabeleri 1* trans. Tahsin Yazıcı (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1987) 131.

¹³⁶ Mehmed Fuad Köprülü, *Islam in Anatolia After the Turkish Invasion* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1993) 9.

demonstrated by the suppression of the rebellious attempts of Turcoman tribes in the east after the annexation of the Danishmend principality. Papademetriou explains the characteristics of “wild” holy men and the necessary environment for their increasing influence as follows:

- 1) “The holy man existed on the edge of society with the ability to move in and out of civilization.
- 2) The holy man represented a total renunciation of the world so as to be an objective critic and judge.
- 3) The holy man was dedicated, hardworking, and gained the trust of people.
- 4) The holy man was a mediator with God on behalf of the people.
- 5) The holy man had prestige in society being able to influence all levels of society including the rulers.”¹³⁷

It would appear that although the unorthodox dervishes of the rural environment had a chance to strengthen their position in the eyes of the nomadic population of the Rum Seljuks in the first half of the 13th century, this event did not occur as no weakening or decentralization of state structure occurred. Conversely, the *Babai* Rebellion was an act against the centralization of the state which resulted in changing military as well as economic organization and increasing exploitation of the periphery. In addition, the Mongol menace had increased the number of nomadic people within the borders of the Rum Sultanate which enabled the “wild” holy men challenge against state authority. During the reign of Ala al-Din Kayqubad, the centralization of the state reached its peak. As was mentioned in the first chapter, the state began challenging Turcoman tribal leaders after the military successes against the Byzantines and the Danishmendids. Nevertheless, it seems that state officials who had possessed considerable wealth, lands and even private slave armies¹³⁸ were very influential on the eve of Kaykubad’s ascension to the throne,¹³⁹ and they were even able to challenge the Rum Seljuk Sultan in terms of economic power, military strength, and popularity.¹⁴⁰ According to a report preserved by Ibn Bibi, after the

¹³⁷ Dean Papademetriou and Andrew Sopko (Ed.), *The Church and the Library: Studies in Honor of Rev. Dr. George C. Papademetriou* (Boston: Somerset Hall Press, 2007) 48.

¹³⁸In my opinion, these “semi-feudal” landlords were mainly responsible for the economic exploitation of the nomadic people.

¹³⁹ Nejat Kaymaz, *Anadolu Selçuklularının İnhitatında İdare Mekanizmasının Rolü* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 2011) 73.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.* 73.

death of the previous Sultan Kaykaus I (r. 1211-1220), Ibn-I Bibi writes, these notables, the king makers, discussed among themselves choosing the new Rum Seljuk Sultan: “High officials such as Emir Seyfû’ d-din Ayaba, Şerefû’ d-din Mehmed Pervane, Mübarizü’ d-din Cavlı, Mübarizü’ d-din Behramşah, and Zeynü’ d-din Bişare kept the death of the previous Sultan secret[...] Later they began discussing the enthronement of the new Sultan.”¹⁴¹ They offered several candidates, some of whom were not even from the Seljuk dynasty; however, in the end they had to accept reluctantly Kayqubad as the legitimate leader.¹⁴² Nonetheless, over time, Kayqubad was able to weaken the officials’ position and eliminate them from the state administration. Instead of these strong land-holding state officials, he sought to fill the ranks of the bureaucracy with his loyal men and several foreigners such as Mavrozomes Komnenos, the son of Manuel Mavrozomes, who played an important role in west Asia Minor after the sack of Constantinople in 1204 and deserted to the Rum Seljuks after his botched attempt to challenge the increasing power of Theodore Laskaris in 1205.¹⁴³

Kayqubad was not only able to deal with these influential state officials but also kept watch over antinomian religious leaders in the rural areas. As is written in Baba Ilyas’ grandson Elvan Çelebi’s book *Menakıb’ul Kudsiyye*, Kayqubad visited Baba Ilyas from time to time in the region of Çorum, located northeast of the Seljuk capital, Konya.¹⁴⁴ A fairly clear inference from the book is that the Sultan was aware of Baba Ilyas’s religious and social standing and influence, which resulted in an inspection of him and the area where the nomadic population had become a serious threat to the existing state structure. Ilyas was not able to start a rebellion before the death of the capable ruler, Kayqubad, due

¹⁴¹ Ibn-i Bibi, *El-Evami’ü’l-Ala’iyye fi’l-Umuri’l-Ala’iyye*, *Selçukname* ed. Mükrimin Halil Yımanç (İstanbul: Kitabevi, 2015) 70. (The book has not been translated into English yet, the Turkish translation of the original version is as follows: Emir Seyfû’ d-din Ayaba, Şerefû’ d-din Mehmed Pervane, Mübarizü’ d-din Cavlı, Mübarizü’ d-din Behramşah, Zeynü’ d-din Bişare gibi büyük ümera sultanın vefatını herkesten ihfa ettiler... tahta iclas edilecek şehzadenin intihabı hususunda müdavele-i efkarda bulundular.)

¹⁴² Ibid 70.

¹⁴³ Sara Nur Yıldız, “Manuel Komnenos Mavrozomes and His Descendants at the Seljuk Court: The Formation of a Christian Seljuk-Komnenian Elite” *Istanbul Texts and Studies Herausgegeben Vom Orient-Institut Istanbul Band 24*. (2011) 58.

¹⁴⁴ Elvan Çelebi, *Menakıbu’l-Kudsiyye Fi Menasibi’l-Ünsiyye* ed. İsmail Erünsal and A. Yaşar Ocak, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1995) 30.

Kamusı-la ‘Aladin-i sultan
Bir vezir-i aziz ü bir hayvan

Şeyhi görmeğe geldiler halvet
Şeyh bunlara gösterir kudret.

the latter's ability to create a collaborating state mechanism on top of which he stationed himself after his struggle with the state officials. Nevertheless, the Sultan's assassination disrupted the unity and integrity within the state mechanism. According to Koca, it is likely the state officials who had lost their privileged position after the enthronement of Kayqubad and might have convinced one of the Seljuk princes, Kayhusraw, to assassinate the Sultan.¹⁴⁵

It appears that after the death of the Sultan, these high officials broke their oaths to crown prince Qilij Arslan and enthroned the other son, Kaykusraw. In this turbulent period, many important figures from the previous sultan's entourage, such as Kayır Khan were eliminated by the same conspirators. The death of the capable Sultan not only allowed the high officials to strengthen their positions but also paved the way for an antinomian rebellion by the rural holy men.

2.1.c Second Phase: Strengthening Periphery-Weakening Center

Within a few years following the death of Kayqubad, rivalry among the state officials resulted in a turmoil in the Rum Seljuk Sultanate. A court administrator by the name of Sa'd al-Din Köpek managed to kill or exile his previous co-conspirators which were conducive to the growth of his influence over the new Sultan.¹⁴⁶ In the end, Köpek even attempted to take the throne instead of Kayhusraw by fabricating a fictional story aimed to connect his bloodline with the Seljuk Dynasty; however, these attempts failed, and later he was executed at the behest of the sultan.¹⁴⁷ Köpek's bloody methods of eliminating his rivals contributed to the alienation of a part of the Seljuk army, which resulted in the flight of the Khwarezmian troops, who pillaged Seljuk-held cities along their way to southeast Asia Minor.¹⁴⁸

In such a troubled time, the leader of the *Babai* movement, Ilyas, supposed that it would be an advantageous time to launch a large-scale rebellion against the Seljuk

¹⁴⁵ Salim Koca, "An obnoxious murder that left its mark on Anatolian Seljuk

History: The poisoning of Sultan 'Alā al-Dīn Kayqubād I." *Türkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi* (2016) 357.

¹⁴⁶ Köpek managed to eliminate his rivals, including Kamal al-Din Kamyar, Shams al-Din Altunaba, Husam ad-Din Kaymeri and Taj ad-Din Pervane from the important position mostly by executing them. On the top of it, he was also able to kill the remaining sons of Sultan Kayqubad which would pave the way for his ambitious plans for the Rum Seljuk throne.

Erdoğan Merçil, *Selçuklu Devletleri Tarihi* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1995) 469.

¹⁴⁷ Nejat Kaymaz, *Anadolu Selçuklu Sultanlarından II. Gıyaseddin Keyhüsrev ve Devri* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2009) 53.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 42.

authorities. Indeed, the Khwarezmians left as a reaction against the imprisonment of their leader; the most capable state officials had been detained or executed due to rivalry among them, which resulted in the ranks of bureaucracy being filled with second-rate state officials; and most importantly, the legitimate heir to the throne had been executed and instead of him, a relatively less promising and inexperienced prince was enthroned.¹⁴⁹ All these developments led to the weakening of the central authority in the face of the periphery. However, the suppression of the rebellion proved that the center and state mechanism was strong enough to cope with the peripheral rebellious initiatives on the eve of the Mongol invasion.

Baba Ilyas was sent from Khorasan to the Sultanate of Rum by the leader of the unorthodox Wafā'iyya order "Dede Garkın" to preach a version of Shi'a doctrine to Anatolian Turcomans.¹⁵⁰ Nevertheless, regarding the issue Ay suggests that the Wafa'iyya was founded in Iraq, however, its doctrine mainly spread among the Turcomans in Northern Iraq, who had migrated to their pastures in the Anatolian plains in the summer season. During this time, the wandering Turcomans were also influenced by some kind of Shi'a and Ismaili doctrines in the area which caused the Wafa'iyya to turn into an antinomian order and spread among other Turcoman groups.¹⁵¹ Although there is no empirical information about the spread of the Wafa'iyya doctrine save Ay's suggestion, it is well known that towards the end of the 1230s, as Baba Ilyas' religious authority over the Turcomans of the Amasya region increased, he began to refer to himself as Mahdi, the figure who Muslims believe will save them from tyranny and rule the Muslim *umma* with justice and prosperity until the end of the world. A contemporary historian of the time, Bar Hebraus writes that "an old man and an ascetic, whose name was Baba -father in Turkish- became notorious in the country of Amaseia. He called himself Rasul, that is to say, one who is sent (i.e. Apostle), for he said that he was the Apostle of God in truth, and Mahamad was a liar and not the Apostle."¹⁵² After declaring that he was the Mahdi who

¹⁴⁹ Salim Koca, "The Authority Weakness That Appeared in Anatolian Seljuk Administration Following Sultan 'Ala al-Din Kayqubad I's Death and Amir Sa'ad al-Din Köpek's Attempt for Seizing the Seljuk Reign" *Gazi*

Türkiyat Türkoloji Araştırmaları Dergisi 7 (2010) 81.

¹⁵⁰ Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Babailer İsyanı Aleviliğin Tarihsel Altyapısı* (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2000) 76.

¹⁵¹ Zahide Ay, "13. Yüzyılda Anadolu'nun İslamlaşma Sürecindeki İsmaili

Etkiler ve Bu Etkilerdeki Vefailik Boyutu" *Akademik İncelemeler Dergisi, Journal of Academic Inquiries* 11/2 (2016) 11.

¹⁵² Bar Hebraus, *The Chronography* vol 2. trans. Ernest A. Wallis (London: Oxford University Press, 1932) 539.

had come to save the Turcomans from tyranny, he called for a large-scale rebellion against the Seljuk authorities. Whether his aim was to strengthen his position, or he genuinely believed in his mission, it was his representative Isaac who took the last step against the Seljuks, finally launching an uprising in Southeast Anatolia.¹⁵³ The rebellion began in earnest here because it was a remote place, far from the center and because it had been pillaged by the Khwarazmians shortly before; as Bar Hebraeus states, “he sent one of his disciples, whose name was old man Isaac, to the country of Hsen-Mansur, which was the limit of the countries of Beth-Rhomaye, so that he might teach from here, and come; and when this man came he captivated many with the love of his master.”¹⁵⁴ After they raised the banner of rebellion, the *Babais* tried to reach Amasya in order to meet their religious leader and savior, the messiah Baba Ilyas. Along the way, they defeated several Seljuk armies, and Turcomans from various regions began to flock to their ranks. However, Baba Ilyas was captured and subsequently executed by the Seljuks.¹⁵⁵ It was only when they were close to Amasya that the news of their messiah’s execution was delivered to the rebels. We might expect that such news would demoralize them; on the contrary, the Babais believed so deeply in the prophecy of Baba Ilyas that they did not believe the news of his death. His followers asserted different theories about the reports of Baba Ilyas’s demise. Some said that he had gone into hiding or occultation because of the sins of his followers. Others said that he had not died but changed his appearance in order to deceive the Seljuk authorities. His most zealous followers, however, had a different theory: they claimed that he had been called back by the heavens, and he would return to the world again in a short period of time in order to save them from their oppressors. Regarding this issue, Bar Hebraeus states that “they spread the report that he had gone up to bring the angels to their assistance.”¹⁵⁶ Ibn Bibi gives similar information: “Although it was said that their religious leader, the Messiah was executed, they did not believe that and in the name of Baba

¹⁵³ Ocak writes that the most prominent follower of Baba Ilyas, Ishak, might be descended from a notable family of the Byzantines or Christians. What is interesting in Ocak’s argument is that although Ishak galvanized the people in the name of *Baba Rasulallah* who is Baba Ilyas, he might have had a different plan.

Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Babailer İsyanı Aleviliğın Tarihsel Altyapısı* (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2000) 125. Isaac’s plan would be creating a new syncretic religious understanding in the area close to the Christianity and declaring himself as the ruler.

¹⁵⁴ Bar Hebraeus, *The Chronography vol 2*. trans. Ernest A. Wallis (London: Oxford University Press, 1932) 540.

¹⁵⁵ Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Babailer İsyanı Aleviliğın Tarihsel Altyapısı* (İstanbul: Dergah Yayınları, 2000) 132.

¹⁵⁶ Bar Hebraeus, *The Chronography vol 2*. trans. Ernest A. Wallis (London: Oxford University Press, 1932) 540.

Rasulullah they started to plunder the surrounding area.”¹⁵⁷ Despite these high hopes, however, “God’s apostle” did not bring angels from heaven to help the rebels in the Battle of Malya. The Frankish mercenaries in the pay of the Sultanate managed to resist the first wave of zealous Babais thanks in part to their superior armor; the majority of the rebels were subsequently slaughtered. This was not to be the end of the Babais, however. It seems that the remnants of the followers of Baba Ilyas managed to survive by migrating to different places, while in the process transforming their beliefs. The most common destinations for the Babai dervishes were the western regions of Anatolia.¹⁵⁸ After the Battle of Köseadağ, towards the end of the 13th century, Turcoman chieftains began to rule their assigned territories as independent lords, which resulted in the shifting of the power balance in favor of the periphery against the center.¹⁵⁹ The religious understanding of Turcoman chieftains was closer to that of the Babai rebels than that of the Seljuk center because these nomadic leaders preserved older traditions outside of the central Sunnite religious doctrines. Although these leaders accepted Islam as their religion and Mohammad as their prophet, it seems that they had been converted by heterodox dervishes before their arrival in Anatolia. Therefore, the Turcoman tribes in western Anatolia were in theory Islamic, but in practice, they did not strictly rely upon Islamic laws as understood in scholarly Islam.

In conclusion, although the state proved to be able to protect its unity and efficiency for a brief period after the Battle of Köseadağ, towards the end of this century, the Mongol

¹⁵⁷ Ibn-i Bibi, *Selçukname* ed. Mükrimin Halil Yınanç (İstanbul: Kitabevi, 2015) 169. “Sizin mukteda bihiniz olan kimse salb olundu denildi ise de asla fayda vermedi onlar inanmadılar ve Baba Resulullah diyerek etrafi istilaya başladılar.”

¹⁵⁸ It is possible to encounter many names with the title *Baba and Dede* such as Geyikli Baba within the Ottoman principality towards the end of 13th century and at the beginning of the 14th century. Selahaddin Döğüş, “Akhi Dervish Lodges in the Ottoman Principality and Sheikh Ede Balı Argument” *OTAM*, 37, (2015) 81.

¹⁵⁹ As reported by Aşıkpaşazade, Osman conquered a castle named Karacahisar, he refused to ask for the permission of the Seljuk Sultan to assign a judge, *kadi*, there. He asserted that he had conquered the castle with his own forces and, thus there was no need to consult the Sultan. In addition, Osman challenged the privileged position of the Seljuk family by stating that he is from the clan of Oghuz Khan, who was considered a legendary nomadic ruler.

“Ve bu şehir halkı ittifak itdiler kim ‘Cum’a namazın kılalum ve hem bir kadı dahı dileyelüm’ didiler[...] Tursun Fakı eydür: “Hanum! Bu işe sultandan icazet ve izin gerekdür.” dir. ‘Osman Gazi eydür: “Bu şehri ben hûd kendü kılıcum-ıla aldum. Sultanun bunda ne dahlı var kim andan izin alam.” didi[...] Eger ol ben Al-i Selçuk neslindenvenm dirse, ben hûd Gök Alp oğlıyın; dirin[...] Aşıkpaşazade, *Osmanoğulları’nın Tarihi* ed. Kemal Yavuz and Yekta Saraç, (İstanbul: MAS Matbaacılık, 2003) 339.

Ilkhanate began to rule the east of Asia Minor directly by assigning their governors.¹⁶⁰ As a result, the Turcoman chieftains who needed all kind of public figures to legitimize their rule in the *uj*, or border regions, began acting independently towards the end of this century,¹⁶¹ which paved the way for the heterodox dervishes to migrate to the region and increase their influence for a period of time.¹⁶²

2.2 Antinomian Figures on the Byzantine Side: Zealous Monks

2.2.a The Zealot Party Versus the Moderate Group in the Byzantine Clergy

In the Byzantine spiritual environment, it is quite possible to observe a similar division among spiritual leaders. One group called the zealots (ζηλωται) labeled themselves as the pure believers of Christianity who honored the holy men of the Middle East in the late antique period and claimed to carry their legacy. Most likely, the zealots were the supporters of the iconoclastic movements in the 8th and 9th centuries against those who were likely influenced by Aristotelian logic. The zealots stood against state interference in church affairs and wished to see the Patriarchate as a separate entity, independent from the

¹⁶⁰ After the Mamluk victory at Elbistan over the Mongols, Sultan Baybars of the Mamluk Sultanate could not find ready support among the Seljuk authorities. On the contrary, the Seljuk statesmen such as Mu'in al-Din Parwana called the Mongol army back to Anatolia, as he hesitated to his hesitation to co-operate with the Mamluks. As a result, the Mongols began incorporating Anatolia into their own state by assigning a governor and officials there towards the end of the 13th century.

Kürşat Solak, "The Attitude Of The Turkmens in Anatolia Against The Uprisings Of Sulemis And Timurtaş" *Cappadocia Journal Of History And Social Sciences* 3 (2014) 63.

¹⁶¹ As early as 1279, the Turcomans from the Karaman region managed to capture the Seljuk capital for a brief period of time, which can symbolize the victory of the periphery against the center.

"Karaman, Eşref ve Menteşe Türklerinden 10 bin kişiye yakın bir ordu Konya yakınlarına indi [...] Türkler kale kapısını ateşe vererek şehri aldılar ve yağmaladılar. Bu olay 8 Zilhicce 677 (22 Nisan 1279) Perşembe günü oldu." *Tarihi Al-i Selçuk, Anonim Selçukname*, ed. İbrahim Gök (Ankara: Tarcan Matbaacılık, 2014) 50.

¹⁶² These dervishes not only migrated to the Byzantine border (*uj*) but also took refuge among the Turcoman tribes along the southern border of the Rum Seljuk realm with the Armenian kingdom. The Karamanids were one of these Turcoman principalities; Oruç Bey writes that Baba İlyas' son Muhlis Paşa came to the region and granted the kingship to the Karamanids. It is remarkable to see members of the scattered Babai community acting as kingmakers. In a similar fashion, the Babai related sheik, Ebebalı, granted right to rule to the House of Osman. "Ve Muhlis Paşa nefis edüp eyitdi: 'Bunun nesli bu vilayeti duta, padişah ola' dedi. Karaman vilayetine Karaman dedüklerinin aslı budur" Oruç Beğ, *Oruç Beğ Tarihi*, [Osmanlı Tarihi (1288-1502)], ed. Necdet Öztürk, (İstanbul: Bilge Kültür Sanat, 2014) 12.

state. In the Byzantine religious realm, this idea had been nurtured for a long period of time; however, most of the time the state asserted control over the church mechanism and limited the independence of this institution. On this issue, Vasiliev states that “[...] the zealot ideas resembled those of the famous Theodore of Studion, who in the ninth century openly spoke and wrote against imperial interference with church affairs. The zealots would not make any concessions to the imperial power; they wished to submit the Emperor to severe ecclesiastical discipline[...]

¹⁶³ The zealous party was mostly made up of by monks who favored strict moral values and preferred an ascetic lifestyle in their monasteries.

“They could not boast of much education and took no care to have an educated clergy, but they faithfully observed the rules of strict morality and austerity. In the struggle with their opponents they were often supported by the monks, and in the moments of their triumph they opened to the monks the way to power and activity.”¹⁶⁴

Their most important center in the European side of the empire was Mount of Athos and in the Anatolia side, the Mount Olympus (Uludağ).¹⁶⁵ Nevertheless, in the course of time, the majority of Anatolian monks had to migrate to European monasteries, as a result of the Turkic conquests, which weakened the position of the Byzantine zealot party in Anatolia, and contributing to the rise and development of the *hesychasm* movement in the Byzantine spiritual realm in the following years.

It appears quite possible to compare the monks from the zealot party with the antinomian dervishes in the Islamic spiritual environment. As was the case with unorthodox spiritual leaders in the Seljuk realm, the wild holy men, the zealous monks were also ready to rally the population around them against the central authority. However, when one of the monks from among their ranks occupied the patriarchal position,¹⁶⁶ the

¹⁶³ A.A. Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire* (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1980) 660.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid. 660.

¹⁶⁵ A famous monk named Christodoulos in the eleventh century began his career on Mount of Olympos. However, after increasing Turkic incursions he had to flee from the region and find a more suitable place for his monastery. His flight from the region is similar to the migration of the Anatolian monks to the European monasteries of the empire in the 13th century after the Turcoman conquests.

John Thomas, Angela Constantinides Hero, Giles Constable, Robert Allison, *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents: A Complete Translation of the Surviving Founders' "Typika" and Testaments*. (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks, 2000) 564.

¹⁶⁶ When an emperor decided to assign a monk to the patriarchal throne, a basic assignment method was usually followed. The monk enters the church as a deacon first and in a very short period of time (perhaps

majority of them tended to co-operate with the state organization.¹⁶⁷ The zealot monks of Asia Minor were in harmony with the flourishing Laskarid Dynasty in the region; however, after Michael Palaiologos executed the lawful Laskarid heir John and moved the capital to the newly conquered Constantinople, the zealot party-backed border guards, the Akritai, rebelled against Constantinopolitan rule in 1262.

In contrast to the zealots, the churchmen from the moderate party were eager to cooperate with the state, especially under difficult conditions. According to the moderates or the politicians (*πολιτικοί*), to use Vasiliev's terminology,¹⁶⁸ it was proper for the church to seek harmony with the state structure and make sacrifices to protect the empire against its enemies. "They believed that a strong temporal power unrestrained by external interference was essential for the well-being of a nation; therefore, they were ready to make considerable concessions to the imperial power."¹⁶⁹ Similar to the moderate Sufis in the Islamic world, this type of religious leader was usually educated in the cities, which prevented them from being exposed to the antinomian doctrines of the rural holy men. Therefore, unlike the monks from the zealot party who claimed to carry the legacy of the famous ascetics of the late antique period when Christianity and neo-platonist doctrines had intermingled with each other, the moderates preferred a mainstream understanding of the religion which was practiced in the Byzantine urban environment. It should be noted that many of the educated

within one day) climb the ranks up to the patriarchal position. The same procedure was adopted even after the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottomans. "Gennadios Scholarios belonged to the ranks of layman when Sultan Mehmed II, ordered his appointment to the Patriarchal throne. His ordination at a forced pace to the ranks of a deacon, priest, Bishop, and Archbishop/Patriarch without prior resolution by the Church's Holy Synod constitutes a non-canonical procedure practices[...]"

Oliver Jens Schmitt, *Religion und Kultur im Albanischsprachigen Südosteuropa* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2010) 74.

¹⁶⁷ However, it seems that there was disagreement among the Byzantine monks from time to time. Although he was a monk before ascending the patriarchal throne, Patriarch Athanasius strongly opposed the followers of the previous patriarch and the schismatic Arsenios Autorianus. He had written several letters to Emperor Andronikos II to take necessary measures against the schismatics.

"I subject to anathema anyone who believes any dogma or opinion which is not believed and approved by the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. Also, I reject from my soul all the nonsensical and treacherous words of the Xylotes (Zealots-Arsenites) which are directed against the Church and the Empire, and I reject the friendship and fellowship [...]"

Athanasius I, Patriarch of Constantinople, *The Correspondence of Athanasius I, Patriarch of Constantinople: Letters to the Emperor Andronicus II, Members of the Imperial Family, and Officials*, ed. and trans. Alice-Mary Talbot (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks, 1975) 49.

¹⁶⁸ A.A. Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire* (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1980) 659.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid. 660

and high-ranking Byzantine officials also had some connections or positions in the clergy. In the 13th century, for example, Akropolites writes against the patriarch Arsenios who was known as a zealot monk before ascending to the patriarchal throne with the support of the Nicaean Emperors. In Akropolites' work, Arsenios is portrayed as a bigoted and uncultured man which is a general bias against monks from the zealot group: "Arsenios had been put forward for the patriarchal throne by the emperor Theodore. He was a dull man both in speech and in deed. He had no reason adorning him, neither that which comes from an education nor that produced by nature [...]"¹⁷⁰ In another passage, Akropolites informs us that Arsenios had miraculous powers which are also attributed to ascetic holy men, "[...] *Sebastokrator* Tornikes pressed the emperor (Michael Palaiologos) to restore Arsenios to the patriarchal throne, describing some miracles and portents worked by Arsenios [...]"¹⁷¹ In the later period, during the Hesychasm, the famous Byzantine historian Nicephorus Gregoras also strongly criticized the zealot party calling them "Messalians", who were believers in an heresy that emerged in the 4th century;¹⁷² however, after his death a zealous mob entered his house and dragged his body through the streets of Constantinople.¹⁷³

2.2.b First Phase: Strong Center-Weak Periphery

In Byzantium, before the Battle of Manzikert, there was a power struggle between the central administration and the powerful landholders in the provinces which resulted in the victory of the landholders, with the enthronement of a landholder from the Komnenian

¹⁷⁰ George Akropolites, *The History* trans. Ruth Macrides (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) 370.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.* 370.

¹⁷² Messalianism was condemned at the council of Ephesus in 431 as a heresy. The most interesting characteristic of Messalian dogma was an idea of perceiving God's presence by human senses.

Jan Mikołaj Wolski, "Autoproscopae, Bogomils and Messalians in the 14th Century Bulgaria" *Studia Ceranea* 4 (2014) 233.

¹⁷³ Anita Strezova, *Hesychasm and Art: The Appearance of New Iconographic Trends in Byzantine and Slavic Lands in the 14th and 15th Centuries* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 2014) 25.

Family, named Isaac, and later Romanos Diogenes from Cappadocia.¹⁷⁴ Nevertheless, although the defeat at Manzikert induced the growth rebellions for a while in the empire's peripheries,¹⁷⁵ in the period known as the "Komnenian Restoration", these attempts were totally suppressed. As a result of the Komnenian Restoration, in the era of Manuel I (r. 1146-1180), the state was able to reorganize its structure and maintain order throughout the empire. In such a situation, the state mechanism was not only able to deal with rebellions of governors or antinomian leaders but it could also directly intervene in church affairs and control the seat of the Patriarchate. "During the reign of the Byzantine Emperor Manuel I Komnenos, the institutional church was in disarray. Imperial forces continually interrupted ecclesiastical affairs."¹⁷⁶ During this era, the emperor generally chose the patriarchs from among the more peaceful and cooperative moderate party, and he was able to change them at his pleasure and according to his current church policies. The relatively weak patriarchs in this period were unable to do anything against this.¹⁷⁷ On this issue, Papademetriou states that "the state, in essence, had become a large authoritarian intuition that squelched the effectiveness of the smaller institutions that were more accessible to the people. The emperor Manuel I Komnenos deliberately attempted to subordinate the church to the imperial throne through his religious policies."¹⁷⁸ The state also challenged the monastic institutions aiming to seize their wealth and weaken the popularity of the monks in the eyes of the people.

¹⁷⁴ When Emperor Basil II had suppressed Bardas Skleros' revolt in 989, he wanted to consult him about the rebellious governors and landholders in the peripheral areas. Skleros gave the emperor the following advice: "Cut down,' he said, 'the governors who become overproud. Let no generals on campaign have too many resources. Exhaust them with unjust exactions, to keep them busied with their own affairs. Admit no woman to the imperial councils. Be accessible to no one. Share with few your most intimate plans."

Michael Psellus, *Chronographia*, trans E.R.A Sewter, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953) 9.

¹⁷⁵ Immediately after the battle of Manzikert, Norman mercenary General Roussel de Bailleul tried to carve off a kingdom for himself in central Anatolia. Another mercenary soldier, Tzachas, managed to set up a small principality around Smyrna for a short period of time. Lastly, during Alexios I's reign, the governors of both Cyprus and Trebizond raised the banner of rebellion for independence.

Anna Comnena, *The Alexiad* trans. Elizabeth Daves (Ontario: In parentheses publications, 2000)150-154.

¹⁷⁶ Dean Papademetriou and Andrew Sopko (Eds.), *The Church and the Library: Studies in Honor of Rev. Dr. George C. Papademetriou* (Boston: Somerset Hall Press, 2007) 39.

¹⁷⁷ After he asserted his certain control over the patriarchate, Manuel started to act more independently on church affairs. He began his plans for a union with the Latins and the Armenians. He even radically changed the formula of abjuration from Islam, "Previously, a Muslim converting to Christianity was called upon to renounce and anathematize the God of Muhammad. The emperor thought that this demand deterred potential converts to Christianity. He, therefore, had a tome drawn up, removing this stipulation.

Ibid. 264.

¹⁷⁸) Dean Papademetriou and Andrew Sopko (Eds.), *The Church and the Library: Studies in Honor of Rev. Dr. George C. Papademetriou* (Boston: Somerset Hall Press, 2007)39.

“Monasticism was seen as having become corrupted by great amounts of wealth and lay patronage while local concerns and issues disregarded.”¹⁷⁹ Although several Byzantine aristocrats had succeeded in launching some monastic foundations at the time, Manuel aimed to prevent this increase in the number of monasteries in the empire.¹⁸⁰ “[...] he (Manuel) concerned himself chiefly with the material interests of the empire’s church and bishoprics, opposing the opening of new monastic centers in order to gain greater control of those that existed.”¹⁸¹ The dire position of monks in this period confirms that they were not seen as required in a relative imperial stability.¹⁸² Since the state was strong and able to watch over possible rebellious subjects of the empire, antinomian religious leaders were limited in their activities. Also, in this relatively stable period, there were no disastrous catastrophes, economic crises, or foreign invasions. In the 1160s, from the shores of the Danube to the gates of Cilicia and even Antioch, the region was under the sway of the Eastern Roman Empire, which was not only able to protect the border but also to expand it on both sides. Nevertheless, the tide turned with the disastrous events after Manuel’s defeat at Myriokephalon. Although Manuel managed to protect the empire’s frontiers after the battle until his death,¹⁸³ after 1180 the defense lines in the frontiers began to crumble.¹⁸⁴ In the turbulent era of the Angelos Dynasty, rebellions on the empire’s periphery initiatives began gaining the upper hand over the center. Just as after the Battle of Manzikert, the

¹⁷⁹ Ibid. 39.

¹⁸⁰ “True, the list of twelfth-century Byzantine saints can be extended to include a number of figures [...], but for one reason or another these do not deserve attention as holy men of central importance to Byzantine society at the time”

Paul Magdalino, “Byzantine Holy Man in the Twelfth Century” in *Tradition and Transformation in Medieval Byzantium* (Norfolk: Variorum, 1991) VII. Chapter 53.

¹⁸¹ Dean Papademetriou and Andrew Sopko (Eds.), *The Church and the Library: Studies in Honor of Rev. Dr. George C. Papademetriou* (Boston: Somerset Hall Press, 2007) 39.

¹⁸² Ibid. 39.

¹⁸³ After the battle, Manuel did not raze the fort at Dorylaion (Eskişehir) as he promised to do according to the peace treaty with the Sultan. This gave way to continuous Turkish raids into the Byzantine territory, however, a large force which the Sultan sent to ravage the west of Asia Minor was utterly crushed by the Byzantines. Also, Manuel “returned successfully to the field on at least two further occasions.”

Paul Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos 1143-1180* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 99.

¹⁸⁴ Several cities along the Turkish borders such as Sozopolis and Cotyaeum fell into Turkish hands in 1182.

One year before, in 1181, the Hungarians “had seized back Dalmatia, much of Croatia and the districts of Sirmium”

John Julius Norwich, *Byzantium, The Decline and Fall* (London: Penguin Books, 1996) 144.

governors and notables in Trebizond¹⁸⁵ and Cyprus began acting independently and at this time became successful.¹⁸⁶ In 1185, the Bulgarians revolted and gained their independence, annihilating an imperial army which came to suppress their revolt.¹⁸⁷ Eventually, competition between the members of the Angelos Dynasty led to a devastating civil war, which culminated in the sack and capture of Constantinople in 1204.

2.2.c Second Phase: Strengthening Periphery-Weakening Center

In 12th and 13th century Byzantium, there was an incongruity between the ruling class in Constantinople and notables in the important peripheral centers. As was the case with Trebizond, Cyprus, and Bulgaria, the periphery was ready for a process of disintegration after a period of weakness in the center. People who lived in peripheral areas understood that the riches and resources of their homeland were drained through harsh taxes for the maintenance of the great capital city, Constantinople. Even in regions located in the immediate surroundings of the center, voices of a negative opinion of the ruling class in Constantinople were increasingly audible. According to Niketas Honiates, the inhabitants of Selimbria were not eager to let him and his retinue in the city after the fall of Constantinople, mocking Niketas' and Constantinopolitans' desperate situation at the hands of the Latins.¹⁸⁸ Furthermore, being known as Constantinopolitan notables, Constantine, and later his brother Theodoros, could not declare themselves as emperors in the first years of their career in Anatolia until 1208.¹⁸⁹ Even the inhabitants of Nicaea

¹⁸⁵ Shortly before the Sack of Constantinople, the members of the Komnenian family, Alexios and David managed to capture Trebizond with the help of Georgian Queen Tamar. Jakob Philipp Fallmayer, *Trabzon İmparatorluğu'nun Tarihi* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 2011) 46.

¹⁸⁶ Manuel's older brother Isaac was ruling Cyprus independently on the eve of the Third Crusade which resulted in the loss of his rule over the island and his imprisonment. John Julius Norwich, *Byzantium, The Decline and Fall* (London: Penguin Books, 1996) 160.

¹⁸⁸ Niketas Khoniates, *Niketas Khoniates'in Historia'sı (1195-1206) / İstanbul'un Haçlılar Tarafından Zaptı ve Yağmalanması* trans. Işın Demirkent, (İstanbul: Dünya Yayıncılık, 2004) 172.

¹⁸⁹ John Julius Norwich, *Byzantium, The Decline and Fall* (London: Penguin Books, 1996) 185.

rejected their request to enter to the city in 1204. In such a situation, it seems that the Laskarids aimed to reconcile with local notables as well as religious public figures in the region in order to gain recognition from locals as their new rulers. In the western Anatolian region, especially around the Olympus Mountain (Uludağ or Keşiş Dağı), where the Laskarid Dynasty would flourish, monks were very active, and it seems that some of them also pursued their own ascetic traditions apart from the main orthodox way of worshipping in cultural centers such as Thessaloniki and Constantinople.¹⁹⁰ Since the region was the home of ascetic and antinomian monks, the state pursued a symbiotic relationship with them, which contributed to the growth of the monks' influence over the state and the society. In this light, although several scholars, such as Magdalino, claim that “the events of 1204 did not, apparently, cause the Byzantines of the diaspora to turn to the holy men for comfort; instead they got on with the job of restoring their empire”¹⁹¹, such an explanation seems insufficient to explain the spiritual reasons for the emergence of the Arsenite Schism later. In my opinion, if people had not begun relying on holy men, especially towards the end of the Laskarid rule in western Anatolia, the Arsenites would not have found ready support among the western Anatolian Byzantine population. In this light, as Vasiliev puts it, after the exile of the Arsenites from the capital to the west of Asia Minor during the reign of Michael VIII Palaiologos, the local population welcomed them with open arms

“the provinces were now open to their propaganda, and the provincial population, in huge crowds, thronged to listen to their inflammatory speeches condemning the Emperor and exalting the deposed patriarch by its feverish animation and unscrupulousness remind us of the stormiest times of the heresy struggles in the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries.”¹⁹²

As Papademetriou notes, these such ascetics were men of tempestuous periods: “[...] the holy man was especially necessary when community identity began to fail. He refocused the community through important and familiar rituals that re-instilled in the people a sense

¹⁹⁰ The monk who called Symeon the New Theologian was exiled in Bithynia from Constantinople in 1009 because of preaching his antinomian doctrines and practicing such kind of worship. In the region, he found a monastery of St. Marina. His proto-Hesychast doctrines were preserved in his writings by one of his followers and it is quite possible that his teachings spread in the region after his death.

Bernard Hamilton, Janet Hamilton, “St. Symeon the New Theologian and Western Dissident Movements” *Studia Ceranea* 2, (2012) 140.

¹⁹¹ Paul Magdalino, “Byzantine Holy Man in the Twelfth Century” in *Tradition and Transformation in Medieval Byzantium* (Norfolk: Variorum, 1991) VII. Chapter 66.

¹⁹² Alexander Vasiliev, *History of the Byzantine Empire Vol.2* (İstanbul: Alfa Publications, 2016) 662.

of identity that was in danger of being lost.”¹⁹³ On the other hand, Talbot states that very few hagiographic texts survived from the era of the Laskarids, and thus it appears difficult to trace the circumstances of holy men back to this period of time.¹⁹⁴ What we do know is mostly about the dynastic holy men of the Laskarids such as John Vatatzes derives from several hagiographic texts which were written down almost 100 years later in the Palaiologian period, which gives us an idea that there must have been more holy men whose *vitae* disappeared or were not written down.¹⁹⁵

In sum, after the elimination of the center, being in a similar position to that of Trebizond and Epirus, Nicaea struggled to become a new center to replace Constantinople. In order to achieve their goals, the Laskarids tended to cooperate with the local holy men in the region, which even resulted in the sanctification of several Laskarid dynastic figures. Towards the end of the Laskarid rule, the figure of the holy man and the emperor were so intertwined that John III Vatatzes was venerated as an emperor-holy man. After his death, similar to famous holy figures in the area, his shrine was treated by locals as a healing place. According to Polemis, inhabitants of Magnesia on Syplos in western Anatolia believed that the shrine of Vatatzes had miraculous healing powers: “Vatatzes had received the grace of healing... His Vita provides additional evidence of Vatatzes’ powers of healing the sick who flocked to his grave.”¹⁹⁶

¹⁹³ Dean Papademetriou and Andrew Sopko (Eds.), *The Church and the Library: Studies in Honor of Rev. Dr. George C. Papademetriou* (Boston: Somerset Hall Press, 2007) 47.

¹⁹⁴ Alice-Mary Talbot, “Hagiography in the Late Byzantium (1204-1453) in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography: Volume I: Periods and Places* ed. Stephanos Efthymiadis (New York: Ashgate Publishing, 2011) 174.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.* 174.

¹⁹⁶ D. I. Polemis, “Remains of an Acoluthia for the Emperor John Ducas Batatzes.” *Harvard Ukrainian Studies, Vol. 7, Okeanos: Essays presented to Ihor Ševčenko on his Sixtieth Birthday by his Colleagues and Students* (1983): 546.

CHAPTER 3

WEST ASIA MINOR AS THE SHELTER OF ANTINOMIANISM:

INTERCONFESSIONAL AND CROSS-CULTURAL INTERACTION AT THE END OF THE 13TH AND THE BEGINNING OF THE 14TH CENTURY

As has already been indicated in the second chapter, the disintegration of the Rum Seljuk realm allowed the nomadic chieftains in the marches to act more independently. In the course of time, the center had weakened so much that it was able to enforce its rule only in the immediate surroundings of the capital city, Konya.¹⁹⁷ Although it was retaken shortly afterward, the capital was sacked¹⁹⁸ by subjects from peripheral territories of the Sultanate.¹⁹⁹ Under such conditions, nomadic chieftains in the marches sought to establish their authority over the people who had recognized the supreme leadership of the Sultan in Konya.²⁰⁰ Indeed, these holy men had spiritual influence over the Turcoman masses who

¹⁹⁷“The Turks became arrogant who raised the banner of rebellion in everywhere. Their temerity and power had increased every passing day. They became very powerful due to their penchant for cunning. Their improvements resulted in the invasions. The army commanders could not manage to retake the provinces where they captured.”

“Türkler küstahlaşıp istila elini uzattılar. Cüretleri ve baskıları günden güne artış gösterdi. Hile düzeniyle ve desise yoluyla git gide güç kazandılar. İstilaları ve gelişmeleri kat kat artmaya arttı. Yönetimleri altına aldıkları vilayetleri, ordu komutanları (ser-leşker) geri almayı başaramadı.

Kerimüddin Mahmud-i Aksarayı, *Müsameretü'l-Ahbar* çev. Mürsel Öztürk (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2000) 87.

¹⁹⁸ Ibn-i Bibi reports that Cimri's co-operator, Mehmet I of Karaman was pronounced as grand vizier. In fact, he possessed the real power behind Cimri.

“Vezaret Mehmet Beğ'in üzerinde mukarrer kılındı”

Ibn-i Bibi, *El-Evamirü'l-Ala'iyye fi'l-Umuri'l-Ala'iyye, Selçukname* ed. Mükrimin Halil Yınanç (İstanbul: Kitabevi, 2015) 246.

¹⁹⁹ A pretender named Cimri claimed to be a son of Kaykhusraw II and took refuge with the Turcomans who succeeded in sacking Konya in 1277.

Ibid. 96.

²⁰⁰For all of the subjects of the Sultanate, the supreme ruler was the Sultan himself. The Turcoman chieftains managed to exert their authority over Seljuk subjects only after the elimination of the Sultanate in Konya. When Mehmet I of Karaman captured Konya, he did not dare to declare himself the Sultan; rather, he used the pretender, Cimri whom he enthroned as Sultan.

Ibid. 97.

still possessed some of the central Asian spiritual traditions. This paved the way for antinomian spiritual groups to migrate the marches where they would be welcomed by these nascent tribal organizations. Towards the end of the 13th century, both antinomian dervishes and Turcoman chieftains were in a clash with the center in Konya, which induced a symbiotic relationship between these two sides. In my opinion, antinomian dervishes also had an influence over the Greek-speaking native population and the spiritual figures in the west of Asia Minor which contributed to the late Hesychast after their migration to the European side of the empire.

3.1 Religio-politics among the general populace

It is quite possible to say that in the 13th century western Asia Minor, antinomian religious figures from both sides were very active, and interfaith interaction was widespread. Nevertheless, one should bear in mind the interaction between Christians and Muslims in western and central Anatolia did not start with antinomian dervish migration to the region. At the same time, Sufi mystics in the cities interacted with Christian communities and their leaders in their surroundings. In Eflaki's book on the life of the founder of the *Mawlawi* dervish brotherhood Mawlana Jalal al-Din, one encounters many anecdotes on the conversion of non-Muslims with Sufis in cities and their interaction.²⁰¹

However, as Ocak states, moderate Sufis in the cities were not able to support the expansionist policies of the Turcoman principalities along the borderline with the Byzantine Empire.²⁰² He argues that the Sufi orders such as Khalwati, Rifa'i, and Qadiriyya did not participate in the missionary activities in the newly acquired territories; rather, they were focused on the Muslim population in the cities.²⁰³ It seems that the followers of these Sufi orders also did not join the conquest of the western Anatolian Byzantine territory. Ocak states that if they had been active in this process of conquest, the

²⁰¹ As Eflaki states, when Mawlana died, the local Christians participated in his funeral and read their holy book during the burial. They also stated that Mawlana was also their spiritual leader.

Ahmed Eflaki, *Ariflerin Menkıbeleri 2* trans. Tahsin Yazıcı (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1987) 47.

²⁰² Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, "Bazi Menakibnamelere Göre Xiii-Xv. Yüzyillardaki

Ihtidallarda Heterodoks Şeyh Ve Dervişlerin Rolü" *The Journal of Ottoman Studies* 2 (1981) 36.

²⁰³ *Ibid.* 36.

Ottoman ghazis and the Janissary order would have preferred one of such orders instead of the antinomian *Bektashiyya* order.²⁰⁴

In this light, it would appear that the western Anatolian local Christian population had mostly interacted with antinomian dervishes who had migrated to the region after the failed rebellious attempt. In early Ottoman sources, one encounters many antinomian figures, and while some of them had participated in the conquest of western Anatolia,²⁰⁵ others preferred seclusion from society.²⁰⁶ Aşıkpaşazade writes that a certain dervish named Abdal Musa came to *Bythinia* in order to fight against the infidels.²⁰⁷ However, it seems that afterward he gave up fighting and founded his own lodge in the village of Tekke in Antalya.²⁰⁸ Many others stayed in western Anatolia and began missionary activities. These spiritual figures exerted such an influence on the local population that according to Nicol, “Whole Christian villages were converted, sometimes as a result of miracles performed by a dervish.”²⁰⁹ Steinherr argues that after their unsuccessful rebellion, several *Babai* followers took refuge in cities that lied in the frontier zone, such as Göynük, where according to the *Tahrir* records of 1487, several names including dede, derviş, and resul are traceable and two of the nine

²⁰⁴ Ibid. 36.

²⁰⁵ “İçlerinde bir derviş vardır. Geyicüklerle musahabet ider, hiç geyicüklerden biri andan kaçmazlar, hayli mübarek kişidür[...] Derviş eytdi ‘Baba İlyas müridiyem ve Seyyid Elvan tarikatındayım’[...]” *Mehmed Neşri, Kitab-ı Cihan-Nüma (Ankara, Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1995) 169.*

²⁰⁶ Although Ibn-i Kemal suggests that Hacı Bektash Veli came to the Ottoman domain in order to bless the house of Osman, considering the death of Hacı Bektash around the 1270s, this seems impossible. However, the following passages still show us the influence of the antinomian dervishes in the early Ottoman society.

“Bu mihman-hane-yi dervişler için
Yapuban komışam pes bunda niçün

Seni sevdi gönül bizümle yar ol
Oturup karşımızda ihtiyar ol

Görür Osman dervişde keramet
Yüz urup kıldı ana dürlü ‘izzet

[...]

Geydürür Hacı Bekdaş ana bir tac
Didi olsun cihan hükmüne muhtaç.”

Ibn-i Kemal, *Selatin-Name* ed. Necdet Öztürk (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınevi, 2001) 40-41

²⁰⁷ “Geldi Abdal Musi bunun üzerinde bir
niçe gün sakın aldı. Orhan devri geldi, gazalar itdi.”

Aşıkpaşazade, *Osmanoğulları'nın Tarihi* ed. Kemal Yavuz and Yekta Saraç, (İstanbul: MAS Matbaacılık, 2003) 571.

²⁰⁸ Abdurrahman Güzel, *Abdal Musa Velayetnamesi* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1999) 20.

²⁰⁹ Donald M. Nicol, *Church and Society in the Last Centuries of Byzantium* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) 90.

districts of the city were called *Baba’i Mahallesi*.²¹⁰ Korobeinikov also focuses on the rural area of Göynük city, concluding that several village names such as *Bektaşlar* are related to antinomian dervish migration to the region.²¹¹ Nevertheless, these dervishes must have migrated to the region some-time after 1333 because Ibn Battuta writes that at that time there was no Muslim in the city of Göynük save the Muslim governor of the city.²¹² It seems that the population around this city was converted to Islam afterwards, about which Aşıkpaşazade says that shortly after the Ottoman conquests, the local Greek-speaking people accepted Islam willingly.²¹³ On the issue, Lowry states that conversion had some certain advantages such as lower taxation for the local community. Greek aristocrats also joined the Ottomans and converted to Islam in order to benefit from the nascent political situation in the region:

“It is as if the behavior of *Köse* Mihal and others, several hundred years prior to the Treaty of Augsburg, exemplified the classic justification for the maxim ‘*cuius regio eius religio*,’ as over time an increasing number of local Christians came to realize that sharing the religion of the ruler brought (or allowed one to retain) certain advantages. The predatory joint venture they were already engaged in made their decisions to adopt their new ruler’s faith easier.”²¹⁴

Focusing on *Tahrir* records from 1487 Korobeinikov points out that there were certain *çiftlik* holders in the rural areas of the city whose ancestors’ names were Greek, but they had Islamic or Turkic names: “A *çiftlik* (land parcel, that formed a unit for taxation) is called Vasil-oğlu (‘a son of Basil’), but the cadaster specifies that its masters were the commander

²¹⁰ Irene Beldiceanu - Steinherr, “ Babai Cemaatlerinin Sığınma Şehri. Göynük”, trans. Bayram Ürekli, *Ata Dergisi*, VII, (1997) 290.

²¹¹ D.A. Korobeinikov “How ‘Byzantine’ were the early Ottomans? Bithynia in ca. 1290-1450” *The Ottoman World and Ottoman Studies*. In memoriam of A.S. Tveritinova (1910-1973)], eds. I.V. Zaitsev and S.F. Oreshkova (2010) 29.

²¹² [...] This man went with us to Kainuk, which is a small town inhabited by infidel Greeks under the government of the Muslims. There is only one household of Muslims in the place, and they are the governors of the Greeks [...] Ibn Battuta Al-Tanci, *Travels of Ibn Battuta, A.D. 1325-1354: Volume II*, trans. H.A.R. Gibb (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2010) 456.

²¹³ Ve Göynük’i dahı hemçünan ve Mudurnı’yı dahı hemçünan virdiler. Bu Süleyman Paşa dahı ol kadar adl ü dad itdi kim cemi’i ol vilayetün halkı eydürlerdi kim: ‘N’olaydı evvelden de bunlar bize hakim olalardı’ dirler-idi. Ve niçe köyler bu Türk halkını gördiler, Müsülman oldılar [...] Aşıkpaşazade, *Osmanoğulları’nın Tarihi* ed. Kemal Yavuz and Yekta Saraç, (İstanbul: MAS Matbaacılık, 2003) 369.

²¹⁴ Heath W. Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State* (Albany, State University of New York Press, 2003) 67.

of the irregular troops (yayabaşı) Seydi-bey and his brother Türkmen”²¹⁵ He also adds that there was a village called *Falanoz* which “is obviously Greek; but the cadaster records no trace of the Greek population there.”²¹⁶ It seems that Islamization in this environment started shortly after the conquests, and it was decisive; therefore, no Christian population in the area survived until the late 15th century. Against Islamization in Byzantine Bythina, the Patriarchate could do very little. Only seven years after the Ottoman conquests, Patriarch Kalekas had to write two letters to the inhabitants in and around the city of Nicaea, which had been one of the most important centers of Christianity. In these letters, he orders them, to denounce their new faith, Islam, which demonstrates that conversion was very rapid and widespread, “Those who choose the true faith in God and desist from the wickedness of the Muslims, in which they have fallen, (the church) will again attribute to the flock of Christians, heal and maintain them; they will not find an obstacle to the salvation of their souls because of their, as I said, earlier error.”²¹⁷

In such an environment, intercultural and interconfessional relationships between Christians or “newly converted Christians” and Muslims were very common. Divitçioğlu argues that the western Anatolian Greek-speaking population welcomed antinomian Muslim dervishes almost without distinguishing them from the zealot Christian monks.²¹⁸ On this issue, Krstic also suggests that the dervishes in the region preached a heavily

²¹⁵D.A. Korobeinikov “How ‘Byzantine’ were the early Ottomans?

Bithynia in ca. 1290-1450” *The Ottoman World and Ottoman Studies. In memoriam of A.S. Tveritina (1910-1973)*, eds. I.V. Zaitsev and S.F. Oreshkova (2010) 29.

²¹⁶ On the issue of the location of the place called “Falanoz”, I figured out that Aşıkpaşazade mentions it in a different form, “Gül-Falanoz”. He writes that the region was under control of a Greek lord whose son married with the daughter of Mihalgazi. However, in a later period, the region should have fallen into the hands of the Ottomans due to nomadic forays into the region: “Göynük vilayetine vardılar, Tarakçı Yenicesi vilayetin dahı urdılar. Geldiler Gül-Falanoz’a [Göl-Flanoz’a] çıkdılar. Yine Hirmenkaya’dan Karacahisar’a çıkdılar. Mihal önlerince kılğuz-ıdı. Amma esir almadılar, mal ganimet çok aldılar. Anun-ıçun esir almadılar, halkı kendülere tabi’ itmek-içün.” Since my grandparents are from the region, I had many opportunities to visit the place. Today, the name “Falanoz” is changed to “Falanz”. It is the name of a meadow which surrounded by villages such as Narzanlar, Kilciler, and Gerişler.

Aşıkpaşazade, *Osmanoğulları’nın Tarihi* ed. Kemal Yavuz and Yekta Saraç, (İstanbul: MAS Matbaacılık, 2003) 333.

²¹⁷ PRK II: *Das Register des Patriarchats von Konstantinopel. 2. Teil: Edition und Übersetzung der Urkunden aus den Jahren 1337–1350*, ed. HUNGER, Herbert; KRESTEN, Otto; KISLINGER, Ewald; CUPANE, Carolina, et. al. (Vienna: Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae XIX/2, 1995). 161. Quoted in J. Preiser-Kapeller, “Webs of conversion. An analysis of social networks of converts across Islamic-Christian borders in Anatolia, South-eastern Europe, and the Black Sea from the 13th to the 15th cent.” Workshop Cross-cultural life-worlds, Institute for Byzantine Studies, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Bamberg 2012. 6.

²¹⁸Sencer Divitçioğlu, *Osmanlı Beyliğinin Kuruluşu* (İstanbul: Eren Yayıncılık, 1996) 53.

Christianized Islam which had facilitated the conversion of the Greek-speaking population in West Asia Minor.²¹⁹ Further, it seems that some of the Greek-speaking population in the region kept their Christian faith, creating a crypto-Christian community, while officially converting to Islam: “Undoubtedly the Patriarch adopted this tactic of actually encouraging Crypto- Christianity in what was to be a futile effort to reverse the growing course of conversions which were decimating his Bythinian flock [...]”²²⁰ Vryonis also states that although these people were converted to Islam, they had preserved their Christian traditions for a while, existing as semi-Christian and semi-Muslim.

“There were large numbers, however, particularly in Asia Minor, who, long deprived of the support of their Christian institutions, were gradually and peacefully persuaded by the dervishes that there was little difference between Islam and Christianity. These converted to Islam, though in many respects they remained semi-Christian through the retention of much from their Christian cult.”²²¹

Both, the Greek-speaking and the Turkish speaking population were influenced by each other in terms of religion as well as culture; and as a result of widespread intermarriages, a mixed Muslim ethnicity must have appeared in the region.²²² “[... T] he Ottoman expansion into Bithynia had been accompanied by the widespread union between Muslim men and local Christian women which had resulted in the appearance of the *mixobarbaroi*, (the offspring of such mixed marriages).”²²³ On the issue, Gibbons suggests in an otherwise racially charged passage that nomads and converted Christians created a new hybrid cultural identity in the region: “The appeal of Islam was greater than that of

²¹⁹ Tijana Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam: Narratives of Religious Change in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (California: Stanford University Press, 2011) 17.

²²⁰ Heath W. Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State* (Albany, State University of New York Press, 2003) 67.

²²¹ Speros Vryonis, *Byzantina kai Metabyzantina 2, Studies on Byzantium, Seljuks, and Ottomans* (Malibu: Undena Publications, 1981) 282.

²²² Heath W. Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State* (Albany, State University of New York Press, 2003) 94.

Christianity. Pagan and Christian alike, then, in their conversion to a new, fresh faith joined in the formation of a new race.”²²⁴ Shukurov states that bilingualism in the region was so common that “it was noticed by an outside observer who knew neither Turkish nor Greek.”²²⁵ He also adds that besides the newly converted Christians, there were others who denounced Islam and reconverted to Christianity.²²⁶ The number of converts must have been quite large, “since the church under pressure significantly reduced the punishment for such lost souls, facilitating their return to the Christian community.”²²⁷ Since these Christians were exposed to antinomian dervish preaching and accepted Islam through their way of understanding, this situation influenced the appearance of *Hesychasm* in the later period. As I will try to elaborate on the possible interaction in the paragraphs below, interfaith relations in west Asia Minor resulted in an increase of ascetic, messianic and apocalyptic practices in the Byzantine spiritual environment. Just as the nomadic Turcomans expected that their religious leader Ilyas would come back from the heavens, the local Byzantines believed that the Nicaean emperor John Vatatzes had not died but turned into marble. Referred to as Marmaromenos, ‘marble king,’ he became a figure of local folk legend: for example, the inhabitants of a city in western Anatolia called Magnesia on Sipylos believed that he came back to life to save them from the besieging Turks around the year 1300.²²⁸ It should be noted that until the end of the 13th century, such messianic legends existed for no emperor save Constantine I, who was the founder of Constantinople and the first Christian emperor. That such a comparatively minor figure as Vatatzes spawned similar legends is a puzzle which deserves further attention. In my opinion, it is possible that there was an increase in messianic and apocalyptic expectations amongst the western Anatolian Byzantine population during this period, and although these people already had such traditions due to the deep-rooted monasticism in the region and ascetic traditions of the region, the presence and interaction with heterodox dervishes in the second half of the 13th century made these expectations considerably more explicit.

²²⁴ Herbert Adam Gibbons, *The Foundation of the Ottoman Empire* (New York: The Century Co., 1916) 50.

²²⁵ Rustam Shukurov, *The Byzantine Turks, 1204-1461* (Leiden: Brill, 2016) 361.

²²⁶ *Ibid.* 368.

²²⁷ *Ibid.* 369.

²²⁸ Apostolos Spanos, “Imperial Sanctity in Byzantium: The case of the emperor John III Vatatzes” Research Gate 10.13140/RG.2.1.3635.6248. (April 2016) 7. (access: 12/3/2017)

3.2 Interaction between “Holy Men”

Aside from the common folk, religious figures in western Anatolia, particularly zealous Christian monks and antinomian Muslim dervishes, had a deep influence on each other. Ocak argues that interaction between these heterodox spiritual figures is much easier compared to the orthodox religious scholars and clergy, which facilitated the conversion of Christian monks in the region.²²⁹ He also adds that dervishes’ role in conversion is comparable to heterodox churchmen’s converting communities from Paganism to Christian faith in the Late Antique period.²³⁰ On the other hand, apart from antinomian holy figures, there was an interaction between the monks and Sufis in cities. In Eflaki’s *Manaqibu’l Arifin* several local Christian religious figures appear to be Mawlana’s followers who were also converted to Islam.²³¹ Nevertheless, one should bear in mind that, as I mentioned in the earlier paragraphs, these moderate Sufis in the cities had not intensely participated in missionary activities in west Asia Minor; that is, probably they were not in affiliation with the zealous Christian monks.

Papademetriou focuses on the same issue and asks, “if the monk and the dervish inhabited the same world at the same time, what happened when their paths crossed?”²³² He gives some examples from the life of Haji Bektash Veli,²³³ concluding that there was an intensive exchange of ideas between these “holy men” in the western Anatolia.²³⁴ Numerous monks embraced beliefs similar to those of the heterodox dervishes of Anatolia, and some even became Muslim. Others did not convert to Islam but were nevertheless heavily influenced by the heterodox belief system of the dervishes. In western Anatolia, the most

²²⁹ Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, “Bazi Menakibnamelere Göre Xiii-Xv. Yüzyillardaki İhtidallarda Heterodoks Şeyh Ve Dervişlerin Rolü” *The Journal of Ottoman Studies* 2 (1981) 41.

²³⁰ Ibid. 42.

²³¹ Ahmed Eflaki, *Ariflerin Menkıbeleri I* trans. Tahsin Yazıcı (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1987) 551

²³² Dean Papademetriou and Andrew Sopko (Eds.), *The Church and the Library: Studies in Honor of Rev. Dr. George C. Papademetriou* (Boston: Somerset Hall Press, 2007) 65.

²³³ “Derviş, ‘nolaydı bunun gibi kimesne Müslüman olaydı?’, dedi. Bunun bu nev’e zamirinden endişe geçirdiği keşiş’e ma’lum oldu. İtti: ‘-Ey derviş ben dahi Müslüman olurdum.’”

“The dervish wished that ‘what would happen if such a person is a Muslim’. Then, the monk had a presentment, learned the dervish’s wish and said, ‘o dervish I would be a Muslim.’” Afterward, the dervish learns that the monk had already been a Muslim.

Firdevsi-i Rumi, *Manzum Hacı Bektaş Veli Vilayetnamesi*, ed. Bedri Noyan (Ankara: Doğu Matbaacılık, 1986) 81.

²³⁴ Ibid. 66.

important center of the monks was Mount Olympus in Bithynia, where many monastic foundations had flourished for centuries. However, when antinomian dervishes migrated to the region, they also settled in this area and practiced their own ascetic way of worship. Kaplanoğlu especially focuses on the influence of the Christian monks on the Islamic antinomian dervishes, concluding that these dervishes had inherited the monastic traditions in Mount Olympus, which reshaped their ascetic practices.²³⁵ On the other hand, Barkan states that many dervishes in western Anatolia and later in the Balkans were recorded as the “son of Abdullah” and *kul* or son of a *kul* in the *zawiyah* records, which demonstrates that converts were very common in dervish organizations.²³⁶ He also argues that this type of dervish, the converts, were the most zealous missionaries in the newly conquered territories. I argue for the strong possibility that there were no strict borders between Christianity and Islam for these antinomian holy figures from either side. In 1354, the famous defender of Hesychast ascetism in the Byzantine ecclesiastical world, George Palamas, was imprisoned by Turkish pirates on his voyage to Constantinople. Afterwards, he was detained in Bursa and then in Nicaea by the Ottomans for approximately a year. The Ottoman Sultan, Orhan, recognizing Palamas’ high status among the Byzantine population in the region, permitted him to act independently within the city walls and participate in religious arguments with the Muslim scholars. In one such argument with a Muslim religious figure, Palamas concluded the heated debate with the following words,

“Had we been able to agree in debate, we might as well have been of one faith. Let the understanding understand the purport of my words. And one of them answered, ‘There will be a time when we shall all agree.’ I acquiesced and wished that that time might come quicker. I did so, because I remembered the Apostle’s saying that every knee shall bow down before the name of Jesus Christ and every tongue shall confess the Lord Jesus Christ to the glory of God the Father, and this will come to pass in the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”²³⁷

In a later period, Doukas writes that he encountered a monk in the Aegean Islands who came from Crete and deeply believed in the messianic propaganda of the followers of the

²³⁵ Raif Kaplanoğlu, *Osmanlı Devleti’nin Kuruluşu* (İstanbul: Avrasya Etnografya Vakfı Yayınları, 2000)

²³⁶ Ömer Lütfi Barkan, *Kolonizatör Türk Dervişleri ve Süleymaniye Camii ve İmareti Muhasebesi (1585-1586)* (Ankara: Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Yayınları, 2013) 78.

²³⁷ G. Georgiades Arnakis, “Gregory Palamas among the Turks and Documents of His Captivity as Historical Sources” *Speculum*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (1951) 110.

antinomian Sheikh Bedreddin.²³⁸ According to Doukas, the monk did not believe Bedreddin's most influential follower Börklüce Mustafa's death, thinking that he had gone into hiding and would come back in the near future.²³⁹ In many similar cases antinomian dervishes were in search of a religious syncretism with the Christian monks as well as population. This kind of religious syncretism even allowed the newly converted Christians to eat pork and drink wine which would facilitate their conversion process²⁴⁰, and in some cases several antinomian dervishes also had not abstained from drinking wine.²⁴¹

In this period, antinomian Christian and Muslim holy men were so intermingled that there were many common saints and places of pilgrimage. Balivet notes that Anatolian village people venerated holy men, be they either Muslim or Christian and the population had sought assistance from them in difficult situations.²⁴² The population visited the holy man of their religion first in order to seek a remedy to their problems in their daily life and if this was not effective, they would often ask holy figures of the other religion for advice.²⁴³ At times of famine, in several cases, the Christian and Muslim religious leaders gathered their community and prayed for rain together.²⁴⁴ As has been stated above, people in such multi-ethnic societies respected the holy figures from both sides; religious boundaries having a different meaning at the time. We know of many cases when Muslims had their children baptized the monks in order to protect them from misfortune as or dark magic.²⁴⁵ In such a close connection between Christianity and Islam, both dervishes and monks were aware of each other's religious doctrines, which in my opinion might have resulted in a kind of exchange between them. Kafadar states that, the famous Turkic holy figure, Sarı Saltuk knew Christianity so well²⁴⁶ that he was able to "recite the Bible with

²³⁸ Michael Doukas, *Tarih: Anadolu ve Rumeli 1326-1462* (İstanbul: Arkeoloji ve Sanat Yayınları, 2008) 99.

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²⁴⁰ Rıza Yıldırım, "Dervishes in Early Ottoman Society and Politics: A Study Of Velayetnames As A Source For History" (Masters Thesis, Bilkent University, 2001) 123.

²⁴¹ Haşim Şahin, "Selçuklu Ve Erken Osmanlı Döneminde Vefâiyye Tarikatı" *Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Velî Araştırma Dergisi* 70 (2014) 48.

²⁴² Michel Balivet, "The Long-lived Relations Between Christians and Moslems in Central Anatolia, Dervishes, Papadhes, and Country Folk" *Byzantinische Forschungen* 16 (1991) 320.

²⁴³ Ibid. 322.

²⁴⁴ F.W. Hasluck, *Sultanlar Zamanında Hristiyanlık ve İslam* (İstanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları, 2012) 59.

²⁴⁵ Speros Vryonis, *Byzantina kai Metabyzantina* 2, *Studies on Byzantium, Seljuks, and Ottomans* (Malibu: Undena Publications, 1981) 174.

²⁴⁶ Although hagiographic stories are not very reliable in general, I think they can still be an important source reflexive of the social and cultural context.

such an emotion that The Orthodox congregation dissolves into tears.”²⁴⁷ On the issue Vryonis notes that conversion from Islam to Christianity is also observable among religious figures. A certain monk Meletius who is known to live in the first half of the 14th century was “[...] formerly an Ottoman *ulema* who had deserted the court in Bursa, had come to Constantinople and converted to Christianity.”²⁴⁸ Shukurov also claims that in the first half of the 13th century, there was an increasing penchant for mystical and ascetic practices in the Byzantine religious environment.²⁴⁹ As per his quotes from Gregoras, there were Sufi dancers at the Byzantine imperial court at that time who performed prayers in an antinomian fashion; they would “sing and dance in a ring in the palace halls, shouting down [the liturgy] by singing intricate dances, with unintelligible yells they cried out odes and hymns to Muhammad thus attracting more listeners than the reading of the Holy Gospel.”²⁵⁰ These Sufis were also invited to the “emperors table” with their musical instruments to play their songs; they would “lead a ‘simple and celibate’ life, but indulge themselves in gluttony and consumption of undiluted wine.”²⁵¹

In such a syncretic environment, it would be difficult to believe that no exchange between these two spiritualities took place. Although it is quite difficult to trace this due to lack of a large number of primary sources, we are still able to reach some conclusions. Şahin notes that in the late Palaiologian period, several Ottoman dervishes were well-informed about Byzantine messianic and apocalyptic traditions. As an example, he adduces a literate member of the *Bayramiyye* order, Ahmed Bican,²⁵² who had an Islamic mystic background due to his position in the order; however, he was also aware of Byzantine apocalyptic and messianic traditions.²⁵³ In his book of *Dürr-i Mekkûn*, it seems that

²⁴⁷ Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds, The Construction of the Ottoman State* (California: University of California Press, 1996) 71.

²⁴⁸ Speros Vryonis, *Byzantina kai Metabyzantina 2, Studies on Byzantium, Seljuks, and Ottomans* (Malibu: Undena Publications, 1981) 144.

²⁴⁹ Rustam Shukurov, *The Byzantine Turks, 1204-1461* (Leiden: Brill, 2016) 375.

²⁵⁰ Gregoras, 1:554.14–19. Quoted in Rustam Shukurov, *The Byzantine Turks, 1204-1461* (Leiden: Brill, 2016) 375.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.* 375.

²⁵² “Bî-cân means ‘lifeless’ in Ottoman Turkish; he was given this nickname for his pallid appearance, a result of years of ritual fasting.”

Kaya Şahin, “Constantinople and the End Time: The Ottoman Conquest as a Portent of the Last Hour” *Journal of Early Modern History* 14 (2010) 329.

²⁵³ *Ibid.* 342.

Ahmed knows the Byzantine solar calendar and comments on the expected end time in the Byzantine world. He notes that several Byzantine scholars determined the end time as 1492, which is the 7000th lunar year in the Byzantine calendar, however, due to using the lunar calendar, Ahmed determines the end time as the 7200th year in the Muslim calendar.²⁵⁴ Furthermore, a general belief about blond people in Byzantine apocalypticism can be seen in Bican's work, too. The Byzantines believed that after the fall of Constantinople, blond people from the north will save the city and expel the Muslims as far as Syria. Şahin argues that this case was reflected in Bican's work too, but this time the Ottoman Sultan had a messianic role and was portrayed as a champion of Islam against the blond people.²⁵⁵ More interestingly, Bican uses several allegories such as the ox, which can be commonly encountered in Byzantine apocalyptic texts.²⁵⁶ These examples demonstrate us to that Ottoman *ulema* class members and Sufi mystics were in a close contact with the Christian religious leaders and were well-versed about Byzantine religious practices as well as apocalyptic traditions. Beside this, Krstic argues that many converts were Christian religious figures, such as monks and priests which in my opinion contributed to such interfaith interactions.²⁵⁷ Nicol also writes that in the west of Asia

²⁵⁴ Yazıcıoğlu Ahmed Bican, *Dürr-i Meknun* trans. Necdet Sakaoğlu (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1999) 121.

²⁵⁵ “[...] Rum’a hücum edeler. İstanbul’u alalar. İslam askerini Haleb’e dek kovalar. Haleb üzerinde azim ceng ola. Andan İslam askeri Haleb’den göçeler. Şam’dan yana Şam ile Haleb ortasında konalar. Beni Asfer onların ardından gele.” “They would attack Rum region. They would take Constantinople. They would expel the warriors of Islam as far as Aleppo. There would be a great battle in Haleb. Then, the warriors of Islam would withdraw from Aleppo. They would deploy between Aleppo and Damascus. Closely to Damascus. The blond people would follow them.” Yazıcıoğlu Ahmed Bican, *Dürr-i Meknun* trans. Necdet Sakaoğlu (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1999) 124.

²⁵⁶ In Bican's book, an ox is mentioned in the creation of the world which has 40.000 horns, mouths, eyes and ears. The universe was positioned on the ox and under the feet's of an angel. However, later they were removed later by a giant fish, might be due to a flood. “Ferişte taş üzerinedir. Taş öküz üzerinedir. İnsanın ilmi bunda tamam fenadır; hala ve meladır.” “Hak te’ala bir ulu balık yaratdı. Adı Yelhü-yi sani dir. Hak te’ala ol balığın altında denizi yaratdı. Pes ol balık taş altına girdi. Bu cümle ferişteyi taşı ve öküzü götürdü” Yazıcıoğlu Ahmed Bican, *Dürr-i Meknun* trans. Necdet Sakaoğlu (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1999) 37-38.

A similar metaphor can be seen in the Byzantine apocalyptic texts. Alexander states that in the prophecy of Erythraean Sibly about the end of the world, a star will rise from the east bearing the image of four living creatures (lion, ox, man, eagle). “Then a horrible beast will come from the east. Its feet will be six hundred and sixty-three, it will speak against the Lamb, blaspheme against (Christ's news) Testament and increase the waters of the dragon” Paul J. Alexander, *The Byzantine Apocalyptic Tradition* (California: University of California Press, 1985) 214.

²⁵⁷ Tijana Krstic, *Contested Conversions to Islam: Narratives of Religious Change in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (California: Stanford University Press, 2011) 71.

Minor, local Turkish princes enslaved many such Christian spiritual figures and I think at least some of them must have converted to Islam.²⁵⁸ He goes on to say that “the Ottoman court appears to have believed in the practicability of some kind of religious syncretism.”²⁵⁹ According to him, Palamas’ writings during his captivity in Ottoman lands are quite illuminative about how much the Ottoman *ulema* class knew about Christianity.²⁶⁰ Lowry states that during Bayezid I’s reign, a preacher in a mosque was able to preach that Jesus was a holy figure not lower in rank than the prophet Muhammad:

“[...] a preacher in Bayezid’s reign who, from a mosque in the capital city of Bursa, even went so far as to declare from the pulpit that Jesus was in no way a lesser prophet than Mohammed. Then, when an Arab member of the *ulema* pointed out to the congregation the fallacy of this view from the perspective of the Islamic science of exegesis, the congregants rejected his intervention in favor of their own preacher’s position. It seems clear, from the manner in which this seeming heretical declaration was wholeheartedly accepted by the populace of Bursa, that they were at a stage where a doctrine preaching that Islam and Christianity were basically one religion was acceptable.”²⁶¹

Moreover, Vryonis states that some Turkic shamanic and Muslim practices and beliefs may well have been adopted by Christian communities and spiritual leaders in Anatolia. Among others, Vryonis cites the ritual of animal sacrifice led by Christian priests. He states that although animal sacrifice as a religious practice was a heritage from late Antiquity, there was a serious disagreement in the clergy whether it can be accepted within the boundaries of Christianity.²⁶² Nevertheless, the interaction between these two sides made this practice more widespread among Christian communities in Anatolia who began

²⁵⁸ Nicol writes about a man by the name of Matthew who was assigned as the bishop of Ephesus after the Turkish capture of the city. “He found that his flock consisted mainly of prisoners and slaves, many of them priests and monks [...]”

Donald M. Nicol, *Church and Society in the Last Centuries of Byzantium* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) 70.

²⁵⁹ G. Georgiades Arnakis, “Gregory Palamas among the Turks and Documents of His Captivity as Historical Sources” *Speculum*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (1951) 108.

²⁶⁰ Some questions and comments from the Ottoman side during the conversation between Gregory Palamas as follows:

‘How do you call Christ a God since he was a and was born as a man?’, ‘Circumcision,’ they said, ‘was ordered by God from the beginning and Christ himself was circumcised; why are not?’, ‘Why do you have images in your churches though it is written: ‘Thou shalt not make any likeness whatsoever of all the things which are in heaven above, the earth below and in the sea?’”

Ibid. 108.

²⁶¹ Heath W. Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State* (Albany, State University of New York Press, 2003) 137.

²⁶² Speros Vryonis, *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century* (California: University of California Press, 1971) 490.

to “frequently refer to these sacrifices by the Turkish term kurban.”²⁶³ According to Vryonis, another religious practice shared by the two sides was the belief in tree spirits. As stated in the previous chapter, shamanic belief systems of Central Asian nomads included many elements about nature and spirits. Greeks also revered cypress trees and had beliefs associated with the holiness of such trees, which might be a result of a spiritual encounter between these sides.²⁶⁴

3.3 Impact of the Interfaith Interaction on the Hesychasm

On the issue of cross-cultural interaction between holy figures, Langer states that “in fact, it is difficult to draw any fundamental distinction between the Turkish dervishes on the one hand and on the other the numerous zealots, mendicant monks, pilgrims, wanderers, and madmen who swarmed through Byzantine territory in the time of the first Paleologi.”²⁶⁵ In my opinion, an important example of the exchange between these holy men can be detected in the issue of the Jesus Prayer, which has a close resemblance with Dhikr prayer in the Islamic world. Nicol defines the prayer practice in the eastern Christian tradition as follows: “in the solitude of his cell the monk must sit with chin resting on his breast and eyes fixed upon his navel. Then, while carefully regulating his breathing, he must say over the Jesus-Prayer.”²⁶⁶ As was mentioned before, this tradition can be traced to one of the early Christian groups, the Messalians, who practiced the Jesus prayer in a very long form without stopping.²⁶⁷ In a later period, in the 7th century, several Orthodox monks on Mount Sinai, including John Climacus, were aware of the Jesus prayer and its practice.²⁶⁸ It seems that Symeon the New Theologian somehow also acquired this practice and carried it to several monasteries in west Anatolia where he was exiled for his contradicting church of Constantinople.²⁶⁹ Nevertheless, the Hesychast practices including the Jesus prayer were not widespread in the Byzantine spiritual realm in the 13th and the beginning of the 14th century. In addition, monks’ encounters with dervishes in western

²⁶³ Ibid. 490

²⁶⁴ Ibid. 492.

²⁶⁵ William L. Langer and Robert P. Blake, “The Rise of the Ottoman Turks and Its Historical Background” *The American Historical Review* 37 (1932) 499.

²⁶⁶ Donald M. Nicol, *Church and Society in the Last Centuries of Byzantium* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) 38.

²⁶⁷ Kallistos Ware, *The Inner Kingdom* (New York: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2001) 79.

²⁶⁸ Theodore Sabo, Dan Lioy & Rikus Fick, “A Hesychasm before Hesychasm”, *Journal of Early Christian History*, 4:1, 88-96, (2014) 89.

²⁶⁹ Ibid. 89.

Anatolia resulted in the transformation of such Hesychast practices and created a turmoil in the Byzantine spiritual environment. Palamas' new Hesychast practices separated Byzantine ascetic monks; a number of them, such as monk and theologian Akindynos criticized Palamas and his followers for "abandoning the long-established tradition of the fathers and developing an innovative approach to defining the practices of the Hesychast."²⁷⁰ Hesychast doctrines induced a lot of ecclesiastical problems and the supporters of Hesychasm were imprisoned and persecuted for a period of time.²⁷¹ On the issue, Baldick states that Islamic Sufi thought was heavily influenced by early Christianity after the conquests in the Middle East; however, later on, Sufis preserved and developed these ascetic practices and reflected them back to Eastern Christianity: "[...] the original Christian remembrance of God, was taken over by Sufism, was now influenced by it. Here again, we have details of bodily postures and breath control, which must have come from India, and are part of a later development, attested from the late thirteenth century onwards."²⁷² If this new kind of asceticism had been widespread in the Byzantine Empire, the Hesychasm would not have divided the Byzantine clergy in the mid-1300s. Conversely, it was part of the struggle of Anatolian monks to establish their new ascetic practices coming from interactions with Muslims in Anatolia within the boundaries of the Orthodoxy.

As Lawrance states, however, many of the Hesychastic practices were brought to Mount Athos by Saint Gregory of Sinai.²⁷³ He adds that during the Patriarchate of Athanasius, there was no reference to experiencing "uncreated energy," which means contemplation of God as light; thus, this topic must have appeared sometime after 1310.²⁷⁴ Furthermore, several monks who migrated from western Anatolia to western monasteries followed practices similar to those of Turkish dervishes, such as acting mad, cutting their

²⁷⁰ Anita Strezova, *Hesychasm and Art: The Appearance of New Iconographic Trends in Byzantine and Slavic Lands in the 14th and 15th Centuries* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 2014) 23.

²⁷¹ One of the main questions in Hesychasm is related to the union with the god which is a clear resemblance with the Wahdat al-Wujud. "[...] how human beings can participate in the divine, as well as the proper understanding of the concept of light and the problem of the eschatological vision of God."

Ibid. 26.

²⁷² Julian Baldick, *Mystical Islam, An introduction to Sufism* (New York: Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2000) 89.

²⁷³ John Lawrance Boojamra, *Church reform in the late Byzantine empire* (Brookline, Mass.: Hellenic College Press, 1980) 161.

²⁷⁴ Ibid. 161.

hairs and eyebrows, and withdrawing from daily life.²⁷⁵ In addition, it is well-attested that the originator of these practices, Gregory, was imprisoned by Turks in his youth and spent some time with Turkish dervishes and heterodox holy men. In this light, although several scholars, such as Geanakoplos, claim that hesychastic practices appeared first in Sinai and then spread to Mount Athos via monks from Crete,²⁷⁶ such an explanation seems insufficient to explain close similarities and synchronicities between the Hesychast and antinomian dervish practices and beliefs. While it is likely that ascetic belief systems and practices did, in fact, develop in the environment of the Monastery of Sinai and had been developing there since Late Antiquity, the question of why this kind of asceticism, Hesychasm, spread among monks of Athos after the 1310s, and most importantly why such a controversy did not erupt before this time, remains unanswered. It seems plausible that Hesychasm must have included some elements borrowed from, or otherwise influenced by practices of antinomian dervishes. Ibn Battuta reports that when he visited Emperor Andronikos in Constantinople, he encountered plenty of monks and ascetics there an important number of whom probably had migrated from west Asia Minor: “[...] churches where there were monks, numbering a hundred man or more or less in each church. Most of the inhabitants of the city are monks, devotees, and priests, and its churches are numerous beyond computation.”²⁷⁷ On a different occasion, Doukas reports that during the Byzantine civil war of 1341-1347, Andronikos besieged the city of Constantinople, and during siege he had tried to humiliate the insurgents in the city by calling them Anatolians and half-Turks, *mixobarbaroi*.²⁷⁸ In my opinion, the time when the Hesychasm emerged is crucial to understand its nature; one must ask why such a controversy did not appear in the Byzantine religious context before the loss of Asia Minor. In 1336, Barlaam of Calabria came to Mount Athos and saw many monks practice a method of unity with God. After witnessing these monks, he issued a number of treatises mocking the absurdity of such practices, and it was these treatises that instigated

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.* 163.

²⁷⁶ Deno John Geanakoplos, *Byzantium: Church, Society, and Civilization Seen Through Contemporary Eyes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984) 183

²⁷⁷ Ibn Battuta al-Tanci, *Travels of Ibn Battuta, A.D. 1325-1354 : Volume II*, H.A.R. Gibb (trans.) (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2010) 512.

²⁷⁸ Michael Doukas, *Tarih: Anadolu ve Rumeli 1326-1462* (İstanbul: Arkeoloji ve Sanat Yayınları, 2008) 29.

controversy among churchmen. While Barlaam and his supporters argued that it is impossible to unite with God by praying for long periods in silence and seeing the uncreated divine light, others continued to adhere to their ascetic religious practices.

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I have aimed to demonstrate the connection between antinomian movements in Eastern Christianity and Islam regarding the Byzantine Hesychasm Movement and Islamic Sufi ascetic beliefs. To this end, two rebellious movements in 13th century Anatolia, those of the Arsenites in the Byzantine realm and the Babais in the Rum Seljuk polity have been examined. With the removal of Byzantine authority over west Asia Minor due to reasons such as neglect of the region by the new Palaiologos Dynasty, severe economic exploitation, and increasing nomadic presence, local society had to readapt itself to a nomadic-Muslim rule, religion and culture.

In the first chapter, I examined the reasons for these rebellions. The native people of West Asia Minor were alienated from the rule of Constantinople already in the 12th century. However, the foundation of Laskarid rule in the region strengthened the bond between the society and the ruling dynasty. Local society rallied behind the Laskarids such an extent that they rebelled against the usurpation of Michael Palaiologos. On the opposite side of the border, in the Seljuk realm, it was economic exploitation and structural changes in the Seljuk military system that incited nomads to rebel. In addition, the increasing number of Turcomans due to the Mongol menace from the east threatened the existing land tenure system and economic structure. Therefore, the Turcoman population began gathering around certain religious figures who had castigated the center for the structural changes and promised to create a more just society. All these developments paved the way for certain Turcoman groups to raise the banner of rebellion against Seljuk rule in Anatolia. However, these Turcomans, who believed in messianic and apocalyptic doctrines preached by ascetic figures were heavily defeated by the center. As a result of this crushing defeat, the followers of Baba Ilyas had to take refuge in the border principalities in order to survive Seljuk persecution.

In the second chapter, I focused on the development of antinomian movements and the relationship between the center and the periphery. I explained the division between religious figures in the Byzantine Empire and in the Rum Seljuk realm. I argue that

antinomian groups on both sides were on a tight leash until the appearance of a catastrophic event, which was 1204 sack of Constantinople by the crusaders for the Byzantines and the Battle of Kösedag for the Seljuks. The sack of Constantinople paved the way for the surfacing of antinomian figures in the west Anatolia who increased their influence on politics. Since the Laskarids organized their state in a region where ascetics had been numerous, they tended to co-operate with and co-opt them in order to legitimize their rule over the region. However, the Byzantine recapture of Constantinople turned the tide. Michael Palaiologos usurped the throne by blinding the lawful heir John before imprisoning him in a castle in Bithynia. Furthermore, he removed his capital to Constantinople, which created a wave of unrest among western Anatolian locals.

As stated above, after the Battle of Kösedag, antinomian figures moved to the border principalities. In these areas they were welcomed by the Turcoman chieftains due to their influence over the masses, which would contribute to the tribal leaders' legitimacy in the eyes of their nomadic subjects. In the process of time, the followers of these antinomian leaders took part in the conquest of Byzantine cities in West Asia Minor, and some of them preferred to perform their ascetic doctrines in the countryside such as the old monastery center, Mount Olympus.

In the third chapter, I elaborated on the interconfessional interactions between Christians and Muslims in West Asia Minor and the possible influence of these interactions on the later Hesychasm in the Byzantine Empire. I argue that local Greek speakers in the region were mostly converted by these antinomian figures. However, I also suggest that although some of the local population were converted, there were others who were also exposed to such antinomian Muslim doctrines but remained Christian and migrated to the European half of the empire. Moreover, there were also laymen and clergy who converted to Islam but later denounced and reconverted to Christianity. These interactions created an increasing penchant for mysticism in the Byzantine Empire in later years. In my opinion, the time for the emergence of such a controversy is very important to understand its reasons. Mysticism was very widespread in the Byzantine religious context since the late antique period; however, the encounter with Muslim dervishes resulted in the transformation of these ascetic practices in Seljuk territories, as is evidenced by the Anti-Hesychast party, which

criticized the Hesychasts for abandoning the long-established mystical tradition and transforming it.

Yet there are several questions that remain unanswered with respect to the effect of Sufi thought on Hesychasm belief. These include Hesychast influence on other Orthodox communities across Eastern Europe and the continuation of the spiritual division between the moderates and zealots in later periods. It seems that Hesychast practices later spread to other Orthodox communities in Serbia and Russia, a question that needs to be further investigated. Second, we need more research on the interaction between Sufi and Hesychast mystics until the very end of the Byzantine Empire, though this would be challenging, due to the limited number of primary sources from the era and sparse research on the issue. Third, one of the most important questions is the continuation of the division between the moderates and zealots in the Byzantine Empire. Thanks to existing research on antinomian spiritual figures in the Ottoman Empire, we are now able to state that such holy figures came into conflict with the state structure during confessionalization in the Ottoman period in the 16th century and were absorbed by state-sponsored religious orders such as the *Bektashiyya*. However, on the Byzantine side, continuity between the separate religious groups still poses a great mystery for scholars.

This project can be continued in a number of directions in the future, each of which should treat the subject with a complex methodology that includes political, social, cultural and religious history on the one hand, and incorporates all the available sources, on the other hand. One of the key questions could be worded as follows: After the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottomans, what groups were active in church affairs and what was the fate of the ascetic movements in the spiritual environment of the Patriarchate of Constantinople?

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