

CONVERSION AND GHAZI-KING IDENTITY IN THE 1436-7
ANONYMOUS *BATTALNAME*

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CONVERSION AND GHAZI-KING IDENTITY IN THE 1436-7
ANONYMOUS *BATTALNAME*

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis focuses on the Anonymous Battalname of 1436-7, examining its components in regard to religious conversion narratives as well as Ghazi and Ghazi-King concepts. The first chapter aims to analyze different conversion narratives within the manuscript, especially conversion narratives involving coercive, voluntary and institutional elements. By doing so, it attempts to examine the possible values within the narrative by their relations to the syncretic nature of the early Ottoman period. The second chapter aims to place the Anonymous Battalname of 1436-7 to its context by examining the ghazi and ghazi-king identities of the narrative. To achieve it, this chapter analyzes different levels of authority and different levels of contextual layers, namely: the Caliph, the ruler and the champion.

ÖZET

1436-7 ANONİM BATTALNAMESİNDE DİN DEĞİŞTİRME VE GAZİ-KRAL KİMLİĞİ

MERT ŞEN

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Anahtar Kelimeler: Battalname, Din Değişirme, Gaza, Gazi-Kral, Sosyal Tarih

Bu tezin ana odak noktasını 1436-7 Anonim Battalnamesi oluşturmaktadır. Tezin ana amacı ise, Anonim Battalname'nin içeriğinin din değiştirme, gazi ve gazi-kral konseptleriyle birlikte Anonim Battalname içerisinde değerlendirilmesidir. İlk bölümün amacı eser içerisindeki çeşitli din değiştirme anlatılarının analizi üzerinedir. Özellikle de zor kullanılarak, gönüllü olarak ve geleneksel yollar kullanılarak yapılan din değiştirmeler üzerinde durmaktadır. Bununla birlikte Osmanlı erken dönemi içerisinde bulunan bağdaştırıcı yapı içerisinde anlatıdaki muhtemel değerleri incelemektedir. İkinci bölümün amacı ise 1436-7 Anonim Battalnamesini, anlatı içerisindeki gazi ve gazi kral konseptlerini inceleyerek bağlamına oturtmaya çalışmaktır. Bunun için, bu bölüm anlatı içerisindeki Halife, yönetici ve kahraman gibi farklı katmanlardaki otorite yapılarını incelemektedir.

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To my grandfather Abdullah "Dođan" Ekmekçiođlu

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. The <i>Battalname</i> in Spotlight	1
1.1.1. The Anonymous 1436-7 <i>Battalname</i>	1
1.1.2. Epic Narratives and <i>Battalname</i>	2
1.2. Literature Review	5
1.2.1. A Question of Origins	8
1.3. Research Questions	11
1.4. Outline	12
2. THE <i>BATTALNAME</i> AND THE QUESTION OF CONVERSION 13	
2.1. Conversion Definitions and Methods to Determine Types of Conversion	13
2.1.1. Conversion Types	13
2.1.2. Approaches to Conversion in the <i>Battalname</i>	14
2.1.3. Battal Ghazi as the Driving Force of Conversion	15
2.2. Conversion in Epic Narratives, a Brief Overview	16
2.3. The <i>Battalname</i> and the Question of Conversion Narratives	17
2.4. Conversion Types and Instances in the <i>Battalname</i>	17
2.4.1. Conversion by Coercion	18
2.4.2. Conversion by Intensification	24
2.4.3. Conversion by Traditional Transitions	29
2.5. What Might Conversion in <i>Battalname</i> Mean to a Muslim Audience?	33
2.6. Same Side, Different Story: Conversion Narrative for a non-Muslim Audience	35
2.7. Syncretic or Not: <i>Battalname</i> 's Case	37
3. THE <i>BATTALNAME</i> AND THE GHAZI-KING IDENTITY	38
3.1. Why the <i>Battalname</i> , Why Now? Research Questions	38
3.2. Ghaza in 15th Century Epic Narratives	39
3.3. The Caliph, Ruler, the Champion, and the Makings of Ghaza in the <i>Battalname</i>	40
3.3.1. The Caliph	41

3.3.2. "The Ruler".....	45
3.3.3. The Champion	48
3.3.3.1. The acquisition and re-distribution of booty	49
3.3.3.2. Political connotations of ghaza in Anonymous <i>Battalname</i>	53
3.4. Why the <i>Battalname</i> ?	56
3.5. Why Now?	58
4. CONCLUSION	60
BIBLIOGRAPHY	63

LIST OF TRANSLITERATION LETTERS

ء: ʾ	ب : B b	پ : P p
ت : T t	ث: Ṭ ṭ	ج: C c
چ: Ć ċ	ح: Ḥ ḥ	خ: Ḫ ḫ
د: D d	ذ: Ḍ ḏ	ر: R r
ز: Z z	ز: J j	س: S s
ش: Ṣ ṣ	ص: Ṣ ṣ	ض: Ḍ ḏ / Ḍ ḏ
ط: Ṭ ṭ	ظ: Ḍ ḏ	ع: ʿ
غ: Ğ ğ	ف: F f	ق: Ḳ ḳ
ك: K k	گ: G g, Ğ ğ	ڤ: Ñ ñ
ل: L l	م: M m	ن: N n
و: V v	ھ: H h	ی: Y y

List of IJMES transliteration letters used in this thesis.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The *Battalname* in Spotlight

1.1.1 The Anonymous 1436-7 *Battalname*

The Anonymous 1436-7 *Battalname*¹ is the copy referenced throughout this thesis. If the usage of another *Battalname* is not mentioned, it is the Anonymous *Battalname* of 1436-7.² The Anonymous *Battalname*'s nature as an epic provides ample grounds for examining 15th century Ottoman social history. Epics' oral transmission was an essential construct of social identity building, which included expression and projection of the self onto society. These epics were already fluid – that is, in a state of change over time - and their natural tendency to alter according to the needs of different audiences at different times makes them a useful source for cultural and social history. I have chosen the Anonymous *Battalname* of 1436-7 amongst other pieces of epic literature due to its date of compilation. Since this *Battalname* epic pre-dates other compilations, it is possible that this form is closer to the oral form, which suggests a relatively stable structure to the written narrative. This “stability” can provide a stronger basis for historical analysis by allowing a more elementary approach to the narrative. After 300 years of orality, the *Battalname*'s emergence in written form provides a starting point for interpreting social

¹Anonymous *Battalname* manuscript of 1436-7 is listed under manuscript number 1455 in the Archeological Museum of Istanbul Library is the earliest known copy of the *Battalname* literature. It is dated Hijri 840. Its dimensions are 22,5 x 15 cm(19x12 cm) and is compromised of 229 loose folios. MS. 1455's assumed scribe is Hacı Seyyid b. Emir el-Gülgehri. Portions of the Folios are missing – evidently the empty slots were intended for miniatures. For more information, see, Georgios Dedes, *Battalname: Introduction, English Translation, Turkish Transcription, Commentary and Facsimile* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1996), 86-92.

²The Original Anonymous *Battalname* manuscript of 1436-7 from the İstanbul Archeological Museum Library, manuscript number 1455, which is inaccessible to the public. Due to this difficulty, I use Georgios Dedes' Turkish transcription of the manuscript as a starting point while all translations from the transcription are done by the present author.

understandings of conversions and ghaza – or, raiding in the name of Islam. As one of the more popular narratives of the 15th century, the *Battalname* can often be found in the repertoire of storytellers (Krstić 2011, 38) and may encompass a greater scope of research possibilities regarding conversion and ghaza. While there are many other epics of the *Ghazavatname* genre or under the umbrella term of epic literature, such as *Saltukname*, *Danishmendname*, *Hamzaname*, *Abu Muslimname*, or others, the *Battalname* seems to be the most persistent and widely circulated of these epics, as it is highly revered and still popular in 20th and 21st century Anatolia. The *Battalname*'s popularity distinguishes it from other written works of the 15th century. However, when it comes to the 1436-7 Anonymous *Battalname*, the circumstances and narration of the story offers research avenues on two subjects in particular: religious conversions and the idea of ghaza in relation with the ghazi-king identity.

1.1.2 Epic Narratives and *Battalname*

The early Ottoman's chronicles often depict events that consolidated the palace's and palace officials' mandate. Most of the written works were endorsed by a patron, which gave the control and distribution of the written works to the hands of the rich and powerful. However, hagiographies and orally transmitted folk tales provide us with a unique perspective which may conflict with the chronicles' conceptions of their world. As such, the *Battalname* offers insight to the populace's ideas on political and social matters – much like a *vox populi*. It can also provide us with an image – though perhaps idealized – of a *vox populi* where the “desired” voices of the populace can be heard. It might also reflect the author's or compiler's perspectives on the ever-shifting populations of the frontier regions.

The process of oral storytelling is a product of bilateral exchange between the poet and the audience. Yet, due to this bilateral exchange and the participation, the agency of the oral presenter remains relatively smaller than a writer. The outcome of the oral performance depends on the audience while the outcome of the written work depends solely on the author. The process of orality should not be mistaken for any other process wherein imagination is a single driving force, such as a story from a single author. In such oral exchanges, while memory forms a basis for the interaction, the audience's demands always prevail over memories (Ong 2005,143-144). In these exchanges, the audience's demands dictate the shape, form, and even the content of

any narrative. However, the exchange between the poet and the audience becomes specific to an audience's locality and the period it takes place in even more than a written work. As one of these localities, frontier regions uses these oral stories in many forms. These narratives find their way into the social consciousness as justifications and – for many – as affirmation, prohibition, or precedent. These primary roles guide the audience in the religious, social and war-making etiquette, in order to give them models that conform to their own localities' social norms. On the other hand, the role of justification in these narratives provides legitimacy to both conversion and ghaza. Although this justification does not consciously take place in the social psyche, these epics stigmatized certain aspects of the non-Muslim community while confirming Muslims' dominance by limiting non-Muslims to the denomination of the "infidel".

Reproductions of epic narratives were an essential part of frontier life and the frontier's social normative consciousness, enabled by intertwining heroes or stories to the frontier population's social values. Especially during Sultan Murad II's reigns (r. 1421-44; 1446-51), transmitting these epics was a well-established pastime and a social constructed defining narrative in Ottoman lands which encompassed the masses and palace officials (Kafadar 1995, 54-95). These texts were useful for delineating religiopolitical clashes and creating social 'identifiers' in a seemingly borderless empire. As the dynamics of conversion shifted to the demands of state formation, texts like the *Battalname* became increasingly varied. This variation can be seen in the transformation of state ideology from a principality to a self-sustaining, self-defining, and self-sufficient state. As the state grew, it became evident that the 'state' needed to develop its own histories, practices, laws and institutional necessities to match this rapidly increasing formation. As institutions grew more stable and wide-reaching, so too did the social narratives that consciously or unconsciously defined the ideology and social norms of the populace. As one of the key characteristics of the frontier regions, the conversion and movement of the masses became highly visible in such narratives. For example, in 15th-century narratives where converted warriors and their struggle in the frontier realms tend to indicate the state's inclusive policies for their subjects (Krstić 2011, 55). On the other hand, these epics also show the tensions that are built in the Islam's expanding community of Believers. These tensions were between the narratives, which by default leaning towards the conversion of Christians and already existing non-Muslim communities of the Anatolia. These conversion narratives provided a platform for converted populations and eased their transformation to the Muslim communities. Through tensions between Muslim populations and the recently converted, the Ottoman Rumi identity³

³For more information on Rumi identity and its progression in 15th century, see, Krstić 2011, 51-75

was born as a compromise between the two (Krstić 2011, 64).the *Battalname*'s circulation may not be necessarily done by Muslim sources and it could be done by non-Muslim sources as well. This is why the stories in these epics straddle both sides of conquest narratives: on the one hand, the *Battalname* provides moral support for ghazis that were fighting "infidel" forces in holy ghaza, the non-Muslim side of the epic conveys a different message. Briefly setting aside tales of heroism and the possibility of economic enterprise for Muslim warriors, these narratives also takes the shape of amnesty and a point of integration into Ottoman society for non-Muslim subjects. The idea of conversion offered unique opportunities to Christian audiences: emancipation, a colloquial tool for integration, and social mobility. For example, ghazis who partook in ghaza in the Balkan later became the nobility, highlighting one of the many potential benefits of conversion. This beneficial nature of ghaza in the narrative connotes that these activities were not purely religious but militarily prestigious and economically beneficial as well (Krstić 2013, 253-254). In this context, the *Battalname*, offers a variety of examples and mindsets that are in conjunction with the aforementioned opportunities for conversion, recruitment, partaking in ghazas, social structures that defined a normative mindset in addition to an idealized religious zealotry masquerading as popular entertainment.

A brief overview on the *Battalname* is now in order. The *Battalname* is an offshoot of the Arabian epic, the *Sirat Delhemma* and has unique properties which should be studied more broadly. Clashes between different ethnic and religious groups are highly visible and highlight the contentious nature of frontier regions. The main protagonist, Battal Ghazi, presents himself as the very definition of the epic protagonist, akin to those in the *Danişmendname* and *Saltukname*. Battal's standing is fluid: whereas in some chapters of the story Battal simply acts as a heroic Sunni Muslim ghazi warrior, in other chapters he becomes a saint (*veli*)⁴ or a prophetic figure. This saint-warrior character as a defender of Islamic lands is a recurring theme in such epic narratives. However, the story of Battal and his troupe of ghazis differentiates itself from other 15th-century narratives. This differentiation presents a unique opportunity to delve into the complex structure of the identity-building process through epic narratives. Battal Ghazi's following consists of Christian-Muslim forces, as opposed to the predecessor of the *Battalname*, the *Sirat Delhemma*. In the *Sirat Delhemma*, Seyyid Battal Ghazi is a supporting character in the arching narrative of the Arab-Byzantine wars in which the ghaza identity was primarily a Sunni warrior phenomenon. However, in the 15th-century

⁴Saint is described in the Encyclopedia Britannica as a "Holy person, believed to have a special relationship to the sacred as well as moral perfection or exceptional teaching abilities." The Encyclopedia of Islam describes the concept of *veli* as: "Friend of God. One who helps and protects." However the concept of *veli* in the *Battalname* is closer to a warrior-saint. This topos gathers concept of *veli* or saint with the aspects of conquest and conversion. For more information about warrior-saints, see Kitapçı-Bayrı, 96-99

Battalname, narratives present themselves as more complex in terms of social constructs, normative relationships, ghazi etiquette. This complexity derives from a period of orality in which Sufi dervishes used Battal Ghazi's image to inspire community between Anatolian social groups by presenting them with the possible opportunities of conversion. Unlike the *Sirat Delhemma*, in 15th-century Anatolia – where the *Battalname* stories were retold – was confessionally complex, and ghazis were belonged to different religions. (Dedes 1996, 1-28). As for the audience of the *Battalname*, like-minded individuals who were frontier *begs* or *akıncı*'s were the primary consumers of this epic since its colloquial depictions and raiding imagery fit their cultural milieus (Anooshahr 2009, 145). However, there are no illuminated manuscript copies of the *Battalname*, allowing one to suggest that its secondary consumers and patronage were limited to non-court subjects along with middle- to lower-class audiences.

In this sense, the epics in question and the *Battalname* in particular provide us insight into these conversion dynamics. The *Battalname* suggests insights to the practicalities of ghaza and the image of the ghazi in the eyes of both the common man and Sultan Murad II. A close examination of the *Battalname* as a text and Battal Ghazi as a hero in the social and political atmosphere of the 15th century can provide us an elaborate matrix where one can observe social interactions and exchange of ideas in its historical context. In addition to these observations, this manuscript also gives a perspective of a non-Muslim or recently converted Muslim subjects' psyche, as will be discussed later in the thesis.

1.2 Literature Review

Most works on the cult of Battal Ghazi, the *Battalname*, or Battal Ghazi as a hero differ mainly in two aspects: Battal Ghazi as the image of an Orthodox Sunni warrior and his image as a character in the grand narrative of Ottoman polity-building. While the latter is made up of Islamic motifs and narratives in their historical context, the former presents itself mostly as a strict narrative of religious or ethnic identities where the authors become lost in their narratives. In this sense, the latter characterization of Battal Ghazi for our discussion of the 15th century than the former. Therefore secondary literature that focuses on the Battal's place in the grand narrative do not present themselves as narratives of national or religious historiography but as revisionist methodological researches. On the other hand, the

"Orthodox Sunni warrior image of Battal" simply puts the image of Battal Ghazi in a repeated cycle of idolization and reverence. Some of the works on the *Battalname* in both Turkish and international literature are as follows:

Ahmet Güzel's *Battal Gazi Tarihi – Edebi - Menkıbevi Kişiliği*, is a great compilation and survey of the Turkish academic interest in the *Battalname*. However, he mostly focuses on the distinctions between different historical figures that are associated with Battal Ghazi: Abdullah el-Battal and Ja'far el-Battal. Although Güzel's work gives some insights into the historical reality of Battal as a character, it only skims the surface of the narratives that are channeled through Battal Ghazi and treats the epic's place in frontier narratives very superficially. Nevertheless, Güzel's book belongs to the first category of scholarly works about the *Battalname*. In this category, Battal is reimagined as a Sunni hero through an in-depth examination of the character as a simple champion of religion or as a conveyor of narratives from a bygone era.

Mustafa Özçelik's *Seyyid Battal Gazi* takes Güzel's example by embellishing and re-tailoring the story of Battal Ghazi. While portraying an ideal image of Battal Ghazi, Özçelik tries to fit Battal's persona and the origins of the story to Turkish identity-building politics. This leaves little room for issues that are related to Battal Ghazi, his image's foundation or a rational portrayal of the character. Although much of the portrayal is due to the Eskişehir governorship's patronage, where Battal Ghazi's supposed tomb is located, the arguments of the book do not invoke a chain of thought or any ingenuity.

On the other hand, there are more inclusive and well researched works such as Yağmur Say's *Türk İslam Tarihinde ve Geleneğinde Seyyid Battal Gazi ve Battalname*. This work offers great insights to the cult of Battal Ghazi, and also provides the historical context behind the epic and its connections to a greater sphere of influence where such epics transform and circulate. Her work continues to examine the *Battalname*'s connections to Sufi circles where the hagiographical background of the story comes from. Her second book *Anadolu'nun islamlaşması ve Türkleşmesi sürecinde gazi-eren-evliyaların rolü: Seyyid Battal Gazi Külliyesi* delves more into the discussion of the narrative and the image of Battal Ghazi. In this work, Say's image of Battal Ghazi is very similar to prior epics such as Digenis Akritas and makes its mark in the social and religious structures of Anatolia where it eased the conversions from Christianity to Islam. While the piece focuses on Battal's 'ghazi' complex, it derives a complex formulation of the subjects of Battal Ghazi's legacy and Islamization of the Anatolian peninsula.

Georgios Dedes' *The Battalname, an Ottoman Turkish Frontier Epic Won-*

dertale: Introduction, Turkish Transcription, English Translation, and Commentary offers a great insight to all matters related to Battal Ghazi and the *Battalname*. Dedes establishes the historical, literary, political, religious and social foundations of the narrative, while unraveling the contextual complexities of frontier narratives. In addition, he also analyzes conversion and ghaza activities related to Battal Ghazi in a limited scope. Dedes' translation and transcription of the Anonymous *Battalname* of 1436-7 would later become a well-established source upon which scholars base their examinations of the *Battalname*. Dedes' work follows a formal approach to the *Battalname* and tries to examine the further possibilities of Canard's articles on the subject which provides the starting point of this thesis. Furthering Dedes' work on conversion narratives becomes one of the main aims of this thesis.

One of the most recent and fascinating works on the subject of the *Battalname* is Buket Kitapçı Bayrı's recently published *Warriors, Martyrs, and Dervishes: Moving Frontiers, Shifting Identities in the Land of Rome (13th-15th Centuries)*, which provides a relatively unbiased comparison between the *Battalname*, *Danishmendname* and *Saltukname*, ranging from Ghazi identities to their peripheral or central roles in their communities and value for Ottoman audiences. By comparing three prominent epics of the 15th century, Bayrı provides a general structure for synchronic and diachronic comparison between these works. Therefore, making this book an essential tool for examining either of the works, Kitapçı-Bayrı applies a comparative methodology to these three epics, which enables new narrative approaches to them. Very much like Canard and Dedes, she affirms the potential of these epics as material for social history.

Tijana Krstić also studies conversion narratives in epics such as the *Battalname* in her book *Contested Conversions to Islam: Narratives of Religious Change in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire*. Krstić's work on these narratives is another essential part of the thesis. Following a revisionist take on these epics, she argues these narratives may impacted different subjects of the polity at the individual level, too. Her argument of possible usage of this narrative by non-Muslims and converts makes many distinction points in this thesis possible. Although her *Battalname*-specific arguments are limited, her analysis of conversion dynamics is used extensively throughout the thesis.

Ali Anooshahr's *The Ghazi Sultans and the Frontiers of Islam: a Comparative Study of the Late Medieval and Early Modern Periods* provides evidence that *Battalname* is used as a political narrative by Murad II. He argues that there is a direct link between the *Battalname* and the *Gazavat-ı Sultan Murad b. Mehmed Han*. He further weaves these epics narratives into the reality of the Murad II's

reign. Moving from his point, this thesis tries to further his argument of direct link by providing more specific examples.

1.2.1 A Question of Origins

One of the main distinction points in the secondary literature derives from the *Battalname*'s origin and a biased critical approach. There is little consensus amongst scholars on the dating of the *Battalname*'s predecessor. The main differentiation between two camps of scholars is whether the *Battalname* is a derivative form of two earlier prose epics, namely the Greek *Digenis Akritas* and Arabic *Sirat Delhemma*, or a completely new iteration of the original Battal Ghazi story where the *Battalname* is a standalone epic in the Ottoman context. While the former is studied and extensively discussed amongst international scholars, the latter seems to be accepted mostly by Turkish researchers. Two scholars in particular lead us to make this distinction in both international and Turkish academia: Marius Canard and Mehmet Fuad Köprülü. This distinction is worth further discussion. While Canard and subsequent scholars such as Dedes highlight the role of such epics in the development of the Anonymous *Battalname*, Köprülü only refers to such epics in passing remarks or does not mention them at all – this is a view shared among scholars such as Güzel, Özçelik, and Say.⁵ Interrogating these two origin arguments closer may provide a critical point to examine such works.

The *Sirat Delhemma* or *Sirat of the Amira Dhelhemma and her son Abdü'l-Vahhab and of the Amir Ebu Muhammedü'l Battal and of the Uqba the Master of Error and of Şümadrıs the Deceiver etc.*⁶ is an Arabian epic that takes place during the Arabo-Byzantine wars of the 8th century. Although the location of the epic varies greatly and spans a long period, most of its attention is drawn towards the Arabo-Byzantine frontier between these two clashing powers. Also, the *Sirat Delhemma* epic is closely attributed and compared with the Greek epic, the *Digenis Akritas* (Magidow 2018, 3-17). Canard and Dedes agree that Battal is a side character in the *Sirat Delhemma*, which shows similarities in feats, locations, and associates to the protagonist of the *Battalname*, Battal Ghazi. However, Battal Ghazi becomes

⁵Although this distinction may be a result of different historiographical traditions, it may be linked to the nationalistic approach of the subject matter. For example, see Dedes' comments on the subject in Dedes, 10-11.

⁶This name, quoted by Canard and subsequently translated by Dedes, comes from the Cairo edition of 1327/1909. For more information, see Dedes, 3. Also see Dedes, fn. 8.

more than an offshoot of the original character. He becomes a unique production of Ottoman narrative and a different story altogether.

On the other hand, Köprülü suggests that Battal Ghazi must be a unique Turkic hero and that the *Battalname* must be a “Turkish National Epic” (Köprülü 1980, 257). Ocak continues Köprülü’s argument on the originality of the *Battalname*. For Ocak, as the Battal stories were gradually written down and given that Arabo-Byzantine epics were all completed through the crusades, the *Battalname* is unlikely an adaptation or translation.⁷ Köksal furthers this argument by pointing out the differences between clashing powers, namely not Arabo-Byzantine but also the Malatya Muslim Emirate and Byzantine, and differences in the name of characters (Köksal 1987, 175). These arguments are also accepted by Özçelik and partly by Say. Say accepts that *Digenis Akritas*’s effect on the *Battalname* while regarding the *Sirat Delhemma* as a passing note. Collectively, these perspectives ultimately brand the *Battalname* a national epic. The over-emphasized reverence for Battal Ghazi as a mythical figure can be found in most of the secondary literature about the *Battalname* – especially in Turkish academic circles.

The Danishmendid and Seljukid periods are points of oral transition for the *Battalname* because there are no known written copies of the text. However, due to the abrupt transitions between chapters and language shifts through the epic, one may assume that it is a text collected from multiple sources (Anooshahr 2009, 144). This collected text may suggest an earlier copy (or multiple), yet there are no other known *Battalname* prior to the Anonymous 1436-7 text (Dedes 1996, 17). This oral transmission period can be an epoch for the text since during this time, Danishmendid petty principalities connected their legitimacies through Arabic epics. Dedes argues that Battal Ghazi acquired the name Sayyid in this period, connecting him to the Prophet and therefore solidified his status while injecting him with a more religious flavor than a simple folk hero.⁸

While Köprülü and Ocak’s arguments may seem definitive, the lack of written material from the previous period suggests an oral transmission. Since there is a scholarly consensus about the *Battalname*’s oral transmission, questions of the epic’s change over time emerge. Although verbatim exchange can be accepted more easily when it comes to Islam because of the Qur’an’s transmission, non-dogmatic convictions should not be interpreted as such. In this case, Özçelik and Ocak point

⁷Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, “Battal” in TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi vol.5, 207. Interestingly, while previous entries in the Encyclopedia of Islam written by Pertev Naili Boratav on the subject of “Battal” point out the Arabic prose form being present in the *Battalname* strongly suggests that the *Battalname* has connections to Arabic epics. later Ocak’s entry does not even take Arabic contributions into consideration.

⁸For more information on the importance of the Sayyid prefix and its transformation, see, Dedes, 12-17.

out that orality is based on memory transfers and – while simultaneous recitations can be checked for continuations or errors – successive recitations cannot (Ong 2005, 56). On the other hand, Köprülü's definition of the *Battalname* as a national epic becomes highly problematic for the 15th century. Köprülü may refer to the *Battalname* as a 20th- or 21st-century national epic, however in the Ottoman context it would be highly anachronistic to label the *Battalname* as a Turkic national, rather than Ottoman, epic. In these seemingly clear-cut historiographical traditions, this thesis works with the assumption that the *Battalname* was affected by the *Sirat Delhemma* and the Digenis Akritas . Furthermore, the *Battalname* changed through oral transmissions and was re-fitted for Ottoman audiences and cultural contexts.

When I first encountered the above-mentioned secondary literature and discussion of origins about the *Battalname*, the majority of studies dealt with the question of "Who is Battal Ghazi?" Although this question was an important question, the answer to it was studied without *Battalname*'s context much like Güzel and Özçelik's works. To answer this question briefly: Battal Ghazi is the main protagonist of the *Battalname* stories and an archetypal pious hero in Islamic epic literature. Loosely based on the character of Amir Abu Muhammad al-Battal of the Arabic *Sirat Delhemma* epic, Battal Ghazi was transformed to an ideal image of a pious Sunni Muslim ghazi through its oral transmission in Anatolia. In the Seljuq period, a "Seyyid" prefix – which denotes a person's descent from Prophet Muhammad or Imam Ali were added to its name to further the character's Islamic origins. The persona of the Battal Ghazi is defined by the narrative as converter of the non-Muslims and protector of the Islamic faith and land. (Dedes 1996, 1-23) However, this thesis does not focus on the persona or the specific deeds of the Battal Ghazi. This thesis rather focuses on the social history around the Anonymous *Battalname* and *Battalname*'s possible meaning to the 15th century audience. Given the scarcity of the records from the 14th and 15th centuries, the sole focus on the question of Battal Ghazi's character lacks the in-depth research the *Battalname* deserves. There are few studies that focus on questions such as: "why was Battal Ghazi portrayed as the hero he is?", "how did Battal Ghazi fit in the narrative of conversion?", "when did Battal Ghazi become relevant in Ottoman epic narratives?" regarding the *Battalname* genre like Dedes and Bayri. And studies that focus on the subjects of conversion and ghaza, like Kristic and Anooshahr, respectively. To add my own voice to this discourse, I examine the *Battalname* in the scope of its two given categories – conversion narratives and ghaza (raiding in the name of Islam) – while trying to limit my boundaries to the narrative.

1.3 Research Questions

The first category of interest in *Battalname* is conversion narratives. Examples of religious conversion in the *Battalname* are dominated by instances of coerced conversions. Although examples of conversion by marriage or voluntary change means exist, the narrative's focus is generally on involuntary conversions. The *Battalname* contests the scholarly consensus that Ottoman confessional policy was mostly based on the co-existence between and religious tolerance of different populations of the Ottoman realm.⁹ Although different conversion typologies and conversion methods will be discussed in detail later, one of these typologies is important for formulating this thesis' research questions. The primary conversion type in the narrative is the coerced conversions.¹⁰ Unlike the examples of coerced conversions, 15th-century policies regarding subjects' conversion points to a permissive and relatively peaceful coexistence between different religious groups. Therefore, one of the fundamental questions that this thesis tries to answer is: What is the reason behind the difference between conversion policies of the narrative and policies of the Ottoman polity in the 15th century? Can this difference be caused by the stereotypical nature of the epic narratives? Or can this difference be caused by a conscious attempt to manipulate the narrative? Second, how could these conversion narratives have affected both the Muslim and non-Muslim communities? Throughout Chapter 1, this thesis tries to answer these questions by focusing on the conversion dynamics in the Anonymous 1436-7 *Battalname* through a methodological approach to conversion narratives.

The other category of interest in *Battalname* is the imagery of ghaza and ghazi. Idea of ghaza and ghazis' identities in 15th-century society is a pervasive theme in frontier narratives. The *Battalname* provides insight to both the practice of ghaza and identities of ghazis in economic and political terms – as well as confessional. As one of the earliest known version of the epic genre under the Ottoman rule, the *Battalname* offers a challenge to reconstruct the political and social structures of the period in which it was compiled. After nearly 300 years of oral transmission and storytelling, why does the story of Battal Ghazi resurface at the

⁹For example, see, Metin Kunt, "Transformation of Zhimmi to Askeri" in *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society* vol.1, ed. Benjamin Braude Bernard Lewis (London: Holmes Meier Publishing, 1982), 55-68; Heath W. Lowry, *Nature of the Early Ottoman State: The Classical Age 1300-1600* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2003), 45-54.

¹⁰Methods of conversion are distinctly categorized to underline the question of social change, discerning how an individual or social group is counted as a convert. For more information on the types of conversion and cultural/social classifications of conversions, see, Lewis R. Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion* (London: Yale University Press, 1993), 12-14.

1436-7? Is it connected to the image-building of a ghazi-king? If so, what is the place of *Battalname* in this imagery of ghaza and ghazi? Chapter 2 will try to answer these questions in the 1436-7 *Battalname* while trying to exemplify, discuss and synthesize the 15th century social structures.

1.4 Outline

The first chapter of the thesis focuses on the *Battalname* and its place in socio-religious constructs, and on different conversion methods in the *Battalname* in particular. I assess these conversion methods in three distinct forms: conversion by coercion, by intensification and by institutional/traditional changes. While examining these three distinct types of conversion in the narrative, I discuss possible explanations of their inclusion. Chapter 1 focuses on Muslim and non-Muslim perspectives of these conversion narratives to examine them in the context of my research questions. The second chapter of the thesis offers a structural analysis of ghaza and ghazi narratives from the Ottoman frontiers in relation to examples from the *Battalname*, pointing to three distinct authoritative levels present in the *Battalname*: the caliph, the ruler, and the champion. Examination of these three subtypes of ghaza and their connotations leads to answers to the second group of research questions. Lastly, the conclusion summarizes the findings and provides notes on further potential research venues.

2. THE *BATTALNAME* AND THE QUESTION OF CONVERSION

2.1 Conversion Definitions and Methods to Determine Types of Conversion

2.1.1 Conversion Types

The individuality of the conversion has always been subject to debate among anthropologists, sociologists, and historians of religion. Instead of the individual aspects of the conversion, this chapter focuses on the social impact of conversion and the types that are employed in the *Battalname* as opposed to other types of religious conversion which were taking place in 15th-century Ottoman Anatolia. A brief examination of the different types of conversion would greatly increase the perception of these conversion events in the text and help us contextualize these events on a greater scale. Lewis R. Rambo's *Understanding Religious Conversion* will be used as a starting point to differentiate the types of conversion and their employment.

The idealized conversion is an intellectual construct that helps conceptualize conversion events. However, conversion instances and narratives deviate significantly from the ideal in varying circumstances. To overcome this disparity between reality and the definition of conversion, the individuality of the convert will be taken as a measuring point. Therefore, in this thesis conversion is defined as cultural and social changes that have occurred in one's life to embrace a new reality of his/her situation (Rambo 1993, 12-13). In this regard, the main categories of conversions can be seen as apostasy or defection from one religion to another; intensification

or revitalization of previous connections of religion¹; affiliation, communal or individual movements to zealous religious practices; institutional transitions, conversion through long periods because of convenience or practical as well as spiritual reasons; tradition transitions through cross-cultural conflicts, mass conversions from one religion to another; and lastly, conversion through coercion.² In the *Battalname*, the main conversion methods are apostasy, intensification, institutional/traditional transitions, and mostly conversion by coercion.

2.1.2 Approaches to Conversion in the *Battalname*

Although, in the case of conversion types and conversion phenomena itself, this chapter mostly follows a descriptive approach since the distinction of such types and phenomena itself is out of the scope of this chapter. However, to employ these types of conversion in the *Battalname* and its social, cultural, and economic effects, the approach is normative rather than descriptive to find possible conflicts of interest for the *Battalname*'s audience. In this chapter, I present the same method of dissecting conversion methods through core elements – namely the interactions between the “advocate” and “potential convert”.³ The interaction between the advocate and potential convert is crucial to this chapter's examination. The goal of this chapter is to determine whether there are correlations between religious policies of the time with practices visualized in the *Battalname*. To answer this question, the main line of inquiry focuses on different possible explanations for the conversion narratives in the *Battalname*. To achieve different possible explanations, these narratives are discussed separately for Muslim and non-Muslim listeners or readers. Also, while examining these different narrative points, the main “potential convert” groups are taken into consideration to examine the duality of the conversion.⁴

¹This category also includes conversions through marriages, near-death experiences or childbirth. For more information, see Rambo, 13.

²Conversion through ‘affiliation’ is highly debated. For a broader discussion as to whether it is a conversion method or just intensification of the previous religious background, see “Affiliation and Disaffiliation: A Role-Theory Interpretation of Joining and Leaving New Religious Movements” in *Thought* vol.61 (1986) by David G. Bromley and Anson Shupe

³For a more detailed explanation of “advocate” and “potential convert”, see, Rambo, 66-124.

⁴The "potential convert" trope includes the converted warrior, the converted maiden and the converted priest and is a superficial device to systematize elaborate conversion dynamics that took place in 15th-century Ottoman lands. It is a useful tool to categorize and differentiate different types of conversion that took place. For more information about these tropes and how to further them in a complex study of conversion, see Krstić (2011), 54-74.

2.1.3 Battal Ghazi as the Driving Force of Conversion

As mentioned before, the usage of terms “advocate” and “potential convert” relate to different characters in the story. While a potential convert will be in a constant state of flux, as Battal Ghazi’s story gets progressively more inclined to different quests and battles, the conversion advocate, i.e. Battal Ghazi, is nearly always the main protagonist of the epic. Although in many cases conversion can be achieved without advocate parties in the *Battalname*, such events occur rarely. These instances are not regarded as one of the main factors of conversion.⁵ The specific qualifications that entitle Battal Ghazi as an agent of conversion are reinforced and reiterated in every possible instance throughout the story. These qualifications, whether because of his previous deeds or his bloodline, makes the interaction between the advocate and a potential convert highly uneven. One such tool that points out Battal’s advocacy is prophecies. In such instances, the prophecy motif is mostly used to legitimize the character’s actions. “[...] After 200 years there will be a tall, beautifully faced, wheat skinned hero from the city of Malatya, named Ca’fer. He will be equal to Hamza in combat, he will be greater than Omar in intelligence, he will memorize four books. When he recites these books birds will sing. He will emancipate that province, he will build masjids and madrasas in place of the churches [...]”⁶ In this instance, the archangel Gabriel prophesizes Battal’s de facto right to his actions. Although there are many instances of Battal’s legitimacy through dreams, there is another prophecy of Battal’s expected arrival: “Ashqar be obedient to the hero, he is not yet to come, but God almighty gave you to Ja’far to war against the infidel. God said be obedient to the hero and bow down to him.”⁷ The narrative establishes Battal’s divine right and charisma at the very beginning. This divine charisma makes the acts of conversion in the next chapters (*meclis*) instantaneous, whereas in reality, the transition from one religion to another is a complex process. However, legitimization through prophecies and dreams can play a different role in interfaith communities. Such dream sequences may provide simple explanations to complex situations. The best-known example in the Ottoman context is the dream

⁵For example, conversion through institutional transitions can be achieved by simply having an incentive to do so by the potential convert. This incentive can range from higher social standings in society to simple monetary relief.

⁶“İki yüz yıldan sonra bir yigit uzun boylu hüb yüzlü buğday enlü ola senün oğlanlarından şehr-i Malātiyye de adı Ca’fer ola, pehluvanlukda Hamzaya beraberı ola, ‘ayyarlıkda ‘Ömer bin Ümeyyeden ziyāde ola, yalñuz yörüyci ola dört kitabı yād kıla. Çün avāz çeke nesne okıya havā yüzinden kuşlar aşāka döküle. Ol vilāyeti güşād kıla kilisālar yerine mescid ve medreseler yapa” Folio P2b-11b; Dedes 336-7.

⁷“Ya Āşqar muti’ ol ol yigide kim dahı henüz vakt olmadı kim ben çıkam sen Hakk Te’ālā Ca’fere virdi kim gele yir yüzinde gāzālar kıla ‘ālemi küfr qarañılığından kırtara. Ol yigide muti’ ve munqād ol didi.” Folio A1-A2; Dedes, 339-340.

of Osman.⁸ The two dream sequences bear little resemblance to each other, but their legitimization power is formidable in both cases where a narrative of divine authority can be seen (Finkel 2007, 2-3).

2.2 Conversion in Epic Narratives, a Brief Overview

Although one of the earliest known examples of epic literature in the Ottoman context is the *Battalname*, the approach to conversion dynamics in other epics such as the *Danishmendname* and the *Saltukname* greatly correlates with the same ideas. Danishmend Ghazi and Sarı Saltuk, the protagonists of the *Danishmendname* and the *Saltukname* respectively, accept they are descended from Battal Ghazi. Both of these works' writing sensibilities derive from the oral transmission of the *Battalname* (Kafadar 1995, 64-65). Therefore, the *Battalname* acts as an indirect common ancestor between these epics, providing us with depictions of conversion narratives that live on in the *Saltukname* and the *Danishmendname*. Conversion in these epics may seem like a complete religious conversion or resemble a political conversion – possibly both. These political conversions are the recognition of the political superiority through taxes or vassalage by the main antagonist of the epics, such as the Byzantines, Christian Romans, Rumis, and in some rare cases the Franks (Kitapçı-Bayri 2020, 178). While the *Battalname* emphasizes the Sunni ghazi persona of the protagonists, other epics such as the *Saltukname* and the *Danishmendname* provide no such emphasis on the Sunni identity. In this sense, the depictions of conversions in 15th-century epic literature, especially in the case of the *Battalname*, *Danishmendname*, and *Saltukname* represent the political conversion of newly acquired subjects eventually leading to their religious conversion (Kitapçı-Bayri 2020, 179). As can be seen in the examples provided later in this chapter, the complete submission of the potential convert politically seems to be a common characteristic of 15th-century epic narratives when thinking about conversion by coercion. Also, the converted warrior's addition to the ranks of Muslim warriors seems to coincide with the idea of political conversion through a display of force, where able-bodied and necessary forms of manpower are added to Muslim ranks.

⁸In Osman's dream, Osman sees a moon rising from the chest of a holy man and sinking into his chest. Then, a tree sprout from Osman's chest and the tree's shade covers the whole world. For more information on the implications of Osman's dream, see Finkel 2007, 1-10.

2.3 The *Battalname* and the Question of Conversion Narratives

The premise of Ottoman's early syncretic nature is a common theme in discussions about 14th- and 15th-century Ottoman cultural and religious life.⁹ Even though the aggressive language of the *Battalname* can be seen as anti-syncretic at first glance, the convoluted social structure of the 15th-century Ottoman Anatolia would make it impossible to determine whether 'anti-syncretism' was more widespread or not. However, to research the *Battalname*'s place in these socially complex and challenging times, conversion instances, different types of conversions, and the descriptive language of conversion events can provide us a perspective. What are the reasons for differences between conversion policies of the narrative and policies of the Ottoman polity in the 15th century? How could these conversion narratives have affected Muslim and non-Muslim communities?

2.4 Conversion Types and Instances in the *Battalname*

Throughout the *Battalname*, conversion narratives are almost the primary motivations of Battal Ghazi's conquests. The main derivative force of Battal's ghazas is portrayed as the conquest of non-Muslim lands and expanding the sphere of Islam. Also as an extension to the conquest, destroying the non-Muslim religious buildings and erecting Muslim ones instead. Instances of conversions are present in nearly every section of the manuscript and graphically detailed. Throughout Dede's transcription, there are more than sixty encounters wherein the case of conversion, Battal graphically and viciously murdering those who refuse. The *Battalname* depicts individual or *en masse* different groups of people become converted through the means of either conquest, prophetic dreams, coercion, marriage, cunning or adoration of Battal's beauty. These conversions span through eighteen provinces, twenty-five cities, seventy fortresses, and more than two armies. Although all examples of these instances will not be provided here, first I discuss and explore the different circumstances of these events.

⁹For example, see Kunt, 55-68; Lowry, 45-54; Krstić (2011), 54-60.

2.4.1 Conversion by Coercion

Most of the conversion narratives in the *Battalname* are coerced conversions. These examples vary, to some degree, in relation to Battal Ghazi's position as the advocate of conversion. However, these variations only affect the method of conversion, not the outcome – which is either conversion or death. One of the main points of interest in these conversion narratives is the conversion of different army groups to join the ghaza later in the text. One such instance comes right after the protagonist wins a wrestling competition, in which he takes the “Battal” name - meaning humongous or heroic. In this instance, the prize for winning the competition results in the loser's side converting to the winner's confession.¹⁰ After Battal Ghazi won, the newly recruited Ahmar – named “Ahmed Turran” – joins Muslim forces and changes the tide of an imminent battle. “Seventy thousand infidels were killed and seven thousand were captured. All of them become inspired by the great God and they all became Sunni Muslims. Seyyid Battal gave all of them mantles, horses and clothes.”¹¹ Although most of the army was decimated, captured contingents were converted to Sunnism and bestowed gifts from the protagonist himself. However, another example of such conversion ends differently:

“Caesar said: Your death is in my hands Battal, Jesus said so last night. Now come join me and I will make you a commander. Sayyid said: Don't talk. If you win, I will join your religion. If I win will you enter my religion? [...] Sayyid said: See now, I was the Jesus and I beat you up. Now become a Muslim so you can be a Sultan to your province again and if someone does not obey you, I will be the one who beheads him. Caesar said: Do not talk. I will not become a Muslim. Sayyid said: If you do not become a Muslim your punishment is this. And decapitated his head.”¹²

¹⁰See Folio P26b; Dedes, 377.

¹¹“Yitmiş biñ kâfir kılıçdan geçdi yidi biñ dahı esir götürdüler. Kamusınuñ gönline Allāh Te'ālā imān bıraktı kamusı sunni müslimān oldılar. Dükeline Seyyid Baṭṭāl hil'atlar atlar ve ṭonlar bağısladı.” Folio A42. Dedes, 377.

¹²“Seyyide beraber oldı, eyitdi: İy Baṭṭāl senüñ ölmeñ benüm elümdedür. Bu gice 'İsā baña haber virdi. İmdi yigitsin sen dahı benüm dinüme gir, seni serleşker ideyim didi. Seyyid eyitdi: Çok söyleme. Eger sen beni zebun iderseñ ben senüñ dinüme girem. Ve ger ben seni yıķarsam bes benüm dinüme gire misin? Didi. Kaşsar rāzı oldı[...] eydür: “Gördüñ mi kim halüni ol 'İsā olup kaçıcıyla dögen bendüm. Di imdi imān arda kılup müslimān ol kim qirü ilüñe sultān ol. Her ki saña muti' olmazsa ben anuñ başın alayım didi. Kaşsar eyitdi: Çok söylemeç Ol sen didüğüñ ben itmezem didi. Seyyid eyitdi: Çün müsliman olmazsın cezāñ uşbudur diyüp başın gevdesinden cüdā kıldı.” Folio A210-211; Dedes, 477-478.

These two instances of conversion do not depict a simple conversion, but the intrinsic practicality of conversion presented as a cultural and social exchange. The first example of Ahmed Turran's conversion to Islam and fighting alongside Battal Ghazi provides an example of converted warriors joining the ghazi ranks.¹³ This conversion is similar to Köse Mihal and other converted warriors' experience, where Ahmed Turran's behavior is zealous in defending his newfound religion Islam (Saraç Yavuz 2018, 280-297). The second example between Caesar and Battal is a unique perspective on conversion. Had Caesar accepted Islam, he would have remained Sultan to his lands. This militaristic understanding of conversion is in line with Tijana Krstić's conception of conversion. 15th-century Ottoman sources show that a constant flow of manpower may well have been the only way to continue a state's growth. Incorporating different cultures and religions under the Ottoman Imperial flag was above all practical (Krstić 2011, 51-54).

Other than the conversion of the military lords or notables in a bilateral exchange scheme, another purpose of coercive conversion method in the *Battalname* is a city's compulsory conversion. These conversions were indirectly related to a need for early military converts to protect the momentum of expansion and raids. As Ahmed Turran joined raiding forces as a warrior, a city's conversion expanded manpower for possible ghazis rather than adding able-bodied warriors.

“It is I, Seyyid Battal Ghazi. I killed your Firdevs along with his lords and rescued five thousand men. Now convert or I will kill you and make your sons and daughters prisoners. As soon as city folk heard of this news, they all screamed. Sayyid and his man opened the gates and made war. They massacred the city for one day and night. They took five thousand prisoners. Sayyid offered them to become Muslim and they accepted. In seven days, they completely converted the city. Seyyid sat down on the throne. They built masjids instead of churches. He ordered a Friday masjid and they did so.”¹⁴

In such a case of city conquest in the name of Islam to expand Islam's regional influence provides a different perspective from individual conversion. Conversion takes place in an urban setting resulting in a city's political, religious and cultural

¹³For a critical approach to Wittek's Ghaza thesis, see Lowry, 45-55.

¹⁴“Benem Seyyid Battāl-ı Ğazi. Uş geldüm Firdevsi öldürdüm begleriyle biş biñ gişi esir olmışlardı halās eyledüm. Siz dañı imān getürün kurtuluñ, yoħsa depelerem dükeliñüzi ođluñuzu kızunuzu esir iderem. Şehir kavmı cünkim bunuñ gibi haber işitdiler ğiriv ğopardılar. Seyyid buyurdı ğapuyı açdılar, ğıkdılar, kılıc yoritdiler. Bir ğün bir ğice ğırdılar şehir kavmı amān dilediler. Biş biñ esir getürdiler. Seyyid bunları dine da‘vet qıldı ğamusu müslimān oldılar. Yidi ğün şehri tamām düzdiler müslimān eylediler. Seyyid taħta geđdi oturdı, buyurdı deyrı yıkdılar ğarāb eylediler. Deyrler yirine mescidler yapıdılar. Tiz cu‘ma mescidi buyurdı yapıdılar.” Folio A108-A109. Dedes 417-418.

conversion. Urban conversion can provide some key ideas and interesting points to further discuss conversion narratives.

Firstly, the city's population was Jewish. Scholarly consensus on Jewish communities under the Ottoman rule is that they were treated justly. Unlike Western Christian powers, Jewish communities were given local autonomy and can even consider favorites amongst the non-Muslim populations (Hacker 1982, 113). Hacker's arguments develop into a more complex situation in which the total acceptance and integration to the Ottoman society is an oversimplification. In most cases, a Jewish community's treatment differs from officer to officer and depended on the city's situation – ultimately whether it surrendered or not (Hacker 1982, 121).¹⁵ Even in the most extreme cases of such disobedience to the new Ottoman rule, Jewish communities were exiled or revered for their work, thriving in their later communal aspects. They were not, however, exempt from becoming casualties that conquest brings (Hacker 1982, 123-124). The Jewish city's conquest does not differentiate from other instances of conquest throughout the narrative, which gives the impression that a populace's denomination did not matter if they were non-Muslims. One might suggest that the text's lack of differentiation for Christian and Jewish communities may well stem from the frontier understanding of the religious identity. In the eyes of frontier communities, there was seemingly no differentiation between the great monotheistic religions (*kitabî dinler*) for Muslim frontier populations. Muslim scholars used similarities between great monotheistic religions and trivialized specific qualities of Christianity, such as Jesus' unique position, in theological debates to ease the transition from Christianity to Islam. (Krstić 2011, 71).

However, the syncretic nature of religious inclusiveness may as well be a compromise between non-Islamic religions and Islam. Because these non-Islamic religions ultimately ended up in an Islamic realm, definitions of their social standing and cultural place was an ongoing discourse (Kunt, 1982, 57-58). This specific instance of a Jewish settlement converting to Islam by coercion may seem to contradict this indifference between monotheistic religions. However, this example may classify Christian and Jewish communities in Anatolia under the umbrella term of 'non-Muslim societies'. This in no way means that the very nature of the *Battalname*, its writer, its readers or listeners disregarded the state's syncretic policies. One possible explanation would be the zealous characterization of ghaza, ghazis, the legitimization of their raids and conquests of foreign lands. In the new framework of

¹⁵Most of the Hacker's arguments regarding Jewish communities under the Ottoman rule comes from primary sources after the fall of Constantinople. One may argue that the effectiveness of such arguments in the *Battalname* would be anachronistic. However, later iterations of the *Battalname* story, such as the Bibliothèque Nationale's *Ancien Fonds Turc*318 (Süleymaniye MS 1153 copy) copy dated AD 1504 depicts a similar story of a Jewish city's conversion.

historiography, this explanation is now highly disputed. Since the characterization of ghazas has proven to be more practical than confessionally zealous, the inclusion of non-Muslim forces in the army and raiding parties is a known fact.¹⁶ Tijana Krstić's arguments on converted warriors and their need to prove their loyalty is a more likely explanation. To resolve their distinct positions, wherein these warriors are stuck between old and new communities, Krstić argues that newly converted warriors in the ranks of the Ottoman flag showed signs of compulsion to kill the so-called 'other' and resolve their implicit contradictions at least through narratives (Krstić 2011, 57).¹⁷ Especially in the case of ransacking and converting Firdavs the Jew's city, this may be the causation behind the umbrella approach to non-Muslim religions and cultures. Furthermore, this narrative may very well be narrated, indented or added by a converted Jewish conscript. It also may simply narrate any other recently converted conscript to categorize themselves under Islamic rule.

Secondly, Battal's specific remarks on the subject of imprisoning the population's "sons and daughters" may be a reference to the *Devşirme*, or the act of converting the young to Islam. From the quote itself, it should be evident that the threat is not to kill the young non-Muslims, but to capture them. Since the *Devşirme* system was already in place at the end of the 14th century, (İnalçık 2001, 80) two different sets of possibilities become apparent from this excerpt. Either they were conscribed into the *Devşirme* system in the forty years before the *Battalname*'s compilation or this excerpt was a result of a long-running practice of enslavement of non-Muslim populations. Although there are many instances of enslavement in the narrative of the *Battalname*, there are no instances of murdering enslaved peoples. Instead, every instance of enslavement ultimately ended up with the conversion of the enslaved populations. There are of course instances where the advocate declares that if the conversion is refused, the potential convert would be killed. However, these instances are specific to the warriors who failed to prove their worth through combat or their usefulness in other aspects of communal life. Ottoman slave ownership, being primarily focused on military aspects and the monopoly of the administrative offices dominated by Muslims, seems to hold in the above instances since it was before the inclusion of converts in high ranking administrative positions in the late 15th century (İnalçık 2001, 89). Since every instance of *en masse* enslavement ends up with the conversion of the subjects, one can argue that this practice is the continuation of a tradition of enslavement policies for Islamic states.

Another aspect of conversion by coercion in the *Battalname* is the offer of

¹⁶For more information on the inclusion of non-Muslim contingents in the army and their recruitment policies in the context of the early Ottoman Empire, see Lowry, 45-94; also see, Kunt, 55-68.

¹⁷For example, a recent convert may use these narratives to prove that their loyalty lies with the new society.

amnesty by the Advocate. The *Battalname* has a plethora of examples where the choices of potential convert are either conversion or death. There are some specific instances of the advocate offering potential converts amnesty aside from the threat of death:

“Ja’far said: Do you know who I am, you wretched man? I am the son of Husayn Ghazi, my name is Ja’far and I came for my revenge. If you become a Muslim, then you are saved. If you say no, I will behead you. The infidel started babbling and his head became separated. The wretched man went to hell. Then [Battal] came back and said Mihriyayil is asking for you and beheaded them too. And two more after that. In total, he killed fourteen famous lords. Only one man left named Eflahun, he [Battal] showed them the beheaded heads and said: See? I am the son of Husayn Ghazi, become a Muslim at once or you will follow their lead. Eflahun bowed down and became a Muslim.”¹⁸

Even though Mihriyayil is the one who murdered his father, Battal offered Mihriyayil a total amnesty if he converted to Islam. This case is very similar in structure to the example of Caesar, where Battal offered Caesar to keep his lands if he converted. Execution was the general punishment for apostasy from Islam to other religions¹⁹. But, when someone converted from another religion to Islam in the narrative, amnesty was the result. Although in the court of law the possibility of such amnesties is debatable, in a narrative sense the common idea points to a total pardon from the previous social, religious or other misdeeds.²⁰ The idea of amnesty could also indicate Tijana Krstić’s recently converted warrior’s legitimacy narratives. The idea of amnesty provides the recently converted warrior a retroactive explanation to integrate into a new social environment. Although the idea of amnesty will be discussed in detail later, the overall picture of the narrative seems to deliver a promise of amnesty to the converts.

Another example of coerced conversion from the *Battalname* is Uqba the

¹⁸“Yā lā’in hiç bilür misin ben kimem. Ben Hüseyn Ğazinüñ oğlıyam adum Ca’ferdür atam kanın isteyü geldüm. Şimdi eger müslimān oldun kurtıldun. Yok dirseñ başuñ keserem didi. Ol kāfir herzeğe başladı gördü kim imāna gelmez başın gövdesinden cudā kıldı. La’in cān cehenneme işmarladı. Andan yine geldi iki ulu meliki kığırdı ki gel sizi Mihriyayil okır diyü iletđi başların kesdi. İki dahı iletđi depeledi. Fîl-cümle on dört adı bellü begleri öldürdi. Bir kulu kaldı Eflahun adlı anı dahı iletđi ol başları gösterdi eydür: Gördüñ mi ben Hüseyn Ğazinüñ oğlıyam tiz müslimān ol yohsa ben seni dahı bunlarıñ yolna viribirem didi. Eflahun yüz yire urdı müslimān oldı.” Folio A14. Dedes, 355.

¹⁹For an example of an apostate being executed, see Krstić (2011), 151-152.

²⁰See for instance Qur’an 9:5 “And when the sacred months have passed, then kill the polytheists wherever you find them and capture them and besiege them and sit in wait for them at every place of ambush. But if they should repent, establish prayer, and give zakah, let them [go] on their way. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.”

judge. As one of many villains of the epic, Uqba differs greatly as a cunning and persevering figure throughout the story. What makes him a great example of conversion is the fact that Uqba is arguably the only example of a Christian living pretending to be a Muslim while under Muslim rule.²¹ Uqba is a judge serving the caliph as an advisor. However, narrative points out he is working for the Caesar and in fact, as a non-Muslim behind their back: “[Sayyid] said: People of Baghdad know this and hear this: This man is an infidel and he is from the people of the rope[*ehl-i zünnar*]. This man is the source of sedition. He tries to turn us to each other”²² After a brief investigation, Uqba is undeniably proven to be an agent when they discover a Christian shrine under his house.²³ After being tortured, he is asked to convert: “Sayyid said: Come to the religion and become a Muslim. Uqba said: I cannot become a Muslim but write to the caesar so he can buy me back.”²⁴ After the incident, Uqba is tortured more and eventually murdered by Battal. Although there are many examples of people rejecting Battal’s offer of conversion, there are no such examples of explicit and violent torture of the potential convert. Since this is the only incident of non-Muslim living in an Islamic realm, indicating treachery, the distinction between these categories is crucial for understanding the text. In this case, it is highly probable that Uqba was not a victim of such brutal treatment because of his Christianity, but because of his treacherous nature. The narrative essentially depends on two sub-arguments. The first is the narrative’s emphasis on Uqba’s treachery. Combined with the lack of such vicious torture to other non-Muslim’s refusing to convert elsewhere in the epic, treachery is the main reason behind Uqba’s torture. In no other case does Battal’s advocacy result in prolonged and highly visualized depictions of torture and/or mutilation. The second sub-argument is the political nature of the Uqba’s punishment: mutilation of the ears and nose²⁵ and public display of his corpse throughout an exaggerated period of 41 years.²⁶ This public display of a potential spy was to make an example of their treachery. This

²¹Although there are other smaller instances, they are usually dealt with immediately, whereas Uqba’s apostasy becomes a narrative point in the story.

²²“İy ehl-i Bağdād bilün ve agāh olun kim uşbu kâfirdür ehl-i zünnârdur. Bu fitneleri hep bu idüp dürür. Diler kim bizüm aramıza fitne birağa didi.” Folio A235. Dedes,493.

²³See Folios A235 to A240. Dedes, 493-495.

²⁴“Seyyid eyitdi: Gel imān ‘arda kıl müslümān ol didi. ‘Uqba eyitdi: Müslimān hōd olmazam ammā bir nāme yazayın қаşара ki beni şatun ala.” Folio A240. Dedes, 495.

²⁵Mutilation of political rivals ensured their mutilated body made them unmatched for heavenly authority. This was a common practice throughout the Byzantine Empire to delegitimize opponents. Except for the Justinian II (685-95 705-711). For more information, see, Philip Longworth, 1992, *The Making of Eastern Europe*. pp.290, footnote 23. Other examples of mutilation of the face in the *Battalname* coincide with the encounters of Muslims and non-Muslims where conversion is not a goal. For example, mutilating the nose and ears of a messenger remains outside the narrative formulation of conversion, see Folio 48; Dedes, 381.

²⁶Folios 241-243; Dedes, 496-7.

display can be seen as a message to the Caesar rather than the Muslim community. Nonetheless, Uqba's case becomes a political rather than a religious motif. Therefore, Uqba's case becomes a non-descriptive point in the discussion about syncretism in the *Battalname*. However, because of the epic's cliché language, superficial understandings of Uqba's case appears as an anti-syncretic narrative.

Other conversions by coercion instances in the *Battalname* do not conform with the syncretic nature of the period. For instance, other recently converted warriors in the *Battalname* narrative do not appear again at all. Other than a select few of them such as Ahmad Turran, these warriors do not become part of the narrative. Equally, there are no distinct indicators that even the converted forces, other than notable lords, participate in the battle. One reason for this could be that the nature of the narrative generally emphasizes the 'underdog' nature of the battles no matter how far the Dar-ul Islam spreads. Battal's specific wording when talking to Abu Bakr, the leader of the ghazis in Malatya, conveys an interesting point. "Abu Bakr, I am leaving now, and I will take these lands for you. But all the churches are mine."²⁷ Although this quote by Battal will again be discussed in the next chapter, it's connotations regarding conversion dynamics is still important. In this case, Battal identifies his personality as an advocate in the conversion narrative and appoints himself a missionary. This admission further cements the *Battalname*'s focus on the conversion narratives where most instances end up in coerced conversions. However, coerced conversions are not the only type of conversions in the narrative of the *Battalname*. One such prominent example of conversion is the conversion by intensification.

2.4.2 Conversion by Intensification

Although conversion by intensification covers a broad type of conversion, in the *Battalname* it mostly in the form of dreams and marriages. This conversion typology appears throughout the text as a motif or motivation. However, these events may be the rationalization of a complex conversion process through simple narration. They can also be an indication of the superiority of Islam for those living in frontier Ottoman communities – at least in the narrative sense. To analyze the reasons behind conversions by intensification, two aspects used in the *Battalname*

²⁷"Yā Ebu Bekir ben giderem bu illeri hep saña. Eved ne kadar kilisâlar varsa benümdür." Folio A145, Dedes, 439.

narrative will be taken separately: God's intervention to encourage the conversion in the form of dreams and conversion through love or marriage.

Prophetic dreams induced by God, the Prophet or one of the angels is a recurring theme in the narrative. Even though the conversion advocacy of God himself may perhaps be a theological discussion, these conversions come in the form of a story device. This story device is in the form of a literal *deus ex machina* which pushes the narrative forward: "I am the daughter of Mihriyayil and my father was killed by Seyyid Battal. Last night I saw God in my dream and I became a Muslim and your coming was foretold to me."²⁸ Another example of conversion by dreams is an enemy messenger converting conveniently just before reaching Battal: "I saw Prophet Muhammed in my dream and I became Muslim."²⁹ Examples of such sudden conversions are abundant throughout the narrative but the reality of these conversions can be questioned. Other than proceeding the narrative, these instances do not provide us any form of information or context in the *Battalname*. One might argue that these conversions prove the perceived cultural, moral, and religious high ground of the Muslim community and righteousness of Islam amongst other religions. In other words, religion supremacy in ghazis' worldview. This argument is superficial as it does not contemplate other possible research avenues.

Another, more probable explanation of these dream conversion phenomena can be the rationalization of conversions in the society without an advocate. The majority of Christian subjects in the Ottoman army and tımar holders themselves became Muslims without any coercion or incentive by Muslim communities over a period of one or two generations (Krstić 2011, 55). Perhaps these communities were being rationalized to fit in a religious narrative through dream sequences by themselves or by Muslim subjects. For Muslim subjects, the indistinct nature of major monotheistic religions made conversion narratives instinctively acceptable but conversion without an advocate may prove more difficult to rationalize. Prophetic dream conversions could be the rationalization of other forms of conversions where a lack of a dervish, ghazi-warrior, or any form of advocacy can be assumed while continuing the narrative without compromising its narrative's flow. Therefore, dreams can be an acceptable narrative device to simplify the complexities of former Christian subjects and their conversions over a long period. On the other hand, building on Krstić's proof of loyalty factor³⁰, conversion by prophetic dreams may be di-

²⁸"Ben Mihriyāyilün kızıyam atamı Seyyid Battāl öldürdi. Bu gice düşümde Resul hāzretin gördüm müslimān oldum. Senün hāberin baña bildirdi[...]" Folio A77, Dedes 399.

²⁹"Ben fulaň yirde düşümde Muhammed-i Muştafayı gördüm imān getürdüm." Folio A145, Dedes 439.

³⁰See Krstić 2011, 56-57.

rectly caused by recently converted Christian warriors. It may well be the same simplification of long periods of conversions where rationale for the conversion may be dismissed by Muslim warriors. To avoid such dismissals, previously converted subjects may refer to their or their ancestor's conversions as a direct commandment from God in order to dismiss further discussion that would undermine their conversion's legitimacy. Therefore, conversion by dream is a practical yet effective device that may be a compromise between former Christian and already Muslim communities, at least in a narrative sense. This explanation could be used from the side of the Christian subjects as well to explain conversions. Therefore, dreams possibly explained naturally occurring phenomena in a simplified form.

The second type of conversion by intensification is the conversion through love and/or marriage. These narratives may provide us another perspective on conversion narratives that have no advocate. Although in most cases such conversion follows kidnapping, the *Battalname*'s narrative depicts genuine belief that the conversion is true and just. Unlike conversion by coercion, there is no possibility of apostasy from Islam in conversion by the intensification category. There are two cases that show women converting the *Battalname*: the first case is abduction followed by conversion and marriage, and the second case is the conversion through love followed by defection to Islam. One of the examples of the former is an incident where Battal kidnaps a girl for one of his men, saying: "I am Battal, do not call for help or I will cut you. The woman could not even move out of her fear. He tied the woman up, lowered her from the walls. He found a horse and they rode until they reach Abdü'l Selam [...] They all did their ablutions. Even Nevruz Banu became a Muslim. They made a wedding and gave the woman to Abdü'l Selam."³¹ Interfaith marriages between a Muslim man and a non-Muslim *kitabi*³² women was a common occurrence. This partial religious indistinction between marriages gave rise to the expansion of the Muslim sphere of influence while broadening the definition of Ottoman subjecthood (Krstić 2011, 66). The coerced conversion of captured non-Muslim women into Islam, although would be recommended by law, (Friedmann 2003, 108) are not mentioned in the *Battalname*. This lack of coerced conversions might be related to the idealization of the ghazi-converted maiden relationship in epic narratives. These relationship narratives, along with monetary gain, signaled other prizes that awaited victorious ghazi (Krstić 2011, 65). However, in the *Bat-*

³¹"Ben Baṭṭālam çağırma yohsa kamuñı yardım didi. Kız dinmedi korkudan. Kızı bağladı ağzını dıkdı burcdan aşığa indürdi. Bir at buldı kızını bindürdi. Sürdi irteye degin 'Abdü's-Selāma yitişdi [...] Kaması du'ā kıldılar. Nevruz-ı Bānu daḥı müslimān oldı. Dügünler eylediler kızını 'Abdü's-Selāma virdiler." Folio A 74-75, Dedes, 397-398.

³²For more detailed information between a Muslim man and a non-Muslim woman, see Yohanan Friedmann, *Tolerance and Coercion in Islam: Interfaith Relations in Muslim Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 186-193.

talname, another explanation for a non-coerced relationship between the hero and the maiden can be rationalized by the link between the *Battalname* and the *Sirat Delhemma*. The *Sirat Delhemma*'s natural tendency to question gender roles in the context of ghaza narratives (Magidow 2018, 17-19) may have been affected its successor. The *Battalname* is directly or indirectly used as a source of legitimization when referring to earlier dates of ghaza in 15th-century epic literature, such as the *Saltukname* and the *Danishmendname* (Dedes 1996, 9-14). Arguably, the essence of Fatima in many forms kept under the different epic narrative maidens before *Battalname* being compiled. This explanation is far-fetched as there is no written evidence between the epic's transformation between the *Sirat Delhemma*'s compilation and the *Battalname*. The epics' orality, being that it was mostly at the hands of men, could be another argument against this explanation. In this case, the presence of a warrior woman would not represent the male angle to the issue but rather the perceptions, anxieties, and desires of men (Kruk 2013, 225). In these representations, ghazis seem to fantasize about beautiful non-Muslim women being led to the strong ghazi men in women's dreams. This fantasy even enabled many men from different groups to join the ghazi forces (Kafadar 1995, 70). Consequently, it is unlikely that the female protagonist's essence is transferred from the *Sirat Delhemma* to the *Battalname*. Even if it did, the heroic women in Arabic epic literature would still be changed in the *Battalname* epic considerably, though it would not contradict the ghaza practices.

Another interesting aspect of conversion by intensification in the epic is the lack of inter-faith marriages between Muslim men non-Muslim women. There are very few instances or minor hints of such marriages in the narrative scheme of the *Battalname*. Although this example uses prophetic dreams and perhaps conditional coercion typologies, the unique nature of the conversion makes it a better fit for the intensification category. One of such instances is a non-Muslim woman and a recently converted Muslim man:

“The [merchant] answered: These are the men of Bidrun Shah, they are going to get Adan-Banu the daughter of beg called Hamiran. That woman [Adan-Banu] says whoever can defeat me can marry me. [...] Sayyid gathered his strength and slammed the person to the ground and that person's head becomes visible. Sayyid saw a woman that has no equal in this world. Sayyid pulled himself back. The woman placed his head at the feet of Sayyid. Sayyid knew that she was Adan-Banu. The woman said: Take me as a wife, I am the daughter of Hamiran and I have killed plenty. Sayyid said: I cannot accept you. I appeared in the dreams of Bidrun I have to give you to him. [...] Sayyid said: I am

the one who appeared in your dream, Sayyid Battal Ghazi, accept your dream and I will grant you your desire. At that moment Bidrun became a Muslim and abandon the ways of the infidel. They took the girl and came back to the tent of Bidrun. Sayyid said to the woman: I gave you to Bidrun accept my word and don't refuse it. The woman said: Whatever you say, I am obedient and loyal. [...] Hamiran said: You do good hero. I want to enter your religion but I am afraid of Caesar, other than that, I am your slave, I am your subservient.”³³

The Adan-Banu character stands out greatly from other woman characters of the *Battalname* in the sense that her skills as a warrior are mentioned in detail. Other woman characters in the narrative do not impact the outcome or direction of the story at all and are only mentioned in passing. Adan-Banu's case also differs from the woman in the *Battalname*. Adan-Banu remains non-Muslim even after her marriage to a recently converted Muslim man. However, this lack of conversion could have been overlooked by the author(s). Since there is no mention of Adan-Banu's religion both before or after the marriage, it could be a simple scribal error or it could have been deliberate. Nonetheless, Adan-Banu fits the very description of the Brunhilde-Motif ³⁴, which is a common occurrence throughout different epic narratives and defines a respect-worthy women stereotype. In the overarching narrative scheme, Adan-Banu's presence can be seen as lacking in comparison to other female heroic figures in epic narratives such as Efromiya in the *Danishmendname* and Princess Saljan in the Book of Dede Korkut, where female characters have at least narrative altering presence (Kafadar 1996, 67-69). Adan-Banu's nature as a non-Muslim woman marrying into a recently converted Muslim man is a unique instance in the *Battalname*. Though Muslim men and non-Muslim women often married (Friedmann 2003, 181-193), and its legality was based on the Qur'an, there should've been more hints about such occasions. Lacking such occasions might indicate a deliberate effort or it could simply be caused by the cliché and idealized nature of the epics.

³³“Eyitdi: Bidrun-ı Şāhdur. Bir beg vardur adına Hamārān (Husrev) dirler bir kıızı vardur ‘Aden Banu adlu şir küşt. Ol kıız da’vi ider kim ‘Her ki beni yıkarısa benüm helālüm oldur diyü[...] Seyyid kuvvet kıldı götürdi yire vurdu başı açıldı. Seyyid nazar itdi gördü kim bir maħbube ki ‘ālemde bir daħı olmaya. Seyyid gendüyi girü çekdi. Kıız yirinde durdı Seyyidün kademinde baş kıdı. Seyyid bildi kim ‘Aden Banudur. Kıız eyitdi: Beni kabul kııl didi. Hamirānun kıızıyam çokları öldirmişem didi. Seyyid eyitdi: Ben seni kabul itmezem. Eved Bidrün beni düşünde görmüş seni aña vireyin didi.[...] Seyyid eyitdi: Ol gişiyem ki senün düşünde girdüm, Seyyid Battāl Ğāziyem didi gel benüm dinime girgil seni murādına irişdüreyim dedi. Hemankim Bidrun bu sözi işitdi küfri terk itdi imān ‘arda kıldı müslimān oldu. Kıızı aldılar Bidrun haymesine geldiler oturdılar. Seyyid kııza eyitdi: Seni Bidruna virdüm sendaħı yok dime benüm sözüm kabul itgil didi. Kıız eyitdi: Sen her ne ki buyurursañ muti’ ve munķadam didi.[...] Hamiran eyitdi: Rāst eydürsin iy behlevān. Kıayardan kırkaram ki senün dinüne girem amma ğulām-ı tuem ve muti’-i tuem ğüft.” Folio A277-A280; Dedes, 515-516.

³⁴Brumhilde-Motif is an archetype of a strong woman character in epic literature. Brumhilde, only agrees to marry to only one strong enough to beat her in combat. For more information, see., Kruk, 214-7.

2.4.3 Conversion by Traditional Transitions

In this section, I elaborate on examples of conversions where Battal Ghazi uses traditional roles or institutional beliefs to convert a subject. In the *Battalname*, these traditional or institutional transitions mostly come in the form of discussions, miracles, or direct display of Jesus-like qualities and powers to masses. Although the link between the miracles and Jesus-like qualities are close, there are some instances to deliberately replicate Jesus's miracles. In these instances, Battal's miracles are very similar to other traditional miracles done by other mystics, dervishes, or velis. Also, these Jesus-like miracles can be found in other epics and hagiographies (Krstić 2011, 70), but conscious attempts to replicate Jesus' miracles should be assessed in a different category.

The encounter between Gul-Andam and Battal while the former was prisoned by Taryun, although including examples of conversion by intensification, mainly portrays a traditional conversion model:

“[Gul-Andam] said: Oh brave one, are you Seyyid Battal? [Battal] said: I am. [Gul-Andam] said: Come to my religion and be free of this dungeon. I will wish for you from my father so that they will not kill you. Seyyid said: Woman! do not say things like that. These words will not even reach my ears. [Gul-Andam] went back to her father and said: Father why did you put such valiant hero to the dungeon and did not invite him to your religion so that he may help you? Her father said: My darling, he will not back down from his cause because he has read too many books.”³⁵

This encounter suggests two insights when faced with a reverse-conversion.³⁶ The first thing to note is Gul-Andam's failed advocacy. In this specific instance, Battal Ghazi is the potential convert and his conversion is presented as an impossible task. The second note is the learned nature of the Muslim protagonist. From the formulation of Battal's non-conversion, prior converts of Battal's advocacy are uneducated.

³⁵“Eyitdi: İy yigit Seyyid Baṭṭāl sen misin? Eyitdi: Beli, eyitdi: Benüm dinüme gir bu zindāndan ḥalāş ol. Atamdan seni dileyeyim mabāzā seni ala vire öldüreler didi. Seyyid eyitdi: Nigār bunuñ gibi sözler söylemegil. Bunuñ gibi söz benim kulağıma girmez didi. Kız durdu gitdi. Sürdi atası katına geldi eyitdi: İy bābā şunun gibi yigidi zindāna koydun, necün gendü dinüñe da‘vet kılmaduñ ki saña şunuñ gibi behlevān bir arka yardım ola? Didi. Atası eyitdi: Ciger küşem ol çoğ kitāblar oқыıyıp durur bize degme gez boyun virmez didi.” Folio A157, Dedes, 446.

³⁶In this case, a reverse conversion would be much more appropriate since the *Battalname* does not present, other than the incident of Uqba, any examples of apostasy from Islam to Christianity.

This assumption is another cliché of non-Muslim subjects, like "Christians are defeated because of their alcohol usage" ³⁷. However, this excerpt does not provide us with enough information to determine whether it is anti-syncretic or not. At first glance, the idea of a potential convert to be educated or not would seem to play a great role in the *Battalname's* seemingly anti-syncretic nature. However, Battal's inability to convert because of his learned nature does not mean that other converted subjects in the narrative are uneducated. But the suggestion of this learned status alone creates an interpretation of anti-syncretism.

The interaction between Battal and Gul-Andam continues to a more traditional transition of conversion where Battal converts Gul-Andam by performing miracles:

“[Gul-Andam]’s girl said: My religion is truer than yours. Why do you avoid me? Sayyid said: My religion is Muhammed’s religion. If someone has the religion of Muhammed what is the use for Jesus’ rituals? The girl said: Prove to me that your religion is the true one and I will believe. Sayyid said: What do you want? The girl said: Ask your God to conjure something out of nothing. If I see that, I will become a Muslim. Sayyid turned his face to God and said: Almighty, do not let me lose face in front of this girl. At that moment dungeon’s wall split from the power of the almighty God. And there appeared a tray with bread and food. [...] The woman saw the prophet in her dream. [Prophet] said: Gul-Andam I gave you to Battal as a bride. You will have a son named Beshir. Now convert to Islam and it will be yours. The woman woke up and saw Sayyid. She said: One true God, fell to Sayyid’s feet and converted to Islam.”³⁸

This conversion, as mentioned before, includes two aspects of conversion by intensification.³⁹ It also presents conversion through a traditional transition. Battal’s prayers are answered and miracles occur in front of a potential convert which results in Gul-Andam changing her religion. These super-natural abilities constitute a tra-

³⁷For example, see, Aşıkpaşazade, 155.

³⁸“Kız eyitdi: Benüm dinüm senuñ dinününden haqqdur. Benden neçün kaçarsın? Didi. Seyyid eyitdi: Din Muhammed dinidür. Anda ki Muhammed dini ola āyin-i ‘İsā neye yarar? Didi. Kız eyitdi: İsbāt it ki senüñ dinüñ haqqdur ben de inanayım didi. Seyyid eyitdi: Ne istersin? Kız eyitdi: Tengriñden nesne dile ğayibden sana viribsün tā ben anı görem müsliṃān olam didi. Seyyid yüzün Ğazrete dutdı eyitdi: İlahi beni şermesār itme bu kız katında didi. Ol dem Haqq Te‘ālānun kudretinden zindānuñ divārı yarıldı. Bir sini çıqdı içinden bir çanaq aş ve bir etmek getürdi[...] Kız dağı düşünde peygamberi gördi. Eydür: İy Gül-Endām ben seni Baṭṭāla virdüm. Gerek senden bir oğlı ola adı Beşir olcaqdur. Tiz imdi imāna gel işde ol dağı başuñ ucında durur didi. Nāġāh kız uyandı Seyyidi gördi. Şaddağ yā resula ‘İlah diyüp Seyyidüñ ayağına düşdi imān ‘arda kıldı.” Folio A158-159. Dedes, 447.

³⁹Conversion through prophetic dream and conversion through love or marriage.

ditional value change. Although the Christian hagiographical materials, mirabilia, and folk tales also include such miracles, performing the miracle in front of the potential convert by the advocate directly places the advocate in the same position as a Christian saint. Although conjuring food is also a miracle done by Jesus, its commonality differs from other examples of Jesus-like miracles.

Another example of traditional conversion is the usage of Jesus' imagery as a reflection on the protagonist to blatantly propose Jesus' common nature. This also causes a trivialization of one of the three main aspects of the holy trinity. This trivialization can be rooted in a potentially unplanned indifference between major religions. Nevertheless, in these instances Battal either performs a specific miracle for which Jesus' was known or in some cases posing as Jesus himself. One of the most extraordinary examples of Battal's imitation of Jesus comes in the form of converting a whole army by using the miracle of Lazarus.⁴⁰ After a brief discussion with the routing army, the prophet Khidr instigates a religious conversation: "They said: He invited us to his religion, but we will not convert. Khidr said: His religion is the true one. He said the truth. Oblige him. They said: Jesus resurrected the dead and Moses showed many miracles and we accepted them. What has he so that we may quit our religions?[...] They said [to Battal]: If you resurrect a dead man we will convert to your religion."⁴¹ Although this line of questioning by the routing army seems basic at first, it actually suggests frontier communities' confessional fluidity as well as the mindset of the Muslim community. The excerpt continues by Battal learning a special prayer. This prayer by Prophet Ilyas has the ability to resurrect the dead. With the help of Prophet Khidr, Battal says the prayer to resurrect two from the dead. Then, Battal returns and confronts the army: "Sayyid put the prayer rug down and read the prayer of prophet Ilyas and all Muslims joined him to say Amen. When Sayyid finished the prayer, the earth split and two people got up from the dust with the power of almighty God."⁴² The idea of reducing one of the main differentiating aspects of Christianity – that is, the idea of reducing Jesus becoming a common man – is a common tactic in epic literature and even religious discussions (Krstić 2011, 71).

⁴⁰One of Jesus' most popular miracles is that he raised a man named Lazarus after few days to demonstrate the power of God. For a more detailed description of raising Lazarus, see the Bible: John:11, Raising of Lazarus.

⁴¹"Eyitdiler: Bizi dine da'vet kıılır biz gendü dinümüzü terk itmemüz didiler. Hızır eyitdi: Anuñ dini haqqdur girçek dindür. Rāst eydür. Varuñ uyuñ didi. Bunlar eyitdiler: 'İsā ölüyi diri kııırdı Musā bunca mu'cizeler gösterdi biz aña ikrār getürdük. Bundan ne gördük kim varalum dinümüzü terk idelim? Didiler.[...] Eyitdiler: Ölüyi diri kııl tā kim biz senüñ dinüñe uyavuz didiler." Folio A114-115. Dedes, 421.

⁴²Seyyid seccādeyi üstine urdı İlyās peyğamber du'asın okıdı kamu müslimānlar el götürdiler amin didiler. Çünkü Seyyid du'ayı kııldı Haqq Te'ālā kıudretinden güir yarıldı iki gişi başında tobrağın saça durı geldi." Folio A118. Dedes, 423.

Making Jesus' miracles commonplace may have other reasons behind it. The prevailing thought on the subject may be to undermine Christian values while proving Islam's superiority. The reason behind portraying Jesus' abilities may be a result of building an inclusive policy. The differentiation between scriptural religions is somewhat of a blur when it comes to the frontier and Islamic mentality, as discussed before. Jesus' reductive state could be a coincidental result of this mentality. Whereas Christendom's possessiveness of Jesus – combined with a syncretic and multi-religious frontier culture – may become undermined unconsciously. Since mirabilia and hagiographical genres and *veli* cults of the Anatolian peninsula were already using heroes close to the unique qualities of Jesus, this becomes more likely an unconscious link between these genres and the *Battalname*. However, to determine whether it is a coincidence or a deliberate and systematic rhetorical tool for religious debates, it might be helpful to pose Jesus through a second set of examples by Battal.

In another instance, Battal poses as Jesus to misguide Caesar into a false sense of confidence, leading to Caesar's fail on the battlefield: "Caesar said: Why are you hitting me and who are you? Sayyid said: I am Jesus the soul of God. Caesar said: I am your humble servant, day and night I put my life for your cause. Why are you killing me? Sayyid said: You infidel dog, what have you done for me? I entrusted my men to you, and you let kings die. You did not even capture my accusers. And [Battal] hit him."⁴³ In the rhetoric between frontier discussions about Muslim and Christian holy men, the idea of Christian scripture being passed down incorrectly is a common theme. Along with this wrong transmission, the idea of true Christian doctrine being in the Qur'an as well can be seen in different discussions (Krstić 2011, 68-72). In this instance, Battal poses as Jesus to persuade the opposing army into a false sense of confidence which ultimately leads to the Muslim's victory. Portrayal of a prophet accepted by Islam seems to oppose this Muslim rhetoric. This discrepancy between the inclusion of Jesus into Muslim rhetoric and usage of Jesus' prophetic image of may be due to the intrinsic belief of differentiation between Islam and Christianity. Although the close resemblance of Islam's monotheistic nature and Christianity is an argument for Muslim scholars, because of Christian subjects' willingness to remain Christian can be a contributing factor to this discrepancy. Since one of Battal Ghazi's main roles is to convert non-Muslims to Islam, using Jesus' image as an advocate of conversion can be another cliché of the *Battalname*'s hagiographical background. Deceit is perfectly acceptable to guile enemies into

⁴³"Qaysar eyitdi: Hāy beni niçün vurursın ve ne gişisin didi. Seyyid eyitdi: 'İsā ruhu-ʿllaham. Qaysar eyitdi: Senüñ kulanam gice günüz senüñ youluña cān oynaram. Beni niçün öldürürsün? Seyyid eyitdi: İy seg-i bi-din benümçün neyledüñ? Bunca adamlarum saña işmarladım bunca pādışāhları kırdudun. Benüm bir mudda'amı ele getirmedün dir, vurur darbı." Folia A205; Dedes, 475.

submission as Battal Ghazi himself proclaims conceitedly: “Nine ten of valor is guile.”⁴⁴ Using guile to convert non-Muslims to Islam can be equally acceptable as a moral standard of the narrative.

2.5 What Might Conversion in *Battalname* Mean to a Muslim Audience?

Throughout the different examples of conversion in the *Battalname*, approaches to conversion vary in a very small scope. In this sense, a very simple directive to approach a non-Muslim person in the narrative can be summarized in a few sentences. If the potential convert is a man, either convert or kill. If the potential convert is a woman, either convert her or convert and marry her off. However, the nuances and exceptions in these conversion narratives define what may be from what should be. In this section, rather than what should be, I discuss what may be the meaning behind the interaction between a Muslim subject and the *Battalname*. Whether this interaction is the main goal of the *Battalname*'s writer or not is discussed later. Meanwhile, this section solely focuses on the *Battalname*'s possible readership. This interaction and possible meaning for an audience have three core values that are limited to the Muslim side of the perspective.

The first probable meaning to a Muslim reader or listener is an obvious and basic interaction between the *Battalname* and the audience: the legitimization of ghaza and the superiority or convenient nature of Islam in the eyes of the Muslim audience. Although this part will be examined in detail in the next chapter, its religious aspect should be discussed here as well. The most prominent example of this is the legitimization of ghaza or Islam in the wake of a religious clash with another religious polity. Islam is one of the largest dream cultures and uses dreams as a means of divination for worldly action. Although it is a common practice throughout the world, Muslims still practice dream interpretation to understand reality. (Edgar 2011, 1-2) Instances of prophetic dreams discussed previously offer a great deal of insight into this dream culture. Divination and prophecies of such dreams come directly from Prophet Muhammad, Archangel Gabriel, or God, have divine authority and dogmatic nature in narratives. These conversion narratives may be provided by recently converted Muslim warriors as discussed before or even by the

⁴⁴“Erlik ondur okuzı hiledür.” Folio A114; Dedes, 421.

Muslim community in which they may rationalize the nature of long-term conversion. However, the narrative's premise regarding the prophetic aspect becomes somewhat more than its components by adding the degree of certainty and legitimacy by God itself. In addition to prophetic dreams, the outcome of every instance of Muslim vs. non-Muslim clashes is known from the start. In any given instance of war, when Battal leads the troops to battle the Muslim side always wins. This unshakable dominance over every conflict by Muslims is also an indicator of which side God is on for narrative purposes. Both war and dream sequences legitimize conversion narratives since they are instigated and carried out by divine will. This dogmatic legitimization is also related to conversions. Conversions done by divine will or its authorized agent, Battal Ghazi, becomes absolute.

The second probable meaning for conversion narratives in the *Battalname* may be a practical reality to boost morale through the narratives. The practical gains described in the *Battalname*, whether for booty, woman, glory or religious fulfillment can attract warriors to the movement. Since the *Battalname* was part of the Jannissary's training curriculum and shouting Battal Ghazi's name before battles were known (Dedes 1996, 23), Battal Ghazi's example was used to acquire more manpower from the provinces and raise the morale of Muslim warriors before battles. Although Battal's example as a ghazi can be hard to attain since it is an ascetic way of living, the potential benefits of ghaza are described in every chapter. Furthermore, the strong connection between conversion and booty is emphasized in all chapters.

The third probable meaning would be identity-building through narrative entertainment. The *Battalname*'s oral versions were likely heard not only by the military but in any setting that an oral poet could perform. Due to the unornamented nature of the manuscripts and low quality content, one can arguably assume that it was heard mostly outside of the court. Through direct interaction between the oral poet and the audience, it would be highly likely that the audience affected the narrative texture of the *Battalname*. Although we are not aware of the differences between the latest oral form of the compiler's period and the finalized version of the *Battalname*, one can safely assume that there should be an agency behind the writing of this version of the epic. We can also assume that there are elements of affirmation or prohibition in the *Battalname*, where the presence of public opinion and the agency of the anonymous writer can be heard. Other than these meanings, there is a distinct category of listeners who hear of recent conversions. Christian audiences are the target audience of the *Battalname*. In this case, while all three points of interaction between the *Battalname* and Muslim audience apply here, there are also additional layers of interaction between the text and recently converted Muslims.

First of these additional layers of interaction is proving loyalty. In other words, a converted subject's ability to use these conversion narratives to further cement his/her status in the community. Even the existence of the narrative of recently converted warriors being under the command of Muslims and achieving many deeds like their comrades provides a narrative entry for recently converted warriors to legitimize themselves. This legitimization has two layers of impact for the recently converted: image of self and their image in the society. Recently converted warriors now engaged in combat with previous brothers, legitimizing his dilemmas and present himself a way out (Krstić 2011, 56). The same way the converted warrior's image in the society could be enhanced through these narratives also solved the warrior's dilemmas.

The second layer for recently converted warriors in the *Battalname* is the reorientation of their self in the society while reinventing themselves in their new political entity. Conversion in this sense for a converted warrior meant to re-identify, learn, reorder and reorient themselves. Not even the most syncretic aspects of a community may provide a simple and absolute break from their previous social life where values were different (Austin-Broos 2003, 2). On the other hand, these narratives provide a platform for the converted subjects to reinvent themselves. Other than the legitimization of the self in the ranks of Muslim warriors, converted subjects might have found themselves through the *Battalname*. Although the proximity of non-Muslim and Muslim subjects may provide insight into the newly adjusted social and cultural environment, the colloquial nature of Islam may have been new to these converts. The *Battalname* narratives gave these converts clichés or sets of actions to fit in with their new social structures. Usage of *Battalname* as a colloquial tool could also prevent friction with their former political and cultural strata.

2.6 Same Side, Different Story: Conversion Narrative for a non-Muslim Audience

Conversion narratives, although at first addressing Muslim audiences, could also be heard by other audiences. In a religiously and culturally mixed environment, the *Battalname* in its oral form had no restrictions in the audience. The depictions and narratives in the story would impact these individuals on a whole new level. The complexity of these narratives on non-Muslim audiences would be still impactful. For a non-Muslim audience, the possible meaning behind the conversion narratives

of the *Battalname* is vast. The main points of the argument can be summarized in two aspects.

The first aspect is the amnesty. The possibility and prior examples of amnesty through conversion can be seen in every instance of conversion in the *Battalname* narrative. From the example of Ahmad Turran to even Uqba, amnesty is always emphasized in the narrative. Although this amnesty is proposed by the advocate – with the alternative being death – the approach to these conversion remains the same. This double-edged approach to conversion, wherein on one hand there is the promise of salvation from earthly and divine punishment, and, on the other hand, capital punishment seems hypocritical. As discussed before, Anatolian communities were intermingled; Muslim and non-Muslim communities lived together and there was little to no coercion to convert. As the promise of amnesty to a non-Muslim may seem like a good choice, such a promise in a syncretic society would mean nothing. Conversion narratives to such a society and the idea of amnesty would only be possible if the audience saw this narrative as a historical source of a bygone era or a form of entertainment that draws its elements from archaic imagery – or, a combination of both. The amnesty aspect of the conversion narratives to non-Muslim communities would be either the explanation of the conversions around them or a cautionary tale of an anti-syncretic community. Given that in the *Battalname* religious conversions come after the total political submission to the authority of Islam, this cautionary tale could also be interpreted as a warning to not dismiss authority. However, given the very core value of amnesty concerning non-Muslim subjects in the Ottoman polity, it may simply be friction between different religious spheres and a call for inclusion to the greater sphere of the population. This call for inclusion might be a compromise for both Muslim and non-Muslim populations, where interchangeability between spheres proves easier.

The second aspect is the call to arms or political acceptance of Muslim authority and new possibilities for a non-Muslim subject. It is very similar to its counterpart for a Muslim audience, however, nuances for a non-Muslim audience make this aspect arguably different. The *Battalname*'s conversion examples, where a non-Muslim warrior converted into a Muslim warrior, are abundant. This inclusive policy, where the manpower pool is enlarged into encompassing every subject in and near the lands of polity, has already been discussed. Its connotations for non-Muslim populations may be more circumstantial than its narrative counterpart. A call to arms in this sense becomes a tool for horizontal as well as vertical mobility for non-Muslim subjects of the population. As it happens, in the case of Ahmed Turran, new vistas opened for the converted warrior, whether economic, political, or social. Combined with amnesty, the conversion narratives become an incentive

rather than a threat for non-Muslim communities.

2.7 Syncretic or Not: *Battalname's* Case

As seen from previous examples, conversion narratives in the *Battalname* provide us an extensive set of data with conflicting accounts of the narrative discourse. In some cases, explanations or discussions regarding the nature of the conversions that took place in the *Battalname* can be seen as syncretic or vague. Yet, most cases demonstrate a strict orthodox approach to conversion even in the flexible nature of frontier narratives. Since the *Battalname* is a collected manuscript, the passages of the 1436-7 manuscript can be taken as selectively chosen or altered. The most plausible explanation for the question of conflict with the *Battalname* anti-syncretism with the syncretic reality of Anatolia at the time might be the compiler's personal beliefs on the subject. Although the confessional ambiguity of the 15th-century Ottoman polity is in an academic consensus, as in any form of the formative process implies, persons against syncretic societies were equally present. It is possible that the *Battalname* compiler(s) interest would be in the league with a more strict Sunni point of view.

Another possible answer to the question of the *Battalname's* conflicting nature with syncretistic society may be due to the limitations of the genre. As in other narrative traditions, certain clichés and patterns are one of the defining factors of epic literature. In this case, conversion narratives may be told regarding these clichés which in turn mold the *Battalname's* anti-syncretic tone. This can be a result of nostalgia for the great ghaza movement of the past, which were reemerging when the text was compiled. This anti-syncretic nature may also stem from simplifying elements in which gave audiences an easy plotline to follow, making it suitable for popular consumption and repetition. These clichés might have prevailed in oral culture to a greater extent. Since this is the first known example of the *Battalname* genre, the distinction between oral and written forms cannot be made. Limitations on the genre would be much looser in written form since it could be controlled by a single author or compiler.

3. THE *BATTALNAME* AND THE GHAZI-KING IDENTITY

3.1 Why the *Battalname*, Why Now? Research Questions

This chapter delves into questions about ghaza and the image of the ghaza in the *Battalname*. The chapter aims to expand the idea of ghaza from the singularity of the religious expedition to complex social, cultural, religious, and economic movement of masses. There are two topics of discussion in the *Battalname* that elaborate on these topics. Since the *Battalname* is one of the earliest examples of re-vitalizing epic literature, the first question is whether the *Battalname* has specific qualities that made it the logical first choice amongst other popular oral epic narratives or not. Other epics were in circulation throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Since the *Battalname* is the first one to be compiled, is it possible that the *Battalname* was a better choice to fit some agenda? Or is it simply because the *Battalname*'s stories are more popular and easier to access? The second question centers on the historical context of the epic's compilation. Why did the *Battalname* emerge at such point and why did epic literature's popularity increase exponentially thereafter? Was the *Battalname* compiled for a reason or was it a side effect of epics' rising popularity at the time? Can we find answers to these questions in the *Battalname* or its underlying tones? This chapter first delves into the ghaza and ghazi structure in the narrative. Following this structure, a possible connection with Murad II's campaigns and depictions of ghaza and ghazi is discussed to answer these questions.

3.2 Ghaza in 15th Century Epic Narratives

Ghaza in epic narratives is a well-researched subject given influential and passionate debate centering around the Ghaza thesis for Ottoman historiography. While discussions about the Ghaza thesis and its importance are in the scope of this thesis, the topic is not one of the main focal points. Any remarks on the Ghaza thesis and its subsequent criticisms will not be broadly discussed here since the Ghaza thesis is a discussion that spans over a century and this thesis is limited to *Battalname*.¹ Instead, I reference these discussions throughout the chapter to emphasize a broader perspective from the *Battalname*.

Ghaza in the *Battalname*, in practical terms, is demonstrated through Battal's freelance raiding on behalf of the caliph and the ruler of Malatya. In a more profound sense, Battal represents both being champion of Islam and maintaining an idealized image of a ghazi-hero. Subduing Caesar and turning the Byzantine Empire into a vassal state – all the while gathering allies – are Battal Ghazi's main political functions. His approach to ghaza in this sense is a pre-emptive strike against the "infidels" in tandem with a mission to expand Islam's influence. To do so, Battal had to fight against known worldly adversaries but also with metaphysical obstacles such as witches, giants, anthropomorphic creatures, and others. His conquest relies on both the legitimization of the caliph, depicted as the supreme policy-making institution of all Muslim peoples and the legitimization done by the ruler of the Malatya Principality, Amir Umar. Although the ruler depended on Battal for both policy and war, the boundary between the ruler and the champion is set. While Battal maintains his position as the champion of Malatya, he also appears as a champion of Islam as a whole. In comparison, Danishmend Ghazi's idea of ghaza is more defensive and, out of necessity, the quest for ghaza starts with a plea for help defending the lands of Islam. Danishmend Ghazi's conquest focuses on bringing order and unity to the former territories of the Byzantine Empire in the former lands of Rum (Kitapçı-Bayri 2020, 179). In the *Saltukname*, the group of ghazis in Sarı Saltuk's entourage set forth to bringing the entire world under the flag of Islam. As such, ghaza essentially equates with universal conquest (Kitapçı-Bayri

¹For the Ghaza thesis, see Paul Wittek, *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire* (London 1938); Halil İnalçık "The Question of the Emergence of the Ottoman State" in *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 2 (1980): 71-79; For more recent approaches to different sides of the Ghaza thesis, see Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: the Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley 1995); for its relation to the image of ghaziking concerning the literary corpus, see Ali Anooshahr, *The Ghazi Sultans and the Frontiers of Islam: A Comparative Study of the Late Medieval and Early Modern Periods* (London 2008); for a broad analysis of the works regarding Ghaza thesis, see Linda T. Darling, "Contested Territory: Ottoman Holy War in Comparative Perspective" in *Studia Islamica* 91 (2000), 133-163; For the role of the Ghaza in identity building of Ottoman polity from its early stages to 15th century, see Linda T. Darling, "Reformulating the Gazi Narrative: When was the Ottoman State a Gazi State?" in *Turcica* 43 (2011), 133-53.

2020, 179-180). Sarı Saltuk's story is differentiated from Battal's in that the latter is under the Caliph's rule. The Caliph is the universal ruler of all Muslims. This universal ruler model adds political and religious layers to Battal's story.

In the three works mentioned above, the nature of the heroes is depicted as an idealized version of a ghazi wherein the hero becomes the embodiment of Islamic virtues. Although these virtues may vary from one audience to another, the universality of Islam remains an underlying tone behind every in the epics. Especially in the *Battalname*, the universality of Islam is accompanied via the universal ruler of Islam. This universality formed the characterization of the Caliph, who granted Battal direct authority over the Islamic sphere of influence.

3.3 The Caliph, Ruler, the Champion, and the Makings of Ghaza in the *Battalname*

Examining the ghazi-king and ghazi-hero narrative sequences in the *Battalname* focus on three aspects: the Caliph, the ruler, and the champion. These aspects form a layered structure that shows where divine authority is delegated. For a more thorough examination, these delegation processes are discussed via the relationships between different nodes of authority in the *Battalname*. These nodes' authority is presented in a top-down model, where the dynamics of ghaza and the imagery presented are more organized to see. The first node of authority in this case is the seemingly ultimate ruler of the lands of Islam: the caliph. The caliph's actions, imagery, and legitimization are discussed in relation to ghaza or specific, indirect political activities. Since this is an epic, the examination focuses on Battal Ghazi's interactions with the Caliph. The second node of authority is the ruler of Malatya province, Amir Umar. Here, I focus on the relationship between the ruler motif and the champion of Islam motif. The clashes and agreements between these two different nodes suggest a regional understanding of ghaza in the *Battalname*. In the *Battalname*, the ruler's narrative is somewhat undermined by the Caliph's universal rule. Yet, the protagonist's interaction with the ruler is still relevant for ghaza after Battal's appointment as the leader of the ghazis by the Caliph. The final and the primary node of power focus on the champion's role, to whom the Caliph's and the ruler's authority are directly related. This formulation provides a structure to ghaza activities that are supported by religious, governmental, and individual/divine authority where the idea of ghaza and ghazi images from the *Bat-*

talname can be discussed in an orderly structure.

3.3.1 The Caliph

The Caliph in the *Battalname* narratives appears as a universal figure for Muslims, which might be compared with Caesar's universal figure in Christianity (Kitapçı-Bayri 2020, 33). In most cases, the ruler or the champion gathers smaller armies to conquer or to battle against Caesar. However, in a crusade, where the struggle for influence between Christianity and Islam is central, the Caliph's authority is nearly absolute: "On the other side, because Caesar became free of Battal, he sent calls to all seven regions. He gathered all of his lords and soldiers to Istanbul. From Malatya, there came a letter conveying the intentions of Caesar to the Caliph. Caliph quickly made letters himself. Caliph sent out a fortune to invite all heroic believers of Islam to Baghdad."² This dual projection of power suggests that both sides not only have the representative agency of their respective realms, but the believers of other regions as well. Whereas the caliph's status as the chief representative Muslims around the world is reinforced throughout the narrative, Caesar's agency is limited, in most cases, to his kingdom. In these cases, the narrative suggests equilibrium-like state to make the battles between Caesar's state vs. Malatya principality on equal grounds. Local clashes become skirmishes and smaller battles between ghazis of Malatya against a Christian state unlike a clash between two religious powers. The equilibrium does not provide an equal number of forces for each side, though the odds are always against Muslim forces. Arguably, this equilibrium could be a distinction between territorial wars and religio-political wars. Clashes under the command of Battal or Amir Umar are territorial clashes under the umbrella of Islam. In Caliph's case, however, the war becomes more than a battle between states or territories: it is a clash between two different religions. The epic even makes distinctions between the specific boundaries of Christianity and Islam.

The spheres of Islamic and Christian influence is defined in the *Battalname*. Yet, there are no indications of territorial changes for either confession throughout the narrative. Battal's advances and conquests become nearly mythical conquests without any impact on the reality of the narrative. Although there are names of

²"Ez ib cānib çünkim kaçşar Baṭṭāldan fariğ oldı yidi İḳlime namer perākende kıldı. Dükelisiniün beglerin ve leşkerin İstanbula cem' eyledi. Malāṭiyyeden nāme viribdiler ḫalifeye kaçşaruñ dimegin bildürdüler. Ḥalife tiz nāmeler perākende kıldı. Qanda ki pādişāh-ı İslām behlevān mu'min varıdı māl dökdi da'vet eyledi." Folio A162. Dedes, 449.

rulers and warriors, the names of the city's or regions, other than mythic ones, are not mentioned in the narrative. However, there are instances of actual regions or cities where the narrative mentions an approximate influence of Islam and Christianity. These locations appear as common knowledge for the audience and the writer. For example, the caliph's levy requesting locations against a Christian conglomerate suggest Islamic influence: "Therefore they sent letters to Hijaz, Yemen, Tayf, Turkestan, Chin and more, Bulgaria, Georgia, Iraq, Isfahan, Herat, Tus, borders of Qirvan, Khorasan, and to Abdü'l-Mumin which is known as Diyar-ı Bekir-i Abad."³ These areas, scattered across Eurasia, point out a fractured borderland interlaced with scattered confessional groups. When compared with Caesar's levies for his Christian army, this dispersion is even more evident: "Ceasar Araqil sent letters to Kingdom of Franks, As, Rus, Khitai, Khotan, Samarkand, Circassia, Transoxiana, Taliqan, Mazandaran, Haluq, Garja, Sarhang-Abad, and the province of Cemshidiyye which all had infidel lords in them."⁴ These locations sketch a map of spheres of influences in the narrative, even though the demographics or geographical aspects of the locations may be subject to change. However, these spheres of influence become obsolete when compared with Battal's journeys, conquests, and conversions. The supposed boundaries of the Islamic sphere of influence does not change in the *Battalname*. These static boundaries may be a result of the mosaic-like nature of the *Battalname*, which gave importance to the hero's deeds rather than the actual conquest. Another possible explanation for the exclusive state of the narrative may lie with the historical context at the time of writing.

In both cases, Islamic territories are under the absolute protective authority of the Caliph. When Christians advance into the Islamic sphere, as in the case discussed above, the Caliph directly assists or partakes in the battle. In other cases of conquest or raiding, the Caliph's interaction with Battal Ghazi is minimal. Only after encounters between non-Muslim lands are complete does the Caliph eventually learn of such expeditions.⁵ This presents a distinctive dual role in the *Battalname*, where the Caliph is responsible for defensive and collective maneuvers. Meanwhile, Battal is responsible for ghaza and offensive activities. Even though there is the duality between the Caliph and Battal Ghazi, Battal is always needed in battles against non-Muslim armies – whether defensive or offensive ones. The Muslim's

³“Andan nāme viribdiler Hicāza ve Yemene ve Tayife ve Türkistāna ve Çine ve Māçine ve Bulğara ve Gürcistāna ve ‘İrāqa ve İsfahāna ve Heriye ve Tusa ve Hadd-i Kırvāna ve Hürāsāna ve ‘Abdü'l-Mu'min iline ki şimdikiñâlde aāa Diyar-ı Bekr-i ābād dirler.” Folio A162. Dedes, 449.

⁴“Araqil qaşar nāme perākende kıldı Firingistāna Asā Rūsa Hıṭāya Hōtana Samarqanda ve Cerkese ve Māverā'n-nehre ve Taliqana İstaḥra ve Hāracneye ve Māzenderāna Haluqa ve Ğarcaya ve Serhenge Bāde ve Cemşidiyye vilāyetine ve her vilāyetde ki kāfir begleri varıdı.” Folio A162. Dedes, 449.

⁵For example, see, Folio A28, Dedes, 365-366; Folio A152, Dedes, 443.

dependence on Battal is evident throughout the epic where, without Battal's direct involvement, Muslims appear to be on the verge of defeat. Since Battal Ghazi always reaches the field before a battle's conclusion, dependency on Battal becomes a motif or a narrative tool rather more than reality. Battal's necessity throughout episodes of conflict enunciates a link between ghaza and the ghazi persona. This link can be formulated as the fight against the enemies of Islam is a lost cause without a heroic ghazi figure. Since Battal Ghazi's popular figure could be appropriated by warriors already took part in ghaza and willing audiences who may partake in these activities, Battal Ghazi's image is irreplaceable. The heroic ghazi image can be interpreted as the audience of the *Battalname*. A ghazi that follows the teachings and the ways of a great hero such as Battal can turn the tide of battle to their favor. The Caliph's dependence on the hero, in real terms, depicts Murad II's dependence on his ghazi warriors. Such a relationship imposes additional burdens and benefits on the narrative's audience. In this sense, the relationship between the Caliph, the personification of the will of the Muslim communities, and the Battal Ghazi are co-dependent.

Despite this dependence, the Caliph's authority remains intact in all times. Furthermore, the Caliph maintains his authority over the ghazis through a share of the booty. In every instance of booty distribution, the Caliph's share is mentioned and saved: "From that booty, they gave a hundred horses, a hundred swords, one-hundred armors, and one-hundred helmets to the Caliph."⁶ This distribution of the booty for the Caliph is a recurring end theme for chapters throughout the narrative.⁷ This displays Battal Ghazi's identity as a Muslim hero rather than a hero of Malatya. Normally, one-fifth of the acquired booty is given to the ruler (Lowry 2003, 48). In this case, however, Amir's share is distributed to the Caliph. Amir Umar receives his share of booty as any other ghazi. This distribution scheme clearly indicates the Caliph's universal rule as well as Amir Umar's role as a simple frontier beg under Islamic rule. In turn, the Caliph's actions to loyal ghazis provide us with another depiction of his universal rule. The Caliph presents gifts to the ghazis in similar ways a ruler interacts with his subjects. The Caliph's gifts of relics and titles to Battal directly relates to the authority given to Battal as a reward for expanding Islam's sphere of influence: "[...]On the eighth day, the Caliph wrote a decree appointing Ja'far to his father's command. The Caliph presented the headpiece of Husayn the commander of the faithful, the sword of Muhammad Hanifa, the mace of Landuh and Hattab the commander of the faithful's banner.

⁶Ol ғанімет мәлн ықардылар ҳаліфе ічүн yüz at ve yüz kılıc ve yüz zire ve yüz ısıқ ҳаліфeye viribdiler." Folio A62; Dedes, 390.

⁷For some of the examples of booty distribution, see Folio A43, Dedes, 278; Folio A62, Dedes, 390; Folio A80, Dedes, 401; Folio A84, Dedes, 403.

He [Caliph] also gave mantles and advice to all other notable ghazis around Amir Umar.”⁸ Throughout the narrative, famous relics of different kinds are gifted to the Battal Ghazi. These gifts are important for two reasons. Firstly, such gifts impart the authority and legitimization of all previous holders of these relics to Battal. Combined with presents from the Caliph himself, Battal both literally and figuratively gains the capability of representing Islam himself.

Secondly, these relics provide Battal Ghazi with a direct link to the ghazas of old. This link makes Battal not only a descendant of the Prophet but also gives him rightful ownership over the relics of known figures in the Qur’an and popular stories. Battal becomes not only the champion of Islam, but also one of its great heroes. In a decree written by the Caliph, Battal was appointed to a commanding position that made him an administrative authority as well. Battal’s political, religious, and historical authority becomes solidified and justified by the Caliph’s decree. This authority is not used in any other sense than ghaza throughout the narrative. Battal remains under the orders of Amir Umar, though in some cases orders of Amir are disregarded or dismissed. Battal’s role never goes beyond the boundaries of a holy warrior. Though his connection with previous ghazis will be discussed broadly later, Battal’s interactions with the Caliph provides an ideal ghazi-image where the former is endorsed by the authority of the community of believers – past, present, and future.

Conquests done in the name of Islam and the Caliph rather than the Malatya Principality. Malatya principality in this sense is a vassal state or contingent on the umbrella polity of Islam. This makes Amir Umar a semi-autonomous frontier lord and one of the Caliph’s political delegates. However, Amir’s standing in the society or the community of Malatya was never challenged by Battal Ghazi. The authority given to Battal by the Caliph remains strictly over conducting ghaza whereas administrative and local authority remains with Amir Umar. In this sense, the relationship between the Amir Umar and Caliph becomes the relationship between the frontier *beg*, and the universal king.

⁸“[...] sekizinci gün halife buyurdı mensur yazdılar atasınıñ serleşkerligin Ca’fer adına yazdılar. Emirü’l-mu’minin Hüseyin imamesin Muhammed Hanefinün kılıcın ve Lendühun gürzin Emir el-mu’minin Haṭṭabun sancağın Ca’fere viribdi. Emir ‘Ömere ondan her adı bellü ğaziye hil’atlar ve naşihatlar viribdi.” Folio A28; Dedes, 366.

3.3.2 "The Ruler"

The ruler in the *Battalname* is Amir Umar, who reigns over Malatya, a province in southeastern Anatolia near the Mediterranean. While Malatya principality is depicted as a semi-autonomous self-sustaining principality under Amir Umar's leadership, religio-political affairs are controlled by the Caliph. Additionally, when a coalition of non-Muslim forces gathers against Muslim populations, the command of the army transfers to the Caliph, who leads the army personally. However, the chain of command alters in some cases, when the Caliph places Amir Umar in command: "He [Caliph] gave his headpiece to Amir Umar. He also gave Ali the commander of the faithful's banner to Amir Umar and said: You are most familiar with this realm. You become the commander in chief."⁹ Although Amir Umar's involvement in the story is minimal and serves as a point of authority in the narrative, Amir Umar's role is reinforced throughout the narrative.

Depictions of Amir Umar are scarce since the relationship between the Caliph and Battal is more prominent. "Ahmar saw a sultan wearing lordly clothes, but is meager and weak."¹⁰ The weakness here refers to Amir Umar's prowess in battle, yet he is depicted elsewhere as wise and intelligent. The scarce presence of Amir Umar has several different connotations. Perhaps this scarceness can be explained through the role of frontier beg when interacting with Battal Ghazi. Frontier lords were given enough freedom to determine the methods of conquest, defenses, missions, and raids against possible non-Muslim raids in a decentralized manner (Jefferson 2012, 96). However, the narrative transfers the active role of a frontier lord to Battal Ghazi, leaving only reactive actions by Amir Umar. Conquests, missions and raids against non-Muslim lands are orchestrated by Battal Ghazi while Amir Umar's role is strictly defensive. Whether or not Amir Umar's lack of presence is on purpose, the emphasis on Caliph as an authority figure is present at all instances of war.

As discussed before, the role of the Malatya Principality in ghaza appears as an outpost of Islam. The Amir's role was nothing but a reactive frontier lord in the Muslim army. But this lack of depth on Amir Umar's part could be related to the scarcity of his presence in the narrative. This scarcity makes examinations an uphill battle. Still, the idea of rulership and ghaza can be seen from another side of the narrative. The supposed Christian side of the narrative pits the Byzan-

⁹"Gendü 'imamesin Emir 'Ömere virdi. Emirü'l-mu'minin 'Alinüñ sancâğın dağı Emir 'Ömere virdi eyitdi: Bu diyârı senden yig kimse bilmez. Serleşker-i muğaddem sen ol didi." Folio A172; Dedes, 455.

¹⁰"Ağmer gördi bir pâdişâh emirâne ÷onlar giyer ammâ za'if." Folio A35; Dedes, 370.

tine ruler against the Caliph. From this opposition, Caesar's religious authority is depicted as lacking compared with the Caliph. Throughout the conflict, between Caesar's constant territorial losses and Islamic advancement into non-Muslim territories, Caesar's influence over the Christian populations remains limited. Caesar's role accordingly changes to the needs of the story. When facing the Caliph, Caesar becomes a religious leader. When Caesar faces with any other Islamic political authority, he simply becomes the ruler of a polity.

Aside from the example of Uqba, the only other example of prolonged political discourse intermingled with conversion can be found in the case of the third Caesar of the narrative, Asatur:

"Sayyid said [to Caesar]: You wretched man, become a Muslim at once or I will order them to dismember you. Asatur said: Oh, the great hero I have two cities and seven thousand castles under my command. If I were to become Muslim, all these places would rebel. For this time only come to pardon me and let me pay you tribute. I will vow to never attack the lands of Islam again. The Caliph, Sayyid, and other notables talked between themselves: "If we kill him now, his son will become the Caesar instead. The city is fortified and surrounded by sea from three sides and cannot be taken by force. Let's make a peace since we have famine amongst our soldiers too."¹¹

This is a unique encounter between life-long enemies wherein Caesar's forgiven for not converting. There are three points of interest this passage exemplifies in the case of ghaza-state relationships and religious conflicts.

The first point is the possibility of political quietism in Islam,¹² which expresses itself the clash between Christianity and Islam. The idea of being patient and submitting to a Christian ruler in the face of anarchy is a deeply embedded thought in Sunni traditions (al-Sarhan 2020, 81-99). The Caliph's decision to let the Caesar remain in his seat of power. Caesar's presence as a ruler may coincide with the articulation of this quietist tradition. Caesar's main argument being possible rebellions

¹¹"Seyyid eyitdi: İy la'in tiz müslimān ol yoḥsa şimdi buyurdum pāre pāre eylediler didi. Asātur eydür: "Li pehlevān şimdi kihāle bana ta'lluk iki pāre şehir var heft hezār pāre qal'a vardur. Eger ben müslimān olursam dükelişi elden gider ḥāsi olurlar. Gelün bu def'a daḥı baña amān virün beni azād eyleñ ḥarāca kesün. And içeyim kim ayruḥ islāma qaşd itmeyem didi. Ḥalife ve Seyyid ve kalan ulular meşveret kıldılar eyitdiler: Şimdi biz bunı öldürürsevüz şehriñ kavmı oḡlın yirine qaysar dikerler. Şehir sarḫ katı mühkem üç yanı deñize savaşıla alınmaz. Meger kim illik ola bizüm leşker içinde daḥı kızlık var çāresi barışmaḫdur didiler." Folios 330-331; Dedes, 543.

¹²Political quietism in Islam has many connotations. Quietism in this case, however, refers to the proverb: "Better one hundred years of Sultan's tyranny than one year of people's tyranny over each other", meaning anarchy is preferable to other ruling conditions.

erupting in various cities if he were to convert makes quietism a plausible argument. On the other hand, granting the Caesar's plea might also be a political understanding of domination and tribute. In all other instances of conquest in the *Battalname*, conquest is the main derivative force of expansion. These conquests are followed by replacing an authority figure with an Islamic emissary. Although total conquest is not achieved in the case above, Caesar's offer of tribute can be viewed as political motivation in the narrative. This notion coincides with conversion dynamics in the *Battalname* where political transformation precedes religious conversion.

Secondly, there is the possibility of understanding contemporary time through past relations with mythic-archaic spaces of frontier mentality. From the very beginning of the epic, the Anatolian conquest was prophesied by Battal Ghazi himself¹³. However, in 1436-7 the geographical and political reality differed from the narrative of *Battalname*. This may be the justification behind the Byzantine's continued rule over Constantinople and other non-Muslim territories. While this justification is not limited to his prophecy alone, Christianity's grasp over Constantinople instead of Islam is frequently reinforced in the *Battalname*. The narrative depicts the expansion of Islam's political sphere. Battal's prophecy of Islamic forces conquering Constantinople does not go beyond prophecy, however. At the same time, the prophecy shows awareness of Christianity's hold on the future Ottoman capital. This awareness includes a connection to the political environment at the time of writing. It is evident that, based on this awareness, other chapters of the narrative were altered to suit the needs and tastes of the 15th-century Anatolian frontier.

The third point is displays of ghaza' more practical aspects in the frontier's political structure. Displaying rational thinking points to a link between narrative thinking and actuality in a given situation. Even in the cliché structure of the *Battalname*, the rationale behind the existing situation becomes exemplified. In this case, the *Battalname*'s narrative includes realities such as famine and Constantinople's fortifications, showing aspects of realpolitik to ghaza. In all instances of war, tactical advantages came solely from Battal Ghazi himself, while disadvantages could be blamed on the enemy. When discussing Caesar's conversion, the tactical disadvantage is the main reason behind Caesar's release. This realpolitik thinking also contributed to the previously mentioned second point. The narrative could easily be changed to Caesar's complete defeat followed by his conversion. Instead, it decides to narrate the story in this manner because of the implausibility of conversion.

Differences between Caesar and Amir Umar, as they both portray political authority, raises questions about leadership status in the wider community of Islam.

¹³See, Folio P2b-11b; Dedes 336-7.

If an analogy between the Caliph and Sultan Murad II could be drawn, what is the functionality of the Amir Umar? One possible answer to this question would be that he is an intermediary between the individual and political aspects of ghaza. The focus on Battal Ghazi is to promote the image of ghazi which forms a connection between the audience and the hero. Amir Umar's presence, or, more arcuately, the lack thereof, attests to the needs of the audience which demand a hero serve the Caliph – not the local ruler. Ultimately, this undermined the intermediary's role.

3.3.3 The Champion

The main point of interest of this chapter is ghaza activities that involve Battal Ghazi, with or without his entourage. This chapter focuses on ghaza-making and ghazi activities in the *Battalname*, and focus in particular on the image and the identity of the individual ghazi. While examining the portrayal of the ghazi, the image building of the ghazi-king is discussed along the lines of the Caliph's portrayal in the narrative. The image of the ghazi presented is not the examination of Battal Ghazi's deeds, but the examination of the ghazi ethos as a whole - including interactions with the ghazi-King image in the narrative. The secondary literature on the *Battalname* dissects Battal Ghazi's every movement and action to portray the image of a perfect ghazi or Sunni warrior. However, the current state of scholarship has not accounted for a holistic approach to the ghazi image in the *Battalname*. This chapter, consequently, provides examples of different image-building pieces of Battal Ghazi, explores possible connotations and discussions regarding these actions in the scope of ghazi imagery. Images of ghaza and ghazis in the *Battalname* are split into two aspects. The first is the economical and practical reasoning behind ghaza where economic concerns regarding the issue are dissected in the framework of the social status of the ghazi. The second is the political aspect of ghaza and its relation to other authority figures – and the ghazi-king in particular.

3.3.3.1 The acquisition and re-distribution of booty

As discussed before, the epic portrays the acquisition of booty as an exchange between a universal ruler and a ghazi. However, rather than the exchanges between the Caliph and the Battal Ghazi, this chapter focuses on the individual connotations of the economic aspects in the epic. Rather than exchanging the means and places of booty acquisition, I create a formulaic approach to illustrate the idea of booty in the ghazi image.

The portrayal of booty acquisition is a common narrative device used throughout the *Battalname*. In all instances of conquest, victory, or conversion, the distribution of booty is used as a conclusion to a respective story. However, Battal Ghazi's actions differ greatly from other ghazis in regard to material possession. For other ghazis, ghaza also comes in the form of an economic enterprise. Battal rejects any material possessions and distributes his share to Muslim communities or other ghazis. "They found great booty in the church. Sayyid distributed all of it and didn't even take one piece of it."¹⁴ This interaction raises the question of Battal Ghazi's asceticism. This asceticism is more apparent when Battal discusses his possessions: " Sayyid said: I own no animal and no thing. Let me go hunting for whatever I may catch may become Abdu'l-Wahab's."¹⁵ From these two excerpts, one can assume that Battal Ghazi a saint-like figure. His rejection of worldly materials, although coinciding with the idea of religious zealotry and saint-like qualities that other epics from the 15th-century display, contradicts the economic benefits of ghaza activities.¹⁶ At first glance, these passages seem to contradict Lowry's ideas of economically incentivized ghaza, as the warriors' driving force is a sense of duty and asceticism rather than plunder. The economic incentivization of ghaza to participants other than Battal Ghazi contradicts the general narrative approach to booty acquisition. In many instances, Battal's acquisitions of booty are concluded with re-distribution either to common Muslim populations or the other ghazis. Even the tributes and annual incomes from Christian and Muslim settlements are respectively portrayed as partly for the Caliph and other ghazi's. The portrayal of a ghazi figure where asceticism and other-worldly qualities are apparent – as opposed to an economically incentivized ghazi figure – are conflicting in nature. If the reality of

¹⁴"Çokluk mal çıkardılar deyrden. Seyyid hep üleşdürdi bir hebbesin kabul itmedi." Folio A80; Dedes, 399.

¹⁵"Yatur de turur de hiç nesnem yokdur. Bir şikâr ideyim her ne kim elüme girürse 'Abdu'l-Vahhâbuñ olsun didi." Folio A220; Dedes, 484.

¹⁶See, for example, Lowry, 45-54.

the situation dictates a certain incentive to recruit more manpower for upcoming conquests or campaigns, Battal's asceticism conflicts with the need for booty. This conflict is more likely tied with the narrative sensibilities of an epic more generally. Champion figures are mostly portrayed as idealized warriors¹⁷ which are portrayed as other-worldly. The portrayal of Battal Ghazi may be a result of a hero motif in the tradition. This differentiation between interest points of the ghazis can be taken as non-conflicting and inclusive. This dual portrayal of ghazi identity enables both religious and practical motivations for partaking in ghaza.

Beyond the portrayal of booty acquisition, the sources of booty in the epic is also an important discussion. There are two main methods for the acquisition of monetary valuables: looting defeated foes or the conquered regions, including annual tribute incomes from territories under Muslim influence or rule. Along with these two varying forms of income from non-Muslim sources, ghazis that participate in battle also acquire gifts from the Caliph.

Booty is primarily derived from military or religious sources. For military booties, victory appears as the main source whereas religious booty derives from the pillaging churches. As discussed before, Battal acts as an initiator for booty acquisition despite not participating in its distribution. His initiator status can be the reasoning behind the epic's discourse on conquering non-Muslim lands. The focus mostly focuses on demolishing churches, religious sites, and territories of non-Muslims.¹⁸ The narrative's focus on demolition may be related to the inherently economic aspects of ghaza activities. In this sense, although discussed in the previous chapter, Battal's words regarding his purpose in the narrative should be mentioned again: "Abu Bakr, I am leaving now, and I will take these lands for you. But all the churches are mine."¹⁹ Although this interaction between Abu Bakr and Battal may be interpreted as conversion and religiosity, it also attests to churches as one of the main sources of income for ghazis. The focus on churches and their properties can be attested to a newly formulating religious identity during Murad II's reign. Under Murad II's reign, the Ottoman realm became more established in its territories and the confessional topography settled. To do so, previous religious sites were destroyed and replaced with Islamic infrastructure (Barkey 2008, 63). Perhaps one

¹⁷For a detailed analysis on the concept of the idealized hero as the champion of Islam, especially in the futuwwa movement, see, Mehmet F. Köprülü, *Osmanlı Devleti'nin Kuruluşu* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1991), 83-102.

¹⁸Although there are many examples of destroying churches, the most interesting one is an instance where Battal asks for permission from Caesar to build a monument in Constantinople, tricking Caesar into giving some portion of Constantinople so that Battal can ultimately destroy churches and build mosques. See, Folios 331-332; Dedes, 543-544.

¹⁹"Ya Ebu Bekir ben giderem bu illeri hep saña. Eved ne kadar kilisâlar varsa benümdür." Folio A145; Dedes, 439.

of the many roles given to Battal Ghazi was to connect the narrative to reality as in the decade the epic was compiled, there was already a process of refurbishing religious institutions underway.

The second form of monetary gain described in the epic is annual tributes from neighboring countries. Unlike the acquisition of booty, tributes in the narrative directly involve the Byzantine Empire.²⁰ While Battal again serves as the initiator in these transactions, the control of the income is ultimately decided by the Caliph. Battal's role in the acquisition of these tributes is simply as a participant in the battle which ultimately depends on himself. These tributes conflict with the nature of the narrative, in which the hero expands Islam's sphere of influence through conquest. Yet again these conflicts may just reflect political and geographical realities of the time.²¹ In this case, tribute is not an exception to the main ideology of expansion but a retroactive explanation to the current situation. The geographical situation of the Ottoman polity must be common knowledge among the subjects. But the narrative's prophetization of the conquest of Anatolia does not coincide with the reality of the geography. Therefore, the concept of tribute may be employed to fill the gap between geographical reality and the continuation of the narrative. Once again, the economic activities of ghaza in the *Battalname* may well coincide with the realities of 15th-century Anatolia. Unlike the inconsequentiality of the geographical expansion, acquiring booty and tribute seem to be in sync with the realities of the situation. However, not all forms of economic transmissions portrayed are in the portrayal of ghazis in the *Battalname*.

In the case of gifts from the Caliph, the value of the gifts does not depend on their monetary value. Gifts' values depend more on the symbolic approval of the Caliph and recognition of the achievement of a ghazi. Even with Battal Ghazi's ascetic values, he accepts relics and other forms of material possessions are accepted if they come from the Caliph. For other ghazis, then, gifts from the Caliph, however symbolic they may be, present another method of material gain for the ghazis. Episodes of gift-giving reemerge at the end of each story to conclude the narrative arc following the distribution of the booty. These gifts come in the form of either oral/verbal commendations through lands of Islam or physical gifts such as weapons, mantles, robes, etc. However, the *Battalname* does not show the Caliph's or the ruler's common practice of land distribution. Throughout the 14th and 15th centuries, the Ottomans frequently offered land in exchange for services rendered on

²⁰For example, see A 331; Dedes, 543.

²¹For detailed information about the wider historical context of 1436-7 under Murad II, see Jefferson, 69-119; For examinations of ghaza literary corpora during the reign of Murad II, see Anooshahr, 139-165; For a chronology of events from 1402 to 1451, see Imber 2002, 17-27.

the battlefield (İnalçık 2001, 25). The lack of land distribution in the *Battalname* raises some questions regarding the nature of these transactions. There is no mention of top-down rewards in the form of land ownership. Battal Ghazi's approach to worldly possession is obvious, however, even in the case of other ghazis, exchanges between the Caliph and ghazi are a simple monetary and honorary exchange. While Battal receives armaments in the forms of relics, these are for legitimacy and battle prowess. Other ghazis receive ceremonial mantles and goods in the exchange of their services. This lack of holdings may be excluded because of the narrative formulation of the ghazi structure in the manuscript. A more likely explanation, however, would be the belief in the zealous nature of ghaza for the author – exemplified by Battal as the ideal image of such a participant. Although the ghazis in the narrative gain monetarily from their expeditions, the narrative emphasizes that an idealized ghazi would not seek compensation. Battal's title, "Sultan of Ghazis"²² puts him on a different station to which others should aspire - where monetary gains would be trivial. This formulation is highly speculative, but it seems plausible when combined with the conversion narratives and the religious leanings of the compiler.

Perhaps a formulation of social context for an individual ghazi may better contextualize economic aspects of the *Battalname*. Although the *Battalname*'s writer was not necessarily of the same social group as his audience(s), the *Battalname* was certainly popular among frontier dervishes and ghazis (Anooshahr 2009, 145). Even in separate narratives, there is always a call for booty in each story along with the formulation of how to acquire it. Each story in the *Battalname* could be taken as a kind of formula for acquiring booty by different audiences. The nature of ghazas or campaigns would be known by the audience through oral transmission, with highly idealized and romanticized stories drawing a larger crowd. While this formula depicts battles and the subsequent acquisition of the booty, the narrative also places the audience in the shoes of the Battal Ghazi. The depictions of battles, where outnumbered Muslim forces with some sacrifices gained an upper hand in battle in any given scenario, inspired many ghazis. Therefore, this near certain glory could boost recruitment. Even though the recruitment pool would be vast, it would be playing little to no role in the recruitment process. Since orality depends on the audience (Ong 2005, 41), Battal Ghazi's actions would be the main point of interest. Therefore, while the economic prospects of the ghaza activities may play a subsidiary role in these recruitment policies, Battal Ghazi's role in these recruitments would be much greater. Battal's role, though perhaps characterized simply as a religious zealot, would encompass cultural, religious, and social characteristics. It would be

²²In the epic, Battal Ghazi is called as the "Sultan of Ghazis" ("Gaziler Sultanı") in many cases, for example, see Folio A144, Dedes, 438.

unwise to suggest the identity of ghazi in the *Battalname* as solely an economic enterprise – rather, it served a combination of purposes, including opening new political vistas.

3.3.3.2 Political connotations of ghaza in Anonymous *Battalname*

The *Battalname*'s political nature comes from Battal Ghazi's interaction with the Caliph as a representative of the Dar al-Islam (Abode of Islam). As discussed previously, the universal title of Caliph remains intact throughout the narrative going as far as to disregard state-level polity. Power relations between Battal and the Caliph are useful in assessing desired or real political structures and policy-making in the *Battalname*.

Identity is a issue highlighted in the *Battalname*. Ghazis' image differs from the realities of contemporary policymaking.²³ These conflicts range from the ideal ghazi to ideal state formations wherein the role of the governmental body is accompanied by religiosity. The most probable explanation for these conflicting narratives would be the idealization of ghaza leaders in the narrative sense. Since Battal Ghazi appears as somewhat different than other ghazis with his approach to ghaza, the idealized Battal Ghazi gives us insight into the idea of a ghazi-king. Ali Anooshahr uses this co-relation between Battal Ghazi and the portrayal of the Caliph as a social understanding of Muslim communities and ghaza. He further argues that the reason behind epics' re-surfacing in the 15th century is to create an idealized image of a ghazi-king where Caliph represents Murad II and Battal represents the ghazis (Anooshahr 2009, 144). However, I argue that the relationship between Battal Ghazi and the Caliph does not exactly replicate the link between ghazi warriors and Murad II. As the Caliph gains his power from the totality of the Muslim sphere of influence, Murad II's case differs in locations and communities represented in the epic. Although the Islamic sphere of influence is not under Murad II's rule, it is clear he had aspirations to such a status. The Ottomans frequently likened themselves as the inheritors of the Caliphate in building their identity. It is often said that the Ottomans inherited their right to rule from the Seljuqs, who in turn inherited their right from the Abbasid caliphate. (Darling 2011, 50). However, after the 1402

²³While Battal Ghazi appears as a single driving force of the ghazis in the narrative, the image of a ghazi-king was promoted through the means of historical record keeping. For a more detailed account of ghazi-king image building, see, Colin Imber, "The Ottoman Dynastic Myth," *Turcica* 19 (1987), 7-27.

invasion of Anatolia by Timurids, the House of Osman's worthiness to continue this succession line became questionable. This loss of legitimacy leads to a search for the rehabilitation of the image of the House of Osman which produced literary works that are inclined to prove that divine authority was still at the hands of the sultan (Yılmaz 2018, 127). Therefore, although Murad II was not in control of the whole domain of Islam and his image as a ruler was scarred, he did in fact have pretenses to such power. This power was mostly stemming from the various scholars and Sufi mystics flooding into the Rum because of Murad II's policy of patronage. Scholars, by including the image of Murad II as the Caliph and a learned ruler, propagated the legitimacy of the Ottoman House. These works further presented the sultan as a universal ruler, very much like in the Timurid scholars' attempt to universalize their ruler (Yılmaz 2018, 130). Also because of Murad II's patronage and close relations with Sufi orders such as Mevlevis and Bektāşis, these Sufi mystics placed Murad II at the center of their understanding of a ruler, making him the first Ottoman caliph in a Sufistic sense - a ruler with absolute religious and political authority (Yılmaz 2018, 131). These portrayals of Murad II, perfectly fits with the image of the Caliph in the *Battalname* and makes the Anoshahr's connection between the fictional and actual ruler more apparent.

Claims of the ideal image of the sultan, where the sultan must protect the sphere of Islam and ensure victory over the rejectionists of Islamic principles (Karateke 2005, 42), is presented by the Caliph. Although Battal Ghazi carries the same burdens in the narrative, Battal's role is martial and as an advocate of conversion. On the other hand, the Caliph represents economic, political, and religious matters. He is harnessed with a "protector against the infidel" discourse which enables the Caliph to act against threats to Islamic principles – whether non-Muslim or not. Anyone who proves to be a threat to the central authority of the Caliph is automatically on the wrong side of the religious authority. If the parallels between Murad II and the *Battalname*'s Caliph are taken into consideration, Murad II would gain *de jure* over anyone who recognizes his religious authority, enabling Murad II to unite all Muslims against opposing parties under the pretense of ghaza.

Although the universal rule of the Caliph is often challenged by Caesar in the *Battalname*, one instance displays another form of conflict where ghaza activities can be elaborated. Instances involving Babak²⁴ the false prophet display another facet of the political side of ghaza in the *Battalname*. Although Babak's case can be taken as a conversion narrative, its political connotations are far more important.

²⁴For more information on the Babak Khorramdin, see Ronen Cohen "The "Babak Khorramdin Organisation": A Mysterious Opposition Group in the Islamic Republic of Iran" in *Iran and the Caucasus vol.18*, 167-180.

Babak the false prophet, as it has been passed down as a cautionary tale in Islamic literature, claims to be one of the prophets: “Babak said: Battal I am a prophet and now this is my time. The era of the Muhammad is long gone, leave him and come to me so that you may not shy away from me in the Judgement Day.”²⁵ Babak’s proclamation, while controversial, does not indicate him being from any other religion or under any umbrella term that corroborates his claim other than being a faction of Islam in the narrative. However, the usage of infidel in this context is somewhat different when it is used for non-Muslim populations. In this case, infidel is similar to the understanding of infidel in the *Gazavat-ı Sultan Murad b. Mehemmed Han*²⁶. When confronted by Karamanid aggression towards Ottoman lands, Murad II asks his scholars to define the meaning of infidel: “Masters, what is your ruling? What is the judgment of the shariah if a man makes common cause with the infidel and causes harm and oppression to the community of Muhammad?” When the ulema replied, ‘If this is the case, he is himself an infidel’, the Padishah issued his orders.” (Imber 2006, 45) Babak’s infidel status comes from the same idea of conflict with the Prophet Muhammed’s community which is under the control of the Caliph. Aside from this, Babak’s pretense to prophethood occurs in the narrative as with any other non-Muslim adversary. Ultimately, I would suggest religious or political rivals of the current administration were subject to ghaza. In the *Battalname*, ghaza is a politically-charged concept.

If the similarities between the Caliph and Murad II are taken as a possible juxtaposition by the compiler, Babak’s case becomes one of the strangest stories in the epic. First, unlike the rest of the narrative, Battal Ghazi speaks for himself – breaking the third-person viewpoint of the story.²⁷ This break possibly points out to an interjection or a different style of narration in the story. Secondly, Babak’s story does not fit in the narrative arc of the *Battalname*. Whereas the first half of the work is dedicated to the politically-driven conflicts between Caesar and the Caliph and the second half dedicated to Battal’s mythical deeds, Babak’s story is in the latter half. This could be because of the popularity of Babak’s story in the realm or its circulation being close to the original in the *Sirat Delhemma*. However, these indicators suggest that either there has been an addendum to the story, or it was taken from a completely different source. In the latter case, Babak’s inclusion

²⁵“Bābek eydür: Yā Baṭṭāl ben peyğamberem şimdiki vakt benüm vaqtumdur. Muḥammed devri geçdi ol āyin erkāni ḳo gel benümlle mutābba‘at it kim yarın ḳiyāmet güninde benden utanmayasın.” Folio A 435; Dedes, 595-596.

²⁶Translations are from Colin Imber, *The Crusade of Varna, 1443-45* (Manchester: Ashgate Publishing, 2006) which uses the *Gazavat-ı Sultan Murad b. Mehemmed Han: İzladi ve Varna Savaşları Üzerinde Anonim Gazavatname* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1989) ed. With notes and facsimile by Halil İnalçık and Mevlüd Oğuz.

²⁷For example, see Folio A422, Dedes, 588-589; Folio A423, Dedes 589.

might have been used as a motif to highlight different forms of infidels or political rivals of central power. In the former, Babak's case may be referring to the power struggle between false (Düzme) Mustafa and Murad II.

If we consider the juxtaposition of Caliph and Murad II, Babak's false claim on the Muslim sphere of influence coincides with the struggle between Murad II and the false Mustafa. In 1421, the Byzantine Emperor, Manuel II, released Mustafa to oppose Murad II. The latter acted to exact vengeance by besieging Constantinople (Imber 2006, 42). These events are more than possibility in the public's memory – being that the event happened 16 years prior to the epic's compilation. Babak's story and the death of Battal are separated by two chapters. Consequently, if the story can be taken as a chronology of Battal's mythical deeds, it seems more logical that Babak's chapter is closer to the end of the narrative since the story is a nearly mythical and widely circulated one. Also, as mentioned in the previous chapter, Battal's prophecy of Constantinople's conquest was incomplete in the narrative because of Battal's untimely death. Perhaps Murad II's failure to capturing Constantinople in 1422 reflects Battal's untimely death. Nevertheless, even in the case of Babak's character being unintentionally included, the possibility of connection remains. Any audience, at least in the time of writing, could have connected the story of Battal to their reality.

3.4 Why the *Battalname*?

One of the more obvious answers to the question of “Why the *Battalname*?”, is the portrayal of a ghazi-king image. Although this portrayal may not be the only reason behind the re-iteration of the *Battalname*, it is a contributing factor for the reemergence of the epic genre. The Ottoman sultan's martial image was promoted through these epics, which enunciated the sanctity of religious battles against the infidel. Combined with the ability to protect Islam's sphere of influence and the strategic command of the Sultan was displayed through these epics (Karateke 2005, 43). However, this image-building does not exemplify the unique qualities of the *Battalname* but a general trend towards the imagery of ghazi-king.

To understand the purpose of the *Battalname*, one must take the portrayal of the ghazi idea in Murad II's reign. In this case a quote from *Gazavat-ı Sultan, Murad b. Mehmed Han* may provide us with insight into the reasoning behind

the preference of the *Battalname*: “You are my companions in every campaign. Let us see how zealously you strike down the infidels who are as low as the dust, the enemies of our religion, for the sake of Islam. You know for certain what the merits of holy war are, and how exalted the status of martyrs. [...] Those of us who kill will be holy warriors, and those of us who die will be martyrs.” (Imber 2006, 45) Of course, Murad II’s speech to his soldiers only espouses civic and religious duties. However, it is exactly the same as the Caliph’s speech from the *Battalname*: “Fight for your religion, for yourself, for your daughters and your sons. If you are killed you will be martyrs and if you kill you will be gazis.”²⁸ Ali Anooshahr takes this similarity as a strong proof of the Caliph-Murad II similarities. Combined with Yazıcıoğlu Ali’s history narrating Murad II as the ideal ghazi-king, this similarity becomes more evident (Anooshahr 2009, 148-152). Given that Murad II’s Balkan campaigns were a success, this image-building as ghazi-king may be the reason behind the popularity of the *Battalname*. Since the *Battalname*’s stories depict the Caliph’s absolute rule over the Islamic sphere of influence, this may uphold the idea of the ruler possessing caliphal power. The Caliph’s absolute authority was lacking in both the *Danishmendname* and the *Saltukname* (Kitapçı-Bayri 2020, 37). One of the reasons behind the *Battalname*’s written form could be its intimate relationship with the universal rule of Islam. Islam’s universal rule would denote that other Islamic territories would be under the *de facto* rule of the Caliph. This presents a unique elasticity to Murad II’s policies. This *de jure* over the other territories may be the reason behind the Amir Umar’s scarceness in the narrative. Since the ultimate ruler is the Caliph, other sources of authority could have been undermined to polish the relationship between the ghazi (Battal) and the Caliph (Murad II).

The second probable reasoning behind the *Battalname*’s early compilation could be its intimate relationship with both the Prophet and Islam. The *Battalname*’s roots in the Arab conquests and its relation to religious orthodoxy is apparent from its narrative focal points. From conversion narratives to ghaza activities, the will of two important Islamic figures presents itself in the Battal Ghazi’s and the Caliph’s actions. While the Caliph holds the authority of Islam, Battal Ghazi continues the “bloodline” of the prophet. The most probable explanation to the question of why the *Battalname* in this sense becomes a question of available epics in this period. If the author or compiler stands closer to the agency of orthodoxy rather than portraying a newer Seljuqid hero, he would rather portray an older, already established Sunni Arab hero. Battal Ghazi’s genealogy is established in the Seljuqid period as a descendant of the Prophet, which explains how he inherited his

²⁸“Din ğayretiğin bařınıuziğin oğluñuziğin kıızıñuziğin durıřuñuz. Ölenüñüz şehid, öldürenüñüz ğāzi.” Folio A171; Dedes, 454.

Sayyid title. This genealogy could make it more suitable in the eyes of potential converts and ghazis. Equally, there may be a memory between the original Battal Ghazi that lived in the 9th century. A hero's portrayal as being closer to its Sunni origins represents a preference for a certain brand of orthodoxy over more ambiguous hero motifs.

3.5 Why Now?

One of the most practical reasons for compiling the *Battalname* would be its utilization for the dissipated remnants of the other factions. During the interregnum period, several threats to the Ottoman dominance were present in Anatolia. From the 1422 siege onwards, however, Murad II must have seen the potential of uniting some of these forces under the Islamic banner (Anooshahr 2009, 145). Therefore, other possible separatist movements could be managed under the same banner with the promise of providence, social mobility, and common cause. The image of ghaza and ghazi-king in the epic may have been promoted to ensure the remnants of such forces came under the Islamic flag once more. Along with campaigns to Balkans, usage of *Battalname* could be used in order to consolidate this Islamic emphasis (Anooshahr 2009, 139-165).

Another reason might be to bolster Ottoman ranks for the upcoming Balkan campaign of 1438. Balkan ghazis and Anatolian lords could have been united under the same pretense of religious ghaza against Christian powers (Anooshahr 2009, 146). Unrelated to the Balkan campaign, it could be related to the constant need for manpower, which upheld Ottoman dominance. A constant flow of manpower to Ottoman ranks in the 14th and 15th centuries seems out of the question since Christian subjects' participation was evident (Lowry 2003, 92). However given that conversion narratives played to a multi-religious audience, in which the hints of cooperation were present through the narrative, the *Battalname* was perhaps circulated in the hope of a compromise. It may be because of the compiler's anti-syncretic nature, which in this case could undermine Christian participation, along with the strict Sunni identity of the warriors.

Another explanation might be the rising image of ghazi-king under Murad II's reign. The epic was compiled 16 years into the Murad II's reign. Circumstantially, it could mean that the compiler used rising sentiments towards the ghaza rhetoric

to profit from them in some way. The appearance of the empty miniature slots probably indicates that this version of the *Battalname* could have been compiled in hopes of patronage. In addition to the empty miniature slots, the addendum of the Babak story displays an interference in the story. Although highly unlikely, by leaning towards the anti-syncretic connotations of the narrative, the author may have been trying to satisfy the public's demand for such narratives. Demand for a compiled version could not have derived from the public. This could be a very localized differentiation of opinion. However, this possibility of patronage is not mutually exclusive with other reasons behind its compilation.

4. CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I have examined the *Battalname* of 1436-7, one of the earliest known examples of the epic literature in the Ottoman polity. This *Battalname* was one of the earliest and perhaps the closest examples between oral and written stories. Various *Battalnames* were studied and translated into Turkish by literary and social historians, especially after the 1950. However, these studies are somewhat lacking concerning the imageries of the ghazi and the ghazi-king – and more so concerning conversion narratives. Although Ottomanist scholars included or touched on the *Battalname* in passim when the ghazi or conversion dynamics were discussed, the reverse has not been extensively studied. In my discussion of the *Battalname* I aimed to focus on these two fields.

With this in mind, the first chapter discusses conversion narratives in the *Battalname* of 1436-7, addressing the question of whether the *Battalname* was syncretic or not. After defining conversion and its methods to trace conversion in the narrative, I elaborate on three types of conversion methods which feature prominently in the *Battalname*: coercion, conversion by intensification, and conversion by traditional/institutional transitions. These different conversion narratives led me to the following conclusions: (1) Coerced conversions focused on military prowess. These conversions were used in many instances to add formerly non-Muslim subjects to Muslim ghazi forces. Although the main antagonist in the narrative is the Christian Emperor, other non-Muslim subjects such as Jewish communities are also included. However, these communities were no different from other non-Muslim communities which posed the ghaza narrative against all non-Muslim communities. (2) The *Battalname* narrative provides total amnesty in the case of conversion to Islam, which can confirm the idea that newly converted warrior used the *Battalname* as narratives to adjust to their new social standings. (3) Even though the narrative structures around patterns of epic literature, these patterns do not necessarily conform the idea of syncretism. This denotes an anti-syncretic connotation in the epic – this was possibly the compiler’s choice. (4) The dream instances in the epic

could be used to rationalize long-term conversion. This rationalization allows both converted the means to adapt to their new realities. (5) Except in rare cases, the conversion of women mostly come in the form of male fantasies, which lends the ghaza participants a romanticized understanding of ghaza. (6) The usage of Jesus' image may be because of the permeability of the Abrahamic religions and a lack of distinction between *kitabî* religions in Islamic thought.

To sum up the first chapter, I focused on the two different audiences of such conversion narratives. (1) For the Muslim audience, along with its economic, religious, and social connotations, the *Battalname* provides solutions to fractious encounters between Muslims and the recently converted. This confirms Tijana Krstić's idea of identity-building through friction and solution through narrative with the addition of the dream sequences to her equation. (2) For recently converted subjects, popular narratives such as the *Battalname* provided a colloquial and cliché background to integrate them into the society. This can also be applied to any other epic work that is similar to *Battalname*. (3) For non-Muslim audiences, the *Battalname* either explained conversions, offered cautionary tales of disregarding Muslim authority, or as an exemplification of the possibilities under Islam. This argument cements Cemal Kafadar's arguments on the subject with a special focus on the *Battalname*. However I have not been able to answer my research question. Although the *Battalname*'s portrayal of interfaith relations offers arguments for both syncretism and anti-syncretism, my research concludes that the anonymous author was leaning towards an anti-syncretic agenda.

In the second chapter, I focused on ghaza narratives in the *Battalname*. My main research question for this chapter was the reasoning behind the *Battalname*'s re-iteration in 1436-7. I tried to differentiate three levels of authority in the narrative including the Caliph, the ruler, and the champion. Examining ghaza in these layers led me to the following conclusions. (1) The *Battalname* presents a unique power configuration that is unlike any of its contemporary epics. This power configuration between Caliph and the hero encompasses the totality of Islamic rule and the identification of a single ghazi. (2) According to the narrative all regions under Islam's sphere of influence recognize the Caliph's authority, which gives Murad II a unique elasticity and *de jure* rule over the other Muslim provinces. (3) There is booty-driven ghaza but no singular religion-driven ghaza in the epic. A more encompassing model of ghaza, one which considers cultural and social along with the religious and economic aspects exist in the narrative. (4) The *Battalname* might have been used to build Murad II's image as a ghazi-king and the universal ruler over Islam's sphere of influence. (5) The story of Babak might be related to the actual event of false (düzme) Mustafa and Murad II. Therefore, the compiler might

be using the narrative to connect lineage and legitimacy in past and present ghaza activities directly to Murad II. Other incidents in the *Battalname* narrative could be altered or written in ways to serve this objective.

Summarizing the second chapter, I sought reasons for the re-writing of the *Battalname*. To do this, I tried to answer "why the *Battalname*?" and "why now?" (1) The most probable use of the *Battalname* would be the authority of the Caliph demonstrated in the narrative. Exercising caliphal authority most likely would be beneficial for the stability of Murad II's post-interregnum reign and its continued growth. This caliphal authority is expedited by scholars and Sufi-mystics to encompass both religious and worldly authority. (2) The reason behind 1436-7 would be most likely the Balkan campaigns and the need for manpower. It could also be the compiler's attempt to benefit from the rising popularity of ghaza narratives. Both answers consolidate Ali Anooshahr's points on the subject, however with a slight addition to the Caliphal power's usage in *Battalname* and Battal Ghazi's place.

Although they are thought to be studied extensively, 15th-century epic narratives provide an abundance of untapped material for early Ottoman history. These resources are limited because of the exhaustion of these epics by biased and superficial treatments. The re-examination of such works can, however, yield further insights into the social and cultural history of the early Ottoman polity. For example, a detailed examination of conversion narratives in the *Saltukname*, the *Danishmendname*, and the *Battalname* could fill a much-needed gap in scholarship. Even comparing these epics in their depictions of feasts, customs, colloquial clichés can shed more light on the psyche of the early Ottoman ghazi or other subjects. In the limitations of this thesis, I have tried to understand different cultural, historical, religious and social dynamics in the Anonymous *Battalname* of 1436-7. Hoping to further the study of in epic and mythical narratives in the Ottoman literature.

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