

Ahmet Cem Durak

**THE OTTOMAN HAGIOGRAPHY OF ABRAHAM:
CONSTRUCTING SACRED RULE AND UNIVERSAL HISTORY IN
ABDÜLVÂSÎ'S *HÂLILNAME***

MA Thesis in Late Antique, Medieval and Early Modern Studies

Central European University

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Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU.

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I, the undersigned, **Ahmet Cem Durak**, candidate for the MA degree in Late Antique, Medieval and Early Modern Studies, declare herewith that the present thesis is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on any person's or institution's copyright. I also declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

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Abstract

Hâtilname stands as a unique literary work in the Ottoman historiography with its choice of Prophet Abraham as its protagonist. The choice of the author who is under the patronage of the grand vizier of Sultan Mehmed I illustrates the court's mentality of placing themselves as a state in a wider universal history in the post-Timurid Anatolia. This thesis researches the reasons of its author Abdülvâsi's preference of an ancient prophet as his work's protagonist to present Sultan Mehmed I and his grand vizier Bayezid Pasha as pious Islamic rulers. The methodology used is both from the disciplines of religious studies and history. As a religious text, *Hâtilname* presents an *ubi sunt* pattern to its audience, and this religiosity is compared with its contemporary sacred discourse and historic-religious advancements. The major findings of this thesis are (1) being the scholar of the court, Abdülvâsi differs from the early Ottoman hagiography who were critical about classic Perso-Islamic sedentary state policies. (2) The author legitimizes his patron's actions through history writing and drawing parallels with ancient Perso-Islamic heroes. Abraham with other prophets and some ancient Persian mythologic kings named in *Hâtilname* are presented as archetypic heroes of justice and piety. Their endeavours such as enforcing justice and producing wealth were followed by Sultan Mehmed I and Bayezid Pasha. (3) Abdülvâsi draws on *isrâ'iliyyât* mostly found in classical *kişâş al-anbiyâ'* books and a *tafsir* named *al-Khaşşâf* to develop his Abraham legend. His sources illustrate the medieval Ottoman author's literature knowledge.

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Table of contents

Introduction	1
Chapter 1: The Ottoman Abraham legend and its Muslim and Jewish sources	25
1.1. <i>Halilnâme</i> 's contextualization in Islamic Universal History.....	27
1.1.1. Sources of <i>Halilnâme</i>	30
1.1.2. Islamic sources	31
1.1.3. Jewish sources within the Islamic literature	33
1.2. Plot of <i>Halilnâme</i>	37
1.2.1. Annunciation of Abraham	37
1.2.2. The Birth of Abraham	41
1.2.3. Abraham's destruction of the idols.....	43
1.2.4. Abraham in the Fire	44
1.2.5. Abraham and Sarah.....	46
1.2.6. Construction of the first sanctuary.....	49
1.2.7. Nimrod Tries to Kill God.....	52
1.2.8. Abraham, "Sultan" of Babylon.....	55
1.2.9. Construction of the Kaaba	56
1.2.10. The Binding of Ishmael.....	57
1.2.11. Abraham's will.....	58

Chapter 2: Depicting Sultan Mehmed as a Perso-Islamic hero in post-Timurid Anatolia	.60
2.1. Timur versus Bayezid I.....	61
2.2 Nimrod and Timur.....	63
2.3. Prophets Abraham and Muhammad versus Sultan Mehmed “the Mahdi”.....	65
2.4. Abraham, Mehmed and Bayezid Pasha, the Just Rulers who maintain the order.....	69
2.5. Persian Kingship Titles for Legitimization.....	72
2.6. Placing the House of Osman in the history of universal kingship.....	75
Chapter 3: Extolling Muhammad as the final prophet and contextualizing Ottomans in Islamic universal history	80
3.1. Rivalry between the <i>ulamā</i> ’ and gazi narratives.....	82
3.2.Rivalry between Timurids and Ottomans.....	86
3.3. The Islamic Courts’ patronage of religious literature.....	88
3.3.1. Timurid versus Ottoman <i>Mi’rādj</i> Narratives	90
3.3.2. Angelology of the <i>Mi’rādj</i>	93
3.3.3.Jews, Christians, and Biblical Prophets in the <i>Mi’rādj</i> Narratives as agents of Confessionalization.....	95
3.3.4.Muhammad, “the Beloved of God”	99
Conclusion	101

Introduction

This study explores the direct and indirect reception of non-Islamic narrative sources in an early Ottoman historical work. Abdülvâsi (d.1415) completed the *mathnawî* (a narrative poem written in rhyming couplets)¹ *Halilnâme* in 1414 in Amasya. In Persian literature, there are many *mathnawîs* which are named after the main character with the suffix “-nâme,”² some of which were translated into Turkish or rewritten by Anatolian authors.³ Moreover, some literature was not only translations but *telif* (“creative mediation”)⁴ works with unique plots.⁵ Even though *telif* works were no translations, they followed Persian literary customs along with Islamic literature.⁶ They mirrored the Persian and Arabic “verse forms, meters, mythology, even the *Weltanschauung*.”⁷ The *mathnawî Halilnâme*, which imitates Persian and Arabic *Weltanschauung*, consists of 3693 couplets (*bayt*) and it is a *telif* work.⁸

¹ Fahir İz, “Introduction: The Ottoman Period 1300-1850,” in *The Penguin Book of Turkish Verse*, ed. Nermin Menemencioglu in collaboration with Fahir İz (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1978): 39.

² E. J. W. Gibb, *Ottoman Literature: The Poets and Poetry of Turkey* (Washington & London: M. W. Dunne, 1901), 17. Some of the important ones are: *Shahname* (the Stories of the Kings) by Ferdowsi, *İskendernâme* (Book of Alexander) first written as a separate *mathnawî* by Nizami (d. ca. 1212), as well as *Musa-nâme* (Book of Moses) and *Bereshit-nâme* (Book of Genesis) written by Shāhīn-i Shīrāzī in Persian with Hebrew script (Many other prophets’ stories are written with the “-name” addendum in *mathnawî* forms. Also see Vera Moreen, “The ‘Iranization’ of biblical heroes in Judeo-Persian epics: Shahin’s *Ardashir-namah* and ‘*Ezra-namah*,” *Iranian Studies* 29/3-4 (1996): 322-25.

³ Saliha Paker and Zehra Toska, “A call for descriptive Translation Studies on the Turkish tradition of rewrites,” in *Translation as Intercultural Communication*, ed. Mary Snell-Hornby, Zuzana Jettmarova and Klaus Kaindl (Amsterdam; Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1995), 79.

Also, see Melike Gökcan Türkođan, “Klasik Türk Edebiyatında Kıssaları Konu alan Mesneviler [The *Mathnawîs* Related the Parable of Qur’an in Classical Turkish Literature],” *The Journal of International Social Research* 3/15 (2010): 65-90.

⁴ See Saliha Paker, “On the poetic practices of ‘a singularly uninventive people’ and the anxiety of imitation: A critical re-appraisal in terms of translation, creative mediation and ‘originality,’” in *Tradition, Tension and Translation in Turkey*, ed. Şehnaz Tahir Gürçađlar, Saliha Paker and John Milton (Amsterdam; Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2015), 35-40. for the discussion of Ottoman poetic imitation and originality.

⁵ See Murat Umut Inan, “Rethinking the Ottoman Imitation of Persian Poetry,” *Iranian Studies* 50:5, 684 for “adaptation,” “innovation” concepts in Ottoman literature. Also see Veysel Öztürk, “The notion of originality from Ottoman classical literature to Turkish modern poetry,” *Middle Eastern Literatures* 19:2 137-8 for the discussion about “originality” and “Ottoman poetry.”

⁶ Günay Kut, “Turkish Literature in Anatolia,” in *History of the Ottoman State, Society & Civilization* 2, ed. Ekmeleddin İhsanođlu (İstanbul: IRCICA, 2002), 29.

⁷ Talat S. Halman, “The Ancient and Ottoman Legacy,” in *Rapture and Revolution: Essays on Turkish Literature*, ed. Jayne Warner (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2007), 19.

⁸ Ahmet Atilla Şentürk, *XVI. Asra Kadar Anadolu Sahası Mesnevilerinde Edebi Tasvirler* [Literary Depictions in Anatolian *mathnavis* until the 16th century], (İstanbul: Kitabevi 2002), 81.

Halilnâme literally means the “Book of the Friend” (*nâme*= book in Persian; *khalīl* in Arabic, transliterated as *halil* in Turkish=friend).⁹ The term “friend (of Allah)” is the designation of Abraham in both the Qur’an and the Bible.¹⁰

Halilnâme is the only Ottoman Turkish *mathnawī* that narrates the life story of Abraham chronologically.¹¹ Moreover, this subject has not been found in Arabic and Persian literature in such detail.¹² On the other hand, there are several prophet-king stories written in Persian or Turkish which narrate the lives of Alexander the Great or Solomon. For instance, *İskendernâme mathnawīs* written in Persian and Turkish portrays Alexander the Great as a prophet of Islam: Zil-ḳarneyn.¹³ The first Turkish *İskendernâme* was written by Ahmedî in 1390.¹⁴ There are also several *Süleymannâme mathnawīs* produced in Turkish literature, narrating the life of King Solomon, a “prophet” according to the Qur’an.¹⁵ For instance, one of the first *mathnawīs* named as *Süleymannâme* was written by Firdevsî-i Rûmî (d.1512), whose learning of Jewish literature is significant for understanding the religious milieu in Anatolia.¹⁶ Other religious literature examples include the first *Kâ’benâme* in Turkish, written by Gubârî (d. 1566), which focuses on Abraham and Ishmael’s construction of the Kaaba.¹⁷ Later, it was rewritten by several authors, constituting a new genre.

⁹ Abdülvâsi Çelebi, *Halilnâme*, ed. Ayhan Gültaş (Ankara: TC Kültür Bakanlığı, 1996) [henceforth, *Halilnâme*]. In what follows, I refer to this edition first by page number and then the number given to each couple (*bejt*) by Gültaş, such as, *Halilnâme* 133/ c. 1569.

¹⁰ *Qur’an* 4:125; Isaiah 41:8: “seed of Abraham, my friend.”

¹¹ *Halilnâme*, 5.

¹² Abdülkadir Karahan, *Eski Türk Edebiyatı İncelemeleri* [Examination of Old Turkish Literature] (İstanbul: Edebiyat Fakültesi, 1980), 234.

¹³ Caroline Sawyer, “Revising Alexander: structure and evolution Ahmedî’s Ottoman *İskendernâme*,” *Edebiyât*, 13:2, (2002): 227.

¹⁴ Tâce’-d-dîn İbrâhîm bin Hızır Ahmedî, *History of the Kings of the Ottoman Lineage and Their Holy Raids Against the Infidels*, ed. Kemal Silay (Boston: Harvard University Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, 2004)

¹⁵ See the Qur’an 4:163: “We have sent revelation to you [Prophet] as We did to Noah and the prophets after him, to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, to Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron, and Solomon— to David We gave the book.”

¹⁶ Murat Vanlı, Firdevs-i Rumi, *Süleymân-Nâme-i Kebîr* (volumes 8-9), unpublished MA thesis (Erzincan University, 2012), 277. I thank Cevat Sucu who advised me to check this part of *Süleymân-Nâme-i Kebîr*.

¹⁷ Türkdoğan, “Klasik Türk Edebiyatında Kıssaları Konu alan Mesneviler.”

Although *Kâ'benâme* constituted a literary genre and was reproduced by several authors, *Halilnâme* is unique in its plot. It recounts the life of Abraham from his birth until death, and it is not reproduced by any later author in Turkish. It was written under the patronage of Bayezid Pasha (d.1421), the grand vizier of Sultan Mehmed I (r. 1413-1421), who was known to be a patron of literature, art, and architecture.¹⁸ Writing right after the end of the so-called Interregnum Era (1402-13), Abdülvâsi in his *Halilnâme* contextualized the early history of Ottomans in a wider *universal history* and legitimated Mehmed I's battles against his brothers to secure his reign.¹⁹ Abdülvâsi's *Halilnâme* is written in Old Anatolian Turkish, but its sub-headings are written in Persian and the Qur'an verses are cited in Arabic followed by its Turkish translations. Abdülvâsi's Turkish translations of the Qur'an verses resemble the interlinear Qur'an translations in the fourteenth-century Persian and Turkic literature.²⁰ Moreover, there is another interlinear Qur'an translation completed in 1427 by Abdülvâsi's contemporary scholar, Muhammed bin Hamza.²¹

Who is Abdülvâsi?²²

¹⁸ See Mustafa Caghan Kesin, "Bayezid Paşa: Vezir, Entelektüel, Sanat Hamisi [Bayezid Pasha: Vizier, Intellectual, Patron of Arts]," *Journal of Ottoman Studies*, 48 (2016): 1-37.

¹⁹ The Ottoman Interregnum started with the Battle of Ankara (July 20, 1402), when Sultan Bayezid I was defeated and captured by Timur. Bayezid I soon died in captivity, leaving behind five sons, namely, Mehmed, İsa, Musa, Süleyman and Mustafa, who then fought each other for assuming the Ottoman throne. In 1413, Mehmed I managed to secure the throne by eliminating his rival brothers and hence ended the Interregnum. See Dimitris Kastritsis, *Sons of Bayezid: Empire Building and Representation in the Ottoman Civil War of 1402-13* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2007), a study of this period.

²⁰ János Eckmann, "Two Fragments of a Koran Manuscript with Interlinear Persian and Turkic Translation" *Central Asiatic Journal* 13/4 (1969): 287-88.

²¹ Muhammed bin Hamza, *XV. Yüzyıl Başlarında Yapılmış "Satur-arası" Kur'an Tercümesi* [An Interlinear Qur'an Translation at the Beginning of the 15th Century] ed. Ahmet Topaloğlu (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1976).

²² Even though the title *çelebi*, which means a member of the literary elite, is never mentioned in *Halilnâme*, philologist Abdülkadir Karahan refers to the author as Abdülvâsi Çelebi. Since the Cairo copy is recorded in the catalogue as "Abdülvâsi Cebeli Divanı" (Anthology of Abdülvâsi Cebeli), Karahan deduced that "Cebeli" must be a corruption of "Çelebi." (Abdülkadir Karahan, "15. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Dini Edebiyatında 'Mesnevi'ler' ve Abdülvâsi Çelebi'nin *Halilnâme*'si" [Mathnawîs in fifteenth-century Ottoman religious literature and Abdülvâsi Çelebi's *Halilnâme*], in *Atti del terzo Congresso di studi Arabi e islamici* (Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1967), 419.) On the other hand, Ayşe Deniz Abik states that the name appears as "Cebelli" in the Ankara Milli Kütüphane (Ankara National Library) manuscript copy and "Cibilli" in the Konya Library copy. According to Abik, "çelebi" is a misreading by Karahan, and *Halilnâme*'s author's second name Cibilli means "someone from Cibil." There was one author named Abdülvâsi Çelebi who was a judge in Istanbul in 1530s and another

Most of what we know about Abdülvâsi comes from his only known work, *Halilnâme*. Abdülvâsi writes that Bayezid Pasha first asked the above-mentioned Ahmedî (d. ca. 1412), a poet at the court of Mehmed I, to translate *Vîs u Râmîn*, a Persian *mathnawî* of Fakhr al-Dîn As‘ad Gurgānî, into Turkish.²³ Ahmedî was a celebrated writer and courtier of his times. He had previously served the rulers of the House of Aydın in western Anatolia²⁴ and later Mehmed I’s rival brother, Emir Süleyman (d. 1411).²⁵ He was the author of the oldest known historical account about the rise of the Ottomans, written as a part of his *İskendernâme*.²⁶ Abdülvâsi’s *Halilnâme* is the second oldest one along these lines as it has a similar historical narrative section on the early Ottoman sultans.²⁷ Both works not only tell the rise of the House of Osman as a Muslim dynastic power, but also characterize their sultans as caliphs.²⁸ Besides, they were not written in Persian, but in Turkish, indicating that they were addressing to the contemporary Turkish-speaking ruling elite and common people of Anatolia and Balkans so as to restore the fragmented Ottoman political legitimacy and prestige at the hands of Timur earlier.²⁹

Ahmedî died shortly after he had started his translation of *Vîs u Râmîn* and, accordingly to Abdülvâsi, Bayezid Pasha was commissioned him to finish this task.

Abdülvâsi Cebeli who served Seljuk sultans in the twelfth century, neither contemporary with *Halilnâme*’s circulation time. Thus, foregoing further speculation, the author of *Halilnâme* is referred to as Abdülvâsi throughout this thesis. See Ayşe Deniz Abik, “İki Yeni Nüshası Sebebiyle *Halilnâme* ve Müellifi Abdülvâsi Üzerine” [*Halilnâme*’s two newly founded copies and its author Abdülvâsi], *Türkoloji Dergisi* 12, issue: 1 (1997): 142.

²³ Fakhr al-Din Gurgani, *Vis and Ramin*, trans. George Morrison (New York & London: Columbia University Press, 1972).

²⁴ See Halil İnalçık, “The Origins of Classical Ottoman Literature: Persian Tradition, Court Entertainments, and Court Poets,” *Journal of Turkish Literature* 5 (2008): 28, 29.

²⁵ Pál Fodor, “Ahmedî’s *Dāsītān* As a Source of Early Ottoman History,” *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 38/ 1-2 (1984): 41.

²⁶ See s.v. “Ahmedî” by Günay Kut, *İslam Ansiklopedisi* [Encyclopedia of Islam; henceforth *İA*] (İstanbul: TDV, 1989).

²⁷ Baki Tezcan, “Ottoman Historical Writing,” in *The Oxford History of Historical Writing*, vol. 3: 1400-1800, ed. José Rabasa, Masayuki Sato, Edoardo Tortarolo, and Daniel Woolf (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 194.

²⁸ Hüseyin Yılmaz, *Caliphate Redefined: The Mystical Turn in Ottoman Political Thought* (Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2018), 15.

²⁹ Yılmaz, *Caliphate Redefined*, 127.

However, he found the *mathnawī* of *Vīs u Rāmīn* to be full of profanity; as he states in *Halilnâme*, his heart could not bear translating a love story with no moral into Turkish.³⁰

Abdülvâsi's rejection of the task of translating *Vīs u Rāmīn* might be either due to the predominance of its Zoroastrian motifs,³¹ or because the opus presents Rāmīn as a "lover of women and wine."³² In any case, he decided to write a prophet's biography instead of translating *Vīs u Rāmīn*.

Abdülvâsi expresses his piety,³³ elsewhere he calls it a pious act for a son of *ḳādī* (jurist-scholar).³⁴ He also calls himself an *imam* in another couplet, which was not true in the traditional sense of the word, but rather as an honorific title for a scholar.³⁵ This means that Abdülvâsi considered himself a member of the contemporary '*ulema*,³⁶ who as a group of scholars had been central to the formation of the Ottoman polity since the early fourteenth century.³⁷ Furthermore, he indicates that he was educated by his "master" while narrating his scientific knowledge.³⁸ This implies either that he had a private tutor or that he was educated in a *madrasa* (most likely in Amasya). While Abdülvâsi shows his respect towards Islamic tradition, Bayezid Pasha manifestly expected him to explore non-Islamic, in this case Zoroastrian, literature, when he commissioned the *Vīs u Rāmīn* to be translated into Turkish.³⁹ Overall, Abdülvâsi's decision to tell the Islamic story of Abraham and Sara, which

³⁰ *Halilnâme*, 76/c. 310: "It [*Vīs u Rāmīn*] talks about love, cheatings, lies/ Its work is all tricks and itself magical."

³¹ V. Minorsky, "Vīs u Rāmīn: A Parthian Romance (Conclusion)," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*, 12, No. 1 (1947): 33.

³² Minorsky, "Vīs u Rāmīn," 33.

³³ *Halilnâme*, 76/ c. 316: "It is not lies, all written is true, all are exegesis."

³⁴ *Halilnâme*, 227/ c. 1919.

³⁵ *Halilnâme*, 499/ c. 3688: "He asked his slave graciously/ Oh Imam, write this book for me too." Here, the grand vizier is asking for a copy of *Halilnâme* to be prepared for himself as well as calling Abdülvâsi an *imam*.

³⁶ Chase Robinson, *Islamic Historiography* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003) 87: "Without any qualifying adjectives, 'knowledge' (*ilm*) meant knowledge of traditions, and those who possessed such knowledge were the '*ulema* (literally 'those who know'), a term which came to denote the religious elite in general."

³⁷ Aziz Al-Azmeh, *Muslim Kingship: Power and the Sacred in Muslim, Christian, and Pagan Polities* (London; NY: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2001), 102.

³⁸ *Halilnâme*, 355/ c.2542.

³⁹ *Halilnâme*, 73/ c. 286: "He said I wish this was in Turkish/ Those who heard it could understand it."

contained *isrā'iliyyāt*, (“Muslim reimaginings of Jewish traditions”)⁴⁰ instead of a pre-Islamic Persian tale can be interpreted as an intellectual and religious compromise that was eventually supported by Bayezid Pasha.⁴¹

Abdülvâsi wrote *Halilnâme* under the patronage of Bayezid Pasha.⁴² Even though early Anatolian Turkish literature was written without courtly patronage,⁴³ traditional Ottoman patrimonial discourse caused eulogies to be written under court patronage.⁴⁴ Centralization policies after the Interregnum period led Ottoman rulers and their *kuls* (servants-viziers like Bayezid Pasha)⁴⁵ to compete for being patrons of art.⁴⁶ For instance, another vizier of Sultan Mehmed, Hacı Halil Pasha, was patron of Ahmed-i Dâî (d. c. 1421), who wrote a *Divan* (anthology of poetry) upon Mehmed I’s ascension to the throne.⁴⁷ This patronage was given by the ruling class to the literati so that their reputation in society might be expanded.⁴⁸ Thus, Bayezid Pasha propagates his statesmanship while openly financing Abdülvâsi to write panegyric poetry for Sultan Mehmed I. As Abdülvâsi profited from the personal recognition of his patron, he can be considered as a *mürebba* (protégé)⁴⁹ which is the

⁴⁰ Ramazan Bardakçı, “Cumhuriyet Döneminde Yayımlanmış Mesneviler Üzerine-I” [About Mesnevis Published In The Republican Period-I], *Turkish Studies* 8/1 (Winter: 2013): 906.

See Shari L. Lowin, *The Making of a Forefather: Abraham in Islamic and Jewish Exegetical Narratives* (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2006), 7-18, for a detailed discussion of the definition of *isrā'iliyyāt*. Lowin quotes from Steven M. Wasserstrom, “Jewish Pseudepigrapha and Qisas al-Anbiyâ,” in *Judaism and Islam: Boundaries, Communications, and Interaction: Essays in Honor of William H. Brinner*, ed. Benjamin H. Hary, et al. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2000), 237–256 passim.

⁴¹ *Halilnâme*, 77/ c. 319: “Then let us say Abraham and Sara/ Vîs and Râmîn: words are not useful.”

⁴² Keskin, “Bayezid Paşa,” 8.

⁴³ Andrew A.C.S. Peacock, *Islam, Literature and Society in Mongol Anatolia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 150.

⁴⁴ Halil İnalçık, “The Poet and the Patron: A Sociological Treatise Upon the Patrimonial State and the Arts,” *Journal of Turkish Literature* 2 (2005): 10.

⁴⁵ Dimitris Kastritsis, “The Historical Epic *Ahvâl-i Sulţân Mehmed* (The Tales of Sultan Mehmed) in the Context of Early Ottoman Historiography,” in *Writing History at the Ottoman Court: Editing the Past, Fashioning the Future*, ed. H. Erdem Çıpa and Emine Fetvacı (Bloomington; Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2013): 8.

⁴⁶ Selim Sırrı Kuru, “The literature of Rum: The making of a literary tradition (1450-1600)” in *The Cambridge History of Turkey 2: The Ottoman Empire as a World Power*, ed. by Suraiya N. Faroqhi, Kate Fleet (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 551.

⁴⁷ Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, “Social, cultural and intellectual life, 1071-1453,” in *The Cambridge History of Turkey 1: Byzantium to Turkey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) 419.

⁴⁸ Ocak, “Social, cultural and intellectual life,” 415.

⁴⁹ Yılmaz, *Caliphate Redefined*, 127.

basic element of the Ottoman patrimonial networks.⁵⁰ Furthermore, the personal relationship between Abdülvâsi and Bayezid Pasha is apparent in *Halilnâme*: “Since you were a little child, I have been praying for you.”⁵¹ Abdülvâsi was possibly a tutor of Bayezid Pasha.⁵² Since Bayezid Pasha was the grand vizier at the time of *Halilnâme*’s composition, he became the patron of his former tutor. As a patron of arts, Bayezid Pasha is depicted as a patron who gives one gold coin for each couplet to Ahmedî.⁵³ Here Abdülvâsi equates Bayezid Pasha to Mahmud of Ghazni (r. 998-1030) who is known for giving one gold coin to Ferdowsi for each couplet of *Shahnameh*,⁵⁴ which is one of the main sources of classical Turkish poetry.⁵⁵

Abdülvâsi’s panegyric to Bayezid Pasha is somewhat more than a classic “praise of a grand vizier”.⁵⁶ The pasha’s statesmanship is compared with some powerful king-heroes from the Perso-Islamic mythology. For instance, his justice is compared to that of Solomon via the reference to “the story of an ant ” in the Qur’an.⁵⁷ Furthermore, Bayezid Pasha is praised as being superior to Jamshîd who is the first king in Persian mythology,⁵⁸ and a leitmotif for kings with his conjunction of kingship and priesthood.⁵⁹ On the other hand, Bayezid Pasha is depicted as being more just than Āşaf [b. Barkhiyā],⁶⁰ which is a common motif of homage for viziers in Islamic literature.⁶¹ Even though, Bayezid Pasha’s justice was paralleled to

⁵⁰ İnalçık, “The Poet and the Patron,” 13.

⁵¹ *Halilnâme*, 67/ c. 242.

⁵² Keskin, “Bayezid Paşa,” 9.

⁵³ *Halilnâme*, 73/ c. 290.

⁵⁴ Keskin, “Bayezid Pasha,” 10.

⁵⁵ Kut, “Turkish Literature in Anatolia,” 29.

⁵⁶ Kastritsis, “The Historical Epic *Ahvāl-i Sulṭān Meḥammed* (The Tales of Sultan Mehmed) in the Context of Early Ottoman Historiography,” 8.

⁵⁷ *Halilnâme*, 58/ c. 171. Also see the Qur’an 27:18.

⁵⁸ Nasrin Askari, *The Medieval Perception of the Shāhnāma as a Mirror for Princes* (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2016), 64.

⁵⁹ Askari, *The Medieval Perception*, 161.

⁶⁰ *Halilnâme*, 58 /c. 169 and 489/ c. 3612. See Jacob Lassner, *Demonizing the Queen of Sheba: Boundries of Gender and Culture in Postbiblical Judaism and Medieval Islam* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993), 106-109 for details about the Hebrew Asaph and Muslim exegesis’ representation of him as Solomon’s vezier.

⁶¹ İskender Pala, *Ansiklopedik Divan Şiiri Sözlüğü* [Encyclopedic Dictionary of Classical Poetry] (İstanbul: Kapı Yayınları, 2012), s.v. Āşaf: “Āşaf is considered to be the vezier who brought the queen of Sheba with her throne. Āşaf represents farshightedness and administration.”

Solomon's in the panegyric, Sultan Mehmed is also depicted as a second Solomon,⁶² who is portrayed as the ruler of the world in the rabbinic literature,⁶³ and later classical Islamic kingship narratives.⁶⁴

Question of Genre

The culmination of several genres is apparent throughout *Halilnâme*. As the book's form adheres to the *mathnawî* genre, which is widely used by authors to depict "romance, epic, didactic-ethical"⁶⁵ themes, it specifically displays characteristics of hagiography, history and exegesis in poetry. The reason of several genres merging in *Halilnâme* is because of the "blurring of boundaries"⁶⁶ in medieval Islamic literature, which was not yet much different from history at the time.⁶⁷ The author presents himself as a historian, since he openly calls his work *tarih* (history)⁶⁸ and *akhbâr*,⁶⁹ but also a *nebler kıssası* (*kışaş al-anbiyâ: stories of prophets*),⁷⁰ a genre of heroic accounts.⁷¹ *Halilnâme* narrates Abraham's quests, prophethood and city-founding, adding a closing chapter on the nocturnal journey of Muhammad, Abraham's descendant according to Islam. This is what endows the opus with the characteristics of hagiography mainly for Abraham, and partly for Muhammad. Lastly, it also contains some characteristics of *tafsîr* (Quranic exegesis),⁷² as the author throughout the

⁶² *Halilnâme*, 275/ c. 1902 and 489/ c. 3612

⁶³ Gerhard Langer, "Solomon in Rabbinic Literature," in *The Figure of Solomon in Jewish, Christian and Islamic Tradition: King, Sage and Architect*, ed. Joseph Verheyden (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2013), 129.

⁶⁴ Lassner, *Demonizing the Queen of Sheba*, 134.

⁶⁵ İz, "Introduction: The Ottoman Period 1300-1850," 39.

⁶⁶ John Renard, *Friends of God: Islamic Images of Piety, Commitment, and Servanthood* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 247.

⁶⁷ See Kastritsis, "The Alexander Romance and the Rise of the Ottoman Empire," in *Islamic Literature and Intellectual Life in Fourteenth- and Fifteenth-Century Anatolia*, ed. A.C.S. Peacock, Sara Nur Yıldız (Würzburg: Ergon, 2016), 251 for the discussion about the genre of *İskendernâme* of Ahmedi.

⁶⁸ *Halilname* 489/ c.3608. Plural of *ta'riḫ* (history)

⁶⁹ *Halilname* 79/ c.338. See Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, xii: "Glossary," "*khavar*, pl. *akhbâr*: an account of the past that has primarily historical, rather than legal, significance."

⁷⁰ *Halilname*, 77 / c.318.

⁷¹ Gottfried Hagen, "From Haggadic Exegesis to Myth: Popular Stories of the Prophets in Islam," in *Sacred Tropes: Tanakh, New Testament, and the Qur'an as Literature and Culture*, ed. Roberta Serman Sabbath (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2009), 309.

⁷² İsmail Çalışkan, "Müzakere," in *Başlangıçtan Günümüze Türklerin Kur'an Tefsirine Hizmetleri -Tartışmalı İlmî Toplantı*, [Debate, Turks' contributions to the Quran tafsir] (İstanbul: Ensar Yayınları, 2012), 244.

mathnawī explains the Arabic Qur'an verses concerning Abraham and Muhammad's nocturnal journey in Turkish. *Halilnâme* openly declares that its stories are from *tafsīr*.⁷³

The narrator is calling the people to "listen" to what he says. This suggests that the author knew that his work was going to be read aloud for people by a storyteller/reader. Orality was the prevailing form of communication in medieval Ottoman society.⁷⁴ Also, hagiographic and advisory literature was amendable to be remodeled each time it was read aloud.⁷⁵ The popularity of hagiographies such as the *Battalname* and the *İskendername* in the library catalogue of Cihangir mosque's "public" library collection from 1593 also illustrates the possible performance readings of storytellers.⁷⁶

One of the most important authors of the prophet stories, al-Tha'labī states five "wisdoms" for his audience which are also found throughout *Halilnâme*.

First the accounts prove that Muhammad received an authentic revelation. Second, they encourage believers to emulate the heroic behavior of the prophets (who functioned as models for Muhammad as well) even as they warn against the conduct of unbelievers. Third, they explain that God clearly preferred Muhammad and his people over earlier peoples who endured much greater suffering. Fourth, they provide essential instruction and guidance about history and religion. Finally, the accounts keep alive the memory of the prophets and Friends of God.⁷⁷

Even though the term hagiography is widely used for Christian heroes and saints, modern scholars of Islam adopted the term for Muslim saints and prophets.⁷⁸ Hagiographies

⁷³ "Those who seek advice in this world/Those who ask me to speak from the tafsīr, Those who are asking about prophets/ Those who work with God's aphorisms, Come and listen to these words with integrity/ May God's peace be upon you." (*Halilnâme*, 79/ c.334-337)

⁷⁴ Arzu Öztürkmen, "Orality and Performance in Late Medieval Turkish Texts: Epic Tales, Hagiographies, and Chronicles, Text and Performance," *Text and Performance Quarterly*, 29:4, (2009): 331.

⁷⁵ Tijana Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam: Narratives of Religious Change and Communal Politics in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 38.

⁷⁶ Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam*, 38.

⁷⁷ Renard, *Friends of God*, 249.

⁷⁸ See Renard, "Introduction: Islamic Hagiography," in *Tales of God's Friends, Islamic Hagiography in Translation*, ed. John Renard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 1-11.

focus on the divine and righteous characteristics of the protagonist, including wondrous details.⁷⁹ Divine intervention in “history” takes place through “the wondrous acts” told within hagiographies.⁸⁰ Thus, the “miraculous tales” are “true events”⁸¹ for the common pious folk. Renard points out the difficulty of distinction between hagiography and historiography, in which no clear lines can be drawn by the author or the reader.⁸² However, according to the author of *Halilnâme*, what he tells is “the truth,” not fiction.

He invites his audience to listen to his book saying, “There are no lies only the truth/ Everything is excerpted from the *tafsîr*”⁸³ “understand whatever happened on this earth”⁸⁴ This kind of *ubi sunt*⁸⁵ pattern, which was also used in the Qur’an,⁸⁶ can be found in the works of Islamic history writers.⁸⁷ It was versified by Karacoğlan, for example, as “who has been here while we were not?” stressing the existence of the past, instead of its non-existence in the present moment.⁸⁸ The religious discourse in *Halilnâme* concludes with the couplet “Listen to it from the hadith, *akhbâr*, and *tafsîr*,”⁸⁹ which suggests that according to the author of *Halilnâme* these Islamic historiographies recorded the past. Abdülvâsi’s claim that what he narrates is “the truth,” resembles the Quran 11:120: “So [Muhammad], We have told you the stories of the prophets to make your heart firm and in these accounts *truth* has come

⁷⁹ Renard, *Friends of God*, 241.

⁸⁰ Catherine Cubitt, “Introduction: Writing True Stories-A View From the West,” in *Writing ‘True Stories:’ Historians and Hagiographers in the Late Antique and Medieval Near East*, ed. Arietta Papaconstantinou (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2010), 5.

⁸¹ Throughout *Halilnâme*, the author confirms repeatedly that what he tells is true: “This is a true story” (c. 1247)

⁸² Renard, *Friends of God*, 247.

⁸³ *Halilnâme*, 76/ c. 316.

⁸⁴ *Halilnâme*, 79/ c.338. Renard, *Friends of God*, 79.

⁸⁵ “*Ubi sunt qui ante nos in mundo fuerunt*” (‘Where are they who were in the world before us?’) is a common theme of early Christian writers and of the Muslim preachers.” Norman Roth, “The ‘Ubi Sunt’ Theme In Medieval Hebrew Poetry,” *Hebrew Studies* 19 (1978): 56.

⁸⁶ Mary Ellen Quint, “The Ubi Sunt: Form, Theme, And Tradition,” (PhD Diss., Arizona State University, 1981): 63.

⁸⁷ Franz Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography* (Leiden: Brill, 1968), 181.

⁸⁸ Cemal Kafadar, *Kim Var İmiş Biz Burada Yoğ İken* [Who has been here while we were not] (İstanbul: Metis, 2009), 14.

⁸⁹ *Halilnâme*, 79/ c. 338.

to you, as well as lessons and reminders for the believers.”⁹⁰ Even though some Islamic scholars incriminated *ķiŗaş al-anbiyā*’ genre’s authors of converging Islam with Jewish literature,⁹¹ scholars like Ibn Kathīr (d. 1373), who treated *isrā’īliyyāt* in wariness, claimed that he used only the *isrā’īliyyāt* which did not contradict the Qur’an.⁹² Moreover, Al-Mas’ūdī criticizes “historians” who draw on *isrā’īliyyāt* in *Murūdj al-dhahab*.⁹³ On the other hand, Hagen argues that *ķiŗaş al-anbiyā*’ “establishes historicized demonstrations of theological truth..., and demonstrates the theological significance of that history.”⁹⁴ Apparently Abdūlvâsi considered the *ķiŗaş al-anbiyā*’ literature, which he drew on, as “theological truth.” At the same time, some readers choose to believe that a ‘miracle’ account is ‘true’ because it describes an actual, empirically verifiable event, whereas others believe that such an account is ‘only a story.’”⁹⁵ It is, of course, unknown how many of the past or present readers of *Halilnâme* believed the miracles and events in the epic, but the important part from a historical and religious studies scholarship perspective, the mythical story *Halilnâme* is a part of “metanarratives that frame and guide history.”⁹⁶ *Halilnâme* constructs a story to frame Ottomans within Islamic universal history and preaches that the historiography told in it is the “truth.”⁹⁷

Even though Gottfried Hagen has not included it in the two articles that he wrote on this genre, it is notable that *Halilnâme* has parallels with heroic and hagiographic literature in

⁹⁰ The Qur’an, 144.

⁹¹ Hagen, “From Haggadic Exegesis,” 304.

⁹² Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, 144.

⁹³ Emine Sonnur Özcan, *İslam Tarih yazımında Gerçeklik ve el-Mes’udi* [Truth and al-Mas’udi in Islamic historiography] (Ankara: Doğu Batı Yayınları, 2014), 230.

⁹⁴ Gottfried Hagen, “Salvation and Suffering in Ottoman Stories of the Prophets,” *Mizan: Journal for the Study of Muslim Societies and Civilizations* 2, Issue 1 (2017): 4.

⁹⁵ Renard, *Friends of God*, 247.

⁹⁶ Mimi Hanaoka, *Authority and Identity in Medieval Islamic Historiography: Persian Histories from the Peripheries* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 209.

⁹⁷ Hanaoka, *Authority and Identity*, 209 quotes from Stefan Leder, “Conventions of Fictional Narration in Learned Literature,” 43: “Fiction cannot be conceived of in opposition to reality. By measure of an intentional selection effected by the author, narratives represent realities of social life, as well as emotions and perceptions.”

that it was produced in Anatolia during the fifteenth century.⁹⁸ Hagen analyzes the Turkish hagiography literature as an illustration of “the heroic age,”⁹⁹ and as a reflection of popular imagination. *Halilnâme* is also a product of the heroic age in Anatolia, and its comparison with the heroic hagiographies is significant for understanding the historic and political context in which it was written.

Like *Halilnâme*, the heroic hagiographies that Hagen examines also “tell an episode of real history, evolving around individual heroic characters.”¹⁰⁰ Both in Abraham’s life in *Halilnâme*, especially in Nimrod’s oracles, as well as throughout Hagen’s case studies, “heroism is inherent in a person, announced at or before his birth.”¹⁰¹ Like the heroes of the other hagiographies Abraham also “transcends natural boundaries of human capability.”¹⁰² Furthermore, Hagen observes a similarity between the heroic age literature and the literature about Muhammad. This common model, in fact, connects it closer to *Halilnâme*, as the hero is a prophet in both cases. Moreover, the earliest Turkish biography (*sīra*) of Muhammad, which dates from the late fourteenth century, portrays Muhammad as a hero.¹⁰³ The other fifteenth-century opus about Muhammad is Süleyman Çelebi’s (d. 1422) *Vesīletü’n-necât* (Path to Salvation) which “emphasizes external salvation through the veneration of a redeemer, in this case the Prophet Muhammad.”¹⁰⁴ This latter text also includes a section about *mi’rād̲j*, contemporaneous with Abdülvâsi’s *mi’rād̲j* narrative, which is to be discussed in the third chapter.

⁹⁸ See Gottfried Hagen, “Heroes and Saints in Anatolian Turkish Literature,” *Oriente Moderno*, Nuova serie 89, no. 2, *Studies on Islamic Legends* (2009): 349-361. And, Hagen, “Chaos, Order, Power, Salvation: Heroic Hagiography’s Response to the Ottoman Fifteenth Century,” *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* 1, no. 1-2 (2014): 91-109.

⁹⁹ Hagen, “Heroes and Saints,” 349: “a notion that especially heroic epics flourish in specific socio-political conditions, that they are inflected by space and time”

¹⁰⁰ Hagen, “Heroes and Saints,” 350.

¹⁰¹ Hagen, “Heroes and Saints,” 352.

¹⁰² Hagen, “Heroes and Saints.”

¹⁰³ Hagen, “Heroes and Saints,” 354.

¹⁰⁴ Hagen, “Chaos, Order,” 108.

Hagen also notes the suffering public voice in heroic literature, which is not found in *Halilnâme*, since it is a product of the court and the vizier's patronage. Hagen states that; “[h]agiography in particular, has also preserved the voices of those who experienced the fifteenth century not as an era of triumph of a nascent Islamic empire, but as a time of transition, disorientation and loss, violence and insecurity, suffering and disrupted order.”¹⁰⁵ On the contrary, *Halilnâme* tells the audience that the violent conflicts are over thanks to Mehmed I and the cities of Bagdad, Khorasan, India, Egypt and Damascus are awaiting Ottoman justice.¹⁰⁶

Halilnâme's protagonist Abraham is from an ancient time period, unlike the protagonists of *Battalnâme*, *Saltuknâme*¹⁰⁷ and *Dânişmendnâme*,¹⁰⁸ and *Menâkıb-ı Âl-i Osmân* (Hagiography of the House of Osman) of Yahşi Fakih (d. 1413) which treats the founder of the dynasty, Osman, as a hero with miraculous powers, fighting in the name of Islam.¹⁰⁹ *Menâkıb-ı Âl-i Osmân* is imbued with fond memories for the past when their overlord had not yet been deceived by the *ulama* adopting the traditions of settled, legislative states.¹¹⁰ The above-mentioned hagiographies are the sources of the frontier societies' concept of “war for the faith” (*ghazwa*).¹¹¹ According to Hagen, “the heroic age should come to an end in the early sixteenth century due to the unification and consolidation under the Ottoman rule.”¹¹² For instance, *Dânişmendnâme* was written for Izzeddin of the Seljuks of

¹⁰⁵ Hagen, “Chaos, Order,” 93.

¹⁰⁶ *Halilnâme*, 498/ c. 3683

¹⁰⁷ See Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds* 147. “In the *Saltukname* compiled for Prince Cem, various passages suggest that the book is intended to serve as a rapprochement between the Ottoman family, or that particular prince, and the gazi circles.”

¹⁰⁸ See Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 110: “The ties of the dervishes to the gazi milieu are attested to in the hagiographies and the gazi lore analyzed above; copious evidence of the ties of both dervishes (naturally, of some orders) and fakihis to the early Ottoman chiefs and warriors can be found in land surveys.”

¹⁰⁹ Tezcan, “Ottoman Historical Writing,” 196.

¹¹⁰ Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 110.

¹¹¹ Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 62. And Ahmet Karamustafa, “Islamisation through the Lens of the *Saltukname*,” in *Islam and Christianity in Medieval Anatolia*, ed. A.C.S. Peacock, Bruno De Nicola and Sara Nur Yıldız (Dorchester: Ashgate, 2015), 364.

¹¹² Hagen, “Heroes and Saints,” 358.

Rum, “at a time of reconciliation between that branch of the ruling house and the subdued march-warriors.”¹¹³ On the other hand, Abdülvâsi (and most probably his patron, the grand vizier) chose Abraham as a protagonist, who represents a much older and sedentary kingship narrative. This way Abdülvâsi does not use a contemporary or near-contemporary warrior-dervish-saint of *velayetname* genre which fuses *gaza* (*ghazwa* in Arabic)¹¹⁴ and saintly virtues in one appealing person.¹¹⁵ As these united intangible and substantial functions appose to the earthly authorities of Ottoman sultans,¹¹⁶ their names and reputations could have surpassed Sultan Mehmed’s. However, an ancient prophet, Abraham, as a hero together with Muhammad in the *mi‘râdj* chapter could only be an exemplar from Islamic history. This choice is not a coincidence but a reflection of the centralization policies of Mehmed’s court, as it will be discussed in the third chapter. I would argue that *Halilnâme* is a work of state propaganda literature which praises the power and justice of the grand vizier Bayezid Pasha and Sultan Mehmed Çelebi unlike the other hagiographies. Thus, *Halilnâme* implies a consolidation of power while extolling Sultan Mehmed, stressing that he is the namesake of the prophet,¹¹⁷ and memorializing his ancestors as *gazis*.¹¹⁸

Similarly, the suggestions to kings made throughout *Halilnâme* makes it more reminiscent to “the mirrors for princes” genre.¹¹⁹ This genre was adapted by Ottoman authors

¹¹³ Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 66.

¹¹⁴ Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 80: “...a difference between jihad and gaza was maintained whereby the latter term implied irregular raiding activity whose ultimate goal was the expansion of the power of Islam. Gaza, after all, had the original sense only of a ‘predatory raid’ or ‘excursion into foreign territory.’”

¹¹⁵ Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam*, 46.

¹¹⁶ Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam*, 46.

¹¹⁷ Especially the c. 3602-3605: “While the religion of Muhammad is famous/ Let make Muhammad Shah’s country prosperous, Make Muhammad Shah, the khan of the World in the sake of Muhammad’s respect”

¹¹⁸ C. 1756, 1757. See Kastritsis, *Sons of Bayezid* appendix, 222: “The Sultan marched, and occupied all of that province Such was the will of Osman and Orhan / The souls of those gazi begs were glad The province became prosperous and was conquered.”

¹¹⁹ Gottfried Hagen and Ethan Menchinger, “Ottoman Historical Thought,” in *A Companion to Global Historical Thought*, ed. Prasenjit Duara, Viren Murthy and Andrew Sartori (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2014), 102: “In the Ottoman Empire, as elsewhere in the pre-modern Islamic world, one of history’s most important functions as a genre was to offer moral and political guidance through exempla, in the sense of history as *magistra vitae* or “teacher of life.”

since Bayezid I's reign who made an attempt to transform the Ottoman state system into an empire that follows Perso-Islamic discourse.¹²⁰ The Perso-Islamic heritage of advice to rulers genre, assisted the legitimization of states in postcaliphal Islamdom.¹²¹ In medieval kingship, discourse of advice indicates precise administration, precise religion and precise order.¹²² For instance, direct advice is given to a "shah" by Abraham coherent with this medieval Islamic advice discourse. After the marriage of Sara and Abraham, Sara's father, the shah, converts to Islam and his city follows him to the new religion. "In one-two days the whole city/ They all converted to Islam"¹²³ The Arabic proverb "al-Nās Alā Dīn Mulūkihim" [The common people follow the religion of their rulers] is cited before the Islamization of the city takes place.¹²⁴ In the Islamic framework, the idealized progress of the *ummah* strengthens the equalization of pietistic and collective character in a way just as to broaden the hope that society would convert to Islam not as entities but as a public.¹²⁵ Moreover, the mission of Islamization of a community with the agency of a hero-prophet is a common motif found in the *universal history* and *kişaş al-anbiyā'* genres.¹²⁶ Ibn Khaldūn interprets this proverb as an illustration for a patrimonial state and ruler: subjects imitate their ruler.¹²⁷ Abdūlvâsi, by writing this couplet, invites his audience, the subjects, to follow their sultan, Mehmed. Moreover, Oghuz¹²⁸ lords' conversion to Islam also led their tribes to convert to Islam

¹²⁰ Pál Fodor, "State and Society, Crisis and Reform, In 15th—17th Century Ottoman Mirror for Princes." *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 40, no. 2/3 (1986): 220

¹²¹ Heather L. Ferguson, *The Proper Order of Things: Language, Power, and Law in Ottoman Administrative Discourses* (CA: Stanford University Press, 2018), 236.

¹²² Neugin Yavari, *Advice for The Sultan: Prophetic Voices and Secular Politics in Medieval Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 75.

¹²³ *Halilnâme*, 182/ c. 1161.

¹²⁴ *Halilnâme*, 182/ c. 1158

¹²⁵ Devin DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion in the Golden Horde: Baba Tükles and Conversion to Islam in Historical and Epic Tradition* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), 24.

¹²⁶ John Renard, *Islam and the Heroic Image: Themes in Literature and Visual Arts* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1993), 94.

¹²⁷ Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, trans. by Franz Rosenthal (West Sussex: Princeton University Press), 22

¹²⁸ See Kafadar, "A Rome of One's Own," 11: "Genealogies of the House of Osman proudly linked them to the tribal tradition of the Oghuz Turks."

adhering to the same principle: “the lord’s religion is his tribe’s religion.”¹²⁹ After the Islamization of the city, the shah asks Abraham for advice. The author calls out the audience not to be deceived by this world¹³⁰ by making Abraham speak to the shah, “That shah listened to this advice/ He said you are a gift from God.”¹³¹ Furthermore, the author uses the Persian word *pend* for “advice” which, in conjunction with “-name” (book), constitutes the Perso-Islamic genre of the mirrors for princes, *pendnâme*.¹³²

Another difference between the *gazi* hagiographies and *Halilnâme* is about social classification. Hagen points to the fact that the hagiographies “criticize the rigidity of social distinctions.”¹³³ On the contrary, *Halilnâme* depicts the social distinctions as a normality: “Some are dervishes, some are poor, some lords/ Some smile while some complain about their issues.”¹³⁴ And: “If there were no flock, there would not be any lords/ If there were no poor, lords would not laugh.”¹³⁵ Abdülvâsi, knowingly or not, follows Ibn Sînâ’s world order philosophy.¹³⁶

Since its protagonists are Abraham and Muhammad *Halilnâme* is partly a *universal history*, but especially a revelation history.¹³⁷ Classic Persian historiography is also organized by late dynasties together with prophets and the contemporary dynasties of chroniclers.¹³⁸

¹²⁹ İhsan Fazlıoğlu, *Kayıp Halka: İslam-Türk Felsefe-Bilim Tarihinin Anlam Küresi* [The lost link: Connotation realm of Islamo Turkish-Philosophy Science History] (İstanbul: Paparsense Yayınları, 2018), 52.

¹³⁰ *Halilnâme*, 186/ c.1190.

¹³¹ *Halilnâme*, 188/ c.1208.

¹³² See Patricia Crone, *Medieval Islamic Political Thought* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 148 for details about Iranian advice literature.

¹³³ Hagen, “Chaos, Order,” 103: “The most blatant neglect of such distinctions in a hagiographical account is attributed to the local Saint of Bursa, Emir Sultan, who marries the daughter of Sultan Bayezid during the latter’s absence, and then defeats the soldiers by the infuriated sultan by way of a miracle.”

¹³⁴ *Halilnâme*, 180/ c.1145.

¹³⁵ *Halilnâme*, 181/ c.1149.

¹³⁶ Al-Azmeh, *Muslim Kingship*, 118. Al-Azmeh cites Ibn Sina and al-Ghazali: “Inequality and unevenness are thus a natural condition, indeed the natural precondition of order. Just as not all individuals can be kings, not all of them tradesmen, [Ibn Sînâ, *Athar Majhul*, 969]”

¹³⁷ Hagen and Menchinger, “Ottoman Historical Thought,” 94

¹³⁸ Julie S. Meisami, “History as Literature,” in *A History of Persian Literature X: Persian Historiography*, ed. Charles Melville (London, New York: I. B. Tauris, 2012), 12.

Even though *Halilnâme* focuses on Abraham and partly Muhammad's life through the *mi'râdj*, the epic starts from the Genesis,¹³⁹ and the prophets following Adam are mentioned by their names in a few couplets, like the genre of *universal history*. Before Adam was created, the first soul created was the “imam of the prophets,”¹⁴⁰ Muhammad.¹⁴¹ The creation of Adam and Eve, was for Muhammad to come to earth, as their lineage.¹⁴² After Adam and Eve, Noah and his sons who “governed the world” are mentioned in a couplet.¹⁴³ Later, following the canonic Islamic lineage of prophets, Şāliḥ is mentioned in three couplets,¹⁴⁴ before the long epic of Abraham. On the other hand, Abdülvâsi also notes a contemporary battle, the Battle of Çamurlu. This is one of the oldest history accounts that the Ottomans wrote in verse, later to be transformed into the genre named *gazavatnâme* (book of exploits) in Ottoman historiography.¹⁴⁵

The content of *Halilnâme*

The sub-titles within the *mathnawî* are written in Persian signifying Persian literary influence over Turkish.¹⁴⁶ The translation of the titles into English are provided to illustrate the narrative structure and the chain of events of *Halilnâme*.

- 1) “Character of the Almighty God”
- 2) “Praise for the leader of the prophets Muhammad Mustafa peace be upon him”
- 3) “The characteristics of the Prophet’s miracles”
- 4) “Peace be upon the greatest Prophet’s miracles”

¹³⁹ *Halilnâme*, 36-39/ c.14-33.

¹⁴⁰ *Halilnâme*, 43/ c. 57.

¹⁴¹ See Uri Rubin, “Pre-Existence and Light: Aspects of the Concept of Nur Muhammad,” *Israel Oriental Studies*, 5 (1975): 67.

¹⁴² *Halilnâme*, 43/c. 60.

¹⁴³ *Halilnâme*, 79/ c. 341.

¹⁴⁴ *Halilnâme*, 80/c. 344-346.

¹⁴⁵ Tezcan, “Ottoman Historical Writing,” 194.

¹⁴⁶ For further information see Barbara Flemming, “Old Anatolian Turkish Poetry in its Relation to the Persian Tradition,” *Turkic-Iranian Contact Areas: Historical and Linguistic Aspects*, ed. by Lars Johanson and Christiane Bulut (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz Verlag, 2006).

- 5) "Praise for Sultan Muhammad, may God's power be with him"
- 6) "Praise for Bayezid Beg, may God's power be with him"
- 7) "Praise for Padishah, may God's power be with him"
- 8) "Praise for the great Pasha and reason of writing this poetic book"
- 9) "Prologue of Abraham's, the friend of God, epic"
- 10) "Abraham's [first] invocation"
- 11) "Satire for the telltale"
- 12) "Abraham's [second] invocation"
- 13) "Abraham's gratitude to the Almighty"
- 14) "Abraham travels to the city of Hazayin and character of Sara, daughter of the Shah"
- 15) "Character of Her [Sarah] in poetry"
- 16) "Sara has a dream"
- 17) "Abraham goes with Lady Sara and sees the Cruel One"
- 18) "Character of Sultan Muhammad's battle with Musa and defeat of Musa"
- 19) "Abraham in the city of Babylon"
- 20) "And the future of God's Friend"
- 21) "The first season"
- 22) "The second season"
- 23) "The third season"
- 24) "The fourth season"
- 25) "The fifth season"
- 26) "The sixth season"
- 27) "The seventh season"
- 28) "Epilogue of the book of God's friend's epic and the construction of the glorious Kaaba"
- 29) "Praise of the glorious Kaaba"
- 30) "Poetry about repenting"

- 31) “Will of the Friend of God via Miran and Miran herself”
- 32) “Poem of death”
- 33) “*Mi’râcnâme* (Nocturnal Journey Book) of Muhammad”
- 34) “The great heaven”
- 35) “The second heaven”
- 36) “The third heaven”
- 37) “The fourth heaven”
- 38) “The fifth heaven”
- 39) “The sixth heaven”
- 40) “The seventh heaven”
- 41) “The character of Rıdvan [guardian angel of the paradise] and his words”
- 42) “The character of the paradise of Me’va”
- 43) “The character of the Tübâ tree”
- 44) “Panegyric poetry for the epilogue of the book”
- 45) “The closure of the words and epilogue of the book”

Scholarly Literature Review

Scholarly works about Turkish literary texts mostly focus on textual format and contents. Not much has changed in modern scholarship since 1986, the publication year of Cornell H. Fleischer’s *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire*.¹⁴⁷

Modern scholarship on the Ottoman Empire tends to mistrust narrative evidence, especially when it is literary in character, in favor of the depersonalized ‘hard’ data of archival documentation or ‘factual’ narrative. Such a lack of confidence, or fear of the subjectivity inherent in such sources,

¹⁴⁷ Cited by Ali Fuat Bilkan, *Osmanlı Zihniyetinin Oluşumu, Kuruluş Döneminde Telif ve Tercüme* [Formation of the Ottoman mentality: Compilation and Translation during the Foundational Period] (İstanbul: İletişim, 2018), 11.

is not only unjustified but severely limiting. ‘Soft’ evidence, like soft tissues, gives life and significance to the hard structure.¹⁴⁸

For modern scholarship, *Halilnâme* is a fictional narrative. On the other hand, some auditors might have been listening to the story as historic facts claimed by its author.¹⁴⁹ But while it is not important whether the audience believed in the text, it is important to see this literary text’s value and the reason for its circulation after the interregnum, as well as the ways in which the vizier-sponsored author uses Abraham’s story to reflect on contemporary issues.

The original copy of *Halilnâme* was written in 817/1414-15. There are six known manuscripts of the work. One, as mentioned, is in Cairo, in Dar’ul-kutubi'l-Misriyye, as *Divan-ı Kadioğlu* (Anthology of a jurist-scholar’s son); it was copied in 1453 and was described by Abdülkadir Karahan.¹⁵⁰ The second one is known as the Muallim Cevdet Copy, and it is kept in the Atatürk Library, Istanbul. It was described by Günay Alpay.¹⁵¹ The third one, called the Afyon Copy, is in the Gedik Ahmet Paşa Library, and was described by Vasfi Mahir Kocatürk.¹⁵² The fourth and fifth copies were presented by Ayşe Deniz Abik in the *Journal of Turkology* in 1997: one is in the Konya Koyunoğlu Museum catalogued as *Destan-ı İbrahim* (Epic of Abraham), the other in Ankara Milli Kütüphane (National Library)

¹⁴⁸ Cornell H. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: The Historian Mustafa Ali (1541-1600)* (New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1986), 4.

¹⁴⁹ See the Introduction above.

¹⁵⁰ Abdülkadir Karahan, “15. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Dini Edebiyatında ‘Mesnevi’ler’.”

¹⁵¹ Günay Alpay [Günay Kut, in later publications], “Abdülvâsi Çelebi'nin eseri ve nüshaları” [Abdülvâsi Çelebi’s work and its copies], *TDA Belleten*, (1969): 210-226.

¹⁵² *İA*, s.v. “Halilnâme,” by Günay Kut.

as *Kıssa-ı Halilulallah* (The story of God's friend).¹⁵³ Sixth manuscript was described by Metin Akar in 2019.¹⁵⁴

The first mention of *Halilnâme* in scholarship comes as late as 1967, when Abdülkadir Karahan published a seminal article in the conference volume *Atti del terzo Congresso di studi arabi e islamici* (Istituto Universitario Orientale, Napoli).¹⁵⁵ Karahan argues that classical Turkish literature started to develop in the fourteenth century out of didactic-religious and heroic *mathnawīs*.¹⁵⁶ There is one doctoral dissertation about *Halilnâme* by Ayhan Gültaş in 1985 at Istanbul University and published by the Turkish Ministry of Culture in 1996.¹⁵⁷ The published work is named *Halilnâme*, and it uses the Cairo copy as the main source but the İstanbul and Afyon copies were also noted in the transcription to the Latin alphabet, where differences occurred.¹⁵⁸ Ayşe Deniz Abik wrote a master's thesis on *Halilnâme* at Ankara University in 1987.¹⁵⁹

There is a disagreement among scholars about whether the chapters 33-43 (according to the Persian sub-chapter names), relating to the Night Journey from Mecca to Jerusalem (*isrā'*) and ascension to heavens (*mi'rādj*) of the Prophet Muhammad,¹⁶⁰ should be read as a separate work or as part of *Halilnâme*. Metin Akar considered the last chapter as a separate *mathnawī* belonging to the genre of *mi'rācnâme*.¹⁶¹ On the other hand, Günay Alpay Kut

¹⁵³ Ayşe Deniz Abik, "İki Yeni Nüshası Sebebiyle Halilnâme ve Müellifi Abdülvâsi Üzerine" [Halilnâme's two recently found copies and its author, Abdülvâsi], *Türkoloji Dergisi* 12, issue: 1. (1997): 146.

¹⁵⁴ Metin Akar, "Eski Türk Edebiyatında İbrahimler, Halil-name'nin Yeni Bir Nüshası ve Düşündürdükleri" [Abraham in Old Turkish Literature, a New Copy of Halil-name and its Projections], *Aydın Türklük Bilgisi Dergisi* 9 (2019): 89.

¹⁵⁵ Karahan, "15. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Dini Edebiyatında 'Mesnevi'ler'."

¹⁵⁶ Karahan, "15. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Dini Edebiyatında 'Mesnevi'ler'," 418.

¹⁵⁷ Abdülvâsi Çelebi, *Halilnâme*, ed. Ayhan Gültaş (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1996)

¹⁵⁸ Ayhan Gültaş, "Prologue," in *Halilnâme*, 32.

¹⁵⁹ Şevkiye Kazan, "Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı Sahasında Yapılmış Doktora ve Yüksek Lisans Tezleri (1987-1999)" [PhD and MA theses in Turkish Language and Literature], *İlmi Araştırmalar* 14, (2002): 284.

¹⁶⁰ See Frederick Colby, *Narrating Muhammad's Night Journey: Tracing the Development of the Ibn Abbas Ascension Discourse*, (NY: State University of New York, 2008), 15, for the interchangeable usage of the terms.

¹⁶¹ *İA*, s.v. "Halilnâme.," Günay Kut. *Mi'rācnâme* is the term used to designate the narration of Muhammad's Night Journey and Ascension.

records that the *mathnawī*'s copy in Afyon starts as “Dasitan-ı İbrāhīm Nebi Aleyhesselam” (The epic of Prophet Abraham, Peace Be Upon Him) while in its final couplets, Abdülvâsi calls the whole work *Halilnâme*.¹⁶² Ayşe Deniz Abik, on the other hand, argues that the *mi'râcnâme* is part of *Halilnâme*, as the author not only keeps the same prosody in both parts, but Muhammad's life is also linked to the Abraham story by the emphasis on the fact that the Prophet was a descendant of Ishmael.¹⁶³ Abik compared the titles of the copies in five different libraries. Although, as discussed above, Afyon is the only library in which the word *Halilnâme* appears,¹⁶⁴ *Halilnâme* is nonetheless the most common title used for the work.

In a recent article, Feridun Emecen compares rhymed chronicles. Emecen examines *Halilnâme*'s political agenda in the light of its praise of Mehmed Çelebi.¹⁶⁵ Hüseyin Yılmaz examines *Halilnâme* and its role of politic-religious legitimization in his recent book *Caliphate Redefined: The Mystical Turn in Ottoman Political Thought*.¹⁶⁶ Mustafa Çağhan Keskin's scholarship focuses on Abdülvâsi's patron, the grand vizier Bayezid Pasha.¹⁶⁷ Hakan Yılmaz published a document about Abdülvâsi's foundation in Edirne which he interprets as evidence for Abdülvâsi's importance in the government.¹⁶⁸ I published an article in April 2018.¹⁶⁹ Dimitris Kastritsis's 2007 monograph examines the historical circumstances in which the work was written.¹⁷⁰ Kastritsis explores the historical environment before and after the Civil War using archival documents, numismatic sources, and chronicles. *Halilnâme*

¹⁶² Alpay, “Abdülvâsi,” 210-226.

¹⁶³ Abik, “İki Yeni Nüshası Sebebiyle Halilnâme,” 140.

¹⁶⁴ Abik, “İki Yeni Nüshası Sebebiyle Halilnâme,” 141.

¹⁶⁵ Feridun Emecen, “Osmanlı Tarihçiliğinin Başlangıcı: İlk Manzum Tarihler” [The Beginning of Ottoman Historiography: First Poetic Histories], in *Türk Tarihçiliğinin Asırlık Çınarı Halil İnalıcık'a Armağan*, ed. Mehmet Öz, Serhat Küçük (Ankara: Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü Yayınları, 2017).

¹⁶⁶ Hüseyin Yılmaz, *Caliphate Redefined: The Mystical Turn in Ottoman Political Thought* (Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2018).

¹⁶⁷ Mustafa Çağhan Keskin, “Bayezid Paşa: Vezir, Entelektüel, Sanat Hamisi” [Bayezid Pasha: An Ottoman statesman, intellectual, and art Patron], *The Journal of Ottoman Studies* 48 (2016): 1-37.

¹⁶⁸ Hakan Yılmaz, “*Halilnâme* yazarı Abdülvâsi Çelebi'nin Edirne'deki Vakfına İlişkin Bir Belge,” in *Şehir & Toplum* 3, (2015): 99-105.

¹⁶⁹ Durak, “Jewish Mystical Influences on a Medieval Ottoman Hagiography,” 83-96.

¹⁷⁰ Dimitris Kastritsis, *Sons of Bayezid: Empire Building and Representation in the Ottoman Civil War of 1402-13* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2007)

is mentioned in the work as a historical source; and its chapter on the Battle of Çamurlu (Mehmed's battle against his rival brother Musa) is translated into English.¹⁷¹

In this thesis, I will examine *Halilnâme*'s stories of Abraham in the context of current historical events at the time of its writing. *Halilnâme* belongs to the long history of Islamization in Anatolia by means of religious education and political propaganda, speaking in favor of Sultan Mehmed. I argue that Abraham is depicted as a rightful, pious ruler-hero, functioning as a myth,¹⁷² and thereby developed into a prototype of Sultan Mehmed. The Abraham story is continued down to Muhammad through Ishmael's lineage, and then reaches Sultan Mehmed, "the just Muslim ruler," who is named after Muhammad.¹⁷³ Before *Halilnâme*, works depicting rulers' similarities with prophets were popular in the Persian, Arabic, Armenian, Bulgarian, Georgian and Byzantine traditions.¹⁷⁴ These sources were not foreign to the Muslim literati;¹⁷⁵ and this old form of legitimizing the ruler via religion was adapted to Sultan Mehmed in *Halilnâme*. Another tradition that informs the work is that of the tradition of *isrā'īliyyāt* which is found in *kışaş al-anbiyā'* genre.

In the present study, I will first explain the importance of Abraham in Islam and how the Islamic depiction differs from the parallel traditions in Christianity and Judaism. My research into the possible literary sources of *Halilnâme* will then shed light on the transmission of religious knowledge in Anatolia during the fifteenth century. The second

¹⁷¹ Kastritsis, *Sons of Bayezid*, 221-233, Appendix: Translation of Abdülvâsi Çelebi's *Halilnâme*, "The Battle of Sultan Mehmed with Musa and the Defeat of Musa."

¹⁷² Hagen, "From Haggadic Exegesis," 305.

¹⁷³ Mehmed and Muhammad are written identically, as Arabic script with only four consonants; M-H-M-D. Out of respect for the prophet, Turkish Muslims usually use the form "Mehmed" when referring to people other than the prophet.

¹⁷⁴ Ivan Biliarsky, "Old Testament Models and the State in Early Medieval Bulgaria," in *The Old Testament in Byzantium*, ed. Paul Magdalino and Robert Nelson (Washington DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2010), 271.

¹⁷⁵ See Gilbert Dagron, *Emperor and Priest: The Imperial Office in Byzantium*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 51: "Islam, which felt the influence, either directly or by way of Byzantium, of Old Testament models provides an illuminating parallel."

chapter will examine what the protagonist and antagonist of *Halilnâme* signified for its contemporary audience. Finally, I will survey the ways in which the story of the *miraçnâme* is connected to Abraham's hagiography and shaped by the other Muslim intellectual trends. My research on the work's context and sources will reveal Abdülvâsi's usage of religion to depict Mehmed as a rightful ruler in the wake of the Civil War.

Methodology

Even though, as the brief overview above demonstrates, *Halilnâme* has been the subject of copious literary studies. On the other hand, it should also be studied both from the perspectives of history and religious studies disciplines. Historio-religious themes such as Turkish prophet stories (*kişâş al-anbiyâ*), have been studied by theology faculties in Turkey. However, while the discipline of theology approaches any religious document from the perspective of its sanctity, religious studies is approaching theology as "data, not method."¹⁷⁶ Thus, this thesis is going to approach *Halilnâme* as a historic data. *Halilnâme*, being a literature written under court patronage, stands out as a historic evidence from the Anatolian post-interregnum Era. As Jonathan Z. Smith suggests,

each scholar of religion, in his way, is concerned with phenomena that are historical in the simple, grammatical sense of the term, that is to say, with events and expressions from the past, reconceived vividly. The scholar of religion is, therefore, concerned with dimensions of memory and remembrance-whether they be the collective labor of society or the work of the individual historian's craft.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁶ Russell McCutcheon, *The Discipline of Religion: Structure, meaning, rhetoric* (London; NY: Routledge, 2003), 93.

¹⁷⁷ Jonathan Z. Smith, "In Comparison a Magic Dwells," in *A Magic Still Dwells: Comparative Study of Religion in the Postmodern Age*, ed. Kimberley Patton and Benjamin Ray (Berkeley: University of California Press), 25.

The “historian” who narrates the story of Abraham, and remembers the battle of Çamurlu, is Abdülvâsi, who constructs and contextualizes Abraham in a wider Islamic history. In doing so, he uses religion as a legitimization tool for the Sultan Mehmed Çelebi.

Chapter 1: The Ottoman Abraham legend and its Muslim and Jewish sources

Halilnâme starts with a panegyric depiction of God. The first Quranic verse quoted in *Halilnâme* is “If there had been in the heavens or earth any gods but Him, both heavens and earth would be in ruins: God, Lord of the Throne, is far above the things they say.”¹⁷⁸ Since Islam claims to be the only legitimate religion, all the prophets mentioned in the Qur’an are called Muslims.¹⁷⁹ Thus, Abraham (Ibrāhīm) is also a Muslim who called people to Islam in the Qur’an.¹⁸⁰ Abraham’s story, already part of Islamic historiography as a Muslim prophet, has been rewritten by Islamic scholars such as by Al-Ṭabarī, Al-Kisā’ī, Al-Ṭha’labī, and Rabḡhūzī (d.1310?), in their *ḳiṣaṣ al-anbiyā’* (stories of the prophets) literature. Using these sources, Abdülvâsi created the longest hagiography that renders Abraham a protagonist in Islamic literature.¹⁸¹ The *ḳiṣaṣ al-anbiyā’* genre is known to include *isrā’īliyyāt*,¹⁸² and in this thesis, I am examining how Abdülvâsi associated these sources with his age and Ottomans. Resembling the Book of Genesis and Islamic universal histories, *Halilnâme* starts with the creation of stars, heavens and earth; and all the creatures.

The characteristics of God is followed by panegyric poetry about Muhammad: “the heavens were created for the sake of him/the world is made for him”¹⁸³ This couplet resembles the *laulāka hadith* which is “if thou hadst not been (but for thee), I would not have created the

¹⁷⁸ The Qur’an, 22:21.

¹⁷⁹ The Qur’an, 3:19: “True religion, in God’s eyes is Islam”

¹⁸⁰ The Qur’an, 3:67.

¹⁸¹ Ayhan Gültaş, “Prologue,” in *Halilnâme*, 4. Gültaş points out that there is no opus in Arabic or Persian literature which only focuses on Abraham’s life.

¹⁸² Franz Rosenthal, “The Influence of the Biblical Tradition on Muslim Historiography,” in *Historians of the Middle East*, ed. Bernard Lewis and P. M. Holt (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 44.

¹⁸³ Gültaş, “Prologue,” 43.

heavens.”¹⁸⁴ According to the Islamic tradition Muhammad’s soul is the first soul to have been created.¹⁸⁵ Thus, due to the fact that *Halilnâme* begins with this genesis and continues the story by naming the prophets before Abraham, it contains some characteristics pertinent to the Islamic genre of *universal history*. To illuminate how the opus contextualizes Abraham and Sultan Mehmed’s battles against his brothers in the framework of a *universal history*, this chapter examines the Muslim and Jewish literature used by the author.

1.1. *Halilnâme*’s contextualization in Islamic Universal History

In classical Islamic historiography, God’s providence from the climax downward structures all human history via noble entities, such as prophets, kings, separatists or rebels.¹⁸⁶ *Halilnâme* exemplifies this Islamic mentality in poetry: the sentence “God is the one who wills the evil and goodness” from the Islamic credo,¹⁸⁷ is written in Arabic after couplet 29. Since God is positioned at the focus of historiography, Islamic historians exemplified events rather than explaining them.¹⁸⁸ The examples have been constituted by prophet stories or hagiographies of saints to teach the “right path” to Muslims.¹⁸⁹ Following the Islamic historiography canon, the author seeks divine guidance: “Make my heart happy with the prophets’ influence/ Make me a lover of the saints” (c.40)¹⁹⁰ *True knowledge* is transmitted to humans via the revelations which are announced by prophets,¹⁹¹ and since the age of prophethood was closed with “the seal of prophets”, Muhammad, people need to learn the rightful acts of prophets to see them as

¹⁸⁴ Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 215.

¹⁸⁵ See Rubin, “Pre-Existence and Light,” 67.

¹⁸⁶ Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, 129.

¹⁸⁷ A. J. Wensinck, *The Islamic Creed: Its Genesis and Historical Development* (London & NY: Routledge, 1965), 35.

¹⁸⁸ Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, 131.

¹⁸⁹ Renard, “Introduction: Islamic Hagiography: Sources and Contexts,” in *Tales of God’s Friends: Islamic Hagiography in Translation* (Berkeley; Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2009), 10.

¹⁹⁰ Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, 40.

¹⁹¹ Franz Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant: The Concept of Knowledge in Medieval Islam* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2007), 29.

examples. The literature about the previous prophets and saints were written down because the Muslims who wish to become pious in their lives while living in the post-prophetic age must learn and understand the reasons of prophets' rightful actions as rightful examples.¹⁹² That is why *Halilnâme*, though placed within the genre of *ta'riḫ* by its author, is not "history" in the Western sense, but rather a moralizing narrative written to show Abraham as an example for Muslims.¹⁹³ The quests of Abraham which represent a model for faithful Muslims suggest that *Halilnâme* is also a hagiography.¹⁹⁴

Similar to the Eusebian model of history writing, which bestowed Christianity with an ancient heritage, Islamic ecumenical chronology positioned Muhammad in a sequence of monotheist phases starting with a prophet.¹⁹⁵ According to medieval Muslim political discourse, unlike Christian theology, forceful rule is not grown among humans as a consequence of the fall from heaven.¹⁹⁶ Instead, people were exposed to God's rule directly or through his intercessors.¹⁹⁷ Adam is the first prophet who was given "power and authority" (*mulk wa-sultan*) and when he dies, authority passes to his son Seth. This prophetic line goes on until Muhammad.¹⁹⁸ *Halilnâme* follows this Islamic tradition which portrays Muhammad's advent as the culminative result of events.¹⁹⁹ Muhammad is present in *Halilnâme*'s prologue, throughout the epic, as well as the epilogue as the first spirit, and at the end as God's Loved One (*ḥabīb*), superior to the Friend (*khalīl*, i.e. Abraham) Many similarities are emphasized in *Halilnâme* between Abraham and Muhammad: anachronistically, Abraham's disbelieving

¹⁹² Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, 129.

¹⁹³ Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, 131.

¹⁹⁴ Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, 116: Robinson quotes from 'Abd al-Latif al-Baghdadi (d. 1231): "One should read histories (*tawarikh*), study biographies and experiences of nations, because in this way it is as if one transcends his short lifetime to live alongside the communities of the past, to become their contemporaries and intimates, and to know the best and worst of them."

¹⁹⁵ (c.60-62); Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, 135.

¹⁹⁶ Crone, *Medieval Islamic Political Thought*, 6.

¹⁹⁷ Crone, *Medieval Islamic Political Thought*, 6.

¹⁹⁸ Crone, *Medieval Islamic Political Thought*, 5.

¹⁹⁹ *Halilnâme*, 79,80/ c. 340-344.

compatriots worship pagan Arab idols, reflecting the cyclical understanding of history that is common in Islam. Even though *Halilnâme*'s protagonist is Abraham and only the nocturnal journey is narrated from Muhammad's biography, the narrative starts with Muhammad's creation and reads: "Adam became *caliph* (deputy)²⁰⁰ for Him [Muhammad]/ God gave Eve to Adam, For the sake of Him Noah is given salvation/From the flood, for him Abraham had come/ And the sacrificial animal came to Ishmael"²⁰¹ The epilogue of *Halilnâme* is the *miraçnâme* which identifies Muhammad as the seal of the prophets. Thus, *Halilnâme* locates Muhammad at the center of a chronology following the Islamic historiographic tradition. God himself compares Muhammad with Abraham: "You are my Beloved (*ḥabīb*) / I made Abraham my friend (*khalīl*) The difference between the Beloved and the Friend is obvious/ It is known by the ones who think/ My friend is looking for my consent/ To make myself pleased/ I ask your consent/ So that you can be pleased."²⁰²

Halilnâme can be contextualized within *universal history*: it starts with recalling Adam, as well as Noah and Şāliḥ, two prominent prophets before Abraham. Since Islamic universal history genre is constructed through prophets who distribute revelations, *Halilnâme* can be considered to be a partial "universal-revelation history."²⁰³ It focuses on Abraham and the Nocturnal Journey of Muhammad mentions prophets before Abraham only by name and their bringing of order and revelation. *Halilnâme* reads: "He [Şāliḥ] too passed, there are many stories about him/ It is not necessary to write an exegesis here."²⁰⁴ Moreover, *Halilnâme* contextualize Sultan Mehmed and Ottomans in the lands of Rum after Byzantine Empire's reign.²⁰⁵ The Prologue of the "Epic of *Halil-ul Allah* [Abraham]" draws a historiographic

²⁰⁰ Here Abdülvâsi uses the term *chaliph* which refers to Adam in the Qur'an 2:30.

²⁰¹ *Halilnâme* 43/ c.60-62. See Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, 43 for *Halilnâme*'s similarity to Islamic historiography.

²⁰² *Halilnâme*, 462/ c. 3396-3399; Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, 462.

²⁰³ See Hagen and Menchinger, "Ottoman Historical Thought" 94.

²⁰⁴ *Halilnâme*, 80/ c. 346-347.

²⁰⁵ *Halilnâme*, 398-99/ c. 2889-94.

picture after extolling God, Muhammad, the Sultan and the vizier with panegyric poetry. “After Noah in this universe/ there was prosperity among people, Noah’s sons governed/ Books were given to them, they governed this universe’s countries/ They hold the religion as sharia, after them there was disorder, God gave Şālih, who separated rightful from the vanity.”²⁰⁶ The cycle goes on with another time of unrest in which Nimrod and Abraham were born.

1.1.1. Sources of *Halilnâme*

According to Islamic literary discourse the Qur’an is the only “original” text.²⁰⁷ Thus, the only direct quotations are from the Qur’an throughout *Halilnâme*. The rest of the author’s sources are not named explicitly, except *Al-Kashshāf* and hadith collections. Unlike most of its contemporary Turkish literature, *Halilnâme* stands out as a *telif* (“creative mediation”) work. There is no similar structure of Abraham’s life story told in Perso-Islamic literature written before *Halilnâme*²⁰⁸ or it has not been described in scholarship yet. Like in a palimpsest, one can discover several literary, historic and cultural layers through *Halilnâme*. Ideas about the divine mission of the prophet-king can be traced back to ancient Babylonian perceptions.²⁰⁹ However, the present chapter mainly focuses on the notion of the *isrā’īliyyāt* literature that is found in most important *kişas al-anbiyā’* literature,²¹⁰ as well as their use in *Halilnâme*. The Prologue of the Epic of *Halil-ul Allah* starts with “Oh, the ones who seek counsel”²¹¹ By this the author gives counsel to his audience via the story of Abraham. Abdülvasi followed the classical Islamic and rabbinic traditions in which wisdom is transmitted through forefathers’ experiences.²¹²

²⁰⁶ *Halilnâme*, 79/ c. 340-344.

²⁰⁷ Paker, “On the poetic practices,” 40.

²⁰⁸ Ayhan Güldeş, Prologue to *Halilnâme*, 4.

²⁰⁹ See Al-Azmeh, *Muslim Kingship*, 41.

²¹⁰ Hagen, “From Haggadic Exegesis,” 304.

²¹¹ *Halilnâme*, 79/ c. 334.

²¹² See Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, 85.

1.1.2. Islamic sources

Abdülvâsi directly refers to only the three basic sources of Islamic religious literature explicitly, the first and most important one being the Qur'an, which is cited directly in its original form, in Arabic, between couplets. The second source is hadith literature, also quoted in the original Arabic and translated into Turkish in the verses that follow, and the third is *tafsîr*.²¹³ The Qur'an is the main source for religious authorities, and as the son of a jurist-scholar (*kādî -oğlu*), Abdülvâsi cannot contradict it. Thus, he establishes a framework of comparing Quranic verses about Abraham with others about Muhammad. Abdülvâsi quotes eighty-three verses from the Qur'an, and sixteen hadiths. This shows his mastery in the Quran and hadith literature.

The private library of Sultan Mehmed had several Islamic books and *tafsîrs*.²¹⁴ This is notable as Abdülvâsi explicitly mentions hadith and *tafsîr* literature as his sources. When addressing his readers/auditors in the prologue, he starts with²¹⁵ “The ones who seek advice in this world/ Tell us about the *tafsîr*”²¹⁶. In one verse, he specifies that he based his poem on the *tafsîr* of Al-Zamakhsharî (Abu'l-Kâsim Maḥmūd b. 'Umar, d. 1144) titled *Al-Kashshāf*,²¹⁷ which declares Abraham to be an exemplar for pious people.²¹⁸ “Write a glorious poem/ Let it be chosen from *Keşşaf* [Turkish version of *al-Kashshāf*]”²¹⁹ Likewise, at the beginning of the *mi'râcnâme* chapter Abdülvâsi indicates the two most authoritative hadith collections,

²¹³ *Halilnâme*, 493/ c. 3638: “From five or six *tafsîr*, I deducted this *ahbar* (account of the past).”

²¹⁴ See Süheyl Ünver, “Çelebi Sultan Mehmed Hususi Kütüphanesi” [Private Library of Çelebi Sultan Mehmed], *Türk Kütüphaneciliği* (Ankara: 1970): 19.

²¹⁵ “Matla-ı Dastan-ı İbrahim Halilullah” [Prelude to the epic of Abraham]. Many literary works in medieval times were recited. Kastitrisis, echoing İnalçık, points out: “in a society imbued with the *ghaza* spirit *menaqibnames* were usually intended to be read aloud in public gatherings, in the army or in the bazaars...” Kastitrisis, *Sons of Bayezid*, 29.

²¹⁶ *Halilnâme*, 79/ c. 334

²¹⁷ Zemaḥşeri, *El-Keşşaf: Keşşaf Tefsiri*, trans. Muhammed Coşkun, Ömer Çelik, Necdet Çağıl and Adil Bebek (İstanbul: TC Türkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu Başkanlığı, 2016)

²¹⁸ Zemaḥşeri, *El-Keşşaf: Keşşaf Tefsiri 4*, trans. Muhammed Coşkun, Ömer Çelik, Mehmet Erdoğan, Sadrettin Gümüş, Adil Bebek, Murat Sülün, Mehmet Çiçek, Necdet Çağıl (İstanbul: TC Türkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu Başkanlığı, 2018), 194.

²¹⁹ *Halilnâme*, 491/ c.3627.

those of Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj and Muhammad al-Bukhārī: “This news came through Ebu Muslim/ The truth is also in Bukhārī”²²⁰

It must be noted that Abdülvâsi’s named sources, *al-Kashshāf* and *Sahih-i Bukhārī* were also part of the Ottoman madrasa curriculum.²²¹ Moreover, *al-Kashshāf*’s popularity among medieval Islamic scholars is evident in some other authors’ works from Mehmed’s court: Haydar el-Herevî’s *Sharh al-Kashhāf*²²² and Ibn ‘Arabshāh’s *‘Adjā’ib al-maḳdūr. Sharh al-Kashhāf* is an exegesis about *al-Kashshāf* in which the author eulogizes Mehmed I.²²³ Moreover, Ibn ‘Arabshāh extols Shah Shujah’s exegesis on *al-Kashshāf*.²²⁴ Also, the book was used in Shahrukh’s court for religious debates.²²⁵ *Al-Kashshāf* was influenced by Ṭabarī’s (Abū Dja‘far Muḥammad b. Djarīr, d. 923) *tafsīr*, the first *tafsīr* translation in Persian and Turkish.²²⁶ Ṭabarī’s *History*, a prototypical book for medieval Islamic chroniclers,²²⁷ contains *isrā’īliyyāt*.²²⁸ Moreover, due to its popularity, Ṭabarī’s *History* in Anatolia was translated from its Persian translation into Turkish by Hüsameddin Çelebi in 1310.²²⁹ Furthermore, Al-Ṭha‘labī and al-Kisā’ī were the essential literature sources for the expansion of the *kişāş al-anbiyā’* in the non-Arabic speaking Islamdom.²³⁰

²²⁰ *Halilnâme*, 419/c. 3051.

²²¹ Bilkan, *Osmanlı Zihniyetinin Oluşumu*, 153. Citing Mustafa Bilge, *İlk Osmanlı Medreseleri* [First Ottoman Madrasas], (İstanbul: Edebiyat İÜ Fakültesi Basımevi, 1984), 43-52.

²²² M. Taha Boyalık, “Haydar el-Herevî’nin I. Mehmed’e İthaf Ettiği *el-Keşşâf Şerhi*’nin Tespiti ve Eserin Literatür, Biyografi ve Tarih Alanlarında Sunduğu Veriler /Detection of Haydar al-Harawî’s *Sharh al-Kashhāf* dedicated to Mehmed I and the data presented in this work in the literature, biography and history,” *The Journal of Ottoman Studies* 54 (2019): 13.

²²³ Boyalık, “Haydar el-Herevî’nin I. Mehmed’e İthaf Ettiği *el-Keşşâf Şerhi*,” 21.

²²⁴ Ahmed Ibn Arabshah, *Tamerlane or Timur the Great Amir*, trans. J. H. Sanders (London: Luzac&Co., 1936), 28.

²²⁵ Maria Eva Subtelny and Anas B. Khalidov, “The Curriculum of Islamic Higher Learning in Timurid Iran in the Light of the Sunni Revival under Shāh-Rukh,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 115, No. 2 (Apr. - Jun. 1995): 213.

²²⁶ Bilkan, *Osmanlı Zihniyetinin Oluşumu*, 124.

²²⁷ Roberto Tottoli, *Biblical Prophets in the Qur’an and Muslim Literature*, (London, New York: Routledge Studies, 2002), 133.

²²⁸ Boaz Shoshan, *Poetics of Islamic Historiography: Deconstructing Ṭabarī’s History* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2004), xxviii.

²²⁹ Bilkan, *Osmanlı Zihniyetinin Oluşumu*, 169. Bilkan cites Ramazan Şeşen’s *Müslümanlarda Tarih-Coğrafya Yazıcılığı* (İstanbul: İsar Yay., 1998)

²³⁰ Hagen, “From Haggadic Exegesis,” 304.

The examination of the Ottoman madrasa curriculum also reveals Abdülvâsi's sources for *Halilnâme*. One of the most influential scholars during the foundation period of the Ottoman Era was Molla Fenârî (d. 1431) who taught in the first Ottoman madrasa, the Madrasa of Manastır, and was appointed to the position of *kâdî* (judge-scholar) of Bursa in 1415 by Sultan Mehmed.²³¹ He adhered to the idea of *waḥdat al-wudjūd* (the oneness of being) propagated by Ibn al-‘Arabî (Muḥyi’l-Dīn Abū ‘Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. al-‘Arabî al-Ḥātimī al-Ṭā’ī, d.1340).²³² The *waḥdat al-wudjūd* is also apparent in *Halilnâme*'s chapter of the “Character of the Almighty God.”²³³ Moreover, scholars educated in Islamic centers, such as Cairo, Samarkand, were migrating to Anatolia and nurturing the religious intellectuality during the early fifteenth century.²³⁴ Furthermore, Abdülvâsi's inclusion of astronomy in his work, explaining how night and day occur,²³⁵ illustrates the Ottoman madrasa curriculum's inclusiveness of sciences. For example, Al-Djaghmīnī's (d.1221?) *al-Mulakhkhaṣ* was one of the astronomy books included in the madrasa curriculum.²³⁶

1.1.3. Jewish sources within the Islamic literature

²³¹ Mustafa Aşkar, “Osmanlı'nın Kuruluş Döneminde Bir İbn Arabi Takipçisi: Molla Fenari ve Vahdet-i Vücut Anlayışı,” [A follower of Ibn Arabi: Molla Fenari and the idea of vahdet-i vucud] International Symposium on Molla Fenari, (2009), 274.

²³² Aşkar, “Osmanlı'nın Kuruluş Döneminde,” 280-88.

²³³ *Halilnâme*, 37/ c.18: “All the universe is in his gracious piece.”; and 41/ c. 48: “There is no us, all is you” illustrate the *waḥdat al-wudjūd* idea.

²³⁴ Abdurrahman Atçıl, *Scholars and Sultans in the Early Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 32-36.

²³⁵ *Halilnâme*, 40-43/ c. 36-63 and also, 354-55/ c.2530-40. See Güldaş, “Prologue,” C. 2539: “Whichever side the sun does not face/ That side is night, the other is day.” Also, the classical Islamic mythology is reflected about the cosmology:

Halilnâme, 69/ c. 257: “Let Utarid [Mercury]write this recitation/Let the earth repeat this prayer.” *Ansiklopedik Divan Şiiri Sözlüğü* [Encyclopedic Dictionary of Classical Poetry] s.v. “Utarid” by İskender Pala. “Mercury is considered as the scribe of fate. It is the symbol of artistic expression and prose.” Later, narrating the oracles of Nimrod, Abdülvâsi defines the universe by naming stars and planets. *Halilnâme*, 82-83/ c.359-365.

²³⁶ Bilkan, *Osmanlı Zihniyetinin Oluşumu*, 153.

Definition of the notion of *isrā'īliyyāt* can be made as “Muslim reimaginings of Jewish traditions.”²³⁷ As its name suggests, it is mainly legends on the ancient Israelites, derived often (but not always) from a Jewish source.²³⁸ The classical explanation of this notion is that Jewish and Christian literati converts to Islam brought their biblical and midrashic knowledge to their new religion which constitute *isrā'īliyyāt*.²³⁹ Even though the “Israelite stories” were originated in rabbinic and biblical literature, they were transformed in the Islamic discourse to make *isrā'īliyyāt* an Islamic legacy.²⁴⁰ However, the biblical origin of the material was not so easily forgotten among the Muslim scholars, and the attitude towards *isrā'īliyyāt* was unfavorable among orthodox jurists.²⁴¹ On the other hand, many *isrā'īliyyāt* narratives were made known by Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d.728), a founding father character for Sufis,²⁴² and they were deemed beneficial by benign scholars of Islam.²⁴³

Some of the Muslim scholars legitimized the use of biblical or rabbinic literature in their works through the accepted validity of biblical revelations: “[All] true Religion, in God’s eyes, is Islam” (Qur’an 3:19). Furthermore, the *Risala* of al-Shāfi’ī manifests the early affirmative prospect for *isrā'īliyyāt*: “The Prophet said: Transmit on my authority be it even one verse (from the Qur’an), narrate (traditions) concerning the Children of Israel and there is nothing objectionable (in that).”²⁴⁴ The Qur’an inserts most of the biblical prophets into a lineage from Adam until Muhammad, all of them being considered as Muslims and members

²³⁷ Lowin, *The Making of a Forefather*, 8. Lowin quotes from Steven M. Wasserstrom, “Jewish Pseudepigrapha and Qisas al-Anbiyā,” in *Judaism and Islam: Boundaries, Communications, and Interaction: Essays in Honor of William H. Brinner*, ed. Benjamin H. Hary, et al. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2000), 237–256 passim

²³⁸ Lowin, *The Making of a Forefather*, 7.

²³⁹ Lowin, *The Making of a Forefather*, 7.

²⁴⁰ Lowin, *The Making of a Forefather*, 17.

²⁴¹ Lowin, *The Making of a Forefather*, 15.

²⁴² Diana Lobel, “Sufism and Philosophy in Muslim Spain and the Medieval Mediterranean World,” in *History as Prelude: Muslims and Jews in the Medieval Mediterranean*, ed. Joseph V. Montville. (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2013.) 155.

²⁴³ Jacob Lassner, *Jews, Christians, and the Abode of Islam: Modern Scholarship, Medieval Realities* (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2012), 58.

²⁴⁴ Lowin, *The Making of a Forefather*, 8. Lowin quotes M. J. Kister, “Hadditha 'an bant isrād'la wa-la haraja: a study of an early tradition.” *IOS* 2 (1972): 215–239.

of the Islamic tradition. For example, according to the Qur'an, "Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but he was one inclining toward truth, a Muslim" (3:67). Since revelations about all biblical prophets are included in the Qur'anic narrative, this opens the question of the validity of their former revelations transmitted in the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament. Even though according to the Qur'an, namely the Torah (*Tawrāt*), the Psalms (*Zabūr*), and the Gospel (*Indjīl*) are of divine origin,²⁴⁵ they have suffered "alteration" (*tahrīf*) by transmitters.²⁴⁶ Moreover, the differentiation of the "distorted" parts from "original revelations given to the prophets" was difficult for Islamic scholars.²⁴⁷

1.1.4. Validity of the Jewish sources for Islam

How biblical stories came into the Qur'an is explained differently by Muslim theologians and secular scholars, since for the former, the divine authenticity of the revelations to Muhammad is a matter of belief.²⁴⁸ According to the Qur'an, God sent his revelations successively to the prophets; and thus, the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament have a basis in God's revelations. The Qur'an, which claims to be the latest revelation from God, is also the only textually valid one, because the Hebrew Bible and New Testament were "altered" (*tahrīf*) by the respective clergy of Judaism and Christianity.²⁴⁹ According to some Islamic scholars, the reason of this process of "falsification" was to erase from the texts the signs of Muhammad's advent as the

²⁴⁵"If you are in doubt about what We have sent down to you then ask those who have been reading the book before you" (Qur'an 10:94). Moreover, the Qur'an reads: "Step by step, He has sent the Scripture down to you [the Prophet] with the Truth, confirming what went before: He sent down the Torah and the Gospel" (Qur'an 3:3.)

²⁴⁶Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, *Intertwined Worlds: Medieval Islam and Bible Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1992), 19.

²⁴⁷ Shari Lowin and Nevin Reda, "Scripture and exegesis Torah and Qur'an in historical retrospective," in *The Routledge Handbook of Muslim–Jewish Relations*, ed. Josef Meri (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016): 70

²⁴⁸ See Lowin, *The Making of a Forefather*, 27-38.

²⁴⁹ The Qur'an 2:79: "So woe to those who write something down with their own hands and then claim, 'This is from God,' in order to make some small gain."

latest prophet.²⁵⁰ Despite these claims, some argue there are some “authentic revelation” parts left in the Hebrew Bible which acknowledge that Muhammad was the latest prophet.²⁵¹

The Qur’an’s acceptance of the previous revelations, in spite of the claim of their distortion, creates a legitimate area for Islamic scholars to study the *Tawrah*, *Zabūr* and *Indjīl*. These terms do not only refer to the biblical books. For instance, the *Tawrah* does not indicate solely to the Torah. Instead, it suggests the broad oeuvre of rabbinic literature.²⁵² In Christianity as well, “the good message” (*evangelion*) can mean both the four Gospels, and the Christian teachings in their totality. This concept reflects the Jewish usage of the name Torah, encompassing both the written Torah (the five books of Moses) and the oral Torah (The Talmud, Midrash and entire rabbinic literature).

Even though it is not stated in Islamic sources when the distortion of pre-Qur’anic revelations from God took place, it is assumed that authentic revelations were still kept at the time the Qur’an was given, because of the latter’s acceptance and praise of the followers of Moses, Jesus, Solomon and other prophets. These pious believers of pre-Islamic prophets were included in the chronologies of saints or “friends of God” (*auliyā’*), and they are even considered as being able to receive a kind of prophecy called *ilhām*, which is different from that of prophets (*vaḥy*). As the prophets before Muhammad were seen as members of Islam receiving the revelations from the same God, there is an Islamic literature both on the pious followers (*auliyā’*) of Moses and on Jesus’ saintly community (*ummah*).²⁵³ The “true followers

²⁵⁰ Hava Lazarus-Yafeh, “Muslim Medieval Attitudes Towards the Qur’an and the Bible,” in *Les retours aux Écritures: fondamentalismes présents et passés*, ed. by Alain Le Boulluec and Évelyne Patlagean. (Louvain, Paris: Peeters, 1993), 258.

²⁵¹ Camilla Adang, *Muslim Writers on Judaism and the Hebrew Bible: From Ibn Rabban to Ibn Hazm* (Leiden; NY; Köln, Brill, 1996), 142.

²⁵² Lowin, *The Making of a Forefather*, 10.

²⁵³ A fifteenth-century Sufi example can be found in Jami’s hagiography *Nafahāt al-uns* (Breaths of Fellowship) in the chapter named “Statements on the miracles of the saints.” Jami quotes a hadith transmitted through Abu Huraira: “A pious rabbi named Cureyh from the Israelites (*Banū Isrā’īl*), who prayed all the time, was object of a woman’s assertions saying she was pregnant from him. When the rabbi asked the baby ‘who is your father’, it said ‘my mother is lying.’” Jami’s chapter also narrates the miracles of Asaf, vizier of King Solomon, and of Mary,

of biblical prophets” are placed in heaven in *Halilnâme*’s *miraçnâme* section and this is going to be examined in detail in chapter three of this thesis.

1.2. Plot of *Halilnâme*

1.2.1. Annunciation of Abraham

Below, I will examine the main motives of the Abraham plot in *Halilnâme* in comparison with a selected *kişas al-anbiyā*’ authors; Al-Ṭabarī, Al-Kisā’ī, Al-Tha‘labī, Rabghūzī, Al-Zamakhsharī’s *tafsir Al-Kashshāf* and Jewish literature. The Abraham-Nimrod narrative starts after the death of Şālih, when “[i]gnorance prevailed among the world/ Blasphemy and perversion were born at one time”.²⁵⁴ Similarly, a fifteenth century Armenian apocrypha named *Պատմութիւն թիմու Հայր Աբրահամ* (Story of Father Abraham) emphasizes Abraham’s role to stop the errors and idolatry of mankind,²⁵⁵ not to signify a direct connection between two works but there is a similarity between Armenian and Islamic Abraham hagiographies. Both works emphasize Abrahams’ commission to mend the civil disorder. Abraham appears in *Halilnâme* as the hero who can rescue his impious age. According to the Islamic understanding, distorted conditions are amended by prophets.²⁵⁶ In a despondent atmosphere, which classical Islamic rhetoric postulates for the sake of despotism,²⁵⁷ God sends his prophets to show people the

mother of Jesus, both being included in the chronology of saints. Since the saints before Muhammed’s times followed their own prophets’ rules and were followers of authentic scripture, the testimony of rabbinic literature must be accepted as trustworthy even though there is no direct proof of its validity. Some post-Quranic scholars openly used rabbinic literature. Molla Câmî, *Nefehâtü’l-iîns*, trans. Kamil Tandoğan (İstanbul: Bedir Publications 1971), 85.

²⁵⁴ C. 347.

²⁵⁵ Anonymous, “Story of Father Abraham,” in *Armenian Apocrypha Relating to Abraham*, ed. and trans. Michael E. Stone (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), 41.

²⁵⁶ Azmeh, *Muslim Kingship*, 41.

²⁵⁷ Azmeh, *Muslim Kingship*, 115.

“right path.” Following this discourse, *Halilnâme*, depicts the time phase before prophet Šālih as a time full of *fitna*’s (Qur’anic term for civil disorder)²⁵⁸ prevalence on earth.²⁵⁹

Halilnâme narrates the annunciation of Abraham mainly following the classical *kişāş al-anbiyā*’ literature. In summary: Nimrod, son of Canaan, who was born in the country of Ajam, conquers Iraq, Rum, a name which is used by Ottomans to define their lands,²⁶⁰ Damascus, Egypt and the land of Canaan. Abdülvâsi writes the name of Nimrod’s capital with an end rhyme; Babil and *ababil*: “The city was called Bābil (Babylon)²⁶¹/ There were no *ababil* [a kind of bird, “*hapax legomenon*”²⁶²] flying over it.”²⁶³ Here Abdülvâsi refers to the Quran’s Sura 105 “al- Fīl.” In this sura a marching army, whose aim to demolish the Kaaba, is stopped by birds called *ababil*.²⁶⁴ Thus, the cyclical concept of Islamic time is illustrated in this analogy; God’s *ababil* would have stopped Nimrod’s injustice but the miracle (i.e. Abraham’s defeat of Nimrod) is yet to come in that couplet. King Nimrod has “witches, augurs, oracles and scholars” in his court who track the stars for divination. The astrologers announce Nimrod that a star was born in that night, which has not been seen for a thousand years, revealing that a boy would be conceived by his mother in the king’s lands, who would overthrow him. Nimrod then prohibits all men of his kingdom to see their wives. The bright star falls on Āzar, the

²⁵⁸ See Jan-Erik Lane and Hamadi Redissi, *Religion and Politics: Islam and Muslim Civilisation* (London: Routledge, 2004) 50-51 for historic evolution of the word.

²⁵⁹ C. 343.

²⁶⁰ See Cemal Kafadar, “A Rome of One’s Own: Reflections on Cultural Geography and Identity in the Lands of Rum,” *Muqarnas* 24, History and Ideology: Architectural Heritage of the “Lands of Rum” (2007): 9.

²⁶¹ Tabari, *The History of Al-Taberi 2: Prophets and Patriarchs*, trans. William Brinner (New York: State University of New York Press, 1987), 61, and Al-Tha’labī, *Lives of the Prophets*, trans. William M. Brinner (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 124. These sources also name Babylon but Rabghūzī does not. Babylon is one of the cities of Nimrod according to Genesis 10:10. And the Armenian apocrypha names the birthplace as Babylon too. *Story of Father Abraham*, 41.

²⁶² Gordon D. Newby, “Abraha and Sennacherib: A Talmudic Parallel to the Tafsīr on Sūrat Al-Fīl,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 94, no. 4 (1974): 436

²⁶³ C. 355.

²⁶⁴ Qur’an, 437. Also see Newby, “Abraha and Sennacherib: A Talmudic Parallel to the Tafsīr on Sūrat Al-Fīl,” 432-6 for the discussion about the identification of the ruler. According to classical Islamic exegetes he was Abyssinia’s Christian ruler Abraha who planned to demolish the Kaaba in 570 CE.

counselor of Nimrod who had the duty of examining the star, and his forehead shines like the moon.

Here, the narrator interrupts the story and addresses his audience: “Listen, you who ask ‘what was that star? / how come it fell on Āzar?’ It is the light of Muhammad/ God has created it before creating the world.”²⁶⁵ These couplets are followed by a hadith written in Arabic: “The first thing created is my light [*nūr Muḥammadī*],” which is also known to have been quoted by Sufis such as al-Hallāj and Attār.²⁶⁶ Thus, the classic Islamic historiography is realized right at the beginning of the epic: *Halilnâme* makes all events in the narrative foreshadow Muhammad’s advent as the last prophet.

Āzar’s wife feels a deeper love for her husband because of the “light” shining from his forehead.²⁶⁷ In the same night, she becomes pregnant, receiving the “light,”²⁶⁸ at the palace of Nimrod. The motif of light, forehead and being attractive to women is found in the birth narrative of Muhammad.²⁶⁹ Abdülvâsi recounts the transfer of the light from Adam to Seth, Noah and Şāliḥ.²⁷⁰ The cyclical understanding of Islamic historiography is illustrated in this chapter, Abraham’s birth prefiguring Muhammad’s birth. The Islamic understanding presents the prophets in a continuum while using *isrā’īliyyāt* in *kişaş al-anbiyā’* literature, culminating in Muhammad’s life.²⁷¹ Thus, every event of Muhammad’s life was hinted in previous prophet’s lives. For instance, a Meccan idolater named Abū D̲jahl (d. 624) was called “the

²⁶⁵ *Halilnâme*, 91/ c. 435-36.

²⁶⁶ Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, 215.

²⁶⁷ *Halilnâme*, 92,93/ c. 445-449.

²⁶⁸ See Rubin, “Pre-Existence,” 67: “Already early Muslim sources furnish us with the view that the spirit of Muhammad, forming part of the spermatc substance of his ancestors existed in the World as an integral prophetic entity before his birth. It was being transmitted from father to son until its visible manifestation on earth, through the corporeal Muhammad”

²⁶⁹ Rubin, “Pre-Existence,” 83.

²⁷⁰ *Halilnâme*, 92/ c. 441: “It came over to Shīth and Nūḥ/ It has also stayed on the forehead of Şāliḥ.”

²⁷¹ Lowin, *The Making of a Forefather*, 80.

Pharaoh of the ummah” by Muhammad.²⁷² Moreover, Ishāq ibn Bisr names Nimrod as “*Fir’awn* of Ibrahim” (Pharaoh of Abraham).²⁷³

Shari Lowin points out to the silence of pre-Islamic rabbinic literature on Abraham’s birth prophecy by astrologers.²⁷⁴ Even though, the post-Islamic Jewish literature do narrate the prophecy about Abraham’s birth, the astrologers understand only after Abraham is born in Jewish narratives.²⁷⁵ Timing of the prophecy difference between the Jewish and Muslim narrative is due to the characteristic of Islamic prophethood. In the Islamic narrative, Abraham is chosen and guided by God to invite people to Islam.²⁷⁶ But “the Jewish texts present the forefather as an individual with control over his destiny and with free will.”²⁷⁷ Even though the motif of the “prophecy of a prophet’s birth” is found before the Islamic narratives, in the New Testament in the Magi’s prophecy about the setting of the Nativity, and in the midrasic narrative about the Pharaoh’s dream,²⁷⁸ the prenatal prognostication about Abraham’s birth was crafted by Muslim authors.²⁷⁹ Thus, the rabbinic birth stories of Moses and Biblical nativity story of Jesus is transformed and adapted by Muslim authors to Abraham’s birth story. More importantly, the Muslim authors’ construction of Abraham’s miraculous birth story subsequently influenced Jewish literature as well.²⁸⁰

On the other hand, *Ma’aseh Avraham Avinu Alav ha-Shalom*²⁸¹ (The tale of our Father Abraham, peace be upon him) differs from all other post-Islamic rabbinic literature about the

²⁷² Cahid Kara, “Klasik Kaynaklarda İslâm Muhalifleri Hakkındaki Rivayetlerin Değerlendirilmesi: Ebû Cehil (Ebû’l-Hakem Amr b. Hişâm) Örneği” [Evaluation of the Narrations about the Opponents of Islam in the Classical Sources: The Sample of Abu Jahl (Abu’l-Hakam Amr b. Hisham)] *İSTEM* 21 (2013): 139.

²⁷³ Lowin, *The Making of a Forefather*, 80.

²⁷⁴ Lowin, *The Making of a Forefather*, 55.

²⁷⁵ Lowin, *The Making of a Forefather*, 61.

²⁷⁶ The Qur’an 6:77: “he [Abraham] said, ‘If my Lord does not guide me, I shall be one of those who go astray.’”

²⁷⁷ Lowin, *The Making of a Forefather*, 63

²⁷⁸ Lowin, *The Making of a Forefather*, 48.

²⁷⁹ Lowin, *The Making of a Forefather*, 61.

²⁸⁰ Lowin, *The Making of a Forefather*, 61.

²⁸¹ There are three editions of this text: 1) *Ma’aseh Avraham Avinu Alav ha-Shalom* [The Tale of Our Father Abraham, Peace be upon Him]. Edition Istanbul (1519? c. 1580?). 2) Elijah ben Solomon Abraham, *Shevet Musar*. First edition: Istanbul 1718, chapter 52; see in the edition Istanbul 1732, fol. 109v-111v; and 3) "Ma'aseh Avraham

timing of prophecy.²⁸² According to this text, Nimrod sees a divination that Abraham will be born. The timing of prophecy in *Ma'aseh Avraham Avinu Alav ha-Shalom* is consistent with the Muslim narratives,²⁸³ which strongly suggests that the original source of the text is an Islamic text about Abraham.²⁸⁴

1.2.2. The Birth of Abraham

In *Halilnâme*, Āzar's wife flees from Nimrod's persecution to a cave, where her son Abraham is born. The boy grows up quickly. A dragon²⁸⁵ dwells in front of the cave to protect him and a deer comes to suckle him.²⁸⁶ The dragon and the deer are not found in classical Islamic *kişas al-anbiyā'* literature such as Ṭabarī (d.923), al-Kisā'ī, or Rabgūzī but there are wild animals that protect Abraham's cave in al-Kisā'ī, and a wild beast suckles Abraham as a baby.²⁸⁷ A tale on a pregnant deer talking about how she is feeding her young is found in an old Turkish-Altay epic named *Közüyke*.²⁸⁸ The plot differs between *Halilnâme* and *Közüyke*, but the idea of the sacredness of the deer may have been transmitted through oral narratives. Moreover, deer is a sacred animal which dwells in caves in ancient and medieval Turkish legends.²⁸⁹ Even though the suckling is also miraculous in *Halilnâme*, most classical Islamic narrative develops the

Avinu Alav ha-Shalom [The Tale of Our Father Abraham, Peace Be upon Him]," in *Bet ha-Midrash: Sammlung kleiner Midraschim und vermischter Abhandlungen aus der ältern jüdischen Literatur* [House of Study: Collection of minor midrashim and miscellaneous texts from ancient Jewish literature], ed. Adolf Jellinek, vol. 1 (Leipzig: Friedrich Nies, 1853). I'm referring to "Ma'aseh Avraham Avinu Alav ha-Shalom" in *Bet ha-Midrash: Sammlung kleiner Midraschim und vermischter Abhandlungen aus der ältern jüdischen Literatur*, 25-34.

²⁸² Lowin, *The Making of a Forefather*, 65.

²⁸³ Lowin, *The Making of a Forefather*, 66.

²⁸⁴ Joshua Finkel, "An Arabic Story of Abraham," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 12-13 (1937-8): 387.

²⁸⁵ According to classical Persian motifs, dragons are protectors of treasuries. This simile was constructed to express that Abraham was the most precious being of his time.

²⁸⁶ *Halilnâme*, 106/ c. 552.

²⁸⁷ See *The Tales of the Prophets of al-Al-Kisā'ī*, trans. W.M. Thackston Jr. (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1978) 138: "When she saw lions and wild beasts at the entrance to the cave, she became anxious and thought her child had surely perished. Entering the cave, however, she found him on a sil-brocade carpet and his eyes painted with kohl."

See also, Lowin, *The Making of a Forefather*, 143: "According to Ibn Ishaq,she discovered that while in his cave her newborn son Ibrahim suckled from wild beasts."

²⁸⁸ Asiye Figen Kalkan, "Türk Destanlarında Kahramanın Olağanüstü Doğumu" [Extraordinary birth of heroes in Turkish epics], in *Türk Dünyası Dil ve Edebiyat Dergisi* 42 (2016): 34.

²⁸⁹ Bahaeddin Ögel, *Türk Mitolojisi* 2 [Turkish Mythology] (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2014), 127-28.

legend of the angel Gabriel suckling Abraham from his finger.²⁹⁰ Furthermore, pre-Quranic Jewish literature differs from the Islamic narrative's miraculous feeding of Abraham. As Judaism's patriarch was not divinely chosen unlike Islam's Abraham, miraculous events do not occur until Abraham's conversion to monotheism by his free will.²⁹¹ On the other hand, the miraculous suckling of Abraham through Gabriel's finger, is found in *Ma'aseh Avraham Avinu*²⁹² and majority of the post-Islamic rabbinic literature includes the miraculous suckling.²⁹³ On the other hand, the first example of the motif of suckling in a miraculous way is found in the Talmud, not for Abraham but for the Israelite babies at the time of Moses' birth.²⁹⁴ The transfer of a motif from rabbinic literature to Islamic texts, while changing the protagonist, is repeated in this chapter which is similar to Biblical pre-birth prophecies about Moses and Jesus.

As soon as the rabbinic motif of the Israelite babies' miraculous suckling entered Islamic literature, it transformed into Abraham's childhood stories.²⁹⁵ As, the main purpose of the *kiṣāṣ al-anbiyā'* literature is to show the resemblance between the prophets and lastly Muhammad.²⁹⁶ The cycle of miraculous events about prophets is also attached to Muhammad's own suckling. Although he was not suckled by Gabriel or a beast, miraculous events occur during his suckling from his foster-mother Ḥalīma Bint Abī Ḍhu'ayb.²⁹⁷ The plot in *Halilnâme*,

²⁹⁰ See Lowin, *The Making of a Forefather*, 141: “‘Abd al-Razzaq, al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Asakir, and al-Suyuti declared that this small act provided Ibrahim with the nourishment he needed to stay alive. When Ibrahim sucked his fingers, they relate, he miraculously found food.”

²⁹¹ Lowin, *The Making of a Forefather*, 154: “the post-Qur’anic midrashic narratives reinforce the midrashic insistence on the absolute normalcy and relative ordinariness of the patriarch’s early existence.”

²⁹² “Ma’aseh Avraham Avinu Alav ha-Shalom,” 26.

²⁹³ Lowin, *The Making of a Forefather*, 156.

²⁹⁴ Lowin, *The Making of a Forefather*, 164.

²⁹⁵ Lowin, *The Making of a Forefather*, 171.

²⁹⁶ Lowin, *The Making of a Forefather*, 171.

²⁹⁷ *ĪA*, s.v. Halīme

foreshadows Prophet Muhammad again by saying that “the creator made him *mahmūd* (praised)”,²⁹⁸ about Abraham, which is another way to recite the Prophet’s name.

1.2.3. Abraham’s destruction of the idols

Abraham’s worshiping of the cosmic elements is both found in the pre- and post-Qur’anic midrash²⁹⁹ and the Qur’an differs on the issue of God’s interference from Jewish literature.³⁰⁰ Abraham in *Halilnâme* also finds God through God’s interference³⁰¹ and he realizes the temporality of the cosmic elements which is an example of *al-ḥudūth* (a way of proving God’s existence with signifying the universe’s temporality in Islamic theology).³⁰²

There are three historical contexts that Abdülvâsi puts in parallel with the destruction of idols: in Abraham’s case, the miraculous victory that monotheism in its inception obtained over idolatry; in Muhammad’s case, the confrontation of incipient Islam with Arab paganism; in the Ottoman times, at the time of the author’s present, the Islamization of Anatolia against Byzantine Empire.³⁰³ Firstly, Abraham places an axe on the biggest idol claiming that the biggest idol must be the destructor of the other idols.³⁰⁴ The destruction of idols is written in the Midrash *Genesis Rabbah* and later in *Ma’aseh Avraham* and *Sefer ha-Yashar*.³⁰⁵ Since Abraham’s destruction of idols is written in the Qur’an, all of the Islamic literature includes this chapter in their narratives.³⁰⁶ Secondly, Abdülvâsi, anachronistically narrating a cyclical time, presents Abraham’s father and relatives as idolaters venerating three ancient Arab deities

²⁹⁸ *Halilnâme*, 119/ c. 653.

²⁹⁹ Lowin, *The Making of a Forefather*, 136.”

³⁰⁰ Lowin, *The Making of a Forefather*, 136.

³⁰¹ *Halilnâme*, 66/ c. 236.

³⁰² Halûk Gökalp, “İslam Felsefesinin ve Kelâmının Divan Şiirine Yansımaları: Tevhid Kasidelerinde İsbât-ı Vâcib,”[Reflections of Islamic philosophy and the word of God in Ottoman classical poetry: *İsbât-ı Vâcib* in *Tawhid* panegyric poetry], *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* 27 (2006): 60.

³⁰³ Turkish Muslims were accusing Byzantine Christians of idolatry. See Speros Vryonis, Jr, *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century* (London: University of California Press, 1971), 400.

³⁰⁴ *Halilnâme*, 129/ c. 733

³⁰⁵ *Genesis Rabbah* 38:13; *Ma’aseh Avraham*, 32; *Sefer ha-Yashar*, 11:31-49.

³⁰⁶ *The Qur’an* 21:51-67; 37:88-96.

named in the Qur'an: al-Lāt, al-'Uzzā and Manāt.³⁰⁷ Secondly, the author refers to Christianity anachronistically in another instance. After Abraham's destruction of the idols, Manāt is replaced by the cross. The idolaters say: "Let us make him [Abraham] ashamed/ For the sake of al-Lāt, al-'Uzzā and the Cross."³⁰⁸ In this couplet, Abdülvâsi draws a parallel between the Christians and the pagans of Abraham's country. This couplet names the Christians among the idolaters, and Abdülvâsi's contemporary Muslim audience would understand their Christian enemies in the guise of the idolaters combated by Abraham. The motif of equating the cross with an idol is also found in another Abraham story; an adaptation from al-Tha'labī's *Kitābu 'arā'is al-mađjālis fī kıṣaṣ al-anbiyā*, written in the fourteenth century for Mehmed Bey (d.1334) founder of the House of Aydın,³⁰⁹ an avid proponent of religious scholarship's vernacularization.³¹⁰ Ṭabarī, al-Kisā'ī, Rabgūzī or the original al-Tha'labī³¹¹ do not specify which deities were venerated in the respective pagan societies in Abraham's and Muhammed's time. Also, there is no reference to Christianity in the classical prophet stories about Abraham. Whether an earlier tradition, or the invention of Abdülvâsi, using the same names for the idols is a classic way of drawing parallels between prophet's lives in a cyclical understanding of time, both reflecting the past (Muhammad's opponents) and present (the Ottomans' opponents).

1.2.4. Abraham in the Fire

³⁰⁷ *Halilnâme*, 122/ c. 680; *The Qur'an*, 53:19: "[Disbelievers], consider al-Lāt and al-'Uzzā, and the third one, Manāt -are you to have the male and He the female? That would be a most unjust distribution! - these are nothing but names you have invented yourselves, you and your forefathers."

³⁰⁸ *Halilnâme*, 130/ c. 740.

³⁰⁹ *Ḳıṣaṣ-ı Enbiya*, ed. by Emine Yılmaz, Nurettin Demir, Murat Küçük (Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu, 2013) 14. Also see, *ibid*, 138: v.146/15: "İbrāhīm entered the house of cross..."

³¹⁰ Sara Nur Yıldız, "Aydınid Court Literature in the Formation of an Islamic Identity in Fourteenth-Century Wester Anatolia," in *Islamic Literature and Intellectual Life in Fouteenth-and Fifteenth-Century Anatolia*, ed. A. C. S. Peacock and Sara Nur Yıldız (Würzburg: Ergon, 2016), 201. Yıldız echoes Ibn Battūta, *The Travels of Ibn Battūta*, vol. 2, 438, 441-443.

³¹¹ Al-Tha'labī, *Kitābu 'arā'is al-mađjālis fī kıṣaṣ al-anbiyā* or "Lives of the Prophets" trans. William M. Brinner (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 129-31.

The legend in which King Nimrod arrests Abraham and sentences him to be burnt at the stake firstly appears in the *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, a Jewish text from the first century CE only transmitted in Latin among Western Christians; it is included in *Genesis Rabbah*,³¹² a Midrash from Late Antiquity, and later rabbinic versions of the Abraham legends,³¹³ as well as in the Qur'an³¹⁴ and it is repeated by the *қишаş al-anbiyā'* literature.³¹⁵ *Halilnâme* follows classical Islamic exegesis and does not contain any further additions in this part of the epic.

One element found in this part of *Halilnâme*, however, seem to belong to the *isrā'iliyyāt* literature, namely Abraham's refusal of Gabriel's help. When Abraham is thrown into the furnace, Gabriel appears and tells him: "If you wish I can help you."³¹⁶ but Abraham refuses Gabriel's help, saying he would only ask for help from God.³¹⁷ Abraham's refusal of Gabriel's help is common in Islamic sources.³¹⁸ Shari Lowin points to pre-Islamic rabbinic texts in which, at the moment of Abraham's martyrdom, Gabriel wants to descend to the world to save him from the fire, but God replies: "I am unique in My world, and he is unique in his. It is preferable that He Who is unique should save him who is unique"³¹⁹ God's announcement to Gabriel that only He can help Abraham is transformed in Islamic sources into a proclamation by Abraham saying that he seeks help only from God: this version is later to be found in *Halilnâme*.

³¹² *Genesis Rabbah* 38:13

³¹³ Talmud BB 91a; *Seder Eliyahu Rabba*, ed. Meir Friedmann (Vienna: Verlag der Israel. -theol. Lehranstalt: 1902), §6 p. 27; *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*, §26, 2nd; *Ma'aseh Avraham* ed. Jellinek, 32-34; *Sefer ha-Yashar* (1625), trans. Samuel 1887, 11:50-12:43.

³¹⁴ *The Qur'an* 21:68,69: "They said, 'Burn him and avenge your gods, if you are going to do the right thing.' But We said, 'Fire, be cool and safe for Abraham.'"

³¹⁵ Lowin, *The Making of a Forefather*, 183.

³¹⁶ *Halilnâme*, 143/ c.848.

³¹⁷ *Halilnâme*, 143/ c.849.

³¹⁸ Tabari, *The History of Al-Tabari: vol.2 Prophets and Patriarchs*, trans. William Brinner (New York: State University of New York Press, 1987), 61.; Rabghuzi, *The Stories of the Prophets Qişaş al-anbiyā': an Eastern Turkish version*, ed. by H.E. Boeschoten and J.O'Kane (Boston, Leiden: Brill, 2015) 87; Al-Tha'labi, *Kitābu 'arā'is al-mađjālis fi qişaş al-anbiyā'*, 132.

³¹⁹ Lowin, *The Making of a Forefather*, 184. Lowin cites *Bt Pesahim* 118a and *Genesis Rabbah* 44:13, *Song of Songs Rabbah* 1:12 which substitute Michael for Gabriel.

1.2.5. Abraham and Sarah

The chapter on the marriage of Abraham and Sarah in *Halilnâme* is unique among the classical Islamic *kişaş al-anbiyā*' narratives as it narrates Sarah's love for Abraham as a consequence of her dream.³²⁰ However, Turkish hagiographies often expand upon the love of their heroes and heroines.³²¹ Falling in love in a dream is a common motif in *mathnawīs*.³²² Especially, in the love stories of Joseph and Züleyhâ [wife of Potiphar], Züleyhâ also falls in love with Joseph in her dreams.³²³ These *mathnawīs* have been circulating in Turkish, before the fifteenth century.³²⁴ The falling in love in a dream with a prophet (i.e. Joseph) motif might have transferred to Abraham in Abdülvâsi's narrative. "Let us speak of Abraham and Sarah/ What help would there be from [the Persian lovers] Vīs and Rāmīn?" (c.319), thus equating Sarah to Abraham as a second protagonist in a love story. Even though, names of the two people who love each other, constitute the name of the title in Persian and Turkish classical literature *mathnawīs* such as Vīs and Rāmīn, Khusraw and Shīrīn, Wāmīk and 'Adhrā',³²⁵ *Halilnâme*'s title consists of only Halil (*khālīl*'s Latinization in Turkish; i.e. Abraham) as the deeds of a hero is more significant throughout the opus. On the other hand, Sarah is praised throughout *Halilnâme* over classical Perso-Islamic romance heroines as Rāmīn, Şirin and Leyla.

In *Halilnâme*, Sarah takes Abraham as her husband, which is different from the main Islamic sources. According to Ṭabarī, Sarah was a daughter of Abraham's paternal uncle, but

³²⁰ *Halilnâme*, 164,165/ c. 1011-1025.

³²¹ Hagen, "Heroes and Saints," 352: "the heroine as the worthy match, companion in arms, and future spouse, such as Efromiya, the bride of Melik Danişmend's companion Arthui. In an initial scene, the hero Melik Danişmend links the two quests together: to conquer Rum, and to win the bride for Arthui."

³²² Günay Kut, "The classical period in Turkish literature", *Ottoman Civilization 2*, ed. Halil İnalçık, Günsel Renda (İstanbul: Ministry of Culture 2003): 555.

³²³ Melike Gökcan Türkdoğan, "Aşk Mesnevileri ve Gazellerdeki Sevgili İmajına Dair Bir Karşılaştırma" [A comparison of the beloved image in love *masnavi* and *gazals*], *Selçuk Üniversitesi Türkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi* (2011): 116.

³²⁴ Gönül Tekin, "Turkish Literature: Thirteenth to Fifteenth Centuries," *Ottoman Civilization 2*, ed. Halil İnalçık, Günsel Renda, (Ankara, 2004): 503, 504.

³²⁵ Flemming, "Old Anatolian Turkish Poetry in its Relation to the Persian Tradition," 55.

he also mentions the claim that she was a daughter of the king of Harran.³²⁶ Rabgūzî states that she was Haran's daughter; others say she was a daughter of a lord of Nimrod's court.³²⁷ Al-Kisā'î quotes Kaab al-Ahbar who states that Sarah was the daughter of the king of Harran, named Harran. However, according to *Halilnâme*, Abraham marries the Shah of Hazayin's daughter.³²⁸ The word Harran might have transformed into Hazayin in *Halilnâme*. *Halilnâme* depicts Sarah using classical Persian literary motifs such as "Her lips were elixir of life/ Khiḍr would have died if he saw her." (c.993).³²⁹ Furthermore, Abdülvâsi compares Sarah's beauty to Vīs. Vīs is the protagonist of the love story *Vīs u Rāmīn*, which was refused to be translated for Bayezid Pasha by Abdülvâsi.³³⁰ Sarah's extraordinary beauty as a topos, found in Islamic literature such as in Ṭabarī,³³¹ has its precedents in rabbinic literature.³³² In addition to this, in later chapters *Halilnâme* calls Sarah a beauty reminiscent of Eve (c. 2063). The archetype of Eve's beauty is found in *Genesis Rabbah* 40.5. It reads "Eve's image was transmitted to the reigning beauties of each generation."³³³ This simile was adapted by Islamic scholars, as in Ṭabarī, and from there to *Halilnâme*.

³²⁶ Ṭabarī, *The History of al- Ṭabarī: Prophets and Patriarchs*, vol. 2, 61.

³²⁷ Al-Rabghuzi, *The Stories of the Prophets Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā': An Eastern Turkish version*, ed. by H.E. Boeschoten and J.O'Kane (Boston, Leiden: Brill, 2015), 89.

³²⁸ Al-Kisā'î refers to Kaab al-Ahbar in *The Tales of the Prophets*, 150. "He traveled until he came to the city of Harran, where he dwelt for a time. There reigned a king named Harran, who believed in Abraham and gave him his daughter Sarah in marriage."

³²⁹ See İskender Pala, *Ansiklopedik Divan Şiiri Sözlüğü*, s.v. "Hızır," 204. According to Islamic tradition, elixir of life is found by Khiḍr and the loved beauty's lips are defined as elixir of life.

³³⁰ "Nobody was beautiful like her being moon-faced/ Hurshid, Veys or Shehruh were not beautiful as her." (c.1000)

³³¹ Ṭabarī, *The History of al- Ṭabarī: Prophets and Patriarchs*, vol. 260.

³³² *Genesis Rabbah* 40:4; *Genesis Rabbah* 1:319. Also see Reuven Firestone, "Difficulties in Keeping a Beautiful Wife: The Legend of Abraham and Sarah in Jewish and Islamic Tradition," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 42(2) October 1991, 205.

³³³ Daphna Arbel, "Questions about Eve's Iniquity, Beauty, and Fall: The 'Primal Figure' in Ezekiel 28:11-19 and 'Genesis Rabbah' Traditions of Eve," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 124, mNo. 4 (Winter, 2005): 653.

The love couplets of Sarah are quite strong and reminiscent of classical Persian motifs:³³⁴ “Like the mad ones, she whirls/ Like a moth³³⁵ to the fire, she burns [out of love].”³³⁶ (Sarah asks her father to gather all the men in the city, and she gives a “golden globe”³³⁷ to Abraham in order to indicate her choice. Abraham preaches to his father-in-law, the shah, and his city, inviting them to convert to Islam,³³⁸ before he marries Sarah.³³⁹ A prophet’s wife choosing him as her husband is not to be found in any orthodox canonical legend. This chapter in *Halilnâme* is a consequence of Persian literature’s influence on Turkish literature.

After the wedding and celebrations, Gabriel appears and tells Abraham to go to “Felestin”³⁴⁰ (Palestine). The prophet stories differ on the issue of where Abraham travelled after marrying Sarah. According to al-Qummī (d.940), Abraham and Sarah are heading to Palestine departing from Nimrod’s land.³⁴¹ Al-Kisā’ī names the place as Jordan and names the king as Zadok.³⁴² On the other hand, Al-Ṭabarī names the king as Pharaoh of Egypt.³⁴³ Abraham prepares a chest for Sarah to hide as they heard about a cruel *beg* who takes any beauty he wishes for himself.³⁴⁴ Abraham says Sarah is his sister when caught by officers and they are taken to the beg. Abdülvâsi addresses to the audience: “Abraham lied three times/ Know that there is no one without lies, one of the lies is this one, the other when he said he was sick [to stay alone with the idols that he destructs]³⁴⁵, the other is his accusation against the

³³⁴ See Wheeler M. Thackston, *A Millenium of Classical Persian Poetry: A guide to the reading & understanding of Persian poetry from the tenth to the twentieth century* (Maryland: Ibex Publishers, 2000), 61.

³³⁵ *General Introduction to Persian Literature*, Volume I, ed. J. T. P. De Bruijn (London & New York: I. B. Tauris, 2009), 184.

³³⁶ *Halilnâme*, 166/c.1029.

³³⁷ *Halilnâme*, 174/ c.1094.

³³⁸ *Halilnâme*, 182/ c.1161.

³³⁹ *Halilnâme*, 192 /c.1241.

³⁴⁰ *Halilnâme*, 195/ c.1258.

³⁴¹ Reuven Firestone, “Difficulties in Keeping a Beautiful Wife: The Legend of Abraham and Sarah in Jewish and Islamic Tradition,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 42(2) October (1991): 205.

³⁴² *The Tales of the Prophets of al-Al-Kisā’ī*, 150.

³⁴³ Ṭabarī, *The History of al- Ṭabarī: Prophets and Patriarchs* 2, 62.

³⁴⁴ C. 1269-1272. Also see Rabguzi, *The Stories of the Prophets Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā’*, 93: “King Dhül-‘Arsh was a young man and very taken with women”

³⁴⁵ *The Qur’an* 37:89: “He said ‘I am sick’”

biggest idol [Abraham accused the biggest idol for destroying the others]³⁴⁶ Sarah is taken to the palace and when the beg touches her, he becomes crippled.³⁴⁷ The beg pleads for forgiveness and Sarah's prayers, and gives a "beautiful slave"³⁴⁸ whose words are pleasant, waist is thin, and tall as a gift.³⁴⁹ This is Hagar.³⁵⁰ Abraham preaches to Sarah with Arabic vocabularies of beauty: *hub* and *mahbub*, "Oh you [Sarah], the beauty (*hub*)/ You witnessed: you are the loved one (*mahbub*) of God."³⁵¹

Abdülvâsi follows the Islamic legend about Abraham's three lies, attributed to Abū Hurayra and popular both in most *қишағ al-Anbiyā'* narratives, Al-Ṭabarī's *History*,³⁵² and *al-Kashshāf*.³⁵³ One of the lies is Abraham's presentation of Sarah as his sister. He hides Sarah in a chest while passing customs. The motif is found in the *Genesis Rabbah* 40:5,³⁵⁴ and the chest is not common in the Islamic literature.³⁵⁵ Firestone refers to Shi'ite commentator al-Qummī (d. 940) who mentions the chest.³⁵⁶ Rabgūzī also refers to the chest,³⁵⁷ unlike Al-Ṭabarī, Al-Kisā'ī and, al-Tha'labī. Thus, it can be deduced that Abdülvâsi might have had access to either; Rabgūzī's or al-Qummi's narrative; through books or oral tales, or with less probability, directly to *Genesis Rabbah*.

1.2.6. Construction of the first sanctuary

³⁴⁶ *Halilnâme*, 198/ c.1282-83. *The Qur'an* 21:63: "He said, 'No, it was done by the biggest of them— this one. Ask them, if they can talk.'"

³⁴⁷ *Halilnâme*, 197-99/ c. 1279-1295.

³⁴⁸ *Halilnâme*, 200/ c. 1304: "karavaş hub"

³⁴⁹ *Halilnâme*, 200/ c. 1304.

³⁵⁰ *Halilnâme*, 202/ c. 1317.

³⁵¹ *Halilnâme*, 201/ c.1312.

³⁵² Firestone, "Difficulties in Keeping a Beautiful Wife," 201.

³⁵³ Zemahşeri, *Al-Keşşaf*, 194.

³⁵⁴ Firestone, "Difficulties in Keeping a Beautiful Wife," 205.

³⁵⁵ Firestone, "Difficulties in Keeping a Beautiful Wife."

³⁵⁶ Firestone, "Difficulties in Keeping a Beautiful Wife."

³⁵⁷ Rabgūzī, *The Stories of the Prophets Qişaş al-anbiyā'*, 93.

Abdülvâsi's chapter about Abraham building a place of worship in Palestine contains *isrâ'îliyyât* in which the author indirectly quotes a verse from the Hebrew Bible. Abdülvâsi's direct source is al-Zamakhsharî's *al-Kashshāf*. When Abraham comes to the lands of Felestin,³⁵⁸ Gabriel appears to Abraham and says: "look as far as you can see/ it is your property"³⁵⁹ Abraham sees a dry land, and after Gabriel performs a miracle, the land fills with water and fruits.³⁶⁰ God's promise to Abraham in the Hebrew Bible is almost the same speech told by Gabriel to Abraham in *Halilnâme*. The Hebrew Bible, Genesis 13:14, 15 reads: "And the Lord said to Abram, after Lot had parted from him, 'Raise your eyes and look out from where you are, to the north and south, to the east and west, for I give all the land that you see to you and your offspring forever.'" Moreover, the Qur'an 21: 71, defines an unnamed place which is blessing. *Al-Kashshāf* names the place in which Abraham dwelt as Filistin in the exegesis of this verse.³⁶¹ Furthermore *al-Kashshāf* rephrases the biblical verse as "[to Abraham:] look as far as you can, and it is yours."³⁶² Thus, as this is the exact definition found in *Halilnâme*, *al-Kashshāf* is the source which the author draws on. The important difference here is that the remark about the offspring is omitted in *Halilnâme*. The reason for this might be that the biblical promise is addressed both to the patriarch and to the Israelites after him. On the other hand, there were Muslim scholars who argued the Quranic *ard al-muqaddasah* (the holy land) in 5:21³⁶³ refers to Jerusalem, and according to some it is *al-Shām*, "entire province of Syria."³⁶⁴ Ibn Tahir al-Maqdisi and Muqatil b. Sulayman introduces *ard al-muqaddasah* to be the land promised to Abraham.³⁶⁵ Finally, and most importantly al-Zamakhsharî refers to

³⁵⁸ *Halilnâme*, 202/ c.1318.

³⁵⁹ *Halilnâme*, 203/ c.1322.

³⁶⁰ *Halilnâme*, 203/c.1323-1325.

³⁶¹ Zemahşeri, *Keşşaf* 4, 462.

³⁶² Zemahşeri, *Keşşaf Tefsiri* 2, trans. Abdülaziz Hatip, Mehmet Erdoğan, Ömer Çelik, Aydın Temizer, Muhammed Coşkun and Avnullah Enes Ateş (İstanbul: Yazma Eserler Kurumu Başkanlığı, 2017), 406.

³⁶³ The Qur'an 5:21: "[Moses:] My people, go into the holy land which God has ordained for you— do not turn back or you will be the losers."

³⁶⁴ Jacob Lassner, *Medieval Jerusalem: Forging an Islamic City in Spaces Sacred to Christians and Jews* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2017), 23.

³⁶⁵ Lassner, *Medieval Jerusalem*, 22.

several definitions of *ard al-muqaddasah* as Sinai, Syria, Palestine or the place which was promised to Abraham and his sons.³⁶⁶ Furthermore, Abraham builds an altar after God's speech in Genesis 13:18. Thus, the altar in Hebron as mentioned in the Hebrew Bible must have transformed into the Temple in Jerusalem with the addition of the Sahre stone in *Halilnâme*. Since the archangel is the messenger of God's words in Islamic tradition, the speech of the Lord becomes Gabriel's speech.

The people of Abraham construct palaces and houses, and they adhere to Islam, while they were still in Felestin³⁶⁷ This part in the plot draws on The Holy Temple narrative found in both Jewish and Islamic literature but Abdülvâsi identifies the foundation stone (*al-şakhrâh*) of the earth with the stone (*al-ḥadjar al-aswad*) brought by Gabriel to the Kaaba. The people ask Abraham for a *qibla* (direction of prayer), and Gabriel brings a stone from heaven as a sign for the *qibla*. They construct a "holy house" (*beyt'ül-mukaddes*) over the stone, which they called *sahre*.³⁶⁸ Many prophets will take this stone as their *qibla*.³⁶⁹ The 'holy house'³⁷⁰ is the Temple of Jerusalem, the holy place for the prophets that followed Abraham. The name *beyt'ül mukaddes* (or *bayt al maḥdis* in Arabic ,translation from Hebrew *Beith HaMikdash*: The Holy Temple) designated not only the temple but the city itself and the Holy Land for Muslims.³⁷¹ Furthermore, the holy stone or the *sahre* (*al-şakhrâh* in Arabic and *even shetiyah* in Hebrew) is the foundation stone of the world over which temple of Solomon is built both in Jewish and Muslim sources.³⁷² If in Abdülvâsi's epic, it is brought by Gabriel in Abraham's time, it can obviously not be the foundation stone of the earth. The reason why Abdülvâsi has Gabriel bring the stone to Abraham in Palestine might stem from his confusion about the holy stone

³⁶⁶ Zemahşeri, *Keşşaf* 2, 406.

³⁶⁷ *Halilnâme*, 203/ c.1328-29.

³⁶⁸ *Halilnâme*, 204/ c. 1336.

³⁶⁹ *Halilnâme*, 204/ c.1330-38.

³⁷⁰ *Halilnâme*, 204/ c.1335: "*beyt'ül mukaddes*"

³⁷¹ Lassner, *Medieval Jerusalem*, 7 and 56.

³⁷² Lassner, *Medieval Jerusalem*, 34.

(*al-ḥaḍjar al-aswad*) near the Kaaba was also brought to Abraham by Gabriel,³⁷³ even though the *sahre* was known to be the foundational stone in Islamic literature. The motif of Gabriel as the bringer of the holy stone is thus repeated by anticipation in the temple building in Jerusalem. The naming of Abraham’s sacred space as *qibla* is also significant, as the Jerusalem Temple was the first *qibla* before Muslims started to pray towards the Kaaba. According to al-Tha’labi Abraham settled in Palestine, Beersheba, constructing a mosque, there is no mention of the Sahre stone brought by Gabriel.³⁷⁴ Also, Ṭabarī only names the Kaaba as the “holy house” built by Abraham.³⁷⁵

The narratives of the stone named Sahre and the construction of the Temple are widely found in Islamic literature, but the stone is neither brought by Gabriel nor is Abraham the builder. To my knowledge, the words of Gabriel, identical with the Hebrew Bible, are unique for *Halilnâme* among Islamic *ḳiṣaṣ al-anbiyā’* literature. Moreover, this biblical verses in which God speaks is a transfer from *al-Kashshāf*, one of the sources of *Halilnâme*.

1.2.7. Nimrod Tries to Kill God

In *Halilnâme*, Nimrod constructs a vehicle which is drawn by flying birds and travels to the skies with the aim of seeing and killing God with arrows.³⁷⁶ Nimrod tells Abraham “Let us get in this vehicle and find your God and see him.”³⁷⁷ He puts four starving vultures and four pieces of meat hung on four trees on the vehicle, so that while the birds try reaching the meat, the

³⁷³ Köksal, *Peygamberler Tarihi*, 202. Köksal cites al-Azraqī’s *Akhbaru’l-Mecca* and al-Ḥalabī’s *Insān al-‘uyūn*.

³⁷⁴ Al-Tha’labi, *Kitābu ‘arā’is al-maḍjālis fī ḳiṣaṣ al-anbiyā’*, 137.

³⁷⁵ Ṭabarī, *The History of al- Ṭabarī: Prophets and Patriarchs*, vol. 2, 69.

³⁷⁶ *Halilnâme*, 223-26/ c.1483-1519

³⁷⁷ *Halilnâme*, 224/ c. 1491.

vehicle flies to the skies.³⁷⁸ Nimrod throws an arrow to the skies and it is hit by a fish, by the order of God³⁷⁹ and when Nimrod sees that the arrow comes back to him with blood on it, he thinks that he has killed God.³⁸⁰ This part of the epic is found in Kisā'ī's *Tales of the Prophets*³⁸¹ without mentioning the fish, but Rabgūzī refers to the fish's blood in the arrow of Nimrod.³⁸² Tha'labī records the vehicle that flies with birds and the arrow with a fish's blood,³⁸³ and the fourteenth-century Turkish translation of Tha'labī's work names the birds the same as *Halilnâme: kerkes* (vulture).³⁸⁴ The battle against God motif is found in *Genesis Rabbah* about the Tower of Babylon: "He—God—has no right to choose the upper world for Himself, and to leave the lower world to us; therefore we will build us a tower, with an idol on the top holding a sword, so that it may appear as if it intended to war with God."³⁸⁵ Moreover, in *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*, Nimrod is the constructor of the Tower of Babylon, and when Abraham passed by, he cursed them asking God to divide their language.³⁸⁶

Shari Lowin argues that three infamous villains' stories –Nimrod, Nebuchadnezzar, Titus- in rabbinic literature is the main source of Nimrod narrative in Islamic sources.³⁸⁷ Nimrod rebelled against God with the Tower of Babylon, Titus tried to murder God in the Holy of Holies,³⁸⁸ and Nebuchadnezzar aimed to "raise his throne above God's stars."³⁸⁹ Lowin argues that the Islamic Nimrod tale about "murdering God" must be borrowed from rabbinic

³⁷⁸ *Halilnâme*, 223/ c. 1484-89.

³⁷⁹ *Halilnâme*, 227/ c. 1521.

³⁸⁰ *Halilnâme*, 228/ c. 1527.

³⁸¹ *The Tales of the Prophets of al-Al-Kisā'ī*, 149.

³⁸² Rabgūzī, *The Stories of the Prophets Qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 91.

³⁸³ Al-Tha'labī, *Kitābu 'arā'is al-maḏjālis fī qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 162-163.

³⁸⁴ Al-Tha'labī, *Kitābu 'arā'is al-maḏjālis fī qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*, 158.

³⁸⁵ *Genesis Rabbah*, 38.7.

³⁸⁶ *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer The Chapters of Rabbi Eliezer the Great, According to the Text of the Manuscript Belonging to Abraham Epstein of Vienna*, trans. Gerald Friedlander (New York: Hermon Press, 1970), 175, 176.

³⁸⁷ Shari Lowin, "Narratives of Villainy: Titus, Nebuchadnezzar, and Nimrod in the Hadith and Midrash Aggadah," in *The Lineaments of Islam: Studies in Honor of Fred McGraw Donner*, ed. Paul Cobb (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2012), 270-93.

³⁸⁸ Shari Lowin, "Narratives of Villainy: Titus, Nebuchadnezzar, and Nimrod in the *Hadith* and *Midrash Aggadah*," in *The Lineaments of Islam: Studies in Honor of Fred McGraw Donner*, ed. Paul Cobb (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2012), 267.

³⁸⁹ Lowin, "Narratives of Villainy," 282.

Nebuchadnezzar frame since the Hebrew Bible; Isaiah 14:12-15 calls the king who fell from heavens and a pre-Islamic Talmudic text, *BT Hagigah* 13a calls Nebuchadnezzar “grandson of Nimrod” who tries to surpass the empyrean.³⁹⁰ Since Nimrod has a more prominent place in Islamic history than Titus and Nebuchadnezzar, elements from rabbinic literature about the other two infamous tyrants were adapted to him in Islamic literature.³⁹¹ Furthermore, the motif of “a tyrant king” trying to see God in the heavens is also found in the Qur’an; the king is the Pharaoh of Egypt,³⁹² who asks this from his vizier Hāmān.³⁹³ On the other hand, Lowin argues that this part cannot be the source of Nimrod story since the Pharaoh does not state any aim to kill God or build a flying vehicle.³⁹⁴ Furthermore, Nimrod is a “mighty hunter” in Genesis 10:9,³⁹⁵ whose precursors are Nergal, Babylonian Marduk and the Sumerian Ninurta.³⁹⁶ Rabbinic literature related Nimrod with the Tower of Babel and mention the plan of placing an idol with a sword on top of the tower.³⁹⁷ Nimrod’s characteristic as a “hunter” according to the Hebrew Bible unites with the rabbinic literature about Titus and Nebuchadnezzar.

According to *Halilnâme*, Nimrod dies because of a mosquito that enters his head through his nostril.³⁹⁸ The same motif is found in most Islamic sources that narrate the story. This kind of death is also a form of *isrā’iliyyāt*, since rabbinic literature attributes the same kind of death to the villain king Titus.³⁹⁹ The death of Titus, in rabbinic literature, has been

³⁹⁰ Lowin, “Narratives of Villainy,” 284.

³⁹¹ Lowin, “Narratives of Villainy,” 288-89.

³⁹² The Quran 40:36-37: “Pharaoh said, ‘Haman, build me a tall tower so that I may reach the ropes that lead to the heavens to look for this God of Moses.’”

³⁹³ Arthur Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur’an* (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1938), 284: “who is thought to be the same person as Haman from the Book of Esther.”

³⁹⁴ See fn. 52 in Lowin, “Narratives of Villainy,” 283.

³⁹⁵ Lowin, *The Making of a Forefather*, 53, points out that Islamic literature refers to Nimrod as الجبار (*al-jabbar*, tyrant) which is constructed from the Biblical Hebrew word for Nimrod: גיבור (*gibbor*, mighty).

³⁹⁶ Yigal Levin, “Nimrod the Mighty, King of Kish, King of Sumer and Akkad,” *Vetus Testamentum* 52 (2002): 356.

³⁹⁷ Lowin, “Narratives of Villainy,” 276.

³⁹⁸ *Halilnâme*, 247/ c. 1674.

³⁹⁹ Lowin, *The Making of a Forefather*, 200, fn.63.

transferred to Nimrod in Islamic literature because of Abraham-Nimrod story's importance in Islam over Titus'.⁴⁰⁰

1.2.8. Abraham, "Sultan" of Babylon

The story of Nimrod's death is followed in *Halilnâme* by the episode of the battle between Mehmed and his brother Musa, which I will examine in chapter two. The chapter then continues with Abraham being asked to be the "khan" and "Sultan"⁴⁰¹ for the people of Babylon, Nimrod's capital. Even though rulership of Abraham is not emphasized within the canonized *kişâş al-anbiyâ'*, the Talmudic *Baba Bathra* depicts Abraham as "world's leader."⁴⁰² This does not mean a direct influence but a possible *isrâ'îliyyât* which is included in Abdülvâsi's sources.

After Abraham becomes the sultan of Babylon, the author says the people of Babylon become a nation/community of Abraham (*İbrahime millet* in Turkish.)⁴⁰³ The Quranic concept of *millat İbrāhīm* signifies Abraham as a common monotheistic ancestor for Jews and Christians, and calls other monotheists to convert to Islam.⁴⁰⁴ *Millat İbrāhīm* refers both to the covenant of Abraham via the Hebrew word *millah*, and the first believers as authentic followers of Abrahamic tradition.⁴⁰⁵ Although this term is a qur'anic one, seventeenth-century Istanbul scholars were arguing whether it is legitimate for a Muslim to use this term. Kâtib Çelebi (d. 1657) writes that saying of *millat İbrāhīm* was common among the people of Istanbul,⁴⁰⁶ while

⁴⁰⁰ Lowin, *The Making of a Forefather*, 200, fn.63: "Interestingly, the rabbis here refer to Titus as the grandson of Nimrod."

⁴⁰¹ *Halilnâme*, 278/ c.1926.

⁴⁰² *BB Nezikin* 91a-91b.

⁴⁰³ *Halilnâme*, 284/ c. 1973.

⁴⁰⁴ The Qur'an 2:130: "Who but a fool would forsake the religion of Abraham? We have chosen him in this world and he will rank among the righteous in the Hereafter" and 2:135: "They say, 'Become Jews or Christians, and you will be rightly guided.' Say [Prophet], 'No, [ours is] the religion of Abraham, the upright, who did not worship any god besides God.'"

⁴⁰⁵ Angelika Neuwirth, "The House of Abraham and The House of Amram: Genealogy, Patriarchal Authority, And Exegetical Professionalism" in *The Qur'ān in Context: Historical and Literary Investigations into the Qur'ānic Milieu*, ed. Angelika Neuwirth, Nicolai Sinai, and Michael Marx (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2010), 502.

⁴⁰⁶ Kafadar, *Kim Var İmiş Biz Burada Yoğ İken*, 22.

the “puritan”⁴⁰⁷ Kadizadeli movement opposed the equation of the term of *millat İbrāhīm* to religion of Muhammad.⁴⁰⁸ Abdülvasi does not hesitate to use the term as a broader concept of monotheism in order to invite non-Muslim monotheists to Islam, reflecting his milieu much before the puritanical movements. Moreover, Abdülvasi calls the new converts “Sunni Muslims”⁴⁰⁹ two couplets after the identity of *millat İbrāhīm*. The shift from a broader designation, *millat İbrāhīm*, to a narrower one, Sunnism, reveals Abdülvasi’s agenda as an ‘ulamā’. The anachronistic emphasis on the Sunnization of the people is an illustration of the Anatolian “age of confessionalization.” Thus, *Halilnâme* is one of the early products which increased the “Islamic literacy.”⁴¹⁰

1.2.9. Construction of the Kaaba

The Islamic belief that Abraham was the constructor of the Kaaba is one of the critical elements of *Halilnâme*’s cyclical understanding of time. The remote past, which saw the construction of the holiest place according to Islam, is connected to the present day with the ritual of pilgrimage. According to Islamic literature, Abraham steps on a stone, and a trace appears on the stone. Ever since, the place is called *maḳām-ı İbrāhīm* (place of Abraham) in a verse of the Qur’an,⁴¹¹ which *Halilnâme* translates into Turkish.⁴¹² Abdülvâsi uses the present continuous tense which takes the historic event to the present: “At the moment, the spot is a place to

⁴⁰⁷ Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, “XVII. Yüzyılda Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda Dinde Tasfiye (Puritanizm) Teşebbüslerine Bir Bakış: Kadızadeliler” [XVII. century puritanism in Ottoman Empire: the Kadizalis], *Türk Kültürü Araştırmaları* 17-21/1-2 (1979-1983): 208.

⁴⁰⁸ Carol Bakhos, *The Family of Abraham: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Interpretations* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2014), 218.

⁴⁰⁹ *Halilnâme*, 284/ c. 1976.

⁴¹⁰ Derin Terzioğlu, “How to conceptualize Ottoman Sunnization: A historiographical discussion,” *Turcia* 44, 309.

⁴¹¹ The Qur’an 3:96-97: “The first House [of worship] to be established for people was the one at Mecca. It is a blessed place; a source of guidance for all people; there are clear signs in it; it is the place where Abraham stood to pray; whoever enters it is safe. Pilgrimage to the House is a duty owed to God by people who are able to undertake it. Those who reject this [should know that] God has no need of anyone.”

⁴¹² *Halilnâme*, 325/ c. 2302.

pray.”⁴¹³ This is how the cyclical time frame of *Halilnâme* refers to the foundation event to contemporary liturgy.

1.2.10. The Binding of Ishmael

Halilnâme follows the majority of Islamic literature about the issue of which son was to be sacrificed as the Qur’an does not name the son. In *Halilnâme* Ishmael is the son prepared to be sacrificed by Abraham. Gabriel brings the ram, which was sacrificed by Adam’s son Abel, in order to ransom Ishmael.⁴¹⁴ On the other hand, in the Hebrew Bible and rabbinic literature Abraham attempts to sacrifice Isaac.⁴¹⁵ The Islamic understanding of repetition of motifs throughout the prophets’ stories is also exemplified in this part in *Halilnâme*.

Another example of Islamic understanding of time is the transfer of the sacrificed ram’s skin through the prophets before Muhammad. Thus, in Islamic understanding, the knowledge of the biblical prophets and their relics are for the use of the last prophet.⁴¹⁶ Abraham gives the sacrificed ram’s skin to Sarah, and she puts it in a chest which is given to Isaac. Later, it becomes a prayer rug for Jacob, Joseph. Abdülvâsi here refers to the Ark of the Covenant (*aron ha-brit*) by stating the chest’s power to defeat the enemy, a biblical reference he made either consciously, or not consciously by paraphrasing some other Islamic source. The Qur’an refers to the Ark of the Covenant as a relic of Moses and Aaron,⁴¹⁷ not that of Abraham. Apparently Abdülvâsi, or his source, confuses the Ark of the Covenant’s enemy defeating powers with the

⁴¹³ *Halilnâme*, 325/ c.2302.

⁴¹⁴ *Halilnâme*, 338/ c.2404. See Firestone, *Journeys in Holy Lands*, 129: “Ibn Abbas is credited five times with a tradition that the ram sacrificed in place of Abraham’s son was the identical animal that was sacrificed by Adam’s son Abel.”

⁴¹⁵ Gen. 22:1-19; *Midrash Rabba*, 55-56; *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*, 31.10; *Sefer ha-Yashar*, 23:1-75.

⁴¹⁶ Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, 135: “Just as Eusebius’ scheme was apologetically determined (the Project was in part to endow Christianity with an antique pedigree), so, too, was Islamic universal chronography, which located Muhammad and his polity in a succession of monotheist events.”

⁴¹⁷ The verse is about Saul’s kingdom: Qur’an 2.248: “Their prophet said to them, ‘The sign of his authority will be that the Ark [of the Covenant] will come to you. In it there will be [the gift of] tranquillity from your Lord and relics of the followers of Moses and Aaron, carried by the angels. There is a sign in this for you if you believe.’”

sacrificed ram's skin relic handed down by the prophets. The motifs of the ram's skin in a chest and its power of defeating enemies reminiscent of the Ark of the Covenant is not found in Rabgūzī, Ṭabarī or Kisā'ī. It may come from another piece of Islamic literature, unless Abdūlvâsi developed the story by himself.

The skin is handed down successively among the prophets until in Muhammad's time it is put in the Kaaba,⁴¹⁸ where it shows once again its war-deciding power, resulting in the fall of the Caesars of the Rum.⁴¹⁹ The chapter on the construction of Kaaba evokes the Muslim pilgrimage, which is in line with Abdūlvâsi's frequent use of history to explain the current rituals. Gabriel brings a huge crimson stone to be placed at the corner of the Kaaba, and because people touched it, it became black. That is why it is called *al-Ḥadjar al-Aswad* (Black Stone).⁴²⁰ One remembers that another stone, which was named Sahre, was brought by Gabriel to Abraham when the latter was constructing the Temple in Jerusalem. The repetition of the sacred stone motif signifies the continuity of God's perpetual revelation, Islam. Islam claims to be the heir of both the Temple in Jerusalem and the Kaaba, and Abdūlvâsi follows this claim. Later in the epic, Abraham starts using the liturgical formula *labbayka* (at your service), and the author gives the information: "Every year a hundred thousand people say *labbayka* there."⁴²¹ In sum, the author legitimizes the Islamic ritual of pilgrimage to the audience through *history*.

1.2.11. Abraham's will

Abraham's will for his sons consists of asking them to continue on the path of Islam⁴²² and to respect Ishmael as the "ancestor [of] prophethood",⁴²³ implying that the latter is the ancestor

⁴¹⁸ *Halilnâme*, 364/ c.2615.

⁴¹⁹ *Halilnâme*, 365/ c.2620.

⁴²⁰ *Halilnâme*, 368/ c.2645-49.

⁴²¹ *Halilnâme*, 371/ c.2669.

⁴²² *Halilnâme*, 400/ c.2902.

⁴²³ *Halilnâme*, 401/ c.2906.

of Muhammed. The religious teachings concluding Abraham's will reflect those of Sufism, dominant in Anatolia during the fifteenth century. In particular, Yunus Emre's (d.1320?) influence on literature is enduring.⁴²⁴ Yunus Emre says "If you broke a hearth; this is not a genuine prayer you are making." Abdülvâsi makes Abraham say, "Built-up the hearths which are broken/ This is better than visiting the Kaaba."⁴²⁵ He also asks his sons to speak nicely to the dervishes.⁴²⁶

Conclusion

The main difference between the Islamic and Jewish narrative of Abraham is that, Islamic Abraham is "rightly guided,"⁴²⁷ whereas Judaism's forefather is finding God with his independent intellect.⁴²⁸ *Halilnâme*, being an Islamic book, follows the Quranic depiction of Abraham, *guided* by God. The birth, the fight against Nimrod, and the Sarah narratives are mostly consistent with the canonical *prophet stories*. On the other hand, the couplets which describe the construction of *bayt al mağdis* with the Sahre stone brought by Gabriel are not found in the canonical Islamic literature. Gabriel's words "look as far as you can see/ it is your property"⁴²⁹ are almost the same as those spoken by God in the Hebrew Bible. The speech of Gabriel in *Halilnâme* is also absent in the classic Islamic *ķiŗaş al-anbiyā'* literature. On the other hand, as cited in this chapter similar saying of Gabriel is found in *Al-Kashshāf*. Moreover, there are hundreds of prophet stories in Persian and Arabic that may include this biblical verse and be a source for Abdülvâsi but this is beyond the scope of this thesis.

⁴²⁴ Fuat Köprülü, *Early Mystics in Turkish Literature*, trans. Gary Leiser and Robert Dankoff (London: Routledge, 2011), 363: "The Sufi poetry of Yunus Emre spread very quickly in Anatolia and in a short time some rather important imitators appeared. Until the ninth/fifteenth century, Ottoman literature was under the influence of Persian Sufi literature, and thus was thoroughly mystical in nature."

⁴²⁵ *Halilnâme*, 402/ c.2921.

⁴²⁶ *Halilnâme*, 403/ c.2924.

⁴²⁷ The Quran 6:77 "Had my Lord not *guided* me, I would surely have been of those who go astray." pointed out by Lowin, *The Making of a Forefather*, 124.

⁴²⁸ Lowin, *The Making of a Forefather*, 129.

⁴²⁹ *Halilnâme*, 203/ c.1322.

Chapter 2: Depicting Sultan Mehmed as a Perso-Islamic hero in post-Timurid Anatolia

If history can serve as an ideal for the present,⁴³⁰ the contemporary can construct the past to become a model for itself. *Halilnâme*, “a manifestly straightforward political statement,”⁴³¹ following both Islamic historic traditions with the *isrā’iliyyāt* narrative, constructs and names past events for a contemporary audience. The characters of *Halilnâme* resemble contemporary or near-contemporary individuals familiar with the intended audience. In this vein, the injustice suffered during the reign of Nimrod is similar to the instability of Anatolia during the Interregnum Era. Abraham, the Prophet Muhammad, and the Mahdi, who is Mehmed I according to *Halilnâme*, are all just Muslim redeemers. Mehmed I was depicted as the redeemer who was incorporated with the prophets in eminence by Abdülvasi,⁴³² while Timur was depicted as a ruler who is reinforced by celestial powers by his court historians.⁴³³ Thus, the two earliest sanctifications of House of Osman narratives were written by court

⁴³⁰ Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, 122.

⁴³¹ Yılmaz, *Caliphate Redefined*, 230.

⁴³² Yılmaz, *Caliphate Redefined*, 231.

⁴³³ Yılmaz, *Caliphate Redefined*, 126.

poets in this period; *İskendernâme* and *Halilnâme*.⁴³⁴ The author, indicating a cyclical time frame, constructs an ideology for the Ottomans, the protectors of Islamdom and imperial power to spread Islamic justice. Abraham represents the Muslim ruler who overthrew Nimrod, the archetype of *al-jabbar* (tyrant) in Islamic literature. Nimrod is the first cruel king who claimed to possess the dominion over the earth in Islamic literature. Thus, Timur's campaigns to Anatolia for establishing his rule, seizing Sultan Bayezid after the Battle of Ankara in 1402, resemble Nimrod's world domination plans and the arrest of Abraham. Abraham being a provider of prosperity is reminiscent of Sultan Mehmed's and Bayezid Pasha's construction policies to make post-Timurid Anatolia prosperous. This the historical connection between ancient religious myths and post-Timurid Anatolia can be examined through the vocabulary used in a cyclical sense by the author to draw these parallels in *Halilnâme*.

2.1. Timur versus Bayezid I

Recent scholarship manifests that unification of religion and politics coined in the post-Mongolian context, especially in the fifteenth century, in consonance with the commitment of political and scholar establishments.⁴³⁵ Two rival courts; Timurids and Ottomans' scholars contextualized and legitimized their dynasties in conformity to this political environment. Even though Timur (r. 1370-1405) claimed to be the patron of the Islamdom,⁴³⁶ Bayezid (r. 1389-1403) refused this ultimatum.⁴³⁷ Timur's treatment to Bayezid as his frontier lord, created rivalry between the two rulers.⁴³⁸ Bayezid's intransigence, resulted in the Battle of

⁴³⁴ Yılmaz, *Caliphate Redefined*, 127.

⁴³⁵ Evrim Binbaş, "Condominial Sovereignty and Condominial Messianism in the Timurid Empire: Historiographical and Numismatic Evidence," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 61 (2018): 175.

⁴³⁶ İnalçık, *Devlet-i 'Aliyye*, 72.

⁴³⁷ Naindeep Singh Chann, "Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction: Origins of the Şāhib-Qirān," *Iran & the Caucasus* 13 (2009): 99.

⁴³⁸ İnalçık, *Devlet-i 'Aliyye*, 71.

Ankara on July 28 , 1402, which ended in the defeat of the Ottomans.⁴³⁹ After this victory, Timur proclaimed himself as the supreme military force both within Islamdom and the Mongol world.⁴⁴⁰ After the defeat of the Ottomans, Bayezid was taken captive and Anatolian lordships were established ending the Ottoman rule over Anatolia.⁴⁴¹

Timur took Chinggis Khan (d.1227) as a modal,⁴⁴² and his aim was to establish a neo-Mongolian state based on the Chinggisid system.⁴⁴³ Moreover, he declared to be related genealogically to Chinggis Khan and Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 661) at the same time.⁴⁴⁴ On the other hand he preferred the Chinggisid law (*yasa*),⁴⁴⁵ over the Islamic sharia.⁴⁴⁶ That is why he was accused of suffocating “the Light of God and the Pure Faith [of Islam] with the laws of Chinggis Khan.”⁴⁴⁷ It is essential to note the accounts of Ibn ‘Arabshāh (d. 1450-51), a captive of Timur, who in 1412 became a *mūsāhib* (companion) and tutor of Sultan Mehmed.⁴⁴⁸ Based on his own experiences, Ibn ‘Arabshāh depicted Timur’s massacres in his *Ajā’eb al-Maqdur*.⁴⁴⁹ On the other hand, Timur’s court historian Nizām al-Dīn Shāmī (d.1411-12)’s *Zafername*⁴⁵⁰ is the oldest remaining biography of Timur.⁴⁵¹ The biography depicts Timur’s warfare to India as an act of *ghaza* and portrays Timur “master of other

⁴³⁹ İnalçık, *Devlet-i ‘Aliyye*, 71-75.

⁴⁴⁰ Beatrice Manz, “Temür and the Problem of a Conqueror’s Legacy,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 8, no. 1 (1998): 26.

⁴⁴¹ Halil İnalçık, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300-1600* (London: Phoenix, 2000), 15.

⁴⁴² Frederick Starr, *Lost Enlightenment: Central Asia’s Golden Age from the Arab Conquest to Tamerlane* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2013), 479.

⁴⁴³ Maria Subtelny, “Tamerlane and His Descendants: from Paladins to Patrons,” in *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, ed. David O. Morgan and Anthony Reid (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 170.

⁴⁴⁴ Subtelny, *Timurids in Transition*, 12.

⁴⁴⁵ See Mansura Haider, “The Mongol Traditions and Their Survival in Central Asia,” *Central Asiatic Journal* 28, no. 1/2 (1984): 79. “Presumably *Yasa* was often used as a counterpoise against *shari’a*.”

⁴⁴⁶ Maria Subtelny, *Timurids in Transition, Turko-Persian Politics and Acculturation in Medieval Iran* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 18.

⁴⁴⁷ Quoted by Subtelny, *Timurids in Transition*, 18, n. 29: “Ibn ‘Arabshāh, *Ajaib al-maqdur*, 395; and J. H. Sanders, trans., *Tamerlane, or Timur the Great Amir: From the Arabic Life by Ahmed Ibn Arabshah* (London: Luzac, 1936), 234.”

⁴⁴⁸ İnalçık, *The Ottoman Empire*, 80. Also see the same page: “Ibn ‘Arabshāh translated the *tafsir* of Abi Leys al-Semerikandi into Turkish.”

⁴⁴⁹ See Ibn Arabshah, *Tamerlane or Timur the Great Amir*, trans. J. H. Sanders, 24-27.

⁴⁵⁰ Nizamüddin Şami, *Zafername*, trans. Necati Lugal (Ankara: TTK, 1949).

⁴⁵¹ John E. Woods, “The Rise of Tīmūrid Historiography,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 46, No. 2 (1987): 87.

ghazis (read Ottomans).⁴⁵² To fulfil his claim to rule over Islamdom, Timur conquered Muslim territories in both the Mamluk and the Ottoman lands.⁴⁵³ One of the most efficient ways to delegitimize an enemy ruler is to declare him infidel (*takfir*), as the authority of an Islamic ruler stems from his piety. Ibn ‘Arabshāh reports that Timur was labelled to be an infidel by Syrian jurists,⁴⁵⁴ and calls God to exclude him from paradise.⁴⁵⁵

2.2. Nimrod and Timur

The concept of *ibra* (admonitions), a concept widely found in Islamic historical writings⁴⁵⁶, is regularly used by Usama b. Munqidh, Ibn Khaldūn, and al-Dhahabi,⁴⁵⁷ The admonitions to be found in characters in Islamic history, create archetypes⁴⁵⁸ which constitute *leif-motivs* of Persian and later Ottoman Turkish literature.⁴⁵⁹ These archetypes are famous for their *awā’il* (first occurrences) in Islamic lore.⁴⁶⁰ Nimrod is also infamous for his “first acts” constituting archetypes in Islamic literature.⁴⁶¹ In Islamic canon, Nimrod is the first one to rule over the earth,⁴⁶² and ask people to worship him, to wear a crown, and to worship the fire after Cain.⁴⁶³ Furthermore, the clear sources of Islamic sources on the part of worshipping fire are the Jewish sources, as Nimrod is identified as Zoroaster.⁴⁶⁴ Moreover, Nimrod’s

⁴⁵² Ali Anooshahr, *The Ghazi Sultans and the Frontiers of Islam: A comparative study of the late medieval and early modern periods* (London & NY: Routledge, 2009), 119-120.

⁴⁵³ Beatrice Manz, *Power, Politics and Religion in Timurid Iran* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 9.

⁴⁵⁴ Quoted by Subtelny, *Timurids in Transition*, 18, n. 30: “See Bartol’d, *Dvenadtsat’ lektsei*, 171 (who gives the date for this as 1372, but without a reference). See also, Ibn ‘Arabshāh, *Ajā’eb al-Maqdur*, 455; and Sanders, *Tamerlane*, 299.”

⁴⁵⁵ R. D. McChesney, “A Note on the Life and Works of Ibn ‘Arabshāh,” in *History and Historiography of Post Mongol Central Asia and the Middle East: Studies in Honor of John E. Woods*, ed. Judith Pfeiffer, Soleh Quinn, Ernest Tucker (Wiesbaden: Harrossowitz, 2006), 207.

⁴⁵⁶ Al-Azmeh, *Muslim Kingship*, 89.

⁴⁵⁷ Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, 130.

⁴⁵⁸ See Al-Azmeh, *The Times of History*, 29: “according to medieval Arab-Muslim historical writing, the first object created by God was the Pen, which was to commanded to write ‘everything,’ and thus described the entire future course of creation as a register of archetypes and re-enactments.”

⁴⁵⁹ İz, “Introduction: The Ottoman Period 1300-1850,” 40.

⁴⁶⁰ Al-Azmeh, *The Times of History*, 28.

⁴⁶¹ Al-Azmeh, *The Times of History*, 28.

⁴⁶² Tabari, *The History of Al-Tabari* 2, 50.

⁴⁶³ See Köksal, *Peygamberler Tarihi*, 142. Köksal cites Ibn Kutayba, al-Ya‘kūbī and al-Tha‘labī.

⁴⁶⁴ K. van der Toorn and P. W. van der Horst, “Nimrod Before and After the Bible,” *Harvard Theological Review* 83, issue: 1 (1990): 26.

establishment of four cities in the Hebrew Bible as “four corners of the world” reflects Assyrian imperialistic credo.⁴⁶⁵

Using Nimrod as an admonition and an archetype of despot kings, his life-related in *Halilnâme* implies similarities to Timur. The birth and conquest geographies of Nimrod in *Halilnâme* and Timur in history are similar. Even though Abdülvâsi does not draw an explicit analogy between Timur and Nimrod, there are implications throughout *Halilnâme* that Nimrod and Timur are alike. In *Halilnâme* Nimrod is said to have been born in the country of “Ajam,”⁴⁶⁶ and he is shown to conquer Turkistan, India, Iraq, Rum and Damascus.⁴⁶⁷ It must be noted that Timur’s historian, Nizâmeddîn-i Şâmî (d. ca. 1412), calls the Ottomans “Rum.”⁴⁶⁸ Timur is known to be born in Şahr-i Sabz, but its capital Samarkand is part of Ajam in *Halilnâme*’s time. Timur’s conquests took place in Baghdad, Damascus, Anatolia and India,⁴⁶⁹ which are the same cities that were conquered by Nimrod in *Halilnâme*.

Nimrod is an infamous *kāfir* (infidel)⁴⁷⁰ and a murderer of anyone he wishes to die in *Halilnâme*.⁴⁷¹ It must be noted again that Ibn ‘Arabshāh, who was at the court of Mehmed I, together with Abdülvâsi, noted that Timur is known to be an infidel by scholars.⁴⁷² Timur’s “atrocities”⁴⁷³ was also noted by Abdülvâsi’s contemporary, the poet-author Ahmedî⁴⁷⁴, which resembles Nimrod’s tyranny in *Halilnâme*.

2.3. Prophets Abraham and Muhammad versus Sultan Mehmed “the Mahdi”

⁴⁶⁵ Mary Katherine Y. H. Hom, “. . . A Mighty Hunter before YHWH’: Genesis 10:9 and the Moral-Theological Evaluation of Nimrod,” *Vetus Testamentum* 60, (2010): 68.

⁴⁶⁶ Ṭabarî notes that one source’s claim about Nimrod being al- Ḍahhāk. Ṭabarî, *The History of al-Tabari*, vol?, 50.

⁴⁶⁷ *Halilnâme*, 80/ c. 348-351.

⁴⁶⁸ See footnote 110 of this thesis.

⁴⁶⁹ Starr, *Lost Enlightenment*, 479.

⁴⁷⁰ *Halilnâme*, 82/ c. 367.

⁴⁷¹ *Halilnâme*, 84/ c. 372.

⁴⁷² See footnote 142 of this thesis.

⁴⁷³ Starr, *Lost Enlightenment*, 479: “Timur’s ceaseless conquests were accompanied by a level of brutality matched only by Chinggis Khan himself.”

⁴⁷⁴ See Bilkan, *Osmanlı Zihniyetinin Oluşumu*, 171: “Timur was unjust/ His cruelty and power was terrific.”

As Azmeh states, “monarchy and prophecy are both curative and they reside at the apogee of a ranking, without their infinite sovereignty the only pandemonium is possible.”⁴⁷⁵ The theme of the ruler as the punitive force in society, was emphasized by Islamic expressions.⁴⁷⁶

Halilnâme also draws parallels between Abraham’s and Muhammad’s rightfulness alongside that of Sultan Mehmed’s. After Sultan Bayezid I’s defeat in the Battle of Ankara, people worried whether the House of Osman was left with divine charisma.⁴⁷⁷ To reconstruct the spiritual charisma *Halilnâme* calls Mehmed I the Mahdi and emphasizes that he is the namesake of Prophet Muhammad. In Islamic eschatology, after the time of the *fitna* the Mahdi appears to establish a just kingdom.⁴⁷⁸ In *Halilnâme* Mehmed terminates the discord caused by his brothers and becomes the Mahdi to mend the world.⁴⁷⁹ Likewise Timur was called to be the Mahdi by Ibn Khaldūn since messianism was a ubiquitous civil aspect of medieval rulership.⁴⁸⁰ There other several rulers and religious leaders who claimed to be the Mahdi in Anatolia, including Timurtaş, governor of Ilkhanate in Konya and Sheikh Bedreddin during the reign of Sultan Mehmed I.⁴⁸¹ Also, the Abbasids,⁴⁸² Seljuqs,⁴⁸³ the Fatimids and the Almohads declared mahdistic commissions.⁴⁸⁴ Moreover, another contemporary author of Abdūlvâsi, Mu‘īn al-Dīn Naṭanzī declares Shahrūkh’s nephew and rival, Iskandar to be *mahdī* in his universal chronicle.⁴⁸⁵

⁴⁷⁵ Al-Azmeh, *The Times of History*, 282.

⁴⁷⁶ Al-Azmeh, *The Times of History*, 282.

⁴⁷⁷ Krstic, *Contested Conversions to Islam*, 44.

⁴⁷⁸ Barbara Flemming, “*Şāhib qirān* and Mahdi: Turkish Expectations of the End of Time in First Decade of the Rule of Süleyman,” in *Essays on Turkish Literature and History* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2018), 204.

⁴⁷⁹ Kastritsis, “The Historical Epic *Aḥvāl-i Sultān Meḥemmed* (The Tales of Sultan Mehmed) in the Context of Early Ottoman Historiography,” 8.

⁴⁸⁰ Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign*, 28.

⁴⁸¹ Flemming, “*Şāhib qirān* and Mahdi.”

⁴⁸² Hayrettin Yücesoy, *Messianic Beliefs and Imperial Politics in Medieval Islam: The Abbasid Caliphate in the Early Ninth Century* (Columbia: The University of South Carolina Press, 2009), 40-58.

⁴⁸³ Peacock, *Islam, Literature and Society in Mongol Anatolia*, 237.

⁴⁸⁴ Al-Azmeh, *Muslim Historiography*, 201.

⁴⁸⁵ Binbaş, “Condominial Sovereignty and Condominial Messianism in the Timurid Empire,” 177.

The plot of *Halilnâme* follows the Islamic history writing tradition, which proves the centrality of Muhammad in *the universal history*. In Islamic historiography, the life of Muhammad serves as an influential prototype for governmental advocacy.⁴⁸⁶ Abraham's birth comes with the "shining star; light of Muhammad" transferring to Abraham's father. As Abraham was born the light in his forehead later transfers to Hagar,⁴⁸⁷ who is mother of Ishmael. Thus, the light of Muhammad transfers from the ancestors to ancestors to confirm him being the latest Prophet in Islamic canon.⁴⁸⁸ Furthermore, Ishmael is told by Gabriel that from his line the "shah of the end times"⁴⁸⁹ (i.e. Muhammad) will come. The couplets between 3020-3033 cover the story from Ishmael's son to Abdullah, the father of Muhammad. After the line of Muhammad, the *miraçnâme* (Book of the Nocturnal Journey) chapter begins.

Abraham's story is attached to Muhammad's life not only by claiming that Muhammad came from Abraham's lineage but also by the cyclical usage of a holy animal. According to *Halilnâme*, Muhammad takes the nocturnal journey by the magical creature, al-Burāq,⁴⁹⁰ which was used by Abraham during his circumambulation of the Kaaba.⁴⁹¹

The first occurrence of Sultan Mehmed in *Halilnâme*, after the prologue, is followed by Abraham's victory over Nimrod. "Oh God, for the spread of the religion of Muhammad, Give Shah Muhammad victories."⁴⁹² "Keep us away from the ummah of Isa [Christians] / Do not make this country belonging to the nation of Musa [Jews]"⁴⁹³ Abdülvâsi draws a parallel

⁴⁸⁶ Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, 122.

⁴⁸⁷ *Halilnâme*, 299/ c. 2093: [Sarah speaks] "It is obvious that Hagar has lied with you/ The light on your forehead transferred to her."

⁴⁸⁸ See footnote 110 of this thesis.

⁴⁸⁹ *Halilnâme*, 414/ c. 3014.

⁴⁹⁰ See Ron Buckley, "The "Burāq": Views from the East and West," *Arabica* 60, no:5 (2013): 569. "It is an animal between a mule and an ass. That is the form of the *burāq*. As for its actual nature, this is known only by God." Buckley cites from Hālid Sayyid 'Alī, *al-Isra wa-l-mi'rāğ: Mu'ğiza wa-haqaiq , asrār wa-fawaid* (Kuwait: Maktabat al-turāt wa-l-Imān, 1422/2001): 72.

⁴⁹¹ *Halilnâme*, 422/ c. 3077.

⁴⁹² *Halilnâme*, 251/ c.1708.

⁴⁹³ *Halilnâme*, 251 /c.1711.

between Mehmed's brothers' names, and Prophets Moses (Musa) and Jesus (İsa).

Muhammad being the latest and most important prophet; superior to Moses and Jesus, is similar to his namesake, Sultan Mehmed, the rightful heir to the throne.⁴⁹⁴

Abdülvâsi apologetically legitimizes Mehmed's fratricide. He claims that Mehmed wanted to share the power with his brothers, but they all wanted it for themselves.⁴⁹⁵ Unlike Timur, Emir Süleyman is openly criticized: Mehmed's older brother, Emir Süleyman, is blamed for being selfish for asking the Ottoman territory only for himself.⁴⁹⁶ Kastritsis translates the couplet 1750 as "But an older brother of his [Emir Süleyman] had taken it/ He was saying 'I will hold this world.'" It is important to note that Nimrod's depiction of "powerful king who had many possessions."⁴⁹⁷ is also similar to Emir Süleyman's representation in *Halilnâme*.⁴⁹⁸ Thus, a historical parallel for Nimrod's greed is drawn for Emir Süleyman, Mehmed's rival brother. *Halilnâme* depicts Mehmed as the rightful heir:

Wherever he goes, with divine assistance he conquers provinces
Whenever he makes it his goal, begs submit to him
A Great Khan, of great lineage and great *devlet*
That is the proof that he is the Mahdi!⁴⁹⁹

The statement "The submission of the begs" is found elsewhere throughout *Halilnâme*. It depicts the lords' conversion to Islam and their submission to Abraham.⁵⁰⁰ This repetition of

⁴⁹⁴ Feridun M. Emecen, "Osmanlı Tarihçiliğinin Başlangıcı: İlk Manzum Tarihler" [The beginning of Ottoman Historiography: The first poetic histories], in *Türk Tarihçiliğinin Asırlık Çınarı Halil İnalçık'a Armağan*, ed. Mehmet Öz, and Serhat Küçük (Ankara: Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü Yayınları: 2017), 110.

⁴⁹⁵ Kastritsis, *Sons of Bayezid*, 218: "Like the *Ahval*, the *Halilnâme* suggests that the best way to have avoided the bloody succession struggles of the civil war would have been for each of Bayezid's sons to have gotten his share of what was left of the empire."

⁴⁹⁶ Kastritsis, *Sons of Bayezid*, 217.

⁴⁹⁷ *Halilnâme*, 81/ c.349.

⁴⁹⁸ *Halilnâme*, 258-259/ c. 1762-1770.

⁴⁹⁹ Kastritsis, *Sons of Bayezid*, 218.

⁵⁰⁰ *Halilnâme*, 189/ c.1212: Abraham gives advice to begs and, begs come to Abraham after Nimrod's death asking him to be the Sultan. (*Halilnâme*, 252/ c.1715) "Begs came from the sea until Damascus/ They saluted that shah (Abraham), listened his nice words." (*Halilnâme*, 341/ c.2426-2427).

the “begs’ submission” formula is significant for contemporary politics *Halilnâme*: Sultan Mehmed’s centralization policies after the interregnum were made possible after the Anatolian begs’ submissions to the Ottoman superiority.⁵⁰¹ The begs’ submission to Abraham and asking him to be their “sultan” is written immediately after Nimrod’s death.⁵⁰² These verses resemble the post-Timurid Anatolian begs submission to Sultan Mehmed especially because Abraham is depicted as “sultan” while talking with the begs.

The other similarity with Nimrod is that of Musa Çelebi, another rival brother of Mehmed. Nimrod says to Abraham: “I took this world with my sword”⁵⁰³. The same words are put in the mouth of Musa Çelebi in *Halilnâme*: “He tells those who come to him ‘I took it with my sword/ This here the land is mine, I have conquered it all.’”⁵⁰⁴ Nimrod’s greed for world domination parallels Musa Çelebi’s aims in *Halilnâme*.

The historical narrative attaches the contemporary Sultan Mehmed to Prophet Muhammad throughout the plot by referring to the fact that the sultan was the namesake of the prophet. Following “The Battle of Çamurlu” and “Abraham in Babylon,” the chapter entitled “The Future of God’s Friend” says “From His [Abraham’s] line, a happiness will occur/ The sultan of prophethood, A gracious Khan will become his ummah/ Named Muhammad *sultan son of sultan*⁵⁰⁵” (c.2007-08). In this way, the author attaches Abraham’s epic to the contemporary sultan, the namesake of the Prophet. Moreover, Sultan Mehmed’s prowess in the Battle of Çamurlu is compared with Muhammad’s. Couplet 1856 reads: “Like

⁵⁰¹ İnalçık, *Devlet-i ‘Aliyye*, 84: “Mehmed confirmed the properties of the begs in their lands, with the condition of his sultanate is accepted.”

⁵⁰² C.1713: “As Nimrod died, his crown and throne left behind him/And all his palaces” C.1714: “All the begs came to Abraham/The prestigious people.” C.1715: “They asked Abraham to be their Sultan.”

⁵⁰³ *Halilnâme*, 215/ c.1419.

⁵⁰⁴ Kastritsis, *Sons of Bayezid*, 223.

⁵⁰⁵ Hakan Karateke, “Legitimizing the Ottoman Sultanate: A Framework for Historical Analysis,” in *Legitimizing the Order: The Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power*, ed. Hakan T. Karateke and Maurus Reinkowski (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 31: “Any sultan ascending to power had a reservoir of legitimacy simply because of his link to his predecessors and their achievements. Formulas such as ‘sultan, son of the sultan’ (*sultan ibnü’s-sultan*) in official correspondence, and similar references on coins and sultanic monograms, were all indicators of this continuity.”

[The Prophet] Muhammad, Zulfikar [“Dhu’l- Faḳār” in Arabic original, the sword was given to Ali by Muhammad as a present] in his hand/ He cut down hundreds of horsemen!”⁵⁰⁶

At the end of *miraçnâme* Abdülvâsi writes “While the religion of Muhammad is famous/ Make Muhammad Shah’s country prosperous”⁵⁰⁷, “Make Shah Muhammad, the khan of the World in the sake of Muhammad’s respect”⁵⁰⁸ and “Make Shah Muhammad rule/ whole over the countries of ummah of Muhammad.”⁵⁰⁹

2.4. Abraham, Mehmed and Bayezid Pasha, the Just Rulers who maintain the order

Anatolia was devastated after Timur’s conquests.⁵¹⁰ Reconstruction and establishing religious institutions throughout Anatolia was one of the main aims of Sultan Mehmed,⁵¹¹ and his grand vizier Bayezid Pasha who was also a patron of building religious institutions such as madrasas, mosques, and other buildings for the community.⁵¹² Architecture and literary patronage are pre-modern monarchs’ tools to maintain their visibility for their subjects. Bayezid Pasha’s architectural patronages are emphasized throughout *Halilnâme*. For instance, according to Abdülvâsi, Bayezid Pasha is the one who arranges the construction projects: “With his idea, the city became prosperous/ Let the competence do not desert him.”⁵¹³ Through architecture, a ruler accomplishes the responsibility that was expected by his subjects, and takes advantage of the profit of offering donation.⁵¹⁴ Sultan Mehmed and his

⁵⁰⁶ Kastritsis, *Sons of Bayezid*, “Appendix,” 228.

⁵⁰⁷ *Halilnâme*, 488/ c.3602.

⁵⁰⁸ *Halilnâme*, 488/ c. 3605.

⁵⁰⁹ *Halilnâme*, 489/ c.3606.

⁵¹⁰ Kastritsis, *Sons of Bayezid*, 2: “Following his victory, Timur spent nine months in Anatolia with his armies, pillaging the countryside, looting Bursa and other Ottoman towns, and reconstituting the Turkish *beyliks* that Bayezid had disposed in creating his empire.”

⁵¹¹ See E. Hakkı Ayverdi, and İ. Aydın Yüksel, *İlk 250 Senenin Osmanlı Mimarisi* [Ottoman Architecture’s first 250 years] (İstanbul: Baha Matbaası, 1976), 26-32.

⁵¹² Keskin, “Bayezid Paşa,” 23.

⁵¹³ *Halilnâme*, 62/ c. 198.

⁵¹⁴ Karateke, “Legitimizing the Ottoman Sultanate,” 50.

grand vizier are shown to implement this patrimonial state understanding. In the city of Amasya, Bayezid Pasha constructs a lodge-mosque in his own property where Mehmed I also dwelled.⁵¹⁵ Moreover in Bursa, Bayezid Pasha rebuilt Orhan Gazi Mosque and constructed a madrasa in 1413.⁵¹⁶ Furthermore, The Yeşil Cami (Green Mosque) of Bursa, built between 1419-24 with its voluminous tile ornaments, monumentalizes the revival of the Ottoman order after the interregnum.⁵¹⁷ Also, the earliest *imaret* (construction projects or public kitchen)⁵¹⁸ construction is a part of Yeşil Cami's complex, built by Mehmed I.⁵¹⁹ Abdülvasi's frequent usage of the word *imaret* as a project of the sultan's patronage is coherent with the architectural evidence. One of the masters of the Yeşil Cami, Nakkaş Ali, was known to have been taken by Timur from Bursa to Samarqand where he learned the art of tiles, and later came back to Bursa.⁵²⁰ The Ottomans' appointment of a Bursa artist who learned the Timurid arts in Samarqand, illustrates the appropriation of the Timurids as their model in art patronage.⁵²¹ Furthermore, Sultan Mehmed I (re-)built a mosque in Söğüt where Ertuğrul Gazi (d. ca. 1281) was believed to have resided. By this reconstruction, Mehmed I aimed to embody his appreciation for Ottoman history and form legitimacy via his *gazi* ancestor Ertuğrul.⁵²²

⁵¹⁵ Hasan Karatas, "The City as a Historical Actor: The Urbanization and Ottomanization of the Halvetiye Sufi Order by the City of Amasya in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries" (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2011), 35.

⁵¹⁶ Karatas, "The City as a Historical Actor," 35.

⁵¹⁷ Gülru Necipoğlu, "From International Timurid to Ottoman: A Change of Taste in Sixteenth-Century Ceramic Tiles," *Muqarnas* 7 (1990): 136.

⁵¹⁸ Amy Singer, "Imarets," in *The Ottoman World*, ed. Christine Woodhead (London & NY: Routledge, 2012), 74.

⁵¹⁹ Singer, "Imarets," 77.

⁵²⁰ Mustafa Çağhan Keskin, "Siyasi-Kültürel İlişkiler Çerçevesinde Tebrizli Çini Ustalarının Anadolu Yolculuğu (1419-1433)" [Journey of Tile Masters of Tabriz in Anatolia Within the Political and Cultural Relations (1419-1433)], *Belleten* 77, no. 279 (2013): 446.

⁵²¹ İnalçık, "The Poet and the Patron: A Sociological Treatise Upon the Patrimonial State and the Arts.," 11.

⁵²² Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 95.

Muslim rulership canon presents the Caliph-rulers and prophets as establishers of order for humankind.⁵²³ Adhering to this discourse, throughout *Halilnâme*, the word *imaret* (construction, good management) is not only introduced as acts of Sultan Mehmed and Bayezid Pasha, but also deeds of Noah⁵²⁴ and Abraham.⁵²⁵ By the repetition of the word *imaret*, the author manifests the importance of construction policies to his audience and draws a parallel between the Ottoman rulers' and ancient prophets' patrimonial philanthropy for their people. For instance, according to Abdülvâsi, after Noah's times, people multiplied, and the world was "constructed".⁵²⁶ Followed by Noah and his sons' reigns before the times of Sâlih, disorder (*fitna*) prevailed on earth.⁵²⁷ Then people were invited by Sâlih to create order and justice. After him prophethood passes to Abraham to close the era of *fitna*.⁵²⁸ Abraham's first construction is the "holy house" (*bayt al-mukaddas*) before the construction of the Kaaba. Later, he builds a mosque (*masdjid*) which is also called holy house (c.2071-2078), and the narrator says that in the very minute a person constructs a mosque on earth, a house of jewels is built for him by God in heaven.⁵²⁹ These couplets are followed by the Qur'an verse in Arabic, which encourages believers to contribute to mosques.⁵³⁰ Thus, the audience is invited to participate in the policies of the state establishing religious institutions, with Quranic depiction of rewards in heaven: divine pavilions,⁵³¹ which are named as *hekhlot* in Jewish literature.⁵³² While Abraham is in

⁵²³ Aziz Al-Azmeh, "Monotheistic Kingship," in *Monotheistic Kingship: The Medieval Variants*, ed. Aziz Al-Azmeh and János M. Bak (Budapest: CEU Press, 2004), 25.

⁵²⁴ *Halilnâme*, 79/ c. 340: "With Noah, this universe became full of (*imaret*)

⁵²⁵ *Halilnâme*, 341/ c. 2425: Abraham makes the city prosperous (*ma'mur*)

⁵²⁶ *Halilnâme*, 79/ c. 340.

⁵²⁷ *Halilnâme*, 80/ c. 343: "After them [Noah's sons] *fitna* spread/ It confiscated the world."

⁵²⁸ *Halilnâme*, 80/ c. 348.

⁵²⁹ *Halilnâme*, 297/ c. 2077-78

⁵³⁰ The Qur'an 9:18 "The only ones who should tend God's places of worship are those who believe in God and the Last Day."

⁵³¹ The Qur'an 29:58.

⁵³² Aaron W. Hughes, *The Texture of the Divine: Imagination in Medieval Islamic and Jewish Thought*, (Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2004), 43.

Mecca, apart from constructing the Kaaba, he builds the city.⁵³³ After this couplet, the author interrupts the Abrahamic epic and starts extolling Sultan Mehmed's rule. "Muhammad Shah and Sultan of countries/ Let him become owner of the world's countries, gracious son of Sultan of the world/ Named Murad Khan the just sultan."⁵³⁴ Abdülvâsi and contemporary chroniclers do not acknowledge Mehmed's father, Sultan Bayezid's name in their writings because his policies led to the Ottomans' defeat in the Battle of Ankara.⁵³⁵ Here too, Abdülvâsi refers only to Sultan Mehmed's grandfather, Murad. "Let that khan [Mehmed] form *seven climates*⁵³⁶ prosperously/ So that people of the universe would become fortunate."⁵³⁷ After this couplet, the plot returns to Abraham's epic. Abraham teaches Ishmael 'ilm (knowledge)⁵³⁸—by going into detail Abdülvâsi presents his intellectual knowledge.⁵³⁹

2.5. Persian Kingship Titles for Legitimization

Persian political discourse exalts the very kingship names their rulers as King of Kings (*shāhānshāh*); a title which was considered to be blasphemous by early Muslims.⁵⁴⁰ On the other hand, after the Islamization of Persia, the ancient Persian celestial kingship discourse was inherited by Islamic rhetoric.⁵⁴¹ Abdülvâsi draws a parallel between Sultan Mehmed and archetypical characters of the Perso-Islamic tradition projecting Ottomans' imperial (*cihangir*) policies.⁵⁴² The Perso-Islamic titles have become archetypes for Ottoman

⁵³³ *Halilnâme*, 341/ c. 2425.

⁵³⁴ *Halilnâme*, 342/ c.2437-38.

⁵³⁵ Feridun M. Emecen, "İhtirasın Gölgesinde Bir Sultan: Yıldırım Bayezid [A Prisoner of His Ambitions: Bayezid 'The Thunderbolt']," *Osmanlı Araştırmaları/The Journal of Ottoman Studies* 43 (2014): 76.

⁵³⁶ The world consists of seven climates (*ekālīm-i seb'a*) in Islamic cosmography. See Murat Ağarı, "İslam Coğrafyacılarında Yedi İklim Anlayışı," [Understanding the seven climates in the works of Muslim geographers] *Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 47 (2006): 195-197.

⁵³⁷ *Halilnâme*, 343/ c.2442.

⁵³⁸ Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, 87: "Without any qualifying adjectives, 'knowledge' ('ilm) meant knowledge of traditions, and those who possessed such knowledge were the 'ulema (literally 'those who know'), a term which came to denote the religious elite in general."

⁵³⁹ Emecen, "Osmanlı Tarihçiliğinin Başlangıcı," 112. Emecen explains these verses as the summary of the knowledge about the world in early Ottoman intellectual life.

⁵⁴⁰ Crone, *Medieval Islamic Political Thought*, 148.

⁵⁴¹ Alan Strathern, *Unearthly Powers: Religious and Political Change in World History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 207.

⁵⁴² Emecen, "Osmanlı Tarihçiliğinin Başlangıcı," 110.

rulers due to the Seljuk and Persian panegyric literary legacy. The reason of the usage of pre-Islamic Persian kings and Sasanian political models repletion of the chasm in Islamdom after the downfall of the Caliphate in the ninth and early tenth centuries.⁵⁴³ As discussed in the introduction chapter of this thesis, Ferdowsi's *Shah-nama* which integrates Islamic and Iranian kingship ideals,⁵⁴⁴ is one of the sources of Turkish literature. The ideals and mythological characters have been rewritten by many authors in Persian between eleventh and fourteenth centuries.⁵⁴⁵ Especially the Seljuqs integrated the *Shah-nama* heroes as a legitimization tool as a "non-caliphal Sunni dynasty" which declares universal authority.⁵⁴⁶

Classical Persian literary tradition was inherited by Anatolian beylics after Seljuqs. The Germiyan Beylik was one of the most important centres for literary production.⁵⁴⁷ There is an explicit linkage between the Seljuq and the Germiyan Beylik's poets' schemes.⁵⁴⁸ This literary heritage was inherited later by the House of Osman which became appealing to Germiyan court's poets after the Beylik's possession by Ottomans.⁵⁴⁹ Especially the political stability which Mehmed suggested was appealing to Islamic scholars.⁵⁵⁰ There were two poets from the Germiyan Beylik who found patronage at Mehmed I's court; Ahmedî and Ahmed-i Dai.⁵⁵¹ These poets' mastery in Persian literary leitmotifs,⁵⁵² and the Timurid

⁵⁴³ Deborah G. Tor, "The Islamisation of Iranian Kingly Ideals In The Persianate Fürstenspiegel," *Iran* 49, (2011): 116.

⁵⁴⁴ Tor, "The Islamisation of Iranian Kingly Ideals In The Persianate Fürstenspiegel," 116.

⁵⁴⁵ Askari, *The Medieval Perception of the Shāhnāma as a Mirror for Princes*, 31.

⁵⁴⁶ Tor, "The Islamisation of Iranian Kingly Ideals In The Persianate Fürstenspiegel," 117.

⁵⁴⁷ İnalçık, "The Origins of Classical Ottoman Literature," 28.

⁵⁴⁸ İnalçık, "The Origins of Classical Ottoman Literature," 26.

⁵⁴⁹ Tekin, "Turkish Literature: Thirteenth to Fifteenth Centuries," 506.

⁵⁵⁰ Abdurrahman Atçıl, "Mobility of Scholars and Formation of a Self-Sustaining Scholarly System in the Lands of Rûm during the Fifteenth Century," in *Islamic Literature and Intellectual Life in Fourteenth- and Fifteenth-Century Anatolia*, ed. A.C.S. Peacock and Sara Nur Yıldız (Würzburg: Ergon, 2016) 317.

⁵⁵¹ İnalçık, "The Origins of Classical Ottoman Literature," 35-48.

⁵⁵² Murat Umut Inan, "Imperial Ambitions, Mystical Aspirations: Persian Learning in the Ottoman World," in *The Persianate World: The Frontiers of a Eurasian Lingua Franca*, ed. Nile Green (California: University of California Press, 2019), 81-2.

court's adaptation of Persian political discourse for their legitimization,⁵⁵³ must have shaped Abdülvasi's work. For instance, Ahmed-i Dai's *Çengnâme*'s panegyric chapter, written for his former patron Emir Süleyman, praises Emir Süleyman with pre-Islamic Persian hero names such as the second Cemşid (Djamshīd/ Jamshid), Husrev and Dara (Darius) together with prophets, such as Solomon, Jesus, Joseph and Khiḍr.⁵⁵⁴ Moreover, Ahmedî praises Emir Süleyman as being more just than Persian king Nūshirwān and Caliph 'Umar.⁵⁵⁵ The author's association of current rulers with former kings from Persia or Islam legitimizes the alteration of rulership.⁵⁵⁶ Moreover, the authors' combination of Quranic characters with pre-Islamic Persian heroes illustrates the inclusion of Persian literary canon in Islamic literature which has already done by Persian mirrors for princes.⁵⁵⁷

Abdülvasi, following the panegyric oeuvre, integrates Persian and Islamic titles with an emphasis on the biblical throne of Solomon. Solomon, in his mighty eminence, nurtured an enduring myth which was adopted by Jewish, Christian and Islamic literature.⁵⁵⁸ The influence of his magnificent name altered the items from being generic to emblematic, supernatural objects; his throne being one of those.⁵⁵⁹ For instance, Byzantine *Book of Ceremonies* depicts the royal throne to be Solomon's, illustrating the Byzantine emperor's personal propaganda.⁵⁶⁰ Byzantine historians' adoption of the throne urged rabbis to update the Solomonic throne midrash and it turned out to be a symbolic conflict for religious preeminence.⁵⁶¹ And finally Islamic literature claimed the Solomonic throne motif for

⁵⁵³ Thomas W. Lentz and Glenn D. Lowry, *Timur and the Princely Vision: Persian Art and Culture in the Fifteenth Century* (Los Angeles : Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1989), 69.

⁵⁵⁴ Ahmed-i Dai, *Çengnâme*, ed. Gönül Alpay Tekin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1992), 313.

⁵⁵⁵ Ahmedî, *İskendername*, ed. Hasan Akçay (Harran: Harran University, MA thesis, 1999), 228.

⁵⁵⁶ J. S. Meisami, "The Past in Service of the Present: Two Views of History in Medieval Persia," *Poetics Today* 14, No. 2 (Summer 1993): 250.

⁵⁵⁷ Tor, "The Islamisation of Iranian Kingly Ideals In The Persianate Fürstenspiegel," 117.

⁵⁵⁸ Allegra Iafate, *The Wandering Throne of Solomon: Objects and Tales of Kingship in the Medieval Mediterranean* (Leiden; Boston, Brill, 2015), 1.

⁵⁵⁹ Iafate, *The Wandering Throne of Solomon*, 1-2.

⁵⁶⁰ Iafate, *The Wandering Throne of Solomon*, 73.

⁵⁶¹ Iafate, *The Wandering Throne of Solomon*, 159.

universal kingship, since it granted a rich historical and religious semblance.⁵⁶² Abdülvasi uses the Solomonic throne motif, already included in Islamic corpus, for extolling Mehmed's kingship. Solomon's throne is signified in a couplet which extols Muhammad and Abraham and the two "believer" kings who conquered the world; Solomon and Alexander in Islamic historiography.⁵⁶³ "Our sultan is the sultan of the universe/ He is the khan of the universe and shah of the world's shahs (*shāhānshāh*), His name is Muhammad, and he is generous as Abraham/ His throne is like Solomon's and he is prosperous as Alexander (c.2597)/ Sultan Mehmed banished all the tyranny and brought prosperity (c.2600) / My God, let the *seven climates* be under his sultanate (c.2602)/ so that, the countries in the world become built-up, let him be the *imam* (also means leader)⁵⁶⁴ /with his righteousness (c.2603). Sultan Mehmed is also likened to Ferīdūn,⁵⁶⁵ a pre-Islamic Persian legendary shah, whose *farr* ("royal fortune") is transferred to rulers in Persian literature,⁵⁶⁶ and Kaykhusraw,⁵⁶⁷ both pre-Islamic Persian mythical kings used in classical Islamic-Ottoman literature to praise rulers.⁵⁶⁸

2.6. Placing the House of Osman in the history of universal kingship

Adjustment of history in conformity with royal families and kings is both found in the Judeo-Christian and Islamic history writings.⁵⁶⁹ The Islamic historiography constructs

⁵⁶² Iafrate, *The Wandering Throne of Solomon*, 163.

⁵⁶³ Tabari, *The History of Tabari* 2, 50. Tabari refers to Musa b. Harun, al-Suddi, Ibn 'Abbas and other companions of Muhammad.

⁵⁶⁴ Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, 133: "Authority over all creatures and all things thus belonged to God, and those whom He had chosen to represent Him on earth (prophets, caliphs or imams) exercised His authority by proxy."

Also see *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Islamic Political Thought* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2013) s.v. "imamate": "Although the word "imamate" may be used to denote leadership in prayer and prominence in a specific branch of knowledge or profession, it was more widely used in juristic, theological, and exegetical literature and hadith to describe a particular political, frequently religiopolitical, leadership and, in modern jargon, a government or state."

⁵⁶⁵ *Halilnâme*, 342/ c. 2436.

⁵⁶⁶ Askari, *The Medieval Perception of the Shāhnāma as a Mirror for Princes*, 51.

⁵⁶⁷ *Halilnâme*, 411/ c. 2987.

⁵⁶⁸ Pala, *Ansiklopedik Divan Şiiri Sözlüğü*, s.v. "Feridun" and "Keyhüsrev."

⁵⁶⁹ Rosenthal, "The Influence of the Biblical Tradition on Muslim Historiography," 45.

genealogical family trees for dynasties attaching to Noah's sons;⁵⁷⁰ narrating the human history around the prophets and in Persian cases ancient Iranian kings. It evolved as an independent genre in late medieval Islamic historiography, and it was also structured by a Timurid-Shahrukh historian Ḥāfīz-i Abrū's works which start with the history of prophets.⁵⁷¹ A contemporary historian of Abdülvasi, Ḥāfīz-i Abrū develops a more detailed genealogical account which includes mythical Persian kings, Umayyad and Abbasid caliphs to the history of prophets.⁵⁷² The Timurid historians' agenda was to legitimize the Timur's reign; historian Yazdi indicates Timur's lineage to Adam, and his tombstone inscriptions in Samarkand associate Timur to Alan Qoa, mythical founder of Chinggisid dynasty, who gave birth to his son after the "royal touch" by a descendant of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib.⁵⁷³

The question of the genealogical tree of House of Osman had been alleged by several authors. For instance, Noah's son Japheth was claimed to be the ancestor of Ottomans by fifteenth-century authors.⁵⁷⁴ Whereas some authors claimed Ottomans to be descendants of Shem who is more esteemed as being the ancestor of prophets.⁵⁷⁵ Furthermore, *Saltuknâme*, completed in 1480, names Esau, son of Isaac, as the ancestor of Ottomans.⁵⁷⁶ Moreover, Esau was presented as the ancestor of the Rum in Arabic literature.⁵⁷⁷ The Arabic literature's usage of Esau as the ancestor of the land of Rum stems from the Jewish traditions; Rome was named as Edom, where descendants of Esau lived, in the first centuries of the Common

⁵⁷⁰ Hiroyuki Ogasawara, "The Quest for the Biblical Ancestors: The Legitimacy and Identity of the Ottoman Dynasty in the Fifteenth-Sixteenth Centuries," *Turcica* 48, (2007): 38.

⁵⁷¹ İlker Evrim Binbaş, "Structure and Function Of The Genealogical Tree In Islamic Historiography (1200-1500)" in *Horizons of the World. Festschrift for İsenbike Togan* (Istanbul: İthaki, 2011), 516.

⁵⁷² Binbaş, "Structure and Function," 516.

⁵⁷³ İlker Evrim Binbaş, *Intellectual Networks in Timurid Iran: Sharaf al-Dīn 'Alī Yazdī and the Islamicate Republic of Letters* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 278-79.

⁵⁷⁴ Ogasawara, "The Quest for the Biblical Ancestors," 39.

⁵⁷⁵ Ogasawara, "The Quest for the Biblical Ancestors," 39.

⁵⁷⁶ Ogasawara, "The Quest for the Biblical Ancestors," 42.

⁵⁷⁷ Barbara Felming, "Political Genealogies in the Sixteenth Century," *The Journal of Ottoman Studies* 7-8 (1988): 134.

Era.⁵⁷⁸ An Ottoman history that was written during the reign of Bayezid II (r. 1481-1512) also refers to Esau as an ancestor of Ottomans.⁵⁷⁹

Even though the genealogy in *Halilnâme* does not explicitly include Ottomans in the family trees of prophets or Persian kings, Sultan Mehmed is repeatedly mentioned in the prophets' chain as a just ruler. The world's order is kept by the prophets: with Noah the world was constructed,⁵⁸⁰ and the rule was left to his sons and their dynasty—"Government was left to the sons of Noah."⁵⁸¹ Elsewhere, Abdülvâsi recounts that after Isaac was born, Abraham became the sultan of Damascus,⁵⁸² and Ishmael became the sultan of the Arab lands.⁵⁸³ The Rum Caesars' line is attributed to someone named Rum.⁵⁸⁴ Maḥmūd al-Kāshgharī also notes that ancestor of Turks was "Türk" and the children of Rum's ancestor is Rum.⁵⁸⁵ This is a depiction also found in Rabghūzī: Esau goes to the land of Rum and becomes the ancestor of people of Rum.⁵⁸⁶ As stated above there is not a direct link between Esau and Ottomans but the author emphasized the changing dynasty which reigns Anatolia. In author's discourse; after the Byzantines of Rum, it is the Ottomans' time to reign in the lands of Rum. The author traces the lineage to his own time, expanding the geography to rule over from Anatolia to world with imperial ideals: "They made this world built, after them, a just sultan/ Our beautiful sultan khan came./ Let God make him victorious/ He will build up the world's

⁵⁷⁸ Israel Jacob Yuval, *Two Nations in Your Womb: Perceptions of Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, trans. Barbara Harshav and Jonathan Chipman (Berkeley, LA: University of California Press, 2008), 10.

⁵⁷⁹ *An Early Ottoman History: The Oxford Anonymous Chronicle* (Bodleian Library, Ms Marsh 313), ed. and trans. Dimitris Kastritsis (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2017), 62.

⁵⁸⁰ *Halilnâme*, 79/ c. 340.

⁵⁸¹ *Halilnâme*, 79/ c. 341.

⁵⁸² *Halilnâme*, 397/ c. 2877.

⁵⁸³ *Halilnâme*, 398/ c.2882.

⁵⁸⁴ *Halilnâme*, 398/ c.2888.

⁵⁸⁵ Flemming, "Political Genealogies," 135.

⁵⁸⁶ Rabghūzī, *Stories of the Prophets*, 112.

countries.”⁵⁸⁷ The hyperbolic couplets manifest an imperial mentality which might be a legacy of Sultan Bayezid’s policies.⁵⁸⁸

The unchanging story retold in *kişâş al-anbiyā*’ literature is the enduring battle between the infidels and believers from the beginning of the world.⁵⁸⁹ *Halilnâme* also depicts this ongoing conflict between believers and unbelievers in Abraham’s story. This understanding of the world as divided between the *dār al-Islām* (abode of Islam) and the *dār al-ḥarb* (abode of war)⁵⁹⁰ was a relevant issue for the audience of *Halilnâme*, but not the *raison d’être* of the state.⁵⁹¹ On the other hand, the primordial position of the Ottoman Sultan was based on military leadership.⁵⁹² While this leadership’s legitimacy stems from a religious mandate; *ghazwa* or *djihād*,⁵⁹³ it is debated, whether the real motivation was religious or secular.⁵⁹⁴ “The Battle of Sultan Mehmed with Musa, and the Defeat of Musa” chapter in *Halilnâme* illustrates Mehmed’s aim of *ghazwa* and spreading prosperity. “Justice had disappeared, but now has returned/ The world has been well managed (*imaret*), and now wears a smile.”⁵⁹⁵ This line suggests that proper management is dependent on justice which is distributed by the Sultan. Establishing justice for his subjects was the Ottoman sultan’s essential mission.⁵⁹⁶ Throughout *Halilnâme*, disorder is always described with the Qur’anic term *fitna*, the period between the times of prophets, which was, as recounted in *Halilnâme*,

⁵⁸⁷ *Halilnâme*, 400/c. 2897-2898.

⁵⁸⁸ Emecen, “Osmanlı Tarihçiliğinin Başlangıcı,” 107.

⁵⁸⁹ Hagen, “From Haggadic Exegesis,” 309.

⁵⁹⁰ Hagen, “From Haggadic Exegesis,” 309, fn. 36.

⁵⁹¹ Kastritsis, “Conquest and Political Legitimation in the Early Ottoman Empire,” *Byzantines, Latins, and Turks in the Eastern Mediterranean World After 1150*, ed. Jonathan Harris, Catherine Holmes, and Eugenia Russell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 223.

⁵⁹² Imber, “Frozen Legitimacy,” 99.

⁵⁹³ Imber, “Frozen Legitimacy.”

⁵⁹⁴ Kastritsis, “Conquest and Political Legitimation.”

⁵⁹⁵ Kastritsis, *Sons of Bayezid*, 221.

⁵⁹⁶ Karateke, “Legitimizing the Ottoman Sultanate,” 38.

ended by Sultan Mehmed.⁵⁹⁷ In this way, Abdülvâsi presents Sultan Mehmed, a ruler like the prophets, who terminates the *fitna* and prevails in justice.

⁵⁹⁷ *Halilnâme*, 276/ c. 1907.

Chapter 3: Extolling Muhammad as the final prophet and contextualizing Ottomans in Islamic universal history

Tayfun Atay turns to Talal Asad's definition of religion in *Din Hayattan Çıkar*.⁵⁹⁸ According to Asad, Clifford Geertz overlooks the essential element, "power," in his definition of religion.⁵⁹⁹

How does power create religion? To ask this question is to seek an answer in terms of the social disciplines and social forces which come together at particular historical moments, to make particular religious discourses, practices and spaces possible.⁶⁰⁰

In *Halilnâme* "religion" is also a result of the power dynamics at the time of its writing. *Halilnâme* itself is a consequence of "social forces," namely the Islamic madrasa tradition and patronage relations, both engaged in a struggle for power against the warrior-dervish chroniclers.⁶⁰¹ Moreover, the "particular religious discourse" throughout *Halilnâme* is wrought out of legitimizing the new Sultan and contextualizing the Ottomans in a broader universal history. Abdülvâsi was expected to extol the prominence of the Sultan as classic court poets did,⁶⁰² while expressing his longing for the late *gazi*-sultans together with the eulogy to prophets. As discussed earlier in the introduction of this thesis, *Halilnâme* contains characteristics found in Anatolian heroic age literature. The most significant distinction that separates it from heroic age literature whose heroes are *gazi* warriors, is that its main hero is Abraham, as well as Muhammad in the *mi 'râdj* chapter, and Sultan Mehmed I as the *mahdi* in

⁵⁹⁸ Tayfun Atay, *Din Hayattan Çıkar: Antropolojik Denemeler* [Religion comes out of life: Anthropological Essays] (İstanbul: İletişim, 2004), 84.

⁵⁹⁹ Talal Asad, "Anthropological Conceptions of Religion: Reflections on Geertz," *Man* New Series, Vol. 18, No. 2. (Jun., 1983): 237. Citing Clifford Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System," *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973) Also see Jon P. Mitchell, "Defining Religion: Geertz and Asad," in *Religion, Theory, Critique: Classic and Contemporary Approaches and Methodologies*, ed. Richard King (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), 333 about Islamic discourse and Geertz.

⁶⁰⁰ Asad, "Anthropological Conceptions of Religion," 252.

⁶⁰¹ Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 90-117.

⁶⁰² İnalçık, "The Poet and the Patron," 10.

the historic chapter about the Battle of Çamurlu. Abdülvâsi instrumentalizes the authority of prophets and the title of *al-Mahdi* to contextualize Sultan Mehmed I in universal history, and to present the sultan as the legitimate religious ruler of the House of Osman. The legitimacy of the sultan could only be constructed together with the subjects of the country, the audience of *Halilnâme*. Legitimacy is a bilateral relationship,⁶⁰³ the ruled ones (subjects) need to admit that they are obedient to the authority.⁶⁰⁴ Thus, the literature of the *ulamâ*’, Abdülvâsi in this case, provides the sultan the visibility of his state through the heroization of Abraham and Muhammad and presenting him as the legitimate Muslim ruler whose deeds resemble Islamic heroes.

This chapter surveys the political aspects of the religiosity in *Halilnâme* which depicted Sultan Mehmed as the Mahdi, the rightful heir to the throne. Abdülvâsi draws on the *locus classicus* of Islamic literature about the requirement of rulership to administer discord,⁶⁰⁵ which is the *fitna*. Sultan Mehmed received the *devlet* (charisma in Turkish) from God,⁶⁰⁶ which encloses him in a spiritual halo similar to other medieval kings.⁶⁰⁷ Abdülvâsi presents Mehmed I as a sultan similar to Muhammad,⁶⁰⁸ like the Byzantine emperors’ representation as *typus Christi* in Christian historiography.⁶⁰⁹ *Halilnâme*’s “*Miraçname*” chapter is the peak of panegyric poetry about Muhammad. The heroization of Abraham, Muhammad and Sultan Mehmed is Abdülvâsi’s response to Anatolian heroic age literature, and an attempt to contribute to Islamization and centralizing the power in the court.

Halilnâme is also a response to the rival court of the Ottomans, the Timurids. The Timurids at

⁶⁰³ Karateke, “Legitimizing the Ottoman Sultanate,” 15.

⁶⁰⁴ Karateke, “Legitimizing the Ottoman Sultanate,” 15. Karateke cites “Rodney Barker, *Political Legitimacy and the State* (Oxford, 1990), 11.”

⁶⁰⁵ Al-Azmeh, *Muslim Kingship*, 117.

⁶⁰⁶ *Halilnâme*, 266/ c. 1830.

⁶⁰⁷ Karateke, “Opium for the Subjects? Religiosity as a Legitimizing Factor for the Sultans,” in *Legitimizing the Order: The Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power*, ed. Hakan T. Karateke and Maurus Reinkowski (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 114.

⁶⁰⁸ *Halilnâme*, 269/ c. 1856.

⁶⁰⁹ Al-Azmeh, *Muslim Kingship*, 43.

this time, similarly to the Ottomans, also claimed to be the patrons of Islamdom, and this is why *Halilnâme* consciously emphasized Mehmed's piety as well as his just reasons for fratricides.

3.1. Rivalry between the *ulamā*' and *gazi* narratives

“The partnership between prince, pen and sword was a precondition for political stability; conversely, elite discord could lead to rebellion.”⁶¹⁰ Men of the pen, the *'ulamā*' in Islamdom, were the ones who had the power to enforce rightful governance.⁶¹¹ To keep the rulership powerful and legitimate, the ruler needed the *'ulamā*' alongside his armies and his economic power; in turn, the learned men were dependent on the ruler's patronage.⁶¹² To keep his authority, the ruler must appoint the *'ulamā*' to preform jurisdiction over issues of legitimacy.⁶¹³ The *'ulamā*' played an essential part in the procedure of Sunni “re-centering,” by training their students and conveying religious literature to the common folk.⁶¹⁴ Abdülvâsi was a member of the class of *'ulamā*', and distributed the *'ilm*⁶¹⁵ via *Halilnâme*'s legitimization of Sultan Mehmed.

“Pen” (i.e. *'ulamā*') became more important than “sword,” (*gazi*) due to the empowerment of centralization policies and Perso-Islamic state customs developed since the fourteenth century.⁶¹⁶ The *'ulamā*' represented the settled Islamic life and state, and their influence over the Ottoman state countered the interests of frontier *gazi* warriors.⁶¹⁷ The social tension between the *'ulamā*' and *gazis* is reflected in both the *Menâkıb-ı Âl-i Osmân*

⁶¹⁰ Jeroen Duindam, “Prince, Pen, and Sword: Eurasian Perspectives,” in *Prince, Pen, and Sword: Eurasian Perspectives*, ed. Maaïke van Berkel and Jeroen Duindam (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2018), 544.

⁶¹¹ Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, 119.

⁶¹² Robinson, *Islamic Historiography*, 118.

⁶¹³ Al-Azmeh, *Muslim Historiography*, 103.

⁶¹⁴ Jonathan Berkey, *The Formation of Islam; Religion and Society in the Near East, 600–1800* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 207.

⁶¹⁵ *Halilnâme*, 40/ c. 35: “[Oh God] save us from the darkness of ignorance/ Make this soul full of *'ilm*”

⁶¹⁶ Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 113.

⁶¹⁷ Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 114.

and *Halilnâme*. The frontier lords' hagiographic literature was nostalgic about "good old days,"⁶¹⁸ and they accused the 'ulamā' of tarnishing the *gazi* ideology with orthodoxy, as well as seceding from the frontier customs,⁶¹⁹ and bringing innovations to the court.⁶²⁰ The customs of sedentary state and bureaucracy which is depicted in *Halilnâme* in a positive way, was criticized in *Menâkıb-ı Âl-i Osmân*. The Çandarlı family, of 'ulamā' training, and holder of top legislative positions, is criticized in the *Menâkıb-ı Âl-i Osmân* as:

when [Çandarlı] Hayreddin Pasha came to the Gate [of government] greedy scholars became the companions of the rulers. [...] Until Vulkoglu's daughter came to him, Yıldırım Khan did not know what drinking parties were [...]. Until then nothing was known of keeping account books. The practice of accumulating money and storing it in a treasury comes from them [...].⁶²¹

In contrast, the second vizier of Mehmed's court, İbrahim Pasha from the Çandarlı family⁶²² is praised in *Halilnâme*.⁶²³ What is criticized in *Menâkıb-ı Âl-i Osmân* as unwelcome courtly innovations, are praised in *Halilnâme*: "golden drinking bowls:"⁶²⁴ "There came pretty young lads, and slave girls beautiful, Without comparison, and the people were astonished,"⁶²⁵ and "So many that the account books [*defatir*] were filled/ that in each place they placed a man as scribe/ To be the book-keeper for all accounting business [*siyakat işleri*]."⁶²⁶ Here, the treasury duties of the Ottoman state is described by the word *siyakat*, a special bureaucratic term for a cryptic script (*siyāka* in Arabic).⁶²⁷ This recording by

⁶¹⁸ Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 112.

⁶¹⁹ Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 113.

⁶²⁰ Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 110.

⁶²¹ Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 111. Kafadar cites the passage from the translation in Bernard Lewis, ed. and trans., *Islam from the Prophet Muhammad to the Capture of Constantinople*, vol. 1, *Politics and War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), 135-41.

⁶²² İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Çandarlı Vezir Ailesi* [The Vizier-Family: Çandarlıs] (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1974), 49.

⁶²³ C. 1877. See Kastritsis, *Sons of Bayezid*, appendix, 229: "That vizier, son of a vizier, that crown of the nation That [Çandarlı] İbrahim Pasha, mine of royal luck."

⁶²⁴ See Kastritsis, *Sons of Bayezid*, appendix, 229.

⁶²⁵ See Kastritsis, *Sons of Bayezid*, appendix, 229.

⁶²⁶ See Kastritsis, *Sons of Bayezid*, appendix, 229.

⁶²⁷ Miri Shefer-Mossensohn, *Science among the Ottomans: The Cultural Creation and Exchange of Knowledge* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015), 96.

Abdülvâsi is one of the earliest illustrations about the policies of centralization and bureaucratization.⁶²⁸ While Abdülvâsi writes “The goods were amassed, the treasury was filled,”⁶²⁹ the treasury ownership is condemned by the *Menâkıb-ı Âl-i Osmân* because the profane accumulation of wealth was not the primary purpose of frontier warriors.⁶³⁰ Centralization of revenues is convicted as a sign of avarice by *gazi* ideology.⁶³¹ The slave booty’s one-fifth given to the state treasury, as recorded in *Halilnâme*’s couplets, was deemed a “cunning trick” in the frontier warrior ethos.⁶³² This “nefarious innovation” of Kara Halil, patriarch of the Çandarlıs, was designed to eliminate the booty of the frontier warlords.⁶³³

The political clash between the frontier *gaza* narratives and the ‘*ulamâ*’ intelligentsia was simply not about hypothetical conventions.⁶³⁴ It was about the ‘*ulamâ*’s elimination of the power of frontier folk.⁶³⁵ Çandarlı Ali Pasha was gathering “pretty boys around himself and called them pages. When he had misused them for a while, he let them go and gave them posts. Before that time there were the old-timers who were the heads of families; these held all the posts; they were not sent away and not dismissed.”⁶³⁶ Even though critics of the bureaucracy were harsh, the centralization policies did not stop under Mehmed I’s rule, although they were not as vigorous as Bayezid I’s strategy.⁶³⁷

⁶²⁸ Feridun Emecen, “Defter-i Köhne: Pirlepe-Kırçova Kesiminin En Eski Tımar Defteri (1445-1455)” [Defter-i Köhne: The Oldest Tımar Register of Pirlepe – Kırçova Region (1445-1455)] *Osmanlı Araştırmaları/The Journal of Ottoman Studies* 43 (2014): 343.

⁶²⁹ See Kastritsis, *Sons of Bayezid*, appendix, 229.

⁶³⁰ Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 112.

⁶³¹ Marinos Sariyannis, *A History of Ottoman Political Thought up to the Early Nineteenth Century* (Leiden&Boston: Brill, 2019), 39.

⁶³² Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 112.

⁶³³ Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 112.

⁶³⁴ Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 112.

⁶³⁵ Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 112.

⁶³⁶ Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 112. Kafadar quotes Anonymous, *Tevarih* as cited in *Islam from the Prophet Muhammad to the Capture of Constantinople*, trans. B. Lewis, 142.

⁶³⁷ Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 18.

The bureaucratization and centralization under the reign of Sultan Mehmed,⁶³⁸ meant that the state was now embodied by the sultan alone. İnalçık states that “what made the Ottoman imperial system a ‘sultanism’ in Weber’s sense may also be the Ottoman sultan’s arrogating political as well as spiritual power in his person.”⁶³⁹ This meant that anyone opposing the Sultan was considered to be enemy of both the state and religion.⁶⁴⁰ Al-Zamak^hsharī’s exegesis in *al-Kashshāf* about Qur’an 21:22,⁶⁴¹ is about the exclusiveness of God and that of the king.⁶⁴² For him, authority can only be operated solely, and the rule is one-sided and imperceptible.⁶⁴³ As stated above, *al-Kashshāf* is one of the books that Abdülvâsi names as his source in *Halilnâme*, which is also a work included in the curriculum of the Ottoman madrasa. Moreover, the Qur’an’s 21:22 verse is the first Quranic verse in *Halilnâme*’s first chapter.⁶⁴⁴ Couplet 9 is a poetic Turkish exegesis of the Quranic verse: “[If there were two gods] One would wish winter, the other summer/ One would like to do less, the other more.” Even though the couplet is about the oneness of God, it can also imply a necessity to have one mighty ruler, as two would create unrest. The idea of a rule to have a single leader is also found in Mehmed’s letter to Shahrukh.⁶⁴⁵

If only one ruler should have power over the country, the most important aspect of religion, power—as Talal Asad writes—is a legitimization tool together with religion.⁶⁴⁶ In Turkish tradition, the charisma and the power to rule is the *devlet*.⁶⁴⁷ The *devlet* is also

⁶³⁸ İnalçık, *Devlet-i ‘Aliyye*, 83.

⁶³⁹ Halil İnalçık, “Comments on Sultanism: Max Weber’s Typification of Ottoman Polity,” *Princeton Papers in Near Eastern Studies* (1992): 50.

⁶⁴⁰ Bilkan, *Osmanlı Zihniyetinin Oluşumu*, 59.

⁶⁴¹ *The Qur’an* 21:22 “If there had been in the heavens or earth any gods but Him, both heavens and earth would be in ruins: God, Lord of the Throne, is far above the things they say.”

⁶⁴² Al-Azmeh, *Muslim Historiography*, 122.

⁶⁴³ Al-Azmeh, *Muslim Historiography*, 121.

⁶⁴⁴ Between the couplets 9 and 10 in *Halilnâme*.

⁶⁴⁵ Kastritsis, *Sons of Bayezid*, 205: Sultan Mehmed quotes from *Gulistan*: “Ten dervishes can huddle together on a carpet, but two Kings don’t fit in the same clime.”

⁶⁴⁶ Asad, “Anthropological Conceptions of Religion: Reflections on Geertz,” 237.

⁶⁴⁷ Kastritsis, *Sons of Bayezid*, 206. Footnote 15: “In the *Ahval*, the term *devlet* corresponds to the Turkish *kut*, i.e. what Fletcher calls ‘talent.’ For a discussion of this concept and its importance in the post-Mongol Turco-Islamic world order, see John E. Woods, *The Aqqyunlu*, 1-9.”

provided by God.⁶⁴⁸ The anonymous *Aḥvāl-i Sulṭān Meḥammed bin Bāyezīd Ḥān (Aḥvāl)*,⁶⁴⁹ completed after 1413, apologetically legitimizes the acts of Mehmed against his brothers.⁶⁵⁰ The same is found in *Halilnâme*, and Mehmed's letter to Shahrukh from 1416.⁶⁵¹ The *devlet* of Mehmed is sufficient for him to rule the state: the act of being chosen by God is not related to age.⁶⁵²

3.2. Rivalry between Timurids and Ottomans

Shahrukh developed a religious policy of Sunnization to counter the Shia movements undermining his state authority, and established a madrasa which taught Sunnism.⁶⁵³

Shahrukh himself selected four scholars to teach in the madrasa and attended the commencement lecture.⁶⁵⁴ Shahrukh abolished the *törä* (Turkic canon and customs) for the sake of Sharia and claimed to be the caliph of the Muslim world, the *padshah-i Islam*.⁶⁵⁵ He moved the capital from Samarqand to Herat, the old Khorasanian center of religiosity,⁶⁵⁶ and transformed Herat into the “political and cultural capital of Central Asia, Iran, and large parts of the Middle East and India.”⁶⁵⁷ Even though, Shahrukh removed non-Islamic accessories

⁶⁴⁸ John Woods, *The Aqqyunlu: Clan, Confederation, Empire* (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 1999), 6: “the sacral model of rule holds that the king or worldly ruler (sultan, padshah) is chosen directly by God, who makes him the repository of sovereignty on earth, raising him above the rest of humanity and endowing him with the charisma of universal rule (*ta'yid-i ilahi*, “divine support,” *fan; qut, ughur*).

⁶⁴⁹ Dimitris Kastritsis, ed., *The Tales of Sultan Mehmed, Son of Bayezid Khan [Aḥvāl-i Sulṭān Meḥammed bin Bāyezīd Ḥān]* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007)

⁶⁵⁰ Kastritsis, *Sons of Bayezid*, 206.

⁶⁵¹ Kastritsis, *Sons of Bayezid*, 198.

⁶⁵² Kastritsis, *Sons of Bayezid*, 198: “Mehmed's adverseries try to present him as unfit to rule on account of his age (we must remember here that Mehmed was probably only fifteen in 1402.)”

⁶⁵³ Maria Eva Subtelny and Anas B. Khalidov, “The Curriculum of Islamic Higher Learning in Timurid Iran in the Light of the Sunni Revival under Shāh-Rukh,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 115, No. 2 (Apr. - Jun. 1995): 211.

⁶⁵⁴ Manz, *Power, Politics and Religion in Timurid Iran*, 216.

⁶⁵⁵ Maria Subtelny, *Timurids in Transition: Turko-Persian Politics and Acculturation in Medieval Iran* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 25.

⁶⁵⁶ Subtelny and Khalidov, “The Curriculum of Islamic Higher Learning,” 211.

⁶⁵⁷ Starr, *Lost Enlightenment*, 487.

from his father's mausoleum,⁶⁵⁸ he endorsed some of the Turko-Mongolian *törä* for the sake of the Timurid military establishment.⁶⁵⁹

Shahrukh's abolishment of the Turko-Mongolian *törä* was not a complete annihilation. For example, he kept the Turco-Mongolian legacy under his rulership.⁶⁶⁰ Sultan Mehmed's *müsâhib* (companion), Ibn 'Arabshāh, who reported the Muslim scholars' declaration about Timur's infidelity, was mistrustful about Shahrukh's Islamization policies.⁶⁶¹ In addition, the fact that Shahrukh retained Turko-Mongolian customs is also illustrated by the fact that he invited Mehmed to follow the Turco-Mongolian dynastic succession *törä*,⁶⁶² which stipulated that "all-male relatives of the supreme ruler had the right to a share in government by receiving appanages."⁶⁶³ Thus, the total abolishment of the *törä* was not practical while Shahrukh could use this Turco-Mongolian tradition against his rival, Mehmed.

The Ottoman's dynastic line is regulated similarly to the Turco-Mongolian tradition, including the absence of a prearranged system of royal sequence, and preeminence of *devlet*.⁶⁶⁴ On the other hand, Shahrukh questions Mehmed's *töre-i Osmani* which led to deaths of Mehmed's rival brothers, Süleyman, Musa and İsa.⁶⁶⁵ When Shahrukh refers to the *töre-i İlhani* which does not accept fratricide,⁶⁶⁶ Mehmed defends his actions arguing that he had to act against the grain because he needed to rule his country only by himself to win his wars against the "infidel."⁶⁶⁷ In addition to Mehmed's letters, there are historical writings

⁶⁵⁸ Manz, *Power, Politics and Religion in Timurid Iran*, 28.

⁶⁵⁹ Manz, *Power, Politics and Religion in Timurid Iran*, 212.

⁶⁶⁰ Manz, "Temür and the Problem," 35.

⁶⁶¹ Subtenly, *Timurids in Transition*, 26.

⁶⁶² Kastritsis, *Sons of Bayezid*, 203; Kastritsis quotes from Feridun's *Münşe'atü's-Selatin*.

⁶⁶³ Kastritsis, *Sons of Bayezid*, 200.

⁶⁶⁴ Kastritsis, *Sons of Bayezid*, 200.

⁶⁶⁵ Kastritsis, *Sons of Bayezid*, 203; Kastritsis quotes from Feridun's *Münşe'atü's-Selatin*.

⁶⁶⁶ Kastritsis, *Sons of Bayezid*, 203.

⁶⁶⁷ Kastritsis, *Sons of Bayezid*, 205.

attempting to legitimize the actions of Mehmed.⁶⁶⁸ Apologist historical writings, including the *Aḥvāl* and *Halilnâme* which legitimized Mehmed's battles against his brothers, were no longer necessary for the sultans after Mehmed II (r. 1444-1446 and 1451-1481), as by that time sultans ascending to the throne were obliged to kill their brothers.⁶⁶⁹

3.3. The Islamic Courts' patronage of religious literature

Timurid history is also a history about the production of arts, and it is associated with government policies and community life, and they must be examined in this context.⁶⁷⁰

Profound political and social changes happened in the lands of the Ottomans and Timurids at this time. The Ottomans, after Mehmed's ascension to the throne, tried to reestablish their state and recover from the Timurid invasion of Anatolia. Thus, the Ottomans presented themselves as the sole sovereigns of their lands, using both literature and architecture to make the state visible. Rival dynasties' struggles were also apparent in science and artistic patronage.⁶⁷¹ The literature produced at the courts of Timur and Shahrukh greatly influenced religious and artistic products in Anatolia.⁶⁷² Even though, both the Ottomans and the Timurids followed the Sunni doctrine, Shahrukh was close to the Naqshbandiyya order, which adhered to the "*waḥdat al-shuhūd*" (the oneness of perception).⁶⁷³ This stood in opposition with the "*waḥdat al-wudjūd*,"⁶⁷⁴ whose influence on the Ottoman madrasa curriculum and *Halilnâme* was mentioned in the "Sources of *Halilnâme*" chapter above.

Both Shahrukh and Mehmed claimed authority by assuming Islamic titles. Shahrukh calls Mehmed a *mujahid* (jihadist) and a *nizamu'l-mulk va'd-din* (order giver of the world and

⁶⁶⁸ Kastritsis, *Sons of Bayezid*.

⁶⁶⁹ Kastritsis, *Sons of Bayezid*, 216.

⁶⁷⁰ Lentz and Lowry, *Timur and the Princely Vision: Persian Art and Culture in the Fifteenth Century*, 69.

⁶⁷¹ İnalçık, "The Poet and the Patron," 8.

⁶⁷² İnalçık, "The 'Ottoman Civilization' and Palace Patronage," in *Ottoman Civilization 1*, ed. Halil İnalçık and Günsel Renda (İstanbul: Ministry of Culture, 2002), 21.

⁶⁷³ Itzhak Weismann, *The Naqshbandiyya: Orthodoxy and activism in a worldwide Sufi tradition* (London & NY: Routledge, 2007), 59.

⁶⁷⁴ Bilkan, *Osmanlı Zihniyetinin Oluşumu*, 48.

religion).⁶⁷⁵ On the other hand, Shahrukh was presented as *mujaddid* (renewer of Islam),⁶⁷⁶ a stronger title than *mujahid*, which endows upon Shahrukh a higher rank in his own Timurid historiography. Some historians of his life alleged that Shahrukh was a miracle worker performing *karāmāt* (wonders).⁶⁷⁷ In hagiography-type literature, Shahrukh is also presented having the ability to foretell events before they happened.⁶⁷⁸ Shahrukh reinforced religious circles because religion was his tool of legitimization.⁶⁷⁹ His control over religiosity was secured through subsidies and endorsing a religious curriculum.⁶⁸⁰ He selected the scholars for the position of *muhtasib*, the supervisor of the city's morals,⁶⁸¹ to pour down all the wine in cities,⁶⁸² and actively sponsored several shrines.⁶⁸³

The other way for a ruler to exhibit religious interest is to sponsor religious literature, which was a mutual characteristic in Mehmed and Shahrukh's courts. A *me'rāj-nāma*⁶⁸⁴ and *universal history*, which starts with creation and ends with Shahrukh's reign named *Majma'al-tawarikh* written by Hafiz-i Abru (d. 1430),⁶⁸⁵ were presented to Shahrukh, together with many other pieces of religious literature.⁶⁸⁶ As a court historian Hafiz-i Abru labored to disclose inequalities of his time,⁶⁸⁷ similar to his contemporary court historian

⁶⁷⁵ Kastritsis, *Sons of Bayezid*, 203.

⁶⁷⁶ Subtelny and Khalidov, "The Curriculum of Islamic Higher Learning," 212. "Contemporary sources wax poetic in their portrayal of Shah-Rukh as 'the protector of the precincts of the faith,' 'the architect of the palace of Islam,' 'the huma-bird guarding the egg of the Sharia,' and 'the one who has obliterated the practices of infidelity and heterodoxy and established the laws of rectitude and rightful guidance.'"

⁶⁷⁷ Manz, *Power, Politics and Religion in Timurid Iran*, 191.

⁶⁷⁸ Manz, *Power, Politics and Religion in Timurid Iran*, 191.

⁶⁷⁹ Subtelny and Khalidov, "The Curriculum of Islamic Higher Learning," 209.

⁶⁸⁰ Subtelny and Khalidov, "The Curriculum of Islamic Higher Learning," 210.

⁶⁸¹ Subtelny and Khalidov, "The Curriculum of Islamic Higher Learning."

⁶⁸² Ghiasian, *Lives of the Prophets*, 19.

⁶⁸³ Subtelny and Khalidov, "The Curriculum of Islamic Higher Learning," 219.

⁶⁸⁴ Even though there is no evidence that the opus was commissioned by Shahrukh himself, it remained in the Timurid royal library. Subtelny and Gruber argues that it must be a product of Shahrukh's court. Maria E. Subtelny, "The Jews at the Edge of the World in a Timurid-era *Mi'rajnama*: The Islamic Ascension Narrative as a Missionary Text," *The Prophet's Ascension*, ed. by Christiane Gruber, Frederick Colby (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2010) 56.

⁶⁸⁵ Mohamad Reza Ghiasian, *Lives of the Prophets: The Illustrations to Hafiz-i Abru's "Assembly of Chronicles"* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2018), 49.

⁶⁸⁶ Ghiasian, *Lives of the Prophets*, 25-44.

⁶⁸⁷ Ghiasian, *Lives of the Prophets*, 47.

Abdülvâsi.⁶⁸⁸ Moreover, like *Halilnâme*, Hafız-ı Abru's *universal history* draws on a *ķiŗaş al-anbiyā'*, literature and *isrā'īliyyāt*.⁶⁸⁹ The latter, presented to Mehmed, can be seen as part of a *ķiŗaş al-anbiyā'* only focusing on Abraham. As mentioned earlier, Bayezid Pasha was the patron of *Halilnâme*, and the pasha's patronage policies, as well as his patronage over religious architecture in Anatolia,⁶⁹⁰ are reminiscent of those of the Timurids.⁶⁹¹

3.3.1. Timurid versus Ottoman *Mi'rādj* Narratives

The *mi'rādj* (ascension) and the *isrā'* (nocturnal journey) were retold by Islamic scholars in different literary genres as didactic or artistic narratives. The Qur'anic verses about the nocturnal journey are enigmatic,⁶⁹² and the literature about the night is mostly based on the hadith.⁶⁹³ A genre is named *me'rāj-nāma* (*miraçnâme* in Turkish), a term originally coined in Persian literature, consisting of the words *me'rāj* (*mi'rādj*) and *nāma* (book) resembling the title of *Halilnâme*, but focusing on the *mi'rādj* and the *isrā'*. Since the *isrā'* constitutes the first part of the night, the literature was named as *me'rāj-nāma*, not *isrā'-nāma*. The newly founded dynasties used their vernacular to convey an Islamic narrative which contributed to the increasing number of *miraçnâme* produced in Persian and Turkish.⁶⁹⁴ The Timurid "book of ascension" also developed in religious scholarly works written in Khwarezmian Turkish in the fourteenth century, such as Rabgħūzī's *ķiŗaş al-Anbiyā'* (Stories of the Prophets) and al-Sara'ī's *Nahj al'Faradis* (Pathway to Heaven).⁶⁹⁵ During the reigns of the Ottoman and Timurid dynasties, the courtly power controlled, sponsored and constructed religion in their realms. Hakīm Atā's (d. 1186) *mi'rādj* narrative paved the path for Turkish

⁶⁸⁸ *Halilnâme*, 180/ c. 1145.

⁶⁸⁹ Ghiasian, *Lives of the Prophets*, 54-6.

⁶⁹⁰ Ghiasian, *Lives of the Prophets*, 16.

⁶⁹¹ Keskin, "Bayezid Paŗa," 27.

⁶⁹² Frederick Colby, *Narrating Muhammad's Night Journey* (New York: State University of New York, 2008), 13.

⁶⁹³ Colby, *Narrating Muhammad's Night Journey*, 30.

⁶⁹⁴ Christine Gruber, *The Ilhanid Book of Ascension* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2010), 12.

⁶⁹⁵ Gruber, *The Timurid Book*, 268.

ascension literature.⁶⁹⁶ The first *miraçnâme* written in Anatolia is by Âşık Paşa (d. 1333) in a mystical-didactic opus called *Garibnâme* (The Book of the Forlorn).⁶⁹⁷ Another early *miraçnâme* produced in Anatolia was written by Ahmedî.⁶⁹⁸ This was included in the *İskendername*, which also had a contemporary history section entitled The Historical Epic of the Imperial Ottoman Ruler.⁶⁹⁹ The Timurid *Mi' rādjname* was a product of Shahrukh's court, in Herat.⁷⁰⁰ It was written in Uighur script. The combination of the Uighur script with Islamic belief, makes this work a manifestation of the consolidation of Turko-Mongolian and Perso-Islamic cultures.⁷⁰¹

The *Mi' rādj* narrative was also included in another work contemporary with *Halilnâme*. Süleyman Çelebi (d. 1422)'s *Vesîletü'n-necât* (Path to Salvation) was composed in 1409 in Bursa, allegedly as a response to an Iranian preacher's claiming Jesus to be equal to Muhammad.⁷⁰² The opus narrates Muhammad's life from his birth to death, includes a chapter on the *mi' rādj*, and didactically teaches the Sunni Islam credo.⁷⁰³ It depicts the *mi' rādj* with fewer supernatural features than Âşık Paşa's narrative.⁷⁰⁴

As a response to a preacher's equating Jesus and Muhammad at the Great Mosque of Bursa, Süleyman Çelebi in the *Vesîletü'n-necât* writes "And Jesus did not die but rose to heaven/That was so that he be of this kin ([Muhammad's] *ummah*)."⁷⁰⁵ Four or five years

⁶⁹⁶ Max Scherberger, "The Chaghatay *Mi'rajname* Attributed to Hakim Süleyman Ata: A Missionary Text from the Twelfth or Thirteenth Century Preserved in Modern Manuscripts," in *The Prophet's Ascension*, ed. Christiane Gruber and Frederick Colby (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2010), 89.

⁶⁹⁷ Semil S. Kuru, "Pious Journey, Sacred Desire: Observations on the Mi'raj in Early Anatolian Turkish Verse Narratives," in *The Prophet's Ascension*, 193.

⁶⁹⁸ Yaşar Akdoğan, "Mirac, Mirac-name ve Ahmedî'nin Bilinmeyen Mirac-namesi," *The Journal of Ottoman Studies* 9 (1989): 263-310.

⁶⁹⁹ Gönül Tekin, "Turkish Literature: Thirteenth to Fifteenth Centuries," in *Ottoman Civilization*, vol. 2, ed. Halil İnalçık, and Günsel Renda (Ankara, 2004): 508.

⁷⁰⁰ Subtenly, "The Jews at the Edge," 54.

⁷⁰¹ Subtenly, "The Jews at the Edge," 55.

⁷⁰² Bilkan, *Osmanlı Zihniyetinin Oluşumu*, 201. Bilkan cites Necla Pekolcay, *Şüleyman Çelebi: Mevlid* (İstanbul Dergah Yay., 1980), 15-16.

⁷⁰³ Bilkan, *Osmanlı Zihniyetinin Oluşumu*, 202.

⁷⁰⁴ Kuru, "Pious Journey," 196.

⁷⁰⁵ Yorgo Dedes, "Süleyman Çelebi's Mevlid: Text, Performance and Muslim-Christian Dialogue," in *Şinasi Tekin'in Anısına: Uygurlardan Osmanlıya* (İstanbul: Simurg, 2005), 327.

after Süleyman Çelebi wrote this couplet, Abdülvâsi wrote in *Halilnâme*: “For the right of the books of Abraham and Musa/ Make Muhammad senior over Jesus.”⁷⁰⁶ This suggests that the allegation about the words of the preacher may have been a real event, still remembered five years after it happened.⁷⁰⁷ Ahmedî included a *miraçnâme* in the *İskendernâme* because of the same debate about Muhammad’s place among other prophets.⁷⁰⁸ Ahmedî’s narrative differs from Süleyman Çelebi and Âşık Paşa’s narratives, in that he was “the first to offer a rather straightforward telling of the ascension story in a versified historical account.”⁷⁰⁹

The other *miraçnâmes* were written around the time of Abdülvâsi probably influenced Abdülvâsi’s in various ways. The inclusion of the *mi‘râdj* section in his *İskendernâme* is similar to Abdülvâsi’s choice to include a *miraçnâme* in *Halilnâme*. Selim Sırrı Kuru categorizes Âşık Paşa and Süleyman Çelebi’s narratives as didactic, but Ahmedî’s *İskendernâme* and Yazıcıoğlu Mehmed’s (d. 1451) *Muhammediyye* (Book of Muhammad) join the ranks of Persian lyrical classics, depicting the *mi‘râdj* with its wondrous features.⁷¹⁰ All these four narratives differ from Hoca Mesud’s *Süheyl ü Nevbahâr* (1350) which depicts Muhammad’s “desire to see God symbolically allude to the position of a lover who is seeking his beloved,” instead of Muhammad’s position of being an intercessor.⁷¹¹ On the one hand, Abdülvâsi’s *mi‘râdj* narrative is close to Ahmedî and Yazıcıoğlu Mehmed’s narratives in depicting the miraculous events of the *mi‘râdj*. On the other hand, Abdülvâsi’s *miraçnâme* points out to Muhammad’s intercession (*shafâ‘a*)⁷¹² for Muslims,⁷¹³ “an aspect of Sunni

⁷⁰⁶ *Halilnâme*, 251/ c. 1709: “Be-hakk-ı suhf-ı İbrahim ü Musa/ Muhammad ra mükerrem kün zi İsa.”

⁷⁰⁷ Ayhan Gültaş, prologue to *Halilnâme*, 23.

⁷⁰⁸ Caroline Sawyer, “Revising Alexander,” 229-30. “Around 1400, a shaykh from Damascus, probably Muhammad ibn al-Jazari (d. 1429) visited Bursa, where Ahmedî was living around that time. The sheikh, who had composed an Arabic *Mevlid*, appears to have provoked great controversy over the question of Muhammad’s place among the other prophets.”

⁷⁰⁹ Kuru, “Pious Journey,” 196.

⁷¹⁰ Kuru, “Pious Journey,” 199.

⁷¹¹ Kuru, “Pious Journey,” 201.

⁷¹² See J. W. Bowker, “Intercession in the Qur’an and the Jewish tradition,” *Journal of Semitic Studies* 11: 1 (Spring 1966): 75-79 for the Jewish literature on Abraham’s intercessions.

⁷¹³ *Halilnâme*, 461/ c. 3385.

soteriology,”⁷¹⁴ and God’s saying, “I have created the world out of your love (*ʿiṣk*)/ The people and jinns of the world.” (c. 3416). Thus, Abdülvâsi’s *miraçnâme* is between the Hoca Mesud’s *mi ʿrâdj* “in the name of love,”⁷¹⁵ and the other narratives’ *mi ʿrâdj* being “in the name of piety.”⁷¹⁶ Abdülvâsi’s *miraçnâme* is a tool to glorify Muhammad and depict him as the supreme prophet and God’s beloved, superior to all other prophets. Muhammad’s quest is attached to both Abraham and Sultan Mehmed’s Battle of Çamurlu. Muhammad undertakes his journey as the hero of the story, and in the context of *universal history* as the reason for humanity’s existence.

Abdülvâsi names his sources at the beginning of the *miraçnâme* as transmitters (*rāwī*) of the hadith; Anas [b. Mālik], ʿĀʾiṣha [Bint Abī Bakr], Ibn ʿAbbās, [Abū] Hurayra, and D̲jābir [b. ʿAbd Allāh].⁷¹⁷ Ibn ʿAbbās’ name is also related to *isrā ʿilīyyāt*, and later on his name was attached to make other chains of transmission seem valid.⁷¹⁸ Thus, there is more than one Ibn ʿAbbās’ reports. The narrator of Abdülvâsi’s *miraçnâme* is Muhammad himself. The use of active voice is found in “the Primitive Version”⁷¹⁹ and Ibn ʿAbbās’s narratives but not in the “official ascension narratives.”⁷²⁰ Ahmedî and Süleyman Çelebi’s *mi ʿrâdj* narratives are not in first-person either, singling out Abdülvâsi’s opus as an exception to the general rule. The difference in the voice of the narrator is significant, as the author who makes Muhammad speak, speaks for Muhammad in poetic couplets without providing an *isnād* (chain of authorities), and makes the plot of the story appealing.

3.3.2. Angelology of the *Mi ʿrâdj*

⁷¹⁴ Christian Lange, *Paradise and Hell in Islamic Traditions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 178.

⁷¹⁵ Kuru, “Pious Journey,” 199.

⁷¹⁶ Kuru, “Pious Journey,” 193.

⁷¹⁷ *Halilnâme*, 419/ c. 3049-50.

⁷¹⁸ Colby, *Narrating Muhammad’s Night Journey*, 31.

⁷¹⁹ Colby names the “earliest known version of Ibn ʿAbbās” as “Primitive Version.” Colby, *Narrating Muhammad’s Night Journey*, 9.

⁷²⁰ Colby, *Narrating Muhammad’s Night Journey*, 39.

The names and natures of angels in the Hebrew Merkabah and Hekhalot texts of ascension may suggest a connection between the Jewish ascension literature and the Primitive Version.⁷²¹ In Abdülvâsi's narrative, the first angel Muhammad encounters after Gabriel during the *Mi 'rādġ*, is the Rooster Angel. Even though, Abdülvâsi does not call it an "angel," he presents it as some supernatural being whose height reaches heaven, and who has wings stretch across the east and the west.⁷²² The Rooster proclaims God continuously, causing the roosters on earth to crow.⁷²³ The second angel, whose body is half fire and half snow,⁷²⁴ is also found in the Midrashic report of the Ascension of Moses.⁷²⁵ The third one is the angel of death, 'Azrā'īl, and Muhammad says "Out of the fear from him, my soul is shaken and my language is shattered."⁷²⁶ And, Muhammad sees angel Mālik, the guardian of the hell, holds the hand of Gabriel out of fear.⁷²⁷ The fourth one is Malik, guardian angel of Hell.⁷²⁸ These four angels are all found in the Primitive Version of Ibn 'Abbās.⁷²⁹ In the Primitive Version, Mālik frightens him,⁷³⁰ and Gabriel holds Muhammad's hand to confront him while passing "the sea of darkness."⁷³¹ The Primitive Version's four angels illustrate the source of Abdülvâsi. Also, this plot might have transmitted to Abdülvâsi's work, either through an earlier, oral or written translation to Turkish or Persian, or via direct access to the Arabic text. The narrative of Muhammad's fear illustrates the nocturnal journey narrator's attempt to emphasize Muhammad is a mortal human being who can have such feelings as other humans.

⁷²¹ Colby, *Narrating Muhammad's Night Journey*, 36.

⁷²² *Halilnâme*, 432/ c. 3153.

⁷²³ *Halilnâme*, 432/ c. 3157.

⁷²⁴ *Halilnâme*, 433/ c. 3160.

⁷²⁵ Subtelny, "Jews at the Edge," 65. In endnote 108 Subtelny refers to Louis Ginzberg, ed., *Legends of the Jews*, trans. Henrietta Szold and Paul Radin, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 2003), vol. 1:504 (citing *Gedullat Moshe*); saying that "It is not out of the question that the Midrashic account may itself have been influenced by the Islamic narrative."

⁷²⁶ *Halilnâme*, 434/ c. 3175.

⁷²⁷ *Halilnâme*, 437/ c. 3198.

⁷²⁸ *Halilnâme*, 438/ c. 3200.

⁷²⁹ See Colby, *Narrating Muhammad's Night Journey*, Appendix A, Translation of the Primitive Version, 176-177.

⁷³⁰ Colby, *Narrating Muhammad's Night Journey*, Appendix A, Translation of the Primitive Version, 177.

⁷³¹ Colby, *Narrating Muhammad's Night Journey*, Appendix A, Translation of the Primitive Version, 180.

From the eleventh century onwards, the Persian *miraçnâme* literature includes pre-Islamic—especially Zoroastrian—motifs to appeal to the newly Islamized Persian communities, reminding them of the motifs that they were accustomed to.⁷³² These motifs became canonical in nocturnal journey narratives: they appealed to newly Islamized Persian or Turkic people in earlier centuries but not to fifteenth-century audience,⁷³³ especially in central Anatolia where Zoroastrian motifs cannot be appealing for already Islamized community whose former religion was not Zoroastrian. The rooster also appears in the Timurid *Mi 'rād̲jname*, as the token for Srōš (Avestan Sraosha), a Zoroastrian deity.⁷³⁴ The Zoroastrian deity is the heavenly intermediary between God and man. The rooster is also between earth and heavens as a narrative in the Islamic canon.⁷³⁵ On the other hand, the rejection of Abdülvâsi's translation of the *Vīs u Rāmīn* also had Zoroastrian motifs.⁷³⁶ Abdülvâsi claimed that it is full of profanity even though he cannot have been aware of the rooster as a Zoroastrian motif, as it has been already “Islamized” and included in Islamic angelology as the Primitive Version.

3.3.3. Jews, Christians, and Biblical Prophets in the *Mi 'rād̲j* Narratives as agents of Confessionalization

Biblical prophets' paying homage to Muhammad, and Muhammad's encounters with “people of the book,” in the nocturnal journey narratives manifest the missionary agenda of the narrative.⁷³⁷ Even though, Abdülvâsi's main target might not be the “people of the book,” but he is reminding his audience about the divisions drawn between other religions and Islam.

⁷³² Gruber, *The Timurid Book*, 13.

⁷³³ Subtelny, “Jews at the Edge,” 62.

⁷³⁴ Subtelny, “Jews at the Edge.”

⁷³⁵ Subtelny, “The Islamic Ascension Narrative in the Context of Conversion in Medieval Iran: An Apocalypse at the Intersection of Orality and Textuality,” in *Orality and Textuality in the Iranian World: Patterns of Interaction across the Centuries*, ed. Julia Rubanovich (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2015), 112.

⁷³⁶ See footnote 13 of this thesis.

⁷³⁷ See Colby, *Narrating the Nocturnal Journey*, 97. Colby points out to the “missionary milieu.” And Subtelny, “The Islamic Ascension Narrative in the Context of Conversion in Medieval Iran,” 103-106.

Thus, confessionalization is not an era, but an ongoing process, in which the *'ulamā'* invite their audience to be engaged in their “right path.”

There are three voices reaching out to Muhammad, and he does not respond to any of them. Gabriel approves Muhammad’s act stating, “the first call was from *cūhud* (Jews from the time of Muhammad who did not believe in him), the second one was from *tersa* (Christians) and *yahud* (Jews); If you have stopped, these would have corrupted your nation.”⁷³⁸ The corruption theme of Muhammad’s community is a reference to a hadith which warns Muslims not to imitate other communities, interpreted as non-Muslims by Sunni doctrine.⁷³⁹ The third voice calling Muhammad is from an old woman with makeup,⁷⁴⁰ representing the world. The first two voices and Muhammad’s refusal to respond represent the boundary drawn between the Muslims and the people of the book. Moreover, Jews from the time of Muhammad (*cūhud*) and the second voice’s Jews (*yahud*) are distinguished, Christians are mentioned together with the *yahud*. The last voice is the profanity of world, reiterating that pious believers must keep themselves away from it.

After these voices, Muhammad encounters other prophets and conducts a conversation about Jews and Christians. Gabriel says “Ask them if God has any partner, their decree has come to you; They ask if He has a son⁷⁴¹ or daughter⁷⁴² / Those polytheists, Christians (*nasrani*) and Jews (*cūhud*).”⁷⁴³ This couplet is followed by Quran 43:45 written in Arabic This couplet is followed by Quran 43:45 written in Arabic.⁷⁴⁴ The prophets answer

⁷³⁸ *Halilnâme*, 424/ c. 3091-3093.

⁷³⁹ Youshaa Patel, “‘Whoever Imitates a People Becomes One of Them’: A Hadith and its Interpreters,” *Islamic Law and Society* 25 (2018): 2.

⁷⁴⁰ *Halilnâme*, 424/ c. 3094.

⁷⁴¹ Abdūlvāsi is referring to The Quran: 9:30: “The Jews said, ‘Ezra is the son of God,’ and the Christians said, ‘The Messiah is the son of God’”

⁷⁴² Abdūlvāsi is referring to The Qur’an: 16:57: “They [polytheists] assign daughters to God.”

⁷⁴³ *Halilnâme*, 429/ c. 3132-33.

⁷⁴⁴ The Qur’an: 43:45: “Ask the prophets We sent before you: ‘Did We ever appoint any gods to be worshipped besides the Lord of Mercy?’”

Muhammad that “those who say so do not affiliated to us/ They became infidels in hell.”⁷⁴⁵ Then, Abraham is first one to salute Muhammad,⁷⁴⁶ and it is in this way that *Halilnâme* is connected to the *miraçnâme*. Muhammad conducts a prayer, being an imam to all other prophets, and the prayer is followed by the prophets’ *amen*.⁷⁴⁷ Thus, the biblical prophets are shown to have Islamized in this part of the Nocturnal Journey, following the Qur’anic verses depicting all prophets as Muslims. The essential aim of the nocturnal journey narratives is Muhammad’s acceptance by the previous prophets.⁷⁴⁸

Abdülvâsi’s *miraçnâme*, categorizes Jews into three groups: those who refuse to believe in Muhammad even after he revealed his prophecy (*cühud*)⁷⁴⁹, the later Jews (*yahud*), and those who followed their prophets’ (Moses and Aaron) “authentic” revelations and were placed in paradise.⁷⁵⁰ The first two categorizations are about the Jews are as *cühud* and as *yahud* whose call to Muhammad are both declined during the nocturnal journey. The latter ones’ placement in the paradise is a narrame, also found in Ibn ‘Abbās, the Timurid one, and also Mūsā bin Hācī Hüseyin el-İzniķī’s Ottoman Turkish translation,⁷⁵¹ that comforts recently converted Jews and Christians that their ancestors might be in paradise, if they were “monotheist,” followed the “authentic” revelations of their prophets. That is why the *miraç* narratives also have a missionary aim; “a missionary text among the various religious communities-Zoroastrian, Christian, and Jewish.”⁷⁵² The narrative of the *mi rād̄j* was also written in hopes to attract non-Muslims to conversion.⁷⁵³ At the same time, the mission might

⁷⁴⁵ *Halilnâme*, 429/ c. 3135

⁷⁴⁶ *Halilnâme*, 429/ c. 3132.

⁷⁴⁷ *Halilnâme*, 430/ c. 3138.

⁷⁴⁸ Subtelny, “Jews at the Edge,” 56.

⁷⁴⁹ 15th century interlinear Qur’an translation also names Jews as *cühud*. Muhammed bin Hamza, *XV. Yüzyıl Başlarında Yapılmış “Satır-arası” Kur’an Tercümesi*, 12.

⁷⁵⁰ *Halilnâme*, 445/ c. 3261.

⁷⁵¹ Subtelny, “The Jews at the Edge,” 60.

⁷⁵² Subtelny, “Jews at the Edge,” 56.

⁷⁵³ Subtelny, “Jews at the Edge,” 57.

not be limited to non-Muslims, but extended to Muslims themselves to urge them to uphold piety.

The Jews who are settled in paradise are identified as followers of Aaron. In the fifth heaven, Muhammad and Gabriel open a door seeing Aaron and his *ummah*.⁷⁵⁴ Gabriel says: “They are from *Beni Israyil* [Banū Isrā’īl in the Qur’an], they loved him [Aaron] without a doubt.”⁷⁵⁵ The followers of Aaron must be considered as the receivers of “authentic” form of religion before its “alteration” (*tahrīf*). The voice of Jews which Muhammad did not reply were of those who did not confirm Muhammad’s prophecy either in his lifetime and afterwards.

The Timurid *mi’rādjname* also depicts Muhammad’s visit to Jews.⁷⁵⁶ Moreover many medieval Islamic literature, *tafsirs*, prophet stories, retold the narrame, mostly in Persian referring to the Qur’an 7:159: “Among the people of Moses there is a community who guide with truth and exercise justice thereby.”⁷⁵⁷ An anonymous Ilkhanid *Mi’rājnāma* of 1286 written in Persian also retells the narrame.⁷⁵⁸ However, they are not defined as the *ummah* of Aaron, but of Moses (*Musa ummatlarindin*).⁷⁵⁹ Aaron is depicted as the brother of Moses in The Qur’an 7:142, as in the Hebrew Bible, Exodus 28:1. These two prophets may have been used interchangeably, addressing the same *ummah*, i.e. that of the Jews. Moreover, Ṭabarī’s *tafsir* names the prophet as Aaron, who had his community around him in the paradise.⁷⁶⁰ This part in the Timurid narrative is much more detailed than Abdūlvāsi’s version.

Muhammad’s refusal of several drinks narrame can be considered as a missionary motif. In most classic nocturnal journey narratives Muhammad is asked to choose between

⁷⁵⁴ *Halilnâme*, 445/ c. 3260.

⁷⁵⁵ *Halilnâme*, 445/ c. 3261.

⁷⁵⁶ Subtelny, “The Jews at the Edge,” 59.

⁷⁵⁷ Subtelny, “The Islamic Ascension Narrative in the Context of Conversion in Medieval Iran,” 115.

⁷⁵⁸ Gruber, *The Ilkhanid Book of Ascension*, 31 and 73.

⁷⁵⁹ Subtelny, “The Jews at the Edge.” 59 and Gruber, *The Ilkhanid Book of Ascension*, 73.

⁷⁶⁰ Colby, *Narrating Muhammad’s Night Journey*, 97.

bowls of wine, honey, milk and sometimes water. These bowls constitute a narrative that singles out “the other” religions with symbolism.⁷⁶¹ However, Abdülvâsi only names two drinks: wine and milk which Muhammad chooses to drink.⁷⁶² Muhammad’s choice is praised by Gabriel: “If you had chosen the wine, your ummah would have gone astray.”⁷⁶³ Subtelny argues the drink narrative was constructed for a proselytization rationale. Refused drinks in the narrative represents “the other” religions; wine is for Christianity, honey is affiliated with Judaism, and water refers to Zoroastrian religion.⁷⁶⁴ Even though Abdülvâsi only signifies the wine motif, wine is also one of the major motifs that segregates Muslim community from Christians. Thus, the refusal of wine motif can also be considered as a part of confessionalization agenda which invites the audience to the “right path.”

3.3.4. Muhammad, “the Beloved of God”

The missionary aim found in classical Islamic *mi‘râdj* narrative is also apparent in the episode of Moses’ weeping in Abdülvâsi’s *miraçnâme*.⁷⁶⁵ The weeping and Moses’s reasoning has also been recorded in al-Ṭabarî’s *tafsir*,⁷⁶⁶ Abdülvâsi’s possible oral or written source. Moses cries as Muhammad surpasses him, ascending to a higher level of heaven.⁷⁶⁷ Moreover, Moses compares his *ummah* (i.e. the Jews) to the Muslims saying: “He [Muhammad] is going to enter the paradise first/ His ummah will also be first-comers to the paradise.”⁷⁶⁸ Even though Abdülvâsi’s *miraçnâme* shows Aaron’s *ummah* in paradise, according to Islamic tradition, the Muslim *ummah* is in a more superior position there. The

⁷⁶¹Subtelny, “The Islamic Ascension Narrative in the Context of Conversion in Medieval Iran,” 108.

⁷⁶² *Halilnâme*, 425/ c. 3104-3105.

⁷⁶³ *Halilnâme*, 426/ c. 3107.

⁷⁶⁴ Subtelny, “The Islamic Ascension Narrative in the Context of Conversion in Medieval Iran,” 108-109.

⁷⁶⁵ Max Scherberger, “The Chaghatay *Mi‘rajnâme* Attributed to Hâkim Süleyman Ata: A Missionary Text from the Twelfth or Thirteenth Century Preserved in Modern Manuscripts,” in *The Prophet’s Ascension*, 87.

⁷⁶⁶ Colby, *Narrating Muhammad’s Night Journey*, 97.

⁷⁶⁷ *Halilnâme*, 446/ c. 3269.

⁷⁶⁸ *Halilnâme*, 446/ c. 3270.

aim of these lines is to invite Jews, whose prophet belongs to a “lower level,” to convert to Islam and become entitled to higher levels as Muslims.

At the peak of the plot, Muhammad ascends to God’s level. Here God compares Muhammad with Abraham, differentiating Muhammad as “his beloved” (*habīb*) and Abraham as “his friend.” (*khalīl*)⁷⁶⁹ The comparison is continued with God’s speech with Moses.. God says, “I have talked with Moses on al-Ṭūr (Mount Sinai), but I saluted you on my ‘*arsh* (throne of God).”⁷⁷⁰ Later God says “I created this world out of your love, the people and jinn on the earth.”⁷⁷¹ This couplet is followed by the hadith *ḡudsī* (“the *laulāka* hadith” is the specific name of the hadith *ḡudsī* here) in Arabic: “if thou hadst not been (but for thee), I would not have created the heavens.”⁷⁷² which is considered to be an invalid hadith by some Islamic scholars,⁷⁷³ but considered to be valid especially by Sufis.⁷⁷⁴

Abdūlvāsi completes his work with the chapter named “end of the words and end of the book.” He defines his audience as the elite (*havas*) and the commoners (*avam*),⁷⁷⁵ and suggests that both of them appreciated his work. He concludes the book with panegyric poetry for the grand vizier Bayezid Pasha, wishing him to settle in the position of viziership. He indicates that Bayezid Pasha’s policies lie behind the sultanate’s success.⁷⁷⁶

⁷⁶⁹ *Halilnâme*, 462/ c. 3396.

⁷⁷⁰ *Halilnâme*, 463/ c. 3400. Also see Thomas J. O’Shaughnessy, “God’s Throne and the Biblical Symbolism of the Qur’ān,” *Numen* 20, no:3 (1973), 201. ;

⁷⁷¹ *Halilnâme*, 465/ c. 3416.

⁷⁷² The English translation is from Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, 215.

⁷⁷³ Ahmet Yıldırım, “Tasavvufa Kaynaklık Etmesi Bakımından Bazı Kudsi Hadisler ve Değeri,” [Some *Hadith Qudsi* as sources of Sufism] *Islamic University of Europa Journal of Islamic Research* 2, no. 3, (2009): 96.

⁷⁷⁴ William Graham, *Divine Word and Prophetic Word in Early Islam: A Reconsideration of the Sources, with Special Reference to the Divine Saying or Hadith Qudsi* (The Hague: Mouton, 1977), 69.

⁷⁷⁵ *Halilnâme*, 497/ c. 3676.

⁷⁷⁶ *Halilnâme*, 498/ c. 3681.

Conclusion

This thesis examined *Halilnâme* through the lenses of both religious studies and history. As an Islamic dynasty, Ottomans' literary works were written according to medieval Islamic canon. This literary work was written to legitimize and sacralize Sultan Mehmed through stories about Abraham and Muhammad. It contextualizes the Ottomans in a more comprehensive *universal history* along with Islamic dynasties with Perso-Islamic medieval discourse. Thus, the battle of Çamurlu is not the only historic chapter—the whole text is historical. It differs from *gazi*-narrative hagiographies by being a product of the court and by praising the settled Perso-Islamic customs which are not accepted by the *gazi* warrior narratives. As a member of '*ulamā*', Abdülvâsi presents sedentary customs of classical Islam through the hagiography of Abraham, the ascension narrative of Muhammad, and an account of Sultan Mehmed's achievements.

Halilnâme draws on *isrâ'îliyyât* which has already been canonized within the classical Perso-Islamic narratives to contextualize Ottomans in a *universal history* which starts with Adam but focuses on Abraham and Muhammad's nocturnal journey. Moreover, religion was used as a legitimization tool by Abdülvâsi, for the lost charisma of state after Timur's victory in the Battle of Ankara. Furthermore, Abdülvâsi's usage of classical Perso-Islamic leitmotifs sheds light on the imperialistic propaganda of Mehmed I's court. Even though, the imperialistic agenda of Mehmed's father Bayezid I led Ottomans into an era of interregnum, Mehmed I's court kept the policy against the *gazi*-frontier resistance.

Halilnâme is only one of the literary works that were produced in the early beginnings of Ottoman dynasty, and further comparative research is necessary to understand the self-depiction of Ottoman political-religious discourse. Further interdisciplinary researches which

are mainly grounded in religious studies, literature and history disciplines, can help the modern scholarship to understand and analyze the production of these works.

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