
	<p>Списание ЕПОХИ Издание на Историческия факултет на ВТУ „Св. св. Кирил и Методий“</p> <p>Journal EPOCHI [EPOCHS] Edition of the Department of History of “St. Cyril and St. Methodius” University of Veliko Tarnovo</p>		<p>Том / Volume XXVIII (2020). Книжка / Issue 1</p>
---	---	--	---

THE *MENAKIB*NAMES IN BALKAN RESEARCHES: THE CASE OF SEYIT ALI SULTAN AND HIS *MENAKIB*

Ahmet TAŞĞIN*, Ahmet ŞİMŞEK**,
Öner ATAY***

Abstract: *This study deals with the publication of Seyit Ali Sultan Menakib, which describes the transition of Turks to Rumelia and Balkans. In addition to the effort dedicated for the publication of this study, the lack of attention for the protection of the Seyit Ali Sultan Menakib’s manuscripts is another point to be concentrated. Naturally, this study points not only to the importance of Seyit Ali Sultan and Menakib in the area of Balkan researches, but also to the problem of lack of serious work during the previous publication attempts of the Menakib.*

There are many copies of the manuscript of Seyit Ali Sultan Menakib, telling about the journey of forty “saints” from Gallipoli to Rumelia and Balkans. Among these, the copy which indicates that Seyit Ali Sultan was contemporary with Orhan Gazi was found in the Kaygusuz Sultan Dergâh in Egyptian Cairo. This copy was given by Ahmet Sirri Baba to Salih Niyazi Dede in Tirana, Albania. A long time no trace of this manuscript was found, and many researchers working on this issue struggled to reach this manuscript.

As a result, Seyit Ali Sultan and his Menakib should be considered as a main source and thus studied in the Balkan researches, considering the internal meaning of the text, the historical personality of the people whom the text deals with and the tracing the followers of these people until today. In this study, the importance of Seyit Ali Sultan and his Menakib will be emphasized and also some problems arising from one of the previous publication of the manuscript will be pointed out.

Keywords: *Seyit Ali Sultan; menakib; Gallipoli; Rumeli; the Balkans.*

Introduction

The paper focuses on the menakibnames (the legendary life stories) of saints who may be the sources for the studies in Balkan history regarding culture, belief, thought and wisdom. It also aims to reveal the parts of the common cultural basin of Balkan land and the common world of symbols for this cultural basin. Another purpose of the paper is to draw attention to the re-evaluation and re-envision of the texts about the lives of the saints in Balkan communities regarding to the subjects, events, people, concepts and contents of the works related to this common cultural basin, which are being subject to research activities in the Balkan region. Within

* Ahmet Taşğın – PhD, Lectured of Hacı Bayram Veli University, Ankara, Turkey; @: ahmetyt@hotmail.com

** Ahmet Şimşek – PhD, Assoc. Prof. of Selçuk University, Konya, Turkey; @: asalihsimsek@hotmail.com

*** Öner Atay – Doctoral Candidate of Necmettin Erbakan University, Konya, Turkey; @: atayoner@gmail.com

this perspective, this study evaluates the menakıbname of Seyit Ali Sultan within the light of the common symbolic world of the menakıbname manuscripts to open the way to understand further the world of “symbolic meanings” for these texts.

There is a considerable amount of resource on menakıbname of Seyit Ali Sultan. These studies focus transferring Seyit Ali Sultan’s own ideas, interpreting and evaluating them within an historical context. In this study, it is aimed to shed light on these studies, analyse their results and evaluate them within a scientific approach. On the other hand, it seems that there are versions among Seyit Ali Sultan’s writings that seem to refer to different periods of Early Ottoman Era, namely referring to the reigns of Orhan Gazi and Yıldırım Bayezit respectively. In other words, although menakıbname texts are identical in their contents, the period in which Seyit Ali Sultan had been lived is attributed to the period of Orhan Gazi in one of them and to the period of Yıldırım Bayezit in the other one. The reason for the attribution of the same text to different periods should be about increasing the symbolic effect of the text by finding an appropriate period just matching with the legendary life of Seyit Ali Sultan. Therefore, by attributing this text to Yıldırım Bayezid’s period, when the Ottoman State’s military activities became much intense and visible, the meaning world of the text and Seyit Ali Sultan’s spiritual identity and personality became part of a political and military activity.

On the other hand, having two texts attributing to different time periods further complicates the understanding process of the text that is already built with many details related to symbolic meanings. When the other possible additions acquired from the personal preferences of the researcher (academic worker) dealing with the text is considered, the distance between the original world of the text and the new text developed by the interpretation of the researcher can be further increased. Even relating the text and the people within, with many irrelevant doctrines and systems such as (in order) so Babai, Vefai, Kalenderi, Haydari, Hurufi, Bedreddini, etc. may create a great problem for transcription.

There is a copy of Seyit Ali Sultan Menakıb in Albanian State Archives in Tirana. This copy is referred within a catalogue printed by The Research Center of Turkish Culture and Haji Bektash in Gazi University. In addition, digital copies of many Ottoman period Turkish manuscripts in Albanian State Archives including the Menakıbname has been transferred to the archive of the Research Center [**“Velayet-name-i Seyyid Ali Sultan”...**, s. 72].

Within this study, these digital copies in the Research Center and the hard copy transcription developed by Mr. Rıza Yıldırım (thanks to his wide-ranging researches on Seyit Ali Sultan) [**Yıldırım, R.** 2007; **Yıldırım, R.** 2008, ss. 1–43; **Yıldırım, R.** 2010, ss. 59–88; **Yıldırım, R.** 2010 a, ss. 153–190] on the version of the manuscript which had been previously published by Bedri Noyan Dedeбaba (the second version different from the one in Albania) have been examined and used to enlighten the research study. On the other hand, as the digital images of some pages in Turkish archives are not so clear, the Albanian State Archives in Tirana have been re-visited. The copy of the manuscript was obtained, more clear images of the unclear pages were obtained and the study could be completed thanks to the sincere help of the officials of the relevant institution in Tirana.

Seyit Ali Sultan’s Menakıb had been initially mentioned by John Kingsley Birge and some researchers traced this copy presented by Birge. Birge described the history of his copy by the following words :

“Through the kindness of Niyazi Dede, the head of the Bektashi community in Albania, a copy of this Vilayetname, copied for him in the Kaygusuz Dergâh in Cairo in 1932, was loaned to me so that I might take a photostat copy.” [**Kingsley, B. J.** 1937, p. 51–53 = **Kingsley, B. J.** 1991, s. 57–59]

Irène Beldiceanu-Steinherr was among the researchers who had searched for the copy by Birge, but could not succeed:

“In terms of philological reasons, the oldest transfer is thought to have been preserved in the Kaygusuz Abdal lodge, which was once located on the Mukattam hill near Cairo. Birge had this document handwritten. This example is in the United States. (In 1985–1986, documents about the Kaygusuz Abdal lodge were moved to an unknown location. 22nd: Case Memorial Library – Hartford Seminary Foundation, Connecticut.)” [Beldiceanu-Steinherr, I. 1999, ss. 53–54]

But this manuscript of this Menakib has been continued to be known among the researchers as “Birge copy” and Rıza Yıldırım has named this manuscript similarly under the topic of “appendix – 2”; however, he did not indicate the source where he obtained this copy from. Also, only 3 pages (varak) from the so called “Birge Copy” of Menakibname has been added to Yıldırım’s study. The reason for not including all the pages was another question that should be asked regarding the Yıldırım’s work.

But the story of this manuscript had been widely explained by Irène Beldiceanu-Steinherr, who identified this copy by the specific name “Birge copy”. Irène Beldiceanu – Steinherr had been busy with searching for the copy for a long time, but she could not reach it. Indeed, her only source was Birge himself, what Birge wrote on this subject, therefore she named this manuscript that she had never seen as Birge Copy around the information he provided. But, Birge, at the same time, indicated that he obtained the sample from Niyazi Baba during his visit to him in Tirana and added that another copy of this manuscript was found in Kaygusuz Sultan Lodge in Cairo, Egypt.

Therefore, the only way for Yıldırım to reach the original version of the “so called” Birge copy was the Albanian State Archives in Tirana who had acquired the manuscript from the Dede Baba lodge in Tirana. Why then Rıza Yıldırım, who directly reached to original form of Birge’s copy in Dede Baba Lodge in Tirana, has still identified and named this copy as “Birge Copy”. Can this choice of Yıldırım be aroused from the insufficiency of the text in terms of details, or the inconsistency of this text with the one he primarily used in terms of historical periods defined for Seyit Ali Sultan. He only explained that in “Birge Copy”, “Orhan Bey” was used instead of “Yıldırım Bayezit”. Is this one-sentence explanation can be considered as sufficient in terms of evaluating the values of both manuscripts and clarifying the reason that why this study is not based on both manuscripts?

In spite of Yıldırım’s insufficient explanations, Irène Beldiceanu-Steinherr, who transferred the main information about Birge manuscript, states that Seyit Ali Sultan had participated in the invasion of Balkans with Orhan Bey. Why Yıldırım has not given importance to the explanations and assertions of Irène Beldiceanu-Steinherr even though he knows about Irène Beldiceanu-Steinherr’s study and made use of it in his study?

The manuscript placed in the series of manuscripts numbered as 186 in Albanian State Archives of Ottoman and Persian Manuscripts Collection is the original version of the Birge manuscript. The copyist of the work was Ahmet Sırrı Baba, the Postnish of Kaygusuz Sultan Lodge.

As a result, Rıza Yıldırım reached to Seyit Ali Sultan’s Menakib through the “original copy by Ahmet Sırrı Baba” later called as “Birge” and he also used some images from Gazi University, Turkish Culture and Hacı Bektaş Veli Research Center archive for his own study but did not explain where he obtained these images. Yıldırım’s study was published by Turkish Historical Society (TTK) with the name of *Seyit Ali Sultan*.

Since the article and book published by Rıza Yıldırım are based on the version of the manuscript that concentrates on the period of Yıldırım Bayezit, it can be hard to build the historical relations between the people and places mentioned in the text within the life of Seyit Ali Sultan. However, if the text which was copied by Ahmed Sırrı Baba and given to Salih Niyazi Baba is taken into consideration, the connection between history, text and individuals is provided more easily.

It can be also argued that the time period and the other characteristics, pointed out by the text of Yıldırım, makes it difficult to explain the naming of Seyyit Ali Sultan by

the name of Kızıl Deli (Red Mad). The Tirana manuscript (Birge) makes it much clear way Seyit Ali takes the name Kızıl Deli as he reached a spiritual maturity as a man of wisdom and identified by the name of Kızıl Deli in wide communities.

The second point that should be emphasized in Birge manuscript is that Seyit Ali Sultan decided to moved from Khorasan after a dream and faced with Orhan Gazi and the forty saints. In that sense both the dream and the symbol of forty Saints is a matter that should be emphasized. It is very important that these forty people met with Orhan Gazi and that Orhan Gazi also received the news of their contact through another dream. Meetings and task divisions of two dreaming groups can be considered as very critical in this sense. At the end; settling of Orhan Gazi, Saruca Pasha and Seyit Ali Sultan had placed themselves on different locations on the battle area has been organized by the ideas inspired by the dream.

The third issue that should be studied in parallel within two manuscripts is about Seyit Ali Sultan's naming as Kızıl Deli and explanations over this process. Seyit Ali Sultan came to the village of Ruşenler in Dimetoka and settled there. The previous name of the river passing near Dimetoka was Kızıl Deli (Red Mad). Also, the points that how and with whom he came from Khorasan and performed his journey in Rumelia can easily prove his aim for emigration should be both evaluated in spiritual and military contexts. On the other hand, Seyit Ali Sultan followed the way from Gallipoli to Burgaz and Şumnu as a Saint, moving through the line of Abdal Musa, Sarı Saltuk ve Hacı Bektaş Veli building a spiritual relationship between them

Conclusion

In this study, Seyyit Ali Sultan Vilayetname (menakibname), its copies and the related publications on these manuscripts has been discussed taking the publication by Rıza Yıldırım on the scope.

One of the problems regarding the transcriptions of Seyit Ali Sultan Menakibname is about not evaluating it from the viewpoint of historical background but from writers own perspectives. The second problem regarding these studies is about the danger of preferring to restrict Seyit Ali Sultan's Menakib in the concepts of "Jihad" and "Ghaza" by the "fear" of being attacked by representatives of the mainstream tradition of the menakibname studies that can exclude other approaches. So, the academicians have failed in their study since the beginning of their research by evaluating Seyit Ali Sultan only focusing on military issues, an issue which cannot be completely understood even by themselves.

Among the many new approaches and methods put forward for social sciences in recent years, attention has been drawn to the relationship between text, writer, environment and commentator. It is a pity that we did not pay attention to the fact that these types of texts were only transferred versions of oral narratives to the written form, that is, they were portrayed versions of the narratives with pen. But just on the contrary, the original oral text was perceived as an original written text and evaluated within this frame. Indeed, verbal text is presented in coordination with its environment and the audience, and if it is recreated within an written environment this process should be carried out to protect its own internal integrity. Based on this idea, there are some issues mentioned in Seyit Ali Sultan Menakib, which may not seem to be important or even classified as being "superstitious" and "exaggerated" for "positivist" researchers. But when the original oral form of these texts are evaluated with the surrounding "symbolic world", the researcher should use all of these details that can be "weird" for positivist view to be consistent with the historical and semantic background of the texts.

REFERENCES

Beldiceanu-Steinherr, I. 1999 – Irène Beldiceanu-Steinherr. Osmanlı Tahrir Defterlerinde Seyyid Ali Sultan: Heterodoks İslam'ın Trakya'ya Yerleşmesi. – Çeviren Özden Arıkan, Ela Güntekin, Tülin Altınova. Sol Kol: Osmanlı Egemenliğinde Via Egnatia (1380–1699). Editör Elizabeth A. Zachariadou. İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1999, 53–54.

Kingsley, B. J. 1937 – Birge John Kingsley. The Bektashi Order of Dervishes, Hartford: Hartford Seminary Press, 1937.

Kingsley, B. J. 1991 – John Kingsley Birge, Bektaşılık Tarihi, Çeviren Reha Çamuroğlu, İstanbul: Ant Yayınları, 1991.

Yıldırım, R. 2007 – Rıza Yıldırım. Seyyid Ali Sultan (Kızıldeli) ve Velâyetnâmesi, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2007.

Yıldırım, R. 2008 – Rıza Yıldırım. Efsanede Gizli Gerçek: Bir Tarih Kaynağı Olarak Seyyid Ali Sultan Velâyetnâmesi. – Tarih ve Toplum: Yeni Yaklaşımlar, Sayı 6, Yıl 2008, 1–43.

Yıldırım, R. 2010 – Rıza Yıldırım. Bektaşî Geleneğine Göre Seyyid Ali Sultan. – Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Veli Araştırma Dergisi, Sayı 53, Yıl 2010, 59–88.

Yıldırım, R. 2010 a – Rıza Yıldırım. Muhabbetten Tarikata: 'Bektaşî Tarikatı'nın Oluşum Sürecinde Kızıldeli'nin Rolü. – Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Veli Araştırma Dergisi, Sayı 53, Yıl 2010, 153–190.

“Velâyet-name-i Seyyid Ali Sultan”... – “Velâyet-name-i Seyyid Ali Sultan”, Arnavutluk Devlet Arşivleri Osmanlı Yazmalar Kataloğu, Ankara: Gazi Üniversitesi Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Veli Araştırma Merkezi Yayınları, 2001.