



Universiteit  
Leiden  
The Netherlands

## **Benevolent conquerors, besieged homelands, threatened state: the reproduction of political myths in cold war Turkey**

Kibris, G.

### **Citation**

Kibris, G. (2022, September 1). *Benevolent conquerors, besieged homelands, threatened state: the reproduction of political myths in cold war Turkey*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3455166>

Version: Publisher's Version

License: [Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3455166>

**Note:** To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

## ***CHAPTER V: The Cut: The Lone Heroes of 1965-1980 as Reproducers of Political Myths***

### ***5.1. Introduction:***

The period of 1965-1980 witnessed the reproduction of nationalist political myths through an abundance of national warrior characters. These natural-born Turkish warriors rush to every place associated with the Turks, from the Central Asian steppes to the Mediterranean Sea, in different ages from the time of Attila to the time of Suleiman, fighting against many other enemies, including Vikings and Byzantium. In fact, as the politics became more aggressive, the warriors became more aggressive, masculine, and lonelier. They are all stripped of titles and ranks due to their idealist nature, and they are as ambitious as if they are fighting for Alexander, to use Girardet's conceptualization. Therefore, their aim is to attack the enemy violently. In this regard, the enemies are so evil that they aim to erase the Turks from history and oppress even their own people. The Turks, however, are just, merciful, and superior. Therefore, even the people of the 'other' needs their help. The national warriors, in this context, are considered to be protecting and saving the ruler, who is the embodiment of both the nation and the state attached to the fatherland. They pierce through different golden ages and homelands while taking the revenge of contemporary nationalist men and their ancestors from every available enemy buried deep in history.

The depictions of Turkish nationalism in the 1965-1980 period are not deviations from those of the 1950s and early 1960s, but complete them. I argue that there was a transformation in the reproduction of political myths in the films through time. The representations of the myth of national warrior as in the movies analyzed in this chapter provide a multi-layered supply for seeing this change. This change happens parallel to the shift in balance power in Turkish politics favoring the 'common man' as well as Turkey's foreign policy choices. This 'common man' is an ordinary Turkish person, who is a male, nationalist, conservative, believer of Sunni Islam, anti-communist, anti-intellectual and anti-bureaucrat, and most importantly, loyal to the ruler and the Father State. Most importantly, Turks in the 1950s-1980 are depicted as destined to conquer the world. In fact, it is only through *Pax Turcica* that the world could become a peaceful place.

Thus, this chapter continues the analysis of the reproduction of political myths in nationalist action/adventure films of the period between 1965-1980. Most of the idealized warriors and other characters dealt with in this chapter's films are imaginary and adapted from comic books. Many of the rulers represented are real characters. Some historical episodes are real-life episodes, although some of them are not. The films' imaginary side might have

provided the filmmakers with a kind of freedom of representation so that the audience could imagine freely, too. This might have also increased the films' aggressiveness by providing a convenient opportunity for the Turkish side to take a symbolic 'revenge' on the enemies.

To put it clearly, the corpus chosen for the current chapter takes place in the past, stretching from Central Asia to the Ottoman Empire. I have put these films in a separate chapter to reveal the continuity and change in the reproduction of political myths more clearly through an elaborate categorization. Besides, they all have lone warriors depicted primarily in series and resemble each other very much in terms of who their heroes are. The most significant difference of this chapter's corpus from that of the previous chapter is that most of those films take war and conquest as the center, unlike the films depicting the times or incidents when Turks are in a defensive position. Besides, the fact that most of the characters and episodes are not real could be considered another distinguishing feature of these films. Thus, in the current chapter, the warriors I discuss are the lone heroes from the past galloping throughout Anatolia or distant territories. Due to their militarist and aggressive nature, I consider these films the pinnacle of nationalist action/adventure movies with historical settings.

The chapter has been divided into three sections. The first is concerned with movies depicting the earlier period, and therefore lone heroes from Central Asia. This section compares and contrasts the reproduction of political myths in seventeen available movies from the 1965-1980 period. Since there is more continuity than change between the films, I did not divide them into groups. On the other hand, to reveal both continuity and change, I have created two main sections in the rest of the chapter: The first analyzes the movies of 1965-1971, and the other examines those of the 1970s. Each part includes two sub-sections, movies about the pre-Ottoman Islamic past, and those that take place in the Ottoman Empire. These sub-sections are again categorized based on which ruler the lone hero fights for.

In my analysis, I first look at the depiction of the national warrior to answer the questions of who the warrior is, and where and when he fights. Here, the reproduction of the myths of the golden age and decline, whenever available, and the myth of the national homeland are examined. Then, I look at the representation of the ruler whom the warrior serves. In this case, how the myth of the leader is reproduced in relation to the understanding of the state as the Father State is revealed. The analysis then concentrates on the warrior's mission, reproducing the myth of the national mission in relation to the hero's personal life and whether he also has a personal cause in realizing the national mission. This section also looks for anti-intellectual and anti-bureaucratic discourses through an analysis of the relationship between the warrior and the ruler. The following section depicts the representation of enemies, both internal and

external. The final section of the analysis concentrates on the different depictions of the women of the other and ‘our’ women, of whom there are not many. Hence, as the current chapter develops, first through a chronological and later a thematical framework, it reveals the gradual increase in the representations of violence and in the use of religious symbols, which run parallel to each other. All these happen, confirming an increase in the rhetorical emphasis in favor of the ‘common man’ in Turkey’s dominant political discourse. Finally, I argue that the films reveal the disengagement of society through time. In the end, the disengagement turned into ‘the cut,’ a chasm between the founding secular elite and the traditional conservative ‘common man,’ which defined Turkey’s political culture.

## **5.2. *Warriors from Central Asia (1965-1980):***

### **5.2.1. *A General Look:***

The films about the first group of loner heroes reproduce the myth of the nation’s antiquity by taking the hero back to as earlier as the 4<sup>th</sup> century. Except few in Byzantine lands, they all insert Turks into Central Asia and confirm the Turkish official history thesis. A crude categorization divides these films into three depending on their time frame. The first group, the *Tarkan* series, takes place in the 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> centuries, when Attila and the European Huns are making raids in Europe. This series includes *Tarkan* (dir. Tunç Başaran, 1969), *Gümüş Eyer* (*Silver Saddle*, dir. Mehmet Aslan, 1970), *Viking Kanı* (*Viking Blood*, dir. Mehmet Aslan, 1971), *Altın Madalyon* (*Gold Medallion*, dir. Mehmet Aslan, 1972), *Güçlü Kahraman* (*Strong Hero*, dir. Mehmet Aslan, 1973) and *Asyanın Tek Atlısı Baybars* (*The Only Horseman of Asia*, dir. Kemal Kan, 1971). The second group consists of *Kolsuz Kahraman Alpago* (*Armless Hero: Alpago*, dir. Nejat Saydam, 1966), *Gültekin: Asya Kartalı* (*Gültekin: Asian Eagle*, dir. Mehmet Aslan, 1968), and *Hakanlar Çarpışıyor* (*The Clash of the Khans*, dir. Natuk Baytan, 1977), which are about the 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Göktürks. The third group depicts the 12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries when Ghengiz Khan’s empire threatens Europe. These films are *Mete Han* (dir. Mehmet Aslan, 1969), *Cengiz Han’ın Fedaisi* (*Ghengis Han’s Guard*, dir. Yücel Uçanoğlu, 1973), *Atlıhan* (dir. Naki Yurter, 1973), the *Karaoğlan* series: *Altaydan Gelen Yiğit* (*The Hero Coming from Altai*, dir. Suat Yalaz, 1965), *Bayboranın Oğlu* (*Baybora’s Son*, dir. Suat Yalaz, 1966), *Camokanın İntikamı* (*Camoka’s Revenge*, dir. Suat Yalaz, 1966), *Bizanslı Zorba* (*Byzantine Tyrant*, dir. Suat Yalaz, 1966), *Karaoğlan Geliyor: Cengiz Hanın Hazineleleri* (*Karaoğlan is Coming: Ghengis Khan’s Treasures*, dir. Mehmet Aslan, 1972). Thus, this part analyzes the reproduction of political myths in seventeen available movies.

A general overview of the movies reveals that they take place in periods in which Turks are believed to be threatening Europe. Given the late 1960s and the 1970s nationalist aggressiveness, insecurity, and turmoil mainly because of the rising political aggressiveness, increasing social inequalities, and isolation in the international arena due to the Cyprus issue, the movies could be serving to defeat all types of enemies, including the western world at a symbolic level. This portrayal reinforces the myth of the other, emphasizing the other powers being the enemy of Turks and the myth of the Turkish nation's superiority. This reflects national aggressiveness supported with increasing motivation and self-confidence in everyday life. The cinematic reflection of this is raider or warrior heroes fighting in a vast territory encompassing entire Asia and Europe against those enemies who want to erase the Turks from the map.

### 5.2.2. Religion:

Despite the increasing influence of Islam in political discourse, the heroes from Central Asia are all in pre-Islamic and/or non-Islamic settings; therefore, the hero never fights in the name of Islam. In fact, most of the time, the films in this part do not even mention the enemies' religious beliefs. However, there are some minor implied references to religious beliefs. For instance, in the *Tarkan* series, the ruler is called God's sword (*Tanrı'nın Kılıcı*) to indicate that God has appointed him. In *Altaydan Gelen Yiğit (The Hero that Comes from Altai)*, the older accompany of Karaoğlan, Balaban, says, "may Gök-Tanrı forgive the sins" (38:12)<sup>653</sup> for a dying man of Camoka, the Mongolian enemy. In contrast, Karaoğlan says, "may Gods take your life" (49:21).<sup>654</sup> Although most of these messages seem to refer to a monotheist religious belief, they are generally inconsistent. For example, the film *Bayboranın Oğlu (Baybora's Son)* depicts Karaoğlan fighting against the Catholics who attack Byzantium. Karaoğlan thinks that Catholic men of religion are murdering people in the name of religion. The Catholic priest then calls him an "unbeliever" (*dinsiz*) several times (55:23, 59:02).<sup>655</sup> At this point, although it is unclear what kind of a religious belief Karaoğlan has, especially in the last example, it is clear that the enemy is Christian. Here the general inconsistency could be a commercial choice of the filmmakers. Instead of dealing with polytheist or Gök-Tanrı references, which could challenge the Turkish-Islam combination as the only possible identity in the viewers' minds, they might have wanted to create a vagueness in terms of religion. In fact, despite the lack of sharpness in terms of the hero's religious belief, the audience must have probably received the message that

<sup>653</sup> "Gök Tanrısı suçlarını bağışlasın." Hangi film?

<sup>654</sup> "Tanrılar canını alsın"

<sup>655</sup> "Baybora'nın dinsiz gölgesi," "dinsiz köpekler"

the enemy is associated with Christianity, given the increasing discursive use of Islam by politicians and the period's richness in terms of anti-Christian films.

### 5.2.3. *Landscapes and Leaders/Rulers:*

Among the heroes in question in this part, Tarkan lives the furthest back in time when compared with the other heroes. Fighting for Attila, the ruler of the European Hunnic Empire, he travels everywhere. Therefore, even though he is born near the Caspian Sea, as shown in *Gümüş Eyer (Silver Saddle)*, he fights in a vast land against many different enemies: Chinese, Vandals, Vikings, Alans, and Romans. This means that the territory in which he is active expands from China, Iran, and Anatolia to Northern and Southern Europe. In this geography, Tarkan, on his horse, gallops through steppes, lowlands, forests, caves, rivers, and the sea as a skillful hero. In fact, the borders of Attila's empire are not clearly presented, so Tarkan always fights to extend the territories. At some point in *Altın Madalyon (Gold Medallion)*, the voiceover mentions that Attila is fighting in Western Europe. However, this is still a vague geographic naming probably used for emphasizing that Turks have been attacking and even defeating 'the West.' In regard, the Tarkan films do not only justify the Turks' Central Asian roots but also connect them with Europe by emphasizing their contribution to European civilization. At this point, a similar hero in the service of Attila is Aybars in *Asyanın Tek Atlısı (The Only Horseman of Asia)*. Although he is a Hunnic Turk from Asia, he comes to Muncuk, located near the Danube River. There, he defeats the Byzantium Emperor Xenon, who had an agreement with the neighboring states to stop Attila's advancement. Compared to that of Tarkan, the geography of Aybars was much more familiar and appealing to the audience due to Balkan and Byzantine connections.

In the group of Göktürk heroes, two heroes fight for Meço Han. In *Kolsuz Kahraman Alpago (Armless Hero: Alpago)*, it is unclear where exactly Alpago resides in Central Asia, but the audience is presented with the information that he fights against the Chinese commander Hubing. His contemporary is Gültekin in *Asya Kartalı (Asian Eagle)*, who also fights in unknown territory. Where Olcayto fights for the Göktürk khan Tigin is stated in a relatively more specific way in *Hakanlar Çarpışıyor (The Clash of the Khans)*. He is in Turkestan and calls himself *Kırgız (Kyrgyz)*. This particular information might be related to the potential familiarity of the 1977 audience with 'Outside Turks' living in a land with uncertain boundaries, which is Turkestan. Therefore, the movie could even be considered as nurturing or being nurtured by the anti-Russian or anti-Soviet action/adventure movies of the late 1960s and 1970s.

confirming the Cold War atmosphere.<sup>656</sup> Besides, the vastest territory is galloped by *Mete Han*, who arrives in the Roman Lands from Central Asia to conquer the Castle of Mezit in Byzantine lands. Nevertheless, it is not a coincidence that these national warriors, no matter where they usually fight, visit Byzantium at some point. This is, of course, related to the Turks' historical animosity with the Greeks. The 'ancient' reflection of the Greek enemy is Byzantium.

Three heroes fight for Genghis Khan, the Mongolian leader, in the 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries. Interestingly, although the Turkish nationalists of the early 1930s were strictly against any association of Turks with the Mongolians because the Western perception of Genghis Khan was based upon him being a plunderer and destroyer of civilizations, and European racists such as Gobineau considered the Mongolians in the same category as the Chinese as the yellow race, therefore not a member of the white and civilization-building Europeans.<sup>657</sup> In this vein, the movie's focus on Genghis Khan was probably the result of his charisma and dynamism, making him a suitable figure for action/adventure stories. The Europeans' dislike of Genghis Khan might also provide a viewing pleasure of a symbolic attack on the Europeans. These heroes fighting for Genghis Khan include Celmenoyan of *Cengiz Han'ın Fedaisi (Genghis Khan's Guard)* in the Gobi Desert, and *Atlıhan* and his companions. They all try to pass through the Selenga River, located in Northern Mongolia, to expand the boundaries. Celmenoyan's enemy is again the Chinese, whereas Atlıhan encounters both the Chinese and an Arab Sheikh Cebel while going to Urumqi Castle in China. Another hero in the service of Genghis is Karaoğlan, a Uighur Turk who sets the road from Khorasan of Central Asia in *Altaydan Gelen Yiğit (The Hero that Comes from Altai)* and *Camoka'nın İntikamı (Camoka's Revenge)*. He fights against some relatively unknown tribes in addition to the Chinese, and a Mongolian traitor named Camoka. In *Bayboranın Oğlu (Baybora's Son)* and *Bizanslı Zorba (Byzantine Tyrant)*, he comes to Byzantium and fights against Manuel I, Byzantine Emperor. His final stop, however, is again Central Asia in *Karaoğlan Geliyor: Cengiz Han'ın Hazinesi (Karaoğlan is Coming:*

---

<sup>656</sup> Some of these films are: *Hacı Murat*, (dir. Natuk Baytan, 1967); *501 Numaralı Hücre (Cell No. 501*, dir. Nusret Eraslan, 1967); *Hacı Murat Geliyor (Hacı Murat is Coming*, dir. Natuk Baytan, 1968); *Kafkas Kartalı (Caucasus Eagle*, dir. Yılmaz Atadeniz, 1968); *Kafkas Şeytanı Aslan Bey (Caucasus Evil Aslan Bey*, dir. Yavuz Yalınkılıç, 1968); *Osmanlı Kartalı (Ottoman Eagle*, dir. Osman F. Seden, 1969); *Kafdağını Terk Edenler (The Ones Who Left Kaf Mountain*, dir. Natuk Baytan, Gündüz Yıldırımgeç, 1971); *Hacı Murat'ın İntikamı (The Revenge of Hacı Murat*, dir. Yavuz Figenli, 1972) and *Güneş Ne Zaman Doğacak (When will the Sun Rise?*, dir. Mehmet Kılıç, 1977). These movies depict the heroism of 'outside Turks' or 'enslaved Turks' living in the Russian dominated regions. Among them, some take place during the time of the Ottoman Empire. However, they use the Empire just as a backdrop to enrich the narrative, so the Ottomanness and conquests in the name of the Turkish nation are never at the center. Others refer to the impacts of communism in contemporary times. Nevertheless, the movies still contribute to the reproduction of nationalist political myths, but the historical setting is relatively vague compared to other action/adventure movies with historical settings analyzed throughout the dissertation.

<sup>657</sup> See: Arthur de Gobineau, *An Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races (1853-55)* (London: William Heinemann, 1915), <https://archive.org/details/inequalityofhuma00gobi/page/n5/mode/2up?view=theater>

*Ghengis Han's Treasures*), where he aims to find the treasures of Ghengis Han after his death. Like other heroes, Karaoğlan, again, fights in a vast space.

Regardless of whom or where the hero fights against, his fight is always represented as legitimate and just. In this vein, the voiceover in the opening scene of *Tarkan* says that Attila, “the Great Hunnic Emperor,” has the legitimate right to conquer the world because he is the “Scourge of God” (2:28).<sup>658</sup> Here, the fact that Attila is getting his legitimacy from God makes his warrior Tarkan’s fight legitimate. Tigin Noyan of *Hakanların Savaşı (The Clash of the Khans)* attains the state of legitimacy when he is born with blood in his palm. This means he is destined to establish the Great Göktürk Empire one day. Since Tigin is legitimate, his cause is legitimate, and this makes Olcayto legitimate as well. This representation of a legitimate ruler as chosen by God and the ruler’s legitimate warrior underlines the hero’s loyalty to God’s will and the ruler as the embodiment of the state and Turkishness. This understanding also reflects on representations of enemies by making them illegitimate, so they do not have God’s grace. At this point, interestingly, a coup narrative comes to the fore to justify the myth of national mission. In all films, the heroes collaborate with the legitimate rulers of the ‘other’ against the illegitimate ones. For example, Karaoğlan in *Bizanslı Zorba (Byzantine Tyrant)* helps a priest and two imprisoned senators against Manuel I, the former commander and the current ruler of the Byzantine, a cruel and ruthless man who causes great distress in the people of Byzantine. At the beginning of the film, Manuel I kills the commander Victor and harasses Victor’s betrothed, Eleni, the daughter of the priest whom people very much love. According to Karaoğlan’s father, Baybora and Karaoğlan, this cruel man, who is a rapist (*ırz düşmanı*), does not deserve to be the ruler. As a result, they collaborate with the anti-Manuel faction. The Byzantine people do not want Manuel I, either, because of his mercilessness, although they are the ones who have brought him to power. Karaoğlan thinks that the most valuable thing for a ruler is not the support of his paid soldiers but his people. Therefore, Manuel I is not the legitimate ruler. As a result, the hero kills Manuel I, the Byzantine tyrant, and saves Byzantium’s people. Here, by helping the legitimate ruler against the illegitimate one, Karaoğlan fulfills the Turkish national mission of bringing peace and order to oppressed people. Tarkan does the same in *Viking Kanı (Viking Blood)*. The Viking commander, Toro, involves in a coup and kills the king Gero. Then, we see Tarkan collaborating with Ursula, Gero’s daughter, against Toro’s junta. Here, besides having a common enemy, Ursula’s confidence in Tarkan could indicate her belief in Tarkan’s justice and so Turks’ justice. In the last film of the

---

<sup>658</sup> “Büyük Türk Hun İmparatorluğu’nun başbuğu, Avrupalıların Tanrının kılıcı ismiyle andıkları Attila”



Tarkan series, in *Güçlü Kahraman (Strong Hero)*, the Chinese commander Wing Yu kills many Chinese because he wants to take power into his hands to become the new emperor. Wing Yu plans a military coup against the legitimate ruler. In this context, the enemy of Tarkan is not the Chinese Emperor, but Wing Yu. A similar narrative is available in *Asyanın Tek Atlısı (The Only Horseman of Asia)*, in which the hero Baybars helps Plintas, the former Byzantine commander of Muncuk castle, and who is imprisoned by Xenon, the current commander of the castle. As in the case of Manuel's people, Xenon is not supported by the people, who favor Plintas against the cruel Xenon. Consequently, as soon as Plintas takes power into his hand thanks to Baybars, he says that Muncuk is a Turkish castle from then on.

In the examples above, the emphasis on the illegitimacy of the ruler of the 'other,' of course, enhances the 'fairness' and 'justness' of the warrior's fight. This reinforces the myth that the Turks, as 'benevolent conquerors,' have a national mission. In this context, the hero is a wind that blows with the righteous ones to the iniquitous ones in the words of Alpago in *Kolsuz Kahraman (Armless Hero)*. To elaborate, this emphasis on an individual's will fits into the mentality of the late 1960s and early 1970s political context, which was mainly shaped by military intervention and a memorandum. Besides, in this period, the rightists were afraid of a leftist coup, and the leftists were fearful of a rightist one. The 1960 coup had created the false perception that the military coups always support the Kemalists. Starting with the late 1960s, this idea was challenged with the suppression of the leftists but still could not allay the rightists' fear of another possible Kemalist coup.

Despite various references to rulers, such as Attila being the greatest and always conquering new places, the rulers do not physically appear in films very much. It is usually through a voice-over that their stories or orders to the heroes are narrated. For example, the voiceover summarizes Attila's orders in *Asya'nın Tek Atlısı Baybars (Baybars The Only Horseman of Asia)*, although the audience never sees Attila. In *Tarkan*, Attila briefly appears at the end of the film in his *otağ*,<sup>659</sup> waiting passively for Tarkan to bring the sword of Mars. A longer story of Attila is told in *Altın Madalyon (Gold Medallion)*, in which Tarkan strives to save his wife, Honoria, and son from the Vandals. Other than these, Attila is always in the background giving orders to his loyal warriors. The same is true for Genghis Khan and Meço Han. Ghengis is in his *otağ* in *Atlıhan* and orders Atlıhan to go to Urumqi, and in *Cengiz Han'ın Fedaisi (Genghis Khan's Guard)*, the audience does not see Genghis Khan. In the Karaoğlan series, Genghis Khan is briefly shown in *Altaydan Gelen Yiğit (The Hero that Comes from*

---

<sup>659</sup> *Otağ* is the name given to the tents of the rulers in Turkish nomadic culture.

*Altai*) in which the hero saves his life from the hands of the treacherous Kaşgarlı Burhan, the grand vizier who wants to take power into his hands. The series' last film *Karaoğlan Geliyor: Cengiz Han'ın Hazinesi* (*Karaoğlan is Coming: Genghis Khan's Treasures*), starts in the *otağ* of Genghis Khan in the year of 1320, which is the date of Genghis Khan's death and further disintegration of the Mongols. In these very short scenes, Genghis is portrayed as an older man who is worried because of his children's potential of struggling over his throne. Besides, Gültekin saves Meço Han from prison in *Asya Kartalı* (*Asian Eagle*), but no other information is given about Meço Han except the scene in which he states the national cause: destroying the Vikings with the help of God's grace. This khan is also mentioned at the beginning of *Kolsuz Kahraman* (*Armless Hero*) as the ruler of Göktürks expecting Alpago and his father to bring some plans against the Chinese (3:08). However, again, he is not shown in the rest of the movie. At this point, *Mete Han* and *Hakanlar Çarpışıyor* (*The Clash of the Khans*) are different in the sense that they both take Mete Khan and Tigin Noyan as their focus. These, however, are not ordinary rulers; in fact, they are future young rulers.

Therefore, the stories tell how these rulers-to-be prove themselves. In fact, in *Hakanlar Çarpışıyor* (*The Clash of the Khans*), even at some point, the focus shifts from Tigin Noyan to his loyal warrior Olcayto. Thus, one could say that the rulers only briefly appear, and whenever they appear, they are depicted in an inactive state, except for the future rulers. This means that the movie's real purpose is to concentrate on the adventures of loyal national warriors, the individuals with whom the Turkish people could associate. In this regard, what matters for the audience is not the ruler, but Tarkan, Atlıhan, Baybars, Gültekin, Olcayto, or Karaoğlan, who could be interpreted as the nationalist ideal role models for the common man of the 1965-80 period. Besides, the films do not refer to intermediate circles such as bureaucrats or soldiers of various ranks between the hero and the ruler. This could reflect an anti-intellectual and anti-bureaucratic mentality and definitely feeds the myth of the strong ruler. Consequently, the hero is so charismatic that, unlike Anatolian folk heroes, who try to save only their towns and cannot reach the Sultan, he saves the Turks and good others, attacks and conquers the world with the great ruler whom he could connect directly. This could be the kind of motivation that the common man of the period needed to deal with rapid social transformation and the bruises caused by the Cyprus issue and isolation in international relations.

#### 5.2.4. Warriors:

Nevertheless, all the nationalist heroes are courageous, brave, and skillful warriors. They are all masters of using swords. Attila in *Altın Madalyon* (*Gold Medallion*) (07:35) and

his daughter Yonca on her way to a border castle in *Viking Kanı (Viking Blood)*, call Tarkan equal to the worth of an army (02:48) due to his bravery and fighting skills. Gültekin is so powerful that he even strikes with his large fist if he does not have a sword in *Asya Kartalı (Asian Eagle)*. In fact, the heroes can fight with anybody, even fantastic creatures such as the Viking octopus and the magician Gosha in *Tarkan: Viking Kanı*. This, however, does not mean that the heroes are only made up of sheer physical power. As stated by the voiceover in *Mete Han*, they combine their physical abilities with intelligence. An example of that is Alpago in *Kolsuz Kahraman (Armless Hero)*, who disguises himself as an armless man. He, then, wins the Chinese ruler's confidence and becomes his friend. Finally, due to his intelligence, he discovers the Chinese plans against the Turks. Here Alpago is initially disadvantaged because he is alone in enemy lands, but he turns this into an advantage because of his intelligence. Similarly, Olcayto in *Hakanlar Çarpışıyor (The Clash of the Khans)* pretends to be Halit, the romantic and effeminate son of the Alamut Sheikh and deceives even the Sheikh. Similarly, Karaoğlan dresses as a monk and enters the Byzantium castle in *Bizanslı Zorba (Byzantine Tyrant)*. Therefore, the national warriors are represented not only as having physical endurance and military capabilities, but also as intelligent.

Another feature of the national warriors in reproducing the myth of the national warrior is their free-spiritedness. They do not want to be dominated by anyone or anything. In *Hakanlar Çarpışıyor (The Clash of the Khans)*, the loyal warrior Olcayto says that he does not expect anything other than fulfilling his duty, and in fact, he is not used to bowing his head. Since they are all idealists, none of the heroes expect material gains such as money, ranks, or titles. In *Altaydan Gelen Yiğit (The Hero Coming from Altai)*, Karaoğlan says that he does not aim to plunder palaces in foreign lands (07:56).<sup>660</sup> He also rejects Genghis Khan's warrior Balaban's offer to be his stable boy by saying that he does not even want to be his father's stable boy. These examples reveal that heroes exist only with Turkishness and their national duty.

Meaningful fighting for their national duty is what the heroes always desire. In the Karaoğlan series, in *Camokanın İntikamı (Camoka's Revenge)*, when a commander of Genghis Khan named Kurtcebe Noyan wants to recruit Karaoğlan to fight against other Turkic tribes and the Chinese, Karaoğlan rejects this offer by saying that he prefers to stay in his *oba* to protect women and children from Camoka (14:27). He also says that he does not believe in the benefit of this war because it happens only for Genghis Khan to gain glory: "Many young people will die; some others will be crippled in their most beautiful the healthiest age... We do

---

<sup>660</sup> "Frenk ellerine gidip saraylar talan etmede gözüm yok"

everything for homeland (*yurt*) and independence (*hürriyet*), but not to make Genghis Khan gain glory” (13:23).<sup>661</sup> For Karaoğlan, war should have a meaning. Although war is an innate characteristic of Turkishness, this understanding refers to just war and fits Turkishness into the idea of benevolent conquest. It also shows that sometimes these heroes could challenge the rulers if they diverge from a nationalist path. In *Altaydan Gelen Yiğit (The Hero Coming from Altai)*, Genghis Khan even apologizes to Karaoğlan because, instead of Karaoğlan, he believed in his bureaucrat Burhan, who wanted to take power into his own hands (1:25:09-1:25:25). These representations could also be taken as indications of rulers’ human side and that they can be mistaken sometimes. Then, it is the hero’s, in fact, common man’s duty to correct the ruler.

Since the warriors exist with their Turkishness, they do not even state their names very much. In some scenes, they do not even have birth names, and they gain names as they prove themselves, such as Alpago of *Kolsuz Kahraman (Armless Hero)* does. A significant example is Karaoğlan, who says that he does not have a fancy and attractive name, and he is just called Karaoğlan when the Mongolian Camoka asks his name in *Altaydan Gelen Yiğit (The Hero Coming from Altai)* (1:18-1:26).<sup>662</sup> The namelessness of the hero shifts the emphasis from his name onto his Turkishness. This feeds the myth of Turks being an army nation. This also contributes to the ordinariness of the hero by making him almost anonymous, so equivalent to other nationalist and loyal Turkish young men. In this context, a hero’s power comes from his inner strength, hence his Turkishness, not from his name.

One other complementary characteristic of the hero is his youth, which is mainly mentioned in the Karaoğlan series. In *Camokanın İntikamı (Camoka’s Revenge)*, he is belittled and not taken seriously due to his young age. The same thing also happens in the very first film of the series, *Altaydan Gelen Yiğit (The Hero Coming from Altai)*, in which the older warrior Balaban calls him a “hairless shepherd” (*tüysüz çoban*) and “nameless boy” (*adsız oğlan*); Camoka calls a “callow warrior” (*körpe yiğit*), and Genghis Khan’s enemy, Burhan, calls him “hairless boy” (*tüysüz oğlan*). Again, the filmmakers’ message nurtures the myth of the warrior nation, giving the idea that Karaoğlan is more than he seems. In fact, this emphasis on the national warrior’s young, inexperienced yet heroic features, also complies with the May 27 Alliance’s emphasis on the youth’s duty to protect the regime. Besides, these young characters could also be interpreted as reflections of leaders of the youth movement or the new generation of young political leaders, such as Demirel and Ecevit.

<sup>661</sup> “Birçok genç ölecek, en güzel, en sıhhatli çağında birçoğu sakat kalacak. Fayda bunun neresinde?” “Yurt için, hürriyet için her şey göze alınır ama Cengiz Han ün kazanacak diye yurt savunmasız bırakılmaz.”

<sup>662</sup> “Benim senin gibi süslü adım yok. Bana sadece Karaoğlan derler.”

For all heroes, fighting against the enemy does not solely mean serving the ruler. In all movies, without exception, it also means taking their fathers' revenge from enemies who kill or imprison the heroes' fathers. This could be a contribution to the myth of ethnic continuity since the depiction establishes a continuity between the older and the younger generations in terms of nationalist causes. This continuity could also be attributed to the enemies by conveying that the Turkish nation always had enemies throughout the generations. According to Tarkan's life story as being told in *Gümüş Eyer (Silver Saddle)*, his father Altar, a significant commander of Attila, is first tortured and later killed together with his wife by the Alans like many other people of the same *oba*.<sup>663</sup> In *Bayboranın Oğlu (Baybora's Son)*, the great warrior Baybora, Karaoğlan's father, is imprisoned by the Byzantines. The Chinese kill Olcayto's father, Toluğ Bey, when Olcayto was a little boy in *Hakanlar Çarpışıyor (The Clash of Khans)*. *Kolsuz Kahraman (Armless Hero)*'s little Alpago's father, who is a warrior of Meço Han, is killed by a group of Chinese, too. According to the voiceover at the beginning of *Cengiz Han'ın Fedaisi (Genghis Khan's Guard)*, Celmenoyan's father Kutluk Beg is killed by the Chinese who attacked their *oba*. In a similar attack, the Vikings kill the father of Gültekin of *Asya Kartalı (Asian Eagle)*. Mete Khan introduces himself as the brave Kürşat's son in *Mete Han*. These examples show two things. First, the fathers are all warriors, too, like the heroes themselves. This representation correlates well with the myth of the warrior nation by emphasizing that all Turks are born as soldiers. Second, in their fight against the enemy, all heroes have a personal cause other than a national one. This personal cause unites with the great cause of fighting for the leader and conquering the world. Here, confirming the myth of the father state, the warrior's father and the nation's ruler could be the same, because the *oba* could be a symbol of both the nation and the fatherland that needs to be protected by the warrior. The ruler, in this context, is the father and provider; therefore, his orders must be fulfilled by the hero. In this perspective, since nation is an indivisible organic whole, an attack on the *oba* has the same meaning as enemies attacking the nation and the state. Right at this point, the representation of the only internal enemy, Kaşgarlı Burhan, the grand vizier of Genghis Khan in *Karaoğlan Altaydan Gelen Yiğit (The Hero Coming from Altai)* is worth mentioning. He is an ambitious bureaucrat who wants to take power into his hands. For doing this, he tries to kill Genghis Khan by making him drink a poisonous drink. However, Karaoğlan discovers this and then kills Burhan. What makes Burhan relevant at this point is not only his political goals but also his personal problem with Karaoğlan's parents. Years ago, he fell in love with Karaoğlan's mother, who married

---

<sup>663</sup> *Oba* is the mansion of the nomads and community brought by the nomadic families living in nomadic encampment.

Baybora. Then, to take revenge, the ambitious and cruel Burhan killed Karaoğlu's mother when he was just a baby. Therefore, Karaoğlu's national cause is not independent of his personal cause. This depiction also reinforces the idea that Genghis Khan symbolized the nation's father, and any attack made against the *oba* could be interpreted as a threat to the entire nation.

If the father is the ruler, the state, and the nation, the warriors, basically idealized citizens, are the sons who are expected to serve loyally. Some films present information about the childhood of heroes and reinforce the myth of the warrior nation. For example, in Tarkan's story, when his *oba* is attacked, and his parents are killed, a woman of the same *oba* sacrifices her child and hides Tarkan in a cave. There, a wolf family finds and raises Tarkan, as portrayed in *Gümüş Eyer (Silver Saddle)*. Then, a wolf becomes his accompany, which is why Tarkan always asks for food for both his wolf and himself in the *hans*, where he visits on his way to his duty. In *Viking Kanı (Viking Blood)*, the wolf's son also accompanies them, and in the *han*, Tarkan says to the other people showing interest in his wolves that the father wolf raises the son according to Turkish traditions so that the son never starts to eat before his father (05:35). Besides Tarkan's childhood story, this setting fits nicely into the Ergenekon myth, which tells that the Turks were descended from wolves. Here, although Tarkan is not descended from wolves, he still has a connection with them due to his warrior nature.

Another childhood narrative is found in *Kolsuz Kahraman (Armless Hero)*. In the beginning scenes, while the little Alpago and his father are in their camping place on their way to the *oba*, the little boy hunts a deer. His capabilities of hunting show that Alpago is ready to be a true masculine warrior. Then, there comes the moment of Alpago's passage to manhood. When some enemies stab his father, Alpago takes the knife from his father's back and promises to take his revenge. With all these skills and this type of bravery, Alpago, as a man-to-be, gives clues about the future heroic Alpago. Another example is *Karaoğlu Geliyor: Cengiz Han'ın Hazineleeri (Karaoğlu is Coming: Genghis Khan's Treasures)*, which partly tells Karaoğlu's childhood. In the story, Karaoğlu is shown as a sportive boy; he fishes, swims very well, rides horses skillfully, and can use a sword. At the same time, he is intelligent and confident that when the enemy kills his foster parents, he does not show any trace of trauma but instead immediately promises to take their revenge. Similarly, Olcayto's son in *Hakanlar Çarpışıyor (The Clash of the Khans)* is so brave that when the Chinese imprison him, he does not give up protecting the honor of his father. According to the story, his mother, and a group of women from the same *oba* are imprisoned. To learn who the wife of Olcayto is, the Chinese enemy plans to divide Olcayto's son into pieces the next day and ask women to consume his flesh and

blood. They think that the one that does not eat is the mother. When the mother asks her son what to do the night before, the boy bravely wants his mother to eat his flesh, drink his blood, and continue to disguise herself to not harm his father's honor. Here, this boy is a man-to-be, a real Turk who considers honor the most significant thing. He is also an authority figure whom the mother asks for advice. This is an apparent reproduction of the myth of the warrior nation, which includes a kind of sexual division of labor where 'real men' are expected to fight for the nation on the battlefield actively.

### 5.2.5. *The Others:*

Except for Burhan in *Karaoğlan*, there are no internal enemies in these films as there are no significant bureaucrats and statesmen. This depiction could be reinforcing the polarization between 'us' and 'them' by leaving no grey areas. Therefore, the 'others,' are foreigners who attack Turkish *obas* and kill all women, children, and men without sparing any. They are so evil that they hurt even their own people, therefore even their own people challenge them. In *Tarkan*, for instance, the Roman slave Jak wants to be a slave of Tarkan after Tarkan saves him from his Roman master, who does not emancipate him although he forcefully takes his gold coins. On the other hand, the Turkish hero, Tarkan, frees Jak and all the other Roman slaves. Here, the Turkish warrior brings peace and order to the oppressed people. In this respect, the others in this group of films are all cruel external enemies who attack innocent and defenseless people. Another enemy is the Alans commanded by commander Kostov in *Tarkan: Gümüş Eyer (Silver Saddle)*. Kostov tortures Altar and later attacks all "innocent Hunnic villages" in the Caucasus. Despite the enemy's cruelty, the Turkish hero does not give up his honorable code of war which is based upon the ideal of having an equal and manly fight. For example, in *Asyanın Tek Atlısı (The Only Horseman of Asia)*, when the Byzantium commander Xenon begs Baybars not to kill him, Baybars says, Turks never kill people who ask for mercy and who do not have guns, nor do they leave brutal people like him alive. In the following scene, he gives another sword to Xenon to have a manly and just fight. In *Tarkan*, too, the hero beats a black gladiator severely, but he does not kill him because the defeated man asks for his mercy. One more point to note is that Turks never kill women of the enemy without reason, as says *Mete Han* in the eponymous film. All these examples convey the idea that Turks are always in favor of just fight.

Humiliating the king or the ruler of the other is another strategy of overcoming the enemy. For example, the merciless Vandal king Genseriko of *Altın Madalyon (Gold Medallion)* is represented as short, fat, and with feminine behaviors. He is not only humble but also a

coward, so scared of Tarkan's wolf very much. When he tries to escape, the wolf pulls out his dress, which is unstitched, and the audience sees the king's buttocks. A similar representation very briefly appears in *Mete Han*, in which the Roman governor is depicted in a feminine way to reduce the enemy's power symbolically. In *Bayboranın Oğlu* (*Baybora's Son*), when Karaoğlan calls the Byzantium Emperor a "fat lover" (*şişko aşık*) and "cheese tube" (*peynir tulumu*) when he sees him making love with the Queen. In *Bizanslı Zorba* (*Byzantine Tyrant*), Karaoğlan also complains that Byzantines smell like goats. For him, Byzantine is "the country of dogs which swallowed a barn" ("*ahır yutmuş itler ülkesi*"). Karaoğlan's way of speaking here works to belittle the enemy. Simultaneously, it instills hope in the audience that even the common man could defeat the other's emperor. At this point, the depiction of the Chinese is also quite interesting. They are mainly represented as excelled in different torture methods, from throwing knives to putting the victim into a pool full of snakes in *Tarkan: Viking Kanı* (*Viking Blood*) or hanging the person downwards as they plan to do to Tarkan in *Tarkan: Güçlü Kahraman* (*Strong Hero*), the final film of the series. The film also portrays the Chinese as unclean with dirty nails. For Olcayto of *Hakanlar Çarpışıyor* (*The Clash of Khans*), the Chinese are cowardly dogs, have yellow faces as if they all have malaria. Celmenoyan in *Cengiz Han'ın Fedaisi* (*Genghis Khan's Guard*) calls them "*çapulcular*" (looters). The Chinese are depicted as slim and short most of the time. In *Kolsuz Kahraman Alpago* (*Armless Hero*), these men wear triangular hats and tiny skirts, making them look ridiculous in the audience's eyes.

The representation of the Vikings relies on a much more fantastic narrative. They resemble pirates crossing the northern seas, according to *Tarkan: Viking Kanı* (*Viking Blood*) or barbarians as in *Gültekin: Asya Kartalı* (*Asian Eagle*). In the latter film, there is a one-eyed Viking that looks like a fantastic creature. This depiction must probably be influenced by the Western depictions of the barbarian tribes of the Middle Ages. This also reinforces the idea that Vikings are evil, even for Europeans. In *Tarkan: Viking Kanı* (*Viking Blood*), the Vikings are said to be taking advantage of a sandstorm that has left European countries defenseless and are plundering the southern coasts of Europe. This point does not only justify Turkish attacks on the Vikings, but it also finds an important place for the Turks in the history of Europe. This is a reproduction of the myth of the national mission, which attributes to the Turks the role of peace bringers. Therefore, Turks, here, become the savior of Europeans too. Besides, Turks in the film believe that they can bring the enemy to heel by heart. This is an interesting emphasis reinforcing the myth of benevolent conquerors. One example is the king of the Western Vandal Kingdom in *Tarkan: Altın Madalyon* (*Gold Medallion*), who voluntarily bows down to Attila. All these examples work to legitimize the Turkish cause.



Given the above representations, the movies do not include enemies that could be directly connected to contemporary politics. The enemy is out there only for very careful viewers. It is, in fact, the Greeks if one considers the Greek words and the Greek music that could be heard in crowded *meyhane* scenes of *Bayboranın Oğlu* (*Baybora's Son*) in which Karaoğlan fights against Byzantium. Since enemies always speak Turkish in these films, subtle references to the Greek enemy that one can hear in the background are significant.

#### 5.2.6. *Women of the Other:*

Another strategy of filmmakers to humiliate the kings and emperors of the others is to attribute negative qualities to their wives. The powerful enemy women, queens, in particular, are always associated with immoral sexual behaviors. In *Tarkan: Güçlü Kahraman* (*Strong Hero*), the Chinese Queen sleeps with Wing Yu, the commander planning a coup against her emperor husband. Similarly, the Roman empress sleeps with the gladiator chosen by the emperor in *Tarkan*. In *Tarkan Altın Madalyon* (*Gold Medallion*), the Vandal king's wife, the Queen, is the queen of prostitutes and secretly works in a brothel. In *Tarkan Viking Kanı* (*Viking Blood*), the commander Toro, who wants to take power into his hands, collaborates with Lotus, the Chinese emperor's daughter, against Attila and sleeps with her. In different scenes, both Tarkan and Toro call Lotus a "Chinese slut" (37:21).<sup>664</sup> These are all dangerous women who can deceive men. One of them is Gosha, an immortal magician who lives on top of the mountains. Gosha's character has no geographic or ethnic reference; therefore, it is not truly known where she lives. This Gosha is basically a *femme fatale* who takes men under her influence with her magic and then manipulates them. She is blonde, beautiful, dances naked, likes to ride a horse naked, and drinks wine from her enemies' skulls. The Alans in *Gümüş Eyer* (*Silver Saddle*) and the Vandals in *Altın Madalyon* (*Gold Medallion*) collaborate with her. In the first film, she enchants Tan, Attila's son, and even Tarkan in the latter by making them fight against Attila. Although she becomes successful in Tan's case, Tarkan overcomes her magic because Attila will execute him due to his betrayal. In *Tarkan*, Tarkan is tricked by the wife of the Roman *han* owner. When Tarkan is in his room, the woman comes and distracts his attention by seducing him. As a result, the *han* is besieged by the Vandals. Karaoğlan does not fall into the same trap in *Karaoğlan Geliyor: Cengiz Hanın Hazineleeri* (*Karaoğlan is Coming: Genghis Khan's Treasures*). On his way to find Genghis Khan's treasures, he meets a naked dancing girl. Although she initially influences him, later, he realizes the trap and overcomes the enemy.

---

<sup>664</sup> "Çinli kahpe"

From an utterly masculine perspective, the message here is that women of other are tricksters who can distract men from their paths.

In addition to those evil women of others, there is a small group consisting of the good women of others. These good ones are all connected with the legitimate leaders that sympathize with the Turkish heroes. They mainly help the heroes and even fall in love with the Turks. One of those women is Ursula, who collaborates with Tarkan in *Viking Kanı (Viking Blood)* against the Viking commander who murdered Ursula's father, the legitimate king. Another one is Honoria, the wife of Attila in *Altın Madalyon (Gold Medallion)*, who is the legitimate Western Vandal king's daughter. The daughter of the Roman governor, who helps the Turks in their conquest of the castle of Mezit, is the third. She also falls in love with Mete Khan and helps against the Roman commander, who wants to be the new governor by dethroning the existing one. What she says at the end of the film *Mete Han* summarizes the nationalist dreams: "By accepting me as a Turkish girl instead of giving me the status of being a princess, you have given me the biggest award" (1:15:10-1:15:20).<sup>665</sup> These words emphasize the Turkish hero's masculine superiority through the women of 'other.'

#### 5.2.7. 'Our' Women:

Turkish women are expected to be patient and self-sacrificing so that they will not influence men's directions. For example, in *Asya Kartalı (Asian Eagle)*, when Bige does not want Gültekin to go to war, Gültekin, says that Turkish women should not such things. This is actually an indication of what is expected from both Turkish women and Turkish men. In *Tarkan Güçlü Kahraman (Strong Hero)*, Tarkan stays away from Alonya, the brave daughter of Ulu Gökçe, a Turkic wise man, because the girl falls in love with him. All these also mark a gendered division of labor. In *Camokanın İntikamı (Camoka's Revenge)*, when Gülcan intends to fight, Karaoğlan tells her not to meddle in men's jobs. In fact, women in the heroes' world exist only in relation to men as somebody's daughter or wife. The only exception is Gosha, the magician. However, her independence is probably expected given her fantastic qualities, which make her dangerous.

The representations of women strengthen the hero's masculinity with an emphasis on gender roles. From this perspective, women's duty is not to interfere with man's space but to stay at home and take care of the household. On the other hand, men should be traveling as loyal and heroic national warriors of a great leader. In this regard, women should fight only in

---

<sup>665</sup> "Bana prenseslik vermek değil de bir Türk kızı olarak aranızda kabul ettiğiniz an en büyük mükafatı vermiş olursunuz."

the absence of men. For example, the Hunnic commander Aybars in *Asyanın Tek Atlısı* (*The Only Horseman of Asia*) leave three drafts of women in the castle to fight against the enemy. This gendered division of labor also works to belittle the enemy. At this point, an interesting case is Attila's daughter, Yonca, who trespasses from women's space to men's space. She is a courageous and good warrior in *Viking Kanı* (*Viking Blood*). She saves Tarkan from a giant Viking octopus by fighting with it and stabbing it at the end. In this way, she proves her strength. This, however, confirms her higher status than men as being the ruler's daughter.

#### **5.2.8. Main Points:**

Among the seventeen films analyzed in this section, nine were shot between 1965-1971, and eight in the 1970s, the first being in 1965 and the final in 1977. Although the Islamic and aggressive tone of the nationalist action/adventure films increased from 1965 to the 1970s, there is more continuity than change in terms of the films about Central Asian warriors. The main reason for this could be the lack of different stories about the warriors due to a lack of historical sources contrary to Islamic warriors of both pre-Ottoman and Ottoman times. In fact, the number of movies about Central Asia was less compared to the others. This might also be related to the audience's interest. It is not unsurprising that the audience was less familiar with the Central Asian past. For them, stories about Islamic heroes could be much more appealing.

The warriors in the seventeen films analyzed in this section all originated from Central Asia, complying with the Turkish History Thesis, which considers Central Asia the original homeland. The stories occur between the 4th to 14th century; therefore, reproduce the myth of national antiquity and ethnic continuity by connecting Attila's Hunnic Empire, the Göktürks, and Genghis Khan's empire. Although the warriors come from Central Asia to Byzantium as if befitting the official canonical discourse, which state that the Turks migrated from Central Asia, the movies do not touch upon this issue. Instead, the arrival to Byzantium is narrated as if it is expected and so the natural outcome of Turkish expansion. Compared to the story of migration, this is a more heroic discourse that nurtures the myth of Turkish national superiority. In this context, Byzantium and China are taken to be significant enemies besides barbarian communities such as the Vikings and Vandals. There are always some good others that help the warriors. The peculiarity is that none of these good others are Chinese. This association of the good other with the more Western and even European enemies could be interpreted as an attempt to place Turks into the European league. Besides, the warriors fight in an almost limitless area stretching from Central Asia to Northern Europe, to the Balkans and China. This

presentation connects all these areas and, at the same time, manifests Turks also as protectors of European civilization by contributing to the myth of national mission.

### **5.3. The Pre-Ottoman Islamic Warrior in 1965-1971:**

#### **5.3.1. Alpago:**

##### **5.3.1.1. A General Look:**

Among the films of the period produced between 1965-1971, there is only one available film depicting the heroic activities of a pre-Ottoman Turkish-Islamic warrior: *Alpaslanın Fedaisi Alpago* (*Alpaslan's Guard Alpago*, dir. Nejat Saydam, 1967). The Turkish warrior in the film is Alpago, who works for Alp Arslan, the ruler of the Great Seljuks. Both are heroic characters fitting into the Girardet's Alexander category. They fight together in 1063 against Qutalmish, a Seljukid dynasty member that competes with Alp Arslan for the throne. Given the date it takes place, the film omits the Battle of Manzikert of 1071, one of the most epic events because the Byzantine army was defeated, and the Turkification and Islamization of Anatolia commenced. This might be a missed chance of representing an epic event, which discursively strengthens Turks' attachment to Anatolia in line with the Turkish History Thesis. However, on the other hand, any depiction of it would require a showdown with the presence of non-Muslim and even non-Turkic populations in Anatolia before the arrival of the Seljuks. Despite these points, with references to Alp Arslan being the future conqueror of Anatolia (*Anadolu fatihi*), the film still underlines Turks' future ownership of Anatolia and reproduces the myth of national homeland.

Despite the emphasis on Anatolia, the film takes place in Isfahan and the Castle of Rayy, both located in modern day Iran. However, Alp Arslan is never associated with Iran, probably to strengthen the Turkish side of his identity, which is further emphasized in the opening and closing scenes through a folk song with lyrics by the folk hero Koroğlu.<sup>666</sup> Besides, Alp Arslan's grand vizier Nizam al-Mulk advises him to choose the color blue for his flag because it is the color of the Göktürks' flag. Here an ethnic continuity is constructed between Alp Arslan and the Göktürks of Central Asia. As a result, Alp Arslan is inserted into the Turkish nationalist discourse, and his significance is further justified by the voice-over stating that Alp Arslan's empire is the hope of all Turks and the Muslim world<sup>667</sup> who want to get rescued from the hands of Byzantium. Here, a savior role is again attributed to the ruler, and therefore, the reason for Alp Arslan's conquests is not mere expansion but saving other Turks and Muslims. At this

<sup>666</sup> Yiğit olan gümbür gümbür gürlesin/Yiğidi doğuran ana, bin yaşa

<sup>667</sup> "Bütün Türklerin ve İslam dünyasının ümidi Selçuklu"

point, the focus on the Great Seljuks nurtures the Turks' imperialist grandeur, which reproduces the myth of the homeland as limitless and without any borders. As a result, both Alp Arslan and his warrior Alpago cover long distances and vast territories.

#### **5.3.1.2. *The Warrior:***

Alpago is a common brave man like any other Turkish national who has a genetic disposition to warfare. He first meets Alp Arslan when the latter is going to Isfahan to find and eliminate Qutalmish. Alpago helps him without even recognizing who he is. This means, Alpago instinctively supports the legitimate heir to the throne without expecting any interests in return. Then, Alp Arslan asks him to become his commander-in-chief and takes him to his palace in Isfahan. For Alpago, palace life is not enjoyable because of burdensome details such as rules, rituals, bureaucracy, and titles. As a result, after spending some time in the castle, Alpago becomes restless and leaves the palace without even informing Alp Arslan. His behavior fits well into Turkish national warriors' free-spirited nature mentioned in other nationalist action/adventure movies. This is also a reflection of the anti-bureaucratic mentality in Turkish political culture, and it makes the warrior a purely idealist one. Besides, this representation reinforces his 'commonality' in the audience's eyes, who could easily associate with the warrior.

#### **5.3.1.3. *The Others:***

The internal enemy of the film is Qutalmish, who has plans to destroy the unity of the Turks. He is, in fact, a traitor to Turkish unity and an arrogant man. He is punished to death by Alp Arslan himself at the beginning of the film. Besides Qutalmish, there are external enemies. What makes those significant is the fact that they are all Muslim. In this context, although the Byzantine enemy is mentioned as the "infidel" that should be defeated, Alp Arslan's army and the Byzantine army never meet. Therefore, the film can be considered a transitory one that talks about conflicts within the Muslim world before the unification of all Turkish-Muslims instead of depicting purely Muslim-Christian conflicts.

To be more specific, the real threats in the film are the governor of Aleppo and Hassan-i Sabbah, an İsmâ'ili missionary who later captures the Castle of Alamut. Here the first is an Arab-Muslim, and the second is an Iranian-Muslim enemy. The governor of Aleppo wants to occupy Anatolia; therefore, he tricks Alp Arslan to marry his sister Ayşim. His collaborator is the evil Hassan-i Sabbah, who has an army of slaves by recruiting those he hypnotizes. He also has uncontrollable sexual desires, so he has too many wives, mistresses, and sex slaves. One of

his wives is Yakute, whom he brutalizes because she does not have children. When Alp Arslan realizes the evil intentions of the governor of Aleppo, he sends out Alpago to save his sister Ayşim from the hands of the governor visiting the palace of Hassan-ı Sabbah at that time. Alpago infiltrates the place by disguising himself as somebody aspiring to be a warrior of Hassan-ı Sabbah. Here, apart from his military capabilities, he uses his intelligence to defeat the enemy proving, that any common Turkish man could deceive the enemy by using his national essence. Besides, an external good other, Yakute, as the woman of the other who is also oppressed by the other, also helps Alpago to save Ayşim from being a slave of Hassan-ı Sabbah. In the end, as a warrior with a mission, Alpago saves not only Ayşim but also the slaves in the enemy palace. However, information about whether or not these people are Turkish is not provided, Alpago becomes a savior, and this portrayal of him reproduces the myth of the national warrior.

### **5.3.2. Main Points:**

As a warrior fighting in Iran, Alpago's adventure does not directly justify the Turkish History Thesis that considers Central Asia as the original homeland and Anatolia as the national homeland. What is indirectly narrated here is that having arrived from Central Asia, the Turks had once become the owners of Iran, and this was how they encountered Byzantium. This narrative allows the filmmakers to Islamize the national warrior whose religion was not even an issue in the films about the warriors from Central Asia. This Islamization, however, is not represented through Islamic symbols such as azan, prayers, or the Shahadah that are generously used in the films of the 1970s. Instead, some messages are given, such as Alpago making a call to the soldiers of Qutalmish to bow down before Alp Arslan because Muslim Turks would own Anatolia if they unified under the leadership of Alp Arslan. Other than similar references, being a Muslim is not an overt element of either Alpago's or Alp Arslan's identity. Therefore, this film reproduces the myths of the national warrior and national leader, through their Turkishness first. In this regard, Alp Arslan, and hence Turkish Muslims, are ushered as the future conquerors of Anatolia, who will save the national homeland from Byzantine invaders' hands. Therefore, the movie can be considered as situated somewhere between the less aggressive and more aggressive reproductions of nationalist political myths.

### **5.4. Ottoman warriors of 1965-1971:**

To put it generally, most of the Ottoman heroes fight in the Ottoman Empire's classical age. In this vein, they confirm the dominant political discourse that focuses on the Ottoman

ascendancy and takes it as an indication of Turkish national superiority. This is not unsurprising given the increasing nationalism in the country. In terms of different sultans, the movies could be summarized as follows: between 1965 and 1971, the heroes fight in the period of Orhan Ghazi (r.1324-1360), Mehmet the Conqueror (r.1451-1481), and Bayezid II (r.1481-1512). Then, starting in 1972, there is Suleiman the Magnificent (r. 1520-1566). I divided the films in accordance with their production dates into two groups because the difference in the dates marks the evolution of the themes into a much more Islamist one. Over time, the characters use a much more macho vocabulary in this framework, and their costumes become much more recognizable with their traditional and Turkish features. These changes in the depictions are all parts of the shrinkage of borders into Anatolia. All these coincide with the real political context of increasing political violence and aggressiveness in the 1970s. In this regard, the first group encompasses seven available movies shot between 1965-1971.

#### ***5.4.1. The Warrior fighting for Orhan and Prince Murat between 1965-1971:***

##### ***5.4.1.1. The Warrior:***

Among the Ottoman heroes, the one that fights during a relatively earlier period is Kılıçaslan in *Vatan Kurtaran Aslan (The Lion that Saves the Fatherland*, dir. Tunç Başaran, 1966). He is the only hero who lives in the Ottoman Empire's foundation period, so he fights for Orhan Ghazi in 1362. The narrative does not provide any information about who he is or his father, dissimilar to the other heroes of the period. In this context, the film reproduces the myth of the warrior nation, not through Kılıçaslan's family, but only through himself. Kılıçaslan is depicted in relation to Orhan Ghazi and Murat, his legitimate heir to the throne. The film includes many scenes in which Kılıçaslan and Murat fight together; therefore, Murat constitutes a fundamental tenet. This uncommon and slightly off-center representation of the hero could be related to the fact that this film was one of the earliest examples of Ottoman lonely heroes and might carry some elements from the pre-1965 period. Nevertheless, the film provides a basic introduction to the nationalist arguments presented in other films centered on lone warriors fighting for a ruler.

##### ***5.4.1.2. The Ruler and the Mission of the Warrior:***

The story begins when Orhan is about to die because of his deteriorating health and old age. He calls Kılıçaslan to his court in Adrianople and gives him the duty of saving Murat, his legitimate heir, from the hands of Byzantium. Orhan's primary concern is to have Murat continue the Rumelia conquests and finally conquer Byzantium. Orhan has three sons, including

Halil and İbrahim, and among them, Murat is the only trustworthy one that deserves the throne. Thus, Orhan thinks, if Murat is not saved, the sons of the Ottomans would come to an end. On the other hand, Orhan is right to feel like this because his other sons have been planning to make a long-term agreement with Byzantium and stop the conquest of Rumelia. This is, of course, a betrayal to the ruler and the great national cause, so these two sons are, essentially, internal enemies who only think about their personal interests. To realize their aims, they collaborate with a Byzantine governor, an external enemy, who aims to halt Turkish expansion into Rumelia, make Anatolia a graveyard for Turks, and imprison Murat. Thus, Kılıçaslan has a vital mission of not only providing the continuity of the Ottoman Empire but also saving the legitimate heir to the throne in addition to providing the westward expansion of the empire. As the movie title suggests, he should save the fatherland, and the fatherland here means Rumelia, the part of the empire that created a trauma once lost at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Kılıçaslan receives his assignment directly from Orhan; therefore, there are no bureaucrats or men of the military between them. This direct relationship between Orhan and his warrior without any intermediaries could reflect the anti-bureaucratic mentality of the Turkish political culture. In this vein, the loyal hero even fights against the two other sons of the Sultan, which means that having a legitimate heir on the throne and the continuity of conquests are far more important for Orhan than the lives of his other sons. Immediately after informing Kılıçaslan about his duties, Orhan dies. At this point, what Kılıçaslan says upon Orhan's death could be interpreted as a summary of what is expected from him: "If I cannot save Murat blowing like a disastrous storm, only my dead body would come back here" (14:21-14:27).<sup>668</sup> This means that Kılıçaslan is ready to die for Murat, and hence the fatherland. He is ultimately a loyal hero who continues to fulfill his mission despite the death of Orhan.

#### ***5.4.1.3. The Ruler-to-be and the Others:***

In this context, unlike the traitors Halil and İbrahim, Murat is depicted as a brave and ambitious prince, like a future Alexander, who is courageous enough to threaten Byzantines by declaring that nobody could enslave Turks, even when they imprison him. In fact, when the Byzantines decide to burn him at the stake, Murat says that the Turkish nation will raise countless other Murats. This sentence marks the kind of duty that the younger generation must adopt. To save Murat, Kılıçaslan and three other warriors that he meets on his way disguise as Byzantines to get into the Byzantium castle. This reproduces the myth of Turks' superiority

---

<sup>668</sup> "Felaket kasırgası gibi esip Murat'ı kurtarmazsam buraya ancak ölüm döner."



through the message that Turks turn a disadvantaged position into an advantaged one not only by using their militaristic skills but also their intelligence. These other warriors are Kutlu Boğa, Gül Hatun, and a mute man. They are all brave sword masters who adopt the sole aim of “saving the fatherland”. Gül Hatun also says that all Turks desire to be a martyr for their fatherland. These words reproduce the myth of the warrior nation and the fact that a female warrior declares them strengthens the emphasis. On their way, these four warriors rest in a Byzantine *han* in which a masked half-naked lady dances and then sleeps with Kılıçaslan. Later, it is shown that this lady is the queen of Byzantium. This narrative reinforces Kılıçaslan’s masculinity and allows him to defeat the enemy at the symbolic level. On the other hand, it humiliates Byzantium and women of other by presenting the queen as immoral.

Consequently, Kılıçaslan and his friends save Murat from the Byzantine prison and take him back to Edirne. Meanwhile, discovering the death of their father, Halil, one of the three sons, has already declared himself as Sultan with the support of İbrahim. While he has just adorned himself with the power symbols, the Ottoman royal gown and turban (*kavuk*), Murat comes to the court and gets into a fight with his two brothers. In this fight, Murat is helped by Kılıçaslan and the other three warriors. In the end, Murat kills his brothers and takes the authority symbols. The mute warrior also gives him the Byzantine crown and staff, which are the Byzantium symbols of authority. Although Murat has not conquered Byzantium yet, this scene is a future indication of his goals, all in line with his father Orhan’s vision. What else attracts attention is that Murat and the other warriors continuously say that they are fighting for the fatherland. Even the film title has the same emphasis on ‘fatherland.’ This could be revealing the mutual fertilization between the films about the Ottomans and the films about the War of Independence. Obviously, there is interaction in the vocabularies used in nationalist action/adventure films, although they talk about different periods. The use of the same vocabulary could be providing two things. The first is audience familiarity, which may arouse more interest in this film. Second, the myth of national continuity is also reproduced by linking the Ottomans and the recent past. In this vein, the movie gives the following messages: There is a continuity with the Ottomans and Turks of today. Rumelia was our fatherland, too, and the Turks sacrificed their lives for this piece of land as they also did for Anatolia in the War of Independence.

#### ***5.4.2. The Warrior Fighting for Mehmet the Conqueror between 1965-1971:***

There is only one Ottoman-Islamic hero who fights for Mehmet II. He is Malkoçoğlu, who is the protagonist in six movies of the series. Among those films, four take place in the

time of Mehmet II These films are: *Malkoçoğlu Avrupa'yı Titreten Türk* (*The Turk that Put Fear into Europe*, dir. Süreyya Duru, 1966), *Malkoçoğlu Krallara Karşı* (*Against Kings*, dir. Süreyya Duru, Remzi Jöntürk, 1967), *Malkoçoğlu Akıncılar Geliyor* (*Raiders are Coming*, dir. Süreyya Duru, Remzi Jöntürk, 1969), and *Malkoçoğlu Ölüm Fedaileri* (*Guards of Death*, dir. Remzi Jöntürk, 1971). In these films, the raider Malkoçoğlu fights in Serbia, Transylvania, and Byzantium, that is, the northwestern edge of the Ottoman Empire and hence the geographical beginning of Europe. The movies all take place in the 15<sup>th</sup> century in the period after the conquest of İstanbul. This skipping of the conquest of İstanbul, which is one of the most memorable events of Ottoman history, could signify filmmakers' caution to avoid potential criticisms by the audience.

#### 5.4.2.1. *The Landscapes:*

As in the other films previously mentioned, the empire's borders are not again depicted clearly; they are instead fluid, and vague, allowing the hero and the ruler to conquer new lands. Malkoçoğlu journeys back and forth to the center from the edges of the empire. He receives orders from the ruler at the center and then goes to frontiers to fulfill his assigned mission. Like Central Asian heroes, he fights in open landscapes. Sometimes, he gallops in vast lands with forests, valleys, and rivers with his horse and a couple of friends. This representation of limitlessness suggests that Turks ruled over a vast area once upon a time, and their power was limitless. This could be why Malkoçoğlu introduces himself as "the owner of the entire world" (30:27) in *Avrupa'yı Titreten Türk* (*The Turk that Put Fear into Europe*).

#### 5.4.2.2. *The Warrior:*

Malkoçoğlu is an already known hero, and even the enemies are aware of his power and appreciate him. For example, in *Avrupa'yı Titreten Türk* (*The Turk that Put Fear into Europe*), Belushi, the lover of Lazar, the younger son of the deceased Serbian king Brankovich III, defines him as "the raider that gives terrifies Europe, a tornado, a storm" (10:53). He is also called as *başbuğ* by the other five other raiders accompanying him in *Malkoçoğlu Ölüm Fedaileri*. Here, *başbuğ* means 'the leader,' and 'the commander-in-chief' in ancient Turkic states. This use of this word reveals the filmmakers' tendency to connect the 15<sup>th</sup> century with the ancient Turkish past to imply some ethnic continuity by confirming the myth of the nation's antiquity. Like Tarkan, a significant Central Asian hero, Malkoçoğlu's symbol is a wolf confirming the Turkish myth of Ergenekon. In fact, he also states that Turks are descended from wolves in the final scene of *Krallara Karşı* (*Against Kings*), in which he saves his hypnotized

son Polat from the hands of Vlad the Impaler by showing his ring with a wolf on it. He uses the ring to make his victims recognizable by imprinting a grey wolf seal on foreshadows of men he kills in *Avrupa'yı Titreten Türk (The Turk that Put Fear into Europe)*. All these images manifest how the myth of ethnic continuity is reproduced regardless of in which period the movies are set. This could also indicate the more significant role of Turkishness than Ottomanness in forming the nationalist myths because former is emphasized much more over the latter.

Furthermore, like other heroes fighting in Central Asia, the audience is provided information about Malkoçoğlu's father in *Krallara Karşı (Against Kings)*. His father is again a heroic raider named Bali Bey. This information justifies the myth of the warrior nation by revealing the message that all Turks are soldiers, both fathers and sons. In this context, at one point in *Avrupa'yı Titreten Türk (The Turk that Put Fear into Europe)*, Malkoçoğlu says that when he cried like a baby, his mother would give him a sword to comfort (30:56). However, there is Vlad, the Impaler's army of hypnotized people on the opposite side. This reveals Turks' genetic disposition to warfare, on the one hand, the artificiality of the other's army on the other hand.

Malkoçoğlu is extremely brave, heroic, and capable of using different weapons, including swords and arrows. He can shoot a target with his bow from a great distance, and he is as acrobatic as the other Turkish heroes. As explained in the following paragraphs, he is handsome and thus attracts many women from both the Turkish and other sides. He also knows how to mock the enemy, as well as knowing what to avoid. For example, in *Akıncılar Geliyor (Raiders are Coming)*, when his stable boy, Balaban threatens a Christian monk with circumcision, Malkoçoğlu gets angry and says that there is no need to clown around. Through similar scenes, while the enemy is symbolically humiliated, limits of what should be done to the enemy are also shown. In fact, in one scene, the monk warns the Byzantium commander Nicola about the Turks, saying that he must not underestimate them because Turks always take revenge for their suffering (9:50-9:55).<sup>669</sup> These words do not only emphasize Turks' bravery but also underline that Turks never attack defenseless people. This means Turks have no grievance with civilians. This message legitimizes the Turkish attacks, and it easily correlates with the nationalist arguments formed around the Cyprus issue, saying that the Greeks always attack civilian Turks, so theirs is illegitimate and unjust. In contrast, the Turkish intervention in Cyprus is the product of a legitimate and just cause.

---

<sup>669</sup> "Türkler kimsede acılarını bırakmazlar, bazı şeyleri affetmezler."

#### 5.4.2.3. *The Ruler:*

Malkoçoğlu fights for Mehmet the Conqueror, who is most of the time depicted at the center in his court, so in a closed inner space, unlike his loyal warrior. The audience sees him while giving commands to Malkoçoğlu or waiting for Malkoçoğlu's arrival. In fact, among the four films analyzed in this part, only in *Avrupa'yı Titreten Türk (The Turk that Put Fear into Europe)*, the audience physically sees Mehmet II, whereas, in the others, the Sultan is just mentioned by a voiceover. This kind of passive representation of the ruler narrative requires the hero to be much more dynamic. As the natural outcome of this narrative strategy, the parts about the hero in the story are always much more exciting. As a result, the audience naturally associates itself with the hero.

On the other hand, this representation does not mean that the ruler is unimportant. Instead, Mehmet II is elevated to a more sacred and unreachable status, contributing to the myth of the ideal ruler. Several titles attributed to him also reinforce his representation, such as the Ruler of Rumelia, the Sultan of Statesmen, and the Master of Seas (08:23-08:32)<sup>670</sup> provided in *Avrupa'yı Türk (The Turk that Put Fear into Europe)*. Thus, the ruler is so glorious and supreme, and the hero exists only in relation to him or in the service of him as his loyal warrior. In connection to this, reaching the unreachable and exalted Sultan is significant in the hero's world. Among many bureaucrats and men of the military (begs and other raiders), only Malkoçoğlu is privileged enough to reach the Sultan. For example, in *Avrupa'yı Titreten Türk (The Turk that Put Fear into Europe)*, the Sultan directly connects with Malkoçoğlu with a letter for the mission. The older and hierarchically superior men do not like the Sultan assigning a young raider instead of themselves. Malkoçoğlu is, in fact, able to do this because he is the most loyal and brave warrior among all the others. This reachability of the Sultan by his most loyal warrior emphasizes the hero's ordinariness on the one hand. On the other hand, it puts the burden of loyalty on the shoulders of that ordinary man. In this context, the loyal hero's reward is to contact and communicate with the leader whom God has appointed. There is, however, a difficult point here. In the same film, the Sultan apologizes to Malkoçoğlu, as in *Karaoğlan Altaydan Gelen Yiğit (The Hero Coming from Altai)*, because he was mistaken in assuming that Malkoçoğlu only thought about his personal interest, not about bringing order to Serbia. This particular scene shows the strength of the relationship between the ruler and his loyal warrior. Besides, it reinforces the warrior's mission of correcting the ruler, who is considered the embodiment of the state and the nation. This understanding even leads to questioning the ruler's

---

<sup>670</sup> "Diyar-ı Rum Hükümdarı," "Lalaların Sultanı," and "Denizlerin Efendisi"

legitimacy by putting Turkishness and its survival through the state in a much more elevated status. In this perspective, the ruler only becomes a means of enacting political power and representing a superior thing, which is the state and the nation. Where the ruler's legitimacy, that is '*kut*,' ends could also be connected to this understanding.

#### 5.4.2.4. *Internal Others:*

The relationship between the ruler and the warrior reflects the anti-bureaucratic mentality permeated into the nationalist mythmaking of the late 1960s. This could also be why either few or no bureaucrats or men of the military are depicted in connection with the Sultan, as in the films about Central Asian heroes. The existing ones are all portrayed negatively as cooperating with external enemies. These constitute the very few stocks of internal enemies in this group of films made between 1964-1971. One of them is İshak Beg, the ambitious Sivrice (Ostrvica) castle commander, who plans to become the sanjak beg in *Avrupa'yı Titreten Türk* (*The Turk that Put Fear into Europe*). The audience first sees him sleeping with Beluchi, Lazar's lover, the deceased Serbian king Brankovich's younger son, and treating her rudely. Both İshak and Beluchi want Lazar to become the new Serbian king. In this scene, Beluchi also mentions the grand vizier Mehmet Pasha's support of İshak. At this point, although the film depicts Mehmet Pasha only very briefly as a part of the court, the audience considers him to be in the same category as İshak, making him the second internal bureaucrat enemy. In fact, Lazar's coronation is illegitimate because there is also Greguar, the older son, who is the legitimate king that is also ready to present his submission to the Ottoman domination as his father did before. Here, Greguar bows down to the Ottoman ruler not because he is forced to do by the Ottomans, but because he is the oldest son, so the legitimate heir, and he is respectful to his father's legacy. This again justifies the myth of Turks being benevolent conquerors instead of being merciless and heavy-handed. In this context, both İshak beg and Mehmet Pasha support the illegitimate heir to the throne. Meanwhile, Mehmet II assigns Malkoçoğlu to reinstate order to Serbia by enthroning Greguar. For İshak, Malkoçoğlu is his rival, and to overcome him, İshak collaborates with Lazar and brings the Serbian treasure to the Sultan by giving the crown to Lazar. Malkoçoğlu, on the other hand, beheads Lazar, brings his head beside the Serbian crown and Greguar to Mehmet II. Here, Malkoçoğlu represents the ideal Turkish warrior who only fulfills his national duties by supporting the legitimate heir instead of İshak, who follows personal interests.

#### 5.4.2.5. *External Others:*

The reason for the presence of either few or no internal enemies could be the filmmakers' desire to represent the Turkish side as a concrete block against external enemies to make it seem much more undefeatable. In this context, the external enemies are all from Europe, and they are all represented very similarly or even indistinguishable from one another. In fact, these enemies are represented not in relation to their ethnic or national identities, but their religious identity, which is Christianity, always comes to the fore. On the other hand, most of the time, the Turkish side is emphasized in relation to its Turkishness more than its Islamic identity. Therefore, in the audience's eyes, the fight always occurs between Christians and Turks, not between Serbians and Turks. This also reflects on spaces that the external enemies are inserted. Besides battlefields and palaces, they appear in church interiors, whereas Turks are depicted in battlefields, İstanbul's city walls, and outer spaces. Right at this point, it should also be noted that although there are no mosques in any of the films mentioned in this group, religious references are visible, unlike they are in the films about Central Asian heroes. For example, *Akıncılar Geliyor (Raiders are Coming)* starts with the Byzantine commander Nicola saying that he will behead all Muslims" (0:51-0:54). Besides, the films are full of Christian symbols such as crosses on flags or the clothes of soldiers, and hymns are heard, in contrast to the simplicity of Islam, which can be seen only in the behaviors of its believers. Such an example is the Ottoman ambassadors' praying in a Serbian Palace in *Ölüm Fedaileri*. This scene means that Turks do not need a specific place to pray because the whole world belongs to them.

In *Ölüm Fedaileri (Guards of Death)*, the warrior fights against Arnold, the Prince of Toronto. Although it is not clear which empire or kingdom Arnold is associated with, the audience still understands his side thanks to cross motifs on his clothes and the flags carried by his soldiers. In fact, all Christian enemies except Vlad the Impaler are depicted similarly to each other. They all have colorful and radiant clothes and carry religious symbols. Only Vlad, the Impaler, has dark garments, and his soldiers have the images of a scorpion on their clothes. This difference in representation could be working to put this Voivode of Wallachia at a fantastic level to mark his cruelty. In *Krallara Karşı (Against Kings)*, he lives in a palace full of naked people kidnapped and later hypnotized by him. These people are members of his army. This representation strictly stands in opposition to the myth of the warrior Turkish nation, which presumes that Turks are born as soldiers. Besides, his soldiers are named "red scorpions." As a political reference, the word "red" is associated with communism; therefore, the filmmakers might have wanted to make Vlad much more familiar to the audience by connecting him with something that the audience already knows. Vlad aims to marry the only heir to the throne of

the Duchy of Dabres to extend his territories. The other main enemy is the Serbian Lazar, who wants to be the new king by challenging his older brother Greguar, the legitimate heir. Lazar also mentions that he collaborates with Hungarian Jan Hunyap against the Ottomans “to wipe the Turks out of Europe” in *Avrupa’yı Titreten Türk (The Turk that Put Fear into Europe)*. In *Akıncılar Geliyor (Raiders are coming)*, the Byzantine commander Nicola provokes the Serbian king Philip who wants to declare his subordination to the Ottoman Empire against the Ottoman domination. Nicola aims to marry Beatrice, Philip’s daughter, and unite against the Ottomans to wave the Crusaders’ flag in Ottoman lands. Interestingly, the Serbians come out as the most manipulated external other. This representation could be related to the fact that Serbians were the first to rebel against Ottoman rule at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In this context, the filmmakers might have chosen the option of Byzantine manipulation to emphasize that there was peace in the Ottoman lands before the Christian manipulation. This narrative reinforces the myth of Turks being benevolent conquerors and just rulers.

Furthermore, the enemies are always so merciless. In *Akıncılar Geliyor (Raiders are coming)*, the Byzantium commander Nicola says to Malkoçoğlu that he is going to build a castle and a palace by using the skulls of betrayers and Turks like him, put their white-skinned girls and women, even the wife of their pompous Sultan into these buildings as slaves (09:57-10:14).<sup>671</sup> These words are very intense and direct, so they could easily provoke the audience. In *Ölüm Fedaileri (Guards of Death)*, a soldier of Arnold beheads a pigeon. This is a bare representation of cruelty that serves to increase the audience’s hatred towards the ‘other.’ In the same film, the Serbian princess Elza, who will be saved and protected by Malkoçoğlu, is tortured by her betrothed Prince Arnold, by being tied onto a turning wheel while Arnold’s friends throw knives and axes at her. Another example could be from *Avrupa’yı Titreten Türk (The Turk that Put Fear into Europe)*, in which Lazar, the illegitimate ruler of the Serbians, tortures his mother Irene and sister Illiona because they support the legitimate heir of the throne, Greguar. This depiction was probably quite radical for the Turkish audience. In *Akıncılar Geliyor (Raiders are Coming)*, after Byzantine commander Nicola beheads several Muslims, the whole screen is painted in red, symbolizing the blood of the Muslims, then we hear the Ottoman army march, which is a symbol of the start of the war. All in all, unlike the historical action/adventure movies of the pre-1965 period, these films demonize the enemy severely. In this context, most of the women of ‘other’ are depicted negatively as manipulative villains. One

---

<sup>671</sup> “Senin gibi hainlerin ve Türklerin kellelerinden kale ve saray yapacağım. Beyaz tenli kızlarını ve kadınlarını cariye olarak dolduracağım hatta o kendini beğenmiş Sultanlarının karısını bile.”

such example is Maria in *Akıncılar Geliyor (Raiders are Coming)*, who is the Serbian king's wife, but sleeps with Nicola, the Byzantine commander. She aims to get back to İstanbul with Nicola and become queen. Another woman is Beluchi of *Avrupa'yı Titreten Türk (The Turk that Put Fear into Europe)*, the wife of Serbian Lazar, who also sleeps with İshak beg, the Ottoman internal enemy, and in one scene, tries to attract Malkoçoğlu. Both examples have erotic and immoral Serbian figures who collaborate with their enemies by cheating on their husbands. These show the Serbians as victims of evil, even their own women.

There are few good external others, and Turks always help them. In parallel to their God-given mission of being benevolent and just conquerors, Turks always support the legitimate ruler in the places they conquer, such as Greguar in *Avrupa'yı Titreten Türk (The Turk that Put Fear into Europe)*. It should also be noted that the people of Serbia also support Greguar. In this vein, Malkoçoğlu protects not only the interests of the Ottoman Empire but also Greguar and his people. A similar character is the Serbian king Mirkovich in *Ölüm Fedaileri (Guards of Death)*, who wants to continue to pay taxes to the Ottoman Empire. He calls the Ottoman ambassadors his friends. Philip of *Akıncılar Geliyor (Raiders are Coming)* is almost the same as Mirkovich. Thus, the hero's mission is to bring peace to these places and bring them under order. As Malkoçoğlu says in *Ölüm Fedaileri (Guards of Death)*, it is not to exploit them but to make everyone stay in their own countries and to fulfill justice in the world<sup>672</sup> (1:21:28). At the end of *Avrupa'yı Titreten Türk (The Turk that Put Fear into Europe)*, Greguar is rewarded for his loyalty by being enthroned by the Ottomans. In this context, his sister Irene could be considered as the other example of good external other. In fact, at the end of the film, Malkoçoğlu marries Illiona, the Serbian princess. Thus, the Serbian princess is also rewarded in return for her support for Greguar, hence the Ottoman domination in Serbia. At this point, marriage is quite unusual for a raider because “love ties the raider down” (39:38).<sup>673</sup> However, in *Avrupa'yı Titreten Türk (The Turk that Put Fear into Europe)*, Mehmet II unites them, and this scene could indicate the Sultan's power and influence on the raider. The Dabres princess Yolanda in *Krallara Karşı (Against Kings)* is a good other, too. Like Greguar, she is the legitimate heir to the throne and asks Malkoçoğlu's help against Vlad the Impaler. Once she is rescued by Malkoçoğlu, she falls in love with him. At this point, Beatrice of *Akıncılar Geliyor (Raiders are coming)*, the daughter of the Serbian king Philip is depicted in parallel to good others. Like her father, Beatrice accepts the Ottoman rule, unlike her stepmother Maria who sleeps with the Byzantine commander Nicola. At the end of the film, she and Malkoçoğlu

<sup>672</sup> “Herkes kendi yurdunda mutlu ve özgür yaşasın.”

<sup>673</sup> “Aşk akıncının ayağını bağlar.”



release the Serbian prisoners in the hands of Byzantines, and interestingly, all prisoners voluntarily convert to Islam as Malkoçoğlu saves them. Beatrice, too, wants to accompany Malkoçoğlu in the final scene. In *Ölüm Fedaileri (Guards of Death)*, Elza, who is the daughter of the Serbian king Mirkovich is also protected by Malkoçoğlu from Prince Arnold because she is one of the two heirs to the throne. Unsurprisingly, once she is rescued and her little brother Enrico becomes the king, she wants to stay with Malkoçoğlu, although the Turkish hero rejects her saying that she will be the queen of her land. This representation of royal women of other falling in love with Malkoçoğlu reinforces the hero's masculinity in addition to the Ottoman rule or legitimacy over the 'others.' In one scene, although Elza bathes in the sea naked, Malkoçoğlu does not turn his head towards her. This scene emphasizes his will and strength in fulfilling the duties assigned to him. The warrior, here, does attract not only those women but also shapes their countries' politics.

Thus, the films in this group present an intense reproduction of nationalist political myths. In addition to Turkish superiority over other nations, the nation's antiquity, and the myth of the warrior nation, a mythical mission is mentioned. In this context, the 'Turks' God-given mission is to bring peace and justice to the lands they conquer. This means that they are benevolent conquerors, and they create a *Pax Turcica* in the world. As Greguar, the legitimate Serbian king in *Avrupa'yı Titreten Türk (The Turk that Put Fear into Europe)*, says, "Turks bring peace and justice to Europe, the things that Europe is devoid of nowadays"<sup>674</sup> (3:19-3:25). This must be why Irene, his wife, asks help from Malkoçoğlu by saying that "let the wars be over, end the blood that has been spilled and the bad had been put on shame" (03:53).<sup>675</sup> As Malkoçoğlu says, in the final scene of the same film, while riding his horse into the sunset with his bride Illiona, the sister of Greguar: "God created Turk as governor and ordered Turks to govern other nations, bring them justice, help the righteous and weak and oppress the unjust and powerful. He gave them horses, women, and guns. He said, the world is yours, fighting is your feast, martyrdom is your last rank. He said, Asia is yours; Europe is yours, too, and God made the Turk superior" (01:34:44-01:35:46).<sup>676</sup>

<sup>674</sup> "...Türkler gittikleri yere adalet ve barış getirdiler. Şu günlerde ise Avrupa'da yokluğu duyulan iki şey budur."

<sup>675</sup> "Harpler, akan kanlar bitsin, artık kötüler utansın."

<sup>676</sup> "Tanrı Türkü ilbay yarattı. Öteki ulusları yönetin, onlara adalet götürün, haklıyı ve zayıfı sevin, haksızı ve kuvvetliyi ezin buyurdu. At verdi, avrat verdi, silah verdi. Dünya senin yurdun, cenk bayramın, şehitlik son rütben dedi. Asya senin Avrupa da senin dedi ve Tanrı Türkü üstün kıldı."

### 5.4.3. *To Fight at the Time of Bayezid II between 1965-1971:*

There are two films which take place at the time of Bayezid II: *Malkoçoğlu Kara Korsan* (*Malkoçoğlu The Black Pirate*, dir. Süreyya Duru, 1968) and *Malkoçoğlu: Cem Sultan* (dir. Remzi Jöntürk, 1969). These films were shot later than the ones mentioned earlier. Therefore, they are somewhat closer to the 1970s. This is significant because especially *Malkoçoğlu Kara Korsan* (*The Black Pirate*) includes more religious references than the previously mentioned films. This makes them precursors of the films of the 1970s, which are much more religious in terms of their tone.

#### 5.4.3.1. *The Warrior's Mission:*

It is peculiar that in *Kara Korsan* (*The Black Pirate*), the hero fights for Bayezid II, and in *Malkoçoğlu: Cem Sultan*, he is with Cem Sultan, the other son of Mehmet II who competes with Bayezid II for the throne. In the latter, Malkoçoğlu fights for a prince who revolted against the legitimate ruler. He has more than sympathy towards Cem Sultan because he is his “blood brother,” as he says to Rüstem Pasha, whom Bayezid has assigned to catch Cem Sultan. This idea of Malkoçoğlu seems to be inconsistent with the general narrative centered on the legitimate ruler and leads to questions about whether Bayezid has not been perceived as legitimate by a portion of the population. At this point, brief background information might be helpful to comment on the significance of the movie's subject matter. In many accounts, Cem is said to be an intellectual prince also favored by his father. Bayezid, however, had a religious character according to popular novels such as *Cem Sultan*, written by Feridun Fazıl Tülbentçi. Ahmad states that Bayezid bribed the janissaries to have their loyalty.

On the other hand, Cem Sultan had the support of bureaucrats, including the Grand Vizier Karamani Mehmet Pasha. However, some janissaries killed the messenger sent to Cem by the Grand Vizier about his father's death. As a result, Bayezid was able to reach İstanbul, and he became the sultan immediately. Then, after several battles, Cem sought exile in Rhodes and later France and Italy as a captive of the Holy Alliance. For the rest of his life, they used him to threaten the Ottoman Empire and he became a tool of international politics.<sup>677</sup> Relying on these, it can be said that Cem still does not seem to be the legitimate ruler, but the way Bayezid II ascended to the throne might also have been perceived negatively. Moreover, some Ottomans might have supported Cem Sultan, given the argument that Mehmet II also wanted

---

<sup>677</sup> Gabor Agoston, “Cem” in *Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire*, eds. Gabor Agoston and Bruce Masters (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2009), 128-130.

him to become the ruler after his death. This could also be enlightening for understanding Malkoçoğlu's perception of Cem.

In *Cem Sultan*, Malkoçoğlu primarily battles with Christian bandits and later *Şeytan* (Evil) Omerro to save Cem Sultan. Therefore, his real enemy is not Rüstem Pasha but these external others. In one scene, Malkoçoğlu warns Rüstem Pasha to get a grasp of himself and not to make Malkoçoğlu rebellious to the Sultan. Then they get into an agreement to save Cem Sultan. So, these two men never fight because "His (Malkoçoğlu's) sword never sheds the blood of Turks..." (25:32-25:37).<sup>678</sup> Later, even a brotherhood is formed between the two men as they talk about what Malkoçoğlu and raiders like him must sacrifice to fight for the fatherland because the fatherland always comes first. Rüstem Pasha appreciates Malkoçoğlu by saying, "You established this fatherland on horse...My lions, may God protect you and bestow you to the fatherland" (28:51-29:34).<sup>679</sup> These words could be a remnant of the anti-bureaucratic mentality of the political discourse that is also available in the earlier movies. Malkoçoğlu, here, makes himself listened to and appreciated by a statesman and finally shows his power and influence over him. Malkoçoğlu's challenge to Rüstem Pasha also indicates that the warrior can challenge the Sultan if he falls into the trap of being against the people of his own nation. This could also suggest that the warrior's loyalty is not simply for the Sultan but the state and the nation, which are above the Sultan. It could also be said that Malkoçoğlu does not directly rebel against the Sultan but opts for supporting and saving Cem Sultan, who has asked for his help. He says he would help even a farmer because the Turkish raider must help the desperate. This mission of helping all those who need help discourse contributes to the myth of a national mission.

Furthermore, since Bayezid is never shown, these two films' discourses might even be working in complementary to each other. Connecting to that, in *Kara Korsan (The Black Pirate)*, the Spanish commander Lucio tortures Malkoçoğlu by saying, "One day your Sultan Bayezid, the son of the Sultan Mehmet Han, who destroyed the Byzantium walls will kneel before me" (1:02:40).<sup>680</sup> Here Bayezid is mentioned in connection with his father, and this might also indicate that he is not perceived as heroic as his father. *Kara Korsan (The Black Pirate)* does not represent Cem Sultan but still refers to him. Besides fighting against the Spanish Inquisition, the hero has the other duty of finding the little Prince Osman, the son of Cem Sultan. In fact, in the final scene, Christians who have just converted to Islam kneel before Prince

<sup>678</sup> "...kılıcımız Türk kanı ... akıtmaz."

<sup>679</sup> "Siz bu vatani at üstünde kurdunuz."

<sup>680</sup> "Bizans surlarını yaran Sultan Mehmed Han oğlu Bayezid de karşımda diz çökecek."

Osman to show their respect. This particular scene might be an attempt to lessen Bayezid's influence.

Here it could be said that the key exciting figure enriching the nationalist action/adventure films was Cem Sultan.<sup>681</sup> He is portrayed as a brave and courageous prince. He stops Evil Omerro when he is about to throw an ax to kill the woman he has bound. So, Cem is an Alexander type of leader. Besides, he defines himself as a Turk and Prince when the men of Evil Omerro attack him. This means Turkishness, instead of Ottomannes, is the most significant element in the way he constructs his identity.

#### **5.4.3.2. More about the Others and the 'Home'land:**

Nevertheless, the enemies in *Malkoçoğlu Cem Sultan* are the bandits and Şeytan Omerro, who agree with Venice to exchange Cem in return for some gold coins. To fight against them, Malkoçoğlu and his raiders cover long distances by galloping through green fields and a river on their horses. There are also caves as the places that bandits live. However, where all these things take place is not clear. Although Omerro's castle walls are shown, no information is provided about which kingdom or empire he is associated with. It is also unclear whether these enemies are Christian because of the lack of reference to their religion. But the way they are represented as coward evils in colorful clothes and their collaboration with Venice makes the audience consider them Christians. Besides, the bandits' clothing stereotypically resembles that of gypsies. They are all ruthless; they think about their interests, and therefore kidnap women and rape them. It is later understood that they have also kidnapped Zühre, the wife of Malkoçoğlu who does not know Malkoçoğlu is alive, and Meryem, Polat's betrothed. Here, Evil Omerro, too, is depicted with colorful clothes and jewelry. He looks frightening like the other external enemies and he is surrounded by women. He likes to kill people and watch them while they are dying. Despite that, he is a coward and does not have fighting skills. When his men fight with the Turkish heroes, he gives them some orders and even promises to give them some gold coins at the end. The message here is that Omerro's men fight for money, whereas Turks fight for the fatherland, nation, and the ruler as the members of the warrior nation. Besides, as in many other films, this great cause gets united with Malkoçoğlu's personal cause because Omerro is the evil man who imprisoned Malkoçoğlu for so many years and caused him to lose his family. During the fight, he even causes the death of Malkoçoğlu's wife, as the leader of the bandits throws an arrow. He also says that Omerro has sold 'his prince' like a slave. Here

---

<sup>681</sup> There is another film which titled *Cem Sultan* directed by Münir Hayri Egeli from 1951. However, since it is not available, it is impossible to make a comparison.

Malkoçoğlu does not distinguish Cem Sultan from his family, showing his mission's importance.

The enemy in *Kara Korsan (The Black Pirate)* is the Spanish Inquisition, controlled by the Spanish king Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. Their goal is to use the power of religion to conquer new colonies. A voice-over gives this piece of information at the beginning of the film, accompanied by a text, which is also reflected on the screen. The use of sound and text simultaneously is an unusual method that was not used in other films. It could be just a random choice of the filmmaker or related to the filmmaker's desire to tell what exactly happened by referring to some foreign names that are unfamiliar to the audience. The movie is unique because, for the first time, a state out of the Balkans is represented as the enemy in nationalist action/adventure films about Ottoman heroes. It should also be noted that the film takes place in the Ottoman-dominated Ainos (Enez) in the Balkans, which is depicted as being attacked by Lucio, a Spanish commander known as "the right arm of the Inquisition." Like other films, Malkoçoğlu of *Kara Korsan (The Black Pirate)* comes to Ainos by covering long distances on horseback. He passes through fields and forests for quite a long time. However, again, the audience is not provided with the information about whether Ainos is at the border or not as in other films. In fact, there are no references to the presence of borders in the film to give the impression that Turks ruled vast lands or even the world.

As in other films of the same group, the enemy is depicted as so cruel and merciless and even kills innocent people. The voiceover emphasizes that the town has been inhabited by both Muslims and Christians living there peacefully before the arrival of the Inquisition. Then, the voiceover gives some numbers, and according to those, 1,500 Muslims and 2,000 Christians have been captured, and the Inquisition has killed 3,000 people. The films show the bare cruelty of the Inquisition. There are scenes in which children, the elderly, and even some animals are killed, and half-naked women are raped. A man has been hanged upside down, and a rooster has been killed with a scythe. Watching all these, the audience must have felt the horror caused by the enemy and must have been filled with the emotions of hatred and revenge, although the film is black and white. These feelings are further amplified as Lucio is depicted shutting his eyes to the murder of his wife, Maria, who has supported the rebels against Lucio and poisoning his son. These rebels, here, are a group of Christian Ainosians who fight against the Inquisition. Here the message is that the enemy is the Inquisition, not all Christians. In fact, these rebels believe that only the sword of the Turks could save them from those evils who spill blood and violence because Turks bring justice and tranquility to the places they go. Therefore, Turks are

needed as benevolent conquerors to help desperate people and re-bring order. These depictions perfectly reproduce the myth of a national mission.

The other duty of Malkoçoğlu as the black pirate in *Kara Korsan (The Black Pirate)* is to find Bayezid II's brother Cem Sultan's son, Osman, as ordered by Bayezid II. In fact, Lucio's men want to kidnap him; therefore, he storms his house. The mother of Osman gives him to Zaloğlu, another raider, to protect and hide. Here the home of Osman and his mother is represented as a traditional Turkish house with its decoration, and confirming this, Osman's mother is depicted in traditional Turkish folk costume. With an emphasis on traditionality, this kind of representation is also present in the films about Ottoman-Islamic heroes of the 1970s. For example, *Cem Sultan* starts in a village that looks the same as any village in Turkey. Peasants all have traditional outfits, and there are cows, chickens, and roosters surrounded by broad farm fields and flowers. This familiar yet warm representation of the myth of fatherland as 'our' home. Of course, it could be an indication of increasing nationalism and a much more inward-looking state of mind, which at the same time makes the audience much more familiar with the characters.

In this vein, for the first time, the Turkish warrior Malkoçoğlu, as the protector of the fatherland, and thus 'home,' is depicted in detail way as having a wife and son. This, however, does not mean that Malkoçoğlu has succeeded in his mission and so decided to settle down. At the end of the film, he loses his wife Zühre, which shows that the nationalist fight is not over yet. In the beginning scene, Evil Omerro attacks the village, and then Malkoçoğlu thinks he has lost his family. His son Polat and wife Zühre think the same for him. Then, as a grown boy Polat, without knowing that Malkoçoğlu is his father, wants to join Malkoçoğlu's raiders. Later, he is assigned by Malkoçoğlu as the commander of Omerro's Castle. Right at this point, the transformation of Polat is also significant in contributing to the myth of the warrior nation. He is, first, depicted as a farm laborer like any common man with whom many of the audience might have felt associated with. Then, he is shown as working in green fields, which have been a life source for him. This representation establishes a link between man and land and strengthens the myth of the homeland, which says that the homeland is like our home. Later, his mother, Zühre, who is at the same time the wife of Malkoçoğlu, is also buried in a green field after her death in the enemies' hands. This enhances the link between Polat and his homeland by making the land the home of his ancestors through a reproduction of the myth of ethnic continuity. Zühre's burial scene is also enriched with a religious hymn in the background. Therefore, Islamic elements, ancestral connections, and land all exist in the same picture. When these are connected with Malkoçoğlu planting a green flag with Arabic script on it onto the wall

of Omerro's castle, the question that arises is whether Malkoçoğlu wants to settle. All these could be subtle references to the hero's conservatism and the sign of a future inward-looking nationalist narrative.

Given Malkoçoğlu's son Polat's involvement in agriculture, social inequalities also occupy a significant part of the narrative. In *Cem Sultan*, when Polat is just a farm laborer, he falls in love with Melek, the daughter of a beg who has promised an aga to give her daughter as a bride. Melek is beaten by her father when he finds out about her relationship with Polat. Here, it should be noted that this representation of violence against women in general by their fathers, lovers, brothers, or husbands gradually increased since the late 1960s, reaching a peak in the 1970s. This correlates with the conservatism of the heroes, as mentioned earlier. Nevertheless, Polat is belittled by the aga because he is just a farm laborer. Then, he is beaten by the men of aga. Polat does not even defend himself during the fight, probably because he respects authority, which again fits into the rise of conservative values in movies. Again, in the same mentality, when the aga calls his mother a "whore," Polat kills him. This is the point when Polat becomes a real man with traditional values and ready to defend the women of his life, basically his girlfriend and mother, as the symbols of his home in addition to his fatherland. This is how he decides to become a raider.

#### 5.4.3.3. '*Becoming*' Man:

In fact, Polat's transformation seems almost inevitable. Because, despite the emergence of his personal cause, he is a natural-born raider because of his connection with Malkoçoğlu and, most importantly, because of him being Turkish. As he becomes a raider, his passage to manhood is somehow completed. As a result, like any Turkish warrior, he rejects to stay with his fiancé Melek after saving her from the hands of Omerro. He says, "there are things beyond the love for a man, for a raider who could use a sword, and this is something she cannot understand"<sup>682</sup> (59:23-59:30). Polat justifies the myth of the warrior nation and emphasizes the national division of labor based upon gender. In this regard, as a 'manly' man, he believes in brotherhood and the beauty of battle for a raider. A particular scene revealing this is the one in which Omerro tortures both Malkoçoğlu and Polat. In that scene, Polat carries Malkoçoğlu on his shoulders with a rope tied to his neck. According to the evil plan of Omerro, if Polat gives up, Malkoçoğlu will be choked by the rope. This plan, however, fails because Polat endures for hours and hours. While carrying Malkoçoğlu, Polat wants him to call himself "my son" because

---

<sup>682</sup> "Bir erkek için, eli kılıç tutan bir akıncı için sevgiden öte şeyler var. Anlayamazsın bunu."

he is an orphan and does not have a father. This dramatic scene reveals the worry of the hero-to-be due to his fatherlessness. The underlying message could be that the nation is Polat, and it needs a Father or a savior as Polat needs his father. Here, 'saving the father' becomes the mission of Polat, and this could also mean 'saving the ruler and the state' reproducing the myth of the Father State. However, the tricky point is that Malkoçoğlu wants Polat to deal with Cem Sultan instead of himself. For Polat, this is also a way to prove his masculinity because, as Malkoçoğlu says for himself in prison in *Kara Korsan (The Black Pirate)*, he is not scared of death but worried because he could not fulfill his mission. Therefore, the only duty of the raider is to achieve his mission.

There are other opportunities for the hero or hero-to-be to prove his masculinity. On his way to Ainos in *Kara Korsan (The Black Pirate)*, Malkoçoğlu stops by a *han* to rest. There, as the proper ideal representative of Turkish man, he saves a woman harassed by some men, probably Christians. These men in the *han* are all represented as evil, so do not hesitate to harass women or kill them. They all laugh and speak loudly and eat and drink rudely. For Malkoçoğlu, this fight is a rehearsal of future battles. Then, he disguises himself as a Spanish pirate named Ojeda and infiltrates into the court of Lucio. There, he sleeps with Anna de Cordoba, an evil Spanish woman and a collaborator of Lucio. In fact, the women of other are always attracted by Malkoçoğlu's bravery and handsomeness. In *Cem Sultan*, even the woman who is tied and has swords and finally an ax thrown at her by Şeytan Omerro yells at Malkoçoğlu and wants him to save her after she sees him. This means, even the women of other want Malkoçoğlu's help against their own evil people. These, of course, strengthen Malkoçoğlu's charisma in the eyes of the audience and allow him to belittle the enemy through their women. For example, when he is brought to prison as being tortured by Lucio, who tied him to the back of his horse and then dragged him, Anna de Cordoba asks him to be hers and so get whatever status or rank he wants. Here, the reaction of Malkoçoğlu fits nicely into the depiction of the ideal nationalist Turkish warrior. He spits in her face, calling her a whore and saying that even the dead bodies of Turks cannot be slaves to her. This scene reduces the enemy to an evil woman and gets the Turks' revenge by referring to her sexuality.

#### **5.4.3.4. Women:**

At this point, a different representation is Jitan, a woman from bandits in *Cem Sultan*. When she meets Malkoçoğlu in a *han*, she removes her clothing, saying that she wants to heal Malkoçoğlu because she is aware of how hard the lives of raiders are, and all raiders need a woman. Malkoçoğlu, however, refuses her by covering her body with a piece of cloth and



saying, “you will catch a cold” (20:20). This reaction is unique compared to other raiders in other films, but on the other hand, it is understandable given the film’s emphasis on family and family values. Besides, Jitan could be considered a good external other because she helps Malkoçoğlu’s men in the fight and consoles Melek when Polat decides to continue fighting for Omerro’s castle. The other good external other is again a woman, and this kind of representation of the good external other through women could be related to the filmmakers’ subtle talent to preparing the audience for the possibility of a sudden belittling of the enemy through their women. They might have also aimed at showing the good women of other in need of Turkish heroes. This second external other is Elena in *Kara Korsan (The Black Pirate)*. She is helped by Malkoçoğlu and his men in her fight against Lucio, who is her cousin and betrothed. She is the leader of the rebels of Ainos who want to overthrow the rule of the Inquisition and want to be dominated by Turks. She hates Lucio because “he sold his fatherland and his people” (1:00:49) to the Inquisition. This great cause of Elena is presented at the same time with her falling in love with Malkoçoğlu. Then, she fights with Malkoçoğlu as if she is a Turkish woman and kills Anna de Cordoba. This makes her qualified enough to be Malkoçoğlu’s lover at the end of the film.

Furthermore, good women around Malkoçoğlu are always good fighters. In *Cem Sultan*, his wife Zühre and Melek, Polat’s beloved, are masters of swords. Both threaten the enemy by showing how brave they are and killing some of them. Melek, later, becomes almost a part of the army and says, “let us hit them, brothers” (1:11:20)<sup>683</sup> to Turkish soldiers in the last fighting scenes in Omerro’s castle while holding a sword in hand. The discourses these characters utilize as well as their skills show that Turkish women are as heroic as Turkish men. This representation, of course, reproduces once more the myth of the warrior nation.

#### **5.4.3.5. The Others and Religion:**

Malkoçoğlu humiliates the enemy also through their men of religion. In *Kara Korsan (The Black Pirate)*, when he is in Lucio's court disguised as a Spanish pirate, he gets into a discussion with a priest about punishment methods used by the Inquisition. He says that putting people on top of pyres and burning them cannot be a sacred religious goal. The priest, however, declares that the lives of three to five people do not matter for cleansing spirits, and they are, in fact, cutting gangrened limbs. The priest's answer reveals the Inquisition’s cruelty to Malkoçoğlu, who thinks that the Inquisition uses religion to mask ruthless colonial ambitions.

---

<sup>683</sup> “Vurun kardeşler”

As a result, when his real identity is released, Malkoçoğlu forcefully takes a priest's clothes to hide. In this scene, the audience sees the priest as naked and crying. With this humiliating scene, the Turkish hero takes not only the revenge of Turks but also the Christians of Ainos who are oppressed by the colonialist Inquisition. In this example, to push it a little bit far, Malkoçoğlu does not only fight against some cruel enemies, but he also fights to eliminate colonial powers. This burdens his heroic identity with the duty of even saving Christians from colonialism. He does this by reinstating Turkish order to Ainos. The message, therefore, reproduces the myth of national mission and could be again interpreted within the context of *Pax Turcica*, in which Turks are benevolent conquerors and conquer different territories because they have this God-given mission of bringing peace, order, and tranquility to the world.

As opposed to the Christian priest figure, Yunus Baba (Yunus the Father) is in *Kara Korsan (The Black Pirate)*. He is an old blacksmith living in Ainos; he is also the Muslim community leader there. Here it should be noted that the Turkic Ergenekon legend probably inspired the filmmakers according to which Turks, led by Asena, a grey wolf, were able to release from the Ergenekon valley, where they had been trapped for four centuries, as a blacksmith melted the mountain made up of iron. Relying on this, it could be argued that Yunus Baba, with his wisdom and experience, is seen as the liberator of the Turks of Ainos. This depiction reminds me of Giradet's Cincinnatus. Yunus is, then, captured by Lucio's men. While he is being tortured, Lucio wants him to convert to Christianity, but Yunus Baba says, "Islam is the true religion for God. Jesus Christ, whom you claim to be the disciple of ordered Christianity by healing the sick and giving you miracles. You, however, destroyed the aims and orders of the true religion of Jesus and used religion as a tool for your own interests. Therefore, those who intervene in the relationship between God and the believer, who tyrannize in the name of religion, are always in iniquity and heresy" (52:04-52:28).<sup>684</sup> In these lines, Yunus Baba, although he is a Muslim leader, warns Lucio and his men about Christianity and accuses them of misusing religion and hence not following the orders of Jesus Christ. Here the underlying message could be the reproduction of the myth of the other through the attempt to separate some good others from the bad ones.

In this regard, Yunus Baba does not say anything bad against all Christians, but only to those who 'misuse' it by limiting the extent of the other. In fact, adopting an utterly anti-

---

<sup>684</sup> "Tanrı katında Hak dini Müslümanlıktır, mensubu olduğunuzu iddia ettiğiniz o Hazreti İsa ki hastalara şifa vererek mucizeler göstererek Hristiyanlığı buyurdu. Sizler İsa'nın Hak dininin gayelerini ve emirlerini bozup kendi çıkarlarınıza alet ettiniz. Tanrı ile kul arasına girenler din uğruna zulüm yapanlar her an günah ve sapkınlık içindedirler."

Christian discourse could be carrying the potential of being criticized due to the challenge towards Turkey's international politics that depended upon alliances with different countries. In fact, Turks are there not only to save Turks but also to save oppressed Christians. In this context, the Christian prisoners kept by the Inquisition are depicted in a too desperate situation. They are in prison for days, are all very crowded, and have to struggle with hunger. In one scene, a group of Christian prisoners kill a rat to eat it. Yunus Baba advises those to be patient even in these miserable conditions caused by the Inquisition. Even while he is tied to a wheel for torture, he starts to recite azan loudly in another scene. In fact, this is one of the most dramatic scenes of the film. Azan is followed by the Shahadah as Christian prisoners all convert to Islam. In the end, when Yunus Baba and the prisoners, including Elena, the betrothed of Lucio and the leader of the rebels, are about to burn at the stake, Yunus recites azan again; the prisoners accompany him, Elena also converts. Then, in an exceptionally aggressive way, Lucio says, "Die! The flames of hell are waiting for you. Die!" (1:20:52).<sup>685</sup> He is followed by the Father, who, laughing loudly, states, "you the five-time God of the Muslims, where is God of Muslims?" (1:21:49).<sup>686</sup> Anna de Cordoba then laughs loudly and says, "If you have God and if your God has power, let Him save you" (1:21:58).<sup>687</sup> These statements increase the tension, and finally, a strong thunder sound is heard as the voice of God. The sound of azan blends with that sound. A heavy rain starts, and all prisoners are rescued. Here, the message given to the audience is that God also supports the Turkish national mission.

What needs to be taken carefully is that the hero's great cause in this film has a much more religious tone than the other ones previously mentioned. Therefore, the film could be interpreted as the precursor of the 1970s films, which predominantly have a religious emphasis. This is supported by Malkoçoğlu putting a green flag similar to that of Saudi Arabia with Arabic script on the walls of Omerro's castle in *Cem Sultan*. Although the Saudi flag's similarity could be coincidental, the religious tones are quite significant that did not exist in many of the nationalist action-adventure films with historical settings made in the second half of the 1960s. Thus, with all their emphasis on traditional values, family, land, and Islam, these two films taking place in the time of Bayezid II and shot in the late 1960s, take us to the films of the next decade in which the Islamic component of the hero's identity is in the forefront.

---

<sup>685</sup> "Geberin, cehennemin alevleri sizi bekliyor, geberin."

<sup>686</sup> "Ey Müslümanların beş vakitlik Allahı, neredesin?"

<sup>687</sup> "Eğer Tanrınız varsa, Tanrınızın gücü varsa kurtarsın sizi."

#### 5.4.4. Main Points:

There are seven available films that are about the Ottoman Empire produced between 1965-1971. One of them depicts the Orhan Ghazi period of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. There are four about the reign of Mehmet II, so the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The other two are on Bayezid II, Mehmet II's son, who reigned between the late 15<sup>th</sup> and early 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. The emphasis here is on the Ottoman Empire's ascendancy period, reproducing the golden age myth and complying with the Turkish History Thesis. Suleiman the Magnificent, unlike the films of the 1970s, never appears in this picture. In fact, since the 1950s, the audience witnesses the cinematic stretching of the Ottoman emphasis. That is, first İstanbul's conquest, which is an unignorable fact and the capital of the empire that is still within the borders of the contemporary Republic, was narrated. Then, his other conquests in the Balkans, basically the period after the conquest of İstanbul, became a subject matter in 1965-1971. This period was also interested in Bayezid II, mostly not to praise but criticize him. In the 1970s, in parallel to the rising aggressiveness in the country, films depict Suleiman the Magnificent's success in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore, there is extension of the subject matter, and the years between 1965 and 1971 constitutes a transition period.

Another point to note is that the films mentioned in this part consider the Ottoman Empire to be a Turkish empire. In this context, the word 'Ottoman' is not even used, and instead of it, 'Turk' is used. This also fits into the Turkish History Thesis. The increasing use of traditional outfits visually completes the Turkishness of the empire's people visually. Turkish women have headscarves and colorful loose dresses made of unique fabrics with easily identifiable Turkish motifs. This could be an attempt to emphasize ethnic and religious identity more strongly, and this increased in the 1970s.

Like many other films, the enemies are Christian, and the battlefields are in Europe. The interesting point, however, is that the films always distinguish Christians within themselves. There are always some influential good Christians, such as the dethroned Serbian king, who collaborate with the Turkish side against the other Christians. In fact, Christian people are good, too, although their ruler could be evil. Therefore, the boundaries with the Christians are not drawn as clear-cut black lines. To be more specific, the others are mostly either Byzantine commanders or Catholic rulers, and soldiers fight in the name of the Spanish Inquisition. There is an unknown enemy named Evil Omerro, but the audience automatically groups him with the absolute others due to his collaboration with them. However, his depiction in *Malkoçoğlu Cem Sultan* is still vague compared to the enemies of the 1970s. Apart from that, civilian Catholics are always portrayed as good. Here the Byzantine adversary is understandable not only because

of the absolute hatred between the Ottomans and Byzantine and the audience's already existing familiarity but also because of its non-existence today. For filmmakers, it must be easier to deal with because the Byzantine Empire does not live anymore. Here, it should also be noted that contemporary Greeks and Byzantine are never connected in any of these films made before 1971.

Besides, in *Kara Korsan (The Black Pirate)*, the choice of the Spanish Inquisition as the external enemy, which had brutalized non-Catholic parts of Europe as from the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, is interesting yet strategical. Malkoçoğlu's fight against it is legitimized because he aims to save not only the Muslims of Ainos, but also the oppressed Christians from the hands of the Inquisition. This reproduces the myth of national mission by making Turks the saviors of Christians, and hence benevolent conquerors. This is a valuable and legitimate mission in the European world and helps the Turks to gain a civilization and peace bringer status. When taken together with the previous section, it can be said that the hero arrives from Central Asia by fighting against barbarian tribes, which also attack Europeans. Now, in Europe, he defeats all those enemies destroying Europe. As a result, the Turks deserve a legitimate place as a member of European civilization. This argument nurtures the Turkish History Thesis. Besides, the warrior comes to Byzantium and then to the Balkans through Serbia and Ainos. This journey is an indication of future symbolic attempts to take revenge for the loss of the Balkan lands, which created a significant trauma in Turkish nationalist minds.

Furthermore, a prevalent depiction is that the warriors always support and collaborate with the legitimate but dethroned rulers of the other against the novel and evil one. The other scenario in which the warriors serve to the legitimate heir to the Ottoman throne is also possible as it is shown in Kılıçaslan in *Vatan Kurtaran Aslan (The Lion that Saved the Fatherland)* and Malkoçoğlu in *Cem Sultan*. In the first, Kılıçaslan fights for Murat, who is the appointed heir of the Ottoman throne. In the latter film, an interesting narrative arises, and Malkoçoğlu helps Cem Sultan fight against the crowned Bayezid II. This makes the movie a rare example and reveals that the question of who the legitimate leader is occupies a significant place in nationalist mythmaking. In this regard, Bayezid II might not be considered sufficiently legitimate because his period is associated with stagnation, and the filmmakers, as mythmakers, might have wanted to create a linear perspective which takes Mehmet II, who could be considered as an Alexander type of leader in Girardet's categorization, as the peak.

The last significant point is that there are no internal enemies except for Prince Halil and Prince İbrahim, the other sons of Orhan Ghazi in *Vatan Kurtaran Aslan (The Lion that Saved the Fatherland)*. Even Rüstem Pasha of *Malkoçoğlu Cem Sultan*, who first supports

Bayezid II, therefore, could be a candidate for an internal enemy, later appreciates the bravery of Malkoçoğlu and other raiders. This representation may work to absolutize the ruler, strengthen the national warrior, and present the Turkish society without any disagreements by reproducing the myth of national homogeneity. This narrative is a remnant of the early 1960s, which, however, changes in the 1970s.

### **5.5. The Pre-Ottoman Islamic Warrior in the 1970s:**

#### **5.5.1. A General Look: *Battal Ghazi*:**

Among all the other available action/adventure films with Turkish-Islamic heroes of the 1970s, the *Battal Ghazi* series consisting of four films are the only ones that insert nationalist political myths into the 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> centuries, an Islamic period predating the Ottomans. These four films are *Battal Gazi Destanı* (*The Legend of Battal Ghazi*, dir. Atıf Yılmaz, 1971), *Battal Gazi'nin İntikamı* (*The Revenge of Battal Ghazi*, dir. Natuk Baytan, 1972), *Savulun Battal Gazi Geliyor* (*Get out of the way, Battal Ghazi is coming*, dir. Natuk Baytan, 1973), and *Battal Gazi'nin Oğlu* (*Battal Ghazi's Son*, dir. Natuk Baytan, 1974). As the titles imply, the warrior is Battal Ghazi. What distinguishes his adventures from the action/adventure films of the previous period is the strong, intense, and even excessive use of religious symbols. In the series, everything takes place against the backdrop of Muslim symbols such as azan, prayer, declarations of Islamic confession of faith of those Christians converting to Islam, green and yellow flags with Arabic scripts on them carried by ghazis on the one hand; chapels, priests, flags with crosses, crucifixions of rebellious ones, Baptist rituals, medieval punishments like those employed for those found guilty such as burning at stake and the Catherine wheel on the other. This means the nationalist political myths *Battal Ghazi* films all emerge in a context defined by the Muslims' fight against Christians. In connection to that, the Muslim component of the hero's identity is much more strongly emphasized than his Turkish side, making *Battal Ghazi* unique among all the other heroes mentioned so far.

##### **5.5.1.1. The Warrior and His Mission:**

Thus, *Battal Ghazi* is a Muslim raider; basically, a ghazi reproducing the myth of the national warrior with a strong attachment to his religious identity. However, the depiction of his ethnic identity has some interesting aspects, probably because of the 1970s' political context. Except for the last film *Battal Gazi'nin Oğlu* (*Battal Ghazi's Son*), Battal is mentioned as Turcoman, contrary to other protagonists whose Turkish identity is emphasized. For instance, in *Battal Gazi Destanı* (*The Legend of Battal Ghazi*), Battal is humiliated by the Byzantine

Emperor Leon with the words “ignoble Turcoman.” Similar wording is also used by Testor, the Commander of Amorion Castle, who calls Battal as “hairless Turcoman” due to his young age and seemingly inexperienced nature. This kind of reference to ‘Turcomanness’ never exists in other films of this kind. His Turkishness is only raised in the last film *Battal Gazi’nin Oğlu* (*Battal Ghazi’s Son*), through which his mother and some slaves he saves from Byzantine are identified as Turkish. Besides, Karagülle, who is originally a Byzantine prince but raised by Turks because he had been switched with Battal’s son when he was a baby, calls himself Turkish despite discovering his real identity. From the first to the last film, this identity ‘transfer’ from ‘Turcoman’ to ‘Turkish’ pops up without any change in the representations of enemies and Battal himself. Besides, there is continuity in terms of actors and actresses. This probably makes the transfer less recognizable by the audience. Despite that, it makes sense given the zeitgeist of 1974, which was the Cyprus Peace Operation’s date and the year the last film was produced. For the filmmakers and audience of 1974, ‘Turk’ must have sounded a less complicated and much simpler category of identification. In this context, in the films, a Muslim-Christian conflict turns into a Turkish-Byzantine one, which could also be perceived as a Turkish-Greek conflict. Therefore, ‘Turkishness’ instead of ‘Turcomanness’ could be much more helpful in reproducing nationalist political myths during a time of a crisis roughly between Turks and Greeks. It should also be noted that whenever the word ‘Turk’ is used, it is always accompanied by the word ‘Muslim.’ To exemplify, in *Battal Gazi’nin Oğlu* (*Battal Ghazi’s Son*), Karagülle defines himself as “Turkish and Muslim,” and Turkish slaves are not only Turkish but, in fact, “Turkish and Muslim.” This could also indicate a strong emphasis on Muslimness as a significant defining feature of the ideal nationalist warrior of the early 1970s.

At this point, Battal Ghazi’s debated ethnic origin in Turkish historiography could be relevant to understand his indecisive representation. The character could be considered as a direct reference to an actual Muslim warrior(s) named Abdullah Battal Ghazi, who fought against Byzantium mostly in Malatya in Central Turkey in the 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> centuries during the time of either the Umayyads or the Abbasids, both of which were Arab empires.<sup>688</sup> This warrior’s heroic activities are the focus of *Battalname* (The Book of Battal), which is a collection of epic stories circulating in Anatolia both in oral and written forms since the 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries. These stories are also associated with the Seljuks. Besides, there is another source

---

<sup>688</sup> Pertev Naili Boratav, “Battal,” *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Vol.2, (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1979), 344; Mehmed Fuad Köprülü, *Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi* (İstanbul: Ötüken Yayınları, 1980), 255; Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, “Battal Gazi,” *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, Vol. 5 (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 1992), 204.

from the same period named *Danışmendname* (Book of the Danishmend), which is about Melik Danishmend Ahmed Ghazi's activities, the founder of the Danishmends, a Turkic *beylik* ruling Malatya and its surroundings.<sup>689</sup> Consequently, some sources mention Battal as an Arab,<sup>690</sup> and some others consider him as Turkish.<sup>691</sup> Those various references to different ethnic origins of real Battal Ghazi(s) might be a cause of his unique representation. In this context, given the unfolding Cyprus issue in 1974, filmmakers probably did not hesitate to put Battal's identity as Turkish. And in fact, this 'translation' or 'transfer' of Battal must have significantly worked to reproduce nationalist political myths on the way of creating a raider ghazi image in Anatolia as a role model to justify Turkish-Islamic domination of Anatolia before the Ottoman Empire.<sup>692</sup>

Nevertheless, Battal Ghazi is the *serdar* (commander-in-chief) of Malatya principality and receives orders from Omer Beg, the principality's ruler. This beg is old, wise, and calm and, in this sense, different from Mehmet II's representation mentioned so far. He resembles the portrayal of Suleiman the Magnificent in *Malkoçoğlu Kurt Bey*. However, the difference with Suleiman is that neither his court nor himself is portrayed as ostentatious as Suleiman; everything is rather humble, probably because he is a beg and the other is a Sultan. On the other hand, Ömer Beg is also just and fair like all 'our' rulers presented in films. For instance, in *Savulun Battal Gazi Geliyor* (*Get out of the way, Battal Ghazi is coming*), he never favors Battal's son when old Battal wants his son to become his replacement as the new commander-in-chief. Instead, he says the son should also prove himself first (0:12-0:22). Then, unsurprisingly, since warriorship is in all Turks' blood, the son becomes the new commander after defeating his rivals. In fact, Battal's father, Hüseyin Ghazi in *Battal Gazi Destanı* (*The Legend of Battal Ghazi*), Battal himself, Battal's son Seyyid Battal Ghazi and Seyyid Battal Ghazi's son, so Battal Ghazi's grandson all succeed to become commander in chiefs of Malatya principality as if validating the myth of warrior nation. This familial continuity is also reinforced with the use of the same actor as the hero, Cüneyt Arkın, in all four films. This tactic, which could depend on economic choices or the audience's demand, enables the audience to perceive different characters as one great warrior automatically. Therefore, for the purposes of

<sup>689</sup> The early Ottomans were also familiar with these epic collections. The tomb of Battal Ghazi near Eskisehir was very close to Söğüt (known to be the birthplace of the Ottoman beylik (and the tomb had already become a sort of pilgrimage destination by the end of the twelfth century. *Danışmendname*: <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/danismendname>

<sup>690</sup> Boratav, "Battal," 344; Marius Canard, 'al-Battal,' in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, eds. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. Van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs (2012), [http://dx.do.org/10.1163/1573-3912\\_islam\\_SIM\\_1288](http://dx.do.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_1288).

<sup>691</sup> Vecdi Yarman, "Behçet Kemal Çağlar Gözü ile Seyyid Battal Gazi," *Eskişehir I. Seyyid Battal Gazi Bilimsel Semineri 22-24 Eylül 1977 Bildiriler* (Eskişehir: Eskişehir Turizm ve Tanıtma Yayınları, 1977), 120.

<sup>692</sup> A. Nuri Yurdusev, "Ottoman Conceptions of War and Peace in the Classical Period, in *Just Wars, Holy Wars & Jihads: Christian, Jewish and Muslim Encounters and Exchanges*, ed. Shoail H Hashmi (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 194.



the current dissertation, I preferred to mention all these different men of the same family, sometimes as one person.

Nevertheless, the narrative continuities in the Battal series might be giving the message about the continuity of the Muslim rule in Anatolia through generations by strengthening the myth of ethnic and/or religious continuity of the people and territory of Malatya through different generations. Here, the myth of the warrior nation is reproduced as identifying the nation as one great family and considering military skills as transferred from one generation to the next. In fact, among all the other heroes, Battal Ghazi is the only one whose family lineage is depicted in such an extended and clear way. In this context, the representative of each generation is the inheritor of his ancestor's skills and experience. It first happens through the training that the son receives from his father. For example, one of the two trainers of the little Battal around the age of ten, whose name is yet Cafer, is his father, Hüseyin Ghazi, in *Battal Gazi Destanı (The Legend of Battal Ghazi)*. Thanks to this training, Battal becomes very good at using swords, shooting arrows, and horse riding with acrobatic and athletic moves. *Battal Gazi'nin İntikamı (The Revenge of Battal Ghazi)* includes a similar depiction, too. It starts with adult Battal training his son to use swords. His son is seven or eight years old and quite talented like the little Battal in the previous film. At this point, it should not be ignored that these scenes in which little boys are being trained by certain 'masters' or 'playing war' with their friends of the same age by sometimes using wooden swords are pretty standard in Turkish nationalist action/adventure films. While reproducing the myth of the warrior nation, these scenes convey the idea that fighting is an innate characteristic of the Turkish nation, and all men are born as soldiers.

#### **5.5.1.2. Children and Fathers:**

The representation of children in Battal Ghazi films is noteworthy. First, it should be pointed out that there are no portrayals of little girls, and women appear only in some cases, as will be mentioned in the following pages. Nevertheless, since the core of national identity is accepted as immutable by the essentialist perspective, Turkish-Muslim boys are always taken to be aware of their identities since their birth. A striking example of that is the portrayal of Seyyid Battal Ghazi's son in *Battal Gazi'nin Oğlu (Battal Ghazi's Son)*. This boy is switched by Byzantine emperor Antuan's wife because she has lost her baby and is terrified of her husband. Thus, the switched Battal is brought up as a Christian and the son of the emperor. However, since he is originally Muslim, he does not really fit into the environment he lives in. For example, when he is just a baby, he rejects being breastfed by his so-called mother as if he

knows she is Christian. In fact, he only accepts to be fed by a wet nurse who is Muslim and, surprisingly, his birth mother. When he is around seven or eight years old, he prefers to spend time with his wet nurse only and listen to stories told by her at his bedtime instead of attending lectures given by a priest tutoring both himself and his sister Irene. Besides, the young Battal symbolically takes all Muslims' revenge by degrading the priest to a laughable object. During one of the lectures that the priest is giving, Battal and Irene attach a donkey drawing onto the priest's back. This happens not because he instinctively understands that the wet nurse is his mother, but because he hates priests as in one scene, he says: "Do not leave me wet-nurse (*süt nine*), I do not want to see the dirty face of the priest. One day when I grow up, I will cut the heads of all priests" (20:16-20:56).<sup>693</sup> These lines support the essentialist idea that Turkishness and Muslimness never change, and even little children are aware of who they are since their identities are in their blood. This could be why the filmmaker did not feel the need to provide Battal's Christian name. Complementing this, at one point, the young Battal says to Irene, "I have had a strange feeling inside since my childhood. I am disturbed by these clothes, this palace, even the knighthood rank." (25:36-25:48).<sup>694</sup> Unsurprisingly, Battal can never get along with his emperor father. For him, his father is evil because he kills unarmed people. Therefore, Battal even helps Turkish prisoners of war escape, and these prisoners think that "the boy is as strong as Turks, his heart is as clean as Muslim, but he looks like a Byzantine" (33:40-33:48).<sup>695</sup> Here, with his clean heart and strength, Battal creates question marks in the minds of Turks. Besides, to look from the other side of the medallion, what Battal does is never perceived as a betrayal because the betrayal is done for the sake of the Turkish-Muslim side. In fact, this is why before learning who his birth father is, he has already decided to leave Byzantium to join Muslim raiders, again because it is already in his blood.

The blood, family lineage, and fatherhood all emerge as very significant concepts defining the background of Battal's fight because they are considered as the guarantors and guardians of Turkish-Muslim continuity in Anatolia. In line with this, all Battal(s) adore their fathers and are therefore very respectful to them. In *Battal Gazi'nin Oğlu* (*Battal Ghazi's Son*), The Byzantine Emperor Antuan says, continuing his lineage is more important than being a father. As a result, he does not have a sincere relationship either with his wife or his children. Besides, nobody feels sympathetic to him since he is evil and wants to forcefully control his

<sup>693</sup> "Bırakma beni süt nine, o papazın pis suratını görmek istemiyorum ben. Bir gün büyüyünce bütün papazların kafasını keseceğim."

<sup>694</sup> "Nedense Irene çocukluğumdan beri acayip bir his var içimde. Bu elbiseler, bu saray, hatta şövalyelik rütbesi bile rahatsız ediyor beni."

<sup>695</sup> "Bileği Türk kadar kuvvetli, yüreği Müslüman kadar temiz; ama görüntüsü Bizanslı"

people and family. Not only Karagülle, his real son replaced by Battal and has already been raised as a Muslim, but even Irene, who falls in love with Battal and changes her religion after finding out that she is not Karagülle's biological sister, leaves their emperor father at the end. If nation is a family, that disjointed Byzantine family could also be considered a representation of a nation or religion that is doomed to extinction.

It is also interesting that child Battal(s) want to be more potent than their fathers. This, on the one hand, fits well into the warlike and competitive nature of the boys, which may be beneficial in war. On the other hand, it is not acceptable for the oppressive political atmosphere of the early 1970s. The younger generation had no longer been considered the proper inheritors of the regime's values due to the radicalized social movements, particularly student movements in the late 1960s. In this context, the ideal son or the ideal warrior-to-be should not be a competitor of his father who could even defeat his father one day, but a follower who follows his father's footsteps in all his ideals and actions. Here the father may also be interpreted as the protector of authority and state order. An answer to the rebellious, disobedient generation comes from the wife of Battal and his son's mother in *Battal Gazi'nin İntikamı* (*The Revenge of Battal Ghazi*), who says to her little son that if he raises his hand against his father, his hand will turn into stone. The mother draws limits to his son and corrects him. The boy, then, gets the message and says: "May God turn me into stone if I do this" (02:50-03:19). He swears that he will not rebel against authority. This is the ideal answer from an ideal warrior-to-be in 1970s Turkey.

Despite this emphasis on ancestors and ancestral connections, there comes a moment when the authority must be left in the younger generation's hands. It happens in *Battal Gazi Destanı* when the Byzantines murder Hüseyin Ghazi and the little Battal swears to take his father's revenge and become the new commander-in-chief of Malatya. Thus, the little Battal, is now on the ideal path of inheriting the bliss of his ancestor. In paving this path, his duty is to fulfill the gap left by Hüseyin Ghazi, not to follow an independent and selfish direction. And he gets this duty with his father's death, not by challenging him. In *Battal Gazi'nin İntikamı* (*The Revenge of Battal Ghazi*) too, the father gives him the duty and defines it. When Battal leaves the village to help Ahmet Turani, his warrior friend, he says, "we cannot leave your mother without any man" (07:50-08:02),<sup>696</sup> when the boy wants to join him in the battle. Here, the son is assigned by his father to the household in his absence. Thus, only when the father is absent, the son could take charge to protect the household established by the father. An analogy of this could be that the younger generation can say when the state allows them to do. Hence,

---

<sup>696</sup> "Annemi erkeksiz bırakamayız."

the youth can voice their ideas within limits defined by the father state and can never diverge from the path inherited from their ancestors. In this regard, both Battal in the first film and his son in the second are suitable role models for the young audience. Through these boys, the new generation is advised to be loyal and obedient warriors complying with the oppressive political atmosphere of the early 1970s that followed a decade of flowering social movements.

In this setting, Battal's personal life, which portrays him as a settled man with a family, is never independent of the political context. His cause and the Muslims' cause always unite. For example, in *Battal Gazi Destanı* (*The Legend of Battal Ghazi*), although Battal sets the road to take his father's revenge, he also fights in the Muslims' name against Christians of the Amorion Castle of Byzantium who do not pay their taxes under their new ruler. In *Battal Gazi'nin İntikamı* (*The Revenge of Battal Ghazi*), the same enemy imprisons Battal's son and burns his wife. Similarly, Battal's son Seyid Battal Ghazi fights to save his imprisoned father and avenge his sister raped by the enemy in *Savulun Battal Gazi Geliyor* (*Get out of the way, Battal Ghazi is coming*). The last movie, *Battal Gazi'nin Oğlu* (*Battal Ghazi's Son*), tells the story of Seyid Battal Ghazi's son, who runs after the enemy because the enemy has attacked his village and murdered his heroic father that has tried to distract the enemy's attention by tying himself onto the gate of the town. Thus, Battal(s) always have a personal cause to fight. Indeed, this does not mean that he only pursues his selfish interest; in fact, what happens to Battal and his family is like a microcosm of what happens to the Muslim community of Malatya. As a result, his personal matter becomes a greater political one originating from a general background of the Muslim-Christian conflict. Thus, in *Battal Gazi Destanı* (*The Legend of Battal Ghazi*), while stabbing the castle commander with seventeen sword strikes complying with the number of sword-strikes that killed his father, Battal says that these strikes are also for the people of Malatya terrorized by Byzantium. This kind of a setting in which personal and political fuse into each other strengthens the aggressiveness of anti-Christian political discourse. Then, the film's message against Christians becomes much easier to be understood by the early 1970s audience, whose chances of empathy probably increased.

Thus, the background of Battal Ghazi stories is mainly formed by Muslim-Christian fights over the domination of Anatolia in the 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> centuries. Several Christian rulers in different scenes raise the goals of the enemy. For example, Andrea Alfonso, the commander of Amorion Castle in *Battal Gazi'nin İntikamı* (*The Revenge of Battal Ghazi*), declares that he will not put his swordback into its case until no Muslim is left beheaded in Anatolia (04:38-04:44).<sup>697</sup>

---

<sup>697</sup> Antuan says: "Anadolu'da kellesi kesilmemiş tek bir Müslüman kalmayıncaya kadar bu kılıç kınına girmeyecek."

As a follow up to that, in the last film *Battal Gazi'nin Oğlu* (*Battal Ghazi's Son*), the Byzantine emperor Antuan says he declares himself “the only and unchangeable ruler of the Great Christian state which will last forever in Anatolia before the God and my subjects” (06:05-06:18).<sup>698</sup> In this context, Battal emerges as a Muslim warrior that protects Anatolia from Christianization. At that point, the side of Battal's mission that is hugely significant for Turkish nationalist discourse comes up: his attachment to a particular territory, Anatolia. This reproduces the myth of ethnic continuity on the national territory by presenting Anatolia as the land of Turkish-Muslims. From that perspective, Battal contributes to de-Christianization and so Islamification and Turkification of Anatolia.

### 5.5.1.3. *The Homeland:*

To put it clearly, Battal's Anatolia is Malatya, which has been ruled by Muslims since the 12<sup>th</sup> century, first by the Seljukids and later by the Ottomans. Despite its ancient Armenian past,<sup>699</sup> Malatya does not have a Christian connotation in the contemporary national memory. Therefore, probably nothing about a specific demographic heterogeneity in Malatya pops up in the audience's minds. Nevertheless, Battal's Malatya is basically a traditional Turkish village with simple wooden houses, beautiful gardens, and green fields. In *Battal Gazi'nin İntikamı* (*The Revenge of Battal Ghazi*), the audience also sees green and plain feast areas where feasts are going on. The feasts are represented as crowded, vivid, and joyful events adorned with folk music played by folk instruments such as drums and zurna besides wrestling contests, all enjoyed by the local people, some of which are having rest in triangular nomadic tents. As complementary to their surroundings, these people are all dressed up in traditional Turkish folk clothes meaning that men have shalwar, women have headscarves, colorful loose dresses made up of unique fabrics with easily identifiable Turkish motifs. The scenes are all very bright and very Turkish for those who are familiar with Turkish culture. All these representations lead to an emotional attachment of the audience to their territory by reinforcing the myth of homeland. The message here is that this beautiful land belongs to these lovely people, so the people are as beautiful as the homeland. Besides, Battal also goes to the frontiers to train his son or be trained

<sup>698</sup> “Ben Antuan. Tanrının ve kullarının önünde kendimi Anadolu topraklarının üzerinde sonsuzluğa kadar sürecek Büyük Hristiyan Devleti'nin tek ve değişmez hakimi olarak ilan ediyorum.”

<sup>699</sup> Laurent Dissard, “Between Exposure and Erasure: The Armenian Heritage of Arapgir in Present-Day Eastern Turkey,” *Études Arméniennes Contemporaines*, No. 8, (2016): 25-49. A blog post of Armenian Community Council of the United Kingdom explains the Armenian past of Malatya: “Malatya: Post-Armenian life in modern Turkey's once Armenian city” <http://www.accc.org.uk/malatya-post-armenian-life-in-modern-turkeys-once-armenian-city/>

by his father, Hüseyin Ghazi. These training areas are shown as endless empty fields without any trees or houses. The audience, however, knows that they are somewhat close to the enemy lands because, in *Battal Gazi Destanı (The Legend of Battal Ghazi)*, Hüseyin Ghazi is murdered when he left the training area to circumvent the tomb of Süleyman Ghazi in the hands of the enemies. Hüseyin Ghazi is buried in that kind of a place, too, far away from the settlement area. It could be a sign of the vastness of the space belonging to Muslims. And in that narrative, Hüseyin Ghazi sheds his blood for this land. Then, the little Battal prays and swears near his father's grave that he will grow up to take his revenge. The grave is next to a very young and thin tree, and Battal says his father's blood will make this tree grow up. This whole representation emphasizes the sacredness of the national territory and reproduces the myth of homeland.

#### **5.5.1.4. The Enemy's Land:**

The land of the enemy can be divided into two parts: the outside and inside of the Amorion Castle. The castle's outer world is mainly represented as a land of rocks and mountains, contrary to the beautiful green fields of the Muslims. In *Battal Gazi Destanı (The Legend of Battal Ghazi)*, Battal and the Byzantine warrior Hammer fight through nights and days on an arid and barren land next to some rocks. The only different representation can be found in the scene in which Battal meets Elenora, a Byzantine princess, and his future wife. These two lovers meet where Battal rests with his horse, a secluded place near a beautiful river in the woods. This representation exalts the love between Battal and Elenora and again makes Battal different than other freedom-loving heroes.

Moreover, on his way, the hero visits several *hans* as the other heroes. These are places of excessive food, drink, and sometimes dance and women of the other. In fact, they can be considered as a part of the manly world where men prove their masculinity against their enemies. Therefore, in these places, Battal or other heroes find an opportunity to show their bravery to the enemy because the first encounters with the enemy always take place in *hans*. At this point, what distinguishes Battal from other action/adventure heroes is that he does not sleep with the daughter of the *han* owner or any woman in the *han*. This could be related to his representation as a Muslim hero and the fact that he has been borrowed from a supposedly actual historical figure. Besides, these are also the places where the hero shows his civilized yet strong nature. For example, in *Savulun Battal Gazi Geliyor (Get out of the way, Battal Ghazi is coming)*, Battal fights with two ugly and barbarian-looking knights, one very similar to red-haired comic book heroes, because these two have oppressed another Christian to drink wine.

Here, Battal provides the signal that he always protects the oppressed. This makes his cause just.

After the *han*, Battal goes into the Castle, surrounded by giant walls. The story, then, takes place in inner spaces as opposed to ‘our’ land with beautiful green outer spaces. The castle is depicted as made up of stones and marble, therefore cold and dark. It has secret rooms with secret doors in addition to chapels. All these are decorated extravagantly with colorful flags and crosses, in contrast with the modest and wooden Muslim houses. The representation of the people living in that space complements the picture. The Byzantine soldiers are depicted to have clothes with layers of dress with protective shields besides helmets, contrary to the simple-dressed hero who fights only with his bare chest. The emperor or prince usually wears long and quite colorful robes, something only to be worn by females; they put on jewelry, their women have revealing clothes. In this representation, the enemy is pretentious, giving the false message that it is also powerful. The reality, however, is different because it does not fit into the land it inhabits, at this point, where ‘the other’ lives is a walled, limited, and human-made space whereas Muslims live in line with nature surrounded by green fields, forests, rivers, and even animals are given Battal’s friendly relationship, with his horse Aşkar. This justifies even naturalizes the Muslim hence Turkish domination of the territory by attaching Muslims to nature, so making them a natural part of the homeland. It also strengthens the idea that ‘we’ are the natural inhabitants, but the ‘others’ are all artificial while marginalizing the Byzantium presence in Anatolia.

#### 5.5.1.5. *The Others:*

The ‘unfitting’ enemies harass the land’s natural inhabitants and disrupt both people and the land’s tranquility from time to time. For example, in *Battal Gazi’nin İntikamı* (*The Revenge of Battal Ghazi*), the colorful and joyful feast area is destroyed; innocent and armless people, including women and children, are all killed in the enemy attack. *Battal Gazi’nin Oğlu* (*Battal Ghazi’s Son*) includes a scene where the enemy destroys the village while looking for Battal’s son and says that they will kill all newborn boys if Battal’s wife does not reveal herself. One of the most aggressive sequences is from *Savulun Battal Gazi Geliyor* (*Get out of the way, Battal Ghazi is coming*), in which the imam reciting azan is shot with arrows, a praying man is murdered, a pregnant lady is killed while doing her daily chores. Besides, Seyyid Battal’s sister Senem is tortured and raped, and even crucified. Likewise, *Battal Gazi’nin İntikamı* (*The Revenge of Battal Ghazi*) shows that Battal’s wife is first crucified and then burned at the stake like the Muslim slaves working in stone hearths in *Battal Gazi’nin Oğlu* (*Battal Ghazi’s Son*).

These scenes resemble medieval witchcraft practices and increase the enemy's cruelty with reference to widely known historical facts chosen from Western history. The enemy, then, is merely evil. This evil tortures men and women, imprisons children, kills innocent people without distinguishing, even kills animals, like chickens and roosters in the villages they attack.

The others are so evil that they show no mercy to their own people as well. A Byzantine princess named Isabella, having rest nearby a lake, is almost raped by the knights of Byzantium before Battal saves her in *Savulun Battal Gazi Geliyor* (*Get out of the way, Battal Ghazi is coming*). Again in the same film, the pregnant Irene is stripped, raped, and then wounded with a knife by Alfonso, a virgin Byzantine prince who wants to gain some experience before he gets married. Irene's husband, Jack, is at the same time tied to a tree, beaten and tortured, and forced to watch his wife. In a similar vein, a Christian woman is raped by Byzantine soldiers in a *han* in *Battal Gazi'nin Oğlu* (*Battal Ghazi's Son*). In *Battal Gazi Destanı* (*The Legend of Battal Ghazi*), Irene, a nun who is at the same time a friend of Elenora, is whipped by Alyon, Elenora's betrothed, and the commander when he finds out about Elenora's amorous relationship with Battal. He then calls his soldiers and says: "Take this bitch. I am giving her virginity that she devoted to God to the Byzantine army...Take her and enjoy...Then, throw her dirty flesh into a pit" (31:10).<sup>700</sup> All these too violent and disturbing scenes work well to justify the cause of Battal's fight. His fight, then, becomes much more legitimate even for the Christian world because he is also needed to save some Christians. Besides, from another perspective, the violent acts of the 'other' give Battal more reasons to respond in a much cruel way making his reaction as bloody as that of others. In all four films, he kills people, sometimes cuts their hands, beheads some, and sometimes puts their heads on spikes to show others as he does in *Battal Gazi Destanı* (*The Legend of Battal Ghazi*). The viewers see the cruelty of the other and the cruelty of 'us' without any censorship. The difference of the other's brutality is that it also includes cruelty directed against women, such as rape. The Turkish-Muslim side never does this. This could be a sign of the civilized nature of 'us' as opposed to the barbarian 'others.' Nevertheless, everything is presented in a vivid way. There are bloody heads, pumping blood out of dead bodies, and cut arms everywhere. These scenes work to increase hatred towards the 'others.' As a result, symbolic revenge is taken from Christians or maybe the Greeks involving atrocities against the Turkish Cypriot population.

---

<sup>700</sup> "Alın bu kahpeyi. Tanrıya adadığı mukaddes bekaretini Bizans ordusuna hediye ediyorum. Alın keyfinizi yapın. Pis leşini bir çukura atarsınız."



Furthermore, there is also an internal ‘other’ betraying the Muslim side. It is Abdulselam, the commander-in-chief of Malatya after Hüseyin Gazi’s death and before Battal becomes the new commander in *Battal Gazi Destanı (The Legend of Battal Ghazi)*. He is an ambitious soldier and a rival of Battal. At some point, he is bribed by Byzantine and starts spying. He also uses a black servant, probably, a slave, named Akabe, to carry a message to Byzantium about Battal’s decision to set the road to Byzantium for taking the head of the emperor Leon. This slave, however, gets caught by Battal and Ahmet Turani on his way to Byzantine. When Battal says that he will put his head on spikes due to his betrayal, Akabe gets frightened very much and dies (40:07-40:17). The natural death of the messenger is quite interesting because he is punished without Battal doing anything. However, Battal could have killed him easily. The messenger is a weak person used by Abdulselam, the internal other, and this kind of direction in the story would not be complying with Battal’s charisma, which relies on him being the protector of the oppressed as he also saves some Christians in need of help. Nevertheless, this scene adds to Battal’s charisma, power, and even masculinity by depicting his frightening impact on an Arab internal other. This fits into the myth of national superiority again. Consequently, Abdulselam fails to reach Byzantium, and in the closing scene, Battal says that he is going to Malatya back to punish Abdulselam. Here, the point is that this character is never mentioned again except for the first film *Battal Gazi Destanı (The Legend of Battal Ghazi)*. This could be related to the change in the director and scenarists, indeed not an ideological choice. To open a parenthesis, Atıf Yılmaz directed the first, and he wrote the screenplay with Ayşe Şasa. However, the other films have Natuk Baytan as the director, accompanied by Duygu Sağıroğlu as the screenplay writer. From the second group's eyes, Abdulselam’s story might complicate the narrative and create multi-layers rather than direct messages that could be easily swallowed like a pill. Therefore, filmmakers could have just omitted the character to give more direct messages to the audience.

#### **5.5.1.6. Tactics to Defeat the Enemy:**

Encountering the enemies, both external and internal, is never a big deal for Battal. As a natural member of a natural habitat, which is Anatolia, Battal enters the enemy Castle, which is, in fact, non-natural to the land, quite easily. Like the other nationalist action/adventure heroes, he uses his intelligence to infiltrate the Castle by disguising himself as somebody else. The audience first sees this in *Battal Gazi Destanı (The Legend of Battal Ghazi)*, where he takes the clothes of Akabe and paints his face in black to look like him to enter the palace. In another scene, he becomes a priest to save his warrior friend Ahmet Turani from prison and says he has

come to convert Ahmet Turani to Christianity. In *Savulun Battal Gazi Geliyor* (*Get out of the way, Battal Ghazi is coming*), Battal kills a Byzantine prince on his way, puts on his clothes, and makes the commander of the Amorion Castle believe that he is the prince. With this disguising tactic, as shown in various films, Battal shows that even one of ‘us’ could defeat the enemy because the other is inferior in terms of intelligence. This is undoubtedly a step towards imposing the national superiority of Turks.

Besides, there are instances in which Battal raises the inferiority of the enemy by using derogatory words. Here, what strikes attention is the use of sexist words that feminize hence belittle the enemy by referring to its lack of morality and power. The most used word, in this context, is “perfidious” or “whorish.” For instance, in *Battal Gazi Destanı* (*The Legend of Battal Ghazi*), when Battal first sees Elenora, he immediately falls in love with her. However, after learning that she is the emperor Leon's daughter, he says, “perfidious Byzantium, perplexed us on our very first day.”<sup>701</sup> For Battal, the Byzantine soldiers, and the bureaucrats, are all “dogs” (*kancık*) because they are all immoral and cowardly. He also says that Alyon, the commander of the castle, must be the commander of the whores, and the prostitutes in the Temple of Forty Virgins must replace his soldiers. This could be a reference to the impotence of the enemy. Again, in the same film, when Battal is killing the emperor Leon, Battal says, “You killed my father whorishly, I will kill you manly,”<sup>702</sup> (1:15:21-1:15:21) by referring to his father’s murder by three Byzantine soldiers. All these words feminize or even emasculate the enemy and reduce it to the level of immoral women to symbolically defeat or control it. Apart from this, Battal’s father, Hüseyin Gazi, calls Byzantine commanders, who attack him near the Tomb of Süleyman Gazi, as “ignorant” and “stupid” in *Battal Gazi Destanı*. (*The Legend of Battal Ghazi*)<sup>703</sup> Battal refers to Byzantine as “Byzantine crow” to make a parody of the double-headed eagle associated with the Byzantine Empire in *Battal Gazi’nin İntikamı* (*The Revenge of Battal Ghazi*). In another instance, he calls the commander Alyon “oxen head” to refer to his nickname “mad head” to belittle him. The Byzantines are also “godless pigs” (*imansız domuzlar*), “black pig” (*kara domuz*), and “mad dog” (*kuduz kopek*) in *Battal Gazi’nin İntikamı* (*The Revenge of Battal Ghazi*). All these bewildering names are for symbolic tactics to defeat the enemy by belittling it.

<sup>701</sup> “Kahpe Bizans ilk günden doğru yolu şaşırttı bize.”

<sup>702</sup> Babamı kahpece öldürdün, ben seni erkekçe öldüreceğim”.

<sup>703</sup> “Cahille budalanın ne yapacağı belli olmaz”

#### 5.5.1.7. More about the Mission of the Warrior:

Battal's youth is one of his features enabling him to defeat the 'other' despite his inexperience, similar to representations of the Central Asian hero Karaoğlu between 1965-1971. For Testor, the Commander of Amorion Castle in *Battal Gazi Destanı (The Legend of Battal Ghazi)*, Battal, is just a "hairless Turcoman." One of the knights of Maria in *Savulun Battal Gazi Geliyor (Get out of the way, Battal Ghazi is coming)*, who is a nun organizing an attack on Muslims, the fate of Anatolia is, now, in the hands of young and inexperienced Battal, who is an easy prey. What the enemies miss out here is the inner power of the warrior. Apart from his intelligence and the ability to defeat the enemy by using humiliating names, Battal has extraordinary fighting skills that he inherited from his ancestors. At this point, a small parenthesis is needed to reveal his features. When he is belittled by another Byzantine commander with the words: "ignoble Turcoman" (*sefil Türkmen*), he mocks him, saying, "you, the noble knight." Combining this with that emphasis on his youth creates Battal's image as a loyal, intelligent, young warrior with an ordinary look and a 'common man' before all. In this context, the physical strength of that 'common man' comes from his inside; whether his Turkishness or Muslimness. So that he can shoot four arrows simultaneously, attack the enemy with a sword even if he has been shot and in blood, and bend the prison's iron bars to provide a passage to his friend Ahmet Turani in prison, and can endure torture. In fact, it is not easy to kill Battal or any man of his family. Like Tarkan of *Tarkan*, in *Battal Gazi Destanı (The Legend of Battal Ghazi)*, although his bones have all been broken, he can gain his strength fully in a short period thanks to some medicine, exercise, and the confidence of people around on him. All these are made possible thanks to Battal's inner power, not merely because of his muscles or basically superhero body. In fact, this is the kind of warrior portrayed in all Turkish nationalist action/adventure films: an ordinary man with ordinary physical features who can turn out to be a hero capable of defeating even an army thanks to his national/religious identity.

Battal, basically, has a natural charisma and a talent that is born out of his identity. He uses this to fight for the Muslim community and fight for the legitimate ruler of the other. This manifests that Battal is constantly and naturally a champion of justice. This also leads to a very significant scene for understanding what mission is assigned to Battal and the Turkish-Muslim youth in general. In *Battal Gazi Destanı (The Legend of Battal Ghazi)*, Battal collaborates with Hilarion, the dethroned Emperor of Byzantium, against Leon. Since he is dethroned, Hilarion is supposed to be the legitimate ruler, and as always, the hero helps legitimate rulers. Here, why Hilarion is more legitimate than Leon is not clearly provided to the audience, but it is stated that during Hilarion's time, Byzantium has been paying taxes to Malatya, but everything has

changed after Leon replaced him. Therefore, Hilarion is a friend of Malatya because he has accepted the Muslims' supremacy in Anatolia. At the end of the film, Battal kills Leon on top of the city's walls, Leon falls off, and his crown falls from his head, too. Then, in the middle of people, including Hilarion's men, clapping their hands with joy and happiness, Ahmet Turani gives Leon's crown to Battal, and Battal puts it on the head of Hilarion. Right at this time, Battal advises Hilarion "not to diverge from the path of God and truth, and be not your people's *efendi* (master), but their servant" (1:17:27-1:17:35).<sup>704</sup> Thus, hierarchically, Battal is presented as superior to the Byzantium emperor, and so he can give him advice. This, of course, makes Ömer Beg, the beg of Malatya, is way more powerful than the emperor. Besides, Battal, in a way, brings order to Byzantium by giving the crown to its rightful owner. This representation reproduces the myths of national superiority and national mission, emphasizing Turkish-Muslims' being bringing order and civilization to the lands they conquer.

#### 5.5.1.8. *Good Others and Conversions:*

As the loyal warrior and symbol of civilization bringer Turkish-Muslim, Battal also brings Islam to the 'good' people of 'other.' Hence, the most significant religious symbol used in the Battal series is the Shahadah, which is very much heard in any of the films in this part. This is happening because there are many scenes with some Christians converting to Islam. For instance, in *Battal Gazi'nin İntikamı (The Revenge of Battal Ghazi)*, a group of prisoners who have been forced to work in stone hearths as slaves escape from Byzantine prisons together with Battal under his leadership. Then, Battal says, "this is the fight of Muslims, my Christian brothers; you can go wherever you want now" (37:04-37:11).<sup>705</sup> The Christians, however, tell that they feel indebted to Battal, and they are ready to die if Battal asks them to do.<sup>706</sup> Then, they decide to convert to Islam and stay with Battal. A striking example comes from *Savulun Battal Gazi Geliyor (Get out of the way, Battal Ghazi is coming)*, in which a priest changes his religion to Islam after witnessing Prince Alfonso's rape and murder of Irene, a Christian peasant lady. Here, both examples underlie the cruelty of the 'other.' Therefore, the 'good' Christians convert not only because of Battal's leadership and charisma but also because of the oppression they encounter. As a loyal warrior, Battal just introduces them to Islam and shows them the correct path; then, they choose this path voluntarily, not by force. This narrative, too, plays a role in legitimizing Battal's cause again.

<sup>704</sup> "Hak yolundan, doğruluk yolundan ayrılma. Halkına efendi değil, kulluk et"

<sup>705</sup> "Bu kavga Müslümanların kavgası. Artık siz Hristiyan arkadaşlar istedikleri yere gidebilirler."

<sup>706</sup> "Sana borçluyuz Battal Gazi, öl de ölelim."

The oppression of Byzantium on its own people is also represented in *Savulun Battal Gazi Geliyor* (*Get out of the way, Battal Ghazi is coming*). In the film, Maria, a Byzantine nun who also has some political goals and is responsible for recruiting knights to fight against Muslims, wants an increase in taxes taken by Byzantium from both Muslims and Christians. How Christians, too, are oppressed by taxes is shown in *Battal Gazi'nin İntikamı* (*The Revenge of Battal Ghazi*), in which a poor and old Christian woodsman complains Byzantine soldiers because they take the property of those who could give them and the lives of those who could not.<sup>707</sup> In the film, the older man meets Battal by chance, and when a group of knights comes to his house to search for Battal, he hides him. Then the knights say they would kill him if they do not need woods to burn Muslims the next day. When the knights attempt to rape the man's granddaughter, Battal reveals himself and saves him and the girl. As this sequence shows, another Christian, who rejects a toast proposal for the Christian domination in Anatolia in a *han*, says that these soldiers are just spilling the blood of innocent people. This kind of violence and cruelty never exists in any of the holy books as Angela, the niece of Elenora and betrothed of a Byzantine commander named Andrea, states after she sees Battal and some others as being tortured in *Battal Gazi'nin İntikamı* (*The Revenge of Battal Ghazi*). Amid this, some of the oppressed others decide to help Battal. For example, a group of Christians heals the blinded Battal by making some medicine. Likewise, he gains his strength with all his bones broken, thanks to the support of Christians in *Battal Gazi Destanı* (*The Legend of Battal Ghazi*). These people are all 'good' others who have chosen the Turkish-Muslim superiority over the oppression by Byzantium and hence sometimes convert to Islam or at least collaborate with Battal. In this picture, these rulers hate Battal not only because he is a Muslim commander-in-chief but also because he played a significant role in many Christians' conversions into Islam in Anatolia, as it is said in *Battal Gazi'nin İntikamı* (*The Revenge of Battal Ghazi*).

One of the most significant converted good others is Hammer, a Byzantine warrior and sword master in *Battal Gazi Destanı* (*The Legend of Battal Ghazi*). He is the only warrior that Hüseyin Ghazi could not defeat. His strength and talent are appreciated very much by Hüseyin Ghazi, who even wants his son Cafer, who has not taken the name Battal yet, to be trained by him, although Tebabil, the current trainer of Cafer, thinks that "nothing good will come from an infidel." Hammer also appreciates Cafer when he first encounters him and sees all the moves he inherited from his father. They fight each other when Cafer is on his way to Byzantium to take revenge for his father's murder. After Cafer defeats Byzantine soldiers, Hammer decides

---

<sup>707</sup> "Verebilenden malını veremeyenden canını alıyor"

to fight with him to save the honor of Byzantium. Once they start to fight and recognize each other, their relationship changes from two enemies into a master and apprentice relationship. In connection to that, they respect each other and live the joy of having a perfect fight, as the audience could see from their happy and smiling faces most of the time. They fight for two days, and none becomes successful over the other. On the night of the second day, in the Temple of the Forty Virgins, they decide to wrestle to find out who is more powerful than the other. Before they start, they make a deal that the one who is defeated will change his religion. Then, as Cafer wins the fight, Hammer changes his faith as he recites the Shahadah, repeating after Cafer with religious music in the background. This whole conversion process finishes with Cafer renaming Hammer as Ahmet Turani, and later, Hammer renaming Cafer as Battal, which means big, brave, and heroic.<sup>708</sup> Here it should also be noted that the wrestling between Hammer and Battal and then Hammer's conversion is probably one of the most memorable homoerotic scenes of Yeşilçam. To describe the scene, there are Cafer and Hammer in the bedroom of Faustina, with naked upper bodies. They wrestle for quite some time while Faustina is watching them half-naked. Although the two men are trying to beat each other, the audience can see the joy and little smiles on their faces. This exalts war and fighting by showing how beautiful and joyful it is. It seems that as they continue to wrestle, they somehow feel the joy more. Then, once Cafer overcomes Hammer, he gives Hammer his hand to help him get up from the ground. In this scene, Hammer's eyes are very much attracted by Cafer's talents and fixed on Cafer's eyes. They are like two lovers staring into each other's eyes. After Hammer becomes Muslim, the two men change each other's names and embrace each other. Watching all these, the viewer even forgets why Hammer is changing his religion because he seems to be doing this naturally and voluntarily.

Thus, the myth of national superiority is reproduced through the hierarchical relationship between Cafer -the future Battal- and Hammer, too. Cafer is superior because he is the one initiating the fight, defeating the enemy, and making the enemy convert to Islam. Cafer, now, is Battal and so a real man who has beaten another man that his father failed to defeat. He is, now, the actual national hero whose power comes from what he inherited from his ancestors and what he extracted from his inner identity justifying the myths of ethnic continuity and the warrior nation. In this setting, Hammer is inferior. This is even represented in the closing scene of *Battal Gazi Destanı (The Legend of Battal Ghazi)*, in which Hammer makes a joke about how he has become the stable boy of Battal while riding Battal's carriage with Elenora, although

---

<sup>708</sup> Battal means "büyük, cesur, kahraman" in Turkish.

Battal leads the way on horseback in front of them. Given all these, Hammer is never a simple warrior. He is brave yet the most heroic warrior of Byzantium. He is already befitting into the Turkish-Muslim side, as the audience could understand from his bravery and fairness, reflecting on his sympathy towards Muslims and his appreciation of both Hüseyin Ghazi and Cafer/Battal. He also states his compassion towards Battal when he introduces him to Faustina, the most famous prostitute of Anatolia at the Temple of Forty Virgins: “rival in war, companion in the meal and the son of the famous commander-in-chief Hüseyin Ghazi”<sup>709</sup> (34:50). Then, the two men toast and drink to all fights they could not defeat each other, their friendship and brotherhood.<sup>710</sup> Given this communication between the two men, Hammer’s conversion is not really a surprise. In fact, he does not even live a transitory period of adaptation. He automatically accepts his new identity and even repeats in several instances that he is no longer Hammer but Ahmet Turani.

In another scene, when Battal is wounded and worried because Byzantium tortured him, he loses some of his power. Hammer motivates him by saying that giving up is never a part of ‘our morals (*töre*).’<sup>711</sup> His fast and almost natural adaptation that makes the audience forget that he has been Byzantine is peculiar if the essentialist idea of nationhood dominating nationalist mythmaking is considered. The same is true for Karagülle, the son of the Byzantine emperor who is raised as a Muslim because he was switched with the little Battal, in *Battal Gazi’nin Oğlu* (*Battal Ghazi’s Son*). Although he finds out who he really is, Karagülle insists on defining himself as Turkish and Muslim.

The instances mentioned above, together with other cases of conversion, which all happen in an entirely smooth way, could be related to an attempt to explain the demographic heterogeneity of the homeland in addition to the national mission of bringing peace and order to Anatolia. Besides, the converted ones are never portrayed differently from other Turks or Muslims in terms of how they look and behave. However, this situation should not lead to an illusion of equality between those born as Muslims and those who convert afterwards. What exists, instead, is a subtle hierarchy where a pure Turkish-Muslim always leads the converted ones, as in the cases of Hammer or Karagülle, both of which choose to continue their lives as being secondary heroes to Battal.

The conversions all stand for symbols of the conquest of the ‘other.’ Another significant good other, whose conversion could be interpreted as the conquest of Byzantium, Elenora, the

<sup>709</sup> “Cenkte rakibim, sofrada yoldaşım ünlü serdar Hüseyin Gazi’nin oğlu Cafer.”

<sup>710</sup> “Yenişemediğimiz cenklere, dostluğa, kardeşliğe”

<sup>711</sup> “Yenilmek töremizde yok bizim”

Byzantine princess. As she falls in love with Battal in *Battal Gazi Destanı (The Legend of Battal Ghazi)*, she gives up everything for her love, prefers “being a slave of Battal than being the queen of Byzantium” (1:04:13).<sup>712</sup> As Hammer and Karagülle do, Elenora, too, accepts the superiority of Battal or, basically, his identity. Then, she converts and takes the name Ayşe, a ubiquitous and significant Muslim name from Prophet Muhammad's wives. Again, this is an indication of Byzantine's inferiority, nurturing the myth of national superiority. Like other converts, Elenora is different from evil Byzantines, such as her father. She is fearless so that she can meet with Battal secretly. When she first sees Battal, she even hides and protects him from Byzantine guards looking for him. She even attacks a Byzantine soldier with a dagger planning to kill Battal. Although she falls in love with the enemy of her father, she is still loyal to the emperor, whom she believes to be her father, therefore courageous enough to protect him from a sword strike. She is also brave enough to find Battal in the torture chamber to save him, so impressed by her character Battal calls her “wild beauty of enemy land”<sup>713</sup> and “the heroic beauty of the whorish Byzantium.”<sup>714</sup> Besides, he cannot believe that an angel like her is the evil Byzantine emperor's daughter.<sup>715</sup> As if she supports Battal's idea, she later finds out that she is the daughter of the dethroned Hilarion, the legitimate emperor of Byzantium. This justifies her bravery and courage besides her love of Battal and Battal's love for her. Besides, Elenora is never presented as a treacherous woman, even for Byzantium. The fact that she falls in love with Battal, the enemy of the Byzantine emperor, is clearly justified by her birth father being different. In fact, for the narrative, betrayal is never betrayal if it is good for the Turkish-Muslim side. Besides, in *Battal Gazi'nin İntikamı (The Revenge of Battal Ghazi)*, Elenora is shown as Ayşe, the converted wife of Battal. In the opening scene, including Battal's training of his son in the garden of their wooden house, Ayşe brings them food as if she is fulfilling the duties of a traditional, obedient, and caring wife and mother.

There are two more good other women. One is the sister of Karagülle, Irene, who is first thought to be the sister of Battal in *Battal Gazi'nin Oğlu (The Son of Battal Ghazi)*. She is a good-hearted young girl. As she learns that she is not the sister of Battal, she falls in love with him, later converts, and takes the name Ayşe. On their wedding night, some Christian knights attack their home while Battal and Irene are praying. She is so heroic, and like Elenora, she also takes a sword into her hand to protect herself from the enemy. There is also beautiful Angela,

---

<sup>712</sup> “Bizans'a kraliçe olmaktansa Battal'a köle olmak”

<sup>713</sup> “Düşman beldenin yaban güzeli”.

<sup>714</sup> “Kahpe Bizans'ın yiğit güzeli”.

<sup>715</sup> “O iblisten senin gibi bir melek nasıl türemiş”



Elenora's cousin, who physically resembles her. She criticizes her fiancé, Andrea, the Byzantine commander, due to his violent behavior against prisoners. She says no holy book includes that kind of violence. These women are all good others and, therefore, different than other Byzantine women who are primarily prostitutes, as in the case of Faustina in *Battal Gazi Destanı* (*The Legend of Battal Ghazi*). Another one is Maria, a Byzantine nun also called Saint Maria of *Savulun Battal Gazi Geliyor* (*Get out of the way, Battal Ghazi is coming*). She is shown to be the mastermind of all the evil Christian plans to conquer Anatolia. She is the one who recruits knights to create an army against Battal.

Nevertheless, all the women of other work to feminize and belittle the enemy. In fact, this picture could even be enriched with Prince Alfonso; the Byzantine prince portrayed stereotypically feminine in *Battal Gazi'nin İntikamı* (*The Revenge of Battal Ghazi*). Moreover, his representation as still a virgin despite his relatively mature age is taken as a sign of not only his impotence but also the impotence of Byzantium in general. All these take the masculinity and so the power of Byzantium away, giving the message that it is not hard to defeat the enemy.

#### **5.5.1.9. Turkish Women:**

Turkish women appear less in Battal Ghazi films compared to the other women. They are only the peasants in Battal's village, including Battal's sister Senem in *Savulun Battal Gazi Geliyor* (*Get out of the way, Battal Ghazi is coming*), converted wife Elenora in *Battal Gazi'nin İntikamı* (*The Revenge of Battal Ghazi*), and Irene in *Battal Gazi'nin Oğlu* (*Battal Ghazi's Son*). Therefore, the Turkish woman is usually either the mother of the Turkish hero or his child's mother. In *Savulun Battal Gazi Geliyor* (*Get out of the way, Battal Ghazi is coming*), Battal's daughter or sister, Senem, whom the others have raped, commits suicide due to her shame. The absence of females in the Turkish-Muslim side underlines the Turkish-Muslim side's masculinity and power against the enemy.

#### **5.5.2. Main Points:**

The four films analyzed in this section reproduce the national warrior myth by reinforcing the Islamic ghazi image through Battal Ghazi character. Having a predominantly Muslim identity, Battal portrays a conservative, traditional, and brave warrior who participates in a Muslim-Christian fight over Anatolia. Unlike Central Asian warriors or the others represented between 1965-1971, Battal's Turkishness comes after his Muslimness. This indicates a discursive balance shift in favor of Muslimness, which can be considered the product of increasing aggressive nationalism in the country. Therefore, in an atmosphere formed by the

bitter effects of the oil crisis, economic inequalities, successive coalition governments, and the Cyprus issue, the national warrior has turned into a more traditional, conservative, religious, and violent one. In fact, this trend had already started in the late 1960s, but now in the 1970s, it reached a peak. Consequently, the myth of the national warrior was reproduced through this conservative family man, a loyal warrior of Islam, and a truly masculine man. In this regard, enemies are so violent that they even rape a pregnant Christian woman and Battal's sister Senem in *Savulun Battal Gazi Geliyor* (*Get out of the way, Battal Ghazi is coming*). Here the rape of women also symbolizes the occupation of the homeland since a woman's body is the territory hence a life source for future generations. Therefore, whatever happens to those women is interpreted as happening to the homeland. Besides, since the nation is a family, the loss of family members means the destruction of the nation. The warrior Battal's reaction is unsurprisingly violent and bloody as the audience is shown all kinds of details regarding how Battal kills the others. This kind of open and transparent depiction of violence, besides the idea that 'the other is raping our women', never existed in nationalist action/adventure films of 1965-1971. This is a clear signal of the rise of aggressive and militant nationalism that was nurtured by a reference to Muslim-Christian animosity, especially through naming Byzantine as 'perfidious' or 'whorish'.

Furthermore, Battal does not fight as a nationalist man on his own. Unlike other nationalist action/adventure heroes presented between 1965-1971, he has a title, *serdar*, the commander-in-chief. In fact, although the warriors like him never like titles and never fulfill their duties for material gains, Battal's family is depicted as a family of *serdars*. Apart from reproducing the myth of the warrior nation, this representation makes Battal type of warriors much more legitimate, equipped, powerful, and significant than they were before at the discursive level. By extension, this could be interpreted as the domestication of the warrior, who is not a free rider anymore but fulfills his mission as a part of the state hierarchy. This depiction fits well into the post-March 12 political atmosphere in which social movements were severely suppressed.

## ***5.6. Ottoman Warriors in the 1970s:***

### ***5.6.1. The Warrior Fighting for Osman Ghazi:***

Most of the nationalist action/adventure films made in the 1970s depict the reigns of either Mehmet II or Suleiman the Magnificent. A rare example, in this regard, is *Kadıhan* (dir. Yılmaz Atadeniz, 1976), which takes place in 1288, the time Osman Ghazi fights against internal and external enemies before he establishes the Ottoman Empire. Although the choice

of the Osman Ghazi period might be related to commercial reasons and the filmmakers' efforts to make something different than other films of the same genre, it completes the national narrative that starts with Orhan Ghazi in *Vatan Kurtaran Aslan (The Lion that Saved the Fatherland)* and, in a way, trains the audience about whom to define as the national leader. The voice-over in the closing sequence also succeeds this in a didactic manner. Accompanying the shootings of Ertuğrul Ghazi commemorations in Söğüt, the voice-over states: "History is full of civilizations of states that were established by heroic acts of great commanders from Mete Khan to Attila, from Alp Arslan to Osman Beg, from Mehmet the Conqueror to Atatürk. The Turkish nation will continue to adorn history written on golden pages by its ancestors with the same care" (01:17:43-01:17:54).<sup>716</sup> These words insert different leaders into a linear continuum, with Mete Khan being the first and Atatürk being the last. This is a reproduction of the myth of the Turkish nation's antiquity that takes it back to Mete Khan's time and, at the same time, the myth of ancestral continuity by connecting all these leaders.

#### **5.6.1.1. The Warrior and His Mission:**

In this vein, Kadihan is the raider of Osman Ghazi. He is brave and obedient same as other warriors. What makes him different is that no information is provided about his family or at least his father. Given the film's general simplistic and cheap plot, the filmmakers probably did not want to spend time deepening both Kadihan and other characters. However, this might have increased his ordinariness by making him much more anonymous, he is like any other Turkish nationalist man. Therefore, he has no personal cause to fight and is thus a purely idealist warrior. It even reflects on how he introduces himself to some bandits attacking an old merchant. He says: "I am Kadihan, the inheritor of the Commander Attila near the Danube, Bilge Khan in Central Asia, Alp Arslan in Rumelia, and the faithful friend of Kayı tribe leader Osman Ghazi. All these lands from the Danube to the Chinese Wall are my responsibility" (09:03-09:16).<sup>717</sup> Here, Kadihan emphasizes national continuity in addition to the mythical vision of the Turkish national homeland as stretching from the Danube to Central Asia. The voice-over in the final sequence confirms this geography by saying that Osman Ghazi and his raiders created a magnificent state by galloping from Baghdad to Vienna, from the Caucasus to Tunisia, Crimea, and Yemen.

<sup>716</sup> "Tarih Mete Han'dan Attila'ya Alp Arslan'dan Osman Bey'e Fatih'ten Atatürk'e kadar büyük kumandanların kahramanlıklarıyla kurdukları devletlerin uygarlıklarıyla doludur. Türk milleti atalarının altın sayfalarına yazdığı tarihi aynı ihtimamla süslemeye devam edecektir."

<sup>717</sup> Tuna boyunda Attila başbuğun, Orta Asya'da Bilge Kağan'ın, Rumeli'de Alp Arslan'ın mirasçısı, Kayı beyi Osman Gazi'nin candaşı Kadihanım. Tuna boyundan Çin Seddi'ne kadar bütün bu topraklar benden sorulur."

### 5.6.1.2. *The Ruler:*

Despite the reference to vast geography, *Kadıhan*, however, focuses on the power struggle between Osman Ghazi and Byzantine landlords of İnegöl and İznik and the Germiyan principality in Anatolia. Therefore, it basically takes place in the Western part of Anatolia. Osman Ghazi is represented as a brave and dynamic ruler fitting into Girardet's Alexander category and reproducing the ghazi myth that centers on warriors fighting in the name of Islam. What also strikes attention is Osman Ghazi's outfit. Contrary to his athletic moves in a one-to-one fight, he wears a bulky outfit composed of royal authority symbols: a royal gown and turban (*kaftan* and *kavuk*). This makes him visually distinguishable from other characters. Besides, it could be functional for providing cinematic continuity between Osman Ghazi and other sultans.

The film starts with a scene where the Byzantine enemy attacks a Turkish village, which is depicted like any Turkish village with wooden houses, livestock animals, people dressed in traditional outfits. The familiarity in the representation helps the Turkish audience to feel attached to the film quickly. To discover the enemy, Osman Ghazi assigns his "faithful friend" (*candaş*) Kadıhan. Here, the close relationship between the ruler and warrior is revealed, and in fact, Kadıhan receives commands directly from Osman Ghazi. This could also reflect anti-bureaucratic political culture. In connection to that, Kadıhan is never after material gains such as money or titles. When the landlord of İznik offers him some money because he saved his betrothed Beatrice from the hands of bandits, he says he does not accept it, and it is the Turkish custom (*töre*) to help those who are in need. Although not rich in terms of narrative materials and symbols, this scene contributes to the myth of Turks being benevolent conquerors. The voice-over also repeats this at the end: "Turkish raiders galloped from Baghdad to Vienna, from the Caucasus to Tunisia, Crimea, Yemen... They carried civilization, culture, and justice to all places they went" (1:16:03-1:16:22).<sup>718</sup>

### 5.6.1.3. *The Others:*

The Byzantine enemies that Turks encountered are depicted as evils. At the beginning of *Kadıhan*, they attack innocent villagers, and while stabbing, they laugh mercilessly. Unlike the brave and dynamic Osman Ghazi, the Byzantine landlord of İznik is portrayed as an effeminate, powerless, fat, and cowardly man. As a sign of his impotence, his betrothed Beatrice sleeps with Kadıhan. Here, Kadıhan is depicted as a womanizer who attracts the women of other. In another scene, he also sleeps with a prostitute named Faustina. This woman is also the

<sup>718</sup> "Bağdat'tan Viyana'ya Kafkaslar'dan Tunus'a Kırım'dan Yemen'e at koşturdular Türk akıncıları. Gittikleri her yere uygarlık, kültür ve adalet götürdüler."

good other helping Kadihan and his friends in infiltrating the enemy castle. The power of Kadihan over women of the other serves to belittle and symbolically defeat the enemy. At this point, a significant other is the beg of Germiyan principality, who competes with Osman Ghazi and aims to establish the Great Germiyan State. His portrayal resembles that of Osman Ghazi in terms of his bravery. In this context, there is nothing different in his physical appearance, unlike the way İznik landlord is depicted, probably because he is the leader of an Anatolian principality. Here, given that Kadihan was one of the last examples of nationalist action/adventure films in the 1970s, it unexpectedly does not have a predominantly Islamic tone. This might also be related to the presence of Germiyan beg, who is, in fact, Turkish and Muslim as the enemy. Nevertheless, this beg is still a betrayer because he collaborates with the Byzantine landlords and promises them some territorial gains when establishing his own state.

#### **5.6.1.4. Turkish Women:**

There are two significant Turkish women characters. The first one is Bal Hatun, the daughter of Sheikh Edebali, a highly influential Sheikh who advises Osman Ghazi about his state's policies. She is a traditional and proper Turkish girl, as could be understood from her traditional clothes. The only information provided about her is that she is the future wife of Osman Ghazi. In collaboration with the landlords, the Germiyan beg kidnaps and later imprisons her in Yarhisar Castle in modern-day Bursa. Kadihan and his other friends disguise themselves as wine sellers and enter the Castle to save her. Here, they use their intelligence to counterbalance the numeric superiority of the enemy. Among those friends of Kadihan, one strikes attention: a young and slim black boy. This boy is brave and has military skills, but never as good as any of the other raiders. Kadihan continuously mocks him by using several derogatory words such as “black Arab,” “the one with ruined color,” “coon,” and “thief.”<sup>719</sup> This representation is like the representation of the black messenger Akabe in *Battal Gazi Destanı* (*The Legend of Battal Ghazi*), and it is obviously a problematic and humiliating one. Later, when he refuses to swim in a pool at the enemy Castle, Kadihan finds out this black boy is Neslihan, the daughter of Akçakoca, who himself is a warrior. She is the second significant Turkish woman character and confirms the myth of the warrior nation through her father, displaying that fighting is a part of her genetics, and therefore her essence. Besides, her portrayal conveys the idea that Turkish women were brave and could fight and contribute to defeating the enemy.

---

<sup>719</sup> “Kara Arap,” “rengibozuk,” “marsık,” and “hırsız.”

Thus, although being a rather simplistic account, *Kadıhan* prepares the ground for establishing the Ottoman state. Then, what is expected from the audience is summarized by the voice-over at the end, saying that through Ertuğrul Ghazi commemorations, thousands of Turks from all over Anatolia presents their debts of gratitude to those heroes, these diligent and self-sacrificing warriors. According to the voice-over, nothing is enough to show appreciation to these warriors who established a great empire out of nothing (1:17:55-1:18:03).<sup>720</sup> Then, the final sequence includes close shots of the busts of all the leaders mentioned above. Finally, the film ends with a shooting of the statue of Atatürk. This representation builds continuity between all leaders and states by reproducing the myth of ancestral continuity. Therefore, the film, in a way, summarizes all the nationalist arguments of political myths at once.

### 5.6.2. *The Warrior Fighting for Mehmet II in the 1970s:*

The warrior who fights for Mehmet II is Kara Murat, whose name means Black Murat. In naming this hero, the creator probably wanted to refer to the hair color of the hero, which is black and stereotypically associated with Turkishness as opposed to ‘Western’ blondness as in the case of Karaoğlan. This might have made the warrior considered an ordinary man by its viewers, so it is not different from most people. There are seven films of Kara Murat, and Natuk Baytan directed all of them. The films are *Kara Murat Fatih’in Fedaisi* (*Fatih’s Guard*, 1972), *Kara Murat Fatih’in Fermanı* (*Fatih’s Edict*, 1973), *Kara Murat Ölüm Emri* (*Death Command*, 1974), *Kara Murat Kara Şövalye’ye Karşı* (*Kara Murat Against Black Knight*, 1975), *Kara Murat Şeyh Gaffara Karşı* (*Kara Murat Against Sheikh Gaffar*, 1976), *Kara Murat Denizler Hakimi* (*Master of Seas*, 1977), and *Kara Murat Devler Savaşıyor* (*Giants are Fighting*, 1978). In all these films, the leading actor is Cüneyt Arkın, who also played Malkoçoğlu. The use of the same actor might have increased the audience’s familiarity with the national warrior represented here.

In terms of the narrative, there is no linear continuity between the subject matters and the dates the films were shot. Each film presents a separate adventure with back-and-forths in the reign of Mehmet II. For example, in the third film of the series, *Ölüm Emri* (*Death Command*), Murat serves Prince Mehmet at the beginning of 1451 when the prince has just

<sup>720</sup> “Büyük bir imparatorluğu kurmak için canlarını dişine takıp insanüstü gayret ve fedakarlıkla bizleri bugüne kavuşturan atalarımızın anılarına hürmeten yurdun dörtbir yanından gelen binlerce Türk onlara minnet borçlarını karınca kararınca ödemek için şenlik yaparlar. Anadolu’nun yöresel milli kıyafetleriyle halk oyunları düzenlenir. Onlara ne yapılırsa azdır. Çünkü onlar hiç yoktan koskoca bir imparatorluk kurmuşlar. Doğudan batıya, kuzeyden güneye egemenlik altında olanları hiç incitmemiş ve bu devleti 600 yıl sürdüre gelmiştir tarih.”

been appointed as the Sultan by the dying Sultan Murat II. In the second film, *Fatih'in Fermanı* (*Fatih's Edict*), he participates the conquest of İstanbul in 1453 and then follows the dethroned Byzantine royalty in Lesbos. The other films depict the post-1453 period. Therefore, the stories mainly concentrate on the period following 1453. Given this focus, they are basically stories manifesting the power of Turks. In this vein, Kara Murat is the loyal warrior of either the legitimate ruler or ruler-to-be. His loyalty to the Sultan complies with the depiction of the other heroes, which reproduces the myth of the warrior nation by showing the warrior as a role model for the Turkish 'common man.'

#### **5.6.2.1. The Warrior and Religion:**

Fitting well into the rising Islamic discourse of the 1970s, the Islamic component of Kara Murat's world is significant in the reproduction of nationalist political myths. So, in *Ölüm Emri* (*Death Command*), he describes himself to a couple of other Janissaries who mistakenly think him as Byzantinian due to his informal or simple, civilian clothes with these words: "I am Turkish and Muslim, and my name is Kara Murat." This short scene indicates that unlike previous heroes of 1965-1971, such as Malkoçoğlu, Kara Murat's Muslimness is as significant as his Turkishness. Therefore, he fights not only in the name of Turkishness but also Islam. This makes him a convenient fit for the 1970s' rise of aggressive nationalism and further production of political myths with predominantly religious tones.

As a reflection of increasing religious tones, these films include too many scenes depicting praying people dissimilar to the films of the pre-1965 period. In fact, Kara Murat films are generous enough to show scenes with prayers, azans, and imams, which had been taboo issues for previous films. In this vein, they resemble Battal Ghazi films. For example, in *Kara Murat Kara Şövalyeye Karşı* (*Kara Murat Against Black Knight*), Murat's mother is attacked by Christian enemies while she is praying. Likewise, the Turkish communities in Lesbos in *Fatih'in Fermanı* (*Fatih's Edict*) and Morea in *Devler Savaşıyor* (*Giants are Fighting*) are attacked by certain Christians again while praying in a mosque. One of the most striking Islamic references is found in the opening sequence of *Fatih'in Fedaisi* (*Fatih's Guard*), which starts with showing the Fatih Mosque in İstanbul, built by Mehmet II. This scene is accompanied by a voiceover relating a hadith that says one day İstanbul will be conquered by Muslims commanded by the Prophet Muhammed. The scene is followed by a script in both Arabic and Latin found in the Mosque garden, which says: "How happy is the commander who conquers

the city of Constantine and how happy for his soldiers” (0:04-0:20).<sup>721</sup> In line with this Islamic justification of the conquest, there is a significant praying scene in *Fatih'in Fermanı* (*Fatih's Edict*), where Murat prays in Hagia Sophia standing next to Sultan Mehmet II on the first Friday Pray after the conquest of İstanbul. Murat is, in fact, the first and the only national warrior represented as praying. The fact that this is happening in Hagia Sophia carries both political and religious significance. This Byzantine Orthodox Church had been turned into a mosque by Mehmet II. However, in the early Republican era, it was turned into a museum to promote secularism and eliminate the Ottoman past's influence.<sup>722</sup> Therefore, the building symbolizes not only religious but also political domination.

It must also be noted that in all Kara Murat films in general, only one sequence that lasts for seven minutes is devoted to the conquest of İstanbul. The scenes in *Fatih'in Fermanı* (*Fatih's Edict*) include only very brief references to the event's cornerstones, the last being the Prayer at Hagia Sophia. In this context, the first quick reference is made to the Ottoman army's march to İstanbul accompanied by the army band (*mehter*) and later the attack on the walls. Then, there is a close shot to the final moments of Ulubatlı Hasan, a legendary Janissary who is believed to have been killed while planting the Ottoman flag on Istanbul's walls. Here, he is depicted as being accompanied by Murat and reciting the Shahadah. The following scene shows Mehmet II's entrance to the city. As in the case of the Prayer in Hagia Sophia, which is the last scene of that sequence, Murat walks next to Mehmet II, holding the reins of his horse with another soldier. Ulema and other Janissaries follow them. In fact, where Murat stands in both scenes indicates his place in the state hierarchy as the Janissary commander. It also shows his closeness to the Sultan. Although there are ulema and other soldiers in both scenes, Murat is always the closest warrior and even the closest person to the Sultan. For example, in *Fatih'in Fermanı* (*Fatih's Edict*), Murat protects Mehmet II when he is on a date with the Byzantine Princess Irene. In *Ölüm Emri* (*Death Command*), Prince Mehmet is also accompanied by Murat. Similarly, in the opening scene of *Şeyh Gaffara Karşı* (*Kara Murat Against Sheikh Gaffar*), Murat is depicted as participating in the war as he stands next to Mehmet II and his horse while he is marching. In *Devler Savaşıyor* (*Giants are Fighting*), he also participates in Divan assemblies, where the Sultan speaks to his viziers in person. There, he even criticizes what

<sup>721</sup> “İstanbul elbette Müslümanlar tarafından fethedilecektir. Ne mutlu o kumandana ki Konstantinin şehrini fethedecektir ve ne mutlu onun erlerine.”

<sup>722</sup> Gülru Necipoğlu, *The Life of An Imperial Monument: Hagia Sophia after Byzantium in Hagia Sophia from the age of Justinian to the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 195-226.



Mehmet II is talking about. All these manifest that the national warrior is inserted into a state structure similar to Battal Ghazi, another warrior of the 1970s.

To put it clearly, the warriors of the 1970s mainly act in a state hierarchy; therefore, they are different from those of 1965-1971, who are free raiders rallying to their missions from a particular place, which is not necessarily the center of the state and always far from the bureaucratic hierarchy. Murat, in this regard, is a Janissary commander who always accompanies the Sultan. The fact that when Murat is in the court, he is always in his Janissary costumes with a red coat, white headgear, and his sword can also be taken as his uniform, which is a sign of his official status. This costume also makes him easily distinguishable from the other viziers, which might be interpreted as the army commander being more important than the other viziers.

#### **5.6.2.2. The Warrior's 'Becoming:'**

Murat's 'becoming' is depicted in relation to his insertion into the state structure. In *Fatih'in Fedaisi (Fatih's Guard)*, he is shown as being trained in Janissary hearth when he is around ten years old as a man-to-be or a soldier-to-be confirming the myth of the warrior nation. Therefore, from an early age, Murat is a part of the state and, in fact, protected by the powerful state. This, however, does not mean that he is forcibly taken under the control of the state. In fact, he is the one asking the Sultan to join Janissaries after his brother is killed violently by Vlad the Impaler before his eyes. When Murat tells what happened to the Sultan in a very mature and self-confident way, the Sultan offers him some money in return. Murat, however, says that he has nothing to do with money, and instead, he wants to be a raider to be able to fight side by side with Mehmet II under the Turkish flag. Then the next scene shows little Murat's training with swords in the Janissary hearth next to the walls of İstanbul. Murat grows up as he fights and finally gets ready to battle with the enemy and avenge his brother. In fact, he is already a part of the warrior nation, and now with proper training, his real essence is extracted.

Like other nationalist action/adventure warriors, Murat's personal cause is always united with the greater national cause. The enemy first harms somebody from Murat's family. For example, at the beginning of *Fatih'in Fedaisi (Fatih's Guard)*, Murat's older brother, another raider, is beheaded by the guardians of Vlad, the Impaler. In *Kara Murat Kara Şövalyeye Karşı (Kara Murat Against Black Knight)*, Murat's father Ömer Beg, a heroic raider, is killed because he has cut the arm of Prince Carlos. Then, Prince Carlos also kidnaps Murat's twin brother Mehmet. Later, Mehmet is converted to Christianity; his name is changed to Mark

and he is appointed as the Christian army commander that aims to murder Turks in the Balkans. Similarly, in *Kara Murat Şeyh Gaffara Karşı* (*Kara Murat Against Sheikh Gaffar*), Murat's brother, Turhan, is kidnapped and hypnotized by Sheikh Gaffar. In all these examples, Murat decides to take revenge for his brother or father or save him while at the same time fulfilling his other duties given by the Sultan. At this point, his family might represent the nation, and the filmmakers' message might be that what happened to Murat's family could also happen to any family. Hence, the whole Turkish nation is under threat.

Interestingly, the films offer a relatively minor representation of Murat's father than other fathers in other nationalist action/adventure films. According to this only representation, which is available in *Kara Murat Kara Şövalyeye Karşı* (*Kara Murat Against Black Knight*), Murat's father Ömer Beg is a heroic raider. This man is killed by the Byzantines when Murat is a small child around the age of five. Murat, then, is raised with the idea that he would get revenge for his father one day. Except for this reference, which reproduces the myth of the warrior nation, there is no mention of Murat's father in any film. The reason for that could be Murat's insertion into the state structure when he was a child. This means he has been trained by the state for being a Janissary at Janissary hearths; later, he is appointed as Janissary commander. In other words, his resource provider and protector is no longer a father figure, but the state. In this context, the state is the Father State, the family is the nation, and the father is the land. Therefore, the warriors like Murat are all soldiers of the Father State.

With many family members being different in each film, one can consider the ambiguity in Murat's life story despite the false cinematic continuity created through the presence of Cüneyt Arkın as Murat in all films. Of course, this could be a commercial choice, and the filmmakers might have shot the films without thinking about the future films of the same series. However, it is interesting that they had seen no problem in these inconsistencies in terms of family members. This point, therefore, leads to a somewhat interesting nationalist narrative that the films could be telling the stories of different Murats. This means, although the films seem to narrate the same warrior played by the same actor, there might have been different Kara Murats. This fits into the period of the 1970s, which took warriors under state control. The message here could be that warriors are common men, and any Turkish man could be a nationalist warrior and then be protected by the Father State if he is loyal enough.

### **5.6.2.3. The Ruler:**

Like other warriors of nationalist action/adventure films, Murat fights for the legitimate ruler. Mehmet II is appointed to the throne by his father, Murat II in *Ölüm Emri* (*Death*

*Command*). The fact that his father has approved him makes Mehmet II a legitimate heir to the throne. In fact, compared to other historical action/adventure films, the Kara Murat series has the most prolonged scenes portraying the Sultan. In these scenes, Mehmet II is depicted as an Alexander type of leader who is young, dynamic, and firm most of the time. He sometimes gives orders, discusses his agenda with the viziers and Murat, and waits for his loyal warrior's arrival in his palace. There are also memorable scenes in which Mehmet II marches on his horse and leads his army. Therefore, he is shown both in his court and in open green fields getting ready to fight. There, he is usually accompanied by the Ottoman military march (*mehter*). He is also brave; therefore, he could easily challenge the Byzantine emperor, who asks him to stop building the Rumelia Fortress if he wants to marry his daughter Irene in *Fatih'in Fermanı* (*Fatih's Edict*). Mehmet II's answer manifests how brave he is: "We are the son of Sultan Murat Han and have decided to realize the dreams of our ancestors. I will get both Constantinople and your daughter. While my soldiers are having Friday prayer in Hagia Sophia, your daughter will be my wife."<sup>723</sup> With these sentences, Mehmet II first reproduces the myth of national unity by talking about how his aims and those of his ancestors are connected. Second, he underlines his masculinity hence military power.

Furthermore, Mehmet II's military successes are also continuously stated by a voiceover. In the closing scene of *Ölüm Emri* (*Death Command*), which tells the story of Mehmet II's accession to the throne after eliminating his rival Prince Orhan, the voice-over ushers his successes: "A new sun is rising in the dark horizons of the Middle Age. The young emperor is going to Adrianople to change the course of history.... He is the sacred ancestor of heroic Mehmeds, who created that immortal Mehmetçik legend. He is the conqueror who honored history with magnificent conquests. He will attack Byzantine with his blessed soldiers, destroy an ancient empire of a thousand years, and give beautiful İstanbul to the Turks as a present. The unrivaled emperor Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror will be leading his army, gaining victories after victories, and the whole world will bow down before the power of Turk" (1:12:03-1:13:04).<sup>724</sup> In these lines about Mehmet II's heroism, the formulation of the ideal national leader is provided. He is young, new, successful, and sacred, as opposed to the decadent

<sup>723</sup> "Biz Sultan Murat Han oğlu Mehmet Han'ız. Dedelerimizin hayalini gerçekleştirmek kararındayız. Hem Konstantinopolis'i alacağım hem de kızını. Askerlerim Ayasofya'da Cuma namazı kılarken kızın da zevcem olacaktır."

<sup>724</sup> "Orta çağın karanlık ufuklarından yeni bir güneş doğuyor. Genç hükümdar tarihin akışını değiştirmek üzere Edirne'ye gidiyor...O, ölümsüz Mehmetçik efsanesini yaratan kahraman Mehmetlerin kutsal atasıdır. Muhteşem fütuhatıyla tarihe şeref veren fatihtir. Kutlu askerleriyle Bizans'a saldıracak bin yıllık köhne imparatorluğu yıkacak güzel İstanbul'u Türklere hediye edecektir. Eşsiz hükümdar Fatih Sultan Mehmet Han ordusunun başında zaferden zafere koşacak, Türk'ün gücü karşısında bütün dünya eğilecektir."

and outdated Byzantium of the dark ages. Mehmet II is also taken as the ancestor of Turkish soldiers, who are affectionally called *Mehmetçik* (Little Mehmet). Here, the military capabilities that make him Alexander-like are emphasized. Besides, Mehmet II is connected with modern-day soldiers through a reproduction of the myth of ancestral continuity. What also strikes attention is that Mehmet II is taken as a Turkish leader hence the representative or the embodiment of the Turkish nation. This representation firmly establishes a continuity with the past and present. The same remarks also exist in the opening scene of *Fatih'in Fedaisi* (*Fatih's Guard*), which is about the post-1453 period: "With God's mercy and the Prophet's favor, İstanbul has been conquered and has become the capital of the Ottoman Empire and the heart of Turkish nation. This sacred heart will never stop and will perpetually beat with a sacred excitement. A thousand-year-old obsolete Byzantine Empire has been destroyed; the Middle Age has ended; the Ottoman Empire has started to shine like the Sun at the beginning of a new age. Nobody can enchain wind. Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror has been a hurricane, a storm, a tornado. He is blowing from horizons to horizons, running from victory to victory. While this great leader (*başbuğ*) is leading his army, waters are giving him a way; lowlands are erased, mountains are bowing down and kissing his horse's shoes. No enemy army could stand before this magnificent stream; kingdoms are destroyed; thrones are turning over. States were falling apart before the Conqueror's power; empires were collapsing. The whole world was bowing down before the Turkish sword. Turks were rewriting history with golden letters by turning it upside down" (02:08-03:40).<sup>725</sup> Here again, the myth of the Turkish nation's superiority is reproduced. As the Alexander type of leader, Mehmet II is associated with "newness" in contrast to the decadent Byzantium. Without any question, he is taken as Turkish hence called "*başbuğ*," which means chieftain of Turkish tribes. This also makes him a warrior-leader. In this context, the nation is taken to be the Turkish nation, and the Ottoman Empire is the state's name. Although there comes a strong emphasis on Ottoman history, this formulation also fits into the Turkish History Thesis, which takes the Turkish Republic as the continuation of the Ottoman Empire's ascendancy period.

---

<sup>725</sup> "Allah'ın inayeti ve hazreti peygamberin yardımlarıyla, İstanbul fethedilmiş, Osmanlı imparatorluğunun başkenti ve Türk milletinin kalbi olmuştu. Bu mübarek kalp hiçbir zaman durmayacak ve ebediyete kadar kutsal bir heyecanlar çarpacaktır. Bin yıllık köhne Bizans imparatorluğu yıkılmış, orta çağ kapanmış, Osmanlı imparatorluğu yeni çağın başında bir güneş gibi ihtişamla parlamaya başlamıştı. Rüzgara zincir vurulmaz. Fatih Sultan Mehmet Han bir fırtına bir bora bir kasırgaydı. Ufuklardan ufuklara esiyor, zaferlerden zaferlere koşuyordu. Yüce başbuğ Türk ordularının başında yürürken sular ona yol veriyor, ovalar önünde siliniyor, dağlar eğilip atının nallarını öpüyordu. Bu muhteşem akış karşısında hiçbir düşman ordusu dayanamıyor, krallıklar yıkılarak tahtlar devriliyordu. Fatih'in kudreti karşısında devletler çöküyor, imparatorluklar dağılıp parçalanıyordu. Bütün dünya Türk kılıcına boyun eğiyordu. Türkler Avrupa haritasını altüst ederek tarihi yeniden, altın harflerle yazıyorlardı."

#### 5.6.2.4. *The Homeland:*

Mehmet II's success is also displayed in an animated map shown in the introductory scene of *Fatih'in Fedaisi* (*Fatih's Guard*). This map manifests the Ottoman Empire centered on a significant portion of Anatolia and the Balkans surrounded by the remaining part of the Balkans and Anatolia, besides a small amount of the Middle East, Crimea, and Cyprus, all painted in different colors. This is interesting because, according to the map, contrary to many Central Asian warriors or the other warriors of the 1965-1971 period, the Ottoman Empire hence the Turkish nation, rule over a limited area instead of limitless and vast territories. This shrinkage of boundaries at the imaginary level could indicate Turkey's inward-looking nationalism as a reaction to its isolation in the international area. The map also includes an animated arrow showing the conquests of Mehmet II. The first arrow goes from the Balkans to İstanbul and then shows İstanbul in flames. Later, İstanbul turns into the color of the Ottoman Empire because it has been conquered. Then, another arrow goes to the Italian Duchy of Athens from İstanbul, followed by other arrows to the Kingdom of Serbia, Despotate of the Morea, Empire of Trebizond, Wallachia, Bosnia, Karamanids, and the Crimean Khanate. Each time the arrow arrives in one of these places, the color becomes yellow to indicate its conquest by the Ottoman Empire. Besides, some other scenes in which the Ottoman army marches are inserted in between two conquests. Both the arrows and the army move very quickly, conveying the message that the Ottoman army never stopped and continuously conquered new places.

The arrows also show the areas in which Murat rides through on his horse. In this vein, his starting point is never somewhere far from the place where the Sultan is. So, it depends on where Mehmet II is; therefore, sometimes, he starts from the capital. In *Ölüm Emri* (*Death Command*), Murat sets the road from Manisa, the central town of Saruhan sanjak, which had been the training ground for princes hence where Mehmet's court is, to Byzantium, then comes to Manisa again, and the final destination is Adrianople, the capital of the Ottoman Empire before the conquest of İstanbul. This tour is at the same time as the tour of Mehmet II as he becomes the Sultan and leaves Manisa for Adrianople at the end of the same film. In *Denizler Hakimi*, Murat is on the island of Chios, ruled by Prince Nicola, who cooperates with some corsairs. *Devler Savaşıyor* (*Giants are Fighting*) takes place in Morea, whereas, in *Fatih'in Fermanı* (*Fatih's Edict*), Murat is in Lesbos against the Byzantines who left İstanbul after its conquest by the Ottomans. In addition to those islands, Wallachia is also a significant destination for Murat. The only eastward expedition of Murat is directed to the Mushar Castle in the Kharput region controlled by Sheikh Gaffar in *Kara Murat Şeyh Gaffara Karşı* (*Kara Murat Against Sheikh Gaffar*). In *Fatih'in Fermanı* (*Fatih's Edict*), the Byzantine attacks

Pınarköy, Murat's hometown located in Çatalca of Rumelia, besides other villages in the vicinity such as Atalan, Subaşı, Oklalı, and İhsaniye. Therefore, except for the islands and Wallachia, all these places are within the borders of contemporary Turkey. In fact, the audience was probably familiar with the islands because of history, but they might be interested in the islands also because of the surge of the Cyprus issue in the 1970s, which might have led audiences in comparing these islands with Cyprus and the Turkish Cypriots with the other Turkish communities living in other islands in the films. The films also served to justify the Turkish community's historical presence in these islands, which the Greeks currently own. Besides, the emphasis on Çatalca villages in Thrace in *Fatih'in Fedaisi (Fatih's Guard)*, the series's first film, might be reviving the trauma of the Balkan lands' loss. All these could indicate a shift in the boundaries of the national homeland. Therefore, the national homeland myth is reproduced not through a limitless understanding of the homeland that dominated the nationalist action/adventure movies of 1965-1971; but instead through a mental shrinkage that reduced the homeland almost to the borders of contemporary Turkey.

In this regard, the representation of these places is worth mentioning to understand the reproduction of the national homeland myth. Murat always starts from the center. Depending on the period, this is either Manisa, where prince Mehmet lives, Adrianople, the capital before the conquest of İstanbul or İstanbul itself. Regardless of where Murat is, the center, as the court of Mehmet II, is depicted as a palace with Turkish/Ottoman blue and white tiles on walls and interior gardens. In *Fatih'in Fermanı (Fatih's Edict)*, before going to his mission, he visits his mother living in Pınarköy. This village is represented with wooden or mudbrick houses as quiet and colorless, which is a sign of modesty. In parallel to that, Murat's mother is portrayed as a humble lady with a typical traditional outfit, including a traditional headscarf and loose dress. The village is all peaceful; there are also children around, all dressed in traditional baggy trousers and turbans, are shown as playing games, some ladies, again with traditional loose robes and headscarves, do their laundry near a river talking about someone's wedding. In fact, both the village and its inhabitants are familiar to any Turkish viewer hence used in other films of the same series. For example, in *Kara Murat Kara Şövalyeye Karşı (Kara Murat Against Black Knight)*, Murat's father, Ömer Beg, visits his wife and twin sons in a village after completing a mission. The village's representation is like Pınarköy only with the addition of livestock animals around. His wife and sons are in their traditional dresses, and in one scene, Ömer Beg is shown playing games with his sons next to a beautiful green river. The Turks of Chios in *Denizler Hakimi (Master of Seas)* also live in almost the same village without any remarkable difference. Lastly, in *Denizler Hakimi (Master of Seas)*, the Turks of Chios work

on the land, fetch water from the river showing their connection with the homeland. These familiar and typical surroundings, however, are disrupted with the arrival of enemies. So, when Murat visits his village second time in *Fatih'in Fermanı* (*Fatih's Edict*), he finds his mother killed by the Byzantine in front of her home. Here, the village's typicality conveys that what happens to Murat's village and mother can happen to yours. His father in *Kara Murat Kara Şövalyeye Karşı* (*Kara Murat Against Black Knight*) is killed, too. Later, both parents are buried in the middle of a wasteland under a tree. In these burying scenes, we see Murat praying; the adult Murat prays for the mother, and the little Murat prays for the father. Thus, from then on, the land becomes the home of not only the living ones but also the deceased ancestors. Besides, national 'home,' in these examples, is represented through a rural place. This is, of course, not surprising given the fact that the films represent the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Still, it is interesting that this representation is meaningful, especially for those who started to leave their villages in the late 1950s for urban centers such as İstanbul. So, the national homeland myth's central tenet emphasizes that the village is Murat's homeland, and the dying peasants are the sacrificing nation who dies for the homeland.

#### 5.6.2.5. *The Enemy's Land:*

Following the dramatic attacks on homeland/home and nation/family, Murat is given his mission and sets the road. For him, "One heart, one hero is enough" (19:43),<sup>726</sup> as he says in *Fatih'in Fedaisi* (*Fatih's Guard*). Murat rides his horse very fast, mostly alone but sometimes with a few other raiders whom he leads. No matter what, he is always at the forefront like the other loner heroes of the post-1965 period. On his way, he passes through wastelands, green fields, muddy rivers, and the sea in nice long shots. There is always a dessert as he approaches the enemy lands. This could be an indication of the harshness of his mission. Within this context, a dangerous raid is the one that he gallops to save Prince Mehmet II from being killed by a Byzantine Princess named Olympia, a collaborator of Mehmet II's rival, Prince Orhan, in *Ölüm Emri* (*Death Command*). In one scene, Murat and his raider friend Sinan beg cross a muddy river on their horses while struggling with the enemy soldiers, who pour a kind of oil onto the water and burn it. There are also cases in which Murat passes through the sea. Here the peculiarity is that although the Ottoman Empire was an empire by the sea, the sea is never incorporated into the part of the story that takes place in Ottoman lands. Instead, it is shown in relation to the enemy lands. That is to say; the sea becomes a part of the narrative only when

---

<sup>726</sup> "Bir yürek, bir yiğit yeter"

the national warrior is about to arrive at the lands controlled by the enemy or even when he encounters the enemy. A convenient example is Murat's sea fare to Lesbos in *Fatih'in Fermanı* (*Fatih's Edict*) to fight with the Byzantine royalty who ran away after the conquest of İstanbul. He and his raider friend Mihal sail with a small boat giving the message about the closeness of Lesbos to Anatolia. They look at Lesbos and a castle there from a certain distance with a serious expression. In fact, these scenes include elaborate shots that always show the land in the sailing character's background. Therefore, the men are never depicted sailing in the open sea but are always connected to the land. So, Turkish warriors are never men of the sea, but men of the land and the sea is primarily the place of others, and these others are very close. A similar example is *Devler Savaşıyor* (*Giants are Fighting*), in which Murat goes to Morea to find out about the corrupted governor who cooperates with another pasha against Mehmet II. This time, Murat passes across the sea alone by ship, and the sea takes Murat to the land of the 'other.' In *Denizler Hakimi* (*Master of Seas*), some corsairs protected by the Prince of Chios attack the sailing Ottoman admiral navy commanded by the admiral Yunus Pasha. Murat sets the road by boat to save Yunus Pasha, who is kept hostage in enemy lands. Meanwhile, the corsairs attack the Turkish village in Chios and bury some Turkish villagers, including an older woman, up to their necks in the sand. The sea waves smash into the faces of those people when Murat rides his horse on the seashore to save them. This is the film's most memorable scene that depicts the enemy's cruelty, in addition to the peculiar relationship between the Turkish nation and the sea. Based on these scenes, it could be argued that the myth of the national homeland is reproduced mostly through a land-based discourse in which the sea is linked to being peripheral, out-of-control, or being owned by the other.

As Murat is about to arrive at the enemy's land, he visits *hans* or *meyhanes*, where he can prove his prowess through a rehearsal and flare of the main encounter. These are masculine places where men eat and drink lavishly. In this vein, *Denizler Hakimi* (*Master of Seas*) includes a remarkable *han* scene revealing the pirates' barbaric and uncivilized attitudes under the control of the Prince of Chios. They eat and drink a lot, and one of them brings a bear and tries to fight with it, while the others all laugh loudly. In *Fatih'in Fermanı* (*Fatih's Edict*) in Lesbos, Murat and Mihal go to an open-air *han* where some travelers and the people of 'other' eat, drink, and have fun. There Murat saves one of the daughters of the dethroned Byzantine emperor from the hands of some Greek bandits naming themselves the Kopena brothers. According to the narrative, although there are many people there, nobody interferes with the bandits. Then this woman wants help, and Murat then shows his military skills and defeats the enemy through some acrobatic moves. Later in the same place, Murat also fights with a mighty



Byzantine fighter named Kabasakal sent by the other emperor's other daughter. During the fight, Murat overcomes the enemy not only with his fighting skills but also with his intellect. For example, since he quickly pulls his legs from the table he put, Kabasakal stabs a plate full of food on the table, and as he does this, the food flies and lands on his head. Murat watches this with a cynical smile on his face. The other people around also laugh loudly at Kabasakal's situation. As this example reveals, the *han* scenes always provide a convenient opportunity for Murat to show his abilities in addition to his masculine power to belittle the enemy. In this context, Barba Yanni's *meyhane* in *Ölüm Emri (Death Command)* is also a significant place where two sides encounter. There, Murat uses all kinds of materials around him to reduce the enemy to a derogatory status. For example, he throws watermelons at Byzantine soldiers' faces, as he also does in *Devler Savaşıyor (Giants are Fighting)*. In fact, Murat can use all kinds of material, including unusual ones, around him. In *Kara Murat Şeyh Gaffara Karşı (Kara Murat Against Sheikh Gaffar)*, since he is in an open market, he attacks the enemy by putting cabbages onto the two sharp ends of a pike. A point to note here is that this open market is depicted as a crowded and chaotic place like the representations of Arab marketplaces. This complies with any stereotypical cinematic representation of the east. Nevertheless, thanks to his intellect, Murat fights with Murat can defeat more than ten soldiers at once, as he does in *Ölüm Emri (Death Command)*. So, he overcomes a disadvantaged situation using his mind and rationality.

Murat infiltrates the enemy palace also by using his intellect. For example, in *Fatih'in Fedaisi (Fatih's Guard)*, he enters the castle by disguising himself as a priest. In *Fatih'in Fermanı (Fatih's Edict)*, he deceives the Byzantine Princess Julia by introducing himself as Kosta after saving her from Greek bandits' hands. Then, he can enter the palace thanks to the Princess that asks him to become her guard. Similarly, he, disguising as Kosta Karelli, saves the Byzantine Princess Olympia in *Ölüm Emri (Death Command)* from two fake bandits, who are initially the raiders accompanying Murat. Due to his bravery, the Princess suggests he to join a palace race to choose a guard. Murat, unsurprisingly, wins the race and becomes a guard in the enemy's court. In *Denizler Hakimi (Master of Seas)*, the castle becomes the enemy ship, and Murat joins the Spanish corsairs by introducing himself as a Spanish corsair named Antonio. Finally, in *Kara Murat Seyh Gaffara Karşı (Kara Murat Against Sheikh Gaffar)*, Murat reveals his real identity but pretends that he has switched sides because he wants to be in the service of the more powerful one. So, he gains the confidence of Gaffar and even becomes the commander of Mustar castle. There is also a case where Murat disguises himself to defeat internal enemies. In *Devler Savaşıyor (Giants are Fighting)*, he pretends to be Tuğrul Beg, the new Ottoman governor of Morea. Here, Murat behaves as if he is a simple, incapable, and

impotent person to observe the tactics of corrupted Rum commanders and bureaucrats governing in the name of the Ottoman Empire. In all these examples, he can deceive the enemy thanks to his intellect, which benefits him in defeating the enemy.

The enemy castle is mainly represented as a big building made of stone, sometimes marble, as an indication of its coldness instead of the familiar and warm representation of Turkish villages. The Christian enemy often uses colorful banners with dragons on them. The choice of dragons is probably not something ideological and, in fact, an outcome of the filmmakers' efforts to attach the strangest thing to the enemy in the eyes of the audience. In fact, the palace seems so unfitting into nature because it is urban, unlike the rural lands owned by Turks. In this manner, the villages on the islands are not depicted differently than those of Anatolia. The houses and primary landmarks, such as mosques, are all the same.

Moreover, the enemy palace also includes an arena where slaves are made to fight to the death, prisons in which people are tortured, and mysterious passages and tunnels full of water where the two sides clash. At this point, Sheikh Gaffar's palace in Kharput is presented similarly, except for the additional oriental motifs on his castle's decorations, such as the walls and his throne. In fact, although no information is provided about the nationality of Sheikh Gaffar, one may think of him as Arab due to these oriental motifs. This 'Arabization' is an indication of a prejudiced representation of a ruler in the east. In the castle, Murat sometimes finds a way to enter a Christian princess or queen's bedroom. For example, in *Fatih'in Fedaisi* (*Fatih's Guard*), Murat sleeps with the Wallachian queen Lucia in her room as she invites him. In general, these bedrooms are colorful spaces with feminine decoration. His entrance to this room symbolizes the Turks' penetration into the deep corners of the enemy land. Besides, there are churches in the enemy castle, where people pray or sometimes make plans to defeat the Turks. In *Kara Murat Kara Şövalyeye Karşı* (*Kara Murat Against Black Knight*), the church is also a place where Mark, who is originally Murat's twin brother who seems to have forgotten his real identity, is sanctified by a Father. The most memorable scenes showing churches are the ones using Hagia Sophia as a part of the narrative. As mentioned before, in *Fatih'in Fermanı* (*Fatih's Edict*), Murat, Mehmet II, and some other bureaucrats pray in Hagia Sophia. In that scene, Hagia Sophia serves as a symbol of conquest. The same place is inserted in *Kara Murat Devler Savaşıyor* as a fighting arena in Peloponnesus in the post-1453 period. Murat defeats Commander Davut in this place. Here, what is striking here is that Davut is the brother of Greek Kani Pasha, who is a devshirme in the court of Mehmet II. Since he wants to become the governor of Morea, he either imprisons or kills the governors appointed by the Ottoman center. Therefore, the scene in Hagia Sophia depicts the encounter of a loyal Turk and a disloyal one.

This scene gains more significance given the Greek origin of Davut, revealing that those converted Greeks may rebel against the Ottoman authority and cause problems. This representation aligns with the essentialist approach to nationhood, which mentions an unchanged essence as an accurate indication of Turkishness. In this context, the Greeks of Anatolia are perceived as traitors, and Byzantium is defeated again in Hagia Sophia as Davut loses the fight.

#### 5.6.2.6. *Bureaucrats:*

In this regard, what makes Murat's missions different from those of other nationalist action/adventure warriors is his connection with high-ranking bureaucrats. Murat does not only save defenseless Turks oppressed by the enemy, but he also fights to save bureaucrats. For example, in *Fatih'in Fedaisi (Fatih's Guard)*, he searches for Turkish envoys imprisoned by Vlad when they ask him to pay his taxes to the Ottoman Empire. In the same vein, Murat is assigned to save the Rumelia governor (*beylerbeyi*) Karacapaşa from the hands of Prince Carlos, who does not want to pay taxes to the Ottoman Empire in *Kara Murat Kara Şövalyeye Karşı (Kara Murat Against Black Knight)*. Another case is when Murat must save four envoys in the Castle of Mushar to collect taxes in *Kara Murat Seyh Gaffara Karsı (Kara Murat Against Sheikh Gaffar)*. In *Denizler Hakimi (Master of Seas)*, Chief Admiral Yunus Pasha's ship is stormed by the Black Corsair controlled by the Prince of Chios. Yunus again has just collected taxes from the islands, then Mehmet II sends Murat to save the Pasha. Therefore, unlike other nationalist action/adventure warriors for whom bureaucrats are always out of the picture, Murat's story revolves around bureaucrats. This narrative indicates a shift in the anti-bureaucratic discourse of nationalist mythmaking. In turn, this is related to the reproduction of the myth of national warrior as inserted into the state structure, confirming the 1970s' oppressive atmosphere as a reaction to various social movements and their subsequent criminalization in the late 1960s.

Murat's state appointment, however, does not lead to an entirely positive discourse about bureaucrats. In Murat's world, bureaucrats are divided into two: the loyal ones and the disloyal ones. He always supports and even saves those who are loyal to the Sultan. The disloyal, however, are the internal others that should be eliminated. The demarcation line between these two is defined based on whether the bureaucrat fulfills the Sultan's commands. At this point, a convenient example depicting this is *Devler Savaşıyor (Giants are Fighting)*, in which Murat sets the road to learn about the three Turkish governors who got lost in Morea. Interestingly, Murat does this independently, not because Mehmet II has assigned him, but

because he decides to show the truth to Mehmet II. In the story, Mehmet II blames his grand vizier Mahmut Pasha. Murat, however, warns him, saying that he is sacrificing his grand vizier to palace intrigues and, in fact, instead of Mahmut Pasha, Greek Kani Pasha is responsible for bad governance and corruption in Morea. Then, since Mehmet II does not believe in him, Murat decides to quit his job by handing his sword back. This is a radical move and, in fact, a remnant of the early examples of the nationalist action/adventure films, which tell that since the state is above everything, even the Sultan, who is considered as the embodiment of it, the warrior is also responsible for correcting the Sultan. Mehmet II then imprisons Murat, and later, Mahmut Pasha helps Murat to set free. At that moment, as the most loyal warrior, instead of running away, Murat decides to go to Morea to find out the truth. In Morea, an imam acting as the leader of the Turkish community explains the situation there. According to that imam, bureaucrats exploit the people, so whether that land is a Greek or Turkish province is unclear. In his words: “soldiers became the greatest bandits, judges started to punish the victim leaving the criminal aside, no business can be carried out without paying bribes” (25:28-25:41).<sup>727</sup> After a series of adventures, Murat understands that the Greek Mehmet Pasha and his brother, the commander Davut, eliminate appointed governors because these two want Davut to become the king of Morea and later revive the Byzantium Empire. So, basically, these devshirme pashas, who are originally Greek, ruin the state authority by eliminating state-appointed governors. The absence of state authority, then, leads to corruption in political and judicial systems, leading to the exploitation of the people. In other words, challenging the Sultan brings injustice and corruption to society. Here, it is remarkable that neither the system nor the Sultan himself is questioned. More importantly, the loyalty of his subjects to the Sultan is taken as the essential criterion of justice and good governance in the society. After learning about all these, Mehmet II agrees with what Murat, his most loyal warrior, has already told him at the beginning. Then, in his court, he furiously yells at the Greek Pasha: “Come here, you converted dog! We took you from garbage, made you vizier, helped you gain a good fortune that you cannot even dream of, and saved you from death. Is that what you do in return?” (1:21:35-1:22:00).<sup>728</sup> These sentences reflect that Mehmet II is the state's embodiment, and the state is the Father State, a provider of all sources. Since the Father State is the resource provider and protector, the subjects are expected to be loyal to the state in any condition. However, despite the protection and grace

<sup>727</sup> “Asker en büyük eşkıya kesildi. Yargıçlar tutukluyu bırakıp mağduru cezalandırıyorlar. Rüşvetsiz hiçbir iş görülmez oldu.”

<sup>728</sup> “Beru gel dönme kopek...seni çöplükten almış vezir etmiş, rüyanda bile göremeyeceğin bir servete kavuşturup ölümden kurtarmışsınız. Bu mudur?”

provided to him, although he has been a “converted dog,” hence not a Muslim by birth, the Greek Kani Pasha has betrayed the Father. Then, as if he confirms what Mehmet II says, the disloyal Greek Kani Pasha picks a dagger, and while he is about to stab Mehmet II, the loyal warrior realizes this. Murat very quickly responds and cuts the Pasha’s arm. This can be a kind of symbolic castration of the disloyal ones. After this incident, Mehmet II says: “A Yanni of forty-year does not become Kani” (1:22:32),<sup>729</sup> which means that despite their conversion and all the efforts of the Father State, Davut and Kani Pasha are betrayers because they have never forgotten their Greek essence. In fact, the words of Greek Kani Pasha that he put in a letter to Davut confirms this: “We are Muslim from outside, but we are still Christian inside” (1:21:22-1:22:26).<sup>730</sup> Here, it should also be noted that Turkishness and Muslimness go hand in hand; therefore, this ‘unforgotten’ essence is both national and religious.

Another example representing both loyal and disloyal bureaucrats is *Ölüm Emri (Death Command)*. In the story, although Murat II assigns Mehmet II to the throne and Zağnos Pasha already supports Mehmet II, the other vizier Çandarlı Halil Pasha favors Prince Orhan, who is the son of Murat II’s brother Süleyman Çelebi. Orhan, at this time, is kept by Byzantium Emperor Constantine as a hostage, basically, a potential tool to start strife in the Ottoman lands. With this background, Orhan initially seems to be like Cem Sultan portrayed in *Malkoçoğlu Cem Sultan*. However, he is very different from Cem in a negative way. Instead of challenging the enemy, Orhan collaborates with Byzantium. Therefore, he is never a fighting man, unfitting to Girardet’s myth of national leader based on Alexander. He indulges in earthly pleasures like entertainment, overeating, making women dance for him, and sleeping with them. He also sleeps with Princess Olympia, the wife of the Emperor. This, however, does not mean that Orhan proves his masculinity and power over the enemy. In fact, it is the outcome of Olympia’s plans to use Orhan to seize the Ottoman throne and become the Empress of the Ottoman Empire. In one scene, when Murat is disguised as Kosta Karelli, he says that he does not want to torture Muslims in front of him. Orhan says that he defines himself as more Byzantinian than Turkish, so Kosta can do whatever he wants. Here, Orhan seems to have forgotten his essence, which is both Turkish and Muslim. Thus, he is never the legitimate heir to the throne because he has not been assigned by the Sultan and does not have the grace of God, ‘kut.’ In this context, both Prince Orhan and Çandarlı are represented as internal others since they are disloyal to the Father State. Therefore, as the loyal warrior, Murat fights to protect the Father State’s embodiment, hence the legitimate heir, who is Mehmet II.

<sup>729</sup> “Kırk yıllık Yanni olur mu Kani?”

<sup>730</sup> “Dışımız Müslümandır ama içimiz yine de Hristiyan kalmıştır”

#### 5.6.2.7. *External Others:*

Besides internal others, Kara Murat has various external enemies. Some are mentioned only very briefly. For example, Magyars are said to be cooperating with Vlad in *Fatih'in Fedaisi* (*Fatih's Guard*), Byzantine in *Fatih'in Fermanı* (*Fatih's Edict*), and *Ölüm Emri* (*Death Command*). Vlad also says that he can ask help from France, England, and Venice, and in *Ölüm Emri* (*Death Command*), it is also stated that the Byzantine has agreed with Venice. Apart from those, the enemies fight because they do not want to pay taxes imposed by the Ottoman Empire, so they do not bow down to the Ottoman authority. Therefore, they attack defenseless and innocent Turkish people. They storm Turkish villages, kill people, rape Turkish women, burn houses, imprison and torture the rebellious men, and do some work in stone hearths. These scenes usually show everything explicitly, and therefore, the representation is not different from that of other nationalist action/adventure films of the 1965-1970s. What makes Kara Murat's enemies unique is the evil laughter that they have every time they burn a village or kill a person. Vlad the Impaler in *Fatih'in Fedaisi* (*Fatih's Guard*) or the Black Corsair in *Denizler Hakimi* (*Master of Seas*) loudly laugh as they mention their evil plans or harm people. This representation contributes to their cruelty and may strengthen the viewers' emotional attachment to the national warrior.

Each film has its own remarkable scenes portraying the evilness of the enemy. Vlad the Impaler of Wallachia, depicted in *Fatih'in Fedaisi* (*Fatih's Guard*), among all enemy rulers, is the cruellest. In this context, a significant scene is the one that takes place in a court setting in which Vlad asks one of his soldiers about what the crime of a man, woman, and their daughter is. The victims here are all dressed in traditional Turkish outfits, the woman and the little girl even having headscarves. Vlad's soldier gives a great answer, which is like a nationalism pill to be swallowed by the viewer: "To be Turkish and Muslim" (04:26). Vlad then tells the victims that he will not kill them if they change their religion and nation and kiss a Christian icon, which is a cross. They, however, do not do this; instead, they start to recite the Shahadah. Finally, getting mad at them, Vlad orders his soldier to impale the male victim and take out the female victim's heart. These are all carried out before their little daughter's eyes, who is later taken as a maid by Vlad. In the following scene, Hamza Pasha is impaled, too. Later, Vlad orders the little Murat in a traditional Turkish outfit to cut off his older brother's arm and leg. The older brother approves this to save Murat, and so the younger one cuts while crying at the same time. All these influential instances of cruelty are shown quickly, which is quite shocking for the audience.

*Fatih'in Fermanı (Fatih's Edict)*, in which Murat fights against Byzantium, also has memorable scenes of cruelty. In this film, the focus is on a Byzantine commander named Nicole. He leads the Byzantine army in attacking Turkish villages in Rumelia, including the hometown of Murat. In one scene, he kills Murat's defenseless and innocent old mother by attacking her back. In another scene, Nicole is in Lesbos where he flees after the conquest of İstanbul. There, he buries some Turks in the sand, shoots arrows at them while at the same time ordering those victims to convert to Christianity. The people, again, refuse to change their religion. As they start to recite the Shahadah, Nicole cuts off their heads. In the third scene, Nicole kills an imam leading the prayer while he and the community are still praying. These are all quite sensitive scenes. Lastly, Nicole is so cruel, and even courageous, that in another Lesbos scene, he kills Irene, the Byzantine Emperor's daughter, because she has fallen in love with Mehmet II. In fact, Mehmet II wants Murat to get revenge on Nicole for Irene as well. At this point, apart from the cruelty of Nicole, reducing the Byzantine enemy into a commander is also significant. In contrast with Nicole, the Byzantine emperor is not an evil man. In fact, even the emperor himself is a victim of Nicole because Nicole only knows where the Byzantine treasure is. Having this piece of information, he plans to overcome both the Byzantine Emperor and the king of Lesbos and finally to become the emperor of Lesbos. This kind of representation of the emperor might be related to a discursive effort to present the emperor as ineffective hence impotent. A similar perspective is available in *Ölüm Emri (Death Command)*, where Byzantium is an enemy that aims to use Prince Orhan against Prince Mehmet II. Here, Byzantium Emperor does not come to the fore again, but instead, his wife Olympia is the main focus. This time not the cruelty of the Byzantine, but its intrigues are emphasized. In this context, Princess Olympia plans to deceive not only the Byzantine emperor but also Prince Orhan to become the empress of the Ottoman Empire one day. She even decides to fool Mehmet II with her beauty and presents, and she visits his court to poison him. Here, Byzantine is feminized, meaning that it is reduced to an enemy Princess, and this could again be an attempt to show the emperor as impotent and weak.

In *Kara Murat Kara Şövalye Karşı (Kara Murat Against Black Knight)*, the enemies are rather vague. They are indeed Christians, as understood from their names, visits to church, or sometimes crosses on the clothes of dark knights, but the audience is not provided the states' names. In one scene, Prince Carlos and Mark, the twin brother of Murat, who has converted and does not remember his past anymore, storm Murat's village in Rumelia. After killing some villagers, they go inside Murat's mother's house, strike her while she is praying, and later tie her to the back of a horse and drag her till she is severely injured. This remarkable scene conveys

the message that this Christian enemy could do the same thing to your mothers one day. This easily fits into the political context, given the bitter memories of the Cyprus conflict. Similarly, in *Denizler Hakimi (Master of Seas)*, Murat fights with some rather vague, but apparently Christian, enemies. They are some corsairs, possibly Spanish, as can be understood from their names and protected by the Prince of Chios. They are evils and capable of what the other enemies do to innocent and defenseless people. Before they attack the Turkish admiral navy, the leader Black Corsair says: “If there is anybody who wants to drink Turkish blood, you can quaff it today” (07:03).<sup>731</sup> These words indicate what they will do in the future. In fact, as they capture the ship, they kill the soldiers there amid screams and the sounds of clashing swords. More remarkable than that, they attack a Turkish village in Chios. Sneaking into the land with daggers in their mouths and swords, they storm the village while azan is being recited. This leads the audience to think that this is not a simple corsair attack but, in fact, an attack on Islam. As in other nationalist action/adventure films mentioned so far, the enemy destroys the quietness and tranquility of that typical Turkish village where people have been going about with their daily chores such as working on the land before their arrival. The Black Corsair laughs loudly in an irritating way as he and his friends burn people’s homes. However, the most remarkable scene is the one in which the corsairs bury some villagers into the sand in the seashore. This scene is not only an indication of the problematic relationship between Turkish national warrior and the sea, as mentioned earlier, but also an expression of the enemy’s cruelty, who can adopt every evil way to destroy Turks hence Muslims from the world. This scene shows the need for a Savior, in fact, an Alexander type of warrior.

The last external other to mention is Sheikh Gaffar, who leads a heretic sect in the Kharput region. In *Kara Murat Şeyh Gaffara Karşı (Kara Murat Against Sheikh Gaffar)*, Murat encounters Sheikh Gaffar because Mehmet II plans to extend the empire eastward. Like Hasan-ı Sabbah of Arab lands, the Sheikh has an army of hypnotized people who follow his orders without questioning. These readily sacrifice their lives for the Sheikh because he promises to take them to heaven. In this context, these hypnotized soldiers, manipulated by a religious figure, stand in opposition to loyal warrior Murat, a member of a warrior-nation who is ready to die voluntarily. The drama further increases as Murat’s older brother Turhan also becomes a victim of the Sheikh. Therefore, Murat’s personal cause united with the national cause, and this situation conveys the message that what happened to Turhan could happen to anybody’s brothers, too. Later, Murat finds out that the Sheikh uses “white powder” brought once a month

---

<sup>731</sup> “İçinizde Türk kanı içmek isteyen varsa kana kana içsin bu gece.”



by the Chinese to the Sheikh. Here, how filmmakers get the Sheikh and the Chinese together is quite impressive. They probably wanted to choose an enemy from the East and unsurprisingly, the historical enemy, the Chinese, was a suitable option. So, Murat also fights with the Chinese merchants, and there the audience sees Murat's martial arts skills, too. One last point to note is that Gaffar's daughter Zeynep is kidnapped by a bandit named Kurdish Abdo and his friends in one scene. Murat, then, comes to the scene and fights with those Kurdish men, who are depicted very similar to the corsairs of *Denizler Hakimi (Master of Seas)* or the Greek bandits of Lesbos in *Fatih'in Fermanı (Fatih's Edict)*. Hence, they are represented as evil barbarians who speak and laugh loudly. Although they are untidy like the other bandits, their clothes, including loose trousers, jackets, and headgears with Anatolian motifs, are familiar to the audience. Combined with their torture of Zeynep next to a cave on a mountain, this movie could be taken as one of the earliest examples of stereotypical representation of Kurds in Turkish Cinema.

Given these representations, it could be stated that the message about the cruelty and savagery of the external other is given sufficiently. However, from another perspective, the brutality of the Turkish side should not be ignored either. Like any other nationalist action/adventure film, the Kara Murat series includes long fighting scenes. What makes Kara Murat different than the films of the pre-1965 period is the degree of violence. Most scenes are very bloody, with beheaded people and severed limbs. Here it is not only the cruel enemy causing these, but also the Turkish side. A striking example is the final scene of *Fatih'in Fedaisi (Fatih's Guard)*, in which Murat kills Vlad and then puts his head on a spike. Then, he carries the head in his hand while riding his horse together with Zeynep and Mihal. What strikes most is the happy smiles on these characters' faces despite the bloody head in the hand of Murat. In another remarkable scene in *Fatih'in Fermanı (Fatih's Edict)*, the Byzantine commander Nicole shoots Murat with three arrows all on his chest. Although he is in blood, Murat can still stand and shoots Nicole with three arrows, one for each eye, and the last one for his throat, saying: "This is for my mother, this is for Kabasakal and Mihal, and this is for all Muslims you killed."<sup>732</sup> Then, the camera shows Nicole with bloody eyes and throat. Here, through using the same cruel methods adopted by the enemy, Murat takes revenge on behalf of the audience as a loyal Turkish warrior.

---

<sup>732</sup> "Bu anam için, bu Kabasakal ve Mihal için, bu da öldürdüğün tüm Müslümanlar için."

### 5.6.2.8. Good Others:

In his cause, three good others accompany Murat. The first one is Mihal, who is a Serbian victim of Vlad's regime. He says Vlad and the commander Nicole have taken all his property away, leading to his wife and children's death due to hunger and poverty. In *Fatih'in Fedaisi* (*Fatih's Guard*), since he throws an arrow at Nicole, he is punished by being dragged from behind Nicole's horse. As Murat saves him, he asks whether Murat is Turkish because he looks so brave. This is a clear indication of a national/ethnic/religious hierarchy between Mihal and Murat that reproduces the myth of Turkish national superiority. In fact, he also asks to accompany Murat besides saying: "if you kill Vlad, the whole of Serbia will be your slave" (26:44). In *Fatih'in Fermanı* (*Fatih's Edict*), Mihal is depicted as a loyal friend of Murat in his raids. Mihal is severely injured at some point, and since he wants to die as a Muslim, he recites the Shahadah. Here it is interesting that Mihal has not converted earlier. This shows that there are some good Christians, and these also support Murat's cause. Besides, to be a friend of Murat, one does not need to change his religion showing how just and tolerant Murat is. In this vein, a similar character is Vlad's hangman Papescu. In *Fatih'in Fedaisi* (*Fatih's Guard*), when Vlad imprisons Murat, they make him fight with Papescu. While Murat is about to win the fight, Papescu begs him to forgive his life. Murat does this, so he does not kill him. In return, on the day of Murat's execution, Papescu places the knot around Murat's neck loosely, so he saves Murat's life. Later, he helps Murat escape the enemy palace, saying he has learned courage and bravery from Murat.<sup>733</sup> When Murat gets back to the castle together with Mihal, Papescu leads them in secret passages. At one point, he is wounded, and when dying, he says, "Throughout my life, I have lived like a dog; now, I am dying as a human being" (1:14:13).<sup>734</sup> Here, it is interesting that in Papescu's eyes, dying when helping to Murat's cause is something that elevates himself. The last similar character is a Byzantine warrior named Kabasakal in *Fatih'in Fermanı* (*Fatih's Edict*). In Lesbos, Murat is made to fight with him, and when he is about to kill Kabasakal, very much like Papescu, Kabasakal asks him to forgive his life. Murat, as a just and fair warrior, accepts this. The two meet again, and Kabasakal is ordered to blind Murat with a hot metal piece. Knowing that Murat has saved his life before, Kabasakal only burns the eyelids of Murat instead of blinding him completely. Then, he helps him to get cured. However, he is killed at the end because he does not say where Murat is to Byzantine soldiers. All these examples reinforce the myth of Turkish national superiority while conveying that even

<sup>733</sup> "Mertliği ve yiğitliği senden öğrendim, yolun açık olsun."

<sup>734</sup> "Ömrümce köpek gibi yaşadım, şimdi insan gibi ölüyorum"

able-bodied men of the other support the Turkish cause. This also underlines the masculinity of the Turkish national warrior over men of the other.

In addition to men, there are also women of other who help Murat. In fact, unlike the other nationalist action/adventure films of the same period, there are many women in the Kara Murat series. Whether they are Turkish or not, these women are the bravest, most idealist, and determined women among all the others portrayed in other nationalist action/adventure films. A remarkable example is the corsair Maria in *Denizler Hakimi (Master of Seas)*. She is a sword master and even able to fight with the Black Corsair. Although she finds the Black Corsair cruel, she still hates the Turks because they have killed her father. She meets Murat when Murat has disguised as a Spanish corsair named Antonio. Then, she falls in love with him. When his real identity is revealed, Maria first cannot decide what to do but later does not give up her love and even helps both Murat and Yunus Pasha run away from the corsairs' ship. A similar character is Elen in *Fatih'in Fermanı (Fatih's Edict)*. She is the daughter of the dethroned Byzantine emperor living in Lesbos. Like Maria, she is an idealist and ambitious woman who hates Turks. She constantly criticizes her sister, Irene, because she has fallen in love with Mehmet II. In fact, Elen says she prefers death to fall in love with a Turk.<sup>735</sup> Then, she falls in love with Murat when he pretends to be Kosta Karelli. When Elen learns about who he is, she takes a dagger into her hand and attempts to kill Murat. However, Murat stops her, and Elen decides not to give up her love like Maria. These two women are both strong idealist women. The fact that they continue to love the warrior marks his masculinity and can be interpreted as a domestication of the enemy. Besides, although Maria and Elen are women of other, they could be convenient role models for Turkish women.

Three other memorable women of other are entirely evils. One is Vlad's wife, Queen Lucia, in *Fatih'in Fedaisi (Fatih's Guard)*. She is merciless and has some sadistic behaviors, such as killing the men she sleeps with. She is, in fact, a beautiful and erotic woman who is always scantily dressed. Therefore, this representation is typical of the period. The second character is the Byzantine Princess Olympia. On the one hand, she is beautiful and erotic like Lucia, but on the other hand, she is an idealist, ambitious, and determined woman like Maria or Elen. She wants to be the empress of the Ottoman Empire, and through the end of the film, she attempts to kill Mehmet II. The last powerful woman of the other is Zeynep, the daughter of Sheikh Gaffar in *Kara Murat Şeyh Gaffara Karşı (Kara Murat Against Sheikh Gaffar)*. She kills her father, an enemy of the Turks, and later becomes the Kharput region's queen. At this

---

<sup>735</sup> "Asla bir Türk'e gönül vermem, ölmeyi tercih ederim"

point, although what Olympia and Zeynep do is quite radical, as being idealists, they could be added to those other women that have the potential of being role models for Turkish women, who are expected to be nationalist and patriotic like them or maybe sometimes as cruel as those women of other.

#### 5.6.2.9. *Turkish Women:*

There are significant Turkish women characters who are also represented as very active and brave. What strikes attention is the women's increasing visibility in the Kara Murat series despite still playing secondary roles. Although it might be related to increasing female artists, women's representation always underlines the warrior's masculinity. For example, *Fatih'in Fermanı* (*Fatih's Edict*) and *Kara Murat Kara Şövalyeye Karşı* (*Kara Murat Against Black Knight*) include a portrayal of Murat's mother, too. In the first film, she is a humble and sympathetic lady who misses her son very much because her son is always fighting. In the second, Murat's mother is depicted as a powerful and tough woman. When Murat's father, Ömer Beg, is murdered, she gives his sword to Murat, saying that he will get revenge when Murat is just around five years old. Here, the younger Murat is presented as a man-to-be, and his mother is given the mission of encouraging him in his 'becoming.' This narrative nurtures the myth of the warrior nation by showing a little boy as a future soldier and his mother as underlining his masculinity. Besides mothers, there are younger Turkish women. Compared to other female Turkish characters of nationalist action/adventure films, the women here are generally multi-layered characters. This means they do not merely follow the warrior because they fall in love with him. Instead, they all aim to take revenge for their fathers or families, and they collaborate with Murat because of that. Given this, these women can be taken as ideal role models for Turkish women. At this point, one small thing to note is that Another issue is that all are named Zeynep, probably because of the filmmakers' efforts to simplify the narratives for the audience. Regardless of the reason, this helps the audience to have an easier attachment to their ideal nationalist role models in the Kara Murat series. This discourse, in the end, reproduces the myth of the warrior nation by conveying the idea that we all can be loyal national warriors.

In this regard, the first significant Turkish female character is Zeynep of *Fatih'in Fedaisi* (*Fatih's Guard*). She is the little girl whose parents have been killed by Vlad at the beginning of the film. Years after, she comes to the scene as Angela serving in Vlad's palace. Despite that, she never forgets her real identity. While being tortured because she has tried to poison Vlad, she says: "My life does not have any value given the cause to which I have dedicated myself. I

am a Turkish girl” (1:05-35-1:05:43).<sup>736</sup> Through the end of the film, Vlad’s wife Lucia tries to kill Zeynep with a dagger, but Zeynep takes it and kills Lucia, saying that “This is for my mother, this is for my father and this is for all innocent Turks you killed” (1:19:17-1:19:22).<sup>737</sup> Her bravery is not surprising given the myth of the warrior nation that considers all members of the Turkish nation as members of an army. The Karacapaşa’s daughter, Zeynep, in *Kara Murat Kara Sövalyeye Karşı* (*Kara Murat Against Black Knight*) is also an idealist and brave Turkish girl who aims to take revenge for her father. She leads rebellious Turks against the cruelty of Prince Carlos. In *Devler Savaşıyor* (*Giants are Fighting*), Zeynep pops up as the daughter of Yunus Pasha, the previous governor of Morea. Like Zeynep in *Kara Murat Kara Sövalyeye Karşı* (*Kara Murat Against Black Knight*), she wants to take the revenge of her father. She is even tortured because she has harshly criticized the new governor and the commander without any hesitation. In *Ölüm Emri* (*Death Command*), the audience is not provided the information about Zeynep’s personal cause, but it is said that she is the sister of a raider named Sinan Beg. In line with this familial connection, which reproduces the myth of the warrior nation, Zeynep has a sacred duty of finding out the Byzantine plans. Therefore, she works so close to Olympia and Orhan as their maids. She later informs Murat and other raiders about those, and so fulfills her national duties.

As a result, with his seven different adventures, Kara Murat firms Turks’ existence in a limited area constituted by Anatolia and a part of the Balkans. The islands of Lesbos, Morea, and Chios are interesting because they are taken not as originally Turkish islands but instead as islands that have Turkish inhabitants in addition to Christians. The link with the islands, in this picture, is established with the taxation of their rulers. Here, the Turkish rule’s justification through taxation and the later fight because the enemies do not want to pay taxes and attack Turks could also be interpreted as a sign of islands being periphery hence out of control. This could be why Turks do not claim ownership of the island but simply focuses on how the enemy terrorizes the Turkish communities. This relatively limited reproduction of the myth of the national homeland makes Murat different from many other warriors who fight in limitless territories. In connection to that, Murat primarily fights with Byzantium and Vlad, the Impaler of Wallachia. In fact, even if the story takes place on an island, there is always a Byzantinian intervening with the local king against the Turks. Both Wallachia and Byzantium are enemies from the past, and Sheikh Gaffar is an imaginary figure. None of them have a direct present-day counterpart as a state. Despite that, the series in general and the islands’ incorporation into

<sup>736</sup> “Kendimi adadığım dava yanında hayatimin değeri yoktur. Ben bir Türk kızıyım”

<sup>737</sup> “Bu anam için, bu babam için, bu da öldürdüğünüz tüm masum Türkler için”

the stories have contemporary meanings, given the 1970s' political atmosphere dominated by aggressive military nationalism as reflected on the Cyprus issue.

The second distinguishing feature of Murat is his connection with the high-ranking bureaucrats. He fights to save those bureaucrats, most of whom are envoys that visit Ottoman lands to collect taxes. Why these envoys collect taxes is never justified through a reproduction of the myth of national or ethnic continuity with these lands. Instead, tax collection is represented as a natural relationship. This point might be related to the myth of benevolent conquerors in minds. To dig deeper, the naturalization of taxing different lands could be perceived as the natural outcome of Turks being benevolent conquerors. That is, Turks conquer new places, protect these places, and rule them just, and receive taxes in return. This kind of perceivably smooth connection between taxation and ruling directly represents the myth of benevolent conquerors inscribed on the Turkish political culture.

### **5.6.3. Warriors Fighting for Suleiman the Magnificent:**

#### **5.6.3.1. A General Look:**

Besides the 15<sup>th</sup> century and Mehmet II's reign, Suleiman the Magnificent's 16<sup>th</sup> century is the other period film producers utilize by contributing to the Ottoman Golden Age myth. There are four available historical action/adventure films made in the 1970s depicting this period. The first is *Malkoçoğlu Kurt Bey* (dir. Süreyya Duru, 1972), which refers to the son of Malkoçoğlu, a renowned hero; the others are *Estergon Kalesi* (*The Castle of Esztergom*, dir. Kemal Kan, 1972), *Akma Tuna: Estergon'un Fethi* (*Do Not Flow, The Danube: The Conquest of Esztergom*, dir. Kemal Kan, 1972) and *Turhanoglu Çal Hasan* (dir. Yılmaz Atadeniz, 1975), which are about the adventures of Çal Hasan. Amid the political turmoil and oppression caused by the 1971 Memorandum, nationalist aggressiveness of the Cyprus issue, Turkey's isolation in the international arena, and the rise of political Islam in connection to all these, the 1970s' historical action/adventure films taking place in the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent mainly worked to revive the Ottoman expansion in the Balkans at a time when the Ottomans were in their golden age, and hence more potent than Europeans.

A general look at the films reveals that Malkoçoğlu Kurt bey and Çal Hasan are not different from other heroes mentioned so far in their great duties: both are loyal warriors of a political leader. Çal Hasan's loyalty is depicted in *Estergon Kalesi* (*The Castle of Esztergom*) with a comparison to paid soldiers of Pope Paul, who kill for a material gain as opposed to Turkish warriors, who only wish a healthy life for their pashas that give them orders in addition to gaining the love of the people they saved. For instance, in *Akma Tuna*, when Yahya Pasha

asks Çal Hasan and his friend Bölükbaşı Cafer what they want in return for their heroism in the conquest of Esztergom, both men say that they wish Yahya Pasha to be healthy. When Kara Ahmet Pasha asks the same question in *Turhanoglu Çal Hasan* to Çal Hasan and the other raider Bal Murat, the answer is again the same, and the two men also say that they have already gained the love of people they protected. A Magyar soldier also praises the Turkish warriors' loyalty in the Esztergom Castle in *Akma Tuna: Estergon'un Fethi (Do Not Flow, The Danube: The Conquest of Esztergom)*: "these warriors are loyal people unlike ours who are traitors" (42:31). So, as the voiceover states several times in Çal Hasan films, Turkish warriors set the road for "taking and giving heads" or 'to kill and be killed' unlike Christian soldiers who fight for a monetary return. This message reproduces the myth of the warrior nation, which attributes war-making to qualities of Turkishness that are given by birth. To open parenthesis at this point, it is also interesting that in *Estergon Kalesi (The Castle of Esztergom)* and *Akma Tuna: Estergon'un Fethi (Do Not Flow, The Danube: The Conquest of Esztergom)*, the commander of the castle Vitelli and his men call each other by adding the word 'noble' before their names. This could be just a narrative choice of the scenarist to enrich the story. Still, it also serves to polish the image of Turkish nationalist 'common' men fighting against the privileged 'nobles' or the paid soldiers of the Pope.

#### **5.6.3.2. The Ruler and the Mission of the Warrior:**

Like the other heroes mentioned so far, Kurt bey and Çal Hasan fight for the 'legitimate' ruler. This legitimacy is defined in relation to the divine right of the kings. As mentioned in *Malkoçoğlu Kurt Bey*, Suleiman has been 'given the state' by God.<sup>738</sup> In this context, any challenge to Suleiman's authority means a challenge to God. This strong emphasis on the divine connection between the state and the ruler elevates Suleiman's status in his subjects' eyes. This kind of legitimation tactic is not novel, given the religious justification of the conquest of İstanbul in Kara Murat films. Therefore, unsurprisingly, Kara Murat films and the four films mentioned here complete one another. In this regard, in war scenes, both Suleiman and Mehmet II are depicted similarly. They do not actively fight; both march on their horse on a greenfield leading their armies accompanied by the army band (*mehter*). Other than these scenes, both sultans are in their courts or tents on battlefields. In general, contrary to the young, energetic, idealist, and excited Mehmet II, Suleiman in *Malkoçoğlu Kurt Bey* is represented as older, wiser, more serious, more rigid, and much more experienced like Cincinnatus of Girardet.

---

<sup>738</sup> "Allah devleti Süleyman'a nasip etmiş."

Unlike Mehmet II, who consults with his viziers and pashas or even with Kara Murat in Divan meetings, Suleiman just gives orders in a calmer but aggressive way. He speaks less and sometimes only shakes his head from right to left or up and down to state his opinions.

The other interesting point is that although Mehmet II appears in all Kara Murat films, Suleiman is represented only in *Malkoçoğlu Kurt Bey*. In the other three films, only a voiceover mentions Suleiman's success and the fact that he is "Sultan of the World" (*Cihan Padişahı*). In connection to that, while Kara Murat and other heroes mentioned so far receive orders about their missions directly from the rulers, Suleiman's loyal warriors are not like that. Only Kurt Bey can communicate with Suleiman in *Malkoçoğlu Kurt Bey*, in which Suleiman orders him to prove his bravery and heroism in finding the Black Knight of the Pope who terrorizes a border village. In the other three films, bureaucrats such as pashas and viziers communicate with Çal Hasan about the orders of Suleiman. For example, in *Turhanoglu Çal Hasan*, Kara Ahmet Pasha informs Çal Hasan about his mission in Andalusia as ordered by the Sultan. The portrayal of Suleiman as such elevates him and so makes him unreachable and glorious. This also means that the warriors are all taken under state control, which is also a step towards the anonymization of even the loner warrior in a period of oppression and aggressiveness following the flowering and later criminalization of social movements in the late 1960s.

Consequently, the national missions of the warrior have transformed, too. Kurt bey of *Malkoçoğlu Kurt Bey* sets the road after Rıdvan Pasha is killed. In *Estergon Kalesi (The Castle of Esztergom)*, Çal Hasan and his raider friend Bölükbaşı Cafer must take revenge for Sinan Pasha and the Turkish committee led by him murdered by Christians in Buda. It is said that Sinan Pasha has been there with İbrahim's Pasha's order and the Sultan's edict. In *Akma Tuna: Estergon'un Fethi (Do Not Flow, The Danube: The Conquest of Esztergom)*, Çal Hasan and his friends are known to be the raiders in the service of Yahya Paşazade Ahmet bey. This Pasha sends Hasan after the conquest of Esztergom to the raid for conquering the Sabac Castle and join other raiders. Bal Murat and Çal Hasan in *Turhanoglu Çal Hasan* join those raiders led by Kara Ahmet Pasha for Timișoara after they complete their mission of saving the Muslim community in Andalusia from the hands of the cruel Spanish. These examples manifest the withering away of the anti-bureaucratic discourse. It can also be an indication of a hierarchy between bureaucrats and loyal warriors. In this hierarchy, the heroes are in a lower position, and this never existed before. In this vein, Kara Murat's place in the state hierarchy is higher. In fact, Kara Murat has already been taken under state authority, but he is never lower than bureaucrats. Here in the films depicting Suleiman, however, the warrior completely loses his independence. This narrative, which takes heroes somehow under the control of bureaucrats,



perfectly fits into the politically oppressive nature of the early 1970s, following a period of political liberalization in the 1960s. The heroes here operate as part of the state apparatus; therefore, they are under the state's control. This represents domestication of the warrior, which complies with the state's attempts to take all different voices under control with the 1971 Memorandum.

#### 5.6.3.3. *The Warriors:*

Compared to historical action/adventure films of previous periods, the films analyzed in this part include more references to other raiders. For example, Çal Hasan is never alone, and there is another raider always accompanying him: either Bal Murat or Bölükbaşı Cafer. In *Akma Tuna: Estergon'un Fethi* (*Do Not Flow, The Danube: The Conquest of Esztergom*), Esztergom's imprisoned commander, Verben, mentions thousands of Turkish raiders coming to Esztergom. At the end of the same film, Çal Hasan is sent to join other raiders in Sabac Castle. Similarly, in *Turhanoğlu Çal Hasan*, after completing his mission in Andalusia, the protagonist joins those fighting for Timişiora's conquest. Then, in the closing scene of the same film, a voice-over says, "we cannot finish the adventures of our raider forefathers by telling" (53:40),<sup>739</sup> to emphasize the abundance of heroic raiders. These references to raiders other than the protagonist reveal the anonymity of the warrior. Besides, the audience hears Yahya Kemal Beyatlı's poem titled *Akıncılar* (*Raiders*). It mentions many raiders galloping on their horses during the Balkan conquests. The initial lines heard by the audience are: "We were merry as children at the raids which had a thousand raiders/That day, we conquered an army like a giant which with a thousand raiders." In the end, the voice-over says: "The fatherland is thankful to you"<sup>740</sup> (54:27-56:03). In Turkish nationalist discourse, this is a prevalent phrase used for soldiers who became martyrs. The point is that this phrase is instead a part of nation-state discourse. Thus, it could be an indication of the Ottomanization of national memory. That is to say; the filmmakers are using concepts, phrases, or words which are commonly associated with Turkish soldiers of the Turkish nation-state. By doing this, they look at the Ottoman past through the lenses of today. This emphasis on how raiders spilled their blood in the Balkans, in the end, serves to justify the Turkish presence in Europe while reproducing the myth of national homeland. More significantly, in this picture, the raiders are basically soldiers. In this regard, they are not freedom-loving, loner men of swords anymore. Instead, they are members of a raider group, not in the forefront because many other raiders like them are fighting in other

<sup>739</sup> "Akıncı cedlerimizin maceraları anlatmakla bitmez."

<sup>740</sup> "Bin atlı akınlarda çocuklar gibi şendik/Bin atlı o gün dev gibi bir orduyu yendik." "Vatan size minnettardır."

places. As the voiceover states in the final scene of *Turhanoglu Çal Hasan*, there are hundreds of thousands of Turks who become martyrs on horseback running from war to war, victory to victory (54:27-56:03).<sup>741</sup> If these references are taken in connection to bureaucrats' insertion into the picture, it could be argued that the 1970s' hero is anonymous. This could also be why both Çal Hasan and Kurt Bey are expected to prove their bravery to the Sultan, as the Sultan says at the beginning of *Malkoçoğlu Kurt Bey* and the voiceover states in *Estergon Kalesi (The Castle of Esztergom)*. Therefore, the hero is much more ordinary; in fact, a loyal common man working as a part of the state hierarchy that puts him below bureaucrats. This could be taken as an indication of the hero's domestication and commonization, which is already seen in the Kara Murat series in line with the oppressive political atmosphere of the 1970s.

Furthermore, like other heroes mentioned so far, both Kurt bey and Çal Hasan have excellent fighting skills and are sword masters. They are on horseback most of the time. They are athletic and robust. The enemies in *Akma Tuna: Estergon'un Fethi (Do Not Flow, The Danube: The Conquest of Esztergom)* even praise Çal Hasan's strength. Similarly, some warriors from the border village (*derbent köyü*) in *Malkoçoğlu Kurt Bey* recognize Kurt Bey thanks to his fighting style that rests on solid punches as those of Malkoçoğlu. What is more significant is that the heroes' strength does not come from their physical features but their Turkishness. In fact, in these films, the warriors are never physically superior, meaning that they do not have a seemingly muscular body; they are not tall or not with well-built bodies. The key to all these heroes, which make them unique, is their ordinariness at first sight. This could be a factor in catalyzing the audience's attachment to the heroes by paving the way to represent the common man. This, in the end, gives the message that every common Turkish man is or should be a loyal warrior for the one who has the 'state.' Thus, the heroes are warriors since their birth because they are the members of the warrior nation, and they bring their capabilities to perfection by training. Kurt bey, for example, is trained by a raider Muslu beg at the age of seven or eight. His twin brother Doğan bey, kidnapped by the Christian enemies when he was a little child hence raised as a Christian, is also quite good at fighting because he carries Turkish blood. In complementing the picture, the heroes are always very self-confident; therefore, they know how to use their intelligence to overcome disadvantaged situations. For example, Çal Hasan in *Turhanoglu Çal Hasan* goes to Andalusia disguised as a Spanish man after changing his Turkish-folk clothes with oriental motifs vest and baggy trousers into a landsknecht hat, black jacket, and leggings. This tactic enables him to infiltrate into the castle easily and, as a

---

<sup>741</sup> "At sırtında savaştan savaşa, zaferden zafere koşmuş yüzbinlerce şehit Türk'ün ruhu şadolsun."

result, creates an advantage out of a disadvantaged situation. In this example, it should also be noted that certain clothes such as baggy trousers and clothes with oriental motifs gain a national character, whereas the others are considered non-national.

#### 5.6.3.4. *The Landscape:*

All these adventures take place at a time when the Ottoman Empire is strengthening its presence in Europe. Therefore, both heroes ride their horses in Balkan lands; pass through rivers and mostly green fields shown with wide shots as in other action/adventure films mentioned so far. Only when going to Andalusia in *Turhanoglu Çal Hasan*, besides greenfields and rivers, Çal Hasan and his raider friend Bal Murat sail across the Mediterranean Sea. During this journey, the sea is never shown to the audience. This could be, on the one hand, related to budgetary concerns. On the other hand, given that Bal Murat gets seasick, it also fits well into the problematic and distant relationship of the Turkish loyal common man with the sea that is also present in other films. Besides, as always, one of the popular stops of the warriors is *hans*. In these cheap hostels and restaurants, warriors present a rehearsal of the actual battle with the enemy. For example, on his way to Andalusia in *Turhanoglu Çal Hasan*, Çal Hasan fights with the Spanish, who remove Muslims from their seats and beat them in a *han*. In fact, here, Muslims, but Turks in other films, are always depicted as innocent and defenseless who do not attack the enemy if the enemy does not attack beforehand. Besides, on his way to Esztergom, Çal Hasan stops by a *han* in *Esztergon Kalesi (The Castle of Esztergom)*. There, he meets a Turkish folk bard (*aşık*), singing a folk song and playing *bağlama*. When a Christian man very rudely asks that *aşık* to stop saying that this land is of Ferdinand so he cannot play and sing freely (16:15-16:23),<sup>742</sup> Çal Hasan attacks and beats this man, who is, in fact, the hangman of the castle. The scene shows how mighty the Turkish warrior is and can even defeat the other's mighty men. At this point, the *aşık* reference is worth mentioning. It is also present in *Malkoçoğlu Kurt Bey*, in which Kurt beg sometimes prefers playing his *bağlama* over his military training even when he is a child around the age of ten. Then, his trainer Muslu Bey, a friend of the deceased Malkoçoğlu, gets mad at Kurt Bey, saying that this is not proper for a raider. This complete reference to a folk singer/poet and a folk musical instrument can be a narrative strategy that strengthens the warrior's links with Anatolia by making him an ordinary man from Anatolia.

---

<sup>742</sup> “Burası Türk toprağı değil; Ferdinand’ın toprağı. Bu manasız türküye devam etmeyeceksin.”

In this regard, the geographical region that the warrior fights includes Esztergom, Timisoara, and Buda in the Çal Hasan series. Setting the road from Adrianople in Eastern Thrace, Hasan goes back and forth between today's Hungary and Romania several times. In this context, Esztergom, nearby the Danube, is his final destination in both *Estergon Kalesi (The Castle of Esztergom)* and *Akma Tuna: Estergon'un Fethi (Do Not Flow, The Danube: The Conquest of Esztergom)* and Çal Hasan play a significant role in its conquest, which was a real event that took place in 1543. These places, in particular Esztergom, are symbolically substantial because historically, they had been the endpoints of the Ottoman's expansion into Europe. Hence, they occupy an important place in Çal Hasan's nationalist world created in *Estergon Kalesi (The Castle of Esztergom)* and *Akma Tuna: Estergon'un Fethi (Do Not Flow, The Danube: The Conquest of Esztergom)*. Therefore, in *Estergon Kalesi (The Castle of Esztergom)*, when the Christian guards of Esztergom say, "get out of European territories" (26:04),<sup>743</sup> Hasan says, "nobody can turn me even if all armies of Europe would come" (26:06).<sup>744</sup> Relying on this, it could be argued that Çal Hasan symbolizes the claim of the Anatolian common man in Europe. Apart from that, in *Malkoçoğlu Kurt Bey*, where the hero fights is not entirely clear. However, the audience understands that the hero is still in the Balkans and somewhere close to Adrianople, which is said to be closer to Malkoçoğlu's farm. For his mission, Kurt bey is sent to a certain border village (*derbent köyü*). Here, interestingly, a border is mentioned, although the name of the village is not given. This understanding of a 'limited' land piece is rarely found in nationalist historical action/adventure films. This hero, therefore, could be interpreted as less aggressive in terms of expansion. Nevertheless, both warriors are in the Balkans, and they both deal with the borders.

On the other hand, Çal Hasan also fights in Andalusia, which has a Muslim community dominated by the Spanish Habsburgs. Complementing the narrative created in other Çal Hasan films, this visit is realized for saving the Muslim community there; therefore, it is not made for expansion purposes. To push it a little bit more, this geographical information might indicate that the hero's aim is not to conquer distant territories anymore but to deepen or firm the Ottoman presence in the Balkans and within the Muslim community. This point revives the myth of benevolent conquerors by attributing the Turkish nation to the mission of saving or protecting those people who need Ottoman/Turkish help. According to the narrative, the Andalusian Muslims are forced to convert to Christianity by the Spanish. They are either imprisoned or killed if they do not accept this. As an Andalusia envoy in *Turhanoglu Çal Hasan*

<sup>743</sup> "Defol git Avrupa topraklarından."

<sup>744</sup> "Avrupa'nın bütün orduları gelse beni yolumdan döndüremezler."

says to the Ottoman Pasha: "...innocent children are killed, women are raped...*Devletlum*, only the iron wrist and merciful heart of the glorious Ottoman state could save us from this inexorable slaughter" (13:06-13:51).<sup>745</sup> This narrative reproduces the myth that Ottomans/Turks are benevolent conquerors and act if needed. Here, the 'benevolence' is not shown through conquest, but through 'help.' So, as the benevolent conquerors, the Turks also teach how to govern to the Andalusians. In fact, as a representative of the Ottoman state, Çal Hasan knows what is best for the Andalusians. He urges them to unite and later protects them until the Ottoman navy's arrival to take them to Algeria. The Turkish benevolence or mercifulness is also emphasized in depicting the 'Turkish/Ottoman style of conquest' in *Estergon Kalesi* (*The Castle of Esztergom*) and *Akma Tuna: Estergon'un Fethi* (*Do Not Flow, The Danube: The Conquest of Esztergom*).

In both films, before the military attacks on the Castle of Esztergom, a committee of bureaucrats and envoys is sent to the enemy to ask if the enemy wants to surrender on the condition of accepting paying taxes. In *Akma Tuna: Estergon'un Fethi* (*Do Not Flow, The Danube: The Conquest of Esztergom*), the committee led by Yahya Pasha, who is the governor of Smederevo sanjak, also says that the Ottomans are in favor of religious freedom; therefore, people can pursue to believe in whatever religious belief they have. This whole setting gives the message that the first choice of Turks is a somewhat peaceful conquest without spilling blood, and they are never cruel, unlike the 'Other.' Instead, they are superior and benevolent conquerors not only for Turks but also for the Islamic community, even those living in Andalusia. This adds to the myth of Turkish national superiority by attributing the feature of being a protector to Turkish national identity. At this point, the Ottoman commander Yahya Pasha *Akma Tuna: Estergon'un Fethi* (*Do Not Flow, The Danube: The Conquest of Esztergom*) adds that if the enemy does not voluntarily bow down to the Ottoman rule, "we will perform the afternoon prayer in the big cathedral of Esztergom and convert it into a mosque" (1:03:38).<sup>746</sup> These words obviously show the courage and self-confidence of the Turkish side of the attack.

### 5.6.3.5. Religion:

As the geographical analysis in relation to the 'benevolent conqueror' discourse also reveals, Islam occupies a significant place in the formulation of Turkish national identity

<sup>745</sup> "Devletlum bu insafsızca katliamdan bizi ancak yüce Osmanlı devletinin müşfik yüreği, demir bileği kurtarabilir."

<sup>746</sup> "Cuma ikindi namazını Estergon'daki büyük kilisede eda eder, onu camiye çeviririz."

represented in the four films complying with the other nationalist action/adventure films of the 1970s. In *Akma Tuna: Estergon'un Fethi* (*Do Not Flow, The Danube: The Conquest of Esztergom*), this happens through a narrative that combines three-crescent Ottoman historical flags planted on Esztergom Castle while the hero is swearing to open holes in the body of the Christian commander for every Turk the commander killed (1:18:53).<sup>747</sup> After the conquest of Esztergom, Çal Hasan and his raider friend Bölükbaşı Cafer decide to participate in other conquests because they want “to spill their blood for their nation” (1:20:51).<sup>748</sup> In *Estergon Kalesi* (*The Castle of Esztergom*), the members of “the Turkish committee” that have been in Esztergom to convince the commander for the city’s surrender are murdered from their back with guns by the men of the Pope when they are praying. As these anecdotes show, the films include great use of both religious and nationalist symbols. More interesting than that is the fuse of these symbols with one another by forming through a novel slightly perceivable hierarchy between Turkishness and Muslimness. In this context, ‘Ottomanness’ is used concerning things related to the state, similar to its use in other nationalist action/adventure movies. For Çal Hasan, for example, the army is the Ottoman army, the state is the Ottoman state, and the navy is the Ottoman navy. On the other hand, in *Malkoçoğlu Kurt Bey*, when sending Kurt bey for his mission to a border village, Suleiman mentions how Christians are “terrorizing our Muslim community” (17:42).<sup>749</sup> Another example is that just before Kurt beg shows his physical strength by flinging off the ropes he has been tied with by the Christians, he sings a medieval religious hymn (*ilahi*)<sup>750</sup> although he is tortured. Besides, only the enemies call Kurt bey’s community Turkish; in fact, both Suleiman and Kurt beg emphasize Muslimness before Turkishness.

#### 5.6.3.6. External Others:

It does not really matter whether the victims are Turks or not; the significant point is the presence of an evil Christian enemy. Therefore, in *Turhanoglu Çal Hasan*, what is happening to Turks happening to Andalusia's Muslim community, the Turkish audience is expected to empathize with these people. Besides, the enemies whip Muslims calling them: “you dirty Muslims, you will die” (23:28). Kara Ahmet Pasha says these cruel and bigoted Christians (*insafsız yobaz hristiyanlar*) (18:23). At the end of the film, the pasha says to Çal Hasan: “you

<sup>747</sup> “Hain kefere, kurban ettiğin her Türk için vücudunda bir yara açacağım.”

<sup>748</sup> “...milletimiz uğruna kanımızı akıtmaya gidiyoruz.”

<sup>749</sup> “Müslüman ahalimize dehşet saçıyormuş”

<sup>750</sup> “Şol cennetin ırmakları/Akar Allah deyu deyu/Çıkmış İslam bülülleri/Öter Allah deyu deyu” by Yunus Emre

saved thousands of Muslims from the rule of the sword and anger of black bigotry” (52:56).<sup>751</sup> The religious emphasis is also available in *Akma Tuna*. Through the end of the film, while Hasan is taking the flag from the hands of a dying soldier in blood and planting it on the walls, he prays aloud. In the next scene, Yahya Pasha says that Esztergom belongs to the Turks, and God has made Turks victorious. This is an Islamic justification of the conquest reinforcing the myth of the national homeland by showing how Turks sacrificed their blood. All these increase the tension by mounting up the cruelty of the Christian enemy.

Although both warriors fight against some Christian enemies, it is hard to specifically determine the enemy except the Spanish in *Turhanoglu Çal Hasan*. The reason is that the films always mention more than one European state at the same time. For example, in *Estergon Kalesi* (*The Castle of Esztergom*), the castle is protected by both German and Spanish soldiers because Ferdinand I, the Holy Roman Emperor, rules the castle. This crowded list of enemies reveals the already complicated history of the region in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Nevertheless, this kind of generalization of the enemy creates a single and straightforward category: Christians. It is an easier formulation of the myth of the enemy and could be easily digested by the audience of the 1970s. It also justifies the myth of the Turkish nation’s superiority repeatedly by attributing Turks the capability of fighting against the entire Christian world. At this point, being a Christian is not the only criterion for being an enemy. In fact, in determining who is a good and who is a bad other, the other’s willingness to pay taxes to the Ottoman Empire is essential. Here, the Ottoman Empire is taken as the natural ruler of Esztergom. Since it conquers with the help of God’s grace, the place is destined to be ruled by it. In this context, being unwilling to pay taxes to the Ottomans carries almost the same meaning as challenging God’s grace. This is how and why Çal Hasan’s fight is justified. So, the Magyar commander Verben is considered a good other since he has accepted paying taxes and not challenged God’s will. Vitelli, however, is bad because he challenges the Ottomans hence Islam. Verben also becomes a victim of Vitelli as he is imprisoned and tortured by him. When he is dead in *Akma Tuna: Estergon’un Fethi* (*Do Not Flow, The Danube: The Conquest of Esztergom*), Çal Hasan says: “Poor Verben, he sacrificed his life for his nation” (34:26).<sup>752</sup> This remark allows the audience to distinguish between good and bad other.

The fight, however, is not between nations; but between the Turkish nation represented by the Sultan and his warrior and the evil rulers of the other. The Christian enemy’s goal is “to

<sup>751</sup> “Kara taassubun kılınıcı, hıncı altından kurtardınız binlerce Müslüman”

<sup>752</sup> “Zavallı Verben. Milleti için hayatını feda etti”

wipe the barbarian Turks out of not only Europe but also the entire world” (34:40),<sup>753</sup> as declared by Don Diaz, possibly the Spanish leader of Christian enemies in *Malkoçoğlu Kurt Bey*. The enemies aim to realize that goal by killing, torturing, and imprisoning unarmed and innocent Turks in the Balkans. This situation justifies the Turkish attack on the enemies. It also means that Turks never attack because they are thirsty for new lands and resources, but because the enemies oppress Turks. Therefore, scenes depicting the cruelty of the enemy are particularly significant. A memorable scene of that kind is in *Esztergom Kalesi (The Castle of Esztergom)*, in which Vitelli, the Commander of the Esztergom castle, tortures Bölükbaşı Cafer, an Ottoman raider. While torturing, he peels the skin off Cafer’s feet, puts salt underneath, and makes a goat lick his wounds. The audience sees all the details of that rather shocking scene. In another scene in *Akma Tuna*, Vitelli, the Esztergom commander, also states that he wants to make Turkish prisoners eat the bodies of the murdered Turkish envoys. Other provocative scenes include the murder of Sinan Pasha and his men during a Friday Pray in the same film. The Christians’ attack Ana Hatun, the wife of Malkoçoğlu and the mother of Kurt beg and Doğan beg in *Malkoçoğlu Kurt Bey*, is equally sensitive. She is wounded and later becomes blind. In the following scene, the little Doğan bey, whom the enemy kidnaps, is shown in a church practicing a Christian ritual. When he is a grown-up, he says that he wants to be the new Milos Obilic by referring to a Serbian knight that is assumed to murder Murat I in the Battle of Kosovo of the late 14<sup>th</sup> century. These scenes make the audience feel absolute hatred towards the Christian enemy. Consequently, ‘our’ cruelty is justified, too. For example, in *Esztergom Kalesi (The Castle of Esztergom)*, when Çal Hasan attacks the hangman of the castle in a *han*, the man vomits blood as clearly shown to the audience. In the final scene of the same film, Çal Hasan cuts off the Christian commander Antonio’s head and throws the skull down the castle walls, saying that the same will happen to all Christians in Esztergom if the commander does not surrender in three days. Then, the bloody skull of Antonio is shown to the audience. As in the case of other nationalist action/adventure films of the 1970s, these violent scenes are never censored, which could indicate the politically aggressive nationalist atmosphere that already unofficially confirms violence against external others.

#### 5.6.3.7. Internal Others:

*Malkoçoğlu Kurt Bey* also refers to internal enemies that collaborate with the Christian others. Here, the main internal enemy is Murat Han III, the nephew of Selim I, who aims to

<sup>753</sup> “Barbar Türkleri yalnız Avrupa’dan değil tüm dünyadan silecektir.”



take power into his hands after killing Suleiman. He, however, ‘does not have the state;’ therefore, his claim is illegitimate. In this regard, he resembles Prince Orhan in *Ölümlük Emri* (*Death Command*) but far more ruthless than him. He whips prisoners and makes them work as forced labor in producing gunpowder to be used against Ottoman armies. He also kills Rıdvan Pasha with a spike when that Pasha warns him that what he is doing leads to strife between brothers. Despite that cruelty, Murat III is a coward because when he gets caught by Kurt bey, he bends on his knees and begs the Sultan while crying. His major accompany is the bureaucrat Mahmut Pasha. When he calls Mahmut his grand vizier, Murat kisses his skirt to show how grateful he is. This scene reveals Mahmut’s lust for money and titles. He is also a cruel man who tortures even his people in a border village (*derbent köyü*) because they fail to pay additional taxes illegitimately mandated by Murat III. Therefore, both Murat III and Mahmut are traitors hence the enemies of the state. Here, as in the Kara Murat series, there is a thick line between loyal and disloyal bureaucrats. The disloyal ones deserve to get punished, as in *Malkoçoğlu Kurt Bey*.

#### 5.6.3.8. Women:

As in other nationalist action/adventure movies, both warriors are very handsome and very attractive to women. In fact, this is another reason that makes them threatening, as confirmed by a soldier of Vitelli, the Esztergom commander, who says that Turkish men have all kinds of features that can fool beautiful women in *Akma Tuna: Estergon’un Fethi* (*Do Not Flow, The Danube: The Conquest of Esztergom*) (16:58).<sup>754</sup> Even the male enemy appreciates the masculinity and superiority of the Turkish men. Then, at some point, Vitelli’s wife Manushka sleeps with Çal Hasan in *Akma Tuna: Estergon’un Fethi* (*Do Not Flow, The Danube: The Conquest of Esztergom*). This is a big stroke to the masculinity of Vitelli. There is also Princess Maria, the daughter of the commander Don Alvarez in *Malkoçoğlu Kurt Bey*. She is an erotic dancer and dances before Murat III with a few other dancers to entertain him. Here, both Manushka and Maria are represented as dishonorable women wearing scanty clothing. This representation humiliates the power and masculinity of the ‘other.’ So, in the case of Maria, even the masculinity of the internal enemy Murat III overcomes that of the external enemy. In this context, there is also a good woman of other underlining the warrior’s masculinity. She is Princess Nadezia, the daughter of Verben, in *Estergon Kalesi* (*The Castle of Esztergom*) and *Akma Tuna*. As she falls in love with Çal Hasan and helps him escape from the castle, she

<sup>754</sup> “Türk erkekleri güzel kadınları kandırabilecek her türlü özelliğe sahip olmalarıyla bilinmektedir.”

becomes interested in Islam. She then says she wants to go to İstanbul and listen to the call to prayer (*azan*) from the beautiful voices of imams in minarets in *Estergon Kalesi* (*The Castle of Esztergom*). Therefore, she is transformed because of her love for the warrior. This is, of course, a manifestation of the warrior's power hence the national superiority of Turks, men in particular. At this point, the fact that Nadezia is not an ordinary person but a princess, is a tool that increases the warrior's power.

Nevertheless, Ana Hatun, Kurt bey's mother in *Malkoçoğlu Kurt Bey*, could also be added to that list of women showing the warrior's power. After the murder of her husband Malkoçoğlu, she gives one of his swords to her son Kurt bey and advises him to take his father's revenge. This scene reproduces the myth of the warrior nation, and the woman, here, becomes a tool to transfer or basically transmit this piece of information from father to son. At this point, the way she dresses in a headscarf and traditional folk dress, which is loose and long, makes her look very recognisable. This may increase the audience's attachment to the character by making them feel that what happens to Ana Hatun may happen to any Turkish mother, including the mother of whoever is watching. Her mansion is in the rural countryside, which is located somewhere near Adrianople. This confirms the mental shrinkage in the reproduction of the myth of the national homeland. The homeland here is imagined in relation to the current borders of Turkey. The point that Edirne is in Rumelia could still be a reference to the trauma caused by the loss of the Balkan lands. On the other hand, the location of Adrianople also gives the audience a kind of an understanding of where the national core and borders are and where the outreaches of the empire from which the Sultan collects taxes are. Besides, the inside of Ana Hatun's house is decorated with carpets on the walls, and that must be familiar to the audience. The difference, however, is the plates with Ottoman-Arabic script on them besides the swords of Malkoçoğlu, all of which are placed onto the wall. This provides information about the significant values in the warrior's life. These are Islam and the state's power, and of course, the Sultan symbolized by the swords. Here, Kurt bey inherits those as a member of the warrior nation with a natural ability to fight.

Thus, the warriors Çal Hasan and Kurt bey reproduce the myth of the warrior nation by attaching the nation to Anatolia and a part of the Balkans, similar to Kara Murat. Here, although the warrior is still powerful and violent, what makes especially Çal Hasan different is his representation as a warrior among many other warriors. This is a step towards the hero's anonymization, which does not allow any individual hero to come to the forefront and shine. It is also realized through the insertion of the warrior into a state structure and the addition of bureaucrats in between the Sultan and the warriors. This perfectly fits into the oppressive

environment of the 1970s, which took the cinematic representation of national warriors under state control. As a natural outcome of this, Sultan Suleiman is represented as a tougher and much more serious character than the other rulers mentioned so far. Therefore, while the warrior is anonymous anymore, the Sultan is less reachable. This contributes to the ruler's omnipotent representation and makes him the only provider who is above everything. In this regard, the national will becomes the Sultan's will because he is also the incarnation of the nation. And, since the Sultan is already considered the embodiment of the state and the nation, both the state and nation become monolithic.

#### **5.6.4. Warriors Fighting After Suleiman:**

There are two available historical action/adventure films that narrate the period after the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent. They are *Kara Pençe* (*The Black Claw*, dir. Yücel Uçanoğlu, 1973) and *Kara Pençe'nin İntikamı* (*The Revenge of the Black Claw*, Yücel Uçanoğlu, 1973). As the names imply, the hero, this time, is called Black Claw. However, his real name is Osman and given the nickname the Black Claw after he proves his strength and bravery to other Turkish raiders in *Kara Pençe*. This shows that although the titles of the films seem to emphasize Kara Pençe as a loner warrior, he fights together with other raiders, confirming his potential anonymity and emphasizing his role as one of the many raiders.

##### **5.6.4.1. The Warrior's Mission:**

Unlike the other nationalist action/adventure movies analyzed so far, Kara Pençe films do not include any information about whom Kara Pençe serves. The period that he fights can only be understood from the missions Kara Pençe participates in. At the end of *Kara Pençe'nin İntikamı* (*The Revenge of the Black Claw*), a pasha states that Kara Pençe and his raider friends have significantly contributed to the conquest of the Remn castle, which is a strategic place for gaining Nagykanizsa (Kanije). Given that Nagykanizsa was captured in 1600, it is probable that the films take place at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup>, so during the reign of Mehmet III. The fact that there is no reference to the Sultan might be related to this period's association with the beginning of the Ottoman Empire's decline. The reigning Sultan of this time might not be interesting for the audience. Therefore, Kara Pençe never receives orders directly from the Sultan. Instead, a pasha informs him about the Nagykanizsa mission in *Kara Pençe'nin İntikamı* (*The Revenge of the Black Claw*). The peculiarity, however, is that the pasha's name is not provided either. Therefore, both the pasha and the warrior could be considered anonymous besides the Sultan, who is deliberately omitted.

When Kara Pençe refuses to accept any material gains due to his contributions for the conquest of the Remn Castle and just wants to continue galloping on horseback,<sup>755</sup> the Pasha says, “There are no earthly blessings in your mind. You only think about serving your state in any condition. Go, may your road be open for your lifetime” (40:35-41:10).<sup>756</sup> This means that Kara Pençe is not perceived as the loyal warrior of the Sultan but the state. This may indicate the Sultan’s powerlessness and that the state’s survival was much more important than the Sultan.

#### **5.6.4.2. *The Landscape:***

Kara Pençe fights in Habsburg-dominated Central Europe. Although the Balkans are always depicted as greenfields in other films, Kara Pençe’s fighting area is set in Cappadocia, a semi-arid region in Central Anatolia, known for its rock formations. This representation of Central Europe makes it seem unfamiliar to the audience, contrary to the Balkans’ familiar heaven-like representation. On the other hand, Kara Pençe’s hometown is a typical Turkish village in the Balkans in the middle of green fields, with its wooden houses and farm animals around like any other representation of Turkish villages. According to the narrative, this village is Karaïsa, located in today’s northeastern Bulgaria in Ludogorie. The choice of that village can be interpreted as a sign of the trauma caused by the loss of Balkan lands and later permeated into the Turkish nationalist political culture. The familiarity of the village undoubtedly makes the audience attachment easier. Besides, the village becomes a micro example of the whole nation, so what happens to that village could happen to the other villages, and by extension, the entire nation.

#### **5.6.4.3. *The Warrior and Religion:***

The inhabitants of the village are portrayed in traditional Turkish folk costumes, and women are with headscarves. The only significant Turkish female character in the films, Kara Pençe’s mother, Emine, is a humble lady living in a modest house. This house resembles that of Çal Hasan, having swords and plates with Arabic scripts on walls. The swords belong to Kara Pençe’s father, Sinan, who is a raider. Kara Pençe, however, does not know this because neither of his parents wants him to become a raider. Despite that, due to his unchanged Turkish and Muslim essence, which makes him a natural member of the warrior nation, in *Kara Pençe*,

---

<sup>755</sup> “Kulunuzu at sırtından indirip şatoya bağlamayınız. Paşam izin versin biz at sırtında koşalım.”

<sup>756</sup> “Senin gözünde dünya nimeti namına hiçbir şey yok. Varsa yoksa sadece devlete hizmeti düşünüyorsun sen, var git ömrünce yolun açık olsun.”

he decides to join a group of raiders. What triggers him is his worrisome love relationship with Ayşe, who is the daughter of an aga. This aga is so evil that he does not allow the couple to marry because Kara Pençe is poor and does not have a father, so he wants to kill Kara Pençe. Kara Pençe then runs away. On his way, he meets the raiders and joins them after proving his fighting skills to them. Here, Kara Pençe's 'fatherlessness' can be interpreted as an allegory of the nation's 'fatherlessness' under weak rulers both in the reign of Mehmet III, when the expansion of the empire halted and during the post-1971 period, which witnessed political aggression and unstable governments. At this point, Kara Pençe's poverty leads to class conflict, strengthening the hero's ordinariness, and enabling audience attachment. In this regard, Kara Pençe is a representative of the nationalist 'common man.' He is also a religious man, reflecting not only the values he fights for but also his daily life. For example, in the first *han* scene of *Kara Pençe (The Black Claw)*, he refuses to drink wine because it is a sin. Apart from the usual Shahadah that Turks recite before dying, Kara Pençe and his raider friends greet each other by saying "selamun aleykum." They also say, "May God protect you"<sup>757</sup> to each other before the raid. In fact, religious symbols are used quite a lot in these films. In another scene, the older woman that looks after Kara Pençe's son recites Quran in *Kara Pençenin İntikamı*. In *Kara Pençe*, the raiders pray together in the *han*. Like the inhabitants of Karaisa village who have traditional folk clothes, these raiders all wear waistcoats with oriental motifs on them, supporting their familiarity and ordinariness. These scenes are all adorned with Ottoman military marches and flags with three crescents as in other nationalist action/adventure movies of the 1970s.

#### 5.6.4.4. External Others:

Therefore, the external enemy is the Magyar Count Fley, an evil character planning to create a new Crusaders' army composed of Magyars and Austrians. He is a cruel man, and at some point, he and his soldiers attack Karaisa, which is Kara Pençe's village. As in similar representations, in *Kara Pençe (The Black Claw)*, they torture and kill people, even children, and rape women in Kara Pençe's village. Ayşe, the daughter of the evil aga, becomes their victim, too, and the enemy men hang her. Consequently, since this village is the allegory of the homeland, Kara Pençe's personal cause unites the great cause he is fighting for. On his way, Kara Pençe shows his heroism before the actual battle. In *Kara Pençe (The Black Claw)*, he first fights against some Magyars who harass the waitress in a *han*; then, he and his friends save

---

<sup>757</sup> "Allah korusun!"

the Count's mother Isabel and sister İbolya from the hands of Magyar bandits, who storm their house. In fact, these bandits have been planning to plunder the house and to blame the Turks. Their plans, however, are disrupted with the arrival of Turkish raiders. The warriors prove that they are always in favor of those who need help regardless of those people's religious beliefs. This is a confirmation of the myth of Turks being benevolent conquerors. So, they protect the Count's family even from their own people, as stated by Isabel: "Turks are protecting us, our property, lives, and honor against our own citizens" (41:15-41:21).<sup>758</sup> All these also justify the cruelty of 'us.' Kara Pençe cuts off the right arm of the Count in the first film, *Kara Pençe (The Black Claw)* and later kills at the end of *Kara Pençenin İntikamı (The Revenge of the Black Claw)*. He also kills the bandits one after the other, and the audience witnesses every death. Although there are no close shots focusing on the victims, this scene is still disturbing, primarily because of what one of Kara Pençe's friends says: "Kara Pençe has turned this place into a slaughterhouse" (37:57).<sup>759</sup> in *Kara Pençe (The Black Claw)*.

In all the instances mentioned above, Kara Pençe overcomes many enemies. In fact, although not a muscular man hence does not have an extraordinary outlook; he can defeat enemies thanks to his bravery and strength. For instance, he beats the aga's ten men attacking in the house at the beginning of *Kara Pençe (The Black Claw)*. Even the Count gets surprised when Kara Pençe and his friends successfully conquer Remn castle. He says: "We surrendered this huge castle to a handful of Turks" (47:22-47:25)<sup>760</sup> in *Kara Pençenin İntikamı (The Revenge of Black Claw)*. These words all confirm the myth of the Turkish nation's superiority. Furthermore, there are also times when Kara Pençe is in a relatively disadvantaged situation. But he always overcomes this by using his intellect. For instance, to learn about the Count's plans, he disguises himself as a Magyar named Simon and approaches Ayşula, the Count's stepsister. In *Kara Pençenin İntikamı (The Revenge of the Black Claw)*, he enters the Remn castle as the saddle boy of a commander's daughter. These examples give the message that the Turkish intellect could easily defeat the enemy.

#### 5.6.4.5. Women:

Like other nationalist action/adventure warriors, Kara Pençe has an attractive power over the women of other. This does not happen only because he is handsome but also because he is a gentleman who helps those women of other that need help. Later, these women want to

<sup>758</sup> "Türkler öz vatandaşlarımıza karşı bizi, malımızı, canımızı, namusumuzu koruyorlar."

<sup>759</sup> "Kara Pençe burayı mezbahaya çevirmiş."

<sup>760</sup> "Koskoca şatoyu bir avuç Türk'e teslim ettik"

sleep with him, as in the cases of Ayşula, the stepsister of İbolya, the waitress he saves in the *han*, and the Magyar commander's wife. This reproduces the myth of national superiority by underlining the masculinity of the warrior and, at the same time, emasculating the enemy. The most remarkable female character, in this context, is İbolya, who falls in love with Kara Pençe after he saves her. She is a brave woman, so in one scene, she cuts off a bandit's hands when he tries to jump into her house from the window. She is also able to run away from the hands of another man who is about to rape her. Therefore, with his bravery and courage, she is, in fact, a convenient woman for the Turkish warrior. Then, although for Kara Pençe, his mission is above everything, the couple has a baby. Then, İbolya goes through a transformation and decides to convert to Islam in *Kara Pençenin İntikamı (The Revenge of the Black Claw)*. This is how she 'deserves' to become Turkish. Then, she says: "I will strive for being a worthy bride for you, your family, and all Turks" (49:32-49:38).<sup>761</sup> This means that the enemy has been defeated, and its masculinity has been destroyed by the Turkish nation, which is superior.

Thus, Kara Pençe is comparable to the other nationalist action/adventure warriors analyzed so far in many aspects. Through his adventures, the myths of the warrior nation, national homeland, the Turkish nation's superiority, and Turks being benevolent conquerors are reproduced, confirming the 1970s' aggressive political atmosphere. What distinguishes him, however, is the everyday visibility of Islamic values in his life. Besides, the omission of the Sultan, less emphasis on the pasha, and the warrior's insertion into a group of many other raiders are crucial tools for making both the warrior and his adventures anonymous. This understanding takes state above everything, even the unsuccessful Sultan. The warrior, in this regard, is just a nationalist common man who is never at the forefront. He is the kind of person who is loyal and religious at the same time with whom the audience is expected to associate itself with. This fits well into the period that is immediately after the declaration of the 1971 Military Memorandum.

### 5.6.5. *Main Points:*

Among the fourteen films analyzed in this part about the 1970s, one is about the period of Osman Ghazi, seven about Mehmet II, four about Suleiman, and lastly, only two are about the period after Suleiman. Like the nationalist action/adventure movies of 1965-1971 featuring Ottoman warriors, the focus is on the Ottoman Empire's ascendancy period. This shows that the golden age myth is reproduced in relation to this expansion period, which completes the Turkish

---

<sup>761</sup> "Sana, ailene ve Türklere layık bir gelin olmaya çalışacağım."

History Thesis. At this point, *Kadıhan*, which depicts the establishment period, and *Kara Pençe*, which shows the post-Suleiman period, reveal the two endpoints of nationalist mythmaking in terms of timespan. The filmmakers were not interested in periods in which the Sultan has been impotent following the reign of Suleiman. This approach also works to underline the myth of decline, which provides the opportunity to take the establishment of the Republic as a new beginning. The period of Ottoman establishment, in this context, is significant to manifest that the Ottomans went through several hardships in establishing the empire. *Kadıhan*, using a didactic tone, connects the establishment, ascendancy, and the Turkish Republic. In a way, it manifests the ‘true national lineage’ to the audience with a reproduction of the myth of ancestral continuity.

In line with the rise of conservative nationalism, the films of the 1970s never depict the Ottoman Empire only as a Turkish one. According to them, it is also Muslim, and in fact, the Muslim element comes to the fore more often than the Turkish element. This reveals through the abundant use of religious symbols such as pray and the Shahadah in different scenes, including those depicting the everyday life of the warrior, as in the case of *Kara Pençe*. Such an increase in the use of these symbols is accompanied by the presence of more bloody scenes showing not only the cruelty of the enemy but also the cruelty of ‘us.’ In connection to that, the films reproduce the myth of national homeland in relation to a much more limited territory. The warriors, therefore, mostly fight either in Anatolia or the Balkans. The narrative incorporation of several Aegean islands is also noteworthy, because it shows that the films made use of the Cyprus issue. At this point, for the first time, those places which are out of the boundaries of modern-day Turkey are shown as connected to the empire through taxation rather than being originally Turkish. This contributes to the myth of benevolent conquerors by conveying the message that Turks do not kill or forcefully convert those places they conquer; instead, they make them pay taxes. Besides, to legitimize the warrior’s cause and increase the drama, a Turkish village attacked by the enemy is always added to the picture. In fact, as there happens a shrinkage in the imagined borders, the number of enemies increases. But since it is hard and complicated to portray them separately, a totalizing and simplified category is adopted. It is Christians, so no matter which state they represent, that all have the same purpose of erasing Turks from the world. Therefore, Christian characters are represented homogeneously. Besides, they all wear the same costumes, and they are mostly played by the same actors and actresses. This might be related to financial concerns on the one hand, but on the other hand, it contributes to the homogenization of the enemy.



As in other films, the warrior serves the legitimate ruler. Among these rulers, Osman Ghazi and Mehmet II are depicted in line with Girardet's myth of Alexander, who is young, dynamic, and active. Suleiman's depiction, however, is different. He is older, much more experienced, more serious, and tougher. He is also unreachable and therefore is not depicted in all films taking place during his reign. At this point, the fact that no Sultan after Suleiman is portrayed could be related to the perception of the later Ottoman rulers as impotent. In fact, from Osman Ghazi to Mehmet III, the Sultan visually gets lost. The warrior, then, is inserted into the state structure and starts to relate to the center through some bureaucrats. Besides, with other warriors' addition into the picture and complicated life stories as in the Kara Murat series, the warrior gradually becomes much more anonymous. This does not allow any of the warriors to come to the forefront and shine. Instead, he is reduced to 'one of many' as always under state control and receiving bureaucrat's orders. Therefore, the warrior is just a nationalist and conservative ordinary member of the warrior nation. He is, in fact, the ideal type of Turkish person who is loyal and religious at the same time with whom the audience is expected to associate itself with. He is also insignificant, easily controllable, hence more loyal than free riders of 1965-1971. This reproduction of the myth of the national warrior perfectly fits into the oppressive environment of the 1970s.

### ***5.7. Concluding Remarks:***

The period between 1965-1980 was vibrant in terms of nationalist action/adventure movies with historical settings. The heroes in those films take revenge from internal and external enemies. Given the rise of aggressive nationalism and conservative right at this period, besides the bitter effects of the oil crisis, economic inequalities, successive coalition governments, and the Cyprus issue, the forty-three available films contribute significantly to the reproduction of nationalist political myths. In this regard, the warriors in the films could represent the common man who is idealized as a nationalist and loyal warrior in the legitimate ruler's service. As a result, the period witnessed the national warrior's gradual transformation from an active, free-spirited, and secular warrior into a more traditional, conservative, religious, and violent man. This depiction fits well into the post-March 12 political atmosphere in which social movements were severely suppressed, and the young and idealist national warrior of the pre-1965 period was lost.

The films could be divided into three main groups depending on the period in which the warriors serve. The first is the films featuring Central Asian warriors in pre-Islamic times. There are seventeen films analyzed in this part: nine from 1965-1971 and eight from the 1970s.

Although the Islamic and aggressive tone of the nationalist action/adventure films increases from 1965-1971 to the 1970s, there is more continuity rather than a change in the case of this first group of films. Complying with the Turkish History Thesis, which considers Central Asia the original homeland, the films reproduce the myth of national continuity since starting with the 4<sup>th</sup> century. In these films, the warrior fights against numerous enemies, including Byzantium, the Chinese, Vikings, and Vandals. There are also good others except for the Chinese. These warriors fight in an almost limitless area stretching from Central Asia to Northern Europe to the Balkans and China. This presentation connects all these areas and, at the same time, manifests Turks also as protectors of European civilization, contributing to the myth of national mission. Therefore, these films basically justify *Pax Turcica*.

The second group of films depicts Islamic warriors fighting in pre-Ottoman times. These five films could be divided into two subgroups, depending on when the films were shot. The first subgroup is constituted by only one film that was made between 1965-1971. This film is about Alpago, a warrior fighting in Iran and preparing to fight against the Byzantines in Anatolia. This narrative allows the filmmakers to Islamize the national warrior whose religion was not even an issue in the films about the warriors from Central Asia. This Islamization, however, is not represented through Islamic symbols such as azans, prayers, or the Shahadah that are generously used in the films of the 1970s. Instead, some messages are given, such as Alpago making a call to the soldiers of Qutalmish to bow down before Alp Arslan because Muslim Turks will own Anatolia if they unify under the leadership of Alp Arslan (06:20-06:38).<sup>762</sup> Therefore, this film reproduces the myths of the national warrior and national leader, first, through their Turkishness. The insertion of the warrior in a region other than Anatolia, but close to it, could indicate a distanced approach to religion. This approach, however, changes in the 1970s with the rise of Islamic warriors. So, these films reproduce the myth of the national warrior by reinforcing the Islamic ghazi image through a predominantly Muslim warrior named Battal fighting in Anatolia. This is an indication of a discursive balance shift in favor of Muslimness. In this regard, the enemies are much more violent and cruel, as depicted in quite influential scenes with close shots. Consequently, the myth of the national warrior is reproduced through a conservative family man, a loyal warrior of Islam, and a truly masculine man. This is a clear signal of the rise of aggressive and militant nationalism. Furthermore, unlike other nationalist action/adventure heroes presented between 1965 and 1971, Battal has an official

---

<sup>762</sup> “Büyük Selçuklu hakanının önünde eğilin, bütün Türkleri birleşmeye davet ediyorum, Alpaslan’ın etrafında birleşin. O zaman bütün Anadolu Müslüman Türklerin olacaktır.”

title. This could be interpreted as the domestication of the warrior, who is not a free rider anymore but fulfills his mission as a part of the state hierarchy.

The third group of films consisting of twenty-one films takes place during the Ottoman Empire. Seven of these films are from 1965-1971, and fourteen are from the 1970s. Amongst them, eleven are about Mehmet II. This shows that the films reproduce the myth of the golden age in relation to the ascendancy of the Ottoman Empire. For the first subgroup from 1965-1971, Turkishness is more important than being a Muslim, as it could be seen from the occasional use of Islamic references in the *Alpago* case. In the 1970s subgroup, however, the Muslim element comes to the fore more often than the Turkish element in line with the rise of the Turkish Islamic Synthesis. This reveals through the abundant use of religious symbols such as pray and the Shahadah in different scenes, including those depicting the everyday life of the warrior, as in the case of *Kara Penge*. Such an increase in the use of these symbols is accompanied by the presence of more bloody scenes showing not only the cruelty of the enemy but also the cruelty of 'us' as in the case of *Battal Ghazi* films of the same period. For both subgroups, the enemies are Christians. The 1965-1971 films, however, divide Christians into two parts: good and bad Christians. Therefore, there are always some powerful good Christians, such as the dethroned Serbian king, who collaborate with the Turkish side against the bad Christians. However, in the 1970s' group, the good Christians are either Christian slaves used as executioners, or women of others who fall in love with the warrior. This can be interpreted as a mark of increasing aggressiveness against Christians. In this context, the 1965-1971 films take place in relatively extensive geography. This enables the characters to perceive Turks as the representative of oppressed Christians. This could result from the attempts to gain a legitimate status in Europe, and it also justifies the myth of Turks being civilized peace-bringers and benevolent conquerors. The 1970s group, however, fights against all Christians, mainly in a limited area, only encompassing Anatolia and the Balkans. The inclusion of some islands on the Aegean can relate to the Cyprus issue, which occupied the political agenda of the time. Despite that, these places are depicted as linked with the Ottoman Empire through taxation rather than Turkishness. This might be an indication of shrinkage in the imagined borders. It seems that the rulers give up their claim on the whole world in films of the 1970s. Despite that, the number of enemies increases in the 1970s with the insertion of internal enemies into the picture. In fact, the 1965-1971 group does not include internal enemies except *Rüstem Pasha*, who later confirms *Malkoçoğlu*. In the 1970s group, however, some internal enemies seriously threaten the Sultan.

More significantly, the status of the warrior changes through time in parallel to the paradigmatic shift from Turkish History Thesis into Turkish Islamic Synthesis. In the 1970s, the warrior attains an official position, unlike the 1965-1971 warriors who is never in the center of the empire and connected to bureaucrats. He is inserted into the state structure and at some point, he receives commands not directly from the Sultan but some bureaucrats. At this point, with the addition of complicated life stories as in the Kara Murat series or the other warriors, some of which are almost as heroic as the protagonist, the warrior gradually becomes much more anonymous. In other words, he is not the only one who shines anymore. Rather, he is one among many. Thus, through time, the warrior becomes just a nationalist and conservative common member of the warrior nation. This is, in fact, the ideal type of Turkish citizen, who is loyal and religious at the same time with whom the audience is expected to associate itself with. Thus, the 1970s' idealized national warrior is insignificant, anonymous, easily controllable, and, hence, more loyal than free riders of 1965-1971. This reproduction of the myth of the national warrior perfectly fits into the oppressive environment of the 1970s.