Since his involvement in an uprising in 1416 which resulted in his execution, the rebellious Ottoman religious scholar and Sufi Şeyh Bedreddin has never ceased to capture the imagination. This has especially been the case since the publication in 1936 of Nâzım Hikmet’s epic poem, which made Bedreddin a symbol of the Left in Turkey. Because he allegedly preached common ownership of property, Bedreddin has been presented as a proto-communist and compared to the Sassanian religious reformer Mazdak, while his universalistic religious views have earned him the name ‘Hallaj of Rum’. Yet the historical Bedreddin still remains elusive. Both the man and his revolt have stayed mostly in the domain of sacred history or political mythology, owing at least in part to the fact that Bedreddin’s career happened to coincide with one of the darkest and most complex

1 Nâzım Hikmet, Simavne Kadısı oglu Şeyh Bedreddin Destanı (originally published 1936, re-published Ankara 1966). A recent, measured treatment for a Greek readership of both the historical problem of Bedreddin’s revolt and its position in modern Turkish political culture is E. Kolovos, ‘“Tou Mpentrentin ta palikaria” sten othomanike kai ste sygchrone tourkike historia’ [‘Bedreddin’s braves’ in Ottoman and modern Turkish history], in K. Lappas, A. Anastasopoulos, and E. Kolovos (eds), Mneme Penelopes Stathe: meletes historias kai philologias [Memo-ry of Penelope Stathi: studies of history and philology] (Heraklion 2010), 117-137.

periods of early Ottoman history, that of the Ottoman Civil War of 1402-1413 (usually known as ‘the Interregnum’). As the Civil War is finally beginning to enter the limelight of history, it is a good time to reassess Bedreddin’s activity in the light of what is now known about the politics and culture of the time.3

The most important source on Bedreddin’s career is undoubtedly the rhymed hagiography or book of exploits (menākibname) by his grandson Halîl b. İsmail, which is the only source covering Bedreddin’s activities before the uprising in any detail.4 Thanks to the important monograph by Michel Balivet and a recent article by Erdem Çıpa, this text has been subjected to some serious critical analysis, in which it is treated as a source of the first order while taking into account its author’s obvious bias.5 Intriguingly, Çıpa has shown that, despite Hâfiz Halîl’s desire to exonerate his grandfather by absolving him of any intention to foment revolt in Rumelia, and by hiding his involvement in the parallel popular uprising in the Aydın region of Anatolia led by Bedreddin’s disciples Börklüce Mustafa and Torlak Hu Kemal, the author of the Menākib nevertheless reveals a great deal about Bedreddin’s political connections and legitimising arguments. In fact, he believes that Hâfiz Halîl’s account allows us to reconstruct Bedreddin’s huruc (i.e., bid for power) and its underlying claims to political legitimacy.6

But did Şeyh Bedreddin and his followers really intend to overthrow the Ottoman dynasty, or should Hâfiz Halîl’s emphasis on Bedreddin’s supposed Seljuk ancestry be interpreted as just another element in the author’s eulogy of his unjustly executed ancestor? While it is impossible to answer with any certainty, some insight on this and other important questions may be provided by taking a broader look at the social and political situation at the time of the Bedreddin uprising. The context in which it must be placed is twofold: that of the religious and intellectual currents of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century, and that of the social and political situation during the civil war of 1402-1413, especially the two-and-a-half-year-long reign of Musa Çelebi. By looking at these two aspects of the historical moment at which Bedreddin’s political activity took place, it may be possible at least to begin to address the larger question of how a man of the education and elite status of Bedreddin came to be involved in an uprising with such a strong popular base.

In fact, it is far from easy to understand what Musa’s regime represented for Rumelia in the early fifteenth century. In his 1938 article ‘De la défaite d’Ankara à la prise de

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3 On the Ottoman Civil War, see D. J. Kastritsis, The Sons of Bayezid: Empire Building and Representation in the Ottoman Civil War of 1402-1413 (Leiden and Boston 2007).
4 Halîl bin İsmâ’il bin Şeyh Bedrûddin Mahmûd, Simavna Kadısoğlu Şeyh Bedreddin Manâkıbı, eds A. Gölpınarlı and İ. Sungurbey (Istanbul 1967) (hereafter Hâfiz Halîl and Menâkıb).
Constantinople’, Paul Wittek spoke of Musa Çelebi’s regime as “la Roumelie révolutionnaire” – however, the only justification he gives for calling Musa’s government revolutionary is Bedreddin’s participation in it, which somehow makes Musa guilty by association of the same proto-communist leanings attributed to Bedreddin’s revolt.\(^7\) This leads to a rather circular argument, to say nothing of the anachronism of using the term ‘revolutionary’ to describe fifteenth-century Ottoman realities. In a review of Wittek’s article, Colin Imber has correctly pointed out these weaknesses, but has gone to the other extreme by claiming that the only reason Musa appointed Bedreddin as his head military judge (\(kadıasker, kazasker\)) in 1411 was that he was a renowned jurist (\(fakih\)).\(^8\) In fact, as we will see, even the most cursory knowledge of Bedreddin’s activities prior to 1411 suggests that there must have been more to the collaboration than the fact that Bedreddin was an important legal scholar. It is essential to reach at least a basic understanding of the historical context in which Bedreddin was operating prior to his service as \(kazasker\), without which it is impossible to understand his connection with Musa’s regime. Such an understanding can be reached by studying the account of Hâfız Halil in a critical manner. Let us turn, then, to the \(Menakıb\).

Our source begins by describing at length Bedreddin’s pedigree as the son of a raider (\(gazi\)) named Israil and grandson of a certain Abdülaziz, Grand Vizier to the Seljuks of Rum. This man, we are told, was directly descended from the House of Seljuk, held the office of \(şeyhülislam\) (making him an \(âlim\)), and was also a disciple of Rumî and Hüsam Çelebi (making him a Sufi).\(^9\) As we have already seen, by providing this pedigree, the author gives Bedreddin a political legitimacy lacking from most other protagonists of the early Ottoman conquest of Rumelia, including the Ottoman family itself.\(^10\) Of course he does not dare to say as much – what he does say is that the prominent frontier lords Hacı İlbegi and Gazi Ece were from the same extended family as Bedreddin, but were nothing more than “seeds of a son-in-law” (\(gürgen tohumu\)).\(^11\) There can be little doubt that this expression would have reminded Hâfız Halil’s readers of Timur’s rather indirect connection to the family of Chingiz Khan – in the context of post-Mongol Central Asia, Timur was forced to legitimise his rule through a puppet khan from the Chingizid line, while also marrying a princess from the same family to obtain the title of imperial son-in-law (\(güregen\)).\(^12\)

Should this emphasis on Bedreddin’s ancestry be seen as an indication that his uprising aimed to overthrow the Ottoman dynasty and replace it with his own rule? An intrigu-

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9 \(Menakıb\), 5-7 (fol. 3b-4a).
11 \(Menakıb\), 8 (fol. 4b). The genealogic information on the families of Bedreddin, Hacı İlbegi and Gazi Ece is fairly detailed. Two brothers and a nephew of Abdülaziz are mentioned, in addition to his son Israil, Bedreddin’s father. As for Hacı İlbegi and Gazi Ece, we are told that they are related to the Seljuks through “a daughter of a sister” (\(kızkarındaş kızındandur bular\)).
12 B. F. Manz, \(The Rise and Rule of Tamerlane\) (Cambridge 1989), 14-15.
ing idea, but one that is very difficult to prove. Halil İnalcık has argued that by 1402 the Ottoman dynasty already held considerable prestige, as demonstrated by the inability of the rival emirates (beyliks) of Anatolia to take advantage of the Ottoman defeat at Ankara. According to İnalcık, at least part of this prestige came from the allegiance of many different segments of society, who relied on the continuation of Ottoman rule for confirmation of their privileges.\(^{13}\) This point is significant, and will be examined again at the end of this article, when we discuss Bedreddin’s challenge to Mehmed I’s rule in the Dobrudja. On the other hand, it is also worth bearing in mind the thesis of Irène Beldiceanu-Steinherr, according to which at least some of the frontier lords carrying out the early Ottoman conquests may have been acting independently. Specifically in the case of Hacı İlbegi, who like Şeyh Bedreddin appears to have claimed Seljuk ancestry, Beldiceanu has argued that his falling out with the Ottoman state-building project may be behind his near disappearance from the historical record.\(^{14}\) According to the theory, Hacı İlbegi’s damnatio memoriae is behind the cult of the mysterious Seyyid Ali Sultan (a.k.a. Kızıl Deli), whose tomb near Didymoteicho (Dimetoka) is still venerated today by Bektashis as their holiest shrine in the Balkans. More research is needed on early Ottoman history and especially on the reigns of Bayezid I and Mehmed I before it becomes possible to evaluate the plausibility of a revolt in the early fifteenth century aimed at overthrowing the Ottoman dynasty. What can be said, however, is that, if Hâfız Halil’s claims about Bedreddin’s Seljuk descent are true, he would have had as good a claim as anyone living at the time.

Let us return to Bedreddin’s biography. Our source describes in considerable detail Bedreddin’s studies, first in Anatolia and then in Cairo, where he meets his spiritual mentor Hüseyin-i Ahlatî at the palace of the Mamluk Sultan Barkuk and is converted to Sufism.\(^{15}\) It is impossible to do justice here to this formative and extremely important phase

\(^{13}\) *EI*, s.v. ‘Meḥemmed I’ (H. İnalcık), 974, 975, 977: “… local begs, with their Tatar and Türkmen followers, had neither the prestige nor the legitimacy of an Ottoman prince”, “Tīmūr’s departure made the Anatolian dynasties realise that Ottoman power and supremacy were still a fact…”, “perhaps equally important was the fact that the Ottoman military groups of sipâhîs, yaya and müsellems, and the kap-kulüs, as well as the peasantry, saw that the confirmation and legitimation of their status and rights in the land were dependent on the existence and functioning of the Ottoman sultan’s centralist government, and we have to remember that the Ottoman survey [see *tahrîr*] and *timâr* system was fully developed and widely applied in this period (see İnalcık, *Arvanid*)”.


\(^{15}\) For the most detailed treatment of Ahlatî available to date, see E. Binbaş, ‘Sharaf al-Dîn ‘Alî Yâzdi (ca. 770s-858/ea. 1370s-1454): Prophecy, Politics, and Historiography in Late Medieval Islamic History’, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 2009, 139-162. See also Balivet, *Islam mystique et révolution armée*, 49.
of Bedreddin’s life, which is known in its basic outlines but still poorly understood. What is really needed is an extensive study of the religious-intellectual environment in which Bedreddin was operating, accompanied by his Rumî scholarly companions Müeyyed and Musa Çelebi (also known as Kadızade-i Rumî, not to be confused with the Ottoman prince of the same name). Needless to say, a proper study of Bedreddin as an intellectual is impossible without reading his many works, most of which are still only available in manuscript form. The goals of this article are more modest: to understand a little bit better the career of Şeyh Bedreddin in its historical context. For this purpose, what is needed is a brief sketch of the intellectual environment in which he found himself. Perhaps the most striking aspect of this environment was its geographical extent. For Bedreddin and his intellectual peers, it was normal to travel between Edirne and Cairo, which was at this time the main intellectual centre of the Islamic world, and from there north-east via Azerbaijan and Iran to Samarkand, where Timur was resettling scholars and craftsmen from all over the territories he conquered. Other important intellectual centres were Bursa, Iznik, Konya, Damascus, Aleppo, Jerusalem, Tabriz, and Ardabil. As we will see, it is certain that Bedreddin spent time in most, if not all of these.

Before discussing the better known events of Bedreddin’s career, there is an aspect of his intellectual development that must be addressed, without which it is impossible to understand the unfolding of these events. Between his early studies in the Ottoman heartland and the decisive period in Cairo, Bedreddin and his companions studied in Konya under a certain Feyzullah, who taught them logic and astronomy. It is clear from Hâfız Halil’s account that had this man not died after a year, they would have continued to study under him in Konya.16 Apparently what they learned there was so important that after Feyzullah’s death, Kadızade Musa made what we would call today a career decision, leaving his companions and going to Samarkand to devote his life to astronomy – where he founded the famous school numbering among its students the Timurid prince Ulugh Beg, creator of the celebrated astronomical tables and observatory.

But we should bear in mind that, at this time, there was no separation between astronomy and astrology. Moreover, thanks to the studies of Balivet and especially Cornell Fleischer and his students, it is becoming increasingly clear that there is a strong connection to be drawn between Bedreddin and the gnostic movement known as Hurufism. Some of the main centres of Hurufism at this time were places that Bedreddin visited.17

16 Menakib, 20-25 (fol. 9b-11b). Hâfız Halil begins by stating that Feyzullah was “a student of Taftazanî”, the famous authority of grammar, logic, law, and theology (v. 290), but eventually adds that it was “in his service” that Bedreddin and his companion Kadızade Musa, “the two seas of Rum, first saw the science of the stars” (ilm-i nücum, v. 320). Astronomy is also mentioned in the chapter heading preceding this part of the account.

17 C. H. Fleischer, ‘Ancient Wisdom and New Sciences: Prophecies at the Ottoman Court in the Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Centuries’, in M. Farhad and S. Bağcı (eds), Falnama: The Book of Omens (Washington, D.C. 2009), 232-243. On Hurufism, a gnostic movement including but not limited to the ‘science of letters’, see EF, s.v. ‘Ḥurūfiyya’ (A. Bausani). The idea of a link between Bedreddin and Hurufism is not new; see Ocak, Osmanlı Toplumunda Zındıklar ve Mühlidler, 158, who emphasises the pantheistic aspect of both Bedreddin and Hurufism, and
We are only just beginning to understand the significance in the fifteenth century of divination and other ‘occult’ sciences, which are of course closely connected to astronomy, logic, mathematics, and the study of the numerical value of letters (ilm al-huruf). It is tantalising to speculate about how interest in such teachings might have brought people together across religious boundaries, as in the case of the famous Byzantine philosopher and reformer George Gemistos Plethon, who was allegedly exposed to the Aristotelian and ‘Zoroastrian’ teachings of the Jewish philosopher Elissaeus while at the Ottoman court around this time.\textsuperscript{18} While the exact nature of these connections remains to be demonstrated, especially where Plethon is concerned, the existence on Ottoman territory of gnostic circles inspired by Hurufism now appears nothing short of certain, as does Şeyh Bedreddin’s participation in them.

Several connections must be noted when discussing Bedreddin’s place in the international Hurufi network (the ‘brothers of purity’, ihwan al-safa). First, Balivet has pointed out that, according to Taşköprüzade, Bedreddin’s teacher Feyzullah of Konya was a student of a certain Fazlullah, who may well have been none other than the founder of Hurufism Fazlullah of Astarabad, executed by Timur’s son Miranshah near Nakhchivan in 1394.\textsuperscript{19} After moving to the east, Bedreddin’s companion Kadızade Musa became acquainted with Sa’în al-Din Turka (d. 1437), with whom he studied under Sa’în al-Din’s elder brother Sadr al-Din. The Turka were a family of qadis and religious scholars of Isfahan who were influenced by the thought of Ibn Arabi and had close connections to Hurufism.\textsuperscript{20} Fleischer has demonstrated that both Sa’în al-Din Turka and another prominent Hurufi, Abdurrahman al-Bistamî of Antioch (c.1380-c.1455), frequented the same Rumi-Hanafi circles in Cairo as Bedreddin.\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{18} There is a lively debate in Byzantine studies about the truth of the allegation that Plethon studied with Elissaeus, which is based entirely on references by his enemy George Gennadios Scholarios, and who the shadowy Jewish teacher might have been and what his teachings represented. See especially P. Gardette, ‘Pour en finir avec Pléthon et son maître juif Elisée’, in Idem, \textit{Etudes imagologiques et relations interconfessionelles en zone Byzantino-Ottomane} (Istanbul 2007), 147-164, which contains many references. Gardette identifies Elissaeus with Elisha, a Jewish doctor in the Ottoman court, who was apparently of Iranian origin or had lived in Iran. He also shows that at this time Romaniot Jews, who were often polyglot, were well represented in learned circles from Iran to Italy, thus playing an important role in the transmission of ideas. Edirne in particular seems to have been an important intellectual centre in the late fourteenth century, and Gardette does not fail to point out that Bedreddin and Plethon were both there at that time.

\textsuperscript{19} Balivet, \textit{Islam mystique et révolution armée}, 42. On Fazlullah of Astarabad, see \textit{EF} \textsuperscript{2}, ‘Hurüfiyya’.

\textsuperscript{20} \textit{EF} \textsuperscript{3}, s.v. ‘Afḍal al-Dīn Turka’ (H. Eichner).

What is of fundamental importance for understanding the career of Bedreddin is that Abdurrahman al-Bistamî visited Edirne during the Ottoman Civil War and ended up spending the last part of his life in the Ottoman realm. While in Edirne, he enjoyed the patronage not only of Bedreddin (presumably during his period of seclusion, roughly 1404-1411), but also of Molla Fenarî, who is regarded as the first Ottoman şeyhülislam and whose father was supposedly a student of Sadreddin Konevî, the famous successor to Ibn Arabi. Also, Bistamî himself tells us that on his way there he spent time in Chios among “the learned and virtuous of the Christians”, tracing in perfect fashion Bedreddin’s own movements in 1404. Finally, he was forced to leave for Damascus and Cairo around the time of Bedreddin’s execution, but returned to Bursa and spent the rest of his life there. All of this suggests a much closer link between Bedreddin and Hurufi circles than has thus far been acknowledged. It seems that these circles transcended religious boundaries, stretching from Iran and Central Asia to Byzantine and Latin Greece. Moreover, as we will see below, the Hurufis spread their teachings among Turkoman populations, which explains Bedreddin’s visits to Aleppo, the Dobrudja, and other areas where such populations were dense.

With these considerations in mind, let us return to the account of the Menakib. We are told that after accepting Hüseyin-i Ahlatî as his teacher and spiritual guide (mûrşid), Bedreddin was so immersed in mystical exercises and the attainment of ecstasy (cezbe) that his master became concerned about his health and advised him to travel in order to recover. He sent him to the east, and Bedreddin ended up in Tabriz. The text contains specific details that allow us to date Bedreddin’s stay in the area with considerable precision: shortly after his arrival in Tabriz, the funerary procession of Timur’s son Sultan Muhammad (d. Şebin Karahisar, 13 March 1403) came through the town on its way to Sultanînya, and Bedreddin followed it, returning later to Tabriz where he eventually met Timur. All this must therefore have taken place in the year beginning in spring of 1403. In order to understand the real purpose behind Bedreddin’s trip, we must bear in mind that Azerbaijan was at the very centre of Hurufism. It was the place where only 20 years before Bedreddin’s visit, the movement’s founder Fazlullah had received the revelation of the hidden meaning of letters and prophecy. It was not far from Nakhchivan, where, as we have seen, Fazlullah was executed by Miranshah only seven years before Bedreddin’s visit, making the place of his execution a pilgrimage site. Because of his execution of their leader, the Hurufis came to call Miranshah ‘Maranshah’ (meaning ‘king of the snakes’) – in this connection, it may be significant that, when referring to Anatolia while

22 *EF*, ‘Fenârî-zâde’ (J. R. Walsh).
23 Fleischer, ‘Ancient Wisdom and New Sciences’, 232. The information on Chios is from Fleischer, who cites an unpublished manuscript by Bistamî in which he describes his itinerary (ibid., 329 n. 7).
24 *Menakib*, 56-65 (fol. 25a-28b).
25 For more detail on the dating of Bedreddin’s visit to Azerbaijan and his activities there see Balivet, *Islam mystique et révolution armée*, 50-52.
26 *EF*, ‘ Украинія’. 
Timur and his army were there, Hâfız Halil says that “at this time … Rum was full of snakes and scorpions”. Also in Azerbaijan was Ardabil, the centre of the Safavid order, whose leader Hoca Ali had received a visit from Timur in 1402. Finally, and most importantly, this was the time when Fazlullah’s successor Ali al-Aʿla was busy spreading Hurufi teachings among various groups in the lands of Rum, including the Bektashis, the tomb of whose founder Hacı Bektaş he visited in Kırşehir.

While in Tabriz, Bedreddin also met Timur, who, according to Hâfız Halil, was so impressed with Bedreddin’s performance in a debate with another legal scholar that he offered him the post of şeyhülislam. However, Bedreddin did not wish to end up in Samarkand like so many other intellectuals of his time, but preferred instead to return to Egypt, where he witnessed the death of his teacher and succeeded him as his halife. Apparently this transition led to some controversy, attributed by Hâfız Halil to Bedreddin’s youth, which forced him to leave for western Anatolia after six months, probably in early 1404.

Bedreddin’s long trip through Anatolia has been studied in detail by several historians, but never before in the context of the Ottoman Civil War which was raging there at the time. The years 1403-1405 were critical in the unfolding of the Civil War. After spending the winter of 1402-1403 in Aydın, Timur had departed for the East in spring of 1403, as we have already seen. But before withdrawing from Anatolia, he had intentionally left a power vacuum there by re-establishing the beyliks previously absorbed by Bayezid I, and recognising the (often conflicting) claims of several of Bayezid’s sons over what was left of Ottoman territory.

As a result, immediately upon Timur’s departure, war broke out between the two Ottoman princes Mehmed and İsa over possession of Bursa, which was still thought of at this time as the Ottoman capital. In 1403, Mehmed was probably no more than 15 years old, but had managed with the assistance of his able Grand Vizier Bayezid Paşa (a kul apparently of Albanian origin) to reassert himself over various tribal elements in the Amasya-Tokat

27 Menakıb, 57 (fol. 25a): “Şol zamanidi ki … Rum idi pür mar ü pür gejdüm”. The same expression is repeated later, when describing Mehmed I’s vision of Bedreddin after he was executed (see below, p. 237).
29 EI, ‘Hurûfiyya’.
30 Almost immediately after his victory at Ankara, Timur’s forces sacked Bursa. However, before this event, the Ottoman prince Emir Süleyman along with the Grand Vizier Çandarlı Ali Paşa and other top members of the administration were able to save the treasury and take it to Rumelia. It is from this time that Edirne begins to function as the Ottoman capital. However, during the Civil War this was not yet clear, and Bursa still held considerable prestige – after taking the city from İsa following the Battle of Ulubad (spring 1403), Mehmed held elaborate enthronement ceremonies there and adopted the title Sultan. See Kastritsis, The Sons of Bayezid, 97-100.
region, where he had been governor prior to the Timurid victory. At the Battle of Ulubad, Mehmed wrested Bursa from İsa, who fled to Constantinople but returned a month later to fight three more battles with Mehmed. While it is difficult to establish a chronology of these battles, it seems that İsa was out of the way by winter of 1403-1404, because by March of 1404 Bursa was in the hands of a third brother, Emir Süleyman.31

Süleyman was the most powerful of the Ottoman contenders at this time, as his territories included not only parts of Anatolia but all of Ottoman Rumelia, where Timur’s armies had never set foot. In order to prevent the Ottomans’ Christian enemies in Rumelia from uniting against him while he was busy in Anatolia, Süleyman had signed a treaty in early 1403 with Byzantium, Venice, and other Christian powers, in which he had made significant concessions in exchange for peace – but not without alienating the frontier lords and the raiders under their command, who relied on a perpetual state of warfare for their livelihood. It was these people, in addition to various Christian and Muslim states threatened by the Ottomans, who supported a fourth brother, Musa Çelebi, in his bid for power in Rumelia. Musa had grown up in the court of his brother Mehmed, who released him and sent him to Rumelia in order to create a diversion – with the assistance of the beyliks of Karaman and İsfendiyar, Wallachia, and probably also the Byzantine Emperor, Musa crossed the Black Sea from the port of Sinop to Dobrudja-Deliorman, apparently in 1409.32 The fact that this is the exact route followed by Bedreddin just a few years later is probably no coincidence – it seems that there was a longstanding alliance between İsfendiyar, who controlled the port of Sinop, and the ruler of Wallachia, who shared and contested the Dobrudja with the raiders.33

Another piece of the Ottoman Civil War’s extremely complex political puzzle was Cüneyd, the lord of Izmir (Smyrna), who was trying to assert his independence from the Ottomans in the Aydın region.34 Much of what is known about this man and his activities comes from the chronicle of Doukas, who was especially interested in that region,

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31 Ibid., 63-118.
32 Ibid., 129-134. The most important source on the Ottoman Civil War is an anonymous contemporary chronicle written in the court of Mehmed I, and preserved only in the later chronicles of Neşri and Oxford Anonymous. See D. Kastritis (ed. and trans.), *The Tales of Sultan Mehmed, Son of Bayezid Khan [Aḥvāl-i Sultan Mehmed bin Bāyezīd Ḫān]* (Cambridge, Mass. 2007 [actually published 2009]), 29-30, 74-76. Halil İnalcık, who was one of the first to identify the chronicle in question and emphasise its importance, has recently claimed that its author is Ahmedî, without providing any justification for this claim. See H. İnalcık, *Devlet-i ‘Aliyye: Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Üzerine Araştırmalar-I* (Istanbul 2009), 97-101.
33 Kastritis, *The Sons of Bayezid*, 50-59, 123-142. For the alliance between Mehmed and Germian that explains how Musa ended up in Mehmed’s court, see ibid., 81-89. For the relations of the voyvoda of Wallachia Mircea with the beyliks of Anatolia, see M. M. Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru, ‘Les relations du prince de Valachie Mircea l’Ancien avec les émirs Seldjoukides d’Anatolie et leur candidat Musa au trône ottoman’, *Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 6/10-11 (1968), 113-125.
34 For basic information and bibliography on Cüneyd, see Kastritis, *The Sons of Bayezid*, 49-50. See also A. Luttrell and E. A. Zachariadou, *Sources for Turkish History in the Hospitalers’ Rhodian Archive*, 1389-1422 (Athens 2008) (page numbers listed in index under ‘Djunayd’).
and therefore also provides valuable information on the revolt of Bedreddin’s disciple Börklüce Mustafa (see below). Like other rulers who were trying to preserve their independence in the aftermath of 1402, Cüneyd, whose father had been the Ottoman governor of Smyrna, was constantly transferring his allegiance from one to the other of the warring Ottoman princes, depending on how the Civil War appeared to be going. Thus, in his battles against Mehmed, Isa was supported by Cüneyd, among others. The reason Cüneyd is being singled out for mention here is that, as we will see, there is some connection between his activity and that of Şeyh Bedreddin.

After this brief overview of the Ottoman Civil War, let us return now to Şeyh Bedreddin, in order to see how his movements in Anatolia fit into the political landscape sketched above. When Bedreddin left Egypt and re-entered the lands of Rum via Syria in 1404, Süleyman Çelebi was already established in Bursa, and, from the perspective of Timur and his beylik vassals in Anatolia, posed the greatest threat of reviving Ottoman power in the area. In this connection, it is interesting to note that, according to Hâfiz Halil, during his slow return to Rumelia, Bedreddin was a guest of several prominent anti-Ottoman actors: Karaman, Germiyan, and Cüneyd. According to the Menakıb, Cüneyd and the Karamanid ruler underwent a spiritual conversion and became Bedreddin’s mürids, while the ruler of Germiyan merely showed him a great deal of respect. Halil also informs us that on his way from Egypt to Edirne, apart from these connections with the ruling elites of Anatolia, in certain areas Bedreddin was also welcomed by other social classes: a thousand Turkomans in Aleppo, who wanted to build him a dervish convent (hankah); the Christians of Chios led by their clergy, some of whom eventually converted to Islam; and a group of torlaks (a type of mendicant dervish) in the Kütahya-Domaniç area. This group, which might have included Torlak Hu Kemal, one of the instigators of the later revolt in Aydın, followed Bedreddin into Bursa, where they were welcomed by the local population.

What should we make of all these connections? As we have seen, some have suggested (based also on later Ottoman ‘official’ chroniclers such as Neşrî) that Bedreddin’s association with Karaman, Germiyan, and Cüneyd should be interpreted as part of a political bid opposing him to the Ottoman dynasty itself. Others have focused more on the religious dimension of his travels. In fact, it is impossible to separate religion and politics in this historical context, as demonstrated by the later actions of Bedreddin and his associates. In any case, Bedreddin’s service in Musa Çelebi’s administration from 1411 onward suggests that we should not be too hasty to attribute an anti-Ottoman political

36 *Menakıb*, 84-94 (fol. 36b-41a).
38 Balivet, *Islam mystique et révolution armée*, 70-88. Balivet does not ignore the political dimension, but in general his work is more concerned with the place of Bedreddin’s revolt in the religious history of the region.
agenda to him as early as 1404, if indeed at all. As far as his visits to Karaman, Germiyan, and Cüneyd are concerned, it was only natural that they would honour someone with Bedreddin’s reputation as a master of many sciences, both manifest and esoteric (zâhir – bâtin), who had enjoyed the patronage of both the Mamluk Sultan Barkuk and Timur. Also, Bedreddin had connections in at least some of those places already dating from his earlier days as a student. Finally, we must bear in mind the fact that, already at this time, Bedreddin seems to have attracted a wide following which included not only members of the elite, but also more popular elements. We will return to this point, since it is key to understanding the social dimension of his later political activity.

Returning to our source, it should be pointed out that, given our earlier discussion about the importance of Hurufi networks at this time, there is every reason to believe Halil’s account of Bedreddin’s homeward trip and the important connections which were then formed (or reinforced, in the case of already existing contacts). If anything, the author of the Menakıb underplays those connections in an effort to absolve his grandfather of any antinomian tendencies – but there is much to discover if one reads the account with the right questions in mind. For example, it is highly significant that Halil includes among those who accepted Bedreddin as their master in Aleppo the man who gave the fetva for the execution of the Turkoman Hurufi poet Nesîmî (d. 1418). His comment that “he had fallen in love with the Sheikh’s learning, and submitted to his rule (bey’at idüp), becoming his servant (kul)” can of course be interpreted as evidence of Bedreddin’s orthodoxy; but the mere mention of Nesîmî’s name would have evoked in a reader more sympathetic to Hurufism feelings of anger against the fanatical man who could have done such a thing (Nesîmî was flayed alive) and wonder that even such an evil man could not resist the power of Bedreddin. In other words, Bedreddin succeeded where Nesîmî failed. A similar interpretation can be made of Halil’s account of the conversion of the ruler of Karaman – we are told that this man was an unbeliever (münkir-i hal) who acted insolently (cüret iderdi) toward Sufis, but that he also recognised Bedreddin once he had met him and witnessed a dervish ceremony (zikr) led by him.

The general sense that one gets reading Hâfız Halil’s account of Bedreddin’s trip back to Edirne is of a triumphant return, during which everywhere he goes people submit to his authority. This authority is, of course, spiritual, but the use of the word bey’at is striking. This term (Ar. bay’a) normally denotes the ceremony of recognition of a Muslim ruler’s political authority by those under him. Does the use of the word bey’at imply that

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39 In the case of Konya, Hâfız Halil says as much; Menakıb, 85 (fol. 37a).
40 Ibid., 85 (fol. 37a): “ılimine âşık olubdı Şeyh’ün ol / Hazretine bey’at idüp oldı kul”. On Nesîmî’s life, see EF², s.v. ‘Nesîmî, Seyyid ‘Imād al-Dîn, known as Nesîmî’ (F. Babinger); İA, s.v. ‘Nesîmî’ (A. Gölpinarlı).
41 Menakıb, 86-87 (fol. 37b-38a).
42 EF², s.v. ‘bay’a’ (E. Tyan). A good example of this from around the same time is given by the anonymous Tales of Sultan Mehmed, which describes the recognition of Mehmed I’s rule by sipahîs after his enthronement in Bursa. See Kastritis, The Tales of Sultan Mehmed, 18, 61 (folia Oxford Anonymous 70 verso, Neşri Codex Menzel 116). See also Idem, The Sons of Bayezid, 97-98.
Bedreddin was making a political claim? Not necessarily. Like many political terms used in a mystical context, the meaning could simply be metaphorical. Nevertheless, there is undoubtedly something messianic about the description of Bedreddin’s travels, a strong sense of the universality of his message and its implications for the real world. This agrees with what is known about his teachings from the chronicle of Doukas, to which reference has already been made and we will now turn our attention.

As has already been mentioned, Doukas is our most important source on the Anatolian part of the uprising of 1416 and its ideological foundation.43 The idea that this was proto-communist in nature, because it was based on common ownership of everything but women, comes almost entirely from Doukas. However, it should be emphasised that the chronicler does not mention Bedreddin by name, but rather his disciple Börklüce Mustafa, who led the revolt in Karaburun near Izmir in the province of Aydın. As he points out, this place (which he calls by its Greek name, Stylarion) is directly across from Chios. One of the main merits of Doukas’s description is that it gives a better idea of the close connection between the coast of Asia Minor and the nearby islands (Samos is also mentioned), a connection that, as we have seen, is also evident in the itineraries of Şeyh Bedreddin and Abdurrahman al-Bistami. An important point to bear in mind is that, when describing the background behind the revolt of Börklüce Mustafa, it is possible that the individual described as “a simple-minded Turkish peasant” (tis ton Tourkon idiotics kai agroikos) and a “false monk (or abbot)” (pseudavvas) and called by name Börklüce Mustafa (Perkletzia Moustaphas) may at least part of the time be Bedreddin himself, even if he does not appear by name. This would not be the first instance in which the Byzantine chronicler in question confused people and events taking place on Ottoman territory – it would appear that much of his information was based on oral testimony and hearsay, and was therefore subject to a certain degree of misinterpretation.44 However, it is exactly its use of oral testimony that makes Doukas’s chronicle an invaluable source. The chronicler was a Byzantine nobleman with family loyalties to the ruling dynasty of Aydın who worked also for the Genoese families ruling New Phokaia (Yeni Foça) and Lesbos, representing them in their negotiations with the Turks. It is clear that he knew Turkish and he seems to have had many informants, one of whom he mentions in connection with the revolt. Let us turn in more detail, then, to his account.

After locating the “simple-minded Turkish peasant” in Stylarion (Karaburun), Doukas describes his doctrine as follows:

He taught the Turks that they must own no property and decreed that, with the exception of women, everything should be held in common: food, clothing, yokes of

43 Doukas, I storia, 149-153 (ch. 21:11-14). In translating into English certain passages, I have made extensive use of the translation of H. J. Magoulias, Decline and Fall of Byzantium to the Ottoman Turks (Detroit 1975) – however this is not always accurate, so I have sometimes chosen to make a new translation from the original.

44 For an example of such confusion in Doukas from around the same time see Kastritsis, The Sons of Bayezid, 91-92.
beasts, and fields. [He said] ‘I shall have access to your house as though it were mine and you shall have access to my house as though it were yours, with the exception of the female members’.

He then goes on to state that, with this doctrine, the “Turkish peasant” in question deceived “all the peasants” (agroikous). He was also after the friendship of the Christians, preaching the doctrine that “anyone among the Turks who says that the Christians do not worship God is himself an unbeliever”. In accordance with that doctrine, his followers treated the Christians they met with honour, while he sent his disciples across to Chios to make it known also to “the rulers and clergy of the Church”. At this point, Doukas mentions one of his informants, “an old Cretan anchorite living on the island in the monastery called Troulloti”. This man claimed to have received some of the Turkish preacher’s disciples, whom he described as “wearing a single tunic, with shaved and uncovered heads, and their feet without sandals” – basically a description of the mendicant dervishes known as torlak or kalender. These emissaries carried a message from “the pseudomunk” that “I am a fellow ascetic who adores the same God you worship. This night I shall walk barefoot over the sea to be with you”. Apparently the anchorite was impressed by the Turkish preacher, for he began to relate bizarre stories (terata) to Doukas about how when he was a monk on the island of Samos, the preacher would cross over every day and speak with him, thus “becoming my fellow ascetic”.46

After this brief but very important description of the doctrines of the Turkish preacher of Stylarion, the chronicler goes on to describe the revolt and its suppression by the Ottoman authorities. After two failed attempts by Ottoman governors (first the son of the Bulgarian king Šišman, whom Mehmed I had appointed governor of Aydın instead of Cüneyd, and who is killed by the rebels, then “the governor of Lydia, Ali Beg”), the Sultan sent his twelve-year-old son Murad accompanied by the Grand Vizier Bayezid Paşa “at the head of the Thracian army”. After much bloodshed, “the false monk” (whom Doukas now finally begins to call by name Börklüce Mustafa) is finally arrested along with many of his followers. They are taken to Ephesus, where Mustafa is “interrogated and subjected to many tortures”, but refuses to renounce his beliefs. He is therefore crucified and paraded around the city on a camel, while his followers who refuse to renounce his doctrines are slaughtered before his eyes, saying nothing else but “Dede Sultan eriş”. The chronicler’s inclusion of this phrase, which he translates “Lord Abbot, arrive” is striking, and is a testament to the overall authenticity of his account. The mode of execution is typical for a rebel at this time in the Islamic world, and does not need to be interpreted as an allusion to Mustafa’s Christian sympathies – but neither can such an interpretation be ruled out altogether.47

45 For a description see A. Karamustafa, God’s Unruly Friends: Dervish Groups in the Islamic Later Middle Period, 1200-1550 (Salt Lake City 1994), 65-67.
46 Doukas, Istoria, 149-150 (ch. 21:11).
47 For example, the supporters of the Mamluk pretender Baydara in 1293 were executed in precisely this manner, without any religious connotations. See R. Irwin, The Middle East in the Middle Ages: The Early Mamluk Sultanate, 1250-1382 (Carbondale, IL 1986), 85. I thank my colleague Angus Stewart for this example.
Finally, Doukas provides certain further indications of the rebels’ numbers and beliefs. When they ambush and massacre the son of Šišman and his forces in the narrow passages around Stylarion, they number more than six thousand. Their victory makes them confident, so that “confirming their belief in the false monk and extolling him as one greater than a prophet, [they] set forth the doctrine that one must not cover the head with a hat, which they call a *zerkulah*, and that one must go through life wearing only a simple tunic and bareheaded, adhering to Christian beliefs rather than to Turkish”. And the seriousness of the revolt is evident from Doukas’s statement that after the execution of Mustafa, the armies of Prince Murad under the Grand Vizier Bayezid Paşa “traversed Asia and Lydia, putting to death all the Turkish monks (*tourkokalogerous*) whom he met on the way who were still living in voluntary poverty”.

All this creates the impression of a very serious revolt of a religious character with messianic overtones, led by mendicant dervishes, but involving also entire communities – Doukas relates that the Thracian forces of Bayezid Paşa “mercilessly struck down everyone in sight, the old as well as infants, men, and women; in a word, they massacred everyone, regardless of age, as they advanced to the mountain defended by the dervishes”. Of course, the socio-economic aspect cannot be ruled out; Anatolia had suffered great famines following the Timurid invasion of 1402, which would probably have made the message of communal property preached by the dervishes particularly appealing to indigent peasants. However, the religious and messianic aspect was at least as important. In other words, it is clear here that we are dealing with a popular movement, but one inspired by the ideas of an intellectual elite, of which Bedreddin was a prominent member.

Unfortunately, much less is known about the details of the uprising involving Bedreddin himself in Dobrudja and Rumelia, which took place around the same time as that of Börklüce Mustafa in Aydın. However, given what has already been said about Bedreddin’s peregrinations during the early part of the Ottoman Civil War and Börklüce Mustafa’s revolt as described by Doukas, it is reasonable to assume that similar factors were in play there as in Aydın. The difference is that, in Rumelia, Bedreddin had an even longer history than in Aydın, both as a local son who had achieved fame as a scholar and Sufi, and as a member of the government under Musa Çelebi. Apart from the religious aspect, then, it is also important to understand the character of Musa’s rule and Bedreddin’s connection to it, since, as we will see, his tenure as Musa’s *kazasker* played a crucial role in the revolt that took place just three years after Musa’s death. Let us return to Hâfiz Halil and see how he describes Bedreddin’s activities in Rumelia.

According to the *Menakıb*, after his visit to Bursa, where, as we have seen, he was welcomed by the local residents, Bedreddin finally made it to the Edirne area, where we are told that he had a great spiritual influence on the local population, including his own family. After spending some time there, he returned to Bursa and Aydın for a brief visit about which little is known, but which suggests that he was keeping up his connections


49 Doukas, *Istoria*, 153 (ch. 21:14); Magoulias, *Decline and Fall*, 121.
(which presumably included Börklüce Mustafa and Torlak Hu Kemal). Then he returned to Edirne, where he spent seven years “in seclusion”.\(^{50}\) It is interesting that this ‘seclusion’ coincides with a time when Emir Süleyman was at the height of his power, but mostly absent in Anatolia, where he was involved in a lengthy struggle with his brother Mehmed which had reached a stalemate.\(^ {51}\) It is likely that, during this time, in addition to Abdurrahman al-Bistamî and other intellectuals, Bedreddin was also associating with various elements hostile to Süleyman’s rule.

When Musa arrived on the scene (almost certainly in 1409), the tide had already turned against Süleyman. While it is impossible to dwell here on every detail of Musa’s rise to power in Rumelia, which has been described elsewhere, it is important to remember that he was sent to Rumelia by his brother Mehmed, with the assistance of the emirs İsfendiyar and Karaman, as well as Mircea of Wallachia and probably also Manuel Palaiologos.\(^{52}\) Once in Dobrudja-Deliorman, Aşıkpaşazade tells us he was supported by “all the tovıca and timariots of Rumelia”.\(^ {53}\) According to Halil İnalcık, the tovıca “were officers of the akindjis, raiders on the frontiers, who enjoyed tımārs as ordinary sipāhīs and in many respects … were treated as tımār-holding sipāhīs”, while Beatrice Manz has written about the Timurid equivalent that “the tovachiş were troop inspectors, who had as their task the supervision of the numbers, condition and equipment of the army, along with conscription for campaigns and the transmission of orders from the sovereign to the soldiers. This office existed with very similar functions in other nomad polities”.\(^ {54}\) It is most striking that, according to Hâfız Halil, during his revolt Bedreddin was supported by the very same tovıca in the same area, after crossing the Black Sea in the same manner as Musa Çelebi.\(^ {55}\) Furthermore, Halil tells us that, upon his arrival in Wallachia, he was supported by a man named Azeb Beg, “who had escaped when Mehmed found his way to Musa” (i.e., overthrew and killed him). This very same Azeb Beg is mentioned by Aşıkpaşazade and the Ottoman Anonymous Chronicles as Musa’s flagbearer (mir-i âlem).\(^ {56}\) Of course, Hâfız Halil presents Bedreddin’s arrival there as an accident: forced to escape from house arrest in Iznik by Sultan Mehmed’s refusal to let him visit Egypt and perform the Hajj, Bedreddin wanted to go to Central Asia, but was persuaded instead to go to the Crimea; after leaving the port of Sinop with that destination, hostile Frankish ships forced him and his companions to land in Wallachia instead.\(^ {57}\)

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\(^{50}\) *Menakıb*, 95 (fol. 41b).

\(^{51}\) Kastritsis, *The Sons of Bayezid*, 118-129.

\(^{52}\) Musa’s crossing to Rumelia and rise to power there is described in ibid., 129-158.

\(^{53}\) Aşıkpaşazade, *Die altosmanische Chronik des Aşıkpaşazade*, ed. F. Giese (Leipzig 1929), 73.


\(^{55}\) *Menakıb*, 111 (fol. 48a).

\(^{56}\) Ibid., 110 (fol. 47b); Aşıkpaşazade, *Chronik*, 74; F. Giese (ed.), *Die altosmanischen anonymen Chroniken* (Breslau 1922), 49; Kastritsis, *The Sons of Bayezid*, 164.

\(^{57}\) *Menakıb*, 102-106 (fol. 44a-46a).
So what are we to make of all this? Without going into the question of whether Bedreddin did or did not intend to go to Dobrudja, which is of course impossible to ascertain, it is reasonable to assume that his arrival there would have been seen by timariots and other individuals who had enjoyed privileges under Musa’s regime as a revival of that regime and of their privileges. But even though it is true that Bedreddin had served in Musa’s regime as his kazasker, while he held that post, he was nonetheless acting in the name of an Ottoman prince. This brings us back to the problem with which this article began, namely, that of whether Bedreddin’s revolt intended to overthrow the Ottoman dynasty itself. At this point, we must bear in mind that his revolt coincided with the revival of the Ottoman Civil War under the Ottoman prince Mustafa, known in Ottoman chronicles as ‘the False’ (Düzme). The simultaneity of the two revolts, which has been demonstrated by Michel Balivet in an important article, is striking – Balivet does not go as far as to say that the two were related, but there is every reason to think that they probably were.\(^{58}\) It can thus be argued quite convincingly, then, that rather than an effort to overthrow the Ottoman dynasty itself, Bedreddin’s revolt should instead be seen as a failed attempt to revive the regime of Musa Çelebi under another Ottoman prince, Mustafa. After the reunification of the Ottoman realm under Mehmed I, an attempt on the part of those threatened by this event (Byzantium, the beyliks, various elements loyal to the previous regime) to undermine him by making use of another pretender is entirely in agreement with what is already known of the politics of the time. In this light, it is highly significant that Bedreddin and Mustafa both crossed the Black Sea from Sinop to Dobrudja around the same moment, and that in doing so they were both helped by Musa’s former allies, Isfendiyar of Kastamonu and Mircea of Wallachia. Moreover, after arriving in Dobrudja, they found themselves conveniently close to the new governor of Nicopolis, who was none other than Cüneyd of Izmir, transported there by Mehmed I in 1415.\(^{59}\) Finally, Byzantium’s support of Mustafa is well known, and if the Ottoman prince was acting in unison with Şeyh Bedreddin, it is necessary to consider that Bedreddin, too, might have enjoyed Byzantine support.

While the politics and alliances described above are not at all surprising in the context of the Ottoman Civil War, which in 1416 was not yet entirely over, they do not in any way negate the religious or ideological dimension of Bedreddin’s revolt, which must still be addressed on its own terms. Furthermore, to say that Bedreddin and his allies intended to revive the regime of Musa Çelebi simply begs the question of what that regime represented in the first place. Musa has been seen as a great foe of the Christians, who tried to take back the territories ceded by Süleyman to Byzantium, and Serbian, Byzantine, and Ottoman sources alike present his reign as a reign of terror during which oaths

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58 M. Balivet, ‘Un épisode méconnu de la campagne de Mehmed 1er en Macédoine: L’apparition de Serrès (1416/819 H.’, *Turcica*, 18 (1986), 137-146. On Düzme Mustafa, see also *EF²*, s.v. ‘Muṣṭafā Čelebi, Düzme’ (C. Heywood), who states: “The activities of Muṣṭafā in 819/1416 are inextricably bound up with the simultaneous revolt against Meḥemmed I led by shaykh Bedr el-Dīn”; *EF²*, ‘Mehemmed I’; Kastritis, *The Sons of Bayezid*, 2-3, 82-83.

were betrayed, Serbian townsmen were massacred and transported against their will, and powerful *uc begleri* were forced to flee to Anatolia or even feign blindness to escape his purges. How can one explain the affinity of such a man to the saintly Şeyh Bedreddin, who supposedly wanted to unite Christians and Muslims in a society based on shared wealth? Clearly, the usual categories of Christian versus Muslim, or even centralising versus anti-centralising forces in the early Ottoman state, are inadequate to describe the situation with which we are dealing. According to one strand in the Ottoman chronicles, Musa was popular with janissaries and timariots (who supposedly represent centralisation), but also with raiders (who supposedly embody the resistance against this centralisation). Conversely, with his policies he somehow managed to alienate both the powerful frontier lords (*uc begleri*), who supposedly represent the frontier mentality opposed to centralisation, and the likes of Çandarlı Ibrahim Paşa, whose family is supposedly the very definition of centralisation in early Ottoman history.

Perhaps it is best to view Musa’s reign as an effort to revive the centralist imperial vision of Bayezid I while eliminating the middle man, namely the urban and rural elites, both Christian and Muslim. At this point in Ottoman history, these might be said to include not only the pre-Ottoman Balkan ruling classes, but also *uc begleri* such as Evrenos. It is hard not to see at least part of the motivation for such policies, or indeed for the political bid of Bedreddin himself, as coming ‘from the bottom up’. In other words, lower and middle ranks of society unable to accept the existing social order seem to have rallied around religious and intellectual figures like Bedreddin, or rival princes, who were in turn eager to associate themselves with the intellectuals because of their popular support. Of course, this suggests that there is a social message at least implicit in the teachings of such intellectuals; which is hardly in doubt, given Bedreddin’s intellectual connections and what is now known of the challenge the ideas of mystic-millenarian Sufi thinkers were posing to the rule of Timurid princes at precisely this time.

What is clear, in any case, is that the same messianic-apocalyptic character is present in Şeyh Bedreddin, his disciple Börklüce Mustafa, and even the Ottoman prince Musa. This is evident in the accounts of Doukas, who, as we have already seen, relates stories of Börklüce walking on water and rising from the dead. It is also present in Hâfiz Halîl, who calls Bedreddin’s master Hüseîn-i Aḥlatî (and therefore by extension also his *halife* Bedreddin) the *kutb-i zaman* (Axis of the Age), and who presents Mehmed I as coming down with an epileptic fit upon seeing a vision of the unjustly executed Bedreddin. Finally, it can be found in Mehmed I’s court poet Abdülvâsu Çelebi, who, when describing the conflict between his patron and Musa Çelebi, feels the need to state repeatedly that it was Mehmed, rather than Musa, who was the Mahdi (Messiah). In this connection, it might be worth noting the legend reported by Evliya Çelebi, supposedly from the mouth

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60 For a detailed discussion based on primary sources see Kastritsis, *The Sons of Bayezid*, 159-187.
of Sultan Mehmed IV himself, according to which the real prince Mustafa lived out his life in seclusion as a dervish in Thrace, and is identical with the eponymous founder of the Bektashi lodge of Nefes Baba near the baths of Traianopolis in modern Greece.\(^6^3\) This is rather similar to the case of Hacı İlbegi and Kızıl Deli, which has already been discussed above.

In conclusion, it is hoped that the present article has made at least a modest contribution toward placing the career and revolt of Şeyh Bedreddin in its broader historical context. As we have seen, it is not possible to study the Bedreddin revolt as a purely social, political, or religious phenomenon, because it was all three at once. In order to understand the significance of the actions of Bedreddin and his followers, we must bear in mind the social, economic, and political instability caused by Timur’s Anatolian campaign of 1402-1403 and the Ottoman Civil War that followed it. Equally important, however, were the intellectual currents of the time, especially Hurufism, whose eschatological and universalistic teachings were well suited to the apocalyptic landscape in which they found root. As has been pointed out many times before, Bedreddin’s teachings and revolt should be seen as the tail end of the larger post-Mongol period in the lands of Rum, which had produced the equally severe Babaî revolt of 1240, but also the likes of Rumi and Ibn Arabi, to whose mystical teachings Bedreddin and his contemporaries were so deeply indebted. These developments did not end with Bedreddin – on the contrary, the 1444 Hurufi uprisings in Edirne and the reported influence of the sect on the young Mehmed II demonstrate that the intellectual climate there did not change in the least after his execution.\(^6^4\) Neither did the influence of Bedreddin himself diminish, but it survived him through his legend and his books. These books must be studied in detail and in context before it is possible to do justice to the man who was much more than a mere rebel, but above all a major intellectual of his time.

\(^6^3\) S. A. Kahraman, Y. Dağlı, and R. Dankoff (eds), Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi, Vol. 8 (Istanbul 2003), 35.