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Uç Beyi (200404)

Yürükler (220322)

Turahan Bey (191074)



CRAFTING HISTORY

Essays on the Ottoman World and Beyond
in Honor of Cemal Kafadar

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Uç Beys, Dervishes, and Yürüks: The Cultural Politics of the Turahanoğlu of Thessaly

Theoharis Stavrides

In his seminal book *Between Two Worlds*, Cemal Kafadar posits the existence of a substratum of Ottoman society, consisting of *gazis* and dervishes, that was subsumed under the all-encompassing juggernaut of the House of Osman, in the second half of the fifteenth century. The existence of this substratum and its role in the founding of the Ottoman state was ignored by later histories and chronicles of the dynasty, so that now they can only be traced through a close and critical reading of the sources.¹ Leaders of the *gazis*, and original partners of the Ottomans in their initial expansion in the Balkans, were the *uç beys* (or, frontier lords), a handful of families that appear to have enjoyed special status under the early sultans. In an oft-quoted phrase, Kafadar characterized these families, in which, uncharacteristically, power and property were passed on in a hereditary fashion, as “mini-dynasties.”²

Regarded as representing part of a “secret history” of the dynasty—a history that never quite made it to official Ottoman histories and chronicles, the

- 1 Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995).
- 2 *Ibid.*, 26. See also Zeynep Yürekli, *Architecture and Hagiography in the Ottoman Empire: The Politics of Bektashi Shrines in the Classical Age* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 9; H. Erdem Çıpa, *The Making of Selim: Succession, Legitimacy, and Memory in the Early Modern Ottoman World* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2017), 104–105.

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