

Abdullah Gündoğdu, Hüseyin Güngör Şahin and Dilek Altun.
Barbaros Hayreddin Paşa – Gazavâtnâmesi ve Zeyli. Ankara: Panama
Yayıncılık. 2019. 445 pages. ISBN: 9786057739186

Reviewed by **Ercan Akyol**
University of Vienna, Vienna, Austria
ercan.akyol@univie.ac.at

In the sixteenth century, Hızır Reis or, as the world knows him, Hayreddin Barbarossa was a pivotal figure for almost all the countries lying along the Mediterranean coast. Nevertheless, until recently, the oldest known manuscript(s) of the *Gazavâtnâme*, a biographical work written by Seyyid Muradî, a companion of Barbarossa, had not been transcribed. In fact, the *Gazavâtnâme* manuscripts in Madrid, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio del Escorial (MS, 1663), and Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale (suppl. turc No.1186), have not been on the radar of most historians, with the exception of a few valuable contributions on the subject by researchers such as Aldo Gallotta,¹ Nicolas Vatin,² and a monograph by Hüseyin Serdar Tabakoğlu,³ which is most likely based on these manuscripts. In 2019, an attempt to fill this gap was made by Abdullah Gündoğdu, Hüseyin Güngör Şahin, and Dilek Altun, who jointly edited the *Gazavâtnâme* based on these two manuscripts.

The book is divided into four main chapters: i) “Analysis and Assessment”; ii) “Barbaros Hayreddin Paşa Gazavâtnâmesi – The Text” (Escorial, MS, 1663); iii) “Barbaros Hayreddin Paşa Gazavâtnâmesi Zeyli -The Text” (Paris, suppl. turc No.1186) and “The Appendix”.

The first chapter is based entirely on Şahin’s Ph.D. thesis, *İspanyol ve Osmanlı Kroniklerinde Barbaros Hayreddin Paşa* (2018), in which he tried to make a portrayal of Barbarossa using some Spanish and Ottoman primary sources – the *Gazavâtnâme* being the most important one. The chapter titled “Analysis and Assessment” contains the core information about the texts and the life of Barbarossa, answering questions such as

- 1 Gallotta, Aldo. 1970. ‘Le Ġazavât Di Ĥayreddin Barbarossa’. *Studi Magrebini* III. 79-160; ibid. 1981. ‘Il ‘Ġazavât-Ĥayreddin Paşa’ di Seyyid Murād’. *Studi Magrebini* XIII. 1-49.
- 2 Vatin, Nicolas. ‘Le Pouvoir Des Barberousse À Alger D’après Les Gazavat-i Hayreddin Paşa’. In Sariyannis, Marinos (ed.). *Political Thought and Practice in the Ottoman Empire*. Rehtymno: Crete University Press. 416; ibid. (with Gilles Veinstein). 2019. ‘Roi, pirate ou esclave? L’image de Hayrî-d-dîn Barberousse’. In Clayer, Nathalie and Kaynar, Erday (eds.). *Penser, agir et vivre dans l’Empire ottoman et en Turquie*. Paris: Peeters. 233-260 ; ibid. 2013. ‘Hayr ed-Dîn Barberousse : Un pacha qui n’était pas du sérail’. *Turkish Historical Review* 10.2-3. (Winter 2020): 107-131. <https://doi.org/10.1163/18775462-01002011>; ibid. 2018. ‘Comment Hayr Ed-Dîn Barberousse Fut Reçu À Istanbul En 1533’. *Turcica* 49. 119-151; ibid. 2011. “‘Comment êtes-vous apparu, toi et ton frère ?” Note sur les origines des frères Barberousse’. *Studia Islamica*, nouvelle édition/new series 1. 103-131.
- 3 Tabakoğlu, Hüseyin Serdar. 2018. *Deryadaki Ateş Barbaros Hayreddin*. İstanbul: Erdem Yayınları.

when the manuscripts in question were written, who was/were their author/authors, how were the manuscripts found, what style of language did the author(s) use, what is the importance of these texts for Turkish history, and so on. However, one cannot find any of the promised analytical assessment of Barbarossa or the *Gazavâtnâme* in the first chapter. The authors' analysis and evaluations, found on pages 63 to 77, bring nothing new to scientific literature. What is more, the underlying arguments, for instance, those evaluating Barbarossa's naval enterprises within the context of Paul Wittek's famous 'ghaza thesis' (see 64-67), have not been well grounded. This brings us to two main problems with *Barbaros Hayreddin Paşa – Gazavâtnâmesi ve Zeyli*: firstly, trying to make sense of Barbarossa's exploits through the ghaza thesis, in my opinion, mixes two entirely different things together. I think one must be precise and diligent when comparing two different phenomena such as the maritime culture of the 16th century and the ghaza culture of the early Ottoman frontiers. The authors' attempts to confine Barbarossa within the ghaza thesis prove to be not only wrong but also misleading for prospective readers. Barbarossa, who started out as a merchant conducting trade along the Aegean coast, would become a famous (and, for some, notorious) pirate. Moreover, Rhodes Murphy,⁴ Nicolas Vatin and Emrah Safa Gürkan⁵ have already shown that the piracy and naval activities carried out by Barbarossa had nothing to do with the Holy War.

Secondly, this chapter is plagued by a bigger and more serious problem: the nationalist approach, an attitude still haunting Turkish historiography today. This nationalist approach attempts to squeeze Barbarossa's personality—which is multi-layered, being that of a merchant, pirate, commander, admiral, a Muslim with a Greek mother, and so on—into something too narrow and confined. The authors seem to have taken Seyyid Muradî's politically motivated depiction of Barbarossa as a holy warrior fighting in the way of Islam at face value, rather than considering historical evidence which shows that he was a pirate who cooperated with Jewish and Christian pirates, and who worked for rival Muslim rulers. By depicting Barbarossa as a holy warrior, Seyyid Muradî must have aimed to strengthen his benefactor's hand in Istanbul, where his political rivals strived to undermine Barbarossa's position and fame. Apparently, Seyyid Muradî achieved his goal. The authors, however, failed to see the subtext, that is, Seyyid Muradî's intentions. Therefore, contributing to the 'great man theory', they portrayed an imaginary Barbarossa, a Turkish ghazi who gave everything for his religion and succeeded in turning "*the Mediterranean into a Turkish lake*" (p. 58). This cliché phrase is a recurring one in Turkish nationalist historiography and the scientific arguments in the book are overshadowed by such expressions and mentality. In addition, when they describe the scope of the word "Türk", they commit a grave mistake by misreading the term "El Gran Turco" ["iğrân Türk"; see Escorial, MS, 1663, 196v] as "*İran-ı Türk*"

4 Murphy, Rhodes. 2001. 'Seyyid Muradî's Prose Biography of Hızır ibn Yakub, alias Hayreddin Barbarossa: Ottoman Folk Narrative as an under-exploited source for historical reconstruction'. *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 54. 523-536.

5 Gürkan, Emrah Safa. 2012. 'Batı Akdeniz'de Osmanlı Korsanlığı ve Gaza Meselesi'. *Kebikeç* 33. 173-204.

(p. 253). Therefore, they misconceived the phrase “İran-ı Türk” as Safavids (p. 73), which is very unfortunate.

The same nationalist perspective is evident when it comes to the analysis of the language Seyyid Muradî used. Showing Turkish linguistic-nationalist tendencies, the authors misinterpret the *Gazavâtnâme*, saying that “*Muradî wrote his work in a simpler and lucid way using Turkish words deliberately instead of Arabic and Persian words*” (p. 16). Needless to say, such a conscious preference for Turkish over the Arabic and Persian languages was against the nature of the early modern Ottoman-Turkish. What is at stake here and what the authors misunderstood is that Seyyid Muradî was specifically commissioned to compose a Turkish chronicle about Hayreddin Barbarossa so that general populace could understand it. That is not to say that the Turkish Seyyid Muradî used does not involve ‘foreign elements’ like Arabic and Persian, the two core languages and main components of the early modern Ottoman language. Approaching the *Gazavâtnâme* with an anachronistic linguistic approach better suited to 19th-century nationalism does not do justice to the text. One must not forget that the *Gazavâtnâme* was the product of a world of pirates, sailors, and seamen whose voices mostly remained unheard in official historiography. In this sense, we should count ourselves lucky to have such a unique example that enables us to glance into a world largely unknown to us. As a result of its cultural origin, we cannot expect to see elegant language, wording and a sophisticated literary style in the *Gazavâtnâme*, even though the authors claim otherwise. It would be unfair and contrary to the very nature of Seyyid Muradî’s work. In fact, his work includes a plethora of mistakes in word choices, suffixes, and grammar rules, not the invaluable literary value the authors claim (p. 9). Moreover, it contains countless phrases that would sound very unnatural to native-speaker ears, suggesting that this work may have been written by someone who had a poor educational background, or maybe someone who learned Turkish later in life. A comparison between the *Gazavâtnâme* and any classical Turkish literary work of the 16th century would highlight the differences in literary style very clearly.

Chapters II and III, where the authors give a full transcription of the manuscripts, contain even more grave mistakes, omissions, and deficiencies than the first chapter. One can summarize the problems of the transcriptions in three sections, namely misreadings, inconsistencies, and legibility. Let us start with legibility: the authors claim in the preface that there are very few unreadable words in the text. However, they apparently did not consult the differences between the manuscripts which Aldo Galotta discusses, which prove them wrong. In his article entitled “Il <Gazavât-ı Hayreddin Paşa> di Seyyid Murād” (in *Studi Magrebini*, 1983), Aldo Gallotta diligently reveals the differences between some major manuscripts of the *Gazavâtnâme*. It is interesting that the authors seem not to have considered this work, despite listing it in the bibliography (p. 75). Additionally, the authors claim that folios 55a-b are missing. However, if they had used Gallotta’s article as they claimed, they would have seen that his article traces down the so-called missing parts.

Unfortunately, the problems do not stop there. The main and most critical issue is not the words that are illegible, but that the authors’ transcription reads as if they have properly read and understood the text, while, in fact, it contains several errors. I found

at least one mistake in almost every line or, in the best cases, in every paragraph. To give a few examples:

Misreading	Correction
<i>sultân Korkûd ol zamânda Antalya'dan kalkub ma'nâ virilüb anda gelmiş idi.</i> [p. 97]	<i>Sultân Qorqud'a ol zamânda Antalya'dan qalqub Mağnisa vèrilüb anda gelmiş idi</i>
<i>bize ma'nî sâde buluşasın dimiş idi</i> [p. 97]	<i>bize Mağnisa'da buluşasın dèmiş idi</i>
<i>Menvuzka</i> [p. 110]; <i>münevür-kâde</i> [p. 112]	<i>Menorqa; Menorqa'da</i>
<i>yekrim dört</i> [p. 122]	<i>yigirmi dört</i>
<i>mesn ba'de sideleriün</i> [p. 132]	<i>min ba'd sizleriün</i>

The mistakes found in the book are due to several reasons, depending on the nature of the errors. We can evaluate them under philological and semantic mistakes, and misreadings caused by lack of historical, geographical, and nautical knowledge. The most common mistakes seen in the transcription are the philological and semantic ones. These errors range from the smallest grammatical units to bigger clusters of meaning. If we take a closer look at the examples below, we can see that these problems are not only seen in Turkish words, but also in the Persian and Arabic parts of the text:

Misreading	Correction
<i>fülân dîdeniün</i> [p. 110]	<i>Fulandire</i> [Flanders]
<i>anlar görencek çâkerler</i> [p. 122]	<i>anlar kürekcük çekerler</i>
<i>küffâr-ı hâk-sârun ol tonaımayı mekteb-i şu'âra ve bezîmet-âsârı dabi</i> [p. 128]	<i>küffâr-i hâksârün ol tonaıma-yı nikbet-şî'ârı ve bezîmet-âşârı dabı</i>
<i>anları hep kâyd-ı hasen teslim eyledi</i> [p. 143]	<i>anları hep Qâid Hasan'a teslim eyledi</i>
<i>günlerde bir gün kal'a-i Berûcânna vardu-klarında</i> [p. 156]	<i>günlerde bir gün Qoron qal'e[siniün] berü câni-binde varduqlarında</i>
<i>Venediklü esbâbozana söz gönderdiler</i> [p. 157]	<i>Venediklü esbâbsuz gönderdiler</i>

It is unfortunate that the mistakes I have highlighted comprise only a small number of the many problems that this book contains. That the text is fraught with numerous errors indicates that the authors transcribed the text having, for the most part, only partly understood the meaning of the original texts. Given the problems in the first chapter, which I discussed above, and the misreadings I have exemplified, it becomes evident that this book was prepared in a hasty way and hence cannot be recommended either for scientific or for personal use.