

**“Mapping the Early Modern Ottoman World:
“Representations of Cultural Geography in the Late Medieval Anatolian Frontier Narratives”
Zeynep Aydoğan**

The proposed subject of study sets out to make sense of the representations of cultural geography in the late medieval frontier narratives. The warrior epics and hagiographies that originated in the frontier milieus of Anatolia reflect the viewpoints of the frontiersmen and hence the way they envisioned the world. The purpose of the project is to attain an understanding of how the people of the frontiers defined their political, social and cultural surroundings in a period where physical mobility prevailed and the boundaries between self and others kept being re-cast at an astonishing pace.

In my research project, rather than confining my study to the analysis of a single text, a problematical approach will be adopted seeking out conclusions in a number of narratives on certain potential themes. The *Battalname*, the *Danişmendname*, the *Saltukname*, the *Düsturname*, the *Menakıbbü'l-kudsiyye*, the *Menakıb-ı Hacı Bektaş* and the *Vilayetname-i Otman Baba* are some of the narratives that will be examined along with other contemporary sources such as the *Dürr-i Mekkun*, Aşıkpaşazade's history, popular chronicles of the Ottoman dynasty (*Tevarih-i Ali Osman*), and narratives of military campaigns and heroic deeds (*gazavatnames*).

The project will be constructed around spatial representations on multiple layers. Temporal and spatial representations as experienced by the protagonists of these narratives, description and extent of their travels, portrayal of ethnic identities, countries and cities, and of architectural spaces are but a few of the many exciting potential themes to which extended study of these texts may lend itself. Even an analysis of these narratives in terms of the geographical motifs they contain would, in itself, be a demanding project, since how the people of the frontiers conceptualized their social, political and cultural surroundings within the framework of these motifs varied greatly, depending on the shifting borders between self and other and between center and periphery.