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The Division Between Çelebi and Babagan Bektashis
An Analysis of Spiritual and Genealogical Perspectives
(19th -20th Centuries)

Summary of the Ph.D. Dissertation

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The Aim and Scope of the Dissertation

Bektashism, recognized for its profound spiritual, cultural, and historical significance, has been a prominent subject of scholarly investigation for an extended period. The initial scholarly interest in Bektashism and the Kızılbaş can be traced to Western travelers, missionaries, and diplomats who encountered the Bektashi Order during their journeys through the Ottoman Empire.[1] Nevertheless, the literature from this period often presented a biased or constrained depiction of Bektashism, shaped by the authors' perspectives and religious biases. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, there was an increasing scholarly focus on various aspects of Ottoman society, including Sufism and religious groups such as the Bektashis and Alevis. However, much of the early academic research was predominantly descriptive rather than analytical, heavily reliant on primary sources and lacking a rigorous theoretical framework. At the dawn of the 20th century, with the implementation of nationalization policies, the study of Bektashism and Alevism underwent substantial transformations. This period saw research that was heavily influenced by state ideologies, which emphasized the preservation of Turkish cultural heritage over critical analysis. Such works primarily engaged with two major debates: first, they challenged the dominant Ottoman view that categorized the Bektashi and Kızılbaş followers as deviant heretics; and second, they countered early Christian narratives that highlighted supposed Christian and pagan influences within Alevi and Bektashi practices. As a result, early publications sought to assert the Turkish and Islamic identity of Kızılbaş-Alevi and Bektashi communities.[2]

Baha Said, a Turkish nationalist, was among the early authors who wrote about the Kızılbaş-Alevi, Bektashi, and related groups, with his articles appearing in journals such as *Muḥibbān*, *Millī Taʿlīm ve Terbiye Mecmūʿası*, *Memleket Gazetesi*, *Meslek Gazetesi*, and *Türk Yurdu*.[3] Influenced by the narratives of 19th-century missionary accounts and the political

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[1] For the most prominent studies for the Kızılbaş-Alevi in the missionary accounts at the late Ottoman period, see, Hans-Lukas Kieser, 'Some Remarks on Alevi Responses to the Missionaries in Eastern Anatolia (19th – 20th centuries)," In *Altruism and Imperialism: Western Cultural and Religious Mis-sions in the Middle East*, ed. Eleanor H. Tejirian and Reeva Spector Simon, New York: Middle East Institute, Columbia University, 2002, 120–142; Ayfer Karakaya, 'The Emergence of the Kızılbaş in Western Though: Missionary Accounts and Aftermath,' in *Archeology, Anthropology and Heritage in the Balkans and Anatolia. The Life and Times of F.W. Hasluck 1878–1892,* David Shankland, Vol I, Istanbul: The Issis Press, 2004, p. 329–353; Markus Dressler, *Writing Religion; Writing Religion: The Making of Turkish Alevi Islam, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).* Yalçın Çakmak, *Sultanın Kızılbaşları: II. Abdülhamit Dönemi Alevi Algısı ve Siyaseti*, Ankara, İletişim Yayınları, 2020.

[2] Dressler, *Writing Religion,* 22.

[3] Baha Said, 'Anadolu'da İçtimâî Zümreler ve Anadolu İçtimâiatı,' In *Baha Said Bey, Türkiye'de Alevî-Bektaşî, Ahî ve Nusayrî Zümreleri,* ed. İsmail Görkem, Istanbul: Kitabevi 2006 [1918]; *Baha Said, 'Türkiye'de Alevî Zümreleri: Tekke Alevîliği–İçtimaî Alevîlik,' Türk Yurdu, vol. 11, ed. Murat Şefkatlı, Istanbul: Tutibay, 2001 [1926].*

difficulties confronting the Ottoman Empire, he developed his own nationalist viewpoints concerning these communities. As a result, his rhetoric was designed to present the Kızılbaş-Alevi and Bektashi in a favorable light, emphasizing their Turkish identity and promoting an exaggerated connection to shamanic origins.

Another notable scholar who advanced the understanding of Kızılbaş-Alevi, Bektashi, and related groups during the same period was Mehmet Fuat Köprülü. His academic contributions established a foundational framework for subsequent research on these communities within the contexts of Islamic and Turkish history, and his concepts remain authoritative to this day. Köprülü's distinctive methodology in situating the Kızılbaş-Alevi and Bektashi within their historical context distinguished him from his peers. As Markus Dressler has noted, Köprülü championed the view that the Ottoman Empire's heritage was a vital component of a broader Islamic civilization with a unique Turkish identity, contrasting with the Kemalist revisionists of the time who perceived the Ottoman era as separate from Turkish historical development. Consequently, Köprülü neither marginalized the Ottoman legacy in his scholarship nor exclusively identified the Kızılbaş-Alevi and Bektashi communities as solely Turkish.[4]

Köprülü's primary aim in his study of Turkish history was to illustrate the development and lasting influence of Turkish cultural heritage from its pre-Islamic roots through the Seljuk and Ottoman periods in Anatolia, utilizing an analysis of mystical literature from Central Asia. To achieve this, Köprülü sought to link the legacy of Aḥmed Yesevī from Central Asia with the Bektashi tradition in Anatolia. According to Köprülü, the Yesevī dervishes migrated to Anatolia from Central Asia and Khorasan, bringing with them Central Asian elements that fostered mysticism in the region. Despite various influences, including Anatolian Christian traditions, Baṭınism, and Ibn Arabi's Vaḥdet-i Vücūd philosophy, Köprülü argued that the enduring presence of Central Asian Turkish culture was the dominant force, as exemplified by the poetry of Yunus Emre. Concerning their religious character, Köprülü viewed Bektashism as a syncretic faith emerging from the nomadic Turkish lifestyle, combining elements of Islam with pre-Islamic beliefs, and incorporating influences from Haydarī, Qalandarī, and Ḥurūfī traditions in Anatolia, suggesting that it was not fully Islamized.[5]

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[4] Dressler, *Writing Religion,* 173.
[5] See, Mehmed Fuad Köprülü, *Türk Edebiyatında İlk Mutasavvıflar. (*Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Basımevi, 1966).*; also see* Mehmed Fuad Köprülü. *Early mystics in Turkish Literature, tr. Gary Leiser and Robert Dankoff. (*London-New York : Routledge, 2006).

Building on Köprülü's methodologies and ideas, later scholars adopted his approaches in their research. Among them, the French Turcologist Irène Mélikoff stands out. Mélikoff's work extensively focused on Alevi and Bektashi communities, characterizing them as manifestations of 'Islamized Shamanism.'[6] Similar to Köprülü and Baha Said, she emphasized the ancient Turkish, predominantly shamanistic elements within Alevi and Bektashi traditions. Her research heavily relied on hagiographic sources to connect these ancient Turkish elements with Alevi and Bektashi beliefs. According to Markus Dressler, a significant critique of Mélikoff's approach is her tendency to conflate Alevism with Bektashism, arguing that Alevism is essentially a form of Bektashism and proposing a unified 'Alevi-Bektashi' tradition. Dressler views this conceptualization as static and essentialist, lacking sufficient differentiation between vernacular and scholarly perspectives.[7] Additionally, Hamid Algar likens Mélikoff's approach to an archaeological method, involving the excavation of successive layers of influence, borrowing, and adaptation.[8]

Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, a distinguished scholar of Sufism and medieval Anatolia, continued the scholarly tradition established by Köprülü by examining the intersections of Batınism, extreme Shia, Bektashism, Turkish shamanism, and Alevism. He produced an extensive body of work, including numerous articles and books, focusing on Kızılbaş-Alevi and Bektashi figures and literature.[9] Unlike his predecessors, Gölpınarlı did not center his analysis around nationalist themes in interpreting these communities. Instead, he employed a blend of theological and historical arguments without giving precedence to the dominant Islamic perspectives of his time. According to Ahmet Karamustafa, although Gölpınarlı's approach did not offer a novel perspective on the Islamization of Turks or the role of Sufism in this process, he was notable for being the first to highlight the importance of the Wafāiyya Sufi Order in the history of Islam in Anatolia.[10]

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[6] See Irène Mélikoff, « Recherches sur les composantes du syncrétisme Bektachi-Alevi, » *Studia Turcologica Memoriae Alexii Bombaci Dicata*, (Napoli : Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1982) ; Irène Mélikoff, *Sur les traces du soufisme turc : Recherches sur l'Islam populaire en Anatolie*. (Istanbul : Éditions Isis, 1992) ; Irene Mélikoff, *Hadji Bektach: Un Mythe et ses avatars. Genèse et évolution du soufisme populaire en Turquie* (Leiden : Brill, 1998) ; Irène Mélikoff, *Au Banquet des quarante : Exploration au coeur du Bektachisme-Alevisme.*(Istanbul: Éditions Isis, 2001).
[7] Dressler, *Writing Religion*, 259.
[8] Hamid Algar, review of "Hadji Bektach: Un mythe et ses avatars. Genèse et évolution du soufisme populaire en Turquie by Irene Mélikoff," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 4 (Nov. 2004), 687.
[9] Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, *Melâmîlik ve Melâmîler* (İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1931) ; Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, Pir Sulṭān Abdal, (Ankara : Ankara Üniversitesi DTCF, 1943); Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, *Yunus Emre ve Tasavvuf*. (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1961); Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, *Kaygusuz Abdal, Hatayi, Kul Himmet.*(Istanbul: Varlık Yayınevi, 1962) ; Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, *Alevî-Bektâşî Nefesleri*. (Istanbul: İnkılap Kitabevi, 1992).
[10] Ahmet T. Karamustafa, "Origins of Anatolian Sufism." In *Sufism and Sufi s in Ottoman Society: Sources, Doctrine, Rituals, Turuq, Architecture, Literature and Fine Arts, Modernism*, ed. Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, (Ankara: Turkish Historical Society, 2005) 72–73.

Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, a prominent scholar in Alevi and Bektashi studies, deserves special mention. Unlike Mélikoff and Köprülü, Ocak placed greater emphasis on non-Islamic religious movements such as Buddhism and Manichaeism as key elements within Alevi and Bektashi beliefs. While he recognized shamanistic influences, he questioned their dominant role in shaping Alevi and Bektashi doctrines, thus differing from Köprülü's approach. Ocak's methodology was predominantly based on hagiographic sources, focusing on religious authority derived from charisma, mysticism, and the lineage of saints, rather than legal and scriptural knowledge.[11] In contrast to late Ottoman and early Republican scholars, Ocak did not frame his narrative within nationalist discourse nor use it as an analytical tool. One of his major contributions to the field was his study of the Wafā'i Order in Anatolia.[12] Through genealogical analysis, Ocak explored connections between some Alevi sacred families and the Wafā'i Order, leading to conclusions that contest Köprülü's thesis regarding Ahmet Yesevī. His research opened new avenues for future scholars. Additionally, Ocak investigated the Qalandarī and Haydarī dervish groups and their interactions with other dervish communities in Anatolia, employing distinctions between high culture and popular culture.[13]

In the study of Alevi and Bektashi communities during the late Ottoman and early Republican periods, scholars often adhered to the dominant research methodologies of the era, but their approaches were marked by essentialism, nationalism, and romanticism, frequently emphasizing religious and ethnic origins. The conceptual framework concerning Alevi and Bektashi traditions, which was significantly influenced by the pioneering ideas of Baha Said and Köprülü, has been criticized by scholars from the post-nationalist era. These contemporary scholars have questioned the methodologies and terminologies employed by earlier researchers. Specifically, Köprülü's theories and perspectives on Islam, Turks, and Sufism, especially those related to figures like Ahmet Yesevī, have faced scrutiny and challenge in light of new evidence and interpretations.

Among these scholars, Devin DeWeese is notable as an early critic of Köprülü's ideas, providing new perspectives on Ahmet Yesevī and the Yesevī Order based on newly available

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[11] See, Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Alevi ve Bektaşi İnançlarının İslam Öncesi Temelleri*, (İstabul: İletişim Yayınları, 2003).

[12] See, Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, "The Wafā'ī tarīqa (Wafā'iyya) during and after the Period of the Seljuks of Turkey: A New Approach to the History of Popular Mysticism in Turkey", *Mésogeios* 25-26 (2005): 209-248.

[13] Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Kalenderîler (XIV.-XII. Yüzyıllar)*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1992).

sources. In the preface to "Early Mystics," DeWeese criticized Köprülü's methodology, particularly his nationalistic tone and his tendency to interpret Central Asian sources through an Anatolian lens rather than evaluating them on their own merits. DeWeese also challenged Köprülü's binary classification of heterodoxy versus orthodoxy, arguing that Köprülü aimed to depict a version of Islam influenced by pre-Islamic Turkic shamanism and popular religious practices as the foundational element of the Yesevī tradition and the religious identity of Central Asian Turks.[14] Following DeWeese, several other scholars, including Ahmet T. Karamustafa,[15] Ayfer Karakaya-Stump,[16] Rıza Yıldırım,[17] and Ayşe Baltacıoğlu-Brammer,[18] have also critiqued Köprülü's methodologies and approaches to the Kızılbaş-Alevi and Bektashi communities, contributing to a broader reassessment of Köprülü's work.

With the advent of new theories and sources, the understanding of Kızılbaş-Alevi, Bektashi, and other dervish groups in Anatolia and neighboring regions has gradually evolved. Historians have utilized these new sources to challenge the established theories of late Ottoman and early Republican scholars, who depicted Alevi and Bektashi communities as archaic, unorthodox, and syncretic. Early research into Alevism and Bektashism predominantly focused on their ethnic and religious origins, relying heavily on hagiographic sources. However, new sources have been used to contest the prevailing belief that these communities lacked a written tradition and relied solely on oral histories. These new materials, which vary in style and content, include buyruk (commandment) texts,[19] icāzetnāme (authorization certificates), and şecere (genealogical)

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[14] Devin DeWeese, "Foreword".

[15] See Ahmet T. Karamustafa, "Early Sufism in Eastern Anatolia." Leonard Lewisohn (ed), in *Classical Persian Sufism: from its Origins to Rumi* (London: Khaniqahi-Nimetullahi Publications, 1993), 175-198; Ahmet T. Karamustafa, "Yesevîlik, Melâmetîlik, Kalenderîlik, Vefâîlik ve Anadolu Tasavvufunun Kökenleri Sorunu," in Ahmet Yaşar Ocak (ed), *Osmanlı Toplumunda Tasavvuf ve Sufiler* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2005), 61-88.

[16] See, Ayfer Karakaya-Stump, The Wafā'iyya, the Bektashiyye and Genealogies of "Heterodox" Islam in Anatolia: Rethinking the Köprülü Paradigm'. *Turcica* 44 (2012–2013):279-300.

[17] Rıza Yıldırım, "Büyüklüğün Büyümeye Set Çekmesi: Fuat Köprülü'nün Türkiye'de Yesevilik Araştırmalarına Katkısı Üzerine bir Değerlendirme", in Yahya Kemal Taştan (ed.), *Mehmet Fuat Köprülü*, (Ankara: TC. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2012), 358-398.

[18] See Ayşe Baltacıoğlu-Brammer, *Safavid Conversion Propaganda in Ottoman Anatolia and the Ottoman Reaction, 1440s–1630s*, Ph.D. Diss., Ohio State University, 2016.

[19] For the analysis of buyruk manuscripts, see Anke Otter-Beaujean, "Schriftliche Überlieferung versus Mündliche Tradition: Zum Stellenwert der Buyruk-Handschriften im Alevitum," *in Syncretistic Religious Communities in the Near East*, ed. Krisztina Kehl-Bodrogi, Barbara Kellner-Heinkele and Anke Otter-Beaujean (Leiden, New York, Köln: Brill, 1997), 213–26; Dogan Kaplan, *Buyruklara Göre Kızılbaşlık*, PhD diss., (Selçuk Üniversitesi, 2008); Ayfer Karakaya-Stump, "Documents and Buyruk Manuscripts in the Private Archives of Alevi Dede Families: An Overview," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 37, no, 3 (2010): 273–86; Janina Karolewski, "Discovering Alevi Rituals by Analysing Manuscripts: Buyruk Texts and Individual Notebooks," in *Transmission Processes of Religious Knowledge and Ritual Practice in Alevism between Innovation and Reconstruction,* ed. Johannes

texts[20], as well as dīvān and cönk (poetry collections), vaqfiyye (endowment deeds), archival documents, memoirs, and accounts from missionaries and travelers.

Extensive research drawing from these newly available sources has profoundly enhanced our understanding of Alevism, Bektashism, and various dervish groups from multiple scholarly perspectives. Noteworthy contributions include: Suraiya Faroqhi's analysis of the economic and social dimensions of different Bektashi convents[21], Zeynep Yürekli's investigation into the interplay between architectural design and the politics of patronage associated with Bektashi shrines[22], Ayfer Karakaya-Stump's study of the relationships between Alevi sayyid families[23] and Bektashi convents in Karbala, with a focus on the role of the Abdāls of Rūm[24], Rıza Yıldırım's examination of the milieu and doctrines of ghazi, abdāl, and Bektashi figures, particularly their veneration of the ahl al-bayt (People of the House)[25], along with studies on Alevi and Bektashi oral and written traditions including *buyruk*s,[26] Ahmet Karamustafa's research into antinomian

Zimmermann, Janina Karolewski, and Robert Langer (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2018); Ayfer Karakaya-Stump, *The Kizilbash/Alevis In Ottoman Anatolia*: *Sufism, Politics and Community*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020); Rıza Yıldırım, *Menakıb-ı Evliya (Buyruk) Tarihsel Arka Plan, Metin Analizi, Edisyon Kritik Metin,* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2020).

[20] For the analysis of *icazetname, hilafetname* texts in the context of Alevi documents, see Ayfer Karakaya-Stump, *Vefailik, Bektaşilik, Kızılbaşlık: Alevi Kaynaklarını, Tarihini ve Tarihyazımını Yeniden Düşünmek,* (Istanbul, Bilgi University Press, 2015); Ayfer Karakaya-Stump*, The Kizilbash/Alevis in Ottoman Anatolia: Sufism, Politics and Community, (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2020);* Karakaya-Stump, *Documents and Buyruk Manuscripts;* Karakaya-Stump*, The Wafā'iyya.*

[21] See Suraiya Faroqhi, *Der Bektaschi-Orden in Anatolien (vom späten fünfzehnten Jahrhundert bis 1826)* (Vienna: Verlag des Institutes für Orientalistik der Universität Wien, 1981); Suraiya Faroqhi, "Conflict, Accomodation and Long-Term Survival: The Bektashi Order and the Ottoman State," in Alexandre Popovic and Gilles Veinstein (eds), *Bektachiyya: Études sur l'ordre mystique des Bektachis et les groupes relevant de Hadji Bektach* (Istanbul: Éditions Isis, 1995), 171-184.

[22] See Zeynep Yürekli, *Architecture and Hagiography in the Ottoman Empire: The Politics of Bektashi Shrines in the Classical Age* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2012).

[23] Sayyids and sharifs are considered as the noble descendants of Prothet Muhammad. The descendants of Muhammad, known as Seyyids, trace their lineage back to his grandson Huseyin, whereas the Sharifs trace their lineage back to Hasan. For the sayyids and sharifs, see Kazuo Morimoto (ed.) *Sayyids and Sharifs in Muslim Societies: The Living Links to the Prophet* (London and New York: Routledge, 2017) For the sayyids and sharifs in Ottoman Empire see Rüya Kılıç, *Osmanlıda Seyyidler ve Şerifler* (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2005);

[24] See footnote 20.

[25] See Yıldırım, *Abdallar, Akıncılar*; Rıza Yıldırım, "Beylikler Dünyasında Kerbela Kültürü ve Ehl-i Beyt Sevgisi: 1362 Yılında Kastamonu'da Yazılan Bir Maktelin Düşündürdükleri," in Halil Çetin (ed), *Kuzey Anadolu'da Beylikler Dönemi Sempozyumu Bildiriler, Çobanoğulları, Candaroğulları, Pervaneoğulları, 3-8 Ekim 2011 Kastamonu-Sinop-Çankırı* (Çankırı: Çankırı Karatekin Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2012), 344-72; Rıza Yıldırım, "Anadolu'da İslamiyet: Gaziler Çağında (XII.-XIV. Asırlar) Türkmen İslam Yorumunun Sünni-Alevi Niteliği Zerine Bazı Değerlendirmeler," *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* 43 (2014): 93–124.

[26] See Yıldırım, *Menakıb-ı Evliya (Buyruk); Rıza Yıldırım, Geleneksel Alevilik: İnanç, İbadet, Kurumlar, Toplumsal Yapı, Kolektif Bellek,* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2018); Rıza Yıldırım, "Literary Foundations of the Alevi Tradition: Mainstream, Canon, and Orthodoxy",in Benjamin Weineck and Johannes Zimmermann (eds.) *Alevism between Standardisation and Plurality Negotiating Texts, Sources and Cultural Heritage,(Berlin, Peter Lang, 2018).*

dervishes [27], Zeynep Uslu's analysis of Alevi-Bektashi literature and the doctrinal tenets of abdāl and Bektashi dervishes [28]. These studies contribute significantly to the scholarly understanding of Alevism and Bektashism throughout the medieval and early modern periods.

In scholarly inquiries concerning the Bektashi and Alevi communities from the nineteenth century onward, pertinent to the subject and timeframe of this thesis, Fahri Maden's publications on the closure of Bektashi lodges[29] and Ahmet Yılmaz Soyyer's research on nineteenth and twentieth-century Bektashism based on the archival documents and manuscripts[30], Yalçın Çakmak's investigations into the Kızılbaş and Bektashis during the reign of Sulṭān Abdulhamid II in the light of the reports of the missionaries and the local officers[31]. Thierry Zarcone's exploration of Bektashi and Freemasonry affiliations[32], Natalie Clayer' s examinations of the Bektashis' involvement in Balkan nationalist movements[33], Hülya Küçük' s analysis of the Bektashis' role during the Ottoman Turkish national[34], Markus Dressler's study on the historiography of Alevi and Bektashi's origins and identity in the late Ottoman and Early Republican period[35], and recently

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[27] See Ahmet T. Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends;* Ahmet T. Karamustafa, "Antinomian Sufis." In Lloyd Ridgeon (ed). *The Cambridge Companion to Sufism.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014),101-124*;* Ahmet T. Karamustafa, "The Antinomian Dervish as Model Saint." In Hassan Elboudrari (ed). *Modes de Transmission de la Culture Religieuse en Islam* (Cairo, Institut français d'archéologie orientale du Caire, 1993), 241-260.

[28] See Zeynep Oktay-Uslu, *The Perfect Man;* Zeynep Oktay*, Mesnevî-i Baba Kaygusuz* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Department of Near Eastern Languages and Literatures, 2013); Zeynep Oktay, "Historicizing Alevism: The Evolution of Abdal and Bektashi Doctrine.*" Journal of Shi'a Islamic Studies* Vol. 13 No 3-4 (2020): 425-456.

[29] See Fahri Maden, "Hacı Bektaş Velî Tekkesi'nde Nakşî Şeyhler ve Sırrı Paşa'nın Lâyıhası". *Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Veli Araştırma Dergisi, sayı* 59, (2011): 159-180*;* Fahri Maden, *Bektaşî Tekkelerinin Kapatılması (1826)* (Ankara: TTK. Yayınları, 2013); Fahri Maden, "En Uzun Yüzyılında Bektaşilik ve Bektaşiler".in (ed.) Yalçın Çakmak-İmran Gürtaş*, Kızılbaşlık, Alevilik, Bektaşilik (Tarih-Kimlik-İnanç-Ritüel),* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2015), 185-213.

[30] See A. Yılmaz Soyyer, *19. Yüzyılda Bektaşilik* (İstanbul: Frida Yayınları, 2012). A. Y. Soyyer, "19. Yüzyılda Yapılan İki Bektaşi Nasib/ İkrar Ayini," In *Alevilik,* (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2004), 259-298.

[31] Yalçın Çakmak*, Sulṭanın Kızılbaşları:II. Abdülhamid Dönemi Alevi Algısı ve Siyaseti,* (İstanbul: İletişim,2019).

[32] See Thierry Zarcone, *Mystiques, philosophes et francs-maçons en Islam : Rıza Tevfik, penseur ottoman (1868-1949), du soufisme à la confrérie* (Paris : Institut Français d'Études Anatoliennes d'Istanbul, 1993), 87-175, Thierry Zarcone, *Le Croissant et le compas : Islam et franc-maçonnerie: De la Fascination à la détestation* (Paris: Éditions Dervy, 2015), 151-164.

[33] See Nathalie Clayer, "Bektachisme et nationalisme albanais," in Alexandre Popovic and Gilles Veinstein (eds), *Bektachiyya: Études sur l'ordre mystique des Bektachis et les groupes relevant de Hadji Bektach* (Istanbul: Éditions Isis, 1995), 277-308, as well as other articles between pp. 269-409 of the same volume; Nathalie Clayer, *Aux Origines du nationalisme albanais: La Naissance d'une nation majoritairement musulmane en Europe* (Paris: Éditions Karthala, 2007), 474-493. Regarding Bektashism in Albania in the 20th century, also see Nathalie Clayer, "Autorité locale et autorité supra-locale chez les Bektashis d'Albanie dans l'entre-deux-guerres," in Nathalie Clayer, Alexandre Papas, Benoît Fliche (eds), *L'Autorité religieuse et ses limites en terres d'Islam* (Leiden-Boston : Brill, 2013), 159-193.

[34] Hülya Küçük, *The Role of the Bektāshīs in Turkey's National Struggle,* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2002).

[35] Markus Dressler, *Writing Religion.*

Cem Kara's inquiries into the cultural interrelations of Bektashis with diverse religious cultures[36] stand noteworthy.

These studies offer valuable insights into Alevism and Bektashism, significantly advancing scholarly discourse from various perspectives. However, a comprehensive analysis dedicated to the intricate organizational structure within the Bektashi Order remains notably absent. Specifically, there is a lack of research that elucidates this organizational framework through the doctrinal principles of Bektashi and Alevi traditions. The Bektashi Order is traditionally divided into two principal branches: the Babagān and the Çelebiyān. This bifurcation originates from divergent views regarding the marital status of Ḥacı Bektāş. Followers of the Babagān branch maintain that Ḥacı Bektāş was celibate, whereas the Çelebi lineage claims descent from Ḥacı Bektāş, positioning themselves as sayyids with a genealogical link to the Prophet.[37] These groups coexisted within the Bektashi Order, each assuming distinct roles. The Babagān faction is primarily responsible for the ṭariqa (Path) within Ḥacı Bektāş's lodge, focusing on the spiritual and ritual aspects of the Order. In contrast, the Çelebi lineage holds leadership positions within the tekke (dervish lodge) as sheikhs, overseeing the management of the tekke's waqf (endowment) assets. The Çelebis also serve as the official representatives between the tekke and the Ottoman state, handling matters such as appointing sheikhs to other Bektashi lodges, managing endowment issues, and overseeing repairs and maintenance of tekke structures.[38] Scholars contend that the origins of this dual structure can be traced back to Bayezid II's appointment of Balım Sulṭān as the head of Ḥacı Bektāş Lodge. According to these scholars, upon Balım Sulṭān's arrival at the tekke, he established a group of celibate dervishes, although the reasons for its formation are not clearly documented. Some authors argue that this bifurcated organization emerged later, following the reopening of the tekke during the reign of Sulṭān Suleiman the Magnificent, which coincided with the appointment of Sersem Alī Baba as postnişīn.[39]

Scholars have predominantly analyzed the power struggles between the Babagān and Çelebi factions in terms of their efforts to control waqf income and tekke leadership during the nineteenth century. While these analyses are valuable, they often overlook the doctrinal and

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[36] Cem Kara, *Grenzen überschreitende Derwische: Kulturbeziehungen des Bektashi-Ordens 1826-1925*, (Brill Deutschland, V&R Göttingen, 2018).

[37] For various aspects of holy families, see Catherine Mayeur-Jaouen and Alexandre Papas (eds.), *Family Portraits with Saints: Hagiography, Sanctity, and Family in the Muslim World* (Berlin: KS, 2014).

[38] For general overview of the roles of Babagān and Çelebis in the lodge, see Yıldırım, 'Bektaşi Kime Derler'.

[39] Ahmet Rıfkı, *Bektaşi Sırrı*: *Mudāfaʿaya Mukabele,* 129.

religio-political dimensions of the conflict. Recently, Ayfer Karakaya-Stump has proposed that Balım Sulṭān's establishment of the celibate faction was intended to integrate abdāls into the Bektashi Order, addressing the ideological differences between the world-affirming and the world-renouncing views. According to Karakaya-Stump, Balım Sulṭān's reorganization was not designed to create a split but to unify two distinct interpretations of the Ḥacı Bektāş cult. This reorganization also aimed to facilitate state control over the less disciplined dervishes, who were often Kızılbaş sympathizers.[40] Furthermore, Yıldırım's assertion, supported by the hierarchical structure outlined in the icāzetnāme texts, reinforces the idea that the Babagān and Çelebi factions coexisted peacefully until the nineteenth century.[41]

While Karakaya-Stump's interpretation of the coexistence between the Babagān and Çelebi branches, through the lens of world-renouncing and world-affirming Sufi perspectives, is compelling, it does not fully address the conflicts that emerged from the nineteenth century onward. Although the precise nature of the relationship between these two groups during the intervening centuries remains somewhat ambiguous, it is clear that tensions continued to exist. I contend that, by the 19th and early 20th centuries, these conflicts evolved into a dispute over religious authority[42], fundamentally centering on which type of religious representatives were deemed legitimate to lead the Bektashi community.

The study aims to revisit the division within Bektashism between Çelebi and Babagān, and subsequently the increased influence of the Çelebi family over Alevi *ocak*s, with a particular focus on doctrinal aspects and concepts such as spiritual and biological descent, celibacy, charisma, and prestige. This thesis argues the division between the Çelebi and Babagān factions stems from legitimization efforts of two distinct sources of authority: one based on the transmission of knowledge (Babagān) and the other on the transmission of blood (Çelebi) from Ḥacı Bektāş Veli. It asserts that, in contrast to prevailing scholarly discourse, which predominantly emphasizes fiscal

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[40] Karakaya, *The Kizilbash/Alevis,* 166-78.

[41] Yıldırım, 'Bektaşi Kime Derler', 42-43.

[42] For the various discussion on different religious authorities and their effects in cultivating Muslim communities, see Devin DeWeese, "Authority," in *Key Themes for the Study of Islam*, edited by Jamal J. Elias (Oxford: Oneworld, 2010), 26-52; Asma Afsaruddin, "Authority, religious" *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 3rd edition eds., K. Fleet, G. Krämer, D. Matringe, J. Nawas, and E. Rowson, (Leiden: Brill, 2020); Gudrun Krämer, Sabine Schmidtke, *Speaking for Islam: Religious Authorities in Muslim Societies,* (Leiden: Brill,2006); Francis Robinson, "Crisis of Authority: Crisis of Islam?" *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Series 3, 19/3 (2009): 339-54; - Ron Sela, Paolo Sartori, and Devin DeWeese (ed().*Muslim Religious Authority in Central Eurasia,* (Leiden: Brill, 2022); Ismail Fajrie Alatas, *What Is Religious Authority? Cultivating Islamic Communities in Indonesia,* (Princeton, Oxford: Princeton University Press,2021).

matters and the administration of *waqf* (endowment) revenues as the primary catalyst for the division, this study posits that the division also originates from divergent perspectives regarding the foundation of religious authority. Rather than viewing disagreement exclusively through an economic lens, this research contends that two distinct modes of authority, grounded in genealogical and spiritual legitimacy, played pivotal roles in shaping the trajectory of the Bektashi Order. These disparate approaches were already discernible in the ideologies of various dervish groups that aligned with the Bektashi order in the late medieval and early modern period. However, the conflicting viewpoints on legitimacy and authority persisted and materialized during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries amidst the conflicts between these factions. Building upon this premise, the thesis examines how the foundational doctrinal and historical claims underpinning the two branches of the Bektashi tradition resurfaced during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, leveraging Bektashi *risale*s (treatise), *icāzet-nāmes* (authorization certificates),[43] letters, memoirs, missionary reports, and archival materials.

Structure of the Dissertation

The initial chapter of this study provides an overview of the foundational aspects of the Bektashi Order. It begins with an examination of Ḥacı Bektāş, the eponymous founder, focusing on his religious identity and doctrinal perspectives. The chapter further explores the institutionalization of Bektashism, emphasizing the role of the Abdāls of Rum, a central component of the Bektashi Order, and their interactions with the Ottoman Empire. This introductory chapter sets the stage for the study by reviewing previous research and highlights the significance of the writings of dervishes representing the abdāl and Bektashi identities in the late medieval and early modern periods. These writings are essential for understanding the underlying reasons for the conflicts between the two groups, which are examined in subsequent chapters.

The second chapter addresses the abolition of the Janissary corps and the subsequent decree to close Bektashi tekkes (lodges). It traces the events that unfolded during this period, scrutinizing the pejorative propaganda directed at the Bektashi and the responses from the Bektashi community through their own publications. This chapter explores the evolving perception of the Bektashi in

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[43] For general information about Sufi lineages, Ismail Fajrie Alatas *"Ṣūfī Lineages and Families"* in *Sufi Institutions,* ed. Alexandre Papas, (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2021), 374-384; Alfrid Bustanov, Shamil Shikhaliev, and Ilona Chmilevskaia, "Building an Archival Persona: The Transformation of Sufi Ijāza Culture in Russia, 1880s–1920s" *Journal of Sufi Studies* 12 (2023) 216–252.

both political and religious contexts following their suppression and how these perceptions influenced political rhetoric and discourse. It also examines the efforts of the Bektashi to counteract negative stereotypes and rehabilitate their image.

The third chapter, which forms the core of the thesis and encapsulates its main argument, investigates the power struggles among three distinct factions within the Ḥacı Bektāş tekke: the Nakshi sheikhs, the Babagān, and the Çelebi family. Using archival records, this chapter meticulously documents the initiation, cessation, and resurgence of conflicts among these factions, highlighting the impact of the appointment or death of Nakshi sheikhs on the dynamics within the tekke. It further explores the reasons behind the conflicts between the Babagān and the Çelebis, with a detailed examination of key works from the period, including Ahmet Rıfkı's *Bektāşī Sırrı* and Cemāleddīn Efendi's *Mudāfaʿa*. These seminal texts are analyzed for their contributions to understanding the disputes over leadership, legitimacy, and inheritance of Ḥacı Bektāş's legacy, reflecting the clash between knowledge-based and lineage-based religious authorities.

The fourth chapter examines the aftermath of the power shifts within the Ḥacı Bektāş tekke, focusing on the repercussions of the Çelebis'—especially Cemāleddīn Çelebi's—alignment with Alevi communities. It explores the propaganda disseminated by the Çelebis among the Alevi communities and its impacts. Cemāleddīn Çelebi, leveraging his lineage's prestige and charisma, significantly increased his influence over the Kızılbaş-Alevis in Eastern Anatolia during the nineteenth century. This chapter discusses the Çelebis' strategies to consolidate their authority over the Alevi communities, including their interventions in sacred rituals, issuance of icāzetnāmes to Alevi ocaks, and initiation of the collection of hakkullah. It draws on missionary reports, icāzetnāmes, letters, and archival documents to illustrate the reception and challenges of these strategies. The concluding section synthesizes the findings, addressing the interconnected nature of the processes discussed and their broader implications for understanding the evolution of the Bektashi Order and its interactions with Alevi communities.

Findings and Conclusions

This study aimed to investigate the underlying reasons behind the conflicts between the Babagān and Çelebi factions within the Bektashi Order during the nineteenth century and to examine the strategies employed by the Çelebis to expand their influence over Alevi communities. The thesis

posits that the core issue driving the discord between the Babagān and Çelebi Bektashis was their pursuit of legitimization through distinct modes of authority—spiritual versus genealogical—coupled with their differing Sufi orientations towards the world. The Babagān and the Çelebi family, each deriving legitimacy from these contrasting forms of authority, adapted their geographic outreach and community engagement based on the recognition or rejection of their claims.

In the early sixteenth century, Balım Sultan established a new dervish faction alongside the existing Çelebi branch. This new branch was intended to integrate abdāls and other itinerant groups, who adhered to an antinomian Sufi tradition characterized by opposition to institutionalized Sufism, into the Bektashi Order centered around Ḥacı Bektāş. This move also aimed to prevent these groups, which were sympathetic to Ali and the ahl al-bayt, from joining the Kızılbaş—a group perceived as a threat by the Ottoman state—thereby facilitating state regulation and oversight.

Despite fundamental disagreements, particularly regarding whether Ḥacı Bektāş had any descendants, the Babagān and Çelebi factions coexisted relatively harmoniously until the nineteenth century. However, the closure of Bektashi tekkes during this period intensified conflicts between the two factions, leading to their geographical and doctrinal estrangement. The fluctuations in the administration of the tekke, influenced by the appointments and removals of Nakshi sheikhs, contributed to these conflicts. The power vacuum created by the removal or death of Nakshi sheikhs often exacerbated tensions between the Babagān and Çelebi factions.

The Babagān, who emphasize spiritual lineage and seek to achieve spiritual progression through knowledge passed down from Ḥacı Bektāş, contrast with the Çelebis, who claim leadership based on genealogical descent from Ḥacı Bektāş, tracing their lineage to the Prophet. The crux of the conflict centers on who possesses the rightful authority to govern the tekke and inherit Ḥacı Bektāş's spiritual legacy. This dispute extends beyond economic considerations to encompass the sacred nature of the relationship between the individuals and Ḥacı Bektāş. The Babagān challenge the Çelebis' claims based on their genealogical descent, asserting that spiritual authority takes precedence. In contrast, the Çelebis argue for the superiority of their biological connection to Ḥacı Bektāş.

Although the Babagān do not recognize the Çelebis as the descendants of Ḥacı Bektāş, and thus do not accept their lineage, some Alevi ocaks in Anatolia have acknowledged the Çelebis'

authority. The Çelebis' esteemed lineage, linked to Ḥacı Bektāş, has fostered stronger connections with the Alevi communities, particularly after their relations with the Safavids weakened in the nineteenth century. By this time, significant similarities emerged in the beliefs and rituals of these groups, and the Çelebis gained prominence by approving icāzetnāme documents for Alevi lodges.

Cemāleddīn Çelebi, leveraging his lineage's prestige, sought to align Alevi ocaks with himself and conducted targeted propaganda efforts. This propaganda focused on sacred objects used in Alevi rituals, such as the tariq, which Cemāleddīn Çelebi and some Babagān Bektashis viewed as symbols of paganism. Despite this effort, Cemāleddīn Çelebi's influence was limited, and he faced accusations from some Alevi ocaks of attempting to create a new sect, highlighting the constraints on his authority.

The removal of the tariq and the Çelebis' attempt to connect Alevi ocaks through the prestige associated with Ḥacı Bektāş were strategies supported by the state. Reports from local authorities to the central government in the nineteenth century, concerning Kızılbaş rituals and the tariq, suggest that the Ottoman state perceived Cemāleddīn Efendi as a potential intermediary in removing what they viewed as outdated and pagan practices. This situation mirrors Balım Sultan's earlier efforts to integrate antinomian dervishes into the Bektashi Order. Similarly, Cemāleddīn Efendi's promotion of the pençe practice over the tariq can be interpreted as an attempt to align Alevi ocaks with the Bektashi Order and potentially enhance state control over these groups.

Publication Pertaining to the Topic of Dissertation

- Emine Yüksel, ''We are descendants of Güruh-ı naci'' The notion of Güruh-ı naci in Alevism and Bektashism' *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association*, Vol 9, No 2, (Fall 2022): 307-330.

- Emine Yüksel, 'Modern Approaches to Kızılbaş-Alevi and Bektashi Studies', *Mediterrán Tanulmányok: Études Sur La Région Méditerranéenne*, vol 32, (2022): 131-145.

- Emine Yüksel 'Oral and Written Tradition: Qizilbash Case in Anatolia' *Tehetségek A Tiirténettudomàny Szolgàlatàban IV: Tiirténelem Szakos Hallgatók*, (2017), 7-19.

Other Publications

- Emine Yüksel, 'Gender and Succession in Medieval and Early Modern Islam: Bilateral Descent and the Legacy of Fatima' by Alyssa Gabbay, *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies,* vol. 19, Issue 1, (2023): 98–100.

- Emine Yüksel, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve İslam: Bir İmparatorluk, Bir Din' by Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, Journal *of the Ottoman Studies*, Issue 60 (2022): 290-93.

Conference Participation

- Comité International des Études Pré-Ottomanes et Ottomanes (CIEPO25), Universiteti Europian i Tiranës and Sami Frasheri Institute, June 21-25, 2024, Tirana, Albania.

  Paper: Revisiting the Division Between Çelebi and Babagan in Bektashism: Exploring Spiritual and Genealogical Perspectives

- Association for Iranian Studies (AIS) 13th Biennial Conference, University of Salamanca, August 30-September 2, 2022, Salamanca, Spain.

  Paper: Stuck Between Two Empires: Transformation of Religio-Political Structure of Qizilbash in Safavid Iran and Ottoman Empire (17th-19th Century)

- Association for Middle East Women's Studies (AMEWS), American University of Beirut-Lebenese American University, June 21-23, 2022, Beirut, Lebanon.

  Paper: Women's Memory, Women's Words: The Process of Acquiring and Transferring the Religious Knowledge of Alevi Women in Anatolia

- Methodological Questions in Historical Research, International Workshop, University of Pécs, September 17-18, 2018, Pécs, Hungary.

  Paper: The Voices and Texts of the Qizillbash/Alevi in Anatolia: Oral History and Collective Memory in Historical Research

- Tehetségek A Történettudomány Szolgálatában IV, University of Szeged, September 2017, Szeged, Hungary.

  Paper: Oral and Written Tradition: Qizilbash Case in Anatolia