Popular Sufism in Eastern Europe

Sufi brotherhoods and the dialogue with Christianity and 'Heterodoxy'

H.T.Norris

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Popular Sufism in Eastern Europe provides a description of the various Sufi orders and movements which penetrated into the Balkans, the Crimean peninsula and other parts of Eastern Europe following the Ottoman conquests.

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Preface

This book is my response to a warm invitation by my former colleague in SOAS, and long-standing friend, Ian Netton, Professor of Islamic Studies in the University of Leeds, and who is the Editor of the Routledge Sufi Series. It was an invitation to contribute a volume in that series on the subject of Sufism in South-eastern Europe, including the Balkans, the Ukraine's Crimean peninsula, and studies of Sufi influenced beliefs on the fringes of the Caucasus, with some reference to the Armenian Yezidis, in particular. The subject has been of great interest to me since my retirement, and, at some time or another, in visits which have been prolonged, or short, I have been able to visit most of the principal countries in that region, which are described in its chapters. My previous book, 'Islam in the Balkans', was devoted to the entire historical development of the Muslim communities in many of those countries, though Sufism inevitably played a prominent role in that history.

This volume is a successor to it, but here the emphasis is different. Here, Sufism exclusively occupies the centre of the stage.

This is not a book specifically concerned about lofty spiritual visions and flights of thought into an abstract world, nor about the thoughts of the greatest Sufi masters. However, the latter, though, were never absent from the Sufi circles in some regions of Eastern Europe. Their works were avidly read and recited, studied, memorized and cherished. The names of one or two of their disciples, chiefly in Albania and its neighbours, will be mentioned during the course of this academic survey. Rather, the book is principally centred in two aspects of the Sufism in the entire region:

1 First, what I have called 'Popular Sufism', and in this title are included Sufi beliefs, ceremonies and rituals, and also the role which these have played in the daily lives of the Muslim communities of Eastern Europe. The majority of the latter, though by no means all of them, once spent their lives in a rural environment. Those who dwelt in the towns were well aware of their rural surroundings. Both have inherited customs and beliefs which were far removed from a third Semitic faith which had arrived in their midst from a very different environment to their own.

2 The second theme, which is explored in this book, is the interplay, the tolerance and the cruelty, of popular faiths and of frequently mutually exclusive religions. How did these faiths live side by side, or clash with one another? With one exception – Albania – these Muslims have always lived as religious minorities, surrounded by Orthodox Christian, or by Catholic, neighbours who have sometimes intermarried with them, commonly lived side by side with them, and who, at times and in certain holy localities, have gladly shared their hallowed places and have participated in the ceremonies which have regularly been celebrated within such holy places, the origins of which date back to a 'pagan' age, at wells, above mountains and inside caves. These sites were neither originally Christian nor were they historically Muslim.

Sufism, common in these Muslim communities, has suffered from the tragedies which, throughout history, have afflicted their kith and kin (through wars, pillaging, rape, ethnic cleansing and genocide). Some of these Muslim peoples were, in the past, subject to forced 'conversion'. Much is justifiably said about the 'forced conversion' of Christians to Islam. In far distant days, less often is the opposite mentioned, a far more common happening amongst the populace than is commonly imagined. Thus, His Excellency, the Rt Hon. C. M. Warling C. B. Chargé d'Affaires in Constantinople, was thus addressed by His Britannic Majesty's Consulate General in Salonica with the following uncomfortable news:

> At the beginning of the Balkan War against Turkey many massacres of Moslems were carried out by Bulgars in various parts. At that time, however, there were many who found excuses for the Bulgarian misdeeds, bringing forward the plea that such crimes had been committed in the first heat of a struggle between nations who had been oppressed for centuries against their oppressors, and that the massacres were rather due to just vengeance than to any innate cruelty and lack of humanity and civilization on the part of the Bulgarians.
>
> But when Bulgarian rule was solidly established in Thrace and parts of Macedonia, when the defeat of Turkey was an accomplished fact, it was seen that Bulgarian cruelty was still being exercised not only against Moslems but against the Christian non-Bulgarian element, and months of bitter experience proved that Bulgarian cruelty and lust for blood were not momentary passions but deep-seated characteristics of the people.
>
> During the last six months a systematic campaign of forcible conversion of Moslems has been carried on, with the full approval of the Bulgarian authorities in Ruptehos, Raslog, Nevrocop, Brama and Cavalla, and in many villages, whose names can be cited, Moslems have been beaten savagely and killed to make them abandon their faith.[1]

It has to be accepted that this flow of converts from one faith to the other must have had a profound effect on the popular religion, 'Popular Sufism'

included. Today, in many respects, Bulgaria is a fine example of an Eastern European country which is endeavouring to understand and to appreciate its Muslim heritage in the Balkan region, as many of the pages of this book will clearly reveal. This Muslim heritage has derived much of its inspiration from 'Popular Sufism'. However, elsewhere in Eastern Europe, in recent years, and still today, this sad picture, portrayed above, has little changed. Within the last decade, together with mosques and churches, Sufi retreats 'tekkes' and tombs of Shaykhs have been scorched, their custodians butchered, though quite often in the less recent past, these Shaykhs were dearly loved and even consulted by members of the Christian communities. They commonly used to visit them for solace, for counsel and for healing, even for a blessing and for the Qur'anic charms which had been blessed.

Sufism has survived a turbulent history. This history will emerge from the range of topics within this study. The Balkan Muslims have also made an individual contribution to Sufi life and thought in European Islam, as a whole. Frequently 'heterodox', 'Popular Sufism' has been openly accused, by some, of 'pantheism' and it has been charged with promoting 'Ali b. Abi Talib to the highest heavenly seat, that alongside the throne of the Divinity, no less. It has, nonetheless, shone with a message of peace and reconciliation and hope, amidst a revengeful and frequently savage populace. Islam in Eastern Europe would be greatly the poorer were 'Popular Sufism' to disappear within its communities.

Two masterly works have been models for me throughout this book: first, F. W. Hasluck's great classic, 'Christianity and Islam Under the Sultans', first published by the Clarendon Press, Oxford, in 1929, and, second, an equally remarkable work, namely, William Dalrymple's, 'From the Holy Mountain, a Journey in the Shadow of Byzantium.' It was first published by Harper Collins in 1997. That book was geographically centred to the East of the region which is at the heart of this book, yet it shares many common examples, many parallels, particularly the dialogues and the misunderstandings of Muslims and Christians in the 'Nearer Orient', as it was once commonly known. That earlier 'East' included, as D. G. Hogarth wrote in his 'The Ancient East', London and New York, 1914, p. 9, 'and some regions also of South-Eastern and Eastern Europe'. My case is that 'Popular Sufism' once formed a vital part of the Muslim life in that European 'East', and it is still highly active there, in certain places, in the struggle to preserve a national identity, even more necessary today.

Acknowledgements

As in my previous book, 'Islam in the Balkans', which was published by Christopher Hurst, in 1993, I have to thank a large number of friends from Eastern Europe for their help in many passages of the contents of the book. Amongst the most important of these is my Kosovar friend, Bejtullah Destani, the head of the Centre for Albanian Studies, in London, who has been most skilful in hunting out rare sources and documents which appear in several of my chapters. Both in Bulgaria and in London, I would also like to thank Dr Rossitsa Gradeva, Dr Florentina Badalanova and Dr Orlin Sabev who, like Rossitsa, is based in the Institute of Balkan Studies in Sofia. Another Bulgarian friend, Dr Yuri Stoyanov, whom I met in the Warburg Institute, University of London, and who is now engaged in research in the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, my former college, is a mine of information about heterodox movements and sects, the Kizilbash in particular, and not only in the Balkans but also in Moldova, Russia, the Caucasus, the Middle East and Central Asia. In Romania, Dr Ioana Feodorov of Bucharest University has, of late, helped me to explore new fields of research, in Romania, in this study. In Jordan, my long-standing friend, Dr Muhammad Mufaku al-Arna'ut, has remained in constant contact while I wrote several chapters in this book.

On matters which relate to the Tatars, I am grateful, in particular, to my Polish Tatar friend, Dr Selim Chazbijewicz, who lectures in the University of Olsztyn. He has visited the Crimea on a number of occasions and he is especially interested in Sufism there. He is himself a Sufi, and it was in the Crimea that he was accepted within the brotherhood to which he now belongs. Further information on the Crimean Tatars and their resettlement was given to a gathering held in the University of Vilnius some years ago, by Natalya Belitser, who is a researcher in the Institute for Democracy in Kyiv, Ukraine. Subsequently, I have been helped by her since that conference was held.

Some of the material relating to the Bektashiyya brotherhood, and especially to the thought of Naim Frashëri, was included in my paper delivered at a conference held in the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University of London, and I am grateful to Dr Celia Hawksworth and Dr Muriel Heppell for their interest and help, especially in the integration of the religious background in Albania with that of the non-Muslim faiths and societies within the Balkan peninsula.

Other matters relating to the thought and publications of Naim Frashëri, in Bucharest, have been sent to me by Dr Ioana Feodorov.

I am also grateful to Mr and Mrs P. Barnes, of Ace Study Tours, Babraham, for helping me to visit a number of the key localities of interest in the Crimean peninsula.

Two authorities figure prominently in this book, namely, Professor Irène Mélikoff who is probably the world's leading authority on the Alawite sects, the Bektashiyya brotherhood and heterodox Islamic movements in Iran, the Caucasus and the Balkans. Secondly, Dr Machiel Kiel, who in addition to his expertise on Islamic architecture in the Balkans, is also a leading specialist on the legacy of the historical and legendary figure of Sari Saltik. It was a pleasure to meet them both in a colloquium which was held in the Collège de France, in Paris, some five years ago.

More recently, Professors Garnik Asatrian and Victoria Arakelova, of Yerevan University, invited me to participate in an International Conference which was held in the Caucasian Centre for Iranian Studies in Yerevan. It was a moving and highly informative occasion, and time was devoted to Yezidi studies, the Yezidis being both an important minority in Armenia today and also a 'case study' for the many forms of heterodoxy which is a feature of the Sufi movements in the Balkans. This view is also shared by Dr Stoyanov, and it is amply illustrated by his publications. That religious fact spans and integrates the entire area, geographically, extending from the Southern Caucasus to the Adriatic Sea.

Other kindnesses are acknowledged in the notes to my chapters. My sons, Kristian and Timothy, have been of assistance to me in the preparing of this manuscript for publication, and last, but not least, I must acknowledge the help and patience of James Whiting and his editorial assistants in ensuring that this book is now in print. Their advice and their practical help is greatly welcomed and they deserve a very special thanks.

H. T. Norris
Newport
Uttlesford
Essex

August, 2006

Introduction

In the deep abyss, their number is seven.
In the azure sky, seven, they are seven.
When they arise in the West, they are seven.
When they loom in the East, they are seven.
T'is their voice that rises, mutters and roars.
And 'tis their shape that fills immensity from heaven to earth.
Seven they are Seven.

Prokofiev's *Cantata* of 1924

When I first drafted this book it bore a sub-title. This referred to the 'seven tombs of Sari Saltik'. The sub-title was subsequently dropped, although it may still be found in forthcoming works listed on the Internet. However, the name and the memory of it still lingers on within several chapters in this book, Chapter 6, in particular. Sari Saltik will be mentioned throughout that chapter. However, I thought it was fitting, also, to introduce him before my opening chapter. Much in his personality, in which 'Popular Islam' is so graphically portrayed in the flesh, spurred me on to say a little more about him in this 'Introduction'.

Sari Saltik, whose name will also be found spelt Sari Saltuq, a 'shamanistic figure', is regarded by many Muslims, and especially those, in Albania, Kosovo, Macedonia and Turkey, who have associations with the Bektashiyya brotherhood, as a superhuman and peripatetic dervish, who performed countless miracles and who attained the status of being one of the *abdal*, that is, those 'who, when they depart from a specific locality, have the power to leave behind them their dual, even multiple, personality' (*shaks ruhani*). The tombs of these 'abdal' can exist in several localities. The *abdal* also have the power to 'wear' the personalities, and adopt the identities, of others, and to be completely absorbed in their spiritual essence. They have the ability to fly from place to place and often to appear, simultaneously, in more than one locality. In short, their humanity has been absorbed by their divine nature.

Sari Saltik was a historical figure. A town, region and a community, were named after him. His town, district and his renown, were mentioned by the Moroccan traveller, Ibn Battuta in the fourteenth century. Many localities in Turkey and in Eastern

Europe are named after him, or are associated with him. Sveti Naum monastery, on the southern shore of Lake Ohrid, is a place where he prayed as a migrant saint in a Christian house of prayer and of meditation. He was also identified with the saint of Corfu, St Spyridon, and this latter, too, was assumed within Sari Saltik's personality. St Nicolas (Nicholas) was the transubstantiated body and blood of Sari Saltik after he had slain that Christian saint and had adopted his habit. No distance thwarted his mission. This took him as far as Gdansk, in Poland, in order, it is said, to preach Islam to the Tatars and to the Slavs. He was buried in many tombs, although 'seven' is the sacred Cabalistic number which befitted his status. His body, they report, rests at Babadag, in Romania, a cave in Krujë, in Albania, and mountains and sanctuaries near Peja (Pec´), in Kosovo, Buzau, in Wallachia, Blagaj in Bosnia, Kaliakra cave and rock, where a many-headed dragon was slain by his wooden sword, in Bulgaria, and Baba Eski and Iznik, in Turkey. All these places honour his name and preserve his memory.

F. W. Hasluck, wrote a 'Nikolaus Pevsner-like' survey of his spiritual domain, and in so doing, highlighted the remarkable manner in which he bridged the Abrahamic faiths.[1] The Bukharan, Muhammad-Sari Saltik, headed a host of Turcomans who settled in the Black Sea region, to the north of Cape Kaliakra, now in Bulgaria. However, Machiel Kiel quotes another source, the *Vilayet-name* which indicated that it was via Georgia,[2] in the Caucasus, that he originally made his entry into South-eastern Europe. The suggestion with which we are concerned, here, is that a popular and a 'heterodox' Sufi expansionist movement, with branches in the Caucasus, and beyond, echoes and matches those local and popular beliefs, which would seem to bear out this statement. Hasluck also quotes a reference which would indicate that Sari Saltik was known also in Kurdistan, where the Bektashiyya was once well established. He wrote, in footnote 4, vol. 11 of his *Christianity and Islam Under the Sultans*, p. 433, that

> The mention of a dervish 'Sari Salte' in a Kurdish folk-story (Jaba, *Recueil de 'Récits'* Kurdes p. 94) may mark a stage in the westward journey of the Sari Saltik myth, or it may be due merely to Bektashi propaganda in Kurdistan.

The former challenging view, 'the westward journey', was, in his opinion, a distinct, and indeed fascinating, possibility. It reveals certain parallels within the beliefs of the extremist sect of the Yezidis, who live among the Kurds and who have their own Sari Saltik – Shaykh 'Adi.

According to Eric Geoffroy[3]:

> Parallel to these great (Sufi)'Ways' which knew a rapid extension, certain were aborted or they degenerated into sects, such as the 'Adawiyya, which has for its source the Syrian Shaikh 'Adi b.Musafir (d 557/1162), an orthodox Sufi, shaped in the Iraqi school, establishing himself in the Kurdish country in order to transmit his teaching there; but, after his death, his disciples – they took the name of the Yezidis – made him into a divinity and so elaborated a

> religion which was that of a supreme syncretism: the spiritual master who gives a fresh impulse to the *khirqa* ('the vestment of piety of the ascetics') which he has received and who founds a school of mysticism but is unable to prevent the deviations which come into being after he has departed.

According to T. Menzel, other Sufis and non-Sufis, besides Shaykh 'Adi, were also regarded as divinities, through transmigration of souls, by the Yezidis, including Dawud (David), Shaykh Shams al-Din, Yazid b. Mu'awiya, Shaykh Hasan al-Basri and Mansur al-Hallaj.[4]

Professor Garnik Asatrian and Professor Victoria Arakelova, both of Yerevan State University, in Armenia, a country where the Yezidis are a substantial minority, have undertaken research which is startlingly revealing in regard to the links between the Yezidis, in their faith, on the one hand, with the ancient faiths in the region, pagan, Zoroastrian and Christian, and on the other, with a Sufi element which reveals the closest similarities with the 'Popular Sufism of South-eastern Europe', whether this be amongst the Bulgarian Kizilbash, or in those tales which are told about Sari Saltik. Speaking about Shaykh 'Adi, Victoria Arakelova, quoting J. S. Guest, has written:

> The Yezidis legendary history traces its origins back to the twelfth century AD,[5] to Sheykh 'Adi bin Musafir and his community. Actually, Shaykh 'Adi was the founder of the 'Adawiyya Sufi order, a part of which, most probably, became the backbone of the first Yezidi community. The leader himself was deified in the Yezidi tradition.[6]

She adds the following[7]:

> The deification of Sheikh 'Adi is an absolutely determinate process. The Sufi orders are characterised by the veneration of their founders and successor-leaders, who, according to the Sufi tradition, have special mystical power (*baraka*). Worshipping masters' graves is also a part of the afore-mentioned general process, and the case of Sheikh 'Adi is more than illustrative here: his sanctuary in Lalesh, North Iraq, became the centre of Yezidism.

In a jointly written article, on the subject of Malak-Tawus: 'The Peacock Angel of the Yezidis',[8] the two distinguished scholars have traced the evolution of the Yezidi notion of a divinity from these separate divine manifestations.

> The Yezidi Holy Triad comprises the following: Malak Tawus, the Peacock Angel (in the Yezidi imagination it is featured as a bird, a peacock or a cock, and sometimes even a dove); Sheikh 'Adi (Seyx 'Adi = Sheikh 'Adi b. Musafir, a historical personality, the founder of the proto-Yezidi community, as an old man): Sultan Yezid (Silt'an Ezid, as a youth). All three characters are manifestations of God – Xwade, Xuda, the term, deriving from New Pers, *xuday*). There are also other variations to designate God: *xudavand, rabb(i)*,

> as well as *allah* (mostly in the Arabic formulas); occurring in some religious songs in the term *ezdan* (from New Pers. *Yazdan* – 'god').[9]

However, this Triad is also increased to seven.[10]

> According to the religious tradition of the Yezidis, Malak- Tawus is accompanied and assisted by seven of his avatars: the angels Azrail, Dardail, Israfil, Mikail, Jabrail, Shamnail and Turail, the attendant angels of God. He spearheads the Triad, although Sheikh 'Adi is often regarded as a character of the same rank, while all three figures, along with Sultan Yezid, are at times identified with one another in many cultic contexts. By tradition, Malak-Tawus, with his company of seven each year determine the course and the fate of the subsequent year during the celebrations of *Jama'at*, Festival of the Assembly, on September 23–30, when an offering is made of a bull at the shrine of Sheikh 'Adi in Lalesh.

Irène Mélikoff refers to the myth of the hidden God in the heart of Adam, before whom the angels were commanded to bow the knee. The throne of the Divine Majesty was in the heart of Adam. She comments,

> One finds again the same myth amongst the Alevis, the Ahl-e Hakk and the Yezidis. In the three cases the scenario is the same: the fall of the Primorial man in Matter which renders him both ignorant and unaware. The call of the Divine Spirit which is unheard and which is unanswered. Finally, the intervention of the Friend, the Guide, the incarnation of the Divine Intelligence, who prescribes the reply thanks to which the soul, which is asleep, is woken to the gnosis of salvation.[11]

She also came to the following surprising conclusion. After the investigations which she had made into the similarities between the Alawites, the Ahl-el Hakk and the Yezidis, she had concluded: 'Up to that point I had believed in the Turkish origin of Bektashism, which I had never once doubted. But I found myself confronted, nonetheless, with elements which were,'a priori', Kurdish' (despite her awareness of the hostility between the Yezidis and the Kurds).[12]

Sari Saltik, a 'Guide' and an incarnation of the 'Divine Intelligence', with his seven identified and hallowed tombs throughout South-eastern Europe is not an unwelcome member of this company. Ibn Battuta was right. Here his words are expressed through the translation by Professor H. A. R. Gibb,[13] 'Baba Saltuq, who, they say, was an ecstatic mystic, though stories are told of actions by him which are condemned by the law'. A selection of these stories will be told later in this book. Meanwhile, his spiritual world is part of a heterodox world which spans the distance, which separates Northern Iraq and the Caucasus from the very heart of the Balkan peninsula. 'Popular Sufism', there, in that world, is also a syncretism, but it is likewise seen as an integral part of the divinely revealed faith which is the belief of those communities who dwell in their corner of Dar al-Islam.

This ‘god’, in disguise (*Förklädd gud*), has its variations the world over. He figures in the verse of the Swedish poet, Hjalmar Gullberg:

> The gods still walk this earth; perchance one shares your board.
> Believe not that a god can ever die, though he pass you by, whilst sluggish is your gaze.
> He bears no sceptre, and he wears no purple gown.
> A god is recognized by his accomplished deeds’ renown.

1 The geographical setting of Popular Sufism in Eastern Europe

A symphony should be like the world – it must contain everything.
Gustav Mahler

Eastern Europe is a vast and loosely defined region today, where many countries which were formerly considered to be 'East European', such as Poland for example, are often referred to as being situated in 'Central Europe', whereas others, such as the 'Baltic States', especially Estonia, are sometimes attached to the Nordic countries. This shuffling of a regional position has been increased through the entry of these, and other countries, into the European Union. Geographers have pointed out that, geographically speaking, a locality in Lithuania lies at the very centre of Europe, on the map. Since the break up of the Soviet Union, Russia has become detached from 'Eastern Europe', and it now is said to be in a vague geographical region called 'Eurasia'. Peoples of other countries, such as Slovenia, have all but detached themselves from the 'Balkans'. They regard themselves, nowadays, as 'Central Europeans'. Amidst the confusion, there are even some who attach Poland, Belarus and the Baltic States to Northern Europe.

In a cultural sense, 'Eastern Europe' has shared the fate of the 'Middle East', which has lost any strict geographical identity through the jargon of the media, or even in some university departments which boast of teaching and studying the language and the literature of the peoples of the 'Near and Middle East'. It might be added that most of the Balkans were at one time included within the term, 'Near East'.

Truth to tell, this confusion applies, to some degree, to the Muslim peoples of Eastern Europe and to other minorities such as the Karaims, the Armenians and the Circassians. Eastern European Muslim peoples, the Albanians in Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia, the Bosnjaks in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Pomaks, the Kizilbash and the Turks in Bulgaria, and the tiny minority of Circassians, Turks and settled émigrés who yet survive elsewhere, are all included within my definition of 'Eastern European peoples', whose Popular Sufism, past and present, has formed an integral part of the cultural and religious life of Eastern Europe.

'The Tatars' present a particular case. They are a Eurasian people. Their cultural heartland is Tatarstan which is a part of Russia. Their impressive contribution to popular Sufism should be included, by any academic criteria, in a study of Popular Sufism. However, this subject is so large, and has been so exhaustively studied, and meticulously described by such authorities as Alexandre Bennigsen, Marie Bennigsen-Broxup, Michael Kemper and Chantal Quelquejay, and by many other specialists, both Tatar and non-Tatar, that the 'Russian Tatar' regions are only incidentally referred to in this book. Particularly valuable source material, together with extensive bibliographies, is to be found, for example, in Michael Kemper's *Sufis und Gelehrte in Tatarien und Baschkirien, 1789–1889*, Klaus Schwarz Verlag, Berlin, 1998 and in Anna Zelkina's, *In Quest for God and Freedom, the Sufi Response to the Russian Advance in the North Caucasus*, Hurst, London, 2000.

On the other hand, it should not be overlooked that the Balkan regions, which form a major part of this book, already have very extensive bibliographies in several other studies and publications.[1] Because the Tatars of Belarus, Lithuania and Poland, and elsewhere in the Baltic region, will form the topic of a sister publication of mine, they, too, will only be introduced on occasions. Sufism, although by no means absent, was never central to the life and beliefs of the Tatars in these Baltic region countries. The Crimean Tatars, those scattered in the rest of the Ukraine, and those who are resident in Romania adjacent to the Black Sea coast, will, however, appear quite frequently in the pages which follow.

I have limited my study to the peoples of Eastern Europe with whom I am most familiar, namely the Albanians, the Bosnjaks, the Macedonian Muslims, and the Tatar community within the Crimean peninsula. Sufism, in the latter, once had close links with Ottoman Turkey, in particular. It was equally so, in the case of Bosnia, Bulgaria, Romania and Macedonia, although the Alawite allegiance in Deli Orman, and elsewhere in Bulgaria, has meant that Sufism in Iran and in Central Asia has also to be seriously considered in their Popular Sufism. Even more noteworthy, in this respect, is the Bektashi community in Albania. Here, Persian influences were especially marked, as, likewise, a strong feeling of unity with the holy places in Iraq. The Shi'ite strongholds of Karbalā' and al-Najaf, now well known to the public through the media, and because of the tragic events which took place there in the early days of Islam, are of a central importance to the Sufism of Albania, equally popular amongst the masses and in its intellectual appeal to the poets. It was compelling and was grafted into local nationalistic aspirations, as is the case in the poetry of the poet, Naim Frashëri, and in the compositions of many poets in Kosovo. Posters and icons of the great Shi'ite shrines in portraits of 'Ali, Hasan and Husain are often to be found in the Balkans.

The Hurufi poet, al-Nesimi, and the works of his Cabalist master, Fadlallah al-Hurufi, have had a profound effect upon Sufism, at a popular level, in these countries. Preached and proclaimed by Fadlallah, and his followers, in the region of Azerbaijan, in the fourteenth century, its influence on popular Sufism in Eastern Europe is to be observed in countless ways.[2] The examples found are immensely varied, though it is often expressed in a form of Gnosticism which has been

combined with the mystical and monistic doctrines which were once thriving in the Balkans, especially amongst the Bektashis. Combined, or detached, from this Gnosticism, the Cabalistic system, based upon the Arabic (and the Persian) letters which spring from the pages of the Qur'an, or in certain writings attributed to Fadlallah, captured and shaped the material medica and folk remedies of the Muslims in Eastern Europe, Tatars and non-Tatars alike. Everywhere amongst the Sufism of Eastern Europe one may find prophylactic texts, prayers and charms, magical squares, star maps and horoscopes. As will be seen, this system has become a standard stylistic scheme and a masterly technique amongst the Albanian Bektashi poets in Kosovo. Ancient pagan customs are frequently retained, although 'Islamized'.

Everywhere in these countries, likewise, the mythological hero, Sari Saltik, his personality clad in a magical raiment of heterodoxy, a coat of many colours, disguised as a dervish, the bearer of a wooden sword, has opened Eastern Europe to popular Sufi influences from far flung sources of spiritual enlightenment and many borrowed stories which tell of heroism and idealism. These stories are to be found in many other parts of the globe. For this reason, I have, at times, not excluded exploring such sources or holy locations of inspiration away beyond the geographical bounds of 'Eastern Europe', as I have defined it. To give myself licence to do so, I have the discoveries, the writings and the publications of F. W. Hasluck as my excuse, and sometimes as my role model.

The presentation may challenge some of the accepted views as to how a popular Sufi belief influences the devout Muslim practice of both Orthodox and Unorthodox Muslim believers in such Eastern European communities. What is Islamic, for example, or what has entered it from the prevailing majorities of the Christian communities amongst whom these Muslims live? At a village level, Popular Sufism may possess no chapels, no 'tekkes', and the like, no buildings and shrines lavishly maintained, financed, and affiliated to a well-established and recognized brotherhood. However, within the geographical area, where it functions, where it still operates, or where it thrives, this brotherhood may still claim, as its own, countless shrines, tombs of holy fathers (türbes), holy wells and caves fit for heroes. These may be frequented by their Christian neighbours and even shared with them. Very often they are erected upon the sites of Christian holy places, in specific historically important sites, hundreds of which were also at one time the most holy places of the ancient 'pagan' peoples; in grottoes, pools, springs, peninsulas and upon the most prominent and sacred Balkan mountain summits.[3]

Eastern Europe is a vast geographical region of steppes, forests, rivers, lakes and mountains, which are amongst the loftiest in Europe, and it possesses long river valleys where struggling villages may have little contact, one with the other, save, seasonally, at the time of the holiest festivals. It also has long stretches of seaboard along the Adriatic, the Aegean and the Black Seas. The Crimean peninsula contains steppes in the north, however along its southern coasts between the Cape of Kherson and Yeni Kale, to the north of Kerch, in the East, it is a land of steep mountains, intersected by deep valleys in which there are abundant streams and a lush vegetation.

Faiths can be spread through countries which are often unconnected by any roads, or by common frontiers. In other locations, roads and highways are vital for the diffusion of sects and for bizarre religious beliefs. There too, the dervishes built their hostels, established their soup kitchens, fed the poor, tended the sick and taught their 'Way', or 'Ways' to the common people. One such highway in the Balkans was the Via Egnatia,[4] which was to link the Balkan countries, to facilitate the spread of Sufi brotherhoods and to guide the steps of countless wandering dervishes. Major Sufi centres were to be found in the past in all the countries of South-eastern Europe. Many of their famous cities, and numerous lesser ones, are worthy to be included within any Sufi directory.

In Albania, one might mention Berat, Gyrokastër, Krujë and Tiranë, both of the latter major centres of the Bektashiyya. In Bosnia and Hercegovina (Hum), Blagaj, Mostar, Sarajevo, Travnik and Zvornik. In Bulgaria, one might mention Plovdiv, Sofia, Strumica and the Pomak towns and settlements in the Rhodopes, the Kizilbash centres around Tutrakan, near the Danube, and in Deli Orman to the west of Varna.[5] In the western Crimea, both Evpatoria (Gösleve), and Bachshisarai, formerly possessed important 'tekkes'. In Kosovo, one might mention Pec´, Dakovica and Prizren, a seat for several brotherhoods, including the Rifa'iyya and the Bektashiyya. Macedonia is important, like Kosovo, for the presence of the Rifa'iyya and also the Khalwatiyya brotherhoods, and, within it, one has to mention Skopje and Tetova (Kalkandelen); the latter of a historical importance for the Bektashiyya, in particular. At Babadag, in Romania is situated the hallowed tomb of Sari Saltik, at a holy site which has many rivals in other parts of the Balkans. The drowned island of Ade Kale was once the home of dervishes. Some of their Hurufi-influenced manuscripts have survived and are housed in university libraries in Romania. The road through Eastern Thrace terminates in Istanbul, the hub of Eastern European Sufism, and, over the horizon, the vision of Asia, with its many 'tekkes' and sites and places of pilgrimage, both near and far, recalling the holy of holies for Sufis, Konya, and similar localities. These Balkan towns with their 'tekkes', and similar 'tekkes' to the north, in Hungary, in Budapest,[6] and elsewhere, have spread a network of satellite Sufi centres, sometimes juxtaposed between one brotherhood and another, which were, and still are, the focus of Popular Sufism in innumerable villages which surround them. Within them, Sufism, in countless ways, has answered the needs of the individual communities. Such, then, were the veins and the arteries within which flowed the red lifeblood of their vibrant and intensely human Islamic mysticism, and it has kept alive their stubborn and amazing heterodox faith during days, sometimes centuries, of persecution. As will be seen, they are still very much alive today and they are often remarkably active.

2 Sufi brotherhoods and the impact of Sufism on national identity within the Balkan Muslim communities

Professor R. A. Nicholson, in his article on 'Mysticism', in the first edition of the *Legacy of Islam*,[1] concluded his survey of Sufism with this assessment:

> Instead of judging them by ordinary standards, which is futile, let us rather reflect that sincere devotion to the Ideal- or as they would say, the Real- covers a multitude of sins, and acknowledge that in the course of their quest they reached, if not the goal, at any rate a purer religion and a higher morality than Islam could offer them.

The final judgement to his aforementioned assessment is crucial. As it reads, it would appear to distance Sufism from the religion of Islam of which, throughout the history of that religion, it had formed, and still forms, a vital and an inseparable part. Today, this assessment is one still widely held by sympathizers in many quarters, religious and non-religious alike. Sufism and Islamic 'fundamentalism' are viewed as deeply conflicting expressions of that faith. In short, to some, they are diametrically opposed expressions of its message. The former, namely Sufism, is viewed as a potential ally of the Christian West, an Islamic movement and a view of Man with which a 'working relationship' can be achieved; in short, to use the phrase of Mark Tully, it is 'something understood'.

Hence, Sufism colours many cultural and artistic endeavours. Recently, the English composer, John Tavener, whose music has been so deeply influenced by the Eastern Orthodox liturgy and other Eastern European influences for most of his musical career, has openly expressed the view that the World religions are now 'senile', as he defined it. Instead, he has found himself increasingly influenced by Oriental spiritual influences, Sufism included. Inspired deeply by the writings of the well-known Sufi writer, Frithjof Schuon, he has incorporated drums and 'nays' into his orchestral and chamber works.[2]

That widely admired writer on religion, Karen Armstrong, wrote,

> The Sufis' knowledge of God was not a rational or metaphysical knowledge but it was clearly akin to the intuitive experience of the prophets of old: Sufis thus 'found' the essential truths of Islam for themselves by reliving its central experience.[3]

Compact discs of Sufi music, both classical and popular from India to Senegal, abound in music stores and shops, and Sufi art are not infrequently on display in the leading exhibitions. 'The dancing Dervishes of Konya', if billed, will fill the stalls.

Elsewhere, in the Islamic World, the response is mixed, ranging from downright condemnation by mainstream Muslims of Ibn 'Arabi's *wahdat al-wujud* or the monism of Nesimi and the Hurufis,[4] to a frank condemnation of the aberrations of Islam, including Sufism. Something like it was uttered by the late President of Bosnia, Alija Izetbegovic.[5] One does not need to be a 'fundamentalist' in order to abhor the excesses of both 'Popular Sufism', or of 'Higher' Sufism's pantheistic flights. Both are viewed as a downright perversion of the true message of Islam. However, there is a different story to tell and in Bosnia, in particular, 'Orthodox Popular Sufism' – if one is allowed to use this expression, showed outstanding bravery in the Bosnian War, where Shaykhs of both the Naqshabandiyya and the Qadiriyya, as well as other *turuq*, joined in the defence of the Bosnjak heartland. Fighting units of dervishes were formed within the most critical defence and military positions which had to be tenaciously held in Central Bosnia and in the Brćko corridor. Similar heroic acts can be reported from Kosovo, where, in 1998, at Orahovac, the greatly loved Sufi, Muhedin Shehu, who was 76 years old and who was also venerated by the local Christian population, was shot by the Serbian paramilitary invaders as he tried to defend hundreds of refugees in his *tekke* which was shared by the brotherhoods.

Certainly, by the end of the nineteenth century and in the early years of the twentieth century, 'Popular Sufism' was viewed by those who worked in the Western diplomatic services with intense fear and suspicion, and by many travellers with a bemused curiosity or by sheer contempt, tinged with moral unease and with incomprehension.[6]

Hence, in a letter sent to Earl Granville, written in Tunis, and dated 4 October, 1873, M. R. Wood, replying to a Circular despatch sent by Lord Granville, dated the 27 August, 1873, had this to say in regard to Sufi brotherhoods and 'Musulman fanaticism'[7]:

> What however is certain, is that the secret societies and other religious orders, whose ramifications extend like a net over the whole of the Mahommedan world, in towns as well as villages, have redoubled their zeal in carrying out the sacred object of their mission, namely, the consolidation of Islam as against the infidels, whether Christian, Israelites or Musulman Princes favourable to Christian institutions, which are considered by them to be at variance with the teaching and spirit of the Koran, or which are not sanctioned by the 'Hadis' or traditions of the Prophet. And such is the utter ignorance of these religious zealots that they esteem almost everything which has not originated with Mahommedans, or which did not exist in the early ages of Islam, as so many culpable innovations, which might, in the course of time, weaken the spirit and essence of Mohammedanism. Hence

> one of the principal causes of the exclusiveness and isolation of Morocco, and, until very recently, of the Khanates in Central Asia.
>
> The most prominent of the religious orders are the Bektashy, Abdul Kader al-Bagdady, the Khowan (Fraternity) Issawiye and Darkawy. From these orders have sprung the secret societies, whose mission, being of a politico-religious character, is the more dangerous, seeing that the emissaries which they employ are inspired with the utmost blind religious fervour, which knows no fear, which disdains to calculate consequences, and which sustains them in the performance of the longest and most painful journeys.
>
> The Bektashy are Rationalists or Free Thinkers; and as its members appertain mostly to the higher and better educated classes, it is comparatively harmless. The Abdul Kader el Bagdady was originally a purely religious order, but has gradually changed its character; and though less active than the Khowan, Issawiye, and Darkawy in disseminating hatred and unrelenting enmity to the Christians, it nevertheless teaches, like the rest, the Mahommedan supremacy and the extermination of the Christians in the Divine Mission of Islam, leading to Paradise.

This letter is an example of the paranoia – today we might call it 'Islamophobia' – which was aired in Whitehall circles at that time. All the Sufi brotherhoods, with the possible exception of the Bektashiyya, are lumped together in a manner which is only too familiar to us as we look at the Muslim World at the present time.

This document was penned in 1873. In 1896, the Bektashi Albanian poet, Naim Frashëri, published, his 'manifesto' and his confession of faith within the affirmations of his so-called *Bektashi Pages*.[8]

In that work, Naim, who was far from being the kind of 'Rationalist Free Thinker', referred to above, wrote, as a true and a deeply sincere Sufi and also as a fervent Albanian nationalist:[9]

> In the Way of the Bektashi the faith is modesty and chastity, wisdom, and all the virtues.
>
> Every ill deed, all vices, follies, and infidelities are forbidden and accursed in this Way.
>
> This is the Way of God and of all the Saints.
>
> The Bektashi have for the book of their faith the Universe, and especially mankind, because the Lord Ali once said, 'Man is the book which speaks, faith consists in speech, but the ignorant has added thereto. Faith is in the heart, it is not in the written book'.
>
> The Bektashi keeps unspotted his heart, his soul, his mind, and his conscience; and his body also, his clothes, his abode and his dwelling, his honour and his good name.
>
> Not only amongst themselves but also with all men the Bektashi are spiritual brothers.

> They love as themselves their neighbours, both Musulman and Christian, and they conduct themselves blamelessly towards all humanity.
>
> But more than all they love their country and their countrymen, because this is the fairest of all virtues.[10]

The Bektashis were to be joined by the Mevlevis (Mawlawiyya) in earning the respect of the anxious Western diplomats. In a reply, by the Acting Consul in Canea, Crete, to Earl Granville's despatch (dated, the 4 October, 1873),[11] he wrote:

> My Lord, I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of the Circular despatch dated the 22nd August last, relative to Mussulmans in Eastern countries partaking in some degree of the character of a religious and political revival, a report being desired regarding any circumstances which may have come under my observation showing the existence and object of such movement amongst the Mussulman population of this island.
>
> In compliance with the instructions contained in said Circular, I beg respectfully herewith to report the existence of two so-called religious associations, both composed entirely of Mussulmans, and also some facts which have come under my observation connected with the same. One is called the Bektashy, which was organized since the last Cretan insurrection; the second named Mevlevis, whose organization in Crete dates from December 1872; the latter originated by a Dervish Sheik (Chief) from Aidin in Asia Minor. Its organization exists throughout the Ottoman Empire, and is, I am informed, encouraged everywhere by the Government. In this island the society counts amongst its numbers influential Mussulmans, and numbers several thousands. The avowed object of both is philanthropic and religious, the propagation of Islamism; and to catachize the ignorant classes of their co-religionists they hold weekly religious meetings. The Mevlevis, under the supervision of their Sheik, who sojourns at present in this place, are about constructing a large Tekeh at a short distance outside this town.[12]

Travellers' tales

F. W. Hasluck,[13] pointed out that Athens was a place of great significance for the Turks, and for other Muslims. This was for a number of reasons. 'Athens was particularly connected by learned Orientals with the Greek philosophers, and on that account called by them the "City of Sages" (Medinat al Hokama)'. The Sufis were also drawn to the city. Its ancient relics served as haunts for their rituals and a place where Muslims could meet with non-Muslims both of whom regarded the location with awe and pride.

The bizarre spectacle of a Sufi séance (*zikr*) in an Athens chapel certainly surprised more than one English artist and voyager who wrote down his descriptions, usually accompanied by prints, and he added much colour and exoticism to his observations.[14]

A dervish tekke in Athens

To the South-East of the Agora is the octagonal 'Tower of the Eight Winds'; the Clepsydra of Andronicus Cynhestes, described by Vitruvius: called 'Horologium' by Varro. It was the waterclock, or chronometer, as well as the weather guide of ancient Athens. It is worthy of admiration more from its peculiarity than its beauty. It escaped the observation of Pausanius, while Stuart, in numerous plates, renders justice to so considerable and perfect a remains of antiquity.

Over the lintel, which faces the North-East, upon a red ground, is described in Arabic, 'La Illah, (illa) Allahu Mahamedu Resoul Ullah' – declaring there to be no God but God, and Mahamed to be His Prophet.

The wooden floor of the interior rests upon the lower cornice, many feet above the ancient pavement. The marble walls are washed with a uniform white. The 'Mihrab' painted in perpendicular stripes of green and red, indicates by its position the direction of the kaaba or oratory of Mecca; each side of this is a wax candle, and the green flag of the Prophet has also its place. The Koran is deposited within this niche, and an imitation of the two-edged sword of Ali is attached to the adjoining wall.Before these is performed the circularly whirling dance of the Dervishes, witnessing which the spectator will find it as difficult to remain serious, as it would appear dangerous to appear otherwise. Dervishes are not alone the actors in this piece of mummery, as other Turks mix with the party. In a circle, sitting upon the floor, they begin with the praises of God and the Prophet; their heads and bodies by their motions backwards and forwards indicating the fervency of their devotion, as well as keeping time in unison with two small drums, the only instrumental accompaniment, until the paroxysm of enthusiasm animates the whole congregation, who similarly start up and whirl in ceaseless frenzy around the department, while the Sheikh, or chief, attired in the sacred green, and wearing a large white turban, incites them by his voice and the sound of his larger tambour. This curious ceremony bears a strong resemblance to the festivals of the Corybantes, who, in honour of Cybele, danced to the sound of their cymbals until they became delirious, of which dance, the description furnished by Apuleius and Strabo is remarkably applicable to that practised by the modern Athenian Dervishes.

The 'Tower of the Winds' was taken over as a *tekke* for the Mevlevi (Mawlawiyya) dervishes in AD 1700. Tolerant to a degree comparable with the Bektashis, they allowed 'infidels' to attend their public performances. One of these, Richard Chandler, describes how the participants sat on goatskins in a circle. The Chief Dervish introduced the séance with prayers and prostrations. Suddenly, they doffed their outer attire and began their dance. The Chief Dervish, in a state of ecstasy, let down his hair and pivoted his entire body on one of his toes. All followed his movements, their hair flying as if in a wind. The dome resounded to their shouting and the wild music. Eventually, fainting with

exhaustion, the ring broke, and those who were able left the ring. Following the ceremony, guests were entertained with pipes and coffee. The Chief Dervish, placid as was his wont, was their host.

Another description of this *tekke* confirms much of the detail which has been furnished in the earlier descriptions. The tower had been converted into a 'Sema-Khane' (*sama´ khana*), or chapel for the religious dance called *Sama´*, which was performed every Friday within its walls. The interior of the tower was covered with a wooden floor, which rested upon the lower cornice, several feet above the ancient pavement. The walls were ornamented with tablets of wood painted in various colours and containing passages (*ayas* and *suras*) from the *Koran* in Arabic characters. The recess, or niche, in the wall was painted with stripes of green and red, indicates the direction of the Ka'ba, in Mecca. Each side of the niche contained a wax candle, before which was placed an imitation of the green flag of Muhammad. The *Koran* was deposited within the *Mihrāb*. The imitation of the double-edged sword of 'Ali (*Dhū'l-Faqār*) was attached to the wall. Twelve small lamps were suspended by a chain to the keystone in the roof of the tower. Sixteen ostrich eggs, which were also suspended by a string, were supposed to be antidotal to the dreaded Evil Eye.

> The only instrumental accompaniment consisted of two small kettledrums. By degrees the song increases in animation, till on a sudden the company all start up, and sing and dance in a circle with vivid alacrity and obstreperous violence. After a certain time they make way for the two principal performers, who, holding each other by the sash, turn round with incredible rapidity. The Sheikh, or chief of the Dervishes, habited in the sacred green, with a large white turban, animates them by the powers of his voice and by the agitation of a large tambour. After the Dervishes have continued turning and screaming for a considerable time, they at length sink into the arms of the bystanders, and are for a few minutes apparently deprived of their senses, and filled with divine enthusiasm.

From the sources which have been cited and quoted by Molly Mackenzie in her *Turkish Athens, the Forgotten Centuries, 1456–1832*[15] by no means all these descriptions and author's impressions were unsympathetic and unfavourable to Sufis and Sufism. The Chief Dervish was said to be 'cool and placid', a comment which softened the otherwise sarcastic remarks which abounded. That such sights in Athens were a shock can hardly be doubted. To the Western World the seat of Greek wisdom was not associated with such an Oriental spectacle. The dance seemed far removed from that of the Classical statuary which graced the gardens of Europeans or which adorned the fountains of their stately homes.

'The Tower of the Winds' was not the only converted building in that age, one which was used by Popular Sufism, or, indeed, for regular worship during hours of daily prayer by the Muslim community of Athens. Several churches had suffered in this way, not only in Athens but throughout the Balkans. Even ancient Greek temples had been converted into places of prayer. Evliya Chelebi, the

traveller, had observed that the temple of the Olympian Zeus, was used in this way when 'all the Moslems go during prayers for rainfall and during Bairam'. When John Galt visited Athens in the nineteenth century, it had been suffering from a lengthy drought. He noted that 'some of the pious Turks were every morning heard praying at dawn among the ruins of the temple of Jupiter Olympios'.[16]

He also reported that were the drought to last some time, public prayers were required and 'a flock of ewes and lambs were driven together in the neighbourhood of the worshippers… the lambs were separated from their mothers and all the Turks standing up began a loud and general supplication in the most pathetic tones'. The bleating of the sheep, it was hoped, would augment the people's petition and would invoke the pity of heaven.

Throughout the nineteenth century, in the Balkans and the Middle East, these ceremonies associated with the Sufi *turuq*, the Mawlawiyya especially, evoked extreme reactions, curiosity, admiration, deprecation, amusement and shock. Yet others found 'Popular Sufism' of this ilk a grotesque spectacle. Thomas Carlyle, whose sympathy for Muhammad at that time was renowned,[17] was seemingly unimpressed, though was he truly so? He despised 'work shy' Antinomians and 'Spinning Dervishes'. Yet, in his book, *Past and Present*, he penned these lines:

> Again, are not Spinning Dervishes an eloquent emblem, significant of much? Hast thou noticed him, the solemn-visaged Turk, the eyes shut, dingy wool mantle circularly holding his figure:- bell-shaped: like a dingy bell set spinning on the tongue of it? By centrifugal force the dingy wool mantle heaves itself; spreads more and more, like upturned cup widening into upturned saucer; thus spins he, to the praise of Allah and advantage of mankind!

The Qalanders

More than the 'Whirling Dervishes', it was the extreme fringe of the dervish movement, the often self-mutilating Qalandaris and their colleagues who left the most disturbing picture in the memory and the minds of both locals and foreigners alike. To the latter, they represented the madness of the Oriental, and, one should recall that in the nineteenth century, many parts of the Balkans, the Crimea, the fringes of the Caucasus and Muslim outposts in Eastern Europe, were still viewed by Westerners as an integral part of 'the Orient'.

One source for an image of these dervishes was the work of Nicolay Dauphinoys, *The Nauigations, Peregrinations, and Voyages Made into Turkie* by Nicholas Nicholay Dauphinoys, of Menavino, Vahidi and others, which graphically describe and portray the Qalandars. Abdal-i Rum, Haydaris, and other bizarrely attired ascetics and dervishes who were to be found in different parts of the Ottoman domain.[18] Something of their ways will be described in this book in later chapters especially in the case of the hero and holy man, Sari Saltik.

Travellers throughout the East encountered Shaikhs who were associated with this popular dervish movement. The following description of a Qalandari

establishment outside Baghdad, could once have been matched by similar establishments in Albania, Bulgaria and Macedonia, nor were ascetics of a similar appearance rare in Eastern Orthodox Christian communities. The author was The Hon. George Keppel, F. S. A. who wrote his account in the early years of the nineteenth century.

> On dismounting from our horses, we were conducted to the Sheikh Calendar (the Superior of the monastery). He was seated on a tiger's skin, in a room describing three sides of a square of twenty-eight feet, and about forty high. We saw fixed on the walls several rude iron instruments, which had been implements of war prior to the use of fire-arms, and had been presented to the monastery by various contributors. There were also some brass urns, a number of ostrich eggs, and some white stones, fixed in the walls. The Sheikh wore a low drab cloth turban, bound round with green, called the tajee-derveishaun (dervish's cap)[19]; the other Calendars had caps of a similar shape, with red tassels. From the neck of each Calendar were suspended a circular onyx-stone, with indented edges, somewhat bigger than a crown-piece, (this was called the sung-i-tulsim, or talismanic stone), and one somewhat larger, called the sung-i-canaut (the stone of repose), emblematic of the peaceful life of the wearer.[20] Round the waist was worn a stone to an oval form, called the 'kumbaria', which accompanies the wearer to the grave.
>
> The Sheikh was a clever talkative little man, and possessed that agreeable vivacity and store of anecdotes which are occasionally found in men who have had much intercourse with the world. He had seen various countries, and spoke Persian with great fluency – which language we conversed. On our approaching him, he vociferated a dozen doggerel rhymes in token of his self-abasement, calling himself a Jew, an infidel, a rogue, and a drunkard. As he repeated these frequently, I caught the following lines, which may serve as a specimen of the metre:
>
> Herkeh poshum
> Baud-i noshum
> Meferoshum
>
> He next began a long speech, thanking us for the honour we had conferred on a poor dervish who had quitted the world; though from his lively conversation, there was little of the anchorite perceptible in him. We were very anxious to learn some account of his Order; but he was so fond of hearing himself talk, that we were obliged to let him have his own way; he dwelt much on the forbearing and pacific doctrine of the Calendars' code; and told us that for a blow given no blow would be returned, but the simple ejaculation of 'God's will be done'. We observed, however, that no Calendar was without a dagger in his girdle. He informed us that the monastery was built by the Caliph Haroun Alraschid, nine hundred and twenty-five years ago: he also intended to represent the circumstance of a European king coming to pay his respects to the King of Calendars. In the adjoining room we were shown a small niche, in which the Calendars are

> supposed to sit. It was covered with Arabic inscriptions – most probably quotations from the Koran.
>
> On returning to the first room, the Sheikh gave us pipes and coffee, and an excellent breakfast of milk, dates and sweetmeats; after which we took our leave, much pleased with the eccentricity of our reception.

George Keppel adds that the Qalanders were noted for their 'debauched morals' and 'vagabond habits' which gave 'great offence' to their more orthodox brethren. He also mentioned that many were mendicants all over Asia.

Within the Balkans, the Albanian regions in particular, it is likely that the Rifa'iyya brotherhood, more than the rest, retained some of the rituals and the habits which have been outlined, aforementioned, amongst the Mevlevis in Athens and the Qalanders, in Baghdad. Nathalie Clayer, in her study of the Albanian dervishes,[21] has made reference to a *zikr* in Tirana, witnessed and described in 1940, and, in greater detail, the same 'zikr' in Shkodra, in 1957. Many of the habits worn and the ecstasy displayed, were remarkably close to those observed amongst the Asian Qalanders, and other brotherhoods, who were the focus of the curious a century earlier.

Popular Sufism amongst the Albanians shared the rituals of the Muslim East. The Turkish, Tatar and Persian influences were deep and its legacy still survives today, in Albania and Macedonia, despite the ruthless repression of religion by Enver Hoxha and the hatred of the Serbs and the Macedonians, and a violent and secular world which has encroached more and more in the twenty-first century. Yet true Sufism is, when all is said and done, a popular cause at the heart of the faith of the Muslims in these lands. The goals of their Sufism can hardly be expressed better than by the Kosovar poet, the 'Malami', 'Umar Lutfi al-Basharizi. He brought Sufism to Kosovo and he died there in 1929.[22] To him, Sufism was pure Islam. It was an absorption of the self in others, a strict observance of God's commands and a total reliance upon Him.

> True Sufism is observation. It is the disclosure of the unseen.
> It is a struggle with the self and with worldly Mammon.
> It is silence, wakefulness, fasting and piety, a strict control, hence able to curb a hurtful and a hasty utterance.
> Rather, contrary to such a wont, it is the pondering of the wonders of the Creator.
> It is the remembrance of His name, both at daybreak, and once again, when falls the stillness of His eventide.

Muslims still visit the graves of their saints. In South-eastern Europe these saints were Sufis. They are, and surely will remain, the focal point of their popular expressions of the Muslim faith.

3 The Krstjani and the Bosnjaks: Sufi orders and the abiding memory of the Bosnian Church

> Whosoever obtains a Permission from the Guides enters into the Choir of the Saints, since all the saints are linked together hand in hand, and thus he enters into this company, and into the Chain of the Lords, as in a dance.
>
> Naim Frashëri's 'Bektashi Pages', F. W. Hasluck, 'Christianity and Islam Under the Sultans', vol. 11, p. 558

Bosnia is situated on a major cultural fault line in South-eastern Europe. Long before the Ottoman conquest, barriers of religion had been erected. The 'Bosnian Church' has often been described, in error, as Dualist or Patarene, 'part-Dualist', or 'Bogomil' or 'infected by Bogomil dualism'. Ivan Lovrenovic, in his *Bosnia a Cultural History* (Saqi books, the Bosnian Institute, London, 2001, p. 54) rejects these affirmations. Abusive names such as Patarenes, Cathars, Manichaeans, 'cursed baboons' and the 'Bosnian plague' applied to Bosnians and members of the Bosnian Church are found only in foreign sources. The accusation of Bogomilism was principally a nineteenth-century invention. The Bosnians always, and exclusively, referred to themselves as 'Christians'.

However, it is true that the Bosnian Church existed as a specific form of religious organization developed in Bosnia, and it lasted as long as the Bosnian state lasted. It had its own hierarchy with the titles *dida* [*djed*-grandfather], *stropni*' [steward], *gost* [visitor] and *starac* [elder], and some kind of monastic organization in *hize* [homes], as the Franciscan friars still call their monasteries. Respected and playing an important role in the political life of the country, its dignitaries were people of great social standing and of a secure status. This was quite different from the fate of Europe's heretical sects and their followers who were subjected to a brutal repression.[1]

Although this unresolved and enigmatic subject as to the influence of Dualism is likely to continue intriguing the scholarly, the political and the artistic imagination, recent critical research, suggests the following firmer conclusion. The church in Bosnia was a continuation of, and a substitute for, the Bosnian bishopric in the period after the unsuccessful attempt to Latinize it, and following its subsequent transfer to Dakovo, in Croatia, in the mid-thirteenth century. In the tradition of Cyril and Methodius, use of the national language and the liturgy

continued after the foundation of the Bosnian Franciscan Vicariate (1340) and it lived, parallel with it, in a mixture of rivalry and coexistence, almost until the very end of the kingdom of Bosnia in 1463.

Sufi brotherhoods and Bosnjak resistance[2]

After the Ottoman conquest, Sufism established itself in a country which was frequently suspicious of its cherished spiritual and political goals. Many of the brotherhoods were present there, though several had a minor following. A number of Bosnia's respected scholars and men of letters, in Arabic, Persian and Turkish, were also Sufis. Two brotherhoods, at least, have survived with a wide popular following, the Qadiriyya and the Naqshabandiyya. Both played an active military role in the recent war for survival amongst the Bosnjak community. Bosnian Islam owed much to all the brotherhoods which were established there at varied times in the Ottoman age. Many of its major towns and cities were the centres of Sufi activities. It was the dervishes, their brotherhoods and their *ahis*, and other initiates and novices, who established and served *tekkes* and *zavijas* and who staffed highway inns and caravanserais and shelters which were offered to wayfarers. The building of brotherhoods' *tekkes* was an important factor for the building of specific towns which were later to rise to prosperity and cultural esteem. 'Isa Beg's *zavija*, in Sarajevo, was founded in order to serve as an inn and as a public kitchen. The *zavija* of Ayas Pasha in Visoko was founded in, or around, 1477. It served as a school for new converts to Islam. In 1489, at Rogatica, towards the Drina valley, a *zavija* was founded by a dervish named Muslihuddin. The Hamzawiyya *zavija* on the road which linked Zvornik with Srebrenica, and which was erected about 1519, was destined to be one of the most historic in Muslim Bosnjak history. In Zvornik itself, around 1530, the Bahsibeg *zavija* was erected for private meditation, yet it also contained a public kitchen. The most important of Sarajevo's *zavijas* were founded by Sufis from the Middle East. The now destroyed fifteenth century Magribija mosque took its name from a dervish from the Maghrib who had accompanied 'Isa Beg.

The mark of Sufi brotherhoods had already been made on Bosnia from the very commencement of that century. Over later centuries, many of the '*ulama*', the scholars and the jurists in Bosnia were to oppose, vigorously, what, in their view, were held to be heterodox tendencies. The temporary sojourn, or limited impact, of both the Bektashiyya and the Rifa'iyya, in the country, as also the Khalwatiyya, to a lesser degree, is explicable to the hostility which they received from their scholarly critics. Sufism was suspected of antinomianism. Those charges which were made against the Bosnian Church, justifiably or unjustifiably, may be matched by the charges levelled at Sufism, in general. They reached a peak of criticism in the eighteenth century. Opposition to Sufism was strongest in Sarajevo. The anti-Sufi militants were known as the *Kadicevci puritans*. Their 'Cromwellian-like' activities are described in a chronicle written by Mustafa Baseskija. This bears the title of *Ljetopis*, and it was composed between the years 1746 and 1804. He makes mention of attacks made on the Sufi brotherhoods by

a teacher in a *madrasa*. The *dhikrs* were interrupted, this in itself indicating the popularity of the brotherhoods at that time. A fanatic called Emir-Vaiz attempted to disturb prayer and worship taking place in a mosque where the Mevleviyya met in the year 1770/1. According to Dr Cornelia Sorabji, who has made a detailed study of this movement in her Cambridge thesis, Emir-Vaiz had initially sought the office of Shaykh following the decease of the office holder among the Mevlevis. The Qadi refused the request, offering the post, instead, to Dervish Mustafa, who was the *muezzin* in the Tabacka mosque. One day, at the time of the *ikindja*, the third prayer in the day, as Shaykh Dervish commenced the *dhikr* a number of troublemakers, the *jaramazi*, appeared uninvited. A quarrel ensued, however the dervishes won the argument. The *hodza* of the mosque, who was a brother of Emir-Vaiz, was sacked from his post and the troublemakers no longer disturbed the Mevlevis.

The barely concealed criticism, an outright condemnation of superstition and un-Islamic practices in 'Popular Sufism', typifies a tendency which has always prevailed amongst the Bosnjaks and it is a general Muslim conception of the 'evils of Popular Sufism', in general, within South-eastern Europe. It is of course a widely held opinion found today throughout the Muslim World.

Aside from the Mevleviyya, the Qadiriyya and the Naqshabandiyya, in past times the Malamatiyya brotherhood also had a following in Bosnia. Shaykh Husain-Lamekani – (d. 1035 AH/1625 AD), one of its foremost figures, appeared to have strictly observed the rules which Orthodoxy applied in Bosnian Islam at that time. However, this did not prevent earlier Sufis, and several later ones, from this particular brotherhood being viewed with deep suspicion. On occasions they either lost their lives or they were forced to flee from Bosnia. The country became a Balkan bastion of Sunnite Orthodoxy, which was located on the sensitive and strategically important western border of the Ottoman Empire. However, the Sufis, the Malamatiyya prominent amongst them, became the vehicle for the transmission of certain beliefs held by the famous Sufi martyr of Iraq, Husayn b. Mansur al-Hallaj, who was executed in the Caliphate of al-Muqtadir, in 922 AD. The beliefs in question had been embellished during the following centuries and they included

1 Divinity is inwardly present within Man himself.
2 The *Shari'a* is subordinate to the Path (*Tariqa*) of the Sufi.
3 Theosophical and Cabalistic ideas which were to the become the hall-mark of certain Sufi orders in the Balkans, especially within the Bektashiyya. The latter was to become the primary, although not the sole, channel for the dissemination of these ideas.

The most famous of these Bosnian Sufis was probably Shaykh Hamza Baliju. A Bosnian, he was a simple man and possibly illiterate. He was also an ascetic. Following the death of his master, Shaykh Husam, he returned to the Sanjak of Zvornik and began to preach the message of his brotherhood. Much of our knowledge about him is based upon the evidence which was provided by a pamphlet

which rejected the claims he made. He was accused of forsaking the world, of preaching pantheistic doctrines and of exalting the status of the Messiah to a level above that of the Prophet Muhammad. He was opposed by one of Bosnia's greatest scholars, Hasan Kafi of Prusac (Aq Hisar, to the south of Travnik). He lived between 1547 and 1616. The latter, together with the Qadi of Sarajevo, Bali Efendi, combined their efforts in order to extirpate his movement from Bosnia. The Malamatiyya, likewise the Bektashiyya, were, in effect, banished from Bosnia, or they were severely circumscribed in their activities. Many of the adherents of both brotherhoods were compelled to live outside Bosnia itself. Amongst them was the Malami-Bayrami, 'Abdallah al-Busnawi (d. 1634), who was a noteworthy commentator on the *Fusus al-Hikam*, the famous masterpiece composed by the mystic Ibn al-'Arabi (d. 1240).

The spiritual teaching of the Malamatiyya which had inspired Hamza Bali is well summarized by Thierry Zarcone in his essay on Muhammad Nur al-Arabi, whose movement is discussed elsewhere in this book (see *Les Voies d'Allah*, edited by Alexandre Popović and Gilles Veinstein, Fayard, 1996, p. 480). He wrote:

> Hajji Bayram Veli (d. 1429 AD), the founder of the Bayramiyya, was the disciple of Qayserili Hamid al-Din, who had come from Hoy (Azerbaijan) into Anatolia at the behest of 'Ala al-Din Ardabili. The centre of this brotherhood was Ankara, a town where the mausoleum of Hajji Bayram is found, today. The mystic doctrine of the latter, as it is offered in his poetry, is clearly marked by the Malamati heritage. One points out, for example, the absence of the 'dhikr', an element which was still essential in all the mystical orders. But it is above all amongst the disciples of Hajji Bayram that this tendency is fully revealed and especially by 'Umar Sikkini (d. 1475–1476 AD), who displayed a disdain not only for the 'dhikr' but also for all that constituted the exterior appearance of the dervish; the famous 'mantle' ('khirqa') and the headdress ('taj'). The Bayramis progressively spread throughout the entire area of Anatolia but the little interest shown for the external and administrative dimension of Sufism meant that their brotherhood did not realize any major development. Thus, at the end of the nineteenth century, in Istanbul, whilst the great mystical orders counted several half-score monasteries, convents and religious establishments, the Bayramiyya were in possession of very few indeed.

By 1560, the Bayramiyya was deeply rooted amongst the Bosnians.

Yasar Ocak has argued that the factors which determined why Hamza should face martyrdom were essentially of a political rather than a strictly religious nature. However, both the Bayrami-Malamis and the Khalwati-Gülshenis, from the thirteenth century onwards, had 'politicized' Ibn al-'Arabi's doctrine of the 'Unity of Being' (*wahdat al-wujud*). Some of their partisans had gone so far as to reject the authority of the Sultan, because, in their opinion, only the *Qutb* – the 'Pole', who was likened to the 'reincarnation of God' – was the true authority to whom obedience should be shown. A sixteenth century example of this firm

belief and attitude had been re-asserted by a young Bayrami Shaykh, Isma'il-Ma'shuqi[3] who was arrested, put on trial and condemned to death in 1529, together with 12 of his disciples. This was in accordance with the formal legal opinion (*fatwa*) given by Ibn Kamal. This *fatwa* condemned Isma'il to death as a heretic and an apostate (*zindiq wa-mulhid*).

In 1361, Shaykh Hamza Bali and his followers declared war against the Ottomans. He rejected the entire administrative system and a *padisah*, *seyhulislam*, *defterdar* and other leaders were elected from amongst the Shaykh's followers. The chief of them was Hamza himself. The latter was arrested, taken to Istanbul and condemned to death and decapitated. After the event the name Hamzavi replaced Malamati amongst the sect.[4]

Both the Khalwatiyya and the Naqshabandiyya have played a momentous role in Bosnian Sufism. Mention has to be made of the popular aspects of their role amongst the Bosnjaks. In the first instance, mention needs to be made of Bosnia's famous poet, Hasan Qa'imi. He was, himself a Khalwati, however it is his association with the Qadiriyya in Zvornik that deserves a special mention here. He was noted for two *diwans* and a number of poems in *Aljamiado*, that is, verses composed in Bosnian though written in Arabic script, often with a more vernacular and popular appeal in their content. His second *diwan*, entitled *Waridat* expresses the 'inrush of praiseworthy thoughts or the response of the heart to inspired sentiments and thoughts which are evoked by the divine name'. The other is specifically concerned with the 'Oneness of Being' (*wahdat al-wujud*), and also the expression of praise and devotion inspired by the name of 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jaylani. Both poems were intended to be read and pondered upon prior to the performance of the *dhikr*.

The Naqshabandiyya had arrived in Sarajevo around the year 1463. The *dhikr* was performed twice a week accompanied by *ilahis*, songs of praise honouring God and His Messenger. This took place amidst the *sama'*, an audition sometimes with a musical accompaniment. The Naqshabandiyya became strongly established in Central Bosnia, around Fojnica. One Shaykh, who held office in Oglavak 'tekke', Sirri Baba, who died in 1846/7, was unsurpassed in his composition of *ilahis* in Serbo-Croat and in his contribution to *Aljamiado* literature.

This latter owes an enormous debt to such men of genius although it should not be overlooked that Sufi *Aljamiado* in local languages was a widespread genre in the entire Balkan region. More and more of its riches are being discovered in the manuscript texts housed in the region's libraries of Islamic books.

Bosnian Sufism and the revival of the fortunes of the 'Bosnian Church': The 'Holy Grail' of Bosnjak identity

Amidst the centuries of Sufi life and activity in Bosnia some important traditions of the Bosnian Church survived. These traditions were preserved in the very heart of Bosnian Sufism. Like a Phoenix rising from the flames, so, in the interpretation of the divine revelation in the minds of some Bosnian Sufis, the condemned

and defunct Bosnian Church surely seemed to prefigure the divine message which they viewed as uniquely theirs. The Bosnian Church had been unjustly condemned, abused, vilified and misunderstood. It had been condemned by the world, both Catholic and Orthodox, as having been dualist, even Manichaean, and it had been dubbed 'Patarin' or 'Bogomil', in the West. Their point of view differed profoundly from this. In their opinion, there existed an original Bosnjak *silsila* or 'chain of initiation'. They, as Muslims, were the spiritual heirs to this 'chain', even though the Bosnian Church had disappeared from history in their land. They had inherited this 'chain' from their ancestors who were believed to have been members of this Church but who were far from being 'Crypto-Christians'. This they totally denied.

Hypothetical speculations still strongly influence the opinions of all those who would try to measure the degree to which the beliefs of the Bosnian Church could have been a major factor in the conversion of the Bosnjaks to Sunnite Islam. Other factors have far greater weight to support them. In matters of doctrinal convergence, and few would seem obvious, any assumptions are of little worth. There are many points where even a heresy, Christian in character, would be found to be theologically totally incompatible with Islam. 'Asim Zubćević, in his article, *The Islamisation of Bosnia* (in *Bosnia, Islamic World Report*, vol. 1, no. 2, Winter, 1996, p. 5), remarks that on the basis of Ottoman *defters*, it took about a century and a half for Islam to become the religion of the majority of Bosnjaks, furthermore Bosnia was never 'colonized' by the Ottoman state. 'The reason may have been the favourable reception of Islam among the native Bosnian population, which, by identifying itself with the cause of Islam, rapidly became a pillar of the Ottoman state'.

He adds, 'unfortunately for the proponents of the Bogomil theory of conversion, the *defters* offer no support for the most commonly held view of Islamisation – that the converts to Islam came primarily from among the Bosnian Church followers who were Bogomils'.

But if Bogomil Bosnia is a myth of largely foreign making, what then? In all religions, even the most stubborn of orthodoxies, heterodoxy may also be found.

Popular Sufism and Bosnjak *Aljamiado* may shed some light upon this dilemma. At least one document, in Serbian, written in the Arabic script customary in *Aljamiado*, together with a Turkish translation has survived.[5]

It originated in the Sancak of Kirka. It is a hymn in praise of the *Peygamber*, Muhammad, the Messenger of God. Believed to have been the 'Paraclyte', whose coming had been foretold by Jesus, himself, it was a claim which challenged all forms of Christianity in Bosnia. The document is dated to the seventeenth century. Though circumstantial evidence suggests that the prediction and the perception which is disclosed about the course of divine revelation to Man, after the Messiah's ascent, had been widely current in Bosnia during a period long prior to the seventeenth century. It is without question a heretical claim. Furthermore, it is one which is not uncommon in many parts of the Muslim World and there are other examples of it in Bosnian documents.

D. Bojanic–Lukac, who has published this intriguing document, has suggested that it emanated from a sectarian group who were under the threat of persecution. One might view them as a sect of 'Paracletists', who might also have been Gnostics. It would be speculative to suggest that they may have been Bogomils or Paulicians or from any well-known Christian sect. The Biblical text was clearly familiar to its authors, but then, so it was to the 'Brethren of Purity' (*Ikhwan al-Safa'*), to the Hurufis and to many members of the Sufi brotherhoods at a far earlier date.

Our primary concern is with the local brotherhoods in Bosnia. Rusmir Mahmud Ćehajić has identified this Bosnian Gnostic tradition:

> As seen from within the mystical tradition, the Bosnian Church represented an alternative 'Christology' to that prevailing either in Orthodoxy or Catholicism: that is, it had a distinct perspective on the mystery of Christ, one which brought down on the Bosnian Church the charges of heresy and an onslaught of persecution. The adherence of the Bosnians to their beliefs can thus be seen as the dedication to the right to respond to the mystery of Christ in different ways. Outsiders found incomprehensible the Bosnian readiness to die for this principle; the question was consequently raised: what is truly paramount in the inner faith of the Bosnians? First of all, it can neither be reached nor understood without terms of reference based on the 'outward'. Historians are therefore confused by two facts:
>
> Firstly, Bosnians were determined to follow the teaching of the Bosnian Church: and
>
> Secondly, the majority later embraced Islam. How is one to reconcile these two facts? The answer lies in a mode of knowledge which lives on in the Sufi heritage of Bosnia: due to its nature, it could not be entirely accessible to the public, but there are some indicative signs.
>
> The spiritual genealogy of the Bosnian Sufi proceeds from Jesus, the son of Mary, to Muhammad, son of 'Abd-Allah, closing a full circle, surrounded by rose petals and vine branches, the two basic symbols of Bosnjak spirituality. The circle is composed of those carrying over the living tradition from Jesus to a line of patriarchs of the Bosnian Church, who handed their spiritual trusts to Sufi Shaykhs. They, in turn, received their knowledge through spiritual genealogy from the Prophet, recipient of revelation from God through the Archangel Gabriel.

In the remaining books of the Bosnian Church, the word 'Paraclete' was considered to be the name of the one who would complete and attest the prophecy of Jesus, and who would clarify all that which made his disciples differ. This was also clarified by a puzzling fragment which was discovered in the secret coffer of the Krka monastery and which reads:

> And Jesus said to his disciples, 'After me, a man will come from the right side (from the direction of the Yemen), from the sunny East; of him, indeed,

> I am not worthy, even to take the dust from his shoe onto my cheek. Take all his message, all his teaching and tradition …. His name will be Holy Spirit, Paraclete, of Abraham's kin'.
>
> Herein lies a clue to the mysterious letter 'a' that appears in names from the word Bosna (Bosanac, Bosanka, etc) but which is absent in the original form: for Jesus, in the Qur'an, prophesies that the apostle who would come to complete his mission would be 'Ahmad' – the celestial name of the Prophet Muhammad.
>
> Bosnia, then, is a land wherein a live interweaving of four Christologies has been the norm.

A curious feature of the earlier interpretation of what many would see as a highly cryptic document is the absence of the name of 'Ali b. Abi Talib, whose role in all aspects of Sufism in the Balkans, as in most of Eastern Europe, as well as the Muslim World, in general, is noticeably absent. The reference to the '*Paraclete*' refers to verse 6, in Sura 61, in the Qur'an, 'Battle Array' (*al-Saff*). This is an issue extensively debated for centuries within and without the Sufi movement. There is little doubt that within Islam, as Sale confirmed and as Lane, in his *Selections from the Kuran*, (London, 1843, p. 269), reaffirmed,

> For Mohammed also bore the name of 'Ahmad,' both names being derived from the same root, and nearly of the same signification. The Persian paraphrast, to support what is here alleged, quotes the following words of Christ, 'I go to my father and the Paraclete shall come (John, xvi.7):' the Mohammadan doctors unanimously teaching, that by the Paraclete (or, as they chose to read it, the Periclyte, or Illustrious) their prophet is intended, and no other. (Sale).

Professor Ian Netton, in his *Muslim Neoplatonists*, (London, 1982, p. 68) has indicated its significance within the writings of the 'Brethren of Purity'. It is discussed in both the *'Rasa'il'* and in the *'Ja'mia'*. It is associated with Mahdism. Netton remarks, exactly what the Ikhwan intended by their usage of the phrase, 'The Greatest Paraclete' is therefore uncertain, though it is clear from its various contexts that it has eschatological connotations'.

What seems more obvious from the Krka monastery document is that there has been a confusion in the minds of its authors respecting the foretelling of the coming of Jesus by John the Baptist, as it is to be read in Mark 1:7 and Luke 3:16. It would seem likely that two passages have been confused or transferred in order to support the Islamic argument in this matter.

Rusmir Mahmud Ćehajić is unclear whether the Bosnjak Sufi claim crucially depends on either the heterodoxy, the dualism for example, or the essential orthodoxy of the Bosnian Church. The former argument is based upon the premise that the Bosnian Church was a 'vessel' for a medley of Christologies, of a 'heterodox Christianity', and so lending some weight that there might have been a 'matrix' wherein this Islamic doctrine of the *Peygamber* could be fixed in stone and

brass.[6] However, Robert J. Donia and John V. A. Fine strongly dispute the historicity of the claim that the Church was the seat of any major forms of 'heterodox' doctrines:

> Many scholars have depicted the Bosnian Church as dualist, calling it neo-Manichaean or Bogomil. Domestic sources about that Church (Both Bosnian and Dalmation, in particular the rich documentation from Catholic Dubrovnik) do not suggest this. These sources show that, unlike the Bogomils or Western neo-Manichees, the Bosnian Church accepted an omnipotent God, the Trinity, church building, the cross, the cult of saints, religious art and at least part of the Old Testament. Bulgarian and Greek Dualist Bogomils rejected all these items. Furthermore, had these Bosnians been Manichees, the cordial relations these sources depict between Bosnian Churchmen and both Orthodox and Catholic clerics and officials (including those from Dubrovnik and Hungary) could not have occurred.
>
> (Robert J. Donia and John V. A. Fine, Jr 'Bosnia and Herzegovina, a Tradition Betrayed', pp. 23 and 35)

It should be pointed out that the case, outlined above, and the sources which are quoted, are not those solely of Rusmir Mahmud Ćehajić himself. Rather, he is the presenter and advocate of a little known poet in the West, the Bosnian, Mak Dizdar.[7] Mehmed Alija Dizdar was born in the town of Stolac in 1917 and he died in 1971. Stolac is located in Herzegovina. It lies between Dubrovnik and Mostar. Dizdar was a member of the anti-fascist resistance during the Second World War.

He left a number of noteworthy compositions to posterity. Amongst the most significant of these, at least in regard to the roots of Bosnjak identity was his long poem, '*Kameni Spavac*', 'The Stone Sleeper'. This poem is deep in feeling and is intensely Bosnian. It is also local. The region of Stolac is famous on account of its remarkable archaeological monuments. These are the *stećci*, which in the past were mistakenly called 'Bogomil tombs'. They are carved from white limestone and are unique in design, shape, portraits of humans and animals, portraits and carved geometrical decorations. Many of these monuments are to be found in cemeteries in several parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina and outside them. Those near to Stolac are a particularly impressive assembly. We are now aware that any allegedly 'Bogomil connection' was largely a figment of the imagination of Von Asboth, and of many others during the days of the Austro-Hungarian occupation. Not only poets have been fascinated by their design and mystery. Ivan Lovrenovic draws attention to this (ibid., pp. 74–5):

> The lay eye can discern little regularity in the placing of the stones. But something in their ambience suggests that these burial grounds were chosen with a feeling of for surrounding nature. Like much ancient stone art they seem to come alive in the sunlight, to have been worked, carved and placed

> to make use of the full play of light at all seasons and at all time of day. At one moment they are so lit that we suddenly stop amazed by their expressive power, at anothers we may pass them by almost unnoticed, seeing nothing on them but the lichens which merge them into the background.

The golden age of the *stećci* was in the fifteenth century. From the seventeenth century the gravestones were differentiated according to the religion of the deceased. According to Lovrenovic (p. 77):

> They do not embody any set of formalized norms or clichés. The decorated surfaces offer us a hospitable syncretism, an acceptance of elements from the most varied cultures and traditions, and of different artistic genres ranging from the purely ornamental to more realistic figurative motifs.

However, Dizdar's poem is not concerned with archaeology. It is concerned with the hidden message which he believed could be found within the designs carved in the stones.

Dizdar was inspired by an awareness that, in the memories and beliefs of the Muslim Bosnjaks, these tombs evoked a feeling of a deep spirituality, one of unity with the Krstjani, the allegedly schismatic and persecuted members of the medieval Bosnian Church. In his view, these symbols and signs were a secret code, *runes*, which, if properly understood, and correctly interpreted, would be a key which could unlock the door to the sanctuary of the holiness of the Divinity and His very nature.

Rusmir Mahmud Ćehajić is himself a Sufi. He has offered the following comments and interpretations:

> This is the message which unerringly guides the poet's pen across the whiteness of the page.
>
> Through the act of writing, the poet became another witness to the primordial, universal tradition (philosophia perennis, lex aeterna, hagia Sophia, 'din al-haqq').

Both Dizdar and also Mahmut Ćehajić, in his analysis of the poet's message, conceive of the Bosnjaks as being the sole surviving heirs of the medieval Krstjani and a kind of depository of their heritage. The latter had been 'born again', as believers in Christ, within that persecuted Church, in Bosnia, through the 'Baptism of the Book'. To the Krstjani, the christening or the baptism, 'of the Book' signified a turning towards purity and light. This latter is the Logos, 'the primal light of the Praised which is passed to every being at their conception and while safe in the purity of the womb','That was the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world' (St John, Chapter 1, verse 9).

> To this very day the Bosnian Muslims, who are the direct historical and spiritual descendents of the 'krstjani', still perform the Baptism of the Book. By

> tradition, when a bride is being led into the groom's home, she has to kick over a copper jug of water with her right foot as soon as she steps inside his courtyard. In doing so, she answers the entreaty of the Qur'an: 'The baptism of God: and who is there that baptises fairer than God?' (11:38). Then the Holy Book –the Qur'an –is laid on the bride's head. This reflects a passage from the fifth Sura: 'There has come to you from God a light, and a Book Manifest whereby God guides whoever who follows his good pleasure in the ways of peace, and brings them forth from the shadows into the light by His leave, and He guides them to a straight path' (V: 15-16).
>
> This recognition of the Book as the light and glory of the Comforter led the 'Krstjani' to wage a 'mighty war' within themselves, a war to end all wars in the world … that, denying ungodliness and worldy lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God' (Paul's Epistle to Titus, Chapter 2, verse 13).

Mahmud Ćehajić draws attention to that feature which so deeply marks Balkan Islam, the respect, even adoration of 'Ali b. Abi Talib the man who is a mirror of his Creator's attributes, a belief which is the hallmark of the Bektashiyya brotherhood in the Balkans as elsewhere and in many other brotherhoods. With 'Ali, this becomes a 'Trinity-like' association between Muhammad and mankind, as the mirror of the Divine.

Mahmud Ćehajić explains that

> It is no surprise that the poet's name, received through no will of his own – Mehmed (i.e. Muhammad) Alija (i.e. 'Ali), Muharem (Muharram) and Dizdar – form a frame-work of signs that define his poetry, as do the symbols on the stecci and in the ancient books. The Messenger is Muhammad, the Praised, and 'Ali, the High, is the person who is closest in the world to the Praised. Through the latter, the real world is made sacred. Hence Man is 'Muharram': he who is under 'prohibition', or who is 'sacred'.

Mahmud Ćehajić is in strong support of this poet's vision which attaches his religious faith to the symbolism of the figures on the *stećci*, more especially the *kolo* dancers who are depicted there. This dance is known throughout the Balkans and called *oro,* in Macedonia. The meaning of its name is either a 'wheel', or a 'ring'.[8] Those who participate in this dance form a circle and hold hands while it is danced. Often musical instruments accompany the dance and songs are often sung during its course. Such *kolos* may celebrate ancient rituals or they may be a spontaneous response to joyful news or to important events.

Dizdar has conceived of this dance as one with cosmic significance. The scene which is depicted on the *stećci* is facing the 'holy temple', 'the centre of the secret self'. To be aware of this is to understand the *kolo*. The traditional South Slav dance matches the dance of the dervishes. It represents the whirling of the manifest forms around their timeless and spaceless centre.

It is through this dance that the dancers who participate can attain different stages in the realization of individual existence. Three of these stages are of a critical importance. The first is the identification with the centre, the core, of the individual being. This when forms merge with their supraformal manifestations. The second stage is to identify with the centre of all manifest states, whether formal or supra-formal, at a point where they merge with Universal Being. The third stage is that of an identification with the Absolute. There, an infinity of possibilities, whether manifest or non-manifest, merges with the Supreme Reality.

Dizdar's thought blends and reinterprets South Slav history. It is buried in mythology and influenced by unorthodox Christianity and expresses a point of view which he believed was the faith of the Krstjani. Heterodox Bosnjak Islamic traditions are infused with unquestionably Sufi influences and symbols. His faith is to be found summarized in that part of *Kameni Spavac* entitled 'The Garland':

> In this world three powers shine, three pillars of light stand in a line
> The Sun and the Moon and the Perfect Man in their midst are the forces of the macrocosm
> He and the Maid and the Intellect in their midst are the forces of the microcosm
> The kingdom of heaven is within us so let it be known
> The kingdom of heaven is without us, so let it be shown.

4 Islamic Antinomianism, 'heterodoxy' and Persian Monism in the literature and the thought of the Albanians: The Sufi inspirations of Naim Frashëri, Albania's greatest poet

For the Bektashi, the Universe is God.
(Naim Frashëri's '*Bektashi Pages*', quoted in F. W. Hasluck's 'Christianity and Islam under the Sultans', vol. 11, p. 554)

Despite its small size, Albania and the Albanians, the Shqiptars or the Arna'uts, as the latter are sometimes known in the Middle East, have made an outstanding contribution to Sufi thought in Eastern Europe and in the world at large. The country has been a bridge between East and West and, unlike many of its neighbouring Muslim communities, has been a channel for the penetration of Iranian thought and letters, both Sufi and non-Sufi. With justification, Nathalie Clayer, a leading authority, titled her book, published in Berlin, in 1990, *L'Albanie, pays des derviches*.

This chapter will be concerned with several examples of this Albanian contribution: the heterodoxy within the heart of the Bektashiyya, Albania's most noted Sufi brotherhood, the Persian thought which is to be found in the writings, especially the poetry, of several of its leading poets, the important, and also popular, works of the most famous of them, Naim Frashëri, and some insight into the past contacts with Sufi centres in the Middle East, and its leading Sufis all of which inspired this 'Sufi Orientalism' in Eastern Europe, and particularly with Sufism in Turkey, Iraq and Iran.

The importance of the movement of Fadlallah al-Hurufi, the Hurufiyya

In some Muslim quarters, Shihab al-Din b. Baha al-Din Fadlallah al-Astarabadi (d. 739/40 AH or 1339/40 AD) is deemed to be the arch-heretic of all time, and in all Islam. He is accused of being an advocate of heterodox beliefs which sowed seeds of corruption of faith and apostasy wherever its allegedly insidious and semi-magical doctrines spread.

The Hurufiyya is frequently viewed as a revolutionary movement which bears a comparison with what the music critic, David Drew, once described as 'the notorious 'Bolero' composed by the French composer, Maurice Ravel, Drew

described it as a, 'calculated mating of the sophisticated to the barbaric'. In his view, in Ravel's case, that is, this led to a 'curious amoral quality of the music, and thus to the almost hysterical enthusiasm which it sometimes arouses'. Sophistication in Hurufism there is in plenty, not only in the almost impenetrable text of the sacred text, the 'Javidan', and in similar Hurufi works, but also in the refined verses of its greatest and highly esteemed poet, Nesimi. Its Cabalism is both sophisticated and absurd, numerology gone mad. The features on man's visage mirror divine truths, and its magical squares and drawings, the magical numbers with which it plays, are like the antics of the insane numerals and digits and fractions in Ravel's *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges*.

Many Hurufis were far from being persons who exhibited a 'hysterical enthusiasm'. Others, in the Orthodox camp, thought differently of it. Al-'Asqalani described Fadlallah as an ascetic and a heretic who claimed that the letters were metamorphoses of men, 'together with many idle and baseless fancies', whilst Ishaq Efendi in his denunciation of the Bektashiyya, which was to become the semi-official Sufi depository of the Hurufi classics, in his work, *Kashif al-asrar wa-dafi' al-ashrar*, referred to the writings of the Hurufis as the 'blasphemies of the "Javidans"'. In particular, he perceived Fadlallah as the latest in a direct line of such deceivers who arose from the licentious *Ibahiyya* (the Mazdakites), through the Carmathian movement, to a series of 'vicars' and *khalifas*, amongst them 'Ali al-A'la who, it was said, divulged the immoral secrets and explained the esoteric mysteries contained within the 'Javidan' to the inmates of the *tekke* of Hajji Bektash.[1]

Hurufis were, and still are, to be found amongst the Bektashis. But so too are they elsewhere amongst other Sufis and non-Sufis, a number of them in Balkan Islam, in the Caucasus, and even beyond Europe. Very many were to be found in Albania and in Kosovo. Yet many of them also were men of a most sincere piety and of a deep spirituality, the writings of which, if better known, would occupy a high place amongst mainstream Islamic Literature and, indeed religious literature, worldwide. There were also others who eschewed the name of Fadlallah, yet, whose view of the universe had much in common with Hurufi thought.

One such figure in the Balkans, is Albania's greatest poet, and certainly amongst its most popular, Naim Frashëri (AD 1846–1900). As a boy he had attended Frashër 'tekke'. His mastery of Persian verse later gained him the title of the 'Muhammad Iqbal of the West'. He absorbed *mathnawis* of Nesimi and the verse of earlier Albanian poets in his homeland and in Kosovo. Before examining a selection of his literary masterpieces, his *diwans* of verse, his *Qerbelaja* and his *Bektashi Journal*, or *Bektashi leaves* (*Fletore e Bektashinjet*, Bucharest, 1896), one might examine some relevant features of Fadlallah's theosophy and the Bektashi vision borrowed and expanded from Ibn 'Arabi's doctrine of *wahdat al-wujud*.

Essential teachings of Hurufism

Superficial similarities between Christianity and Hurufism led some European travellers to believe that a peculiar relationship existed between the two faiths, a view, strengthened by those who became aware of the poetry of Nesimi in

particular. However, looking closer at Hurufi texts, it is often hard to see, despite their unorthodox character, where they differ, in regard to the person of Jesus Christ, from the Orthodox Muslim position. This is particularly so in the case of those, who are, in the broadest sense, representative of the Sufi tradition.

From the Persian texts which have been edited and translated by M. Clement Huart,[2] in the book called 'the Book of the Definition of the Atom' (*Dar ta'rif-i dharra*), God is manifest in all the atoms of the Universe. The Word is made flesh and the opening of St John's Gospel is quoted almost verbatim, though the words of the Gospel writer are put into the mouth of Jesus himself. *God is the Word and I am this Word*. Yet, Jesus himself is not identical with God, nor is He an emanation of His person, since, in the Hurufi view, as is expressed elsewhere in the texts, 'Only the Single came forth from the Single' (*al-wahid sadara 'an il-wahid'*).

Mary, the Mother of Jesus, is perceived to be occupying a totally different and far loftier plane in the human and eternal realms than any other woman born amongst mankind. An *Ave Maria* would not seem blasphemous, at least in part, on the lips of a Hurufi. Hence, in the 'Book of Alexander' (*Iskandarnameh*), which is in verse and which is attributed to Fadlallah, himself, the triune Water of Life and the Word of God and the Living Water are conceived as being a creation of God. Each one of these three was placed within the womb of Mary prior to the birth of Jesus, and this very fact was the explanation for His unique conception. The Word of God is eternal, while all else perishes. This Word was manifested in Jesus, who, according to the Christian position, to quote the Book of Common Prayer, was 'begotten of His Father before all worlds', an essential part of the Christian creed. Hence the Qur'anic denial of his physical 'death', might be interpreted in line with the exegesis of this claim, as it arose quite logically from this reality of a 'timeless' and 'deathless' relationship with Divinity, this relationship having existed before Time and hence outside the negation of 'Sonship' in the Qur'an. It is, therefore, a relationship of a kind which exists wholly outside the bounds of Time as man conceives it.

In the Hurufi view, as with the 'Brethren of Purity' (*Ikhwan al-Safa'*), the denial of a begotten 'Sonship' in the Qur'an, and the affirmation of the eternity of the 'Word', is not to be viewed as an essentially contradictory statement.

Sayyid Ishaq in his 'Book of Confidences' (*Mahramnameh*), which was composed in 828 AH/1425 AD) states:

> You will know God, through His Divinity, the prophet by his prophet hood, his ability to prophesy, the saint by his sanctity, and you will not exceed the limit in matter of belief, as do the Christians. They, in their belief in regard to Jesus (the blessing and peace of God be upon him) have gone way beyond the limits and the measure in regard to his person. They have, thereby, become infidels. Nonetheless, although Jesus is a Prophet, he does not attain, in his role as a Prophet, the perfection which was that of the Prophet Muhammad. How could he therefore attain the standard for attainment of the Divinity? Anyone who believes, in regard to Jesus, the contrary of what we have just said is false in his beliefs.

Hurufism, in its Christology, at times, conceives of a kind of narrowly circumscribed 'emanation' of the Divine. It is also qualified by the fact that the role of Jesus, in so far as he is a divine person, takes second place to the role of the Prophet Muhammad and it is circumscribed as a unique revelation of the 'Word'(*Kalima*). The latter is enshrined, Cabalisticaly, within the 'hidden libretto' of the Qur'an itself, that is to say, as the Hurufis, themselves, interpret the Qur'an. In other respects, Hurufism might approach the view of Faustus Socinius (1539–1604). Socinius denied the divine nature of Christ and considered him to be a mortal, though he was not an *ordinary mortal*. Upon him, God had bestowed *divinitas* of function, as distinct from *deitas* of nature.

Fadlallah's system is a triple one. It is also cyclical. It offers a 'triple-track' line of spiritual evolution and Divine self-disclosure. In this, the cycle of 'Prophet hood' evolves from Adam to Muhammad; the second, the 'Imamate', evolves from 'Ali to the eleventh Imam, Hasan al-'Askari. The highest state, the third and the loftiest 'track', is that of the *Uluhiyya*', the incarnations of the Deity. These began with the *Mahdi*, who is identified with Fadlallah al-Hurufi himself. Jesus would seem to have no role to play within the second cycle, nor within the third, unless, of course, his status of *al-Mahdi'* is affirmed. Fadlallah here, it seems, had subsumed this role.

Nesimi, whose example as a martyr and as the poetic tongue of Hurufism captured the imagination of Bektashism can only be understood if one considers this entire mission of 'Abd al-Rahman Fadlallah who was the founder of the sect (*nihla*), or the persuasion (*madhhab*) of the Hurufiyya.

Fadlallah, born in 740 AH or 1339/40 AD, began his life as a Sufi wanderer in Persia, based in Isfahan. He started to preach around 780 AH/1378 AD. In 788 AH/1386 AD, he proclaimed the manifestation of his divinity (*zuhur-i kibriya*) which was centred on the *huruf*, the letters of the Arabic alphabet. He attracted a number of followers amongst the dervishes and the artisans. He became known in Central Asia, and Timur sentenced him to death in Samarqand. Fadlallah fled to the Baku region (Shirvan) in the South-eastern Caucasus. Geographically this location was to be pivotal for the spread of his movement, since, located on the very lip of South-eastern Europe, it offered scope for westward expansion into the heart of the continent itself. However, Miran Shah, son of Timur, with whom he had a close relationship, ordered him to be executed. He was 56 years old when he died in 796 AH/1395 AD. Fadlallah was buried in Alindjak (Elindje). Nesimi was to be Fadlallah's greatest spokesperson. Fadlallah, himself was to remain a popular figure in the Balkans, together with a number of his works. His teachings are based on either by his works or by his 'visiting card', the Cabalism which he expounded. Based upon the numerology (*jafr*) of Ja'far al-Sadiq, it appeared to have incorporated other systems, some associated with the Western Asian extremist sects (the *Ghulāt*). It is occult (*bātinī*) and obsessed with the hidden meaning of its alphabetical system. Its power base in Asia Minor rapidly took it further westwards into the Balkans. Amongst its missionaries, the most important was probably Fadlallah's disciple, Mahmud 'Ali al-A'la (d. 822 AH/1419 AD) from Ishik. To him, is attributed a system of magical atomism, a

'science of dots in combination' and a Hurufi Commentary upon the Qur'an. However, the work which became best known and which became the model of such commentaries among the Balkan dervishes was Fadlallah's own masterpiece, his *Javidan-i Kabir*. It is known to Albanian Bektashis and to Bulgarian Babai's. Manuscript copies of the entire work, or abridged excerpts, are to be found in manuscript collections in Tiranë, Krujë, Baku and in many libraries, large and small, elsewhere. According to Professor E. G. Browne this work was written before 792 AH/1390 AD.

Fadlallah al-Hurufi is sometimes known by another name in the Balkans, amongst the general populace, especially amongst the Bektashis in Albania. Reference to its use amongst the dervishes in Krujë will be made again in Chapter 6.[3] That popular name is 'Fazl-i Yazdan', which is clearly the equivalent of 'Fadlallah' (Fadl-Allah), in Arabic. 'Fazl-i Yezdan' is often confounded with 'Ali, both being conceived within a single manifestation of the Godhead. This name is a striking one. *Yezdan* is an Iranian word. Its presence amongst the Albanian Hurufis and the association with 'Ali within a 'trinitarian' scheme, bears all the hallmarks of the *Ghulat* sects, such as the Kizilbash, the Kurdish, Ahl al-Haqq and even the Yezidis of Kurdistan and in the Caucasus.[4]

Similar to these sects are notions in regard to the divine status of Man, where cyclical theories also operate. Man, in a perfect state, is personified in Adam. In Fadlallah's *Javidan*, for example (e.g. the Cambridge University copy, Ee.1.27, folios 315 and 397), Adam is shown as part of a truly momentous cosmic scheme. He stands at the central point of the World, its navel, its very heart, the black stone of the Meccan Ka'ba. Adam is described as standing in the exact place where 'the chest, the nape of his neck, and his brow are perceived'. He and Eve, his wife, form the point of the mole which is the microscopic focus of pure beauty. Since Man is Adam's descendant, the vicar of God, then he is able to obtain a truer awareness and knowledge of His being through that science which is based upon the Gnostic meaning of the 32 letters of the Persian alphabet. Words are made up from the letters which are composed from the elements, from earth, air, water and fire. They are conceived as being identical with their embodiment in all Nature, though uniquely and supremely in the human form. The name of God is written clearly in the letters on Man's visage. Man and the mind of Man are identical with the Ultimate Reality.

As Naim Frashëri expressed it, popularly, in verses from his 'Flowers of Summer' (*Lulet e Verës*):

> The road that leads to God's own mind
> Is nothing more than of mankind.
> If man holds man in high esteem,
> He has revered his Maker's name.
> Look in our hearts, and He is there;
> Our hearts are homes with Him to share.
> When God first sought to show His face
> He made mankind his dwelling place.

A man that knows his inward mind
Knows what God is. It is mankind.
(translation by Stuart E. Mann)

Hurufism was born out of suffering, and out of a long memory of suffering, especially the suffering of the martyrs of Karbalā', in Iraq, 'Ali's sons. Martyrdom will be repeated, endlessly, although primarily it is centred in Fadlallah's own martyrdom. However, there is the Messianic hope. There will be a Second Coming at the hand of the 'Lord of the Sword'.

Hurufism was throughout its history, at all times and in all places, including its followers in the Balkans, a radical, a revolutionary and a popular movement. Within the *tekke* the circle of worshippers who are gathered, replace the direction of Mecca (the *qibla*) by sitting opposite the faces and bodies of their brothers and sisters. The human face has replaced the Meccan Ka'ba.

Wahdat al-Wujud

A belief in Divinity in all forms of life and in nature, amongst the Bektashis and Hurufis in Albania, was a consequence of their acceptance of the Sufi, and especially Ibn 'Arabi's, belief in the 'Unity of Existence (*wahdat al-wujūd*)'. Here, Hurufism, also adopted the message of Qasim al-Anwar, Persian poet and Hurufi and Nuqtawi, who, in the year 830 AH/ 1426/7 AD, was implicated in an attempt to assassinate the Timurid king, Shahrukh. He was accused of being involved in Hurufi insurrections. He is famous for his verses which describe the Divinity seated upon His throne on that seventh day when He reposed and He reflected. It gave birth to a poetic and pantheistic Monism, the hallmark of this school:

Each mote's a Throne, to put it plain
Where He in some new Name doth reign.
Know this and so to Truth attain.[5]

The late Baba Rexheb, who established the first Albanian Bektashi *tekke*, in Detroit[6] illustrated his explanation of *wahdat al-wujūd* by the Bektashi poet, Naim Frashëri:

In each single 'One' is the foundation which creates and directs. They all derive from 'One'. All numbers are made up of one repeated many times

The man who has become perfect recognizes and understands fully this concept, for he has removed the 'I' and the 'You', and in his heart has remained only one true 'One', the Almighty God.

Naim Frashëri further writes:

In the vast ocean the eye sees in each wave all of the seas.
Look then closely at each wave your eye can see.

The influence of Nesimi

Through the poetry of the Turkoman, 'Imad al-Din al-Nas¯m¯ Nesimi), that Hurufi beliefs have spread far and wide amongst the Muslim communities of Eastern Europe and especially so in the Balkans. He was born, either in Iraq, as some Iraqis vigorously maintain,[7] or in the region of Baku, in Azerbaijan, a view which the Azerbaijani's claim with much historical evidence to support their claim. According to Professor Mélikoff, Azerbaijani scholars have discovered that he was born in the village of Nesim, near to the important city of Shamakha, and, in all probability, it occurred in the year 1370. It is also probable that he was the son-in-law of Fadlallah al-Hurufi, himself.

Nesimi was flayed alive in Aleppo, in Syria, in 829 AH/1417/8 AD. Like his master he was a martyr for his faith. However, towards the latter part of his life, his devotion to the memory of Fadlallah was overtaken by his adoration for the great Sufi martyr, al-Hallaj.

The obscurantist, numerological and apopolyptic vision of Fadlallah is now mellowed, humanized and sensualized by the poet, Nesimi, thereby enabling the message of Hurufism to appeal to the hearts of poets, and through them to the hearts of the people. The images are now the cup, the beloved cup-bearer, the erotic and the scented. Man's nature is the very Book of God, hence also is Man's habitat; his home, his homeland. Man's face is the *Fatiha*, the opening *Sura* of the Qur'an. Seven signs, which have been inherited from Eve, the 'Mother of the Book' are mirrored in the 'Seven of the Repetition' (*Sab' al-Mathani*), in Holy Writ. The *Fatiha* opens with 18 letters, which correspond to 18,000 worlds, which are reduced, in their number, to 14 letters, when God, Himself, is subtracted from this total.

All Nature is the manifestation of the Deity. Man is the Microcosm, and, in miniature, he contains within Himself all that exists in the Cosmos.

The poetic Monism of Nesimi has had a tremendous influence upon the popular Sufi poets of the Balkans, and especially in Albania. Some of these poems are addressed to the members of the Bektashi sect alone, while others are proclaimed to the mass of the people, who read, or recite the works of poets who have brought home the essential message to the people, a message which has been set on fire by the fervent national, even nationalist, aims of the greatest among these poets. Naim Frashëri was perhaps the most typical of such poets in South-eastern Europe and even today must be counted amongst the very greatest. In all his works the blend of Hurufism, Bektashism, Western liberal thought, Albanian patriotism and nineteenth century humanism is revealed in almost every verse which he penned:

> Friends rejoice and curb your anger
> when you sip the blessed wine.
> Refrain from squabbling and abuse,
> And never brag and never whine,
> For this insults our Lord of bounty.

He planted grapes upon His vine.
In your midst you find Him hidden,
In your features, in shape, divine.
Not a thing will ever perish,
Not a living thing is lost
In this world nothing may vanish
It may change its form at most.Our whole universe is constant and
Will undergo no change.
No extinction, nor addition,
No reduction of its range.
Man may die, yet like all creatures
He will come to life anew.
Such is the law of our Creator,
To whom all human life is due.

(adapted from the translation by Ali Cungu
in his *Frashëri's Song of Albania*, Smithtown, New York, 1981)

Not only is Nesimi and the Hurufi/Bektashi tradition expressed poetically, and popularly, in these verses, but also thoughts of al-Rumi (d. 1273) and Shamsi Tabriz, in Reymond Nicholson's translation (*Selected Poems from the Divani Shamsi Tabriz*, first edition, 1898, second edition, New Delhi, 1994, Appendix 11, pp. 343–4):

Yet stay not here thy journey: thou shalt grow
An angel bright and home far off in heaven.
Plod on, plunge last in the great Sea, that so
Thy little drop make oceans seven times seven.

Major Bektashi and Hurufi works by Naim Frashëri

The Bektashi beliefs of Naim Frashëri (1846–1900) may be seen in his principal works, whether in verse or in prose. His epic poem, *Qerbelaja*, which is about the martyrdom of 'Ali's son, al-Husayn, at Karbalā', marked the peak of the quest by Albania's noted Bektashi poets in the nineteenth century to dramatically describe those events which the annual celebration of the *matem* (Ar. ma'tam) meant to the suppressed Albanian people. As is pointed out by Robert Elsie,[8] each of the ten nights, in *Muharram*, is 'dedicated to one of the Shi'ite imams, and extracts are recited from the 'Hadiqatu's-su'ada' (*shuhada*) (the garden of the blessed/martyrs) by the great Azeri poet, Fuzuli (1494/1498?–1556)'. Naim had Albanian predecessors, more especially Dalip (Talip) Frashëri and Shahin Frashëri who had each composed lengthy odes on this same subject.

The Bekrashi movement had ample opportunity, through Constantinople, to draw upon the historical and poetical sources in order to furnish the dramatic and traumatic events, personalities and lessons for humanity of this major event in Iraq. However, it should not be overlooked that in several Balkan *tekkes* Iraqi

Bektashis, who knew the historical sites at first hand, were able to graphically enhance the impact of the events recalled. The noted *tekke* at Durballi Sultan, in Thessaly, knew at least eight 'Babas' from Iraq between 1522 and 1753, one of which, Emin Baba (1643–55) came from Karbalā' and in the days of Naim and his predecessors the '*tekke*' of the brotherhood were flourishing, as a recently published article has mentioned (Appendix 1).

Naim, when young, had studied Persian poetry in Zosimea Secondary School, in Ioannina, including Rumi. He wrote a Persian grammar, in Istanbul and it is Persian Sufism which pervades his 'Paradise and winged words' (*Parrajsa dhe fjala fluturake*), which was published in Bucharest, in 1894.

It is Bucharest, also, where one of his most personal works which reveal his Bektashism, his lofty Muslim ideals, his humanism and his love of humanity was first printed. All are revealed in a work of a more popular appeal. Here too, the Hurufi influences are also discernable. According to Stuart Mann[9]

> His *Bektashi Journal* (*Fletore e Bektashinjet*, 1896) belies its title. It is, in fact, a collection of original poems embodying the pantheistic philosophy and aims of the Bektashi sect. It was designed to attract Albanians to a liberal faith acceptable to Christians and Moslems alike, and so to remove one cause of national dissention.[10]

F. W. Hasluck, on the other hand, offers a comprehensive translation, via Greek, of *Bektashi Pages*. Admittedly this is far from ideal. In his introductory comments, he remarks that 'Naim Bey's pamphlet passed through two editions, printed respectively at Bucharest in 1896 and at Salonica in 1910 'in a mixed character based on Roman, but borrowing letters also from Cyrillic and Greek. It is now everywhere on sale in Albania'. Hasluck's translation has a short glossary of Albanian religious terms.[11]

The content is overwhelmingly 'orthodox' Bektashi, and indeed, entirely Muslim in its message. However, at certain points Naim openly confesses to his so-called 'pantheist' beliefs. For example, in Hasluck, p. 554, he declares that 'for the Bektashi the Universe is God', an affirmation of *wahdat al-wujud*. He adds, on p. 555, 'All things are in man, yea, even the True God, since when He wished to manifest Himself, He made man in His image and likeness'. On p. 558, the image of the *dhikr* recalls the imagery which was later explored by the Bosnian poet, Dizdar.

> Whosoever obtains a Permission from the Guides enters into the Choir of the Saints, since all the saints are linked together hand in hand, and thus he enters into this company, and into the Chain of these Lords, as in a dance.

A more recent rendering of this passage in Naim's text distributed on a Bektashi Website, translates it as:

> Whoever receives permission from the Guides can enter into the presence of the 'Evliyas'. All the Saints are linked spiritually. Thus the Dervish can enter

> into the company of the 'Evliyas' and then into the 'silsilah' as in the Circle with permission.

In the note to this translation, it is explained that '*Silsilah* is the spiritual chain that links all Saints back to the Prophet. When you come into the company of the *zikr* many orders do a slowly turning dance with arms linked rotating in a circle'.[12]

Bektashi and Hurufi poets amongst the Albanians during the lifetimes of, and after, Naim Frashëri and his contemporaries

Some of these poets, in Albania and in Kosovo, surpassed Naim Frashëri in the challenge of their esoteric verse, and in their absorption and recycling of Hurufi influences. These poets were masters of the art of the 'couplet maker' (*Bejtexhin*) and were enthusiasts of the school of Albanian literature in Arabic script ('*Aljamiado*').

Baba Salihu from, Matohasanaj, near Tepelenë, translated into prose al-Fuduli's 'Garden of the Martyrs' (*Hadiqat al-shuhadā'*), already the literary spur of Dalip Frashëri and crowned in Naim's *Qerbelaja*. Shejh Jonuzi (1845–1909), in his verse, lauded the *Nur Muhamed Mustafaja* ('Light of the Prophet' (*Nur Muhammadi*). The sequence of his verses is constructed upon a letter of the Arabic alphabet, *Elifi* and upon the dotted and undotted letters (*Nokta tylbejana*). He offered a necklace of poetic pearls which betray the esoteric, cryptic and artful techniques of the Hurufi school. Other poets, some little studied, composed likewise.

Yet others are classed as exponents of metempsychosis, a belief wholly unacceptable in Orthodox Islam. In considering an ode composed by Hoxhe Dobi, from Gjirokastër,[13] Hajdar Salihu singles out as a major feature of his poetry the Hurufi permeated vocabulary and imagery of his Bektashi verses:

> Bektashism is mixed with Hurufism, the latter being a doctrine which accords with the ascribing of symbolic sign, with omen, and with design, to the numerical order and sequence. This rests upon the letters of the Arabic alphabet, joined to the doctrine that there is a combination, both imaginary and mystical, with the literary creation which has been brought into existence thereby ('*Bektashizma i tij është i përzier me hurufizëm, doktrinë kjo sipas të cilës shkronjat e alfabetit arab i merr si shenja dhe viza dhe u jep vlerë numerike dhe në baze të tyre bën kombinime fantastike dhe mistike përmes krijimet letrar*').

Such numerical literary feats and creations are frequently highly complex and are well nigh impenetrable to the uninitiated. In one verse, in *Gjuftei Hoxh Dob*,[14] the poet refers to the form and shape of 'him who denies the Grace of God'. His shape is that of a 'hideous and ugly monster' ('*në surat të hajvanisë*'). It is

unclear whether the view of the poet is metaphorical, or whether he literally believes that such a sinner will be physically reincarnated in the form of a monster or animal (Ar. *hayawān*). His foe is the enemy of Muhammad-'Ali and, in any event, he is condemned to punishment within a bestial and utterly debased form of existence. This is the situation in a world where Man and Nature are interrelated and inseparable, and where both are pervaded by the essence of Divinity

> Hasm i Muhamed Alisë, që ka faztl-ull-llah inqar
> Në surat të hajvanisë do të hijë si murdar
> Në sifat në egërsira sado qe janë zahir
> Nëpër surat ne tëbdira do të gjezdis ai munqir.

Faztl-ull-llah is a double-entendre (*īhām*). It refers to the 'Grace of God' and also to the name of Fadlallah al-Hurufi, himself. Kathleen Burrell, in her book on Nesimi's poetry offers a number of examples.

Beyond Albania's borders, in Kosovo, Hilmi Abdyl Maliqi (1856–1928) undertook the task of translating from Arabic, Persian, and Turkish, the 400-paged *waridat* by the heterodox rebel, Badr al-Din al Simavi (1358–1416).

Many of the poems of this school, religious songs of praise (*ilahi* and *kesidas*) show a loyalty to the 'Alid tradition. Several poets believe in 'Muhammad-'Ali'. Their alphabetic couplets are of a Hurufi inspiration. Allusions to metempsychosis are to be found in their verse.[15]

The poets in the Albanian *tekkes* reveal all the influences which are to be found in the Bektashi works in other parts of the Balkans and in Nearer Asia. They can be matched with examples from Egypt, and also from Iraq. Some information about the little-known Iraqi school will be included in Appendix 1 to this book.[16]

5 Popular Sufism in Bulgaria and Macedonia – Demir Baba Akyazili, the Kizilbash saints of Deli Orman and the neo-Malamiyya of Muhammad Nur al-'Arabi

> Verily to find the signs promised to believers in Mark's Gospel, in these days it is to the Sufis thou must go
>
> (Sic. Shaykh Ahmad Kashshsaf from Bulgaria or Macedonia, quoted by W. H. T. Gairdner (1873–1928), '*The Way of a Mohammedan Mystic*', Otto Harassowitz, Leipzig, 1912, pp. 8–9)

The Eastern Balkans, especially Thrace, Bulgaria and Macedonia, formed an important region for the establishment of Sufi brotherhoods, including that of the Bektashiyya. In the past, their influence also extended into Kosovo.

Over many generations, and by the presence of 'holy families', whose inheritance passed down over many generations, they created a network of branches and sub-branches. Some of these branches were to merge with other brotherhoods. Their followers included diverse populations, either of Balkan peoples or of those who had arrived in the Balkans from Asia Minor, the steppes of the Ukraine, and beyond; Turks, Tatars and Turkomans, Iranians and even Arabs, from the heart of the Middle East.

The Ramazaniyya, for example, established branches in Bulgaria, in Macedonia and in districts beyond them. The spiritual chain of authority of its Shaykhs (*silsila*), Seyh Fazil 'Ali Rumi, in this instance, boasted of established and initiated incumbents in the *tekkes* of Samakov and Sofia and Kustendil in Bulgaria, in Salonica, Veles, Belgrade and Debra, as well as in other localities in Asia Minor. With these they kept a close contact at various times. One of the most important of the Bektashi *tekkes*, for example, was that of Harabti-Baba. Its fine structure still survives and it is preserved as an important historical monument in the city of Tetova, within the Republic of Macedonia. The entire region was likewise important for the role which was to be played by the Malamiyya and the neo-Malamiyya brotherhoods. The members of the aforementioned brotherhoods (*turuq*) were Turks, Albanians, Greeks and Macedonian and Bulgarian Slavophones. The Hurufi movement and its doctrines were established in Bulgaria through the mission of Mir 'Ali al-A'la who was a member of the Hurufi group who were known popularly as *isi*'. Their presence in that country dates back to the sixteenth century, though Hurufi propaganda and its doctrines came

to Bulgaria centuries before. *Tekkes* where *isiks* permanently resided included Akyazili (near Varna), Filibe (Plovdiv) and Tatar Pazari, all of which are situated in Bulgaria. However, it is the Alawite Kizilbash community of the Deli-Orman region in North-eastern Bulgaria which has most stubbornly preserved the heterodox Sufi tradition and whose resilience has enabled them to survive persecution and suppression over the past centuries.

Their tradition is known as the 'Baba'i' tradition. This characterizes the entire Alawite Kizilbash community of North-eastern Bulgaria. They number at least 100,000 souls. Their records date back to before the sixteenth century. They include *abdals*, some of whose asceticism and habits aroused strong emotions, even outrage, amongst their pious Muslim constituencies.

Ahmet T. Karamustafa remarks[1]:

> Another antisocial dervish practise, particularly inscrutable from a modern perspective, was self-laceration and self-cauterization. The *Abdals* of Rum displayed excessive zeal in carving names and figures on their bodies, a practise not recorded for the other dervish groups; This may presumably be explained by the fervent Shi'ism of the *Abdals*. Whatever the religious and psychological motives behind such behavior, it manifestly deviated from established religious custom in Ottoman Anatolia and the Balkans and increased the distance between *Abdal* piety and social convention.

The poet, Hayreti (d. 941 AH/1535 AD), from Vardar Yenicesi, now in Greece, lauded these ascetics, often naked and shaven, adorned with ritual symbols, devotees of mortification of the flesh and greatly influenced by doctrines of the Twelver Shi'is.

The best known of these warrior dervishes, who were associated with the Bektashiyya and the Rifa'iyya, was Sari Saltik. His reputation is so widespread in Eastern Europe that I have devoted my next chapter entirely to his historicity, his heroic exploits, his final resting place and the reputation which he enjoys amongst the Albanians, the Qipchaq Tatars and Turks and amongst other Muslims in Eastern Europe, and especially in the Balkan countries.

Another of these saints was Othman, or Osman, Baba, who is closely associated with Bulgaria. Known also by the name of Ibrahim al-Sani (*al-thānī*, the 'second') and by *Qutb*, the 'pole of the saints', he died in 1478. His *tekke*, which was to become popularly known by the number seven, on account of the rituals which were held within it, has suggested some Isma'ili, or Hurufi connection. This *tekke* is located to the west of Edirne, near to Haskovo (Haskoy) according to the hagiography which was written by one of his followers, Kucuk Abdal. In 1483, his true name was Husam Shah and he originated in Khurasan, in Persia, as did so many Sufi missionaries in South-eastern Europe.

Othman 'Baba' believed that sainthood 'shepherded' prophecy. True saints were commonly concealed from humanity. He was critical of the Sufi masters who claimed exclusive rights to the guidance and to the instruction of neophytes. He believed firmly in a vision of the 'Unity of Being' (*wahdat al-wujud*). God

was manifested in all things visible and invisible. Othman Baba claimed to be identical, in essence, with Muhammad, Jesus, Moses and Adam. He even claimed unity with the Godhead. He combined renunciation with social activities.Othman Baba had two brothers. Yenihan Baba was the eldest of the three and Sari Baba, the youngest. As the years passed only the first two have remained a part of the cycle of legends, a 'diad' like Muhammad-'Ali, in Albania. This replaced an original 'triad'.

Valery Grigorov has analysed their relationship in some detail[2]:

> The images of Othman baba and Yenihan baba are in a binary opposition, the former being an absolutely sinless man while the latter is susceptible to sin. Yet the two brothers constitute the unit of the sacred space complementing and supporting each other. In the hierarchy of holiness of Bulgarian Muslims, Othman baba definitely ranks higher than Yenihan baba. Yet, rather unexpectedly, according to Bulgarian Muslims in the Central Rhodopes, being a pilgrim to the *tekke* of Yenihan baba equals a pilgrimage to Mecca. They declare that 'Yenihan is the Bulgarian Mecca'. The elaboration of the mythologeme of a Bulgarian Mecca ranging at an equal level of holiness with the real one raises a number of questions concerning the compensatory mechanisms in creating the desired but unattainable sacred where it is attainable and convenient for the potential pilgrims.
>
> Represented are also the different functions of the *tekke* – as a holy place for pilgrimage, as a place for a ritual sacrifice, '*kurban*', as a place for the veneration of the baba-saint, as a place one visits for '*hayir*', as a place of curing sacrifices …
>
> The information gathered so far allows us to conclude that the Bulgarian Muslims from the Central Rhodopes choose to make the ritual visit to the *tekkes* at a time convenient for them, usually during a holiday when they are not at work, when the weather is good (preferably in the summer), when work in the fields is not very intense, and they do not always take into consideration the religious holidays in the Muslim calendar. To define this new attitude towards the sacred we have adopted a term introduced by Evgania Ivanova, 'utilitarian sacred', that is, an adaption of the sacred to the utilitarian aspects of the modern times. The revival of Islam observed in some parts of the Rhodopes leads to new attitudes in the reverence for *tekkes*. It is believed that this is an innovation introduced in Islam by the Ottoman Tuks and is considered bad

Amongst the disciples of Osman Baba was Akyazili Sultan. He was also known as Ibrahim Baba. His sanctuary is located within the village of Obrociste which is situated between Varna and Balcik, in Bulgaria. The number 'seven' had determined the plan, the shape and much of the symbolism of this sanctuary.[3] (For a description of the Akyazili *tekke*.)

Akyazili became a leader of the *'Abdals'* in 1495/6. One of his disciples was Yemini, who, in 925 AH/1519 AD, composed an ode on the life and miracles of

'Ali b. Abi Talib. It was named the *Faziletname*. In this poem he declared the divinity of Fadlallah al-Hurufi.

Muhyiddin Abdal, in his poetry, made mention of Osman Baba and Akyazili Ibrahim Baba. According to Irène Mélikoff, his verse is entirely syllabic and he is ranked highly amongst the Bektashi poets. He was a fervent Hurufi and was influenced by the poet, Nesimi. Traditionally, Muhyiddin Abdal is, by repute, buried in Thrace between Kirklareli and Edirne, in the locality known as Coke, near the village of Hacidanisment. He travelled extensively in the Balkans. In one of his poems, called the 'travelogue' (*seyranname*), he praised the chief towns of Rumelia which he visited. However, Coke is particularly singled out for his praise.

Another saintly personality associated with Bulgaria is Gani Baba. He was one of the Qalandari mendicants. He lived in an earlier age, during the lifetime of Hajji Bektash, himself, at the beginning of the fifteenth century. He was also known as Husam Shah. He was a warrior in the cause of Islam. He gathered disciples in Edirne and his exploits took him as far as Plovdiv and Tirnovo. He is said to have been buried in a village to the south of Kirklareli, in Thrace.

The 'Iron Baba', Demir Baba, is the most important spiritual leader amongst the Kizilbash 'Alawites of Deli Orman. Historically, he is the foremost saint of the Baba'i community. His tomb is a major Muslim shrine in Bulgaria. This place of pilgrimage is situated at Zavet, between Isperikh and Kubrat, in Northern Bulgaria. In Baba'i traditions, Demir 'Baba' is associated with a far more significant figure in the history of Sufism in Deli Orman and, indeed, throughout the Balkans. According to the tradition, this saint would have been a partisan of Shaykh Badr al-Din. He would have accompanied the latter from Silistria.

Several of the stories which are told about Akyazili and Demir Baba and his followers are typical of the popular sentiment about these heroes and saints. Heterodoxy is to be found in such stories as are told about the dervish Hasan Pehlivan (who is Demir Baba). His Persian name indicated a warrior fighter in some worthy cause. Other stories are about his *tekke* and its origins.

Much of the content which follows is representative of the numerous and repetitive folk tales and allegories which are told amongst the Bulgarian Kizilbash Alawis. They are from cycles of stories about the relationship between the exploits of the warrior devishes and their families and their Sufi brotherhoods. Special devotion is directed towards Hasan Pehlivan, or Demir (Temur/Timur) Baba.

Some of these written compositions are in note-books. Others are to be found in the texts of the words, songs and poems (*nefes* and *ilahis/ilayhis*) which are recited or read during festivals and during regularly held religious gatherings. If they are chanted during a ceremony called a *zakir* (*dhikr)*, either out of doors, or in a *tekke*, any singing is accompanied by a mandolin (a *saz*). The stories of the warrior dervishes are a part of a far larger Islamic repertoire. This includes the biography of the Prophet and the exploits on the battlefield of 'Ali, Hasan and Husayn. Here the greatest of the battles is Karbalā' as is the case amongst the Bektashis in Albania.

One manuscript, preserved in Sofia, is entitled the *Kitab Vilayetname* of Timur (Demir) Baba Sultan. It is a valuable historical document. It is being studied and

edited by Nevena Grammatikova, who has an expert local knowledge of these local traditions. It is written in Ottoman Turkish, with many Arabic and Persian loan words which are unknown to the Kizilbash today. They are no longer familiar with the Arabic script. The manuscript has 100 folios. It was completed and written down in *Muharram* 1129 AH (that is, between the 16th December, 1716 and the 15th January 1717 AD).

The work opens with the family tree of Demir Baba. His lineage is traced back to Noah, Abraham, Muhammad, ‘Ali b. Abu Talib, Hasan and Husayn. It is markedly Shi‘ite in character. The content then introduces the deeds which marked the life of the hero. These deeds include the following:

1 The deeds of Akyazili Baba, who is also called, Ak Azala, or Ak Jazala. These feats were to result in the marriage of Haci Dede who was to be the father of Demir Baba. This marriage was witnessed by an assembly of the holy, devout and initiated amongst the Sufi saints. They were the patrons of *tekkes*, or they were Shaykhs, or they were custodians of shrines, who were called *turbedars*, or they were dervishes. Dursin Baba was appointed to be the godfather of Haci Dede, Kizana Sultan was the godmother (*sagdic*) of the bride and Tay Hizir participated in the wedding as the father of the bridegroom.
2 The rituals performed at the birth of Demir Baba. They included the blessing given to the infant. It was their chosen belief and their hope that he would become ‘the Saviour of our sect’.
3 An account of the many quests of Demir Baba. He was accompanied by Akyazili Baba and Haci Dedi. The account includes their visit to famous *tekkes*.
4 The death of Mustafa Baba. Akyazili Baba appoints Demir Baba to be his successor. He bestows his holiness and his sanctity upon him.
5 The many miracles performed by Demir Baba. They include his destruction of a dragon in the Kingdom of Moscow, his participation in the battle for Budapest (Badin), and a battle with Marco, an infidel hero (possibly of the Serbians?).
6 The ‘noble and heroic man’ (*erzade*) of Kizil Deli Sultan *tekke*, puts his seal and license of authority (*icazat*) upon Demir Baba, naming him by this name. Thereby, he acknowledged his right to be revered and to found one of the major centres of the Alawite cult.

A more recent and popularised narrative about some of the feats, the miracles and the mission of Demir Baba has been published as a tract in Bulgaria. It is accompanied by illustrations, somewhat in the manner of those which were drawn to illustrate John Bunyan’s *The Pilgrim’s Progress* and *The Holy War*. My friend, the Bulgarian Ottomanist, Dr Orlin Sabev, has kindly drawn my attention to this work and he has translated the following passages. The booklet, which is written by Boris Eliev, is entitled *Zelezniya Basa Demir Baba*, ‘Demir Baba, the Iron-Father’. It was published in Sofia, in 1982. The selected passages are taken from pp. 43–62:

The following thought crossed the mind of Akyazili Baba, who was the chief, and the preacher, amongst a group of Kizilbash Alawite dervishes who were spreading abroad a faith in 'Ali, the son-in- law of the Prophet Muhammad. They had entered into the region of the Dobruja and *Ludogorie*, where a great number of homesteads (*ocaks*) of Yuruks from Persia, from Anatolia, from Sarindag and from Bulgardag, had been settled, together with their herds.

'We shall not prohibit the drinking of wine, nor shall we force the women to wear veils, ferefas', he told his aspiring neophytes. 'Nor shall we prohibit the burning of candles. Islam has been imposed here by force of arms. The native Christians must come to the faith in 'Ali of their own free will. Thereby, our followers will multiply and the believers will grow in number. You will marry the native women and take care of the holy spring which is sacred. The people who are already here await, with hope, the 'Iron-Father', Demir Baba. We shall give him to them. A preacher must be born. His father will be a dervish and his mother will be a woman who was born, locally. She will be of a noble birth, though, and that preacher will be a leader who must inherit the name and bear the glory of Demir Baba in order to increase our glory, and, thereby, enhance our name'.

Hasan Pehlivan the noble was born. He went to war in Budapest. Akyazili recalled him to Bulgaria.

He was met by a goat-herder, who told him:

'Go to the West. There, in the wilds which lie beyond the tumuli, in the valley of the Chermodlanitza river, there, below the rocks, is the "Five-fingered Spring". Somewhere, in that locality, will be the site of the dervish retreat (*tekke*) of Demir "Baba". One day, I lost my nanny-goat and I found her again at that spot. She was digging in the ground with her hoof and removing human bones from the soil. On the surface of one of the bones was an inscription that indicated that this location was a sacred place and that its sanctity would return once more to it. You should establish your settlement and dervish retreat in that place'.

Hasan Pehlivan went to 'Five-finger Spring'. He founded his settlement upon the ruins of the ancient monastery of St George which had been destroyed. Many years afterwards he gathered his neophytes together. The news that Hasan Pehlivan Demir Baba, 'The Iron-Father', had appeared there spread to other localities.

After the death of Pehlivan Demir Baba, his neophytes erected a seven-sided stone tomb (*türbe*) and there, in the *tekke*, they capped it with a dome surmounted by a crescent, although with a cross concealed within. On its eastern wall they sculptured a portrait of St George in the act of slaying that dragon which had blocked the springs. That deed was accomplished in order to publish abroad that Demir Baba 'was the successor to the power and the glory of the ancient master of the valley and the springs'.

The association of a famous 'Baba' with St George, or with some other Christian saint, with a dragon, a hydra, or with a serpent, or with a maiden princess of

Christian Balkan origin, with religious heterodoxy will be discussed in Chapter 6, since Sari Saltik is by far the most famous of these Babas. However, Demir Baba receives an honourable mention by F. W. Hasluck.[4]

He reports that:

> He was a holy dervish, who was able to make water gush from the most arid rocks, as he did at Kral Bunar, his original dwelling- place, and in the gorge where he built his '*tekke*' and his tomb.

Other holy men of the Kizilbash, in Bulgaria and Romania, are revered in the region of the municipality of Tutrakan This is situated to the south of the river Danube which divides the two countries, today. Some of the population is Turkish, while others in the area of Preslavtsi (Preslavci) is Kizilbash. St George is the patron saint of the local Christians and he is the special patron of the shepherds. A holiday in his honour is celebrated in May. Another, in early December, is '*Nikulden*' which is in honour of the local fisherfolk and during the course of which only fish is eaten. The Muslims, on the other hand, celebrate *Ramazan Bayram* and *Kurban Bayram*, the latter falling two months and ten days after the first. Two dervish *tekkes* are of special importance, The first is known as '*Softi Baba tekke*' which is situated in the outskirts of Tutrakan. It is open to visitors of all faiths. '*Ali Baba tekke*' is more frequently visited. This is partly due to the local belief that 'Ali Baba' once healed the daughter of Tsar Ivan Shishman, who, in order to express his gratitude, became the patron of the *tekke*. It is located near the village of Varnentsi, to the north-west of Preslavci, which is an important centre of the Alawites.

The movement of Badr al-Din of Samavna and the neo-Malamiyya movement of Muhammad Nur al-Din al-'Arabi in Macedonia and in Kosovo

In the sixteenth century, the Ottoman world was disturbed by mystical Messianic movements. Their claims were hotly disputed by distinguished opponents and the counter current was forceful and outspoken. Birgivi Mehmed Efendi, for example, deemed Sufism to be 'Islamic decadence' and, he like others, was influenced by the literalist views of Ibn Taymiyya (1263–1328).[5]

Some of the mystics who were accused were influenced by the example of Husayn b. Mansur al-Hallaj who was executed during the reign of the Caliph al-Muqtadir in 922 . His example inspired generations to follow. One Messianic personality was Molla Qabiz, who, in 1527 assumed a view of Prophethood which was anathema to both Sunnis and Shi'is. In his view, Jesus was exalted in status to a point which seemed to rank him above the Prophet, himself. Less extreme, was the view of Hakim Ishaq, who declared that the Old Testament, the New Testament and the Torah were not 'falsified texts'. Each was authentic and genuine and equal to the Qur'an as divine revelations.

Judged to be heretics, such men were condemned, though probably on political rather than on religious grounds. They were not the first. In the previous

century, a movement of the same ilk was well established in the Balkans. This was especially true in Deli Orman and in Thrace.

The movement was inspired by Badr al-Din of Samavna, a town near Adrianople, in Thrace. He lived between 1358 and 1419. He was a Saljuq on his father's side, a Christian on his mother's. After some years spent in the Middle East, particularly in Egypt, and having been greatly influenced by the mysticism of Ibn al-'Arabi, Badr al-Din was to become associated with Mircea, the ruler of Wallachia in Romania. Badr al-Din was martyred at the hands of the Ottomans, but his idealism and the mystical and inter-faith dialogue which he pursued was to be continued by others.

During his lifetime, in the Greek island of Chios, which he once visited, he attempted to bridge the religious divide between Islam and Orthodox Christianity. He was invited by the Orthodox monks to visit them. They phrased their welcome in words, phrased in an apparent eclectism:

> In the name of the true God and in the name of Muhammad's community. In the name of Jesus, the Spirit of God, and the Word of God, Moses, accept our invitation.

Shaykh Badr al-Din is said to have replied:

> If we are separated by religion, such being so O Divine Mystery, then we have a sole God and we are all his servants.

A joint séance of adoration and of prayer, a *dhikr,* then took place. It was based upon the contemplative spiritual practices of Orthodox Hesychasm, the spiritual exercise which was developed by the monastic order of the Orthodox Church in the Eastern Balkans. Hesychasm, itself, had been possibly influenced at some earlier stage by Sufism. At anyrate, it had been in the distant past influenced by Oriental, including Middle Eastern, meditation .

According to Michel Balivet:[6]

> The leading 'Hesychast', Evagrius Pontus (d. 599) insisted that the knowledge which we had of God in prayer had nothing to do with concepts or images but was an immediate experience of the divine which transcends these. It was important, therefore, for 'hesychasts' to strip their souls naked: 'When you are praying', he told his monks, 'do not shape within yourself any image of the deity and do not let your mind be shaped by the impress of any form.' Instead, they should approach the Immaterial in an immaterial manner'. Evagrius was proposing a sort of Christian Yoga. This was not a process of reflection; indeed, 'prayer means the shedding of thought'. It was rather a an intuitive apprehension of God. It will result in the sense of the unity of all things, a freedom from distraction and multiplicity, and the loss of ego – an experience that is clearly akin to that produced by contemplatives in non-theistic religions like Buddhism. By systematically weaning their minds

> away from their 'passions' – such as pride, greed, sadness or anger which tied them to the ego – 'hesychasts' would transcend themselves and become deified like Jesus on Mount Tabor, transfigured by the divine energies.

Islam was seen by some of the Orthodox as a 'purifying fire', which Eastern Orthodoxy was destined to suffer for its own salvation. George of Trebizond, who was ready at times to quote the Qur'an, and who showed that he was aware of the doctrine surrounding 'Unity' (*tawhid*) saw the Ottomans as an example of God's chastisement.

Something of the appeal of Badr al-Din's movement, and that of others like him, was to continue, although often it lay dormant, in the Balkans, over many centuries. A similar appeal was to be found in the Malamiyya brotherhood, which rested its case upon the Qur'anic 'Sura of the Table' (*Surat al-Ma'ida*, Chapter V, verse 54), *Yujāhidūna fī sabīl-illahi wa-la yakhāfūna lawmat lā'im, dhālika fadllullāhi*, 'They struggle in the path of God and they fear not the blame of a blamer'. The Malamiyya, like the other brotherhoods in the Balkans, was not exempt from Hurufi and heterodox influences.

However, in the twentieth century, its essentially orthodox message was to be preached anew, in Macedonia and in Kosovo, by Muhammad Nur al-'Arabi (1813–87) and by his initiates. The latter included several important Sufis and men of letters from Kosovo. Muhammad Nur was known also by the name of Muhammad 'Arab Hoxha. This name reflected his Egyptian origins. Early on, during his sojourn in the Balkans, he established four *tekkes*, attached to the Malamiyya; at Koncan, Strumica, Prizren and Skopje where he was to spend most of his life in Macedonia. He taught Sufism and religious studies and he wrote at least forty books, some of them in Arabic and others in Turkish.

Amongst the most important of his students was a Kosovar, Shejhu Jonuzi who was also named Haydar. He was born in Toplica where he began his elementary education. His family fled to Vucitern where he studied with a professor of Arabic language and literature, Hafez 'Arif. Shejhu Jonuzi graduated in Istanbul. Upon his return to his home country he met Muhammad Nur in Skopje. There he received the license to train and teach neophytes (*icaza*) from Muhammad Nur who gave him the name of Shaykh Yunis. His task was to further the cause of the Malamiyya amongst the Albanians. A *tekke* was built for him in Suhadoll and he taught there until he died in 1909.

Shejhu Jonuzi's verse contains religious poems of a great length. His *al-Ilahiyyat* contain poems which attain 600 verses. Most of the content is Sufi. It calls for love (*mahabba*) and for justice ('*adala*). Other odes are pedagogical. Two hundred verses are sub-divided according to the letters of the Arabic alphabet. These poems are included within the genre which has been mentioned, known as *Bejtexhinjve*', Albanian poetry written in Arabic script. It accords with the forms and prosody of Islamic poetry in Oriental languages. The Divine Light of the Prophet (*Nur Muhammadi*) is often a topic for meditation and reflection. A collection of 410 verses, *Nokta tylbejana* (*Nuqtat al-bayan*) are devoted to the clarification of the *Shari'a', the Tariqa, the Haqiqa and the Ma'rifa*.[7]

Muhammad Nur and the neo-Malamiyya, in the Balkans, offered a path to follow which possessed a number of individual features. These features and the background are fully described by Thierry Zarcone in his article, *Muhammad Nur Al-'Arabi et la confrérie Malamiyya (xixe-xxe siècle)', in 'Les Voies d' Allah'*, Fayard, Paris, 1996, pp. 479–83).[8]

These were as follows:

1 Nur al-'Arabi centered his teaching around the commentary upon three great representatives of Arabic and Turkish Sufism, Ibn al-'Arabi (12th century) and two followers of his mysticism, Badr al-Din Samavni (15th century) and Niyazi al-Misri (17th century)
2 The great figures of mystical theology and Arab philosophy, al-Ghazzali and Ibn Sina' (Avicenna).
3 The denial of the resurrection of the body. This was a view also held by Badr al-Din.
4 Firm support for the doctrine of the 'Unity of Being' (*wahdat al-wujūd*) of Ibn al-'Arabi.
5 The absence of a special *tekke* for the Malamiyya as distinct from the other brotherhoods.
6 According to his *Risala-i Salihiy*', the submission of the initiate to three binding rules which he should strictly observe before entering the brotherhood:
7 To fight against his passionate self (*mujāhada*).
8 To pray continuously (*dhikr dā'im*)
9 The rejection of the veil of duality, that veil which hides the disclosure to man that the World and the Deity are one and the same.

According to Zarcone:

> There was no initiation ceremony in the Malamiyya and the teaching which the spiritual master gave to his disciple took place in an isolated locality, a mosque or in a private house. The two men faced one another upon their knees and, whilst practising the *dhikr*, without a pause, the neophyte was made aware, at the end of an exercise, 'the unity of actions' (called *tevhid-i ef'al*) that all form of action should be brought afresh before the Almighty. The other degrees which the disciple passed through, stage by stage, with the help of his initiator, were a perfecting of this initial *tevhid* of actions, restoring anew all the 'qualities' (*sifat*) and all the 'existences' (*dhat*) in order to be one with God. Finally, the secret of the creation and the secret of its Creator were progressively disclosed to him in the degrees which followed: *maqam-i jem, hazret ul-jem*, and jem ul-jem, and proceeding along a path at the end of which the veil of the apparent (*zahir*), which is also that of plurality and multiplicity, gave way to the hidden (*batin*). It is during the course of reunions, called *suhbat*, that the Malami shaykhs transmitted their teachings. The *suhbat* could be convened in any place, in the *tekkes*

of one or other of the brotherhoods, or else in a mosque, or in private homes even.[9]

This chapter has concentrated upon the profound influence of 'higher' Sufism in a provincial Islam, at times isolated from close associations with the religion's most important centres of Sufism, at the same time it has mentioned examples of popular Sufi heroic tale and allegory in the Balkans. In them may be found the clearest proof of the underlying Christian and pagan belief which is to be found in the everyday life of the pious laymen in the brotherhoods.

Such belief has survived centuries of harsh criticism and persecution by 'Orthodoxy', whether this be 'heresy hating', 'Shi'ite hating', or '*Ghulat* hating', by Sunni Islam, or by militant Eastern Orthodoxy, fuelled by its faith as a national force, intent by cleansing, rape and fire, to fuel national programmes in parts of Eastern Europe. Its perpetrators went to war with the three fingered sign of the hand which symbolized the 'Trinity', little aware to them that, for some, there was another 'Trinity', the trinity of Allah and Muhammad -'Ali.

Heterodoxy blended folk magic, it blended expressions of humble piety, it did so through the urgent mystical gropings of the heart for identification with divinity; that divinity which was present in the soul of man himself. The art of success was the award bestowed upon the Bektashiyya and upon those other kindred brotherhoods. Their achievement was to establish a popular awareness of the 'Way'. That is the way, whereby Man, as Dr Martin Lings has explained, has 'an operative means of reintegration in his Divine Origin'.

The success of such popular brotherhoods in the Balkans, and in Eastern Europe, generally, is undeniable. This view is forcefully argued and supported by the Bulgarian scholar, Strashmir Dimitrov:[10]

'Some aspects of ethnic development, Islamisation, and assimilation in Bulgarian lands in the 15th–17th centuries', 'Aspects of the Development of the Bulgarian Nation', Sofia, 1989, p. 43.

The sects, and specifically Bektashism, grew closer to the Christian population as they took over many Christian saints and temples, claiming them as Muslim. Researchers point out that the Bektash syncretic type of saint is among local population's oldest and therefore most respected. These were the heroes originating in antiquity, regarded in Christian times as devoted saints, and under Bektashism as Islamic. Often a particular Christian hero continued to be worshipped under Bektashism, turning out to be utraquiste, or a saint worshipped in more than one religion. Some saints passed from one religion to another. For instance St George is often identified with Hazur (Khidr), a very important Muslim saint and St Elijah is connected with Ilias, both having mountain-top shrines where ancient sun temples were supposedly located.Another example is the Christian-Muslim shrines of Sari Saltak Baba who is identified with St Nicholas. The temples of Sara Saltak Baba became the monastery of St Nicholas at Baba Dag, and the monastery on Cape Kaliakra. A holy place for Christians and Muslims was the grave of

St Naoum on the shores of Ohrid lake. The Bektashis 'worshipped their Sara Saltak'. Holy springs and consecrated grounds were proclaimed to be graves of Bektash preachers or warriors and corresponding legends emerged, even though the Bektash order was not formed until after the conquest of the Bulgarian lands. There is ample justification to state that 'the transformation of holy places into the graves of Turkish warrior priests, who allegedly came from the Bektash order, retrospectively associated the Bektashis with the Ottoman Army'.

The Bektashis made better use than the Mevlevi and the Bedreddinists of the 'holy places' where prayers would be allegedly better heard and heeded since there was already a saint there who would put in a good word to God. In the same way as Christians prayed to relics of various holy people or saints, asking them to intervene before God on their behalf, the Bektashes crowded their dervishes' places with 'holy relics' of righteous people called *dede*, *baba*, or *sheikh*. They performed the same role as Christian saints. Bektashi popular Islam was closer to Christianity with its idea of God as head of a patriarchal family, in which the first-born son (Christ) and the mother (Mary) held their due places, and a host of helpers (saints) carried out God's demands or reported on what was going on among the people. Syncretic Islam proved to be a bridge linking Christianity to Islam, but never the other way round. The Bektash order became a sort of patron and representative of converts from Christianity to the Muslim faith.

6 ‘The heterodox hero’, the mythical Sari Saltik and his many tombs in Albanian and in Tatar lands

> For the Bektashi the Universe is God, But in this world Man is the representative of God.
>
> (From ‘*Bektashi Pages*’, by Naim Frashëri)

It is arguable that the most popular of all the heroes of the Bektāshiyya, and indeed many amongst the Muslim population in the Balkans, is the saint, seer, shaman and warrior, Sari Saltik.[1] This is especially the case in Albania, in Turkey and in Romania, where his tomb is believed to be situated within the town of Babadag.[2] The saint is a historical and also a legendary character. The historical evidence, with a few rare exceptions, is almost entirely furnished from Ottoman documents.[3] The contemporary, or near contemporary, references to him, which indicate where he lived, and what charismatic powers he possessed, are almost exclusively reserved to the memories of his miracles, or the brief description about him which was a passage in his book, penned by the Moroccan traveller, Ibn Battuta, in the fourteenth century.[4]

The usually quoted passage, in question, is very short indeed and it is included amongst the anecdotes, told by the famous globetrotter, about his alleged journey between the Crimean peninsula and the city of Constantinople. The entire journey is problematic, whether it occurred, just as he said, when exactly it occurred, which route had he followed, and how was it he obtained the information which he includes, almost casually, in his *rihla*, or globetrotter’s travelogue.

Ibn Battuta wrote that he reached a small town (*balda*), which was known by the name of ‘Baba Saltuq’, in the parlance of the local people. They mentioned to him that this man, Saltuq, was that holy one who had discovered and disclosed unseen mysteries to them. Ibn Battuta recorded what they had told him but he remarked that there were things which were told about the saint which broke the law of the *Sharī‘a* and what it had expressly forbidden. This town and country was the last of those wherein the Turks both lived and ruled. Betwixt it and the first province of the Byzantines was a wearisome march of 18 days through a deserted stretch of steppe that was devoid of any human settlement.[5] Eight days were spent in a waterless tract. Water had to be collected beforehand and it was transported in leather water bags and in animal skins, carried in carts and in wagons.[6]

In many stories, Sari Saltik/Sari Saltuq is associated with a town, either named after him, or a location where he had once resided. This location had been named after him. Unfortunately, the distances of daily marches that are recalled by Ibn Battuta do not site such a town with any precision and certainly not within the vast spaces of the area of the Dasht-i Qipchaq steppe, to the north of the river Danube. The Crimean steppes are, arguably, too close to his point of departure, and also to any town as it is described, furthermore, the shortage of water, the absence of any mention whatsoever of the crossings, or even the existence, of the Danube river, not to mention the vast Danube Delta and Ibn Battuta's total lack of any comment on the Genoese and Romanian settlements which were to be found to the east and south of the town of Babadag, cast doubts on claims that here was the undisputed headquarters of this holy figure. However, this does not exclude his subsequent burial at the traditional holy site of Babadag during subsequent centuries.

According to E. W. Lane, the Arabic word *balad* and *balda*, is normally used to indicate 'a town, a country, a district, a land, even a region', or 'a tract of land which is a place of resort of animals, or genii'. However, this word also includes 'a waterless desert', a *mafāza*, which is possibly of relevance in this context. If it is a problem to attempt to plot a precise 'town' on the map, it might, nonetheless, indicate a tract wherein this holy and heterodox 'shaman-like' character had left a memory of his powers amongst the Qipchāq Turkic and Tatar peoples. The entire region lay some way to the east of the borders of the Byzantine Empire.

Machiel Kiel is amongst the leading authorities on the tomb and history of Sari Saltik in Babadag.[7] He assumes the existence of a town that once bore the name of Sari Saltik. He has argued strongly in favour of this locality as having been the last resting place of the holy man. He has also argued that on the historical person of 'Sari Saltik Dede' very little is known other than that he was a strong and persuasive personality. It was said that he was a native of the Central Asian city of Bukhara. Almost all that is said in detail about him is found in the *Vilayet-name* of Hajji Bektāsh. The historicity of this work was doubted by Georg Jakob, but it was accepted by J. K. Birge, still the greatest authority on Bektāshism. Birge regarded the *Vilayet-name* as a historical source for the period prior to 1400 and with only a few later interpolations. Both Claude Cahen, and George Anarkis, made use of it. Cahen also mentions a *Saltuk-name***,** which is not contemporary with Sari Saltik but is still a very early work. Until recently, the oldest known Arabic source about Sari Saltik was Ibn Battuta, though, as will be seen, we now have an even earlier, and more specific, Arabic source.

The Tangerine traveller was on his way from the court of Khan Özbek, in Southern Russia, to the Byzantine capital. He visited a town known by the name of Baba Saltuq who, he also reported, was an 'ecstatic mystic'. The latter remark hints at some heterodox practices. The town is described as being at the frontier between the Turkish (Golden Horde Tatar) dominions and Christian territory. Ibn Battuta passed along this route, in 1332–33. It is not possible to identify 'Baba Saltuq' with the town of Babadag, specifically, though it is not improbable.

Fig 1 The alleged mausoleum (türbe) of Sari Saltik at Babadag, in Romania. It is now being extensively repaired in order to save it from collapsing. Sari Saltik is mentioned in the Vilayet-Name-i of Sultan Otman Baba (Bodleian Library, Oxford, Ms Turk 43). the work's author is listed under the name of Kucuk Abdal (see fo, 9r), and, it also mentions 9fo, 16v) Koyun Baba whose tomb is allegedly to be found hidden in the forest overlooking Babadag. This Sufi holy place is of a major importance in Eastern Europe and in Turkey and it is visited by pilgrims.

According to the *Saltuk-name*, Sari Saltik was one of the most intimate companions of Hajj¯ Bektāsh. This same source maintains that Sari Saltik founded a *tekke* in Kiligra-Kaliakra in the Dobrudja/ Dobrogea, and that he came to Europe by way of Georgia. However, another reliable source relates, that he came with the followers of the Saljūq chief, 'Izz al-D¯n, across the Bosphorus during the reign of Michael VIII.[8]

Machiel Kiel has diligently continued to undertake an exhaustive examination of the Ottoman and non-Ottoman works, and amongst his discoveries is a

particularly interesting source which suggests that this saint was intimately associated with the Qipchāq Tatars,who, at that time, roamed through the steppes between the Crimean peninsula and what is today the regions of Moldova and Eastern Romania. He remarks:

> Evliya (Çelebi, in his Seyahat-name 111, pp. 36–90) mentions a '*Futouhat* (*Futuwwa)-i-Tokhtamish*'. Tokhtamish the Khan of the Golden Horde, the man who destroyed Moscow (August 1382) ruled between 1380 and 1397/9. We do not known his contacts with Northern Dobrudja in which Babadag lies, but the area was, in any way, very close to his sphere of interest and easy to reach when passing by the Danube fords at Isaccea. From 1241 onward the area immediately to the east of Dobrudja, the Budjak (the name derives from the earlier Cuman settlers and means 'corner') had been a part of the territories of the Golden Horde. This with two short intervals, around 1345, when it was occupied by the Rumanian principality of Wallachia and around 1400 when it was occupied by the Voyvode of Moldavia. According to Grousset, the empire of Tokhtamish stretched from the Dnjester to the Syr-darja in Central Asia. If between the above mentioned dates Budjak was included within the frontiers of the state of the Golden Horde, the period corresponds precisely with the reign of Tokhtamish …. It seems safe to conclude that Tokhtamish was the closest possible neighbour of Babadag. As Sari Saltik is regarded as the man who brought Islam to the Tatars of Southern Russia (in the time of Noghay) an interest in the life of the saint by Tokhtamish is highly probable. The khan of the Golden Horde must have been born in 1330–1340 and could easily have spoken with men who had known Sari Saltik personally. In our opinion, the now hidden works mentioned by Evliya Çelebi, dating from around 1380–90 and 1430–50 constituted the link between Ibn Battutah and Bayezid II and make it certain that Babadag is the real place where Sari Saltik lived and worked. On no other of the alleged six places where he was buried have we such an information as is available about Babadag.[9]

It may be noted that Toqtamish, named above, after his defeat by Timur, was offered asylum in the Duchy of Lithuania by Grand Duke, Vytautas (W¯tuft Kināz L¯twa), who, between 1392 and 1430, settled Qipchāq Tatars from the Crimean region (and also some Qipchāq Qaraims) within the region of Vilnius, Trakai, Novogrudok and İvye, far to the north of Europe. The present Tatar descendants of these Qipchāq people could once have had ancestors who were aware of the person of Sari Saltik.

I shall return to another possible site of Sari Saltik's town, Isaccea, again, a little later in this chapter. In the meantime we have established, with the help of Machiel Kiel, that Sari Saltik was, in origin, a Central Asian saint, who was to become especially associated with the Qipchāq speaking Tatars, and who had settled somewhere, either west, or east, of the river Danube, or of another hydronym, though, possibly, if Machiel Kiel is correct, at no great distance from the Danube's eastern bank, itself.

Machiel Kiel has also been the first to draw our attention to a late, though fascinating, source, hitherto undiscovered, which has shed a detailed light on Sari Saltik and his Sufi background. This source is the *Tuffāh al-Arwāh*, by Kamāluddīn Muhammad al-Sarāj al-Rifā'ī who completed this work in 715/1315, at a date earlier than any known description by Ibn Battuta.[10] The work (a copy is now housed in Berlin) was quoted by the relatively recent man of letters, Yūsuf al-Nabhānī, and the passage to be quoted is taken from the second volume of his, *Kitāb Jāmi' Karāmāt al-Awliyā'*, a work which reports the noteworthy miracles which were performed by a selection of saints and holy personages.[11] The passage reads as follows:

Saltuq the Turk

Al-Sarrāj has said,[12] 'According to that which has been reported to us rests upon the authority of a number of trustworthy persons. Amongst these was Sayyid Bahrām Shāh, the Haydari dervish.[13] May God Almighty have mercy upon him'.

Sayyid Bahrām Shāh reported that Shaykh Saltuq, may God have mercy upon him, travelled from the town[14] (balad), where he resided, together with a group of his followers who numbered less than one thousand. It was his intention to launch a raid upon the infidels.[15] Some days passed and then the Shaykh arose. He stripped his clothes from his body and, then and there, stark naked, he began to move to and fro as he stood upright.[16] His movements were disturbing and he acted as though he was someone who was struggling with an adversary. All this occurred while, blood oozed with the sweat from his body.[17] The novices (al-fuqarā') wiped his body, time after time, during a period that lasted for three hours, about a quarter of the daylight hours. Then he sat down and he was quiet. His companions, including Sayyid Bahrām Shāh, who was one of them, asked him the cause of this occurrence. They regularly asked him such questions for such was their wont. He replied, 'that company of men went forth to fight the foe. A host of the infidels, who numbered some thirty thousand went forth to fight them. When I saw how feeble they were in the face of those others, I joined their company. I did so through the power of the Almighty. I fought against their enemy and I rescued them from death. I went before them on their way. Only very few of them perished. They totalled three. They had followed a path that was different from the one which I had told them to follow. The first of them will be in your midst after a week hence'. His companions said, 'We have noted the date in the calendar'.

When the week had passed, those who were the first among their number arrived at the retreat (zāwiya) and not in their homes. They threw themselves down at his feet. They wept, just as a mother does when she is bereaved. They cringed submissively and they said, 'For long we have been in ignorance of your divine status. Let us abide at your bidding, O saint of God'.

They were questioned about what had taken place during this episode. They said, 'We were less than one thousand in number. When the infidels

engaged us they numbered thirty thousand men. When we realized that death faced us, Shaykh Saltuq appeared before us. He fought with them before our very eyes. He repulsed them, and he rescued us so that we were safe and we were well'.

Ten days later, the remnant also arrived safely. They told exactly the same story. They had only lost a few souls who had strayed from the direction and the path which was to be followed, according to Shaykh Saltuq's directions.

He (al-Sarrāj) said, 'We were told by one who was trustworthy from amongst the Companions of Shaykh Saltuq, the aforementioned', and he said, 'I recalled what I had heard about (the Sufi) Ibrāh¯m b. Adham,[18] may God be pleased with him, that he ordered a fish to be brought to him and they brought him the extremity of its tail from the sea. This story is commonly told. On the morning of that very day, he said, 'Let us arise because I have a need for much fish'.[19] We came to the sea and he said 'O water, retreat'. So the water in the sea retreated to a distance of the flight of an arrow shot (al-qāb). There it halted and many fish were left high and dry where the sea had been. The neophytes took all they they needed of fish for their sustenance. At the close of the day, he said, 'Water, return to your place', and so it did. He looked at me and he said 'O so and so, all of such things are trivial matters for neophytes amongst the Sufis'. I said, 'My lord, I ask for the pardon of God'.'

He (al-Sarrāj) said, 'According to what we have heard, on one occasion, Sari Saltuq said to his companions in such and such a place. "In the steppe (*barr*) there is a large jar which is filled with gold, silver and objects of priceless value". They said, "Let us know its location so that we can recover them". He showed them where it was and they dug from above the spot to a depth of several cubits. When they had extracted the jar and had emptied it and had beheld the priceless value of what had once lain therein, they became obsessed and suffered an intense desire to fight one another in order to gain possession of it. The Shaykh and his chosen companions were in their vicinity. When he noticed that they had drawn their weapons from their sheaths, he drew nigh to where they were standing.[20] They turned aside from the jar on account of the awe and the fear which he inspired. They believed that he had come to divide the treasure amongst them. When he saw it, he breathed over it and the riches were changed in their shape to the dust of the earth. They exclaimed, "O Lord, what meaning has this for us?" He replied, "This necessity was destined to be, for you, a great benefit. Yet, you have sought to fight for it amongst yourselves. You had no shame, nor regard, neither for me, nor for Almighty God".'

He (al-Sarrāj) said, 'According to that which has been reported to us, a Christian once said, "O my Lord, the Franks have seized my brother, together with his commercial business, despite the fact that they are all Christians though they differ in their religious persuasions".[21] The Shaykh said, "If I free your brother from captivity, will you become a Muslim believer?". "Yes, I will", he replied. The Shaykh crouched for a while, then, from his sleeve,

or from beneath the hem of his garment, he drew forth the head of the captor. His gore flowed profusely.

After several days, the captive arrived, together with those who were in the trading business. He said, "On such and such a day, as we were seated, a grey hawk swooped down upon my captor and it severed his head from his body. It declared aloud, "I am Shaykh Saltuq".

When they saw what had happened they set me free, together with those who were with me". 'They embraced the Muslim faith, together with their people, and so did many others because of this event'.

According to that which came to our ears, he, (the Shaykh) possessed a rosary in which there were two hundred beads. He said to his Companions before he died, 'Place it in a pot and watch over it. Seven years will pass after I have died and then a king will come. He will be called by such and such a name and he will be accompanied by his army and by two hundred commanders and he will search for it. Tell him, "If you take hold of it, fighting and slaughter will occur, there will be depravity in the land, there will be high prices and much distress". If he retains his hold upon it and does not withdraw his request, then hand it over to him'.

After seven years the king arrived just as the Shaykh had predicted.[22] He said 'I need to possess it'. He took it, and he divided it up, giving one bead to each of his commanders. Only a little while later there took place all that the Shaykh had mentioned and it was at a time when no repentance was of any benefit whatsoever.

He (al-Sarrāj) said, 'According to the report which we have received, Shaykh Saltuq, may God Almighty be pleased with him, when he was seated upon the prayer rug of his authority (sajjāda), after a long period of long residence and contemplation in the mountains,[23] and within his isolated retreat,[24] was visited by a certain person. The Shaykh spoke to him, saying, "Cast your mind back to that time when you came to me in a mountain named such and such, and when in a lowly state. You gave me a loaf of bread to eat. You assumed that it was bread, but, in reality, it was cowpat?". "Yes", he replied. The Shaykh continued, "You are amongst those men who mock the saints of Almighty God and who hold them in contempt. I shall have to treat you in a manner that will teach you a lesson, and those like you, and it will be a stern lesson, indeed". Hardly had he uttered his words when that ignorant fool was split in twain inside his belly. He collapsed, rent asunder. Such was that fatal blow which befell him'.

Al-Sarrāj said, 'This Shaykh Saltuq was one of the greatest of the saints and of the lords amongst men and amongst the masters of the Sufi 'way'. He performed stupendous miracles and accomplished mighty deeds. He was a companion of Shaykh Mahmūd (Ahmad) al-Rifā'‾, who was initiated by Shaykh Shams al-D‾n al-Musta'jil'.[25]

Shaykh Saltuq resided in a small town called Sakj‾ (26), as it is pronounced in the Qipchāq (Qifchāqiyya) language. The neophytes asked him to create a source of water for his town. He struck a rock with his hand and

a spring of water gushed forth then and there. It flowed and never ceased to flow. The tomb (türbe) of Shaykh Saltuq is located at a distance of three hours journey from Sabhi ? (Sakj¯/Sakçe) He died in 697 AH/ 1296/7 AD. May God be pleased with him'.

From the above passage, one can build up some picture of the real Sari Saltik, divested of at least some of the fabulous and legendary tales which, as will be seen, were woven throughout the Balkans around a Sufi who bore his name. The following are amongst the most important:

1 The document states that Sari Saltik was associated with the Rifā'iyya brotherhood. The name of Mahmūd al-Rifā'¯ is mentioned. Shaykh Ahmad al-Rifā'¯ died in 578/1183 and was not a contemporary of Sari Saltik. There are however several passages which would seem to match the Rifā'iyya brotherhood and the practises of its dervishes. As Karamustafa has noted,[27] the Rifā'iyya dervishes challenged established modes of piety through such practices as walking on fire, eating snakes, and piercing the body with swords or long and sharp iron rods. The diffusion of thaumaturgical practices was a productive move that led to to the spread of the Rifā'iyya throughout the region, and beyond, in a short time, and it was to produce its related and localized versions. He has also pointed out that there was a certain degree of interaction amongst the different dervish groups, citing the Rifā'is and Haydaris in particular.[28] It will be observed in the text that the reports are said to be those of Bahrām Shāh, who was a Haydari. The name is not uncommon among the Seljūq rulers. At a later stage the Haydaris were noteworthy for their adoration of Nas¯m¯, the Hurufi poet, and for their scanty attire, and for body mutilation. They wore chains, genital rings and other outlandish talismans and fashions of hirsute. Sari Saltik is described as having stripped naked before entering into a trance and before his entry into a second physical body in order to combat his foes. This description may be compared with those of Ibn Battuta's reservations in regard to the 'Orthodoxy' of Sari Saltik.
2 Sari Saltik was a warrior dervish. His followers were armed to do battle against Christian foes that had sworn differing allegiances to different masters. Some of them are specifically referred to as 'Franks'. Others may be assumed to be Eastern Orthodox, in faith, either Greeks, Moldovans, or Romanians, or, if the alleged event took place in the Crimea, Russian, or even Armenian. There are superficial resemblances between the story here and that told about a certain Kamāl Atā, in the Crimea and in Central Asia. It has been noted, too, that mountainous country figures in one passage in the text.
3 Subh¯/Sabh¯ in the early, poorly edited, editions of al-Nabhān¯'s work would appear to be corrupted and this name should now be read as 'Sakj¯/İsakçe'. The case has been well argued by Machiel Kiel, and it is found thus in the text of *Tuffāh al-Arwāh*. It is, today, the town of Isaccea,

on the southern, or right bank, of the Danube, west of Tulcea, in the far north of the Romanian Dobrogea. 'Noviodunum', the Classical name of the site, had been inhabited since ancient times and in 514 BC, Darius, the Mede, had fought the Scythians there in a decisive battle. Following the Romans, it was the most important Byzantine naval base on the Danube, until 602, at which date it was lost to the emigrating Turkic peoples who threatened it from the East. Amongst these peoples were the Pechenegs,who were driven southwards by the Cumans who were centred in the Crimea. The name of the locality was named 'Saccea'/'Satza', a personal name of a Romanian king. It was to appear again in the 'Alexiad'. Under the Turks, it became İsakçe and was under this later name that it drew to itself the local tale of the famous Sufi warrior, Baba Ishāq. It might also be mentioned that in the Middle Ages the town was also known by the name of 'Oblucita', from the Slav, '*oblutak*', indicating a 'rock which is shaped by water into a roundish shape'. According to the Arab geographer, Abū'l-Fidā', the town of Sakj¯ had a Muslim majority amongst its citizens. One should also mention that in the text, above, Sari Saltik is credited with a miracle that brought forth an ever-flowing water supply for his dervishes from the bare rock in his home town.

Sakj¯ was occupied by the Golden Horde, in 1340. By the end of the century it was in the hands of Mircea cel Batran. It was during this earlier phase of its history that Ibn Battuta could have either passed through it, or near to it, on his route to Constantinople, though this would have taken place in 1332 or 1333. The Ottomans did not finally control the town until 1601. It retained an Islamic character. Even today four per cent of its population is still Turkish or Tatar.

If the date of Sari Saltik is correct, 697/1296–7, he would have lived in its vicinity prior to its occupation by the Golden Horde and he could have been buried at three hours distance from Isaccea. Babadag is some sixty to seventy kilometres from Isaccea, a distance which is not so far as to make one doubt the truth of such a statement.[29]

Exploits of Sari Saltik elsewhere in Eastern Europe

What is historical, and what is legendary about Sari Saltik, are both to be found side by side in the extreme East of South-Eastern Europe; in Bulgaria, the south of the Ukraine, including the Crimean peninsula, as well as in Turkey itself. However, Sari Saltik, in sundry disguises, is a figure of major importance in popular Islam, Sufi and non-Sufi, throughout Eastern Europe. Some of his alleged footprints and tombs have been raised in status to that of the shrine of the saint, examples of one of the seven, or more, bodies of the saint, since, as we have already seen in the stories which were told about him, he was divinely endowed with the gift of an existence in more than one physical body, or to be seen in

several places at the same time. If his person was essential for the survival of his followers then neither steppe, nor water, nor mountain range, nor forests could block his path. His home was not always a 'town', or 'steppe of Sari Saltik', but it was, and still is, a cave, a Christian monastery, or a mountain retreat. In this role, Sari Saltik is still popular in Albania and in Kosovo. There, he is especially associated with the Bektāshiyya brotherhood.[30]

Robert Elsie,[31] overlooking the evidence of the undoubted historicity of the holy warrior and miracle worker in the Eastern Balkan region, has expressed the view that he was originally a figure of early Balkan legend and that he was not in his origin a Bektāshi, or a Muslim, legendary figure. We have seen in Romania that Sari Saltik was, on the contrary, an undoubted historical figure, nevertheless, in Albania and elsewhere, his person bears no resemblance whatsoever to that personality whom Bahrām Shāh or Ibn Battuta described. Sari Saltik is a central Bektāshi figure in the history and religious life of the town of Krujë, once the capital of Skanderbeg. The character of Sari Saltik has been transformed, by local legend, into an aged dervish who rescues a princess from a dragon (*kulshedra*). He gains her hand as a recompense, and, when hated by the people whom he rescued from that dragon, rides away on a mule and disappears on a magic carpet to Corfu, leaving his footsteps in Krujë, and in Durres, on the Adriatic coast of Albania.[32] In Krujë, Sari Saltik, the dervish, dwelt in a cave and in a Bektāshi tradition was buried there. Krujë is, in fact, one of the holiest sites of the Bektāshiyya brotherhood in Albania, and in the past was a holy place which demanded a visit by all Bektāshis, even rivalling Mecca as a religious duty which was imposed upon them. It was also a centre for Hurufism, according to Degrand. This is confirmed, without doubt, by a commentary on a Hurufi poem in which the *Jawidan-nam***e** of Fadlallah is mentioned. A copy of it is now preserved in a manuscript in the Library of Cambridge University.[33] The poem was composed by Sayyid Shar¯f. The commentator was an Albanian Bektāshi dervish (Arna'ūd¯) Yūsuf b. Haydar. This is a poem in which the text of Fadlallah al-Hurufi is quoted. Yūsuf b. Haydar came from Āq-Hisār, which was the Turkish name for Krujë. The copy is dated 1240/1824 .

An Ottoman register dating from about 1567–8, discovered by Machiel Kiel, indicates that a road which led up to the grave of Sari Saltik in Krujë was in need of repair. It proves that the saint was revered in Albania in the sixteenth century, and it also proves that the burial place, by then, was no longer believed to be exclusively located in the area of the Dobrogea.[34] Sari Saltik was buried in a number of places. His body had been translated into relics of a local significance each of which focused the minds of believers on his sanctity, his power and his patronage of the Bektāshiyya brotherhood, in particular. F. W. Hasluck has cited the principal places where the body was laid to rest although, since he wrote, others have been added to a list of sites of pilgrimages which not only span the Balkans, from Blagaj near Buna in Herzegovina, but also includes towns in Central, and even Northern, Europe.[35]

According to Hasluck:

> Before his death the saint gave orders that his body should be placed in seven coffins, since seven kings should contend for its possession.[36] This came to pass: each king took a coffin, and each coffin, was found, when opened to contain the body. The seven kingdoms blessed by the possession of the saint's remains are given as (1) Muscovy, where the saint is held in great honour as Svity Nikola (St Nicholas); Poland, where his tomb at Danzig is much frequented; Bohemia, where the coffin was shown at 'Pezzunijah'; (4) Sweden, which possessed a tomb at 'Bivanjah'; (5) Adrianople, near which (at Eski Baba) is another tomb; (6) Moldavia, where the tomb was shown at Baba Dagh and (7) Dobruja, in which district was the convent of Kaliakra containing the seventh tomb. The veracious history concludes with the remark that in Christian countries Sari Saltuk is generally called St Nicolas, is much revered, and Christian monks ask alms under his auspices.

St Nicholas and St Spyridon have also been metamorphosized amongst the Bektāshis. An example of this is to be found in the monastery of Sveti Naum, in Macedonia, facing Lake Ohrid and also in Albania and in Corfu Cathedral which was once visited by Bektāshi pilgrims who lit candles there.[37] It should be added that the mention of locations in Bohemia and in Sweden is one that has been made only by the noted Ottoman traveller, Evliye Çelebi. With the exception of Gdańsk, each defies any convincing explanation.

Poland is different, since, during the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in particular, the relationship, in peace or war, through trade or missions, grew and came to knit Poland with the ever present Ottoman Empire to the south (the name of 'Lehistan', which Poland acquired, was an indication of this relationship). The Tatar population of the Polish Lithuanian Commonwealth (1569, the Union of Lublin – 1795), and later, in Poland alone, was far greater in number then than it is today. Important Tatar units were, in time, to become a feature within the Polish army, notwithstanding the fact that it was engaged in constant wars and battles with the Ottoman Turks. The Lithuanian Tatars often had contact with fellow Tatars in the Crimea, and, elsewhere, in other parts of the Ottoman domains. Here, the name of Sari Saltik was well known, and it had associations with St Nicolas, and with other Christian saints. Through such contacts, borrowed ideas from a heterodox Sufism and from common Sufi symbols entered popular literature, and it left its mark on the iconography of the Tatar community. It is hardly surprising, that in several manuscripts and documents of the Lithuanian Tatars, stylized representations of Sufi objects, influenced by Ottoman art, appear. One such example is a collection of tightly bound charms (*chamayil*), in a volume from Slonim (today, in Belarus). These date from 1890, and are now in the Lithuanian National Museum in Vilnius. In these manuscripts are depicted the cleft sword of 'Al¯, Dhū'l-Faqār, the tree of knowledge, and a dervish double-bladed axe (*teber* or *balta*). Another example, dated 1828, also from Slonim, which contains the same pictures, is housed in the British Museum library in London.[38] One may assume that this symbolism was well-known.

Fig 2 A Tatar book of prayers and Qur'anic quotations (Chamail) from Slonim (Belarus). It was written and illustrated in 1890. It is now to be found in the Lithuanian National Museum in Vilnius. Apart from its talismanic seals (muhur), the page illustrates the sword of 'Ali b. Abi Talib (Dhū'l-Faqār), the Tree of Life, and an axe of a dervish fraternity.

Another example of dervish influence in Polish/Lithuanian/Byelorussian Tatar culture is the story of Kuntus, a humble shepherd and a saint, equipped with a magical dervish stick, and who was clad in green, who enabled his master to visit Mecca through his power to convey, in a single instant, his physical body from one part of the world to another. All of this draws upon similar notions and beliefs which enabled Sari Saltik to traverse the globe, dead or alive, in the guise of St Nicolas, or of other Christian saints.

St Nicholas church in Gdańsk (Kosciol SW. Mikolaja) is a strange building to have become associated with this Oriental dervish. Founded by the Dominicans, in 1348, it is a lofty brick structure, with all the feel and the architectural style of the Hanseatic churches which are the hall-mark and the glory of Gdańsk and Riga. However, inside the nave and chancel, with its multi-level high altar, its breathtaking Baroque stalls, its organ of a similar date, its chandeliers, its pictures of saints and the Holy Family, its elegant statues and its candles, it is difficult to relate its splendour to the crumbling tomb in Babadag,[39] the cave in Krujë, the Baroque church of St Nicolas in Dubrovnik, the featureless steppes of the Qipchāq Tatars, far distant Bukhara and in the *tekkes* of the Bektāshis.

Yet there are more links still waiting to be discovered. Sari Saltik, 'the blonde dervish', is also St Nicolas, the patron of seamen. The seas of the world, with their harbours, were and are the meeting places of East and West. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that the world's coastal localities are listed amongst the 'towns of Sari Saltik'.

7 The popular expression of the *dhikr* amongst the Sufi communities of Eastern Europe

> Oh, Ta-Ha, Oh, Ya-Sin, Oh, Ha-Mim, Oh, Ta-Sin!
> We are thy unhappy servants, To thee alone we send up glory, For the sake of Allah, servants of God, Help us for the sake of God
>
> From Shamil's *Psalm*, composed by him to replace all profane songs, translated from the Russian version of Professor Mirza Alexander Kazem-Bek, together with his notes, and published in Appendix 111 of '*The Russian Conquest of the Caucasus*' by John F. Baddeley, Longmans, London, 1908, pp. 489–93.
> The song was sung in chorus by all the Mur¯ds accompanying Shamil, who rode almost always at a foot's pace, except, of course, when engaged in military operations.

Dr Martin Lings, in his *What is Sufism?* (University of California Press, 1977), discusses several aspects of the *dhikr* (or *zikr*) amongst the Sufis, whether the latter be fully initiated members of the brotherhoods, or whether they be aspiring novices (*murīds*). He writes:

> Another means of becoming submerged in the nature of the Prophet is to recite his names and the litanies that are associated with them. Yet another, the most direct of all, is to dwell in particular on one of these names, '*Dhikru'llah*', the Remembrance of God, and to become like him a personification of all this name implies (page 44).

A definition similar to this has been provided by Nathalie Clayer, who is a noted authority on the Albanian brotherhoods and whose work *L'Albanie Pays des Derviches*, Berlin, 1990 provides a gazetteer of the *tekkes* which were founded and which once flourished there. She defines *dhikr* as

> 'zikr' signifies 'remembrance'. In the world of the tarikat, it more precisely signifies 'remembrance of the names of God'. That is to say, 'repetition for a great number of times of the most beautiful names of God (Allah, Hu, Hayy, Kayum…). These remembrances, which are frequently practised commu-

> nally, constitute an important part of the ritual of the tarikat. Certain perform this with lowered voice. Numerous others do so with their voices raised. The aim of it is always to draw near to the presence of the Divinity thereby.

In Eastern Europe, amongst its varied Muslim communities, the way that the *dhikr* is said, or sung, is as widely varied and expressed in its performance as is the case in every other part of the World of Islam. The *dhikr* is known even where no Sufi brotherhoods are to be found today, and elsewhere where they most certainly existed, or exist. The rules which define the *dhikr*, or *hadra*, communally recited or sung, are very specific, as likewise are the rituals. The physical movements and the surroundings where *dhikrs* are privately or publicly held have been filmed, described, admired, or mocked, around the globe. This is particularly true of the spectacle of the 'Whirling Dervishes' (the Mevleviyya), whose holy of holies is Konya, in Turkey, where Rumi is laid to rest.

Amongst the Tatars of Poland, today, where the term *dhikr* or *ziker* is known, but where brotherhoods are not and, as far as we are aware, had never appreciably influenced them except through those Tatar individuals who had been initiated into a brotherhood outside Poland or Lithuania, be it in Kazan, or in Istanbul, or in the Crimea, the communal expressions of this kind are more in keeping with prayer meetings in Christian 'house churches'.

Religious songs are sung accompanied by meditation and with praise. Such a meeting may be attended by both men and women, the gathering led by an imam and accompanied by the reading of the Qur'an and followed by a 'communion' of bread, salt and water. Sometimes this takes place in a private house, an imam invited to attend.

Much the same is true of the Tatars in Lithuania and in Belarus, although the facts, as they are known, present a more complicated situation. Belarus, in particular, has a growing Muslim community of newly settled exiles and job seekers, alongside its Tatars. These newcomers are Kurds, Azerbaijanis, Chechens, Lezghins and Arabs. Amongst them are to be found a number for whom the *dhikr*, within the context of the rituals of the Sufi brotherhoods, is well-known and is loyally followed. The Chechens, whether in their homeland, or in exile in Europe, or in the Middle East, are a representative example of a leavening of Eastern European Islamic worship and ritual by popular Sufi practices from Europe's frontier regions.

According to the *Hippocrene Dictionary and Phrasebook Chechen–English, English–Chechen*, by Nicholas Awde and Muhammad Galaev, (New York, 1997, p. 127, 'Religious Heritage'):

> Many Chechens are Sufis, followers of the mystical side of Islam. There are two *tariiqas* or paths – the Naqshabandi historically based in the north, and the Qadiris, historically in the south. These are split up into between 70 and 80 smaller groupings. If you see Sufis performing the *zikr* – singing, dancing and banging drums – at festivals, then they will be Qadiris. A Qadiri follower is known as *h'azhi wird* (literally 'hajj prayer'). while a Naqshabandi is

known as *q'aili zikr* (literally 'hidden holy dance'). A Sufi in general will be called a '*murd*' (*murid*).

Members of the latter brotherhood have been noted for their silent or secret *dhikr* (*dhikr khafi*), although Anna Zelkina, in her *In Quest for God and Freedom* (London, 2000, p. 80, note 33) has reported instances of the vocal *dhikr* performed by the Chechen Naqshabandis.

Amongst sophisticated Shaykhs of the Sufi orders in South-eastern Europe, the *dhikr* is a clearly defined path of an entire discipline, which, if followed, through seven stages of the soul (*al-nafs al-safiya wa'l-kamila*), will lead to the extinction of the 'self' in the Ultimate Godhead (*al-fan*a'). This ecstatic state is one which is brought about by the merging of the identity of the Sufi individual with the spirituality which is stored in the personal charisma of the founder of the brotherhood; through his sayings, in his verse, by his miracles, within the miraculous spiritual power which is stored in his tomb, in a total harmony with the manner and the location in which the *dhikr* is held and the tangible feeling of unity with fellow Sufis who are likewise single-mindedly engaged and who stand shoulder to shoulder in that *dhikr* which is led by their Shaykh.

The noted English missionary and Orientalist, W. H. T. Gairdner (1872–1928), who was an admirer of the great Sufi scholar Louis Massignon, had an intimate friendship with two such Shaykhs from the Rifa'iyya brotherhood. Their *tekke*, or retreat, was situated in the border region between Bulgaria and Macedonia. These men had attended the *dhikr* since the age of four, and, despite the conversion of one of them to Christianity, saw no lack of merit in the emotional, even bizarre, or barbaric, rituals which, at times, accompanied the *dhikr*, or were an integral part of its performance.

Gairdner quoted Shaykh Ahmad on p. 5 of *The Way of a Mohammedan Mystic*, a pamphlet which he wrote in Leipzig and which was published in 1912:

> At such times the ecstatic, in virtue of his State, and involving the merit of its founder, Ahmad al-Rifa'i, will stab himself with a dagger, and it passes in and out without doing harm: he will handle fire and the fire loses its heat and does not hurt. If he drinks a deadly thing, it has no effect. 'Verily, to find the signs promised to believers in Mark's Gospel, in these days it is to the Sufis thou must go'.

A *dhikr* in the Sinaniyya *tekke* in Sarajevo, in 1890, as described by J. de Asboth

Johann von Asboth's *An Official Tour of Bosnia and Herzegovina* was published in its English edition, in London, in 1890. It had been first published in 1888, in Vienna, with the title of *Bosnien und die Herzegovina*. In recent years, its content has come under severe criticism, in parts, its author now being viewed as a 'colonial' spokesperson, and a reporter of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. A number of his assertions and conclusions concerning archaeological, cultural and historical

discoveries are viewed as biased, unfounded and uncritical. Even so, his record is, at times, a classic of the nineteenth century in, what was then, a little explored region of Eastern Europe, and the home of a distinct Muslim community, the Bosnjaks. On pages 206 and 207 of that work, he furnishes a graphic description of a *dhikr* in Sarajevo, a description which contains many allusions to popular Sufism.

> The most frequent meetings of the dervishes also fall during the time of *Ramazan*: one Friday we witnessed the ceremonies of the Howling Dervishes. Towards ten o'clock in the evening we started for Sinan Thekia (*tekke*) which is situated tolerably high up upon the hillside on the right bank of the Miliaska. This Thekia – Dervish monastery – takes its name from its founder, the celebrated Bosnian Dervish Sheik, who was held in great respect, and was even credited with being a sorcerer. We found a quiet deserted place, a building in ruins. We were cautioned to mount the wooden stairs with care, and to take our places quietly in the broad wooden gallery; not only because the ceremonies had already commenced, but also that the rotten timbers might not give way. The broad, dome covered hall was only dismally lighted by a few tapers. Opposite to us there stood, in front of the Kibla (the niche for prayer), which faced towards Mecca, a haggered old man, with a white beard and gloomy visage, in a pale, faded caftan, and the green turban of the sheiks. Before him stood a circle of about twenty men in the dress usually worn by the Mohammedan middle classes in Sarajevo; respectable water-carriers, merchants and artisans. For just as Islam knows no ecclesiastical hierarchy, so the dervishes form no particular order, as our monks do, for example, even though they, like them, rely upon mysticism and asceticism. Where the entire education of whole groups of nations consists exclusively in the study of and commenting upon one book, the Koran – where, moreover, the conditions of existence of the race which stands at the head of the whole of this movement, the physical conditions of life in a desert-all tend to fantastical extravagances, hair-splitting refinements, to fanaticism, and to ascetism, mysticism, too, must perforce also soon develop. As it was in Christendom, so it was in Islam, and that, too, partly upon the same grounds and under like circumstances – the stream branched off into two directions. Mystical refinements, the passages in the writings difficult of interpretation, or directly contradictory, led to ever more elaborate explanations, until at last the allegorical significations took precedence of the positive articles of faith, and in Islam, just as elsewhere, arrived at last at Pantheism and Rationalism. In this process there frequently arose, on the one hand sects, which were persecuted with blood; on the other, secret lessons, genuine mysteries, into which the pupils were only gradually initiated, but whose teachers and followers, whether out of fear of those in power or because they really did regard their dogmas as unsuited to the masses, concealed their dangerous, and frequently quite irreligious, views behind a strict observance of religious forms. Then again, there were Mystics, who in their

> belief remained Orthodox, but who, nevertheless, carried the austerities of their religion to the extreme, and especially the dominant conception, contained in the Koran and in all religions of Semitic origin, that this earthly existence is a worthless fraud, and at its very best only a probation full of heavy trials. The doctrine of a stern God, the very fear of God, heightened these pessimistic views of life. All efforts were directed towards despising earthly life and its pleasure, and the killing and mortification of the flesh, by which means they, like the Christian hermits and monks, hoped to attain to a direct, intuitive, ecstatic knowledge of God, and to the winning of celestial life. Before they could be finally free from earthly fetters they desired to attain to at least a temporary oneness with God by ridding themselves momentarily of them.

In pages which follows, Von Asboth describes how he was particularly impressed by the dignity throughout the ceremony. He contrasted this with other *dhikrs* which he had witnessed elsewhere in the Muslim World. The closure of the meeting had a silent, yet dramatic, climax. The lights were extinguished, one by one, those who were participants in the ceremony bowed in turn to the Shaykh, who tenderly embraced them. They withdrew, in turn, in complete silence as darkness enveloped the audience, whether participants or spectators. At its very close a solitary taper illuminated the austere figure of the Shaykh.

Popular Sufism, here, mirrored the sober, dignified, reticent temperament of the Muslim Bosnjaks.

A Rifa‘iyya dhikr amongst the Albanians

A very different *dhikr* has been described in an account by Margaret Hasluck, an outstanding scholar in the study of Albanian culture and language and the wife of F. W. Hasluck, author of *Christianity and Islam Under the Sultans*, and other studies of the Bektashiyya brotherhood. When Von Asboth wrote his account of the *dhikr* in the Sinan tekke, in Sarajevo, the building was also used by the ‘Howling Dervishes’, the Rifa‘iyya, for their litanies. Elsewhere, in the Balkans, they had other *tekkes*, however, here in Bosnia, and with Albanians, as the dervishes, their rituals took a very different form. Margaret Hasluck’s description of a ceremony in Elbasan, in Albania, is in complete contrast to the spectacle which was observed by Von Asboth and which moved him so profoundly.

Margaret Hasluck was in Elbasan, at a time when the ceremony took place and her account was sent by post to a certain Mrs Hunter who, at that time, lived in 295, Boston Road, Hanwell, London, W.7. Her account, of 1400 words, and which has never been published before, bears no calendar date.

With Albanian Dervishes

> With the establishment of settled government in Albania the travelling public has discovered the beauty of Albanian scenery. The ancient glories of

Buthrotum (Butrint) and Appolonia appeal to others and all but the most hurried visit the *teqe* (monastery) of the picturesque Bektashi dervishes near Kruja, one of Albania's earliest capitals.

Before Kemal Ataturk suppressed religious orders in Turkey, the peculiar mode of worship of the Rifai, or 'Howling', dervishes drew crowds of foreigners to their convents in Constantinople. Rifais live in all Albanian towns, but so far have neither courted nor attracted attention. So I count myself fortunate to have seen them celebrate on September 7th the anniversary of the birthday of their founder, Seid Ahmet Rifai, an Arab who died in Basra in Iraq in A.D. 1182

The place of worship was a single room set in a wide garden. Carpets of local make were spread before a sculptured niche which pointed the way to Mecca; on the whitewashed walls above and around this were *hung a dervish's club, a bunch of steel skewers, some* texts of the Koran, five baby drums, and a pair of brass cymbals. Wooden benches for visitors were set near the door. A few electric lamps combined with scores of votive candles to flood the room with light.

We entered to find the Sheikh already seated in front of the niche and leading the Mohammedan prayer of everyday usage. His white felt hat, conical and tall, was almost hidden under a black turban; the crown was marked with segments like a melon in remembrance of the Twelve Imams of Islam. Over long black trousers he wore a pale blue shirt that reached below his knees, and over that a long black coat, with a green scarf at the neck; green and black are the distinctive colours of the Rifais. Still young and slim, the Sheikh was bearded, for in the Near East all men of God must be Nazarenes.

His disciples (*muhiba*) sat facing him in a semi-circle, following his lead in prayer. They were ordinary citizens in ordinary garb, all clearly very poor. Some wore the pudding-basin hat of white or black felt which is still happily to be seen in Albanian bazaars. Others had for the once donned a white skull-cap, for the European hat they wore every day was unsuitable for Mohammedan worship, in which the brow must sometimes touch the ground. A number of women and children squatted in the background, interested spectators; an even larger number peered in at the open window. Unlike orthodox Mohammedans, the Rifais do not refuse women access to their places of worship. They even accept them as members of the Order, but to avoid scandal they forbid them to take active part in the worship.

The Sheikh next read a homily in Albanian, reminding his disciples of the importance of the day and warning them as good Rifais to avoid the more outrageous of human frailties. Then began the specifically Rifai worship, even in its attenuated Albanian form a thing of chants and howls and violent exercises. The men rose to their feet as a servitor, acting as muezzin, began to intone a series of religious formulas. Each time he paused, the men sang an appeal to Allah to save the Prophet Mohammed and his son-in-law, Ali. At each mention of 'Ali's name they bowed more and more profoundly, whereas they glided almost indifferently over

Mohammed's, much to the scandal of my companion, who held Ali infinitely lower than the Prophet.

A curious mourning for the Imam Hasan and the Imam Husejn, the sons of Ali who were cruelly done to death many centuries ago in Iraq, succeeded the antiphonal chanter. '*Oo-oo-oo*,' the men moaned in a low stabbing monotone, their heads bent and their hands folded in an extreme of grief; utterly unlike anything Albanian, the sound recalled the pattering of rain or sand on a desert tent. One devotee, overcome by his grief suddenly howled aloud, like an animal in pain.

The lamentation ended, the Sheikh seized a drum and struck it with a leather thong. In response, the men, still standing, began to chant repeatedly the Mohammedan profession of faith. '*La ilaha ill' Allah*, There is no God but One', they sang, bending forward at each accented, and recovering their balance at each unaccented, syllable. As their ecstasy gained on them, they, thrust their bodies farther and farther forward and hurled their song into the air, slurring the syllables till only '*llah*' could be distinguished. Four assistants seized the remaining drums and beat them like men possessed. The Sheikh swept the ground with his long coat as he swung his drum now right, now left. Some men began to gasp, others closed their eyes and writhed in mystic exaltation; sweat streamed down every face.

Ninety-nine times they repeated the chant. Then the Sheikh surrendered his drum to an assistant and himself unhooked the cymbals. Clashing them together with all his might, he started another chant, its theme that God is Living. Now the men swung their bodies from side to side, grouped in pairs; one tossed his head towards the right while his partner tossed his to his left so that they almost knocked heads; reversing the motion, each almost knocked heads with his neighbour on the other side. Soon they lost all self-control and cried wildly, '*Hu! Hu!* He (is God)!' At a signal from the Sheikh they suddenly halted, again lamented for Hasan and Husejn, and at a clash of the cymbals resumed the 'physical jerks' of their first dance. '*Hu! Hu!*' they screamed, flinging themselves from side to side and up and down. Consciousness of this world had slipped from them.

At last two men stepped each into a corner and stripped to the waist, while the Sheikh took down the bundle of skewers and passed his fingers appraisingly along their length. The first man advanced towards the Sheikh with humble prostrations, kissed his feet, rose to kiss his hands, and stood straight, bracing himself visibly. The Sheikh selected a skewer and after licking it from end to end drove it stiffly through the man's upper arm. A second time he skewered this arm, and then the left arm twice; with a fifth skewer he transfixed the flesh on the right side of the man's neck. After skewering the upper arms of the second man he, at the latter's own request, passed a skewer through his cheeks. The two devotees resumed heir place in the semi-circle, while the Sheikh, bidding each of the others in turn open his mouth, pushed a skewer through his cheek. Then drums beating, cymbals clashing, and skewers protruding half an inch, another chant began, wilder even than its

> predecessors, and its exercises more violent. Only the man with the steely moustache stood motionless, fearing to move. Utterly exhausted, the Sheikh called a halt and pulled out the skewers one by one, while the audience delightedly drew my attention to the singular freedom from bleeding displayed by the wounds.
>
> All were frankly disappointed because the hard Scotch head which sits on my shoulders was so little perturbed by the signs and wonders, and they told me pointedly of the more satisfactory Albanian schoolmaster and Italian officer who had fainted at the sight. Actually there seemed little to be perturbed about. The Sheikh pinched up the flesh of his victims like a doctor about to give an injection, so avoiding the veins. Large as the skewers were, they were smaller than the needle driven into the abdomen of a patient due to receive an injection of salt water. The mental excitement engendered by the preliminary chants had certainly made the pain less perceptible; any shock this caused was certainly diminished by the quick resumption of the chants and exercises. The rapid coursing of the blood through the veins after the exercises was a further safeguard. Besides, though the Sheikh had had the skewers washed 'to prevent microbes from meeting the blood', as he put it, they had been as good as sterilized when he licked them, for a Sheikh's saliva is always holy and his had been further sanctified on this occasion by the holy words he had uttered in praise of Allah, Mohammed and Ali.

It is difficult to equate the sober *dhikr* of the Rifa'iyya in Sarajevo, as described by Von Asboth, with the highly emotional, bizarre and 'barbaric' performance as it is described by Margeret Hasluck. Her description can undoubtedly be matched by many more recent accounts of the *dhikr* which have been observed by the curious in the Balkans and beyond. Alexandre Popović in his *Un Ordre de Derviches en Terre d'Europe* (Lausanne, 1993) has listed a wide selection of *tekkes* of the Rifa'iyya in several Balkan countries and in some of the most noteworthy of them the spectacle is even more impressive. In Kosovo, that ceremony is held in the town of Prizren, The latter town is described by Popović as being 'at the present time the most important centre of the Rifa'iyya (and, of course, the most active!) in the whole group of South-Eastern European countries'.

He mentioned the weekly performance of the *dhikr* (*zikr*). It takes place every Friday after the congregational *djuma* prayer, normally at about 12.30 am. However, on the first Friday of the month the most important performance of the *dhikr* (*zikr*) is held. During the course of it, the '*ijrah*' (Ar. '*ajrāh*' 'wounds') takes place. This term denotes 'ritual mortification of the body' similar to that which was described by Margaret Hasluck. This same ritual is the heart of the ceremony which is held during '*Sultani Nevruz*' which takes place, annually, on the 21/22 March. Popović points out the very special importance of this *dhikr* (*zikr*) in Prizren. He also mentions the spectacular impact of it, attracting, as it once did, a large number of visitors, including journalists, producers of cine films, photographers and ethnomusicologists. Over the years a large number of films were made and distributed, as well as gramophone recordings which included, Bernard

Fig 3 A circular wheel-like design from the Qadiriyya (Kadirije) Sinaniyya tekke in Sarajevo, Bosnia. It is depicted upon a wall outside the Sama'hane which is used for Sufi gatherings. the circle contains a series of stretched, or elongated, confessions of faith (Shahadah), forming a Star of David in the middle. This tekke was founded by Hajj Sinan in 1640 and it was extensively restored and expanded by Hajj Sinan at a later date. Following bombardment by Serbian artillery during the Bosnian War it is now being restored and it is used for weekly Sufi rituals.

Maugin's 'Islamic Ritual from Yugoslavia: Zikr of the Rufa'i Brotherhood', which was included in the UNESCO collection 'Musical Sources'. The *tekke* of Prizren is only rivalled by that in Skopje, the capital of Macedonia. The latter is the subject of a major academic study, a near definitive study by Ljiljana Masulovic-Marsol, *Structure et impact de la confrèrie des Rifa'is de Skoplje*', University of Paris, Paris, 1982.

At first, one might be surprised by the contrast between the ceremony of the *dhikr*, which is described by Von Asboth, and that by Margaret Hasluck. In his account, the '*ijrah*' was not performed. Aside from this, is the fact that the Sinan *tekke* in Sarajevo was, over many centuries associated with the Qadiriyya Sufi brotherhood, as is the case to this day. Its history, throughout the centuries is traced in detail by Dzemal Ćehajić, in his book devoted to the dervish orders in Yugoslavia, *Derviški Redovi u Jugoslovenskim Zemljama na Posebnim Osvrtom na Bosnu i Hercogovinu', Sarajevo, 1986, Hadzi-Sinanova tekija u Sarajevo,* pp. 123–132.

Fig 4 Sufi ornamental inscriptions in Arabic within the tekke (tekije) of Hajj Sinan in Sarajevo. These differ in date and in the calligraphical styles that are to be commonly found within Bosnia and Herzegovina and in other parts of the Muslim Balkans where Sufis are currently to be found.

However, it is Popović, in his *Un Ordre de Derviches en Terre d'Europe*, op. cit., pp. 63–4, which explains how the dhikr, without '*ijrah*', came to be held there. The use of *tekkes* for such purposes by brotherhoods other than that which possessed that *tekke* are far from uncommon in the Balkans and in Eastern Europe. Shared *tekkes* are found in Kosovo, for example.

> First of all, it is fitting, prior to speaking of two Rifa'i groups in Sarajevo, to say some words about five different texts, all of which (especially the four last ones) contain a certain number of interesting pieces of information about the Rifa'is of this town in the first half of the twentieth century; texts which are impossible to fix for sure to one or other of the two groups of Rifa'is which will later be looked at. In fact, be it a matter of imprecise texts, or be they texts which describe the séances of the zikr having taken place in Sarajevo, in the celebrated tekke of the Qadiris (the tekke of Sinan, called the 'Sinanova tekija') 'mixed' séances, in which there probably took part, together, different kinds of dervishes of this town (notably, rifa'is, qadiris and mevlevis).

Later, in his account, Popović describes the different stages of the *venue* which the first Rifa'i group had to tolerate or to adapt to prior to their arrival at a more permanent home. These *venues* varied between the private homes of dervishes, the renting of a disused Qur'anic school, then a return again to private homes after the school was repossessed, and then their rendezvous included, in '*Bakiye*' street, 'Cemetery Street', a one-roomed tekke of their own, owned by a woman who was known to none. The dervishes there were Albanians who had moved to Sarajevo. Popović points out that

> the tekke was open to everybody and it was located in a very convenient position. But, later, under Baba Zej, it became a closed community. During the Second World War numbers shrank and its establishment was attacked by those 'progressives' who were opposed to all dervishes. These included several orthodox 'ulama' who were opposed to the music performed in it and the chanting of '*Hu*'. A certain Smajlaga replaced Baba Zej, after his death in 1949. However, after the latter's death, the tekke was demolished.

The second group of Rifa'is were a very little known congregation. Popović discovered a sole reference to them (p. 74). They were to disappear, however, one Rifa'i Shaykh, Ruhija, continued for a while to practise their *dhikrs*. This activity took place in the Mevlevi tekke, in Bendbasa. Ruhija was their Shaykh in accordance with the rules of the Rifa'iyya brotherhood, although, he, himself, belonged, first of all, within the hierarchy of such Shaykhs, to the order of the Mevlevis.

Bosnia was never a 'Rifa'i country' and this brotherhood was very late in its arrival there. Yet its extreme manifestations in the *dhikr* single it out within Eastern Europe as a whole. That *dhikr* had a popular appeal. It was, and has remained, 'popular' in every sense, since it has riveted the attention of the curious and the spectators of such starling rituals from many parts of the globe and way beyond the bounds of the Balkan Peninsula.

8 The Bektashiyya brotherhood, its village communities, and inter-religious tensions along the border between Albania and Greek Epirus, at the beginning of the twentieth century

> 'These', quoth Giorgo, 'are Greeks!' – 'Greeks, signore!' 'We are not among Albanians, now'. 'Signore! Let us be thankful we had gone out of the reach of those 'poveri disperati'! 'Qui siamo in Epiro, Signore', 'ringraziamo il cielo, we are among Epirotes! (For though the country opposite Corfu is distinctly known as Albanian, the innocent traveller who happens to speak of its natives to one of themselves as 'Albanians' finds himself in as wrong a position as if should address Messrs. A. and B. and C., residents at the Cape of Good Hope, as so many Hottentots')
>
> ('Edward Lear in Greece, Journals of a Landscape Painter in Greece and Albania' (1848), Kimber, London, 1965, p. 161)

Balkan border regions are frequently known for their havens of small dervish communities and villagers whose way of life is centred upon these communities. The frontier region between Greece and the Republic of Macedonia is one such region. It is here that tiny *tekkes*, barely distinguishable from Orthodox chapels and remote cemeteries are to be found. A prevailing non-orthodoxy, in faith, in art and architecture and in worship is characteristic of these *tekkes* and they are frequented by followers of both faiths and by believers in neither.

Epirus, which marks the border area between Albania and Greece, is another such region. Today, none would dispute it being an integral part of the latter. In the past, its character, whether population wise or politically, was more open to question. Hasluck, in his writings predicted a very gloomy future for the Bektashiyya along the border region in the early years of the twentieth century: 'The losses of the Bektashi order in Epirus during the troubles succeeding the Balkan war was enormous', he wrote, 'many *tekkes* having been burnt to the ground, and the remainder looted of everything moveable by the Epirote irregulars'. The nominal excuse for this was:

1. that the order was implicated in the national Albanian (and therefore anti-Greek) movement, and
2. that some 'tekkes' were suspected of harbouring not only 'bands' but fugitives from justice (the two categories largely overlapped) and to have shared

> their plunder. To this the Bektashis would probably reply that they were natural allies, by blood and language, of the local Albanians and their cause and that hospitality, irrespective of persons, was the rule of the Sufi order.

It is clear that in such a country the evident prosperity of the '*tekke*', whatever the character of their inmates, would be sufficient to attract the cupidity of guerrilla captains; several dervishes are said to have been murdered because they would not or could not disclose the whereabouts of their supposed wealth.

In Epirus, itself, the Bektashiyya brotherhood was in a very weak position. Hasluck (op. cit., p. 536) drew attention to the fact that it made little headway and had few roots for growth to the south of the latitude of 40 degrees. Yannina (Ioannina) was the capital of Ali Pasha, who was an active supporter of the Bektashis, and who was responsible for both founding and restoring *tekkes*. However, no such *tekke* was founded in Yannina. All that survived was the tomb of Hasan Sharef Baba a saint of that time and the tomb of Ali himself. Its headstone was capped by the 'crown' (*taj*) of the Bektashi order. Elsewhere, a *tekke*, which was once situated on the road between Yannina and Metzovo, was probably built there in order to control an important pass into Thessaly. It was the region immediately to the north of Epirus which proved to be the most volatile and sensitive. Greece laid claim to this Albanian region, Orthodox Greek-speaking communities were located there, and the Bektashiyya brotherhood was strong and it had a great popular following fuelled by nationalist aspirations.

We are fortunate in possessing a correspondence dating from that time, letters which were sent by the 'Consul General d'Angleterre' in Ioannina, addressed to Monsieur H. C. de J Du Vallon and to Sir R. W. Graves, the Consuls General of Britain in Salonica. These letters cover the period between the 18th and 19th December, 1904 and the 11th May, 1905. The events which are described predate the accounts which are provided by Hasluck.

The correspondence opens with a short summary of the threatening situation which faced the Bektashi population at that time.

> I believe it to be my duty to submit a fact of potential importance to you. However, before I proceed to do so, allow me to supply you with a specific piece of information which is closely related to that fact about which I shall be speaking to you at a later moment. Such information is necessary to enable you to understand the scope of it, the purport and its potential importance.
>
> It is a certain fact that in this *Vilayet*, the Albanian population is overwhelmingly Muslim in faith. It is said that, amongst its 550,000 inhabitants, at least 300,000 are Muslims. You should also be made aware that of these 300,000 Muslims, at least 250,000 are Bektashis. The Bektashis, although they are Muslims, do not follow the rules of the Prophet Muhammad, but rather what has been attributed to his son in law, 'Ali. Their religious practises differ enormously from those of the Orthodox Muslims. They are allowed to consume alcoholic and fermented beverages, they do not observe

Ramadan, and they only observe a fast which lasts two weeks during the summer months (the twelve day fast which celebrates the martyrdom of 'Ali's son, Husain, at Karbalā', known as the *'mat'am'*). They cannot eat the flesh of the hare (See Hasluck, op. cit., vol. 1, pp. 240–2) and they perform their prayers in a manner which is different from that of other Muslims. From Delvino (Ffonike, to the north-east of Sarande, southern Albania, opposite Corfu) to the bounds of Shkodra/Shkoder (Scutari, in northern Albania) and to Monastir (Bitolj, in Macedonia) most of the entire length of the country is inhabited by the Bektashis.

Since the days of the (Ottoman) conquest, the Bektashis, in their provinces, have built numerous 'monasteries' (convents, retreats or hospices). These are called *tekkes*. They are ruled by a celibate who is called a 'Baba', and who has taken vows of chastity (the *Mucerrid* branch of the dervishes). These *tekkes* thrive upon the benefits bestowed by the immense properties which have been given to them. This is either through a will or by a donation, given to them by the Albanian Beys who are members of this rite. The *tekkes* and the 'Babas' are greatly venerated by the Bektashis. Above all, the 'Babas' exert an extraordinary influence over their co-religionists. In general, the Bektashis are brave and courageous men. In no wise are they fanatics in regard to matters relating to their religion. They do not loathe the society of Christians. They are highly intelligent and they are humanitarians. It is due to this that the Albanian national ideal has been able to trace its path far more easily amongst the Albanian Bektashis. The *tekkes* are like 'seed beds' for the growth of Albanian thought and for patriotic sentiment.

This state of affairs in no way pleases our (Ottoman) Governor-General, who has conceived a plan to close all the *tekkes* and to extirpate the schism of the Bektashis. Such is his design, although without his paying any heed to the fact that this matter is extremely offensive to them, and that it may have consequences of which he has no notion whatsoever.

Osman Pasha, in his time, had sought to suppress the secular privileges, sanctioned by successive '*firmans*'. These privileges are still enjoyed by the seven villages of Kimara (Konispoli, in North-Western Epirus) right up to the present day. However, events having taken a turn for the worse, it has meant that he has had to backtrack on his plans. Now, in order to redress matters, he leaves the Bektashis to their own devices.

Some five or six months ago, having learnt that at three hour's distance from Metsovo (Metsovon, in Greece, to the east of Ioannina, on the road leading to Meteora) and close to Dervenichta (Dhelvinakion, situated to the north of Ioannina near the border between Greece and Albania) a *tekke* was situated. It was far away from the centre of the Bektashi populations. He made up his mind to suppress it. Under some pretext, or other, he compelled the 'Baba' to come to Ioannina. He closed the *tekke*. He detained the 'Baba' several months here, after which, he sent him to Berat, his home country, guarded by a strong escort. This *tekke* is now closed and its properties have been abandoned.

His deed produced a sad response among the Bektashis, but the 'Babas' still hoped that affairs could be put right in Constantinople and thereby justice would take its course. They have been able to bide their time and, above all, to moderate the ardour of their adepts.

Encouraged by this modest success, the Governor General had his appetite whetted for yet another and far mightier blow against Bektashism.

In the province of Gyrokastër there are many rich *tekke* with 'Babas' who exercise an enormous influence amongst these populations. One such *tekke* in the very same town, Gyrokastër, is the *tekke* of 'Baba' 'Ali (the *tekke* of Asim Baba. 'Baba' 'Ali was one of its major Shaykhs. Nathalie Clayer, in her *L'Albanie pays des derviches*, points out, on p. 287, that 'Baba' 'Ali, one of its major Shaykhs', was arrested and imprisoned in Ioannina with two other Babas from Girokastër). The 'Baba', who is called 'Ali, is the recognized chief of all the Bektashi 'Babas' in the *Vilayet*. The *Vali* conceived the idea of 'grasping the beast by the horns', this, through the seizure and closure of this latter *tekke*. He secretly sent a telegraph to the Provincial Administrator (*mutasarrif*) of Gyrokastër, ordering him to compel 'Baba' 'Ali to come, under some pretext or another, to the *Serai* in order to lay his hands on him and to escort him to Ioannina, while the *tekke* itself was to be closed.

The deal proved to be abortive. The Provincial Administrator of Gyrokastër immediately replied to the *Vali*, saying that in order to carry out his commands he would need to have at least six battalions of troops to restrain the Bektashis, since the latter would undoubtedly seize weapons and they would freely roam in the Serai with the intent of liberating their chief. They would set alight the countryside since almost all the employees, the policemen and the bulk of the population, were Bektashis. In any event, the Provincial Administrator declined to accept responsibility for any consequences.

The 'Vali' did not dare to brave such an outburst of this sort from the Bektashis. His projected blow having been such a failure, he decided to wait for a more favourable opportunity. It was not long before this offered itself.

A fortnight later, in a *tekke* near to Gyrokastër, 'Baba' Haidar (an active participant in the Bektashi led movement for national liberation), who was the superior there, died suddenly. The *Vali*, having been notified, he immediately issued the orders to securely lock up the *tekke*. He next notified the chief of the 'Babas' that his nomination of a successor to the deceased should not take place until a fresh order had been issued.

The locks were fixed in place and the order not to nominate a successor to 'Baba' Haidar was delivered to 'Baba' 'Ali. These facts stirred up enormous discontent among the Bektashis. Misfortunes would have resulted if the Bektashi 'Babas', who, however determined they may be, are also very wise, had not used their influence to pacify their co-religionists.

The Bektashis have resolved to pursue every legal path open to them and to take their case to Constantinople in order to obtain justice. In a situation, to the contrary, they will, one has been told, adopt 'extreme measures'. In the

current state of the Ottoman Empire it would appear to be useless to wish to create new problems, especially so if they entail religious questions and dilemmas which excite a feeling of very serious danger amongst the populace. In such questions, were they to be broached, one is never sure of the likely outcome.

This idea of Osman Pasha to close the *tekkes* and to suppress Bektashism, if it be true, is folly and it is dangerous. It is impossible to accomplish. It would entail the depopulation of the entire region which is inhabited by the Bektashis. It would plunge it, in its entirety, into utter misery. It is politically hazardous, since, in seeking to suppress an element which, in number, totals around 200,000 Muslim people, Bektashis though they may be, one would open the way to Hellenization. That beats in fury upon the southern door (of Albania) and, of course, is in no way advantageous to the Ottoman Empire. Furthermore, it could bring with it a terrible civil war, which could plunge the country into a most stubborn conflict and set it ablaze.

Ioannina, 25th January, 1905.

To the English Consul General in Salonica, Sir R. W. Graves.

The ferment among the Muslim population of Gyrokastër provoked by the question of the Bektashis is still prevalent. This is because our *Vali*, by an act of outright injustice and of a ferocious and impudent authoritarianism has again sought to pour fuel upon the burning fire.

Two months ago, Mufid Bey, the son of the late Naky Pasha of Libohovo, a grandson of the celebrated ‘Ali Pasha of Tepelenë, arrived in our town. Mufid Bey is aged between twenty-eight and thirty. He has studied in Constantinople and in Europe. His father, who belonged to the richest and noblest of Albanian families, left a fortune to his sons. This totalled ninety thousand Turkish pounds, around two million francs. Mufid Bey entered a diplomatic career. He was secretary of the Ottoman legation in Brussels and at present he is credited as filling the office of First Secretary of the Turkish Legation in Berne. He is a very well informed young man with very distinguished manners.

Mufid Bey had come to Ioannina in order to visit his properties, for long abandoned, and then to return again to his post in Berne. After a few days he left our town in order to go to Gyrokastër and to enter into an agreement with his uncle, Riza Bey, over his landed properties which he had left in this *Vilayet* and in Thessaly. Above all, it was in order to define the limits of a property which is situated in the environs of Gyrokastër itself. In order to fix a term for this dispute he addressed the Administrative Council (*Majlis Idara*) of Gyrokastër. Having presented his titles, the Council decided to despatch a sub-lieutenant, accompanied by ten gendarmes, to the localities in order to carry out the delimiting thereof and to chase away the illegal possessor from part of the disputed land, this extending, approximately, between fifty and three hundred metres. The holder, in order to establish his rights in

an ostensible manner, had a straw hut erected there and he planted some vines.

Mufid Bey went in person to these localities accompanied by the sub-lieutenant and the gendarmes with intent to take possession of the territory which was adjudged to be his by the Administrative Council. The usurper's men were chased away by the gendarmes without offering any resistance. Mufid Bey, with the ultimate aim of for ever eliminating the bone of contention between him and his neighbour, had the hut demolished and the vines uprooted. He maintained that all of it belonged to him from the moment that the authority had attributed the ownership of the land to him, giving him the possession by the secular arm of authority.

The usurper, through the intervention of Mustafa Efendi the Sanitary Inspector of this *Vilayet*, and the intermediary of the *Vali* for local and venal affairs, addressed a petition to the Governor General. In this he exposed his complaints levelled against Mufid Bey. The 'Vali', who did not know how to vent his spleen against the Bektashis, well aware that Mufid Bey belonged to that same sect, desired to gain some advantage from this occasion in order that he could pursue a criminal path, levelled against the Bey for his abuse of power and in order to issue an order that he should be arrested.

The instructing judge, a timid individual who dared not wilfully oppose the *Vali*, issued such an order, characterising Mufid Bey's action as that of a criminal. He ordered that he should be arrested. However, in order to give him the capacity to do this and to formulate such an order Ottoman law requires the agreement of the President of the Tribunal, and, since the latter would appear to be more independent, after having thoroughly examined the matter, it would appear that, by virtue of the decision of the Administrative Council and with the secular arm Mufid Bey had indeed acted correctly. The President did not acknowledge the criminality of his action, he denied that seizure had taken place and for this reason the issue of the mandate did not take place.

The *Vali* became aware of this act. Being unable to master his hatred he immediately convened the Administrative Council of our town. He obtained a decision (*karar/Ar. qarār*) ordering the arrest of Mufid Bey. Osman Pasha, equipped with this document which was in itself invalid and illegal, issued an immediate and formal order to the Provincial Administrator of Gyrokastër to arrest and imprison Mufid Bey.

The decision of the Administrative Council, which the *Vali* had brought about so as to cover his arbitrary action is clearly null and void. The Council has no right to deal with penal cases. With this intent the Tribunal had exceeded the limits of its sphere of competence. This order had been issued under pressure from the Governor. It had done so, out of sheer servility, whereby it could cover the deed which was monstrously unjust by a covering of legality.

Naturally, this action has made a speedy and marked impression among these Muslim populations, since the vexations and the arbitrary deeds of the

Vali have overstepped the bounds. However, in the present circumstances, matters have turned out differently. Neither injustice nor the annoyances worked in favour of His Excellency, our *Vali*.

The period which has followed in respect to the affair of Mufid Bey is as follows. While the matters which I have spoken about, above, were taking place, Mufid Bey, ignorant of the plots which were afoot, had left for Delvino in order to sail to Santi Quaranta (possibly the so called 'monastery of the forty martyrs', the original name of the town known today as Sarande in Albania). It was his intention to go on to Vallona and to Berat in order to visit his other properties. Before he had left Delvino, the order for his arrest had reached the Head of the Administrative District (*Caymacam/Ar. Qā' im-maqām/Albanian, Kajmakam*), who administered this town. The latter had him arrested and he sent him then and there to Gyrokastër, escorted by five mounted gendarmes. He arrived there as evening descended. He was led to the *Serai* and he was put into the custody of the Major of the Gendarmerie, Zia Bey, with the intention of placing him into prison. Hardly had this news of Mufid Bey's arrest been spread abroad in that town than a lively agitation began to make itself apparent among the Bektashi population, and, as though by some magic, a crowd of Albanians gathered in front of the gate of the 'large house' (*konak*, lodging, inn, asylum), making known to the eye its far from reassuring attentions. This crowd grew in its number as it assembled there and it filled the adjoining streets of the *Serai* which became so packed with men that circulation was all but impossible. However, a commission of ten persons which was presided over by a certain Ulema Nazif Cascia, an *ex-Qadi* of Gyrokastër, was named by the Bektashis. This commission visited the *Serai* in order to meet the Provincial Administrator. It served notice that it would not abandon the 'large house' before it had been informed of the cause of the arrest of Mufid Bey and before having obtained his immediate release. The Provincial Administrator, perceiving the insistency of their submission and the far from reassuring mood of the crowd which stood without deemed it fit to give his consent to this demand. He showed the despatch of the *Vali* to them. It was phrased in these terms: 'have Mufid Bey arrested and consign him to Major Zia Bey so that he can hold him in detention while awaiting the disposal of the penal tribunal'

The commission of the Bektashis had hardly noticed that the order was intended to hold Mufid Bey at the disposal of the Judiciary. But it insisted that the members of the tribunal should be summoned to meet immediately. The Provincial Administrator objected on the grounds that the hour was late and that the members could not come. But the commission held firm and the Inspector of Justice, Zouhdy Bey, who happened to be present in Gyrokastër, who had been made acquainted of the matter and who had prevented the imprisonment of Mufid Bey, ensured that the Provincial Administrator had to concede in order to prevent an ugly incident. The Council Chamber was convoked at six o'clock in the evening, that is to say,

Turkish time, one hour before midnight. The Council of the Judiciary, in the presence of the Inspector of Justice, the Procurator and the Instructing Judge, unanimously decided that the action of Mufid Bey, in conformity with the law, could not warrant his arrest nor could it prevent him from continuing his journey.

Following upon this decision Mufid Bey was immediately granted his freedom. That same night he left for nearby town of Libohovo and he went to the home of his uncle, Riza Bey. The following day he sent a despatch to the *Vali*. In it he informed him that he had been arrested, unlawfully, and that he had decised to demand justice in Constantinople.

At this moment, Mufid Bey is living in Gyrokastër. It is said that he will shortly depart in order to visit his other properties in Thessaly and that he will then proceed to Constantinople.

Here then is a stupid and arbitrary action of our Governor General. That serious troubles did not erupt in Gyrokastër, and that deplorable incidents were only just avoided, was entirely due to the moderation and the wisdom of the Provincial Administrator, as well as to the impartial and decisive action of the Inspector of Justice, Zouhdy Bey.

My dear Consul General, please accept an assurance of my most eminent regards and consideration.

To Sir R. W. Graves, British Consul General in Salonica.
From Ioannina, 16th March, 1905.

In my report, no. 34, of the 18th (19th?) December, I did not fail to make it clear to you the intent of our *Vali* to exacerbate the problematic issue of the Bektashis. As I said in that report, the *Vali* had ordered the closure of the *tekke* of 'Baba' Haidar. The inhabitants of Gyrokastër had sent a commission to the Provincial Administrator to ask for a reason for the issuing of this order. The commission demanded the reopening of the *tekke* for religious worship. The Provincial Administrator had replied, 'à la Turque', that is to say, with smooth words but without satisfying the desires of the commission.

Weary of the promises of the Provincial Administrator, the Bektashis secretly named a provisional dervish in place of the late 'Baba'. They have recommenced their religious rites in their *tekke*. Following remonstrations made by the Provincial Administrator they replied that they had obeyed his orders and that they had not nominated a 'Baba', but a substitute dervish in order that they could avoid any interruptions in their functions. More to the point was the fact that the substitute was the natural heir to the possessions of the late 'Baba' Haidar.

Affairs continued in this wise for some months. Then quite unexpectedly, on the eighth of the month, a company of Anatolian soldiery, commanded by a captain, arrived in Gyrokastër. The arrival of the military led to the belief that that they were bent upon punishment and a recall to disciplinary behaviour by the rebel gendarmerie in Gyrokastër, who, from time to time, had

revolted over the non-payment of their arrears. But on the following day, at ten o'clock in the morning, the company, without prior warning, went outside the town in order to seal the *tekke* of 'Baba' Haidar. They waited for the arrival of the Provincial Administrator, accompanied by the judicial authority. At length, a very minute search was carried out. This lasted for several hours due to the compiling of an inventory of all the objects in the *tekke*. After this, locks were placed in position there. They were fixed to all the doors. The dervish was ordered to leave the neighbourhood, without a hope of his return there under pain of his arrest.

This fresh attempt left a deep impression upon the Bektashis and the Muslims, in general. All of them deeply deplored the arbitrary acts of our *Vali*. He had given in to the temptation to act in this way, one which was prejudicial to the Islamic populace who are the object of his persecution and who are sure that he is in the pay of the Greeks.

A secret ferment of feeling prevails among the Bektashis, who have united in secret. All this leads one to believe that they now desire to take their revenge. Let us hope that more moderate opinions will prevail. But it seems to me that the omens are not propitious. This is especially so at the present time. Spring has arrived and it is always an ominous season. It stirs the religious passions of the Muslims, goading them to act with some aim in view. As I have said that it is not lawful nor is it practical to put into effect.

PS. This very moment I have been made aware that a raid has taken place in Gyrokastër upon the *tekke* of 'Baba' 'Ali, the most venerated and the chief of all the 'Babas' of the Vilayet. It has had negative repercussions. In the *tekke* of 'Baba' Haidar the authority seized several books in the Albanian language which the deceased 'Baba' had left there. It was also the aim of the authority to seize the sum of two thousand five hundred Turkish pounds left behind by the deceased 'Baba' although for a long while this sum seems to have been placed by the Bektashis in safe hands.

Salonica, the 11th May, 1905.

Discontentment amongst the Bektashis in Gyrokastër is still increasing. This is because the *Vali*, with his false policy, has thrown back upon the Provincial Administrator all the displeasure which the Bektashis had to suffer, whilst the Provincial Administrator himself, was merely a tool. A month ago the Bektashis asked the *Vali* to replace him. At first the *Vali* spoke pleasantly, however he took no action whatsoever. At length, the Bektashis sent a despatch to the *Vali* and another to Constantinople. They openly declared that if nobody would treat them justly, then they would act as the Ghegs (speakers of Ghegerisht, the northern dialect spoken in Albania) had done. They would rise up in revolt. To show their ill feelings, during the final festivities of Orthodox Easter, during the night, they fired a fusillade at the house of the Christian assistant (*moavin/Ar. mu'āwin*) who is the adjoint to the Provincial Administrator of Gyrokastër. A bullet grazed the ear of the mother-in-law of

the adjoint. The latter is in an excitable state and he persistently asks to be transferred elsewhere.

The *Vali* has been impressed by the despatch which was sent by the Bektashis. He sent a telegram in which he asked the Provincial Administrator for the names of its signatories. The latter replied that they numbered over two hundred.

Were the *Vali* to have taken such measures which are his usual way of exerting some brutal suppression, then this act would undoubtedly have unleashed an explosive backlash amongst the Bektashi populations. This is altogether a more common situation, nowadays, since we have no regular troops, near at hand, and the country is situated in an area of the Ottoman reservists of the *Vilayet*. They are all Albanians. To judge by the unheard of acts which our *Vali* has committed in recent days one may flatly state that our Governor has become a victim to a fit of madness.

Consul General, please accept an assurance of my highest consideration.

Public Record Office PO/294/32,1909, Janina, 14th February, Ghev A. Stranieri, no. 4, 'Bektashi Conference at Tepelene', reports with observations, Recd 22nd, Acknd 22nd, addressed to the Embassy, same date, in E 24. To Mr Milazzo, for perusal, VC 49.

Vice Consulate of Her Britannic majesty in Ioannina, 14th February, 1909, no. 4. Monsieur The Consul General:

I have just been informed that on the fifth, sixth and seventh of the current month, severable notable Albanians, sent by diverse cazas of our *Vilayet* held reunions in the *tekke* of 'Baba' Ahmad which is located near to Tepelenë (probably the Turan *tekke*, the seat of 'Baba' Ahmad Turani. The *tekke* was burnt by the Greeks in 1914). The aim of these reunions, which were to have taken place through the initiative of the Albanian Bektashi party (possibly the Patripotic Club of Tepelenin which 'Baba' Ahmad played a major role from 1909), is not known with any certainty.

I have been able to learn from persons, who claim to be well informed, that during these reunions it could have been decided to present a demand to the government in Constantinople. This would be a demand for the granting of autonomy to the Albanian provinces. This item of information should be taken into consideration as a part of those other items which I have received directly from Gyrokastër. I say, 'in part', since, following these latest pieces of intelligence, the proposition of Albanian autonomy which has been made by the Bektashi party would not, in any way, evoke a response amongst the Geg Albanians of Luchnia (a locality which is situated between Fier and Durres), in Berat and in Elbasan. In contrast, they would receive the unanimous approval of an alternative proposition, namely, the formation of bands of Albanian Muslims whose aim would be to combat the Greek bands which might be ready to organize themselves. This would take place next Spring, and it would have a political goal, that is, to prevent the

population of the Orthodox villages from lending their support to the Greek bands.

Such being the case, I think it opportune to inform you that,here, everybody whom I know, rightly, or wrongly, foresees grave events and this after a very brief delay.

The Christian element affirms that, due to Albanian velleity, one should dread the outbreak of serious disorders. The Muslim element, which is entirely of Albanian origin, insists, on its part, that it should make some response. They see in it the secret ambitions of the Greeks. For this very reason, they should be watchful of the Orthodox population of the *Vilayet*.

This frame of mind could explain the concurrence of the reunions at Tepelenë and the preventive measures which may well have been decided there by the Albanians who are opposed to any risk of an insurrection on the part of the Greeks.

Consul General, Sir, accept the assurance of my highest consideration.

Turk, Greek and Bektashi Albanian and the crisis of national identity at the beginning of the twentieth century

The misrule and corruption which marked this period of Ottoman government in southern Albania was to lead to a national disaster, to 'ethnic cleansing' on a massive scale and over large areas it resulted in the uprooting and expulsion, or the Hellenization, of its Albanian inhabitants, a large number of whom were Bektashis. It took place between 1913 and 1915, only a little whist after these reports had been written. These crucial years transformed the entire character of Northern Epirus. Hasluck's assessment, which began this chapter, is a catalogue of destroyed tekkes. Much further detail may be gleaned in the pages of Nathalie Clayer's *L'Albanie pays des Derviches*, Berlin, 1990.

A map, entitled, 'Albania and its unredeemed territories' which was published in *Albania. The Master Key to the Near East*, by Christo Dako, in 1919, shows these Albanian territories which were ceded by the Congress of Berlin, 1878, and by the London Conference of 1912/13. The map, in question, was published in M. Edith Durham's *Albania and the Albanians, Selected Articles and Letters, 1903–1944*, edited by Bejtullah Destani, London, 2001, immediately facing the first page. It shows an entire swathe of territory awarded to the Greeks by the London Conference. It extends from the region of the lakes in southern Macedonia, south-westwards, and it includes Konitza, Konispoli and Ioannina as far as the gulf of Arta along the coast of the Ionian Sea. The map, as it is drawn, contains no information as to the ethnic change which had occurred in the early years of the century. Apart from Hasluck's reports, the most graphic descriptions were penned by Edith Durham in the correspondence which she sent from Valona, on 3rd September, 1913 (ibid., pp. 33–4), and on later occasions.

Describing the task of the International Commission to define the line of Albania's southern boundary, she listed those localities the fate of which had been

left pending after the treaty of London. These included Delvino, Premeti, Liskovok, Kolonia, Rogou and Konitza (Koritza).

The tragedy which was predicted by Edith Durham, and by the Vice-Consul in Ioannina, took place in a manner which recalls, graphically, more recent events in Bosnia, Kosovo and Macedonia, all of which have been displayed to the world through the media. At that time the 'ethnic cleansing' took place with few to report it in detail.

Writing in the 'Manchester Guardian' on 14th November, 1940, Edith Durham was outspoken in what she said about the 'tragedy of Koritza', and about those whom she held responsible for it having taken place (ibid., pp. 188–9):

> At the beginning of the present century, Koritza was the home of Albanian nationalism in the south as was Scutari in the north. Albania was then part of the Turkish Empire, and the Turks, by forbidding the printing or teaching of the Albanian language under heavy penalties, were striving to check the rising national spirit.

Edith Durham then commented upon the remarkable success of the British and Foreign Bible Society in furthering the cause of the Albanian language, then next she turned to the fate of Koritza itself. 'Koritza when I first visited it in 1904 was a clean stone-built little town with considerable trade. The school was well equipped and attended both by Moslem and Christian girls'.

The Turks did all they could to suppress the Albanian language. In the intervening years Koritza had been 'ethnically cleansed' by the Greeks. The Albanian Christians had suffered, but so too had the Bektashis suffered even more. F. W. Hasluck had made this quite clear in his report of the destruction and of the defacing of Bektashi cultural monuments. A mention of this is to be found in a letter which he sent from Ioannina which he published in his *Religion and Folklore*, London, 1926, p. 4.

'Yannina, 8th March 1915. 'Things Bektashi are very flat here. They say that when the Greeks got in, the 'andarts' ran amuck and biffed the tombs, etc. Also elsewhere in the district '*tekkes*' have been burned and the sect is lying low'.

There is little doubt that the destruction of the Bektashi *tekkes* in the border regions, and even those in Gyrokastër, by the Greeks, left a deep wound in the heart of the Albanian Bektashi movement. The grief which it suffered finds a mention in the impressive book, and literary legacy, *Misticizma Islame dhe Bektashizma*, New York, 1970, by the late 'Baba' Rexhebi, who was the head of the Albanian *tekke* in Detroit.

In the final chapter of that work, titled 'Two last words' (*Dy Falje te Fundit*, p. 382), he makes a passing reference to the tragic loss to Albanian culture and literature and particularly to the Bektashi movement. He does this within an appreciation of the help which he had received from the many 'Babas' whom he had met during the course of his long lifetime. He mentions, by name, Kasem Baba of Kosturit *tekke* and other famous Babas, such as Turabi Baba and Baba Haidar (Hajdar) who were associated with the *tekke* in Konitza. He felt that his

lack of poetical quotations and examples (*nefes*) meant that he could not do justice to their poetic and spiritual genius. As for Hafiz Baba of Kucit *tekke*, in Devoll, Baba Rexhebi described him as a 'martyr' of the Greek aggression of 1914 (*deshmor, viktime e agresionit grek, ne vitim 1914*).

The Albanian Bektashiyya in the face of the choice between peaceful dialogue or military struggle to defend a people's national identity and existence

The views and responses of the Bektashis, as expressed in the correspondence of Consul General Du Vallon is very typical of the opinions which were expressed by others who wrote their reports towards the end of the nineteenth century and in the early years of the twentieth century. The writings of F. W. Hasluck have already been quoted, another is that by Margaret Hasluck, *The Non-Conformist Moslems of Albania*, which was first published in *The Contemporary Review* (CXXVII, May, 1925, pp. 599–606), an article which was reprinted in *The Moslem World*, 15, 1925, pp. 388–98. These share the credit for shaping current opinions at that time.

Popular Sufism, or rather, the practices of the brotherhoods, and of the popular reading of the mighty Sufi spiritual masterpieces, in verse, is now far from uncommon. However, at the end of the nineteenth century, as has been mentioned earlier in this book, popular Sufism and the goals of the Sufi brotherhoods were viewed as the most active and the most dangerous cells for the widespread resistance to Western interests. They were feared, mistrusted and opposed. The occasional excesses, the self-mutilations, the use of narcotics and the allegedly 'permissive' practices made them a prime target for agents and for military intelligence. The memory of a 'Mad Mullah' and a 'Mahdi' (Sufi and Mahdist were viewed as one and the same) and, especially, in Russia, gripped by the military resistance of Shamil, his *murids* and other fighters from the Daghestanis and the Chechens, conveyed a picture, an image, of a Sufism which was far removed from the 'Monism' of Ibn al-'Arabi, or from the poetic spiritualism of the *Masnavi* of Jalal al-Din al-Rumi.

Edith Durham, in her article in the *Contemporary Review*, October 1917, *'The Albanian Question*' (ibid., pp. 83–90) pointed out the significance of the events at that time. She wrote:

> After the Russo–Turkish war of 1877, when Turkish territory was being divided among the Balkan peoples, the Albanians saw with dismay, much of their best land torn from them and given to the Greeks, Serbs and Montenegrins. They resisted fiercely, saved some of it, and formed the Albanian League. Its centres were at Prizren and Argyocastro, and its object the defence of Albanian rights.

With this background one is in a better position to weigh the value of the information in these letters from Ioannina. The Bektashis had a wide reputation for

eclecticism. The reports of the Vice-Consul conveyed a few of the essentials which distinguished them from fellow Muslims who were Sunnis. He fails to underline the Shi'ite features which Bektashism had acquired over many centuries, features which have already been illustrated in Chapters 4 and 6, in particular. The Bektashis were not only devotees of 'Ali, to a differing degree, but they were also deeply influenced by the martyrdom of Husain. They had absorbed countless customs and taboos from their Illyrian and Christian past, customs which find a place in Robert Elsie's *Dictionary of Albanian Religion, Mythology, and Folk Culture* (Hurst, London, 2001). The reports mention the Albanian abstention from the flesh of the hare. Hasluck discussed this in some detail and Robert Elsie (on p. 111) explains this popular belief,

> The hare, 'lepur', def, 'lepuri', plur. 'lepuj', is a bad omen of Albanian belief. If someone starts out on a journey and his path is crossed by a hare, it is deemed advisable, as with a black cat, for him to return home at once, for otherwise something bad will happen to him. If a pregnant woman sees a hare, her child will turn out to be a coward and will sleep at night with his eyes open. Nor should a woman eat a hare during pregnancy. Dervishes will not eat hares because they believe the animals are made of menstruation discharge (cf. H. Pedersen 1898, p. 111–112: F. Nopesa. Religiose Anshauungen).

Ger Duijzings, in his recent book, *Religion and the Politics of Identity in Kosovo* (Hurst, London, 2000, pp. 170–1) wrote:

> The prominent role of the Albanian Bektashis in the national movement led to an explosive growth of the order, though for historical reasons it never succeeded in extending its influence into the north. However in the south of Albania the number of lodges doubled (from twenty to fifty) between 1878 and 1912. this remarkable growth in strength and popularity enhanced the self consciousness of the order, which increasingly started to mark itself from the Turkish Bektashis and Sunni Albanians, both of whom opposed Albanian independence (Clayer 1992:296) the growing independence of the Albanian Bektashis and for their support of national goals expressed itself for instance in the composition of patriotic poems written in the traditional genre of Bektashi 'nefes' (hymns), and in the cultivation of the Kerbela theme. In particular, the Kerbela epics written by members of the Frashëri family-Hadikaja by Dalip Frashëri (1842) and the Myhtaremaja ('Tale of Myhtar') by Dalip's brother, Shahin Bey Frashëri (1868) – had a lasting influence. Both works describe the events during the battle of Kerbela and their aftermath, and were recited during the matem ceremonies (the memorial services in honour of Husayn during the Kerbela battle. Instead of stressing Muslim unity throughout the Ottoman empire, greater importance was attached to good relations with other (Christian) Albanians.

9 A future role for Balkan Sufism and the revival of Popular Sufism among the Tatars of the Crimean peninsula

> A remarkable feature of religious life in Bakhchisarai and in Crimea, in general, was the abundance of followers of Sufi Teaching. Several Sufi (dervish) communities existed in Bakhchisarai. Members of these mystical circles yearned to comprehend mysteries of being through mystic practices like special prayers. Sufi communities possessed several 'tekiyes' or praying houses in Bachchisarai. There were followers of Sufism among the Crimean khans as well, like, for example, Mehmed 1V Giray (1641–44; 1654–66) and Haci Selim 1 Giray (1671–78; 1684–91; 1692–99; 1702–04).
>
> Khan administration was unusually tolerant towards adherents of different faiths (quite a unique phenomenon in the world history of that epoch). The population of Crimea included, along with Muslims, groups of Greek, Armenian and Roman Christians, Qarays (or Karaites) and Jews. No facts of religious persecutions as state policy in the Crimean Khanate are known. On the contrary, some of the Crimean khans even rendered financial help to a Greek monastery located in the vicinity of the Qarq fortress. All non-Muslim communities in Crimea had their own legal structures. Only the most grave crimes were tried in the Shari'at courts.
>
> (Website of the Khan Palace Museum in Bakhchisarai)

Recent wars in the Balkans have left very deep scars among the Muslims of Albania, Bosnia, Kosovo and Macedonia. For Sufism, whether it be popular, or as a deeply felt Islamic spiritual inspiration amongst intellectuals, war has also brought about much suffering, self-examination, and also a challenge, which, in Bosnia, at least, has brought Sufism into the heart of the resistance movements, and into others which are struggling to redefine ethnic identity, cultural rebuilding and resettlement in villages and towns which have been devastated by battle and ethnic cleansing. Popular Sufi worship of devotion may be observed within an essentially Sufi movement, called *Nashīd al-Hudā*, in Bosnia. Cassettes of *ilahijas* are for sale and are popular. Sold under the general title of Asik (Ilmija BiH) Tabacki Mesdzid, the content includes the invocation of God, *tekbir*, *ilahijes*; *Ah ihvani*, *Bilmemnidejim*, *O Mu'mine*. *Salavat*, *Allah emrin ans* and *Asere*. The chanting is deeply moving and is influenced by the chanting in the *tekkes* and it also shows certain similarities with the chanting of the Muslim Tatars in Belarus, Lithuania and Poland.

Popular support for Sufi ritual is especially the case, in Sarajevo, where in the Sinaniyya *tekke*, meetings of both young and old for the weekly *dhikr* take place in the middle of that fine Ottoman structure which is now being restored anew, as are so many other Islamic structures which the Bosnjaks deeply cherish as a part of their surviving Ottoman heritage. The distinctions which were once made between the brotherhoods – and we have seen how these have been of a secondary importance in the past – although still asserted, seem, as the days pass and as crises multiply, to matter less and less within the turmoil which confronts Islam today, not only in Africa and in Asia, but equally in parts of Eastern Europe where Sufism was once followed by very few, if any, for example among the Tatars of Poland and Belarus, have seen a renewed, reborn, or newly planted growth among the Muslim minorities. This has come about partly on account of the constant influx of refugees, of asylum seekers, of job seekers, of a mobile workforce, and families, many of whom have emigrated to the west from the former Soviet Union and from the Middle East. The enlargement of the European Economic Community (EEC) to the East will add further pressure to this ongoing movement and drifting of populations. The presence of Azeris, other Caucasians, such as Lezgins, and especially Chechens, Kurds, Turks, Persians, Arabs and Pakistanis, has meant that their home-grown Sufi gatherings and brotherhoods have been brought with them to their new homes. All this is taking place within countries and communities where Islamic movements, which are unsympathetic and hostile to Sufism, are also growing, by the day; for example, in their pressure to teach and to spread the knowledge of the Arabic language, their influence in the mosques, in their increasing numbers, and in their popular appeal and support.

Sufism in Bosnia is one element in the changes within Islam which are now in progress amongst the four key groups in Bosnjak society. According to Rusmir Mahmud Ćehajić,

> The fourth, and numerically smallest, group consisted of members and conveyors of the Sufi tradition in Bosnia. Throughout this century, they were subjected to persecution from members of the 'reform' movements of a pan-Islamic and Wahhabi orientation. Although the Islamic tradition in Bosnia, in its original form, was always aligned with 'tasawwuf', the religious authorities officially banned all dervish orders and the work of 'tekkes' in 1952. This marginalized the small 'turuq', pushing them into secrecy and a state of social deprivation. This, however, did not end their existence. They continued to function, closed off from the surrounding environment, unable to express themselves in forms that would be credible and intelligible to the wider intellectual community. They remained linked to the total Bosnjak heritage, cognisant of their spiritual tradition, and they drew form and substance from those functioning in the living Tradition. They also have no illusions of religion 'dying away' or being 'reformed'. Members of the three afore-mentioned groups usually consider the Sufi dedication to traditional forms to be both naïve and outdated. There are no relations between this group and the

> other three in this principal respect. Such relations as do exist are on the individual level alone, and thus have little effect on society at large.[1]

Bosnian Sufis were in the forefront of battle during the Bosnian War. Some of them rose to high office in the Bosnian Army brigades. Others in the brotherhoods, especially in the Naqshabandiyya and the Qadiriyya, were active in the establishment and manning of relief convoys from all over Western Europe. Sufi *tekkes* and mosques were frequently primary targets in Bosnia and in Kosovo for the Serb artillery.

The question of the future of Bosnian Sufis, side by side with Christian neighbours from amongst the Croats and the Serbs is one which is constantly faced by them, both as Muslims and as Sufis, amidst their fellow Bosnjaks. On this point Mahmud Ćehajić has remarked,[2]

> the second prediction, unanimously preferred by the Bosnian Sufis, says that Bosnjaks will renew their strength in the process of in-gathering ('qabd'), leave nationalistic illusions behind, and return with a conviction that God has created a Law and a way of life for every people, and that the aim which can save all men is but one. Different paths lead to this single goal, but the difference cannot produce mutual threat. From this renewed strength in the knowledge of the single goal uniting all the children of Abraham, Bosnjaks will be able to offer the reconstruction of Bosnia as a replacement for the current state of exhaustion brought about by the tyranny of nationalism.

Two *tariqas* are now particularly active, the first, the Naqshabandiyya, has long been established in the heart of Bosnia.[3] Both in Bosnia and more recently in Albania, the Naqshabandi-Haqqaniyya of Shaykh Nazim al-Qubrusi, the latter being a non-infrequent visitor to these countries, is extremely active. The Khalwatiyya was long established in Albania side by side with the Bektashiyya[4] and in recent years the Khalwati (Helvati)-Jarrahiyya has actively promoted and financially supported Bosnian students in order to complete their higher education in the United States.

Sufism in the Crimean peninsula

The war in Bosnia was preceded by many other tragic and genocidal events which faced the long established Muslims in Eastern Europe. Stalin's decreed deportation of the Crimean Tatars from their ancient homeland took place in 1944, together with Armenians, Bulgarians and Greeks. It was a major, if not total, expulsion of Muslims. But in 1954, the Crimea was transferred to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and the return of the Tatars from Central Asia and elsewhere began in 1968. It has continued ever since, although not without local hostility, especially from elements in the Crimean Russian population who resent their return. Incidents where new mosques have been destroyed, and one or two of the few old mosques which had survived, have been reported.[5]

Today the former Region of the Crimea is an Autonomous Republic within Ukraine, with its own flag and national anthem. The Tatars now number 300,000. Some of them are settled within, or near, their former cultural centres and lands, towns such as Bakhchisarai and Eski Krym. In many other cases, however, their former lands had been settled by newcomers or obliterated, hence many of the new villages are in virgin territories. The architecture is contemporary in style, the mosques very new, sometimes large and impressive, and frequently in debt to architecture with which one is familiar in Turkey and in Central Asia. What remains of the ruins of the Seljuq and Mamluk ages is markedly different in style. The long sojourn in Central Asia has meant that the younger generation has little memory of their former life in the peninsula and the Islam which they once knew, or in many cases never knew, where it exists, is heavily indebted to the Islam which they grew up amongst in exile and observed to a greater or lesser degree within the Central Asian communities. Hence, Sufism, where it exists, reflects Sufism in Turkey, in Uzbekistan, in Russia and in the West. The Sufi heritage of the Crimea seems alien, yet this heritage has a rich history and even today a few ruins, cemeteries and *tekkes* convey an impression of what has been lost of that wilfully obliterated heritage. Alexander Bogomolov, in his article 'Islamic Knowledge in Ukraine' (*ISIM Newsletter*, 14th June 2004, pp. 20–1) explains how the Crimean Tatar community, even in exile, preserved its 'Popular Sufism'.

Communal religious life was organized around the annual cycle of religious holidays and the critical moments of the cycle of life. The former included major Islamic holidays – *qurban bairam*(*id al-adha*), uraza bairam (*id al-fitr*) and the *mawlid*, and, in the case of Crimea Tatars, *Khidirles* and *Derviza* festivals celebrated at sacred places in Crimea. In footnote 2, Bogomolov explains that some of the Crimean Tatars used to return from exile annually to visit their native villages and towns to celebrate *Khidirles*, as far back as the 1970s. This was the festival held in honour of al-Khidr, a great saint in Popular Sufism. *Derviza* was held on the day of the autumn equinox.

Early Sufism in the Crimea and in the adjacent Caucasus plains and mountains

One of the sources for the presence of Sufism in the Crimean peninsula and in the fringe regions of the Northern Caucasus is the account of the traveller, Ibn Battuta, who passed through this region in the fourteenth century during the rule of Tuluktumur, the representative of the Khan of the Golden Horde and ruler of the Crimean *ulus* of the Horde. Özbeg Khan resided in Saray, on the Volga. At different localities there were Sufi hostels and retreats (*zāwiyas*) where the Shaykhs, who were in charge, were predominantly men from Khurasan, in Iran. In one of these retreats he met a teacher (*faqīh*) who was an Ossetian from the Northern Caucasus. Everywhere he went, he found the Sufis to be multi-ethnic and, at times, in some form of dialogue with their Armenian, Greek and other Christian neighbours. Converted Byzantine Greeks lived as Sufis in the company

of Iraqi Arabs and Turks. Near Kaffa, he entered a church and encountered a monk, who was either an Armenian or a Greek. Ibn Battuta wrote:

> On one of the walls of the church I saw an image (either a Greek icon or an Armenian *khashqar*) of an Arab who was wearing a turban. He was girt with a sword and he was brandishing a spear in his hand. A lamp was burning before the image. I asked the monk, 'Whom does this image depict?'. He said to me, 'This is the image of the Prophet 'Ali (b, Abi Talib)'. I was astonished at what he had told me. We spent the night in that church.[6]

Throughout the Balkans, the adjoining regions of the Middle East, and many other parts of the East where Muslims and Christians had for long been close neighbours. 'Ali had been identified with the Prophet Elias, or with the warrior saint, St George. This was especially the case where Popular Sufism was sympathetic to such shared personal religious heroes and objects of spiritual example to believers.

A further passage in Ibn Battuta's account informs us about personal friendships and inter-faith dialogue between an Armenian monk and a Sufi Shaykh, each one established in a nearby retreat. While Ibn Battuta was staying in al-Qirim (Solqa/Solhat, later Eski Krym or Starij Krym) he was accommodated in the retreat of Shaykh Zadah al-Khurasani who was one of the leading Sufis in Tuluktumur's capital.

> This Shaykh welcomed us and offered us hospitality and favours. He is highly venerated amongst them. I saw the people paying him their respects and this included the Qadi, the preacher in the mosque (*al-khatīb*), the jurist (*al-faqīh*) and others than these.
>
> Shaykh Zadah informed me that outside this town a Christian monk resides in a monastery. He is extremely ascetic in his manner of life and assiduous in his devotion to God. He fasts strictly and sometimes he does so for up to forty days. He then breaks his fast by eating one bean. He reveals matters which are concealed from human knowledge and matters which are unforeseen. Shaykh Zadah asked me to keep him company in order to visit this monk, but I declined his invitation. It was then that, after a while, I regretted that I had declined his offer in order to ascertain the truth of his affair.[7]

Tim Mackintosh-Smith has identified the retreat of this monk, who was almost certainly an Armenian, in a building which formerly stood on the site of the present location of the Monastery of the Holy Cross (Surb Khach) which is situated on a high slope beside a forest outside Starij Krym. Commentating upon the fast itself, with consumption of a single bean at its close, he has discovered that this is a common practice of the Armenian Orthodox Church. It is striking, too, that the existing monastery has many Islamic architectural and ornamental features. It was built in 1338, soon after Ibn Battuta's visit to the Crimea.[8] The peninsula contained Qipchāq Christians, Karaims, Armenians, Greeks, Seljuqs and Muslims of the Golden Horde. Ibn Battuta's description suggests local heterodoxy and a

toleration which marked the communities within the capital of the Horde, Saray. Sufism was at the forefront of a religious dialogue. In Starij Krym and upon Chufut Kale (Citadel of the Jews), the Karaim holy of holies, with its adjacent necropolis, and in the local Sufi retreats, there were ample opportunities for popular Sufism to absorb varied beliefs and observe the rituals of non-Muslim religious practices.

Sufism in the age of the Crimean Khanate

The Crimean Khanate commenced in the middle of the fifteenth century, with Haci Giray, one of the successors of Tas Timur. The event is attributed to an initiative made by the powerful ruler of the Duchy of Lithuania, the influence of whom extended, in that age, to the northern shores of the Black Sea. In 1443, the Tatars of Perekop, Barin and Sirin, whose Khan had died heirless, sent to Casimir, the prince of Lithuania, requesting him to give them Haci Giray to be their Khan. Haci Giray, who was probably born in Lithuania, left for the Crimea, and from that time onwards, as an independent ruler, he vacillated between a friendship and an alliance with Poland–Lithuania, on the one hand, and with Muscovite Russia on the other. His death, however, led to internal feuding amongst the Tatars. This came to an end with the conquest of the Crimea by the Ottomans in 1475 and the establishment of their firm grip on the Khanate in 1477.

Culturally, the Crimean Tatars became part of the Islamic life and culture of the Ottoman World and this may be seen in what is known of the history of Sufism, both lettered and popular, in the centuries which were to follow. This Sufi following was to include the Nogay nomads who inhabited the steppes to the north of the peninsula. Evidence from the seventeenth century indicates that certain Sufis exerted a powerful popular appeal over parts of the peninsula and in this respect were successors to Sari Saltik of the steppes who lived in the age of Ibn Battuta. Our evidence for this is the *Tevārīh Dešt-i Qipčaq/Tawarīkh Dasht-i Qipchāq*.[9] This dates from the seventeenth century. It informs us that one of the Circassian Mamluks built a splendid mosque in the Crimea and that the peninsula attracted many merchants and that this led to avarice and strife within the community. Amongst those who suffered was a Shaykh, who was a Sufi, named Kamal Ata (whose name is also well known in Central Asia). He was believed to have been a contemporary of Timur and Khan Toqtamish, the latter being the Khan of the Golden Horde and, for a time, resident in the Crimea. The tomb of his daughter, Nenekecan Hanim, may be seen to this day on the very summit of Chufut Kale.

The dervishes of Kamal Ata were treated roughly by the merchants, so their Shaikh threatened to destroy the town and its community. Since certain stories about Kamal Ata describe him as a novice (*murīd*) of Sari Saltik, his legendary exploits are closely modelled upon those told about Sari Saltik, who also allegedly founded a mosque and a *zāwiya* in the Crimea. Kamal Ata (the holy, the respected and 'the father') is best viewed as one of the numerous *abdal* about whom, as we have seen, many of the Alawite Kizilbash and non-Alawite Muslims in Bulgaria and Romania base the history of their communities and identify the

sacred tombs (*türbes*) which are at the centre of the ceremonies. They hold these annually and are an essential part of their group identity. However, because of his association with Khan Toqtamish, it is also quite possible that he is in some way linked to, or identical with, the famous historical Persian Sufi poet, Kamal al-Khujandi (Kamal al-Din, d. 803 AH/1400–1), who was brought into captivity from Tabriz to Saray by Toqtamish Khan.[10]

Sufi scholars and Shaykhs in the Ottoman Crimea

The noteworthy Lithuanian Tatar document, the *Risāla-i Leh* mentions that the Crimea was an important centre for training *imams* amongst the Lithuanian and Polish Tatars. Others who studied there were those from the Dobrudja region, which is now in Romania. Under the Ottomans, the key religious figure was the *Mufti* who resided in Aq-Kirman (now Belogrod-Dnectrovsky), to the south-west of Odesa. His influence extended as far as Lithuania and Poland, and the Crimean Tatars who settled in many parts of the Ottoman Empire, including Istanbul. Many, at some time or another, had been under his authority. The chief towns of the Crimea were centres for *tekkes* and *zāwiyas* and there were Sufi circles in the court of the Khans in Bakhchisarai.

Barbara Kellner-Heinkele[11] has furnished us with the names and the literary works on Sufism of several of the Sufis who lived in the Crimea during the latter half of the eighteenth century. Their names are listed in the notes and recorded memoirs of Sa'id Giray Sultan, a Tatar prince who had a great affection for Ibn al-'Arabi's *al-Futūhāt al-Makkiyya*. The information given by him arose from his travels, his meetings and his experiences among the Nogay tribes who were nomadic and who wandered around the district of Yedisan. This is situated in the Ukraine between the rivers Dnister and Dneper. All this took place between 1755 and 1758. His information about the scholars and the Sufis surpassed the limits of Yedisan and extended into districts in the heart of the Crimea and into Bessarabia. The Rifa'iyya brotherhood had been established there. The most important brotherhood which was mentioned by Sa'id Giray was the Khalwatiyya (Xalvetiye).

He also mentions seven contemporary Shaykhs, only two of them having received a *madrasa* education. One was Shaykh (Seyx) Mehmed al-Faqri al-Qirimi, who was the son of the former Khalwati Shaykh of Qarasu, Hamid Efendi. Shaykh Mehmed had studied Qur'an recitation (*tajwīd*) with several *ulamā'* in the Crimea. Later he joined the Khalwatiyya brotherhood. This Shaykh had spoken personally to Sa'id Giray and had told him that he had faced difficulties when he had commenced his pursuit of the contemplative path (*sulūk*). He had therefore departed for Istanbul, where he had joined the company of the great Shaykhs, including the Shaykh of Qoga Mustafa Pasa retreat (*tekke*), likewise Shaykh Eyub. He had been unable to resolve his problems under their guidance or the guidance of others. It was then that he heard of Sezayi Efendi who was the Shaykh of the Gülseni brotherhood in Edirne, in Thrace. This Shaykh was to resolve Shaykh Mehmed's difficulties. Some time later he succeeded his father in the retreat (*tekke*) of the Khalwatiya brotherhood in Qarasu.[12]

Prior to this date, biographies which are associated with the Crimea and the adjacent Nogay districts in the steppes are exceedingly few. However, there is one sixteenth century biography which sheds further light on the uphill task which faced Tatar Sufis. One of these tasks was to curb and eliminate heterodox influences which had penetrated the Sufi brotherhoods and local communities in the Black Sea region, especially within the Kizilbash and Alawite territories to the south of the Crimea.

This biography is to be found in Muhammad Murad Ramzi's, *Talfīq al-Akhbār*.[13] The Sufis about whom he wrote lived over a century before the Shaykhs of the Khalwatiyya who are mentioned by Sa'id Giray. The specific Shaykh mentioned was named, Ibrahim Efendi, and he was a contemporary of the Ottoman Sultan, Murad III (1547–95).

> His father, Haqq Muhammad slept one night after he had completed the melodic recitation (*tilāwa*) of his Sufi litanies, collects and responses (*adhkār wa-awrād*) which he knew by heart and observed in accordance with the rule of the Sufi path to perfection (*sulūk*). During his sleep he saw a Shaykh who was illumined by a blaze of light. The latter gave him a copy of the Qur'an. He placed it upon his head but it did not stay in position there. Next he placed it upon his knees and it did not rest there, either. Lastly, he placed it upon his stomach and there it rested.
>
> When he awoke, he reported what he had dreamt to a Shaykh whose will he obeyed without question and who was his confidant. After a while, the latter said to him after pondering a short time and after a period of silent meditation and reflection. 'You will give birth to a son of joyfulness and one who will witness to the faith and he will be the cause of the happiness of countless other folk'. A short while later he fathered Shaykh Ibrahim Efendi. When the latter had grown up to be able to grasp the outwardly religious and observed creed of his faith sufficient for him to practise their tenets, and after he had memorized the Qur'an by heart, his heart longed to attain the inward and esoteric meaning and essence of the faith and the mystical perfection of the same (*al-kamālāt al-bātiniyya*). This matched his firm character and his resolution to be prepared for the task (allotted for him).
>
> Whilst he was hesitant about the appointment of a spiritual guide (*murshid*) he heard the voice of one whom he could not see. That man told him, 'The cure for your ills will only be found in a guide of the highest rank within the Sufi fraternity (*Sāhib al-sajjāda*), in Istanbul. He directed his steps to that city and he arrived at the gate of 'the guide of the age', namely Shaykh Nūr al-D¯n al-Ghalbāw¯ (?)[14] – may his secret be sanctified.
>
> Over several years this Shaykh had told his novices about the coming of Ibrahim Efendi. This was long before his arrival. He remained in his company for many years. After he had greatly profited from his lofty directives and from his holy verses (*nefes*) inspired by a perfect mysticism, and when he was qualified to be appointed as his successor, his Shaykh granted him his license (*ijāza*), thereby appointing him to his office.

Afterwards he returned to his home country – the Crimea – and then, seeing many wrongs committed and many matters which were contrary to the *Shari'a* law, and, finding himself impotent to act in order to change them all around him, he resolved to leave where he then lived and he returned to Istanbul as a refugee. He decided to reside in the retreat (*zāwiya*) of Kucuk Aya Sofia. He was occupied in propagating knowledge of religious benefit, especially so in the interpretation of, and the commentary upon, the Qur'an; thereby making clear and plain its meaning and its essence. This preoccupation was due to his stay and his memorizing of the Qur'an in the mosque of Sultan Muhammad the Conqueror. He wrote two books wherein one can read the true essence of the Qur'an. In it are distilled the choicest words uttered by the Merciful Lord. One of the books contained epistles and sundry writings, and the other, written works which had been folded away and had been kept in store.

On him, may God have mercy. He was a man who had been created with lofty moral qualities. These were noteworthy for the effective application of the rulings of the Shari'a law, perfect and uncorrupted, and for the revivification of the sayings and the deeds (*Sunan*) of the best of men, the Prophet, the blessing and peace of God be upon him.

It was due to this that a command was issued from the Sublime Porte decreeing the elimination of the heresies which abounded in the neighbourhood of (the Nogay and Alawite) inhabited Baba Taghi (Babadag in the Dobrudja).[15] He (the Shaykh) made it an obligation that such heresies should be forsaken. He subdued the people with decisive proofs and with clear evidence. Then he destroyed them with the sword of the Shari'a. He cleansed those localities from defilement and from the vile pollution of their latterly existence. He died in the year 1001 AH/1592 AD. His son, Shaykh 'Abdallah 'Afif al-Din Efendi was his successor.

The revival of the past heritage of Sufism in the Crimea

Up to 300,000 Crimean Tatars are now settling in the peninsula. Few of their number are practising Sufis, however, some effort is being made to restore the memory of the Sufism of the past. Three approaches may be observed. The first of these is the re-establishment of well-known and internationally widespread brotherhoods which are currently active, such as the Naqshabandiyya brotherhood. Further impetus is given by the visit of Tatar, Turkish and other Muslims who are, themselves, members of the worldwide Sufi movement. The leading Tatar poet, in Polish, Dr Selim Chazbijewicz the former *imam* of the Gdańsk mosque and himself a Sufi, has visited the Crimea on several occasions and has accompanied students to the Crimea and attended conferences and religious *dhikrs* there. His own official acceptance into the Sufi brotherhoods took place during one such visit. He pays visits to Tatar religious leaders and officials in the Crimean peninsula on a regular basis and has written an important book on the history of the Crimean Tatars.[16] In a public report by Dr A. Kopanski on the

purpose of the new regional movement, The Muslim Confederation of the Baltic Sea (MCBS), the unofficial headquarters of which is the Polish port of Gdańsk, Kopanski has mentioned the programme of the Gdańsk based Muslim Revival Movement (MRM) which has issued a call for the restoration of the Caliphate. This movement also has its supporters in Tatarstan, Bashkiria, Dagestan, Checheno-Ingushetia, Idel-Ural and the Crimea. Another movement, the All-Russian, *Hizbe Islami* has also established offices and printing houses in former Soviet territories. However, side by side with these radical movements he has also reported the re-establishment of the Naqshabandis and the Qadiris in these self-same territories, including the Caucasus, Tatarstan, and Russia and, in a special reference to the Crimea, remarked,

> In the Crimea where the Tatars have come home forty-four years after being deported by Stalin, they are reasserting their Islamicity. Today the muezzin calls the believers to prayer from the minaret of the sole remaining mosque in Bakhchisarai. The Islamic trend is represented by the Russian language Saratov-based 'Musulmansky Vestnik' (*Muslim Herald*) and 'Avde-Vozverashchenye' (*Revival*) from Bakhchisarai, the old capital of the Crimean Khanate.

The second approach is the importance now given to the repair and the reconstruction of former Sufi mosques and *tekkes* throughout the Crimea. The foremost amongst these are the Sufi structures and establishments which formed a part of the Khan's palace in Bakhchisarai over the centuries of the Khanate. One particularly important example is at Eski Yurt (Qarq/Qirq). This has centred on a cemetery which contained tombs and mausolea. It was once known as 'Forty Saints' (Kyrk Aziz). Some of these survive and are now carefully preserved. The presumed fifteenth century *türbe* of Ahmad Bey is not especially large or grandiose and next to it is located the ruins of the chapel (*tekke*) of the dervishes which was built in the form of a pulpit (*minbar*), an eight-sided tower structure built on a platform mounted by 12 stone stairs. A number of structures on the site, for example, the 'ancient *türbe*' (Eski Dyurbe) like others on the site date back to the fourteenth century and therefore predate the arrival of the dynasty of the Girais. On the slopes above Bakhchisarai is the cave church of the Dormition, dating back in its origins possibly to the eighth century, which was to house the wonder-working icon of the Mother of God. It was so revered, by both Christians and Muslims, that in the days of the Tatar Khans the latter offered candles to the Monastery which was established there. These were lit before the holy relic throughout the year, an act which seems to echo the experience of Ibn Battuta, near Kerch, where 'Ali b. Abi Talib was honoured in an image of St George. Sufism has returned to Bakhshisarai even though numbers may still be few.

Another important Sufi location which is now protected and in part restored, and which is also the focus of renewed Sufi practise, is the city of Yevpatoria (Gözleve), in the west of the Crimea. It contains the restored Dzhuma-Dzhami mosque, a fine Ottoman structure, first built in 1552 to the order of the Crimean

Khan Devlet Girai the First (d. 1577), by Sinan, the architect of the Suleimaniya in Istanbul. The city also contains remains of one of the most important *tekkes* of the Mevleviyya outside Turkey, which is deemed by its guardians as a protective shelter, beneath the floor of its dome-shaped sanctuary, for the human remains of a number of Sufi saints. This structure is the finest, if not unique, structure of its kind to survive in the Crimea. It is now part of a major reconstruction project which is underway in order to restore it to something like its original glory. It remains the chief focus for Sufism in the Crimea in its efforts to find roots amidst the rubble of its devastated heritage.

The Crimean Tatar legend of Mamai and the dervish

Sufism also has a place, at a popular level, in the oral folk tales which are still recalled by the returning Tatars and by those still in exile. Riza Gulum, in her chapter on *Rituals: Artistic, Cultural and Social Activity*,[17] in *The Tatars of the Crimea*, wrote 'Crimean Tatars love and create songs and music, folksongs, and other folklore'. Furthermore, folklore was actively encouraged in exile. Popular ballads are about heroic figures of the medieval past and it is not possible to date their composition with precision. One such story, which is described as a legend dating back to the 'days of Old Crimea', has, as its central chiefly figure, Khan Mamai/Mamaj/Mamay, and also, in the *Zafar-Nameh,* Mamaq. The other character is un-named. He is simply referred to as a *dervish*.

Mamai is known to history as a major military chief and a ruler within the Golden Horde during the mid-fourteenth century. His realm lay within the steppes to the north of the Crimea and within the peninsula especially in the town of Kaffa (Feodosia), which like Sudak, was an important centre of the Genoese. He became the equivalent of a local warlord. Mamai was a *tumenbashy*, in command of 10,000 men. His strength grew to the point that within the period of 1378–80 he tried to compel the Russians to pay him tribute. He was active in and around Kaffa, in 1359, but disaster befell him in the crucial battle of Kulikovo Field (Polye) on 8th September, 1380, at a time when Toqtamish was battling to be the ruler of the Golden Horde. Mamai was defeated by the Russians, who were led by Dimitri Donskoy. He was subsequently defeated by Toqtamish in the neighbourhood of the Sea of Azov. However, it was in Kaffa that Mamai met his death at the hands of the Genoese who blamed him for the needless slaughter of their crossbowmen at Kulikovo. A son of Mamai escaped and found an asylum with Vytautas within the Duchy of Lithuania.[18]

The role of the *dervish* may be contrasted with the role of Saint Sergius of Radonezh who was visited in the Monastery of the Life-Giving Trinity by Prince Dimitri on the eve of his battle with Mamai, in 1380. St Sergius blessed him and gave him wise counsel. *Go forth fearlessly, my lord, the Lord will aid you against your godless enemy*. The Saint provided Dimitri with two redoubtable former warriors of his whom he blessed before the battle. Its outcome was the answer to the prayers of St Sergius and his monks.

The old Tatar legend is retold as follows:

With the arrival of winter frosts, the northern wind carries a snowstorm which wraps the hills and the clearings of the ancient Crimea with a white covering. In the moonlight, Mamai's tomb glistens with a sparkle as if some being was moving upon its top. When the snowy wind rises in its force. it looks as though a huge white bear was rearing itself. At midnight the storm howls and the bear roars angrily, but as soon as the first beam of light with the white thread cuts the night from the day, it walks downwards and away from the tomb. Then, in the depths of the tomb, the sound of horses, the gnashing of teeth and swearing can be heard. At the foot of the tomb, sheltered away from the winds, rests the grave of the saintly 'Aziz,[19] the *dervish* who came to Mamai at the beginning and at the end of his life. He came at the beginning when the fame of the Shah of Shahs was waxing and at the end when his star was waning. There was day and there was night and what was to pass came and went. Mamai was sitting within a golden tent clad in a *qaftan* which glistened with diamonds as though it were alight. This was when his *dervish* saw him for the first time in the steppe far to the north. The *Padishah* of *Padishahs* turned away with pride and anger from Lems and from Murz who bowed down before him in terror. The *dervish* who was clad in rags was walking away towards the East in order to prostrate towards the holy Ka'ba in Mecca. Mamai caught sight of him and commanded that he should be brought before him. 'You have walked the earth', he said, 'Tell me how big it is and how long will it take to conquer it?' 'The world is without limits', the *dervish* answered, 'and so is human desire but the power of even the most powerful man has its limitations'.

Mamai smiled. 'You do not know whom you are addressing'. But the *dervish* did not cower in fear. Even a great ruler is not different from an unworthy human being of lesser status in the eyes of Allah. In Heaven, Allah's answer to Mamai was one of wrath and disapproval since His mind transcends the petty affairs which are earthly. Keep fairytales for those who are simpletons. The *dervish* simply nodded and said 'I am sorry for you'. His reply was much too bald and blunt and to the point for the *Padishah* of *Padishahs* who was overcome by wrath. He said, 'Never let me see you again, otherwise your dismembered body will be fed to the bears'. The *dervish* bowed before Mamai. 'I shall remember your words', he replied, 'Do not forget mine'. Then he departed.

The *dervish* travelled to many lands. He attained purity of soul and he forgot the weaknesses of the flesh. He learned the truth of putting a price upon human treasure and because of this he felt enriched. He had no fear of those who were in power and due to this his own power became the greater. He pitted his power and strength against Mamai who wished to conquer the world.

He heard news and he became aware of rumours. The wars of Mamai are like a river, nothing will stand in their path. In Mamai's eyes people are no more than leaves the time of which to fall to the ground has come. Mamai had forgotten that he was a mere mortal. Thus thought the *dervish*. He was

not surprised therefore when he heard that Mamai's army had perished (at Kulikovo) and that he, with a few of the survivors of the battle were sheltering in the southern steppe. Were they to kill him, the world would not wear raiments of mourning, nor would a soul rend his *qaftan*. But the time had not yet come. The face of Allah smiled upon him and he managed to make his escape to Kaffa in the Crimea. There he found shelter. When the *dervish* arrived there was much talk in the bazaars and markets about Mamai and about his wealth which was concealed underground beneath his headquarters. Rumours abounded that the slaves of Mamai toiled for days at a time carrying coffers containing treasures and weapons into this underground strongroom. When all had been hidden safely, Mamai ordered that all the slaves should be executed so that they could never reveal the place where his treasure was hidden. During the night, the servants of Mamai came to the gates of Kaffa to see whether it was well guarded. Rumours abounded that it was Mamai's intention to conquer the city of Kaffa.

During one of the darkest nights, when the snowstorm compelled all to seek protection within their houses, an owl was heard hooting near the walls which defended the city of Kaffa. When the owl hooted for the second time, the soldiers of Mamai attacked the city walls. But the sentries were not asleep and they slaughtered all the invaders, save for one of them who had given the signal by hooting like an owl. Mamai (who was amongst the attackers) escaped and went into hiding. He was cold and terrified and he shivered from fright. Someone who was nearby stirred near to him. Mamai cried aloud and, upon hearing the reply, he recognized the voice of the *dervish*. Mamai begged him for help.

'You must have forgotten that you ordered me never to show my face in your presence again', the *dervish* reminded him. He recalled their encounter in the golden tent where scores of attendants were trembling with fear before Mamai.

Mamai's heart shrank with embarrassment. But he overcame this feeling and he answered to indicate that it was the ruler who was now speaking, a man who was both cold and hungry. The *dervish* did as he was asked and he guided Mamai beyond the city, taking him along the canal through which the water which descended from the Crimean mountains flowed. Before dawn they reached the road which led to the headquarters of Mamai. Still fearful for his life, Mamai demanded that the *dervish* should hurry his step fearful lest they might be captured and slain. However, a little before dawn, the wind carried the sound of a cockerel's crowing from the nearby village. The *dervish* stopped in order to prayer the dawn prayer (*namaz*).

'This is not the time for saying prayers', Mamai shouted. He wanted to go alone but he was frightened. He had no knowledge of the way. The *dervish* looked upon him and in the light of the dawn Mamai's face looked white, as if her were dead. The *dervish* felt sorry for him. 'Beseech the Prophet that he may grant peace to your soul'. The *dervish* reminded him how short lived is human power and mighty status and how futile it is to seek for them.

Mamai hated the *dervish* for these words, yet he could not bring himself to be humble before the *dervish*. 'You stupid slave, had time allowed I would have ripped out your tongue'. Mamai swiftly drew his dagger and he sank it into the throat of the *dervish*. He dressed himself in the clothes of the *dervish* so that he would not be recognized by his pursuers.

Several riders were galloping down a hill and one of them spotted a running figure, one who was clad in rags. He assumed that the man was a slave and he ordered him to halt. When his order was disobeyed the pursuer caught up with the fleeing man and he smashed his skull with his cudgel.

On the following morning, when the soldiers of Mamai found the bodies they buried them where they had found them, one beside the other. Due to homage shown to a Khan, and so that his ashes would not be disturbed by the people, they erected a huge mound over his grave. To this day the bones of the mound of Mamai have survived and next to this mound is the grave of the dervish.

It is unwise to walk near to the mound on a winter's night, especially when a snowstorm is blowing. One may be terrified by the roar of a bear and one's heart may be chilled by the wailing of Mamai.[20]

Conclusion

> I believe that 'Wahhabism' is in fact a real threat to the Crimean people. The fact that only 100 mosques have been built in the Crimea, so far, has nothing to do with the issue. The ones who are spreading their 'Wahhabist' views do not need mosques to do so. We all know that Simferopol has a fairly large Arab student community, and that they eagerly promote their 'Wahhabist' ideas, especially amongst Crimean Tatar young people. How do they do this, you ask?
> Well, firstly by the teaching of the Arabic language, then, also, by giving money to young Crimean Tatars. 'Wahhabist' Islamic booklets are doing the round in Crimean Tatar villages very much in the same way as in Dagestan and in Chechnya before the war there. This is what is so disturbing. Furthermore, we all know that the Crimea's economy can be better. So if Arabs pay young Crimean Tatar people to believe their ideas, I am sure many Crimean Tatar young people would believe what the Arabs expect them to do. I personally know quite a few such Crimean Tatar young people.
>
> 'Fevzi', dated 3rd April 2003. An impromtu message left on a Website

'Popular Sufism' in Eastern Europe, today, encounters many challenges. Yet it also faces many new opportunities. The Sufis are anxious to develop their institutions and to expand their influence within the Muslim communities. The challenges which principally threaten 'Popular Sufism's' very existence come from two opposing religious movements: Islamic 'fundamentalism', with its base in the heart of the Arab Middle East, and Eastern Orthodox Christian nationalism fuelled by political leaders. It occupies a high profile in many Balkan states, and it also fuels religious hatred in some other Eastern European societies. There are also the tensions within the Muslim communities themselves. Two Islamic revival movements compete for the souls of Muslim Sufis in South-eastern Europe, one Sunni and the other Shi'ite. This would appear to be a future choice which faces 'Popular Sufism' in this region.

However, the situation is far more complicated than at first appears. Vitaliy Naumkin, the President of the Center for Strategic and Political Studies in Moscow (1), in his *On Stabilization in areas neighbouring on Chechnya, with a particular attention paid to 'Sufism and Wahhabism'*, points out that:

> The Russian federal authorities should know better than to hope for a conflict between North Caucasian endemic Sufism and imported alien Wahhabism. Sufism, Tariqatism (Muridism), is thought to be a patently moderate trend. In reality it was and continues to be professed by the majority of supporters of Chechnya's separation from Russia, terrorists included.

He is not happy with the popular term, 'Wahhabism'.

> As far as Wahhabism is concerned, a more precise name for this trend which both foreign emissaries and its local adherents, who draw inspiration from foreign experience, seek to see adopted in the Northern Caucasus, is Salafism, a more general term meaning a return to the original teaching of Islam (derived from the Arabic word. 'salaf', the ancestors). The relative success enjoyed by the Salafite 'daawa' (sermons, appeals) is explained not only by the size of the monetary contributions preachers make to the empty coffers of North Caucasian and other Muslim communities, but also by its attractiveness.

He does not deny the clash which inevitably arises between Salafism and Popular Sufism.

> At the same time the Salafites, or Wahhabis, will not abide by sacred traditions, causing discontent among the local population by their non acceptance of the worship of saints' graves, which is a custom in Sufism. An even more sinister concept is that of *takfir*, or the right to brand as infidels (*kafir*) the Muslims who, in the Wahhabis view, do not follow the precepts of true Islam and are therefore liable to destruction if they fail to reform. It is this part of the doctrine that repels many Muslims, let alone adherents of different faiths, and makes it possible to qualify it as a teaching based upon intolerance not characteristic of the whole of North Caucasian communities.

His views, expressed earlier, may be said to apply to a lesser or greater degree to the other Muslim communities in different parts of South-eastern Europe.

Sufism has survived the Communist era, especially the militant atheism of the Hoxha regime in Albania, and, in its popular forms, it is still practised widely in the rural districts of Bosnia, Bulgaria, Macedonia, and in Romania. In Bosnia, Sarajevo, before the Bosnian War, was the centre of a vibrant and urban Sunni Sufism. Sufism has survived that war, and it still has a modest part to play, today, in Sarajevo, with its new movements, revived ceremonies in its *tekkes*, and its contacts with Sufi movements in the West and in the Middle East and especially with those in Turkey.

In Southern Kosovo, a city such as Prizren (Prëzërën), is both a historical centre for the history of the Albanian national movement, and, at the same time, it is still a focal point for the meeting of differing Sufi brotherhoods. This role is nothing new. It reflects the importance of Prizren, over many centuries, in drawing

together Sufis from differing backgrounds and subsequently acting as a forum for the exchange of contrasted interpretations of Sufi spirituality.

The city of Prizren largely escaped the destruction that befell Kosovo, in 1999. This destruction spared neither mosque nor *tekke*, in such towns as Prishtinë, in Pejë (Peć), Orahavec and in Djakove,or, Dakovica (Gjakovë or Gjakovicë). The latter *tekke*, together with Gostivar and Tetovo, in Macedonia, was, or is, an important outpost of the Bektashiyya brotherhood. The *tekke* in Djakove, was burnt to the ground in May 1999. It was founded by Semsi Baba (died 1896), in 1893, and it contained the graves of subsequent, and associated, Babas, Adem Baba (died 1894), Abderrahman Baba (died 1907), Hafiz Ali Baba (died 1926), Hadzi Adam Vedzihi Baba (died 1946) and Kazim Baba who was its last holder of the office. The *tekke* was only partially functioning in recent years, but it had links with Turkey and it contained a valuable library of books which related to Sufism. A number of valuable manuscripts were lost during the destruction which took place at the hands of the Serbs.[2]

The number of the brotherhoods, which are still to be found in Prizren, illustrate the variety of Sufi influences which have left their mark on the local Albanians and Turks over the centuries. The presence of the Sinaniyya dates from 998 AH/1589–90 AD. The Qadiriyya arrived in 1066 AH/1655–6 AD. The Qarabashiyya branch (*tā'ifa*) of the Khalwatiyya came into being in 1111 AH/1699–70 AD. A second *tekke* of the Sinaniyya was founded in 1118 AH/1706–7 AD. The 'Adjiziyya branch of the Sa'diyya was also present in Prizren, likewise the Bektashiyya which was active at one time in the city. Indeed, the important role of Prizren for the Bektashi-led Albanian national movement would itself have assured the brotherhood an important part to play in the city's activities. F. W. Hasluck[3] confirmed its presence, *The Prizrend 'tekke', built by the learned Haji Adem Baba, who now lives privately at Jakova (Djakove), has been converted into a Serbian orphanage'*. Other writers, whom he mentions, confirmed the former existence of this *tekke*.

Branches of the Malamiyya still exist in Prizren. In more recent times other brotherhoods have been active. The *tekke* of the Rifa'iyya was rebuilt in 1972 by the present Shaikh, Dzemali Zukic.[4] Machiel Kiel has pointed out that the *Newruz* ('new year') ceremony within this *tekke* is one of the major events to be held in any of the dervish centres in the former Yugoslavia.

When Islam entered Bosnia and when Sufism was established there, the country had its own ancient Christian tradition and faith cherished by the Bosnjaks. This was the Bosnian Church, which, as we have seen, left a profound mark on the character of Sunni Sufism in Bosnia. Albania possessed no such Church, though heretical Christian sects from the East may have left their spiritual spores on both sides of the Via Egnatia. Islam, and in particular, the Bektashi brotherhood, was to become an influential religion amongst the Muslim Albanian majority, whether in Shqiperia, itself, or amongst the Albanians in the diaspora. They, and their neighbours, adopted and adapted a Sufi legacy which is at the very heart of 'Popular Sufism' in much of Eastern Europe, indeed one might regard it as its spiritual soul. We may conveniently call it the 'legacy of Hurufism'.

Although the Bektashiyya and the Baba'iyya in the Balkans are the depositaries of the teachings of Fadlallah al-Hurufi, and his disciples, they were not the only Sufi brotherhoods, particularly at the level of the 'laity', who were influenced by the religious movement which was attuned to the popular religious beliefs and superstitions of Balkan and, indeed, Eastern European peoples, outside the Balkans.

This was true, for example, of the Malamiyya, which, as has been noted, made an important contribution to Sufism, in the Balkans, both as a spiritual discipline and as a popular channel for the spread of Sufi teachings. C. H. Imber has argued that the beliefs and idealism of martyred Hallaj came to the Malamiyya from the original Hurufiyya.

> Hurufi doctrines appear not only in the Halladjism of Malami writings, but also in specific details. In the verses attributed to Oghlan Shaykh, there are references to God's appearing in the human face: 'Today, O heart, look at the beauty of the Beloved's face', and in a 'ghazal' of 'The Hidden' Idris, there is a reference to the indisputably Hurufi concept of the 'The seven Lines' of the face as a visible form of the 'fatiha' which in turn represents the Sum of the Universe (i.e. God plus what is beside God). 'The Seven Lines' are the 'Mother of the Book' (i.e. the 'fatiha'). They are the visible testimony from God'. Oghlan Shah also makes the Hurufi equation between the 'Name' (ism) and the 'Named' ('musamma'): 'You whose name is Man gives news of the Named'. Furthermore, one of his 'ghazals' is a 'nazira' of one of by the Hurufi martyr Nesimi (d. 820/1417). These Hurufi echoes occur in poems of the 10/16th and early 11/17th centuries, but it is possible that the doctrines themselves date from the earliest days of the sect in the first half of the 9th/15th centuries, since this was the period when the disciples of Fadl Allah were actively preaching Hurufi doctrines in Anatolia and Syria.[5]

'Ali, the Prophet's son-in-law, because of his divine essence, or, as some beliefs, held in the Balkans, and elsewhere in Eastern Europe, maintain,[6] the fusion of his personality with the Prophet himself, or, as Christ reborn, is a holy figure of the highest significance. The sixteenth century, Bektashi poet, Hasan Zyko Kamberi, maintained that 'Ali was none other than 'Elie' (Elias). 'Ali, in his view, surpassed all other saints and prophets, a view confirmed by the alleged mention of him by Jesus, in the Gospels. The expression of Jesus, uttered by him, from the cross, 'about the ninth hour', would appear to indicate the expression, '*Eli Eli lama sabachthani*'. That some special person is directly intended by this cry is assumed by the statement of verses 47 and 49 of the 27th chapter of St Mathew's Gospel.

> Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, 'This man calleth for Elias', and the rest said, 'Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him'.

'Ali features in art, in songs of praise and in popular verse among the Bektashi and Baba'i poets of the Balkans, especially amongst the Albanian and Bulgarian Kizilbash communities. An acknowledgement of the divinity in 'Ali, and his identity with Elias and others, is a central doctrine which is to be found in their poetic compositions. Some of their poets are little known in the West, indeed, the vast majority are unknown, or some of their verses have no identifiable author. However, one of the most representative of the poets amongst those who expressed the adoration of 'Ali b. Abi Talib was Hoxhe Dob, or Dobi, from Gyrokastër, in Southern Albania.

He lived in the nineteenth century, and his collection of poems (*diwan*) was composed in Albanian. It was preserved in manuscripts written in Arabic script, commonly known there as *Bejtexhinjve* or Balkan *Aljamiado*.

These works were discovered and interpreted by the Albanian Orientalist, Osman Myderrizi. They were part of a collection of some ten manuscripts. Other manuscripts referred to the attacks of 'Ali Pasha's troops against Gjirokastër, which, as has been noted in Chapter 8, was one of the strongholds of the Bektashiyya. Hoxhe Dob's poetry was inspired by a strong nationalist sentiment.

In the French *résumé* to his article, which was published in Tiranë,[7] Myderrizi expressed the general impression which he had formed about this poet whom he had, by chance, discovered. He had been impressed by the deeply felt religious sentiments which inspired the couplets. It was a religion, he thought, which was far removed from Sunnite Orthodoxy, even Sunnite Sufism. In the Albanian text, Myderrizi reproduces three of Hoxhe Dob's poems, or rather, arguably Cabalistic, homilies, in verse. Their content explores the depths of the Bektashi 'creed', which, to those who have embraced it, would seem to have at its heart a theosophy far beyond the accepted bounds of Sufism. In reality, the 'creed' seemed to have become an occult and gnostic religion in its own right. What is Islam no longer? Myderrizi concludes that Bektashism, as presented here, is nothing other than a separate religion. 'Ali is not a mere human, he is a being who is part of a multiple divinity, Muhammad, 'Ali, the Mahdi, and Hajji Bektash Veli. In this, alone, Hoxhe Dob's beliefs totally differ from the principals of the 'Sunna' and those of the Orthodox Sunnite Muslims. Whether the Bektashism of this poet is pure Sufism, or whether it is not, Myderrizi refrains from a personal judgement, considering that the doctrines and the practice of the Bektashis are kept secret amongst themselves. What is evident, from one of the poems, indicates that this form of Bektashism is totally mixed and fused with Hurufism, which Myderrizi describes as a 'heretical' doctrine, one which considers the characters of the Arabic alphabet as cryptic signs and lines, each one possessing a numerical value. Upon this 'ground plan', this 'base line' of numbers has been constructed, 'combinations and fantastic deductions, with religious meanings'. Any reader of the verses is undoubtedly struck by the Hurufi framework of belief. However, there are yet other heterodox doctrines discernable in the poet's affirmations. Whatever mainstream Bektashism may, or may not, maintain, there is little doubt that Hoxhe Dob's confessions place him amongst the extreme Sufi radicals in his sect.

This is not only theoretical, dogmatic even, but it reaches down to the popular level of the folk beliefs of his people.

Metempsychosis, or 'reincarnation' within the natural world is accepted as a dogma. Indeed, it is an irrefutable reality within the Divine plan for mankind and within the whole of Nature. The framework is Islamic, even though, superficially, some might suspect a vaguely 'Hindu' or 'Buddhist' influence, or at least some ancient belief known in ancient Turan and in Central Asia. The form taken in Man's reincarnation is determined by his moral and his spiritual progress along a path of life which can only be comprehended, clearly, by one who has been initiated, or spiritually enlightened. Hoxhe Dob's affirmation of 'Ali's divine status reaches an extreme which recalls that adoration which is to be found amongst the Ahl-i Haqq in Iraq, and even some of the sects beyond the pale of Islam, such as the multiple emanations of the divinity of the Yezidis.

Amongst those many epithets which are associated with 'Ali's holy name and person are; 'the secret of Prophethood' *(sirr'i nubuvetit*), 'Ali is the trustee of Ahmad'. He is the 'secret of the divine Godhead' (*sirr' i Allahut*). He is 'the master of fate'. He is the point beneath the Arabic letter, '*bā*', in the *bismillah*, which opens the *Fatiha* in the Qur'an. The holy word, itself, is interpreted and structured according to numerical permutations of radicals within the Hurufi Cabalistic system. Throughout Hoxhe Dob's verses he poses the question, 'is not 'Ali divine? 'does he not fulfil all these superhuman claims?' (*a nuk' është Aliu?*).[8]

Hoxhe Dob was clearly an extreme exponent of a 'pantheistic' Bektashi position amongst the Albanians.[9] As mentioned in earlier chapters, many of his views were shared, to a varying degree, by others. They are noticeably included, although unpreached, within the views of the poet, Naim Frashëri. Albanian Bektashis hold differing opinions as to the essentiality of Hurufism within their brotherhood. The late Baba Rexheb, writing from the Bektashi *tekke*, in Detroit, was of the opinion that the adoption of Hurufism within the ranks of the initiated, and especially amongst its senior initiated members, was a matter of personal choice. It was a private conviction.[10] This may have been the case, but the deep influence of Hurufism in other Sufi brotherhoods in the Balkans, together with its Cabalism and the widespread appeal of much of its so-called 'pantheism' and its artistic influences, at a popular level, within Turkey and Eastern Europe, suggests that it finds a response amongst the Muslim peoples there at a far broader level than within the walls of the *tekkes* and within the verses of the poets.

The challenge of, so-called,'Wahhabism', 'Fundamentalism', and 'Salafism', amongst the Balkan Muslims, as elsewhere, is by no means the only challenging movement at work amongst the Sufis in this European corner of Dar al-Islam. Both Nathalie Clayer and Alexandre Popović, in their recent writings on the revival of Sufism in the Balkans, have drawn attention to Shi'ite proselytism, which is particularly effective amongst several of the Sufi brotherhoods and the faithful among the laity in the Western Balkans. This is in conjunction with the mission which is taking place in Turkey amongst the Alevi groups. In Albania, the Shi'ites, backed by Iran, have approached the representatives of the Bektashis, the Helvetis (Khalwatis), the Rifa'is, and other Sufi brotherhoods,

whose deeper knowledge of Sufism is, to some, as meagre as the budget which sustains their communities. They have helped them to publish Shi'ite-orientated books and they offer fellowships to allow young Albanians to study in Iran. In Kosovo, and in Macedonia, Shi'ite groups from Iran, as well as from Western Europe, enter into contact with a Muslim community who have hardly been touched by the historical and well-established Sufi brotherhoods. Their Muslim converts are now convinced that the 'true Islam of the third age' is Shi'ism. This will take the place of Sufi Islam, and it will long outlast the loud mouthed 'Wahhabis' and the single minded 'Salafists'. They may well be right. In their Shi'ite view, Sufism is only a 'second stage', a halfway house, after Sunni Islam. 'Ali, al-Hasan and al-Husain have long won the hearts of the Albanians. They have, in effect, become 'Shqiptars'. To them, he, and his sons, are the inspiring examples of faith, as inspiring to them, as is the martyred king, St Lazar, of Kosovo Polje fame, among the Serbs. Sufism from the world of Iran, and not only Hurufism, may, in the future, markedly shape the destinies and the spiritual thoughts of many of the Sufi and non-Sufi Muslims of Eastern Europe.[11]

The Hurufi Sufism of Albania, and elsewhere in the Balkans and Eastern Europe, is likely to linger, if not survive, indefinitely, in the hearts of its people. The Persian Hurufi poet, Qasim al-Anwar (died 835 AH/1432 AD), expressed his doctrines, succinctly, and topically, even prophetically, in our age of the competing 'Supermarket Religions' of the twenty-first century:

> In six days runs God's Word, while Seven
> Marks the divisions of the Heaven.
> Then at the last 'He mounts His Throne',
> Nay, Thrones, to which no limit's known.
> Each mote's a Throne, to put it plain,
> Where He in some new Name doth reign.
> Know this and so to Truth attain.[12]

Appendix 1
The heyday of the Bektashi 'tekkes' in Iraq[1]

The presence of Iraqi Sufis in parts of Eastern Europe is an event of historical significance for the continuous history of Arab influences on Sufism in many parts of the Balkans and in the Caucasus. Mention has been made of the influence of Arab-born Sufis in Albania, and in Kosovo and Macedonia, for example, Muhammad Nur al-'Arabi, in Skopje and the growth of the Neo-Malamiyya brotherhood in that region, and also, at an earlier date, the passing acquaintance with Iraqi Sufis in *zāwiyas* and retreats where Ibn Battuta stayed on the fringes of the Northern Caucasus.

The presence of 'Alid sects' Kizilbash, Bektashis, and others, for whom 'Ali b. Abi Talib was, and still is, a cult figure, in 'Popular Sufism', and where the tragedy of Karbalā' has been a spur to poetic masterpieces, has meant that such cities as al-Najaf have become household names amongst the Sufi-influenced communities. Certain places have become especially blessed by the presence of these Iraqi Sufis. The great Bektashi 'tekke' of Durballi Sultan in Thessaly was administered by Arab 'Babas', a number of whom were Iraqis. At least eight occupied this high office between 1522 and 1753, principally Sufis from Baghdad and from Karbalā'.[2]

An article which has been published quite recently by the Professor of Religions in the Islamic University of Rotterdam, Professor Muhammad Sa'id al-Turayhi[3] is particularly addressed to the history, legacy and existing state of the Bektashiyya brotherhood in Iraq and the location of its most important 'tekkes' in the country.[4] It is prefaced by a short elegy for the past glory of the brotherhood and the reminiscences of his father, who described, in his presence, the weekly meetings held in the mosque in al-Kufa on the banks of the Euphrates; the bright illuminations, the joy of the *dhikr*, the poems of al-Rumi and the saffron-flavoured tea. The author tells of his father's ecstatic experience, and his own, while attending the uplifting recitation of collects and litanies (*al-tarātīl wal-awrād)*. Much of the following columns of the article are occupied by the story of the part played by Hajji Bektash Wali in his establishment of the brotherhood in Iraq and the major part of the Janisseries in its propagation and their eventual demise during the reign of the Ottoman Sultan Mahmud II, following which, the properties of the Bektashiyya were transferred to the Naqshabandiyya.

The author draws attention to the points of contact with the other brotherhoods, ideas shared with the Bektashis, especially the need for a spiritual guide and the existence of four 'gateways': the *Shari'a* law; the *tariqa*, the path that is followed; the *ma'rifa*, the spiritual enlightenment which is experienced by those who follow that path; and the *haqiqa*, the final experience of the divine, the Ultimate Reality and union with God the author points out those features which distinguish the Bektashiyya in practice, the *Self-Manifestation* of the Reality, which is God, in both Muhammad and in 'Ali (which is so prominent in Albanian Sufism) and also the close link with, the intertwining of Cabalism and pantheistic thought in the Hurufiyya.

The author mentions the *Javidannameh* as the holy manual for the selective numerology of the spiritual world, he also alludes to their common belief in metempsychosis, and their indifference to statutory hours of prayer, alms giving, fasting, pilgrimage, all of which concern the 'beginner' in the path but have no meaning for him or her, who has attained the spiritual state when such have no relevance whatsoever. 'Ali b. Abi Talib is the human ideal, and they also acknowledge the hidden and absent twelfth *Imam*. Their popular prayer is phrased in the words:

> Call upon 'Ali, the displayer of wonders, summon him and you always find him to be with you in life's many tragedies'. 'Ali, in their belief, will come to their aid, just as he came to the rescue of the Prophet himself in the battle of Uhud.

The confession of sins to Shaykhs who absolve them of their sins, in the same manner as is the role of the priest amongst the Christians, the lawfulness of wine, the non-veiling of women, the celibacy of many of the Shaykhs (as in the *tekke* of Kizil Deli Sultan) and the central focus of the sect in Hajji Bektash in Central Turkey, the distinct dress, the white cloak, the head-dress with four or 12 pleats or ridges, the green turban, the charm of onyx worn around the neck (*taslim tash*), the double-bladed axe (*balta*, or *fas* or *teber*) the earrings, and other items of ritual attire are all distinguishing marks which unite the Bektashis in Iraq with those in Turkey and Albania and in many other Balkan *tekkes*.

Professor al-Turayhi next lists the principal *tekkes* which either were or still are standing in Iraq's holy places. These are:

The tekke in al-Najaf

This is situated within the courtyard along the western external wall, the side enclosing the shrine (*mashhad*) of 'Ali b. Abi Talib. It is said to have been the retreat of Hajji Bektash himself. The existing building resembles the arched enclosures and chapels (*īwāns*) in the exterior walls of the shrine itself. It dates back to the Safavid era. The Turks took a particular care in preserving this *tekke* and it was a hospice for Turkish Sufis. The *tekke* benefited from the land on the river-bank, and it also enjoyed the benefit of a number of endowments (*awqāf*).

The *tekke* has been neglected and robbed in more recent times. Bektashis in Turkey are anxious to revive it, or at least prevent further destruction.

A number of major Sufi Shaykhs of the Bektashiyya have been associated with this *tekke*. Notable among them was Shaykh Hajj Ahmad Wirani Sultan who is considered to be the foremost saint of both the Bektashiyya and the Ka'ka'iyya brotherhoods in Iraq. He is credited with having appeared and, who, having been translated in form into a lion, ascended heavenwards.

His cap is preserved to this day in this *tekke*, standing in an eminent place on a bench. Very great respect and adoration is shown to it by visitors and by pilgrims. His dates are uncertain, although it is believed that he lived before the Ottoman caliphate. Other saints who had their retreat in this *tekke* were, as mentioned, Hajji Bektash himself and Fadlallah al-Hurufi. The *tekke* was, by repute, the deposit for a fine collection of regalia (*shi'ārāt*) of dervishes, axes (*baltas*), *kashakil*, 'beggar's bags', and the like which were hung up within the wall of the *qibla*, facing Mecca.

The Baba Gur-Gur tekke
This *tekke* was in Baghdad. It was constructed next to the tomb of the Bektashi saint, Baba Gur-Gur, *the father filled with light*. It was founded in 1081 AH/1670 AD. It subsequently became a mosque, the construction of which was lavishly endowed by Muhammad al-Fitri b.'Abdallah. The mosque was subsequently destroyed and the *Imamate* was transferred to the town of Bistamli, in Kirkuk district. The site of this Baghdad *tekke* is in the Maydan district, near to Suq al-Haraj.

The tekke *of Dedeh Ja'far*
The *tekke* is located in the town of Dahuq, in Kurdistan.

The tekke *of Mirdan 'Ali*
This *tekke* is located within the city of Kirkuk.

The tekke *of Khidr Ilyas*
This *tekke* was in the quarter of al-Ja'far, in the western part of Baghdad. Its traces were rediscovered following one of the floods, in Baghdad. Originally, it was a fortified outpost or retreat (*ribāt*), which was built by the 'Abbasid Caliph, al-Nasir li-Din Allah. Adjacent to it was the tomb of Saljuqi Khatun, the daughter of Qilij Arslan,[5] the ruler of the Byzantine East. She was the wife of Nur al-Din Muhammad Qarah Arslan. the lord of Hisn Kay.[6] After his death, the Caliph al-Nasir married her. When the Ottomans came to Baghdad, the locality became the *tekke* of the Bektashiyya.

The Karbalā' tekke
This *tekke* together with that in al-Najaf are considered to be the two most ancient Bektashi *tekkes* in Iraq. It is located within the courtyard (*sahn*) of the Imam

Husain. It is also known by the name of the tekke of the Dedes (Dadāwāt), or simply as the Bektashi *tekke*. The Arabic Dadawat, is the plural form of al-Dadah/Dedeh, and indicates the supreme head amongst the titles of high office of the Bektashiyya.

This same title is also applicable to one of the families in Karbalā'. They enjoy an honourable status and respect, namely Āl al-Dedeh. Thereby, they are known as being the lineal descendants of their grandfather, 'Abd al-Mu'min al-Dedeh. He was one of the grandsons of Hajji Bektash Wali, the founder of the brotherhood.

'Abd al-Mu'min had emigrated to Karbalā' in the middle of the tenth century of the *hijra*, namely the seventeenth century AD. He became a neighbour of the tomb of his forebear, al-Husain, which is located at the gate of the *Qibla* in the courtyard of the Imam al-Husain. He died there and he is buried in that spot called by his name, the 'tomb of al-Mu'min Dedeh'. Beside it stands the *tekke* of the Bektashis who were to grow in number in Karbalā' in the years which followed the departure of 'Abd al-Mu'min from the town of Kirshehr in Turkey.

At the commencement of the thirteenth century of the *hijra*, the twentieth century AD, the supreme head of the Bektashiyya appointed Sayyid Ahmad, a descendant of the Imam Rida b. al-Imam Musa b. Ja'far, to assume the responsibility for the upkeep and the administration of the Bektashi *tekke*. He was among the ancestors of the present day Āl al-Dedeh. After his death, the responsibility was that of his son, Sayyid Muhammad Taqiyy. This appointment was acknowledged by the dervishes. He was followed by Sayyid Husain al-Dedeh, who died in the summer of 1948. The custodianship has remained with the Āl al-Dedeh until today. All of them today are Imamate Shi'ites. The number of dervishes arriving from Turkey dropped, then ceased, after the First World War. Mention might be made that Sayyid Ahmad al-Dadah who was the custodian in the days of the Ottoman Sultan, 'Abd al-Hamid, altered the name of the Bektashi *tekke* to that of the Naqshabandi *tekke*. This was because of the pressure of the Turkish authorities.

The tomb of the famous poet, Fuzuli al-Bayati al-Baghdadi, who was the greatest poet of the Turkomans was once in this *tekke*. It was subsequently transferred to another nearby locality in Karbalā'. It was commonly believed that he had lived for a long time in the Bektashi *tekke*.[7]

Appendix 2
The *dīwān* of the Mamluk Sultan, Qansawh al-Ghawri and Nesimi

A late medieval Muslim court which had links with the Balkan and Volga regions and which was to be influenced by the Hurufism of Nesimi was the Mamluk court in Cairo. This was especially the case during the reign of the last Circassian Mamluk ruler, Qansawh al-Ghawri (who ruled between 1500 and 1516). He was in an alliance with the arch-enemy of the Turks, Shah Isma'il of Persia (1502–24) and in his court there was a demand and a vogue for Persian literature. Fresh translations of Persian epics were made into Arabic and also translations from popular Persian verse. Like his Mamluk predecessors, al-Ghawri was in regular commercial and political contact with the Tatar Qipchāq communities to the north and to the west of the Black Sea, especially with the emporia in the Crimea, and with the Muslim communities in the Caucasus. He traded with Dubrovnik (Ragusa), in Croatia, and with other ports of the Adriatic.

Personal contact between an earlier Circassian (Burji) Mamluk, a son of the Sultan Malik al-Zahir Barquq (1382–98) and a heterodox mystic (later to be the warrior leader), associated with the Balkans, took place in Egypt. This happened during the stay there by the Malami mystic, Badr al-Din. It was in Egypt that he was initiated into Sufism, by Shaykh Husain-i Ahlati. Following the Pilgrimage to Mecca, Badr al-Din taught, as his pupil, the son of Sultan al-Barquq. It was during his 10-year stay in the Egyptian capital that Badr al-Din wrote a commentary on the Bezels of Wisdom (*Fusūs al-Hikam*) by Ibn al-'Arabi (1165–1240). The influence of the latter master was apparent in his concept of 'Unity' (*wahda*) in his *Wāridāt*.

It comes as no surprise, therefore, that Badr al-Din's disciples, after his death, in 1419, or in 1420, in Serres, and elsewhere in the Balkans, should have eventually found their safe haven in brotherhoods such as the *Safaviyya* and the *Bektashiyya,* and that the cause of his doctrine of 'Unity' – theosophical and denominational and political, so actively pursued by Badr al-Din during his lifetime, – should be passed on to, and ardently pursued, by Hurufis, Kizilbash and Qalandars in the Balkans, during the sixteenth century. Only 20 years after the death of Badr al-Din, George of Hungary met a Hurufi dervish in Chios (the Greek island where a Muslim and Christian dialogue, between Orthodox Hesychasm had taken place), and he reported that this dervish crossed himself upon entering a Christian place of worship.

Qansawh al-Ghawri was a keen imitator of the religious verses of Nesimi, and he was influenced also by Hurufism, in general. According to L. Massignon (*The Passion of al-Hallaj*, vol. 2, Princeton, 1982, pp. 253–4):

> The deeper than merely poetical feelings of these amorous lines which contributed to Nesimi's being condemned to death, help us to understand why popular legend saw Hallaj come to life again in him. He had admirers as far away as Egypt. Sultan Qansuh Ghawri venerated his memory and Sha'rawi praised his cheerful attitude before the executioner, chanting *muwashshahat* (strophic verses). A legend still alive among the Armenians of Aleppo depicts Nesimi as the son-in-law of a priest, becoming converted when he sees him celebrating mass. The madfan (the burial spot) of Nesimi stands in the Farafira quarter at the foot of the citadel (in Aleppo), and preserves in a stone, at Bab al-Nasr, the imprint of three of his fingers.

An unpublished collection of poetry (*dīwān*) of al-Ghawri, now housed in the *Kongelige Bibliotek*, in Copenhagen, exhibits some identifiable symbolic and figurative features which are probably derived from Nesimi's repertoire.

Missionaries of Hurufism, in Egypt, were present in, and around, Cairo, in the days of Kaygusiz 'Abdullah al-Maghawiri, a saintly *dervish* (in Albanian, Kaygusezi Sultan), who died in 1444, according to Baba Rexheb. Al-Mughawiri is highly regarded by Albanian Bektashis, whose former *tekke* on Jabal Muqattam was built close by the tomb of this *dervish*.

Late medieval dervish brotherhoods in Egypt and their links with the Balkans

If al-Ghawri's, somewhat dilettante, Hurufism, in his verse, characterized his court, in general, then those who were present at that court, men of letters and poets, whether Sufi, or non-Sufi, were serious contributors to this spiritual exchange. Several of these men were continuously resident in the Eastern Balkans.

Among them was Usuli, who was born in Yenice Vardar, in Macedonia. In Egypt he was drawn into the powerful Sufi fraternity which then characterized Cairo, in particular.

According to Muhammad b. Ahmad b. lyas, al-Ghawri was constantly surrounded by *dervishes* from the brotherhoods of the *Badawiyya*, the *Qadiriyya*, and from the distinctly heterodox Central Asian influenced, in spirit, if not in practice, brotherhoods, such as the *Rifa'iyya*, led by the successors of Sayyid Ahmad al-Rifa'i. However, the most noteworthy form of heterodoxy was to be observed amongst some of the leaders of the *Khalwatiyya*, especially the *Gülsheniyya*, the *'Ushshaqiyya* and the *Sinaniyya* which was under the influence of an Azerbaijani and a Tabriz and Hurufi-influenced leadership. Nesimi's example, life, and verse, had a wide impact in the Arab Middle East and in Rumelia.

The memory of Nesimi survived in his poems. It likewise survived among Syrians in the marks allegedly left by his fingers upon a stone in Bab al-Nasr, in Aleppo. This stone was believed to contain much *baraka*. To this day it is revered by Christians (especially Armenians) and by Muslims, and it was once guarded, and tended by ladies with lighted candles and lamps. It is hardly surprising that, in this way, legendary stories should have circulated that ignore the religious divide, in a manner that Hasluck has made us familiar with in his *Christianity and Islam Under the Sultans*.

In this instance, however, it is due to a specific story (*khabar*) attributed to a Jesuit, named Rossinoli, as a sign of 'the wonders of the mass' (*'ajā'ib al-qurbān*), that Nesimi's life and legend were given a specifically Christian significance. An Arabic version (d., *c*., 1750–52) attributed to the Armenian Patriarch, Ya'qub Yusufian (d. 15 March, 1753), who appears to have made additions to an original and older narrative, sets out (story 39) to tell the 'tale of al-Nesimi, who was converted to the Christian faith from unbelief by means of the holy sacrament'. The history falls into two distinct parts suggesting that two sources may be represented in the final narrative.

> A nobleman of Aleppo bought a beautiful captive Armenian girl from Barbary corsairs who had raided the coast of Lesser Armenia. Enamoured by her, he pressed her constantly to marry him and to change her faith. Eventually, she did so, though only outwardly. In secret, she clung desperately to Christianity for the sake of her widowed father who had lost her. He had been an Armenian priest. A short while later, on his way to Jerusalem to lament his daughter's loss, he was captured. Providence determined that the same nobleman of Aleppo should purchase him. He was appointed as his gardener and he became the secret confider of his sorrows to the mistress of the house whom he failed to recognize as his own daughter. She shared his grief. He was promoted to become a shepherd and each day he went with the sheep and goats into the desert. One day, he spied a rock that reminded him of a church altar. He was irresistibly drawn to celebrate the Eucharist there. After he confessed his identity to his mistress, the latter did so as well, and she sought to obtain raiment for him fitting for his intention. Soon it was a daily occurrence to celebrate the Mass in secret, watched by the meek and reverent flock he shepherded.

Then follows the second part. It concerns the same nobleman of Aleppo.

> One day, by chance, he espied his enrobed shepherd at his devotions. Both the sacrament and the desert rock glowed with a dazzling light. The shepherd in a scene (not unlike the meeting of Sari Saltik at Zamzam well with his master Hajji Bektash), told the nobleman about his faith, his origins and the truth of Him who was bodily present in the Host. His master reverently took the consecrated elements to his home in a napkin and he placed them out of the reach of profane hands. The sacrament glowed throughout the house.

> Convinced of the truth, he confessed his belief. His wife told him that she was the daughter of his converter. A great feast was prepared. The Armenian priest and his daughter were put on board a ship sailing for Lesser Armenia (in Eastern Asia Minor) while the nobleman proclaimed his faith openly in the streets'. The narrative then becomes specific, 'He returned to his city, proclaiming the holy faith with no desire to hide his light under a bushel. He declared it publicly in the highways and the byways. The anger amongst the populace was aroused. They seized him. They imprisoned him. They tortured him, but he remained resolute. They flayed him and took him away to be executed as a martyr. He raised his three fingers upwards pointing thereby to the Trinity, in the three persons. As he left the city he struck a stone with his fingers, saying, 'My Lord, Lord of the heavens and the earth. If the secret of the Trinity be true, make my three fingers enter this hard rock'. They melted into it as though into snow. All who beheld it marvelled. They still remain until this day in Aleppo, in Bab al-Nasr. They put their fingers there. The martyr was Nesimi. All this he did with his flesh slung, as a raiment, over his shoulder. He composed verse about the triune God and the Incarnation. Many wonders he performed.[1]

Hence, Nesimi, poet, Hurufi, proto-Bektashi, mystic (according to Baba Rexheb) and mediator upon the 'gibbet of Mansur', came to be considered a Christian martyr who had been converted by the love of a captive Armenian, and by the splendour and light of the real presence in the Host. That he was a Christian was a belief of some antiquity in Europe. The sixteenth-century Italian Menavino, who had allegedly read his works, maintained that he was a 'Trinitarian'.

One might mention, perhaps, in this context, that, at an even earlier date, Abu'l-Hasan 'Ali b. 'Abdallah al-Shushtari (d. 668/1268–9) – received teaching from outstanding Sufis, amongst them Ibn Sab'in and Abu'l-Hasan al-Shadhili. He had contacts with Christian monks who invited him to stay in their monasteries. He, so to speak, 'sacramentalized' the Agape in his nomadic brotherhoods. According to Massignon (*The Passion of al-Hallaj*. Op. cit., vol. 2 pp. 324-5):

> Shushtari in his prose works, such as the Maqalid, about the Sab'inian rule of life, envisages an ascetic tradition going back to Muslim 'desert fathers' directly 'connected' with Christian ascetics and their 'logia' of Jesus, breaking like them the bread of hospitality (*hadīth al-talqīm*) and making vows. In his poems, Shushtari speaks also of the wine reserved for the Elect by sura '*hal atā*' (Quran 76:1 [But the righteous shall drink of a cup tempered at the Camphor Fountain, a gushing spring at which the servants of God will refresh themselves' [al-Insan]]; this wine, which is forbidden to the faithful in this world, uncovered in secret by the adepts of the Salmaniyan guilds (Isma'ilis, Nusayris, Druzes), was desired by Sufis at an early time, especially after Hallaj – like the pre-eternal cup of our predestination as men (of flesh and blood) to Divine Love, of which the consecrated wine of Christians is only the prefigure. According to Shushtari, the Muslim Sufi 'follows' an

> asymptotic line with the Christian ascetic; he venerates, without sharing in, the Christian Holy Grail in a form of invitation to the final punishment. Hallaj was executed for having 'stolen' in broad daylight the Cup set aside for the angels. And his disciples chant, along with Shushtari for the Chalice and the Deacon cup-bearer of the heavenly banquet, reduced in this world under the features of equivocating sacristans of the district set aside for Christian minorities and their tavern keepers; for this is where, among the Muslim mountebanks and prostitutes who frequented it, Shushtari, with Promethean boldness, came to call men to repent, sublimating in his poems the crudest vocabulary and the most provocative rhythmic cadences of the 'milieu'.

In all the above, one is made aware of the hidden 'god', in disguise, be the divine hidden in natural phenomena, in wine or bread, in the secret of the letters and verses as are manifested in Qur'anic revelation, according to the Hurufis, runic secrets, the human form and countenance, or the holy man, the *dervish*, who is often clad in a shepherd's attire. Such imagery and symbolism is the vernacular of heterodox Islam and much heterodox Christianity. It is the common language of both Muslims and Christians in Eastern Europe.

Glossary

***Ashik* (Ar. *'āshiq*)** A word which, in Arabic, originally indicated a 'lover', but which, within Sufism, in Albania, for example, indicates non-initiated neophytes who are, nonetheless, at an advanced stage of their training prior to their initiation.

Baba The word literally means 'father'. It is widely used in different contexts. It may indicate a respected, even a revered, member or associate of a Sufi brotherhood, one who is worthy of an honorific recognition, hence, Baba Saltik whose Sufi associations are far from clear. It is also a specific term in the Bektashiyya, and in other brotherhoods, and it indicates one who is the director of a centre of the Sufi order under whom the dervishes serve and who respect his authority. These dervishes are either called *muhip* (Ar. *muhibb*), or *ashik*, depending upon their grade of initiation into the order.

Bektashiyya (Ar. Baktāshiyya) The famous brotherhood founded by Hajji Bektash who was born in Khurasan in the thirteenth century. He was a pupil of Ahmad Yasawi (Ata Yesavi), of the Yesaviyya brotherhood. This order was arguably the most important 'Popular Sufi brotherhood' in the Balkans, and possibly throughout parts of Eastern Europe, especially amongst Albanians.

Dervish (Ar. *darwīsh*) Is the term which describes an initiate who has accomplished an initial period of service in a *tekke* and who has attended a ceremony which allows him to wear the *dervish* dress and to take a specific Shaykh as his spiritual master. The title is loosely applied to mendicant Sufis and also to those who officiate in Sufi ceremonies. The range of possible meanings which this term has denoted through the centuries has been described in detail by Ahmet T. Karamustafa, in his *God's Unruly Friends*, Salt Lake City, 1994.

Ghulāt Is an Arabic pejorative term (plural in number) indicating those who have gone to a religious extreme which questions their inclusion within the bosom of the Muslim *Umma* as 'true believers'. Who are intended by it, who included, or excluded, by this loose term, is often a subjective judgement depending on the point of view of the judger. However, the popular criteria for inclusion amongst the *Ghulāt* is held to be an excessive reverence, even adoration of 'Ali and of the 'Alids, and a belief in the incarnation of the Deity

(*hulūl*) and the emanation of His powers in divine or semi-divine beings, including angels, and also within 'Popular Sufi' leaders with supernatural powers. Ibn Battuta may have regarded Sari Saltik amongst them. Metempsychosis (*tanāsukh*), and heterodox beliefs, alien to Islam, are all characteristic of the *Ghulāt* sects such as the Alawites, Ahl-i Haqq, Kizilbash, the Druze and the Yezidis. All are commonly included, or they may even be deemed to be outright unbelievers, the Yezidis especially so. Some of these characteristics, however, are to be found well established in several of the mainstream Sufi orders in Eastern Europe.

Halvetiyya **(***also spelt Khalwatiyya***)** The Sufi brotherhood founded by 'Umar al-Khalwati, who died in Tabriz in 800 AH/1397 AD. The Arabic term *khalwa* indicates 'retreat'. This was a very important order in South-Eastern Europe, including Albania, and it has a number of sub-branches.

Haydariyya is a term which indicates a dervish order, founded by Qutb al-Din Haydar. Its members were notorious for the wearing of iron collars, bracelets, belts and rings suspended from their ears and their genitals, cloaks made from the skins of animals and an appearance familiar to us from paintings which depict John the Baptist wandering in the desert of Judea. The Haydaris were conspicuous from the thirteenth century onwards. The *dervishes* were commonly solitary and frequently begged in the manner of the Indian *fakirs*. See Karamustafa, op. cit., pp. 44–8.

Hurufiyya The beliefs, doctrines and Gnostic teachings of Shihab al-Din Fadlallah al-Astarabadi (martyred in Shirvan in 1394) which, through its revolutionary programme: numerology, symbolism, the incarnation of the Divine in Man and his physical form, spread within the Sufi movements of the Muslim World, particularly in the Ottoman territories and within the Bektashiyya Sufi brotherhood in particular. Noted Albanian poets, such as Naim Frashëri, reflected, in their verses, the loftier pantheistic aspirations of its great men such as the poet, Nesimi, whilst the Cabalistic message of Fadlallah was an inspiration to all levels of the Sufi community, including popular religious movements and in charms and amulets amongst rural communities.

Kizilbash (Kizilbaş) A sect of the extreme Shi'ite *Ghulāt*. Their name is derived from the headgear which imitated the blood-red headgear worn by the partisans of 'Ali in the battle of Siffin (657). The Sufi societies which constitute the Kizilbash communities, who survive today, in Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey, bear many resemblances to those of the Bektashiyya brotherhood, and they have been misunderstood, in particular, because certain ceremonies and holy places belonging to both have been confused, and incorrectly reported and described. The distinguishing features between the Kizilbash and the Bektashis are discussed in detail by F. W. Hasluck, in his *Christianity and Islam Under the Sultans*, op. cit., vol. 1, pp. 142–50.

Nevena Grammatikova has shown that:

1 The villages around the *tekke* of Demir Baba were originally dervish villages and predominantly Bektashi. Today, her research has revealed the presence of Naqshbandis and Qadiris in the Razgrad region.

2 These Bektashis, in her view, were linked to the branch founded by Balim Sultan, the celibate (*mucerred kolu*) branch of the brotherhood. The other large Alevite group were the Babais who spread to Haskovo, Silistra and Razgrad. They were the agents for the spread of heterodoxy in Northeastern Bulgaria. It was this group which was ideologically and religiously linked to the Persian Safavids.
3 The Babas differed as to their association with one or the other, Demir Baba, in all likelihood, belonged to the Babai *tarikat*. There were some conflicts between Bektashis and Babais.
4 Hurufism was widely accepted amongst the Babais. This is to be noted in their religious songs (*nefes*). Safavid influences may be found in the lawbooks and ceremonies of this order. An example is 'Seyh Safi Buyrugu', the name Safi is one indication of the influence of Safieddin Erdebili, the founder of the Safavi brotherhood.

Malamiyya This brotherhood is attributed to Hamdun al-Qassar (d. 884/5 AD) and the title of the brotherhood is based upon the Qur'anic injunction, and the *Risāla al-Malāmiyya* by 'Abd al-Rahman al-Sulami (941–102 AD) both of which call upon the true believer to eschew all outward show of piety. In the Balkans, the brotherhood has played a significant role in the history of popular Sufism. In Bosnia, its popularity was at its height when led by Shaykh Hamza. In its Malamatiyya form, and linked to a heretical form of the Bayramiyya, it was the transmitting agent for the diffusion of the beliefs of the martyred Hallaj, including the Divine in Man, the subordination of the law of the *Shari'a*, and many features of the heterodox 'Hurufi' school. Hamza was accused of preaching pantheistic teachings and the exaltation of Jesus, the Messiah, above the Prophet Muhammad and he met his death on account of it. The Malamiyya is also associated with Badr al-Din al-Simavi's movement in Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey, and, in recent times the movement has grown under the influence of Muhammad Nur al-'Arabi, especially in Kosovo and in Macedonia, see Alexandre Popović and Gilles Veinstein, *Les Voies d'Allah*, Fayard, Paris, 1996, 'Muhammad Nur al-'Arabi et la confrérie Malamiyya (X1Xe–Xxe siècle), by Thierry Zarcone, pp. 479–83. Hamza Bali (d. 1573 AD) and Badr al-Din are also discussed in that same chapter.

Mawlawiyya (Mevleviya) The famous order of 'dancing Dervishes', centered in Konya, and with its internationally famous *zikr*, was founded by Jalal al-Din al-Rumi, who died in 1273 AD. It was represented throughout the Balkans during the days of the Ottoman Empire as well as in many countries in the Arab World. Controversial appointments to the post of the Shaykh of the *tekke*, on occasions, led to forceful interruptions by troublemakers during the course of the *zikr*, one such occasion having taken place in Sarajevo. It cannot be said, though, that this particular brotherhood took root in the Balkan countryside, and its presence, in Albania, is left unmentioned by Nathalie Clayer in her study of Albanian Sufi brotherhoods. Only five pages are devoted to it in Dzemal Ćehajić's classic study 'The Dervish

Brotherhoods in Yugoslavia' ('Derviski redovi u Jugoslovenskim Zemljama sa posebnim osvrtom na Bosnu i Hercegovinu', Sarajevo, 1986). The city of Plovdiv, in Bulgaria, had an important *tekke* which is now a restaurant. The brotherhood was principally urban in its appeal. In the Crimean peninsula, however, one of the most important *tekkes* of the Mawlawiyya, in Eastern Europe, is still to be seen in the town of Yevpatoriya (Gösleve) and it is now in the process of being reconstructed and restored to something like its former glory.

Muhib/Muhip (Ar. *muhibb* 'lover') Amongst the Bektashis in Albania, the term denotes an initiated member of the order who has participated in the initiation ceremony in the *tekke*. However, as Nathalie Clayer points out, in other brotherhoods the term simply denotes a non-initiated novice, who is a sympathizer in that brotherhood.

Naqshabandiyya This brotherhood did not originate with the great Sufi figure of Bukhara, Baha' al-Din Naqshaband (1318–1389), although, during that century, he was to decisively determine the future course of that brotherhood. Its initiator was Khwaja Yusuf Hamdani (d. 1141), whose *khānaqah* (retreat) and his tomb, at Marv (in Turkmenistan today), were known as the 'Ka'ba of Khurasan'. The brotherhood places emphasis on the silent prayer (*zikr/dhikr-i khafi*). Whatever its origins, the Naqshabandiyya has probably succeeded in becoming the most dynamic and deeply rooted, rurally, of the Sufi brotherhoods in Eastern Europe as a whole, and this is so at the present time, and it is to be found in the Balkans and Turkey, in parts of the Caucasus and Russia, and amongst the Tatars in the Crimean peninsula.

It is also certainly true of Bosnia, where its first *tekke* was built in Sarajevo soon after 1463. Its greatest centre is now near Fojnica, in Central Bosnia, where its 'tekke' was founded in 1781, by Shaykh (*Shayh*) Husejn who had studied in the Muridiyya *tekke*, in Istanbul. Oglavik *tekke*, in Bosnia, was the home of Shaykh Sirri Baba, who became famous throughout Bosnia for his *ilahis*, his songs of divine praise, composed here in the Serbo-Croat language. He died in 1846/7. At a later date, the Naqshabandis were the impetus behind the important Sufi journal, *Sebi Arus* which was published in Sarajevo. The Naqshabandis took a prominent part on the side of the Bosnjak resistance in the recent war against the Serbs, in Bosnia. The brotherhood is found elsewhere, in Eastern Europe, in Dagestan, Chechnya, Kazan and amongst the Tatars, generally. It has shaped the faith and culture of much of Eastern Europe which is solidly 'Sunni' in its beliefs.

Pomaks The Muslims of Bulgaria, and also adjacent countries, although in fewer numbers now, were commonly known by the derogatory name of *Pomaks*. In fact they are Bulgarian Slavs who speak Bulgarian which is their mother tongue even though their faith is Islam. They number some 200,000–300,000 souls. Over the centuries, many of them have suffered severely for their faith, and since 1948, the Bulgarian authorities, supported by the Orthodox Church, forced them to change their names and to integrate themselves within Bulgarian society. Today, their identity has been

respected, although some discriminatory social and religious pressures remain. That said, crypto-Christianity has survived for centuries amongst them, and where Sufism is found heterodox elements are apparent, although of a kind that distinguishes them from the Kizilbash. Examples of their heterodoxy are apparent in their popular beliefs which are, to a degree, common to both Islam and Christianity and which have been described by Dr Florentina Badalanova, in her 'Interpreting the Bible and the Koran in the Bulgarian Oral Tradition: the Saga of Abraham in Performance', in Celian Hawksworth, Muriel Heppell and Harry Norris, *Religious Quest and national Identity in the Balkans*, Studies in Russia and East Europe, Palgrave, 2001, pp. 37–56.

Pir The founder saint, who is often mythical, of a Sufi brotherhood. This is the case with many of the acknowledged founders of these brotherhoods although in several instances it is the second *pir* who has effectively made it a viable and a long-lasting institution in several countries in Eastern Europe, as elsewhere.

Qadiriyya Founded by 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jaylani/Jilani, in 1165, this brotherhood is widely spread throughout the Balkans, in Bosnia, in Macedonia and even in Albania, as well as the Caucasus. One of the oldest Qadiri establishments was the eighteenth century, Sinan *tekke* in Sarajevo, which, although badly damaged in the Bosnian war, has now been restored to weekly use, especially for the *zikr* which is regularly held there and attended by both young and old. One of Bosnia's greatest Sufi poets, Hasan Qa'imi, a Helveti or Khalwati poet, may be claimed, as their own, by both the Khalwatiyya and the Qadiriyya. He was Shaykh of a *tekke* which bore his name in Sarajevo. In Zvornik, he was associated with the Qadiriyya and it was there that he composed his *Wāridāt* and his w*ahdat al-wujūd*, works in which he praised 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jaylani, the 'king amongst the saints in East and West', who, he believed, would help destroy the power and assault of the 'blonde infidels', the 'Christian Banu'l Asfar'. He was also noted for his religious verse in colloquial *Aljamiado* composed in the vernacular language in Bosnia. For an insight into the Qadiriyya, in Kosovo, and its role in society, see, in particular, the unique chapter in *Les Voies d'Allah,* op. cit., pp. 589–95, by Alexandre Popović, on the subject of *Heures et malheurs d'un centre de derviches dans l'ex-Yougoslavie (d'après un temoignange traduit et présenté*). This is a short biographical work of a Qadiri Shaykh, Riza Bajrami, of the small town of Kosovska Mitrovica at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Qalandariyya An order of ascetic dervishes, who are similar to the Haydaris. Their life and beliefs, their excesses, their 'tekkes' and their love of the poetry of Nesimi, in the Middle East and in the Ottoman Empire generally, and their relation to the movement of Badr al-Din, have been discussed, in detail, in Karamustafa's *God's Unruly Friends*, op. cit., pp. 52 and 53, and in the Ottoman Empire, pp. 67–70, in particular. See, also, *Les Voies d'Allah*, ibid., pp. 500–3, by Julian Baldick.

Rifa'iyya The foundation of the brotherhood is attributed to Ahmad al-Rifa'i (1118–82). During the life of the founder and following his death, the brotherhood expanded eastwards towards Iran, the Indian subcontinent, and Indonesia. In Arabia itself, it spread to Kuwait, parts of Su'udi Arabia, the Yemen and from thence into the Horn of Africa and the East African coastal regions. In the North of Africa it spread from Egypt to Libya. There were also centres of the brotherhood throughout the Fertile Crescent. Although present in the area to the north of the Crimea, during the Middle Ages, it largely disappeared later. Since Turkey became a stronghold during the Ottoman age, it spread with the Ottomans through the Balkans and where it resurfaced in the Black Sea region it was on account of the Ottomans and would seem to have little relation to the influence it once had during the days of the Golden Horde. The Rifa'iyya is notorious for its violent *zikr*. This involved mutilation, mortification of the flesh and customs which originated from beyond Islam and which entailed rituals associated with fire and with serpents. Hence, although absent from much of the steppes it, nonetheless derived much of its individual features from customs from beyond those steppes, including beliefs from Central Asian and Mongol shamanism. Parts of South-eastern Europe became strongholds of the brotherhood, especially in Albania, Bulgaria, Kosovo and Macedonia. About all these regions, in particular, reference should be made to the concise and highly informative study by Alexandre Popović, *Un Ordre de Derviches en Terre d'Europe*, *L'Âge d'Homme*, Lausanne, 1993. No student who is interested in Popular Sufism in Eastern Europe, especially this brotherhood, should ignore this important book. It should likewise be noted that in some regions the name Rifa'iyya is pronounced 'Rufa'iyya'.

Silsila In Sufism, the chain of transmission by a Shaykh, or Baba, within a *Tariqa*, to his disciple, or disciples, often his chosen disciple, or neophyte. The originator of this chain, in most brotherhoods, goes back to the family of the Prophet, or descends from the Prophet and especially through 'Ali b. Abi Talib, Abu Bakr, or through another distinguished transmitter, such as Anas b. Malik. In 'Popular Sufism' the chain may be bizarre, highly suspect, and occasionally chronologically absurd, and it may reflect cultural and historical and religious, even 'Crypto-Christian', realities, for example the 'silsila' of the Bosnian Sufis, which is said to go back to the elders of the Bosnian Church.

***Tariqa*, sometimes *Tarikat* (in Bosnia, *dervisi red* and in Albanian Kosovo, *rruge, rend i dervisheve*)** This term is understood throughout the Sufi movement to indicate the 'Way' to be followed in order to attain union with God, or, at the level of the administration of the Sufi movement, it defines the vast network of orders or brotherhoods and their sub-orders which cover, and categorize, the entire world of Sufi Islam. Membership of more than one of these brotherhoods is not deemed incompatible in the Balkans, indeed allegiance to more than one brotherhood is not uncommon, neither is it uncommon to share *tekkes* for *zikrs* and *hadras* and other Sufi activities.

***Tekke* (Arabic *Takiyya*, *Tekije*, *zgrada za derviske obrede*, in Bosnia)** Nathalie Clayer in her *L'Albanie Pays des Derviches*, op. cit., p. 487, defines *tekke* as follows:

> A *tekke* is a kind of 'monastery', of 'lodge', of a Muslim mystic order. Most of the time, a Shaykh (Baba among the Bektashis) dwells there; sometimes dervishes as well (above all amongst the celibate Bektashis). But the greater part of the dervish community lives in their homes outside the *tekke*. They came to the latter to see the Shaykh, to join together with one another, and to practice their rituals as a group. In the Arab World, such a centre is called a *Zāwiya*, whilst in Iran and in India one uses the word *Hanqa* (*khānaqah*) or *Dergah*.

On p. 488, Dr Clayer explains that where a *zāwiya* is to be found in the Balkans it denotes a location which is not a true *tekke*, though, in practice, it is used as such. It may be the room of a private house, or it may even be a mosque.

Türbe Nathalie Clayer, ibid., p. 488, defines this word as follows:

> An Arab term which has been adopted into Ottoman Turkish with the meaning of 'tomb'. The members of the Sufi *tarikat* frequently visit and kiss the *türbes* of their saints in order to pray there, to make offerings or to seek for a cure. The *turbedar* is the person who is entrusted with the duty of keeping watch over an important *türbe*.

***Wahdat al-wujūd* (*wahdat-i wujud*)** Defined by Baba Rexheb as 'Oneness in Being' and 'Spiritual Love'. It is at the heart of the message within the 'monistic' teaching of Muhyi al-Din Ibn 'Arabi (1165–1240). It was his major contribution to Sufi mysticism and to philosophy. Its message of the Oneness of the Divine within the Universe which He had created, and which is still in the process of being created, lies at the very heart of Naim Frashëri's Albanian verse and it pervades the literary and popular beliefs of Sufism, especially of Bektashism throughout Eastern Europe.

***Zāwiya* (see *tekke*, aforementioned)** During the course of Ibn Battuta's visit to the Crimea, which predated the Ottoman age, this was the term which he used to describe the Sufi hostels which he visited and where he stayed.

Zikr The popular term used for the Arabic *dhikr*. The word means the remembering, the recollection and the evocation of the Divine. In the Sufi brotherhoods, it denotes the repeated reciting of the most beautiful names of God, either aloud and openly, or quietly and subdued. It is an important part of the rituals of the Sufi brotherhoods and in certain instances, for example amongst the Rifa'iyya, it takes bizarre forms of self-mortification, or it is accompanied by a trance-like state, either produced by the 'mantric' nature of the ritual, or occasionally, it is artificially produced by intoxicants and by opiates.

Notes

Preface

1 Confidential letter, no. 69, from His Britannic Majesty's Consulate General, Salonica, 17 July, no. 13, The Public Record Office.

An even more tragic petition is an that sent within the text of Consul-General Lamb's Despatch, no. 22, of the 22nd March, 1913. It was a petition addressed to the European Consulates in Salonica, on behalf of the inhabitants of Osmanieh (signed by Shukri bin Salih and Ahmed bin Meniche, dated the 21st February, 1328/7th March, 1913).

> As soon as they returned, the inhabitants of the villages of Berovo, Burhanie Djirtik, Istimenik, Ihsanie, Tirtovitcha,Virdje, Grade Istamer, Isvakre, Gabrovo, Klimantha, Hunguiar, Tcharova, were attacked by the Bulgars and all sorts of punishment was inflicted upon them. All the young girls of these 14 villages were violated, and all who were good looking were forced to adopt the Christian religion. All the widows were forced to marry Christians. To compel the whole population to accept Christianity, all possible and imaginable atrocities were committed. Some villagers who would not become Christians were beaten and killed. Terrified by these dreadful spectacles, some Mussulmans were obliged to accept the Christian religion and to sign a paper which was presented to them and by which they were made to declare that no violence had been used to effect their conversion.
>
> Finally it came to the turn of the chief town, Behdjova. One day an order was given out that that everybody was to proceed to church on the ringing of the bell, and it was added that whosoever disobeyed should at once be shot.
>
> It was then that we fled …
>
> Public Record Office, FO195/2452/10426

Note on transcription

My transcription follows that used in my 'Islam in the Balkans'. However, the transcription of Oriental words has been considerably simplified. Diacritics and macrons in Arabic names and Islamic words or technical terms are infrequently shown. For their transcribed spelling, with accompanying vocalization based upon standard Arabic, there is sufficient shared content to allow for both books to be consulted if such is deemed to be necessary by a reader.

Introduction

1 F. W. Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam Under the Sultans*, Oxford, 1929, vol. 11, pp. 429–39, and see also the extensive list of references in the index to his book, on p. 857.

Other sources which furnish extensive references to his role and geographical activities include Ger Duijzings, *Religion and the Politics of Identity in Kosovo*, Hurst, London, 2000 with particular reference to Kosovo, Abdülkadir Haas, *Die Bektaşi,*

Riten und Mysterien eines islamischen Ordens, Berlin, 1987, pp. 36–40, and Irène Mélikoff, in *Studies in Ottoman History in Honour of Professor V. L. Ménage*, edited by Colin Heyward and Colin Imber, Istanbul, 1994.

2 Machiel Kiel, *The Türbe of Sari Saltik at Babadag-Dobrudja, Guney Dogu Avrupa Arastirmalar Dergisi, 6–7*, Istanbul, 1978, p. 211.

3 Eric Geoffroy, *L'apparition des voies: les 'khirqas' primitives, (X11e siècle – début X111e siècle)*, in *Les Voies d'Allah*, edited by Alexandre Popović and Gilles Veinstein, Fayard, Paris, 1996, p. 49.

4 See the article on the Yezidis in the *Shorter Encyclopaedia*, Brill, Leiden and Luzac, London, 1953, under 'Yaz¯d¯', 'Yaz¯d¯ya', pp. 641–5.

5 F. W. Hasluck, vol. 11, p. 572, says that local (Nestorian) Christians hold that the site of the Yezidi sanctuary, at Lalesh, was originally occupied by the monastery of St Addai (possibly Addeus of Edessene legend). It was allegedly usurped by a renegade monk called 'Adi who evolved the Yezidi religion. Similar scurrilous remarks were made in regard to Sari Saltik.

6 Victoria Arakelova, 'Three figures from the Yezidi Folk Pantheon', in *Iran and the Caucasus*, Brill, Leiden, 2002, p. 57, note 1, and J. S. Guest, *The Yezidis. A Study in Survival*, New York, 1987, pp. 20–1.

7 Victoria Arakelova, ibid., p. 57, note 2.

8 Garnik Asatrian and Victoria Arakelova, *Malak Tawus the Peacock Angel of the Yezidis*, *Iran and the Caucasus*, no. 7, 2003, pp. 1–2.

9 Ibid., p. 4.

10 Ibid., p. 21. Also see *The Ethnic Minorities of Armenia*, by Garnik Asatrian and Victoria Arakelova, published by the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland with the assistance of the OSCE Office in Yerevan, 2002, pp. 8–9, 'The Yezidis'.

11 Irène Mélikoff, *Hadji Bektach, Un Mythe et ses Avatars*, Brill, Leiden, Boston, Cologne, 1998, p. 187.

12 Ibid., p. 188.

13 H. A. R. Gibb, *Ibn Battuta, Travels in Asia and Africa, 1325–1354*, The Broadway Travellers, Routledge, London, 1939, p. 153.

1 The geographical setting of Popular Sufism in Eastern Europe

1 Bibliographies which include a wide selection of books and articles on the subject of Balkan Sufism are to be found in Alexandre Popović's, *L'Islam Balkanique, les Musulmans du Sud-est Europeen dans la Période Post-ottomane*, Wiesbaden and Berlin, 1986, pp. 417–76, likewise, regarding Albania, Nathalie Clayer, *L'Albanie Pays des Derviches, les Orders Mystiques Musulmans en Albanie à l'Epoque Post ottomane (1912–1967)*, Wiesbaden and Berlin, Berlin, 1990, pp. 489–502. A recent bibliography which offers a wide selection of works about the Bektashiyya may be found in John Norton, 'The Bektashis in the Balkans', Chapter 11 in *Religious Quest and National Identity in the Balkans*, edited by Celia Hawksworth, Muriel Heppell and Harry Norris, Palgrave, Basingstoke, 2001, pp. 199–200.

Popular Sufism

The bibliography on Popular Sufism in the region of South-eastern Europe and parts of Caucasia is less comprehensive. It includes several works published in the Balkans, especially in Bulgaria, which are mentioned in individual chapters in this book. However attention is particularly drawn to the following:

Robert Elsie, *A Dictionary of Albanian Religion, Mythology and Folk Culture*, Christopher Hurst, London, 2001. This Dictionary surveys and explains a number of the Sufi legends, rituals and religious customs which are in the chapters of my book. Note, in particular, the entry on the Bektashiyya, between pages 25 and 34, which introduces and explains essential technical terms.

F. De Jong, 'The Iconography of Bektashism. A Survey of Themes and Symbolism in Clerical Costume, Liturgical Objects and Pictorial Art'*, Manuscripts of the Middle East*, vol. 4, Brill, Leiden, 1989. The information which is contained in this study is of great value for the study of Bektashi rituals and popular art in the Balkans and also in Cairo. Excellent illustrations illustrate the main text, and technical terms are explained in detail.

Mention might also be made of De Jong's article about the Kizilbash or Qizilbash (Qizilbaş) sects in Bulgaria, their possible origins, their views on their origins, the dates of their settlement in the region and their heterodox religious beliefs in 'Problems concerning the origins of the Qizilbaş in Bulgaria: Remnants of the Safaviyya ?', in *Convegno sul tema, La Shi'a Nell'Impero Ottomano (Roma, 15th April 1991)*, Accademia Nazionale Dei Linci, Fondazione Leone Caetani 25, Rome 1993, pp. 203–15.

Machiel Kiel has always been greatly interested in the popular aspects of Sufi culture in Turkey and the Balkans, in general, in his publications, as well as his masterly study of the surviving Islamic architecture of the region, including mosques and 'tekkes' in remote villages. A number of examples are to be found in his *Studies on the Ottoman Architecture of the Balkans*, Variorum, Aldershot, 1990. See in particular, his article on the 'Türbe of Sari Saltik at Babadag-Dobruja. Brief Historical and Archiectonical Notes', IX, pp. 205–20, and 'The Mosque of Kel Hasan Aga in the Village of Rogova: an Unknown Ottoman Monument of the sixteenth Century in the Kosovo District', X1, pp. 411–21.

Irène Mélikoff: Without question, Professor Irène Mèlikoff is the greatest world authority on the whole subject of heterodoxy and Bektashi and Alawite religion in South-eastern Europe, Turkey and much of the Northern Caucasus and parts of Central Asia. For a wide selection of her authoritative works over many years, the Bibliography which is furnished, by her, between pages 299 and 300 of her *Hadji Bektach, un Mythe et ses Avatars, Genèse et evolution du Soufisme populaire en Turquie*, Brill, Leiden, 1998, amply indicates the unique contribution which she has made to the study of Popular Sufism. Her discoveries are of a direct relevance to Popular Sufism, throughout the Muslim World.

2 The key dates in the career of Fadlallah have been summarized by Professor E. G. Browne in his second article on Hurufi literature, 'Further notes on the Literature of the Hurufis and their connection with the Bektashi order of dervishes', *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* for the second half of the year 1907, London, p. 540, where he quotes the fly-leaf of one of the Hurufi manuscripts in the British Museum (Or. 6,381):

1 The birth of Fadlallah, 740 AH/1339-40 AD.
2 The Manifestation, or disclosure of knowledge, 788 AH/1386–7 AD.
3 The martyrdom of Fadlallah, 796 AH/1393–4 AD.
4 The age of Fadlallah at the time of his death, 56 years.
5 The death of his 'Khalifa', or Vicar, entitled 'Hadrat-i-'Aliyyi A'la, 822 AH/1419 AD.
6 The death of the Anti-Christ (the *Dajjāl* who slew Fadlallah), namely 'Māran-shah' (i.e. Timur's son, Miranshah, whose name the Hurufis have thus changed to make it mean 'the Serpent King'), 803 AH/1400/1 AD.

John P. Brown, in his *The Darvishes, or Oriental Spiritualism*, OUP, London, 1927, p. 224, mentioned that:

> According to Ishaq Effendi the Hurufi doctrine began to be promulgated in 1397–98 AD, and Fazl's death is assigned to 1401–02. But Fazl may have been born as early as 1339–40, and have been martyred in 1394–95 – which would have made him almost a contemporary of Haji Baqtash. If the tradition that he was executed by Miran Shah is true, he must have perished before the death of that prince in 1400–1.

According to E. J. W. Gibb, *A History of Ottoman Poetry*, vol. 1, London, 1958, p. 355, the poet Nesimi refers to his master, the founder of the Hurufi sect as 'Fazl-ullah', but also with a Persian equivalent, *Fazl-i Yezdan* (or an alternative,*Khuda*). The word, *Yezdan* will be alluded to later in this book as a term for the Divine in the Yezidi religion which is to be found in Iraqi Kurdistan, Armenia and elsewhere in those countries to which the Yezidis have emigrated or have fled.

3 An example is the Drenica pillar, in Kosovo.an ancient pagan site but which has inspired more recent examples. Thus, a wooden pole of recent date was discovered in the village of Laush. It had been carved in oak in 1950, and was the handiwork of a partially crippled 30-year-old Albanian peasant who was part carpenter and part farmer. It was shaped in the form of a human being. During the threshing season, this pole, and several others, were adorned with 15 ears and stalks of wheat. This local custom was excused as being an example of a 'harmless' ceremony in order to ensure good fortune, fertility and abundant blessings. Kosavac, the author of this report, was told '*per bereqet*', 'it was put there for a blessing'. '*Bereqet*' is derived from the Arabic *baraka*, 'blessing', a word much used by Muslims and very common in Popular Sufism. However, via Turkish, it has come to mean 'grain and cereals', in Albanian. Hence, figuratively, it denotes 'prosperity, success, gain, increase and abundance'.

4 The Via Egnatia: since ancient times, and particularly under the Byzantines, the Via Egnatia was the principal route in the mountainous interior of the Balkans for those preaching the Christian religion. It was also used by caravans in order to transport articles of commerce between east and west. Dyrrachion, now Durres, in Albania, became the most important Byzantine port in the west. It was given the name, 'the flower garden of the Adriatic'. Notable towns grew up along the route of the Via Egnatia. They included Skampa, near the later town of Elbasan, in Albania, and Deabollis (mentioned later by the Arab geographer al-Idrisi) near the river Devoll in south-eastern Albania, to the west of Lake Ohrid. Some belief this to be the 'nerve centre' of the Balkans, an important region for the Balkan's lakes. This reality was used to advantage by the Turks and by the dervish orders which had originated in the Middle East and in Central Asia when Islam began to penetrate the Balkan interior. It became a chosen location for their sanctuaries.

5 The Deli Orman region of Northern Bulgaria is the centre of the Alawite community in Bulgaria. There are, however, clear distinctions between them, one district differing from another. There is also a clear distinction between Bektashis and Babais. According to the Bulgarian scholar, Nevena Grammatikova, expressed in an 'Abstract' to her lecture, entitled *Islamic non-Orthodox trends in North-Eastern Bulgaria (on the basis of data from the literature originating from the milieu of these trends and from field work)*, she has discovered that:

> Alevi is a relatively new term reflecting a state of unification of the non-orthodox Islamic trends in Bulgarian lands. Its meaning is identical with the more popular *kizilbas* in colloquial language. Following our field studies we were able to discern some groups within the *kizilbas* community which, until recently, were closed and homogeneous. At the same time the basic ideas in the religious doctrine and cult are common to all of them. The differences are in some details in the performance of the rituals, in some interpretations of the basic ideas, as well as in the attitude to some of the religious leaders, venerated as saints. One comes to the conclusion that this division emerged as a result of the union of some communities with one or another religious leader.
>
> Also, of importance, was the geographical factor. We believe that by the time of the emergence of the Safavid state (*see De Jong, in footnote 1, above*), many of the Turkmen tribes were already connected with Shi'ite Sufi mystical orders. This can be claimed with certainty of those 'kizilbas' who say, even today: "We are slaves to the Babai" (*Biz babai kullariyiz*). The two main groups among the 'kizilbas' in Bulgaria, in North Eastern Bulgaria in particular, and existing up to the present day,

are the Babai and the Bektashi. The name of the latter shows that they had some organisational link with the Bektashi order. Apart from the Bektashi of the 'kizilbas' community there is yet another branch of the Bektashi in North Eastern Bulgaria. It is well known that some villages near the 'tekke' of Demir Baba were inhabited by dervishes and the villages were dervish ones. In the past, the majority of them were linked to Bektashism, but today, during field work, we also find the heritage of the Naqshibandi and Qadiri groups. These are the villages of Sveshtari (Mumcular), Vazovo (Eski Balabanlar), Raynino (Kose Abdi), Durach and Ivan Shishmanovo (Yeni Balabanlar) in the Razgrad region.

These villages were in a region which was the field of activity of Bektashi dervishes. But Sultan Mahmud 11's measures forced the transformation in the direction which had been wanted by the authority. Despite the common religious and moral-ethical ideas, these Bektashis did not consider themselves identical with the 'kizilbas'. In our opinion, that belonged to the branch of the Bektashis founded by Balim Sultan – the so-called branch of the unmarried Bektashis (*mucerred kolu*). Their origin was of no importance for their initiation into the Bektashi order. The only condition was that they adopted Islam and went through the initiation ritual in the Bektashi order. Besides the 'tekke' of Hacci Bektash Veli, near Kirsehir in Turkey, they were also linked with the Bektashi centre in Albania, probably at a later stage, after the measures of Sultan Mahmud 11.

The Babai, the other large Alevi group, are spread in the Haskovo, Silistra and Razgrad regions. The village of Chernik (Karalar, near Dulovo) belongs to the Babai, Vodno (Sugutcuk), the Silistra region, also belongs to the Babai. The inhabitants of Bradvari (Baltaci yeni koy), Silistra region, are predominantly Babai, but there area also families of the Bektashi branch, united in two 'cems'. In Yordanovo (Kolebina), Silistra region, the majority of the heterodox Muslims are Babai, but there is also one Bektashi *cem*. The village of Preslavtsi (Ece koy), Silistra region, likewise is predominantly Babai, while the number of Bektashis is lower. The heterodox Muslims living in the villages of Galabets (Guvencler), Haskovo region, Voyvodovo (Pasa koy), Haskovo region, Grafitovo (Tekke mahalesi), Sliven region, Teketo (Osman Baba tekkesi), Haskovo region, are, likewise, Babai. In the Razgrad region, the village of Madrevo (Mesim mahalesi) is entirely of the Babai branch, a little more than a half of the 'kizilbas' inhabitants of Sever (Djeferler) are Babai, while the rest are Bektashi. The villages of Bisertsi (Kascilar) and Ostrovo (Ada koy) belong to the Bektashi branch.

Nevena Grammatikovo adds, elsewhere, that Hurufism has gained a wide acceptance in the Babai branch of the Alevites. Evidence for this can be found in the *Vita* of Demir Baba (see Chapter 5) as well as in the songs which are sung. One religious sing (*nefes*) which has been recorded in Chernik and Sevar, the author of which is Muhieddin Abdal, is an indication of this influence. This author, it is believed, was one of the neophytes (*murīds*) of Akyazili Sultan (who is also mentioned in Chapter 5).

6 The most noted *türbe* in Budapest is that of Gul Baba associated with the Bektashiyya, see L. Fekete, 'Gul-Baba et le Bektasi der'kah de Buda', in *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, IV, 1955, pp. 1–18. On earlier Islamic communities in Hungary, see *Islam in the Balkans*, op. cit., pp. 26–31.

2 Sufi brotherhoods and impact of Sufism on national identity within the Balkan Muslim communities

1 *The Legacy of Islam*, edited by the late Sir Thomas Arnold, Oxford, 1931, p. 238.

2 John Tavener has been particularly drawn to Frithjof Schuon and his writings. On Islam in general, he has said that,

I was appalled by what happened {On 11 September 2001} but I am more appalled that Islam now has such a terrible name in some quarters. I love the Koran, and I wanted to write something that was an affirmation of Islam, rather than the terrible negations that one sees everywhere'. Quoted in '99 Names for God', by Richard Morrison, in *BBC Music*, November 2004, p. 33.

3 Karen Armstrong, *A History of God*, London, 1993, p. 220.

4 An example of an Iraqi Muslim's critique of 'Hurufism', Fadlallah, and more especially Nesimi – whom the Iraqis, as opposed to the Azerbaijanis, claim to be one of their own, and of an Iraqi Turkoman origin – may be read in 'The Legacy of the Hurufiyya', from *Tārīkh al-'Iraq bayn al-ihtilalayn'*, vol. 3, *'Al-Hūkuma al-Turkumāniyya*, by 'Abbas 'Ali 'Azzawi, Tafayud, Baghdad, 1939, pp. 45–54. Significant points which he makes include the following:

> They (the 'Hurufis') aimed at strengthening their sect at the expense of the esoteric schools of the initiated (*al-Bātiniyya*), though they were one of them, in order that they could bring Islam out of its established inherited code of virtues and mores and the firm credentials upon which it was founded. They rent asunder its coherence and they deemed it be based upon the Arabic alphabet. An action such as this was in order to rid Islam of its true concepts, through the heresy about which I have made mention. The Muslims hunted them down. They sent them packing and they ruled that they were infidels.
>
> These men infiltrated and propagated their sect and its teachings through Sufism. They donned a motley choice of raiment in order to blind others to the truth. They were the supporters of *wahdat al-wujūd, of ittihād, hulūl and of tanāsukh*. Let us make mention of their adoration of human beings (*'ibādat ashkhās*). The Bektashiyya, more than any other brotherhood accepted the words of the 'Hurufiyya', though, in the days of the saint, Hajji Bektash, it knew nought of them. They were only introduced into the brotherhood by 'Ali A'la, one of the pupils of Fadlallah al-Hurufi.
>
> We know that Islam brought an open message. It brought no signs, no symbols, no hidden significations. Its language is clear and speaks openly to men's minds. It produced proofs. It openly proclaimed – so that the entire world could observe-, what it possessed. For an era which was of a long duration none had given thought to a creed, nor to a dogma, nor to what was unbelief. We saw true belief prevailing, a belief unshaken. Neither dilution, nor adulteration, nor corruption had befallen it. The noble Qur'an was, and still is, the invalidator of all magic. It is open to all. Its case is made cleanly and brightly. These people – the 'Hurufis' and their ilk – portrayed those who were other than themselves as ignorant men, simple literalists, men of decrees, rules and statutes. They believed that they, alone, had attained the Reality. They achieved no success, beyond railing against and abusing the 'ulamā', giving them an insulting name and making that view which they had of things terrible to behold.

5 It would be a mistake to think that in the hands of the theologians Islam has remained a closed book. Ever more closed to science and open to mysticism. Theology has permitted many irrational- and to Islamic teaching-completely alien elements and even blatant superstitions to be added to it. It will be clear to anybody who is acquainted with the nature of theology why it found itself unable to resist the temptation of mythology and why it even saw in this a certain enrichment of thought. The monotheism of the Koran, the purest and most perfect in the history of religious teaching, was gradually compromized and a repulsive commercialism appeared in its practice', Alija Izetbegovic, The Islamic Declaration, Bosnia. See, 'The Trial of Moslem Intellectuals in Sarajevo, The Islamic Declaration', *South Slav Journal*, vol. 6, no. 1, (19), Spring, 1983, pp. 84–5.

6 Aspects of this chapter were previously published in Bulgarian (with an English Abstract) the Bulgarian publication, *History of Muslim Culture in Bulgarian Lands,* vol. 7, *The Fate of Muslim Communities in the Balkans*, edited by Rossitsa Gradeva, International Centre for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations, Sofia, 2001. The article was titled, 'Contrasting Views of Sufi Activities in the Balkans and the Ottoman East by Westerners in the nineteenth century', pp. 285–99.

7 The passages quoted in this chapter are taken from no. 17. B. Public Record Office documents – Turkey, no. 16 (1877), *Reports by Her Majesty's Diplomatic and Consular Agents in Turkey respecting the Condition of the Christian Subjects of the Porte, 1868–75*, London, 5th March, 1877. These and others quoted, in part or in whole, have been kindly sent to me by Bejtullah al-Destani, the Director of the Centre for Albanian Studies, 13 Coulson St, London, SW3 3NG.

At a later date, the Mevlevis (Mawlawiyya) were viewed as a moderating Sufi influence in a letter sent by Steven Runciman (later Sir Steven Runciman, see W. Dalrymple, *From the Holy Mountain*, London, 1997, p. 18). In that letter (Public Record Reference 195/2481), dated 16th December, 1943, c/o the British Council, Istanbul, addressed to 'Busk' (Douglas Busk Esq, H. M. Embasssy, Ankara), he refers to the 'Grand Çelebi' and adds

> I have a very great historical regard for the Mevlevi order, which has always been a force in favour of moderation and toleration. It was this man's grand-father and father who saved the lives of all the Armenians in Konya at the time of Abdul Hamid's massacres by sheltering them in the Tekke there and refusing to allow the soldiers to enter; and the Order has always been on very cordial terms with the Christian churches of Syria. The Grand Çelebi and the Maronite Patriarch still send representatives to each other's chief ceremonies.

A pacific attitude at the heart of Sufism is underlined by Lesly Blanch in her study of Shamil's movement in the Caucasus, *The Sabres of Paradise*, London, 1960. She says about 'Muridism', pp. 57–8, *'Thus in its origins, Muridism was not warlike in character, however much it came, during the nineteenth century, to be identified with the Caucasian Wars of Independence'*.

8 F. W. Hasluck, op. cit., vol. II, pp. 552–63.

9 See my Introduction on Balkan Islam, in Celia Hawksworth, Muriel Heppell and Harry Norris, *Religious Quest and National Identity in the Balkans*, London, 2001, pp. 12–14 and *Frashëri's Song of Albania*, Anglicized and edited by Ali Cungu (Tsungu), first edition, 1981, by Mahmoud Tsungu, printed by Exposition Press, Inc. 325 Kings Highway, Smithtown NY, USA 11787, where may be found, translated, numerous examples of Naim's nationalist aspirations and sentiments.

10 F. W. Hasluck, op. cit., vol. II, p. 556.

11 See Note 7, aforementioned, and F. W. Hasluck, ibid., vol. II, pp. 534–36. Most of his information is about the former Bektashi community on the island of Crete and their immigration to Turkey and to Tripolitania. However, on p. 535, he remarks

> the small number of Bektashi in Canea, the capital of the island and an important town, is accounted for by the fact that the Mevlevi are strong there, as also, owing to the floating population of Tripolines ('Halikuti') from Benghazi, the Rifai.

12 F. W. Hasluck, op. cit., Vol II, pp. 375–6, remarks

> In the Convent of the Mevlevi at Canea (Crete), founded only forty years ago, are two saints' tombs, side by side and exactly similar in outward appearance. One of these is that of the founder, the other admittedly a cenotaph erected by the latter's will to commemorate his revered teacher.

13 On Athens, and the 'Tower of the Winds' in particular, see, F. W. Hasluck, ibid., vol. I, pp. 12 and 13.

14 According to F. W. Hasluck, both J. D. Le Roy, in 1770 and R. Chandler in 1817 refer to these dervish activities in Athens in their publications. Both are listed amongst the authors consulted in vol. I of his work. E. Dodwell's work was published in London in 1834.
15 See M. Mackenzie, *Turkish Athens, The Forgotten Centuries, 1456–1832*, Reading 1992, pp. 55 and 56, in particular.
16 J. Galt, *Letters from the Levant*, London, 1813.
17 Thomas Carlyle, *Past and Present*, Oxford, 1858, 1918, pp. 181 and 232.
18 Ahmet T. Karamustafa, in his *God's Unruly Friends,* op. cit., reproduces some telling illustrations from these far earlier publications.
19 There would appear to be a relationship between this *taj* and that of the *Tac Haydari* (the Qalandars and the Haydaris being closely related). Irène Mélikoff, op. cit., pp. 129 and 161, maintains that this headgear 'The Crown of Haydar' is the 'début du mouvement kizilbach', thereby further underlining the interrelationship between the Bektashis, the Baba'is, the Kizilbash, in general, and the independent movements of the 'Qalandariyya' and the 'Haydariyya'.
20 See John Norton, in *Religious Quest and National Identity in the Balkans*, op. cit., p. 175, and also relevant pages in John Kingsley Birge, *The Bektashi Order of Dervishes*, London, Luzac and Co. Ltd, 1965, and F. de Jong, op. cit., *Manuscripts of the Middle East*, vol. 4, Brill Leiden, 1989.
21 Nathalie Clayer, *L'Albanie Pays des Derviches,* op. cit., pp. 476–9.
22 A short biography, together with a quotation from this poem may be read in H. T. Norris, *Islam in the Balkans*, Hurst, London, 1993, pp. 227–31.

3 The Krstjani and the Bosnjaks: Sufi orders and the abiding memory of the Bosnian Church

1 One of the strongest advocates of the essential 'Orthodoxy' of the Bosnian Church, and who, in his opinion, has been erroneously dubbed 'Bogomil', has been John Fine Jr, who, in his *The Bosnian Church, a New Interpretation*, Columbia University Press, 1975, and 'Bosnian Church', *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, 11, pp. 341–3, argues forcefully, on such lines in the Glossary to his, and to Robert J. Donia's, *Bosnia and Hercegovina, a Tradition Betrayed*, Hurst, London, 1994. On p. 290, he writes,

> An independent Church established in Bosnia by Bosnian Catholics when they broke with international Catholicism in the second half of the thirteenth century. Though often labelled 'heretical' and even 'Bogomil', it seems to have been merely schismatic (i.e, in a break with Rome), for its beliefs seem to have been in keeping with Catholic ones.

Under its own independent hierarchy, it survived through the Middle Ages, only to disappear in the early years of Turkish rule. A point of view similar to the above has marked Noel Malcolm's Bosnia, a Short History, London, 1994, and also two contributions to *The Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina, their Historic Development from the Middle Ages to the Dissolution of Yugoslavia*, edited by Mark Pinson, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1994, the first by John. V. A. Fine on *The Medieval and Ottoman Roots of Bosnian Society*, especially pp. 7–8, and the second, by Colin Heywood, *Bosnia Under Ottoman Rule*, 1463–1800, pp. 32–3.
2 A first hand account of the role of Sufis and Sufism in the Bosnjak resistance and in high ranks in the Bosnian army during the siege of Sarajevo, Tuzla, Travnik and elsewhere, may be read in '*Bosnia, Islamic World Report*'. In particular, it may be read in Rusmir Mahmud Ćehajić's, *Understanding the Suffering. A Sufi perspective and the Plight of Bosnia's Muslims*, pp. 51–61. The impact of the Bosnian War is even more dramatically described in the interview with Shaykh Halil Hulusi, who was in command of an eminent Bosnian army brigade. He is himself a deeply committed Sufi. See pp. 61–3.

3 On Isma'il al-Ma'shuqi, see Gilles Veinstein and Nathalie Clayer, *L'Empire Ottoman* in *Les Voies d'Allah* (op. cit.), pp. 334–5.
4 A comprehensive examination of the history of Hamza and the development of the Hamzawiyya/Hamzaviyya, in Bosnia, is to be read in Dzemal Ćehajić's, *Derviski Redovi u Jugoslavenskim Zemljama sa Posebnim Osvrtom na Bosnu i Hercegovina*, Sarajevo, 1986, pp. 185–208. For the whole historical background to Hamza's movement, see A.Y. Ocak, *Turcica* XXI–XXIII, 1991, pp. 71–82.
5 On the nature of this document, see, Dusanka Bojanic-Lukac, *'Un chant à la gloire de Mahomet en serbe'*, *Weiner Zeitschrift fur die kunde des Morgenlandes*, band 76, Wien, 1896, pp. 57–63.
6 One may compare this document and its claims with other Bosnian documents which have been studied and translated. Mention should be made of R. Y. Ebied's and M. J. L. Young's, *An Exposition of the Islamic Doctrine of Christ's Second Coming as Presented by a Bosnian Muslim Scholar*, *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica*, 5, 1974, pp. 122–38. The text is in English. While by no means unique in their claim, in regard to the Paraclete, and the Prophet, the Bosnian claim is unusual in its assertion that a national, and, to some, schismatic, national church was the spiritual home for the announcement of such a prophesy.
7 The principal source for this information about this Bosnian poet is the beautifully produced publication, *Kamen Spavac*, 'Stone Sleeper', by Mak Dizdar, translated by Francis R. Jones, DID, Sarajevo, 1999. This publication contains the Bosnian text with a facing, page by page, translation into English. The Afterword, by Rusmir Mahmud Ćehajić', is a remarkably detailed analysis and appraisal of Dizdar's verses, entitled 'The Text beneath the Text: the Poetry of Mak Dizdar'. It also contains a biographical background and other information about the reason for the work's composition.

   Ibid., pp. 211–2. 'In the sacrament of Baptism in Christ', or 'The Baptism of the Book', the priest placed his hands on the initiates and presented them with the 'Holy Book'. At the wedding ceremony, the Qur'an is placed upon the bride's head. The 'Book' symbolizes the blessing of 'the light and glory of the Comforter'.

8 The South Slav *kolo* is thus seen to mirror the Sufi *dhikr* (*zikr*). The carvings on the stećci are often very different. The *kolo* is danced in a variety of situations and at times with both sexes dancing hand in hand. At others, warriors hold unsheathed weapons. Von Asboth suggested a relationship to the 'death dance' which is mentioned in Bosnian popular songs. It is the poet's imagination, alone, which associates the *kolo* with the *dhikr* (*zikr*). Other Bosnian Sufis would question the propriety of this poetic license.

4 Islamic Antinomianism, 'heterodoxy' and Persian Monism in the literature and the thought of the Albanians: the Sufi inspirations of Naim Frashëri, Albania's greatest poet

1 H. T. Norris, 'The Hurufi Legacy of Fadlallah of Astarabad', *The Legacy of Mediaeval Persian Sufism*, edited by Leonard Lewisohn, London and New York, 1992, p. 89.
2 *Textes Relatifs à la Secte des Houroufis*, E. J. Gibb Memorial Series, vol. IX, Leiden and London, 1909, p. 119, in particular.
3 This is in the context of the Albanian legends relating to Sari Saltik (Sari Salltek, in Albanian), as reported in Jules Alexandre Degrand (d. 1844), *Souvenirs de la Haute Albanie*, Paris, 1901.
4 The Umayyad Caliph, Yazid, is regarded as the model of an evil and tyrannical ruler by the Albanian Bektashis. The use of 'Yezdan' as a part of the name of 'Fadlallah', is entirely different. Similarities to beliefs which are held amongst the Ahl al-Haqq and the Yezidis come to mind, where Sultan Yezid would seem to match *Yezdan*. Amongst the Yezidis of Iraq (in the region of Lalish), and in Armenia and in Georgia, this name

is an essential element in their vocabulary which is devoted to a statement of definition and relationship within their triadic Divinity. Common shared beliefs and traditions may be suspected. See, Irène Mélikoff, *Hadji Bektach un Mythe et ses Avatars*, op. cit., pp. 188–94. She also mentions the Paulicans. Dr Yuri Stoyanov has published a very illuminating article, *Islamic and Christian Heterodox Water Cosmogonies from the Ottoman Period – Parallels and Contrasts*, in BSOAS, vol. 64, part 1, 2001, pp. 19–33, in which he gives ample evidence for the linkage between these disparate religious groups which extend from Kurdistan to the Western Balkans. He writes,

> This article will focus on some interesting correspondences between certain heterodox Eastern Christian and Islamic heterodox (Alevi/Kizilbash, Yezidi and Ahl-e Haqq) cosmogenic traditions (and their respective pre-Christian and non-Islamic Turkic analogies), which shared and developed certain old cosmogenic themes such as the 'primal ocean' and demiurgic 'earth diving', and retained their vitality, occasionally reshaped by new influences, during the Ottoman period.

Also highly relevant are two articles in the journal, *Iran and the Caucasus*, *Malak-Tawus: the Peacock Angel of the Yezidis*, by Garnik Asatrian and Victoria Arakelova (7. 1–2, 2003 Brill, Leiden), pp. 1–8, and *Three Figures from the Yezidi Folk Pantheon*, by Victoria Arakelova, (6. 1–2, 2002, Brill, Leiden), pp. 57–73. The Yezidi 'Symbol of the Faith' (*Shahda dini*) includes:

> The Testimony of my faith is One God,
> Sultan Sheikh 'Adi is my king,
> Sultan Yezid is my king,
> Malak-Tawus is the Symbol [of Faith] and my faith.
> Indeed by God's will [we] are Yezidis,
> We are called by the name of Sultan Yezid.
> 'Sar nave Silt'an Ezdina.

5 E. G. Browne, *A History of Persian Literature under Tartar Dominion*, 111, pp. 474–81.

6 Baba Rexheb, *The Mysticism of Islam and Bektashism' volume 1*, English translation from the Albanian with a Glossary and Bibliography by Bardhyl Pogoni, Naples, Italy, 1984, p. 123.

7 Kurdish and Turkoman books were published in Iraq supporting this view, with alleged photographs of his tomb in Iraq and his village. Although highly critical, this was the accepted view of 'Abbas 'Ali 'Azzawi in his *al-Hukūma al-Turkumāniyya*, vol. 3 of his *Tārīkh al-'Iraq bayn ihtilalayn*, Tafayoud, Baghdad, 1939, pp. 45–54. He was very sceptical of the evidence, though, and remarked,

> Nasimi has been given the epithet of 'al-Baghdadi' in most works of literature. One author has said that Nasim is a Baghdadi village to which his kinship became associated.This is incorrect. What is known to be true is that he joined the company of Fadlallah al-Hurufi, in Baghdad.

8 Robert Elsie, *A Dictionary of Albanian Religion, Mythology and Folk Culture*, Hurst, London, 2001, pp. 175–6, under *Matem*.

9 Stuart E. Mann, *Albanian Literature, An Outline of Prose, Poetry and Drama*, London, 1955, pp. 37–41.

10 There are now several translations available, in English, French and German. Apart from the translation in F. W. Hasluck's book, French translations were made by Faik Konitsa (himself a Bektashi) in 1898 and, without the poetry, by H. Bourgeois, published in the *Revue du Monde Musulman,* in 1922. The most scholarly translation is that, in German, by Norbert Jokl, accompanied by the Albanian text. It was published in *Balkan Archiv*, 11, Lepizig, 1926, pp. 226–56.

11 See *Christianity and Islam Under the Sultan*s, vol. 11, 1919/26, pp. 562–3. Fuller glossaries are to be found in Norbert Jokl, op. cit. and in Nathalie Clayer, *L'Albanie pays des Derviches*, Berlin, 1990, pp. 484–8.
12 F. W. Hasluck, ibid., pp. 554, 555 and 558.
13 Amongst the poets of Albania and Kosovo who are introduced in the book, *Poezia e Bejtexhinjve*, by Hajdar Salihu. op. cit., and singled out by the author is Hoxhe Dobi from Gjirokastër, one amongst those most influenced by the doctrines of the Hurufiyya, see p. 280, and also his source, O. Myderrizi, *Manuscripts of Unidentified Albanian Works from Gjirokastër* (*Doreshkrime te vjetra shqip te panjohura te Gjirokastres*)*, 'Buletini Shk. Shoq.* Tiranë, 1959, no. 2, pp. 178–84. These poets will be discussed in greater detail later in this book.
14 Ibid., pp. 284, verses 4–7 and 285 verse 3. This is pure Hurufism.
15 The sources of these beliefs are varied and a matter of some uncertainty. One of the more recent publications which have examined the influences of Arabic, Persian and Turkish poetics and the philosophical idealism on the content of Naim's poetry is to be read in Qazim Qazimi's, *Oriental Influences on the literary works of Naim Frashëri* (*Ndikime Orientale ne vepren letrare te Naim Frashërit*), Prishtinë, Kosovo, 1996. The works selected include *Qerbelaja*, *Lulet e Verese* and *Bageti e bujqesin*'. Shi'ism is examined on pp. 189ff. Hurufism is not discussed. The author – possibly correctly so – regards the Monism ('*njesia e ekzistences/wahdat al-wujūd*) of Naim, and his advocation of metempsychosis (*metempsikozen/transmigrinin*) as derived directly from the thought of Ibn al-'Arabi, on the one hand, and Jalal al-Din al-Rumi, on the other. See, in particular, pp. 70 and 194–5.
16 Bektashism in Iraq offers some interesting points in common with that in Albania. The matter is the subject of an Appendix, which presents a recent study, published in 2003, in *Sawt al-Turkumān* (*Hurrīyat al-'Iraq*), by Muhammad Sa'id al-Tarihi.

5 Popular Sufism in Bulgaria and Macedonia – Demir Baba Akyazili, the Kizilbash saints of Deli Orman and the neo-Malamiyya of Muhammad Nur al-'Arabi

1 Ahmet T. Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends*, Salt Lake City, 1994, p. 20.
2 See Valery Grigorov, 'Tekkes Revered by Bulgarian Muslims in Central Rhodopes', *The History of Muslim Culture in Bulgarian Lands (Musulmanskate Kuultuura po Bulgarskiite Zemii)*, edited by Rossitsa Gradeva and Svetlana Ivanova, vol. 11, Sofia, 1998. This subject is further explored by Ljubomir Mikov, *Alevian Shrines in the Eastern Rhodopes*, in *Balkan Folklore (English Summary)*, published by the Institute of Folklore at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, year 22, 1996, nos 3–4, pp. 61 and 93–7.

A very comprehensive coverage of the Bulgarian *tekkes* in Bulgarian may be read in *Etnologiya na Sufitskite Ordenni Teoriya i Praktika* (Ethnology of Sufi Orders: Theory and Practice), *The Proceedings of the British–Bulgarian Workshop on Sufi Orders, 19–23 May, 2000*, Sofia, Bulgaria, edited by Antonina Zhelyazkova and Jorgen Nielsen, published jointly by the International Centre for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations (Sofia) and the Center for the Study of Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations (Birmingham). It was published by IMIR, in Bulgaria, as vol. 8 of *The Fate of Muslim Communities in the Balkans*. Several contributions, with *résumés* in English are essential reading for anyone who might wish to follow up a number of the themes in this chapter. Legends and lives of 'Babas' figure prominently. They include: *Ethics and Ethnographic Research in the Context of Sufi Tariqas*, by Mustafa Draper, *Discourse and the Ethnographic Study of Sufi Worship, Some Practical Suggestions*, by Martin D. Stringer, *Oral History Methodologies*. In Christine Allison's paper, The Yezidis and Qadiri *Silsilas*, in Kurdistan, are introduced. Also, *A Study of Sufism in post-Soviet Dagestan*, by Galina M. Yemenialova, with a special section devoted to the role of Shaykh Nazim al-Haqqani among Dagestani Sufis, *How Rhodope Muslims See the*

Perfect Man, by Cvetena Georgieva, *Local Bulgarian Muslim Evlii in the Rhodopes, Idea and Fable*, by Golina Lozanova, including plots of *Evliya* tales, *Specifics of sixteenth–twentieth century Sufi Architecture*, by Lubomir Mikov, including the Akyazili Baba *turbe* and Demir Baba *türbe*, as well as many other Kizilbash 'turbes' throughout Bulgaria, *Holy Men and Utility, the 'Türbe' of Sari Baba at Momchilovci near Smolian*, by Evgenia Ivanova, *Türbes of Muslim Holy Men in Ruse: History, Legend and Reality*, by Teodora Bakardjieva, and *Changing Fates and the Issue of Alevi Identity in Bulgaria*, by Nevena Gramtikova, in which the whole investigation as to the origin of the Kizilbash is examined in great detail and in a masterly fashion.

Many other aspects in regard to Islam and Popular Sufism in Bulgaria, including the *tekke* of Demir Baba, may be read in the special issue, *Islijam*, *Bulgarski Folklor*, 3–4, 1996, published by the Institute of Folklore, in the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 1996.

3 For an architectural description of Akyazili *tekke*, see *Un santuario islamo-christiano nei pressi di Varna*, by Georgio Rota, *Islam storia e civilta*, no. 20, year 6, no. 3 (July–September), Rome, 1987, pp. 191–9.

4 F. W. Hasluck, *Islam and Christianity Under the Sultans'* op. cit. vol. 1, pp. 295–7.

5 Referring to the death of Ibn Taymiyya, Reynold E. Niicholson remarks in his *A Literary History of the Arabs*, Cambridge, 1969, p. 463.

> Oddly enough, he was buried in the Cemetery of the Sufis, whose doctrines he had so bitterly opposed, and the multitude revered his memory – as a saint!

6 Michel Balivet, *Deux partisans de la fusion religieuse des Chrétiens et des Musulmans au Xvième siècle*', *Byzantina*, vol. 10, 1980, pp. 375–6.

7 Representative verse, by Shejh(u) Jonuzi, including *Nokta tylbejana* may be read in *Poezia e Bejtexhinjve*, by Haydar Salihu, Relindja, Prishtinë, Kosovo,1987, pp. 289–343.

8 The features which characterize the neo-Malamiyya and the background to Muhammad Nur al-Arabi are fully described in the article by Thierry Zarcone, *Muhammad Al-'Arabi et la confrérie Malamiyya (xixe–xxe siècle)*, in *Les Voies d'Allah*, Fayard, Paris, 1996, pp. 479–83.

9 Ibid., pp. 480–2.

10 Strashmir Dimitrov, 'Some aspects of Ethnic Development, Islamisation and Assimilation in Bulgarian Lands in the fifteenth–seventeenth centuries', *Aspects of the Development of the Bulgarian Nation*, Sofia, 1989, p. 43.

A note on tekkes in the region of Greek Macedonia near the Bulgarian border

Tiny Bektashi *tekkes* and *türbes* within Greece, immediately to the south of the present Bulgarian and Greek frontier may be seen (together with maps which indicate their location) in a book written by Efstration Zenginis, in Greek, with a summary of content, in English, *Bektashism in Western Thrace: a Contribution to the History of the Propagation of Islam on Greek Territory*, published by the Institute of Balkan Studies, Thessalonich, 1988. Zenginis observes, on p. 249, that:

> As far as the Pomaks' conversion to Islam is concerned, it is to be noted that those who embraced Christian heresies, such as Paulicianism, Massalianism and Bogomilism, were easily proselytized by the propagandist Dervishes as soon as the Turks had occupied Western Thrace. Those Pomaks who were Orthodox Christians, however, at the time of the Turkish conquests remained Orthodox until the seventeenth century, and some until the eighteenth century or even later. Most of the Orthodox Pomaks, like much of Thrace's Christian population, were unable to withstand the harsh measures Sultan Mehmed IV (1648–87) implemented against them, and converted en masse to the Muslim faith. Finally it should be noted that Bektashism was the successor in the Turkish period of the various Christian heresies that had previously obtained in Thrace.

Probably the most recent and unquestionably the most authoritative exposition of popular Kizilbash beliefs in the region with which this chapter has been concerned is, Irène Mélikoff, *Hadji Bektach: Un mythe et ses Avatars, Genèse et evolution du soufisme populaire en Turquie'*, published by Brill, Leiden, Boston, Cologne, 1998.

6 'The heterodox hero', the mythical Sari Saltik and his many tombs in Albanian and in Tatar lands

1 Sari Saltik, as it is spelt here, is also spelt Sār Salṭuq in the texts by Ibn Sarrāj and Yūsuf al-Nabhān. Other spellings are Sari Saltuk and Salltek, in Albanian, in Robert Elsie, *A Dictionary of Albanian Religion, Mythology, and Folk Culture*, Hurst, London, 2001, pp. 225–9, while Professor Irène Mélikoff spells his name Sari Saltuk. He is also called Sari Saltik Dede.

2 Babadag/Babadag, 'the Mountain of the Father (Baba)'is associated in particular with Baba Saltik, although other holy figures are not unknown. According to my friend and Ottoman scholar, Mehmet Mustafa, in Bucharest, another revered holy figure, Kojun Baba, is also buried near, or upon, this small tree covered mountain. Both mountain and town lie to the south of Tulcea, in the Romanian Dobrogea, at no great distance from Lacul Babadag, the Black Sea and the archeological site of Enisala. Babadag is situated in a small hilly district which rises above the surrounding plain, semi-steppe and sea. One of the earliest references to this hilly district may be found on the map of al-Idrisi (1100–1166), although his 'south' should be 'west'. In his work, *Nuzhat al-Mushtāq*, he describes the district as 'Armocastro (Enisala), is an ancient town, its buildings are lofty, countryside fertile, of a goodly size, profitable commerce and which is situated at the foot of a pleasant "mountain" which overlooks the sea, two days to the south of it'. Babadag is the most imposing Muslim town which still survives in the region. Aside from the alleged tomb of Sari Saltik, it contains remains of the mosque and tomb of Gazi 'Ali Pasha, fragments of a *madrasa* adjoining the Museum of Oriental Art, and a below ground level fountain (*çeşme*), all dating from the seventeenth century. For the view of a local historian's view of the history of his town, see Cintian Barbuleanu, *Monografia Oraşului Babadag* (*Consiliul Judeţean Tulcea, Centrul Cultural 'Nicolae Balaşescu-Nifon' Babadag*, Bucureşti, 1998.

3 On these documents see, Machiel Kiel, 'The Türbe of Sar Salt k at Babadag-Dobrudja. Brief Historical and Architectonical Notes', IX, in Studies on the Ottoman Architecture of the Balkans, *Variorum Reprints*, Aldershot, 1990, pp. 205–20, and, by the same author, 'Ottoman Urban Development and the cult of a heterodox Sufi Saint: Sari Saltuk Dede and towns of İsakçe and Babadag in the Northern Dobrudja', *Syncrétismes et Hérésies dans l'Orient Seldjoukide et Ottoman (XIVe – XVIIIe Siècle), Collection Turcica, vol. IX*, Peeters, Paris, 2005, pp. 283–98.

4 *The Travels of Ibn Battutah*, edited by Tim Mackintosh-Smith, Picador, London, Basingstoke and Oxford, 2003, p. 129, and p. 312, note 59.

5 The entire region was an area of devastation in the Middle Ages, as well as settlement. At the time of Ibn Battuta's visit Tatar domination had not encouraged settlement. Dr Ioana Feodorov tells me that the existing cultivation and intensive settlement, in places, along the coast in the area presumably crossed by Ibn Battuta and his party is recent in date.

6 Such forms of transport were still to be found until a relatively recent date in the Crimea and in the Dobrogea/Dobrudja. For the life of the Tatars in and their transport within the latter, see Professor Dr R. I. Calinescu, *Cutreerând Dobrogea Meridională*, published by Editura Adeverul S. A., Bucureşti in the 1920s and 1930s.

7 See the references in footnote 3, above.

8 On these sources, the differing accounts about the identity and the exploits of Sari Saltik, see Irène Mélikoff, 'Qui était Sari Saltuk? Quelques remarques sur les manuscrits du Saltukname', in C. Heywood, C. Imber (eds), *Studies in Ottoman History in Honour of Professor V. L. Ménage*, Istanbul, 1994, pp. 232–33. Also, see Paul Wittek,

'Yazijioghlu 'Ali on the Christian Turks of the Dobrudja, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, X1V/3, London 1952, pp. 639–88.

9 Machiel Kiel, footnote 3, above, op. cit., 'The Türbe of Sari Saltuk at Babadag-Dobrudja', p. 215.

10 The visit of Ibn Battuta to Baba Saltuq is approximately dated to 1332/1333.

11 Yūsuf b. Ismā'īl b. Hasan b. Muhammad al-Nabhān¯ was a Sufi poet and a *Qādī* from Jenin in the northern part of the West Bank, in Palestine. His work, *Jāmi' Karāmāt al-Awliyā'* is of a relatively recent date and was printed in Beirut, in 1911. The most recent Cairo edition is dated 1974, see vol. 2, pp. 100 and 101. Al-Nabhān¯ lived between 1265 AH/1849 AD and 1350 AH/1932 AD. Machiel Kiel, in his recent and most important article, op. cit., 'Ottoman Urban Development and the cult of a heterodox Sufi Saint: Sari Saltuk Dede and towns of İsakçe and Babadag in the Northern Dobruja', *Syncrétismes et Hérésies dans l'Orient Seldjoukide et Ottoman* (*XIVe–XVIIIe siècle*), edited by Gilles Veinstein, *Collection Turcica vol. IX*, Paris 2005, pp. 286–7, has now been able to identify al-Nabhān¯'s primary source. This was *Tuffāh al-Arwāh*, by Kamāl ul-D¯n Muhammad *al-Sarrāj* al-Ru/ifā'¯, who completed his work in 715 AH/1315 AD, prior to the alleged visit of Ibn Battuta to the region. This earlier date is important. The first reason is the certain historicity of Sari Saltiq, and, secondly, the possibility that Ibn Battuta could have seen and even quoted this work.

12 Each paragraph in the text is prefaced by a direct quotation of al-Sarrāj.

13 Al-Haydār¯ would appear to denote the Haydariyya Sufi brotherhood. Machiel Kiel supports this view. The source is therefore of some interest. See Ahmet T. Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends* Utah, 1994, pp. 44–6.

14 Bahrām Shāh cannot be confirmed elsewhere as an impeachable source, or as a contemporary witness. His information is not precisely dated, making it difficult to argue a definitive historical case for either 'the town of Baba Saltuq', or Bababag as the burial site for the saint Baba Saltik, as early a date as the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries, however plausible his information may be in such matters of detail. The use of *balad* confirms that a town is meant.

15 The 'infidels' would seem to be of mixed nationalities, some Franks, others Genoese, possibly Armenians and, less likely, Slavs and Romanians.

16 The swaying motions attributed to Sari Saltik would indicate some kind of *dhikr/zikr*, or a trance. Such is not uncommon amongst heterodox dervishes. See a comparable example in Irène Mélikoff, Hadji Bektach, Un Mythe et ses Avatars, Brill, Leiden, Boston, Köln, pp. 85–6.

17 A phenomenon, which, in this context, recalls incidences of a manifestation of the stigmata amongst the most holy of saints within the Catholic Church.

18 Ibrāh¯m b. Adham, the prince of Balkh (d. 160 AH/777 AD). On his life see, A. J. Arberry, *Sufism, an account of the mystics of Islam*, Unwin, London, 1990, pp. 36–7.

19 This story of the fish and the saint is a very faint echo of the account in St Luke's Gospel, verses 3–6, while command over the motion of the waves is referred to in several places in both Old and New Testaments.

20 This is another point in the text which indicates that the followers of Sari Saltik were 'armed Sufis', probably *akhis* On 'Akhisme', the duties of the *akhis* (the *futuvvet*), an artisan and trader chivalry movement which were to amalgamate with the Bektāshiyya, see Irène Mélikoff, op. cit., pp. 108–10. Those followers who were to accompany Sari Saltik have been described by Professor George Grigore, in his article, 'Muslims in Romania', *ISIM Newsletter*, March 1999, p. 34.

> The first Muslims – a group of 10-12,000 Anatolian Turkomans, led by Sari Saltik – settled down in Dobrudja in 1263–4. The famous traveller, Ibn Battutah (1344) made the first documentary attestation of Tartars living in this area. According to the discovered traces, the first group of Tartars, as part of the empire of the Golden Horde, seem to have settled here during the time of the Tartar leader, Noghai (1280–1310) who ruled over the northern side of the Balkan Peninsula up to Dobrudja.

21 The mention of 'the Franks' may refer to the Genoese whose presence in the Black Sea region constantly impinged on the life of the Tatar and other Muslim communities, especially in the major trading centres in the Crimea and elsewhere.
22 The number, seven, is an *idée fixe* in stories regarding Sari Saltik. His supposed tombs are of the same number. On the seven Imams, see Irène Mélikoff, op. cit., pp. 123 and 257, and, in this region, in general F. W. Hasluck's index, vol. 2, op. cit., p. 859.
23 This story may relate to Sari Saltik's life at some distance from the Dobrudja region, possibly in Anatolia, or in the southern part of the Crimean peninsula.
24 The 'mount'(*dağ*) at Babadag cannot be excluded, it being a traditional site of his retreat, though the distinction between 'mountain', or 'mountains', '*jabal*, or *jibāl***,** is crucial. The latter appears in al-Nabhān¯'s text.
25 Machiel Kiel has solved any confusion, here, by pointing out that Sari Saltik made the pilgrimage to the tomb of Ahmad al-Rifā'¯/ Rufā'¯, near Wāsit, in Iraq, and it was there that he became a follower of Mahmūd al-Rifā'¯/ Rufā'¯, one of the successors of Ahmad al-Rifā'¯.
26 The identification with Isaccea, 'Sakçi', etc, rests entirely upon a copyist's mistake.The printed text of the Beirut edition of al-Nabhān¯ reads 'Subh¯/Sibh¯/ Sabh¯'. If the point below '*b*' is transferred to the '*h*'**,** and doubled**,** '*b*' existing either as a printer's, or copyist's, error, then Sajji(ya) and Sakcçi is a certain reading, conforming to the text of al-Sarrāj. Isaccea, as Machiel Kiel has argued, is, in any case likely to have been near to the crossing point on the Danube for Ibn Battuta's party. The Qipchāqs were undoubtedly present, in number, in this district. However, discounting the unreasonable distances of Ibn Battuta's marches, a fact that must be faced also, is, that nowhere is the Danube, nor are any of its crossings, mentioned in his account. Is this a sign that his account is a fabrication here, based upon al-Sarrāj's account, or is it a slip in his memory? Or had he crossed so many rivers in his journeys that he simply forgot to mention the Danube?
27 Karamustafa, op. cit., p. 56.
28 See F. W. Hasluck, op. cit.,vol. 2, pp. 429–39, and Nathalie Clayer, *L'Albanie Pays des Derviches*, op. cit., pp. 336–9.
29 Isaccea still has a substantial Turkish and Tatar population, a mosque and historic associations with Otman Baba. The local population have little knowledge of earlier medieval history and, on account of the 'bird flu' epidemic are now within a quarantined zone of Romania.
30 For a general survey of sites associated with Sari Saltik throughout the Balkans, see Grace. M. Smith, 'Some Türbe/Makams of Sar Saltuk, an Early Anatolian Turkish Gazi-Saint', *Turcica*, XIV, 1982, pp. 216–55.
31 Robert Elsie, *A Dictionary of Albanian Religion, Mythology and Folk Culture*, Hurst, London, 2001, pp. 25–34 and 225–9.
32 On Krujë, see F. W. Hasluck, op. cit., vol. 2, pp. 549–50.
33 See H. T. Norris, *Islam in the Balkans*, op. cit., pp. 84–5 for a photograph of specimen pages of this manuscript.
34 The coastal region along the Black Sea extending from the south-west corner of the Ukraine, through Romania, where Dobrudja is spelt Dobrugea, and including the Kaliakra region of North-Eastern Bulgaria. Other spellings include Dobruja, etc. Sites identified by Sari Saltik are reported in the Crimea as well as in Kaliakra in north-eastern Bulgaria.
35 The alleged grave of Sari Saltik, at Blagaj, in Herzegovina is something of an unresolved mystery. Mentioned by Evliya Çelebi, the *tekke* is Helveti (of the Khalwatiyya brotherhood) which is hardly surprising since Bosnia was never a friendly place for the Bektāshiyya. See, Dzemal Ćehajić, *Derviski Redovi u Jugoslovenskim Zemljama sa Posebnim Osvrtom na Bosnu i Hercegovinu*, Sarajevo, 1986, pp. 99–101.
36 Hasluck, op. cit., has much to say about the 'seven tombs'. The number 'seven' is crucial. Compare this with the seven jars of Sari Saltik in the text of Ibn Sarrāj and al-Nabhān¯.
37 Corfu appears as the final destination of Sari Saltik in his flight from Krujë.

38 Photographs of the pages in both manuscripts may be seen in Andrzej Drozd, Marek M. Dziekan and Tadeusz Majda, *Pismiennictwo i muhiry Tatarow polsko-litewskich', Katalog Zabytkow Tatarskich, Tom 111, Res Publica Multiethnica*, Warsaw, 2000, *Chamaily*, plates 40, 41–42. See, likewise, the main text, pp. 55, and 56, where the 'dervish' drawings are discussed.

39 The reincarnation of St Nicholas and his transformation into extraordinary manifestations of his miraculous powers, have been graphically, and most entertainingly, described to us by the recently published study, *Santa, a Life*, by Jeremy Seal (Picador, 2005). The personality of Sari Saltik is no less extraordinary, and his fusion with St Nicholas is but one example. The Balkans is one location where the two personalities encountered and merged with one another. Romania, the supposed resting place of Sari Saltik is one location and it may be of note that Jeremy Seal has informed us that elsewhere on his travels the name of Babadag was associated with St Nicholas. On p. 62, he describes a voyage in Turkey where upon discovering a church he found an ancient fresco of 'Osios Nikolaos' and he added, 'I continued to the island summit. From the top I looked east to the massif of Baba Dag, Father Mountain, and south to the open sea'.

Babadag, in Romanian Dobrogea, is a half forgotten resting place of Sari Saltik, with historical evidence to support its authenticity. A crumbling domed *türbe*, its stonework suggesting centuries of rebuilding and repair, is currently encased in wooden scaffolding and supports whilst a Turkish company is engaged, yet again, in attempting to ensure its survival. It is surrounded by wire fencing, in a solitary and forlorn corner of the town, although still visited, on special occasions, by pilgrims and adherents from the Balkans, Turkey and beyond.

It was once a more substantial structure which may have resembled, though smaller in dimensions, the still standing *türbes* of Demir Baba, and Otman Baba, in Bulgaria (see Chapter 5), magnificently illustrated on the cover, and in plates 3, 4, 19, 20, 21 and 25, in the recent volume by Lybomir Mikov, published by the Institute of Folklore, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, The Art of Heterodox Muslims in Bulgaria (XVI-XX Century), Bektaşi and K z lbaş/Alevi, Marin Drinov Academic Publishing House, Sofia, 2005.

I would like to thank the British Academy, London, Mrs Magda Craciunescu of the Romanian Academy and, especially Dr Ioana Feodorov of the University of Bucureşti for enabling me to visit this hallowed building.

8 The Bektashiyya brotherhood, its village communities, and inter-religious tensions along the border between Albania and Greek Epirus, at the beginning of the twentieth century

1 The substance of much of this chapter formed part of a paper which was submitted to a conference that was held in the University of Wales, Gregynog, in November 2001. More than 60 delegates from 12 different countries met together to discuss F. W. Hasluck and issues connected with his life and work. The papers have recently been published, in two volumes, entitled *Archaeology, Anthropology and Heritage in the Balkans and Anatolia: The Life and Times of F. W. Hasluck, 1878–1920*, the Isis Press, Istanbul, 2004. My contribution entitled *Bektaşi life on the Border Between Albania and Greece*, is to be found in vol. 1, pp. 309–28.

The text has been slightly shortened here, since the subject matter omitted did not concern the Bektashis. I am very grateful to Bejtullah Destani for making this correspondence available to me.

9 A future role for Balkan Sufism and the revial of Popular Sufism among the Tatars of the Crimean peninsula

1 'Understanding The Suffering', by Rusmir Mahmud Ćehajić, in *Bosnia Destruction of a Nation, Inversion of a Principle, Islamic World Report*, vol. 1, no. 2, Winter, 1996, London, pp. 56–7.

2 Ibid., p. 60.
3 For a comprehensive description of the Naqshabandiyya brotherhood in Bosnia, see Hamid Algar, *Notes on the Naqshabandi Tariqat in Bosnia, Die Welt des Islams*, vol. XIII, nos. 3–4, 1971, pp. 168–201.
4 The distribution and the relationship between the Bektashiyya and Khalwatiyya (les Halvetis) in Albania are comprehensively described, by Nathalie Clayer, in her *L'Albanie, pays des derviches*, Berlin, 1990, pp. 129–49.
5 See, 'Yet Another Testing Time, in Renewing Self Awareness', by Edward A. Allworth, in *The Tatars of Crimea, Return to the Homeland*, Duke University Press, Durham and London, 1998, pp. 20–3.
6 H. A. R. Gibb, *The Travels of Ibn Battuta, A.D. 1325–1354*, vol. 11, The Hakluyt Society, 1959, pp. 468–9. *The Travels of Ibn Battutah*, edited by Tim Mackintosh-Smith, Picador, Macmillan, London, 2002, pp. 119–20, Tim Mackintosh-Smith, *Travels with a Tangerine*, 2002, pp. 318–9.
7 H. A. R. Gibb, ibid., pp. 471–2, and Tim Mackintosh Smith, ibid., pp. 121 and 315–6, respectively.
8 Tim Mackintosh-Smith, ibid., pp. 315–6, and the numerous illustrated examples which are to be found in Y. A. Aibabaina, *The Art of Stone Carving in Kaffa. fourteenth–eighteenth centuries*, *'Sonat'*, Simferopol, Crimea, 2001.
9 Ananiasz Zajaczowski, *Tevārīh Dest-i Qipcaq/Tawārīkh Dasht-i Qipchāq*, Warsaw, 1996, pp. 79–81.
10 Muhammad Murād Ramz¯ (who spells the name, Hujand¯, probably a printing error) describes him as one of the greatest of Sufis who spent his days in spiritual exercises and in strenuous spiritual warfare. He notes that the earliest days of the Sufi saint were spent in Tashkent, thus making him a Central Asian figure. This was prior to his sojourn in Tabriz.
11 Barbara Kellner-Heinkele, Berlin, 'Crimean Tatars and Nogay scholars of the eighteenth Century', in *Muslim Culture in Russia and Central Asia from the eighteenth to twentieth centuries*, Berlin Islamkundliche Untersushungen, edited by Kemper. M., vol. 1, 1996, pp. 279–96, see, in particular, pp. 288–9 and 291, 293, 294 and 295.
12 Qarasu, in all likelihood, is the town now spelt Karasu, in recent Atlases, a town which is situated in Anatolia, on the Black Sea coast of Turkey, facing the southern Ukraine and the Crimean peninsula. This place name is also to be found in Central Asia.
13 The full title of this work, in Arabic, is *Talfīq al-Akhbār wa-talqīh al-āthār fī waqā'i' Qazān wa-Bulghār wa-mulūk al-Tatār*, published by Karimiyya wa-Husayniyya Press, Orenburg, Russia, 1908. The title of this work indicates *the piecing together of reports and accounts and the consideration of the significance (for the minds of men) of what is left from history and the deeds which occurred in Qazān and Bulghār and amongst the Tatar kings*. The title is not without a suggestion of some fabrication (*talfīq*) in these past accounts. Ramz¯'s great work in Arabic is a vast compendium of source material. Short biographies of Sufis and scholars abound, although almost entirely reserved for important men from Tatarstan, Kazan in particular, and a few from Daghestan and Astrakhan. Their years of study took them to Central Asia, to Istanbul, to Cairo and to the holy places in Arabia. The Crimean Tatars are wholly neglected.
14 'Ghalbāw¯', 'Ghulbāw¯', 'Ghilbāw¯', is an unidentified Arabic *nisba*.
15 For more details about Babadag and its history see the notes to my Chapter 6, which is particularly concerned with this locality as the alleged burial spot of Sari Saltik /Saltuq.
16 The title of Selim Chazbijewicz's book is *Tatarzy Krymscy, Walka o narod i wolna ojczyzna,* 'The Crimean Tatars, a fight for a nationhood and a free homeland'. It is published as a supplement to the journal, *Rocznika Tatarow Polskich*, the Annual Yearbook of the Polish Tatars, and it is published by Oficyna Wydawnicza LIKON Poznan-Wrzesnia, 2001. The book covers the entire recent history of the Crimean Tatars including their extermination and expulsion and their resettlement.

17 Riza Gulum, *Rituals, Artistic, Cultural and Social Activity*, in *The Tatars of Crimea, Return to the Homeland*, edited by Edward A. Allworth, Duke University Press, Durham and London, 1998, pp. 84–98.
18 The son who was granted asylum by Vytautas was given the title of 'Prince of Glina'. In the early 1400s, he was the lord of many estates around Poltava, in the Ukraine. By the sixteenth century the family had embraced Christianity. In the 1520s Princess Elena Glinskay became the wife of Vassily III, Grand Prince of Moscow, and she gave birth to Ivan the Terrible.
19 The name of *'Aziz,* in the story appears in localities in the Crimea near to Bakhchisarai within the extensive archaeological site of Eski Yurt settlement, which dates back to the fourteenth century. These include Qarq/Qirq Azizler one of the oldest and the largest of the Muslim cemeteries This contains what is believed to be the tomb of a Companion of the Prophet, and also mausoleums close to a Sufi *tekke* and to sundry tombs of saints which are called *azizes*, burial places of holy people. In the story, here, the burial place of Mamai and the *dervish* is located near Kaffa (Feodosia).
20 The story translated here is called Kurhan Mamaja (*legenda starokrymska*), rendered into Polish, by Maciej Gierych. It is published in Rocznik Muzulmanski, year 4, tome 3 1416 H/1995, published by the Instytut Muzulmanski, ul. Pienkowskiego 4/9 in 02-679,Warsaw, pp. 73–5. I am exceedingly grateful to Mrs Z. Everett for her help in the translation of an English version of this Polish text, based upon the old Crimean Tatar legend. It is of an unknown date. It incorporates a popular account, Kurhan Mamaja, revealing the former role and power of the *dervishes* in Crimean Tatar society.

Conclusion

1 Vitaliy Naumkin, *On Stabilization in Areas Neighbouring on Chechnya, Central Asia and the Caucasus*, Center for Social and Political Studies (Sweden), Database in Russian and English, 1st November 2003, pp. 7–8. Natanja J. Delong-Bas, in her recent book, *Wahhabi Islam from Revival and Reform to Global Jihad*, I. B. Tauris, Oxford and New York, 2004, has drawn attention to the far from hostile view of Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab to soundly based 'Qur'anic-based' Sufism (see in particular pp. 83–90). On the other hand, the *Rafida* sects (see pp. 87–90), were, in Ibn Wahhab's view, unquestionably infidels. On p. 87, she remarks, 'he believed that their practices violated monotheism to the point where he declared that they had rejected Islam altogether'. Scholastic Islam, and not only the Wahhabis, would seemingly view, as heresy, much 'Popular Sufism' still to be found in parts of South-Eastern Europe, a tradition which is, in any way, indebted to so-called 'pantheistic' Sufism, or to those influences which are attributable to Hurufism. They would find themselves, as scholars in the faith, in full agreement with Muhammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab. Hence, Bosnian Sufism contrasts markedly with that which existed amongst the Albanians and the Kizilbash. It is to be doubted whether much of the Hurufi tradition has survived the age of Enver Hoxha in Albania.
2 Prizren saw some of the worst destruction of Serb religious buildings during the recent outbreak of hostilities between Albanians and Serbs. One recalls the destruction of Islamic properties and monuments in Bosnia and Kosovo. Here the picture mirrors what had happened previously and it has provoked outrage which has been widely reported. According to *Orthodox News*, vol. 17, no. 3, Spring/Eastertide, 2004, Bungay, Suffolk, p. 1, headlined,

> 'The Shame of the United Nations, The Destruction of Kosovo'; Prizren was once home to 8,000 Serbs. Recently only about 60 elderly Serbs remained in the city which was the scene of a wave of unprecedented violence and barbarism on 17 March. Albanian mobs set about the destruction of all Christian sites including the bishop's house, the Sts Kyril and Methody Seminary, St George's Cathedral, the medieval Holy Virgin of Lyevish Cathedral, six other churches and the Holy

Archangels Monastery from which the monks were only evacuated at the last moment. Sufi buildings have also been destroyed and defaced by insensitive Arab-financed reconstruction, repair and redecorating since the wars in both Bosnia and Kosovo.

3 F. W. Hasluck, op. cit., vol. II, p. 525.

4 See the article on *Prizren*, in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd edition, Brill, Leiden, p. 340.

5 C. H. Imber, *Malāmatiyya*, the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd edition, Brill, Leiden, p. 226.

6 The 'divine' 'Ali is extensively discussed in Irène Mélikoff's, *Hadji Bektash, un Mythe et ses Avatars*, op. cit., and in several of her other books and articles which are listed in her Bibliography. She has also discussed the subject further in her article, *Hasluck's study of the Bektashis and its Contemporary Significance*, in *Archaeology and Anthropology and Heritage in the Balkans and Anatolia, The life and times of F. W. Hasluck. 1878–1920*, edited by David Shankland, the Isis Press, Istanbul, 2004, vol. 1, pp. 297–307.

7 Osman Myderrizi, *Dorëshkrime të vjetra shqip te panjohura të Gjirokastres*, *Buletini Universitet Shtateror të Tiranes, Seria Shakencet Shoqerore*, 2, 1959, pp. 159–89. Also, see pp. 178–80, and 184. Representative examples of Hoxhe Dob's verses are printed in the selection of predominantly Bektashi poems, published and edited by Hajdar Salihu's *Poezia e Bejtexhinjve*, Prishtinë, Kosovo, 1987.

8 Ibid., pp. 280–6, together with a short biography of the poet largely drawn from Osman Myderrizi's publications.

9 Ibid., pp. 103–21, especially the sections entitled *Karakteri alevi i besimit*, *Mendimi panteist*, and *Teoria e metempsikozës*.

10 Baba Rexheb therefore assigns a subordinate role to Hurufism in the Bektashiyya.

11 *Imamuddin Nesimiu*, in Baba Rexhebi's *Misticizma Islame dhe Bektashizma*, pp. 216–27. See p. 218, especially, where the author qualifies, and all but disputes, the allegation that Hurufism, and the theosophy of the Bektashiyya, are inseparable, the one from the other. However, he admits that Hurufism is an important cultural, especially poetical, influence, within his sect, which, he insists, is 'Orthodox Islam', the doctrine of monism (*wahdat al-wujūd*) being widely held, the poet, Naim Frashëri, having been a noteworthy exponent. On p. 79 of *The Mysticism of Islam and Bektashism,* by Baba Rexheb(i), Naples, 1984, the author does not flinch from use of the word 'pantheism'. He describes *Mutlak Wahdat* as corresponding 'to the Western Concept of Pantheism'.

12 A report on the influence of Iran in the Balkans, written by Nathalie Clayer and Alxandre Popović may be read in, *A new era for Sufi trends in the Balkans*, *Newsletter of the International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World* (*ISIM*), Leiden, no. 3, July 1999, p. 32. Nathalie Clayer characterizes the theology of Bektashism as 'pantheistic', and she notes that a belief in metempsychosis is widespread. She also notes that the Tiranë *tekke* was reopened in the Spring of 1991 and that a Bektashi conference was convened on the 21st June, in 1992. It was then decided that new *tekkes* should be opened, and older and closed *tekkes* should be reopened. Financial assistance from the Bektashis in the United States was sought. At the same time, in Albania itself, the noted writer, Ismael Kadaré, had alleged that *Only in Albania's Christian past could the nation find its identity and play its role as a 'European Community' within that continent*. This view of religion and of Europe was rejected by all the Sufi brotherhoods in Albania. The Bektashis were at the forefront amongst those who have sought entry into the new Europe.

On the other hand, Albania's Sunni majority have been supported with funding from the Middle East and there has been a marked revival also within the Catholic communities. The Bible based churches have likewise become extremely active and have had success. To the latter, the verses of Hoxhe Dob would seem to be blasphemous, wholly

'unscriptural', and theologically abhorrent, especially metempsychosis, contradicted, as it is, by many Bible passages. If the poems' intentions were not understood, as seems very likely, they would be received with a mixture of bewilderment and utter incomprehension. Yet more extreme in its heterodoxy is the neo-mysticism of the Albanian Muslim, Hamid Gjylbegaj. In his beliefs, all have within them the opportunity to become 'Sons of God', see H. T. Norris, *Islam in the Balkans*, Hurst, London, 1993, pp. 192–5.

Appendix 1 The heyday of the Bektashi 'tekkes' in Iraq

1 The text which follows is a free translation of only a part of the original Arabic text. It is included in my book in order to illustrate the presence of the Bektashiyya in an important, partly Shi'ite, Arab country where the Sufi order established itself in the major centres of al-Najaf, Karbalā', and elsewhere, centres which were of central importance to the Bektashiyya in Albania, the latter being the principal centre for the brotherhood in South-eastern Europe.
2 See *Islam in the Balkans*, Hurst, pp. 176–7, where further information is to be found, relevant to this translated article.
3 The author, Dr al-Turayhi, published his article in *The Voice of the Turkoman*, a special number in *Hurrīyat al-'Irāq*, no. 13, May 2003, p. 9. I am very grateful to my friend and colleague, Dr Muhammad Mufaku al-Arna'ut, of the Āl al-Bayt University of al-Mafraq, Jordan, for sending me a copy of the Arabic text of this exceedingly rare article.
4 One or two other *tekkes* are unmentioned, although they are listed in F. W. Hasluck, *Islam and Christianity under the Sultans*, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 514.
5 See *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New Edition', vol. 5, Brill, Leiden, 1986, *Kilidj Arslan I, II, III*', by C. Cahen, pp. 103–4.
6 *Encyclopaedia of Islam, new edition*, ibid., vol. 3, *Hisn Kay*, by S. Ory, pp. 306–8.
7 Passing reference to these Iraqi *tekkes* may be found in standard authoritative works on the Bektashiyya, for example, John Kingsley Birge, *The Bektashi Order of Dervishes*, London, Luzac, 1937 and 1965.

Appendix 2 The *dīwān* of the Mamluk Sultan, Qansawh al-Ghawri and Nesimi

1 The original Arabic text of this story about Nesimi and the Mass may be found in Y. W. Yusufian. 'al-Nas¯m¯ al-Shah¯d al-Halab¯', in *al-Mashriq*, Beirut, September 1920, pp. 706–11.

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Three books, and series of books, of special relevance to the subject of this book

1 Alexandre Popović and Gilles Veinstein, *Les Voies d'Allah, Les Orders Mystiques dans le Monde Musulman des Origins à aujourd'hui*, Fayard, Paris, 1996. This work on Sufism is of a direct relevance in this book in view of its authoritative contributions many of which are especially relevant. These cover many aspects of 'Popular Sufism' in Eastern Europe, of especial note is the *Petit dictionnaire du soufisme et des confréries*, by Nathalie Clayer and Thierry Zarcone, pp. 615–36.

2 Celia Hawksworth, Muriel Heppell and Harry Norris, editors, *Religious Quest and National Identity in the Balkans*, Studies in Russia and East Europe, Palgrave in Association with the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University College, London, Chippenham, 2001.

This book offers a complete survey of the religious background of the societies in South-eastern Europe, from the earliest times up to the present day. It explains the layers of their beliefs, their religious politics and their national mythologies, as well as concentrating upon the Orthodox Christian faith and on Islam, in particular, including studies on Bosnian Islam and Islam amongst the Tatars and Turks in Romania. The chapter which has been contributed by John Norton, who was the Director of the Centre of Turkish Studies in the University of Durham, is probably the most recent and authoritative study on the Bektashis to have appeared and to have been published, in English, in recent years.

3 The series of books, published by the International Center for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations, in Sofia, entitled *Muslim Culture in Bulgarian Lands*' (*Mysylmanskata Kultura po Bulgarskiite Zemii*). Here is a unique contribution to the study of 'Popular Sufism' and of recent research into its varied manifestations in Bulgaria. The series has been edited by Dr Rossitsa Gradeva, together with her colleagues, who work in the Institute of Balkan Studies, Sofia, and also in the city's principal libraries and museums and university departments. This long term project, which covers the entire field of inter-faith relations in Bulgaria, has, over many years, been actively supported by the Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations (CSIC), at Selly Oaks, Birmingham. A whole range of topics relating to 'Popular Sufism', in Bulgaria, is to be found here. The articles, some of them pioneer, are in Bulgarian. However, there is an English *résumé* to each; some *résumés* are extensive. The volumes of collected papers and articles are published by IMIR, Sofia, and further details as to how volumes may be acquired can be obtained from the Centre for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations, in Sofia, the Bulgarian Embassy in London.

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