The iconography of Bektashiism
A survey of themes and symbolism in clerical costume, liturgical objects and pictorial art
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1. HISTORICAL PROLEGOMENA

Ever since the beginning of the Turkish conquest and settlement of Anatolia in the eleventh century, the proportion of the region’s Sunnî population to its Shi‘î population has been difficult to establish for any period of its history. The Shi‘î segment has often been qualified as heterodox, presumably in differentiation from the orthodox or Sunnî segment of the population. In present-day Turkey, the various sects concerned, the Tahtacs, the Çepnis, the Abdals, the Bektashis, and the broad mass of Alevîs who do not belong to any of the groups mentioned are normally referred to by the generic term Kızılbaş by those who do not belong to these sects. The terms most widely used by the members of the sects to refer to themselves are Alevi (Aliyán) or Çafirî. The first term points to their belief in the Divinity of the Imam ‘Ali. This conviction is the cornerstone of the Alevi belief systems and makes these sects stand out as present-day representatives of the gülâ’î traditions in Islam. The term Çafirî refers to the presumed conformity of religious belief and practice with the mezheb of the Imam Ja’far al-Sādiq, to whom one of the most important texts in use among the Alevi sects in Turkey and elsewhere, the Buyruk, is attributed.

The Anatolian Shi‘îtes were persecuted in the early sixteenth century; the Ottoman authorities perceived them as an internal threat to the stability of the Empire because of the numerous indications of their loyalty to the monarch of the Safavid state, Şah İsmâ’il. One effect of these persecutions seems to have been that Alevî Islam functioned increasingly within the framework of the Bektashi order. The origins of the Bektashi order are obscure and our knowledge of its history is fragmentary. Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli, the supposed founder of the order, is thought to have been a descendent of the Imam Mûsâ al-Kâzîm, through Mûsâ’s son İbrahim. His birth date and the date of his death are uncertain but have been computed from chronograms as 646/1248 and 738/1337. In the writings attributed to Hacı Bektaş which have come down to us, nothing suggests Shi‘î leanings. This would seem to point to a shift in the theological orientation of Bektashiism in a later period, probably as the result of the incorporation of elements of gülâ’î teaching into the belief system of the Bektashi sect.

For seemingly administrative purposes, the Bektashi sect was treated as a sâﬁ order by the Ottoman administration. According to Bektashi tradition, this order under Sersem ‘Ali Sultan (d. 977/1569-70) became a separate centralized organisation which controlled a network of tekkes over the Empire. To what degree the rise of the Bektashi order can be attributed to its links with the Janissaries is a matter still open for investigation. Its fate in 1826, when the order was suppressed following the destruction of the Janissaries in that year, is normally attributed to the connection between both entities. This view, however, has been challenged recently and alternative, more complex explanations have been advanced. About two decades later, around 1850, the Bektashis could manifest themselves again; tekkes were rebuilt or restored, and the order went through a moderate revival in the following decades, recovering part of its glory but never regaining its past prominence.

Inside Bektashiism, a situation of protracted conflict existed, and in fact still exists, between its two branches: the Mucered or Babagân branch and the Çelebi or Sofiyân branch. The former knows the vow of celibacy for its clerus, as is indicated by its name (mucered: celibate), while a de facto prohibition against unmarried clergy exists in the latter.

The Çelebi branch is led by the presumed descendants of Hacı Bektaş and Kadıncık Ana, also known as Fatima Bâci or Fatima Nuriye, the daughter of one of the notables of an Oghuz tribe. According to an account in one of the versions of the Vilâyet-Nâmeh of Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli, Kadıncık Ana became pregnant after having drunk from the water with which Hacı Bektaş had performed his ablutions and which contained some drops of blood from his nose. The heads of the Çelebi branch claim to be descendants of the two children she bore later.

According to Bektashi tradition, the introduction of celibacy for bahas goes back to Balım Sultan (d. 925/1519). This innovation is held to mark the historical
beginning of the Mürzred branch, which became the dominant branch of Bektashiism known as the Bektashi order. The subsequent heads of the order, with the title of Dede Baba (grandfather), resided in the central dergâh of the order near Kirşehir. The candidates for this supreme leadership position were normally selected by an electoral college of unmarried members of the order with the rank of Dede (see below, note 76) and confirmed in office by imperial ferman 30.

After the closure of the tekkês and the prohibition of the şâfi orders in Turkey in 1925, Bektashiism continued to be adhered to by a sizeable number of people and liturgical meetings continue to be held semi-clandestinely in private homes till the present day 32. Outside Turkey, Bektashi communities still exist in the countries of southeastern Europe 33 and in the U.S.A. 34.

2. THE CONTEXT OF THE ICONOGRAPHY: ELEMENTS OF DOGMA AND RITUAL 35

Bektashiism is not a single consistent and codified cosmological system with a fixed set of religious practices. Nevertheless, the various clusters of beliefs and practices which have made up Bektashiism at different places and times have several elements in common 36. These elements are largely shared with Alevi Islam and practices which have made up Bektashiism at different

progress. When he was eventually admitted, after announcing himself not as the Prophet but as the poor one (al-fâkîr), he saw a gathering of 39 people, including the Twelve Imams, his daughter Fâtima, and his wife Khâdiya, presided over by the Imam 'Ali. Muhammad then proceeded to ask about the nature of the curious gathering and was told that this was the Assembly of the Forty. When he replied by observing that there were only 39 persons present, it was pointed out to him that their number was forty because of the spiritual presence of Selman-i Pâk (Fâris-i), the aid and companion of the Imam 'Ali (see below). Thereafter, 'Ali took a grape from the table in front of him, pressed it, and began to fill the glasses on the table with its juice from which those present drank 41. Then, intoxicated, the party rose and started to dance, moving around in a circle with each of the participants turning simultaneously around his own axis. The main liturgical gatherings of the Bektashis and the Alevis are basically dramatic re-enactments of the Kirklar meclisi 42.

On these occasions both sexes are present and mix to a considerable degree. Rakî or wine 43 and food are ceremoniously consumed and ritual dances are performed. With some Bektashi groups, a live white rooster is brought in at a certain point in the ritual to be blessed by the celebrating Baba. The animal is subsequently sacrificed outside the meeting hall and prepared to be eaten later. The Bektashi groups who practice this custom consider the white rooster as the most precious animal for sacrifice, which they refer to as Cebrait kurbani, the sacrifice of Gabriel. On the symbolic level, the sacrifice of the rooster, indeed, seems to be perceived as the sacrifice of the Archangel Gabriel himself 44. With the Babagân branch, however, the sacrifice of a rooster is not part of the standard liturgical ritual. Nevertheless, the idea of the rooster as a symbol for the Archangel Gabriel has sometimes found a concrete expression in Bektashi art (see below).

Additional evidence for the Divinity of 'Ali was provided by the events surrounding his death. After having predicted his own death, he informed his sons Hasan and Hüseyin that a veiled man would come to the house after his death. This stranger would load 'Ali's corpse on a camel and lead it away for burial. He prohibited his sons from intervening, and instructed them not to follow the veiled man or to ask him questions. When, indeed, the predicted events took place, Hasan and Hüseyin could not restrain themselves and eventually ran after the man to find out who he was. When they caught up with him, they insisted upon knowing his identity. Then, the stranger lifted his veil and showed his face: it was 'Ali himself, miraculously carrying his own body to the grave 45.

Since 'Ali is believed to have been the manifestation of God on earth, he is held to be the nahib-i risâla, i.e. the originator of the Qur'ân, while Muhammad is referred to as the nâtâg-i risâla, i.e. the mouthpiece of 'Ali. A different way of formulating this relationship, found in gulâr texts, is that the exoteric (zâhir) aspect of the Divine came into the world with Muhammad,
while in its esoteric (bâţin) aspect the Divine is identical with 'Ali. In other words: Muḥammad and 'Ali are both manifestations of the same Divine reality. In this way, Allāh, Muḥammad and 'Ali form a sort of Trinity (referred to in Alevi Islam as the üçer) manifesting one and the same Truth (haqīqa), and thought of as a miraculous unity. In everyday speech, the presence of this idea of miraculous unity becomes clear from the fact that the names Muḥammad and 'Ali are never used separately but are always pronounced as one name: Muḥemedali. Similarly, in the salawāt formulas in Arabic which are said by Bektashi at the end of certain prayers, the part wa-'alâ al-i Muḥammad (and on the relatives of Muḥammad) is understood as wa-'alâ 'Ali-Muḥammad (and on Alimuhammed), i.e. on Muḥammad and 'Ali as the same manifestation of and as identical with the Divine, the ultimate Truth, the hakikat.

To go through the gateway of hakikat, i.e. to experience this Truth from the inside, one has first to pass through the three gates of seriat, tarikat and marjâyat. These stages are related to the four basic cosmic elements, water (seriat), air (tarikat), fire (marjâyat) and earth (hakikat), and to the four levels of being (ervâh) in Man: mineral (ruh-i cismani), vegetable (ruh-i nebatti), animal (ruh-i haywani) and human (ruh-i insanî). When all four ervâh are annihilated and replaced by the ruh-i safî (the pure spirit) the stage of the Perfect Man (insan-i kāmil) has been reached. In order to reach this stage and to go through the Four Gates, one needs a guide, a mürsî, who himself has reached perfection, the stage of insan-i kâmil.

The potential for perfection is present in every human being, since God (Muḥammad-'Ali) is present in every human being. The Qur'ānic passages cited in support of this belief are the ones which are used to the same effect in some of the mystical traditions in Sunni Islam, namely Qur'ān 53:9 ('fa-kana qab, qav)'sawân aw adnî', and Qur'ān 50:16 ('wa-nahnu aqrab ilayhi min ħabîl al-warâfî; We are nearer to him (i.e. Man) than his jugular vein). In addition, Bektashi tracts also refer to Qur'ān 95:3 ('laqad khalaqnâ al-insân fi ahsanî taqwîmî'; We have indeed created Man in the best of forms), notably in support of the belief that the signs of the Divine presence in Man are outwardly manifest in the shapes of a number of Arabic letters (the best of forms, because they were used to write down the Revelation) found in the human face and in the human body. Moreover, certain parts of the face and the body are identified with the ehl-i beyt (see below) who were equally the best of forms, as are the letters of their names. By substituting these letters for numbers according to fixed rules, another level of hidden meanings is opened up pointing towards the Divine presence in Man and underscoring the unity of Allāh, Muḥammad and 'Ali (see below, section 4, for examples). He who knows the location of the letters and their hidden meanings has gained access to a cosmos in which all of reality is manifest: he knows God in accordance with the tradition 'man 'arafa nafsahu fa-qad 'arafa rabbahu (He who knows himself knows his Lord).

Because these signs of the Divine are found in the human face, it is held sacrilegious to touch the ground with one's face in prayer as the Sunnî do. In fact, each human being is a mosque and each human face is a mihrâb, while the mihrâb is the face (the vechi kamâl: the face of perfection) of one's mürsî. In him the outer signs of perfection are matched by inner perfection. For his disciples, therefore, he is the kîble, which is normally located more precisely as the site between his eyebrows. For this reason, Bektashis equal ritual prayer (namaz) with paying visits to one's mürsî, involving niyaz (see below, note 83). At the same time, God is everywhere, in every animate and inanimate being. Such and similar beliefs are found frequently in Bektashi writings, notably in the poetical nêfes (hymns), and clearly demonstrate the pantheistic world view which is so characteristic of the central tradition in Bektashiism.

Concerning the Caliphate, the Bektashi view is the common Shi'ite belief: 'Ali was the rightful Caliph and his rightful successors are the Imams recognized by Twelver Shi'ism. The three Sunni caliphs preceding 'Ali and the Umayyad pretenders, particularly Mu'âwiya and Yazîd, are cursed (tebellâ) on whatever occasion presents itself.

The killing of Hûseyin at Kerbela is commemorated yearly with a ten or twelve-day period of fasting and mourning. In the eyes of many Bektashis and Alevis, the Sunni Muslims are in a sense the spiritual heirs of those who are responsible for the killing of Hûseyin and have become carriers of a sort of original sin in consequence. For this reason it is sometimes deemed better by Bektashis and Alevis to limit interaction with Sunni Muslims as much as possible.

The people of the house of the Prophet, the ehl-i beyt, to the contrary, are revered and venerated. In the most prevalent Bektashi conception, the ehl-i beyt are restricted to Muḥammad, 'Ali, Fâṭima, their sons Hasan and Hûseyin, and the nine later Imams. Muḥammad, 'Ali, Fâṭima, Hasan and Hûseyin are collectively referred to as the Five (beşler). The ehl-i beyt are venerated (tevelâ) in daily conversation as well as in the setting of the tekke. Tevellâ and tebellâ are obligations imposed upon the Bektashi at the time of his initiation.

In addition, Bektashis revere the ondört ma'sunu pâk, the Fourteen Pure Innocents, and the onvedi kemër, the Seventeen Girded Ones. The former group consists of children of Imams martyred in their childhood, who are considered as special manifestations of God. The latter group are the companions of 'Ali who were initiated by him. The first of these seventeen was Selmân-i Pâk, who is also considered as...
being one of the family of the Prophet in accordance with the Prophetic tradition saying ‘Selman is of us, the ahl al-bayt’ (Salmān minnā ahl al-bayt)\(^{60}\). He was an aid and companion of ‘Ali in the world and is believed to be his helper in the hereafter, as is the case with the Archangel Gabriel. The besler, Selman and Gabriel are collectively referred to as yediler (the Seven).

In Bektashi poetry and prose, numerous indications can be found testifying to the belief that Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli was ‘Ali (i.e. God) in a different guise\(^{61}\). Numerous miracles were performed by him, of which many are on record in the Vilayer-Nameh. One of the best known and most frequently related miracles concerns Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli’s struggle with the dervishes of Rūm, who tried to prevent him from coming to their lands from Khurasan. He solved this problem by going to Rūm transformed as a dove\(^{62}\). Later, after changing into a human being again, he was met by one of them, Karaca Ahmed Sultan, who rode a lion and used snakes as whips\(^{63}\). Thereupon, Hacı Bektaş mounted a rock (a wall, according to another tradition) and ordered it to move, which happened immediately. In this way, Hacı Bektaş demonstrated his superiority over Karaca Ahmed Sultan, who could only exercise control over animate beings, while he demonstrated his capacity to rule the inanimate world as well.

Apart from some Hurufi influenced treatises on the requirements of the Four Gateways\(^{64}\), Bektashi texts in general are relatively silent on points of social ethics. Nevertheless, Bektashis and Alevis have a common conception concerning the minimal moral requirements necessary for the maintenance of an ordered society. These requirements are imposed upon the initiate during the initiation ceremony when the baba invokes him: ‘eline, diline, beline sag ol’ (be master of your hand, your tongue, your loins/seed)\(^{65}\). In this invocation, the basics of Bektashi/Alevi ethics are summarized: do not take what is not yours, do not speak untruthful or defiling words, do not commit adultery. An infringement of these moral precepts may lead to sanctions, varying from penitence to (temporary) excommunication and to the penalty of death\(^{66}\).

3. Symbolism in Clerical Costume and Liturgical Objects

Both married as well as unmarried dervishes and babas of the Miçered branch of Bektashism\(^{67}\) wore the same clerical costume (plate 1) which nowadays is seen only in the tekkes in Yugoslavia and in the tekke in the U.S.A. Many parts of this costume have a symbolic dimension since they refer to elements of Bektashi teaching. For this reason, the religious garb of the dervishes and the babas should be discussed as part of the iconography of the sect. This is also the case with the liturgical objects used in the meydan\(^{68}\) and for some of the common household objects in use in the tekke. In addition, some of these symbols may also be found in the architecture of a tekke, examples of which are mentioned below.

Most characteristic is the headgear, the so-called Hüseyni taş or Huseyni stone. It is made of felt and has twelve segments, symbolizing the Twelve Imams. Rarer are the seven-sided and the four-sided taş. In the case of the latter, the four sections are said to symbolize the Four Gateways. The seven-sided taş symbolizes the yediler mentioned above. In all cases, a button or knob stands in the center of the top, symbolizing the unity of Allāh, Muḥammad and ‘Ali\(^{69}\). When not worn, the taş is placed on a kavukluk. This can be a stand but is normally a shelf, hung on the wall, specifically designed to carry the taş (plate 2). Around the neck, dervishes and babas wear the teslim taş, the stone of surrender, to symbolize the merger of human individuality in the Eternal Truth\(^{70}\). Only babas wear a similar, but much larger stone, named palîhenk\(^{71}\), on the girdle. This stone is sometimes enamelled and inlaid with gold and (semi-) precious stones\(^{72}\).

The girdle, worn by dervishes and babas alike, is often woven in colors and patterns reflecting the style of the region of its maker or its bearer. The girdle should go around the waist seven times, symbolizing the yediler. Attached to the girdle is the cilbend, a leather case embroidered or dyed with characteristic Bektashi symbols. The kambariye is worn over the girdle. This consists of a plaited rope, normally of three strings of wool with a stone in the shape and size of a small egg at its end. It symbolizes the lead-rope of ‘Ali’s mount Dündül, which was carried around the waist by ‘Ali’s groom Kamber when Dündül was unridden\(^{73}\). Unmarried babas distinguished themselves from the married ones by the pierced earlobe of the right ear. In the hole, a variety of earrings, sometimes in the shape of a teslim taş, were worn\(^{74}\). Ideally, however, a silver decoration in the shape of a horse-shoe was carried as a sign of servitude similar to the servitude of Dündül\(^{75}\).

Dervishes as well as babas also wear a sort of sleeveless vest, a haydariye, with the armholes shaped like the letter ‘a.vn (for ‘Ali). Only babas, however, wear two strings of seven crystal beads along the fronts of their haydariye. These beads, which symbolize the ondirt ma’sumu pâk, are made of the transparant necefi taş. The outfit is normally completed with a backscratcher (plate 3), a walking or resting stick and a rosary (tesbih) of forty-one beads\(^{76}\). These items may be decorated with Bektashi symbols as is normally also the case with the tebers (axes), nefirs (horns), incense burners, letter openers and keşkilüs (begging bowls) of Bektashi provenance. This makes it possible to distinguish between such items of Bektashi origin and similar items used by adherents of other şuft orders.

The keşkil can be made of a gourd or a large coconut, or can be carved out of wood. It was normally attached to a chain worn around the neck or the
shoulder, or was directly attached to the belt. The nefir is usually made from the horn of a bull or a cow. In the tekkes, this instrument was used to call the dervishes to the refectory. Nowadays, it is only found hanging as a wall decoration (see plate 4).

In Sunnī Islam this invocation of Mularμad, Fāṭima and the Twelve Imams, all of which is an invocation for divine blessing and salvation here (plate 6).

It has an inscription around the edge of coffee cups.

Cups with matching plates in the shape of a teslim tasr (plate 7) were exclusively produced by the Mūcīred branch. These symbols derive their force from their feedback to this symbolic content of the architecture of Bektashi tekkes, notably in the meydan where most of the liturgical meetings were held. Several of the symbols found in this pictorial art were also found on objects in their turn may be found decorating the walls of türbes as well as in cemeteries. They can be identified easily as Bektashi because the upper part is shaped as a Hūsaynī tāc.

4. THE PICTORIAL REPRESENTATION OF BELIEF: COLOR, SHAPE AND MEANING

The images and the objects pointing towards episodes and elements of Bektashi tradition and cosmology were exclusively produced by the Mūcīred branch. In the case of the images, they were normally found decorating the walls of türbes of Bektashi saints and of the tekke, notably in the meydan where most of the liturgical meetings were held. Several of the symbols found in this pictorial art were also found on objects with a decorative or a practical function outside the liturgical context. At present, these images and objects are preserved in a number of museums in Turkey. Others are in private hands or still decorate the walls of tekkes (plate 7) in Yugoslavia and Greece. A number of images of Bektashi provenance and examples of calligraphy have been published.

In conjunction, these published and unpublished images have allowed me to determine which themes occur the most frequently in Bektashi pictorial art. At the same time, these images appear to contain references to elements of belief which are shared by all Bektashis, thus explaining the frequency with which these images occur.

In a sense, the images epitomize the central elements of Bektashi teaching. They confront the Bektashi with some of the essentials of Bektashi belief. Thus, these symbols derive their force from their feedback to this belief, i.e. they are important since they stand for what is important in the Bektashi belief-system which, in its turn, retains its importance by dint of the force of the symbols.

Most of the Bektashi images presented below can also be found on the walls of the communal liturgical
meeting place (cem evi) in an Alevi village and even in private homes. In all these different contexts, their function would seem to be multiple: viz. esthetical, as decoration, social, as a (semi-) public statement of religious identity, and psychological, as a visual representation of the essentials of Bektashi/Alevi belief.

The images may be divided broadly into three categories: purely figurative, purely calligraphic, and compositions containing both figurative and calligraphic elements. The techniques of execution are: painting upon paper, wood or glass, fretwork, embroidery (rare), and bits of straw glued to a wooden base (very rare).

The number of images and objects which has survived to the present is surprisingly small, considering the importance of Bektashiism and the large number of Bektashi tekkes in the Ottoman Empire. Much of this part of the sect's heritage must have been lost in or shortly after the suppression of 1826, later during the Russian-Turkish and the Balkan Wars and in the First World War. The prohibition of the sufî orders and the closure of the tekkes in Turkey in 1925 could only have accelerated this loss. These events explain, at least in part, why some of the most important examples of Bektashi pictorial art are found in areas not much affected by these wars and other events, such as Kosova in Yugoslavia and Thessalia in Greece, where Bektashiism is a living force till the present-day, thus protecting these images from disappearance and destruction.

Many Bektashi images consist of two halves, one being the mirror image of the other. This characteristic constitutes a symbolic reference to the zâhir (exoteric) and the bâtin (esoteric) aspects of being. When the name of 'Ali is written as a mirror image (cf. plate 8), it is nothing less than a statement of the central credo of Bektashiism: 'Ali is God. This plate contains also an allusion to the belief that 'Ali (i.e. God) manifests himself in the human face, namely, the faces in the 'awns of 'Ali: the shape of the 'awn follows the contours of the human eye, while the eyes are identified with the Imam Hasan (the right eye) and the Imam Hüseyin (the left eye). The central piece is the Bektashi teslim taş: the symbol of the abandonment of human individuality in the Eternal Truth which is the unity of Allâh, Muhammad and 'Ali. The same idea of 'Ali and Muhammad being one and identical with God is hidden in the numerical value of the letters forming these names: their sum is 202, a number which is equal to the sum of the letters râ' and hâ' forming the word rabb, i.e. Lord, i.e. God. Calligraphically, the unity of Muhammed and 'Ali is also expressed in the element crowning, as it were, the two alfís: both names are written intertwined, the 'ayn being identical with the hâ'.

Apart from a pictorial representation of the tradition of 'Ali carrying his own corpse to his grave and his metamorphosis as a lion, this plate also depicts 'Ali's legendary two-pointed sword, Dhu'l-Fiqâr, as an integral element of the calligraphy. In this plate, the alfî as well as the yâ' have the shape of a two-pointed sword which is also carried on the back of the camel. In Bektashi iconography, the letter yâ' in the name 'Ali almost always has the shape of Dhu'l-Fiqâr. In this shape it occurs as well in calligraphic renderings of the human face, where it often represents the moustache, as e.g. in the plate reproduced here (plate 9). The plate itself expresses the belief, mentioned above, that each human being is a mosque and that each human face is a mimâr.

Dhu'l-Fiqâr is also visible in the fretwork in the shape of the Hüseyni taş, containing the names of the beşler (plate 10). This sword was obtained by Muhammad as booty from the battle of Badr and presented to 'Ali. In early Twelver Shi'ism, the issue of who possessed this sword became part of the larger issue of claims for divinely sanctioned authority. Eventually, Dhu'l-Fiqâr became the ultimate Alid symbol, depicted in Shi'a iconography everywhere. For Bektashis and Alevis, the sword is the symbolic representation of 'Ali's supreme power. He alone is associated with the legendary sword, as is made explicit in the formula lâ fata llam 'Ali, lâ safi llam Dhu'l-Fiqâr: there is no hero like 'Ali, there is no sword like Dhu'l-Fiqâr. This formula is pronounced, among other occasions, during the initiation ceremony by the initiate and seems to be the Bektashi equivalent of the Sunnî şehadet. The text is found in the form of framed calligraphy hanging on the walls of tekkes, engraved on tebers and on liturgical objects, and as a monumental inscription on Bektashi shrines.

Apart from the symbolic representation of the Twelve Imams in the twelve segments of the Hüseyni taş, we find their names in composite calligraphies and also engraved in liturgical objects like the hawd shown above. Much rarer is the physical representation of the Imams. In the tableau reproduced here (plate 11), made of strips of straw glued to a wooden base, the Imams are dressed as Bektashi babas with the Hüseyni taş and the teslim taş. They carry tebers, apart from the two in front who carry a Turkish banner. The tableau contains a supplication for help (madad) from the Divine Trinity (Allâh, Muhammad and 'Ali) in the upper half of the circle and invokes the names of Fâtima, Hasan and Hüseyin in the lower half. It contains the familiar Bektashi symbols of the Hüseyni taş, the teslim taş, Dhu'l-Fiqâr and the lions, who symbolize 'Ali. In addition, it contains the equally familiar numeric symbols in the lower half of the circle: the three starlike circles between the two letters yâ' (ûçler). The two small circles placed slightly higher on the left and the right, but still within the alfî of the invocation yâ', add up to five (beşler), while the two starlike circles outside the yâ' add up to seven (yediler).

In the original, the lions are painted gold, a substance which is sometimes considered as symbolic for
'Ali in accordance with a tradition in which Hūseyin said at the beginning of the battle of Kerbela: 'Ali was the gold, Fātima was the silver, I am the son of the gold and the silver. My father was the sun, my mother was the moon. I am the son of the sun and the moon ...

The sun and the moon are also found in the calligraphy representing the perfection in the face of the Bektashi baba (plate 12). It contains the invocation 'yā Muhammad-'Ali' and thus conveys the idea of the presence of the Divine in the veche-i kamāl. Here, the letter yā' stands for the eyebrows as well as for the cheek bones (since the name of 'Ali can be read upside down and in its mirror image). In this plate, the seven-pointed star does actually represent the sun. Together with the crescent, the unity of Muhammad and 'Ali, i.e. of God, is symbolized. The spot where these symbols are located, between the eyebrows of the mürsīt, is held to be the site of the kible, as mentioned above.

The association of the sun with the Divine and thus with 'Ali is not unusual among some of the Alevi sects in eastern Anatolia. In mainstream Bektashism, however, we find a modified version of this belief. This version itself might be considered as a reformulation in Bektashi terms of the conception of al-nūr al-muḥam-maddī of the central tradition in Islamic mysticism: 'Ali is the source of the Divine light which manifested itself in Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli. Hence, 'His light' in Qur'ān 24:35 (mathala mūrihī ka-māghkāt fīhā miṣbāh: 'His light is like a niche in which is a lamp') is understood to mean the light of 'Ali. This idea is expressed in the calligraphy of the name of Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli, preceded by the honorifics 'Hünkâr Hazreti' in the shape of an oil-lamp (see plate 13).

The background of the calligraphy is green, a color normally seen as symbolizing paradise and usually associated with the Prophet's family. At the same time, however, the color green is sometimes taken to be the color of the Imam Hasan exclusively, evoking his death by poison, as red is taken to be the color of the Imam Hasan. As the corporal manifestation of God on earth, he is necessarily the Prince of the Believers and identical with God is thought of as one of 'Ali's mysteries. As the corporal manifestation of God on earth, he is necessarily the Prince of the Believers and the blessing of 'Ali's face is the blessing on Man's face, since Man's face manifests Allāh as well.

In a slightly different way than is the case in plates 9 and 12, the name of 'Ali follows the contours of the eyebrows and the nose (the letter yā' forming the base of the nose and not ending in a Dhu'l-Fiqār shaped moustache) in the drawing of the Perfect Man in plate 17. The lām on the lower side of the chest is the sign of all possible existence, the letter hā' written over the belly stands for the unity of Muḥammad and 'Ali (by dint of its numerical value: 2). It is appropriately crossed by the large alif written over the belly which is the symbol of Divine unity, thus constituting a calligraphical representation of the üçler.
On a very concrete level, the plate refers to the doctrine of the four elements (air, water, fire, earth) and to the corresponding levels of being (mineral, vegetable, animal, human)\(^{123}\), in addition to a full representation of the forms of animal life (in the air, in the water and on land). Between the legs, a female figure representing Eve is visible\(^{124}\), and a white cock, which is the symbolic representation of the Archangel Gabriel (see above).

In the figure of the Perfect Man, the names of Muhammad and Fatima are written as one word, from the hands through the arms and to the feet. The names of Hasan and Huseyn are written on the left and on the right side of the chest. Apart from the letters alif, dâl and mim (the sign of Muhammad and of the Perfect Man)\(^{125}\), making up the name Adam, the lamalif and the two letters nun stand in the area of the genitals. The first mentioned letter, the lamalif, is a symbol of procreation and an allusion to the Qur'anic verse 6:59 (‘He has the keys of the unseen. No one knows them except Him’)\(^{126}\). The letter nun stands for the stellar constellation of Scorpio (Akrep), symbolizing sexual instinct, which is also symbolized by the serpent on the left. The feet stand for the stellar constellation of Pisces (Het), symbolizing primary forms of existence. To the lion a similar meaning is attributed: Leo (Eser) standing for predatory instincts located in the heart\(^{127}\). By locating the signs of the Zodiac in Man, Bektashi teaching does not cast Man as a microcosm reflecting the macrocosm, but rather presents the cosmos as a projection of Man\(^{128}\). In similar reproductions of the Perfect Man, the serpent extends between the legs at the site of the genitals and does not lie in the background as is the case in this picture. The picture, therefore, would seem to be a probably recent bowdlerized version of an ancient motif.

Control of the sexual instincts is part of the edeb (discipline) required of the Bektashi/Alevi. The three letters which make up this word, in the Arabic script, follow the contours of the head (alif), the shoulder (dâl), and the curve of the chin (bâ‘). They are also the first letters of the words el, dil and bel. The term edeb therefore summarizes Bektashi/Alevi ethics, as contained in the phrase ‘eline, diline, beline sahib olmak’ (to control one’s hand, one’s tongue and one’s loins/spERM (see above, section 2).

At the same time, however, it is the dot of the last letter, the bâ‘, that contains the most compact representation of what is the most central idea in Bektashi doctrine: that ‘Ali is God. This is the dot of the bâ‘, in accordance with ‘Ali’s saying ‘anâ muqtat al-bâ‘. I am the dot of the bâ‘, i.e. the first dot of the revelation\(^{129}\), which contains all the secrets of the universe and gives meaning to the universe since it gives meaning to the letters, which allow for an understanding and a penetration of the universe. This dot, however, also symbolizes the belief in ‘Ali’s reincarnation in Hacı Bektas-ı Veli and is a visual echo of the belief in their identity as expressed in a famous nefes known by Bektashi the world over. The essential lines of this nefes run\(^{130}\):

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{Aslan oлюp yol üstünde oturan} \\
&\text{Engîr şerbetini Kirklara ezen} \\
&\text{Kendi cenazesin kendi götüren} \\
&\text{Hünkâr Hacı Bektas Ali kendidir} \\
&\text{He who sat upon the road as a lion} \\
&\text{He who squeezed the grape juice for the Forty} \\
&\text{He who conducted his own funeral} \\
&\text{The Sovereign Hacı Bektas is Ali himself}
\end{align*}
\]

**NOTES**

1 For a description of the conquest, see e.g. S. Vryonis, The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century, Berkeley etc. 1971, chapter 2.

2 Cf. Vryonis, op. cit., 371. For more data on the heterodox groups, see e.g. M.F. Kópnilti, Ies örígínes de I'Empire ottoman, Paris 1935, 114 ff. (Mainly based upon ‘Aşıkpaşâzâde’s Tavârîh-i Âl-i Osmân.)

3 Cf. I.M. Erıgen & K. Samancigil, Hacı Bektas Veli, Bektasilik ve Alevilik Tarihî, n.p. [İstanbul]: Ay Yayınevi 1966, 95 ff. Frequently, the Yeşilidis, the Ahi-ı Haqq and the Nuşayris are also qualified as Kızılbaş.

4 The term Kızılbaş, which literally means redheads, was used for the first supporters of the Safavids in the era of Şah İsmâ’îl’s father, Haydar (d. 1488); cf. A. Gölpinarlı, ‘Kızılbaş’, İslam Ansiklopedisi, vi, 789-95. They wore red headgear in commemoration of the blood-soaked headgear of the partisans of ‘Ali in the battle of Şîlîn. Other explanations exist, however; cf. M. Eröz, Türkiye’de Alevilik - Bektâşilik, Istanbul 1977, 88. See also R.M. Savory, ‘Kızılbaş’, *EI*, v. 243.

5 The pejorative sense the term Kızılbaş has in present-day Turkey (but not e.g. among the Alevi Turks in Bulgaria) is of recent date, perhaps as recent as the beginning of the 19th century; cf. I. Mélíkoff, ‘Le problème Kızılbaş’, *Turcica* vi (1975), 49.

Other present-day representatives of gulât traditions are the Shabak and the Kā'kā'iyya (in Iraq), the Ahl-i Haqq or 'Alī-llāhīs (in Iran, Iraq and Turkey), the Yezdīs (in Turkey, Iran and Syria), and the Nusayris (in Turkey and Syria).


7 See below, note 33.

8 İmamı Cafer Buyruğu, İstanbul: Ayıllız Kitabevi (n.d.) has nothing to do with the text in use among the Alevi sects. The Alevi Buyruq, together with a number of variants found in manuscripts in private possession in various parts of Turkey, was published by S. Aytekin under this title (Buyruk). Ankara: Emek Basım-Yayını 1958. A substantially different version of the Buyruk is mentioned by Z.V. Togan, ‘Londra ve Tahrandaki islami yazmalarдан bazıı- larna daир’, İslami Tercükləri Enstitüsü Dergisi, iii-1/2 (1959-1960), 152. This text seems to be the western Turkish version of Tawakkul’s Sañvat al-Ṣafā.


13 A recent contribution to our knowledge of the history is S. Faroqhi, Der Bektaši-Orden in Anatolien (som späte fünfzehnten Jahrhundert bis 1826), Vienna 1981 [= Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes, Sonderband 2]. See also F. De Jong, ‘The Tawakkul’s Safwat al-

14 For the basic positions concerning this problem, see J.K. Birge, The Bektashi Order of Dervishes, London 1937, 40 ff. (Hacı Bektaş did found the order); I.H. Uzunçarşı, Osmanlı Devleti Teskilâtından Kapıkuşluk Ocakları, 2 vols., Ankara 1943/44 [= Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınlarından, vii Seri, No. 12], i, 148; and F.W. Hasluck, Christianity and Islam under the Sultans, Oxford 1929, 488-493 (Hacı Bektaş did not found the order).

15 Rif‘at Efendi, Mırrat-ı melkasît fi daft’ü ıl-mafâsid, İstanbul 1293/1876, 181.


17 Of these writings known as the Makalât, various editions exist in Ottoman Turkish as well as in modern Turkish. A relatively well-executed edition is the one by S. Aytekin, which was published in Ankara: Emek Basım-Yayını 1954. It contains an introduction of seventeen pages and a glossary.


19 A. Sirri (Dede Baba), Al-Risâla al-Ahmadiyya fi Tarîkh al-Tariqa al-Bektâshîyya, Cairo 1959, 27.

20 On the nature of these links, see Birge, 46 ff. and 74 ff., and also Uzunçarşı, i, 150.

21 The classic contemporary account of the suppression of the Bektashi order and the destruction of the Janissaries is found in Mehmed Es’ad Efendi, Üss-i Zafer, İstanbul 1243.

22 Cf. e.g. Birge, 77.


24 Birge, 78 ff.

25 M.T. Oytan, Bektaşîlîğîn Ýçyûzü, Dibi, Köşestî, Ýzûzü ve Astanî Nedîr?, İstanbul 1978, 348 f.

26 The classic statement of the claims of the leaders of the Çelebi branch for supremacy is Ahmed Cemâleddin Efendi, Mûdâfa’a, İstanbul 1326. The authority of the supreme leaders of the Çelebi branch was strengthened considerably in the course of the 18th century; cf. Faroqhi, ‘Bektasîkhîkôşter’, 41 f. The Çelebi branch itself has a number of sub-branches, of which the most important are the Hûdâdâtiler and the Mûrselliller; see Erlen-Samancuğil, 114, and Ulusoy, 69 ff.


28 See e.g. I.Z. Eyüboğlu, Dürtûn Yönleriyle Bektaşîlık — Alevîlik, İstanbul: Yeni Çırg Kitabevi 1980, 142. This book is probably the most comprehensive recent work in Turkish on the subject.

29 Erlen-Samancuğil, 115 f.; Ulusoy, 72 ff.

30 The institution of this practice is ascribed to Sersem ‘All Sultan (d. 977/1569-70); see A. Sirri (Dede Baba), al-Mu’dâkkira al-Tafsîrîyya li-Shârî al-Tariqa al-Aféyya al-Bektâshîyya, Cairo 1949, 11.

31 In 1952, the number of Bektaşis in Turkey was put at about 30,000; Cahiers de l’Orient contemporain xxvi (1952), 251. But compare Noyan, 4570, who gives an estimate of thirteen million for the total number of Cuferis in Turkey. See also A. Gökalp, Têtes rouges et bouches noires, Paris 1980, 14, who estimates their number at ten million.


33 The Bektashi order was suppressed in Albania, as
were all denominations in that country; see A. Popovic, 'La communauté musulmane d’Albanie dans la période post-ottomane', Zeitschrift für Balkanologie xii/2 (1983), 199 f.

Bektashi communities and tekkes exist in Bulgaria (Çelebi branch), Greece (Çelebi branch), and Yugoslavia (Mücerred branch). For details, see F. De Jong, 'Islamic Sects in Southeastern Europe' (in preparation). In Egypt, the Bektashi order was much involved with the Court until 1952; cf. F. De Jong, 'Aspects of the Political Involvement of Sufi Orders in 20th-Century Egypt (1907-1970)', in G.R. Warburg and U.M. Kupferschmidt (ed.), Islam, Nationalism and Radicalism in Egypt and the Sudan, New York 1983, 193 f. The order ceased to exist on Egyptian soil in 1965. In southeastern Europe, Alevi communities are nowadays found in Bulgaria only.


For this article, I define the term iconography as: the traditional or conventional images and symbols associated with or referring to (a) religious and/or legendary subject(s).

Apart from the publications mentioned in the following notes, the reader is referred to my forthcoming book 'Islamic Sects in Southeastern Europe' for a more detailed discussion of Alevi and Bektashi belief and ritual practice in general and in the area mentioned in the title of the book in particular.

On this problem, see Mélíkoff, 'Recherches sur les composantes', passim.

Other terms referring to this occasion are Kirklar gecesi (the Night of the Forty) and Kirklar sofrası (the Banquet of the Forty).

The edition of the Bayrûk mentioned in note 8 gives two versions of the events of the Kirklar meclisi; cf. p. 7 f., and 155 ff.

The Imam 'Ali was also known as al-haydar (the lion) and as asad Allah al-ghâlib (the victorious lion of God). Bektashis tend to understand these names as references to 'Ali's metamorphosis into a lion as related in the muraç account mentioned here.

A Tahtacr version of the story, recorded by K. Ozbayri, Tahtacr ve Yörükler, Paris 1972 [= Bibliothèque archéologique et historique de l'Institut français d'archéologie d'Istanbul, xvii], 47, mentions that Muhammad was admitted after he had produced the grape. In an Alevi nefes, mentioned by E. Borel, 'Les poètes Kizil Bach et leur musique', Revue des études islamiques 1946, 109, 181, it is Selman-i Pâk and not 'Ali who passes the grape.

Mélíkoff, 'Kızılbaş', 64. The liturgical meeting of the Bektashis of the Babagân branch has little in common with the sometimes very elaborate and detailed re-enactments of the events of the Kirklar meclisi of some of the Alevi sects. Many of the elements of ritual, however, are justified by the statement that this was the way things were done during the Assembly of the Forty. Further details may be found in my forthcoming study mentioned in note 33.

Alevis and Bektashis do not recognize sunni ijmâ' concerning the prohibition of alcoholic beverages. The verses of the Qur'an on wine drinking and its prohibition are believed to be later additions, inserted by the enemies of the partisans of the ehl-i beyt. At the same time, a Qur'anic justification is found for the consumption of raki, by reading the term kavûlhar in sûra 108 as a synonym for this drink, and by understanding the 'pure drink' to be given by God (Qur'an 76:21) equally as a reference to raki (there is no drink more pure than strong raki, as the argument runs).


This part of the Bektashi/Alevi tradition has come down to us in nefes only; see e.g. S.N. Ergun, Bektâşî Şairleri ve Nefesleri, 3 vols., Istanbul 1955, iii, 35.

See Eyüboğlu, 237 ff.

Cf. Eröz, 34.

For an explanation of these stages, see e.g. Birge, 102 ff.

Op. cit. 96 ff. on the doctrine of the mürşit.

In R. Bell, The Qur'an. Translated with a critical re-arrangement of the Surahs, Edinburgh 1960, 540, the translation of this verse reads: 'Till he was two bow-lengths off or nearer'. Qâb is normally translated as 'small distance' or 'short span'. The expression 'âla qâb qawasayn has the meaning of 'quite near' or 'very close'. Qawasayn is the dual form of qawâs, i.e. bow, arch. According to the Bektashi interpretation of the verse, the two bows are the eyebrows and the 'small distance' refers to the space in between.

This part of Bektashi teaching is normally looked upon as the Hurulî segment in Bektashiism; cf. Birge, 148 ff.

Cf. Birge, 150 and Eyüboğlu, 213 ff. for additional information on the strikingly humanistic anthropology of Bektashiism.

Birge, 288 ff., Erişen/Samancıgil, 137 ff.

Teberla (litt.: a standing aloof, a withdrawing) has also the connotation of 'considering with deep disgust', in addition to 'continuously cursing'.

Normally, the curse is pronounced in Arabic: 'la'nat Allâh 'âlà muqâtillîlî(n) al-Imâm al-Husayn', or 'la'nat 'alay-hî(m)', especially when the occasion is a ritual context. In addition, curses in Turkish are pronounced, e.g. lanet Yezide or variants thereof.

The length of the fasting period differs between the various Bektashi communities. A detailed description of the Muharram fasting and the following Asura celebrations in a Bektashi community in southeastern Europe may be found in my 'Islamic Sects in Southeastern Europe' (see note 33 above). The other holidays celebrated by Bektashis are: Nevruz (21/22 March: celebrated as 'Ali's birthday, i.e. the coming of God into the world), Hidrellez (6/7 May), and Kurban Bayram (10 Dhul-Hijja); cf. Oytan, 410 f.

The term tevellâ (litt.: taking a friend) has the connotation, or perhaps the meaning, of 'paying homage' and 'cultivating or cherishing love' (for the ehl-i beyt).

For a list of their names, see Oytan, 305 f.


See e.g. S.N. Ergun, Bektâşî Şairleri, Istanbul 1930, 57. In the Vilâyet-Nâme (Gross, 149 ff.), Haci Bektâşî Veli performs his own burial rites, veiled, and unknown and invisible to those present. After the funeral, one of his disciples goes with the stranger for some distance and asks him to lift his veil and to show his identity: it is Haci Bektâşî Veli himself. Here, the duplication of the events following the passing away of 'Ali points towards the belief
that Hacı Bektash was a manifestation of 'Ali in a different guise. It is also an expression of the belief tanasuh, i.e. metempsychosis; cf. Birge, 129 ff.

62 For an analysis of this theme, see P.N. Boratav, 'Vestiges oğuz dans la tradition bektashi, Akten des vier-
undzwanzigsten internationalen Orientalisten-Kongresses (München 1957), Wiesbaden 1959, 382-385; Ş. Yola, Zur
Ornithophanie im Vilâyet Name des Hâggî Bektaşî, in H.G.
Mugur (red.), Islamkundliche Abhandlungen [= H.J. Kissling
Festschrift], München 1974, 125-129.

63 Gölpnarlı, Vîldet-Nâmé, 18, 20, 91. In another ver-
сion of the event (cf. Gross, 36, 80 f.), the dervish is named
Seyyid Mahmud Hayran.

64 See Birge, 102 ff.

65 Erişen/Samancıgil, 57.

66 Cf. B. Noyan, 'Bektashi ve Alevîlerde hukuk düzeni
(düşkünülük)', I. Uluslararası Türk Folklor Kongresi Bildiri-
leri, iv Cilt. Gelenek-Görenek ve İnşanlar, Ankara 1976,
189 ff.

67 The term dervish is normally used by Bektashis to
refer to a rank and not to a wandering (mendicant) mystic.
The degrees in Bektashism are in ascending order: tâlîp (candidate for initiation), muhip (initiated member), dervish (performing a task during the ritual), baba (can initiate and give guidance), dede (elects the Dede Baba), and Dede Baba (the supreme head of the Mürcerer branch). Only the Mürcerer branch has a monastic tradition; cf. Birge, 162 ff.

68 Bektashis use the term meydân to denote the place
where the liturgical meeting is held. Such a meeting is
customarily referred to as mubahbet. Among the Alevi sects,
however, the use of the term cem is more frequent, while the
room or the building where the cem is held is known as cem evi.

69 The lower part inside of the twelve-segmented and
the seven-segmented tares is usually divided into four sections,
symbolizing the Four Gateways. Often, a piece of green
cloth is bound around it.

70 Cf. J.P. Brown, The Darvishes or Oriental Spirituality,
London 1968, 180 f. The teslim taş is either made from a
kind of alabaster quarried near Hacibektaş (köy), or from the
transparant necef raq, a crystal which supposedly comes
from al-Najaf, the town where the shrine of the Imam 'Ali is
located.

71 Palihenkis with seven corners are also known; op. cit.,
176.

72 Some particularly beautiful examples are preserved in
the Hacibektaş Müzesi; see A. Taşdelen, 'Hacibektaş Velî
Dergâhi ve Müzesi', Türkivemiz, 28 (Hazar 1979), 20. The
dergâh was opened as a museum in 1964. On its holdings,
see A. Taşdelen & A. Sümer, Hacibektaş Müzesi Rehberi,

73 Cf. Oytan, 261 (the text of prayer no. 9).

74 The piercing of the ear used to take place either on the
threshold of the shrine of Balıım Sultan in the tekke of Hacı
Bektash-ı Veli near Kirşehir or in the tekke in Kerbela. The
operation was also performed in the tekke of 'Ali Sultan
(Kızıl Deli Sultan) near Dimetoka. It was part of the
ordination ceremony (mücerer irşârî) of the celibate babas.
The last baba who went through this ceremony in the central
tekke in Hacibektaş was Baba Kazım (d. 1981) of Diakova
(Yugoslavia).

75 Cf. Birge, 70, where it is said that it was worn 'in
memory of Düldü'. The horseshoe earring, although no
longer worn, is seen as a symbol of servitude in present-day
Bektashism.

76 This number refers to the forty-one who participated in
the Kirklar meclisi. The use of a tesbih of 99 beads,
consisting of three groups of thirty-three, separated by two
beads in the shape of a Hâşeyni tac, and one large bead at the
end, is also known; cf. Birge, 254.

77 The Bektashi order was not a mendicant order, and
begging was very restricted and bound to strict rules; cf.
Brown, 185, and Birge, 236.

78 Birge, 235.

79 Each muhip has a rehber or guide who directs him and
supervises him and, in a sense, prepares him for guidance by
the mürîş or spiritual guide. In the initiation ceremony,
the candidate is conducted into the meydân by the rehber,
sometimes carrying a teber.

80 On this ceremony, see H. Ringgren, 'The initiation
ceremony of the Bektashis', C.J. Bleeker (ed.), Studies in the

81 I. Melikoff, Abu Muslim, le porte-hache du Khorasan
dans la tradition épique turco-iranienne, Paris 1962, 68.

82 For an example, see Birge, illustration no. 6. Cf. Birge,
233, for the commentary on this plate; he has not noted that
the word haqq (Truth) constitutes an integral calligraphic
element of each of the tebers.

83 A nıyaz is a prostration, somewhat similar to the
sûjud position in the sunni şâlâh ritual. The floor, however,
is touched with the hands only. These are held in a distinctly
prescribed position, in such a way that a pattern of three
kisses can be completed on, or in the air slightly above, the
fingertips.

84 Reverence for the threshold is also found among the
Tahtâces and all other Alevis; cf. Roux, Traditions, 121 ff.

85 See Oytan, 201 f.

86 This is not the case, however, in Bulgaria, where the
tekkes have virtually been dismantled and liturgical meetings
are held semi-clandestinely. A similar situation prevails in
Turkey.

87 The engraving reads: Allahumma sallî 'alâ al-Muṣṭa-
fâ Muhammad wah-l-Murtada alâ 'alî wah-l-Niswân Fātimâ wah-l-
Sîbiyân al-Hasan wah-l-Hasayn wah-sallî 'alâ Zayn al-
Aḫīdīn wah-'alā al-Bâgîr Muhammad wah-l-Sâdîq Ja'-far, al-Kâzîm
Mūsâ wah-l-Riḍâ 'Alî wah-l-Taqî Muhammad wah-l-Bâgî 'Alî
wah-l-Zâkî al-Askârî al-Hasan wah-sallî 'alâl-Imām Muḥam-
dad-i Maḥdî.

88 E.g. in the Bektashi türbe of 'Ali Baba near Svidovica,
est of Strumica (Yugoslovakia).

89 Examples are the türbes of Demir Baba near Ragrados
in Bulgaria, and of Serem 'Ali Baba in Tetovo (Yugoslo-
ia). See F. Babinger, 'Das Bektaschi-Kloster Demir Baba',
Mitteilungen des Seminars für Orientalische Sprachen
xxiv (1931), 1-10; and G. Palikruseva & K. Tomovski, 'Les
tekkès en Macédoine aux xviiie et xixe siècles', Atti del
Secondo Congresso Internazionale di Arte Turca (Venezia
1963), Naples 1965, 203-211, for a general description of the
architecture of these establishments.

90 E.g. the türbes of Kidemli Baba near Nova Zagora, of
Akyazlı Sultan near Balcik and of Ali Baba in Kraljevo
(near Malak Izvor, south of Harmanli), all in Bulgaria. On
the türbe of Kidemli Baba, see M. Kiel, 'A Monument of
early Ottoman Architecture in Bulgaria. The Bektasî Tekke
of Kidemli Baba Sultan at Kalugerevo-Novazagora', Belle-
ten xxxv/137 (1973), 45-60. On the tekke of Akyazlı Sultan,

91 E.g. in the tekkes in Kanatlars and in Kievo in Yugoslavia.

92 Tombstones with the so-called Ethem taci (four segments) and the elifi taci (shaped like a Bishop's mitre) are also found. On these different types, see Birge, 37, 46 f., 217, 248, 250, 261, 284. The tombstones of female Bektahs have no taci but a decoration of sculptured flowers and leaves on the upper part instead.

93 Also the greater part of Bektashi writings has been produced by babas of the Mürzerr branch. This seems to suggest that the monasticism characteristic of this branch of Bektashiism must have been decisive for this intellectual production.

94 Meetings for the ceremony of baş okutmak (cf. Birge, 170 ff.) and part of the liturgical celebrations on the occasions of Aşura, Nevruz, and Hidrellez are sometimes held more privately, e.g. in the house of the baba, or more publicly, depending upon local circumstances and tradition.

95 Small, but important collections are preserved in the Istanbul Belediye Müzesi, in the Divan Edebiyat Müzesi, in the Ethnographical Museum in Ankara, and in the Hacibektaş Müzesi (cf. note 72, above).

96 In Birge's book, mentioned throughout these footnotes, and in M. Aksel, Türkleri Dini Resimler. Yazi Resim, Istanbul 1967 [= Elif Yaymlari, No. 21].

97 For a theoretical elaboration of these ideas, see C. Geertz, 'Ethos, World View, and the Analysis of Sacred Symbols', in C. Geertz, The Interpretation of Cultures, New York 1973, 126-141.


99 In Greece, outside Western Thrace, Bektashiism has come to an end in 1974 with the death of Baba Seit, the last head of the tekke of Durbali Sultan near Farsala in Thessalia. The Greek authorities refused to admit a successor. Since the death of Baba Seit, the tekke has rapidly fallen into a state of dilapidation. Most liturgical objects have been stolen from its premises and the framed images and calligraphy hang in the türbes are being destroyed by moisture and insects. On the tekke, see e.g. G. Thoma, "Tekê" Döürbalı Soutlân. Tö 'Arvantiq Monastiri Farsalon. Ena Istorikó Kíisma tis Thessalas, Volos 1966.

100 On these Hurufi elements, see notes, and in M. Aksel, Türklerde Dinî Resimler, yazmlar, Istanbul, 1967 [cf. note 72, above].

101 See e.g. illustration No. 14 in Birge.


103 As is the case among the Nusayris (see L. Massignon, 'Nusaieti', EI', iii, 1043), the sun is sometimes associated with Muhammad and the moon with 'Ali; cf. Oytan, 299.


105 Cf. Birge, 185, for the prayer said at the lighting of the candles ('The light of Muhammad is born from 'Ali').

106 See Birge, 36, for the story which explains how the honorific Hünkâr (Persian: Khünkâr, meaning sovereign, lord) came to be attached to the name of Hacı Bektaş-i Veli.


108 Lassy, 86.

109 Cf. Hasluck, 226. The birds themselves can probably also be understood as symbols of the immortality of the soul; cf. Melikoff, Abu Muslim, 63.

110 In the picture, Hacı Bektaş-i Veli and Güvenc Abdal wear the elifi taci, which is the earliest form of the Bektashi taci; see note 92.

111 Ulusoy, 50 ff.

112 In this position, the right toe is placed upon the left toe.


114 Ali'd Islam: all groups who trace themselves back to the early partisans of 'Ali.

115 With certain Alevi sects, women wear a red shawl covering their hair during the liturgical gatherings. In some Bektashi lodges, male members sometimes wear red woolen knitted skullcaps. This, however, is not an established rule for religious attire. I have also met babas who had a red, instead of the regular green, piece of cloth around their taci, but this is an exception rather than the rule.

116 Cf. Paret, 46.

117 The composition was made by Turgut Reşadi Baba (Istanbul), who is the only remaining Bektashi baba producing Bektashi art (object and images) in the classical tradition.

118 Based upon the oral explanation given by Turgut Reşadi Baba.

119 Cf. Birge, 244.


122 The numerical value of the Arabic letters of the name Adam (ddif, dal and mûm) is forty-five. The letters of the name of Eve, when written ḫawâh (hâ, alif, wâw, alif, hâ), have a numerical value of twenty-one. Their total is sixty-six, which equals the numerical value of rabb (râ and bâ), i.e. Lord ( = God). This computation is used in the Çelebi branch and in various Alevi sects to demonstrate the necessity of marriage in order to attain perfection.


125 Ibid.

126 For an enumeration of the location of the signs of the Zodiac in Man, see G. Jacob, Die Bektaschije in ihrem Verhàltnis zu verwandten Erscheinungen, Abhandlungen der philosophisch-philo- logoschen Klasse der königlich Bayrischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, xxiv. Band, Abh. iii, Munich 1909, 47 (based upon Virâni's Risâle; cf. Birge, 282).

In this respect, Bektashi teaching differs substantially from the teachings of Ibn 'Arabi and his school.
Plate 1. A Bektashi baba in full regalia: Sha'bân Baba from Prishtë (Albania). He came to Cairo in 1913 as a refugee from the Greek terror in southern Albania. He died in Cairo on 16 Muharram 1333/24 November 1914; Ahmad Sirri (Baba), ar-Risâla al-Ahmadiyya i Ta'rikh al-Tabiga al-'Aliyya al-Bektâsiyya bi-Misr al-Mabrûsa, Cairo 1939, 53 f.

To the right of the palihenk the egg-shaped crystal stone of the kamberiye is visible. A backscratcher, a spoon, and other implements (probably a letter opener and a small knife) are visible in the belt. The haydariye is partly visible beneath the mantle (aba). Strings of habbes made of necefi taş decorate the sleeves of the haydariye.

The photograph was taken in Cairo in 1913 or 1914. The original of this photograph, which is in the possession of the author, was part of the legacy of Ahmad Sirri Dede Baba of the tekke of Qaygusuz Sultân in Cairo; see the article mentioned in note 13 for details.

129 Cf. K. Samancıgil, Alevi Şairleri Antolojisi, İstanbul 1946, 242; Jacob, op. cit., 39 (apud Virânî). A variant exists which compares 'Ali with the dot of the nün; see Ergun, i, 217.

130 Ergun, 19; cf. Samancıgil, op. cit., 18, for a nefes containing a slightly different formulation of the same idea.
Plate 2. A kavukluk. The dimensions are $21 \times 27 \times 62$ cm. Note the glass bead, against the evil eye, attached to the upper left corner. Private collection in Istanbul.

Plate 3. A letter opener and a backscratcher both made of wood. The reverse side of the backscratcher has a ribbed surface and is not decorated. The lengths are 15 cm and 41 cm respectively. Private collection in Istanbul.
Plate 4. A taht-i Muhammad. The invocations in the upper part are cut through the wood. (Yû Alläh, Yû Muhammad, Yû ’Alî, Yû Hasan, Yû Hüseyn). The lower inside of each railing is carved into twelve-pointed segments referring to the Twelve Imams. The similar decoration running along the edge of the upper step has seven points referring to the yedîler. The upper part gives the suggestion of a teslim taşî crowned by a Hüseynî taç. On the left, a very basic taht is used for storage. On the wall hang a nefîr and two teberîs. The instrument, which is visible behind one of the teberîs and the slightly differently shaped instrument hanging to the left of the small teber are muttekîs, also known as muîns. These are chin supports, made of metal or wood, which were placed under the chin during periods of sleepless retreat. The photograph was taken in the now defunct tekke of Hasîb Baba in Xanthi (Greece) in August 1982. See on this tekke A. Dede, Rumeli’inde Biraktanlar (Batı Trakya Türkleri), İstanbul 1975, 139 ff. The dimensions of the large taht at its base are 60 × 70 cm. It is 120 cm high.
Plate 5. A bırlık cırgıt in the shape of an Ethemi tac (see note 92) made of copper. It is 35 cm high. Private collection in Istanbul.

Plate 6. A havd of galvanized copper. The inscription around the edge is given in note 87. Abstract patterns and animal figures, mainly deer, cover the outside. It is 10 cm deep and has a diameter of 22 cm. Private collection of the author.
Plate 7. The hall with the graves of the deceased heads of the Bektashi tekke in Diakova (Yugoslavia), showing a row of plates decorating the walls. Note the nefir hanging in the corner. The photograph was taken in September 1978.

Plate 9. Plate expressing the belief that each human being is a mosque. Paint on paper. The dominating colors are black (beard, eyebrows and eyes), yellowish-brown (dome, minarets and pupils), red (base of minarets, top of dome, lips, and the invocation Yà Òîñ). The Arabic text in black on the base of the minarets reads: harrarahu al-faqîr 'Alî Ridâ ibn Mehmed (drawn by the poor one, 'Alî Ridâ son of Mehmed). The image is covered by a broken glass plate which could not be removed. Photographed in the Bektashi tekke in Diakova (Yugoslavia). The dimensions are 35 x 40 cm.
Plate 8. Calligraphy containing a statement of the central creed of Bektashiism. Paint and pencil on paper. The teslim taşi in the center is crudely drawn with a red coloring-pencil. Pencil is not used for any of the other elements in this plate. In view of this, the teslim taşi may be a later addition. In this case, the plate without the addition may have decorated an Alevi cem evi before ending up in the Bektashi tekke of Durbali Sultan in Thessalia (Greece). It was purchased by the author in Farsala (Greece). The dimensions are $38 \times 46$ cm.
Plate 10. Fretwork in the shape of a Hûseyînî taş. Wood on a cloth-covered wooden base. Diakova (Yugoslavia). The dimensions are 45 × 50 cm.

Plate 12. Calligraphy representing the idea of the presence of the Divine in the face of the Bektashi Baba. Paint on paper. The teslim taşî is dark yellow. The Hûseyînî taş is white (upper part) and dark green (lower part). The flowers in the corners are in red and green. All calligraphical elements are in black. Diakova (Yugoslavia). The dimensions are 37 × 49 cm.
Plate 11. Tableau with the Twelve Imams dressed as Bektashi Babas. Strips of straw glued to a wooden base. The faces of the Imams and the heads of the lions are done in black ink on bits of white paper. The tableau was probably made in Kolonje (Albania) in 1312/1894-5. This is suggested by the Ottoman Turkish text at the bottom. The text also mentions that the tableau was presented to Baba Bayram, the pustnisi (head, abbot) of the dergah of Durbali Sultan. The tableau was purchased by the author in Greece and is presently part of his private collection of Bektashi art. The dimensions are 35 x 44 cm.
Plate 13. Calligraphy of the name of Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli in the shape of an oil-lamp. Paint and pencil on paper. Diakova (Yugoslavia). The dimensions are $21 \times 28$ cm.

Plate 14. Calligraphy of the name of Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli in the shape of two doves. Paint on glass. Diakova (Yugoslavia). The dimensions are $40 \times 40$ cm.
Plate 15. Plate depicting the meeting of Hacı Bektaş and Karaca Ahmed Sultan. Ink, pencil and watercolors. Green (the grass and the mountains), red (the roofs of the houses) and yellow (the lion) dominate. Diakova (Yugoslavia). The dimensions are 31 x 50 cm.

Plate 16. Calligraphy expressing the belief in the identity of God as 'All. This calligraphy was made for the author by Turgut Reşadi Baba (see note 119). Red (paws and tongue) and black on a yellowish paper base. The dimensions are 16 x 22 cm.
Plate 17. The Perfect Man. Paint on paper. Photographed in a private collection in Istanbul. The dimensions are $21 \times 40$ cm.