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# MONUMENTS AND COMMUNITIES: BEKTASHISM IN 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY GREECE

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## Introduction

In the area defined today as Greece, during the late Ottoman period there is a significant presence of Bektashi communities, differentiated according to the location: Albanian- and Greek-speaking in Central and Northwestern Greece, Turkish- and Bulgarian-speaking in Northeastern Greece and Greek-speaking on the island of Crete.

It seems that Bektashism flourished in the area in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, while the reforms of Sultan Mahmud II, the independence of Greece, the Greek-Albanian hostility during World War II and, above all, the compulsory population exchange between Turkey and Greece -in combination with other factors- led to the weakening and, ultimately, to the dissolution of the vast majority of the communities.

This study, based on several years of field research and mainly on the Greek bibliography, aims at presenting the important architectural vestiges (mausoleums/ türbes, cemeteries, etc.) of Central and Northern Greece, along with the history of the communities, as well as the Bektashi influence on and relation with the surrounding non-Bektashi (mainly Christian) communities, focusing on those which still existed and maintained some kind of life during the (best part of the) 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## Epirus, Thessaly and Central Macedonia

### The tekkes of Konitsa

The small town of Konitsa (Epirus, 63 km north of Ioannina) was one of the most important Bektashi centres in Northwestern Greece. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, half of the population of Konitsa was (mainly Greek-speaking) Christians and half was (mainly Albanian-speaking) Muslims. As Efthimiou, 1997 (an important local historian) informs us, in Konitsa -where the main mosque of the town carried the name of "Husein Shah"- there was a big and powerful Bektashi community. At that time, the most prominent Muslim family in Konitsa was the family of Zeynel Bey (relative of Kurt Pasha, governor of Berat, Albania), the father of Hornko, who became the wife of Veli Bey Tepelenli and the mother of Ali Tepelenli, Pasha of Yannina/ Yanya. Zehra Hanım, the daughter of Abdüllatif Pasha and mother of the famous Turk poet Namik Kemal, also came from Konitsa.<sup>1</sup>

In Konitsa there were many dervish lodges/ tekkes of various orders,<sup>2</sup> of which two Bektashi: the tekke of Baba Osman in the upper part of the town and the tekke of Baba Husein or Husein in the lower part of the town.

In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the abbot/ postnişin in the Husen Baba tekke was baba Haydar, son of Mahmut, from Glina-Lesković<sup>3</sup>. At that time, the tekke was served by

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<sup>1</sup> Efthimiou, 1997: 104, 108

<sup>2</sup> Since the Greek sources and documents of that period usually mix Bektashis and Nakshibendis, giving the title "Sheikh" to the leaders of all orders and tekkes, it is not clear who was what and to what order they belonged, especially in the case of Konitsa. I shall, therefore, restrict my references only to those about whom I have totally or relatively clear indications, mainly those mentioned as "baba".

dervish Suleyman, dervish Ali,<sup>4</sup> dervish Bilio or Bilal Mehmet from Valovizta, dervish Zeynel Abedin, the nephew of baba Haydar, dervish Zeynel from Gönçü close to Erseka in the region of Kolonjia, and dervish Demir from Avoritsiani, while there was a number of followers/ muhip, who visited the tekke frequently and took part in the liturgical life (prayers, meals etc).<sup>5</sup> In older times the tekke owned extensive lands in Grevena, Tsotili and in the plain of Konitsa, large numbers of sheep and cows and its own mill.

The tekke of Baba Osman -also called "small tekke"- was in the upper part of the town of Konitsa, close to Zeynelbey gate. There is no information regarding the babas and dervishes of this tekke. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century many people would visit the türbe to light candles and offer bars of soap, towels, kerchiefs, slippers, etc.<sup>6</sup>

In the kurban bayram time, the people serving the tekkes would sacrifice rams and other animals and distribute a part of the blessed meat to all the people of the same religion. On the day of Ashurah, they would cook the "asir" and serve it to all visitors, including Christians, while in Moharem or Matem holiday, all the Bektashis would drink turbid water, to which coffee had been added. In the summer, the Bektashis from the area of Konitsa would gather for the feast of Baba Ramo, where they would celebrate and dance for three days.<sup>7</sup>

We know that the majority of the Muslim people living in the lower part of the town - around the tekke of Baba Husen- were Bektashis,<sup>8</sup> while it seems that most of the Bektashis in Konitsa had very close relations to the Christians. Many Muslims from the area of Konitsa (including an unknown number of Bektashis) used to visit Christian churches and pay respect to saints by offering candles, oil for the oil lamps (one actually offered a candelabrum), while some of them used to swear not only by the typical Muslim "vallah - billah" but also by the "për shiën Kolien e Vodiçes" (Albanian = to Saint Nicolas of Voditsa).<sup>9</sup>

It is worth mentioning that in 1925, when a big group of Muslims left the area of Konitsa<sup>10</sup>, dervish Abedin, a fluent Greek speaker and member of the Municipal Council of Konitsa for many years, was given 1,000 drachmas from the Municipal Council and 300 drachmas from the church -both due to his very bad financial situation and to the service he had offered to the (Greek) community. By way of thanks, he offered a Bektashi ceremonial vessel (a holy water sprinkler or an incensory) to the church of St. Nicolas of Konitsa.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> The tekke of Baba Husen must have been founded by Husein Baba or else Baba Huso himself in mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. His successor was baba Ismail, while the next known postnişin was Turabi Gül baba, who built a school/ mektep in 1870 near the tekke, which was later characterised as a "secondary school"/ rüştiye. In 1878 and 1882 baba Adem was the postnişin, while from 1883 until 1896 the postnişin was baba Kiamil from Anatolia. Efthimiou, 1997: 153

<sup>4</sup> Who used to pay respect to bishop Panaretos, by visiting him often and kissing his hand.

<sup>5</sup> Efthimiou, 1997: 167

<sup>6</sup> Efthimiou, 1997: 168. Apart from these, the tekke of Baba Nevruz and the türbe of the "badji" - possibly connected to Aise Badji who died in 1748 - are also mentioned, but there is no activity related to them in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>7</sup> Efthimiou, 1997: 149-150.

<sup>8</sup> Baltiotis, 2002: 306. Field work finding in Leskovik, Albania, April 2001.

<sup>9</sup> Efthimiou, 1997: 142, 143. Moreover, it seems that many Christians in the area, for various reasons, used to resort to the healing power of the babas.

<sup>10</sup> As a result of the compulsory population exchange between Greece and Turkey under the 1923 Lausanne treaty. Under the treaty, all the Muslims of Greek citizenship living in Greece had to leave Greece and move to Turkey. Many Muslims from Epirus and Macedonia avoided the exchange as of Albanian origin or as non-Greek citizens. Most of the Muslims from Konitsa were not forced to leave, but after some time and mainly due to the widespread changes in the Balkans and the pressure they felt, they decided to leave. Some moved to Turkey and others to Albania.

<sup>11</sup> Efthimiou, 1997: 128

In 1950 it is estimated that around 30 Muslim families still lived in Konitsa. Nowadays some 7 Muslim families still live in the town<sup>12</sup>, not showing the slightest sign of a public Bektashi practice, while all the Bektashi monuments have been ruined.

#### The tekke of Dorbali Sultan in Farsala

At the heart of Thessaly, 28 km away from Farsala and 38 km away from Volos, by the small village of Asprogia (earlier named Ireni) lies the tekke of Dorbali Sultan, the most important Bektashi monument in Central Greece.

Most of the references talk about the "Albanian Tekke" of Farsala. As Tsiakoumis, 2000 (an important local historian) informs us, it seems that the tekke was founded by Turks in the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and was probably built on the ruins of an old Christian Orthodox monastery of St. George<sup>13</sup>.

By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the tekke cluster -surrounded by a tall wall with a single entrance- contained a number of buildings, the most prominent being the main hall for the liturgical services/ meydan and the cook-house/ aş evi. Outside and adjacent to the wall were the stables, while to the West, some 50 m away from the gate, were the 2 mausoleums/ türbe.

At that time the meydan was decorated with pictures of Arabic calligraphy. One depicted a "face" (probably the typical "face" created from the calligraphic rendering of the word Ali) and another a "lion" (probably the typical "caliph Ali, the lion of God"). Near them there was a bow and two axes/ teber (a small one with Koranic verses on it and a big half-moon shaped one), while the existence of a double drum/ kudum is also mentioned. In the türbe of Dorbali Sultan there were three typical Ottoman graves (that of Dorbali Sultan and on its sides those of his companions and co-warriors Djafer and Mustafa<sup>14</sup>), a lot of clothes<sup>15</sup>, three big silver candlesticks, a long sword, an iron club/ topuz and two green flags wrapped around flagstaves, one ending at a half-moon and the other at a spear.<sup>16</sup>

From the time of its establishment all the postnişin seemed to be of Turkish ethnic origin until the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (1782) when -possibly with the involvement and support of the powerful Ali Tepelenli, later Pasha of Yannina/ Yanya<sup>17</sup>- first appeared a postnişin of Albanian ethnic origin.<sup>18</sup> From that time on,<sup>19</sup> all the babas and most of the dervishes were of Albanian origin. However, despite the fact that the first language of most of the dervishes and the babas was the Albanian<sup>20</sup>, there is every reason to believe that at least until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the language of the services was the Turkish<sup>21</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> Baltsiotis, 2002: 307

<sup>13</sup> Tsiakoumis, 2000: 62 - 68, 29-46

<sup>14</sup> Hasluck, 1973 chapter 42.

<sup>15</sup> According to the dervishes, some belonged to Dorbali Sultan himself, while others were offerings.

<sup>16</sup> Karkavitsas, 1892: 158, 159.

<sup>17</sup> For an extensive discussion of this issue, see Hasluck, 1972.

<sup>18</sup> Hysënj Baba from Tirana, the 18<sup>th</sup> postnişin of the tekke. Tsiakoumis, 2000 in the annex.

<sup>19</sup> Until 1972, when Seit Baba Kokka Vandresa, the 33<sup>rd</sup> and last postnişin of the tekke died. As for the babas who were postnişin before the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, some are reportedly from Baghdad, one from Halep (Syria), one from Misir (Egypt), one from Kirsehir and one from Erzerum (Turkey), and one from Lahore (Pakistan?). Tsiakoumis, 2000: 64

<sup>20</sup> It is worth noticing that in a letter dated 1335 AH / 1920 AD addressed to the postnişin of the tekke of Katerini and signed -among others- by the nine dervishes of the tekke of Dorbali Sultan, one signs in Albanian, two in Greek and the rest in Turkish (Tsiakoumis, 2000: 80)

<sup>21</sup> In a hand-written small book from the library of the last müfti of Volos who left the area in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century -which I obtained from an antique shop of Istanbul in 1985- all the Bektashi prayers, wishes and comments contained therein are written in Turkish.

The tekke gets "fully Albanised" in 1925, when the dervish orders/ tarikats are banned and persecuted in Turkey<sup>22</sup> and communication with the Bektashi centres in Turkey is no longer possible, whereas the people of the Dorbali Sultan tekke recognise as their leader the dedebaba in Tirana<sup>23</sup>.

The impact of the Bektashi persecution in the period 1826-1839 on the Dorbali Sultan tekke is not known in detail. What is clear is that in 1851 the Nakshibendi sheikh Muharrem Halife is appointed as postnişin<sup>24</sup>.

The dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century finds baba Bayram Murteza as postnişin of the tekke (he was appointed in 1867 and died in 1905), while in 1888 the tekke is served by 51 dervishes and in 1896 by 23. In 1919, baba Kiazim was appointed as postnişin, with only 10 dervishes still remaining in the tekke, while in 1940 it seems that he is the only person serving the tekke<sup>25</sup>.

Until the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it seems that apart from the dervishes a small Bektashi community existed/ lived by the tekke. On February 6, 1920, according to a letter addressed to the postnişin of the tekke of Katerini and signed by all the "people" of the Dorbali Sultan tekke, affiliated to the tekke are nine dervishes and eleven followers/ muhiban, all male and Albanians (six from Leskovik, one from Elbasan, one from Gjirokaster, one from Fraseri and one from Permet)<sup>26</sup>.

After the murder of baba Kiazim by Italian soldiers in 1942<sup>27</sup> none remained, so the dedebaba of Tirana Ali Rıza dede "transferred" dervish Sait from the tekke of Katerini and appointed him as postnişin of the Dorbali Sultan tekke<sup>28</sup>. Baba Seit Koka Vandresa, the last postnişin and at the same time the last dervish of the tekke, held his position until 1972. On November 30, 1972 he breathed his last in a clinic in Katerini.<sup>29</sup>

Everything suggests that there was an excellent relationship between the (Christian Orthodox) local inhabitants and the babas and dervishes of the tekke. The tekke had extensive lands under its ownership and provided jobs to a large number of locals, therefore it played an important social and economic role in the area. Until the 1950's, when its decline became visible, the tekke offered sustenance to all the poor (Christian Orthodox) peasants of the area.<sup>30</sup> Besides, various narrations of (Greek Christian Orthodox) visitors during the 20<sup>th</sup> century show that all strangers -including a bishop and an Orthodox monk<sup>31</sup>- were welcomed. The babas would receive them with pleasure and discuss about Bektashism with them, offering them, first of all, coffee and raki/ ouzo.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>22</sup> By Law 677/ 30-11-1925 passed by the Turkish Parliament.

<sup>23</sup> Full list of names of the 33 postnişin of the tekke in the Albanian newspaper Dielli (The Sun) Boston, USA, no. 5269, 1920. A similar list, as part of a petition, was sent to the Greek Ministry of Finance by the last postnişin Sait Baba, in Tsiakoumis, 2000 in the annex.

<sup>24</sup> By a berat of Sultan Abdul Medjit dated 1269 AH/ 1851 AD. Tsiakoumis, 2000: 52

<sup>25</sup> Mostly as a result of World War II, during which Albania is considered to be an enemy country for Greece, an event with certain negative consequences for the "Albanian" tekke and its "Albanian" dervishes.

<sup>26</sup> Tsiakoumis, 2000: 80

<sup>27</sup> During WWII Greece was occupied by the German army, while some parts were assigned to their Italian allies. It is worth mentioning that during that time the king of Albania Ahmet Zogu was offered shelter in the tekke. Information provided in November 1999 by Kostas Tsergas - the last shepherd attending the tekke flocks.

<sup>28</sup> Tsiakoumis, 2000: 86-87

<sup>29</sup> The clinic of Dr. Hasan Bektas, a prominent member of the Bektashi community of Katerini. More information below.

<sup>30</sup> Tsiakoumis, 2000: 10

<sup>31</sup> Tsiakoumis, 2000: 128, 125. It is interesting to notice that the monk finds that Bektashis have many similarities with the Freemasons.

<sup>32</sup> Karkavitsas, 1892:158, who visited the tekke at that time, reports "plentiful ouzo-drinking". In 1904

Regarding the question of the tekke property, until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the tekke owned about 32,000,000 sq.m. of land -actually all the area surrounding the village of Elefterohori (earlier named Arduan) in the district of Volos and the village of Asprogia (earlier named Ireni) near the tekke.<sup>33</sup> In 1881, Thessaly was annexed to Greece and in 1882 Bayram Murteza Baba<sup>34</sup>, postnişin of the tekke since 1865, attempted and finally achieved to transfer the entire tekke land to his ownership by fraudulent acts -by actually counterfeiting the title deeds<sup>35</sup>. Finally, in 1920, after a long and distressing process<sup>36</sup>, out of the 28,268,000 sq.m. of the tekke, 19,268,000 sq.m. were expropriated and only 9,236,000 sq.m. remained, of which 9,000,000 sq.m. were pastures.

The earthquake in 1955, which ruined more than half of the tekke buildings (the aş evi, the meydan and part of the surrounding wall), was not to be the hardest blow for the tekke. In 1959 and in implementation of the relevant legislation concerning Albanian properties in Greece<sup>37</sup>, all the property of the tekke was seized (attachment of real property) by the Greek State.

In a hard legal battle in order to regain the property, Seit baba first attempted to convince the Greek State that the tekke was a religious foundation/ vakıf having no connection with the Albanian State, therefore its treatment had to be irrelevant of the national origin or the nationality of the people serving it. After failing at that, as a last resort, he proceeded (September 9, 1951) to renouncing his connection with the Bektashis of Albania and the jurisdiction of the dedebaba of Tırana<sup>38</sup> and asked that both himself and the tekke be brought under the jurisdiction of the dedebaba Ahmet Siri dede in Cairo, Egypt, who -on September 16, 1952- granted Seit baba's request. His act did not bring the expected results. In 1959 the Greek Council of State reaffirmed the previous rulings (of 1956 and 1958), whereby 13,000,000 sq.m. of tekke lands were assigned to landless local peasants. Finally, the tekke was left with just 3,000,000 sq.m. of mostly mountain pastures (of which only 270,000 were arable) and a monthly reimbursement of 2,000 drachmas was paid "to the person (Seit baba) who lives in the monastery<sup>39</sup> until the issue is finally resolved".<sup>40</sup>

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the visitors are offered coffee and raki and are invited to the meal, while in 1938 the visitors are offered coffee, raki/ ouzo and cigarettes (Tsiakoumis, 2000: 126, 135). In 1966, baba Seit also offers his visitors chocolate, brandy and cigarettes (Thomas, 1966).

<sup>33</sup> The total income of the tekke during the 5-year period from 1846 AD (1262 Hicri) to 1850 AD (1266 Hicri) was 22,000 kuruş. Tsiakoumis, 2000: 68

<sup>34</sup> A Greek Christian Orthodox boy, who was kidnapped by Albanian soldiers (serving the Ottoman army?) from a village of Central Greece around 1830, converted to Islam, adopted by the Pasha of Almyros (Volos), became Bektashi and -nobody knows how- was appointed as postnişin in the tekke of Dorbalı Sultan in 1873. Tsiakoumis, 2000: 73

<sup>35</sup> In the name of protection of the property from the Greek State and the landless peasantry, and despite the fact that the Greek State in 1881 declared its intention to respect all the waqf/ vakıf property and proceeded to passing a relevant act in 1889, on the administration of the evkaf in Epirus and Thessaly. Tsiakoumis, 2000: 72

<sup>36</sup> In which his nephew İsmail İbrahim, his successor Tahir baba and finally Kiazim baba were also involved. For a detailed discussion, see Tsiakoumis, 2000: 72 - 94

<sup>37</sup> Pursuant to acts of 1940 (see Tsiakoumis, 2000: 98) characterising Albania as an enemy state. The state of war with Albania was lifted by Greece as late as in 1987!

<sup>38</sup> Characterising him as "a slave of communism" (Tsiakoumis, 2000: 176, who publishes all the relevant documents for the first time), in view of disengaging himself from Albania, an enemy state for Greece.

<sup>39</sup> 2,000 drachmas was more or less the salary of a middle-rank civil servant, more than enough for the personal needs of a dervish but totally inadequate for any maintenance expenses. Moreover, it is worth noticing that in all the relevant Greek documents, the tekke is described by the Christian term "monastery" -in most of the cases "Albanian Monastery".

<sup>40</sup> Tsiakoumis, 2000: 105

After the death of Seit baba (November 30, 1972), the property of the tekke (the land and a flock of some 200 sheep -the only thing living of the tekke that is still alive) was handed over to the Revenue Service of Farsala, which leases them to the highest bidder every four years, while in 1977 there was an interesting appearance and involvement of the Albanian State in the case, which asked for the restitution of the vakıf as Albanian property.<sup>41</sup>

The buildings of the tekke seemed to be in good condition until 1938<sup>42</sup>, served at that time by 3 dervishes<sup>43</sup>, but the tekke was facing severe financial problems, since the largest part of its property had been taken away. The 2 türbe, in particular, were in very good shape. The graves -especially that of Dorbali Sultan- were covered by valuable fabrics and the place was decorated with the above-mentioned green flags, with calligraphic Arabic letters on them, fastened on lances, with oil lamps and a horn/ nefir next to them. The 1955 earthquakes destroyed the largest part of the tekke buildings -the second floor of the meydan and the aş evi, but not the 2 türbe. After the death of baba Seit in 1972, the cemetery and the 2 türbe were almost totally destroyed by (illegal) excavations of treasure-seekers, and the rest of the remaining buildings were used as stalls. In 1981 the Greek State listed the tekke as a monument, but no preservation /restoration action has been taken since.

The death of baba Seit marks the end of the Bektashi community and the typical liturgical life in the Dorbali Sultan tekke. The place, however, still keeps a kind of life connected with its tradition. Apart from the tekke sheep flock grazing in the nearby pastures, visitors can notice an oil lamp always burning by an icon of St. George at the entrance of the türbe, showing the sense of holiness of the place for local peasants, whose ancestors used to work in the tekke fields. Moreover, in the türbe visitors can notice various offerings/ adak (kerchiefs, bars of soap, coins and candles) offered by unknown pilgrims (locals? strangers? Christians? Muslims?) asking for the blessing or thanking for the mediation of Dorbali Sultan. The most massive and spectacular presence of people, however, is on May Day, when a large number of (Christian Orthodox) people -most of them aware of the history of the tekke and caring about it, considering it part of their own cultural history<sup>44</sup>- gather there to celebrate the coming of the Spring. Such a gathering also brings to mind similar gatherings in the past, when -according to narrations of older people<sup>45</sup>- baba Seit would prepare the famous "tsorva" and serve it to his numerous visitors on the day of Ashurah.

#### The tekke of Hasan Baba in Tempi

In the village of Tempi (earlier named Hasan Baba köy<sup>46</sup>) by the Tempi valley (earlier named Hasan Baba boéazi) lies the tekke of Hasan Baba. The tekke cluster contained the

<sup>41</sup> The Council of State (2603/1977) denied jurisdiction as the dispute was of private character, however it did recognize that there is no longer *de facto* a state of war between Greece and Albania, therefore Act 2636/40 would no longer be applicable (Tsitselikis). For the time being, this is all the information available on the issue.

<sup>42</sup> As presented in the "Neos Kosmos" newspaper of Volos. Tsiakoumis, 2000: 129 - 137.

<sup>43</sup> Baba Klazim, dervish Feta and dervish Bairam. The tekke was also served by 4 Albanians, a Tserkez and a Greek, all offered sustenance by the tekke and receiving a 500 drachma monthly pay. Tsiakoumis, 2000: 134.

<sup>44</sup> Tsiakoumis, 2000: 13

<sup>45</sup> Narration of Kostas Maliahovas and his wife Evangelia, referring to 1957, in Tsiakoumis, 2000: 144. Similar information also in Kostas Tsergas's narration during my field research in November 1999.

<sup>46</sup> The village in its present form -since the wider area is full of ancient Greek and Byzantine ruins- seems to have been founded by the first Turks who arrived in the Balkans. In 1830, it was inhabited by 25 Turkish families and 2 Greek ones. In 1909 the village had 150 permanent inhabitants and 4 hotels/ inns. Vakalopoulos, 1972: 65-66. Muslim Ottoman Turks first arrived in the area of Thessaly (Central Greece) in the late 12<sup>th</sup> century; the area was annexed to the Greek State in 1881.

mausoleum/ türbe of Hasan Baba -an imposing building<sup>47</sup> with an inscription quoting Koranic verses<sup>48</sup> in its inside perimeter, and to the SW the cook-house/ aş evi, the meydan and the dervishes' and visitors' cells. In 1890 in the türbe there was the grave of Hasan Baba, accompanied by the graves of two other dervishes<sup>49</sup> and decorated by an iron club/ topuz<sup>50</sup>, an Arabic sword, a turban/sarık<sup>51</sup>, and two green flags, with calligraphic Arabic letters on them, fastened on two lances. An undated photograph showing a minaret close to the türbe<sup>52</sup> indicates the existence of a mosque in the cluster and is evidence of a powerful Sunni presence and influence.

Local historians mention that, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, people serving in the Hasan Baba tekke used to offer large meals<sup>53</sup> to all visitors irrespective of religion, while many Muslims who suffered from physical and mental conditions -coming from as far as Istanbul- would swarm to the türbe and hang parts of their clothes on the window rails, asking for healing.<sup>54</sup>

What remains in the area in the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is the semi-ruined türbe, with only parts of the inscription extant, and a part of the aş evi- meydan cluster -a large rectangular room having a big fireplace on one side, now used by the present owner as a sheep stall. Two attempts of the Greek State in the 1980's to restore and preserve the türbe were actually blocked by nationalistic circles who strongly opposed such a step and once threatened to plant a bomb at the türbe entrance. Nowadays not the slightest sign of liturgical activity is noticed.

#### The tekke of Katerini

In the town of Katerini, 70 km SSW of Thessaloniki, there was a memorable Bektashi community. Very few things are known about the tekke of Abdullah Baba in Katerini<sup>55</sup>. In 1922, the postnişin was the renowned Halife Djafer baba<sup>56</sup> and in 1949 the postnişin was Veli Mustafa baba, a Greek citizen<sup>57</sup> who held that post at least until October 30, 1954.<sup>58</sup> In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the tekke owned extensive lands close to the village of Koukos, at the foot of Mt Olympus, which were finally expropriated. Around 1950 there was only one dervish living in a semi-ruined cell by the türbe. The Bektashis of Katerini had strong connections with the people in Dorbali Sultan and with the Bektashi community of Thessaloniki.

There is no clear evidence about the early steps the Albanian Bektashi community in Katerini. Dr Hasan Bektas<sup>59</sup>, a prominent member of the local society and one of the last

<sup>47</sup> Estimated to have been built in the late 14<sup>th</sup> or early 15<sup>th</sup> century. Vakalopoulos, 1972.

<sup>48</sup> A part (from verse/ ayet 11 to verse/ ayet 17) from the 48<sup>th</sup> chapter/ sura (The Victory/ El Feth) of the Koran.

<sup>49</sup> Possibly the first two Hassan baba's successors. Vakalopoulos, 1972: 72

<sup>50</sup> According to the tradition, used by Hasan Baba himself in his various battles.

<sup>51</sup> According to the tradition, belonging to Hasan baba himself.

<sup>52</sup> Vakalopoulos. 1972:68.

<sup>53</sup> Once a year. The time of the year is not specified.

<sup>54</sup> Vakalopoulos, 1972: 73.

<sup>55</sup> Ayverdi (1982: 343) presents photos of the türbe and the tombstone that lies inside the türbe of Katerini saying that it is the türbe of Abdullah Baba. Obviously by mistake he places this monument in Kavala -where no such building was ever reported.

<sup>56</sup> As evidenced by a letter dated 1338 AH/ 1920 AD, signed by him and addressed to the dervishes of the Dorbali Sultan tekke, concerning the appointment of a new postnişin after the death of Tahir Baba, Tsiakoumis, 2000: 81. Djafer baba must have been a highly respected person. As Dr. Hasan Bektas mentions (personal communication, Katerini, 09.01.2001), when he was a child, the Bektashis of Katerini used to swear by Djafer baba.

<sup>57</sup> According to a relevant reference by Seit baba of the Dorbali Sultan Tekke. Tsiakoumis, 2000: 66

<sup>58</sup> As evidenced by a relevant document signed by Ahmet Siri dededaba in Cairo. The document is quoted by Tsiakoumis, 2000: 178 - 181.

<sup>59</sup> Dr Hasan Bektas was born in Katerini in 1925. His family originated in the village of Medjori in the Tepelen district, Southern Albania. Due to his age and his family history, he is one of the best

members of this community, attributes the foundation of the community -actually following Hasluck's, 1973 explanatory scheme- to an attempt made by Ali Tepelenli, Pasha of Yannina to create a network to control an extensive territory in Northern and Central Greece in order to create his own state in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>60</sup>

The size of the community in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century is not known, but it seems that it did not exceed 50 members. In 1923 they were not forced to follow the rest of the Macedonian Muslims on their way to Turkey in implementation of the Lausanne treaty. Since they were of Albanian origin, they had the option of either staying or leaving -and those who had strong economic interests in the area and enjoyed the trust and respect of their (Greek Christian Orthodox) compatriots decided to stay.

During World War II (1940 - 1945), since those people were considered to be Albanians and Greece was at war with Albania, they felt strong political and economic pressure (attachment of real property in retaliation for such action taken for Greek properties by the Albanian State).

The only memories of liturgical life the older people have are some "secret" gatherings of their parents named "davet" (Turkish = invitation) and the Ashurah feast.<sup>61</sup> In the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there were only four (former) Bektashi families<sup>62</sup>, almost all the young members of which had been baptised and had become Greek Christian Orthodox.

Nowadays from the tekke cluster only the türbe and 2 or 3 tombstones standing by it remain, in a relatively good condition, in the middle of a small park, which now belongs to the Municipality of Katerini and is often the target of nationalistic circles, although there is not the slightest sign of liturgical activity.

#### The tekke of Thessaloniki

The Bektashi presence in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Thessaloniki is difficult to be traced, mainly due to the persecution of Sultan Mahmud II and the great fire of Thessaloniki in 1917, which destroyed the biggest part of the city's historical centre.<sup>63</sup>

There is only limited and relatively misty information about the Bektashi community of Thessaloniki in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>64</sup>. Most of the community members were of Albanian origin with strong family ties with the Bektashi community of Katerini<sup>65</sup>. Just like in Katerini, the Bektashi people of Thessaloniki being of Albanian origin, they were exempted from the compulsory Greek-Turkish population exchange of 1923.

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informers on the issue. His father has long been the caretaker of the property of the Katerini tekke and his ex father-in-law, Mr Muharem Rustem Sula (?) was the mayor of the town of Katerini in the last period of the Ottoman rule in Greek Macedonia (1912) and, due to the respect he enjoyed from the local (Greek Christian) community, he held that position long after the annexation of Macedonia to Greece. All the information provided here comes from a long discussion with him in Katerini, on 09.01.2001 and 25.01.2001.

<sup>60</sup> At that time it seems that most of the community members were involved in the production and trade of salt produced at the salt-works on the coast of Katerini.

<sup>61</sup> Dr. Hasan Bektas. Personal communication, Katerini, 09.01.2001

<sup>62</sup> The families of Bektas, Kapran, Gerou and Soula.

<sup>63</sup> Including the Bektashi tekkes. Dimitriadis (1983: 379) mentions the Bektashi tekke of Kara Baba, which was confiscated in 1827, returned to the Bektashis in 1840 and finally -according to the inventory of the müfti of Thessaloniki- destroyed by the fire in 1917.

<sup>64</sup> Strong evidence for the existence of the community is a 1913 photograph showing a Bektashi baba -wearing the typical Bektashi white woollen crown (tadj) wrapped with green strip. Thessalonique 1913 & 1918. Les autochromes du musée ALBERT-KHAN. Olkos publications, Athens, 1999, p. 78, photo No 48 (code number 2019)

<sup>65</sup> Hasan Bektas. Personal communication, Katerini 09.01.2001.

Most of them seemed to be settled in the "Hirsh" district, SW of Vardari Square, an area mainly inhabited by (poor) Jews. Upon the outbreak of World War II (1940), since those people were Albanian citizens and Greece was at war with Albania, they were exiled to the island of Lemnos. After the end of the war, they returned to Thessaloniki. Some migrated to Albania and most to Turkey<sup>66</sup>, while some of those who stayed -either themselves or their children- became Christians.

In the mid-1950's two prominent members of the Greek Bektashi community (of Albanian origin) lived in Thessaloniki: the merchant Kemal Rifat and the agronomist Halit Gérou.<sup>67</sup> It is estimated that in the 1970's less than a hundred members of the Bektashi community lived in Thessaloniki -20 to 30 families<sup>68</sup>. Nowadays there is no visible presence of an active Bektashi community in Thessaloniki.

In Thessaloniki of the 1950's a tekke must have existed.<sup>69</sup> The last monument reminding of the presence of Bektashis in Thessaloniki was the so-called Albanian Cemetery of Triandria. There is no information about the time it was founded or its ownership regime. It is marked on a map of Thessaloniki dating back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, relatively far from the city walls, north of Askeri Hastahane, between seytan deresi in the West and üç çeşme deresi in the East.<sup>70</sup> It was surrounded by a high wall with an iron door, which was always locked. Inside there were many cypress trees and relatively few graves with even fewer gravestones with sculpted marble heads, which could be potential sources of information for researchers. Just past the entrance on the right there was a small square semi-destroyed building<sup>71</sup> which must have been a türbe.

There were probably burials until the 1970's. For the local society, who lacked any precise knowledge about the monument, the cemetery was a strange place, at times associated with ghost stories and at times considered to be a health hazard. Real use - actually giving life and value to the place- was made by the young boys of the area, who gathered there after climbing the surrounding wall and used it as a shelter, a meeting point, a place of discussion, sustaining a use which was close to the original one, without being aware of it.

Following strong pressure by the neighbours and in the name of regeneration/renewal of the area, the Albanian Cemetery in Triandria, the last Bektashi monument in Thessaloniki, was expropriated by the Municipality in 1983. Graves and gravestones were destroyed, while some of the bones were collected by a few "brave" workers, put into bags<sup>72</sup> and delivered to some distant relatives who arrived from Katerini for this purpose, who finally buried them in a corner of the (Christian) cemetery of Katerini, made available to them by the mayor of the town.<sup>73</sup> What

<sup>66</sup> Hasan Bektas. Personal communication, Katerini 09.01.2001

<sup>67</sup> They are both appointed (by Ahmet Siri dedebaba in Cairo on September 16, 1952) on a committee aiming to deal with the "various problems of financial and administrative nature the Bektashi tekkes in Greece face". The relevant document is fully quoted by Tsiakoumis, 2000: 177 - 178.

<sup>68</sup> Hasan Bektas. Personal communication, Katerini 09.01.2001.

<sup>69</sup> While possibly Bektashi was the türbe of Musa Baba, still staying semi-ruined in Terpsitheas sq. (being a Muslim cemetery till 1930) in Ano Poli in Thessaloniki. It is interesting to notice that till 1980 by the türbe there was a small shrine with the icon of St. George in it, by which someone could see often candles lightened both by Orthodox Christians and by Muslim Gypsies who had migrated from Thrace to Thessaloniki in early 1980's. By the end of 1990, one of the Albanian migrant workers who were working in the reconstruction of the square offered/ built by the türbe a shrine sacred to St. Charalambos. Field research findings.

<sup>70</sup> Dimitriadis, 1983, in the annex.

<sup>71</sup> According to the narrations of people living next door and in the vicinity, who used to play in the cemetery when they were young.

<sup>72</sup> A. Margariti, civil engineer, director of the Municipality of Triandria-Thessaloniki. Personal communication, 15.04.2005.

<sup>73</sup> Hasan Bektas. Personal communication, Katerini 09.01.2001

exists now is a plot of land about 30 by 50 m, defined by Koundouriotou, Glinou and Eleftherias streets.<sup>74</sup>

### Eastern Macedonia

In the area between Thessaloniki and the Nestos River, now defined as Eastern Macedonia, there must have been a significant presence of Bektashis during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. In many sources we notice the presence of people defined by others as "Kirdjalis" who speak Bulgarian, have Christian family names and are often called "emirs" mainly due to the green turbans wrapped around their heads.<sup>75</sup> In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century they are settled in an extensive mountain area around the towns of Drama, Eleftheroupoli (earlier named Pravi) and Kavala, with their southernmost settlement in the village of Kutskar (now named Eleohori) close to the coast of the Aegean Sea.<sup>76</sup>

There is little if any information about the Bektashi people and monuments of this area in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, who all left in 1924 during the Greek-Turkish population exchange under the Lausanne treaty, just like there is no adequate or clear evidence to prove whether and to what extent the Slav-speaking ex-Christians of the area, possibly Bektashis in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, became Turkish-speaking Sunni Muslims in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The chapel standing on the top of a hill by the Filipi village close to Kavala (earlier named Seliani, inhabited by Greek-speaking Muslims!) is probably the türbe of an unknown Bektashi baba, built in 1780 and transformed into a church in 1924.<sup>77</sup>

The most important monument of the area -which could be attributed to Bektashis with a slight reserve- is the türbe of Hadji(m ?) Baba,<sup>78</sup> some 2 km off the village of Eleftheres (earlier named Leftere), 20 km SW of Kavala. In November 2000, the only visible remains were those of a rectangular stone building (1x2m) with a number of broken ceramics in and around it, and those of a square stone wall with a side length of aprox. 20 m. surrounding the smaller building.<sup>79</sup> Field research carried out by one of my partners in 2003 among the elderly of the village of Güzel ²amli in the Dilek peninsula close to Kuşadası, Turkey, where the Muslim people of Leftere settled after the Greek-Turkish population exchange in 1923/24, did not come to fruition, since nobody seemed to have any relevant knowledge or memory.

Despite the fact that the Muslims abandoned the area 80 years ago and the türbe is ruined<sup>80</sup>, there is some activity giving some "ceremonial life" to the site. Every spring, on the

<sup>74</sup> It is worth mentioning that in the Albanian Bektashi Cemetery of Triandria, Thessaloniki Tahsin Pasha was buried, the Ottoman general of Albanian origin (possibly a Bektashi) who handed Thessaloniki over to the Greek army in 1912.

<sup>75</sup> E.-M. Cousinéry, *Voyage dans la Macédoine, contenant des recherches sur l'histoire, la géographie et les antiquités de ce pays*, Paris, 1831, vol. I, p. 163. References to "Kirdjalis" also in Hasluck, 1973 chapter 42.

J.-J. Tromelin, "Itinéraire d'un voyage fait dans la Turquie d'Europe d'après les ordres de Son Excellence le général en chef Marmont duc de Raguse, etc., etc. par un officier d'état-major de l'armée de Dalmatie dans l'automne de 1807", *Revue des Études Napoléoniennes* 12/ 1917, pp. 344-381 & 13/ 1918, pp. 96-124.

B. Nikolaidy, *Les Turcs et la Turquie contemporaine. Itinéraire et compte-rendu de voyages dans les provinces ottomanes avec cartes détaillées*, Paris, 1859, vol. I, pp. 275-276.

<sup>76</sup> Koutzakiotis, 2000: 257

<sup>77</sup> Politistikos Sílogos Filípon (Filípi Cultural Association), 1999, Seliani - Mesorema - Filípi: enas eonas (Seliani - Mesorama - Filípi: one century), p. 38.

<sup>78</sup> Known to the locals as "Hadji Baba"

<sup>79</sup> While the 2 big nearby halls show traces of attempted treasure finding.

<sup>80</sup> Initially severely damaged by a fire set by a local Greek Christian as an act of revenge after being attacked by a local Turk (Beikaki, 1994: 51) and finally ruined in the course of time and with the "help" of treasure-seekers, to such an extent that it is hardly traceable today.

Tuesday after Easter, the (Christian) villagers take the holy icons from the church of St. Ioannis and hold a procession, which ends at a newly-built chapel (1980?), some 20 m away from the ruins of the türbe. There they perform the "holy water rites"<sup>81</sup> and return to the church, where they leave the icons. Later, they go to a nearby square where they dance three ritual dances accompanied only by a cappella songs, with no use of instruments.<sup>82</sup>

Signs of Bektashi presence also exist in the area between Kavala and Seres. As Hypert, 1889 mentions, by the river Angista there was an inn/ han ran under the directions of a Bektashi dervish. The dervish reportedly introduced himself (to a catholic priest) as a "Turk priest", described the functional and symbolic meaning of his sword -connecting it with his hostility against the descendants of the killers of řmãm Hüseyn- and stated that he was a freemason, asking the catholic priest if he was a freemason too. There is no further information connecting the above-mentioned dervish to a dergâh or indicating or proving connections with other specific networks.

### Thrace

In the area of Greek Thrace, east of the Nestos river,<sup>83</sup> there is a significant presence of Bektashi monuments and of a relatively extended Bektashi community -located in the mountain area between Rodopi and Evros prefectures, close to the Greek-Bulgarian borders- mainly due to the fact that the Muslim population of this area was exempted from the Greek-Turkish population exchange following the Lausanne Treaty in 1923. All the Muslims of Greek Thrace are fluent Turkish speakers, the great majority of them have Turkish as their mother tongue, while a group of highlanders living in a strip of land by the Greek-Bulgarian borders, named Pomaks, have a Slavic language, close to Bulgarian, as their mother tongue. The vast majority of the Thracian Muslims consider themselves as part of the Turkish nation.

#### The tekkes of Karadja Ahmet and Karadja Ayse

In the village of Ehinós (named óahin by locals), in a mountainous area some 30 km N of Xanthi, inhabited by Sunni Muslims only, lie the tekkes -actually the türbes- of Karaca Ahmet and Karaca Ayşe. As Zenginís, 1988 (the most systematic researcher into Bektashism in Greek Thrace) informs us, the türbe of Karaca Ahmet, having by it an inscription dated 1300 AH/ 1882 AD,<sup>84</sup> has been part of the tekke camisi mosque at least since the mid-1960's. The tekke of Karaca Ayşe -also named tekke of Osoika, after the hill on which it stands- is a small (5x7m) stone building with a stone carved grave inside, by which village women would often gather and read a ceremonial prayer (mevlit).<sup>85</sup> By the türbes of Karaca Ahmet no typical Bektashi activity has been reported.

#### The tekke of Hasip Baba

In the eastern part of the town of Xanthi (called also řskeçe by the Turkish speakers), inhabited both by Christians and (Sunni) Muslims, and on the junction between Stratou Ave. and H. Kopsida st., lies the tekke of Hasip baba. Until the early 1990's, when the town plan was

<sup>81</sup> The whole ceremony does not have the slightest connection to the existence of the türbe of Hadji(m) baba. This ceremony -called "maz'idia" and probably related to the Arabic word mazi / maziyye which means "past" but also "memorial service"- used to be held in the old cemetery of the village until 1918. As Beikaki, 1994:51 states, at that time and mainly due to certain irregularities as a result of a funeral which had taken place some days ago and obstructed the normal "flow" of the ceremony, the priest decided to change place and move it far enough from the cemetery.

<sup>82</sup> Field research findings 2001; see also Beikaki, 1994: 48 - 49

<sup>83</sup> The river named Nestos in Greek, Mesta in Bulgarian and Kara Su in Turkish is considered to be the natural border between Macedonia and Thrace.

<sup>84</sup> It is not clear, however, whether this is the date of death of Karaca Ahmet or the date the inscription was made.

<sup>85</sup> Zenginís, 1988: 218 - 220.

implemented, new streets were established and a block of flats was built just by the türbe, the tekke covered a relatively extensive area. In the tekke's yard<sup>86</sup> there were two graves of two former postnişin: that of Hadji Salim baba and that of Arif baba, both dated 1320 AH / 1902 AD.

What still stands nowadays is the türbe of Hasip Baba, while outside the türbe and just before the entrance, there are two more graves. The one with the typical twelve-fold Bektashi mitre/ külah sculpted at the top of the tombstone and a teslim taşı in the centre of the tombstone belongs to İbrahim baba, who died in 1311 AH/ 1893 AD. The other one belongs to Hasim Bey, a rich landowner from Xanthi who owned the land on which the tekke was built and died in 1340 AH/ 1921 AD.

Inside the türbe there is a wooden coffin covered with green fabric and a small wooden pulpit/ minber painted green, with the word "Allah" carved on it (in Arabic) and below it the words "Ya Muhammed", "Ya Ali", "Ya Hasan", "Ya Hüseyin", while on the wall behind the minber there are three axes/ teber of various sizes, two small elaborate T-shaped iron sticks/ şeyh mütekkası and a horn/ nefir. Two inscriptions, one inside and the other above the entrance of the türbe, indicate that the türbe was built in the 1880s<sup>87</sup>.

In the summer of 2004 in the türbe and by the grave there were lots of offerings: pieces of green fabric, a large number of chaplets, candles, pairs of clogs etc., while close to the cypress tree by the entrance of the türbe there were signs of a recently sacrificed animal/ kurban. I estimate that they are all connected to expressions of folk religious beliefs. No traces of a Bektashi community or signs of typical Bektashi practices were noticed.<sup>88</sup>

#### The tekke of Kütüklü Baba

By the village of Selino (called also Kereviz by the Turkish speakers), some 25 km SE of Xanthi, inhabited by Christians only, lies the türbe of Kütüklü Baba; a carved stone octagonal building of elaborate design and dome cover, having no inscriptions at all, possibly built in the 15<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>89</sup> Obviously it was part of a cluster that no longer exists, although there is no clear indication that it belongs to the Bektashi culture. When I visited the monument in the summer of 1999, on the western side there were some remains of a Muslim grave, which was destroyed by treasure-seekers and repaired in a makeshift manner, covered by kerchiefs, having by it as offerings bottles of water, (traditional straw) brooms, pairs of clogs, candles, pieces of bread and coins. On the eastern side of the türbe, there were the icons of Holy Mary and St. George, a candelabrum and lots of candles<sup>90</sup>, while outside the türbe there were relatively fresh signs of a kurban -mainly of cooking and consumption of meat. When I revisited the site in 2004, it was completely deserted. No "fresh" offerings existed, while the icons and the candelabrum were missing. Besides, an asphalt road to the tekke was built, a sign that local authorities consider the monument to be ready for "development".

<sup>86</sup> As Zegkinis, 1988: 217 informs us. They both had at the top of the tombstone the ethemi taç .

<sup>87</sup> Not showing clearly whether that was also the date of death of Hasim baba. The inscriptions, transliterated in Latin letters and translated in Greek, are fully quoted by Zegkinis, 1988: 214 - 215.

<sup>88</sup> Even if we take into consideration that the previous caretaker, an old Sunni man from a mountain village of Xanthi -who for many years and until his death in 2003 lived in the türbe, with the permission, as he stated, of the family that previously owned the wider area and the mansion by the türbe and now lived in Turkey- saw to it that a candle burnt by Hasip Baba's grave every Thursday night.

<sup>89</sup> Zegkinis, 1988: 226, based on Ayverdi.

<sup>90</sup> Wherever in this text I refer to candles I mean those white (paraffin), some 15 cm high, industrially-made candles -the modern "successors" of the tallow wax- used by heterodox Muslims to light by the türbes, totally different in colour and shape from the wax candles used as a rule by the Christians of the area.

### The tekke of Kırklar in Genissea

In the village of Genissea (called also Yenice by the Turkish speakers), 12 km SSE of Xanthi, inhabited half by Christians and half by (Sunni) Muslims, in the neighbourhood named "Kırklar" (Turkish = the forty) lies the türbe of Kaygusuz Sultan.

Two inscriptions (one on the tombstone, half buried, and the other above the gate, dated 1265 AH/ 1848 AD) refer to Kaygusuz Sultan.<sup>91</sup> On the left wall there hangs an axe/ teber with the word "Allah" inscribed on it, while the existence of various offerings -towels, chaplets, (traditional straw) brooms, pitchers, bottles with water, etc.- shows that the türbe is connected with folk religious practices.

### The tekke of Taslik in Petrota

In the village of Petrota (called also Taşlık by the Turkish speakers), some 30 km SE of Komotini, lies a 6x8m old building with two rooms. The one on the right is a chapel dedicated to St. George and the other on the left is a prayer place for Muslims. An inscription over the gate with the (semi-erased) word "Allah" and a circle below divided in twelve parts is the only element referring us to the Bektashi tradition.

### The tekke of Seyyid Ali Sultan or Kızıl Deli

By the village of Roussa (called also Ruşenler/ Urşanlar by the Turkish speakers), some 33 km WNW of Soufli (called also Sofulu by the Turkish speakers) by the Greek-Turkish borders, in the middle of an area inhabited mainly by some 3,000 rural Bektashis who live in some 20 villages and settlements, lies the most important Bektashi monument of Northern Greece: the tekke of Seyyid Ali Sultan.

The tekke was founded in 804 AH/ 1402 AD and restored in 1173 AH/ 1759 AD, according to the inscription over the gate of the big hall for the liturgical services/ meydan. The cluster covers an extensive area with a lot of buildings, the most important being the türbe of Seyyid Ali.

In the centre of the türbe is the grave of Seyyid Ali, a wooden coffin covered by green fabric (on which people often place as offerings towels, kerchiefs etc.), having on its eastern side, under the cover and in a plastic bag, a piece of red thick wool cloth, according to the tradition a part of Seyyid Ali Sultan's clog/ hırka. A short rail surrounds the coffin. Around it there are 12 candlesticks, and next to it, on the right side, a tray with a jug of water and three small glasses, close to a Koran, while the wall is hung with inscriptions in Arabic with the words "Allah", "Muhammed", "Ali", "Hasan" and "Husein". Adjacent to the türbe is a small praying place/ mescit with mihrab. Close to the türbe - mescit building, on the left, there is a large cook-house/ aş evi, while on the right lies the meydan joined to a large room where the collective meals (muhabbet) take place<sup>92</sup>.

When one enters the recently restored<sup>93</sup> meydan, one can see on the floor a big flat white stone with a candlestick on it, half-covering a similar dark brown-red stone. On the left there is a huge fireplace, close to which there is a small red carpet with 11 candlesticks on it. The entire room next to the meydan is covered by carpets, with lots of pillows, mattresses and blankets in one corner and a small library in another corner, while the walls are hung with two old

<sup>91</sup> The inscriptions, transliterated in Latin letters and translated in Greek, are fully quoted by Zegkinis, 1988: 223.

<sup>92</sup> Moreover, close to the cook-house there are two slaughter-houses, while in various locations there are stables.

<sup>93</sup> Around 2003 (?) the wooden ceiling was replaced, a wooden floor was fitted over the existing earthen one and -most importantly- the two slot-shaped windows on the south wall gave their place to two large windows, which give a symbolic "accessibility" and "transparency" to the place.

instruments (saz), icons of imam Ali and recent hand-written inscriptions in Arabic (in the Ottoman language?).<sup>94</sup>

At the north side of the cluster there is a big building called paşa konaéi, possibly quarters for babas in the past, where nowadays the caretaker (the devoted - and worthy of currying the title of "the guard of the mausoleum"/ türbedar - Müslim Tsolak) and his family live. At the south side, behind the türbe, there is a graveyard, where many former postnişin are buried -the oldest inscribed tombstone dates back to 1160 AH/ 1747 AD. There are two more graveyards some 100m east of the tekke perimeter<sup>95</sup>.

The tekke of Seyyid Ali Sultan is also connected -considered as a single unit- to the Aşaéi tekke (the lower tekke) some 10 km E of the Seyyid Ali Sultan tekke, 1 km NE of the village of Mikro Derio (called also Küçük Derbent by the Turkish speakers), inhabited by Christians only.

The history of this tekke is misty; the fact that at least two tombstones of the graveyard out of the Tekke of Kizil Deli in Roussa, dated around 1200 AH/ 1786 AD, refer to the "upper tekke" using the word bala (Persian = upper) shows that in the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the Aşaéi tekke still operated. Everything (location and informers) suggests that at that place there was a relatively large cluster, most probably destroyed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. What exists now (2004) is an octagonal stone built türbe, restored around 1990, with a grave inside; a piece of ground 1x2.5 m surrounded by a short wall, having on two sides remains of undated old tombstones, with no typical Bektashi mark on them. On the short wall there are 12 flat stone candlesticks, usually with half-burned white candles of them. Outside the türbe there are also some parts of other old tombstones; one in Arabic, another reading "Süleyman dede Safer 1220" and another one -on the roof- reading "Abdullah dede 1220".

At the time the Kizil Deli tekke was founded, extensive lands were assigned to (the founder of) it by the Sultans<sup>96</sup>, actually establishing a religious and philanthropic foundation/ vakif. This land was confiscated after 1826 and the reforms of Sultan Mahmud II, but everything shows that the tekke "recovered" fully after 1840. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the tekke seemed to be in a good financial condition, having about 80 dervishes, some 2,500 sheep, 200 cows, 50 horses, and 25 couples of water buffaloes, as well as 1,458,000 sq.m. of fields, 70,000 sq.m. of vineyards and a wine-press, 55,000 sq.m. of orchards, 5 water-mills, 15 buildings, 8 stables, 8 granaries, 3 ovens, an oil and soap workshop etc.<sup>97</sup>

In the four first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the tekke suffered many hard blows. As a result of the antagonism between Bulgarian and Turkish irregular troops over the control of the area and the Bulgarian occupation of Western Thrace in the years 1913-1919, many locals left the area and their settlements were destroyed<sup>98</sup>. In the years 1925-1940 the area of the tekke was taken possession of, used mainly as stables and finally semi-destroyed by a large group of Greek nomadic shepherds (Sarakatsani/ Karakatsani) under the leadership of the notorious "Gika".<sup>99</sup> Besides, through a vague process and in the name of protection (?!), all the tekke lands were transferred in the 1960's (?) to a person now living in Turkey, who unsuccessfully

<sup>94</sup> "Presents" of the postnişin of the Otman baba tekke given to the caretaker's family members during their visit to Southern Bulgaria in 2003.

<sup>95</sup> The inscriptions on some tombstones, as well as the inscription over the meydan gate mentioned above, transliterated in Latin letters and translated in Greek, are fully quoted by Zegkinis, 1988: 180, 191 - 195.

<sup>96</sup> See the detailed discussion of Zegkinis, 1988: 180 - 185, with references to Ottoman archives.

<sup>97</sup> Kavak, 2005.

<sup>98</sup> Finally, in 1920 Western Thrace was annexed to Greece.

<sup>99</sup> Field research findings. See also Kavak, 2005.

attempted to sell them.<sup>100</sup> Nowadays the tekke has no land and its revenues fully depend on the funds the Bektashis of the area are in a position to raise.

In the area having the tekke of Seyyid Ali Sultan as a geographical and spiritual centre, a lot of activities connected to the Bektashi culture take place, most importantly the various kurbans from Spring to Autumn every year,<sup>101</sup> by the tombs/ yatir of local saints. The "cycle" opens with the kurbans on the day of Hederlez (May 6) in various places, among them by the Aşaéi tekke. The next big kurban -the kirk kurban- is some 40 days later, by the tombs of the "Gaziler" close to the village of Chloi (called also Ebilköy by the Turkish speakers), some 20 km W of the Kizil Deli tekke, followed by the kurban by the tomb of Ali Baba, in the village of Ano Kambi (called also Yukarı Kamberler by the Turkish speakers), some 110 days after Hederlez. Meanwhile numerous other kurbans take place<sup>102</sup>. The kurban by the tomb of Mursal baba, some 3 km W of the tekke (November 8, the day of Kasim) closes the "cycle", while the biggest kurban is the one taking place in the tekke on the 13<sup>th</sup> of Muharrem every year, where almost all the Bektashis of the area gather.<sup>103</sup> It is worth mentioning that in some kurbans, especially those of Hederlez in Aşaéi tekke and Mursal Baba<sup>104</sup>, Christians from the nearby villages participate in the feast, too, and eat the meat of the kurban with pleasure, most of them having a rather vague perception of the whole thing, but knowing and accepting that it is in the name and memory of a Muslim saint. The Sunni people of the area, who usually visit the feast area in hundreds, do not usually ask to eat the meat of the kurban, perhaps perceiving it as forbidden by the religion/ haram.

Another feast connected to the local Bektashi culture but not having straight religious connotations is the wrestling festival of Setsek, which is held in a plateau near the village of Ano Kambi in the beginning of August, traditionally under the directions of the "Lord of the plateau" (yayla aéasi). In the year 1996 the "Setsek Cultural Association" was established and started undertaking the organisation of this feast and of some kurbans<sup>105</sup>. Among other things, they introduced some "modernisation measures",<sup>106</sup> which seem to have disappointed a number of the Bektashis of the area.

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<sup>100</sup> Field research findings.

<sup>101</sup> We have to keep in mind that this is a mountain area at an altitude of over 1,000 metres, with heavy winters and snowfalls, which made travelling during wintertime impossible in the past.

<sup>102</sup> Detailed presentation by Vrahiologlu, 2000.

<sup>103</sup> To illustrate the size of that feast, in the year 1999 I counted more than 100 sheep, goats and cows offered by the people and sacrificed in this kurban.

<sup>104</sup> The special symbolism of those days needs to be underlined here. Hederlez -an important day to the heterodox Islam since, according to the tradition, on that day Hidir meets prophet Elias- on May 6 (the day of the celebration of the memory of St. George according to the old Christian Orthodox calendar) is 45 days after the Spring solstice and marks the beginning of Summer. Accordingly, Kasim, on November 8 (the day of the celebration of the memory of St. Demitrios according to the old Christian Orthodox calendar) is 45 days after the Autumn solstice and marks the beginning of Winter, while the Seçek feast is in mid-summer close to the day of the celebration of the memory of prophet Elias according to the old Christian Orthodox calendar.

<sup>105</sup> It should be pointed out that all these big events/feasts are an excellent opportunity for a public confrontation between the Greek and the Turkish nationalism. The Turkish State, investing in the strong cultural bonds people of the area have with Turkey, seems to guide and support (mainly through the Turkish consulate in Komotini) the "Seçek Association", facilitates the presence of folk dancers and musicians from Turkey etc. At the same time Greece, whose citizens -some of the poorest and most neglected, at that- are the participants in those feasts, declares its existence and will through the presence of Prefects and Mayors, who usually promise to finance infrastructure works.

<sup>106</sup> E.g. the Setsek feast is now held on the first weekend of August and not in mid-week, as traditionally was the case.

Of course, and apart from all these activities, the Bektashis of the area follow their own liturgical life, with acts accessible only to the initiated ones. It seems, however, that this tradition is weakening<sup>107</sup>; as a result, the whole thing is slipping towards a folk religious practice, perhaps partly due to a progressive "Sunnification"<sup>108</sup> and partly due to the lack of local Bektashi scholars capable and willing to cultivate and spread an elaborate Bektashi tradition.

### Concluding Remarks

The significant Bektashi presence in Central and Northern Greece in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century has progressively shrunk, while nowadays the only remarkable presence is that of some 3,000 Bektashis living around the tekke of Kizil Deli.

The Greek State practice for vakifs (most notably, confiscation of extensive lands and redistribution to landless peasants -especially in areas where Muslim communities no longer existed), doubled by the actions (mismanagement etc.) of some "perjurers" from the Bektashi community, resulted in great property losses, which drove to a further drain of human resources and to the devastation of the monuments.

The knowledge existing to date, based on field research and Greek bibliographical sources, is not able to sustain the hypothesis of the existence of a network connecting all Bektashi communities and monuments in Central and Northern Greece in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It seems that the Bektashi communities of Thessaly, Epirus and Central Macedonia were connected indeed; their main agglutinating element was the Albanian ethnic origin of the people and their being under the jurisdiction of the Bektashi centre of Albania, which made it possible for them to offer basic mutual coverage for their administrative needs at least. The people around the Kizil Deli tekke obviously constitute a network with an unclear connection -at least to me- with the Bektashi circles in Turkey, while -rather due to the turmoil and the changes in the area during the three first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century- we notice the existence of a gap between Thessaloniki and Komotini.

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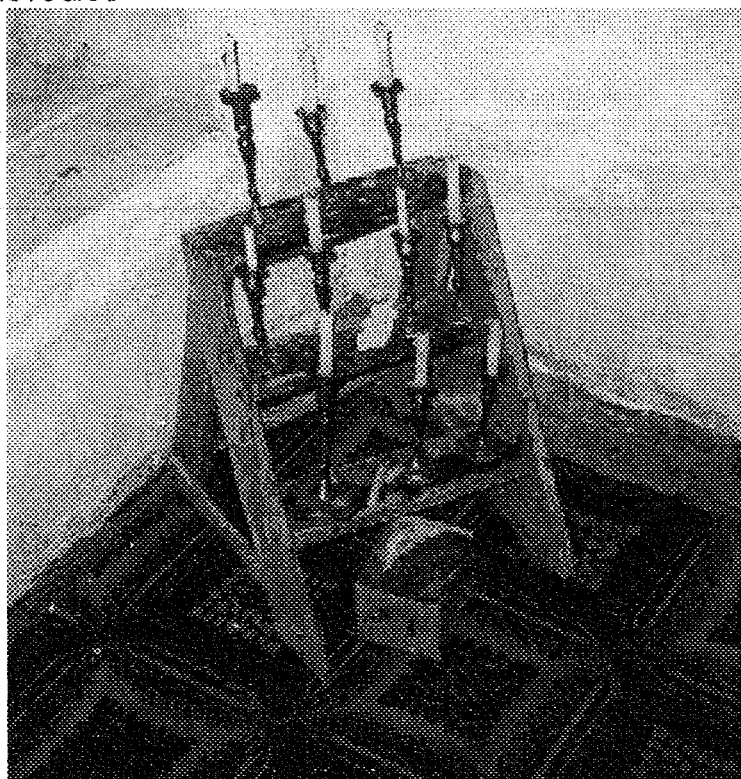
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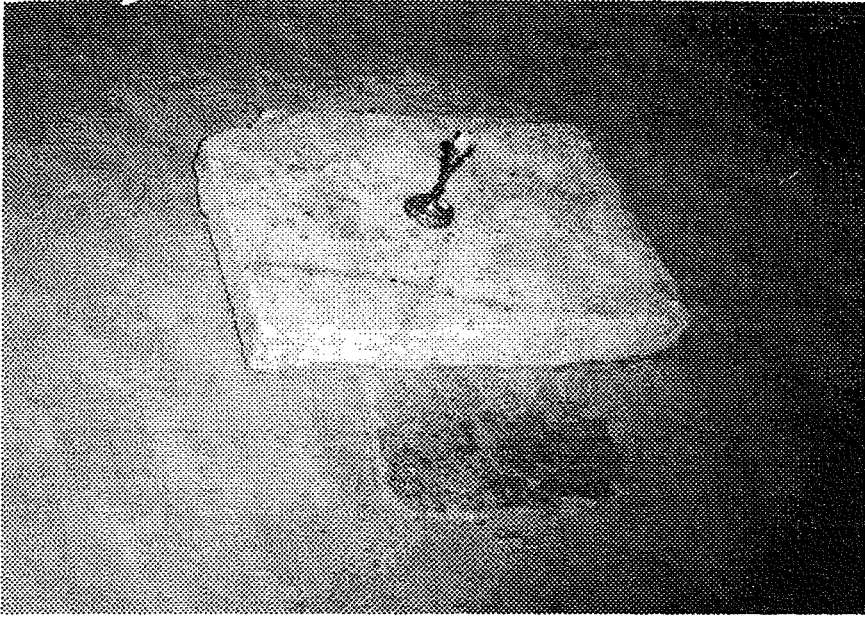
<sup>107</sup> On that issue there is limited "public" knowledge, since the people of the area strongly avoid discussing such issues. Once, in the early 1990's, the leadership got to the point of "punishing" a member of the community who dared publish two rather general articles in a local Turkish newspaper.

<sup>108</sup> It is worth mentioning that -according to field research findings- nowadays, in most of the cases (ceremonial and collective meals), the people of the area, most probably in an attempt to avoid being blamed by the Sunnis, replace alcohol (wine or raki) with cola type refreshments.

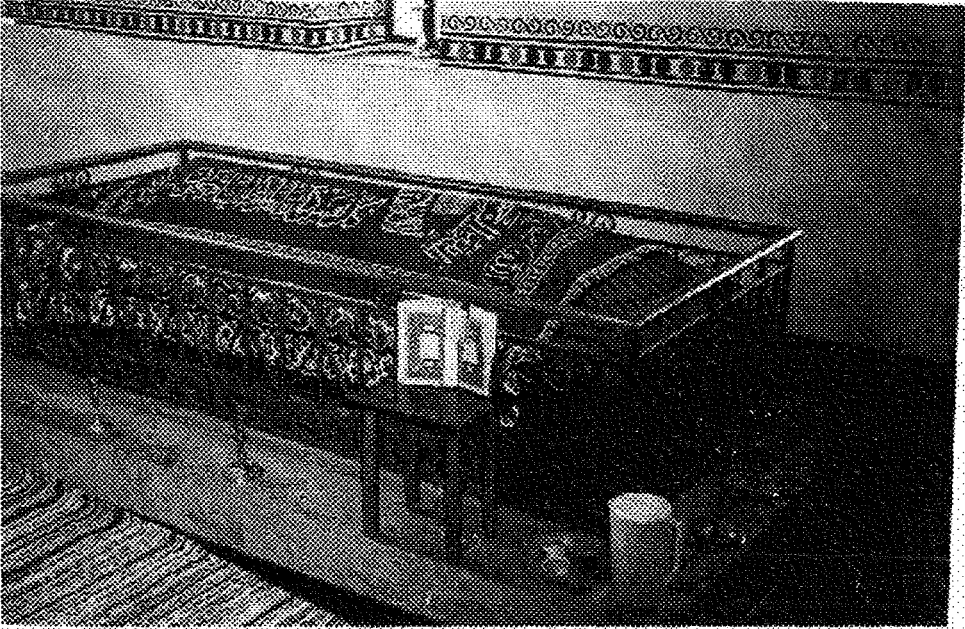
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#### PHOTOGRAP





In the meydan of Seyyid Ali Sultan



The turbe of Seyyid Ali Sultan



In the turbe of kutuklu Baba



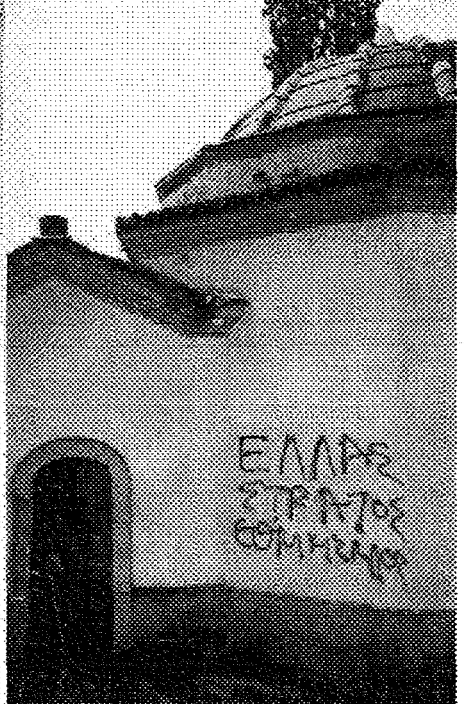
In the turbe of kutuklu Baba



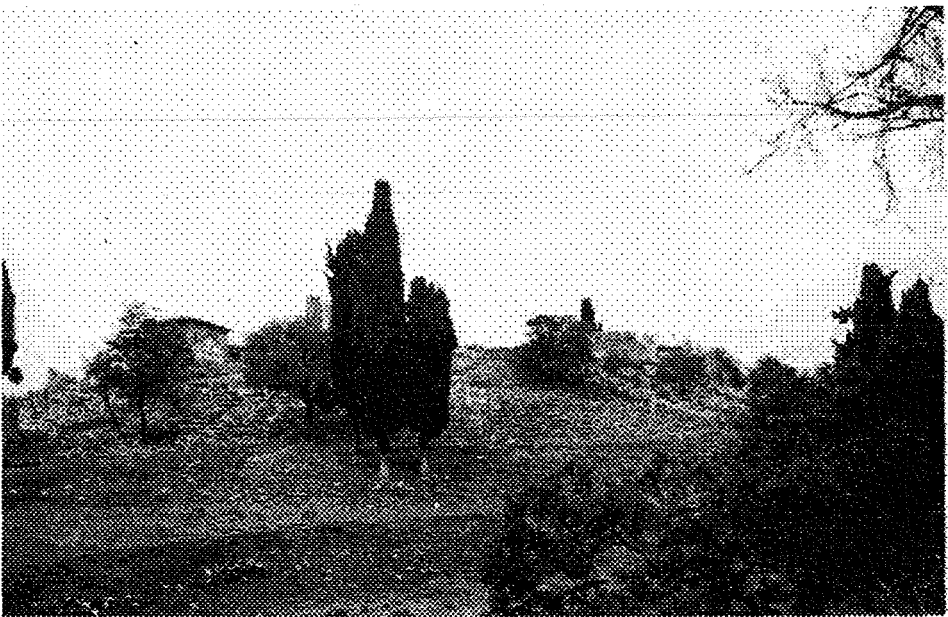
Entrance of the turbe of Seyyid Ali Sultan



The turbe of Abdullah Baba in Katerini



The tube of Abdullah Baba in Katerini



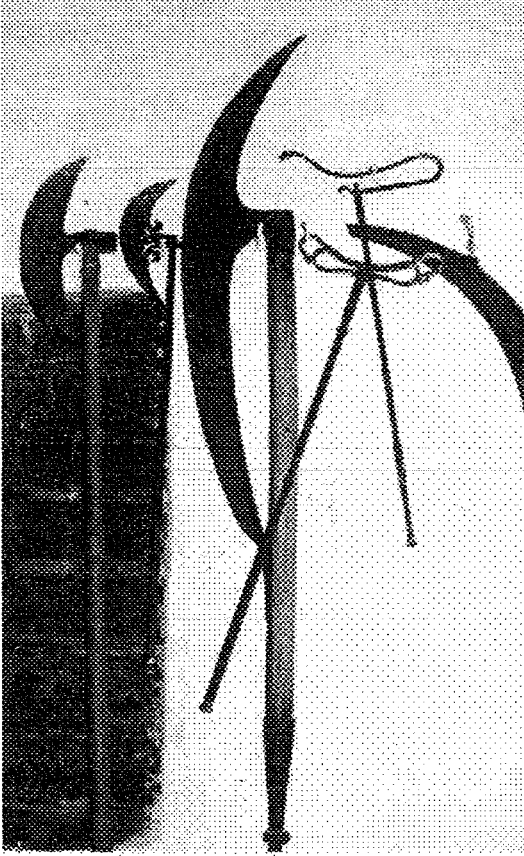
The tekke of Dorbali Sultan



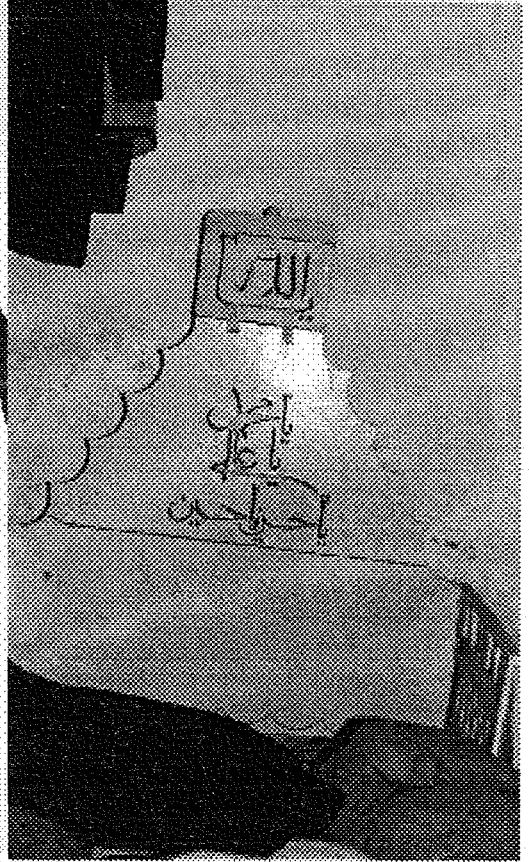
The cook house at the tekke of Dorbali Sultan



The ground floor of the meydan in the tekke of Dorbali Sultan



In the turbe of Hasip Baba



In the turbe of Hasip Baba



To the tekke of Dorbali Sultan



At the tekke of Dorbali Sultan



The turbe of Dorbali Sultan

## Bildirinin Türkçe Özeti:

Bugün Yunanistan olarak adlandırılan bölgede Osmanlı döneminde önemli miktarda Bektaşî topluluğu bulunmaktaydı. Bunlar Arnavutça ve Yunanca konuşan Orta ve Kuzey Yunanistan'da, Girit'te ve Türkçe ve Bulgarca konuşan Kuzey Doğu Yunanistan'daki Bektaşîlerdir. 18.yy'da II. Mahmut reformları, Yunanistan'ın bağımsızlığı, II. Dünya savaşında Arnavutluk-Yunanistan anlaşmazlığı, Türkiye-Yunanistan göçmen değişimi, gibi bazı faktörler bu dini toplulukların zaman içinde zayıflamasına yol açmıştır.

Bu çalışma çoğunlukla Yunanca kaynaklar esas alınarak merkezi ve Kuzey Yunanistan'daki önemli yapıtlar, ve bununla beraber dini toplulukların tarihi, Bektaşîlerin etkileri ve onların Bektaşî olmayanlara etkileri de göz önüne alınarak 20.yy. da ki durumunu ortaya koymaya çalışmaktadır. Tekkelerin konumları ve son durumları hakkında detaylı bilgiler verilmiştir.

**Epirus, Selanik ve Merkez Makedonya:** Konitsa'nın Kuzey Batı Yunanistan'da önemli bir Bektaşî merkezi idi. Merkez camisi Hüseyin Şah ismini taşıyordu. Burada köklü aileler bulunmaktaydı. Mesela Namık Kemal Konitsadan idi. Konitsada çok sayıda tekke bulunmaktaydı. Baba Osman ve b aba Hüseyin gibi. Bunların ciddi manada mal varlığı bulunmaktaydı. Kurban Bayramlarında bu tekke ve türbelerde kurbanlar kesilir, insanlar ziyaret eder, mumlar yakıp, sabun, havlu, mendil ve terlik adarlardı. Aşure günlerinde aşure pişirilir, Hıristiyanlarında dahil olduğu Matem Muharrem günlerinde çamurlu kahveyle karıştırılmış suyu içerdiler. Bu bölgelerde Hıristiyanlarla ne kadar içi içe olduğunu gösterir.

**Farsala'da Dorbalı Sultan Tekkesi:** Kaynaklar buradaki Amavut tekkesinden söz edilir. Tekkede büyük bir duvar ve küçük bir giriş bulunmaktadı. Giriş Kaligrafler ile süslenmiştir. Burada tipik Osmanlı türbeleri bulunmaktadı. Yaklaşık 32 milyon metre karelik arsaya sahipti. Tekke Türkiye'de tekkelerin yasaklanmasından soma tamamen Arnavutlaşmıştır. 1941 de baba kazım orada kalan tek kişi olmuştur. Burada da Hıristiyanlar ve Babalar arasında çok yakın ilişki olduğu gözlenir. Buranın sakinlerini azalmasına karşılık, rahipler tarafından ziyaret devam edilmiştir. 1955 deki depremde ciddi hasar görmüştür. Zaman içinde dağıtılan, satılan arazi en son kalanı kadaryla Farsal Arsa Ofisine devredilmiştir.

**Tempi'deki Hasan Baba Tekkesi:** Zengin süslemelere sahip tekkede türbe ve cami müstemilatı ile hizmet vermiş 19. ve 20 yy.1arda salgın hastalıklarda buraya İstanbul'dan bile şifa bulmaya insanlar gelmiştir. Şu anda ahır olarak kullanılmaktadır.

**Katerini Tekkesi:** Burası hakkında çok az bir bilgiye sahibiz. Şu anda belediyeye ait tekkeden çok az bir kalıntı bulunmaktadı.

**Selanik Tekkesi:** 1917' deki büyük yangında büyük hasar görmüştür. Cemaati dağılmış, büyük kısmı mübadelede Türkiye göçmüştür. 1950'lerde iki önemli Bektaşî babası Kemal Rıfat ve Halit Gerou Selanikte yaşamıştır. Kalanların büyük kısmı kendileri yada çocukları Hıristiyanlaşmıştır. Şu anda Selanikte görünen bir Bektaşî cemaati bulunmamaktadır. Şu andaki kalıntılardan tekkenin etrafında türbe ve az sayıda mezarların kalıntıları bulunmaktadı. Şu andaki haliyle hayalet hikayelerinin atfedildiği ancak cesur gençlerin uğrayabildiği bir yer halini almıştır.

**Doğu Makedonya:** 19. ve 20. yy. da çok ciddi bir Bektaşî cemaati bulunmaktaydı. Eski slavce konuşanların yerine 16.yy da artarak 20.yy.da Türkçe konuşan Müslüman topluluk yerini almıştır. En önemli eser Hacı Baba türbesidir. Bu bölgede bir çok irili ufaklı dini yapıtlardan

kalıntılar bulunmaktadır. Bu bölgede seromonikte olsa dini törenler yapılmaya devam etmektedir. Kaval ve Seres bölgesinde Bektaşî varlığı göze çarpmaktadır.

**Thrace:** Buradaki Müslüman topluluk mübadeleden istisna tutulmuştur. Ana dilleri Türkçe'dir. Pomak olarak adlandırılan gruplar ise Bulgarca'ya yakın bir Slav dili konuşmaktadırlar.

**Karaca Ahmed ve Karaca Ayşe Tekkeleri:** Osaika tekkesi olarak adlandırılan mekanda karaca Ahemdîn ve türbesi bulunmaktadır. Burada tipik Bektaşî ritüelleri devam etmektedir. Mevlütler okunmaktadır.

**Hasip Baba ve Kütüklü Baba Tekkesi:** Bu mekan İskeçe şehri içindedir. Tipik bir Bektaşî mimarisi gözlemlenmektedir. Süslemeler, işlemeler, türbelerin yapılan buna örnektir. Hala canlı olarak adaklar adanılan, etrafıan çaputlar bağlanan, mum yakılan mekanda folklorik dini inanışlar devam etmektedir.

**Genissa Kırklar Tekkesi ve Taşlık Petrota Tekkesi:** Göreceli olarak daha küçük tekkeler olarak Bektaşî geleneğinin izlerini üzerlerinde taşımaktadırlar.

**Seyid Ali Sultan veya Kızıl Deli:** Burası Kuzey Yunanistan'ın en önemli yapısına sahiptir. Bektaşî mimariyi ve süslemeleri çok güzel yansıtmaktadır. Yakın zamanda restore edilen meydana girildiğinde üzerinde mum bulunan büyük düz taşın üzeri kaplayan yanm kızıl-kahverengi bir taşı görebilir. Türbe ve mescit Paşa konağı ile Bektaşîler için önemli bir merkez olmuştur. Haziresinde önemli isimler bulunmaktadır. Çok zengin ve geniş arazileri ve çiftliği bulunmaktadır. Değişik zamanlarda kurbanlar kesilmekte, davetler civardan Hıristiyanlarda katılmaktadır. Festivaller, dini törenler devam etmektedir. Tabii olarak buradaki Bektaşî dini geleneği giderek folklorik özellikleriyle öne çıkmaktadır.

**Sonuç Değerlendirmesi:** Merkezi ve Kuzey Yunanistan'daki Bektaşî varlığı önemli ölçüde azalmaktadır. Yunanistan'ın vakıf arazilerini dağıtması veya yanlış yönetimlerle Bektaşîler ait olan arazilerin büyük kısmı kaybedilmiştir. Yunanca kaynaklardan ve alan araştırmalarına göre şu anda bütün Bektaşî cemaatlerini ve eserlerin bağlayan belli bir Bektaşî organizasyonu bilgisine ulaşılmamıştır. Thessaly, Epirus ve Merkez Makedonya'dakiler arasında bir bağ gözüküyorsa da bu daha çok Arnavut olmaları ve Arnavutlukta Bektaşî zincirine bağlı olmalarından kaynaklanmaktadır. Kızıl Deli tekkesi Türkiye ile bağlantılı görünmektedir. Bölge özellikle 20. yy'ın ilk 30 yılında oldukça karışık bir dönem geçirmiştir.