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The Cult Of The Saints in The Alevi Villages of Yablanovo (Alvanlar), Malko Selo (Küçükler) and Mogilets (Veletler) in Bulgaria

Bulgaristan'daki Veletler, Küçükler ve Alvanlar Adlı Köylerinde Evliya Kültü

Krassimira MUTAFOVA*

ÖZET

Şu anki araştırmalar, Gerlovo – Yablanovo (Alvanlar), Malko selo (Küçükler) ve Mogilets (Veletler) yöresindeki Alevi köylerinde bugün bile işlevine devam eden merkezlerindeki evliyaların ibadetlerinin bazı somut bildirilerini ele alıyor. Bu evliyaların ibadetleri ve onların değerli türbeleri üzerinde olan vurgunun birtanesi tarihsel ve çağdaş bakış açısından müslüman. Aleviler müslüman sünni ve ortadoks hristiyanları arasındaki ilişkiyi etkiliyor. Yablanovo köyünün (Gerlovo yöresindeki en büyük Alevi köyü) güneyindeki Gözcü Ali Baba türbesine özel bir ilgi gösteriliyor. Üstte bahsedilen üç köydeki değerli türbeler arasında ve tüm bulgaristanın kuzey doğusu üzerinde de özel bir yeri vardır. Zaman akıp giderken bölgedeki tüm alevilerin ibadet merkezi olarak ayırır. İnceleyen yerleşkelerde ve bölgelerde yaratılan dini atmosfer ve belirli kültürler hakkındaki araştırmalarda üretilen incelemeler, bu nüfus arasındaki yazarın kişisel araştırma işine, yazılı kaynaklara, ve Osmanlı'nın ulaşılabilir yazılı ve yazısız kaynaklarına dayanmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Alian, Alevi, Alevi-Bektaşî, Kızılbaş, Müslüman, Türbe, Tekke. Ortadoks Hristiyanları

ABSTRACT

The present research discusses some concrete manifestations of the cult of the saints in their centres that function even nowadays in several villages of *alians/ alevi*s in the region of Gerlovo – Yablanovo (Alvanlar), Malko selo (Küçükler) and Mogilets (Veletler). One of the accent is placed on the way in which the cult of these saints and their esteemed sanctuaries (*türbe*) influence the relations between Moslems-aliens, Orthodox Christians and Moslems-sunites from a historical and contemporary point of view. Special attention

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is paid to the *türbe* of Gözçü Ali boba that situated south of the village (the biggest Alevi village in district Gerlovo) and particularly to the legends and ritual practice that is being followed there. It takes a special place among the esteemed *türbes* in the mentioned above three villages and also over the whole North-East Bulgaria. By the time passes it separates as a cult center of all alians in this region. The observations produced in the investigation about the specific culture and religious atmosphere created in the studied settlements and regions, rely predominantly on the author's personal research work among this population, on accessible Ottoman published and unpublished sources and on published works.

Key words Alian, Alevi, Alevi-Bektashi, Kızılbaş, Moslem, Sanctuary, Dervish Lodge, Orthodox Christians

The cult of the saints that has penetrated the Shia trend of Islam on a large scale, occupies a specific place in the religious life of the *Kızılbaş* communities deported to Rumeli in the 16th and 17th cents. and known recently by the more popular among them appellations *Alians* and *Alevi-bektaşis*¹. Nowadays it has been evidenced not only in the esoteric literature disseminated among them but also in their sanctuaries of worship called *türbes* and *tülbes*. Only a small part of the latter are an "authentic" version of those that have once existed according to the written sources but they undoubtedly mark the perimeter of propagation and the role of the cult in confessional relations.

My interest in the present paper is directed mainly to some concrete manifestations of the cult of the saints in three compact *Alian* villages in the region of Gerlovo – Yablanovo (Alvanlar), Malko selo (Küçükler) and Mogilets (Veled/Veletler). The available Ottoman sources, the published monographs and papers and most of all, the data collected during my field work raise questions concerning not only the religious and ritual practice followed in those too closed communities. They give the opportunity to seek the modern projections of the circumstances of their deportation, the character of their relations with Orthodox Christians and Sunni Moslems, to outline the eventual migration of

¹ According to some authors the most satisfactory term from historical and linguistic aspect is "*Alevis*", while "*Alians*" is a term of subsequent origin, which in fact reflects the unification of the various Islamic non-orthodox groups. N. Gramatikova has noted that the appellations "*Kızılbaşes*", "*Alians*", "*Alevis*", and "*Bektaşis*" are ethnonyms that have been used for the identification of one and the same population. Known in scholarly research as *Alians*, the members of this community identify themselves as *babais*, *Bektaşis* and *Kızılbaşes*. – Граматикова, Н. Ислямски неортодоксални течения в българските земи. – In: История на мюсюлманската култура по българските земи. Т. 7. Международен център по проблемите на малцинствата и културните взаимодействия. София, 2001, 192-193.

cults and the mythological patterns imposed in folklore and part of the research work on Bulgarian settlements.

* * *

The dramatic circumstances of the appearance of the *Kızılbaş* communities in Rumeli and in the Bulgarian lands particularly left a lasting imprint on their attitude towards the representatives of the Ottoman authorities, the local Orthodox Christian population and the Sunni Moslems. Their forced settlement here was related to the prolonged bloody wars of the sultans Selim I (1512–1520) and Süleiman (1520–1566) against the Sefevîd Shia state of Shah Ismail I (1502–1524). An extreme enemy of the Shias and their related sectarian groups Selim I undertook persecutions aiming at their extermination within the boundaries of the Ottoman Empire. In order to counter the unrest and predominantly to eliminate the danger of their support to the Iranian shah, his successor even activated the repressive policy towards them. The *Kızılbaş* uprisings that broke out in the first decades of the 16th c. (1508, 1511, 1526–1529)² and the beginning of the 17th c. and were crushed with extreme cruelty, were followed by mass interning of the rebels from Asia Minor to Rumeli.

Information about these forced deportations contain the *kanunnames* (the codes) of Sultan Suleiman I for the *sancaqs* Silistra and Niğbolu (Nikopol)³, though the “exiles” are mentioned in their provisions only by the standard term for designating deported population – “*sürgünan tâıfesi*”. This repeated process of settlement has been evidenced in Ottoman register material from the first half of the 16th c. In the most ancient preserved *defter* about the *sancaq* Silistra of the *icmal* (brief) type, made in 1526–1527⁴, figure *dcemaats* of exiles from Anatolia, installed in the Pravadi Subdistrict (*nahiye*) and registered as separate landless *zeamet*. The

2 Новичев, А. Д. История Турции. Ч. I. Эпоха феодализма (XI–XVIII вв.). Ленинград, 1963, pp. 81–82, 106–108, 127–135; *İnalçık, H.* The Ottoman Empire. The Classical Age. 1300–1600. L., 1975, p. 195; Шараф-хан Ибн Шамсадин Бидлиси. Шараф-наме. Т. 2. Пер., предисл., примечания и приложения Е. И. Василевой. М., 1976, p. 174.

3 Турски извори за историята на правото в българските земи (ТИИПБЗ). Т. 1. Състав. Г. Гълъбов. С., 1961, pp. 262–264; Т. 2. Състав. и коментар Б. Цветкова. С., 1971, pp. 41–42.

4 Димитров, Стр. Нови данни за демографските отношения в Южна Добруджа през първата половина на XVI в. – История, 1997, no. 3–4, pp. 95–103. The author has grounded the dating of the studied *icmal defteri* on the data and the historic information included in it (pp. 95–96). Annotation of the register under the press-mark BOA – Istanbul, TD 370 (a microphotograph in the Oriental Department of “St Cyril and St Methodius” National Library) and dating from 18 *rebiülevvel* 929 – 12 *şaban* 943 (4. II. 1523 – 24. I. 1537). See in: Радущев, Евг., Р. Ковачев. Опис на регистри от Истанбулския османски архив към Генералната дирекция на държавните архиви на Република Турция. Ред. Ст. Андреев. С., 1996, pp. 7–12.

time of their transferring in this region is obviously earlier since it has been recorded in the marginal notes that they had been put down in the "old register" and possessed written orders and resolutions dating from the reign of Sultan Selim I. More definite proof of the structure of this deported population gives the detailed register of *vakıfs* of the sacred town of Medina from 1-10 *decemaziülev-vel* 965 (19-28 Feb. 1558). It includes a list of "*râya* without permanent domicile, *Yürüks* and *exiles-Persians*", scattered in villages in the *nahiyes* Hasköy-i Uzunca, Zagra-i Eski hisar, Mahmud paşa-i Hasköy, Akça Kazanlık, Niğbolu, Týrnova, Hezargrad, Çernovi, Lofça and in the neighbourhoods of Edirne and paying taxes in favour of the sacred town [of Medine]⁵.

Specifically important for the future homogeneity of the settlements of the deported were the provisions of the *kanunname* for the sancak Niğbolu by which the central Ottoman authority restricted their right to free migration within the boundaries of the Empire: "not to allow change of domicile". The same was the role of the provisions that sanctioned the attempts of outsiders to gain the statute of the "exiles" and to profit by it⁶. In the near vicinity of the *Kızılbaş* villages there was at least one big village of Sunni Moslems or a charity Islam complex, subsidized by representatives of the central and the local Ottoman authorities.

Three villages, which I study in the present paper, are a typical example in this aspect. Not only their population is entirely *Kızılbaş*, but they were situated around the big village of Vrani kon (Kara ata, Kara atalar, Kara ohatlar) which was inhabited by Sunni Moslems and near which, in the place *Tekke* the religious and educational complex "*Hıfız baba*" was located⁷. The mentioned villages most probably came into being as a result of the first wave of deportation of *Kızılbaşes* in the 16th c. Reliable record is available about the village of Veletler (today's Mogilets)⁸, mentioned under the name of *Veled* in a *defter* (inventory) about suppliers of small farm animals (*celepkеşan*) made on 21-29 *şaban* 981 (16-24. XII.1573)⁹. In the same register the village of Alvanoğlu was included.

5 Радущев, Евг., Р. Ковачев. Оp. cit., p. 21.

6 ТИИПБЗ. Т. 2, p. 42.

7 Пенков, М. Герлово. Поселищно, демографско, историко-етнографско изследване. С., 1987 (дисертация). About its condition in the 19th c. see Събев, О. Документи от началото на XIX в. за мюсюлманския култово-образователен комплекс "Хъфъз баба" в с. Врани кон (Кара охатлар). – In: Град Омуртаг и Омуртагския край. История и култура. Т. 2. Съст. Ив. Радев, М. Тошев. В. Търново, 2003, pp. 324-356.

8 The village has been renamed in 1934.

9 Oriental Department of St. Cyril and St. Methodius National Library, ф. №420, а.е. 261д, л. 4^a.

This most probably was the village of *Alvanlar* (today's Yablanovo)¹⁰. There is no information about the 15th c. but the findings of the archaeological excavations in the today's village of Mogilets show that a medieval Bulgarian settlement has existed near the ruins of a basilica from the late Antiquity and suggest to a continuity of settlement in IX–XIV cents.¹¹ I'd like to add that in the mentioned register of *vakyfs* of 1558 the village of Ablanova with 34 households (*hanes*) was included in the subdistrict (*nahiye*) Çernovi. The lack of written data about the village of Malko selo does not exclude its earlier appearance still more that among the local population circulate legends which connect the founders of the three villages.

A special place among the sanctuaries visited by the inhabitants of the three villages and by the population of Northeastern Bulgaria occupied the *türbe* of Ali boba¹². It was situated to the south of the village of Yablanovo, the biggest *Kızılbaş* village in Gerlovo today and in the course of time it established itself as a religious centre for all the *Kızılbaşes* in the region. This special position of the *türbe* has underlined Frederik de Yong too in his research work on the *Kızılbaşes* in Bulgaria. According to him the religious leaders of the *cems* of the *Kızılbaşes* in Gerlovo, who, as he has emphasized, were a separate group among all the rest in Bulgaria, were subjected to the chief *dede* in the village of Yablanovo¹³.

Among the local population the *türbe* is known as *Gözçü Ali boban'ın türbesi* named after the hill on which it is situated (*Gözçü Ali boba*)¹⁴. It has not been established exactly when it has been built but it has been reconstructed many times. According to a local legend for centuries on it has been a sacred place for the ancient Thracians and a watch-tower of the nearby stronghold *Tos kale*¹⁵ that existed during the late Antiquity and the middle ages. The present-day building

¹⁰ Ibid., л. 2^б

¹¹ Апостолов, К. Археологически паметници, находки и проучвания в Омуртагския край. – In: Град Омуртаг и Омуртагския край. История и култура. Т. 1, Варна, 1999, p. 51-53.

¹² Among the Alians from the region of Gerlovo the Turkic *baba* meaning *ata* ("father") has turned into *boba* meaning "elder", while among the Turks from the region of Deliorman it has turned into *buğa*.

¹³ Jong, F. De. Problems Concerning the Origins of the Qizilbas in Bulgaria: Remnants of the Safaviya? – In: Convegno sul tema la Shi'a Nell'impero Ottomano. Roma, 1993, pp. 205-206.

¹⁴ The hill on top of which it has been built is situated in the region between the places Zlosten and Tsarevets and its elevation above sea level is about 1000 m. – Колев, Ив. Тюрбетто край Ябланово. – Векове, 1990, №3, p. 67.

¹⁵ It was located about 250 m below the so called Forked Rock, situated to the west of the *türbe*. – Колев, Ив. Op. cit., p. 67.

with a symbolic "sarcophagus" inside it, wrapped in green cloth, is a new one. It is low and small, constructed of stone blocks and mud, with dimensions of the foundation 2.5 m to 4 m, with a wooden roof lagged with sheet iron. Next to it another building is situated used for keeping all the necessary staff for the traditional boiling of mutton. To the west of it a gravestone has been set up in 1967 with a peace prayer for the saint cut out in it¹⁶.

The widespread cult of Ali *boba*, to whom the local legends ascribe fantastic deeds and wonder-working abilities, is considered by some researchers as a personification of the special respect to Hazreti Ali – the fourth pious caliph¹⁷. Significant is the fact that under this name were known many of the patrons of the functioning today *tekkes* and *türbes* of *Bektaşî* origin in Central and Northeastern Bulgaria – of Ali boba in the village of Taşkun (today's village of Buynovitsa, Shumen region), of Ali baba near the village of Lipnik (nowadays united with the village of Nikolovo, Russe region), of Ali baba in the village of Tekke Kozluca (the village of Izbul, Shumen region)¹⁸, as well as others in Southern Bulgaria. Others presume that Ali boba possibly belonged to the *Bektaşî* order, but their hypothesis is only of general character. I. Kolev for example has based his arguments on the settling of janissaries in Yablanovo without presenting concrete information about it¹⁹. In this aspect a landmark could be the naming of the saint "*Gözçü*" – "the observer". Its etymology has underwent various interpretations made by the local population and in the research works. They range from underlining the situation of the *türbe* and the possibility to watch the whole region of Gerlovo from it to the absurd assumption that the surveillance of the neighbouring villages and places was done with the aim "to give the accumulated information to the high Ottoman authorities with reference to achieving their political and assimilatory goals"²⁰. It is possible to look for a different explanation related to the religious practice of the *Kızılbaşes* and the rest of the mystic orders and brotherhoods, persecuted by the central Ottoman authorities. The principle "*takiya*" strengthen its positions among them. It provided for the compulsory

16 It has been deciphered by M. Penkov. – Пенков, М. Алианите в Герлово... A detailed description of today's condition of the *türbe* see in Колев, Ив. Op. cit., pp. 67, 69. .

17 Пенков, М. Алианите в Герлово...

18 Маринов, В. Дели-Орман..., р. 203; Бакърджиева, Т. Ислямски култови сгради на територията на Русе. Историко-типологиялна характеристика. – In: История на мюсюлманската... Т. 7, pp. 475, 478-480; Маринов, В. Плисковско (Абобско) поле. Поселнично географско изучаване. С., 1943, pp. 171-173.

19 Колев, Ив. Op. cit., pp. 69-70.

20 Ibid., p. 71, note 7.

concealing and fictitious renouncing of the professed faith²¹. During each one of their secret religious meetings "observers" (*gözçüs*) were appointed to guard the house where the religious ritual was performed and to watch lest outsiders stole by. On the other side, the post of the *gözçü* was one of the twelve posts in the hierarchy of the *Bektaşî* order. So, a consecutive belonging of the *türbe* to *Kızılbaş-Bektaşî* traditions could not be excluded. To some extent this hypothesis is corroborated by the fact that it is the only one among the *Kızılbaş* sanctuaries in the region of Gerlovo that has dual function²².

The Christian population worship as a counterpart of Ali boba Gyozechu St. Elija and visit the *türbe* on St. Elija's Day. Part of the authors try to find an explanation of its dual function in the denomination of the near place Klisedzhik (the Church) on the left bank of the river Ticha. The researchers connect the place with a monastery complex and with a pre-Christian archaeological layer²³. As an argument the legend about the building of a church at the village of Yablanovo during the reign of Prince Boris I has been advanced. It is obvious that in both cases the matter in hand is about a newly growing up legend which gave "legitimacy" to the visits of the local Orthodox Christian population since there is no explicit evidence for the existence of a church. One could hardly consider as well-grounded the explanation that the ancient heathen sanctuary was named after the popular saint Elija the Thunderer since in the region "not a few thunders strike"²⁴. St. Elija is worshipped in other dual sanctuaries most of which are of *Bektaşî* origin (the *tekke* of Mustafa Kanat in the village of Kapakli, today's Alexandria; the *tekke* of Ali baba in the village Tekke Kozluca, today's Izbul, etc.)²⁵.

The Moslems visit the *türbe* "in an organized manner" in spring (on a Friday, after the cherries become ripe) and in autumn (after St. Petka's Day, and on a Friday

21 Граматикова, Н. Житието на Демир Баба и създаването на ръкописи от мюсюлманите от хетеродоксните течения на исляма в Североизточна България (извор за културната и религиозната им история). – In: Мюсюлманската култура по българските земи. Изследвания. Т. 2. Съставители Р. Градева, Св. Иванова. С., 1998, pp. 416-417.

22 About the appearance of sanctuaries with dual function see in full in Мутафова, К. Култът към светците в народния ислям и утраквистичните светилища. – In: Етнологията на границата на два века. Изследвания и материали, посветени на на 60-годишния юбилей на доц. д-р Н. Колев. Университетско издателство "Св. Св. Кирил и Методий". В. Търново, 2000, pp. 249-266.

23 Колев, Ив. Op. cit., p. 69.

24 Op. cit., p. 68.

25 Мутафова, К. Култът към светците..., pp. 257-258, 260-261. A more special case is the *türbe* of *şeyh* Bali Efendi of Sofia in Knyazhevo whose counterpart was St. Elija. He belonged to the *Halveti* order, one of the most orthodox in the Ottoman Empire. – Калицин, М., Мутафова, К. Исторически реални за халветийския шейх Бали Ефенди Софийски в новооткрито житие от XIX в. – In: Мюсюлманската култура... Т. 2, pp. 212-242.

too), as well as on St. Elija's Day²⁶. The village holiday which lasts for three days starts on 6th of May (Hýdýrlez) – St. George's Day according to the Christian festive-ritual calendar, but according to the information received from my informants in the past the greatest numbers of visitors gathered on St. Elija's Day. Then the *türbe* was visited by the three religious communities in the region – *Kızılbaşes*, Sunni Moslems and Orthodox Christians. In the rest of time the preferable days for visiting were Saturday and Sunday.

Besides the *türbe* of Ali boba in the village of Yablanovo there are several more *türbes* most of which have been built recently in spite of the assertions of the local inhabitants that the buildings are at least 200 or 300 years older. The *türbe* of Topuz boba is considered the oldest one and in the rest the population worship respectively Koçlu boba, Huseyn boba, Hassan boba, Hizir-Nazir boba, Hüsem boba, Yoksüz boba, Alvan boba. These "*türbes*" which do not resemble the architectural complexes and the dervish monasteries at all have been preserved in Northern Bulgaria and are visited only by *Kızılbaşes*. They represent low enclosures in almost square form, made of slab-stones, arranged quite off-hand or of scattered laths (*çatma*) painted in green. Memorial slabs dedicated to the respective saint have been set up within them. Candles are "lighted" in an imitation of a furnace called "*fýrýn*" with an opening in the direction of sunrise²⁷.

The oldest of all the mentioned *türbes* – the *türbe* of Topuz boba – is situated to the north of the village, under a century-old oak tree considered sacred. According to the questioned inhabitants of Yablanovo the oak tree is at least 1000 years old while the saint has been worshipped for 400 years at any rate. In the recently made *çatma* a slab has been set up dating from the 20th c. with a peace prayer "for the spirit of Topuz boba". The inscription (in Turkish Roman alphabet) says word for word the following: "*The one who visits the türbe, let him say a peace prayer for the spirit of Topuz boba*"²⁸.

26 These common festive days have been mentioned by I. Kolev and M. Penkov. See *Колев, Ив.* Op. cit., p. 70; *Пенков, М.* Op. cit. During my visit on 19.06.1993 the questioned informants confirmed this succession of visits specifying that for some time past it has no longer been visited "in an organized manner" and the offerings have been made individually.

27 A detailed description has made M. Penkov as well. – *Пенков, М.* Op. cit. See also his dissertation thesis – Герлово...

28 The translation has been made by M. Penkov. It has been noted on the slab that the order for its making was placed by "Islam, son of Fatima, daughter of Hüsem Alioğlu Hassan". – *Пенков, М.* Алланиите... It is beyond dispute that the names of the "donor" cut out in the slab make impression. As it is well known Fatima was daughter of the Prophet and wife of Ali; Hasan was one of his sons martyrs, Hüsem was the patron of one of the *türbes* in the village, and the first name Islam does not need any comments.

According to a legend told to me in the village of Yablanovo, Topuz boba, Alvan boba and Veled boba who were considered founders of the villages Alvanlar, Topuzlar and Veletler, were brothers. They came to the Balkans 400-500 years ago. One they, after they "had eaten and drunk" somewhere "sofra yeri", they decided "to shoot a few arrows" and wherever the arrows fell each one of them to find a village for himself. The arrow of Topuz boba reached the nearby village of Topuzlar (today's Topuzevo). Alvan boba's arrow fell in today's village of Yablanovo, while the arrow of Veled boba reached "as far as Veletler". To my question "Whose arrow returned back?", the answer was: "The one of Gözçü Ali boba. It returned back to the top of the hill. Not a village but a *türbe* was founded there to watch over the whole of Gerlovo".

There are reasons the patron of the *türbe* in the village of Yablanovo to be connected with Topuz boba mentioned in the vilaetname of Demir baba Sultan²⁹. In it a story is related about Ali Büzürük baba, Topuz boba and Djuneid, who were sons of Esseyid Hassan. The latter after coming to Rumeli, received from the Sultan land as *vakyf* possession in the region of Tanridag and Gerlovo (K/Girliova). It is also mentioned in the vilaetname that Ali baba and Topuz boba were buried near the town of Koshu (probably today's village of Koshov, Razgrad region) in Gerlovo, and Djuneid – in Dimotika.

Register information from the beginning of the 16th c. also corroborates the early foundation of Yablanovo. In the detailed register (*mufassal defteri*) of *timars*, *zeamets* and *hasses* in the vilaet of Niğbolu from 922 (5.II.1516–23.I.1517) in the *nahiye* Tuzluk alani³⁰, belonging to the kaza Tirnova, the village of *Yöksüzoglu* is included with 7 Moslem households and one bachelor³¹. Most probably the same village is referred to as *Yöksüzler* and *Yöksüzlü* respectively in a defter of *celepkeshans* of 981/1573 and in a nominal register for collecting the tax *avariz-i divaniye* in the *sancaks* Niğbolul and Silistra, made between the 11th–20th *rebiülevvel* 1051 (20–29.06.1641) and the 22nd *şaban* 1070 (3.05.1660)³². Its hardly only a question of identical names – of the patron of one of the most worshipped *türbes* in Yablanovo, Yöksüz boba, and the name of the village from the register liter-

29 Noyan, B. Demir Baba Vilâyetnamesi. Anadolu Matbaa, 1996, s. 115-117.

30 In the 80s of the 15th c. it included the territory located along the upper reaches of the river Stara reka and along its right feeder, the river Golyama reka. Today these are the regions of Targovishte, Sliven and Veliko Tarnovo. – See in Речник на селищни имена и названия на административно-териториални единици в българските земи през XV–XIX в. Съставил Ст. Андреев. С., 2002.

31 BOA – Istanbul, Maliyeden Müdevver № 11, л. 297^a.

32 The Oriental Department of "St. Cyril and St. Methodius" National Library, Ф. 20, а. е. 261 д, л. 56; BOA – Istanbul, TD 771, p. 264.

ally meaning “son of Yöksüz”. Most probably the *türbe* of Yöksüz boba in Yablanovo has had its earlier prototype, devoted to the founder of the village.

From among the rest of the “patrons” of the *türbes* of today in the village of Yablanovo an object of interest is Koçlu boba. His the *tekke* is a small building with a tiled roof and a shed, situated at the highest place in the so called Gorna Mahala (Upper Neighbourhood). According to a legend it was named after Ali Koç from the family of Hacı Bektaş. He left his son there and he himself went to Nikopol. It is known that already in the 16th c. in the village of Dervişler, founded by him, and bearing the name Bulgarine-i küçük as well, and belonging to Nikopol, his *zaviye* was built, subsidized by considerable vakıf incomes during the reign of Sultan Süleiman I (1520–1566)³³.

Hardly the patrons of the other two *türbes* Hassan boba and Huseyn boba have real prototypes. Most probably their cults are a personification of the respect to the sons of Ali and the grandsons of the Prophet – Hassan and Husayn. Maybe they, as all the rest – the *türbes* of Hızır-Nazir boba and of Hüsem boba, do not have even a symbolic connection with the founding of the village and could rather be related to famous saints, whose sanctuaries were visited by the local population. I have in mind the *tekke* of Hüseyin baba near the village of Hüseyin baba tekke (Mahzar pasha – today’s village of Voden, Razgrad region), the tekke of Hassan boba in the village of Hassan bobalar (today’s Bashtino, Kardzhali region), the *türbe* of Nazır baba at the village of Kaya altı (today’s village of Zvezdelina, Kirdzhali region), the *türbe* of Hızır baba in the village of Karalar (today’s village of Gorna Krepost, Kardzhali region), and the big *zaviye* of Hızır baba, son of Timurtaş Bey in the *kaza* Chirmen which was generously subsidized with incomes from vakıfs³⁴. In corroboration of this assumption I’d like to refer to the information of one of the questioned women* in the village of Yablanovo. Childless for a long time, each year she visited and made offerings in the following tekkes: of Demir baba in the place of Sboryanovo near the village of Mumcilar (the village of Sveshtari, Razgrad region); Kızana tekkesi³⁵ in the village of

33 See the detailed register of sancak Niğbolu from 963 (16.11.1555–6.10.1556) r. – Barkan, Ö. L. Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda bir iskân ve kolonizasyon metodu olarak vakıflar ve temlikler. İstila devirlerinin kolonizator Türk dervişler ve zaviyeler – Vakıflar Dergisi. Ankara, 1942, №2, s. 341-342 (№181).

34 Маринов, В. Дели-Орман, Областно географско проучване. С., 1941. р. 192; Граматикова, Н. Ислямски неортодоксалци... pp. 216, 219; Barkan, Ö. L. Op. cit., s. 347 (207).

* Zilha Mustafafo Kehayova, 66 years old from the village of Aölanovo.

35 Иванова, Д. За едно двойно светилище в Северозточна България. – Епохи, В. Търново, 1994, №2, pp. 93-100.

Momino (Popovo district), though it is inhabited by Sunni Moslems; the tekke of Elmalı baba in Haskovo region, and the "big *türbe*" of Osman baba in Haskovo region as well.

The earliest information about the village of Küçükler (Malko selo) with the neighbourhood Dağ köy date from the 18th c.³⁶ Its origin could be a result of inter-migration processes. Presumably under the neighbourhood information about the village of Küçükler (Malko selo) with the neighbourhood Dağ köy in the place of Klisecik (Church) traces of a medieval settlement that has already disappeared could be excavated³⁷. The preserved legend about this place directs to an early stage of the confrontation "Alians-Sunnis". According to it there was a Turkish village there which inhabitants had been banished by the *Kızılbaşes*. No legends have been preserved about the two *türbes* in the village – of Kurt boba and of Hüsem boba, but the location of the first (under a century-old tree, an oak tree) suggests the character of the professed cult. The name of the other worshipped saint "Hüsem" is probably a transformation of "Husam" – translated as "sword" which directs towards the cult of the famous follower of Otman (Osman) baba – Husam shah, also known as Gani shah who died in 1496. In the above mentioned vilaetname of Demir baba a tekke of Hüsam shah Gani or of Hüsameddin baba is mentioned. According to N. Gramatikova this was one and the same sacred complex and it was identical with the tekke of Osman baba since he was known by the initiated (erenler) and the saints (evliya) under the name of Hüsam shah Gani³⁸. However, in the absence of other evidence this only landmark makes too hypothetical the assumption of a possible migration of his followers and of his cult to the region of today's village of Malko selo.

The tekke in the third studied *Kızılbaş* village of Veletler has been recently built. It is situated about 20 km away from the place of the old village, close to the graveyard. The gravestones have been taken from the river and no names have been cut out in them. It was only during the last 10 years that new gravestones with inscriptions on them have been set up. The questioned inhabitants of the village emphasized that they tie bands ("cloths") only at the tekke of Demir baba. It is visited only by local people who leave here offerings praying for health. In the village the legends about the saint are not well remembered with the exception of the one that asserts that Demir baba was Alvan boba's and Topuz boba's

36 Пенков, М. Алиантите...

37 М. Penkov has noted that until recently there have stood upright Moslem gravestones in the place of Kliselik. – Пенков, М. Алиантите...

38 Гаврилова, Н. Ислямски неортодоксални..., p. 226.

brother and that his *türbe* was erected because he appeared in the dream of a local inhabitant as a protector of the village. For the peasants the saint worshipped by them was not married. To my question "Was he an *evliya*?", the answer was: "No, he was not married – a young man with moustaches guards the village". They treat Ali boba with special respect by visiting his *türbe* above the village of Yablanovo each Friday. The desire to enjoy constantly "his benevolence and protection" became the reason for the original "taking down" of the sacred power of the saint within the boundaries of the village.

About 70 years ago the local inhabitants built a small tekke at the road to Yablanovo. The old people for whom the climbing up of the height Gözçü Ali bobanin is difficult, leave their offerings in it and show their respect to the saint. The Orthodox Bulgarians do not visit the tekkes in the village – maybe because today it is entirely *Kızılbaş* and the saints have only local significance. The common village holiday is on Hıdırllez and on 2nd of August (St. Elija's Day) all the inhabitants of the village go to Yablanovo to the *türbe* of Ali boba. This developing unification of the festive days and the celebrated ritual practice to some extent corroborate the legend that the village was closely connected with Yablanovo. Except the mentioned sacred places the villagers also often visit the famous among all the *Kızılbaş* population of Gerlovo region *tekkes* of Demir baba at Sveshtari and of Osman baba in Haskovo region.

The joint visiting of the religious sanctuaries does not eliminate the years long hostility in the relations with the Sunni Moslems in the region under study. The inquiry organized during my field work confirmed the existence of negativism in the relations between the inhabitants of the village of Vrani kon and the *Kızılbaşes* from the neighbouring villages expressed by the laconic sentences: "We have nothing to do with them. We avoid all contacts and the marriages between us are totally impossible". Similar were the observations of M. Penkov. During one of the inquiries organized by him in the 70s of the 20th c. to the question about their relations with the *Kızılbaşes* the Sunni Turks have answered: "We do not mix up with them. We share a common language, but our customs are totally different; recently some of us have become allied by marriage"³⁹.

In comparative aspect striking is the fact that the greater part of the saints worshipped by the *Kızılbaşes* in Gerlovo and the Deliorman, quite a few of which are symbolic personifications of Ali and of Shia *imams*, do not have Christian saints as counterparts. Neither the toponyms, nor the preserved local legends, espe-

39 Пенков, М. Герлово...

cially as far as Gerlovo is concerned, suggest any type of co-relation with the worshipped *Kızılbaş* saints. The available information about churches (Kliselik) situated near Moslem sanctuaries testify rather to the existence of ancient Christian settlements, than to the existence of a church and respectively a saint counterpart. An exception is the unearthed during the excavations in 1992 basilica with a nave and two aisles and an apse, situated about 1 km away from the village of Veletler in the place Klise tarlı (Church field)⁴⁰. It was destroyed by fire and according to the findings it dates back to the 5th–6th cents.

The assertions that most of the *Kızılbaş tekkes* and *türbes* have double function⁴¹ obviously ignore the real specific characteristics of the religious life, the circumstances under which most of the *Kızılbaş* villages have come to existence and have preserved their compactness and isolation even till nowadays. These were factors that have indisputably influenced the opportunity for a stable parallel existence of the cults of a pair of saints – Moslem and Christian. Another fact has not been taken into consideration too – the change of the religious orientation of many *Bektaşî* tekkes after the banning of the order in 1826 when they turned to be considered *Kızılbaş*, as well as the almost traditional identifying of the *Kızılbaşes* with the *Bektaşî*.

40 According to the village hodja's son excavations have been conducted there and traces of burned down foundations of a church have been discovered. A grave of a woman has also been unearthed in 1993 – the corps has been laid in a bent position. The excavations have been conducted in 1992 by the archaeologists A. Konakliev and K. Apostolov. – Апостолов, К. Op. cit.

41 Дерубеев, Б. Op. cit., p. 193.