



cilt  
**3**

**BALKANLARDA**  
**İSLÂM**  
**MİADI DOLMAYAN UMUT**

**İSLAM IN THE BALKANS**  
**UNEXPIRED HOPE**

GÖNÜL FETHİNDEN ZİHNİYET TEMSİLİNE  
FROM THE CONQUEST OF HEARTS TO THE  
REPRESENTATION OF MENTALITY

EDİTÖR  
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ANKARA - BELGRADE - BUCHAREST - BUDAPEST - CHISINAU - KIEV  
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MİADI DOLMAYAN UMUT

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# Bektashis in Greece: From the turn of the 20th century to the turn of the 21st century

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## *Summary*

**S**in the lands defined today as Greece, there was, during the late Ottoman period, a significant presence of Muslims, most of whom had strong affiliation with Islamic orders/ *tarikats*. In the beginning of the 20th century, we observe a significant presence of Bektashi communities, differentiated according to the location: (mainly) Albanian-speaking in Central and North-western Greece, part of the Babagan branch, Turkish and Bulgarian-speaking in North-eastern Greece, most of them part of the Chelebi branch and some, part of the Babagan branch, (mainly) Turkish and Greek-speaking on the islands of Lesbos and Crete, part of the Babagan branch.

All seem that Bektashism (the Babagan branch/ type) flourished in the area in the late 18th century. However, from that time and on, Bektashi communities and monuments suffered from consecu-

tively strikes: the reforms of Sultan Mahmud II which induced a heavy blow to the Bektashi community and culture all-over the empire; the independence of Greece after the Greek revolution against the Ottomans in 1821, and the creation of the Greek state (1830) which was connected with the devastation of Muslim communities and the destroy of many Muslim monuments in area of Southern Greece; above all, the compulsory population exchange between Turkey and Greece of 1923, which forced some 700 thousand Muslims – among them, of course and the Bektashis- to move from Greece to Turkey (the Muslim of Albanian ethnic origin of North Western Green and the Muslims of Thrace were excluded); and, finally, the Greek-Albanian hostility during World War II (which, in cases and sectors, lasted till the beginning of the 21st century). All these, in combination with other factors, led to the weakening and the gradual dissolution of the vast majority of the Bektashi communities in Greece.

This paper, using concepts, methods and tools from the fields and disciplines of history and social anthropology, based on several years of field research and synthesising mostly Greek bibliographical information and data mainly from local (oral and written) history, takes shape on two parallel layers:

- Describes the main architectural Bektashi vestiges (tekkes, türbes/ mausoleums, cemeteries, etc.) following a “clock round” journey. More specifically, the paper refers: to the tekke of Sari Baba on the Island of Lesvos (East Aegean Sea), to the tekkes of Horasanli and Hacı Hasan Baba on the island of Crete (South Aegean Sea), to the tekkes of Peloponnese (South Greece), to the tekkes of Durbali Sultan in Farsala and Hasan Baba in Tempi (Thessaly – Central Greece), to the tekkes of Baba Osman and Baba Husen in Konitsa (Epirus – North West Greece), to the tekke of Abdullah Baba in Katerini, to the tekkes and the Bektashi cemetery of Thessaloniki and to the Bektashi monuments of the area of Kavala (Macedonia – North Greece), and finally, to the tekkes of Hasip Baba in Xanthi, and Seyyid Ali Sultan or Kızıl Deli in Evros (Thrace –North East Greece).
- Presents the history of the monuments and the communities, focusing (in the two most important cases, the tekkes of Durbali Sultan in Thessaly and of Seyyid Ali Sultan in Thrace) on issues regarding the property of the tekke. The paper proceeds to

extent references on issues regarding the relations Bektashi had with the surrounding non-Bektashi (mainly Christian) communities; on the one hand, with the members of the Christian-orthodox clergy, and on the other hand with the members of the surrounding rural communities, for whom, in cases, tekke has been operated as an “employer”. Special references are made on the monuments maintaining some kind of life during the 1985-2015 period - having liturgical life for the Bektashi communities, or becoming some kind of “reference points” of other social activities for the surrounding non-Bektashi communities.

The paper concludes with remarks on the influence the evolution of the Greek-Turkish and the Greek-Albanian relations had on the Bektashi communities, and with comments on the old and new Bektashi networks in Greece, whilst, attention is put on the (potential) relations between the various Bektashi communities and their connection to Bektashi and other networks out of Greece.

## Yunanistan'da Bektaşiler 20. Yüzyılın Başından 21. Yüzyılın Başına

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### Özet

Bu gün Yunanistan olarak tanımlanan topraklarda geç Osmanlı döneminde çoğunluğunun İslami düzen/tarikatlarla güçlü ilişkileri olan önemli bir Müslüman varlığı bulunmaktaydı. 20. yüzyılın başlarında yere göre ayrılan Bektaşî toplumların önemli varlığına şahit oluyoruz: Babagan kolunun bir kısmı olan Orta ve Kuzey batı Yunanistan'da bulunan ve (çoğunlukla) Arnavutça konuşanlar, çoğunlukta Çelebi bir kısmının da Babagan kolunun mensubu olan Kuzey doğu Yunanistan'da Türkçe ve Bulgarca konuşanlar ve kısmen Çelebi kolu kısmen Babagan kolu mensubu olan ve Midilli ve Girit adalarında Türkçe ve Yunanca konuşan Bektaşî topluları.

Görünüşe göre Bektaşilik (Babagan kolu/tipi) 18. yüzyılın sonları itibarıyla bölgede gelişmiştir. Ancak o tarihten sonra Bektaşî toplumlar ve eser ardı ardına gelen darbelerle ezildiler: imparatorluk içinde

Bektaşî topluma ve kültüre ağır darbe indiren II. Sultan Mahmut'un reformları, Yunanlıların Osmanlılara karşı 1821 tarihinde bağımsızlık için başlattıkları devrim ve müteakiben Yunanistan'ın bağımsızlığı ve Güney Yunanistan'da birçok Müslüman anıtın ve Müslüman toplumların yıkımı ile ilişkilendirilen Yunan devletinin kurulması (1830); her şeyden önce 1923 tarihinde Türkiye ve Yunanistan arasında gerçekleştirilen zorunlu nüfus mübadelesi ile aralarında Bektaşîlerin de bulunduğu yaklaşık 700 bin Müslüman Yunanistan'dan Türkiye'ye göç etmek zorunda kalmıştır (Kuzey batı Yunanistan'da oturan Arnavut asıllı Müslümanlar ve Trakya Müslümanları hariç tutulmuştur) ve son olarak II.Dünya Savaşı sırasında Yunan-Arnavut düşmanlığı (vaka ve sektör bazında 21. yüzyılın başlarına kadar devam etmiştir). Tüm bu hususlar diğer unsurlarla birlikte Yunanistan'daki Bektaşî toplumların çoğunun zayıflamasına ve kademeli olarak dağılmasına yol açmıştır.

Tarih ve sosyal antropoloji ile ilgili alanları ve disiplinlerine ait kavramları, yöntemleri ve araçları kullanılarak ve birkaç yıllık alan araştırması ile çoğunlukla Yunan bibliyografik bilgilerin ve başta yerel (sözlü ve yazılı) tarihi sentezine dayalı olarak yapılan bu çalışma iki paralel katman şeklinde yürütülmüştür:

- Başlıca Bektaşî mimari eserleri 'saat düzeni' olan yolculuk boyunca tarif edilmektedir (tekkeleri, türbeleri/mezarları, mezarlıkları, vs.). Makalede Midilli adasındaki Sarı Baba tekkesi (Doğu Ege Denizi), Girit adasındaki Horasanlı ve Hacı Hasan Baba tekkeleri (Güney Ege Denizi), Peloponez tekkeleri (Güney Yunanistan) Farsala'daki Durbali Sultan tekkesi ve Tempî'deki Hasan Baba tekkesi (Tesali – Orta Yunanistan), Konitsa'daki Baba Osman ve Baba Hüsen tekkeleri (Epirus – Kuzey batı Yunanistan), Katerini'deki Abdullah Baba tekkesi, Selanik'teki tekkeleri ve Bektaşî mezarlığı ve Kavala bölgesindeki Bektaşî Anıtlara (Makedonya – Kuzey Yunanistan) ve son olarak Ksanti'deki Hasip Baba tekkesi ve Evros'daki Seyit Ali Sultan veya Kızıl Deli tekkesi (Trakya – Kuzey Doğu Yunanistan) ele alınmaktadır.
- Tekkelerin mülkiyeti ile ilgili konulara odaklanarak anıtların ve toplumların tarihini sunmaktadır (en önemli vakaları olan Tesali'deki Durbali Sultan tekkesi ve Trakya'daki Seyit Ali Sultan tekkesi). Makalede Bektaşîler ve çevredeki Bektaşî olmayan (çoğunlukla Hıristiyan) toplumlarla mevcut ilişkilerine atıfta bulunulmaktadır; bir yandan Hıristiyan Ortodoks din adamları

ve diđer yandan tekkenin ‘iřveren’ sıfatıyla iřletildiđi evredeki kırsal toplum mensupları ile ilgili iliřkileri incelenmektedir. zellikle 1985-2015 dnemi sırasında Bektaři toplumlari aısından liturjik yařamı olan veya evredeki Bektaři olmayan toplumlari iin diđer sosyal faaliyetleri aısından ‘referans noktası’ olan anıtlara atıfta bulunulmaktadır.

Makale Yunun-Trk ve Yunan-Arnavutluk iliřkilerinin evriminden Bektaři toplumlara intikalinin etkisi ve eřitli Bektaři toplumlari arasındaki (olası) iliřkileri ve Yunanistan’daki eski ve yeni Bektaři ađları ve bunların Bektaři ve Yunanistan dıřındaki diđer ađlarla bađlantıları ile ilgili yorumlarla sona ermektedir.

## Bektashism in Greece

The existing historical data -mainly tombstones in the extant *tekkes*- show the existence of a *tarikāt* style of Bektashism (of the *Babagan* branch – the celibate Bektashis) in 19<sup>th</sup> century Greece. However, this changed dramatically in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The compulsory population exchange between Greece and Turkey under the 1923 Lausanne treaty -carried out on the grounds of religion and decided in order to resolve the Greek-Turkish dispute and eliminate the “minority question” in both countries- forced about half a million Muslims to move from Greece to Turkey,<sup>1</sup> but many Muslims from Epirus and Macedonia avoided the exchange as of Albanian origin or as non-Greek citizens. The Albanian *dervishes* who stayed in Greece followed the ‘transformation’ of Albanian Bektashism (in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century) from a *Sufi* order to a religious community at the Albanian national level and the ‘transformation’ of *dervishes* and *babas* into a ‘clergy’, by analogy to the Christian Orthodox and Catholic clergy.

The situation in Thrace was different, since in the wider area there existed for centuries an ethnic-sect style Bektashism<sup>2</sup> which, after the repeated destructions of *tekkes* and the death or departure of all *dervishes* and *babas* of the area, became dominant. These Pomak/ Bulgarian and Turkish speaking rural populations (of Greek citizenship) have many similarities with the Alevi in Turkey. Most of them prefer to define themselves by the term Bektashi, although some prefer to use the term Alevi, in spite of the great differences between Anatolian Alevi and themselves.

## Bektashi monuments and communities in Lesvos, Crete and Peloponnese

### The *tekke* of Mitilini

On the island of Lesvos (North-East Aegean Sea), in the town of Mitilini (named Midili during the Ottoman period) there was the Bektashi *tekke* of Sarı Baba. The time of its founding is unknown. The *tekke* was founded within the borders of the Christian community, close to the (later built) chapel of Saint John. It is interest-

1 And more than one and a half million Christians to move from Turkey to Greece. The Muslims of Western Thrace and the Greek Orthodox of Konstantinoupolis/ İstanbul, Imvros/ Gökçeada and Tenedos/ Bozcaada islands were exempted from the exchange. Both population groups had the right to remain in Greece and Turkey, respectively, enjoying a special minority status under the terms of the Lausanne Treaty.

2 Here, the term attempts to outline the wider area of (mainly rural) Bektashi and Alevi, both in Anatolia and in the Balkans, who belong to the branch of married Bektashi, also named *Chelebi*, considering themselves to be, somehow, blood line descendants of Hacı Bektash. These populations can be (self or hetero-)categorised and distinguished in numerous groups according to various criteria: a) mother tongue (e.g. Turkish or Bulgarian in Thrace, Turkish or Kurdish in Anatolia), b) mythical or real descent (e.g. the Turkish “tribes” of Amuca, Balaban etc. in Thrace) often linked to the geographical area in which they are spread, c) differentiation according to the *tekke* to which they “belong” e.g. Kızıldeliler, Akyazılılar, (Ottoman) babailar, Alikoçlular, etc. which is often connected to different beliefs and practices.

ing that local Christians were visiting the *tekke* too, performing some type of rites, maybe due to the belief that a Christian sanctum preexisted there.<sup>3</sup> Nowadays, there is not the slightest remain of the *tekke*.

### The *tekkes* of Crete

At the beginning of the 20th century there were two famous Bektashi *tekkes* on the island of Crete: the *tekke* of the “Horasanlı”, close to the town of Heraclion (named Kandiye during the Ottoman period) and the *tekke* of Hacı Hasan Baba, in the town of Rethimno (named Resmo during the Ottoman period).

The *tekke* of Horasani-zade Mevlana Derviş Ali Dede was found in 1650 by Gazi Deli Hüsein Paşa expense. According to Evliya Celebi, the *tekke* had eighty dervishes. Nowadays, the only thing remaining from the *tekke* is the building of the *türbe*, as part of a privet dwelling.

The *tekke* of Hacı Hasan Baba was found in 1830, the construction being competed in 1869. At that time, the *tekke* had twenty seven dervishes. After the Greek-Turkish population exchange (1923), the *tekke* cluster provided housing to an orphanage and then to a police academy. Later on, the buildings were abandoned and demolished, and nowadays, a music gymnasium stands on the (previous) *tekke's* lands.<sup>4</sup>

Regarding the Cretan Bektashi community we note that:

- The vast majority of the Cretan Muslims – and thus, the Cretan Bektashis – had Greek as mother tongue. For this reason, there were *nefes*/ Bektashi hymns in Greek, parts of which have been rescued.

- As we see in photos from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>5</sup> there were strong relations between the (Greek-speaking?) *dervishes* of the Bektashi *tekkes* of Crete and the (Albanian-speaking?) *postnishinl* abbot of the Bektashi *tekke* of Kaygusuz Abdal in Cairo-Egypt, while, at the same time, it seems that there was some kind of connection between Bektashism and the Turkish nationalism. However, there is no precise information about the extent and the type of networks the Cretan Bektashi *dervishes* were part of.

3 Efstiratos Aggeloglou (ed.), “The Ottoman Monuments of Mitilini” [Ta Othomanika Mnimia tis Mitilinis], *E Theologia Mesopelaga*, [web blog], 22 July 2015, [http://e-theologia.blogspot.gr/2011/07/blog-post\\_1320.html](http://e-theologia.blogspot.gr/2011/07/blog-post_1320.html) (Accessed 15 September 2015).

4 See respectively the Bektashi Tekke of Horasanizade in Ampelokipoi, Herakleio and of Hacı Hasan Baba in Rethimno, at Institute for Mediterranean Studies, “The Ottoman Centuries - The Ottoman Monuments”, *Digital Crete*, [http://digitalcrete.ims.forth.gr/tourkology\\_monuments\\_display.php?id=208](http://digitalcrete.ims.forth.gr/tourkology_monuments_display.php?id=208) and [http://digitalcrete.ims.forth.gr/tourkology\\_monuments\\_display.php?id=57](http://digitalcrete.ims.forth.gr/tourkology_monuments_display.php?id=57) (15 September 2015).

5 See Erkal Ekrem (ed.), *Geleceksel Kültürüyle Türk Girit*, İzmir, Nurdaş Medya İletişim Danışmanlığı, 2008.

## The *tekkes* of Peloponnese

Local historians, based on information drawn from Venetian ledgers (1698) as well as from travelogues (1780, 1805, 1817), mention the existence of a Bektashi *tekke* in North Peloponnese, in the town of Aegio (named Vostizze at that time). The *tekke* was standing just by the Roman thermal and was partly destroyed at the time of the Greek Revolution against the Ottomans (1821).<sup>6</sup> Nowadays, only a part of its basement is still standing, not bringing any element (inscription, symbols etc.) that might prove any connection to the Bektashi culture.

In the wider area of the town of Argos, East Peloponnese, it seems that there was significant presence of Bektashism. A Venetian ledger (1698) refers to the existence of a “*convent di Turchi*” (Turkish monastery) by the village of Thermes (meaning thermal), while later travelogues (1780, 1805, 1812) provide information and descriptions of the building, which was standing and had some kind of operation till the time of the Greek Revolution. Apart from the references on the certain *tekke*, there is one more reference (1858) for a *tekke*, and a dervish living in it, in the area of Ai-Giannis, out of the town of Nafplion (named Anabolu at that time). However, there is no clear evidence that these were Bektashi *tekkes* and dervishes.

On the other hand, the significant Bektashi presence in the town of Nafplion/Anabolu in mid-18<sup>th</sup> century is proved by the inscription on the top of a drinking fountain still standing on St. Spyridon Square (at the corner of Potamianou str.). The inscription refers “*to the faithful Bektashis and to the ninth order*” (of Janissaries?) and was constructed by expense of Mahmut Aga, in 1734 (A.D.).<sup>7</sup>

## Bektashi monuments and communities in Thessaly and Epirus

### The *tekke* of Durbali 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 Durbali Sultan, the most important Bektashi monument in Central Greece. Most of the references talk about the “Albanian *Tekke*” of Farsala (named Chataldja in Ottoman times).

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

6 The Peloponnese peninsula (South Greece) was the place of the first outbreak of the Greek Revolution against the Ottomans (1821) and the first part of the newborn Greek state. This, among others, resulted the massive destroy of the monuments reminding the old regime.

7 See Christos Piteros, “Enas Tekes kai ena Kafeneio sta xronia tis Ellinikis Epanastasis kai Anejartiasias stis Thermes tou Argus” [A Tekke and a Coffee Shop at the of the Greek Revolution and the Independence at Thermes of Argos], *Argolikos Archival Library History and Culture*, 1 March 2011, <http://argolikivivliothiki.gr/tag/%CF%84%CE%B5%CE%BA%CE%AD%CF%82/> (Accessed 10 September 2011).

St. George. 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 *meydan*/ main hall for the liturgical services and the *ash evil* cook-house. Outside and adjacent to the wall were the stables, while to the West, some 50 m away from the gate, were the 2 *turbel* mausoleums.

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 one, a “lion” (probably the typical “caliph Ali, the lion of God”). Near them was a bow and two *teberl* axes (a small one with Koranic verses on it and a big half-moon shaped one), while the existence of a *kudum*/double drum is also mentioned. In the *turbe* of Durbali Sultan there were three typical Ottoman graves (that of Durbali Sultan and on its sides those of his companions and co-warriors Djafer and Mustafa),<sup>8</sup> a lot of clothes, three big silver candlesticks, a long sword, an *topuz*/iron club and two green flags wrapped around flagstuffs, one ending at a half-moon and the other at a spear.<sup>9</sup>

From the time of its establishment all the *postnishin* seemed to be of Turkish ethnic origin until the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (1782) when a *postnishin* of Albanian ethnic origin first appeared (Hysénj *baba* from Tirana, the 18<sup>th</sup> *postnishin* of the *tekke*). From that time on,<sup>10</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>11</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 Turkish.<sup>12</sup>

The *tekke* gets “fully Albanised” in 1925, when the *tarikatl* dervish orders are banned and persecuted in Turkey and communication with the Bektashi centres in Turkey is no longer possible, whereas the people of the Durbali Sultan *tekke* recognise as their leader the *dedebaba* in Tirana.<sup>13</sup>

8 See chapter 42 in Frederich Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans*, vol. 2, New York, Octagon Books, 1973, (First edition Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1929).

9 Andreas Karkavitsas, *O Tekes ton Bektasidon* [The Bektashi tekke], Athens, Estia, 1892, pp. 158-159.

10 Panagiotis Tsiakoumis, *O Tekes ton Bektasidon sto Ireni Farsalon* [The Bektashi tekke in Ireni, Farsala], Larisa, Ella, 2000, p. 64.

Until 1972, when Seit *baba* Koka Vandresa, the 33<sup>rd</sup> and last *postnishin* of the *tekke* died. As for the *babas* who were *postnishin* before the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, some were reportedly from Baghdad, one from Halep (Syria), one from Misir (Egypt), one from Kirsehir and one from Erzerum (Turkey), and one from Lahore (Pakistan? - origin which seems to be rather legendary).

11 It is worth noticing that in a letter dated in AH 1335 / 1920 AD addressed to the *postnishin* of the *tekke* of Katerini and signed -among others- by the nine *dervishes* of the *tekke* of Durbali Sultan, one signs in Albanian, two in Greek and the rest in Turkish (Tsiakoumis, p. 80)

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

13 Full list of names of the 33 *postnishin* 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 *postnishin* Seit *baba*, in Tsiakoumis.

The impact of the Bektashi persecution in the period 1826-1839 on the Durbali Sultan *tekke* is not known in detail. What is clear is that in 1851 the Nakshibendi *sheikh* Muharrem Halife is appointed as *postnishin*, by a *berat* of Sultan Abdul Medjit dated AH 1269 / 1851 AD.

The dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century finds *baba* Bayram Murteza as *postnishin* of the *tekke* while in 1888 the *tekke* is served by 51 dervishes and in 1896 by 23. In 1919, *baba* Kiazim was appointed as *postnishin*, with only 10 dervishes still remaining in the *tekke*, while in 1940 it seems that he is the only person serving the *tekke*. This was –rather- 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*.

Until the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it seems that apart from the dervishes, a small Bektashi community lived by the *tekke*. On February 6, 1920, according to a letter addressed to the *postnishin* of the *tekke* of Katerini and signed by all the “people” of the Durbali Sultan *tekke*, affiliated to the *tekke* are nine *dervishes* and eleven *muhiban*/ followers, all male and Albanians.

After the murder of *baba* Kiazim by Italian soldiers in 1942<sup>14</sup> no one remained, so the *dedebaba* of Tirana Ali Riza “transferred” *dervish* Sait from the *tekke* of Katerini and appointed him as *postnishin* of the Durbali Sultan *tekke*.<sup>15</sup> *Baba* Seit Koka Vandresa, the last *postnishin* 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>16</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 1950s, when its decline became visible, the *tekke* offered sustenance to all the poor (Christian Orthodox) peasants of the area.<sup>17</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>18</sup>- were welcomed. The *babas* would receive them with pleasure and discuss about Bektashism with

14 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*. The information was provided in November 1999 by Kostas Tsergas, the last shepherd attending the *tekke* flocks.

15 Tsiakoumis, pp. 86-87

16 The clinic of Dr. Hasan Bektas, a prominent member of the Bektashi community of Katerini. More information below.

17 Tsiakoumis, p. 10.

18 It is interesting to notice that the monk finds that *Bektashis* have many similarities with the Freemasons (Tsiakoumis, pp. 125&128).

them, offering them, first of all, coffee and *raki/ ouzo*,<sup>19</sup> as it was/ is also the custom to most of the Greek-Christian monasteries.

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>20</sup> In 1881, Thessaly was annexed to Greece and in 1882 Bayram Murteza *baba*,<sup>21</sup> *postnishin* 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>22</sup> Finally, in 1920, after a long and distressing process,<sup>23</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 *ash 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>24</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/pious foundation (*vakuf*) 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 (9 September, 1951) to renouncing his connection with the Bektashis of Albania and the jurisdiction of the *dedebaba* of Tirana<sup>25</sup> and asked that both himself and the *tekke* be brought under the jurisdiction of the *dedebaba* Ahmet Sirri, having his seat in the *tekke* of Kaygusuz Abdal in Cairo, Egypt, who -on 16 September, 1952- granted Seit *baba*'s

19 Karkavitsas, who visited the *tekke* at that time, reports "plentiful *ouzo*-drinking" (p. 158). In 1904 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, pp. 126&135). In 1966, *baba* Seit also offers his visitors chocolate, brandy and cigarettes (Thomas).

20 The total income of the *tekke* during the 5-year period from 1846 AD (AH 1262) to 1850 AD (AH 1266) was 22,000 *kurush* (Tsiakoumis, p. 68).

21 A Greek Christian Orthodox boy, who was kidnapped by Albanian soldiers (serving the Ottoman army?) from a village in Central Greece around 1830, converted to Islam, adopted by the Pasha of Almyros (Volos), became Bektashi and -nobody knows how- was appointed as *postnishin* in the Durbali Sultan *tekke* in 1873 (Tsiakoumis, p. 73)

22 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/ vakuf* property and proceeded to passing a relevant act in 1889, on the administration of the *evkaf* in Epirus and Thessaly (Tsiakoumis, p. 72).

23 In which his nephew Ismail Ibrahim, his successor Tahir *baba* and finally Kiazim *baba* were also involved. For a detailed discussion, see Tsiakoumis, pp. 72 – 94.

24 Pursuant to acts of 1940 (Tsiakoumis, p. 98) characterising Albania as an enemy state. The state of war with Albania was lifted by Greece as late as in 1987!

25 Describing him as "a slave of communism" (Tsiakoumis, p. 176), who publishes all the relevant documents for the first time, in view of disengaging himself from Albania, an enemy state for Greece.

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 mountainous 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>26</sup> until the issue is finally resolved”.<sup>27</sup>

After the death of Seit *baba* (30 November, 1972), the property of the *tekke* (the land and a flock of some 200 sheep -the only ‘being’ living of the *tekke* that is still alive) was handed over to the Revenue Service of Farsala, which leases it 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 *vakuf* as Albanian property.

The buildings of the *tekke* seemed to be in good condition until 1938, served at that time by three dervishes,<sup>28</sup> but the *tekke* was facing severe financial problems, since the largest part of its property had been taken away. The two *turbe*, in particular, were in very good shape. The graves -especially that of Durbali 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 *nefir/ horn* next to them. The 1955 earthquakes destroyed the largest part of the *tekke* buildings -the second floor of the *meydan* and the *ash evi*, but not the two *turbe*. After the death of *baba* Seit in 1972, the cemetery and the two *turbe* 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 Durbali 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 *turbe*, showing the sense of holiness of the place for local peasants, whose ancestors used to work in the *tekke* fields. Moreover, in the *turbe* visitors can notice various offerings (kerchiefs, bars of soap, coins and candles) offered by pilgrims, Albanian Bektashi migrant workers

26 Two thousand 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 insufficient 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”.

27 Tsiakoumis, p. 105.

28 Baba Kiazim, dervish Feta and dervish Bairam. The *tekke* was also served by four Albanians, a Cherkez (Circasian) and a Greek, all offered sustenance by the *tekke* and receiving a 500 drachma monthly pay (Tsiakoumis, p. 134).

who visit the *tekke* frequently, pray and sacrifice sheep (*kurban*) asking for the blessing or thanking for the mediation of Durbali Sultan.<sup>29</sup> The most massive and spectacular presence of visitors, however, is on May Day, when a large number of Christian Orthodox -most of them aware of the history of the *tekke* and caring about it, considering it part of their own cultural history<sup>30</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- *baba* Seit would prepare the famous “*tsorva*” (soup) and serve it to his numerous visitors on the day of *Ashurah*.

### The tekke of Hasan Baba in Tembi

In the village of Tembi (earlier named Hasan Baba köy)<sup>31</sup> by the Tembi valley (earlier named Hasan Baba Bogazi) lies the *tekke* of Hasan Baba. The *tekke* cluster contained the *türbe* of Hasan Baba -an imposing building<sup>32</sup> with an inscription quoting Koranic verses<sup>33</sup> in its inside perimeter, and to the SW the *ash 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>34</sup> and decorated by *atopuz*, an Arabic sword, a *sarikl* turban, 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>35</sup> indicates the existence of a mosque in the cluster and is evidence of a powerful Sunni presence and influence. But the twelve-ribbed marble Bektashi cap standing still on the top of the *türbe*, proves the Bektashi dominance in the area.

Local historians report 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, once a year, to all visitors irrespective of religion, while many Muslims who suffered from physical and

29 These people have proceeded (Summer 2005) to some “restoration works” (by cleaning the interior of the *turbes*, repairing the walls and a marble inscription in Arabic inside a *turbe*, paving the floor with modern style tiles, restoring the *babas'* graves outside the *turbes*, etc.). Their actions infuriated the Greek public service in charge for the monument, for both pragmatic and symbolical reasons.

30 Tsiakoumis, p. 13.

31 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 inns. See Apostolos Vakalopoulos, *Ta kastro tou Platamona ke tis Orias sta Tempi ke o tekas tou Hasan Baba* [The castles of Platamonas and Oria in Tempi and the tekke of Hasan Baba], Thessaloniki, The Society for Macedonian Studies, 1972, pp. 65 – 84.

Muslim Ottoman Turks first arrived in the area of Thessaly (Central Greece) in the late 14<sup>th</sup> century; the area was annexed to the Greek State in 1881.

32 Estimated to have been built in the late 14<sup>th</sup> or early 15<sup>th</sup> century (Vakalopoulos).

33 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.

34 Possibly the first two Hassan Baba's successors (Vakalopoulos, p. 72).

35 Vakalopoulos, p. 68.

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>36</sup>

What remains in the site 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 *ash 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 1980s and 1990s to restore and preserve the *türbe* were actually blocked by nationalistic circles which strongly opposed such a step and once planted a bomb at the *türbe* entrance.<sup>37</sup> Nowadays, not the slightest sign of liturgical activity can be noticed.

### The tekkes of Konitsa

The small town of Konitsa (Epirus, 63 km north of Ioannina) was one of the most important Bektashi centres in North-western Greece. In Konitsa there were two Bektashi *tekkes*: the *tekke* of Baba Osman in the upper part of the town and the *tekke* of Baba Husen or Hüseyin in the lower part of the town, close to the famous bridge of Konitsa.

In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the *postnishin* in the Husen *babatekke* was *baba* Haydar, son of Mahmut, from Glina-Leskovik<sup>38</sup>. At that time, the *tekke* was served by *dervish* Suleyman, *dervish* Ali,<sup>39</sup> *dervish* Bilio or Bilal Mehmet from Valovista, *dervish* Zeynel Abedin, the nephew of *baba* Haydar, *dervish* Zeynel from Giontsi, and *dervish* Demir from Avoritsiani, while there was a number of *muhib* who visited the *tekke* frequently and took part in the liturgical life (prayers, meals etc.).<sup>40</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 *turbe* to light candles and offer bars of soap, towels, kerchiefs, slippers, and so on.

36 *ibid*, p. 73.

37 This incident took place in May 17<sup>th</sup> 1997. See ‘Ios, Versions of Thessalian nationalism’ [Ios, Ekdohes tis Thessalikis ethnikofrosinis], *Eleftherotypia*, 21 July 2001. Available from <http://www.iospress.gr/mikro2001/mikro20010721.htm> (Accessed 10 September 2015).

38 The *tekke* of Baba Husen must have been founded by Hüseyin *baba* or else *baba* Huso himself in mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. His successor was *baba* Ismail, while the next known *postnishin* was Turabi Gül *baba*, who also founded a *mektep*/ school in 1870 near the *tekke*, which was later characterised as a ‘secondary school’/ *ruştıye*. In 1878 and 1882 *baba* Adem was the *postnişin*, while from 1883 until 1896 the *postnişin* was *baba* Kamil from Anatolia. See Anastasios Efthimiou, *Selides apo tin Istoria tis Konitsas* [Pages from the history of Konitsa], Konitsa, Municipality of Konitsa, 1997, p.153.

39 Who used to pay respect to bishop Panaretos, by visiting him often and kissing his hand.

40 Efthimiou, *Selides apo tin Istoria tis Konitsas*, p. 167

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 *Moharrem* or *Matem* period (of mourning), all 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>41</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 Bektashi,<sup>42</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 “*per shen Koliën e Vodiçes*” [“by Saint Nicolas of Voditsa” in Albanian].<sup>43</sup>

It is worth mentioning that in 1925, when a big group of Muslims left the area of Konitsa,<sup>44</sup> *derwish* 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>45</sup>

In 1950 it was estimated that around thirty Muslim families still lived in Konitsa. Nowadays (2015) some five Muslim families still live in the town, not showing the slightest sign of Bektashi practice, while, on the land where the *tekke* of Baba Husen was standing, what remains is the surrounding wall and the building of the *turbe*.

## **Bektashi monuments and communities in Central and Eastern Macedonia**

### **The tekke of Katerini**

In the town of Katerini, 70 km SSW of Thessaloniki, there was a memorable Bektashi community.

41 Ibid, pp. 149-150.

42 Field-work finding in Leskovik, Albania, April 2001.

Lambros Baltiotis, *L'Albanophonie dans l'état Grec*, Paris, E.H.E.S.S., 2002, p. 306.

43 Moreover, it seems that many Christians in the area, for various reasons, used to resort to the healing power of the *babas* (Efthimiou, pp. 142, 143).

44 As a result of the Greece-Turkey population exchange. 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.

45 Efthimiou, p. 128.

Very few things are known about the *tekke* of Abdulah Baba in Katerini. In 1922, the *postnishin* was the renowned *halife* Djafer *baba*<sup>46</sup> and in 1949 the *postnishin* was Veli Mustafa *baba*, a Greek citizen<sup>47</sup> who held that post at least until 30 October, 1954,<sup>48</sup> and most probably died in 1960.<sup>49</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. In the late 1950s there was only one *dervish* living in a semi-ruined cell by the *turbe*. The Bektashis of Katerini had strong connections with the people in Durbali Sultan and with the Bektashi community of Thessaloniki.

There is no clear evidence about the early steps of the Albanian Bektashi community in Katerini. The size of the community in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century is not known, but it seems that it did not exceed fifty 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 these people were considered to be Albanians and Greece was at war with Albania, they found themselves under 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 “*davei*” [invitation in Turkish] and the day of *Ashurah*.<sup>50</sup>

At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there were only four former Bektashi families,<sup>51</sup> almost all the young members of which had been baptised and had become Greek Christian Orthodox.

Nowadays (2015), from the *tekke* cluster only the *turbe* and three tombstones standing by it remain,<sup>52</sup> in a relatively good condition, in the middle of a small

46 As evidenced by a letter dated AH 1338 / 1920 AD, signed by him and addressed to the *dervishes* of the Durbali Sultan *tekke*, concerning the appointment of a new *postnishin* after the death of Tahir *baba*, (Tsiakoumis, p. 81). Djafer *baba* must have been a highly respected person. As Dr. Hasan Bektas reported (Katerini, personal interview, 09 September 2001), when he was a child, the Bektashis of Katerini used to swear by Djafer *baba*.

47 According to a relevant reference by Seit *baba* of the Durbali Sultan *tekke* (Tsiakoumis, p. 66).

48 As evidenced by a relevant document signed by Ahmet Sirri *dededaba* in Cairo. The document is quoted by Tsiakoumis (pp. 178 – 181).

49 Ekrem H. Ayverdi, *Avrupa'da Osmanlı Mimâri Eserleri* [Ottoman Architectural Monuments in Europe], vol. 4, İstanbul, Fetih Cemiyeti, 1982, pp. 235.

50 Dr. Hasan Bektas, Katerini, 9 January 2001, personal interview.

51 The families Bektas, Kapran, Gerou and Soula.

52 This of Ramazan *baba* (died in AH1326), this of Ayse hanim, wife of Sadik aga (died in AH 1323) and this of Muharrem *baba* (Ayverdi, pp. 235).

park, which now belongs to the Municipality of Katerini - since the building of the *turbe* and the surrounding area was donated to the Municipality by Dr. Hasan Bektash who was recognised as owner - and is often the target of nationalistic circles, although there is not the slightest sign of liturgical activity. In the summer of 2005, the Municipality proceeded to restoration works (financed by Dr. Hasan Bektash *in memoriam* of his father Riza Bektash) and now the monument is in good shape and easily accessible.

### The tekke of Thessaloniki

The Bektashi presence in 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>53</sup>

There is only limited and relatively vague information about the Bektashi community of Thessaloniki in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>54</sup> Most of the community members were of Albanian origin with strong family ties with the Bektashi community of Katerini.<sup>55</sup> Just like in Katerini, the Bektashis of Thessaloniki, being were of Albanian origin and exempted from the compulsory Greek-Turkish population exchange of 1923.<sup>56</sup>

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, while some of those who stayed -either themselves or their children- were baptised and became Christian Orthodox. In the mid-1950s two prominent members of the Greek Bektashi community (of Albanian origin) lived in Thessaloniki: the merchant Kemal Rifat and the agronomist Halit Gérou.<sup>57</sup> It is estimated that

53 Including the Bektashi *tekkes*. Faroqhi (1976), based on Ottoman taxation records, mentions the existence of the *tekke* of Kara Baba and Beyazit Baba in the area of Thessaloniki in the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Dimitriadis (1983) informs us that the Bektashi *tekke* of Kara Baba (confiscated in 1827 and returned to the Bektashis in 1840), according to the inventory of the *mufi* of Thessaloniki, was destroyed by the fire in 1917.

54 Strong evidence for the existence of the community is a 1913 photograph showing a Bektashi *baba* -wearing the typical Bektashi twelve ribbed white woollen crown (*taj*) wrapped with green strip. See photo No 48 (code number 2019), in Jeanne Beausoleil et al, *Thessalonique, 1913 & 1918: Les Autochromes du Musée Albert Kahn*, Athens, Olkos, 1999, p. 78.

55 Dr. Hasan Bektas interview, 2001.

56 Actually they had the option of being exempted. Being exempted does not mean that they were somehow forced to stay, despite the fact that - at that time - all of them opted for staying. Moreover, there was the remarkable phenomenon of wealthy people of Turkish ethnic origin -who were obliged to leave- "buying" the Albanian nationality or documents that proved an Albanian ethnic origin in order to stay.

57 They are both appointed (by Ahmet Sirri *dedebaba* in Cairo on 16 September, 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 (pp. 177 - 178).

in the 1970s less than a hundred members of the Bektashi community lived in Thessaloniki -20 to 30 families.<sup>58</sup> Nowadays, there is no visible presence of an active Bektashi community in Thessaloniki.

In the 1950s, a *tekke* must have still existed in Thessaloniki.<sup>59</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 Uch Tsesme Deresi in the East.<sup>60</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-ruined building<sup>61</sup> which must have been a *turbe*.

There were probably burials there until the 1970s. For the locals, 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>62</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

58 Dr. Hasan Bektas interview.

59 Possibly Bektashi was also the *turbe* of Musa Baba, still standing semi-ruined in Terpsitheas sq. in Ano Poli, Thessaloniki, a site that was a Muslim cemetery until 1930. It is interesting to notice that, until 1980, by the *turbe* there was a small shrine with the icon of St. George in it, by which one could often see candles lit both by local Orthodox Christians and Muslim Gypsies who migrated from Thrace to Thessaloniki in the early 1980s. In the late 1990s, one of the Albanian migrant workers who worked in the reconstruction of the square built by the *turbe* -at his own expense- a shrine dedicated to St. Charalambos. Field research findings.

60 Basilio Dimitriadis, *Topografia tis Thessalonikis kata thn Epohi tis Tourkokratiias 1430 - 1912* [Topography of Thessaloniki during the Ottoman Period 1430 - 1912], Thessaloniki, The Society for Macedonian Studies, 1983.

61 According to the narrations of people living next door and in the vicinity, who used to play in the cemetery when they were young.

62 Alexia Margariti, Thessaloniki, 15 April 2005, personal interview. Mrs A. Margariti is a civil engineer, director of the Municipality of Triandria-Thessaloniki.

of the town.<sup>63</sup> What exists now is a plot of land about 30 by 50 m, defined by Koundouriotou, Glinou and Eleftherias streets.<sup>64</sup>

### The *tekkes* in eastern Macedonia

In the area between Thessaloniki and the Nestos River, the present-day 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 one notices 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>65</sup> In the early 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>66</sup>

There is little if any information about the Bektashi monuments and people 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 Filippi village close to Kavala (earlier named Seliani, inhabited by Greek-speaking Muslims!) is probably the *turbe* of an unknown Bektashi *baba*, built in 1780 and transformed into a church in 1924.<sup>67</sup>

Signs of Bektashi presence also exist in the area between Kavala and Seres. As Hypert, 1889 mentions, by the river Angista there was a *han/* inn, 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 mean-

63 Dr Hasan Bektaş, interview.

64 It is worth mentioning that in this cemetery Tahsin Pasha was buried, the Ottoman general of Albanian origin (possibly a Bektashi) who handed Thessaloniki over to the Greek army in 1912.

65 Esprit M. Cousinéry, *Voyage dans la Macédoine, contenant des recherches sur l'histoire, la géographie et les antiquités de ce pays*, Paris, Imprimerie royale, 1831, Vol. 1, p. 163.

References to «Kirdjalis» also in Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam*, ch. 42; Basil Nikolaidy, *Les Turcs et la Turquie contemporaine: Itinéraire et compte-rendu de voyages dans les provinces ottomanes avec cartes détaillées*, Paris, F. Sartorius - Libraire-éditeur, 1859, Vol. 1, pp. 275-276. See Jean-Jacques Tromelin, 'Itinéraire d'un voyage fait dans la Turquie 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*, Vol. 12, 1917, pp. 344-381 & Vol. 13, 1918, pp. 96-124.

66 Giorgos Koutzakiotis, 'I Oresivii Mousoulmani tis Rodopis (Teli 18ou - Arhes 19ou Eona): Skepsis gia tin Ikona tous sta Taxidiotika Egrafa tis Epoxis' [The Muslim Highlanders of Rodopi in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century: Some Thoughts about Their Depiction in Travellers' Reports of that Time], *Ethnologia*, Vol. 8, 2000, pp. 249 – 264, 257.

67 Politistikos Silogos Filippon [Filippi Cultural Association], *Seliani - Mesorema - Filipi: Enas Eonas* [Seliani - Mesorema - Filipi: One Century], Kavala, Politistikos Silogos Filippon, 1999, p. 38.

ing of his sword -connecting it with his hostility against the descendants of the killers of Imam Hüseyin- 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 networks.

### **Bektashi monuments and communities in Thrace**

In the area of Greek Thrace, east of the Nestos river, there is a significant presence of Bektashi monuments and of a relatively extended rural 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. Worth to be mentioned that all of the 80,000 Muslims who live permanently in Greek Thrace are nowadays fluent Turkish speakers, the great majority of whom 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 the official Bulgarian, as their mother tongue. The vast majority of the Thracian Muslims consider themselves as part of the Turkish nation.<sup>68</sup>

### **The *tekke* of Hasip Baba in Xanthi**

In the eastern part of the town of Xanthi (also called Isketse 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 1990s when the town plan was implemented (new streets and a block of flats were built just by the *türbe*), the *tekke* covered a relatively extensive area. In the *tekke's* yard there were two graves of two former *postnishin*: that of Hadji Salim *baba* and that of Arif *baba*, both dated AH 1320 /1902 AD, both having at the top of the tombstone the *ethemi taj*.<sup>69</sup>

What still stands nowadays (2015) is the *türbe* of Hasip Baba, while outside the *türbe* and just before the entrance, there are two more graves. The one with

68 Having passed -in cases still passing- through an interesting process of transition, during which, the Greek nationalism was/is attempting to keep them in a pre-national situation, where the main element of the identity is religion, while the Turkish nationalism was/is attempting to cultivate and in cases to impose the sense of belonging to the Turkish nation. See Giorgos Mavrommatis, *Ethnikismos kai Istoria tis Ekpaideftikis Politikis: I Ekpaideusi ton Thrakioton Mousoulmanon Meionotikon 1945- 1975* [Nationalism and history of educational policy: the education of Thracian minority Muslims 1945-1975], PhD Thesis, Panteion University of Athens, 2008.

69 Efstrathios Zegkinis, *O Mpektasmos sti D. Thraki: Simvoli stin Istoria tis Diadoseos tou Mousoulmanismou ston Elladiko Horo* [Bektashism in Western Thrace: A Contribution to the History of the Propagation of Islam on Greek Territory], Thessaloniki, Institute for Balkan Studies, 1988, p. 217.

the typical *külâh*/twelve-fold Bektashi mitre sculpted at the top of the tombstone and a *teslim tash* in the centre of the tombstone belongs to Ibrahim *baba*, who died in AH 1311/ 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 AH 1340 / 1921 AD.

Inside the *türbe* there is a wooden coffin covered with green fabric and a small *minber*/ wooden pulpit painted green, with the word “Allah” carved on it (in Arabic) and below it the words “Ya Muhammed”, “Ya Ali”, “Ya Hasan”, “Ya Huseyin”, while on the wall behind the *minber* there are three *teber*/axes of various sizes, two small elaborated *sheyh mutekkasi*/ T-shaped iron sticks and a *nefir*. Two inscriptions, one inside and the other above the entrance of the *türbe*, indicate that the *türbe* was built in the 1880s.<sup>70</sup>

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, and so on, all connected to expressions of folk religious beliefs. No traces of a Bektashi community or signs of typical Bektashi practices were noticed, probably due to the fact that the Bektashis of the area have been assimilated/ “Sunnified” or have migrated to Turkey.

### The *tekke* of Seyyid Ali Sultan or Kizil Deli in Evros

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

The *tekke* was founded in AH 804 / 1402 AD and restored in AH 1173 / 1759 AD, according to the inscription over the gate of the *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* lies the grave of Seyyid Ali, a wooden coffin covered by green fabric (on which people often place as offerings towels, kerchiefs and so on), 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 *hirka*/ *clog*. Around the grave there are twelve 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 *mesdjit* with *mihrab*.

70 It is not clear whether that was also the date of death of Hasip Baba. The inscriptions, transliterated in Latin letters and translated in Greek, are fully quoted by Zegkinis (pp. 214 – 215).

Close to the *türbe - mesdjit* building, on the left, there is a large *ash evi*, while on the right lies the *meydan* joined to a large room where the collective meals (*muhabet*) take place.

Upon entering the recently restored<sup>71</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 eleven candlesticks on it, while recently (2014) a poem in Albanian written on a porcelain tile was hanged on the south wall of the *meydan*. 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 instruments (*saz*), icons of imam Ali and recent hand-written inscriptions in Arabic letters, present of the *postnishin* of the Otman Baba *tekke* given to the caretaker's family members during their visit to Southern Bulgaria in 2003.

At the north side of the cluster there is a big building named *Pasha Konagi*, possibly quarters for *babas* in the past, where nowadays the caretaker (the devoted and worthy of bearing the title of *türbedar* "the guard of the mausoleum" Müslim Tsolak and his family live. At the south side, behind the *türbe*, there is a graveyard, where many former *postnishin* are buried -the oldest inscribed tombstone dates back to AH 1160 / 1747 AD. There are two more graveyards some 100m east of the *tekke* perimeter.<sup>72</sup>

The *tekke* of Seyyid Ali Sultan is also connected -considered as a single unit- to the Ashagi Tekke (the lower tekke) some 10 km E of the Seyyid Ali Sultan Tekke, 1 km NE of the village of Mikro Derio (also called *Kutsuk Derbent* by the Turkish speakers), inhabited in the last 60 years, exclusively by Christians.

The history of this *tekke* is obscure. The fact that at least two tombstones of the graveyard outside the Kizil Deli tekke in Roussa, dated around AH 1200 / 1786 AD, refer to the "upper *tekke*" using the word *bala* ("upper" in Persian) shows that in the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the Ashagi *tekke* still operated. The existence and operation of the "lower *tekke*" is recorded in 1826. It seems that around that time the buildings of the *tekke* were deliberately demolished, since shortly after 1826 most of its property was sold off and the new owners decided to bring down the buildings and sell the building material.<sup>73</sup>

71 Around 2002 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.

72 The inscriptions on some tombstones, as well as the inscription over the *meydan* gate mentioned above, transliterated in Latin and translated in Greek, are fully quoted by Zegkinis (pp. 180, 191–195).

73 Suraiya Faroqhi, 'Agricultural Activities in a Bektashi Center: The Tekke of Kizil Deli 1750-1830', *Südost-Forschungen*, Vol. 35, 1976.

Everything (location and informers) suggests that at that site 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, with remains of undated old tombstones on two sides, but no typical Bektashi mark on them. On the short wall there are twelve 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”.<sup>74</sup>

At the time the Kizil Deli *tekke* was founded, extensive lands were assigned to (the founder of) it by the Sultans,<sup>75</sup> actually establishing a *vakıflı* religious and pious foundation. 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>76</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>77</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 semi-nomadic/ moving shepherds (Sarakatsani/ Karakatsani) under the leadership of the notorious “Gika”.<sup>78</sup> Besides, through a vague process and in the name of protection (?!), all the *tekke* lands were transferred in the 1960s (?) to a person now living in Turkey, who unsuccessfully attempted to sell them.<sup>79</sup> Nowadays (2015) the *tekke* is considered to be a *vakıf* connected to the mosque of the village of Roussa.<sup>80</sup>

74 The Persian and Arabic script was read by the Japanese Prof. Kozo Itani, when we visited the area in the summer of 2004 together with the ethnomusicologist Mitsuru Saito for field research in Bektashism.

75 Detailed discussion in Zegkinis (1988) with references to Ottoman archives.

76 Ahmet Kavak, *Seyyid Ali Sultandergâhı*. Paper presented (by Gönül Bekirusta) in Batı Trakyada Çokkültürlülük, Batı Trakya Türk Azınlığı kültür sanat sempozyumu, Gümülcine/ Komotini, 15 January 2005.

77 Finally, in 1920 Western Thrace was annexed to Greece.

78 Field research findings. See also Kavak.

79 Field research findings.

80 Under the legal protection regime Muslim pious foundations (*vakıflı*) enjoy in Thrace, as was first provided for in Act 2345/1920 and finalised in Act 1091/1980 and the relevant decrees of 1990 and 1991. See Konstantinos Tsitselikis, *Old and New Islam in Greece: From Historical Minorities to Immigrant Newcomers*, Leiden, Brill/ Martinus Nijhoff, 2012.

In the area having the *tekke* of Seyyid Ali Sultan as a geographical and spiritual centre,<sup>81</sup> a lot of activities connected to the Bektashi culture take place, most importantly the various *kurbans* from Spring to Autumn every year,<sup>82</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 Ashagi *tekke*. The next big *kurban* -the Kirk Kur-bani- is some 40 days later, by the tombs of the “Gaziler” close to the village of Chloi (also called Ebilköy by the Turkish speakers and/or (H)Ebilovo by the Slav 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 (also called Yukari Kamberler by the Turkish speakers), some 110 days after Hederlez. Numerous other *kurbans* take place in the meantime.<sup>83</sup> The *kurban* by the tomb of Mursal Baba, some 3 km W of the *tekke* (8 November, the day of Kasim) closes the “cycle”, while the biggest *kurban* is the one taking place in the *tekke* on 13<sup>th</sup> Muharrem every year, where almost all the Bektashis of the area gather.<sup>84</sup> It is worth mentioning that in some *kurbans*, especially those of Hederlez in Ashagi *tekke* and Mursal Baba,<sup>85</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 site in hundreds, do not usually ask to eat the meat of the *kurban*, perhaps perceiving it as *haraml* forbidden by the religion, since the animals are not slaughtered according to the Sunni/ orthodox “protocol”.

Another feast connected to the local Bektashi culture but not having straight religious connotations is the wrestling festival of Sechek, 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 agasi*). In the year 1996

81 The villages of the area inhabited only or partly by Bektashis are: Mirtiski (Musadjik), Hloi (Hebilköy), Kehros (Merkoz), Hamilo (Salincak), Ano Kampi (Yukari Kanberler), Goniko (Babalar), Rushenler (Roussa), Mesimeri (Mevsimler), Spano (Köseler), Mikraki (Kütüklü), Sidirochori (Tsilingir mahalle), Megalo Derio (Büyük Dervent) etc. In parenthesis the old/ Turkish names.

82 One has to bear 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.

83 Detailed presentation in Dimitris Vrahiologlou, *I mpektasides mousoulmani tis ditikis Thrakis: giortes ke laika thriskefika ethima* [The Bektashi Muslims of Western Thrace: feasts and folk religious customs], Alexandroupolis, Anglohellenic, 2000.

84 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*.

85 The special symbolism of those days needs to be underlined here. Hederlez -an important day to heterodox Islam since, according to the tradition, on that day Heder/ Hidir meets prophet Elias- on May 6 (the day of the celebration of the memory of St. George according to the old Christian Orthodox/ Julian calendar which was in effect in Greece till 1923) 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 Sechek 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.

the “Seçek Cultural Association” was established and started undertaking the organisation of this feast and of some *kurbans*.<sup>86</sup> Among other things, they introduced some “modernisation measures”,<sup>87</sup> which seem to have disappointed a number of local Bektashis.

Besides, as part of a general modernisation process<sup>88</sup> we can consider the visit/pilgrimage of some Bektashis from Bulgaria and Turkey (from villages close to the Greek border, “belonging” traditionally to the *tekke* of Kizil Deli) to the *tekke* from 2004 and on, at the invitation of the association and with the “tactful” support of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs,<sup>89</sup> while from mid 2000’s and on, the involvement of the Turkish State (through the Turkish Consulate in Komotini) to the activities of the Thracian Bektashis increases rapidly and becomes visible (presence of folk music and dance groups with the support of the Turkish Ministry of Culture, presence of various State officials, restoration of the *türbe* etc.)

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; as a result, the whole thing is slipping towards a folk religious practice, perhaps partly due to a progressive “Sunnification”<sup>90</sup> and partly due to the lack of local Bektashi scholars capable and willing to cultivate and spread an elaborate Bektashi knowledge.

### Concluding remarks

- The significant Bektashi presence in Central and Northern Greece in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century has progressively shrunk, mainly due to the Greek-Turkish population exchange and the bad Greek-Albanian relations, especially during the period

86 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. The evolution of the *panyiri* feast of Seçek during the last decade was presented (with the help of visual material) and analysed Miranda Terzopoulou, under the title “Identity, Politics and the Sacred: The Evolution of a Bektashi Panayir in Greek Thrace” in the 1<sup>st</sup> International Symposium on Alevism and Bektashism, organised by the Department of Theology of the Suleyman Demirel University, 28-30 September 2005, in Isparta, Turkey.

87 For example, the Seçek feast is now held on the first weekend of August and not in mid-week, as traditionally was the case.

88 Since it takes place in this new contemporary framework, despite the fact that it could also be read as a continuation of older practices, before the Greek and the Bulgarian States were created or borders were traced.

89 A senior official of which (the vice consul of the Turkish consulate of Komotini) was present and welcomed the Bulgarians in their last visit, in November 2005.

90 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.

1940-1990. Nowadays the only noticeable presence is that of some 3,000 rural Bektashis in Thrace, living around the *tekke* of Kizil Deli.

- The current state of knowledge, based on field research and Greek bibliographical sources, cannot sustain the hypothesis of the existence of a network connecting all Bektashi communities and monuments existing on the lands that constitute Greece during the 1920 – 2015 period. 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- a gap can be noticed between Thessaloniki and Xanthi.

There must be various types of connections between the (urban) Bektashi communities of Crete with communities and networks in Turkey, in which, the rising Turkish nationalism of the beginnings of the 20th century, should have played significant role. On the other hand, it is clear that there were strong relations between the (Greek and Turkish –speaking) Cretan Bektashi *babas* and *der-vishes* with the (Albanian origin) Bektashi *babas* of the Bektashi *tekke* of Kaygusuz Abdal in Cairo-Egypt, who were (most probably) keeping political and ideological distances from the Turkish nationalism.

- The presence and the action of Albanian Bektashi migrant workers in Greece from 1990 and on, which could be viewed as the beginning of a revival of Bektashism in Central Greece, was often perceived with suspicion, concern or even hostility among authorities in Greece, and alarmed certain (nationalistic) circles.

- The revival of another Bektashi network is also taking place in Thrace, since rural Bektashis of the same ethnic-sect background from Turkish, Bulgarian and Greek Thrace get together, having as a centre (or as a reference point) the *tekke* of Kizil Deli. Turkey supports this network and promotes through it the (official form of) Alevi-Bektashi culture, while building a platform on which wider cultural and political issues could be promoted.

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