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BEKTASHIS AND ISLAM IN BOSNIA AND HERCEGOVINA

The spread of Islam in Bosnia and Hercegovina began immediately after the conquest of these provinces by the Turks (Bosnia, 1463 and Hercegovina, 1465) when orthodox Sunni Islam was strengthened. Already from the beginning of islamization in Bosnia and Hercegovina, a powerful sunni oriented theological school which was very active in this region, and was aided and supported by the Ottoman authorities, fought against all kinds of heterodoxy. But this not mean that heterodoxy did not find ways of spreading its influence here. However, heterodox movements appeared only sporadically and have not left deeper traces in the religious life of the Muslims of Bosnia and Hercegovina. Thus, the Hamzavites, for instance, as a heterodox brotherhood or sect, though they rapidly spread, obtaining a great number of followers, were subdued immediately, and no memory or tradition of them has been preserved among the people of Bosnia and Hercegovina. The same happened to the bektashis. Even if bektashi tekkes (monasteries) existed in Bosnia and Hercegovina in the first centuries of Ottoman domination, they were shortlived and only on the surface touched the religious and social life of the Muslims of this province, without deeper penetration into their consciousness.

Ottoman governors in Bosnia and Hercegovina and Ottoman feudal society, as well, systematically carried out the policy of protection and support to Sunni Islam, and they also established tekkes of orthodox dervish orders — such as: mevlevi, halveti, nakšbandi, kadiri, etc., giving them financial and other assistance in order for them to serve and act, also, as a counter-balance to the struggle with heterodox brotherhoods and sects. Thus, Isa-Bey Ishaković, the Duke of so-called Western provinces (1440-1446) established a Mevlevi tekke in Sarajevo (1462).¹⁾ Skender Pasha, probably du-

1. See: Hazim Šabanović, *Vakufnama Isa-bega Ishakovića za njegove zadužbine u Sarajevu* (The vakf-name of Isa Bey Ishaković for his pious endowment in Sarajevo), POF, II, 1951, p. 7-29; Mehmed Mujezinović, *Musafirhana i tekija Isa-bega Ishakovića u Sarajevu* (The guesthouse and the tekke of Isa Bey Ishaković in Sarajevo), *Naše Starine*, III, Sarajevo, 1965, p. 247; Sidžil br. 77 u GH-biblioteci u Sarajevu, str. 51-52 (The Court protocol, No-77 in Gazi Husrev Bey's library in Sarajevo, p. 51-52).

ring his third governorship in Bosnia (1499—1505), founded a tekke of the naksbandi order, also in Sarajevo about 1500.²⁾ The great Bosnian governor and benefactor of Sarajevo, Gazi Husrev-Bey (governor in Bosnia, 1521-1541) established the Hanekah of the halveti order of dervishes in Sarajevo before 1531.³⁾ The great tradesman, Hadži Sinan-aga, father of Silahdar Mustafa Pasha, established, in the XVIIth century, the "Sinan-aga's tekke" of the kadiri order in Sarajevo named after him.⁴⁾ So, we can see that the naksbandi, halveti and kadiri brotherhoods played certain role not only in the process of the spreading of Islam in these regions, but also in the development of tesavuf and in creating mystical tradition as a spiritual form of Islam in this land. Naturally, Bosna and Hercegovina as a bordering provinces of the Ottoman empire was in need of protection from heterodoxy which in its antagonism and opposition to Ottoman feudal society and Sunni Islam very often provoked revolts and uprisings.

In this connection, we would like to point out the historical fact that the Dervish order of bektashis, as a heterodox form of Islamic religion, was not represented in Bosnia and Hercegovina to such a degree as the other sufi brotherhoods mentioned above. Accordingly, it had no considerable influence on the janissaries, unlike the situation in the other provinces of the Ottoman empire. Together with Turkish conquests in the Balkans, in company with the Turkish army in which they took part, bektashi dervishes appeared also in the Yugoslav lands. Already in the middle of the XIVth century, bektashis appeared on the borders of Roumelie and to the end of this century they exercised very great influence on the janissaries, since, according to the opinions of some historians, janissaries were Christian children, or of Christian origin, or prisoners of war and they manifested inclination to bektashism as a popular form of Islamic religion rather than to Sunni Islam. However, the absence of a stronger representing or more considerable influence of bektashism in Bosnia and Hercegovina, desproves in a way the above said opinions of historians. It only may verify the attitude of Mehmed Fuad Koprulu who regarded as pure inventions the legends about the meeting of Hadži Bektash Veli with Ottoman rulers — Osman and Orhan and the role which Hadži Bektash had in the founding of the janissary corps and that such claims have no historical base.⁵⁾

2. Look: Alija Bejić, Skender-pašina tekija (Skender Pasha's tekke), Novi Behar, god. XVI, No. 2, 1944, p. 24; Đoko Mazalić, Biograd Prusac — stari bosanski grad (Biograd Prusac — old Bosnian town), GZM, 1951, p. 156; M. Kadić, Kronika (Chronicle), vol. I, p. 169, Djelo se nalazi u Gazi Husrevbegovoj biblioteci u Sarajevu — The work is to be found in the Library of Gazi Husrev Bey in Sarajevo; Sejfuddin Kemura, Sarajevske džamije i druge javne zgrade turske dobe (The mosques and other public buildings of Sarajevo), Sarajevo, 1910, p. 215; Šaćir Sikirić, Sarajevske tekije (The tekkes of Sarajevo), Narodna Starina, vol. 14, t. 1 — Zagreb, 1-XII-1927, p. 77.
3. See: Hazim Šabanović, Teritorijalno širenje i građevni razvoj Sarajeva u XVII stoljeću, Radovi knj. XXVI, Odjeljenje istorijsko-filoloških nauka, knj. 9 (The territorial spreading and architectural development of Sarajevo in the XVII th century, Works, t. XXVI, Department of historical-philological Sciences, t. 9), Sarajevo, 1965, p. 32; Hamdija Kreševljaković, Šejhovi hanikaha, Spomenica Gazi Husrevbegove četiristogodišnjice (The heads of Hanekh, in The Memorial of Gazi Husrev Bey's four hundred anniversary), Sarajevo, 1932, p. 57; Alija Nametak, Islamski kulturni spomenici — Turska perioda u Bosni i Hercegovini (The Islamic cultural monuments - Turkish period in Bosnia and Hercegovina), Sarajevo, 1939, p. 18, 19; Ciro Truhelka, Gazi Husrevbeg, njegov život i njegovo doba, (Gazi Husrev Bey, his life and his time), Sarajevo, 1912, p. 176-178; Š. Sikirić, Sarajevske tekije (The Tekke of Sarajevo), p. 78.
4. Mehmed Mujezinović, Islamska epigrafika u Bosni i Hercegovini, sv. 1 (The Islamic epigraphy on Bosnia and Hercegovina, t. 1 — Sarajevo), Sarajevo, "Veselin Masleša", 1974, p. 247-48.
5. See: Mehmed Fuad Koprulu, Les Origines de l'Imperie Ottoman, tr. by Nedim Filipović, Sarajevo, "Veselin Masleša", 1955, p. 144.

Fuad Koprulu also pointed out that the bektashi order is only one of the heterodox brotherhoods and it was not the most important one until the XVIth century. Only in the XVth and XVIth centuries, when it absorbed other mystical brotherhoods that had their origin in babaism, did it begin to play a more considerable role, and that was the reason why it was given very great importance in the establishing of the Ottoman empire.

Bektashi propaganda had considerable success and influence on the Turkomans of Anatolia, particularly in the region between Kizilirmak and Erzerum and in the mountains of Taurus in the south. The teaching of the bektashi tarikah was also accepted by Turkomans-Yuruks, settled between Adrianople and the Danube in the Balkans, then the dwellers of Dobrudža and Deliorman in eastern Bulgaria, and also the inhabitants of Rodop in Southern Macedonia and Thessaly. During the XVth and XVIth centuries a great number of Turkoman - nomads passed to a settled way of life, founding their villages and settling in towns and cities, bringing bektashism to urban centres.

It is well known that heterodox groups of dervishes, as for instance: habais, abdals, haidaris, and others, played an active role in the islamization of the inhabitants of Roumelie and the Balkans during the XIVth and XVth centuries.

Halil Inaldžik also speaks about the great role of bektashis in the spreading of Islam and Islamic culture among autochthonous Christian inhabitants of Roumelie and the Balkans, because, according to him, bektashi form of Islam which approves of the equality of religions, which gives importance to the hidden virtues than exterior symbols, which disregards the performance of islamic rituals-prayers, fasting, and permits drinking of wine and women to show themselves with uncovered faces and to mix with men, because of its esthetic nature and character of the people's tarikah, it was acceptable for numerous Balkan peasants.⁶⁾

The Dervish order of bektashis was not so much spread in Bosnia and Hercegovina; however, bektashi propaganda made efforts to that direction. According to Evliya Čelebi, who travelled through this region in 1660, there was a bektashi tekke on the outskirts of the town of Čajniče. Concerning this tekke, Evliya Čelebi writes: "On the eastern side of the town, on the right and the left sides of the highroad which leads from Taslidža (Plevlje) to Čajniče, from Hasan Pasha 's drinking-fountain (of well), situated on that highroad, at a distance of the promenade lined with trees to the south-east, on a small hill some thousand steps away, there is Gazi Murad-baba's garden with a bektashi monastery (asitan), vvhich is worthy to be seen. It is so high a watchtower full of shades, that from it the whole of the town of Čajniče can be seen. In every corner of that place, many enamoured and devoted dervishes have been performing musical programs with wonderful melodies and at any time different groups prepare musical programs, as for example those made and organized by Husein Baykara. Briefly, the inhabitants of towns come to this place of feast and entertainment with all sorts of dishes and drinks, preparing parties and meetings of various kinds".⁷⁾ After this, historical sources do not speak about this tekke. There is, however, a memo-

6. Halil Inalcik., *The Ottoman Empire. The Classical Age, 1300-1600*, London, 1972. tr. by Milica Mihajlović, Beograd, 1974, p. 276.

7. Evliya Čelebi, *Putopis (Seyahat-name) — fragments about the Yugoslav lands*, tr. by Hazim Šabanović, Sarajevo, "Svjetlost", 1967, p. 397-98.

ry preserved among people, concerning a tekke situated in Musalla above the town of Čajniče over the place where the hotel "Orijet" now stands. There was a turbe (tomb) a little below the mentioned hotel "Orijet", built for a Turkish officer. The tekke was demolished after the first World War, but a certain woman restored it later. And in the end, it was pulled down after the Second World War and has never been renewed. People remember a certain šeyh Omer and Muraddede who were, probably, bektashis.

There is a certain similarity between the tekke described by Evliya Čelebi and the one preserved in the memory of people as far as the place where it was located is concerned. May-be that tekke had lost its primary character and later belonged to some other tarikah.

There was also a bektashi tekke in the city of Sarajevo, on the left bank of the river Miljacka, close to Ćumurija bridge of which we are reminded only by the Street called "Tekija", so-called until 1931. Otherwise, we have no information either about its establishment or its disappearance.⁸⁾

It is known that there was also one bektashi tekke in the city of Banjaluka. Murat Sertoglu refers to this tekke, but gives no information about it.⁹⁾

Since the historical sources of later times offer very little information about these tekkes, it only mean that their duration and activities were both limited and shortlived, that bektashism here was only of a lesser importance, and that as a kind of sincretistic religion, bektashism could not last for a long time within the Sunni surroundings of Bosnia and Hercegovina. Because all tekkes which were active, continued their activity much longer, particularly those from later times of Ottoman rule, there were certain reflections in historical and other sources, or at least short information about their appearance and activities.

Now, we may draw the conclusion that not only bektashism but also other heterodox dervish orders and sects, which appeared from time to time, were not permanently developed in this area, where the influential Islamic theological school had control and was Islamic spokesman. If we consider bektashism completely in the framework of islamic civilisation — complexity of Bosnia and Hercegovina, in comparison with the influence of mevlevis, halvetis, kadiris, for example, the bektashi brotherhood had no greater influence in this region. It seems that a few individuals of Turkish and Albanian origin, who lived in Bosnia and Hercegovina, and only a very small number of local inhabitants belonged to it.

Taking a logical procedure, we have now to consider the connection of bektashism with the janissaries on the soil of Bosna and Hercegovina. It is a fact that we have not discovered something very helpful but it is necessary to point out that there is no information in accesible sources which would refer to the bektashi influence on the janissaries of Bosnia and Hercegovina, or to any kind of connexion between bektashis and janissaries, which, for instance, existed between the janissaries and the mevlevies, halveties, nakšbandies, kadiries, to which certain sources refer. But, it is true that we can not decisively say that there was no such influence at all, because there were a few bektashi tekkes in Bosnia and Hercegovina, as we have explained before. We must say that

8. See: Alija Bejtović, *Ulice i trgovi Sarajeva (The Streets and squares of Sarajevo)*, Sarajevo, 1973, p. 383-84.

9. Refer to: Murat Sertoglu, *Bektaşilik ne dir*, Istanbul, 1969, p. 317.

some researchers suppose that the bektashi tekke which situated close to Cumurija bridge in Sarajevo belonged to the bektashis. But I am not so sure, because no information or any notes exists in historical sources about it.

However, Mulla Mustafa Bašeski in his Chronicle (Ketab) gives us information concerning Šeho Čelengir on the occasion of his election as the head of the Mevlevi tekke in Sarajevo, who had to take off his janissary turban and replace it with mevlevi tadž (bonnet). This is a very interesting case which tells us that Šeho Čelengir, as a mevlevi šeyh, belonged to janissaries. As the head of the Mevlevi tekke in Sarajevo, he in fact opened the way to a stronger influence of the mevlevies on the janissaries. A very good example is of Mulla Mustafa Bašeski in his Chronicle. He informs us that saddlers, and it is well known that handicraftsmen mainly were janissaries, prepared entertainments and pleasure-parties in the Summer Mevlevi tekke of Šehova Korija which was a garden suitable for this kind of collective ceremonies.¹⁰⁾ A second instance which is for me very instructing: The author of the Chronicle (1740-1804), Mulla Mustafa Bašeski, as can be seen from title, was a janissary veteran, belonged to the kadiri order of dervishes, as he said in his Chronicle.¹¹⁾

We have a similar situation in Serbia. Concerning the dervish orders, we have not much information in historical sources. Evliya Čelebi supplies us with some information for earlier periods. He explicitly mentions the Tekke of Mehmed Pasha Yahya-pašić which was, certainly, founded before his death (1548). The tekke was situated on the Southern side of Abaza Pasha 's kiosk in Belgrade. The head of this tekke was Dervish Mehmed Horasani.¹²⁾ Since its founder, Mehmed Pasha, was akinci bey and it is known that the cult of Hadži Bektash was spread among akincis, Hazim Šabanović supposes that it belonged to the bektashi order of dervishes.¹³⁾

There was a bektashi tekke of a certain Subasha, which was probably located somewhere on the border of the city, because it was used as an excursion-place by the people of Belgrade.

Immediately after the Belgrade peace of 1740 there was another bektashi tekke established in Belgrade, which was mentioned in the vakfname of Defterdar Ahmed-Efendi. From the vakf-name it is evident that it was situated on Bulduldere and 12 akčas were donated for food.¹⁴⁾ From Evliya Čelebi's travels (Seyahat-name), we also see that two bektashi tekkes were established in Niš. One is "Kopru bashi tekke", and the other Subasha 's tekke, which was an excursion-place.¹⁵⁾ Evliya also refers to Seferbaba 's turbe (The tomb of Sefer-baba) which was probably situated near to the Kopru bashi 's tekke, which suggests to us that he was a šeyh of this tekke.¹⁶⁾ This is all we can find in historical sources concerning bektashism in Serbia.

10. See: Mulla Mustafa Bašeskija, Ljetopis (1746-1804) (Kitab), tr. from Turkish to Serbo - Croatian by Mehmed Mujezinović, Sarajevo, "Veselin Masleša", 1968, p. 211.

11. M. M. Bašeskija, Ljetopis (Chronicle), p. 198, 210, 249.

12. Evliya Čelebi, Putopis (Seyahat-name), p. 87.

13. See: the Articles of Hazim Šabanović concerning the cultural past of Belgrade, Istorija Beograda, knj. 1 - Stari, srednji i novi vijek, Beograd, 1974, p. 641-673 i druge.

14. See: H. Šabanović, Isto, p. 670; Ankara AWUM Arşivi, Vakfiye defteri, No-14, The court sopy of Defterdar Ahmed Efendi's vakf-name from the 5th of zilhidže of 1153th, p. 14.

15. Evliya Celebi, Putopis (Seyahat-name), p. 67.

16. Evliya Čelebi, Putopis (Seyahat-name), p. 64.

Nevertheless, the bektashi brotherhood had more considerable importance and played a significant role in religious and socio-political and cultural life of Macedonia and Kosovo in the XVIIth and the XVIIIth centuries. In nearly every town of the Yugoslav Southern area there was at least one bektashi tekke. Members of this order, whose role in the political life of these regions was most important, were recruited mainly from the people of Albanian nationality. Its expansions was evident on the soil of Macedonia and Kosovo modifying the structure of the people already in the XVIIth and the XVIIIth centuries. Though it is obvious that the process of islamization and the appearance of dervish tekkes and zawiya in a great number in the first epochs after the conquest of these lands by the Turks is a historical truth, after all we have not at our disposal much historical material concerning these questions until the XVIIIth century.

In addition to this, we must emphasize that the Pashas who ruled over Macedonia and Albania in the XVIIth and the XVIIIth centuries had close relations with the bektashis. To the bektashi brotherhood belonged also janissaries, most *çifluk* owners, army officers, handicraftsman (particularly gun-makers), and a part of free peasants. At the same time, when the Albanians accepted bektashism, Bektashi tekkes in Roumelie, filled with autochthonous element, had a firm hold of a national spirit, unknown to Asiatic Turkey.¹⁸⁾

Representatives of Albanian national spirit and ethnic sensibility came mainly from small landowners (*begs*) and middle-class people, from where bektashis also were recruited. It seems, however, that bektashism did not take root in Yugoslav Southern area (Macedonia and Kosovo) before XVIIIth century, even if there were tekkes of this order, as Evliya Çelebi informs, in Kosovska Mitrovica, Kačanik etc. "Mustafa-baba 's bektashi tekke is at a distance of an arrowshot from the town of Kosovska Mitrovica", says Evliya Çelebi". Bektashis accomodate travellers and passengers there".¹⁹⁾ Evliya also refers to the tekke of Kačanik and to the turbe of Krkler (The tomb of forty saints), where forty saints (*awliya'*) were buried.²⁰⁾ Researchers who have been occupied with bektashism recorded that there were bektashi tekkes in Macedonia in the following towns: Skoplje, Tetovo, Štip, Titov Veles (Koprulu), and in Kosovo in the towns: Djakovica, Prizren, Strumica, etc.

Bektashism as a religious teaching, or sect, in addition to the elements taken over from different sources, having begun with Shamanism..., coming to the soil of the Balkans, has taken over, naturally, certain elements of religious views of the Balkan peoples. We said that bektashism is a continuation of babaism and traces of Shamanism were quite evident in it, expressed in bektashi dances and entertainments. Traces of ancient Turkish folklore and customs can be seen. Women were free and equal with men as they were in preislamic Turkish society. Some historians, as for instance Georg Jacob and Hasluck, have drawn attention to the influence of Balkan paganism and Balkan Christianity on bektashi views and ideas. According to them, the conception of the Trinity expressed in bektashi dogma that God, Muhammed and Ali are one unit, confe-

17. See: F. W. Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam under Sultans*, II, Oxford, 1929, p. 243.

18. Refer to: Max Choublier, *Les Bektashis et la Roumelie*, *Revue des Etudes Islamiques*, annee 1927, III, p. 431.

19. See: Evliya Çelebi, *Putopis (Seyahat-name)*, p. 267, 278, 298.

20. Evliya Çelebi, *Putopis (Seyahat-name)*, p. 278, 298.

ssion of sins to the šeyh on the part of dervishes, and also the offering: bread, wine and cheese to novices on the occasion of the initiation ceremony (Ikrar ayini) are of Christian origin. Celibacy, introduced by Balim Sultan (d. 1516), begun in the XVth century, became an obligation for the heads of bektashi tekkes and for dervishes who lived in tekkes. Bektashis in Macedonia and Kosovo, according to Max Choublier, retained and continued the cult of St. Nikola and believed in demons and evil spirits of Slav origin, as for example, Samo Divi and Samo Vili.²¹⁾

Bektashi tekkes were founded as if following a certain established custom, somewhere on the border of village, town, or city in order to perform their mission - to transmit Islam and Turkish culture to the Christian environment, or to be as a moved out watch-towers, because they used to appear very often in Romelie in the area where the conquest was not definitely completed. Certain researchers called them forerunners of Turkish conquests which, it seems to me, is very unreasonable. But the main reason why they were established on the border of a village, town, or city was, as I see it, because of their persistent opposition to orthodox Sunni Islam whose influence prevailed in urban centres and, secondly, dervishes would be dedicated to spiritual life and education in more peaceful surroundings and atmosphere.

Expansion of bektashism in Macedonia, Kosovo, Serbia and in Bosnia and Hercegovina took place at the time when this tarikah had been formed on turco-anatolian traditions and other's in the XVth and the XVIth centuries in the definitive form which Balim Sultan gave to it. As a result of social developments and its special evolution in the XVIIIth and the XIXth centuries, bektashism was expressed not only as a religious movement, but Albanian national sentiments were also cultivated through the bektashi tekkes. National aspirations of Albanians were developed and also originated from bektashi lodges. Having in view this and other circumstances, we may understand that bektashism as Turk tarikah, was accepted not only by the Turks but also by Albanians in Macedonia, Kosovo and Albania, and much lesser by subjects of other nationalities. However, it is unnecessary to exaggerate the importance of bektashism in the creating and propagating of local national aspirations of Albanian people, because other Albanians who adopted orthodox Islam were also inclined to that. The members of this tarikah were recruited mainly from the middle classes of society craftsmen, small shopkeepers petty landowners (begs) and free peasants. A few great landlords who contributed to the strengthening of their influence and their authority, as for example, in western and central Macedonia, also belonged to this tarikah.

As for Bosnia and Hercegovina, bektashism was a shortlived and ephemeral phenomenon in these lands, therefore it could not be established as a tradition, nor could it have a considerable influence on spiritual life of this province, as it had in Macedonia, Kosovo, and Albania.

It is true that the "aristocratic form of Islam" was cultivated in Bosnia and Hercegovina, if we can say that, a kind of cosmopolitan form of islamic culture, or orthodox Sunni Islam, which was represented not only in urban centres but also in rural districts. By the way, it can not be denied that the "people's form of the Islamic religion", represented by dervish orders and sects was developed, but it was never so strong and predominant. It was always in the background, it always had minor signifi-

21. See: Max Choublier, *Les Bektashis et la Roumelie*, p. 427.

cance, and in such a form it existed in the structure of islamic life of the Muslims of Bosnia and Hercegovina.

To conclude, I would say that even some very well known historians attach excessive importance and role to the bektashi order of dervishes, which seems to be a certain glorification of this order. True, bektashism had a certain role and importance but to a much lesser degree than some would like to give to it.