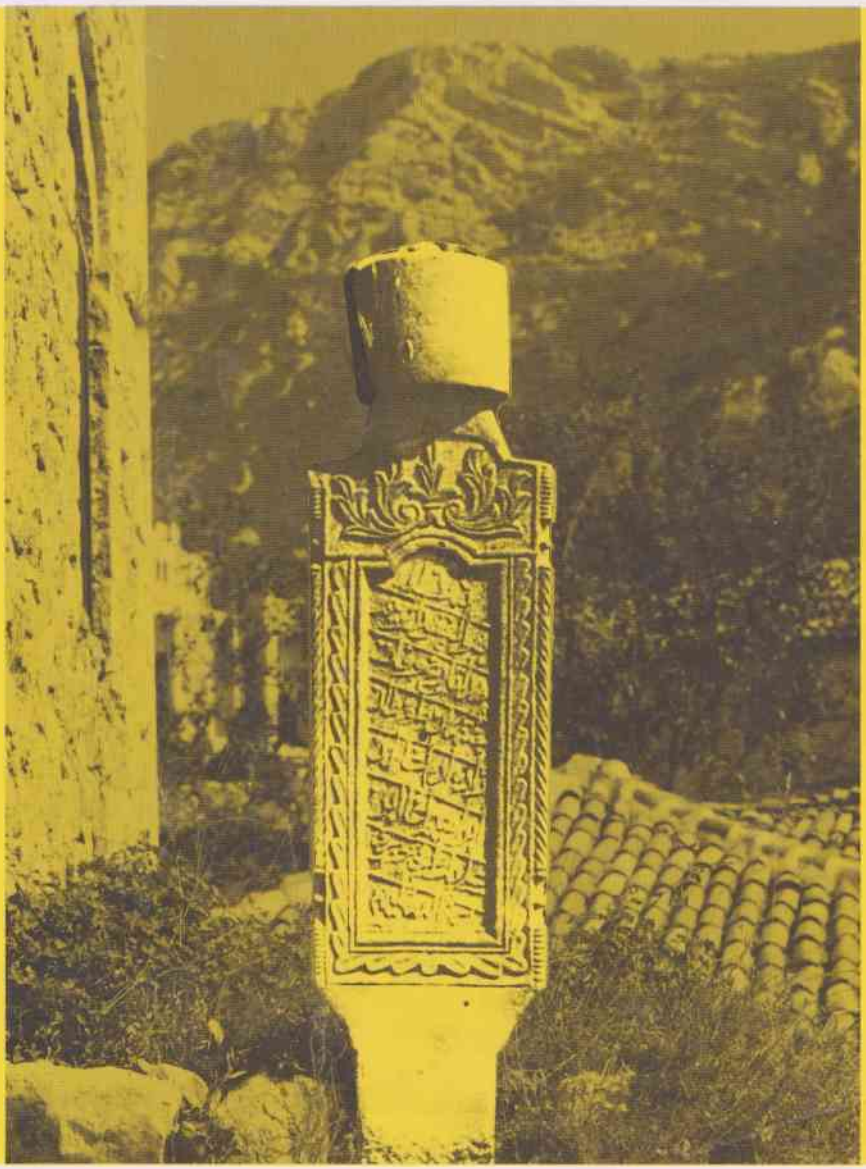
ISLAM IN THE BALKANS

H. T. Norris

Religion and Society between Europe and the Arab World





A 19th-century map printed in Arabic in Malta, showing Ottoman territories in the Balkans. It will be observed that the 'Albanian territories' (*Arnā'ūṭ*) extend beyond Albania deep into Macedonia and the borders include Salonica. Epirus is also deemed to be part of Arnaut territory. Some of the place-names do not follow the standard Ottoman spellings.

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Religion and Society between Europe and the Arab World

H. T. NORRIS

HURST & COMPANY, LONDON

First published in the United Kingdom by
C. Hurst & Co. (Publishers) Ltd.,
38 King Street, London WC2E 8JT
© 1993 by H. T. Norris
Printed in Hong Kong
ISBN 1-85065-167-1

To Karen

Land of Albania! where Iskander rose,
Theme of the young, and beacon of the wise,
And he his name-sake, whose oft-baffled foes
Shrunk from his deeds of chivalrous emprize:
Land of Albania! let me bend mine eyes
On thee, thou rugged nurse of savage men!
The cross descends, thy minarets arise,
And the pale crescent sparkles in the glen,
Through many a cypress grove within each city's ken.

(From Lord Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have to thank a large number of people for their help to me over the writing of this book. In the first instance I have to thank Christopher Hurst and Michael Dwyer for agreeing to its publication and for their encouragement to write it specifically on the Balkans with a wide scope for general discussion. They have also been most kind in allowing me ample time to complete it.

Secondly, I would particularly like to thank several libraries for their help and thoughtful service in searching for and obtaining the books and journals that I needed, often through inter-library loan. Apart from the libraries of the School of Oriental and African Studies and the School of Slavonic and East European Studies in the University of London, I owe a very special debt to Saffron Walden Library (my local library), in whose Society I am proud to be a member. Over a number of years, the staff have gone to uncommon lengths to search for rarities and to correct inadequate references on my part. So great has been their help, and that of the library staff elsewhere whom they contacted, that it would not be incorrect to claim that this book (I accept full responsibility for its shortcomings) is an example of what can be achieved through making maximum use of the facilities that the inter-library lending system offers today in the United Kingdom – all this through the dedication of library staff. Help from other libraries in the matter of photographs of manuscripts is acknowledged individually.

My special thanks are due to Fereshteh Hancock for her help in ensuring the final textual accuracy of this work. I also have to thank many academic colleagues and friends in the Balkan countries for their help. In Sarajevo I particularly wish to thank Professor Svetozar Koljević, the late Dr Džemal Ćehajić, Dr M. Maglajlić who gave up his time to show my wife and myself so much of his once splendid city, and Miss Azra Kadić, librarian at the Gazi Husrevbegova Biblioteka, working in the once unique collection of Oriental manuscripts. I also wish to thank the library staff in the Dubrovnik archives. Dr Rade Božović at Belgrade University, the *Imām* of Ohrid, Ramadani Ramadan of the Islamska Zajednica and his former colleague M. Shehu in Struga were likewise helpful. In Bucharest I wish to acknowledge the advice of Professor N. Anghelescu and her husband Dr M. Anghelescu, and in Sofia of Dr Evgeni Radushev and Dr Stojanka Kenderova. I would also thank the Revd Baba Rexhebi of the Baktāshi *tekke* in Detroit for sending me

copies of his valuable books, and the Revd Arthur E. Liolin, Chancellor of the Albanian Orthodox Archdiocese in America, in Boston, who has helped me with useful information regarding Longfellow, Skanderbeg and the Persian studies of Bishop Fan Noli. I would also thank Dr Alexander Lopošić of Reading University and Dr Ian Netton of Exeter University. A debt is owed to my friend Dr Muḥammad Mūfākū of the Universities of Prishtinë (Kosovo) and Yarmouk (Jordan). Although at the date of writing we have not had an opportunity to meet in person, we have been in regular correspondence for several years, and his Arabic writings on Albanian and Balkan Islamic topics are discussed and quoted throughout the book. He is himself a Syrian-Albanian, and has probably undertaken more research into the writers in Arabic from among the Albanian disapora in the Middle East than any other scholar. His name is known in the Gulf, Jordan, Syria, Egypt, Algeria, and Tiranë as well as in Novi Pazar and other Islamic centres in former Yugoslavia. It is a pleasure to make his writings better known in the West through this book.

Three members of the staff at SOAS have been of special help to me: Mr Paul Fox with the photographs; Mrs Catherine Lawrence who kindly drew the maps; and Mrs Mary O'Shea who gallantly typed and retyped the entire text for me. I cannot repay her kindness, thoughtfulness and constant encouragement.

Postscript

This book was completed at a time when the Muslim community in Bosnia and Hercegovina was being subjected to ruthless assault, slaughter and expulsion through a 'cleansing' operation by Serbian irregulars and ex-members of the Yugoslav army. This has brought about a grevious loss of life, and considerable destruction and desecration of Muslim monuments in such gutted towns and cities as Foča, Goražde, Banja Luka, Mostar and Sarajevo. Important collections of Oriental manuscripts have been utterly destroyed. The very future of the entire Muslim community in this republic is wholly unclear. At the time of going to press, I do not know whether several Bosnian friends, Muslim and non-Muslim, whose names appear above are still alive.

Newport, Essex
July 1993

H. T. NORRIS

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NOTE ON TRANSCRIPTION

In the spelling of Arabic and Islamic proper names and miscellaneous terms, I have followed the system used in the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* (London).

H.T.N.

GLOSSARY

Abdal (Albanian, from the Arabic *badal*, (pl. *abdāl*). The spiritual hierarchy of the Ṣūfīs. According to Baba Rexhebi, 'those who have the capacity to change from any physical to any spiritual state'.

Āghā (Turkish). Formerly a military title but now largely honorific, applied to a tribal chief or a man in authority.

Arnaut (origin obscure). Applied to the Albanians in Ottoman times and occasionally to Balkan Muslims other than the Bosnians. It is still used to denote Arabs of Albanian origin in the Middle East, especially in Syria.

Ashik (Albanian, from the Arabic *ʿāshiq*). 'Lover', and occasionally a minstrel, who sings of the love of Majnūn and Laylā and other Arab and Persian lovers. In Ṣūfī circles, it denotes a novice who aspires to initiation (e.g. in the *Baktāshī* order).

Ashura (Arabic, '*Āshūrā*'). The tenth day of the month of *al-Muḥarram*. It is celebrated in Bosnia and in Albanian regions as in all Muslim countries and, according to Dr Cornelia Sorabji, worshippers at the Kadiri (*Qādirī*) Hadži Sinanova *tekija* (*tekke*, see below), now destroyed, used to offer paper cups of *Ašura* at the end of the celebrations on that day. Among *Baktāshīs*, in Albania and elsewhere, the day marks the end of the eleven days of prayer for the martyrs of Karbalā (see *Matem* below). In Albanian, *ashur* and *ashure* indicate a pudding served with walnuts, or a sweet round cake, which is eaten by Muslims, and especially by *Baktāshīs*, in order to celebrate Noah's sacrifice. The date in the calendar is May 16.

Ayini-cem (Turkish and Albanian). *Baktāshī* and other Alavid ceremonies (*muhabbat*) take place in a *maydān* or *cem*. Candles and lights form a major element in these 'ceremonies of light' (*çerāg ayini*) where verse 35 of *Sūrat al-Nūr* (XXIV) is of singular importance. For full details, see Abdülkadir Haas, *Die Bektaşi*, Berlin, 1987, pp. 143–6.

Baba (also *atë* and *prind*). Literally 'father', a grade in the *Baktāshī* hierarchy. The director of an order who is responsible for dervishes in a *tekke* (see below), whether *ashik*, 'uninitiated', or *muhip* (see below), 'initiated'.

Bezistan (Turkish, Serbo-Croat). Covered (frequently domed) market-place. The design is often modelled on mosque architecture.

Bogomils. Followers of the Bulgarian priest Bogomil (loved of God), 'the first to sow heresy in the land of Bulgaria'. The movement was active by 950 AD and was to have a following in Macedonia and Serbia, whence it spread to Bosnia (see *Patarins*). Its doctrines, which were decidedly dualist, partly gnostic, and with a marked advocacy of renunciation of the world and its temptations, were influenced by *Paulicianism* (see below). It was iconoclastic and opposed to Orthodox Christianity.

Cheikh (Arabic *Shaykh*). In Albanian, *Sheh* is the title of the 'head of a Moslem

monastery, keeper of sepulchre' (Stuart Mann, *An Historical Albanian–English Dictionary* London, 1948, p. 470). A member of a *tarikat* (see below) who has the right to act as a spiritual guide. He has received this from his predecessor and ultimately back to the founder of the order by a chain of transmission (*silsila*)

Çiftlik (Turkish and Arabic). A farm, a country estate, government land.

Dār al-Ḥarb (Arabic). The non-Muslim world. It is the duty of Muslims to struggle to convert them to the true faith.

Dār al-Islām (Arabic). 'The Muslim World', where the religion prevails and where the *Sharī'a* (see below) is practised.

Dede (Turkish and Albanian *Baktāshī*). 'Grandfather' (also *gjysh*), highest grade in the *Baktāshī* hierarchy. Supreme spiritual guide.

Dervish (a Persian term but one found throughout the Islamic East). Generally, in the Balkans, one initiated in the rules of a Ṣūfī order who has taken a Cheikh (see above) as his spiritual guide. Among the *Baktāshīs*, in particular, a *dervish* is not a mendicant, as sometimes in other orders, but one who lives in the spiritually stratified world of a *tekke*, where he has attained a status superior to a *talip* or *ashik* (see above), a candidate for initiation, or to a *muhip*, an initiated novice (see below). A *dervish* has progressed to the second degree and this entitles him to wear the *tac* or *taj* (see below). His status is below that of a *baba*. Most *Baktāshī dervishes* in Albania were celibate.

Devshirme (Turkish). 'Boy tribute' or 'tribute in blood'. A levy of Christian children, widespread in the Balkans, as elsewhere, for training in order to fill the ranks of the *Janissaries* (see below). They could occupy posts in the service of the Court and the Ottoman administration. The levy dates back to the 14th century in the Balkans.

Fakir (Arabic *faqīr*). 'Poor [in heart]': one who has renounced worldly concerns and who has become pure before God whereby the heart of the believer is emptied of all save God's presence (to cite Baba Rexhebi).

Ferman (Persian and Turkish). An imperial order.

Halifa (Arabic *khalīfa*). Caliph or successor. In Ṣūfī terms, one who has power and authority to transmit the teachings of the *tarikat* (see below).

Halvet (Arabic *khalwa*). 'Retreat and solitude', defined by Baba Rexhebi, in a Ṣūfī context, as a 'retreat of a Ṣūfī in an enclosed place for a set period of time where he evokes the name of God'. The *Khalwatiyya* was an important Ṣūfī order in the Balkans. The *halvet* is not exclusive to that order.

Hoxha (Serbo-Croat *hodža*; the Albanian word having as its plural *hoxhallar*, and its feminine form *hoxeshë*). Usually defined as a 'Muslim priest', or a religious teacher.

Ḥurūfiyya (Arabic and Persian). 'Ḥurūfism is described by Baba Rexhebi as 'an intellectual principle or tenet reflecting culture of the mind' (*dogme kultorore*). It expresses a distinct and eclectic view of man's place in the

Universe, God's nature and Islamic thought, as it was formulated in the works of Shihāb al-Dīn b. Bahā' al-Dīn Faḍlallāh al-Astarābādī (martyred in 796/1394 by order of Tīmūr's son, Mīrān Shāh). His doctrines assimilated beliefs derived from Gnosticism, Ṣūfism, Cabbalism and Ismā'īlī ideas that are a feature of the *ghulāt* sects in the Middle East, e.g. the Druze. Two aspects are discernible:

(*a*) Numerology and symbolism, divine in origin and supremely displayed in the heavenly text of the *Qur'ān*, itself a miracle of numerology.

(*b*) The imminence of the Divinity in Man which is mirrored in his physical form and in his facial features and contours as well as in the innermost depths of his soul.

Ḥurūfī ideas are discernible in Balkan Muslim literature, especially in Albania. Numerology of a non-Ḥurūfī kind, wherein the Qur'ān is shown to be a miracle of numbers, may be read in Ahmed Deedat's *Kur'ani Mrekullia Më e Përsosur* (*Al-Qur'ān the ultimate miracle*), Shkup, Macedonia, 1986, pp. 42–6.

Imām (Arabic). The leader in prayer. The Caliph and his successors, who, in the case of the *Baktāshiyya* in the Balkans, are acknowledged to be the following successors of the Caliph, 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (the Prophet's son-in-law): his sons, al-Ḥusayn and al-Ḥasan, Zayn al-'Ābidīn, Muḥammad al-Bāqir, Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, Mūsā al-Kāẓim, 'Alī al-Riḍā, Muḥammad al-Taqī, 'Alī al-Naqī, al-Ḥasan al-'Askarī al-Zakī, Muḥammad al-Mahdī.

Imara (Arabic *'Imāra*). Public kitchen in which the officials of an endowed institution and the poor receive food.

Janissaries (Turkish *yeni-cheri*, 'new troops'). The *devshirme* system (see above) supplied men for this corps of regular infantry, in fact a semi-religious organisation dating back to the fourteenth century, which was one of the principal forces that brought about the Ottoman conquest. For a brief description, see Ernle Bradford, *The Great Siege: Malta, 1565*, London, 1961, pp. 82–3.

Kizilbaş (Turkish 'red heads'). A sect of the *Shī'ite ghulāt*, extremist 'Alīds, whose name is derived from the hats they wore in commemoration of the blood red headgear worn by the partisans of 'Alī at the Battle of Ṣiffīn (657 AD). Kizilbaş and *Baktāshīs* are sometimes confused since their practices and feasts have much in common, and honour is paid to common shrines. Today, they are almost exclusively centered in the Balkans in Bulgaria, near the Romanian border, and in Turkey.

Kutb (Arabic *quṭb*, 'pole' or 'pivot'). Applied to the chief of a saintly hierarchy, who, according to Baba Rexhebi, 'usually remains unknown to believers and friends', A *kutbu alam* is the founder of a *tarika* (see below), Ḥājjī Baktāsh is the *kutbu alam* of the *Baktāshī* order.

Madrasa (Arabic 'school' or 'college'). *Medresa* is usual in Serbo-Croat and *medresë* in Albanian. Such schools were to be found in major towns or cities

and were often theological seminaries used for the training of teachers and *imāms*.

Mekteb (Arabic, 'elementary school' or office). In the Balkans, as elsewhere, a *mekteb* is of a religious intention, primarily to inculcate and acquaint the very young with the Qur'ān and the Arabic alphabet.

Matem (Albanian; Arabic *ma'tam*). According to E.W. Lane's *Arabic-English Lexicon*, 'a place of assembling of women (and of men also) in a case of rejoicing and of mourning'. Now almost entirely understood in the latter sense, also as 'a place of wailing'. Among the *Baktāshīs*, the *matem* celebrates the martyrdom of al-Ḥusayn at Karbalā, and, by extension, of all 'Alīd believers, especially those who were slain as infants. According to Gaspar Kici's *Albanian-English Dictionary*, Tivoli, Italy, 1978, 'a ten day fast of the Bektashi'.

Mesnevija (Turkish *mesnevi*, Persian *mathnawī*). A long poem that comprises verses that rhyme in pairs which are harnessed to any suitable metre. The most famous composition of this kind is the mystical *Mathnawī-yi ma'nawī* of Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, referred to as *Mevlane* amongst the mystics in the Balkans who greatly revere him and his poetry.

Mevludi (Arabic *mawlid* and *mawlūd*). Celebration of the birth of the Prophet Muḥammad, 12th *Rabī' I*, hence panegyric poems for recitation and entertainment. The most famous *mawlid* is *Bānat Su'ād* of Ka'b b. Zuhayr and the *Hamziyya* of al-Būṣīrī, the latter often imitated. Both Albanian and Bosnian poets have composed considerable numbers of such poems and examples survive in Arabic script.

Muhip (Arabic *muḥibb*, 'lover'). Initiate in a *Baktāshī tekke* who participates in all its rituals.

Murshid (Arabic 'guide'). Pathfinder and teacher, who must conform strictly to the rules of a Ṣūfī order.

Müsāfirhana, (Turkish, Bosnian and Albanian). In Arabic, a *musāfir* is a 'traveller' or 'passenger'. In Albanian, *mysafir* means 'guest'. An inn for travellers where they could stay free of charge for three days.

Namāz (Persian) and *namazi* (Albanian). Statutory prayers for portions of the day and night, for special occasions (*rregulla dhe lutje*) and also for private supplications. The term may extend to include ritual worship, in general.

Nevruz (Albanian). Persian New Year's day (*Nau-rūz*), March 21. Among *Baktāshīs* the day is a joyful one, since it celebrates the birthday of 'Alī, whose heroic deeds are sung on that day.

Patarins. Name specifically used for the Bosnian Bogomils (see above), although the Patarins originated in Bulgaria. According to Ivo Andrić, they put down deep roots in Bosnia and spread there on account of the shallowness of Christian beliefs in the country. He comments:

> What is most certain and, for us, most important is the fact that Patarins knew how to adjust to Bosnian conditions; the fact that their faith thus

became the people's faith; and the fact that in so far as there did exist a criterion by which the country's internal organization could be judged or a palladium in Bosnia's struggle against foreign intervention, this faith carried weight. In their unequal, bitter fight with Catholicism, the Patarins had begun to erect that wall of stone between Bosnia and the Western world which in the course of time was to be enlarged still more by Islam and raised to such mighty heights that even today, though long since crumbled and fallen to pieces, it still produces the effect of a dark, demarcating line that one dare not step over without effort and danger. (*The Development of Spiritual life in Bosnia under the influence of Turkish Rule*, pp. 12 and 13.)

Paulicians. A sect, markedly gnostic, the followers of Paul of Samosta who lived in the middle of the 3rd century AD and who preached the doctrine of Adoptionism. This taught that Jesus was a mere man and that Mary did not remain a Virgin after his birth. At his baptism the holy Word entered into him, the Word being engendered by God himself who was One Person. At that point Jesus became a perfect being, brought about through the help of the Word alone (see S. Runciman, *The Medieval Manichee*, p. 19). From Thrace the doctrines of the Paulicians penetrated west into the Balkans. (Compare these doctrines with those of the Albanian poet Gylbegaj in Chapter 5.)

Pejgamber. Title of the Prophet Muḥammad among the Albanians, corresponding to the 'Messenger of God' (*Rasūl Allāh*).

Pomaks (pl. *Pomaci*). Muslim Bulgars who principally reside in Southern Bulgaria in Rhodope near the Greek border and who are now reckoned to number some 270,000. This number is reduced from the former Muslim total in Bulgaria. The following account by Midhat Pasha, published in *La Revue Scientifique de la France et de l'Etranger, Revue des Cours Scientifiques* (2nd series), 7/49, 8 June 1878, p. 1152 (transl. as *The Nineteenth Century* [n. d.]), is an impression of the deeply-rooted nature of Islam in Bulgaria at that time. In its treatment it is also prophetic of the perennial dilemma of the Slav Muslims, including those caught up in the human tragedy in Bosnia today:

> First of all, one must take into consideration that amongst the Bulgars, for whom one observes such a lively interest, there are more than a million Muslims. Neither the Tatars, nor the Circassians, are included in this number. These Muslims have not come from Asia to establish themselves in Bulgaria, as is commonly believed. They are the descendants of those Bulgars who were converted to Islam at the time of the conquest and during the years that followed. They are children of the same country and of a similar race and are descendants of the same stock. No other tongue but Bulgarian is spoken amongst them. To wish to uproot this community of one million inhibitants from their homes,

and to force them to be expelled from their country constitutes, in my eyes, the most inhuman act that one can commit.

On the strength of what right, in the name of which religion could we act thus? I do not believe that the Christian religion allows it and I know that civilization has its code and that humanity has its laws for which the nineteenth century professes great respect. Besides, we are no longer living in a time when one could say to Muslims, 'Become Christians if you wish to remain in Europe.'

It is also pertinent to remark that the Bulgars, in respect to the level of their intellect, are very backward. That which I have remarked about in regard to the progress attained by the Christian races does not apply to them. It is the lot of the Greeks, the Armenians and others.

Amongst the Bulgars one reckons fifty out of one hundred labourers and no less than forty out of one hundred shepherds, herders, hay makers and the like. As for the Muslim Bulgars, thanks to the tuition drawn from religious teaching and due to experience resulting from a long experience of government, they have acquired a more distinct development of their intellectual faculties which makes them superior to the others. The Bulgars themselves recognize this.

To wish today that those who were in charge for four centuries should be governed by those who were obedient to them yesterday, when those latter are their inferiors in their intelligence, is plainly to seek to create in the Balkan peninsula a state of affairs so that during a further generation Europe will, as a consequence, be in trouble; for the Muslim Bulgars, before leaving their country, and before giving up their property and their estate, will engage in bloody combat. This has already begun and it will continue, but, were it to be stifled, would be born again from its ashes in order to trouble Europe and Asia.

Roma (*Român* or *Aromân*). Elements of the ancient race (originally from India) found throughout the Balkans. In Bulgaria there are over half a million. Many are Muslims who resisted, as best they could, the efforts of the Bulgarian government under Todor Zhivkov (before 1989) to change their names. In Macedonia and Kosovo, an 'Egipcani' Association — stressing Egyptian origin — was set up in 1990 by Muslim Romas.

Sahatkullë (Albanian). 'Clock-tower', often built adjacent to a mosque.

Samāhane (Albanian *samah*, in Arabic *samā'*). Ritual music and dance performed by certain of the Ṣūfī orders, for example, the *Mevlevi* (*Mawlawiyya*). This took place in a galleried hall or high-ceilinged room, called a *samahane*, examples of which survive in Sarajevo and in Plovdiv (Bulgaria) and elsewhere.

Sandžaq (Turkish *sanjaq*). Originally a 'flag' or 'standard', but subsequently applied to an administrative district and to a subdivision of a *vilayet* in the Ottoman empire. Administered (e.g. in Bosnia) by a *Sandžaq beg*.

Sharī'a (Arabic, Serbo-Croat *šerijat*). 'Canon law of Islam', though in the Balkans it has a general sense of 'religious law of the Muslims' (Albanian, (*sheriat*), Baba Rexhebi defines it as 'Islamic legislation codified by the early *fakih* and *ulema* and specified in the Quran'. In the view of Alija Izetbegović (*The Islamic Declaration*, 1970), 'In the Koran, there are relatively few genuine "laws" but much more "faith" and demands for its practical application.' Occasionally, in the Balkans, the term is synonymous with Islam itself.

Tac or *Taj* (Arabic *tāj*, 'crown'). In the *Baktāshiyya* Ṣūfī order, denotes (to quote Baba Rexhebi) 'head-cover worn by dervishes and Baba; a white cap consisting of twelve or four foldings; the twelve foldings symbolise the Twelve Imams [see above]; the number four symbolises the four gates: *shariah* [see above]), *marifah* [*ma'rifa*, 'spiritual knowledge of the mystics]), *hakikah* [*ḥaqīqa*, 'God as the Ultimate Reality'] and *tarikah* [see below])'.

Tarikat (Arabic *ṭarīqa*, 'way', 'path' or 'method'). Ṣūfī order or Ṣūfī 'way' (Albanian *rruge*), or 'Brotherhood of Dervishes' (Serbo-Croat, *derviški red*). Some orders take their name from their founders, e.g. *qādiriyya* (*Kadirija*) from 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, while others, e.g. *Malāmatiyya* or *Malāmiyya*, indicate some special doctrine or intention of the order or, as in the case of the *Khalwatiyya* (*halvetija*), central importance is given to the regular practice of a retreat.

Tekke (Arabic *takiyya*, pl. *takāyā*). Usually called a *tekije* in the Balkans, though other terms of similar designation, derived from Persian and Turkish, such as *hanikah* and *zavija* (see below), are also used. A lodge of a Ṣūfī order which is inhabited by a *Cheikh* or *Baba* and by dervishes, who, in the case of the *Baktāshiyya*, were predominantly celibate (*myxheret*).

Timar (Turkish). Originally a landed estate which yielded less than 20,000 pieces of silver annually. Administered in the Balkans by the *timar-defterdar*.

Türbe (Turkish, from Arabic *turba*). Mausoleum, or elaborately canopied grave, often of a notable Ottoman official or a Ṣūfī *Shaykh*; regarded as the tomb of a saint. They are visited on occasions, prayers are said, offerings are made and cures are effected. A locality called by this name is situated to the west of Travnik in Bosnia. Frequently a *türbe* is located to one side of a mosque founded by the occupant.

Vlachs. With the Greeks, one of the most ancient Balkan peoples, claiming descent from the original Thracians. Today they live in Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Macedonia (Bitola, Resen, Kruševo) and Serbia, and they extend inland in East-Central Europe as far as Slovakia. They speak a form of Romanian, and, unlike the Roma, are almost entirely Eastern Orthodox in religion; a few are Uniates. Once many were nomadic pastoralists, but they are now either farmers or have migrated to towns. Small colonies of Vlachs were once found in the Middle East, but these have now been Arabised and absorbed. Recent research by Dr Marian Wenzel suggests that some of the

famous tomb monuments (*stečak*, pl. *stečci*) in Bosnia and Hercegovina, usually described as 'Bogomil', may have been carved by Vlachs.

Vakuf (Arabic *waqf*). 'Pious bequest', described by N.J. Coulson (*A History of Islamic Law*, Edinburgh, 1964) as 'a settlement of a property under which ownership of the property is "immobilised" and the usufruct thereof is devoted to a purpose which is deemed charitable by the law'. This may apply to land, property (in the form of buildings) or sums of money. In the Balkans, *vakuf* may mean the property of a Muslim community and include socially beneficial property of various kinds. Whole towns and villages in Bosnia and Hercegovina, such as Gorni Vakuf, Donji Vakuf and Skender Vakuf, have perpetuated the name of such an endowment. Poems have been written in honour of those who made the bequest. A *vakufnama* is an endowment (*zakladnica*), and the founder or donor of the bequest (*zakladnik*) is termed a *vakif*.

Wahdat-i-wujud (Arabic *waḥdat al-wujūd*). 'Oneness of Being', an extremely important Islamic belief in the Balkans as elsewhere. Often dismissed as 'pantheism', it reflects concepts that cannot be so easily defined. According to Taufic Ibrahim and Arthur Sagadeev, in their *Classical Islamic Philosophy* (transl. H. Campbell Creighton, Moscow, 1990, p. 309)

> The philosophy of the Wujudists is above all one of absolute monism. The keystone of their structures is the doctrine of unity, of the absolute unity (*wahda mutlaqa*) of everything that exists. Behind any plurality they saw the unity encompassing it; they saw in anything a manifestation of the One that linked it with other things, forming them into an organic whole. All being was one, Ibn 'Arabi wrote, and there was nothing in the world except the supreme One (*wahdat al-wahdat*) or the One that was manifested in the many, the 'One-many' (*al-wahid al-kathir*).
>
> The monistic intention of Sufism is clearly conveyed by the verses of Jalal ad-Din ar-Rumi, which Hegel cited as a model of the contemplation of the One characteristic of the pantheisms of the Muslim East 'in *His finest purity and sublimity*':
>
> *I saw but One through all heaven's starry spaces gleaming:*
> *I saw but One in all sea billows wildly streaming.*
> *I looked into the heart, a waste of worlds, a sea —*
> *I saw a thousand dreams, yet One amid all dreaming,*
> *And earth, air, water, fire when thy decree is given.*
> *There is no living heart but beats unfailingly*
> *In the one song of praise to thee, from earth and heaven.*

Zavija (Arabic *zāwiya*). 'Corner' and 'establishment of a religious order'. Nathalie Clayer, *L'Albanie pays des derviches*, p. 488, explains: 'In the Balkans, "zawiya" is employed to indicate a place utilised as a *tekke*, but which is not a true *tekke*, such as a room in a private dwelling or a mosque

(whereas in the Arab world this term is equivalent to *tekke* in the Turkish world).'

Zikr (Arabic, *dhikr*). 'Invocation' and 'evocation'; in Ṣūfī terms, *Dhikr Allāh*, 'invocation of God'. This is common to all Ṣūfī orders, namely a repeated calling on the name of God during séances and gatherings held by the different Ṣūfī orders (both men and women separately). In Albanian, *dhikër* or *ziqër* (*permendje e Zotit, lutje e përbashkët e dervishëve*), namely 'mention of God, prayerful petition jointly attended and carried out by dervishes'. According to Baba Rexhebi, 'The repeating of the names of God: the invocation may be silent, *suqut*, or vociferous.'

Zot. One of the most commonly used names of God among Albanians (appearing, for example, in Naim's verse), although *All-ahut* is also found (also *Përend*). Hence, 'In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful' (Arabic, *Bi-smillāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm*) is rendered in Albanian either by '*Me emërin e Zotit Bamirës, Mëshirues*' or '*Në emër të All-ahut te gjithmeshirshmit Mëshirëplotit*'.


The Balkans
ROMANIA
Baba Dag
Belgrade
Bucharest
Constanta
BOSNIA
SERBIA
YUGOSLAVIA
Danube R
Rustchuk
DOBRUDJA
(Dobrogea)
DELI ORMAN
Kilgra
C. Kaliakra
BLACK SEA
Sarajevo
Mostar
Blagaj
Nish
Shumen
Varna
HERCEGOVINA
Spit
Novi Pazar
Tirnovo
Sofia
BULGARIA
Burgas
Dubrovnik (Ragusa)
Trebinje
MONTENEGRO
Cetinje
Jakova
L. Shkodres
KOSOVO
Pristine
Rhodope Mts
Edirne
Shkoder
Ulcinj
Prizren
Kalkandelen (Tetova)
Uskub (Skopje)
ALBANIA
Black Drin R
Vardar R
ADRIATIC SEA
Lezhe
Kruje
Durres
Tirane
Ohrid
L. Ohrid
MACEDONIA
Xanthi
THRACE
Istanbul
Shkumbi R
Monastir (Bitola)
Kavala
Brindisi
Berat
Mt Tomor
L. Prespa
Ostrovo
Salonica
ITALY
Kolça
Gallipoli
Bruse
Tepelene
Frasnen
Mt Athos
Imbros
Eskishehir
Himara
Gjirokaster
Mt Olympus
Lemnos
SIDI GHAZI
Sarande
Butrint
Ioannina
Larissa
ÆGEAN
Corfu
Corfu
Farsala
Mytilene (Lesbos)
EPIRUS
Arta
Nikopolis
Skyros
IONIAN SEA
Mt Parnassus
Chios
SEA
GREECE
Athens
PELOPONNESUS
Naxos
0
200 km
© Lawrence SOAS

INTRODUCTION

This book began as a study of the relationship between the Arabs and those sundry peoples that inhabited Europe to the north of the Black Sea. Circumstances were to prevent the publication of such a wide study. The field of interest soon appeared to be over-ambitious. By then, it had become narrow and focused upon the Balkans, and upon Albania in particular. The stimulus that was provided by such works as F.W. Hasluck's *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans* (Oxford, 1929), and Alexandre Bennigsen and S. Enders Wimbush's *Mystics and Commissars: Sufism in the Soviet Union* (London: Hurst 1985) may be detected in the pages that follow. Travel in the Balkans was also a spur. The thrill of entering unknown territory as one carried one's luggage through the wild no-man's-land between Yugoslavia, as it then was, and the atheist PSR of Albania at Hani Hoti in the days that followed the death of Enver Hoxha was a memorable experience. Subsequent visits to Macedonia, Romanian Dobrudja and Bulgaria stimulated and sharpened an interest in these Muslim peoples, which has in no way diminished over the years. Even during visits to North Africa it was an extra pleasure to meet representatives of the dwindling Balkan communities that survive in Algiers and elsewhere.

Apart from the valuable essays brought together in the publication *Islam in the Balkans* (papers arising from a symposium held to celebrate the World of Islam Festival at the Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh, 28–30 July 1976, published in 1979), there are few current works in English that aim at being a general introduction to the subject. It should be said at the outset that in my book it is principally the selected list of books and journals in the bibliography and the notes accompanying each chapter that provide such an introduction. Some of the references listed are in Balkan publications. I have however found that it is quite possible to obtain xeroxed copies of many of these publications through inter-library loan arrangements and the facilities afforded by good lending libraries in Britain. Some other publications are in Arabic and Persian. Their inclusion is deliberate. There is much ignorance of Balkan Islam among many Muslim readers in the Arab world, Africa, Pakistan and South-East Asia. As many of these Muslims have a reading knowledge of Arabic, it seemed reasonable to include these references together with those in West European languages.

Islam in the Balkans is often viewed as suffering from a kind of

terminal ailment, deprived of almost all means of self-renewal, with nothing to contribute to the reform and revivification of world Islam as a whole, and dependent on funding from the heartland of the Arab East. Professor W. Montgomery Watt wrote in his book *What is Islam?* (Longman/Librairie du Liban, 1968), p. 142:

> There are also three and a half million Muslims in Europe [sic] (other than Turkey), chiefly in Yugoslavia, Albania and Bulgaria; but this is a part of the periphery where Islam has been on the defensive, and indeed in retreat, for centuries. These European Muslims are unlikely to make any great contribution to the general life of Islam in the visible future, but influences from other parts of the Islamic world might some day lead to revival and renewal among them.

It is a fact that for centuries there has been quiet and continuous contact between Balkan Muslims and the Islamic Middle East, besides Turkey, either individually or through the Balkan families that established homes in Egypt, Syria and North Africa.

Historical and religious studies (I exclude anthropological ones) devoted to the Muslim peoples of the Balkans (especially Albania, Bosnia and the Turks in Bulgaria) may be divided broadly into two angles of vision. The first regards Islam in the Balkans as a branch of Ottoman studies, and the region as one formerly part of the 'Ottoman East' (the 'Near East', as it was often called in an older distribution of the 'East' as viewed from Western Europe; D.G. Hogarth wrote that 'the East' denoted 'some regions also of South-Eastern and Eastern Europe'). This view is admirable and eminently sound if one considers the overwhelming impact that the Ottomans indeed made on every aspect of life (for example architecture of all kinds) in this part of Europe. In the weighty articles and books by writers such as Hasan Kaleši, Alexandre Popović, Peter Sugar and Machiel Kiel, the Balkan lands tend to be seen as part of 'European Turkey'. Their views are sustained by archival documentation, numerous linguistic borrowings and the styles of both religious and secular architecture. Theirs is a very formidable case, even though it does not explain the whole story.

The second point of view is that of a quite independent 'European Islam'. A distinguished writer on the cultural achievements of the Bosnian and Hercegovinan Muslims who sees it in this light is Smail Balić, together with several other contributors to articles published in the *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*. The 'Islamisation of the Balkans', in their view, is not merely to be equated with 'Ottomanisation'. The gateways are many and the people diverse, and the genius of Islam is to be perceived at its deepest in the character of the Balkan peoples themselves.

Islam reflects their own identity just as hitherto Oriental Christianity has become acclimatised among the Illyrians and the Slavs.

These two views are not mutually exclusive. They are a matter of relative weight and balance. I admit that my approach is sympathetic to the latter, and this is one of the themes that run through the seven interrelated chapters of this book. Those links are emphasised that have brought together the Balkan Muslim peoples and the Arab world in particular. Nevertheless, I do not share all the premises of those who advocate a 'European Islam'. That cause, seems at times to be almost an apologia not backed by adequate proof. Sometimes its advocates seem to be trying too obviously to show, or prove, that Islam is not a 'heat-belt religion'. It is capable, in the Balkans, as it was in the ex-USSR via the Caucasus or the Volga, of being propagated among European peoples, however one happens to define 'European'.

A scholar such as Francis Robinson in his *Atlas of the Islamic World since 1500* (Oxford, 1982, p. 176: 'Islam in the West') remarks: 'The map illustrates, as far as can be accurately ascertained, the Muslim populations of European societies and the main places from which they came. The Muslims of the Balkans are long established.' However, what it is that unites, say, a Bosnian Muslim in Sarajevo, a convert in Bradford, a Maghribī settled in Marseille and a Tatar in Helsinki is nowhere properly explained other than by the fact that the dictate of geography determines that they share an abode in a locality on a specific continent that is marked in a particular colour on the pages of an atlas. In many ways the thoughtful and moving article by Michael Ignatieff, 'Stones of Sarajevo put us to shame' (the *Observer*, 17 May 1992, p. 19), answers that question.

'Balkan Islam' has come about because it is a part of the European continent that is a cultural bridge and has a coastline (and to a degree an interior) adjacent to and opposite the great heartland of Islam in North Africa and the Middle East. In the same way that al-Andalus, parts of Italy, Sicily, the Balearics, Crete and Cyprus became, for a while at least, important cultural centres of the medieval world of Islam, so it was destined that at least some parts of the Balkans would become directly or indirectly a mission field, a 'tide-mark', for the Islamic faith. It was to gain a tiny following in that peninsula before the arrival of the Ottomans in the fourteenth century, just as it has obviously survived the Turks' departure. Seeds of Islam were nurtured in Mamlūk Egypt and Syria before they were transferred to fertile soil in parts of the Balkans; so too other cultural elements were transplanted via Hungary

or came direct from the steppes and river systems of Eastern Europe and from Central Asia. Slavs who had once been settled on Byzantium's Syrian frontiers were to be influenced by the manners, customs and folk-epics of the Persians, the Arabs and other Muslim enemies. Albanians and Bosnians who served as Janissaries in the Maghrib or Mashriq were exposed to various Islamic influences. Their relationship with the Arabs sometimes had a detached relationship to life in the Ottoman heartland in Asia Minor or west of the Bosphorus.

A brief word may be added about the frequent invocation of 'syncretism' and 'heterodoxy' in these pages. To many a pious Muslim in the Middle East (Sunnite Albanian-Arabs among them) such a term may cause distress. It is equated with unorthodoxy, heresy and beliefs gauche or queer. This is an outsider's subjective view. Furthermore, the heterodox in the Balkans have much in common with the Middle East, where Druze, Nuṣayrī Ismā'īlī and Kizilbaş display some kindred beliefs. There are numerous Balkan Muslims, especially in Bosnia, who are orthodox Sunnite to the core, sober and God-fearing, lofty in ethic, loyal servants of the Prophet. Where Ṣūfīsm is to be found among them, it is a personal matter and tends to be scholarly. To this may be added a further point. The 'heterodox' do not at all view themselves as such. *Baktāshī Bābās* and the like regard themselves as no less 'orthodox' than their peers (as one may see from extracts from the writings of Baba Rexhebi and Shaykh Aḥmad Sirrī Bābā in this book). Some even maintain that their daring and questioning Islamic ideal is a fulfilment of the Qur'ānic message, and in particular even a refinement of the teachings of Ṣūfīsm.

Be this as it may, it will also be observed that in the past there was a difference between Slav Islam, as practised in Bosnia, and much nominal Islam as practised amongst the Albanians. Believers may be shocked to read this description by M. Edith Durham, in her book *High Albania*, published in London in 1909, p. 313:

> The ground fact is this. The North Albanian tribesman is an Albanian first. He has never absorbed the higher teaching of either Christianity or Islam (I speak of the masses only). Christ and Mohammed are to him two supernatural 'magic dickies,' each able, if propitiated, to work wonders. Looked at, impartially, through the eyes of a tribesman, which has succeeded better? As a Christian, the tribesman was trampled by that hated unbeliever, the Slav (he has never called the Slav a Christian). With the help of Islam, on the contrary, the Slav has been beaten back. The Albanian has regained much territory. But for foreign intervention, he would have regained much more. The magic of Mohammed has given him fat lands, ruling posts in the Government, has not

exacted compulsory military service, has paid him well when he chose to fight, and has never troubled to teach him Mohammedanism properly, but has left him free to keep his old customs.

He does not veil his women, nor seclude them more than do many Christians, and rarely has more than one wife, save a sister-in-law. He pays no more attention to his Hodja than to his priest. Except at a mosque, I have never seen him perform either the proper prayers or ablutions. If he be an earnest believer, he belongs to some Dervish sect — preferably the Bektashes — which love the Orthodox Mohammedans as do the Dissenters the Church of England. Briefly, he has had all the advantages of Islam, and gone his own way. As a counter-attraction, Christianity offers him the position of underdog, problematic advantages in another world, and, mark this, probable foreign domination in this one.

Can Muslim Albanians (their faith eroded by years of Marxism) be judged benighted in having such an earthbound view? Is Islam, or indeed Christianity, primarily a portfolio of investments to secure unending bliss in the world to come (*al-ākhira*)? On this criterion alone, are the Balkan Muslims given a low rating for piety, commitment to their faith or a show of sincerity in their confession? Has the Westerner ever truly understood the real Albanian Islam? In the past, Sunnite orthodoxy has been disparaged by Westerners. The gnosticism of the *Baktāshiyya* has been viewed with a sympathy beyond its deserts, possibly because its creed has been seen as a 'half-way house to Christianity'. All these are valid questions, and it is hoped that in these pages Islam in the Balkans (not simply because of its topicality) may enjoy a far higher regard, and that those who profess the faith there and indeed who are dying for it may receive much more support from Arab and non-Arab fellow-believers.

The feeling of neglect among Yugoslav Muslims, in particular the Bosnians, is stressed by the Arab journalist Munīr Naṣīf:[1]

> But they scold their Arab Muslim brethren. How often have we heard cross words of complaint, that Muslim brethren in the Arab and non-Arab countries do not know much at all about the Muslims of Yugoslavia. The University [of Belgrade] is desirous of being supplied with books, with sources and with cultural and literary journals and Arabic newspapers. A Muslim Yugoslav student, who was studying Arabic language and literature, said to us, 'Isn't it strange that Arabic books and newspapers reach Athens, capital of Greece, and

1. In his article 'Arabo-Muslim Civilisation in Yugoslavia', *al-ʿArabī*, Kuwait no. 233, 1978, p. 75.

stop there. The distance by air between Athens and Belgrade is no more than half an hour.'

The journalist was not surprised by the student's remarks since during his visit to Belgrade and Sarajevo, which lasted a fortnight, no Arabic newspaper could be purchased. Arab students studying in Yugoslavia had complained to their ambassadors, who had promised to help, but so far nothing had been achieved.

Muslims in Britain in their unstinting support for victims of the tragedy of Bosnia have shown what should be done by way of sympathy, aid relief and understanding. Believers and unbelievers alike should have more thought for the faith and the culture that has made its individual and fascinating contribution to the life of South-Eastern Europe.

Note on the use of certain ethnic, geographical and historical terms in this volume, in the light of the current situation in the Balkans and especially in Bosnia-Hercegovina

The origin of the Bosnian Muslims. This subject is still a controversial one. The historical facts are unclear and are open to wide differences in interpretation. The simple equation 'ex-Bogomils' equals 'Muslims' is a gross over-simplification and unlikely to be correct. According to Ivo Andrić in *The Developement of Spiritual Life in Bosnia under the Influence of Turkish Rule*:[2]

> The situation in Bosnia was all the more awkward on account of the frightful religious struggle that was raging within the country. As mentioned, this struggle had reached a critical point just before the invasion when some resolution was unavoidable, whatever the direction taken. Bosnia might have turned entirely to the Catholic West and participated to the fullest in its spiritual life. (The fact that two of the last Bosnian kings openly leaned towards Catholicism, followed by a respectable number of the nobility, makes this the most likely possibility.) Or on the other hand, less plausible, a kind of minor scale Slavic Reformation in Bosnia's spiritual life would have been brought about by a victory of the Patarins.
>
> At the decisive moment this far-reaching process was abruptly broken by the sudden intrusion of a conquering people foreign in faith, spirit and race. The confusion was compounded when the upper, better-off part of the population, in order to save its possessions, adopted the religion of these intruders. So it

2. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990, pp. 16–17.

came about that down the middle of the South Slavic lands a line was etched, a line generally following the Danube, Sava and Una rivers and the Dinaric Alps if we disregard strong fluctuations. This dividing wall split in two the Serbo-Croatian racial and linguistic complex, and its shadow, where four centuries of ghastly history were played out, was to lie heavy on the landscape to either side into the far distant future.

Therein we see the whole meaning of Turkish rule and Turkish influence on Bosnia's spiritual life.

By right of geographic position Bosnia should have linked the lands along the Danube with the Adriatic Sea, two peripheries of the Serbo-Croatian element and two different zones of European culture. Having fallen to Islam, it was in no position to fulfill this, its natural role, and to take part in the cultural development of Christian Europe, to which ethnographically and geographically it belonged.

Far more succinctly, Alexander Lopašić remarks:[3]

A special case of peaceful conversion to Islam is Bosnia where, shortly after the conquest in 1463, a considerable number of Christian inhabitants, peasants and lesser nobility adopted Islam. Many of them belonged to a Christian sect called the Bogomils, who, after being expelled from Serbia, Bulgaria and other Balkan countries, settled down in Bosnia where they formed a kind of national church. The Bosnian kingdom was troubled by both Hungary and Rome, and as a result of this the Bogomils' religion became an expression of Bosnian independence and national identity. It received support even from the court which was officially Catholic. After the Ottoman conquest many Bogomils accepted Islam at least formally since it did not make too high demands on them. On the other hand it secured them a future in the new political situation.

Muslim nationality in Bosnia and Hercegovina. In my final chapter I make reference to the muslims of Bosnia and Hercegovina (and to a lesser degree elsewhere) as being *sui generis* within the Islamic *Umma*. In no way is this pejorative. The whole question has been examined in great detail, and thoroughly documented, by Sabrina P. Ramet, who remarks:[4]

Today in Bosnia-Herzegovina, there are Muslims who consider themselves primarily 'Muslim Croats', those who consider themselves 'Bosnian Muslims'

3. 'Islamisation of the Balkans: Some general considerations', *Islam in the Balkans*, Edinburgh, 1979, p. 50.

4. 'Primordial ethnicity or modern nationalism: The case of Yugoslavia's Muslims reconsidered', *South Slav Journal*, vol. 13, nos 1–2 (47–48), p. 15.

(i.e. 'Muslims in the ethnic sense'), and those who, in the spirit of the 'Islamic Declaration', see themselves simply as 'Muslims'. In addition, there are those Muslims who in the 1981 census declared themselves 'Yugoslavs'. This already complex picture is made more so by the presence of persons like Fuad Muhić, who describe themselves as 'atheist Muslims', and who therefore completely divorce religion from nationality.

Current events are certainly changing this situation completely, including the question of Bosnian (*Bosanski*) identity. There is no intention here to predict the future outcome.

Yugoslavia (Jugoslavia). Throughout this book I have used the former name of the entire Republic to express a geographical region (in the same way as 'Indian sub-continent' is currently in use), without any intention of a political connotation.

Kosovo and Kosova. The former is the Serbian spelling, the latter that of the Albanian Kosovars, used also in Albania itself. I have retained the form of Kosovo since it is the most commonly used spelling in Anglo-Saxon countries; it is also the spelling used by Isa Zymberi in his Preface to *Colloquial Albanian* (Routledge, 1991), himself a Kosovar, and avoids the current Albanian spelling of Kosovë (as used by Ramadan Marmullaku in his *Albania and the Albanians*).

Macedonia. Unless Greece or Bulgaria is specifically indicated, Macedonia denotes the republic of that name in former Yugoslavia.

The future of the Muslim communities in the Balkans. In the concluding chapter an attempt is made to see what lies ahead for these small and predominantly minority communities. A future where Islam and Christianity will to some extent overlap seems very likely in Albania where religious friction is rarely found in popular practice or in Albanian thought. Whether Ṣūfīsm will be revived is harder to predict. In Bulgaria, among both Turks and Pomaks, mosques are being restored and rebuilt, and increasing support, especially financial, is being sought from Turkey and Saudi Arabia in order to build *madrasas* and finance training courses for *imāms*, who are exceedingly few. Arabic is hardly understood and the Qur'ān is a closed book unless a Turkish translation is used. The size, the territory and the character of the Bosnian Muslim community in the future cannot be predicted. Many of the refugees and

displaced persons will never return to their homes – villages and towns which have been erased from the Balkan map. Instead we are likely to see the establishment and growth of small or even sizeable Muslim communities in parts of Croatia, Slovenia and Hungary, where Muslims have been few in number since Ottoman times. The Zagreb mosque has become increasingly central for Bosnian Muslim relief and religious activities.

1

THE ARABS, THE SLAVS, THE HUNGARIAN SARACENS AND THE ARNAUTS

'In the city of Aleppo, I met a large number of persons called Bashkīrs, with reddish hair and reddish faces. They were studying law according to the school of Abū Ḥanīfah (may God be well pleased with!) I asked one of them who seemed to be an intelligent fellow for information concerning their country and their condition. He told me, "Our country is situated on the other side of Constantinople, in a kingdom of a people of the Franks called the Hungarians.

"We are Muslims, subjects of their king, and live on the border of his territory, occupying about thirty villages, which are almost like small towns. But the king of the Hungarians does not allow us to build walls around any of them, lest we should revolt against him. We are situated in the midst of Christian countries, having the land of the Slavs on the north, on the south, that of the Pope, i.e. Rome (now the Pope is the head of the Franks, the vicar of the Messiah in their eyes, like the commander of the faithful in the eyes of the Muslims; his authority extends over all matters connected with religion among the whole of them); on the west, Andalusia; on the east, the land of the Greeks, Constantinople and its provinces." He added, "Our language is the language of the Franks, we dress after their fashion, we serve with them in the army, and we join them in attacking all their enemies, because they only go to war with the enemies of Islam.' I then asked him how it was they had adopted Islam in spite of their dwelling in the midst of the unbelievers. He answered, 'I have heard several of our forefathers say that a long time ago seven Muslims came from Bulgaria and settled among us. In kindly fashion they pointed out to us our errors and directed us into the right way, the faith of Islam. Then God guided us and (praise be to God!) we all became Muslims and God opened our hearts to the faith. We have come to this country to study law; when we return to our own land, the people will do us honour and put us in charge of their religious affairs." ' (Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-Buldān*, translated by Sir T.W. Arnold: *The Preaching of Islam*, London, 1935, pp. 193–4)

The Arabs enter Balkan history

Francis Dvornik[1] maintained that the establishment of the Slavs as conquerors in Southern Europe was not simply an event of major impor-

1. In *The Slavs, Their Early History and Civilization*, Boston, 1956, p. 42.

tance for the evolution of Europe, but also an event of significance for the history of humanity. In his opinion, the destruction of Christianity within the extensive region of the Roman empire then called Illyricum, which today we know as Albania and a large part of ex-Yugoslavia, had another important consequence. The region hitherto had come within the jurisdiction of the Roman see. Thessalonica's metropolitan was appointed as a special apostolic vicar for Illyricum. Latin- and Greek-speaking populations intermingled, living in peace with each other, and the Balkan peninsula formed a bridge, economically knit together by that great highway the Via Egnatia, joining the Latin West to the Greek East.

Christian Illyricum's civilisation was to be destroyed by the Avars and the Slavs. This destruction and this severance were eventually to be compounded by the late medieval expansion of Islam as a world religion. However, the main development was to take place in the future, although Islamisation began earlier than is sometimes supposed. Balkan Islam was a force that eroded Christianity, aggravating further the estrangement of Western and Eastern Europe. At the same time it provided a channel for the westward diffusion of Oriental culture and commerce.

It was also the view of Dvornik that the Western and the Eastern churches might have remained in constant touch and that their evolution would not have taken the contrary direction that it took during the Middle Ages and later. The Avars and the Slavs were the most decisive of the intruders. The Byzantine Emperor Heraclius (610–41) sought for allies among the Serbs in order to fight the Avars. Furthermore, he appears to have sent an embassy to the Croats, offering them a new homeland in Illyricum after they had expelled the Avars. The Croats sent a body of troops to Byzantine territory. There, in league with the small Serb army and with the support of the Byzantine navy, they began operations against the Avars. First Dalmatia, then the remainder of Illyricum and finally the territory between the Drava and Sava rivers were liberated.

Both Croats and Serbs were settled by Heraclius in the lands liberated from the Avars, and assumed the leadership of the other Slavic tribes that had been inhabitants of much of Yugoslavia from the end of the sixth century. Heraclius continued to claim overlordship of the territory and, according to the Byzantine imperial writer Constantine Porphyrogennetus, he asked Pope Honorius to send missionaries to the Croats and the Serbs. To these, even at this early date, the growing

impact of the Arabs in Asia Minor may be added. Arab control of much of the Mediterranean made contact between East and West more difficult across this vital Balkan peninsula.

Unquestionably the 'Slavs', however loosely this term was conceived, made an impression upon the Arabs. To cite a description of them by Ibrāhīm b Ya'qūb (as quoted by Abū 'Ubayd al-Bakrī, died 487/1094):[2]

Constantinople is sited to the south of Bulgaria. The Pechenegs (*al-Bājānakiyya*) are neighbours of the Bulgarians to the east and to the north. To the west of Constantinople is [situated] the Venetian Gulf. It issues from the Syrian sea between the great land [mass of Europe] and Constantinople. The great land mass is encompassed by the littorals of Rome, and those of Lombardy, and it terminates, decisively, at Aquileia [in the north-eastern Adriatic]. All these places become as one peninsula, being surrounded by the Syrian sea in the south and by the arm of Venice in the east and in the north. An opening from the western side of the peninsula remains.

Both sides of this Venetian Gulf [northwards], from its exit in the east from the Syrian sea, are inhabited by the *Ṣaqāliba*. To the east of them are the Bulgarians, and to the west of them there are 'Slavs' who are other than them. Those who dwell in the western part of the Venetian Gulf are of a greater courage and of a doughtier metal. The people of that region seek for their protection and guard against their violence. Their land is lofty in height and is mountainous. It is one where routes are rough and are difficult to traverse. Generally, the *Ṣaqālib* [*sic*] are violent and aggressive. Were it not for the diversity in the branches of their stock, and the numerousness of the subdivisions of their clans, no nation would stand up to them in toughness and in vehemence.[3]

The first contacts between the Arabs and the Slavs are best seen as a tripartite interelationship between the Byzantine Emperors who reigned

2. See Abdurrahman Ali El-Hajji, *The Geography of al-Andalus and Europe*, from the book of '*al-Masālik wal-Mamālik*': (*Jughrāfiyat al-Andalus wa-Ūrūbbā*), Beirut: Dār al-Irshād, 1387/1968, pp. 179–81.

3. Although the Arabs in a later age (as is shown in Chapter 4) created fantasies, including genealogies and fictitious migrations, all of which linked the Albanians and some Slavs with themselves, they seem to have been unaware of the ancient ties of the Maure-Vlachs with Moors who were settled by the Romans in the Danube region and in adjacent provinces which included Moesia (modern Serbia), Dacia, Bessarabia, and Illyria. See D. Mandić, *Postanak Vlaha prema novim povicsnim iztrazivanjima* (the origin of the Vlachs in the light of new historical research), Buenos Aires, 1956. Mandić has carried out much further research since and the reader is referred to *Croatia, Land, People, Culture*, vol. II, University of Toronto Press, 1970, pp. 383–5, and his footnotes wherein early sources are cited.

during the seventh and the ninth centuries, the Slavs who bordered Byzantine territory in Thrace, and the Arabs who pushed north through Asia Minor towards the Caucasus and Byzantium, or alternatively, by sea along the southern coast of Asia Minor, the Aegean, the entrance of the Bosphorus and, along the coast of the Adriatic in both southern Italy and Dalmatia.

The Byzantine emperors were faced with a challenge on two fronts, the threat of Slav encroachment to the north and west and the problem of the Arab and Muslim advance. Constans II (641–68), when he failed to stem the Arab onward march in Asia Minor, turned his attention westwards. The Imperial armies moved against the Slavs. He used them afterwards as an emigrant population in Asia Minor both to serve his purposes as farmers and to curb and control them. It is no surprise therefore that when 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Khālid led his raid in 664 he should have come face to face with 'Slavs'.

Under Justinian II some 30,000 Slavs, many now armed, were settled in the Theme of Opsikion (especially Bithynia) in western Asia Minor. According to Michael, the Syrian, about 7,000 of these Slavs deserted to the Arabs in 692/3. Many of them were to be incorporated within the Arab forces.

In the reign of Constantine V, the number of transplanted Slavs is reckoned to have totalled 208,000. In the campaign of 716–8 the Arabs seized an entire fortress or town of Slavs, (*madīnat al-Ṣaqāliba*). It was sited at Loulon, a key fortress on the eastern border of the Empire, though E.W. Brooks[4] believes that this fortress could have been situated nearer to Constantinople.

The presence of Slavs in the path of the Arabs and the subsequent desertion of many to their cause, and to Islam, was an important factor in developing a relationship between the Arabs and the southern 'Slavs' as peoples. Graebner notes: 'Thus, in little over a century (657–762) close to a quarter of a million Slavs were settled in Asia Minor, the heartland of the empire. This Slavic immigration represents the largest series of population transfers in Byzantium's history.'[5] He further

4. E.W. Brooks, 'The Arabs in Asia Minor (641–750), from Arabic Sources', *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, vol. 18 (1898), p. 194, fn. 6. However, T. Lewicki, in his 'Un témoignage arabe inconnu sur les Slavs de l'an 720', *Folia Orientalia*, vol. IV, Krakow, 1968, p. 3321, suggests either Asia or Thrace.

5. Michael Graebner, 'The Slavs in Byzantine population transfers of the seventh and eighth centuries', *Etudes Balkaniques*, no. 1, Sofia, 1975, p. 43.

adds: 'Although bribery and promises played a part, once the Slavs were on the Arab side they remained there.'

Dvornik maintained that the Byzantines were forced by the Persians and the Arabs to look increasingly towards the East when danger threatened. Having lost almost all the European provinces, they were forced to increase their reliance upon the eastern provinces, especially upon those in Asia Minor. A gradual 'Orientalisation' of the Empire and the Church was its natural consequence. Hence Illyricum, 'instead of being a bridge between West and East, contributed most to the estrangement of the two Churches. It finally became the battlefield on which the two forms of Christianity waged the first great struggle which led to that complete separation so fateful for the whole of Christendom.'[6]

Illyricum (Albania and Yugoslavia) was destined later to become a Balkanic 'drawbridge' between West and East, between Christendom and *Dār al-Islām*. Yet what is perceived as such a bridge may, instead, be viewed as troubled border marches of an alien extra-European intrusion. This latter view is not uncommon among non-Muslim Balkan peoples. No less a figure than the world-famous Yugoslav writer Ivo Andrić, in his doctoral thesis, remarks: 'The part of Bosnia's population assimilating to Islam which constituted a dominant warrior cast throughout Turkish rule, first directed its energies to conquest and then to the defence of property. This was a caste whose spiritual and intellectual life grew petrified in the twin moulds of a foreign religion and an alien language.'[7]

Middle Eastern beliefs among the Slavs

At the beginning of the Christian era, Slav tribes occupied a region that extended from the Baltic to the Carpathians, and from the Elbe to the Black Sea. To this latter may be appended the Balkan peninsula itself. Both the Black Sea region and the Balkans exerted a strong pull upon these Slavs. The climate was drier and warmer, and the trade routes of the Roman East and the Persian Empire were a magnet that drew them to the South. About 200 AD they replaced Sarmatians in South Russia. Later they expanded deeper into Europe, and by the third century they had reached the northern bank of the Danube. In this process they had

6. F. Dvornik, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

7. Ivo Andrić, *The Development of Spiritual Life in Bosnia under the Influence of Turkish Rule*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990, p. 67.

been compelled to contend with two other invaders, the Huns and the Antes – the latter appear to have been Slavs under Sarmatian leadership. Once the Huns had disappeared, the Antes extended their territory towards the lower Danube. Two other tribes, who may also have been of Sarmatian origin, or whose leadership may have been Sarmatian, achieved a prominent position. They were the Croats and the Serbs. These had originally settled in the northern region of the Caucasus and were all but free of Slav elements. Nonetheless, in their flight from the Huns, they migrated beyond the middle Dnieper and were joined by a tribe of Goths. In this northerly region they formed a kind of state, joining to themselves the Slav tribes of Galacia, Silesia and eastern Bohemia. This state is mentioned by King Alfred in his Anglo-Saxon translation of Orosius' *History of the World*, and by Constantine Porphyrogennetus. It is also mentioned by the early Arabic sources, notably by al-Mas'ūdī (943):

> The Slavonic tribes living in the middle and upper reaches of the Laba river, in the upper reaches of the Vistula river, and in the basin of the middle Danube [among other S(A)RBIN – the Serbs of Lusatia or Lusitians, M(O)RĀWA – Moravians, H(O)RVĀTĪN – White Croats].[8]

In several areas, the Serbs and the Croats were intermixed, especially in the region of the Upper Vistula. 'White Serbia' was geographically situated between the Elbe and the Saale rivers.

When the Goths departed from Central Europe, the Slavs who were in search of land, moved in a southern and in a south-westerly direction. They attained the middle reaches of the Danube, crossed it in 517, and appeared in large areas within the Balkan peninsula. They raided Dardania, Macedonia, Epirus and as far-away a region as Thessaly. The Byzantines deemed them savages.

The Slavs had their own material culture and their own beliefs that

8. Cited in Tadeusz Lewicki, 'al-Mas'ūdī on the Slavs' in *al-Mas'ūdī-Millenary Commemoration Volume*, Aligarh University, 1960, p. 12. According to Stanko Guldescu: 'There are Arabic sources, the compte-rendus of Ibn Rusta and of Kardisi or Gardizi [1048–52] on the Slavs, which refer to the Galician Croats. The first part of the accounts of these Arabs was probably written between 842 and 847. It is an interpolation of the original, added during the last twenty years of the century, that mention is made of the Croats of little Poland or Galicia and of their powerful prince, Svetopouk or Svetopolk (Sviat-Malik). . . . The tenth century Arab geographer, Al-Masudi, also uses the name 'Charvats' to designate a military tribe and its prince Avandza, who fought against the Greeks, Franks and Lombards. If he was a Croatian ruler, this mysterious Avandza has still to be identified.'

were to have a marked influence on Christianity and, later, popular Islam, when both these faiths were to compete dramatically to change their lives. They were organised into family groups and formed village communities, although only the South Slavs were to know a loose confederation of such communities. Slav social life was either pastoral or agricultural and their religion was centred on nature and the cycle of the seasons, especially the harvest. Some of their gods however were independent of these seasonal preoccupations. They show some relationship to ancient Iranian or Indian deities, especially those to do with the sun. Key words such as 'god', 'paradise' and 'holy' illustrate these Asian connections and influences.[9]

According to Matthew Spinka:

> Their ancient gods were converted into Christian saints: Veles became St Blasius and continued to guard the flocks of the Christianized Slavs: Perun became Elijah and continued to drive his thunderous car over the clouds and to wield the thunderbolts of the sky; the household gods were retained as family saints, and the belief in fairies and dryads and other members of that delightful ilk persisted without any apology or camouflage. Most of the sacred days and religious customs of the Pagan Slavs were likewise retained, having been but slightly changed or adapted. Thus for instance, the worship of ancestors is still observed in the so-called 'slava' celebrations, where the Serbian peasants bring food and drink to the graves of their dead.

Kozarac, in an article about the ancient Drenica pillar in Kosovo, describes his discovery of a modern wooden pole in Lauš village. Carved of oak in 1950, it was the handiwork of a partly crippled thirty-year-old Albanian peasant who was himself part carpenter and part farmer. It was shaped in the form of a human being. During the threshing season, this pole and several others were decorated with fifteen ears and stalks of wheat. This local custom was explained away as a harmless ceremony to ensure good fortune, fertility and abundant blessing of all kinds. He

9. Simargl, a winged monster who in the mythology of the Sarmatians guarded the tree that produced the seed for every plant, appears to be derived from the Iranian Simurgh which features in Islamic mythology of the Persians and, later, of the Arabs. The goddess Mokosh is a form of the Iranian goddess Anahita. Triglav, a three-headed god, was worshipped by the Slovenian Slavs when they settled in the Julian Alps in the sixth century. The name survives today in that of Yugoslavia's highest mountain.

Also of Middle Eastern origin was the belief in a Slav god of the underworld. He supported the earth with his arms raised to a sky. A city suspended in the air by the supernatural is not unknown in Islamic romances that owe much of the substance to Iranian legends and to ancient beliefs. Slavonic idolatry took the form of wooden poles, carved in human shape, though sometimes any ornamentation was wholly symbolic.

was told it was *per bëreqet* (for blessing); this latter Albanian word derived through Turkish from the Arabic '*baraka*', meaning 'grain and cereal' and, figuratively, 'prosperity and success, gain, increase and abundance'.[10]

A Glagolithic church document of 1452 from the Croatian-Dalmatian area states that he who bows to the sun, the moon or any created thing and prays to them commits a mortal sin. Bosnian Orthodox church documentation condemned magical practices and also condemned the following of pagan customs well into the seventeenth century. These included dancing in the square, especially a special mask-dance that was popular on the eve of the Day of the Assumption where men wore women's dresses and women mens'. Belief in the nymphs called *vilas* was also condemned.

The Bogomils were especially inclined to continue observing these customs however much they might, in theory, contradict their otherwise 'nonconformist' beliefs. In a description of Poturs (Turcisised Bosnians), Paul Rycaut in the 1660s tells of them reading the Gospel in Slavonic though having an interest in learning the Qur'ān. They drank wine in Ramaḍān but abstained from spices. They protected Christians, believed that the Prophet Muḥammad was the Paraclete, abhorred images and the sign of the cross, and practised curcumcision. Double-faith was in places almost a norm. The magic of both faiths worked, and occasionally Muslim mothers sought Fransiscan baptism in Bosnia since baptism brought good luck, success in battle and protected against evil spirits.[11]

But however important such survivals may have been at the popular 'pagan' level, at a higher level, especially among the proto-Bogomils, the tenth-century Bogomils of Bulgaria and Macedonia, and then those of the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries in Bosnia and Hum, it was contact with Manichaean and non-Manichaean dualists, or with Paulician 'adoptionists', that filtered and even transferred beliefs of the Christian Middle East into the Balkans. Many of the Paulicians (who were also strong in the Caucasus) were to be transferred from Eastern Anatolia to the area of Thrace, bordering Bulgaria, following their defeat at the

10. V. Kozarac, 'The Drenica Pillar', *Glasnik Muzeja Kosova i Metohije 1* (Prishtinë, 1956) pp. 317–18.

11. See D. Lang, 'The Slavs' in *Mythology, an Illustrated Encyclopedia*, London: Orbis, 1980, pp. 972–7, and John V.A. Fine, 'The Bosnian Church, A New Interpretation' *East European Quarterly* (Columbia University Press), 1975, pp. 16–20.

hands of the Byzantine Emperor Basil I in 872. Thrace was a dumping-ground for undesirables, a melting-pot wherein Oriental peoples, some transferred there at a far earlier period, formed a significant part of the population, and they infiltrated into more westerly regions along the Via Egnatia. Foremost amongst them were Paulician and non-Paulician Armenians, whose influence was to last for centuries.[12]

From a later age, a little of this transcontinental character may be observed in Bogomilism. In the thirteenth century, from the information given by the Italian writer Rajner Sacconi, Bogomil Byzantine communities existed in Asia Minor (Philadelphia) and in Constantinople itself (*ecclesia graecorum de Constantinopoli*); at that time there was also a community in Bosnia (*ecclesia Slavoniae*). Ties were established between all of these. They were united in a single front and shared a common ideology. As organisations, these Balkan dualists led a secret life (structured within their hierarchy of 'perfect/ascetic', 'believer' and 'listener'). Only in Bosnia were the Patarine Bosnians (who in their church were spurred on by the aspirations of a feudal nobility, yet threatened from without by a Catholic Hungarian feudal nobility) able for a while to enjoy some relative liberty. When Bosnia's sovereigns, who were intent on obtaining Hungarian assistance against the Ottomans, declared the Patarin church to be a heresy and instituted measures to eradicate it, a body of the Bogomils, hating Catholicism, embraced the Muslim faith out of choice.[13]

12. On the Asian origins of this heresy, see S. Runciman, *The Medieval Manichee*, chapter 3 and *passim*. For Balkan implications, see John V.A. Fine, 'The Bulgarian Bogomil Movement', *East European Quarterly, vol. XI*, pp. 385–412, and Bernard Hamilton, 'The Origins of the Dualist Church of Drugunthia', *Eastern Churches Review*, vol. 5, no. 5, pp. 115–24.

13. See Dimitar Angelov, *Les Balkans au Moyen Age, la Bulgarie des Bogomils aux Turcs*, London: Variorum Reprints, III. 'Le Mouvement Bogomile dans les pays Slavs Balkaniques et dans Byzance', 1978, pp. 607–16.

According to Runciman, 'The Arab geographers took little interest in Balkan Bulgaria; and the Arab and Armenian chroniclers only repeat, very occasionally, items that trickled through to them from the Empire: though the Armenians took a flickering and unreliable interest in the adventures of Armenian soldiers in Basil II's Bulgarian wars. Only two of the Oriental chroniclers were interested in Balkan affairs. Eutychius, the Patriarch of Alexandria, as a Christian, kept watch on events in the Imperial Court. His chronicle ends at the year 937, and he died in 940. His continuator, Yahya of Antioch, who died in 1040, is more important. When he wrote, Antioch was a Christian city under the Empire; he therefore was in touch with all the contemporary history of the Empire.'

The Arab threat to Byzantium

In 634, Constantinople was menaced by the Arabs and the Muslim armies. Byzantium faced a double threat almost alone, although at one time in 717, the Bulgarian Khan gave powerful assistance which helped to thwart a threat from the Arabs, killing 20,000 of them. This was an exception. On at least one occasion, both Arabs and Bulgarians conceived of an alliance that would serve their respective interests. In these stratagems the Arab armies already had Slav troops in their midst. By the end of the seventh century and certainly early in the eighth, the *Ṣaqāliba*, as they came to be known in the East and in al-Andalus, formed a significant military component in the Muslim Middle East. Yazīd b. al-Muhallab, who had been imprisoned by the Caliph, 'Umar II, in 717, escaped to Baṣra and fought his former master in the battle of Babylon in 720. Yazīd rallied his forces by insulting the Caliph's forces, calling them 'non-Arabs'. Probably these contingents were recruited among the Slav colonists whose presence in the Umayyad Caliphate, and above all in Syria, in the later seventh century has been established. They were mostly men who had changed sides from among the Slav military colonies that had been organised by Byzantium in Anatolia. They had crossed over with those in the Arab ranks during 663, 665 and 690, and had installed their headquarters in northern Syria. There were also other Slav groupings that had established themselves in the Caliphate under the Umayyads. It is not unlikely that after his expedition to Constantinople in 717, Maslama b. 'Abd al-Malik brought and installed some Slav groups within Syria.

The raid on Constantinople by Maslama was heavily defeated by Leo the Isaurian (717–40) who was himself of Syrian origin; he was aided by Bulgars and other Slavs. The Arab fleet was dispersed. This disaster did not leave the Arabs unaffected. It produced a major folk hero who was to enter into both Arabic and Turkish literature, Abū'l-Ḥusain 'Abdallāh al-Baṭṭāl al-Anṭākī (d. 740). He inspired the name and the role of the warrior Muslim, Sayyid Ghāzī, who is believed to lie buried near Eskişehr (Seyyit Battal gâzi türbesi) in Asia Minor. A former *tekke* of the *Baktāshiyya* Ṣūfī order is still to be seen there. The model character of the Muslim martyr in *jihād* that Baṭṭāl provided was one of major importance in the popular heroic literature of Islam, Arabic and Turkish alike.

At the same time as Dalmatian Adriatic attacks, the Arabs were engaged in raids in the area of Epirus. In 805 or 807, as allies of the Slavs of the Peloponnese, they took part in the siege of Patras, which was

reportedly saved only through the intervention of Saint Andrew, the protector of the town.

In 827, the Arabs of al-Andalus chose to land in Crete and eventually to settle there. Commanded by Abū Ḥafṣ, they were able to establish a strong fortress within the island, surrounded by a moat (*khandaq*) on the site of the city of Candia. The population were reduced to the status of slaves and only one church was preserved for the use of the Christian inhabitants.

In 862, the Arabs from Crete disembarked near Mount Athos, close to the monastery of Vatopedi, and they carried its monks into slavery. The church was burnt, and the raiders returned to Crete. In a subsequent raid, the monks of Athos were themselves captured and the region was deserted. In 866, the Arabs attacked the island of Néon, near Athens, where the famous anchorite Euthyme was living together with his brethren. The latter were captured although they were released later and subsequently transferred their place of meditation to Athos itself. Despite several attempts to dislodge the Arabs from Crete, it was only retaken in 961 by the Byzantine Emperor Nicephoros Phocas[14] aided, it seems, by a Russian detachment.

Arabs and Bulgarians at the beginning of the tenth century

A kind of alliance between the Bulgars who had settled in the Balkans, and the Arabs, could have mutual advantages.[15] A continued campaign on the Arab front in Asia Minor forced the Byzantines to reduce their garrisons in Europe, while their Bulgarian operations were a respite for the Caliph's forces. What in theory seemed advantagous never materialised. The Bulgars were insufficiently organised to launch a strategically planned and concerted attack. However, in the tenth century such an alliance did assume a serious form. Tsar Simeon (893–927), from his capital at Preslav in eastern Bulgaria, to the west of what is today Varna, conceived a design to conquer Byzantium and to have himself crowned Tsar of Bulgaria and the Romans. In order to achieve this it was imperative to obtain a fleet that could overcome the Byzantine naval mastery of the seas surrounding the capital on the Bosphorus. He

14. V. Christides, *The Conquest of Crete by the Arabs (ca. 824), a Turning Point in the Struggle between Byzantium and Islam*, Athens, 1984, pp. 61, 66–7, 83–4. There is a lengthy discussion of Arab operations in the Greek islands and mainland.

15. M. Canard, 'Arabes et Bulgares au début du Xe siècle', *Byzantion*, Brussels, vol. XI, 1936, p. 213.

adopted two plans and approached two possible allies, the Fāṭimids in Ifrīqiyā and the Amīr of Tarsus. The latter plan proved abortive, and the former was countered by the skilful diplomacy of Romain Lecapene, who captured the embassy that had sailed to Africa to finalise a treaty and was on its way home. The Bulgars were held prisoner and the Arabs from North Africa were released.[16] The project was exceedingly ambitious. An African fleet was to meet a Bulgarian army which was to be led by the king in person across Thrace. The spoils of Byzantium would be shared. Tsar Simeon would rule Byzantium, the African Arabs would return to the Maghrib. Al-Mas'ūdī, in his *Murūj al-Dhahab*, furnishes a number of details concerning Tsar Simeon's eastern contacts with the Arabs which seem to have had no greater success.[17]

Canard concludes:

> From 927, there could be no more question of any alliance of convenience between the Arabs and the Bulgars. Simeon's successor, who married a granddaughter of Romain Lecapene, was devoted to Byzantium. From the second third of the tenth century, conforming to this new attitude of Bulgaria, numerous Bulgars engaged themselves in the service of the empire and they fought in its armies against the Arabs. They are frequently mentioned by the historians in the wars of this epoch between Byzantium and the Hamdānid, Sayf al-Dawla, as well as by the contemporary poets.[18]

Far earlier, the Bulgars had come under Sasanian Persian artistic influences, but it was during the reign of Tsar Simeon that some traces of Islamic artistic influence began to appear in Bulgarian illuminated manuscripts and elsewhere in Bulgar art. These artistic borrowings were apparent in both Bulgarian and Serbian liturgical gospels and continued well into the fourteenth century. André Grabar, who has studied this art in detail, traces such borrowings to southern Italy and its cosmopolitan communities that were subject to Muslim influences, and to the Christian art of the Copts. To explain this influence, he suggests, one might invoke the tradition according to which Islamic missionaries were said to have diffused Arabic books in Bulgaria in the middle of the ninth century. 'But in admitting that to be so, the memory of these manuscripts, which must have been destroyed at the time of the conversion to Christianity, had no chance of being perpetuated in the

16. *ibid.*, p. 214–15.
17. *ibid.*, p. 219.
18. *ibid.*, p. 223.

ornaments of Bulgarian manuscripts.'[19] He prefers to trace the major influence to Byzantium and Preslav in the ninth and tenth centuries where early Muslim style and motif had exerted a powerful influence on the decorative arts.

However, other artistic influences reveal the continuous contact between the Arabs and the Slavs. They may be perceived in the music of the Eastern Church. As Egon Wellesz remarks in his *A History of Byzantine Music and Hymnography* (Oxford, 1961, p. 235):

> Investigating the melodies of the Serbian Oktoechos I found that they were composed of a number of musical phrases, repeated either exactly or with slight variations. Since the melodies of the Serbian Church derived from the Syrian — introduced into the Balkan countries along the pilgrim-routes which by-passed Constantinople — the occurrence of an identical principle of composition in both Syria and Serbia was explained, a principle to which Idelsohn had first drawn attention in his study of the technique of Arabic music and which had been confirmed by Dom Jeannin and Dom Puyade in their publications on Syrian music.

After the Arabs had gained control over the greater part of Southern Italy, they launched raids on the eastern shores of the Adriatic. Arab ships appeared before Budva, Risan and Kotor. They extended their activities to the area of Ragusa (Dubrovnik), Split and Trogir. In the middle of the ninth century, the Arabs made an alliance with the Niritliyani (the Narentane tribe in the area of the Naretva valley in Hercegovina), who had not embraced Christianity, in a joint war against Venice.

The 'Slavs' (*Ṣaqāliba*), numbers of whom had few, if any, connections with the Balkans, were to play a prominent part in the life of Islamic al-Andalus, and in Fāṭimid North Africa during this period and up to the eleventh century. There were *Ṣaqāliba* among the guards of the Arab princes in Egypt. At the end of the tenth century, the 'Slav' named Raydān was appointed commander of the guards of the Caliph, al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh. It is well known that 'Slavs' of sundry origin and background filled important posts in the state and the army during the rule of the Arabs in al-Andalus, forming the bodyguard of the Caliph in Cordova. The number of these 'Slav' guards, belonging to the Umayyad Caliphs, attained a total of 13,750 men. Among these there

19. André Grabar, 'Influences musulmanes sur la décoration des manuscripts slaves Balkaniques', *Revue des Etudes Slaves*, 1951, p. 132.

were men of letters and of culture who left a noted mark on Arabic Spain. One was al-Khādim al-Ṣaqlabī, a literary figure during the reign of Hishām II (976–1013). Another from the same period was the noted Ḥabīb al-Ṣaqlabī, who hotly defended the origins and accomplishments of those like him in his work 'Clear and victorious arguments against those who deny the excellence of the Slavs' (*Kitāb al-Istiẓhār wa'l-mughālaba 'alā man ankara faḍā'il al-Ṣaqāliba).*[20] Anecdotes, histories and verse were prominent in this valuable composition. However ethnically comprehensive the *Ṣaqāliba* were, Croats were included among the body of the 'Slavs'.

There were contacts between the Croats along the Adriatic coast and the Arab Muslims who were centred around Lucera in southern Italy. These contacts were to continue up to and beyond the fourteenth century, when the Croatian bishop, Augustin Kozotic, came to convert them to Christianity, which he did with some success. Nonetheless, it is also certain that Croats became converted to Islam. According to Stanko Guldescu[21], Croatian conversions to Islam, even before the fall of Bosnia and Hercegovina (Hum, as it was then known), far exceeded the Muslim proselytes who were brought into the Christian fold by Croat missionaries. The Bosnian Bogomils and Catholics were to follow a precedent that had begun at a time before the Ottoman conquest.

20. Ḥabīb's identity has given rise to some speculation. His work is lost and we have no certain idea of his ethnic background or how many 'Balkan Slavs' were included among the *Ṣaqāliba*. A Yugoslav Slovenian and Croatian theory, admittedly dated now, was proposed by Vladimir Mazuranić, *Südslaven im Dienste des Islams* (vol. X, to 16th century) Zagreb and Leipzig, 1928. Further comment is furnished by Dr Jury Andrassy, *Tragom Vladimira Mazuramica*, Zagreb, 1927. Such views on the Spanish *Ṣaqāliba*, however fascinating, have to be reconsidered in the light of Daniel Ayalon's reconsideration of the whole question of the *Ṣaqāliba*, as set out in his 'On the eunuchs in Islam', *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*, Jerusalem, 1979.

Further examples that show the value of Slav eunuchs in Fāṭimid times are furnished by Ibn Khallikān (De Slane's translation, vol. 1, pp. 253–4), who refers to the slaughter of Barjamān, the negro eunuch, at the command of al-Ḥākim in 390/1000. He was killed by Abū'l-Faḍl Raydān al-Ṣaqlābī, the prince's umbrella-bearer. He, in turn, was killed three years later by Mas'ūd al-Ṣaqlābī, al-Ḥākim's sword-bearer. The author calls Ṣaqāliba 'a race which produces eunuchs'. The great Fāṭimid general in Egypt, Jawhar, was of Dalmatian origin. He founded Cairo and al-Azhar. His career is one of the greatest ever made by a Balkan convert to Islam before the Ottomans.

21. Stanko Guldescu, *History of Medieval Croatia*, 1964, p. 304.

Dubrovnik and the Arab East

With Ragusa (Dubrovnik) the Arabs maintained a long and often close relationship. Earlier the city had been the goal of raiders, but it later became a valuable partner in trade. Ragusa was decreed to be a safe haven from the disturbances within the Balkan interior. For example, Albanians and Bosnians, partisans of the tribe of Dukagjinas (Duchagini) around Shkodër, fled there to escape punishment. Survivors from Arab sea attacks sought asylum within its walls. We are told that the men of two castles on the mainland, from Chastal Spilan and Chastal Gradaz, made their dwellings on the coast, 'for they were of the race of Epidauros destroyed by the Saracens'.

Arab attacks on Ragusa were mounted for a number of reasons. Wood, which was scarce in the Levant, was an important incentive. One major siege of the walled city took place in 866–7. It lasted fifteen months and was only raised after the intervention of the Emperor, Basil the Macedonian, with his fleet. It is this siege that may have inspired the all but legendary, allegedly earlier, defeat of the Saracens in 783 by Orlando, or Roland, the Paladin. In this earlier phase, Ragusa's most active trade with the Muslim world was to be with the Caliphate in al-Andalus.

However it was later in the Mamlūk age that Ragusa's connection with the East attained its apogee. Despite the Crusades, and despite papal and ecclesiastical displeasure, commerce throve, with a profitable trade with Mamlūk Egypt in timber and iron in exchange for Eastern spices. Ragusa also actively participated in commerce with slaves in the Levant.

According to Krekić:

> At the end of the thirteenth century, the epoch when documents contain precise details about the traffic of slaves in Ragusa, in the majority they were exported in the West into Italy and to the Levant. Bosnia furnished the greatest number.

The schismatic Bogomil Bosnians were preyed upon by Western merchants. The reduction of schismatics to slavery was in no way deemed sinful. Ragusa was one channel whereby slaves were imported into the Balkans from Levantine countries. By the fifteenth century other categories of slaves had grown in number. These were men of Tartary, others were Circassians, some were black slaves from North Africa.

Spices that were transported from Alexandria and from Syria were of prime importance for the Ragusans, while in the Muslim ports in the East lead was the most sought-after commodity. It was mined in Bosnia

and elsewhere deep within the interior of the Balkan peninsula. Although the Venetians played a part in this trade, Ragusa dominated it.

Ragusa's commerce with the Muslim East received a significant boost through the extraordinary concessions granted by the papacy in 1341. These enabled the city to carry on commercial relations with unbelievers. Diplomatic links with the Muslim East followed. With their formidable fleet of some 300 ships, the sixteenth-century Ragusa merchants were to sail and travel freely, and they were able to establish factories in what were by then Turkish-held towns and in Ottoman Balkan cities. There were significant Ragusan colonies in North Africa as well, including Fez in Morocco. Many Croats lived in Egypt in the Mamlūk age, including citizens from Dalmatia, Istria and Slovenia.

The capitulations of 1510, which Ragusa (*Rakūziyya*) received from the Mamlūk Sulṭān al-Ashraf Qānṣawh al-Ghawrī (1500–16), enabled its merchants to trade beyond Alexandria. Henceforth, their efforts were concentrated on the safe conduct of merchandise from the area of Suez and southern Sinai to Cairo and Alexandria, where their ships waited for the spices form the East Indies. There seems to have been a connection between this understanding of 1510 and a project by the Ragusans to dig a canal between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, one of the earliest serious attempts to construct a Suez canal, although the effort to induce the Mamlūks to attempt it was to end in failure.

When Selīm I conquered Egypt and Syria in 1516/7, the Ragusan establishments in Alexandria and Cairo were of a long standing. What was to follow was a yet bolder commercial discovery of Persia, India and beyond. It was short in duration since the Ragusans were hotly challenged by both Venetians and Portuguese. This enterprise was to be the conclusion to the centuries-old record of sea communication between the Adriatic coast and the Islamic East.[22]

The oldest Arabic document (925/1519) in the Archives of Dubrovnik is an appeal by Marin, the Ragusan consul in Alexandria, addressed to the first Ottoman governor, Khāyir Beg, requesting the lifting of a payment to the Catalan consul that had been imposed by the city Qāḍī

22. On this project Professor Charles Beckingham has kindly given me the following three useful references:
F. Kinchmayer, *La Caduta della Reppublica aristocratica di Ragusa*, Zara, 1900, p. 46.
R. Fulin, *Il Canale di Suez e la Reppublica de Venezia in Archivio Veneto*, vol. 2, 1871, pp. 175–213.
F.M. Appendini, *Notizie istorico-critiche sulle antichità, storia e letteratura dei Ragusei*, Ragusa, 1802, vol. 1, p. 213.

on his fellow-citizens, who hitherto had been exempt, having been awarded a special and independent status by the Sulṭān of the Burjī Mamlūks, al-Ashraf Qānṣawh al-Ghawrī. His name clearly inspired memories of a cordial and privileged relationship between the merchants of the city-state and the ruler of Egypt and it evoked a vision of an age of great prosperity.[23]

Pecheneg and Khwārizmian Muslims in medieval Hungary

One of the earliest Arab geographers who referred to the Pechenegs in south-eastern Europe was al-Iṣṭakhrī (*circa* 950). He identified them as a nomadic Turkish tribe which, in his days, was moving westwards between the kingdom of the Khazars, in the Caspian region and the North Caucasus, and Byzantium. The vigorous action of Vladimir of Rūs in the late tenth century against these nomads, and their defeat at Kiev by Yaroslav less than a century later, pushed them further to the west in the direction of the northern borders of the Balkans. Eventually they crossed Byzantium's Danubian frontier. This was in part due to the pressure of other nomads, Oghuz and Cumans, who in turn were also moving into regions of Eastern Europe from Inner Asia. Pecheneg pressure and intrusions of the eleventh century had been preceded by others at least a century earlier. In 1048, the Pechenegs caused havoc in Bulgaria, and the interior of the Balkans was to suffer widely from their intrusions. Continued military efforts by the Byzantines, aided by the Cumans, achieved success in 1122. From then onwards the Pechenegs were to enter the Balkans as part of a far wider and diluted movement of Turkic groups. Already in the tenth century they had entered Hungary. However, it was in the eleventh century that the greater part of them, whether pagan, nominally Christian or Muslim, were to begin to play a part in the history of Hungary and of the Balkans as a whole.[24]

One of the countries through which Muslims entered Hungary during the reign of Prince Taksony (mid tenth century) was Bulgaria, although the Muslim groups in question are more likely to have been traders or merchants (possibly Pechenegs) who had originated in the

23. Besim Korkut, *Arapski Dokumenti u Državnom Arhivu u Dubrovniku*, Sarajevo: Orijentalni Insitute, 1961, vol. 11, document from Alexandria (925/1519), pp. 143–154.

24. On the activities of the Pechenegs in this early period see Denis Sinor (ed.), *Cambridge History of Inner Asia*, Cambridge University Press, 1990, esp. pp. 270–5.

Volga region of Bulghār. Two of them were called Billa and Boscu.[25] That Muslims in Bulgaria presented problems for the Danube region is confirmed by a letter of Pope Nicholas, dated 866, which ordered the 'extirpation of the Saracens' from the region.[26] It was during the reigns of the Hungarian kings Stephen I (997–1038) and especially Stephen II (1115–31) and Geza II (1141–61) that the incoming half-Muslim population were given considerable liberty. They served in the border-guard system or in other duties, both military and civil.[27] According to John Kirnamos (1150–65) these subjects of the King of Hungary fought at the time alongside the Dalmatians against the armies of the Byzantine emperor Manuel Comnenus. Numbers of them accepted Christianity, while some relapsed or remained crypto-Christians; they were always at risk of royal displeasure and oppression, especially at the time of the First Crusade.

The question of the precise ethnic and national identity, and the lasting influence, of the Hungarian Muslims, who are referred to in both the Arabic and the medieval Hungarian sources, has inspired a number of hypotheses that have been aired in articles published both in Hungary and elsewhere, and there is much variety of opinion among those who

25. T. Lewicki says in his article, 'Madjar, Madjaristān (in pre-Ottoman period); *Encyclopedia of Islam* (new edition), p. 1014, 'According to a passage in the Hungarian Chronicle known as the *Anonymi gesta Hungarorum*, composed in 1196–1203, there arrived in Hungary, during the reign of the prince Taksony (?955–972 AD), a group of Ishmaelites, i.e. Muslims, originally from *terra Bular* (Bulgaria), led by two semi-legendary figures (whose names begin with the letter 'b'), Billa (Ar Bi'llāh?) and Bocsu (?). Lewicki suggests that the weight of scholarly opinion favours Bulghār as the departure point of these two 'Ishmaelites', though he himself does not exclude Bulgaria of the Danube as an alternative. It might be pointed out that the story of a Yemenite expedition into the Bulghār region, reported by Abū Ḥāmid al Gharnāṭī (d. 1160), mentions an army of Yemenites led by two commanders, one of whom reached the Bulghār capital on the Volga, while the other reached the Hungarians (Bāshghūrd). These accounts may not be connected. On the other hand they may reflect some Islamic folktales that circulated in the region of Eastern Europe in the twelfth century.

26. Lewicki, *ibid.*, p. 1014, says that a letter exists written by Pope Nicholas in the year 866. In it he orders the extirpation of the Saracens in Bulgaria of the Danube. On this whole question see Smail Balić, 'Muslims in Eastern and South Eastern Europe', *Journal of the Institute for Muslim Minority Affairs*, vol. V1, 1985, pp. 361–74.

27. A duty they would seem to have fulfilled, in some ways similar to the employment of the Tatars in Lithuania and Poland at a later age. See Sir Thomas Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam*, London, 1935, pp. 193–4.

are most expert in judging the issue.[28] A number of names, sometimes interchangeable and occasionally superseded, the one by the other, are to be found. They include the Ismaëlitae, the Bissermini (Bezermen or Buzurmen), Hungarian Böszörmény (meaning Muslim) the Caliz, Kalez or Qualiz, and the Saraceni (Szereezen).

The Ismaëlitae were predominantly Pecheneg, although, according to Szekely[29], it is known that the Ismaëlitae (Hysmaelitae), in a document of the Hungarian king Emeric (196) written on the occasion of the market at Eszék (Valkö, now Osijek on the lower Drava in Yugoslavia), were apparently not Pechenegs.

The Bissermini (Buzurmen) were in all likelihood arabised or persianised Khwārizmians from Central Asia, either agriculturalists or traders, who had entered Hungary from the Volga region or from Bulgaria. The Caliz (Arabic *Khawālis*) were similarly Khwārizmians, though including some Khazar Kabars and Pechenegs who were to be employed as auxiliaries by the Hungarians. To what extent these peoples were other than nominal Muslims is uncertain. Some were superficially Islamised and some others were to exchange their beliefs, under pressure, for Christianity. Some for a time retained Zoroastrian beliefs. However, according to al-Bakrī (*circa* 1068), there were to be found *faqīhs* and Qur'ān reciters among them. The Pechenegs were frequently settled close to Hungary's frontiers, which were delineated by a wooden stockade on its western border, around Fejervár Tolna and between the Danube and Lake Balaton. Like all the Hungarian Muslims these communities were to be particulary ravaged and dispersed following the arrival of the Tatars in 1241.

Who the 'Saraceni' were has been debated. Much of the argument is based on the Arabic terms for nationalities that are employed by the Hispano-Arab writer and traveller Abū Ḥāmid of Granada (1080–1170), who came to Hungary in 1150/1 and stayed in 'Bāshghīrd/

28. For a breakdown and description of all the groups in question, see Lewicki, *op. cit.*, pp. 1014–15. For a general introduction to the role of the Pechenegs in Balkan and East European history, see C.A. Macartney, 'The Petchenegs', *Slavonic Review*, 1929, pp. 340–55. On the first incursions of the Pechenegs into the Balkans and the Arab writers, see Petre Diaconu, *Les Petchénègues au Bas-Danube, Bibliotheca Historica Romaniae* (no. 27), Bucarest, 1970, pp. 11–21.

29. All these matters are discussed by György Szekeley in full in 'Les Compacts entre Hongrois et Musulmans aux XIe-XIIe Siècles', *The Muslim East: Studies in honour of Julius Germanus*, edited by Gy. Kaldy-Nagy, Budapest: Lorand Eötvös University, 1974, pp. 53–74.

Bāshghūrd' for three years. He put down his impressions in two of his works, *Tuḥfat al-Albāb* and *al-Mu'rib 'an ba'ḍ 'ajā'ib al-Maghrib*[30]. In the former he remarks:[31]

This [land] of Bāshghūrd is [the home] of numerous communities. It has seventy-eight cities, each one of which is like Isfahan and Baghdad, wherein is to be found [God's] bounty, favour and abundant blessing and a luxury and easiness of living that can neither be accounted for nor quantified. My eldest son, Ḥāmid, there married two ladies from among the Muslim noblemen and he [by them] begat male offspring.

In the *Mu'rib*, Abū Ḥāmid subdivides the Muslims of Hungary into two broad categories, the *Awlād al-Maghāriba* (who were in royal favour) and the *Awlād al-Khawārizmiyyīn*, whose East European or Central Asian origin is not disputed. As for the former, views diverge as to whether the term 'men of the Western lands' indicates, as it does so today, Muslims principally from North Africa and Spain, or is perhaps a reference to Pechenegs or Cumans from the region of Kiev.[32]

Vilmos Voigt, would see the former as a reference to Arabs or other Muslims, whose original home was in Muslim Spain or in southern Italy or Sicily. He bases his hypothesis on the following three points:

(*a*) At the end of the eleventh century, Kálmán (Coloman), king of Hungary, made a treaty with the southern Italian and Sicilian Normans, and in 1087 he married Busilla, the daughter of Roger, the Norman ruler of Sicily. She came to Hungary with members of her court. In view of the nature of the half-Oriental life and culture of Sicily at that time, he supposes that a number of the communities could well have been Arab or Muslim.

(*b*) The thirteenth-century Anjou kings Károly (Charles) I and Lajos (Louis) I tried to place Naples and Sicily under the Hungarian crown.

30. Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Sulaymān al Mīzinī al-Qaysī was born in 473/1080 and died in 565/1169. His two known works are *Kitāb al-Mu'rib 'an ba'ḍ 'ajā'ib al Maghrib*, published and translated by C.E. Dubler, Madrid, 1953, and the second, *Tuḥfat al Albāb wa nukhbat al-a'jāb*, was published by Gabriel Ferrand in *Journal Asiatique*, 1925, pp. 1–148 and 195–307. Although sections on Russia and Africa have been translated, it is only recently that a complete translation has appeared in Madrid.

31. There is a full discussion by Ivan Hrbek of the question of Bāshgīrd (Bāshghūrd) and its precise ethnic and geographical connotation in the text of Abū Ḥāmid al Gharnāṭī in 'Ein Arabischer Bericht über Ungarn', *Acta Orientalia Hungarica*, 5, 1955, pp. 205–30.

32. See 'Les noms des Hongrois et de la Hongrois chez les médievaux geógraphes arabes et persans', *Folia Orientalia*, 19, 1978.

This indicates a continuing interest of the Hungarian kings in the Arab-influenced south.

(*c*) The Hungarian term *Szerecsen* (from the Arabic *Sharqiyyīn*) is derived from the northern Italian *saresin-seresin*. This same word in southern Italy explicitly denotes an Arab, later a negro. It is not likely that such a term would have come into Hungarian by this channel if it were meant that the people in question were Pechenegs from Southern Russia or Arabs from the Levant.

The above arguments, are taken up in his concluding remarks:

At the very end of the eleventh century, Hungary entered into Mediterranean trading life. By 1105 the Hungarian conquest of the Dalmatian seaports was complete and the long-lasting military and commercial war of the Hungarian kings mainly against Venice (but against other Mediterranean trading centres as well) then began. These historical contacts are reflected by some of the Italian loan words of the Hungarian language: eg *bárka* (bark), *gálya* (galley), *sajka* (small boat) and *szamár* (donkey) which are all inevitable requirements of sea trade (and sea battle). In the course of the Crusades it becomes evident that the Mohammedans of the Holy Land are in Hungarian eyes (Saracens) (szerecsen), in the same way as the Arab traders of the Maghreb or the Mohammedan minters, usurers and mercenaries of Hungary. The quoted development of the meaning of the Latin word saracenus in Hungary is accounted for by this complicated crosscurrent.

From what has been said above one may draw the following conclusions. The Hungarian sources prove that traders and soldiers of the western part of the Mediterranean were known by the name szerecsen 'Maghrebean Arab' at the latest in the first half of the twelfth century, and they lived in Hungary as well. At this time the Hungarian Kingdom was probably the most north-eastern point of their expansion.[33]

Not dissimilar is the view expressed by Charles d'Eszlary in his article 'Les musulmans hongrois du Moyen-Age (VIIe–XIVe siècles)',[34] though in more general terms. Here he is more concerned with one of the alternative nomenclatures, the Ismaëlitae, whom he identifies as Muslims coming from both East and West. Again, the Arabs are included. 'On account of the liberation of the Spanish provinces, a

33. Vilmos Voigt, 'Hungarian Sources on Early Mediterranean Contacts', *Proceedings of the First Congress of Mediterranean Studies of Arab-Berber Influence*, edited by Micheline Gallay and David R. Marshall, Algiers: Société Nationale d'Edition et de Diffusion, 1973, pp. 213–28.

34 In *Revue Ibla* (Tunis), vol. XIX, 1956, pp. 375–86.

number of Moors emigrated. They felt insecure because of the Crusades and the rigorous stipulations of the synods of Toledo and Latran. The so-called negroes, as they were known at this time, were a mixture of Arab refugees from the Byzantine Empire that had fallen under Latin domination, immigrant Muslims, Bulgars and Bashkir Hungarians who, in fleeing from the Mongols, had crossed the Volga, and, lastly, apostate Hungarians. Such newcomers established themselves in the countries of purely Hungarian population of the Great Plain and beyond the Danube: quickly adopting the Hungarian language, they remained strangers in regard to their religion and their customs.[35]

Al-Idrīsī (548/1154) describes the Yugoslav coast, Albania and the Macedonian interior

Alain Ducellier, in his book *La Façade Maritime de l'Albanie au Moyen Age*[36] which especially centres on the region of Durrës and Vlorë in Albania between the eleventh and the fifteenth centuries, has indicated that Idrīsī's *Book of Roger*[37] was perhaps the most important source for our knowledge of the trans-Balkan itineraries. Idrīsī provides valuable information about the Adriatic coast of Yugoslavia, including such ports as Kotor, Ragusa, Trogir, Sibenik, Zara and as far north as the regions to the south-east of Venice and Trieste. He also supplies an especially valuable itinerary inland from the Albanian port of Durrës towards Constantinople. Also interesting are references to the Black Sea coast. A number of these routes meet at key localities, whether the final destination be Belgrade (Bilghrādūn) or Thessalonica. Several of the localities that he lists have not been identified with certainty although there is enough precision to indicate that the ancient Via Egnatia was substantially preserved despite the intrusion of Robert Guiscard's Crusading exploits and the riposte of the Byzantines, whose mercenary forces contained many nationalities.[38] The lakes of the

35. *ibid.* A passage from the Arab geographer Yāqūt, cited in W.T. Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam*, pp. 193–4, is quite inconclusive; any reference to Bulghār, or Bulgaria, merely indicates that the 'Islamic reformers' came from that region. The informants (who were Ḥanafīs) had no clear idea of their ancestry.

36. Ducellier, *Variorum, op. cit.*, XV, pp. 1–7.

37. *ibid.*, pp. 6–7 and *passim*.

38. Set out in Henri Grégoire's article 'La Chanson de Roland et Byzance', *Byzantion*, XIV, 1939, pp. 267–315.

Kosovo-Macedonian region are particularly singled out as crossing points, Ohrid being among the most important.

Idrīsī remarks:

The road from Durrës to Gjirokastër leaves Durrës on the Adriatic sea and pursues an inland route in the direction of Constantinople. It passes over Deabolis [Tabarla?], a distance of two days. This is a town located on the summit of a mountain and it is four days distant from Ohrid. Ohrid [Ukhrīda] is a mighty city. It is amply housed and populated. Broad in its scope in trade and in commerce. It is located above pleasing mountains. Near to it is a lake wherein fish is caught by fishermen in skiffs. The lake is situated to the south of the city. It takes three days to circumvent the lake and some of the city is sited by the lake side. Between Ohrid and Polog/Tetova [Būlghū] is a journey of two days march. It is a beautiful town on a large mountain. Between it and Skopje [Usqūfiya] is a day's journey to the north-east. Skopje is a large town with adjacent public buildings and habitations. It has an abundance of vines and of cereal crops.[39]

Idrīsī describes the major rivers of Serbia and Macedonia and he also describes lakes in the region of Kastoria and Ioannina.[40]

In ancient times, the Via Egnatia was important both economically and strategically. Relations between Albania and Macedonia, under the Byzantines, were largely military and political. This route, via Deabolis and Ohrid, is, in the opinion of Ducellier,[40] the one which gave access to 'the nerve centre of the Balkans, the region of the lakes', a reality that was not to be lost on the Turks, or on those wandering dervish orders that originated in the Middle East and in Central Asia, and which sought new territories and sanctuaries when Islam began to penetrate the interior of this peninsula. For the enemies of Byzantium, the Normans and the Crusaders, the Via Egnatia afforded the obvious route for them to follow in order to reach their eastern destinations. Durrës was a valuable Adriatic harbour, and the route between it and Thessalonica was the principal access to the Levant. Another connected Vlorë and Almyros on the coast of Thessaly. Idrīsī is remarkably precise in the detailed information that he furnishes. At that time, Durrës, and Vlorë to a lesser degree, had two essential economic functions: they were used for the export of local produce, and were intermediary links in a chain

39. al-Idrīsī, *Opus Geograhicum* (E. Cerulli, F. Gabrieli, G. Levi della Vida, L. Petech, G. Tucci), Fasc. V, Naples-Rome: Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli 1975, pp. 792–3.

40. Ducellier, *Variorum*, *op. cit.*, IV: 'L'Arbanon et les Albanais au XIe siècle', p. 367.

that united the West and the Levant, being the outlet on the Adriatic of the most important land-routes of the Balkans. The economic axis which gave life to the Albanian coast was an East-West axis.[41]

The coastline had maritime importance, as is also confirmed by Idrīsī. The Albanian ports were stages. 'To go from Durrës to Constantinople, following the contour of the coast-line, one first passes Vlorë [Valona]. From then onwards this route enters the Aegean Sea and finally reaches Constantinople itself.'

Our Arab geographer gives little information about the inhabitants of the interior, although the Serbs are specifically mentioned. It seems certain that he received reports from travellers who had journeyed into the Balkans from Italy and Sicily. Trade to the south has already been mentioned in connection with Hungary's relations with that quarter. What we know of the presence of Oriental peoples at that time in the Balkan interior is extremely sketchy. However, Grégoire, in his studies of the significant part played by this region in the geographical setting for the *gestes* of both West and East, emphasises that the battle of Butentrot (Butrint) opposite Corfu, in 1081, was a major one. The Normans of Robert Guiscard were faced by a Byzantine army that included a barbarous and a pagan vanguard, some 2,000 Turks, including auxiliary Patzinaks (Pechenegs).[42]

The Arnauts

The Albanians (whom the Turks were to call Arnavut and the Arabs al-Arnā'ūṭ) claim to be descended from the Illyrians, the ancient people of Bronze and Iron age times in this region. Their ancestors had been bold seamen whose ships had taken them to Italy and along the Adriatic to the Levant. They bartered with foreign lands, especially with the Phoenicians, with the Hellenic ports and with the cities of Italy. Later the Illyrians came under the rule of the Greeks and the Romans. The second-century AD geographer, Ptolemy of Alexandria, listed the

41. Ducellier, *Variorum*, *ibid.*, XV, 6–7, furnishes details as to the changes in this ancient axis, by land and sea, at this period. See also Stojanka Kenderova and Bojan Běšeliev, *La Péninsule Balkanique Réprésenté sur les Cartes d'al-Idrisi*, Sofia, 1990, for the Black Sea regions.

42. See Grégoire. 'La Chanson de l'an 1085 ou l'étymologie de Baligant et de Califerne', *Bulletin de la Classe de Lettres de l'Académie Royale de Belgique*, XXV, 1939, pp. 240–4.

Illyrian tribes. He noted among them the 'Albanoi', who dwelt in the mountains between Durrës, Dibra and Albanopolis.

To a large extent, the Illyrians preserved their language, although under Roman rule many Latin words were incorporated within it. In the first century of the Christian era, Christianity found a response. One recalls the statement by St Paul in Romans 15, verse 19: 'Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.'

In the second century, two of the earliest proselytes of the faith proclaimed its message, St Donat in Aulon and St Ast in Dyrrah. In Albania, as elsewhere in the Balkans, ancient paganism lingered on, and within the deep and inpenetrable interior it has continued to linger, or was but partially transformed by the Christian, whether Catholic or Orthodox, Muslim (and Marxist) beliefs that were to be transfused within it, or imposed, willingly or reluctantly, upon it. Ramadan Sokoli, in his *Chansons populaires albanaises*,[43] illustrates how the cult of the sun is alive in Albanian folklore, in its oral tradition and in its toponyms, especially in regard to caves, during special seasons or during hours of daylight, where the sun's rays are perceived in their gloomy depths. The festival of St George is celebrated in a way that preserves a solar myth. In Kosovo horses and carts are loaded with cakes and sweetmeats and entire towns and villages take part in the festivities. Around Midsummer Day is the festival of St John, Shëngjin, when bonfires are lit in a blaze that turns a mountainous night into day. In time of drought a child is stripped and clad in grass and green leaves from head to toe. One sings from door to door:

'Rona, Rona, rain maker, bear rain to our ploughed fields, May grain swell in the ear, may good men eat harvests to the limits, from the corn that shall grow in abundance.'[44]

During this early period and later, under the Byzantines, the Via Egnatia was the principal route in the mountainous interior for the publishers of the Christian faith, as well as for caravans that transported articles of commerce between East and West. Dyrrachion (Durrës) became the most important Byzantine port in the West. It was named 'the flower

43. Ramadan Sokoli, *Chansons populaires albanaises* (vol. 1: *Chansons Lyriques*), translation by K. Luka, Tirana: Editions 'Naim Frashëri', 1966, pp. 53–85.

44. *ibid.*, p. 79.

garden of the Adriatic'. Notable towns that were to grow up along the Via Egnatia were Skampa, near the later town of Elbasan, and Deabolis (later mentioned by Idrīsī) near the river Devoll.

Towards the end of the sixth century, the Slavs began to settle in both Albania and Macedonia, colonising the lands most suited to agriculture.[45] As a consequence of the barbarian invasions, of Slav colonisation, and of the revolts of slaves and tenants, the ancient system of slave-ownership that had hitherto been practised came to an end. The Illyrian population entered the annals of medieval history known by a new name coined from the Illyrian Albanoi tribe that had inhabited the region between Durrës and Dibra, north of lake Ohrid. The medieval Albanians came to be called Arbër/Arbën and their country Arbanon.[46] In the ninth century Byzantium, in order to defend the Albanian provinces that were under threat from the Bulgarians and the Arabs in southern Italy, established two 'themes', Durrës (Durazzo) and Nikopoja. However, in 851 the Bulgarians captured Ohrid and then, between 852 and 927, Berat and Mallakastra. Finally, under Tsar Simeon (893–927), they captured all the 'theme' of Nikopoja and thirty castles in the 'theme' of Durrës, although the city itself did not surrender.

At the end of the tenth century the Bulgarian kingdom renewed its expansionism under Tsar Samuel, and Ohrid became its capital. In 989 he captured Durrës. By 1018, however, Byzantium had re-established its rule in Albania and its borderlands. Half a century later, Pope Gregory VII incited the Normans in Sicily to attack the Byzantine territories in this part of the Balkans. In 1096 the Crusaders, led by Bohemund son of Robert Guiscard, passed through Albania. There was another invasion in 1107 when the Normans landed in Vlorë although they could not capture Durrës and withdrew a year later. By 1190 the Albanian nobles had founded principalities. The first of these was centred at Krujë. These did not last long, although the Albanians revolted and stubbornly resisted the Byzantine empire of Nicea.

Michael II, the despot of Epirus[47], took advantage of the rebellions in order to renew his struggle against the Nicean emperor. He also made

45. Ducellier, *Variorum, op. cit.*, X, 'Des Albanais ont-ils envahi le Kosovo?', pp. 1–8.

46. Ducellier, *Variorum, ibid.*, IV, 'L'Arbanon et les Albanais au XIe siècle', pp. 353–68, where the geography and society during this period of the history of medieval Albania and Epirus are discussed.

47. On the alliance between the Albanians and Michael II, on all fronts, see D. Nicol, *The Despot of Epirus*, Oxford, 1970, esp. pp. 48–9.

an alliance with the king of Sicily, Manfred Hohenstaufen. He granted to the latter the hand of his daughter Helena, and gave her as her dowry Corfu, Vlorë, Kanina, Berat and other Albanian towns in his possession. Manfred's help, however was not sufficient to prevent the triumph of the emperor of Nicea, who conquered Constantinople in 1261, restored the Byzantine empire, and subsequently subdued the despot of Epirus.

Although Manfred Hohenstaufen retained his possessions in Albania for a short period, it was only with the help of German and Arab vassals that he did so. He was eventually defeated and killed in a battle fought with Charles of Anjou, who became king of Sicily. The latter seized Vlorë, Kanina, Berat and Durrës in 1272. On February 2, 1272, Charles in Naples proclaimed the 'kingdom of Arbëria' and declared himself its king. He granted fiefs to the Albanian nobles, although his intentions were unrealised when the chief office of state and the fiefs were filled by members of the Catholic French and Italian nobility. Suppression of popular resentment followed and the Albanian locals were thenceforth to support the Byzantines against the Anjous, who withdrew from Albania in 1286.

They returned, under Philip, in 1304. This time the Albanians, fearful of the growth of the Serbian state, were compelled to side with Philip who divided power between the Arbënesh nobles. Tulielm Blenishti was appointed as marshal of the Angevin armies in Albania, Tanush Thopia was made a count and recognised as feudal lord of the lands between the Mati and Shkumbi rivers. Andreas Muzaki was given the title of 'despot of Arbëria' and the lands between the Shkumbi and Semani. Despite this, Albania fell under Serbian domination for a time, especially during the reign of Stephen Dušan (1331–5). The fourteenth century, however, was a prosperous time for the Albanian cities, Durrës in particular. Great nobles lived in castles, like the Thopias in Krujë, the Muzakis in Berat and the Dukagjinas in Lezhë. Money was minted and banners depicted lordly emblems, the crowned lion of the Thopia, a two-headed eagle for the Muzakis and a white single-headed eagle for the Dukagjinas. In the fifteenth century the Kastriots identified themselves by the now famous two-headed eagle against a red background.[47]

It is with these Albanian principalities of the later medieval period that one finds the first reference to Turkish mercenaries and auxiliaries. This was especially true of the region around Krujë (Arbanon). In Turkish documents of the fifteenth century onwards that region was to be called

Sancak-i Arvanid or Sancak-i Arnavud.[48] The name was extended to the whole of Albania.

The Ottoman conquest in Albania was accomplished according to a well established pattern. First the Turks were mercenaries, serving Christians. Later, by involvement in local or wider conflicts, they subdued the Christian lords and reduced them to vassalage.[49] As early as 1291, Michael Palaeologos used Turkish mercenaries to halt the advance of the troops of Charles of Anjou into Albania. In 1337, Andronikos III Palaeologus subjugated the Albanian nomads, living between Kanina and Arta, with the help of a Turkish army. In the fourteenth century the annexation of Krujë was a grave loss to the Venetians in Durrës. It was governed by Helena Thopia and by her Venetian husband Marco Barbadico. In 1394 the couple gave it to the Turks. Its inhabitants were rewarded for this surrender. Yaqut Pasha and Khodja Firuz granted them exemption from various taxes.[50]

Balkan regions, the 'Chanson de Roland' and medieval Arabic folk epics

Towns and districts mentioned by Idrīsī in his *Book of Roger*, especially in Albania, Epirus, Macedonia and a part of Serbia, were a source for toponyms in the *Chanson de Roland*. They may also be alluded to in several of the major Arabic folk epics, those that were composed in Egypt and Syria, particularly in the *Sīras* of 'Antar b. Shaddād, Dhāt al-Himma and perhaps, Sayyid Baṭṭāl.[51] To Henri Grégoire we owe the pioneer detective-like assembling of the evidence which mainly reflects the historical landings of the Normans in Albania and the clashes

48. *Arnāut(i), Arn'ūd, Arnā'ūd*, etc. is still used in the Balkans, though most frequently among families of Albanian origin in Turkey, Syria, Lebanon and Egypt. I have heard village boys in the region near Struga and Kališta and Radolišta, west of Lake Ohrid, call themselves by this name.

49. Elizabeth A. Zachariadou, 'Marginalia on the History of Epirus and Albania (1380–1418)', *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, vol. 78, Vienna, 1988, p. 196.

50. *ibid.*, p. 206.

51. The Arab hero Sayyid Baṭṭāl is both Arabic and Turkish. In ancient Arabic versions (which are lost, or survive principally in *Dhāt al-Himma*) events are concerned with wars between Arabs and Byzantines. The account is transformed into that of a Gazi whose burial-place is allegedly in the Baktāshī sanctuary at Seyyit Battal Gazi in Asia Minor.

that followed against the Byzantines, assisted by their Oriental and non-Oriental mercenaries, between 1080 and 1085. The wars ended with the death of Bohemund and the sound defeat of his father, Robert Guiscard, the leader of the military expedition. The names of towns, harbours and lakes such as Butrint in Albania, where a major battle was fought, or 'Jericho' and Kanina in Epirus, or 'Malprose' Lake Prespa in Macedonia, have been convincingly identified; so too the identities of major heroic figures and political leaders such as Baligant, who is none other than (George) Palaeologos, the Byzantine general. Grégoire pairs him with a certain Balkūm (Baligant) in the Arabic romance of *'Antar.*[52]

The Balkan framework for the Pyrenean setting for the *Chanson de Roland* was an exciting discovery. The Orientals were not the allies of the Spanish Moors, nor Turks and others of the enemy that were fought by the Crusaders in Asia Minor: Twenty-seven were names of nations. The Esclavoz were the Slavs, Sorbres and Sorz the Serbians and Serbs, the Ermines and Ormalens were the Armenians, the Turs and Pers were the Turks and Persians, the Pinceneis were the Pechenegs, the Avers the Avars, the Hums and Hongres the Huns and Hungarians, the Astrimonies were the people from Strymon in Macedonia. All of them were represented in the Byzantine army. There were strong contingents of Pechenegs already in 1069 with Romanoes Diogenes' expedition against the Turks, and the presence of Pechenegs in Alexios' troops was resented by the Normans, who a few years later complained to the Pope that their adversary was employing Scythian barbarians. Armenians had always been numerous in the Byzantine army, and during the siege of Durrës, a mass of Serbs came under King Bodin to help the Basileus against the Normans. The linkage between Norman, Byzantine and Arab was explored in detail by Grégoire.[53]

Over and above this, Grégoire considered the impact of Guiscard's failed campaign in the Balkans as not only having influenced the *Chanson* but, in a not dissimilar way, as having furnished the names of individuals and, somewhat less, countries, peoples and events within Arabic popular romances of the same period. Although several are mentioned by him,

52. See H. Grégoire, 'La Chanson de l'an 1085 ou l'étymologie de Baligant et de Califerne', *Bulletin de la Classe des lettres de l'Académie Royale de Belgique*, XXV, 1939, pp. 211–73.

53. Grégoire's view was that although the *Chanson de Roland* had a Northern author, *circa* 1085, perhaps in order to exhort the Normans of Italy and of France to support the effort to regain Epirus, a *trouvère* was added to the *Chanson* proper, a lengthy episode full of Byzantine materials.

it is with the most famous of them, the *Sīrat 'Antar*, that he especially observed a connection:

I think that nothing can be found in the Antar Romance, which could not belong to the end of the XIth nor the beginning of the XIIth century. What is Antar's last exploit? He kills . . . Bohemond, and rescues Rome besieged by the latter . . . He does that as an ally of the Byzantine Emperor, as an ally of the King of Rome called Balkām. One remembers that the killing of Bohemond, the greatest enemy of both the Byzantines and the Moslems, was mentioned also in the Del-Hemma, where it is said to be the merit of Del-Hemma herself. It is an epic law that the supreme victory over the national enemy 'number' one must be kept in store for the greatest hero of the 'geste'. In the German epic, it is always the insuperable Dietrich von Berne or Theodoric of Verona who survives all other champions.

Antar, the Arab knight *par excellence*, saves Byzantium and Rome and kills the great Norman Bohemond. This is certainly a direct echo of the alliance of the Byzantine Empire with Moslem states and princes in their fight against the Normans. And if we had the slightest doubt about that, that doubt would be suppressed by the very names of the relatives of Bohemond; Mubert, Subert, Kubert. History is so vaguely known to philologists that even Heller has not seen the truth: 'Hier haben wir erst mit einer Gruppe von Namen auf -bert zu tun. Tatsächlich ist dies villeicht die häugigste Endung der altfranzösischen Namen (Aubert, Dagobert, Englebert . . .)', and he cites a dozen or more similar names, forgetting that Bohemond's father was Robert (Guiscard).

Antar's expedition as an ally of Byzantium is simply Alexios Comnenos' and Palaeologos' war against Robert and Bohemond: and this at once clears up the name of the King of Rome, or of the Romans, Balkām, who is Palaeologos himself, but under the French form of Baligan.

The Antar Romance thus affords us an unexpected confirmation of our identification of Palaeologos with Baligan in the *Chanson de Roland*. In the Syria of the Crusaders, evidently, the famous war of 1081–1085, celebrated by the French *trouvères*, inspired the Arab novelist, and we may conclude that the Antar Romance was completed exactly at the same period as the other epics aforementioned.[54]

However, the most recent part of this folk epic of interest to Grégoire, after detailed inspection, reveals the hand of a romancer of the Mamlūk age.[55] It was shaped, or retold, at least a century after the Balkan

54. H. Grégoire, 'The historical element in Western and Eastern Epics Digenis – Sayyid Battal-Dat-El-Hemma-Antar-Chanson de Roland' in *Autour de l'épopée byzantine*, London: Variorum Reprints, 1975, pp. 531–2.

55. There are references to Mamlūk weaponry and to technical terms that brings the 'Antar Romance into the same company as the typically Mamlūk *Sīras* of *al-Ẓāhir Baybars* and *Sayf b. Dhī Yazan*.

campaigns of Robert Guiscard and Bohemund. Furthermore, the geographical setting includes Spain where there is a reference to the talismanic idol (*ṣanam*) that once guided Norse ships near (Cadiz), and allusions to a major sea battle, fought with Mamlūk weaponry, in the eastern Mediterranean, to Rome and to Adriatic Italy, and to Sicily (where, in an adjoining section of the *Sīra*, a church at Najrān in Arabia has been merged with tales about the suspended remains of Aristotle in a church in Palermo or Cyprus stories that were reported by the Arab geographers).[56] Kūbart's name may have been inspired by that of Robert (Guiscard). Sir Jawān/Sinjāwan (Shëngjin?) could have been inspired by (Raymond de) St Gilles, a person found in the Turkish folk epic of Abū Muslim, Balkām (Baligant) by Palaeologos, and King al-Ṣāfāt (possibly Ṣāffāt 'archangels in ranks') might conceivably have some association with the name of the port of Suffada (rather than Safad) to the north of Durrës in Albania. Recorded as Sopot(on), and receiving mention in Idrīsī's *Book of Roger* (1192), it was a zone for commercial exchange between the Dukagjinas and the Thopias.

However, no such identifications can be made with the person of a certain 'King of the Islands', and of a large expanse of land on the northern coast of the Mediterranean extending to a distance of some forty days' journey. In the text he is called Laylamān, the son of Ṣarāyir, His name suggests a connection with the people, the Alamani — Grégoire indicates that the 'German' mercenaries of the Byzantines, the Micenes and Nimetzi, were sometimes also called Alamani. However, this would place them in the wrong camp, as between foe and ally in the events recounted in the *Sīra*.

In view of the identifiable borrowings from Arabic geographical and historical literature within the *Sīrat 'Antar*, it is possible that the juxtaposition of the names Laylamān/Līlamān and Ṣarāyir, together with the visit in state of the former to Heraclius, may have been inspired by Ṣāḥib al-Sarīr (the 'lord of the throne' or 'the couch', or 'the ruler of the Dagestani province of Sarīr' in the Caucasus), namely the 'king of the Ṣanārians', who was given permission by Heraclius to sit on a throne in the palace in Byzantium. Laylamān, with variants, could have been a deformation of the name of the Sarmatian Alans (al-Lān) who had penetrated as far as Dalmatia in the age of the wanderings of Balkan

56. See F. Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans, passim*, and his *Letters on Religion and Folklore*, London: Luzac, 1926, p. 91.

peoples. The Alans were deemed to be within the domains of the 'lord of the throne' or one of the provinces of Dagestan.

Still facing north, there is also another possibility (supported by the known commercial connections with that region, between Mamlūk Egypt and the Golden Horde) This is the region of Novgorod, Jūlmān or Gūlmān (Holmgard in the *sagas*), the trading state of Novgorod. Another possible explanation is the intrusion of a name not associated with Robert Guiscard's earlier campaign in the Balkans, but of a person that came to Arab ears somewhat later. Enrico Pescatore — Henry of Genoa, count of Malta — in association with the Genoese corsair Alamanno de Costa, count of Syracuse, became master of much of the Mediterranean. Alamanno was the principal figure in the conquest of Syracuse in 1204. Both were lauded by the Languedoc troubador Peire Vidal, whose adventurous life took him to Hungary and the Levant. Genoa figures notably in the *Sīrat Baybars*. In that same folk epic Maryam is described as a daughter of the King of Genoa. Maryam, or Māriya, is also the name of a wife of 'Antar in this particular section of the *Sīrat 'Antar*.[57]

An effort like this to link somehow the folk epic of *Roland* and *'Antar* is rarely convincing and is highly speculative; others may suggest alternatives. Its interest can only be marginal in postulating any conceivable direct influence on the Islamised Balkan peoples, whether before or after the Ottoman conquest at the end of the fourteenth century. Sounder

57. It is not intended to press such specific identifications or digress on the possible sources cited for the Arab romances. For example, Saint Gilles may have no Crusading connections and the name Sirjwān or Sanjwān (etc.) may be a simple borrowing from *The Story of Sarjīl ibn Sarjūn* (of Syria) who is referred to by Anwar G. Chejne, *Islam and the West, the Moriscos*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983, p. 105. Nevertheless, I would agree with Grégoire (and scholars before him) that there is a general atmosphere of the first Crusade present in the *Sīras* of 'Antar and Dhāt al-Himma in particular. To this may be added specific references to relevant geographical localities, including ports, in all likelihood in Italy, Sicily, Greece, Albania and Dalmatia.

There is the distinct possibility that the 'German' ruler in question is none other than the Hohenstaufen, the half-Oriental ruler of Sicily, Frederick II (1215–50). According to al-Dimashqī (d 727/1327): 'The King of Kings of the Germans (*malik mulūk al-Lamān*), named the "Inbirāṭūr", and called al-Inbirūr, has as his dwelling place the island of Sicily. In his kingdom there are fifteen lands.' It is likely that a copyist misread *al-Inbirūr* and changed it to Ibn Ṣarāyir.

58. Rade Božović, *Arapi u Usmenoj Narodnoj Pesmi na Srpskohravtskom jezičkom području*, Faculty of Philosophy, Belgrade University, 1977, pp. 223–4.

evidence for folk-copies influences has emerged from the research carried out, and the examples collected, by Dr Rade Božović, an Arabist in Belgrade University. His examples display shared themes and episodes that mark both Arabic and Serb-Croat folk epic. They are especially centred around the person of Marko, the major hero of the South Slavs.[58] In the verse that Božović has examined:

. . . . Arab is superseded by the Gypsy, because they too are black, by the Turks, as a result of a genetic extension of the function, and the Arnauts, because folk tradition held them to be of Arab origin and also because they were sometimes treated as national enemies. The explanation for Arabs appearing as black should be sought not only in the influence of myth but also in the oral Arab tradition of frequent black heroes (Antara, Abu Xaid, Hilali, Abdul Wahab in the folk romances on Antara, the Hilal tribe and Princess Zatul Himma), and in black being the heraldic and war colour of the Abbasides.[59]

What is also clear, is that the impact of the Arabs and of Islam in this literature most surely predates the ascendancy of the Turks. Pre-Ottoman Islam in the Balkans played at least some part:

The Arab appears very early in the epic tradition of Southern Slavs. He enters it already during the Byzantine-Arab wars in the frontier area between Byzantium and the Arab Caliphate. At that time (700–1000 AD) the Arab may very well have assumed the function of the ancient Slav Crnbog (Black God), and the Slav hero the function of Belbog (White God). However, as the Byzantine-Arab conflicts receded into the past, the character and function of the Arab began to take on mythical features. The structure of this character regresses, tending to return to its archetype, irrespective of the growing numbers of Southern Slavs adopting Christianity.

This is the situation in which Marko appears as a new factor in the collision. He assumes the function of the old Slav hero from the Byzantine-Arab frontier area. The arrival of the Turks marks the beginning of a revitalisation of the Arab's function. The myth fades and reality returns. Thus, with the Turks, the Arab enjoys a comeback in the epic poems of Southern Slavs, he will remain until after the new national enemy, the Turks, have finally established themselves.'

59. Božović, *op. cit.*, p. 224.

2

ORIENTAL INFLUENCES ON ISLAMIC AND NON-ISLAMIC LIFE AND LITERATURE IN BOSNIA, IN MACEDONIA AND AMONG THE ALBANIANS

'I travelled for a long time through the country of Rumelia, and saw many beautiful cities and was amazed by Allāh's blessing, but none amazed and thrilled me as that city of paradise – Skopje (Üsküp), through which the Vardar river flows.' (Dilger Zede, 17th century)

The Bogomil and Christian background

The focus of uninterrupted Balkan Islamic scholarship and literary activity lies in Bosnia and Hercegovina and certain predominantly Albanian towns and cities (Albania proper and Kosovo Pokrajina extending into Macedonia). However, one cannot overlook the special factors that have helped preserve the legacy in these specific countries. Elsewhere, more recent tragedies or movements of populations have distorted the picture and erased traces. There were once major centres also in Bulgaria and in what is now Greek Macedonia. These, likewise, played a prominent part in the Islamic life of the Balkans.[1]

Up to the fifteenth century, all these districts were Christian-Orthodox, Catholic and (if it be viewed as a Christian heresy of a dualistic kind) Bogomilist. The latter, which also may be seen as a distinct religion, did not in its doctrines actively pave the way for the triumph of Islam. Its dualistic beliefs could hardly do so, although its doctrines reflected an inherent tendency towards heterodoxy or towards electicism in the whole region. This cannot be ignored. The premise that the Muslims of Bosnia and Hercegovina are 'descendants of converted Bogomils' has long been seriously challenged. The causes for Islamisation, it is held, cannot be so simply assigned. The coast was for centuries exposed to the world of Islam, and it was but a question of time before

1. Machiel Kiel's *Studies on the Ottoman Architecture of the Balkans: A legacy in stone* (collected studies series CS326), Variorum, 1990, is a mine of information on the Islamic legacy in Bulgaria and Greece.

that religion was carried into the mountainous hinterland behind. John V. A. Fine remarks:

> Why did so many changes in religious confession occur in Bosnia and Hercegovina and not elsewhere in the Balkans (excluding Albania)? The reason I suggest is not hard to find and has nothing to do with the content of beliefs of the former heresy, even if such a view has frequently been advanced. The other Balkan states had one dominant form of Christianity. They had had and continued to preserve under the Turks fairly efficient and territorially organized church administration. Bosnia, unlike them had had competing faiths. And as a result of its religious history no faith in Bosnia was able to establish an efficient territorially based organization that could bind believers to its church – be it through belief or through a sense of community. Thus Bosnia's Christians, of whatever confession, had had little contact with any church, and few Bosnians were deeply attached to any religious community. In the 1450s and early 1460s many Bosnians had been forcibly brought to Catholicism. These converts certainly had not had time to become strong believing Catholics, they probably lacked interest in Catholicism, and many may have resented being forced to accept that faith. Thus many Bosnians were more or less between faiths – having renounced an earlier faith and not yet committed to the new one – with no deep belief in any.[2]

It is arguable that Islamic heterodoxy, or Ṣūfīsm at a popular level, may well have found a fertile ground in some regions where Balkan Paulicians had become established in the Byzantine age. Nevertheless, there is no convincing evidence that Bogomilism *per se*, 'moderate' in its dualism, as in Bosnia, or in its 'absolute' position, as typified by some churches in Bulgaria, made a crucial contribution to Islamisation.

True, there were some beliefs that were held among the Paulicians and the Bogomils, who were moderate in their dualism, that might have made the Islamic faith less of a leap into the unknown. Furthermore, in the more distant past, the Muslim Arabs in parts of Asia Minor had been sought as protectors against the spiritual authoritarianism of the Greeks. It was, after all, the Paulician 'adoptionist' view that it was God the Father, and not the Word of God, who had made Heaven and Earth and all that existed therein. Jesus, the Messiah, was a created man, not a creator; he was made and was not the Maker. He was born a man of the Virgin Mary. He was never viewed as pre-existant Deity at all, but only as the newly-created Ādam. The Trinity was nowhere used and, it seems, was rejected as unscriptural. However, such abstruse logic

2. John V.A. Fine, Jr, *The Bosnian Church: A New Interpretation*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1975, p. 386.

meant little to the rank and file of the peasant Bogomils. What mattered was local practice and simplified ritual, and here there were several Islamic parallels — the Bogomil church had neither priests nor magical sacraments. Images, pictures, holy crosses, incense and candles were considered, at best, irrelevant and, at worst, idolatrous. One would not have been surprised if, locally, a connection with an Islamic manner of thinking had not been made, and yet the hard evidence is nowhere evident. It was power, the presence or the lack of it, that seemed to have decided the issue within their isolated, persecuted or pressurised community.[3]

Any explanation of the origins of Bogomilism — be it one accepting Paulician influences or indigenous origins — reflects the unsettled state of religious values within Bulgaria at the time when Christianity was replacing the earlier pagan cults. Social change worked in favour of Islamisation. In their everyday life, the Bogomils found it hard to adapt themselves to a more advanced form of feudalism which was centred in powerful autonomous districts, and in which the materialistic money-commodity, as seen by them, must have represented a step towards an utter alienation of the actual physical world in which they lived, and their ideals, and the exclusively spiritual world of their divinity.[4]

None of the three creeds — Bogomil, Catholic and Orthodox — could, on its own, take upon itself the role of acting as the spiritual and cultural integrator of Bosnian society at that particular juncture. The feudal class — stimulated by the Ottoman administration when it came, and when it gave administrative opportunities to young and to unmarried yeomen through recruitment upon conversion to military service — was drawn to Islamisation. The Turks were well established in Bosnia after 1415. Nevertheless, the penetration of Islam was more radical and more far-reaching. The settlement of Islamised artisans to serve the Ottoman administration, the founding of entirely new towns on an Islamo-Oriental plan, the integration of many of the destroyed feudal class through the *tîmâr* system,[5] which was applied likewise among the

3. Moderate and absolute dualists and the differences between views are discussed by Bernard Hamilton in his 'Origins of the Dualist Church of Drugunthia', *Eastern Churches Review*, vol. V, no. 2, 1973, *op. cit.*

4. See John Fine's articles, *op. cit.*

5. *Timar* (Turkish 'a fief') is defined by Carleton S. Coon in *Caravan: The story of the Middle East*, London, 1952, p. 359, as 'a landed estate yielding less than 20,000 pieces of silver each year'. On the relevance of the system in Bosnia, see Nedim Filipović '*Ocaklik Timars*, in Bosnia and Hercegovina', *Prilozi* (English version), vol. 36, 1–358, Sarajevo, 1987, pp. 157–80.

Balkan peasantry, each and all, served to promote the acceptance of the Islamic faith and the adoption of its culture.

In fact, according to Balić,[6] Islam was not entirely unknown to Bosnians before the arrival of the Ottoman Turks. In the fourteenth century, and perhaps as long before as the tenth century, a following had become attached to the Hungarian Ismaelitak. Some were soldiers, or were financial advisers and merchants who were in the service of the Hungarian and Croatian kings. In the twelfth century, they were followed by the Islamised Turkish tribes of the Kalisians in Bosnia, Syrmium and Macva.[7] The oldest mosque, at Ustikolina, was allegedly built before the conquest of 1463.

Alexander Lopašić — in assessing the general considerations that, in his view, dominated the religious picture in the Balkans, and which account for conversion to Islam over a period — draws attention to the professional soldiers and to the *devshirme* levy of Christian children for training to fill the ranks of the Janissaries, or to occupy posts in the service of the court and the administration.[8] Here was a forced Islamisation; such too was the deportation of nomads from Asia together with a policy of their colonisation in parts of the Balkans. Less coercive, though in the event equally persuasive, were measures aimed at the conversion of miners in Bosnia and Serbia. However, culturally it was probably the converted local nobility who were the most important. Lopašić mentions the converted as including some members of the Palaeologue imperial family who owned large properties in Bulgaria during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

The Ottoman-Turkic or, to cite Antonia Zeljazkova, 'Muslim' colonisation within the Balkans was linked to a specific category of feudal landownership in the Ottoman empire in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; namely land *mülks* and *vakifs*. The central government, when making gifts of land in unconditional and inheritable ownership, depended on the economic interestedness of the *mülk-sahibs* to revive derelict land and restore economic life. To do so they drew on a constant

6. See Smail Balić, Cultural Achievements of Bosnian and Hercegovinan Muslims, in *Croatia: Land, People, Culture*, vol. II, pp. 302–3.

7. See Ivo Andrić *op. cit.*, pp. 13–15, together with references in Klaic, *Poviest Bosne do propasti kraljevstva*, Zagreb, 1982.

8. Dr Alexander Lopašić 'Islamisation of the Balkans: Some general considerations', in *Islam in the Balkans*, Edinburgh: Royal Scottish Museum, 1979, pp. 50–1. The whole subject is discussed by V. L. Ménage in his 'Some notes on the Devshirme', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, vol. XXIX, 1966, pp. 64–78.

flow of prisoner-slaves settled in large numbers on their estates. Such migrating groups were of mixed origin. Some were from nomadic Turkic tribes, while others, especially in Thrace and Macedonia, were poor or landless Anatolian peasants. A peculiar category was that of the warrior fraternities, attached to the religious orders, and closely linked to the craft and the trades in Anatolian towns. These *akh* accompanied detachments of the Ottoman army during its campaigns. Colonisation and settlement, and the *tîmâr* organisation, varied in character and depth in different parts of the Balkans, so that although the *tîmâr* system was only formally established in High Albania, as its consequence, that same region, thanks to the settlement elders who became part of the system, remained untouched by colonisation. Few colonists, for example, settled in Kosovo. That was a country of garrisons or administrators in urban communities. Here it was a later generation of Albanian immigrants, and their adoption of Islam, that was to transform it into a bastion of the faith.[9]

One document, translated in a recent corpus of Ottoman documents that has been published by the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences,[10] furnishes an example for Albania of the way that the *jizya/ćizje* tax was imposed in a fashion that both tempted conversion and at the same time undermined the conversion of what at that time had been an overwhelmingly Christian community.

[Document no. 11] The *Qāḍī* of Opar brings to the notice of the Porte that the inhabitants of the village of Kilidan, this latter under his dependence, protest against the attempts by the collector of tax *ćizyedar* to oblige them to pay the general tax. 'We are all of us converted to Islam in our village, save one who has remained a Christian' they said. 'Those who are tax-gatherers affirm, though, that from the moment we are listed in their inventories, we too, are beholden to pay it'. The *Qāḍī*, having gone in person in order to verify the situation in the village, had to acknowledge that, 'in fact, in the village, there is only one Christian. All the rest have embraced Islam.'

It is known from the literature that has a bearing upon this matter

9. On the role of the *akhis*, see Mehmed Fuad Köprülü, 'Les Origines de l'Empire Ottoman', *Etudes Orientales publiées par l'Institut français d'archéologie de Stamboul*, III, Paris, 1935, pp. 107–12.

10. *Sources Ottomanes sur les processes d'Islamisation aux Balkans (XVIe-XIXe s.)*, translation by A. Velkov, E. Radušev, E. Siljanove, M. Kaličin, N. Robev, S. Ivanova, edited by Maria Kalicin, A. Velokov, E. Radušev, Sofia: Editions de l'Académie Bulgare des Sciences, 1990, p. 100. See the valuable preface, pp. 23–42.

that, in order to avoid having to pay the tax and to put an end to a humiliating situation which deprived them of all rights, the Albanian population of entire regions declared themselves Muslims, while at the same time continuing to practise the Christian faith in secret. In 1650 the Christian population of the *Qāḍā' (kaza)* of Spat (Sopot) complained of the fact that among the 1,844 Christian households listed in the inventories of those who were to pay tax, 804 households had embraced Islam, so that the Christian contributors did not exceed 1,040. The tax-gatherer, however, continued to demand from all 1,844 households that they pay the tax, adding those who had remained Christians to pay the tax in equality with the households that had declared themselves Muslims. One is in the presence here of a widespread practice, to which written sources elsewhere bear witness, according to which the financial authorities, and especially the redeemers of the tax, imposed supplementary charges on the Christians and constrained them sometimes to declare themselves in their turn to be Muslim to avoid fiscal pressure. Whole villages declared themselves Muslim, while in reality they continued to observe Christian customs and, unknown to the authorities, to profess their Christian religion.

The English traveller M. Edith Durham, who passed through this same region at the close of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, noticed that the Albanian mountaineers there 'called themselves Konstantin in front of Christians, and Sülayman in front of Muslims'. They observed the fast, would receive communion, and be married following both Christian and Muslim rites. They would publicly frequent the mosques and, in secret, the churches. Certain villages would even have clandestine priests. When an inhabitant died there would be a funeral service through priests of the Greek church, and subsequently burial in a Muslim cemetery. This simulated conversion to Islam was transformed into a mode of existence that was convenient for villages and even entire districts. They had to pass, in the eyes of the Muslim authorities, the test of being Muslims. To be exempt from the poll-tax, they had to pay less heavy taxes and escape the discrimination that weighed upon the subject Christians. At the same time, these men continued for centuries to keep their Christian faith. 'It was natural that at the first favourable opportunity these threw off their Muslim cloak, in order to return openly to the bosom of the Christian church.'[11]

11. M. Edith Durham's books, *High Albania*, London, 1909, and *The burden of the*

Apart from Bosnia, Albania at the time of its conquest was a feudal society. It had been in part subject to the Nemanjić state and then to the Dušans in Serbia. It was in part a land in a state of transition from family patrimonies. Unlike Bosnia, the Albanians were a coherent ethnic unity although their feudal families did not organise themselves into an independent Albanian state. Villages were built around churches and monasteries, and a rigorous and militant resistance to Islamisation was to last up to and beyond the death of Skanderbeg in 1468.

Islam and the Balkan city

Viewing Yugoslavia as a whole, Hasan Kaleši[12] concluded that, with the exception of parts of Bosnia and Kosovo, Islamisation and conversion to the faith from the fifteenth century onwards took place faster in the towns than in the villages. In 1485 Peć had thirty-three Muslim houses and 104 Christian. Skopje had 623 Muslim as opposed to 263 Christian. Prizren had four large Muslim districts and nine small Christian ones. Prishtinë, a mere village some forty-seven years before the battle of Kosovo in 1389, had become a Muslim town by the fifteenth century. Strategic urban growth and development, Oriental in type, took place in Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and also Greek Macedonia in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[13] Novi Pazar, on the border of Kosovo, was founded by 'Īsā Beg, a governor of Bosnia, under Mehmed the Conqueror. Some evidence of its Islamic character may be observed through its men of letters, particularly in the works of its poets. This is noticeable elsewhere in more peripheral areas. Both Muḥammad Caqi 'Arshī (d. 1570) and Aḥmad Walī (d. 1598) of Novi Pazar were praised for their love poetry (*ghazal*). Ni'mati (d. 1603) was a bohemian poet who is especially associated with Macedonia.[14] Notably cultured and sensitive was the poet Sulaymān 'Ayānī of Bitolj

Balkans, London, 1905, have numerous examples of Christian and Muslim practice among the Albanians. Pages 203–7 of the latter work discuss the relationship between the two faiths in some detail.

12. See the paper 'Oriental culture in Yugoslav countries from the 15th Century till the End of the 17th Century' in *Ottoman Rule in Middle Europe and Balkan [sic] in the 16th and 17th Centuries*, Prague: Oriental Institute, 1978, pp. 359–64.

13. *op. cit.*, 1978, pp. 359–60.

14. Novi Pazar was a centre for poets. See the article devoted to the town in the *Encyclopedia of Islam* (new edn).

(Monastir), who died in 1603. This town of Bitolj in Yugoslav Macedonia has offered early evidence of proficiency in Arabic and in the endowment of its religious sanctuaries. Hasan Kaleši informs us:

Until several years ago there existed in Bitolj (Monastir) a mosque called 'Eski čami' (the old mosque). It was the oldest mosque in our regions and one of the oldest in the Balkans. Its founder was Sungur Bey, called Čauš-Bey, one of the commanders of Sultan Murat II. It seems that Čauš came from the region of Bitolj and that he was taken to Istanbul by means of *devshirme*.[15] Coming back from a campaign against Skanderbey in Albania, he stopped in Bitolj and he settled there. He built there the mentioned mosque and then a *medresa* and a *zavija*, remnants of which can still be seen in Bitolj. Čauš-Bey also built a *mesdžid* in Jedren and another one in Vidin. For maintenance of these institutions he founded a foundation consisting of 25 shops, one *han* (inn), two pieces of land, 7 mills, 1 vineyard in Bitolj and another 11 shops and 17 rooms in Jedren and a mill at Vidin.

Čauš-bey made his *vakfija* legal between the 9th and 19th April 1435. This *vakufnama* written in Arabic, represents, in fact, the oldest Arabic or Turkish document discovered so far in Yugoslavia.[16]

Earlier in this same article, to underline the historical significance of this Arabic document, Hasan Kaleši points out:

The oldest inscription of dating from 842 (24.VI.1438) and the old document, the *vakfiye* of Aladža mosque in Skopje, dating from 848 (20.IV.1444), were the oldest items to have been published until now in Yugoslavia. It is now clear that Čauš Beg's *vakifiye*, from an even earlier date, is the oldest Arabic-Turkish document which has so far come to light.[17]

John Thirkell, in his study of 'Islamisation in Macedonia as a social process',[18] adds his own comment to the pioneering study of the Serbian scholar Hadži-Vasiljević, pointing out that during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the region of Macedonia with its centre in Skopje (and especially certain of its cities) formed a military 'march' from which the conversion of both Serbia and Bosnia was initiated. The area was a head-

15. See Dr Alexander Lopašić, *Islam in the Balkans*, Edinburgh, 1979, pp. 50–1.

16. *Prilozi*, vol. 36, 1–358 (English edn), Sarajevo, 1987, 'The oldest Vekuf Charter in Yugoslavia', p. 250.

17. *ibid.*, p. 233.

18. John Thirkell, 'Islamisation in Macedonia as a social process', in *Islam in the Balkans*, Edinburgh: Royal Scottish Museum, pp. 23–48, including an extensive quotation of recent articles that treat with the Ottoman archive material, especially those published by historians connected with the Institute of National History in Skopje.

quarters for Islamisation and at the same time it furnished a bastion for Islam in its efforts to establish itself in other Balkan regions. This effort particularly characterised certain Ottoman governors, among them Jigit Beg (1392–1414), Isḥāq Beg (1414–44) and 'Īsā Beg Isaković (1444–63). By 1450 a substantial majority of the dwellers in Skopje and Bitolj were Muslim and their numbers were to increase steadily over the years. In Skopje trade played a key part in the change. The presence of *hans* and caravanserais among the Muslim monuments indicates this; in the Čaršija the fifteenth-century Sulihan and the sixteenth-century Kuršumli Han are but two examples. The Islamic character of Skopje is shown by the seventy-one *Imāms* that it possessed, its fifty-eight *muezzins* and its 377 artisans, a great many of whom were converts to Islam.

A not dissimilar picture typified Bitolj. This is reflected in its Islamic art and architecture in that age. Commenting on mosque architecture in Bitolj, Machiel Kiel has observed:[19]

> It is clear from a number of Ottoman census documents that the greater part of the Moslem population of Bitola consisted of local converts, especially newcomers from the villages, who became submerged in the culture of Islam. The greater part of the Moslem population of the surroundings of Bitola still speaks its local Macedonian-Slav dialect. It appears to us that the Bitola Muslims kept something of their pre-Islamic attitude towards art. The form in which Ottoman art came to their environment, an early 15th century form, was kept and cherished by them long after the appearance of new forms because their form and manner was the 'real' one.

Bitolj (Bitola/Monastir) was to continue to be a centre for Islamic studies till well into the nineteenth century. The town possessed at least four dervish *tekkes*.[20] Two belonged to the *Rifā'iyya* – one of these, the Shaykh Naẓmī Efendi *tekke*, containing the tombs of its founder (1859–60) and of Shaykh Mehmed of Aleppo; one belonged to the *Naqshabandiyya* and contained the tomb of Ḥasan Bābā whose adventures and miracles allegedly took him to Kosovo, Skopje, Turkey and Egypt; and lastly there was a Baktāshī *tekke* containing the tomb of Ḥusayn Bābā (d. 1872–3).[21]

A study of state endowments (waqf/'waqufa') by Adem Handžić

19. 'Some Reflections on the Origins of Provincial Tendencies in the Ottoman Architecture of the Balkans', *Islam in the Balkans*, Edinburgh, *op. cit.*, pp. 22–3.

20. On these *tekkes* see *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans, op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 356–7, 524 and *passim*.

21. *ibid.*, pp. 356–7, and Džemal Ćehajić, *Derviški Redovi, op cit.*, p. 184.

(published in *Prilozi*, XXV, 1975, by the Oriental Institute in Sarajevo, 1977, pp. 134–69) reveals that state policy in the founding of towns in Bosnia was of primary importance. Many towns such as Sarajevo, Zvornik, Foča, Višegrad, Srebrenica, Travnik, Doboj, Bijeljina and Gradiska developed after the building of mosques during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. These mosques were called 'Ṣulṭān mosques', built by the order of the Ṣulṭān with state funds. They were well maintained and their *imāms* were paid from state funds. A different sort of town was that founded by prominent personalities or by high officials of state whose endowments consisted in building mosques and Qur'ānic schools. Such foundations by private individuals usually took place after the order of the state authorities. One such town, mentioned by Adem Handžić in his study, founded by the order of the central government in the second half of the sixteenth century, is Kasaba Glasinać, between Sarajevo and Višegrad, in the Romanija mountain range. Its founder Ḥājj Ibrāhīm Āgā, a local official, endowed a number of buildings. There were also such '*waquf*' foundations beyond the borders of Bosnia itself. The Sanjaq Beg from Klis, Farhād Beg Sokolović (later Beylerbeg of Bosnia) founded Kasaba Hrvatci, between Sinj and Knin north of Split, and Kasaba Zemunik east of Zadar. Zaim Mehmed Bey of Stolac (in Hercegovina) founded Kasaba Cesta. The names of some of these towns were later changed.

Many of the principal cities in Bosnia and Hercegovina and the Albanian regions owe their monuments and foundations to noted governors. Thus Višegrad owes its subsequent glory to Mehmed Pasha Sokolović, who built a caravanserai and its famous bridge in 1571. Yet earlier (here there is a comparison with Bitolj) Mostar was founded in 1452, together with Jaju and Bihać. The most famous city of all, Bosnia's capital Sarajevo, which had 50,000 inhabitants by the seventeenth century, owes many of its most precious historical monuments to 'Īsā Beg (who was there before 1462) and to Ghāzī Husrev Beg.[22]

'Īsā Beg is an almost legendary figure. His activities and foundations serve to illustrate the two phases of the development of the Oriental settlements in Bosnia and the Balkans in general. An early period which has been described as 'the dervish period', was followed by one that reflected later Ottoman state organisation. Aspects of the first phase are given some prominence in Bosnian folk literature in which the oral

22. Much of the Sarajevo tradition is to be read in Vlajko Palavestra, *Legends of Old Sarajevo* (translated by Mario Susko and William Tribe), Sarajevo, 1987.

tradition of its native populace is coloured, reshaped and retold in the manner of Oriental fable and romance. Such stories as the Old Castle, the accursed Jarina, buried treasure without price, milk pouring down like snow from the mountains and the phenomenon of a peripatetic minaret indicate an earlier rather than a later date. Vlajko Palavestra recounts a legend that brings together the dervish and the governor, 'Īsā Beg:

In the western part of the old city of Sarajevo there is a mosque which is popularly attributed to a certain sheik of the Maghreb. When Isa Beg came to Sarajevo he was accompanied by a dervish sheik from the western lands, from the Maghreb, who built a mosque on this spot.

It is said that when Eugene burned Sarajevo, his soldiers captured a woman in the Vinograd *mahala* (quarter) and took her as far as Buda, where they put her into service. The woman was a good servant and pleased her masters, but they never allowed her to enter a certain building in their courtyard. Once, when none of her masters was present, she found the keys and opened the forbidden door. She found herself looking at a *kubura*, a wooden casket, above a *mezar* (grave). She fell onto the casket and fainted. Then an old man appeared with an *ahmedija* (a thin cloth) wrapped around his cap and asked her who she was and where she was from. The woman explained to him everything that had happened to her, and that she was a native of Sarajevo. The old man asked her if she knew where in Sarajevo the Maghreb mosque was situated. She said that she knew, and then he asked 'And would you like to be there now?' The woman nodded. The old man said to her 'Stand on my foot for a moment and close your eyes!' She did as she was told and when she opened her eyes again she was indeed in Sarajevo, right outside the Maghreb mosque! It is said that from this time onwards the woman went every Friday without fail to this mosque. She frequented it in order that her wishes might be fulfilled, and she prayed for the soul of the sheik of the Magreb.

The diverse mixture of East and West, culturally and geographically, is not surprising when one recalls Evliya Çelebi's description of this city as an emporium for wares from India, Arabia, Persia, Poland and Czechoslovakia. To 'Īsā Sarajevo owes its Serai, its Emperor mosque (*Careva džamija*), its public bath, its hippodrome and its *kolobara* caravanserai. Splendid works such as these were to be continued by successors, above all by Ghāzī Husrev Beg (1521–41) who laid out its streets of crafts and trades (*Čaršija*), its *madrasa* for higher education (the *vakufnama* dates from 1537) and its great mosque (1530) within the precincts of which he lies buried. It is not to be wondered at that a folksong in the city has preserved the memory of these precious endowments:

I built the *medresa* (*madrasa*) and *imaret*
I built the clock-tower [*sahatkula*] by it a mosque
I built Tašlihan and the cloth market [*bezistan*]
I built three bridges in Sarajevo
I turned a village into the town of Saraj'vo.[23]

Smaller towns of lesser fame became centres of cultural and literary activity. One such is Titovo Uziče in Western Serbia. It was occupied by the Ottomans in 1463, in 1476 it had four registered Muslim families and a century later 568. By 1772 this number had not changed appreciably, though by then Uziče had become a substantial town, the second largest in Serbia. Its Muslim population was predominantly of South Slav origin. The town had sixteen principal congregational mosques and many lesser places of worship, including *tekkes* of the Ṣūfī orders. A number of scholars and poets in both Turkish and Arabic originated from this town and left noted works on jurisprudence, Prophetic tradition, Ṣūfīsm and legal rulings, and poetic compositions to posterity.

Mosque, tekke and library

It is within the mosques, the *tekkes* of the dervish orders and the *madrasas* (to which may be added the libraries) in the towns of Bosnia, Hercegovina and the Albanian regions that the works of the scholars were written, memorised, studied, copied or preserved. The largest number of mosques were built in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, although fine examples were built later. The oldest mosque is the *džamije (xhamië)* in Prishtinë, built by Bāyazīd I and commemorating his victory in the battle of Kosovo. It is now called Carska *džamije*. Skopje possesses the Aladja *džamije* of Isḥāq Beg (1438) and the mosque of Muṣṭafā Pasha (1492). The Ghāzī Husrev Beg mosque in Sarajevo, built in 1530, was among the finest. Later mosques built in the sixteenth century include the Altun-alem *džamije* in Novi Pazar (1550) and one which, till its destruction in May 1993, was among the finest of all, the Banja Luka mosque, the Farhād Pasha, likewise from the sixteenth century (1579).

A number of the dervish *tekkes* of size and fame were founded around 1600, although the Husrev Beg Hanikeh in Sarajevo was built earlier. Noteworthy examples are the Sadi *tekiye* in Djakovica (1600), the Halvetiya *tekiye* in Ohrid (1600) and the *tekiye* in Prizren. Among the

23. Quoted in Džemal Celic, Zdravko Čavarkāpa, *Sarajevo and its surroundings: Pocket Guide for Tourists*, no. 17, 6th edn, Zagreb, 1988, p. 11.

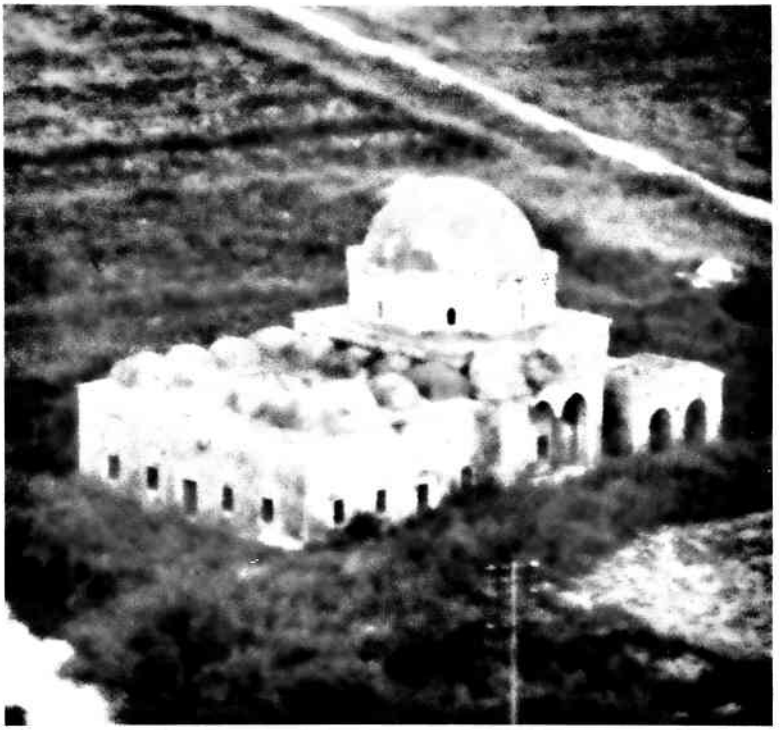


Plate 1. The 18th-century Leaden Mosque (*Xhamië e Plumbit*) on the site of the Church of St Mark, sited beneath the fortress of Rozafat at Shkodër, Albania. The multi-domed hall for prayer is a peculiar feature. Old prints (e.g. one in Edward Lear's *Journals of a Landscape Painter in Albania, etc.*, 1851) show a graceful minaret, since vanished.

finest of the later ones is the *tekke* of Sersem Ali Baba in Tetova (Kalkandelen), built in the eighteenth century.[24]

Apart from mosques and *tekkes*, learning and scholarly activities were centred in the *mektebs* and *madrasas*. Here calligraphy in Oriental languages features significantly as part of the study of Arabic grammar and syntax, the handmaid of Qur'ānic studies, theological debate (*uṣūl al-ḥadīth*), rhetoric, stylistics and geometry. These centres of learning were at first part of the mosque. Later, large and small towns and

24. On Kalkandelen (Harabti Baba *tekke* Tetova) see Max Choublier, 'Les Bektachis et la Roumélie', *Revue des Etudes Islamiques*, 1, 1907, pp. 427–53.

some villages were endowed with *mektebs*. An early example is that of Sinānuddīn Çelebi in Ohrid (1491), and at Prizren, in Kosovo, a *mekteb* was built by the poet Sūsī Çelebi (1513), who taught there till his death.

The *madrasas* were to be centred in major cities, foremost among them the Husrev Beg *madrasa* in Sarajevo and the Mehmed Pasha *madrasa* in Belgrade.[25] Other foundations were those of Sinānuddīn Yūsuf Çelebi (1434) and Ishak Çelebi (1508) in Bitolj and those of Ishak Beg (1465) and his son 'Īsā Beg (1469) in Skopje.

Unlike Bosnia and Hercegovina, and indeed the adjacent countries (in part Albanian) of Kosovo and Macedonia, Albania itself offered a modest selection of architectural monuments of an Islamic nature from Ottoman times. As Ettore Rossi explained in 1941 (there has been some depletion since), it was Shkodër which offered an example dating from the mid-fifteenth century in the Ṣulṭān's mosque *xhamië Hunqarit*) of 1478–9, also the mosque of the Arsenal (*xhamië mbretit*), of 1637–8, and the multi-domed 'lead mosque' (*xhamië e plumbit*), first built in 1773–4 (Plate 1).[26] In Elbasan, the Royal Mosque (*xhamije mbretit*) and the mosque of Ḥasan Bālī, as well as a number of others, were built or restored in 1608–9. At Krujë (Āq Ḥiṣār), the mosque of Murād Bey was first built in 1533–4 and, like so many of the others, heavily restored in the nineteenth century. At Korça, the still surviving mosque of Imrahor Ilyās Bey was possibly first built in 1495–6 (Plate 2) and at Berat, one of the great cultural centres of Albania, the mosque (later a museum) was constructed by Bāyazīd between 1481 and 1512 (Plate 3). All these, and other minor structures at Vlorë and Gjirokastër, were much rebuilt in the nineteenth century. For sheer beauty of design the mosque of Edhem Bey in Tirana, finished in 1820–1, is in many ways pre-eminent among all Albania's mosques, although the oldest mosque in Tiranë, *Xhamië e vjetre*, was built by the city's founder, Sulaymān Pasha, in 1651–2. Together with the adjacent tomb (*türbe*), it was restored in 1843–4.[27]

25. On the mosques and *madrasas* of Belgrade, see Muḥammad Mūfākū, *Tārīkh Balghrād al-Islāmiyya*, Kuwayt, 1407/1987, pp. 101–22. *Madrasas* are discussed on pp. 31–2. For an exceedingly useful short guide to academic study in Sarajevo, see Mehmet Mujezinović and Mahmud Trajici, *The Ghazi Khusraw Beg Library, Sarajevo*, Sarajevo, with examples of calligraphy and a glossary.

26. Ettore Rossi, 'Tracce del Dominio Turco in Albania', *Die Welt des Islams*, special issue, 1941, pp. 109–18. This is an excellent article, brief yet rich in content.

27. The mosque is described by A. Degrand, *Souvenirs de la Haute-Albanie*, Paris, 1901, pp. 184–5, as one of those distinguished for its ornamentation and painting: 'Aucune des villes que j'ai vues en Albanie se présente un caractère aussi intéressant.' The mosque has now been restored.

The libraries of Islamic books in Yugoslavia were founded in the fifteenth century. Among the earliest were those situated in the southern and the south-eastern part of the country, adjacent to the Albanian regions, in Macedonia and parts of Kosovo. One that housed Oriental books was founded in Bitolj in 1430, and another in Skopje in 1443. In the following two centuries a number of libraries, whether endowed as *vaqfiya* or in wholly private collections, were founded in all the major towns of Bosnia, Hercegovina and Serbia and several of the minor ones. Centres of scholastic learning and endeavour were also located there.

According to Kasim Dobraca,

> The libraries grew and expanded mainly through the acquisition of books published in the Islamic world at large. The Yugoslav Moslems maintained throughout the centuries very close ties with the Islamic world. Many of them often visited or studied in the famous cultural centres, such as Istanbul, Cairo, Bagdad, Damascus, Mecca and Medina; others, again, stayed for long periods in the Near East and North Africa, either as merchants or pilgrims or Government officials, often sending books as presents to their fellow-compatriots, or acquiring them for their own use at home and, eventually, making over most of them to local libraries.[28]

In a number of the towns there were to be found bookbinders (*mudžellits*) or guilds of these artisans. Two streets in the oldest parts of Sarajevo are named after them.

Individuals are remembered by the libraries they founded or expanded. In Foča-on-Drina, one of its large libraries was founded about 1550, attached to the *madrasa* of Hasan Nažīr. The second, the Memishahbey library, was founded around 1575. Among the most famous from this period was that founded by Karadjož-Beg in Mostar in 1570, and which was later to house books from other collections in the city. Most renowned of all is the Ghāzī Husrev-Beg library in Sarajevo. According to Kasim Dobrača:

> In his directions to the Waqf with reference to the building of his medres-school, Husrav-bey wrote: 'The unexpected balance of building costs shall be spent on good books to be used in the medres-school referred to, so that every and each reader may derive benefit from them and transcribe them for the purposes of study.' It was thus that the foundations of the library were laid.

28. *Catalogue of the Arabic, Turkish and Persian Manuscripts, The Ghazi Husrav-Bey Library in Sarajevo*, Sarajevo, 1963, vol. 1, pp. xx–xxii.

Arabic and Persian scholarship

The fruit of the education that was implanted may be judged from the wealth of religious and secular literature that was to be produced by the learned in Bosnia and Hercegovina and the Albanian regions. The subject-matter of this literature was mainly determined by this thorough grounding in Islamic subjects. Balić remarks:

> The Bosnian-Hercegovinian Muslims were interested in the Arabic language chiefly for religious reasons. They aimed to teach every child at least to read and write vocalized Arabic texts, so that they could read the Ḳur'ān on their own, although this reading, more often than not, was purely mechanical. However, knowledge of this alphabet proved most useful, because not only were Arabic, Turkish and Persian written in Arabic characters, but their native Croatian was as well.
>
> The primacy of the religious interest helped considerably to determine the type of literature produced in Arabic. The prominent subjects were religion, pedagogy, and mysticism, followed by the history of Islam and Arabic philology.

The Bosnian and Hercegovinian scholars (many of whom, and a substantial number of their works, are now known[29]) wrote the majority of their compositions in Turkish. Their achievement in Arabic and Persian is in its way equally impressive. Among the earliest of these scholars was Mawlā 'Abd al-Karīm (d. 1471). He wrote works on Islamic law and was a glossographer of the major Qur'ān commentary by Sayyid Sharīf. 'Alī Dede al-Busnawī was one of the finest commentators on Ḥāfiẓ, Sa'dī and Rūmī; he was one of the leading scholars who was both a historian and a dervish; he died in 1598 during the seige of Szigetvar in Hungary. The strong influence he received from al-Suyūṭī (1445–1505) is manifested on the level of entertainment by his 'Lecture upon first events and the evening entertainment discourse on last things'

29. In order to obtain full details the following studies (among those others in the bibliography which have been listed) have been recommended: Safvetbeg Bašagić, *Bošnjaci i Hercegovci u islamskoj književnosti. Glasnik Zemaljskog museja*, 24 (1912), pp. 1–87 and 295–395; Safvetbeg Bašagić, *Znameniti Hrvati, Bošnjaci i Heregovci u turskoj carevini*, Zagreb, 1931; Mehmed Handžić, *Književni rad bosansko hercegovaskih muslima*. Sarajevo, 1933; Hazim Šabanović, *Književnost Muslimana Bih na orijentalnim jezicima*. Bibliogafija, Sarajevo 1973; Alexandre Popović, 'La Littérature ottomane des musulmans yougoslaves. Essai de bibliographie raisonné', *Journal Asiatique*, 259 (1971), 5/4, pp. 309–76; Smail Balić, *Kultura Bošnjaka, Muslimanska komponenta*, Vienna, 1973; Smail Balić, 'Sudslawen als Mitgestalter der Kultur des Orients', *Der Donau-Raum*, 20, parts 1–2, Vienna, 1975, pp. 23–39.

(*Muḥāḍarat al-awā'il wa-musāmarat al-awākhir*), a work of anecdotes about the kings and learned men of the Islamic Orient. However, two of his other works, 'The unravelling of the symbols and the discovery of the hidden treasure' (*Ḥall al-rumūz wa-kashf al-kunūz*) and 'Lights of the Eastern lands' (*Anwār al-mashāriq*) are both devoted to mystical subjects, the former being concerned with a view of Qur'ānic philosophy. Mysticism also figures prominently in the writings of 'Abdallāh 'Abdī b. Muḥammad al-Busnawī, the head of a mosque of Bayramī dervishes who died in Konya in 1644. Of special note is his commentary on 'The bezels of wisdom' (*Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*) by Muḥyī'l-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī, the classic work of this greatest gnostic of al-Andalus.

One of the famous scholars and builders of religious monuments in Bosnia was Ḥasan Kāfī b. Ṭurkhān al-Āqḥiṣārī (born 1544/7) from Prusak. He ranks high among Ottoman authors and was a teacher and a judge in Prusak where he died in 1616. His treatise — also his masterpiece — on the policy of the ideal or most effective ruler, 'The bases of wise maxims in regard to the systematic ordering of the world' (*Uṣūl al-ḥikam fī niẓām al-'ālam*), was translated from Turkish into a number of European languages and into Arabic. Other works of his are concerned with metaphysics, philosophy, dogmatics, religious observance and prayer, and jurisprudence. Hazim Šabanović[30] regards him as the major literary and intellectual figure in Bosnia in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century. Between 1600 and 1607, he wrote several outstanding works, biographical and jurisprudential, and contributed over seventeen important works and abridged compositions to Bosnian literature in Oriental languages.

Hardly less prolific was the outstanding scholar of Mostar, Muṣṭafā b. Yūsuf b. Murād Ejubić/Ejubović al-Mūstārī (known as Shaykh Jujo/Yūyū), who was born in 1651 and died in 1707. He has been called the 'most prolific' writer in Oriental languages in Bosnia and Hercegovina. His pupil and relation by marriage, Ibrāhīm b. Hadži Ismā'īl al-Mūstārī (1678–1726), himself a scholar of no mean achievement,[31] described him as 'scholar of the time and professor of the era'

30. Hazim Šabanović, Hasan Kāfī Pruščak (Ḥasan Kāfī b. Ṭurhān b. Dāwūd b. Ya'qūb al-Zībī al-Āqḥiṣārī al-Bosnawī, in *Prilozi*, XIV–XV, Sarajevo, 1969 (German résumé, pp. 29–31).

31. See Omer Mušić, 'Ibrahim Opijač Mostarac (Ibrahim b. Hadži Ismail El Mostari)', in *Prilozi*, SV, X–XI, Sarajevo, 1961, pp. 31–53. These are extracts from his Arabic writings.

(*'allāmat al-zamān wa-'ustādh al-awān*). Portraying his attainments in his essay on the pious, even miraculous deeds and feats of his master, entitled *Risāla fī manāqib al-shaykh Muṣṭafā b. Yūsuf al-Mūstarī*, a number of its folios are devoted to the piety, humility and devotion to scholarship of this profuse and assiduous man of letters who, at his death, had composed over sixty works, many of them commentaries and glosses on medieval Oriental scholars. His works include such subjects as dogmatics, logic, stylistics, rhetoric, philology, astronomy, geometry and Islamic law and philosophy. Foremost among these compositions were his gloss *Miftāḥ al-ḥusūl li-mir'āt al-uṣūl fī sharḥ mirqāt al-wuṣūl*, a commentary on Muḥammad b. Farāmurz b. 'Alī Mullā Khusraw al-Tarasūsī (d. 1480), begun during his stay in Istanbul in 1691; his commentary on al-Samarqandī (d. 1483), *Sharḥ 'alā'-l-risāla al-Samarqandiyya fi'l-ādāb*; his gloss on al-Taftāzānī (d. 1390) in Logic, *Sharḥ al-tahdhīb 'alā'l-manṭiq wa'l-kalām*; a commentary on the *Kitāb al-Unmūdhaj* by al-Zamakhsharī (d. 1144) and his commentary on logic, *Sharḥ al-jadīd 'alā l-Shamsiyya fī'l-manṭiq* by Najm al-Dīn 'Alī al-Qazwīnī (d. 1276). Interesting likewise is his commentary on the Arabic recension of the Isagoge of Porphyrius undertaken by Athīr al-Dīn al-Abharī (d 1265). In all, twenty-nine works in Arabic are attributed to Shaykh Jujo.[32]

Among the numerous Bosnian and Hercegovinan poets in Arabic, Persian and Turkish was 'Alā'al-Dīn 'Alī b. 'Abdallāh al-Busnawī Thābit of Uziče (d. 1712), who is credited by E. J. W. Gibb with being the first to introduce a spirit of humour into Ottoman Turkish poetry.[33] Great artistry is shown in his descriptions of the seasons and nature and of historical events. His *Mi'rājiyya*, the ascent to heaven of the Prophet, is full of rich colour and pageantry.[34] Gibb, its translator, wrote:

> Born in what the biographers call 'the town of Uzicha in Bosnia, Sábit, whose personal name was 'Alá-ud-Dín began his studies under a certain Khalíl Efendi who had a reputation for learning in those parts. In due time he made his way

32. On details regarding the works of Shaykh Muṣṭafā b. Yūsuf al-Mūstārī Ayyūbī Zāde (Ejubović), who died in 1707, see Smail Balić's article on the cultural achievements of Bosnia and the Hercogovinian Muslims in *Croatia: Land, People and Culture*, vol. II, *op. cit.*, p. 345.

33. Smail Balić, *ibid.*, p. 348, and E.J.W. Gibb, A *History of Ottoman Poetry*, ed. E.G. Browne, London, 1900–8, vol. IV, p. 16.

34. Smail Balić, *ibid.*, p. 349, and Gibb, *ibid.*, vol. VI, pp. 234–5.

to Constantinople, where he continued his studies, until, having passed through the several classes of the muderrisate and served as judge-substitute at Rodosto, he entered the second or devriyye order of the magistracy and was appointed molla of Bosna-Seráy, Qonya, and Diyár-Bekr successfully. He received the mollaship of the last-named city in 1119 (1707–8), but before his death, which occurred in 1124 (1712–13), he had retired from public life. The only personal note that I find recorded of Sábit is that he was afflicted with a stutter or stammer in his speech which made him say on occasions 'I cannot speak, but thank God my pen can speak a little; were it too unable to speak, I should split.'

Early Islamic poets in Albania

The impact of Arabic, Persian and Ottoman literature on Albania and the Albanians has been explored in considerable depth at the popular level as well as that of *belles lettres*. Some of the most recent studies have been published within Albania, others outside (in Kosovo especially) and in the West. Albanian compositions in Arabic script, preserved in manuscript, have been consulted and discussed at conferences and in published work. The writings of the late Hasan Kaleši are among the most important.[35] In his survey entitled 'Orientalische Einflüsse in den albanischen Volkserzählungen'[36] few elements of popular theme, story, folktale and vernacular verse, coloured by Oriental borrowings, are omitted. A more recent study by Muḥammad Mūfākū of popular tales among the Albanians and their Oriental inspiration, published in the Syrian journal *al-Ma'rifa*,[37] draws attention especially to the Arabic sources for their themes and compositional techniques.

It was in the fifteenth century that the first attempt was made to write in the Albanian language. The most ancient text is the Baptismal Formula of 1462, written by Archbishop Pal Engjëll, who collaborated with George Kastrioti Skanderbeg. This referred to family baptism where neither font nor priest was available. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries a vernacular literature undoubtedly existed; Marin Barleti, in the *Siege of Shkodra (De Obsidione Scodrensis)*, refers to annals he had acquired in which fragments of the famous tale of Ross and her brother

35. In *Südost-Forschungen*, vol. XXXI, Munich, 1972, pp. 267–301.

36. *ibid.*, pp. 269, 274, 287, 277–95.

37. Muḥammad Mūfākū, 'Mu'aththirāt 'Arabiyya fi'l-qiṣaṣ al-sha'biyya al-Albāniyya', *al-Ma'rifa*, Damascus, 191–192, Jan. and Feb. 1978, pp. 49–57.

Fa, the founder of Shkodra (Shkodër) appeared.[38] At the same time, Ottoman Turkish words began to enter Albanian after the conquest about 1470. *The Book of Hours* by John Buzuku, composed in 1555 to aid priests in their use of Albanian in the litany, contains nine Turkish words. In the following century, writing developed and the vernacular took a more literary form in the catecisms, dictionaries and eventually verse books by Budi (1621), Bardhi (1643) and Bogdani (1689). The Qur'ān was taught almost immediately after the conquest, and the oriental *ḥikāya* found its way, in theme and style, into popular story-telling. Turkish, Persian and especially Arabic models had an impact on lyrical and emotional verse in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[39]

Although Mesihi, who was born in Prishtinë and died in Istanbul in 1512 and whose 'Spring Ode' was translated into Latin by W. Jones,[40] might be preferred, one of the best known of the earlier Albanian poets, who is remembered for his handling of Oriental themes, is Yaḥyā Bey of Tashlidja (Plevlje in northern Montenegro)[41], a Sipāhī officer and administrator of *vaqif* who died in luxury in Bosnia around 983/1575. He claimed as his background the aristocratic Dukagjin (Duca Jean) family near Shkodër, which was descended from a Norman adventurer.

38. The story of the entombed maiden, a sacrifice offered when Shkodra (Shkodër) castle was built, is the subject of many a song in the Balkans, 'Rozafati' in Albanian and 'Zidanje Skadra' in Serbian. The name 'Rozaf' is mentioned in the biography of Nemanja by Stephen I crowned in 1215; it occurs as Rozapha in Marinus Barletius around 1480. The name is explained by childish identifications, although Jirecik has almost certainly given the correct explanation in the Arabic form of Ruṣāfa which was known in both Syria and Spain and in other regions conquered by the Arabs. *Rusafa*, now an extensive ruin in Syria, is mentioned in the legends of St Sergius, patron saint of Syria, and Bacchus. Beneath Shkodra castle, on the banks of the River Bojana, there was once a noted monastery dedicated to these saints who came from *Rusafa*. Over a period of time the home-city of the Syrian martyrs was transferred to the adjacent locality which happened to be the formidable castle that dominates the entire plain. On this whole subjects see Stavro Skendi, *Albanian and South Slavic Oral Epic Poetry*, Philadelphia, 1954, pp. 50 and 51. A totally different account is given in James Creagh, *Over the borders of Christendom and Eslamiah*, London, 1876, vol. II, pp. 330–3.

39. On the 'Catholic' tradition in Albania before Islamisation, see Stuart Mann, *Albanian Literature: An Outline of Prose, Poetry and Drama*, London, 1955, pp. 1–8, and Koço Bihiku, *A History of Albanian Literature*, Tiranë, 1980, pp. 11–19.

40. See, Ettore Rossi, 'L'Ode alla Primavera del Turco Mesihi. . . .' *Oriente Moderno*, vol. XXXIV, no. 1, Jan. 1954, pp. 82–90.

41. E. J. W. Gibb, *A History of Ottoman Poetry*, London, 1904, vol. III, pp. 116–31. Note the specifically national sentiment in the poem on p. 117.

In his Ottoman verse he was not ashamed to declare his origin as an 'Arnāud' (Arnā'ūṭ) and compared his people to eagles or falcons living, like jewels, in their rocky terrain. This imagery brings out clearly the Albanian play with the words *Shqipëria* (Albania), *shqipe* (eagle) and *shkrep* (rocky places). Although his strongest sympathies were for his homeland and origins, it is precisely in his romantic leanings that he displays his ability to fuse East and West into a creative achievement. This is to be seen in his *mesnevis* (extended religious poems). Of these, *Shāh u Gedā*, 'the King and the Beggar', 'Yūsuf and Zulaykhā', Joseph (Yūsuf), together with Solomon (Sulejmani), Hazreti Hezer (al-Khiḍr), Hazreti Ademi (Ādam) and Xhaxhima Huxhet (Yājūj wa-Mājūj — Gog and Magog) enjoy great favour among the Albanians, both with men of letters and in popular storytelling.[42] Joseph and his narrative are also to be found in folk stories.[43] Mystical sentiment and ethical counsel mark his verses.

The story of *Shāh u Gedā* portrays young Aḥmad — called 'the King' on account of his exceptional beauty — who regularly meets his friends at the Hippodrome of Constantinople. A wise and yet begging 'dervish-like' figure from Rumelia has a vision of Aḥmad in a dream and, enamoured of him, seeks him everywhere, although his amorous advances are continuously repulsed. The 'beggar' is about to give up in despair, then he is addressed by an unseen and mysterious voice (*hātif*) warning him of the vanity and fickleness of human love. In the view of Alessio Bombaci,[44] it is the influence of a poet of Herat, Hilālī, who composed Persian verse in the circle of 'Alī-Shīr, that is seen most clearly in Yaḥyā's verses although the lover and beloved, both males, received strong disapproval in the memoirs of Babur, who took exception to Hilālī's license. Yet Yaḥyā's treatment is never less than elegant and in good taste. Furthermore, despite the creature of beauty being a king, the story of the quest for 'the beauty of the world' (*bukura e dheut*), 'the beauty of the sea' (*bukura e detit*) and 'the beauty of heaven' (*bukura e qiell*) is a most popular and cherished theme in the folk-tales (*perallë*) and folk epics of Albania, and of considerable antiquity.[45]

42. On Hazret Hezen (al-Khaḍir/al-Khiḍr) see Muḥammad Mūfākū, *al-Ma'rifa*, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

43. Discussed at length by Hasan Kaleshi in his 'Ndikimet orientale në tregimet populare shqiptare', *Buletin Muzeut të Kosoves*, XI, Prishtine, 1972.

44. On *Shāh u Gedā*, a poem by Yaḥyā of Tašliža (Plevlje, Kosovo) see *Histoire de la Littérature Turque* (transl. Irène Melikoff), Paris, 1968, p. 293.

45. See the extensive discussion in Maximilian Lambertz, XII, *Albanische Märchen*, Vienna: Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1922.

Certain Albanian stories are borrowed almost directly from the *One Thousand and One Nights*, and Muḥammad Mūfākū has drawn attention to the theme of 'Alī Bābā and the Forty Thieves as the prototype of the tale of *Sezan çilu-Sezan mbyllu*.[46] These and other popular sources were to emerge in the works of Ottoman and post-Ottoman Albanian poets and prose writers down to the twentieth century.[47]

Islamic popular literature

In common with Turkish and other literatures in the Orient, popular literature of all kinds, including folk epic, developed side by side with the '*dīwān* literature', the love poetry, the scholastic world of commentary, gloss, theological and philosophical speculation, and historical writing. In Bosnia, at Novi Pazar and among the Albanians, particularly in Kosovo, an epic romance may be observed in the *krajina* of the *guslar* singers, the battle *gestes* on Islam's borders,[48] the *sevdalinka* and *kënge e ashikeva* among the more urbanised communities and, especially from the second half of the eighteenth century onwards, an entire corpus of exploits of heroes such as Djerzelez Aliya, and Mujo and Halil.[49]

Dr Rade Božović has argued that themes and forms from Arabic popular *sīra* are to be detected in the 'frontier areas' within the Balkans:

> The possibility of close connections between our epic poems and epic heroic story-telling amongst the Arabs is indicated by the large number of typological features characteristic of both and the number of interesting formulaic elements such as drinking the glass of death, black ravens as symbols of disaster, and word duels preceding those with arms. With the Southern Slavs fighting in the Byzantine-Arab frontier area ever since the 7th century, and the epic tradition certainly already existing at the time or somewhat later among the Byzantines and the Arabs, the Slavs could not possibly have remained outside that tradition, and if actual borrowing is uncertain, what is certain is knowledge at least, among Southern Slavs of these epic traditions.[50]

46. See the comment by Hasan Kaleši on p. 378 of his article 'Oriental Culture in Yugoslav countries from the 15th Century till the End of the 17th Century', *op. cit.*; also Muḥammad Mūfākū, *al-Ma'rifa*, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

47. The love of this was especially to be found among Albanian writers in Egypt, e.g. Thimi Mitko (1820–90), see Robert Elsie, *op. cit.*, pp. 98–9.

48. An immense literature on this subject exists – see B. Albert Lord, *The Singer of Tales*, Cambridge, 1960, and André Vaillant, *Les chants épiques des Slaves du Sud*, Paris, 1932. On Albania see *Culture Populaire Albanaise*, Tiranë, 1985.

49. See Chapter 4 for a fuller treatment of these heroic cycles, likewise Maximilian Lambertz, *Albanische Märchen*, *op. cit.*

50. Rade Božović, *op. cit.*, p. 224.

The escapades of Naṣruddin (likewise Juḥā), in all the Balkans, illustrate the interchange of literary and the popular. Dr Munib Maglajlić remarks:[51]

In the oral prose material collected on the territory of Yugoslavia, particularly in the regions which used to constitute an integral part of the Ottoman Empire for short or long periods of time, there is a great amount of evidence testifying to the existence of stories told about Nasruddin especially in Bosnia. Bosnia had a special position with the Empire, while it was under Turkish rule, but we cannot dwell on this matter any further here. This province, a former pashadom, maintained a close and frequent contact with the metropolis. The Turkish language was much more in use than it was dictated by the circumstances, Turkish being the official language of the ruling Empire. Namely, the Slav population, having accepted Islam after the fall of Bosnia under the Turkish rule, which is of extreme importance in the ethical genesis of Bosnian Moslems, used Turkish besides Arabic and Persian, as the language of literature. Furthermore, a considerable number of people were receiving education in Constantinople preparing for administrative and religious functions in their native land or elsewhere in the Empire. As Bosnian Moslems made up the largest population in Bosnian towns as well as in some towns of Serbia until the Serbian uprising, the Turkish language had a special status among certain groups of Bosnian and Serbian town population. This, of course, created favourable conditions for the penetration of Turkish culture in general, and particularly into the oral literature. It is not suprising then, that stories about Nasruddin, which greatly appealed to the people, soon took a prominent place in the folk traditions of the people who communicated in the Turkish language.[51]

Specific topics from Oriental literature were cultivated and adopted; stories from the *One Thousand and One Nights*, Shah Ismael, Majnūn and Laylā, Farhād and Shīrīn, Ṭāhir and Zahrā, tales of fairy beings and a search for the fairy princess of mountain or sea who is 'the beauty of the world'.[52] Some of these stories were Indian or Persian in origin. Others were especially popular in Islamic literature in general, though handled in literature with mixed religious and secular intentions: Yūsuf and Zulaykhā', 'Alī and Fāṭima, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn and the *Mawlid* of the Prophet. Allusions to these stories, with proverbs and maxims from

51. Munib Maglajlić, 'Nasruddin-Khoja in Bosnia', *III Milletlerarasi Türk Folklor Kongresi Bildirileri*, Ankara, no date, p. 232. Dr Maglajlić contributed a paper, 'The Singer Selim Salihović as a representative of the living tradition of Moslem Folksongs in Bosnia', to the Vuk Karadžić Centenary Conference held in the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University of London, 1989.

52. See the works by Hasan Kaleši (or Kaleshi) referred to above in footnotes 35 and 46.

Oriental literature, were introduced into the so-called *aljamiado* literature of Bosnia and the Albanian regions. It was composed in the vernacular language though written in Arabic script.

In an article about Romanian tales of Eastern origin, M. Anghelescu has shown that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries such tales were published and disseminated and had a wide readership in many walks of Romanian society. Cycles of stories that include Barlaam and Jehosaphat, Sindipa the Wise and notably Halima, together with other stories from the *One Thousand and One Nights* were translated from Greek via Syriac, although they reveal an Arabic version as their origin.

The Greek translation keeps an indication not only of its Syriac origin but also of the text out of which it has been translated into Syriac, attributing it to 'Mousos the Persian'. But Mousos,who is mentioned by al-Jāḥiẓ and by other Arabic sources of the epoch, is Mūsā b. 'Isā al-Kasrawī, who translated the original text of the Persian into Arabic. Manuscripts in Romania, in their majority, confirm such a double translation from Syriac into Greek and then into Romanian.

Anghelescu adds:

A manuscript of this text (*Sindipa, The Book of Sindibad*), that has still to be studied, Romanian ms. no. 583, in the Cyril and Methodius library in Sofia, was written on 28 February 1795; it contains, besides the *Alexander Romance*, an incomplete version of *Sindipa*, and it attributes an Arabic original to the translation: 'The first word of Sindipa, the philosopher translated from the Arabic language into Moldavian (folio 141).[53]

This flow of theme, form and Oriental inspiration is of course not entirely explicable in Romania as due to translation from Arabic, Syriac or Turkish alone. There were, and are, other popular levels of transmission within the Balkan regions, via the Gypsies, the Vlachs and other peripatetic peoples and isolated story-telling groups. Thus Marcu Beza has shown in his *Paganism and Romanian Folklore*[54] that among the Vlachs in Romania and in part of Macedonia, the *zanë* ring-adorned, nymphs (so too their counterparts in Albania), the frequenters of remote forest glades and fountains, and the seducers of beautiful youths, more especially princes, are matched by such creatures as grace the pages of

53. In particular see 'Une vision de la spiritualité arabe à travers les contes roumans d'origine orientale', in *Romano-Arabica*, edited by M. Anghelescu, Bucharest, 1974, pp. 55–68, together with her references to Romanian publications on this theme.

54. Marcu Beja, *Paganism in Roumanian Folklore*, London and Toronto, 1928, pp. 70–94.

the *One Thousand and One Nights*. The nymphs clad in owl-skins, who having stolen golden apples bathe at a pool and are overlooked by a prince, and likewise the story of the prince who gains access to a hidden chamber by the possession of a solitary key, match in great detail such descriptions in the tale of *Ḥasan al-Baṣrī* and in one part of the massive *Sīrat Sayf b. Dhī Yazan* to which the tale in the *Nights* appears to have some relationship.

A further parallel with these Arabic works can be observed in a sequence in the same *Sīra* where Ḥasan/Sayf encounters two youths who are in dispute over the possession of a leather cap and a rod of brass. This cap that makes the wearer invisible, coupled with a stave, rod or whip that evokes the response of obedient *jinn* or that will behead the most frightful foe or monster, is obtained by the prince through a stratagem. Not only does this story occur in the Romanian tale of the *Fairy of the Fairies* (which shares the whip and a cap with its Arabian counterpart and a pair of sandals as well), but it is also not hard to discern some parallels with the legend of the maiden, the spring and the magic wooden sword (pairing the rod or the whip) that is so devastating a weapon in the hands of the dervish Sari Saltik (who is also supplied with a flying carpet). Marcu Beza found many similarities between Vlach and Indian, Scottish and Irish tales. He has also discussed the Boy-Beautiful or the Prince Charming of Romanian folklore, the 'youth without age and life without death' which has its peer in Turkish fairy tales.[55]

The best known of the men of letters in the Albanian countries during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries illustrate, in their use of Albanian written in Arabic script (Albanian *Aljamiado* literature) and in other compositions of theirs in Oriental languages, this attractive lyricism and feel for nature that is tinged and sometimes heavily coloured by a mysticism in part Islamic and in part something deep within the Albanian temperament. Muçi Zade is credited with the first verses that have survived and written in the Arabic alphabet.[56] Composed around 1725

55. *ibid.*, pp. 92ff.

56. The fullest documented source for Muçi Zade (circa 1725) is to be found in Osman Myderrizi's 'Letersia Shqipe në alfabetin Arab', in *Bulëtin për Shkencat Shoqërore*, 9, Tiranë, 1955, pp. 148–54 (esp. p. 151). The handiest introduction for an English reader to the history of the use of the Arabic alphabet in the Albanian language and in its literature is Odile Daniel's article 'The Historical Role of the Muslim Community in Albania', *Central Asian Survey*, vol. 9, no. 3, pp. 1–28, 1990, esp. pp. 10–16, together with the references. In Arabic see Muḥammad Mūfākū, *al-Thaqāfa al-Albāniyya fi'l-Abjadiyya al-'Arabiyya*, Kuwayt, 1983, pp. 38–81, though he has written on this subject elsewhere in Middle Eastern periodicals.

when the author was old, and surviving in a manuscript that originated in Korçë the poem contains seventeen verses (pattern AAAB). It is a light-hearted affair in praise of coffee by a lover of it who has been constrained to give it up. It is the oldest Tosk verse written in Albania.[57]

Of greater importance was Ibrāhīm Naẓīmī, or Nezim Frakulla, who was born either in the 1660s or between 1680 and 1685, and died in 1760. He grew up in the Albanian village of Frakull, near Fier, and came from a good family background. Much of his life was spent in Berat, a city noted for its beauty, its poets and its artists. It was an old Byzantine centre, and to this day it possesses a noted cathedral in which the artistry of the medieval Albanian icon painter Onufri, may be admired. Besides its scholarly pursuits, the city was well endowed with baths and its many coffee houses were frequented by poets. Indeed Evliya Çelebi (1670) mentions its mosques, *tekkes, madrasas*, coffee houses and poets.

Nezim studied in the foremost *madrasa* in Berat, and afterwards in Istanbul, where he wrote his first poetry in Turkish and Persian. It seems that he also visited the Arab countries although no Arabic verse by him has survived.[58] He returned to Berat in 1731, and began to compose Albanian *Aljamiado* verse there. He became engaged in a poetic contest with Muftī Mullā 'Alī, which led to uproar and division in the city. Reports of it reached Istanbul, and the Shaykh al-Islām intervened; Mullā 'Alī was sacked from his post. Nezim was now at the pinnacle of his fame, although this was short-lived. Following a dispute with the governor of Berat at some date after 1747, he was exiled to Khotin in Bessarabia and eventually brought to Istanbul where he died in prison in 1760. Elegies were composed in his honour, and one by the poet Fejzi hailed him as a martyr (*shahīd*).

The *dīwān* of some 110 odes contains the first secular poetry recorded in Albanian.[59] To the fore are nature poetry and love lyrics that he dedicated to his nephew. The everyday life of the people was his primary

57. Muçi Zade's light-hearted poem in praise of coffee is held to be the oldest known Albanian poem (in Tosk dialect) to have been written in Arabic script. It was found in Korça, and verses from it can be read in Haydar Salihu's, *Poezia e Bejtexhinjve*, Prishtinë, 1987, pp. 131–2.

58. The Oriental influences on Nezim (Naẓīmī, according to Muḥammad Mūfākū) are extensively discussed in Ernesto Koliqi, 'Influenze Orientali sulla letteratura Albanese', *Oriente Moderno* (Rome), XXXIV, no. 1, Jan. 1954, pp. 27–33.

59. Muḥammad Mūfākū, *al-Thaqāfa al-Albāniyya fi'l-Abjadiyya al-'Arabiyya*, Kuwayt, 1933, pp. 111–18.

concern: 'Whosoever lives in this world then what benefit is there for him to take an interest in the world beyond?'[60] He satirised hypocrisy. Man should take pride in his good qualities and not his wealth.

Nezim was a bard, an *āshiq*, and he prided himself unashamedly on assuming this mantle. In one of his most noted verses he likens himself to the lover poet and his beloved to the heart, he a nightingale and his beloved a rose, he the breath of spring and his beloved spring itself. He is Majnūn, his beloved is Laylā. He is a patient, his beloved is the physician. He is gold, his beloved is the alchemist. He is the lawsuit, and his beloved the rule and order issued by the judge. He is Farhād, his beloved is Shīrīn. He is a falcon, his beloved is a dove. He is a Muslim, his beloved is the religion. He is the assembly of the Muslim community, his beloved its *imām*. He is Gedā, the beggar mystic, and his beloved is Aḥmad the King of beauty (the subject of Yaḥyā Dukagjin's verse). He is the night, his beloved is the moon. He is the hour of dawn's breaking, his beloved is dawn itself. He is eventide, his beloved is the twilight.

More noteworthy still is Nezim's boast in using Albanian as the language for his verses:

Divan, kush pat folurë shqip
Ajan e bëri Nezimi
Bejan kush pat folurë shqip
Insan e bëri Nezimi
Këjo gjuhë qe bërë harap
me qeder, me shumë hixhap
Shahit mjaft ky qitap
handan e bëri Nezimi
Vetëmë mos duash, o mik
këtë gjuhë flet ky ashik
shih udhënë qe s'qe açik-
mejdan e bëri Nezimi.

[Who is he who has composed a *dīwān* in the Albanian language? Nezim has clearly done so. An elegant statement, who has composed it so in Albanian. A man, Nezim is his name. Whose tongue was ruined, afflicted, suppressed and concealed. Enough testimony is within this book. Mocking Nezim is his name. O friend, perchance you may not wish to say a poet's tongue composed these words. See how the path is clear and open wide, Nezim is master of the field.][61]

60. On Fejzi, see Muḥammad Mūfākū, *ibid.*, pp. 114–15.

61. Ettori Rossi, 'Notizie su un manoscritto del canzoniere di Nezim in caratteri arabi', *Rivista degli studi Orientali*, 21 (1945–6), pp. 219–46.

Arguably less important, was the Berat contemporary of Nezim, the *Baktāshī* Sulejmān Naibi (Ramazani), who probably died in 1771 or 1772. Few of his works, especially in verse, have survived. His lyrics tell of love and of beautiful women. His Albanian is purer and less flavoured with oriental loan words and imagery than Nezim, but even so he used the Arabic alphabet, and poems such as 'Beautiful Maḥmūda' (*Mahmudeja e Stolisurë*), which Koço Bihiku calls 'The Dandy burning with Love', are influenced by Arabic verse.[62] Some of his works were written in Elbasan.[63] More significant was Hasan Zyko Kamberi, who was born in the second half of the eighteenth century in Starje e Kolonjes in Southern Albania, and took part in a battle on the Danube in 1789 between the Turkish and Austrian armies. His tomb in Starje was later turned into a shrine (*türba*). Some of his poetry is satirical — for example *Paraja* (money) — and aimed at combating the horrors of war, exploitation and corruption. Others are laudatory, for example his praise of broth. Fifty of his verses are secular, although even here his Islamic heritage is conspicuous. He is best known for his poetry on Abraham, Hagar and Sarah and his *mavlid (al-Mawlid al-Nabawī)*, his religious *qiṣṣa*, and his Baktāshī verses that were meant to be recited and meditated upon during the *Ma'tam* in memory of those who died in Karbalā at the hands of the Umayyad Caliph, Mu'āwiya.

Muḥammad Mūfākū, in his study of the Albanian poets who wrote in Arabic script, comments on Kamberi, drawing upon the studies of him by Ḥāfiẓ 'Alī and others.[64]

There is no doubt that the interest shown by the Albanians in the celebration of the Prophet's birthday (*al-Mawlid al-Nabawī*) was due to the Ottoman Turks who spread Islam in these regions. In fact, up to now we have nothing that indicates the time when the Albanians began to celebrate the birthday nor what the celebration included on this occasion, though it would appear that the Albanians during the first phase used to depend upon the *Mawlid* of Sulaymān Çelebi[65] on account of it being the most renowned. Perhaps this motivated the poet Kamberi to write his verse in Albanian so that it could be recited during the celebration among the Albanians.

62. On Sulajman Naibi, see Robert Elsie, *Dictionary of Albanian Literature*, p. 103, and *Poezia e Bejtexhinjve* by Hajdar Salihu, Prishtinë, 1987, pp. 143–6.

63. An old centre in Albania for literary activities — see Robert Elsie, *ibid.*, p. 4, and the poets entered under *Elbasani* on p. 39, and F. von Babinger, 'Die Gründung von Elbasan', *Ostasiatische Studien*, 1931, pp. 94–103.

64. Quoted in Muḥammed Mūfākū, *al-Thaqāfa al-Albāniyya fi'l-Abjadiyya al-'Arabiyya*, Kuwayt, 1983, *op. cit.*, pp. 129–31.

65. See Bombaci, *Histoire de la littérature turque, op. cit.*, pp. 258–9.

This *mawlid*, like any other *mawlid* of its kind, indicates a long ode that is composed in fifty-one parts, or sections, each of which comprises four verses. Such tell of the birth, life and miracles of the Prophet Muḥammad in an appealing poetic format. Today we only possess one copy of this *mawlid* and it is at present preserved in the archival centre in Tiranë.[66] Even this copy was unknown till recently. This *mawlid*, written by Kamberi the poet, is noteworthy for its original features and for its simple realism. This latter is important, in fact, since if we consider carefully, the *mawlid* is usually written for recitation during the celebration on the day itself and is basically of interest for the simple populace. This determines that it should be in an attractive poetic form and a language close to that which the common people look for and the idiom they are used to. For this reason we do not find it strange today when we come across some illiterates who can remember by heart the Prophet's *mawlid* or at least some sections of it. In reality, the *mawlid* of the poet Kamberi is greatly prized in view of the fact that he encouraged the rest of the poets in Albania to make permanent this poetic tradition in those regions inhabited by Albanians. The poets have continued to compete in this tradition, and have done so up to the present century.

This has led to the creation of a poetic legacy that is especially interested in the *Sīra* of the Prophet Muḥammad in the Albanian language. It might seem that the great interest aroused by this subject was natural in view of the social position that the poet gained in a situation where, in one region or another, he was depended upon for 'his *mawlid*' during the celebrations marking the Prophet's birth itself. We possess evidence to show that the *mawlid* of the poet Kamberi was widespread among the Albanians in the south [of Albania] and in those regions currently situated in the north of Greece. It is worth drawing attention to the fact that the celebration of the *mawlid* of the Prophet Muḥammad — to be precise, 'the recitation of the *mawlid*' in the Albanian regions — is not restricted to the annual remembrance itself of the *mawlid*. Rather, it has been transformed into a social tradition carried out at sundry times: *Rajab, Sha'bān and Ramaḍān* and various occasions such as during circumcision and the remembrance of the deceased for forty days. Besides this *mawlid*, the poet Kamberi has left us some other odes concerned with religion. We have a number of them that are part religious and part historical, such as the lengthy ode about the history of Abraham, with Hagar and Sarah.

66. On the *mawlid* of Kamberi and his other verse, see Robert Elsie, *op. cit.*, pp. 73–4. Osman Myderrizi has written a specific study, '*Hasan Zyko Kamberi*', in *Buletin për Shkencat Shoqërore* (1955), 1, pp. 93–108.



Plate 2. Korçë's mosque minus its minaret. This ancient town in eastern Albania, with a large Christian population, once had an important cultural influence throughout the country and abroad. In the 15th century a mosque and public baths were built by Hoxha Ilyās Bey, who had taken part in the capture of Constantinople in 1453.

The Albanian writer Dodani is the first person to have been alerted to the importance of this ode when he discovered it about 1822 in one of the *tekkes*. Dodani then undertook to copy out this long ode. He was so greatly surprised and pleased that he deemed it to be a peak of creative artistry. The other poetic works we have are Shī'īte verses by this poet. They belong to his old age, after he had become interested in Ṣūfīsm, and he had become a dervish of the Baktāshī order, which was in essence essentially Shī'īte. Amongst the oldest of the works that we know of is an ode the length of which extends to one hundred verses, called 'Mu'āwiya' and this title indicates, aside from the ode's

content, the Shī'īte influence on the Baktāshī order. The latter passed it on within the Albanian regions. There 'Mu'āwiya' was transformed into the symbol of evil itself from which all other evils stem. Added to this, we have a number of other odes that are dominated by Shī'īte interest and preoccupation, as for example in some poems that deal with the battle of Karbalā and what happened there. In fact the poet Kamberi is considered to be the first poet to exploit the theme of Karbalā in Albanian poetry. It was to be transformed into a major topic in this poetry during the nineteenth century.[67]

A lesser figure than Kamberi — although he is considered so in part because of the small quantity of his verse that has survived — was Haxhi Ymer Kashari, known also as Ymer Mustafa Kashari. He came from Tiranë, and his language furnishes information on the dialect of that city during the mid-eighteenth century. According to Muḥammad Mūfākū:

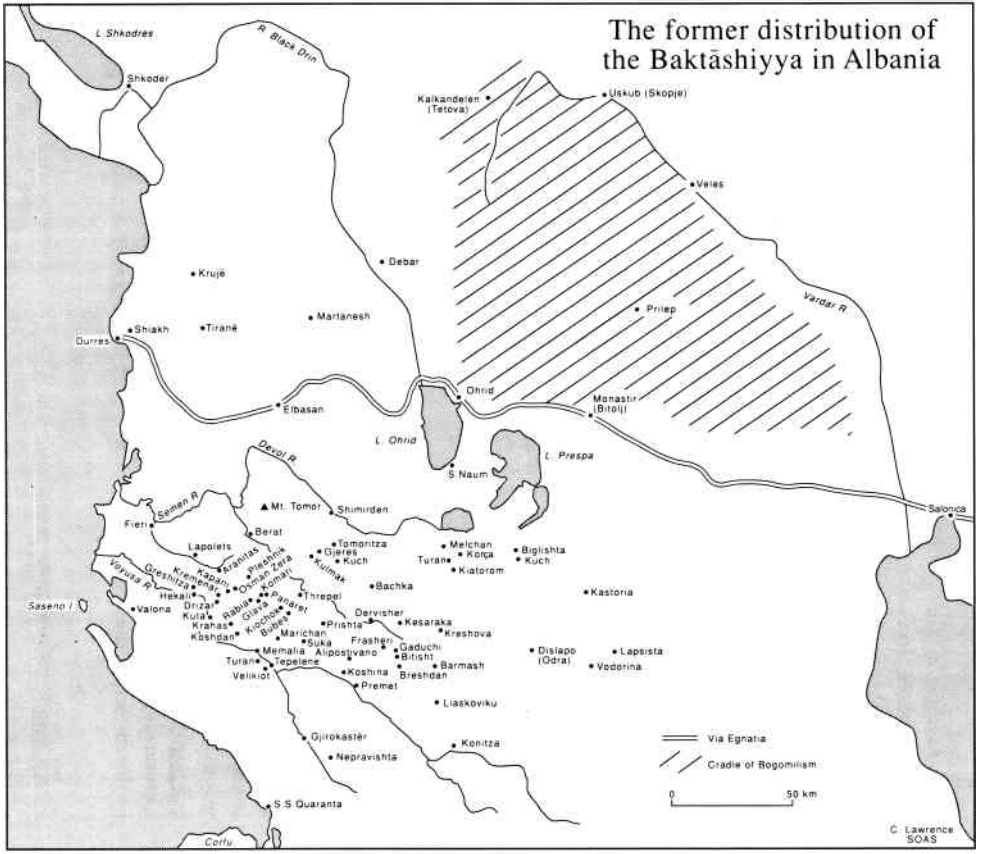
> Most of his poems have been lost due to an earlier lack of interest in him, though his person enjoys high regard. All we know about him is that he was born at the beginning of the eighteenth century in the town of Tiranë . . . which had become an oriental town at that time although it came into being at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Furthermore, we know that Haxhi Kashari was a shaykh in the *Qādiriyya* Ṣūfī order. This indicates the presence of this order in Albania from that time. In regard to his poetry, our information about him shows that he wrote his verse in two languages, Albanian and Turkish. From the few odes that we know of today, we have one known as the *Alif*. This is of a special interest to us since it is the first of its kind composed in Albanian poetry. The poem is based on the letters of the Arabic alphabet (*al-abjadiyya*), and for this reason has twenty-eight verses. Each verse begins with one of the letters of the Arabic alphabet, from *alif* to *yā'*, consecutively. This type of verse was to become a tradition in Albanian poetry and we now have many that have followed the same technique. This poem is also of importance linguistically and historically, seeing that this was the first literary text to have been composed in the dialect of the region of Tiranë.[68]

Early nineteenth-century poets

It is fitting that the pre-*Rilindja* (pre-Renaissance) phase in Albanian cultural, literary and religious history should include a major Baktāshī saint, Nasibi Tahir Babai (d. 1835), who founded the *tekke* at Frashër

67. On the theme of Karbalā, see Chapter 5 and in particular the *Qerbelaja* by Naim Frashëri.

68. On Haxhi Ymer Kashari see Muḥammad Mūfākū, *ibid.*, pp. 121–2, and Robert Elsie, *op. cit.*, p. 74.


The former distribution of the Baktāshiyya in Albania
L. Shkodrës
Shkoder
R. Black Drin
Kalkandelen (Tetova)
Uskub (Skopje)
Veles
Debar
Krujë
Shiakh
Tiranë
Martanesh
Durres
Prilep
Vardar R.
Ohrid
Elbasan
Monastir (Bitolj)
L. Ohrid
L. Prespa
S. Naum
Devol R.
Semen R.
Mt. Tomor
Shimirden
Salonica
Fieri
Berat
Lapoleis
Tomoritza
Melchan
Biglishta
Gjeres
Kuch
Turane
Korça
Kuch
Kiatorom
Kranitas
Pleshtina
Osman Zara
Kolmari
Kremenara
Kapari
Vorusa R.
Greshitza
Bachka
Kastoria
Hekal
Threpel
Sasenò I.
Valona
Drizar
Kanareri
Rabia
Kuta
Glina
Kochoke
Dervisher
Krahas
Bubesi
Prishta
Kesaraka
Köshidan
Marichan
Kreshova
Suka
Frasheri
Memalia
Alipostivano
Gaduchi
Bitisht
Dislapo (Odra)
Lapsista
Turan
Tepelene
Barmash
Vodorina
Velikiot
Koshina
Breshidan
Premet
Liaskoviku
Gjirokastër
Konitza
Nepravishta
Via Egnatia
Cradle of Bogomilism
0
50 km
S.S Quaranta
Corfu
C. Lawrence SOAS

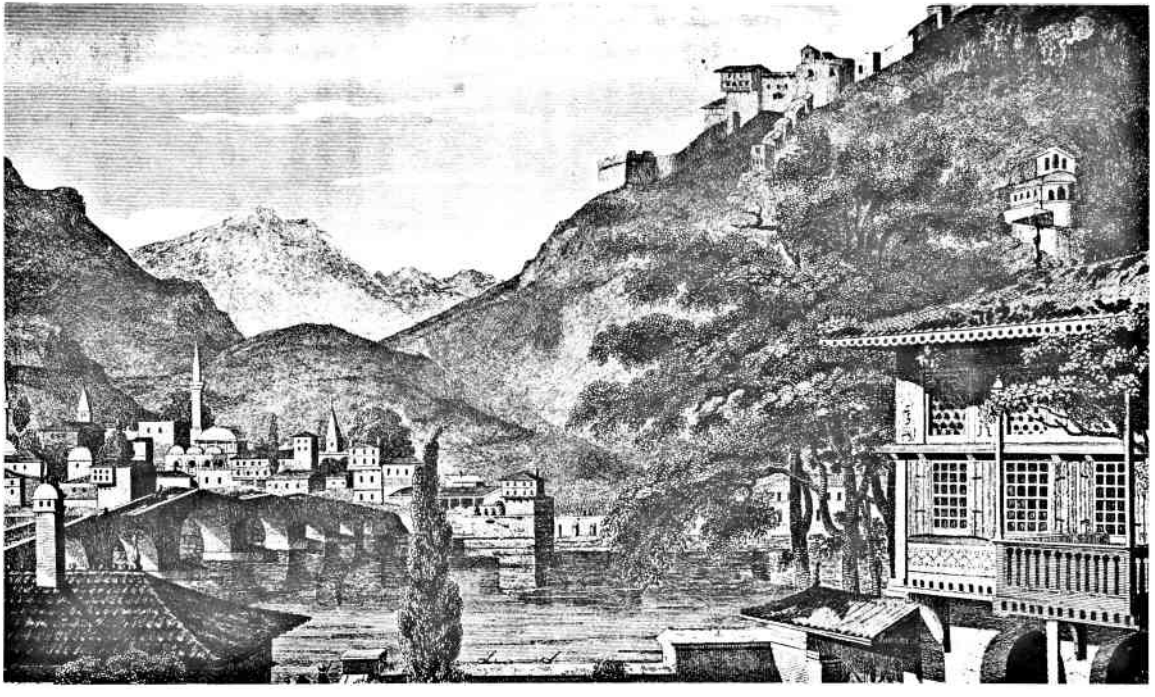


Plate 3. The Albanian city of Berat, home of outstanding 18th-century poets such as Nezim Frakulla and Sulajman Naibi, is now preserved by the government as a 'museum city'. This scene, showing the citadel and the Ottoman bridge, is from Rev. Thomas Smart Hughes's *Travels in Sicily, Greece and Albania*, vol. II, London, 1820. Apart from the Leaden Mosque (*Xhamië e Plumbit*), originally built in 1553–5, two other mosques, including the Bachelor's Mosque (*Xhamië e Beqarevet*), are partly preserved.

in 1825 and was buried there. According to Sami Frashëri,[69] he composed much verse in Albanian, Turkish and Persian. In his youth he had visited Iraq and other parts of the Arab East. If little of his own verse has survived and the *tekkes* of Frashër and of Leskovicu, which he also developed as a centre for culture and literature, have also been erased, it was his example that was to fire the imaginations of Naim and Sami in the Albanian Renaissance at the end of the century.

The city of Shkodër was one of the most important centres for Islamic scholars and cultural and literary activity. Daut Boriçi (1825–96) was a significant figure there who favoured the 'revival' and is probably best known in Albania for his Albanian primer in Arabic script, published in Istanbul in 1861, where he had resided for many years, first in a theological seminary and later during a period in exile. In his capacity as an inspector in the Inspectorate of Education, he showed himself a convinced champion of the use of Arabic script for his mother-tongue. This, however, was no exclusively nationalist cause but had strong religious roots, as is evident from his upbringing. He was a student of Hoxha Ferhali of Shkodër (1773–1844) and also studied in Qafës *madrasa*. He was deeply influenced by theologians associated with Shkodër, including Salih Efendi, Mullah Ahmet Hadri and Mullah Sylo Fakoja, and was himself to become *Imām* of the *Draçin* mosque in Shkodër in 1848.[70]

Two further poets can be counted among the significant figures who wrote verse in the Arabic script up to the middle of the nineteenth century. One was Tahir Efendi, Boshnjaku (Bosnian), who died about 1835. Known also as Tahir Efendi Jakova or *Efendi i Madh*, 'the great *Efendi*', he is reckoned among the greatest poets who hailed from Kosovo. His life was centred around the town of Gjakovë and later in Bosnia, which he visited so much that the region became attached prominently to his name and title. A scholar of theological bent and steeped in the literary arts and metrical skills of Arabic, Persian and Turkish poetry, he is principally famous for his long poem *Emni Vehbie* (Offering), printed in the Istanbul alphabet in Sofia, Bulgaria, in 1907 – although the poem itself had been composed in 1835. Tahir Efendi prefaced his verses with Arabic meters, in this instance a form of *Ramal, Fā'ilātun, fā'ilātun fā'ilāt (fā'il-un)* followed by the *basmala*, the *ḥamdala* and praise of the Prophet (*Pejgamberit*). Throughout his works rhymed

69. Robert Elsie, *ibid.*, p. 103, and Nathalie Clayer, *L'Albanie pays des derviches*, Berlin, 1990, p. 277.

70. Robert Elsie, *Dictionary of Albanian Literature, op. cit.*, p. 18.



Plate 4. An external wall-painting in the Edhem Bey mosque, Tiranë, one of the finest surviving mosques in Albania. The interior is lavishly decorated with floral designs, and scenes in Constantinople are depicted. In the 18th century, Albanian artists were skilled in such decorative painting and examples exist in *Baktāshī tekkes* at Krujë and elsewhere.

prose, citation of Qur'ānic verses and Prophetic *ḥadīth* are employed to varied effect. A number of this writer's works have been lost, and one of these concerned the duty of revenge as it was once demanded and effected among the Albanians.[71]

The second of these poets, Etëhem Mollaj (1783–1846), has particular associations with Tiranë. Known also as Haxhi bej Tirana Etëhem, he was noteworthy in Albanian literature for composing mystical verse in both Turkish and Albanian; four of his *dīwāns* were in Turkish. A man of substance, he was buried, according to Muḥammad Mūfākū, in

71. Robert Elsie, *op. cit.*, pp. 18–19, and the poem *Emmi Vehbie*, quoted in Haydar Salihu, *Poezia e Bejtexhinjve, op. cit.*, pp. 212–31, and shorter verses.

1848 in the Tiranë mosque that bears his name. This Xhamija e Haxhi Edhem Beut mosque was begun in 1791 or 1794 by Molla Bey of Petrela (d. 1806), the nephew of Tiranë's founder, and finished by his son Etëhem Bey in 1819 or 1821.[72] Graced with most attractive interior wall-paintings completed in 1820–3, and beautifully balanced architecturally, it has been described by Alexander Meksi and Gjerj Frashëri as 'an important monument of the architecture of the last centuries of the Middle Ages . . . It bears witness to the quite lofty levels that were reached among us not only in its construction but likewise through its architecture. All these elements make this monument one of the most successful realisations of Islamic architecture we have.'[73]

Etëhem Bey, as already mentioned, was laid to rest in this monument, and beside him sleeps his wife Balkis. Yet it is the paintings of flowers, of a town surrounded by a hill of cypresses and pleasure boats, reminding one of the Bosphorus at the end of eighteenth century, that linger most in the memory. The blend of a local art with the quintessence of Ottoman art at its most delicate is seen in the skill of these artists (Plate 4) whose work in paint is a perfect match for the verse of those Albanian poets who, as has been said, were the pioneers of the Albanian ode inspired by the Muslim East.

With the works of the poet Muhamet Çami, or Muhamet Kyçyku (1784–1844) — perhaps the major figure in Albanian literature of Oriental inspiration during the first half of the nineteenth century — a new outlook on the world can be noticed. He has been regarded as the representative of a literary transition between the classical Islamic verse of such poets as Frakulla, Naibi and Kamberi and the poets of the Albanian Renaissance towards the end of the century. He grew up in Konispol in southern Albania, and then went to Cairo for eleven years to study at al-Azhar University. He returned to Konispol as a *hodja* although without a doubt his stay in Egypt, in scholarly Islamic surroundings, left a permanent mark on his style and his choice of subject. Muḥammad Mūfākū sees in him one of the principal sources for Egyptian Arabic influences on modern Albanian literature. He was an innovator.[74] As a poet and a literary figure he received a brief mention

72. Alexander Meksi and Gjerg Frashëri, 'Architecture et Restauration de la mosquée de Haxhi Ethem Bey à Tirana', in *Monumentet*, 14, 1977, Tiranë, Ministria e Arsimit dhe e Kultures, Instituti i Monumenteve te Kultures, pp. 125–44.

73. *ibid.*, pages 143–144.

74. Muḥammed Çami is also known as Muhamet Kyçyku (1784–1844). See Robert Elsie, *op. cit.* p. 84, together with a number of references. See also pp. 136–43 of Muḥammad Mūfākū, *al-Thaqāfa al-Albāniyya fi'l-Abjadiyya al-'Arabiyya op. cit.*, pp. 136–43.

in Stuart E. Mann's *Albanian Literature* and a comprehensive appreciation in *Oriente Moderno* in 1948, where Ettore Rossi explored the cultural inspiration from Ottoman Turkish literature and from the *One Thousand and One Nights* in Muhamet Çami's 'Erveheja'.[75]

Çami's first extended ode *Zaptimi i Misolongjit*, (The conquest of Missolongi), composed in 1826, was inspired by the dramatic campaign of Ibrāhīm Pasha, the son of Muḥammad 'Alī, against the Turks on the Greek mainland. Another poem, of 348 verses, written two years before, was devoted to a condemnation of the drinking of wine and *raki*. However, his second major ode, of some 2,430 verses, was in the Oriental tradition, as too was that of Yaḥyā Bey Dukagjin.[76] This was *Jusufi i Zelihaja*, based on the Islamic poetic legend, rooted in Qur'ānic narrative, of Yūsuf and Zulaykhā'. Fragments of the Albanian verses of this work have now been published.[77] The inspiration afforded by Egypt may have led to this specific subject being chosen. This without doubt was one of the reasons that compelled him to translate the mystical work, the *Burda*, from Arabic into Albanian composed in Arabic script. Muḥammad Mūfākū remarks: 'Of his poetry translations we now know a number of long odes. Possibly the most important is his translation of the *Burda* ode by the Egyptian poet, Sharaf al-Dīn al-Būṣīrī (1213–95) which enjoyed great renown in the Islamic world.[78] In the view of Mūfākū, the poet's extended sojourn in Egypt drew him to it and gave him a chance to absorb the necessary Arabic literary background. A forty-page manuscript of this work, dating from 1884, survives.[79]

75. Ettore Rossi, 'La Fonte Turca della Novella Poetica Albanese, "Erveheja" di Muhamat Çami (sec. XVII–XIX) e il tema di "Florence de Rome" e di "Crescentia" ', *Oriente Moderno*, XXVIII, no. 1–3, Jan.-Mar. 1948, pp. 143–53.

76. Jahja bej Dukagjini. E. J. W. Gibb, *A History of Ottoman Poetry*, vol. III, London, 1904, p. 125. According to Gibb, Yaḥyā was inspired to compose *Yūsuf and Zulaykhā* while in Palestine on the way to Mecca. Egypt and especially Cairo, 'the City of Joseph', also inspired him.

77. Muhammad Çami's poem *Yūsuf and Zulaykhā* contains 2,430 verses derived from Turkish and Persian literature according to Necip Alkan, 'L'influence de la langue et la littérature albanaises', *Deuxième Conference des Etudes Albanologiques à la mort de Georges Kastrioti-Skarderberg, Tiranë, 12–18 Jan. 1968*, III, Tiranë, 1970, p. 100.

78. This work of piety is remarkably free from Ṣūfī influences, a feature that marks Muḥammad Çami's Azhar-trained background.

79. For a detailed analysis of Çami's Arabic influencing poetic compositions, see Muḥammad Mūfākū, *al-Thaqāfa al-'Albāniyya fī'l-Ahjadiyya al-'Arabiyya, op. cit.*, pp. 137–9, and Dhimitër Shuteriqi, *Shkrimet shqipe ne vitet 1332–1850*, Prishtinë, 1978, p. 194.

The most famous composition to have reached the West by Muhamet Kyçyku is his poem *Erveheja (Ervéhé)*, held to be based on a Turkish prose original, *Revza*.[80] According to Myderrizi, it may have been composed about 1820; a written copy exists from 1839, and was published in 1888 by Jani Vreto, who transliterated it into Latin script and radically purged it of its Turkish and Arabic vocabulary. A copy in Arabic script survives in Albania.

Mann, in his short study of Albanian literature (written, however, before the rediscovery of much Albanian literature in Arabic script), succinctly outlines the plot of the poem:

> *Erveheja* recalls the popular story of Geneviève of Brabant. It is the story of a chaste woman who survives and triumps over the evil designs of men. Erveheja's husband, who is forced to go away on a long journey, leaves her in the care of his brother. The brother suspects her of infidelity and causes her to be stoned. By a miracle she escapes with her life to find refuge with a nobleman, who subsequently asks her hand in marriage. When she refuses another charge is made against her; this time it is one of complicity in the murder of the nobleman's son. Forced to flee once more, she encounters a man who is about to be put to death for raiding the King's coffers. Her intervention, and the surrender of all her small earnings to the would-be executioners, saves the man's life. But the ungrateful victim pays her undue attention, and her steadfast refusal causes her to be sold to a ship's captain. But Erveheja fares no better at the hands of the captain. At length a storm at sea drowns captain and crew, but Erveheja survives and disguises herself as a monk. In this garb she succeeds by an odd chain of circumstances to the throne of a distant land, where she rejoins her husband, who rules with her in mercy and benevolence.[81]

It has been generally thought, and discussed at length by Ettero Rossi,[82] that the source of Kyçyku's subject was Turkish, although ultimately it is derived from the Oriental story collections that are found in *al-Faraj ba'd al-shidda*, the *Ṭūṭī nāmeh* and *Alf Layla wa Layla*. It is the last, the *One Thousand and One Nights*, and 'The story of King Dadbin and his Wazirs' circulating in Baktāshī circles, familiar to Muhamet Kyçyky, that have gained wide acceptance as the poet's true inspiration. Among Muḥammad Mūfākū's extensive studies of this

80. See the references given in Robert Elsie's *Dictionary of Albanian Literature, op. cit.*, p. 84.

81. Stuart E. Mann, *Albanian Literature: An outline of Prose, Poetry and Drama*, London, 1955, pp. 12–13.

82. Ettore Rossi, 'La Fonte Turca della Novella Poetica Albanese. . . .' , *op. cit.*, pp. 143–53.

work and its author, and of Kyçyku's influence on Albanian and Yugoslav literature of a much later period, his essay, *Arwā al-'Arabiyya wa -Arwā al-Albāniyya*[83] argues an Arabic case for the inspiration of this epic. It owes much to the pervasive presence of similar ethical themes in Albanian folk literature and the long sojourn of Kyçyku in Egypt. His mastery of Arabic was a key factor that was to determine his choice.[84]

83. Muḥamud Mūfākū's article first appeared in the Journal *al-Ma'rifa* (Damascus), no. 218, 1980. It was conveniently bound and augmented with more Albanian source-material in his *Malāmiḥ 'Arabiyya Islamiyya fi'l Adab al-Albānī*, Damascus, 1990, pp. 67–92.

84. Muḥammad Mūfākū's arguments in favour of Arabic (Cairene) influences have been specifically argued in his 'Erveheja ne perallat popullore', *Rilindja*, Prishtinë, 6,1, 1979.

3

ṢŪFĪ MOVEMENTS AND ORDERS IN THE BALKANS AND THEIR HISTORICAL LINKS WITH THE ṢŪFĪSM OF CENTRAL ASIA

'It would be mistaken to think that in the hands of the theologians Islam has remained a closed book. Ever more closed to science and open to mysticism, theology has permitted many irrational – and to Islamic teaching – completely alien elements and even blatant superstitions, to be added to it. It will be clear to anybody who is acquainted with the nature of theology why it found itself unable to resist the temptation of mythology and why it even saw in this a certain enrichment of religious thought. The monotheism of the Koran, the purest and most perfect in the history of religious teaching, was gradually compromised and a repulsive commercialism appeared in its practice.' (Alija Izetbegović, *The Islamic Declaration*)

To consider the impact and the influence of Ṣūfīsm and the Ṣūfī orders on the Balkan countries, some attention has to be directed, by way of introduction, to the Ṣūfīsm of Central Asia. Ultimately it is from that region, via Turkey and the Caucasus, that many of the ideas, practices and beliefs of Balkan Ṣūfīsm originally evolved under the impact of Iranian ideas. Central Asia occupies a prominent place in Islamic history and especially in the evolution of Ṣūfīsm. Particularly important are Khurāsān and Transoxania.[1] It was in this latter region of Central Asia that the study of Prophetic *ḥadīth* achieved its peak, and it was there that the most important early collections of *ḥadīth* were compiled.[2] Central Asia was also a major centre for the study of the Qur'ān and Islamic theology.

Ṣūfīsm, Islamic mysticism (*taṣawwuf*), owes a number of its most important concepts to pious men and thinkers in Khurāsān and Transoxania. To some it was indebted in matters of doctrine, to others in

1. On the religious beliefs peculiar to Central Asia, and more especially those factors that influenced the evolution of Ṣūfīsm (especially heterodoxy) see Emel Esin, 'Eren'. Les Dervīš héterodoxe Turcs d'Asie Centrale et la peinture surnommée "Siyāh-Ḳalam" ', *Turcica*, vol. XVII, 1985, pp. 7–42.

2. As is confirmed by such names as Muḥammad b. Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī, born in Bukhara in 194/810; Muḥammad b. 'Īsā al-Tirmidhī, who died near Balkh in 279/892–3; and later Maḥmūd b. 'Umar al-Zamakhsharī, born in Khwārizm in 467/1075.

those matters that related to the rules of practice (*ādāb*) in the dervish orders and the habit of the retreat (*khalwa*).[3] Crucial too were those matters of organisation and discipline within the brotherhoods (*ṭuruq*) as they subsequently evolved.

From Central Asia and later, likewise, from the Caucasus these innovations were adopted elsewhere. Great scholars such as al-Kalabādhī[4], al-Qushayrī[5] and al-Ḥujwīrī[6] were to record a transformation of Ṣūfī ideas, beginning with the simple monotheism and early asceticism of such men as Uways al-Qaranī and al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī,[7] through the emotional and personal mysticism of love (*maḥabba*), in the verses of Rābi'a al-'Adawiyya,[8] to the gnosticism of al-Junayd and al-Ḥallāj,[9] and ultimately to that of the Spanish-Arab, Ibn al-'Arabī, and Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī,[10] especially the doctrine of the extinction of self within the divine essence (*fanā'*) and existential monism *waḥdat al-wujūd* — these latter earned for Ṣūfīsm the charge from the orthodox of exchanging monotheism for pantheism. To cite the respected Albanian *Baktāshī* shaikh, Baba Rexhebi,

> Neither man nor any other creation can exist independent from God. All are simply mirrors which reflect their master, the creator, without whom they could not have existed. Neither man nor any other creation can exist independent from God. All are simply mirrors which reflect their master, the true God. *Wahdat Wujud* sees only *one* essence existing in the world, any other essence representing its creator:
>
> The pantheistic [*sic*] notion of Al Arabi is clearly expressed in this excerpt: You alone hold in yourself each and all creations.

3. A *khalwa* is a cell for private meditation and retreat among the Ṣūfīs. This is a central feature of the *Khalwatiyya ṭarīqa* (see article in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*) but it is important in other orders, such as the *Kubrāwiyya ṭarīqa*.

4. Muḥammad b. Isḥāq al-Kalabādhī (d. 996), an important Ṣūfī from Bukhara who was the author of *Kitab al-Ta'arruf li-madhhab ahl al-taṣawwuf*.

5. Abū l-Qāsim al-Qushayrī of Naysābūr (d. 1074), the author of *al-Risāla al-Qushayriyya*.

6. al-Ḥujwīrī (d. 1071), the author of *Kashf al-Maḥjūb*.

7. al-Ḥasan of Baṣra (d. 728), one of the most noted of the earliest Ṣūfīs.

8. Rābi'a al-'Adawiyya (d. 801), famous woman mystic.

9. al-Junayd (d. 909–10) and al-Ḥallāj (martyred 922), whose life has been exhaustively studied by L. Massignon in his *The Passion of al-Hallaj*. See also Chapter 6 below, note 4.

10. Ibn 'Arabī (Ibn al-'Arabī) of Murcia (1165–1240) and Jalāl al-Din al-Rūmī (1207–73) are the most influential of the later Ṣūfī, especially in the Persian and Turkish Ṣūfī-influenced countries.

هذا شرح قصيدة سيد شريف عليه الرحمة

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم وبه نستعين

ستايش بر كمال لايزال ذات كريميست كه سئوالات سائلات وتقضاء محتاجان در خزاين موهبه وجود او هيچ تنقيص وتنفيض پيدا نميكند كه هو الجواد الذى لا يفيضه سئوال السائلين ولا يبخله الحاح الملحين ودر جواب مسئله هر شريف ووضع طريق توحيد بكلمه استجب لكم ظاهر ميكرداند ودر ايراد سئوال هدايت وغرض هر سائل مفوض رقم اجابت بر ناصيه هر سائل ميكشد كه فاسئلوني الهدى اهدكم وصلوة وسلام با جلال وعظمت نثار آن وجوديست كه در مدرسه حاذ وحكمت وخانقاه شهود ومعرفت جميع سئوالات غامضه اهل عناد را بالحجت قاطعه انا النبي بالسيف وبراهين ساطعه قلعا قلعا تو بر هانكم ان كنتم صادقين خرقا بجرف بجواجب شافى الزام داده ودر مباحثه ومناظره با خصم دين ومناقشه وتكذيب اصحاب كين اين نكته مهمى ساختند لا تسئلوا عن اشياء انما هلك من كان قبلكم باختلافهم فى الكتاب وكثرة سئوالاتهم على الانبياء وبر آل واصحاب او كه هر يك از غايت كرم والطاف در سئوال اسباب كونرا از كبائر مى شمرده در اجابت داعى وانجاح امانى ومقاصد حث طريق كلمه سلوني قبل ان تفقدوني نسپرده اما بعد بر حسب سئوال بعضى از اصحاب كه در ادراك مسائل تحقيق وتعقل ضوابط اهل توفيق غايت اجتهاد وكمال اعتقاد داشتند اين رسيله تكتب ميكردد در حل ابيات قصيده كه مشتمل است بر سئوالاتى كه در اعوان غفوان شباب كه از هر شيخ وشباب اين فقير استفسار واستكشاف حقايق ميكرد وتا چون اتفاق نزول ببلده تبريز شد وبشرف صحبت حضرت خلافت مآبى حقايق آيابى امير سيد على رحمة الله كه مالاح كوكب عن المشرق المشهود من حكمت العلى مشرف شد ومتصدى باستنساخ كتاب جاودان نامه الهى شد وباقى نسخه نكاشت ناكاه در اثنا كتابت در زاويه متبركه شرفها الله تع بالبمن والبركت اين معنى در خاطر متمكن شد كه اكر قصيده در عقيده تحقيق كفته شود مبتنى بر سئوالات ممكن كه تذكره كردد ودر نزد اصحاب فضل وارباب توفيق وبراى ضبط مسائل حقه ومتقنه

وحفظ

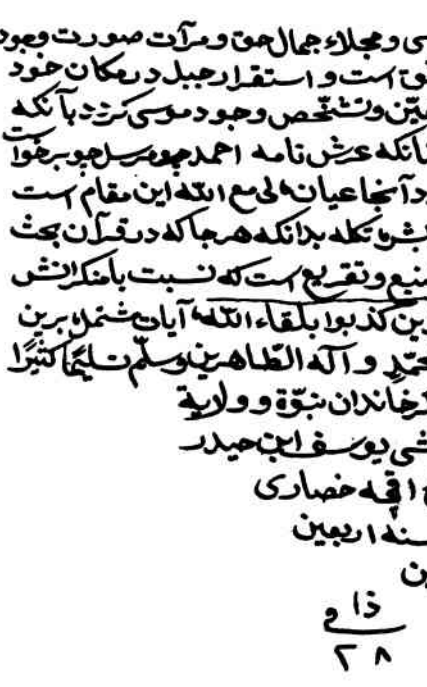


Plate 5. The opening and final folios, with colophon, of a commentary on Ḥurūfī verses of Sayyid Sharīf by the Albanian *Baktāshī* dervish, Yūsuf b. Ḥaydar, possibly of Krujë. The ms. is dated 1240 AH/1824AD and is listed by E. G. Browne as OR, 26(9), in his catalogue of Oriental manuscripts in Cambridge University Library. The verses are part of a *qaṣīda*, or ode, entitled *Jāwidān-nāma*. There is no clear indication of where the copy was made. 'Arnā'ūdī is an unusual spelling of Arnā'ūṭī. Āq Ḥiṣār is an Ottoman name for Krujë. Photograph published by permission of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library.

You alone inside yourself created all that exists today.
You are the greatest essence.

The essence of God is the essence of all creations and there is no other essence.[11]

This vision manifests a clear terminal line of development within Ṣūfī thought, though it would be wrong to maintain that one stage merely absorbed or displaced another. Ṣūfīsm can be described as containing within itself a variety of subtly differentiated and sometimes incompatible conceptions of man in relation to divinity. Resulting maladjustments were always potentially there.

A semi-constant tension that may subsist between an orthodoxy and mystical movements is not exclusive to Islam, although in certain dervish orders the cult of 'Alī, the son-in-law of the Prophet, carried to an extreme, was one such major cause of friction. There were, however, other and deeper reasons. These have been defined sharply by Hans-Joachim Kissling in his article 'The Sociological and Educational Role of the Dervish Orders in the Ottoman Empire'.[12]

From the viewpoint of religious sociology, there are irreconcilable differences which cannot be changed by the fact that occasionally all-embracing pantheism may be colored by a theism instilled from childhood or that it may use theistic terminology, since the pantheistic experience cannot be described otherwise. Permit me to give one example. A mystic entranced by the sight of the stars is no claim that a loving Father must dwell above. Or on our topic: the Islamic dervish does not mind merging the pantheistic all-god term *haqq* with the orthodox term *Allāh*, while the strictly orthodox Moslem will carefully distinguish between them. In monotheism the idea of a *unio mystica* is unheard of, for the monotheistic God is outside his creation, that is, in opposition to it. A union, however, is possible only between essentially equal, not between different, things. Even the attempt of Ghazzali or Qushairi to make mysticism palatable for orthodoxy by declaring it to be originally monotheistic cannot invalidate our statement. The unconscious obscuring of pantheistic sentiment by a monotheistic predisposition can be observed in any form of mysticism.

In the ninth century the Oguz Turks began to embrace Islam. However, it was the counsels of their poet-priest-magician 'Qam-Ozam'

11. Baba Rexhebi, *The mysticism of Islam and Bektashism*, vol. 1, Naples, 1984, pp. 75 and 76, under 'Pantheism: Wahdat-i Wujud'.

12. Published in *Studies in Islamic Cultural History* (a special issue of *The American Anthropologist*), ed. G.E. von Grunebaum, 56, no. 2, part 2 (April 1954), memoir no. 76, pp. 23–35.

that appealed to them more than the teachings of the Muslim *faqīhs*. The Old Turkoman religious traditions lasted long in their memory, subconsciously or consciously influencing the later Ṣūfīsm of the *Yasaviyya*, the first Ṣūfī order to be fully 'acclimatised' among the Turks.

Here the ceremonial *dhikr* and the *samā'* were adjusted to the ecstatic dances of the Shamanistic Turks. As the Turks moved westward into the Islamic heartlands between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, so these ideas were to be influenced by others which were preached by the Carmathian (*Qarāmiṭa*) Ismā'īlīs, with their division of Islamic religious teachings and beliefs into the esoteric (*al-bāṭin*) and the exoteric (*al-ẓāhir*). Sects emerged. Extreme 'Alīd views among the Boghratch Turks, a long distance from the borders of Khurāsān and Transoxania in the eleventh century, allotted to 'Alī the role of the Turkish Sun God, Göle Tengri.[13] Once Ṣūfīsm was institutionally realised within sundry orders (*ṭuruq*), so these esoteric beliefs aided in the formation and promotion of mendicant and dervish orders, such as the *Qalandariyya* and the *Ḥaydariyya*.

Here [writes Fuad Köprülü] the role of the Turks is too important to be neglected. There was a [Ṣūfī] order which, deriving its origin from the *Malāmatiyya*[14] of Khurāsān (as represented by such great Ṣūfīs as Abū Sa'īd Abū'l-Khayr and Ḥamdūn-i-Qaṣṣār) after Shaykh Jamāl al-Dīn-Sāvī (in the years 382–463/992–1070), and under the influence of diverse factors and in different Turco-Muslim regions, had developed, and took a more definite form under the names of '*Abdālān*'[15] or *Javāliqa*' (those clothed in flock or hair). Excommunicated by the orthodox theologians and even by certain mystics because of the scandalous customs of its adherents and because of their indifference towards dogma and religious duties, this order, which was very widespread in the Muslim world, from the sixth to the thirteenth century, gave birth to a series of secondary branches among which the 'Ḥaydariyya' order was especially worthy of attention.[16] Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn Ḥaydar, a disciple

13. This and other kindred topics are discussed extensively in Irène Melikoff, 'Recherches sur les composantes du syncrétisme Bektach-Alevi' in *Studia Turculogica memoriae Alexeii Bombaci Dicata*, Istituto Universitario Orientale, Seminario di Studi Asiatici, XIX, Naples, 1982.

14. Keuprulu Zadé Mehmed Fuad Bey (see also p. 88 overleaf, note 22), 'Les Origines du Bektachisme. Essai sur le dévéloppement historique de l'hétérodoxie musulmane en Asie Mineure', *Actes du Congrès International d'histoire des religions*, Paris, 1923, vol. 2, 1925, p. 398. See also Claude Cahen, 'Le problème du Shi'isme dans l'Asie Mineure turque préottomane', *Le Shi'isme Imâmate*, Paris, 1870, pp. 115–39.

15. Fuad Bey, 'Les origines da Bektachisme', p. 398.

16. *ibid.*, p. 399.

of Yasavī, who was born into a princely Turkish family and who died after 618/1221 and was buried at Zāva near Nīshāpūr, had founded a *zāwiya*, or convent. Its fame was to last for centuries. He surrounded himself with numerous adepts who were recruited among young Turkish men. Between the *Qalandariyya* and the *Ḥaydariyya*, orders overtly esoteric (*bāṭinī*) in their tendencies, and the *Baktāshiyya* there was so much affinity that we see these terms employed as though synonymous in subsequent centuries.[17]

Later he comments:

The esoteric creed of the great orders and heterodox sects such as the *Ḥaydariyya*, the *Baktāshiyya*, the *Ḥurūfiyya*, the *Ni'mat Allāhis*,[18] the *Nūrbakhshiyya*,[19] the *Qyzyl-Bāsh*[20] and the *'Alī-Ilāhis*[21] is only, in fact, an eclectic and syncretic system, heterogeneous and sometimes even incoherent, a kind of conglomerate of Muslim esotericism, of indigenous beliefs of Anatolia and Iran, with an infiltration of diverse schismatic forms of Christianity and philosophical and Ṣūfī ideas. Naturally, the character and proportion of these elements differ according to each sect or order, but whatever the result that future studies reveal, one can affirm that from this time onwards, the migration to the west of the Oguz nomads has contributed powerfully to the extension of heterodoxy in the countries of Anatolia and Iran and to the triumph of Shī'īsm with the Safavids.[22]

Fuad Köprülü relates the *Baktāshiyya* to the other heterodox Ṣūfī orders:

Although the Baktāshī brotherhood existed in the fourteenth century, it was not the most important among the analogous heterodox fraternities which were the continuation of Bābāism. It only acquired this importance between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, that is to say after having absorbed the other heterodox groups. The existence in the fourteenth century of the cult

17. *ibid.*, p. 400.

18. On the *Ni'mat Allāhī's* see Farzad Daftary, *The Isma'ilis, their history and doctrines*, Cambridge University Press, 1990, pp. 462–7.

19. *ibid.*, pp. 463 and 471.

20. On the Kizil-Bash (Kizilbaş etc.) see the article by R.M. Savory in the *Encyclopedia of Islam* (new edn), pp. 243–5.

21. There is an extensive literature on the 'Alī Ilāhīs. See Matti Moosa, *Extremist Shi'ites: The Ghulat Sects*, Syracuse University Press, 1987. In this particular context, the reader is referred to Nikki R. Keddie, 'The Roots of the Ulama's Power in Modern Iran' in Keddie (ed.), *Scholars, Saints and Sufis: Muslim Religious Institutions in the Middle East since 1500*, University of California Press, 1972, pp. 217–19.

22. Mehmed Fuad Köprülü, *Les origines de l'empire ottoman*, Paris, 1935, p. 123.

of Ḥājjī Baktāsh, the successor of Bābā Rasūl Allāh, among the Abdāls and all the other groups stemming from Bābāism has prompted the belief that all the groups were Baktāshīs and has given the *Baktāshiyya* an exaggerated importance in the foundation of the Ottoman empire. Ḥājjī Baktāsh also had members of his sect in Western Anatolia. Let us add that these groups of wandering dervishes who exercised a major and a crucial influence on the religious life of the sedentary and nomad populations on the frontiers also played the most active rôle in the conversion of Christian populations. In the Islamisation of the Balkans during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, this decisive role of groups of heterodox dervishes appears very clearly.[23]

To balance this picture, something should certainly be said about the many other important and more orthodox Ṣūfī orders that entered the Balkans after the Ottoman conquest, for example the *Naqshabandiyya* which, like the *Baktāshiyya*, shares origins in the popular mysticism of the Turkic-speaking countries, especially in the *Yasaviyya* Ṣūfī order, though only so at a relatively recent date.[24] However, it is the *Baktāshiyya* that most obviously represents the surviving heterodoxy of the Central Asian Turkomans, the Iranians of Khurāsān, the Ismā'īlis and Carmathians, and, added to these, many of the customs and the beliefs which were indigenous to the pre-Ottoman Balkan peoples themselves.[25]

The Baktāshiyya

The *Baktāshiyya*, unlike other Ṣūfī orders in the the Balkans, though officially Sunnī, is essentially *Shī'īte*. Members of this order believe that their founder, Ḥājjī Baktāsh, was born in Khurāsān in the thirteenth century. He was either taught by, or had a spiritual relationship with, Ahmed Yasavī (Aḥmad al-Yasawī), which took no note of the passage of time.

23. See also Keddie, 'The Root of the Ulama's Power . . .', *op. cit*, pp. 212 ff.

24. In regard to Bosnia, the *Naqshabandiyya* has been admirably covered by Ḥāmid Algar, 'Some Notes on the Naqshabandī Ṭarīqat in Bosnia', *Die Welt des Islams*, vol. XIII, nos 3–4, 1971, pp. 168–203.

25. These matters are extensively discussed in Mehmet Fuad Köprülü, 'Les Origines de l'Empire Ottoman', *Etudes Orientales*, III, Paris, 1935 and in his *Les Origines du Bektachisme*, Essai sur le développement historique de l'hétérodoxie musulmane en Asie Mineure', *op. cit*.

All paths in Turkish Sūfīsm, it is said, lead back to Ahmed Yasavī, or Ata Yesevi, who is also called Pir-i-Turkistan. In the twelfth century Ahmed Yasavī created a genre of popular poetry the purpose of which was to convert the Turkic nomads to Islam. This kind of poetry was to be developed in most Turkic-speaking countries and reached its highest point in the verses of the thirteenth-century Anatolian poet Yunus Emre. Ahmed Yasavī founded the first Turkish *ṭarīqa*, the *Yasawiyya*, which spread in Turkish-speaking areas.

Features of the legends that surround the life of Ahmed Yasavī, and the feats he allegedly performed, have been influenced by the divine powers that mark out two legendary characters in very ancient Arabic literature. They are central to the seventh- and eighth-century Yemenite tales of 'Ubayd b. Sharya al-Jurhumī, and Wahb b. Munabbih's *Kitāb al-Tījān* (where references to contacts between the Arabs and the Central Asians may be found in sundry passages). The power of flight is associated with the pre-Islamic prophetic figure, Luqmān, a Macrobite king. He, however, could not fly himself, but his seven eagles could, at his bidding, and when they lost their power to do so this had some effect on his own physical powers and his life-span. One eagle died, only to be reincarnated in its successor. Also, in these works, kingship is favoured with an insight into the mysteries of the 'fount of life' (*'ayn al-ḥayāh*, beloved by mystics) and into the paradoxes and seeming injustices of the world that are hidden from human knowledge. Guidance for the superman was to be found in the prized companionship of al-Khiḍr, 'the green man', the spiritual companion of the 'two-horned' king.[26]

Irène Melikoff has shown that both Baktāshīs and Yasavīs shared a number of common practices. They used, or use, Turkish during their ceremonies instead of Arabic or Persian. Hymns are sung, and women participate in the ceremonies. Both orders share a belief in bird metamorphosis, a dove for Ḥājjī Baktāsh, a crane (*turna*) for Ahmed Yasavī. The *Baktāshiyya* was to compound its heterodoxy later, after the sixteenth century, with the addition of the *Ḥurūfī* doctrines propounded by Faḍlallāh al-Ḥurūfī (executed 796/1394) and with the adoption of the belief in the divinity of 'Alī that characterised the Kizilbaş. Other beliefs such as reincarnation and sometimes metempsychosis may well have been a legacy from the pre-Islamic Turks, although they also figure

26. Such is the role of al-Khiḍr in the early age. On his Ṣūfī role see the article by A.J. Wensinck, al-Khaḍir in the *Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam*, Leiden, 1953, pp. 232–5.

prominently in the beliefs of the heterodox Druze and the 'Alawites of Syria.[27] Ḥājjī Baktāsh came to Anatolia. His headquarters were established in that spot which bears his name today, Hacibektaş, between Kirşehir and Nevşehir (Suluğa Qara Ojük).[28]

The Albanian Shaykh, Aḥmad Sirrī Bābā in the following passage from his *Risāla al-Aḥmadiyya*, describes the arrival and the settlement of Ḥājjī Baktāsh:

This situation lasted for the lengthy period in which he trod the 'way' until he arrived at Ṣūlīja Qarah Ūyūk (Suluğa Qara Ojük) which subsequently became famous by being called 'the district of al-Ḥājj Baktāsh' a locality named after his noble name. It belonged to the city of Qīr Shahr (Kerşehir) being a six hour's travelling distance from it. He stopped there and he adopted it as his place of residence. He began to preach sermons of warning and to offer counsel. He disseminated religious knowledge, whether it be learning in the religious sciences or in spiritual gnosis. Students gathered about him for divine guidance in order to know of the essential reality of the divinity. The people thronged to that district to be blessed by him. So the sublime *Baktāshiyya* order was spread abroad in the entire land of the al-Rūm. The number of those who were affiliated to it increased dramatically until the reputation of our lord reached the ears of Sulṭān Ūrkhān, the second Ottoman Sulṭān. He saw that he would be successful and would benefit through the prayer of the venerable Shaykh, so he left his throne and he journeyed in person to meet our lord and master. He enjoyed the privilege of kissing his blessed hand and he obtained his charitable supplications, and the divine blessing (*baraka*) came upon him.[29]

Well into the twentieth century, Hacibektaş retained its status as the great place of pilgrimage for Albanian and other non-Turkish Baktāshīs. G.E. White in an article 'The Alevi Turks of Asia Minor' in the *Contemporary Review* (Nov. 1913, pp. 690–8) remarks, after his visit to the tomb and shrine of the founder: 'The purpose of the Dervish life is the rest, peace, satisfaction, that come on taking the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and withdrawing from the world. It was a surprise to find that out of about four-score dervishes resident at the *tekke*,

27. The principal studies of the Druze religion attach importance to this belief among them. A recent study by Nejla M. Abu-Izzeddin, *The Druzes: New study of their history, faith and society*, Leiden, 1984 (Chapter 13 on al-Amīr al-Sayyid Jamāl-Dīn, 'Abdallāh al-Tanūkhī), reveals his Ṣūfī commitment. There was clear compatibility in both belief systems.

28. A comprehensive description of the *tekke* of Haci Bektaş is provided by Suraiya Faroqhi, 'The Tekke of Haci Bektaş, Social position and economic activities', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 7 (1976), pp. 183–205.

29. Aḥmad Sirrī Bābā, *al-Risāla al-Aḥmadiyya, ibid.*, pp. 6–7.

nearly all are Albanians. What are these Albanians doing, away over in Central Asia Minor? Yet, here they are, with others of Turkish or other nationality [p. 694].

According to the *Vilâyet Nâme Manâḳib Hünker Hajji Bektaş-i-Veli*, Ahmed Yasavī gave Ḥājjī Baktāsh a number of sacred tokens. These were a head-covering, *tadj* (Ar. *tāj*, 'crown'), a Ṣūfī robe, *hirka* (Ar. *khirqa*, Ṣūfī mantle), a table or table-rug, *sofra* (Ar. *sufra*, table), a prayer-rug, *sedjdjade* (Ar. *sajjāda*, prayer-rug), a candle-stick, *çerag* (Ar. *sirāj*, lamp) and a banner, *'alem* (Ar. *'alam*. landmark, banner or flag). All these had been given to the Prophet by God, then to the Twelve *Imāms*, Ahmed Yasavī and finally Ḥājjī Baktāsh himself.[30]

Shaykh Aḥmad Sirrī Bābā comments on the symbolic significance of this *tāj*, and *khirqa*, in his *Risāla al-Aḥmadiyya*:

As for the Baktāshī 'crown' (*tāj*), it denotes a white skullcap of felt [Plate 5]. It has twelve furrows and is called the Ḥusaynī 'crown'. It is conditional on him who wears this noble 'crown' that there should be gathered within his person such qualities as to enable him to be fit for the honour of wearing it. These noble qualities are: knowledge, obedience, the asking for forgiveness, the remembrance and recalling of God, contentment, dependence on God, abstinence, piety, humility, generosity, patience and the giving of one's approval to what is ordained and decreed. In this there is a pleasing reference to the number of the letters in the confession that 'there is no god but Allāh', namely twelve letters — *lā ilāha illā'llāhu*. In 'Muḥammad is God's Apostle', '*Muḥammad Rasūl Allāh*', there are twelve letters also. As for the wearing of the cloak (*'abā'*) or the mantle (*khirqa*), it is among the praised traditions that are followed by the godly forebear. The conquering lion of God, our lord, 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, may God honour his countenance, undertook to clothe Ḥasan al-Baṣrī in the mantle or the cloak.[31]

According to Baba Rexhebi[32] Ḥājjī Baktāsh was born in 648/1247/8 at Nīshābur in Khurāsān, a direct descendant of the Prophet's family. He studied under Loḳmān Perende the *khalīfa* of Ahmed Yasavī, was inspired by Ahmed Yasavī and went to Anatolia as a missionary, visiting on his way the tomb of 'Alī at Najaf in Iraq. He prayed at his tomb for forty days and during the month of *Dhū'l-Ḥijja* he fulfilled the Meccan pilgrimage. Later he visited Palestine, Damascus and other sacred places. In 1281 he arrived at Soluğa Qara Ojük where, having

30. *ibid.*, p. 13.
31. *ibid.*, p. 14.
32. Baba Rexhebi, *The mysticism of Islam and Bektashism*, vol. 1, *op. cit.*, p. 99–101.

won the hearts of local Ṣūfīs, he organised his *tekke* which was to become the centre for his *ṭarīqa*. From there missionaries took his message to Arabia, Persia and the Balkans. He wrote two books, *Maqālāt-al-Ḥājj Baktāsh* and *Fawā'id al-fuqarā'*.[33] He died either in 738/1338 or in 1341 and was buried in the *tekke* which he had founded.[34] Shaykh Aḥmad Sirrī Bābā also says in his *Rīsala al-Aḥmadiyya*[35] that the word *Baktāshiyyah* has numerical significance in regard to the decease of the saint. According to the numerical value of the Arabic letters in the Arabic alphabet (*al-abjad*), the sum total of the letters *B-k-t-ā-sh-y-h* amounts to 738, this number corresponding to the *hijra* date of the decease of Ḥājjī Baktāsh (1338). The intimate connection between the Janissaries and the Baktāshīs was to take place years after his death. It was this connection that vitally contributed to the spread of the order in the Ottoman empire.[36]

In the early sixteenth century, the second major *Pīr* (*shaykh*) in the history of the order made determined efforts to reform its organisation and the practice of its members, both of which had succumbed to unorthodox practices and rituals. This was Bālim Sulṭān who, to cite Ziya Shaqir in his Baktāshi lyrics (*Bektaşi Nefesleri*), was born at Ker in Anatolia in 1472, although other historians say he was born in Rumelia and give the date as 1452 or even later. He re-established celibacy. Sulṭān Bāyazīd invited him to be his guest in the Topkapi Seray, and during his stay the Sulṭān himself and high officials of the court joined the Baktāshī order.

Four grades of initiation were introduced by him into the *ṭarīqa*: (1) *Asik* (Ar. *'āshiq*, lit. lover) or *kalender*, one who seeks to be fully admitted to the order and receives instruction before initiation. (2) *Dervish*, one who had been admitted into the order. (3) *Baba* (Bābā), one who after a period as a Dervish becomes the leader and instructor of groups of *Dervishes* and *Asiks*. (4) the *Dedebaba*, who is the elected chief *Baba* and who, up till the abolition of the Ṣūfī *ṭuruq* in Turkey in 1925, was based at the *tekke* of Hacibektaş. A *halife* (Ar. *khalīfa*, deputy) was at times appointed between the grades of *Dedebaba* and *Baba*, having been selected by the former to exercise authority as his delegate.

33. *ibid.*, p. 100, footnote 1. See the article in the *Encyclopedia of Islam* for further details regarding these works.

34. Baba Rexhebi, *ibid.*

35. Aḥmad Sirrī Bābā, *ibid.*, p. 9.

36. Vincent Monteil, 'Les janissaires' in *L'Histoire*, 8, Paris, Jan. 1929, p. 29.

Those Baktāshis who are 'Children of the Way' (*Yol Evladi*) and who believe that Ḥājjī Baktāsh never married and had no descendants maintain that true membership is gained by initiation at the ceremony of *Ayin-i Cem*[37] after a period of instruction from a *mursit* (Ar. *murshid*, guide). With them the *Dedebaba* is chosen for his paramount worthiness. On the other hand, the *Yol Evladi*, who claim descent from Ḥājjī Baktāsh, believing him indeed to have married and had a son, maintain a right to the leadership. Known as Çelebis, they are members from birth, and thus no special initiation ceremony is required.

The formal requirements of Islam, especially the 'five pillars' (e.g. five regular daily prayers and pilgrimage to Mecca), were never given emphasis among them. Yet fasting during the first twelve days in *Muḥarram* is observed, preceded by the three preceding days of *Dhū'l-Ḥijja*. Almsgiving (*zakāh*) is extended to the helping of all who are in need. The *Baktāshiyya* were to conceive of Allāh, Muḥammad and 'Alī in a triune relationship, the Prophet and son-in-law united together in a unity of personality. Baba Rexhebi, however, makes a clear distinction between them, Muḥammad was the bearer of the Islamic 'light'[38] while the *Imām* 'Alī was inspired by the Prophet and offered by him the knowledge of this same mystical light. 'Alī, 'the king of saints' (*shaykh al-awliyā'*), then entrusted the divine light to the Prophet's children and to the remaining Twelve *Imāms*, until it reached Pir Hunqar Ḥājjī Baktāsh. Furthermore, Baba Rexhebi maintains that the order respects the rituals of the faith, and that there are two special prayers for the goodwill of the world (*evrad*, Ar. *awrād*, litanies), at dawn and dusk, and above all observes mourning (*matam*) for the martyrdom of Ḥusain, son of 'Alī, at Karbalā.[39]

Baktāshīs hold their meetings in both home and *tekke*, with recitation and singing of verses occasionally accompanied by music. The meal held at these gatherings might be a sacrificial sheep, the drink wine or *raki*

37. On the overall organisation and ritual of the *Baktāshiyya*, including the *Ayin-i-cem*, one of the most lucid sources I know, and an excellent introduction for anglophone readers, in particular, is J.D. Norton, 'Bektashis in Turkey', in Denis MacEoin and Ahmad al-Shahi (eds), *Islam in the Modern World*, London, 1983. Likewise Helmer Ringgren, 'The Initiation Ceremony of the Bektashis', in *Studies of the History of Religions*, X: *Initiation*, Leiden, 1965, pp. 202–8.

38. Baba Rexhebi, *The Mysticism of Islam and Bektashism*, *op. cit.*, and L. Massignon, *The Passion of al-Hallaj*, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, pp. 282–5.

39. Baba Rexhebi, *The mysticism of Islam and Bektashism*, vol. 1, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

distributed by the *saki* (Ar. *sāqī*, wine-bearer). In the conversations that developed, *sohbet* (Ar. *ṣuḥba*, companionship), discussions would take place on religious and social matters, and questions would be answered by the Baba. Such teachings were based on the *Maqālāt* of Ḥājjī Baktāsh and were aimed at leading the follower successfully and progressively through the four gateways, *Sheriat* (Ar. *sharī'a*, the canonic law of Islam), *Tarikat* (Ar. *ṭarīqa*, Ṣūfī way), *Marifat* (Ar. *ma'rifa*, gnosis) and *Hakikat* (Ar. *ḥaqīqa*, the reality or essence of the Divine) attained by the lover (Ar. *muḥibb*). Each of these represented the observance of the revealed divine law, the path followed within the order itself, the mystical knowledge of God and finally the soul's experience and feeling of oneness with the essence of Reality.[40]

An important belief, as in the other Ṣūfī orders, is *waḥdat al-wujūd*, the Oneness of Being, and the discovery of God's reality within oneself. All creations are only His manifestations.[41] Baba Rexhebi, in explaining this, cites verses by the Albanian poet Naim Frashëri, of whom more later:

Në det të madh e të gjërë
Çdo valë që të sheh syri,
Esht' atje deti i tërë,
Po valëtë mirë kqyri.

[In the vast ocean the eye sees in each wave all of the seas. Look then closely at each wave your eye can perceive.]

The Baktāshīs have recognised that women have rights equal to those of men, and their presence in the *tekke* is accepted as natural and correct. In this respect, as Irène Melikoff notes, the order is heir to the teachings of the *Yasaviyya*[42]: 'An important point in the description of the *medjlis* of the Yeseviye is that women were admitted to the meetings without wearing a veil and alongside men. This custom also exists among the Baktāshīs.'

The *Baktāshiyya* offered, and still offers, a doctrine that caters for all intellects and temperaments. As will be seen, it shares with other Ṣūfī orders a similar goal, although the path it discloses may differ and

40. This is lucidly explained by J.D. Norton in his article on 'Bektashis in Turkey'.
41. Baba Rexhebi, citing Naim Frashëri (see Chapter 5, footnote 37), *ibid.*, p. 123.
42. A reality confirmed by all Naim Frashëri's *Baktāshī* writings (see Chapter 5).

manifest contradictions. Unique among these orders, as they reached the Balkan countries with the Ottoman conquest, was Baktāshī *Shī'īsm* and the intensity of its devotion to 'Alī. United as one with the Prophet, it is through him especially that the early Arab martyrs of the Muslim faith have made their mark on much of Albanian Islam.[43] To cite Baba Rexhebi:

Pathfinders discuss the sources of mysticism with believers by emphasizing the Islamic foundation of tassawwuf, the importance of the holy Quran, and the words of the Prophet. Not everyone can understand in depth the philosophy and science of Islam. Only the descendants of the Prophet are able to discern the subtleties of tasawwuf. The prophet Muhammad has said:

I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its Gate.

To enter the garden of Islamic knowledge one must pass through the gate, the great Ali. Muhammad has also said: 'Ali is my hereditary successor.' These words do not imply material inheritance, but they relate to the knowledge and the deference of the Prophet.

After the death of the Prophet, Ali founded the first religious school, *madrassa*, in Medina. There he began to teach the philosophy of Islam. After the martyrdom at Karbalá, the school continued to exist. Famous scholars like Imam Zaynel Abadin, Muhammad Bakir and Imam Jafar Sadik were teachers at the school. Students from all over the Muslim world came to study its Islamic philosophy. Imam Jafar Sadik began the teaching of mysticism, which attracted many students, and it continued for centuries until the time of the Pir, Hajji Bektash Wali.

The believers of Bektashism revere the Prophet, the great Ali, and the Twelve Imams. They believe that the road of Bektashism is the road of the great Ali.

Many of those features that characterised the *Baktāshiyya* in Turkey, were once to be found among the Albanians, although, as Margaret Hasluck discovered,[44] the Albanians impressed their own individual national character on the *Baktāshiyya*. As she explains:

Bektashism is a powerful factor in Albanian history and politics, conciliating the Christians enough to make them forget their age-long antipathy to Islam, yet remaining itself a very living force within that religion. It is by no means uninteresting to seek the explanation of such a paradox. In its organization there is nothing extraordinary. The rank and file are not outwardly distinguishable from other Moslems but recognise each other by a secret sign, con-

43. Baba Rexhebi, *The mysticism of Islam and Bektashism*, vol. 1, *op. cit.*, pp. 108–9.

44. Margaret Hasluck, 'The Non-conformist Moslems of Albania', *The Moslem World*, vol. XV, 1925, pp. 392–3.

sisting, it is said, in a certain, apparently casual, touching of the chin. Above them are dervishes, conspicuous by their tall, ridged hats of white felt, and celibate or married according to the branch they choose: a single earring denotes a celibate. As usual with Eastern priestly castes, they are bearded, the Serbs rousing more resentment by shaving the abbot of Martanesh than by burning his *tekke*. Laymen live at home, but dervishes must reside in a convent (*tekke*), which the donations of the pious living and the legacies of the dead support; its essential feature is an oratory (*ibadet hane*) for common worship, and in it dervishes, as they die, are buried; a proper mosque is never attached.

Dervishes are appointed by abbots (*Babas*), who generally preside each over a *tekke*, and are themselves, if of the celibate branch, appointed either by the superior abbots called *khalifehs*, of whom three exist in Albania alone, or by the Akhi Dede, supreme head of the celibates, who lives in the central *tekke* in Asia Minor.

In Albania and other Balkan regions the *Baktāshiyya* has shown an eclecticism which perhaps surpassed limits observed elsewhere. Margaret Hasluck summarised its basic beliefs as faith, adoration and reverence centred around God, Muḥammad, Fāṭima, his daughter, 'Alī her husband, and Ḥasan and Ḥusayn, their offspring. 'Alī has a peculiarly close relationship with the Prophet; their personalities are fused, a personification of some higher spiritual being. The words of the Prophet are quoted, *Anā wa-'Alī min nūr-in wāḥid-in* – 'I and Alī are from one light', and Aḥmad Rif'at's claim (*Mir'āt al-Maqāṣid*) that *man ra'ānī faqad ra'a'l-Ḥaqq* – 'whosoever sees me beholds the Truth [God's essence] and the Reality', as evidence of some mutual theological analogy between the *Baktāshiyya* and Christianity.[45] Massignon[46] stresses the numerical and *Hurūfī* influenced character of this association. 'The divine identity of Muḥammad and 'Alī is a very old extremist Shī'ite concept. It forms the basis of the Khaṭṭābiyya initiation (*in jafr*, the numerical value added together is equal to *Rabb* (Lord = 202)'. The alleged words of the Prophet are quoted.

The dual person of Muḥammad-'Alī was believed by the Baktāshī Albanians to be represented on earth by every Baba who is thereby entitled to great veneration. A Baktāshī creed would include the twelve

45. Similarities between Christianity and *Baktāshīsm* have mainly been observed in rituals, hierarchy, celibacy and external forms. Irène Melikoff, in 'L'Islam Hétérodoxe en Anatolie', *Turcica*, vol. XV, 1982, pp. 151–3, discusses the relationship between Jesus, Elias and 'Alī.

46. *The passion of al-Hallaj Mystic and Martyr of Islam*, Princeton University Press, 1982, vol. 2, '*The survival of al-Hallaj*', p. 255, footnote 86.

Imāms, Moses, Mary, Jesus and countless saints. Worship is a secret affair, peculiar to initiates. Public prayers are held in the oratory of the 'parish' *tekke*, at sunrise and at sundown and not at the statutory five times each day. The *Baba* sits in his special corner, reciting the prayers or portions of the Qur'ān, while the devotees sit in a semi-circle around him and bow their heads to him as 'Alī's representative. Twelve candles for the twelve *Imāms* burn on a three-tiered altar. Prayer requires no genuflexions, and attendance at the *tekke* is only compulsory twice a year. Instead of *Ramaḍān*, the commemoration of the martyrdom of 'Alī's sons Ḥasan and Ḥusayn at Karbalā is observed. Metempsychosis is widely believed and universal love for mankind, male and female, and for one's homeland has become an all-inclusive ethical ideal. Acceptance of suffering without retribution is advocated; all violence and injustice is to be avoided. Charity and hospitality should be shown to all. For initiation, firm sponsorship and a rigorous enforcement of vow-keeping is demanded and expected. *Babas* once received a severe training either under superiors at other *tekkes* or at Hacibektaç itself. The admission of a layman was a veritable *rite de passage*. Convents of married or unmarried dervishes were once known and were sited away from towns and villages. Pilgrimages to holy places were shared by both Muslims and Christians. They were held throughout the calendar: visits to Sveti Naum near Ohrid, to St Spyridon in Corfu and to St Elias on Mount Tomor, who was identified by Baktāshīs with their saint 'Abbās 'Alī.[47]

The eclecticism of the *Baktāshiyya* has prompted comparison with other extreme *Shī'īte* sects (*ghulāt*) — such as the Nuṣayrīs, in parts of Syria and Asia Minor[48] — that are viewed as being on the very fringe of Islam. It is perhaps the Kizilbaş (Qyzyl-Bāsh) who survive in Bulgaria in Deli Orman, that are most often mentioned. However, the *Baktāshiyya* has not transgressed the bounds of orthodoxy in the eyes of the Muslim community as a whole. The Kizilbaş conceal their true identity, outwardly professing to be orthodox Sunnis to their Turkish or Bulgarian neighbours, or alternatively claim to be Baktāshīs, depending on who is addressing them. Both Baktāshīs and Kizilbaş venerate 'Alī, who is inseparable from the Prophet Muḥammad. Both honour

47. On legends regarding 'Abbās 'Alī, see Nathalie Clayer, *L'Albanie pays des derviches, op. cit.*, pp. 409–11.

48. This eclecticism is of course an outsider's assessment. To many *Baktāshīs* their beliefs are seen to be orthodox and even a mirror of a truer Islam than is to be found in many other Muslim communities. On this point see Nathalie Clayer, *L'Albanie pays des derviches, op. cit.*, pp. 77–9.

Ḥasan and Ḥusayn, for whom they mourn. However, the Baktāshīs recognise Abū Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmān as legitimate Caliphs. Both sects neglect the five prayers and the fast of *Ramaḍān*. The Baktāshīs, however, maintain that this is because they give emphasis to sincerity of faith and not to the religion's outward observances.

The Kizilbaş differ fundamentally in some important respects. 'Alī is a confessed incarnation of God who has revealed Himself in multiple hypostases. Before 'Alī, Jesus was the greatest — Son, Word, Saviour and intercessor. God is conceived in three persons, with 'Alī representing the Father, Jesus representing the Son, and Muḥammad, the Prophet, in the role of the Paraclete. Mary is the Mother of God. Below God are five beings — archangels that correspond to the five *aytām* of the Syrian Nuṣayrīs. Below these are twelve ministers of God, corresponding as they do with the Apostles and the *naqībs* of the Nuṣayrīs. Satan is not adored, but he is held to be incarnated. He appeared in the person of Yazīd, the enemy of 'Alī, and in his offspring. In nightly rituals, prayers are said in honour of 'Alī, Jesus, Moses and David. Penances are imposed, demanded and acknowledged. Bread and wine are received after being blessed. Sometimes a sheep is slaughtered and its flesh partaken by the gathering. Several Christian festivals are observed, including Easter. Al-Khiḍr is identified with Elias. The highest priest, the *Dede*, is an intercessor between God and man, while the two highest patriarchs of the Kizilbaş are regarded as 'Alī's descendants. Many shrines of other faiths, or sects, are revered, including the *tekke* of Hacibektaş. Woven into the fabric of popular observance are pagan survivals, sun and moon cults, worship of rivers and streams, and adoration of sacred trees in high places.[49]

Although apparently on a smaller scale than in Bosnia and Kosovo, the activities of Ṣūfī orders were not unknown in Bulgaria in the years between the two World Wars. Tadeusz Kowalski observed:

> The religious life of the Bulgar Turks equally offers a great number of curious phenomena which merit considerably more attention from scholars, as analogous phenomena have already all but disappeared completely in Turkey proper as a result of radical recent reforms. In the first place it is the matter of the religious fraternities of a mystical character. It is Hasluck who has first

49. F. de Jong, 'The iconography of Bektashiism', *Manuscripts of the Middle East*, Leiden, 1989, pp. 7, 16 and *passim*. On the Baktāshī presence in Del Ormani see F. von Babinger. 'Das Bektashi Kloster Demir -Baba', *Ostasiatische Studien*, 1931, pp. 8–93.

indicated the extent of Bektāshī propaganda in Bulgaria in former times. Following the information furnished by this author, there should be no more active Bektāshī convents in this country. However, the facts furnished by him on this subject do not seem to be entirely exact and they call for some verification. The Muslims sectarians of Deli Orman, called Aliyans or Kyzylbaš,[50] seem to be in close relations with the Bektāshī movement. In his interesting study on the Bektāshī convent of Demir Baba, Babinger has recently touched upon the question of religious tendencies in this region, and has rightly insisted, as in his other works, on the importance of Shī'īte propaganda amongst the Balkan Turks. It may be that the 'athletic traditions' that are so alive in the Deli Orman region, traditions that manifest themselves through the flights of popular athletes in the fairs and that are accompanied by diverse ritual ceremonies, are related in some way with the cult of Saint Demir Baba, mentioned above. There are beside the Bektāshīs other religious brotherhoods. I have visited myself at Ruscuk a small convent observing the Shādhilī rule. In all the country, one comes across sanctuaries, especially sacred tombs, of a two-way religious identity, tombs that are visited equally by Muslims and Christians.

Amongst the Turkish artisan, in towns such as Ruscuk, Razgrad, Šumen, Eski-Dzumaja, one finds the residue of an ancient organisation of corporations that are closely tied to the religious life.[51]

Non-Shī'īte Ṣūfī orders in the Balkans

Džemal Ćehajić, in his far-reaching studies of the implantation of the Ṣūfī orders within the whole of what was once Yugoslavia, has emphasised the predominantly orthodox character of most of the mystical orders, especially in Bosnia and Hercegovina where the *Baktāshiyya* which Alexandre Popović regards as having once been the *ṭarīqa*, or order, *'qui a été le plus répandu dans l'ensemble des pays du Sud-Est européen'*[52] made its mark early on, although it failed to maintain a dominance in the Balkans as a whole.[53] Islam spread in Bosnia and

50. See the comprehensive study of Krisztina Kehl (Bodrogi, *Die Kizilbaş/Aleviten. Untersuchungen über eine esoterische Glaubensgemeinschaft in Anatolien*, Berlin, 1988.

51. Tadeusz Kowalski, '*Les Turcs et la langue turque de la Bulgarie du nord-est*', Polska Kracow: Akademja Umiejtnosci, pp. 9–10.

52. Alexandre Popović, 'Les ordres mystiques musulmans du Sud-Est européen dans la période post-ottomane' in A. Popović and G. Veinstein (eds), *Les ordres mystiques dans l'Islam*, Paris: EHESS, 1986, p. 66.

53. For English readers see the useful résumés by Džemal Ćehajić on 'Bektashis and Islam in Bosnia and Hercegovina' in *Anali Gazi Husrev-Begov Biblioteke*, books V–VI, Sarajevo, 1978, pp. 83–90, 97–8.

Hercegovina immediately after the conquest of these provinces by the Turks (Bosnia in 1463 and Hercegovina in 1464–5). It was vigorously promoted and from the earliest days of Islamisation a powerful orthodox theological school was active. With support from the Ottoman authorities, it fought all kinds of unorthodox practices.

The Ottoman governors and Ottoman feudal society pursued a policy of protection and support for *Sunnite* Islam. They established *tekkes* of orthodox dervish orders, especially the *Mawlawiyya* (which has now all but disappeared); the *Khalwatiyya* which is still alive in Bosnia, Kosovo and Macedonia, the *Rifā'iyya*; the *Naqshabandiyya* (with its historical roots in Central Asian Islam like the *Baktāshiyya*), which is found to this day in Bosnia;[54] the *Qādiriyya*, and at a later period the *Tijāniyya* in Albania and other orders.

'Īsā Beg Ishaković, the 'duke' of the so-called Western provinces (1440–6), established a *Mawlawiyya tekke* in Sarajevo in 1462. Skender Pasha, probably during his third governorship in Bosnia (1499–1505), founded a *tekke* of the *Naqshabandiyya*, likewise in Sarajevo, about 1500. The famous Bosnian governor (1521–41) and benefactor of Sarajevo, Ghāzī Husrev-Beg, established a Khāniqāh (Hâniqâh) of the *Khalwatiyya* order of dervishes in Sarajevo before 1531. In the seventeenth century the great tradesman Hadži Sinan-aga founded the Sinan-aga *tekke* of the *Qādiriyya* order that was named after him in Sarajevo. These three orders thus played their part not only in the diffusion of Islam and Ṣūfīsm in these regions but also as a defence against the spread of heterodoxy.

The dervishes themselves had a particular role to play in the foundation of these *zaviyas* (Ar. *zawāyā*), which over a period became the nucleus for larger settlements. This process began in the fifteenth century in Eastern Rumelia, where there was a settlement of populations in considerable numbers from Anatolia, especially in Thrace, Serres, Thessaly and Macedonia. The dervishes and their elders, the *akhis* (Ar. *Ikhwān*), in their numerous *zaviyas*, fulfilled their duty by offering travellers the services of wayside inns, around which settlements were to develop. To a lesser degree the same pattern of growth may be seen in Bosnia. Among the oldest in that region was the 'Īsā Beg *zaviya*, founded in 1462, which according to its endowment (*vakifname*) was to be an inn and a public kitchen. The *zaviya* of Ayas Pasha was founded

54. See the studies by Ḥāmid Algar, *Die Welt des Islams*, vol. XIII, nos 3–4, 1971, pp. 168–203, and A. Popović and G. Veinstein, *op cit.*

in Visoko in 1477. The dervish Muslihuddin founded a *zaviya* in Rogatica a little before 1489. About 1519, the Hamzevi *zaviya* was sited on the Srebrenica-Zvornik road. In Zvornik itself a public kitchen, together with a *zaviya*, was founded by Bahši-Beg in 1530. In the mid-sixteenth century a *zaviya* was founded at Prusac, and in the mid-seventeenth century the dervishes played a significant role in the Skender Vakif settlement.[55] The close personal connection between the ruler and the dervish goes back to the days of 'Īsā Beg. According to Vlajko Palavestra,[56]

> Isa Beg Ishaković, the second son of Ishak Beg, was governor of the Brankovic lands, and later Sanjak Beg of the Bosnian Sanjak (1464–8). In the spring of 1448 he stormed into Bosnia and, after laying it waste, permanently occupied the Vrhbosna district together with the castle of Hodidjed. In 1463 he played a decisive role in the destruction of the Bosnian kingdom. He laid the foundations of today's Sarajevo, which took its name from his palace. In the summer of 1464 he was appointed Sanjak Beg of the Bosnian Sanjak for the second time. His name is mentioned for the last time in 1472. The present structure of the Sultan's Mosque was built only in the 16th century, on the site of an older mosque which must certainly have been built before 1462, and which its founder 'Īsā Beg later presented to the Sultan Mehmed II, the Conqueror, whence its name.

Ṣūfīsm, however, was not neglected by 'Īsā Beg. Vlajko Palavestra adds:

> In the western part of the old city of Sarajevo there is a mosque which is popularly attributed to a certain sheik of the Magreb. When Isa Beg came to Sarajevo he was accompanied by a dervish sheik from the western lands, from the Magreb who built a mosque on this spot.

Sarajevo became, and remained, a major centre for Ṣūfīsm and its orders. Even today the *dhikr* (*ḥaḍra*), the spiritual exercise designed to ensure God's presence throughout one's being (J. Spencer Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam*, p. 302: the 'lauding of the Almighty' or, as Shaykh Baba Rexhebi describes it, 'a repeating of the names of God, by invocation either silent or vociferous') is still regularly held in the *tekkes* of different orders. In the days of Asboth, who wrote in 1890, these services still maintained the ecstatic expression that survives today in

55. On Skender Vekif, see Džemal Ćehajić, *Derviški Redovi u Jugoslovenskim Zemljama, op. cit.*, pp. 41–4.

56. Vlajko Palavestra, *Legends of Old Sarajevo, op. cit.*, pp. 39.

Kosovo but is otherwise more characteristic of the Ṣūfī Orders in India and the Arabic Middle East:

The most frequent meetings of the dervishes also fall during the time of Ramazan: one Friday we witnessed the ceremonies of the Howling dervishes. Towards ten o'clock in the evening we started for Sinan-Thekia, which is situated tolerably high up upon the hillside on the right bank of the Miliaska. This Thekia – Dervish monastery – takes its name from its founder, the celebrated Bosnian Dervish Sheik, who was held in great respect, and was even credited with being a sorcerer. We found a quiet, deserted place, a building in ruins. We were cautioned to mount the wooden stairs with care, and to take our places quietly in the broad wooden gallery; not only because the ceremonies had already commenced, but also that the rotten timbers might not give way. The broad, dome-covered hall was only dismally lighted by a few tapers. Opposite to us there stood, in front of the Kibla (the niche for prayer), which faced towards Mecca, a haggard old man, with a white beard and gloomy visage, in a pale, faded caftan, and the green turban of the sheiks. Before him stood a circle of about twenty men in the dress usually worn by the Mohammedan middle classes in Sarajevo: respectable water-carriers, merchants and artisans. For just as Islam knows no ecclesiastical hierarchy, so the dervishes form no particular order, as our monks do, for example, even though they, like them, rely upon mysticism and asceticism. As a whole the ceremony differs little from what which I have seen in the heart of the Mohemmedan world. But a closing scene followed, which I had nowhere beheld before, and which in its affecting solemnity is unequalled. Whilst one of the dervishes commenced to put out the lights in rotation, the others, one after another, with signs of the deepest reverence, approached the ancient sheik, still standing before the Kibla, and bent low before him; after the salutation each was twice embraced by him, and whilst he who had bidden farewell withdrew in silence, the next advanced to the sheik. The simple naturalness, the deep affection, which was manifested in this silent scene, is quite indescribable. Upon the stage at the close of an act it would make one of the most effective of closing scenes. Yet where would one find so many actors who would, in the constant repetition of the same action, understand how to combine such free, dignified bearing with such reverent awe; the earnest dignity of the sheik with his fatherly affection? One light after the other had been extinguished, one dervish after the other had withdrawn, and ever gloomier did it grow in the dome-covered hall, darker the picture, more vague the dignified form of the sheik, until at last he stood there alone, hardly visible now, by the glimmer of the one remaining taper. My companions had already departed; but I could hardly tear myself away from the scene in which such deep, such true and noble sentiments had been displayed.[57]

57. J. de Asboth, *An Official Tour through Bosnia and Herzegovina*, London, 1890, pp. 206–9.



Plate 6. The outer courtyard of the Sinān Pasha *tekke* of the *Qādiriyya* order in Sarajevo, built in 1640. The circular painting on the wall was once of significance for Ṣūfi meditation and rituals. Ḥājj Sinān and his wife are buried in an adjoining cemetery. Till recently, this handsomely restored *tekke* was regularly used for weekly *dhikr* and prayer and was a centre of Ṣūfi activity in Sarajevo.

The part played by the *tekkes* (*takiyya/takāyā*) in spreading Arabic and Islamic learning generally in the region of Belgrade and in northern Serbia is important. Muḥammad Mūfākū, in his *Tārīkh Bilghrād, al-Islāmiyya* remarks:

In addition to their social rôle, the *tekkes* had their cultural rôle as well. The *tekke* was a centre for the imparting of culture to those who were part of it and of its following. The dervishes used to hunt for knowledge in the Ṣūfī sources and devoted themselves to writing, especially in verse. Usually in every *tekke* there was a library which housed, as was the custom, manuscripts concerned with Ṣūfīsm. In these *tekkes* were found some dervishes employed in copying manuscripts. In a general way, Ṣūfī literature developed and flourished in these *tekkes* and the bulk of it was in verse. I have already referred in passing to the fact that the majority of the Ṣūfī orders and their well-known branches in the world of Islam exercised an influence and extended their presence in Belgrade. The number of *tekkes* at the beginning of the mid-seventeenth century reached seventeen, although the circumstances that swept through buffeted Belgrade during the war of recovery led to the uprooting of the *tekkes* as well as to the destruction of their manuscripts and, by the nature of things, their literature and culture. Nothing important from the legacy of these *tekkes* has been left to us.[58]

The Qādiriyya

A review of several of these other orders can offer a balanced picture of the relationship of Balkan Ṣūfīsm to that in the wider, especially Central Asian, Islamic world. The *Qādiriyya*, for example, is among the most widespread of all Ṣūfī orders. It was founded by 'Abd al-Qādir b. Abī Ṣāliḥ Jangīdūst, who was born in Jīlān, Persia, in 470/1077. He came to Baghdād and spent most of his life as a Ḥanbalī preacher. After his death in 561/1166, his followers attributed to him mystical teaching. His *ṭarīqa*, after his death, grew into a major Ṣūfī order and came into favour in the Ottoman world at a relatively late date. As we have indicated, the Sinān *Qādiriyya tekke* was founded in Sarajevo in the seventeenth century. By repute a *tekke* was founded in Prizren, Kosovo, at the same time.

However, it is with another shaykh from Iran that the *Qādiriyya* in Kosovo associates much of its early history. This is said to have happened at the end of the succeeding century. Shaykh Ḥasan al-Khurāsānī came as a wandering dervish to Skopje, the capital of Macedonia, which at

58. Muḥammad Mūfākū, *Tārīkh Bilghrād al-Islāmiyya*, Kuwayt, 1987, p. 51.

that time was the centre of a Ṣūfī order that had established its own *tekke*. Shaykh Ḥasan joined with the other shaykh already in occupation, who told him to take a stone and throw it as far as he could. There he would build a *tekke*. The stone fell at Prizren at a distance of some 100 kilometres. The stone is still preserved and the *tekke* has been continued down to the holder of the office at the time of writing, Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir. Apart from Prizren, Gjakova was important in the spread of the *Qādiriyya* in Kosovo. It is especially associated with the life of Ḥājj Shaykh Islām who lived in the locality in the early part of the nineteenth century, who was a tradesman who became rich and bought land. He went on pilgrimage and visited Baghdād. However, on his way south he was lost in the deserts of Arabia and only survived through his miracles. The shaykh of the *Qādiriyya* in Baghdād became aware of his sufferings and sent two of his Arab followers to rescue him. He was brought to Baghdād, stayed there for six months and was instructed further in the *Qādiriyya*. He was given the office of *khalīfa*, and returned to Gjakova. He owned lands in a number of small villages, including Damian, Postosel and Radost but gave up his wealth on his return from Baghdād and distributed it to the Ṣūfī novices, the *fuqarā'*. He refused to give his wealth to his two sons, this being unworthy of his religious mission; rather it was his duty to teach them the truth, and stories grew regarding his miracles, and his ability to travel at great speed and to distribute largesse to the poor. He established a 'holy family' through his offspring by his two wives:

Born by his first wife

(1) al-Ḥājj al-Shaykh Maḥmūd (Šejh Mahmud)
(2) al-Ḥājj al-Shaykh Ṣādiq (Šejh Sadik)
(3) al-Darwīsh Zayn al-'Ābidīn (d. 1977/8; at his death the branch came to an end)
(4) al-Ḥājj al-Shaykh Ḥaqqī (Šejh Hakija, d. 1977)

Born by his second wife

(5) al-Darwīsh Yūnus (Yunis)
(6) al-Shaykh Ibrāhīm (Šejh Ibrahim)
(7) al-Ḥājj al-Shaykh 'Abd al-Raḥīm (Šejh Abdurahim)
(8) al-Shaykh Islām
(9) al-Shaykh 'Azīz (Šejh Aziz)*

*At the time of writing, he is in his thirties and is Shaykh of Gjakova *tekke*.

Al-Shaykh Ḥaqqī (Hakija) was born in Gjakova on January 13, 1913. He studied and traded, but on the death of his parents he had to devote all his time to the support of his family and became an *imām* in a local mosque and so continued for thirty years. During this time he was put in charge of the *Qādiriyya tekke*, and under his influence *tekkes* of the *Qādiriyya* were re-opened in Kosovo and in Macedonia. New ones were founded or old ones revived, including the *Qādiriyya* headquarters in Sarajevo after a long period of closure.

The *Qādiriyya* has played an important part in the encouragement of Islamic literature in Bosnia and Kosovo, such as the poet Dervish Muhamed Gurani, born in Sarajevo in 1713, who laboured hard to maintain the *tekke* there. Muḥammad Mūfākū lists four surviving *tekkes* of the *Qādiriyya* in Gjakova.[59]

One of the most representative of the Bosnian Ṣūfī poets, both in Turkish and in *aljamiado* (composed in Bosnian Slav, though written in Arabic script) was Ḥasan Qā'imī Bābā (born in Sarajevo about 1630 and died in 1691), long regarded as a senior Khalwatī figure, but whose Qādirī sympathies, and his affiliations, embrace a wider Ṣūfī circle; the close study of his *dīwāns* by Jasna Šamić shows this.[60] His first spiritual master was a shaykh of the *Khalwatiyya* resident in Sofia. Later, however, he became attached to the *Qādiriyya* and directed the Sinān *tekke* in his native city.

Dr 'Abd al-Raḥmān Zakī in his article on the subject of the Yugoslav Muslims and their heritage (published in *al-Majalla* [*sijill al-thaqāfa al-rafī'a*], no. 44, 1380/1960, p. 25) says of this building:

> Let us pass on to the *tekke* of al-Ḥājj Sinān (died 1640) erected in commemoration of the Turkish conquest of Baghdād. Sultan Murād III helped in its building. Nevertheless, the credit for its erection and establishment goes to al-Ḥājj Sinān Āghā who was one of the wealthy merchants of Sarajevo. This *tekke* is built from hewn stone which has been cut and polished with care. The most important of its parts is the *samāhāne* wherein the dervishes used to sing their hymns and recite their spiritual and mystical poems and odes. Its ceiling has been adorned with calligraphic ornamentations and decorations of the names of the most important of the Ṣūfī orders.

59. Muḥammad Mūfākū 'al-Ṭarīqa al-Qādiriyya fī Yūghūslāfiyā', in *al-'Arabī*, no. 285, 1982, pp. 82–6 (esp. 86).

60. Jasna Šamić, *Dîvân de Kâ'mî. Vie et oeuvre d'un poète bosniaque du XVIIe siècle*, Paris: Institut Français des Etudes Anatoliennes, 1986.

Dr Šamić gives a vivid account of the origin of this *tekke* (first described by Asboth, above):

One of the most beautiful monuments of the 17th century was the *tekke* of Ḥājj Sinān (1640) of Sarajevo [Plate 6]. Evliya Çelebi, who passed through Bosnia in the seventeenth century (towards 1650), claimed it to be one of the best known and the most beautiful *tekkes* of the region, even in the Jugoslav countries as a whole. This *tekke* belonged to the *Qādiriyya* order. There exist two versions of the history of its construction. The first tells that it was built by the Sarajevo merchant Sinān Aga at the behest of his son Muṣṭafā Pasha, the *silāḥdār* of Sulṭān Murād IV (1623–40). According to the other version it was built by the *silāḥdār*, Muṣṭafā Pasha himself, in the name of his father, Sinān Aga.

In our day, it is to be found on a hill of Sarajevo, in the Sagardzije quarter, beside the 'Vrbanjusa' mosque and its cemetery. The building is of cut stone. The great door gives access to the court where are to be found the tombs of the Shaykhs; the *türbe* of Sinān Aga and of his wife are in the cemetery behind the court. To the right are found the rooms that the Shaykhs of the epoch used to inhabit. To the north of the *tekke* is the guest chamber, *müsāfirhāne* and the chamber where the sick are cared for; both are extended by a large *semāhane*. The *miḥrāb* is to the left, the stairway of the balconies of the *semāhane* to the right. On the wall are suspended different musical instruments (nine percussion instruments, *birbir halka, kudum, zil* etc) and a great rosary (*tesbīḥ*). The traces of a rosette are left on the wall. On the floor several carpets and sheepskins act as the *sajjāda* (prayer-carpet).[61]

Having become involved in a riot, Ḥasan Qā'imī had to leave Sarajevo. He settled in Zvornik where he died about 1103/1691–2. He left his permanent mark through his verses and, personally, on the life of the dervishes there. His tomb is at Kula, a short distance from Zvornik. Near his tomb a *Qādirī tekke* was subsequently built. Ḥasan Qā'imī was reputedly the shaykh of another *tekke* on the left bank of the Miljacka in Cumurija street in Sarajevo, which was named after him. Originally his private house, it was transformed into a *tekke* in 1079/1667/8; the *tekke* belonged to the *Khalwatiyya*, but Jasna Šamić stresses that it is above all with the *Qādiriyya* in Zvornik that the name of Ḥasan Qā'imī is most firmly linked.

His major poetic achievements were two *dīwāns* in Turkish and sundry *aljamiado* didactic poems.The second *dīwān*, entitled *Wāridāt* (inspirations of a mystical kind), are predictions of future events — one of these

61. *ibid.*, p. 244.

was the Ottoman conquest of Crete in 1669. However, the first *dīwān* contains a rich collection of symbolic Ṣūfī verse. The doctrine of *Waḥdat al-Wujūd* is revealed and great devotion is shown to 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī who is described as the 'saint of saints', the 'spirit of the terrain' and 'the king of saints in West and East'. It will be through his help and ultimately the help of the Divinity that the 'blond Europeans' *Banū'l Asfar* will be ultimately routed. Ḥasan Qā'imī's poems are strongly rhythmic and they were intended to prepare the heart for participation in the *dhikr* within a Ṣūfī *tekke*.[62]

The Mawlawiyya

The *Mawlawiyya* became an important order throughout Balkan Islam and especially in the area of Bosnia and Hercegovina. According to Džemal Ćehajić, this may be observed in the influence of the thoughts of Rūmī on Bosnian poets and writers and in the way the order became influential in shaping Bosnian social and economic life. The presence of the order is recorded as early as the fifteenth century when its *zavija* was founded in Sarajevo (first at Šehovoj Korija and later at Bendbaša). Prominent in this activity was 'Īsā-beg Ishaković, governor of the so-called Western Parts (1440–6) and the second Bosnian Sandžak-beg (1464–9). A *tekke* was built on the right bank of the Miljacka river on the borders of the city before the Bosnian campaigns of Sulṭān Mehmed in 1463. The building included a *müsāfirhāna*. This was an inn where poor Muslim scholars, military personnel and wayfarers were accommodated. Meat, rice and bread were cooked there and served free of charge, the remainder being distributed to the poor children of Sarajevo. Guests were entertained for three days. From the description of the *Mawlawī zavija* by Evliya Çelebi in his *Siyāḥat-nāme*, it would appear to have been an active and well-endowed religious centre. The Sarajevo chronicler Mulla Muṣṭafā Bašeskija recorded that the *tekke* was extensively restored in 1196/1762. Many of its activities continued till well into the twentieth century.

The *tekke* was one of the centres for the study and recitation of the *Mesnevi* of Rūmī. It was also actively encouraged at Mostar in Hercegovina. A number of leading Bosnian writers and poets were members of the *Mawlawī* order, and included some who wrote in

62. *ibid.*, p. 16, 17, 18, 19 and *passim*.

Persian as well as Turkish. Their *Mawlawī* works pondered such themes as cosmic love, moral rearmament and aspirations of the soul towards absolute beauty. Characteristic of these writers and thinkers were their humanism and tolerance and the welcome they gave to converts. Ćehajić notes the success they achieved among Orthodox Christians in some areas of Bosnia and Hercegovina.

Four noted poets influenced by Rūmī's teachings in the Muslim regions of Yugoslavia were Darwīsh Pasha Bāyazīd Agha-Zāde (Bajezidagić) al-Mūstārī (d. 1603), who wrote an equivalent of the *Mesnevi* together with poems in praise of Mostar, his home town; Ḥabīb Ḥabībī-Dede (d. 1643), who preached renunciation; Rajab-Dede 'Adanī (d. 1684), who was head of the *tekke* in Belgrade and wrote rhymed glosses entitled *Nakhl-i tajallī* (the date-palm of transfiguration) to the love poems from Rūmī's *Mesnevi*; and Ḥasan Naẓmī-Dede of Sarajevo (d. 1713), who was deeply influenced by the same work and whose own *dīwān* is devoted to dependence on God (*tawakkul*) and devotion to Him.[63]

In contrast to the *Mawlawiyya*, the *Baktāshiyya* had far greater importance and played a far more significant role in the religious and social life of Macedonia and Kosovo in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The link between the *Baktāshiyya* and the Albanians was one obvious reason. The Pashas who ruled Macedonia and Albania during these two centuries had close relations with the *Baktāshiyya*. Affiliated to it there were janissaries, — most *čifluk*[64] owners, army officers, craftsmen and some of the free peasants. However, only at this period did the *Baktāshiyya* gain a strong presence even if several of their *tekkes* had been founded earlier, at Kosovska Mitrovica, Kacanik, Krkler and in a number of the major towns of Macedonia and Kosovo.

The Khalwatiyya

The *Khalwatiyya* order has as its founder 'Umar al-Khalwatī, who died in Tabriz in 800/1397. It derives its name from the 'retreat', *khalwa* or *khalva* (Ar. cell), that figured prominently in the much earlier

63. Much has been written in Bosnia on Rūmī's verse, *inter alia* a short article by Džemal Ćehajić, 'Some characteristics of the teachings of Galāluddin Rumi and beginning of dervish order of Mawlawis in Bosnia and Herzegovinia' (with English summary) in *Prilozi*, Sarajevo, XXIV, 1974 (printed 1976), pp. 85–108.

64. *Çiftlik* — farm or privately owned estate.

Kubrāwiyya order in Central Asia. This was the practice of entering into a retreat for periods of up to forty days, and fasting from dawn till sunset in a solitary cell. The *Khalwatiyya* began as a sub-order of the 'illuminationist' *Suhrawardiyya* order, and it spread to Shirvān, adjacent to Bākū, and among the 'Black Sheep' Turcomans of Azerbaijan. After the conquest of Istanbul it gained a considerable following among the population and in the Ottoman military forces. Sub-orders were founded in many parts of Anatolia, Syria and Egypt. At first, activism and a dubious orthodoxy brought the *Khalwatīs* under the suspicion of the authorities and they were in disagreement on a number of issues with the *'ulamā'*. However, by degrees, they moved towards a comparatively orthodox form of Ṣūfīsm. Its fortunes revived during the reign of Sulaymān the Magnificent (926–74/1520–74), and during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it produced a number of outstanding shaykhs and scholars. At the beginning of the latter century, out of the *Qarabāshiyya* branch of the order, there emerged Muṣṭafā Kamāl al-Dīn al-Bakrī, a Damascus shaykh (d. 1749), who undertook missionary journeys and many labours to gain followers and exert his influence in Syria and Egypt. While several of his predecessors openly adhered to the ideas of Ibn al-'Arabī in regard to *waḥdat al-wujūd*, he himself opposed monist, or rather theomonistic, views, and stressed the separate identities of God and the human soul.[65]

Apart from Bosnia and Hercegovina, the *Khalwatiyya* was, and perhaps still is, the most widespread order in Kosovo and Macedonia. Its members are divided into three principal branches, the *Qarabāshiyya*, with their *asitane*, or headquarters, in Prizren, the founder being Shaykh Osman Baba from Sereza, who established his *tekke* there about 1699/1700. It developed many branches in Albania and in the region of Skopje. The *Jarrāḥiyya* is named after Shaykh Nūr al-Dīn Dzerahi, who was born in Istanbul in 1673, went later to Egypt, but returned to Istanbul where he died in 1720. Several of its *tekkes* were established in Macedonia.

The *Ḥayātiyya*, the sub-order founded by Shaykh Muḥammad Ḥayātī, who was born in Bukhara[66] and allegedly reached Kičevo in

65. See the article 'Khalwatiyya' by F. de Jong in *The Encyclopedia of Islam* (new edn), pp. 991–2.

66. On the *Ḥayātiyya* in the region of Ohrid, Kičevo, Struga and elsewhere in the Balkans see the article by F. de Jong on the *Khalwatiyya* cited above and Džemal Ćehajić, *Derviški Redovi u Jugoslovenskim Zemljama, op. cit.*, pp. 112–15. The most specific study

Macedonia in 1667, is of considerable local importance. He later went to Ohrid, where he died at the beginning of the eighteenth century. F.W. Hasluck reports that the date over the gate of their ruined *tekke* at Liaskovik (1211/1796/7) seems to confirm the general accuracy of the chronology of their arrival in Macedonia. Shaykh Aḥmad Sirrī Bābā in his *Risāla al-Aḥmadiyya* mentions that a *Baktāshiyya tekke* (founded by Baba Abidin in 1887) also once existed in this town which he spells Lasqūwīk (today Leskovicu), lying just within Albania north of the Greek border.

The Naqshabandiyya

The *Naqshabandiyya* was originally founded by the Khwājagān or 'masters', specifically of Bukhara, and by Bahā' al-Dīn Naqshaband (1318–89). An early link between it and the *Baktāshiyya* is through the person of Ahmed Yasavī, who is revered by both.[67] It was introduced into Turkey by shaykhs from Transoxania. It also enjoyed the support of the Mughal emperors in India, and the Syrian lodges of the order were founded by a missionary from India. In the eighteenth century its reputation in Arab Asia was enhanced through the travels and writings of Shaykh 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nablusī, who enjoined its followers to observe to the letter the rules prescribed by the Sharī'a and to engage in silent meditation (*dhikr khafī*), as had allegedly been laid down by 'Abd al-Khāliq Gujduvānī (d. 1179 or 1189) whose practice in this respect differed from the *Yasaviyya*, where the *dhikr* of the 'saw-mill', the *zikr-i-djahriye*, was a public *dhikr* recited with a loud voice.[68]

The distinction between these two forms of *dhikr* reflects the origin of the disclosure of the *dhikr* by the Prophet to his Companions. Accord-

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is that by Galaba Palikruševa, 'Derviškiot red Halveti vo Makedonija' in *Zbornikhana Štipskiot Naroden Muzej*, no. 1, Štip, 1959. I have been informed by the shaykh of the Ohrid *tekke* and his wife that there are a few small inaccuracies in the *silsilas* printed in the article which they checked with the *tekke* scrolls preserved in Ohrid.

67. On the connection between Ahmed Yasavī and the founder of the Gujduvānī order, 'Abd al-Khāliq Gujduvānī (d. 1179 or 1189), who established the 'silent *dhikr*, see Irène Mélikoff, 'Ahmed Yesevi and Turkic Popular Islam', *Utrecht Papers on Central Asia*, Utrecht Turcological Series, no. 2, 1987, pp. 83–94. The Gudjuvānī order was the parent order from which the *Naqshabandiyya* of Bahā'al-Dīn Naqshaband (1318–89) issued.

68. *ibid.*, p. 89. While the *dhikr* of the *Naqshabandiyya* is *khafī*, 'silent', the *Yasaviyya* is *erre*, 'sawmill', or *jahriyya*, 'loud-voiced'.

ing to Shaykh Aḥmad Sirrī Bābā in his *al-Risāla al-Aḥmadiyya*, the *dhikr khafī* was a tradition adopted from the Caliph Abū Bakr who, once meditating in a cave with the Prophet, received it in a state of deep meditation and prayer with his eyes closed. As for the *dhikr jahrī*, this was a tradition adopted from 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib who, after being told to be seated in the Prophet's *ḥaḍra*, was told to close his eyes and listen so as to receive the threefold *dhikr* of the *kalimat al-tawḥīd*, the forgiveness of the divinity, from the mouth of the Prophet.[69]

Much influenced by the laity, the *Naqshabandiyya* differed from other orders in having the character of a simple religious association. Unlike the *Baktāshiyya*, with its intense devotion to 'Alī, the first link in the *Naqshabandī* chain of authority after the Prophet himself is the first Caliph, Abū Bakr. The order prides itself in its chain of authority (*isnād*) that shows that its way was that originally proclaimed by the Prophet's Companions, the *Ṣaḥāba*.[70]

According to Ḥāmid Algar, who has written authoritatively on this *ṭarīqa*,[71] the *Naqshabandiyya* first appeared in the Balkans in the fifteenth century in the person of Mullā 'Abdullāh Ilāhī (d. 896/1490–1) who was the founder of the West Turkish branch of the order. After journeying to Khurāsān and Transoxania, he became one of the pupils and novices (*murīdīn*) of the Pīr, Khwāja 'Ubaydallāh Aḥrārt (d. 845/1441), in Samarqand. After severe *khalwa*, fasting and meditation at the tomb of the order's founder he returned westwards, as *khalīfa* of his master, and led an active life in Istanbul. Later he moved to Yenice-i-Vardar in Macedonia although the expansion of his *ṭarīqa* in the Balkans cannot be said to have begun there.

The first Naqshabandī *tekke* in Bosnia was built in 1463 in Sarajevo by Iskender Pasha, Beylerbeyi of Rumelia and four times governor of Bosnia. Adjoining it he built a bridge and a *müsāfirhane* to accommodate visitors to the *tekke*. Another Naqshabandī *tekke* was built in Sarajevo in the nineteenth century, and this, by means of spiritual welfare offered to others, carried on the work of Iskender Pasha's *tekke*, which no longer survives. As Ḥāmid Algar shows, it is outside Sarajevo in other *tekkes* in the Bosnia region that the *Naqshabandiyya* has left a profound influence on the Bosnian Muslims. Several of these *tekkes* date back to

69. Aḥmad Sirrī Bābā, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

70. R.S. Bhatnagar, *Dimensions of Classical Sufi Thought*, Delhi, 1984, pp. 175–6.

71. 'Some notes on the Naqshabandī ṭarīqat in Bosnia', in *Die Welt des Islams*, 13, 1972, pp. 168–203, reprinted in *Studies in Comparative Religion*, 9, 1975, pp. 69–96.

the eighteenth century and are still active at the present time.[72]

The goals, character and membership of the Ṣūfī orders in Bosnia and Hercegovina have been distinguishable from those among the Albanians in Albania proper and in Kosovo in several ways. These are not only cultural or historical. At one time, Bosnian Ṣūfīsm was frowned on and deemed élitist, since it was expressed in Oriental languages that meant little or nothing to the Bosnians themselves apart from those scholarly men with the knowledge to study Ṣūfī literature in these languages.[73] However, Ḥāmid Algar argues that this view has been based on an inadequate knowledge of Ṣūfī practice in the *tekkes*, and is untenable. The rediscovery of Bosnian *aljamiado* literature, of Bosnian in Arabic script, and of verse in the vernacular has revealed that Ṣūfī belief and sentiments occupy a significant place in such literature.[74] Bosnian Ṣūfīsm is said to be *dhikr* (*zikr*)-centered, somewhat quietist, sober and subdued. There is a marked contrast between it and the sometimes ecstatic and violently emotional séances that characterised manifestations of Ṣūfīsm in Kosovo. But whatever may represent the life of the Ṣūfī *ṭuruq* in Sarajevo and in Bosnia as a whole today, the evidence from the past indicates that here too Ṣūfīsm had a marked individuality and was by no means divested of all unorthodox features.

Cornelia Sorabji has argued that in the eighteenth century the dervish orders were of sufficient notice and significance to become the target and focus of attention from followers of the Kadicevci puritan movement.[75] Kadizade, who died in Istanbul in 1635, was a puritan reformer who sought to revitalise the simple and puritanical lifestyle which, it was believed, marked the Muslim community when the Prophet was alive. The influence of his teaching lasted well into the

72. There is a functioning *tekke* in Sarajevo and a few outside the city and the order plays a prominent role in the Tarikatski Centar (based in Sarajevo, this body coordinates the programmes of Ṣūfī orders in former Yugoslavia) and the Ṣūfī publication *Šebi Arus*.

73. A meagre view of this literature was expressed by Ivo Andrić in *The Development of Spiritual life in Bosnia under the influence of Turkish rule*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990, pp. 67–9.

74. On Albanian *Aljamiado* literature, see the classic article by Hasan Kaleši, 'Albanska Aljamiado Književnost', *Prilozi*, XVI–XVII, Sarajevo, 1970, pp. 50–76 (with German summary).

75. This is indicated, for example, by the presence of Ḥurūfī elements in the *Malāmiyya* in Bosnia, as elsewhere. For a discussion on this issue see Cornelia Sorabji's unpublished Cambridge Ph.D. thesis, 'Muslim Identity and Islamic Faith in Socialist Sarajevo'.

eighteenth century in Sarajevo, although his movement was localised. The Kadicevci were especially opposed to the dervish orders. The chronicle kept by Mustafa Baseskija, *Ljetopis* (1746–1804), refers to these attacks, among them those made by an Emir Vaiz, *madrasa* professor and upholder of the teachings of the founder of the Kadicevci sect who attacked *shaykhs*, *dervishes*, *tekkes* and *ṭuruq* alike. *Dhikrs* were sometimes interrupted. Religious circles in Bosnia were divided at that time over the merits of the practising Ṣūfīs and their orders. However, it seems clear from an example like this that they were sufficiently active and alive to evoke vigorous opposition from those who were opposed in principle to their activities.[76]

The Malāmiyya

Perhaps the *Malāmiyya* illustrates this. The *Malāmiyya* Ṣūfī order in the Balkans, and especially in Bosnia and Hercegovina, was of significance in two specific periods and regions. The first, both in age and importance, was associated with the Ottomans, and centred around Shaykh Ḥamza of Bosnia and his descendants. The second, relatively recent movement is essentially Albanian and is distinct historically from the former, which exemplifies much of the character of Ṣūfīsm among the Bosnians in particular.

The order originated in Khurāsān and is attributed to Ḥamdūn al-Qaṣṣār (d. 271/884–5). Its doctrines are found summarised and expounded in the *Risāla al-Malāmiyya* written by 'Abd al-Raḥmān Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Sulamī (330–412/941–1021). Its tenets eschewed all outward appearances of piety or religiosity as ostentation, and even deeds of merit were to be performed in secret. The desire for a divine reward and man's approval were equally susceptible to debasement. An inward and secretive devotion was the only solution to this paradox, whereby the believer could fulfil the requirements of *Sūra* V, verse 54 in the Qur'ān, 'They struggle in the path of Allāh and fear not the blame of any blamer'. This teaching of the *Malāmiyya* was to be adopted by other Ṣūfī orders, the *Naqshabandiyya* in particular. Its message was to be diffused directly or indirectly in many parts of the Islamic world, including the Arabian peninsula. There was a link between it and the *futuwwa* and the craft guilds, the relationship dating

76. The effects of this movement in Bosnia and social aspects are fully discussed in Cornelia Sorabji's thesis.

back to the days of Ḥamdūn al-Qaṣṣār himself and to his followers and pupils such as Abū Ḥafṣ al-Ḥaddād and 'Abdullāh Munāzil.

In the Ottoman empire it was the association between the *Malāmiyya* and the heretical branch of the *Bayrāmiyya* order in a new sub-order (*ṭā'ifa*) known as the *Malāmiyya-yi Bayrāmiyya*, the followers of Shaykh 'Umar the Cutler (d. 880/1475–6), that presaged its later, sometimes violent history. Their writings of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries indicate indebtedness to the ideas of Ḥallāj; ignoring the doctrines of *fanā'*, individual loss of identity in God, and instead believing in a manifestation of the Divinity in the individual member of the sect. Such a view was unacceptable to the orthodox *'ulamā'*, who regarded a 'Quaker-like' belief in divine authority within oneself as a disregard of the *Sharī'a* and in effect a denial of a clearcut distinction between the canonically legitimate and the forbidden (*ḥalāl* and *ḥarām*). *Ḥurūfī* ideas and images that also shaped the teachings of the *Baktāshiyya* likewise found their way into the poetic imagery of the later *Malāmiyya*.

The Malāmiyya, as a sect within the Ottoman empire, had spread into the Balkan regions early in its history.[77] While Oghlan Shaykh is credited with having brought its doctrines to Istanbul from Anatolia, and was executed for heresy a year later in 1529, it is possible that Aḥmad the Cameleer, a native of Hayrabolu in Thrace, brought its teachings to Europe. One of his successors, the Hidden Idrīs, in the middle of the sixteenth century, may have diffused *Malāmiyya* practice during his travels as a merchant to Belgrade, Plovdiv, Sofia, Edirne and Gallipoli. By 1560 its doctrines had reached Bosnia, and it became deeply rooted there. The Malāmī Shaykh, Ḥusām al-Dīn, a *khalīfa* of Aḥmad the Cameleer, was tried and executed in Ankara in 1553, and a *khalīfa* of Ḥusām al-Dīn, Shaykh Ḥamza, a Bosnian by birth, was executed in Istanbul in 1561 after much public preaching. The execution of Ḥamza created a martyr for the cause of the *Malāmiyya*. Further persecution of his followers in Bosnia, after his death, failed to stamp out his movement. He had followers in Hercegovina and others well beyond the boundaries of the *sanjaq*. By the early seventeenth century, however, the *Malāmiyya* had noticeably changed. It had become markedly orthodox. One of its Bosnian shaykhs, Ḥusayn-i-Lāmekānī

77. See the introductory article by Ḥāmid Algar on the *Malāmatiyya* in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, pp. 224–5 for Arabic and non-Arabic works that list the basic texts on the Malāmatī mystical tradition.

(d. 1625)[78] defended the gyrating dance of its *dhikr*, yet upheld the primacy of the Sharī'a. The Malāmī leaders and their followers too came from the artisan class to a considerable degree and a list of Bosnian suspects in 1582 refers to two as knife-grinders. One of them, termed a *khalīfa*, may well have been a senior member of a craft-guild.[79]

The importance of Ḥamza in Balkan Ṣūfīsm is, hard to assess. That he was a major figure in Bosnia and Hercegovina can hardly be questioned. In the view of Tayyib Okiç[80] his execution was a major religious event in the reign of Sulaymān the Magnificent. Condemned as a *zindīq* (free-thinker), he came from a region where even before the days of the Bogomils, heterodoxy found a refuge. His original name was Bālī, which he derived from his predecessor, Shaykh Ḥusām al-Dīn. He was a simple, possibly unlettered man, but possessed of a compelling charisma enhanced by his ascetic life that made him subsist on food for animals thrown down in the streets. Following the death of Shaykh Ḥusām al-Dīn, he returned to the *sanjaq* of Zvornik, in Bosnia, to preach his *ṭarīqa*. The exact nature of Shaykh Ḥamza's teaching and the specific reasons for his condemnation are not clear in the accounts. Tayyib Okiç cites a pamphlet of refutation written by Mehmed 'Amīqī in 1614 to dissuade the son of a *sipāhi*, in which he characterised Ḥamza's doctrines as being against work and effort, pantheistic in theology, opposed to seeing meaning in dreams and with a generally negative attitude to this practice.

The Messiah was held in high esteem, although Tayyib Okiç doubts the view that Ḥamza deemed Jesus to be superior to the Prophet himself.[81] Apart from Ḥamza's impact on Islam in Bosnia, his appeal was also viewed with alarm by those *'ulamā'* opposed to him. Not only did the greatest local scholar of the Ottoman era, Ḥasan Kāfī of Āqḥiṣār (Prusac,[82] 1547–1616), collaborate with the chief Qāḍī of

78. On Shaykh Ḥusayn-i Lāmekānī (d. 1035/1625) see the article on the *Malāmatiyya* in OttomanTurkey in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, p. 228, and Džemal Ćehajić, *Derviški Redovi u Jugoslovenskim Zemljama, op. cit.*, p. 206–8.

79. C.H. Imber, *op. cit.*, p. 228, and G.G. Arnakis, 'Futuwwa traditions in the Ottoman Empire, Akhis, Bektashi Dervishes and craftsmen', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, vol. XII, no. 4, 1953, pp. 246–7.

80. Tayyib Okiç, 'Quelques documents inédits concernant les Hamzawites' in *Proceedings of the Twenty-Second Congress of Orientalists*, Istanbul, 1951, vol. II, Leiden, 1957, p. 279.

81. *ibid.*, p. 282.

82. See Chapter 2, note 30.

Sarajevo, Bālī Efendi (d. 1582), with a view to extirpating the movement of Ḥamza in Bosnia, but he, with other scholars, made a major contribution to strengthening a sober orthodoxy there.

As Tayyib Okiç remarks,

> Thanks to him, and to others like him, the Muslims of Bosnia and Hercegovina have acquired a reputation for being the established faithful. The activity of the existing religious orders in the country, Naqshabandī, Qādirī, Mawlawī, Khalwatī, Rifā'ī, has thereby been reduced to a simple observance of the practice of the faith, whether in ritual or in moral conduct, without being able to expand effort into the theological and philosophical controversies which the different *ṭarīqas* give rise to. The *Malāmiyya* and *Baktāshiyya* orders found no possibility to establish themselves there, contrary to the situation in Macedonia and Albania. It is true that a great number of Bosnians were adherents of these two orders, but they were always those who lived outside the frontiers of Bosnia [for example, 'Abdullāh al-Busnawī (d. 1643), who was likewise Malāmī-Bayrāmī and a celebrated commentator on the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* by *Muḥyī'l-Dīn Ibn al-'Arabī*].[83]

The uprising of the supporters of Ḥamza in 1582 had both a political and a religious purpose, the former taking precedence over the latter. Those who launched the movement had worked out who was to be a *sulṭān, vizīr, defterdār, qāḍī'l-'askar* and other such officers. The repression was total, so that Ibrāhīm, the grandson of Ḥamza, a silk merchant and an author of mystic works, was compelled to spend his life in the Arab world and to forgo the dream of a return to his native Bosnia. He died in Cairo in 1617. Muḥammad al-Muḥibbī, in his *Khulāṣat al-Athar* (Cairo, 1284/, 16–17), has furnished a portrait of him that is both strange and sad, yet fascinating in the way that it may shed a little light on the character, personality and beliefs of his still relatively little-known grandfather, Ḥamza:

Shaykh al-Ṭā'ifa al-Bayrāmiyya

Al-Shaykh Ibrāhīm b. Taymūrkhān b. Ḥamza b. Muḥammad al-Rūmī al-Ḥanafī was resident in Cairo, known as al-Qazzāz (the silk merchant), the great master, the shaykh of the sub-order (*ṭā'ifa*), known as the *Bayrāmiyya*.

83. On 'Abdallāh al-Busnawī (Bosnevi) see Džamal Ćehajić, *Derviški Redovi u Jugoslovenskim Zemljama, op. cit.*, pp. 190, 206, 208, 225. Likewise Tayyib Okiç, *op. cit.*, p. 282.

He was the holder of a position of high esteem and made utterances and pronouncements on Ṣūfīsm that were thought to be beautiful and agreeable. He composed epistles about the love of the people, including one that he named *Muḥraqat al-qulūb fī'l-shawq li-'alām al-ghuyūb* (the holocaust of hearts in longing for the cognisance of the transcendental), and there are others. He was born in Bosnia and grew up devout, pious and ascetic. Then he travelled around the Muslim lands and met the great saints. He was serious and he toiled and laboured diligently. In every town he acquired a special name: in the lands of the Ottomans his name was 'Alī, in Mecca it was Ḥasan, in Medina Muḥammad, in Cairo Ibrāhīm. He was initiated into the *Kaylāniyya Bayrāmiyya* Ṣūfī order by Shaykh Muḥammad al-Rūmī in the line of Sayyid Ja'far, preceded by Amīr Sikkīn and so back to al-Sulṭān Bayrām.

He resided in the holy cities of Mecca and Medina for a period, then settled in Cairo and lived in the mosque of al-Zāhid for some time, then in the mosque of Qawṣūn, then in the Barqūqiyya. Afterwards he lived in the citadel and sat in a shop where he knotted silk. He experienced unusual moods of possession and trance, and other strange and singular happenings. He loved company around him, but he also loved to be alone. Much of his time was spent in the refuge that he found in the graveyards outside the citadel, and at Bāb al-Wazīr, and the graveyard of the Muqaṭṭam hills.

When in a trance he raved like a lion and exclaimed 'I fancied that I beheld the Prophet, the blessing and peace of Allāh be upon him, and 'Alī al-Murtaḍā was standing before him. He was saying "O 'Alī, write the farewell of peace and of health and well being in quiet solitariness." He repeated that, and henceforth it was something that he loved dearly. He used to report that he had given birth to a son. When the *muezzin* called at the hour of the *'ishā'* prayer he pronounced the witness to Allāh's unity and to the Prophethood of His Messenger, yet the boy was still in his cradle. He [al-Shaykh Ibrāhīm] died in the year 1026/1617, and was buried with his offspring in the *türbe* of Bāb al-Wazīr, opposite the Niẓāmiyya. Thus mention was made by the *Imām* 'Abd al-Ra'ūf al-Munāwī in his [*Ṭabaqāt*] *al-Kawākib al-durriyya fī tarājim al-sāda al-ṣūfiyya*. What I have edited here is derived from that worked through with some abridgement and alteration. The Muqaṭṭam graveyard contains the tomb of the Imām al-Shāfi'ī'.

In Yugoslavia, however, it is a far more recent branch of the *Malāmiyya* order, the *Malāmiyya-Nūriyya*, founded in the nineteenth century, that has a peculiar interest, owing to the cultural link it has maintained with the Arab countries. Its founder, Muḥammad Nūr al-'Arabī, came from Tantah in Egypt. At some unknown date he travelled to Macedonia. Apart from a stay in Prizren, he spent much of his life in Skopje where he was called Arap Hodža. He died in 1887

(according to Ćehajić in 1897).[84] He left a daughter who had married 'Abdurraḥīm Fedai Efendi, a teacher who became Shaykh in succession to his father-in-law. He had successors, although the *tekke* in Skopje was destroyed in 1938. Arap Hodža founded a number of *tekkes* in Kosovo and Macedonia.

According to Alexandre Popović, he was a cultured man and a prolific writer in Arabic and Turkish, author of at least forty works. Six of those written in Arabic, now in the University Library in Belgrade, have been studied.[85] Muḥammad Mūfākū has furnished details of his particular influence on the Albanians of Kosovo and Macedonia:

In the second half of the nineteenth century we had a poet who was called Shaykh Yūnus (Sheh Jonuzi) who was present in the remotest north, in the region of Kosovo. This poet, named by his parents Ḥaydar, was born in a village near the town of Toplica where he completed study at the primary school. With the flight of his family to the town of Vucitrn he continued his study there with the teacher of Arabic language and literature, al-Ḥāfiẓ 'Ārif. After this he went to Istanbul, where he graduated from the College of Religious Sciences. Following his return, while in the city of Skopje, he met the Arab Ṣūfī, Muḥammad 'Arab Hūjā (Muhamet Arab Hoxha), who had come from Egypt to spread the *Malāmiyya ṭarīqa* in Yugoslavian districts.

Mūfākū adds that Muḥammad Nūr al-'Arabī had come to the area at the beginning of the nineteenth century to further the *Malāmiyya* and that his efforts had received a warm response from Albanians. He was able to found four *tekkes* of the *Malāmiyya* — in Kon Çan, Strumica, Prizren and Skopje. He spent most of his life in Skopje and it was there that he became known as Arap Hodža.

As a result of this encounter, Ḥaydar took up residence in this city until he was entitled to the licence (*ijāza*) to teach and initiate those who wished to enter the *Malāmiyya*, receiving this from Muḥammad 'Arab Hūjā. The latter gave him the name Yūnus (Jonuzi), and since that time he became known as Sheh Jenuzi. After that he became concerned to spread the *Malāmiyya* among the Albanians. These latter took to him and for him they built the *tekke* in the town of Suhadoli. This *tekke* was turned into a centre for instruction and teaching in Islamic culture in the surrounding district in view of Sheh

84. For the most complete details on his life see Kāmil al-Būhī, 'Arapski redovi Jugoslovenskih Pisasca', unpubl. Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of Belgrade, and A. Golpirali, *Melamlik ve Malamiler*, Istanbul, 1931.

85. A. Popović and G. Veinstein, *op. cit.*, pp. 75–7.

Jonuzi's ability to give language and religious instruction in this *tekke*. It was there that he wrote until he died in 1909. He composed much verse which was copied by his followers, some were lengthy odes on religious and educational subjects.[86]

Mūfākū singles out from among his 'spiritual and theological' verse (*ilāhiyyāt*) ten odes of a Ṣūfī nature totalling 600 verses. In the Arabic alphabet, then used in the writing of Albanian, he wrote 220 verses and another ode of 410 verses consisting of a clear exposition of the *Sharī'a*, the *ṭarīqa*, the *ḥaqīqa* and *ma'rifa* for Ṣūfī novices entitled *Nuqṭat al-bayān*.[87]

Two other leading scholars of this order are also mentioned by Popović. The first, Hadži Omer Lutfi Pacarizi (Basharīzī) (1869–1929?), was a poet and writer and man of politics (he is discussed in Chapter 6). Hilmi Maliqi (1856–1928), the second scholar, was fluent in Arabic, Persian and Turkish as well as in Albanian and Serbo-Croat. He studied in Prizren before returning to his birthplace, Rahovec. Later he became the Shaikh of the *Malāmī tekke* there. He taught and translated, and left two *dīwāns* of verse, one in Turkish, the other in Albanian though written in Arabic script.[88]

Other Ṣūfī *ṭuruq* in Albania and in surrounding areas are of more recent growth. The *Tijāniyya*, for example, entered the region from Turkey in the nineteenth century and gained a following in the north of the country around Shkodër. This was mainly due to the energetic propagation of Sheh Shaban and later, in Tiranë, the educational activities and teaching of Qazim Efendi. Though short-lived, it was sufficiently effective to ensure the *Tijāniyya* a modest place among the six Ṣūfī *ṭuruq* that were formally recognised in Albania.

The *Rifā'iyya* was likewise active, though more especially in the region of Skopje through the efforts of Shaykh Hadji Hatifi Abdulatif, Mehmed Efendi of Tetovo and the succeeding shaykhs of the Skopje *tekke*, Shaykh Hadji Saduddin, Mehmed al-Bakir and Saluddin Sirri. The *Rifā'iyya* with its offshoots, both Middle Eastern and local, was

86. Muḥammad Mūfākū, *al-Thaqāfa al-Albāniyya fī'l-Abjadiyya al-'Arabiyya, op. cit.*, pp. 154–6.

87. Muhamet Pirrzaku, *Gjurmë të Veprimtarisë letrare shqipe me alfabet arab në Kosovë*, II. *Gjurmime albanologjike – Seria e Shkencave filologjike* (Research in Albanian Studies), IX, Prishtinë, 1979 p. 215.

88. See Mark Krasniqi, 'Sheh Hilmi Maliqi' in *Jeta e re, Revistë letrare*, Prishtinë, 3, 1953, pp. 260–6.

established far earlier in Macedonia and Kosovo. Evliya Çelebi mentions twenty *tekkes* of this order, which had been founded in Iraq in the twelfth century, in Skopje alone in the seventeenth century. This Rifā'ī activity furthered the teaching and the study of Oriental languages and texts in Skopje, and the dervish tradition has continued there up till the present.[89]

A curious insight into the doctrines of the *Rifā'iyya* of the region of Skopje, or further east in what is now Bulgaria, has been given by the English missionary W.H.T. Gairdner, (1873–1928). According to Constance Padwick,

> Gairdner's most enriching Potsdam experience (1910) as regards his own studies was the friendship that he made with two ex-Moslem sheiks [one of them a convert to Christianity], the elder of whom had been the 'half-worshipped head of a pantheistic Sufi monastery in the wilds between Macedonia and Bulgaria'. Gairdner wrote 'They are sincere enough men, of that I am convinced. Also they are not Moslems. The question is, however, are they Christians? or something quite patent of their own invention? They look to me more like Oriental heretics of the type that in the second century used to call themselves Christians, but were more or less impolitely informed by Irenaeus and others that they weren't. The pantheist can make an equation of everything by the simple device of giving every quantity the value of zero, or as he would say, of unity. This is, I think, what our two Turkish friends are trying to do. I like the chaps immensely and am really interested. Oriental gnosticism in the twentieth century quite live and real!'[90]

We know more about these two dervishes, Muḥammed Nasīmī and Aḥmad Kashshāf (these, allegedly, were their names) from Gairdner's curious work *The Way of a Mohammedan Mystic*, a pamphlet of twenty-three pages privately published in 1912 by Otto Harassowitz in Leipzig. Gairdner wrote before R. Nicholson's eagerly awaited *The Mystics of Islam* (1914), and before his first meeting with Louis Massignon in 1913. Gairdner's little study indicates that these brothers had been born into a Ṣūfī family and had performed the *dhikr* since they were four years old. They were *Rifā'iyya*, and the elder of the two, Shaykh Aḥmad, had been shaykh of a 'Rifa'ite monastery in Bulgarian-speaking Turkey'; he was deeply acquainted with esoteric doctrines. Gairdner

89. On the Rifā'iyya *ṭarīqa* in Yugoslavia, see Džemal Ćehajić, *Derviški Redovi u Jugoslovenskim Zemljama, op. cit.*, pp. 149–55, and in Albania, Nathalie Clayer, *L'Albanie pays des Derviches, op. cit.*, pp. 150–62.

90. Constance E. Padwick, *Temple Gairdner of Cairo*, SPCK, 1930, pp. 203–4.

speaks of long discussions with him. Apart from the *dhikr* (notated by Gairdner), much of the work is taken up with an explanation of the seven stages (*maqāmāt*) of this order. Some of the details given by Gairdner seem more characteristic of other *ṭuruq*, and all the technical terms that he cites are furnished in Arabic. Violent actions during the the *dhikr* are mentioned (p. 8): '. . . At such times the ecstatic, in virtue of his State, and involving the merit of its founder, Ahmad El Rifā'ī, will stab himself with a dagger, and it passes in and out without doing harm: he will handle fire and the fire loses its heat and does not hurt. If he drinks a deadly thing, it has no effect. "Verily to find the signs promised to believers in Mark's Gospel, in these days it is to the Ṣūfīs thou must go" (sic Sheikh Aḥmad).'

Gairdner discusses the 'traces of ancient cosmology or astrology in the Sevenfold Way', traces of gnosticism, 'the Seven Stages' as they correspond to seven states of the soul (p. 11), finally culminating in the Seventh Stage, the Soul Clarified, Perfect (*al-nafs al-ṣāfiya wa'l-kāmila*) (p. 19). The study ends with a brief appendix entitled 'The Seven Tesserads' (p. 21), and cabbalisms not dissimilar to that mentioned by John Kingsley Birge concerning the *Baktāshiyya* and the *Ḥurūfiyya*. However, Gairdner merely quotes what he has read in Ibn Khaldūn and does not make it clear whether he was personally enlightened to any degree by his informants. There is an interesting diagram of 'the Sevenfold Mystical Way' in Appendix 11. The work was written in Cairo and, granted the authenticity of his discussions with Macedonian or Bulgar Ṣūfīs in Germany, the text may well have been elaborated in Egypt and reworked into a wider portrayal of Ṣūfī beliefs of an esoteric kind. Be this as it may, the work contains a curious and entertaining reflection of the views shared by Balkan Ṣūfīs at that time.

The origins of the Baktāshiyya in Albania

The *Baktāshiyya* was established in a number of areas of the Balkans by the end of the sixteenth century. The Turkish traveller Evliya Çelebi refers to its establishment. In Serbia, for example, he mentions the *tekke* of Mehmed Pasha Yahyapašić, which must have been founded before 1548 when he died. This *tekke* was situated on the southern side of Abaza Pasha kiosk in Belgrade[91] and the head of it was Dervish Mehmed Khurāsānī. Since its founder, Mehmed Pasha, was *akinci* Bey,

91. Muḥammed Mūfākū, *Tārīkh Bilghrād al-Islāmiyya*, *op. cit.*, pp. 32–3.

and it is known that the cult of Ḥājjī Baktāsh was wide spread among *akincis*,[92] it has been suggested by Hazim Sabanović, and not disputed by Džemal Ćehajić, that this *tekke* was in all probability *Baktāshiyya*.[93] If one turns to the situation in Albania at that time, there are many gaps in the chronological record. Birge attempted to reconstruct a possible context for the establishment of the order in that country. The invasion of Albania by Turkish troops under Murād II began at least as early as 1431, when Ioannina in Epirus was captured, and Evliya Çelebi reports that Evrenos Gazi advanced as far as Lake Ohrid — he died in 1417. Birge thinks it likely that his advance campaign took place in the reign of Bāyazīd I, who was fighting on the borders of Albania when called away to attend to the invasion of Tamerlane in 1402. It is possible that Baktāshī companions of the Janissaries accompanied them and that these may have influenced those who settled there, and persuaded the local inhabitants who were tempted to convert to Islam.

Yet Evliya Çelebi hardly says anything to confirm it. Rather, he alludes — indirectly — to a tenuous Baktāshī presence. He once met a group of people who manifested a marked hatred for the Umayyad Caliphs, Mu'āwiya and Yazīd. They refused to wear blue and would not drink millet spirit because they believed that Mu'āwiya was partial to the colour and the beverage. At another place he found those who observed New Year's Day, and who honoured Sari Saltik, a major saint of the Baktāshīs (more is said of him later). At Elbasan[94] he came across a *tekke* of dervishes who followed the 'way of the family of the mantle' and at Pugarados found *tekkes* of the *Abdāl* dervishes, who, as has been seen, foreshadowed the *Baktāshiyya*. This proves the presence of the heterodox, but it avoids any explicit mention of the name of the order as known later.[95]

The movement began to take root in the Balkans at the Ottoman conquest. It did so peacefully, slowly and without serious opposition. Those who preached it were handicapped by a lack of knowledge of local languages, fluent as they were in Turkish and Persian. They came

92. Irregular soldiers who were used as scouts or raiders. See Peter F. Sugar, *Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule*, 1354–1804 (vol. V in *A History of East Central Europe*), Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1977, pp. 39 and 343.

93. See Džemal Ćehajić, *op. cit.*, pp. 169–70.

94. Franz von Babinger, 'Ewlija Tchelebi's Reisewege in Albanien', *Mitteilungen des Seminars für Orientalische Sprachen*, vol. 33, 1930, pp. 137–78, esp. p. 169.

95. Besides 'adopting' Christian shrines and saints it is clear that earlier Islamic heterodox traces and Ṣūfī cells were equally subject to assimilation.

in tiny groups, often just three — a Baba and two dervishes. The principal centre for their departure apart form Istanbul was Dimotika (Dhidhimótikhon) on the border between what are today Turkey, Greece and Bulgaria. Among the earliest Baktāshī preachers, who allegedly reached Albania and its borders, were Pir Abdalli in Kosovo and Shah Kalenderi in Elbasan. This was a period when the small cells of the order were not established in geographically fixed *tekkes*.

These first missionaries were men of the scholarly stature of Baba Ali Horsani of Krujë, Dylgjar Hysejni in Elbasan and Baba Arshiu, all of these men are said to have lived during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The growth of a network of *tekkes*, especially those in the Tosk regions of Albania, was to follow and stem from the activities of Durballi Sultan to establish a base in Thessaly, whence *Baktāshī* establishments were to be sited in parts of southern Macedonia and in Crete. In the eighteenth century, there were established *tekkes* at Gjirokastër by Asim Baba about 1800, at Krujë by Shemimi Baba about 1790, and afresh in Elbasan by Xhefaj Ibrahim Baba (1723–1780). Further *tekkes* were founded, a number of them sub-houses in the adjacent countryside, e.g. at Kuç, Melçanit, Korçë, Kuit, Devoll, Prishtë, Skrapar and the Baba Hajder *tekke* in Gjirokastër. Among other *tekkes* were Koshtan and Gllava. Among the most famous was Frashër. These *tekkes* were not free from Ottoman interference and, on occasions, destruction, if the Sulṭān suspected the incumbents of working for nationalist or subversive interests. Baba Rexhebi mentions the burning of the *tekke* of Baba Alikos at Berat in the reign of Sulṭān Maḥmūd (1808–39), when priceless books of mysticism and philosophy in Arabic and Persian were destroyed. There was similar destruction in Monastir (Bitolj) and Melçanit. This wholesale assault on the *Baktāshiyya* in Albania served to strengthen its support from Albanians and was a factor that made the country the headquarters of the order after the closure of *tekkes* and *zaviyas* in Turkey itself in 1925.

Babinger, in his article about Evliya Çelebi's journey in Albania,[96] noted the lack of any description of a *Baktāshī tekke* in Krujë, and that the only *tekke* mentioned was one in Kanina.[97] Kissling, in his important article about the origins of the *Baktāshiyya* in Albanian regions,

96. See Babinger, *op. cit.*, p. 149, footnote 1.

97. On this historically important *tekke* in Albania, see Nathalie Clayer, *op. cit.*, pp. 308–10, suggesting a foundation date between 1491 and 1644. The evidence is inconclusive.

took up this point afresh and subjected the speculations to a rigorous examination. Conceding that individual *Baktāshī* groups, attached to the Janissaries, could have had some influence on the spread of the order, he was disposed from the start to favour a date that was late rather than early and certainly not in the sixteenth century. He drew attention to Hasluck's views, however exaggerated, about the much later impetus the order received under 'Alī Pasha, and the desire at that time to push back the date of entry into a remoter past.[98]

Since Evliya Çelebi mentions the founding of a *Baktāshī tekke* at Kanina and a *Khalwatiyya tekke* in Elbasan, both during the governorship of a certain Ghāzī Sinān Pasha, it is obvious that the *Khalwatiyya* reference might shed some light on the question of who this governor might have been and the circumstances that led to the founding of the Kanina *tekke*. By a process of elimination, Kissling concluded that no governor of the early sixteenth century could have founded the *Khalwatiyya* establishment, since the missionary activities of Maḥmūd Hudā'ī al-Khalwatī were not launched till the first and second decades of the seventeenth century. In Kissling's view, both *tekkes* must have been founded towards the end of the century, near the date of Evliya Çelebi's account. Of relevance were the *vizir* Qara Muṣṭafā Pasha and his aide Qirq-Ayaq Sinān, who were responsible for the demolition of the *Baktāshī tekke* in Adrianople district, known as Xiẓrliq. According to Hasluck, it was suppressed in 1641. The foundation of Kanina could be viewed as a direct result of this suppression, a substitution by *Baktāshīs* of its function on the soil of Albania, and perhaps encouraged by the ideas of a subordinate who was himself an Albanian. In Kissling's opinion, the meagre evidence, if interpreted correctly, suggested that it was during the period between the suppression of the Xiẓrliq *tekke* in 1644 (this being the actual year of the suppression) and the visit to Albania by Evliya Çelebi in 1662 that the *Baktāshī* order first gained a firm footing in Albania.[99]

When were the first tekkes built in the heart of Albania?

The chronology of *Baktāshī* influence in the region of Albania is complicated by the gradual nature of the Ottoman conquest. It was not

98. Hans-Joachim Kissling, 'Zur Frage der Anfänge des Bektaschitmus in Albanien', *Oriens*, vol. 115, 1862, pp. 281–6.

99. *ibid.*, pp. 283–5.

the result of random raids but according to a strategy facilitated by, or contingent upon, the Sulṭān's alliances with local lords and with issues that involved major European powers.[100] The Turks arrived first in Epirus and Albania, between 1380 and 1418, as mercenaries in the service of Christians. Later they were to dominate them and – during this first phase of Ottoman encroachment – they were to involve themselves in local and international conflicts or alliances. Eventually they reduced the Christian lords to vassalage. Following this the Turks established Albania and Epirus as Ottoman territories.

Back in the fourteenth century, this part of the Balkans was the scene of conflicts between the Angevin family. In 1380 Turks were introduced into the Ioannina area as allies of the lord of Janina Thomas Prealimbos, then fighting the Albanians; these Turkish troops were led by Shāhīn, later to bear the name of Shihāb al-Dīn Shāhīn Pasha. In 1391, Bāyazīd I annexed several Turkish *amīrates*, which by then had been formed using his vassals in Epirus and Albania. One of the conquests at that time was the town of Krujë, later Skanderbeg's capital. In 1393 Bāyazīd adopted a course of action designed to restrict Venetian trade. Aside from causing problems for Venetian merchants, he began to dispute Venetian possession of the territory. The Ottomans occupied the fortress of San Sergio. By August 1394, the Venetian administration in Durrës (Durazzo) was obliged to make pacts with its governor Shāhīn. The Turks were assured of their supplies of salt while they, in turn, permitted the caravans to reach Durrës. Shkodër was also under Shāhīn's command. Among the localities annexed at that time was Krujë, then governed by Helena Thopia, sister of Giorgio Thopia, and her Venetian husband Marco Barbadico; in 1394 they gave the town to the Turks. Its administration was entrusted to Constantine, a member of the Balsha family who had the confidence of the Sulṭān. Krujë's inhabitants were rewarded for their surrender, since Yāqūt Pasha and Khodja Fīrūs granted them exemption from various taxes.

It was of course after all these events that the *Baktāshī* order gradually penetrated into this and other parts of Albania. The tradition reported to Birge by Ḥaydar Bābā, a well-informed member of the order, was that Baktāshī Bābās accompanied the army of Murād II to Albania. Supported by a report from Zylfo Baba of the Turan *tekke* near Korça,

100. For this see Birge, *The Bektashi Order of Dervishes, op. cit.*; M. Choublier, 'Les Bektachis et la Roumélie', *Revue des Etudes Islamiques*, 1927, pp. 427–53; and H.J. Kissling, *op. cit.*, pp. 281–6.



Plate 7. Tomb of a *Baktāshī Baba* capped by a crown (*tāj*), and with an Arabic inscription, in the cemetery adjoining the Dollma *tekke* at Krujë, Albania. It is thought that the alleged *tekke* was the grave (*türbe*) of Baba Mustafa Dollma. The entire group of sanctuaries dates from 1779. Restoration in 1989 confirmed that the structure is a handsome Islamic edifice with mural decorations and magnificent Arabic and Turkish calligraphy dating from 1779 onwards.

and by a reference in a work by Turabi Baba on the general history of the *Baktāshiyya* in Albania, a number of names of holy men seem to support this order's early presence, though they hardly confirm it. One holy man, Qāsim Bābā, is believed to have come to Albania and settled there in the time of Muḥammad II (1451–81), whose successor Bāyazīd II (1481–1512) is said to have endowed many *tekkes*. Qāsim Bābā was especially active in the district of Kastoria (Kostur), perhaps as early as the beginning of the early fifteenth century. At about this time, or later, Yamin Baba is said to have come to Vutrine of Naselich, Piri Baba to Djuma, near Kozani in Greek Macedonia, and Ḥusayn Bābā to Konitsa in Epirus. These accounts may contain some truth, though their chronology is uncertain.

An early rather than a later date for the establishment of *Baktāshī* centres in the Balkans is given by Baba Rexhebi in a detailed chronology

that is included in his short biography of Muharem Mahzuni Baba of Gjirokaster.[101] This important *shaykh* of the nineteenth century served for a while in the famous *tekke* of Farsalla in Thessaly, that was founded by the missionary Durballi Sultan in 1480.

Krujë

Krujë may be selected as a locality to shed light on this early period. The Albanian town — 'wellspring', a fortress spectacularly sited — was surrendered in 1478 to Muḥammad II. It became known as Āq Ḥiṣār and until recent times remained one of the most important historical centres of the *Baktāshiyya* (Plate 7).[102]

A. Degrand, who wrote about Albania at the end of the nineteenth century, conveys the character of rural life of the *Baktāshiyya* and especially of the Babas of Krujë. Although he admits that little opportunity was afforded to him to discuss matters relating to the doctrines of the order, or to examine the content of its religious buildings closely, he found it possible to devote a number of his pages to the basic beliefs of the *Baktāshiyya* among the village communities near Krujë at a time when their curious eclecticism was still widely maintained. These beliefs were about the mystical chain of Ḥājjī Baktāsh with its improbable chronology, the high regard for the position of women in the sect, the adoration of 'Alī, the 'house-church fellowships', the non-observance of the fast or of communal prayer, and the strong national feeling that permeated all religious denominations within Albania at that time. The miracles of Ḥājjī Baktāsh, as told by the far-flung Baktāshī community (as it then was), have much common hagiography. However, Degrand singles out several of the leading saints, Ṣūfīs and Babas of Krujë for an extended chapter on *Baktāshī* hagiography.[103]

Degrand places Baba 'Alī chronologically at the beginning of the sixteenth century (a date that must be considered as far too early). He came from Khurāsān and settled in the lower part of Krujë where he built a *tekke* — a simple affair, consisting of four planks of wood from a cypress tree. Within the shelter thus afforded, he lived from the alms given to him by the locals on account of his good works and wise

101. Baba Rexhebi, *Misticizma Islame dhe Bektashizma, op. cit.*, pp. 270–1.

102. F.W. Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans, op. cit.*, pp. 549–57. The *tekke* there has been reopened.

103. A. Degrand, *Souvenirs de la Haute-Albanie*, Paris 1901, pp. 228–48.



Plate 8. The elaborate gravestone of a *Baba* buried outside the eastern end of the Dollma *tekke* in view of the range of mountains above Krujë, where one of the alleged tombs of the saint, Sari Saltik, is situated.

counsel. One evening he said to the humble townsfolk who visited him that he would be going on a long journey. On their way to work in the fields the following day, they saw a large cypress tree at the place where he had sited his primitive *tekke* the four planks had been transformed into this tree. The body of the Baba was laid to rest next to the tree and a *türbe* was built above the grave. Baba Bali ('honey') Efendi also originated from Khurāsān. He came to Krujë, it was said, at the time of its capture by the Muslims. One day he met a man leading a horse that was carrying wine. He asked him what the animal was transporting, and the man in his embarrassment told him it was honey. The saint replied that it would indeed be honey from that time onwards, and when the man arrived at his destination he found this to be so. Zemzem Baba, at an unknown date, met a sick person who begged for water from the Meccan well of Zemzem. The dervish tapped the ground with his staff and at once fresh water gushed forth. The sick man knew its taste, drank of it and was cured. The staff was transformed into a magnificent cypress tree. The *türbe* of Zemzem Baba was sited below the bazaar.

Baba Hujjat secured the word of the Sulṭān in Istanbul, and a *firmān* was given to the effect that the people of Krujë were excused taxes. This *firmān* was written upon a bronze plaque, and so was preserved. This Baba, too, was buried locally, though in a painted *türbe*. Shaykh Mīmī, an agent of 'Alī Pasha, founded a *tekke* at Krujë in 1807[104] near to the *tekke* of Bābā 'Alī. He was murdered by Kaplan Pasha and the *tekke* was ruined. It was restored by Bābā Ḥusayn of Dibra who was attached for a while to the Farsalla *tekke* in Thessaly, during 1794. The restoration took place during the mid-nineteenth century. Bābā Ḥusayn lived to a great age. His successor Bābā Ḥajjī (Haxhi), born in Krujë, was much travelled, but his efforts to purchase and employ machines to work his mill and farm aroused the hostility of some of the pious in Krujë, who made them unusable.

Babinger and Birge were amongst the first Western Orientalists to mention tombstones around the *zāwiya* of Murteẓa Bābā. This building dates from the beginning of the eighteenth century.[105]

However, Machiel Kiel in his research about the cult of Sari Saltik Dede in Krujë has established some observances of the cult there around

104. On the evidence for or against this proposed chronology see Nathalie Clayer, *op. cit.*, pp. 325–32, under 'Ibrahim Shemimi Baba'.

105. *ibid.*, pp. 326–32.

1567/8. This has provided a more stable chronology of early *Baktāshī* influences in Albania, especially in Krujë. Evliya Çelebi saw a *türbe* of Qāsim Baba during his visit to Kastoria in the spring of 1661. The most interesting discovery of Dr Kiel was made in the Ottoman census register (*Kuk* 27) in Istanbul, dated 991/1583, which mentions a 'congregation of Muslims that is appointed to repair the road of Sari Saltik'. This was fifty years after the reputed death, in Krujë of the saint, Ḥamza Bābā, in 940/1533/4. The grotto sanctuary of Sari Saltik is situated within the mountain range above Krujë (it has, or had, an inscription dated 1104/1692/3). The Muslim congregation in the census numbered ten families of *tamircis*. First these road repairers are mentioned by name, then the following is added:

On the mountain of Āqa Ḥiṣār is the tomb of Sari Saltik to which the people of the neighbouring district come on pilgrimage. The mentioned road is very arduous and difficult and gives those who come to visit it much trouble. For the task of flattening and repairing the road, having paid their tithe, the repairers referred to were freed from the extraordinary tax for the *dīvān* and Common Law Duties. Such was their reward.[106]

A point of special interest is that an actual tomb of Sari Saltik was said at that date to be at Krujë. We now know that Krujë had been exempted from certain taxes, possibly from as far back as the early sixteenth century. An earlier date had the support of Babinger after his visit to the *tekke* at Krujë. He published his observations in an article entitled 'with the Dervishes of Krooya' in *The Sphere* (no. 1525, April 13, 1929, p. 63):

It had long been clear to me that the widespread theory that this order had only existed on Albanian territory for about 150 years could not stand serious examination. Although Mehmed Baba's conviction that Albanian Bektashism was older than Ottoman rule in Albania (fifteenth century) perhaps oversteps the mark, yet what I ascertained later, especially in the dervish monasteries of Southern Albania, testified that the monastic order of the Bektashi was planted in Albania at the latest by the middle of the sixteenth century. This is already indicated by the numerous Albanian Bektashi saints who can with certainty be identified with that century.

Mehmed Baba invited us, after the usual refreshments had again been offered, to inspect the shrines of his own monastery. We traversed the middle-court, with the stabling and the new convent buildings, and passing through a tiny

106. I am grateful to Dr Kiel for his personal views and for the communication of details which at the time of writing have not appeared in print.

little gate, reached a broad meadow where there grew a huge fence. All around stood the turbes or mausoleums of the holymen of the monastery, which apparently owes its existence to Ali Baba, who died in 1562 (970 AH).

Next to the chapel of Ali Baba, that of the Jelaleddin Ibrahim Shemimi is held in particularly high veneration; he ended his days as sheikh of the monastery in 1807 (1222 AH), and he is honoured and revered not only as a saint but also as a poet. As a matter of fact, up in Krooya I saw for a few moments his collection of poems. A zealous Bektashi held them safely the while, and in some Bektashi song-books, which were also shown to me, I came across songs from his hand.

The third especially revered saint is Haji Husain Baba; he died only in 1890. But the present head of the monastery also stands in high repute, although he has only held his office for the last seven years. His home is in Argyrokastro (Albanian-Gjirokastra), in Southern Albania, where the Bektashi have several establishments which I afterwards visited.

Meanwhile the hours had slipped by, and as we still had the intention of paying Krooya itself a thorough visit, we had to take leave of Mehmed Baba and his four monks. After the group of dervishes and various objects of interest in the monastery had been photographed, we drove up into the mountains in the company of the schoolmaster, who had kindly offered us his services. The road was straight at first, but afterwards climbed in frequent curves, bordered by splendid old groves of olive. Soon the whole wide plateau lay stretched at our feet, and we could gaze far into the Albanian land. Away in the distance gleamed the Adriatic.

But our eyes were held by the view of the town of Krooya, which has an almost indescribable charm. Out of a magnificent wood of olive trees interspersed with dark cypresses the cupolas of the Bektashi shrines rise up, between them nestle the quaintly grouped houses of the town, crowned by the castle with its high-girt walls, from whose ruins a single clock tower raises its head — the only structure which has been able to defy the onslaughts of time. Behind the dwellings of men rise the steep, in some places perpendicular, rocks of the Mali Krus, on whose summit is situated the greatest shrine of Krooya — the tomb of Sary Saltyk Dede. It is reached by a winding path over countless boulders, negotiable only by men and mules.

It is striking how few mosques there are; I could only perceive two, and of these only one was in daily use — the mosque of Murad Bey, founded according to its inscription in 1533 (940 AH) and restored in 1827 (1253 AH). The other erected by Sultan Muhammad II, the Conqueror, with splendid stained glass windows, was almost completely destroyed, and a pitiful picture inside.

The paucity of mosques may to a certain extent be explained by the fact that three-quarters of the inhabitants (about 5,000) are Bektashis, while the rest are members of the Sunni branch of Islam. As the Bektashi possess no mosques of any kind the need for such places of worship did not arise. All the more

imposing is the number of mausoleums whose cupolas rise here, there, and everywhere above the dark groves of the cypresses.

The *türbe* of Bali Sultan is particularly important, because solemn oaths are made by the coffin of this saint. Haji Hamza Baba belongs to the older of the Bektashi saints; his death is said to have occurred already in 1533 (940 AH). that is, about the same date as Ali Baba. At that time Krooya had long been under Moslem rule. The outstanding landmark of the town — the castle which dominates the whole neighbourhood — was three times besieged in vain by the Turkish sultans, first by Murad II and later by his son, Muhammad II.

A Macedonian *Baktāshī* mystic, a poet of importance, lived in the mid-sixteenth century. This was Sersem Ali Dedje, a contemporary of the reformer, Bālim Sulṭān. According to Baba Rexhebi, his family ties were with the region of Tetovo in Macedonia and with Kosovo. After a promising career as a *vizir* in the administration of Sulṭān Sulaymān the Magnificent (1520–66), he was drawn to the mystical quest of the *Baktāshiyya* and served for nearly twenty years in the *tekke* of Hacibektaş,[107] eventually returning to Tetovo where, allegedly, he founded the *tekke* of Kalkandelen and was buried within it. The *tekke* later fell on hard times. In a *vakufname* of Redzep-pasha dated 1799, the construction of a complex of some size is mentioned.[108] According to Hasluck, it was refounded by 'Riza Pasha' at the behest of the *Baktāshī* shaykh, Muharrabe Baba. The Kalkandelen *tekke* came to be known as Harabti-baba *tekke*. It was a beautifully designed complex of celibate dervish-quarters with a number of meeting halls and refectories and a library. A cult grew up surrounding the personality of Sersem 'Alī Dedje (d. 1569) who was believed to have been the original founder. Local Christians identified him with Elias. A wooden sword was hung above his tomb.

The southern Albanian town of Gjirokastër was also for centuries an important centre for *Baktāshī* propagation and literary activity. One of the oldest Babas to laud it in his verses was Arshi Baba, who was born in Diyarbakir in Anatolia and died in 1621. In the following century Sayyid Asim Baba, who was born in Istanbul, studied in Hacibektaç and moved to Kara Ali Dede *tekke* near Dimetoka in Bulgaria, arrived in Albania in 1778. He founded a *tekke* in Gjirokastër in 1780 ('one of

107. Baba Rexhebi, *Misticizma Islame dhe Bektashizma*, New York, 1970, pp. 209–13.

108. See F.W. Hasluck, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 205–6.

the oldest in Albania' according to Hasluck),[109] and under his headship it established daughter establishments in southern Albania. He died in 1796. Together with his successor Ḥasan Bābā Turku (1796–8), he was buried at the gateway to the *tekke*. Later this *tekke* had many links, through its scholars and Babas, with Elbasan.

In the nineteenth century, Haxhi 'Alī Haqi Baba (d. 1861), who was associated with the growth of the Gjirokastër daughter houses, was a noted traveller in the Middle East. He visited Iran as well as the holy places in Arabia. He wrote a *Siyāḥetnāme* of 1000 pages and a 5000-page composition on mystical terms and technical expressions (*iṣṭilāḥāt ṣūfiyya*).[110] During this same period, lived Muharem Mahzuni Baba, who was born in Gjirokastër. He was resident in the *tekke* of Durballi Sultan (1480–1522) in Thessaly between 1845 and 1867, and he was buried there. This *tekke* was one of the most famous of *Baktāshī* establishments in the Balkans and from its well endowed and imposing portals went forth numerous missionaries, among them 'Alī Rismi Dede Khorasanli who founded the Baktāshī *tekke* at Candia in Crete in 1650. According to Robert Elsie[111], Muharem Mehzuni Baba composed Turkish verses that were 'permeated with Arabic vocabulary',[112] although his style would appear to be an indulgence in the use of *Hurūfī* symbolism, his employment of the Arabic letters for numerical purposes, with reference to Qur'ānic verse and to dates of religious significance. He also wrote in Albanian and he maintained contact with the *tekkes* in and around Gjirokastër. He was the twenty-seventh Baba of the *tekke* at Durballi Sultan.[113]

An important Albanian *Baktāshī* scholar of the nineteenth century was Baba Abdullah Meçani or Melçani (d. 1852), who some hold was the true founder of the Melçani *tekke* near Korça. Much of his verse is concerned with Ṣūfīsm and in one of the poems that is best preserved he

109. See Baba Rexhebi, *op. cit.*, p. 288, and Nathalie Clayer, *op. cit.*, pp. 280–90.

110. On Haxhi 'Alī Haqi Babai, see Baba Rexhebi, *Misticizma Islame dhe Bektashizma, op. cit.*, pp. 291–302.

111. Baba Muharem Mehzuni, in Robert Elsie, *Dictionary of Albanian Literature*, New York, 1950, p. 96.

112. This is only intermittently obvious from the examples of his poetry published in Hajdar Salihu's, *Poezia e Bejtexhinjve, op. cit.*, pp. 235–9, and in Baba Rexhebi, *Misticizma Islame dhe Bektashizma, op. cit.*, pp. 269–75.

113. On the ultimate fate of the Durballi Sultan *tekke* see F. de Jong, *The iconography of Bektashiism, op. cit.*, p. 18, note 98.

is laudatory towards Sari Saltik (Sari Saltek Baba) and other saintly personages of the *Baktāshīyya*. According to Baba Rexhebi, he was a Geg (an Albanian from the north) and a painstaking and energetic dervish. He was inspired by the guidance of Qemaluddin Shemimi and by the Babas of Krujë. He was also inspired by such scholars as Baba Husayni (Hysejni), who was of the Melçani *tekke*, and who was likewise buried there. He inspired Baba Tahir Prishte who founded the *tekke* in Prishtinë.

The Albanian mystical verses of Baba Abdullah Meçani were highly prized. He extols Sari Saltik alongside Ahmad Muhtar (Mukhtār) who is none other than the Prophet Muḥammad, 'Alī Dhū'l-Faqār who is called Zylfikar, Hunqar Haxhi Bektashi, and all the sacred scriptures of the monotheistic faiths without any distinction. He and his order, above all, typify the syncretic character of Ṣūfīsm in much of the Balkan peninsula. However, this development evolved over a period of time and owed much to its Albanian environment.

Muḥammad Mūfākū has remarked:

> The *Baktāshiyya* remained in its primitive and original state for a while in Albania. It had not evolved beyond the war-cry that called for *Shī'īte* vengeance for [the blood] of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib and his offspring. To compensate for this, its teachings lacked any special bias against Christians or against beliefs of others. This led to the *Baktāshī tekkes* being open to everyone. Furthermore, the *Baktāshiyya* took upon itself to explain, interpret and comment on the statutory rites and canonical duties in accordance with their peculiar way and order. It excused and allowed its members from performing the canonic observances — prayer, fasting, and the like — just as it allowed them to drink wine, lawfully, and so too make use of other things that were prohibited. To balance this, the *Baktāshiyya* promoted its own rituals and observances. Its individual establishment for the members was the *tekke*, which was devoid of any niche for prayer towards Mecca [*qibla*]. The gatherings for the *dhikr* and the recitation of it in séances belonged to varied ranks and orders. These took the place of statutory prayers, and the form of a circle was adopted so that each man faced another. In this way the *Baktāshīs* protested against the facing of any specific direction in order to pray, 'since there is nothing better for you than to face, or turn your person towards, another human being'. It would appear that these matters were encouraged and enjoined [on members], together with a *Baktāshī* emphasis on the unity of all that exists (*waḥdat al-wujūd*), [members] who were a section of the Muslims who entered and among whom were traces and elements of Christian belief. So in the *Baktāshiyya* they found an unusual solution [to their dilemma], enabling them to combine their

former Christianity with their outward and open confession of the Muslim faith.[114]

Dervishes were once highly colourful characters in the Balkans and were occasionally described by Western travellers in Albania, Epirus and Thessaly in the early nineteenth century. Not infrequently, the person portrayed was unfriendly and suspicious, unusually fanatical and at times stupid and unlettered. We do not dispute the sincerity of these travellers, or the fact that many drop-outs and beggars somehow found their way into the multifarious orders that competed within the Balkan peninsula. However, there were also highly cultured, poetic and dedicated men and women among them. One of the most warming descriptions of a dervish in Greece at that time is that in Henry Holland's *Travels in the Ionian Islands, Albania, Thessaly, Macedonia, etc. during the years 1812 and 1813* (London, 1815, pp. 283–4):

Our party, in leaving Larissa, was further increased by a Dervish travelling to Salonica, and by another Turk who was taking the same route. The Dervish belonged, as I believe, to the class of these *religieux* called the Bektashis: his dress was that most common among the Dervishes, a long cloke made of coarse white woollen, and on his head a tall white cap, in form nearly resembling that worn by the Tartars. His beard was of remarkable length: though sanctified by his character, he wore pistols in his girdle, while over his shoulders was suspended a long leathern case containing a *mandolin*, which we afterwards found to be a most important part of his travelling equipage. Though his exterior had something of uncouth wildness, his manner was gay, good-humoured, and civil; he seemed to court an intercourse with us, and sought to beguile the way by the chaunting of Turkish songs, a species of music which more engaged the ear by the loudness than by harmony.

114. These and other often very critical views (understandable in view of his Arab readership) are to be found in the author's article 'al-Baktāshiyya', in *al-'Arabī* (Kuwayt), no. 220, March 1977, pp. 64–8 (esp. p. 66).

4

MUSLIM HEROES OF THE BULGARS, THE TATARS OF THE DOBRUDJA, THE ALBANIANS AND THE BOSNIANS

Let us give thanks unto the Almighty who brings us forth from nothing into light!
The sun shines forth in all its strength, yet how meagre is the warmth it gives!
The wintry squall bends the elms at Jutbina. A bitter hoar-frost carpets the terrain.*
The snowy beech-trees bow to breaking point. Only the tips of maple-trees are seen.
Avalanches sound within the valleys. They tremble, roar and fill the deep ravines.
When the shepherdesses went to tend the sheep beside the river bank, they saw that the river bed was frozen. They traced their path to springs though these were all with hoar-frost covered.
Alarmed, the shepherdesses pondered, 'What will happen to our animals? When is it the Lord's will to melt the ice and snow?'
'Good Lord' they cried, 'who are these wayfarers princely clad? To us like knights they seem!
Have they not gone to scout those frosty tracts that block all channels?'
At this point Jera answered her companions, 'Sisters, these are no nymphs who, but a while ago, next to the river stood.
Ti's Muyi who, with heroes of his own, goes forth to tramp the woodlands and to seek for game.'.

(From 'The marriage of Halil' in Ismael Kadare and Kole Luka, *Chansonnier épique albanais*, Tirana, 1983, pp. 156–7. For a full analysis of this folk-epic, see Maximilian Lambertz, 'Die Volksepic der Albaner', *Zeitschrift der Karl Marx Universität*, Leipzig, vol. 4, 1954–5, pp. 243–89.)

* Jutbina is the fortress of the Albanian and South Slav hero Muyi Mujo, whose exploits, with those of other Muslim heroes of the Balkans, are described by Stavro Skendi in his *Albanian and South Slav Oral Epic Poetry*, American Folklore Society, 1954.

Oriental legends about the Arabian or Central Asian ancestry of the Bulgars and Arnauts

Arabic writings of the ninth century and earlier, that recount stories of expeditions by Yemenite kings to conquer the earth's four quarters, especially in Europe north of the Caucasus mountains, often furnish the framework for later simple or elaborated romances that provide an Arabian pedigree for Islamised peoples. These peoples were to be represented as defenders of the frontier regions of the faith in the steppes, the mountains and those plains that lay on the perimeter of the expanding, or contracting, Muslim world.

In the pictorial art and literature of medieval Europe, for example in the Hereford *Mappa Mundi*, such strange or grotesque peoples were deemed to be, at best, benighted — although Prester John, in Christendom, was felt to be a potential ally against the infidel. As soon as Islam had gained the allegiance or respect of such peoples, whether as ardent or reluctant converts (*potorice*) or as protected *dhimmīs*, Islamic scholars or story-tellers devised ingenious or bizarre games with tribal names and toponyms to show that ancient Arabs of noble blood had been there centuries before. Close by, they had planted colonies of their progeny, which would be 'rediscovered' at some later time. Subsequently, through faith in Allāh and His Prophet, they would be joined to the heartland of Mother Arabia. If not Arabia, then it was the 'Arab' seat of power in Baghdād, Damascus or Cairo that at a particular time in history came to represent the 'Camelot' of Arabian chivalry. Arab tribal honour had never been abandoned since 'the days of ignorance', but had been enhanced, purified and ennobled by the revelation of the true Qur'ānic faith by the mouth of its Arabian Prophet and through the incomparable and indeed inimitable diction of the Arabian tongue.

One such account is furnished by Abū Ḥāmid of Granada in the twelfth century.[1] Shaddād b. 'Ād, the legendary Yemenite megalomaniac of pre-Islamic times, had a cousin named al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. 'Alwān who commanded an army of 10,000 giants. One of his men, Lām b. 'Āmir, was a believer in the Prophet, Hūd. This displeased al-Ḍaḥḥāk, but Lām eluded him by pretending to go on a hunt. He crossed the Caucasus and reached the land of the Slavs and the Hungarians

1. Gabriel Ferrand, 'Le Tuḥfat al-Albāb de Abū Ḥāmid al Andalusī al Garnāṭī, édité d'après les Mss 2167, 2168, 2170, de la Bibliothèque Nationale et le Ms d'Alger', *Journal Asiatique*, July-Sept. 1925, pp. 129–31.

(Bāshgūrd). He arrived in a region west of Byzantium allegedly near the Black Sea. There he saw many trees and plants. He found springs of water and lush gardens and the air was cool and fresh. He discovered mines of blackish coloured lead (a commodity like wood that made the inner Balkan region economically important), and ordered that a dome of lead should be erected so that he could be buried within it. On a stone above his last resting-place were engraved some Arabic verses. These indicated that he was a believer in the Prophet Hūd, and explained how and why he had raised the dome of lead. They foretold that a Prophet (Muḥammad) was to be born and how Lām regretted that his mortal years had not been prolonged so that he could have met him in the flesh and given him homage.

Al-Ḍaḥḥāk, wrathful at being given the slip by his underling, sent an army led by two commanders in pursuit of him. One commander reached the Bulghār capital on the Volga, the other reached the Hungarians (Bāshghūrd). Al-Ḍaḥḥāk was slain. The Yemenite commanders, and their giants, settled among these northern peoples. Abū Ḥāmid reports how he had seen their enormous bones and teeth, and how the *Qāḍī* of Bulghār, Ya'qūb b. al-Nu'mān, had informed him that a giant sister of one such member of this 'Ādite race – Abū Ḥāmid had met him and observed his strength – had killed her husband by hugging him to her chest in a way that recalled the embraces of a bear.[2]

Another, later account, that shares certain common diffusionist features with it may be read in the Arabic work entitled 'A cogent demonstration of the lineage of the Circassians from Quraysh'.[3] This anonymous Mamlūk composition is a mixture of legendary Arab sagas that supposedly took place in the days of the Caliph 'Umar. The source is given as an epistle or essay (*risāla*) written by a certain *imām* of a mosque in Ak Şehir in Turkey. He was named Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Ṣafadī and he died in 980/1272–3. Part of this essay is about a noted Arab named Kisā b. 'Ikrima b. Wadd b 'Amr who, during horseplay, blinded another of the participants in one eye. Fearing the Caliph's wrath and revenge, he fled with 30,000 men into Asia Minor and thence into Byzantine lands in the Balkans and in the Caucasus regions of the Black Sea near the southern borders of Bulghār, which is specifically

2. *ibid.*, p. 131.

3. P.M. Holt, *Studies in the History of the Near East*, London: Frank Cass, 1973, pp. 220–30.

mentioned in the text. The area where he and his men were to settle was called Circassia. It was a landscape of watery glades, gardens and abundant produce. There they maintained the noble Arab virtues of pre-Islamic Arabia.

However, according to the *risāla* other Christian or pagan Arabs were to flee and settle in northerly regions in the early days of Islam. Two of the tribes specifically mentioned are the Banū Ghassān under Jabala b. al-Ayham — who, it is said, was given fiefs by Constantine II in Albania (Jabal Arnūd/Arna'ūd) and the Banū Mudlij who were settled in Spain. A third group had accompanied Kisā to Circassia. The *risāla* mentions that the Ghassānids were still represented by descendants in Albania at the time when its author Shihāb al-Dīn wrote his work. Since the Byzantine emperor Nicephorus I (802–11), a contemporary of Hārūn al-Rashīd, was himself a possible descendant of Jabala al-Ghassānī (who, as the last Ghassānid ruler, had fled to Constantinople), it is not difficult to see how such a story originated, first in the Arab world and secondly within Ottoman sources.

We have seen how Krujë (Āq Ḥiṣār), in Albania, passed into Ottoman hands in 1396, during the reign of Bāyazīd. Both Yaqut Pasha and Hoce Firuz eased some of the tax impositions there. This is also recorded in 1431.[4] Hoce Firuz, in the last year of the reign of Bāyazīd, became *beylerbeyi* of Rumelia, Yaqut Pasha having previously occupied this post. After defeat by Tamerlane at Ankara in 1402, Ottoman influence weakened in Albania; the Venetians increased their pressure and captured the city of Shkodër. Betwen 1410 and 1415, Krujë was held by Nichita Thopia, but in 1415 Muhammad Çelebi, having achieved Ottoman unity, turned his attentions to Albania, and especially the region of Krujë. In 1431 he revived the taxation concessions the town had enjoyed and it became the centre of a *subaşilik*, although it may well have had this status earlier for a time. In 1438 Iskander Beg, the future Skanderbeg Kastrioti, held the post of *subaş*.

This campaign of Muḥammad I afforded Sayyid Aḥmad b. al-Sayyid Zaynī Daḥlān,[5] an opportunity to introduce in his Arabic writings

4. Elizabeth A. Zachariadon, 'Marginalia on the History of Epirus and Albania (1380–1418)', *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, vol. 78, Vienna, 1988, p. 196.

5. al-Sayyid Aḥmad b. al-Sayyid Zayni Daḥlān, *al-Futūḥāt al-Islāmiyya, ba'd muḍiyy al Futūḥāt al-Nabawiyya*, Cairo, 1323 AH, p. 81. For the factual history of relations between Byzantium and the Ghassānid Arabs see Paul Gombert, *Byzance avant l'Islam*, Paris, 1951, esp. pp. 249–70.

two legendary reports explaining the Arabian origin of the Albanians. He wrote:

Mention of the raid to the land of the Serbs, Bosnia and the Arnauts

In 863 [1458/9], he turned towards the land of the Serbs and made conquests there. In 866 [1461/2] he conquered the region of Trebizond and Sinope and brought its master captive to Constantinople. Sulṭān Muḥammad killed him. He had eight sons and [the Sulṭān] killed them [also]. The lord of Sinope was in correspondence with the king of the Persians and assisted him against Sulṭān Muḥammad. In the year 867 (1462/3) [the Sulṭān] turned afresh to complete his possession of the province of Bosnia and launched raids on the provinces of the *Aflāq* (Wallachians or Vlachs), *the Bughdān* (Moldavians) and the *Ṣaqāliba*. Then he directed his resolution towards the conquest of the country of the Albanians (*Arnāʾūṭ*). They are a race of Christians who possess a fortitude to withstand trials and tribulations. They take upon themselves hard labours. It is said that by origin they are from the Arabs of Syria, from the Banū Ghassān. They emigrated from Syria after Allāh had brought [the revelation of] *al-Islām*. They came from Syria and settled in this country. It is also said that by origin they are from the Berbers. They crossed the sea from the Maghrib in this direction. Then ignorance overcame them and they became Christians.

The Sulṭān entered the land of the Albanians, pillaged it and gained control over a number of citadels there. He ordered that a fortified castle should be constructed at a major frontier point to serve as a barrier between us and the infidels. He garrisoned it with men and called it *Āq Ḥiṣār*. Within it he deposited cannons and firearms sufficient to protect it. In the year 872 (1667/8), Sulṭān Muḥammad was angry with the lord of Konia and Laranda, and seized Karaman province from him. There he installed his son Sulṭān Muṣṭafā. Then he gained possession of obstinate fortresses such as Qal'at Arklī and Qal'at Āq Sarāy, Qal'at Kūlak and Qal'at Kūlī and appointed all of these to the possession of his son. In 875 (1470/1) he conquered the peninsula/island of Arghabūz,[6] one of the provinces of Venice, after descending in force on its people and slaughtering the majority of them. Then he conquered the rest of the land of the Albanians.

The story of the exile of the Banū Ghassān in Albania makes a pair with the account of al-Ṣafadī, source of the story of the Circassians' origin from Quraysh. It is significant that Albania and Spain are men-

6. It is possible that what is meant is Hvar (Dalmatia), namely Vrboska, and the area of Korčula. J.A. Cuddon in his *Companion Guide to Jugoslavia*, London, 1986, pp. 105–14, has a number of references to folk memories (and dances) of Arabs, Moors and Turks in the area. Hvar was raided by Uluz-Ali ('Ulj 'Alī, see Chapter 6) in 1571.

tioned together. The reference to the Berbers, on the other hand, in the reports of Berber settlement among the Roman armies in the Balkans in ancient times, or else in some kind of way has come to be associated with the story of Arabs from Sicily or 'Black Arabs' in the area of Greece, Albania and parts of Yugoslavia. In either case, be it the Ghassānids or the Berbers, some allusion to population transfer and the settlement of mercenaries appears in the web of the narrative, however fancifully the tale is expressed.

An alleged kinship between the Albanians and some Caucasians on the one hand and the Banū Ghassān on the other seems to be a variant of a ruse employed far earlier by some of the *Ṣaqāliba* in Moorish Spain. Ignaz Goldziher pointed out in his article 'Die Su'ûbijja unter den Muhammedanern in Spanien',[7] that the *Ṣaqāliba* were a very mixed group, although a genuine Slav element was to be found. Some of them may have stemmed from Balkan tribes. If Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī is to be believed, it is possible that some Bogomil or 'Adoptionist' elements were among them; 'The *Ṣaqāliba* confess belief in the Creator whom they name *ni'am* (perhaps derived from the Slavonic Bog?). He had a son. The world was inundated and the only person who remained was the Son of God (I think they mean Noah).'[8]

Mixing and intermarriage as clients (*mawālī*) with the Arabs in Spain stimulated the invention of imaginative and fictitious claims to Arab ancestry. These were disputed although it was conceded that a number of the *Ṣaqāliba* were exceedingly skilled in Arabic language and grammar. Very popular was an alleged descent from Jabala b. al-Ayham al-Ghassānī through a certain Mughīth. To cite the historian al-Maqqarī, 'his true lineage is Mughīth b. al-Ḥārith b. al-Ḥuwayrith, b. Jabala b. al-Ayham al-Ghassānī.'

A recent story on this particular theme is told of Wāṣā Pasha, *Mutaṣarrif* of Lebanon in 1883–92. Of Albanian origin, he was born at Shkodër in 1824. According to Muḥammad Khāṭir,[9] 'Wāṣā Pasha was of Albanian origin, Catholic in religion. He was of the Mirdite clan which, our major historians confirm, traces its origin to 12,000 rebellious ones (*marada*) whom Justinian II evacuated from Lebanon. It

7. Presented at the 12th International Congress of Orientalists in Rome, October 1899.

8. The evidence available is so scanty as to be highly speculative.

9. Muhammad Khāṭir, *'Ahd al-mutaṣarrifīn fī Lubnān (1861–1918)* (The Age of the *Mutaṣarrifīn* in Lebanon), Beirut: Manshūrāt al-Jāmi'a al-Lubnāniyya (Dept. of Historical Studies), 1967, p. 139.

is related that the Maronite bishop, Yūsuf al-Dibs, spoke frequently to Wāṣā Pasha about this link that tied him to Lebanon and he corroborated what he said, confirming that in this tribe there was an unbroken tradition from father to son that supported that genealogical tie between the *Marada* and the Mirdites.'

Philip Hitti, in his *History of the Arabs*, describes these Christian Arabs in the service of the Byzantine cause who were to take an active part in the early conflicts between the Byzantines and the Muslim Arabs.

A people of undetermined origin leading a semi-independent national life in the fortresses of al-Lukkām (Amanus), these Jarājimah (less correctly Jurājimah), as they were also styled by the Arabs, furnished irregular troops and proved a thorn in the side of the Arab caliphate in Syria. On the Arab-Byzantine border they formed 'a brass wall' in defence of Asia Minor. About 666, their bands penetrated into the heart of Lebanon and became the nucleus around which many fugitives and malcontents, among whom were the Maronites, grouped themselves. Mu'āwiyah agreed to the payment of a heavy annual tribute to the Byzantine emperor in consideration of his withdrawal of support from this internal enemy, to whom he also agreed to pay a tax. About 689 Justinian II once more loosed the Mardaite highlanders on Syria, and 'Abd-al-Malik, following 'the precedent of Mu'āwiyah', agreed to the new conditions laid down by the emperor and agreed to pay a thousand dinars weekly to the Jarājimah. Finally the majority of the invaders evacuated Syria and settled in the inner provinces or on the coast of Asia Minor, where they became sea farmers; others remained and constituted one of the elements that entered into the composition of the Maronite community that still flourishes in the northern Lebanon.[10]

10. Hitti (Mardaites), pp. 204–5. See 'Abbas al-'Azzāwī, *Tārīkh al-'Iraq bayn iḥtilālayn*, Baghdād, 1949, vol. IV, p. 48, and Mūfakū *al-Thaqāfa al-Albāniyya*, p. 11. According to 'Azzāwī, al-Wāli Āyās Bāshā (952–1046/1546–6) was of Albanian origin and rose to the Baklarbeyship – he was the brother of Sinān Pasha who conquered the Yemen for the Turks. He assumed the governorship of Baghdād after sacking Ṣūlāq Farhād Pasha, and then became *wazīr*, following the battle of Basra. According to the Ottoman archives, he assumed the post of governor of Diyarbekir in 956/1548, then Erzerum, and died in 967/1559/60. According to the *Qāmūs al-'Ālām* (by Sami Frashēri), he was executed in Erzerum after facilitating the flight of al-Shahzāda Bāyazīd to Iran in 966/1558/9. He left several offspring: Maḥmūd Pasha and Muṣṭafā Pasha, and among his Mamlūks was the poet Ṣāfī Çelebi who died in 997/1588/9.

The ridiculous lengths to which an Arabic root for the Albanian name Arberi or Arbanese (which is quite distinct from the country's name Shqipëria, as is found today) may be seen in an acid comment made by 'Abbās al-'Azzāwī in a footnote to his description of the governorship of Āyās Bāshā in Iraq. He remarks: 'The origin of the expression Arbāniyā or Arbariyā, some pronouncing it in the former manner, and some in the latter; the Europeans say Albāniyā, and so it has come to us from their geographical

The fanciful name- and word-play in such accounts as these is neither more banal nor more plausible than numerous others that one encounters throughout the Muslim world. However, if large numbers of 'Slavs' were settled in Syria and Asia Minor by the Byzantines, and if later some of them at least were transferred to remote areas of the Byzantine empire, frontier areas in particular, then it is not impossible that some Middle Eastern tales and oral traditions were carried with them. This was long before the arrival of the Ottoman Turks. Furthermore, all this folk epic soon attracted to itself other stories that may have come into the Balkans from Arab Sicily, Moorish Spain and the eastern steppes, brought by the Pechenegs, Khwārizmians, Cumans and other Oriental peoples. The Ottomans, on their arrival, found traces of these in Albania, in Bulgaria and within the mountain regions of Macedonia, Kosovo and behind the Dalmatian coast.

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and political translations. In Turkish it has appeared distorted, via the Byzantine Greeks who utter the word as Arbāniyā, or Arwāniyā, for the kingdom, and Arwānit for the people. The Turks pronounce it Arnārawīt or 'Ārnāwud. Some of them have shown that its origin is found in a Persian word, 'Ạrnabūd, meaning 'It was no shame', or an Arabic origin, 'It is a shame for us to return' [*'ār 'alaynā an na'ūd*]. Such is childish!'

An earlier European reference to these Arabian connections is to be read in 'Notice géographique sur l'Albanie' in *Mémoires sur la Grèce et sur l'Albanie* (1828), written by Ibrahim Manzour (Manṣūr) Efendi. On page xxv he writes:

> The Albanians pretend that they are the descendants of the Arab tribe named *Arnaboude* [sic], expelled from Arabia at the epoch of the civil war which troubled this country, for the cause of 'Alī, the son in law of Muḥammad. They base this assertion on the name which the Turks give to their nation, namely the word *Arnaoude*: but this reason is not admissible, considering that the name which the Albanians give to themselves in their own language is that of *Chkipe* (Shqip). Besides, their physique, their language, their customs and their usages have not, in any respect, the least analogy with the peoples of Arabia; also it is only as a consequence of their national pride that the Albanians give to themselves such an origin, which according to the ideas of Muslims in all countries is the most noble on earth, since the Prophet, his disciples, the Caliphs and all the *evlias* (*awliyā'*) (muslim saints) have been Arabs.

This story is of little interest in regard to general Arabian connections since there are widely differing theories among them as to how Arabia might enter into the obscure history of their origins. Significant though is the fact that the 'Alīd and Carmathian affiliation is emphasised, immediately indicating that it owes its coinage to the Baktāshī, and not to the orthodox Sunnite element in its Muslim community.

The folk epic, religious mission, miracles and many tombs of Sari Saltik

The peripatetic warrior saint Sari Saltik was, and still is, revered in the Balkans and Eastern Europe, in parts of the Middle East and possibly as far east as Sinkiang. Like the story, widespread in the Balkans, European Russia and the Caucasus, of the entombed maiden or sacrificed wife encased in a castle wall while it is being built, the adventure of Sari Saltik varies wherever it is recounted.[11] Specific towns and specific topographical localities are associated with some aspect of his story. Sari Saltik, buried in his tomb or on some promontory, or concealed in some cave, is reported in widely separated regions of the Balkans where Islam has a following: for example at Blagay in Hercegovina, Sveti Naum in Macedonia and Peja (Peć) in Kosovo. He seems to have had a particular significance for the holy sites associated with the *Baktāshiyya*.[12]

The Arab traveller Ibn Baṭṭūṭa is the earliest known source of a reference to him in Eastern Europe. It is recorded in the Moroccan's famous travelogue (*riḥla*). At one point, he describes the journey that he undertook to the lower Dnieper region of Russia and the Danube Delta region, between the Crimea and Kavulī (Jamboli), at the southward bend of the Tunja (Tontzos) river in Bulgaria. This took place in July 1332 or June 1334. H.A.R. Gibb has translated this passage:

> We came to the town known by the name of Bābā Salṭūq. Bābā in their language has exactly the same meaning as among the Berbers [i.e. 'father'], but they pronounce the 'b' more emphatically. They relate that this Salṭūq was an ecstatic devotee, although things are told of him which are reproved by the Divine Law. This town is the last of the towns possessed by the Turks, and between it and the beginning of the territory of the Greeks is [a journey of] eighteen days through an uninhabited waste, for eight days of which there is no water. A provision of water is laid in for this stage, and carried in large and small skins on the wagons. Since our entry into it was in the cold weather, we had no need of much water, and the Turks carry milk in large skins, mix

11. Admirably surveyed by Grace M. Smith in her article 'Some Türbes/Maqāms of Sari Saltuq an early Anatolian Turkish Gāzī Saint' in *Turcica*, vol. XIV, 1982, pp. 216–25.

12. This is a fact generally acknowledged, although the tradition of a tomb in such localities as Gdansk in Poland has yet to be explained. Babadag in Romania is unique among the others. This is a genuine *türbe* of antiquity and linked to local history in the Dobrudja and not the spread of the *Baktāshiyya ṭarīqa*.

it with cooked *dūgī*, and drink that, so that they feel no thirst. At this city we made our preparations for [the crossing of] the waste.

The evidence suggests that it is with coastal Bulgaria and the place called to this day Babadag, in the Dobrudja of Romania, that the saint's activities ultimately came to have a particularly close association. Yazicioğlu 'Alī, who wrote during the reign of Murād II (1421–51), says that 'Izz al-Dīn Kaykā'ūs II, who was threatened by his brother, found refuge with his followers at the court of the Byzantine emperor. He fought the latter's enemies, and as a reward the emperor gave them the Dobrudja. The Turkish clans were summoned, and with Ṣarī Ṣaltiq (Sari Saltik) as their leader, they crossed over from Üsküdar and then proceeded to the Dobrudja. Such a migration has the unmistakable character of a folk epic *destan*, and it recalls another westward emigration, that of the Banū Hilāl nomads into Tunisia and North Africa. That was a reward for services rendered to the Fāṭimid rulers of Egypt in the eleventh century, and at the same time a form of punishment of their enemies in North Africa.

The historicity of the migrating horde allegedly led by Sari Saltik is bound up with the whole question of the entry of sundry Turkic groups into Bulgaria and beyond. Tadeusz Kowalski broached the question in regard to the origins of the 'Turks of Deli Orman and the Gagaouzes'. He quoted the views of the Škorpil brothers that the 'Turks of the Deli Orman' were descendants of the Proto-Bulgar Turks who had escaped Slavisation. His view was in part based on a tradition, dating to the Ottomans, that a more ancient Turkish population had reached the country from the north-east. Moškov (although he also included the Gagaouzes) proposed the region north of the Black Sea and the route across its steppes as the direction from which this people had come. Nevertheless, while the Gagaouzes belonged to an *Oguz* group that may have entered the Balkans about 1064, the Deli Orman Turks were, in his opinion, Pechenegs who had established themselves around 1055 in the neighbourhood of Silistria in the Dobrudja with the permission of the Byzantine authorities. There they had mixed with *oguz* elements. Moškov maintained that the Turks of Deli Orman had been Islamised before the arrival of the Ottomans.

Jirecek gave a similar explanation for the origin of the Gagaouzes, although he regarded them as Cumans, who had settled in great numbers in Bulgaria after the Mongol invasion. Moškov's view was that they were also *Oguz* Turks. They had come to the Balkans in 1064. He maintained that a part of them had withdrawn north of the Danube into

Russian territory, where they had mixed with other Turkish elements and formed a group under the name of Karakalpak. They had embraced Orthodoxy. According to him, a part of these Karakalpaks had returned to northern Bulgaria during the Mongol invasion and, under the influence of the Turks of Deli Orman, had given birth to the Gagaouzes.

Kowalski casts doubt on the historical value of all these speculations, pointing out the fragile evidence frequently to be found in undocumented local traditions. He turned to language as a possible key to the sequence of the entry of these peoples. The story of the journey of Sari Saltik and the Islamic mission of his followers, combined with fragments from Ibn Baṭṭūṭa about him and his lost city in the steppes of Russia or in Romania or Bulgaria, has to be put into some sort of historical and cultural perspective.[13]

The detailed research undertaken by Profesor Paul Wittek and published in his articles chronologically equated the legendary with the historical.[14] He confirmed that the Gagaouzes were the 'people of the Kaikāūs' who had derived their name from 'Izzeddīn Kaikāūs II, the Saljūq, who had crossed the Bosphorus during the reign of the *basileus* Michael VIII (Palaeologus) and who, as a reward for his services, had been appointed 'warden' of the Dobrudja region and settled there ('Sari Ṣaltiq of blessed memory too crossed over with them') around 662/1263–4. However, within the *Oguznāme* by Yazicioghlu 'Alī, completed in 1451 (drawing on Ibn Bībī's history of the Saljūqs of Rūm, and on oral traditions and legends) a number of references were included to the spiritual guidance, intermediary acts and miraculous feats of Sari Saltik. The latter are especially centred around the release of the brother of Mas'ūd, the successor to 'Izzeddīn Kaikāūs. This brother had been imprisoned by the *basileus* and surrendered to the patriarch. Converted to Orthodoxy, he had become a monk and served the patriarch for some time at the Hagia Sophia. It was Sari Saltik who asked for his release, and the patriarch agreed to this because of Sari Saltik's great reputation as a saint. The prince was later to become a dervish and a holy madman, having swallowed the saliva of Sari Saltik which contained a supernatural power given to him while he was a shepherd by Shaykh Maḥmūd Ḥayrān of Aksehir.

13. See Tadeusz Kowalski, 'Les Turcs et la langue turque de la Bulgarie du Nord-Est', in Polskan Akademja Umiejetnosci, *Mémoires de la Commission Orientaliste*, no. 16, Kracow, 1933, pp. 8–13.

14. Especially in his article 'Yazijioghlu 'Ali on the Christian Turks of the Dobrudja', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, vol. XIV, part 3, 1952, pp. 639–88.

The demented dervish prince was caressed by Sari Saltik who called him 'my dog' (*baraq*). He was sent to Sulṭāniyya, and later died there. This city came to be associated with Baraqī and his disciples. Wittek points out the minor role played by Sari Saltik; furthermore, his people in the Dobrudja were said to have renounced Islam and forgotten it after his death. It is interesting that elements in this account correspond closely to the role played by Sari Saltik generally in the Balkan lands where stories about him were to be embellished, and attached to his peripatetic exploits and his numerous tombs, caves and *tekkes*. Wittek remarks:

> Most interesting for our present study is the fact that Baraq presents a Christian as well as a Muslim aspect: born a Muslim prince, he is baptized and becomes a monk in the patriarch's retinue, only to end as the founder of a mystic dervish order. The same is true also for Ṣari Ṣaltiq: he appears on the one hand as the spiritual leader of the Muslim nomad Turks and on the other hand he is regarded by the patriarch as a saintly man to whom unhesitatingly he entrusts the newly converted prince. This Christian aspect of Ṣari Ṣaltiq is clearly recognized in a fetwa of Abū's-Su'ūd, which has just come to light. This outstanding scholar and sheikhülislam of the 16th century describes Ṣari Ṣaltiq as 'a Christian monk (*keshīsh*) who by asceticism has become a skeleton.'[15]

Halil Inalçik relates these exploits to the historical events that seem to be the basis for some of the themes expanded in the folk-epic which stress the unorthodox beliefs of Sari Saltik himself.[16] Sari Saltik shares the characteristics that mark the heroic adventures of warriors of the faith in other epical tales and legends in the Arab and Turkish worlds, tales that were based on the expeditions (*maghāzī*) of the Prophet's Companions and on those later Arab and Persian heroes about whom *gestes* were elaborated and recounted; superhuman characters such as Sayyid Baṭṭāl, Melik Dānishmend and Abū Muslim al-Khurāsānī. Here there is a close association with the *Akhīs* (the *Akhiyat al-Fityān*, plural of the *akh*, 'the generous and the chivalrous', one who in his person and status personified the ideal of Muslim chivalry) or with the artisan class. Sayyid Baṭṭāl, who also became associated with the *Baktāshīs* among the Turks, is not only an Arab hero of very great prowess, but also a lineal descendant of the Prophet and an adventurous *ghāzī* whose feats are directed at infidels whom he either converts or slays. But he is also

15. *ibid.*, section 12, *The Baraq Story*, pp. 660–1.

16. Chapter XIX, 'Popular Culture and the Tarikats-Mystic Orders', in *The Ottoman Empire: The Classic Age, 1300–1600*, London, 1973.

scholarly and lettered. Like Abū Zayd al-Hilālī he is a master of disguise; he can appear as a monk and argue with Christian theologians. His feats are interlinked, through his warriors and his relations, with those of the revolutionary, Abū Muslim.[17] The episodes in the *geste* of Dānishmend are likewise to be included within the corpus of all these cycles of folk-epics and feats of Muslim gallantry.

To such adventures can be added all that is recorded about the exploits of the warrior dervish Sari Saltik, under whose direction, as Alessio Bombaci describes,[18] a colony of Turcomans emigrated into Europe towards the middle of the thirteenth century. His exploits were narrated towards the end of the fifteenth century by Abū'l-Khayr Rūmī at the command of the Ottoman prince Djem. This took a written form although it would appear to have been based on some earlier corpus. In Alessio Bombaci's view, the exploits of Sari Saltik show a marked resemblance to those of Sayyid Baṭṭāl. Early Arab and Muslim heroes and Persian champions, joined to all the wonders and marvels found in the *One Thousand and One Nights*, were here introduced. Saltik is mounted on Simorgh, the fabulous bird. He is anointed with the grease of the salamander, which assumes the form of a winged steed that is impervious to heat and is untouched by fire: it traverses the Mountain of Fire, and with its rider reaches the remotest land of darkness that is the kingdom of Ahrīman, the personification of evil. In Persian mythology he takes the form of the dragon-headed *dīv*. In the folk-epic, which is set in the days of Osman, he predicts a glorious and illustrious future for his family. Elements in the story were to be adapted with little difficulty to folk-epics and heroic tales among Balkan peoples, but since in all traditions of folk-epic and popular romance this process is difficult to date one cannot say when a dragon-headed *dīv* was replaced by an Albanian hydra, or when Sayyid Baṭṭāl, dressed as a monk, may have become Sari Saltik, armed with his wooden sword and disguised as an al-Khaḍir or as a Christian saint.

Sari Saltik was incorporated into all the hagiographies of the *Baktāshiyya*, especially in the *Vilāyetnāme* of Ḥājjī Baktāsh. He came to

17. The 'epic' facts of Abū Muslim are exhaustively surveyed in Irène Mélikoff' *Abū Muslim. Le 'Porte Hache' du Khorassan dans la tradition épique Turco-Iranienne*, Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1962. See also *La Geste de Melek Dānişmend*, vol. 1, Paris 1960.

18. His name is spelt Sari Saltikh Dede. According to Alessio Bombaci, *Histoire de la Littérature Turque* (transl. by I. Mélikoff), *op. cit.*, pp. 263–4. The adventures were narrated towards the end of the fifteenth century by Abū' l-Khayr Rūmī, at the command of the Otoman prince Jem.

be associated with certain spectacular feats: a flight over water on his prayer-rug, the conversion of the prince of Georgia to Islam, the cutting off of the heads of a seven-headed dragon in Kalagria (Kilgra near Varna in Bulgaria), and a lifetime spent in countless localities converting unbelievers (including the king of the Dobrudja) by his miracles and feats.

A number of such interconnected exploits, and the magical powers of Sari Saltik, may be traced in the corpus of the hagiographical lore of the *Baktāshiyya*, some of it Central Asian. Irène Mélikoff has shown how Loḳmān Perende (the flying Loḳmān), the master of Ḥājjī Baktāsh had the power to fly and to wander without head or feet. Sun-like, he was called *Shams-i-Perende* (the flying Shams). He had the power of ubiquity, appearing in different places at the same time. Ḥājjī Baktāsh also had this power, as also did Pīr Sulṭān Abdāl and Bābā Rasūlī. All of these men were seen in different places after their deaths. Sari Saltik's bird-like flights, and his descents in Georgia, Bulgaria, Albania and Corfu are examples of *Baktāshī* hagiography.

The seven coffins of Sari Saltik match a story in the *Vilāyetnāme* about the dervishes of Khurāsān who sent seven of their numbers with the intention to invite Ahmed Yasavī to their meeting. They changed themselves into cranes, and then flew to Turkistan. Irène Mélikoff has drawn our notice to a comment made by Mircea Eliade that 'the power of flying belongs to the world of myth; it is connected to the mystical conception of the soul under the form of a bird and of birds as guides of the soul'.[19]

The essential elements of the Sari Saltik cycle of stories, as they are retold among the Albanians and other Balkan peoples, as well as the *Baktāshī* Turks and Turcomans, are present in the high-medieval *Vilāyetnāme* of Ḥājjī Baktāsh. Leading motifs (such as have been identified and discussed in this *geste*)[20] include the first encounter between Ḥājjī Baktāsh and the shepherd, Sari Saltik, at Zamzam well, near Mecca and Mount 'Arafāt, Sari Saltik gaining spiritual strength from the blessed eye of Ḥājjī Baktāsh, and the command given to Sari Saltik to go to Rūm and to the Balkan regions. His receipt of a wooden sword,

19. Loḳmān Perende, the master of Ḥājjī Baktāsh, was a disciple of Aḥmed Yasavī. According to Irène Mélikoff, citing Abdulbaki Golpinarli, there are three applicants to this title. She sees a connection between this title and that of *turna*, a 'crane'. Many holy men had power to change themselves into a bird.

20. Described in Erich Gross, *Das Vilajet Name des Haggi Bektasch. Ein Türkisches Derwischevangelium*, Leipzig, 1927. Aḥmad Sirrī Bābā, *al-Risāla al-Aḥmadiyya*, pp. 49–51.

a book, seven arrows and a flying carpet precede his adventures in Georgia and at the hill of Kiligra in Bulgaria. The rescue of a ruler, a prince or a princess, and the slaughter of a seven-headed dragon (which seems to match the seven bodies of Sari Saltik himself) all suggest a fusion with classical mythology in these regions, with the adventures of St George and with the Islamic cycles of rulers of the Yemen, aided by al-Khaḍir. These cycles were themselves Islamised fragments derived from the Alexander Romance, *Pseudo-Callisthenes*. Oriental thematic substance, the Turkish folk-epic cycles of Central Asia and Anatolia, all are combined here with early folk-lore and folk-epic of the Balkan peoples.

No town on the Russian steppes has so far been found where local legends are in some way connected with Sari Saltik and his followers. It was from the direction of Anatolia that he entered Bulgaria, and, as has been seen, any place associated with him must lie in, or around, the present-day town of Babadag in Romania.[21] If there is a tradition to be found among the Tatars, then this may tell of other journeys, migrations and wars of conquests. In a sense two people, the Turks and the Tatars, meet at the Danube's mouth, and the tales converge there in a version given by Kamal Pasha Zadeh in his 'History of the Campaign of Mohacz', called by this title in the French translation by Pavet de Courteille and published in 1859.[22] In this account the army is Tatar and all its fighting men are believing Muslims. They had embarked at Sinope and Samsun and set sail for Rumelia. In the Dobrudja they became disciples of Sultan Sari Saltik and, having placed themselves willingly under the orders of this 'possessor of the treasurers of piety, the pilgrim in the path and the terrain of holy *jihād*', they followed his commands and made incursions into the country of the Bulgars and the Vlachs. Accompanied by knights of the Turkestani *Oghuz*, they captured abundant booty from the infidels.

The vast plain and steppe of southern Russia known as Dasht Qipjaq was ruled by one of the grandsons of Genghis Khan, Barakat Khan (Berke), whose 'blessed head was the bearer of the glorious crown of al-Islām'. Mounting an invasion of Moldavia at the head of a horde, he achieved a resounding victory over the infidels. The Muslim armies

21. For an effective argument in favour of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's town being Babadag, see J. Denny, 'Sari Saltiq et le nom de la ville de Babadaghi' in *Mélanges offerts à Emile Picot*, Paris, 1913. See also G.G. Arnakis, 'Futuwwa traditions in the Ottoman Empire', *op. cit.*, pp. 243–4.

22. M. Pavet de Courteille, *Histoire de la campagne de Mohacz*, Paris, 1859.

encamped at Aq Kirman and Kiliya – the tombs and mausolea of their chiefs were to be seen near the Danube. Mention is made of Tarkhan Yazishi, Salpi (Yalpi?) Guli, Qutlu Bahaqatli Suwiy, each of these deriving its name from tribes that formerly resided there. The *Oghuz* occupied the right bank of the Danube and the Tatars the left; from there they launched further raids. At that time, a detachment of the army of Barakat Khan passed through Wallachia, traversed the Balkans and advanced towards the Hungarians who sorely defeated the outnumbered Muslims in the region of Mohacz. The old scores were about to be settled.[23]

Here there is a blending of Ottoman and Tatar traditions. They converge geographically at the Danube Delta, north of Babadag. The existing towns of the Bratul Chilia arm of the river in Romania, and Kilija and Ozero Jalpug and Ozero Katlabuch in Moldavia, give some clue to the geographical heart of these legendary and factual *jihāds* on the fringes of the Balkans.

The feats of Sari Saltik extend beyond the holy places of Islam in the Balkans. They take place in the heart of Catholic Christendom, even within northern Europe, and furthermore his exploits are concluded in the narrative with the last will and testament (*waṣiyya*) made by him before his death; the last instructions which he gave to his son and to his Ghāzīs. They were to prepare up to seven coffins in each one of these his body would appear. F.W. Hasluck takes up this story:

A certain dervish, by name Mahommed Bokhar, called also Sari Saltik Sultan, who was a disciple of the celebrated Khodja Achmet of Yassi [d. 1166/7 AD] and a companion of Hadji Bektash [d. 1326–60], after the conquest of Brousa was sent with seventy disciples into Europe. In his missionary journey Sari Saltik visited the Crimea, Muscovy, and Poland: at Danzig he killed the patriarch 'Svity Nikola' and, assuming his robes, in this guise made many converts to Islam. He also delivered the 'kingdom of Dobrudja,' and in particular the king's daughter, from a dragon: this miracle was falsely claimed by a Christian monk, but Sari Saltik was vindicated by the ordeal of fire and the king of Dobrudja was in consequence converted to Islam. Before his death the saint gave orders that his body should be placed in seven coffins, since seven kings should contend for his possession. This came to pass; each king took a coffin, and each coffin was found when opened to contain the body. The seven kingdoms blessed by the possession of the saint's remains are given

23. *ibid.*, pp. 77–8. The rivers allegedly crossed by Ibn Baṭṭūṭa would seem to make best sense if they referred to the three main arms of the Danube in the Delta area or to these other waterways in Moldavia. See the article on *Babadaghi* by Bernard Lewis in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*.

as (1) Muscovy, where the saint is held in great honour as Svity Nikola (S Nicholas); (2) Poland, where his tomb at Danzig is much frequented; (3) Bohemia, where the coffin was shewn at 'Pezzunijah'; (4) Sweden, which possessed a tomb at 'Bivanjah'; (5) Adrianople, near which (at Baba Eski) is another tomb; (6) Moldavia, where the tomb was shewn at Baba Dagh; and (7) Dobrudja, in which district was the convent of Kaliakra containing the seventh tomb'.[24]

In the *Saltiqnāme* the number of rulers — kings and beys — is increased to a figure of twelve: the Tatar Han and the kings of the Vlachs, Edirne, Boğdan (Moldavia), Russia, Hungary, Granada (in Spain?), Croatia(?) and Poland, although Sari Saltik had stressed that his real or 'master' coffin, or sarcophagus, would be at Baba Eski in Thrace. The enhanced number may not be unconnected with the magical number of the twelve *Imāms*, the twelve letters in the declaration of faith, the confession of the Prophethood of Muḥammad, and the recurrence of this number in so much of the numerical symbolism of the *Ḥurūfiyya* and the *Baktāshiyya*.[25] According to Margaret Hasluck,[26] the secret rites once performed by the Albanian *Baktāshīs* at sunrise and at sundown included the saying of prayers by the *bābā*, the recitation of the *Qur'ān* and the lighting of twelve candles for the twelve *Imāms* on a three-tiered altar. To this may be added further Ṣūfī and Eastern Christian parallels (one recalls the seven angels, seals and churches of Asia in the Book of Revelations). The seven bodies of Sari Saltik recall the notion of the seven *abdāl* (*badal*, substitute). Belief in this heavenly hierarchy dates back to the Ṣūfīs of the ninth century. They conceived of the cosmic order as possessing a fixed number of saints at any one time. However, the number varied; Ibn al-'Arabī (d. 1240) established their number as seven, each corresponding to a prophet — Ādam, Moses, Aaron, Idrīs, Joseph, Jesus and Muḥammad. Each exercised sway over one of the seven climes into which the world is divided. But there are other localities in the Balkans and in Asia Minor that perpetuate the memory of Sari Saltik's resting-place, including Baba Eski, Iznik, Bor near Niğde in Anatolia, Diyarbakir and possibly other still unidentified or unlocated sites.

24. F.W. Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans*, vol. 11, p. 577.

25. For probably the most detailed study of the numerical design of the Cabbala of the Ḥurūfī sect, see John Kingsley Birge, *The Bektashi Order of Dervishes*, London, 1937, 1965.

26. Margaret Hasluck, 'The Nonconformist Moslems of Albania', *The Moslem World*, vol. XV, 1925, pp. 392–3.

Babadag (Babadagh) 'the mountain of the father', has remained an important religious centre, in Muslim memory. In the Cairene journal *Nūr al-Islām*, published by the *Mashyakha* of al-Azhar (part 10, Shawwāl 1350/1932, vol. 2, p. 741–2) this locality was singled out for special comment:

> The Muslims reverence the town of Babadag, on account of the presence there of the tomb (*ḍarīḥ*) of Sārī Saltī (*sic*) whom the Muslims consider as a Muslim saint and holy man. It was he who, after having colonised the Dobrudja, began to propagate Islam as far as Lake Ohrid in Albania. Muslim *muftīs* are represented in four localities in [Romania] Tulcea, Constanta, Silistria and Bazargik [now in Bulgaria]. In Romania there is a *madrasa* of the highest rank for teachers in the city of Majīdiyya (Medgidja). Among the *tekkes*, there are three, for the *Qādiriyya*, the *Baktāshiyya* and the *Shādhiliyya'*.

Degrand in his *Haute Albanie* — published in 1901, though written in 1892 — has one of the most comprehensive accounts of the destruction of a seven-headed hydra at Kalagria in Bulgaria, or at Krujë in Albania by Sari Saltik. His account, owing to its date, has special value. Others draw upon him. Almost every facet of the story — the destruction of the monster with a wooden sword, the rescue of a princess who identifies her rescuer from other suitors by means of three apples, the sojourn of a holy dervish in the cave, his flight by stages on a prayer carpet to Corfu, his forty identical coffins (corresponding to the *Abdāl*) — are all found. Of particular value is Degrand's hearsay description of an alleged sarcophagus *türbe* of Sari Saltik in the mountain overshadowing Krujë. The pilgrim station and the narrative cohere in almost every detail, and furthermore the parallels between the Krujë story and those that mention Sari Saltik's very similar exploits in Bulgaria or in Romania are well described. Variation and similarity may be explained by a stitching together of folk narrative derived from some *Ur*-narrative that reflects the *Vilāyetnāme* itself or its sources. This narrative has been employed to interpret local cults, whether in Romania, Bulgaria or in Albanian regions.

Krujë, Sari Saltik and Gjerg Elez Alia in Albania and Bosnia

F.W. Hasluck attributed the various episodes that involve Sari Saltik at Krujë to the *Baktāshīs*. A similar opinion was held by Hasan Kaleši, who gives by far the most comprehensive account of the local Albanian

traditions.[27] Machiel Kiel does not differ, but is cautious about attributing the substance of the Krujë traditions to the *Baktāshī* order and its dervishes *per se*. He suggests that the amalgam of Albanian folktale and *Saltiqnāme* might be accounted for by the presence (already at the beginning of the sixteenth century) of an Ottoman garrison in Krujë[28].

Mark Tirtja emphasises the continuity over centuries in the Krujë traditions.[29] On the mountain of Krujë a pagan rite was once practised. Later a church was built nearby in honour of Saint Alexander — who with Islamisation was replaced by Sari Saltik. Such a sequence of conversion is the norm in Albania on the summits of mountains and in forests, in groves near lakes and by sacred springs. Hasluck noted that at Krujë the dragon — in fact a hydra — lived by day in a cave and at night in a church. The Muslim champion, Sari Saltik, saved a princess in the manner of St George. Later, as a hermit, he lived in this cave until, when his life was gravely threatened by the local people, he made three strides — 'marked by a footprint and a *tekke* at each stage'[30] — that took him to Corfu, where he died. This must be a late development, since in Kiel's sixteenth-century account Sari Saltik was allegedly buried at Krujë in his mountain shrine. This is where Babinger found the Turkish inscription dated 1104/1692/3.[31]

What looks like a borrowing from *Baktāshī* folk-epic may in fact be matched by the exploits of heroes in Albania, traces of which may date back to Illyrian times. Mark Tirta shows for example that the local Albanian hero Gjergj Elez Alia (who matches Muyi and Halil in the Albanian North) performs several of the heroic feats and possesses the superhuman powers of Sari Saltik. These must have been present in Christian Albanian heroic narrative centuries before Sari Saltik's name was known in these districts. The hero and the dragon are closely linked in Albanian

27. Hasan Kaleshi: 'Albanische Legenden um Sari Saltuk', *Actes du Premier Congrès International des Etudes balkaniques et Sud-Est Européennes*, vol. VII, Sofia, 1971, pp. 815–28.

28. Personal communication from Dr Kiel.

29. The subject is fully discussed in his 'Survivances religieuses du passé dans la vie du peuple (objects et lieux de culte)', *Ethnographie Albanaise* (Tiranë) 1976, pp. 49–69. A Marxist attitude is displayed throughout.

30. F.W. Hasluck, 'Ambiguous Sanctuaries and Bektashi Propaganda', *Annual of the British School at Athens*, no. XX, session 1913–14, London, p. 111.

31. On the mountain shrine and its *tekke*, see Nathalie Clayer, *L'Albanie pays des dervishes, op. cit.*, pp. 336–9.

tradition. Both possess heroic and liberating virtues. However, the seven-headed hydra (possibly a symbol of a primeval matriarchy), which is slain by the hero and is in fact the 'dragon' in most of the Sari Saltik stories, though sometimes a monster of the sea, symbolises the fight of the Albanians against their enemies. The dragon-heroes have seven hearts, and it is hard not to perceive some connection between this and the seven coffins, each containing the mortal remains of Sari Saltik (later changed to twelve or forty). The Albanian hero casts the slain body of the monster into a well or into the sea – exactly what occurs in the stories at Krujë. The hydra's body is thrown to Lezhë (a shrine of Skanderbeg), the dragon and the hero, according to Mark Tirta, being one and the same. 'Some who are scientific have seen in the combat of Gjergj Elez Alia against the monster of the sea, the fight of the dragon against the hydra kuçedër.'[32] The dragon is born in order to fight *hydras*, and he defends extended families which compose the community. He has wings beneath his arm-pits, and his weapons include the post around which the mill-stone revolves. He uses the great trees of the forest to fight the hydra; these may be compared with the wooden sword of Sari Saltik. The hero is aided by the fairy *Zanës* who are often forest-Amazons. They serve the patriarchal order and – like the *Orës*, the fairies of fate, destiny and luck – guard the family and the tribe. The *Zanë* or *Xinë* is also the mountain fairy, the muse of heroes. These two fairies between them are like the *ḥūriyya*, and the *jinniyya* even more, in pre-Islamic Arabia.

The Bosnians have their own epic traditions about their Alija Djerzelez (also of Budalina Tale), whose name is almost identical with that of the Albanian hero. His exploits are especially associated with the district of Sarajevo, and with the illustrious Ghāzī, Husrev-Beg. According to Vlajko Palavestra:[33]

Alija Djerzelez, a well-known hero of Moslem epic poetry and a notable personage of the folk tradition, was, in the view of contemporary historians, an actual person. He was a warrior and hero of the Bosnian borderland. In reports concerning the Krbavska Battle [1493] an anonymous Turkish writer from the

32. See the important article by Mark Tirtja, 'Des stratifications mythologiques dans l'épopée légendaire' in *Culture Populaire Albanaise*, Year 5, Tiranë, 1985, pp. 91–102.

33. Vlajko Palavestra, *op. cit*, pp. 63–4. These passages are selected from a chapter on Alija Djerzelez (V: 'Warriors and Heroes'), and other Bosnian heroes. It is told in Sarajevo that the Serbian hero, Kraljević Marko became the blood brother of Alija Djerzelez because they had both dreamt the same dream and went out into the world in search of one another. From being bitter enemies they became loyal allies.



Plate 9. Tombstones in the Turkish cemetery on Alifakovac hill, Sarajevo. Characteristic are the turbaned headstones and the elaborate mausolea (*türbe*) in the form of pavilions standing upon four columns. Two in this cemetery date from the 18th century: one marks the grave of the son of Jahja Efendi, a judge (*kadija*), and the other that of Jusuf Pasha, who is said to have commanded the fortress of Tabriz in Persian Azerbaijan and, after receiving a death sentence, to have fled to Sarajevo and lived there incognito.

beginning of the 16th century mentions a certain Gerz-Iljas, whom a commentator links with the epic Djerzelez. In a Turkish census *defter* [administrative register] of 1485, a *timar* [feudal property] of Gerz-Eljaz is recorded for the *nahija* [small administrative area] of Dobrun near the town of Višegrad. The famous hero, Gerz-Iljas, is also mentioned in the long account written by the Turkish historian, Ibn Kemal [1468–1534] of the fighting in the Bosnian borderland in the years 1479 to 1480.

The hero is linked to the battles fought by Ghāzī Husrev-Beg against his enemy, the armies of the alliance between the Hungarians, the Croatian, Ban Ladislave, of Egervar, Peter Doczy and Vuk Grgurević, the Serbian, who led a counter-offensive against Sarajevo in 1480. Ghāzī Husrev-Beg was rescued from defeat by an unknown warrior on a winged horse:

Some time later Husref Beg returned home with his army. When he went to his house, his wife asked him how he had fared. Husref Beg told her that things would have ended ill and the battle been lost, if an unknown warrior on a winged horse had not appeared, scattering and cutting down before him with his scimitar the entire army of Vuk Jajcanin. When they wounded me in my arm, Husref Beg said, that hero bound my wound with his scarf. There it is still, in my saddle-bags! His wife dashed to see, and, taking the scarf from his saddle-bags and examining it carefully, said, My God, I know whose scarf this is! I gave it to our servant Alija. And I know that these two days, when we have had the most work to do, when we have been threshing, he has not been here. Husref Beg quickly ordered that Alija be brought before him. Alija came, the same old Alija, seemingly wretched and dejected, but Husref Beg leapt to his feet, went to him, and sat him on the cushion beside him. Alija, he said, so many years you have served me and I have become indebted to you. I should pay you off, you should no longer be my servant. You are a greater hero than me! And, truly, he paid Alija well and bade him farewell.

From this moment onwards Alija began to wander the world and fight with the greatest heroes. They say that this is where his name originated, for *Djurzelez* means the warrior with the mace, or mace-wielder.

Vlajko Palavestra writes:

Until recently there were in Sarajevo those living who could remember a hollow elm tree at Klokoti near the town of Kiseljak, which Alija Djerzelez had struck with his mace while pursuing Vuk Jajčanin. There were until recently marks in the wall at the base of the minaret of the Ulomljenica mosque which were believed to be the fingerprints of Alija Djerzelez.

Various songs were sung and stories told about the death of Alija. Some said that he was killed at Gerzovo Polje near the town of Mrkonjić, in the rebellious Krajina, by Vuk Jajčanin himself. They say that he caught Alija at prayer, crept

up on him and cut him down with his sword. Although Alija realized that he would be killed he did not want to interrupt his prayer. One of the songs records that Alija was killed on mount Romanija by a *haiduk* [outlaw] named Sava of Posavlje, but this is highly unlikely. One should tell the truth even though it is not easy to discover it.

At Gerzovo Polje there is, still today, a *türbe* [mausoleum] beneath which, it was believed, Alija Djerzelez was buried (Plate 8). People would visit that *türbe* even from afar, especially on Alidžun (Ilindan) (St Elia's Day, August 2) to commemorate this great hero. Old people used to say that the mace of Alija Djerzelez was preserved in Sarajevo in the *tekija* of the Seven Brothers, but that once, when Sarajevo was on fire, the mace was destroyed.

5

ALBANIAN ṢŪFĪ POETS OF THE NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURIES AND THEIR IMPACT ON CONTEMPORARY ALBANIAN THOUGHT

> 'Since my school days, in my free time, I have read works of honest authors and scholars about the great culture of the ancient Arabs and Persians and about their influence on the development of world science and culture. Amongst other things, this has aroused in me feeling of profound respect and admiration for these people and their liberation struggle.
>
> 'One cannot reach a judgement about the present state of a people, about their patriotic and freedom-loving spirit, about the future which awaits them, without knowing and studying their past, their cultural and spiritual history, which in the case of the Arab and Persian peoples is truly brilliant.' (Enver Hoxha in his *Reflections on the Middle East, 1958–1983*, Tiranë, 1984, pages 452–3)

Muḥammad Mūfākū, after his discussion of the post-seventeenth-century cultural and commercial growth of such cities as Prizren, Monastir (Bitolj) and Skopje, remarks:

Besides these schools and colleges, the *tekkes* of the Ṣūfī orders played a major role in establishing Islamic Arabic culture in Albanian areas. It is worth pointing out that most of the Ṣūfī orders experienced an expansion and extension to the Albanian regions, so that traditions and practices became associated with and attached to them as time passed. In fact, these Ṣūfī orders were to bind together, lastingly, the Albanians and the Arabs. We have evidence indicating that some Ṣūfī from the Arab countries came to spread their Ṣūfī orders in Albanian areas. Later, Albanians used customarily to visit the Arab countries (Egypt, Syria and Iraq) to obtain diplomas to teach (*ijāzāt*) in the Arabic language from the *mashāyikh* of the Ṣūfī orders there. Of interest to us is that the Ṣūfī *tekkes* in the Albanian regions were to enjoy a substantial cultural activity. Every *tekke* housed a library rich in Arabic, Persian and Turkish manuscripts. The dervishes of the order (*ṭarīqa*) learned these languages and used to copy out manuscripts in these languages. Likewise there were many poets of genius in these *tekkes* who wrote in the Arabic language. In general,

these *tekkes* were a principal source for Albanian literature as well, since within them odes and lengthy epics in verse were composed and created.[1]

The writings of Naim Frashëri

A lofty level of Muslim humanism is reached in the Baktāshī writings of Albania's leading poet Naim Frashëri (1848–1900). His idealism and national feeling stirred Albanians throughout the world.

Naim was one of a brilliant family which included three brothers who were to play an especially prominent role in the movement for Albanian cultural and political independence and in the revival of the Albanian language. He was born in the beautiful southern Albanian village of Frashër (the ash tree) which his ancestors had been given as a fief from Sulṭān Mehmed II. His father began in commerce, then later became a civil servant. Like every village boy he received a Qur'ānic education and went to the important local *Baktāshī tekke*.

According to Baba Rexhebi and Hasluck,[2] the Frashër *tekke* was founded in the time of 'Alī Pasha of Tepelenë. It once contained a score of dervishes and housed the tomb of its greatest local scholar mystic, Tahir Baba Naṣībī, who died about 1835. '*Naṣībī*', 'the fortunate one', became his nickname after it was reported that the door of the *tekke* of Hacibektaş in Asia Minor opened miraculously of its own accord in order to allow him to enter. Nasībī was a gifted poet, especially in his love poems (*ghazal*) in Albanian, Persian and Turkish, and he was also regarded as one of the three spiritual advisers of 'Alī Pasha. Other eminent shaikhs associated with this *tekke* were Alushi Babanë, Abedin Babanë and Baba Mustafanë.

Like his brothers, Naim learnt Arabic, Persian and Turkish and became familiar with several Albanian masterpieces written in Arabic script. All these were to influence him, and he always retained a deep affection for Oriental literature. In 1865, having lost his parents, he left for Ioannina, where he entered the Zozymée gymnasium, one of the best in the Balkans. He developed a working knowledge of European

1. See Muḥammad Mūfākū, *al-Thaqāfa al-Albāniyya fī'l-Abjadiyya al-'Arabiyya*, *op. cit.*, p. 97–8. See likewise the author's comments on *tekkes* in *Tārīkh Bilghrād al-Islāmiyya*, *op. cit.*, pp. 32–3.

2. Previous writers on Frashër, including Frashëri, are conveniently summarised and listed by Nathalie Clayer, *op. cit.*, pp. 275–8.

literature including Voltaire and Victor Hugo,[3] studied Greek and Latin, and read works by Homer and Virgil. Yet he also cultivated his knowledge and deep affection for Persian, and he is said to have written a 200-page volume of original Persian verse composed in the style of his favourite poets. His fluency in Persian never departed, and it is not suprising that 'Abd al-Karīm Gulshanī, who has published and assessed his Persian verse, has dubbed Naim as the 'Muḥammad Iqbāl of the West'.[4] His first *dīwān* of Persian verse reflecting his personal mysticism and lyricism is *Takhayyulāt*, published in 1885.

In 1871 he became a civil servant. After a period in the customs department in the towns of southern Albania and at the Albanian port of Saranda, he left in 1882 for Istanbul and worked as a censor in the Ministry of Education. While there he met Albanian patriots; he joined forces with his brother Shams al-Din Sami Frashëri (1850–1904), whose own efforts in the cause of Albanian literary and linguistic revival had drawn inspiration from the common *Baktāshī* background which they shared. This background was the inspiration of the eldest brother Abdul Frashëri (1839–1894), the true leader of the Albanian League. In his paper *Ṣabāḥ* (Morning, 1875), in the paper *Ṭarābulus* (founded in Tripoli, Libya, 1874–5) and in his play *Seydi Yahya* (1876) based on a plot from Arab al-Andalus, Sami exhibited a mastery of Oriental literature and language. Later he was to complete other compositions showing a command of Arabic grammar and vocabulary. This may be read in the history of Middle Eastern peoples within his *Qāmūs al-'Ālām*, and in his commentary to the *Seven pre-Islamic Odes (Mu'allaqāt)*. His collection of verses allegedly composed by 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib shows by its title and presentation that its author was essentially *Shī'īte* in his sympathies.[5]

3. Naim, like his brothers, was to use his education and background to the full in the League of Prizren. See Stefanaq Pollo, 'La Ligue Albanaise de Prizren et sa lutte pour la libération et l'union nationales', *Etudes Balkaniques*, Sofia, 1978, 2, pp. 3–18, and Veselin Trajkov, 'La Ligue de Prizren de 1878', *Etudes Balkaniques*, 2, Sofia 1978 pp. 19–32.

4. 'Abd al-Karīm Gulshanī, *Farhang-i Irān dar qalamrau-i turkān Ash'ār-i fārsī-yi Na'īm Frāshirī: shā'ir va nivīsandah-i qarn-i nūzdahum-i albānī* (About Persian literature written in Turkish realms, and Persian poetry of the nineteen-century Albanian author Naim Frashëri), Shīrāz, 1304 AH. This is the only printed study to my knowledge of Naim's contribution to Persian literature.

5. On Sami's contribution in Oriental languages see the article by Dr Hasan Kaleshi, 'Le rôle de Chemseddin Sami Frachery dans la formation de deux pangues littéraires Turc et Albanais', *Balcanica*, 1, Belgrade, 1970, p. 197–216.

In 1884 Naim Frashëri published the Albanian periodical *Drita* (Light), and two years later produced several major compositions and literary contributions that furthered the cause of the Albanian revival. The revival centred on the comprehensive struggle for independence or autonomy enshrined in the League of Prizren (in Kosovo) founded in June 1872 and led by his brother Abdul. A number of these works were planned as historical, geographical and science textbooks for use in schools. Others were collections of Naim's own verse in Albanian, such as 'Herds and Pastures' (*Bagëti e Bujqësi*) and 'Flowers of Summer' (*Lulet e verës*) of 1890. The latter especially displays not only his deep love for Albania, but his seemingly 'pantheistic' or 'monistic' philosophy.

It is in these poems that a Ṣūfī mysticism is blended with a nature mysticism centred on Naim's homeland. The defiant peaks of the Albanian mountains express the will of the people; they point upwards to the skies and ultimately to Heaven and Divinity. The woods, streams and valleys in his verses express his idea of the beauty of nature and the bliss of freedom that could be enjoyed by those who lived there among his countrymen. As Koço Bihiku remarks, 'The pantheism of life in the bosom of nature no doubt stems from the illuminist convictions of the poet.'[6]

In other poems God is identified with man himself, as well as with that divinely created environment that manifests His nature. Man may know the nature of divinity within the 'ground of his being', also within his body; and especially in the beauty of his own visage. Here Naim expresses those notions that were the ancient heritage of esoteric Islam (*al-bāṭiniyya*), but were to be forcibly re-expressed by the Ismā'īlī and Ṣūfī Shihāb al-Din b. Bahā' al-Dīn Faḍlallāh al-Ḥurūfī of Astarābād (born 1339/40), who was executed by Timur's son Mīrān Shāh in Shirvān in the Caucasus in 1394. The nature of divinity in man was central to Faḍallāh's massive Persian and Arabic *Jāwidān-i-Kabīr* and his other works. They were later displayed afresh in the verses of Qāsim al-Anwār (d. 1432), Nasīmī of Baghdād, or of Tabrīz (martyred in 820/1417–18 possibly 807/1404 in Aleppo) by Rafī'ī, or by Rūḥī of Iraq, and by a great number of *Baktāshī* and janissary poets (for example Ḥabībī and Ruṣenī). These verses were read and memorised and imitated in Kosovo and Albania (Plate 9).

The features of man are the mirror of divinity. In Faḍlallāh's *Jāwidān*, which was studied and commented upon in Krüjë, Ādam is the

6. Koço Bihiku, *A History of Albanian Literature*, Tiranë, 1980, p. 43.

prototype link between God and man (wholly opposite to the dualistic beliefs of the Bogomils). Ādam, in his corporeal form, was united to the Ka'ba in Mecca. He was also a part of the physical world that was his home and his environment. To cite the *Jāwidān*, 'God Almighty created the head of Ādam and his forehead from the soil of the Ka'ba, his chest and his back from Jerusalem, his thighs from the Yemen, his legs from Egypt, his feet from the Ḥijāz, his right hand from the Muslim East and his left from the Muslim West'.[7] This sentiment may be observed in Naim's verse. For him Albania's soil is part of such a divine scheme for a particular people, and it is a part of the homeland. Stuart E. Mann has translated such verses in his *Albanian Literature*:[8]

When God first sought to show His face
He made mankind His dwelling place.
A man that knows his inward mind
Knows what God is. It is mankind.[9]

In this poem, as in several others, influences from Ibn 'Arabī, Rūmī and from Nasīmī are apparent. Equally apparent is a non-sectarian, interfaith appeal that is not only a personal characteristic of this poet and his fellow nationalists, but is also typically gnostic, and heterodox.

Perhaps more than any other Anatolian sect, the *Bektashis* interpreted Scripture allegorically and effaced all sharp contrasts and vicissitudes, preaching as they did, their favourite theme of the unity of existence (*waḥdat al-wujūd*) and the identity of the external and the internal world. To the agonised man who had known decades of war, slavery, abduction, and all kinds of violence, the mystic offered hope and comfort, an escape from harsh reality. Thus, the Mevlana Jelaleddin Rumi was regarded as a saintly figure by both Moslems and Christians, and his contemporary Haji Bektash Veli, the eponymous saint of the Bektashi order, could likewise attract worshippers from both religions.

7. This passage and others regarding Ādam's head and body being materially linked to the substance of the Ka'ba and the holy lands of Islam in East and West, proceeding from Mecca and Jerusalem are included in the opening sections of the copy of Faḍlallāh's *Jāwidān*, Cambridge University Library copy (E.1.9.27). See E.G. Browne, *A Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts of the Library of the University of Cambridge*, pp. 69–86.

8. Stuart E. Mann, *Albanian Literature: An outline of Prose, Poetry and Drama*, London, 1955, pp. 40 and 41. Naim's poems were not unique in this but the quality of his verse combined with his other nationalist and educational activities placed him at the head of the *avant garde*.

9. These verses echo the Ḥurūfī-inspired verses of Nasīmī: 'O thou spirit that is enshrined in physical form, Your face is that of sacred scripture, exalted be its state, Allāh is most great.'

Tolerance in all directions, common places of worship for Christians and Moslems, stories of mircales for the followers of Christ and Mohammed indiscriminately, saints venerated by both peoples, and a persistent, if vague, identification of Ali with Christ and Haji Bektash with St Charalampos – these are some of the factors to which the Bektashis owe their success.[10]

The League of Prizren was eventually suppressed. The *Baktāshī tekkes* in the south of Albania suffered severely from Ottoman repression, the vandalism of Greek and Serbian irregulars and much Sunnite hostility. Yet the triumph attained by Naim and Sami Frashëri in founding an Albanian school in Korça, Sami's invention of an Albanian alphabet, the broad non-sectarian message of the cause they promoted, with its ethical idealism, its stress on the unbreakability of a promise given (well manifested in Sami's noteworthy drama in Turkish, *Besa yahod abd-u-vefa*, Istanbul, 1876) and the close cooperation with Hodja Hasan Tahsin, Jani Vreto, Postenani, Pashko Vasa, Gjirokastriti and many other like-minded men of letters – these efforts were not wasted. They are praised for their writings in Albania today. Some of their works that were published are regarded as representative masterpieces of Albanian writing that should feature in any serious history of Albanian literature, and indeed could hardly be omitted from it.

Naim Frashëri's poem on Skanderbeg

Apart from his lyrics, Naim Frashëri's most noted composition is his epic on the life of Gjerg Kastrioti, written in 1898 and held to be his most famous and greatest work.[11] *Historia e Skenderbeut* transcends religious boundaries. By the time Naim wrote his epic, Albania's hero of the late Middle Ages and Krujë, his capital, had acquired a denominational significance for the Albanian *Baktāshīs*.[12] According to Stuart Mann, 'Of all his works, Naim considered the Skanderbey epic to be his best. In his last moments he bade his nephew Midhat read it out to

10. Cited in G.G. Arnakis, 'Futuwwa traditions in the Ottoman Empire; Ahis, Bektashi dervishes and craftsmen, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, XII, 1953, p. 243. See also papers presented to Simpoziumi per Skenderbeun, 9–12 May, 1968, Prishtinë: Institut Albanologjik 1969.

11. There are a number of editions in Albanian of Naim's masterpiece. On the topic, as literature, see the articles listed by Robert Elsie. *Dictionary of Albanian Literature*, p. 126, under 'Scanderbeg'.

12. On the history of Krujë *tekke* and the *Baktāshī* practice there see Nathalie Clayer, *op. cit.*, pp. 325–39.



Plate 10. The victory of Skanderbeg over the Ottoman Turks is depicted in a large, recently painted fresco in Krujë castle which has now become a national shrine. Scenes of a similar kind appear in Serbian paintings representing Serbian knights in the battle of Kosovo. According to the former Marxist view of history, Skanderbeg temporarily fulfilled a role in south-eastern Europe similar to that of Charles Martel in the battle of Tours against the Arabs. The triumphant march of Islam into Europe was at least postponed and an example set for others to follow. However, Skanderbeg is simply accepted by Albanian Muslim intellectuals as a great national hero. Even the Orthodox Bishop, Fan Noli, had reservations over Skanderbeg's true religious loyalties.

him for final correction, though the final version seems never to have been published.'

It was a supreme attempt by this poet to project his idealism, patriotism and sense of cultural continuity back into a past age when for twenty-four years the Albanians had fought under Skanderbeg's leadership to defend their liberty. The Turks were not the only enemy; Venice and others are included too. According to Koço Bihiku, 'the *History of Skanderbeg*' is one of the most popular productions of the period of the national renaissance. Its most successful and inspired parts, such as the re-entry of Skanderbeg into Krujë, were committed to memory by the patriots, 'who found embodied in it their most sacred desires'.[13]

Those works of Naim Frashëri which combine Ṣūfism (including traces of idealistic, as opposed to Cabalistic, *Ḥurūfism*) and Western philosophical and poetic ideas — works that are openly apologetic for the *Baktāshiyya* — have proved difficult to appraise. Indeed, from the prevailing view in Marxist Albania, they had to be dismissed as a *cul-de-sac* and were only redeemable by the nationalist heartbeat still detectable in the content. Even so, much of that content was out of keeping with what was viewed as positive national aspirations, and without question was incompatible with current progressive ideas and ideology. Significantly, a work about Naim contained a photograph of its title and cover, while the content was rigorously ignored.

Arshi Pipa however points out that on a broad level Naim Frashëri's *Baktāshī* beliefs are always in basic harmony with his Albanian sentiment. These, if need be, may take preference in his sympathies.

The first important poem by an Albanian author is Naim Frashëri's *Herd and Crops*. This major Tosk exponent of Albanian nationalism was also the poet of Moslem Shiah history and doctrine. He was a Bektashi, a follower of an originally Shiah doctrine which has been very popular among the Albanians. The Bektashis are a *dervish*, i.e. mendicant, order. A beggar appearing in Frashëri's bucolic poem is soon dismissed with an appeal to the rich to give him alms. And in a lyric, 'God', he censures a begging dervish for his hyprocisy. How can we explain the absence of the type in the work of a poet who codified Albanian Bektashism? The character is untypical, i.e. incompatible with the Albanian psyche.[14]

13. Koço Bihiku, *A History of Albanian Literature*, Tiranë, 1980, p. 47.

14. Arshi Pipa, 'Typology and Periodization of Albanian Literature', *Serta Balcanica-Orientalia Monacensia in Honorem Rudolphi Trofenik Septuagenarii*, 1981, Munich, pp. 248–9.

Naim Frashëri's Baktāshī works

There are, however, two works in which Naim's denominational loyalties are made abundantly plain. The first of these, *Fletore e Bektashinjet* (Bucharest, 1896, and Salonika, 1910), has been translated variously as 'Baktāshī pages' or 'leaves', and more closely as the 'notebook' of the *Baktāshīs*.[15] The book is a tract, some thirty pages of statement of belief, followed by ten poems by Naim on faith in God, the deity immanent in nature and the tragedy that befell 'Alī's descendants (*Vjersh të Lartë*). Birge was somewhat sceptical of its purpose and its true authorship and remarked: 'The treatise translated by Hasluck needs to be treated with some care for it is quite obviously something prepared for those outside the order .'[16]

Besides Hasluck's English version, via Greek, it was translated into French as far back as 1898 by Faik Konitsa, himself a *Baktāshī*. A complete French translation, without the poems, by H. Bourgeois was published in the *Revue du Monde Musulman* in 1922. However, the most scholarly translation, this time accompanied by the full Albanian text and with very detailed notes on its language, was published by Norbert Jokl in *Balkan Archiv* in 1926.[17]

The work is a discourse about the characteristic beliefs of the sect. It opens with a statement of belief in God, in Muḥammad-'Alī, the dual form of the 'Alīd cult, then Khadīja the Prophet's first wife, then Fāṭima his daughter, and the two sons of 'Alī, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn. Next come the twelve *Imāms* — 'Alī, Ḥasan, Ḥusayn, Zayn al-'Ābidīn, Muḥammad al-Bāqir, Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, Mūsā al-Kāẓim, 'Alī al-Riḍā, Muḥammad al-Taqī, 'Alī al-Naqī, al-Ḥasan al-'Askarī al-Zakī and Muḥammad al-Mahdī al-Ḥujja. 'Alī is conceived as a father (*at'*) and Fāṭima as a mother (*mëmë*). The Old Testament Prophets, Jesus and his disciples are also acknowledged. Ja'far al-Ṣādiq and Ḥājjī Baktāsh are the elders in the spiritual chain shared by all those who are initiated into the *Baktāshiyya* order. The Universe and God are

15. For the translation of H. Bourgeois, the full reference is *Revue du Monde Musulman*, vol. 49, 1922, pp. 105–20. On Jokl, see note 17 below. The latter, besides reproducing the Albanian text and furnishing a glossary, also reproduces the verses (p. 17 in the 1896 Bucharest edition) in Stuart Mann's *Short Albanian Grammar*, London, 1932, pp. 122–3.

16. In the view of Stuart Mann (*Albanian Literature*, London, 1955, pp. 39–40), it is a collection of poems and its message was aimed at attracting 'Albanians to a liberal faith acceptable to Christians and Moslems alike'.

17. N. Jokl's translation is to be read in *Balkan Archiv*, 11, Leipzig, 1926 pp. 226–56.

indivisible, or at least completely interlocked or fused. After death man is transformed (perhaps reincarnated) in his body, yet he is always near to God — although God is hidden, — in a relationship like father and son. Monogomy is commended and divorce deemed a sad misfortune. Charity and love transcend religious differences. Great emphasis is placed on helping 'the poor'. This latter also denotes the '*faqīr*', a novice in the order, whose role and status within the structured organisation of that order are given considerable prominence.

Markedly absent are references to the five pillars of Islam that are fundamental to Sunnite belief. Instead much of the prayer and almost all the fasting are centred around the massacre at Karbalā in Iraq, where 'Alī's son Ḥusayn met his death. This is introduced in two places. To cite Hasluck's translation:

For a fast they have the mourning they keep for the passion of Kerbala, the first ten days of the month which is called Moharrem (*al-Muḥarram*).

In these days some do not drink water, but this is excessive, since on the evening of the ninth day the warfare ceased, and it was not till the tenth after midday that the Imam Husain fell with his men, and then only they were without water.

For this reason the fast is kept for ten days, but abstention from water is practised only from the evening of the ninth until the afternoon of the tenth.

But let whoso will abstain also from water while he fasts. This shows the love the Bektashi bear to all the Saints[18].

This same emphasis on the events at Karbalā is taken up again later:

The Bektashi keep for a holy-day Bairam [*bajram*], the first day of the month which is called Sheval [*Shawwāl*]. Their second feast is on the first ten days of the month called Dilhije [*dhilhixe*], here the text actually reads 'on the tenth day itself' of *Dhū'l-Ḥijja, 'Īd al-Aḍḥā* [celebrated at the height of the annual pilgrimage by all Muslims] the New Day (which is called *Nevruz*) on the tenth of March and the eleventh of the month called *Moharrem*. During the ten days of the Passion they read the Passions of the Imams.

According to Muḥammad Mūfākū the festival of Nevruz among the Albanian Baktāshīs is held on March 21, celebrating the birthday of the *Imām* 'Alī. The ten days of *Muḥarram* are those during which the events in Karbalā are recalled, in conjunction with other sad events involving sacrifice and relating to famous prophets and to *imāms*.

18. F.W. Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans*, vol. II, Oxford, 1929, pp. 558–9.

The ten days are divided up in the following manner. On the first night the sufferings of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses and Jesus are commemorated. On the second night the prophet is Muḥammad. The third night is devoted to the *Imām* 'Alī, who fell 'as a martyr in the path of justice'. On the fourth night the poisoning of *Imām* Ḥasan is the central subject of the lament. The fifth night is devoted to the life history of the *Imām* Ḥusayn. On the sixth night the subject is the *hijra* of the *Imām* Ḥusayn from Medina to Mecca. The seventh night is devoted to the history of Muslim b. 'Aqīl, who was sent as an envoy to Kūfa by the *Imām* and who died a martyr there. The eighth night is concerned with the journey of the *Imām* to Kūfa. The ninth night tells of the arrival of the *Imām* Ḥusayn in the suburbs of Kūfa where he received a letter from Muslim b. 'Aqīl who advised him to advance no further. The tenth, the final night, is about the battle of Karbalā and the death of the *Imām* Ḥusayn.

After the mourning the sweetmeat called '*Āshurā*' (*hashnreja*) is prepared in the *tekkes*. This sweetmeat is now commonly eaten by Albanians many of whom are not members of the *Baktāshiyya*. After hymns, prayers and lamentations, sung or recited in recollection of the sufferings of the *Imām* Ḥusayn, the food is eaten, stories of the battle of Karbalā are re-told, followed by odes by the poets of the Frashëri family, especially those by Dalip and Shahin Frashëri. Their odes are recited aloud, although these latter are, in part, recited during the whole period of the ten days in *Muḥarram*.[19]

It is characteristic of Albanian *Baktāshīs* that these elements in the '*Āshūrā*' that join them together with members of other denominations and faiths should be stressed. This same feeling is revealed, for example, in the following explanation of the feast's meaning and significance by the Albanian *Baktāshī*, Sirrī Bābā, who wrote these words with a special reference to the Cairene *tekke* where he lived, and the Egyptian society with which he mixed.[20]

The day of the 'Āshūrā'

The day of '*Āshūrā*' is an honoured and respected day among all the people of the books of heavenly revelation, Muslims, Christians and Jews. On that day Allāh Almighty honoured, in varied miraculous acts, a goodly number of His Prophets. In '*Āshūrā*', Allāh Almighty accepted the repentence of Ādam and David, upon whom be peace. In it, Allāh raised Enoch (Idrīs) to a lofy place in Heaven. In it, the ship and ark of Noah, peace be upon him, were fixed firmly

19. Muḥammad Mūfākū's article on the *Baktāshiyya* in *al-Arabī*, no. 220, *op. cit.*, pp. 66–8; see also Nathalie Clayer, *op. cit.*, pp. 85–7.

20. Aḥmad Sirrī Bābā, *al Risāla al-Aḥmadiyya*, pp. 49–51.

on Mount al-Jūdī after the end of the flood, and [the earth's] inundation. In it, Abraham was born, peace be upon him. Right guidance was bestowed upon him in that day. In '*Āshūrā*', Allāh Almighy saved him from the fire of Nimrod. In it, Allāh returned the sight of Jacob, may His peace be upon him. In it, Allāh brought forth Joseph, peace be upon him, from the cistern. In '*Āshūrā*', Allāh took away the suffering and affliction of Job, peace be upon him. In it, Moses, upon whom be peace, had secret and spiritual communion with his Lord. In it, He aided him against Pharaoh, his foe, where he split the sea in twain for him so that Pharaoh and his soldiers were drowned. In '*Āshūrā*', King Solomon, peace be upon him, was granted a kingship that was unattained by any ruler who came after him. In it, Allāh rescued Jonah, peace be upon him, from trial and tribulation and brought him forth from the belly of the whale. In it, our Lord Jesus was born, peace be upon him, and in it he was raised to Heaven. In it, our lord, Muḥammad, the blessing and peace of Allāh be upon him, was pardoned from all his sins that he had committed. In '*Āshūrā*', our lord, the *Imām*, al-Ḥusayn, the son of 'Alī, the satisfaction of Allāh be upon them both, was slain at the place named, al-Ṭaff [beside the Euphrates], at Karbalā, in Iraq, he and seventy men from the household of the Messenger of Allāh.

It is reported in the books of *tafsīr* that the day of the 'breaking of the dam of the Cairo canal' (*al-zīna*),[21] which Allāh Almighty made mention of in *sūrat Ṭāhā*, where He said, 'Your appointed time is the day of ornature' (*al-zīna*), is the day of '*Āshūrā*'. It is also said in the book, *al-Durr al-manthūr fī'l-tafsīr bi'l-ma'thūr* by Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, that the Messenger of Allāh, His blessing and peace be upon him, said, 'Whosoever fasts on the day of the "adornment" will make up for those fasts that he has missed within that year, and whosoever gives alms on that day will redeem for the almsgiving that he has missed during that year, that is to say, on the day of "*Āshūrā*".' In another *ḥadīth* it is said, 'Whosoever is open-handed towards his family and his children on the day of "*Āshūrā*" then Allāh will be generous towards him, likewise, for the rest of the year'.

On this blessed day, food that is made from grains and cereals is cooked. The reason for that is that when the ship and ark of Noah, peace be upon him, rested firmly on Mount al-Jūdī on the day of '*Āshūrā*, Noah, peace be upon him, said to those who were with him in the ark, 'Gather together what provisions you

21. E.W. Lane (in his *Lexicon*, vol. 1, Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1984, p. 1280) explains that *yawm al-zīna* (as it appears in *Sūrat Ṭāhā*, verse 61) is taken to mean 'the day of the bursting [of the dam a little within the entrance] of the canal of Miṣr (Cairo). The dam is broken when the Nile has attained the height of sixteen cubits or more. This day is said to be meant in Koran XX, 61.' A.J. Arberry (*The Koran Interpreted*, vol. 1, London, 1955) renders the verse as 'Your tryst shall be upon the Feast Day' (p. 342). The day of '*zīna*' is otherwise translated as the day of adorned apparel.

have left.' This one came with a handful of beans, another brought with him a handful of lentils, another came with a handful of rice and barley and millet and wheat. Then Noah, peace be upon him, said 'Cook it all' and they did so. And all of them ate of it until they were satisfied. It was the first repast that was cooked on the face of the earth. On account of that, the Muslims have adopted the cereal food that is given the name of '*Āshūrā*'.

The lords of the *Baktāshiyya* celebrate the memory of the martyrdom of al-Ḥusayn which took place on such a day as this in the year 61/683. They cook the 'Āshūrā' and distribute it as charity to the poor and needy who make for the *tekke*, arriving there from every direction. The Shaykh of the *tekke* [in Cairo] invites men of the royal palace and ministers and scholars and men of state and the ambassadors of states and leading men of the capital to partake of the food of the '*Āshūrā*' at the tables that are set up in the gardens of the *tekke*. Then the Qur'ān is read and prayers are recited and the following formal prayers:

> In the name of Allāh, the Compassionate, the Merciful.
> Peace be upon you, O father of 'Abdallāh, peace be upon you, O son of the Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon you, O son of the Commander of the Faithful. Peace be upon you, O lord of the trustees. Peace be upon you, O son of Fāṭima al-Zahrā', the mistress of the women of the world. Peace be upon you, for ever, as long as the day and the night remain. The misfortune that came upon you was of major and awful concern both for us and for the entire Muslim people. Your misfortune was a mighty event in the Heavens among all those in the realm of the Heavens. O Allāh, make me, with you, to be one who is acceptable with al-Ḥusayn in this world and the next. I ask Allāh, who has shown me an honour in having a knowledge of you and a knowledge of those close friends of yours, and who has blessed me in disavowing your enemies, that He will make me to be with you in this world and the next and that my foot of truth will be firmly fixed with you in this world and the next. I beseech Him, the Almighty, that He will make me reach the praiseworthy rank that is yours in the presence of Allāh. O Allāh, make my life-time to be that of Muḥammad and the family of Muḥammad, and my decease to be that of Muḥammad and the family of Muḥammad. O Allāh, give me the blessing of the mediation of al-Ḥusayn on the day of the attainment. Make us firm-footed in truth with Thee, along with al-Ḥusayn and with the companions of al-Ḥusayn who spilled their life-blood for the sake of al-Ḥusayn. Gather us together with al-Ḥusayn, O most gracious of the gracious. Peace be upon you, O Messenger of Allāh, peace be upon you, O Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon you, O Fāṭima al-Zahrā', peace be upon you, O Khadīja the greatest, peace be upon you, O Ḥasan, the selected, peace be upon you, O Ḥusayn the approved, peace be upon you, O martyr of Karbalā', peace be upon your grandfather and your father, your mother and your brother and upon your

family and household and your clients and your party and those who love you. The mercy of Allāh and His blessings and peace be upon those who were sent as messengers, and Thine angels who are brought close to Thy presence, and the saints of Allāh Almighty every one. Praise be to Allāh, the Lord of the Worlds.

Aside from its religious affirmation of faith, Naim's work on his sect is of relatively little literary interest. It has to be seen as having a relationship with another of Naim's last and most monumental works, his second great epic poem *Qerbelaja*. Passages in verse are found in both works. However, in the brief statement of *Baktāshiyya* belief that *Fletore e Bektashinjet* contains, there is enough evidence to show that national sentiment was never far from Naim's mind. In this juxtaposition lies its originality, as Stavro Skendi* explains:

In the Notebook of the Bektashis (1896), Frashëri, who was himself a Bektashi, manifests such a great desire for the purity of language that he translated even the established Oriental terms of the order. Nor does he mention the mother monastery of the Bektashis, *Pir-evi*, in Asia Minor. As explained by his nephew, Midhat Frashëri: 'He [Naim] tried hard to convey to the Bektashis that we need a *Dede-baba* [supreme abbot] from whom the babas [abbots] should receive their consecration and not go to Pir-evi [for that purpose]; and this *Dede-baba* should be recognised by all the babas of Albania as their spiritual head.' The fact the *Pir-evi* was ignored by Naim Frashëri seems to betray his intention of creating an independent Bektashi order for Albania.

The historical background to Naim's 'Qerbelaja'

Qerbelaja is Naim's most direct confession of inspiration that the Albanians derive from the cultural, historical and religious legacy of Iraq and Iran.

The presence of the *Baktāshiyya* in Iraq's holy cities, especially in the Shī'īte shrines where resthouses for pilgrims were needed, is reported by Hasluck.[22] He mentions that the heterodox Kizilbaş of Asia Minor made the pilgrimage to Baghdād, Kūfa and Karbalā and that the Baktāshīs showed a special respect for the tomb of Gulgul Bābā in

* See Stavro Skendi, *The Albanian National Awakening, 1878–1912*, Princeton University Press, 1967, pp. 123–4.

22. Hasluck, *op. cit.*, p. 514. His comment on Damascus is hardly correct, even though at the time dervishes were held in a poor opinion. Hasluck also refers to a *tekke* in Kurdistān and one at Shamakhi in Shirvān, Azerbaijan, north-west of Baku. Azeri verse is influenced by Ḥurūfīsm.

Baghdād, the tombs of the *Imāms* Mūsā and Ja'far al-Ṣādiq in Kāẓimayn and for Karbalā, Najaf and Sāmarrā'. Albanian interests were well served in Iraq, especially during the governorship of Āyās Pasha, who was of Albanian origin. His polite manners, lettered tastes and manly if ruthless virtues were esteemed. He was brother to Sinān Pasha, conqueror of the Yemen, and became governor of Baghdād in 952/1546 after the dismissal of Sūlāq Farhād Pasha.

Karbalā, sacred to the *Baktāshiyya*, as well as to all Shī'ītes and indeed to a large selection of the Muslim world, is associated with events that followed the death of the Umayyad Caliph, Mu'āwiya, in 680 AD. Ḥusayn, second son of 'Alī, together with other members of the Arab aristocracy, had refused to take the oath of allegiance to Yazīd, Mu'āwiya's son. Invited to leave Mecca and take up residence in Kūfa, where he had support, he was intercepted by patrols sent out by 'Ubaydallāh b. Ziyād, Yazīd's governor. Ḥusayn refused to turn back towards Mecca and was therefore escorted as far as Karbalā some sixty miles south-west of modern Baghdād. There he was surrounded and, deprived of further supplies of water, confidently expected to surrender since his allies in Kūfa proved ineffectual. On the 10th of *Muḥarram*, October 10, 680, 'Umar b. Sa'd, the commander under Yazīd's authority, called on him to surrender. Once again Ḥusayn refused. He was killed and his head was sent to the Caliph — who was filled with genuine remorse. This event was to herald a series of 'Alīd rebellions and messianic movements. In 687 al-Mukhtār the Thaqafīte appeared in Iraq as a self-proclaimed 'messenger' for one of 'Alī's younger sons, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya. Claiming to be inspired by Gabriel, al-Mukhtār preached — through a curious, allegedly revealed scripture based on the style of the Qur'ān itself — that the arrival of the Mahdī was at hand. After some striking successes, he won much of Iraq, although he could not win the Arabs of Kūfa. He was killed having fulfilled only in part the sacred duty to avenge the martyrs of Karbalā. It was left to Abū Muslim and others to take up this task.

The happenings in Karbalā and their aftermath, were to appear in poems by the fourteenth-century Anatolian epic poet, Sa'dī. His Karbalā epic is divided into ten parts, corresponding to the ten days of mourning during *Muḥarram*. In the first *séance*, Ḥusayn is shown in Mecca. Invited to go to Kūfa, he leaves notwithstanding the counsel of his friends and well-wishers to remain. In the second *séance*, his companion, Muslim b. Aqīl, whom he had sent to Kūfa ahead of him, is slain. The thirst suffered by the martyrs now begins. The third *séance* shows the journey of Ḥusayn to Karbalā. In the fourth he digs a defence ditch

and pitches his camp. The fifth describes the death of Qāsim, son of a brother of 'Alī, who had married the daughter of Ḥusayn. *Séances* six and seven are concerned with the deaths of Ḥusayn's two sons, 'Alī Akbar and 'Alī Aṣghar, followed by Ḥusayn's own death. The last three *séances* tell of the miracles of Ḥusayn's head as it is carried to Yazīd. The young *Imām*, Zayn al-'Ābidīn, is spared and bravely predicts the vengeance in the future for the slain in Karbalā.

The tekkes of Iraq

Karbalā had its own Baktāshī *tekke* (of the *Dadawāt* — likewise Baghdād, at Najaf, Kirkuk *takiyyat* Mardan Ali, and other cities). These were to play an important role as centres for religious and cultural activities. They provided hostels for pilgrims and became centres of meditation and literary activity, some of which, especially the verse, was to be coloured by Ḥurūfī imagery and thought. Several of the Babas in Albania and Thessaly were either Iraqis or were resident or were trained in Iraq. For example, among the Babas of the 'mother *tekke*' of Durballi Sulṭān in Thessaly, a number of them from the Arab world, at least eight between 1522 and 1753 had come there from Iraq: Bābā Mūsā of Baghdād (1522–53), Kasim (Qāsim) Bābā of Baghdād (1627–43), Emin (Amīn) Bābā from Karbalā (1643–55), Zejnel Abidin (Zayn al-'Ābidīn) Bābā from Baṣra (1660–3), Sejjid Maksud (Maqṣūd) Bābā from Baghdād (1694–1713), Ṣāliḥ 'Alī Bābā from Baghdād (1713–25), Manṣūr Bābā from Baṣra (1725–36) and Selim (Salīm) Bābā from Baghdād (1744–53).

Ḥāwī al-Ṭu'ma in his book *Turāth Karbalā*,[23] writes:

The Karbalā tekke of the Baktāshiyya order

This is located towards the eastern side at the entrance to the southerly gate of the shrine of (the *Imām*) Ḥusayn, and in proximity to the tomb of Āyat Allāh al-Shīrāzī, the leader of the Iraqi revolution (in 1920). This was once the haunt of Pashas and Mushīrs who came from Istanbul at one time or at another. So too came the poets of Karbalā. Among them I single out for special mention Shaykh Mahdī al-Khāmūsh (namely Abū Ziyāra, Shaykh Mahdī b. 'Abūd al-Ḥā'irī, made famous by the name of al-Khāmūsh), who was a preacher and poet and who was favourably attested to by the congregations of Karbalā. He died in 1332/1914/15. He used to make the *tekke* his goal in the age of Sayyid

23. Salmān Ḥāwī al-Ṭu'ma, *Turāth Karbalā*, 1st printing, 1383/1964, al-Najaf, p. 229–30 where the Baktāshī *tekke* is specifically described.

Taqiyy al-Darwīsh, the head of the family of Āl al-Dadah who still survive, and also the two poets Shaykh Jum'a b. al-Ḥā'irī (Shaykh Jum'a b. Ḥamza b. al-Ḥājj Muḥsin b. Muḥammad 'Alī b. Qāsim b. Muḥammad 'Alī b. Qāsim, who died in 1350/1931/32, one of the poets and preachers of Karbalā), and (secondly) Shaykh Muḥsin Abū'l Ḥabb al-Ṣaghīr. All of that took place during the age of the late Sayyid 'Abd al-Ḥusayn al-Dadah. It is well known that those conversations and evening *séances* of a literary nature occupied the first place in the meetings of the *tekke* of the *Baktāshiyya* order.

In a further note the author adds that this *tekke* was about 200 years old, that it had a dome covered with Qāshānī tiles and supported by a marble column. Within its precincts lay buried the poet Fuḍūlī (Fuẓūlī) al-Baghdādī, together with his son. The Āl al-Dadah were an 'Alīd family, descended from the *Imām* 'Alī b. Mūsā al-Riḍā. The family became custodians of the *tekke* in the nineteenth century, first of all Sayyid Aḥmad b. Mūsā Ṣādiq, then his son Muḥammad Taqiyy al-Darwīsh (d. 1314/1896/7) took over the custody of the shrine of al-Ḥusayn from his father. 'Abbās, one of his sons, died in 1316/1898/9. The three offspring and the family farmed 'dervish' lands outside Karbalā. These sons were 'Abd al-Ḥusayn (who was interned in Ḥilla in 1920 and died in 1948), Ja'far and Muḥammad. What is left of the property of the *tekke* was looked after by an Albanian, Meḥmed 'Alī.

Ḥusayn 'Alī Maḥfūẓ writes that in his old age al-Fuḍūlī became a recluse. He spent much of his time attending to the shrine of al-Ḥusayn in Karbalā, a city he called the Elixir of Kingdoms. It is said that he took on the responsibility of lighting the lamps at the *Imām*'s tomb and died of the plague when it ravaged the city. He was buried in the cemetery of the Āl al-Dadah family in that part of the *tekke* of the *Baktāshiyya* to the south of the open court of the *Rawḍa* of the *Imām* Ḥusayn facing Bāb al-Qibla. His son Faẓl b. Fuḍūlī, who would appear to have died after 1014/1605/6, was also lettered, a highly talented writer of verse in Arabic, Persian and Turkish. He wrote histories on noted religious buildings and refutation of the sect of *Kizilbaşiyya* (*Alevi*).

Spencer Trimingham maintains that Bālim Sulṭān (d. 1516) was the first leader of a true Baktāshī organisation, and that it was during the sixteenth century (according to Baba Rexhebi[24]) that the first Karbalā *Dede*, Abdyl Mymin Dedeja, was put in charge of the Karbalā *tekke*,

24. Baba Rexhebi, *Misticizma Islame dhe Bektashizma*, New York, 1970, *op. cit.*, p. 203–8.

which had been established there by Bālim Sulṭān himself. A direct link may be traced between Abdyl Mymin Dedeja, the great poet of Azerbaijan al-Fuḍūlī, and the Baktāshī Albanian poets of the nineteenth century who drew spiritual and patriotic inspiration from the tragedy of the *Imām* Ḥusayn.

The epic of Fuldūlī and his influence on later Albanian literature

The Azerbaijānī poet, Muḥammad b. Sulaymān al-Fuḍūlī al-Baghdādī (died 963/1555/6 or 970/1562/3), who was the greatest of poets in Turkish as well as a master in Persian and Arabic, is best known for his love poetry, which displays pathos and tender yet passionate feelings. His romance *Laylā and Majnūn* (composed in 963/1556), has been described as the most beautiful *mesnevi* in the Turkish language. But he is also noted for his poem *Ḥadīqat al-Su'adā'* (the garden of the blissful) on the martyrdom of the *Imām* Ḥusayn.

This work is partly a Turkish translation of the *Rawḍat al-Shuhadā'* by the Persian Ḥusayn Wā'iẓ al-Kāshifī, a resident of Herat (died 910/1505), a major writer, a scholar, an astrologer and a preacher, and it also has parts derived from the *Kitāb al-Malhūf* by Sayyid Riḍā' l-Dīn b. Ṭāwūs. This contribution in prose to Shī'īte literature was specifically written to be read, recited and pondered upon during 'Āshūrā. It is the source of other compositions devoted to the theme of lamentation, not only for the death of the *Imām* Ḥusayn but also for the afflictions of the prophets, the martyrs and sufferers in every time and place. The composition is divided into ten chapters, to which is appended a conclusion and a colophon:

1. The manifestation of support by the prophets for Muḥammad.
2. The rudeness and persecution towards Muḥammad by the Quraysh, and the martyrdom of Ḥamza and Ja'far al-Ṭayyār.
3. The death of the Prophet Muḥammad.
4. The life of Fāṭima.
5. The life of 'Alī al-Murtaḍā.
6. The virtues of the *Imām* Ḥasan.
7. The miracles of the *Imām* Ḥusayn.
8. The martyrdom of Muslim b. 'Aqīl and the death of several of his sons.
9. The arrival of the *Imām* Ḥusayn at Karbalā, the battle and his martyrdom.

10. The events that happened to the *Ahl al-bayt* in Karbalā, and the punishment that befell those who were compact breakers and seceeders. Conclusion, genealogies of the grandsons and descendants of the *Ahl al-bayt*.

1–4 are a preliminary to the Karbalā events.

Ḥadīqat al-Su'adā' by al-Fuḍūlī, which was written before 963/1555, had among its main aims to make the Turkish reader, as opposed to the Arab and the Persian, familiar with the deeds of the Karbalā martyrs and their sufferings. It had an appeal for the masses and not only for a lettered élite. It is not simply a translation of *Rawḍat al-Shuhadā'*, but surpasses its model in a number of respects; al-Fuḍūlī shapes his material as he wishes. The eleven parts into which the work is divided vary in some respects from those of its predecessor.

1. A statement of the circumstances and background of the prophets and their deeds, including Muḥammad.
2. The harsh treatment suffered by the Prophet Muḥammad at the hands of the Quraysh.
3. The death of Muḥammad.
4. The death of Fāṭima.
5. The death of 'Alī al-Murtaḍā.
6. The circumstances of the *Imām* Ḥusayn.
7. The journey of the *Imām* Ḥusayn from Medina to Mecca.
8. The death of Muslim b. 'Aqīl.
9. The coming of the *Imām* Ḥusayn to Karbalā.
10. The martyrdom of the *Imām* Ḥusayn.
11. The journey of the secluded womenfolk of the *Ahl al-bayt* from Karbalā to Damascus.

According to Ḥusayn Mujīb al-Miṣrī, Fuḍūlī's work reveals a tendency both to simplify and to abridge the content of *Rawḍat al-Shuhadā'*.[25] It is a late work, composed at a time when he was drawn overwhelmingly to Shī'īte piety and to an obsession with the 'Alīd cause. His sympathies had been aroused by the example of the 'Arna'ūdī' Āyās Pasha, a devout follower of 'Alī. Fuḍūlī encouraged

25. Dr Ḥusayn Mujīb al-Miṣrī, *Fī l-Adab al-Islāmī, Fuḍūlī al-Baghdādī, amīr al-shi'r al-turkī al-qadīm*, Cairo, 1966, pp. 645–72 (esp. pp. 648–53). See also E.J.W. Gibb, *A History of Ottoman Poetry*, London, 1904, vol. III, Ch. IV, pp. 90 and 105.

him to take action against rebellious Baṣra in 1546, and on his way there. Āyās Pasha paid a visit of respect to the tomb of 'Alī at Najaf where Fuḍūlī was residing at the time. Such an act by an Ottoman governor had no precedent. However, it was during the period of Āyās Pasha's successor, Mehmed Pasha, that the poem on the Karbalā tragedy was written.

It is this literary and poetic expression of the *Matam* (Arabic *Ma'tam*), the recollection of the Karbalā tragedy, that distinguishes the Shī'īsm (or somewhat more accurately expressed, *Shī'īte* leanings) of the *Baktāshiyya* among the Albanians. It corresponds to the spectacular and dramatic expression of mourning and lamentation (*ta'ziya*) still to be witnessed in Iran and parts of Azerbaijan.[26] Persian and Turkish epic sentiments on this theme were to inspire the masterpieces 'The garden' (*Hadika* or *Hadikaja*) or 'The garden of the martyrs' (*Ḥadīqat al-Su'adā'* in Arabic, *Kopshti i të Mirëvet* in Albanian) by Dalip Frashëri, nicknamed Hyxhrati, an uncle of Naim Frashëri. This is a landmark, and is arguably the first and the longest 'epic' known in Albanian literature. We know little of the life of its author. Dalip Frashëri was born in Frashër and played an important part in the life of the *tekke* there. He may have finished writing this poem on Friday 21st *Rabī'* II, 1258/1842. Its content reveals a blend of Arabic, Turkish and Albanian Islamic terms and idioms. The poem totals some 56,000 verses (adab). Centred upon the Karbalā story, it may be seen as an attempt by an Albanian to rival that task already undertaken by al-Fuḍūlī al-Baghdādī in his *Ḥadīqat al-Su'adā'*. While the latter poet had both poetry and prose in his composition, Dalip Frashëri relied almost entirely on verse to achieve his intentions.

He divided his work into ten parts, preceded by an introduction. In the latter, the poet surveys the history of the *Baktāshīyya* among the Albanians, deriving information, apparently sent to him in Korçë, from Bābā Shemimi in Krujë and from Bābā Naṣibi (Nasībī) in Frashër. He outlines who were the sect's important personalities, who of note joined the order and who took part in its propagation. Following this, he traces the history of the Arabs before Islam, then describes the events in the life of the Prophet, his death and all the major happenings that led to the Karbalā tragedy. The battle is described in detail and he

26. I. Lassy, *The Muharram mysterices among the Azerbaijani Turks of Caucasia*, Helsinki, 1916, furnishes in considerable detail the mysteries among another *Shī'īte* community.

eulogises those who fell as martyrs, especially the *Imām* Ḥusayn.

This enormous poem shows the impact of the *Baktāshīyya* on Albanian life, including Albanian customs, festivals and sensibilities. An example is the habit, during the first ten days of *Muḥarram*, of refraining from drinking water. This was out of respect for the martyrs before the battle, and in their memory. The *tekkes* were chapels where a number of memorial services and vigils were held. Over ten days, the story of the martyrdom was retold during nightly gatherings. Verse was recited. At first, it seems, an attempt was made simply to translate al-Fuḍūlī's *Ḥadīqat al-Su'adā'* into Albanian, so that it might be used on such occasions. However, Dalip Frashëri filled the need with a truly national and comprehensible composition. His tenfold division of the work was undoubtedly meant to facilitate its use in services held in *tekkes* and in homes during the *Matam*.

A second ode was composed by a younger brother of Dalip Frashëri and uncle of Naim, Shahin (Shahinin) Frashëri, and probably completed in 1868. Little is known of the author or the reasons for its composition. It is called *Mukhtār Nāmeh* (*Myhtarnameja*) and its content relates to al-Mukhtār, his rebellion in 685–7 and his 'Alīd movement aimed at avenging the death of *Imām* Ḥusayn. It has 12,000 verses and is claimed by some to be the second epic in Albanian relating to the events of Karbalā and their aftermath. Undoubtedly, the work has as its starting-point the Persian epic on this theme, although Shāhīn Frashëri used a Turkish version as his model. It is one of the last major *Baktāshī Shī'īte* works in Albanian to be written in Arabic script. After it the Baktāshīs relinquished the Arabic alphabet.

According to Muḥammad Mūfākū,[27] both these epics had a lasting influence on modern Albanian literature. They established the genre, the epic form employed by Naim Frashëri for his poem on Skanderbeg. It also made Karbalā an important event in the minds of all Albanians. Furthermore, the two poems were to inspire the major Islamic composition of Naim Frashëri, his own epic in Albanian on these same events, *Qerbelaja*.[28]

27. Conveniently condensed and summarised in Muḥammad Mūfākū, 'Karbalā' fī'l adab al-Albānī', in *Malāmiḥ 'Arabiyya Islāmiyya fī'l-Adab al-Albānī*, Damascus, 1991, pp. 31–65.

28. One of the earliest references to this work in the West is a comment made by G. Jacob in is article *Die Bektaschijje in ihrem Verhaltnis zu verwandten Erscheinungen, in Abhandlungen der Philosophisch-Philologischen Klasse*, XXIV (1909), Munich, p. 11. Jacob discloses that on p. 51 in the *Zeitschrift Albania*, 1898, which he had read in Strasbourg,

'Qerbelaja'

When Naim was young he had heard *Hadikaja* and *Myhtarnameja* recited in his *tekke*, and he resolved in this major work to combine his own beliefs with his ardent nationalism, and to aim at a national epic that would appeal to all sections of Albanian society, despite the constant introduction of *Baktāshī* terms in his verse. He worked on its composition between 1892 and 1895, and it was published in Bucharest in 1898. *Qerbelaja* is in 10,000 verses.

Unlike its precedessors, its content is extended over twenty-five sections, or chapters, each verse rhyming in couplets without any break within each individual section. It therefore differs from *Historia Skenderbeut*, which is broken up into shorter sections.

Among the works most clearly reflected in the content of the Karbalā epic, works which Naim published at various stages of his career, are: (*a*) *Fletore e Bektashinjet*, which, in its pages relating to *Baktāshī* belief in the twelve *Imāms*, and in the succession to Ḥājjī Baktāshī, appears almost verbatim in *Qerbelaja*; (*b*) Naim's monistic and monistically-influenced verse and the shared Ṣūfī belief in the unity of existence (*waḥdat al-wujūd*) and his essay on the Arabs; (*c*) Arabëtë, published in his *Histori e Përgjithëshme për Mësonjëtoret të para* (1886). A large part of this last essay is taken up with the disputes in the Caliphate, and in particular the conflict between 'Alī and Mu'āwiya and the events before and after Karbalā. The figures of 'Alī and Ḥusayn (though quite contrary to the historical evidence) owe much to the heroism of the romantic era, including Naim's own character-study of Skanderbeg.

In Part 1, the pre-Islamic Arabs are presented as a people, then it introduces the Prophet Muḥammad, his rejection by the Quraysh, his *hijra*, the victory of Islam, the death of Muḥammad and the differences within the Caliphate up to the death of 'Uthmān.

In Part 2 allegiance (*bay'a*) is sworn to 'Alī, who is portrayed as an upholder of social justice, a prophet in all but name. He is compared

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he discovered a reference to 'Qérbélaja', poème religieux, par N.H.F. (Naim Frashëri), Bucharest, 1898: 'C'est l'histoire religieuse des Bektachis racontée par un homme de foi et de talent.' This book was unobtainable, which he regretted, although he could sense from the information that he had gleaned that even though the description of its content was not entirely correct, it was of some value in shedding fresh light on the history of the movement that was to evolve into a national branch of the *Baktāshiyya*. Albania was thus to become the most important centre of that movement, at least for a time.

with noteworthy mystics such al-Ḥallāj and Muḥyi l-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī and with earlier biblical characters, and stress is laid on the 'father status' of 'Alī and the 'mother status' of Fāṭima in the Muslim community, a point already made in Naim's *Baktāshī* leaflet.

In Part 3 the poem is concerned with the difficulties that arose following the allegiance given to 'Alī, who only acted as he did in self-defence. The 'battle of the camel' is fought against Ṭalḥa and Zubayr in 656, in which 'Alī was victorious and after which he was recognised as Caliph throughout Iraq.

In Part 4 the poem touches on the dispute that arose between 'Alī and Mu'āwiya and takes the story up to the crucial battle of Ṣiffīn. Mu'āwiya's troops are in dire straits without water but 'Alī generously allows them to have access to it. For dramatic effect Naim extends the length of this battle to four months.

In Part 5, there is a description of the heroic feats of 'Alī in the battle, mounted on his white mule, formerly the Prophet's *al-Duldul* (*duldyl*), 'the hedgehog', and armed with his sword Dhū'l-Fiqār. He attempts to stem the slaughter and challenges Mu'āwiya's troops and their ruse in raising the *Qur'ān* aloft on their lances. This is followed by the mediation of Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī and the deception of 'Alī by 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ.

Part 6, outlines the circumstances that led to the assassination of 'Alī by Ibn Muljam. Naim links this event with plots by Mu'āwiya. 'Alī is buried in al-Najaf, though he 'lives in the hearts of those who love him'. The numerous assassination attempts on the life of *Imām* Ḥasan are mentioned. He dies, poisoned, at the forty-first attempt.

In Part 7, Mu'āwiya asks all to swear allegiance to his son Yazīd (*'Jezit'* is synonymous with evil in Albanian). *Imām* Ḥusayn refuses and he flees from Medina to Mecca. The men of Kūfa ask him to join with them, but he is counselled not to go. He sends Muslim b. 'Aqīl there with his sons, Ibrāhīm and Mukhtār. Muslim b. 'Aqīl is isolated in the city.

Part 8, is an account of the confrontation between 'Ubaydallāh b. Ziyād and Ibn Muslim.

Part 9, portrays the journey of *Imām* Ḥusayn to Kūfa. On his way he is stopped by the poet al-Farazdaq who begs him to return. He continues and learns of the death of Muslim b. 'Aqīl and his two sons. He is stopped by al-Ḥurr b. Yazīd al-Tamīmī who is accompanied by 1,000 horsemen. The latter demands the return of the *Imām*, who is undecided but when darkness falls has resolved to continue to Kūfa.

Part 10 describes the arrival of *Imām* Ḥusayn in Karbalā. He meets

Ibn Ziyād and seeks permission to continue on his way. He is told that he may do so, provided he swears allegiance to Yazīd. The *Imām* refuses and Ibn Ziyād tells his men to surround him and his followers. They are cut off from the water of the Euphrates, but *Imām* Ḥusayn in this grave crisis sees visions and consoles his thirsty warriors. In a dream he meets Muḥammad, 'Alī and Fāṭima, and sees God's throne and weeping angels who await him.

In Part 11, before the final engagement, there are discussions between *Imām* Ḥusayn and 'Umar b. Sa'd who tells him to offer allegiance to Yazīd. In the enemy camp there is a dispute between al-Ḥurr b. Yazīd and 'Umar, who withdraws and joins the *Imām*.

Part 12 is a description of the battle of Karbalā. Naim makes his first appeal to his fellow-Albanians to ponder on the events in Karbalā and to love its heroes.

Part 13 outlines the heroism of a number of the martyrs. The deeds of 'Abdallāh b. Muslim and Muḥammad, the grandson of Ja'far al-Ṭayyār.

Part 14 is a description of the frightful thirst endured in the heat of the sun.

Part 15 describes the exploits of Zayn al-'Ābidīn, who falls sick after great gallantry but recovers in order to help *Imām* Ḥusayn.

Part 16 is the point where *Imām* Ḥusayn seeks to break out from his position and appeals to his foes.

Part 17 is the climax of the epic. *Imām* Ḥusayn, amid tears, bids farewell to his womenfolk and prepares to die while attacking his foes with great courage.

Part 18 introduces a comment by Naim on the significance of Karbalā. The *Imām* has fallen but the battle was not a defeat. Zayn al-'Ābidīn is brought to Kūfa.

Part 19, explains how the news of his death was spread abroad. Ḥusayn's head is carried to Yazīd. He breaks its teeth with his whip. Those who witness it are appalled at this disrespect. Yazīd is punished for his misdeeds before he dies. Mu'āwiya II expresses no wish to assume power and is assassinated.

Parts 20–24 are historical surveys, describing the fall of the Umayyads and the rise of the 'Abbāsids in whom great hopes were placed but whose conduct of affairs reverted to the injustice and the abuses of the Umayyads.

Part 25 is a summing-up of the message of the epic. It is here that Naim Frashëri speaks in the first person. There are also open confessions

of faith in the creed of the *Baktāshiyya*, including the belief in the twelve *Imāms* and in Ḥājjī Baktāsh:

Besuamë Perëndinë,
edhe Muhammet Alinë,
Haxhdien'e Fatimenë,
Hasanë edhe Hysenë,
Imamet të dymbëdhjetë
që ishinë të vërtetë.
Kemi mëm' e at' Alinë
q' e njohëm si Perëndinë,
të parë kemi Xhaferë,
nukë njohëmë te tjerë,
kemi plak mi njerëzinë
Haxhi Bektashi Velinë,
Zotn' e udhës së vërtetë,
q' ishte si Aliu vetë,
se ishte nga ajo derë,
p andaj mori gjithë nerë.

The triple relationship (the expression 'trinity' is misleading) of Muḥammad to 'Alī and to the incarnated Divinity is expressed in various ways, although in principle all are common to both *Baktāshīs* and *Kizilbaş*. The Muḥammad-'Alī conjunction is a manifestation of the workings of the 'light of Muḥammad' (Nūr Muḥammadī). Both symbolise the trust and security that is found solely in the Godhead.[29] Both are located within the mystery of the creation of the world.

29. See E.G. Browne, *A History of Persian Literature under Tartar Dominion*, Cambridge, 1920, pp. 474–81. Time and God are the sole active force for good. 'Time' appears to indicate that period wherein God has acted and acts within history since creation began and throughout His universe, and in the manner expressed by the Persian (*Ḥurūfī*-influenced) poet, Qāsim al-Anwār. To cite Professor Browne's fine translation of the latter's verses:

In six days runs God's Word, while Seven
Marks the divisions of the Heaven,
Then at the last 'He mounts His Throne'
Nay, Thrones, to which no limit's known.
Each mote's a Throne, to put it plain,
Where He in some new Name doth reign.
Know this and so to Truth attain.

God is the sole truth. In Mankind and Humanity God is manifested. Nowhere else can He be so closely found. He who loves Mankind in all honesty and with sincerity loves God, while he who loves not Humanity has no love of God in his heart.

Hence Muḥammad-'Alī is synonymous with the divine aim that is the goal of man. There is no God but God, Muḥammad is His Prophet and 'Alī is His friend (*Walī Allāh/Veliyullah*). Three names become as one name in the ultimate meaning of Love (*maḥabba*). This is vocalised in the *dhikr* (*zikr*). From this indivisible nomenclature is made manifest an in-dwelling and all-pervasive 'Divine Light', not only in 'Alī who is the youth of valour, but likewise in his sword. 'There is no sword, but *Dhū'l-Fiqār*.' This manifestation is also to be observed in the twelve *Imāms* and their offspring. The names of those *Imāms* are sacred names that are to be learnt, repeated and used as an object of meditation, likewise the names of the 'Fourteen Innocents' who were begotten only to be martyred.

Muḥammad Mūfākū, in his articles devoted to Naim,[30] concentrates on the national sentiment that is condensed within the poem. He observes:

Undoubtedly Naim [Na'īm] the poet, in these verses and others from his creative works and writings, exerted a major influence on the souls and hearts of the Albanians. Turkish authority, with success, employed the faith as an agent for its own ends in the Albanian regions, so that the word 'Turk' or 'Turkish', which became synonymous with being a Muslim, was applied in general to the Albanians. As a consequence there was no longer any meaningful existence for the Albanians as a people or for the Albanian language in the view of the Turkish authority. The latter fought fiercely against every attempt to open a school to teach the Albanian language, just as it waged war against every attempt to gain an independence that arose from the depths of Albanian national feeling, which became [in its eyes] a confiscator and an enemy of the faith.

However Naim, as we see him, places matters in context by a logic that runs counter to this. With Naim no contradiction is to be observed in the essence of religion between love for the sons of men and the Albanians' love of themselves. Just as 'every sparrow has its nest, so has every people its homeland'. By this logic the Albanians had their homeland just as the Turks had theirs, and it was their right to enjoy it.

In the same way, Naim tackles the question of language: 'Let us learn our language since God has given it to us.' In this way he transforms the Albanian language, which must be learnt for it comes from God. Since it is a divine language, one has a right to protest against being taught another language, Turkish, which will cause one to forget one's language that is divine in its source and in its inspiration. In this national spirit Naim closes his epic. He

30. These views are reiterated in a number of Muḥammad Mūfākū's writings, e.g. those articles concerned with *Qerbelaja*. The contribution of Naim is especially relevant in his article on the *Baktāshiyya* in *al-'Arabī*, no. 220, pp. 67–8.

tries to link Karbalā in some way with the future of Albania and the Albanians. He wants an Albanian to find his inspiration in the events which occurred in Karbalā for the interest and welfare of his homeland and his nationalism. 'Let him die for the sake of his homeland, just as al-Mukhtār b. Abī 'Ubayd al-Thaqafī died for the cause of Ḥusayn.'

O God, for the sake of Karbalā,
for Ḥasan and Ḥusayn
for the sake of the twelve Imāms
who suffered as they did whilst they lived,
Do not let Albania fall nor perish.
Rather let it remain for ever and ever
Let is attain its aspirations,
Let the Albanian remain a hero, as he once was,
In order to love Albania
Let him die for the sake of his homeland
Just as al-Mukhtār died in the cause of Ḥusayn
So that he can honour Albania.

Our final vision of the epic is from this angle. Whereby we esteem it a work of value. Without doubt Naim had a major influence on the hearts and souls of Albanians with this national spirit. He was aware of how he could arouse the reader who had become deeply attached to the events that took place in the epic, which was written to set the Albanians a lofty example. It has remained so in their minds down to the present day, repeated on several occasions and printed more than once. In this sense the epic remains alive.

To conclude, one has to point out that the battle of Karbalā made a big impact on Albanian literature. There were many poets who contributed their share to more refined and sensitive literature, who wrote at length in verse about Ḥusayn for them to be recited in memory of 'Āshrūrā'. Among these, on the purpose and cause of the martyrdom, was [the poet] Bābā Sersem 'Alī who was born at the end of the fifteenth century [*sic*] and reached highest office in the time of Sulaymān the Magnificent, and the poet Bābā Qemaludin Shemīmī and others among the major Albanian names that merit independent study.

The formulation of these notions and the goal of these visions have to be considered as part of the movement that all the Frashëri brothers tirelessly served. Naim was keen to convince the *Baktāshī* Bābās in Albania that they needed a senior from among them to whom they could turn for guidance and teaching. Henceforth there would be no need to visit the *tekke* in Hacibektaş to be given instructions. They were in need of a contemporary ideology that would allow them to participate fully in the national uprising. His brother Abdul-Bej visited the principal

tekkes and obtained the support of Bābā Alushi to win the incumbents to his cause. Sami saw the transformation of the hierarchical structure of the Albanian *Baktāshiyya* into a political party organisation, and set forth a charter in his famous and much-read work (*Shqipëria — C'ka qenë, c'është dhe ç do të bëhetë* (Albania, what is was, what it is and what will become of it?), Bucharest, 1899. In the chapter reviewing the organisation of the religions in a future Albania, Sami Frashëri concludes that it should be conjoined to the Ministry of either Education or of Justice. Elsewhere in his book, Sami Frashëri adds that the heads of the religions in Albania — the chief *muftī* of the Muslims, the Orthodox Patriarch and the chief bishop of the Catholics — 'will occupy a place of honour and respect but will only interfere in matters of faith and belief'. This ideological evolution of the *Baktāshiyya* in Albania was to run parallel with another development that overtook the order in connection with its organisation. As it evolved within Turkey, the *Baktāshiyya* was a Ṣūfī brotherhood, whereas in Albania it was to be turned into a political party, with its own aspirations to power and an authority special to it. The *Baktāshiyya* in Sami's scheme should adopt a 'hierarchical' party system in which the rank held by a member is graded and his status conforms with his seniority and the proportion and degree of his commitment and loyalty. The ranks were, in ascending order, '*Āshiq, Muḥibb, Darwīsh, Mutajarrid*, ordinary political party member, *Bābā, Khalīfa*, assistant to the Supreme Shaykh, and the Supreme Shaykh.

The *Baktāshiyya* found it necessary to clarify its identity over the language and the alphabet. From the start the *Baktāshīs* had adopted a firm stance, adhering to Albanian and hotly defending its non-substitution by Turkish. The *Baktāshiyya* shared in the battle to choose the Albanian alphabet. For a while, the Bābās welcomed the Arabic alphabet, but they retracted and reversed their position, demanding the Latin alphabet and consistently pressing for it until it finally prevailed.

Twentieth-century Ṣūfī poets of Kosovo

The continuation of the still living tradition of Ṣūfī verse in Albanian regions, especially in the Arabic script, may be seen among the poets of Kosovo. This is not surprising. The pervading influence of Turkish and Arabic idiom and vocabulary are observable at all levels and far more so than in almost any other Balkan region. Popular songs reveal it. As Stavro Skendi remarks,

I have noticed that the songs which have originated in Kosovo usually have more Turkish words than the other Albanian heroic songs. The Kosovo towns have been influenced more because they have been inhabited partly by Turks. Also, the songs of Kosovo have Turkish words – often of Arabic or Persian origin – which are altogether foreign to the Albanians of Albania proper.[31]

If one turns specifically to Arabic, the continuation of the composition – much of it centred on Ṣūfīsm – in Albanian, written in the Arabic script, marks out Kosovo from all the other regions of Yugoslavia after the First World War. Elsewhere, those who favoured the retention of the Arabic alphabet were defeated by the 'Westerners' who demanded its replacement by the Latin alphabet. In Kosovo, however, where the Albanian language was proscribed, the Arabic script was preserved, especially in the *madrasas* and the Ṣūfī *tekkes*. Those who maintained the tradition were either poet-teachers in *madrasas* or else shaykhs or dervishes from among the *mashāyikh* of the Ṣūfī orders.

Among those who continued to write in Arabic was Shehu Hysena Halwative of Prizren (1873–1926). After graduating in one of the *madrasas* he became an *imām* early in the twentieth century. He turned to Ṣūfīsm and was affiliated to the *Khalwatiyya ṭarīqa*. He obtained the *ijāza* and became the shaykh of one of the *tekkes*, after which his name became more generally known. Since no Albanian books or journals were printed, his poems were copied or memorised and became the property of Kosovans, some of them illiterate.

Ṣūfīsm was expressed in verse and there were other Shaykhs who were renowned for it. Amongst them was Shaykh Hilmi Maliqi (1856–1928), who was born in a village near Prizren. He moved to Rahovec where he too became an *imām*. Converted to Ṣūfīsm, he became a member of the *Malāmiyya ṭarīqa*; he was associated with Arab Hoxha (Muḥammad Nūr al-'Arabī) and took the *ijāza* from him. His example favoured the spread of the *Malāmiyya* and a *tekke* was built for him in Rahovec where he remained till his death. This *tekke* was to become a cultural centre.

Shehu Hilmi's wide interests in letters, philosophy and the natural sciences resulted in the *tekke* becoming a free school for the surrounding populations. The *dīwān* of verse attributed to him contains seventy-nine odes in which Arabic metres and rhyming letters are used. Sixteen other odes by him are preserved in his *tekke*. One of the odes, titled *al-Risāla*,

31. See Stavro Skendi in the Bibliography.

deals with Ṣūfīsm, and with historical, spiritual and emotional subjects. The poet, Hafiz Islam Bytyci (al-Ḥāfiẓ Islām Bytyashī), was born in 1910 in the village of Llapusha and completed his Qur'ānic education in Djakova. He died tragically when only twenty-four in 1934. He had composed love verse which eloquently reveals his knowledge of Oriental themes and imagery. Other noted poets include Faik Maloku of Prishtinë who became a director of a religious school in Podijeva and who died in 1935. His poetry extensively quotes Qur'ānic verses and Prophetic *ḥadīth*. Hafiz Imer Shemsiu was also born in Prishtinë. He directed a Qur'ānic school in Sazli and died in 1945, having composed a quantity of religious verse in Albanian in Arabic script. Shaip Zuranxhiu (1884–1951) was born in Mamushë near Rahovec, and was a pupil of Hilmi Maliqi and a member of the *Malāmiyya* order. To him are attributed seventeen poems in Albanian, twenty in Turkish and five in Serbo-Croat, all of a devotional nature. Sheh Osman Shehu (d. 1958) was shaykh of a *Khalwatiyya tekke* at Junik. His son Sheh Xhaferi composed a number of noteworthy poems, one of which, 'Come, O brothers' (*Ehi Vllazën Ehi*), expresses the true essence of Ṣūfīsm and especially the duality within it of the exoteric and the esoteric sciences. Muḥammad Mūfākū rendered part of it into Arabic, and the following English rendering is based on this and the original Albanian:

Let the eyes of your heart be opened
and, with the eyes of your brow,
direct your gaze towards the Ṣūfī way.
Thereby is disclosed that artery that goes forth
from the heart, and the artery, likewise,
that rises upwards to the forehead.
That man who, by perception, is not made cognisant of Reality,
shows that the artery of his heart functions no more.[32].

The Baktāshī legacy in the verse of Bābā 'Alī Tomori

The religious and literary legacy of Naim was continued into the first half of the twentieth century by leading *Baktāshīs* in Albania and the Middle East. Among their number must be counted Baba Ali Tomori

32. Information on Sheh Osman Shehu and his son Sheh Xhafari may be found in Muḥammad Mūfākū *al-Thaqāfa al-Albāniyya fī'l-Abjadiyya al-'Arabiyya*, *op. cit.*, pp. 173–4, and in Hadjar Salihu, *Poezia e Bejtexhinjve*, 1987, *op. cit.*, pp. 467–9 (verse 5 on last page).

(d. 1947). Born near Tepelenë, he studied in Ioannina where he not only read in European languages but became devoted to a study of language in general. During sojourns in the *tekkes* he mastered both Turkish and Arabic. Apart from the *tekke* at Prishtë, where he studied under Baba Shabani, he journeyed to Cairo and became attached to the *tekke* there for some years. He returned to Prishtë and showed his affection for it by calling himself Varfë Ali Prishtë. Later he went to Tomor. During the First World War years he found life difficult owing to the destruction of the Albanian *tekkes* by the Greeks; nevertheless, he showed no hostility whatever to the Christian faith. In 1921 he attended the first *Baktāshī* Congress and thereafter devoted his life to the reform movement and to assuming the administrative responsibilities that were necessary to promote the progress and survival of his order and its following.

Despite these duties he found the time to write at least four books and a large quantity of lyrical and religious verse in Albanian on *Baktāshī* subjects. Foremost among the books were *Histori e Bektashizmës*, a history of the sect, published in Tiranë in 1929,[33] also *Letratyra e*

33. On Baba Ali Tomori, see Baba Rexhebi, *Misticizma Islame dhe Bektashizma* 1970, pp. 367–72, and Nathalie Clayer, *op. cit.*, pp. 409–11. Two of his poems are concerned with Baktāshī saints of the past, the first a panegyric in which their names are listed 'Shënjorët e Shqipërise' (Saints of Albania), and the second 'Vjershëtorët Bektashinj' (Poets of the *Baktāshiyya*). In the latter's verses, names of outstanding poets are listed from the whole history of the sect.

The Baktāshī missionaries include: Ḥājjī Bābā of Khurāsān, who founded his *tekke* in the seventeenth century, Sari Saltik of Krujë, Bulgaria and Romania; and Shemīmī Baba of Krujë, who was spiritual advisor to 'Alī Pasha and a promoter of the recitation of the *Ḥadīqa* by Fuḍūlī. Then came Ṭāhir Nasibiu, who founded the Frashër *tekke* in 1825 and was a master of Persian and Turkish; and then came Asim Baba and Arshi Bābā of Gjirokastër, Sersem 'Alī of Kosovo who allegedly lived in the late sixteenth century and is buried in the Macedonian *tekke* of Kalkandelen, Gül Baba whose *türbe* is in Budapest, Kuzu (Kosum) Bābā of Vlorë, Bābā 'Alī of Berat, Muṣṭafā (Xhefaj) Baba of Elbasan, Abdallāh Baba of Vlorë, Baba 'Alī of Berat, Abdallāh Baba Melçani the successor to Ḥusayn Bābā who founded the *tekke* in Melçan near Korça in the mid-nineteenth century, Baba Tahir of Prishtë *tekke* founded in 1860 near Berat, and Sanxhaktar Abbas Ali who founded the *tekke* on the slopes of Mount Tomor, one of the earliest in Albania.

In the second poem, 'Vjershëtorët Bektashinj', Baba Ali Tomori assigns a high place to the *Ḥadīqa* of Fuḍūlī and alludes to the attempts to incorporate its heroic story into the epics of Dalip, Shahin and Naim Frashëri in the Albanian language. Nor does he forget the poetic accomplishments of Mahzun Baba and Baba Abdallah Melçan and a number of poets who preceded them.

Bektashinjet surveying Albanian literature as revealed in works by *Baktāshīs*. Among his verse, three extended poems show his esteem for the achievements, of his spiritual predecessors, including Naim. One of his poems, *Dëshmor i Qerbelasë*, renewed the theme of Karbalā and the tragedy that had been the subject of Naim's epic, hence its title 'Martyr of Karbalā'.

In the couplets of this poem, the martyr (*dëshmor*) Ḥusayn is portrayed with much of the passion and identification that marks the analogous compositions of Naim and his predecessors. Ḥusayn is seen with compassion and heartfelt sympathy. He, the son of Fāṭima the Virgin, the youthful flower of the household of the Messenger, is shown journeying from Medina to Iraq. He treads wearily through the monotonous and sandy tracts towards Karbalā on a journey that in the event will take him to Paradise. Banished from the City of the Prophet, and this by divine decree (*taqdīr*), his course is oriented towards the highest seat of 'Alī his father. Defiant in the face of Ḥurr b. Yazīd, who tries to dissuade him and bully him into returning to Medina, he continues on his way to Taftafit field, stout in heart although tears of sorrow fall from his eyes. Yet he remains courageous, sustained by the ever-present light of Fāṭima al-Zahrā'. Thus the youth goes into battle and falls a martyr. Sweet and kind in character, he has become an example to all living creatures, leaving behind him a world that passes away and attaining a reward in the world to come in Ḥusayn's burial place.

The neo-mysticism of Hamid Gjylbegaj[34]

A recent though unusual example of the way that Ṣūfī thought made a mark on a man of letters before the Second World War is to be found in F. Cordignano's article, 'Il pensiero religioso nel paese di Skanderbeg'.[35] It reflects the disoriented spiritual vision in Albania at

34. Attemps to trace details of the life of this poet have proved unsuccessful. He is not mentioned by Stuart E. Mann, in his *Albanian Literature* (London, 1955) or in Robert Elsie's *Dictionary of Albanian Literature* (1968). His views would have been anathema to Albania under Enver Hoxha. However, they are valuable as indicators of much thinking that exists among so-called Albanian Muslims (*Sunnites* or *Baktāshīs*) and of why doubt exists in some minds in the Middle East as to the commitment of Albanians to the faith. Odile Daniel (*Central Asian Survey*, vol. 9, no. 3, p. 24) reports Kuwaytī doubts. See also my Chapter 7, n. 32 (p. 278 below), on the current situation as reported by the 'Evangelicals', of whom Gjylbegaj seems typical.

35. *Il Pensiero Missionario*, Rome, vol. 5, 1933, pp. 290–310. On the weakening of links with Istanbul and al-Azhar at this period, see Ettore Rossi, *Tracce del Domino Turco in Albania, op. cit.*, p. 116.

that time. Cordignano prefaces his comments with the remark that the period was one when religion in general was in decline. Despite outward signs of some religious guidance, members of the younger generation, especially those taught in the universities, were facing a future of anarchy and a life seemingly without any spiritual values.[36]

Hamid Gjylbegaj was a Muslim from Shkodër, a poet from the masses yet a man of outstanding culture. His verses are seen as 'a return to good sense', written in a style understood by the common man. His work outlined a belief system designed to shock many of his readers. These reflect a contemplation of man's problems and the meaning of the Universe, and contain references to Ṣūfī and Muslim theological speculations tinged with Christianity that had been aired in Albania for generations.

The poet maintained that nothing has been created and nothing destroyed. What he describes as the transcendant light of the 'Holy Ghost' has neither a beginning nor an end, with the goodness of God ruling over the Universe. His religious beliefs were undefined though he was nominally a Muslim. To him Muḥammad was the last of the prophets, i.e. those who distinguish good from evil and who establish a creed. Gjylbegaj interpreted Islamic belief in his own way. The truth is made known to whoever comes to know himself. One becomes aware of the light of truth through self-knowledge. The truth is one in essence although it presents itself in numerous forms. Religious rites and disciplines vary according to age and locality. He refers to a Trinity in his poem, *Zoti e Robi* (master and slaves) but this differs from the Christian Trinity. Everyone through a gradual ascension within himself will attain the light of the Holy Ghost and become a 'son of God' – as distinct from the title given to Christ alone. His poem appears to express an idea of religious evolution, or of a mystical transcendentalism.

The poet's views of differing religions were expressed in his poem *Fejat e ndryshme* (differing faiths). Any religion that is believed, as long as it has an ideal goodness, is one that is holy and blessed and mankind may be saved by it. No distinction is made between the great religions. Man has passed and will continue to pass, step by step, from the material to the divine light. God manifests himself in individual men, in Moses, Christ and Muḥammad. Such is a part of the evolution of life itself. The poet's religious thought was determined by these principles.

36. Naim's thought, though interdenominational, has none of this diffuse theology. *Qerbelaja* shows that his *Baktāshī* beliefs were firmly rooted in its principles.

One of the bases of the system proposed by Hamid Gjylbegaj was a certain evolution of religious thought. By virtue of various circumstances and by the law of adjustment, only visible contrasts may be discerned. However, in reality, only one single truth exists. There is ascent to a mystical and a transcendent unity with the spirit and with the truth of God. This could be interpreted in a mystical sense alone were it not for the proclamation that God manifests Himself in the history of mankind through men. Each great man, by becoming a prophet, becomes a son of God like Christ himself. The poet is faced with a dilemma. He can either maintain that, in his conception of a divine Trinity, neither Father, Son, nor Holy Ghost is divinity. Therefore Christ, like the other great men of history, is not the Son of God, but merely a man. Or he can maintain, when speaking of the ability of every man to become a son of God, that the word 'son' has a sense of unity in divinity. Therefore, both Christ and mankind are equally sons of God. The poet's religious belief seems to be a form of pantheism.[37] There is a lofty ethical ideal in this belief: man is free; he is created to do good works and if he commits evil then he trangresses limits and is subject to sanctions. All that is unjust and impure is condemned. Moral values

37. 'Pantheism' in Baktāshīsm is acknowledged as such by Baba Rexhebi and Ernesto Koliqi (see below), although the application of this term is anathema to many Ṣūfīs. The debate revolves in part around the precise connotation of 'Oneness of Being' (*waḥdat al-wujūd*), as conceived by Ibn al-'Arabī. The whole subject is lucidly discussed by Ian Netton in his *Allāh Transcendent*, London, 1989, pp. 272–4. William C. Chittick in his *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, New York University Press, 1989, pp. 79, remarks:

> Stated in these terms, the 'Oneness of Being' may appear to some people as another brand of 'pantheism'. But in fact this simplified expression of what the Shaykh is talking about cannot begin to do him justice, especially since such terms like 'pantheism' are almost invariably employed with a dismissive and critical intent. When the Shaykh himself explains what he means by the statement that 'being is one', he finds one of the most sophisticated and nuanced expressions of the 'profession of God's unity' (*tawḥīd*) to be found in Islamic thought.

On Naim's conception of such a notion in his verses and other writings, the specialist reader is referred to Dhimiter S. Shuteriqi's, 'Naim Frashëri', *Studia Albanica*, Tiranë, no. 1, 1971, pp. 9–11, and at considerable greater length in his book, in Albanian, *Naim Frashëri (jeta dhe vepra)*, Tiranë, 1982. Apart from Ernesto Koliqi's searching discussion of Naim's religious beliefs in his 'Influenze Orientale sulla Letteratura Albanese', *Oriente Moderno, op. cit.*, pp. 33–42, and Baba Rexhebi's books, where Naim's verses are quoted specifically with their underlying Ṣūfī meaning in mind, Naim's writings, including his verse, have not to my knowledge been studied in great depth in regard to nuances of his Baktāshī thought, or detailed relationships to Ṣūfī thought and verse in general. The atheist years now make the task harder within Albania itself.

are extolled and apply to mankind, whether as individuals or within a society. At the base of the life of an individual there is sacrifice and at the base of the collective life there is charity.

The thought of Hamid Gjylbegaj, with its idealism, eclecticism and gnostic-inspired presentation,[38] is typical of much Albanian thought. A direct line can be traced through Naim Frashëri back to the major expressions of Ṣūfī thought shared by the *Baktāshiyya* and other Balkan Ṣūfī orders. *Ishrāq* and *Waḥda*, the mystical cosmos of al-Suhrawardī and Ibn al-'Arabī, are to be found here. Monotheism and theocentric monism are discernable in Gjylbegaj's verse.

38. On the literary, poetic and intellectual level in Albania, it is principally from the Ḥurūfī-inspired poets such as Nesimi (Nasīmī), Rūḥī, Uṣūlī and others that models and images have been borrowed. It is for this reason that a work such as Kathleen R.F. Burrill's *The Quatrains of Nesimī, Fourteenth Century Turkic Hurufi, with annotated translations of the Turkic and Persian quatrains from the Hekimoglu Ali Paşa Ms*, The Hague: Mouton, 1972, is likely to be the most useful source for comparison.

6

BALKAN MUSLIMS IN THE HISTORY OF THE MAGHRIB, EGYPT AND SYRIA, AND THE INFLUENCE OF THE ARAB EAST IN THE COURTLY LIFE OF ALI PASHA OF TEPELENË

> 'Pan-Islamism has always come from the very heart of the Moslem peoples, nationalism has always been imported. Consequently, the Moslem peoples have never had 'aptitude' for nationalism. Should one be distressed by that?'
> (Alija Izetbegović, *The Islamic Declaration*)

The Albanian and Bosnian communities in the Arab world, especially in recent times, were both influenced by, and made their own mark on, the history and the cultural life of the Maghrib, particularly Algeria and Tunisia, and on the life of Egypt, Syria and Lebanon. At the same time members of these communities were the agents of a continuous transmission of Middle Eastern Islamic culture, language and literature into the heart of the Balkans. Trends in Islam, the vicissitudes of Ṣūfīsm, the effort of the Arabs to achieve independence from the Turks or the West, were echoed or reflected within the towns, villages and citadels of Islam in the Balkan peninsula. The Balkan languages themselves, especially Albanian, illustrate this borrowed phenomenon.

An example of the borrowed influence exerted within the Balkans from Egypt and Central Asia in an earlier age can be seen in what is today Greek Macedonia, including such cities and towns as Yenice Vardar, Larissa, Salonika, Serres, Kavalla and Arta. The first of these cultural circles at Yenice Vardar was within a small sophisticated group and particularly among its lettered élite. It reveals the way the Ṣūfīs there were to transmit Egyptian and Persian influences within the interior of Macedonia. Machiel Kiel[1] has pointed out that in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries this Macedonian city, in its crucial central location, was essentially Turkish, though surrounded by a mixed

1. See M. Kiel, 'Yenice-i-Vardar (Vardar Yenicessi Giannitsa): A forgotten Turkish cultural centre in Macedonia in the 15th and 16th centuries', *Studia Byzantina et Neohellenica*, 3, Leiden, 1971, reprinted in *Studies on the Ottoman Architecture of the Balkans*, Aldershot: Variorum, 1990, IV, pp. 308–16.

Turkish and Christian population, chiefly Bulgarian. It was an important Islamic cultural centre, noteworthy for its literary intelligentsia. Three of its members — Shaykh 'Abdallāh al-Ilāhī, Shaykh Shams al-Dīn al-Bukhārī and the Ṣūfī poet Uṣūlī, — illustrate the unbroken relationship between Yenice, their home town, and Istanbul, Egypt and Persia at that time.

Shaykh 'Abdallāh was born in Anatolia. However, his earlier years were partly spent in Samarqand, where he was accepted into the *Naqshabandiyya* Ṣūfī order. He then moved to Istanbul, where he became a professor in the Molla Zeirek *madrasa*. He actively propagated the *Naqshabandiyya* order, ably supported by Shaykh Shams al-Dīn al-Bukhārī, who was originally from Bukhara in Central Asia. The two men had met in Samarqand. Shaykh 'Abdallāh al-Ilāhī's reputation and devotion to the *Naqshabandiyya* earned him a measure of support among the citizens of the expanding Turkish urban communities in the Balkans. When he died in 1491, communities that followed his teaching had been founded in Macedonia and beyond, including Sofia. To the north such communities were to be observed in Skopje and in Bitolj, the hub of Balkan routes and a key centre for secondary contact within the Albanian interior. As Dukagjin-Zadeh Basri Bey has remarked: 'Every road leads to Rome. In Albania-Macedonia one says "every road leads to Monastir [Bitolj]". Monastir-Korça, Monastir-Elbasan, Monastir-Dibra form the hyphen that joins together the mass of southern, central and northern Albania.'

At this time, the Ṣūfī poet Uṣūlī was born in Yenice Vardar. He moved to Egypt, which in that period had become a centre for several Ṣūfī orders.

As we have already seen, the last major Circassian Mamlūk ruler, Qānṣawh al-Ghawrī, had commercial and diplomatic contacts not only with the spice entrepots of the Orient but also with Ragusa and its merchants, whose fleet rebuffed the Portuguese and who had a marked sympathy for certain of the Ṣūfī orders, one or two of which bordered on heterodoxy. The orders were favoured during his reign. According to Muḥammad b. Aḥmad Ibn Iyās, describing events before the Ottoman conquest of Egypt in 1516,[2]

> On the Sulṭān's departure from Aleppo he went to Ḥailan and halted there . . . the Sulṭān said the morning prayers, mounted and proceeded to

2. Lieut.-Col. W.H. Salmon, *An Account of the Ottoman Conquest of Egypt in the Year AH 922 (AD 1516)*, Oriental Translation Fund, New Series, vol. XXV, Royal Asiatic Society, London, 1921, pp. 41, 59, and 84.



Plate 11. Four folios from *Muḥarrik al-qulūb li-ʿibādat ʿallām al-ghuyūb*, one of the earliest Bosnian and Hercegovinian compositions in Arabic, on the Meccan pilgrimage. The work originally contained 16 chapters, but only parts of the text survive. Its author, Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn Aḥmad b. Muṣṭafā al-Mūstārī (from Mostar), known as Aḥmad Efendi, was a simple *muezzin* and a Ṣūfī affiliated to the *Khalwatiyya ṭarīqa*; he died in 1090AH/1679AD. His *shaykh* was Muṣliḥ al-Dīn of Uziče. The first folio is typical of this author's pious style and his evocation of prophetic and Qurʾānic



recommendation of the duty of the *hajj*, citing Abraham for an example, and strengthening his argument and his case by seemingly fabulous reports of pilgrims and accounts of the undoubted blessings they received in consequence. The work refers to holy sites and localities in and around Mecca and Medina, and the significance of the performance of certain rites at certain seasons. The fragments of this work were preserved in the Gazi Husrev Library, Sarajevo, which recently suffered damage and destruction.

Zaghzaghin and Tell al-Fār, where the alleged tomb of the Prophet Dā'ūd is.[. . .] He there mounted his charger, wearing a light turban and a mantle, carrying an axe on his shoulder;[3] he inspected the army in person; on the right wing was the Amīr of the Faithful, also wearing a light turban and mantle . . . carrying an axe on his shoulder like the Sulṭān, and having over his head the Khalīfah's banner. Around the Sulṭān, borne on the heads of a body of nobles, were forty copies of the Ḳor'ān in yellow silk cases; one of the these copies was in the handwriting of Imām 'Othmān Ibn 'Affān. There were also round him a body of dervishes, among whom was the successor of Seyyid Aḥmed al-Bedawī founder of the Ṣūfī sect accompanied by banners. There were also the heads of the Ḳādiriyyeh sect with their green banners, the successor of Seyyidī Aḥmed al-Rifā'ī with his banners, and Sheikh 'Afīf al-Dīn, attendant in the mosque of Seyyidah Nefisah with black banners.'

Ibn Iyās adds that 'he had a great belief in the dervishes and the pious'.[3] However, even more significant, was the fact that he was inclined to 'the *Nasīmiyya*', and its beliefs, and that this preference was strengthened by his liking for foreigners and the stimulus of men from Iran and from the Caucasus and Ṣūfīs from those regions. Massignon spotted this fact. 'The Turcoman sect of the *Ḥurūfiyya*, persecuted simultaneously among the Tīmūrids, the Osmanlis and the Mamlūks of Egypt survived among the Turks of Egypt and Anatolia thanks to the poetry of Nasīmī, which Sultan Qānṣūh al-Ghawrī admired.'[4]

It was not only the appeal of the poetry of Nasīmī (d. 807/1404), the gnostic follower of the epiphanic and theophanic teacher and thinker Faḍlallāh of Astarābād, with poetic reflections and disclosures of the divinity in the physical form and facial features and members of man, but also the complex Qur'ānic cabbalistic schemes that were, in some respects, more typical of the founder-master than of Nasīmī, his chief disciple. Much of the speculative and the magical Ṣūfīsm was to be seen in the esoteric teaching of the first *Khalwatī* dervishes and men of letters who came to Egypt in the reign of Qānṣawh al-Ghawrī, especially Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Demirdāsh ('iron-stone') Shāhīn al-Khalwatī and Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad Gülshenī. Uṣūlī was initiated into his order and remained in Cairo until his master's death in 925/1528, when he returned to Macedonia, dying in poverty there in 1538. Imitating Nasīmī's style, Uṣūlī's verse is marked by its *Ḥurūfī*

3. On the type of axe described, see F. de Jong, 'The iconography of Bektashiism', *Manuscripts of the Middle East*, vol. 4, 1989, p. 21, and the details furnished in his article.

4. Louis Massignon, *The Passion of al-Hallāj, Mystic and Martyr of Islam* (transl. Hubert Mason), vol. 2, *The Survival of al-Hallāj*, Princeton University Press, 1982, pp. 253–4.

content, which the poet seems to have studied and absorbed in Cairo – not, however, through any schooling that emanated from the *Baktāshiyya*, which was destined to become the principal depository of such *Ḥurūfīsm*, but through the *Gülsheniyya* which was only one among other sub-orders that had also accepted Faḍlallāh's speculations and saw their secret propagation as a duty. Uṣūlī's death did not sever this connection between Cairo and Macedonia, since Sinecak of Yenice Vardar went to Cairo later in the sixteenth century and was initiated into the order of Ibrāhīm Gülshenī. He then performed the Meccan pilgrimage, and travelled extensively in Arabia and Persia before returning to Thrace. He was an acknowledged master of Arabic and Persian as well as Turkish.

Albanians and Bosnians in Algeria and Tunisia

At the time when the Ottomans established their rule in Egypt, three Levantine adventurers from the island of Lesbos established their power on the Barbary coast. Of these 'Arūj, whom G. Yver, in his article on him in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, suggests was the son of a Turkish captain, or a Greek or Albanian renegade, had been first favoured by an Egyptian prince following his captivity and escape from a galley belonging to the Knights of St John at Rhodes.[5] At the beginning of the sixteenth century, accompanied by his brothers Isḥāq and Khayr al-Dīn, 'Arūj arrived in Tunis with a strong religious motivation for launching a *jihād* based on an Islamic state superimposed on effete Berber principalities in the western Mediterranean. The dreams of 'Arūj were of wide extent. He conceived of attaining political sovereignty for his brethren within the central Maghrib, as far as Tilimsān. The menace of Spain spurred him on to his goal, although death at the hands of an expeditionary force, despatched by the future Charles V, put paid to his own and his brother Isḥāq's ambitious endeavours. Khayr al-Dīn, in Algiers, was to replace him and he decided to seek the protection of Sulṭān Selīm. Algiers became an Ottoman frontier province and the Sulṭān sent 2,000 Janissaries and 4,000 other Levantines who were enlisted into the Algerian militia. These Janissaries were to form the backbone of resistance against the Spaniards and spearhead Turkish

5. On 'Arūj and his brothers and their origins, see John B. Wolf, *The Barbary Coast: Algiers under the Turks, 1500 to 1830*, New York and London, 1979, p. 64, and Corinne Chevallier, *Les trente premières années de l'état d'Alger, 1510–1541*, Algiers: Offices des Publications, 1986, pp. 26–36.

conquests deep into the Maghrib. The corps of the Janissaries was to provide the garrison into which groups of Turks, Albanians and Bosnians were absorbed, along with renegades, in this region of North Africa. It seems likely that the first 2,000 men were largely the offspring of Balkan Christians who had been taken from their homes as *devshirme*. Other recruits, who were to outnumber them, were probably landless Anatolians. The Janissary corps was extremely mixed in origin and was to be enlarged by numbers of renegade Christians.

Indeed North Africa was to attract numbers of Levantines, unemployed Rumelians and Anatolians, some of them peasants as well as renegades, who in aggregate formed a community superficially not unlike the '*Ṣaqāliba*' (Slavs) as an ethnic notion so defined in the Middle Ages by the Arabs in Spain and elsewhere.

According to J. Pignon, at the end of the sixteenth century the Spanish monk Diego de Haëdo, a slave in Algiers, noted the considerable number of Turks entering Barbary to seek their fortunes, like the Spaniards in Peru. Slavago, in his turn, has shown us how they abandoned their native hovels and their ploughs as they crowded into Barbary to enable themselves, for there they could found a household by marrying a Moorish woman and see their sons succeed them in the militia. He says that there was always someone waiting in the ports of Moré or in the islands of the Aegean, in Adalia, Cyprus or Cairo, for a boat to arrive which could carry him to Barbary.

However, the Turks of the Levant were not the only ones to appreciate these advantages. How much greater was the allure of the force of Janissaries for the numerous renegades living in Tunis; young captives converted in their childhood despairing of ever purchasing their freedom, or compelled by circumstances to renounce their faith — or even adventurers renouncing it voluntarily for the sake of their careers. The renegades, mostly from the coasts of Italy and Provence, were very numerous among the Janissaries and were certainly the most active. In 1682, during the conflict between Tunis and Algiers, out of thirteen leaders selected by the Divan to ensure that the town was well guarded and the troops properly led, twelve, including the commanding general were renegades.*

After 1568, Muḥammad Pasha decreed that Janissaries could go to sea with the corsairs and that Levantine and renegade marines could

* Jean Pignon, *Les Cahiers de Tunisie*, 15, Tunis, 1956, p. 307.

join the militia. The latter was organised as in Tunis[6] in the ascending ranks. At the bottom was the *joldac* (*yoldash*, 'comrade' or private), then *adabuch* (sergeant), *boulouk-bachi* (captain) and at the top *agha* (commander). Janissaries married local women, and their offspring, the *Coulougli* (Kul-Oughlu), were to become an element of the population, among whom familial memories of Anatolian, Bosnian and Albanian ancestry and wider Balkan tribal connections were preserved and cherished, and have continued to be down to the present in the major cities of Algeria and Tunisia.[7] It is noteworthy that the offspring of merchants, pashas and men of religion are also included within this small community.

Algiers was to remain one of the most important North African cities where Balkan Muslims were to live, especially in the originally Berber district of Beni Mezerna, alongside Spaniards, Catalans, Maltese, Sardinians and more northerly Europeans. The spiritual heart of Algeria for the Janissary corps was the mosque that is still known as *al-jāmi 'al-jadīd* (the 'new mosque', later *la mosqueé de la pêcherie*). Built in 1660 on the site of the *madrasat Bū 'Inān*, it was the one *Ḥanafī* mosque in Algiers city, and was built solely for the non-indigenous population in Algiers, the Turks and the Kul-Oughlu population. Its cruciform plan reflects the influence of the Ottoman East. It is one of the few of its kind in Algeria, although there are examples in Tunis. The mosque of Ṣāliḥ Bey, in 'Annāba, Algeria, built in the eighteenth century, is crowned with a pencil-like Salonica-style minaret that is unique in Africa outside Egypt and Libya, and its interior is graced by decoration around its prayer-niche (*miḥrāb*) in the style of Ottoman floral and decorative tiling that also exists in palaces in Algiers city.

Certain Janissaries of Balkan origin are listed in the registers of salaries preserved in the Turkish archives in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Algiers[8]. Composed in 1702 in the time of the Dey Muṣṭafā, by the

6. For the Janissaries in Algiers, see H.D. de Grammont, *Histoire d'Alger sous la domination turque (1515–1830)*, Paris, 1887. For an account of the Janissaries in Tunis, see Jean Pignon, 'La milice des Janissaires de Tunis au temps des Beys (1590–1650)', *Les Cahiers de Tunisie*, 3me trimestre, no. 15, Tunis, 1956, pp. 301–26.

7. Albanian families still have descendants in the principal cities. The Bosnian community is particularly associated with Algiers (the shrine of Sīdī 'Abd al-Raḥmān is frequently visited by women of Bosnian origin) and with Tlemcen (Tilimsān).

8. Details are given in J. Deny, 'Les registres de solde des Janissaires conservés à la Bibliothèque Nationale d'Alger', *Revue Africaine*, nos 304–5, 1920, pp. 19–46 and 212–60.



Plate 12. The 'New Mosque' (*al-jāmi 'al-jadīd*, or *mosquée de la pêcherie*), the only *Ḥanafī* mosque in Algiers, specifically built in 1660 for the Turks, the Kul-Oghlu, and the Bosnian and Arnaut population, and members of the Janissary corps in the city. Its plan and design reflect Ottoman influences.

hand of al-Ḥājj Muṣṭafā Dā'ī, they describe the serving or departed members whose names follow as 'dervishes of Sulṭān Ḥājjī Baktāsh Walī, may Allāh sanctify and illuminate his tomb until the Day of Religion'. The Janissaries are listed according to rank and are sometimes identified within the 400 or more units (called *odjaq*) by their town of origin and their profession. All principal barracks are included: their inhabitants were ethnically mixed, but a few Balkan Muslims were listed among them:

Bābā 'Azzūn barracks: no. 1, Arna'ūṭ Sha'bān, Sha'bān, 'the Albanian'. *Ṣāliḥ Pasha barracks*: no. 23, Veli (Walī) Dede.This name recalls a 'marabout' who was first of all chief cook at the Mevlevi *tekke* of Pera, and then became the *Mesneviḥān* in 936/1529–30. He later went to Algiers and died in 955/1548–9. There is a convent dedicated to Veli Dede in the village of Goeldjuk (Tavchjanli district, near Gallipoli).

No. 24, Qalābaq, a Janissary from Qalabaqa, a town in Thessaly, north of Trikkala. *Eski barracks*: no. 3, Arnaghūdlar, 'the Albanian'.

No. 4, Istankūlī, 'the man from Kos or Tanco'.

No. 23, Qāzdāghlī, from the vicinity of Mount Ida, in the region of Troy.

While at times the Albanian Janissaries in Algiers were, as elsewhere, a very troublesome element in the population of Algiers, and in the eighteenth century mounted an unsuccessful coup during the rule of Bābā Muḥammad Torto,[9] in the sixteenth century they played a positive role in combating the Spaniards and administering the city. Also, together with Moroccans, Turks and Serbs, they established a foothold in Montenegro that was to last for centuries.

In the sixteenth century, one or two *beylerbeys* in Algiers were of Albanian birth. It is recorded that King Philip II, while in England in 1557 to visit Mary Tudor, wrote letters to *Ra'īs* Dragut and to *Qā'id* Muṣṭafā Arnā'ūṭ on hearing news of the death of Muḥammad Pasha, *Āghā* of the Janissaries. This Muṣṭafā was chosen as his successor. During the rule of Hasan-Veneziano (1577–80), who made many destructive raids on the Spanish coast, Cervantes was taken captive by *Ra'īs* Mami Arnā'ūṭ, whom the author of *Don Quixote* describes as large yet thin and pale, with a ruddy though sparse beard and burning eyes, a man both cruel and brave and endowed with boundless energy.

A decade later, the fourth *beylerbey*, in succession to Khayr al-Dīn, 'Ulj 'Alī Pasha, died. In 1569, he had taken advantage of the uprising of the Moriscos in Spain to capture Tunis from the Spaniards. Although its first recapture proved short-lived, it was decisive in the long term since in 1574 'Ulj 'Alī again seized Tunis, together with La Goletta, thereby ending Spanish control and influence. This great man was responsible for major building projects in Algiers, including an extension to its harbour, and he had dreams of digging a canal between the

9. On the revolt of the 'Arnaouds', see Venture de Paradis (presented by Joseph Cuoq), *Tunis et Alger au XVIIIe siècle*, Paris: Sindbad, 1983, pp. 217–20. There is a detailed description of Janissary life in Algiers on pp. 159–95.

Mediterranean and the Red Sea in order to extend Ottoman maritime power in the East. Specifically for the Balkans, it was he who, perhaps more than any other North African ruler, established a corsair foothold in the peninsula of Ulcinj, today the most south-easterly point of Montenegro. This town had been subject to Arab attacks since the eighth century and was held by them for two centuries, after which it passed into the hands of the Slavs. Then in 1571 it was captured by 'Ulj 'Alī, ally of Selīm II during the war of the latter against Venice. Until 1878 the port remained a haven for corsairs, who extended their influence northwards towards Bar and the Rumije range. It was garrisoned by Moroccans, Algerians, Albanians and Turks.

Ulcinj was to become an important harbour for landing slaves from Black Africa. Some intermarried with Albanians and became an important major element in the town, and a tiny remnant of their descendants survived. Trade in slaves continued under the Montenegrin flag as late as 1914, and the names of several sea captains who brought negro slaves from Tripoli and elsewhere on the North African coast have been recorded. Some of these slaves, referred to as '*Arap*', were from the region of Bagirmi near Lake Chad. They spoke Arabic and retained a memory of some Sūdānic vocabulary.

Alexander Lopašić, who has made a detailed study of the descendants of freed slaves in Ulcinj district, writes:

> The Ulcinj Negroes have been and still are Mohammedans by faith. Their women have always hidden and still hide their faces and decline to give up that custom. According to information which I received from the Albanians of Ulcinj, some customs of the Ulcinj Negroes are apparently either of Arab or African origin, since they are not Albanian. For example, trousers were not allowed to be left near the bed because otherwise the owner would dream while sleeping. This custom was told me by Rizo Brashnye who himself had it from his father and still observes it. He was further told by his father that if he wanted to do harm to a person he must appear in the dreams of that person. If a person appears in the dreams of another, the dreamer has only to turn the pillow over and then he himself will appear in the dream of the former one and then he will remain undisturbed. It is still remembered that Negroes brought to Ulcinj had scars on their faces indicating their tribes. Two scars indicated the town dweller, while one scar was the sign of people living in the country. It is known that Abdula Brashnye had two scars and Mohammed Shurla only one scar across the face. Negroes without scars on their faces were considered to be of lower rank.[10]

10. Alexander Lopašić, 'A Negro Community in Jugoslavia', *Man*, vol. LVIII, Nov. 1958, p. 171. Links between Ulcinj and Algiers are discussed in Muḥammad Mūfākū,

Ulcinj was not devoid of a certain intellectual and cultural life. This continued till late in the Ottoman age (as it did in adjacent Stari Bar). For a time in the seventeenth century it was the place of banishment for the messianic Jewish leader, Shabbetai Zevi (1626–76):

> Although they were still very strong in the Balkans and Asiatic Turkey, the Shabbateans were gradually driven underground but were not actually excommunicated. The borderline between the apostates and those who remained Jews sometimes became blurred although the latter were generally noted for their extremely pious and ascetic way of life. Shabbetai Zevi himself, who enjoyed the sultan's favour, formed connections with some Muslim mystics among the Dervish orders. Letters between his group and the believers in North Africa, Italy and other places spread the new theology and helped to create an increasingly sectarian spirit. After a denunciation of his double-faced behaviour and sexual license by some Jews and Muslims, supported by a large bribe, Shabbetai Zevi was arrested in Constantinople in August 1672. The grand vizier wavered between executing or deporting him, but finally decided to exile him, in January 1673, to Dulcigno in Albania, which the Shabbateans called Alkum after Proverbs 30:31. Although allowed relative freedom, he disappeared from public view, but some of his main supporters continued their pilgrimage apparently disguised as Muslims.[11]

The town was the birthplace of Hafez Ali Ulqinaku (1835–1913), author of a large Turkish-Albanian/Albanian-Turkish dictionary, written in the Arabic script (1897), and of a *mawlūd* (poem in praise of the Prophet), published in Istanbul around 1878. Tiranë's *Biblioteka Kombetare* contains a copy of an Arabic work entitled *Jalā' al-qulūb*, by Isḥāq b. Ḥasan al-Zajānī, copied in 1224/1808 in Ulcinj.

Though ruined by earthquake and culturally decayed, Ulcinj is one of the best examples, at least in Yugoslavia, of a district that has maintained over a long period those links that have connected the Balkans with Istanbul and the maritime cities of North Africa. However to the Albanians, who have long regarded it as an integral part of their homeland, the town has inspired, in at least one of its men of letters, a spirited defence. The lyric poet Filip Shiroka (1859–1935, pseudonym Gegë Postripa), who lived most of his active life in exile, first in Egypt and later in Lebanon, working as a railway engineer, wrote verses

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'Al-Thawra al-Jazā'iriyya fī'l-shi'r al-Albānī', in *Malāmiḥ 'Arabiyya Islāmiyya fī'l-adab al-Albānī*, Damascus, 1990, *op. cit.*, pp. 93–5. Two further studies are Durdica Petrović, 'Crni u Ulcinju', in *Etnolški Preglad*, 10, Cetinje (Montenegro), 1972, pp. 31–6 and Tih R. Djorjevic, 'Negri i nasŏj zemlya', *Glaznik Skopsoj Naučnoj Društva*, pp. 303–7.

11. *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 14, 1972, pp. 1220–54.

entitled in Italian *All' Albania all' armi* (Albania take up arms) praising the struggle to defend Ulcinj from Montenegrin assaults that took place in 1880. The town was therefore notable for more than merely having once been a nest for North African corsairs.

Albanians in Egypt

Egypt is the most important Muslim country, after Turkey, with which the Albanians have had long and close contact. This was natural since the Albanian founder of modern Egypt, Muḥammad 'Alī,[12] was intensely proud of his Arna'ūṭ origins. He arrived in Egypt as a young officer with the Albanian detachment in the Turkish expeditionary force. He looked fondly towards his home town of Kavalla in Macedonia, and seemed always to breathe some distant fresher mountain air beyond it, so that when he received Mr Barker, a former British Consul General in Egypt, at Alexandria in November 1826, he allegedly remarked:[13]

'I will tell you a story: I was born in a village in Albania, and my father had ten children, besides me, who are all dead; but while living, not one of them ever contradicted me. Although I left my native mountains before I attained to manhood, the principal people in the place never took any step in the business of the commune, without previously inquiring what was my pleasure. I came to this country an obscure adventurer, and when I was yet but a *Bimbashi* (captain), it happened one day that the commissary had to give each of the *Bimbashis* a tent. They were all my seniors, and naturally pretended to a preference over me; but the officer said, 'Stand you all by; this youth, Mohammed Ali, shall be served first. And I was served first; and I advanced step by step, as it pleased God to ordain; and now here I am.'

Albanians viewed the triumph of Muḥammad 'Alī with pride. M.

12. This modernising autocrat is seen by P.J. Vatikiotis not as a nationalist but as 'simply a Muslim ruler whose conceptions about society and the relations among men were basically religious, with a strong instinct for domination and command' (*The History of Modern Egypt: From Muhammad Ali to Mubarak*, London, 1991, pp. 68–9).

13. Cited in James Augustus St John, *Egypt and Muhammed Ali, or Travels in the Valley of the Nile*, London, 1834, vol. 1, p. 543. An interesting study of Muḥammad 'Alī as a man of vision is Anouar Abdel-Malek, 'Moh'ammed 'Ali et les fondements de l'Egypte indépendante', in *Les Africains* (Charles-André Julien, Magali Morsy, Cathérine Coquéry-Vidrovitch and Yves Person), vol. V, Paris: Jeune Afrique, 1977, pp. 231–59. There is a photograph of Muḥammad 'Alī's boyhood home at Kavalla in Greek Macedonia on p. 243.

Edith Durham, in her *The Burden of the Balkans* (London, 1905, p. 44), remarks:

> Mustaffa Bushatli, Pasha of Skodra, the chief ruler in North Albania, then thought, as other people were obtaining recognition of freedom, it was a good opportunity for him, to strike. Albanian power at this moment was very great. Mehemet Ali an Albanian, had made himself master of Egypt, and threatened daily to yet further curtail the Sultan's power. It is said that he not only encouraged Bushatli to rise, but supplied him with funds.

Again, on page 77, she comments on an Albanian who hated all the English that 'he knew all about them, for he had lived ten years in Egypt. Had it not been for the English influence Mehmet Ali would have ruled the Turkish Empire and all would now be Albanian.'

This was an age when Albanians and Bosnians were posted to garrisons within the Nile regions, and[14] furthermore the bulk of the Albanian troops were uncultured, exceedingly unruly, and often hated. Yet the dynasty that Muḥammad 'Alī established, the affection it had for Albanians and received from them, and the haven it afforded to them as exiles from Ottoman control, victimisation by Greek neighbours, or the sheer misery of Balkan poverty, meant that in time Alexandria, Cairo, Beni Suef and other Egyptian towns would harbour Albanians who organised associations, published newspapers and above all wrote works in verse and prose that include significant masterpieces of modern Albanian literature. Within al-Azhar and the two *Baktāshi tekkes* in Cairo, Qaṣr al-'Aynī and Kajgusez Abdullah Megavriu, Albanians and Balkan contemporaries were to find inspiration for a mystical quest, and artistic and literary stimulus, that sent ripples, as on a pond, throughout Albanian and Egyptian circles in Cairo and distantly and remotely in towns of Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia.

Some of the outstanding literary figures of modern Albanian literature – for example, Thimi Mitko (d. 1890), the author of collections of Albanian folksongs, folk-tales and sayings, in his *The Albanian Bee (Bleta Shyqpëtare)*, Spiro Dinë (d. 1922) in his *Waves of the Sea (Valët e detit)* and Andon Zako Çajupi (1866–1930) in his *Baba Tomorri* (Cairo, 1902) and his Skanderbeg drama – although they lived in Egypt for much of their lives, were essentially nationalists and not much influenced by

14. On Bosnians in the region of Nubia see Burkhardt's *Travels in Nubia*, London, 1819, pp. 134–5 (1822 edn, p. 31), on Ibrim, and within a wider context, V.L. Ménage, 'The Ottomans and Nubia in the Sixteenth Century', *Annales Islamologiques*, vol. XXIV, 1988, Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1988, pp. 137–53.

the Islamic way of life that they saw around them. If anything, the rural and peasant life in Egypt acted as a spur to their absorption in popular traditions which, in their view, enshrined the soul of their people. The Albanians in Egypt were, without a doubt, influenced by the Egyptian theatre – but specificially by those elements not overtly infused with Islamic sentiments. Later writers became prominent figures among the Albanian community in Cairo. Milo Duçi (Duqi) (d. 1933) did so because of his office as president of the national 'Brethren' league (*Villazëria/Ikhwa*), and by his Albanian newspapers (*al-'Ahd*, 1900, known in Egypt as *al-Aḥādīth*, 1925). He also wrote plays, especially 'The Saying' (*E Thëna*, 1922) and 'The Bey's Son' (1923), and a novel *Midis dy grash* (Between two women, 1923). More recently still, it has been secular and Arab nationalist causes such as Palestine and Algeria that have inspired Albanian Egyptian writers.

Nonetheless, Çajupi's poetic works (*Vepra*, Prishtinë, 1970) are more revealing about his religious beliefs than one might expect. In *Baba-Tomorri* (Cairo, 1902) he epouses, as was to be expected, his strongly nationalist sentiments. Equally apparent are his notions of religious tolerance. These show, on the other hand, the influence of the national poet Naim Frashëri. But Çajupi's verses exude the same respect for other religions as his great predecessor, though, in his case, from an orthodox position within Islam. He deplores the fate of the Albanians, torn between Greek and Turk (each of a differing faith); nor does he conceal his strong dislike of the deceit that was so apparent in both church and mosque. On the other hand, both Muslims and Christians share a belief in One Lord (*Te krishtër'e myslimanë gjithë një Perëndi kanë*), and both are brothers to one another (*jemi vëllëzër të tërë*). Furthermore, albeit *Sunnī*, his reference to the single face of man, be he a Muslim or a Christian, as being the creation of a single shared God, reveals the inherited symbolism and poetic vocabulary which the Baktāshīs derived from the *Ḥurūfiyya* and from the all-pervading influence of the poetry of Nasīmī (*Zoti kur bëri insanë, me një fytyre të naltë të krishtër' e myslimanë i gatoi nga një baltë. Zoti me të math të vetë është një dhe i vërtetë si këtu si këtu dhe n'atë jetë. Si Ungjilli dhe Kurani, mos e ndajni Perëndinë*). Born of the dust of the earth, descended from Ādam, as both Gospel and Qur'ān alleged, so the one shared God had only to will His human creation into existence (*fa-innamā yaqūlu lahu kun fa-yakūnu*).

However, the influence of al-Azhar on shaping the works of exiled Balkan writers cannot be denied. It was not confined to Balkan Muslims in Egypt who were Albanian. Bosnians were more directly inspired to devote their energies to matters that were markedly Islamic. One

relatively recent figure who resided for a long time in al-Azhar was Mehmed Handžić (Muḥammad b. Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ al-Khānjī al-Busnawī, to give him his Arabic name), who was born in Sarajevo and died in Bosnia in 1945 — one in a long line of scholarly Bosnians who had thus sojourned in Cairo. His biographical dictionary on the scholars and poets of Bosnia (*al-Jawhar al-asnā fī tarājim 'ulamā' wa-shu'arā' Būsna*) is highly regarded in Egypt (published as it was in Cairo, in Arabic, in 1349/1933). To this may be added his gloss and commentary on the *Risālat ḥayāt al-anbiyā'* by al-Bayhaqī, and on *al-Kalim al-Ṭayyib* by Ibn Taymiyya. These are characteristic of the solid traditional scholarship of Bosnia, which has included a remarkable variety of other literary activity.

Of the works of leading Albanian writers at this time, it would seem that those of Muhamet Kyçyku (Çami) (1784–1844) represent the influence of al-Azhar in its clearest form. He had come to al-Azhar from Konispol specifically for a religious education, and continued as a religious teacher from the time of his return home till his death. His study of both Arabic language and literature was to have a profound influence on his choice of poetic subject, first in a direct translation of the 'Mantle Ode' (*al-Burda*) of al-Būṣīrī (d. *circa* 1296), a panegyric of the Prophet with a message appealing in a popular manner to the believer in his miracles, and also in his other odes, especially the Qur'ānic-based *Yūsuf* and *Zulaykhā'* (2,430 verses) and *Arwā* (856 verses), based on the *Nights* (although finding no place in the Mahdi edition), known under its Albanian title of *Erveheja*,[15] composed about 1820. It has been transformed into a play by the writer Ahmed Tchirizi from Kosovo, that evoked a number of kindred Albanian tales and romances about a faithful wife separated from her spouse, who maintained her loyalty against the unjust and the self-seeking conduct of others towards her.

Albanians and the Cairene Baktāshī tekkes

Both the *Baktāshī tekkes* were once significant landmarks in Cairo, and historically the most important centres of this specific Ṣūfī order in the Arab world. They were also centres for cultured individuals including noteworthy poets. They filled a rôle, though on a more substantial scale, of élite artistic circles that had once met and rectified poetic compositions within the pilgrim hostel *tekkes* of Baghdād and Karbalā. Unlike the

15. See Chapter 2, notes 82–84.

latter, the *tekkes* at Qaṣr al-'Aynī and of Kajgusez Abdullah Megavriu[16] in Cairo were focuses of local life in a number of respects. Shaykh 'Abdullāh al-Maghāwirī was a major interdenominational saintly figure of the Mamlūk age, adored by the pious in Egypt who had no religious reasons for seeking formal affiliation to the *Baktāshīyya*. Furthermore, the area adjacent to the *tekke* of Qaṣr al-'Aynī was an administrative district, fortified in Mamlūk times, that was especially prominent during the lifetime of Muḥammad 'Alī and his immediate successors. There is no conclusive evidence in support of his personal initiation into this particular order, although it has been claimed and may indeed be a fact. What is clear is that for a time the area surrounding the Qaṣr al-'Aynī *tekke* was to be the haunt of Albanian, Turks and Persians in the Egyptian capital, and that some among them could be described as 'Shī'ītes'. The word almost certainly alludes to *Baktāshī* beliefs or sympathies, or else to the allegiance which some of them owed to the saintly memory of Ḥājjī Baktāsh Walī, particularly members of the Janissary corps.

During the rule of Muḥammad 'Alī, the Albanians — typically — formed a distinct body within his army. Albanians had been mercenaries since at least the second half of the seventeenth century and on occasions had balanced or stiffened the unreliable Janissaries (of whom they had likewise formed an element). They were tribally mixed, yet each one was devoted and loyal to the tribe from which he originated. None displayed any special religious ardour, though whether the fact that they did not fast during Ramaḍān (as reported by Jabartī) was due to indifference or the allegiance of some, at least, to the practices of the *Baktāshiyya*, which ignored this obligation, is not clear. Muḥammad 'Alī decided to select Qaṣr al-'Aynī as the most suitable site for his distinguished 'college'. James Augustus St John wrote in 1834 that it was built 'on the right bank of the canal of Rhoda' and 'forms the most prominent feature of the scenery of the metropolis. To the right of the edifice is the establishment belonging to the sect of the Shiahs (probably the *Baktāshiyya*) formerly the palace of Mourad Bey, surrounded by a grove of enormous sycamores.'[17]

16. On Kaygusuz Abdāl (Kajgusez Abdullah Megavriu), see in particular Dr Riza Nur (Nour), 'Kaüghousouz abdal (Ghaïbi bey)', *Revue de Turcologie*, vol. II, no. 5, Feb. 1935, pp. 77–98, and Baba Rexhebi, *Misticizma Islame dhe Bektashizma*, New York, 1970, pp. 183–98. For a description of the establishments see F.W. Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans*, vol. II, pp. 514–16.

17. James Augustine St John, *Egypt and Mohammed Ali, or Travels in the Valley of the Nile*, London, 1834, vol. II, p. 395, and Gaston Wiet, *Journal d'un Bourgeois du Caire. Chronique d'Ibn Iyas*, vol. II, Paris: SEVPEN, 1960, pp. 84–5.

Far earlier, in the later medieval period, the city had been noted for its Ṣūfī establishments, some of them 'convents'. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa described them in the course of his *Riḥla* as separately managed by the various dervish orders, 'mostly Persians, who are men of education and adepts in the mystical doctrines'.[18] After describing their social life and eating habits, he adds, 'These men are celibate; the married men have separate convents.'

It was during this same period that other locations in and around Cairo were favoured as haunts for meditation and the siting of Ṣūfī establishments, including the burial-places of the saintly dead.

According to Dr Tawfīq al-Ṭawīl (*al-Taṣawwuf fī Miṣr ibbāna 'l-'aṣr al-'Uthmānī* (pp. 67–78):

Perhaps the spread of the convents [*zāwiyas/zawāyā*] on Egyptian soil will help [us] to picture the plethora of the retreats with which the Ṣūfīs were acquainted in Ottoman days. But the *zāwiyas* were not the sole places where fixed retreats took place. Among the Ṣūfīs there were those who, in their sincerity and their devotion to God and His adoration and for the benefit of the soul, dispensed with a specific *zāwiya* in which to dwell together with novices. Men such as these lived in caves, where they held their retreat and adored God and held their *dhikr*. Such caves were spacious and visibly kept in good order. The cave of the *Sharīf*, Abū 'Abdallāh al-Maghāwirī was hewn into the mountain, levelled with symmetry. Other retreats were held in private dwellings.

The alleged retreat of Abū 'Abdallāh al-Maghāwirī was destined to become one of the most famous of all, a focal point, next to the Muḥammad 'Alī mosque and the Citadel, for the Albanian and Turkish *Baktāshīs* of Egypt, and a city landmark. However, the occupant of the tomb in the cave was held in awe long before the Albanian community – deriving some advantages from the family traditions of Muḥammad 'Alī and his descendants – became the ultimate trustees of its sanctity, sadly only to lose it forever with the demise of the Egyptian monarchy.

According to Aḥmad Sirrī Bābā, who devotes a chapter to the history of Abū 'Abdallāh al-Maghāwirī in his *al-Risāla al-Aḥmadiyya*:

The Baktāshī 'Alīd *ṭarīqa* was unknown in Egypt until the visit of the perfect saint, the ascetic bestower of favour, Kajgusez Abdāl Sulṭān (Qayghusāz) renowned as our lord and master 'Abdallāh al-Maghāwirī, in the year 751/1388, in the age of the [Baḥrī Mamlūk] king al-Ḥājjī Ṣāliḥ [b. Sha'bān, 1381–90].

18. For a general account in Arabic of Ṣūfism in Egypt at this period see Tawfīq al-Ṭawīl, *al-Taṣawwuf fī Miṣr, ibbāna 'l-'aṣr al-'Uthmānī*, Cairo (n.d.), pp. 52–69.

Our Lord, referred to above, God bestow upon us benefits through his blessings and grace [*barakāt*], was the son of the prince of the town of 'Alā'iyya [*sic*] (Adaliya). His original name was Ghaybī. When he was a youth around eighteen years old, he was very strong, with sinewy arms and was famous among his people and kindred for his knightly horsemanship and manly courage. He shot arrows with skill and smote with the sword. His intelligence was recalled on every tongue. He delved far and deep into the sciences, both exoteric and esoteric. In sum, he was a man of acute percipience, scholarly and distinguished, a man of mighty destiny and importance.

When he came to Egypt in that year, the common populace were aware of his status. Novices flocked to him and associated lovers of the Ṣūfī path [*muḥibbūn*] and the mass of human kind assembled with him in order to kiss his blessed hand and seek his grace and spiritual power and blessing through his prayer that was habitually answered. After he had resided in Cairo for some five years he journeyed to the Ḥijāz in 796/1393/4. He visited Medina the illuminated, noble al-Najaf and Karbalā. Then he returned to Egypt in 799/1396/7. In 806/1403/4, a special locality was erected for him and a *tekke* built for him, Qaṣr al-'Aynī, which, still today, continues to be in the well-known locality adjacent to the hospital, on the southern side. He dwelt there. He acquired great renown and his brilliant miracles were manifested. Many people took a covenant from him. He died in 818/1444 and was buried, according to his injunction, in the existing cave which, at that time was a *tekke* of the *Jalāliyyīn*. The shaykhs who followed after him adopted this usage sanctioned by tradition. All of them were entered in the same cave, following the example of their mighty *Shaykh*.[19]

During this earliest phase of the *Baktāshī* presence in Egypt (certainly before the Ottoman conquest) it can be observed that a founder-figure already existed, that the order had a *tekke* in Cairo city and that it shared in the cave-cult of Egyptian Ṣūfīsm at that time. At a popular level its local founder was already entering the folklore, imagery and hagiographical repertoire of the story-teller, and nowhere more obviously than in the Mamlūk folk-epic known as *Sīrat al-Ẓāhir Baybars*.[20]

The presence of Abū 'Abdallāh al-Maghāwirī in varied passages in the text of this work, as we now have it, together with his, admittedly secondary, background role among the personalities in it, at least established that the text was written no earlier than 1388, and probably much later. Futhermore, there are minor references to Ismā'īlīs, to warrior 'brethren' armed with magical wooden swords, in the manner of Sari

19. Aḥmad Sirrī Bābā, *al-Risāla al-Aḥmadiyya, op. cit.*, p. 25.

20. *Sīrat al-Ẓāhir Baybars*, (*al-Maktaba al-Mu'allimiyya al-Kutubiyya*, near to al-Azhar and Sayyidnā al-Ḥusayn), 1st printing 1326/1908, part 12, pp. 45–6. 'Abdallāh al-Maghāwirī appears at various points of the narrative in the *Sīra*.

Saltik (see p. 157) and to a King Ṣāliḥ, whose name recalls the ruler of Egypt, al-Ḥājj Ṣāliḥ. The latter was reigning when Abū 'Abdallāh al-Maghāwirī arrived in Egypt. Alternatively, the name may refer to the Ayyūbid Sulṭān, al-Ṣāliḥ Ayyūb (d. 1249). King Ṣāliḥ has a companion named 'Uthmān. These details suggest some Ottoman, or Baktāshī allusions; one can hardly call them influences. A far closer study might show deeper *Qalandarī* and *Baktāshī* influences at work. The following passage, for example, indicates how popular piety combined with Ṣūfīsm had given the saint a high place in popular esteem, despite the competition faced from other major saints:

Whereupon, King Ṣāliḥ ('the pious king') arose. He took 'Uthmān by the hand and proceeded with him until he was nigh 'the sea'. He pointed to it with his hand, then descended and stepped into it, 'Uthmān being with him, up to their ankles in depth and they continued thus until they had passed over to the other side.

Whereupon, King Ṣāliḥ said to him 'Close your eyes, O my brother 'Uthmān.' The latter closed his eyes and had counted seven steps when, behold, he found himself in a country known only to God. King Ṣāliḥ said, 'Save me, O Overseer from among the mystic order of Watchmen'. Then, lo, a person drew nigh unto them, saluted them and pointed to 'Uthmān, who fell to the ground in a swoon [of ecstasy] as though he had been slain. This was Sīdī 'Abdallāh al-Maghāwirī. He had observed 'Uthmān, bestowing upon him an awesome glance. He said to King Ṣāliḥ, 'Journey from here to the island of the [Ṣūfī] spiritual leader of the Invocation of the Age, and respond obediently to what he commands you to do.' The King said, 'To hear is to obey.' Al-Maghāwirī said, 'Journey forth with the Almighty's blessing.' He pointed to 'Uthmān, who awoke from his swoon. King Ṣāliḥ said, 'Let me have your hand so that we may pass over to the further shore.' 'Uthmān said, 'Let me tarry longer than you. You cross over on your own, then I shall act likewise.' The two of them waded out until they reached the given "island" about which they had been informed by Sīdī 'Abdallāh al-Maghāwirī. They met the Pole of the saints who was there. He glanced at 'Uthmān in a manner that was complete, a perfect gaze. Then he said to King Ṣāliḥ: 'Know that Baybars is in Genoa. You must give him succour.'

From the existing accounts and descriptions from travellers — such as those by Evliya Çelebi (1671), in the *Khiṭaṭ Tawfiqiyya* by 'Alī Mubārak, or by Carston Niebuhr and others[21] — it would seem that

21. See the description *en passant* of Qaṣr al-'Aynī introduced in a discussion of Baghdād *tekkes* in Carsten Niebuhr's, *Voyage en Arabie et en d'autre pays circonvoisins*, vol. II, Amsterdam, 1780, pp. 243–4.

in its heyday Rawḍa Qaṣr al-'Aynī *tekke*, was an impressive complex of up to two domed structures with decorated marble facings and amply furnished with refectory and other facilities, and a fountain bearing an inscription dated the 15th *Ramaḍān* 1197/1782/3. Apart from this *tekke*, Baktāshī pilgrims, including Albanians, were also frequenting the higher Muqaṭṭam district, traditional site of the cave of Sīdī Abū 'Abdallāh al-Maghāwirī. They may have done this from as early as the sixteenth century.

Probably the most comprehensive description of the vicissitudes of the Qaṣr al-'Aynī *tekke* is furnished by the Egyptian historian al-Jabartī, in Part 4 of his *'Ajā'ib al-Āthār fi'l-Tarājim wa'l-Akhbār*:[22]

In the middle of the months of Shawwāl 1201/1783/4, the construction of the *tekke* adjacent to Qaṣr al-'Aynī, known as the Baktāshī *tekke*, was completed. Its story is that it was given as an endowment to a group of non-Arabs [*a'ājim*, Turks, Persians?], known as the *Baktāshīyya*. Circumstances had brought it close to ruin, and it had become extremely filthy. Its shaykh died and there was a dispute over who should merit the title of *shaykh* between a man who had originally been one of the private soldiers of Murād Bey, and a young man who claimed to be one of the offspring of the former shaykh who lay buried within the *tekke*. That [former] man got the better of the youth because of his relationship with the *Amīrs*. He travelled to Alexandria and, as his visit coincided by chance with the arrival there of Ḥasan Pasha, he had a meeting with him. He was clad in dervish attire. They have a liking for that mode and he became one of his intimate friends. This was on account of his being one of the people who adhered to [Ḥasan Pasha's] belief. He accompanied him to Cairo and acquired both reputation and notoriety. He was called dervish Ṣāliḥ and began to construct the aforementioned *tekke* out of bribes received from the customs tax — he acted as a go-between for those who handled [the customs receipts] and Ḥasan Pasha. Thus with the endowment he built its fabric and its walls, and the garden walls encompassing it on all sides, and he raised a water tank in the entrance to the dome-shaped edifice. He prepared the arrangements for the *tekke*, the facilities and a kitchen and, on the outside, he built an oratory with the name of Ḥasan Pasha. When that was completed, he made a feast in celebration and invited all the *Amīrs*. But rumours of intrigue and misgivings spread among them. They equipped themselves and after the *'aṣr* prayer rode with all their Mamlūks and their followers, armed and at the ready. He laid out a meal for them and they sat down to eat. They

22. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ḥasan al-Jabartī, *'Ajā'ib al-Āthār fi'l-tarājim wal-akhbār*, edited by Ḥasan Muḥammad Jawhar, 'Abd al-Fattāḥ al-Saranjāwī and al-Sayyid Ibrāhim Sālim, Cairo text, Lajnat al-Bayān al-'Arabī, part 4 (1958–66), pp. 41–2.

were suspicious of the food, believing it to be poisoned. They arose and dispersed outside the Qaṣr and the moored boats. He made a warlike display (?) with a naphtha conflagration of touchwood and from gunpowder. They were suspicious of his eccentricity. They then rode during part of the night and went to their homes.

However one views the authenticity of this somewhat unsavoury and bizarre anecdote, it indicates the varied vicissitudes that befell the Qaṣr al-'Aynī *tekke*. Aḥmad Sirrī Bābā takes up the story a little later:

The situation continued thus until the time of Shaykh Ismā'īl Bābā (1239/1823) who was a contemporary of the governor, 'Abbās Pasha I. (d. 1298/1881), when an order (1242/1826) was issued from the governor to evict the dervishes from Qaṣr al-Aynī, which was to be set apart for the *Qādiriyya* order. Shaykh Ismā'īl took his dervishes, who numbered twenty-six, and settled in Qaṣr Ismā'īl Pasha Sirrī al-Manāstirlī (Bitolj?). He stayed there for nine months. After this they changed from their dervish attire and adopted lay clothes. They left Egypt and travelled to Medina. The only one of them left in Egypt was Shaykh Ismā'īl Bābā together with a dervish called Ṣādiq. After a short time, the shaykh in question died. The *tekke* library remained in the Qaṣr of the said Ismā'īl Pasha, and eventually dervish Ṣādiq emigrated to Anatolia where he visited the tomb of our lord and master, the mightiest *Quṭb*, founder of our 'Alīd order.

After dervish Ṣādiq had been favoured to pay this visit in this noble manner, he was appointed shaykh of the *tekke* in 1268/1851, having obtained a license (*ijāza*) from Shaykh 'Alī Dede al-Sā'ātī. He came to Egypt, and bought a dwelling in Bāb al-Lūq quarter, adopting it as his residence and as a house of worship and for the assembling of the brethren. He resided there till 1282/1865, when Shaykh Ṣādiq Bābā was translated into close proximity to his Lord's mercy. 'Alī Bābā (1285/186-8/9) succeeded him. He moved from that place to the existing *tekke* [located in a cave] of Sulṭān 'Abdallāh al-Maghāwirī by reason of the noble and gracious command issued by the 'father of favours', the dweller in the bowers, the Khedive most noble and proven, Ismā'īl Pasha, may God cause him to dwell within the expanse of His garden of Paradise and clothe him with happiness. The insignia of our 'Alīd order have continued to remain in the *tekke* referred to up till the present time.[23]

It is now a closed *tekke* (vacated in 1957), once one of Cairo's supreme beauty-spots, that was to become a show piece of the last three shaykhs of the order in Egypt, all of them Albanians. The first, Ḥaydar Mehmed Baba, born in Leskovicu, was *de facto* shaykh from 1303/1885

23. Aḥmad Sirrī Bābā, *op cit.*, p. 26.

although only officially confirmed as such by the Dede Baba in Hacibektaş in 1305/1903. It was his successor Mehmed (Muḥammad) Luṭfī Bābā (1265–1360/1849–1941) and Sirrī Bābā, who succeeded him in 1354/1935/6, who made the Muqaṭṭam *tekke* one of the most important *Baktāshī tekkes* in the world, visited by famous personalities and acting as a focus for Albanian cultural and political interests in the entire Middle East.[24]

However, the two short biographies found in the *Risāla* by Aḥmad Sirrī Bābā have a special interest in themselves, since they shed light on the circumstances of the order in the Balkans at that time and indicate motives why Egypt, in particular, became a magnet drawing men of religion to Cairo from that part of Europe.

The history of Shaykh Muḥammad Luṭfī Bābā and Shaykh Aḥmad Sirrī Bābā

Master of virtue and of guidance, Shaykh and Ḥājj Muḥammad Luṭfī Bābā, was born in Gyrokastër, pertaining to the realm of Albania, in the proximity of Dūnāvāt (Denavet) in his father's house in the morning of the second day of *Ramaḍān*, the honoured, in 1265/1849. His father named him 'Islām', and generally gave him this name until he was affiliated to the 'Alīd *Baktāshī* order, whereupon he was named Muḥammad Luṭfī, as will subsequently appear. He grew up in this town in the personal care of his father, Yaḥyā Lāmaqū Efendi, who was a focus of attention among his people on account of the intensity of his piety, his abstemiousness and his God-fearing life. As he grew to manhood he read the Qur'ān in its schools, and the principles of the Islamic sciences. Thus he continued until the signs of intelligence appeared upon him and his father perceived an aptitude for using his initiative. So he gave him a love for trade and he became an associate in it. What marked his character was trust and self-restraint, fair dealing and upright conduct. His good conduct permeated him wholly.

When he was twenty-seven years old (1292/1874/5), he had become skilled in commerce and had grasped its principles. He sought his father's permission to travel abroad. Together with his brethren in Gyrokastër, his birthplace, he rose and took up residence in the city of Shkodër, and engaged in commerce there. As he had a strong bias towards Ṣūfīsm and asceticism, he prepared to devote himself and his life to austerity, to piety and to worship. He found what he missed and what he sought for in Shkodër. In the year 1296/1878/9, early in his thirty-first year, he became an affiliate to the master of virtue, Shaykh

24. Baba Rexhebi, *Misticizma Islame dhe Bektashizma*, New York: Walden Press, 1970, pp. 183–98.

Ḥasīb Bābā, shaykh of the *tekke* of the *Baktāshī* hierarchy in Shkodër, when this *tekke* was a house for the teaching of true virtue, good manners and literature, just as it was a place where those of ascetic tastes assembled. From that time forward he was given the name of Muḥammad Luṭfī and his guide was Ibrāhīm Bābā. Following his affiliation, he wound up his commercial activities and left his fortune there to his brethren.

In the year 1300/1882/3, when aged thirty-five years, he left Shkodër for the seat of the Sublime Caliph and sojourned in the *tekke* of Shāqūlī Sulṭān (the warrior) in the suburb of Mardyūn Kōy (Merdiven Keui) on the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus. He was admitted to membership of the circle of the perfect guide and active scholar, Ḥājj Muḥammad Dede Bābā, the shaykh of the said *tekke*; there he correctly engaged in obtaining his exalted pleasure and was guided by his sublime guidance. His esteem grew among his brethren and he stood out from them for his lofty qualities and praiseworthy features and his compliance in acting obediently so that our lord the Shaykh clothed him in honour, cared for him and clad him by his noble hand with the livery (*khirqa*) of nobility and the sublime crown [of the *Baktāshīyya*] which he placed on his head.

When he was forty-one years old (1309/1891/1), he began a life of travel for the faith and visited the holy places. He left Istanbul and he arrived in Karbalā and had the honour of paying a visit to the tomb of our lord and master, 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, the lion of God [in al-Najaf], may God ennoble his countenance. From thence he returned to Anatolia in 1310/1892/3 and stayed in the *tekke* of our lord, the Sulṭān of the gnostics, the proof of those who attain the Truth of Divinity (*ḥaqīqa*), the mightiest saint, and most generous succour, our Lord, Ḥājjī Baktāsh Walī, may his secret that is manifested be sanctified. He stayed there for three years and experienced outpourings of the spirit in the counsels of Ḥājjī Muḥammad Dede al-Malātiyyawī (from Malatya) and he attained the degree of *tajarrud* — unhampered single-minded devotion — due to the zeal of his guide, Ḥājj Fayḍallāh, through being stripped from all links that joined him to this world. After he had obtained this exalted rank he devoted himself solely to obedience and to continued reading and study and to worship and devotion. He was distinguished among his brethren due to his loftiness. He pursued the true path of sincerity and loyalty. He followed the *Sharī'a* and the *Sunna* of the Prophet — the blessing and peace of God be upon him — and he eschewed heresies and he opposed misleading beliefs and fancies until he became the light of the garden of the Truth and the light of the pupil of the eye of this Ṣūfī order. He loved the mendicant novices. He prepared food for them with his blessed hand and he personally served them at their table. In 1313/1895/6, when he was forty-five years old, he returned to 'the house of happiness' [in Istanbul] and stayed there a year. Then he journeyed to Rumelia to visit the noble *tekke*s there. He returned to Istanbul a second time.

When he was fifty, he put his trust in God and began to equip himself to

fulfil the duty of the Meccan pilgrimage. So he travelled to the Holy Land and attained his objective. He antimonied his eyes with the soil of the Ka'ba, and performed the stages, circumambulated, and made the pilgrimage outside the annual season (*'umra*). He then returned to Istanbul and spent two years there. In 1319/1901/2 he obtained the noble authority to teach (*ijāza*). His labours, which were to make him famous, took place in the (Istanbul) *tekke*. He clung stubbornly to fulfilling the principles of the order and its rules to perfection. His piety and asceticism were [with these above] responsible for his being appointed director of the office of shaykh of the 'spiritual carpet' (*shaykh al-sajjāda*) of the Baktāshī *tekke* in Egypt. In 1319/1901/2 he left Istanbul and arrived in Egypt. He was received with worthy hospitality because his lofty renown had preceded his arrival. The brethren and novices gathered around him and to this day he has continued to preach sermons and offer guidance — may God prolong his lifespan and bless us by his life among us.

Since he assumed the affairs of the *tekke* he has constantly striven to exalt its status, repair its monuments and conserve all his zeal and physical and spiritual energy to augment its splendour and beauty, and facilitate and embellish the path for the brethren — those who are affiliated and those who are associated as spiritual members (*muḥibbūn*).

A year following his attainment of the Shaykhdom, in Egypt, 1320/1902/3, a fearful explosion occurred in the powder magazine (*al-jabkhāna*) and in the ammunition that was stored adjacent to the *tekke* which caused the ruin of the *tekke* buildings and the total spoiling of its distinguishing features. Seeing the beautiful character that distinguishes our lord the Shaykh and the loftiness of his zealous endeavour, he was viewed with consideration by princes and ministers and leading men of state. He therefore submitted his case to the men of government and God blessed his charitable effort. What he sought, without trouble, was facilitated by God — that is the rebuilding of this *tekke* in which we take pride in being associates, for we have grown up within the perimeters of its flowing waters and spiritual blessings. No wonder, therefore, that his happy days were the most flourishing of the ages of this noble *tekke*, and that by virtue of his mighty endeavours the eternal monuments that we behold in every place, each and all offer the greatest evidence and proof of the same. He is a respected and patient shaykh. He has become famous on account of his moral life and the purity of his moral integrity. He loves welfare and does not spare himself in promoting it. He is mercifully kind and affectionate and he conceals no hatred for anyone. He is jealous and zealous and a fighter which he combines with praiseworthy qualities. In short, he is the bearer of the title of the perfect guide. We beseech God to supply him with favour and success. Owing both to the excess of his attachment to the 'eye-lashes' of faith and to his belief in love for the fatherland, he built in his birthplace (Gyrokastër) a large mosque where prayers are said and the Friday sermon is preached and the two great feasts are celebrated. Likewise, his is a deep love for the comfort

of his fellow-countrymen, causing sweet water to flow into the town. He has built a fountain for it. It has lasted to this day and is well known as the 'fountain of Luṭfī Bābā'. He has been nicknamed 'the father of the poor' because of what he has spent at one time or another on the poor of the town in the form of gifts and financial assistance.

Not content with the great efforts that he has made in enhancing the *tekke*, he has added to them a major matter of pride, namely his grant to every dervish resident within it of 100 Egyptian pounds. He has made them secure from want and need. For our part, we are not capable of paying back to him what is due for his mighty services, or to recount his virtues and his mighty deeds of supreme worth. All that we have mentioned is but a drop from the sea of his goodly favour and his generosity. On the feeble author he bestowed the noble *ijāza* at the beginning of *Rajab*, in the year 1342/1923/4, and took him as his deputy and heir. He appointed him to be his successor as shaykh of the *tekke*. He [the author] asks the Almighty to keep him in perfect health and give us a blessing during his rich and fruitful life, so that his novices will not be denied the breath of inspiration from his holiness and his sanctity.[25]

Such writing expresses the sentiment of adoration that is so characteristic of the relationship between shaykh and novice. This is to be found among Balkan Ṣūfīs, as elsewhere in Islamic communities with a well-established tradition of lodges and of supportive communities.

Aḥmad Sirrī Bābā also devotes several pages in his work to his own autobiography, explaining how he came to join the *tekke* of Kajgusez Sulṭān, built around the cave-tomb of Abū 'Abdallāh al-Maghāwirī. He remarks:

Aḥmad Sirrī Bābā was born in the village of Glina, adjacent to the town of Leskovicu (appertaining to the Albanian government) in the year 1313/1895. His father was the late Shāhīn Efendi, son of Aḥmad Jūjūl Efendi. He grew up in the town and spent his youth imbibing the sciences and sundry knowledge. When he was seventeen, he was initiated into the 'Alī Baktāshī order, having obtained the pleasure of his father. Then he emigrated in the company of Shaykh Sulaymān Bābā, the shaykh of the *Baktāshī tekke* in the town of Leskovicu.[26]

He had an inclination for the ascetic life, worship and devotion, and his love for the people of God was a cause of his becoming joined to the Ṣūfīs when still in the prime of youth, because he who is discerning and bright seeks perfection, while he who is ignorant seeks money. As has been said, 'The love of the people of God is the key to Paradise.'

25. Aḥmad Sirrī Bābā, *ibid.*, pp. 30–5.
26. On Leskovicu, see Nathalie Clayer, *op. cit.*, pp. 346–7.

After he had stayed in an aforementioned *tekke* for one year, war was declared between the Turkish and Greek governments. The Greeks occupied the town of Leskovicu and launched raids on the adjacent towns. Before this disaster, they had impelled Shaykh Sulaymān to leave the town, and he emigrated with his dervishes to the town of Ioannina. After staying there for a short while, the author asked his shaykh's permission to leave the *tekke*, and acquired from him a letter of recommendation to Shaykh Sha'bān Bābā, the Shaykh of the *tekke* in the town of Prishtinë. He travelled there and took the covenant from [the latter] in 1332/1913. The Greeks occupied this town as well, and the author was forced to emigrate yet again. He joined Shaykh Sha'bān Bābā and travelled with him to Italy. He desired to be at a distance from the war zone. He took up residence in a hotel called Milano in the town of Salsāmājiyūrī,[27] and the two of them were there for four months. After this they went forth from it to go to Cairo and stayed in the *tekke* of our lord Sulṭan al-Maghāwirī, may God be pleased with him. After a brief sojourn, Sha'bān Bābā died and was buried in the noble cave [on the Muqaṭṭam] on the sixteenth day of *Muḥarram* 1333/1914. May God's mercy for him be ample. When the shaykh of the *tekke*, through close contact with his novice Aḥmad Sirrī, discovered that he had potential gifts and a propensity to some attainment, he showed him honour. He taught him, and thereby [the author] obtained the divine outpourings of the spirit. Having stayed a little while, he was permitted by his shaykh to undertake a spiritual journey. He began with a visit to the tomb of the lord and supreme Pole, the founder of the order al-Ḥājj Baktāsh Walī, in the land of Anatolia. He remained there two years, during which he was privileged to be able to attend the councils of the chief men of the order. In 1341/1922/3, he decided to leave the town to go to Tarsus. When he arrived there, the shaykh of the *tekke* Ṣādiq Bābā had died. The brethren and novices were in a consensus over this affair, agreeing to appoint the author to be the shaykh over them. When the author beheld the unanimous opinion of the men of the order, he bowed to their wishes. He obtained a authority license from Shaykh Muḥammad Luṭfī Bābā, one of the *khalīfas* of the order, and the *Shaykh al-Sajjāda*[28] in Cairo, following the rules of the order and its principles.

At that time the master of virtue and guidance, Muḥammad Luṭfī Bābā, had reached old age. He was in pressing need for rest and devotion to worship, so he wrote to his spiritual son, the author, and asked him to come to Cairo to bear with him some of the affairs of the *tekke*. In view of the wish of the noble shaykh, the author resigned from the shaykhdom and, of preference,

27. The identity of this place is uncertain, although it could be Salsomaggiore, west of Parma (44.48 N–9.59 E).

28. Together with the term *Ṣāḥib al-Sajjāda*, this title is defined by Hans Wehr, in a *Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic* as 'title of the leaders of certain dervish orders in their capacity of inheritors of the founder's prayer rug'.

chose to be a dervish. His love of being in charge did not dissuade him from immediately responding to the command of his master and guide. At once he set out from Tarsus, accompanied by the dervish called Muḥarram. He came to Cairo and was honoured to kiss the hands of his superior guide. On that occasion, the shaykh and Ḥājj Muḥammad Luṭfī Bābā assembled the dervishes, the brethren and associates (*muḥibbūn*), and convened a council of high dignity. At the gathering he announced that he had adopted Aḥmad Sirrī Bābā as his general deputy while he lived, and appointed him to be the shaykh over the *tekke* after his death. The men of the order were confronted by this appointment, which had unexpectedly caused his people perfect joy and acceptance, and they warmly approved of it.

The *shaykh*, having obtained this acceptance from the dervishes and others, wrote down the noble licence and gave it to the author. That was at the beginning of *Rajab* 1342/1924. The following year, the author was struck by a malady which compelled him to stay in bed. The doctors advised him to go abroad for a change of air to improve and recover his health. So he travelled to Albania and stayed there for six months. Then he returned. After some time he went once more on his travels to visit Baghdād. Karbalā and al-Najaf before returning to Egypt. The fatigue of travelling had affected his health, the illness returned once more, and he was compelled to travel afresh in order to be cured. He left Cairo exhausted and arrived in Salonica. Near this city is the town of Katerini (Qatrīna) and by chance its shaykh, Ja'far Bābā had died, and his place remained vacant. When the men of the order affiliated to this *tekke* knew of the author's arrival in Salonica, they invited him to be the shaykh over them. He accepted and fulfilled their hopes. He obtained a licence from one of the *khalīfas*, who resided in Albania, and he was appointed shaykh. He stayed two years in the town until his disease abated and he regained his health. At that time he offered the affair [for decision] to his shaykh, Luṭfī Bābā, who issued his noble command that he should return. The command, having reached him, he forsook the shaikhly office and hastened back to Cairo.[29]

During the period in office of the last three shaykhs of the *tekke*, all Albanian, the buildings were transformed into a tranquil retreat that would attract artists, poets and writers, some Egyptian, others associated with the *Baktāshiyya*, which at that stage had become concentrated particularly in the Albanian countries. This atmosphere of the *tekke* under Ḥaydar Meḥmed Bābā at the beginning of the century was conveyed in the writings of travellers. Gaston Migeon, in his *Le Caire, le Nile et Memphis* (Paris, 1906, p. 83), wrote:

But today the monks [*sic*] are really of their epoch. They are no longer solitary, they receive visitors, and their order of its own accord seeks for contributions.

29. Aḥmad Sirrī Bābā, *ibid.*, pp. 53–6.

A stone stairway leads up from the foot of the mountain to the gate of the convent. In a small court, which is cooled by a fountain, a monk welcomes you. He is clad in baggy trousers and a grey tunic, his head covered with a high hat of white cloth. His beard grows to a great length. A tame gazelle, gracious and lively, wanders in the courtyard with uneasy movements as if alarmed. A deep corridor is hollowed into the side of the mountain, where Baktāsh [*sic*] rests within a small sanctuary lit by several candles. The soil of this cave, dug into the hard sand, is covered with mats and carpets. On the wall are hung trophies — spears and axes, and ridiculous pictures.

One returns gladly to the few square metres from which these men have been able to make such a verdant corner within this arid solitude. In small gardens they have planted vegetables and flowers, in the shade of orange trees and cassias. And from there the view is so beautiful that the eye is not sated by the contemplation of it all.

Under both Muḥammad Luṭfī Bābā and Aḥmad Sirrī Bābā, the Muqaṭṭam complex was to be graced with extra rooms, catering facilities, drinking fountains and basins of water, bearing inscriptions and dedications in Arabic and Albanian. Endowments grew and both the royal house of Muḥammad 'Alī (the courtly circles surrounding King Fārūq) and the exiled King Zog I were to sustain the fabric and enjoy its tranquillity. The remains of the Albanian princess Rūḥiyya Zogu were transferred on 28 February 1950 from the crypt of Aḥmad Sirrī Bābā, having been interred there on 28 February 1948, to a shrine close by which had been erected for her.[30]

However, one of the personal friendships that knit the life of the *tekke* to that of Egyptian *littérateurs* was that between Aḥmad Sirrī Bābā and the Egyptian poet Aḥmad Rāmī.[31] The two men shared a taste for

30. F. de Jong, 'The *Takīya* of 'Abdallāh al Maghāwirī (Qayghusuz Sulṭān) in Cairo: A historical sketch and a description of Arabic and Ottoman Turkish materials relative to the History of the Bektashi *Takīya* and Order preserved at Leiden University Library', *Turcica*, XIII (1981), pp. 242–60.

31. The early life of Aḥmad Rāmī in Thasos is outlined in the study by Dr Ni'mat Aḥmad Fu'ād, *Qiṣṣat shā'ir wa-ughniya* in the series, *Iqra'* (no. 368), Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, pp. 6–7. Aḥmad Rāmī made a noted translation of the *Rubā'iyyāt* by 'Umar al-Khayyām. On the whole it received a welcome from his literary contemporaries in Egypt, among them S. Spiro Bey (himself an Albanian) who at the time was head of the literature department of the *Egyptian Gazette*. It can hardly be doubted that this masterpiece was one of the poetic interests shared by Aḥmad Rāmī and Aḥmad Sirrī Bābā in his Cairene *tekke*.

The *Rubā'iyyāt* inspired other Albanians, and not only Muslims. Bishop Fan Noli, who had lived in Egypt and knew Arabic, Persian and Turkish, translated it under the pen-name of Rushit Bilbil Gramshi. Noli had a deep appreciation of, and sympathy

poetry and the *tekke* furnished a milieu where congenial company could be enjoyed, accompanied by recitation of verse and meditation. Aḥmad Rāmī was also drawn to Persian as a language and made his own translation into Arabic of the *Rubā'iyyāt* by 'Umar Khayyām. His version has been highly praised in some quarters.[32] Thus Professor C. Huart, in Paris, praised its closeness to the original. Professor 'Abd al-Qadir al-Māzinī found the translation close, though weak in its poetic spirit. However, S. Spiro Bey, head of the literary section of the *Egyptian Gazette* and himself an Albanian, was struck by the simplicity of Aḥmad Rāmī's language: 'He uses an easy simple language as adopted by Omar, so that the reader finds no difficulty in following the sense the Persian poet desired to convey.'

There were, however, other reasons that brought the two men together. The grandfather of Aḥmad Rāmī, Ḥasan 'Uthmān, was an

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with, medieval Persian thought, including philosophy and mysticism. For further details see Arshi Pipa, 'Fan Noli as a National and International Albanian Figure', *Südost Forschungen*, vol. 43, 1984, pp. 252–3 and *passim*; likewise 'Il pensiero religioso nel paese di Skanderberg', *Il Pensiero Missionario*, vol. V, 1933, pp. 299–301, footnote 9, from the introduction to his translation, Brussels, 1927.

A few further points might be made here. The Very Rev. Arthur E. Liolin, with whom I have corresponded on the circumstances that led to the adoption of the *nom de plume* of Rushit Bilbil Gramshi, has pointed out that the Vienna edition of Noli's translation, was published in the very year 1926, when he was overthrown by Aḥmad Zogu. While in Germany, Noli concealed his identity.

The introduction (*Hyrje*) to the 1926 Vienna edition of *Rubajatet e Omar Khajamit (i shqiperoj)*, pp. 5–21, discloses the varied reasons, all of them personal, why Noli undertook the Albanian translation, which has been called 'the finest, with the possible exception of Fitzgerald's'. The efflorescence of Persian culture (multi-variant and suffering the burden of hybrid creeds and influences) under the impact of Islam between the ninth and the fourteenth centuries stirred him, as it had stirred other Albanians (including Naim) before him. The appeal of Iran was always present among them and Noli dedicates his translation to Niẓāmī and Ḥāfiẓ. For Noli the language of 'Umar (d. 1123) was of a unique beauty, and furthermore the composition had been distorted, misrepresented and sometimes mistranslated, its purity sullied by dross that was alien to the original. Noli viewed the Persian intellectual response to this Islamic impact that homed on Baghdād, as being first the emergence of a conforming and reconciling group of dogmatists and literalists; secondly, a school of neo-Platonic Ṣūfīs; and lastly a daring, indeed heroic company of rationalists and questioning men who wedded science (Noli praises 'Umar's scientific contribution) and philosophy. These latter — 'Umar among them — had qualities that matched his own thoughts and sentiments, and for that matter those of other Albanians of the Rilindja.

32. Muḥammad Mūfākū, 'Hal kāna Rāmī ḥaqqan min Shuyūkh al-Ṭarīqa al-Baktāshiyya' in *al-'Arabī* (Kuwayt), no. 260, 1980, pp. 40–2.

Albanian who had settled in Crete. He came to Egypt, rose to officer rank, and was killed in action in the Sūdān in 1885. Muḥammad Rāmī, the poet's father, also joined the Egyptian army as a doctor, but died at the age of forty-seven. Aḥmad Rāmī spent part of his happiest earlier years on the island of Thasos near Kavalla. All these family circumstances meant that he shared common memories with Aḥmad Sirrī Bābā. Their literary tasks coincided, although whether Aḥmad Rāmī, as a poet himself, became anything more than an associate of the *tekke* is unproven, even though there is a suggestion that he was finally invited to join the *Baktāshiyya*.

The memory of friendship between the two men is preserved in the inscribed Arabic verses that grace the tombstone of Aḥmad Rāmī, whose name appears beneath them:

On the second face of the gravestone is inscribed:

God have mercy upon His servant, Sirrī Bābā,
and may He show regard to him, shepherding him with kind favour.
May He give him a draught that is pure to perfection,
and bestow on him the paradise garden of His bliss.
He departed as one who emigrates from this fleeting world,
and who spoke softly and in confidence with his Lord,
and who enfolded himself within the truest faith.

On the third face is inscribed:

Sleep, cool and contentedly, betwixt the branch and foliage drawing nigh,
below the shady mountain foot, beneath Muqaṭṭam,
within the hallowed spot of 'Abdallāh, dweller in the caves,
the Pole of true guidance, the treasure of desires.
In truth, a bower, it is the soil whereof you watered,
with a renewed acquaintance of its planting and with a kind affection.

On the fourth face is inscribed:

O resident of the fertile plot in Egypt,
between these sand dunes and those rich abodes,
may God be satisfied with your accomplished deed
in this world, so that most fitting for you be
the bliss of His Divine forgiveness.
Therefore, abide safely, in the haven of Paradise, and receive
the grace of My Lord, with praise and gratitude?

One further inscription is attributed to Aḥmad Rāmī. It is to be found before the door of the burial-place of Aḥmad Sirrī Bābā. A noble basin

for holding water, made with fine craftsmanship, has been installed, and above it is a marble pillar on which is inscribed:

> *O thou, unknown, who comest to this fount*
> *where Salsabīl (in Paradise) flows with a gingered water, sweet.*
> *Say 'The mercy of the Lord be upon him who made fine workmanship to last.'*[33]

al-Ḥājj 'Umar Luṭfī Bashārīzī

Albanian Ṣūfīs were drawn to Egypt on account of other orders and approaches to the mystic path besides the *Baktāshiyya*. One such person was 'Umar Luṭfī Bashārīzī, who may yet prove to have been the most outstanding of all the Kosovan Ṣūfī poets who lived around the beginning of the twentieth century.

His family were from the district of Dibra in Kosovo but moved to Prizren, where his father was to be the *Imām* of one of its mosques for at least fifty years. 'Umar Luṭfī was born in 1896 and at the age of sixteen went to Istanbul to pursue his studies and was admitted into the Muḥammad al-Fātiḥ *madrasa*. He was a poet of strong feelings, and for one of his compositions, an ode directed against the Sulṭān 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, he was punished with imprisonment. The city did not satisfy his intellectual curiosity. Fired by the new thinking in Cairo, he went there in 1901 and stayed for four years, an experience that was to have a major impact on his literary production in Arabic, Turkish and Persian — in all of which he could express his sentiments, whether in verse or prose, or whether socialist ideas, the goals of the Young Turk movement[34] or the reforming role that could be played by Albanians. He was disappointed at that time in many of the ideals he had held as a young man, and his mind turned increasingly to Ṣūfī aspirations, which had been part of his cultural and spiritual life since his childhood.

We know well that 'Umar Luṭfī grew up in a region filled with tendencies in this direction and among Ṣūfī orders (*Baktāshiyya, Naqshabandiyya, Malāmiyya, Rifā'iyya* and *Shādhiliyya*). This being so, it was not strange that he should be actively interested in Ṣūfīsm from his youth onwards. It appears that his stay in Istanbul did not cut him

33. Aḥmad Sirrī Bābā, *ibid.*, p. 47.

34. On Albanian involvements in the Young Turk Movement, see Hasan Kaleshi and Ibrahim Temo, *Osnivac mladoturskog Komiteta "ujedinjenje i napredak"*, Sarajevo: POF, 1976, and an Arabic translation by Muḥammad Mūfākū, *al-Wajh al-Ākhar lil-Ittiḥād wal-taraqqī*, Irbid, Jordan: Yarmuk University, 1991.

off from the influences of the Ṣūfī milieu within his soul. So we find him later, in 1892, taking advantage of being in his birthplace to visit the town of Gjakova which was deemed to be among the greatest Ṣūfī centres. There he declared that he had become a member of the order at the hand of the shaykh of the *Malāmiyya*. It would seem that his stay in Cairo between 1901 and 1905 played a part in consolidating his link with Ṣūfīsm.'[35]

Some of the Egyptian phase in 'Umar Luṭfī's life was spent outside its borders. He visited the Sūdān, the Ḥijāz and the Yemen, the last-named inspiring one of his finest writings in Turkish, his *Yaman Siyāḥatnāmeh*, which gives the author's impressions of life in the country at a time of great backwardness and revolt against Ottoman control, and an analysis of the reasons for this instability. A translation of Ibn 'Arabī's *Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya* into Turkish is attributed to him.

It is in his Arabic works, now preserved in manuscript in Belgrade and the Sorbonne, that his mystical thought attains its clearest expression. Much of this expression is in verse, although his Ṣūfī commentary on several *Sūras* of the Qur'ān — for example, *Sūrat al-Baqara, Sūrat Alif, Lām, Mīm* — should also be mentioned.[36] In verse 'Umar Lūṭfī took pains to express the essence of Ṣūfīsm in pentastichs that show the influence of an ode of 'Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī, verses by Ibn 'Arīf al-Ṣinhājī, others by 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulsī, and an ode of Ibrāhīm b. Adham. The language of his own verse, even where there is no direct Ṣūfī message, nevertheless derives from much of the vocabulary of Ṣūfī poets:

> *I created beauty for the love of beauty,*
> *sweet beauty and eloquent speech.*
> *For beauty's sake, thou lovest perfection.*
> *Thou, who art the beautiful, lovest beauty.*
> *Thou hast tied the heart with the cord of affection.*
> *For one enamoured such is the path of sense and of wisdom,*
> *having held out to those who love thee that which is sought for.*
> *Thou, who are the beautiful, lovest beauty.*

In verses such as this, clothed in Ṣūfī language, are those idealistic visions of beauty that appealed to sensitive Albanians, and which were

35. A valuable article on this Ṣūfī is Muḥammad Mūfākū and Ni'matallāh Ḥāfiẓ, 'al-Ḥājj 'Umar Luṭfī Bashārīzī, *al-'Arabī*, no. 242, January 1979, pp. 135–9 (esp. p. 138).

36. *ibid.*, pp. 137–8. Luṭfī Bashārīzī is unquestionably one of the major scholars of Kosovo in Ṣūfīsm and in Qur'ānic commentary (*tafsīr*).

expressed in literature in an earlier age, by Yaḥyā Bey Dukjagin (see p. 63) or in the characteristic imagery of the *Ḥurūfī* tradition of the *Baktāshīyya* as refined in the verses of Nasīmī and his followers.

It would appear, however, that the greatest impact was made on the Ṣūfī ideals of 'Umar Luṭfī by the personality of that major mystic Aḥmad b. Idrīs.

It seems that his stay in Cairo (1901–5) had a share in firmly strengthening his attachment to Ṣūfīsm, whether this be through its theoretical sources or else through his ties with some of the leaders of the Ṣūfī orders. From one aspect, his sojourn in Cairo permitted him to be well informed about the sources of the Ṣūfī writings of Ibn Adham, al-Jīlī, Ibn 'Arabī, al-Nābulusī and Ibn Idrīs and others.[37]

Thus 'Umar Luṭfī's writings provide an unusually interesting insight into his times. He was looking for a model and a guide to follow. Not only are there to be found citations from Ibn Idrīs in the folios and notebooks that he brought back to Kosovo from Cairo, but there are accounts of his personal relations with Muḥammad b. 'Alī Muḥammad b. Aḥmad Idrīs 1876–1923, the descendant of Ibn Idrīs whose acquaintance he had made during his Egyptian stay. It is not entirely certain where the Moroccan and the Albanian had met; possibly it was in al-Azhar, but in the light of the dates furnished by R.S. O'Fahey it is equally possible that it was in Upper Egypt or the Sūdān. Muḥammad al-Idrīsī returned to 'Asīr in 1905, the year of 'Umar Luṭfī's return to Kosovo. When 'Umar Luṭfī settled in Prizren, he was appointed Shaykh of the *Malāmiyya* order there, and remained so up till his death in 1929. What were his contacts with Cairo following his return are unclear.

That Albanians became specifically affiliated to the *ṭarīqa* of Aḥmad b. Idrīs (the *Aḥmadiyya*) is confirmed by 'Abd al-Muḥsin al-Barakātī in his *al-Riḥla al-Yamāniyya*. Describing the moves by Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Idrīsī to bring about an uprising in the Yemen and 'Asīr against Ottoman rule and establish his own position there, al-Barakātī remarks:

He continued thus until [the time] when the storms of feuds and uprisings blew hard within the Ottoman empire, when the government was overturned constitutionally and laboured to extinguish the internal revolts, such as those of the Druze and the Albanians, and when the *Imām* Yaḥya was in rebellion in

37. On the impact of the teachings and person of Aḥmad b. Idrīs and his descendants on Balkan Ṣūfīs, see R.S. O'Fahey, *Enigmatic Saint: Aḥmad Ibn Idris and the Idrīsī Tradition*, London: Hurst, 1990, pp. 185–8.

Ṣan'ā', Muḥammad b. 'Alī thought that this was the time he had been watching for and anticipating for launching the raid against the Sublime Porte, to obtain what he had wished for, and because of which he had journeyed from Egypt. He arose against the state, exciting hearts against it, rallying numbers of the masses and mobilising an army to fight it. When the Porte sensed what he was up to, it sent a delegation to him to find out his intentions. As head of this delegation it appointed Shaykh Tawfīq al-Arnā'ūdī, one of the men of the Idrīsīd *ṭarīqa*. This shaykh hoped that an agreement could be concluded by his hand between the Porte and al-Idrīsī concerning that which was conducive to the wellbeing of both the people and the country, under God.[38]

The enterprise was unsuccessful from the Ottoman point of view. Nor can we know more about the Albanian shaykh — whether he was from Europe, Syria, Egypt or Arabia. Once the writings of 'Umar Luṭfī have been studied and translated, it may be possible to ascertain whether he was personally involved with these events in any way.

'Umar Luṭfī's aim was first to bring Ṣūfīsm in Kosovo out from its restricted, even familial membership, and secondly to make it meaningful to the common man. Deeds not words and practical help wedded to meditative retreat were his goals. These were firmly within the fold of orthodox Islam and not, as might appear a 'parallel Islam' tainted by heterodoxy. In one of his odes, parts of the Arabic text of which have been published, and which may have been composed early rather than late in his life, tendencies such as these were already present:

It is purification within a freedom from defilement, from envy, rancour, evil hope.
It is adornment with the cream of moral values, an absorption of oneself in others.
It is total reliance upon Him, the Provider and Sustainer,
watchful over the soul, secretly and openly, alerted against that which God has prohibited and that which misleads.
Ṣūfīsm is observation. It is the disclosure of the unseen.
It is a struggle with the self and with wordly Mammon.
It is silence, wakefulness, fasting and piety, being on guard to curb a hasty utterance.
Rather, it is a pondering of the Creator's wonders and remembering.
His name in the morning and in the evening. . . .

38. Sharaf 'Abd al-Muḥsin al-Barakātī, *al-Riḥla al-Yamāniyya*, Cairo, 1330/1912, pp. 5 and 6.

'Alī Pasha of Tepelenë

The '*Pashalik*' of 'Janina' (Ioannina in Northern Greece) is widely known through the description given of its ruler and its people by Lord Byron. In the early nineteenth century 'Alī Pasha was *de facto* ruler of southern Albania and Epirus and courted by the great powers of Europe as if he were an independent Sulṭān within the Ottoman state. Although geographically his was a European estate, in several respects his courtly life seemed to reflect the Maghrib and the Mashriq and indeed to show some similarities with the Egypt of Muḥammad 'Alī (both men were Albanians), or Bashīr Shihāb, prince of the Lebanon.

'Alī Pasha was born between 1741 and 1750 in the fortress town of Tepelenë on the road connecting Gjirokastër with Vlorë, Fier and Berat. His father, Veli Bey held its *mutesellimlik* (governship) and a whole tradition grew up within the family about its Islamic origins, including its lineal descent from a dervish named Nazif, allegedly of the *Mawlawiyya* order, who had emigrated to Albania from Kütahya in Asia Minor. Having entered Rumelia, he had made his way to Tepelenë. When 'Alī was nine or ten, his father was assassinated and he was then brought up and educated by his mother, Hanko or Kanko. It is from this period that stories reminiscent of the *One Thousand and One Nights* form part of the history of this man who, throughout his life, seems to have been surrounded by dervishes. However he may be viewed by posterity, 'Alī Pasha was regarded in the West at the time as a figure almost of major importance. Hence, the Reverend Thomas Smart Hughes, Fellow of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, who met him, wrote: 'It is a remarkable fact that the three greatest men produced in Turkey during the present age have all derived their origin from Albania. These are the late celebrated Vizir Mustafa Bairactar, Mohammed Ali Pasha of Egypt, and, the greatest of them all, the subject of this present memoir'. (That history will see 'Alī Pasha as ultimately greater than Muḥammad 'Alī is certainly to be questioned.)

Hughes confirms the crucial role played by 'Alī's mother in his ultimate rise to fame:[39]

> The mother of Ali and of his sister Shaïnïtza was a woman of uncommon talents, undaunted courage and determined resolution, but fierce and implacable as a tigress. Her first act was to get rid of her rival whom, together with

39. Rev. Thomas Smart Hughes, *Travels in Sicily, Greece and Albania*, vol. II, London, 1820, pp. 101–2.

her child, she took off by poison, thus securing all the rights and property of her husband to Ali, who was then aged about fourteen. Far from yielding under the disastrous circumstances of fortune, she armed herself with double fortitude, and rising superior to the weakness of her sex, carried a musket against her enemies in the field at the head of her faithful clan, performing all the duties of both general and soldier. In most of these enterprises she took Ali as an associate, although she kept him within the strictest limits of obedience. Plainly foreseeing that his security depended chiefly on his military education, she accustomed him early to the perils of an active and romantic life, and improved his naturally strong constitution by exercise and temperance: she engaged the oldest and most faithful retainers of her family to animate his zeal by a recital of the history and exploits of his ancestors, to correct his rash impetuosity by their experience, to instruct him in all the manly exercises of an Albanian *palikar*, and to school him in knowledge of mankind and the arts of governing them, rather than in the lore of book-learning and science.'

However, according to the Mémoirs of Manzour (Manṣūr) Efendi,[40] when 'Alī was a poor adolescent aged about fifteen, an African dervish, allegedly from Morocco, came to ask for hospitality in his mother's house. At that time she was in a state bordering on penury. The offering of hospitality is a general Oriental virtue, but when Khamco (Hanko/Kanko) saw how poor the dervish was, she said in distress that she had no meat to offer to her guest, who she supposed could not speak Albanian in which she conversed with her son. As there was no money in the house, 'Alī decided to sell his only good item of clothing to treat the guest God had sent to her house in the best possible manner. The dervish fell ill while there, and 'Alī, unable to borrow money, little by little sold various chattels to cover the considerable extra cash which hospitality entailed. After one month the stranger recovered. At the moment of bidding them farewell, he informed 'Alī that he knew the Albanian tongue and that consequently he knew of all the sacrifices that had been so generously made for him. As a reward he gave him a ring, saying he should never part with it. It would bring him extraordinary happiness and lead him rapidly to the highest degree of grandeur, riches and power.

Manṣūr, a French renegade who later spent three years at 'Alī's court, adds: 'I have seen this ring (*unazë*). He wore it hung around his neck. He showed it to me himself in 1817.'

40. The story is recounted together with other details in Ibrāhīm Manzour Efendi, *Mémoires sur la Grèce at L'Albanie*, Paris, 1827, esp. pp. 268–9, 270–1 and 359–60.

The source of Manzour Efendi's information was allegedly 'Alī Pasha himself. Yet the introduction of a Moorish dervish (astrologer), a hospitable widow and her son, and lastly a magic ring looks suspiciously like an acquaintance with the opening pages of 'The Story of Aladdin and the Magic Lamp' in the standard collections of the *One Thousand and One Nights*. Hussain Haddawy, in his translation of the fourteenth-century text, edited by Muhsin Mahdi, says (on page xiii) that this Levantine 'story' is a rogue part of the original work. In all likelihood its thematic substance is derived from countless stories about a poor boy whose life is transformed by a stranger with occult powers who is befriended in a house that is plunged into sadness and poverty. The following passages from Sir Richard Burton's translation may be compared with Manzour Efendi's account:

Now this Darwaysh was a Moorman from Inner Morocco and he was a magician who could upheap by his magic hill upon hill and he was also adept in astrology. So after narrowly considering Alaeddin he said to himself, 'Verily, this is the lad I need and to find whom I have left my natal land.' and soon after the ground had cloven asunder before the Moroccan it displayed a marble slab wherein was fixed a copper ring. The Maghrabi, striking a geomantic table, turned to Alaeddin, and said to him, 'An thou do all I shall bid thee, indeed thou shalt become wealthier than any of the kings, and for this reason, O my son, I struck thee, because here lieth a hoard which is stored in thy name; and yet thou designedst to leave it and to levant. But now collect thy thoughts, and behold how I opened earth by my spells and adjurations. Under yon stone wherein the ring is set lieth the treasure wherewith I acquainted thee: so set thy hand upon the ring and raise the slab, for that none other amongst the folk, thyself excepted, hath power to open it, nor may any of mortal birth, save thyself, set foot within this Enchanted Treasury which hath been kept for thee.'

One can conclude either that fragments incorporated into this tale had reached Albania from the Levant at some unknown date, and that it was retold with 'Alī Pasha in the role of an 'Alā' al-Dīn, or else that Manzour Efendi, the renegade, made it up on the basis of his acquaintance with Galland's translation of the *Nights* to add colour to his account, or else that one of 'Alī Pasha's own courtiers had come to know of the story and told it to his master who had gladly woven it into the memoirs of his childhood and those semi-magical objects that he treasured and trusted and used as charms or instruments of power.

'Alī spent much of the early part of his life as a robber chief attacking his rivals in Albania and Thessaly. In 1785, at the age of forty, he was

rewarded by the Sulṭān for his services and given the title of Pasha and sub-govenor (*mutaṣarrif*) of Delwine, and the rank of *Mīr al-Mīrān*. In 1786 he was appointed *mutaṣarrif* of the *sandjaq* of Tirḥala (Trikala), and the Warden of the Passes, to establish law and order. In 1787 he became *pasha* of Toskeria and Thessaly. After hard experiences on several Balkan battlefields, he came to Ioannina, a wealthy city of artisans and merchants and the meeting-place for the feudal rulers of the region. 'Alī skilfully took advantage of their conflicts and in 1788 captured it. Later it was to boast some 25,000 citizens, mostly Greek although it also housed Albanians, Turks and Jews, with colleges, churches, mosques and *tekke*s and a number of factories making silk and cotton clothes and fabrics. Its imports and exports brought it into contact with the Ionian islands, Italy and Trieste, and probably with Egypt, from which rice was imported.

The Sulṭān granted him a *ferman* to govern and also one for his second son Veli Pasha to be the *mutaṣarrif* of Tirḥala. Building up a powerful army in Ioannina, and profiting from the war between Turkey on the one side and Russia and Austria on the other, Alī made deep advances into Toskeria and Epirus, capturing among other towns Konitza, Përmeti and Tepelenë in Albania and Arta in Epirus. In 1792 he established a satisfactory relationship with Sulṭān Selīm III and officially joined the expedition against Shkodër in 1793, although when Turkey's power declined dramatically following Bonaparte's campaigns, he took the opportunity to expand his own authority. In 1797 France captured the Ionian islands and Corfu. Napoleon incited 'Alī to start a revolt and gave him arms to do so. Even so he did not break with the Sulṭān and thus added further to his conquests. In 1799 Russians captured the Ionian islands; 'Alī mistrusted them and they plotted against him through his Albanian enemies. Having subdued the Suliots, he sought independence, and in 1802 was appointed *wālī* of Rumelia. The following year he entered into agreement with England, and in 1806 with France.

John Cam Hobhouse (later Lord Broughton), in his *A Journey through Albania, and other provinces of Turkey in Europe and Asia, to Constantinople during the years 1809 and 1810*, describes how he met 'Alī and gives a view of his achievements and his prospects for further success:

At present, his dominions extend (taking Ioannina for a centre) one hundred and twenty miles to the north, as far as the pashalik of Ocrida; to the north-east and east over Thessaly, and touching the feet of Mount of Olympus; to

the south-east the small district of Thebes, and part of that attached to the Negroponte, bound his territories; which, however, on this side, include the populous city of Livadia (Lebadea) and its district, and will soon, it is expected, comprise Attica, and afterwards the above-mentioned country. To the south he commands as far as the gulf of Lepanta, and the Morea belongs to his son. The Ionian Sea and the gulf of Venice are his boundaries in the south-west and west, and to the north-west the pashalik of Scutari, and the banks of the Drino; but on this side, the pashalik of Vallona intervenes. Parge, on the coast opposite to Corfu, belongs to the French, and the Chimeriotes can scarcely be said to depend entirely on his authority.

Throughout the whole of the country so bounded, the imperial firman is but little respected; whilst a letter with the signature of Ali (of which, as a curiosity, I send you a fac-simile), commands unlimited obedience. The Vizier is now absolute lord, as a Greek in Ioannina told me, of fifty small provinces; and should his projects of aggrandisement succeed, the countries which anciently composed the southern part of Illyricum, the kingdom of Epirus, part of Macedonia, the whole Thessalian territory, Euboea, and all the Grecian States, will be under the dominion of a barbarian who can neither write nor read. His tyranny is complete; although the form of subjection to the Porte is still preserved, and he furnishes his contingent of men to the Ottoman armies, and pays besides a certain part of his tribute to the Grand Signor.

As he advances to the north-west, he will be in possession of the frontier towards Dalmatia, which the views of the French must render a most important post. It is confidently asserted, that Napoleon has offered to make him King of Albania, and to support his independence against the Porte; but, if this be true, he has had the prudence to refuse a crown, which would be rather the badge of bondage than of power, and of late the Emperor has talked of thundering down upon Albania from his Illyrian provinces.[41]

Between 1808 and 1812 he started to expand northwards into Albania. In 1808 he captured Berat, in 1810 Vlorë, and in 1811 Delwine and Gjirokastër. With the exception of Parga all of Toskeria, Thessaly and Epirus formed a part of his *pashalik*. He was now a major owner of estates, including 934 villages. All these successes encouraged his dream of independence, or at least a maximum autonomy, relying on his Albanian soldiery to buttress his power. In 1812, Sulṭān Maḥmūd II officially discharged him and ordered him to withdraw to Tepelenë. 'Alī complied, but returned to Ioannina two months later.

'Alī next strengthened his ties with the British and paid scant heed to the authority in Istanbul. The Sulṭān anxious to avoid a complete

41. J.C. Hobhouse, *A Journal through Albania* . . ., London, 1813, and New York, 1971.

rupture, restored 'Alī's titles although he became involved in conflict with Muṣṭafā Pasha, the ruler of Shkodër, who was an ally of Istanbul in his attempt to curb the Pasha of Ioannina. In 1814–15, in the new period of European rivalry that followed the fall of Napoleon, 'Alī made approaches to Russia and joined with the Greek nationalists who were seeking independence. This belief in their effectiveness was to prove his undoing. In 1820, Maḥmūd II decided to crush him. A decree was issued dismissing him and he was summoned to Istanbul. 'Alī did not comply, and a *ferman* warranting his death was issued. 'Alī could only play for time. The Turkish army and fleet had as their ally Muṣṭafā Pasha Bushatli of Shkodër. Ioannina was surrounded in 1820, although it took a siege of seventeen months to reduce it to submission. 'Alī was assassinated in 1822. Resistance then ended. Albania was finally subjugated in 1838.

During his rule in Ioannina, 'Alī had established a court, Oriental in taste and style, in some respects dependent on Arabs, as well as Albanians, to administer Islamic institutions. Both Ioannina and Tepelenë were cosmopolitan, but they were also outwardly Islamic as Byron, in Stanza 59 of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, emphasises:

> *Hark! from the mosque the nightly solemn sound*
> *The Muezzin's call doth shake the minaret,*
> *'There is no god but God! to prayer-lo! God is great!'*

Hobhouse (pp. 98–9) suggests that the regular prayers, and a general observance of a statutory house for these prayers, was observed in 'Alī's court:

> At sun-set the drum was beat in the yard, and the Albanians, most of them being Turks, went to prayers. In the gallery, which was open on one side, there were eight or nine little boxes fitted up with raised seats and cushions, between the wooden pillars supporting the roof; and in each of these there was a party smoking, or playing at draughts.
>
> I had now an opportunity of remarking the peculiar quietness and ease with which the Mahometans say their prayers; for, in the gallery, some of the graver sort began their devotions in the places where they were sitting, entirely undisturbed and unnoticed by those around them, who were otherwise employed. The prayers, which last about ten minutes, are not said aloud, but muttered sometimes in a low voice, and sometimes with only a motion of the lips; and, whether performed in the public street or in a room, excite no attention from any one. Of more than a hundred in the gallery, there were only five or six at prayers. The Albanians are not reckoned strict Mahometans; but no Turk, however irreligious himself, is ever seen even to smile at the

devotions of others; and to disturb a man at prayers would, in most cases, be productive of fatal consequences.

We were disturbed during the night by the perpetual carousal which seemed to be kept up in the gallery, and by the drum, and the voice of the 'muezzin', or chanter, calling the Turks to prayer from the minaret of the mosek [mosque] attached to the palace. This chanter was a boy, and he sang out his hymn in a sort of loud melancholy recitative. He was a long time repeating the purport of these few words: 'God most high! I bear witness that there is no God but God: I bear witness that Mahomet is the Prophet of God. Come to prayer; come to the asylum of salvation. Great God! There is no God but God!' The first exclamation was repeated four times, the remaining words twice, and the long and piercing note in which he concluded this confession of faith, by twice crying out the word 'hou' still rings in my ears.

'Alī Pasha has also been viewed as an Albanian nationalist. In the opinion of Ligor Mile, Ioannina had a special role to play in this:

The development of the culture in southern Albania at the end of the eighteenth century and at the beginning of the nineteenth cannot be disassociated from the support which teaching, science and culture found, notably in the capital of 'Alī Pasha. This Albanian lord held everything Ottoman in disdain, and furthermore tried, in the domain of culture, to encourage national elements. Thus, during the domination of 'Alī Pasha, his capital attained major renown thanks to the schools and libraries founded there. As one is aware, at Ioannina, promoted by 'Alī Pasha, the Albanian language was also cultivated. This great economic centre, which flourished during 'Alī's reign, became renowned at that time, thanks to the close economic ties with the Albanian and Greek territories, as the great cultural centre of the south-western part of the Balkan peninsula.[42]

He further remarks:

It was not be chance that 'Alī of Tepelenë chose Ioannina to be his capital. One knows that this town was one of the principal economic centres, the most important market of Western Greece and Southern Albania, where not only the Greek merchants but also the Albanians were highly active. Besides having a Greek population, it has Albanians as well. Thus, the Ioannina merchants who were behind 'Alī in his taking power in this town offered themselves so as to be assured of an ally in their struggle against feudal anarchy. One can affirm that from then onwards they attained their aim to a certain extent.

42. 'Sur le caractère du pouvoir d'Ali pacha de Tépélène', *Actes du 1er Congrès*, IV: *Histoire*, Sofia, 1968, p. 101 (pp. 97–109). This same subject is also printed in *Studia Albanica*. For other important studies on 'Alī Pasha, see Odile Daniel, *Albanie. Une bibliographie historique*, Paris: Editions du CNRS, 1985, pp. 405–15.

As we have noted, dervishes were highly regarded by 'Alī Pasha. They flocked to Ioannina, establishing *tekkes* and becoming rich due to the economic wealth of the district. Manzour Efendi mentions one or two of them who would appear to have come from Arab countries and to represent more than one Ṣūfī order. 'Alī was encouraged to build by a Syrian dervish 'of a great sanctity and of a profound knowledge'. 'Alī was especially humble towards those dervishes from Arab peoples, men who, we are told, hailed from Arabia, Syria, Egypt, Barbary and the Kingdom of Morocco. They were also Persians who were cultured and seemingly better educated. Ioannina swarmed with such holy men, whose extortions were suffered by the local population. The dervishes were frequently religious riff-raff, some of them banished from Istanbul for their corruption.

The presence in Ioannina of numbers of Arabs and Negroes from the Middle East and North Africa is confirmed by the traveller Henry Holland in his *Travels in the Ionian Isles, Albania, Macedonia*:

> We now see, besides Turkish, Albanese and Moorish soldiers, the Turkish officers, and ministers of the Vizier; Greek and Jewish secretaries, Greek merchants, Tartar couriers, the pages and black slaves of the Seraglio; petitioners seeking to obtain audience, and numerous other figures, which give to the court and palace of Ali Pasha a character all its own. [. . .] The population thus variously composed, and with the addition of Arabs, Moors and Negroes, afford a curious spectacle in all the streets of the city. Somewhat such an assemblage may indeed be seen in other towns, but wanting the numerous Albanese soldiery, which forms here so striking and characteristic a feature. Of the female part of the population, few, except those of the lower class, are to be seen in the public streets, and these few are so much concealed by the mode of dress, that they are but as moving figures to the eye. The Turkish women of higher rank are seldom abroad. Any female of this nation, coming into the streets, is entirely covered with a dark-coloured cloak, excepting the face, which is likewise concealed by bands drawn across it, leaving merely a narrow transverse opening for the eyes.

The example of 'Alī's defeat of the French in 1798, as described by Hobhouse, suggests that the influence of Babas and 'Alī's spiritual counsellors of the *Baktāshiyya* was considerable among some of the Albanian troops who were thrown into the battle:

> I had the account from an Albanian who was in the battle, and who confessed that the French force did not amount to more than eight hundred men, and all of them infantry. The Albanians continued some time on the hills, viewing their enemies in front. Their priests, of whom there was a great number, then

began to pray with a loud voice, and the soldiers joined them in the holy exclamations. The whole body remained waving their heads, as it was described to me, and as I have myself seen in some religious ceremonies in Turkey, like a vast field of corn, and calling on the name of God with a fervour of tone and action that was soon wound up to the highest pitch of fury; as if with one voice, the word was given, 'Out with your swords!' and the Albanian army, both horse and foot, rushed down into the plain.

A number of the shaykhs, who were made wealthy by 'Alī and were in charge of sundry *tekkes*, came from Asia Minor but also from Morocco. Sayyid Aḥmad Efendi, who was twice 'Alī Pasha's diplomatic agent in England, was also nominated head of the *tekke* in Parga — he came from Lataqiya in Syria. Others were from Egypt or from Albania itself, all enjoying great wealth and most charged with *tekkes* in Ioannina itself or in its vicinity.

The dervishes of the *Baktāshiyya* were particularly favoured. 'Alī Pasha was himself initiated into this order. John Kingsley Birge noted the particular influence of Kamāl al-Dīn Shamīmī (Mimi), a noted *Baktāshī* missionary. It was he who initiated 'Alī. The latter is depicted in an engraving wearing the *tac* (*tāj*) of the *Baktāshīyya*. F.W. Hasluck regarded 'Alī Pasha as a prime mover behind the mushrooming of the order in southern Albania, which was especially marked in the later years of his life. The headstone of his tomb at Ioannina was once capped by the twelve-sided head-dress of the order.

However, among the dervishes listed by Manzour Efendi, the *Baktāshīs* are by no means conspicuous, nor did their sect possess a *tekke* because of the fanatical orthodoxy of the Muslims in the area of Ioannina. All in all, Hasluck had a poor opinion of 'Alī's own sincerity. On the other hand, he had a high regard for Shaykh Shamīmī who founded (or revived) a *tekke* in Krujë in 1807. In his opinion many of the conversions of the southern Tosks in the districts north of Ioannina were due to the *Baktāshī* influence promoted by 'Alī.[43]

Muḥammad Mūfākū considers the role of Shaykh Shamīmī (Mīmī) as of crucial importance in 'Alī Pasha's religious policies:

The rebirth of the *Baktāshī* movement at this stage is connected with a leading Albanian figure, namely Bābā Kamāl al-Dīn Shamīmī (Babaj Qemaludin Shemimi), who, it has been mentioned, was once a teacher in a Sunnī

43. See F.W. Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans*, vol. II, pp. 537 and 591, likewise *The Annual of the British School at Athens*, no. XX, Session 1913–14, p. 113. However, Nathalie Clayer (*L'Albanie pays des derviches*, p. 37) has grave doubts.

school before he became a *Baktāshī*. For a time he lived in the *tekke* of Hacibektaş, then returned with a companion to the town of Krujë, in Albania, and resided in a *tekke* to preach. After his travels through the length and breadth of Albania to further the *Baktāshiyya* order, fortune helped him in the south of the country when 'Alī Pasha Tepelenë announced his adherence to the *Baktāshiyya* at the hand of Kamāl al-Dīn. It is possible that 'Alī Pasha embraced the *Baktāshiyya* through a growing sympathy, one of some consequence, towards its later ideological and organisational development. It is known that 'Alī Pasha had gained success, following the example set by his contemporary Muḥammad 'Alī Pasha in Egypt, through backing and strengthening a local administration that had recognised his authority in southern and central Albania. From that time onwards, he had entered into dispute with the Ottoman Turkish state in order to gain recognition from Istanbul for an Albanian identity and an Albanian entity. It may be that 'Alī Pasha found it prudent to embrace the *Baktāshiyya*, which called for Shī'īte revenge against the (*Sunnī*) Turkish power, and thus enabled him to declare war, both national and religious, at one and the same time, against Istanbul. From all this one may regard 'Alī Pasha as the first person who profited from the *Baktāshiyya*, and who made use of it, in the service of Albanian national leanings which aimed at a severance from Ottoman Turkey.

So it was natural that the *Baktāshiyya* should see an opening for new opportunities in Albania during the age of 'Alī Pasha. We find that *Baktāshī tekkes* began to cover the Albanian towns, here and there, first in the south of the country and then moving up to the centre and north. The aim of this spread was to establish a popular base to resist the Ottoman Turkish authority. However, 'Alī Pasha was eventually defeated in 1822, confronting the Turkish armies that surrounded him from every side. Following the defeat of 'Alī Pasha, the Turkish state undertook a ruthless purge of the *Baktāshiyya*. While this was decisive in Turkey itself, in Albania the *Baktāshiyya* order was able to save itself by taking refuge in the mountains before it returned once more, profiting from the weakness of Ottoman Turkish power. The assault on the *Baktāshiyya* in Albania by the state led to a deep struggle between the two sides, especially following the Ottoman state's declaration of the infidelity of the *Baktāshiyya* and its veto on it being affiliated to the official state religion. Its subsequent, resistance to the *Baktāshiyya*, wherever it might be, compelled the sect to find itself in opposition, indeed to head the opposition. Henceforth, retaining the reins of control, it embarked on a prolonged resistance to the Turkish presence.[44]

The strong sentiments of Shī'īsm among the southern Albanians, the Tosks, at that time can also be seen from a number of details which

44. See 'al-*Baktāshiyya*' in *al-'Arabī* (Kuwayt), no. 220, March 1977, pp. 64–8.

are given in Manzour Efendi's account especially in the 'Notice Géographique sur l'Albanie'. We are told that 'A large part of the Tosk Muslims follow the sect of 'Alī, the son-in-law of Muḥammad, like the Persians, who detest their Sunnite neighbours and insult them by calling them followers of Mu'āwiya (who are the opponents of 'Alī and responsible for the death of his sons). The same name was given to the parish dogs of the bazaar in Ioannina. Furthermore it is clear from Manzour Efendi's description that 'Alī Pasha tolerated and even supported Christian worship and practice in Ioannina, where there were seven or eight churches and a Greek archbishop. Yet at the same time he endeavoured actively to promote the Muslim faith, ordering Christians in Laperi to convert to Islam. He sent an *imām* from Ioannina for this purpose and took offspring as 'hostages' to ensure the sound 'conversion' of their parents and sent them to Muslim households in Ioannina to be taught the faith.

According to Manzour Efendi, 'Alī Pasha was moved deeply by religious song and chant, 'Many times have I seen him weep while a young singer, born in Arabia, sang *illahis* (hymns), although the vizir did not understand the Arabic language. But the melody alone used to soften his fierce heart.'[45] He was also superstitious, believing that predictions of his longevity by the devout were not to be lightly dismissed, even if a century and a half was predicted. 'I am no prophet, for after Muḥammad there can be none other since he is *Âkher pêighâmbar* — the last — but I am a man destined to be above others: consequently God does for me what he would in no way do for another.'

A hatred for the Umayyid Caliphs, Yazīd in particular, who is accused of the slaughter of Imām Ḥusayn and his followers at Karbalā on October 10, 680, and the desecration of his mortal remains, is not a mere hearsay report from Orientals and Westerners who visited Albania at that time. It can be confirmed by Albanian poetry of a semi-vernacular kind. One such poem is an anonymous composition by a *Baktāshī* opponent of 'Alī Pasha. Between 1793 and 1812, the latter brought much distress to the city of Gjirokastër. The poet calls on the aid of the Almighty to thwart the evils of a treacherous *'jezid i Qerbelase'* who is castigated in several verses. Later Shaykh Nesibi, also of Gjirokastër, in a poem composed in 1897 (since it refers to the fighting

45. *Ilahī* is discussed by Hajdar Salihu, *Poezia e Bejtexhinjve*, Prishtinë, 1987, p. 490, as *himn, vjershë e lartë fetare*, 'verses of a lofty devotion.' Hobhouse (*A Journey through Albania, op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 113) sees the girl as one of 'Alī's harem.

between Greeks and Turks, and the bombardment of Saranda on April 18 of that year), makes bitter remarks about the evil deeds being committed, which he calls '*jezidija*'. This term of abuse was found among the Tosks, many of whom were *Baktāshiyya* or 'Alīds.

However, it was the ambiguity of 'Alī Pasha's religious loyalties and those of his people that struck Thomas Smart Hughes during his travels at that time:[46]

After the death of the great Scanderbeg, when the Albanians, who had made a most brave resistance, fell beneath the Ottoman yoke, an innovation was introduced into their religious faith; till this time they at least professed Christianity, however uninstructed they might have been in its peculiar tenets and doctrines: the progress of the apostasy however was at first very slow, and the religion of Mahomet did not gain many adherents till about the end of the sixteenth century: at this time a law was promulgated which secured their estates in the possession of all those Albanian families who should bring up one of their members in the Mahometan faith. This had the double effect of keeping the country more clear of Osmanli settlers than the rest of Turkey, and of soon transferring the chief property into the hands of the new proselytes. At various times however whole villages, towns or districts, for political advantages, have voluntarily renounced the religion of their ancestors: and these instances occur not unfrequently at the present day. Yet the Albanian Mahometan is not more observant of doctrines, rites and ceremonies under his new law than he was under his old one, and is looked upon with great contempt by the rigid Osmanli. He frequently takes a Christian woman to be his wife, carries his sons to mosque, and allows his daughters to attend their mother to church; nay, he even goes himself alternately to both places of worship, and eats with his family out of the same dish, in which are viands forbidden to the disciples of Mahomet. Very few of them undergo the rite of circumcision: hence when the pasha, in a fit of religious zeal, has sent sheiks to perform the operation throughout certain districts, many of the adults have died in consequence. They are in general too poor to avail themselves of the licence which their religion grants for polygamy, but are content with one wife, who is chosen, like any other animal, more for a slave or drudge than for a companion: they are by no means jealous of their women, nor do they confine them like the Turks and Greeks. The wretched creature of a wife, with one or two infants tied in a bag behind her back, cultivates the ground and attends to the household affairs by turns, whilst her lordly master ranges over the forest in search of game, or

46. Thomas Smart Hughes, *op. cit.*, pp. 97–8. For a useful summing up of 'Alī Pasha's career see Stanford J. Shaw, *Between Old and New: The Ottoman Empire under Sultan Selim III, 1789–1807*, Harvard University Press, 1971.

guards the flocks, or watches behind a projecting rock with his fusil ready to aim at the unwary traveller.

One of the most balanced comments on 'Alī Pasha's religious attitude and policy comes from Henry Holland, writing at about the same time as Hughes. He specifically comments on 'Alī's strange mixture of tolerance, superstition and expediency. Islam among the Albanians was at this time of a kind that defied any coherent assessment by either a Western or an Oriental onlooker, nor could the growth of *tekkes*, fuelled by scholars, *Babas* and the like, or the show of fanaticism fuelled sometimes by the devout from the Arab East, be seen as indicative of popular devotion. Even less did it provide any indication as to the piety of 'Alī himself:

The adherence of Ali Pasha to the tenets of the Mahomedan religion is by no means rigid, and probably depending more on a sense of interest than upon any zeal or affection for these tenets. He has few of the prejudices of a Mussulman; and in regarding those around him, his consideration obviously is, not the religion of the man, but whether he can be of service to any of his views. I have seen a Christian, a Turkish and a Jewish secretary, sitting on the ground before him at the same moment — an instance of the principle which is carried throughout every branch of his government. In Albania especially, the Christian and Mussulman population are virtually on the same footing as to political liberty; all indeed slaves, but the former not oppressed, as elsewhere in Turkey, by those subordinate agencies of tyranny, which render more grating the chain that binds them. It may fairly be said that under this government all religions find an ample toleration. I have even known instances where Ali Pasha has directed Greek churches to be built for the use of the peasants, as is the case in one or two of the villages on the plain of Arta.

Though without religious bigotry, however (or perhaps religious feeling) Ali Pasha exhibits certain superstitions, which possibly may have been engrafted on his early youth. He has his lucky and unlucky days, and is said to have shewn belief at times in the magic arts of charm and conjuration. Mixed with the good sense of his conversation, I have now and then noticed a tone of credulity, which perhaps, however, could not be construed into more than a belief, that human art went further into the mysteries of nature than it really does — a natural mistake in a man of talent, partially instructed. I have once or twice seen a Dervish with him, one of those strange appendages of eastern states which combine the repute of sanctity with buffoonery, or even idiocy of manner. It did not appear, however, that he paid any attention to the gesticulations of this man, or thought of him otherwise than merely as an adjunct to his court.

The Albanians in Syria

Though not as famous as Egypt as a home for Albania's exiled community in the Eastern Arab world, Syria (and to a degree Lebanon) was to become a significant centre for Muslim Albanians, so that today the tiny Arnā'ūṭ community in Damascus, as elsewhere, is not only respected but has already made a significant contribution to modern Arabic literature and cultural life in Syria. Damascus has for centuries acted as a magnet for Albanian Muslim scholars and students, and it is not uncommon to meet *imāms* of mosques in Yugoslavia, a few of them Yugoslav Albanians, who have perfected their Arabic in Damascus.

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries a number of Ottoman governors and administrators were of Albanian origin. Among the most famous of these was Sinān Pasha, whose achievements as a builder were distinguished in many parts of the Ottoman empire. He was born about 1500 in the region of Topoyani, in Central Albania, and rose to importance through the *devshirme* system. Five times appointed Grand Vizir, he could be ruthless and harsh (he allegedly destroyed the holy relics of Saint Sava, patron saint of Serbia), but he was also a major builder of caravanserais, bridges, baths and mosques. These included the town of Kacanik, in Kosovo, important buildings in Salonica and Belgrade, and, in the Arab countries, in Cairo and in Damascus. The latter owed much to him, so that Muḥibbī described him as 'the founder', the man responsible for major monuments in the country, including the mosque in Damascus outside Bāb al-Jābiya, the bath and the market, both of equal beauty and refined workmanship. To him are also attributed similar works in Qaṭīfa, Sa'sa', 'Uyūn al-Tujjār and 'Akkā (now in Israel), including caravanserais.

Damascus figured prominently in the life of Ibrāhīm Pasha and in the writings of Ismā'īl Kamāl Bey (Ismael Qemali), who was to proclaim Albania an independent state on November 28, 1912, and was appointed head of government and foreign minister. Lataqiya district and the life of the downtrodden heterodox Alawites, close by, were to leave a deep mark on his memory.

Such men, however renowned, were in a sense birds of passage. Students who came to Damascus stayed longer, some of them for good. They would settle in such quarters as *Sūq Sārūja* and *Sūq al-Muhājirīn*. If they returned, they would teach in Qur'ān schools in Kosovo and elsewhere. Others, of a Ṣūfī spirit, acted as human bridges between Albania and the centres of the Ṣūfī orders in the Middle East, Syria

included. One specific order, the *Sa'diyya*, founded by Sa'd al-Dīn al-Jibāwī and his successors in about 1335, was especially associated with Damascus, although it later spread to Turkey and Egypt, and in the eighteenth century gained a foothold in Kosovo and Yugoslav Macedonia.

According to Muḥammad Mūfākū:

> It suffices to mention here that the *Sa'diyya* was transported by these men [students, scholars and shaykhs] to Albanian regions. It was spread and disseminated in a number of Albanian cities. So too there were, among the Albanians, distinguished personalities, geniuses of this order, such as Sulaymān Ajīza Bābā (Sulejman Adzizi-baba, of Gjakova),[47] who had the nickname 'the second great teacher', bearing in mind that the founder of this order, Sa'd al-Dīn al-Jibāwī, was 'the first teacher'. The spread of this order in Albanian groups necessarily led to a sort of tie with Damascus since it was the spiritual home of this order, and shaykhs of this *ṭarīqa* used to be given licenses (*ijāzāt*), or take the latter from Syria.

Damascus and its Albanian circles were centres of Muslim orthodoxy. The Syrian influence on Muslim Albanians is characterised by its support for traditional orthodox Islam, freed from any taint of heterodoxy or excess, and it is therefore not surprising that studies in Arabic by Albanians published in Damascus, should reflect this preference. Examples of such books are a study of the thought of *Imām* Abū Ḥanīfa by Wahbī Sulaymān Ghāwijī al-Albānī, published in Damascus and Beirut in 1973, an edition of *al-Tadhkira fī faḍl al-adhkār*, by Abū 'Abdallāh Muḥammad al-Ourṭubī al-Andalusī (d. 671/1273), edited by 'Abd al-Qādir al-Arnā'ūṭ and Ibrāhīm al-Arnā'ūṭ, published in Damascus in 1972, and *Riyāḍ al-Ṣāliḥīn*, by the Imām al-Nawawī, edited by Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī, and published by the Islamic Office in 1398/1978. These typify the serious scholarly work that has recently characterised the Arnā'ūṭs in Syria. Potentially Syria has offered a scope and ambience for their efforts that is rarely to be found, elsewhere, in the Arab world in recent years.

Syria is the home of a very active family of Arnā'ūṭ novelists, short story writers, poets, dramatists, literary critics and artists, still active, names such as Abdylkader Arna'ūṭi, the sisters Ajshe and Hatixhe

47. Cited and extensively discussed in his article *'al-Albāniyyūn fi Sūriyah wa-dawruhum fī'l-ḥayāh al-Sūriyyah*, Second International Congress on the History of Syria (1516–1939), part 1, Damascus, 1980. On the *Sa'diyya* in Albania see Nathalie Clayer, *op. cit.*, pp. 163–72.

Arna'ūṭi, Muḥammad Barakāt Laṭīf Arna'ūṭi and Rakha Arnā'ūṭi who later moved to Algeria. These writers are completely Arab in their expression, though of course retaining a great affection and pride in their origins. Within those areas of literature where specifically Islamic sentiments are expressed, we should mention three names. First, Muṣṭafā Khalqī (Mustafa Huluki, 1851–1915), the lyrical yet realistic poet and protestor against social and anti-Ottoman abuses whose ancestors came from Kavalla and whose father, 'Uthmān Bey al-Nūrī, was a commander in the army of Ibrāhīm Pasha but 'like many others' later settled in Damascus. For a time he was head of the Sultanije school in Beirut. Islamic sentiment, critical of the mercenary religious establishment, frequently surfaces in his verse. Muḥammad Mūfākū cites two verses from a famous (manuscript) poem of his, derived from his *dīwān*:

How many a worshipper and servant of God, who displays
his integrity and his piety, yet who, in the closet, is in direct contact with sins,
If he beholds the Dīnār, *bows adoringly, and says 'O*
Lord of ours, O fulfiller of our needs, our heart's desires.'

A quite different case is presented by Thābit Nu'mān Farīzāy Sabit/ Thabit Niman Ferizaj (1860–1950), whose sentiments were more obviously focused on Albanian aspirations, and who wrote in Albanian though in Arabic script. He was born in a region that was claimed by Serbia during the war between Turkey and Russia in 1877. His family moved to Kosovo and settled in the town of Frizay, where he grew up. He learnt Arabic as well as Albanian, became a teacher and also a poet in both languages, being heavily influenced in his writing by Ṣūfī thoughts.

Since local custom forbade his marriage to the girl of his choice, they eloped and settled first in Istanbul, moving to Syria in 1890. He lived in Amman, in Kerak and in a converted windmill in Hauran, although Damascus was to become the centre of his academic life up to his death. In his last years he devoted much time to preaching and to carpentry. He made his retreat the Albanian mosque (*Jāmi' al-Arnā'ūṭ*) in the *Dīwāniyya* and *Barrāniyya* quarter of Damascus. Apart from poetry and literature in general, he was also especially interested in astrology and the natural sciences. He constructed a telescope, an electric generator and a large clock, which, apart from its spring mechanism, was made entirely of wood. One of his books bore the title 'My views regarding history and about Arabic, Turkish, Persian and Albanian literature' (*Ārā'ī al-khāṣṣ fī'l-tārīkh wal-adab al-'arabī wal-fārisī wal-turkī wal-*

albānī). His other interests were reflected in such books as 'The Zodiac and its effect on the life of men' (*al-Burūj al-falakiyya wa-atharuhā fī ḥayāt al-nās*), 'The Albanian astronomy [or talisman?] for the explanation of the astrological commentator' (*Raṣad al-Arnā'ūṭī 'alā bayān al-mufassir al-falakī*, 'The storehouse of trinkets' (*Khazīnat al-mujawharāt*), 'Terms of the natural sciences' (*Mufradāt al-'ulūm al-ṭabī'iyya*), 'The benefits and the uses of plants and herbs for man' (*Manāf' al-nabāt lil-insān*), 'Herbs and their effect on medicine' (*al-A'shāb wa-ta'thīruhā fi'l-Ṭibb*), 'A clear exposition of the nature of plants and the symptoms of the change of human temperament' (*Bayān ṭabī'at al-nabātāt wa-'alāmāt taghayyur al-mizāj al-insānī*), and his commentary on Qur'ānic verses (*Tafsīr āyāt Qur'āniyya*). He was particularly interested in Firdawsi's *Shāh Nāmeh*, a portion of which he translated into Albanian. He left a son and a daughter, the latter a noted poet of strong Ṣūfī sentiments. To this may be added his original contribution to the creation of an alphabet in Arabic script to express Albanian. Thabit Ferizaj was far from being the first Albanian to attempt this task. We have already seen in Chapter 2 the direct contact of Albanian men of letters with Arabic, especially in such towns as Berat, Shkodër and Elbasan. Nezim Frakulla (*c.* 1680–1700) is credited with the invention of such an alphabet and later examples were Mulla Hysen Dobraçi (*c.* 1785), Daut Boriçi (1825–96) — his Albanian primer printed in Arabic script was published in Istanbul in 1861 — and Hoxha Hasan Tahsin (1812–81).

Necip P. Alpan, discussing the question of the Albanian alphabet in relation to Turco-Ottoman influence on Albania, writes:

> When they became Muslims, the Albanians used the Arabo-Ottoman alphabet. However, this alphabet was insufficient, since it did not have letters that corresponded to the sounds and consonants of the Albanian language. For example, the Arabic alphabet had no character for the vowels.
>
> In the eighteenth century Albanian writers, both Catholic and Orthodox, began to prepare purely national alphabets. In 1844–5 an intellectual of Korça, Naum Panajot Bredhi of Vithkuqi, published *L'Evëtori Shqip Fort i Shkurtër* (the most handy and concise Albanian alphabet). According to the great Austrian Albanologist Johannes Georg von Hahn, this alphabet was quite original. But the Phanariot church of Istanbul, by sending its author into obscurity, prevented its use in the teaching of Albanian.
>
> Then Sh. Sami Frashëri, Hoxha H. Tahsin Filati, Kostardin N. Kristoforidhi Elbasanasi, Vasso Pasha Shkodrani, Jovan Vreto Postenani, Koto Hoxhi Gjirokastriti and other Albanian intellectuals residing in Istanbul in 1879

formed another Latin-based alphabet consisting of 25 Latin letters, 6 Cyrillic letters and 5 Greek letters. It was revised in 1908 by the Congress of Monastir, and the alphabet decided there is that and the alphabet used today.[48]

This question was not simply one of academic experiment, but had strong religious implications and led to heated dispute involving orthodox clerics who were in favour of keeping the Arabic script dominant and actively promoting it, as opposed to those like the Frashëri brothers and a growing following especially among *Baktāshīs* who favoured the Latin script. Those in favour of Arabic were to be the losers, but only some time after the Congress of the Society for the Printing of Albanian, held at Monastir (Bitolj) in November 1908, mentioned before, where the partly Arabic alphabet of Hoxha Tahsin was rejected as too complicated. When a further Congress was convened in Elbasan in the following year, there was still opposition form the *'ulamā'*. According to Odile Daniel, 'The Sublime Porte, under pressure from Albanian Muslims, made its response a month after the decisions were taken by the Monastir Congress. The Ministry of Education forced the Albanians from the Vilayet of Kosovo to use the Albanian alphabet in Arabic characters.'[49] The effort to promote a Latin and Greek alphabet continued to attract much opposition and caused rifts in Albania. The Arabic alphabet implicitly paid homage to the Qur'ān, whereas Greek characters implied an adherence to Greece and everything Greek. The Albanians were caught in a dilemma between religious and nationalist loyalties. Harder still was the ultimate choice facing the Muslim Albanians whether to look to Europe or remain a frontier region of the Islamic East. Kosovo was not involved directly in the matter. The use of Arabic script survived longer there than in Albania proper. Thabit Ferizaj invented his own alphabet in Damascus, and if the research carried out by Muḥammad Mūfākū and his conclusions are accepted, it reflected the archaisms of that region and was strongly influenced by the prevailing Arabic of Syria; it has been described as the most compact way of presenting Albanian in an Arabic script, with a mere twenty-three letters as opposed to forty-four in the alphabet of Rexhep Voka from Tetova in Macedonia, published as an *Elifbaja shqip* in Istanbul

48. See Necip Alpan, 'Influence turco-ottomane dans la littérature albanaise', *Makedonski Folklor*, Skopje, 1979, pp. 161–8. For a more accessible source see Odile Daniel, 'The Historical Role of the Muslim Community in Albania', *op. cit.*, pp. 13–16, together with references given in her notes.

49. Odile Daniel, *ibid.*, p. 14.

in 1910. On the other hand, Thabit Ferizaj's alphabet was unpublished and written in manuscript form only and appealed to a community that had survived, after a fashion, in a solely Arabic or Arabo-Turkish environment.

The Syrian writer and dramatist Ma'rūf al-Arnā'ūṭ (1892–1948) is probably the best known, at least by name, of all the Syro-Albanians.[50] Arab nationalism figures prominently in his work, and furthermore is preached across sectarian and religious divides. There is a heroic feeling about his style and in his socio-historical novels about the early days of Islam and the events that preceded and followed its revelation. Social history and a knowledge of the Byzantine background to the history of the Middle East are apparent. His tripartite 'The Lord of the Quraysh' (*Sayyid Quraysh*), of some 1,000 pages, is perhaps the best known of these works. It caused a literary stir when it was published in 1928, since the birth of the Prophet of Islam is discussed against a more comprehensive background than the Muslim Arab world had hitherto been prepared to envisage. The origins of Islam were rooted in social history. The Arab nation existed before Islam. The Syrian Arabs were civilised, in a close relationship with Byzantium and with a far wider world than the Arabian peninsula. The Arabs (the Banū Ghassān figuring prominently among them), regardless of whether they were Christian or Muslim, supported each other and cooperated on the basis of their 'Arab identity'. A single identity determined their communal relationships. One is struck by similarities between this approach by a Syro-Albanian and that of Naim Frashëri somewhat earlier in *Qerbelaja* and his other works, where an Albanian identity took precedence over religious allegiances.

Ma'rūf al-Arnā'ūṭ had been inspired by two heroic prototypes since his boyhood in Beirut. The first of these was 'The Fathêr of Knights', 'Antar b. Shaddād, to the extent reported by Professor Yūsuf Ibrāhīm Yazbak:[51]

> On the day of the publication of his novel *Sayyid Quraysh*, causing as it did an uproar in literary circles until the echo of it reached the more distant world of Islam, I heard tell from my friend Shaykh Ḥusayn al-Ḥabbāl some of his

50. A short bibliography, together with a list of works may be read in Yūsuf Sa'd Dāghir, *Maṣādir al-Dirāsāt al-Adabiyya*, Part 2, Section 1: *al-Rāḥilūn*, (the deceased), 1800–1955, Beirut: 'Marouf Ahmad Arnaout' (1892–1948), pp. 107–10.

51. Ma'rūf al-Arnā'ūṭ, *Sayyid Quraysh*, Parts 1 and 2, 3rd edn, Beirut: Dār al Qalam, 1391/1971, pp. 7–13.

memories about his distinguished pupil Ma'rūf al-Arnā'ūṭ. Among them was the story that when Ma'rūf was very young he passionately loved 'Antar and his heroism. One day he made a lance of wood, dyed his face black from a cooking-pot as to resemble the blackness of the 'Absī hero, and then went forth reciting his verses. He continued in his violent emotion until a warlike enthusiasm got total power over him. He forgot the dye on his face and walked ahead of his companions to his home while continuing his recitation. When his mother saw him, she ran to him and led him into the kitchen. She washed his face so that his father, who was of a dry Albanian temperament, would not see it. What is recalled of that Albanian temperament is that Ma'rūf and his brothers never knew their father ever give them a kiss. So perhaps a 'reaction' spurred Ma'rūf after he himself had become a father, that made him always kiss his infant children. How often he used to bend over Marwān, Ghassān and Māriya.

'Antar is the '*homme armé*' of the Arabs, *par excellence*. However, there was another fighter that imposed his two-horned image, also, upon the youthful mind of Ma'rūf al-Arnā'ūṭ. Gjergj Kastriote (Skanderbeg), with his bearded figure portrayed riding his steed, bore a resemblance, aside from the colour of his skin and his flowing beard, to 'Antar, the supreme Arabian hero, 'Antara. His portrait was hung in many an Albanian home. Ma'rūf was born into a family tradition of story-telling about that other '*homme armé*', Albania's national hero, and the hero of Naim Frashëri's greatest composition.

According to Yūsuf Ibrāhīm Yazbak,

In the first half of the nineteenth century, there came to Beirut a young man of beautiful appearance and noble stock. His name was Ḥasan Āghā al-Mawliyy Yūsuf. He was an emigrant from the Albanian town of Vlorë (Aulon) and with him were his mother, his brother and their woman servant, to work in the service of the government. On his arrival, he was placed in charge of ensuring the security and order of the city — Beirut at that time being a small spot within the walls that surrounded it — and he traced out the plan of moving about in the night from quarter to alley and from district to market, ever wakeful, on his own, in order to chase 'the company of law-breakers, criminals, touts and pimps'. He had no knowledge of Arabic, all he spoke being Turkish and Albanian; however, his silver-handled whip was the most eloquent interpreter for his justice and his boldness. In a short time, the name of Ḥasan Aghā al-Arnā'ūṭ — the latter name being added as indicative of his country — was on every tongue. People of all kinds were delighted by his manly qualities since Beirut was in very direct need of security and discipline.

Our friend, in his true situation, was none other than one who had been placed at a far distance from his country by order from 'His majesty the

Sulṭān, son of the Sulṭān, Sulṭān 'Abd al-Majīd Khān', for fear lest he should show Albanian nationalist tendencies. So, they applied to him the rule of his employment as a deportee. This rule is followed by the pious, though pleasure-loving Ottoman leaders with those whom they considered undesirables and were deemed to be of importance within their realm banishing them to confined localities and appointing them as officials, confined strictly within remote Ottoman territory so that they would feel safe from their influence upon their communities and their *milieu*.

Our Lord, the Sulṭān, the Sublime Porte, ordered the appointment of Ḥasan Āghā al-Mawliyy Yūsuf as an official in the city of Beirut, that youth who aroused fear with his beautiful appearance and his valour had come to the ears of those of influence, it was said of him that he narrated tales and anecdotes, that had been told by his father and uncles and by very old men among his own people, about the life of their greatest forebear Skanderbeg (Gjergj Kastriote) who lived in the fifteenth century, tracing the heroes of his noble family in the declared cause of liberating Albanian soil from Austrian, Balkan and Turkish occupation, striving to unite its torn lands and resurrect it whole and free. From the splendour of nationalism in those narratives, veritable legends came into being which became national traditions among the dispersed Albanian nation. It thus became a legacy handed down among the Albanians to love their national hero, Skanderbeg, and make him into the symbol of their pride and dignity, and their deepest wishes and aspirations. In the nineteenth century they proclaimed his name as a sacred war-cry in their struggle for liberation and gave him the nickname 'the national hero of Albania'.

Ḥasan Āghā al-Mawliyy Yūsuf knew that thousands of his race, who had fought against the Ottoman occupation for many years in a bitter and stubborn fight in their mountains and plains under their leader Skanderbeg, had emigrated after his death to Southern Italy, especially to Sicily. Their sons and grandsons had then lived in their new abode, preserving their language and traditions. In a word, the grandson Ḥasan Āghā had contact with those exiled relations, 'feeling their pulse' to ascertain their Albanian hardiness. It is said that he did not stop his dedication to the principals of his grandfather Skanderbeg, when he sang about the legends of his nationalism and his heroism. It was his wish that the people should be guided positively by their goals.

Because of all this, it was natural that his majesty, our lord, the Commander of the Faithful should favour our young man with an august glance of his eye and appoint him [banish him] as a superintendent in the government of Beirut, the small town sleeping with its dreams in the shelter of Mount Lebanon, severed from the country of the Albanians by mountains, plains and sea. But Ḥasan Āghā did not see a land of banishment in Beirut. Rather, he found it to be a fine new homeland where he lived with an awesome reputation. Young and old, in fear, sought his succour. Tales were told of his dignified

mien and his courage, and that it used to suffice for a thief or a murderer only to be told, when he denied his crime, 'Verily, Ḥasan Āghā says to you that you should confess the whole truth' for that suspect to disclose the offence he had committed!

It was not long before the *mutaṣarrif*, Khalīl Pasha, selected him as a military companion and gave him permanent control of security. His name began to fill the city and the mountain.

His mother chose a pious, meek and good-natured neighbour for him to marry. She was Maryam, the widow of Shaykh Muṣṭafā al-Rifā'ī, and daughter of Yūsuf Sāsīn, from the Beirut Maronite family of Sharfān. Ḥasan Āghā followed his mother's wish and with his good wife enjoyed the most pleasant manner of living the family had known at that fortunate time. They were blessed with two boys. One of them was Aḥmad al-Arnā'ūṭ, the father of Ma'rūf, the author of *Sayyid Quraysh*.[52]

Such was the history of one talented Albanian family that was to leave its mark in the history and literature of Syria and Lebanon. There had been countless others earlier who not only found a new home there (as many Albanians had done centuries before elsewhere, in Calabria or in Istanbul), but who had made a positive contribution to the cultural life of the Arab East. Culture flows in more than one direction, and Albanians such as these were channels of communication. The life of the Muslim communities in the Balkans owed a substantial debt to their kith and kin who were destined to live beyond the Bosphorus divide.

52. *ibid.*, p. 10, in an extended footnote.

7

BRIDGES AND BARRIERS OF ISLAMIC FAITH AND CULTURE WITHIN BALKAN MUSLIM AND NON-MUSLIM SOCIETIES

So tear down minarets and mosques,
and kindle the Serbian yule logs,
and let us paint our Easter eggs.
Observe the two fasts honestly,
as for the remainder, do as you like.
I swear to you by the creed of Miloš Oblilić
and by the trusty weapons that I carry,
our faiths will be submerged in blood.
The better of the two will rise redeemed.
The 'Īd can never live in peace with
Christmas Day.

(Petar II, Petrović-Njegoš, monk, poet and prince of Montenegro who reigned between 1830 and 1850)

"Trust in Allah." "Surely this is a Catholic wedding?" "I know", says Lida, our intepreter, "But the atheist years have eroded the distinction. Some of the Muslims in my class wear crucifix earrings, even go to Mass."

(Ian Thomson, 'Flesh and Blood in Albania', *Observer Magazine*, June 21, 1992, p. 29)

In previous chapters, we have attempted to introduce certain peoples of the Balkans in selected periods in their history when, as Ottoman subjects, directly or indirectly influenced by Middle Eastern culture in much of their life, as townsfolk or as peasants, they witnessed the evolution and growth of a Muslim society in their midst. This was among their own kith and kin, or among Muslims from Asia who had settled as neighbours beside them. It was influenced by their contact with Muslim peoples in the Middle East and beyond, with whom they traded or had cultural relations (Plate 12). The Ottoman age was unquestionably decisive although, as has been shown, other long-term factors that brought this Muslim community into existence had also to be taken into account.

The Balkan peninsula does not house a 'Muslim nation', homogeneous and geographically bounded, in the sense that this can be said to exist elsewhere. However, the Muslims of the Republic of Bosnia and Hercegovina, have since 1969 been recognised as a nationality and they number some 1,600,000.[1] They are, or were, a local majority community within the fractured society of what was once known as Yugoslavia. On a number of counts, Bosnia and Hercegovina may be regarded as the historical heartland of the world of Islam in the Balkans. In a booklet entitled *Islam our choice*, compiled and edited by Ebrahim Ahmed Bawany and published by the Muslim World League, there is a curious undated testimony, allegedly by Dr Abdul Karim Germanus, Professor of Oriental Studies in the University of Budapest:

During a summer vacation I was lucky to travel to Bosnia, the nearest Oriental country adjacent to ours. As soon as I settled in a hotel I dashed forth to see living Muslims, whose Turkish language had only beckoned to me through its intricate Arabic script from the pages of grammar books. It was night, and in the dimly-lit streets I soon discovered a humble café in which on low straw stools a couple of Bosnians enjoyed their kayf. They wore the traditional bulging trousers kept straight at the waist by a broad belt bristling with daggers.

Their headgear and the unfamiliar costume lent them an air of truculence. It was with a throbbing heart that I entered the *kahwekhane* and timidly sat down in a distant corner. The Bosnians looked with curious eyes upon me and I suddenly remembered all the bloodcurdling stories read in fanatical books about Muslim intolerance. I noticed that they were whispering among themselves and their topic was my unexpected presence. My childish imagination flared up in horror; they surely intended to draw their daggers on the intruding 'infidel'. I wished I could safely get out of this threatening environment, but I dared not budge.

In a few seconds the waiter brought me a cup of fragrant coffee and pointed to the frightening group of men. I turned a fearful face towards them when one made a gentle salaam towards me accompanied with a friendly smile. I hesitatingly forced a smile on my trembling lips. The imagined 'foes' slowly rose and approached my little table. What now? — my throbbing heart inquired — will they oust me? A second salaam followed and they sat around

1. On the Muslim population of Bosnia and Hercegovina and ex-Yugoslavia generally, see Alexandre Popović, *L'Islam balkanique, op. cit.*, pp. 356–66, and Hugh Poulton, *The Balkans: Minorities and States in conflict*, Minority Rights Group, 1991, pp. 39–45. For the number of Muslims in Kosovo and Macedonia see Odile Daniel, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

me. One of them offered me a cigarette and at its flickering light I noticed that their martial attire hid a hospitable soul. I gathered strength and addressed them in my primitive Turkish. It acted like a magic wand. Their faces lit up in friendliness akin to affection — instead of hostility they invited me to their homes; instead of the falsely anticipated daggers they showered benevolence upon me. This was my first personal meeting with Muslims.[2]

His first bizarre impressions were of a country that was still wild, barbaric and apparently lacking in law and order. How little it has changed we now know. It was nonetheless precisely under the Austrian occupation that there was to be a stirring, culturally, ethically and philosophically, among the Bosnian and Hercegovinan Muslim community.

A representative figure at that time was Mehmed Beg Kapetanović Ljubušak (1839–1902),[3] whose *Risalei Ahlak*, was the first Moslem book to be printed in Bosnia Hercegovina in Latin characters. It aimed at providing strongly ethical schooling for Muslim youth. Later another work *Šta misle Mohamedanci u Bosni* (What Bosnian Muslims think) expressed the thoughts of a writer whose works were to make an impact not only in his own Muslim circles but also among Muslim groups in Croatia and Serbia.

Kapetanović studied Oriental languages in Mostar, at a time when his Muslim community felt a loss of identity, compounded by illiteracy and cultural stagnation, which had the effect of making it introspective and withdrawn. It was in this situation that a renaissance began: reading rooms were opened, and Muslim authors such as Kapetanović began to write in Serbo-Croat. The first translation of the Qur'ān into that language was made in 1875 by Mico Ljubibratić from the French; it was of course in the Latin script. Kapetanović's own career was widened by travel in Europe and the Middle East, and he also had diplomatic experience. Other writers, scholars and thinkers in Bosnia and Hercegovina were to publish a number of books and journal articles

2. *Islam our choice*, Muslim World League, Mecca, Cairo and Beirut, no date, pp. 39–43. On the widow of the alleged author, Mrs Abdul Kerim Germanus, see Mohammad bin Nasir al Aboud, 'Muslim Experience in Eastern Europe: a First Hand Report', *Journal of the Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs*, vol. VII, no. 2, p. 99. See also *The Muslim East: Studies in Honour of Julius Germanus*, edited by Kaldy Nagy, Lorand Eötvös University, Budapest, 1974.

3. See the entry on Mehmed Beg Kapetanović Ljubušak in *Enciklopedija Jugoslavije*, Zagreb, 1962, vol. 5, p. 190; likewise Muḥammad Mūfākū, Risālat Yūghūslāfiya fī l-akhlāq al-islāmiyya, *al-'Arabī*, no. 372, 1989, pp. 185–9.

devoted to Islamic history, translation from archival documents and, on a more personal level, their private views of Islamic doctrine and aspirations. Among such works is the biography of the Prophet and a study of Islam by Osman Nuri Hadžić (1869–1937), *Muhamed A S i Kur'an*, published in Belgrade in 1931 and republished in Sarajevo in 1968.[4] To this may be added the growing revival of interest in Ṣūfīsm, especially in the verse and thought of Rūmī, and the publication at the same time of several Ṣūfī periodicals by the orders in Bosnia. One of the most important and fateful expressions of contemporary Muslim thinking in Bosnia is to be read in the fifty-page Declaration (translated into English, German, Arabic, Turkish and Farsi) written by Alija Izetbegović in 1970 which caused thirteen Moslem intellectuals to be arraigned before the Grand Bench of the District Court in Sarajevo. Their indictment was their alleged intention of creating an 'ethnically pure Muslim Bosnia and Hercegovina'. In this far from 'fundamentalist' document their position in relation to the Christian world is clearly and logically defined:

> With regard to Christianity, we make a distinction between Christ's teaching and the Church. In the former, we see God's announcement, albeit somewhat distorted, and in the latter we see an organization which, with its inevitable hierarchy, policies, wealth and interests, has not only become anti-Islamic but even anti-Christian. Whoever is required to determine his attitude towards Christianity seeks to have it first defined: whether it concerns Christ's teaching or the Inquisition, throughout its existence the Church has constantly swung between these two poles. The more it is the expression and interpreter of the ethical teachings of the Gospel, the farther it is from the Inquisition, and, consequently, the nearer to Islam. We welcome the new tendencies in the Church, manifested at the last Vatican Council, because we regard them as moving closer to the original Christian fundamentals. If Christians should want it, the future may offer an example of the understanding and cooperation of two great religions for the well-being of all people and mankind, just as in the past was the scene of their senseless intolerance and friction.[5]

There is an almost 'Neo-Bogomil' sentiment in this thoughtful document. The Albanians — the number of active Muslim believers among whom must surely now be considerably reduced — are not, as some enthusiastic Middle Eastern Muslims would have one believe, a 'Muslim people' in the sense that we may use such an expression about, say, the Arabs and Berbers in Algeria or Morocco. In Kosovo and adjacent

4. See the bibliography in *L'Islam Balkanique, op. cit.*, p. 438ff.

5. 'The trial of Moslem intellectuals in Sarajevo: The Islamic Declaration', *South Slav Journal*, vol. 6, no. 1 (19), Spring 1983, pp. 84–5.

Macedonia there are well over a million, perhaps two million, believers and more survives there of a genuinely Islamic-conscious community than can now be found in Albania itself. Within Bulgaria the Turk and Tatar minority, whose identity was wilfully suppressed till recently, includes altogether some three quarters of a million to a million Muslims, including Pomaks (Muslim Bulgars), Gypsies (Romas) and heterodox Kizilbaş (heterodox 'Alīds). Beyond the borders of these countries, which were all, to a varying degrees in the past, centres of Muslim urban and rural life and practice, one is well aware of isolated pockets of believers — in Greece (in Western Thrace and the island of Rhodes), Romania (Northern Dobrudja — Turks 29,533 [0.1%], Tatars 24,649 [0.1%]) and a tiny handful in Hungary, geographically separated from the Balkans though historically linked to the Balkan peoples.

Islam is therefore of major cultural and political significance in Bosnia, and this can be viewed favourably or otherwise. True, with Orthodoxy and Catholicism, it has dramatically shaped the ideals, the language and literature and the individuality of the Albanian nation. These communities contain genuinely 'Balkan Muslims', whose Islam, in their view, does not necessarily cut them off from their local allegiances and shared past in the midst of the family of European peoples. As for the Bulgarians, the Greeks, the Macedonians, the Serbs and the Romanian Turks and Tatars, they are condemned by the circumstances of post-medieval history to be associated with alien invaders from Asia whose yoke bore heavily on peoples of strong national identity who have seen themselves increasingly as Europeans, either as a human bridge or as a bulwark, between the West and *Dār al-Islām*.

The Battle of Kosovo and the Serb crusade against Islam

The battle of Kosovo Polje in 1389 may not have been a key battle in European history as some have maintained. However, it is viewed by the Serbs as the most crucial event in their history. The memory of it among the Serbs recalls King David's lament for Gilboa. Its implications — cultural, political and religious — cannot be ignored. Furthermore, its results were not decisive merely with regard to the Serbian attitude to the Turk. The Albanian succeeded the Turk and the role that each plays is both national and cultural. It is also religious, for notwithstanding the Albanian Catholic minority in Kosovo, it is the Albanian Muslim, *as a Muslim*, who is seen as the ultimate rival (since

the Croat impinges on another border) for hegemony in this 'holy land' which, for the Serbs, houses the prized treasures of their faith, their Canterbury and York. This unshakeable conviction long predates the beginning of modern nationalism and the independence movements in the Balkans as a whole, and, in this particular instance, the resurgence of Serbian sacred historical memories and a vision of historical territorial integrity. Such headlines as 'Christian civilisation' and 'Asiatic despotism', 'the Battle for Christ and for Europe', 'Holy Serbs' and 'Kosovo and the European cultural heritage', as they appear in print in Belgrade,[6] are heavily loaded expressions or slogans, and are, without doubt, precisely meant to be so.

The existence of a deeply held and seemingly growing contemptuous hatred for 'Islam' among the Serbs was confirmed by an interview with two journalists, reported by S.P. Ramet in an article, 'Islam in Yugoslavia Today'.[7]

> Typical of this atmosphere was a conversation in which I found myself, at a Belgrade café, as two local journalists drew and redrew maps of the Balkans, showing a menacingly large arrow projecting northward from Istanbul through Serbia, while they told me of their fears of a Muslim threat to European civilisation (Plate 13). 'Albanian Muslims and Bosnian Muslims are in this together,' they told me in deadly earnest. 'They have big families in order to swamp Serbia and Yugoslavia with Muslims, and turn Yugoslavia into a Muslim republic. They want to see a Khomeini in charge here. But Belgrade is not their final goal. They will continue to advance until they have taken Vienna, Berlin, Paris, London — all the great cities of Europe. Unless they are stopped.

And yet who won the battle of Kosovo and what its precise outcome was is a matter for controversy, wrapped up in a national folk epic. According to Ferdo Šišic,[8] 'After Bulgaria had fallen under Turkish rule, Serbia was next in line. In the early spring of the year 1389, Murād

6. Some Serb comment, though strong in its religious and patriotic sentiments, is tempered by charity. Dimitrije Bogdanović, in his article 'The Serbian Church during the Kosovo hardships', remarks: 'The Serbian Church will have to keep on preaching love, not hatred, and pardon, not vengeance, modelled on the tradition of the holy Christian confession and martyrdom. Where the Albanian people are concerned, regardless of their religion and denomination, the Church must take care that the sentiments of justice and humantiy, the generosity and dignity of the Serbian people do not ever, at any cost, diminish.' p. 144, in *The Battle of Kosovo, 1389–1989*, *Casopis Malice Isiljenika Srbije*, XXXVI, 1989, p. 344–7, Belgrade.

7. S.P. Ramet, 'Islam in Yugoslavia Today', in *Religion in Communist Lands* (Keston College), vol. 18, no. 3, August 1990.

8. 'The Battle of Kosovo Polje' in *The Battle of Kosovo, 1389–1989*, *op. cit.*

led a large army out of Plovdiv and across Ihtiman, Kjostendil, and Kratovo into the final battle; both armies met at Kosovo Polje on the 15th day of June.' Šišic tells us it was a most significant battle. It has often been described in the minutest detail, and many folk songs have been written about it. Sources for descriptions of it are numerous, and have increased in recent years, but they are sometimes contradictory. What is known for certain is that the Turks occupied the more suitable southern part of the field, while the Serbs took up the more awkward northern position. Both sides fought bravely, and at first it appeared as though the Serbian side would win, especially when news spread that Sulṭān Murād himself had been stabbed in his tent by the Serbian knight Miloš Obilić. Later the Turks attacked the Serbs with great power and forced them to retreat, capturing Prince Lazar the same day and beheading him in revenge for the death of their Sulṭān. The Bosnian army (which King Stjepan Tvrtko had sent as a reinforcement) fought alongside Prince Lazar under the command of Duke (Vojvoda) Vlatko Vuković.

The prevailing feeling within the Serbian and Bosnian camps was that the Turks had been defeated, for only with that kind of interpretation of events can Serbs explain King Stjepan Tvrtko's gesture in Sutjeska, on August 1, when he informed the municipality of Trogir that on June 15 he had gloriously defeated the enemy of the Christian people, the infidel Murād, who had already conquered many peoples with the intention of marching into Bosnian and Dalmatian territory. An identical message was sent by Tvrtko to Florence, from which in turn he received a commendation on October 20. A message about the event was also received in Paris.

The earliest texts referring to the struggle of the Serbs make clear the view they had of their enemies. Murād and his band, even if not presented as the heroic yet diabolical Saracen foe who appeared with his weaponry, idols, carbuncles of flame and lurid banners in the Western *Chansons de Geste*, were nonetheless ethnic and religious stereotypes. According to Thomas A. Emmert,[9]

> The writers describe the battle very simply as a struggle between the forces of good and evil: Murad with his band of bloodthirsty beasts and Lazar with his pious army of God-fearing Christians. The Turks are identified as Ishmaelites or Hagarites – an obvious and derisive reference from the Old Testament. In *Zitije kneza Lazara* the Ishmaelites are 'arrows released by God

9. Thomas A. Emmert, *Serbian Golgotha: Kosovo, 1389*, New York: Columbia University Press (East European Monographs), 1990, pp. 68, 77, 78.

because of our sins', and Murad is 'the beast who came like a roaring lion seeking to devour Christ's flock and to destroy our homeland'. In Patriarch Danilo's *Slovo o knezu Lazaru* Murad, the head of the Ishmaelites is compared to Alexander of Macedonia and Xerxes of Persia. Having gathered a countless multitude of men from both eastern and western lands, Murad attacked 'like the cruel lion'. To the writer of *Prološko zitije kneza Lazara* Murad is the 'evil, heathen Ishmaelite emir, who, like a roaring lion, rose up and conquered many peoples'. Approaching Lazar's territory he went 'mad with wild fury, closed his ears like the deaf adder, and lunged at them'.

He adds:

In time the Battle of Kosovo came to be seen as the source of all the misfortune Serbia was to suffer during her long years of subjugation to the Turks. The theme of defeat at Kosovo was necessary for the companion themes of hope and resurrection. Lazar and the Serbian people gave their lives freely for the faith and for the land; and because of this martyrdom at the hands of the heathen enemy the Serbs knew that God would protect His people and return them one day from their captivity.

The identification of the Turk with the (Arabian) Ishmaelite and the Hagarite is relevant to a comment made by Dr Rade Božović about the way pre-existent folk memory has been rekindled at various times among the Southern Slavs:

The arrival of the Turks marks the beginning of a revitalization of the Arabs' function. The myth fades and reality returns. Thus, with the Turks, the Arab enjoys a comeback in the epic poems of Southern Slavs. He will remain until after the new national enemy, the Turks, have finally established themselves.[10]

It is ironic that in spite of the way the Muslim (be he Arab, Turkish or Albanian) is regarded by the Serbian Orthodox Church and indeed by the Eastern Orthodox Church as a whole, the Western authors and editors of the *Chansons de Geste du Cycle du Roi* should deem this Balkan people to be allies of the 'paynim' and so equally meriting combat and denigration. Paul Bancourt[11] mentions several Eastern European peoples who were dismissed as 'pagan' despite centuries of conversion to Christianity – including Hungarians, Russians, 'Esclavons' and Bulgars. They were considered to be in a 'pre-Christian' state of

10. Rade Božović, *op. cit.*, p. 224.

11. Paul Bancourt, *Les Musulmans dans les Chansons de Geste du Cycle du Roi*, Aix-en-Provence, Marseille, 1982, vol. 1, pp. 28–9.

ignorance, and of some the chroniclers knew next to nothing. Any people suspected of hampering the Crusader advance in the First Crusade was suspect. Byzantine service was altogether damnable, and in one episode the Hungarians are bracketed with the Bulgars. Since the 'Slav' Wends in the Baltic region had only been subdued and Christianised in the twelfth century, no Slav whatever was above suspicion, including the Southern Slavs, who had hampered and even harassed the forces of Raymond de St Gilles in the Balkans. William of Tyre, for example, mentions the Dalmatians with disfavour; and the Greeks are frequently referred to as 'allies' of the Turks.

One only has to read the following passage from *The Song of Roland* to appreciate the Western view of the part played by the Serbs as companions in arms with Saracen foes, whose monstrous shapes recall the giants, gnomes and other strange creatures in the marriage feast and the lamentable end of King Dodon in *Le Coq d'Or*:

> *The great Emir goes riding through the host,*
> *And after him his son, of mighty mould,*
> *King Dapamort and King Torleu also.*
> *In thirty columns their force they soon dispose;*
> *Their knighthood makes a marvellous great show –*
> *The least can reckon full fifty thousand souls.*
> *The first is formed of men from Butentrote;*
> *Myconians next, with huge and hairy polls,*
> *Upon whose backs, all down the spine in rows,*
> *As on wild boars, enormous bristles grow;*
> *The third has men from Nubia and Polose,*
> *The fourth, from Brune and the Slavonian coast,*
> *The fifth of Sorbs and Servians is composed.*[12]

Episodes after the battle of Kosovo (long after the *Chansons*) during which, as vassals and allies of the Turks, the Serbs fought the Hungarians are enough to dismiss some extreme claims of the Serbs as 'the defenders of Christendom', as sheer romanticism, although of a dangerous kind, notwithstanding that by the end of the Middle Ages the culture of Serbian Christianity was truly of a high order in the fourteenth century and had many links, both cultural and dynastic, with the West.

The traditional Albanian Muslim folksinger's view of the battle's significance, in so far as it has been recorded, appears to share common

12. *The Song of Roland*, transl. Dorothy L. Sayers, Penguin Books, 1957, p. 174.

sources with the Serbs, but to show certain differences as well.[13] According to Alois Schmaus:

The Albanian poem of Kosovo consists of two, clearly divided, main parts. The first includes Sultan Murad's campaign from Constantinople to the plain of Kosovo. Murad is here described as a great champion of the faith, a righteous man and a miracle worker. The four poems describe mainly the same events: the Sultan's dream and its interpretation; the gathering of the army and the Sultan's discharge of those who sinned and those who are not prepared to die in the name of the holy crusade; the first miracle: the Sultan opens the sea (as Moses did); the campaign to and conquest of Edirne, Salonika and Skopje; the sudden almost victorious advance (usually in Kacanicka gorge). According to historical facts, Sultan Murad was not a saint, but a merciless and rigid ruler. With some acts of his, however, he proved his righteousness and generosity. Historians emphasise his severity with war plunderers (for example, during the siege of Konya). The facts confirming this siege can be found in the Tronoska Chronicle. 'Murad's passing through Serbian territories — writes Mr Radojcić — is described here in the same manner as it is in an Albanian poem about the battle of Kosovo'. In the poem Murad's righteousness is sublimated to sacredness. Heading the holy war, Murad is prepared to sacrifice his life. In order that God help his army he must take, with total commitment, the soldiers' destiny on himself. That is why he warns and discharges all those who are not prepared to die. In this poem, Murad does not conclude an agreement with the Supreme Truth — as the Turkish historian Neshri wrote — but he has his destiny predicted in a dream before leaving Constantinople. In spite of that, his character resembles that of Prince Lazar in the Serbian tradition. Lazar submits to the Heavenly Kingdom, and Murad is prepared to sacrifice his life. Exactly like Murad, Lazar discharges — after Vuk Branković's escape — all those who want to follow Vuk's example and leave him. In the Albanian poem, Sultan Murad is not only chosen by God, but is also a miracle worker: as Moses did, he divides the seas in order to enable his army to cross to the other side. The poetical changes of Murad's character will not amaze us if we have in mind the great respect, among the Moslems, for his tomb on the plain of Kosovo and the habit of the sick to visit it in order to be cured.

The second part of the poem is concerned with the heroic self-sacrifice of Miloš Obilić in slaying Sulṭān Murād. Here, too, Alois Schmaus spotlights Oriental traditions in the Albanian version:

13. See the Battle of Kosovo in Stavro Skendi, *Albanian and South Slav Oral Epic Poetry*, Philadelphia: American Folklore Society, 1954. There is also an interesting article 'Le Chansonnier Albanais sur la guerre de Kosovo, 1389, in *Culture Populaire Albanaise*, Tiranë: Academie des Sciences de la RPS d'Albanie, Institut de Culture Populaire, 1985, pp. 57–68.

In this part of the Albanian poem the local tradition is also used. 'The story says that Miloš, having been executed, took his head and went to Banja in order to stick it back with healing water. Already entering Banja, a girl saw him and immediately died struck by the curse.'

We shall comment on this tradition. The existence of the belief that a hero can carry his cut head has already been ascertained, especially in regard to Kosovo. This is what Nusić says about the tombs on Gazi-Mestan: 'Turkish folk tradition, very similar to that describing Miloš's death, says that the Turks did not die on the very spot where their tombs are, but down in the plain. Each of them took his head, put it under his arm, and brought it to Gazi-Mestan in order to bury it.' Many years ago I listened to Moslems in Priština narrating the same tradition about four tombs located next to the Tash Mosque. As can be seen from this discussion, it becomes clear that we can talk about the presence of the legend of Kosovo in Albania only in regard to the legend of Miloš Obilić. This latter represents an older and more primitive level of a common Serbian legend in its local Kosovo form.[14]

One of the bizarre reports as to what actually happened during the battle of Kosovo was brought to Europe from the East. The Spanish Ambassador, resident in Samarqand, Clavio Ruy Gonzales, who had been sent by King Juan III of Castile to Tamerlane in 1403, wrote of his journey and experiences and reported that 'Murād was an excellent knight who was killed by the Christian Prince Lazar, slain in battle by a spear-thrust. It pierced his chest and came out of his back. Then Jyldrym Bāyazīd revenged his murdered father, killing Prince Lazar, by his own hand, in the battle.' Gleaned in Constantinople, this report was inaccurate in most of its detail. Interestingly, the cause of Murād's death, a spear thrust in place of a dagger is phrased in a manner that strongly recalls Islamic *maghāzī* and epic formulaic narrative. The spear thrust that protruded glintingly through the back of an opponent in single combat is a formula used time and again in the wartime exploits of 'Antar, or of Sayyid Baṭṭāl Ghāzī.

Syncretic movements and religious bridge-building in the late Middle Ages

If the memory and past and present myths of the battle of Kosovo may be said to represent the polarisation of the very real opposition and even

14. Alois Schmaus, 'About the tradition of Kosovo amongst Albanians', in 'The Battle of Kosovo, 1389–1989', Belgrade, 1989, pp. 60–1 and 344–7. On the tradition of Kosovo among Albanians see 'The Battle of Kosovo, 1389–1989', *op. cit.*, pp. 60–2.

hatred that so clearly still exists between Christianity and Islam in the Balkans, there were always other elements and tendencies, shaped by individuals, that militated in favour of meaningful dialogue between the two hostile religions.

In order to study these, one has to have in mind a number of factors that relate to the conversion process in the Balkans. For example,

(1) Many converts were very young and many too were poor and illiterate peasants. What John Fine says of the Bogomils would apply equally to many of the early converts to Islam and to syncretic and heterodox movements that appeared after the Ottoman conquest: 'The religion of Balkan (and other) peasants is practice-orientated and deals primarily with this world. It has little or no doctrine and its emphasis is chiefly or even entirely upon practices that aim at wordly goals: at the health and the welfare of family, crops and animals.'[15]
(2) Split marriages sometimes resulted when only one partner was converted.
(3) In far rarer cases, a change of religion took place more than once. Women were more prone to this than men.
(4) Occasionally a Christian cleric was converted.
(5) Conversion among Balkan women tended to be superficial: numbers of them continued to adore local Christian saints, so that a Balkan sayings runs, 'Saint Ilia up to mid-day, and after mid-day Alia.'[16]
(6) There was no 'follow-up' or instruction in sound Muslim doctrine and rules of regular prayer among the converted.
(7) Jewish communities (for example in Bitolj and Salonica) were more likely (than Christians)to convert to Islam in family groups.
(8) There was unspoken agreement, dictated by a common interest among priests, rabbis, educated *imāms* and others, to seek for some religious common ground.

Syncretism was a major factor in the conversion of Balkan peoples to Islam, as has frequently been mentioned in previous chapters. Its importance compared to other reasons for conversion has been a subject continuously discussed and subjected to shifting appraisal. Peter F. Sugar,

15. J.A. Fine, *The Early Medieval Balkans: A critical survey from the Sixth to the late Twelfth Century*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1987, p. 171.

16. On the relationship of Alī b. Abī Ṭālib to Elie, allegedly mentioned by Jesus (together with the assimilation of the latter to 'Alī) see Irène Mélikoff (citing Sadeddin Nuzhet Ergun's *Becktaši Sairleri ve Nefesleri*, 1, p. 77), 'L'Islam hétérodoxe en Anatolie', *Turcica*, vol. XIV, 1982, p. 151.

in his *Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule, 1354–1804*, is solidly in favour of it as a major cause for mass conversion:

> In order for this identification to occur, the dervişes had to move around and reach the various localities of the Ottoman Empire. Unlike the akhi, the dervişes wandered almost constantly, preaching and practising their tarikat and numerous related ceremonies. They were the babas, a sort of combination of holy man, miracle worker, medicine man, etc. and were often regarded as living saints. Their eclecticism and pragmatism knew practically no bounds. Given the numerous similarities between folk-Christianity and folk-Islam, they had little difficulty in fitting local customs into their tarikats. Furthermore, what they preached had certain advantages. The old formulae that ensured 'good fortune' were broadened by the addition of customs that they had brought with them, and by the not negligible circumstance that those who followed them passed from the zimmi to the Muslim group. What emerged was a curious variety of European, or rather Balkan, 'folk-Islam', which included icons, baptism to prevent mental illness, and many other basically non-Muslim features.
>
> It was not difficult for Christians whose faith was of the superstitious folk variety to pass over to a similar but more secure folk version of Islam. I believe that this explanation of the early mass conversion, advanced by several scholars, is more believable than the equally popular interpretation that attributes such conversion either to the wish of the population to retain its landed possessions or to the desire of previously persecuted heretics (mostly Paulicians and Bogomils) to become the master of their oppressors.[17]

In Evliya Çelebi's account of his journeys in what is today Romania and was once Yugoslavia, it is not suprising to see such eclecticism colouring his account and at the same time revealing the curious religious fusion and confusion that prevailed across the Balkans in his time. For example, he mentions the fourteen fortified monasteries in Bucharest, all protected by iron gates. One was dedicated to Voivode Michael (Kodja Mihal), another to St Demeter, another to St Nicholas, another to St Constantine; others were Radu Veda monastery (Radul Bey), the 'monastery of Sari Saltik' (Sary-Saltyc), almost certainly a second monastery originally dedicated to St Nicholas, and yet another to St Mary. Equally remarkable, and in many ways similar, was what he witnessed in Dubrovnik where on Sunday eve, and on the 'eve of Sari Saltik', of St Nicholas, Khiḍr Ilyās, St Mary and the Archangels, and at Easter, there was a festive spirit in the air, yet a hushed anticipation, to be broken by the pealing of bells so that a man who was in ignorance could believe that the day of the Antichrist, and the last

17. Peter F. Sugar, *Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule, 1354–1804*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1977, pp. 53–4.

judgement, had unexpectedly arrived. The cosmopolitan character of the city with its citizens and visitors from both West and East, enhanced the hybrid character of local belief in the minds of outsiders who, perchance, beheld such celebrations.[18]

The dervishes were but one of the groups most active in implementing a policy of religious accommodation. Among the Ṣūfī orders, the *Baktāshiyya* was arguably the most conspicuous and successful. This process began before it arrived; other factors contributed to it, and continued long after the order's heyday in Albania and beyond. Orthodox Islamic religious writers have commonly adopted a hostile, or at least a highly critical, attitude to it, arguing in effect that it has paid too high a price, sacrificing a true faith in an omnipotent God in order to justify a temporal success, the augmentation of an Islamic constituency so nominal that in Albania at times it sought a distinct religious status.[19] Other famous though short-lived movements at the end of the Middle Ages show convergences. Yet they remain, as far as can be discovered, distinct, consecutive efforts, arising out of exploits of the *akhis* and dervishes of a remoter age, guided from different directions and by independent motivators.

The period 1400–16 marked a coordinated attempt in both Asia Minor and the Eastern Balkans to found a revolutionary syncretic movement led by Badr al-Dīn. It was partly Ṣūfī-inspired, partly social and political, and partly heterodox in its aims. Though chronologically contemporaneous one cannot be clear to what extent, if any, the *Ḥurūfīsm* of Nasīmī (1369/70/1417/8), who was one of the leaders of the *Malāmiyya* and who spent much of his life in Tabriz, Brusa and Rumelia, might have influenced the thought of Badr al-Dīn. The *Ḥurūfiyya* had its advocates among Ṣūfīs in Mamlūk Cairo, and there are certain similarities between the disregard of differences between Islam and Christianity in Badr al-Dīn's appeal and in the speculations of Faḍlallāh al-Ḥurūfī as presented by Nasīmī. Kathleen Burrill remarks:

It is interesting that some have attributed Christian beliefs to him. As early as the sixteenth century, the Italian Menavino wrote that he had read some

18. Hazim Šabanović, *Evlija Čelebi. Putopis odlomci o Jugoslavenskim*, Sarajevo, 1967, p. 422, and Michael Guboglu, 'Evlija Celebi: De la situation politique, administrative, militaire, culturelle et artistique dans les pays roumains (1651–1666)', *Studia et Acta Orientalia*, V–VI, 1967, pp. 44–5.

19. There is a detailed discussion on the whole question of Baktāshī cult status in Alexandre Popović, *L'Islam Balkanique, op. cit.*, see especially Annexes II, IVB and V, in Nathalie Clayer, *L'Albanie pays des derviches, op. cit.*, Annex D, and F. de Jong's publications on the *Baktāshiyya* both in Albania and in Egypt.

of Nesimi's works and that from these it was clear that the author adhered closely to the Christian faith. Ishak Efendi, in his Kâşif-ül-esrar, says: They [the Hurufis] also believe in the three Persons of the Christian Trinity'. He is correct to the exent that Hurufi writings, like many Sufi works, do contain fairly frequent references to Christ and to the 'Holy Spirit', but this in no way signifies acceptance of the Christian Trinity. On the contrary, Christ is regarded by Hurufis merely as a prophet who did not reach the same perfection as Muhammad.[20]

Shaykh Badr al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. Isrā'īl b. 'Abd al-'Azīz (born 760/1358), was, through his alleged descent, a successor to the Saljūq, 'Izz al-Dīn Kaykā'ūs II (d. 1260). We have seen (pp. 148–9) how in 1259 he had sought refuge with Michael VIII in Byzantium. The itinerent Saljūq ruler heralded the arrival of the company of the warrior saint Sari Saltik into the area of the Dobrudja. Two of his grandsons married Byzantine royalty and were converted, with their relations, to Christianity.

The father of Badr al-Dīn, Ghāzī Isrā'īl, was the *Qāḍī* of Samāwnā near Adrianople. He was highly respected and held high office. Melek, his wife, was a Muslim Greek. Badr al-Dīn himself showed early promise as a scholar, studying in Brusa, Konya and Jerusalem. He went to Cairo (he also visited Mecca) during the reign of the Mamlūk Sulṭān, Barqūq (1382–98), and became tutor to Faraj, Barqūq's son.

A noted Ṣūfī from Akhlāṭ in Armenia, Sayyid Ḥusayn al-Akhlāṭī, had come to Egypt with a number of his company. Babinger has suggested that the event may have attracted to itself some legendary substance, offering a kind of inverted account of Sari Saltik's emigration to the Dobrudja (or for that matter Arabs to the Caucasus and the Balkans from Egypt or Arabia); here a 'flight into Egypt' being a kind of prelude to events deemed to be of a semi-eschatological significance. Badr al-Dīn saw such events as prophetic for himself and for another important figure whose acquaintance he had made, namely Sayyid Ḥusayn. Badr al-Dīn, hitherto a strong critic, was now won over to Ṣūfīsm. He was particularly attracted to the thought of Ibn al-'Arabī.

Having been given a licence (*ijāza*) by Sayyid Ḥusayn, Badr al-Dīn,

20. K.R.F. Burrill, *The Quatrains of Nesimi: Fourteenth-Century Turkic Hurufi*, Paris: Mouton, 1972, pp. 35–6. On the movement of Badr al-Dīn, see Franz Babinger, 'Schejch Badr-ed Dī, der Sohn des Richters von Sīmāw', *Der Islam*, vol. 11, Berlin and Leipzig, 1921, pp. 1–105; the article by H.J. Kissling in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 1, p. 869, W. Witteck, 'De la défaite d'Ankara à la prise de Constantinople (un demi-siècle d'histoire Ottomane)', *Revue des Etudes Islamiques*, 12, 1938, pp. 1–34, and the major study by N. Filipović, *Princ Musa Šejh Bedreddin*, Sarajevo, 1971.

who was himself to be a writer not only on law but also of substantial works on Ṣūfīsm, visited Tabriz in 1403, but returned to Cairo to escape the notice of Tamerlane. At this stage his views were unorthodox, seemingly *Qalandarī*, gnostic and communist. He established contact with the Genoese on the island of Chios.

He next returned to Adrianople, where he entered into a retreat though all the time he was gaining a following in Thrace, Macedonia, Deli Orman (Ağaç Denizi) and the Dobrudja among both Muslims and Christians. Some heterodox Turks in the Dobrudja supported him, and he came to be regarded as a valued ally by Mircea 'the Old' (*cel bâtîn*), the independent Voivode of Wallachia (d. 1418). Following the Ottoman disaster at Ankara in 1402, Mircea had already inflicted a major defeat of the Turks before Silistra (now in Bulgaria) in 1407–8. Eventually, deemed a liability and under suspicion, Badr al-Dīn was banished to Izniq where he wrote and taught — such was his scholarly reputation.

By 1415, Badr al-Dīn's movement in Asia Minor received the active backing of Börklüce Muṣṭafā, his disciple and a former servant, and of Torlaq Hū Kamāl. Börklüce's own ideas were either derived from, or all but coincided with, those of Badr al-Dīn. Around Mount Stylarios, near Izmir, he preached a semi-communist Islamic message advocating the abolition of all personal property and possessions. Only wives were exempt from his dictate. In his view, as that of his master, differences between Islam and Christianity, which both revered a common divinity, were negligible and insignificant. Twice Sulṭān Mehmed I sent forces to defeat him. Both campaigns were unsuccessful, but eventually a large army commanded by his sons Murād and Bāyazīd was despatched, and in 1416 Börklüce was captured on the Karaburun promontory. Brutal massacres were committed and the leader's closest followers were butchered before his eyes. Then he was crucified.

Meanwhile, Badr al-Dīn had moved to Europe to establish a second front disclosing himself Malik Mahdī. He fled to Deli Orman (Agaç-Denizi) and the Zagra plain to rally his heterodox movement of *abdāls*. His support (including for a time that of Mircea) faltered and broke. He was taken to Serres in Macedonia and hanged there. Within the Balkans, as in Asia, the remaining supporters of Badr al-Dīn and Börklüce became attached to various Ṣūfī and heterodox groups within the peninsula.

Romanian monasteries and mosques and links with the Arab East

Romania offers some unusual examples of the impact of the Arab East (in contrast to the Ottoman East) on a Balkan people. One of the earlier

sources is the account in the diary of Macarius, Patriarch of Antioch, written in Arabic by his son Paul, Archdeacon of Aleppo, during the course of their journey through Romania to Russia between 1652 and 1660. This is a remarkable account and here and there are found allusions to the many links joining the Romanian church to the Arabic-speaking churches in the Middle East, especially the Patriarchate of Antioch.[21] Describing the wall-painting in the church of Vaslui, a former capital of Moldavia, he noted:

On the gate of the wall of Vashlui church is a picture of the last judgement. It shows Moses leading Annas and Caiaphas and the other Jews towards our Lord. They have woeful countenances. Behind them is a troop of Turkish figures in their white shawls, turbans and flowing kaftans, accompanied by their dervishes. The Kashidbari is in front of them, in his cap. Devils are driving them on and mocking them. One is climbing on to their leader's shoulder and upsetting his cap from his head. The interior of the church is entirely covered with paintings.[22]

Macarius mentions mercenaries and military units of varied Balkan nationalities in the service of Christian Romanian and Moldavian princes who were to employ at least nominally Muslim units to protect them:

When the Cossack troops, vanquished and routed, arrived in successive groups, elsewhere the rumour ran that the prince and his son-in-law had disappeared. But on the Tuesday before Whitsun they arrived unexpectedly and they entered the palace in a lamentable state. They told Hmiltinoki (Akhmīl) about all that had happened. One was aware then, for certain, that they had vanquished the Hungarians, the Vlach and the Serbian army four times and that none was able to stand up against them. This was until they arrived at a day's march from Tergovist, the capital of the Prince of Wallachia. Prince Matthew went forth and marched against them. He encountered them with a huge army which was composed of Vlachs, Hungarians, Serbs, Greeks, Albanians (Arnā'ūṭ), Bulgars and Turks.[23]

It can hardly be doubted that in this mixed company both Christians and Muslims were represented. Arabic was a useful language to know on this journey and he made good use of it. Those whom he and his

21. Basile Radu, 'Voyage du Patriarche Macaire d'Antioche', *Patrologica Orientalis*, vol. XXII, Paris, 1933.

22. *ibid.*, fasc. 1, p. 153.

23. *ibid.*, fasc. 4, part 3, pp. 495–6 (255–6). The account of Macarius mentions the settlement of Tatars and Turks in the Dobrudja. On nomad settlement in all this region see pp. 25–32.

son chanced to meet were sometimes familiar with Oriental tongues.[24]

What the narrative of Macarius shows is that there was an Arab East (both Christian and Muslim) subject to, yet quite distinct from, an Ottoman East. The Romanians were aware that a Christian body of some size and importance was to be a partner in dialogue within that Islamic sea, the waves of which broke high above, or down upon, the plains, the valleys and the peaks of the Balkan peninsula.

The study of Arabic, together with that of other Oriental languages, can be said to have been established in Romania in the middle to later eighteenth century, both in Moldavia and Wallachia. Particularly important was the role that its rulers played in sponsoring the establishment of an Arabic typography and in the printing of Arabic ecclesiastical works for Arab Christians in the Levant, with whom there was a remarkably close relationship.[25] An important example was the support given to the Patriarch of Antioch, Athanasius IV Dabbas, who obtained the backing of the Romanian prince Constantine Brancovan to print religious books. In Wallachia the first typography in the Arabic language was achieved, and the skill of Antheme of Ivir, the Superior of Snagov monastery near Bucharest, was employed in engraving Arabic letters on wood. Subsequently, Athanasius obtained the approval of Constantine Brancovan to transfer this Arabic typography to Aleppo, where printing continued till 1724.

Such links as these with the Arab East (then in deep decline) were the result of direct dealings of some importance, creating a peculiar Balkan/

24. A number of the interpreters in Istanbul and in Levant commerce were of Romanian origin, and Arabic was a language in which they were proficient. The Patriarch Macarius of Antioch, through the pen of his son, makes at least two specific references to 'Arabs' during his journeys. In part II, book 1 of the *Voyage du Patriarche Macaire d'Antioche* (transl. Basil Radu), Paris, 1933 (vol. XXIV, fasc. 4) p. 516 (276), he mentions the slaughter in Moldavia of some 100,000 men, including Moldavians (Bughḍān), Vlachs, Greeks, Hungarians, Serbs, Arabs ('Arab) and Turks. These were probably mercenaries. Later in the account (part III, book 1), about Wallachia, he remarks that most of the grooms of the princes and dignitaries of state were from Syria and Egypt, both Muslim and Christian, and that they had black slaves who were called 'arapides', i.e. 'Arabs'. For this reason, Syrians were regarded as little better than grooms and black slaves. The Patriarch and his son sensed that they were despised, although when the Vlachs became aware of their learning and command of the liturgy and of classical Greek (*al-Rūmī al-faṣīḥ*), they were greatly surprised and their contempt turned to admiration.

25. On this subject see Mgr J. Nasrallah, 'Les imprimeries melchites au XVIIIe siècle', *Proche Orient Chrétien*, vol. XXXVI, 1986, pp. 230–59.

Middle Eastern channel of communication with the Arabo-Islamic world.[26] Yet while this created a cultural bridge between Romania and the Christian Arab world, Islamic Arabic works were at this time and later to furnish the textual library of the Ṣūfī centre in Ada Qal'a island in the Danube river, an island which, alas, has now been submerged. It was essentially Turkish, deep within Romania, the shrine of the tombs of seven saints, one allegedly a dervish from Bukhara, who were attached later to the *Baktāshī* order, and who were skilled in healing and in herbal remedies (some ultimately derived from Arabic sources) and the use of formulae similar to the cabbalism of the *Ḥurūfiyya*. The island was also a commercial centre and a meeting-place of sundry and heterodox religious groups. Interestingly, the library was largely composed of works in Arabic, as is shown by the thirty-eight Arabic manuscripts, now preserved in the state archives of Craiova.[27] The bulk are texts devoted to Qur'ānic commentary (though including no Qur'āns as such), to canonic law, to religious practice and to Arabic language and grammar. Bestowed on this Ṣūfī-led community, these works were the heirloom of a mosque endowed by Sulṭān Maḥmūd I in 1754. Small in number, this collection is an important and unusual one among the rich collection of Arabic manuscripts housed in a number of libraries and universities in Romania.

Islam in Kosovo

If Romania has furnished a bridge, Kosovo has remained a cultural and religious 'fault-line' within the Balkans. Yet even here, as an Egyptian

26. The subject has been studied extensively and the following articles cover different aspects of it in both the Balkans and the Levant:
— Virgil Candea, 'Une politique culturelle commune Roumano-Arabe dans la première moitié du XVIIIe siècle, *Association Internationale d'Etudes du Sud-Est Européen Bulletin* (Bucharest), vol. III, 1965, pp. 51–6.
— Const. C. Giurescu; 'L'aide accordée par les pays roumains à l'enseignement de la Péninsule Balkanique et du Proche-Orient', *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire*, vol. IX, part 5, 1970, pp. 823–35, no. 25.
— Mgr J. Nasrallah. 'Les imprimeries melchites au XVIIIe siècle', *op. cit.* (see note 25 above).
On the Vlach element among the Bedouin population of Sinai, see John G. Nandris, 'The Jebaliyeh of Mount Sinai, and the land of Vlah', in *Quaderni di Studi Arabi*, 8, 1990, Venice, pp. 45–90.

27. A. Deci, '38 de Carti manuscrise arabe şi. Turceşti in arhivele statutlui din Craiova' in *Revista Arhivelor*, no. XII, part 1, 1969, pp. 2–12. See Val Cordun, 'Les Saints thaumaturges d'Ada Kaleh', *Turcica*, vol. III, 1991, pp. 100–16.

journalist Fahmī Huwaydī has reported, the ever-present influence of heterodoxy impinges on and dilutes the Islamic beliefs and practices of its Albanian Muslims:[28]

When the discussion touched upon the beliefs of men and their customs, they said that since the Ottomans had adopted Islamic orthodoxy it had predominated [in Kosovo]. However, its hegemony was not total and there were a small number of Shī'ītes who were centred in the town of Dakovica (Gjakova). They call themselves 'Alawīs and they place the *Imam* 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib over and above all the Companions. They also said that the Ṣūfī orders continued to be present in Kosovo and that the *Qādiriyya* is the most noted of these orders in Prishtinë. Its name attached it to the Ṣūfī of Baghdad 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī. There were, however, other orders that employed their energies, orders such as the *Rifā'iyya*, the *Khalwatiyya*, the *Sa'diyya* and the *Naqshabandiyya*. The *Malāmiyya* is a sub-branch. Excluded from the list was the *Baktāshiyya* which was one of the renowned orders, widespread in its reputation, in the shadow of Ottoman rule.

However the real surprise is that the activity of these orders was restricted to the realm of the Shī'ītes, whereas the customary situation that is well known in varied states of Africa and Asia is that those orders find their fertile soil amongst the varied sects of the *Sunnites* to a high degree. When I displayed this observation, one of the seated *Imāms* said that the *Sunnites* were not in any way linked to those *Ṣūfī* orders. They disapproved of their endeavours and those heretical notions that are to be found mixed up in their practices. He further added that those who were affiliated to these orders went to an extreme point and one that was deemed to be beyond the bounds of Islam itself. Among them were those who did not pray regularly. Instead they made a habit of the

28. The passages quoted here are from my translation of Fahmī Huwaydī's article, originally published in the Kuwaytī journal, *al-'Arabī* (no. 227), Dec. 1981, pp. 70–87. The translation first appeared in the *South Slav Journal*, vol. 13, nos 1–2 (47–8), 1990, pp. 38–54. Dr Famī Huwaydī was born in 1937 and graduated in law at Cairo University in 1960. He joined the research department of the Cairo newspaper *al-Ahrām* in 1958, and worked for eighteen years with that paper, becoming editorial secretary. After 1976, he was attached to *al-'Arabī*, and was apointed director of its editorial panel. For ten years he has been a specialist in Islamic affairs and participated in most of the conferences and colloquia of Islamic dialogue (*al-ḥiwār al-Islāmī*). He has undertaken field trips to various African and Asian Muslim countries and in Muslim Europe, and his writings have been aimed at acquainting Arab readers, through *al-'Arabī*, with such countries. He has written several books, including one on Islam in China (*al-Islām fī'l Ṣīn*), published in Kuwayt in 1981. A more optimistic picture of Islamic practice in Kosovo may be observed in the pages of *Dituria Islami* (Knowledge of Islam), published in Prishtinë. Here are found serious articles on the Ḥajj tradition, the Sharī'a, Ramaḍān observances and the combating of public immorality. There is a marked Arab world orientation, towards Egypt especially, and much emphasis on building new *madrasas*.

circles of the *dhikr*. Others made use of texts to free themselves from their duties as Muslims. Some interpreted the holy Qur'ānic verse, 'Adore your Lord until the certain truth comes to you', in the sense that the obligatory acts of worship, enjoined upon Muslims, are practised up to a certain specific stage, the attainment of certainty, and that having attained this degree of certainty in the mystical knowledge of God they were then excused from all the observances and rituals, arguing that 'the certain thing [or truth] in the Qur'ānic verse means death. Some of them find support in the noble tradition [of the Prophet], 'When God loves a servant, no sin will afflict him', and so they can commit all kinds of disobedient acts that may cross their minds, or sin with the belief that their sins will be pardoned and forgiven, and so on. I said, 'Where do these [Ṣūfī] orders flourish?'. They said, 'In the villages especially and in some of the towns'. I said, 'Do they draw young people and prove appealing to them?' They said, 'Most of those who are members of these orders are from the elderly and the simple-minded folk who know next to nothing about their religion. They have before them no channels of canonic law so that the true knowledge can be made to reach them. They imagine that the faith [of Islam] is this [Ṣūfī] order or that.' I said, 'What is the role of the *Imām* in the mosque?' They said, 'The *Imām* delivers his word once every week and the people live in another world. He rejects his religion and he invalidates its fundamental teachings during the remainder of the week.' One of them added, 'The *Imām* gathers the young together in order to teach them to memorize some verses of the Qur'ān in the mosque, but their parents send their children to the mosques before they enter the governmental schools. When they enter the schools and once they are enrolled within their classes and pass through their grades they have forgotten everything.'

But it is not only mysticism, now in decline, that typifies the adaption of Islam to local beliefs and customs. Brought to the level of family relationships, the ceremonies of birth, death or marriage, the interrelationship with the ancient customs of the Balkans will have a direct bearing on the social and the political problems that are central to the ethnic strife which has torn, and is tearing, the Balkans apart. Huwaydī remarks:

In the house of Ḥājj Muḥammad Islāmī, who had performed the duty of the Meccan pilgrimage four times and who was responsible for the affairs of the *Imāms* in the town up to last year, it was clear that the reception room at least belonged to the Ottoman era with its sofas fixed along the four walls and the stuffed upholsteries covered with coloured and embroided cloth. Ḥājj Ibrāhīm said that the people during the feast leave the mosques to visit the tombs of their relatives as do many Muslims in the Orient. Then the men-folk come to visit the *Imām* of the district mosque on the first day. The next day he returns the visit to all those who had given him a greeting at the feast, and visits

continue interspersed with the partaking of Turkish sweet-meats; this is the characteristic feature that is basic to the celebration of the feast by the elderly.

We experienced a difficult test in our observance of the feast when we visited another Albanian family. Barely a few minutes had passed before the mistress of the house came with an iced drink which is taken with small pieces of chocolate. The lady passed by each of us with the tray full of drinks, then she stood attentively until we had finished. She collected the empty glasses and then was absent for a few moments only to return again with the same tray. On it there was a large bowl and upon this there was an unleavened loaf. The sugar and the honey were kept apart; the whole positioned in a squarish fashion. The lady of the house repeated the same story over again. She distributed our portions, then she stood waiting until we had finished. Then she collected the plates and left the dining room. She disappeared for some time then returned once more, cautiously however, fearful that any of the plates which she had arranged upon it might fall. It was apparent to us that the plates contained rice and milk to which a little salt had been added and not sugar to which we were accustomed. This dish meant a tasty mass of meaty fat. The mistress of the house remained waiting for us to finish this third course, with a constant expectancy, until she carried off the plates and left the dining room to enter a fourth time with excellent coffee. That concluded the sequence which was repeated with every one of us who had attended. My attention was aroused, too, by the fact that the Albanians in the villages more especially continue to live at the stage of a segregated [sex] community. In it the distances between men and women are far apart, and I was even told that in many Albanian villages marriages continue to be arranged and agreed through go-betweens. The one who mediates is a man, not a woman, a betrother as we [the Arabs] know. They call him *mesit* [middleman] who is also an agent and go-between. Usually he is amongst those personalities whose role and status is respected in the village. Heed is paid to what he says because the trust and the confidence placed in his person will usually be great.

The *mesit* undertakes to make the preliminary contracts and connections and, if his endeavours are crowned with success, the marriage ritual begins with a sum of money which the father of the bridegroom pays to the father of the bride to cover the expenses of her wedding. This is quite the opposite to the custom that is found amongst the Serbs, since there the bride pays for the marriage rites and ceremonies. Those ceremonies are concluded by the contract of marriage at the hands of the *Imām* of the village where the bridegroom goes to the bride's house in a procession that has to be headed by the blood-red Albanian flag. It was proscribed until 1968, then people were allowed to go forth with it on occasions such as this. Behind the flag walk the family of the bridegroom and groups of men who are carrying drums and pipes and the people of the village up to where the contract of marriage is to be concluded,

in the bride's house. Despite the fact that a monogomous marriage is the original one that is the basis that is acknowledged by the law, polygamy has not ceased to exist and the law has been unable to stop it. Rather, they have been able to benefit from the text of the law in order to determine the rights of sons [born] from second and third wives.

When I asked them they told me that polygamy existed. It remained the exception rather than the rule, although in the villages one could be found who was married to two or three women. The law does not allow anything except the registration of the first marriage even though it does not prohibit a man having long-term relations with other women, a situation that prevails in all European states.

I said to my interlocutor, who was a preacher in one of the mosques, 'but that will cause problems for the second wife and her sons in the event of the husband's death.' He said, 'The law permits inheritance by a man's sons through any other woman even though she may not be his wife, if two testify that the man cohabits with that woman and that he has fathered children by her. But the law does not permit inheritance by the second wife who usually deliberates her affairs with the sons or becomes their trustee if they are under age.

We can add polygamy to the causes of the increased size of the Albanian family. But it continues to be a secondary cause because polygamy remains the exception and is not the rule. It is a firm fact that a family of ten sons continues to be found frequently in Albanian villages. As for the towns, the average number of sons in a family remains at five or six. This is a high average by any yardstick. Consequently, official statistics refer to the average birth-rate and population increase in Kosovo as exceeding all average levels of birth in Yugoslavia and possibly in Europe. What emerges from the official statistics indicates that this descriptive statement is by no means an exaggeration.

On this alarming note, one is reminded of the doomsday scenario of the Serb journalists at the start of this chapter. Islam for them was an expansionist threat. Similar are the apprehensions of the Bulgarians towards the Turks among them, and the growing fears of the Orthodox Macedonians amid a rising demographic tide of Muslim Albanians and Turks. Religious affiliation has become inseparable from historical memory, limited economic resources, nationalist aspirations and scores to settle. Dreams of integration within Greater Europe are shared by Muslim Bosnians as well as Albanians, who see no inherent conflict between this wish and their own Muslim history. If there is hostility, as often as not it stems from their 'Christian' neighbours.

Typical of an Albanian view from Kosovo is that of Skender Rizaj:[29]

The Islamization of Albanians indeed is an important and delicate problem. In this connection I will state some facts. The attitude of the Albanian towards religion is remarkable. Christians and Moslems are before all Albanians. Indifference to religion and the strong sense of nationality as overriding all other distinctions helped to make them tolerant and gave curious results.

Therefore the Greeks hardly regarded the Albanians as Christians, or the Turks as Moslems, and in fact they are a mixture of both, and sometimes neither. Religion, indeed, has always sat lightly upon them. I question whether they were ever much attached to Christianity. A Catholic archbishop, writing in 1610, says that out of a population of 400,000 in the See of Antivari, 350,000 were Catholics. There are probably about one-third of that number now. It is certain that the two-thirds of the total population who now profess Islam are very loose Moslems.

On the death of the great national leader, Skender Bey, in 1468, many of the Albanian chiefs soon found it to their interest to profess Islamism. By their conversion they obtained peace and support of the Turks against other chiefs. Their followers, with the feudal attachment to their chiefs and without any great attachment to Christianity, adopted the creed of their leaders. Others were attracted to a life of adventure in the Turkish Army and adopted the creed of their comrades. Many, however, who remained at home, especially women, remained Christians. Many became crypto-Christians.

There have been several references to 'crypto-Muslims' and 'crypto-Christians' in earlier pages. 'Crypto-religion' and pluralism exist in a number of diverse regions of *Dār al-Islām*. The orthodox and the fundamentalist contemplate it with horror and with revulsion. Foes may deny a genuine Balkan Muslim existence, making no distinction whatsoever between the menace of a transplanted Khomeini-like plot, by aliens, to turn the Balkans into a springboard for a holy *jihād*, or a shared religious-cum-cultural legacy (indeed, part of their own Balkan heritage).

The Future

To quote Alexandre Popović:

It is, all the same, far more logical to believe that (unless there take place major upheavals that none can foresee) nothing will change and that these diverse

29. Skender Rizaj, 'The Islamization of the Albanians during the XVth and XVIth centuries', *Studia Albanica*, 1, 1985, pp. 129–30. Compare this with Stephen R. Bowers, 'The Islamic Factor in Albanian Policy', *Journal of the Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs* (see Bibliography).

Muslim communities will continue to progress on the paths on which they have entered, in which they have become engaged and are pre-occupied.[30]

This considered view is proving to be over-optimistic. Since Popović wrote those words, the world has altered, sometimes beyond recognition, and nowhere more so than through upheavals in the Balkans, progressing backwards daily into the last century, and in Eastern Europe. The uprooted Muslims within the ethnic and sectarian mosaic of Bosnia and Hercogovina face the possibility that the sole hope for any long-term future for their religious and cultural identity lies now in some kind of insignificant rump 'Muslim entity', or as an appendix to the Croats. The Albanians, freed from the yoke of an enforced Marxist atheism, face chaos and famine. Turning to Turkey and the rich oil states, they are now offered the choice of a revivified Islam to be financed by a *Sunnite* orthodoxy seemingly foreign to them, which is undecided as to the degree of its 'fundamentalism'. The Muslim Albanians, many of them nominal, are challenged by the renewal of Albanian Catholicism and by the unpredictable appeal of a well-organised relief movement that is Europe-oriented and often sponsored by Western evangelism.[31] In scattered *tekkes* in the Balkans (now only a few in Kosovo and Macedonia), and in the clandestine and nostalgic Ṣūfī circles centred in Turkey or in exile in the West, the vision of Rūmī's *mathnawi*, or the sentiments of Nesimi or of Ibn al-'Arabi's 'Unity of Being' may have lost little of their timeless spiritual appeal, especially among the academic, the sensitive and the gnostically-minded, for whom traditional Islam and traditional Christianity now seem to offer little spiritual solace. It is a fact to be faced that the future (culturally or numerically) of the Muslims in the Balkans cannot be clearly predicted.

Significantly, during one of the all too temporary lulls in the fighting, during which United Nations relief workers brought food and supplies to the besieged suburb of Dobrinja, in Sarajevo, a mass for the dead was held, which was broadcast on BBC TV news. Amid the Croat congregation, who were served the host by a Croatian priest clad in his ritual vestments, there was to be seen a turbaned and bearded *imām* who, out of respect, or through the sheer necessity of mutual solidarity, showed the understanding and the brotherly feelings of a Balkan Islam which knows nothing of the narrow-minded bigotry or the ethnic religion and

30. Alexandre Popović, *L'Islam balkanique, op. cit.*, p. 366.

31. Richard West, 'The Victory of Faith', *The Independent Magazine*, London, Aug. 17, 1991, pp. 22–7. The photographs by Michael Setboun are especially valuable.

destructive intent of those fanatics in Belgrade who conceive of Islam's future in the Balkans as being decided and determined by 'ethnic cleansing'.

However, there is at least one other sphere of religion where some survival for the Islamic ideas and beliefs may be envisaged. Steven Runciman, in his *The Medieval Manichee*,[32] observed that 'Heresies, like

32. Steven Runciman, *The Medieval Manichee: A Study of the Christian Dualist Heresy*, Cambridge University Press, 1991, p. 94. On the conflicting views about the future of Islam in Albania, compare the answer given by Adīb al-'Azīz al-Khashshābī of Doha, Qatar, published in *al-'Arabī*, no. 159, 1391/1972, p. 85, entitled, 'You asked and we reply — Yes, the majority of the inhabitants of Albania are Muslims' (*na'am al-aghlabiyya min sukkān Albāniyā muslimūn*) with the following statement published in the Keston College journal and newsletter, *Frontier*, Nov.–Dec. 1991, p. 19. Here Vanessa Townsend reports:

> The Minister of Culture, Preg Zogai, feels that the introduction of all these beliefs, at a time when Albania is thirsting for spiritual ideas and literatrue, is for the good of the country. 'I think the Lord speaks Albanian, so when the people read the Bible and the Koran, God is one.' The degree of tolerance betweeen faiths in Albania cannot be denied. Muslims are pleased to meet Christians, fellow-believers in the One God, and equally pleased to accept Christian literature. A Muslim recently told a Christian tourist, 'I take what is good from my religion and anyone else's and discard what I do not find useful.'

The new government's line is that faith is a unifying factor, not a dividing one as formerly claimed by Enver Hoxha. Zogai believes that Albania could act as an example to other countries of how the different religious groups can live together after so many years of atheism. But he seems convinced that the faith to which Albanians will turn in the end will be Christianity. 'The true faith of the Albanians — in their subconscious — is Christianity. Historically, this is our ancient religion.' With 70 per cent of the population at the time of the Second World War officially Muslim how can he be so sure? 'What I can say with certainty is that never will a Christian turn to the Muslim religion. Rather the opposite happens. Many Muslims are turning to Christ and have embraced the Christian faith.'

A recent example of this, as reported in *The Independent on Sunday* and *Q News International* (23 October 1992), is the successful bid of a Florida-based Christian fundamentalist group to take over control of all orphanages in Albania. The Hope of the World Foundation from Orlando, Florida, beat Muslim groups when the Albanian government invited bids to look after 2,500 inmates of orphanages throughout the country. This, it is alleged, was despite protests from Muslim organisations and UNICEF. 'Asked if attention would be paid to the religious education of Muslim orphans, Janney, assistant pastor of the Orlando Baptist Church in Florida, replied that 'this was unlikely'.

M. Edith Durham in *The Burden of the Balkans, op. cit.*, p. 207, back in 1905, remarked that among the Baktāshīs, 'in the event of a free Albania, it seems probable that many of the sect will turn Christian.'

It will be observed above that the term 'Muslim' (even the way that the term is allegedly used by Mr Zogai) makes no distinction whatsoever between *Sunnī and Baktāshī*

civilisation itself, are apt to spread Westward from the East. The Gnostic seeds were to flower most richly not in Armenia nor in Bulgaria but in the Westernmost country of the Balkan peninsula.' Flowers of many bizarre oriental hues have blossomed there in the past. It is unlikely that some will not blossom afresh in the years ahead.

(if such be deemed 'Muslim' at all), nor is the sprititual *tabula rasa* of the Albanians, a supposed legacy of Hoxha's years, seen as having made a difference to the former numerical equation of religious allegiance in Albania proper (unlike Kosovo and Macedonia), as it surely may have done. It is interesting to compare these comments with the prophetic remarks of Margaret Hasluck in her article 'The Nonconformist Moslems of Albania' (*Moslem World*, vol. XV, 1925), where, forecasting the conquest of Albania by 'Bektashism' (now hardly likely), she remarks on page 398: 'Then Albania, with her face now turned towards the progressive West, feels that the conservative Koran, noble book though it be, hampers progress.' She adds, 'But Albanian history shows that Albanians are peculiarly susceptible to the pressure of necessity or expediency, having been converted to Islam to a degree absolutely unparalled in other Christian countries conquered by the Turks in the Balkans.'

A more searching investigation, made before the recent events and published in Italian, may be read in 'Dati statistici situazioni giuridica delle religioni in Albania', and Heinz Gstrein, 'Albania, progressi della fede', *Orienterung*, 21 (XV), Nov. 1984, pp. 231–3. *L'altra Europa*, published by Centro Russia Christiana, Milan, 1985 (May-June), pp. 132–40. There is certainly some evidence now that *tekkes* are being reopened in Elbasan and Krujë.

For a thoughtful historical introduction to relations of non-Muslim with Muslims in the Balkans, see the article by Aleksandar Matkovski, 'L'Islam aux yeux des non-Musulmans des Balkans', *Balcanica*, IV, Belgrade, 1973, pp. 203–11.

From the viewpoint of the 'Islamic Revival' the future of Islam seems more assured if one reads the article by Larry Luxner, 'Albania's Islamic Rebirth', *Aramco World*, vol. 43, no. 4, July–Aug. 1992, pp. 38–47. He himself took the photographs of restored mosques and other Muslim structures. An expanded version of his article was published as 'Islamic Resurgence in Albania', *The Middle East*, Dec. 1992, pp. 46–7. British Muslims are well aware of the currently confused situation; the following comment appeared in the Muslim newspaper, *Q News International*, vol. 1, no. 28, October 9, 1992, p. 12:

> After decades of communism in which 'scientific socialism' was literally thrusted down their throats, the Muslims in Albania now have to contend with a new kind of 'scientific' garbage. The loony Church of Scientology has picked Europe's only Muslim majority nation as its priority in evangelical work. Next week 30,000 Muslim peasants in the only state that has described itself 'atheist' will get free copies of *The Way to Happiness*. More will be victims of the Oxford Analysis Capacity – a personality test the cult uses to persuade raw recruits they have problems to which scientology or dianetics are the answer.

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1983–4 Stephen R. Bowers, 'The Islamic factor in Albanian policy', vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 123–35.
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1988 Cornelia Sorabji, 'Islamic revival and marriage in Bosnia', vol. 9, no. 2, pp. 331–7.

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APPENDIX

THE SERBIAN VIEW OF ISLAM IN THE 1980s*

During the 1980s the well-known Belgrade newspapers and journals *Politica*, *Nin* and *Duga* devoted much attention to a large number of articles, because of either their provocative titles or their content. All of them were connected with Islam and Muslims — in Yugoslavia, in Europe generally and in the world at large. It is not easy for us to conceive that these articles were spontaneous or reflected the personal feelings of the authors. The media, in Serbia, during those years, was subservient to the 'one party system' (Communist then, 'Socialist' now, what tomorrow?). Most important, among this and that, was that these articles totally succeeded in their goal, which was to stir up and rekindle latent and dormant animosity within the Serbian people towards Islam and the Muslims, which had existed since the Middle Ages. This was accomplished by magnifying and inflating the Islamic 'menace', thereby bringing to the surface 'solutions' which justified everything in order to free and rid oneself of the other side by any means possible.

Out of the thousands of articles which I have collected, I offer here one specimen. It purports to give an account of a meeting arranged and held by the journal *Duga* (no. 9, 22 December 1989) with Dr Miroljub Jevtić, assistant professor in the Faculty of Sciences, Belgrade University.

Here it should be observed that the Belgrade press, in its endeavour to convince readers of some message that it particularly wishes to convey, from time to time invites 'experts' and 'scholars' to speak in turn about the Islamic 'menace' and 'threat' to and within Yugoslavia. Thus *Duga* reminds its readers that Jevtić is one of the experts and authorities in this field and that he is the author of a recent book entitled 'The Current *Jihād* as a War' (its Serbo-Croat title was *Savremeni džihad kao rat*, Belgrade, 1989). The book was lauded by the Belgrade orientalist, Darko Tanasković.

In this 'model' meeting we discern four grave elements, on which the Serbian attack on Islam in general and the Muslims [of Yugoslavia] in particular fastens in order to make its views known:

(*a*) The upsurge of basic or 'fundamentalist' Islam in Yugoslavia happened only recently as a result of the firm relations established by Tito with the Arab and the Islamic countries. Thus, this element was turned towards and shifted to Tito himself in blame as part of the Serbian attack that was launched against him at that time.

(*b*) The Arab Muslims have a strategy to enable them to dominate the world and form a single world-wide state. To further it, they will try to 're-animate' Islam in Yugoslavia.

* See Muḥammad Mūfākū's book on Belgrade and Sarajevo referred to in the Bibliography on p. 288, above.

Translation by H.T. Norris—freely in places to make the sense clearer.

(*c*) By its very nature, Islam allows the extermination of others who are not in agreement with it. Hence, the idea of Muslim domination of Yugoslavia becomes terrifying.
(*d*) The Bosnian Muslims have betrayed their race. They have acted disloyally to their history by embracing the Islamic religion. This was the most grave matter of all, the re-opening of the 'dossier' of 'wilful betrayal' after a number of centuries. The Muslim now becomes responsible for his ancestors' conversion to Islam 400 to 500 years ago!

Here follow some of the questions and answers from this exhaustive interview.

Tito's fancies

'Now, when the review of the ties with 'the Third World' is complete, it would seem that these ties have cost us dear, does it not?'

'I agree with you on that.' Here the question is posed again: 'Where does Tito's mistake over those links and ties with the Islamic countries lie hidden?'

'Quite simply, it is hidden in the fact that Tito and his aides did not look with a critical eye at the Islamic world, and Yugoslavia accepted that part of the world as it is, as progressive and friendly to us. This was a big mistake and an illusion.'

'Did the ties between Yugoslavia and the Islamic states play a part in the introduction of 'Islamic fundamentalism' in our midst?'

'The answer to this question needs some wider comment. Even so I shall answer briefly. Yes, it did have a share in it, even though the introduction of 'Islamic fundamentalism' was unintentional.'

'There is an impression that study of those phenomena was prevented because of interference from the supreme political leadership in both Bosnia and Kosovo.'

'This is true. Islam differs from Christianity and Judaism in that it came to this country as the ideology of an occupier. When we say this, many of the elements on which the notion of 'Muslim nationality' rests have to be seen as null and void, since its essential notion goes back to the resistance of the 'Jugoslovenstvo Union'.* So Yugoslavia, as is well known, was created as a substitute, ousting the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires'.

'How do you explain the action of the Islamic states in offering huge sums

* *Jugoslovenstvo* was a term coined to express an idea of one great people (*narod*) among the South Slavs (including the Bosnian Muslims). It was aired by J.J. Strossmayer in Zagreb in 1849 and by Franjo Rački in his 'Jugoslovenstvo', published in the journal *Prozor*, in Zagreb, on 31 October 1860. Such views are no longer in favour in Serbia. The whole subject is fully discussed in the article 'Jugoslovenska i Južnoslavenskaideja', in *Enciklopedija Jugoslavije* (Zagreb, 1990), pp. 128–44.

of money to Islamise [*aslama*] Yugoslavia, and in financing the building of mosques in particular?'

'The Islamic centres in the world offer vast quantities of money to finance Islamic institutions in Yugoslavia. Qadhdhāfī, for example, has promised ten million dollars to build an Islamic centre and a mosque in Belgrade. King 'Abd al-'Azīz [Muḥammad Mūfākū suggests King Khālid] from Saudi Arabia donated 25,000 dollars. Saudi Arabia has presented a quarter of a million dollars for the Islamic *Sharī'a* college. The Saudi King Fahd has contributed 720,000 dollars to build the Zagreb mosque, and so on. . . . in their strategy to dominate the world or, to be precise, the ultimate creation of one single Muslim state. Inevitably, every financial donation will widen the space to dominate and impose a hegemony on Yugoslavia and so include it within the world-wide Islamic state.'

'Then surely Qadhdhāfī's dollars will cost us dear?'

'Every single cent from Qadhdhāfī which reaches Yugoslavia will carry evil kernels within it. Naturally, he does not call on the Muslims of Yugoslavia to wage a *jihād* here and now. But it is not far-fetched to think that this is what he will want to do tomorrow.'

'Is it true that the Islamic *Sharī'a* automatically regards all non-Islamic systems and ideologies as antagonistic to it?'

'Of course.'

'Would you like to give us some examples [of the contradiction and incompatibility of the *Sharī'a* with equality before the law as conceived by civilised humanity]?'

'Egypt was once a Christian country; now it is Muslim. At one time Turkey, was the land of the Armenians and the Greeks; then the Turks came from Central Asia. They slaughtered some, they converted others to Islam and they expelled many more. Why? Because there is a collection of commands in the *Sharī'a* which allows for the extermination of those who believe in other religions. There are other examples. Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia were not Arab but Berber countries. Then the 'sacred' *Sharī'a* came and swallowed them up. This is the Islamic tolerance which is called for by Džemaludin Latić [editor of the Islamic Sarajevo newspaper, *Preporod*].

'In one of the articles, you mentioned the participation of the leaders of Bosnia such as Niyaz Duraković, Mehmet Filipović and others in the projection of 'Islamic fundamentalism'. These are the leaders of the Communist party in the state.'

'Yes, I said something about this. This group more than any has participated in the Islamisation of Bosnia. Bosnia has sunk to the lowest depths through the name of Islam. Those who embraced Islam betrayed Bosnia. The Ottomans came to the Balkans in the name of Islam, and in the name of Islam they slaughtered and exterminated the inhabitants. Those who embraced Islam in fact acknowledged the occupiers as their own brothers, just as they took on

their shoulders the deeds which were committed by their "brothers". Because of this, the hands of the Muslims who are with us are stained and polluted with the blood of their ancestors from among the inhabitants of Bosnia at that time, namely those who did not embrace Islam. They [the converts] were the traitors in regard to the Bans [governors], governor Kulin and King Tvrtko [of Bosnia, claimant to the throne of Serbia, who offered his help at the battle of Kosovo].'

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The tragic events that began to unfold in the former Yugoslavia at the beginning of the 1990s have drawn the world's attention to the history and rich culture of the Muslim communities of Bosnia especially, but also of Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia – the historic heartland of Muslim Europe. Here H. T. Norris breaks new ground by focusing on their religious and intellectual links with the Arab world, Persia and Central Asia, whereas the few previous publications on the subject have been mostly concerned with the more obvious links between the Balkan Muslims and the Turks. Norris illustrates from a wide range of sources the many channels through which the Arabs and Persians were linked with Balkan peoples, especially after the Ottoman conquest, in their art, architecture, literature and religion – direct contacts were also forged through Sufism. From the earliest times, also, many Balkan Muslim soldiers and bureaucrats, as well as scholars and poets, made an impact on the wider Islamic world, the most prominent being Mohammed Ali, the founder of modern Egypt.

The resurgence of Muslim identity in Bosnia-Hercegovina and Kosovo has of course much to do with the aggressive nature of Serbian nationalism. But it is also a legacy of the region's relations over many centuries with the Arab countries and Persia, now given a new meaning in the wake of Serbian attempts to 'cleanse' Sarajevo and other cities of their Muslim inhabitants.

As the wider world has become aware, for the first time in several generations, of the phenomenon of Muslim Europe, many people of all persuasions now want to know and understand more about it, and the forces which have been tearing ancient communities apart and threatening a wider conflagration. Up till now, the sources available to them have been largely concerned with power politics, economics and demography. H. T. Norris's cultural investigation, the fruit of many years' research, corrects this imbalance.

For a note on the author, see back flap

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Until his retirement in 1991, *Harry Thirlwall Norris*, born in 1926, was professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

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Printed in Hong Kong