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

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

This study, using concepts, methods and tools from the fields of history, social anthropology and political sciences, based on several years of field research and synthesising mostly Greek bibliographical information and data mainly from local (oral and written) history, aims at (re)constructing the historical and social framework in which the Bektashis acted in Central and Northern Greece1 and at describing the main architectural vestiges (mausoleums/turbes, cemeteries, etc.) along with the history of the communities, as well as the Bektashi relations with the

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1 Leaving out those of the Aegean islands and the island of Crete. Also leaving out the area of Peloponnese, where so far research has shown indications —in some cases clear evidence— of Sufi but not of Bektashi presence until the early 19th century.

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surrounding non-Bektashi (mainly Christian) communities, focusing on those which still existed and maintained some kind of life during the (best part of the) 20th century.²

Bektashism in Greece

The existing historical data (mainly tombstones in the extant tekkes) show the existence of a tarikat style of Bektashism³ in 19th century Greece. However, this changed dramatically in the early 20th century.

The compulsory population exchange between Greece and Turkey under the 1923 Lausanne treaty — carried out on the grounds of religion and decided in order to resolve the Greek-Turkish dispute and eliminate the “minority question” in both countries — forced about half a million Muslims to move from Greece to Turkey,⁴ but many Muslims from Epirus and Macedonia avoided the exchange as of Albanian origin or as non-Greek citizens.⁵ The Albanian dervishes who stayed in Greece followed the “transformation” of Albanian Bektashism (in the late 19th and early 20th century) from a Sufi order to a religious community at the Albanian national level and the “transformation” of dervishes and babas into a “clergy”, by analogy to the Christian Orthodox and Catholic clergy.

The situation in Thrace was different, since in the wider area there existed for centuries an ethnic-sect style Bektashism⁶ which, after the

² This paper would not have this form and content without the valuable contributions of many friends and colleagues. I wish to thank Huseyin Abiva, Lambros Baltsiotis, Leonidas Empirikos, Elias Kolovos, Giorgos Koutzakiots, Meriç Özgüneş, Mitsuru Saito, Fani Sari, Sevasti Trubeta and Konstantinos Tsitselikis. Especially Marina Diafa, Mark Soileau and Miranda Terzopoulou, who additionally read and commented the manuscript. Turkish, Arabic and Persian terms in the text have been transliterated.
³ The branch of celibate Bektashis, also named Babagân, considering themselves to be spiritual descendants of Hadji Bektash.
⁴ And more than one and a half million Christians to move from Turkey to Greece. The Muslims of Western Thrace and the Greek Orthodox of Konstantinoupolis/ Istanbul, Imvros/ Goktseada and Tenedos/ Bozجاada islands were exempted from the exchange. Both population groups had the right to remain in Greece and Turkey, respectively, enjoying a special minority status under the terms of the Lausanne Treaty.
⁵ For the history of the Muslim presence in Greece and the situation of the Muslim population in Greece from 1821 to 1981 see Popovic, 1986. A comprehensive approach to the issue of the compulsory population exchange between Greece and Turkey following the Lausanne treaty in Pekin, 2005.
⁶ Here the term attempts to outline the wider area of (mainly rural) Bektashis and Alevis, both in Anatolia and in the Balkans, who belong to the branch of married Bektashis, also named Chelebi, considering themselves to be, somehow, blood line descendants of
repeated destructions of tekkes and the death or departure of all dervishes and babas of the area, became dominant. These Bulgarian and Turkish speaking rural populations (of Greek citizenship) have many similarities with the Alevis in Turkey. Most of them prefer to define themselves by the term Bektashi, although some prefer to use the term Alevi, in spite of the great differences between Anatolian Alevis and themselves. Apart from these Bektashi highlanders in Thrace, there are some 15 to 20 thousand Muslims —Turkish-speaking and settled in their majority— (hetero) defined as Gypsies, who practice something that could be characterised as “folk Islam”, among other things. Examining their believes

Hadji Bektash. These populations can be (self or hetero-) categorised and distinguished in numerous groups according to various criteria: a) mother tongue (e.g. Turkish or Bulgarian in Thrace, Turkish or Kurdish in Anatolia), b) mythical or real descent (e.g. the Turkish “tribes” of Amudja, Balaban, etc., in Thrace) often linked to the geographical area in which they are spread, c) differentiation according to the tekke to which they “belong” (e.g. Kızıldeliler, Akyazılılar, (Otman)babaillar, Alikotslular, etc.) which is often connected to different believes and practices.

With regard to the relationship between Bektashism and Alevism, it should be noted that they are closely related in terms of both philosophy and culture. Over the last two decades, in Turkey, in public discourse, they have been generally regarded as parts of an integrated Alevi-Bektashi culture, despite the fact that Bektashi scholars and a lot of Alevi point to significant variances and differentiations.

For the record, the various mainly Turkish-speaking “tribes” in medieval Anatolia practising folk Islam strongly influenced by Shia beliefs and involved in the foundation of the Shia Safavid Dynasty of Iran that fought against the Ottomans, were (hetero-) defined as Kizilbash [“red head” or “red head cover” in Turkish]. This term is occasionally used even nowadays in Turkey and the Balkans in order to define heterodox Muslims, always as a hetero-definition and always in a derogatory sense (BIRGE, 1937, TSIKALULA, 2000 and more details in MÉLIKOFF, 1975). The term “Alevi” is traced for the first time by the famous turcologist Andreas Tietze in Ferec ba’de sidde, of 1451, where it is used to refer to those descended from Ali. In the poem by Gelibolunun Mustafa Ali (1541-1599) entitled Kun hâl-ahbar, the term “Alevi” seems to refer to Ali’s followers (SAYASCI, 2004). The term seems to have acquired its contemporary cultural / religious / political connotations —both as a self-definition and as an hetero-definition (attempting and finally achieving to replace, in most cases, the term Kizilbash) — after the 1960s and especially in the late 1980s. The 1960s is the period when many poor peasants of this category gather in the working class suburbs of the big cities in Turkey, practically ignoring the existence and action of their co-believers, and gain a sizeable presence for their “group”, while becoming aware of the religious and political dimensions of their beliefs and practices, mainly as a result of the hostility they face from their Sunni neighbours. The second half of the 1980s is a milestone in the construction of the Alevi identity and marks the beginning of the relevant claims and struggles, since at that time a large unification and reframing process takes place in Germany, in the bosom of the Turkish Alevi migrant workers group (FAYT, 2003, and KUCUK, 2002).
and practices, some researchers (e.g. Zeginis, 1988, 1994) hasten to diagnose significant similarities with Christian beliefs and practices and distances from the official Sunni Islam and, consequently, to place them among heterodox Islam, recognising kinship with Bektashism. It is true that people of this category visit places were Bektashi saints are buried (*turbe* and *yatir*), pray there, make offerings, light candles and enjoy eating the meat of sacrificed animals (*kürban*) the Bektashis offer to everybody. But this set of beliefs and practices is a meagrely — if at all — elaborated scheme, far removed from the highly elaborate Bektashi system, while people of this category, even those few settled in or by Bektashi villages, are not accepted as members of the (ethnic-sect and here more or less tribal) Bektashi community and, thus, can not participate in the liturgical life.

**BEKTASHI MONUMENTS AND COMMUNITIES IN GREECE**

**Epirus, Thessaly and Central Macedonia**

**The tekkes of Konitsa**

The small town of Konitsa (Epirus, 63 km north of Ioannina) was one of the most important Bektashi centres in Northwestern Greece. In the 18th century, half of the population of Konitsa was mainly Greek-speaking Christians and half was mainly Albanian-speaking Muslims. As Efthimiou, 1997, an important local historian, informs us, in Konitsa — where the main mosque of the town carried the name of “Husein Shah” — there was a big and powerful Bektashi community. At that time, the most prominent Muslim family in Konitsa was the family of Zeynel Bey (relative of Kurt Pasha, governor of Berat, Albania), the father of Homko, who became the wife of Veli Bey Tepelenli and the mother of Ali Tepelenli, Pasha of Yannina/ Yanıa Zehra Hanım, the

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9 In general (people considered to be) Gypsies are not accepted into the Bektashi bosom.

10 The first presentation of this issue, in the form of comments accompanying visual material, was made at the 1st International Symposium on Alevism and Bektashism, organised by the department of Theology of the Süleyman Demirel University, 28-30 September 2005, in Isparta, Turkey.
daughter of Abdullatif Pasha and mother of the famous Turk poet Namik Kemal, also came from Konitsa.\footnote{11 \textsc{Efthimiou}, 1997: 104, 108}

In Konitsa there were many dervish lodges/ tekkes of various orders,\footnote{12 Since the Greek sources and documents of that period usually mix Bektashis, Nakshibendis and other orders, giving the title “Sheikh” to the leaders of all orders and tekkes, it is not clear who was what and to what order they belonged, especially in the case of Konitsa. I shall, therefore, restrict my references only to those about whom I have totally or relatively clear indications, mainly those mentioned as “baba”.} two of which Bektashi: the tekke of Baba Osman in the upper part of the town and the tekke of Baba Husen or Husein in the lower part of the town.

In the beginning of the 20th century, the abbot/ postnishin in the Husen baba tekke was baba Haydar, son of Mahmut, from Glina-Leskovik\footnote{13 The tekke of Baba Husen must have been founded by Husein baba or else baba Huso himself in mid-18th century. His successor was baba Ismail, while the next known postnishin was Turabi Gul baba, who founded a school/ mektep in 1870 near the tekke, which was later characterised as a “secondary school”/ rushtie. In 1878 and 1882 baba Adem was the postnishin, while from 1883 until 1896 the postnishin was baba Kiamil from Anatolia. \textsc{Efthimiou}, 1997: 153}. At that time, the tekke was served by dervish Suleyman, dervish Ali,\footnote{14 Who used to pay respect to bishop Panaretos, by visiting him often and kissing his hand.} dervish Bilio or Bilal Mehmet from Valovista, dervish Zeynel Abedin, the nephew of baba Haydar, dervish Zeynel from Giontsi close to Erseka in the region of Kolonja, and dervish Demir from Avoritsiani, while there was a number of followers/ muhib, who used to visit the tekke frequently and take part in the liturgical life (prayers, meals etc.).\footnote{15 \textsc{Efthimiou}, 1997: 167} In older times the tekke owned extensive lands in Grevena, Tsotili and in the plain of Konitsa, large numbers of sheep and cows and its own mill.

The tekke of Baba Osman —also called “small tekke”— was in the upper part of the town of Konitsa, close to Zeynelbey gate. There is no information regarding the babas and dervishes of this tekke. In the early 20th century many people would visit the turbe to light candles and offer bars of soap, towels, kerchiefs, slippers, etc.\footnote{16 \textsc{Efthimiou}, 1997: 168. Apart from these, the tekke of Baba Nevruz and the turbe of the “Badji” — possibly connected to Ayse badji who died in 1748 — are also mentioned, but there is no activity related to them in the 20th century.}
In the kurban bayram time, the people serving the tekkes would sacrifice rams and other animals and distribute a part of the blessed meat to all the people of the same religion. On the day of Ashurah, they would cook the asir and serve it to all visitors, including Christians, while in Moharrem or Matem period (of mourning), all Bektashis would drink turbid water, to which coffee had been added. In the summer, the Bektashis from the area of Konitsa would gather for the feast of Baba Ramo, where they would celebrate and dance for three days.17

We know that the majority of the Muslim people living in the lower part of the town — around the tekke of Baba Husen — were Bektashi,18 while it seems that most of the Bektashis in Konitsa had very close relations to the Christians. Many Muslims from the area of Konitsa (including an unknown number of Bektashis) used to visit Christian churches and pay respect to saints by offering candles, oil for the oil lamps (one actually offered a candelabrum), while some of them used to swear not only by the typical Muslim vallah — billah but also by the per shen Kolien e Vodiçes [“by Saint Nicolas of Voditsa” in Albanian].19

It is worth mentioning that in 1925, when a big group of Muslims left the area of Konitsa20, dervish Abedin, a fluent Greek speaker and member of the Municipal Council of Konitsa for many years, was given 1,000 drachmas from the Municipal Council and 300 drachmas from the church —both due to his very bad financial situation and to the service he had offered to the (Greek) community. By way of thanks, he offered a Bektashi ceremonial vessel (a holy water sprinkler or an incensory) to the church of St. Nicolas of Konitsa.21

In 1950 it was estimated that around 30 Muslim families still lived in Konitsa. Nowadays22 some 7 Muslim families still live in the town, not

17 EFTHIMIOU, 1997: 149-150.
19 EFTHIMIOU, 1997: 142, 143. Moreover, it seems that many Christians in the area, for various reasons, used to resort to the healing power of the babas.
20 As a result of the Greece-Turkey population exchange. Most of the Muslims from Konitsa were not forced to leave, but after some time and mainly due to the widespread changes in the Balkans and the pressure they felt, they decided to leave. Some moved to Turkey and others to Albania.
22 In this text, by saying «nowadays» —and if not else defined— I refer to the year 2005.
showing the slightest sign of Bektashi practice in public, while all the Bektashi monuments have been ruined.\(^{24}\)

**The tekke of Durbali Sultan in Farsala**

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

Most of the references talk about the “Albanian Tekke” of Farsala (named Chataldja in Ottoman times). As Tsiakomis, 2000 (an important local historian) informs us, it seems that the tekke was founded by Turks in the end of the 15\(^{\text{th}}\) century and was probably built on the ruins of an old Christian Orthodox monastery of St. George\(^{25}\).

By the end of the 19\(^{\text{th}}\) century the tekke cluster —surrounded by a tall wall with a single entrance— contained a number of buildings, the most prominent being the main hall for the liturgical services/meydan and the cook-house/ash evi. Outside and adjacent to the wall were the stables, while to the West, some 50 m away from the gate, were the 2 mausoleums/turbe.

At that time the meydand was decorated with pictures of Arabic calligraphy. One depicted a “face” (probably the typical “face” created from the calligraphic rendering of the word Ali) and another a “lion” (probably the typical “caliph Ali, the lion of God”). Near them there was a bow and two axes/teber (a small one with Koranic verses on it and a big half-moon shaped one), while the existence of a double drum/kudum is also mentioned. In the turbe of Durbali Sultan there were three typical Ottoman graves (that of Durbali Sultan and on its sides those of his companions and co-warriors Djafer and Mustafa\(^{26}\)), a lot of clothes\(^{27}\), three big silver candlesticks, a long sword, an iron club/topuz and two green

\(^{24}\) Moreover, a small but significant Bektashi presence was also noticed in the town of Ioannina until 1913. In the district named Bostan, close to the lake, there was the “Sheikh Lutfi” tekke, also known as the Bektashi tekke, founded in late 19\(^{\text{th}}\) century by Muhtar Pasha, first-born son of Ali Tepelenli Pasha. In the town of Ioannina, at the end of Vilara St., there was the —probably Bektashi— “Babalar” cemetery (Koulidas, 2004: 234, 265).


\(^{26}\) Hasluck, 1973 chapter 42.

\(^{27}\) According to the dervishes, some belonged to Durbali Sultan himself, while others were offerings.
flags wrapped around flagstaffs, one ending at a half-moon and the other at a spear.28

From the time of its establishment all the postnishin seemed to be of Turkish ethnic origin until the end of the 18th century (1782) when first appeared a postnishin of Albanian ethnic origin.29 From that time on,30 all the babas and most of the dervishes were of Albanian origin. However, despite the fact that the first language of most of the dervishes and the babas was Albanian31, there is every reason to believe that at least until the end of the 19th century, the language of the services was Turkish.32

The tekke gets “fully Albanised” in 1925, when the dervish orders/tarikat are banned and persecuted in Turkey33 and communication with the Bektashi centres in Turkey is no longer possible, whereas the people of the Durbali Sultan tekke recognise as their leader the dedebaba in Tirana34.

The impact of the Bektashi persecution in the period 1826-1839 on the Durbali Sultan tekke is not known in detail. What is clear is that in 1851 the Nakshibendi sheikh Muharrem Halife is appointed as postnishin35.

28 KARKAVITSAS, 1892: 158, 159.
29 Hysenj baba from Tirana, the 18th postnishin of the tekke. TSIKOUMIS, 2000 in the annex.
30 Until 1972, when Seit baba Koka Vandresa, the 33rd and last postnishin of the tekke died. As for the babas who were postnishin before the mid-18th century, some were reportedly from Baghad, one from Halep (Syria), one from Misir (Egypt), one form Kisehir and one from Erzerum (Turkey), and one from Lahore (Pakistan — origin which seems to be rather legendary). TSIKOUMIS, 2000: 64.
31 It is worth noticing that in a letter dated 1335 AH / 1920 AD addressed to the postishin of the tekke of Katerini and signed — among others — by the nine dervishes of the tekke of Durbali Sultan, one signs in Albanian, two in Greek and the rest in Turkish (TSIKAUMIS, 2000: 80).
32 In a hand-written small book from the library of the last mufi of Volos who left the area in the beginning of the 20th century — which I obtained from an antique shop in Istanbul in 1985— all the Bektashi prayers, wishes and comments contained therein are written in Turkish.
33 By Law 677/ 30-11-1925 passed by the Turkish Parliament.
34 Full list of names of the 33 postnishin of the tekke in the Albanian newspaper “Dielli” (The Sun) Boston, USA, no. 5269, 1920. A similar list, as part of a petition, was sent to the Greek Ministry of Finance by the last postnishin Sait baba, in TSIKOUMIS, 2000 in the annex.
35 By a berat of Sultan Abdul Medjit dated 1269 AH / 1851 AD. TSIKOUMIS, 2000: 52.
The dawn of the 20th century finds baba Bayram Murteza as postnishin of the tekke (he was appointed in 1865 and died in 1905), while in 1888 the tekke is served by 51 dervishes and in 1896 by 23. In 1919, baba Kiazim was appointed as postnishin, with only 10 dervishes still remaining in the tekke, while in 1940 it seems that he is the only person serving the tekke.36

Until the second decade of the 20th century, it seems that apart from the dervishes a small Bektashi community existed/ lived by the tekke. On February 6, 1920, according to a letter addressed to the postnishin of the tekke of Katerini and signed by all the “people” of the Durbali Sultan tekke, affiliated to the tekke are nine dervishes and eleven followers/ muhiban, all male and Albanians (six from Leskovik, one from Elbasan, one form Gjirokaster, one form Frasheri and one from Permet)37.

After the murder of baba Kiazim by Italian soldiers in 194238 none remained, so the dedebaba of Tirana Ali Riza “transferred” dervish Sait from the tekke of Katerini and appointed him as postnishin of the Durbali Sultan tekke39. Baba Seit Koka Vandresa, the last postnishin and at the same time the last dervish of the tekke, held his position until 1972. On November 30, 1972 he breathed his last in a clinic in Katerini.40

Everything suggests that there was an excellent relationship between the (Christian Orthodox) local inhabitants and the babas and dervishes of the tekke. The tekke had extensive lands under its ownership and provided jobs to a large number of locals, therefore it played an important social and economic role in the area. Until the 1950s, when its decline became visible, the tekke offered sustenance to all the poor (Christian Orthodox) peasants of the area.41 Besides, various narrations of (Greek Christian Orthodox) visitors during the 20th century show that all

36 Mostly as a result of World War II, during which Albania is considered to be an enemy country for Greece, en event with certain negative consequences for the “Albanian” tekke and its “Albanian” dervishes.
38 During WWII Greece was occupied by the German army, while some parts were assigned to their Italian allies. It is worth mentioning that during that time the king of Albania, Ahmet Zogu, was offered shelter in the tekke. Information provided in November 1999 by Kostas Tsergas — the last shepherd attending the tekke flocks.
40 The clinic of Dr. Hasan Bektas, a prominent member of the Bektashi community of Katerini. More information below.
strangers—including a bishop and an Orthodox monk—were welcomed. The babas would receive them with pleasure and discuss about Bektashism with them, offering them, first of all, coffee and raki/ouzo.

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

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

In a hard legal battle in order to regain the property, Sejt baba first attempted to convince the Greek State that the tekke was a religious/
pious foundation (vakuf) having no connection with the Albanian State, therefore its treatment had to be irrelevant of the national origin or the nationality of the people serving it. After failing at that, as a last resort, he proceeded (September 9, 1951) to renouncing his connection with the Bektashis of Albania and the jurisdiction of the dedebaba of Tirana\textsuperscript{49} and asked that both himself and the tekke be brought under the jurisdiction of the dedebaba Ahmet Sirri in Cairo, Egypt, who —on September 16, 1952— granted Seit baba’s request. His act did not bring the expected results. In 1959 the Greek Council of State reaffirmed the previous rulings (of 1956 and 1958), whereby 13,000,000 sq.m. of tekke lands were assigned to landless local peasants. Finally, the tekke was left with just 3,000,000 sq.m. of mostly mountain pastures (of which only 270,000 were arable) and a monthly reimbursement of 2,000 drachmas was paid “to the person (Seit Baba) who lives in the monastery\textsuperscript{50} until the issue is finally resolved”\textsuperscript{51}.

After the death of Seit baba (November 30, 1972), the property of the tekke (the land and a flock of some 200 sheep —the only thing living of the tekke that is still alive) was handed over to the Revenue Service of Farsala, which leases it to the highest bidder every four years, while in 1977 there was an interesting appearance and involvement of the Albanian State in the case, which asked for the restitution of the vakuf as Albanian property.\textsuperscript{52}

The buildings of the tekke seemed to be in good condition until 1938\textsuperscript{53}, served at that time by 3 dervishes\textsuperscript{54}, but the tekke was facing

\textsuperscript{49} Describing him as “a slave of communism” (Tsiaoumis, 2000: 176, who publishes all the relevant documents for the first time), in view of disengaging himself from Albania, an enemy state for Greece.

\textsuperscript{50} 2,000 drachmas was more or less the salary of a middle-rank civil servant, more than enough for the personal needs of a dervish but totally insufficient for any maintenance expenses. Moreover, it is worth noticing that in all the relevant Greek documents, the tekke is described by the Christian term “monastery” —in most of the cases “Albanian Monastery”.

\textsuperscript{51} Tsiaoumis, 2000: 105.

\textsuperscript{52} The Council of State (2603/1977) denied jurisdiction as the dispute was of private character, however it did recognise that there is no longer de facto a state of war between Greece and Albania, therefore Act 2636/40 would no longer be applicable (Tsitselikis). For the time being, this is all the information available on the issue.

\textsuperscript{53} As reported in the “Neos Kosmos” newspaper of Volos, Tsiaoumis, 2000: 129-137.

\textsuperscript{54} Baba Kiazim, dervish Feta and dervish Bairam. The tekke was also served by 4 Albanians, a Tserkez (Circasian) and a Greek, all offered sustenance by the tekke and receiving a 500 drachma monthly pay. Tsiaoumis, 2000: 134.
severe financial problems, since the largest part of its property had been taken away. The 2 turbe, in particular, were in very good shape. The graves —especially that of Durbali Sultan— were covered by valuable fabrics and the place was decorated with the above-mentioned green flags, with calligraphic Arabic letters on them, fastened on lances, with oil lamps and a horn/ nefir next to them. The 1955 earthquakes destroyed the largest part of the tekke buildings —the second floor of the meydan and the ash evi, but not the 2 turbe. After the death of baba Seit in 1972, the cemetery and the 2 turbe were almost totally destroyed by (illegal) excavations of treasure-seekers, and the rest of the remaining buildings were used as stalls.\(^{55}\)

In 1981 the Greek State listed the tekke as a monument, but no preservation/restoration action has been taken since.

The death of baba Seit marks the end of the Bektashi community and the typical liturgical life in the Durbali Sultan tekke. The place, however, still keeps a kind of life connected with its tradition. Apart from the tekke sheep flock grazing in the nearby pastures, visitors can notice an oil lamp always burning by an icon of St. George at the entrance of the turbe, showing the sense of holiness of the place for local peasants, whose ancestors used to work in the tekke fields. Moreover, in the turbe visitors can notice various offerings (kerchiefs, bars of soap, coins and candles) offered by pilgrims, Albanian Bektashi migrant workers who visit the tekke frequently, pray and sacrifice sheep (kurban) asking for the blessing or thanking for the mediation of Durbali Sultan.\(^{56}\) The most massive and spectacular presence of visitors, however, is on May Day, when a large number of Christian Orthodox —most of them aware of the history of the tekke and caring about it, considering it part of their own cultural history\(^{57}\)— gather there to celebrate the coming of the Spring. Such a gathering also brings to mind similar gatherings in the past, when —according to narrations of older people\(^{58}\)— baba Seit would prepare

\(^{55}\) Detailed presentation — with the use of photographs — of the tekke as it was in 1972, in Kiel, 2005.

\(^{56}\) These people have recently (summer 2005) proceeded to some “restoration works” (by cleaning the interior of the turbes, repairing the walls and a marble inscription in Arabic inside a turbe, paving the floor with modern style tiles, restoring the babas’ graves outside the turbes, etc.). Their actions infuriated the Greek public service in charge for the monument, for both pragmatic and symbolical reasons.

\(^{57}\) TSiAKOUMIS, 2000: 13.

\(^{58}\) Narration of Kostas Maliahovas and his wife Evangelia, referring to 1957, in Tsi-
the famous “tsorva” (soup) and serve it to his numerous visitors on the day of Ashurah.

The tekke of Hasan Baba in Tembi

In the village of Tembi (earlier named Hasan Baba koy) by the Tembi valley (earlier named Hasan Baba Bogazi) lies the tekke of Hasan Baba. The tekke cluster contained the mausoleum/ turbe of Hasan Baba—an imposing building with an inscription quoting Koranic verses in its inside perimeter, and to the SW the cook-house/ ash evi, the meydan and the dervishes’ and visitors’ cells. In 1890 in the turbe there was the grave of Hasan Baba, accompanied by the graves of two other dervishes and decorated by an iron club/ topuz, an Arabic sword, a turban/sarik, and two green flags, with calligraphic Arabic letters on them, fastened on two lances. An undated photograph showing a minaret close to the turbe indicates the existence of a mosque in the cluster and is evidence of a powerful Sunni presence and influence. But the twelve ribbed marble Bektashi cap standing still on the top of the turbe, proves the Bektashi dominance in the area.

Local historians report that, in the late 19th and early 20th century, people serving in the Hasan Baba tekke used to offer large meals to all visitors irrespective of religion, while many Muslims who suffered from physical and mental conditions —coming from as far as Istanbul— would swarm to the turbe and hang parts of their clothes on the window rails, asking for healing.
What remains in the site in the end of the 20th century is the semi-ruined turbe, with only parts of the inscription extant, and a part of the ash evi — meydan cluster — a large rectangular room having a big fireplace on one side, now used by the present owner as a sheep stall. Two attempts of the Greek State in the 1980s and 1990s to restore and preserve the turbe were actually blocked by nationalistic circles who strongly opposed such a step and once planted a bomb at the turbe entrance. Nowadays not the slightest sign of liturgical activity can be noticed.

The tekke of Katerini

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

Very few things are known about the tekke of Abdulah Baba in Katerini. In 1922, the postnishin was the renowned halife Djafer baba and in 1949 the postnishin was Veli Mustafa baba, a Greek citizen who held that post at least until October 30, 1954, and most probably died in 1960. In the early 20th century the tekke owned extensive lands close to the village of Koukos, at the foot of Mt Olympus, which were finally expropriated. In the late 1950s there was only one dervish living in a semi-ruined cell by the turbe. The Bektashis of Katerini had strong connections with the people in Durbali Sultan and with the Bektashi community of Thessaloniki.

There is no clear evidence about the early steps of the Albanian Bektashi community in Katerini. Dr Hasan Bektas, a prominent member of

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69 AYVERDI (1982: 343) presents photos of the turbe and the tombstone that lies inside the turbe of Katerini saying that it is the turbe of Abdullah Baba. Obviously by mistake he places this monument in Kavala, where no such building was ever reported.
70 As evidenced by a letter dated 1338 AH/ 1920 AD, signed by him and addressed to the dervishes of the Durbali Sultan tekke, concerning the appointment of a new postnishin after the death of Tahir baba, TSIAKOUMIS, 2000: 81. Djafer baba must have been a highly respected person. As Dr. Hasan Bektas reported (personal testimony, Katerini, 09.01.2001), when he was a child, the Bektashis of Katerini used to swear by Djafer baba.
72 As evidenced by a relevant document signed by Ahmet Sirri dededaba in Cairo. The document is quoted by TSIAKOUMIS, 2000: 178-181.
74 Dr Hasan Bektas was born in Katerini in 1925. His family originated from the village of Medjgori in the Tepelen district, Southern Albania. Due to his age and his family
the local community and one of the last members of the Bektashi community of Katerini, attributes the foundation of the community —actually following Hasluck’s, 1973 explanatory scheme— to an attempt made by Ali Tepelenli, Pasha of Yannina to create a network to control an extensive territory in Northern and Central Greece in order to create his own state in the early 19th century.75

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

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

The only memories of liturgical life the older people have are some “secret” gatherings of their parents named “davet” [invitation in Turkish] and the day of Ashurah.76

At the end of the 20th century there were only four former Bektashi families77, almost all the young members of which had been baptised and had become Greek Christian Orthodox.

Nowadays78 from the tekke cluster only the turbe and 3 tombstones standing by it remain,79 in a relatively good condition, in the middle of a history, he is one of the best informers on the issue. His father has long been the caretaker of the property of the Katerini tekke. His ex father-in-law, Mr Muharem Rustem Soula (?) was the mayor of the town of Katerini in the last period of the Ottoman rule in Greek Macedonia (1912) and, due to the respect he enjoyed from the local (Greek Christian) community, he held that position long after the annexation of Macedonia to Greece. All the information presented here comes from a long discussion the historian Leonidas Empirikos, the social anthropologist Miranda Terzopoulou and myself had with him in Katerini, on 09.01.2001 and 25.01.2001.

75 At that time it seems that most of the community members were involved in the production and trade of salt produced at the salt-works on the coast of Katerini.
76 Dr. Hasan Bektas. Oral testimony, Katerini, 09.01.2001.
77 The families Bektas, Kapran, Gerou and Soula.
78 In this text, by saying «nowadays» —and if not else defined— I refer to the year 2005.
79 This of Ramazan baba (died in 1326 A.H.), this of Ayse hanim, wife of Sadik aga (died in 1323 A.H.) and this of Muharrem baba. AYVERDİ, 1982: 235.
small park, which now belongs to the Municipality of Katerini —since the building of the *turbe* and the surrounding area was donated to the Municipality by Dr. Hasan Bektash who was recognised as owner—and is often the target of nationalistic circles, although there is not the slightest sign of liturgical activity. In the summer of 2005, the Municipality proceeded to restoration works (financed by Dr. Hasan Bektash *in memoriam* of his father Riza Bektash) and now the monument is in good shape and easily accessible.

**The tekke of Thessaloniki**

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

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

Most of them seemed to be settled in the “Hirsh” district, SW of Varvardi Square, an area mainly inhabited by (poor) Jews. Upon the outbreak of World War II (1940), since those people were Albanian citizens and Greece was at war with Albania, they were exiled to the island of Lemnos. After the end of the war, they returned to Thessaloniki. Some migrated to Albania and most to Turkey, while some of those who

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80 Including the Bektashi tekkes. FAROQHI, 1976, based on Ottoman taxation records, mentions the existence of the *tekke* of Kara Baba and Beyazit Baba in the area of Thessaloniki in the beginning of the 19th century. DIMITRIADIS, 1983, informs us that the Bektashi *tekke* of Kara Baba (confiscated in 1827 and returned to the Bektashis in 1840), according to the inventory of the *mufti* of Thessaloniki, was destroyed by the fire in 1917.

81 Strong evidence for the existence of the community is a 1913 photograph showing a Bektashi *baba*-wearing the typical Bektashi twelve ribbed white woollen crown (*taj*) wrapped with green strip. Thessalonique 1913 & 1918. Les autochromes du musée Albert Khan. Olkos publications, Athens, 1999, p. 78, photo No 48 (code number 2019).


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

84 Hasan Bektas. Oral testimony, Katerini 09.01.2001
stayed —either themselves or their children— were baptised and became Christian Orthodox.

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

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

There were probably burials there until the 1970s. For the locals, who lacked any precise knowledge about the monument, the cemetery was a strange place, at times associated with ghost stories and at times considered to be a health hazard. Real use —actually giving life and value to the place— was made by the young boys of the area, who gathered there after climbing the surrounding wall and used it as a shelter, a meeting

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85 They are both appointed (by Ahmet Sirri dedebaba in Cairo on September 16, 1952) on a committee aiming to deal with the “various problems of financial and administrative nature the Bektashi tekkes in Greece face”. The relevant document is fully quoted by TSIAKOMIS, 2000: 177-178.
87 Possibly Bektashi was also the turbe of Musa Baba, still standing semi-ruined in Terpsitheas sq. in Ano Poli, Thessaloniki, a site that was a Muslim cemetery until 1930. It is interesting to notice that, until 1980, by the turbe there was a small shrine with the icon of St. George in it, by which one could often see candles lit both by local Orthodox Christians and Muslim Gypsies who migrated from Thrace to Thessaloniki in the early 1980s. In the late 1990s, one of the Albanian migrant workers who worked in the reconstruction of the square built by the turbe -at his own expense- a shrine dedicated to St. Charalambos. Field research findings.
89 According to the narrations of people living next door and in the vicinity, who used to play in the cemetery when they were young.
Following strong pressure by the neighbours and in the name of regeneration/renewal of the area, the Albanian Cemetery in Triandria, the last Bektashi monument in Thessaloniki, was expropriated by the Municipality in 1983. Graves and gravestones were destroyed, while some of the bones were collected by a few “brave” workers, put into bags and delivered to some distant relatives who arrived from Katerini for this purpose, who finally buried them in a corner of the (Christian) cemetery of Katerini, made available to them by the mayor of the town. What exists now is a plot of land about 30 by 50 m, defined by Koundouriotou, Glinou and Eleftherias streets.

**Eastern Macedonia**

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

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91 Hasan Bektas. Oral testimony, Katerini 09.01.2001
92 It is worth mentioning that in this cemetery Tahsin Pasha was buried, the Ottoman general of Albanian origin (possibly a Bektashi) who handed Thessaloniki over to the Greek army in 1912.
97 KOUTZAKIOTIS, 2000: 257.
There is little if any information about the Bektashi monuments and people of this area in the 20th century, who all left in 1924 during the Greek-Turkish population exchange under the Lausanne treaty, just like there is no adequate or clear evidence to prove whether and to what extent the Slav-speaking ex-Christians of the area, possibly Bektashis in the 16th century, became Turkish-speaking Sunni Muslims in the beginning of the 20th century.

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

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

Despite the fact that the Muslims abandoned the area 80 years ago and the turbe is ruined, there is some activity giving some “ceremonial life” to the site. Every spring, on the Tuesday after Easter, the (Christian) villagers take the holy icons from the church of St. Ioannis and hold a procession, which ends at a newly-built chapel (1980s?), some 20 m away from the ruins of the turbe. There they perform the “holy water
rites \textsuperscript{101} and return to the church, where they leave the icons. Later, they go to a nearby square where they dance three ritual dances accompanied only by a cappella songs, with no use of instruments.\textsuperscript{102}

Signs of Bektashi presence also exist in the area between Kavala and Seres. As Hypert, 1889 mentions, by the river Angista there was an inn/\textit{han} ran under the directions of a Bektashi \textit{dervish}. The \textit{dervish} reportedly introduced himself (to a catholic priest) as a “Turk priest”, described the functional and symbolic meaning of his sword —connecting it with his hostility against the descendants of the killers of Imam Huseyin— and stated that he was a freemason, asking the catholic priest if he was a freemason too. There is no further information connecting the above-mentioned \textit{dervish} to a \textit{dergâh} or indicating or proving connections with other networks.\textsuperscript{103}

\section*{Thrace}

In the area of Greek Thrace, east of the Nestos river,\textsuperscript{104} there is a significant presence of Bektashi monuments and of a relatively extended rural Bektashi community —located in the mountain area between Rodopi and Evros prefectures, close to the Greek-Bulgarian borders— mainly due to the fact that the Muslim population of this area was exempted from the Greek-Turkish population exchange following the Lausanne Treaty in 1923. All of the 80,000 Muslims who live permanently in Greek Thrace are nowadays fluent Turkish speakers, the great

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\textsuperscript{101} The whole ceremony does not have the slightest connection to the existence of the \textit{turbe} of Hadji(m) Baba. This ceremony -called “maz’idia” and probably related to the Arabic word \textit{mazi} / \textit{maziyye} which means “past” but also “memorial service”- used to be held in the old cemetery of the village until 1918. According to BEIKAKI, 1994:51, at that time and mainly due to certain irregularities as a result of a funeral which had taken place some days ago and obstructed the normal “flow” of the ceremony, the priest decided to change place and move it far from the cemetery.

\textsuperscript{102} Description of the ritual in BEIKAKI, 1994: 48 -49. Findings from field research in spring 2001, when I visited the area with the social anthropologists Miranda Terzopoulou and Anna Michalakeli, guided by the historian Giorgos Koutzakiotis. At that time we had the first thoughts and discussions about the relation that might exist between the contemporary Christian rituals and the \textit{tekke}.

\textsuperscript{103} The only relevant reference to a \textit{tekke} possessing an inn at that time —according to formal Ottoman taxation records— is the one to Hadjet Baba \textit{tekke} in the town of Kopru (later named Veles) in the territory currently belonging to the Republic of Macedonia (FAROQHT, 1976). However, not the slightest clear connection appears between the two, and it would be at least strange for a \textit{tekke} to have an appendage some 500 km away.

\textsuperscript{104} The river named Nestos in Greek, Mesta in Bulgarian and Kara Su in Turkish is considered to be the natural border between Macedonia and Thrace.
\end{flushleft}
majority of them have Turkish as their mother tongue, while a group of highlanders living in a strip of land by the Greek-Bulgarian borders, named Pomaks, have a Slavic language, close to the official Bulgarian, as their mother tongue. The vast majority of the Thracian Muslims consider themselves as part of the Turkish nation.

The tekkes of Karadja Ahmet and Karadja Ayshe

In the village of Ehinos (named Shahin by locals), in a mountainous area some 30 km N of Xanthi, inhabited by Sunni Muslims only, lie the tekkes —actually the turbes— of Karadja Ahmet and Karaca Ayshe. As Zenginis, 1988 (the most systematic till now —though somehow ethnocentric— researcher into Bektashism in Greek Thrace) informs us, the turbe of Karadja Ahmet, having by it an inscription dated 1300 AH/1882 AD, has been part of the Tekke Djamisi mosque at least since the mid-1960s. The tekke of Karadja Ayshe —also named tekke of Osoika, after the hill on which it stands— is a small (5x7m) stone building with a stone carved grave inside, by which village women would often gather and read a ceremonial prayer (mevlit). By the turbes of Karadja Ahmet no typical Bektashi activity has been reported.

The tekke of Hasip Baba

In the eastern part of the town of Xanthi (also called Isketse by the Turkish speakers), inhabited both by Christians and (Sunni) Muslims, and on the junction between Stratou Ave. and H. Kopsida St., lies the tekke of Hasip Baba. Until the early 1990s when the town plan was implemented (new streets and a block of flats were built just by the turbe), the tekke covered a relatively extensive area. In the tekke’s yard there were two graves of two former postneshin: that of Hadji Salim baba and that of Arif baba, both dated 1320 AH /1902 AD.

What still stands nowadays is the turbe of Hasip Baba, while outside the turbe and just before the entrance, there are two more graves.

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105 It is not clear, however, whether this is the date of death of Karadja Ahmet or the date the inscription was made.
107 As ZEGKINIS, 1988: 217 informs us. They both had at the top of the tombstone the ethemi taj.
108 In this text, by saying «nowadays» —and if not else defined— I refer to the year 2005.
The one with the typical twelve-fold Bektashi mitre/ kulah sculpted at
the top of the tombstone and a teslim tash in the centre of the tombstone
belongs to Ibrahim baba, who died in 1311 AH/ 1893 AD. The other
one belongs to Hasim Bey, a rich landowner from Xanthi who owned
the land on which the tekke was built and died in 1340 AH/ 1921 AD.

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

In the summer of 2004 in the turbe and by the grave there were lots
of offerings: pieces of green fabric, a large number of chaplets, candles,
pairs of clogs etc., while close to the cypress tree by the entrance of the
turbe there were signs of a recently sacrificed animal/ kurban. I estimate
that they are all connected to expressions of folk religious beliefs. No
traces of a Bektashi community or signs of typical Bektashi practices
were noticed, probably due to the fact that the Bektashis of the area
have been assimilated/ “Sunnified” or have migrated to Turkey.

The tekke of Küükülü Baba

By the village of Selino (also called Kereviz by the Turkish speakers),
some 25 km SE of Xanthi, inhabited by Christians only, lies the turbe of Küükülü Baba: a carved stone octagonal building of elaborate design
and dome cover, having no inscriptions at all, possibly built in the 15th
century. Obviously it was part of a cluster that no longer exists,
although there is no clear indication that it belongs to the Bektashi cul-
ture. When I visited the monument in the summer of 1999, on the west-

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109 It is not clear whether that was also the date of death of Hasip Baba. The inscrip-
tions, transliterated in Latin letters and translated in Greek, are fully quoted by Zeckinis,

110 Even if we take into consideration that the previous caretaker used to light a can-
dle by Hasip Baba’s grave every Thursday night. The caretaker was an old Sunni man
from a mountain village of Xanthi and for many years —until his death in 2003— he
lived in the turbe, with the permission, as he stated, of the family that previously owned
the wider area and the mansion by the turbe, living now in Turkey.

111 Zeckinis, 1988 : 226, based on Ayverdi.
ern side there were some remains of a Muslim grave, which was
destroyed by treasure-seekers and repaired in a makeshift manner,
covered by kerchiefs, having by it as offerings bottles of water, (tra-
ditional straw) brooms, pairs of clogs, candles, pieces of bread and coins.
On the eastern side of the turbe, there were the icons of Holy Mary and
St. George, a candelabrum and lots of candles\textsuperscript{112}, while outside the turbe there were relatively fresh signs of a kurban —mainly of cooking and
consumption of meat. When I revisited the site in 2004, it was com-
pletely deserted. No “fresh” offerings existed, and the icons and the
candelabrum were missing. Besides, an asphalt road to the tekke was
built, a sign that local authorities consider the monument to be ready for
“development”.

The tekke of Kirklar in Genissea

In the village of Genissea (also called Yenidje by the Turkish speak-
ers), 12 km SSE of Xanthi, inhabited half by Christians and half by
(Sunni) Muslims, in the neighbourhood named “Kirklar” [“the Forty” in Turkish] lies the turbe of Kaygusuz Sultan.

Two inscriptions (one on the tombstone, half buried, and the other
above the gate, dated 1265 AH/ 1848 AD) refer to Kaygusuz Sultan.\textsuperscript{113}

On the left wall there hangs an axe/ teber with the word “Allah” inscribed on it, while the existence of various offerings —towels, chap-
lets, (traditional straw) brooms, pitchers, bottles with water, etc.—
shows that the turbe is connected with folk religious practices.

The tekke of Tashlik in Petrota

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

\textsuperscript{112} Wherever in this text I refer to candles I mean those white (paraffin), some 15 cm
high, industrially-made candles —the modern “successors” of the tallow wax— used by
heterodox Muslims to light by the turbes, totally different in colour and shape from the
wax candles used as a rule by the Christians of the area.

\textsuperscript{113} The inscriptions, transliterated in Latin letters and translated in Greek, are fully
quoted by ZEGKINIS, 1988: 223.
The tekke of Seyyid Ali Sultan or Kizil Deli

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

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

In the centre of the turbe lies the grave of Seyyid Ali, a wooden coffin covered by green fabric (on which people often place as offerings towels, kerchiefs etc.), having on its eastern side, under the cover and in a plastic bag, a piece of red thick woolen cloth, according to the tradition a part of Seyyid Ali Sultan’s clog/ hirka. A short rail surrounds the coffin. Around it there are 12 candlesticks, and next to it, on the right side, a tray with a jug of water and three small glasses, close to a Koran, while the wall is hung with inscriptions in Arabic with the words “Allah”, “Muhammed”, “Ali”, “Hasan” and “Husein”. Adjacent to the turbe is a small praying place/ mesdjit with mihrab. Close to the turbe — mesdjit building, on the left, there is a large cook-house/ ash evi, while on the right lies the meydan joined to a large room were the collective meals (muhabbet) take place114.

Upon entering the recently restored115 meydan, one can see on the floor a big flat white stone with a candlestick on it, half-covering a similar dark brown-red stone. On the left there is a huge fireplace, close to which there is a small red carpet with 11 candlesticks on it. The entire room next to the meydan is covered by carpets, with lots of pillows, mattresses and blankets in one corner and a small library in another corner, while the walls are hung with two old instruments (saz), icons of imam Ali and recent hand-written inscriptions in Arabic (in the Ottoman language?).116

114 Moreover, close to the cook-house there are two slaughter-houses, while in various locations there are stables.

115 Around 2002 the wooden ceiling was replaced, a wooden floor was fitted over the existing earthen one and —most importantly—the two slot-shaped windows on the south wall gave their place to two large windows, which give a symbolic “accessibility” and “transparency” to the place.

116 “Presents” of the postnishin of the Otman Baba tekke given to the caretaker’s family members during their visit to Southern Bulgaria in 2003.
At the north side of the cluster there is a big building called Pasha Konagi, possibly quarters for babas in the past, where nowadays the caretaker (the devoted and worthy of bearing the title of “the guard of the mausoleum”/ turbedar) Müslim Tsolak and his family live. At the south side, behind the turbe, there is a graveyard, where many former postnishi are buried -the oldest inscribed tombstone dates back to 1160 AH/ 1747 AD. There are two more graveyards some 100m east of the tekke perimeter\textsuperscript{117}.

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

The history of this tekke is obscure. The fact that at least two tombstones of the graveyard outside the Kizil Deli tekke in Roussa, dated around 1200 AH/ 1786 AD, refer to the “upper tekke” using the word bala (“upper” in Persian) shows that in the end of the 18th century the Ashagi tekke still operated. The existence and operation of the “lower tekke” is recorded in 1826. It seems that around that time the buildings of the tekke were deliberately demolished, since shortly after 1826 most of its property was sold off and the new owners decided to bring down the buildings and sell the building material (Faroqhi, 1976). Everything (location and informers) suggests that at that site there was a relatively large cluster, most probably destroyed in the early 20th century. What exists now (2004) is an octagonal stone-built turbe, restored around 1990, with a grave inside; a piece of ground 1x2.5 m surrounded by a short wall, with remains of undated old tombstones on two sides, but no typical Bektashi mark on them. On the short wall there are 12 flat stone candlesticks, usually with half-burned white candles of them. Outside the turbe there are also some parts of other old tombstones; one in Arabic, another reading “Süleyman dede, Safer 1220” and another one —on the roof!— reading “Abdullah dede 1220”.\textsuperscript{118}

\textsuperscript{117} The inscriptions on some tombstones, as well as the inscription over the meydangate mentioned above, transliterated in Latin and translated in Greek, are fully quoted by ZEGKINIS, 1988: 180, 191-195.

\textsuperscript{118} The Persian and Arabic script was read by the Japanese Prof. Kozo Itani, when we visited the area in the summer of 2004 together with the ethnomusicologist Mitsuru Saito for field research in Bektashism.
At the time the Kizil Deli tekke was founded, extensive lands were assigned to (the founder of) it by the Sultans, actually establishing a religious and pious foundation/vakuf. This land was confiscated after the 1826 reforms of Sultan Mahmud II, but everything shows that the tekke “recovered” fully after 1840. By the end of the 19th century the tekke seemed to be in a good financial condition, having about 80 dervishes, some 2,500 sheep, 200 cows, 50 horses, and 25 couples of water buffaloes, as well as 1,458,000 sq.m. of fields, 70,000 sq.m. of vineyards and a wine-press, 55,000 sq.m. of orchards, 5 water-mills, 15 buildings, 8 stables, 8 granaries, 3 ovens, an oil and soap workshop etc.

In the four first decades of the 20th century, the tekke suffered many hard blows. As a result of the antagonism between Bulgarian and Turkish irregular troops over the control of the area and the Bulgarian occupation of Western Thrace in the years 1913-1919, many locals left the area and their settlements were destroyed. In the years 1925-1940 the area of the tekke was taken possession of, used mainly as stables and finally semi-destroyed by a large group of Greek semi-nomadic/moving shepherds (Sarakatsani/Karakatsani) under the leadership of the notorious “Gika”. Besides, through a vague process and in the name of protection (?!), all the tekke lands were transferred in the 1960s (?) to a person now living in Turkey, who unsuccessfully attempted to sell them. Nowadays the tekke is considered to be a vakuf connected to the mosque of the village of Roussa, has only been left with a few square metres of land and its revenues fully depend on the funds the local Bektashis are in a position to raise.

In the area having the tekke of Seyyid Ali Sultan as a geographical and spiritual centre, a lot of activities connected to the Bektashi culture

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119 See the detailed discussion in ZEGKINIS, 1988: 180-185, with references to Ottoman archives.
120 KAVAK, 2005.
121 Finally, in 1920 Western Thrace was annexed to Greece.
122 Field research findings. See also KAVAK, 2005.
123 Field research findings.
124 In this text, by saying «nowadays» — and if not else defined — I refer to the year 2005.
125 Under the legal protection regime Muslim pious foundations (vakufs) enjoy in Thrace, as was first provided for in Act 2345/1920 and finalised in Act 1091/1980 and the relevant decrees of 1990 and 1991 (TSITSELIKIS).
126 The villages of the area inhabited only or partly by Bektashis are: Mirtiski...
take place, most importantly the various kurbans from Spring to Autumn every year,\textsuperscript{127} by the tombs/ yatir of local saints. The “cycle” opens with the kurbans on the day of Hederlez (May 6) in various places, among them by the Ashagi tekke. The next big kurban —the Kirk Kurbani— is some 40 days later, by the tombs of the “Gaziler” close to the village of Chloi (also called Ebilköy by the Turkish speakers and/or (H)Ebilovo by the Slav speakers), some 20 km W of the Kizil Deli tekke, followed by the kurban by the tomb of Ali Baba, in the village of Ano Kambi (also called Yukari Kamberler by the Turkish speakers), some 110 days after Hederlez. Numerous other kurbans take place in the meantime\textsuperscript{128}. The kurban by the tomb of Mursal Baba, some 3 km W of the tekke (November 8, the day of Kasim) closes the “cycle”, while the biggest kurban is the one taking place in the tekke on 13\textsuperscript{th} Muharrem every year, where almost all the Bektashis of the area gather.\textsuperscript{129} It is worth mentioning that in some kurbans, especially those of Hederlez in Ashagi tekke and Mursal Baba\textsuperscript{130}, Christians from the nearby villages participate in the feast, too, and eat the meat of the kurban with pleasure, most of them having a rather vague perception of the whole thing, but knowing and accepting that it is in the name and memory of a Muslim saint. The Sunni people of the area, who usually visit the feast site in hundreds, do not usually ask to eat the meat of the kurban, perhaps perceiving it as forbidden by the religion (haram), since the animals are not slaughtered according to the Sunni/ orthodox “protocol”.

(Musadjik), Hloi (Hebilköy), Kehros (Merkoz), Hamilo (Salincak), Ano Kampi (Yukari Kamberler), Goniko (Babalar), Rushenler (Roussa), Mesimeri (Mesimleri), Spano (Köseler), Mikraki (Kütüklü), Siddirochori (Tsilingir mahalle), Megalo Derio (Büyükdere) etc. In parenthesis the old/ Turkish names.

\textsuperscript{127} One has to bear in mind that this is a mountain area at an altitude of over 1,000 metres, with heavy winters and snowfalls, which made travelling during wintertime impossible in the past.

\textsuperscript{128} Detailed presentation in V. RAHIOGLU, 2000.

\textsuperscript{129} To illustrate the size of that feast, in the year 1999 I counted more than 100 sheep, goats and cows offered by the people and sacrificed in this kurban.

\textsuperscript{130} The special symbolism of those days needs to be underlined here. Hederlez—an important day to heterodox Islam since, according to the tradition, on that day Heder/Hidir meets prophet Elias—on May 6 (the day of the celebration of the memory of St. George according to the old Christian Orthodox/ Julian calendar which was in effect in Greece till 1923) is 45 days after the Spring solstice and marks the beginning of Summer. Accordingly, Kasim, on November 8 (the day of the celebration of the memory of St. Demitrios according to the old Christian Orthodox calendar) is 45 days after the Autumn solstice and marks the beginning of Winter, while the Sechek feast is in mid-summer close to the day of the celebration of the memory of prophet Elias according to the old Christian Orthodox calendar.
Another feast connected to the local Bektashi culture but not having straight religious connotations is the wrestling festival of Sechek, which is held in a plateau near the village of Ano Kambi in the beginning of August, traditionally under the directions of the “Lord of the plateau” (yayla agasi). In the year 1996 the “Sechek Cultural Association” was established and started undertaking the organisation of this feast and of some kurbans\(^{131}\). Among other things, they introduced some “modernisation measures”\(^{132}\) which seem to have disappointed a number of local Bektashis.

Besides, as part of a general modernisation process\(^{133}\) we can consider the visit/pilgrimage of some Bulgarian Bektashis (from villages close to the Greek border, “belonging” traditionally to the tekke of Kizil Deli) to the tekke in 2004 and 2005, at the invitation of the association and with the “tactful” support of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.\(^{134}\)

Of course, and apart from all these activities, the Bektashis of the area follow their own liturgical life, accessible only to the initiated. It seems, however, that this tradition is weakening\(^{135}\); as a result, the whole thing is slipping towards a folk religious practice, perhaps partly due to a pro-

\(^{131}\) It should be pointed out that all these big events/feasts are an excellent opportunity for a public confrontation between the Greek and the Turkish nationalism. The Turkish State, investing in the strong cultural bonds people of the area have with Turkey, seems to guide and support (mainly through the Turkish consulate in Komotini) the “Sechek Association”, facilitates the presence of folk dancers and musicians from Turkey etc. At the same time Greece, whose citizens —some of the poorest and most neglected, at that—are the participants in those feasts, declares its existence and will through the presence of Prefects and Mayors, who usually promise to finance infrastructure works. The evolution of the panyir/ feast of Sechek during the last decade was presented (with the help of visual material) and analysed by Miranda Terzopoulou, under the title “Identity, politics and the sacred: the evolution of a Bektashi panyir in Greek Thrace” in the 1\(^{st}\) International Symposium on Alevism and Bektashism, organised by the department of Theology of the Suleyman Demirel University, 28-30 September 2005, in Isparta, Turkey.

\(^{132}\) E.g. the Sechek feast is now held on the first week-end of August and not in mid-week, as traditionally was the case.

\(^{133}\) Since it takes place in this new contemporary framework, despite the fact that it could also be read as a continuation of older practices, before the Greek and the Bulgarian States were created or borders were traced.

\(^{134}\) A senior official of which (the vice consul of the Turkish consulate of Komotini) was present and welcomed the Bulgarians in their last visit, in November 2005.

\(^{135}\) On that issue there is limited “public” knowledge, since the people of the area strongly avoid discussing such issues. Once, in the mid-1990s, the leadership got to the point of “punishing” the member of the community Huseyin Kamber who dared publish a rather general article in the local Turkish newspaper Ileri, which is published in Komotini (no. 816/ 29 of September 1995 and no 817/ 6 of October 1995).
gressive “Sunnification” and partly due to the lack of local Bektashi scholars capable and willing to cultivate and spread an elaborate Bektashi knowledge.

**Concluding remarks**

- The significant Bektashi presence in Central and Northern Greece in the early 20th century has progressively shrunk, mainly due to the Greek-Turkish population exchange and the bad Greek-Albanian relations, especially during the period 1940-1990. Nowadays the only noticeable presence is that of some 3,000 rural Bektashis living around the tekke of Kizil Deli.

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

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

- The presence and the action of Albanian Bektashi migrant workers in Greece could be viewed as the beginning of a revival of Bektashism in Central Greece. Such a development might give rise to suspicion,

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136 It is worth mentioning that —according to field research findings— nowadays, in most of the cases (ceremonial and collective meals), the people of the area, most probably in an attempt to avoid being blamed by the Sunnis, replace alcohol (wine or raki) with cola type refreshments.
concern or even hostility among authorities in Greece, and alarm or even mobilise certain (nationalistic) circles.

– The revival of another Bektashi network is also taking place in Thrace, since rural Bektashis of the same ethnic-sect background from Turkish, Bulgarian and Greek Thrace get together, having as a centre (or as a reference point) the tekke of Kizil Deli. Turkey supports this network and promotes through it (the official form of) Alevi-Bektashi culture, while building a platform on which wider cultural (potentially along with other) issues could be promoted.
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Giorgos MAVROMMATIS, *Bektish in 20th Century Greece*

In the area defined today as Greece, during the late Ottoman period there was a significant presence of Bektashi communities. This study, using concepts, methods and tools from the fields of history, social anthropology and political sciences, based on field research and synthesising mostly Greek bibliographical information and data mainly from local history, aims at (re)constructing the historical and social framework in which the Bektashis acted in Greece and at describing the main architectural vestiges along with the history of the communities, as well as the Bektashi relations with the surrounding communities, focusing on those which still existed and maintained some kind of life during the 20th century. It concludes with remarks on the influence the evolution of the Greek-Turkish and the Greek-Albanian relations had on the Bektashi communities and with comments on the old and new Bektashi networks in Greece.

Giorgos MAVROMMATIS, *Les Bektachis en Grèce au XXᵉ siècle*

Dans l’espace aujourd’hui défini comme la Grèce, pendant la période ottomane tardive, il y eut une présence significative des communautés bektachies. Cette étude, utilisant les concepts, méthodes et outils des champs de l’histoire, de l’anthropologie sociale et des sciences politiques, basée sur une recherche de terrain et synthétisant la plupart des données et informations bibliographiques grecques, principalement celles de l’histoire locale, vise à (re)construire le cadre historique et social dans lequel les Bektachis agirent en Grèce et à décrire les principaux vestiges architecturaux et l’histoire des communautés, ainsi que les relations des Bektachis avec les communautés environnantes, en insistant sur celles qui existent encore et ont maintenu une certaine vie pendant le XXᵉ siècle. Elle conclut par des remarques sur l’influence que l’évolution des relations gréco-turques et albano-grecques eurent sur les communautés bektachies et par des commentaires sur les anciens et nouveaux réseaux bektachis en Grèce.