Review: [Untitled]

Reviewed Work(s):

*Der Bektaschi-Orden in Anatolien (vom späten fünfzehnten Jahrhundert bis 1826.*) by Suraiya Faroqhi

F. De Jong


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The second line could be corrected to:

Ayagar sakaln an akipurge yolalam

365: Read: ol kadar uypis ulepsi kim.

JOHN E. WALSH


This book is basically a source-critical study and not a history of the Bektashi order as the title seems to suggest. Following an introduction, the first of the four chapters this study contains discusses the relevant data from Eviya Celebi's Segahname in conjunction with archival materials, while focusing upon such variables as the pattern of urban settlements, the road system, the distribution of the medreses and the Kizilbaş movement, in relation to the historical spread and the distribution of the Bektashi tekkes in Anatolia. Throughout the discussion the author makes explicit the defective nature of the available source materials and reaches the conclusion that none of the variables discussed can be shown conclusively to stand in a functional relationship with the geographical spread of the Bektashi tekkes and the changes therein.

The importance of the tekke of Abdal Musa in Elmalı and the quality of the available documentation concerning this establishment, make it central to the discussion of the Bektashi tekke as an economic unit, which is presented in the second chapter. Here, a considerable amount of data is presented on various aspects of the ownership of land and other real estate by the tekke, on modes and output of agricultural production and on the role of the tekkes as money-lenders. In order to arrive at an appreciation of the economic importance of the tekke of Abdal Musa, a comparison is made between its assets and the assets of one of the aya of the area, Tekelioğlu Mehmed Paşa. This comparison bears out the relatively limited degree of economic importance of the tekke in absolute terms. The limitations of the source materials are stressed continually and account for the fact that no general conclusions concerning the economic significance of the Bektashi tekkes can be presented. In addition, the author points towards the lack of more fundamental studies in the economic history of Anatolia as being one of the main obstacles on the way towards such conclusions. In this chapter it is not always clear whether the term 'Besitz' (possessions) refers to real estate owned by a tekke or also to the evkaf established in its favour and controlled or managed by its şeyh. Equally, and in conjunction with this imprecision, it is unclear whether the
offices of zaviyedari/ı turbadar and mütevelli of the evkaf of a zaviye were normally separate or held by one and the same person. In this context one also wonders about the possible existence of the common distinction between public (khayri) and family (abili) vakif. If such a distinction could be established, it would doubtlessly place in a different perspective some of the disputes about management and administration of such pious foundations noted in the third chapter.

Here, the discussion centres upon the social foundations of the Bektashi tekkes. It is interesting that against what has become generally accepted fact, that is, the existence of firm links between the Janissary Corps and the Bektashi Order, the author suggests that the extent and the importance of this relationship has been limited. Historically, the authority of the Dede Baba residing in Hacibektas increased from the mid seventeenth century onwards. The organization itself seems to have been supported by the State in order to exercise control in a more effective way. The authority of the de jure head of the order remained ambivalent, however, since his privilege of proposing candidates for appointment and dismissal as heads of tekkes by the sultan, was not always honoured and involvement of the local kadil in appointment procedures was frequent.

Partly as a concession to the extremely şeriat-minded ulama, Sultan Mahmud II ordered the dismantling of the Bektashi organization. According to the theory advanced by the author, the Sultan did so since he needed the ulama's co-operation in his programme of military and administrative reforms. This support he hoped to obtain by acting against this non-sunni brotherhood while at the same time offering the ulama greater control over the sunni-orders, as part of a general policy aiming at establishing central control over these orders. The liquidation of the Bektashi order, which had become possible as soon as the dismantling of the Janissary Corps had resulted in its political isolation, was also to serve as an example to those contemplating resistance to this policy.

In addition, it is suggested that the Sultan, following the example of Muhammad 'Ali in Egypt, was contemplating a general abolition of evkaf, in order to mobilize the funds necessary for financing the army. As a prelude, which was also conceived as an experiment designed to test reactions, the evkaf of the Bektashi order were liquidated and sold in small plots, possibly with the aim of strengthening the position of the small and middle-sized landowners vis-à-vis the large landowning dyans. This hypothesis undoubtedly has the merit of pointing towards the possible political complexities underlying the suppression of the Bektashi Order which has hitherto always been looked upon as having taken place in consequence of its links with the Janissaries.

The merit of the book as a whole would seem to be of a similar nature: it points towards problems and notes the complexities involved in finding adequate answers, rather than offering solutions. In addition, it contains useful data for anyone working on the history of Şafi orders in the Islamic world in general or in the Ottoman Empire in particular. One could only have wished that the author had given the dates of the records used. The consistent absence of such dates makes it frequently impossible to locate in time the affairs discussed. This does not make matters easy for those who are dependent upon Faroqhi's references for their own studies.

F. DE JONG


Süleyman the Magnificent is remembered by the Turks as Süleyman the Great (Koca Nigânci), an appellation usually rendered 'the Lawgiver'. He owes this title mainly to the labours of two of his servants, the Mufti Abî'l-Su'tud, the exponent of the function of the shari'a within the state apparatus, and Celâlzâde Muştâfâ, the 'Great' (Koca) Nişânî, who was responsible for the oversight of the remarkably thorough and efficient Ottoman bureaucracy. Having been private secretary to the Great Vizier Piri Pasha from 1518 to 1523 and thereafter to his successor İbrahîm, Celâlzâde was Re'is'i'il-kütâb from 1525 to 1534 and then Nişânî until 1557, with a further year in that office after Süleyman's death. Thus, we may presume, he had been present at all meetings of the Divân, the Council of State, for over 30 years. It is not surprising then that his history of the reign of Süleyman was always highly esteemed, serving as a main source for (among others) 'Ali, Peçevi and Hammer. With his professional concern for the proper presentation of documents, Celâlzâde would have been highly gratified to see his work at last published in this most handsome format.

The text here published is a facsimile of the Berlin manuscript (no. 144 in Professor Barbara Flemming's catalogue), of 532 fols., undated but early, and written in an attractive and clear hand by a careful copyist. The text-face is reduced by about a quarter, so that one opening is accommodated in each page, but is easily legible. Dr. Kappert's introduction deals with the author's life, the place occupied by his work in Ottoman historiography, and its style. She then describes (pp. 41-51) 17 MSS, which she divides, convincingly, into three groups, with the Berlin MS (B) standing in the oldest Group One. A clear and succinct overview of the contents (pp. 52-102) is followed by a selective list of variant readings.