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FUTUWWA TRADITIONS IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

AKHIS, BEKTASHI DERVISHES, AND CRAFTSMEN

G. G. ARNAKIS

When the adventurous traveler of Tangier, Abu Abd Allah Ibn Battuta, arrived at Attalia in the beginning of his Anatolian tour early in 1333 and took up his residence in the Moslem seminary of the town, he was visited by a young Turk of unpretentious appearance who invited him and his company to dinner. The Moorish traveler's attitude was one of condescending reluctance, for, as he tells us, he was loath to burden the finances of a man who seemed to be anything but wealthy. He was reassured, however, by the sheikh in charge of the school, who hastened to inform him that the hospitable Turk was the leader of the local Akhiyat al-Fityan, or the Brotherhood of Youth, which, as the traveler learned afterward, existed in every important city of Asia Minor. In Attalia it had a membership of about two hundred. They were commonly mentioned as Akhi, or Brethren.

The dinner party in question was Ibn Battuta's first contact with the Akhis, and Ibn Battuta, in turn, became our first source of information concerning the Brotherhood. As he pursued his journey from town to town in the Anatolian Turkish emirates, he had occasion to become acquainted with more than a dozen chapters of the Akhiyat al-Fityan and to learn the organization's aims and practices. When, back in Morocco, many years later, he dictated the recollections of his journeys in the three continents, he did not fail to describe the Akhis of Anatolia. Thus, Ibn Battuta's Travels came to shed new light upon one of the darkest corners of early Turkish history at a time when scholarship, headed by Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall (1774–1856), seemed to have fully exploited all the known sources, yet without penetrating beyond the legends and traditions which enveloped the heroic personalities of Osman, Orhan, and their contemporaries.

1 Jean Dony, in his brief article, "Futuwwet-name et romans de chevalerie turcs," Journal asiatique, XI series, XVI (1920), 152–53, pointed out that originally the word akhi was not the Arabic equivalent of "brother" (akhi), but the Eastern Turkish word ağ, which meant, as an adjective, "generous, chivalrous," and, at a kûn, "chivalry," "sanctity," "corps de métier." It is possible that Ibn Battuta confused the word ağ, which, being Turkish, was unknown to him, with his familiar Arabic akhi. The latter prevailed as designation of the members of the society, as the original Turkish name fell into disuse, and the term was generally taken to mean "brother." Franz Taeschner, in his "Beiträge zur Geschichte der Akhis in Anatolien," Islamica, IV (1920), 15, suggests that there was a semantological fusion of the two words, as in the instance of modern, the title of Jełęeddin Rumi and others, which originally meant "our lord" and later signified "wise man" or "scholar." Cf. Enno Littmann, "Äusserformen in erweiteter Bedeutung," Nachrichten von der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, Philosophisch-historische Klasse (1916), P. 192.

For a long time, however, Ibn Battuta's testimony remained unnoticed by historians. It was only as late as the interwar period that scholars began to realize that our knowledge of the Akhi Association could help us understand some of the most intricate aspects of the great upheaval that took place in Asia Minor between the first Mongol invasion and the establishment of the Turks on the Aegean littoral. Such historical facts as the foundation of the Osmanli state in northwestern Anatolia, cradle of the virile Lascarid Empire until 1261, the growth of other Turkish principalities in lands that were equally Greek at the opening of the Palaeologian era, the large-scale Islamization of Asian and European peasants and townspeople alike, and the stability of the advanced Turkish positions, from which they were able to invade Europe without losing their hold on Asia Minor—facts that baffled the historians of earlier times—are less enigmatic today in the light of what Ibn Battuta has reported concerning the dynamics of fourteenth-century Moslem-Turkish society.

What he has to say about the Brotherhood can be classified under three main headings, corresponding to each of the three aspects of its group life: religious, socioeconomic, and political. It must be admitted as a matter of course that these headings do not suggest any clear lines of demarcation. The three modes of expression of Akhi group-consciousness are closely interrelated, and it is merely as a result of the challenge of environment that at times one of them appears more pronounced than the other. For example, when the Turks were expanding into Christian areas, the religious phase seemed to take precedence to such a degree as to lead one into thinking that the Akhiyat al-Fityan was primarily devoted to the spread of Islam. At times they took up arms in defense of the Moslem faith, though they were by no means a military organization. Similarly, whenever civil government was weak or inadequate, the Akhis came to the fore as a political power. Ibn Battuta reports that in towns where there was no "sultan" or emir, one of the Akhis acted as governor, having the same authority and enjoying the same prestige as the ruler. Yet, while exercising an undeniable political and religious influence, the Akhis, at least during their ascendancy, kept their socioeconomic setup that impressed the Moroccan traveler so much. Until the time of their decline, in the latter part of the fourteenth century, they remained a cohesive, well-integrated communal organization, adhering to the fundamental principles of the futuwwa.

The futuwwa (Turk. futuved) has been defined as the aggregate of all those virtues which distinguish the chivalrous young man, especially nobility of manner and generosity. A generous, hospitable,

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upright, and heroic Moslem who belonged to an association that had adopted a definite liturgical or ritualistic procedure was a fata, or "young man." It is very probable that futuwa associations in one form or another played a part in the establishment of Moslem rule in the Near East in earlier times, especially in the ninth century, when they appear as volunteer warrior guilds. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries with Fatimite support, the futuwa way of life dominated the guilds practically all over Islam. But it was Caliph Nasir (1180-1225), who, under the influence of a mystic (sufi), revived and reorganized the futuwa as an order of chivalry.\(^7\) Franz Tassenhauer discerns a twofold aim in the caliph's action—first, to strengthen the political position of the Abbasids and, second, to lessen the tension between hostile religious groups, particularly between the Sunnis and the Shiites.\(^8\) It is still debatable to what extent the new futuwa was an outgrowth of Western influences that intruded in the Near East at the time of the Crusades. In a recent article Gérald Salinger\(^9\) pointed out that the term "order of chivalry" has been misused in connection with the adherents of the futuwa, since there is only a superficial resemblance between European knighthood and the fityan (pl. of fata). In any case, it is all too easy to see that, unlike Western feudal institutions, which had their roots in the system of land tenure and sought to achieve socioeconomic stability, the futuwa was a dynamic movement whose purpose it was to implement a religion and an ideology not only in the dar al-Islam but also, and more conspicuously so, in the dar al-harb. There is no doubt that in times of conflict the futuwa was much more likely to flourish in the frontier zone than in the more settled world of the Faithful.\(^10\)

In Asia Minor the Akhiyat-al-Fityan appeared as the most vital realization of futuwa ideology from the middle of the thirteenth century to the last quarter of the fourteenth—that is, from the morrow of the defeat of the Rum Seljuks by the Mongols until the time when Anatolian Turkish society assumed a stable character. The Mongol invasion had torn down the spiritual barriers between Sunni Islam, the religion of the upper classes, and the Shi'ah of the masses. At the same time it had brought about a dislocation of political power from the center to the frontier zones.\(^11\) During this crisis, when Anatolian Turkish society came so close to disintegration and yet managed to come out with new life, the Akhis were a great power. But when the incorporation of the western emirates was under way, in the reign of Murad I and Bayazid the Thunderbolt, the Akhiyat was in a state of decline. As it might be expected under an autocratic regime, it was the political

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\(^7\) Tassenhauer, "Der Anteil des Sufismus an der Formung des Futuwaladales," Der Islam, XXIV (1937), 63. Tassenhauer's term for Nasir's organization is Odermäktetext oder Sächliche Kettenband, while the earlier warrior guilds are styled as niederer Genskampfzust. Cf. Louis Massingham, "Gulds - Islamic," Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, VII (1932), 215-216, and "Le Futuwa ou 'pacce d' honneur arsienal' entre travailleurs musulmans et paysans," La Nouvelle Revue, IV (1932), 171-198. Massingham says (p. 176) that Nasir used the futuwa to form a "sourd order of chivalry," something like the modern system of honorary decorations—a fact that tended to obscure what he calls the "protestation" nature of the brotherhoods. For outstanding traits of these societies that have survived until the present, see E. S. Vidal, "Religious Brotherhoods in Moroccan Politics," Middle East Journal, IV (1950), 427-446, especially pp. 428-91 and 442-43.

\(^8\) Tassenhauer, "Islamisches Odermäktetext zur Zeit der Kreuzzüge," Die Welt als Geschichte, IV (1936), 403.

\(^9\) "Was the Futuwa an Oriental Form of Chivalry?" Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, XCIV (1950), 491-93.


aspects of the organization that were the first to disappear. Remnants of the Fraternity's socioeconomic life lingered on for a few decades, some of them eventually finding their way into various guilds of craftsmen, while the main body of their religious tenets was perpetuated by the dervishes of the Mevlevi, Khalveti, and Bektashi orders.12

Of these three groups, the Bektashis are the ones who come nearest to the spirit and the objectives of the Akhis. The similarities between the two movements are such as to lead one to the conclusion that the Bektashiyeh is the spiritual successor of the Akhiyat al-Fitiyan. In the following pages we shall trace the rise and the decline of the Akhi Association, its fusion with kindred institutions, and the part that Akhis related groups played in the formation of Ottoman society in Asia Minor and in the Balkans.

At the time of Ibn Battuta's visit the outstanding political aspect of the Akhiyat al-Fitiyan was their determination "to crush the tyrants and to kill the satellites of tyranny and the miscreants who join with them."13 This may be an echo of earlier struggle under Karmathian influences. Furthermore, we know that not infrequently Moslem states suspected the guilds of revolutionary agitation and religious heresy and sought to control them by means of the urban police (hisba), which was composed of loyal Sunnites.14 On the other hand, the guilds accused the state of oppression and tried to find comfort in sufism. Thus, there was a tendency toward antagonism between the guilds and the governments all over the Moslem Near East. Nevertheless, Ibn Battuta's statement, made with particular reference to Anatolia, indicates clearly that the Akhis acted as a check on the absolutist trends of local emirs. At the same time the relations of Akhis and emirs appear to be harmonious. Not only do we hear nothing about conflicts between the Fraternity and the Turkish governors, but cases are mentioned when the two cooperate. In addition to the statement cited above that an Akhi would normally replace an absence ruler, Ibn Battuta recalls instances of collaboration in smaller matters, which are nonetheless indicative of the general trend. At Ladhik (Laodicea), for example, the Akhis, who had a street squabble before they could decide which of the two local chapters would entertain him first, sent word to the sultan about his arrival, and the sultan granted him an audience the following day.15 At Brusa, the meeting held in the Association's headquarters was attended by the high officials of Orhan's realm, the sultan himself being out of town.16 Even more convincing is the information that Akhi Sherif Hilseyin held sway at Aksearay17 and Akhi Emir Ali at Kayseri.18 In the court of Emir Eretma, at Sivas, Akhi Tchelébi was a dominant personality.19 Another member of the Brotherhood was kadi at Konya.20 The office of kadi was second in influence to the sultanate and was often the surest way to it. Taeschner believes that the Akhis of Ankara exercised their administrative authority under the guise of the kadi.21

In that city, which Ibn Battuta by-passed in 1333, leading Akhis appeared as public benefactors and builders of mosques as early as 689 A.H. (A.D.

15 Voyages, II, 272.
16 Ibid., p. 288.
17 Ibid., p. 318.
18 Ibid., pp. 290-91.
19 Ibid., p. 285.
20 Ibid., p. 281.
21 "Beitrage," Islamica, IV, 11.
1290), as is shown by the inscription on the mimbar of Aslanhane Jamissi. At Ankara the regime of the Akhis continued until 1361, when Murad I annexed the city. There the Brethren, isolated from the rest of the Fraternity, had had a distinct evolution. Even before the advance of the Mongols, they had avoided entering into the political fabric of the Anatolian Turkish principalities; they had organized a self-sufficient town life; and they had imposed a paternalistic despotism, with themselves as ruling caste. Taeschner speaks of them as a "städtisches Patriziat." In assuming so much responsibility, they drifted away from the popular basis of the original Akhiyat alf-Fityan. Rivalries and dissensions arose among them. Those who remained loyal to the democratic pattern of earlier days tried to undermine the oligarchy that had sprung up among them, while Murad I played off one faction against another, in an attempt to bring the entire organization under his control. Once he became their master, he could hope to extend his authority over large sections of Anatolia. Before long the governing urban patriciate realized that they were too isolated and too weak to resist Ottoman expansionism. Accused of a conspiracy against the Ottoman government, they were incorporated into the empire, and Murad was recognized as their leader. Murad's autocracy, however, was distasteful to the Akhis; popular discontent increased, and in the reign of his successor, Bayazid the Thunderbolt, it broke into open rebellion. A republic with socialistic tendencies was set up, and it struggled on for almost a decade, while the house of Osman was going through the greatest crisis that it experienced until that time. It was the aftermath of Tamerlane's victory in 1402. The Ankara regime collapsed when Sheikh Bedreddin, the archrebel of Rumeli, was captured and executed at Serres in 1416. One of his chief supporters was Mikhaloghlu Mehmed, son of the Greek collaborationist Köse Mikhal, brother-at-arms of the founder of the Ottoman dynasty. A hundred years before, when the Akhis were very influential in the courts of Osman and Orhan, a revolution like that of Bedreddin would have been improbable, because the early Osmanyits knew how to live harmoniously with potential agitators as well as with their Christian allies of the type of Köse Mikhal. Those were the revolutionary days of the Osmanyits, and Akhis, religious leaders, and discontented Christians were equally welcome in their ranks.

The downfall of the Akhis of Ankara marks the lowest ebb of the political power of the Brotherhood all over Asia Minor. Henceforth, whenever they appeared to be active as a political force, they provoked the animosity of the Osmanis, whose sultan had now grown strong enough to flout the principles of


24 Islamica, IV, 13.

25 Massignon, La Nouvelle Khâ, IV, I., contains on the basis of a paper read by Taeschner in the meeting of the Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft (Bonn, August 1930) that the affiliation of the Turkish sultan (Murad 1) with the fâtimis was much deeper than that of Caliph Nasir. Whatever Murad's devotion to the fâtimi ideal may have been, his policy towards the government of Ankara was dictated by practical considerations, especially by his desire to acquire more territory.

26 See Franz Bahnhöfer, "Schlecht Bedruckte Einführung der Schule des Richters von Solmaw," Der Islam, 31 (1921), 64.

the Fraternity. In the meantime, in Ankara and elsewhere, some Akhis began to own extensive property and the term *ayam* ("owner of large estates") was used to describe them. Subsequently we hear of *ayam ve akhiyan*, and the historian Idris Bilisi, about a hundred years after Murad's death, knew of the Akhis merely as "great landowners" or "village notables." 17

The last we hear of Akhis in politics is in connection with the events of 1423, when two Akhis of Brusa incited Mustafa to revolt against Murad II. 26 Thereafter, the Akhiyat al-Fityan passes into political eclipse. But perhaps it had already served its purpose. All available information leads to the conclusion that as long as it was able to avoid open conflict, as indeed it was in the formative years of western Anatolian Turkish society, it was a democratic power behind the throne, keeping the sultans in line and giving a popular foundation to their authority.

The appeal that the Akhis had among the masses came from their way of life and, more specifically, from their socio-economic setup. To quote Ibn Battuta: "Nowhere in the world will you find men so eager to welcome strangers, so prompt to serve food and to satisfy the wants of others." Elsewhere the Akhis are described as noble-minded, unselﬁsh, compassionate, affectionate, and hospitable. "A stranger coming to them is made to feel as though he were meeting the dearest of his own folk." 22 The rules of the *futuwwa* excluded from membership people of loose morals and questionable practices such as tax-collectors, actors, dancers, fortune-tellers, sorcerers, gamblers, police informers, and wine-dealers. 21 The golden rule of the *futuwwa* was "*iθhar ala nafsīthi*" ("put the other man above thyself"). 22

Such a regime of life contrasted very decidedly with the situation in the Byzantine provinces of Anatolia. There, a variety of factors that tended toward social disintegration had been noticeable as early as 1261, working havoc in town and country. 23 The countryside was infested by robbers and terrorists; the church was split up into warring factions; morals had declined, and corruption was rampant. The Palaeologoi had adopted a policy that was intended to weaken the rural middle classes, which had lent their support to the Lascarids. Wanting to eliminate potential opposition to his dynasty, Michael VIII had virtually wiped out the *aristae* by means of taxation and conscription, while economic pressure was brought to bear upon the small farmers who had emerged during the Lascarid regime. Large estates appeared again, not as the flourishing economic units of the Comneni period, but as a transient phase in the process of economic decay that was undermining the Empire, especially after the intrusion of Western commercialism. 34

In the midst of the confusion of the late 1200's and the early 1300's, the large estates, belonging for the most part to absentee landlords and to monasteries, fell apart, and with their disappearance the last vestiges of Byzantine authority came to an end. Our sources are particu

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17 See Hammer, Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches, I, 599, n. 2, p. 169; cf. Aramakis, op. cit., p. 17, n. 59. Gordievski (Zapiski Koll. Yastek, II, 247) says that the name *ayam* was given to the Akhis because they controlled the *raj* estates.

26 Taechnner, Islamica, IV, 26, 28; Gordievski, Zapiski, II, 242.


23 Thorning, Beitrage, p. 194; Taechnner, Islamica, V, 290; Masson, La Nouvelle Kisa, IV, 174.

24 C. van Asromen, Encyclopaedia de Islam, II, 130; Taechnner, Der Islam, XXIV, 63-64.


larly enlightening as to the encroachments of the peasantry upon the monastic estates. The latter, as a rule immune from taxation and enjoying imperial favor, especially under Andronicus II, had grown to immense proportions as a result of requests by pious people who had despaired of the world. Such people could be counted by the thousands, and their number steadily increased in proportion to the adversities of the Byzantine state.

The growing wealth of the monasteries aroused the destitute to rebellious acts; they raided church estates, carrying away grain supplies, olive oil, cheese, and other foodstuffs. Not infrequently they would carve off valuable slices of land which the monks were unable to recover even by force of arms. The coming of the Turks facilitated the breakup of the large estates, as it is testified by the documents. When the curtain rose again to show the Turks in control of the cities of western Anatolia, there was a noticeable degree of peace in the countryside, and the new rural class, composed of small farmers, had already identified its well-being with the Turkish domination.

During the transition and immediately after it the Akhis exerted their greatest

influence. Their saviye's were not merely local headquarters of the Fraternity but also cultural and religious centers and hostels for the travelers. There the Brethren met in the evenings, after the day's work; they deposited the proceeds of their labors in the common treasury; and they resumed their group life, which began with a common meal. From the Association's treasury they paid for meals, entertainment of strangers, and maintenance of the saviye. Each chapter was under a leader who was addressed as "Akhi." He was elected by the group, but Ibn Battuta records nothing about his term of office or the extent of his powers.

The Moroccan traveler says that the Brethren were unmarried and that they all practiced a trade. However, it is not clear from his words if he thought that they were bachelors by conviction or only incidentally and if they all belonged to the same trade or to different trades. Of course, in a place like Ankara, where a political tradition flourished and family ties were strong, general celibacy was out of the question. At any rate, the genealogy of Akhi Sherefeddin of Ankara may be regarded as sufficient indication that married life was not unusual among Akhis. And though the Akhis of Ankara were by no means typical of the Fraternity, it is a well-known fact that celibacy, an outstanding characteristic of Christian monasticism, was never a general prerequisite of Turkish dervishdom. It is therefore very probable that among the Akhis, too, celibacy was optional, and the Brethren could take the vows or could avoid them.

As far as professional lineup is concerned...

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4 e.g., the Lemba Monastery "had many more estates before the invasion of the godless Agarces" (ibid., IV, 62). Cf. Arnold, op. cit., pp 95-100.

5 Ibn Battuta traveled unmolested over Anatolia in 1333; the warm springs of Isusa were frequented by patients from distant provinces, according to the information of Muhammed al-Umari (d. 1349), Notices etextraits des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque du Roi, XIII (1833), 365; in the early sixteenth century, numerous travelers, going about on peaceful missions, were seen by Bécandron de la Broquiere, Voyage d'ouest mer (1433-1455), ed. Ch. Schéfer (Paris, 1992), p. 151. These and other items of information indicate a peaceful countryside.


7 Toutchkher, Islamica, IV, 36-37; Girdievski, Zapiski, II, 242; Mehmet Fuat Köprüülü, Les Origines de l'Empire Ottoman (Etudes Orientales publiées par l'Institut d'Archéologie de Stamboul, III [Paris, 1935]), p. 109. Köprüülü believes that celibacy was very limited.
cerned, in Attalia—"—and doubtless in other towns—there was one fraternity composed of men of different crafts, as there could never be enough people of the same trade to form a body of considerable strength. Even when the number of craftsmen increased in the midst of a predominantly agrarian population, it is probable that men of different trades cooperated as a unit. As long as the religious factor retained its importance, there could be little difficulty in keeping alive their *esprit de corps*, despite professional variations.

Their group life, as described by Ibn Battuta, suggests the fervor of a spiritual revival or of a recent conversion. After their common meal, he tells us, the Brethren would sing hymns, recite portions of the Koran, dance, and listen to sermons. Some of them would fall into an ecstasy, which to their mystic mind was the consummation of union with God. At Brusa, during the night of the Ashura (the tenth day of Muharrem), the Moroccan traveler witnessed the death of a man in the throes of religious paroxysm in the course of such a dance. The Ashura, preceded by ten days of fasting, is in memory of the death of Huseyn, the son of Ali, and its celebration with such fervor at Brusa indicates Shi'ite loyalties. On the same occasion Ibn Battuta 

*Voyages,* II, 262. Gibb's translation, p. 126: "about two hundred men belonging to different trades."

*Voyages,* II, 262, 270.

"The Arabic word ashura means "the tenth." In Turkey, as the writer remembers, *ashura* is a dish consisting of boiled wheat, walnuts, raisins, almonds, rosewater, and other ingredients, was offered as a part of the ceremony. The ashura day—to use the Turkish form of the word—was scrupulously observed in Bursa until the abolition of the dervishes by the Turkish Republic in 1925. Until the turn of the century there were also processions in the streets of Constantinople, with shout of "All Hala, Huseyn," and self-inflicted wounds in the midst of emotional outbursts were not infrequent on such occasions.

*Voyages,* II, 318-20.

recalls Akhis "speaking with tongues." The preacher who helped create such an atmosphere was Mejideddin of Konya (al-Kuneswi), who was admired for his wisdom and spiritual power. He lived from the work of his hands, owned no property except the clothes he wore, and slept in the graveyard at night.

Mejideddin was one of the homeless dervishes who, obedient to their vow, were constantly on the move. It is significant that the fifteen-century Turkish historian Ashkipashazade calls the Akhis musafir (i.e., "strangers" or "travellers"). This characterization lends further support to the theory that dynamic Moslems like Mejideddin kept immigrating from the east and came to have an influence that was tantamount to the spiritual leadership in the Anatolian Turkish principalities. Though they could hardly outnumber the local Akhis at any one time, they were, nonetheless, the dominant force in the Fraternity, and they left their imprint upon its character. Hence, the appellation musafir was extended to all the Akhis.

As the wandering dervishes arrived

*See Philip Hitti, *History of the Arabs* (London, 1940), pp. 100-01. Professor Hitti remarks epigrammatically: "Shi'ism was born on the tenth of Muharram."

*Die eisenmische Chronik des Alshibabzade,* ed. Friedrich Giese (Leipzig, 1929), p. 201. According to the historian, there were three other groups (tari'is) of musafir: gazi (warriors for the faith), adal (inspired dervishes) and baj ("sisters", presumably members of a women's organization, about which our present state of knowledge permits nothing more than conjectures).


Paul Wissich, on the other hand, has expressed the opinion that the term *musafir* has an allegorical meaning, designating the expanding, fighting power of Islam. See his article, "Deux chapitres de l'histoire des Turcs de Roum," *Byzantien,* XI (1936), 285-319. Concerning Professor Wissich's theory of the gazi origin of the Ottoman Empire, see his lectures, *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire* ("Royal Asiatic Society Monographs," No. XXIII [London, 1938]), passim.
year after year, they found that the zawiye's were convenient places where they were sure to have a free meal and a congenial audience. Being for the most part mystics (sufis), these men brought about a further accentuation of esoteric life, as they came in contact with the groups assembled in the zawiye's all over Anatolia. Parallelly, the Fraternity became increasingly aware that their active interest in politics involved too many embarrassments. About thirty years after Ibn Battuta's visit, Yahya Ibn Halli, author of a Futuwevname, which purported to serve as a handbook for the Akhiyat, admonished all good Akhis not to go to the courts of the rulers, to associate with the poor only, to be humble, and to keep their membership secret. He sought to purge the Fraternity of all secular tendencies and to bring it closer to sufı ideals.

To him the goal of the Akhiyat al-Fityan was the attainment of holiness. Those initiated had to know and apply 124 rules of ethics (adab) corresponding to the 124,000 prophets, Taeschner, who made the most comprehensive study of the Futuwevname, noticed that these rules are an abridgment of the 740 precepts that should guide the life of a good sheikh. The Futuwevname of Yahya also describes the initiation ceremony, which is referred to as "receiving the candle" (ichirak almak), "putting on the belt" (kushak kushanmak), and "getting permission" (destur almak). A symbolic tonsure of the new member reminded one of Christian monasticism. In addition to these acts, the candidate had to drink a glass of water with salt and to "receive the scissors" (makaş almak). In fact, a pair of scissors formed a part of his equipment. Candles were also important in the initiation as well as in all other ceremonies. Ibn Battuta remembered that many candles stood on three-legged candlesticks.

The Akhi's outfit consisted of a long, white robe, boots, a belt with a sword, and a tall peaked headdress made of white woolen cloth and terminating in a strip one cubit long and two inches wide. This cap was called kalansuma, and later generations knew it as the distinctive mark of the Janissaries.

Yahya mentions three ranks of Akhis—yaghil ("heroes" or "knights"), akhi, akhis, and akhis. 24

24. The three-legged candlesticks, the tonsure, and the ritualistic importance of lights suggest pre-Islamic survivals. Yet, to what extent they can be attributed to the influence of Christianity is still a matter of conjecture. It is hard, of course, to underestimate Christianity, which had a thousand-year tradition in the cities of Asia Minor before the coming of the Turks, but our sources of information are, as best, fragmentary and sporadic. A puzzling inscription was copied and published by Cyril VI, patriarch of Constantinople from 1813 to 1818 and former archbishop of Iconium (Konya), in his "Historical Description of the Map. Already Published in Vienna, of the Great Archery of Iconium ("At the Patriarchal See, (1815), p. 47. The inscription in question existed in the Monastery of St. Chariton (Kak Monastery) near Sille in Lycia. It mentioned a certain "Akhi Pangalo." Whose Greek who had joined the Akhis? Or was he a Turk with Christian sympathies? Was Pangalo's name or was it simply an adjective describing some Akhi who (or whose son) was buried there? Or could it be that Cyril had made a mistake in copying? The text is fragmentary and is published inaccurately. However, it acquires significance from the fact that St. Chariton's was held sacred by Greeks and Turks alike. It is very probable that the inscription of "Akhi Pangalo" dates from the year 1300. For the text and a brief discussion of this interesting document see E. W. Haskins, Christianity and Islam under the Sultans (Oxford, 1920), II, 363 (V). Cf. idem, pp. 273-77, 377. Also, Taeschner, Islamica, IV, 46. A. N. Buss, Die Inschriftenausleseung des Kodex Sinaiticus Graecus 168 (1976) and die Marinoschriftfische Klosterkirche bei Sille (Lykien) ("Bedeutung der Byzantinisch-neugriechischen Jahrbücher," No. 1 (Berlin, 1921)), is a very good study of St. Chariton's monastery and its inscriptions but contains no reference to "Akhi Pangalo." 25

sheikh—the last one being merely honorific. He hastens to add, however, that members of all ranks are equal. Two other categories are mentioned, presumably subdivisions of the first rank, the kâbîl (“preachers”) and the sâyîf (“soldiers”), which are styled as “the two ways.” No attempt is made to define their positions.

Clearly, the Futuwwname reflects a condition of political decline in the Akhiyat at a time when secular tendencies came into conflict with religious ideals. As a result, the Akhis fell into two categories. On one hand, there was the essentially practical man who regarded the Fraternity as something between a trade-union, a guild, or a workmen’s cooperative. On the other hand, there was the spiritual Akhi who was more sympathetic to a monastic way of life. Gerdleveki very aptly observes that, after the expansion of the Osmanlis in the neighboring principalities, the zâmiys lost their political significance and operated as religious and professional centers. Henceforth the downfall of the organization was inevitable. Before the split both types of Akhi found a channel of self-expression in the political life of Anatolia and a clearly defined social ideology kept them united. The spiritual Akhi reconciled heaven and earth and set the common goal as he thought most pleasing in the eyes of Allah; the simple Akhi, the realist and the man of action, plied his useful trade or joined the fighting forces of Islam in the frontier zone. For both, participation in political life was a necessary outlet. Moreover, it provided a common ground for the two types of man. When that common ground was no longer there, the “two ways” diverged at a wide angle. The educated, spiritual, and esoteric Akhis became monks or hermits, and the practical, untutored, worldly individuals chose the life of a craftsman. Before long, the first category was absorbed by the new orders of dervishes—the Mevlevis, the Khaliqis, and the Bektashis—and the guilds of Moslem craftsmen, whose origins go back to the ninth century, claimed many of the rest. The Akhiyat al-Fitän thus passed out of existence. Scanty recollections of the once powerful Fraternity remained in the traditions of the guilds and in the mystic life of the Bektashis.

Let us first turn to the Akhis who identified themselves with the dervishes. Already in 1355 theologian Akhîs formed the élite in what was then the cradle of the Ottoman Empire. As “wise and erudite men,” they were asked by Sultan Orhan to have a public debate with the outstanding theologian of Eastern Christendom, Gregory Palamas, then a captive of the Osmanlis. Orhan’s capital, Brusa, the leading city in the westernmost regions of Anatolian Islam, had become the rallying point of theologians, scholars, mystics, and God-inspired adventurers. It was rapidly becoming the dar al-udma, “the city of theologians.” Back in the countries of their origin—that is, in North Iran and in Turkestan—the theologians had been exposed to a religious syncretism that had been going on for centuries. Buddhist, Zoroastrian, Manichaean, Gnostic, Christian, and Moslem elements and an atmosphere laden with religious spirituality were the heritage of the typical Moslem who came out to the west. There is no doubt that most of them belonged to the Shîah. Once in Anatolia, they became associated with the

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25 Taeschner, Islamica, IV, 7.
Mevlevi order, or they helped in building up two other noteworthy religious organizations that reveal strong evidences of syncretism—the Khalvjetiye and the Bektaşiye.¹⁰

The Mevleviye, with its Persian intellectual background, appealed mainly to the educated upper classes in the cities, and the Khalvjetiye was likewise a limited movement because of its exclusive mystical discipline. Neither the one nor the other was able to influence the development of the Ottoman Empire to any serious degree. But the Bektaşiye outnumbered all Turkish sects combined and came to play an increasingly important role from the beginning of the sixteenth century, when the order was reorganized as a militant body, perhaps by Balm Sultan of Dimotika, to the first quarter of the nineteenth century, when Western influences invaded Turkey.

Concerning the historical background of Bektashism, it is the opinion of the present writer that J. K. Birge’s thesis¹¹ that Haji Bektaš is the founder of the movement is more plausible than the theory endorsed by F. W. Hashwick, Ismail Hakki Uzunçarşı, and others that Bektaš did not found the order that bears his name and is in no way related to it.¹² Like Birge, they place Haji Bektaš in the thirteenth century on the basis of written evidence of a convincing nature, but they speak of an “adoption”¹³ of his name by the bəbər movement in the fifteenth century. Accepting Haji Bektaš as a real and not as a fictitious per-

¹⁰ The Vishayname has been translated into German by Erich Grosz, Das Vishayname des Haji Bektaş (“Türkische Bibliothek,” No. 25 (Leipzig, 1927). Concerning the traditions and Bektaš’s historical life, see Birge, op. cii., pp. 33–42. Birge’s book is still the best work on the subject. It has superseded the old classic by J. P. Brown, The Dervishes (1st ed.; Constantinople, 1886; 2d rev. ed. by H. A. Rose; Oxford, 1927). Prior to Birge, the leading authority was Georg Jacob, with his Beiträge, already cited, and Die Bektashije in ihrem Verhältnis zu verwandten Erkenntnissen (“Abhandlungen der Philosophisch-philologischen Klasse der Königlich Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften,” XXIV (1900), Part III (Munich, 1903)). Jacob doubted the historicity of the Vishayname; regarded the affiliation of the Janissaries and Bektashis as a sixteenth-century phenomenon; and concluded that Haji Bektaš did not found the order that bears his name. He attributed the founding of Bektashism to Pir Sultan, leader of the Huruf sect, a century after Bektaš’s death. Birge (pp. 46–51, 74) accepts the Vishayname as a historical document of a period prior to 1400, with only a few later interpolations, and he sees an early relationship between the Janissaries, organized in the fourteenth century, and “some leaders or leaders of the already widespread Bektash derwishes.” For background material, allowing a basis for Birge’s conclusions, of particular importance are the works of Mehmet Fuat Köprülü (Izalat, 1918): “Bemerkungen zur Religionsgeschichte Kleinasiens,” Mitteilungen zur Geschichte des Islam, I (1921–22), 203–22; “Les Origines du Bektashisme,” Actes du Congrès International d’Histoire des Religions, II (Paris, 1925), 391–411. V. Mirmuhboghi, Of Aqşaba, (“The Dervishes”) (Athens, 1946), which devotes a good deal of space to the Bektashis (pp. 78–242), contains wealth of information from Turkish records and traditions but is unsystematic and uncritical.

¹¹ The Vishayname has been translated into German by Erich Grosz, Das Vishayname des Haji Bektaş (“Türkische Bibliothek,” No. 25 (Leipzig, 1927). Concerning the traditions and Bektaš’s historical life, see Birge, op. cii., pp. 33–42. Birge’s book is still the best work on the subject. It has superseded the old classic by J. P. Brown, The Dervishes (1st ed.; Constantinople, 1886; 2d rev. ed. by H. A. Rose; Oxford, 1927). Prior to Birge, the leading authority was Georg Jacob, with his Beiträge, already cited, and Die Bektashije in ihrem Verhältnis zu verwandten Erkenntnissen (“Abhandlungen der Philosophisch-philologischen Klasse der Königlich Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften,” XXIV (1900), Part III (Munich, 1903)). Jacob doubted the historicity of the Vishayname; regarded the affiliation of the Janissaries and Bektashis as a sixteenth-century phenomenon; and concluded that Haji Bektaš did not found the order that bears his name. He attributed the founding of Bektashism to Pir Sultan, leader of the Huruf sect, a century after Bektaš’s death. Birge (pp. 46–51, 74) accepts the Vishayname as a historical document of a period prior to 1400, with only a few later interpolations, and he sees an early relationship between the Janissaries, organized in the fourteenth century, and “some leaders or leaders of the already widespread Bektash derwishes.” For background material allowing a basis for Birge’s conclusions, of particular importance are the works of Mehmet Fuat Köprülü (Izalat, 1918): “Bemerkungen zur Religionsgeschichte Kleinasiens,” Mitteilungen zur Geschichte des Islam, I (1921–22), 203–22; “Les Origines du Bektashisme,” Actes du Congrès International d’Histoire des Religions, II (Paris, 1925), 391–411. V. Mirmuhboghi, Of Aqşaba, (“The Dervishes”) (Athens, 1946), which devotes a good deal of space to the Bektashis (pp. 78–242), contains wealth of information from Turkish records and traditions but is unsystematic and uncritical.

man by displaying a remarkable flexibility and, second, it held the spiritual leadership of the Janissary corps.

Perhaps more than any other Anatolian sect, the Bektashis interpreted Scripture allegorically and effaced all sharp contrasts and vicissitudes, preaching, as they did, their favorite theme of the unity of existence and the identity of the external and the internal world. To the agonized 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 Celaleddin 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 worshipers from both religions. Tolerance in all directions, common places of worship for Christians and Moslems, stories of miracles 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. Their expansion continued down to the suppression of the Janissaries in 1826, when the Bektashis were also persecuted as their spiritual mentors. Until then, the Asiatic provinces from Iraq to the Aegean coast, Constantinople, and large sections of the Balkans were fertile grounds of Bektashi propaganda.

Perhaps the earliest infiltration of Bektashism in the Balkan Peninsula is associated with a semilegendaary figure, Sari Saltık, who according to the Vilayet-name was one of the outstanding associates of Haji Bektash. The same source, which doubtless contains historical facts under a veil of romantic accretions, informs us that, on orders from the Veli, Sari Saltık established a tekke at Kilgra (= Kaliakra) in the Dobruja. On his way to Constantinople from the court of Mohammed Usbeg, khan of the Golden Horde, Ibn Battuta recalls visiting “a town known by the name of Baba Saltuk, who, they say, was an ecstatic mystic, though stories are told of actions by him which are condemned by the law.” The town is described as being on the frontier between the Turkish (i.e., Tatar) dominions and “the Roman (Greek) territory” (the latter presumably including Bulgaria). Though Ibn Battuta does not give any clue to establish the identity of

As a Shī‘ite, a Bektashi could practice “dissimulation” (tašiyah)—“not to be as one seems, not to seem as one is” (Birge, op. cit., p. 270).

For an analysis of Bektashi theology see ibid., pp. 109-8(263,750),(534,774).

See Haskew, op. cit., I, 56; II, 374; see also “Christianity and Islam under the Sultans of Roum.” Annual of the British School at Athens, XIX (1912-13), 109.

“Ottoman Traditions and Legends,” published in Einreiseschauere Oberirnien, a work which I have not been able to consult, studies 187 saints of this nature, according to a citation by Babiner, loc. cit., p. 149, n. 1.

See Birge, op. cit., pp. 77.

German translation by Gross, p. 73.

Kilgra (=Kaliakra) with Baba Saltuk village, it is clear from the text that “an ecstatic mystic” named Saltuk (or Saltik) was well known in a European locality on the way from the Ukraine to Constantinople. It is certain that the orthodoxy of the baba was not beyond reproach, and this testimony, coming from a Sunni source, lends further support to the idea that he was associated with Bektash. Whether or not he was one of the Veli’s lieutenants is an open question, but it is a fact of particular importance that there was a local tradition concerning the life of a Shi’ite leader on Balkan soil about forty years after Bektash’s death and more than two decades before the Osmanlis crossed over to Europe. According to the Vilayetname, Sari Saltuk came to Kilgra by way of Georgia, but Yazijioghlu Ali, a Turkish historian of the early fifteenth century, says that Sari Saltuk came to the Dobruja with the followers of Izzeddin Kaikais II, across the Bosporus, in the reign of Emperor Michael Palaeologus.

The tekke of Baba Saltuk, perhaps the oldest outpost of Islam in the Balkans, continued to be a center of Shi’ite tradition, and in the sixteenth century it provoked the censure of the ulema. By that time it must have played its part in the spread of Islam in the new lands of the empire. The role of Saltuk and his tekke in the Dobruja seems to be strikingly analogous to that of his contemporary, Mejdeddin, and the zawis of the Akhis at Brusa. Both leaders were sufi’s, dynamic Moelems, and pioneers in the lands of the infidels. Judging from the results, both must have been extremely successful. In Bithynia the slopes of Mount Olympus were dotted with tekke’s of anchorites, many of them occupying the very cells of their Christian predecessors, and in the Balkans, where the Ottoman Turks advanced rapidly under Murad I, there were dozens of Bektashi tekke’s scattered in Bulgaria, Macedonia, the South Slav countries, Albania, Thessaly, and, more recently, Crete. In Albania, particularly, Bektashi dervishes prepared the way for the conversion of whole villages or tribes as late as the eighteenth century. Today it is estimated that some 200,000 Albanians (one-fifth of the entire population of the country) profess Bektashi affiliations. It is also estimated that prior to the persecution of the order by Mahmud the Reformer, in 1826, there were 7,370,000 Bektashis, of whom about 7,000,000 were in the Asiatic provinces of the empire, 120,000 in Constantinople, 100,000 in Albania, and the rest scattered all over the peninsula. After the closing of the tekkes in Turkey, Albania contains the greatest organized force of Bektashism.

In the days when the Turks were new on European soil, the Bektashis were unofficial propaganda agents who succeeded in making the gap between the ruling nation and the subject races less wide. Appearing more as pioneers of the Osmanlis than as followers of Mohammed, they helped in recruiting soldiers and administrators for the sultans and in replenishing the manpower that threatened the West. At the same time, by wielding a decided influence over the Janissaries, they were a factor in the domestic affairs of the empire. Beyond the narrow but important circle of the Janissaries, the

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22 Birge, op. cit., p. 51, n. 4.


24 Birge, op. cit., pp. 70-73, 86-86.

25 Ibid., p. 15.
Bektashis approached the masses of the Turks more effectively than any other religious group—a fact that can be attributed to their broad human sympathy and to their simple Turkish speech, which contrasted very favorably to the erudite, incomprehensible Arabic of Sunni theologians.

With such a power among the masses, it was not hard for them to overthrow the Sunni emperor, especially in times of crisis such as that of 1501, when Shi'ite Persia waged war against Bayazid II. If they did not do so, in the formative years of the empire, it was because of a vague awareness of a common Ottoman background and the munificence of the sultans toward the Janissaries. Undoubtedly, much depended upon the personality of the sultan. The mild and tractable Bayazid II managed to hold the loyalty of his Shi'ite subjects, but Selim I, surnamed Yavuz, or “the Grim,” an epithet which he fully deserved, had to face the growing hostility of his heretical soldiers. In his brief reign large numbers of Kizilbashsh and other dissenters were massacred, and the Janissaries became troublesome. After Selim, Suleyman the Magnificent had to strain his energies to crush a Bektashi rebellion in Anatolia in 1526. In the period of decline that began immediately after Suleyman’s death Ottoman loyalties became more vague and inconsequential, and the demands of the Janissaries grew in reverse proportion to their usefulness. In fact, it was the Janissaries, more than any other group in the empire, that made the reign of many sultans difficult. They even went so far as to depose two sultans—Osman II (1622) and Selim III (1807). Their suppression by Mahmoud the Reformer was an act of political necessity, for they had degenerated into a rabble.

This, at least, is the orthodox interpretation of the measures taken in 1826.

The relation that the Bektashi derishes had with the uprisings of the Janissaries during the period of decline has not yet been thoroughly investigated. It is now an essential task of the historian of the Ottoman Empire to study these upheavals in connection with the social rebellions like those of Sheikh Bedreddin and his associate, Burhulie Mustafa, in fifteenth-century Anatolia, which were directed against Ottoman despotism. The contemporary Greek historian Ducas says of Mustafa that “he taught that all things, except women, should be held in common, even food, and clothes, and shoes, and land.” The movement attracted many Christians, as it preached freedom and equality and showed closer affinity to Christianity than to Islam. After desperate resistance these rebellions were drowned in blood. Religious slogans of a broad, syncretistic nature, as well as economic motives, were the driving power in the rebellions of the sheikhs and of the Janissaries alike. Furthermore, it is clear that there was much of the spirit of the Akhiyat in the rebels of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The Bektashi derishes, in particular, carried on the main traditions of the Akhis after the Osmans were established in Europe. Religious dances (sema), a fervent mystic disposi-


18 Bonn ed., pp. 111–115. A. S. Stepanov, “The Work of Ducas as a Source for the History of the Revolt of Burkhan Mustafa in the Beginning of the Fifteenth Century,” in Russian, Vizantiiski Premenik, new series, V (1952), 99-104. Stepanov, who describes the revolt as a peasants’ uprising directed against the Turkish feudal lords, attributes it to oppressive taxation. He makes no attempt to study the underlying causes, nor the deeper spiritual aspects of the movement, especially the solidarity of Christians and Muslims and their willingness to face martyrdom.

19 Birza, op. cit., pp. 199, 211.
tion, special importance attached to the Ashura feast,\textsuperscript{40} common social ideals with emphasis on the spirit of brotherhood, and allegiance to the futuwwa code of ethics\textsuperscript{41}—these are outstanding Bektashi traits reminiscent of the Akhiyat al-Fityan as described by Ibn Battuta. In this light it is easy to understand how, in a land where clothes indicated social distinctions, the headdress of the Akhis came to be worn by the Janissaries, the spiritual protegés of the Bektashis.

The “lower” order of the Akhis, who identified themselves with the various craftsmen’s guilds, likewise preserved important elements of the old institution. A strong futuwwa tradition, which existed in Moslem guilds from the ninth to the nineteenth centuries, served as a connecting link among the Akhiyat al-Fityan, the Bektashiye, and the organized craftsmen. Bektashi sheikhs kept the books containing the old regulations of the futuwwa,\textsuperscript{42} and the guilds accepted the spiritual leadership of the dervishes as a matter of course. The origins of the relationship of dervishes and craftsmen go back to the Akhiyat al-Fityan, which brought the two groups together, in an organization that had a religious, political, and professional scope. The futuwwa books (many of them actually bearing the title of Kitab el-futuwwa), which have come down to our times, point to a triangle-like relationship of Akhis, Bektashis, and guilds, with the Akhis placed at the apex of the triangle as the historical link uniting the other two.

The allegiance of the guilds to the futuwwa idea is attested by the generic term ahl el-futuwwa, which was used with reference to the craftsmen, in the same way as ahl el-hak (“people of the right”) and ahl el-tarikh (“people of the way”).\textsuperscript{43} As futuwwa associates, the workmen had an initiation ceremony that had much in common with that of the Akhis of the Futuwwesname of Yahya Ibn Halil.\textsuperscript{44} The connection of the guilds with the Bektashis appears clearly in the initiation ceremony of such bodies as the blacksmiths’ etana (guild) of Burdur in Anatolia. Gordelvski mentions that the new member was solemnly apprised that he was about to join “the society of sheriat, hakikat, tarikat, and marifat.”\textsuperscript{45} These are “the four gateways” of Bektashism,\textsuperscript{46} interpreted by Birge as “religious law,” “immediate experience of the essence of reality,” “teachings and practice of the secret religious order,” and “mystic knowledge of God.” Various external aspects of the ceremony—posture, movements, gestures—were also part of the Bektashi way.

In the same guild a very important place in the ritual was reserved for an official called Akhi baba.\textsuperscript{47} He addressed the new masters with the final admonitions—respect, love, compassion, truthfulness, and abstinence from forbidden food. In other guilds the Akhi baba supervised promotions.\textsuperscript{48} An Akhi, Akhi Evran, was the patron saint (pir) of the tanners’

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., p. 163.
\textsuperscript{41} Thorning, op. cit., pp. 81-82.
\textsuperscript{42} Thorning, in connection with his work on the Best Masud al-Tauqi (his translation of this title is “Darlegung der Idee des guldigen Bektaschens.” op. cit., p. 176), has made a comparative study of a score of futuwwa books intended for the use of the various guilds in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., pp. 75-76, 114, 116, 154.
\textsuperscript{44} For a description of initiation ceremonies see Thorning, pp. 71–73, 123–65. Masseignon in his article on Islamic guilds, Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences, VII. 214–16, describes the ceremony as “semi-masonic.” Lewis, describing Moslem guilds in general, prefers the expression “quasi-masonic” (Economic History Review, VIII. 22).
\textsuperscript{45} Zapiski, II, 240.
\textsuperscript{46} Birge, op. cit., pp. 102-7.
\textsuperscript{47} Gordelvski, Zapiski, III, 239, 241.
\textsuperscript{48} Taeockner, “Das hebräische Zunftwesen zur Türkenszeit” (review art.), Byzantinische Zeitschrift, XLIV (1951), 554.
guild of the entire Ottoman Empire. He lies buried at Kirsehbir, some ninety miles southeast of Ankara, and an inscription over his tomb, dated 854 A.H. (A.D. 1450), reads: “pir of pirs, saint of saints, fountain, sultan sheikh Nasreddin Mahmut Akhi Evran. May his mystery be blessed by God (kaddîsa Allah-u sirrüh-u). . . .”58 “May his mystery be blessed” is a common Bektashi formula.59 Another inscription says that the cemetery near by was a burial place of Akhis.60 The legendary Akhi of Kirsehbir was also the pir of the clothiers’ guild, and all the guilds of Turkey claimed him for their own.61 Kirsehbir was an important center of dervishes, whose leader was styled Akhi baba.62 As late as 1887 the tanners’ guild of remote Bosnia received a traveling sheikh, also called Akhi baba, who came from Kirsehbir as representative of the dervishes of Akbi Evran.63

From facts such as these the fundamental relationship between Turkish guilds and Bektashi dervishes, and also between guilds and Bektashis, on the one hand, and the old Akhiyat al-Fityan, on the other, appears very clearly. The function of these three bodies in the development of the Ottoman Empire was essentially the same. In degrees that varied according to the prevailing circumstances, Akhis, dervishes, and craftsmen contributed in their significant way to the consolidation of Turkish power in the Near East—the Akhis in Anatolia before and during the rise of the Osmanlis, the Bektashis primarily in the Balkans and to a smaller extent in Asiatic Turkey, and the organized craftsmen all over the Empire. The Akhis, who were not merely craftsmen or religious men alone but a brotherhood with a multiplicity of interests and functions, wielded extensive political power, limiting the absolutist tendencies of Anatolian Turkish emirs and of the first two Osmanli sultans, and they exerted a leveling influence until authority and wealth corrupted them and Murad I brought them under his control. Their tradition, which was tied up with the old futuwwa, was carried on by the Bektashis, but the latter’s influence was more cultural than political. It appeared in the Islamization of the Christian peasants in the Balkans and in Anatolia. The craftsmen’s guilds, though not in any way fanatical, played a similar role among the townspeople, and through their social mechanism they implemented the missionary activities of the dervishes. All three—Akhis, Bektashis, and guild craftsmen—served as vital supports of the growing Ottoman Empire.

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Futuwwa Traditions in the Ottoman Empire

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