Aesthetic and Performative Dimensions of Alevi Cultural Heritage

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Orient-Institut Istanbul

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Introduction

Martin Greve, Ulaş Özdemir & Raoul Motika

Alevi, Bektaşi, Kızılbaş, Tahtacı and similar communities, mainly originating from Anatolia though by transnational migration processes now scattered almost all over the world, are commonly referred to nowadays as 'Alevi.' The tendency to unify these groups has various explanations and even political functions. However, even a quick glance at historical sources and contemporary religious practices proves that these communities have neither been homogeneous throughout history nor become so in the contemporary context. This plurality throughout the history is, besides the scarcity of written sources for many periods and places, the most important challenge for those dealing with 'Alevis' today. Even in this volume, diverse and complex aspects and phenomena are presented and subsumed under the single term 'Alevi.' This reflects our belief that the question of how 'Alevism' is imagined, believed and practised is more important than the discussion of the specific boundaries and definition of 'Alevi' today. In other words, we search for answers to questions of how 'Alevism' is lived and how the cultural knowledge of those who regard themselves as 'Alevis' comes to constitute the cultural concepts related to 'Alevism.' The aesthetic and performative diversity of Alevis and Alevism's cultural past and present shows a wide spectrum of possible answers.

Within the plurality and diversity of Alevism another question also arises, of what we should understand as its aesthetics and performance. Instead of using theories of 'aesthetics' or 'performativity' as a starting point, we prefer to discuss the perception of aesthetics and performance based on Alevi practices, as much more research and scholarly discussion is needed before specific theoretical approaches can be developed.

As a primary step, it seems necessary to examine which cultural phenomena are appropriated by Alevis, to analyse how they internalise, (re-)shape and perform them. For this research, neither the paradigm of traditional-modern is of any help, nor the search for an 'essence of Alevism' or any kind of 'real Alevi.' Rather, we hope to widen the scope of Alevism studies by examining their concrete aesthetic and performative dimensions, both historically and in contemporary practice. What is considered in this book as 'Alevi cultural heritage' therefore includes everything that Alevis themselves perceive as inherited parts of their culture or religion.

Within this context, analysing and conceptualising aesthetic dimensions of Alevi cultural heritage presents almost unsurmountable difficulties, and at present it seems largely unclear how the specific affinity of Alevism to 'artistic' expression can be theorized. This volume does not therefore aim to advance an aesthetic

theory for Alevi cultural heritage. The main aim is rather to examine phenomena which Alevis accept as their cultural heritage and which are diversified aesthetically and performatively. Neither does it follow an approach based on a specific aesthetic theory; rather each article discusses aesthetic and performative dimensions according to its own specific context. On the other hand, the concept of 'performance' as used in the title of this book focuses on how Alevis perform any form of piety or spirituality in their communal life.

The present book originates in a lecture series, 'Aesthetic Dimensions of Alevi Cultural Heritage,' held winter 2017–2018 at the Orient-Institute Istanbul. While a wide range of artistic genres in the context of Alevism were discussed in this lecture series, including music, poetry, architecture, iconography and body movement, the editors later decided to focus this volume on performative aspects of Alevi cultural heritage (ritual, sound, body movements), rather than on its material culture (architecture, ritual objects etc.). Only the last part of this volume focuses on manuscripts, in the case of Judith Haug's text on written sources of performed music; while Janina Karolewski's article analyses them as a specific form of cultural expression in material form embedded in social life, rather than focusing on the written content.

In this book, we have examined the aesthetic and performative dimensions of Alevi cultural heritage from past to present, in an interdisciplinary framework and using a wide range of approaches. The chapters analyse traditional, contemporary and transnational developments of Alevi cultural expression including modern adaptations (De Rosa), local (Elias, Cler) and regional practices (Greve), Alevism in a wider context (Langer, Özdemir), textual sources (Haug) and materiality (Karelowski). The perspectives of the various authors, each coming from different disciplines, demonstrate the complexity of socio-historical and socio-cultural dynamics. To conclude, the present volume is intended as a first approach to a complex issue, which definitely deserves further research and analysis.

Jérôme Cler's article was translated from French by Maude Caillat, and Ulaş Özdemir's article from Turkish by Öznur Karakaş. The editors would like to express their gratitude to Sarah Mandel for the careful editing of the whole volume, and the Orient-Institute Istanbul for its support.

I.
Ritual, Body and Aesthetic

The Aesthetics of Contemporary Alevi Religious Practice: A Bodily-and-Material Cultures' Approach

Robert Langer

Introduction

Alevi ritual practice is a significant means in the (re)production of a specific Alevi cultural identity and habitus, i.e. the way to use the body and perceive with it, established by socialisation, and cultural identity. It is by now an established fact in academic discourse that the *cem* ritual (Motika, Langer, 2005) and the emblematic *semah* (Dinçer, 2000) were formative in the so-called Alevi revival (van Bruinessen, 1996). Representations of such performances became core symbols of 'Aleviness', which made them also a major aesthetic resource in Alevi culture. Consequently, Alevi rituals received the status of UNESCO registered intangible heritage items on a national level in Turkey (UNESCO, 2010), and there are ongoing similar processes in other countries where Alevis have settled (Weineck, 2014, 2015). Despite this, Alevis often complain of a lack of 'authenticity' in the contemporary Alevi ritual (Zimmermann, 2018). And yet, contemporary rituals and ceremonies preserve and reproduce rites and ritual elements constitutive for the Alevi tradition (Langer, 2008). When we start from the basic rites that occur in many more complex Alevi rituals, we can distinguish elements that are means of reproduction of a certain Alevi 'habitus' and therefore part of an embodied Alevi identity. To conceptualise this, it is helpful to approach Alevi ritual practice with a theory of bodily-and-material culture (Mohan, Warnier, 2017).

I draw on a body of audio-visual material collected during my fieldwork among Alevis in Turkey and Germany from 2003 to 2010 (Figure 1). The research was conducted within the Collaborative Research Centre 619 'Dynamics of Ritual' at the University of Heidelberg, financed by the German Research Council (DFG). The film footage together with some transcriptions of ritual texts and interviews, as well as the field notes, are archived at the University of Heidelberg in its audio-visual database *HeidICON*. They are available to interested scholars upon request.

In this contribution, I will draw on the original meaning of aesthetics as 'perception', specifically perception of bodily actions by the observer, and perception through bodily actions, that is, by participating. The latter, naturally, cannot be reproduced in the context of an academic publication. We also must keep in mind, that all the representations I refer to–both from the ethnographic material as well as from more 'professional' media–are likewise mediatised, i.e. conveyed to a receiver by a specific medium, such as film (Grimes, 2002). It is an epistemic

Figure 1: *Cem* Ritual, *Karacaahmet Sultan Cemevi*, İstanbul © Christian Funke 2007.

fact that we cannot access cultural practice without mediatising, either through external media, or through our own body and its sensual perception.

Research on Alevism – 'Collecting Culture'

When we assess research on Alevism, or Alevi religious culture, we notice that we are still in a period of collation. Besides historical data, creeds and beliefs have been collected; a realm of knowledge that falls into the academic field of religious studies, and, increasingly, into the field of theology, as we observe, implicitly or explicitly, an emergence of an Alevi theology (conf. Güzelmansur, 2012).

In terms of material culture, which is strongly connected to the body in my approach to cultural performance and aesthetics, we observe a certain gap in respect to Alevi culture. Notwithstanding the museums, such as the one in Hacı-bektaş, or those in some Alevi villages including Ocak Köyü, Arapgir, which hold objects related to ritual activity, there is no representative collection of objects pertaining to Alevism. When it comes to performances, collecting was exactly what we did in the initial stage of the Heidelberg research project, resulting in the above-mentioned video database, documenting around fifty events and rituals in around three hundred films, each of usually one-hour duration.

Alevi rituals have not yet been analysed comparatively across a broad data basis, not the least because a representative and accessible body of data was lacking. However, there are some exceptions, namely the documentations and analyses of certain sections of Alevi rituals by Mehmet Ersal (2016) at the Katip Çelebi University in İzmir, and several rather prescriptive descriptions by Alevi non-academic authors and associations (e.g. Çağlayan 2002).[1] It would be a major task to bring research on belief systems, the material culture, and ritual practice under one umbrella for further inquiry into Alevism; a task only to be realised by a qualified research team bringing together all available sources and materials.

Research on Alevi Rituals in Heidelberg

My fieldwork conducted within the Heidelberg Collaborative Research Centre involved a variety of contexts of contemporary Alevi rituals: modern *cemevi*s in İstanbul and in other Turkish cities; associations and *cemevi*s in German towns; public events, such as in sport stadiums in İstanbul or Erzincan, but also in German contexts; and re-enactments of village rituals in villages north of Ankara and the province of Malatya, etc. This means that not all events were 'real' religious rituals from a common viewpoint; however, all involved the basic aesthetics of Alevi cultural religious performance. And even staged or mediatised events activated in the participant or the audience a certain Alevi habitus, if there is a basic socialisation into Alevism or knowledge of similar traditions. The staging and mediatising of rituals and performances is an unavoidable way of practising culture and religion in the modern world. Moreover, it is not possible nowadays that all members of a tradition take part in the practice of their tradition all the time—if it ever was—and it is not necessary to guarantee continuity. Delegation of active cultural practice to an engaged minority is common in contemporary circumstances. Interestingly, although pre-modern village communities have dissolved into scattered urbanised and diaspora contexts, modern means of media and communication link together remaining village communities and related urban and diaspora cultures in a 'constellation of practices', consisting of several related, overlapping 'communities of practice' (Langer, 2010).

In order to analyse dynamics of rituals and processes of bodily-and-material culture, participation in these cultural performances is necessary. The method of data acquisition, besides documenting the rituals on video tape, was participant observation. Over the years, I have gained increasing experience and confidence in taking part in the rituals—a kind of mimetic socialisation into *Alevilik* in its performative dimension.

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[1] An attempt to analyse Alevi rituals in a transnational context on the basis of the Heidelberg material will be Langer, 2020 (forthcoming).

Transfer of Ritual

As an analytical tool for the analysis of contemporary Alevi rituals, the Heidelberg project initially applied the theory of 'transfer of ritual', developed in a research group at the Department for the Study of Religions (University of Heidelberg) (Langer *et al.*, 2006). The initial focus on 'transfer' was due to the primary focus of our research on the establishment of Alevi religious-ritual life in Germany, i.e. in a migration context. Alevi rituals had clearly been transferred into a new cultural environment in Germany, as well as in Turkish cities, where they underwent major adaptations and transformations from their formerly rural cultural context.

The generalised ritual transfer theory states that there is a direct, compelling connection between the context factors of any cultural practice–such as geography, historical context, society, economics, etc. (the domains of socio-cultural anthropology)–and the realisation of a cultural practice, such as religious ritual. The latter can be observed in the so-called dimensions of the ritual, externally defined properties of cultural practice, such as its communicative dimension, its performativity, its efficacy, its mediality, and not least in its aesthetics. All these concepts are applied and were partly developed or adjusted in the field of ritual studies (conf. Platvoet, 1995).

Observing and analysing these transformation processes was one basic tool for me in systematising contemporary Alevi ritual practice, starting from strictly empirical, that is, observable material. They included, for example, the shortening of ritual forms due to the socio-economic needs of an urban, industrialised context, where night-long rituals are no longer realisable by the participants; or the mediatisation of ritual performances via television and internet, most prominently on YouTube, among other developments. As far as I can assess, the mediatisation of Alevi rituals, beginning even before television and internet in printed publications (see e.g. Dinçer, 2009), was one major factor in the modern standardisation and aestheticisation of Alevi cultural practice.

The first Alevi journals came into existence at the end of the 1960s and into the 1970s, publishing texts on Alevi beliefs and practices (e.g. Yaman, 1970–1974). Beginning in the 1980s and increasing in the 1990s, a lively Alevi publication market made Alevi religious practices public in various forms and went as far as publishing 'ritual manuals' (Sarıönder, 2005). Soon after the liberalization of the Turkish media market, this conventional medium of printed text with occasional visual, mostly photographic, representations, was followed by radio and television stations directed by Alevi individuals and later also by Alevi institutions. These media outlets began with broadcasting religious rituals and other cultural performances, such as festivals and other political or cultural events. In recent years, the European Alevi Federation has set up a TV station. These and the Turkish stations are now a significant mediating channel for Alevi ritual knowledge, particularly in the European diaspora. The modern media has

thereby become another ritual context, besides the actual real-life performances. This change has induced a massive transformation of the religious practice from one in which ideally the whole village community was directly involved, into one in which the 'whole' community, which now comprises ideally all Alevis, is involved only virtually, perhaps similar to an 'imagined community' as described by Anderson (1991). Such virtual environments beyond television are playing a significant role, be it the interactive chats in Alevi forums (Zimmermann, 2018), e-mail lists, or the growing number of ritual performances broadcast via the internet.

Alevi Rituals in Modern Media

With the emergence of Alevi-run TV stations around the year 2000, large Alevi *cem* rituals, such as organised in 2006 by the *CEM Vakfı* in Ankara in a sports stadium, were also mediatised through *CEM Vakfı*'s own TV channel *CEM TV*. Similarly, the *cem* ritual of the *CEM Vakfı* in their central *cemevi* in Yenibosna (İstanbul), in which I participated several times throughout 2003, was not only regularly filmed by Alevi participants for private use, but also broadcast by *CEM TV*, at times on a weekly basis. This broadcasted footage enabled television audiences to acquire, or at least rehearse, an Alevi ritual habitus through observation, without having to participate in the service (*ibadet*) on a weekly basis.

Alevi television stations have also been established in the European diaspora, such as *Yol TV* in Germany. Besides Alevi rituals conducted in Europe, they also include material from Turkey, even from rural contexts, such as a staged village *cem* ritual that took place in 2011 in Mezirme (Ballıkaya, Malatya), which was also documented by me. Despite the fact that the introductory speeches explicitly stated that it was 'not a ritual' (and long discussions and negotiations took place beforehand about the legitimacy of staging such an *ibadet*), the performance structures and aesthetics observably induced a ritual commitment and mode of behaviour, both within the 'actors' and within the audience, Alevi as well as non-Alevi.[2]

Basic Patterns, Infrastructure and Classification of Alevi Ritual Activity

Concerning the systematic description of contemporary Alevi rituals, I approach the material using the conceptual framework for the description of a living ritual tradition outlined by Michael Stausberg (2004). I start from the basic patterns of Alevi ritual activity, such as texts (e.g. names, formulae, 'prayers', poetry, songs, hymns), the characteristics of the redistribution of food and commensality, bod-

[2] This event took place as one activity conducted in the context of a large conference on Alevi culture and history in Malatya. See Khan, Langer, Öğütcü (2011).

Figure 2: *Meydan* and *Post* Area in a *Cemevi*, Malatya © Janina Karolewski 2009.

ies and spaces (spatial orientations, sensorimotorics, purity and food prescriptions, spatial demarcations, ritual areas and spaces, greeting rituals, collective-body configurations), objects (certificates, manuscripts/books, liturgical objects, musical instruments, votive objects, amulets), substances (liquids, light), temporal configurations (day, calendar, seasons) and different actor groups and basic performative structures. Figure 2 shows specific orientations of objects and bodies, spatial demarcations, ritual areas, greeting gestures and collective body configuration, here before the start of the actual ritual. Moreover, characteristic liturgical paraphernalia and iconographical significant votive objects are visible.

Infrastructures of ritual activity include the personnel and their religious roles, such as different religious specialists; places, such as traditional or modern *cemevi*s, modern *cemevi* complexes, significant topographical and spatial relations in villages and modern city quarters, pilgrimage places and other spatial markers such as natural phenomena, graves, shrines, etc., private spaces, and nowadays also virtual spaces (representations in the internet). Within infrastructure, I also include the means of transmission and mediatisation of ritual activity–from the premodern techniques of training religious specialists and rehearsing the community, which include orality, scripturality, and mimetic participation, to modern mediatisations that add to or substitute 'traditional' ways of transmission, as described above.

Alevi ritual practice can be classified into recurring congregational ceremonies, lifecycle-based rituals, calendric events, and case-based performances. These comprise the wide scope of Alevi religio-cultural practice in contemporary times that must be documented and analysed in order to form a holistic picture of the aesthetics of Alevi ritual(ised) performances.

Collective-congregational ceremonies, which have a liturgical structure, involving specific rites, usually music, and often ritual dance, are differentiated in emic terminology in ceremonies called *muhabbet, Abdal Musa cemi, (ayin-i) cem,* or *görgü (cemi)* (Karolewski, 2005). Additional to the congregational assembly ceremony, ritual activities usually include animal sacrifice (*kurban*) and the distribution of food (*lokma*) as a performative framing marker for the ceremony itself (see Figures 3 and 4).

These collective ceremonies also have a specific spatial framing, such as a *cemevi* with a special room for the ritual (*cem salonu*), although in many pre-modern cases the *cem* might have been conducted in normal houses with a room large enough for the village community. Distinct rites of greeting while entering the room or the ritual space (*meydan*) and embodied forms of appropriate movement during the ritual induce a specific habitus among the participants, as we can see in a picture taking during a *cem* at the Karacaahmet Cemevi in Istanbul – Üsküdar (Figure 5).

Life-cycle based rituals in the context of childhood, male circumcision, marriage, the establishment of pseudo-kinship as patron of the circumcised boy (*kirve*, *kvra*) or between adult couples (*musahiblik*), as well as funeral (*cenaze*) and post-funeral commemoration rituals can involve elements also practiced during the regularly recurring congregational rituals, or be included into a regular *cem*. Congregational rituals are also sometimes performed at certain festive dates of the calendar, some according to the (old) solar calendar (Hızır fast, Hıdırellez). Calendrical performances according to the Islamic hicrî-kamerî calendar tend to be of a more general 'Islamic' character, for example for the two large Muslim festivals, or have a more 'Shii' character during the month of Muharrem, the month of mourning. Traditionally, at times of mourning *cem* rituals should not be performed; however, as congregational communal rituals, such 'Muharrem evenings' still bear the performative and aesthetic character of parts of the *cem*, especially as concerns the musical repertoire.

Case-based performances are for example 'crisis rituals', such as divination, amulet production, and healing, but also individual pilgrimages (*ziyaret*). Individual 'visits' to locally established places of devotion are sometimes performed during specific times of annual collective pilgrimage to famous sites, such as the shrines of Hacı Bektaş or Abdal Musa. In that way, case-based performances can coincide with calendric performances, repeated annually. In modern times these include large cultural-religious performance complexes, referred to as *etkinlik*, *şenlik*, or *kültür festivali*. Both in pre-modern and modern times, congregational *cem* ceremonies were included in more complex events, such as annual pilgrimages.

Figure 3: *Karacaahmet Sultan Cemevi*, İstanbul © Christian Funke 2007.

Figure 4: *Karacaahmet Sultan Cemevi*, İstanbul © Christian Funke 2007.

Figure 5: *Karacaahmet Sultan Cemevi*, İstanbul © Janina Karolewski 2009.

Like any ritual system of a specific culture, Alevi ritualism has a complex structure: smaller units (rites, such as lighting candles, bowing or prostrating, singing hymns) are bound into larger sequences (rituals). Several sequences are combined again into even larger units, such as the *cem*, which according to the theoretical classification of a ritual would be closer to a ceremony (Snoek, 1987, 2006). Additionally, there are even larger sequences in Alevi practices, in which several ceremonies are bound together. Typically, this happens where rituals or ceremonies take place over several days.

This is true for the pre-modern *cem*s, which included the administration of justice and mediation sequences that were framed or followed by ritualised performances, but also for the modern festivals, lasting sometimes more than a day, where ritual elements are publicly performed on stage and shorter prayers sequences or even full *cem* rituals are conducted. The aesthetic and performative system of Alevi rituals are therefore full of 'inter-rituality' and 'ritual citations' (see Gladigow, 2004), such as citing ritual sequences or rituals in a different ritual complex or the occurrence of the same rite or rituals in differently denoted ceremonies. An important example of this is the *semah*-dance, which is performed both in the *cem*, but also at weddings (see Shankland, 2003) and festivals as well as in mediatized form over television and the internet (Tambar, 2010).

Sensorimotorics

In the field of sensual motoric actions (habitus, posture, and gestures), the worshiping gestures accompanying the 'invocations' in certain texts, especially the invocation of the names of religious figures regularly referred to in Alevi ritual, are one basic performance pattern. These resemble greeting gestures towards superiors and are widespread in the Middle East: placing the right hand on the chest and/or

the mouth or the forehead (see Figure 7). This can be supplemented by other gestures or movements, such as by prostration (*secde*), which is repeatedly exercised at certain moments of the *cem* ritual, followed by the kneeling position with the upper body bent over, a position that is kept during the prayer directed by the *dede* leading the congregation (see Figure 5). There are also other prayer postures while standing up. Public prayer, for example at funerals, follows the pattern of the orthodox Sunni majority standing with hands held forward with the palms facing up. This prayer posture can be observed in cases where common Islamic prayers, such as the *fatiha*, have been incorporated into the *cem* ritual. Specific to Alevi practice is, however, the standing with the big toe of the right foot atop the big toe of the left foot in the *ayak mühürleme* posture (lit. 'sealing the feet') performed while 'standing in *dar*' ('dara durmak', lit. 'remaining on the gallows'). The 'standing in *dar*' is also practiced in the centre of the ritual space (*meydan*) when a person is about to perform a ritual service (*hizmet*) or a different role in the ritual and steps in front of the *dede*. In addition to 'sealing the feet', the performer 'standing in *dar*' must fold his hands over his chest and incline the upper body and head slightly forward. This complete body gesture can be identified as a generic posture demonstrating humility in front of a superior (see Figure 6).

In addition to the casual sitting (*rahat*) during less ritualized phases of the ceremony, for example during the presentation of a *deyiş* hymn, there is also the upright kneeling. This posture is accompanied by rhythmical movements to some of the chants, primarily during the collective singing of the *tevhid* songs, during which hitting one's chest or thighs as a gesture of self-flagellation has become standard. This was not always the case in the villages, as my field research and interviewing of elder villagers have shown, where different forms, such as handclapping, were practiced. Thus, it is a standardization that is rapidly spreading over the modern transnational Alevi community and has found acceptance, not the least due to particularly impressive ritual performances during mass events broadcast on Alevi television (see Figure 7).

Probably also originating in more publicised events comes the collective singing of the Kerbela lament (commemorating the murder of Hüseyin there) at the end of the ritual, where all stand and hold the hands of each neighbouring person (see Figure 8).

In relation to the body, not any religiously sanctioned, ritualistic cleansing rules are carried out before the ritual, such as the public partial ablution before praying in a mosque. However, modern ritual manuals mention that one should arrive washed, clean and dressed in good but not overtly conspicuous clothes to worship.

The spatial structure within Alevi community rituals is determined, besides the above-mentioned focus on the *dede*, by the performative containment of the ritual space, which, in principle, can be realized in any spatial structure large enough for the participating congregation. The ritual space (*cem salonu*) can be created in any sufficiently large room, even in private homes, independently of a

Figure 6: Standing 'in *dar*', *CEM Vakfi Cem*, Ankara © Christian Funke 2006.

Figure 7: *Cem, Atatürk Spor Sarayı*, Ankara © Christian Funke 2006.

Figure 8: *Cem, Atatürk Spor Sarayı*, Ankara © Christian Funke 2006.

community house, but it is distinguished by the fact that one takes his/her shoes off before entering. The place assigned for this is usually the threshold of the entrance door. In addition, a duty officer (*hizmetçi*), assigned for the service (*hizmet*), recruited from the laypeople, ensures compliance with this rule, and is referred to as *iznikçi* or *kapıcı*. In the village his role was to allow the eligible ones into the ritual and deny the non-initiated community members and the outcasts. Especially in earlier times he also had the task of warning the congregation if unforeseen non-Alevis or representatives of the state (military, police, etc.) approached the village, and especially the place of the ritual. Until some decades ago, there were violent disturbances of Alevi rituals by Sunni Muslims with accusations of heresy, or by police seeking to enforce the Republican law that made the activities of mystical orders illegal.

Over the threshold the room is often characterized by a special floor covering, such as woven or knotted carpets and seat cushions arranged around the *meydan*, which one finds also in a traditional home (see Figure 9).

In Germany, chairs are occasionally used, but this is largely frowned upon in Turkey although it is largely accepted nowadays that elderly people sit on chairs. The centre of the ritual space (*meydan*) is left open and used by the lay *hizmetçi*s for specific actions during the ritual, such as the ritual dance called *semah*. This

Figure 9: *Cem Salonu*, Ocak Köyü © Janina Karolewski 2009.

area is comparable to the central ritual space in dervish convents (*tekke*, *dergah*), also called meydan (place). The place of the *dede* is highlighted by the orientation of the community towards him, but also by a special seating arrangement, whereby the skin (*post*) of a previously ritually sacrificed sheep is brought in and put in place at the beginning of the ritual by a layman (*postçu*). In modern *cemevi*s, the seat of the *dede* or *dede*s, called *post pars-pro-toto*, is usually characterized by a platform-like elevation resembling a stage. On the wall behind the *post*, modern decorations for the ritual space can be found, such as images of the Twelve Imams, pictures of saints, or in the diaspora often modern symbolic murals (doves as symbols of peace, etc.).

The *meydan* serves for greeting rituals that the participants perform in front of the *post* even if the *dede* has not yet arrived. This form of prostration, connected with the kissing of the *meydan* or *post* is called *niyaz* (petitionary prayer, invocation/supplication, and, in a dervish context, gesture of worship towards a higher rank). Such greeting rituals in the form of prostration are also performed during certain sequences of the ritual by the participants, always directed towards the *post*, for example when taking over a ritual service (*hizmet*). During the ritual, further collective body configurations are performed synchronously. For example, *rızalık*, expressing consent to the participating co-believers as well as to the pre-

ceding *dede*, is performatively implemented by the congregation's mutual hugs or handshakes. Particularly body-effective is the mutual holding of hands while standing and singing a mourning song (*mersiyye*), which narrates the killing of Hüseyin in Kerbela and re-actualizes it (see Figure 8).

Aesthetics, or aestheticisation?

Aspects of deliberate aestheticisation are observable in the recent staging of Alevi ritual practice, for example on Turkish television TRT during Muharrem (e.g. in 2009). It is insightful to compare these events, extensively documented on YouTube, to the more organic, although improvised and bricolage aesthetics of a community ritual during Muharrem in the Istanbul *cemevi*s, which lack the representational means of a television studio.

The staged version, although enhancing the possibilities of aestheticisation, reduces the participatory bodily elements, especially for the seated studio audience, whereas in the *cemevi*, participation is unavoidable, and the aesthetics lie mainly in the perceptive body of the participant, perceiving the others via and together with her or his own body while moving and singing along. Aestheticisation of space—of the costume, of the music and the singing, etc.—becomes a secondary aspect in a context framed as an active religious congregation. However, as we observe occasionally in the TRT footage, even in the studio the audience tries to participate, as the music induces a ritualistic mode for those accustomed to participating in Alevi events or rituals.

The Bodily-and-Material Cultures of Religion ('Aesthetics')

For my research I conceptualise aesthetics as the perception of bodily actions, and perception through bodily actions, using the theoretical framework developed by Mohan and Warnier (2017) in a working group at the University College London. By drawing on Marcel Mauss's notion of the techniques of the body ([1936] 1973), Schilder's theory of the *Körperschema* (1935), findings of neurocognitive sciences and Foucault's concept of subjectivation, they focus on the so-called bodily-and-material cultures, prominent in all religious traditions. This implies a shift away from formerly privileged areas such as verbalised creeds, doctrines, and texts.

The working group's approach should serve to understand how religious practice produces the devotee and obtains his compliance. Religion materialises in the devotional subject, the devotee. There are potential synergies, tensions, and cognitive gaps between the verbalised creeds (the ideologies, or *Weltanschauungen*) and the bodily techniques within their respective material cultures (bodies, things, places, and practices). This tension is at the core of the dynamics of relig-

ion, the driving force of its reproduction, adaptation, transformation, and in some cases its extinction.

In order to achieve a better analytical basis, Mohan and Warnier (2017) suggest as a first step to put aside anything that pertains to beliefs, creeds, dogmas, doctrines, speech, texts, preaching and verbalised knowledge in general; also, anything associated with signs, codes, meaning, and symbols, which could all be translated into verbalised knowledge. They explain:

> Once you have practised the *epoche* [abstinence] that denies the natural evidence of religion as creeds and a system of signs, what is left is what we shall refer to [henceforth] as bodily-and-material cultures of religious practice and their practical or praxic value in a system of agency, that is, for what they achieve or do, to and for the religious subject, through bodily practice and material culture. (Mohan and Warnier 2017: 370).

One aim of this approach is to make it possible to study emotive and performative aspects of religion in their own right. That this is even necessary, proves that the believer, the devotee, and the religious specialist, when asked about these subjects, invariably refer to verbalised creeds. The reason for this is that the devotee (just like the researcher actually) lacks any sophisticated tool to access these aspects of religion; the bodily and material aspects, the practice. As the body and the material are driving forces in the (re)production of 'religion', it is however essential for an academic discipline working on religious phenomena to develop such a tool-kit, which can provide a basis for empirical research on the aesthetics and materiality of religious ritual practice.

Verbalized and Procedural Knowledge

Cognitive neuroscience has shown that there is a clear distinction in the brain between two kinds of human knowledge: verbalised and procedural–knowing *that*, and knowing *how*–, although both are also interconnected in the human brain (Mohan and Warnier, 2017: 370–372).

Whereas the first involves verbal expressions, discourse, and ideas, the second results in bodily techniques, for example how to stand 'in *dar*', how to dance the *semah*, how to play the *bağlama*, how to shed tears for Hüseyin and his companions murdered at Kerbela–all these are easily recognisable as religious practice. The aggregation of such bodily techniques results in a specific *habitus*, a body feeling and a body expression, with all related constraints and potentialities. Procedural knowledge is always the result of an apprenticeship, whether to a person or to a process, for example by participating in a community of practice in regular rituals, like in a *cemevi* congregation, or traditionally in a village community. Its aesthetic aspect is that procedural knowledge is achieved via the sensorium, all our senses including the body. As Morgan (2010) explained: "[The devotee] says he believes in God, […] He says he believes, but what he really does is feel, smell, hear, and see."

Methodologically, this approach requires us to be suspicious of verbalised descriptions (Mohan and Warnier, 2017: 371). Access to bodily-and-material cultures of the devotee is only possible through direct participant observation and partly through audio-visual media; which involve the perception of both unconsciously and consciously manipulated aesthetics (i.e. aestheticisations). Additionally, we have to take into consideration that the representation of practice is not the same as the practice itself. As in Magritte's famous painting, "This is not a pipe"–you cannot kindle and smoke the painting of a pipe, and hence you could never understand from a painting how it is to smoke a pipe (Mohan and Warnier, 2017: 371). An analysis of Alevi ritual practice, including its aesthetics, is not possible without at least some form of bodily participation by the researcher.

The materiality in bodily techniques lies in the fact that "procedural knowledge is" often (as in the case of pipe-smoking) "'propped' on material culture" (Mohan and Warnier, 2017: 372). There is no *semah* without an appropriate, aesthetically manipulated space, no *cem* without a musical instrument, or water and light and other objects and substances used in the ritual. The connection to the body lies in the fact that, according to Schilder's (1935) notion of the *Körperschema*, or bodily scheme, the body does not end at its skin, but extends beyond those physical boundaries (Mohan and Warnier, 2017: 372). It includes spaces, objects, and substances used, and at times even other bodies, while dancing for example, exerting collective formations, or while shaking hands, kissing each other, etc.

The Double Status of the Body as a Subject and Object

The human body, in these contexts of cultural performance, has a double status, both as subject and as object. "The subject *is* a body, and it *has* a body" (Mohan and Warnier, 2017: 373, 376). And it is aesthetic paradigms as culturally reproduced elements, for example in Alevism as a religious practice, that organise the bodily experience of things, others, and of the own body of the performing subject. "Religion is compelling, […] because it is a technique, that is, an efficacious and traditional action on and by the body of the 'total man' as a bio-psycho-social entity" (Marcel Mauss, 1936 cited after Mohan and Warnier, 2017: 373).

This double status of the body is also part of the process that produces, with a whole imaginary cosmos attached to the body's experience, the 'real' for the believer (Mohan and Warnier, 2017: 373–375). On the other hand, it produces the subject, as the body is the first of our tools as a human being, the means of our actions as well as the focus of other people's actions on us. Here the group or community comes into play, as it partakes in the creation of the subject. Only in a group, in our case the Alevis, can the bodily, material, emotional, and cognitive resources be provided to the subject (Mohan and Warnier, 2017: 377). That is: To produce an Alevi subject, there must be a group where the subject is, at least at some point in time, acting and re-enacting (and by that learning) the specific bod-

ily movements (e.g. in a *semah*), how to handle certain objects (such as a *saz*), and reacting to certain actions and narratives (e.g. representation of the Kerbela events, inducing crying and weeping), etc. (Mohan and Warnier, 2017: 378). These elements can also be achieved partially by observing mediatised performances (as a kind of passive rehearsal).

"In order to be the 'true' subject of his or her religious commitment […], the devotee has an obligation to make certain gestures, to relate to given substances and objects, to experience given perceptions and emotions" (378). Given the subjectivity of each individual, the event-like processual character of the bodily action, and the ambiguity and uncertainty involved (which characterises every cultural praxis and symbolic system), we can also note the dynamic, potentially both productive and subversive character of this process of subjectivation through bodily-and-material culture.

Cognitive Gaps

The relationship between a verbalised creed and the different register of knowing and being produced by bodily-and-material cultures typically involves cognitive gaps and contradictions. Bodily-and-material cultures rarely duplicate or re-enact creed. There is no standard rule for the adequacy of a practice and its representation, as is often assumed in sociological or anthropological studies. We cannot therefore access practice by simply studying its representation via statements of the devotee or even the religious specialist. In fact, the dynamics and potency of religion lies in that potential gap, which demands the ongoing social and cultural work on the devotee. And herein lies the scope for the reproduction of a religious tradition, for its adaptation and transformation, but also for its subversion, which could even entail the extinction of a tradition. (Mohan and Warnier, 2017: 379–380)

The double bind character of cognitive gaps, produced in culture through the differing channels of verbalised and procedural messages, can be illustrated, in the Alevi case, in the re-enactment of the Kerbela story. This ritual is performed by sprinkling water onto the congregation, which represents the water of the Euphrates for those dying of thirst in Kerbela 680, though in fact it is only tap water from the water supply of the *cemevi*. The discrepancy is bridged by resorting to the imaginary, which via activities such as these, is planted with great emotional force into the devotee as a subject. Devotional subjects, moreover, enact within these kinds of rituals the bodily movements and postures they have acquired during their socialisation and participation in religious and cultural practice. The difficulty in accessing this procedural side of religious knowledge is that such bodily conducts (that is how a certain habitus acquired through socialisation is enacted by the body) and the sensorium are buried in the cognitive unconscious (Mohan and Warnier, 2017: 380). The brain prevents us from being reflexively aware of our bodily conducts, a characteristic of habitus, for neuro-pragmatic reasons. In con-

trast to the inherent reflexivity in uttered speech, bodily conduct stays on a rather non-reflexive level of the brain, as it is not directly bound to symbols, such as words or signs, that could then be linked to concrete speech acts.

Bodily-and-Material Cultures as Domains for Religious Reproduction and Adaptation

Religion is an attractive repository for cultural resources. Its bodily-and-material culture overlaps with those of other domains such as art and politics and is adaptive. This is evident in the innovation of Sivas commemoration rituals in Europe, where the bodily-and-material culture of the majority society or from a secular domain are included in the ritual, such as marching with candles, arranging them on a stage, etc. (see Figure 10).

Let me, once again, underline the need for collective research in such a topic: An individual researcher is inevitably biased in one way or another towards the rituals he or she becomes socialised into during their research. Moreover, every religious/cultural tradition is made up of several areas of specific ritualisms, which might overlap, but could also remain separate from another. In order to develop a more holistic picture, it is important that different and diverse research perspectives are combined; most obviously, but not exclusively, to ensure a range of gender perspectives.

Conclusion

Considering the relative inaccessibility of bodily conducts, the low reflexive awareness of culture and religion bodily enacted in a specific habitus of the devotee, and the resulting lack of terminology to describe those processes, or even simple bodily activities, forces us to start with very basic elements of a given tradition, such as Alevilik, for describing and analysing ritual practice. A first step, at the very least, is to detach it from verbalised creed. However, while doing so, we observe a certain unspecifity and generality in the identification of basic bodily actions and configurations. This may be seen by the follower of a tradition as potentially dangerous, as it relativizes his or her tradition and renders it comparable to other, neighbouring traditions. Yet this is just what we, as researchers, aim to do. Besides identifying specificities, we work to contextualise specific traditions both historically and contemporarily into a wider context of human cultural repertoires. As early as 1956, Ethel Drower spearheaded this holistic perspective on cultural repertoires of the Middle East in her ingenious monography, *Water into Wine: A Study of Ritual Idiom in the Middle East*. While Lady Drower worked on the Mandaeans, Yezidis, Zoroastrians, and Oriental Christians of Iraq and Iran, it remains for us to incorporate further traditions not yet explored dur-

Figure 10: Sivas Commemoration, Dortmund, Germany 2007 (author and source unknown).

ing her time, such as Alevism (but also other non-Sharia-oriented Muslim communities) to get a more comprehensive picture of the ritual idiom of the Middle East and its aesthetics.

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The Drinking Dervishes[1]

An Enquiry into Ritual Inebriation Among a Bektashi Congregation

Nicolas Elias

Ey zahit şaraba eyle ihtiram	O ascetic! Show respect to wine
İnsan ol cihanda bu dünya fani	Be a Man in this world, this world is ephemeral
Ehline helaldir na-ehle haram	Wine is permissible to its people, unlawful for the outsider
Biz içeriz bize vebali yoktur	We drink it, it does not make us sin
Sevap almak için içeriz şarap	We drink wine to obtain God's rewards
İçmezsek oluruz düçar-ı azap	If we do not drink it, we become afflicted with torment
Senin aklın ermez bu başka hesap	Your intellect will not grasp it, this is a different conception
Meyhanede bulduk biz bu kemali	We have found this perfection in the tavern
Kandil geceleri kandil oluruz	On the holy nights of the candle we ourselves become candles
Kandilin içinde fitil oluruz	We become the wick inside the candle
Hakkı göstermeye delil oluruz	We become the guides that show the Truth
Fakat kör olanlar görmez bu halı	But those who are blind do not see this state of ours
Sen münkinsin sana haramdır bade	You are a denier, wine is unlawful for you
Bekle ki içesin öbür dünyada	You shall wait to drink it in the next world
Bahs açma Harabi bundan ziyade	Harabi, do not speak further
Çünkü bilmez haram ile helali.	Because he does not know the difference between lawful and illicit
Edip Harabi[2]	Translation: Zeynep Oktay Uslu

1 This work is based on joint fieldwork with Nikos Sigalas and Jérôme Cler (see Cler, 2013 and 2017; Sigalas, 2017) and draws from two previous publications (see Elias 2016 and 2017). The caricature was brought to my attention by Catherine Pinguet who found it in the personal collection of Pierre de Gigord.

2 Nineteenth century Bektashi poet. I quote the poem as sung by the contemporary musicians Erkan Oğur and İsmail Hakkı Demircioğlu.

Figure 1: Bektashi *baba*s indulging in lust. Caricature from 'Bektaşi fıkraları', Orhan Ural.

I

The members of the Bektashi brotherhood have, in Turkey, a reputation for being at odds with Islamic prescriptions. A set of popular jokes revolves around the nonchalance of the Bektashi dervish toward the religious laws (Balivet, 2014). This is especially true when it comes to the prohibition of alcohol. Bektashis are known not only for drinking, but also for doing so within their ceremonies, called *cem*. This leads to recurrent accusations of ritual debauchery, accusations best displayed in the novel *Nur Baba*, published in 1922 by Yakup Kadri Karasomanoğlu. Its paradigmatic opening scene describes drunk dervishes shouting for more alcohol in the nocturne company of women. Interestingly enough, it echoes similar fears expressed by the late Ottoman administration. Quoting Ottoman sources, Selim Deringil writes that: '[i]t was also reported as an extremely undesirable development that "women of good family had been frequenting Bektaşi *tekkes* and imbibing alcoholic beverages".' (Deringil, 2011: 65).

In the village of Tekke Bektashis stress the rigorousness of their way of life, in contrast to popular perception. 'Here, the rules are very strict' ('*burada kurallar çok katı*') said one of them, emphasizing the difference with the neighbouring Sunni villages. The meaning of the order affiliation, the villagers claim, is to achieve spiritual betterment. More specifically, their teaching focuses on 'taming the *nefs*', ('*nefsini köreltmek*'), the *nefs* being something between the self and the natural urges (Svara, 2002). That should not come as a surprise: most Muslim orders (*tarikat*), perhaps all of them, base their teachings on this taming of the *nefs* (Papas, 2008; Silverstein, 2007). However, they endeavour to achieve it through different means. As for the Bektashis villagers, they explicitly included alcohol consumption in this struggle for betterment. As one of them explained, 'there can be no liturgy without alcohol' ('*dem yoksa cem olmaz*').

The fact that ritual inebriation may take place among other spiritual techniques used by Muslim brotherhoods, and the fact that alongside the 'whirling dervishes' and 'howling dervishes' exist drinking dervishes, was already pointed out by John Kinglsey Birge as soon as 1937 in his seminal book, *The Bektashi Order of Dervishes*:

> Just as the characteristic of the *Rufai* order is to produce a state of ecstasy by the swaying of the body and the repetition out loud of God's name and praises for Him; and just as the *Mevlevis* produce their 'state' by whirling in their special manner to the tune of the *ney* and drum; so the Bektashi here claims, in the spirit of a sacrament, remembering the recognition of God before creation began, that it is the Bektashi's characteristic rite or ceremony to produce a state of spiritual intoxication by the drinking of wine or *raki*. (Birge, 1937: 201)[3]

[3] Decades later, Mark Soileau contributed an extended analysis of ritual eating and drinking among Bektashis in contemporary Ankara (Soileau, 2012).

This statement begs a wider question. Whatever 'state' the Bektashis wish to reach, why do they choose to reach it through drinking, when whirling or howling is an option?

Drawing from fieldwork among the congregation of Tekke, I will argue that a 'state of ecstasy' or 'spiritual intoxication' are far from the only outcomes of ritual inebriation. Ritual inebriation is perhaps above all, and as strange as it may sound, a matter of discipline and hierarchy. My claim is thus twofold. Through the ethnography of the ritual, I will analyse how inebriation is rooted in a broader bodily discipline and aims ultimately at self-discipline – i.e. 'taming of the *nefs*'. Then, stepping outside the ceremonies, I claim that discipline through inebriation introduces a discontinuity in the Muslim community and therefore a sharp hierarchy between those who are initiated and those who are not.

II

The village of Tekke lies in the Taurus mountains, two hours by car north of Antalya, in south-west Turkey. I visited it several times during the winters between 2011 and 2017, in the friendly company of Nikos Sigalas and Jérôme Cler. The village once hosted an important Bektashi convent (*tekke*), partially destroyed in 1826 and then closed in 1925. While nothing remains of the *tekke* but the mausoleum of Abdal Musa and the cemetery, most of the inhabitants of the village are still affiliated to the Bektashi order. For this reason, the mosque of the village is almost always empty, while villagers gather at one of the two 'houses of assembly' (*cemevi*) in the village for ceremonies called *cem*. This disparity between the state-built mosque ('*cami*') and the secretive *cemevi* is meaningful. While the mosque is a public space, with a public call for prayer, *cem* ceremonies take place behind closed doors, at sundown, in a house that does not differ from the surrounding buildings.

How the villagers remained affiliated to the Bektashi order throughout the twentieth century is a long and complex story, as is the history of the order itself[4]. While affiliated to the heads of the order in Turkey, they claim to follow a specific rule, the 'rule of Kaygusuz' (*Kaygusuz erkanı*), Kaygusuz being the discipline of Abdal Musa and one of the most famous poets of the Order. Indeed, the *ordo* of the ceremony slightly differs from the one described by Birge and Soileau, referred to as 'the rule of Balım Sultan' (*Balım Sultan erkanı*). The village enjoys a rich congregational life, with no less than two sheikhs (*icazetli baba*), and a varying number of 'substitutes' elected each year (*dikme baba*). The process of elections, as well as the rivalry between the two leaders, led to frequent disputes and the formation of numerous groups holding their ceremonies in two different 'house of assembly' (*cemevi*).

4 See Elias, 2017 and Sigalas, 2017.

The congregation may be divided, but all members agree on one thing: the path they follow is characterized by a specific discipline, and by a greater perfection. The compulsory initiation ritual implies, as Soileau puts it, 'a kind of transformation' (2012: 11). Initiates call themselves '*erenler*', 'the accomplished one' or '*canlar*', 'the souls'. They make great use of well-known phrases in Islamic mysticism, such as 'dying before dying' (*ölmeden önce ölmek*) or 'taming one's self' (*nefsini terbiye etmek*). When referring to themselves, they try to avoid saying 'me' or 'I', and replace it by 'this poor person' (*bu fakir*). Yet, there is no particular prevalence of asceticism in the village. The main objective one has to pursue is to refrain from what the villagers call '*benlik*', or 'egotism', within community life. It is somehow a strict application of their famous motto, 'master your hand, your tongue and your waist' (*eline, diline, beline sahip ol*). It is worth noting though, that this injunction to master oneself is not mere rhetoric, but is backed by a specific system of sanctions. Misconduct is actually punished by fines, or by exclusion from the congregation (*düşkünlük*).

Communal life culminates in the ceremony of the *cem*. During the winter, when the fields no longer require attention, the village lives in a profusion of ceremonies. Under the supervision of a '*baba*', men and women gather at dawn in a dedicated house full of rags and colourful pictures of Ali, Hacı Bektaş Veli and Abdal Musa. They won't leave until long after midnight. At first glance, the *cem* may appear as some kind of entertainment: men and women eating, drinking, dancing and singing together, though the ceremonies are infused by seriousness and even a certain boredom. Enjoying oneself too much is precisely the one thing to avoid: it is seen as an act of egotism (*benlik*), and, as such, strongly censured.

Alcohol, the mixing of the sexes, music, dance and food are embedded in a specific discipline, ritualized, and reframed, nominally at least, as different substances. Alcohol becomes *dem*, that is 'instant' or 'blood' (Soileau, 2012: 24). Music is called *nefes*, 'breath'. Dance is referred to as *semah*, 'listening'. Food is turned into *lokma*, 'a morsel'. As for men and women, they are both desexualized as *canlar*, 'the souls'. This transmutation was once emphasized by a preeminent *baba*, who said bluntly: '*semah oyun değil*', 'the *semah* is not a dance', without, I think, any reference to Magritte's famous 'Ceci n'est pas une pipe'. I do not claim that the participants do not enjoy drinking or eating. They do, and they're right to do so: the food is pretty good, and the music of the most excellent quality. Changing the name of the cooked lamb doesn't make it less tasty. But each one of those elements must be handled according to its new status.

An example of a failed reframing might better illustrate this process. Everyone in the village acknowledges that N. K. is without a doubt their most talented musician. The statement is accurate. He is a truly talented *saz* player and singer, who once made a living from wedding and concerts. But he exhibited the bad habit of showing off, asserting that he is an artist, and that he can do what no one else can. As a result of his *benlik*, he was banned from the *cems* for many years. That

does not mean that the congregation do not care about the quality of the music during the *cem*. They do. But they do not want 'artists' confusing the *cemevi* with a concert hall.

III

As for alcohol (*rakı* in our case, a grape distillation bought in the village's grocery store), participants drink in large quantities but in a highly ritualized manner. As outlined above, alcohol is always referred to as *dem* and never as *rakı* or alcohol. But the ritual transmutation does not only affect its name. The consumption of alcohol is strictly regulated, both in its gestures and its temporality. Consumption takes place during a specific phase of the ceremony – called *muhabbet* – and its distribution falls under the supervision of someone called *saki* (i.e. 'the cup-bearer'), a specific office devoted to the distribution of alcohol. The *saki* regulates the quantity of *rakı* mixed with water and organizes the circulation of alcohol among the participants. Participants have no direct access to alcohol, which they are given at specific times from a common cup. The logic of consumption is quite simple. To quote Mark Soileau, who describes the ceremonies of a Bektashi congregation in Ankara: 'Discipline is the rule. No one takes a sip of *dem* until the moment when the *baba* calls for it – and only following the *baba*'s own sip' (Soileau, 2012: 18). The *baba* initiates the consumption by what is called *üçleme*, that is taking three sips 'for the love of the Three' (*üçler aşkına*) – Allah, Muhammet and Ali. All participants follow. Sips are then taken at significant moments, as a kind of punctuation to the preachings of the *baba* or to the lyrics of the songs[5]. Even though it is taken in sips, and strictly controlled in its distribution, overall consumption is substantial, as the *muhabbet* phase lasts at least two hours. I should add that most women do not generally drink, and that it is of course possible to refuse the cup when offered.

If, upstream, alcohol is placed under the supervision of the *saki*, downstream, inebriation falls under the control of another office, the *gözcü* (i.e. 'the watcher'). His role is quite simple: discipline and punish, as Foucault puts it. Second only to the *baba*, he watches over the whole ceremony and controls the behaviour of everyone in the room.

In general, the rules are rather strict. One shouldn't speak. One shouldn't leave the room before the ceremony is over without permission – and the ceremony lasts for five or six hours. One shouldn't stand up or even extend his legs unless

[5] 'The fact that *dem* is drunk at moments in the baba's speech or in the *nefes* from which the essence is to be extracted, suggests that the drinking of *dem* is a signal that marks a point worthy of attention and activates the perceptive faculties of participants to register an understanding of reality. The point is distilled in *dem*, and as it is drunk, the point is ingested.' (Soileau, 2012: 25).

being told so. Any misbehaviour is reprimanded as a mark of egotism (*benlik*) by the *gözcü* or the *baba* and the system of repression goes from oral reproof to definitive exclusion, through fines or temporary exclusion. The disciplined bodies are placed under strict scrutiny, embedded into the formal *ordo* of the ceremony.

The relation between strict bodily discipline and the injunction to drink alcohol may appear contradictory. But it is precisely in the convergence of those two realities that the use of alcohol takes on its full meaning. Here, ritual drinking is used as a double bind – 'be drunk but behave'. The logic at the root of this double bind was voiced by one of the religious authorities of the village. When asked about it, he answered: '*dem insanın anahtarıdır*', 'alcohol is the key to man'. During the *cem*, alcohol is valued for its capacity to reveal the 'self' (*nefs*), the 'essence' (*öz*), thus potentially revealing the possible egotism within each person. What inebriation exposes, is precisely what is supposedly put on trial during the ceremony. As such, it ultimately works toward 'taming the *nefs*' – or, more prosaically, proving the absence of *benlik*. Inebriation does not contradict the strict discipline of the ceremony, but intensifies it, deeply increasing its effectiveness. The logic of exposure through inebriation and the regime of sanction go hand to hand.

We can therefore understand how the explicit transgression of the Islamic *haram* is manoeuvred: alcohol is no more the *object* but rather *the means* of discipline. The participants elaborate on this shift through the Sufi dialectic of the law (*şeriat*) and the way (*tarikat*), the exoteric law that applies to the many and the esoteric way practiced by the few. Thus, the ban on alcohol is exceeded but not lifted. It simply does not apply to everyone – only to those whose *nefs* isn't tamed. Drinking is a matter of capacity, as stated in the poem of Harabi (*'Ehline helaldir na-ehle haram'*), something only the 'accomplished ones' (*erenler*) may achieve. As such, the famous Islamic sentence, 'alcohol is the mother of all vices' still applies, notwithstanding a minor twist: vices do not originate in alcohol itself but in a person's essence – inebriation merely reveals it. The logic at play here has been perfectly expressed by Spinoza, who wrote that, 'Different men can be affected in different ways by one and the same object' (Spinoza, 2006: 86). The first words of the proposition are of particular relevance: *different men*. Only by reading Spinoza's sentence completely can we grasp the logic at the core of this antinomian practice: hierarchy. The ritual consumption of alcohol introduces a discontinuity in the Muslim community.

IV

At this stage, I would like to quote an interesting sentence from Max Weber regarding the sociological implications of religious behaviour that he designates as 'religious virtuosity':

> Religious virtuosity, in addition to subjecting the natural drives to a systematic patterning of life, always leads to a radical ethico-religious critique of the relationship to soci-

> ety, the conventional virtues of which are inevitably unheroic and utilitarian. (Weber, 1978: 542)

As a matter of fact, an antinomian practice such as the one we are examining constitutes, in its own way, a fitting example of religious virtuosity. And as such, we ought to be attentive to its heroic and non-utilitarian virtues, that is its critical charge.

In the discourse of the Bektashi villagers, not only is alcohol legitimated despite the Islamic law, but the stigma of alcohol consumption is also partially reversed. As I heard one *baba* say, if Sunnis don't drink it is 'because they cannot master themselves' ('*kendilerine sahip olamadılar*'), or 'because they fear themselves' ('*kendilerinden korkuyorlar*'). We could say that they are afraid of what inebriation would unleash, afraid of their untamed *nefs*. They are, that is, imperfect.

For the participants, alcohol consumption stands as proof of inner perfection. And inner perfection is, nominally, a requisite for entering the ceremony, within which each participant is referred to as 'accomplished' or as a 'soul'. Each person entering the *cem* should be free from any sin or any negative feeling towards another member of the community. The religious authorities who I interviewed stressed the importance of alcohol in the *cem*. But they stressed even more the superiority of the *cemevi* over the mosque. 'Anyone can enter the mosque and participate in the liturgy, even thieves or murderers' they said, while among Bektashis anyone who misbehaves is excluded and therefore cannot enter the *cem*. Exclusion, together with inebriation, here plays a fundamental role in enforcing the perfection of the assembly.

Inner mastery, exposed by alcohol consumption, is gauged and valued in comparison with the mosque as a place of doubtful perfection. What is at stake is nothing less than the collective superiority of the order's members over the majority of Muslims. Ritual alcohol consumption thus contributes to a wider apparatus designed to produce a strong dichotomy and hierarchy between two places of assembly, the *cem* and the *cami*, to the benefit of the first and the expense of the second. This dichotomy between a secretive and perfect assembly and a public and possibly corrupted one, goes further than confessional antagonism. One should keep in mind that the mosque is not only a place of worship for the Sunni community, but is the *only* permitted place of worship for Muslims according to the state. It is an official building, a place where every Friday a state employee reads sermons written in the capital.

In this regard, the ritual use of alcohol not only tames the natural drives of the participants, it also shapes their 'relationship to society' – as Weber puts it – by secretly yet deeply antagonizing the state religious institution. The *cem* ceremonies do not only differ from other Sufi rituals in their ritual secrecy. They differ radically in their relation to the state-defined Sunni Islam, both in its ritual and its place of assembly. The *Kadriri* gatherings that take place in the *tekke* of Kadirler Yokuşu (Istanbul – Tophane), or the *Nakşibendi* gathering described by Brian

Silverstein (2007) both include the *namaz* (the prayer performed five times a day) in their rituals. And those gatherings are but an adjunct to the mosque, where all members are expected to attend the Friday prayer. On the contrary, the *cem* is not a gathering to be attended in addition to the common assembly, but something of a dissident assembly.

Alcohol is central in shaping this dissidence. Both a 'state of ecstasy' and (self-) discipline could be achieved through different means. What alcohol achieves *per se*, is a kind of ontological differentiation between 'different men'. The logic of ontological differences between men, or at least the hierarchy of men according to their degree of perfection, is rooted in Sufi teaching. But ritual alcohol consumption implements it in a radical form, articulating two communities of men whose values diverge.

V

The radical nature of this division is best displayed by the controversies that surround it. Clearly not everyone in the village is completely at ease with the 'heroism' implied by ritual inebriation, evidenced in the heated disputes it provokes among the congregation. Disputes are the common to the villagers. But ritual alcohol consumption, its potential for disruption, is something of a *casus belli* in contemporary Turkey.

When analysing such sensitive disputes, one fact must be firmly established: alcohol consumption has a long and respectable history in the village, and, according to Suraiya Faroqhi, historical evidence supports the villagers' claims:

> From an inventory of the Bektashi convent of Abdal Musa, dating from 1826, it is clear that certain Bektashis produced their own wine. Thus, in their stories, real wine must have been meant, and not the 'inebriation of the soul' which leads the devotee to God and is a common metaphor in Islamic mysticism. In a less elevated mode, the dervishes of Abdal Musa owned a vineyard on the coast of south-western Anatolia, together with wine-press and barrels. (Faroqhi, 2005: 216)

But when I asked M.Z., one of the elders of the village (who was once an elected *baba*) what had changed in the performance of the *cems* over the preceding decades, his answer was: 'now, they serve too much *dem*' – 'they' referring to the religious authorities of the village. Born in 1938, M.Z. had played an important role in reconnecting the village with the heads of the Bektashi order. He had recently resettled in the village after many years in the city of Antalya, which is home to a community of Bektashis (many of them originating from Crete), and that long stay in the city may have contributed to his more 'conservative' stance. He added that the purpose of alcohol was only to 'intensify' the experience ('*koyulaştırmak için*'), but that too much of it was something illicit ('*haram*'). The elder also stressed that the *cemevi* should not be turned into a 'wedding place' or a 'mun-

dane place' ('*Düğün evi, dünya evi değil*')[6]. His critique thus addressed a 'secular' way of drinking as antithetical to a liturgical one.

His characterisation of the subject, I suspect, was not only derived from his views on alcohol consumption. He kept insisting on the place of the Quran, stating that all their traditions derived from it ('*her adetimiz Kuran'dan*'), and that the prayers recited during the *cem* were but 'a Turkish version' of it ('*okuduğumuz dualar Kuran'ın Türkçesi*'). This is hardly borne out in by the congregation, as the Quran is nowhere to be seen, neither during the ceremonies nor in private houses. Yet for M.Z., minimizing alcohol consumption preserves the integrity of the Muslim community, resorbing the discontinuity between the two assemblies.

Some have gone even further in the attempt to close the gap between the village congregation and the national public space. Everyone in the village remembers this episode, referred to as the one of 'the tea drinkers' (*çaycılar*): a small group established too close a link with a national Alevi organisation – *CEM Vakfı* – and were therefore excluded from the village congregation (Sigalas, 2017). In imitation of the public ceremonies held by *CEM Vakfı*, they decided to replaced alcohol with tea.[7] Only when they were reintegrated into the congregation some time later, did they also reintegrate alcohol into their ceremonies.

While the exact link between tea and exclusion remains unclear, it is quite symptomatic that the attempt to establish links with an established national institution resulted in an attempt to 'dry' the ceremony.

Jérôme Cler reports another dispute worth considering. Some years ago, the participants of one of the two *cemevis* were serving the *dem* not in a common cup but in individual glasses, which were considered more hygienic. They were therefore accused by their more conservative counterparts of behaving as if in a tavern. They replied by criticizing their fellows' own ceremony in which, during the collective dance, men and women danced separately (first the men, then the women). Such a segregation was perceived as a 'Sunni' element (Cler 2017: 328). Both novelties were removed some time later. But through such disputes we are able to grasp the terms of a local debate: the need to keep both the mosque and the tavern at bay. Deviation to either side is harshly criticized; either for a lack of discipline (drinking excessively or individually like in a tavern) or for the lack of differentiation (banning alcohol, segregating men and women as in a mosque).

Let's go back to J. K. Birge's statement: 'Bektashi here claims […] that it is the Bektashi's characteristic rite or ceremony to produce a state of spiritual intoxication by the drinking of wine or *raki*.' The villagers of Tekke couldn't agree more when they assert that 'there can be no *cem* without *dem*'. However, alcohol con-

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6 When hearing such a statement, it is hard not to have in mind the words of the then mayor of Istanbul (and later President of the Republic of Turkey) Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who declared that the *cemevi* is a '*cümbüş evi*', 'a place of entertainment'.

7 This change was obviously facilitated by the different meanings of the word *dem*, which refers most commonly to the highly concentrated tea in the upper part of the samovar.

sumption produces effects beyond 'spiritual intoxication'. Inebriation of the body, as performed during the *cem*, aims to create hierarchy *through* discipline. The discipline of the *nefs* through ritual alcohol consumption introduces a sharp discontinuity in the Muslim community and establishes, nominally at least, a community of the 'accomplished ones' (*erenler*). Disputes but illustrate the unending effort required by such an antinomian stance, the hardly sustained virtuosity – as much as its constant negotiation. They illustrate even more how, beyond any dogmatic dispute, a material practice shapes the social reality of the congregation and does bear much of the local (re)definition of what constitutes Bektashism.

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Movement and Adaptation of the Alevi Semah for the Stage: from *Kardeşlik Töreni-Samah* to 'biz'[1]

Sinibaldo De Rosa

More often than not, the 'Alevi' category is constructed as an ethno-religious marker and conceived of as a stable given. However, since ethnicity is better understood as a system of relations and differentiation, anthropologists such as Ruth Mandel (2008: 20-21) note that use of language that acknowledges process rather than fixity, is better suited to understanding the articulation of an ethnic identity. Bodily transmission and professional theatre-making in Alevi contexts provide privileged access to those trying to grasp such evolving dynamics. In fact, over the last few decades, an 'Alevi' category has been imagined in the frame of performing arts projects, which are motivated by the intention of recovering, preserving or transgressing specific bodily forms in Alevi traditional contexts. These artistic contexts suggest how fabrications and conceptualizations of Alevi cultural heritage are configured through socio-cultural circumstances, which are experienced and actualized in bodily terms. Within the scope of this book, this chapter pays attention to some situational and embodied dynamics at play in the making and transmitting of contemporary Alevi cultural heritage. Current scholarship in performance and dance provides tools to analyse these performative and bodily dimensions, contributing to a more refined understanding of the unfolding and contingent character through which Alevi identities have been culturally produced and transmitted. In other words, the study of Alevi-themed performing arts projects helps debunk how Aleviness has been 'eventfully produced' since the 1980s in Turkey and transnationally.

After offering a preliminary discussion of two key concepts that I use in my research ('movement' and 'adaptation'), this article examines two arts projects whose choreographies and dramaturgies are strongly inspired by Alevi ritual themes.[2] In general terms, such projects can be understood as part of a shift in Alevi cultural production from a ritual towards a theatrical domain; a shift well-explicated by Guy Debord's notion of spectacle. As 'a social relationship between people that is mediated by images' (Debord, 1995:10), the spectacle is capable of

1 I wish to thank the editors of this book for their warm encouragement and support, and the Orient Institut Istanbul for offering me a six-month PhD Grant in 2017-2018. I also wish to express my gratitude to Mary Bateman, who made comments and helped me improve the English of the text.

2 The materials overviewed in this chapter were collected between 2009 and 2018 during my research on the staged adaptations of the Alevi *semah*s. This enquiry grounds an AHRC SWWDTP-funded PhD thesis that I completed in 2019 between the Drama department at the University of Exeter and the School of Music at Cardiff University.

providing a unitary representation despite its isolation from 'life'. As such, Alevi-themed performing arts crystallize a novel ontological distance between performers and spectators in the transmission of bodily Alevi heritage. By establishing a perpetual *separation,* which is typical of social relations in the contemporary forms of capitalist production, such a distance satisfies the demands of supposedly objective aesthetic judgments. It is solely through such a separation, which emerged after a process of knowledge construction and performative disciplining, that an embodied spiritual practice like the *semah* could even be conceived in the realm of the creative industries as a theatrical dance. It is however, in the potential for this spectacle, that the struggle for the emancipation of the Alevis within the national imagination has often been pursued. In complex and multifaceted ways, the transposition of spiritual practices from a ritual context towards aesthetic frameworks, has offered the Alevis a way out of their isolation and marginality.

Alevi Movements

In my research, the term 'movement' is used as a conceptual lens to discuss the centrality of body motion in Alevi symbolism and social life, as emphasised by the crucial place of the *semah* in Alevi liturgies. The question of which terms should be used to describe the *semah* in academic literature, has been already debated within Alevi studies. Some researchers remark that there is no historical evidence that the *semah*s were ever recognized as 'dance', and do not consider this categorization appropriate from an Alevi perspective (see Arnaud-Demir, 2002-2003: 143; Öztürkmen, 2005:248; Vorhoff, 1998:248). As I will unpack in this section, my privileging the term 'movement' over 'dance,' is motivated by the weighting of the *semah*s over studies and readings in the anthropology of dance and related disciplines (i.e. Farnell, 2012, Kaeppler, 2000, Royce, 1977), as well as by ethnographic anecdote.

In his lecture within the series that inspired this book, Nicolas Elias skilfully discussed how, in Tekkeköy, Antalya, Bektaşi devotees cultivate a form of discipline of the senses during ritual ceremonies (see Elias' article in this volume). Sensorial control is often invoked to defend themselves against frequent accusations that their religious practices are shallow and immoral. Such discipline within the ritual context empowers their claim of the moral superiority of the *cem* rituals over Sunni religious practices, contributing to a form of social distinction. In his lecture, Elias offered a striking reference to the famous painting by the Belgian surrealist, Rene Magritte '*Ceci n'est pas une pipe*' (1926), into which a painting of a pipe is undermined by the statement below affirming, 'this is not a pipe'. Through that reference, Elias hinted at linguistic discrepancies between his definitions of the components of the rituals and the emic definitions found in an ethnographic context. Similarly, he suggested that during the ritual practice, the *semah* is not understood as dance, the *dem* not as alcohol, and the participants become subliminally asexualized as genderless *canlar*. I would like to engage here with this

remark and to propose an ethnographic caveat on the implications of labelling the *semah* 'dance'.

I observed such a labelling paradox when I attended for the first time, an Alevi sit-in demonstration in Sakarya Meydanı in Ankara in November 2010. There I had a chat with a middle-aged woman in the street who had travelled from Malatya by bus for more than ten hours to join the protest. Since she noticed that I was not Turkish, she asked me where I was from and why I had come, and I told her that I was Italian and studying anthropology at ODTÜ. I also said that I wanted to learn more about the *semah*. My curiosity about Alevi culture was very fresh and this was my first immersion in a full-fledged Alevi event. The woman told me that I would be most welcome to join the *semah* classes at the headquarters of the Pir Sultan Abdal Kültür Derneği, one of the organizers of the sit-in (an offer that I would later accept), but she was also very firm in explaining that the *semah* is not a dance, but *ibadet* (devotion).

Understanding the *semah* as a dance did not make sense for the woman I met at the sit-in in Ankara, nor for the Bektaşis Elias met in Tekkeköy. Over the last few decades, rejecting the labelling of the *semah* as 'dance' has become a systematic response to the government's trivializing of Alevi religious practice. Theological and political reasons motivate this rejection as part of a struggle against assimilatory policies fought in the economic as well as linguistic spheres. The aversion to the 'dance' label can be read alongside other appeals made by Alevi organizations: to recognize the *cemevi*-s as places of worship as much as the mosques, to recognize the 'Alevi' category on ID cards; or to abolish compulsory religious classes from the state schools' programmes. During the course of my research, however, I also encountered Alevi people for whom understanding the *semah* as 'dance' was certainly possible, as well as other Alevi contexts (especially outside of Turkey) where the *semah* would be presented unproblematically as *dans* ('dance'), possibly accompanied by the adjective *kutsal* (sacred).[3] The assumption that all Alevis reject the semah as 'dance' is thus a generalisation that the diversity in the evidence does not corroborate.

For the researcher, the hesitancy towards labelling the *semah* as 'dance' is a cogent problem that invites reflection on the categories that we use in anthropological research and their inherent western ethnocentrism. The refusal to conceptualize the *semah*s as dance points to the term's insufficiency as a category for transcultural translation, not only between the Alevis and academia but also between different Alevi contexts. In other words, the paradox exposes the logical discrepancy between social facts and their scholarly understanding. On the one hand, the term 'dance' does not effectively capture the enmeshment of sonic and kinetic dimen-

[3] For instance, as part of an education series aimed at younger Alevi generations, the London-based Qizilbaş Yayinevi released a bilingual booklet in Turkish and English (Aydoğmuş and Çoban, 2014) into which the *semah*s are presented as '*kutsal danslar*' (sacred dances).

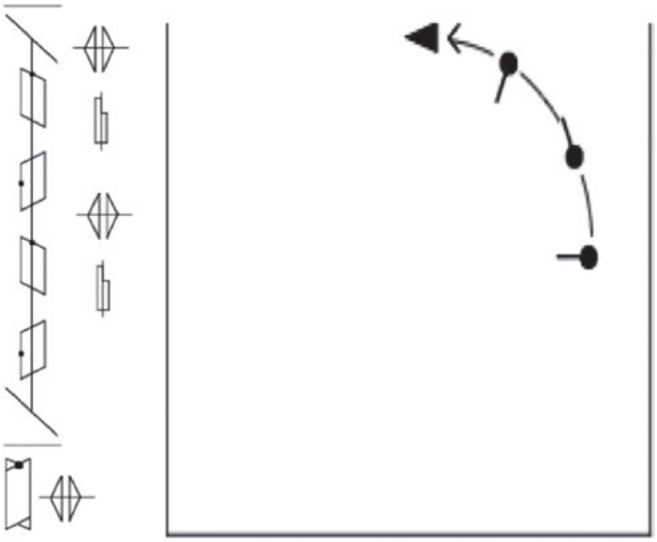

Figure 1. A *semah* recurring pattern described with Laban motif notation (also known in French as Symbolisation) and a floor plan.

sions as conveyed by the term '*semah*'. On the other hand, this discrepancy in translation encourages the researcher to assess the historicity of 'dance' as a cultural category in Turkish contemporary history. For instance, the historian Arzu Öztürkmen (2001) extensively investigated dance in the history of the Turkish Republic and beyond, refining with anthropological sensibility our understanding of the political valence and geo-cultural influence of terms as diverse as *oyun*, *raks* and *dans*, which all translate as 'dance' in contemporary Turkish.[4]

During ethnographic fieldwork, rather than *dans* and *ibadet*, the term 'movement' (*hareket*) seemed to be a much more flexible category that could be used in both etic and emic discussion. In fact, I never encountered resistance to addressing the *semah*s as *hareket sistemi* ('movement system') among Alevi people. At the same time, referring to 'movement' allowed me to bring into consideration bodily motion in Alevi cultures and aesthetics. In this way, I started reflecting more holistically on dynamic embodied forms practiced in Alevi contexts, paying attention both to individual bodies as well as to the articulation of group formations within the *semah*s (see Fig. 1). However, I could also consider bodily actions which were not accompanied by music, and therefore would not be understood as 'dance' by either Alevis or non-Alevis. For example, my interest expanded be-

[4] Since the 1970s Metin And has published a few books in English (i.e. And, 1976) which were pivotal in bringing the study of Turkish playing and dancing into dialogue with Western methodologies and traditions.

yond the *semah*s and include embodied modalities of walking, seating and praying in Alevi ritual life.

By paying attention to body movements and physically enacting them myself, I gained a privileged understanding of how enacting specific postures and group configurations shapes a sensorial environment. Not only that, I appreciated how movement is a powerful tool in the formulation of a system of values. This participatory methodology clarified the ways in which Alevi ritual contexts exemplify how harmonizing movement – among body parts, among different bodies, and among different spatial and sonic stimuli – enhances a shared aesthetic experience as well as humans' fundamental potential for communication and cooperation.

The recently departed ethno-choreologist, Andrée Grau, advanced some thought-provoking views of her mentor, John Blacking, on the place of dance in human evolution. For instance, Grau argued that 'the ability to move together in time allowed collaboration among individuals' (2015: 233). The skill to coordinate and synchronise one's body parts with other bodies would 'lead to the acquisition of language, and, therefore, culture' (ibidem). Accordingly, language and bipedalism were later-stage developments in human evolution, stemming from humans' capacity to articulate such elementary artistic processes as singing, body percussing and dancing. Body movement is indeed not a mere accident. The way we walk and sit are not just 'natural' modalities to cope with the environment, but reveal geographical and socio-historical conjunctures, and are intrinsically imbued with socio-political force. As such, the expert expression of movement not only responds to an aesthetic demand, but also to an ethical one (if the two may ever be split).

In Alevi contexts, the ability to move together in time shapes aesthetic sensibilities and shared convictions. In this sense, the capacity to synchronize oneself with others while dynamically actualizing specific body shapes and group configurations does not just reflect moral values, but actually postulates them. The capacity of movement to demarcate values renders it not only reflective, but also generative of identities and belonging. It is noteworthy that the word 'movement' also refers to the coming together of people with shared values or their mobilizing towards a common goal. This definition of 'movement' is the one that is most commonly used in the social sciences – in relation to Alevism as the 'Alevi movement', for instance.

There is however a third use of the term 'movement,' which is relevant to my research. This third use is prevalent in social scientific vocabulary, for instance when we speak of 'the anthropology of movement' and refer to mobility, displacement, diaspora and migration. In this third use, 'movement' is an acknowledgement of the transnational character of Aleviness. Pointing to the geographical and post-national dimension in the transmission of Alevi cultural heritage, changes in body movement patterns can be analysed in relation to movements of the Alevis across national borders, a theme that due to space constraints I will leave

aside in this discussion. It is intriguing to notice how these different meanings conflate in the word 'movement,' in a polysemy that exists beyond the Turkish and English languages, and intersect in bodily movement. I will therefore make that capacity of bodies to move together in time, my focus in the discussion of the aesthetic dimensions of Alevi heritage.

Movement and Adaptation

Leaving aside issues of ethnographic categorization for more aesthetic ones, I will now approach another key concept that is in the title of this chapter: 'adaptation'. This concept lies at the centre of intriguing debates in theatre and performance studies. To clarify what I mean by it, I wish to refer again to Magritte's pipe painting which Elias mentioned in his lecture. The painting, also known as *La Trahison des Images* ('The Treachery of Images'), has been interpreted as a test of the very structures of representation in modernity. In an essay first published in 1968, Michelle Foucault commented on the painting, as well as on a later one, painted by Magritte in 1966 and titled *Les Deux Mystères* ('The Two Mysteries'). In this later one, the original composition is again reproduced, but this time a second image of a pipe is inserted in the background, yet again provoking bewilderment between notions of *being* and *representing*. Foucault's homage to Magritte contextualized the work of the Belgian painter within modernist art's blurring of boundaries between plastic and linguistic representation. Foucault thus theorized contradictions between image and text, as developed more fully in his other works. Both Magritte's painting and Foucault's reading seem to suggest that what may at first look like a game of faulty mirrors between words and images, is in fact the logical affirmation of the discrepancy between the 'things' themselves and the truth claims propounded by their representations.

Along with participating in various *semah* classes in Turkey and abroad, I have spent the last few years researching the *semah*s themselves, as well as their transpositions onto the theatrical stage. This research has prompted certain questions: could the movement forms enacted in a theatrical context still be considered '*semah*s'? In other words, are the *semah*s still *semah*s when not performed in the ritual context? What role do these forms play in constructing Aleviness as a folkloric fact? And, are the *semah*s still *semah*s when performed by people who were not born into an Alevi family? To what extent is it possible to reinvent and transgress 'traditional' forms, but still recognize a *semah*? And finally, are these staged representations of any use in refining our ethnographic grasp of Alevi cultures?

The term I use to refer to this shift is not 'representation', but 'adaptation', as this is the more widely used term in contemporary dance and especially in theatre studies. Turning to literature on the adaptation of folk dances for the stage, I encountered conceptions of such adjustments as partial shifts from a 'primary' to a 'secondary existence' (Hoerberger, 1968), from a 'participatory' to a 'presenta-

tional' character (Nahachewski, 1995), or from 'survival' to 'revival' forms (Shay, 1999). However, the adaptations in my research exceeded these categories. On the one hand, this is due to the complex dramaturgy of these theatrical projects. On the other hand, as I have already discussed, the *semah*s do not easily fit into the 'dance' category; and their acquired folkloric significance remains minor when compared to their ritual underpinning.

Theatre historian Kara Reilly (2018), remarked how, like dramaturgy, adaptation is a slippery term. Adaptation 'eludes definition because it is so context specific' (p. xxi), and can only be explored 'through specific, material concrete examples that help us to build both archive and repertoire' (p. xxii). My use of adaptation encompasses a series of adjustments to the *semah*s for the stage. Accordingly, I wish to discern which elements from the wider *semah* repertoire were selected to be included in dramatic 'archives' and displayed on national and international platforms, and on the contrary, which elements remained excluded from them. Looking at the selections and changes in the structures and qualities of the movements of the *semah*s performed on the stage, I sought to understand the role that these adaptations played in larger historical developments, such as urbanization, migration, folklorization and heritagization. In other words, how they comprise responses to, and constituents for the transformations of previously established economic and linguistic environments.

Arzu Öztürkmen's article on the re-contextualization of the *semah*s as folklore, in the context of the Boğazici University Folklore Club (2005) and Fahriye Dinçer's wide-ranging study on the reformulations of the *semah*s in Turkish Republican history (2004) offer solid frameworks to assess the newly acquired position of the Alevis within the national imagination. Understanding such public forms as reinvented traditions, Dinçer assessed how, especially since the 1980s, the *semah*s began to catalyse Alevi cohesion in urban ritual contexts, becoming a powerful symbol of external visibility. Dinçer observed how the *semah*s were re-adjusted through a set of 'rules,' resulting in a tendency towards uniformity and articulated as the allegiance or resistance of Aleviness to Turkish national culture. Over the last few decades, however, the changes in *semah* forms, meanings and contexts reconfigured them even further from their supposedly 'stable' theatrical forms. These changes invite us to reconsider the assumption that Alevi modernity coincided with standardization.

The adaptations are symptomatic of the re-formulations of Alevi culture in the cities. In her study of the experiences of Turkish migrants in Germany, Ruth Mandel (2008) wrote:

> Alevilik as it has existed for the last several centuries, marked by practices that are secretive, underground, dissimulating, and oppositional, may indeed be nearing obsolescence, replaced by a transformed, public, politicized, folklorized, popularized and ever-splintering iteration of Alevilik that continually finds ways to re-express itself. (p. 293)

Such predictions of Alevi futures apply to Alevi cultures transnationally. When we think of the *semah*s' adaptations for the stage, 'individualized' and 'professionalised' are other descriptors that might encapsulate the dynamic iteration and creativity of the Alevis' self-reinvention. For instance, Ali Keleş and Öznür Doğan (2016) recently conducted research on the professionalization of the *semah* in the context of the *cemevi*. Professionalization is not meant here in the financial sense but rather in terms of standardization of training led by increasingly professional instructors, as well as further stylization of choreographies and costumes aimed at public theatrical display. Such professionalization also relates to the unsuccessful processes of heritagization. For instance, Bahar Aykan (2013) discussed the alarming falsifications that accompanied the listing of the Alevi-Bektaşi *semah*s as UNESCO intangible heritage in a process launched by the ruling party (AKP) in 2010. As I share many of the concerns voiced by Aykan's informants, it is important to note that by focusing on dramatic adaptations, I do not wish to negate or diminish the cogency of the *semah* as a spiritual and religious practice. On the contrary, I wish to clarify the modalities through which the *semah*s became encapsulated in an aesthetic domain, to highlight how the theatre often offered a scaffold for their re-discovery. Such a rediscovery, fought primarily on a bodily level, challenged a political context in which public and administrative framing of Aleviness as a religion was normally hindered or ideologically domesticated. In this way, I wish to expand existing sociological conceptualizations of Aleviness as an emerging syncretic public religion, Islamic heterodoxy, or peculiar cultural marker, by depicting its freshness and nonconformity as performative and embodied phenomena.

Kardeşlik Töreni-Samah

The first performance piece I discuss is *Kardeşlik Töreni – Samah* ('The Ritual of Brotherhood – *Samah*', hereafter, *KTS*). First performed in 1983, *KTS* reveals the emergence of a transformed conceptualization of Aleviness in the wider national culture, as well as a specific history of artistic and academic research in the expanded field of performance in a Turkish context.[5] *KTS* offers a re-enactment of some of the elements of the *cem* rituals, which are combined to form a theatre piece of one-hour duration (see Fig. 2 for a flyer about *KTS* in 2007). Following the thread beginning with Elias's discussion, it is striking that some of the musical and choreographic repertoire conflated within the dramaturgy of this piece, originated from the rituals of the same village discussed by Elias, where Alevi and Bektaşi devotees perform a pilgrimage when visiting the tomb of the saint Abdal Musah (Tekkeköy).

[5] For a lengthier discussion of this piece see De Rosa (2019).

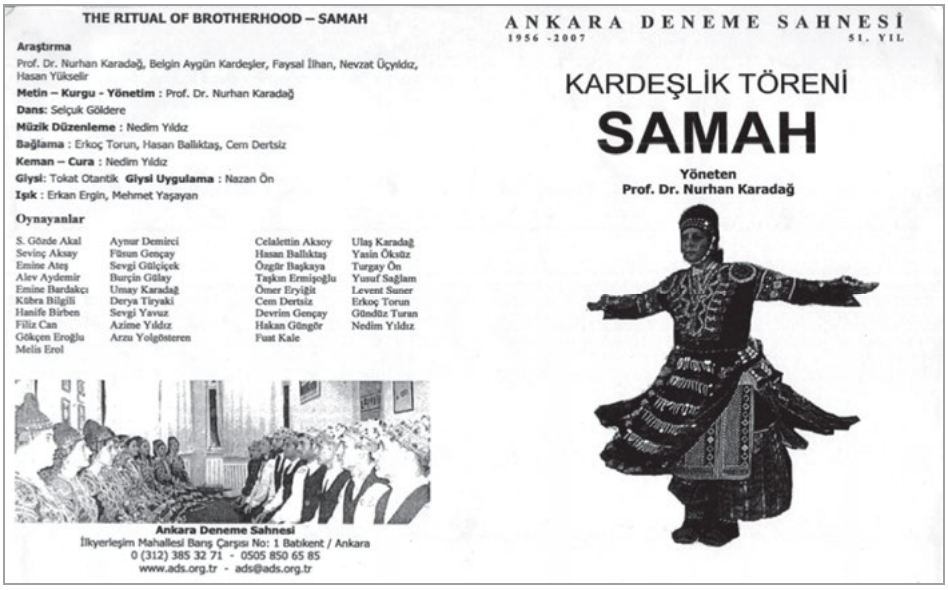

Figure 2: A flyer of *Kardeşlik Töreni – Samah* in 2007.

The re-enactment did not consist of a direct translation from ritual to stage, but was mediated by an initial process of scripturalization of Alevi ritual material, itself a process of adaptation of bodily knowledge to meet the confines of the page. Indeed, the initial staging aimed to highlight through performance, some ethnographic materials that Belgin Aygün (now Belgin Aygün Çifçioğlu) had collected, mostly in the regions of Antalya and Ankara. These materials were presented in a BA thesis (Aygün, 1982) at the Theatre Department of the University of Ankara, where Aygün worked under the guidance of the prominent scholar of Turkish dramatic and dancing traditions, Metin And. Also benefitting from the backing of Turkish folklorist, Nejat Birdoğan[6] and anthropologist, Atilla Erden[7], the thesis was an attempt to intersect folklore, social scientific and dramatic arts methodologies in the study of Alevi rituals. This disciplinary blend renders this study important for an unpacking of the emergence of a performative paradigmatic turn in the articulation of humanities and social scientific methodologies in Turkey. The perception that the rituals were at risk of disappearing motivated Aygün's research, and it was for this danger that the scholar wished to find a remedy through her thesis. For instance, in the introduction, Aygün elucidates that these rituals and dances, 'nowadays already exist only in form, and for a

6 Birdoğan often challenged many undisputed assumptions about the Alevi 'democratic' culture (see reference in Bozarslan, 2003:11) or the embedding of Aleviness within Islam. His courageous position in these controversies eventually led to him being regarded as *yol düşkünü* (roughly, 'excommunicated') and forbidden to participate in the rituals.

7 Years later Erdem became General Secretary of the Alevi-Bektaşi Federation.

long time have lost their essence'.[8] Such an approach was marked by nostalgia for a rural past, which coincided with neo-liberal expansion of cultural life in the early '80s, as well as the academic and social explosion of Aleviness during the last three decades.

More than stressing the 'function' of rituals in social life, Aygün was interested in analysing the formal character of the rituals in a theatrical sense. Accordingly, she emphasized how the *cem* rituals, as dramatic actions, are characterized by 'imitation' (*taklit*) as well as by an actor-spectator relationship among the participants. These can be divided into two categories: the twelve service holders (*hizmet sahipleri),* who similarly to a theatre troupe work together as a team to perform the duties necessary for the realization of the ritual; and all the other devotees, who do not seem to perform any specific duty, as spectators at a theatrical event. Informed by theatre methodologies, Aygün emphasized how the rituals are enacted through the recitation of specific scripts, such as prayers, and how their enactment occurs in closed settings. In such settings, a circular space is left empty in front of the *dede* (the leader of the community). This area, she suggests, functions like a stage, as key activities take place there. The appendices to the dissertation included musical notations of three *semah*s, as well as photographs of ritual actions. These appendices also comprised four graphic diagrams that roughly exemplify an aerial perspective on some movements through the space by people participating in the rituals. For these reasons, this thesis exemplifies a very contemporary interest in documenting group movements within the ritual space. The documentation was done through verbal descriptions, as well as through a local form of movement notation. Despite its limitations, this was an innovative attempt to transmit the movements within and beyond the rituals, into written form.[9]

Although Aygün's thesis was innovative, its social impact was only realised after its stage adaptation in *KTS*. The staging was a result of a team effort led by Nurhan Karadağ, who was at that point a research assistant in the theatre department of Ankara University. Born in 1943 in the Ağın district in the region of Malatya, Karadağ did not have an Alevi family background. His family migrated to Ankara, where he became a young national Discus-throw champion in 1962, before moving into the Arts. His early engagement with the theatre centred around the recently reopened Ankara Municipality *Halkevi*, a setting which influenced Karadağ's artistic as well as scholarly research. Years later, as part of the exam for promotion to the role of Docent at Ankara University, Karadağ compiled a detailed study (1988) on the place of theatre in the *halk evleri* ('people's houses') between 1932 and 1951, as part of state-led civic projects of adult educa-

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8 My translation, from '*Günümüzde artık yalnızca biçim olarak var olan ve özün çoktan yitirmiş'* (Aygün, 1982: 5).

9 For a lengthier discussion of *KTS,* including the discussion of some choreographic elements within the piece, see the forthcoming De Rosa (2019).

tion. The celebration of the Turkish peasant that characterized the theatrical aesthetic of that period (i.e. Karaömerlioğlu 1998) also finds traces in *KTS*. In fact, the depiction of an idealized Alevi ritual provides here a frame for the celebration of an Anatolian rural past infused with humanist values.

Even though the dramaturgy of *KTS* focuses on the music and choreographies within the *cem* rituals, few of its dramatic scenes replicate the sophisticated ritual argot. These scenes expose how the rituals may function as a form of popular tribunal (*halk mahkeme*) or as the site where kinship ties are established among community members (i.e. the 'brotherhood' of the performance's title). As Karadağ explained to me in a recorded interview in February 2011, the production renamed this kinship tie *kardeşlik,* rather than the more specific *musahiplik,* with the purpose of making the nature of this celebration more intelligible to a larger Turkish audience. More generally, ritual materials were composed and stylistically enhanced for a theatrical presentation to a larger public, even at the cost of a selective reduction of the varieties of practices in different Alevi locations and lineages. The choreography and the musical forms were often altered, resulting in a bricolage of different *semah* traditions. The adaptation process also gave birth to radical innovations, such as what might be called a 'dual salutation'. During the *semah*s performed with the rituals, the *semahci*s (as those who perform a *semah* are called) would normally show respect to the *dede* and the *zakir* (the person providing the music for the ritual) by gently bowing towards them in a salutation (*niyaz*). In *KTS* however, in addition to the bow towards the actors playing the *dede* and the *zakir*, the actors redouble such a salutation and perform a bow also towards the audience.[10]

KTS can be understood as a form of 'documentary theatre' devised through culturally specific adaptation strategies. I would suggest that it might even have developed into a form of 'performance ethnography' had it emerged in the Unites States.[11] An appreciation of Alevi traditions as valued traces of Anatolian humanist philosophies motivated the staging, with the goal of making Aleviness more accessible and visible in the national imagination. Karadağ insisted that the locating and nurturing of those Alevi traces that are closer to the present should be the responsibility of people working in the arts and sciences. These intentions were realized in a dramaturgy exploring the ambiguity between the secretive character of the rituals and the public nature of the theatre. For instance, the entrance of the actors onto an open stage, and the ritual bodily actions performed in semi-darkness, were some of the dramatic strategies that secured a sense of intimacy in the performance. During most of the piece the actors seem to be immersed in the reality of their own ritual, and they avoid addressing the audience directly. However, towards the end, they turn towards the public while they sing a final song.

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10 I discussed this gesture further in De Rosa (2014: 72-73).

11 As theorized in Conquergood (2013).

This shift brings the focus back to the theatrical scaffold in which both actors and audience partake, inspiring in the spectator a feeling of distortion or de-familiarization. This dramatic strategy, reminiscent of the Brechtian *Verfremdungseffekt* (generally translated as the 'alienation effect'), encourages critical reflection and political mobilization among the spectators once the theatrical event is over.

With *KTS*, knowledge traditionally transmitted within Alevi ritual contexts was made accessible to the public and was also conveyed on an embodied level to the actors. Whilst some of them were professional actors, many were students or amateurs. Karadağ saw the acculturation of young generations of actors into such bodily knowledge as a crucial component in their aesthetic education. Regardless of their religious and ethnic background, engagement in the piece formed a spiritual training to temper their inclination towards humanist values. In fact, though some of these actors were born into an Alevi family background, many were not. Also, even of those who were, many had never experienced Alevi ritual life in a rural context. Others were not even aware of their Alevi heritage, and the theatre offered a site for the discovery and embodiment of a legacy to which they had never been exposed. The actors' bodily acculturation into Alevi tradition was part of the social duty that Karadağ felt in expanding public knowledge of Aleviness on a public and national level.

Since it was first staged in 1983, *KTS* evolved to incorporate other elements which were not part of Aygün's thesis. Other researchers of an Alevi-Bektaşi background contributed to enrich it as a bodily archive. One of these was Faysal İlhan, who would later move to Germany where he worked for the Almanya Alevi Birlikleri Federasyonu and directed the *semah* choreographies of the mega-event, '*Bin Yılın Türküsü*' ('Saga of the Millennium') in 2000. Both Karadağ and Faysal suddenly 'walked to God' (*Hakka yürüdüler* in Alevi phrasing) in Autumn 2015, the first after a heart attack in Ankara, the second in a car accident in Köln. Although Karadağ was not an Alevi or Bektashi himself, the obituary service for him was held at the *cemevi* in Batıkent. The fact that this service was conducted in an Alevi context hints at the way Karadağ's scholarly and artistic engagement with Alevi rituals somehow transformed his own ethnic identity. Such a slippage into ritual practice that was alien to his own cultural belonging at birth, proves how the arts do much more than reflect social reality; they also construct it.

'biz'

The second case study I wish to discuss is '*biz*', a contemporary dance piece in which several Alevi elements are layered over discrete formal and discursive planes, resulting in a hybrid movement vocabulary and a multi-layered dramaturgical scaffold (see Fig. 3 for a poster of "*biz*" in 2014). Staged around 20 times in Turkey and elsewhere, '*biz*' was attractive to young audiences not necessarily

Figure 3. A poster of 'biz' in 2014.

engaged in Aleviness.[12] '*Biz'* was also the product of a team effort since it was co-created through improvisation by the three male dancers. Within the confines of this chapter, I will limit myself here to providing some details on the Istanbul-based choreographer, Bedirhan Dehmen (born in 1978), who initially conceived the piece.

Dehmen was born into an Alevi lineage. His great grandfather was the reknowed *aşık* and poet Nimri Dede (born İsmail Dehmen), a native of Pınarlar köyü (Nimri) in the Keban district of Elazığ and a highly respected figure among the Alevis. His *deyiş* '*Özde ben Mevlana oldum da geldim'* was adapted and recorded by many. The version that Arif Sağ recorded with minor changes as '*İnsan olmaya geldim*', became one of the most representative and popular modern Alevi songs.[13] Despite having grown up in a family of theatre or music-makers, Bedirhan did not take the traditional musical route, but instead decided to study sociology, completing his undergraduate and master's degrees at Boğaziçi Üniversitesi. During this time, he started his career in the performing arts by joining the Folklore Club and the Association for the Performing Arts in that university, as both dancer and director. After completing a PhD thesis (2010) in Theatre Criticism and Dramaturgy at Istanbul University, he started teaching dance history, physical theatre and dance dramaturgy in the Contemporary Dance departments of Mimar Sinan, Sabancı and Koç Universities. During his career as a dancer and choreographer, Dehmen absorbed diverse movement techniques, ranging from theatrical folk dance, contemporary choreography styles, and contact improvisation. The influence of the latter is especially clear in '*biz'*, resulting in a creative blend of movement qualities that are apparently at odds with each other. Indeed the emphasis on improvisation and physical contact in the contact improvisation technique was married with *semah* conventions, normally marked by fixed figures and lack of contact among the performers.

'*Biz'* addresses Aleviness only very obliquely. In 2010, in collaboration with musician, Cem Yıldız, Dehmen worked as a choreographer for *Tevhid – Birlik – Oneness*, an artistic project directed by Şule Ateş. Ateş was also a graduate of the Theatre Department at Ankara University, and had herself been an actor in the first troupe performing *KTS* in 1983. Motivated by her own journey of self-exploration into her heritage in the regions of Dersim and Erzincan, Ateş had conceived *Tevhid* as an enquiry into Alevi cosmology and its place in the contemporary world. The project culminated in a multimedia performance embracing

12 A trailer for *"biz"* is available online at https://youtu.be/1i4kG9gKao4 (accessed 04.10.2018).

13 Paul Koerbin suggested that Nemri Dede may have composed this *deyiş* upon hearing the performance of the female Aşık Sarıcakız (real name Ýlkin Manya). For a full text of the *deyiş*, the adapted version by Arif Sağ, the original version offered to Koerbin by Sercihan Dehmen (grandson of Nimri Dede and cousin of Bedirhan), as well as Koerbin's translations into English, see Koerbin's PhD thesis (2012: 383-384), as well as his online blog (https://koerbin.wordpress.com/tag/nimri-dede/ accessed 04.10.2018).

documentary film, dance, music and poetry, which was presented at the independent theatre venue Garajistanbul in Istanbul, and documented on video.[14] The dramaturgy of '*biz*' differs from that of *Tevhid*, not only for its more improvisatory movement vocabulary but also for its relationship to Aleviness. In *Tevhid* the musical themes and an overall dramaturgy dealing with the rediscovery of Alevi roots, reinforced Alevi references. On the contrary, in '*biz*' such references are never articulated directly but remain rather elusive, especially for the audience member who does not have any previous knowledge of Aleviness. '*Biz*' also differs from *KTS* in this sense, as the decoding of these Alevi themes is never straightforward, and its dramaturgy never openly engages in the teaching of Aleviness.

The fact that '*biz*' is not intended as a public showcase of, or education on Aleviness, is testified by the reviews it received after it was first staged in Istanbul at the Fulya Sanat Merkezi in May 2014. For instance, on the pages of the English daily *Today's Zaman*, the American journalist Alexandra Ivanoff interpreted '*biz*' as expressing, 'states of grief, the state of the present moment in history, and ways to maintain a state of grace'.[15] The review did not contain any references to the Alevi themes in the performance. The non-Alevi spectator may well have remained unaware of the piece's Alevi background, as my own first viewing of '*biz*' in January 2016 made clear. After the performance, I spoke to another spectator, a 32-year-old 'second-generation' Turkish-speaking resident of the Netherlands.[16] He revealed that he had returned for the Saturday night showing after having enjoyed it so much on the Friday night. However, he was surprised to hear that I came to see it because of my research on staged adaptations of the Alevi *semah*s.

Rather than educating on or showcasing Aleviness, the dramaturgy in '*biz*' sought a visceral connection with the audience. Through a hybrid movement vocabulary, Dehmen succeeded in commenting on historical developments and specific events of a more recent past. Indeed, the piece was conceived after the political turmoil and mournful aftermath of the Gezi protests, an historical moment when Alevi political demands grew into a massive and multifaceted anti-governmental movement. The conscious objective of '*biz*' was to invite the audience to partake in the healing from collective and individual trauma, and the recovery from the painful experience of human loss. At this time, Alevi public expression was significantly targeted and brutally repressed. For instance, the

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14 This is available online at https://youtu.be/5rhpLnddeSo (accessed on 4.10.2018).

15 Alexandra Ivanoff retrieved this review for me. Articles appearing in *Today's Zaman*, part of the Gülen Movement-affiliated media conglomerate, Feza Gazetecilik, were removed from the internet in March 2016. In July 2016, together with dozens of other media organizations, the online daily was closed down following a Presidential degree after the July 15, 2016 military coup attempt.

16 Even though I agree with Ruth Mandel and do not assume periodization of the migratory experience in terms of first-, second-, and third-generation (2008:18; 155-161), I use the phrase here for lack of a better one.

protesters, despite coming from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds, were ethnically targeted and collectively labelled as 'Alevi' by the government. Ayfer Karakaya-Stump (2014) called this process 'Alevizing Gezi'. The response on the stage was to resist this process, in an attempt to enlarge the sense of mourning beyond the scope of the Alevi deaths and the Gezi protests. In this way, '*biz*' offered a site for civic mourning as grounds for establishing a new political collectivism based on inter-dependency and ethical responsibility.

Conclusion

In this discussion of two adaptations of Alevi movements for the stage, I have sought to expand existing sociological conceptualizations of Aleviness by depicting its freshness and nonconformity as performative and embodied phenomena. Studying these theatrical projects and their impact within and beyond Alevi contexts, reveals how performing arts professionalism played a role in the representation and cultural production of Aleviness. Building on the assumption that Alevi ethnicity is not a stable given, this article considered how such an 'eventful production' of Aleviness has enmeshed the Alevi category in relational and situated dynamics. Aleviness resulted here from the reproduction and transgression of ethnicization and mimetic processes, which have the realms of ethics and aesthetics and at their very core.

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II.
Ritual and Musical Performance

The Life of a Ritual Repertoire and its Aesthetic: *Cem* Ceremonies in Tekke Köyü, the Village of Abdal Musa

Jérôme Cler[1]

Preamble

a. 'Long-running' Field Research[2]

Twenty years ago, while I was conducting field research in the Sunni *yörük* environment of the *yayla* in Western Taurus, I began regularly visiting the village of Tekke Köyü, which hosts a Bektashi community claiming to be part of the 'Kaygusuz Rite', *Kaygusuzun erkani*. The beauty of the ritual music I discovered in 1997 encouraged me to return there every winter, especially from 2003 onwards. I limited my research and enquiries to ritual and musical life and I investigated their content, simply captivated by a living and singular tradition, a musical tradition that seemed unlike any other in the surrounding area, not to mention religious life and institutions. From 2011, two fellow researchers joined me in this field research: Nikos Sigalas, an historian and Nicolas Elias, an anthropologist. The social organization of the village as a religious brotherhood (*tarikat*), as well as its history, would come to the forefront of our investigation, the first presentation of which was released in 2017 in the *Turcica*, in the form of a three-part report, 'Tekke Köyü, a Bektashi village in Western Taurus' (Cler, 2017; Elias, 2017; Sigalas, 2017).

In this report, music made only a filigreed appearance – when using the word 'music', I include the sound material, its function, its performers and their status, and the ritual repertoire. As in any Alevi-Bektashi community, this kind of repertoire includes *semah*, sung-danced poems and *nefes*, which are sung poems 'intended to be listened to. Tekke, however, enjoys a relative cultural autarchy: its community is even referred to as a place of pilgrimage for the whole Alevi world and during an annual gathering which occurs every June, its ritual singularity and repertoire are restricted to within its boundaries. But above all, the main difficulty during ethnographic investigation lies in the paradox of music. Placed at the service of an overabundant hymnography, omnipresent in the ritual, structuring its time, it is never the subject of discourse and commentary. The officiat-

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1 Translation from French: Maud Caillat.

2 This research was conducted under the aegis of the Laboratoire d'Excellence (Labex) ResMed, Religions and Societies in the Mediterranean, and of the CETOBAC, Centre for Studies on Turkey, Ottoman Empire, Balkans and Central Asia (CNRS).

ing musicians disappear behind the grandeur of the musical and ritual architecture, considering themselves only a tiny element of it.

b. Musical Collection and Recordings.

For ethnomusicologists, recordings are a primary necessity, which enables them to study music. Long before thinking about cultural heritage archiving or capturing the fleeting moment, it is first of all a matter of remedying the lack of exposure to such music among researchers, who have missed out on the passive cultural transmission that comprises village life. Recordings allow repeated listening, which is indispensable in the process of familiarisation with the repertoires. Year after year, my repeated stays, always occurring in the middle of winter, when the ritual season is in full swing, aimed first and foremost to succeed in the protracted learning process of a perfectly organized musical and self-sufficient world, which appears as a detached, 'minor' world in the sense already mentioned in a previous article (Cler & Messina, 2007). Since 1997, when I recorded my first *cem,* and later when I attended all other *cem*s in the village, I was never asked what I was planning to do with the recordings. This was not a matter of concern for the villagers who demonstrated unusual and touching confidence. This allowed me to compile a sound database, and then to distribute numerous CDs within the community. In addition, I planned to pay tribute to this musical community by releasing a CD in the Ocora-Radio-France collection where I had already featured the repertoires collected during my previous research. In March 2011, during the *Nevruz*[3], my colleagues and I wanted to gather good singers from the village in the house where we were staying in order to record a *muhabbet* evening. This project immediately 'deviated from its target' at our interlocutors' initiative, who jumped at the opportunity to propose that we made our own *cem.* This would be termed a *Balim muhabbeti* because it lacked a *semah* of Forty or a *kurban* (at most, we would cook *cebrail*, i.e. chickens). It was the recording of this *cem* that provided the future CD with its core material. In order to honour the *güvende* of the other *cem* house, I added the twelve Imams' hymns, the initial and final *semah* of a *cem* held in 2003, for their particularly good singing quality. The following pages will partly rely on this recording for musical analysis.[4]

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3 Nevroz is a celebration on 21st March, marking the Persian "new year", and in *Tekke Köyü* is also Ali's birthday.

4 A significant overview is given in the CD *Turquie: Cérémonie de Djem Bektashi: la Tradition d'Abdal Musa* (CD *Turkey: A Bektashi Djem Ceremony: Abdal Musa's Tradition*), I published via Ocora-Radio-France (C560248) in 2012. The following analyses will sometimes refer to it.

- All original recordings together with transcriptions can be found online at:
  www.nomos-elibrary.de/extern/nomos/live/978-3-95650-640-6/transcription_booklet_and_all_examples.zip
- Videos of various parts of the cem can be watched in:
  vimeo.co › jerome cler › Abdal Musa.

c. The Cem.

I will not provide details regarding the ritual of Abdal Musa's *cem* or *birlik*, as they were already described in the report released by *Turcica*. I will limit myself to the main musical phases to facilitate the understanding of this article:

1. Opening:
- initial hymn to the twelve Imams
- *Babalar semahı*, the *semah* of the *baba*.

2. *Sofra* (meal) :
- *dem nefesi*
- *oturak nefesleri, kathismas*[5]
- *Kerbelâ* song

3. End of the *sofra.* The assembly leaves.
- *Semah* of Forty
- 2 or 4 'additional' *semah*. These *semah* cannot be danced if the *cem* is to be finished earlier, which is often the case when spring approaches and brings the first agricultural work.
- *gözcü semahı*, *semah* of the *gözcü*
- *lokma*, new agape meal, hand washing and leave of services.

The duration of a *cem* is generally between five and seven hours. The ritual functioning of the brotherhood requires that each *talip* (disciple, faithful) owes one *cem* to his community annually, and that each *cem* corresponds to two *talips*, i.e. two married couples. In this village, which hosts two ritual houses *(cem evi)* and where religious authority is entrusted to five *baba*, each one being responsible for one group, ritual life is extremely intense during the off-season, which occurs between November and March, where several *cem*s are held per week. In terms of musical repertoire, it is easy to understand how this abundance of *cem*s makes the musical life similar to a living language.

[5] I borrow this term from the vocabulary of Byzantine liturgy, because it translates with accuracy the original Turkish expression which means 'songs [to be listened to] when seated'.

The Musicians' status

1. Aşık *and* Güvende.

During my very first stay, I clumsily asked if there were any *aşık*s in the village and I was answered that there were no such musicians at this site. However, the *cem* I attended a few days later gathered a choir of six singers and two or three *saz* players! Consequently I came to understand that the word *aşık* in Tekke Köyü is identified with famous musicians or with the renowned Alevis who come for the festival. In Tekke, the names of the officiating musicians are *güvende baba*, from *goyande,* i.e. 'spokesman' in Persian. The villagers are unaware of this etymology and the word remains associated with the stem *güven* – trust and security – in the sense that the musician is the guarantor of a safely conducted ritual.

It is obvious that a *güvende* cannot be more than his function requires. Nor can he use his talent to reach fame: listening to himself sing, considering himself as an *aşık* is *benlik*, it involves ego(t)ism, which is a major sin. Nuri K., an outstanding singer whom I had heard in the very first *cem* I attended in 1997 and whose name will be mentioned later in this article, had disappeared from performances in later years. However, I saw him sitting at the village's café. When I asked about his absence from the *güvende* choir, I was told that he had been excluded. Why? '*Benlik*', was the reply without further details, but letting me understand that he had given himself too much importance.

Behind the distinction between *aşık* and *güvende baba,* the relationship between the 'outside' and the 'inside' is at stake. The word *aşık* refers to the world of 'global' Alevism that comes every year to Tekke Köyü for the Abdal Musa festival, involving renowned *aşık*s. As for the *güvende baba*, he is no more than the officiant of the ritual, or a mere peasant performing his duties with dignity, accompanied by a small team of singers and *saz* players. He has nothing to do with music releases or deterritorialization: tradition and the local rite (*erkan*) are deeply rooted in this place and cannot be exported outside the strict regulation of rituals. From this point of view, the village's *güvende* are careful not to show themselves during the festival, but rather let the *aşık* visitors display their musical art and artistry. Finally, let us not forget that if foreign visitors, i.e. ethnomusicologists, tend to favour local musicians because they appreciate 'autochthonous voices', this fact is not always understood. The villagers remain convinced that they don't have much value compared to the *aşık* from the outside. This modesty is notable when juxtposed with their concurrent tendency to declare that their tradition is central, unique and centuries-old.

Nevertheless, musical art is an essential part of ritual life where, like alcohol consumption, music is regulated by the religious system. Hence, no 'secular' practice seems to be maintained in the village, and it is not something about which to

boast[6], although some musicians have played at weddings (*düğün*) in the past. They used to team up with Abdal, Alevi communities related to the Gypsies living in nearby villages, particularly in the coastal lowlands of Finike. They were often professional musicians and they performed in small bands including a violin, clarinet and *darbuka*. But once they pronounce their vows (*ikrar*, initiation), they give up this activity, becoming *güvende* exclusively for the ritual. I have been told that stranger musicians were hired for weddings at Tekke Köyü, more particularly Abdal[7] musicians.

The use of the violin during *cem* ceremonies was common until the recent past. In the years 2003-4, when I asked if I would ever be lucky enough to attend a *cem* with a violin, I was always told that such an opportunity had passed: either the violinists had died or they were no longer playing because of their age. However, one day in the winter of 2004, I attended two successive *cem*, each one featuring a different violinist. Hüseyin *dede* had managed to convince these 'retired' violinists to join the group of *güvende* to satisfy my curiosity. One of them was an elderly violinist from the nearby village of Akçaeniş[8]: his physical appearance showed more Gypsy (or Abdal) than Yörük/Turcic ancestry. I met him only once for he did not visit again and died two years later. Ahmet, the second violinist, was living in Tekke and I saw him again in March 2019. He was alive, but told me that he was unable to play his instrument.

Nowadays, the only instrument used during *cem* ceremonies is the *saz* in a standard format, i.e. with a long neck. This use seems to be an acculturation to the 'outside world' dating back to the 1970s at the earliest. Instead of playing this instrument, the masters of the previous generation used the small three-stringed *saz cura*, which they played without a plectrum, in contrast to its use in all the surrounding Yörük environments.

Finally, charisma and religious authority can be coupled with musical proficiency and the mastery of the 'bülbül', nightingale – as one of the village's elderly

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6 Thus I paid a visit to an Alevi *dede* from an Abdal community in Finike in winter 2008. He never mentioned to me that he was also a good violinist, going so far as to deny it – even though the whole neighbourhood had praised his talent. But this occurred 'in former times', before he became a *dede*, when he played at local weddings (as *mahalle sanatcısı*, 'local musician').

7 Referring to the Abdal/Gypsies who were living in this region in the past, Xavier de Planhol (1958: 372) emphasizes that they could be hired as musicians 'in village weddings' or 'in the meetings and feasts organized by the Alevi communities'. My hosts sometimes told me that some *cem* were once accompanied by the *cümbüş* and the violin, which perhaps indicates Abdal/Gypsies' skills. Was there a time when ritual musicians were not only solely village natives to the village?

8 Akçaeniş is an Alevi (Tahtacı) village, but it hosts a Bektashi minority considered part of Tekke Köyü, as well as a Bektashi *cem evi*, in addition to a recently built Alevi *cem evi* (although we have always been told that the Tahtacı Alevi performed their rituals at home in the greatest secrecy, the villagers, however, followed the 'trend' of building a separate venue in the village, probably inspired by Istanbul).

baba used to tell me when he was designating the *saz*. The two *mürşid*s, Ali *baba* and Hüseyin *dede* the *halife*,[9] distinguish themselves by their musical skills: each one is present at *cem* ceremonies where the groups are placed under their guidance, and they inevitably intervene when it is time for the *sofra* (*kathismas*). Endowed with exceptional subtlety when playing the *saz*, Hüseyin *dede* displays deeply personal interpretations when he performs the village's *nefes*; moreover, he often chooses rarely featured texts from the repertoire, which he can sing during the *kathisma*. In his youth, Hüseyin had a short career as a wedding musician before he entered the order. He performs several types of tunings on the *saz*, and, unlike the village's *güvende*, he cares about sound quality, searching for new timbres. His musical and poetic culture extend far beyond the narrow frame of the village, even though they cannot be simplified by stereotypes or imitation. Finally, all Hüseyin's brothers are *güvende:* they are either good instrumentalists or singers. Their father was the village's former *türbedar* and *hafız*, the only person who could actually read the Arabic alphabet. So there is obviously a family 'stamp' of which Hüseyin is undoubtedly the most accomplished representative.

As for Ali Baba, the older *mürşid*, he is respected for his traditional *saz* playing, which is a reminiscent of the 'T.R.T.-orthodoxy'[10] of the 1960s. He is especially respected for his knowledge of the poetic repertoire. A shrewd musician, he embodies a more conservative tendency, convinced that he is a true representative of an ancestral tradition, which he views rather as a heritage designed to be preserved as such, often deploring its decline.

Consequently, although the function of *baba* or *mürşid* is not directly related to that of musician or *güvende* with regard to the rank and hierarchy of/in the twelve services (*on iki hizmet*), this function seems to depend quite extensively on individual charisma.

2. Cosmos and Harmonia

Every *semah* begins with a preparation in which *niyaz* and prayers follow one another. Women gird their husbands with a cord, which symbolizes the torn turban of the Prophet with which the Forty gird themselves, according to the *miraç* founding story. Meanwhile, the *güvende* make the *semah* rhythm audible on the *saz*, relying on an ostinato. They don't sing until the *gözcü* gives the signal for a simultaneous start to the singing and dancing. However, during one evening in the winter of 2006, as soon as the *semah* had begun, I saw the *güvende* getting up and leaving the *meydan* – the ritual room – very quickly; I didn't even have time

[9] Concerning the religious authorities of the village, see the report published in the *Turcica* journal (Cler, 2017; Elias, 2017; Sigalas, 2017).

[10] This expression refers to the *saz* promotion programme, led by national radio and television as well as conservatories (cf. Cler, 2000).

to understand that they had made a prosody error, missing the first syllable of the song. Consequently the *semah* could not begin and the choristers, feeling undoubtedly the greatest shame, had to leave. An old *baba* then replaced the *güvende* and accomplished the task of the choir in good order, on his own. Once the *semah* was completed, the *baba* called the choristers back, judged and reprimanded them, then each *güvende* received a fine before joining their place and their office for the rest of the ritual. This was the only time when the role of musicians was publicly explained: 'you have the easiest and most pleasant function, you sit there singing and drinking the *dem* at will, while the others are preparing the meal and the room, how dare you?', etc. The ritual sequence relied on them and this heavy responsibility was compensated by a certain comfort within the *cem*, as well as certain privileges. Since the *semah* represents a perfect coincidence between time, rhythm, sung poetry and choreography, the *güvende baba* are the guarantors of the whole ritual in its very texture. On them depends the cosmos in the etymological sense of order and ornamental beauty. Both masters and servants of time, they provide *harmony* throughout the ritual – also in the etymological sense – of a perfect *adjustment* of ritual temporalities. And all this happens in the rejection of the ego/*benlik*.

Musical language

1. The Repertoire

The repertoire of *cem* ceremonies includes two types of songs: some are fixed while the other ones left to the *güvende*'s choice. The fixed hymns feature as follows: *düvazdeh-imam* of Şah Hatayi, the solemn opening of the ritual, the main *semahs* known respectively as 'of the *baba*', 'of the Forty' and 'of the *gözcü*', the song of the *dem* (*dem nefesi*). The flexible songs are *kathismas*, *oturak nefesleri*, i.e. songs designed to be listened to when seated: they are indeed repertoires to be listened to, *sama'*, this time in the etymological sense of 'listening'. The meal continues, the *kadeh (cups)* circulate, everyone listens and sometimes meditates with closed eyes on the songs while a slight inebriation arises. At that time, it often occurs that inspired villagers, i.e. a fervent singer, a *baba* or the *baba güvende* himself, will sing their solo part, burning with fire from this banquet of Forty and from the communion. All the audience listens to them with a reverential attention to the verses. The singers can then really 'express their musical selves' in selected *nefes*, of which three, six, nine etc. must always succeed each other.

Similarly, Kerbelâ's *ağıt* (threnody), which will be sung at the end of the meal, and before the *semah* of the Forty, is left to the free interpretation of a soloist of the choir, – who can then be accompanied by the audience's cries when Imam Hüseyin's martyrdom is evoked. From a formal viewpoint, this song will preferably be an unmeasured and melismatic one ('long' aria, *uzun hava*).

Through these general considerations, readers can easily imagine the rich and indigenous aspects of the poetic and musical repertoire. The village of Tekke Köyü acquired its own cultural autonomy, so it remains firm in resisting all forms of 'globalization', even a relative one within the scale of the country, which reproduces a very small part of Alevi music all over the country. Now let us tackle in more detail the music performed in itself.

2. Music, Semah *Dance and Sung Poetry.*

a. A specific melodic and rhythmic universe?

When ethnomusicologists are already familiar with a specific region and its musical art, they will gradually learn how to distinguish local styles, which appear most often as variations of a more geographically widespread style. Similarly, it is possible to summarize in a few main points the style of the region containing the areas between Denizli and Korkuteli in the North, and Antalya and Fethiye in the South, which corresponds to old Lykia :

- contrast between two forms: the first one, *kırık hava*, is a measured form associated with dance and sung poetry, which adapts itself to them according to laws close to the *syllabic giusto*, a concept described by Brailoiu that I chose to adapt to *aksak* rhythm and not only octosyllabic lines; the second one, *uzun hava*, is an unmeasured form, which instead fits expressive poetry or laments, such as the exile songs called *gurbet havası*.
- predominance of the 'D mode' scale, with a 'neutral' E (between E flat and E, notated E 'flat 3' by Turkish folklorists) – the same occurs for the letter note B (*makam bayati*).
- as for the *kırık hava* form, there is a predominance of the *aksak* rhythm, type 9/8=2+2+2+3 (and permutations: 3+2+2+2, 2+3+2+2, etc., cf. my previous works on *aksak* rhythms). It is as much a dance rhythm as a metrical structure where sung poetry can be inserted, most often in heptasyllables (*mâni*) or hendecasyllables.

The musical repertoire of Tekke Köyü exclusively fits ritualistic contexts: the festive musical world is part of the outside world, of *zâhir*, and consequently has no place in the village. Unlike secular music, ritual music in itself remains totally unknown outside of the village. This of course does not prevent it from sharing several common features with the music performed in the surrounding areas, but in a transformed or reworked style.

Moreover, this ritual music is richer and more variegated in terms of modes and rhythms than the festive music of the surrounding locality. In addition to the much anticipated importance of *aksak* rhythm 9=2+2+2+2+3, rite musicians also master other 'basic' *aksak* meters, such as 5=2+3, or 7=2+2+3. They show a

scholarly knowledge of prosody, which they adapt to this musical rhythm. They also perform *uzun hava* during some *nefes*, especially the *ağıt* –threnodies– of Kerbelâ, when concluding each *semah*.

b. Generalities: Modes and Rhythms.

The predominant modal scale is therefore, as in most of Anatolia, that of the D mode, in other words the *makam bayati* scale. But the musical note E, which is the second degree of the D mode, generally moves towards E flat, especially when the song descends to the tonic, or when the *saz* dictates the rhythm in ostinato before the beginning of the *semah*. This principle can be verified for all the tunes transcribed in the booklet (see www.nomos-elibrary.de/extern/nomos/live/978-3-95650-640-6/transcription_booklet.pdf): this is really a local characteristic, which corresponds to the notion of the 'upper leading note,'11 which is itself subject to the power of attraction of the tonic.

We may also find, though more seldomly, two situations where the mode corresponding to the *hicaz* of Ottoman classical music theory can be noticed: the second version of the *dem nefesi* (cf. booklet, www.nomos-elibrary.de/extern/nomos/live/978-3-95650-640-6/transcription_booklet.pdf, p. 8) and a modulation in the *semah* of Forty (p. 15).

The unmeasured tunes are sung after a melodic pattern of regional 'long tunes', which are called *avşar makamı* at Tekke Köyü. The word *makam* means 'tune' or 'melody' in the village area: it is a mere (standard) melody i.e. it is not a 'mode' in the sense provided by classical Ottoman theory. As for *avşar*, it is an ethnonym that refers to a famous Turkmen/Turkish[12] ethnic group located between Iran and Anatolia, which took possession of these Western Taurus territories during the fourteenth century. Among other things, the legendary victory of the Avşar over the Germiyan is celebrated between Burdur and Acıpayam in a song called 'Avşar Beyleri', 'Lords of the Avşars.' It is both a kind of regional anthem for all musicians in this geographical zone, and provides a model for a long tune (Cler, 2012: 208ff), very different from laments and exile songs. However, the same melodic style is used to sustain lamentation texts, such as Kerbelâ's threnodies performed at the end of *cem* ceremonies. This melodic style can also be used when the last two lines of the fast section *kıvrak* of the *semah* are repeated, while the *baba* recites the prayers.

Here is the melodic profile of these unmeasured songs, characterized by the use of a glissando, which occurs during the phrase, starting from the highest de-

11 The concept of the upper leading note, specific to descending modes, is explained by Samuel Baud-Bovy, 1972.

12 It is worth recalling that, since the Middle Ages, the word *türkmen*, translated as Turkoman, has referred to nomadic groups that refused the yoke of the central state.

gree (7th). This glissando is the stamp of the *gurbet* style (exile songs) in the entire *yayla* region from Burdur to Denizli. Such is the second glissando, which often begins on the 'upper leading note', when the tonic (Eb3[13] – Eb – D) approaches.

Avşar makamı: cf. Ex. 14, www.nomos-elibrary.de/extern/nomos/live/978-3-95650-640-6/example_14_avsar_makami.mp3 (the note E is slightly lower than the natural E, it is the second degree of the *makam bayati* or *hüseyini* of the classics):

We can also notice that this melodic profile is found in a large number of songs in this repertoire.

The rhythms: the *aksak* rhythm 9=2+2+2+3 dictates the dance movements on 4 steps, corresponding to the '4 *aksak* beats': q q q q. This custom is followed in festive music throughout the Southwest of Turkey and in regional *semah* among the Alevis Tahtacı. The tempo is lively, i.e. e = about 210.

Sung verses can fit the same prosody within this dance rhythm, but they are most often articulated in the form 3+2+2+2+2.

Other configurations of this *aksak* rhythm can be found in *kathismas*, particularly in the form 2+2+2+2+3 (cf. www.nomos-elibrary.de/extern/nomos/live/978-3-95650-640-6/example_08_goenuel_calamazsan.mp3, Ex. 8/transcription booklet, p.16 '*gönül çalamazsan*...'). Finally, in addition to simple binary rhythms (2/4, 4/4), the *aksak* rhythm which appears in the form 7=2+2+3 or 3+2+2 is very common among *kathismas*. The form 5=2+3 is also possible.

c. Poetry+Melody+Dance Configuration: The Architecture of Semah.

Each ritual includes three, five or seven *semah*, three being the mandatory minimum number for a whole ceremony. The first *semah*, which is referred to as *babalar semahı* (the *baba*'s *semah*), invariably opens the *cem* just after the invocatory hymn addressed to the twelve Imams and before the 'banquet.' Then come *kırklar semahı*, the *semah* of Forty, which concludes the banquet, and finally the *gözcü semahı*, the *semah* of the *gözcü*, which precedes the leaving of the faithful after the twelve services. These three *semah* constitute an established repertoire, including text and music. It occurs in all *cem* houses which belong to Tekke. This number can be increased to five or even seven *semah*, when the assembly decides to perform a longer *cem*, especially in the middle of winter when no agricultural work awaits the participants the next morning. In this case, the two or four additional *semah* would precede the *gözcü semahı*, and would be chosen from within a larger repertoire of poems or melodies.

With the exception of the *semah* of Forty, where the assembly dances around the ritual room along with a single poem attributed to Şah Hatayi, all *semah* consist of two parts, each one corresponding to two sung poems: the first part is said

[13] Eb3 means, according to the Turkish notation, a 3-commas-flat E, hence between Eb and E.

to be 'slow' (*ağır*), the other one is referred to as 'fast' (*kıvrak*). These adjectives are also commonly used in connection with festive music, where *ağır* is the common name of *zeybek*, and *kıvrak* is the name of the piece that always follows, performed in a fast tempo: *'her ağırın bir kıvrağı var'* as it is said in the Denizli's area – 'each slow piece has its fast one.' But in this case, it is not the tempo that accelerates, rather it is the choreographic performance itself, i.e. the dancers' trajectories. This feature is particularly noticeable during the transition between two sung verses, where the two couples turn around the ritual area (*meydan*).

Another significant feature shared by the villagers with their Tahtacı[14] neighbours is the transition to the so-called fast part, which is marked by a modulation and a change of drone, always transposed up a minor third. In this region of ancient Lycia, such drone shifts are specific to Alevis, Tahtacı and Bektashi *semah*s. They are not performed by musicians from the Yörük villages (Cler, 2012), whereas they are found in Thrace or Balkan music, – similar to Byzantine *ison*. The mode established on this new drone becomes either a 'major'mode (the *rast* type in the classical theory) or a 'minor'mode (*nihavend* type). On one of the *kıvrak semah*, there is even a second drone shift, which reaches the note G (*kıvrak* of the *gözcü semahı*). This combination of effects generated by the rising to the high notes, the changing modes and the acceleration of the choreographic rhythm are felt as a fast part, so the intensity of dance is experienced as 'speed.'

Finally, in the village of Tekke a third part is added to *semah*: once the verses of the poem are sung, the dancers will adopt the same pose as the *dar*[15] in front of the dignitaries who say their prayers. The *güvende*, on the other hand, directly follows the *semah* rhythm, which sounds like an unmeasured prelude (close to the *gurbet hava* or *avşar makamı* types), repeating the last quatrain in this *uzun hava* form until the end of the prayers. He can then also start singing a *nefes* to conclude the whole part.

In essence, every *semah* consists of a perfect coincidence between a poetic form – which is most often composed of four hendecasyllabic quatrains – and dance: the anecdote of the 'missed syllable' explained above fully confirms this assertion. These poems are called *beyt* (distich) in the village, and most often belong to the *mesnevi* tradition, a *genre* largely mastered by members of the community who still compose such poems today and sing them during the *sofra* (banquet) as *kathismas* (*oturak nefes*).

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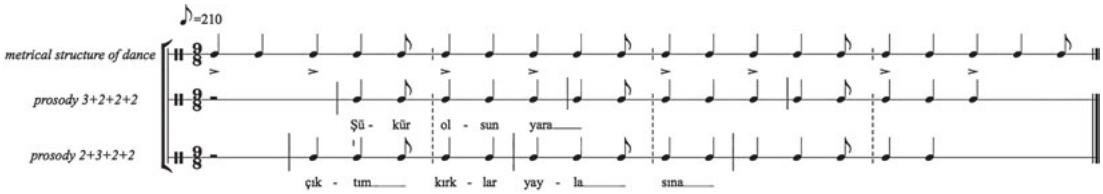
14 This may also explain why the Alevi of Istanbul refer to the inhabitants of Tekke Köyü as Tahtacı, or why a local *semah* was published in 1997 in the archive CD *Tahtacılar* (Kalan Müzik) by folklorist Melih Duygulu. However, the inhabitants of Tekke insist on strongly distinguishing themselves from this Tahtacı universe, which is the culture of the neighbouring village of Akçaeniş.

15 The *dar*'s attitude corresponds to a posture of contrition, the right foot covering the left foot, hands crossed on the chest or belly, head inclined.

Each distich corresponds to a dancing 'rotation:' the two couples are placed in a square in the centre of the *meydan*. At the very beginning of the *semah*, after a preparation phase when men are girded by their wives, and when several ritual gestures are performed, the *gözcü* gives the inaugural signal, exclaiming: 'Şah !' The first hemistich (2 bars) has to be heard before the dance movements can really begin. This gap between the verse and the beginning of the dance is also due to the gap existing between two metric orders. As a dance, if the *semah* is always thought of as 2+2+2+3 (i.e. 4.5 beats out of 9 pulses), the verse is articulated differently with a predominance of the structure 3+2+2+2, and in some cases, 2+3+2+2, as shown in the diagram below[16] :

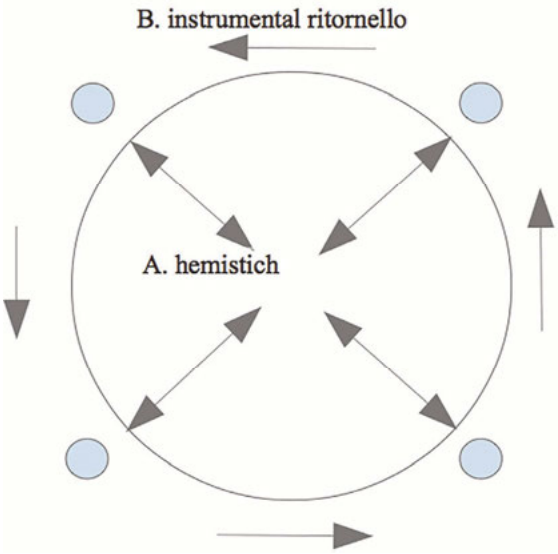


When the *semah* begins the dancers first 'get into the movement' as the first hemistich is being sung. They do this either on the spot, discreetly, with their feet, or by starting the dance movement with a slight momentum in order to mark the advance towards the centre of the area: then four steps (forward and backward) are regularly performed towards the centre. There are namely two musical bars for one hemistich, and thus eight bars for a distich, i.e. four cycles of forward and backward steps.

Let's take the example of *babalar semahı*, the first one in each *cem*:[17]: at the end of the first distich (see letter A on the diagram below), the exclamation '*medet Şah*!' ('help us, O Shah!') – which was added to the poem itself – completes the dance cycle by a backwards turn, before the four dancers change their disposition as they move around the dance area. They perform a quarter turn, as indicated by the letter B in the diagram below: at that precise moment, the *gözcü* renews his exclamation ('*Şah*!'), and the two pairs of dancers change their disposition on for the length ofa 2 bars length. Thus the whole performance of the *semah*, based on a poem composed of quatrains, enables the four dancers to switch regularly and eventually to come back to the first disposition at the end of the quatrain. Then the forward backward movements continue until the end of the sung poem.

16 This proves once again the general truth, that the notion of 'first beat' is rarely relevant: see my work on the *aksak* rhythm and the detailed regional study regarding the form 9=2+2+2+3 in my book Cler, 2012.

17 We refer to the Ocora CD version (track 3). The whole *babalar semahı* can be watched in: Vimeo › Jerome Cler › 'Tekke Köyü, le 01/01/2008' https://vimeo.com/346619635

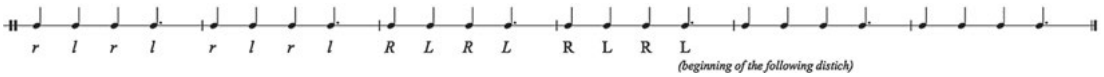


The figure below explains the link between dance and distichs. In capital letters and italics, feature the Right-Left steps during the advance towards the centre, and in straight font the return towards the back of the ritual area.

Small letters show the transition between two distichs, where the dancers perform a quarter turn on the dance circle. This lasts only two bars, and the dance 'towards the centre' starts immediately again, even before the end of the instrumental ritornello, which does not occur in all *semah*.

A. Distich sung over eight measures:

B. Instrumental ritornello on four measures (the dancers change their disposition)



When the end of the first poem arrives, the last sung syllable does not rely on the tonic. Instead, it inaugurates a tonic change by going up a third, in order to introduce the fast *kıvrak*: this transition can be found in every *semah*[18]. The four dancers find themselves in the initial disposition, in a square, face-to-face, two by two, while the *baba* recites his prayers over eight bars, the tempo being given only by the *saz*. Then the *semah* restarts at the signal of the *gözcü* (who again exclaims '*Şah*!;' he does so at each transition between sung units). This time the

[18] Except the '*semah* of the Forty,' which holds a special status.

choreographic rhythm changes: the unit is the verse, one verse corresponds to six bars, and each bar is followed by two bars for the exclamation *'medet Şah!.'* Then six bars of instrumental *ritornello* appear: the two couples perform two complete turns around the dance area, and each time they find their initial place. If the second part is said to be a *kıvrak*, it is not due to tempo acceleration contrary to what one might think, but to choreographic movements that become more rapid and intense.

The *semah* continues in this way until the end of the second poem. It ends with prayers, while a singer repeats the last distich in the form of unmeasured singing. This *uzun hava* conclusion seems to have the function of regulating the energy spent during the *semah,* where the climax is reached during the second part.

This is the procedure of the *babalar semahı*. At the end of the *cem*, the *gözcü semahı* [cf. www.nomos-elibrary.de/extern/nomos/live/978-3-95650-640-6/example_06_goezcue_semahi.mp3, Ex. 6] does not offer exactly the same symmetrical structure: during the first part, the dance towards the centre of the circle was performed on distichs, but this time, it extends over ten bars (= five forward and backward movements), where two bars enable the two couples to change their position. In the fast section, the forward and backward movements encompass fourteen bars; the transition, which is announced by the instrumental *ritornello*, includes six bars. Those bars are followed by a single bar allowing the four dancers to get their balance, before performing again the poem as well as the forward backward movements towards the center of the dance circle. The same type of analysis could be applied to all additional *semah*, with some light minor differences.

So it is obvious that the *semah* are elaborated performed according to an extremely precise architecture: from an overall formal perspective, the poetic structure and the dance movements must perfectly coincide, given that dance alternates between the balance of forward and backward movements towards the centre and 'spinning' movements (we say *semah dönmek*, 'spinning the *semah*'). If the etymology of the word *semah* is the Arabic stem *sama',* which means listening, this dance is thus based on listening to the poem that accompanies it and to which it gives a spatial and kinesthaetic consistency.

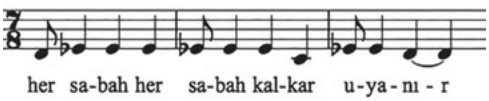
However, we can find other metric organizations of the sequence such as in the '*semah* of Forty,' where the melody and poetic rhythm are organized according to the meter 2+3+2+2, while the dance still follows the pattern (2+2)+(2+3) (and therefore begins on the sixth pulse of the sung melody); the same occurs for the *semah* '*gider iken yolum…*,' p. 20 of the transcription booklet (see www.nomos-elibrary.de/extern/nomos/live/978-3-95650-640-6/transcription_booklet.pdf). The latter case is rare, but all this shows that this ritual music subtly exploits all the resources provided by regional rhythmical habits, those characteristics I have already described in the context of celebration music and weddings.

Consequently, each *semah* has its own character and follows its own laws. It is indeed a dance performed by the 'initiated', because no one can perform it without being perfectly aware of its structure, its order, the sung text that controls the choreographic order, – as much as because no mistake is allowed during the performance of the ritual. The faithful told us how they learned the ritual content before their initiation, at home, within families.

No mention of symbolism, no interpretation was made about of the *semah*, although elsewhere in Turkey, it is referred to as the motion of the planets or the nuptial dance of the grey crane. When one asks the meaning of the dance, words such as rapture, slight inebriation, exultation and joy immediately come. When our friend Kâzim Dede saw himself dancing the *semah* in the pictures, he vividly said: 'can you see how I fly?!'. The most appropriate verb to explain the *semah* is *coşmak*, which evokes intense joy, inebriated rapture and ecstasy in Sufi vocabulary.

3. Sung Prosody, Syllabic Giusto *and Melismatic Emphasis.*

Throughout the Western Taurus region, poetic creativity is or was of great intensity, considering the great transformations due to rural exodus: *mâni, tekerleme, koçma*, all these forms produced constrained models where assonances and paradigms generated multiple poems that were moulded into the musical rhythms. I have already detailed the principles of this poetic-musical production and I will recall here one of its aspects, namely the adaptation of the syllabic *giusto* (Brailoiu, 1973) to the *aksak* musical world. The essential characteristic of the *aksak* rhythm is the 'irregular bichrony', i.e. the distribution of two units of duration respectively equal to 2 for the short and equal to 3 for the long. The long value generally appears as a break in a series of shorts[19]. As for the syllabic *giusto*, it rather consists of a 'regular' bichrony, where the long is equal to two shorts. So that frequently, when the tempo is not too fast, the group of three provided by the *aksak* rhythm will appear as 2+1 or 1+2 on two syllables: we can easily check this in the transcription booklet, for example in the case of the *nefes 'her sabah, her sabah'* (see Ex. 7, www.nomos-elibrary.de/extern/nomos/live/978-3-95650-640-6/example_07_her_sabah_her_sabah.mp3):



This *aksak* rhythm notated 3+2+2 represents the group of 3 divided into two syllables, 1+2, as it occurs there, or 2+1 (which is more frequent).

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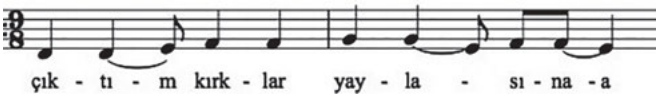
[19] The case of '3' as a break in a series of '2' is the most frequently observed in the Balkans and ′in Turkey; see Brailoiu, 1951 and Cler, 1994.

Another possibility is that the poetic bichrony completely merges with that of the musical *aksak*, so the long will be equal to 3/2 of the short: we see it in the *semah* of Forty (this practice is very common in 'secular' festive music of the region):

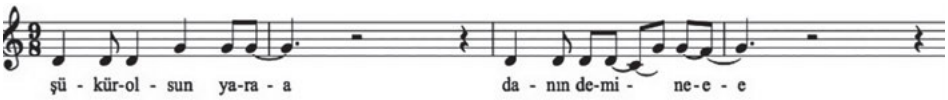


However, in this case, it is worth noting that although one single syllable is sung in the 'group of three,' it will spread over two notes, dividing the 3 pulses into 2+1 – or 'the long being equal to 3.' Consequently, after a long acquaintance with these repertoires, it is possible to assert that the bichrony of 2:1 ratio in sung poetry predominates over the bichrony of 3:2 ratio, which remains strictly linked to music and choreography. This fact suggests a difference from the 'secular' repertoires of the surroundings, where some fast *aksak* rhythms of type 9/16 = 2+2+2+3 include 4 syllables, the long one being then equal to 3/2 of the 3 previous short syllables. However this situation does not happen in Tekke except perhaps in the case of the *semah 'gider iken yolum uğradı*,' notated 2+3+2+2, where the second syllable is a long placed on a dotted crotchet, which is equal to 3/2 of the previous short. But even in this case, we must consider another aspect of this sung prosody, which strongly distinguishes Tekke Köyü's repertoires from all the surrounding 'secular' practice, namely the strong melismatic tendency of the musical poetic unity.

a. Melismata.

What I have just mentioned above is therefore a syllabic *giusto* similar to those belonging to the surrounding countryside, as explained in more detail in my book *Yayla* (Cler, 2012). A poem's syllable can be identified with a musical rhythmic unit, possibly two, whether this unit is a quaver, a crotchet, or more rarely a dotted crotchet, depending on the tempo. What is striking about the sung prosody of Tekke Köyü's rituals is that the syllabic unity extends beyond the musical meter, especially in *semah,* which feature as the most important and thoroughly performed repertoire.

Let's take the first example, provided by the *baba*'s *semah*:



In the first verse: *şükür olsun yaradanın demine* ('thanks be to the Creator's breath/wine'), we first notice a caesura that breaks the unity of the core word, *yaradan/yaratan*, the creator: *şükür olsun yara / danın demine*. The verse is divided into 6+5, while the usual poetic division in these forms (see the *koçma*) is actually 4+4+3 (Boratav, 1964), as it is the case here: *şükür olsun / yaradanın / demine*. This process is common when the musical (choreographic) metric prevails over the textual coherence, in other words it is a typical case in danced musical-poetic repertoires.

If the structure of the sung verse had followed the pattern of the syllabic *giusto* usually used in this region (adjustment of the poetic meter to the *aksak* musical rhythm in 3+2+2+2), we could have expected, so to speak, 'mechanically:'

Şükür ol sun ya -ra / da-nın de – mi- ne
u u u – – –/ – u – – –

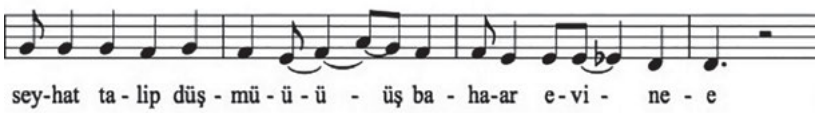
or:

Şü-kür ol – sun ya-ra / da-nın de- mi- ne
u u u – – –/ u u u – –

However, the first hemistich covers the next bar via the elongation of the *a* of -*ra*. The process is repeated in the next hemistich, where *de-mi-ne* becomes:

de-mi – i – i – i – ne – e – e
u u u u u u u –

If we continue listening to this same *semah*, we will notice that this phenomenon is repeated in the second verse:



The second syllable of *düşmüş* also extends, as if to 'force' the hemistich to go beyond, which allows the poetry to adjust itself to the dance steps at the end of the hemistich. In addition, it is worth noting that these melismata rather occur at the end of segments – hemistich, verse – whereas the beginning corresponds to the syllabic *giusto* pattern.

In the absence of anything better, this process will be named 'melismatic emphasis:' these long melismata correspond neither to the natural language accentuation, nor, obviously, to an expressive emphasis on the meaning of words. Stretching a hemistich over two bars seems rather to comply with a choreographic logic: in other words, the fact of doubling measures aims at to ensure the movements' parity, forcing a 'stretching' of the verses. The key thing is that this particular drive of melismata is perfectly 'regulated,' repeating itself without change from *cem* to

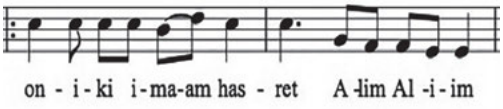
cem. It is similar to a fixed composition, different from occasional expressivity, and in no case left to the performer's choice.

b. Melodic Emphasis and Interval Jumps.

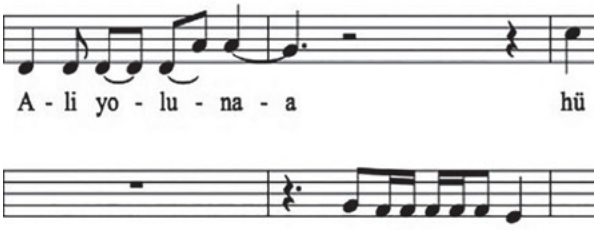
Another type of 'emphasis' can be noticed in the *babalar semahı*, that of a modal drive. For example, regarding the melisma on *düşmüş* already examined, we see a third leap from E to G, immediately followed by a return to E, which already represents a singularity in the usual treatment of sung poetry. And in fact, this inaugural *babalar semahı* strongly stands out from all regional styles, by using significant interval jumps up to sevenths. Another aspect of the melodic treatment of poetry is to be taken into account here, namely the addition of words, interjections or exclamations addressed to the 'Shah,' *Şah, Ali*, which are notated within square brackets and added to the segmentation in verses or hemistichs:

Şükür olsun Yaradan'ın demine
Seyyah talip düşmüş bahar evine [medet Şah!]
Onik'İmam Hasret [Alim Alim] Ali yoluna
Hü diyen canlara hemen [dedem] aşk olsun [medet Şah!]

And precisely, the exclamation *'medet Şah!,'* 'help us, Shah!' presents an opportunity for a quite original seventh jump with a melisma on *Şah* – in accordance with the expressive content, which must be that of a call. The next verse continues on the same degree of C. Or, after *hasret* '*Alim Alim*,' 'My Ali' is added, i.e. the sung performance repeats the short instrumental transition found elsewhere after each hemistich, with a jump, this time down by a fourth:

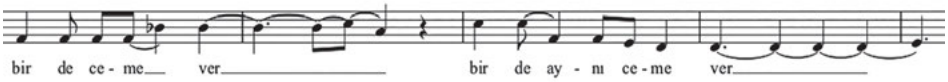


At the end of the same verse, after *yoluna*, a leap occurs again, up a fourth, in relation to the singing, but this leap is distant from a sixth regarding the instrumental transition:



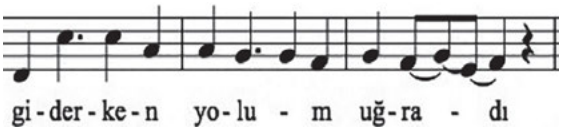
All these melodic drives are extremely atypical. To me, they seem to be part of the same 'emphasis,' the same expressive intensity and perhaps of a *tekke*-like aesthetic.

We can find such astonishing interval jumps in pieces from various *semah*: in particular in the *dem nefesi* (cf. below), which begins in a rather 'regular' way, in joint intervals. Then when the second verse is repeated in bars 16 to 19 – *bir de ceme ver* –, an ascending fourth jump occurs on *ceme*, then as in response we have: *bir de ayni ceme ver* ('gives to the assembly of *cem*'). It is an hemistich added to the poem, a sudden descending movement of six degrees, which reaches immediately the final note D:

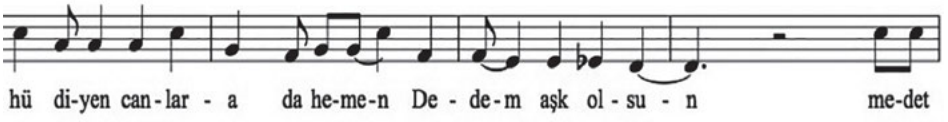


Here again, it is difficult to find equivalents in regional repertoires. This style belongs specifically to the village.

Or, at the beginning of the '*gider iken' semah*, which opens with a seventh jump:



Moreover, interval jumps, or more precisely disjunct interval motions are found many times in the texture of the melodies themselves. Another example is provided by the *babalar semahı*, which is one of the most spectacular in this respect. Just before the '*medet Şah !*' call already mentioned, we have:



These interval jumps can certainly be found in regional repertoires, but they are rather adventitious ornamentations (Cler, 2012: 248-257). In Tekke, everything happens as if usual ornaments of regional 'secular' festive music have 'frozen' into melodic elements. This phenomenon reminds us what may have happened with Ottoman classical music. Over the centuries, ornaments of the past combined with simple melodies have established themselves as devices in scholarly composition (Feldman, 1996: 330ff). Therefore I have chosen to include all these phenomena under the category of 'melodic emphasis,' since I remained unable to find a more appropriate term.

Through the examination of all these cases, one wonders how the poems in general have been adapted to music, particularly those featuring in the *semah*. The same melismatic emphasis will always be found, without varying between brotherly groups or rituals. This assertion is supported by a 20-year attendance of Tekke Köyü's *cem*. This invariance has undoubtedly been crystalized by habit over time, but since when? Given that the gathering of the village's traditions and institutions took place between the end of the nineteenth century and a more recent past, which modalities were adopted in the ritual's musical repertoires? For now it has been impossible for me to gather any clues about this. The older members of the community often tell me that the main *semah*, as well as some *nefes*, already existed in their youth, i.e. in the 1950s and 1960s, but also claim that they have 'always' existed. If a ritual repertoire was ever created, it was long before the 1950s. In order to deepen our knowledge of these repertoires, perhaps we should also investigate the other Bektashi villages in the area, such as those located in the Denizli region, where an important lineage of Tekke originated, not to mention Hüsnü, the author of the poem sung during the *baba*'s *semah*, who also lived in Denizli at the beginning of the twentieth century. Another explanation for repertoire invariance could be that it was created collectively, gradually and practically because, at that time, the community consisted of only one 'group.' This could have occurred before the village was divided in the 1960s.[20] Once the repertoire was fixed, each new group would only reproduce the same model, without changing anything. It is difficult, however, to imagine that this repertoire could have been partly composed by highbrow elements, or "experts" from the ancient world of tekkes. It seems more relevant to link this music to a more general category of '*Semah* of Lycia (Tahtacı),' considering the rhythms to which melodic and melismatic drives could have been added and were stylistically inherited from the former *tekke*.

I have also identified the melodic patterns of three other *semah*s,[21] which are intended for various texts: two of them are transcribed here on the texts *yalancı dünya*, 'lying world,' and *gider iken*, 'on the way.' In addition, the melodies of the two main *semah* don't exclusively fit those specific texts: identical melodies can also be used as melodic patterns for other texts. The poem, *karşıda göründü dostum bağları*, which was recited on with a specific tune in 2016, features on the *Tahtacılar* CD,[22] where it was performed by Ali Koca, Mehmet and Ali Eriş ion the same melody as the *babalar semahı*. A relative freedom therefore rules the association between texts and melodic patterns, except for the two main *semah,* which are never performed on another melody.

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20 See the *Turcica* articles (48/2017)

21 In this context, 'melodic pattern' refers to a standard tune, i.e. a 'melodic mould,' which is likely to fit several poems.

22 Kalan, *Arşiv Serisi*, CD 057, 1997. It was collacted by Melih Duygulu, who does not provide information regarding the date, although the collection probably occurred in the 1980s.

c. Second Part of the Semah: *'"Kıvrak"'.*

Regarding the *kıvrak* part, the same is true, but the choice is much more limited, since I have never heard more than three different tunes. Transcribed after the *babalar semahı* (*'Abdal Musaya bende olalım'*) the first tune is stylistically related to it. Both the melodic emphasis in interval jumps and melismas can be noticed again. The second tune, that of the *gözcü semahı*, which, like all Tekke's *kıvrak*, dwells upon a new tonic (F), begins in the same way as the *babalar semahı*, but evolves differently: while the second was ascending, step by step, towards the high notes (1-4-5 for the first verse), before descending in joint intervals towards the first degree (F), the *kıvrak* of the *gözcü semahı*, stopped after the same ascending movement (1-4), then descended a third by chromatic degrees – in a quasi-glissando movement – to dwell upon a new tonic, the note G. It is true that the text which was then sung and notorious in the whole Alevi world, was attributed by tradition to Pir Sultan Abdal, just before he was hanged, after the vizier Hızır Paşa had asked him to sing a *nefes* in which the word *Şah* would be omitted – i.e. without any reference to Ali. Pir Sultan is then said to have sung this poem, purposely featuring the word *Şah* in the refrain *'açılın kapılar, Şaha gidelim*,' 'let the doors be open, let us go to the King,' as a sign of his firm consent to martyrdom. The dramatic tension, which, let us not forget, corresponds to the last sung verses of the *cem*, is thus reflected by a more original and subtle melodic drive, where perhaps Tekke Köyü's musical-poetic artistry is most apparent.

d. A 'One Part' Semah: *The* Semah *of Forty,* Kırklar Semahı. *(see Ex. 5*[23]*)*

When the banquet has come to an end and the tablecloths have been folded, it is the moment for the whole assembly to dance the *semah* around the ritual area. The so-called *semah* 'of Forty' owes its name to the earthly representation of the celestial dance where the Forty were led during the Prophet's celestial journey, the *mihradj*, *miraç* in Turkish. Men and women arranged in two consecutive lines, perform turns in this way while Şah Hatayi's poem is sung. The melody is built on 4 bars corresponding to a distich: the d-*bayati* tetracord, which ascends on two bars, is followed by a *hicaz* tetracord, which descends on the next two bars. When the first verse of the second distich is performed, the ascending movement of the beginning mutates, since the melodic pattern is repeated on the seventh degree – in this case it is again a melodic emphasis. Once the quatrain has been sung on the alternation of these two sentences, a refrain invokes Ali, Hasan, Hüseyin and Balim Sultan, the founder of the *bektaşi* order. But this time, it does not correspond to a choreographic rearrangement as in the *semah* previously ana-

[23] www.nomos-elibrary.de/extern/nomos/live/978-3-95650-640-6/example_05_kirklar.mp3

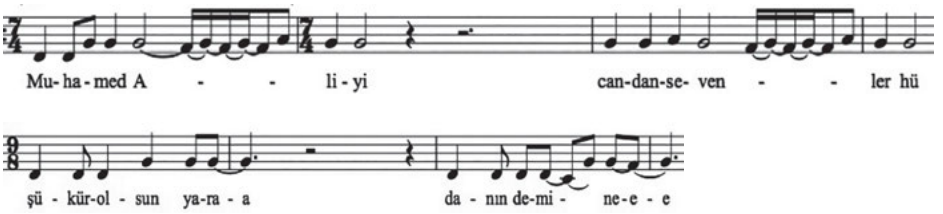
lysed, since during the *semah* of Forty, the whole assembly performs turns around the ritual room.

4. Nefes *and* 'Kathismas'

a. A Hymn Addressed to the Twelve Imams.

If *semah*s are unified by rhythms and by a form imposed by the choreographic order, which alternates movements from backward to forward and movements around the area, the hymns and *oturak nefes* – songs to be listened to – display a great variety of meters and melodic characteristics. Actually, one *nefes* stands out from the whole repertoire: it is the hymn addressed to the twelve Imams, the first *nefes* to be sung in all the *cem* ceremonies. This piece displays the slowest tempo in the whole repertoire. Consequently it inaugurates the ritual ceremony with solemnity, before the first *semah* can begin. This hymn shows a subtle cyclical structure: its metric is based on seven steps organized 3+4 for the sung section. As for the instrumental *ritornello*, based only on one bar, it opens the hymn and comes back at the end of each distich, so it is not easy to determine a segmentation, which can be heard as 4+3, 2+3+2, as well as 3+4, depending on the articulation. It often happens that in slow tempos, the *aksak* division is not immediately perceptible, except in terms of singing prosody, because the syllabic articulation on 3+4 beats is obvious. Here again, the melismatic emphasis is strong, since invariably each fourth syllable of hemistich is elongated and sung as a long melisma, after a regular syllabic rhythm occurs (this rhythm features one syllable per beat, if the crotchet is considered as the first beat). A singular fact characterizes this cyclical and strophic structure: the eighth bar is shortened to 5=3+2, in order to punctuate the end of each distich with the addition of *'hü!'* ('He!'). This happens before the repetition of the whole second verse of the distich, which ends in the same bar containing 5 beats. This *nefes* is perfectly atypical in the region and even in the *cem* repertoire in general. This is the reason why it raises, more than any other, the hypothesis of a relic of *ilahi*, i.e. a possible remnant of the ancient dervish *tekke*.

Moreover, some similarity between the beginning of this hymn and the beginning of the following *semah* is noticeable in terms of their respective melodic characteristics (cf. Ex. 1, www.nomos-elibrary.de/extern/nomos/live/978-3-95650-640-6/example_01_duevazdeh.mp3)



Thus the beginning of the *semah* seems to echo the melody of the hymn that was performed prior to it: in fact, both 'launch' the ritual in a mood of solemnity, and they seem closely linked to each other.

b. Dem Nefesi.

Another fixed *nefes* is the one of the *dem*, which follows the moment of the *üçleme* (i.e. drinking *dem* three times in the name of Allah, Muhammad and Ali), *'güzel Şahtan bize bir dolu geldi*,' 'by the beautiful Shah a cup was given to us:' the transcription booklet shows that it can be performed on two different melodic patterns. One is the 'usual' *bayati*-like *makam* (D scale described above), the other is based on the *hicaz* scale.

The first version (Ex. 3, www.nomos-elibrary.de/extern/nomos/live/978-3-95650-640-6/example_03_dem_nefesi1.mp3) uses text-music composition devices similar to those of the *semah*, with a division of the verse into 6+5 syllables (cf. *babalar* and *gözcü semahı*), and with an insertion of an instrumental bar after the first hemistich. The first quatrain is divided into two musical strophes: on the first musical phrase (bars 6-8 of the transcription), the first two verses are sung according to a 'syllabic *giusto*' prosody:

Güzel Şahtan bize / bir dolu geldi (bis)
Bir sen iç saki eh / bir de ceme ver (ter) – bir de ayni ceme ver

[By our beautiful shah a cup was given to us
Drink, you cupbearer, and give it to the assembly]

The second verse is repeated twice again (bars 9-15), this time with a melismatic emphasis until the conclusion, noticeable for its descending jump of sixth, in transition to the tonic (already mentioned above). This verse serves as a refrain, 'drink a cup of it, and give it to the *cem*, – give it to the *cem* assembly.' Here we reach the climax of the ritual, the assembly having just drunk three times 'in the name of the three.' This poem expresses the sharing of the 'nectar' given by Ali and the holy founder of the Haci Bektaş order, it expresses the full communion of the assembly, hence the strong emphasis and the melodic accentuation.

The same structure is repeated in the second distich of this poem (the second verse, i.e. the fourth verse of the quatrain is identical to verse 2).

From the second quatrain on, the four verses follow each other separately on the same melodic model instead of the distichs:

Payım gelir eren-/lerin payından (bis)
Muhammet Mehdinden / Ali soyundan
Kırkların Kırkların / engür suyundan
Bir sen iç saki eh / bir de ceme ver (ter) / bir de ayni ceme ver

[From of the perfect ones a slice is granted to me,
From Muhammad from the Mehdi, from Ali's lineage
A juice made of grapes squeezed by the Forty
Drink, you cupbearer, and give it to the assembly

Even if this construction does not correspond to the choreographic structure of a *semah*, it is not very far from it and is of a comparable aesthetic.

The second version (Ex. 4, www.nomos-elibrary.de/extern/nomos/live/978-3-95650-640-6/example_04_dem_2.mp3) of this *nefes* is much simpler and more regular: each verse is repeated over three bars alternating between even and uneven rhyme schemes, according to a melodic logic based on antecedent-consequent phrases. The only originality of this 'melodic pattern' is the *hicaz* mode, which does not modulate.

c. Kathismas, Oturak Nefesleri.

During the *sofra*, – the banquet –, the *güvende* chooses three *nefes* at their convenience, which are always repeated without pause until the *baba* recites a prayer after the third *nefes*. There are either 'classical' poems attributed to the local saints, Kaygusuz Abdal in particular, or poems attributed to the ancient poets of the Alevi repertoire, such as Şah Hatayi, Pir Sultan Abdal, Kul Himmet, or more recent poets. For example in the released CD (Ex. 8, www.nomos-elibrary.de/extern/nomos/live/978-3-95650-640-6/example_08_goenuel_calamazsan.mp3) and in the booklet of transcriptions (p. 15), the wonderful *nefes* '*Gönül çalamazsan aşık sazını*,' 'my heart if you can't play the love *saz*...,' was composed by Hüdayi who lived during the second half of the twentieth century. The melodies can be in 7/8 or 5/8. They possibly originated from the wide repertoire of Alevi songs broadcasted nationally, so they can be used in turn as 'melodic patterns' in other tunes (for example, the album and the CD features the 7/8 melody *'her sabah her sabah sabah'*), or they can be used as 9/8 'melodic patterns,' such as *'Gönül çalamazsan'* that I have already cited.

Some 'melodic patterns,' however, are referred to as 'old' and local. They present melodic singularities such as the one mentioned in the transcription booklet (see www.nomos-elibrary.de/extern/nomos/live/978-3-95650-640-6/transcription_booklet.pdf) from the recording of an evening working session with Nuri K., whose name will appear below: '*Ey erenler çün bu sırrı dinledim*,' 'o perfect ones, because I listened to this secret…' by Serezli Pir Sultan. This melody, which can

fit other poems, can be heard in all *cem*s, so Nuri K. declared that it was one of the oldest in the repertoire.

In summary, the style of 'melodic patterns' matches three categories:

- *sui generis* melodies, specific to the village itself, which may also reflect memories of the songs of the old *tekke*, among others, because of their long melismata, which occur at the end of the hemistich or verses.
- pieces related to the Tahtacı repertoires, particularly to *semah*.
- appropriations from regional 'secular' modes, such as the long *avşar* arias
- *aşık* songs renowned at a national level and reproduced according to the widespread model, or, more frequently, on a local 'melodic pattern.'

Liturgical Ordo *and Variability: The Poetic Repertoire*

During the many years I have been travelling to Tekke alone, and then, after 2011 when I was there as part of a team, the hymn to the twelve Imams, the *baba*'s *semah*, the song of the *dem*, the *semah* of Forty and the *semah* of the *gözcü* were invariably the same. They were sung in the same 'melodic pattern' (except for the two possible versions of the *dem nefesi*). Everyone told us that 'they have always been performed this way.' But patience during prolonged field research always proves rewarding: one single exception was needed to refute our interlocutors' statements, and this was provided by one of the most outstanding musical personalities in the village, namely Nuri K., the *güvende* I mentioned above in reference to his temporary exclusion. I had heard him in 1997 when I first came. His singing[24] struck me then for its originality, its intensity, the use of a vocal drive rather unfamiliar in this region, which rather imitated the style of Central or Eastern Anatolia. Then he sang again,[25] during the *Balim muhabbeti* organized in 2011 by and for our researchers' trio. He had been stripped of his function as a *güvende* for *benlik*, ego(t)ism. In 2005, I attended a negotiation at the beginning of *cem* where the *baba* Ismet Baba asked the assembly if he could be reintegrated into the rituals: indeed, Nuri K. no longer appeared in *cem* ceremonies, not even as a mere *talip*. The community decided to open its doors to him while continuing to forbid him to sing in the choir. But from stay to stay, after 2011, we were the witnesses of his gradual rehabilitation. By 2015, the *çelebi* Kâzım Dede decided to hire him as a *güvende* in his own newly created group.[26] Fully aware of his new *güvende's* strong personality, Kâzım knew how to give him space and freedom in the *cem*s we attended in 2017 and 2019.

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24 cf. Ocora CD, track 11

25 cf. Ocora CD, track 7

26 Regarding the different groups in the village sharing the two ritual houses, see the report published in *Turcica*.

1. A Musical 'Evening Working Session': The Strong-Headed Nuri K.

We attended our first *cem* in Kâzım's group in 2017, with Nuri featuring as *güvende* and we noticed at least one innovation: to accompany the prayers preceding the *babalar semahı*, instead of simply marking the rhythm on the *saz* while waiting for the 'start' of the poetry+dance episode, the new *güvende* sang a *nefes*, *'armut ağacı*,' borrowed from the Tahtacı of Mut (Mersin), as he would later tell us. A few days later, whereas my past attempts to gather musicians in my hosts' home had always been taken back to the celebration of rituals and to *cem's* house, Nuri K. spent an evening at *mürşid* Kâzım's home, our host. He was accompanied by another choir member whom we praised as one of the best and most fervent chorister of the village, Süleyman C., his son-in-law. Nuri K. confidently told us, 'Ask me anything you want to know, and I'll tell you.' Our interview mainly focused on the *semah* performed in Tekke and on 'old' *nefes* melodies – i.e. those he claimed to have heard in his youth during the 1950s and 1960s. Visually impaired, Nuri holds in his memory hundreds of songs – for which he cannot rely on written material. In his youth he lived for a while in Gaziantep, which hosted the first school for the blind in Turkey, actually the only one for a long time. In this distant province, he learned 'exogenous' stylistic elements, in particular the way of making the voice 'burst out' or 'sob' in melismas. His mastery of the *saz* was in addition to an encyclopaedic knowledge of all repertoires he claimed to know, encompassing secular as well as Bektashi repertoires. For a long time, he had belonged to a festival musicians' ensemble as a *darbuka* and then as a *saz* player. This trio was composed of a violinist and a clarinettist, and closely resembled the *tamçalgı*, a 'comprehensive instrument' owned by the gypsies or the Abdal, common in marriage ceremonies of the past until the appearance of the *elektro-saz* and *org* (synthesizer). Nuri K. concluded: 'I am the only artist (*sanatcı*) living in the village, the others are only peasants.' Beside him sat his son-in-law Süleyman, one of these 'peasants.' He kept the passive and humble attitude required of all *güvende*, and waited for questions before being allowed to express his views, modestly explaining how he had been initiated to *nefes* by his father during childhood and how the latter had developed his taste.

2. Nuri, a Reformer?

During our most recent stay, which occurred in March 2019, i.e. two years later, we met Nuri several times at the village's café, but he was no longer available because he had family problems. And when we asked him if he had time to continue the interview we had started two years earlier, he simply replied that we should go to the *cem* – a common response of every *güvende* since I had been visiting Tekke. However, the *cem* conducted by Kâzım Dede's group confirmed that Nuri had really taken the opportunity offered to him since he was given freedom.

For the first time in 21 years of regular attendance at Tekke's rituals, I heard the inaugural hymn of invocation to the twelve Imams sung differently. Instead of the usual melody, another unmeasured melody was performed in the *uzun hava* style; when it came to singing the *babalar semahı*, his 'assistant,' Süleyman, asked: 'Are we opening the ceremony with *şükür olsun?*', and Nuri replied: 'No, because *şükür olsun* is sung by everyone and everywhere. We will open the ceremony with *yalancı dünya*.' This is exactly what he did, introducing the *semah* with a chant from the '*armut ağacı*' quatrain, as in 2017. Similarly, regarding the *gözcü semahı* he did not sing the usual *'salavat getirin....'*, but *'gider iken yolum uğradı'* instead (see Ex. 13, www.nomos-elibrary.de/extern/nomos/live/978-3-95650-640-6/example_13_giderken_yolum_ugradi, booklet, p. 26). Although the liturgical ordo seemed to have been fixed 'since always' – as we had been told –, it was however subject to variations, at least in the group recently formed by Kâzım Dede. During the following days, when we asked in the village if the poems sung for the most important *semah – babalar* and *gözcü semahı* – had always been *'şükür olsun'* and *'salavat getirin'*, the answer was no. Actually the freedom to choose was offered to performers of the poem and melody and this has always been the case in the past. These ritualistic elements must therefore have somehow become fixed prior to my first visit in 1997. Even though I had not attended all the *cem* ceremonies given in Tekke and the neighbourhood for twenty years, I can surmise that the two well-known texts were invariable. It was only when Kâzım Dede's group became effective and Nuri K. was rehabilitated into the community, that a return to the former freedom was made possible.

However, when we asked a former *güvende* who had become a *baba*, Muzaffer G., if '*şükür olsun*' and '*salavat getirin*' were mandatory, he responded by arguing over aesthetic and semantic criteria: 'No, you can sing the *semah* you want. However no *semah* is more beautiful than the one describing the *türbe* and evoking the traveling disciple (*seyyhat talip*), nothing is more beautiful than *salavat getirin*, the invitation to bless Muhammad Ali, and nothing is more beautiful than the verses *'bizim dinden özge din bulunurmu'* (can we find another religion than ours, referring to the *gözcü semahı*)?' He justified the 'fixing' of the repertoire by the text's high quality, which he considered perfectly adapted to a particular ritualistic moment, namely the opening and the closing of the ceremony. He thus implied that there was no need to change them. But Nuri did not want to limit himself to such conformism and thus acted as a liturgical reformer.

3. The 'Illiterate Scholar' and Poetic Sources.

Apart from Ottoman inscriptions on the stelae and the well, the village displays no traces of writings from ancient times. The Tekke library and all its belongings were confiscated after 1826. The only writings we can rely on in our field research are the large *güvende* notebooks, which often consist of old diaries, although those

diaries are quite thick, unlike school notebooks. The thickness of these notebooks as well as the large number of recopied poems they contain, show the villagers' profound devotion to their poetic tradition. They provide at the same time material for the ritual, the expression of doctrine, and reflection on the great moments experienced in the village. Generally, the notebooks would start with a *semah*, each one being two pages long[27] (*ağır* and *kıvrak*). They can then be grouped into several sections: *düvazdeh* (hymns to the twelve Imams), *dem* (songs 'of the nectar,' in other words mystical drinking songs), *oturak* (*kathismas*), *Kerbelâ/matem* (threnodies evoking Imam Hüseyin's martyrdom). They then feature the great annual feasts: *nevruz* (21 March, which is Imam Ali's birthdate), *hidrellez* (5 May, which marks the beginning of the pastoral summer). Finally, several *beyit* composed by the owner of the notebook can be found; though most of the time, the faithful would come to the *cem* with their own poem written on a sheet of paper, to intervene during the *sofra*, the listening episode and the *oturak nefes*.

Consulting various *güvende*'s notebooks proved that their contents were essentially the same. The lists containing poems reminds us of the practice of the *cönk* or *mecmua* from the Ottoman era (Köksal, 2016). However, in the absence of any other source in the village, it is difficult, if not impossible to know how these anthologies were compiled and on whose initiative. We cannot discern if the religious order has undergone an era of institutional re-building within the village – and it is particularly difficult to find available sources.

Most of the village's *güvende* have no more than elementary schooling, as commonly occurs in the rural world. The only Tekke official who studied at university is Hüseyin Dede, the current *halife*: his position in the hierarchy is undoubtedly linked to his education level; he is the only one who is interested in academic papers, colloquiums, and who owns books in his home. Consequently, for the others, instruction and scholarship are based solely on poetic tradition and albums each one creates by copying those of another. We admire the deep poetic knowledge of the peasants from Tekke, since the poetry they often know by heart is not always written in an easy language and responds to an esoteric code that makes it difficult to translate or understand.

One day in 2004, while working with one of the *güvende*, Muzaffer G., I asked him the meaning of a verse. He asked me to show it to him in his notebook. Then he looked at it silently for a few seconds, repeated it by singing and he concluded: this is it (*işte böyle)'*, without going further into exegesis. This little anecdote may raise several comments. First of all, the identification of the text with the music that fits it. This is a cognitive process, or a habitus, according to which the text is primarily sung, since it is perceived as a song and not as a 'said' text. As

[27] Cf. the end of the transcription booklet (www.nomos-elibrary.de/extern/nomos/live/978-3-95650-640-6/transcription_booklet.pdf) that features the photos of one of the transcribed *semah*.

such, it is disconcerting for a practitioner to be asked: 'What does this mean?' Nothing had prepared him to comment on the text or to explain it in and of itself, because this metalinguistic situation never occurred. On the contrary, a specific verse or distich can be quoted during a conservation to illustrate a subject, using it as if it were a proverb. Though in colloquial language the quoting of a poem usually intended for the liturgy is very unusual, because of its religious status, and thus cannot be explained *in abstracto*. What do our *güvende* peasant friends understand from poems composed in the sixteenth century, in an archaic language where Persian vocabulary is abundant, even if their texts were simplified or modernized in some sections? More generally: what does it mean to understand a poem that is heard only during its liturgical use?

A parallel question is that of the relationship between the written and oral in the Turkish rural world. The linguistic aspect of Alevi-Bektashi religiosity, whose mystical poetry, from the beginning, developed in Turkish to the detriment of Koranic Arabic, has often been emphasized, as much as because the Koran is absent from the 'holy writings' in this community where the lute *saz* is referred to as *telli Kuran*, i.e. 'stringed Koran'. In Sunni circles and in the Yörük villages where I have worked for a long time, the word *hoca*, which can be translated as 'master', refers to both the imam and the school teacher, since they both have writing competencies: Arabic and Koran for the former, the usual Latin script taught in school, for the latter. On the musicians' side, the same is true: *hoca* is mainly the one who knows how to read, how to write notes, he is the one who teaches from written materials. As for the one possessing pure musical artistry, he is called *usta*, using the same term applied to a craftsman, mechanic, watchmaker, etc. Regarding Tekke and its oral/written tradition, an obvious gap occurs with the surrounding Sunni environment, due to the exceptional poetic erudition among Bektashi peasants – who are convinced they are the holders of the gnosis, the *marifet*, which is one of the four doors[28]. Written remnants therefore reveal themselves in a negative way: they are as indecipherable as the convent ruins, consisting of many *yazılı taş*, 'written stones', and the well and steles in the cemetery surrounding the mausoleum. The last person who knew how to read the Ottoman language was the father of the current *halife* who died in 1998. Actually, he knew the Arabic alphabet because he had been a *hafız*; therefore he could read the inscriptions in Ottoman, but we don't know if he really had the competence to understand this language beyond the ability of average Turks, or even educated ones. Finally, several people in the village told us about an 'autograph manuscript of Abdal Musa', which the foreign occupying powers allegedly 'stole' and took to Europe after the 1914-18 war, more precisely to France. This rumour had been going around in the village for a long time and I was aware of it from my first visits.

[28] Let us recall that the doctrine is based on the 'four doors': *şeriat*, the law, *tarikat*, the way/brotherhood, *hakikat*, truth, reality, and *marifet*, knowledge, gnosis.

Since I was French, I was entrusted with the mission to find this manuscript. Ali baba, the *mürşid*, added: whatever the price is, we will buy it back. I explained that probably no such manuscript ever existed. If so, it would have been confiscated in 1826 with all the property of the convent.[29] But this legend persisted and is still repeated today, the written element being the relic rather than the document.

The arrival of foreigners – one of whom could read the Ottoman steles and was delving into the archives – suddenly facilitated access to traces of a past that the village had been deprived of by the reform of the alphabet, but that had been preserved in its memory through oral transmission (Sigalas, 2017: 35). Today this material break with the Ottoman past is over, so it is worth noting that the *halife*, specifically the son of the last *türbedar* 'knowing the Ottoman', is also a *hoca*, in the sense of secular and republican education, having studied and graduated to be a teacher. Later, his commitment to the order and his service to the community that employed him full-time, led him to give up his initial professional career. However he remains a true scholar, evoking Victor Hugo, Tolstoy and placing these authors on the same level as Mansur Halladj or Kaygusuz Abdal. Moreover, an outstanding musician, he once confessed to me his desire to implement new elements borrowed from ancient traditions. Having read the description of the convent given by Evliya Çelebi in the seventeenth century, who had identified framed drums, *def*, he would have liked to reintroduce these percussion instruments into *cem* ceremonies.

There are thus potentially two levels of knowledge and proficiency in the village, which reproduce the classical disjunction between *hoca* and *usta*,[30] but differently to in a Sunni environment. Whereas the *halife* belongs rather to the *hoca* category, the village *güvende*s, as well as the other *mürşid,* Ali baba, belong rather to the *usta* category: they are endowed with (remarkable) musical and ritual expertise. Even if the latter copied the hymnographic repertoire into makeshift notebooks, their use of written material is close to a kind of 'degré zéro'. The material operates as an aide-memoire,[31] so they do non't take have any critical look approach at to the texts or their performance. As for the concern to resurrect former sources or to give a more scholarly aspect to these textual references, only Hüseyin Dede seems to care about this. He never brings a notebook with him and most oftenusually sings by heart (*ezberli*). However, during the *cem* ceremony, which features in the CD released by Ocora Radio-France, he sings a poem by Pir Sultan Abdal in the *avşar* mode, that which he reads from a scholarly edition of the latters works (track 5).

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29 It was the Ottomans who plundered the convent of its treasures (Maden, 2013).

30 Both words can be translated as 'master', but one notable difference remains: the *hoca* possesses the knowledge and masters literacy in a religious (imam) or secular (teacher) context, while the *usta* masters skills (for example mechanical as well as musical).

31 During the ritual they do not closely follow the written version of the hymns.

Since the 1960s, a considerable number of publications have seen the light of the day, offering poetic anthologies or 'complete works' composed by leading poets of the community, such as Şah Hatayi, Pir Sultan Abdal and many others. Although most of these issues are presented as scholarly publications, they do not necessarily include a critical edition and consequently they often reveal an ordinary chain of transmission. But we do not find books in the homes of Tekke Köyü and the Abdal Musa association(*dernek*), which is officially called *Abdal Musa Kültürünü Araştırma Yaşatma Derneği*, the 'Association for Research and Preservation (literally "vivification") of Abdal Musa's Culture,' has not yet taken the opportunity to create a library, which would have been welcome in the 'house of culture' built after 2003. We can therefore verify that the *güvende*'s notebooks do not really rely on the content of the books or current editions of great poets of the past. A very small part of the *nefes* they contain comes from popular aşıks whose songs are distributed my mass media and widespread within the Alevi world,, such as Mahsuni Şerif, for example, a very popular figure in Tekke. Thus some *nefes* have come to the village through such famous musicians of national influence, who have interpreted great poets' works of the tradition and made them popular.

These notebooks therefore reflect an internal village tradition. Four poetic categories can be found in the *cem* repertoire:

- Poetry by the local former saints and poets, first and foremost Abdal Musa himself. However, the most knowledgeable of the *güvende*, such as Nuri K., confess that the texts are probably not his own and that he was not a poet, but rather a man of action. Kaygusuz Abdal was an illustrious fourteenth century poet whose settlement in Tekke is more legendary than real, since he went on to found a convent in Cairo, where he died. Moreover, the Kaygusuz sung during *cem* remains weaker compared to his abundant work,[32] because the original version was undoubtedly too difficult to be sung during Bektashi rituals in the Taurus region.
- Poetry composed by the 'classics', the authors of the sixteenth century, such as Şah Hatayi, Pir Sultan or Kul Himmet. This era is the golden age of Alevi poetry.
- Poetry by authors closer to us who are not strangers to the Tekke community, such as Hüsnü *baba* who composed the text of the *baba*'s *semah* at the beginning of the twentieth century, or Derviş Kemal, born in 1930 in Dimotika, Didymotic in Thrace, and died in 2015, whose *nefes* are often sung during the *sofra*;
- Finally, some contemporary poets from Tekke or the surrounding area, such as Hasan Kara.

[32] Cf. the admirable work of Zeynep Oktay (2013) on Kaygusuz.

4. Appropriations, Attributions and Variants: A Living Tradition

The main question remains of when and how these notebooks were organized. I can try to give some answers from two examples.

One *nefes* seems particularly important to me to give a better appreciation of the Tekke tradition: it is the *babalar semahı*. This text is indeed a 'local' composition, because it begins by describing the *türbe* and its environment in the form of a thanksgiving, referring to the miracles performed by the saint:

Türbe bağlarında (Ali'm Ali'm !) zeyn'olur güller
Çevirmiş etrafını da hemen şakır bülbüller (medet Şah!)
Muhabbete canı (Ali'm Ali'm !) katacak yerler
Muhabbete giren cana aşk olsun (medet Şah !)

Türbe bağlarının (Ali'm Ali'm !) dört yanı bağlar
Sular revan olmuş da olmuş her yana çağlar (medet Şah !)
Üstümüze yürüdü (Ali'm Ali'm !) ol yedi dağlar
Yürüten canlara da hemen dedem aşk olsun (medet Şah !)[33]

–

Among the vines of the mausoleum (my Ali my Ali my Ali!) shine the roses,
All around them gloat the nightingales (help us, Shah!)
These places invite (my Ali my Ali my Ali!) souls to the agape;
To the soul that enters this agape, may Love be! (Help us, Shah!)!

The vines of the mausoleum (my Ali my Ali my Ali!), on all four sides are vines,
Water flows in from all sides (Help us, Shah!)!
Before our eyes these seven mountains (my Ali my Ali my Ali!) began to walk
To the souls who set them in motion, from now on, may love be (help us, King!)!

We know that poets always sign the last quatrain by including their name in the text (*taç beyt*, or *Şah beyt*): this poem is signed Hüsnü. However, he appears in a *nefes* anthology by Ali Rıza Öge, a Bektashi poet who signed his texts with the nickname Kadîmî. Those texts were published in the master's dissertation of a student from Sivas, Murat Demir.[34] Ali Rıza Öge was born in 1881 and died in 1957. His anthology is a manuscript of 927 pages in which we find, among other things, poems of Hüsnü Baba, with whom he may have been well acquainted since he was born in Greece in 1874, studied in Izmir, was living in Denizli in 1915, and ended his life in Izmir after the *tekke* were was closed down.[35]. Ali Rıza Öge probably had access to the original version of the *baba*'s *semah* poem adopted in Tekke, since these authors were contemporaries of him – the version commonly sung in Tekke differs very little from the original text (see p. 315 of

[33] *Babalar semahı*, cf. Jérôme Cler: *Turquie: cérémonie de djem bektachi, la tradition d'Abdal Musa*, Ocora Radio-France, C 560248, 2012, track 3. And video : Vimeo › Jerome Cler › 'Tekke Köyü, le 01/01/2008' https://vimeo.com/346619635

[34] Demir, 2016. I thank Nikos Sigalas for having found this major source of information.

[35] According to Bedri Noyan, quoted by Murat Demir (2016: 34) of his master dissertation.

the anthology). It is certain that Hüsnü baba visited the village of Abdal Musa, as evidenced by his lyrical description of the *türbe*. Without knowing more about his connection with Tekke Köyü, we can surmise that he was involved in the reconstruction of the village's Bektashi institutions during the troubled times at the end of the empire or during the even more difficult times for Tekke Köyü, when the *tekkes* were closed down by Mustafa Kemal. The second 'fast' part, which evokes Abdal Musa's achievements during his lifetime is by Kul Şükri, who lived between the end of the eighteenth and the middle of the nineteenth century. We know almost nothing about his life, except that he was in the service of Abdal Musa's *dergâh* for a time (Özmen 1998: 307).

These two texts are the only genuine 'local' material among the fixed parts: texts from the 'fast' parts of two additional *semah* can be added (those added at the end of the *cem*, before the *gözcü semah*, cf. transcription booklet, (www.nomos-elibrary.de/extern/nomos/live/978-3-95650-640-6/transcription_booklet.pdf) p. 23 *'Adem oldum'* and p. 25, *'içmişem bir demden'*). But in these specific cases, the signature corresponds more to an attribution or appropriation than authentic paternity. Indeed, both are signed by Kaygusuz Abdal. The chorus of the second text evokes the hunting of a deer: *'kaçma geyik kaçma, bir avcı değilim,'* 'don't run away, deer, don't run away, I am not a hunter.' Legend holds that Kaygusuz was hunting a deer and wounded it in the flank. This deer took refuge in the convent of dervishes. Still hunting the wounded deer into the convent, the young Kaygusuz then stood in front of Abdal Musa, who showed him the arrow on his side. Kaygusuz, whose worldly name was Gaybi, understood the holiness of the master. Convinced by this miracle, he became his disciple. Many commentaries are provided on this legend. According to some of them, it echoes the shamanic past of Turkic peoples.[36]

However, this poem is referred to as a *nefes* by Şah Hatayi in Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı's anthology, without being explicitly linked to Abdal Musa's legend. It is therefore likely that the peasants of Tekke spontaneously replaced the *tac beyt* with Kaygusuz because they were influenced by the strong hagiographical narration. Regarding other poems, common confusions occur such as between Pir Sultan Abdal and Kul Hüseyin, the latter being a disciple of the former. It is therefore not relevant to search for an indisputable 'original author' of many poems in this tradition, because oral transmission from community to community gives rise to various appropriations or attributions, as also occurs in Western literature of the Middle Ages.

Another example confirms the extent to which this liturgical poetry can be the subject of multiple appropriations, substitutions and attributions. This is the

[36] The thematics of deers and comparable legends about religious conversions have been mentioned by Hansluck in his book, *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans*, Oxford UP, 1929, pp. 460 sq. Those characteristics also appear in Christianity. They are not necessarily related to the often mystified shamanism of the *Turkic* peoples of the Great Steppe.

nefes/semah quoted on p. 21 of the transcription booklet [see Ex. 11, www.nomos-elibrary.de/extern/nomos/live/978-3-95650-640-6/example_11_semah_yalanci_dunya.mp3): '*karşıdan göründü dostun bağları,*' 'opposite appeared the vines of the Friend,' a poem that mentions Abdal Musa and Kaygusuz Abdal, as well as the *türbe*. As in the poem of the *babalar semahı*, Abdal Musa is associated with the vines and the paradisiacal garden of the *türbe*:

yedi de kapı içeriye Şahimin türbesi
üstüne nur doğdu / Abdal Musanın

inside the seven gates lies my King's mausoleum
a light was born above, that of Abdal Musa

The version cited in Ismael Özmen's great anthology, which features similar elements but in a different order, tells us:

Yedi babtan içeridir türbesi
Nur doğdu üstüne Abdal Musa'nın

The meaning is exactly the same, but the turns of phrase are different and the vocabulary (*bab* instead of *kapı*) is more archaic. However, we can probe further by relying on Ali Rıza Öge's anthology. The poem that precedes it in this anthology, the one of the *baba*'s *semah* strangely resembles the poem of 'The Friend's Vines' discussed above, especially the last distich magnifying Abdal Musa's exploits. This poem begins with the following verses:

Horasan elinde duyuldu sesi
Mümin olan canlara düştü hevesi
Yedi babdan içeri şahın ziyası
Türbesin bekleyen cana aşk olsun
Kudretten başında elifi tacı
Eşiğin bekleyen Güruh-ı Naci
Mağripten meşrike oynar kılıcı
Kılıcın sallayan cana aşk olsun

From the land of Horasan, his voice was heard
desire has taken hold of the souls of believers
Inside the seven doors shines the King's light,
to the soul awaiting at the mausoleum, may love be!
On his head be the elifi tadj conferred by the (divine) power,
waiting on the threshold, Güruh-ı Naci,
From the West to the East plays with his sword
to the soul that waves his sword, may love be!

The following version is very similar to the text mentioned above, attributed to Pir Sultan or Kul Hüseyin. According to the Tekke's version:

Başına da giymış elifi tacı
eşiğin bekleyen istemez hacı
maruptan meşruba oynar kılıcı (...)
Kürdistan elinden duyuldu sesi
Mühib olanların düşmüş hevesi

There is a shift in the order of the verses and sometimes also in the vocabulary: Horasan, which was Hindistan in the version attributed to Kul Hüseyin, is replaced by Kürdistan. In the same poem by Hüsnü Baba, we also find the verse *'türbe bahçesinde cennet bağları'*, *'in the mausoleum garden, the vines of paradise*,' which recalls *'cennet bahcesidir türben' evleri*,' *'the mausoleum houses are the garden of paradise*,' in the Tekke's version.

This unique example epitomizes several characteristics of poetic transmission such as language simplification, borrowing of verses or distichs, changes in authorship. But it seems that the existence of Hüsnü Baba and his presence at the opening of the *cem* in the initial *semah*, are significant clues that enable us to locate in time the creation of this poetic corpus between the end of the nineteenth century and the 1920s.

Conclusion

This article was an endeavour to dive into a 'tradition' in the literal sense of the word, which means 'knowledge transfer and interpretation' (Picard, 2001). It is a real joy for ethnologists to work in a village where tradition is fully alive and escapes the patterns of recomposition of the Alevi urban world, which often exerts a strong influence on the village communities and tends to erase local particularities. One day in December 2007, I was invited to attend a *cem* in Finike (Yuvalı Köy) in an Abdal Alevi community. A *cem* house (*cem evi*) had just been built and the *cem* ceremony was like a dress rehearsal for the inaugural *cem* that was scheduled to take place the following March. I was greatly surprised to see that this *cem* was a mere copy of those performed in Istanbul, including the musical repertoire. However, the *dede*'s preaching insisted on the pride, for the Abdal community, of having gained recognition as a minority. When all was over, some members of the community showed us some genuine 'local' Abdal *semahs*[37] After the *cem*, while talking with the *dede*, I quickly understood that his intention was to conform to the model imposed from the outside by the federation of Alevi associations, rather than to emphasize the specific traditions inherited by the community. In Tekke, nothing like that happens; quite the contrary. The village remains impervious to external influences, even though Alevis from all over Turkey come annually to Tekke for the Abdal Musa festival in June. If there was ever any 'influence' from a musical viewpoint, it probably came from the Tahtacı neighbours. But the singularity of the ritual and the conscious Bektashi identity, as well as the scholarly and refined musical features described in the previous pages confirm the power of a ritual and musical tradition. For fur-

[37] One of these *semah* is available on my YouTube channel: watch Youtube › Jeriabi-Jérôme Cler › Semah abdal Finike 31/12/2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nIlOQ31MVPc

ther research, it would now be advisable to start from the centre embodied by Tekke, to reach out to the other Bektashi villages in the nearby region, from Isparta to Denizli. This will enable a better assessment of the transmissions, shared repertoires and the continuity of ritualistic organization. More than ever, anthropologists and ethnomusicologists must persevere in the ancient practice of long-running field research, led in small rural communities, to highlight the cultural wealth that the waves of globalization have not yet swept away.

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Transcription Booklet and Original Recordings Online

All Original Recordings together with Transcription Booklet

www.nomos-elibrary.de/extern/nomos/live/978-3-95650-640-6/transcription_booklet_and_all_examples.zip

Separate Links

Transcription Booklet:
www.nomos-elibrary.de/extern/nomos/live/978-3-95650-640-6/transcription_booklet.pdf
Example 1:
www.nomos-elibrary.de/extern/nomos/live/978-3-95650-640-6/example_01_duevazdeh.mp3
Example 2a:
www.nomos-elibrary.de/extern/nomos/live/978-3-95650-640-6/example_02_a_babalar_agir.mp3
Example 2b:
www.nomos-elibrary.de/extern/nomos/live/978-3-95650-640-6/example_02_b_babalar_kivrak.mp3
Example 3:
www.nomos-elibrary.de/extern/nomos/live/978-3-95650-640-6/example_03_dem_nefesi1.mp3
Example 4:
www.nomos-elibrary.de/extern/nomos/live/978-3-95650-640-6/example_04_dem_2.mp3
Example 5:
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Example 6:
www.nomos-elibrary.de/extern/nomos/live/978-3-95650-640-6/example_06_goezcue_semahi.mp3
Example 7:
www.nomos-elibrary.de/extern/nomos/live/978-3-95650-640-6/example_07_her_sabah_her_sabah.mp3
Example 8:
www.nomos-elibrary.de/extern/nomos/live/978-3-95650-640-6/example_08_goenuel_calamazsan.mp3
Example 9:
www.nomos-elibrary.de/extern/nomos/live/978-3-95650-640-6/example_09_cuen_bu_sirri.mp3
Example 10:
www.nomos-elibrary.de/extern/nomos/live/978-3-95650-640-6/example_10_karsidan_goeruendue.mp3
Example 11:
www.nomos-elibrary.de/extern/nomos/live/978-3-95650-640-6/example_11_semah_yalanci_dunya.mp3
Example 12:
www.nomos-elibrary.de/extern/nomos/live/978-3-95650-640-6/example_12_Armut_agaci_and_Semah_yalanci_dunya.mp3
Example 13:
www.nomos-elibrary.de/extern/nomos/live/978-3-95650-640-6/example_13_giderken_yolum_ugradi
Example 14:
www.nomos-elibrary.de/extern/nomos/live/978-3-95650-640-6/example_14_avsar_makami.mp3

Miracles and Tears

Religious Music in Dersim/Tunceli

Martin Greve

Today the religion which people in Dersim used to call *raa haq / réya heq / hak yolu* (literally: the way of truth) has disappeared to a great extent, giving way to the urbanized and standardized Alevism which follows the model of western Anatolian Alevism.[1] The decline of Alevi traditions in Dersim took place over a period of several decades, beginning with the military operation of 1938[2], further affected by the coup d'etat of 1980 and the armed conflict between the PKK and the Turkish army, which reached its peak in 1994. On the other hand, as many *dede*s today confirm, Alevi traditions were destroyed at least to the same degree by extreme left-wing ideologies in the 1960s and '70s. As a result, in Dersim today, Alevism is just one element within complex identity patchworks composed of leftist, Zaza, Kurdish, Alevi, Dersim and other identity discourses (Greve & Şahin, 2018).

As only a few specific religious traditions from Dersim are still practised regularly, and many more reside primarily in memories, research on traditional religious music from Dersim has only a limited role for fieldwork. The focus rather has to be on the analysis of historical recordings and oral history. Recent historical research on Alevism in Dersim, however, has mainly focused on the history of *ocaks*[3] and much less on religious practices, especially not on religious music.[4] While *dede*s and other informants often speak at length on legends and the meaning of traditions, *ziyaret*s, on *ocak*s and their founders, it is difficult to get clear information on concrete religious practices of the past.

Furthermore, the search for historical recordings is difficult. While during the first half of the twentieth century, audio recordings of religious Alevi music were only rarely made (the only two song collections in Dersim were conducted by

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1 While Dersim is often described as a large area reaching from eastern Sivas to Varto (Muş), and from Tercan (Erzincan) until northern Elazığ, central Dersim as understood in this article encompasses the mountainous region of today's province of Tunceli. In general, Alevis in this region might be seen as part of eastern Alevis or Alevi Kurds, hence those which were historically attached to a Safavidic tradition. White 2003; Kieser 2000; Gezik 2000; Bumke 1989.

2 The Turkish military operation of 1937/38 in Tunceli, the so-called *tertele*, officially counted 13,000 dead. Between 1938 and 1947 at least 12,000 locals were forced to resettle in central and western Anatolia. Bruinessen, 1994; Bilmez et al., 2011.

3 For example, Güler, 2014; Gezik & Özcan, 2013; Çakmak, 2012; Tee, 2010; Saltık, 2009; Dinçer, 2004.

4 In general, on music in Alevism see Özdemir, 2016; Karolewski, 2014; Güneş 2013; Güngör, 2011; Yöre, 2011; Erol, 2002; Clarke, 1998.

Ferruh Arsunar in 1936, and Muzaffer Sarisözen in 1944), the development of transportable tape recorders (since the 1950s) and in particular of cassette recorders from the 1960s on, led to a rapidly growing number of private local recordings (Greve & Şahin, 2018). Local researchers and collectors, including Hüseyin Erdem, Musa Canpolat, Zılfi Selcan, Daimi Cengiz, Hawar Tornecengi, Cemal Taş, Metin and Kemal Kahraman and Mesut Özcan began to record elder people in order to preserve a culture which they perceived as endangered by advancing commercialization, turkification and standardization. Today, many of these recordings, almost all with insufficient meta data, are stored in private collections without scientific catalogues, and hence are difficult to access. Important are the recent publications of historical recordings by Cemal Taş (2016; Saltık & Taş, 2016). However, it is among these private collections, that the oldest recordings of Alevi songs and even of *cem* ceremonies offer a view on Alevi practices before the recent urbanization and standardization of Alevism. Unfortunately, hardly any musicological analysis based on this extensive material has been done so far. The only exception is an article by Daimi Cengiz (2014) on music in *cems* of the *Kureyşan ocak*.[5]

Cem *Ceremonies*

The lack of reliable sources concerns in particular the central Alevi ceremony, that is the *cem*. Hardly any historical recording of a *cem* from Dersim exists that is older than some twenty years. These first recordings were made privately, sometimes even secretly as many *dede*s seem to have refused to be recorded. A few private recordings present an almost *cem*-like situation, when a *dede* is asked to sing his repertoire and he performs an uninterrupted sequence of religious songs, *semah*s or evens *gülbenk*s. Hüseyin Erdem for example, owns the recording of a 'Sivaslı Amca' (literally: uncle from Sivas) made in 1967. Afraid of prosecution, this *dede* refused to give his real name. He was a member of the Bava Mansur *ocak*, and probably came from somewhere between Koçgiri and northern Dersim.[6] He sang *deyiş*s, *semah*s and spoke rhythmically in a continuous sequence, almost as during a *cem*. The intense atmosphere almost approaches an ecstasy.

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[5] Within the few printed notation collections with music from Dersim religious songs are hardly included. The cover of Turhan/Kantar (2012) depicts the famous Firik Dede from Ovacık, the back cover Hozatlı Ahmet Dede. In its first part, entitled '*Semah*s, *Deyiş*s, *Nefes*' and *Türkü*s' the collection includes some *semah*s and *deyiş*s from the collections of Arsuner (1937) and Yıldız, 1992. In the introduction the authors explain that all non-Turkish songs are excluded. In Mikail Aslan's notation book (2012) a *deyiş* from Firik Dede with lyrics by Virani Baba is included, '*Efendim efendim canım efendim*'. At present, the best compilation of recordings and notations is that of Cemal Taş (2016).

[6] His performance style is in fact reminiscent of that of Büklü Dede (see below) from Pülümür, north-east Dersim. I am grateful to Hüseyin Erdem for letting me hear this and other recordings from his archive.

Later songs on this recording, however, return to pure musical performance and some songs are even reminiscent of the style of Aşık Veysel. The term *muhabbet* for religious-musical gatherings, however, did not become known in Dersim before the 1960s (Interview with Bava Servan, Kureyşan *ocak* from Nazimiye/Hannover, in Hannover, September 13, 2018). Almost no publication on Dersim Alevism mentions the word.

According to private collectors, including Hüseyin Erdem and Bekir Karadeniz, more recordings exist from southern and western Alevi traditions, for example from Malatya, Maraş, Sivas, Çorum or even from the Black Sea coast.[7] Two reasons might explain this disproportionate underrepresentation of eastern and hence Kurdish and Zaza Alevi ceremonies. On the one hand, due to state pressure against non-Turkish languages, ceremonies in Kurdish and Zaza had to be kept secret and their recordings were potentially dangerous for all recorded persons. On the other hand (again related to state pressure), traditions in the east obviously disappeared from at least the 1970s, which is when recording technology became widely available. In general, the number of recordings grows from extremely rare *cem* recordings beginning in the mid-1960s and 70s until the 1990s. In *cemevi*s today, recording *cem*s is a common practice.

According to oral history in Dersim just as elsewhere, traditionally the regular *cem* (*cıvat, cevat*) rituals were conducted during autumn and winter.[8] Until the late twentieth century Alevism in general has to be described as a traveling culture (to use James Clifford's term), although with strong local traditions and practices. A great number of *ocaks* have centres in Dersim, including *Baba Mansur*, *Kureyşan*, *Ağuçan*, *Derviş Cemal* and *Sarı Saltuk*. However, *dede*s regularly travelled to their *talep*s on an annual basis, covering a large area reaching from Hınıs (Erzurum) and Varto (Muş) over north-western and western Bingöl, Erzincan, Gümüşhane, Sivas-Koçgiri, northern Elazığ, Malatya, Adıyaman and Maraş.[9]

Members of *ocak* families today remember the times when their fathers, uncles or grandfathers used to travel every autumn and winter, alone or accompanied by *koçeks* (assistant boys). The traveling *dede*s used to stay in the villages of their *talip*s for a few days to up to several weeks. Until the military operation in 1937/1938, which brought Dersim under control of the government, two overlapping social networks existed in Dersim: that of a large number of minor or major tribes (*aşiret*) negotiating the political, economic and territorial power; and the religious network of *ocak*s and their *talip*s. While traveling between the territories of different *aşiret*s was dangerous and possible only to a limited degree, the highly respected *dede*s

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7 I would like to thank Bekir Karadeniz for his generosity in giving me access to several recordings of *cem*s.

8 For *cems* in Dersim and beyond, see Cengiz, 2014; Çem, 2010; Gezik & Çakmak, 2010: 41ff; Deniz, 2010: 60ff; Gültekin, 2004b: 160.

9 Deniz, 2012, pp. 60ff; Aytas, 2010; Gezik, 2013; 2000, p. 150; Gedik & Özcan, 2013; Greve, 2018a; Greve & Şahin, 2018.

were the only people who could travel freely in Dersim and beyond. Dersim was therefore a religious centre which influenced its surroundings, and adopted influences from outside. In fact, a great number of religious songs recorded in Dersim, present melodic patterns similar to Alevi songs recorded north and west of Dersim, in particular in Erzincan, Sivas or northern Malatya.

As far as we know today, the small *saz* version called *temur*, *tomır, tembur* (Turkish: *dede sazı* or *üc telli*), was the only instrument used at *cems* in Dersim. It had three or five strings, in general was tuned in the so-called *bağlama* tuning (*bağlama düzeni*) and had 7 to 14 frets.[10] Until recently it was played without plectrum in the so-called *pençe*-technique which emphasizes percussive sounds. Usually the corpus was made from one piece of wood (*yekpare*) instead of the now widespread *yaprak* technique (the corpus being constructed from several pieces of wood). Similar lute types were played in particular by Alevis in a wide area reaching from Sivas and Erzincan to Malatya (here also called *ruzba*, *tırzva*, or *balta saz*) and beyond (Duygulu, 2014: 135). As late as 1992 Süleyman Yıldız mentions the practice to have more than one *saz*-player in *cems* (Yıldız, 1992: 28). Due to the lack of sources, we do not know if this was an older practice, nor if more instruments might have at times participated or if any particular musical arrangements were ever made for them.

Within Dersim, on the other hand, the borders between *aşiret* territories might have supported the emergence of local traditions and possibly also regional musical styles, in particular for non-religious music such as laments (Greve 2018b). Due to our limited sources, however, we can only speculate about regional, individual or other stylistic differences also among *ocak* traditions. Bava Servan for example (real name Ali Tamac; Nazimiye/Hannover, Kureyşan *ocak*; Interview in Hannover, September 13, 2018) refers to different styles using the term *perde*, which literary means fret (of a lute), hence intonation, but here rather stands for religious song, or even musical style:

> Those who play well, who know how to tune their instrument and manage to play melodically have their own style / intonation / melody (*perde*). If anyone from a tribe (*aşiret*) hears him or anyone else he would say this is the style (*perde*) of this or that dervish. There is such a subtlety.

Also, an anecdote of Hozatlı Ahmet Dede which his son Ali Ekber Yurt Dede told me in an interview (Tunceli, September 1, 2014) indicates that between *ocak*s recognizable stylistic differences must have existed and be clearly audible at least for experienced musicians (Greve, 2018a). Today, unfortunately, these stylistic differences do not exist anymore, and we do not know anything about them. Due to

[10] Çem, 2010, p. 33. Arsuner (1937, p. 11) mentions also other tunings in Dersim. In contrast to the *ağıt* tradition in Dersim in which the (western) violin played an important role (Greve, 2018b), I never came across any evidence of the use of this later instrument in the Alevi context in Dersim.

the lack of sources there is no way to verify if these claims are true and if so, what musical qualities might have characterized particular dervishes or *ocak*s.

Again, according to oral history, ceremonies in the villages were quite informal and flexible, and probably not everywhere in Dersim were all services and traditions actually performed. Daimi Cengiz (2014: 67) for example, claims that *miraçlama* and *duaz-ı imam* hymns in general where not sung at Kureyşan *cem*s (his own recordings of those *cem*s go back to the 1970s); lyrics rather focus on Kureyş, Düzgün Baba and Hızır. Zilfi Selcan (b. 1949 in Pax, central Tunceli), questioned the tradition of singing songs on Kerbela (*mersiye*) during the *cem*s:

> I did not hear them. No. They reffered to Kerbela, but musically, sung with lyrics, that was never performed. I did not see this tradition. (Interview in Tunceli, 15. 5. 2013)

In particular the service of the lute-player and singer (*zakir*) was mostly filled by the *dede* himself.

> Hasan Hayrı Şanlı Dede (b. 1944), Ziyaret village, Ovacık, Derviş Cemal *ocak*: *Zakir* in general is the *dede* himself. (Şanlı, 2004: 13).[11]

In other cases, the *kocek* (assistant boy), or musicians from the village played the instruments. In some cases, the *dede* simply went from house to house, teaching, talking, singing religious songs, and the *talip*s honoured him by kissing his hand. Naime Üregil, *talip* attached to Baba Mansur *ocak*, Karyemez Village, near central Tunceli (Interview 24.12.2017):

> The *pir*s came towards autumn, or towards the winter. They mostly came in autumn. For example, the *dede*s came, walked from house to house, everyone gave his material support (*çıralık*) to the dedes. There were some *dede*s who came in spring and played *saz* and gathered everyone around them.

In many other cases, however, complete and extended *cem*s were conducted and remained imprinted in the memory of witnesses.

Also, in terms of the language used in *cem* ceremonies, no standard existed in Dersim and the surrounding area. Van Bruinessen (1998) and others suggested, (mainly based on the observation of Ali Kemali (1932, then governor of Erzincan), that the liturgical language of *cems* in Dersim traditionally used to be Turkish. In fact, as several *dede*s confirmed and recordings prove, songs from the great Turkish singer-poets including Yunus Emre, Şah Hatayı, Pir Sultan Abdal, Kul Himmet, Viranî and others have regularly been performed also in Dersim. Cemal Taş (2016) reports from singers, including Süleyman Kaya / Sılık (1901–1991) and Hüseyin Doganay (1947-2006), that they sang laments in Kirmanc/Zazaki but *deyiş* in Turkish. Similarly for example the recordings of Seyit Süleymane Axce (Mazgirt) made in 1975 by Seyfi Muxundi (part of Mesut Özcans collection, MÖ 4 B).

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[11] Hasan Hayrı Şanlı Dede wrote books on Alevilik such as *Alevilik ve kurban*; *İkrar Meydanı*; *Dersim'de Cem*; *Munzur Efsanesi* (Gezik & Özcan, 2013, p. 234-263).

However, until the mid-twentieth century only a minority in Dersim spoke Turkish. The main languages were Kirmanc/Zazaki and Kurmanji, and until 1915 also Armenian (which as far as we know was never used in *cem*s). Bava Servan (Nazimiye/Hannover, Kureyşan *ocak*; Interview in Hannover, September 13, 2018):

> In *cem*s Turkish was definitely not used, let's say I saw recently that Turkish religious songs (*beyit*s) are learned.

Since 1938 the Turkish state has suppressed the local languages Zazaki and Kurmanji in Dersim, and promoted the Turkish language. Meanwhile, a great number of local *gülbenks* (prayers) and *beyit/deyiş* (hymns) in Zazaki and Kurmanji have been collected and published.[12] We may therefore assume that *dedes* in general spoke and sung the languages of their *talips*, that is Zazaki, Turkish or Kurmanji.[13]

Hasan Hayrı Şanlı Dede (2004: 14):

> *Deyiş*s and *duazi imam*s sung by *dede*s from Dersim were Turkish. But in villages of *talip*s who did not know Turkish they told and sung *deyiş* in Kurdish.[14]

Only a few *ocak*s conducted their *cem*s mainly or even completely in Turkish, the most important being the Sarısaltuks.

Hozatli Ahmet Dede, Hozat, Sarısaltuk *ocak* (Çakmak, 2012: 204):

> Do you know, our *ibadet* is in Turkish, our *deyi*'s are Turkish, our *miraçlama*s are Turkish, our *duazdeh*s are Turkish, our prayers (*dua*s) are Turkish. So, in the past, Kurdish, I might say, those who did not know Turkish, I might say, might have made one or two prayers (*dua*) for example in Zaza, do you see? But our *ibadet*s are originally in Turkish.

In almost all memory accounts of *cem*s in Dersim, people remembered its extreme emotional character, including extensive periods of crying, a feature which neither exists nowadays, nor in historical recordings of *cem*s made in Alevi communities west of Dersim (Greve, 2018a).

Naime Üregil, Karyemez village, central Tunceli, (Interview December 24, 2017).

> In the old *cem*s the *dede*s played *saz* in a way that they shook with their *saz*, your liver would burst from fear, people where so afraid.
> (and the people cried...?)
> They cried, and how much they cried! The cried and shouted '*ya hak*', and in the end they came to themselves again.

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12 Cengiz, 2014; Görgü, 2014, pp. 80ff; Tornêcengi, 2015; Çakmak, 2013; Mûxûndi 2012; Gezik & Çakmak, 2010, pp. 45; Çem, 2010; Munzuroğlu, 2012; Metin & Kemal Kahraman 1997. Several extracts of recent *cems* in Zazaki in Tunceli can be found on Youtube.

13 Gezik & Özcan, 2013, pp. 29ff.

14 Similarly, for example Ali Şahin (son of Pir Bava Bulısk from Pülümür), interview April 24, 2016, İzmir/Narlıdere (Greve & Şahin, 2018).

Towards the end of *cem*s the performance of *semah*s and (if performed) songs on the events of Kerbela, constituted an emotional and musical climax of the *cem*, where the community, possibly even the *dede* used to cry. A short recording of some seven minutes duration of a *cem* ceremony in Kırmızıköprü (Pülümür), which was made secretly by the *dede*'s son in the 1980s, demonstrates this emotional and excited atmosphere, with all *talip*s deeply involved with loud shouts.[15] Furthermore, in Bekir Karadeniz' archive a recording of some 30 minutes of a *cem* exists, conducted by Davut Sulari in 1985, a few days before his death. Bekir Karadeniz received this cassette from the man who made this recording in a village near Hınıs (southern Erzurum).[16] Here, while Davut Sulari was singing, intense crying by many participants is clearly audible.

In *cem*s, therefore, music clearly serves to heighten emotions. However, *talip*s crying for Ali and Hüseyin, more or less consciously might also have cried for their personal pain and suffering. While fieldwork and oral history need to be done among other Kurdish and Zaza Alevi regions, however, at least from Varto (some 300 kilometres east of Tunceli) I heard several similar reports of emotional *cem*s. In Dersim, the extreme emotions during the *cem*s were possibly fostered by the traumatic events of 1937/38, which gave more than enough reasons to cry. As I pointed out elsewhere (Greve, 2018b), after 1938 laments probably became widespread and almost completely replaced other issues in song lyrics. In both cases the experience of extreme violence in 1938 might have influenced traditions.

Trance and Miracles

A crucial element of *cem*s in Dersim, as remembered by numerous witnesses, is the performance of supernatural power (*keramet*, *kehanet*, *iqin*) by the *dede*s; for example healing, telling fortunes, touching fire and boiling water. This performance of *keramet* mostly happened during a psychological state which was called *tewd*.[17] The word *tewd* might be etymologically connected with *tevhid* (literally: union), in Alevi tradition the term for a particular form of hymn.[18] In Dersim, however, the term *tewd* describes a state during *cem*s when a *dede* or dervish (see below), or sometimes even normal people, begin to tremble and shake their bodies, losing consciousness and hence falling into a trance. Afterwards, these persons do not re-

15 The recording is owned by Hüseyin Şanlı Dede, Kırmızıköprü, kureyşan *ocak* (interview in Kırmızıköprü, January 8, 2015). The recorded *cem* was conducted by Hüseyin Sanli Dede's father in Kirmiziköprü, according to Hüseyin Şanlı Dede at least ten years before his father died, hence around 1980. His father was at that time in his late 80s.

16 Until late 2018, a shorter version of this recording of 7 minutes was available at Youtube but has since been deleted.

17 For the related concept of possession, that is the 'intrusion of immaterial beings into one's self,' see Yürür, 2019.

18 I am grateful to Doğan Bermek for this tentative explanation.

member what they did while in a trance. In order to create an atmosphere where trance could emerge, music seems to have been essential. Cengiz (2014: 64) gives the name *parda tewt* or *hava tewt* (trance song) for respective tunes, but it is unclear to what extent these terms were actually known.

Mahmut Yıldız Dede (Nazimiye/Berlin), Kureyşan *ocak* (Interview by Özay Şahin in Pah Köprüsü, September 20, 2014):

> This hymn (*ilahi*) when they did that, they fell into a trance, into tewt, they went to the love (*aşka gelir*), they became excited, they performed the *semah*. This is another story. This state (*hal*) is another state. (…) Now for this trance state, I asked the *pir*s and dervishes about the trance state. I said to an elder: 'You were sitting within the fire, the flames burned your beard, and nothing happened. Tell me, what is this, how did that happen.' He said, 'I also don't know. He said I was in a trance (*tewd*).' I said: 'but you were sitting on the fire'. 'I don't remember at all,' he said. 'I didn't do such a thing.' (...) There was an uncle of mine, he rose up during a *Hızır Cem* and sat on the fire, he played *saz* on the fire. I was a child and I cried: '*Baba* get up, my uncle is burning'. Our people used to cry always. It was a turmoil, everyone was excited. Later my father went there and somehow brought my uncle back.

Bava Servan, Nazimiye/Hannover, Kureyşan *ocak* (Interview in Hannover, September 13, 2018):

> In the moment when a *cem* begins they enter another world. In this invisible world (*bâtın alem*) they have friends, good friends, we call them guides (*kılavuz*). If a *talip* goes to a *cem* with any wish or desire, the *pir* will tell it to this guide. For example, there is a certain question or a given issue, he will tell it to the invisible world. Me too, I saw these *cem*s. Not with my grandfather [who was a dervish] but we had another *pir*, who was more than 70 years old. Once per year he came and conducted a *cem*. In this cem they call it *tewd*, in Turkish they call it trance (*trans*) but I don't think this word fits well. When the *pir* entered this world, I was a youngster of 18 years. He became blind and turned like that, how do they call it? He turned in that way around himself and when he calmed down, he said the names of whoever mentioned his desires or wishes; he said Ahmet, Mehmet or Şehriban or another name but nothing else. Later when he had calmed down, after he had finished the cem, when he actually went next to them, if it was necessary that not everybody should hear what he says. And he explained what he saw, say, if there is a question, a problem, a disease or a vow or a sacrifice, he would tell them.

Cemal Taş (2016, 248f; CD 2, tr. 17) published the recording of a '*tewt*', sung in 2009 by Usenê Padiye, together with a transcription made by Cebrail Kalın. A short repetitive melody pattern in 7/8 introduces and later accompanies a fast vocal recitation, followed by shouts (obviously already in a state of *tewt*) and even faster recitations. Personally, I have never witnessed any trances and all accounts I have heard, speak about them as memories from a by-gone past. Many Dersimians today believe that contemporary *dedes* in the region have lost their *keramet*.

Hüseyin Şanlı Dede, Kureyşan *ocak*, Kırmızıköprü (interview January 8, 2015):

> Nowadays nobody believes. Nobody believes this. But in the older days there was *keramet*.

Songs for Body Movement and Trance

As far as we know, the practice of *semah* in Dersim also often, though not always led to *tewd*. Again, direct sources are scarce. I have never encountered any recording (not even audio, leaving aside video) of *semah*s from Dersim before the 1990s. According to Hüseyin Erdem (personal communication, 2018) beginning in the 1970s, it became popular among Alevis to perform *semah*s during weddings. Future research in private archives might therefore possibly find some early recordings of *semah*s on some of the numerous (and usually very long) wedding videos. However, even if such videos exist, they would be of limited value for the understanding of *semah* during *cem*s.

According to oral history, *semah*s were also not practiced always or everywhere in Dersim as a regular part of *cem*s (Cengiz, 2014: 72).

Ali Şahin, son of *Pir Bava Bulısk*, Kureyşan *ocak*, (Interview by Özay Şahin, April 24, 2016 in İzmir/Narlıdere):

> (Did they perform *semah* during the *cem*s?)
> There were *semah* during the cem but my father did not allow it performed. Other *dede*s from *Koma Kol* allowed the performance of *semah*s.

In my interview the Zaza linguist, Zilfi Selcan for example, attested that their own *dede*s, who were of the Kureyşan *ocak*, did not practice the *semah*.[19] However, recordings from Daimi Cengiz as well as the memories of Kureşanlı Pir Zeki Görgü (2014, pp. 83ff), who described a *semah* by Kureyşan *dede*s in 1946, proves that *semah*s at least sometimes took place in the Kureyşan *ocak*, too.

Naime Üregil Karyemez Village, near central Tunceli, *talip* attached to Baba Mansur *ocak* (interview December 24, 2017):

> No, we did not make *semah*. We did not enter a *semah*, I don't know semah. Nowadays they make it but earlier there was no *semah*. Or if there was *semah* I did not see it.

Munzur Çem (2010: 35) assumed that *semah*s were lost only since the 1950s-'60s, however, without being able to give sources for the period before.

Even where *semah*s were performed, even regularly, we do not know anything about regional or *ocak*-related differences of body movements and the music. The Qajigu family (see below) of the Celal Abbas *ocak* in Kedek village (Ovacık) for example, practices *semah* at the beginning of *cem*s.

Zeynel Dede, Interview in Kedek, Ovacık, May 17, 2013:

> In our old *cem*s we begin with *semah*. Having finished the *semah*, we begin to interrogate / advise the *talip*s [*talipleri görgü altından geçiriyoruz*]. Afterwards we begin with the ser-

[19] 'Semah *are only practiced by certain tribes. In Dersim they are not very common (...)* Semah *are mostly practiced by the Bamasur (Baba Mansur). (...) Among us I saw semah only once, and that was with people from Muxundi.*' Zilfi Selcan (b. in Pax, near central Tunceli, 1949; Interview in Tunceli, May 15, 2013).

vices. We conduct three turns of *semah*. Afterwards we make the voluntary *semah*. Whoever wishes might enter the *semah*. In the end we make the *kırklar semahı*. It is sung while entering the *miraçlama*.

During this final *semah* at the end of a *cem*, the *dede* of this family himself turns slowly in the middle of the other *semah* performers, while still playing the *tomır* (lute).[20] Similarly, other individual, *ocak*-specific or regional variants of *semah* and their position within *cem*s might have existed.

Several older witnesses report the occurrence of trances during the performance of *semah*s. Kamer Yeşilçiçek, born 1943, Hakis/Büyükyurt, Nazimiye (Interview July 20, 2010, in Tunceli) :

There was Oncle Veli, they called him Cemal Ali Seyit, grandson of a *seyit*. This man conducted *cem*s. When he conducted a cem in our village, in the middle there was a big oven. The fire burned, and in a circle around, the *semah* was performed. People called: '*ya Allah, ya Allah*', they went and came back. They cried, and when they cried everyone fell into a trance. Of course, we were still children. You want to take part, it attracts you. I asked them, I asked my father: 'When you made the *semah*, when you turned, what did you feel?' Because he was old. He said: 'When we made the *semah*, when everyone cried '*ya Allah ya Allah*', I did the service (*hizmet ediyordum*), and I could not bear it, and I fell [into a trance].' This is the effect of the trance. I heard that from my father. [...] Everyone unites in one thought and enters the trance. The women were sitting. Our women did not take part in the *semah*, only men did.[21] When the men fell into a trance the women cried. Of course, we also cried. For Hz Ali and God's sake.

Mahmut Yıldız Dede (Nazimiye/Berlin), Kureyşan *ocak* (Interview by Özay Şahin in Pah, September 20, 2014):

(Was there *semah* in the olden days?)
Semah hymns [*ilahi*] is love. The hymn [*ilahi*] is a trance [*trans*]. To be with God (*Hak ile Hak olmak*), to meet God himself. It is a ritual to approach God. We can say the hymn [*ilahi*] is love, it is more beautiful. To approach God, to meet God himself, in this moment get out of yourself. Even if semah is a form of dance [*raks*] it reminds us of the universe. Everything is turning. Because of this, when the love becomes exuberant everyone gets up and turns some turns.
(Are there fewer *semah* melodies in Dersim compared to other regions?)
Maybe, in some regions many semahs have been made, here only a few. Maybe.
(For example, during the *cem*s which your grandfather and father conducted, did you make *semah*?)
Certainly, they were made. During these dervish *cem*s they possibly did not perform *semah*, the dervish himself turned. He fell into a trance. For this moment, they don't want to disrupt this trance. This is another issue. This trance is not much connected with music anymore. He fell into a trance with music anyway, then he leaves his *saz* and enters another world.

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20 Munzuroğlu 2013. I am grateful to Kenan Tülek for sharing with me his video recording of a *cem* made in Kedek in 2012.

21 Similarly, Hüseyin Şanlı Dede (Interview in Kırmızıköprü, January 8, 2015): '*In former times women were not accepted in the* semah.'

On the other hand, the few *semah* melodies which were known to have been performed in Dersim, are clearly reminiscent of religious songs, and do not differ substantially from *semah* songs in other parts of Anatolia. Already in 1944, after his fieldwork trip to Tunceli, the Folklorist Halil Bedii Yönetken (2006, 101) reported: '*Thus, there is no great difference between a Hozat, Ovacik or Kalan [Tunceli]* semah *melodie and one from Sivas or Tokat.*' However, it is not very likely that the Alevis in Dersim, at that time still traumatized from the massacres only six years before, would have permitted the foreign Sunni researcher to take part in a *cem* with the performance of trance-like *semah*s.

We might suspect that at least the performance practice of *semah* melodies in Dersim changes in connection to trance, becoming less melodic and more rhythmic and hypnotic. Unfortunately, we do not know the age nor the history of *semah* songs from Dersim and around, nor much about their performance practice. It therefore remains unclear if these songs are the result of an earlier development (possibly even outside of Dersim), which changed an older trance-like recitation to a musical song; or if, vice versa, the performance style of widespread *semah* songs might have changed only during a trance.

Even today, in contrast to *deyiş* and other genres of Alevi songs (which from a strictly musical perspective are reminiscent of non-religious folk songs) *semahs* actually show particular musical elements, which indicates a possible relation to trance.[22] *Semahs* might have one to three or four parts, the tempo accelerating from part to part. A slow introduction (*ağırlama)* is followed by faster sections *(*e.g. *yürütme – hızlanma*, *coş* or *pervaz; hoplatma – yeldirme – devşirme).*[23] In general, nine-part rhythms (in various accentuations) dominate. The melody of most *semah*s is characterized by short and repeated motifs. Accelerating, melodies become simple and imploring. The second part often begins with syncopated rhythms, later the melody encircles one single plain tone. Towards the end the music calms down again.

While among Anatolian Alevi in general some 30 *semah*s are known today, we only know of less than ten examples from Dersim. According to most researchers in the field, the most popular *semahs* in the wide area reaching from Erzincan to Dersim and Sivas, were *kırklar semahi* (dance of the forty saints) and *turnalar semahi* (dance of the cranes).[24]

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22 Yıldız 1992; Duygulu 2014, p. 384. For *semah* (also *samah, sema, sima* oder *zamah*) see Erol 2010; Bozkurt 1992/1995; Erseven 1990.

23 Yıldız 1992; for this terminology see Dinçer, 2004, 141f. In Tunceli today I never heard any of these terms, if they had ever been in use (being Turkish, these were foreign words for Zazaki and Kurdish speakers anyway), at least today they are not very common.

24 Bozkurt 1992, pp. 60ff; Erol 2010, p. 379. Kemal Kahraman, CD *Ceverê Hazaru*, 1997, p.64. Hüseyin Dede, Baba Mansur *ocak*. Interview 30.1.2017 at Düzgün Baba. Süleyman Yıldız, in his 1992 master's thesis (hence after the collapse of the tradition but before the construction of the first *cemevi* in Tunceli), notated and analysed five *semahs*, including three *Kırklar semahi*. Greve 2018a.

Dervishes

In addition to the *pirs* of *ocak* families, in Dersim so-called dervishes (*dewres, dewrêş*) could conduct *cems*.

Interview Mahmut Yıldız Dede (Nazimiye/Berlin), Pah Köprüsü, 20 September 2014:

> Actually, the dervish tradition disappeared. There were many of them, spiritual persons [*ruhani insanlar*]. This trance [*trans*], this invisible world [*bâtını alem*] does not get lost. Of course, who could do that? Wise men [*ermiş insanlar*] could do it. [...] Dervish is the state of trance. Not everyone reaches this love, this enthusiasm. Also, *talip*s could become dervish.
> (So, dervishes could conduct *cem*s?)
> Of course. Their *cem*s where different, very horrific.
> (But most of these dervishes where pirs anyway?)
> Yes, but there are differences in the form. But the *ibadet* is the same. The *zikir* is almost the same.

The use of this term 'dervish' in Dersim differs remarkably from that of *tarikat*s such as Bektaşi or Mevlevi, where it is used for new apprentices (*mürid*) (Yazıcı 1994). In Dersim in contrast, dervishes are extra-ordinary *pir*s, not necessarily members of an *ocak*, who are accepted as dervish by the people due to their *keramet*. Unlike *dede*s, being a dervish was not hereditary but needed to be proved by repeated performances of *keramet*. Erdal Gezik gives a general picture of these dervishes:

> They are individuals who devoted themselves to religion as their own decision. In general, they travelled alone, though they might gather into groups during a period of suffering (*çile*). Though many were members of *seyit* families, in particular of Kureysan's, in principle everyone could become a dervish. Dervishes were persons without land or those who did not care for their land. They looked a bit distraught. One might have met dervishes with long hair and it is told that in former times some shaved their eyebrows. The average was about 50 years and older. Younger dervishes were a rare exception. If dervishes had family they used to live far away from their home. (Gezik 2010: 15)

In the 'irregular' *cem*s of dervishes without a *görgü* part, trance (*tewt*) and the performance of *keramet* was central, while other services hardly took place (Cengiz, 2014: 62; Cakmak, 2013a: 78ff; Deniz, 2012: 116ff; Gezik & Çakmak, 2010: 43, 67ff). In particular dervishes of the Kureyşan *ocak* were known for their *keramet* in connection with fire. For legendary dervishes of the past much larger supernatural powers are reported, similar to those attributed to the founders of the *ocak*s. Hüseyin Şanlı Dede told the following story about his great grandfather who was a dervish (interview in Kırmızıköprü, 8 January, 2015):

> There was a place they called Buyer lake, a lake like the sea. Quite big. They went there and conducted a *cem*. After having said some words they saw how he went into the lake and disappeared. They cried because they thought he fell into the lake and drowned. One hour later they saw that the lake was boiling in its centre. He came out of the lake

> carrying a stone like this stove on his shoulder. He walked from this side of the lake and remained on the left side, there was a rock. He left the water and brought the stone there, climbed down from the rock and again disappeared in the lake. A little later he came again and sat down where he had conducted the *cem*. When he completed the *cem*, there was no water on him or anything else. They told him what had happened, 'what is it?' they asked. 'When I conducted the *cem*', he said, 'I said some words, it was a meadow, a green meadow, not water. A man with a white beard gave me his hand and I went with him, he directed me, we walked to neighbours and houses. These are *kurban*s [sacrifices] who came here, they are *lokman*s, *çıralık*s which have been thrown here. Then they showed me a ram which had come to prophet Ibrahim. When you go back, explain that to the people: This ram is this lake. Then you will carry his stone, put it on the rock, and it should remain there as a sign.' That is what he told to the people. At that time no one knows any doctor. Now if someone fell ill, they asked: 'Where is Seyit Muhammed?' His name was Seyit and the name of his father was Muhammed. He lived for 125 years. When he died, he had only one son, my grandfather. He also lived 115 years. My grandfather had two sons, one was my father the other my uncle.

Bava Servan (Kutudere/Hannover, Kureyşan *ocak*, Interview in Hannover, September 13, 2018) explained the *cem*s of dervishes in the following way:

> Everyone made *cem*s in his own way. It was to a degree that only those who went to these *cem*s constantly and knew him [the *dede*], would know how to begin and to end. The twelve services we fulfil in a *cem* do not exist among these cems. Only everyone takes his gift [*çıralık*] and burns, burns himself. There is no additional candle burning for a gift, everyone who comes, comes with a gift and a candle anyway and lights it. And the *lokma* which is brought by everyone is given to the responsible person, the *lokmacı* or the host or whoever is taking care of the services. And later when the *lokma*s are divided and shared, someone is taking care of that service. Only the sweeper [*süpürgeci*] service is there. At some places there is also a doorman [*kapıcı*] and a watchman [*gözcü*] because of problems with the state's soldiers and so on. But at us, we were not very afraid of soldiers in our cems.

Again, as far as I know, no available recording preserves any of such ceremonies. Today, numerous names of dervishes of the past are remembered, however, without any biographical details, not to mention religious practices (Çakmak, 2013: 329). The most well-known dervish of the recent past was Hesen Efeniye Baskoyi (Başköylü Hasan Efendi, 1894-1973) (Başköylü Seyyid Hasan Efendi 2007; Balaban, 2001). Metin and Kemal Kahraman on their CD *Çeverê Hazaru* (Lızgé, 2003) mention two video recordings of a Dewres Zeki Özdağ including the performance of a *methiye* (hymn), which they arranged in their own style for this CD. A few lyrics of so-called *kilame haqiye* have been published, religious songs said to have been created by dervishes.

Already after 1938 the number of itinerant dervishes seems to have decreased rapidly. Until the 1960s or '70s some dervishes used to stay for weeks or even months at important *ziyaret*s, including Düzgün Baba. Today, there remains an observable respect towards all 'mad' (*deli*) persons in Dersim, which is probably reminiscent of this high status of dervishes. The memories of the dervish tradition can be seen in particular in the case of Sevuşen (Hüseyin Tatar, 1930-1994),

a villager who lost his mind and left his family and his house to live on the streets of Tunceli. He evetually became accepted as a *budela* (holy mad man) and owner of *keramet*, though he was clearly not a dervish, and never conducted *cem*s or performed *keramet* as dervishes did (İlengiz, 2019).

Music as Keramet

To understand the function of music in the *réya heq / hak yolu* of Dersim, not only the numerous musically gifted *dede*s are worth of investigation (see below), but perhaps even more so, those *dede*s with lower or no musical ability at all, those who can hardly play lute, let alone properly tune the instrument. Even in these cases, however, a *thomir* (or nowadays a *bağlama*) was obligatory during *cem*s. I often saw *dede*s (in real life or in videos) who sang and played completely out of tune and rhythm.

Bava Servan, Nazimiye/Hannover, Kureyşan *ocak* (Interview in Hannover, September 13, 2018):

> Of course, every dervish played [*thomir*], but there was nothing like playing a melody [*makam çalmak*], playing according to the melody of a *beyit*, or singing a *beyit* until the end. Before what we call *tewd*, he beats the *saz*, so they did not tune the *saz* [*üç telli*] and played regular in a way that it pleased to the ear. But they took [the instrument] and used it in the *cem*s by beating on the strings.

In particular for the trance, a *temur* together with at least some basic singing/recitation seems to have been obligatory. In the documentary of religious songs from Dersim entitled *Vengdame,* by Caner Canerik (2012; see figure 1), from 36:20 for over seven minutes, Ali Riza Büklü Dede, a *dede* from Bük village (Pülümür, Dersim) who died in 2018, is shown as performing a religious song accompanied by a short necked *bağlama* in the *cemevi* of his village (see figure 1). The instrument is completely out of tune, as is the voice of the *dede*. He sings in a fairly free manner; a descending melody is rudimentarily recognisable. The instrument is stroked in a regular pattern, almost independent from the sung melody/recitation. From time to time his voice rises, gets faster and more excited, almost shouting; later he continues with the main 'melodic' formula. It seems that he almost reaches a state of trance. In other recordings, *dede*s including Firik Dede play similar regular percussive beats on the instrument, almost abandoning all melodic movements.

The question arises of why *dede*s (or dervishes) without any musical knowledge or skill even play or sing at all. Obviously, the simple presence of a *thomir* is necessary to transform the situation into a religious one; as is the slightest attempt to sing or recite, hence to produce a non-natural voice instead of the daily voice. Only few *dede*s did not even try to play and sing and asked their *kocek* or anyone else among their *talip*s to function as a *zakir*.

Figure 1: Ali Riza Büklü, Bük village (Pülümür) in the cemevi of his village. Canerik 2012.

As among other Alevis, also in Dersim short-necked lutes, the *thomir* in particular, is perceived almost as a religious object which certainly belongs to *dede*s. Just as elsewhere among Anatolian Alevis, during religious contexts musicians often kiss their instrument once or three times before and after performing (Clarke 1999: 148). Mahmut Dede referred to his main tuning as *dede* tuning (*dede akordu*; also *bakıl'ın akordu*). Today, some *dede*s (e.g. Zeynel Dede, Bava Servan) occasionally refer to the instrument as 'Koran with strings' (*telli kuran*), however this (Turkish) metaphor seems to have been introduced to Dersim only recently.

Also, the lyrics of several religious songs praise the *thembur*, for example the song 'You [God] are the lute, I am the fret' (*tu temburî ez perde me*), a song in kurmanci which was collected by Cemil Kocgiri in Doxan village (near Çemişgezek) from a certain Hatice Erdogan (CD *Heya*, Kalan, 2009). Also, two *deyiş*s from the most famous singer-poet from Dersim, that is Sey Qaji (d. 1936), refer to the *thomir* (Cengiz, 2010: 51):

Thomırê mı thomırê chemê haqiye	My *saz* is the *saz* of the *cem* of truth
Çhopol dano xıravınêni u neqıye	She beats the evil and the injustice
Dest kon tıro, jiveno, naleno	I beat with the hand, it goes down, and pains
Hata ke sewa Haqi ma sero şikiye	Until the darkness of the night comes over us
Vazo, thomırê mı vazo	My *saz* should speak, speak
Wo mırê ewlado layo	He is my child and my son
Thomır chınıtene sare deyo	Playing the *saz* is a headache
Wonca ki chınonu,	But still I play
Kam sa vano vazo	Whoever says whatever

Figure 2: Hüseyin Şanlı Dede, Kırmızıköprü 2015, with the *thomur* of his father (who died in 1992 aged 105), hence not the instrument which he refers to in his story. The instrument was probably made at the latest around the mid-twentieth century. Video *Rayver Ali Şanlı'ra Roze 12 Imamu Ser Qesey* by Caner Canerik. (www.youtube.com/watch?v=okINXIlNxGE) posted 2014 (accessed December 2, 2018).

In the following story of Hüseyin Şanlı Dede (see Figure 2) about his great grandfather (interview in Kırmızıköprü, 8 January 2015), who was a dervish, the lute again is a symbol for religious service and 'the other world':

> The grandfather of my father was poor when he left his father, he didn't own anything. In former times they had made a house and stayed there. They did not own anything. […] One night he lay down, while he was about to leave from his father, and all of a sudden, he jumped from his bed. '*Bismillah*. What is it?' And he said to his wife: 'I saw a dream, a man with a white beard came and he said to me: 'I tuned your *cura* (small lute) and put it on your bedside. You will be a dervish and wander among the people.' He turned around and in fact there was a *cura* above his bed. He took the *cura* and became a dervish.

The case of the family Qajigu in Kedek village (Ovacik) indicates an even stronger role of music. Today, one family member, that is Zeynel (Batar) Dede (b. 1952) is one of the most well-known *dede*s of Dersim (see figure 3).[25] As Doğan Munzuroğlu (2013: 155) points out, according to oral history, this family was originally known only as *zakir*s, who sang at *cem*s and funerals. Over time family members became accepted as *dede*s, that is as a branch of the Celal Abbas *ocak*. Notably,

[25] Munzuroğlu mentioned three members of this family known as singers, Seydesen, Sey Usıv (an uncle of Zeynel), and Zeynel Dede. Interview with Zeynel Dede in Kedek, Ovacık May 17, 2013. Video recording of a *cem* by Kenan Tülek 2012; Satun, 2014: 24ff.

Figure 3: Zeynel (Batar) Dede singing a *beyt* during a *gağan* ceremony, December 2014, Ovacık.

around the same time the family began to sing in Turkish (rather than Zaza; Munzuroğlu, 2013: 157).

Two reasons might explain this remarkable rise. Obviously, the strong musical abilities of the family have been crucial for this acceptance as *dede*s, in a comparable way to the performance of *keramet* led to the acceptance of dervishes. Hence impressive religious music might have functioned as a kind of *keramet*. Considering that here not only one individual dervish is accepted, but his whole family in a hereditary way, music is even stronger than other *keramet*s, which belonged to one individuum only.

On the other hand, the situation seems to anticipate the recently developed social structure of Alevism. In Dersim just as elsewhere, the connection between *ocak*s and their *talip*s is no longer hereditary but rather *talip*s might choose their personal *dede* (Greve, 2018a). Similarly, some years ago, *talip*s from Ovacık selected the Qajigu family as their *pir*s.

Musical Dedes

The case of the Qajigu family – and in particular Zeynel Dede – introduced us to the field of musical *dede*s, that is *dede*s who in addition to their roles as *pir*s, are known locally as good musicians, singers or poet-singers. Throughout the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty first century, hence during the entire time for which biographical data for Dersim is available, a number of such musical *dede*s have been identified, their biographies mirroring the changing history of the region.

Figure 4: Fırık Dede. Photo: Özay Şahin

The earliest traces are left by some historically-known singer-poets of non-religious songs, in particular of laments (Greve, 2018b). A number of respected singers were members of *ocak* families, including the Barans (Ağuiçen *ocak*), Sey Weliyê Kupikey (1900/05–1980) and Rayber Heylo (date of birth unknown)(all Bava Mansur *ocak*); Hüseyin Doğanay (1940-2005, Dervis Cemal *ocak*); or Sa Heyder (1890–1916), Weliyê Wuşenê Yimami (1889–1958), Sêyd Kheko (1905–1970), Bava Bulısk (1912–1089), Hesenê Şıxali (b. ca. 1920), Pir Ahmet Taş (1918-2008) and Bava Bedri (1927–2010), who were members of the Kureyşan *ocak*. Seyit Süleyman Şahin (1912–1995, Bava Mansur *ocak*) from Mazgirt is documented primarily due to the research of Metin Kahraman. In Mazgirt, he was known as an important *dede* and a singer-poet who sang laments and other songs in Zaza, Kurdish and Turkish. Also his two brothers, Ape Bava and Sey Mehmet, were regionally known as singer-poets (Kahraman, 2013: 39). Born in Çayırlı (Erzincan) but of Dersim origin, Davut Sulari (original name Davut Ağbaba, 1925-1985) became one of the most well-known *âşıks* (singer-poets) throughout Turkey. He was a member of the Kureyşan *ocak* and conducted *cem*s (Özdemir, 2017: 97ff).

In Dersim, in particular Seyfiê Delilê Fırıki / Fırık Dede (1900/9-2007; see Figure 4) was and still is a highly popular figure. While he did not conduct *cem*s during most of his life, he was respected as a symbol of the painful history of Dersim over the twentieth century.[26] Born in Hozat as a member of the Derviş Cemal *ocak*, he

[26] Taş, 2016: 69f. Several (mostly anonymous) sources in Alevi journals or online, tell the life story of Firik Dede; some videos of him are available online, e.g. www.youtube.com/watch

grew up with *cem*s and soon began to conduct *cem*s by himself. In 1926 he was imprisoned for this practice, and during the military operations of 1937 he was tortured, but survived hidden until 1941. After this time, he never again conducted a *cem* nor visited his *talip*s. In 1981, his son was tortured and burned to death by Turkish soldiers. From that moment until his death, Fırık Dede did not cut his beard. Later, a number of local researchers and musicians visited him, recorded his songs and made them famous in Dersim, as for example Mikail Aslan who sang his *beyit*s '*Canım Efendim*' and '*Desa Khurêsa*' (CD *Miraz* 2005; CD *Kızılbaş*, 2009; Aslan, 2010; Taş, 2016: 145ff).

After decades of being the most well-known *dede* from Dersim, Hozatli Ahmet (Yurt) Dede, born 1934 in Akören village (Hozat), Sarısaltık *ocak* (Cakmak, 2012; Gültekin, 2004; Yıldız, 1992: 28), might be seen as a counter-figure to Fırık Dede, representing the adaption of Dersim to the Turkish state. Ahmet Dede was the first official *dede/*director of the *cemevi* in Tunceli after its construction in 1994 and remained in this service until his son, Ali Ekber Dede took over his duties. In addition, Ahmet Dede conducted *cem*s in Istanbul, in Hozat, Çemişgezek, Pertek and other cities. He performed his own hymns and songs on a short necked *bağlama* in a musical style which evokes that of Alevis in the region of Erzincan – Sivas. In a video of a *cem* conducted by Ahmet (Yurt) Dede in the *cemevi* of Tunceli (see Figure 5), as recorded in 1998 by Mesut Özcan, the *dede* sings fervently throughout almost the whole *cem* and towards the end (while a *mersiye* is sung) the atmosphere becomes extremely emotional (Video MÖ 116, stored in the Orient-Institute Istanbul). Ahmet Dede wrote numerous poems and songs and published two volumes of religious poems (Yurt, 2008).

Unfortunately, I could not find any recordings by other members of the Sarısaltuk family prior to Hozatlı Ahmet Dede, for comparative purposes. However, in his small book of 1937, Feruh Arsuner mentioned as one of his informants a 55 year-old folk poet named Seyid Seyfi Sarı Saltık, who lived in the village of Karaca in Hozat (see Figure 6). About his song Viranî Baba, Arsunar noted:

> This piece is in fact a different style; it is not similar to hymns (*nefes*) or *divan*s as sung in the old lodges (*tekke*), it was a melody, sung on the basis of his own style. (Arsunar, 1937: 6).

The experienced transcriber, Arsunar obviously had problems notating this song. The word '*usulsüz*' at the beginning of the stanza might be translated as 'without meter' (with the additional note 'showing a melody in fourth meter' (*bir dörtlük ölçü melodiyi gösteriyor*). Unfortunately, the notations do not indicate details concerning melodic embellishment, larynx techniques, intervals and the general voice or playing techniques. The transcription looks like a free recitation

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?v=GmaXzE9tuUA; Buket Aydın's short documentary *İnsan-ı Kamil*: www.youtube.com/watch?v=G-rxt6m6tBw; other recordings from Firik Dede in Saltık & Taş 2016, CD 1, 5.; CD 1, 6.

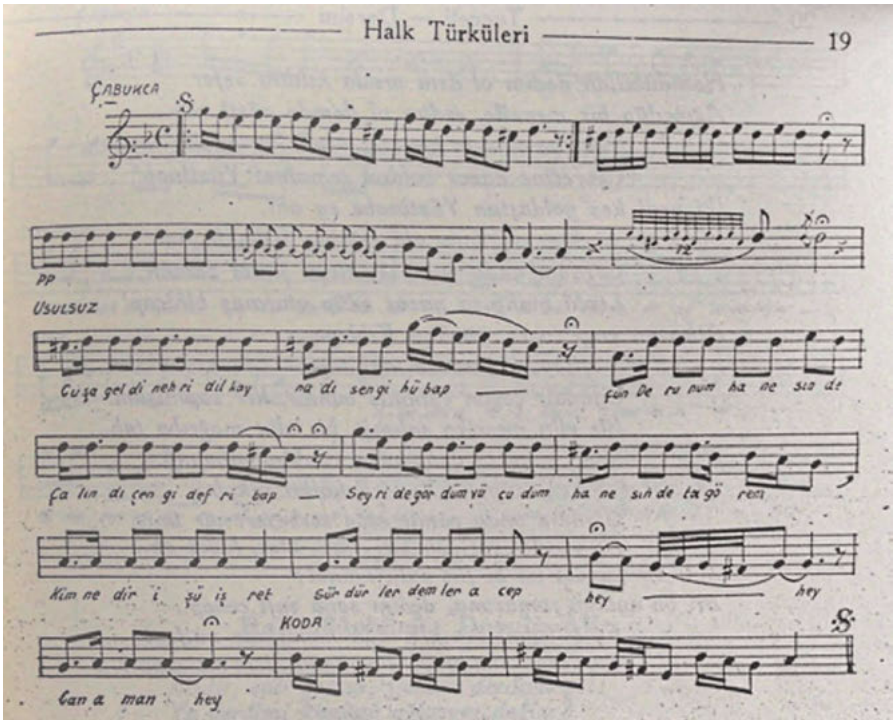
Figure 5: Hozatli Ahmet Dede during a *cem* conducted in the *cemevi* Tunceli, 1998. Video recording Mesut Özcan.

on the tone D, ending a fourth below on A, a structure clearly different from Ahmet Dedes' melodic style. According to Hasan Sarısaltık (interviewed by Erdener Önder and Ömür Şenol, 2018: 227), Seyid Seyfi Sarı Saltık was a cousin of Hasan's father Feyzullah Sarısaltuk (1909-2006, Akören village, Hozat). In an interview with another descendent, that is Veli Saltık at Pirali Ziyareti, Mazgirt (interview August 5, 2018), the latter told me:

> He was the uncle of my grandfather. […] My grandfather moved here [Pirali Ziyareti] in 1922 [coming from Karaca village] The son of an uncle of my father is Hozatlı Ahmet Dede.

However, Veli Saltık described the playing style of Ahmet Dede as '*very different*' from that of his grandfather, who had played with hands on a *thomir* rather than by plectrum on a short necked *bağlama*, as Ahmet Dede does. Possibly it was Ahmed Dede who introduced this musical style with the short necked *bağlama* to Dersim, suggestive of western, Turkish Alevis (as for example in Sivas or Arguvan). Other members of the family might have continued in an older style, which over time was lost, just as among other *ocak*s in Dersim.

Other recent *dede*s from Dersim, who are (at least locally) known also for their musicality, include the Kureyşan Mahmut Yıldız Dede (b. 1936 in Birmu/Bir-



Hozat — 6

Halk Türküsü: Viranî Baba

Cuşa geldi nehri dil, kaynadı sengü hübap;
Çün derunüm hanesinde çalındı çengi def ribap.
Seyredegördüm vücudüm hanesinde ta görem,
Kim ne der işü işret sürdüler, demler acep can aman!
Vardım o demde oturmuş kırk vücut aşıklar tamam,
Ellerinde camı baki rakseder durmaz şarap!
Hamdübillâh dedim ol dem onlara sürdüm yüzüm,
Sundular cami visali olmışam sermesti harap!
Mesti lâyakıl gezerim bu vücudun mülkünü,
Oğradım bir yerde dahi yedi şahsa bihesap!
Anlar dahi yedi yıldır bilesince devreder,
Hükmedüp Kaftan Kafa anlara peyk olmuş şahap!
Hu dedim!.. ya hu dedim!.. anlar da kıldım sefer,
Seyrederken nagihan gûşüme erdi bir hitap:
Gel!.. dedi; vardım oturmuş anda üç padişah,
Tevhit olmuş dillerinde dört kitap..
Dediler: «Hoş geldin! ey dürlü vücuda bir deva,
Taliin ınesut imiş, lâ havf olup çekme azap!..»

Figure 6: 'Viranî Baba', sung by Seyid Seyfi Sarı Saltık in 1936 (Arsunar, 1937: 19).

Figure 7: Mahmut Yildiz Dede in the cemevi Berlin, 2014. Video Özay Şahin.

man village, central Tunceli, see Figure 7), who since 1962 has lived in Germany and today is based in Berlin. He was one of the main sources of information for Metin and Kemal Kahraman.

Another musical Kureyşan *dede* is Baba Sevan, born in Kutuderesi, and living in Germany. Since 1986 he has released six music cassettes. Since the 1990s, he began to conduct *cem*s (Interview in Hanover, September 13, 2018). [27]

Even after the decline of Alevi traditions in Dersim, a number of *ocak* members from Dersim became musicians, though not of religious music but rather of political or lyrical songs, e.g. Ali Asker (b. 1954 in Hozat); Emre Saltık (b. 1960 in Ovacık), both Sarısaltık; Adil Arslan (b. 1962 in Tunceli, director of private music school in Berlin, Kureyşan); Mansur Bildik (b. 1949, director of a music school in Vienna, Baba Mansur) or even *arabesk* singers such as Hakkı Bulut (b. 1945 in Mazgirt, Baba Mansur), Seyfi Doğanay (1940-2005, Dewrês Cemal) or Daimi Özdoğan (Pirsultan Abdal *ocak*).

Religious Music in Dersim

Within the Alevism in Dersim and its surrounding areas, music serves three interacting functions. First, music distinguishes between ceremonies and daily communication. In particular the presence and performance of a long-necked lute (however basic) is almost obligatory for each *cem* ceremony and each *dede*. These instruments and even the songs, might be seen as religious objects rather than elements of a daily culture.

[27] For example, www.youtube.com/watch?v=6r4Vdsm4NGk.

Second, music opens a way to the 'other world', hence for trance and the performance of *keramet*. Here, rhythm and sound seem to be important, while melodies can in the case of non-musical *dede*s even be neglected. Musical beauty does not play a substantial role in this religious function.

Third, music directly affects emotions. Sung lyrics, in particular *mersiye* songs on the massacres of Kerbela have a much deeper impact than narrated stories ever could and are specifically crafted to make *talip*s cry. Similarly, music can also help to stop tears. In a particular tradition in Kedek (Çedagê) / Koyungölü, Ovacık the dede sings *beyit* during funerals. The (as far as I know) only singer of this tradition nowadays is Zeynel (Batar) Dede. In this case, music serves to console and to *reduce* feelings of pain and suffering (see also Ulaş Özdemir's article in this volume).

*Talip*s, and thereby almost everyone in Dersim, are used to perceiving music as part of religious ceremonies, performed by the most respected persons, that is the *dede*s. In addition to this high prestige, which makes music attractive to everyone, the regular prominence of music during *cem*s might also have motivated many people to learn songs or even sing and create songs on their own. Within *ocak* families, the effect of religious music was even stronger. Due to their regular performances, *ocak*s became centres of musical education and transmission of musical repertoire. The continuous demand for religious songs within *cem* ceremonies must have motivated *ocak* members to create new songs on their own. Successful new songs would be performed before *talip*s and possibly even transmitted to other *dede*s or even to future generations. In the case of musically-gifted *dede*s, *cem*s might almost turn into concerts, with only a few prayers recited between sung lyrics. As Metin Kahraman, musician and researcher of religious tradition in Dersim pointed out:

> Each *ocak* in their time was like a conservatory. There is Zeynel Dede from Kedek village. Whenever you go to him, he will sing a new *beyt* for you. It is definitely like that, and we see that in every *ocak*. (Interview, 26 November 2015, İstanbul)

Generations of *dede*s hence created *beyit*s, some of which spread and became known, while most remained local or in the hands of individual *ocak* families.

This direct demand for religious songs primarily concerns genres used in *cem* ceremonies, including *oniki hizmet deyişi*, *duaz-i imam, düvazdeh* or *düvaz*, *tevhid*, *miraçlama* and *mersiye*. Researchers such as Hüseyin Cakmak (2006: 26; 2013:85ff; Çakmak & Gezik, 2010: 30ff) further mention the term *qılamê haqiye* (songs of truth/god) which referred to the songs of itinerant dervishes. However, it does not seem very likely that the songs of dervishes, who did not receive any specific religious or musical education, differed musically from other religious songs in the region.[28]

[28] Cengiz, 2014; Çakmak, 2013.

Due to the great importance of music in the faith, the field of music in Dersim is widely dominated by Alevism. In fact, in Dersim, similar to most Alevi groups, at least in the east (Koçgiri, Dersim, Varto-Hınıs), no clear border separates religious Alevi music from other folk songs. Almost all song texts include Alevi elements in their lyrics, for example the names of spiritual persons or sacred places (*ziyaret*s) (Özcan, 2002: 25). Religious songs deal with legendary religious figures or tell legendary stories about a person saved by the help of a *ziyaret*. Well-known examples include the songs *Hewa Silê Feqir beyiti* or *Hewa Hesen Qela*. Furthermore, from the famous singer-poet Sey Qaji, a number of religious songs are still known, including *Dewe dewe*, *Welat welat* and several *mani* songs on religious issues (Cengiz, 2010: 261ff).

General terms for religious Alevi songs in Dersim (and Erzincan) are *beyit* and *perde*. Nowadays the Turkish word *deyiş* is used synonymously (Duygulu 1997). However, the terminology is unclear and songs might be labelled as *hewa*, *kilam*, *beyit* or others (Greve, 2018). Different from *tewd* (trance) and *gülbenk* prayers, songs are open to and accessible for everyone, including *talip*s. A wide range of more or less religious songs are known in the region, and the sources (including recordings) give us a much clearer picture than we have for the practice of *cem* ceremonies and *semah*s. Just as in *cem* ceremonies, *beyit*s were sung in Zazaki, Kurmanji or Turkish in *cems* but also in other contexts, such as healing ceremonies, at times of fasting, or during gatherings for example in long winter nights. However, no overview of the repertoire and musical structures of *beyit/deyiş* in Dersim currently exists. Only individual examples have been collected and rarely notated, the oldest examples by Arsunar in 1937 and more recently by musicians such as Yılmaz Çelik, Metin or Kemal Kahraman.[29]

In terms of musical style these religious songs, present a wide stylistic range (in this aspect similar to laments), as might be seen for example in the pure, non-narrated and almost uncut documentary, *Vengdame* (literary: we give sound), made in 2010 by Caner Canerik. In total 19 religious songs together with prayers and poems are presented, recorded over several years from different *dede*s in Dersim. Some songs show mainly descending melodies, suggestive of *aşık* songs from Sivas or Erzincan[30]; other are near to the style of laments from central Dersim (Greve 2018), with the characteristic inclusion of fast recited syllables within a recitative style.[31] Only the general melancholic sound, typical for most lament singers, is

[29] Cengiz 2014; *Gönül ne gezersin seyran yerinde* collected from Mustafa Kaya, Ovacık, and notated by Melih Duygulu (1997, pp. 231f).

[30] For example, a *beyt* sung by Mehmet Çelebi, *dede* of the Pir Sultan Abdal ocağı in his 80s, as recorded in the village of Hacılı (Pülümür) by Caner Canerik in February 2019, clearly represents the melodic style of Erzuncan-Sivas. I am grateful to Caner Canerik for sharing this rare recording with me.

[31] Different from *aşık* songs and similar to the *kılam*s of the *dengbêj*s, laments in Dersim are not structured in stanzas with a fixed number of syllables but rather use changing numbers of lines of different length in free meter. Hence neither the fixed rhymes of *aşık* poetry are

usually missing in religious songs. The religious song *Silo Feqir* from Sey Qaji for example, sung by Silo Qiz and recorded in 1990 by Mesut Özcan (MÖ 57, B4) presents this lament style. Other songs, for example *Dêsa Khurêsa* by Fırık Dede do not have clear melodies, but rather consist of hypnotic recitation (in this case on B, sometimes temporarily rising to D).[32] The most frequent *makam* (melodic mode) – just as in most laments and *aşık* songs of the region Sivas-Erzincan – is *hüseyni*.

The most common instrument for accompaniment is again the long-necked lute *thembur* (Turkish: *cura sazı*, *dede sazı*, *ruzba*), today almost completely replaced by the short-necked version of the *bağlama*. In contrast to the performance of laments, I never heard strictly religious songs accompanied by a violin. Performance without any instrumental accompaniment is much less common than with laments. The *thembur* mainly provides drones during the vocal passages, in between the lines short patterns are repeated, reminding to the practice of *aşık* singers. Often an accented rhythmical attack on the instrument indicates the Alevi character of a song. In general, instruments mainly served as a kind of audio background for the voice, rather that asserting any musical character of their own.

We may conclude, that in Dersim, 'Alevi music' does not form any specific musical style but might be defined by its religious function – and even then only approximately. Even 'traditional' religious songs from Dersim reflect a wide musical spectrum rather than a recognizable style, which might be compared to that of neighbouring regions. The issue of Alevism in the lyrics presents an even wider and open field, and is almost impossible to define clearly. While traditional religious practices in Dersim can only be partly reconstructed from remaining sources, the high prestige of music and the dominance of religion in folk songs is still present. Main parts of the traditional repertoire are lost – only partly stored in closed private archives. Today, to a large extent, the religious musical repertoire in Dersim, as performed for example in the numerous *cemevi*s of the region, is widely standardized. Contemporary musicians including Metin Kemal Kahraman, Yılmaz Çelik or Mikail Aslan even arrange these traditional songs with western polyphony as chamber music or jazz (Greve, 2018).

No clear Alevi musical aesthetic can therefore be found in Dersim; but the idea is widespread that music is part of religion, possibly even a form of *keramet*, that is supernatural power. The instrument *thembur* has gained the status of a religious object, and songs are perceived as appropriate for religious stories and messages, strengthening both the religious and emotional effect on listeners.

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used nor the traditional *âruz* prosody. Free rhymes, however, are used frequently, in several existing rhyme schemes. Cengiz (2014, 10) mentions free metered lyrics as typical for religious songs form the Kureyşan *ocak*.

32 The notation of a song called *Duzge* (*Kemerê Duzgını*), sung by Usênê Pardiye (b. 1935) and recorded by Cemal Taş (2016: 154f) in 2009, seems comparable.

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With or Without *Bağlama*?

A Religious Aesthetic Debate on 'Music' Performance in Funerals

Ulaş Özdemir

Death, it seemed to me,
was the truth in life
- Âşık Veysel

Introduction

In 2015, during the fieldwork for my PhD dissertation on *zakir*s who perform music in Istanbul *cemevi*s, I noted down and kept aside to be analysed later, words that a young *zakir* uttered regarding musical performance in Alevi funerals and some of the funerals that I came across in the field (Özdemir, 2016: 268). That period saw a proliferation of discussions on whether it was possible to play *bağlama* at funerals. The two most widely discussed funerals, both within the Alevi public and across social media, revealed how high the stakes were: Gani Pekşen, a traditional Alevi music performer and academic, played *bağlama* and chanted *nefes* (hymns or mystical Alevi poetry) at the funeral of his mother in 2014, just as Arif Sağ, popular Alevi music performer did in 2016 at his wife's funeral, a practice that was both supported and protested by other Alevis.

Leaflets and books published in 2000s by various Alevi institutions regarding *erkân*s (Alevi rituals) such as *hakka yürüme erkânı* ('walking to the Truth/God' rite or funeral ceremony) showed the diversity in the application/lived experience of both the Alevi belief and its rituals. There are also other Alevi *erkân* books written by many Alevi *dede*s (descendants of Hz. Ali) and researchers. These include the question of the funeral *erkân* and whether it could be musically accompanied, placing it among the leading discussions in today's Alevi world.

In this article, I will explore how musical performance is practiced in Alevi funeral *erkân*s, making reference to ongoing debates among Alevi opinion leaders, Alevi institutions, as well as various researchers on how to organize Alevi *erkân*s today, in addition to my ethnographic observations on Alevi funerals from 2014-2018. It is certainly true that in different communities settled in Anatolia, just as in many other cultures throughout the world, there exists a tradition of chanting elegies (*ağıt*) following a person's death. Nevertheless, musical performances to be analysed in this article, especially the ones that are played with *bağlama* as part of the funeral ritual, are not classified among funeral elegies. Other post-funeral mourning rituals, such as distributing *lokma* on the third, seventh and

fortieth days after the funeral; *dar cemi*, the visit; and the sacrifice, among others, do not fall within the scope of this article.

Funeral Rituals: An Indicator of Identity

As stated above in the verse of Âşık Veysel, the phenomenon of death, perhaps the first 'truth' known to humanity, is a basic anchor point to signify life and the afterlife. Emile Durkheim refers to E.B. Taylor when he states that the first divine services were for the dead, and the first religious ceremonies were funerals, as it was believed that the spirit reached a higher status after death (Durkheim, 2005: 74). In ancient societies, death is deemed a supreme rite, a new beginning of the spiritual existence (Eliade, 2017: 174). Nevertheless, rituals to say farewell to the deceased or to bury them differ across societies and can be understood within the cultural diversity of humanity. Claude Levi Strauss states that there exists no society that does not show respect to its dead, including the Neanderthals who buried their dead in graves, albeit superficially (Lévi-Strauss, 1992: 241). In this respect, funeral ceremonies have been more decisive in the history of humanity than the invention of tools or language (Dastur, 2019: 11).

Many researchers, starting with Van Gennep, explain that beliefs and worship stem from the most significant events in human life, such as birth, youth, marriage and death; and hence religion is mostly shaped around such events (Malinowski, 2000: 12). Birth, marriage and death 'rites' in particular are governed by many customs, ceremonies, rituals, religious and magical practices, with the help of which the new human situation is celebrated and consecrated, while at the same time protecting participants from dangers and harmful effects that are believed to intensify at times of 'transition.' (Örnek, 1971: 11).

Death, having a significant meaning for the collective consciousness is an object of collective representation (Hertz, 2004: 28). This representation is both complex and it varies according to different socio-cultural factors. Practices following the death of someone, beliefs, rituals and ceremonies concerning death become traditions, and significant signs revealing the culture and identity of the community in question. Adem Sağır explains how post-mortem practices are indicators of the group identity in terms of death sociology: 'Basic concepts putting social context at the centre when it comes to death are *integration*, *solidarity* and *sharing*. The most significant tools to realize social integration are *ceremonies*. These ceremonies are also identity indicators differentiating societies from one another.' (Sağır, 2016: 282) In other words, death as a cultural phenomenon is the manifestation of social identity.

Rituals also guide the mourning process: 'Only the ritual that rearranges boundaries can dispense the ambiguous zone between life and death' (Aydın, 2016: 107). Hence, rituals also reflect a society's memory of its past, the way it lives today and its future projections. In that sense, the society is brought to its future

through the reality of death (Sağır, 2014: 142). Burial and mourning rituals, as a point of contact both among living beings and with the founding principle of the society, signify a two-way communication. In that sense, burial and mourning rituals have an order in which the past of a society consecrates its future in the light of the present (Etöz, 2016: 86-87).

Jean-Paul Roux, analysing the old religions and death rituals of Turks and Mongols, states that funeral rituals never adhere to unchanging rules, and they never become uniform, the fixed point among these changes being the realization of the best possible conditions for the dead and the living (Roux, 2002: 274). This is also valid today: For instance, according to Lois-Vincent Thomas, who states that funeral ceremonies in the West are under attack by modernity, death is denied in modern funeral ceremonies (Thomas, 1991: 103). For Thomas, funeral ceremonies should be continually renewed, as a society's conception of death and its consequential arrangement of funerals change in time according to various socio-cultural effects.

On the other hand, Sedat Veyis Örnek, in his research on the issue of death in the folkloric traditions of different communities in Anatolia, classifies practices related to death in Anatolian folklore into three groups (Örnek, 1971: 108):[1]

> a) Facilitating the 'transfer of the dead person to the other-world;' practices to ensure that s/he is a valid and happy 'dead', both in the eyes of the ones s/he left behind and in the 'other world.'
> b) Practices to prevent the deceased coming back to life, to hurt or damage his/her relatives
> c) Practices to heal the damaged psychological state of the relatives of the deceased, arrange their broken social relations and reintegrate them into the society.

In Anatolian death-related customs, it is possible to identify the beliefs that the deceased live in an 'other world,' the fear that the deceased might return at will, and the concern to determine how his/her relatives would sustain their lives (Örnek, 1971: 108-109). In this respect, questions regarding how a society perceives life and death, how it situates itself in the face of death, and what death-related rituals it applies, reveal the life and death culture of that society.

Death, Funerals and Music

Aaron Ridley states that music determines and is determined by various concepts throughout history. He therefore relates music to psychological health via religious songs, to play via nursery rhymes, to the army via anthems, to solidarity via national anthems, to mathematics via ratios, to 'death' via funeral songs and to other disparate things through other concepts (Ridley, 2004: 12). In other

[1] See Naskali (2012); Naskali and Yüksekkaya (2018) for two edited books on death and burial rituals in various societies living in Anatolia in differents periods.

words, we need to consider music a part of life so as to conceive of it historically and culturally. In this respect, the relationship between music and death is tied to many issues ranging from the musical performances in post-mortem rituals, chanting songs regarding death in daily life, the attempt to relate to the world of the dead through music and the function of music to heal the spirit and body.[2]

One sees different musical performances related to death in many regions and cultures of the world. One of the most widespread is to elegize after the dead (Dönmez, 2008: 143): 'Elegies are musical communication forms enhancing the sharing and socialization of pain through 'empathy.' Music is embedded in the death ceremony, just like any other ceremony, and it is indispensable in its function to facilitate communication.'

Another dimension of the relationship between funeral and music is musical performance at funerals. This is a very important experience for mourners and participants. In one of the distinguishing functions of the funeral music, three themes come to the forefront: organizing the funeral ceremony, expanding words and actions regarding the deceased and emotional control (Bruin-Mollenhorst, 2018: 10). The funeral music is listened to by all the mourning participants, independent of their respective personal musical taste (Bruin-Mollenhorst, 2018: 15). Hence, playing, performing and listening to 'music' at the funeral ceremony are both means to have a distinct relationship with death and life, and a unique experience for everyone who joins the funeral. However, the music which is conceived to be related to death or to be sorrowful in a culture, is not necessarily so for the members of another musical culture (Tagg, 1993: 76). In other words, given the problem of the 'universality' of music in general, 'death music' is not universal. Such preferences vary according to the music perception and signification of each culture.[3]

In many different societies from the Middle East to Iran, it is known that certain instruments, usually the drum, accompany people chanting elegies and songs during the funeral procession and burial (Tryjarski, 2012: 259-260; Hamzeh'ee; 2008: 276). Music and dance are also practiced in funeral ceremonies of some communities, i.e. Lek-speaking Yaresan (or Ahl-i Haqq) in Loristan and various Ezidi communities (Hamzeh'ee, 2008: 275). Jean-Paul Roux states that a *yog*-like burial tradition, including a dance accompanied by 'wild' music at funerals, exists

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2 Another dimension of the relationship between music and death is the mediating role of music in the attempt to contact spirits, and to wander around cemeteries as the best possible place to perform it. Wandering around in cemeteries and contacting spirits, traditions witnessed in various pagan and shamanic societies, are also practices of the Anatolian *âşık* [troubadour]: it is believed that the *âşık*s who falls asleep in cemeteries find themselves endowed with the talent of playing instruments and singing when they wake up (Erdener, 2019: 54-56). Hence, death also has the power to 'give life' to the living beings.

3 See an article on the performance of Chopin's funeral anthem by the military band at the funerals of Turkish statesmen, and its political significance, as an interesting example of this point; Bozdemir (2007).

in many (extremist) Shiite sects in the Islamic world, and this remains a controversial religious issue that seems impossible to be resolved (Roux, 2002: 283).

As we have seen above, music-related performances during the funeral might be accepted or rejected depending what music means to a community. The question to be analysed in detail below on whether Alevi people can perform 'music' during funerals is an issue we also witness among older Turkish people settled in the Middle East and different Islamic societies, out of a concern that funerals should not become 'amusement.' This issue is among the most widely discussed problems among Alevi people at the intersection of today's political and sociocultural developments.

Death Beliefs and Funeral Rituals Among Alevis

In ancient societies where death is conceived as the realization of the continuity of the human being with the earth, special ties with the earth endow it a human identity engendering responsibility and bonds towards past and future generations (Plumwood, 2017: 142). A similar approach is evident in thoughts about death, i.e. the idea of returning to the Truth/God among Alevis. According to this idea, the dead body 'is glazed' on earth, the spirit leaves 'the cage of the body,' but the cage remains in the world to blend with nature in earth.[4] The spirit, on the other hand, will walk towards God, change its 'underwear' and return back to earth. Piri Er summarizes the idea of death and 'walking towards Truth/God' in Alevi belief as follows (Er, 1998: 117):

> Anatolian Alevis use terms such as 'walking to the God [*Hakk'a yürümek*], changing the mould [*kalıp değiştirmek*], changing underwear [*don değiştirmek*], migrating [*göçmek*], getting ready to fly [*uçmağa varmak*] etc.' instead of the term of death. Walking to God signifies that the individual is saved from his/her form and returns to his/her essence, signifying, in terms of Islamic mysticism, the concept of '*fena fillah*,' the created to dissolve in the existence of God. According to the belief of Anatolian Alevis, the human being, made of God's light and carrying a Godly essence, will return to God after his/her death, i.e. s/he will walk towards God.

The tenets of *tenâsüh* (reincarnation/metapsychosis), *hulûl* (incarnation) and *don değiştirme* (metamorphosis), frequently witnessed in Alevi-Bektashi written resources and oral culture, are also significant in terms of the relationship of Alevi beliefs with non-Islamic belief systems.[5] In this respect, the belief in afterlife and praying with respect to death, and the idea of death differ among Alevis to other

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4 See Yıldız (2007); Aktaş (2015) on two articles compiling beliefs and rituals regarding death, funerals and mourning in various Alevi societies.

5 For these three forms of thought seen in Bektashi stories, that Ahmet Yaşar Ocak deem belief motives stemming from the Far East and Iranian religious resources, see Ocak (2007: 183-226).

Islamic communities. Ali Aktaş, stating that death has two meanings for Alevi people, states it as follows (Aktaş, 2015: 20):

> Death has two significations in the Alevi faith. The first is the 'biological death.' The biological death is called 'dying,' 'death,' 'resting the mould,' and 'walking towards God.' 'Resting the mould' and 'walking towards God' stems from the belief that death is not the end, but the beginning of a new situation. The mould referred to here is the body, and the body has aged, got tired or is damaged, it is not in a situation to fulfil its function. In this case, the body [mould] is abandoned. The one who leaves his/her mould comes from God, and will return to him. Therefore, it is said that s/he leaves the mould to reach God [walks towards God]. In other terms, death/dying is conceived as reuniting with the God/essence. The second death, on the other hand, is the 'death in the ceremony of *nasip* [admission].' This death is called by Alevis 'dying before death' and 'dying.' Death during the admission ceremony is a wilful death, and that stage is considered to be perhaps the most striking and challenging phase of Alevi teaching.

Another significant point affecting the concept of death in Alevi belief is the massacre of Hz. Hüseyin, the son of Hz. Ali and his companions in Karbela in 680, also one of the most significant incidents in the history of Islam. This incident has become one of the founding narratives of Alevi belief, which is repeatedly commemorated both in daily life and in rituals. Karbala martyrs-centered concept of death created a martyrology which has had a profound influence on later generations:[6] The thought surrounding the love of Hz. Hüseyin and Ehl-i Beyt, 'has developed around the axis of an internal reckoning and a universal quest for justice regarding whether the person will consent to his or her fate sealed in Karbela, and persuade his or her soul to this fate' (Zırh, 2014: 106). The Karbela incidence, one of the founding blocks of Alevi-Bektashi belief, is an event that reveals and also recalls the fact that one's relation to death is also connected to one's soulful being.

The issue of how the funeral ritual is and/or should be with respect to the concept of death in Alevi belief, is a major contemporary discussion in the Alevi world. Today, a *cemevi* affiliated to the Alevi community exists in almost every region with a significant Alevi population around the world. Aside from praying, the most frequent practice exercised in these *cemevi*s is the Alevi funeral rite.[7] Fuat Bozkurt reveals the following, concerning the rising problem of funeral ceremonies, especially with the increase in the number of urban Alevi populations (Bozkurt, 2000: 152-153).

> In the transition from the rural Alevi culture to the urban Alevi culture, one of the most important problems is funeral ceremonies [funeral *namaz*, prayer]). In fact, the Islamic funeral ceremony is at odds with Alevi customs […] In villages, Alevi *dede*s lead the *prayer* of the deceased and bury them, while those bodies are generally left aside in cities.

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6 For a study on martyrdom and shahada in the Alevi faith, see Hess (2007).

7 For issues regarding Alevi organization, its propagation in *cemevi*s and practices in *cemevi*s, see Özdemir (2016: 42-51; 121-126). Also see Zırh (2012) regarding Alevi organization and the funeral issue, funeral practices among Alevis living abroad and their return to the country.

> They are either not accepted in mosques or *imam*s consider it a sin to ordain funeral ceremonies for Alevi people. Hence, funeral ceremonies have turned into a big problem. Especially over the last few years, there appeared the challenge for Alevi associations to hold funeral ceremonies for this very reason. An Alevi person who hasn't stepped foot in a mosque throughout his/her life, also doesn't feel like attending for death ceremonies. […] Urban Alevi culture has had to find a solution to this problem in the 1990s. Holding funeral ceremonies in big cities through *cemevi*s emerged as a solution to this requirement.

Bozkurt underlines the fact that Alevi funeral ceremonies have come to cause significant problems: He thinks that Alevi people should give a place to Turkish prayers as well as hymns from Alevi *âşık*s, just as Tahtacı community does in their funerals, rather than Arabic prayers. He also states that Alevi federations must teach monolithic funeral customs to Alevi people (Bozkurt, 2000: 153). His idea of 'hav[ing] a monolithic ceremony via Alevi federations' has been the main focus of the standardization effort persistently pursued by Alevi institutions and leaders since the 1990s.[8] Today, standardization of a monolithic funeral *erkân* is continuously emphasized by institutions and leaders with distinct approaches to Alevi belief. Nevertheless, this insistence has not led to any level of standardization, rather a more heterogeneous funeral structure has emerged over time (see Figure 1).[9]

Today, the writing and application of *erkâns* have varied according to the position of Alevi institutions and *dede*s regarding Alevi belief (within and outside Islam, political, cultural etc.). Some *dede*s state that Alevi funerals have been rendered Sunni since the 1950s with the rise in rural-urban migration (Metin, 2010: 16; Şahin, 2015: 14), while others insist on having a funeral *namaz* and reading sections of the Koran during the funeral ceremony (Yaman, 2003; Güvenç, 2011). In other words, the main discussion in the *erkân* literature is about 'the risk of Alevi belief becoming Sunni,' revolving around questions as to whether or not a funeral *namaz* can be held or whether verses from the Koran can be read during the ceremony. The issue of whether or not it is allowed to have a *bağlama* performance in a funeral ceremony, which we will be discussing in more detail below, is either deemed related to these matters or explicitly rejected. Nevertheless, some *erkân*s actually find it appropriate to both read verses from the Koran and play the *bağlama*. For instance, Binali Doğan Dede, making a direct reference to the Koran in his *erkân*, also gives examples of *nefes*es with the note that they 'can be performed with *bağlama* during the *erkân*, if required' (Doğan, 2013: 27).

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8 For discussions on the institutionalization and standardization efforts among Alevis, see Özdemir (2016: 30-51).

9 To compare funeral *erkân*s published by Alevi institutions, see. AABF (2011); HHBVV (2014); DAB (2017); ADB/İK (2018); ABİK (2018); Cem Association, (2018). To compare funeral *erkân*s published by Alevi *dede*s see: Yaman (2003); Metin (2010); Güvenç (2011); Doğan (2013); Şahin (2015). Aside from these publications, there is information regarding funeral practices in numerous *erkânname* books published by both institutions and individuals. For the issue of funeral *erkân* in the Bektashi faith, see Noyan (2011: 47-79).

Figure 1. Sample covers of various funeral *erkân*s prepared by Alevi *dede*s and institutions.

Similar discussions are also observed in some *erkân*s prepared by Alevi institutions: for instance, although there is no note about *bağlama* performance in HHBVV [Hünkar Hacı Bektaş Veli Vakfı] and ABİK [Alevi Bektaşi İnanç Kurulu] *erkân*s, it is stated that *dîvazdeh* imam [sacred chants about the Twelve Imams] and *nefes*es can be chanted during funeral *erkân*s (HHBVV, 2014: 32; ABİK, 2018: 18). *Bağlama* performance is also found in *erkân*s held in *cemevi*s affiliated to these institutions. However, another *erkân* prepared by ADB/İK [Alevi Dedeleri Birliği/İnanç Komisyonu] was distributed with a note saying: 'We have objections to those who play instruments by the bedside of the coffin, whirl *semah* around it, banish the funeral *namaz* and to those who abandon the path of the Twelve Imams to follow other sects' (Pirha, 2018a, 2018b). In other words, this discussion is conducted in completely opposite directions depending on the political and religious postures of people and institutions. Before delving into the details of the debate concerning whether it is appropriate to play *bağlama* in Alevi funerals, one that has been gaining popularity in the mainstream press and Alevi public, we will first look at the historical and ethnographic research on whether 'music' was performed in the past at Alevi funeral ceremonies.

Post-Mortum 'Music' Performance in Alevi Societies

It is evident from historical and ethnographic studies that music was performed in funeral *erkân*s of various Alevi communities. In particular, research on the Tahtacı, one of the Alevi communities, has found that *zakir*s performing *nefes*es with *bağlama* at the death ceremony of the deceased, is a tradition stretching back hundreds of years. Halil İbrahim Şahin, in his ethnographic study of Tahtacı from Kazdağları, states that *sazandar*s serving as *zakir* in this region performed music, an 'indispensable' post-mortum performance (Şahin, 2014: 151):

> Tahtacı people from Kazdağı have a tradition to chant *nefes* for the deceased. This is indeed one of the basic features of the burial practices of the deceased person. *Sazandars* state that there is not one single person in the Tahtacı villages of this region who is not buried without a death *nefes* performance. The *nefes* performance tradition, an indispensable post-mortum practice, is still sustained today. If the deceased person passes away at a time convenient for the burial ceremony, the *sazandar* chants three death *nefes* before the dead, and the burial practices are thus initiated. However, if the deceased person is to be kept at home for one night, the *sazandar* or *sazandar*s keep chanting *nefes* by the bedside of his/her body throughout the night at certain intervals. When the *sazandar* is done with *nefes* chanting, he leaves his instruments in the house of the deceased person for three days.

The tradition in Tahtacı communities to stay in the house of the deceased, before the dead body, until the morning chanting *nefes*, is studied by different researchers: Rıza Yetişen, in his ethnographic study of customs and traditions of Tahtacı communities around İzmir, states that instruments used to be played and *nefes*es used to be chanted in the past in the deceased person's house, while women chanted elegies (Yetişen, 1986: 49). İsmail Engin, conducting an ethnographic study on the Tahtacı community of the Akçaeniş region affiliated to the town of Elmalı in Antalya, notes that *zakir*s played instruments and chanted verses when the 'dead body was required to stay at home until dawn' (Engin, 1995: 40). Mustafa Aksoy, in his field study in a Tahtacı village affiliated to the Mut town of Mersin, states that instruments are played and elegies were chanted before the dead body until the morning, in cases when the dead body is required to stay at home to be buried the next day (Aksoy, 2004: 389). Nilgün Çıblak, in her study on Tahtacı communities in Mersin, also detects the same tradition and relates that people cry out in front of the dead body until the morning, chanting *nefes*es about death with instruments. These are called 'funeral *nefes*es' of Şah Hatayi, Pir Sultan Abdal, Kul Himmet Üstadım and Kul Mustafa (Çıblak, 2005: 196, 259-264). Gani Pekşen, in research on 'the death *nefes*' as part of a field study on the Tahtacı people settled in different towns and cities of the Aegean region, states that the person who plays the instrument chants three *nefes*es before the dead body when the funeral stays at home until the morning, and that we should not confuse these *nefes*es, which are mostly from Hatayi, Kul Himmet and Pir Sultan Abdal, with elegies (Pekşen, 2005: 109-111). Şeref Uluocak, on the

other hand, states that death *nefes*es of Tahtacı from Kazdağları are mostly related to Kul Himmet (Uluocak, 2014: 67). Sinan Kahyaoğlu, states the following, regarding the 'death *nefes*' chanting tradition of Tahtacı Turkmens of the Kazdağı region (Kayhaoğlu, 2005: 194):

> *Sazandar* approaches the funeral [place] with his instrument. As he enters, he pray to the threshold. He sits by the bedside of the deceased person, crying women keep silent. *Sazandar* chants three death *nefes*es before the funeral. At times when the burial is urgent and there is no *sazandar* around, *nefes*es are not chanted. However, it is a must to endeavour to chant *nefes*. Death *nefes*es are written by Kul Himmet, the word of 'shah' is not uttered. There is a distinct death *nefes* for each funeral; there are different death *nefes*es for children, elderly people, young people, and for contagious diseases.

*Kamber*s and *sazandar*s from Çepni and Tahtacı communities in the Balıkesir region who serve as *zakir*s, also state that they perform *nefes*es about death when someone passes away (Duymaz, et al., 2011: 49-50). Fuat Bozkurt, as part of his field study, states the following about the funeral *erkân* of the Turkmen Tahtacı people (Bozkurt, 1990: 220-221):[10]

> Turkmen Tahtacı people living in the Aegean region used to bury their dead bodies with the hymns of Hatayi they called 'İsm-i Âzam prayers.' This death ceremony lasted no more than 25-30 years. […] The Turkmen burial ceremony is conducted as follows: All the attendants of the death ceremony perform an ablution. The body of the deceased is washed. Relatives of the deceased pour a cup of water. This is called 'the water of Afterlife.' According to this faith, the water in question is inherited from Hz. Ali and Fâtıma. Then, the deceased is placed on a high platform. The entire community stands behind the deceased to perform *Fatma Ana darı*. The *dede* or someone else who knows about it reads the İsm-i Âzam prayer. This prayer is, in fact, a hymn of Hatayî. Other *ozan*s [singer-poets] have hymns with a similar content. These hymns can also be chanted, if required. Therefore, the death ceremony is performed. The deceased is sent off with elegies [*ağıt*], epopees [*destan*] and hymns [*deyiş*].

Similarly Sinan Kahyaoğlu also relates, referring to a *dede* from Akhisar/Manisa, Aydın – Çine region, that the *dede* kneels down before the grave once the deceased is buried to read the 'İsm-i Âzam' *nefes* composed of fourteen verses, and conveys his teaching (*talkın/telkin*) (Kayhaoğlu, 2005: 201). As we have already seen, *nefes* chanting with *bağlama*, a widespread tradition among Tahtacı communities, continues through the funeral *erkân*. Nevertheless, although these traditions kept faltering, or were completely abandoned in different communities for various reasons, post-mortum music performance still persists among the Tahtacı in general during the funeral *erkân*.

Other Alevi communities in Anatolia that are not Tahtacı, also exhibit the performance of music during funeral *erkân*. However, how exactly the 'music' per-

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[10] Bozkurt stated that Şinasi Koç, a popular Alevi *dede* of the time, when writing his book, argued that the funeral *namaz* was not Islamic, and suggested an alternative funeral ceremony with some hymns (and *gülbenk*s [blessings]), something that he would not have needed to do if he had known about the Tahtacı commnuity (Bozkurt, 1990: 155, 220).

Figure 2. Zeynel (Batar) Dede, chanting a *nefes* in Dersim before the coffin (Şahin, 2013).

formance fits into the funeral *erkân* is not very explicit in the narratives of the related resources. Ali Haydar Ülger, in a research on elegies and tombstones of Alevi communities in Binboğalar, describes how in the past the person who played *bağlama* during the funeral ceremony also chanted one or two favorite *nefes* of the deceased person (Ülger, 2013: 125). Nazaret Dağvaryan, an Ottoman deputy with many professions, originally from Sivas, in his research on the Kızılbaş faith written in 1890 in Armenian and published as a book in 1914, stated that wealthy Kızılbaş people performed music at their funeral ceremonies (Dağvaryan, 2017: 78). Ali Kemali, the Erzincan governor in 1930-1932, conveyed that in some tribes around Erzincan, the famous '*Şeytan Bunun Neresinde*' *nefes* was chanted before the deceased was buried (Kemali, 1932: 171). In 1939, the journalist Naşit Hakkı Uluğ also stated that all practices related to funerals were conducted by *seyit*s (*dede*s) in Dersim who chanted elegies and played the *bağlama* (Uluğ, 2007: 133). This tradition is partially sustained today in Dersim. For instance, Zeynel Batar Dede from the Kedek village of Ovacık, states that they chant *nefes*es and elegies, that they avoid reading Koranic verses, that their Koran is 'the stringed Koran,' in other words *cura* [a small size *bağlama*], and that they play the *cura* and chanted hymns until the deceased walks towards God (see Figure 2).[11]

As we have seen above, the tradition of different Alevi communities to chant *nefes* with *bağlama* until the end of the burial ceremony is a practice that still exists today. However, due to the scarcity of historical/ethnographic studies about the issue, and the sensitivity of the matter for both Alevi and non-Alevi Islamic communities, there is no detailed research on this topic.

[11] For the expressions of Zeynel Dede see: Dersimnews (2014). Also Mustafa Mısır, one of the Üryan Hızır Ocak *dede*s, conveys the information he received from his father, and states that in the past, people used to follow the coffin until the graveyard playing the *bağlama* (Sonzamancı, 2018).

'Music' Performance in the Funeral: Today's Religious Aesthetic Debate

Although funeral rituals vary across communities, they can be generally studied under two headings (including the temporary burial in some societies): preparation of the deceased and the actual burial (entombment, interment etc.) (Etöz, 2016: 81). İsmail Engin, analysing funeral practices of Tahtacı community from Akçaeniş in two stages, defines the first stage, which he calls the preparation, as the moment until the performance of the funeral prayer, while the second stage, which he calls the burial, includes the practices from the funeral prayer to the burial (Engin, 1995: 40). However, the issue of whether or not to even perform prayer in today's funeral *erkân* is a significant discussion. Hence we might classify funeral *erkân* in general into two parts: the preparation of the funeral (waiting in front of the dead body, spending the night and washing the dead body) and the *erkân* stage where the funeral practices (asking the consent of the attendants and burial) are performed. As I already stated in the introduction, the rituals practiced after the burial are not within the scope of this article.

When to perform the music during funeral *erkân* is a widely discussed issue. The practice of 'keeping the deceased overnight' and the 'death/funeral *nefes*,' is widespread among Tahtacı, but is not applied today by some urban Alevi communities and institutions, while dead bodies that are kept in the morgue of *cemevi*s are washed, then the consent of their relatives are asked and *nefes*es are chanted with *bağlama* performance. Moreover, *nefes*es are chanted in some *erkân*s during the burial with *bağlama* performance. Therefore, in today's practices, music is performed during the second phase, after the body is washed, rather than at the first stage, as in Tahtacı societies, when the relatives of the deceased wait/stay overnight by the bedside of the dead body.

Burial rituals make reference to the past, as they touch the founding principles of the society and reveal an attempt to illuminate the past in the light of the present, therefore consecrating the future (Etöz, 2016: 86-87). Discussions among Alevi people on how to perform funeral rituals reveal an attempt to construct the faith in the present based on how it was lived in the past and how it will be lived in the future with respect to this past. Whether or not *bağlama* was played in funerals in the past is either affirmed or negated based on this fact. For instance, according to Bülent Aldede, the son of İbrahim Aldede, an esteemed *dede* from Sinemilli Ocak and a significant resource on music, it is explicitly 'vagabondism' (*serserilik*) to play *bağlama* in funerals. Aldede states that his father didn't allow *bağlama* performance in the funeral ceremony of a *dede* in the region, and he even found it inappropriate to talk about it at home (Aldede, 2018):

> There are great lessons to be taken here concerning vagabond-like dedes who claim to be Alevi playing bağlama in funerals. Take note that Aligül Dede didn't want instruments to be played at his funeral, he just wanted people to chat [*muhabbet edilsin*] in his

house after the funeral, and my father Ibrahim Aldede found even the latter inappropriate, and only fulfilled this wish a year after the burial.

According to Aldede, the newly made-up funeral *erkâns*, playing *bağlama* in the funeral and related newly introduced concepts are a part of the 'Neo-Alevi faith play'. Similarly, according to Ali Rıza Özdemir, 'recently invented practices, especially playing the *bağlama* and chanting *nefes*es while the corpse is on the coffin rest, whirling *semah* around it, were not performed by the past Alevi communities. They are new inventions prepared as part of a project whose main purpose is to alienate Alevi society from the Islamic faith' (Özdemir, 2018).

The Islamic circle outside the Alevi world also partakes in this discussion. For instance, an Islamic newspaper published the article, 'Funeral without Fatiha divided Alevi people.' According to the news item, the funeral ceremony in the Kısas district of Urfa, performed with a *bağlama* instead of Koran verses bothered people. Apparently this ceremony was held in line with the new *erkân* of HHBVV, but turned into a 'funeral *prayer* with *bağlama* and without Fatiha' (Yeni Akit, 2018). Such news and discussions clearly show that Alevi funeral ceremonies have become an identity signifier both religiously and politically; indicating the political significance of death today, and the accompanying formalization of funeral ceremonies.[12] Either playing the *bağlama* or not playing it thus has significance in this situation.

The question of whether to play *bağlama* at funeral ceremonies has recently turned into a public debate (with the help of social media), especially among popular Alevi musicians or their families. The first of these funerals was the one organized in 2014, in İstanbul Kartal Cemevi for the mother of Gani Pekşen, a musician and music researcher who tries to perform Alevi music in its traditional form and conduct fieldworks on numerous communities such as the Tahtacıs. A video featuring Pekşen playing his *bağlama* and chanting *nefes* at his mother's bedside was circulated on social media and triggered a big debate. Both the people who supported Pekşen in this matter and others saying that *bağlama* performance next to the deceased had nothing to do with the Alevi faith, paved the way for a discussion that would gain momentum over time.[13] Pekşen was quite resolute and decisive on this matter, having published articles on music performance at Tahtacı funeral *erkân*s with *bağlama* (Pekşen, 2005) and performed it on stage (see Figure 3). Pekşen also performed music with his *bağlama* at other funeral ceremonies.

Another discussion that further triggered the issue occurred after the funeral *erkân* of Yıldız Sağ, the deceased wife of Arif Sağ, one of the most popular Alevi music performers, in 2016. Dertli Divani, an important *dede* and *âşık* (who is

[12] For two contemporary studies on the relationship between death and identity, and the body politic, see: İflazoğlu and Demir (2016); Sayın (2018).

[13] For a news and video upon the issue, see: Dersimnews (2014); Karaçalı (2014).

Figure 3. Gani Pekşen and Mehtap Dikme, performing a 'Tahtacı death *nefes*' on stage (Pekşen and Dikme, 2014).

connected to the Hacı Bektaş Lodge), performed with his *bağlama* at the funeral *erkân* in the Karacaahmet Cemevi, resulting in both support and highly intense and harsh criticism from Alevis. Dertli Divani, who also played an active role in the writing of the funeral *erkân* published by HHBVV, had conducted a similar *erkân* at the funeral of Yıldız Sağ. Alevi musicians like Gani Pekşen, Erdal Erzincan and Muharem Temiz also accompanied him with their *bağlama*. Following this funeral – again under the great influence of social media – Alevi people were almost divided into two regarding whether it was appropriate to have a funeral *erkân* with *bağlama* performance (see Figure 4).[14]

Apart from these two funerals, similar practices were also performed at the funeral ceremonies of Ali Kızıltuğ (2017), a popular Alevi *âşık*, and Alevi musician, Hakan Yeşilyurt, leading to debates following their broadcast over the social media.[15] From these funerals we see that there is 'music' performed while asking the consent of the attendants in the *cemevi*; and the performance generally includes three *nefes*es and a *duvazimam* chanted by one or more *bağlama* practitioners next to the dead body. The selected *nefes*es mostly include lyrics expressing human life from birth to death, just as in '*devriye*' poems, and the thought of death in the Alevi faith. The music, on the other hand, is the performance of melodies which are mostly anonymously fixed with the selected *nefes*es. *Bağlama* is performed in a non-ornate manner, mostly accompanying the lyrics. Sometimes a microphone

14 See Demir (2016), Altuncu and Tiftikçi (2016a) for news and discussions about this funeral.

15 Regarding such funerals and *erkân*s with *bağlama* performance, there are numerous videos in circulation in social media, while debates continue including harsh reviews in the comments section under these videos. Besides, videos from the funeral ceremonies of people from Yaresan or İsmaili faiths, known to be close to the Alevi faith, are also frequently shared, and it is underlined that communities with an affinity to the Alevis also do not perform the Islamic funeral rite with a *namaz*.

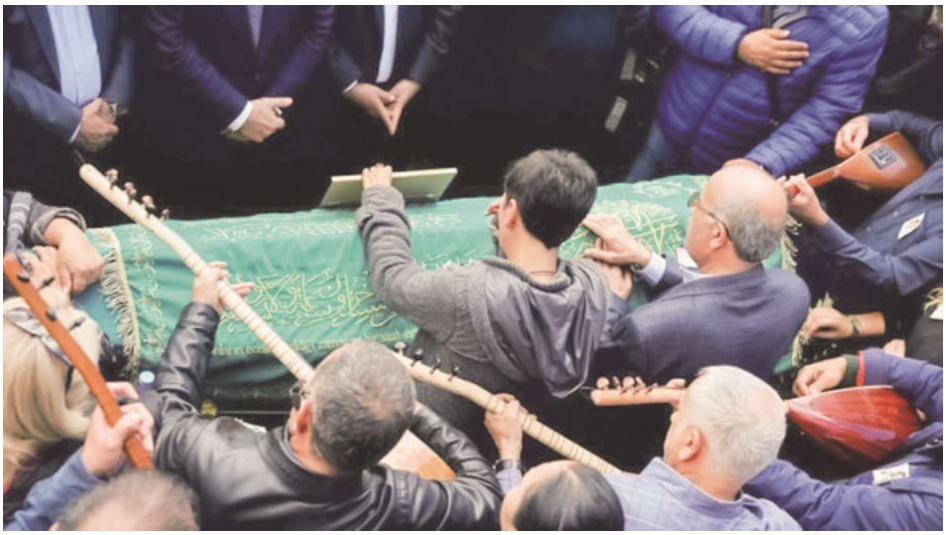

Figure 4. A photo from Yıldız Sağ's funeral *erkân* in Istanbul (Altuncu and Tiftikçi, 2016b).

is also used depending on how crowded the funeral is; however, *bağlama* musicians perform standing by the dead body. *Nefes*es performed with *bağlama* do not have, contrary to allegations, the goal of 'amusement' and do not mirror a 'music market folk song.'

Some Alevi people also believe that chanting *nefes*es with *bağlama* is perceived as 'amusement' and that one should abstain from these practices during the mourning phase. Rıza Yetişen, while stating that Tahtacıs perform *bağlama* and chant *nefes* by the bedside of the dead person, avers that they mourn for a week after the death avoiding 'songs and instruments' (Yetişen, 1986: 50). Şeref Uluocak, investigating death *nefes*es among Tahtacıs from Kazdağları, relates that 'there is no amusement in the mourning phase and no music is played,' referring to a resource on the mourning phase after the burial of the deceased (Uluocak, 2014: 73). In both resources, what is at stake must be the playing of music and chanting in general, rather than performing *nefes* regarding death. This confirms that chanting funeral and death *nefes* in the Alevi faith is distinguished from playing 'music' or *bağlama* in daily life. One is considered related to belief and the other a part of daily life (even 'amusement'). The context and aesthetics of each are different. Nevertheless, those who are opposed to funerals with *bağlama* performance insist on the fact that it is a 'music' performance.

The issue of 'music' here is a religious and aesthetic discussion: just as in the debate about whether music is universal or not, 'a different meaning is attributed to music in all social groups' and 'music' 'is' what the community deems music to be (Stokes, 1998: 127). Moreover, as already stated by Philip Tagg, the phenomenon of universal music, associated with the 'universal' death phenomenon, does not refer to the same 'music' (Tagg, 1993: 76). In other words, although we,

the musicologists/ethno-musicologists, deem all musical performance as 'music,' performances like 'death *nefes*' are not deemed 'music' by Tahtacıs. The *Bağlama* debate among Alevis concerns whether the aesthetic form perceived as 'music' is admissible in a funeral. However, those who perform *bağlama* at the funeral embrace an understanding that what is practically deemed 'music' is not esoterically 'music,' but the 'sacred word of the Truth/God.'

Similarly, those who argue that funeral *erkân*s can be performed with *bağlama*, state that these performances are not 'musical' or for 'amusement' purposes; on the contrary, they are practices that reflect the 'essence of the Alevi faith.' In this respect, playing *bağlama* and chanting *nefes* in the *cem,* and doing the same in the funeral *erkân*, have no intrinsic difference; indeed the extension of this practice beyond the *cem* is more compliant with the 'real' Alevi faith. Dertli Divani, one of the most significant actors in this matter, explains it as follows (Pirha, 2019):

> In villages, if it wasn't for the *dede*, someone who has expertise on the issue used to lead the *erkân*. We used to call him the *hoca* in our own faith. However, our *hoca* was not like the *hoca* in the mosque. He had to perform a ceremony similar to the one in the mosque due to the pressure on him. Why have our 'walking towards God' ceremonies become so sordid and corrupted? Because our neighbours of different faiths used to come, in whatever region we lived, and join us in our *erkân*. If you chant *duaz*, or *gülbeng* with *bağlama*, it's something that they're not used to. The Alevi faith is already forbidden, we have performed *cem* behind closed doors for all these years. In other words, it was affected by neighbouring faiths, it became similar to the funerals in the mosques. It's because of the oppression and massacres. Although we are well assimilated now, we don't turn towards the direction of the Mecca during our *cem* ceremonies. We play our instrument, whirl our *semah*, we conduct the twelve services. […] Now we perform our 'walking towards God' *erkân*s according to the essence of our faith, we no longer look to the direction of Mecca. We started to perform all of them standing face to face in a circle around the deceased body uniting our souls, putting our hands on our heart, chanting *gülbenk*, *nefes*es, *duaz*, performing all the rituals in compliance with our faith until the service of burial.

Referring to Simon Frith, who emphasizes the power of music, it is not so difficult to imagine how a feeling of identity can be mobilized through music, or how music has the power to evoke certain practices depending on our position according to various social phenomena (Stokes, 1998: 144). *Nefes* performance with *bağlama* at Alevi funerals mobilizes a feeling of Alevi identity through 'music'. Nevertheless, its dynamics are a bit more complex than simply pointing to Tahtacıs or other societies and saying, 'we used to have *bağlama* performances in the past.' What is targeted today with the *bağlama* performance at funerals is a funeral *erkân* purified, as much as possible, of Islamic motives, Koran and Arabic references, and the assertion of an identity in line with this. Playing or not playing *bağlama* at the funeral is significant in terms of one's position regarding today's Islam debate. In other words, this issue is both a religious, aesthetic and ideological matter.

Playing *bağlama*, singing a special song for the deceased or whirling *semah* might all be practiced with the permission of the family, depending on the will

Figure 5. *Semah* performance at the funeral *erkân* of Fikret Otyam in Antalya (Radikal, 2015).

of the deceased. For instance, funerals of people like Fikret Otyam, not an Alevi himself, but beloved to the Alevi world and who is deemed an Alevi by them, were organized in *cemevi*s, including funeral *erkân*s with *bağlama* and *semah* (see figure 5). Whirling *semah*, as it goes beyond playing *bağlama*, is on the other hand, a new debate outside the scope of this article. Nevertheless, those who are against playing *bağlama* at funeral ceremonies are also against whirling *semah* for the same reasons. The issue of *semah*, going well beyond the *bağlama* debate, evokes other issues, such as the layout of the funeral space, how to determine its aesthetics and whether the funeral should be organized in a hall or in the open air.

Whether it is appropriate to play the *bağlama* at the funeral or not (and whether it is appropriate to whirl *semah*) is also significant for the order of the funeral. The most important aesthetic dimension of this is the spatial ordering. For instance, it is stated in the *erkân* published by HHBVV, that standing face to face -also underlined by the Dertli Divani above – is essential. (HHBVV, 2014: 22). On the other hand, in the *erkân* published by DAB [Devrimci Aleviler Birliği], the order of the funeral space is shown in a drawing, while the ceremonial space, including the *semah*, is aesthetically depicted (DAB, 2017: 32). As we can see in these examples, the issue of how to implement the funeral *erkân* manifests a religious, political and aesthetical debate at its core (see Figure 6). Conceptions and/or identities of the Alevi faith shaped by the positions of institutions or persons also transform aesthetic perceptions and signifiers both in daily life and in rituals. Therefore, new Alevi faiths – albeit claiming to sustain the old belief – and pro-Alevi opinions ap-

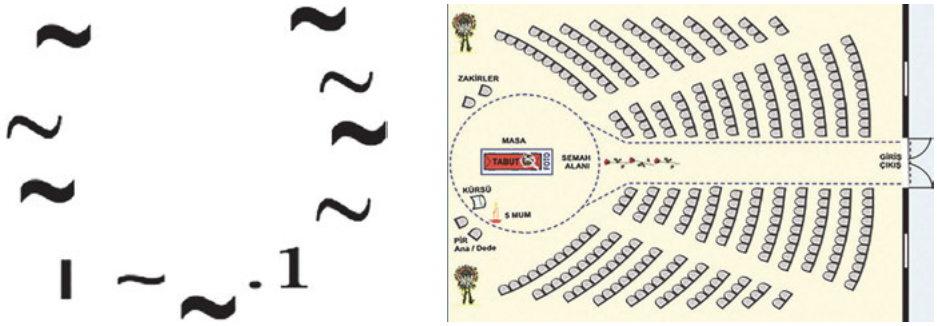

Figure 6. Standing order in the funeral according to HHBVV (left; HHBVV, 2014: 22) and *cemevi*/hall order at the funeral *erkân* according to DAB (right; DAB, 2017: 32).

pear in all periods. Beyond the issue of whether it is genuinely 'traditional' or 'the invention of a tradition,' in terms of Eric Hobsbawn, we cannot overlook the fact that 'traditional' cultures are in fact defined from an ideological point of view, and consequently they become subject to a redefinition when new political orientations appear (Guilbault, 2004: 116).

Conclusion

There are great debates and variations in the application of the funeral *erkân* among Alevis, just as with many other issues. When it comes to Alevi research and *erkân* literature, this is yet another reminder that 'heterogeneous' Alevi communities have sustained themselves throughout history, rather than believing that a 'homogeneous' Alevi faith has always existed. While the *Babagan* branch hold the belief that *Hacı Bektaş Veli* never got married and the *Çelebi* branch are believed to be the sons and daughters of *Hacı Bektaş Veli,* they have created values that are widely accepted by Alevi-Bektashi societies until today. Taking into consideration that there is a widespread acceptance that they are not separated from one another and that they have the same beliefs, albeit with some differences, recognition of the 'heterogeneity' of Alevi-Bektashi (and other related) communities would also be a significant step to be taken for today's debates.

Attempts by Alevi institutions and leaders to 'standardize' Alevi rituals have also paved the way for interrogations concerning the relationship of the Alevi faith with Islam. This issue has provoked serious conflict, nowadays leading to law cases.[16] How to conduct Alevi rituals and especially the content of the funeral *erkân,* are among the significant contemporary debates among Alevis. There

[16] To mention a contemporary example, see how the lawsuit finalized in 2019 in Australia, has spread to provoke conflict within Alevi institutions in Europe as to what extent the faith is Islamic or not. For analysis of the trial and surrounding discussions, see Engin (2019).

has been a recent and rapid rise in the number of books published by Alevi institutions, *dede*s and various researchers on how to conduct funeral *erkân*s, all dealing with the issue in a distinct manner, revealing how 'heterogeneous' Alevi practices are today.

The issue of funeral *erkân*, a fundamental matter for different Alevi communities, has gradually become an ever-intensifying debate. Instead of claiming that 'this is the real Alevi faith,' it seems crucial to accept the differences in the general Alevi-Bektashi path with the conviction that '*yol bir, sürek binbir* [the path is one, the practices are thousand and one]'. But yet conflict continue to intensify among Alevis over this issue. In this tense process in which *dede*s and Alevi institutions in particular have adopted the role of main actors, performing funeral *erkân* with or without *bağlama* (and even whirling *semah*), a practical/esoteric discussion, has turned into a public matter for the Alevi people.

Playing *bağlama* and performing 'music' in funerals has turned into a debate similar to the hundreds-of-years-old discussion on music and *semah* in Islamic history, testing the limits of 'tolerance' among Alevi people. Similar to the '*mum söndü* [blowing out the candle]' aspersion cast upon the Alevi people, people who perform *bağlama* performances at funerals are also subjected to various slanders and accusations by some Alevis, all revealing to what extent issues around the Alevi faith, being an Alevi and different Alevi convictions are profound and challenging today. In this respect, we face the challenge of sustaining Alevi faiths that are religiously, politically and aesthetically varied.

Translation from Turkish: Öznur Karakaş

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III.
Written Sources of Alevi Cultural Heritage

ʿAlī Ufuḳī's Notation Collections as Sources for ʿĀṣıḳ Culture and Literature

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The two notation collections compiled by the Polish-born Ottoman palace musician and interpreter, ʿAlī Ufuḳī (Ufḳī) / Wojciech Bobowski (c.1610–c.1675) are of important value for the historiography of Ottoman-Turkish music, as they record in writing repertoires that were generally transmitted orally at least up to the mid-nineteenth century. His endeavours of presumably several decades are collected and stored in the manuscripts Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Turc 292,[1] and London, British Library, Sloane 3114 (henceforth: Turc 292 and Sloane 3114).[2] Both could be described as *mecmūʿa* or *cönk*[3] – song-text collections – with additional musical notation. However, Turc 292 in particular, is more than a notation collection, containing valuable notes on various aspects of musical life as well as a wealth of non-musical information. The term *mecmūʿa* without qualification is exactly appropriate for such a mixed, polythematic source (Kuru, 2012: 19ff.). Until now the focus of musicological study has primarily been on analyzing and interpreting the repertoire of elite instrumental and, to a lesser extent, vocal music, as those corpora can be compared to later written sources. However, both manuscripts contain a rich treasure of *ʿāşıḳ* texts by poets both famous and obscure, many of them with notated melodies, which makes Turc 292 and Sloane 3114 major repositories of *ʿāşıḳ* creativity. This was first highlighted by Rıza Nur, who included a photograph of a page from MS Turc 292 in an unfortunately little-noticed article (Nur, 1931).

The present contribution follows two lines of inquiry according to two spheres of *ʿāşıḳ* content: A function- and repertoire-oriented distinction will be made between the *ʿāşıḳ* poets and performers associated with military and court circles in Istanbul, henceforth 'Janissary tradition,' and a smaller segment dedicated to more overtly heterodox, antinomian personalities such as Ḳayġusuz Abdāl or Pir Sultan Abdāl, belonging to the so-called Abdalān-i Rūm, henceforth 'Abdāl tradition.' Although biographical data is far from clear in many cases, it seems as though most of the Janissary *ʿāşıḳ*s recorded by ʿAlī Ufuḳī belonged to the generation preceding him. That would be the same historical layer described by Evliyā Çelebi (see below), centered around the sultanate of Murād IV, 1623–

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1 https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84150086 (uploaded 11/10/2010). A critical edition by the present author is forthcoming.

2 Facsimile: Elçin, 1976, edition: Cevher, 2003.

3 On the topic of *ʿaşıḳ* literature in connection with the discussion of source types see Koz, 2012.

1640. ʿAlī Ufuḳī's notations provide us with rich contributions to the existing canons of prominent sixteenth- and seventeenth-century *ʿāşıḳ*s, such as Ḳaracaoğlan, Kātibī or Ḳul-oğlı. Concerning this group linked to the Janissaries, attention will be paid to issues of transmission and the stability of texts. Concerning the Abdāl authors, questions of religious plurality and knowledge migration are in the foreground.

Besides the actual repertoire, the paths of transmission by which the songs reached ʿAlī Ufuḳī are of interest. ʿAlevī/Bektāşī circles close to or in the palace were surely influential. It should not go unmentioned that there are also traces of Mevlevī spirituality, most prominently the 'Semāʿī-yi Mevlānā' *Her ki hezār āferīn* on f. 396b/311a.[4] This text, attributed to Aḥmed Eflāḳī, is a fixed part of *Āyīn-i şerīf* ritual music (Çevikoğlu, 2011: 440). However, the focus of the present study will be on artistic expression in the context of ʿAlevī/Bektāşī religiosity, excluding other mystical streams. Due to constraints of space, not all the relevant authors referenced by ʿAlī Ufuḳī can be analysed. In general, this article will focus on MS Turc 292, with brief glances at MS Sloane 3114.

'Janissary' ʿāşıḳ*s*

Bektaşism had a secure place in Ottoman society as long as it remained inside Janissary circles. Ḥācı Bektāş was the patron saint of the Janissaries to whom new recruits swore allegiance (Birge, 1937: 74f). The legendary connection between the army corps and the dervish order reaches back to the early days of Ottoman conquest, when Bektāşī dervishes played a crucial role in the Islamization of the Balkans and the recruitment of local children for the regiment through *devşirme*. It 'seemed appropriate to place [those foreign-born children] under the moral and spiritual protection of an order of colonizing dervishes' (Mélikoff, 1998: 4; see also Birge, 1937: 4, 74). It is most probably this institutionalized current of mysticism that generated the high number of *ʿāşıḳ* texts in ʿAlī Ufuḳī's notation collections.

In research literature, astonishment at the broad range of repertoire recorded by ʿAlī Ufuḳī has repeatedly been expressed, sometimes leading to a narrative of decay and rebirth of Ottoman-Turkish musical culture in which 'folk music' is involved (Feldman, 2018: 74f). An alternative view stresses diversity and plurality of styles and tastes, especially at the court of Sultan Murād IV (Haug, 2019: 328ff). Catherine Pinguet's assessment that rural Anatolian folk literature was

[4] MS Turc 292 features two conflicting foliation systems, hence all pages have a double numbering. The current binding order is incorrect; the original order has been reestablished by the present author (Haug, 2019: 94ff). The first number represents the original foliation, the second one the later addition by a different hand. The digital copy cited above refers to the secondary foliation, hence, when looking up f. 396b/311a, go to f. 311a.

'longtemps reléguée au second plan et méprisé par les poètes du Palais,' ('for a long time relegated to second place and scorned by the poets of the palace', 1998: 391) is hence directly contradicted by ʿAlī Ufuḳī's repertoire collocation. Indeed not only by him: also by our most important witness besides ʿAlī Ufuḳī, his slightly older contemporary Evliyā Çelebi. In Evliyā Çelebi's description of the guilds of Istanbul, the paragraph concerning the *çöğür* players mentions many well-known names:

> *Sāzendegān-ı Çöğürciyān: Neferāt 3000 [...] [Levendāne][5] beş ḳıllı ve taḫta göğüslü ve yiğirmi altı perdeli göğdesi büyük bir sāzdır. Ekṣer yeñiçeri ocaġına maḫṣūṣ sāzdır mahāret ṣāḥiblerinden evvelā Demir-oġlı ve Cula Ḥasan ve Ḳor-oġlı ve Gedā Muṣlī ve Ḳara Fazlı ve Ḥaleb Kātibī ve Ṣarı Muḳallid Celeb ve Ḳul-oġlı ve Ḳayıḳçı Muṣṭafā ve Ramazān ve Ḳayıḳçılar Muṣṭafāsı ve Gedik Süleymān ve Ṭoy İbrāhīm ve Celeb Gedāyi ve Ḥāḳi ve Türābī bunlar pādişāh ḥuzūrundaki sāzendelerdir* (Evliyā Çelebi, 1996: 304).
>
> Players of the *çöğür*: Their number is 3000 […] It is an instrument of the navy with five strings, a wooden soundboard, twenty-six frets and a large corpus. It is an instrument especially particular to the Janissary barracks; among the most talented there are foremost [list of names]. They are the instrumentalists who perform in the presence of the Sultan.

Later he adds that the *çöğürciyān* were all military men ('cümle ʿaskerdir'; Evliyā Çelebi, 1996: 305). To sum up, this text supplies us with crucial information regarding organology (large five-string instrument with a wooden soundboard and twenty-six frets) and sociocultural context (male-connotated, soldierly instrument especially connected to the Janissaries). Concerning the author names cited by Evliyā Çelebi, there is likewise considerable congruence: The pen (and stage) names Demir-oġlı, Ḳor-oġlı, Ḳul-oġlı and Ḳayıḳçı Muṣṭafā appear in Turc 292 with four, two, eleven and one poem respectively attributed to them – disregarding the possibility that Ḳayıḳçı Muṣṭafā, Ḳul Muṣṭafā and Muṣṭafā were the same person. The identity of those three personalities has been denied by Ergun (1930: 237) and confirmed by Kocatürk (1963: 62). Among the remaining names, some can be more or less tentatively identified with authors recorded by ʿAlī Ufuḳī: Gedā Muṣlī, Gedā or Gedā Aḥmed could also be the same person as Celeb Gedāyī; in the same vein, Ḥaleb Kātibī could be Kātibī; Gedik Süleymān could be Süleymān; and Ṭoy İbrāhīm could be İbrāhīm. In any event, the group of persons mentioned by Evliyā Çelebi are present in the same locale as ʿAlī Ufuḳī, so he was not far removed from their art, even if he did not know them personally. It is an advantageous circumstance that the two authors corroborate each other in so much detail. In his description of the Ottoman palace, *Serai Enderum* [sic], ʿAlī Ufuḳī supplies us with additional valuable information:

> *Jl Sultan di hoggi cioè Sultan Mehemet, si innamorò di un giouane Constantinopolitano, che fù suo paggio di musiche dal cui nome è Kuloglu, il qual hora non e solo suo musico, ma sona, e canta quando il G.S. commanda ma ancora suo fauorito. Questa pazzia e malizia da loro forte e goda-*

[5] The editor transcribes erroneously as 'londāne.'

> *ta, e approuata, e gli pare che non sia libidinosa, dicano ancora di più che per sapere ben amare Dio, che è il uero amore; bisogna prima amar le sue creature con amore inbrobrio, e imperfetto, tutto questo è per forma in uerita sono sodo[m]iti e pediconi* [sic] (ʿAlī Ufuḳī, 1665: 47).

> The current Sultan, Sultan Meḥmet [most probably erroneous for Murād IV], fell in love with a youth from Constantinople, who was his music page and whose name is Ḳul-oġlı; now he is not only his musician, but plays and sings when[ever] the Grand Signior commands, but [is] also his favourite. This delusion and evil is strong and [widely] enjoyed among them, and it is approved, and they do not consider it libidinous as they say that in order to love God, which is true love, it is necessary first to love his creation with improper and imperfect love. But all this is a pretext, actually they are sodomites and pederasts. (Haug 2019: 209f.)

Besides the well-worn homosexuality trope, Ḳul-oġlı is so important that ʿAlī Ufuḳī names him to his European readers – in contrast to, say, a composer of courtly instrumental music from roughly the same period such as Ṣolaḳ-zāde (MS Turc 292: f. 352b/194b) or Şerīf (MS Turc 292: f. 377*a/233a). A full understanding of his motivation to name Ḳul-oġlı may be impossible to fathom; however it becomes clear that *ʿāşıḳ* literature and culture occupied a significant position in ʿAlī Ufuḳī's mind. The question remains however, of whether he was Bektāşī-socialized himself. He was a prisoner of war and not a *devşirme*, but at the very least it is clear that his interaction with Bektāşī circles was close and enduring.

It is an interesting point that the high density of *ʿāşıḳ* content in ʿAlī Ufuḳī's manuscripts coincides with the *Ḳażı-zādeli* movement, a militant group on a mission to purify Islam. With the approval of Sultan Murād IV's mother, Ḥatīce Turḫān, the *Ḳażı-zādeli* first targeted Sufi worship practices, including music and bodily movement. In the later 1660s, their attention shifted to Bektāşī lodges (Baer, 2008: 64ff., 113ff.; Finkel, 2007: 213ff.). At that time, most probably the best part of ʿAlī Ufuḳī's notations had been completed, but he must have felt the rising tension and the increasing stigmatization of religious outsiders in the palace and city. This begs the question of how ʿAlī Ufuḳī selected his repertoire (if he selected it at all). It is clear that he does not promote a particular religious stance, but notates diverse and even contradictory positions. This is not to imply uncertainty or a deliberate policy of variety, but shows the broad range of topics and notions available to him.

In preparation for our analysis of the samples from Turc 292, a few words on ʿAlī Ufuḳī's transliteration system are necessary. Most probably self-invented, it is based on Italian and Polish phonology. The following chart shows the most important characteristics of the system, which, however, is not employed consistently.

Grapheme		*Transliteration*	
gi / ge	inginir	c	incinir
ǵ	aǵeb	c	ʿaceb
tz	netze	c	nice
cz	czok	ç	çoḳ
gh	gherek	g preceding e or i	gerek
gh	dileghim	ğ	dileğim
ij	akłijm	ı	ʿaḳlım
ł	ołdu	dark l	oldu
gn	guignul	ñ	göñül
io	ghioz	ö	göz
v	vmrum	ö	ʿömrüm
ß	kaß	ş	ḳaş
v	vian	u as initial sound	uyan
iu	ghiul	ü	gül
u	dunia	ü	dünyā
u	seudighim	v	sevdiğim
i	iarijm	y	yārim

ʿAlī Ufuḳī mainly identifies *ʿāşıḳ* songs and song texts as *türkī*, sometimes also as *varşaġı*.[6] The first example (Turc 292: f. 267a/113a) is attributed to Ḳaraca-oğlan (an *ʿāşıḳ* not mentioned by Evliyā Çelebi but connected to Istanbul janissary circles during the seventeenth century by Öztelli, 1969). Birge (1937: 73) likewise describes '*Karaca Oğlan* [author's italics], a Janissary musician-poet, and therefore also a Bektashi.' He is present in Turc 292 with sixteen texts, among which only three can be found in modern editions. *Bei ei ala ghiozlu dilber* could easily be identified as the famous *Behey ala gözlü dilber*. When juxtaposing ʿAlī Ufuḳī's text with the modern version from Sadettin Nüzhet Ergun's edition (1950: 220f.), there is a striking similarity:

Bei ei ala ghiozlu dilber ://:
Czaghin getzer demedimmi
Ghiozlerin ołmiß harami
Beller kesser demedimmi

Bak siu kaßa bak siu ghioze ://:
Gigher kebab ołdu kioze
Jakasuz ghiomlekler bize
Felek biczer demedimmi

Behey ala gözlü dilber
Vaktin geçer demedim mi
Harami olmuş gözlerin
Beller keser demedim mi

Bak şu kaşa, bak şu göze
Ciğer kebab oldu köze
Yakasız gömlekler bize
Felek biçer demedim mi

6 The exact criteria for distinction between those two genres are unclear and the discussion must be skipped here for lack of space; see Haug, 2019: 353–356.

Kaßłarin kurułij kalem ://:
Ghidem iaurum ghene ghelem
Ghiowerginlikdur siu alem
Konar giotzer demedimmi

Derialerde gezer ghemi ://:
Szekerdur dudunin iemi
Sora ghiordummi dewrani
Vmur getzer demedimmi

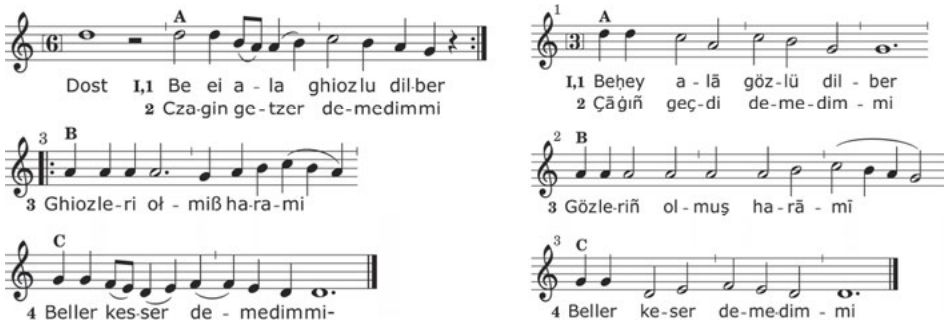
Deryalarda yüzer gemi
Şeker dudağının yemi
Süregör devranı, demi
Devran geçer demedim mi

Karagia ogłan der merd ile
Jßim ioktur namerd ile
Felik bizij bu derd ile
Akibet Ałer demedimmi

Karaca Oğlan der merd ile
Sözüm yoktur nâmerd ile
Kahpe felek bu derd ile
Bizi eğer demedim mi

ʿAlī Ufuḳī's third stanza seems to have been lost on the way, but the remaining four quatrains deviate only in wording, not in content – with one exception. There is of course no such thing as a 'correct version' in the sense of critical edition ('Urtext'), but it seems that the wording '*Szekerdur dudunin iemi*' ('Sugar is the food of the parrot') is a more probable reading than '*Şeker dudağının yemi*' ('Sugar is the food of your lips'). The parrot feeding on sugar is a familiar poetic image in Ottoman literature. Such a high degree of conformity hints at a common time and locale, and it would be extremely valuable to know Ergun's exact sources. He occasionally mentions special *mecmūʿalar* but does not provide a list of studied manuscripts (e.g. Ergun, 1930: 16, 46).

The text is accompanied by two melodic versions, one underlaid with the transliterated text and the other with the first stanza in Arabic characters.



Figures 1a and 1b: Edition of the notations on MS Turc 292, f. 267a/113a.[7]

[7] All editions by Judith I. Haug. A short note on editorial procedure: Capital letters designate formal units of the melody, bold Roman numerals the stanza and bold Arabic numerals the verse. Numbers in light weight designate the number of the respective staff. Notation 1 – Dextrograde. In absence of a rhythm designation, the melody shows regular units of six semiminims (edition: breathing signs). Stanza I is underlaid in transliteration. The number 3 above the repeat sign is original. Notation 2 – Sinistrograde. Regular units of three minims (edition: breathing signs). Stanza I is underlaid in Arabic script by ʿAlī Ufuḳī.

The second example is by Kātibī, and again, the version transmitted by ʿAlī Ufuḳī (Turc 292: f. 375a/218b) and the modern edition by Sadettin Nüzhet Ergun (1933: 9f.) deviate only in details of the wording. The similarity is so close that Ergun's editions can help decipher ʿAlī Ufuḳī's sometimes hardly legible texts:[8]

Efkār atı ile menzil görenler
Var ise cevheri girsün meydāne
Bizi bilmez deyü ıẓlāl ėdenler
Gelsün söyleşelim sözi rindāne

Efkâr atı ile menzil görenler
Var ise hüneri girsin meydane
Bizi bilmez deyu ıdlâl edenler
Gelsin söyleşelim sözü rindâne

Terk ėdüb efkārı rindāne söyle
Maʿrifet baḥrini sen dāḫī böyle
ʿĀrif ol sözüñi muḫtaṣṣar [sic] söyle
Ehl-i ḳā'il onur yola erkāne

Terkedüp efkârı rindâne söyle
Maârif bahrini sen dahi söyle
Ârif ol sözünü muhtasar söyle
Ehl-i dil tâbidir yola erkâne

ʿÖmrümüñ diraḫtı derd ile bitdi
[…] sözüm menzile yetdi
Felek aşımıza aġūlar ḳatdı
ʿAşḳımıñ şemʿine döner pervāne

Ömrümün dirahtı derdile bitti
Bihamdillâh sözüm menzile yetti
Felek aşımıza ağular kattı
Aşkımın şem'ine döner pervâne

Biz ġāẕiyüz her maʿnīden aluruz
Ġāibāne düşmenimi bilürüz
Ecel gelüb bizde bir gün ölürüz
Nice ḳahramānlar geldi devrāne

Ârifiz biz her mânâdan alırız
Gaibâne düşmanımız biliriz
Ecel gelir bir gün biz de ölürüz
Niçe kahramanlar geldi devrâne

Ḥıfẓ eyle kendüñi ṣu gibi aḳma
Nāmerdiñ nārına uṣuñı yaḳma
Kātibī cāhiliñ söziñe baḳma
ʿArifiñ […] bekle merdāne

Hıfz eyle kendini su gibi akma
Nâmerdin nârına özünü yakma
Kâtibî yadların sözüne bakma
Ârif ol kaderi bekle merdâne

Unfortunately, ʿAlī Ufuḳī does not record a melody, neither is there a notation in Sloane 3114. From a number of marginals added to the *türkī* texts it becomes clear, however, that the melodies could be interchanged according to the syllable count. For example, *Gözlerimden yaşı bir zamān aḳar* on f. 241a/87a can be sung '*Jn la Voce [to the tune of] Megnunden benim haŧijm iemander*' notated on f. 124a/264a. Hence, a *türkī* transmitted only textually could and still can be performed with any metrically matching melody.

The third and last example is a song attributed to the famed Ḳul-oġlı (Turc 292, f. 46b/250a; Ergun, 1940: 30f.). The fact that it was also recorded by the Venetian *bailo*, Giovanni Battista Donado in his *Della Litteratura dei Turchi* (1688, Ekinci and Haug, 2016: 95f.) fits the picture of an author and a repertoire in the public eye.[9]

ʿAceb ne diyārdan uçub gelürsiz
Bir ḫaber [sic] ṣorayım ṭuruñ ṭurnalar
Sevgilü yārimden siz ne bilürsiz
Bize bir teselli vėrin ṭurnalar

Acap ne diyardan uçup gelirsiz
Bir haber sorayım durun turnalar
Sevgili dilberimden ne bilirsiz
Bana bir teselli verin turnalar

8 The transliteration follows the Library of Congress standard.
9 I am indebted to Mehmet Uğur Ekinci for this important discovery.

Gönül perīşāndır tellerin eğri
Düğemez çū çevre ʿāşıḳın baġrı
ʿAzm ėdüb çekilüb Baġdāda doġrı
İmāmlara yüzler sürün ṭurnalar

Ḳulavuzun yañlış yola ṣalarsa
Şāhin urub telleriñiz yolarsa
Alāyuñuz bölük bölük bölerse
Ayrılıḳ nice olur görün ṭurnalar

Ḳāsım gün eyyāmı ṣāḳın fevt etmeñ
Vaḳtlı vaḳt sız ḳalḳub yollara gitmeñ
Avçılar duymasun çaġrışub ötmeñ
Ṣaġ ėsen menzile ėrin ṭurnalar

Ḳul oġlı dembedem içimde ṭolı
ʿAşıḳıñ baġrını ḫūn ėder dili
Mardin dāġlarınıñ ṭoġrıdır yolı
Çölleriñ ṣafāsıñ sürüñ ṭurnalar

Kılağuzun yanlış yola salarsa
Şâhin görüp tellerini yolarsa
Alayını bölük bölük bölerse
Ayrılık nic-olur görün turnalar

Kasım gün eyyamın sakın fevt etmen
Vakıtsız çıkıp ta yollara gitmen
Avcılar duyarlar çağrışıp ötmen
Sağ esen menzile erin turnalar

Gönlün perişandır tellerin eğri
Dayanamaz cevrine âşıkın bağrı
Azm edüp çekilin Bağdad'a doğru
Çöllerin safâsın sürün turnalar

Kuloğlu dembedem içimde dolun
Mesteder âşıkı ol tatlı dilin
Mardin dağlarına uğrasa yolun
İmamlara yüzler sürün turnalar

Here, besides the fact that the order of stanzas 2, 3 and 4 is different, deviations in wording are more obvious. Again, the wording recorded by ʿAlī Ufuḳī is smoother than the modern version: In III,2 the falcon 'hunts / attacks (the crane), tearing out (its) feathers'; in the corresponding II,2 he 'sees (the crane) and tears out (its) feathers'. 'Teller' here means the longer white plumage that extends behind the eyes of the '*telli turna*', the demoiselle crane, to the back of its neck. This animal has strong symbolic meaning in ʿAlevī/Bektāşī spirituality.[10] The less common word '*düğmek*' (to tie a knot, to bind) is accompanied by a gloss: '*duiemes idest daianamas*' – and in fact the modern version has '*dayanmaz*' in the same position. The rhyme in the last stanza is also different.

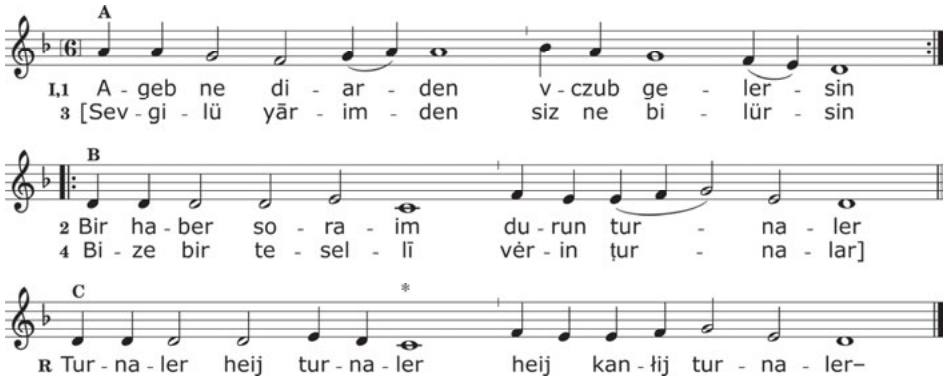


Figure 2: Edition of MS Turc 292, f. 46b/250a.[11]

[10] My heartfelt thanks to Ulaş Özdemir for his knowledgeable contribution.

[11] The melody shows regular units of six minims (edition: breathing signs), which may also be the intention of the *uṣūl* (rhythmic cycle) designation '3/2'. Half a stanza is underlaid in

The melody shows the previously observed syllabic style with sparse ornamentation, a language-dominated form of text setting that easily lends itself to the exchange of texts and migration of tunes. Comparison with current melodic styles and possibilities of enabling historically informed performance practice are important concerns. Regarding textual tradition, the comparison of three examples with versions available in printed collections has already yielded valuable insights. Concerning the melodies recorded by ʿAlī Ufuḳī, the situation is decidedly different. For a 1992 paper, Ursula Reinhard conducted an experiment with a group of modern-day *ʿāşıḳ*s. She asked them to perform the *türkī Ḳaṭar ḳaṭar gelen turnam [sic]* from Sloane 3114 (f. 150b, Turc 292: f. 264b/110b) in order to find out whether continuities still existed from the mid-seventeenth century. They found the melodies remote and alien, difficult to handle in performance, and tended to fill large melodic gaps with stepwise scalar movement. This practice led Reinhard to conclude that ʿAlī Ufuḳī notated a mere skeleton that would have been performed with lots of embellishment (Reinhard, 1992: 225). This explanation is not unproblematic as the 'simple' notations of *ʿāşıḳ* songs stand side by side with highly detailed records of long and complex instrumental pieces. She is, however, probably correct in suggesting that the vocal line without the instrumental accompaniment that is so crucial, paints a skewed picture, just as Pinguet is correct in asking to what extent *ʿāşıḳ* poetry could be appreciated when not accompanied by the *sāz* (Reinhard, 1992: 225; Pinguet, 1998: 393). In the time and locale of ʿAlī Ufuḳī and Evliyā Çelebi a similar question must be asked about the *çöğur*, as the instrument of the *ʿāşıḳ* was not the *saz* or *bağlama* in use today, as the passage cited above clearly shows. After all, *ʿāşıḳ* art has developed over centuries of predominantly oral transmission, especially concerning the music, hence stylistic changes must have occurred naturally. It is however important to keep in mind that *ʿāşıḳ* culture was not entirely oral and that written song-text collections existed, from which ʿAlī Ufuḳī may have copied the lyrics.

Before closing this section, it is important to remark that ʿAlī Ufuḳī's collections offer a wealth of texts by less well-known *ʿāşıḳ*s, such as Meftūnī (e.g. f. 301a/147a; Öztelli, 1955: 88–90; Kocatürk, 1963: 234f.) or Ṭās-bāz (e.g. f.47a/249b; Elçin, 1997: 269–272), besides the many additions to the œuvre of famous authors such as the three personalities cited above.

The Abdāl Tradition

This second distinct segment of repertoire content is best exemplified by the specific genre of *tekerleme*. While there are also texts in *türkī* form by authors from the Abdāl sphere (see table below), the *tekerleme* is more obviously different. In both of ʿAlī Ufuḳī's notation collections, there are examples of the *tekerleme*. In Anatolian

transliteration, the remainder is added in square brackets from the Arabic-script version below the notation. C 1: 5-6 Mi c' read Sb c' (edition: asterisk).

literature, this term is understood to refer to folk tales or riddles, often containing figures of absurdity or reversal of the natural order. In Bektāşī tradition, such poems carry deep spiritual meaning cloaked in wit and humour and offer lessons on religious principles. They are further linked to the mystic genre of the *şaṭḥiyye*, 'ways of expressing one's spiritual teaching in a counter-intuitive and shocking manner, achieved by bringing together affirmations and negations which should not co-exist according to common sense' (Oktay, 2017: 110ff., 112). A well-known example of this type of literature is the poem by Yunus Emre in which he describes eating a walnut from a plum tree (Pinguet 1998: 399f.; 2002: 15–19, 33).[12] For ʿAlī Ufuḳi, the *tekerleme* is clearly also a musical term; he even counts it among the parts of a performance sequence (MS Turc 292: ff. 243b/89b, 249a/95a). Texts titled *tekerleme* can be found on folios 242b/88b, 271b/117, 308b/164b, and 233b in MS Turc 292 and on folios 25b–26a and 48a in MS Sloane 3114.

The text I would like to draw attention to is neither entitled *tekerleme* nor attributed to Ḳayġusuz Abdāl, a crucial proponent of this tradition (Birge, 1937: 83ff), but I became fortuitously aware of this important connection through a presentation by Zeynep Oktay at the Orient-Institut Istanbul in October 2017. Ḳayġusuz Abdāl (d. c. 1444), disciple of Abdāl Mūsā, who was instrumental in the 'Bektashisation of the Janissaries' (Oktay, 2017: 12, 20), is understood as one of the central Bektāşī authors and spiritual teachers (Birge, 1937: 55; Pinguet, 2002: 13; Oktay, 2016, 75ff.). His extensive corpus of prose and various types of verse comprises didactic works aiming at both the general public and the dervishes themselves (Oktay 2016: 75f.).

One of Ḳayġusuz Abdāl's most famous poems is the *tekerleme* of the goose. It describes how the poet buys a goose and tries to cook it, but it resists for fourty days. Outwardly comical, even coarse, its mystical meaning targets the base self, stubbornly resisting enlightenment, equating the cooking of the goose with the spiritual growth of the human soul (Pinguet, 1998: 400–404; Oktay, 2017: 119). On f. 245a/91a of MS Turc 292, we encounter a text that bears high resemblance. It is attributed to Budalam (Ergun, 1930: 205-207; Eröz, 1990: 108). Budala(m) or Ḳul Budala(m) – both name versions exist in ʿAlī Ufuḳi's sources – is described by Ergun (n.d.: 51f.) as a Bektāşī poet who supposedly lived in the seventeenth century. Ergun adds that 'it is possible to encounter many poems […] of this singer-poet in old and new song text collections.'[13] Unfortunately, he does not name those sources and we are left to wonder what this eminent scholar would have made of Turc 292. The text is most probably a *naẓīre* (a creative reworking) of Ḳayġusuz Abdāl's goose *tekerleme*. It is titled '*Torludan kaz tekerlemesi*', 'The goose *tekerleme* from Torlu'. The place name is not easily localized; it appears that Torlu was

[12] Regarding the connection between the *tekerleme* and the *şaṭḥiyye*, see Pinguet, 2002: 19f. and Oktay 2016: 76f.

[13] „[…] bu saz şairinin eski ve yeni mecmualarda […] epeyce şiirine tesadüf olunmaktadır'. Ergun n.d., 51.

the old name of the village of Dzhebel in the province of Kardzhali (Kırcaali) in southeastern Bulgaria, near today's border with Greece and Turkey.[14] Given the connection between Bektāşism, the Janissaries and the Balkan region, this would make sense.

The following chart shows the poem as transmitted by ʿAlī Ufuḳī (MS Turc 292, f. 245a/91a), juxtaposed with the matching stanzas in the canonized version of Ḳayġusuz Abdāl (Özmen, 1998a: 229; see also Pinguet, 2002: 21–24). Although only three stanzas correspond directly, the general content is the same, as is expected from a *naẓīre*:

Antepte bir karidan, bir kaz ałdum *1 Vc giun ołdu kainadirez*	*1 Bir kaz aldım ben karıdan* *Boynu da uzun borudan* *Kırk abdal kanın kurutan* *Kırk gün oldu kaynadıram kaynamaz*
Kimimuz odunun czatar *Kimimuz ghiorugun czeker* *Kaz baßijn kałdermiß bakar* *Vcz giun ołdu kainadirez*	*2 Sekizimiz odun çeker* *Dokuzumuz ateş yakar* *Kaz kaldırmış başın kadar* *Kırk gün oldu kaynadıram kaynamaz*
2 Kainadikce ołdu better *Tengere icinde gurgur vtter* *Korkarom kapaghin attar* *Vc giun etc*	
3 Suiuna saldim bułgur *Jcinde durmaiub kałghir* *Agałar ne mußkiul hałdir* *Vc giun ołdu etc*	*9 Suyuna biz saldık bulgur* *Bulgur Allah deyü kalgır* *Be yarenler bu ne haldır* *Kırk gün oldu kaynadıram kaynamaz*
Gurgur vttikce vrkeres *Hebimus hisse ałmaga sarkares* *4 ianena warma korkares* *Vc giun etc*	
Kainadikce iß baßaramadik *5 Otuz czek odunla bißijremedik* *Szimdi waktin dußuremedik* *Vc illadak kainadirez*	
Bin bir kirba koduk suiu *Kurułduk necze bin kuiu* *Kazijn hitz ißanmas tuiu* *Ghiorduk kuru kainaderez*	

[14] http://wikimapia.org/8867147/tr/Ka%C5%9Flar-k%C3%B6y-ve-Torlu-k%C3%B6y, accessed 14 September 2018.

7 Tikirleiub ołduk naczar
Kaz susamiß agzin aczar
Dukiuben suiun durma iczer
Szindi susuz kainadirez

8 Budałamder mußkiul hałijm
Kaz kainatmak bukti belim
Ołsun ia ołmasun zulum
Ciak vlingesk kainadirez –

The presentation of the poem is problematic: riddled with deletions, glosses, annotations and metrical errors, and difficult to understand formally. Stanza numbers are found in unexpected places, and the stanza beginning with '*Suiuna saldim buł-gur*' has been added later to the right of stanzas 2 and 4. Obviously ʿAlī Ufuḳī struggled in some way, about which we can only guess. However, there are also some important contentual deviations: The symbolic number 40 has disappeared from the refrain-like last verse; the goose resists cooking for three days instead of fourty days, and there are no fourty *abdāllar* involved in the story. Mount Kâf is not invoked, and also the *pōst*, the ceremonial sheepskin mentioned in the last verse of the standard version ('*Kaldırıp postu gidelim*') is missing (Pinguet, 1998: 401f.). However, in the text underlaid to a short notation on the same page, the name of ʿAlī is invoked as a sort of introduction:

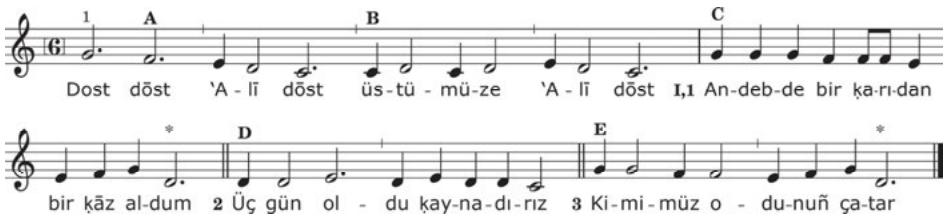


Figure 3: Edition of MS Turc 292, f. 245a/91a.[15]

Although the notation does not clarify the formal structure of the song, it allows a fascinating insight into the performance of this type of mystic literature. *Dōst*, by the way, is ubiquitous as an exclamation opening *ʿāṣıḳ* songs. A comparable (untitled) text dealing with various foodstuffs including 'Terhana' (*tarhana*, i.e. soup made from a stock of dried yoghurt and spices) and accompanied with a notation again starting with the words '*Dost dost ali dost vstumuze ali dost*' can be found on f. 244b/90b. It seems as though there was a certain performance practice for the *tekerleme*, but we have far too little source material in our hands to support conclusions regarding performance contexts and meanings.

[15] The melody exhibits regular units of six semiminims (i.e. quarter notes), marked off with breathing sings in the edition. This supposed rhythmic organisation requires two minor emendations indicated with asterisks: B 2: 4-6 Mi d' read dotted Mi d'. – E 2: 4-6 Mi d' read dotted Mi d'.

There is one specimen of the *tekerleme* I would like to draw special attention to. It is a short poem in South Slavic (roughly the predecessor of modern-day Serbo-Croatian) entitled '*iki bela Tekerleme*' (tentatively: '*Tekerleme* of two troubles'; MS Turc 292: f. 271b/117b). With its absurd juxtapositions of animals and objects it bears resemblance to Ḳayġusuz Abdāl's '*Ḳaplu ḳaplu baġalar*', in which tortoises grow wings to fly and the butterfly goes to hunt with a bow and arrow (Özmen, 1998a: 225; Oktay, 2017: 119, 128f.).

iki bela Tekerleme

Nagledau se czuda – czuda ter welika	*I have seen my share of miracles – great miracles*
Na mediedu zwonu A na wuku gatie	*A bell on a bear and underpants on a wolf*
A na iezu kozuh Ter mekahem kozuh	*Skin on a hedgehog, and soft skin*
Na wrani wiencij Na Lunij obotcij	*Wreaths on the crow, earrings on the kite*
A ne Ciwku ciałma	*A turban on the screech owl*[16]

This stimulates a whole new line of research on Abdāl/Bektāşī piety in the Balkans and its reverberations in seventeenth-century palace circles. A second interesting connection are the allusions to the Dobruca region in the borderlands of today's Romania and Bulgaria (MS Turc 292: ff. 47a/249 and 52b/251a).

The section on Abdāl-inspired poetry closes with an overview of the representation of heterodox authors in MS Turc 292. Inclusion in this sphere mainly follows the attributions made by Ergun in his '*On yedinci Asırdanberi Bektaşî – Kızılbaş Alevî Şairleri ve Nefesleri*' (n.d.) for ʿAlī Ufuḳi's lifetime.

- (Ḳul) Budala(m): ff. 245a/91a with melody (see above), 245b/91b *türkī* without melody, 263a/109a with melody.
- Pīr Sulṭān Abdāl: ff. 253a/99a without melody; concordance is attributed to 'Ufḳī' (MS Sloane 3114: f. 39b); 311a/167a with melody (see Figure 4).
- Balım Sulṭān: f. 261b/107b *türkī* with melody.
- Ḥācı Bektāş: ff. 265b/111b with melody, 267b/113b with melody (ascribed to 'Cüce ʿAli Āġā' in MS Sloane 3114, f. 28b).
- Yūnus Emre: f. 279a/125a *türkī* without melody.
- 'Muhiettin' (f. 2a/253a, without melody) may be Muḥyiddin Abdāl (Özmen 1998b: 87ff.).

The number of texts attributed to heterodox authors is much smaller than those from the sphere of Ḳaraca-oġlan, Ḳul-oġlı and Kātibī. However, their presence in the collection is meaningful, as is their disappearance or reattribution in Sloane 3114, even if this observation cannot yet be interpreted fully.

[16] I am most grateful to Branka Ivušić for the translation of this text and all editorial comments. ʿAlī Ufuḳi, whose native language was Polish, was not very familiar with South Slavic. He added a number of explanations to the text.

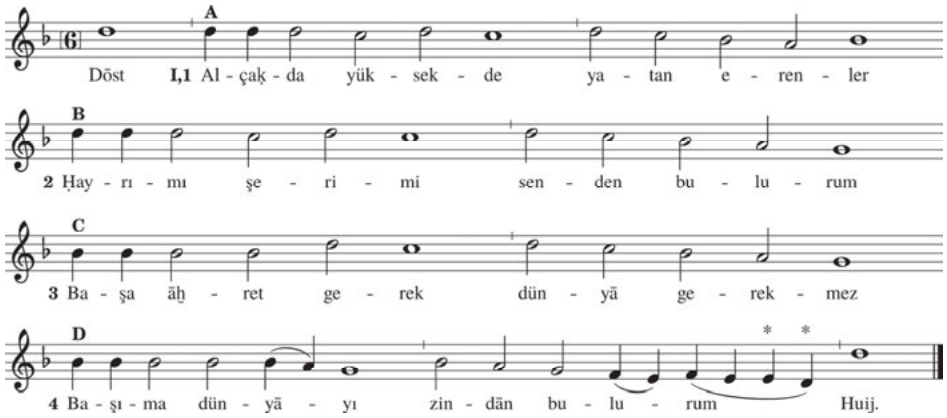


Figure 4: Edition of MS Turc 292, f. 311a/167a.[17]

Are the two groups of *ʿāşıḳ*s really as clearly defined against each other as the design of the present article suggests? In terms of poetics and style, important words, for instance the terms for ritual clothing and objects – *ḫırḳa*, the cowl, *ʿabā*, the woolen cloak, and *pōst*, the sheepskin, see the example by Ḳaygusuz Abdāl cited by Mélikoff (1998, 3) – can be found in the texts of the Janissary *ʿāşıḳ*s as well.[18] The combination of various strands of repertoire from the ʿAlevī/Bektāşī spectrum repertoires transmitted by ʿAlī Ufuḳī supports Oktay's statement that 'Ḳaygusuz Abdāl's strand of *abdāl* piety remained mostly limited to Bektashi and Alevi circles, and became a central element of their religious views and practices' (Oktay, 2017: 125). Likewise, it is proof for Karamustafa's thesis that the Bektāşī order as it is known today came into being during or after the reign of Süleymān II 'through the blending together of earlier antinomian mystic groups', among them the Abdālān-i Rūm (Karamustafa, 1993: 129). It is clear that Abdāl piety was present and valued in ʿAlī Ufuḳī's palace surroundings.

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[17] The melody shows regular units of six minims (i.e. half notes), marked with breathing marks in the edition. This supposed rhythmic organisation requires the following emendations indicated with asterisks: D 2: 6 Mi e' d' read Sm e' d'. 'Ḥayrımı' sic.

[18] For the use of terminology in the poems transmitted by ʿAlī Ufuḳī see Haug, 2019: 213–217; a glossary can be found in Birge 1937: 251–271.

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The Materiality of Alevi Written Heritage: Beautiful Objects, Valuable Manuscripts, and Ordinary Books[1]

Janina Karolewski

For several decades now, we have seen ground-breaking research into the Alevi written tradition. This has been notable for various reasons. Most of all, these academic studies have only been possible due to the radical change initiated by a number of Alevis: they lifted the obligation to secrecy surrounding their tradition and allowed fellow believers as well as non-Alevis to access their writings and publish research on them. In the ensuing years, the number of written sources, documented mainly in private collections, has amazed many scholars. The former paradigm of an almost exclusively oral tradition has been revised and is now being presented in a more nuanced way. Some Alevi groups, though settling in rural areas and oftentimes socially marginalized, had established manuscript cultures, for which we have most evidence from the late eighteenth century to the 1950s. By now, a fairly large number of studies based on these sources in mainly Ottoman Turkish, have provided insights into religious, social and historical aspects of Alevi communities[2]. For the most part so far, research has focused on the texts contained

1 Firstly, we would like to thank the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft and the Sonderforschungsbereich 950 'Manuscript Cultures in Asia, Africa and Europe', Universität Hamburg, which have made this research possible. Our thanks also go to Martin Greve and Ulaş Özdemir, who encouraged our contribution to this volume and showed saintly patience with us. We would also like to express our thanks to all of the interviewees and collectors who worked with us. Their great selflessness and endless patience with us allowed this research to develop. Special thanks go to Ali Göktürk Dede (Malatya), Akar Güneş (Schweinfurt), Hasan Gazi Öğütcü (Daisendorf), Hasan Gazi Öğütcü (Bicir Köyü), and the late Cennet Uluk (Bicir Köyü). Last but not least, we are profoundly grateful to Antonella Brita (Hamburg) and Victor D'Avella (Hamburg) for proof-reading this essay. Of course, any mistakes are our responsibility alone. Çalışmamızda sabır ve anlayış içerisinde bize yardım eden ve emeğe geçen herkese minnettarız. Özellikle Ali Göktürk Dede'ye (Malatya), Akar Güneş'e (Schweinfurt), Hasan Gazi Öğütcü'ye (Daisendorf), Hasan Gazi Öğütcü'ye (Bicir Köyü) ve rahmetli Cennet Uluk'a (Bicir Köyü) en içten dileklerimizle çok teşekkür ediyoruz.

2 Regarding documents from Alevi family archives, the work of Ayfer Karakaya-Stump (2006a, 2006b, 2007, 2010a) is leading in many ways. A series of document-related studies has also been published in *Hacı Bektaş Velî Araştırma Dergisi* (later named *Türk Kültür ve Hacı Bektaş Velî Araştırma Dergisi*); for an overview see e.g. Yılmaz (2017a). Studies on manuscript books containing text collections on Alevi beliefs and practices have been presented by Anke Otter-Beaujean (1990, 1997) and Doğan Kaplan (2010, 2015), to name the most comprehensive works. The recent article by Mehmet Ersal (2016) on notebooks by Alevi ritual specialists and musicians hopefully initiates more research into this much neglected field. Apart from these works, there exists by now a huge number of both academic and popular publications on various kinds of manuscripts from Alevi contexts, most of them text editions and renditions.

in the manuscripts, and the materiality of these artefacts has not yet received appropriate attention. This essay proposes a perspective on the Alevi written heritage that goes beyond its texts and considers its material and social dimensions. In touching on aspects such as the design, value and use of these manuscripts in their particular social and temporal contexts, we do not offer final answers, but prefer to contribute several case studies to the ongoing discussion on Alevi material culture in the historical village setting[3]. And finally, we touch on recent developments in handling Alevi written heritage, which are, for several reasons, very much related to aspects that lie behind its mere textual contents.

For the present essay we limit our investigation to manuscript books, notebooks and documents, but we surely regard more objects of the Alevi material culture as 'manuscripts'[4], or alternatively speaking as 'written artefacts'[5]; among them stone inscriptions on buildings or gravestones, wall writings, calligraphy lettering on textiles or metal work, and amulets. Considering all writings that were produced, displayed and perceived within 'public' or 'private' spaces, expands the research perspective to a concept of written tradition that exceeds books and documents. Text as instantiated in writing takes different material forms, which all have a social and cultural context in which resources were allocated for their production. We do not touch on these other objects, but hope for future studies to shed light on their materiality in the Alevi case as compared to Sufi or Sunni milieus, for example.

Furthermore, we understand the Alevi written heritage as the result of a continuous interplay between Alevi communities and other social milieus: the Safavid and Bektaşi Orders, Ottoman bureaucracy, and Islamic schooling, for instance. In many cases, Alevi scribes composed or copied texts in order to learn, keep and transmit their religious knowledge as well as their literary and poetic heritage. One finds, among others, religious treatises, hagiographies, epics, the Quranic text, surah collections, ritual manuals, and prayer and poem collections. For some manuscript copies, we assume that they entered Alevi communities from outside and were subsequently incorporated into their heritage. This was usually possible when the texts enjoyed common respect and acceptance, as in the case of the Quran, epics and narratives on episodes from Early Islam, hagiographies, and Sufi poetry, for example. Since the information contained in such books and notebooks regarding the scribe, date, or provenience is often insufficient, we lack a detailed description of the production context. But the situation with documents is different. Some of these rule that certain groups or families are exempt from taxes,

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3 For a concise overview, see Hendrich (2018); for the historical context see e.g. Özgül (2001), Hendrich (2004), Yıldırım (2012b) and Andersen (2015); for recent developments see e.g. Hendrich (2005), Çaylı (2014), Weineck (2015), Markoff (2018), and Weineck & Zimmermann (2019a).

4 See the definition by Lorusso et al. (2015: 1–2).

5 See Exzellenzcluster 2176 'Understanding Written Artefacts', Universität Hamburg, https://www.written-artefacts.uni-hamburg.de/.

others confirm the lineage of religious specialists or authorize them to initiate followers. Such certificates were normally prepared outside of Alevi villages, e.g. in Kerbela at the *nakibü l-eşraf*, the state official who testified that a person was descended from the Prophet Muhammad (e.g. Karakaya-Stump, 2007, 2017; Yılmaz, 2017a).

Lastly, we must underscore that manuscript culture was not common to all Alevi communities. So far we know of only a few such communities and can already recognize the diversity between them. In some cases, for example, religious specialists were decisive actors in disseminating their respective written knowledge among their illiterate followers by providing readings from books that were accessible to them alone (e.g. Karolewski, 2020a). But we also know about cases in which oral and musical performances, which were supposed to be given without the aid of writings and did not rest on a set of fixed texts, were favoured for transmitting religious knowledge. Even in such cases however, private notes among performers were not frowned upon and they helped circulate texts and hand them down (e.g. Kieser, 2005; Özdemir, 2018). These findings are not unexpected at all, but confirm what is well known: The communities that are collectively termed 'Alevi' in the present day comprise groups that used to be affiliated to lineages with varying traditions and histories (e.g. Dressler, 2013).

The Materiality of Alevi Written Heritage: Manuscripts Beyond Their Texts

Many scholars who have worked on books, notebooks or documents from Alevi contexts most probably share common experiences in their approach to the sources. They might seek sources in public libraries, which often resembles the search for the proverbial needle in the haystack. Still, the chances are not zero of finding manuscripts with content that hint at an Alevi milieu. One might also struggle to gain access to the two Alevi-focused collections established so far at university institutions in Turkey, about which we will learn more below. If one is interested in the former 'social life' (Appadurai, 1986) of these manuscripts, however, one has to be extremely fortunate to find relevant evidence in their 'paratexts' (see e.g. Ciotti & Lin, 2016) or in the documentation in catalogues and inventories, for example. One might, therefore, endeavour to work with private collectors, who are often Alevis and can sometimes be the key to situating their items in a social and temporal context. The most favourable situations occur when manuscript evidence can be juxtaposed with information gained from members of Alevi families or communities that used and at times produced the objects in question (see e.g. Karolewski, 2018a, 2020a). Such an approach has obvious limits, since one cannot go back further than oral history allows and one has to cope critically with the 'remembered information' of a past that is itself a 'social product' (Vansina, 1985).

In the case of Alevis, where accounts of everyday life and life history have seldom been recorded in writing, as far as our sources are concerned, one would be well-advised to consider oral history and memory studies and see 'that this methodology and interdisciplinary field has the potential to change the way the recent past is studied and represented both within academe and in society as a whole' (Neyzi, 2010: p. 443). The impact of academic work on Alevi actors who are actively involved in identity and heritage politics, especially in Germany, is not nominal and becomes particularly obvious in their various publications (e.g. Kaplan, İ., 2003; Aksünger-Kizil & Kahraman, 2018). For now, however, their recourse to available studies is at best selective, but most often motivated and at the same time limited by demands that cannot be met by academics, let alone by the sources found thus far (see e.g. Weineck & Zimmermann, 2019b). In particular, the expectation of finding a general cure-all for questions on religious beliefs and practices in the manuscripts, is not reconciled with the historical situation in most Alevi villages. The importance of giving oral history a special place when researching the Alevi past or negotiating today's Alevi identity has been impressively illustrated in the short opening text, '*Eksik Kalan bir Hikâye*', or 'An Incomplete Story', of Rıza Yıldırım's recent monograph (2018: 19–23).

Today, one meets fewer and fewer Alevis who still remember how they and others made, utilized and perceived manuscripts, before these practices almost came to an end in many communities around the mid-twentieth century. Among the manifold reasons for the end of manuscript culture in Alevi communities was the alphabet reform from Perso-Arabic to Latin characters in 1928 and a number of other social and political transformations in the early Republic of Turkey (see e.g. Yılmaz, 2013). Interestingly enough, one can often observe nowadays how the unfamiliarity of many Alevis with Ottoman Turkish, i.e. Turkish in Perso-Arabic letters, did not lead to a complete dismissal of their written heritage. Instead, there are numerous private collections, the keepers of which assign value to their manuscripts that is beyond the textual contents, which they cannot understand easily in most cases. Apart from the textual aspects, our Alevi interviewees who either possess manuscripts or still remember manuscripts in the possession of community members, regard them as beautiful or impressive objects, they link memories or knowledge to them, they display them to others, or they consider them valuable, whether monetarily, sentimentally or otherwise. We assume that such attitudes towards and practices with books, as well as documents, are not entirely new to the Alevi material culture, but have been, to some extent or another, an integral part of some communities. Our perspective is based on observations mostly gained from the manuscripts themselves and from interviews with Alevis. While most Alevis, as common in rural Anatolia, were illiterate in the past, oral history substantiates that not only the few literate ones remember books and documents as present in their communal life.

The idea that some manuscripts have a 'social life' beyond their textual contents and are not exclusively involved in text-related practices such as reading, memorizing, or copying, supports itself. For one thing, a manuscript is never a mere carrier of texts, musical notes, images, and so on, but forms a unit of 'content and its concrete physical instantiations', the latter comprising 'anything from the format and measurements of a manuscript, the materials chosen as a writing support and for writing and painting to the visual organisation of a manuscript, its decoration and the style of the script' (Wimmer, Bondarev, Karolewski, & Lorusso, 2015: p. 1). It is this material nature of manuscripts that can be essential in communicating meaning and transmitting contents in an unwritten form and beyond the texts contained. The visual appearance of a book, for instance, can appeal not only to its readers, but also to listeners or viewers, whether the producers intended so or not. Besides that, there are many ways of using manuscripts, with reading in all its nuances being only the most apparent (Wimmer et al., 2015: 5). Books can be used as souvenirs, display items, or mnemonic devices, and we will exemplify this with observations from Alevi communities. For the present essay we subsume these aspects under the term 'materiality', as Piquette and Whitehouse (2013) convincingly suggest in their edited collection, *Writing as Material Practice*, and we adapt it to our objects of investigation. Besides material aspects, the materiality of manuscripts refers also to their modes of production, their later involvement in 'subsequent activities, from reading / viewing (where intended) and display, to discard, deposition or loss', and their embeddedness 'in individual and group interactions and perceived cultural norms, and how these are reproduced or renegotiated' (Piquette & Whitehouse, 2013: p. 3).[6]

Books, Notebooks & Documents from Alevi Communities: A Short Overview

The variety of manuscripts that belong to the Alevi written heritage is huge, in terms of both content and materials. So far, no one has dared to attempt a detailed overview, summarizing and contextualizing Alevi manuscript cultures as represented in the sources available. Furthermore, the Alevi written textual tradition has been established on a very general level only[7], and we are still lacking studies that analyse what texts occurred when and in which Alevi communities, or in how many manuscripts certain texts are attested. The same holds true for manuscript culture, since we cannot yet judge when, how and to what extent some groups had

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6 For a short discussion on materiality of texts and agency, see also Karagianni, Schwindt, & Tsouparopoulou, 2015.

7 For an overview on common literary works from Alevi contexts see e.g. Yıldız, 2004; Dreßler, 2008: 102–106; Yıldırım, 2018: 205–314. On the emergence of an Alevi literary tradition see e.g. Yıldırım, 2019. On the study of Alevi written sources see e.g. Weineck & Zimmermann, 2019b: 35–44.

opportunities to obtain and uphold literacy. As Béatrice Hendrich (2018) argues, Alevis favoured 'oral transmission and the *incorporation* of religious knowledge by members of the holy lineages' (p. 50). We completely agree with her appraisal in general, but plead for a case-study-based approach to manuscripts in future research, especially in light of collections from Alevi communities that hint at elaborate written traditions in certain periods. In focussing on such nuances, we might be able to better understand the social, economic and political dimensions behind the formation, control and circulation of Alevi religious knowledge in written form.

In this essay we apply a simplistic classification for manuscripts from Alevi communities that is based on our observations and combines textual contents, material features and forms of use[8]. We do not claim that this classification in its totality is exclusive to Alevi contexts, since it naturally shares commonalities with neighbouring manuscript cultures. Parallels between the written tradition of the Bektaşiyye, other Sufi orders and Alevi communities have often been drawn and are surely uncontested (see e.g. Yıldırım, 2019: 78–89). But there are also similarities with manuscript culture in Sunni villages, which were equally characterized by a low rate of literacy. One finds common texts such as the Quran or epics on Early Islamic times; the manuscript-making is based on the same tradition, as becomes obvious in scribal practices or bookbinding; and practices such as public readings or keeping of personal notebooks with prayers, for example, are present in both contexts. An in-depth comparison of nearby rural communities, both Sunni and Alevi, maybe even Armenian in some regions, would be crucial for many research desiderata, not only for the nature and possible interplay of their manuscript cultures.

In the following short summary of our three main categories we focus on texts that, generally speaking, can be labelled religious. They are contained in most manuscripts documented so far, ranging from multiple-text manuscripts named *Buyruk*, which supposedly assemble Alevi core texts (see e.g. Otter-Beaujean, 1997; Kaplan, D., 2010; Karakaya-Stump, 2010b), to the aforementioned documents that serve as proofs of descent for holy lineages in the Alevi socio-religious fabric. But one also finds various other text genres represented among the manuscripts. For instance, there are Arabic textbooks, or booklets with both religious poetry and private notes on topics as varied as crop yields.

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8 This classification was developed in the sub-project C04 'Reading Aloud, Memorising and Making Notes: Uses of Manuscripts in Alevi Village Communities in Anatolia', Sonderforschungsbereich 950 'Manuscript Cultures in Asia, Africa and Europe', Universität Hamburg, which focussed on the role of manuscripts in educational practices and the transmission of Alevi religious knowledge. The classification will be presented in more details in a final project report, which is currently in preparation for publication in the journal, *manuscript cultures*.

– *Voluminous books and commercial thick notebooks or blank books with leather, textile or cardboard covers*, the layout of which is often in accordance with common conventions of Ottoman book production (framed text-blocks, catchwords, rubrications, and book hands, for example). They usually contain narrations (in prose and poetry), poem anthologies, and dogmatic texts of the Alevi tradition. We assume that one usually read from these books, either for self-study, in a small circle or at a larger gathering. Supposedly, male and literate members of the holy lineages were in possession of such manuscripts and had them circulating within the broader network of religious specialists. In some communities, however, it is said to have been a custom to read and display these manuscripts to literate and illiterate, laymen and religious specialists, women and men alike. In doing so, books gained meaning and value beyond their textual contents.
– *Thin books or booklets and commercial thin notebooks of ruled or squared paper* with often simple page layout and copied in cursive, at times very individually executed. They usually assemble poetry, prayers, other short texts and notes. We assume that these are often private manuscripts, prepared by performers or practitioners as tools for memorization or as later aide-memoires, since reciting or singing texts by reading them was apparently frowned upon during rituals or ritualized gatherings. A particular case within this category are poetry collections that are referred to as *cönk*s, a term often used to name oblong-shaped booklets with the binding on the short edge, but sometimes also common for rectangular notebooks (see e.g. Gökyay, 1993; Kaya, no date). The page layout is usually adapted to stanzas.
– *Documents* in a huge, partly oblong format with an elaborate layout, which are often rolled up for transport and storage. They are usually family trees, confirming the descent from the Prophet Muhammad, and diplomas, attesting the affiliation to certain Sufi orders; but one also finds correspondence with Ottoman state institutions, which is often in relation to family descent and religious establishments such as Dervish convents. These documents were and partly still are stored with great care and at times displayed and read to family members and affiliated laymen. We assume that their owners did not only memorize their central contents, but had to acquire additional knowledge to put flesh on the condensed information in the documents when presenting them to an audience. As we will show in the following, the objects function as 'storage boxes' (Hendrich, 2018: 44–45) for the collective identity of their families and communities.

While documents were usually produced outside the Alevi village context[9], we also know about manuscript books and booklets that were 'made' by Alevis, as we can learn from colophons, for example. Here, 'manuscript-making' refers almost exclu-

[9] Karakaya-Stump (2012–2013: 284–286) and Yılmaz (2017a: 252–253), for example, mention later copies, which were most probably made by their owners for various reasons.

sively to the labour of copying and some minimal illumination, because in many cases we cannot judge who were the handicraftsmen responsible for bookbinding, for example. We cannot exclude the possibility that some Alevis were trained to stitch quires to a stack, attach the stack to boards and adhere textile or leather as cover to the boards, for example. It is also possible that Alevi scribes bought sheets of paper first and had them bound later, once the copying or writing was done, or they acquired blank books at stationers in urban centres[10]. The latter case is particularly easy to detect when blank books are pre-printed accountant books or commercial exercise books with blank pages for schoolwork, for example. From the early twentieth century onwards, the use of such ready-made books and booklets is widely attested in collections from Alevi communities, but could have been popular already before, when stationery stores or bookbinders offered blank volumes on demand. A similar issue is whether some Alevis prepared their writing tools and inks or acquired them in stores or from traveling salesmen, for example.

For now, information on whether these basic production steps were performed within Alevi communities is very rare[11], and we will touch on the importance of these aspects later on. However, we assume that scribes opted for a certain 'manuscript architecture' (Tumanov, 2017: 28) – no matter if they prepared the binding and reed pen, for example, or simply purchased a blank book and metal nib. They did not only consider layout in the two-dimensional sense of a page or opening, but depending on content and use they chose certain manuscript forms and sizes, or bindings and covers. When highlighting material aspects and object-based practices below, we do not intend to deny or diminish the main function for which most of these manuscripts were made and used, namely the storage of written texts for reading, memorizing and copying, for example.

Aesthetics and Use of Manuscripts: The Historical Village Setting

During our research on the transmission of religious and especially ritual knowledge in the Alevi village Bicir in Malatya Province, we made various interviews with community members, in which we also inquired on aspects such as literacy and scripturality (Langer & Öğütcü, 2018; Karolewski, 2018a). In June 2006, Hasan Gazi Öğütcü (born 1959), and Robert Langer interviewed another Hasan Gazi Öğütcü, born 1938 and called Hasan Bey[12], who had been trained by *dede*s,

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10 On such stores in provincial cities of the Ottoman Empire see e.g. Erünsal (2017: 103, footnote 12) and Yılmaz (2013: 264, endnote 101).

11 For an individual account on these issues for the mid-twentieth century, see Karolewski (2020a).

12 Here, 'bey' is not to be confused with the common practice, when it is used after a male person's first name in order to address him. Like 'efendi' and 'ağa', 'bey' functions also as a higher or honorific title or appellation for a man in a position of authority. This use, however, was officially prohibited with the 'Law on Appellations' in 1934 and is still rarely common among elders today (see e.g. Türköz, 2018: 79–83). Oral history in Bicir supports

or religious specialists, in the early 1950s. Hasan Bey had written down several texts in Latin characters during his training and reported as follows on the religious specialists, Temir Kargın (1926–1990), called Temir Dede, and Ali Sami Öğütcü (1923–1970), called Alişan Dede:

Hasan Bey:	We wrote this book in 1953. [He refers to a ritual manual copied by him and another man in two separate notebooks.] And I wrote *Hızır İlmi*. All of it.
H. G. Öğütcü:	Can you tell apart the writing of my uncle Alişan and Temir Dede?
Hasan Bey:	Alişan's writing was a bit better than Temir Dede's writing.
H. G. Öğütcü:	Ah no … can you recognise Temir Dede's writing when you see it?
Hasan Bey:	I recognise the writing of my uncle Temir ... a bit at least. Temir Dede used to write talismans (*muska*). The writing of Alişan Dede was a bit better than the writing of my uncle Temir.

The judgement by Hasan Bey on the handwriting of both *dede*s is surprising at first, since he never learnt the Arabic alphabet. He could not understand whose writing was closer to a book hand or neatly executed without scribal errors, for example. His assessment, therefore, must have been based on an aesthetic perception different from that of someone literate in Arabic letters.

As Hasan Bey told us, he remembered how both *dede*s used notebooks and books written in 'old script', i.e. Perso-Arabic alphabet, when they dictated to him what to write down. Interestingly enough, Hasan Bey did not pay attention to the notebooks, but he remembered how both *dede*s added texts from memory or composed others impromptu[13]. It is very possible, therefore, that the notebooks were not present enough for Hasan Bey to take notice of them during educational sessions. Further, the *dede*s might have deliberately held back their notebooks from others, as is not surprising for private notes, but could also be due to their appearance. Most of them exhibit normal features of individual notebooks or scrapbooks. They are simple commercial notebooks, written with quick hand, with incomplete and crossed-through text passages and an arrangement of text units that is not immediately comprehensible to us (see Fig. 1).

Indeed, our experience shows that notebooks often received and still receive less attention than hardcover books and documents[14]. This can be related to their plain and inconspicuous appearance, which becomes obvious when comparing them to manuscript books with lengthy literary texts presented in a well-arranged,

a narrative that Hasan Bey inherited the title from a male relative, who is said to have been a respected, well-off gentleman and to have taken social responsibility for community members in need.

13 H. G. Öğütcü (born 1938) & J. Karolewski, interview, 30.08.2010.

14 This holds true for private as well as public collections and can be clearly observed in the small number of publications on the topic.

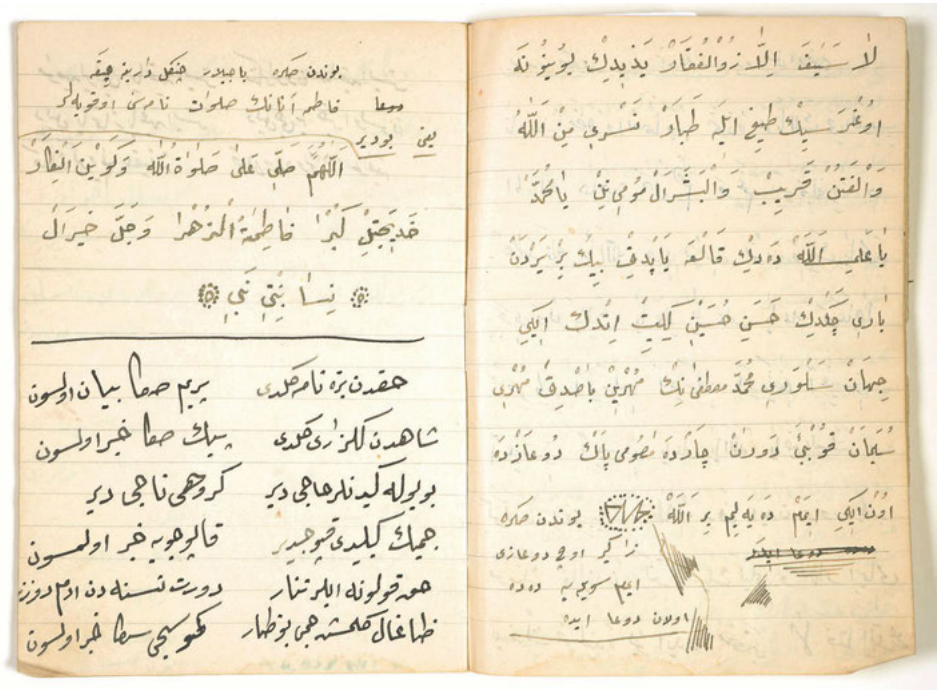

Figure 1: Scrapbook by Alişan Dede, fols. 8v–9r. Undated, presumably 1950s. Drafts for a ritual manual. © Hasan Gazi Öğütcü. Photograph by Karsten Helmholz, CSMC, Universität Hamburg.

symmetrical page layout with illuminations and decorative elements. An example of the latter is the copy of *Hızır İlmi*[15], made by Alişan Dede in 1954 (see Fig. 2).

We assume that the materiality of this *Hızır İlmi* manuscript had an influence on Hasan Bey and his preference for the writing of Alişan Dede. As Hasan Bey mentioned in several interviews, Alişan Dede dictated *Hızır İlmi* to him, using a copy written in old script. It is very likely that Alişan Dede did not hesitate to display the manuscript to Hasan Bey and others, since the copy is executed in a diligent hand close to *Rıka*, most of the text has vocalization signs, and the text block is largely consistent, for example. Furthermore, Alişan Dede chose to copy the text in a pre-printed accountant book with a patterned cardboard cover and a linen spine, measuring 16.5 × 24 × 2 cm[16]. In doing so, Alişan Dede might have

15 Here, *Hızır İlmi* refers to a text commonly known under the short title 'Dürr-i Meknun,' which is not to be confused with the work of the same title by the fiteenth-century scholar, Ahmed Bican.

16 The use of the same kind of accountant book is also attested for three *Buyruk* copies and copies of *Cabbar Kulu*, *Gülzar-i Hasaneyn* and *Lubb al-Lubub*, which were previously presented in an online overview on the homepage of Hacı Bektaş Velî Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi at Hitit Üniversitesi in Çorum.

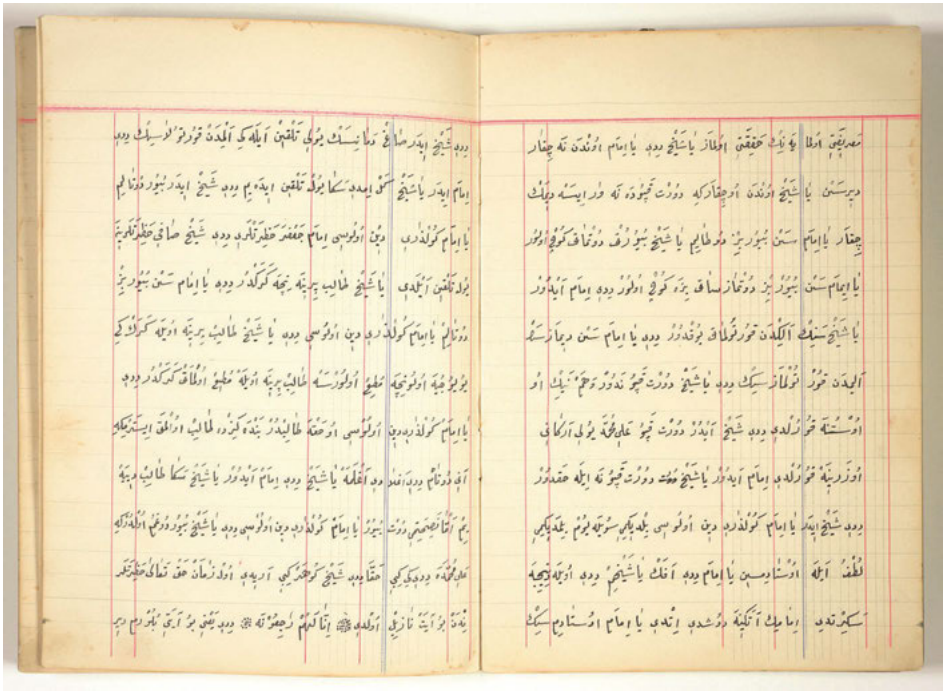

Figure 2: *Hızır İlmi*, copied by Alişan Dede, fols. 16^{v}–17^{r}. Dated 3–14 March 1954. © Hasan Gazi Öğütcü. Photograph by Karsten Helmholz, CSMC, Universität Hamburg.

simply followed the manuscript architecture of the exemplar he used, but he departed significantly from the way he made his notebooks and scrapbooks, which carry excerpts from *Hızır İlmi* and other texts, all equally central to his religious tradition.

We suggest that the differences in the making of notebooks and books do not necessarily relate to the importance of the texts contained, but depend on their forms of use. Religious specialists and musicians, for example, had to memorize texts that were meant to be recited and sung in rituals and at ritualized gatherings. Even though some of them prepared booklets with prayers and hymns for their own ends, using these writings during performance was allegedly frowned upon. In some cases, these private notebooks turned into aide-memoires or were planned as collections of one's own poetry or poetic keepsakes from befriended poets, for example. Texts, such as *Hızır İlmi* or those from *Buyruk*s, however, were meant to be read and commented upon by religious specialists during meetings with community members. At these occasions, laymen and other religious specialists had the chance to see these books. Whilst most of them were not able to read the texts, they might have been impressed by the size of a manuscript, its decorative cover, a symmetrical page layout, or the appealing use of rubrication. It is possible that non-textual characteristics also helped observers to recognise manuscripts often

presented to them and to connect the books and documents with the contents read and explained to them.

The use of objects and human bodies as 'storage boxes' or media of commemoration for Alevi cultural knowledge has been convincingly shown in the works of Béatrice Hendrich (e.g. 2004, 2018). However, she excludes manuscripts for the most part and reasons that the historical context caused a preference for non-written forms of knowledge transmission (Hendrich, 2018: 49–50). We agree with her assumption that written transmission played a subordinate role for many Alevis, but the question we pose here is how the manuscript 'medium' was utilized in communities with an established manuscript culture, and even in those with only a few literate men, or illiterate communities that received visits by literate *dede*s, for example. For the historical context, for instance, Ayşe Baltacıoğlu-Brammer (2019: 47–48 and 52) describes that written texts were used both 'as sacred texts or objects' (p. 47) in rituals or during recitation sessions. As we will see in the following examples, manuscripts store knowledge in the form of texts, which are re-activated when reading them (Hendrich, 2018: 44), and, at the same time, manuscripts are locations of memory, where more knowledge beyond their mere textual contents can be stored (Hendrich, 2004: 174–176).

Documents: The Case of the Ocak *of Şeyh Ahmed Dede*

The first example of manuscripts as 'storage boxes' are genealogical documents and diplomas[17], objects for which it seems most apparent that they address an audience on the non-textual level, since they can be long scrolls with huge calligraphic writings and decorative elements. It is known for various Alevi communities, that document owners presented and sometimes still present the manuscripts in order to communicate their family history, for example. Ayfer Karakaya-Stump (2010b: 274) reports on cases in which affiliated laymen were excluded from such demonstrations, and Murat Bulgan (2010: 276) describes how the document in question can be only displayed to laymen on condition that they recite prayers and make an animal sacrifice. For the holy lineage of Şeyh Ahmed Dede in Şeyh Hasan Köyü, Elazığ Province, it is said that such documents are part of a commemorative practice that is still alive today. Those religious specialists from the holy lineage who are in possession of such scrolls (see Fig. 3)[18] display them to their followers in the Islamic month of Muharrem, a period of mourning in some Alevi communities, during which followers come together in the early evening and mourn collectively. The several text units of the documents, which are mainly in Arabic, are said to be

[17] For a general overview on their material features and layout, see Yılmaz (2017a: 252).

[18] For a full reproduction in colour of such a document from the holy lineage of Şeyh Ahmed Dede, see Aşan (2005: plates 1–16).

Figure 3: First fifth of a document relating several persons via Şeyh Ahmed Dede to Prophet Muhammad and the Vefaiyye. Dated AH 1135 (1722/23). © Ali Göktürk Dede. Photograph by Janina Karolewski.

read, paraphrased in Turkish and explained at length, in order to re-activate the family history of the religious specialists from the village[19].

The stories about the alleged founder of Şeyh Hasan Köyü, a Sufi named Şeyh Ahmed Dede[20], and his descendants are still recalled by many, mainly older members of the community, who usually refer to the documents as reference for their knowledge. But these stories comprise much more details than written down in the manuscripts, while they also skip passages from the documents and differ from each other. We often observed, for instance, that community members did not bring up the affiliation of Şeyh Ahmed Dede to the Vefaiyye, which is actually attested to in most documents published so far (Aşan, 2005; Akın & Yılmaz, 2017; Yılmaz, 2017b). Even when we asked specifically, they could not remember anything about it. It becomes apparent, therefore, that the textual contents of the documents are not only re-activated when reading them to the followers. They are updated, revised, or extended, and by doing so, the manuscripts turn into locations of this additional memory.[21] In some cases, however, we assume that documents were indeed manipulated in order to adapt contents.[22] This is a well-known phenomenon by now, and some relate it to religious and social changes in Alevi communities (e.g. Karakaya-Stump, 2010b: 275).

Manuscript Books: The Case of Buyruk*s*

Our second example is based on several observations on *Buyruk* manuscripts as possible 'storage boxes' in the Alevi tradition. In general, *Buyruk*s are regarded as written instantiation of the Alevi tradition, handed down for generations.[23] As we can observe, some Alevis connected and still connect knowledge to these books that is beyond the texts contained (see e.g. Karolewski, 2014: 184–187), and we will elaborate on this in detail below. But again, we cannot generalize here, since we also know about communities that were not in possession of *Buyruk* manuscripts or were sceptical towards such written texts (see e.g. Tee, 2012: 162–163; Neyzi, 2002: 102). For them, religious and ritual knowledge was incorporated into the bodies of its human performers, who also acted as its transmitters or bearers, a task that was usually assigned to male members of holy lineages, but an important role

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19 Ali Göktürk & J. Karolewski, interview, 29.03.2017; Akar Güneş & J. Karolewski, interview, 20.10.2018.

20 On early documentation in Ottoman sources, see Weineck (2019).

21 Some religious specialists also possess typewritten transcripts into Latin characters of documents from their holy lineage or make use of scholarly publications on their manuscripts. The future will reveal how new forms of media will influence the use of manuscripts and how academic research results are received.

22 For the document in Figure 3, see in short Karolewski (2020a).

23 On assumptions about their origins, see e.g. Otter-Beaujean (1997: 219–226) and Karakaya-Stump (2010b: 278–284).

in this was also taken by so-called *âşık*s, or singing musicians and poets, who were not necessarily religious specialists (see e.g. Clarke, 1999; Karolewski, 2015).

For now, we cannot tell if it was a custom in most Alevi communities that the owners of such manuscripts displayed them to family members or affiliated laymen. While some Alevis report that religious specialists kept these books secret from non-Alevis and Alevi laymen, others remember having seen them when followers came together and religious specialists read from them[24]. In some *Buyruk*s one finds instructions that followers should read the texts and act accordingly (e.g. Mannheim AKM Dedeler Kurulu, 2000: 39 and 151). This hints at a literate setting, the opposite of what we know about Alevi villages in general, but possibly evidence for the milieu these texts emerged in (see e.g. Yıldırım, 2012a). Other passages from *Buyruk*s seem rather to corroborate our understanding of Alevi village contexts, since they explain in short how the spiritual master is supposed to read certain texts to the followers (see Karolewski, 2018a). In the same vein reads a short note on the flyleaf of a *Buyruk* print version from 1958, a photograph of which was recently published by Levent Mete (2019, 325): 'We ask you to carefully hide this book and to read it only to its community.'

It is therefore possible that some religious specialists read to their illiterate followers, who associated the books first of all with the texts contained, which they regarded as divine command (*buyruk*) for their religious community. In addition to that, *Buyruk* manuscripts functioned as locations of further religious knowledge that was actually not contained in them, but had either been presented as connected to them or was simply believed to be part of these text collections. For instance, many Alevis refer to *Buyruk* books when asked about written rules for their ritual practice, although all manuscripts known to us so far have very little information on this issue (see e.g. Karolewski, 2018b).

Today, some communities have only the memory that they had been in possession of *Buyruk* manuscripts, others still preserve these books in family collections. Very often their members recall how *Buyruk*s, but also other books were treated with great care and had been in the hands of their religious specialists. Levent Mete (2019: 328), for instance, mentions that *Buyruk* manuscripts are said to have been wrapped in cloth and kept in wooden chests or in bags made of textile hanging on the wall. This special care can be also observed for printed *Buyruk* versions, which were first published in 1958 and have reached a considerable number by now (see e.g. Kaplan, D., 2010: 95–98). David Shankland (2005), for example, reports for the late 1980s:

> In practice, where I lived, the *Buyruk* appears to be possessed almost entirely by the hereditary holy figures, the *dede*s. They read it in a modern Turkish edition, printed in Istanbul. Many refer to it, and keep it wrapped in a soft piece of cloth to protect it. (p. 313)

[24] It is believed that these practices had already been a central component in early times, namely in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (see e.g. Baltacıoğlu-Brammer, 2019: 47–52).

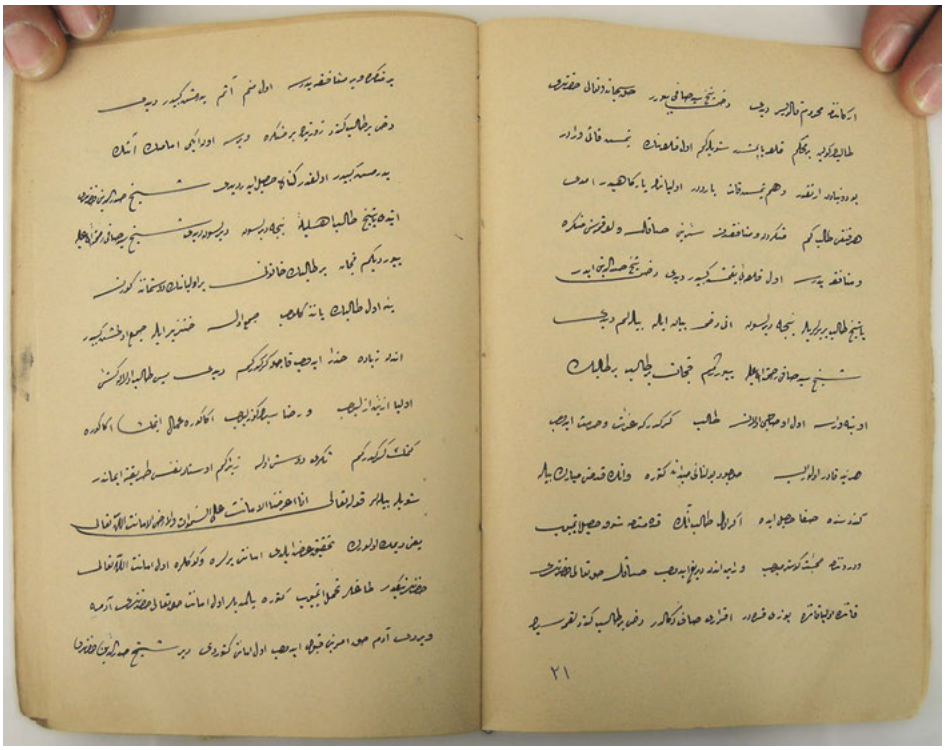

Figure 4: *Buyruk* manuscript, fols. 33^{v}–34^{r}. Copied in Ocak Köyü. Dated 16 Eylül 1306 r. (28 September 1890) and 1309 r. (1893/94). © Ocak Köyü Özel Müzesi. Photograph by Janina Karolewski.

From such accounts, it becomes obvious that some Alevis paid particular respect to *Buyruk* manuscripts. This is in line with the explanations by Mehmet Yaman Dede, a religious specialist from the holy lineage of Hıdır Abdal Sultan in Ocak Köyü, Erzincan Province, a village that is said to have had a long manuscript tradition in the past (Yaman, M., 2018: 188). He mentions that *Buyruk*s were not ordinary (*alelade*) books to be found with just anyone, but they were sacred (*kutsal*) and enjoyed great respect (*onlara büyük saygı duyulur*) (Mannheim AKM Dedeler Kurulu, 2000: X).

We assume that such respect towards *Buyruk* manuscripts had an influence on their production and, at the same time, it was their aesthetics that had a share in mediating their sacredness or importance. Usually, they are prepared with diligence, even when the scribes copied in *Rıka* or their own individual style and not in the popular book hand *Nesih*, for example. One observes elaborate layouts, which follow common conventions and show individual traits (cf. Fig. 4 and 5). Sometimes central and recurring expressions are highlighted in red ink or in a writing style that differs from the running text, other times rubrications and visual markers help to divide the text, which is usually copied in scriptio continua. In

Figure 5: *Buyruk* manuscript, fols. 25ᵛ–26ʳ. Dated 11 Rebi II AH 1241 (22 November 1825). See Karakaya-Stump, 2015: 280–283. © Ali Yaman. Photograph by Janina Karolewski.

most cases, the manuscripts have a leather cover and are medium-sized, i.e. ca. 10 to 20 cm × 15 to 30 cm. Unlike Quran manuscripts, which are often recognisable by their particular layout, this manuscript architecture is not characteristic solely to *Buyruk*s, but can be found with texts such as *Hızır İlmi* and many others. We suggest that the look of these manuscripts depends on their intended use as 'storage boxes', although it is unclear in some cases whether these books were produced within the Alevi village context. However, their similar general appearance and, of course, the equivalent textual contents made them appropriate to be absorbed into and used within Alevi communities.

Notebooks & Co.: The Case of Alişan Dede and Hasan Bey from Bicir

In our last example we focus on notebooks and books that were made for private use, the materiality of which differs significantly from the manuscripts discussed before[25]. For this purpose, we return to Alişan Dede and Hasan Bey, who had compiled texts and notes for their own ends, which were most probably not

[25] In the case of these manuscripts, it is hard to determine a clear-cut boundary between notebook, scrapbook and private book, for example. Partly, because one manuscript can contain textual drafts, notes, and self-consistent text units; partly, because some of the manuscripts come closer to text collections (often poems and prayers), which appear like pre-arranged, but individual book projects (see e.g. Ersal, 2015).

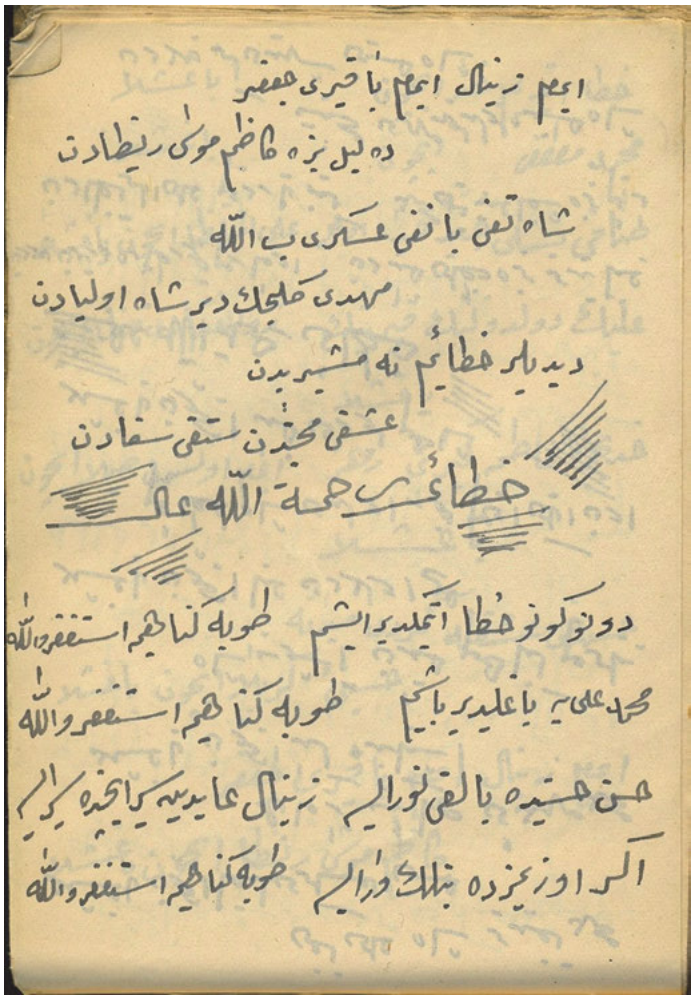

Figure 6: *Cönk* by Alişan Dede, fol. 37^{v}. Undated, presumably from the 1950s. Mixed content; here, religious hymns by Şah Hatayi. © Hasan Gazi Öğütcü. Photograph by Janina Karolewski.

supposed to be used by any third persons, but only designated for a few fellows, if at all. While Alişan Dede was an industrious scribe, whose numerous notebooks are today scattered among his relatives, Hasan Bey has one notebook only, as far as we know. This mainly relates to their different paths in life, which definitely depend on their respective personalities and dispositions, but we suggest that their manuscript-making can also be seen within the eras they both grew up and lived in. Although their age difference is only some fifteen years, comparing them reveals how decisive these years were. Alişan Dede experienced a period when handwritten transmission in Ottoman Turkish seems to have flourished, before it came to an end in many Alevi communities and could not

be replaced by a substantial production of manuscripts in the Latin alphabet, as the example of Hasan Bey shows.

Alişan Dede, who was himself a poet, used to record poems by others as well as by himself in several notebooks, among them manuscripts in *cönk* format, but mostly commercial, ready-made notebooks (see Figs. 1 and 6). His manuscripts resemble what Doğan Kaya (no date: 2) summarizes for *cönk*s from villages: They are usually lacking a leather cover, have no or very simple decoration, and are often written in 'defective' script and orthography. In addition to poetry, which is usually religious, Alişan Dede wrote down prayers, excerpts from works such as *Hızır İlmi*, and made several drafts for a ritual manual, which he dictated to Hasan Bey (see Karolewski, 2018a). As his late sister Cennet (1922–2016) remembered in 2010, Alişan learnt the Arabic alphabet from an Alevi teacher and used to take notes during educational meetings with his father, whom he succeeded as religious specialist after he became too old to hold this office[26].

Interestingly enough, his available manuscripts are almost exclusively commercial blank books or exercise books, often with ruled and squared paper. Therefore, we assume that these products were easily accessible and affordable to him, so that they replaced the earlier common, oblong *cönk* format (see e.g. Kaya, no date). The shift to stationery products, which can be observed in general, was accompanied by a change in script, as we observe with Hasan Bey, who was literate in Latin characters only. Broadly speaking, he followed the example given by Alişan Dede and prepared his own notebook. Besides the aforementioned ritual manual and parts of *Hızır İlmi*, Hasan Bey continued to write down prayers, hymns, songs, and other short notes in this little blank book – most probably since it is thick, but maybe also because he intended it to be his private text collection, a kind of vademecum, which he designed with some level of affection,[27] and he obviously named it *Mecmua*, meaning miscellany (see Fig. 7).

When Hasan Bey, only some fifteen years old, started to write the ritual manual in his blank book, he did this with great neatness and in a colourful page layout. His hand clearly exhibits that he had finished primary school in 1953, as he remembers. For him, it was the beginning of his education to become a ritual specialist. His first task was to learn the ritual procedure and memorize the relevant prayers and songs, in order to perform without reading. As he told us, he soon realized that it was useful to first write himself what he had to memorize, and when studying the manual, he made use of visual markers as mnemonic devices in the layout[28]. During his training, he attended performances and rituals in order to acquire all the relevant knowledge that could either not be captured in writing or had not been scripturalized before. He had to obtain musical and

[26] C. Uluk (1922–2016) & J. Karolewski, interview, 31.08.2010.

[27] He also used a piece of blue textile with a colourful flower print as wrapper around the original cover.

[28] H. G. Öğütcü (born 1938) & J. Karolewski, interview, 30.08.2010 and 07.09.2010.

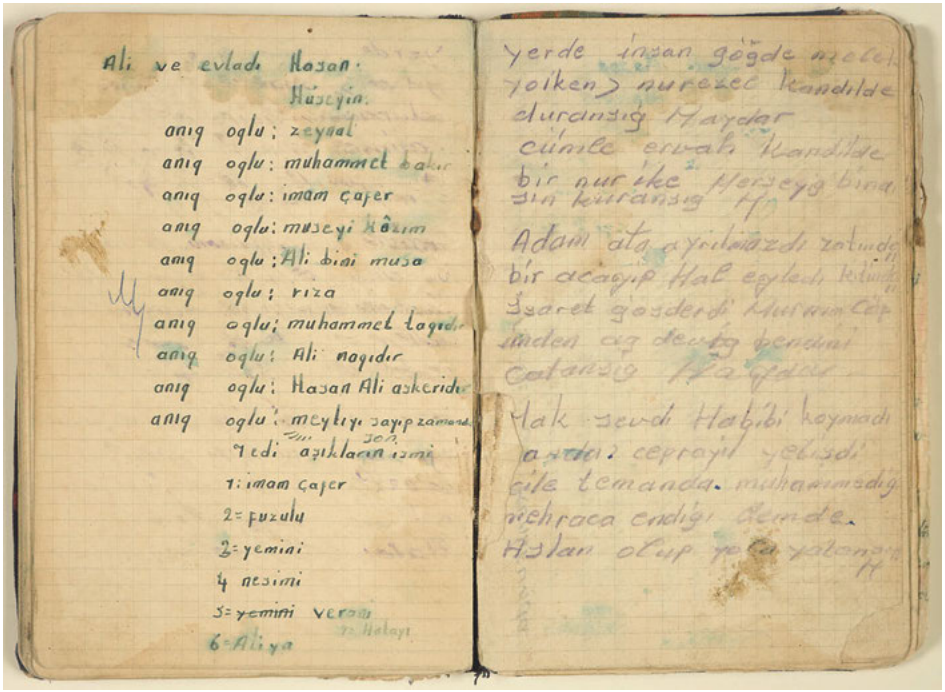

Figure 7: Notebook by Hasan Bey, fols. 87ᵛ–88ʳ. Dated 1953, but used later on for further notes. Mixed content; on the left page, lists of the Twelve Imams and 'Yedi Âşıklar', presumably *Yedi Ulu Ozan*, and on the right page, the beginning of a poem by Sefil Sadık. © Hasan Gazi Öğütcü. Photograph by Karsten Helmholz, CSMC, Universität Hamburg.

performative knowledge, and that was only possible through participation, imitation, and repetition in a 'community of practice' (see e.g. Stausberg, 2001: 611), which was mainly congruent with the 'interpretative community' (see e.g. Fish, 1980), in which he both received exegetical knowledge and acquired skills to explain texts to others.

As a young man, Hasan Bey left the village to work abroad, did not take the office of religious specialist, and *Mecmua* remained his only notebook. Even if he had stayed, it is very likely that the situation might not have changed, since religious practice in Bicir decreased considerably around the late 1950s and many villagers left for urban centres in Turkey or foreign countries. Alişan Dede, however, stayed in the village and continued to act as religious specialist for his remaining followers, in Bicir and the surrounding areas. He seems to have written most of his work in the 1950s, when he was in his thirties, although it is very possible that later manuscripts exist that we do not yet know about. However, his own poetry and the repertoire of prayers and hymns, which are partly peculiar to his holy lineage and preserved in Ottoman Turkish in the manuscripts, soon became inaccessible. Alişan Dede was one of the last in the village who knew the Arabic alphabet, and apart from that, the poetry that was supposed to be performed could not be learnt

by written transmission only. In Bicir, the 'community of practice' as well as 'interpretative community' began to lose their active members, who assured the transmission of religious knowledge. These developments occurred in many Alevi communities around the same time and presumably led to a decline in the compilation of such private notebooks (Ersal, 2015: 97).

A crucial insight that we gained from our work with Hasan Bey and other members of the community relates to personal handwriting as displayed in the notebooks from the village. As is often the case, these manuscripts lack documentary information such as date or name of scribe, so that one might tend to equate difference in hand with several scribes. The examples of Alişan Dede as well as Hasan Bey, however, give us another perspective: What appears as labour of two or more scribes can be by one scribe only. Alişan Dede, for example, switched from a rather controlled and *Rıka*-like script to a loose, curved and protruding script, which is clearly inspired by *Rıka*, but flows into a more individual form – all this within one manuscript (cf. script on fol. 8^{v} with script in lower half of fol. 9^{r} in Fig. 1). Hasan Bey, on the other hand, refined his script from rigid to smooth during the many years that he wrote into his book (cf. script on fol. 87^{v} with script on fol. 88^{r} in Fig. 7). Naturally, there are notebooks that were filled by several scribes, may it be successively or simultaneously, but we assume that this was rather the exception than the rule with such manuscripts from Alevi 'practitioners.' A rather common form of 'recycling' of these individual text collections seems to have been using them as a template for copying into one's own manuscript, as becomes apparent from short notes such as 'shall be copied' (see e.g. Gökyay, 1993: 75; Karolewski, 2020a), that again hints at the practice of copying oral texts from exemplars once they were scripturalized and available in written form. Thus, considering this, it becomes hard to tell if a poem, for example, that appears with deviations from standard orthography, but is in accordance with local or dialectal pronunciation, is the initial result of a scripturalization or a later copying without corrections.

As much as some perceive such peculiarities in orthography as corrupt, underlining a poor educational level, they rate the quality of handwriting as cramped or bad, for example (see e.g. Duymaz, 2016: 21–23). We suggest, however, that such peculiarities have to be seen in their own context. In the case of handwriting, it is not unexpected that individual notes and scraps are less carefully written, regardless of educational level. Furthermore, scribes from Alevi villages and their notebooks have to be located within their economic situation and referential frame, in which handwriting might not have been assessed with the same formal criteria as in other milieus. What appears as non-standard or illegible hand to others, might have been common and legible to those familiar with it, and we do not only have the scribe himself in mind here[29].

[29] In order not to go beyond the scope of this essay, we have abbreviated drastically here. Handwriting as well as orthography strongly depend, among other factors, on the oral context in which these notebooks were produced and used. They are among the integral

The Alevi Written Heritage Today: Private Keepsakes, Institutional Collections & Manuscript Publications

Considering manuscripts as objects with a 'social life', one might argue that their lives come to an end once they are no longer read or lack embeddedness in their social context. Indeed, in the Alevi case the number of those who can read Ottoman Turkish is shrinking and the social fabric of the village setting has been transformed substantially, but one can note that manuscripts play an important role for many Alevis today. We assume that this is a remnant of previous, generally existing practices with books and perceptions of them, while we also observe trends in using manuscripts that are less inspired by examples from the Alevi past and better interpreted as attempts to produce a common Alevi written heritage.

Based on religious discrepancies with the surrounding, hegemonic Sunni milieu, which in combination with political reasons have led to periods of harsh persecution of parts of the Alevi communities (see e.g. Sohrweide, 1965; Karolewski, 2008), a common prejudice against them was that they were without 'scripture' or 'book' (*kitapsız*). This clearly relates to some of their beliefs and practices, which differ from Sunni interpretations of Islam, and is a direct reproach claiming that Alevis would not accept the Quran, the Bible, or the Torah. Many Alevi communities, however, regard the Quran as part of their religious writings or have deep respect for the Bible and the Torah[30]. From the scarce accounts from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, we know about Alevis who negated the existence of a book, while others used to refer to *Buyruk*s as their writing equivalent to the Quran (see e.g. Hasluck, 1921: 336).

Today, we still observe the same attitude towards *Buyruk*s, which are often referred to in singular as 'the *Buyruk*', most probably a remnant of past perceptions, when religious specialists presented one manuscript to the laymen or referred to one writing as the fundament of their tradition. Presumably, these differences in text tradition were less troubling to members of the holy lineages, who must have been aware of them, than they are nowadays to Alevi actors who engage in attempts to standardise and canonise written sources, sometimes with the aim to present one book that stands for systematically arranged teachings (Weineck et al., 2019b: 35–47). When Benjamin Weineck and Johannes Zimmerman (2019b) summarize that 'in the Alevi context it seems to be inevitable to develop a less strict idea of canon' (p. 51), we suggest that this implies a partial return to concepts that had been present among Alevis before.

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parts of literacy, which, is always situated differently and cannot be understood as universal (see e.g. Barton, Hamilton, & Ivanić, 2000).

30 In Islam, the Quran, the Bible and the Torah are commonly referred to as the Four Books, counting the Book of Psalms separately. Especially in Alevi religious poetry, one finds numerous references to the Four Books.

Apart from the *Buyruk*s, we noted that many older Alevi interviewees perceived manuscripts from their family or other community members as materialised proofs of their religious eruditeness. Given the remembered hardships of rural life and social marginalisation in some cases, they were proud of such intellectual achievements. We assume that not only literacy or education in general, but books as objectified, presentable demonstration of it, added to the social capital of their owners. In the case of religious specialists, the possession of books must have heightened the 'religious charisma' of the holy lineages (Dreßler, 2002: 17–20), as it was deemed to be their prerogative to keep the most central writings. Still, it seems that manuscript collections did not exist in all families of the holy lineages, for example, and books circulated within their closer or broader networks (see e.g. Karolewski, 2020a). Today, there are numerous Alevis who store manuscripts from deceased family and community members, regardless of the fact that they are often unable to read them. Concerning her own experiences with documents in Alevi family archives, Ayfer Karakaya-Stump (2010b) impressively points out:

> Alevi documents as a whole are dispersed among dozens, or possibly even hundreds, of *dede* families in different corners of Anatolia and the Balkans. Even in the case of a single *ocak*, they are often scattered unevenly among several *dede* families inhabiting different localities. (p. 275)

For many owners, the books are keepsakes from their fathers, grandfathers, husbands, or narrow confidants, for example, and in some cases, their present owners act as guardians who hold together the written tradition of their holy lineage and share it with their followers only (see e.g. Fölster & Karolewski, 2015: 5–15). Another interesting case are practising *âşık*s, who own manuscript notebooks with poetry by their fathers, grandfathers, or masters, for example. It is not uncommon for them to copy these texts or let someone do this in order to continue their forerunners' legacy and pay tribute to them (see e.g. Karolewski, 2015: 101). For many of them, especially those with a personal bond to the manuscripts or strong roots in the tradition, it is beyond question to give them away, let alone to name their monetary value. Still, the lack of interest of the younger generations in preserving and reviving these sources and a general transformation of Alevi social structures, are leading to the further dissolution of such collections. While some owners attempt to earn money when exhibiting them to interested scholars, for example, others sell them to antiquarian booksellers or donate them to libraries or research institutes.

Handling the Alevi Written Heritage: Research Institutes and the Case of Alevî-Bektaşî Klasikleri

With the growing academic interest in Alevi writings and sources in the 1990s, which was eased by a slowly increasing number of Alevis who no longer observed the obligation to secrecy, first attempts were made to collect manuscripts at univer-

sity institutions. The Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Velî Araştırma Merkezi,[31] founded at Gazi Üniversitesi in Ankara in 1987 and housed at Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli Üniversitesi under the name Türk Kültürü Açısından Hacı Bektaş-ı Velî Araştırmaları Uygulama ve Araştırma Merkezi since 2018, was the first research centre in Turkey to build up such a collection[32] and ever since publishes on various documents and books in its journal.[33] Since 2003, its branch in Çorum was actively involved in further collection efforts, which led to several manuscripts in the local library and the digitization of many others.[34] After a temporary closure of the branch in 2006, the centre re-opened under the name Hacı Bektaş Velî Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi at Hitit Üniversitesi in Çorum in 2008. Both centres have always exchanged and cooperated with several Alevi actors, scholars, and communities, and one outcome of this is that it was possible to document and collect hundreds of manuscripts from Alevi private owners[35]. Today, the centre in Çorum seems to have ceased activities, or might be even closed, since the centre in Ankara states on its Facebook page that it is the only academic institution in the country that at present conducts research in this field.[36]

These current events have to be seen in connection with the coup d'état in Turkey on 15 July 2016, in the aftermath of which the Turkish judiciary also took legal measures against members of the Gülen Movement, who were said to have been involved in projects designed to influence Alevi opinion makers and Alevis in general and to shape Alevi-related public discourses as well as developments in accordance with their own ends.[37] While the former director of the centre in

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31 It is not uncommon today that Alevi issues are summarized and addressed under the label 'Bektaşilik' or even 'Alevilik-Bektaşilik,' see e.g. Weineck (2015: paragraph 23); Kara (2019: 180–205). As the centre clearly states on its homepage, its mission is to create and disseminate knowledge on the Turkish culture, Bektaşilik, and Alevilik. See https://hacibayram.edu.tr/hbektasveli/misyon-ve-vizyon (last accessed 1 August 2019).

32 For the link to the 'Manuscript Archive List,' see https://hacibayram.edu.tr/hbektasveli/kutuphane (last accessed 1 August 2019).

33 For the online archive of *Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Velî Araştırma Dergisi*, see http://hbvdergisi.hacibayram.edu.tr/index.php/TKHBVD/issue/archive (last accessed 1 August 2019).

34 The homepage of the centre in Çorum underwent a series of changes, so that we could no longer find the formerly extensive overview of manuscripts.

35 We are not able to give a concrete number here. First, the list of the centre in Ankara (see footnote 121) comprises 315 manuscripts, but it is unclear how far they are related to Alevi communities, and several of them appear more than once in the list or seem to be prints. Second, the overview of originals and digitized copies from the centre in Çorum is not available any longer, but its director mentioned 180 manuscripts in 2008 (Eğri, 2008: 162).

36 See https://www.facebook.com/pg/turkkulturuvehacibektasveli/about/?ref=page_internal (last accessed 1 August 2019).

37 See Çobanoğlu, 2015; Tuğsuz 2016, 2018. We thank Hakkı Taş, GIGA German Institute for Global and Area Studies, Hamburg, for pointing out these references to us. The role of the centre in Çorum and its former director have not been touched upon in academic reappraisals on the Gülen Movement so far.

Çorum, Osman Eğri, is under investigation for allegedly taking an active role in these projects,[38] the fate of the collection, which is probably an important part of the Alevi written heritage in the region and beyond, remains unclear. Against this background it is even more difficult to understand the actors and intentions behind the agenda for Alevi written heritage that the centre in Çorum had established since the 2000s. We therefore touch only on aspects that are directly related to the focus of this essay, namely the materiality of manuscripts, and we hope for future research to shed light on this part of recent history.

Just like in Ankara, the centre in Çorum hardly allowed researchers access to the manuscripts housed at its library as originals or digital copies and described them only rudimentarily in a previously accessible online overview. Still, in 2013 a visitor to the centre could observe four manuscript books that were exhibited in a showcase, standing in a small library or meeting room. The short labels stated only that all four items had been given to the centre from the Koyulhisar District in Sivas Province and were *Kitab-i Cabbar Kulu*, *Risale-i Virani*, *Vilayetname-i Hacı Bektaş Veli*, and *Risale-i Giridi*. To our knowledge, such a museumization of manuscripts is yet exceptional for the Alevi context[39] – if we may assume that this exhibition was meant to present Alevi material culture at all. It reduces the books to material objects, and the readable texts are limited to the opening chosen. In this context, manuscripts can hardly function in the same way as 'storage boxes' as they did in some villages. Most of all, because their contents have to be sufficiently (pre-)mediated in order for the audience to connect to them. Without a 'museum guide' – comparable to the religious specialist in the past –, the normal viewer cannot understand the significance of these exhibits, beyond their being 'old books' from Sivas. Apart from that, it is debatable how far this tiny showcase exhibition has ever reached a wider audience or was perhaps intended as a decoration to the centre, which at the same time could be interpreted as objectification of its scholarly work on manuscripts and its success at having acquired originals.

The *Alevî-Bektaşî Klasikleri* series, published by Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı between 2007 and 2015 and coordinated by the centre in Çorum, uses a different format to mediate the contents, aesthetics and importance of several manuscripts. Designated a contribution to the Alevi-Bektaşi community, fifteen volumes with 'manuscript facsimiles', transcriptions or text renditions in Latin characters and an accompanying introduction have been published. Regarding the texts included in the volumes, it has already been indicated that naming them 'classics' conveys the idea of a corpus commonly agreed upon, although their representativeness for the Alevi textual tradition is actually questionable in many cases (e.g.

38 See e.g. *Cumhuriyet* (2017).

39 On the debates on the plan for an Alevi-related museum in Sivas, see Hendrich (2018: 65–68).

Yaman, A., 2016; Weineck et al., 2019b: 41)[40]. Doğan Kaplan (2019: 115–120) however, argues that the selection of texts in the series defines them merely as examples of literature, which exhibit various religious influences on Alevi communities, and he understands the series as portraying the 'multi-vocality of what could be labelled an 'Alevi Cultural Heritage'' (p. 121).

Drawing attention to the aesthetics of the series, we agree with the assessment by Benjamin Weineck and Johannes Zimmermann (2019b: 43–44) that the manuscripts were endowed with greater value when their printed editions were decorated with an imitation leather hardcover, pastedowns made of paper with a colourful *ebru* print, frames with ornaments around the text block or the manuscript reproduction, and glossy paper. The decision to reproduce 'semi-facsimiles', and we explain below what that means, can also be understood as an attempt to visualize and partly embellish the material side of these manuscripts, namely the page layout. This is due to the likelihood that the cover, pastedowns, page ornamentation or paper quality of the original manuscripts did not resemble those of the series. Surely, displaying reproductions of the sources themselves lends transparency to the edition of the texts, but we assume that the series editors were well aware of the fact that an average member of the Alevi-Bektaşi community would not be able to compare original with transcript. At best, one can see the publication design as a compromise, meeting both academic as well as popular needs, although only a few volume editors exhausted the available options to produce scholarly editions in the series.

All but one volume are 'semi-facsimiles' of the original pages, since graphic designers removed the writings and sometimes the frame around the text field from the original background in the manuscript reproductions and pasted them onto the background of the print publication, which is designed to imitate yellowed paper and displays varying decorations in the margins. In doing so, the original paper disappears and the writing is transferred into the 'new' manuscript architecture that is realised in serial production at the printing press. Only in the case of volume fifteen, are the text fields of the originals, deprived of the page margins, reproduced in colour, but again framed by the same paper-imitating background that appears in all volumes (see Fig. 8). It is this volume's page layout in particular that resembles practices from manuscript production, for instance, when a precious text field is inserted into the margins of another paper by inlaying, a technique that was popular in Ottoman lands, Persia, and India (see e.g. Porter, 1994: 118–119). We assume that the motives here and then were the same: an attempt to improve present materials and create more attractive objects. Indeed the series presents a

[40] The naming 'Alevi-Bektaşi Klasikleri' for a book series, by the way, was first introduced with a *Buyruk* publication by Mehmet Yaman Dede at Ufuk Matbaası in Istanbul in the early 1990s (Yaman, M., 1994). To our knowledge, the series was not continued however.

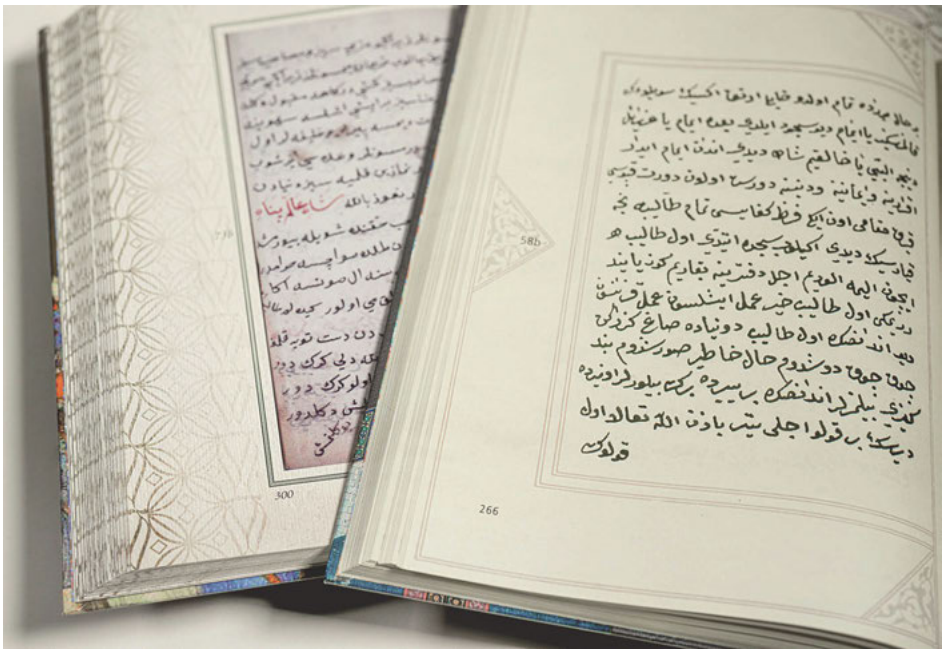

Figure 8: Page layout of *Alevî-Bektaşî Klasikleri*, vol. 15 (left) and vol. 8 (right), detail. Photograph by Karsten Helmholz, CSMC, Universität Hamburg.

cleaner, smoother layout, where water and ink stains, folds or marginal notes are almost absent, but at the same time most of the material individuality of the sources and the many traces of their 'social lives' are lost.

Interestingly enough, Ali Yaman (2016: 150) reports that some Sunni academics noticed the lavish design and expensive production, but many Alevis remained unimpressed. As predicted, Alevis refrained in general from buying the series, a reaction that can be explained by the critical stance of many Alevis towards Diyanet (e.g. Yaman, A., 2016: 158); though allegations about the involvement of the Gülen Movement in the publication project support another motive for refusal (Çobanoğlu, 2015: 293–295)[41]. Regardless of the possible agenda behind the *Alevî-Bektaşî Klasikleri* series and its repudiation by many Alevis, the volumes are not poor per se, although their quality varies considerably, which is due to the individual editors. Often missing is a critical analysis discussing the role of each text within different parts of the Alevi tradition, instead of presenting them as generally accepted classics or corpus – a similar approach, by the way, can also be observed with text editions from Alevi publishing houses (see e.g. Karolewski, 2018: 87).

[41] Regarding the concerns about the centre and its director uttered by some Alevis early on (e.g. *Cumhuriyet*, 2012), it would be worthwhile analysing its impact on aspects other than the collection and publishing of manuscripts for the purpose of presenting an Alevi-Bektaşi literary canon.

This recurring shortcoming can be best explained as a result of the wish to generalise and standardise a multitude of parallel phenomena under the term 'Alevi' or 'Alevi-Bektaşi', an ambition present among Alevi actors as well as academics in the field. As Rıza Yıldırım (2016: 138–139) pointed out in a paper presented at the international symposium, 'Alevî-Bektaşî Klasikleri' in 2014, there is no easy answer to the question of what constitutes the 'classics' in Alevi communities, since the texts preserved in manuscripts are in a dynamic relationship with the lived tradition – if these books were ever even kept with the belief of their relevance for the tradition.

With the hitherto last volume of the series, Doğan Kaplan presents a provisional completion of his year-long work on *Buyruk*s, delivering a thorough transcription and Turkish rendition of the texts plus facsimiles of several manuscripts (Kaplan, D., 2015). However, when looking at bookshelves in Alevi associations or asking interviewees about their books, one finds other *Buyruk* publications, among them the various renditions in Latin characters by Mehmet Yaman Dede (1994; Mannheim AKM Dedeler Kurulu, 2000). His books, like those by Sefer Aytekin (1958), Fuat Bozkurt (e.g. 1982), or Ahmet Taşğın (e.g. Bisâtî, 2003), however, are rarely consulted or even remain unread, because most of their owners are not familiar with the texts and lack the skills to access their meanings. The linguistic barriers that these texts often pose are also considerable, so that one now not only finds renditions using common contemporary Turkish vocabulary, but also translations into German, reflecting a possible need felt by Alevis who have grown up in German-speaking countries (Bozkurt, 1988; Mete, 2018). The social context of these texts has changed to such an extent, that it appears obsolete to meet on a regular basis for reading sessions with religious specialists or equally educated laymen who can re-activate, interpret and update the respective writings[42]. Still, as Tord Olsson (1998: 206) noticed, the books function as material instantiations of an Alevi identity, which can be deliberately displayed to others or kept privately as objectification of one's religious belonging.[43]

Final Remarks

This essay focuses on the materiality of manuscripts, in order to contribute to the ongoing research on Alevi written as well as material heritage in the village setting and beyond. In making the material features of documents, books and notebooks the subject of interest, we intend to explore new perspectives on these manu-

[42] Interestingly enough, the centre in Çorum seems to have drawn on such text-mediating techniques when organising weekly readings from the *Alevî-Bektaşî Klasikleri* series. However, we are not able to judge how far the local Alevi community accepted this offer. See http://www.hbektas.hitit.edu.tr/Haberler/2016/4/4/huham-da-alevi-bektasi-klasikleri-okunuyor (last accessed 1 August 2019).

[43] See also Karolewski (2020b).

scripts, which reveal much more than textual contents. On the one hand, we stress how manuscripts also functioned as material objects within certain social contexts of the Alevi tradition and were not only involved in text-related practices among literates. For the use of manuscripts as 'storage boxes,' which depends on mediation and later re-activation of knowledge, we refer in this essay to the case of the *ocak* of Şeyh Ahmed Dede, in which documents are part of commemorative practices, and discuss the usage of *Buyruk* manuscripts in some communities. On the other hand, we give importance to notebooks, which seem to have been circulated, if at all, in a small circle of fellows and not to have been displayed like documents or *Buyruk*s, for example. Their materiality, however, is often closely linked to their scribes, the people who kept these notes, and gives us an insight into another aspect of Alevi manuscript culture, which cannot be accessed via nicely designed books or looked down on as 'substandard' products. This relates to the handling of manuscripts in the *Alevî-Bektaşî Klasikleri* series, which we introduce as a recent development within the wider scope of Alevi written heritage, although its role is still debated. Leaving aside the choice of texts to be published in the series, it becomes apparent in most volumes how the intention to present 'beautiful' books neglects material dimensions of written transmission.

Indeed, most of the editions, text renditions, and content-related studies that have been published so far are interested in the Alevi teachings and their relation to other Islamic traditions, as supposedly included in frequently appearing texts such as *Risale-i Virani*, *Dil-güşa*, and those gathered in *Buyruk*s. Far fewer, however, are studies devoted to text collections that were usually prepared for personal purposes and might hold individual accounts or record local beliefs and practices. The same applies to the examination of paratexts, which are indeed rare, but could help us understand how the texts contained were interpreted or commented upon and give insights into their production, subsequent use, and the actors involved. Most seldom, however, are studies that analyse manuscripts beyond their core contents. Here one might expect findings on book production practices and availability of different materials, which link to the socio-economic situation; or on scribal practices and language use, which hint at educational background and can highlight linguistic developments. Investigating individual manuscripts, complemented with additional information from secondary literature, other written sources, or oral history, results in a portrayal of far more than mere writing on the pages, but an illustration of the cultural and social dimensions of Alevi communities and their networks.

Unfortunately, the awareness of what manuscripts mean to Alevi material heritage and history is also not widespread among Alevi communities today, for which we as scholars might have some culpability. Not only has research focussed too often on textual contents, but many academics did not develop a genuine interest in the 'social life' of manuscripts and their respective contexts. Oftentimes during our work, younger Alevis ask why we are interested in old books when

there are plenty of text editions available by now and no one would understand the old script any longer. Although they thankfully agree to work with us and make every effort to help us, many do not share our general curiosity about Alevi village life in the past, which some even associate with backwardness and outdated circumstances. They regard our questions as less important compared to their concerns about present Alevi issues, such as the fear of a future loss of their tradition or the confusion about their religious identity. Apart from that, our findings sometimes challenge collective constructions of identity or the historical narrative; a common dilemma that will not be solved but should be handled with care. Even more so, our experience shows that, when possible, we need to interact with older Alevis whose manuscripts, families and communities we are researching. Our appreciation for their life histories often helps them open up and share invaluable insights into the 'social life' of manuscripts and their various cultural contexts. What might appear insignificant to them, namely individual life histories that are not always appreciated by those belonging to a younger generation, still needs to be documented as a record of Alevi culture in general and Alevi manuscript culture in particular.

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