

Martin van Bruinessen, 'Between Dersim and Dâlahû: Reflections on Kurdish Alevism and the Ahl-i Haqq religion'

Published in: Shahrokh Raei (ed.), *Islamic Alternatives: Non-Mainstream Religion in Persianate Societies* [Göttinger Orientforschungen, III. Reihe: Iranica, N.F. 16]. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2017, pp. 65-93.

## Between Dersim and Dâlahû:

### Reflections on Kurdish Alevism and the Ahl-i Haqq religion<sup>1</sup>

Martin van Bruinessen

#### Is Alevism Turkish or Iranian?

In the scholarly literature on the religions of the Ahl-i Haqq, Yezidi, and Alevi (Kızılbaş) communities, it has been common to highlight the influence of pre-Islamic Iranian religion (vernacular Zoroastrianism or Mazdaism) on the former two as well as of old Turkic religion ('shamanism') on the third, while acknowledging that beneath the surface, the three have a number of important institutions, beliefs, and practices in common that distinguish them from Sunni Islam. The publication of sacred texts which had long been kept cautiously hidden from outsiders appeared to strengthen the division between Iranian- and Turkish-tinged syncretisms, for the oldest and most 'authentic' Ahl-i Haqq texts are written in Gurani (and more recent important texts in Persian), the sacred poetry of the Yezidis is in Kurmanji, and their alleged sacred books have come to us in a form of Sorani, whereas the vast corpus of Kızılbaş sacred poetry as well as their only 'book,' the *Buyruk*, are in Turkish.<sup>2</sup> Understandably, scholarship on the Ahl-i Haqq and Yezidis has been dominated by scholars with a background in Iranian studies, whereas the study of Alevism long remained the domain of Turkologists. As a result, the Iranian elements in the Ahl-i Haqq and Yezidi religions have received more attention than possible historical connections with Alevism, and in Turkey, the alleged Central Asian Turkish origins of Alevi religious institutions, beliefs, and practices were elevated into an unassailable dogma.

There were a few studies that cut through the seemingly neat Iranian-Turkish dichotomy. One of the leading experts on old Turkish religion, Jean-Paul Roux, commented that he recognised numerous Turkish elements in the Gurani texts published by Mokri.<sup>3</sup> More importantly, the pioneer of Ahl-i Haqq studies, Vladimir Minorsky, has pointed to the Turcoman Qaraqoyunlu

---

<sup>1</sup> An earlier and shorter version of this paper was published in Mehmet Öz & Fatih Yeşil (eds), *Ötekilerin peşinde. Ahmet Yaşar Ocak'a armağan / In pursuit of the Others: Festschrift in honor of Ahmet Yaşar Ocak*, Istanbul: Timaş, 2015, pp. 613-30.

<sup>2</sup> Mohamed Mokri has published a large corpus of Ahl-i Haqq *kalâm* in Gurani (with translation and commentary) as well as a major text in Persian by the Ahl-i Haqq reformer Ni'matullâh Jayhûnâbâdî; earlier, Vladimir Ivanow had published a substantial Persian Ahl-i Haqq text with translation. Philip Kreyenbroek (in co-operation with the Yezidi *pîrs* Khidr Silêman and Xelîl Jindî) published, translated, and analysed a large corpus of Yezidi sacred poetry (*qawl*). In Turkey, Abdûlbâki Gölpınarlı and others have brought much Alevi-Bektashi material into the public domain, especially hagiographies (*menâkıbnâme*) and sacred poetry (*deyiş*, *nefes*). Hardly any of this material is available in languages other than Turkish.

<sup>3</sup> Jean-Paul Roux, 'Les Fidèles de Vérité et les croyances religieuses des Turcs', *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 176(1) (1969), pp. 61-95.

empire, which in the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century controlled Azerbaijan, Persian and Arab Iraq, as well as most of Kurdistan, as the cradle of the Ahl-i Haqq religion.<sup>4</sup> Minorsky was fascinated by the emergence of new political, cultural, and religious formations in the region, where Turkish and Iranian (as well as Armenian and Aramaic) cultures interacted in the 15<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. He was also the first scholar to point to a surviving Turkish-speaking Ahl-i Haqq community in Azerbaijan named Qaraqoyun.

The Qaraqoyunlu ruler Jihanshah wrote poems in Turkish as well as in Persian, with expressions in Arabic and references to the Qur'an; although the backbone of his empire was a confederacy of Turcoman tribes, his subjects and followers included various ethnolinguistic groups.<sup>5</sup> Half a century later, the Safavid Shah Isma'il, who was the major formative influence on Anatolian Alevism, drew upon the same or an even wider range of religious and ethnic resources. All his known poems (which are considered sacred by the Kızılbaş) are in Turkish, but he is also said to have written in Persian as well.<sup>6</sup>

Turkish scholarship, from Fuad Köprülü onwards, has long tended to prioritise the Central Asian origins of Anatolian Alevism, focusing on the (Central Asian) Yeseviye Sufi order and the role of the *Baba* – Turcoman religious leaders somehow connected with that order – in shaping Anatolia's religious syncretism.<sup>7</sup> Studies dealing with the rise of the Safavids in Anatolia stressed the Turkish character of the Kızılbaş movement.<sup>8</sup> The facts that even now, a considerable proportion of the Anatolian Alevis is not Turkish but Kurdish (including speakers of Zaza as well as Kurmanji), that the considerable Kurdish population of Khurasan descends from Kızılbaş tribes that had followed Shah Isma'il from the Erzincan region to Iran, and that therefore, his followers must have included large contingents of Kurds was not perceived or deliberately kept hidden by many scholars.<sup>9</sup> Besides the Turkish bias of many

---

<sup>4</sup> V. Minorsky, 'Jihan-Shah Qara-Qoyunlu and his poetry', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 16(2) (1954), pp. 271-297. Referring to the Turkish-speaking Ahl-i Haqq community of the district still named Qaraqoyun in Maku, West Azerbaijan, Minorsky suggested that "the beginnings of the Ahl-i Haqq must be connected with the Qara-qoyunlu period (...), [and] the final formation of this religion took place in the region of Shahrazur and Zohab (...); even if the Ahl-i Haqq doctrines were not a kind of state religion under the Qaraqoyunlu, they may have developed in the favourable climate of unorthodoxy, which prevailed under the sultans of the Black Sheep" (p. 276).

<sup>5</sup> Minorsky, 'Jihan-Shah Qara-Qoyunlu', *passim*.

<sup>6</sup> V. Minorsky, 'The poetry of Shah Isma'il I', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 10 (1942), p. 1008a.

<sup>7</sup> Köprülüze Mehmed Fuad, *Influence du chamanisme Turco-Mongol sur les ordres mystiques musulmans*, Istanbul: Institut de turcologie de l'Université de Stamboul, 1929; Fuad Köprülü, *Türk edebiyatında ilk mutasavvıflar*. 3. basım, Ankara: Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı, 1982 [1919].

<sup>8</sup> Faruk Sümer, *Safevi devletinin kuruluşu ve gelişmesinde Anadolu Türklerinin rolü*, Ankara: Selçuklu Tarih ve Medeniyeti Enstitüsü, 1976.

<sup>9</sup> There is no indication of the large Kurdish component of the Kızılbaş in Sümer's study. Interestingly, in his history of the Kurdish emirates, *Sharafnâma*, which was completed in 1597, the former ruler of Bitlis, Sharaf Khân, claims that all Kurds were staunch Sunnis (except the occasional Yezidi tribe). There are good reasons to

leading scholars – which also had an impact on the work of their European colleagues –, there were also political constraints in Turkey that made it difficult to discuss the Kurdish dimension of Alevism. The official denial of Kurdish ethnicity and the endorsement of historiographies ‘proving’ that the tribes concerned were of Central Asian origin and of Turkish ethnicity continued well into the 1990s.

The very concept of Kurdish Alevism was a contested one, and as a result of a long period of official suppression and ideological misrepresentation, it could no longer be observed as a living tradition. Like the Sufi orders, Alevi ritual had been formally banned since 1925 (although many village communities, especially the Turkish-speaking ones, continued to practice it secretly). Dersim, the geographical centre of Kurdish Alevism, had moreover been subjected to a genocidal pacification campaign in 1937-38, followed by massive deportations.<sup>10</sup> Accounts by various officials serving in the region, who invariably insisted on the Turkish character of the population and their religion, were long the only available representations of the religion of Dersim.

This Turko-centric definition of Alevism was challenged from the 1980s onwards by the emerging Kurdish movement. Kurdish intellectuals of Alevi background insisted on the differences between Turkish and Kurdish Alevism, which were sometimes framed as pro-state Bektashi versus oppositional Kızılbaş Alevism. They have identified and emphasised elements in Kurdish Alevism that appeared to connect it with Iranian religions such as Zoroastrianism and, more specifically, with Yezidi and Ahl-i Haqq traditions. Some activists countered the thesis of ‘shamanist’ origins with the equally doctrinal insistence on origins in Zoroastrianism and Mazdaeism.<sup>11</sup> Others attempted to recover the pre-1937 religious tradition through systematically interviewing surviving knowledgeable persons.<sup>12</sup> The 1990s and 2000s were a period of intensive debate on the religious and ethnic identity of the Kurdish Alevi.<sup>13</sup>

---

consider this to be an apologetic statement, intended to convince the Ottomans of the Kurds’ trustworthiness in their confrontation with the Safavids.

<sup>10</sup> Martin van Bruinessen, ‘Genocide in Kurdistan? The suppression of the Dersim rebellion in Turkey (1937-38) and the chemical war against the Iraqi Kurds (1988)’, in: George J. Andreopoulos (ed.), *Conceptual and historical dimensions of genocide*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994, pp. 141-170.

<sup>11</sup> Cemşid Bender, *Kürt uygarlığında Alevilik*, İstanbul: Kaynak, 1991; Ethem Xemgin, *Aleviliğin kökenindeki Mazda inancı ve Zerdüst öğretisi*, İstanbul: Berfin, 1995.

<sup>12</sup> Journals such as *Berhem* (published in Sweden in 1988-1993), *Ware* (Germany, 1992-2003), and *Munzur* (Ankara, since 2000) have sparked an interest in documenting the oral traditions of the Kurdish Alevi, and several of the contributing authors were explicitly interested in the similarities between the recorded narratives and those of Iranian origin. Since 1999, the publishing house Kalan in Ankara has published numerous books on Dersim, many of them based on interviews with old men and women known to be repositories of oral tradition. Oral history interviews carried out by activists and scholars such as Metin and Kemal Kahraman, Bilal and Gürdal Aksoy, Cemal Taş, Erdal Gezik, Mesut Özcan, and Hüseyin Çakmak have resulted in an impressive body of new material on Dersim traditions before 1937.

<sup>13</sup> Martin van Bruinessen, ‘“Aslımı inkar eden haramzadedir!”: the debate on the ethnic identity of the Kurdish Alevi’, in: Krisztina Kehl-Bodrogi et al. (eds.), *Syncretistic religious communities in the Near East*, Leiden: Brill, 1997, pp. 1-23.

In academia, the Köprülü thesis of Alevism's Central Asian origins was challenged by new research on the itinerant dervish groups (Qalandar, Haydarî, Jalâlî) that, before the rise of the Safavids, helped shape the heterodox communities that were to become the Ahl-i Haqq and Alevis.<sup>14</sup> Other important new work (to which I shall return below) is based on the study of genealogical documents held by Alevi priestly lineages, which showed the importance of the Iraqi Wafâ'iyya Sufi order – named after the Kurdish saint Abu'l-Wafâ' Tâj al-Ârifîn – for shaping the religiosity of the Baba and later Alevism. When the Ottoman Empire consolidated its control of Anatolia and Iraq, the Wafâ'iyya networks were gradually integrated into the Bektashi order, but for a long time, Alevi religious authorities continued their orientation towards Iraq.<sup>15</sup>

### Similarities and differences

My own familiarity with the Ahl-i Haqq of Dâlahû began during two visits of about ten days each in 1976. It was here that I first heard Ahl-i Haqq narratives about Haji Bektash and discovered that educated Ahl-i Haqq believed that the Anatolian Alevis held the same or very similar religious ideas as they did themselves. I also noticed that my informants easily incorporated material they read in books about other religions into their own cosmology and found confirmation on their own religious ideas in the existence of similar ones elsewhere.<sup>16</sup>

My first encounter with the religious universe of Dersim was through a few brief visits in the late 1970s and early 1980s, my reading of travel reports,<sup>17</sup> the first academic studies on the subject,<sup>18</sup> and meetings with intellectuals of Dersimi background. From the beginning, I was struck by a number of remarkable similarities such as identical myths (although the

---

<sup>14</sup> An especially relevant study is: Ahmet T. Karamustafa, *God's unruly friends. Dervish groups in the Islamic later middle period, 1200-1550*, Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1994. From an Indian perspective, an earlier study of the same groups is: Simon Digby, 'Qalandars and related groups', in: Yohanan Friedmann (ed.), *Islam in Asia*, vol. I: *South Asia*, Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1984, pp. 76-91.

<sup>15</sup> Ayfer Karakaya-Stump, 'Subjects of the Sultan, Disciples of the Shah: Formation and Transformation of the Kizilbash / Alevi Communities in Ottoman Anatolia', PhD dissertation, Harvard University, 2008. Earlier, both Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı and Ahmet Yaşar Ocak had noticed the importance of the Wafâ'iyya, but neither had realised what this implied for the Kurdish / Iranian contribution to Alevism.

<sup>16</sup> Van Bruinessen, 'When Haji Bektash still bore the name of Sultan Sahak. Notes on the Ahl-i Haqq of the Guran district', in: Alexandre Popovic and Gilles Veinstein (eds.), *Bektachiyya: études sur l'ordre mystique des Bektachis et les groupes relevant de Hadji Bektach*, Istanbul: Éditions Isis, 1995, pp. 117-138; idem, 'Veneration of Satan among the Ahl-e Haqq of the Gûrân region', *Fritillaria Kurdica, Bulletin of Kurdish Studies* (Krakow) nos. 3-4 (2014), pp. 6-41 (available online at: [http://www.kurdishstudies.pl/?en\\_fritillaria-kurdica.-bulletin-of-kurdish-studies.-no.-3-4,78](http://www.kurdishstudies.pl/?en_fritillaria-kurdica.-bulletin-of-kurdish-studies.-no.-3-4,78)).

<sup>17</sup> Especially L. Molyneux-Seel, 'Journey into Dersim', *Geographical Journal* 44(1) (1914), pp. 49-68; Melville Chater, 'The Kizilbash clans of Kurdistan', *National Geographic Magazine* 54 (1928), pp. 485-504; Andranig, *Tersim*, Tiflis, 1900 (recently translated into Turkish: Antranik, *Dersim seyahatnamesi*, Istanbul: Aras, 2012).

<sup>18</sup> S. Öztürk, 'Tunceli'de Alevilik', mezuniyet tezi, I.Ü. Ed. Fak. Sosyoloji bölümü, Istanbul, 1972; Peter Bumke, 'Kızılbaş-Kurden in Dersim (Tunceli, Türkei). Marginalität und Häresie', *Anthropos* 74 (1979), pp. 530-548.

protagonists have different names in the two regions),<sup>19</sup> similar beliefs in the incarnation of God as well as other spiritual entities in human beings, and forms of nature worship based on the belief that spiritual beings can be embodied in human beings as well as trees, springs, mountains, rocks, and other objects – as well as the rejection of the idea that Satan (or rather the Peacock Angel) represents the evil principle.<sup>20</sup>

The periodical ritual meetings are known by the same name in both communities (*jam* and *ayin-i cem*, respectively). In both communities, the singing of sacred poetry (*kalâm*, *deyiş*), accompanied by a small long-necked lute (*tanbur*, *temur*, *tomir*), is an important element of the *jam* / *cem*.<sup>21</sup> The *tanbur* is itself a sacred instrument, and it is kissed respectfully before and after playing. The consecration and consumption of food (*niyaz* / *lokma*) is another important element of a ritual meeting in both communities. Both in Dersim and among the Ahl-i Haqq, the origin of the *jam* is explained by narratives of a primordial meeting of forty dervishes (*chil tan*, *kırklar*), to which the Prophet Muhammad – on the return from his ascent to heaven (*mi' râj*) – was only admitted after having been taught humility and declaring himself the lowest of servants.<sup>22</sup>

The meetings can only be held in the presence of – and have to be led by – a hereditary religious specialist (*dede* or *sayyid*) belonging to a known and named lineage (*ocak*, *khândân*) that claims descent from the Prophet. Every adult person has to be connected with a sayyid (who is his *pîr*) and with a second person from another priestly lineage, who acts as his 'guide' (*rayber*, *rehber*, or *dalil*). In Dersim, one should (at least in theory) be connected to yet a third spiritual preceptor (called *murshid*) whose status is even above that of the *pîr*. Since the members of the holy lineages should also have their *rayber*, *pîr*, and *murshid*, this

---

<sup>19</sup> For an example of a myth occurring not only in these two communities but among heterodox groups all the way from South Asia to the Balkans, see Martin van Bruinessen, 'Haji Bektash, Sultan Sahak, Shah Mina Sahib and various avatars of a running wall', *Turcica* XXI-XXIII (1991), pp. 55-69.

<sup>20</sup> Van Bruinessen, 'Veneration of Satan'; Irène Mélikoff, *Sur les traces du soufisme turc. Recherches sur l'Islam populaire en Anatolie*, Istanbul: Isis, 1992, p. 39. For a myth in which the Peacock Angel plays a part in the creation of the world, as narrated by an Alevi sage in Dersim, see Erdal Gezik, 'Nesimi Kilagöz ile yaratılış üzerine', *Munzur* 32 (2009), pp. 4-34.

<sup>21</sup> On the Ahl-i Haqq *tanbur*, see Partow Hooshmandrad, 'Performing the belief: Sacred musical practice of the Kurdish Ahl-i Haqq of Guran', PhD dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2004; Navid Fozi, 'The hallowed summoning of tradition: body techniques in construction of the sacred *tanbur* of Western Iran', *Anthropological Quarterly* 80(1) (2007), pp. 173-205. In Turkish literature, the instrument used in the *cem* is commonly referred to as *bağlama*, but Dersimi musicians are increasingly using the term *temmur* or *tomir*, claiming that this is the original name (cf. Munzur Çem, *Dersim merkezli Kürt Aleviliği*, Istanbul: Vate, 2009, p. 35).

<sup>22</sup> An Ahl-i Haqq version of this myth can be found in the Persian *Tadhkira-i A'lâ*, edited and translated by V. Ivanow in *The Truth-worshippers of Kurdistan*, Leiden: Brill, 1953, pp. 108-109. Virtually identical versions are given by the Alevi Ağuçanlı author Adil Ali Atalay, *İmam Cafer-i Sadik buyruğu*, Istanbul: Can, 1993, pp. 13-22, and the late Suleyman Şahin of the Baba Mansur *ocak* in a recently published interview: Metin Kahraman & Kemal Kahraman, 'Seyid Süleyman Şahin Görüşmeleri-I', *Alevilerin Sesi* 174 (2013), pp. 40-45.

has led to a complex stratification among these lineages, in which some act as *pîr* to one other lineage and as disciples (*talip*, *toliw*) to yet another.<sup>23</sup>

Both communities also believe in divine incarnation in human beings, 'Ali being the major incarnation recognised by both. However, the Ahl-i Haqq have a considerably more developed belief system concerning divine incarnation than the Alevi. God and seven high spiritual beings (*haft tan*) are believed to have revealed themselves in human form in various historical periods. Sacred history is cyclical; important events repeat themselves in each cycle, and the consecutive human incarnations of the same spirit are considered to be essentially identical. The Iranian concept of seven spiritual beings jointly manifesting themselves in the world – which the Ahl-i Haqq and Yezidis have in common with Zoroastrianism and other Iranian religions – is not known among the Dersim Alevi. The latter do believe in other divine incarnations besides 'Ali, such as the Jesus of their Armenian neighbours and Shâh Ismâ'îl, as well as in other spiritual forces that were once incarnate in human form. In two of these powerful forces, known by their human names Duzgin Bava and Avdil Mursa, we may recognise an Iranian dualism. They are opposed to one another as forces of light and darkness and command entire armies of benign and dangerous spirits.<sup>24</sup>

The Ahl-i Haqq also believe in the reincarnation of ordinary human souls, which is called *dûnadûn*, 'exchanging one garment for another'. The same expression (*don deđiştirme*, 'changing garment') is also known among the Alevi but mainly for Ali's successive manifestations. The belief in the reincarnation of ordinary humans was still recorded among the Dersimi just over a century ago, but currently, there appears to be little memory of such beliefs, and at least one young Dersimi researcher insists strongly on its absence.<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> Erdal Gezik, 'Rayberler, pîrler ve mürşidler (Alevi ocak örgütlenmesine dair saptamalar ve sorular)', in: Erdal Gezik and Mesut Özcan (eds.), *Alevi ocakları ve örgütlenmeleri*. 1. kitap, Ankara: Kalan, 2013, pp. 11-77.

<sup>24</sup> On Duzgin Bava and Avdil Mursa (Düzgün Baba and Abdal Musa) as opposed spiritual forces, see: Erdal Gezik and Hüseyin Çakmak, *Raa Haqi - Riya Haqi: Dersim Aleviliđi inanç terimleri sözlüğü*, Ankara: Kalan, 2010, pp. 23-24, 70-73; Munzir Comerd, 'Dersim inancı'nda Duzgin', *Ware* 11 (1997), 84-104. Abdal Musa is the name of a well-known 14<sup>th</sup>-century Turkish Bektashi saint buried in Elmalı near Antalya; Düzgün Baba is the name of a mountain sanctuary in Nazimiye, perhaps the most important *ziyaret* of Dersim.

<sup>25</sup> The Armenian traveller Antranik was told by a sayyid that after death, the human soul may reappear in animal form, and another *dede* told him that he remembered a previous life as a donkey (Antranik, *Dersim*, pp. 124-125). See, however, Kemal Astore, 'Glaubensvorstellungen und religiöses Leben der Zaza-Alewiten', in: Ismail Engin and Franz Erhard (eds.), *Aleviler / Alewiten*. Vol. 2: *Inanç ve gelenekler / Glaube und Traditionen*, Hamburg: Deutsches Orient-Institut, 2001, pp. 149-162, which firmly denies the existence of belief in reincarnation. Krisztina Kehl-Bodrogi also reports that she has in vain sought confirmation of a continuing belief in reincarnation (*Die Kızılbaş/Alewiten: Untersuchungen über eine esoterische Glaubensgemeinschaft in Anatolien*, Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1988, pp. 143-144). On the other hand, another student of Dersim's oral traditions informs me that he has repeatedly heard accounts according to which the human soul has to pass through 1,001 incarnations to reach perfection (Erdal Gezik, personal communication).

## Between Dâlahû and Dersim

As I have suggested elsewhere, the Bektashi order, which provided diverse heterodox groups with a protective umbrella, may have constituted a connection between the Anatolian Alevi and the Ahl-i Haqq during the Ottoman period.<sup>26</sup> The existence of several Bektashi *tekke* (convents) in Baghdad, Karbala, Samarra, and Kirkuk during the past four centuries is well attested.<sup>27</sup> Legends about Haji Bektash have been incorporated into Ahl-i Haqq religious lore; he is generally declared to be an incarnation of one of the highest spiritual beings in their pantheon. Of the various Ahl-i Haqq communities, it is unsurprisingly among the Kâkâ'î of Kirkuk that we find the greatest familiarity with the Bektashi tradition. Kâkâ'î sources quoted by Edmonds associate an entire cycle of sacred history with the appearance of Haji Bektash, in which the seven divine spirits (*haft tan*) took the form of Bektashi saints.<sup>28</sup> This amounts to a recognition of the Bektashiyye as essentially representing the same religion.

There is an even more remarkable testimony of Alevi communities living far to the West and recognising Ahl-i Haqq leaders in the Kermanshah region as their highest religious authorities. The American missionary Stephen van Rensselaer Trowbridge, who was based at 'Ayntab (Antep, Gaziantep) from 1906 to 1911 and in contact with local Alevi, reports that these Alevi recognised a family of Ahl-i Haqq sayyids as their chief religious authorities. In fact, he appears to claim that Alevi communities all over Anatolia and Syria accepted these sayyids as their spiritual leaders:

“The Geographical Centre of [the Alevi] religion is in the town of Kirind, Kermanshah province, Persia. Four of Ali's male descendants now reside in Kirind. They are by name, Seyyid Berake, Seyyid Rustem, Seyyid Essed Ullah, Seyyid Farraj Ullah. Seyyid is correctly said only of Ali's descendants. *These men send representatives throughout Asia Minor and northern Syria for preaching and for the moral training of their followers.*”<sup>29</sup>

Trowbridge has to be taken seriously as a source; his article is one of the best early reports on Alevi belief and practice. Sayyid Brâka and his grandson Sayyid Rustam were the most powerful and influential Ahl-i Haqq leaders of their day. Their descendant, Sayyid Nasreddîn, is the much-respected religious leader of the Ahl-i Haqq of Dâlahû, the Gûrân region to the West of Kermanshah. (I have not been able to identify the sayyids Asadullâh and Farajullâh.) This family of sayyids, known as the Haydari family, also extended its authority to various Turkish-speaking Ahl-i Haqq communities in Azerbaijan and Qazvin, sending dervishes there

---

<sup>26</sup> Martin van Bruinessen, 'When Haji Bektash'.

<sup>27</sup> Ayfer Karakaya Stump, 'The forgotten dervishes: the Bektashi convents in Iraq and their Kizilbash clients', *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 16(1-2) (2010), 1-24.

<sup>28</sup> C.J. Edmonds, 'The beliefs and practices of the Ahl-i Haqq of Iraq', *Iran* 7 (1969), pp. 89-106; cf. van Bruinessen, 'When Haji Bektash'.

<sup>29</sup> Stephen van Rensselaer Trowbridge, 'The Alevi, or Deifiers of Ali', *Harvard Theological Review* 2, no. 3 (1909), pp. 340-353, emphasis added. The quoted passage is at pp. 342-343.



as teachers and perhaps to collect tribute.<sup>30</sup> These Turkish-speaking communities may at times have constituted another bridge between the Kurdish heartland of the Ahl-i Haqq and Turkish-speaking Alevi communities.

The connection between Anatolian Alevi and the sayyids in Dâlahû appears to have been lost in the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and I have not found any traces of this connection. Many educated Kurdish Alevi are aware of the Ahl-i Haqq and Yezidis, and are convinced of the close relation between the three religions; but this awareness appears to be based on a recent reading of academic studies or popularising books rather than actual memory or direct acquaintance.<sup>31</sup> Musicians have played a special role as cultural brokers: the Kurdish Alevi musician and musicologist Ulaş Özdemir, from the Maraş region, has performed and recorded with the Kurdish Ahl-i Haqq musician Ali Akbar Moradi, from Dâlahû, seeking the commonalities in their musical traditions.<sup>32</sup> The Azerbaijani Ahl-i Haqq musician Cavit Murtezaoğlu not only performs frequently with Turkish musicians, but also published a book on the Ahl-i Haqq tradition in which he minimises the differences with Alevism.<sup>33</sup>

Kurdish Alevi intellectuals appear to be primarily interested in the Ahl-i Haqq as representing a common (Iranian) heritage that distinguishes them from Turkish Alevi and Bektashis. There has also been recent interest in the Ahl-i Haqq among Turkish nationalists, who have been focusing more specifically on the role of the Bektashi order and the Turcomans of northern Iraq. Of the various heterodox communities there, the Shabak (of the Mosul plain) adhere to a version of the Kızılbaş religion, whereas the neighbouring Sarlı, like the Kâkâ'î

---

<sup>30</sup> One such community was that of the Qaraqoyunlu district in Maku, which was mentioned above (see note 3). Z.A. Gordlevsky, who visited the district in 1916, writes that the community referred to itself as Görân (meaning 'seeing' in Turkish, but may, as suggested by Minorsky, also be adapted from 'Gûrân') and was regularly visited by dervishes sent in from Kermanshah to give religious instruction. Gordlevsky's 1927 Russian article was published in Turkish translation as: 'Karakoyunlu (Maku hanlığı'na bir geziden derlenmiş bilgiler)', *Alevilik-Bektaşilik Araştırmaları Dergisi* 4 (2011), pp. 83-124. Irène Mélikoff visited this and other Turkish Ahl-i Haqq communities in Azerbaijan in the 1970s but does not mention their connection with the Guran Ahl-i Haqq: *Sur les traces du soufisme turc*, pp. 33-38; instead, she emphasises their closeness to Anatolian Alevism, which one of her interviewees explains as a 'Suficised' (by the Bektashis) version of the same religion.

<sup>31</sup> A popular book that may have been influential is Mehrdad Izady, *The Kurds: A concise handbook*, Washington etc.: Crane Russak, 1992, which claims that Alevism, Yezidism, and Ahl-i Haqq are three variant forms of an originally Kurdish 'cult of angels'. It was translated into Turkish in 2004 (Izady, *Kürtler: bir el kitabı*, Istanbul: Doz). Other books that had an impact include my own *Kürtlük, Türklük, Alevilik: Etnik ve dinsel kimlik mücadeleleri*, Istanbul: İletişim, 2000, which contains my earlier essays on the Ahl-i Haqq; and the translation of M. Reza Hamzeh'ee's 1990 study, *Yaresan (Ehl-i Hak)*, Istanbul: Avesta, 2009. Other studies suggest a common Turkish religious background: Gölpınarlı, referring to various Azerbaijani Ahl-i Haqq communities, claimed that 'in Iran, the Kızılbaş call themselves Ahl-i Haqq' ('Kızılbaş', *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 6, Istanbul 1977, pp. 790, 794); Mélikoff, whose work is also well-known in Turkey, had commented on the relationship between these Azerbaijani communities and Anatolian Alevism (see note 30).

<sup>32</sup> *The Companion*, the CD they recorded together, can be heard on Spotify, as can Moradi's four-volume set of Ahl-i Haqq sacred music, *Les Maqam Rituels des Yarsan*.

<sup>33</sup> Cavit Murtezaoğlu, *Yarizm: Ehli Hak Alevilerin yirmi dört ulu ereni*, Ankara: Yurt Kitap-Yayın, 2011. The book contains many *kalâm* in Turkish. Murtezaoğlu was born in Tabriz and is connected with the Ahl-i Haqq community of Ilkhchi.

and at least part of the Turcomans of Tall Afar, are Ahl-i Haqq.<sup>34</sup> Earlier observers had remarked that the Sarlî and Shabak (and even more so the Yezidis, who also live nearby) are quite distinct and very conscious of belonging to different religions.<sup>35</sup>

Following the 2003 American invasion of Iraq and the fall of the Saddam regime, there was considerable effort on the part of local Turcomans and agencies from Turkey to persuade these communities of ambiguous ethnicity to declare themselves explicitly as Turcoman. The Turkish think tank ORSAM, which surveyed the various heterodox groups of Northern (Shabak, Kâkâ'î, and Turcoman) communities, found their religious traditions to be surprisingly alive in spite of the long period of repression. The report glosses over the religious differences and suggests they are all integrated by the Bektashi order, of which it mentions no less than 35 *tekke* (convents), many of which it claims are still functioning. Eight of these *tekke* are located in Shabak and six in Kâkâ'î villages.<sup>36</sup> In fact, there exists an Iraqi Alevi-Bektashi Federation, based on the Turkish model which claims all these communities as its members and on which the report leans heavily.<sup>37</sup>

The presence of the Bektashi order in Ottoman and independent Iraq has long gone virtually ignored, and its possible role in connecting various religious communities deserves more scholarly attention. In the remainder of this paper, however, I intend to focus on another institution that is capable of integrating religious communities, even if there are 'objective' religious differences: the priestly lineage.

### Priestly lineages

Among the Ahl-i Haqq and Alevis as well as the Yezidis, there is a limited number of priestly lineages (typically considered to be *sayyid*, descendants from the Prophet or from a saint in whom a divine spirit manifested itself). As observed above, every individual has to be associated with a spiritual elder or *pîr* who belongs to one of the priestly lineages (*khânadân / ôjâgh / ocak*) as well as with a 'guide' (*dalîl, rehber*) belonging to another priestly lineage.

---

<sup>34</sup> C.J. Edmonds, *Kurds, Turks and Arabs. Politics, travel and research in North-Eastern Iraq, 1919-1925*, London: Oxford University Press, 1957, pp. 182-201; Martin van Bruinessen, 'The Shabak, a Kizilbash community in Iraqi Kurdistan', *Les Annales de l'autre islam* 5 (1998), pp. 185-196; Michiel Leezenberg, 'Between assimilation and deportation: the Shabak and the Kakais in Northern Iraq', in: Krisztina Kehl-Bodrogi et al. (eds.), *Syncretistic religious communities in the Near East*, Leiden: Brill, 1997, pp. 175-194.

<sup>35</sup> Edmonds, *Kurds, Turks and Arabs*, p. 195; Amal Vinogradov, 'Ethnicity, cultural discontinuity and power brokers in Northern Iraq: The case of the Shabak', *American Ethnologist* 1 (1974), 207-218; Leezenberg, 'Between assimilation and deportation', pp. 171-172. Edmonds considered the Shabak, the Sarlî, and most of the Kâkâ'î as Kurds, but noted that there were also Kâkâ'î among the Turcomans, notably in Tall Afar.

<sup>36</sup> Bilgay Duman, 'Irak'ta Bektaşilik (Türkmenler – Şebekler – Kakailer)', ORSAM Rapor no. 88, ORSAM, Ankara, 2011, available at: <http://www.orsam.org.tr/tr/raporgoster.aspx?ID=2883> (last accessed 29-10-2014). At least some of the '*tekke*' in the list appear to be just shrines of Kâkâ'î saints. ORSAM (Center for Middle Eastern Strategic Studies) is specifically interested in the position of Turcomans living outside Turkey's borders.

<sup>37</sup> The ORSAM website features numerous interviews with leaders of this Alevi-Bektashi Federation and affiliated persons speaking for the other groups.

These priestly lineages constitute a caste, though not all their members may act as religious specialists; they do not intermarry with commoners, and there is a strong tendency for each lineage to be endogamous.

Certain saintly lineages may be so charismatic that they attract followers from outside the community in which they emerged. The Haydari sayyids of Dâlahû, whose authority was recognised even by Alevi communities in Anatolia and northern Syria, are a case in point. Another interesting case is mentioned by Michiel Leezenberg who visited a Sarlî community and discovered to his surprise that his interlocutors had previously been Shabak. A generation ago, a significant number of Shabak had shifted their affiliation to a powerful Kâkâ'î sayyid who had offered them his patronage and had thereby become Kâkâ'î / Sarlî.<sup>38</sup> The fact that the belief system of their new patron's community was quite different from that of their community of origin appeared to matter little. Other Shabak had de facto become Ithna'ashari Shi'is when their *pîr* entered into relations of patronage with urban Shi'i sayyids, as Vinogradov had already observed.<sup>39</sup>

The Turkish scholar Ahmet Taşğın draws attention to yet another factor: the Shabak sayyids of two villages east of Mosul were relatives of Alevi sayyids in the Bismil district of Diyarbakır, and there had been regular mutual visits. These had been discontinued because of political conditions, as a result of which 'the relations with Turkey weakened.'<sup>40</sup> And as the connection with Anatolian Alevis was cut, realignment with Kâkâ'î, Shi'i, or even Sunni sayyids may have been a survival strategy.

### **The *khânadân* of the Ahl-i Haqq**

Among the Ahl-i Haqq exists only a limited number of sayyid families (*khânadân* or *ôjâgh*), all of which trace their ancestry to early Ahl-i Haqq saints who were themselves the embodiments of spiritual beings belonging to one of the main heptads in the Ahl-i Haqq pantheon. The most extensive list comprises the names of eleven such *khânadân*, six of which descended from persons in the entourage of Sultân Sahâk, the founder of the Ahl-i Haqq religion, whereas the others descended from later incarnations.<sup>41</sup>

---

<sup>38</sup> Michiel Leezenberg, 'The end of heterodoxy? The Shabak in post-Saddam Iraq', in: Khanna Omarkhali (ed.), *Religious minorities in Kurdistan: beyond the mainstream*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2014, pp. 247-267, at p. 256.

<sup>39</sup> Vinogradov, 'Ethnicity, cultural discontinuity and power brokers', pp. 214-216.

<sup>40</sup> Ahmet Taşğın, 'Irak'ta Bektaşî topluluğu Şebekler', *Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Velî Araştırma Dergisi* 52 (2009), pp. 126-143, at p. 129. Taşğın claims that the previous generation of Shabak sayyids, who had maintained these contacts, had been able to speak Turkish, but their descendants no longer do so, although Turkish continues to be the ritual language.

<sup>41</sup> Nur Ali-Shah Elahi, *L'ésotérisme kurde*. Paris: Albin Michel, 1966, p. 49; Edmonds, *Kurds, Turks and Arabs*, p. 186; Murtezaoglu, *Yarsanizm*, pp. 26-27.

Sultân Sahâk and the *haft tan* were mentioned above as the highest of the spiritual entities. Sultân Sahâk was an incarnation of the Deity; as in all cycles of incarnation, he was accompanied by four archangels (named Binyâmîn, Dâwûd, Pîr Mûsî, and Mustafâ in this cycle – and identical with Jibrâ’îl, Mîkâ’îl, Isrâfîl, and ‘Azrâ’îl), a female spirit (Ramzbâr), and the spirit known as Bâbâ Yâdigâr, whose shrine in Dâlahû is the most important place of pilgrimage for the Guran. In some accounts, Sultân Sahâk is one of the Seven himself; in others, they are the Sultân’s companions and the heptad is completed by a ‘twin’ of Yâdigâr, Shâh Ibrâhîm.<sup>42</sup> Both Yâdigâr and Ibrâhîm are the progenitors of major *khânadân*; in the case of Yâdigâr, who remained childless, the *khânadân* descends from his most-trusted servant. The status of Shâh Ibrâhîm is contested among the Guran. The Shâh Ibrâhîmî *khânadân* and their followers are convinced that he is one of the *haft tan* and relates to Bâbâ Yâdigâr like one eye to the other – or like (the imam) Hasan to Husayn. The Yâdigârî and Khâmûshî *khânadân*, on the other hand, see Ibrâhîm as a much darker counterpart to Yâdigâr, who killed the latter in at least one of their incarnations. They recognise Bâbâ Yâdigâr in many famous martyrs who were beheaded (like Husayn) and speak of an occult struggle (*jang-i batinî*) in which Shâh Ibrâhîm is perpetually opposing Yâdigâr. In this version of Ahl-i Haqq cosmology, the pair Yâdigâr/Ibrâhîm has been infused with the Iranian dualism of light and darkness, and the *haftawâne* have similarly become darker opponents of the *haft tan*; both are cosmologically necessary, but there is no moral equivalence between them.<sup>43</sup>

However, both Ibrâhîmî and Yâdigârî agree that Shâh Ibrâhîm is also connected with another heptad, the *haftawâne*. These are more worldly counterparts to the purely spiritual *haft tan*. The *haft tan* do not, for instance, engage in ordinary physical procreation, whereas the *haftawâne* do. There are numerous narratives of virgin birth in the case of the *haft tan*. Bâbâ Yâdigâr, for instance, was conceived when a girl servant of Sultân Sahâk found and swallowed a pomegranate seed that had been spilt in a ritual offering. She then gave birth from her mouth. It is significant that the Yâdigârî *khânadân* descends not from Bâbâ Yâdigâr himself but from a close associate. The *haftawâne* are also called ‘sons’ of Sultân Sahâk, but my informants insisted that this should not be understood in the ordinary biological sense; a myth has them miraculously born after only seven days as perfectly identical adults, indistinguishable from Sultân Sahâk.<sup>44</sup>

The various Ahl-i Haqq communities broadly agree on the names of the *haftawâne* in the period of Sultân. Two of them, Sayyid Muhammad and Sayyid Abu’l-Wafâ, are especially relevant for the Guran because they engendered the other two *khânadân* that are influential in Dâlahû (besides the Bâbâ Yâdigârî), i.e. the Shâh Ibrâhîmî and Khâmûshî lineages. The

---

<sup>42</sup> For a succinct statement on the belief system of the Ahl-i Haqq, see my entry ‘Ahl-i Haqq’ in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, third edition.

<sup>43</sup> This dualism is reminiscent of the one of Duzgin Bava and Avdil Mursa in Dersim, see note 24.

<sup>44</sup> Ivanow, *Truth-worshippers*, p. 126.

eponymous Shâh Ibrâhîm was a son (or, in other accounts, a grandson) of Sayyid Muhammad, and Sayyid Khâmûsh was a son (or a grandson) of Sayyid Abu'l-Wafâ.<sup>45</sup>

The Ahl-i Haqq recognise yet another heptad, the *haft khalîfe*, and the *dalîl* descend from them. As has been said, every adult should have a *pîr* as well as a *dalîl*. Just like the *pîr* should belong to a sayyid *khânadân*, the *dalîl* should (at least in theory) belong to a family of *khalîfe*, descending from the original Seven who were appointed by Sultân Sahâk. According to my Guran informants, each lineage of *khalîfe* is associated with a particular sayyid *khânadân* and is called by the same name. The *dalîl* is, as it were, the intermediary between the initiate (*murîd*) and his *pîr*, who in turn is the channel of communication between his community and the *pâdishâh* or divine manifestation. It is claimed that everyone is free to choose his or her own *pîr* and *dalîl*, but in practice, the affiliation of commoner families (*murîd*) with specific *khânadân* tends to remain unchanged over the generations. In spite of their *pîr* and *dalîl* titles, which suggest religious instruction and guidance, most of the sayyids I met among the Guran did not appear to be very knowledgeable about their religion. (The presence of a sayyid, however, is necessary for any ritual to be valid, even the simplest offering or *niyâz*.) Whichever religious instruction took place, it was given by parents and the *kalâmkhwân*. However, the latter are also affiliated with specific *khânadân*, and I found out that among the Guran, there were some significant differences in belief between the Yâdigârî and Khâmûshî on the one hand and the Shâh Ibrâhîmî on the other hand.

The sayyid families are generally respected, but certainly not all of them are influential. Some sayyids, however, have emerged as powerful political as well as religious leaders, commanding the unquestioning obedience of their followers who believed them to be inhabited by a divine presence. One family of sayyids in particular, residing in the village of Tutshami near Kerend, rose to great prominence in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and came to be recognised as the highest religious authorities not only by the Guran, but also by Ahl-i Haqq and related communities as far as northern Iran and (as we have seen above) Anatolia. Although the family's political influence has much declined, Tutshami to this day remains a major religious centre for the Guran – or at least for certain sections of them. Sayyid Nasreddîn, the present head of the family, was called by several of my informants the *pîr-i Gûrân* or simply *âghâ*, 'the lord.'

### **The sayyids of Tutshami**

I heard stories about the sayyids of Tutshami from the first day that I spent among the Guran. The name of the village came up in many of my conversations at the shrine of Bâbâ Yâdigâr – with the resident sayyids and dervishes as well as many pilgrims. All of them admitted a certain degree of ignorance when I questioned them on the finer points of doctrine and even ritual. They did carry out their rituals, of course, but never took great pains to conform to the

---

<sup>45</sup> The names of the other five members of the heptad are given as Sayyid Ahmad Mîr-a Sûr, Sayyid Bawa Îsî, Sayyid Mustafâ, Sayyid Shihâbeddîn, and Sayyid Habîb Shâh (see Edmonds, *Kurds, Turks and Arabs*, p. 186 and, with minor differences, Mokri, *Ésotérisme kurde*, pp. 48-49).

standard of correct practice they assumed to exist. It was sufficient for them to know that there was a place where, theoretically, they could go and find authoritative answers to any question. If I were interested in such things, I was told repeatedly, I should go to Tutshami, for that is where all the answers are. Some called the village *pâytakht-i tâyfe*, ‘the capital of the [Ahl-i Haqq] community’. In the residence of the illustrious family, the *mâl-a âghâ* (‘house of the lord’), I was sure to find the most knowledgeable *kalâmkhwân*.

Sayyid Nasreddîn has no political power such as his ancestors once wielded, but he still exerts a moral authority over the Guran that enables him to mediate in conflicts. This authority is not based on his religious knowledge (which he is not expected to have; that is the province of the *kalâmkhwân*), but only on his family’s charisma. By his followers, he is widely believed to be blessed with the presence of one of the *haft tan* – some say Yâdigâr, others Binyâmîn –, although he attempts to discourage such beliefs. Similar claims of indwelling (*hulûl*) by one or more of the *haft tan* were made in the past about his ancestors. The American missionary F.M. Stead – who spent a long time in Kermanshah and Kerend in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and had very good contacts with the Ahl-i Haqq there – observed that “[t]he principal seyyid of the Guran district is practically worshipped by his followers.” As an example of their veneration, he relates that one of the tribal chiefs of the region once said to him: “May God forgive me for saying so, but Seyyid Rustam is my God.”<sup>46</sup>

Tutshami and the *mâl-a âghâ* were but meagre reflections of what they must have been a century earlier. A few old *kalâmkhwân* still lived in the house, and every day, visitors from all over the Guran district – peasants, nomads, and townspeople – would come to pay their respect to Sayyid Nasreddîn and his father Sayfeddîn, visit sacred spots in and around the house, and consecrate *niyâz*, little offerings of pomegranates and sweets which they would take home afterwards. They would talk much of greater days in the past, the times of Sayyid Brâka, Rustam, and Shamseddîn, when Truth (*haqîqat*) was more palpably present on earth and the last great dervishes composed the last inspired *kalâms*.

Tutshami’s period of greatness was largely the work of one remarkable man: Sayyid Haydar, who later became known as Sayyid Brâka (1785-1863). Little is known of his origins, except that he belonged to the Khâmûshî *khânadân*. It almost seems as if his backgrounds are deliberately suppressed, in order to make it seem like he rose from complete obscurity to supreme religious leadership of almost the entire Ahl-i Haqq community through the sheer force of his spiritual powers alone. The family names itself Haydari, as if its history only began with Sayyid Haydar; the village of Tutshami is said to have been founded by him, too. However, not far outside the village, near Sayyid Brâka’s simple grave, stand the ruins of an old house named after a certain Sayyid Ya’qûb about whom people told me nothing but incoherent stories. He must have been an earlier resident, and his relation with the Haydari family remains unclear. Sayyid Brâka’s starting position may have been less lowly (and his appearance less sudden) than is being claimed in retrospect.

Be that as it may, Sayyid Brâka did command tremendous respect in his lifetime. His first successors, his grandson Rustam and his great-grandson Shamseddîn, inherited much of

---

<sup>46</sup> F.M. Stead, ‘The Ali-Ilahi sect in Persia’, *The Moslem World* 22 (1932), pp. 186-187.

this respect as well as his political skills and were moreover quite charismatic persons in their own right. These sayyids' influence was not just restricted to the Guran. The German physician J.E. Polak, who lived in Qazvin in northern Iran in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and was in contact with local Ahl-i Haqq, comments on the super-human veneration in which they held a spiritual leader in Kermanshah province.<sup>47</sup> This can hardly have been anyone else but Sayyid Brâka, whom we also know to have been mentioned a few decades later by Trowbridge in 'Ayntab.

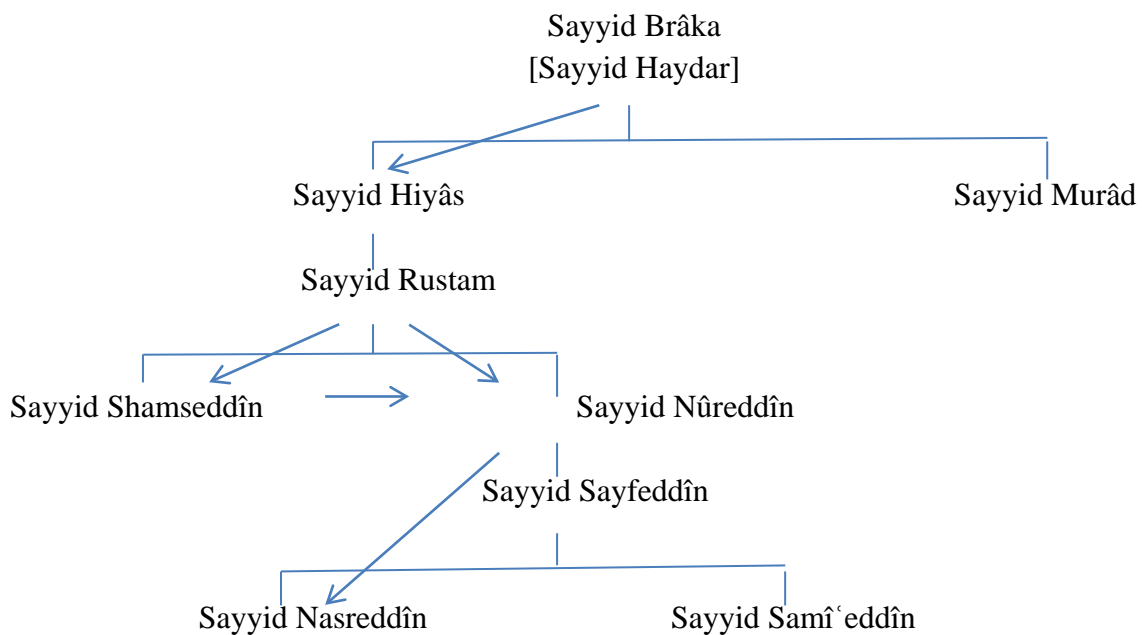
The authority that the sayyids claimed for themselves was not exclusively spiritual. The British consul Rabino relates how around 1900, Sayyid Rustam incited the chieftains of the Guran tribes to a rebellion against the paramount (and governmentally recognised) *khân* of the Guran confederacy and succeeded in gradually stripping the latter of both political authority and economic power.<sup>48</sup> This was probably only the culmination of a long process that had started under Sayyid Brâka, in which the sayyids of Tutshami gradually replaced the tribal *khâns* as the supreme leaders of the Guran. The *khâns* never regained their power; the sayyids finally lost much of theirs under Reza Shâh's centralising regime. Sayyid Rustam's son Shamseddîn, the last really powerful sayyid, saw his secular authority gradually ebb away and had to make great efforts to retain his authority as the sole spiritual leader of the Guran. His successors were respected but exerted moral authority over only a certain section of the Guran.

---

<sup>47</sup> J.E. Polak, *Persien. Das Land und seine Bewohner. Ethnografische Schilderungen*, Bd. I. Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1865, p. 349.

<sup>48</sup> H.L. Rabino, 'Kermanchah', *Revue du monde musulman* 38 (1920), p. 24.

## The Haydari family



(arrows indicate succession to leadership)

Sayyid Brâka lived 1785-1863.<sup>49</sup>

Sayyid Rustam, who succeeded him, was still alive and in power in 1920.<sup>50</sup>

Sayyid Shamseddîn and his brother Nûreddîn exercised a dual leadership over the Ahl-i Haqq in the region in 1949.<sup>51</sup> Later that same year, Shamseddîn died and Nûreddîn became the sole leader.<sup>52</sup>

Sayyid Sayfeddîn was still alive in 1976 when I visited Tutshami, but his son Nasreddîn was the universally recognised leader, believed to possess the divine spark the father lacked.

---

<sup>49</sup> Elahi, *L'ésotérisme kurde*, p. 111 (comment by the editor, Mohammed Mokri).

<sup>50</sup> V.F. Minorsky, "The Gûrân", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 11 (1943), p. 95.

<sup>51</sup> Henry Field, *An anthropological reconnaissance in the Middle East, 1950*, Cambridge, MA: Peabody Museum, 1956, p. 43.

<sup>52</sup> Mohammed Mokri, *Le chasseur de Dieu et le mythe du Roi-Aigle (Dawra-y Damyari)*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1967, p. 3.



## Historical origins of the Ahl-i Haqq *khânadân*

Ahl-i Haqq sacred history is cyclical; incarnations of the same spiritual entity who lived in different historical times are considered to be identical in essence, and the myths may bring together persons who, from the point of view of the historian, lived in different times and even at different places. This may be illustrated by the list of names of Companions (incarnations of the *haft tan*) in the cycle of Haji Bektash as found in Kâkâ'î *daftar*: Qayghusîz 'Abdâl, Gul Bâbâ, Shâhîn Bâbâ, Qaftân, Qizil Dede, Turâbî Orman, and Wêrân 'Abdâl.<sup>53</sup> It is obvious that these persons – to the extent that they can be identified – were not historical contemporaries and flourished in places far apart. Shâhîn Bâbâ, after whom a *dergâh* in or near Baghdad was named, and possibly the poet Virani are the only geographically close ones.<sup>54</sup> However, they all appear to be associated with the Bektashi order, and the fact that this list of names exists in an Ahl-i Haqq sacred text at all shows that the Kâkâ'î, who lived in Ottoman territory, must have been more familiar with the Bektashiyye than the Guran and considered it as a related religious formation.

Similarly, the *haft tan* and *haftawâne* of Sultân Sahâk's cycle were not necessarily real contemporaries, and attempts to assign this cycle to a precise historical period may be futile. The few concrete indications of historical dates are contradictory. Bâbâ Yâdigâr and Shâh Ibrâhîm are both called 'sons' of Sultân Sahâk and may have been his successors as leaders of the early Ahl-i Haqq community.<sup>55</sup> They may have been contemporaries, as is suggested by the existence of myths about a conflict between them, but this was not necessarily the case, and the conflict may have taken place in some of their other incarnations.

Mohammed Mokri discovered a title deed in which a piece of land was granted to Bâbâ Yâdigâr in 933/1527 by a man who had been imprisoned in Baghdad and was released through the saint's intervention. Bâbâ Yâdigâr had appeared to the *wazîr* of Baghdad in a dream and ordered him to set the prisoner free.<sup>56</sup> Mokri concludes that Yâdigâr must therefore have been alive in 1527, which would place the beginning of the Ahl-i Haqq community somewhere in the 15<sup>th</sup> or early 16<sup>th</sup> century. However, the grant may in fact have been made

---

<sup>53</sup> C.J. Edmonds, 'The beliefs and practices of the Ahl-i Haqq of Iraq', *Iran* 7 (1969), p. 94.

<sup>54</sup> The *dergâh* of Shâhîn Bâbâ was one out of the three that were regularly visited by Alevi *dede* from East Anatolia, see Karakaya-Stump, 'Forgotten dervishes', pp. 18-19. The other two *dergâh* were attached to the shrine complexes in Kerbela and Najaf. Wêrân Abdal may be the 16<sup>th</sup>- to 17<sup>th</sup>-century Bektashi poet Virani who is associated with Ali's shrine and the Bektashi *tekke* in Najaf, and who reportedly was venerated by the Kâkâ'î of Kirkuk, see Matti Moosa, *Extremist Shiites: The Ghulat sects*, Syracuse University Press, 1988, p. 183. Kaygusuz Abdal, Gül Baba, and Kızıl Deli Sultan are well-known Bektashi saints who founded *tekke* in Cairo, Budapest, and Dimetoka.

<sup>55</sup> Philip Kreyenbroek has recently suggested that they were the leaders of rival factions into which the early Ahl-i Haqq community split soon after moving from Hawramân (where Sultân Sahâk lived and where his shrine is) to Dâlahû. See Philip Kreyenbroek, 'The Yaresan of Kurdistan', in: Khanna Omarkhali (ed.), *Religious minorities in Kurdistan: beyond the mainstream*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2014, pp. 3-11, at p. 4.

<sup>56</sup> Mohammad Mokri, 'Étude d'un titre de propriété du début du XVIe siècle provenant du Kurdistan', *Journal Asiatique* 251 (1963), pp. 229-256. In those years, Baghdad was under Safavid control, so the {please complete}

to the saint's shrine (it mentions the site of the shrine as the saint's residence), and he may have appeared in the *wazîr*'s dream long after his physical death. Shâh Ibrâhîm is associated with Baghdad, not with Hawramân like Sultân Sahâk or Dâlahû as Bâbâ Yâdigâr, and my informants believed that he was buried there.<sup>57</sup> To my knowledge, there are no documents that give an independent indication of when exactly he lived.

Ahl-i Haqq sources agree that Sultân Sahâk was the son of a certain Sayyid 'Îsî, who had (together with his brother Sayyid Mûsî) come from elsewhere and settled in Barzinja in Shahrizur. The same Sayyid 'Îsî is also the common ancestor of the prominent and well-documented Barzinjî family of sayyids and Sufî shaikhs.<sup>58</sup> The two brothers are usually said to have arrived from Hamadan and to have been affiliated with the spiritual lineage of 'Alî Hamadânî and Muhammad Nûrbakhsh,<sup>59</sup> but there is at least one source that may hint at another connection. A register of genealogies of sayyid families in the Sulaymaniye region lists Shaikh Mûsî and Shaikh 'Îsî Barzinjî as the sons of a certain Bâbâ Rasûl, who in 760/1358 or sometime later arrived in Barzinja in Shahrizur. The same manuscript mentions 846/1442 as the date of Shaikh 'Îsî's death.<sup>60</sup> The unusual name of Bâbâ Rasûl occurs two more times in the Barzinjî's family tree, most prominently in the person of Bâbâ Rasûl Gewre, 'the Great' (d. 1646), whose numerous children are the progenitors of distinct branches of the family existing today.<sup>61</sup> It is conceivable that the sayyid register makes an error in placing the name of this much later ancestor before 'Îsî and Mûsî. However, it is tempting to speculate whether this genealogy suggests an association of the Barzinjî family with the famous Anatolian saint Bâbâ Rasûl who led a popular millenarian rebellion against the Rum Seljuqs in Anatolia in the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>62</sup> Like several other *baba* of his day, this Bâbâ Rasûl was a Wafâ'î, and he may therefore have had Iraqi connections and certainly been known in Iraqi Wafâ'î circles.

The Iranian author Sadîq Safîzâde has compiled 'biographies' of the *haftawâne* and other persons in Ahl-i Haqq sacred history, on the basis of Ahl-i Haqq *daftar* and a variety of other written and oral sources, which he interpreted in a rationalistic way by eliminating all

---

<sup>57</sup> Matti Moosa mentions the shrine of Shâh Ibrâhîm in Baghdad as the second-most important place of pilgrimage for the Kâkâ'î and Sarlî, after the one of Soltân Sahâk; see Moosa, *Extremist Shiites*, p. 182.

<sup>58</sup> Martin van Bruinessen, 'The Qâdiriyya and the lineages of Qâdirî shaykhs among the Kurds', *Journal of the History of Sufism* 1-2 (2000), pp. 131-49; Edmonds, *Kurds, Turks and Arabs*, pp. 68-78.

<sup>59</sup> Mohammad Ra'uf Tavakkulî, *Târîkh-i tasavvuf dar Kurdistân*, Tehran, 1359/1980, pp. 133-134; cf. Edmonds, *Kurds, Turks and Arabs*, p. 68.

<sup>60</sup> Manuscript in the private collection of V. Minorsky, studied by M. Mokri, see Mokri, 'Étude d'un titre de propriété', p. 241.

<sup>61</sup> Edmonds, *Kurds, Turks and Arabs*, pp. 68-72. Van Bruinessen, 'The Qadiriyya.'

<sup>62</sup> Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *La révolte de Baba Resul ou la formation de l'hétérodoxie musulmane en Anatolie au XIIIe siècle*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1989. The date of Bâbâ Rasûl's revolt against the Seljuqs is around 1240, which places him perhaps a century before the Barzinjî brothers.

miraculous elements.<sup>63</sup> In his narrative, the *haftawâne* were mystics who came from different parts of Iraq and Iran and gathered around Sultân Sahâk in Pirdiwar as their *pîr* and *murshid*. Safîzâde makes all of them contemporaries, living in the 13<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> century, but he does not inform us which source this dating is based on.

I propose an alternative hypothesis: the five *khânadân* that are associated with the *haftawâne* and their eponymous ancestors represent originally different communities of spiritual teachers and followers that at some point in time (or at different points in time) were integrated into the Ahl-i Haqq. The eponymous founders of the *khânadân* may have been contemporaries, but there is no compelling reason why this should have been the case. The names of Abu'l-Wafâ' and his successor Khâmûsh are especially tantalizing. Safîzâde identifies the former as Abu'l-Wafâ'-i Kurdî, who was sent to Hamadan by Sultân Sahâk and was buried near the local shrine of Bâbâ Tâhir. His grave, however, could not be found, for it was allegedly removed in the course of a restoration of the main shrine.<sup>64</sup>

It is tempting to speculate whether the names of the founders of the Khâmûshî *khânadân* may refer to the earlier Kurdish Sufi Abu'l-Wafâ', known as Tâj al-'Ârifîn (d. 1101). He was the son of a sayyid descending from the imam Zayn al-'Âbidîn and a Kurdish mother. He was the founder of the Wafâ'iyya Sufi order, which later became influential in Anatolia. He remained childless and was succeeded by a nephew named Khâmîs – like his namesake of the *haftawâne* was succeeded by his son Khâmûsh. His hagiography mentions that he had numerous Kurdish followers and was very tolerant of their tendency to heterodoxy.<sup>65</sup> Several Kızılbaş *ocak* of East Anatolia trace their genealogy through Abu'l-Wafâ' to Imam Zayn al-'Âbidîn, indicating the importance of the Wafâ'iyya as a contributor to Anatolian Alevism. Moreover, his name also comes up in early Yezidi history: he was a teacher of Shaikh 'Adî b. Musâfir and is mentioned in several of the *qasîda* attributed to the latter – in one instance as a protagonist in a myth that is also attested among the Ahl-i Haqq, the Bektashis, and in Dersim.<sup>66</sup>

---

<sup>63</sup> Sadîq Safîzâde, *Dânishnâme-yi nâm-âvarân-i Yârsân. Ahwâl u asâr-i mashâhîr, târîkh, kitâbhâ u istilâhât-i 'irfânî*, Tehran: Intishârât-i Hayramand, 1376/1997.

<sup>64</sup> Safîzâde, *Nâm-âvarân*, pp. 134-137.

<sup>65</sup> The hagiography was compiled in Arabic and completed in 1371 by a certain Shihâbeddîn (another name that also occurs among the *haftawâne*). See Alya Krupp, *Studien zum Menaqybnâme des Abu l-Wafa' Tag al-Arifin: Das historische Leben des Abu l-Wafa' Tag al-Arifin*, München: Dr. Rudolf Trofenik, 1976. An early Turkish translation exists, attesting to the influence of the Wafâ'iyya in Anatolia and recently edited by Dursun Gümüšoğlu, *Tâcü'l Arifîn Es-Seyyid Ebu'l Vefâ menakıbnamesi*, Istanbul: Can, 2006; cf. Ocak, *La révolte de Baba Resul*, p. 54, and Karakaya-Stump, 'Subjects of the Sultan', *passim*.

<sup>66</sup> Abu'l-Wafâ' rides a lion and Shaikh 'Adî shows his superiority by mounting a rock and ordering it to walk. Philip Kreyenbroek, *Yezidism: its background, observances and textual tradition*, Lewiston, NY: Mellen Research Publications, 1995, p. 48. For other versions of the same myth, see van Bruinessen, 'Haji Bektash, Sultan Sahak, Shah Mina Sahib'.

## The Alevi priestly lineages of Dersim

The *ocak* system of Dersim is complicated; there is a large number of *ocak*, several of them broken up into sections that have become almost independent, and the relations of authority between them defy any attempt at systematic representation. Most of them are ‘independent’ *ocak*, in the sense that they have no or only tenuous relations with the central Bektashi lodge in Kırşehir and were connected with the Safavids in the past: they are Kızılbaş rather than Bektaşî. Some of the *ocak*, such as the Bamasur (Baba Mansur), Kureyşan and Ağuçan (Ağuıçen), have a strong local cultural identity and are associated with a rich repertoire of local legends and sacred sites. It was mostly from aged sayyids of these *ocak* that young artists and intellectuals recovered myths, legends, and memories of a social and religious world that was completely overturned in the massacres and deportations of 1937-1938.

In Dersim and the culturally related communities stretching in a wide arc from Kahramanmaraş to the southern parts of Erzurum, entire tribes (or at least regional sections of each tribe) used to be affiliated with the same *murshid*, *pîr*, and *rehber*, each usually belonging to a different *ocak*. The members of *pîr* and *murshid ocak* must also have their *rehber*, *pîr*, and *murshid*, in many cases apparently from other *ocak* (however, the information about this is contradictory). The Baba Mansur and Ağuçan *ocak* are most often mentioned as *murshid* (for the tribes in East and West Dersim, respectively), and there are at least eight other priestly lineages that provide *pîr* and *rehber*. Besides these Kurdish *ocak*, there are also a number of Turkish *ocak* with their centres in the same region. The relations of spiritual guidance among the *ocak* as well as between *ocak* and commoner tribes (*talip*, *toliv*) are complex, and no unambiguous hierarchy can be established; reports by local researchers are not consistent.<sup>67</sup> Although *murshid*, *pîr*, *rehber*, and *talip* stand in a relationship of authority to each other, it is certainly not the case that tribes and *ocak* as social units constituted at any time a four-layered stratified system. The terms reflect the past relationship with Shah Isma‘il and his successors; well into the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the *rehber* was the one to be in contact with local communities of Kızılbaş, and the *pîr* was responsible for a large region, as the representative (*khalife*) of the Safavid shah who was the *murshid*.<sup>68</sup> How this was transformed into the later *ocak* system, in which local *ocak* came to function as *murshid*, remains unclear.

Most of what we know of the Dersim *ocak* system (and more generally of Kurdish Alevi communities) consists of reconstructions of how it used to function before 1937, based on interviews with aged informants. There is at least one *cemevi* in Dersim now, a recent purpose-built structure for celebrating *cem*, but the rituals celebrated here appear to be recently re-introduced rather than the continuation of the *cem* as practised in the past. As the anthropologist Peter Bumke, who carried out research in Dersim in the 1970s, remarked with

---

<sup>67</sup> For a good analytical and critical overview, see Erdal Gezik, ‘Rayberler, pirlar ve mürşidler (Alevi ocak örgütlenmesine dair saptamalar ve sorular)’, in: Erdal Gezik and Mesut Özcan (eds.), *Alevi ocakları ve örgütlenmeleri*. 1. kitap, Ankara: Kalan, 2013, pp. 11-77.

<sup>68</sup> M.A. Danon, ‘Un interrogatoire d’hérétiques musulmans (1619)’, *Journal Asiatique* 2e sér., tôme 17 (1921), pp. 281-293.

some exaggeration, his informants appeared to adhere to ‘a religion that is not practised’.<sup>69</sup> The *ocak* never ceased to exist, of course, and they continued to be held in respect by the other tribes, but the regular visits by *murshid*, *pir*, and *rehber*, which had been the occasions when *cem* were held, were to a large extent disrupted by the deportations. However, conditions differed from place to place, and some oral information suggests that here and there, *cem* continued to be celebrated.

In the past two decades, a considerable body of information on the *ocak* system as well as on other aspects of this religion has become available.<sup>70</sup> Most significantly, a large number of manuscript documents in the possession of *ocak*, such as genealogies (*shajara*, *şecere*), letters of confirmation as sayyid (*siyâdetnâme*) or *khalîfa* (*icâzetnâme*) – which had long been kept hidden –, have been made available to and been analysed by researchers.<sup>71</sup> Besides scholarly studies on the subject, we now also have self-representations of several *ocak*, usually with reproductions of their *şecere* and other documents.<sup>72</sup>

The *ocak* documents of East Anatolia that have been studied so far have shown the great importance of the Kurdish Sufi Sayyid Abu’l-Wafâ’ Tâj al-‘Ârifîn, through whom many *ocak* trace their genealogies. Gölpınarlı and later Ahmet Yaşar Ocak showed that many of the 13<sup>th</sup>-century Anatolian Sufi masters and charismatic leaders known as *baba*, including the famous Baba Resul, were in fact connected with the Wafâ’iyya rather than the Central Asian Yeseviyye.<sup>73</sup> Ayfer Karakaya-Stump analysed a large number of documents belonging to (Turkish) *ocak* in the Maraş-Adıyaman-Malatya region, and her findings are of particular importance for my argument because they show that the Anatolian Wafâ’iyya network and the Alevi *ocak* retained strong connections with spiritual centres in Iraq for a long time.<sup>74</sup>

---

<sup>69</sup> Peter J. Bumke, ‘The Kurdish Alevis – boundaries and perceptions’, in: Peter A. Andrews (ed.), *Ethnic groups in the Republic of Turkey*, Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1989, p. 515.

<sup>70</sup> Nejat Birdoğan, *Anadolu ve Balkanlarda Alevi yerleşmesi: ocaklar – dedeler – soyağaçları*, İstanbul: Alev Yayınları, 1992; Ali Yaman, *Alevilik’te dedelik ve ocaklar*, İstanbul: Karacaahmet Sultan Derneği Yayınları, 2004; Hamza Aksüt, *Aleviler: Türkiye – İran – Irak – Suriye – Bulgaristan*, Ankara: Yurt Kitap-Yayın, 2009; Dilşa Deniz, *Yol/Rê: Dersim inanç sembolizmi. Antropoljik bir yaklaşım*, İstanbul: İletişim, 2012.; Erdal Gezik & Mesut Özcan (eds.), *Alevi ocakları ve örgütlenmeleri*. 1. kitap, Ankara: Kalan, 2013.

<sup>71</sup> Birdoğan, *Anadolu ve Balkanlarda*; Ocak, ‘Türkiye Selçukluları döneminde’; Karakaya-Stump, ‘Subjects of the Sultan’; Caroline Tee, ‘Holy lineages, migration and reformulation of Alevi tradition: a study of the Dervis Cemal ocak from Erzincan’, *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 37(3) (2010), pp. 335-392.

<sup>72</sup> Seyyid Hacı Mustafa Aklıbaşında, *Ehlibeyt nesli Seyyid Mahmud Hayrani ve evlâtları*, Duisburg: private, 1993; Kureşanlı Seyyid Kekil, *Peygamberler ile seyyidlerin şecereleri ve aşiretlerin tarihi*, Köln: private, n.d. [c. 2000]; Vaktidolu, *Ağuiçenliler ocağı*, İstanbul: Can, 2013.

<sup>73</sup> Abdalbâki Gölpınarlı, *Yunus Emre ve tasavvuf*, İstanbul: İnkilâp, 1992[1961], pp. 46-50; Ocak, *La révolte de Baba Resul*; idem, ‘Türkiye Selçukluları döneminde ve sonrasında Vefâî tarîkati (Vefâiyye): Türkiye popüler tasavvuf tarihine farklı bir yaklaşım.’ *Bellekten* 70(257) (2006), pp. 119-154.

<sup>74</sup> Ayfer Karakaya-Stump, ‘Documents and Buyruk Manuscripts in the private archives of Alevi dede families: an overview’, *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 37(3) (2010), pp. 273-286; idem, ‘Subjects of the Sultan’; idem, ‘The forgotten dervishes’.

Most of the Wafâ'î dervishes appear to have joined the Kızılbaş movement, and the Wafâ'iyya network at least in part seems to have reoriented itself towards the shrine of Shaikh Safi in Ardabil. Karakaya-Stump suggests that after the Ottoman conquest of East Anatolia, the Anatolian *ocak* remained affiliated with the Safavids via Iraq, where Ottoman control long remained less complete than in Anatolia. The nodes of contact were dervish convents (*dergâh* or *tekke*), the most important of which were located in the holy shrines of Kerbela, Najaf, and Kazimayn. In the course of time, these *dergâh* came to be affiliated with the Bektashiyya; as it did elsewhere, this order incorporated and domesticated the various heterodox dervish groups. Additional Bektashi *dergâh* were later established in places such as Kirkuk and Samarra and became parts of the network visited by Anatolian dervishes and sayyids. Through the centuries, sayyids of East Anatolian *ocak* would make journeys to Kerbela, Najaf, and Baghdad in order to request certification of their *silsile*, *şecere*, and *icâzetnâme* from prominent sayyids residing there.<sup>75</sup>

This orientation towards Iraq continued, as Karakaya-Stump asserts, until around 1800, after which these *ocak* (whose documents she studied gradually) shifted their orientation towards the central Bektashi lodge in Kırşehir. Other *ocak*, especially from Dersim proper, may have continued to seek confirmation of their genealogies from Kerbela well after that date. I have heard of Dersim sayyids travelling to Kerbela as late as the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Birdoğan describes a *şecere* that was signed by sayyids in Kerbela in 1953. It belongs to one of the less well-known Turkish *ocak*, named Şah İbrahim, and Birdoğan shows a healthy scepticism towards the genealogical claims of this lineage, but there is little reason to doubt that the signatures and stamps on the document are from Kerbela.<sup>76</sup>

### Some surprising coincidences

The Ahl-i Haqq *khânadân* of Shâh İbrâhîm is associated with Baghdad and strongly represented among the Kâkâ'î of Kirkuk. The existence of an Alevi *ocak* with the same name, which moreover as recently as 1953 sought recognition and legitimation from Iraq, raises the question whether there could be a connection between the two, and if so, of what kind. As Aksüt suggests, the title 'Şah' in the *ocak*'s name may be of recent usage, for it used to be referred to as the *Şeyh İbrahim ocağı*.<sup>77</sup> In this case, it is possible that the Anatolian sayyids, aware of the prominence of the Shâh İbrâhîmî *khânadân* in northern Iraq and Baghdad, adapted their *ocak*'s name to resemble the one of a more famous namesake. It is also imaginable that there is a more direct connection between both lineages – as a resident of

<sup>75</sup> Karakaya-Stump, 'Subjects of the Sultan'.

<sup>76</sup> Birdoğan, *Anadolu ve Balkanlarda*, pp. 198-203. On the Şah İbrahim *ocak*, which is a section of the Dede Garkin *ocak*, see also Aksüt, *Aleviler*, pp. 87-113; Hamza Aksüt, 'Der Şah İbrahim Ocağı: Die Siedlungsgebiete, der Gründer und die mit ihm verbundenen Gemeinschaften', in: Robert Langer et al. (eds.), *Ocak und Dedelik: Institutionen religiösen Spezialistentums bei den Aleviten*, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Verlag, 2013, pp. 69-93.

<sup>77</sup> Aksüt, 'Der Şah İbrahim Ocağı', p. 70.

Baghdad, Shâh Ibrâhîm may have been more closely associated with the Safavids than other Ahl-i Haqq saints –, but there is no evidence for that effect.<sup>78</sup>

The name of Sayyid Abu'l-Wafâ' occurs not only in the genealogies of many East Anatolian Alevi *ocak* but is also associated with Shaikh 'Adî bin Musâfir around whom the Yezidi religion took its shape. This suggests that the milieu of Kurdish followers of Sayyid Abu'l-Wafâ' Tâj al-Ârifîn had a major formative influence not only on Kurdish Alevism but on Yezidism as well. Both Abu'l-Wafâ' and 'Adî b. Musâfir were themselves *shari'a*-abiding, orthodox Muslims, but many of their followers definitely were not, and Abu'l-Wafâ's hagiography explicitly notes his tolerance of the Kurds' failure to perform the canonical obligations and approval of their *samâ'* ritual that was criticised by other Sufis.<sup>79</sup> The presence of a founding father of the same name among the Ahl-i Haqq *khânadân* raises fascinating questions which cannot be satisfactorily answered. The connection between early Ahl-i Haqq and the said Kurdish Wafâ'î milieu remains elusive. The names of the ancestors of the Khâmûshî lineage, Abu'l-Wafâ' and his grandson and successor Khâmûsh, are very reminiscent of those of the 11<sup>th</sup> century (Abu'l-Wafâ' and his nephew and successor Khâmîs), but a gap of at least three centuries appears to exist between the lifetimes of the latter two and the emergence of the Ahl-i Haqq.

Similarly, the name of Bâbâ Rasûl, who is mentioned as the 'father' of the sayyids 'Îsî and Mûsî – who settled in Barzinja sometime between the 13<sup>th</sup> and the 15<sup>th</sup> century and became the common ancestors of the Barzinjî sayyids as well as the Ahl-i Haqq *khânadân* deriving from Sultân Sahâk –, is reminiscent of that of Bâbâ Rasûl, the leader of the large Anatolian rebellion against the Seljuqs. Whatever the real identity of the Anatolian Bâbâ Rasûl, he was a Wafâ'î, and his name must have been well-known in Iraqi (Kurdish) Wafâ'î circles.

In the cyclical concept of sacred time that frames all Ahl-i Haqq traditions, linear time and chronology do not matter much. The concept of reincarnation makes it possible for historical persons living centuries apart to appear together in Ahl-i Haqq myths. I am not claiming that the Abu'l-Wafâ' (who actually lived in Kurdistan in the 11<sup>th</sup> century) and the Abu'l-Wafâ' of Ahl-i Haqq tradition – or the Anatolian rebel leader Bâbâ Rasûl and the Barzinjî sayyids' ancestor of that name – may actually have been the same persons. The identical names may be pure coincidence. But it is not impossible that some of the communities that merged into the Ahl-i Haqq religion in its formative stages had Wafâ'î connections and looked upon Abu'l-Wafâ' and Bâbâ Rasûl as divinely inspired authorities with whose names they wished to be associated.

---

<sup>78</sup> Complicating matters further, Moosa mentions the existence of a Kızılbaş community named Ibrâhimiyya among the Turcomans of Tall Afar, with both Safavi and Bektashi connections: Moosa, *Extremist Shiites*, pp. 165-167.

<sup>79</sup> Cited in Karakaya-Stump, 'Subjects of the Sultan', pp. 41-42.

## Conclusion

In spite of many similarities and a general family resemblance, the Ahl-i Haqq religion and Kızılbaş Alevism have quite distinct belief systems. The clearest expression of their belief systems is found in the religious poetry of *kalâm* and *deyiş*, the oldest and most respected of which is written in Gurani and Turkish, respectively. (But there is a corpus of *kalâm* in Turkish and Persian, as well as a small number of *deyiş* and *gulbang* in Kurdish and Zaza.) There is no overlapping (thematically or even stylistically) between the *kalâm* and the *deyiş*.<sup>80</sup> In addition, we have a small number of prose texts of both communities – various versions of the *Buyruk*, a type of Kızılbaş catechism in Turkish that appears to be of early Safavid provenance,<sup>81</sup> and a few relatively late Ahl-i Haqq prose texts in Persian.<sup>82</sup> These texts are also very different from one another, but they refer to a (small) number of common myths on the origin of the world and the *jam / cem* ritual. There are no Ahl-i Haqq communities that know the *Buyruk*, nor Alevi communities that know any of the Ahl-i Haqq texts. Intellectuals of both communities have recognised their similarities or even proclaimed the fundamental identity of both religions; but where Kızılbaş and Ahl-i Haqq communities have existed in close proximity – as they did in northern Iraq –, they have maintained clear and strict boundaries between each other. Individuals and even groups may occasionally have crossed the boundary, but the distinctness of Shabak and Kâkâ'î has remained.

Both the Kızılbaş and the Ahl-i Haqq consist of numerous local communities that until recently were largely endogamous, with each having their own cultural traditions, holy sites, and associated legends. Affiliation with a priestly lineage, which was in charge of the core *jam / cem* ritual, integrated local communities into a larger moral community with a certain sense of a distinct identity, which could be reflected in some distinct ideas and practices within the overall system of their religion. A clear example mentioned above is that of the Bâbâ Yâdigârî and Shâh Ibrâhîmî *khânadân*, who (within their shared Ahl-i Haqq belief in cycles of manifestation of spiritual beings) hold radically different views of the relationship between some of these entities. Similarly, minor differences between remembered ritual practices of different Alevi *ocak* became manifest when the *cem* ritual was reinvented in Turkey's metropolitan cities and the diaspora in the 1990s. Oral history research suggests that at least some of the Kurdish *ocak* (such as the Baba Mansur and Ağuçan) besides the common core of myths and legends preserve distinct traditions of their own.

The social structure of commoner tribes and peasant communities tied to priestly lineages is an important feature the Ahl-i Haqq and Kızılbaş have in common (and share with the

---

<sup>80</sup> Perhaps an exception should be made for the religious poetry of Azerbaijani Ahl-i Haqq. Cavit Murtezaoğlu has published a large collection of *kalâm* by Azerbaijani poets which are quite different in style from the Gurani *kalâm* and somewhat similar to Anatolian Alevi poetry (Murtezaoğlu, *Yarsanizm*).

<sup>81</sup> Atalay, *İmam Cafer-i Sadik buyruğu*; Anke Otter-Beaujean, 'Schriftliche Überlieferung versus mündliche Tradition: zum Stellenwert der Buyruk-Handschriften im Alevitum', in: Krisztina Kehl-Bodrogi et al. (eds.), *Syncretistic religious communities in the Near East*, Leiden: Brill, 1997, pp. 213-226.

<sup>82</sup> The *Tadhkira-i A'la*, published by Ivanov, *Truth-worshippers*, and Jayhûnâbâdî's as yet unpublished *Furqân al-Akhbâr*, which was a major source for Minorsky's writings on the Ahl-i Haqq.



Yezidis, with whom they otherwise maintain an even stricter boundary).<sup>83</sup> For the common adherents of these religions, the affiliation with a particular *ocak* or *khânadân* may be more important for defining their religious identity than any specific beliefs and practices. Each of these lineages is unambiguously either Ahl-i Haqq or Kızılbaş, and so, one would presume, are their followers. However, highly charismatic sayyids may extend their religious authority not only across all of their own *ocak* or *khânadân*, but also across other lineages – as did the Haydarî family of Dâlahû, which found recognition among communities affiliated with the Âtashbegî *khânadân* in Azerbaijan and Qazvin as well as even among Alevi communities far to the West which appeared unaware of the theological differences between themselves and the Ahl-i Haqq. In another case of realignment with a more powerful sayyid lineage, we have seen that a group of Shabak had crossed the religious boundary and became Sarlî-Kâkâ'î.

The origins of the priestly lineage system and the *jam / cem*, in which specialists belonging to these lineages play an essential role, cannot be unambiguously traced. However, the genealogies of several Kızılbaş *ocak* that have been studied show their connection to 11<sup>th</sup>-century Kurdish Sufi, Sayyid Abu'l-Wafâ, and the Wafâ'iyya Sufi order, which had emerged in southern Kurdistan and by the 13<sup>th</sup> century had become influential among the Turcoman and Kurdish tribes of Anatolia. The appearance of orthodox Muslim sayyids and Sufi shaikhs (such as Sayyid Abu'l-Wafâ and his contemporary Shaikh 'Adî) among superficially Islamicised Kurdish tribes gave rise to more or less stable religious communities that were affiliated with the descendants of those sayyids and shaikhs, as well as of various degrees of attachment to scripturalist Islam. The Safavid movement of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries pulled many of these groups, and notably their saintly families, together and imposed on them a certain degree of uniformity in doctrine and ritual practice. Later, the Bektashi Sufi order, closely connected to the Ottoman state, offered the same *ocak* affiliation and privileges.

Five (or rather six) of the Ahl-i Haqq *khânadân* claim descent from ancestors directly associated with Sultân Sahâk. No family genealogies have been published; Edmonds suggests that they can be traced to Sultân Sahâk. The myth of the miraculous birth of the *haftawâne*, however, suggests that the *khânadân* founders were Sultân Sahâk's sons only in a spiritual sense. I would suggest that these families originally represented different local spiritual traditions, i.e. priestly families with followers who merged into the Ahl-i Haqq in a similar way, since not much later, other such communities were to join the Safavid movement and to become known as Kızılbaş. Some names of protagonists in these *khânadân* are strangely reminiscent of names in the Wafâ'iyya network.

During the Ottoman period, occasional contacts between Kızılbaş *ocak* and Ahl-i Haqq communities may have existed, as sayyids and dervishes affiliated with the former travelled to the Shi'i shrine cities of Karbala, Najaf, Kazimayn, and Samarra in search of authentication of their genealogical claims and confirmation of their authority to act as *pîr*. There are no records of Ahl-i Haqq pilgrimages to the same holy cities, but Ahl-i Haqq dervishes did travel

---

<sup>83</sup> Even among the Sunni Kurds exist some saintly families that play a comparable role, such as the Barzinjî sayyids and Sufi shaikhs, as well as the Barzani family. See van Bruinessen, 'The Qâdiriyya'.

vast distances. It is likely that the Bektashi *tekke* in various Iraqi cities provided hospitality to both types of travellers.

As yet, little is known about two important populations that may have been intermediaries between the Anatolian Kızılbaş and the Kurdish (or Guran) Ahl-i Haqq. Some Turcomans of Iraq (notably in Tall Afar) are reportedly Kâkâ'î; many others hold or held beliefs similar to those of the Kızılbaş. To my knowledge, there is no serious study of the religion of the various Turcoman communities in Iraq.

There is some literature on the various Ahl-i Haqq communities of Azerbaijan and Qazvin, but they are not very informative about their religious beliefs and rituals – and even less so about possible contacts with Kızılbaş communities of the same language. They appear to have lived in relative isolation and may not have been influenced much by the arrival of large numbers of Kızılbaş tribes in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. However, they were affiliated with the Kurdish Ahl-i Haqq and, being Turkish-speaking themselves, constituted a bridge between the Turkish- and Kurdish- or Persian-speaking heterodox communities, as were the multilingual Shabak and Kâkâ'î communities of northern Iraq.

The past two decades have seen an increasing interest among members of Ahl-i Haqq and Alevi communities in each other, and several authors have insisted on the close relation between the two religious systems. These claims appear to be mainly based on the reading of academic or popularising literature, but they have also spurred young activists and scholars to carry out actual field research in other communities or to make some of their own tradition available to others. These efforts may end up having an impact on the ritual and discursive heritage of both groups, adding yet another layer of common ideas.

## Bibliography

Aklibaşında, Seyyid Hacı Mustafa (1993), *Ehlibeyt nesli Seyyid Mahmud Hayrani ve evlâtlari*, n.p. [Duisburg]: private.

Aksoy, Bilal (1995), “Tunceli bölgesinde dinsel değerlendirme”, in: Birdoğan, Nejat (ed.), *Anadolu Aleviliği'nde yol ayırımı*, Istanbul: Mozaik, pp. 335-351.

Aksüt, Hamza (2013), “Der Şah İbrahim Ocağı: Die Siedlungsgebiete, der Gründer und die mit ihm verbundenen Gemeinschaften”, in: Langer, Robert et al. (eds.), *Ocak und Dedelik: Institutionen religiösen Spezialistentums bei den Aleviten*, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Verlag, pp. 69-93.

Antranik (2012), *Dersim seyahatnamesi*, Istanbul: Aras.

Astare, Kemal (2001), “Glaubensvorstellungen und religiöses Leben der Zaza-Alewiten”, in: Engin, Ismail and Erhard, Franz (eds.), *Aleviler / Alewiten. Bd. 2: İnanç ve gelenekler / Glaube und Traditionen*, Hamburg: Deutsches Orient-Institut, pp. 149-162.

Atalay, Adil Ali (1993), *İmam Cafer-i Sadik buyruğu*, Istanbul: Can.

Bender, Cemşid (1991), *Kürt uygarlığında Alevilik*, Istanbul: Kaynak.

Birdoğan, Nejat (1992), *Anadolu ve Balkanlarda Alevi yerleşmesi. Ocaklar – dedeler – soyağaçları*, Istanbul: Alev.

van Bruinessen, Martin (1991), "Haji Bektash, Sultan Sahak, Shah Mina Sahib and various avatars of a running wall", *Turcica* XXI-XXIII, pp. 55-69.

--- (1994), "Genocide in Kurdistan? The suppression of the Dersim rebellion in Turkey (1937-38) and the chemical war against the Iraqi Kurds (1988)", in: Andreopoulos, George J. (ed.), *Conceptual and historical dimensions of genocide*, University of Pennsylvania Press, pp. 141-170.

--- (1995), "When Haji Bektash still bore the name of Sultan Sahak. Notes on the Ahl-i Haqq of the Guran district", in: Popovic, Alexandre and Veinstein, Gilles (eds.), *Bektachiyya: études sur l'ordre mystique des Bektachis et les groupes relevant de Hadji Bektach*, Istanbul: Éditions Isis, pp. 117-138.

--- (1997), "'Aslını inkar eden haramzadedir!': the debate on the ethnic identity of the Kurdish Alevis", in: Kehl-Bodrogi, Krisztina, Kellner-Heinkele, Barbara and Otter-Beaujean, Anke (eds.), *Syncretistic religious communities in the Near East*, Leiden: Brill, pp. 1-23.

--- (1998), "The Shabak, a Kizilbash community in Iraqi Kurdistan", *Les Annales de l'autre islam* 5, pp. 185-196.

--- (2000), "The Qâdiriyya and the lineages of Qâdirî shaykhs among the Kurds", *Journal of the History of Sufism* 1-2, pp. 131-149.

--- (2009), "Ahl-i Haqq", *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Third Edition, Part 2009-2, Leiden: Brill, pp. 51-58.

--- (2014), "Veneration of Satan among the Ahl-e Haqq of the Gûrân region", *Fritillaria Kurdica, Bulletin of Kurdish Studies* (Krakow), nos. 3-4, pp. 6-41.

Bumke, Peter (1979), "Kızılbaş-Kurden in Dersim (Tunceli, Türkei). Marginalität und Häresie", *Anthropos* 74, pp. 530-548.

--- (1989), "The Kurdish Alevis – boundaries and perceptions", in: Andrews, Peter A. (ed.), *Ethnic groups in the Republic of Turkey*, Wiesbaden: Reichert, pp. 510-518.

Chater, Melville (1928), "The Kizilbash clans of Kurdistan", *National Geographic Magazine* 54, pp. 485-504.

Comerd, Munzir (1997), "Dersim inancı'nda Duzgin", *Ware* 11, pp. 84-104.

Çem, Munzur (2009), *Dêrsim merkezli Kürt Aleviliği (etnisite, dini inanç, kültür ve direniş)*, Istanbul: Vate.

Digby, Simon (1984), "Qalandars and related groups", in: Friedmann, Yohanan (ed.), *Islam in Asia, vol. I: South Asia*, Jerusalem: Magnes Press, pp. 76-78, 87-91.

Danon, M.A. (1921), "Un interrogatoire d'hérétiques musulmans (1619)", *Journal Asiatique* 2e sér., 17, pp. 281-293.

Duman, Bilgay (2011), "Irak'ta Bektaşilik (Türkmenler – Sebekler – Kakailer)", ORSAM Rapor no. 88, Ankara: ORSAM. Online at: <http://www.orsam.org.tr/tr/raporgoster.aspx?ID=2883>.

Edmonds, C.J. (1957), *Kurds, Turks and Arabs. Politics, travel and research in north-eastern Iraq, 1919-1925*, London: Oxford University Press.

--- (1969), "The beliefs and practices of the Ahl-i Haqq of Iraq", *Iran* 7, pp. 89-106.

Elahi, Nur Ali-Shah (1966), *L'ésotérisme kurde. Traduction, introduction, commentaire et notes par Dr. Mohammed Mokri*, Paris: Albin Michel.

Field, Henry (1956), *An anthropological reconnaissance in the Middle East, 1950*, Cambridge, Mass.: Peabody Museum.

Fozi, Navid (2007), "The hallowed summoning of tradition: body techniques in construction of the sacred tanbur of Western Iran", *Anthropological Quarterly* 80(1), pp. 173-205.

Gezik, Erdal (2009), "Nesimi Kılâgöz ile yaratılış üzerine", *Munzur* 32, pp. 4-34.

Gezik, Erdal and Çakmak, Hüseyin (2010), *Raa Haqi – Riya Haqi: Dersim Aleviliği inanç terimleri sözlüğü*, Ankara: Kalan.

Gezik, Erdal (2013), "Rayberler, pirlar ve mürsidler (Alevi ocak örgütlenmesine dair saptamalar ve sorular)", in: Gezik, Erdal and Özcan, Mesut (eds.), *Alevi ocakları ve örgütlenmeleri. 1. kitap*, Ankara: Kalan Yayınları, pp. 11-77.

Gezik, Erdal and Özcan, Mesut (eds.) (2013), *Alevi ocakları ve örgütlenmeleri. 1. kitap*, Ankara: Kalan.

Gordlevsky, Vladimir Aleksandrovic (2011), "Karakoyunlu (Maku hanlığı"na bir geziden derlenmiş bilgiler)", *Alevilik-Bektaşılık Araştırmaları Dergisi* 4, pp. 83-124.

Gölpınarlı, Abdülbâki (1958), *Vilâyet-nâme: Manâkib-i Hünkâr Hacı Bektâs-i Veli*, İstanbul: İnkilâp.

--- (1977), „Kızılbaş”, *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, cilt 6, İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, pp. 789-795.

--- (1992), *Yunus Emre ve tasavvuf*, İstanbul: İnkilâp.

Gümüšoğlu, Dursun (2006), *Tâcü'l Arifin Es-Seyyid Ebu'l Vefâ menakıbnamesi - Yaşamı ve tasavvufi görüşleri*, İstanbul: Can.

Hamzeh'ee, M. Reza (1990), *The Yaresan: A sociological, historical and religio-historical study of a Kurdish community*, Berlin: Klaus Schwarz.

Hooshmandrad, Partow (2004), "Performing the belief: Sacred musical practice of the Kurdish Ahl-i Haqq of Guran", PhD dissertation, University of California, Berkeley.

Ivanow, W. (1953), *The Truth-worshippers of Kurdistan*, Leiden: Brill.

Izady, Mehrdad (1992), *The Kurds: A concise handbook*, Washington, Philadelphia and London: Crane Russak.

Kahraman, Metin and Kahraman, Kemal (2013), "Seyid Süleyman Şahin Görüşmeleri-I", *Alevilerin Sesi* 174, pp. 40-5.

Karakaya-Stump, Ayfer (2008), "Subjects of the Sultan, Disciples of the Shah: Formation and Transformation of the Kizilbash/Alevi Communities in Ottoman Anatolia", PhD dissertation, Harvard University, New Haven.

--- (2010), "Documents and *Buyruk* manuscripts in the private archives of Alevi *dede* families: an overview", *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 37(3), pp. 273-286.

--- (2010), "The forgotten dervishes: the Bektashi convents in Iraq and their Kizilbash clients", *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 16(1-2), pp. 1-24.

--- (2012), "The Vefa'iyye, the Bektashiyye and genealogies of 'heterodox' Islam in Anatolia: rethinking the Köprülü paradigm", *Turcica* 44, pp. 263-284.

Karamustafa, Ahmet T. (1993), "Early Sufism in Eastern Anatolia", in: Lewisohn, Leonard (ed.), *Classical Persian Sufism: from its origins to Rumi*, London: Khaniqahi-Nimatullahi Publications, pp. 175-198.

--- (1994), *God's unruly friends. Dervish groups in the Islamic later middle period, 1200-1550*, Salt

Lake City: University of Utah Press.

Kehl-Bodrogi, Krisztina (1988), *Die Kızılbaş/Aleviten: Untersuchungen über eine esoterische Glaubensgemeinschaft in Anatolien*, Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag.

Köprülü, Fuad (1982 [1919]), *Türk edebiyatında ilk mutasavvıflar*. 3. basım, Ankara: Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı.

Köprülüzade Mehmed Fuad (1929), *Influence du chamanisme Turco-Mongol sur les ordres mystiques musulmans*, Istanbul: Institut de turcologie de l'Université de Stamboul.

Kreyenbroek, Philip (1995), *Yezidism: its background, observances and textual tradition*, Lewiston, NY: Mellen Research Publications.

--- (2014), "The Yaresan of Kurdistan", in: Omarkhali, Khanna (ed.), *Religious minorities in Kurdistan: beyond the mainstream*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, pp. 3-11.

Krupp, Alya (1976), *Studien zum Menaqybyname des Abu l-Wafa' Tag al-Arifin: Das historische Leben des Abu l-Wafa' Tag al-Arifin*, München: Dr. Rudolf Trofenik.

Kureşanlı Seyyid Kekil (n.d. [c. 2000]), *Peygamberler ile seyyidlerin şecereleri ve aşiretlerin tarihi*, Köln: privately published.

Leezenberg, Michiel (1997), "Between assimilation and deportation: the Shabak and the Kakais in Northern Iraq", in: Kehl-Bodrogi, Krisztina, Kellner-Heinkele, Barbara and Otter-Beaujean, Anke (eds.), *Syncretistic religious communities in the Near East*, Leiden: Brill, pp. 175-194.

--- (2014), "The end of heterodoxy? The Shabak in post-Saddam Iraq", in: Omarkhali, Khanna (ed.), *Religious minorities in Kurdistan: beyond the mainstream*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, pp. 247-267.

Mélikoff, Irène (1992), *Sur les traces du soufisme turc. Recherches sur l'Islam populaire en Anatolie*, Istanbul: Isis.

Minorsky, V. (1920), "Notes sur la secte des Ahlé Haqq", *Revue du monde musulman* no. 40-41, pp. 19-97.

--- (1921), "Notes sur la secte des Ahlé Haqq – II", *Revue du monde musulman* no. 44-45, pp. 205-302.

--- (1942), "The poetry of Shah Isma'îl I", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* no. 10, pp. 1007a-1053a.

--- (1954), "Jihan-Shah Qara-Qoyunlu and his poetry", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* no. 16(2), pp. 271-297.

--- (1960), "Ahl-i Hakk", *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., vol. I. Leiden: Brill, pp. 260-264.

Mokri, Mohammed (1963), "Étude d'un titre de propriété du début du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle provenant du Kurdistan", *Journal Asiatique* 251, pp. 229-256.

--- (1967), *Le chasseur de Dieu et le mythe du Roi-Aigle (Dawra-y Damyari)*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

--- (1970), *Contribution scientifique aux études iraniennes. Recherches de kurdologie*, Paris: Klincksieck.

Molyneux-Seel, L. (1914), "Journey into Dersim", *Geographical Journal* no. 44(1), pp. 49-68.

Moosa, Matti (1988), *Extremist Shiites: The Ghulat sects*, Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.

Murtezaoğlu, Cavit (2011), *Yarızım: Ehli Hak Alevilerin yirmi dört ulu ereni*, Ankara: Yurt Kitap-Yayın.

Ocak, Ahmet Yaşar (1989), *La révolte de Baba Resul ou la formation de l'hétérodoxie musulmane en Anatolie au XIIIe siècle*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu.

--- (2006), “Türkiye Selçukluları döneminde ve sonrasında Vefâî tarikatı (Vefâiyye): Türkiye popüler tasavvuf tarihine farklı bir yaklaşım”, *Bellekten* no. 70(257), pp. 119-54.

Otter-Beaujean, Anke (1997), “Schriftliche Überlieferung versus mündliche Tradition: zum Stellenwert der Buyruk-Handschriften im Alevitum”, in: Kehl-Bodrogi, Krisztina, Kellner-Heinkele, Barbara and Otter-Beaujean, Anke (eds.), *Syncretistic religious communities in the Near East*, Leiden: Brill, pp. 213-226.

Öztürk, S. (1972), “Tunceli’de Alevilik”, mezuniyet tezi, I.Ü. Ed. Fak. Sosyoloji bölümü, İstanbul.

Polak, J.E. (1865), *Persien. Das Land und seine Bewohner. Ethnografische Schilderungen*. 2 vols., Leipzig: Brockhaus.

Rabino, H.L. (1920), “Kermanchah”, *Revue du Monde Musulman* no. 38, pp. 1-40.

Roux, Jean-Paul (1969), “Les Fidèles de Vérité et les croyances religieuses des Turcs”, *Revue de l'histoire des religions* no. 176(1), pp. 61-95.

Safîzâde, Sadîq (1376), *Dânishnâme-yi Nâmâvarân-i Yârsân. Ahwâl u asâr-i mashâhîr, târîkh, kitâbhâ u istilâhât-i ‘irfânî*, Tehran: Intishârât-i Hayramand.

Stead, F.M. (1932), “The Ali-Ilahi sect in Persia”, *The Moslem World* 22, pp. 184-189.

Sümer, Faruk (1976), *Safevi devletinin kuruluşu ve gelişmesinde Anadolu Türklerinin rolü*, Ankara: Selçuklu Tarih ve Medeniyet Enstitüsü.

Taşgın, Ahmet (2009), “Irak’ta Bektâşi topluluğu Şebekler”, *Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Veli Araştırma Dergisi* no. 52, pp. 126-143.

Tavakkulî, Muhammad Ra’uf (1359/1980), *Târîkh-i tasavvuf dar Kurdistân*, Tehran: privately published.

Tee, Caroline (2010), “Holy lineages, migration and reformulation of Alevi tradition: a study of the Derviş Cemal ocak from Erzincan”, *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* no. 37(3), pp. 335-392.

Trowbridge, Stephen van Rensselaer (1909), “The Alevi, or Deifiers of Ali”, *Harvard Theological Review* 2(3), pp. 340-353.

Vaktidolu (2013), *Aguçenliler ocağı*, İstanbul: Can.

Vinogradov, Amal (1974), “Ethnicity, cultural discontinuity and power brokers in Northern Iraq: The case of the Shabak”, *American Ethnologist* no. 1, pp. 207-218.

Xemgin, E. (1995), *Aleviliğin kökenindeki Mazda inancı ve Zerdüst öğretisi*, İstanbul: Berfin.