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**Re-Reading Bektashi
Menakibnames: Transforming an
Oral Text into the Prose**

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**Бекташи аңыздарын әңгімелеу:
Ауызша мәтіннің прозаға
айналуы**

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**Пересказ Легенд Бекташи:
преобразование
устного текста в прозу**

This presentation proposes to shed light on menakibname texts that reached to Anatolia via Turkistan and Horasan. These texts narrate the studentship, mentors, journeys, doctrines, the other sheiks and students that create his life, individual and social relationships, and lastly psychological developments of the characters that are centred.

Presentation asserts that menakib texts have a unique language and semantic world that should be explained. To fulfil this, the presentation also offers to read the menakib texts by always considering the communities that engage in these texts.

Because menakibnames, which are read and narrated among communities, have been transferred to proses in time, some of their oral text features have become less visible. Eventually, Bektashi menakibnames have not received necessary interest and these couldn't be presented to scientific world to be benefited.

Key words: Menakib, Haji Bektash, Dedi i Sultan, Alawite, Bektashi.

Бұл мақала Түркістан және Хорасан арқылы Анатолияға дейін жеткен аңыз әңгімелердің мәтіндеріне арналған. Мәтіндерде студенттік жылдар, ұстаздар, саяхаттар, ілімдер, шейхтар және шәкірттер, жеке және қоғамдық қатынастар кейіпкерлердің ерекше психологиялық ерекшеліктері жайлы баяндалған.

Мақалада аңыз әңгімелердің мәтіндері түсінуге болатын ерекше тілге және семантикалық әлемге бай. Сонымен қатар, аңыз әңгімелердің мәтіндерін осы мәтіндерде кездесетін қауымдастықтарды қарастыра отырып оқу қажет.

Қауымдастықтар арасында оқылған және айтылған аңыз әңгімелердің мәтіндері тарих барысында прозаға алмасты. Сонымен қатар, осындай мәтіндерді оқитын ғалымдар оның ауызша ерекшелігі жайлы ұмытып аңыз әңгімелердің жазба мәтіндері ретінде ғана түсініп, жеткізеді. Нәтижесінде Бекташи аңыз әңгімелерінің мәтіндері ғылыми әлемде айтарлықтай қызығушылық тудыра алмады және ғылым игілігіне үлес қоса алмады.

Түйін сөздер: аңыз, Хаджи Бекташ, Деди және Сұлтан, Алауиттер, Бекташи.

Данная статья посвящена текстам menakibname, которые дошли до Анатолии, через Туркестан и Хорасан. Тексты рассказывают о студенческих годах, наставниках, поездках, учениях, шейхах и учениках, которые создавали свою жизнь, об отношениях, как индивидуальных, так и общественных, и наконец, об отличительных психологических чертах персонажей.

В статье говорится, что тексты Легенд обладают уникальным языком и содержат в себе семантический мир, который должен быть объяснен. Также упоминается, что нужно читать тексты Легенд, всегда рассматривая сообщества, которые участвуют в этих текстах.

Тексты Легенд, которые были прочитаны и рассказаны среди сообществ, в ходе истории были трансформированы в прозы. Кроме того, ученые, которые учатся на таких текстах, забывают такое устное измерение, понимая и рассказывая Легенды только как напечатанные тексты. В конечном счете Легенды Бекташи menakibnames не получили необходимый интерес и не могли быть представлены научному миру, которому принесут пользу.

Ключевые слова: легенда, Хаджи Бекташ, Деди и Сұлтан, Алауиты, Бекташи.

**RE-READING BEKTASHI
MENAKIBNAMES:
TRANSFORMING AN
ORAL TEXT INTO THE
PROSE****Introduction**

The article is focused on the journey of Haji Bektash from Khorasan to Anatolia by relying on his *Vilayetnames* (books that are written about the lives and journeys of travellers). During this journey, the cities, events and communities are subjected to. Also, *menzilname* of him is also emphasized¹. In addition, Anatolian saints, their relationships among saints and Haji Bektash are also narrated.

Intensive emphasis on studies of Haji Bektash in Anatolia caused the ignorance of his studies maintained in different areas. However, there are many communities in Khorasan, Iraq, Balkans, which mentally belong to Haji Bektash. In this respect, the article reminds this ignored point to scientists².

Vilayetname of Haji Bektash discusses the name, education, journeys, extraordinary mystic events of Haji Bektash, his development in his cult (*Tarikat*), the communities and cities he encountered during his journey, and his settlement to Karahöyük. The article, in this respect, relies on this *Vilayetname*, and also applies to some writings about small passages from different *menakibs* on Anatolian saints.

The language of the text mentioned above is plain and subject-focused. When transforming from oral text, text were benefited from the structural advantages of the prose but they do not have a design of a written text originally. Especially, today's typography facilities that produce written text are slightly changing the oral culture's products. In this respect, approaching these texts from the point of today's written texts' designing would not contribute to social scientific area. Thus, it is crucial to understand these texts by considering their own socio-cultural conditions.

Another problem about the transforming the texts is mainly about ignoring the meaning of the texts. That is why, both pure meaning of the text and their structure inside oral transformation process should be cared because there is a dual meaning kept in the texts. It seems impossible to understand this dual meaning, which is based on vir-

¹ Esra Doğan, «Hacı Bektaş Veli'nin Vilayetnamesine Göre Horasan'dan Rum'a İzlediği Yol», *Alevilik Bektaşilik Araştırmaları Dergisi*, Sayı 4, Köln: 2011, ss. 58-82.

² *Vilayetname Menakıb-ı Hünkar Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli*, Hazırlayan Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, İstanbul, İnkılap Kitabevi, s. 18-20.

tual (*Zahiri*) and esoteric (*Batini*) World, unless the theoretical background is given in detail. Thus and so, keeping these two worlds together encourages reader to prepare himself to the texts and follow the meanings carefully³.

One another problem about the subject is maintaining the studies by always referring cumulative information about Haji Bektash Veli. This saving that is collected for many years appears by the effect of historical, political, cultural, and religious structuring. By this way, the subject is transformed into a structure as the active object demands. In that case, this subject should be re-examined since the studies of Fuat Koprulu, who firstly focus on Haji Bektash researches. It could be said that by the researches belong to Koprulu, the current subject gains a wide currency. However, Koprulu's abandonment his views on Haji Bektash and the other saints, not explaining what has he given up in his writings and what has he added, etc. do not mean that Koprulu's initial ideas and arguments on Haji Bektash are invalid. On the contrary, researchers who follow Koprulu share the reasons behind the his abandonment and now, it is almost impossible to assert something against this idea⁴.

The Journeys of Haji Bektash

Among the information obtained from Velayetnames, the journeys, cities visited, and erbains (*a spiritual recursion lasts 40 days*) have an important position. His journeys start from Nishabur, Khorasan. As his birth place, Matbua town is also mentioned in the texts. After the first place, Nishabur, Haji Bektash stops by the tomb of Ali (the 4th Caliph of Muslims) in Necef. After that, her visits Makkah, Medina, Jerusalem, Khalil, Damascus, Aleppo –especially Prophet David's tomb– and the cave of Ashab-ı Kehf in Elbistan. In each visits,

Bektash produced one *erbain*. After his visit in Elbistan, he comes to Kayseri and then Karaoyuk, which is probably near to Konya city because Konya was the capital of Turkish Seljukian Sultanate⁵. Yunus Mukri and his family could affirm this information⁶.

Basically, the principle point that clarifies Haji Bektash research is his journeys. In this respect, the journey summarized above should be re-created and read. Haji Bektash started his journey from Khorasan and illustrated many miraculous deeds, he encountered many people, community, city and made visits with local people. He temporarily settled these places and he spent some time with communities.

His journey is too long in terms of both time and distance. Despite this fact, we almost do not have detailed information regarding his journeys. Detailed parts only belong to Anatolian journeys. That is why, the ways that link Bektash to Anatolia should be followed and the communities there should be re-examined to find out the details. If the main directions of his journey are determined, some researches that shed light on the details could be followed. My own research could be exemplified for the current advice. It is possible to find some traces by our research that we maintain on South-eastern Anatolian Alawites: Near to Sergen village (called Barut in past and in the archives, the name of the village is Haji Bektash), which is between the borders of Mardin and Sanlıurfa, there is a place visited by Haji Bektash. Villagers are generally Arabic and they shafii sect. In the light of the information we obtained, it is said that when escaping from the enemy soldiers, Haji Bektash stabs his rod into the soil, the rod gets green, and Haji Bektash disappear from that point. It is also narrated that the green plant transformed from the rod becomes a tree and the tomb of Haji Bektash is structured 6 to 7 hundred meters ahead the tree. The top of the tomb is broken down but the walls are still standing. In this region, not only Haji Bektash's tomb is kept, but also Dede Kargın, Gurgur Baba and Aslan Baba's tombs are visited⁷.

³ Taşgın, Ahmet, «Alevi Metinlerin Anlaşılmasında Karşılaşılan Sorunlar: Aleviliğin Yeniden Zuhuru», II. Uluslararası Tarihten Bugüne Alevilik Sempozyumu (23-24 Ekim 2010), Ankara: Cem Vakfı Ankara Şubesi Yayınları, 2012, ss. 237-253.

⁴ Köprülü, Fuad. (1922). «Anadolu'da İslamiyet» Darulfünun Edebiyat Fakültesi Mecmuası, Sayı 4 ve 5 ve Sayı 6, İstanbul Şehzadebaşı: Evkaf-ı İslamiye Matbaası, ss. 282-311 ve ss. 385-420 ve ss. 457-486. Köprülü, Fuad. (1943). «Anadolu Selçukluları Tarihi'nin Yerli Kaynakları» Belleten, cilt 7, Sayı 25, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, ss. 379-457. Köprülü, Fuad. (1986). «Hacı Bektaş Veli», İslam Ansiklopedisi, Cilt 2, İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, ss. 461-464. Köprülü, Fuad. (1989). Edebiyat Araştırmaları, Cilt 2, İstanbul: Ötüken Yayınları. Franz Babinger – Fuad Köprülü, Anadolu'da İslamiyet, Çeviren Rağıp Hulusi, Yayına Hazırlayan Mehmet Kanar, İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 1996.

⁵ Taşgın, Ahmet, «Hacı Bektaş'ın Rum'a Gelişi: Seyahati ve Rum Erenleriyle Karşılaşması», Doğumunun 800. Yılında Hacı Bektaş Veli Sempozyumu (Nevşehir, 17-18 Ağustos 2009), Yayına Hazırlayan: Filiz Kılıç, Ankara: Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Yayınları, 2009, ss. 1-9.

⁶ Taşgın, Ahmet, «Dediği Sultan ve Menakibi: Konya ve Çevresinde Alevi Bektaş Ocaklarının İzleri», Türk Kültürü ve Hacı Bektaş Araştırma Dergisi, Sayı 66, Yıl 2013, ss. 213-238.

⁷ Taşgın, Ahmet, «Hacı Bektaş Veli Menakibnamesinin Yeniden Okunması: İmkanlar ve Sorunlar», I. Uluslararası Nevşehir Tarih ve Kültür Sempozyumu (16-19 Kasım 2011 Nevşehir), Cilt 1, Editör: Dr. Adem Öger, Nevşehir: Nevşehir Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2012, ss. 103-121.

Encountering with Anatolian Saints

Among the information obtained from Velayetname, Haji Bektash also encounters with Anatolian saints. Karaca Ahmed Sultan, Hacı Tuğrul the caliph of Beyazid Bestâmî, Seyit Nureddin in Seferihisar (it is also named Sivrihisar and Senurhisar), his daughter Fatma Bacı are some of the saints Haji Bektash encountered. In addition, Rumi, who is one of the most famous representatives of Sufism, Mahmud Hayranî, Yunus Emre, Tabduk Emre, Emir Çin are among the saints encountered.

Some of the caliphs can be counted among these names. Sarı İsmail, Seyit Cemal, Kolu Açık Hacım Sultan ve Baba Resul are some of the caliphs. The *menakib* among these only belongs to Kolu Açık Hacım Sultan. The others do not have any *menakib*. The information about the others is gained through the Velayetnames of Haji Bektash. Thus, we do not have enough information about the caliphs and the seedbeds (*ocak*) who assumingly follows the way of Haji Bektash.

Velayetname underlines the relationship among Haji Bektash and historical characters mentioned above. In the light of these arguments, Bektash came to Anatolia, saluted the saints and he was responded by Fatma Bacı among the saints. Fatma Bacı told people that a saint from Khorasan came to Anatolia and saluted the Anatolian saints and she received Bektash's salute. After that, Anatolian saints talked about the arrival of Bektash and they had some precautions to prevent his entrance to Anatolia.

According to this summary, we can talk about a fraction among the saints from Anatolia and Khorasan. This fractions or difference is maintained in the texts the text, so we can ask some questions that would make us curious about the subject. For example, «What sort of differences among Khorasan and Anatolian saints have?», «Why do not Anatolian saints want to receive Khorasan saints inside their region?», «Why do not the precautions against Khorasan saints work?», etc. could be asked. We ask these questions because of the dual meaning behind the text. In doing so, such meanings would be understandable. That is why, some examples could be given now.

The *velayetname* written about Karaca Ahmed is also tough upon in his own *menakibname* and the other manuscripts. However, there are some differences among these and Haji Bektash's *velayetname*. In Karaca Ahmed's *menakib*, Sheik Musa ez-Zuli wonders the saints in Persian region and asks Karaca Ahmed to search for them. After Karaca Ahmed's inspection, Haji Bektash is detected

Sheik Musa Hacı Togrul is sent to see Haji Bektash on behalf of Togrul himself. Hacı Togrul finds Haji Bektash. However, Bektash does not like Togrul's way of coming, he declares his discomfort, makes him upset and send him back. This was anyway an opportunity to understand Haji Bektash's situation in detail. The wound made by Haji Bektash on Hacı Togrul is cured by Karaca Ahmed⁸.

In the passage of «The Story of Karaca Ahmed» (*Hikayat-ı Karaca Ahmed*), it is written that Karaca Ahmed rides a lion by using a snake as a whip to reach to Haji Bektash and he is welcomed by Haji Bektash, who walk on the wall with his prayer rug.

According to two examples given above, detecting the arrival of Haji Bektash to Anatolie, welcoming of him, his reply to this welcoming, the situation of hosting saints, their evaluations of the welcoming of Haji Bektash, etc. should be re-examined.

Beside the information given above, we can also discuss some arguments in the light of the information provided in Haji Bektash's *velayetname*. Firstly, it is interpreted that Khorasan saints may have a target of capturing Anatolia and Anatolian saints would not be taken seriously. In parallel to this, they had some precautions. For example, by the signal of Karaca Ahmed, Haji Togrul settled into the pants of a hawk to be captured Haji Bektash, who were settled into the pants of a pigeon. However, their plan was invalidated by Haji Bektash. In addition, according to Khorasan saints' resources, welcoming style of Anatolian saints are criticized in terms of style and method. This was also indicating the weakness of Anatolian saints. This weakness were seen both in virtual and esoteric world. This style is also criticized by an action, compressing the chest of the saints and saying that «a brave man does not welcome another brave man in this way».

Sending Haji Togrul, who is the caliph of Beyazid Bestami, to welcome Haji Bektash according to precautions taken by Anatolian saints is another point to be discussed. According to information in *Velayetname*, the cardigan belongs to Haji Bektash reaches to Cafer Sadik and then Beyazid Bestami and Lokman Perende. By this argument, a connection in spiritual world among Haji Bektash and Beyazid Bestami is asserted. Yet Beyazid Bestami is also the first saint after Imam Cafer Sadik in the chain of cult (*tarikât*). Basically, we can say that the connection through Haji Togrul is again provided

⁸ Taşğın, Ahmet, «Hacı Bektaş'ın Rum'a Gelişi ve Karaca Ahmed İle Karşılaşması», Uluslararası Hacı Bektaş Veli Sempozyumu, Derleyenler Pınar Ecevitoglu, Ali Murat İrat, Ayhan Yalçinkaya, Ankara: Dipnot Yayınları, 2010, ss. 56-67.

and this is maintained in Anatolia. However, it is interesting that there is no information or sign about the connection of Beyazid Bestami in Alawite and Bektashi literature. That is why, Bestami is not recognized as someone interested in Alawism when Hacı Tugrul was a sign about the participation of Beyazid Bestami among Alawi communities. Moreover, there is a Beyazid Bostan seedbed (*ocak*) and grandfather among alawites in Diyarbakir and its around⁹.

It is possible to talk about a couple of subjects by relying on the information about Anatolian saints. First of all, fifty-seven thousands of saints living in Anatolia when Haji Bektash starts his journey could be mentioned. This proves the existence of saints in Anatolia before the arrival of Haji Bektash. What, then, are the sequences and methods of these saints were based on? We at least know that they were independent from Haji Bektash's. To remember again, we classified the Anatolian saints and Khorasan saints as different categories. In addition to this, however, there is almost no information about the saints called in the text (i.e. where were they living in Anatolia, which lodge they belong to and serve, etc.). There is also less information about their relationship with Haji Bektash. Only *Velayetnames* provide information about their lives. Such a question could appear at this point: «Before Haji Bektash coming to Anatolie, what sort of activities were maintained by Karaca Ahmed, who is also a spotter, and where were the communities obey to him and lastly, had he caliphs? The information about him in *Velayetname* seems unclear. However, it is known that until he comes to Anatolie, there are fifty-seven thousands of saints there and Haji Bektash is also recognized as grand saint. If we would have all of the saints' *menakibs*, we could have seen how they react to the arrival of Haji Bektash to Anatolia in terms of their own perspective¹⁰.

⁹ Taşgün, Ahmet – Bünyamin Solmaz, «Hacı Bektaş Ve Hacı Toğrul Karşılaşması: Güvercin Ve Doğan Donuna Bürünme», *Turkish Studies – International Periodical For The Languages, Literature and History of Turkish or Turkic* Volume 7/1 Winter 2012, p.105-129.

¹⁰ Taşgün, Ahmet, «Menkıbelerin Kurduğu Zaman ve Mekân: Ahmed Yesevi ve Hacı Bektaş Örneği», *Uluslararası*

In addition to these, there are some inconsistencies about Fatma Baci and his father, Nouredin. Especially, according to the information about the place in the written resource addresses *Seferihisar* but in different samples, it is called *Sivrihisar*. Even, if we examine the spelling, we may find some different cities.

Conclusion

As a result, a new perspective that could enrich our information on Haji Bektash Veli should be followed. In this frame, if the subject is reconsidered, the information in *Vilayetnames* would be re-evaluated again and the importance of *Vilayetnames* could be more visible. Moreover, communities and their places that Bektash encounters and lives during his journey would be detected.

The information given above, as you shall see, have not been evaluated in this frame so far, so they are not included in any written resources. That is why, Haji Bektash's work on his journey (*menzil-name*) should be reviewed and the route he followed should be re-followed. Especially, the information after the arrival of Haji Bektash to Anatolia is very important. By this way, both the historical characters and places could be clarified. At the same time, the trace of the places could be done by looking those written resources. In addition, the other cities that were not mentioned in the resources could be focused on.

Actually, some suspicions are made about the historical character of Haji Bektash by means of some discussions about the solidity of the resources. As it has been said, a new methodology problem appears at this point when examining historical sources. In this respect, after examining the route of Haji Bektash and the places-characters he meet, the scientific perspective of the information on Haji Bektash would be followed. Finally, some unclear points on the life of Haji Bektash would be clarified.

İpek Yolunda Türk Dünyası Ortak Kültür Mirası Bilgi Şöleni (3-4 Ekim 2013), Editör Fahri Atasoy, Ankara: Türk Yurdu Yayınları, 2014, ss. 267-272.

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