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## A NARRATIVE OF A MYTH OF ORIGIN LINKED TO OĞUZNAME AND THE TAHTACI TURKMENS

### OĞUZNÂME'YE BAĞLI BİR KÖKEN MİTİ ANLATISI VE TAHTACI TÜRKMENLERİ

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#### ABSTRACT

#### ÖZ

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The work titled Şecere-i Terakime (Genealogy of the Turks), written by Ebul Gazi Bahadır Han in the 17th century, is part of the Oğuzname tradition. The origin myths in this work are of a nature that will describe the origin of the Tahtacı Turks and the geography they have lived in over the past 1000 years. The aim of this study is to analyze the origin myths found in the work, providing information about the origins of the Tahtacı Turkmens and the geography and history they have experienced over the past thousand years. As a result of the study, it is seen that Tahtacı Turkmens clearly belong to the Salur tribe according to the oral history narratives in Ebülgazi Bahadır Han's Şecere-i Terakim, which is included in the Oghuznâme tradition. Therefore, when the origins of Tahtacı Turkmens' thousand hundred years of history are revealed, it can be said that they belong to the Salur tribe of Oghuz.

Ebül Gazi Bahadır Han'ın 17. yüzyılda yazdığı Şecere-i Terakime (Türklerin Soy Kütüğü) adlı eser, Oğuznâme geleneği içinde yer alır. Bu eserdeki köken mitleri, Tahtacı Türkmenlerinin kökenini ve son 1000 yıl içinde yaşadıkları coğrafyayı açıklayacak niteliktedir. Bu çalışmanın da amacı söz konusu eserde yer alan köken mitleri anlatılarından hareketle Tahtacı Türkmenlerinin kökenlerini ve son bin yılda yaşadıkları coğrafya ve tarihlerine dair bilgi vererek tahlil etmektir. Çalışma sonucunda Tahtacı Türkmenlerinin Oğuznâme geleneği içinde yer alan Ebülgazi Bahadır Han'ın Şecere-i Terakimesinde yer alan sözlü tarih anlatılarına göre açıkça Salur boyuna mensup oldukları görülmektedir. Dolayısıyla Tahtacı Türkmenlerinin bin yüz senelik tarihlerinin kökenleri ortaya konulduğunda onların Oğuzların Salur boyundan oldukları söylenebilir.

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## Introduction

The subject of our study is to closely analyze some myth narratives that we believe are illuminating on the subject in the context of the views put forward about (alleged) the origin of Tahtacı Turkmens for nearly two hundred years. As it is known, according to a widely accepted view, the first emergence of Alevi Hearths (Ocaks) started with Hacı Bektaş Veli. However, in addition to these evaluations based on the relationship established by Hoca Ahmet Yesevi's appointment of the founders of the Ocak, there are also beliefs that some Alevi Ocaks came to Anatolia and Rumelia before Hacı Bektaş Veli (Ersal, 2016, p. 70). Such origin myth narratives or legends, which aim to highlight the glorification of the founding fathers of the hearths, appear universally as the source of extremely common phenomena and formations in almost all cults and cultures, and even as the most important source of legitimacy of the "authority" of religious structures on a largely systematic basis. In our study, where we will discuss the relationship between some historical narratives that overlap with the origin narratives of the Tahtacı Turkmens, it will be useful to start the subject with the conceptualization of "ocak" or "dede ocağı" in our culture to be more easily understood.

Mehmet Ersal considers the concept and formation of the Ocak or "dede ocağı" as something that can be shaped by charismatic religious and political authority leaders, forming a "saintly cult" while they are alive, or by communities that unite around the "cult" after their passing (Ersal, 2016, p. 70). In addition to the understanding that came to Anatolia from Khorasan with the assignments of Hoca Ahmet Yesevi and is somehow connected to Hacı Bektaş Veli, new perspectives that oppose this and try to foreground Ebul Vefa, the founder of the Iraq-Syria-centered Vefailism, are becoming increasingly prevalent, especially among historians. In this context, the Tahtacı Turkmen and their historical, intellectual, and action-oriented data suggest that we might have other possibilities and that, if we are exempt from the socio-cultural backgrounds of the thesis and antithesis we mentioned, we can present new or even "brand new" perspectives in various and different socio-cultural contexts. It is precisely in this context that the Tahtacı Turkmen possess extremely important characteristics. Especially the adventure of the Turkish tribe called "Tahtacı Türkmenleri", which has been subjected to various so-called ideological games by missionaries and their local supporters or followers, both yesterday and even today, by German and English Orientalists, holds clues that can illuminate the topic more by examining its historical flow more closely.

In other words, the Tahtacılar are perhaps the group among the Oğuz Turkmen who Turkified Anatolia that best preserved their qualities while their clans, enmity, and peculiarities disappeared. Undoubtedly, the role of the closed communal life they lived until recent times is significant. Not giving their daughters in marriage and not accepting daughters-in-law from outside, and in the meantime, continuing their social life at the slowest pace in mountainous, forested regions deprived of educational opportunities such as schools, radios, and other communication tools, and a social structure conditioned by the outside society, would naturally prevent the deterioration of these characteristics. Indeed, it also prevented rapid socio-cultural.

However, especially during the Republic period, and particularly in the last 80 years, the socio-cultural changes it has undergone have brought about transformations in all segments of society, far exceeding those experienced by the Tahtacı Turkmen in particular. In other words, the characteristics of the Tahtacı Turkmen, who are extraordinarily connected to our distant past, are on the verge of being erased with the near-complete disappearance of the negative aspects we mentioned above. Undoubtedly, our societal structure, which is undergoing the process of industrialization, is changing in different ways every day. This terrible turmoil, referred to as "urbanization, migration from village to city", can easily break such community chains with the power of education and communication tools. In this context, some of the incredibly intense and frequent cultural changes experienced by the Tahtacı Turkmen, such as these changes in marriage, are illuminating for the process in question. In addition to traditionally not giving or taking girls from Sunnis, Tahtacı Turkmens in the Balıkesir region would not even give or take girls from Çetmiş (Çepni), another Alevi group. However, because of the labour migration to Europe, when they were forced to marry Germans and other nationalities, the former rigidity towards Sunni-Alevi marriages began to take on a more flexible and softer character, which is extremely noteworthy. As a result of the rural-to-urban migration in Turkey over the past fifty years, our population, which used to live in villages by almost 80%, now lives in villages by only about 10%. This incredibly large migration and the establishment of the Ministry of Forestry, along with the developments and changes in wood-lumber technology and industry, have led to very few Tahtacı Turkmens engaging in their traditional occupation of "Tahtacılık" today. From

agriculture to tourism, the new generations of Tahtacı Turkmen have spread across all sectors (Çıblak, 2005) change until relatively recent times.

When summarizing the adventures of the Tahtacı Turkmen throughout history, it is beneficial to point out and pay attention to the following point and its conclusion: The Tahtacılar, considered the remnants of the “Ağaçeri Turks” by many scholars, including Ziya Gökalp (Gökalp, 1976, p. 40-96), are predominantly Turks belonging to the Salur tribe, one of the most prominent branches of the Oğuz. The element that has caused misconceptions or differences regarding their origins and identity is the fact that they have entered Rumelia, Anatolia, and even Iran at different times and places, which has not been sufficiently highlighted recently. The Tahtacı Turkmen are nothing more than different groups belonging to the Salur tribe that have come together again over time.

In this context, if we take a closer look, we see that the Ağaçeris migrated westward from Western Turkistan during the Mongol invasion and descended into Anatolia between the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. Meanwhile, some settled in the Georgia basin, while the rest made their home around the Malatya-Maraş region. After Hülagü’s siege of Baghdad, they fled to Syria in 1260, scattering around Aleppo, Damascus, and Latakia in the face of the army he sent against them (Yörükan, 1929, p. 92).

Again, the incident of the same “Ocak” members’ revered Dur Hasan Baba going to Khorasan and receiving a “genealogy” from Imam Reza could be another indication of a connection between the Ağaçeris and today’s Tahtacı (Yörükan, 1929, p. 95). However, the other branch of the Tahtacılar, the Sehepli (Sahipli), unlike the Yanyatırlı, settled in Anatolia in phases through the Balkans. For example, the “Turcopol legions” in the Byzantine army during the Battle of Manzikert in 1071, and the Cuman units that participated in the “Miryo-kefolon” Battle near Isparta in 1176, who, upon realizing that their own compatriots were facing them before the battle began, wanted to return to Rumelia but were not allowed to do so by the Genoese sailors because they did not fight. In the following centuries, we witness the settlement of Turkish tribes who accepted Christianity from the Byzantine Rumelia in the region of Bilecik, where the Ottoman Beylik was established (Turan, 1965, p. 268).

After the events of transferring and settling the Turkish elements from Rumelia to Anatolia, which we mentioned above and are quite common, Karesi Bey, the founder of the Karesioğulları Principality ruling in Balıkesir in the 14th century, around the year 1310, and his neighbor Saruhanoğulları ruling in Manisa, invited the Turkish communities known as the Aktav (Akdağ) Tatars (Gökbilgin, 1957, p. 23) or the “Sarı Saltuk Türkmenleri” who were neighbours to the remnants of the Kuman and Peçenek in Rumelia, and settled them on their lands in Anatolia. The members of the branch known today as Sehepli are precisely these. As can be clearly seen, the Sehepli branch is not merely a remnant of the Ağaçeri Turkmen but rather a separate group that was brought from Rumelia to Anatolia and settled there. The reason they are called “Sarı Saltuk Türkmenleri” is that the “Turkmen Father” named Sarı Saltuk, who was one of the Yesevi disciples and Alperen Gazis who spread across the world for the purpose of İlay-ı Kelimetullah (İlâ-i kelime-t-ullah), was the person who first preached and made these Aktavlı communities accept Islam (Turan, 1965, p. 270). As is known, although these Turkmen Fathers living in the early period had embraced Islam, many Shamanistic traditions were preserved in their lives by adopting an Islamic guise. Indeed, Ibn Battuta, who observed the Tahtacı Turkmen community that Sarı Saltuk had converted to Islam, states in his travelogue: “We arrived at a town known as Bahedu Baba Saltuk...” Although Sarı Saltuk is famous for his mukashafa (having an open heart’s eye, being a visionary), the traditions and the people’s way of life seem to contradict the Sharia (Ibn Battuta, 1917, p. 386).

The elements of lifestyle and belief derived from the shamanistic beliefs and myths of the Turks, which Ibn Battuta considered “contrary to the Sharia” in the sense of “Ahl al-Sunnah”, are the most distinctive features of the Tahtacı Turkmen identity. Many of these still live among the Tahtacılar (Sehepli) today. For example, among the Tahtacılar and the Turks living in the Siberian and Altai mountains, “kaz” holds a sacred identity. The word “kaz” appears in our nation’s first Turkish grammar and dictionary book, *Divan u Lugatit-Türk*, written in Arabic in the 11th century AD, as the name of Alp Er Tunga (Afrasyâb)’s daughter and the city of “Kazvin”, which means “game of kaz” in the context of two names being “kaz oynı” (Mahmut Kaşgarlı, 1943, p. 149-151). In the Dede Korkut Stories, the phrase “kaza benzer kız” is seen to be used in the sense of “beautiful girl” (Ergin, 1981, p. 221). Similarly, in the “Şu Epic”, the “goose” motif is encountered with its auspicious and blessed meanings and characteristics (Banarlı, 1983, p. 16). Today, among the Tahtacılar, there is a “Kaz Ayağı” stamp, which is considered auspicious and is believed

to bring abundance and strength while working. This stamp, usually embroidered on a triangular ground, is often found on the back of shirts or on the aprons of women (Yörükan, 1929, p. 95). The name Sehepli (Sahipli) must have been given to emphasize that this Turkmen tribe is the original owner of the “herringbone stamp” that is now associated with all the elements that come to mind when one thinks of Tahtacı.

It is clearly seen that the origin of the Tahtacı people and everything we have described so far was identified from oral sources approximately three hundred years ago. In other words, in the 17th century, Ebul Gazi Bahadır Han, who ruled the Khanate of Khiva and is famous for his work “Şecere-i Terakime” (Genealogy of the Turks), explains in his work that ten thousand households from the Salur tribe went to Khorasan under the leadership of Dinkli Bey during an internal conflict among the Oğuz called “Şah Melik Bozuğu”. They settled there, but a very small portion of them went to Iraq and Persia and remained there. When the Seljuks took Iraq (Mosul-Kirkuk), many people from the lineage of Dinkli Bey of the Salur tribe entered the service of the sultan and declared their brotherhood by saying, “Our great ancestors came from Turkistan...” (Ebul Gazi Bahadır Han, 1974, p. 16). In his work, which is significant in terms of history, language, and literature, Ebul Gazi Bahadır Han, who benefited from Reşidüddin’s Cami’ü’t-Teravihi and collected the “Living Turkmen Narratives” passed down from generation to generation until his time, and written in a brilliant Chagatai style, states that according to his calculations, many of the Salur Turkmen who settled in Mosul and Kirkuk in the first quarter of the eleventh century, during the time of the Seljuks, could not get along with the Kınık and especially the Bayındır tribes of the Seljuks who settled in Iraq, and set out with their bey named Ögürçik Alp as a thousand-household group, then returned and went to Crimea via Khorasan. After residing for a long time in Crimea under the rule of the Kanglı (Kağnılı) tribe (Ebul Gazi Bahadır Han, 1974, p. 53). Kanglı Han, after quarreling with Kök Tonlu (Gök Donlu) and fleeing, mentions that his people, consisting of seven hundred households, were turned back by the Kanglıs and that Ögürçik went to Mangışlak and then to Ebulhan Mountain. At the end of a poem attributed to Ögürçik Alp, which is closely related to our subject, he states; “...” Which community did not hold a feast there/Because they brought a rabbit with golden eyes/I marked the goose’s foot with three different stamps (Ebul Gazi Bahadır Han, 1974, p. 61). Additionally, he writes that it is unknown where Ögürçik Alp’s son Kusar went and what his lineage was (Ebul Gazi Bahadır Han, 1974, p. 68).

In light of Ebul Gazi’s accounts, the Ağaçeriler are considered “a separate tribe outside the Oğuz” (Ziya Gökalp, 1976, p. 91). However, if we place the Dinkli Beys, who belong to the Salur tribe mentioned by Ebul Gazi Bayındır Han, instead, we can easily trace and accept the migration of the Sehepli (Aktav Turkmen) to the Balkans with the Kanglı Turks under Ögürçik Alp, who remained in Crimea and later moved to the Balkans with the Kanglı-Kuman (Turan, 1965, p. 271). Similarly, the claim that they came from Baghdad and the vicinity of Aleppo and Latakia from Khorasan and spread to Anatolia from there (Yörükan, 1928, p. 61) merges with the claim that they descended to Anatolia via the Caucasus and spread to the vicinity of Aleppo, Damascus, and Baghdad (Sümer, 1962, p. 521-528). Thus, the origin issue of the Ağaçeri, Aktav Turkmen, and Tahtacı groups would be definitively resolved.

Many beliefs that are considered “contrary to Sharia” by Ibn Battuta, or in the Tahtacı and other Turkish communities, are remnants of the ancient Turkish religion, Shamanism (the Sky God Religion). A large portion of these beliefs have transformed and taken on an Islamic guise. For example, in the work titled “From Siberia”, translated into our language by Prof. Dr. Ahmet Temir, the renowned Turkologist W. Radloff, who gained great fame through his scientific studies in Turkology, provides examples from the religious life of Shamanist Turks living in the Altay-Soyon mountains. Among these examples is the belief that the spirits of the “Yersular”, who do good to people (the seventeen high lords), reside on the peaks of the immense snowy mountains in the “Region of Springs”, and that the most powerful of these seventeen, “Yökan”, the largest tree on earth, the cedar, reaches the house of the god “Bay Ülgön” with its tip... This belief is reflected in a Kam’s (shaman’s) prayer: “I am the descendant of a noble person/I am the root of the cedar tree.” “While reflecting in this way, they have the custom of tying cloth (nazr) to the ‘Sacred Trees’ and making vows.” (Radloff, 1976, p. 222) In the response Salur Kazan, one of the heroes of the Dede Korkut Stories, gives to the emperor’s words “Curse Oğuz, praise us” when he is captured, he says, “... when the white reed is tamed, I have a root in the land of the mottled goose... when the white falcon is tamed, I have a root in the land of the mottled duck and black goose...” We would like to draw your attention to the similarity between the “Goose and Tree” motifs mentioned in the words of Salur Kazan and the Tahtacılar, whom we claim to be from the Salur tribe of the Oğuz (İnan, 1976, p. 165). At the end of the



Dede Korkut Stories, in the prayers of Dede Korkut Ata (Alkış), the phrase “May the shadowy coarse tree not diminish” is repeated. Today, as in almost all Turkish communities, among the Tahtacı Turkmen, there is a belief in fairies at water sources, fountains, and wells, and a sanctity is attributed to large trees. “Nazir” cloths are tied to these trees, which are not cut down, and those who do so are not looked upon favourably. Moreover, the fact that they pray to the ordinary trees they will cut down to earn their livelihood and only proceed after receiving “permission” is a striking indication of their beliefs and culture. There is no possibility or necessity to touch upon all these in this short article. However, let us suffice to point out the narrative and functions that strikingly reveal the mythological transformations the Tahtacı Turkmen underwent in the process of Islamization, along with the geography they settled in.

As is well known, there are mountains that religions and nations have considered sacred throughout history and in the present day. For example, Jews consider Mount Sinai sacred, Greeks consider Mount Olympus sacred, and Hindus consider the Himalayas sacred. The Kazan Tatars also consider “Kız Dağı” near the city of Bulgar to be sacred and perform sacrifices there. “According to Chinese sources, the Tobas, a branch of the Huns, performed a Sky God ritual and sacrificed in the first month of autumn.” (İnan, 1976, p. 181).

The place where the Tahtacı Turkmen live most densely is the Kaz Mountains between Balıkesir and Çanakkale. They gave this name. We have mentioned the significance of the Kaz motif and its characteristics among the Tahtacı Turkmen above. The Kaz Mountains, referred to as “İda” in Greek mythology, and the peak named Sarıkız hold special significance for the Tahtacı Turkmen. Because the Sarıkız hill is considered sacred due to this legendary origin story, every Tahtacı Turkoman must come here at least once every seven years to perform a “sacrifice”. This origin story is as follows: “During the Battle of Kan Castle, while Hz. Ali was capturing the king’s daughter, the girl dies”. When our mother Fatima wanted a daughter, Hz. Ali told her to go to the Kaaba and get her daughter. The king’s daughter is resurrected in the Kaaba, and Hz. Fatima takes this beautiful girl with golden hair. She shows her to her father, Prophet Muhammad. “The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, ‘My eyes are Hasan and Husayn.’” “When she said, ‘I cannot see him, leave him at the Kaaba...’ Hz. Fatima, feeling sad, was returning to the Kaaba when she saw Salman al-Farsi on the way and gave her daughter to him.” While they were living on Mount Qaf, Lala Selman fell in love with the growing and beautifying Sarıkız. He prays and begs, becomes young again, and Hz. Ali builds them a palace at the peak of Kaz Mountains (Sarıkız Hill). Sarıkız and Selman live here for twenty-one days, on the twenty-first day Sarıkız says, “I want to see my mother, my father, my grandfather, my siblings (Hz. Ali, Hz. Fatima, Hz. Muhammed, Hasan, and Husayn), show them to me, Selman.” Selman prays and begs. Hz. Fatima comes to see Sarıkız in the early days of autumn, they meet, and Sarıkız dies. Hz. Fatima returns. Selman grows old and dies.” (Yılmaz, 1948, p. 15). The Kaz Mountains are considered sacred due to the legend summarized above. According to belief, every Tahtacı Turkmen visit this place and sacrifices an animal in the early months of autumn and participates in the special cem and rituals held here (Yılmaz, 1948, p. 43). The belief that distinguishes the Tahtacı Turkmen from other Anatolian Alevi comes first. In other rituals, they have similarly merged with old traditions and gained new forms. The Tahtacı Turkmen do not recognize any other lodges besides the Yanyatırlı and Hacı Emirli lodges. They organize their lives with the principle of “Control your hand, waist, and tongue”.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, after summarizing the origins of the 1100-year history of the Tahtacı Turkmen in the most general terms, we can say that they belong to the Salur tribe of the Oğuz. According to the oral history narratives in the Şecere-i Terakime by Ebul Gazi Bahadır Han, who is part of the Oğuzname tradition, they are clearly seen as belonging to the Salur tribe. Moreover, and perhaps most importantly, they are part of the Tahtacı Turkmen and, for some reason, have not attracted much attention until today, the “Karkın Tahtacılar”. In other words, the Karkın Turkmen, who migrated and lived together with the Tahtacı Turkmen from Turkistan to Anatolia through Iraq, the Caucasus, and Rumelia, and who had a presence of about 100 households, constituting 10% of the population during their initial migration to Iraq, and likely formed the “Garkın Ocağı”, are an extremely important document and information source that awaits re-examination in this context and are being presented to your attention for the first time with this study.

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## **OĞUZNÂME'YE BAĞLI BİR KÖKEN MİTİ ANLATISI VE TAHTACI TÜRKMENLERİ** **(Genişletilmiş Özet)**

Ebül Gazi Bahadır Han'ın XVII. yüzyılda yazdığı Şecere-i Terakime (Türklerin Soy Kütüğü) adlı eser, Oğuznâme geleneği içinde yer alır. Bu eserdeki köken mitleri, Tahtacı Türkmenlerinin kökenini ve son 1000 yıl içinde yaşadıkları coğrafyayı açıklayacak niteliktedir. Söz konusu eserde yer alan köken mitleri anlatılarından hareketle Tahtacı Türkmenlerinin kökenlerini ve son bin yılda yaşadıkları coğrafya ve tarihlerine dair bilgilere dikkat ederek Tahtacı Türkmenlerinin tahlilini gerçekleştirmek uygun olacaktır. İlk olarak yaygın olarak kabul gören Alevi Ocaklarıyla ilgili ilk ortaya çıkışın Hacı Bektaş Veli'yle başladığı görüşüne temas etmek gerekir. Ancak Hoca Ahmet Yesevi'nin Ocak kurucu piri görevlendirmesiyle kurulan ilişkiye istinaden oluşan bu değerlendirmelerin yanı sıra bazı Alevi Ocaklarının Anadolu ve Rumeli'ne Hacı Bektaş Veli'den de önce geldiklerine dair inanışlar da bulunmaktadır. Ocakların kurucu pirlərini yüceltmeyi daha da önde göstermeye yönelik köken miti anlatıları veya menkıbeler, evrensel olarak hemen hemen bütün költ ve költürlerde son derece yaygın olgu ve oluşumların kaynağı ve hatta büyük ölçüde sistematik olarak dinsel yapılanışların "otorite"sinin en önemli meşruiyet kaynağıdır.

Ağaç kesen, tahta biçen ve kereste işleriyle uğraşan kişileri ifade eden "Tahtacı" ifadesi, tarihte farklı coğrafyalarda yaşayan Türk boylarına mensup topluluklar tarafından boy ismi olarak kullanılmıştır. Günümüzde "Adana, Maraş, İçel, Antalya, İzmir, Burdur, Isparta, Denizli, Muğla, Balıkesir, Aydın yörelerinde yakın zamanlara kadar tamamen ormanlık bölgelerde yaşayan ve geçimlerini yarı göçebe olarak ormandan ağaç kesmek, biçmek vb. kerestecilik işleriyle kazanan Alevi-Türkmen zümreleri"ni ifade eder. Bu adlandırmada, Anadolu coğrafyasında bin yıllık haşır neşir oluşun, yoğruluşun, yaşanan bin bir göç, savaş vd. sosyal ve költürel kuşak değişimlerinin rolü büyüktür. Uzun bir zaman sonra, Anadolu'ya gelen Türk boylarının nerdeyse bütün boy hususiyetlerini özellikle de İslam öncesi devrelerin nerdeyse bütün motiflerini çok büyük ölçüde taşıyan ve yaşayan bir hâlde bulabilmelerini költürün doğası düşüldüğünde tahayyül etmek bile güçtür. Ancak tarihi ve etnolojik bir perspektifte, bazı halkbilimsel değerlendirmeler yapılarak bakıldığında, Anadolu'yu vatan yapan ecdadımızın göç ve göç öncesi izleri şaşılacak bir şekilde diri ve süreklilik göstermekte olduğu görülür. Dolayısıyla Tahtacılar, Anadolu'yu Türkleştiren Oğuz Türkmenleri arasında; boy, husumet ve hususiyetleri ortadan kalkarken sahip oldukları vasıflarını belki de en iyi korumuş kesimdir.

Tahtacı Türkmenlerinin tarihsel sürecinde, "Ağaçeri Türklerinin" bakiyesi sayılmaları ve Oğuz'un en önde gelen boylarından birisi olan Salur boyuna mensup Türkler oldukları gerçeği dikkat çeker. Onların kökenlerine ve kim olduklarına dair yanlışlara sebep olan veya farklılık yaratan unsur Rumeli ve Anadolu'ya hatta İran'a değişik tarih ve mekânlarda girmiş olduklarının yakın zamanlarda yeterince dikkat çekmemiş olmasıdır. Bu sebeple Tahtacı Türkmenleri, Salur boyuna mensup farklı gruplarının zaman içinde tekrar bir araya gelmelerinden başka bir oluşum değildir. Daha derinlemesine bakıldığında ise Ağaçerilerin, Moğol istilası esnasında ve Batı Türkistan'dan daha da batıya göç ettikleri, Anadolu'ya Karadeniz ile Hazar denizi arasından indikleri dikkat çeker. Bu süreçte bir kısmı Gürcistan havzasına yerleşirken geri kalanları ise Malatya-Maraş civarını yurt tutmuşlar, Hülagu'nun Bağdat kuşatmasından sonra 1260 yıllarında üzerlerine sevk ettiği ordu karşısında Suriye'ye kaçıp Halep, Şam, Lazkiye civarına dağılmışlardır.

Bütüncül olarak bakıldığında Tahtacıların kökeniyle ilgili anlatıların yaklaşık üç yüz yıl önce sözlü kaynaklardan da tespit edildiği açıkça görülür. XVII. yüzyılda Hive hanlığı yapan ve yazdığı "Şecere-i Terakime" Türklerin Soy Kütüğü adlı eseriyle ünlü olan Ebül Gazi Bahadır Han, eserinde Salur boyundan on bin evin Oğuzların "Şah Melik Bozuğu" adlı bir iç kargaşasında, Dinkli Bey başkanlığında Horasan'a gittikleri orada yerleşip kaldıkları ancak çok küçük bir kısımlarının Irak ve Fars'a gidip orada kaldıklarını Selçukluların Irak'ı (Musul-Kerkük'ü aldıkları zaman, Salur Boyundan, Dinkli Bey'in göçünün (bir bölümünün) neslinden gelen birçok adamların sultanının hizmetine girip "Büyük atalarımız Türkistan'dan gelmiş..." diye kardeşliklerini bildirdiklerini aktarır.

Tahtacı Türkmenleri arasında diğer Türk topluluklarında da olduğu gibi Türklerin eski dini olan Şamanizm (Gök Tanrı Dini)'den kalma pek çok inanca rastlanır. Bunların büyük bir kısmı şekil değiştirmiş, İslâmî bir kisveye bürünmüştür. Oğuzların Salur boyundan geldiğini iddia ettiğimiz Tahtacılar ile Dede Korkut'ta Salur Kazan'ın sözlerinde geçen "Kaz ve Ağaç" motifleri arasındaki benzerlik dikkat çekicidir. Dede Korkut Hikayelerinin sonlarında Dede Korkut Ata'nın dualarında (Alkış) "Gölgelice kaba ağacın eksilmesin" cümlesi tekrarlanır. Bugün nerdeyse bütün Türk topluluklarında da olduğu gibi Tahtacı

Türkmenleri arasında da su, çeşme, kuyu başlarının periler inancı ve ulu ağaçlara bir kutsiyet izafe edilmekte “nezir” bez bağlanmakta, bu ağaçlar kesilmeyip kesenlere de iyi gözle bakılmamaktadır. Dahası ekmeklerini kazanmak amacıyla kesecekleri alelade ağaçlara da dua edip ancak “helallik” olarak kesmeleri son derece dikkat çekici inanç ve kültürel işaret etmektedir. Ayrıca Tahtacı Türkmenlerinin en yoğun olarak yaşadıkları yer olan Kaz dağları, sözlü gelenekteki kaz motifinin önemini ve Tahtacı Türkmenleri arasındaki kültürel hususiyetleri barındırır. Köken anlatılarına da konu olarak kutsal kabul edilir ve her Tahtacı Türkmen’in yedi yılda bir defa olsun buraya gelip “kurban tığlaması” gerekir. Dolayısıyla Kaz Dağları ve Sarıkız adlı doruğu, Tahtacı Türkmenleri için ayrı bir öneme sahiptir.

Tahtacı Türkmenlerinin bin yüz senelik tarihlerinin kökenleri ortaya konulduğunda onların, Oğuzların Salur boyundan oldukları söylenebilir. Oğuznâme geleneği içinde yer alan Ebülğazi Bahadır Han’ın Şecere-i Terakimesi’nde yer alan sözlü tarih anlatılarına göre son derece açıkça Salur boyuna mensup olarak görülmektedir. Dahası ve belki de en önemlisi Tahtacı Türkmenlerinin bir parçası olan ve bugüne kadar pek dikkat çekmeyen “Karkın Tahtacılar”ıdır. Bir başka ifadeyle Tahtacı Türkmenleriyle Türkistan’dan, Irak, Kafkasya ve Rumeli üzerinden Anadolu’ya birlikte göçüp yaşadıkları ve onların ilk Irak’a göçlerinde yaklaşık 100 evlik mevcutla %10 gibi bir varlığa sahip Karkın Türkmenleri ve kuvvetle muhtemel onların oluşturduğu “Garkın Ocağı” bu bağlamda tekrar ele alınmayı bekleyen son derece önemli bir belge ve bilgi kaynağıdır.



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