

Sözlü Gelenekten Yazılıya: Bektaşî Mitlerinin Kutsaldan Sekülere Uzanan Yolu

From Oral to Litrary : The Path of Bektashi Myths from Sacred to Secular

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İslam coğrafyasının çeşitli bölgelerinde XIII. yüzyılda tasavvufun önde gelen velileri hakkındaki anlatıları toplayarak bunları bir velinin hayatı ve kerametleri şeklinde ortaya koyan ve Arapça, Farsça veya Türkçe gibi çeşitli dillerde yazılmaya başlayan eserlere menakıpname, vilayetname ya da velayetname adı verilmiştir. Edebiyattan folklor çalışmalarına, tarihten teolojiye kadar pek çok disiplinin çalışma konusu haline gelmiş olan bu mitler genel itibarıyla edebi birer tür olarak tanımlanmış ve bunların içerisinde yer alan velilere ait kerametler de folklorik-edebi birer motif olarak adlandırıp sınıflandırılmıştır. Ancak kutsalın ve inancın alanında yer alan mitin asıl hâkimiyet sahası olan sözün-topluluğun alanını terk edip yazının-kamusalın alanına çıkarıldığında nasıl bir mahiyet dönüşümüne uğradığına, nelerle karşılaştığına ilişkin bir tartışma yürütülmemiştir. Yazısal-kamusal alanda işleyen süreçlerin bu mitlere ne tür etki ettiği analiz edilmemiştir. Böyle bir sorunsallaştırmayı odağına alan çalışma, Bektaşî Velayetnameleri üzerine üretilmiş literatürün eleştirel bir incelemesini gerçekleştirmektedir.

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Abstract

The works that collect the narratives about the leading saints of Sufism in various regions of the Islamic geography in the 13th century and present them in the form of a saint's life and miracles, and which were called hagiography, began to be written in various languages such as Arabic, Persian or Turkish. These works, which have become the subject of study in many disciplines from literature to folklore studies, from history to theology, are generally defined as literary genres, and the miracles of saints included in them are named and classified as folkloric-literary motifs. However, there has not been a discussion about what kind of transformation the myths when they leave the communal domain which see them as sacred and enter public sphere. It has not been analyzed what kind of effects operating in the public sphere have on these narratives. The study, which focuses on such problematization, examines a critical review of the literature produced on the written documents called Bektashi hagiographies.

Keywords:

Myth, public, communal authority, oral and written tradition, Bektashi Hagiographies.

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Introduction

Logos, which presents a narrative by combining data and verifiable factual parts, is derived from the Greek word *legein*, meaning "to bring together." In this context, there is an audience that judges the argument of the speaker, who is identified with their words and is responsible for them. In contrast, *mythos*, as opposed to *logos*, tells a story without taking responsibility. It is something that relates to believing in the words themselves (Havelock, 1967, p. 91; Sennet, 1996, p. 69-70). Plato generally uses *logos* as an argumentative discourse to help prove ideas to the interlocutor. However, in his work *The Republic*, he characterizes *mythos* as a discourse that hinders the attainment of *episteme*, which is the aim of philosophy (Plato, 2018, p. 61-62). Myth belongs to the realm of belief, to the world of the sacred. Mircea Eliade, while interpreting myths as having a single function—the creation of a sacred cosmos from primal chaos—emphasizes their importance for both belief and community (Eliade, 1987, p. 90-99). Through myths, a community creates an empathetic closeness and finds its place within the sacred cosmos. Myths are not invented; they are experienced (Martins, 2012, p. 160). However, when myths, which exist in the collective memory of the community and nourish that collectivity, are taken from being mere narrative and get publicized through writing, it leads to a fundamental shift in their structure. A primary reason for this transformation is that those who engage with writing never present myths in their raw form but rather re-interpret them within a rationalization framework, making them a tradition that evolves in line with new inquiries (Bourdieu, 1987, p. 178). Belief is no longer lived but becomes something to be used. According to Jean-Pierre Varnant, who problematizes the process of transferring myths into written form, what is created can no longer remain a myth but is transformed into a mythology. According to the author, who asserts for distinguishing the two of these, myths will now become integrated narratives that represent a complex, solid, and original thought, as if crafted by a thinker with a unique style (Varnant, 1980, p. 205).

In Islamdom, the works known as hagiography or *menakıbnâme*—which gather narratives about Sufis from the 13th century and present them in the form of a saint's life and miracles—began to be written in various languages such as Arabic, Persian, or Turkish (Ocak, 1997, p. 40-65). Studies that address hagiographies within the context outlined above have not yet been found in the literature. However, studies that define them as a literary genre and classify the miracles of the saints within them as motifs are quite common. The motif analysis of hagiographies and inventory studies on them were first conducted in Türkiye by Pertev Naili Boratav. In his work *100 Soruda Türk Folkloru*, (100 Questions on Turkish Folklore) he considered the miracles of saints as motifs and attempted to classify them. Another work in this vein is by Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, who, in his book *Kültür Tarihi Kaynağı Olarak Menakıbnameler* (Hagiographies as a Source of Cultural History), referred to the miracles of saints as motifs and attempted to trace their origins. Subsequently, many other works have also focused on similar topics, conducting research on the historical background of certain miracle motifs found in hagiographies and attempting to uncover their historical roots (Gülerer, 2012; Yurtoğlu, 2012; Kardaş, 2016; Coşkun, 2019).

The classification of the myths contained in the hagiographies, the division of the miracles into different motifs and the search for sources for these motifs or the attempt to trace the origins of these myths through the beliefs of certain communities have undoubtedly contributed to the literature. However, the absence of a discussion on the change in the nature of the myth when it moves from the realm of oral tradition - where myth, the dominant force in the domain of the sacred and belief, resides (Gülerer, 2020, p. 2) - to the realm of writing has prevented an analysis of how the processes in the literary field affect these myths. Although it is known that additions and omissions were made to the written hagiographies, and even new elements were introduced beyond what was originally heard or transmitted (Gölpınarlı, 1983, p. 300), it has not been considered that the authors who transcribed these narratives, in the ongoing process of criticism, opinion and debate in the public sphere, distanced the narrative from being a product of belief by trying to respond to these discussions, thus transforming it into a rationalized literary genre. A study focusing on this issue will critically examine the literature produced on the written Bektashi hagiographies. Concluding that these hagiographies, once introduced into the public sphere, are no longer evaluated within the framework of the sacred but from a secular and rational perspective, the study will attempt to show how the communal authority of these myths has been transformed in the public sphere.

As part of the study's structure, the first section will attempt to demonstrate the oral nature of the narratives found in the Bektashi hagiographies and emphasize the transformation in the nature of the narratives as they move from the realm of oral to the realm of writing. The following section will demonstrate how the literature produced on these hagiographies carry out secular explanations when evaluating the extraordinary qualities of the saints and their miracles.

1. From Oral to Written: The Public Encounters of Communal Authority of Bektashi Myths

The cultural historian Mehmed Fuad Köprülü, while describing the dervish community known as the *Rum Abdalları*, which has a historical background dating back to the 13th century, later identified them as a group that became part of the Bektashi tradition (Köprülü, 1935, p. 36). However, the historical sources mention the saints and dervishes of the religious community continuing Yesevi traditions (Birge, 1937, p. 50) known as the Bektashi Order or Bektashism from the mid-15th century onward (Karamustafa, 2010, p. 46). Although an order was established around the name of Hacı Bektaş Veli, believed to have lived in the 13th century, this sufi figure did not establish the Bektashi Order itself. According to Aşıkpaşazade (1949, p. 238), the founders of the Bektashi Order were Hacı Bektaş Veli's spiritual partner *Kadıncık Ana* and *Abdal Musa*, who was a disciple of *Kadıncık Ana*. *Abdal Musa* is associated with Sultan Orhan's military campaigns and the establishment of the Janissary Corps. Irene Melikoff (1994, p. 21-22), who considers this situation as normal, states that the Bektashi Order was initially closely linked to the early Ottoman sultans, and this relationship continued during the later stages of the order's institutionalization.

It would not be incorrect to state that Bektashism, in its establishment and institutionalization stages, formed around a *Hacı Bektaş* cult, long after the time of Hacı Bektaş Veli, the spiritual leader of the order. It is clear that formation of this cult and narratives required a certain period. These rich narratives became, for many people, a source of learning and wisdom, shared through observation, hearing, and remembrance (Metting, 1994-1995, p. 282). Mark Soileau and Salih Gülerer, who emphasize the importance of time and narrative in the formation of the Hacı Bektaş cult, makes a crucial observation in this context. According to him, after Hacı Bektaş's death, those around him began to share the stories of him wherever they went, working to spread this cult and thereby expand the Bektashi tradition (Gülerer, 2020, p. 9; Soileau, 2010, p. 91). The fact that the foundation of communal unity is based on emotion rather than thought, and that the source of myth relies on this emotional economy (Cassirer, 1944, p. 83), makes the establishment of a narrative-based order highly plausible. The incorporation of Alevi-Kizilbash communities into the Hacı Bektaş cult also takes place through this narrative-mythic emotional economy. After their connections with the Safavids were broken off, the Alevi communities, which were religiously marginalized within the Ottoman Empire, were likely brought into the order by early Bektashi caliphs who created this cult (Kehl-Bodrogi, 2012, p. 43). Similar to what Jacques Ellul (1985, p. 29) says about the narrative circulation of the sacred word, these caliphs, who narrated myths, spoke not of reality but of truth, and as creators, founders, and producers of this truth, they played a significant role in the formation of the community. The Alevi-Bektashi communities emerged in this climate of truth constructed by memory, oral tradition, and narrative, where "legendary-mythological tales centered around the names of certain heroes of Islamic history [...] in the hagiographies, stories passed down from generation to generation, came together with a collective memory that bound society together and created a sense of collective belonging" (Yıldırım, 2012, p. 151). There is no doubt that the belief in the saints and their mythic narratives played the leading role in Hacı Bektaş Veli's influence on these communities (Karamustafa, 2010, p. 46).

In Bektashism, it is possible to understand that narratives containing miracles in such a vital position through the large number of hagiographies produced within the order, which can be seen as collections of narratives. Some of the main hagiographies include *Hacı Bektaş Veli*, *Kolu Açık Hacım Sultan*, *Abdal Musa*, *Kaygusuz Abdal*, *Seyyid Ali Sultan*, *Sultan Şücaeddin*, *Otman Baba*, *Koyun Baba*, *Demir Baba*, and *Veli Baba*. When these hagiographies are examined linguistically, it is evident that they are compilations of narratives that were orally transmitted among the believers and are products of collective memory. It is seen that the faithful listened to these narratives as a religious duty and orally transmitted them with the purpose of conveying the sacred (Kaplan, 2010, p. 340). However, at a certain point, these narratives were compiled and transcribed by an author.

Hacı Bektaş Veli hagiography transcribed dates back 15th century, were not written by him although attributed to Hacı Bektaş Veli. Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı states that this hagiography was published by Uzun Firdevsi. However, Gölpınarlı provides two

different dates regarding the year the on writing of hagiography. In one of his works, he mentions the year 1440 (Gölpınarlı, 1958, p. 294), while in another, he states that it was written between 1481 and 1501 (Gölpınarlı, 1983, p. XXIII) and does not explain the reason for this difference in date. It is not known who wrote hagiography attributed to Hacım Sultan, who is thought to have lived in the same period as Hacı Bektaş Veli. But it is estimated to have been written at least 20 to 30 years before Hacı Bektaş Veli hagiography and no later than the mid-15th century (Ocak, 1983, p. 8-9). The author of *Abdal Musa hagiography*, believed to have been written in the same century, is also unknown (Atalay, 1997, p. 11). It is understood that this hagiography emerged by compiling the narratives told about Abdal Musa's life after his death. Although it is stated that *Kaygusuz Abdal hagiography* was written in the early 16th century, there is no information about who published it (Güzel, 2004, p. 42). However, Ocak (2010, p. 39) mentions that the author collected the narratives from places he visited, especially from orders in Elmalı and Egypt. The *Seyyid Ali Sultan hagiography*, in which the author mentions his own name, was written by a poet with the pen name Cezbi. Considering the language and style of the work, it is suggested that this hagiography was written in the first half of the 15th or 16th century. Therefore, it is believed that the poet Cezbi, who lived in the 18th century, was not the first author but the one who rewrote the work (Ocak, 1997, p. 54). In *Sultan Şücaeddin hagiography*, the author is named as *Esiri*, and this work is believed to have been published between 1421 and 1450.

Similarly, the *Otman Baba hagiography*, published in the 15th century, was likely written by Köğçek Abdal after the death of Otman Baba in 1483 (Saygı, 1996, p. 3). The *Koyun Baba hagiography* is believed to have been transcribed in the 16th century, but its author and place of writing are unknown (Ocak, 2010, p. 46). The author and date of writing of *Demir Baba hagiography* are also unknown. As seen, none of these Bektashi hagiographies were published by the saints to whom they are attributed. The narratives and cults formed around the saint were “transmitted orally for a long time”, spread as oral stories in the community, and later compiled, gathered, and written down (Melikoff, 1999, p. 194). Morrison (1977, p. 342), who states that this is the most efficient way to transfer the narrative to a written text, draws attention to the importance of a timeless ancestor (saint) figure who protects, guards, gives wisdom and represents tradition.

There are significant differences between transmitting narratives and cults orally or in writing. Writing encompasses much more than the mere transcription of a narrative into paper; it involves a profound transformation (Goody, 1987, p. 226; Ong, 2002, p. 47-50). Writing means to present the narrative to the public or an institution. It is at this stage that the expectation of validation and recognition for all the work that has been put in arises. In this context, the influence of political power, religious orthodoxy, or the prevailing cultural climate in society must be considered, as it determines the content of the written work that seeks approval and recognition. Likewise, it is also possible to express this in reverse. Since presenting messages to the public in written form in order to carry out a critique of religious orthodoxy, political power or

dominant culture requires highlighting the qualities of the target group of the work, it transforms the content of the oral narrative that aims solely at the expression and commemoration of something sacred. In this context, Metting (1994-1995, p. 283) offers a clear criticism of the text that has been turned into written and characterizes the author as “reducing with the pen”. Therefore, this is the emerging point where the author starts to separate from the public, who are the real owners of the narratives, by making their tactics and rational interests.

Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, and Rıza Yıldırım, who have opened a discussion on the relationship between the authors of the hagiographies and the people, who are considered their true owners, generally explain this within the framework of emotional resonance, understanding, and shared traditions. For instance, Gölpınarlı (1958, p. XI) asserts that the authors of hagiographies are “from the people, and the people are the authors themselves”. Focusing on the two main elements in the formation of hagiographies —the “anonymous creator” and the “writer” who transcribes it—Ocak (1997, p. 36-37) states that there is no disruption or difference in perception between the writer and the anonymous creator. Yıldırım, a student of Ocak, shares a similar perspective in this regard. According to Yıldırım (2012, p. 155), the authors of hagiographies transcribed these works from within the tradition without being subjected to external influence or indirect guidance, emphasizing that the hagiographies were written as part of the traditional ritual environment, which was formalized and closed off to the outside world. Literature frequently discusses how, during the process of transcribing oral traditions into written form, authors adapt various themes, ideas, and motifs from traditional sources with creativity and imagination to expand or enrich their written literature, resulting in a transformation that reveals growth and individual eccentricity (Metting, 1994-1995, p. 285).

In contrast, all three authors emphasize the emotional and traditional similarities between the people and the authors of hagiographies, but they do not engage in a discussion about the consequences arising from the differences in how tradition is transmitted. However, this overlooked aspect contains significant transformative elements (Gülerer, 2013, p. 258). As mentioned earlier, while oral expression initiates an emotional process of integration, written transmission means relinquishing the magical quality of speech. It places it beyond empathy (Varnant, 1980, p. 197-198). The fundamental principle in this new domain will no longer be the living of faith and tradition, but rather the utilization of faith and tradition (Varnant, 1980, p. 199). This process of “writing” in Bektashism, described as “the first examples of the transition from oral culture to written culture” (Yıldız, 2020, p. 47), marks the emergence of the writer as an individual with personality, standing out from the belief that once required the obliteration of self and the subordination of the individual for devotion. This transition indicates that tradition is moving from being something lived to something used. The clear expression of the writer’s personal identity in many hagiographies (Yıldırım, 2001, p. 71-72) is a clear sign that the emotional integration and the dissolution of individuality that the faith and narratives aimed to establish have been relegated to the background. Indeed, when these types of narratives are

creatively adapted into written texts by distinguished authors, they provide society with certain prescriptions concerning psychological survival, identity, and well-being, offering protection, strength, and fulfilling an integrative function (Martins, 2021, p. 160). However, as noted earlier, they do so by constructing an identity that must be embraced. This process of identification, as Bauman has noted, is a sign of the weakening of the community, because, according to him, identities are only invented in such moments. In other words, when narratives that once established an empathic unity shared by society begin to fade, identity emerges (Bauman, 2000, p. 21-22).

It is essential to always keep in mind that the narratives compiled by the authors involve, to a certain extent, a process of reconstruction (Varnant, 1980, p. 233). In this context, the transcribed narrative is a constructed and structured narrative. The reason for this is that writing is not neutral; there are power centers that control its production, use, and meaning (Chartier, 1998, p. 260). As mentioned earlier, the act of writing, which involves presenting a narrative to the public or an institution, will transform it into a part of the power relations at play in these spaces, or, with an optimistic perspective, it will be shaped by them. Hussain (2018, p. 13) notes that this situation is quite common in hagiography literature, pointing out that the authors of hagiographies include elements that align with their worldview and emphasize things they deem appropriate to spread in line with the spirit of the times.

The simultaneous progression of the process of hagiography writing and the institutionalization of the Bektashi Order with the support of the Ottoman sultans is not a mere coincidence in this context (Soileau, 2010, p. 93). According to Melikoff, who emphasizes the role of Sultan Bayezid II (1481-1512) in this process, it was this sultan who appointed Balım Sultan as the Postnişin (spiritual leader) of the Bektashi Order in 1501. During this period, when the hagiographies of Bektashism were being transcribed, the order would be directed by the Ottoman administration in Anatolia and institutionalized as a formal religious order (Melikoff, 1994, p. 21-55). Thus, the hagiographies would be tasked with constructing and standardizing the tradition of the institutionalized order, or in other words, faith and tradition would be transformed into something utilizable.

In addition to the functionalization of the narratives by the authors who compile and transcribe them, it is also necessary to address the scientific approach that makes these narratives objects of various analyses, rendering them usable. This approach, which normalizes the extraordinary nature of the saints and their miracles, products of the sacred world, and reduces their theological significance for a community to an average character, will be analyzed in the following section. Examples of this new functionalization of the narratives will be discussed in the upcoming section.

2. From the Extraordinary of Communal Authority of Myths to the Their Ordinairiness in Public

In myths, individual confessions or personal perspectives are not encountered. This is because speech is the objectification of human societal rather than individual experience (Cassirer, 1946, p. 57). Therefore, the sanctity attributed to a saint, believed to possess miracles in the eyes of the believers, derives precisely from the symbolic

value it offers to society. The value that society grants to the saint flourishes not in the realm of the eye and written words, but in the embrace of the ear and the tradition of oral storytelling. The reason for this is that oral expression initiates an emotional process of integration, and piety, initially not concerned with sacred texts but primarily with religious discussions, advice, narratives, or sermons, is intrinsically linked to this (Başer, 1995, p. 30). Writing and the eye, by invoking critical intelligence to uncover the truth, largely sever their connection with the *kléos* (glory, rumor) that speech attempts to reveal (Hartog, 2000, p. 29). The process of writing, which begins to change the position and value of the narrative, transforms the extraordinary into something ordinary, and the miracle-performing saint into an ordinary opinion leader. The saint, in the eyes of those who read about him, becomes a figure thought to need social legitimacy or to be striving to attain it (Boran, 2017, p. 28).

Placing the narrative in the form of a text for everyone to access and use means making it publicly available. The hagiography brought into the public sphere, in the face of objections and debates, now finds itself needing to justify its legitimacy or becoming the subject of various analyses (Varnant, 1980, p. 197-198). It is no coincidence that works aiming to determine the fundamental motifs of Alevi-Bektashi belief, analyze its “literature” content, or trace the historical development of these communities, utilize the written Bektashi hagiographies. In this context, those who wish to decipher the secret of the sanctity once experienced by the listeners begin to take the place of the sacred. Thus, narratives that were originally intended to convey a truth about the world where the sacred might emerge and manifest at any moment now become tools for both the community and the saint, as well as for those who wish to decode them. As Jacques Ellul (1985, p. 249) states, instead of listening to the word of creation, those who wish to unravel the secret of this creation emerge. In her work *Hadji Bektach: Un Mythe et Ses Avatars: Genèse & Evolution du Soufisme Populaire en Turquie*, written in French, Irene Melikoff provides important details about how the secret is sought to be revealed through hagiographies. The translator’s conversation with the author regarding the difficulties in translating the terms *mythe* and *avatar* into Turkish, and the reasons behind the author’s choice of these terms, is significant in terms of understanding how written narratives are functionalized. Melikoff explains that the Greek word *mythos*, in the sense of explaining existence and being through narrative, reflects the religious-narrative aspect of Hacı Bektaş Veli, while the word *avatar* is used to express the manifestations and embodiments of this religious-narrative personality in the real world (Alptekin, 1999, p. 11-12).

The Turkish translation of the work as *Hacı Bektaş: Efsaneden Gerçeğe* reflects the author’s own choice in this regard (Alptekin, 1999, p. 11-12). Thus, Melikoff aims to highlight how the mythic-religious-narrative figure of Hacı Bektaş Veli, by gaining a personality for studies in history, literature, folklore, or theology, assumes various forms that can be used. One of the new manifestations of the saints and their miracles, resulting from the functionalization of hagiographies, is presented by the famous folklore researcher Pertev Naili Boratav.

For the first time, Boratav examines hagiographies as literary texts and conducts motif analysis, compiling an inventory of these motifs. In his work *100 Soruda Türk Folkloru*, he suggests that the miracles of saints can be grouped. Boratav identifies thirty-five motifs organized around five main themes: miracles performed by the saint against non-believers or adversaries, miracles aimed at helping those in need, miracles involving animals, miracles involving non-human living or non-living creatures, and metaphysical miracles (Boratav, 1997, p. 43-44). Following Boratav, cultural historian Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, in his works *Alevi-Bektaşî İnançlarının İslam Öncesi Temelleri* and *Kültür Tarihi Kaynağı Olarak Menakıbnameler: Metodolojik Bir Yaklaşım*, provides another example of using the narratives, products of the sacred world, as texts of literary history. In hagiographies, which he classifies as literary works, Ocak similarly refers to the miracles as motifs, akin to Boratav's classification. While he qualifies similar phenomena in religious works as miracles (Ocak, 1997, p. 79), he presents the miracles in hagiographies as motifs. From this standpoint, Ocak draws various inferences about the formation of Alevism-Bektashism, focusing on understanding the structure of this "heterodox Islamic understanding" by coding these communities as heterodox and examining which elements constitute it and where these elements originated (Ocak, 2010, p. 9). As seen, miracles, products of the sacred world, can be turned into a step for searching for the origins of the community and are functionalized beyond their original purpose.

Uygar Kurum, through his analysis of Bektashi hagiographies, characterizes the narratives, which are products of the belief realm in themselves, as literary works formed as a result of various religious and mystical influences. By focusing on their origins rather than the functions the narrative serves for the afterlife, he argues that these narratives can be discussed with a secular content, suggesting that their religious nature is merely a derivative. The author asserts that "the extraordinary elements from the beliefs of Indian and Iranian religions (Buddhism, Hinduism, Zoroastrianism) and Abrahamic faiths, such as Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, are adapted to the identity of the saint in the hagiographies" (Kurum, 2021, p. 1066). He sees rituals such as the *semâh*, *cem*, and *dhikr* ceremonies as elements that merely enrich the content, positioning the hagiographies as literary products that do not establish an independent understanding of sanctity (Kurum, 2021, p. 1066). This approach, which seeks to extract or reduce religion and sanctity to secondary elements, can, in some studies, go even further by viewing the saints and their miracles as products created by individuals who sought social status through religious means (Yurtoğlu, 2012, p. 1-2). In this view, the saint can be portrayed as a hero in a literary genre, with the miracles seen as propaganda tools to increase the hero's reputation and follower count (Ay, 2013, p. 14). In this context, Mumford's argument that the mechanized production of words, images, and sounds democratizes culture, but simultaneously standardizes and cheapens it, seems highly relevant.

Hagiographies, as objects of scientific analysis, are often interpreted as fictional narratives, with the miracles they describe being classified as unreal. An example of this can be seen in Mahmut Yazar's comparison of Buddhist narratives and the *Hacı*

Bektaş Hagiography, where he reduces the narratives in both texts to the level of fantastical myths, arguing that these have no connection to reality (Yazar, 2022, p. 84). Similarly, Yıldırım, one of the historian-authors who seeks historical facts in hagiographies, describes these narratives as "far from historical reality, constructed with stereotypical miracle motifs" (Yıldırım, 2007, p. 2) when he fails to find "historical truth". Moreover, Haşim Şahin (2018, p. 98), another historian, claims that most of these works contain events that are "unrelated to reality, or if they are real, are exaggerated to an extreme". These analyses, which overlook the essential quality of the narrative world it creates, fail to recognize that the narratives emerge from a universe that does not prioritize or even consider the veracity of factual truth (De Certeau, 1984, p. 70). These narratives are products of a world where the sacred and the secular have not yet been separated. In this world, the sacred, which we today see as separate from nature, has not yet diverged from nature itself, meaning that it is a world with the potential for the sacred to emerge at any moment and in any form. It is a world where the entirety of nature can transform into cosmic sanctity (Eliade, 1971, p. X).

The function of the narrative is to explain that the world created by the gods is marked by sanctity, and within this world marked by sanctity, divinity can reveal itself— in other words, it translates the lived experience into the language of the ideal, the transient into the permanent, and the immanent into the transcendent (Gaster, 1950, p. 25). However, scientific approaches that attempt to analyze hagiographies through the secular logic of their respective disciplines fail to penetrate the meanings of these texts correctly (Taşğın, 2018, p. 19). According to Ahmet Taşğın, this failure to grasp the dual meaning world constructed by hagiographies results in these texts being subjected to the invasion of the literal language, making them objects of mere formal analysis (Taşğın, 2012, p. 44).

Conclusion

The process of literary transformation that began to emerge in the 15th and 16th centuries within the Bektashi order was largely manifested through written works called hagiography, which include the lives and miracles of figures known as saints. These narratives, which had legitimacy within the community and were transmitted orally over a long period of time, emphasized the essential features of the faith for believers and therefore had an oral structure that included both poetic and prose forms. As a result, research has shown that a hagiography written for a saint exhibits significant differences and variations. One of the primary factors contributing to this diversity is the fact that these narratives were based on a process of remembrance or memorization. They evolved over many years and were shaped by the workings of memory.

The process of transferring these narratives, which are products of the world of faith and the sacred, into the public sphere has indirectly brought myths, which have communal authority, into the domain of logos and made them sensitive to the dynamics inherent in the public sphere. This transformation, which also gave birth to the institution of religious leadership, also shifted these narratives from the realm of the sacred to the realm of reality, placing them at the center of rational criticism,

negotiation and debate. As a result, narratives that previously had an authority that did not need confirmation or proof of their truthfulness began to feel the need to prove their rightness, to show their authenticity and to respond to other religious claims in this field when they were transferred to the public sphere. These concerns became one of the main preoccupations of hagiographies when they moved into the public sphere.

In this transformation, which can also be traced through the hagiography author, he is no longer a mere myth narrator for the community. The myth poet or orator has now turned into a myth compiler. This shift, which signifies a change in purpose, leads the narratives to begin forming a code that will be interpreted. Myths will no longer be mere stories to be believed in and to guide life but rather will take on the role of subjects that believers will evaluate along the axis of truth and falsehood. Those who can interpret these myths correctly will separate themselves from the community, leading to a layered situation in which a division within the community occurs.

Analyzing the transformations that the elements with communal authority underwent during their public life in the world of empires, where the central power could not exert a strong influence on the whole society, will reveal the continuities and ruptures of cultural, religious and social values that have survived to the present day. It will also allow us to analyze the processes of debate, separation, rupture and integration of the communal element with political, social, economic and religious values in the public sphere. How do communal elements gain a place for themselves in the public sphere and by what means do they do so? Since there are significant gaps in literature, this study, which is only theoretically based, suggests that future studies develop this line of research by supporting it with empirical, historical or ethnographic data. In this way, it will be possible to more clearly identify the political-public debate-strategies and conflicts that lie in the history of contemporary cultural, religious and social life.

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