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Introduction – Beyond State Islam: Religiosity and Spirituality in Contemporary Turkey

Beatrice Hendrich

- ¹ Turkey has always had a vivid and rich religious and spiritual life. Nevertheless, academic research on non-mainstream or extracanonial religiosity remains restricted to a minimum both inside and outside Turkey. Likewise, religious and cultural activities, communities and production that criss-cross categorical borders between the secular and the religious, East and West, or national culture(s) and universal religion(s) fail to attract the attention of researchers despite the amplitude of this research area. Thus, the articles gathered under the heading *Contemporary Sufism and the Quest for Spirituality. Transgressing Borders, Transgressing Categories* in this issue of the European Journal of Turkish Studies aim at highlighting some of the relevant topics such as transnational Sufi communities in Turkey and its diaspora, and the growing quest of many people for spiritual answers as it is reflected in Turkish novels. This introductory article provides an overview of the religio-political background throughout the history of the Turkish Republic in order to reflect the particular circumstances in Turkey and its diaspora, to connect these national particularities to global trends, and to point to some relevant topics which are not covered by these articles.

The Religious Landscape of Turkey

- ² The geographic exposure of Asia Minor has not only influenced the art, literature, politics and lifestyles of the Ottoman Empire and Turkey, but also the particular nature of their religious landscape. Turkey's religious pluralism and diversity comprise "Intra-Islam" pluralism (Introvigne 2005: 6) as well as historic and (post-)modern non-Muslim currents. Intra-Islam pluralism covers all shades of Islam, from state-controlled Islam and Islamic mysticism (*tasavvuf*) to minorities located both inside and outside the Muslim community—depending on the perspective—such as Alevi¹, Sabbateans² or

Baha'is³. By the number of its members, Islam dominates the religious field by far. According to a KONDA survey from 2006, ninety-nine percent of Turkish citizens are Muslims (Agnostik.Org: n.d.).⁴ Contrary to common perceptions in non-Muslim countries, 'orthodox' Islam and mysticism are not necessarily mutually exclusive categories (Sedgwick 2003). Mystical orders were a constitutive part of Ottoman religious history and while some of them postulate absolute obedience to shari'a, others combine obedience with particular mystical practices. Only some orders linger at the margins of shari'a when it comes to their rituals and interpretation of Muslim belief. An interesting example of this is the Bektashiye, which managed to survive throughout the centuries despite the usually sharp criticism of the religious establishment on this order, sometimes even intermingling with the rural representatives of this establishment (Faroqhi: 227). The continually changing quality and proximity of the relation between the Bektashiye and the Ottoman state requires further research, but the mere survival of a non-shari'a *tarikât* so close to the state and the societal elite is enough to question both the 'orthodox' character of Ottoman Islam and the use of normative categories such as 'orthodox' and 'heterodox' Islam.

- 3 The 'Extra-Islamic' religious pluralism encompasses a broad variety of non-Muslim religious or spiritual collectives and movements such as different denominations of Judaism and Christianity, the Kurdish Êzîdî⁵, and people interested in Buddhism⁶. Finally, collectives and individuals who base their religious identity on 'Shamanistic heritage,' belief in UFOs, spiritualistic practices, etc.,⁷ or a combination of several elements, are not necessarily affiliated with one of the aforementioned religions. In the most cases, however, these practices are embedded and interpreted as a part of an 'umbrella religion' like Islam or Christianity. Atheism is certainly part of the religious field, but despite its important place in the social and political discussion in Turkey, research on Atheism in Turkey is next to zero.

Beyond State Islam

- 4 The expression "beyond state Islam" in the title of this article points to tendencies in Turkey's religious field which result from the state's religious policies. Whereas one part of the field could be entitled 'state-approved orthodox Islam' (cf. Hart 2009), another part can be located outside of state-controlled institutions, being much more in flux and producing creative solutions to changing circumstances. The split between these parts of the field is on no account absolute; rather, a distinctive feature of communities positioned 'beyond state-control' is that they negotiate their relation with state-controlled institutions instead of taking the relation for granted. The legality of some of the so-labelled communities or practices is a different question, in some cases not easily answered.
- 5 The laws and reforms implemented in the first years of the Turkish Republic brought an end to certain Islamic institutions like the Caliphate or the religious schools (the *medrese*, abolished in 1924), and rendered religious affiliation and rank invisible by banning religious attire in public. According to its constitution⁸ Turkey is a *laik* country, which implies that state and religious institutions do not get involved in each others' affairs. In the Turkish case, however, it rather means "the subordination of Islam to state objectives, and active management of religious institutions and affairs by the state" (Saatci 2005: 234). A decisive step in controlling Islam was the foundation of

the Presidency of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet İşleri Reisliği* [now *Başkanlığı*], *Diyanet*) in 1924; the Presidency coordinates the religious learning and training inside Turkey and in the diaspora communities, prepares the Friday sermons, and enforces the state-sanctioned conduct of all its employees. Subject to several legal changes throughout the years, it took its current structure in 2010 and is directly connected to the Ministry of the Prime Minister.⁹ But whatever measures were taken, no formula has ever been created that would be able to reconcile the different approaches in the society of Turkey towards the nature of the relation between religion and state, or to depoliticize religious discourse.

- 6 Having said that, it has to be admitted that the importance of religious topics in public discourse has changed time and again since the foundation of the Republic, and that state pressure or support for religion or religious communities and currents has passed through various phases. But indisputably, the former balance between and co-existence of (1) scholastic ('orthodox') Islam, (2) folk beliefs and practices, and (3) mystical Islam (*tasavvuf*) has been destroyed by a model of Sunni Islam which takes state-controlled institutions as the only legal frame for religious activities while banning and demonizing independent activities or communities, particularly those of a mystic nature. The law of 1925 put an end not only to the hitherto well-established forms of Sufi activities but also to expressions of folk Islam like the veneration of saints at their tombs.¹⁰ The Societies Law of 1938¹¹ put a further constraint on any association founded with religious ambitions.
- 7 Yet, the laws and measures did not result in the extinction of forms of religiosity beyond state Islam. Rather, different ways to cope with the situation emerged.¹² For example, interest in spiritual experiences other than those provided by approved Islamic rituals grew,¹³ and the now illegal mystical orders (*tarikāt*) developed new internal and external patterns. On the one hand, their rituals had to be conducted in the seclusion of private homes, while on the other hand orders like the *Mevleviye* and, much later, the *Bektashiye* managed to regain public space bit by bit. The development of the *Mevleviye* throughout the Republic is an example of extraordinary—but still paradigmatic—success in surviving and developing despite the anti-Sufi legislation. The main convent of the *Mevleviye* in Konya was used as a Museum of Antiquities since 1926 (and not neglected or destroyed as many other sacred sites in Turkey); in 1954 its name was changed into *Mevlana Müzesi* and its content was rearranged accordingly. In 1953, the first authorized 'whirling' ceremony (*sema*) since 1925 took place in a cinema in Konya with only three musicians and was officially presented only as a display of Turkish cultural heritage. The two participating *Sheikhs* wore street clothes. From then on, the *sema*, *Mevlevi* music and the (translated) poems of *Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi* spread all over the world. For many decades, when the *sema* was staged in Turkey, the organizers had to clarify that it was not a religious service but a cultural event although the religious dimension was often obvious to the observer, as Hellmut Ritter describes in detail (Ritter 1962). Fifty years later, the *Mevleviye* is not only a world-wide and diversifying movement, it is even strong enough to run a signature campaign in order to end the touristic display of *sema* because "it harms the tradition" (*İmza.la n.d.*)¹⁴. The example of the *Mevleviye* shows that the ban of the mystical orders in 1925 resulted in both the end of 'traditional sufism' in Turkey and the emergence of new organizational forms. The former authority of the *şeyh* as the sacrosanct head of the order and the spiritual guide has lost much of its strength¹⁵. Instead, competition between different leading figures and groups has taken place. Individuals interested in

the Mevlevi culture and teachings of Celaleddin Rumi have the choice to join the community which fit their interests the best—groups following ‘the traditional way,’¹⁶ or those only teaching mystic music and *sema*. The number of ‘spare time sufis’¹⁷ in the Mevlevi community must be very high in light of the numberless associations engaged in ‘Mevlevi activities’. Another term related to the new ‘non-commitment’ is “free-riding,” that is, “[...] keine dauerhafte Einbindung in Netzwerkstrukturen mit Übernahme von Verpflichtungen, sondern die unverbindliche gelegentliche Teilnahme an sozialen und rituellen Veranstaltungen (not a continuous embedding in the structures of the network including taking charge of certain duties but an occasional participation in the social and ritual events without further commitment [my own translation]).” (Böttcher 2011: 106)

- 8 Another important *tarikat* in Turkey is the Nakshibendiye (Naqsbandiya). The Nakshibendiye is known for being religiously conservative but also for connecting spirituality to political and economic power (Atay 2012; Weismann 2007). A very good example is Turgut Özal (1927–1993), who combined membership in this order with the post of the prime minister and president of the republic, thus symbolizing economic liberalization and a re-formulation of the religious field at the same time.¹⁸ Since then, orders and communities based on the former Sufi tradition are part of Turkish society although legally still banned.
- 9 Both the Mevleviye and the Nakshibendiye are among the *tarikat* that obey the rules of the shari‘a, the Islamic law and duties, and both have developed a global network. Many a subgroup of the contemporary Mevleviye have cut back their requirements towards their members; the three-year dervish education in the convent no longer exists, and conversion of its adherents to Islam is not necessary. The Nakshibendiye is much more rigid in following Islamic duties but even among their subgroups the opening towards Western adherents has imposed compromises—a fact which has given rise to much criticism inside the Nakshibendiye itself and within the Muslim community in general.¹⁹

The Global and the Local

- 10 In the course of the last paragraphs I have already mentioned, en passant, *globalization* and *Westernization* as aspects of contemporary Sufism. In recent years, a broad variety of research literature has been published on *Sufism in the West* (Malik/Hinnells 2006) or *Sufism in Europe and North America* (Westerlund 2004). *Sufism Today: Heritage and Tradition in the Global Community* (Raudvere/Stenberg 2009) covers—among other relevant topics—the recent developments related to the Sufi heritage in different diaspora communities such as the Mevleviye in Germany or the Halveti-Jerrahi in the US. All these volumes offer important examples of the interplay between the search for tradition and adjustment to change inside migrant communities, as well as on the effects of including adepts from a non-Muslim background. But what also becomes evident on the basis of these case studies is that *glocalization* is a prominent feature of contemporary Sufi or Sufi-inspired communities, or other spiritual trends. Where on the one hand physical and virtual global networking defines the nature of their activities, the particular national—or even local²⁰—circumstances cannot but shape perspectives and goals decisively. So, where in this complex picture, characterized by a

steady flux of communication and ideas on both the global and the local level, should we locate religiosity and spirituality beyond state control in Turkey?

- 11 The framework has already been mentioned: Despite the state's efforts to regiment the religious field, the field beyond the tutelage of the Diyanet keeps expanding and diversifying. *Tarikats* and Sufi-orientated communities have expanded; striking examples are the Mevleviye with a focus on high culture and spiritual development, the Nakshibendiye with a focus on spiritual guidance and socio-political influence.²¹ New congregational forms have emerged: The circle of Cemalnur Sargut (1952-), probably the most famous *şeyha* (female head of a Sufi community) in Turkey at present, positions itself in the frame of Sufi tradition (Rifa'iye), but acts independently when it comes to organization and teaching. Without an investiture by an earlier *şeyh* and without being trained in Religious Studies in a formal manner, Sargut still succeeded in becoming a spiritual guide for men as well as for women. Anna Neubauer has analyzed the different means and methods of attracting followers. There is charisma, a convincing discourse and wondrous tales (Neubauer 2009: 55-66). But beyond these elements, the expansion of Cemalnur Sargut's international relations and her growing reputation outside Turkey leads to a win-win situation. Whereas her foreign followers look for an authentic and local tradition, the attention paid to her by foreigners strengthens her position in Turkey (Neubauer 2009: 208). Furthermore, the systematic networking with international researchers supports her standing.
- 12 While for communities like that of Cemalnur Sargut globalization started as an additional asset at a later period of the activities, for the Gülen movement as we know it today global networking is a core issue. The Gülen movement is the Islamic proselytizing organization of Turkish-born Fethullah Gülen (1941-). Its network is based on charter schools with a high educational standard in more than 100 countries. The assessment of the Gülen movement ranges from "liberal Islam" (Ebaugh 2009: 45) to 'anti-democratic pro-shari'a Islamist,' but undisputedly, it exercises influence on both the political landscape of Turkey and the perception of the movement itself as the "humanist way in Islam" among (Western) outsiders. One asset of the movement is its organizational fuzziness. Although its main pillars—the followers and sympathizers, the political supporters and the economical basis—are equally important and mutually dependent, they are diverse and independent enough to overcome a segmentary crisis. A weakening of one pillar or a ban in a certain country (e.g., Afghanistan and Uzbekistan) would neither destroy the entire organization nor annihilate the movement. This asset is certainly based on the "international opportunity structures by globalization" (Kuru 2005: 254), as Ahmet T. Kuru demonstrates in his analysis on Turkish Islamist movements.
- 13 Finally, one of the most important universalist Sufi movements has to be mentioned, the International Sufi Movement of Hazrat Inayat Khan (1882-1927). Inayat Khan was an Indian Sufi—initiated into the Chishtiyya, Suhrawardiyya, Qadiriyya and Naqshbandiyya Orders—who introduced first Sufi music and later his own particular blend of Sufi teaching in several countries, including the US and the Netherlands. His case matters in the frame of this article because of a particular, more recent development in the movement's global network. The expansion of the network did not stop when it had reached most 'Western' countries, but is continuing into the 'East.' The translation of texts into Turkish and the establishment of Inayat Khan communities in Turkey is the work of followers living in Germany. The interplay of at

least three elements is the reason for this development: (1) the growing interest in transnational networking of the Turkish and German followers in Germany; (2) social and political change in Turkey which permits and supports the dissemination of Inayat Khan's teaching, and (3) the adapted universalist character of Inayat Khan's language and message (Toprakyan 2012: 5).

Border Crossing

- 14 The range of the articles included in this issue is not restricted to non-state controlled Islam or globalizing movements, but covers the crossing of religious borders as well. It has to be stressed that the crossing of religious borders, the amalgamation and modification of “extraneous matters” (Walgrave 2011: 15) in religious belief and practice according to the given historical, political and social circumstances is not an exception but the rule. So, the result of this dynamic process should not be defined as deviance, or what is usually called ‘syncretism.’ Walgrave categorically refuses to use this term in Religious Studies, arguing that “it is an illusion that it is possible to receive or maintain a religious tradition completely unchanged (although the degree of adaptation to circumstances may differ). Consequently, even if the words remain the same the content may change” (ibid.: 15). But it can be argued that certain religions and spiritual practices put a particular emphasis on creating a ‘new path,’ which by definition has to change the existing road map and to adopt new elements. In these cases, religious border crossing is a key element, even if the representatives in many cases argue to the contrary in an essentialist manner.²²
- 15 The above mentioned Universal Sufi Movement of Inayat Khan certainly counts among these transgressive religious communities: Inayat Khan not only changed some Islamic terms into a more general wording (e.g. Nur-i Muhammadi into Spirit of Guidance [Toprakyan 2012: 6]), but also defines Sufism as the essence of *all* religions and philosophies (Toprakyan 2012: 7). It will be interesting to see if the newly established groups in Turkey are going to put an emphasis on the Islamic heritage of the Sufi Movement.
- 16 A good example of the crossing of several boundaries (religious, ethnic, and linguistic) and of the emergence of new religious-spiritual communities is the relation between Freemasonry and Sufism in the Ottoman Empire and later. Due to some common elements—e.g., the initiation, the system of adepts and masters, the possession of a *secret*, and the free spirit—in the Ottoman Empire, Masons and Sufis, particularly Bektashis, developed close personal relationships. Outsiders often confused and equated both communities, while the word *tarikāt*, the Sufi way and order, was finally used for Freemasonry, too. Eventually, in 1920 a para-Masonic group was established in Istanbul, the Virtuous Order (*Tarikat-ı Salahiye*), whose members were “prominent Turkish freemasons and Bektashi shaykhs” (Zarcone 2009: 39). “The reception in the Virtuous Order is an imitation of various ceremonial acts from Masonic ritual with many Muslim and Sufi elements” (ibid.: 40). At the same time, the story of Freemasonry in the Ottoman Empire reveals the relation between socio-economic change and change in the religious field. “For sure, had there not been the thousands of European adventurers who flocked to the Ottoman *eldorado* from the 1850s onwards, Ottoman freemasonry would have developed on a much lower scale” (Dumont 2005: 482).

Another, very recent, example of this Masonic-Sufic relation would be the Yunus Emre²³ Lodge in Cologne, founded in 1997.

- 17 The activities in the surroundings of Oruç Güvenç—mentioned below in this article and described in detail in the article of Robert Langer in this issue—definitely cross borders and amalgamate elements of diverse origins; yet, the example of this *şeyh* shows clearly that the search for the essential spiritual and historic truth may lead to the creation of completely new forms, let alone teachings.

Global Tendencies, Turkish Particularities

- 18 In the paragraphs above, I have emphasized the particularities of the religious landscape in Turkey throughout modern history and at present, as well as the effects of globalization on religious communities, networking and teaching. I will now dwell shortly on the relation between Turkish particularities and global tendencies when it comes to the global “resurgence of religion” and the “spiritual turn” (Houtman 2007).
- 19 In 1999, the sociologist Peter Berger wrote: “My point is that the assumption that we live in a secularized world is false. The world today [...] is as furiously religious as it ever was, and in some places more so than ever. This means that a whole body of literature by historians and social scientists [...] is essentially mistaken” (Berger 1999: 2). Berger continues by saying that what should puzzle the researcher is not the important place of religion within the human experience throughout history, but rather the emergence of secularization. The argument that the religious resurgence is an answer to the uncertainties of modernity, or that anti-secularism is based on the resentment felt by non-elite classes which do not share the elite’s secularization discourse, would be unconvincing in Berger’s eyes (ibid.: 12).
- 20 The literature published during the last twenty years on “counter-secularization” (Berger 1999) including all forms of contemporary spirituality, esotericism and New Age movements, is enormous. Some titles are mentioned in this paper as well as in the following articles. However, a closer look at the publications on the religious resurgence in general or on spirituality in particular shows that in the end, theoretical considerations are based on selected examples such as the religio-political history of the US (Mitchell 2011) or “Indian and Chinese spiritualities” (Van der Veer 2009). Certainly, this approach is justified by the vast differences between the religious landscapes, as Berger demonstrates in his introductory article to his *Desecularization of the World* (1999). But it seems reasonable to side with Grace Davie, who interprets the growing interest and attentiveness of the sociologists towards religious topics as a major reason for the ‘religious shift’: “In other words, the shift is as much in the perspective as it is in the reality being observed. Religion is indeed resurgent in many parts of the world [...], but it is also more readily recognized as a continuing and powerful force in both individual and social lives” (Davie 2010: 161). Hence, it could be argued that the shift in perspective unites what is actually multifarious.
- 21 On the other hand, as I sketched above, the religious landscape of Turkey is part of a globalizing and expanding network and cannot be analyzed in the borders of the nation state exclusively. When we return to the example of the Mevleviye, we see clearly that one strand of the Mevlevi field can be interpreted as being a part of the global, popular ‘quest for spirituality’. This quest comes together with the refusal of established

institutions (such as “the” church or Diyanet), a low commitment towards the relevant network or community (“free-riding”), an openness towards multiple religious identities (Bernhardt/Schmidt-Leukel 2008), a stress on spiritual autonomy and a (life-long) wandering in quest of ‘the’ answer (Bochinger/Engelbrecht/Gebhardt 2009). Middle-class women between the age of thirty and fifty are particularly engaged in this quest.²⁴ Two recent novels on the globalized best-seller market tellingly illustrate the connection between gender, age and the quest for autonomous spiritual fulfillment: *Eat Pray Love* by Elizabeth Gilbert (2006, adapted to a movie with Julia Roberts!), and *The Forty Rules of Love* by Elif Shafak (2009, published in Turkish as *Aşk*, see below). In both cases a well-educated, world-travelling woman in her early thirties with no material problems undergoes a personal crisis, which proves to be a spiritual crisis, which is finally overcome by spiritual means and metaphysical experiences. In the case of *The Forty Rules of Love*, the ‘Mevlevi spirit’ supports the spiritual relief, and in both cases it is the ‘spirit of the place’ (Konya and an Ashram in India, respectively) which enables the heroines to ‘find’ a new path to the self. Of course, the women are from the West, whereas spiritual answers are found in the East. (Elif Shafak herself is a good example of the spiritual globalization of educated women with biographical and cultural roots in Turkey: With a Mevlevi background in her family, she is making use of her religious heritage in her novels which are located in both Turkey and the US, and which are usually published in Turkish *and* in English, both versions written by herself.)

- 22 To sum up: As a result of the accelerating mobility of people and concepts, single religious phenomena are of course to be analyzed against the background of their exposure to (trans-national, international, global) influences. On the other hand, local circumstances, the legal framework, etc., not only have to be taken into consideration, but have to be made explicit as decisive factors of the religious landscape.

The Articles

- 23 The following papers on religiosity and spirituality in Turkey beyond state control differ in their approach and disciplinary background, but they are born out of scientific curiosity and openness to the religious and social reality of current Turkey. The intended disciplinary diversity pays respect to the fact that extracanonial religious activities in Turkey find their reflection in all kinds of cultural productions (music, literature, theater, dance) as a result of reciprocal relations between religious currents or communities and artists. The tense relation between state, society and religion throughout the history of the Turkish Republic has created a need for compromise. The cultural activities in Turkey on the occasion of the UNESCO Year of Mevlana in 2007 were undoubtedly symbolic, but they also originated in the interest to establish a kind of (cultural) religiosity that is apolitical, universalist and particular at the same time.
- 24 Philipp Bruckmayr’s paper, “The particular will (*al-irādat al-juz’iyya*): excavations regarding a latecomer in *kalām* terminology on human agency and its position in Naqshbandi discourse,” dwells on a theological topic—the particular and the universal will—and its way into the current teaching of the *cemaat* of Fethullah Gülen via the Nakshibendiye, one of the most important Sufi *tarikāt* in Turkish history. The appeal of Gülen partly derives from his stature as a modern Sufi, representing traditional Sufi values and ways, seemingly in perfect harmony with modernity, without any affiliation to a *tarikāt*, as the author claims. Furthermore, Bruckmayr argues, he can be identified

as personifying the legacy of the Ottoman Nakshibendiye and its offshoots in the republican era, particularly the Nurcu *cemaat*. A person like Fethullah Gülen, being in the centre of current religious discourse in Turkey and its diaspora, transmits and translates the theological eruditeness of an Ottoman scholar from 16th century to Turkish Muslims of today. What is even more intriguing in the present context is the disconnection of Gülen's teaching from its geographical origin—and restriction—due to his migration to the US and the dissemination of his message not only via print media but via electronic media to a bigger extent.

- 25 The papers by Catharina Raudvere and Béatrice Hendrich shift the focus to multireligious regions outside the Turkish Republic but nevertheless maintain a strong if not essential connection to Turkey. Furthermore, both papers examine communities in the making. Whether based on Sufi or Alevi roots, political changes such as the building of new nation states and shifts in religious policy empower new elites but also require new raw material for identity building. A period of state transition also provides new religious spaces outside of state control, as Catharina Raudvere shows in her paper "Claiming Heritage, Renewing Authority. Sufi-oriented Activities in Post-Yugoslav Bosnia-Herzegovina." "Collective memory and collective amnesia" have an important impact on efforts of "reconstruction" after decades of cultural suppression. The article also clearly demonstrates the kaleidoscopic character of "contemporary Sufism". Big *tarikats* like the Nakshbendiye and Kadiriye (Qadiriyya) constitute parts of the Islamic Community that are established in Bosnian law, while others prefer a semi-official status. Charismatic individuals may open up their *tarikat* to global networking, while other reverted sheikhs are labelled as Sufi from outside though they define themselves as mainstream Muslim. Raudvere concludes that "Bosnian Sufi identity balances between national heritage and search for spirituality; it connects to the contemporary world and its specific issues in a way that is relevant for contemporary Bosnia as well as symptomatic for contemporary Sufism."
- 26 Alevism (*Alevilik*)—also known as Alevism-Bektashism—has only recently entered both the public stage and academic research (with the exception of single researchers or very short periods of interest). Its entry onto the public stage intriguingly coincides with some major changes at the national and global political levels: the Turkish coup d'état in 1980, the end of the Cold War, and the religious turn in Turkey as well as in several European countries, partly related to the shrinking of certain political camps in the wake of political changes. The Alevi community of Cyprus is also to a very high degree determined by its political and economic circumstances. In her paper ("Alevitische Organisationen auf Zypern – Landsmannschaften, soziale Netzwerke und Suche nach Spiritualität"), Béatrice Hendrich presents the Alevi associations of Cyprus, the expectations of their members and the impact of the Cyprus Conflict on the Alevi settlers from Turkey. The expectations and needs of the Alevis in Cyprus range from social support toward strengthening the Alevi identity to the realization of ritual gatherings and spiritual guidance. As is the case with other Alevi communities, a classification of Alevism as religion or culture, social movement or Sufism-based worldview does not result in a better understanding of its nature. Antoine Faivre's definition of esotericism as a *forme de pensée* (Faivre 1986), a certain mode of perceiving both society and one's own existence, might be the one aspect that brings "ethnic," "cultural," and "religious" Alevis together. However, the influence of Turkish nationalism and the difficulties of living on a divided island and an officially unrecognized state prompted the small Cypriot community to organize in two

associations at odds with each other. Another focus of the article is the ascribed spiritual power of the religious specialists, the *dede*, and the obvious neglect of spiritual necessities among Alevis. The struggle for social, political and legal recognition, as a rule led by persons socialised and shaped by leftist political movements, has resulted in the complete neglect of the religious and spiritual realm for many years. The future of Alevi religion in Cyprus depends on political decisions taken by others. When the division of the island or at least the blockade of the Northern part comes to an end, Cypriot Alevis will likely become a part of Cyprus' multi-religious landscape. If the blockage and the Turkish influence linger on, the alleged Turkish character of Alevism will determine many aspects of ritual and identity.

- 27 A very high complexity in terms of transnationality, ritual dynamics and culture-crossing networking shows the loosely organised group of dancers, musicians and disciples with Sufi orientation, examined by Robert Langer under the title "Transfer Processes within Sufi Rituals: An Example from Istanbul." This paper deals with the Turkish post-modern Sufi, musician and "musical therapist," as he would call himself, Oruç Rahmi Güvenç and his group TÛMATA, an abbreviation of "Türk Musikisini Araştırma ve Tanıtma Grubu." To a large extent, the activities of this group take place in Turkey and in Germany, but they visit other European countries as well. What distinguishes TÛMATA from many other post-modern spiritual or religious groups is its ability to balance "new tradition" and flexibility, scientific reasoning and arousal of spiritual emotions, canonical content and a continuous search for new appropriate forms and cultural production. Oruç Güvenç identifies himself as an initiated Sufi, or dervish, with the right to teach the knowledge of several orders like Kadiriye, Bektashiye or Mevleviye. He also experienced the "dream-call" when he was still a child, so he was fated to become a musician-dervish. This could be called the traditional Muslim aspects of his life and teaching. What makes him a representative of the religious field in Turkey is his engagement in Shamanism. As Langer puts it: "As effective the concept was in integrating the religious history of 'the Turks' into the narrative of the modern nation state of Turkey by scholars such as Mehmet Fuat Köprülü (see Dressler 2010b), it is just as effective in making Sufi practice attractive to interested Westerners." It was probably not by chance that another group of Sufi musicians in Germany distanced itself from Güvenç and instead now follows the way of Inayat Khan. There are striking similarities between the approach and disciples of TÛMATA on the one hand and the results of research on spirituality carried out in the US on the other. This research singled out a segment of interviewees labelled "highly active seekers" who "adopted a highly individualized spirituality which rejected organized religion and traditional forms of worship. [...] more educated, more individualistic, more likely to engage in 'mystical' religion which may contain various New Age beliefs and practices, [...] more likely to view their faith as a 'spiritual journey' or a 'quest'" (Zinnbauer 1997: 561).
- 28 Finally, Zeynep Tüfekçioğlu's contribution draws attention to the handling and embedding of religious motives in popular cultural production. At first glance, the cultural production of artists of the Turkish Republic seems to focus on 'worldly' political and social or individualistic topics. A second look, however, reveals that religious and spiritual motives and topics have always been part of music and literature, and today even of ballet.²⁵ Since its emergence, modern Turkish literature has implicitly or explicitly mirrored the state of the religious field in Turkey. It has embedded themes of religious history, mocked spiritualistic fashions and generated the

genre of Islamic Literature (Çayır 2007). Nevertheless, this aspect has not been subject to literary criticism or analysis for decades. Only recently, with famous and popular authors like Nedim Gürsel, Elif Shafak²⁶ or Ahmed Ümit beginning to attend to religious motives, could the theme no longer remain ignored. As mentioned above, in 2007 Turkey celebrated the UNESCO-Mevlana Year. In 2008 Ahmed Ümit's crime novel *Bab-ı Esrar* (*The Dervish Gate*, 2011) was published, followed by Shafak's novel *The Forty Rules of Love* in 2009. Both books are based on aspects of the biography of Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi and on the relation between him and his mystical friend Shams-e Tabrizi.²⁷ Tüfekçioğlu explores the possible functions and connotations of Sufism as they arise in Turkish popular culture, as well as the depiction of Mevlana and Shams in one of the most popular contemporary Turkish crime novels in relation to cultural memory. The author argues that through a plurality of voices and with the use of genre conventions of crime fiction, *Bab-ı Esrar* presents an alternative cultural memory in relation to Shams' position in Turkish culture. Thus, the novel functions as a revisionist fiction.

- 29 The conflict between autonomous religious communities and the state in the geographies relevant here is older than the Turkish Republic. The persecution of Kızılbaş and Êzidis or the ban of the Bektashiye in 1826 are the best known examples. But with the foundation of the Republic and its different concept of the duties of the state in controlling and engineering society, the battle against communities outside of state control became of structural and permanent feature, solidified through law. Today, the situation presents itself quite differently again, despite the recent efforts of the AKP government to enforce 'Islamic rules' on society (like the ban of alcohol in many public areas or the anti-abortion controversy). The idea of "spirituality" as a quest for autonomy and self-rule by individuals or communities (Wood 2010: 267) clearly permeates all the papers in this issue. On the level of the individual it is the autonomy to choose a (better) fitting religious community, to join and to leave it according to one's own decision, to attend certain practices and to refrain from others. On the level of the collective it is to develop and change teaching and practice, to split off or to cooperate with another group—in another country—without the pressure to justify these decisions to a legal institution or a greater public.
- 30 "As a part of societal structure, religion cannot be unrelated to a general societal change. In the course of time, those changes have an effect on 'lived religion', organisational structure, world view and practices as well" (Atacan 1990: 11). It is the merit of Raoul Motika, now director of the Orient-Institute Istanbul, to have attracted attention to the topic in 2008 with a symposium on "new religiosity in the Near East and its Diaspora" at the Hamburg University. What followed was a panel at the World Congress on Middle Eastern Studies in Barcelona, 2010, dedicated to Sufism and Spirituality in Turkey. Most of the contributors to this issue of EJTS joined that panel and agreed to collaborate in this publication. Meanwhile, research on New Religious Movements in Turkey is carried out at the Orient-Institute Istanbul by Alexandre Toumarkine. The hope remains that future research might close the gap between religious—spiritual and esoteric, non-canonical or beyond-state-control—activities in Turkey and its reflection in academic publications.

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NOTES

1. For a recent overview on Alevi history and present issues see Dressler 2008.
2. Sabateans are the adherents of Sabbatai Zevi (1626–1676), an Ottoman Jewish rabbi who was proclaimed to be the Jewish Messiah in 1665. Sabbatai Zevi converted to Islam in 1666. Some of his disciples followed him in his 'turn'; that is why they are pejoratively named *Dönme* ("those who turned"). In the Ottoman tax registers, they were sometimes registered as Muslims, sometimes as Jews.
3. The Baha'i faith is a monotheistic religion based on the belief in a series of messengers including Jesus and Muhammad, with Tehran-born Baha'ullah (1817-1892) being the last messenger. Today, an estimated 21,000 Baha'is live in Turkey.
4. KONDA is a private research institution. The Turkish Statistical Institute does not conduct surveys related to religion. This is the responsibility of the Presidency of Religious Affairs, but there is currently no survey on religious affiliation available.
5. The Êzidî (or Yezidis) are a mainly Kurdish-speaking group who share a distinctive religious tradition. As a result of political and religious pressure, the bigger part of the Êzidî population has left Turkey for Europe or the US (see Robert Langer 2010).
6. For current Buddhist activities in Turkey see –among others websites– *Buddhanet* (access 26.11.12).
7. A novel of Mehmet Acar, *Hayatın Anlamı Ya da Akhisarlı Hasan Tütün'ün Maceraları* (*The Meaning of Life*) (İthaki Yayınları 2005) is suggestive of the current scene of spiritualism and New Age in the intellectual heart of Istanbul, Beyoğlu.

8. With an amendment to the first constitution of the Republic of Turkey (*Teşkilât-ı Esasiye Kanunu*, 1924) in 1928, Islam as state religion was removed. In 1937, *laiklik* was explicitly introduced in Article 2.
9. The changes of 2010 have been included in the relevant law of 1965: Law No. 633, *Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı Kuruluş ve Görevleri Hakkında Kanun* (1), 22/6/1965, published in *Resmî Gazete* 2/7/1965, No. 12038.
10. Law No. 677, *Tekke ve Zaviyelerle Türbelerin Seddine ve Türbedarlıklar İle Bir Takım Unvanların Men ve İlgasına Dair Kanun*, 30/11/1925, published in *Resmî Gazete Tarihi* 13/12/1925, No. 243, Tertip: 3, Cilt: 7, Sayfa: 113.
11. Law No. 3512, *Cemiyetler Kanunu*, adopted at 28.06.1938.
12. Brian Silverstein emphasizes the continuity in the Ottoman-Turkish cultural traditions and power relations which have not been subject to the ruptures of colonialism. That is why mystic orders in Turkey are able to maintain their traditions and incorporate modern features at the same time (Silverstein 2007, 41).
13. Contemporary authors like Peyami Safa (*Matmazel Noraliya'nın Koltuğu*, 1949, *The Seat of Mademoiselle Noralia*) or Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar (*Saatleri Ayarlama Enstitüsü*, 1962, *The Time Regulation Institute*) demonstrate the interest of their coevals in spiritualism, table-turning and other metaphysical experiences.
14. The campaign is announced on Semazen, a website which claims independence from any association or community but is *de facto* the site of the Çelebi family in Konya and their supporters. Until recently, the site had refrained from any critical position towards the religion policies of Turkey.
15. On current questions with regard to religious authority in Islam see Krämer/Schmidtke 2006.
16. These groups accept the respective *şeyh* of the Çelebi family—the descendents of Celaleddin Rum—as their head. Recently, they have adopted the use of a specific symbol (the “Mevlevi ring”, accessed 20.09.12) in order to identify all web pages “authorized to represent the Mevlevi tradition”.
17. The term ‘spare time sufi’ is used in research literature on contemporary mysticism in order to denote those ‘adherents’ of Sufi communities which spent their spare time in the community but do not devote their entire time and lifestyle to the *tarikat*.
18. M. Hakan Yavuz's *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey* (Yavuz 2003) focuses on the time of Özal's pro-market policy and change of the position ascribed to religion in politics and society after 1983.
19. An interesting example of a globalized branch of the Nakşibendiye is the Naqshbandiyya-Haqqaniyya whose *şeyh* is of Cypriot origin (Atay 2012). For the problems caused by ‘Westernization’ inside the Haqqaniyya see Böttcher 2011, 105-106.
20. Riem Spielhaus points to the need to shift the focus from Migration Studies to an inclusivist approach which embeds Muslims and mosques in the fabric of a given city or society instead of keeping treating them as different entities with alien roots (Färber/Spielhaus/Binder 2012).
21. On the current activities of the Halidiye-Nakşibendiye in Turkey see Silverstein 2007. Information on the Mevleviye in Turkey is scattered in many a publication from different perspectives. One recommendable volume is Ambrosio/Feuillebois/Zarcone 2006.
22. The Collaborative Research Center (“Sonderforschungsbereich der DFG”) “Ritual Dynamics” of Heidelberg University has been conducting research on this “change” and its condition since 2002. Robert Langer, author of “Transfer Processes within Sufi Rituals: An Example from Istanbul”, is one of its 90 members.
23. Yunus Emre (d. appr. 1321) was a poet and peripatetic Sufi in Anatolia. His work is much revered by Bektashis and Alevis.
24. On the new research area of ‘spirituality of men’ see Engelbrecht/Rosowski 2007.

25. Franklin Lewis lists pages and pages of cultural production based on Mevlevi motives in his comprehensive work on Mevlana (Lewis 2003).
26. Nedim Gürsel, *Yedi Dervişler*, Istanbul: Doğan Kitap 2007; *Allah'ın Kızları*, Istanbul: Doğan Kitap 2008; Elif Shafak, *Pinhan*, Istanbul: Metis 1997; *Aşk*, Istanbul: Doğan 2009.
27. In her contribution, Catharina Raudvere mentions another 'Sufi-Novel': Mesa Selimovic, *Death and the Dervish* (*Derviş i smrt*, 1966), Northwestern University Press 1996.