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In The Context of Turkish Culture Animal Symbolism in Heterodox Dervishes

Türk Kültürü Bağlamında Heterodoks Dervişlerde Hayvan Sembolizmi

Meriç Harmancı*

Abstract

The belief systems of societies that have continued since mythical periods exhibit their vestiges in newly accepted religions. The memories of the past and the mythical codes that have been placed in the subconscious of the Turkish society that accepted Islam also find themselves reflected in the cultural assets in an ongoing process. As one cornerstone of this life, animals have had an important place in their mythical worlds and systems of thought, as have many elements that have been included in the cultural world of the Turks, having lived on the nomadic steppes for ages. The animal motifs in the zoomorphic world design of the Turks, in the myths of descent, in the narratives as guides and assistants, overlap with

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* Doç. Dr., Yıldız Teknik Üniversitesi Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı Bölümü (Yıldız Technical University Faculty of Arts and Sciences Department of Turkish Language and Literature). harmanci@yildiz.edu.tr. ORCİD 0000-0003-1062-7926

the names of some dervishes in the Sufi literatüre. In this study, the mythological traces in the naming of dervishes, who are called by the names of some animals, were tried to be determined through animal symbolism in Turkish mythology. At the same time, the characteristics of dervishes who take animal names in the Sufi literature that cause this naming are emphasized. The fact that these dervishes have common characteristics in terms of disposition and that almost all of them are from the group of heterodox dervishes also brings up the relationship between animal symbolism and melamet. At this point, heterodoxy emerged as a form of religious interpretation, which is one of the factors in Turks' acceptance of Islam beyond the central understanding of the religion; it created a syncretic interpretation of Islam by incorporating mysticism. These animal titles, which are preferred to contribute to the systematic of the Melamet doctrine that works to accuse the human soul, can be thought of as a mystic interpretation or traces of a sectarian line. The study also examines the naming in the names of wandering dervishes with animal titles in the center of melamet; naming stories and tries to reveal the symbolic and functional consistency of these titles. In this context, it has been determined that the animal names in the names of sufis such as Aslan Baba [Lion Father], Kurt Baba [Wolf Father], Barak Baba [Dog Father], Koyun Baba [Sheep Father], Geyikli Baba [Deer Father] have a function beyond animal symbolism. It has been observed that the negative perception of the world of associations that these animals represent in terms of social and semantics is utilized. This study aims to evaluate how animal symbolism is seen in heterodox dervishes and the animal names in the names of these dervishes through mythical and esoteric readings.

Keywords: *symbol, naming, animal symbolism, sufism, heterodoxy*

Öz

Toplumların mitik dönemlerden itibaren süregelen inanç sistemleri, yeni kabul edilen dinlerde izlerini sürdürür. İslamiyet'i kabul eden Türk toplumunun geçmişe ait hafızası ve bilinçaltına yerleşen mitik kodları da devam eden süreçteki kültür varlıklarında yansımasını bulur. Uzun süre göçebe bozkır yaşamı süren Türklerin kültür dünyasına dâhil olan pek çok unsur gibi bu hayatın temel taşlarından olan hayvanlar, onların mitik dünyalarında ve düşünce sistemlerinde önemli bir yer tutar. Türklerin zoomorfik dünya tasarımında, türeyiş efsanelerinde, yol gösterici ve yardımcı olarak anlatılarında yer alan hayvan motifleri, tasavvuf literatüründe bazı dervişlerin adları ile örtüşmektedir. Bu çalışmada bazı hayvanların isimleri ile anılan dervişlerin adlandırmasındaki mitolojik izler, Türk mitolojisindeki hayvan sembolizmi üzerinden tespit edilmeye çalışılmıştır. Aynı zamanda tasavvuf literatüründe hayvan adları ile anılan dervişlerin bu adlandırmaya neden olan özellikleri üzerinde durulmaktadır. Bu dervişlerin meşrep bakımından ortak özellikler göstermesi, hemen tamamının heterodoks dervişler zümresinden olması hayvan sembolizmi-melamet ilişkisini de gündeme getirmektedir. Türklerin İslam dinini kabulündeki etkenlerden biri olan ve en genel ifadeyle merkezi din anlayışının dışında kalan dinsel yorumlar için kullanılan heterodoksi, mistisizmi de bünyesinde barındırarak senkretik bir İslam yorumu oluşturur. Melamet doktrinin

insan nefsini itham etmek üzere işleyen sistematiğine katkı sunmak üzere tercih edilen bu hayvan unvanlı adlandırmalar, bir tasavvuf yorumundan ve bir meşrep çizgisinden kaynaklanabilmektedir. Çalışma, hayvan unvanlı gezgin dervişlerin isimlerindeki adlandırmayı melamet merkezli de irdelemekte; adlandırma öyküleri ve bu unvanların, sembolik ve işlevsel bakımdan tutarlılığını ortaya koymaya çalışmaktadır. Bu bağlamda Aslan Baba, Kurt Baba, Barak Baba, Koyun Baba, Geyikli Baba gibi mutasavvıfların adlarında geçen hayvan isimlerinin hayvan sembolizminin yanında melamet doktrinle de ilişkisi üzerinde durulmuştur. Çalışma, hayvan sembolizminin heterodoks dervişlerde nasıl görüldüğünü ve bu dervişlerin isimlerindeki hayvan adlarını mitik ve ezoterik okumalar üzerinden değerlendirmeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar sözcükler: *sembol, adlandırma, hayvan sembolizmi, sufizm, heteredoksi*

Introduction

Lasting around 300 years, Turks' westward journey was also when their esoteric understanding of religion was shaped. Evaluating the understanding of Sufism that continues from Anatolia to the Balkans is not possible by ignoring the effect of the nomadic mythical-period order of beliefs and the life practices that geography and travel required. Behind the emotional attitudes of the nomadic society trying to recognize and adapt to a new religion, theirattempts at recognizing the new religion through Sufism should be sought out as much as the traces of mythical tradition.

During this period of acquaintance, Sufism-based religious life had not yet completed its institutionalization, and the multi-layered chaotic structure in the geography was unable to permit institutional learning processes. The gap between madrasa scholars and the pioneers of love was widening daily, as the political powers of the cities were unable to penetrate into the provinces due to the harsh geographies and difficult conditions of the age. This power in spirituality that has been ongoingly maintained changed hands periodically, each attempting to maintain its presence within their own social environments. Indicating the difference of Islam between settled and nomadic Turks from the Karakhanids to the Ottomans, Ocak said, "While developing in the settled cultural centers, in accordance with the book-based principles taught in the madrasahs called Sunnism or Ahl-i Sünnet ve Cemaat, under the guidance of a well-worked systematic law and a theology, without a madrasa states that the popular Islam among the nomadic groups has a strong mystical spirit and structure" (Ocak 2013a: 92).

The understanding of mysticism that emerged in those years should be considered as an adaptation process that was susceptible to the mythological nature of the societies that was periodically prepared and geographically permitted. A belief system consisting of Turkish society's reactions to the situations it encountered in the process of recognizing nature did not undergo a radical change in addressing the Islam; the typology and forms remained largely the same. Because the nomadic Turkish society had not yet achieved the conditions for fully learning the rules of the new religion, they were able to maintain their traditions for a long time. In particular, any book Islam/ madrasah Islam reaching the world of spirituality far

from cities was difficult outside of the verbal transmissions of wandering Sufis. The written transmission of the religious institution being uncommon, especially information about the Islamic religion being in Arabic and the absence of a clergy, was enough to ensure the continuation of an emotional and verbal belief system within this geography. Ocak, states that Sufism found strong representatives among nomadic and semi-nomadic Turkmens in Anatolia in the 13th century. "Fathers, similar to the old kam-ozans, were spreading a simpler and simpler understanding of Islam than the madrasa-origin jurists taught, and meanwhile, they also formed a folk Sufism suitable for the conditions of Anatolia" (2000: 71). Ocak defines it as " kind of folk Islam" and states that it "has a heterodox character rather than a Sunni character" (2000: 71, 2013b: 48- 54).

In this process, the general public apart from the urban minority, which had gained a relatively institutional and academic dimension, had to maintain an integrated belief intraditional religions. This separation process led to sharp divisions that resulted in conflicts and wars as well as in sociological polarizations that have persisted to the present day. Conflicts and wars were experienced in those times due to the sheltered areas of societies not enabling homogenization, and different interpretations emerged in Sufism (Ocak, 2000: 36-51; Ocak, 2013a: 90-95, 123-152, Köprülü 2003: 208).

Turks' westward migration coincided in all respects with the center of the above-mentioned social conflict. The chaos the Mongols caused, the long westward migration, the local forces trying to keep their hold on the geography, the social environment formed by the new religion, and the presence of Sufism-oriented pioneers among the established belief systems of ancient societies, in particular, all shared an extremely chaotic structure. The doctrine of *Melamet* [self- reproach][1] being an alternative approach to mysticism removed from the madrasas' cultural power and trying to institutionalize, emerged as a reaction to this chaotic environment.

The Turks, along with the religion of Islam they encountered while migrating westward, also came across *Melamet* in Khorasan Sufism.[2] This is why the thoughts of the Khorasan dervishes who'd come to Anatolia from Central Asia were determinant in how Islam formed in Anatolia. This *Melamet* interpretation, also known as the Khorasan School or Nishapur School, was determinant in the Islamization of the Turks and turned into a big trend by extending beyond its geographical borders.[3] *Melamet* was an interpretation of Sufism that reached the Balkans with the 300 years of migration toward Anatolia. Aside from surviving in Turkistan, Afghanistan, Iran, and Iraq, it has also been able to exist in broader and more expansive geographies through the Turks' interpretation of Islam. It lost its power day by day in the face of the belief system institutionalized by the cities in the Islamic lands both within and beyond the Ottoman Empire, surviving in the Balkan cities for as long as its geographical nature allowed. Gölpınarlı states that the idea of Melâmet, which had many supporters in Khorasan in the 11th century, was developed by mystics over time and spread over a wide geography from Turkistan to the Balkans and affected many sects and groups (2013: 14-15, 1969: 262).

In Melamet dervishes, a kind of self-discipline is essential by being shamed, condemned, hiding her good deeds, and revealing her bad deeds. These dervishes, who aim to adopt a deeper and sincere understanding of religion by opposing the formalism of religion, live-in care to stay away from everything that pleases the nafs. The animal furs these dervishes wear, the horned caps they wear on their heads and the nefir they use as an instrument should be evaluated in terms of both animal symbolism and melamet (Ocak, 1992: 72, 115, 163-164).

The relationship between animal symbolism and heterodoxy

Primitive humans took care of the wild animals they saw as more experienced than themself in the face of nature and were fascinated by that roughness and comfort. They were deeply impressed by the animals because animals were not afraid of the sea, mountains, forests, swamps, or the dark. According to Huizinga's game theory, humans have learned to make this world livable for themselves by imitating animals. The most important mission of the living organism is to survive and maintain its lineage. Human beings have understood that the game of animals, which begins with mating, is necessary at every stage of life (Huizinga, 2006: 16- 17).

The adventure that started with imitating these animals has caused humans to see animals as sacred beings and perceive them as a divine power for hundreds of years. Therefore, animals have occupied a large place among the divine helpers in whom humans have taken refuge against earth- and sky-borne fears, and these animals, both timid and dangerous that have taken a long time to domesticate, are often described in the myths of creation and salvation.

These mythical traces were seen in the zoomorphic world-design as perceived by the Turks, in how they assigned animal names to the 12 months in the Turkish calendar (Bayat, 2007: 40- 41, Biray, 2009: 671-675), and in the legends of how various Turkish tribes had descended from animal ancestors (Bayat 2007: 165-178,183-187; Ögel 2003: 20-23; Erkoç, 2017: 39-41, 45, 61-63), at the same time, this effect was also seen in animal motifs that help and guide the hero in the difficulties he encounters, and in the animals believed to accompany the heroes on their journey to become shamans. The traces of animal symbolism, ancestry, and totems seen in the history of Turkish culture since mythical periods have continued to be present in various forms with the adoption of Islam. Some dervishes being named with these symbols in Sufi literature can be regarded as a reflection of this manifestation. The effect of animal symbolism in names such as Aslan Baba [Lion Father], Kurt Baba [Wolf Father], Barak Baba [Dog Father], Koyun Baba [Sheep Father]), Geyikli Baba [Deer Father], Kartal Baba [Eagle Father] cannot be considered strange.

In all societies, naming is seen to be an important factor in social representation and in providing people with an identity, and social norms and moral values are taken into account when naming. However, most of the heterodox dervishes found names for themselves and preferred words with negative connotations and meanings with regard to social values, meanings that society finds strange and belittles. Moreover, these dervishes are seen to have even choose titles such as dumb, crazy, stupid, naked, and drunk. This philosophy of

Melamet, which resembles a strict diet that will last a lifetime, advises people to refrain from almost all worldly blessings. According to this philosophy, worldly blessings and titles such as property, sexuality, marriage, parenthood, and natural beauties such as eyebrows, eyelashes, hair, beard, and mustache should be avoided (Ocak, 1992: 114; Ocak, 2000: 67-68, 196, Köprülü: 1996: 49-50). All the difficulties and dangers of being a traveler should be experienced byconstantly traveling without settling in any geography or city, without owning land or property.[4]

Some of their colorful life stories have survived to the present through their manuscripts and poems, their names and acclaim still present today. Even now, different approaches are exhibited regarding these dervishes who maintained their way without diverging despite being regarded as strange by society during their lifetimes. Those who criticized these marginal and contrary travelers in terms of moral and religious judgments and those who approved of them were due to the enigma of their colorful lives.

One of the peculiarities in the appearance of heterodox dervishes is that they dressed in animal furs. Integrating with nature and establishing closeness with animals that can harm people, in particular, are meaningful in this ardent way of life. Showing a supernatural power, this style of dress has acquired a metaphysical meaning, as seen in the story of Prophet Solomon talking to birds (Akkaya, 2010: 61). In Sufism, which over time became institutionalized, *post* [furred animal skin] became a word for sheikhdom. The adjective *postnişin* [sitting on the fur skin] in Persian implied the authorized representative of the sect at the time (Gölpınarlı, 2004: 256). In the Mevlevi sects, the leader of the order, in particular, would sit on a red fur during rituals (Arpaguş, 2007: 332). This still-current practice is a continuation of the animal cults from the mythic period. In mythic religions and ancient legends, narratives are found of heroes who'd established a special correlation with wild and dangerous animals. Heterodox narratives state that some dervishes could avoid scorpion bites and not get poisoned by snakes. These narratives report those wild animals such as deer, lions, and wolves neither harm nor fear them.[5] This wildlife, which is a deadly threat to normal humans, was believed to not be a danger to them and that they could even influence wildlife.

These immunities the wandering dervishes had were believed to be blessings God had bestowed upon them. These groups, who are believed to have lived with timid and wild gazelles and deer and to have made friends with lions, were also allowed to wear the furs of these animals. According to written sources, these dervishes with their scary appearances and cutting and piercing war tools had been useful in wars before a regular army was established during the foundation of the Ottoman Empire. Geyikli Baba [deer father], who supported the conquest of Bursa and its surroundings during the Orhan Gazi period, was believed to be the head of these heterodox dervishes and had gained his name because he wore deerskins (Ocak, 1992: 89-92).

We see deer imagery in most of the founding pioneers of the Sufi movement in Anatolian geography. This myth, shaped around a focus on the dervish Geyikli Baba, is full of rich narratives. Geyikli Baba fought with his men against Byzantine soldiers with a sword in

his hand during the establishment of the Ottoman Empire and was described as a dervish upon a deer (Ocak, 2000: 207; Köprülü, 2003: 242). Neither his sword nor his being a Sufi strengthened this legendary narrative, but his ability to ride and dominate the deer like a horse. Many narratives also stated that he wore deer furs; this is known to be seen in many heterodox dervishes. There are narratives describing the sanctity of the deer and the belief that the deer should be protected. The most colorful of these is the narrative between Abdal Musa and Kaygusuz Abdal. Gaybi, son of the ruler of Alanya, shoots a deer with an arrow while hunting. The deer entered the lodge of Abdal Musa, the hunter followed him and asked the dervishes about the deer. Abdal Musa took an arrow from his armpit and showed it to Gaybi. Gaybi recognized his own arrow and began to believe in Abdal Musa's philosophy of life (Güzel, 2020: 11-17).

With a great area of influence in Anatolia, the Bektashi coterie's leader and founder Hacı Bektaş Veli was similarly friendly with deer and gazelles; these untamed animals did not leave his surroundings. According to one belief still present among the Anatolian peoples, some families called *sherbetli* were believed to be protected from dangerous, wild animals that would not harm them. These people, whom poisonous animals were believed would not bite, performed healing through their extraordinary ancestral powers. Due to this belief, antlered deer heads and at the very least deer motifs were seen to adorn the walls of these homes for hundreds of years. The collectivist culture wanted to bring the saints of their time together with the deer in their narratives in order to explain deer's sanctity, so the encounter Muhammad and the warrior Hamza had with the deer, the guidance in the *Dede Korkut* stories and deer's meeting with one of the first Sufis, Ibrahim Edhem, and directing him to Sufism are the narratives contained in the Islamization process (Yeşildal, 2015: 18-22).

Animal symbolism in Turkic mythology is largely shaped by the wolf leadership. In the Chinese annals, the wolf was seen as one of the origin myths since the 100th year in the light of half historical/half mythological information about Proto Turks. A variant is found in one of these origin myths: Hsi-Hailer, the first ancestor of the Göktürks, was destroyed by a country called Lin. They tortured a little boy, cut off his arms and legs, and threw him into a large swamp. A she-wolf found the boy and fed him daily. After a while, the child and the wolf mate, and the wolf becomes pregnant with the child. The wolf gives birth to ten boys. The *Aşina* family, who founded the Göktürk state, is descended from one of these children (Ögel, 2003: 22-23).

In these origin myths, which also have other variants, and later in the Göktürk and Uyghur Turks, the wolf is seen to gain savior, protective, and leadership characteristics with the function of ritual-myth. In the epic of *Oguz Kagan*, a big male wolf with sky-blue hair and a sky-blue mane guides the Oguz Kagan and his army who had gone to war (Bang, Arat, 1936: 19). Through the changes in religion and culture, the wolf did not lose its basic function and has continued its ritual-prayer function by being embroidered on woven fabrics, banners, tents, and objects such as swords. As a matter of fact, Turks used to hang a wolf head or wolf tooth on the front of their tents in order to protect their families, believing that they could avoid the dangers that may come from evil spirits in this way (Bayat, 2006: 65).

Esoteric and mystical pioneers did not appear to cut ties from this mythological ritual but rather to have continued the wolf symbolism to protect from evil spirits and to represent the secret bond of esotericism. At various times, this mythological bond is understood to have been kept alive through behaviors such as wearing wolf skins, howling like a wolf, or being referred as a wolf. The multi-layered cultural structure of the early modern period and the political periods in different geographies have caused these homogeneous myths to diversify and change. The myth of the pioneer and the guardian wolf, which continues its existence as a ritual, also survives in dervishes; this has also been related to this syncretic structure of Sufism.

The myth of the wolf continued to exist even after the Turks converted to Islam, a religion quite different from their old beliefs. Being a religion extremely removed from totems and saints apart from the one god, Islam does not mention wolves among the particular sacred animals. Wolves are mentioned among the sacred animals guiding society in Central Asia and Anatolia. In this respect, many dervishes in Anatolia are seen to refer to wolves.

The *Kurt Baba* tombs in Anatolia, especially in İzmir, Kemalpaşa, Amasya, Antalya, Adıyaman, Konya, Kocaeli, and Giresun all have wolf stories in their dervishes' narratives. In almost all of the narratives present around these tombs, these dervishes are seen to be the founding *Babas* [fathers] who came to Anatolia from the Khorasan region; some of them refer to wolf leadership and protection just like the origin myths (Ekşi, 2014).

One animal cult that is thought to be related to the wolf myth also developed around the *barak* [long-haired hound]. According to Kaşgarlı Mahmud, when the vulture or eagle is close to death, it lays two eggs and incubates them. A chick hatches from one of the eggs: This is the eagle's last offspring. The other is a long-haired hound called a *barak*. Barak is considered to be the fastest running dog and the most reliable hunter (1992: 171). Baraks are mentioned in tales from the Kipchak period and in the context of Oğuz Kağan's trip to the Empire of Dogs. The ruler of the Empire of Dogs was called "It [Dog] Barak." (Ögel, 2003: 87, 562) According to Roux's quotes, R. Dankoff suggested that two distinct shamanic beliefs exist in the Barak narrative: The shaman and the other animal shamans borne by an eagle. Roux agrees with Dankoff's view that well-known figures from many Turkish peoples have used the name Barak since the Mongols and undoubtedly from earlier times (2011: 48).

The narratives of *Barak Baba* and *Sheikh Barak*, whose names are mentioned in locations' names and tombs in Anatolia, are also multi-layered as origin myths. The Barak dervishes, whose different narratives about places of emergence and burial given, are mentioned to be united in their heterodoxy. These dervishes, some of whom were of Khorasan origin and others born in Anatolia, are understood to have been in demand over a very broad geography. The narrative attached to *Saru Saltuk*, in particular, can be said to have been decisive; he lost his life dramatically. He is rumored to have been given the name *Barak* by Sarı Saltuk. Those who talk about Barak Baba and his dervishes say that they shaved their hair, beard, and eyebrows. They expressed that people had bushy down-turned mustaches with iron rings on their wrists and ankles, wearing a felt cap with horns on both sides, small cymbals and anklebones hanging around their necks, singing cries while dancing and playing drums

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(Ocak, 1992: 71-73). In addition to the mythical connotation, the word *Barak* has with a long-haired hound, its perception as with other wild animal names (i.e., wolf and dog) are related to its disguise and clothing. Barak Baba is known to make strange noises and shouts while dancing caused himto be described as a *barak*.

In terms of being the transit route of Haji Bektash-centered dervishes in Anatolia, the *Barak Baba* mausoleums in Balıkesir's Bigadiç, Çorum and Niğde in Kırıkkale, Yozgat, and Nevşehir as well as the villages named *Barak* in Kayseri reinforce the *Barak Baba* narrative under the guidance of *Saru Saltuk*. Although where and how his life story ended is not known, his colorful dervishes are shown to have left traces of his terrible appearance. He was understood to have been able to make himself accepted as part of the wild with strange situations and strange clothes. Admitting the mythical animal-ancestor association to have been as effective as Sufism is necessary for forming this metaphysical/esoteric image. As a matter of fact, in one small text said to belong to Barak Baba and to carry mythical traces, he counts mountain life and wild animals such as lions, tigers, deer, wolves, bears and coyotes there (Gölpınarlı, 1992: 21).

Narratives about the eagle and the falcon are also mentioned among the genesis stories in Turkish mythology. In a mythical narrative about the descent of the Kyrgyz, a woman dreams that a hunter nature comes to the tent and flies around her bed while she is sleeping. Then, somehow, the woman becomes pregnant. All of the chiefs who ruled the Kyrgyz tribe were descended from this woman (Ögel, 2003: 594). Another narrative tells that the *Merküt* tribe, one of the Teleut Turks in Altaic, was descended from the black eagle and the *Yurttaş* tribe from the white eagle (Ögel, 2003: 47). For Yakut Turks, the eagle is one of the birds frequently mentioned; they consider the eagle to be very important, and the most important oaths were made with the name *karakuş*. The generation of those who broke an oath made this way was believed would come to an end (Radloff, 2008: 339). During the Göktürk and Uygur periods, eagles and other birds of prey were also regarded to represent protective spirits and justice. The eagle continued to be viewed as a symbol of sovereignty even after adopting Islam (Aslan, 2005: 87). According to beliefs in Turkish mythology, the eagle is seen as the symbol of the God Ulgen (Küçük 2013: 124-125). In narratives, the falcon/hawk appears in metamorphosis motifs because it can rise high and fly fast. Haji Bektash Veli disguised himself as a falcon to attack the Bedahşan soldiers who had occupied Khorasan, plundered Muslims' property, and captured Kutbeddin Haydar. After winning the war and returning to Khorasan, he disguised himself as a dove (Duran, 2014: 126-127). What can be understood to come to the fore from this narrative is that the falcon represents war and attack, while the pigeon represents peace and tranquility.

In folk poetry and classical poetry, despite being known for flying high, making nests on peaks, and hunting, the eagle was not used much in dervish names or Sufi narratives because the social culture preferred falcons/hawks among hunting birds. No information is found on how *Kartal Ahmet Baba*, who had a dervish lodge in Istanbul's Üsküdar district and died in 1789 (M. Süreyya: 1996: 872), got this name. Despite being from the institutional Sufi school of the late period, this is important in terms of being associated with the eagle.

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The lion, a symbol of power and might, is also an important symbol of Turkish mythology. Physical power is an important factor providing power in societies that have lived as hunter-nomads for a long time. One of the animals accepted as the symbol of this power is the lion. *Arslan* [lion] is a title used by khans in Turkish states since the early ages. According to the information provided by Chinese sources, the Uyghur khans were called *Arslan* toward the end of the 10th century and their countries were called *Arslan Han Uyghurs* (İzgi, 1989: 32). In addition to *Arslan* being a title, boys who are desired to be powerful are given the name *Aslan*. Many rulers have been known by this name in history (e.g., Arslan Yabgu, Sultan Alparslan from the Great Seljuk khans, and Kılıçarslan from the Anatolian Seljuk khans). *Kılıçarslan* [lionsword], the sultan in a narrative in the *Velayetname of Haji Bektash*, kills a dragon in Hasandağı near Aksaray and makes that area a place where people can live without fear (Gölpınarlı, 1995: 71). This narrative reveals the name of the hero who eliminates a terrible dragon-like creature is the *Aslan*, the symbol of power.

The lion, a symbol of bravery and courage, is an adjective used for Hazrat Ali. Hz. Ali was referred to as the lion of God for hundreds of years. The twelve imams descended from Hz. Ali is also described as the 12 lions. Another person referred to as a lion in Islamic history for his might, glorious appearance, and heroism in wars was Hz. Hamza, the uncle of Prophet Muhammad. Annemarie Schimmel (2004: 49) compared a true dervish to the golden lion in the dark forest of this world, stating that wild lions will obey the saints and serve them like domestic mounts. One example of this situation is seen in the *Velayetname of Haji Bektash*. According to the narrative, Sayyid Mahmud Hayrânî rode a lion and used a snake as a whip while going to visit Haji Bektash (Gölpınarlı, 1995: 49). In another narrative in the *Velayetname*, while Haji Bektash was migrating from Turkistan to Anatolia, he visited a place where lions were found in the desert. Two lions went to attack Haji Bektash. Haji Bektash pats them from their heads to their tails. After that, both lions turn into stone. When other lions see this, they become unable to do anything (17). The collectivist culture wants to show that divine power defeats the lion, and the dervish is strong like the lion.

Ahmed Yesevi is one of the important persons who had established religious mystical literature in Central Asia and developed Sufi literature in Anatolia; his master's (sheik) name was *Arslan Baba*. No information in the sources is found as to how Arslan Baba got this name. According to the mystical narratives, Arslan Baba lived in the time of Prophet Muhammad and lived for 400-700 years (Köprülü, 2003: 79).

Animals and their care are important in the economic structure of nomadic societies. For this reason, shepherding and the cult of Shepherd Ata [Shepherd Baba] are important. After the adoption of Islam, Central Asian Turks transferred the civilized heroic function of the Çoban *Ata* through the Yesevi dervish Zengi Baba. Zengi Baba was known for his miracles in legends, shown as a shepherd who tamed animals and grazed cattle among mythological rumors (Bayat, 2007a: 81–84).

The fact that some prophets and people with important religious identities worked as shepherds made mentioning this profession alongside saints or having various qualifications

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such as being in close contact with animals, speaking their language, and dominating them common. The profession of *Koyun Baba* [Sheep Father], whose real name is rumored to be Seyyid Ali and one of the Kalenderi dervishes of the 15th century, was also a shepherd. He was known as *Koyun Baba* because he was a shepherd (Çıplak, 2001: 21, 23, 77). In Turkish, the phrase "like a sheep" is used for agreeable people. A narrative in *Menakıpname* exists about his mild-tempered and patient personality (Yılmaz, 1999: 24).

Evliya Çelebi attributed the reason why *Koyun Baba* had this name was due to his bleating like a sheep. According to the narrative, Evliya Çelebi (2006: 94) conveyed, *Koyun Baba* would bleat like a sheep every 24 hours until he arrived at Anatolia from Khorasan with Haji Bektash Veli. Koyun Baba can be considered as a representative of the Çoban *Ata* cult in the 15th century. The fact that the place and the narrative representing the *Koyun Baba* school in many places (including Bursa, Menemen, Kütahya, Kızılırmak River, Thrace, and the Balkans) have survived until today reflects this cult (Taşkın, 2015: 117).

Conclusion

In Turkish Sufi literature, some dervishes are called by animal names such as Aslan Baba [Aslan Baba], Kurt Baba [Kurt Baba], Barak Baba [Dog Baba], Koyun Baba [Sheep Father], Geyikli Baba [Deer Baba]. In this naming, animal symbolism in Turkish culture is effective, as well as the fact that these dervishes have common characteristics in terms of philosophies. Since the way of life in close relationship with animals, which started with hunting and gathering in the mythical periods, continued in the nomadic life of the ancient Turks, animals take place in many areas of cultural history. Animals such as lion, wolf, dog, sheep, deer and eagle seen in the naming of dervishes, which constitute the main element of this study, are animal motifs in Turkish mythology. These animal motifs, which exist in cultural memory, are encountered in many folk narratives from myth to hagiography. There are also hagiography about the dervishes, whose names are mentioned above, who are mentioned with the names of animals. However, cultural memory/animal symbolism is not the only factor in naming some dervishes with animal names.

These dervishes, who aim to adopt a deeper and sincere understanding of religion by opposing the formalism of religion, live in an effort to stay away from everything that pleases the soul. The essence of the understanding of melamet, which is far from institutionalization in its essence, is to control the sovereignty of the soul and to reach self-consciousness, regardless of the condemnation of those who condemn it. For heterodox dervishes, it is a kind of self- respect to be condemned, to hide the good, to reveal the evil. The dervish in this consciousness resorts to various ways to hide the understanding of his spiritual wealth. The animal skins and horns used by these dervishes as clothing should be evaluated both in animal symbolism and within the heterodox system of thought. The mention of dervishes by animal names is also related to this system of thought. The fact that the names of some of these dervishes were chosen from animal species should be evaluated in the context of their relationship with melamet, which means that they blame their nafs.

Endnotes

1 See Bolat, "Melamet, which means to condemn, to blame, to scold, to reproach, to fear, to disgrace, is an infinitive word and Melam(et)i means that which is subject to condemnation. Melamet in Sufism is "Hiding his good deeds (for fear of showing off) and revealing his bad deeds and sins (to fight his own soul)… The essential quality of melamet manifests as secrecy and avoidance of reputation in order to avoid hypocrisy." (Bolat, 2003: ss. 15-16). See Gölpınarlı, "Melamet... It is the way adopted by a group that opposes the people of Sufism in Sufism. It is derived from the word "levm", which means to condemn." (Gölpınarlı, 1969: 246), for more information see, A. Gölpınarlı, *Melâmîlik ve melâmîler,* ss, 22-26.

2 See Gölpınarlı, "These first Melametis were called "Melâmiyye-i Kassâriyye" or "Melâmiyye-i Ulâ" meaning first period Melamis because of the spread of melami in Nishapur by Hamdûn'ül-Kassâr. Also, since they spread from Khorasan region, Khorasanids, Khorasan saints, Khorasan soldiers tried too." (Gölpınarlı, 1969: ss. 251-252), for more information see, F. Köprülü, *Anadolu'da* İslâmiyet*, s*s. 48-49.

3 For more information see, A. Gölpınarlı, *Melâmîlik ve melâmîler,* ss. 4, 8-9, 14-16 and A. Y. Ocak, *Babâiler isyanı (Alevîliğin tarihsel alt yapısı), s*s. 69-72.

4 For more information see, R. Hartmann, Es-Sülemî'nin Risâletü'l-Melâmetiyyesi, ss. 340-346.

5 For more information see, A. Y. Ocak, A. Y.*, Alevî Ve Bektaşî inançlarının* İslâm öncesi *temelleri*, ss. 162, 165, 166-167, 207-209, 219-221, 226-228., A. T. Karamustafa, A. T., Tanrının kuraltanımaz kulları İslâm dünyasında derviş toplulukları 1200-1550, s. 11 and A. Gölpınarlı, A. *Vilâyet-nâme menâkıb-ı Hünkâr Hacı Bektâş-ı Veli*, ss. 12-13, 17-19.

Araştırma ve Yayın Etiği Beyanı

Bu makale tamamıyla özgün bir araştırma olarak planlanmış, yürütülmüş ve sonuçları ile raporlaştırıldıktan sonra ilgili dergiye gönderilmiştir. Araştırma herhangi bir sempozyum, kongre vb. sunulmamış ya da başka bir dergiye değerlendirilmek üzere gönderilmemiştir.

Research and Publication Ethics Statement

This is a research article, containing original data, and it has not been previously published or submitted to any other outlet for publication. The authors followed ethical principles and rules during the research process. In the study, informed consent was obtained from the volunteer participants and the privacy of the participants was protected.

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The first author in this article contributed to the 100% level of preparation of the study, data collection, interpretation of the results and writing of the article.

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