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The Phenomenon of "Tekke" in the Context of the Spiritual and Cultural Identity of Turkic-Muslim Peoples (Mid 19th – Early 20th Century)

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Abstract. This study explores the significance of Anatolian tekkes as pivotal spiritual and religious institutions that profoundly influenced the Islamic identity of Turkic communities in Central Asia. It draws upon an in-depth analysis of Eastern archival records and manuscript traditions, shedding light on the processes of collecting, safeguarding, and interpreting Islamic manuscripts. A central focus is placed on the role of tekkes in pilgrimage, Islamic scholarship, and the broader cultural-religious development of Turkic societies. Historical accounts underscore the profound connection between manuscript traditions and the operations of tekkes, which functioned as depositories, transcription centers, and distribution points for theological discourse, philosophical essays, and literary works rooted in Islamic thought. Notably, tekkes were not confined to religious functions; they also acted as cultural nexuses, bridging diverse regions and fostering spiritual unity within the Turkic-Muslim sphere. Within this framework, particular attention is given to Uzbek tekkes in Istanbul, which emerged as focal sites of religious convergence for Central Asian pilgrims while also serving as conduits for the dissemination of Islamic knowledge and devotional practices.

The theoretical foundation of this research is based on cultural archival studies and historical-cultural analysis, which regard manuscripts as integral elements of collective memory, ensuring the transmission of religious doctrines and spiritual customs. Methodologically, the study employs a comparative-historical approach, textual scrutiny of archival sources, and an examination of the socio-political, ethno-religious, and cultural dimensions of tekkes. Special emphasis is placed on Uzbek dervish tekkes within the Ottoman Empire, their involvement in pilgrimage networks, and their instrumental role in spreading Sufi traditions among Turkic populations. The evaluation of primary sources reveals that Uzbek tekkes in Istanbul functioned not only as centers for spiritual education but also as arenas for social engagement, reinforcing Islamic communal identity. The manuscripts preserved and composed in these tekkes were more than revered texts; they were dynamic instruments of religious instruction that embedded Islamic thought within the community. On a broader scale, tekkes operated as crucial spiritual institutions that facilitated the transmission of knowledge and upheld cultural-religious continuity among the Turkic-Muslim communities of the Russian Empire from the mid-19th to early 20th centuries.

The findings substantiate that Uzbek tekkes in Anatolia played a fundamental role in reshaping religious and educational practices, particularly amid the socio-political turbulence of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Their contributions to Islamic pedagogy and intercultural dialogue emphasize the necessity for further exploration of

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their manuscript legacy, offering deeper insights into the religious and ethno-cultural dynamics of the Turkic world.
Keywords: Istanbul; dervish lodges; Central Asia; Turkic-Muslim peoples; pilgrimage; Ottoman Empire; Tsarist Russia

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Феномен «текке» в контексте духовно-культурной идентичности тюрко-мусульманских народов (середина XIX – начало XX века)

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Аннотация. В статье рассматривается значимость текке Анатолии как духовно-религиозных центров, оказывавших влияние на формирование исламской идентичности тюркских народов Центральной Азии. Исследование базируется на анализе восточной археографии и книжной традиции, выявляющей процессы сбора, сохранения и изучения мусульманских рукописей. Одной из ключевых задач является изучение роли текке в паломничестве, мусульманском образовании и культурно-религиозном развитии тюркских народов. Исторические источники свидетельствуют о тесной взаимосвязи между рукописной традицией и функционированием текке, поскольку именно в этих институтах осуществлялось хранение, переписывание и распространение богословских трудов, философских трактатов и литературных памятников исламской традиции. Важно отметить, что текке не только выполняли религиозную функцию, но и служили связующим звеном между различными регионами, поддерживая культурно-духовное единство тюрко-мусульманского сообщества.

Теоретическая основа исследования опирается на концепции культурной археографии и историко-культурного анализа, рассматривающие рукописные источники как элементы коллективной памяти, способствующие передаче религиозных знаний и духовных практик. Методологический подход включает сравнительно-исторический метод, археографический анализ текстов, а также изучение социального, этнополитического и этнорелигиозного контекста деятельности текке.

Результаты исследования подтверждают, что узбекские текке Анатолии играли ключевую роль в трансформации духовных и образовательных практик тюрко-мусульманских народов, особенно в условиях социальной и политической нестабильности конца XIX – первой четверти XX вв. В статье обосновывается гипотеза о том, что текке в Османской империи выполняли важнейшую функцию в интеграции тюрко-мусульманских паломников, становясь пространствами религиозной консолидации. Они обеспечивали поддержку тюркоязычным мусульманам, прибывавшим в Стамбул, способствовали распространению суфийских учений и выполняли миссию по сохранению исламских традиций. Их вклад в развитие исламского образования

и культурной коммуникации между регионами обусловливает необходимость дальнейшего изучения их рукописного наследия, что открывает перспективы для более глубокого понимания религиозных и этнокультурных процессов в тюркском мире.
Ключевые слова: Стамбул; дервишские текке; Центральная Азия; тюркско-мусульманские народы; паломничество; Османская империя; Российская империя

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«Текке» феномені түркі-мұсылман халықтарының рухани-мәдени бірегейлігі контекстінде (XIX ғасырдың ортасы – XX ғасырдың басы)

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Аңдатпа. Аталған мақалада Анадолы жерлеріндегі теккелердің рухани-діни орталық ретінде маңыздылығы қарастырылады, олар Орталық Азиядағы түркі халықтарының исламдық бірегейлігінің қалыптасуына ықпал еткен. Зерттеу шығыстану археографиясы мен кітап дәстүрін талдау негізінде жүргізіліп, мұсылмандық қолжазбаларды жинау, сақтау және зерттеу үдерістерін анықтауға бағытталған. Негізгі мақсаттардың бірі ол теккелердің қажылық, мұсылмандық білім беру және түркі халықтарының мәдени-діни дамуы салаларындағы рөлін зерделеу болып табылады. Тарихи деректер текке қызметінің қолжазба дәстүрімен тығыз байланыста болғанын көрсетеді, өйткені дәл осы институттарда діни еңбектер, философиялық трактаттар және исламдық дәстүрдегі әдеби жәдігерлер сақталып, қайта көшіріліп, таратылған. Сонымен бірге, теккелер тек діни қызмет атқарумен шектелмей, түрлі аймақтар арасындағы байланысты нығайтып, түркі-мұсылман қауымдастығының мәдени-рухани бірлігін қамтамасыз еткен.
Зерттеудің теориялық негізі мәдени археография және тарихи-мәдени талдау ұғымдарына сүйенеді, олар қолжазбаларды діни білім мен рухани тәжірибелерді жеткізетін ұжымдық жад элементтері ретінде қарастырады. Методологиялық тұрғыда зерттеу салыстырмалы-тарихи әдісті, қолжазбаларды археографиялық талдауды, сондай-ақ текке қызметінің әлеуметтік, этно-саяси және этно-діни контекстін зерделеуді қамтиды.
Зерттеу нәтижелері Анадолыдағы өзбек теккелерінің XIX ғасырдың соңы – XX ғасырдың бірінші ширегіндегі әлеуметтік және саяси тұрақсыздық жағдайында түркі-мұсылман халықтарының рухани және білім беру тәжірибелерін түрлендірудегі маңызды рөлін көрсетеді. Мақалада Осман империясындағы теккелердің түркі-мұсылман қажыларын біріктірудегі басты рөл атқарғаны туралы гипотеза негізделеді, олар діни бірігу кеңістіктеріне айналды. Бұл орындар Стамбұлға келген түркітілдес мұсылмандарға қолдау көрсетіп, сопылық ілімдерді таратуға ықпал етті және исламдық дәстүрлерді сақтау миссиясын орындады. Олардың исламдық білім берудің дамуы мен аймақтар арасындағы мәдени байланыстарды нығайтуға қосқан үлесі теккелердің қолжазбалық мұрасын әрі қарай зерттеу қажеттілігін айқындайды. Бұл зерттеулер түркі әлеміндегі діни және этномәдени үдерістерді тереңірек түсінуге жаңа мүмкіндіктер ашады.
Түйін сөздер: Ыстамбұл; дәруіштер теккелері; Орталық Азия; түркі-мұсылман халықтары; қажылық; Осман империясы; патшалық Ресей

Introduction

Prior to the implementation of the colonial policies of the In Russian Empire, the Turkic-Muslim peoples of Central Asia utilized transregional communication arteries encompassing both overland and maritime routes through the territories of modern-day Afghanistan, Iran, and India to fulfill the ritual practice of hajj. In the first half of the 16th century, the Ottoman Empire, having colonized Mecca and Medina, assumed the title of *hadimü'l-harameyn* (Custodian of the Two Holy Sanctuaries) (Inalcık 1997: 326-329), with its sultans taking on the sacral-political role of the caliphate and becoming supreme patrons of the global Muslim *ummah.* This geopolitical and confessional shift led to the inclusion of Istanbul within the configuration of pilgrimage routes for the Turkic-Muslim peoples of Central Asia. Simultaneously, the intensification of interstate conflicts with neighboring Afghanistan, Iran, and India compelled these communities to direct their pilgrimage trajectories primarily through Ottoman territories. During this period, pilgrims reaching the Caspian Sea with caravans from the interior regions of Central Asia crossed the waters by ship, heading toward Anatolia. Their routes often involved traversing the Astrakhan Khanate, the basins of the Idil (Volga) and Don Rivers to the Crimean Khanate, and onwards to Istanbul, or alternatively passing through the port infrastructure of Derbent in the Caucasus and along the Terek River into the eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire, ultimately arriving in Istanbul via land or sea. From Istanbul, the most frequented route to the Hijaz was by sea, although land-based transport networks were also utilized in certain cases (Nikolskiy 1911: 256-292).

Central Asian pilgrims primarily sought to visit Istanbul, which during the Ottoman period functioned as an integrative hub connecting regions that included Mecca and Medina. At the same time, Turkic-Muslim communities from Kazan, Ufa, Orenburg, the Crimea, the Balkans, the Kazakh steppes, and Turkestan participated in interregional assemblies of the Turkic world, which served as platforms for the exchange of political, social, cultural, religious, and intellectual innovations within their respective regions (Timaev 1909: 107). During the hajj season, between 5,000 and 16,000 pilgrims from the In Russian Empire and the Central Asian khanates reached the Islamic holy sites on the Arabian Peninsula, drawing strategic attention from the imperial administration to this region (Naumkin 2020: 229-260). According to alternative sources, the annual influx of pilgrims to Mecca, particularly during the Eid al-Adha holiday, predominantly comprised residents of Arabia and Turkey, while minorities included individuals from the colonies of the In Russian Empire, Bukhara, China, and Iran. Statistical data from the early 20th century indicate that the total number of pilgrims ranged from 180,000 to 200,000 annually, with only 8,000 to 12,000 originating from the In-Russian Empire. The increase in the number of pilgrims during this period correlated with the organization of transportation infrastructure, the affordability of railway travel, and other logistical factors (Saidazimbaev 1909: 17-18).

In the second half of the 19th century, the highest levels of the tsarist administration-initiated discussions on the institutionalization of a body specifically designed to regulate issues related to Muslim pilgrimage. As part of these initiatives, it was proposed to establish a specialized commission responsible for developing comprehensive measures to support Muslim pilgrims and unify their travel routes, including the mandatory use of a primary route through Istanbul, which would apply to all Muslims of the In Russian Empire (Neflyasheva 2006: 19-34).

At the beginning of the 20th century, five high-level meetings were held to address key aspects of the Muslim question, including issues related to hajj. The first meeting, organized by the Ministry of Public Education and led by Privy Councillor A.S. Budilovich from May 10 to June 3, 1905, focused on educational strategies for Eastern aliens. The second meeting, chaired by Adjutant General Count A.P. Ignatiev from November 29, 1905, to May 28, 1906, dealt with confessional issues. The third meeting, held at the Ministry of Internal Affairs from January 12 to January 29, 1910, was dedicated to developing measures to counteract Tatar-Muslim influence in the Volga region. The fourth interdepartmental meeting conducted from November 30, 1910, to December 14, 1911, concentrated on issues of school education for the indigenous, non-Orthodox, and non-Christian populations. The fifth meeting, held at the Ministry of Internal Affairs from April 29 to May 16, 1914, aimed to thoroughly address matters related to Muslim affairs (Senyutkina 2018: 232-234).

Thus, the study of the pilgrimage the Turkic-Muslim peoples of Central Asia through Istanbul, as a central axis of cultural and religious mutual influence among Turkic peoples, assumes particular relevance in the context of contemporary historical processes. Since the mid-20th century, the tsarist administration sought to institutionalize the regulation of this phenomenon in order to exert control over the Turkic-Muslim peoples of Central Asia, as the empire perceived the Ottoman state as a source of potential threat, driven by its religious and political influence. The analysis of Turkish and In Russian historiography on the relations and mutual influence between the Ottoman Empire and the Turkic-Muslim peoples of Central Asia aims to uncover the role of Uzbek tekkes (dervish lodges) as crucial cultural and spiritual centers and shelters for the Turkic-Muslim peoples of Central Asia, as evidenced through the prism of pilgrimage. This study examines the historical background and evolution of the pilgrimage of Turkic-Muslim peoples through the territory of the Ottoman Empire, explores the main routes and specific features of the pilgrimage practice, and reveals the significance and functional role of Uzbek tekkes in Istanbul.

Materials and methods

The issue of pilgrimage among the Turkic-Muslim peoples of Central Asia is a complex one, which has been thoroughly investigated in administrative reports, analytical notes, and scholarly works prepared within the methodological frameworks of the Tsarist administration in the Volga region, the Caucasus, the Kazakh steppe, and the Turkestan General-Governorship. The empirical foundation of this research includes a substantial corpus of archival materials preserved in the Central State Archives of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, as well as in regional repositories such as the State Archive of the West Kazakhstan Region.

From a methodological perspective, particular emphasis is placed on the analysis of primary sources, including published collections of documents from the Missionary Anti-Muslim Department of the Kazan Theological Academy. These materials are characterized by a high degree of ideological bias, necessitating the application of critical-analytical approaches to interpret their content. One of the pioneers in studying the phenomenon of Islam and the discursive justification for countering its spread in pre-revolutionary literature was M.A. Miropiev (Miropiev 1877: 19). In his work, the author conducts a comprehensive analysis of the religious and political significance of the Hajj as the sacred pilgrimage of Muslims to Mecca, within which participation in ritual and celebratory practices occurs. Particular attention is given to the structural-functional interpretation of this phenomenon within the framework of Islamic systems.

A notable contribution to the study of pilgrimage among the Turkic-Muslim peoples of Central Asia was made by Sh. Ishaev, who, published an article in the journal Central Asian News in 1896. In this publication, he emphasized the role of Mecca as a sacred center for Muslims within the Russian Empire (Ishaev 1996: 64). A methodological approach rooted in critical analysis of documentary sources was also employed by V.I. Yarovoy-Ravsky. In 1899, he compiled a collection of documents on Islam, providing detailed insights into the pilgrimages of the Turkic-Muslim peoples of Central Asia (Yarovoy-Ravsky 1889: 31). That same year, the military publishing house in St. Petersburg issued a report by Staff Captain Davletshin on his expeditionary mission to Hejaz. This document highlighted key aspects of intergovernmental and cultural-religious relations between the Ottoman Empire and the Turkic-Muslim peoples of Central Asia (Davletshin 1899: 127-129). These studies demonstrate the application of interdisciplinary methods, incorporating elements of comparative-historical analysis, discourse-based approaches, and source-critical methodology. Such approaches enable a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted nature of the Hajj within the broader socio-political processes of the era.

In pre-revolutionary historiography, the issue of the Hajj in Imperial Russia was explored by Said-Gani Saidazimbaev, who in 1908 conducted a detailed study of the processes involved in the movement of Muslim pilgrims to Mecca (Saidazimbaev 1908: 1-23). His work, consisting of five chapters, represents a comprehensive investigation grounded in an interdisciplinary approach. The author meticulously examines the organization of the pilgrimage, the operation of food supply infrastructure, logistical schemes for transporting pilgrims by rail, land, and sea, the construction of intermediary stopover points, and the mechanisms of linguistic support provided to pilgrims through interpreters.

The dynamics of the Hajj and the institutional necessity of controlling pilgrims in Istanbul were also examined by M.E. Nikolskiy. His study, published in 1911 in the journal *Historical Bulletin,* is divided into two parts, presenting a structured model of analysis that situates the Hajj within the geopolitical context of the Ottoman and In Russian Empires (Nikolskiy 1911: 284).

Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, previously inaccessible archival documents concerning the relations between the Ottoman Empire and the Central Asian khanates began to be published. In Turkish historiography, Central Asia is conceptualized as Turkestan, with regions such as Bukhara, Samarkand, Khiva, Khorezm, and the Kazakh steppe identified as the Turkestan khanates, thereby offering a unique methodological perspective for the analysis of regional history.

A collection of materials on Ottoman-Central Asian relations was published in 2005 under the auspices of a research project led by Yusuf Sarınay. This collection exemplifies an innovative research approach, combining traditional source-critical methods with the use of digital archival techniques. It addresses issues of pilgrimage, the role of Istanbul as a strategic hub on the Hajj route, and the multifaceted nature of Ottoman-Turkestan relations, encompassing not only political but also scientific, economic, and religious interactions, which remained relevant until the end of World War I.

These connections, although sustained during the years of Turkish-Soviet engagement following the establishment of the Turkish Republic, were significantly weakened after the Soviet Union consolidated control over Central Asia, marking a pivotal shift in regional dynamics (Sarınay 2005).

The relationship between the Ottoman Empire and the Turkestan region, despite the political disconnect, continued to evolve through entrenched cultural and religious ties. A critical dimension of this relationship was the steady flow of pilgrims from Turkestan to Istanbul, the epicenter of the caliphate. This phenomenon has emerged as a pivotal subject of inquiry within the framework of historical anthropology, particularly as it pertains to the role of religious practices in shaping intercultural and intergovernmental interactions. For instance, Seyfettin Erşahin's research investigates the Ottoman Empire's strategic role in safeguarding pilgrims, positioning pilgrimage as a matter of state policy. Erşahin's analysis, grounded in archival sources and political-economic theory, highlights the dual influence of Iranian and In Russian geopolitical factors in shaping pilgrimage logistics and political dynamics. This methodological approach, which contextualizes historical developments within broader socio-political shifts, provides a nuanced understanding of Ottoman governance concerning religious travel (Erşahin 1999: 17-21).

A crucial methodological focus is the exploration of cultural and religious interconnections through the lens of pilgrimage, which held both spiritual and geopolitical significance for the Turkic and Muslim populations of Central Asia. Mustafa Güler, in his comparative analysis, frames pilgrimage as an extension of In Russian colonial policy, particularly focusing on how In Russian imperial interests intersected with the religious autonomy and identity of Central Asian Muslims. His study employs a socio-political methodology that examines how imperial control affected the organization and experiences of pilgrims traveling from Central Asia to Istanbul, positioning pilgrimage as both a religious duty and a potential site of resistance (Güler 2016: 11-13). This analytical framework not only examines the overt interactions between state structures and religious practices but also reveals latent mechanisms of state influence over religious identity.

Further advancing this scholarly conversation, Mustafa Tanrısever offers an in-depth analysis of the pilgrimage patterns of citizens from the Bukhara Emirate through Ottoman territories. His study, rooted in archival research, emphasizes the social and cultural exchanges that occurred along pilgrimage routes. Tanrısever's methodological focus on archival sources allows for the examination of how pilgrimage contributed to the consolidation of cultural networks between the Ottoman and Central Asian Muslim worlds. His research underscores the political implications of pilgrimage, particularly in the context of the late 19th century, when the growth of transportation infrastructure raised concerns within the In Russian Empire. According to Tanrısever, In Russian anxieties about these pilgrimages were not solely religious but also political, as the mobility of Muslim populations across imperial boundaries was perceived as a potential threat to the empire's control over Central Asian territories.

In sum, the study of pilgrimage as a conduit for cultural and religious exchange not only enriches our understanding of Ottoman-Turkestan relations but also offers a lens through which we can examine the complex interplay of religious, political, and social factors shaping identity formation in Central Asia. Through the application of archival methods, comparative analyses, and political historiography, these studies reveal how pilgrimage served as a site of both religious devotion and political negotiation, offering a more comprehensive understanding of inter-imperial and inter-religious dynamics in the broader Eurasian context.

In domestic historiography, the exploration of pilgrimage and the role of Istanbul as a pivotal cultural and spiritual nexus for Turkic-Muslim communities has been comprehensively examined in the works of Mashhur Zhusip Kopeyuly. His corpus, which encompasses documentary essays, poetry, and narratives of early pilgrims to Mecca and Medina in the late 19th and early

20th centuries, constitutes a critical primary source for reconstructing the historical and cultural praxis of pilgrimage within the Kazakh context. The scholarly contributions of Zhusip Kopeyuly have profoundly influenced subsequent historiographical frameworks, notably among prominent historians such as E. Bekmakhanov, A. Margulan, and M. Kozybaev, who have emphasized the centrality of his written materials as foundational to the historical conceptualization of pilgrimage practices among the Kazakh people (Shagyrbaev 2018: 76-78). Nevertheless, despite the substantial weight of these sources, the methodological approach to studying the role of Uzbek tekkes within the broader canvas of national historical scholarship remains inadequately explored. This gap invites further theoretical deliberation and critical engagement, particularly within the broader paradigms of cultural exchange and religious transformation.

The methodology applied to the study of Uzbek dervish tekkes in Istanbul as centers of cultural-religious identity formation among the Turkic-Muslim populations of Central Asia in the context of pilgrimage (mid-19th to early 20th centuries) is grounded in a synthetic approach that amalgamates historical sociology, anthropology, and religious studies. Central to this methodology is the employment of historical-comparative analysis, which seeks to reconstruct the evolution of religious practices and cultural interactions within the intricate geopolitical milieu shaped by the imperial expansions of both the In Russian and Ottoman Empires. A critical tool in this analytical framework is the method of discourse analysis, applied to texts that describe pilgrimage rituals, dervish practices, and the functioning of tekkes. This approach facilitates the identification of key religious and cultural elements that fostered intercultural connections between Central Asia and the Ottoman Empire, providing insight into the intersection of religious devotion and political maneuvering.

Moreover, particular emphasis is placed on a source-driven methodology, which incorporates a comprehensive examination of archival materials, memoirs, folkloric traditions, and literary works. This methodological approach enables the reconstruction of religious and cultural transformations at the level of local communities and their interactions with broader Islamic structures. The integration of archival sources, alongside memoirs and oral histories, offers a more nuanced understanding of the role of pilgrimage, not merely as a religious undertaking but as a dynamic phenomenon reflecting the socio-political realities of the time. This methodological framework, which integrates textual analysis, allows for the precise identification of the cultural and ideological mechanisms through which Ottoman imperial influence shaped the formation of religious identities and cultural practices among Turkic-Muslim communities in Central Asian territories.

In sum, the synthesis of historical-sociological methodologies and cultural anthropology presents new avenues for understanding the role of pilgrimage within the context of cultural exchanges and religious transformations in Central Asia, particularly during the period of Ottoman dominance. By adopting a multi-disciplinary and comparative analytical approach, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the interwoven dynamics of religious, political, and cultural processes, shedding light on the intricate mechanisms of identity formation and cross-cultural interaction between the Ottoman Empire and Central Asia.

In contemporary historiography, a significant focus is placed on examining the intersection of Jadidism and the role of Istanbul's tekkes as pivotal religious institutions within the broader socio-cultural landscape. Central to this inquiry is the question of continuity how the ideological currents of Jadidism, as a reformist movement within the Muslim world, intertwined with the

institutional structures of Sufi tekkes in Istanbul, and how these interactions informed larger cultural conflicts between tradition and modernity. Jadidism, as a modernizing force, sought to reconcile traditional Islamic teachings with the imperatives of modernization, secularism, and colonialism by advocating for reforms in religious education, the incorporation of scientific knowledge, and the evolution of Islamic praxis. Within this dynamic, Istanbul, as the spiritual and intellectual nucleus of the Ottoman Empire, played a critical role, with its tekkes serving not only as centers for religious practice but also as significant sites of cultural exchange and intellectual contestation. These tekkes, long considered bastions of orthodox Sufism, became arenas for ideological confrontation during the rise of Jadidism, wherein competing visions of Islam's role in the modern world came to the fore. A groundbreaking contribution to this field is found in the work of A.A. Kulshanova, whose analysis of the ideological, conceptual, and practical dimensions of Jadidism illuminates the movement's complex interactions with Ottoman religious structures (Kulshanova 2022: 62-64).

The methodology for exploring the relationship between Jadidism and Istanbul's tekkes demands a multifaceted approach, drawing on historical, sociological, and religious studies frameworks. A key methodological tool is historical-comparative analysis, which facilitates the identification of both continuities and ruptures in religious, cultural, and educational practices in the context of the interaction between traditional Sufism and the reformist impulses of Jadidism. This comparative approach enables an in-depth understanding of how the traditional practices of the tekkes interacted with and were influenced by the reformist agendas of Jadidism, and provides a lens through which the religious practices of the time can be analyzed as dynamic responses to the pressures of modernization. Furthermore, discourse analysis plays a vital role in the investigation, focusing on the texts produced by both Sufi leaders and Jadidist reformers. These texts, including sermons, religious treatises, and educational curricula, serve as critical sources for uncovering competing narratives about the role of Islam in a rapidly changing world. Archival research further enhances this study by reconstructing the historical context of Jadidism's influence on the tekkes, allowing scholars to map the intellectual and cultural shifts of the period and to examine how broader geopolitical and socio-political factors shaped religious thought and practice within both the Ottoman and post-Ottoman contexts.

The theoretical framework of this study is founded upon an interdisciplinary synthesis of key paradigms, including religious transculturality, cultural identity, and syncretism theory, while employing advanced methodological approaches such as comparative analysis, discourse analysis, and archival research. These paradigms provide a robust analytical lens for examining the dynamic interplay of religious, cultural, and political forces within the context of Turkic-Muslim pilgrimage practices, particularly in relation to the interstitial role of Istanbul during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In the context of religious transculturality, pilgrimage is conceptualized not merely as a religious ritual, but as a site of complex cultural exchange through which divergent religious practices, beliefs, and identities converge, thereby catalyzing the formation of hybridized Muslim identities. Pilgrimage routes, such as the passage through Istanbul, function as transnational vectors for the diffusion and reconfiguration of religious and cultural elements, fostering the synthesis of distinct Islamic traditions within the broader Muslim world. This process reveals the fluidity of religious identity as it is continually reshaped in response to shifting socio-political and imperial contexts.

The theory of cultural identity, applied here, focuses on the specific role of Uzbek dervish tekkes as cultural and religious loci of identity formation within the Turkic-Muslim populations of Central Asia. These tekkes serve as spaces of both preservation and transformation, where local religious practices are not only safeguarded but also adapted to the evolving cultural and political landscapes. As creative incubators of both religious devotion and cultural expression, these tekkes provide fertile ground for the crystallization of distinct ethnic and regional identities that intersect with larger Islamic narratives. This approach enables a nuanced understanding of the ways in which these institutions become instrumental in the preservation, negotiation, and transmission of cultural capital. Syncretism theory further enriches the analysis by facilitating an exploration of the mutual enrichment processes between diverse religious traditions. The fusion of various religious practices and belief systems within the tekke environment reflects the broader socio-political processes of cultural hybridization, with both internal religious transformations and external geopolitical forces-such as the interplay between the In Russian and Ottoman empires-acting as catalysts for change. Syncretism here is viewed not merely as a blending of traditions, but as an active, dynamic process of adaptation and resignification that reshapes the boundaries of religious practice and cultural identity.

To operationalize these theoretical frameworks, the study employs a multifaceted methodological approach. Comparative analysis, as a core tool, is utilized to identify both shared and distinct features of pilgrimage practices across different Turkic-Muslim communities, particularly those that intersected with the Ottoman Empire. This comparative lens is essential for situating Central Asian pilgrimage practices within broader trans-imperial and transnational networks, highlighting the intersections between local religious practices and Ottoman imperial policies. Discourse analysis serves as a critical methodological tool for interrogating the texts that document pilgrimage rituals, dervish practices, and the institutional functions of tekkes. By examining these texts, we are able to uncover the underlying ideological and cultural mechanisms that governed religious expression and social interaction, and to track how these texts both reflected and shaped broader socio-political realities. This allows for a nuanced reading of pilgrimage as both a religious and socio-political practice, where the text becomes a site for negotiating power, identity, and belonging. The study also draws on archival research, with a focus on primary source materials such as memoirs, religious treatises, and folkloric texts. Archival materials serve not only as a means of reconstructing the lived experiences of pilgrims and the operation of tekkes but also as a conduit for understanding the broader cultural and political forces at play. By analyzing these sources, the study seeks to reconstruct the religious and cultural transformations occurring within local communities, paying particular attention to their interactions with larger imperial structures and the ways in which local religious practices both contributed to and were shaped by broader cultural and political exchanges.

In conclusion, this study adopts a synthetic, multi-disciplinary approach to investigate the complex processes of religious transformation and cultural exchange among Turkic-Muslim communities in Central Asia, focusing on the role of pilgrimage and the function of Uzbek dervish tekkes as critical sites of identity formation. By combining theories of religious transculturality, syncretism, and cultural identity with methodological tools such as comparative analysis, discourse analysis, and archival research, this study provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the intersections between religion, culture, and politics in the Ottoman and Central Asian contexts.

Results

Despite numerous efforts and administrative measures, the In Russian imperial authorities were unable to resolve the issue of Hajj in a manner fully aligned with their interests and objectives, which led to the establishment of a special Hajj Committee in 1896 under the Turkestan Governor-General's Office. At its first meeting, the committee acknowledged the impossibility of completely preventing the Hajj due to its religious nature and concluded that it should be permitted, albeit with restrictions imposed by state policy. These restrictions entailed the creation of a special program for organizing the pilgrimage, which included the transportation of pilgrims from Turkestan to the port of Odessa, from where they would continue their journey to Hejaz on In Russian ships. This project, approved by the tsar in 1903, represented a pragmatic adaptation of In Russian imperial policy, which sought to control religious practices among Muslims while minimizing the political threat that, according to the authorities, the pilgrimage might pose. Furthermore, the 1904 circular, which lifted the ban on issuing passports, indicates an attempt to relax the restrictive measures while maintaining substantial control over the process. One significant consequence of this process was the involvement of private agencies in organizing the pilgrimage, which allowed the authorities to maintain nominal control while shifting responsibility for organizing the Hajj to private structures. The case of Seyid Gani Azimbayev, who carried out the first large-scale pilgrimage in 1908, illustrates the adaptive nature of this approach, where private interests and state restrictions were intertwined to ensure a regulated flow of pilgrims.

However, despite the established administrative procedures, the new order did not spare Turkic-Muslim pilgrims from severe hardships, as evidenced by the negative feedback from the pilgrims themselves. The criticism directed at Azimbayev, as articulated in the letter of Mustafa Yangalichef, clearly reveals the practical side of organizing the Hajj, which, despite administrative measures, failed to protect pilgrims from abuses, police brutality, and high costs. The letter, filled with emotional pain and dissatisfaction, calls into question the effectiveness of state policy regarding Muslims and their religious practices.

This case serves as an example of how In Russian imperial authorities utilized biopolitical mechanisms to manage transnational religious flows, ensuring not only control over the physical movement of Muslims but also minimizing their cultural and political mobility. In this context, the pilgrimage, which became an object of control, acquired an additional socio-political dimension tied to the identity and cultural memory of the Muslim world, emphasizing the significance of Hajj as not only a religious event but also a cultural one within the context of imperial power. Therefore, in the historical context, pilgrimage to the In Russian Empire can be viewed as a significant indicator of broader processes, including ideological and cultural interventions in the religious practices of Muslims. The issue of Hajj, surrounded by administrative barriers and state censorship, reveals the enduring strategies of imperial control and their impact on the social and political dynamics of Muslim communities, both in terms of individual practices and within the framework of larger transnational Islamic networks.

It is clear that the Turkic-Muslim pilgrims of the In Russian Empire also experienced great financial difficulties on the way. As we realized from the travel notes of one of the pilgrims, according to Behbu-di, "since he does not have a thousand marks in his sack, he cannot eat to his heart's content. In the quarantines he pretends to be lazy and passes without stamps. There

is not a single pilgrim who is in school or madrasa" (Anisimov 2023: 551). Again, according to Behbudi's records, the Turkic-Muslim pilgrims of the In Russian Empire were in the following situation: "It is sad that some of your pilgrims set off without a penny in their bags, quarrel with porters, quarantine and port officials who charge them a few kurush each because we are poor. Some of them eat rancid meat cooked in Turkestan a month ago and get sick. They also eat goose and horse meat in hot weather. Some of them dip bread in the remaining mud, drink tea and eventually fall ill" (Anisimov 2023: 554). The women's pilgrimage was more arduous. Behbudi reports the following in this regard: "Many Turkestan brothers went on pilgrimage with their women and children... The behavior of the Turkestan women on the ship is very hard and deplorable. It is a sin to drag women in such a state, trample them with their feet, hide them in the worst place of the ship, wrap them in the "tails" of their clothes and shove them on the ship. The voyage and the agony make them sick. They had better not put our poor mothers in that condition. Why do they need these tails when they can wear the abaya and the veil? Let these tails be cut off so that their torment and hardship may be lessened" (Anisimov 2023: 555).

The In Russian Empire, seemingly fearing potential social unrest and political opposition, did not openly prohibit Muslim pilgrimage but, as noted above, actively employed mechanisms of control that hindered its realization. Faced with such stringent bureaucratic and administrative regulations, Muslims seeking to perform the Hajj resorted to various evasive strategies. Pilgrimages were carried out under pretexts such as health, trade, or other legitimate reasons, as well as through covert and conspiratorial methods, which significantly highlights the deep desire to engage in religious practices despite the obstacles. For instance, the In Russian consulate in Jeddah recorded regular flows of pilgrims from Turkestan arriving in Hijaz through the port of Jeddah without official documentation (Yamaeva 1998: 7–9), demonstrating the importance of the religious ritual and the resistance prompted by it. Moreover, Russia sometimes prohibited pilgrimages based on the political and social context, such as during the Dukchu-Ishan uprising in 1889 and in 1903 when a ban on the Hajj was imposed (Yamaeva 1998: 31–36).

According to documents from the In Russian consulate in Jeddah for 1894, the pilgrimage flow can be observed, with 75% of the 3,500 pilgrims heading to Hijaz coming from the Fergana Valley (Yamaeva 1998: 72–78). This fact highlights the high level of religious activity and interest in the Hajj among local Muslims, underscoring the significance of pilgrimage as a sacred act for Muslims in conditions of colonial and social isolation. The fluctuations in the number of pilgrims, linked to the local agricultural situation, also reveal the complex interplay between socio-economic conditions and religious practice. For example, in 1909, due to a poor cotton harvest, one of the region's key economic resources, the number of pilgrims decreased to 1,500, while in 1910, following a better harvest, the number increased to 5,000 (Yamaeva 1998: 137).

The Turkic-Muslim peoples of Tsarist Russia, despite social instability and restrictions, expressed their devotion to the holy places and sought to support and facilitate the development of infrastructure for the ease of pilgrimage. A prominent example of such support is the financial contributions to the construction of the Hijaz Railway, which aimed to ease the transportation of pilgrims. Donations from figures such as Astanakul, the kushbek of the Emirate of Bukhara, who sent 37,846 kuru to the Hijaz Railway Construction Committee in 1899, or Shabdan Baatyr, a Kyrgyz manap, who in 1904 donated 2,000 soms for the same cause, show a high level of involvement and social responsibility among local elites in the organization of pilgrimage (Özyüksel 2000: 32). These initiatives can be seen as part of a broader network of cultural and

religious practices that sought to overcome the social and political barriers imposed by the authorities, while strengthening transnational Muslim identity and solidarity.

The policies of the In Russian Empire towards Muslim pilgrimage during the Tsarist period reveal a complex interplay between religious devotion, state control, and socio-political factors. Despite the imperial administration's efforts to regulate and limit the practice of the Hajj through bureaucratic restrictions, Muslims from Turkestan found clandestine ways to fulfill their religious duties, highlighting the deep-rooted significance of pilgrimage in their lives. The fluctuations in pilgrimage numbers, influenced by economic conditions, further demonstrate the intimate connection between religious practice and local socio-economic realities. Moreover, the contributions from Muslim elites in the region, such as donations to the Hijaz Railway, reflect not only a commitment to facilitating pilgrimage but also a broader sense of solidarity and resistance against imperial restrictions. These actions exemplify the resilience of Turkic-Muslim communities in the face of colonial repression and their continuous efforts to maintain and express their religious identity.

Discussion

The *tekkes* of Istanbul, serving as spiritual and cultural hubs, operated as key stopping points for pilgrims and played a pivotal role in fostering transnational religious and cultural connections within the Ottoman Empire. The Uzbek *tekke* in Üsküdar, as an autonomous institution, exemplifies a religious, social, cultural, artistic, and political establishment independent of major branches of the Naqshbandi Order, such as *Khalidiya* and *Mujaddidiya.* This tekke incorporated diverse ethnic and religious groups, including Afghans, Indians, and *qalandarhanas,* with a predominance of Central Asian representatives. Within the context of Ottoman spiritual and social life, it demonstrates the enduring influence of classical Naqshbandi thought, synthesizing spiritual practices and cultural traditions with the political and social framework of its era (Green 2012: 14–17).

The methodology employed in the study of this subject integrates approaches from cultural anthropology, social history, sociology of religion, and political theory. This multifaceted framework provides a comprehensive understanding of the role of spiritual institutions in shaping the collective identity of Turkic-Muslim communities in Central Asia. A significant conceptual tool in this analysis is the application of theories on transnational networks, cultural identity, and cultural memory, enabling an exploration of the mechanisms of connection and exchange among diverse religious and ethnic groups. By examining *tekkes* as religious and cultural nodes within pilgrimage networks, the study highlights their social functions, influence on Ottoman state policies and culture, and their role in shaping cultural identities through social integration and political support from the Ottoman administration. The tekkes' role as sanctuaries for itinerant dervishes and pilgrims from Central Asia, Russia, and China, in the context of Ottoman religious policy, opens new avenues for examining the intersection of Islam and politics amidst colonial and globalizing processes.

Archival sources reveal that pilgrims traversing Ottoman territory were provided with extensive support at both official and unofficial levels, with their lives and property safeguarded by state structures. For instance, during the pilgrimage of Bukhara's Mirza Haji Sabir in 1810, the governor of Damascus, Abdullah Pasha, confiscated a portion of his funds (Lifchez 1992:

4–6). Upon learning of the incident, Emir Haydar of Bukhara appealed to the Ottoman Sultan for redress. In response, the Sultan issued a decree directed to the highest administrative authority in the region, mandating the restitution of the confiscated funds. If the return of the seized assets proved impossible, compensation was to be provided from properties and lands in Damascus, with the funds subsequently delivered to Dersaadet (a term denoting Istanbul, meaning "Gate of Happiness") (Lifchez 1992: 31–33).

Analogous examples illustrate how the Ottoman administration extended support to Central Asian Muslims. Shaykh Ahmed Efendi, a prominent leader of the Bukhara branch of the Naqshbandi *tariqa,* was provided with two months' salary, transported aboard an Egyptian steamship, and sent to Alexandria. A similar incident occurred in 1850, involving Haji Molla Ahmed Efendi, the son of the Shaykh-ul-Islam of the Kokand Khanate. After an extended stay in Istanbul due to financial constraints, he received monetary assistance amounting to 500 *kuruş* from the Sultan's funds and was subsequently sent back to his homeland (Lifchez 1992: 38–41). Particular attention to Turkic-Muslim pilgrims can also be observed in diplomatic practices. For instance, Emir Abdullahad of Bukhara (1885–1910) dispatched a delegation in 1884, led by Haji Mirza Mehmed Sharif, carrying a gift chest to Mecca. The delegation passed through Istanbul without inspection, facilitated by a special decree accompanied by a *Sadaret* memorandum (Lifchez 1992: 94–97).

The situation underwent a significant transformation under the colonial policies of the In Russian Empire in the latter half of the 19th century. Political and economic stagnation, coupled with cultural decline and the pressures of colonial rule, rendered the Turkic-Muslim populations of Central Asia dependent on authorities representing a different religious system. Within this context of dependency, the practice of religious rites, including pilgrimage, required the approval and support of secular authorities. While the In Russian policies in Turkestan have not been subject to comprehensive scholarly analysis, certain elements of their doctrine can be discerned from the speeches of General von Kaufman, the first military governor-general of Turkestan (1867–1882). He stated: *"We must tolerate the presence of Islam in these lands, but we cannot allow its expansion. The time has come to deprive Islam of the conditions necessary for its existence. It will disappear on its own. Let us not impose restrictive policies, as they will provoke resistance from the local population"* (cited in Litvinov 2006: 56–59).

Thus, pilgrimage for Muslims of the In Russian Empire was not merely a religious act but also a significant cultural and political event. Recognizing this, the authorities sought to obstruct its realization. One such method involved administrative barriers. In 1880, the In Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs issued a circular instructing provincial administrations to cease issuing passports to pilgrims. Despite these measures, Muslims determined to fulfill their religious duty resorted to traveling to ports such as Odessa, where they procured the necessary documents at exorbitant prices. The inability to fully curtail pilgrimage journeys eventually compelled the In Russian authorities to lift the ban on passport issuance in 1904 (Litvinov 2006: 97–103).

It has been established that the imperial administration of the In Russian Empire systematically engaged the scholarly community and missionary organizations in the development of specialized treatises and monographs designed to ideologically and administratively counteract the practice of pilgrimage. One such treatise, published in the 1870s, emphasized the politico-cultural nature of the Hajj, justifying the need for measures aimed at severely limiting its accessibility to Muslims (Litvinov 2006: 48). This text should be viewed as part of a broader strategy of epistemological intervention, aimed at transforming religious experiences through state regulation.

By the late 19th century, the intensification of pan-Islamist ideology within the Muslim world had deeply alarmed the tsarist administration. This phenomenon, perceived as a threat to the political status quo, mirrored the anxieties of other colonial powers, including Britain, which governed extensive territories within the Islamic world. A key instrument in countering this perceived threat was the deployment of public health discourse, constructed around the "threat of infectious diseases". From the 1890s, international conferences on infectious diseases and quarantine measures were organized, ostensibly to protect the health of Muslim subjects but in practice serving as a mechanism to restrict their religious mobility. While colonial policies outwardly proclaimed the absence of direct legal barriers to pilgrimage, the implementation of epidemiological and sanitary restrictions created conditions that, within the framework of Islamic legal tradition *(Shari'a),* rendered the Hajj virtually unachievable. Thus, quarantine practices became a latent tool for repressing religious activity.

Abdurreshid Ibrahim (1850–1944), an Uzbek Muslim intellectual and social activist, criticized these measures based on his observations, pointing to their covert political nature: *"Although quarantine appears at first glance to be a sanitary measure, it is, in reality, a political evil. Unfortunately, Ottoman officials and doctors neither recognize nor understand its political essence… Europeans, on the other hand, have always prioritized and continue to prioritize the political aspect above genuine healthcare concerns".* This commentary, reflecting a profound understanding of the complex dynamics of colonial governance, illustrates how the discourses of biopolitics and sanitation were integrated into imperial control strategies. These measures effectively demobilized transnational Islamic networks and ritual practices, embedding surveillance and restriction within the framework of colonial administration.

Conclusions

Istanbul dervish lodges (tekke), key elements of Islamic civilization and functioning as khanqahs, have for centuries played crucial roles not only in religious but also in social, cultural, and political spheres. These institutions became centers of education for prominent figures in religion, science, art, and culture, while actively providing social support to the poor, the sick, and those who were destitute. As essential nodes in transnational Islamic networks, Uzbek tekkes played a decisive role in integrating and consolidating the Turkic-Muslim peoples of the In Russian Empire, creating bridges of understanding and unity among diverse ethnic and religious groups. Particularly significant were the Naqshbandi tekkes, which flourished in the Ottoman capital, fulfilling both an enlightening function in promoting Sufi teachings and serving as stations for pilgrims.

These dervish lodges not only maintained high spiritual and educational standards but also served as crucial social institutions with considerable influence on the region's political life. Uzbek tekkes, in particular, were distinguished by their representativeness, attracting pilgrims and believers not only from Central Asia but also from other parts of the Ottoman Empire. In the context of geopolitical tensions in Central Asia, driven by rivalries between Russia, China, and Britain, the sheikhs of these tekkes acted as spiritual diplomats, sent to maintain relations with authorities and resolve local social and political conflicts.

Thus, Uzbek tekkes, as vital centers of religious, cultural, and political activity, contributed to the formation and maintenance of unity among the Muslim communities in a complex

international environment. Furthermore, these lodges served as important sociocultural hubs, providing not only spiritual guidance but also material support to pilgrims, which, in the context of harsh conditions and political restrictions, was a significant contribution to the stability and social cohesion of the Turkic-Muslim peoples.

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Egamberdiyev, M. – Initiating and formulating the ideas of the research, defining its objectives and tasks; managing and coordinating stages of the research, including planning and execution of research activities; preparation, creation, and presentation of the published work, including conducting critical analysis, writing commentary, and participating in post-publication stages such as revision and assessment of results.

Azmukhanova, A. – Developing and conceptualizing the research methodology; directly conducting the research process, including organizing and performing experiments, collecting and analyzing evidence; developing, visualizing, and presenting the research results within the published work; preparing and creating the initial draft of the text, including its lexical and conceptual translation, as well as ensuring compliance with academic standards.

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