

**ALEVI NARRATIVES ON AUTHORITY,
GENEALOGY AND LAW**

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In recent years, various empirical qualitative studies on Alevi traditions have been conducted in Turkey. In these interviews, individuals belonging to the Alevi faith community have shared various Alevi narratives about God and creation and the transmission of just order and norms. Based on these narratives, this article undertakes the task of presenting the origin myths of Alevi law in the present and analyzing them. Likewise, this article attempts to read and analyze Alevi law in the context of the German and Austrian law.

Keywords: Alevi, genealogy, law and authority.

For citation: Çiçek H.I. (2023) Alevi narratives on Authority, Genealogy and Law. *Istoricheskaya Etnologiya* [Historical Ethnology]. Vol. 8. No. 1: 47–62. DOI: 10.22378/he.2023-8-1.47-62

Structures of law and authority provide information about the hierarchical composition of a society. Through law and authority – without making a valuation here – we recognize how the network of relationships between subjects within a community and subjects of different groups is regulated. All human societies, however egalitarian they may be, are organized hierarchically and have differently legitimized structures of law and authority. This is intended to signal as clearly as possible, both internally and externally, the power relations to which the members of society within the internal space of the respective community are called upon to uphold structures of law and authority. This enables strangers to gain insight into the respective society by respecting and adhering to the same norms of law and authority.

The fact that we repeatedly encounter differently regulated legal and authority structures in societies is not surprising, since human beings, due to their anthropological as well as social nature, are dependent on regulations within human associations (Lévi-Strauss, 1971, 1972, 1973; Münkler, 2010; Girard, 1994). Not least for this reason, the literature repeatedly speaks of "normative pluralism" in the context of increasingly diverse societies (Grinten, Heukels, 2006). At the same time, these discussions clearly show the limits of foreign law or religiously influenced law with regard to the territorial principle (Rohe, 2016: 242–299).

Of importance for this article is the question of what legal norms and authority are based on within Alevi communities. It is primarily a matter of looking at Alevi narratives (in the sense of a definition of "narrate") and identifying the ideas of law and authority and just order described therein. When this article talks about authority and law, it does not refer to state law, but to an anthropological or sociological definition of authority and law. In short¹, it follows the assumption that wherever a community has arisen, law and authority also exist within it (*uib societatis, ibi ius*). Accordingly, the aim of this article is not to trace an Alevi legal order and place it in its historical context, but to outline the significance of narratives in the creation of law and authority.

These narratives are based on orally transmitted religious norms and identity-forming factors, which have now – after previous video recording – been written down. To this end, this work draws on research conducted in Turkey in recent years, in which contemporary Alevi witnesses between the ages of 47 and 92 from various regions of Turkey were interviewed about Alevi traditions and lore (Yıldırım, 2018). The sources analyzed here are thus oral narratives from the recent past that have been written down.

This research attempts to capture the Alevi tradition even before the much-discussed urbanization and to bring to light lost or forgotten oral traditions and narratives. By no means does the author intend the narratives examined here to suggest that these narratives² have canonical status within the multifaceted Alevi communities or are interpreted in the same way. These studies are significant to this article because law and authority are also implicit and explicit themes in these works. Likewise, because surveys of Alevi conceptions of law and authority can make an important contribution to the emergence of an Alevi theology. It is important to note that Alevism in urban areas also maintained its own conceptions of law and authority, independent of the territorial principle (Dressler, 2002). The ritual practices under the leadership of the "dede" would be an example of this.

This article, then, is ostensibly not about Alevi political structures or whether or not Alevism constitute a part of Islam, but about narratives (oral sources/narratives) that allow us to discern what the notions of law and authority are metaphysically based on. That the notions of Alevi legal and authority structures can also be based on the narratives known in Islamic traditions is not surprising because of the historical entanglements. However, this is not to suggest that Alevism are classified as part of Islam in this article. This is neither suggested nor intended by the author; rather, each person who feels that they belong to the Alevi community must decide for themselves whether or not they locate themselves within the Islamic tradition. In the words of Ludwig Wittgenstein: the use of the same linguistic terms does not mean that they refer to the same contents.

¹ I would like to thank Prof. Dr. Mathias Rohe and Reinhard Schulze for this important reference.

² The terms narrative and narratives are used interchangeably in this article.

It should also be mentioned that the various Alevi organizations to be found in Europe are not the focus of this article (Özkul, 2015; Massicard, 2010). Of course, attentive observers of the Alevi community in Turkey or the European diaspora will not fail to notice that the associations would like to gain sovereignty over the interpretation of Alevism, among other things. There are various Alevi organizations that locate Alevism within Islam or declare it to be a faith independent of the Islamic faith. These developments, in turn, contribute to the fact that ideas and convictions about Alevi religious understanding and law can change or become more firmly established (Dressler, 2002).

The starting point of our investigation is the person as well as the institution of the "dede"³ (Alevi clergyman). Strictly speaking, it is not about real persons or the institution in the narrower sense. The focus is on the divine descent of the "Ehl-i Beyt"⁴, as they are transmitted in the stories. In them the order foreseen by God is realized in immanence, which is maintained by "dedes" (Ağuiçenoğlu, 2005). The quotation marks around the term "dede" in this article are meant to indicate that it does not refer to a concrete person or institution, but to an abstractly imagined entity that enjoys power and approval by virtue of divine legitimacy and lineage. In other words, without a doubt, Neoplatonism, with its mystical stages and its mediation of eternal transcendence and historically-conditioned and therefore changeable world, has had an impact on all Abrahamic traditions. Therefore, even if it does not need to be examined in detail here, it can certainly be assumed that the institution of the "Dede" was inspired by this tradition. In the historical figure ("image") the spiritual ideal ("archetype") of the perfect man, who is therefore also able to act as an educator and wisdom teacher, becomes apparent. The further history of effect of these ideas can be followed up to the present "esotericism".

Even if the importance of the "dede" decreased due to urbanization (Ağuiçenoğlu, 2005), today the "dede" is an important authority in various Alevi organizations, which is also supposed to convey the interests and beliefs of the respective associations to the various members. Likewise, it should be noted here that the narratives examined here do not represent a fixed canon. They can be assigned to a specific region in Turkey and may be told differently from place to place. At the same time, the author is convinced that the imaginaries of law and authority to be formed from the narratives are an important addition to the already existing and analyzed sources – such as Alevi manuscripts, poems or chants, etc. – of Alevism (Dressler, 2002: 103).

³ Alevi cleric; the connection to the Prophet family is explained in the article.

⁴ This refers to the Prophet's family: Muhammad, Ali, Fatima (the Prophet's daughter), Hasan and Huseyin.

Alevi notions of law and authority in oral narratives

"Dedes" are authorized in Alevi societies to lead the community spiritually and to advise socially (Langer et al., 2013). Social in this context is to be defined broadly. It can concern interpersonal relations, divorce or burial, as well as mediation in inheritances, disputes within the community or political issues. The "dede" is intended to facilitate a peace order within the Alevi community (Langer et al., 2013; Yıldırım, 2018; Dressler, 2002: 112). At the same time, due to the primarily oral transmission of religious norms and practices, there are different religious emphases in the Alevi tradition with regard to the practice of Alevi religiosity. The "dedes" are responsible for conveying the above mentioned norms and practices, as they have knowledge of the divinely shaped peace order due to their ancestry and are supposed to convey this knowledge in the respective Alevi communities due to their divine authorization (Ağuiçenoğlu, 2005).

The duties of the cleric include advising and guiding the Alevi community on religious and secular issues and matters, based on Alevi notions of divine order and justice. In short, and regardless of which religious traditions the Alevi communities embed themselves in, the "dede" enjoys the approval of the community members.⁵ In Alevi manuscripts, there are repeated references to the fact that rejection of the authority of the "dede" or rebellion against the same may result in punishment (Yaman, 1994; Karolewski, 2021). This indicates that genealogy can simultaneously establish and enforce law, and that the equality of all community members, which is often emphasized by Alevis, has clear limits (Kaplan).

According to Rıza Yıldırım and Ali Yaman, in traditional Alevi communities "dedes" represented the highest authority within social and political hierarchies, and even in modern Alevi groups today they are still accorded a special social position (Yaman, 2004; Dressler, 2002; Karolewski, 2021). The difference between traditional and modern refers above all to the fact that because of the urbanization of the 1950s, Alevis from the most diverse regions of Turkey had become distanced from their religiously structured everyday lives. In cities, the maintenance of religious structures that had been practiced within a small village community for many hundreds of years could no longer be sustained. This would have contributed to a possible loss of meaning or change in the perception of the "dede." (Langer et al., 2013; Yaman, 2004; Yıldırım, 2018).

The above-mentioned divinely shaped conception of law and authority derives first from the realm of transcendence. Alevis do not claim their own revelation in this context; rather, the relevant parts of their doctrine of creation are composed of Islamic and independent narratives (Güzelmansur, 2018: 270–292; Aksünger-Kizil, Kahraman, 2018).

⁵ From his own research within the framework of the Islam in Bavaria project as well as visits to Alevi associations in Vienna, Vorarlberg, southern Germany and Switzerland, the author was able to gain this insight again and again.

The often-emphasized formula that the "most important book is the human being" forms a center of Alevi spirituality and ethical teachings, but it can lead to confusion because it suggests a religious-genealogical independence that does not stand up to objective scrutiny. An example of this is the Alevi manuscripts (also called "buyruk"), which can be defined as a kind of Alevi "code of conduct" and which, among other things, specifically refer to various Islamic sources to legitimize their contents (Yıldırım, 2020). Although man is an important "book," at the same time there is a divinely shaped chain of tradition of transcendental normative ordinances that enable man, in imitation of the mediators or transmitters (Ehl-i Beyt and subsequently "dedes," etc.), to follow the God-given order of peace. Likewise, this view contributes to the formation of hierarchical religious and social structures and their acceptance by the members of the community.

Apart from the oral narratives that inspire the imagination that history is one shaped by God, there is also a history in which people are held responsible for the emergence of the "dede" instance. In this context, various researchers point out that this system of order – although not in the form we encounter today – was, with regard to the history of Anatolia, a means of binding the people living there within different and rival centers of power. Hüseyin Ağuçıenoğlu of the University of Hamburg holds that it was the policy of Shah İsmail to have established "Ocak"⁶ families in the 16th century that are still recognized as religious authorities today. The background to the shah's interest had been, among other things, that he wanted to and was able to find allies for his politics as well as religious beliefs in the Ottoman center of power. The shah's recognition of the "ocaks," to which the "dedes" belonged, thus also contributed to a hierarchization of the community (Ağuçıenoğlu, 2005: 139). This enabled the "dedes" to exercise law and authority.

The role of the spiritual mediator, who is also a bearer and enforcer of divine legal norms, contributes to the fact that man acquires a special significance. In the imitation of the mediator, the "Nur"⁷ is imitated that was transferred from the Almighty to Muhammad and Ali before creation. Of course, in the creation story, Muhammed and Ali come into the world many thousands of years later after the creation of the "world." The "Nur" is also found in the first prophet or man: Adam. (More on this below). This brings us to an important foundation for grasping Alevi notions of divine right and authority: the genealogy chosen by God (Turkish: "Soy").

However, as with other religions, it is not democratic processes that give rise to law and authority, but hierarchical structures whose legitimacy derives from transcendence. At the core is the belief that the lineage of the "dedes" and their ocaks – the hearth to which the "dede" belongs – can be traced back to "Evlad-i Resul" (Ağuçıenoğlu, 2005: 139). What is meant by this is that the "dedes," also called "seyyid," are descended from the Prophet Muhammad or the prophetic family "Ehl-i

⁶ Translated into German, *ocak* can hold different meanings; in this context, it means "hearth" or "place of descent."

⁷ The term can be translated as "light", "love", "universal intellect", among others.

Beyt" and thus can trace their authority as spiritual leaders to the same sources (especially "Nur"). This is an important basis for the non-canonized and orally transmitted Alevi law, which appears in the authority of the "dede" (Ağuiçenoğlu, 2005: 139).

This return allows the "dede" as a person and institution to speak law and claim authority at the same time. It also allows him to determine ritual practices in the Alevi public sphere, and likewise to act as a mediator between conflicting parties. The genealogy or sacred legacy allows the "dede" and his descendants to concentrate authority in their families. In short, social and spiritual right guidance passes to the person or institution of the "dede" because of the genealogy (sacred legacy). This is most clearly expressed in Cem rituals (Sources).

***Bearers of God-ordained Alevi Law:
Genealogy, Law, and Authority in Oral Narratives***

A closer look at the God-given norms of order in Alevi narratives reveals that the Prophet Muhammad does not enjoy the same central religious and power-political significance as in Sunni Islam. According to Alevi narratives, the Prophet Muhammad's "sira"⁸ attains the importance it does primarily through the involvement of Ali b. Abi Talib the meaning that had been predestined by God. In the Alevi narratives, there is no question that Prophet Muhammad could not have realized his divinely assigned mission alone (Langer et al., 2013; Başaran, 2016). Muhammed and Ali were already created from "Nur" (light / light God) many thousands of years before the creation and received their assigned tasks even before the creation of the world.

According to Alevi oral narratives, it was God's love ("Nur") towards these two creatures that prompted the Almighty to initiate creation. The "Nur" is not only a light, but contains all knowledge – in the sense of a definition of Neoplatonism – about transcendence or God and the religious and worldly guidance necessary for humans to lead a life pleasing to God. It is beyond the scope of visible authoritative sources as in mainstream Sunni Islam (Yıldırım, 2018: 160–161). However, this does not transcend or dilute the difference between God and creation-Muhammad and Ali belong to the second category. This suggests that, compared to a strict perception of pure monotheism in which God reigns in absolute separation from the world, the divine is reflected in certain attributes-in the sense of theophany-in the "Ehl-i Beyt." Theologically speaking, this means that God, through the "Nur", bestows upon Muhammad and Ali a universal knowledge that allows them, first and foremost, to perceive the difference from their Creator and, at the same time, enables them to follow the path of righteousness deemed necessary by God for humanity because they are endowed with certain divine attributes. The latter is, among other things, a reason why certain "dedes" are granted the possibility of performing miracles.

It is precisely this light that enabled Muhammad and Ali during their time on earth to see, understand and transmit beyond the limits of the visible even the invis-

⁸ The biography of the Prophet.

ble and unseen "sources" of religion for ordinary mortals⁹. According to Alevi ideas, God manifests Himself through "Nur" in humanity via the work of the "Ehl-i Beyt" (Fierro et al.). Broken down to the human species, this means that every human being – precisely through Adam and Havva; more on this below – carries something divine "Nur" within him, but at the same time the oral sources used here exclude the possibility that every Alevi may interpret Alevi norms of law and authority as he sees fit (Özkul, 2015). Not least for this reason, the office of "dede" has an ambiguous character, within Alevi organizations and regardless of whether they locate themselves within Islam or outside it (Langer et al., 2013). Being a "dede" is, among other things, religiously and at the same time hierarchically (socially, politically, etc.) constructed. It is first of all the concrete descent from the "Ehl-i Beyt" that has both a metaphysical dimension and, on a secular level, empowers the concrete creation of norms in Alevi communities (Langer et al., 2013). The norm is an expression of transcendently legitimized power as well as authority, and these can be invoked by "dedes" depending on the social context to respond to social concerns. The foundations of the Alevi legal order thus go back to God and can be interpreted, modified and reproduced in an adequate manner, especially by the descendants of the "Ehl-i Beyt" (the prophetic family).

This brings us to another essential point mentioned above, and it should be noted that according to Alevi oral narratives, humanity is divided into two "genealogical-ontological" genera: Those who are distinguished as the descendants of Adam and Havva, and those who are designated as the descendants of "Güruh-ı Nâcı" (saved community) (Kehl, 1988: 51, 52, 267). The main difference between the two groups is that the latter carry the "Nur" that was transmitted to Muhammad and Ali before the creation of the world and that they pass on to their descendants, especially male heirs¹⁰. This knowledge enables them to realize the God-ordained order of existence because they are of pure divine origin (Yıldırım, 2020: 337–365). This is also one of the most important reasons why a "dede" helps shape, modify, and supervise the ritual practices as they are practiced. Even though the Alevi faith is only partially "codified," it is based on a "hiero-history" tradition, and enforcement in the interpersonal sphere is ensured by "dedes."

These two genres originated in the Immanence at the time of Adam and Havva (Yıldırım, 2018: 355–365). The central concern of these narratives is to convince the readers that the descendants of the "Ehl-i Beyt" and the rest of humanity are connected, but also fundamentally different from each other "genealogically-ontologically". Therefore, only one of the two groups has the necessary divine legitimacy, a more "only" to lead the Alevi community and to set legal norms and execute legal deci-

⁹ The visible and the hidden is called "exoteric and esoteric".

¹⁰ R. Yıldırım explicitly points out that the narratives about "Güruh-ı Nâcı" have not been preserved in their entirety, or that he did not have a complete written version in his hands during his field research; cf. Yıldırım from page 337–365, different versions of the narratives are documented or transcribed.

sions. This includes, among other things, the prerogative to determine ritual practices (Cosan Eke, 2021: 115–204).

In the various traditions it is reported that the couple, Adam and Havva, were blessed with 72 children – in some versions explicitly twins – each a son and a girl. From these unions emerged the species or humanity we know. Echoes of the Islamic tradition of the 72 tribes cannot be ignored. Nevertheless, as already referred to above, Adam's and Havva's children carry something of "Nur" in them because of their father. At the same time, these descendants are not free of envy, greed or many other vile character traits that are mentioned in the narratives with regard to "Güruh Nâcı".

In four traditions it is referred to that Adam asks God to send a help to his wife Havva, because of her advanced age. Adam is characterized as someone who goes about his hard work in the fields and on his farm every day. His righteousness is unquestioned in the narratives. God hears the request and sends "Güruh Nâcı." She first meets Havva, who is strikingly impressed by the woman's presence and equally intimidated. The oral narratives likewise imply that no sexual activity is likely to have taken place between the couple, Adam and Havva, for an extended period of time.

The presence of "Güruh Nâcı" (Korkmaz, 2005) arouses Havva's sexual desires and she rushes to her husband (Schüngel-Straumann, 1997). He has no idea that God has granted his request. Havva's actions make the reader (listener) realize that she naturally feels love and affection for her husband, and at the same time that she is challenged by the messenger and does everything in her power not to lose her "possession" or to triumph over her "rival." Thus, implicitly, envy, greed, desire, etc. occupy an important place in the narratives (Girard, 1994). This subtly suggests that the 72 descendants of the two have similar vile character traits (Yıldırım, 2018: 356). This becomes very clear when Havva asks Adam if he would leave her for another woman. Adam, who is obviously confused by the question, denies or swears that he would never take such a step (separation). His wife's suggestive questions lead her to succeed with her "ruse." At the same time, these narratives show us that the role of women in these narratives is structurally little different from other biblical stories about Adam and Eve. The ambivalent role of women in the Alevi narratives analyzed here is hard to miss.

Referring to his oath, Adam refuses God's request to unite with "Güruh Nâcı". Here, the texts implicitly favor monogamy, and a small miracle occurs that enables "Güruh Nâcı" and Adam's son "Şit" to go into action as the "parents" of "Ehli Beyt" and prophecy, respectively. In the narratives, it is clear that Adam "Şits" father, however, in the narratives analyzed here, it is mentioned only once that the 73rd son was born ("yetmiş üçüncü çocuk dünyaya geldi") (Yıldırım, 2018: 356). Previously, it is transmitted that the 72 children were born, and the narrative suggests at this point that Havva is "Şits" mother. The other narratives do not allow for such an assumption (Yıldırım, 2018: 356). The following narratives indicate that "Şit" comes into the world miraculously and without a mother (Yıldırım, 2018: 356). This, of course, comes as little surprise because the division of the world according to Alevi criteria

of law and authority demands a pure origin. As we have seen above, Havva's character was by no means pure. The union of "Şit" and "Güruh Nâcı" is responsible for becoming the 73rd tribe (Yıldırım, 2018: 356).

The children of the two are the prophets known to us such as Abraham (Ibrahim), Noah (Nuh) and many more. All these prophets bear the "Nur" of God from this pure relationship. Likewise, this "Nur" was passed on to the father of Prophet Muhammad as well as father of Ali. Through the marriage of Muhammad's daughter Fatima to Ali, the "Nur" united and transferred to their children Hasan and Hüseyin, then to the Imams and to their children, for example, to the descendants of the seventh Imam Musa-ı Kâzım (Halm, 1982), from whose 13 sons the genealogy of the "dedes" or Ocaks is derived. This "genealogical-ontological" descent connects today's "dedes" with the "Ehl-i Beyt" and gives them the legitimacy to speak law and exercise authority (Yıldırım, 2018: 172).

Role model and mediator of law and authority in the oral narratives

Alevis explicitly characterize their religious history, or the religious history in which they are embedded, as a history of injustice, the beginning of which refers to the first Islamic civil war after the death of the Prophet Muhammad. Above all, the person of Yezid in its historical reality and in abstract representations that today's autocrats and regimes of injustice have Yezid as their father serve as religious and political bases for criticism and/or resistance. The latter was responsible for the death of Huseyin (grandson of the Prophet) in Karbala.¹¹ Yezid is among those powers in the Alevi narratives who would have deliberately sabotaged the legitimate succession of Ali or the divinely established order. What is decisive in the narratives is above all that God created creation out of his special and intimate love ("Nur") for Muhammad and Ali, and that this love is reflected above all in the "Ehl-i Beyt" and their descendants. For their part, Yezid's successors would have done everything to prevent this righteous order¹².

As already mentioned above, in the Alevi tradition God is also responsible for creation and is not created himself. Therefore, it is always surprising to find statements in the literature that the Alevi tradition is not a monotheistic one (Aksünger-Kizil, Kahraman, 2018: 93). However, Alevi oral narratives explicitly point out that Muhammad and Ali owe their preexistence to God, especially to his love ("Nur"). This love is contained in "Nur" in Muhammad and Ali before the beginning of creation. Figuratively speaking, the Divine that is designated as "Nur" falls down from the Almighty onto Muhammad and Ali. From Mohammed and Ali, this "Nur" is passed on to chosen ones and their descendants, respectively. In other words, the hierarchical representation in the narratives refers to three important contents: The

¹¹ You can find an account of the events of that time in many publications, and here we would like to refer to the article by (Ende, 2005).

¹² It is to be hoped that works on the lament-religious dimension of the Alevi tradition will be published in the coming years. Basically on the subject (Canetti, 1980).

"Nur" that falls from an uncreated source to two creatures created by that very source. This "Nur" enables the two preexistent creatures – in a later sequence the Ehl-i Beyt – to recognize the uncreated source and, above all, to transmit its promises, norms of order, etc., to the creation yet to be created. The narratives refer to the fact that after the act of creation, the world would be able to be guided by God's chosen ones in representation of God according to his norms (Yıldırım, 2018; Yazıcı, 2014: 121–177).

As shown in the narratives, Adam was able to admire the "Ehl-i Beyt" even before the creation of the world. To clarify once again: even though, according to Alevi tradition, all human beings have something "divine" in them, this "divine" is clearly more in the human beings whose descent goes back to the "Ehl-i Beyt" than from those who descend from Adam and Havva. The latter are thus dependent on the former. Muhammad and Ali receive right and authority from God through "Nur," which is absolutely superior to them; there is no mixing of the "spheres." The transferred "Nur" does not change this difference between God and the "Ehl-i Beyt" either and refers to the intimate relationship starting from God to his people who were created by him as the first. The mediators Muhammed and Ali – as well as their descendants – "facilitate or enable" the human species to understand the "grammatology of God". This just by the Almighty himself who makes the recognition possible for them by the transmission of knowledge ("Nur"). The descendants of the "Ehl-i Beyt" are also able to ensure this. God, even in the Alevi tradition, remains a power and greatness that is intangible, and remains a mystery. It is this mystery that grants power to His first creation favored by Him, the "Ehl-i Beyt", this enables the "Ehl-i Beyt" to recognize and name, so that through God's legitimation they can guide further creation according to the norms shaped by God¹³.

At this point, Rıza Yıldırım's presentation of the Alevi understanding of "Hak-Muhammed-Ali"¹⁴ should be taken up in order to make the Alevi doctrine somewhat more tangible (Yıldırım, 2018: 166). Yıldırım refers to a cone at the topmost point of which is God "ulûhiyet" (divinity). Further down the cone, we meet Muhammad and Ali. They represent the "nübüvvet" (prophecy) and the "velayet" (empowered). The "Nur" falls from the top to the bottom and is transferred from the "Ehl-i Beyt" to certain parts of the creation. This is precisely an important reason why the "dedes" can dispense justice and exercise authority.

At the same time, the Alevi understanding of "nübüvvet" (prophecy) and the "velayet" (empowered, God-friend) differs from other concepts. Within Alevi narratives, these two realms are intertwined and are not thought of independently. The proclamations of Muhammad have been entrusted a priori to Ali. In short, the totality of transcendental knowledge in exoteric (zâhir) and esoteric (bâtin) form. Ali, above all, is the one who, with his role as "velayet" (authorized representative, friend of God), ensures that the proclamation is not distorted. This special gift belongs to the

¹³ In this context, an approach from Wittgenstein's perspective, which has not yet found expression, might be important (Yıldırım, 2018).

¹⁴ Corresponds to *God-Mohammed-Ali*.

"Ehl-i Beyt" and only to her. This means that Fatima, the daughter of Prophet Muhammad, Hasan and Huseyin, just like their grandfather, Muhammad, and father, Ali, are also capable of correctly transmitting the God-inspired order in whatever form of existence. God transmitted this ability to the "Ehl-i Beyt", and from her it was transmitted to her lineage. This is, among other things, an important reason why current currents of the Alevi traditions oppose a "canonization" of their norms.

***Implementation of Alevi Religious Law in Germany and Austria:
A Non-Exhaustive Selection***

As noted by Mathias Rohe, religious communities cannot practice their religious legal norms in a nation-state at will or by invoking religious freedom. The principle of territoriality ensures that "each state [...] applies its own substantive norms" (Rohe, 2016: 229). Above all, but not only, with regard to public law and criminal law, the Erlangen professor points out that religious communities have to comply with the national legal order. Rohe also points out that it is quite common practice in the area of private law to have recourse to religious law, provided that the "welfare of individual persons" is not endangered (Rohe, 2016: 273). From this we can deduce, for example, that the "dedes" can act as spiritual leaders in the context of ritual celebrations or other situations.

Now, we pointed out at the beginning of the article that Alevis had become alien to their original traditions due to urbanization (Langer et al., 2013). At the same time, we can currently observe that Alevi organizations in Austria – such as the already recognized Islamic-Alevi religious community or the Alevis Austria just like the AABF in Germany – would like to gain an interpretive sovereignty over Alevi religion via the "dedes". In other words, while the Alevis are not recognized as a religious community in the Ottoman Empire and today's Turkey, an Alevi religious law has only been able to develop outside the realm of public law up to the present day. The migration of Alevis to German-speaking countries, as well as the religiously open structure of Germany and Austria, makes it possible for them to transform the contents of their myths and narratives into religious law within the framework of their recognition process as a public corporation. In this context, Markus Dressler speaks of "considerations of utility," among other things, and points out that the "dedes" in individual organizations share their political goals. Likewise, Ali Yaman also points out that the "dedes" today are largely dependent on the Alevi organizations and that their ancestry and traditional ties have receded somewhat into the background. The latter because many "dedes" have failed to grow along with the Alevi educated elites that have emerged in Turkey and in the diaspora¹⁵. On the other hand, Yaman also notes that "dedes" identify with the organizational goals of the individual Alevi asso-

¹⁵ This is the view of all researchers explicitly cited or mentioned in this article on Alevi research.

ciations and realize their duties as members and clergy of the respective groups¹⁶. A reciprocal relationship whose beginnings date back to the 1980s.

The interest of Alevi organizations in being recognized within the German or Austrian legal system as a religious community and as corporations under public law also requires that they prove that their religious teachings do not conflict with the norms of the rule of law¹⁷. This is realized in various ways. An important argument put forward by Alevi associations is that, although they have links to Alevi organizations in Turkey, they are not dependent on a religious authority from Ankara, unlike in the case of DITIB or ATIB (Rohe, 2016: 146). Likewise, that the liberal democratic constitutional state offers Alevi, in contrast to Turkey, an opportunity to discover their religious roots and develop their theological potential. With regard to religiosity, this will have to be ensured by the Alevi associations in close cooperation with the "dedes." "Dedes" are authorized by their genealogical-ontological lineage to legitimize religious practice, to accompany the rituals, and to make religious interpretations. In other words, Alevi teachings go back to the "Ehl-i Beyt," whose heirs are today's "dedes," and this genealogy predestines them to interpret religious sources. For this purpose, separate training centers are founded; alternatively, training takes place on the premises of the individual Alevi associations. As Ali Yaman rightly notes, these developments are an expression of a shift in power toward Alevi organizations that claim to represent the Alevi community (Langer et al., 2013). Likewise, these trends demonstrate that the Alevi associations have understood the organizational structure expected of them in Germany and Austria and are implementing it within their means. With regard to Alevi theologies, the future will show which paths will be taken.

Alevi religious law comes into play primarily in the practice of rituals by "dedes," and from previous studies of Alevi ritual practice, it can be stated that the law is applied primarily in ritual practice and does not conflict with Austrian or German law (Langer et al., 2013). The recognition processes of Alevi religious communities as public corporations in Germany and Austria are also evidence of this. The dual character of the "dedes" may also play a role in this, as they are not only spiritual leaders but also mediators, in that the "dedes" can act as mediators between Alevi individuals. This, of course, is only as long as the individual Alevi individuals agree to mediation by a "dede." At the same time, the limits of the legal character in application are also clear when individuals of the Alevi faith do not want to seek out a "dede" due to private matters (such as inheritance or divorce) or cannot due to the territorial principle. The role and significance of the "dede" in the German-speaking diaspora currently focuses primarily on ritual practice. This is also because some representatives of Alevi organizations in Germany and Austria have enjoyed legal training and are conducting negotiations at the federal and state levels (Langer et al., 2013; Ağuıçenođlu, 2005: 145).

¹⁶ Dressler also comes to a similar conclusion as Yaman; cf. both articles in (Langer, 2013).

¹⁷ For the German context, see (Rohe, 2016), fifth part; for the Austrian context, see (Potz et al., 1998).

Other private points, without explicitly going into them, would be, for example, marriage, circumcision, funerals, where the "dedes", on the basis of their authority as religious guides, accompany the above ceremonies and ensure that they are held within the framework of the Alevi norms they consider to be correct – of course, in compliance with the liberal-democratic legal system.

Summary

The religious legal understanding of the Alevi is based on God, just like many other religiously influenced legal systems. The "Ehl-i Beyt" and their lineage are legitimized to realize the God-influenced order in the world. "Dedes" represent this chain of descent in the Alevi tradition. Due to the Alevi history, the practice of Alevi law was possible only conditionally and in secret. It was only in the European context, due to labor migration in the 1960s, that Alevi organizations could be founded, and in the course of these developments Alevi are trying to live their religious traditions in the diaspora as well. Due to the development of Alevi organizations so far and their relationship to the rule of law, no collisions between the German or Austrian democratic rule of law can be perceived. An important reason for this is that Alevi organizations do not use the legal means of the constitutional state to establish counter-systems. This is also an important point that the Alevi themselves in Germany and Austria repeatedly make clear in the process of recognition as a public corporation. The "internal plurality" (Rohe, 2021: 171) of the Alevi also shows that the Alevi groups, which differ in religious content, hold the same positions with regard to the democratic constitutional state. This occurs primarily because Alevi organizations present the non-negotiable foundations of the constitutional state as being in harmony with religious Alevi teachings. Within the framework of various educational initiatives, they try to combine concrete contents and convictions of Alevi tradition with the rule of law, human rights, religious freedom, etc., and to convince the majority society in German-speaking countries that the values of their tradition and the norms of society do not represent a contradiction. This has resulted in the following developments, among others:

- The Alevi organizations and associations in Germany and Austria have understood that the "dede" office, as the bearer of religious teachings, plays an important role in the recognition of their religion in the public sphere. Although the traditional exercise of the office has changed due to urbanization as well as in the diaspora, it is not simply passed over in the transmission of religion. Rather, the organizations have an interest in supporting "dedes" who also share their political interests, especially with regard to the principle of territoriality as well as compatibility with secularity.

- The oral narratives of Adam and Havva, to name only these two, offer different theological and religious-scientific possibilities of approaching Jewish, Christian and Islamic narratives. A rapprochement or distancing of the Alevi tradition from Jewish, Christian, or Islamic traditions would be possible based on the similar narra-

tives. So, too, would a deeper theological discussion with an eye toward gender studies. The portrayal of Adam and Havva in the narratives leaves much room for further analysis. Also, further comparative analysis of the "imitatio" in the Alevi and Christian contexts would potentially bring to light insightful content.

- The conceptions of Alevi law in the narratives examined here do not fundamentally indicate any collision with the principle of territoriality, primarily because the organizations are partly led by well-educated Alevi academics who are familiar with German or Austrian legal norms and act in accordance with them. The implementation of Alevi law in religious rituals does not violate the foundations of the rule of law and has so far not aroused any negative assessment on the part of state institutions in German-speaking countries. A look across the borders, for example to France, also shows that Alevi organizations enjoy the full support of state institutions there as well.

- Likewise, Alevi organizations demand the integration of their members into the majority society and a distancing from political ideas that support unlawful ideologies. The latter especially with regard to Turkey's policies under the AKP. In this context, the importance of the rule of law is repeatedly emphasized and that it is above all the legal space created by German or Austrian law that allows Alevis their multifaceted development. It remains to be seen in which direction the developments of the Alevis will go. This is especially true with regard to internal Alevi religious developments and the discussion of whether or not Alevis should be located within Islam.

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Received December 29, 2022

Accepted for publication February 15, 2023

РАССКАЗЫ АЛЕВИТОВ О ВЛАСТИ, ГЕНЕАЛОГИИ И ЗАКОНЕ

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В последние годы в Турции проведены различные эмпирические исследования традиций алевитов. Во время интервью представители религиозной общины алевитов поделились разными рассказами о Боге, творении и передаче справедливого порядка, норм. На основе таких нарративов в статье ставится задача раскрытия мифов о происхождении алевитского права в настоящее время. Предпринимается попытка анализа правовой системы алевитов в контексте немецкого и австрийского права.

Ключевые слова: алевиты, генеалогия, закон и власть.

Для цитирования: Çiçek H.I. Alevi narratives on Authority, Genealogy and Law // Историческая этнология. 2023. Т. 8. № 1. С. 47–62. DOI: 10.22378/he.2023-8-1.47-62

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Поступила 29.12.2022

Принята к публикации 15.02.2023