



**VERNACULARISATION OF SUFISM
IN THE BALKANS:
The Example of the 'Shpija e Zotit'
(House of God) Treatise**

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Abstract: Sufism, beyond being a philosophical discipline, is a way of life to enhance individual and societal existence. The concrete product of the intellectual and spiritual effort shown in Sufism has often emerged in poetry or prose. This study examines a Sufi manuscript as a form of Sufi legacy that significantly influenced the Muslim Albanian community in Ottoman territories. The focus is on the treatise "House of God," featuring prose texts by 'Abd al-Mālik Ḥilmī, included in his collection of Sufi treatises known as 'Risale'. The study explores the general characteristics of Sufi texts, particularly those preserved in Kosovo's tekkes. Through field research, interviews, and literature review, data on 'Abd al-Mālik Ḥilmī's life and works were compiled. It was found that manuscript works of some authors remain under-researched. The treatise is analyzed linguistically, highlighting the author's didactic style and word choices. Sufi terms used in the text were extracted and classified according to their usage in contemporary Albanian standards. The author's efforts toward the vernacularization of Sufi terms demonstrate his belief in conveying Sufi thought in the local language. Based on references in the anthology text, assumptions about 'Abd al-Mālik Ḥilmī's Sufi thought are presented. Sample passages from Hilmī's work in Albanian are translated into English.

Keywords: sufism, sufi texts, Risalet, Abd al Malik al Hilmī, text analysis

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Introduction

IT IS OFTEN RECORDED and written that dervishes arrived in the Balkans in the 13th century, before the Ottoman rule. The spread of Islam in Kosovo and the Balkan region generally occurred in

various forms. However, above all, the prevailing opinion is that missionaries and wandering dervishes achieved the fastest and most enduring spread.¹ It is also thought that the spiritual character of the Balkan people facilitated the easy acceptance of Islam.² Indeed, it is a well-known fact that the Muslim populations of the Balkans have historically received education in tekkes (dervish lodges) built alongside mosques, through which they developed their religious and national cultures. Among the many missionaries who have helped spread the Islamic faith in Albanian lands and the Balkans is Sari Saltik Baba.³

Another wave of dervishes arriving in the Balkans and Kosovo occurred during Sultan Mehmed II (1432–1481). (...) They often traveled through cities and villages to present their message and teach spiritual practices. This especially occurred during the reign of Sultan Mehmed II.⁴

Although the Ottoman period in the Balkans closes an essential chapter in the history of dervishes in this region, after World War II, some Sufi tekkes were rebuilt, and the activity of the dervishes was revived in some Islamic communities in the Balkans, thus preserving their mystical and cultural heritage.⁵

The Sufi heritage in the Balkans has reached us today through tekke architecture, tekke etiquette, tekke literature, tekke music, and tekke art. Sufi authors often made concerted efforts to make complex Sufi ideas accessible to local populations through using vernacular languages. A rich tradition of Aljamiado literature included lyrical-mystical works, epics, novels, religious texts,

¹ Ömer Lütfi Barkan, *İstilâ Devirlerinin Kolonizatör Türk Dervişleri-Nüfus ve İskân Meselelerine Dair Toplu Çalışmalar* (İstanbul: Ötüken Neşriyat, 2021), 468.

² Antonina Zhblyazkova and Jorgen Nielsen, "Ethnology of Sufi Orders: Theory and Practise (Etnologiya Na Sufistkite Ordeni - Teoriya i Praktika)," in *Proceedings of the British-Bulgarian Workshop on Sufi Orders. 19-23 May 2000* (Bulgaria, 2001), 628; Metin İzeti, *Balkanlar'da Tasavvuf* (İstanbul: İnsan Yayıncılık, 2014).

³ Nexhat İbrahimî, *Historia Dhe Kultura Islame Shqiptare*, Vepra 10. (Shkup Prishtine Tirane: Logos-A, 2009), 199.

⁴ Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Sari Saltik-Popüler İslamın Balkanlar'daki Destanı Öncüsü* (İstanbul: Alfa Yayıncılık, 2022), 67.

⁵ Ibid.

dictionaries, and textbooks, spreading beyond Albania to regions like Kosovo, Montenegro, and North Macedonia.

The first researcher who comprehensively addressed Albanian Sufi texts or so-called Aljamiado literature was the Albanian orientalist Hasan Kaleshi. Many of the Kosovar tekke poets, including 'Abd al-Mālik Ḥilmī, were introduced in Kaleshi's 1957 article "Letërsia Shqiptare e Alhamiados" (Albanian Aljamiado Literature). Scholars evaluate these writings as "crucial for understanding the cultural and educational conditions of the Balkan peoples, their process of Islamization, and the shared life of Turks and Albanians who once lived side by side."⁶ Despite its deep roots in Islamic culture, Aljamiado literature proves Albanians retained their identity after converting to Islam. Understanding it is vital for grasping Albania's cultural atmosphere in the 18th and 19th centuries, though modern Albanian historiography often overlooks this.⁷ Hysa also writes a few articles⁸ Albanian Islamology – as he calls it – where he tries to criticize Albanian historiographers for not giving the proper place to aljamiado in Albanian literature. Such studies illustrate how authors and their writings become closely associated with the Albanian national movement, serving as motivational texts that fuel political struggles. 'Abd al-Mālik Ḥilmī is also mentioned as a contributor to these struggles of the nationality movement by Kaleshi, Redzepagiç, and others. However, we argue that his contributions are primarily within the realms of culture and education, as he was never directly involved in any movements, unlike the dervishes of other orders, who actively participated. Thus, we use vernacularisation as "the least ideologically encumbered of the terms."⁹

⁶ Hasan Kaleshi, "Albanska Aljamijado Književnost," *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*, Sarajevo 16–17 (67 1966).

⁷ Machiel Kiel, "Aljamiado," *Islam Ansiklopedisi* (Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2020), <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/aljamiado>.

⁸See: Mahmud Hysa, *Alamiada Shqiptare II (Studime Dhe Recensione)* (Shkup Prishtine Tirane: Logos-A, 2000).

⁹ Richard Bauman, "The Philology of the Vernacular," *Journal of Folklore Research* 45, no. 1 (2008): 32.

The philology of the vernacular is text-centered, which is why textual analysis remains a fundamental method in fields like literature, history, religion, and cultural studies. However, since many of these works were written in Ottoman Turkish, they have yet to remain inaccessible to local researchers, underscoring the pressing need for transliteration and translation into local languages. These texts, still awaiting thorough study, can be found in archives, various library collections, some private libraries, madrasas, and tekkes. The manuscripts preserved in tekkes mainly consist of collections of hymns (*mağmū'a*) recited during dhikr, poems written by sheikhs and dervishes, and some authorial manuscripts of divans.

The manuscript that is the subject of this study is an original text identified in the library of the Melāmī Tekke in Rahovec. It is a prose text with Sufi content. The author is 'Abd al-Mālik Hilmī, who served as a shaykh at the Melāmī Tekke in the town of Rahovec in Kosovo. Shaykh 'Abd al-Mālik Hilmī was a Sufi who, besides writing poetry, also engaged in translations and authored prose texts.¹⁰

This paper argues that Sufi texts were crucial in making complex Sufi concepts accessible to the local population. The paper also argues that 'Abd al-Mālik Hilmī made efforts to express Sufi concepts in Albanian, making the teachings more understandable and relevant to Albanian Muslims. This effort is seen as a form of vernacularization, helping to preserve and transmit Sufi thought within the local cultural context. In order to do this, we use a descriptive and analytical method.

¹⁰ We must discuss the author's biography and complete literary work to keep this paper concise. For more information, see Idriz Ajeti, "Gjuha e 'Divani' Të Sheh Maliqit" (1966): s. 27-52; Hasan Kaleshi, "Letërsia Shqiptare e Alhamiados," Hikmet, Institute for Humane Science "Ibni Sina," no. 6 (2015); Jashar Rexhepagiqi, Dervishët, Rendet Dhe Teqetë Në Kosovë, Sanxhak e Në Rajonet Tjera Përreth, Në Të Kaluarën Dhe Sot (Pejë: Dukagjini, 1999); Jahja Hondozi, Sheh Hilm Maliqi Dhe Divani i Tij Shqip (Shkup: Logos-A, 2014).

Method

For this study, fieldwork was conducted to identify the manuscript in the library of the Melāmī Tekke in Rahovec.¹¹ Additionally, visits were made to other Melāmī tekkes in Gjakova, Mitrovica, and Prizren to gather information through interviews with shaykhs.¹² Besides the Melāmī tekkes, Qādirī, Khalwaṭī, Naqshbandī, Sa‘dī, and Rifā‘ī tekkes were also visited.¹³

Subsequently, by employing a descriptive method, library research on Sufi texts in Kosovo was conducted to determine the place of the work within Albanian Sufism. The manuscript written in Albanian with the Arabic alphabet was transliterated to form the backbone of this study. Throughout the examination of the text, citations are provided in both Albanian and their corresponding English translations. Photos of some folios from the manuscript were taken and included in the study as sample texts.

Finally, the paper includes information regarding the technical characteristics of the manuscript: ‘Abd al-Mālik Ḥilmī’s language, vocabulary, and style. Turkish borrowings found in the text were classified according to their usage in contemporary Albanian, and the existing Sufi terminology was revealed. In the final part of the study, we provide a brief evaluation of the topics covered in the treatise “Shpija e Zotit.”

Tracing the place of the manuscript within Sufi texts

Early Sufis like Bistāmī, Hallāj-ı Mansūr, and Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq left their mark on fields such as jurisprudence, exegesis, hadith, as

¹¹ The interview was conducted with Xhafer Hoxha, the representative of Malami Tekke in Rahovec, city of Kosovo, who kindly shared the manuscripts for his study. Visit date: 03 March 2023

¹² The visit with Sheikh Raif Virmica of the Malami order in Prizren occurred on March 18, 2023. In Gjakova, we met with Ali Sylaj on May 10, 2023, followed by a meeting with Haji Faik in Suhadoll, Mitrovica, on May 27, 2023.

¹³ We want to express our sincere gratitude to the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation of the Republic of Kosovo for their invaluable support in facilitating the visits to the Tekkes. These visits were an integral part of the "Sufi Heritage in Kosovo – Orders, tekkes, ideas, beliefs, rituals" project, undertaken by the Department of Oriental Studies at the Faculty of Philology, University of Pristina, from March to November 2023.

well as Sufism, literature, and poetry, were followed by later Sufis like Qushayrī, Ibn al-Fāriḍ, Abū al-Khayr, Ibn al-‘Arabī, Farīd al-Dīn ‘Attār, Rūmī, Yunus Emre, and Hacı Bektaş-ı Velī. These figures, emerging after the eleventh century, produced numerous literary, sacred, didactic, and theoretical texts whose influence extended to the Balkans. As Green (2004) mentions, Sufism is among a textual world composed of overlapping writing genres.¹⁴ According to Schimmel (2003), complex Sufi concepts began to be systematized with Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn al-‘Arabī, the author of hundreds of sufi texts.¹⁵

Anawati suggests that the texts left by Sufis after the 8th and 9th centuries can be examined by dividing them into four groups¹⁶:

- 1) Texts in which Sufis describe their inner worlds, created spontaneously or according to a specific pattern and based on personal experiences.
- 2) Texts consisting of narratives about experiences lived under the cloak of Sufi thought, woven with the truths and archetypes provided by the Sufi tradition. These types of texts are symbolic works belonging to Sufis with profound experiences, such as Ibn al-‘Arabī, Ghazālī, Suhrawardī, and Ḥallāj-ı Manṣūr, which Western researchers like Massignon, Henry Corbin, and Nicholson have tried to understand and interpret.
- 3) Supplications and prayers, which, when performed orally, are very close to the experience and uniquely continue the nature of the experience. And finally,
- 4) Didactic texts. Whether organizing the author's own experiences or those of others, these texts (in the final stage) utilize the other three forms of observation mentioned above.

¹⁴ Nile Green, “Emerging Approaches to the Sufi Traditions of South Asia: Between Texts, Territories and the Transcendent,” *South Asia Research* 24, no. 2 (2004): 123.

¹⁵ Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (North Carolina: North Carolina University Press, 2003).

¹⁶ G.C. Anawati and L. Gardet, *Mystique Musulmane* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J.Vrin, 1961), 77–90.

It may be helpful to interpret the texts of this study in the fourth group solely about the previous three groups. Green states that teaching manuals and the treatises of Sufi metaphysical theory always had a relatively circumscribed readership.¹⁷ This is further supported by statements from several interviewed sheikhs, who emphasized that their activities primarily focus on Sufi practices such as *dhikr* (remembrance), prayer, chanting, and interpreting *ilahi* (devotional chants), which together cultivate a meditative and uplifting atmosphere for worship and spiritual contemplation, rather than engaging in reading or studying texts.¹⁸ Sheikh Ruzhdi even stated:

"Our understanding of Sufism is that it is not something learned but rather something experienced. The experiences one undergoes during the journey of self-discipline and the transformation of the heart are absorbed into the treasury of secrets, the 'kenz al-asrār' (Treasure of Mysteries), inherited from Sheikh Zenel Abedin, our spiritual guide here, and also from Sheikh Emin and Sheikh Murteza Sukuti. This path is documented, as well as the litanies (wird) that equip the ashiq (lover), the disciple (murīd), the overseer (qavush), the sheikh, the spiritual guide (naqīb), and the khalifa with daily recitations, starting from Monday and continuing through to Sunday, performed according to the time of prayer, including the ishraq before dawn."¹⁹

The fact that these texts are written for didactic purposes as a kind of 'guide' does not mean they constitute the best learning method. From what we have learned from the interviews, it could be concluded that the Sufi texts of the genres such as *awrād* (litanies). This is true not only in Sufism but in other sciences as well. Moreover, this idea has been attempted to be explained in Sufism with the concept of *nāṭiq al-Qur'ān*, or the "speaking Qur'ān." The written text does not constitute knowledge by itself; it risks reenacting or materializing someone else's experience. Therefore, evaluating a written guide as an integral part of a

¹⁷ Green, "Emerging Approaches to the Sufi Traditions of South Asia: Between Texts, Territories and the Transcendent," 130.

¹⁸ Interview with Abedin Shehu, the sheikh of Halvatija order in Prizren. I interviewed on 18th March 2023.

¹⁹The interview with Sheikh Ruzhdi was conducted at the Sādi Tekke on June 2, 2023, in Gjakova.

shaykh's oral teaching is beneficial.²⁰ Recent text studies treat Sufi texts in the framework of *the vernacularization of Islam*, which is often defined as:

"a process through which the message and teachings of Islam are adjusted and adapted in local, regional environments, particularly in the non-Arab regions."²¹

According to Tanvir, the Sufis are historically viewed as the agents of the vernacularization of Islam through the production of Sufi literature in local languages.²²

In this context, it is essential to highlight that Sufi literature within Ottoman-ruled territories flourished in a trilingual environment of Turkish, Arabic, and Persian. While not everyone graduating from a *maktab* or *madrasa* achieved proficiency in all three languages, they were undoubtedly familiar with them. Many non-Turkish communities within the Ottoman Empire produced substantial literature in their native languages using Arabic script. This phenomenon is evident among both Sufi writers and the Albanian *ulema*. Notably, 'Abd al-Mālik Ḥilmī is also recognized for establishing a *maktab* in the small city of Rahovec, which was later transformed into *tekke*. Studies show that following the Prizren League, these mastabas became a cradle for cultivating Albanian writing in Arabic script.²³ 'Abd al-Mālik Ḥilmī emphasized the importance of explaining Sufi subjects in the Albanian language in all his works. He translated examples of classical works written in Arabic, Turkish, and Persian into Albanian for his disciples. Above all, Hilmī begins the treatise with the phrase, "This Risale is written in Albanian, so listen!" as he does in his other poems.²⁴ Continuing the text, after expressing

²⁰ Anawati and Gardet, *Mystique Musulmane*, 99.

²¹ Tanvir Anjum, "Vernacularization of Islam and Sufism in South Asia: A Study of the Production of Sufi Literature in Local Languages," *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan* 24, no. 1 (June 2017): 209.

²² *Ibid.*, 210.

²³ Sadik Mehmeti, *Shkollat Dhe Arsimi Në Kosovë 1830-1912* (Prishtinë: Instituti Albanologjik, 2019), 103–105.

²⁴ Hondozi, *Sheh Hilmi Maliqi Dhe Divani i Tij Shqip*, 24. states that Ḥilmī emphasized the importance of the Albanian language many times in his Albanian

praise and gratitude to Allah (c.c.), he extols "Hazrat Muhammad and the Ahl al-Bayt and all the companions whose names are in Arabic, as it should be, in their language." Thus, he expresses that not only his native language but the language of every nation is meaningful and valuable.

'Abd al-Mālik Hilmī's manuscript 'Risalet' (Treatises)

This paper will not delve into the author's major works, such as Diwans, written in Albanian and Turkish. Instead, we will focus solely on his compilation of treatises entitled "Risalet" (The Treatises), which is previously mentioned by scholars but was never transcribed nor adequately presented.

This collection consists of 159 folios. The treatises within the collection can be divided into two groups based on content. The first group contains 11 treatises written by the author himself. The Albanian titles and English translations of these treatises are provided below:

1. "Risale Shpija e Zotit" – The Treatise of the House of God. Consists of 21 folios.
2. Risale Loçka e Zemrâs" – The Treatise of the Essence of the Heart. Consists of 7 folios.
3. "Risale Dashnore për te Dashni" - The Treatise of the Lovers of Love. Consists of 6 folios.
4. "Risale Lulureja e Hilmis" – The Treatise of Hilmī's Bouquet. Consists of 10 folios.
5. "Risale Mullari i Zemrâs" – The Treatise of the Pivot of the Heart. Consists of 7 folios.
6. "Risale Bahçeja e dashnis" – The Treatise of the Garden of Love. Consists of 10 folios.
7. "Risale Ziyafeti e Bajrami Hilmis" – The Treatise of Hilmī's Feast of Bayram. Consists of 6 folios.
8. "Risale Ndihmi Shpirtave" – The Treatise of the Aid of Spirits. Consists of 4 folios.

Dīwān and in the treatises he translated. Some sources even suggest that he prepared a work titled "Alfabetarja." In this work, he should deal with the special characters for Albanian texts written with the Ottoman alphabet.

9. "Risale Sofra e Alis" – The Treatise of Ali's feast. Consists of 12 folios.
10. "Risale Eglenxheja Hynerit Hilmis" – The Treatise of Hilmî's Skillful Amusement. Consists of 8 folios.
11. "Evrad-ı Ali'nin Şerhi" - The Commentary on Evrad-ı Ali. Consists of 18 folios.

The second group consists of 5 translated sufi treatises, listed below with their respective details:

1. "Risâle-i Şâlihiyye" by Muhammed Nûr al-‘Arabî (1813-1887). Copied in 1947. Consists of 12 folios. The author's title is "Mësuesi ilm al din" (Teacher of Religious Knowledge).
2. "Esrar-i Ezân-i Muhammediyye" by Muhammed Nûr al-‘Arabî. It was copied in 1946. It consists of 6 pages—the author's title is "Përtërinsja hijabi ezel" (Repetition of the pre-eternal Speech).
3. "Nishanet e kijametit" (Signs of the Day of Judgment) by Niyâzî-i Misrî (1618-1694). Consists of 5 folios. The author's title is "Syni hakikatit" (The Eye of Truth).
4. "Risâle-i Murâdiyye"²⁵ by ‘Abd al-Rahîm Fedâ’î (d. 1885). Consists of 14 folios. The author's title is "Minderllaku nusavet hakikatit" (The Veil of the Brides of Truth).
5. The translation of "Evrâd-ı ‘Alî." They copied on 28 Şafar 1366/1947. Consists of 7 pages. The author titled this work: "Lutnja e zemrës" (The Prayer of the Heart).²⁶

²⁵ We can see that the information regarding the Risale-i Muradiye in the book *Prizrenli Abdurrahim Fedaî Külliyatı ve Bestelenmiş İlahileri* is incomplete. For more detailed information, see: Oğuz Yılmaz, Burak Anılır, and Ender Doğan, *Abdürrahim Fedai Külliyatı* (İstanbul: H Yayınları, 2021). According to the information provided in the manuscript we have by ‘Abd al-Mâlik Hilmî, the mentioned text is a treatise written in response to the questions posed by Murad Bey, the Naqshbandi sheik from Novi Pazar, who came to Pristina to meet Abdurrahim Fedaî. It is noted that after this treatise, the mentioned sheik pledged allegiance and affiliation to him. See: ‘Abd al-Mâlik Hilmî, "Risalet" (Rahovec, 1947), D.Sh.11/1-18.

²⁶ The website <https://www.islamicfinder.org/islamic-date-converter/> was used to convert the dates.

Text Analysis of the treatise “Shpija e Zotit” (House of God)

Textual Characteristics

As a result of the conservation carried out in 1966 by the Yugoslav Novi Sad Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments, the manuscript we analyzed was recorded with the number D.Sh.11/1-18. The collection of treatises is a copy written by hand and not the author's original manuscript. Information needs to be provided about the name of the copyist. At the end of the texts of the risales, the date of the text is given as the month and year.

The text under examination is the first of the eleven original treatises that comprise the collection. The outer cover is made of brown tones of cardboard with leaf motifs. The first folio of the first treatise, "Shpija e Zotit," which is also the subject of our study, is tattered and damaged. The upper middle part of the leaves is damaged by moisture, so the first and second lines cannot be read. However, the first two lines were unreadable and written in the margin by another person. It can be understood that it was written by someone else from the shape of the writing and the spelling. For example, in the main text, the word 'benllak' is written as بَنْلَكْ, while in the corrections, it is written as 'benlik' بَنْلِكْ. The vowel {a} written with alif (ا) by the copyist is shown with beautiful he (ه) in the marginal text. These and other examples show that a Turkish speaker made the corrections. The copyist has easily readable handwriting.

The text is framed. It consists of a total of 21 folios. The folio numbers are the numbers we use today, referred to as "Arabic numerals." They are given in the upper corner of the left-facing folio. Therefore, in the continuation of our study, the folio sides will be marked as 1a and 1b. No punctuation marks are not used in the text. Therefore, it is sometimes difficult to determine where a sentence begins and ends. However, stops used in the form of flowers sometimes indicate the end of a sentence.

At the bottom of the last page, the copyist provides the date of writing the treatise in a section separated from the main text by two lines. According to the record on the last folio, it is understood

that this treatise was completed on Monday, the 14th night of the month of Šafar in the year 1366. This corresponds to January 7, 1947.

The ‘Abd al-Mālik Hilmī’s Vocabulary and Language

Part of the vocabulary that determines the style and subject matter of Hilmī’s text consists of terms specific to Sufi terminology, and another part consists of Turkish borrowings in Albanian, known as Turkisms. It is understood that these Turkisms entered the texts of Albanian authors who produced texts between the 18th and 20th centuries in two ways. The first way is the passing of borrowed words during translation from Turkish to Albanian, and the second way is the passing of borrowed words from the daily spoken language of Albanian. Turkish borrowings in Albanian have been the subject of many studies of Albanian linguists.²⁷ Linguists such as Reinkowski, Kazazis, and Vajzović believe that a significant portion of Turkish borrowings in Albanian consists of religious terms.²⁸ In studies related to these borrowings, known as Turkisms, Sufi terminology has been very limitedly included among religious terms. This is because researchers have rarely referred to works consisting of manuscripts and poems from Sufi literature. Despite this, it should be noted that some previous studies have included glossaries of

²⁷ For more information on Turkish loanwords in Albanian see: Eqrem Çabej, “Hyrje Në Historinë e Gjuhës Shqipe Fonetika Historike - c. V.: Huazimet Turke,” in *Studimet Gjuhësore*, vol. III (Prishtinë: Rilindja, 1976); Tahir Dizdari, *Fjalori i Orientalizmave Në Gjuhën Shqipe* (Tiranë: AIITC-ISESCO, 2005); Zeqije Xhafçë, “Arnavutça Konuşma Dilinde Türkizmalar: Kosova Sözlü Tarihi Örneği /Turkisms in Spoken Albanian: Example of Oral History of Kosova,” *Folklor Edebiyat: Cyprus* 25, no. 100 (2019): 873–882.

²⁸ See: Maurus Reinkowski, “Kulturerbe Oder Erblast? Zum Status Der Turzismen in Den Staaten Südosteuropas, Insbesondere Des Bosnischen,” *Mediterranean language review 14*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag 14 (2002); Kostas Kazazis, “The Status of Turkisms in the Present-Day Balkan Languages.” (Presented at the Aspects of the Balkan Continuity and Change, International Balkan Conference, UCLA - Indiana University, 1969), 87–117; Hanka Vajzović, *Orijentalizmi u Književnom Djelu (Lingvistička Analiza)* (Sarajevo: Institut za jezik, 1999).

Sufi terms added at the end.²⁹ To address this gap, we found it appropriate to classify the Turkish borrowings in this text according to their purpose of usage.

Turkisms in the present text can be considered in three groups based on their usage purpose:

- Turkish Borrowings No Longer Used in the Modern Spoken Language:

Yohsa (otherwise), mahsus (specific), arapçe (Arabic), haslli (in summary), hasll-i qelam (in short), vel hasll (in summary), gjosteris (to show), halbuqi (however), lâkin (but), velâkin (but), çynki (because), anxhak (however), jahud (or), oruxh (fasting), etc.

- Turkish borrowings still present in the modern spoken language:

Evlija (saint), zotnillak (divinity), selam (greeting), aletet (tools), qibir (arrogance), benllak (selfhood), sher (evil), gafil (heedless), namaz (prayer), isharet (sign yrnek (example), sagllam (sturdy), nejse (anyway), rahatllak (comfort), kallaballek (crowd), açık (open), serhosh (drunk), turli (various), kuvvet e takat (strength and power), mall (goods), ortak (partner), muhabbet (affection), hajnat (thieves).

Additionally, a set of so-called hybrid morphemes verbs formed by adding the Albanian -is verb suffix to Turkish-origin words: jaratis (to create), kurtalis (to save), dalldis (to dive), kapllais (to cover), kapllaisneja (covering), ujdis (to fit, to adjust), me fiqru (to ponder deeply), bohet top (to gather). Looking at the dictionary definitions of Turkish borrowings³⁰ Most of these two groups belong to the vernacular rather than the standard written Albanian language.

²⁹ Fatos Dibra, *Sulejman Naibi Dhe Divani i Tij* (Tiranë: ACDA, 2022); Abdulla Hamiti and Abdulla Rexhepi, *Poezi Shqipe Me Alfabetin Arab* (Tiranë: ASHSH, 2022).

³⁰ The Albanian Dictionary published by the Albanian Academy of Sciences was used as a reference in this study. Check: Jani Thomai, Miço Samara, and Pavli Haxhillari, *Fjalori i Gjuhës Shqipe* (Tiranë: ASHSH, 2006), <https://fjalorthi.com/>.

The last group consists of Sufi terms and concepts used in specific linguistic contexts limited to the subject and purpose and generally used for information and teaching purposes.

c) Sufi terms and concepts in the text

Tawhīd, tawhīd-i af‘āl, tawhīd-i șifāt, tawhīd-i dhāt, tawhīd-i ilāhī, taħallī, taħallī-i af‘āl, taħallī-i șifāt, taħallī-i dhāt, sharī‘a, haqīqa, haqīqatan, zāhir, zāhiran, bātiñ, bātiñan, qadar, qadā, nafs, benllak (egotism, ego), dunjā wa ākhira, basmala, sirr, asrār, asrār-i tarīqa, mushāhadā, fānī, fanā’, fanā’-i af‘āl, fanā’-i șifāt, fanā’-i dhāt, zuhūr, zuhūr-i dhāt, mazhar, mazhar-i ism-i dhāt, ghayb, martaba, maqām, sulūk, tafakkur, gāfil, ishāra, ism-i Jamāl, ism-i Jalāl, mawjūd, mawjūdāt, kāmil, insān al-kāmil, murīd, murshid, murshid-i kāmil, haqīqa, ‘āshiq, ‘ishq, ‘ārif, ‘irfān, ma‘rifa, ahl al-bātiñ, ahl al-ṣūrat, juz’, Dilbarī (as a name of Allah referring to the one who captivates the heart), khāliṣ, sāfi, bāqī, șūrat, kathrat, wahdat, wujūdullāh, hāl, aħwāl, fikr-i tām, sakr, maqāmāt al-‘urūj, ruju’, kufr, sayr ilāllāh, safar ilāllāh, mi‘rāj-i rūhānī, asmā’ al-dhātiyya, Ahad, Wāħid, hazrat al-jam‘, jam‘ al-jam‘, aħadiyyat al-jam‘, ‘Anqā, laħifa ilāhiyya, qadīm, haqīqa, etc.

As in the general culture of Islam, the importance of terminology is significant. It can be easily said that the terminology used by ‘Abd al-Mālik Ḥilmī in his texts consists of the terminology explaining the concept of wahdat al-wujūd (the unity of being), which is attributed to Ibn al-‘Arabī and later seen in the teachings of Sufis such as Rūmī, Yunus Emre, Șadr al-Dīn Qūnawī, Niyāzī-i Miṣrī, and Nūr al-‘Arabī.

According to sources, it has been observed that researchers, due to their profound spiritual experiences, frequently and without hesitation resort to the terminology used by Sufis like Ḥallāj and Ibn al-‘Arabī in their works.³¹ Moreover, the first work that can be considered an independent Sufi dictionary in Sufi

³¹ Smailagić, *Klasična Kultura Islama*, I:229.

literature is Ibn al-‘Arabī’s Mu‘jamu Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Ṣūfiyya.³² Additionally, the thoughts of Muhyiddīn Ibn al-‘Arabī, who received guidance from many sheiks, have been perpetuated, and his works taught within the circle known as Akbariyya, which, despite claims of lacking an institutionalized structure, have been influential throughout the history of Sufism. In this context, it should be emphasized that Muḥammad Nūr al-‘Arabī, a Melāmī Pir whose name appears in the chain of multiple Sufi orders, is also included in the Akbariyya lineage.³³

Nonetheless, even if the author generally adheres to Sufi terminology, it is observed that he also makes an effort to provide the Albanian equivalents of Sufi terminology through the use of synonyms within the text. Below are some examples of words from the Albanian text:

For the words evliya (saints) and enbiya (prophets), he uses the Albanian correspondent word *shejtni*. For words like tafakkur (contemplation), hatıra (memory), and havatır (thoughts), he uses the Albanian word *kujtes*.

In Turkish, the word "lezzet," which means taste, flavor, or pleasure, is used in the Albanian text to correspond only to the last meaning of the word, which is a pleasure. For example: "lezzet shpirtit" means the pleasure, joy, or delight of the soul.

The word "hakikat" is used in the sense of reality and as an adjective with no Albanian suffixes for forming adjectives. For example: "hakikat puntor" (a true worker who does his job correctly).

For the word "iradeja," meaning wish and desire, he uses the Albanian equivalent "dashnija." Interestingly, the Albanian word

³² İhsan Kara, “İbn’ül Arabi’nin Tasavvuf İstilahlarına Etkisi ve Seyyid Mustafa Rasim Efendi’nin İstilahat-ı İnsan’-ı Kamil Örneği”, İldi ve Akademik Araştırma Dergisi” İbn’ü Arabi Özel Sayısı, no. 23 (2009): 583–600.

³³ See the lineage in: Gölpinarlı, *Melamilik ve Melamiler*, 233, Gölpinarlı states that he took this information from Tâhir B.’s book “Menakibi Şeyh Seyyit Hace Muhammed Nurül Arabî ve beyâni Melâmet ve ahvâli Melâmiyye” (pp. 8–14). The lineage is relayed by Burak Anılır, *Nuru'l Arabi Külliyyati: Varidat Şerhi*, vol. 7. Cilt (İstanbul: H Yayınları, 2020); Bolat, *Muhammed Nur’ul Arabi: Hayatı, Eserleri ve Tassavufları Görüşleri*; etc.

"daphnia" means love, and the author uses it as a correspondent to many Arabic synonyms. In this case, it is seen that the words love and desire are used synonymously. However, later in the text author also uses the word "dashnija" as an equivalent for "heva" and "muhabbet." "Heva" is one of the four words used by Ibn al-'Arabī to define love. It is essential to mention that the other names or levels of love are "aşk," "hub," and "vedd."³⁴

For the word "zihin" (mind), he uses the word "dermend," which means thinking, coming to mind, remembering.

For the word "marifet" (gnosis), he uses the word "dineja," which also means knowledge or science.

Some Turkish borrowings used by the author are purely from book quotations. For example, for the synonym of the word "mutabık" (in agreement), he explains it with another frequently encountered Turkish borrowing in spoken language, "ujdis" (from Turkish "uymak," to fit). He uses the word "aza" for a part of the body or organ and "shifa" (şifa) for health.

In this group, it was found that the translations of compound verbs formed with auxiliary verbs like "etmek," "yapmak," "olmak" (to do, to make, to be) in Turkish are created using the Albanian auxiliary verb "me bo" (to do). For example: "Tesir me bo" (to have an effect), "hyqem me bo" (to rule, to have authority over something), "bonu irfan" (to become knowledgeable, to understand), "bon galebe" (to become victorious, to gain superiority), "mahal me bo" (to make a place, to take a place).

The Albanian words used for Allah, the Prophet, and Allah's friends (saints) are found to be translations of Turkish words. For example: "Madhni" (Azamet, grandeur), "Shejtni" (saints and prophets), "Dilber" (beautiful), "Dashni" (love, beloved), "Paki" (pure, clean), "Jaran" (companion).

Author's style and topic

In this section, we examine 'Abd al-Mālik Hilmī's treatise using an emic approach to authentically present his Sufi

³⁴ İbn'ül Arabi, *İlahi Aşk* (İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2009), 74.

perspective. We also analyze his style through text grammar theory, focusing on linguistic and stylistic elements.

Werlich's discourse typology identifies five text types: descriptive, narrative, explanatory, argumentative, and instructive.

³⁵ Based on this framework and the author's linguistic choices, Hilmî's writings can be categorized as narrative (explanatory) and explanatory (interpretative). In such texts, the author elucidates the structural elements of a phenomenon and their interconnections, aiming to inform and explain.³⁶

Styles based on the function of language are grouped into three categories: informative, narrative, and persuasive.³⁷ Language functions are grouped into informative, narrative, and persuasive categories. Hilmî employs two styles:

1. Technical and Descriptive: Aimed at informing.
2. Metaphorical: Serving a narrative function, utilizing stories, explanations, similes, and prayers.

While Hilmî's treatise incorporates concepts defined by Ibn al-‘Arabî, he adopts a more accessible approach. He conveys profound meanings through everyday analogies, making complex ideas more comprehensible. For example:

- (1) '...Seeing the Creator as the Creator, for example, is like a mill that, when viewed externally, grinds with a stone. Internally, water grinds on its own. The mill parts make noise; water speaks silently. It says that the mill would not grind (the wheat) if it were not for me. It keeps saying, 'I, I' flour emerges, and the water gushes. In short, nothing happens without water. As water moves, the wheel opens. The stone stays on the wheel. [...] The stone must be balanced. Nothing moves without the stone. The stone and the wheel move by the rule of water. Water is the truth, the wheel is fate, and water passing through the mill is destiny, which is called

³⁵ Egon Werlich, *A Text Grammer of English*, 2nd ed. (Heidelberg: Quelle&Meyer, 1983), 39. Transmitted from Bardh Rugova and Lindita Rugova Sejdiu, *Hyrje Në Gramatikën e Tekstit Të Gjuhës Shqipe* (Prishtinë: Trembelat, 2015).

³⁶ Rugova and Rugova Sejdiu, *Hyrje Në Gramatikën e Tekstit Të Gjuhës Shqipe*, 77.

³⁷ Ibid.

governance. Man is like a metaphor for the decree of Allah. The water of the mill is the soul, like the water of the heart. The stone is the miller. The proper grinding of the mill is called good work. Poor grinding is the work of the miller. If the soul does evil, it is called evil. Evil does not know love. Love does not know evil, the soul. In other words, if the heart follows Sharia, goodness comes from Allah; evil comes from the soul. However, Allah created all deeds, just like water. Just as the water worked the mill parts, so it is, if the heart is with the soul and selfhood, if it keeps itself high with arrogance and selfhood, if it is rich, without Bismillah and Sharia, evil arises there. Moreover, a person who acts this way will suffer reckoning and punishment hereafter.' (1a-4a)

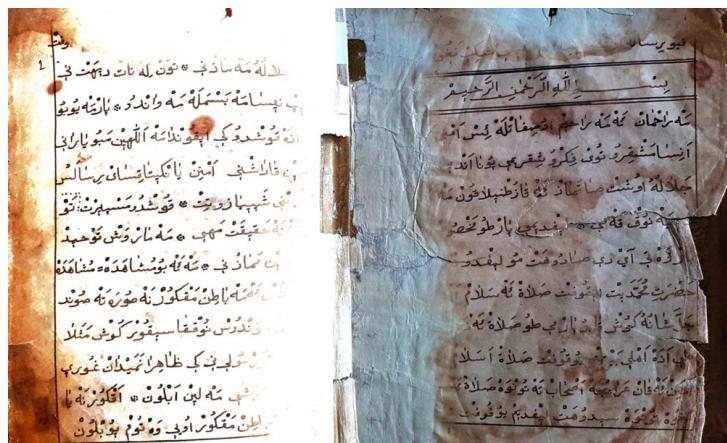


Image 1: "Risalet, Shpija e Zotit", D.Sh.11/1-18, 1a-1b.

(2) 'If it is with selfhood, it says, 'I will do this, I will do that.' If it rules as it pleases, riding on the degree of selfhood, death comes from those steps, and it falls, breaking its bones. May Allah protect us from these steps and direct us to the straight path. In other words, let us go with His name as God and the Rabb say, Amen. Never be away from the secret of Bismillah from the saints and prophets.' (4b)

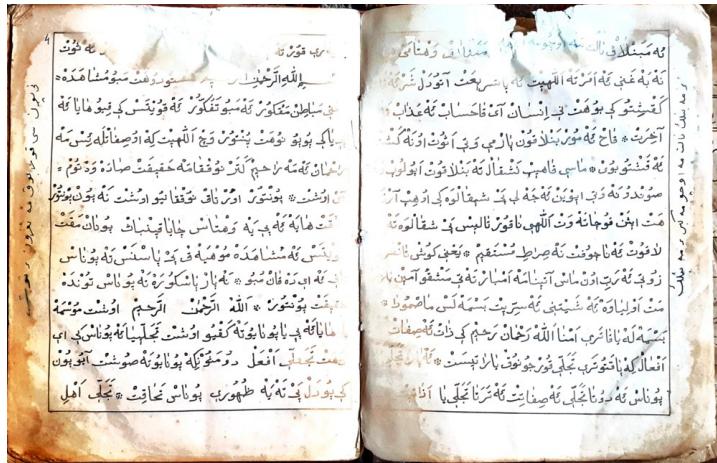


Image 2: "Risalet, Shpija e Zotit", D.Sh.11/1, 184a /4b.

Looking at his style, we see that the author begins to write after reflecting on the writings he has read, indicating that he studied and tried to understand the meanings of sacred texts. The resulting texts showcase his interpretative approach.

(3) '...e nisa me shkru tuj fiqru shkrimi punān...' (1a)
eng./'I started writing, thinking about the texts' (1a).

Thus, in this text, the author may have interpreted different books he read according to his aptitude and spiritual experiences. Towards the end of the text, he cites the views of Sufis such as Abū Sa‘īd al-Kharrāz (d. 890)³⁸, considered the founder of the theories of annihilation (*fanā*) and subsistence (*baqā*), Ahmād al-Ghazālī (d. 1126), a Sufi whose Sufi understanding reached the highest level in Rūmī and Ibn al-Fārīd, and Ahmād ibn Ḥanbāl (d. 855), the imām of the Ḥanbālī school. However, even though the text is generally in prose form, it can be seen that he prefers poetry to express his thoughts on some symbolic issues. Thus, the text includes thoughts that emerge as a mental product by commenting on specific aspects of sacred texts, as well as spiritual discoveries obtained through divine inspiration.

³⁸ Mehmet Demirci, "EBÛ SAÎD EL-HARRÂZ," *İslam Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV, February 15, 2024), 222–223.

(4) Lyp insan-i qamil me pā
Inshallah zoti pej ti s'na dā

Hakikat sirri qi jon
[...] Hakit flet daima

Ngutu Hilmi daim Zotit pa u dā
ne hije te qamilve me rā

Tuj thon Allah daima
pasnen te zotit gjith me pā

(9b)

English:

Seek to see the perfect human
Inshallah, may God not separate us from him

Who is the real secret of the truth
Truth always speaks

Hurry, Hilmi, never leave God.
To fall into the shade of the perfect ones

Always saying Allah
To see the existence of God

(9b)

The author emphasizes that anyone who wants to reach a spiritual goal can achieve this only with the help of the perfect human being (*Insān al-Kāmil*)³⁹ who is familiar with the secret of the truth. He also says that Allah should always be mentioned if one wants to witness Allah's existence constantly.

³⁹ The concept of the Perfect Man (*Insān al-Kāmil*), who embodies the manifestations of Allah at every level, was established in Sufi literature by Ibn al-‘Arabī. ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Jili (d. 1428) later became a prominent Sufi who commented on Ibn al-‘Arabī’s works and explained the concept of the Perfect Man in his book “al-*Insān al-Kāmil fi Ma‘rifat al-Awākhir wa al-Awā'il*” (The Perfect Man in the Knowledge of the Last and the First) using Sufi terminology. See Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, 77–149.

(5) A po ndin ej dashni em
I Resultit ô ku ferkem
Mu bô tabi ni kofsh i jem
Kto mertebe mi bô xhem
Mâs kqyr gru edhe dijem
Mervesh ku erdhâm e ku kem
Kto esrare sikur pem
Suni kallzoj babes tem
Me Allahin bes po kem
Me bô ikrar na gjo s'kem
Dy shtat shihem ni shpirt kem
Jem bashku e pa fârkem
Na Hilmi gjo nuk po jem
Ton Allahit na ca kem

(17b)

English:

'Do you hear, my love
It is the act of the Messenger
Be my follower if you are mine
Tot these ranks
Do not worry about women and children.
Understand where we came and where we are
These secrets are like a tree
Even my father, I cannot tell
We have a promise to Allah
Let us pledge that we can do nothing else
We are seen as two bodies and one soul.
We are united, without separation
Hilmi, we are nothing
We are all of Allah'

(17b)

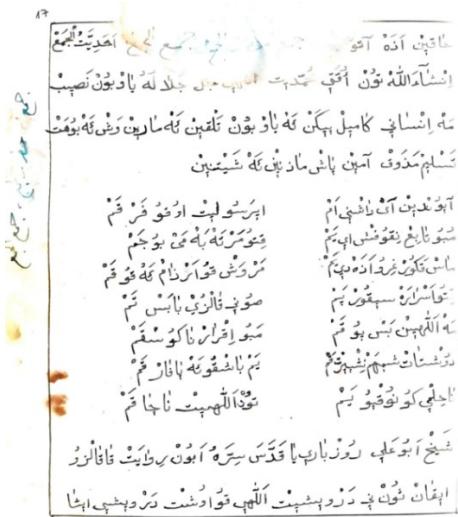


Image 3: "Risalet, Shpija e Zotit", D.Sh.11/1-18, 17b.

In this poem, Hilmi advises himself to be from the Messenger, to tot (jām) the ranks, and not to be engrossed in worldly troubles. He declares that he is united with his beloved, has abandoned the self he attributed to himself, and is now one soul in two bodies. Additionally, his statement that he cannot even tell his father these secrets of existence suggests that what he has written is not just a result of contemplation but also an esoteric knowledge that ordinary people cannot comprehend.

Even though the Treatise requires much deeper religious, Sufi, and philosophical examination, for the sake of the brevity of this paper, we will limit ourselves to providing a general view of the topics and some concepts it encompasses.

The topics addressed in the Treatise are the fundamental concepts that constitute Hilmi's ontology. These include the secret of the Basmala, the unity of being (wahdat al-wujūd), the stages of annihilation (fanā') stemming from the secret of the Basmala, the names and attributes of Allah, the meaning of the command "Kun" (Be!), the importance of the method of witnessing (mushāhada), the significance of *Sharia*, the meaning of tawhīd, and similar issues. These are fundamental definitions observed in the ontology

of Nūr al-‘Arabī, who adopted Ibn Arabī's viewpoint and concepts in all matters.⁴⁰

According to the author, there is no existence other than Allah's. One can reach the truth of existence through the guidance of the perfect human (al-insān al-kāmil), submission, and enjoyment. Hilmī explains that he begins with the expression *Bismillahirrahmanirrahim*. Because, as he says:

“Basmala takes the place of the command 'Kun' (Be!). Allah creates with the command 'Kun.' Without 'Kun,' nothing was created. For Allah, 'Kun' is what the Basmala is for us.” (7a).

English:

Allah created His three manifestations, known as actions (*af’āl*), attributes (*ṣifāt*), and essence (*dhāt*), with the three attributes and names mentioned in the *Basmala*. According to him, the *Basmala* contains the secret of existence and creation.

The reason for writing his treatise is to explain some concepts to those who wish to know Allah as a beloved friend, to reach the truth with their soul, to fully understand the divine unity (tawhīd-i ilāhī), and to witness the inner side of forms with their heart. The reasons show that the ultimate goal of monist Sufis, known as *fanā’*, the state of seclusion of the dervish, is hinted at. Using the metaphor of prayer, ablution, and pilgrimage, Hilmī explains the stages of *fanā’* with a few examples in the understanding of the hadith "Die before you die" (mutu qabla an tamūtu) of the perfect

⁴⁰Gölpınarlı, *Melamilik ve Melamiler*, 244. It is also known that Nūr al-‘Arabī provided commentaries on Ibn al-‘Arabī's texts and defended his ideas in his works. We can also see that Ibn al-‘Arabī is praised in Hilmī's dīwāns and translated works, frequently referencing his famous works “Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam” and “Futūhāt al-Makkiyya.” See: ‘Abd al-Mālik Hilmī, “Kible e Zemrās” (Rahovec, 1347H 1928). fol.141. The influences of Ibn al-‘Arabī's Sufi thought on world cultures are primarily visible to textual historians through the inherited sufi texts of poetry and prose. James W. Morris, “Ibn ‘Arabī in the ‘Far West’: Visible and Invisible Influences,” in *the University of Kyoto, Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies, January 19-23, 2001* (Presented at the International Conference on ‘Ibn ‘Arabī and the Islamic World: Spread and Assimilation,’ Kyoto, 2001). notes that this Sufi has left “spiritual” influences on both the subject and the guiding intention of so much of Ibn ‘Arabī's writing and life's work.

human. A person can witness Allah's three manifestations by passing through the stages of annihilation in actions (*af'āl*), attributes (*sifāt*), and essence (*dhāt*) that they attribute to themselves. Allah can only be known through witnessing.

In religions, extraordinary and natural mysticism means the infusion and opening of faith and love to One who is even closer than the soul itself.⁴¹ From the expressions used by 'Abd al-Mālik Hilmī, we can understand that he addresses people who aim to understand the Truth in the same way as Ḥallāj⁴², who is considered one of the prototypes of Sufis mentioned in his poems, says in his "Rivayat": "There is no worship better than loving Allah." He emphasizes the importance of reaching the rank of lover (*āshiq*) as a central theme within the text. Moreover, as Ibn al-'Arabī speaks of the characteristics of lovers in the Qur'an, he mentions their attachment to the Messenger of Allah, those who purify themselves or rectify their character, those who are patient, those who do good, and their love for beauty.⁴³ Similarly, as seen in example (5), Hilmī talks about attachment to the Messenger of Allah, cleansing the heart from forms and filling it with the remembrance of Allah, and transforming the type of love called the soul's desires (*heva*) into love for the Essence.

However, according to him, everyone who enters this path must first build the structure called Sharia:

(6) '*...pa sheriat aty del sher'*

English: '...evil arises from where the heart is full of self, arrogance, and ego, and where there is no Sharia'.

⁴¹ Smailagić, *Klasična Kultura Islama*, I:201.

⁴² *Benliği terk ettim dostum varına, Manşūram aṣıldım 'aṣķıñ darına / eng.* I abandoned my ego for the wealth of my friend, I am Mansur I hanged the gallows of your love.

⁴³ Arabi, *İlahi Aşk*, 95–113.



Image 4: "Risalet Shpija e Zotit", D.Sh.11/1-18, 4a

In a metaphorical sense, Sharia is a building that needs to be constructed with good deeds, while *tariqa* is the furnishings to be laid out after the building is constructed. After the Sharia is implemented, this furnishing (*tariqa*) is sought within the inner world, in a pure heart, with constant remembrance (*dhikr*). Remaining solely with Sharia means being at the level of asceticism. According to Hilmî, the ascetic abandons all the wealth in his hand but is not yet annihilated from the world and existence. That is, he is still occupied with the deceptive form. (19a). The one who abandons their existence is called a lover ('āshiq), and lovers are souls who find pleasure and delight in Allah. Loving is the highest level of asceticism. He explains his intention with an advisory style:

(7) *Po ni hakikat o pej hakikative, aj i dashni jem bonu ashik mos ri ne zahidllak mās bo pishman mas dekes* (19a)

English: There is one truth among all truths. My dear, become a lover, do not remain an ascetic, do not regret after you die.'

From the content of this treatise and the language and style used by Hilmî, we understand that the sought truth is not limited to the external world and that it is necessary to use external forms to describe it.

Embarking on the path of love initiates a journey toward understanding Allah, known as *sayr ila Allah* (journey to Allah) and *safar ila Allah* (travel to Allah). Through His acts, names, and attributes, one comprehends the states of the Acted (*Maf'ül*) and the Described (*Mawṣūf*). This ascending journey involves unifying one's actions, attributes, and essence, leading to oneness with the Truth and reaching descending stages such as *Jam'*, *Hażrat al-Jam'*, and *Jam' al-Jam'*. Hilmî states: "After the Essence (*Dhāt*), there is nothing; only returning remains, descending to the stations of *Jam'*, *Hażrat al-Jam'*, *Jam' al-Jam'*." (20a)

According to Hilmî, attaining these final stages requires guidance from a perfect human (*al-insān al-kāmil*). He prays for the entire ummah of Muhammad to find such a guide. He notes that the path of the Messenger of Allah, all saints, and pirs traverses the *Melāmī* tariqa, and the experiences of Hazrat Musa and Hazrat Khidr in the Qur'an embody the secret of *Melāmī*.

Hilmî concludes the Treatise with:

(8) Striving elsewhere is deception; saints and prophets have brought no other knowledge. However, everyone has adapted a path for themselves and deviated from the true path. They are like thieves who cut off the road and deceive people. May Allah protect us from their *shirq* (idolatry). Amen! With these words, this book is completed. (21a)

Although the Malami Tekke is currently less active, Abd al-Malik Hilmi's contributions profoundly influenced the residents of Rahovec. Fehim, an old dervish in the Malami Tekke, said, "No single citizen did not attend Abd al-Malik's maktab. I remember my mother running to tekke for *dhikr* after hard work in the fields."⁴⁴ he was highlighting the widespread participation in his educational endeavors. His translations of classical Sufi works into Albanian were primarily driven by his disciples' requests, underscoring his commitment to making spiritual teachings accessible to the local community.⁴⁵ Hilmi's influence endures

⁴⁴ The interview with Fehim ef. At Malami tekke in Rahovec on October 16, 2023.

⁴⁵ The author's other manuscripts can evidence this information.

through his ilahi (chants), which remain popular among other Malami tekkes and various Sufi orders in Kosovo, including the Rufai, Halwati, Qadiri, and Naqshbandi.⁴⁶ Notably, a majmua (collection) from a Qadiri Sheikh features Hilmi's ilahi "Eni vëllezën eni" as its opening piece, attesting to his lasting impact on the region's spiritual and cultural heritage.

Conclusion

This study provides an in-depth description of *Shpija e Zotit* ("House of God") Sufi treatises by Abdulmalik Hilmi, highlighting how the text reflects a process of vernacularization in which Sufi principles are adapted to the Albanian language and cultural context. This vernacularization is a central argument in understanding Hilmi's contribution to Albanian Sufi heritage, as it demonstrates his effort to make complex Sufi ideas accessible and meaningful for an Albanian-speaking audience in the post-Ottoman Balkans.

Through his choice of language and translation of crucial Sufi terms, Hilmi brings esoteric Sufi concepts into the vernacular, bridging the sophisticated philosophy of the unity of being (*wahdat al-wujūd*) with Albanian cultural identity. Examples from the text show Hilmi's deliberate use of Albanian translations for traditionally Arabic or Persian Sufi terms, which would otherwise remain foreign to his audience. By vernacularizing these terms, he enhances their relatability, embedding Sufi doctrine within the familiar linguistic landscape of his readers.

By presenting Sufism as an intrinsic part of Albanian culture, Hilmi transforms the mystical doctrine of *wahdat al-wujūd* into an experience that is accessible, meaningful, and culturally resonant for his readers.

Hilmi's treatise thus stands as both a spiritual and cultural text, preserving a rich heritage and reflecting the adaptable nature of Sufi teachings across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

⁴⁶ This information is gained from interviews with the sheiks mentioned in the first part of this paper.

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