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NATHALIE CLAYER

### *Abstract*

*Islam in modern Southeastern Europe is mostly studied in terms of institutionalization, nationalization and reforms. This top-down approach allows us to understand only incompletely the transformation of the Islamic religious scene and the relationship between state and religion. Here, I take the case of interwar Albania and de-center the analysis in studying the development of the Tijaniyya—a strongly orthodox North-African brotherhood which spread in this country after 1900—and examine the position of its members in the Islamic religious circles. The spread of this brotherhood was probably stimulated by the interference from the state in the religious sphere, which led to a transfer of the religious vitality to a sector which escaped to the state tutelage. The integration of several members of the Tijaniyya at the heart of the official structures of the Islamic Community in 1930 in order to control them, contributed to an Islamic revival from within the new reformed Islamic institutions, at a time when these institutions seemed more rationalized, controlled and secularized. In the second half of the 1930s, this unexpected Islamic revivalist evolution within the official Islamic institutions came to serve the new politics of King Zog, who abandoned his secularist politics, to fight the “communist danger”.*

### Introduction

Islam in modern Southeastern Europe is mostly studied in terms of institutionalization, nationalization and reforms, which are processes usually seen as linear. In this paper, I would like to show that this top-down approach allows us to understand only incompletely the transformation of the Islamic religious scene and the relationship between state and religion in these regions. For this, I will take the case of interwar Albania and de-center the analysis in studying the development of the Tijaniyya—a North-African brotherhood which spread in this country after 1900—and the position of its members in the Islamic religious Community.

In interwar Albania, Islam was the religion of 70% of the inhabitants of the country.<sup>1</sup> However, the country had no official religion; the state was declared *afetar* (non religious or laic). One could say that the secularist policy of the Albanian government was, in fact, relatively close, not to the French “laïcité” of the same period, but rather to the system of the nineteenth-century French Concordat characterized, according to Jean-Marie Mayeur, by the “laïcité” of the state, which implies the equal treatment and recognition of all cults. This implied the will of the state authorities to control the recognized churches, the state interference into the administration of cults, the involvement of the Churches in the nation’s life and a recognition of the social utility of religion:<sup>2</sup> a system which had been built only step by step.<sup>3</sup> Of course the Albanian

case was different, but several of its features were similar to that of the Concordat: the “laïcité” of the state, the recognition of some cults, the interference of the state into their administration, the integration of the “Churches” into the nations’ life and the idea that religion was of social utility, even of political utility (against the raise of communism particularly). As in France, all the cults did not have the same position. In Albania, the Catholic Church remained less submitted to the state, while the interference of the government into the administration of the Orthodox Church and the Islamic Community was decisive in the building of national centralized institutions.<sup>4</sup> However this process was less linear and homogeneous than generally described.

Through the study of the Albanian Tijanis, we will focus here on a group of Muslims whose position towards the new national Islamic institutions was complex and changing, from contestation to integration. We will see that, as a consequence, these very institutions were shaped by different dynamics, not only imposed from the top down.

### **The Tijaniyya: A Strongly Orthodox Mystical Path**

The Tijaniyya *tariqa*, or path, appeared around 1781–1782 in the Maghreb region, in the framework of a religious revival movement (*tajdid*) which took place in the eighteenth to nineteenth centuries and was characterized by a strong educative, missionary and militant stand, and a particular reverence for the Prophet, his model and his teaching. Ahmad al-Tijani (1737–1815), the founder, had a vision of the Prophet, while he was awake, which means that the path was made exceptional by its *silsila* (spiritual chain) which goes back directly to the Prophet. Furthermore, Ahmad al-Tijani is considered as the seal of the saints and the Tijanis claim a kind of superiority on the other mystical paths, even banning affiliations to other *turuq*. Tijanis disciples and their relatives are promised salvation. The Tijanis have even claimed sometimes that the reciting of their specific prayer was more effective to obtain salvation than the reciting of the Quran, and they believe that the ascetic life does not guarantee salvation. As they are generally described, their rites consist of the recitation of the *wird*,<sup>5</sup> in the morning and in the evening, of the *wazifa* (at least once in the morning) and of the *dhikr* on Fridays. From the Maghreb, this path widely spread south to the Sahara. But it came also to proliferate in Albania.<sup>6</sup>

Indeed, the Tijaniyya path spread to the Albanian provinces of the Ottoman Empire between 1900 and 1910, or even later around 1918, by means of the pilgrimage to Mecca. Born in Shkodër, the Northern Albanian city, in 1868 (or 1870), the ‘*alim*’ Muhammed Shaban Domnori, who would have previously been affiliated to different *turuq*, notably the Khalwatiyya and the Naqshbandiyya, is said to have met during the *hajj*<sup>7</sup> the well-known *shaikh* of the brotherhood, Sayyid Abdulkadir Minhaji (or Shaikh Elfe Hashim, according to another tradition<sup>8</sup>). He became his dervish, was appointed *shaikh* by him and came back to his native city, where he propagated his new path until his death in October 1934.<sup>9</sup>

The features of the Tijaniyya, as it spread in these Albanian provinces which were incorporated in 1913 into a new Albanian state, are very close to those of the Tijaniyya elsewhere. The brotherhood follows a strongly orthodox mystical path, rejecting the ascetic life and having no specific *tekkes*.<sup>10</sup> In the booklet published by one of its members in 1941,<sup>11</sup> the exclusive bond with the Prophet and with the founder is strongly underlined. Seyyid Ahmed Tixhani (under its Albanian form), is presented as a scholar, an example, a reformist, who has reached a superior degree of mystical knowledge, being the supreme authority or *kutbi xhami* (*kutb-i jami*). The members should follow the

Prophet's example, the Prophet's path to God. But to purify their heart and their spirit, to reach the moral perfection, to enlighten the soul by divine light, they have to link themselves to a master possessing a high spiritual knowledge, as one does to acquire every kind of knowledge.

According to this booklet, the basic requirements of the Tijani path are: to put oneself in the hands of a Tijani *shaikh* having the right to transmit the *wird*; not to recite the *wird* of another *tariqa*; not to seek for the moral help of other *awliya/evliya* (saints, people close to God), neither by word, nor by thought or by heart; to respect all the *awliya*, but to seek a spiritual education only from the one with which one is bound; to do regularly the five daily prayers, as far as possible with the *jemaat* (the assembly); to respect all the Quranic prescriptions; to love and respect Ahmad al-Tijani and one's own *shaikh*; to believe in Divine compassion; not to speak against the *shaikh*; to continue the *wird* recitation until one's death, always with the permission of an authorized *shaikh*; to have good relations with everybody, and particularly with the comrades of the path; to honor everybody, and especially one's own parents. As for the compulsory prayers presented in the booklet, they are exactly as described in Jamil Abun-Nasr's study: the morning and evening *wird*, the *wazifa/vazife* and the Friday *dhikr/zikr*.<sup>12</sup> Finally, the author underlines, as is also believed by the Tijanis elsewhere, the promise of salvation given to the Tijani disciples and to their own family (women, children and parents).

A brief document preserved in the Albanian archives also describes the Albanian Tijaniyya as a path whose disciples agree and are obliged to perform the Islamic duties as prescribed by the *shariah*, notably the five daily prayers. The *tariqa* is considered as having no relation with other *turuq*, because of its direct connection to the Prophet, and the position of the *shaikh* position is supposed to be transmitted only by merit and qualifications and not by blood or descent.<sup>13</sup>

### The Spread of the Tijaniyya in Early Twentieth-Century Albania

How did this strongly orthodox path, opposed to traditional brotherhoods in many ways, spread in the Albanian territories? Three main figures, all *'ulama* (learned men in religious sciences) and natives of Shkodër, are considered responsible for this expansion: Muhammed Shaban Domnori, already mentioned, Muhammed Bekteshi and Qazim Hoxha. Let us look at their biographies to understand better the mechanism of diffusion of the Tijaniyya in interwar Albania.

The initiator of the *tariqa*, Haxhi Sheh Muhammed Shaban Domnori, studied in a *rüşdiyye* school (Ottoman advanced primary level school) in his native town, and later in the local *madrassa* called "Medrese e Qafës" where he received two *ijaza* (diplomas). He is said to have mastered the Albanian, Turkish, Arabic and Persian languages. Throughout his life, he was an *imam* and preacher in Shkodër. Considered as a model of piety and virtue, he attracted many followers as a Tijani *shaikh*. Before 1920, he may have spread the *tariqa* in Shkodër only secretly, probably because the local milieu was not favorable to the Sufi expression of Islam. Thereafter, he openly directed the Tijani religious ceremonies in his house, which he may have bought with his followers' help. He attracted many followers and a large crowd attended his funeral ceremony in October 1934.<sup>14</sup>

One of his most important disciples was the professor (*mudarris/myderriz*) and preacher (*waiz/vaiz*) Haxhi Hafiz Muhammed Bekteshi (Shkodër, 1883–1958). Trained in a primary and an advanced primary level school, he then received religious

teaching from different ‘*ulama* of Shkodër. He is said also to have learned as an autodidact in reading material published in Istanbul, Cairo and Lahore.<sup>15</sup> As a professor, he had many students, be it in the New Madrasa of Shkodër (*Medrese e Re*), which was operational in two time periods from 1925 to 1929 and 1944 to 1947, or be it at home.<sup>16</sup> As a preacher, he was one of the most famous in Shkodër. He also had some responsibilities in the official Islamic institutions in the city, being a member of the local Assembly and councilor of the *mufti*.<sup>17</sup>

The third figure is that of Sheh Qazim Hoxha (Shkodër, 1893 or 1895–1959). His father, a doctor and director of the military hospital in Shkodër, was of Arab origin. However he was brought up in his mother’s family, the well-known local family of the Çelepíej. After high primary studies in the military *rúshdiye* school,<sup>18</sup> he became acquainted with the two earlier figures: he learned exoteric sciences from the *mudarris* Haxhi Muhamet Muhammed Bekteshi and esoteric sciences from Sheh Shaban. He obtained from Haxhi Muhamet Muhammed Bekteshi an *ijaza* and became, around 1919, an *imam* and religion professor in his native town. But unlike his two masters, he had to leave Shkodër. In 1925, he was appointed preacher and professor in Durrës, the port city of central Albania, where he had students coming from central and northern Albania. At that time, because of his preaching, he acquired fame in all of Central Albania. In 1930, as we will see, he was transferred as a professor at the newly established General Madrasa in Tirana, and subsequently became one of the most appreciated preachers of the capital. Within the *tariqa*, his position became ever greater, and in 1934, following Sheh Shaban’s death, Sheh Qazim Hoxha was chosen as the head of the brotherhood. His successive appointments in Central Albania were decisive for the diffusion of the Tijani path in this region, especially in Durrës, Tirana,<sup>19</sup> Shíjak and Kavajë, and their surroundings.<sup>20</sup>

Under his influence and that of his two masters, the Tijani path spread among different social groups. Firstly, they attracted many people from their own milieu, that of the ‘*ulama*; several *muftis* became affiliated to the path.<sup>21</sup> They also attracted Muslim intellectuals, who played a key role in the fields of education and publication of printed materials.<sup>22</sup> Some of their disciples were also administrators working for Islamic institutions.<sup>23</sup> Little is known about their influence among the students of the *madrasas* in Shkodër and later on in Tirana. But we can surmise that it existed. Outside these religious circles, the *tariqa* strongly spread among shopkeepers and tradesmen from Tirana and Durrës.<sup>24</sup> One of the tradesmen in Durrës financed the publication of the booklet dedicated to the *tariqa* in honor of his father who had passed away and was himself a member of the Tijaniyya.<sup>25</sup> Lastly, the *tariqa* seems to have spread among villagers of Central Albania, since groups of disciples existed in several villages, such as Prezë, Radë, Maminas, Ishëm, Guzje, Rubjekë, Metallë, Kameronas.<sup>26</sup> It is interesting to note that this region had been the center of the Muslim rebellion which broke out in 1914–1915 against the German Prince sent by the Great Powers to lead the new Albanian Principality, and for the restoration of the Ottoman order.<sup>27</sup>

This relatively important network of “Orthodox” Sufis in Shkodër and Central Albania<sup>28</sup> came to play an important role on the Islamic religious scene in interwar Albania. This was due not only to the individual fame of its main figures, known also as religion professors and preachers, but also to the stand they adopted *vis-à-vis* the Islamic institutions and the reforms the latter wanted to urge. More exactly, there were two distinctive phases in the relationship between the Tijaniyya and the official Albanian Islamic institutions: a contestation phase and an integration phase.

### The Tijanis and the Contesting of Reforms

With the relative stabilization of the political situation in the country after the First World War, the political authorities worked for the strengthening and the centralizing of the religious Islamic institutions in Albania. For this very purpose, a congress was held in winter of 1923. One of the main reforms which was initiated some months later as a result of this organizational step, was the opening of a main *madrasa* in the capital.<sup>29</sup> The director of the *awqafs* and the main *'ulama* leading the religious institutions wanted to establish a good *madrasa*, with modern methods of teaching and a program including contemporary sciences. With this *madrasa*, they hoped to prevent the young Albanian Muslims from going to Europe to study, so that they would not be cut off from their religion and the nation.<sup>30</sup> In reality, one of the problems for these *'ulama* was that ever fewer young boys came to study in the *madrasas*, especially from the South of the country.<sup>31</sup> In 1924–1925, two such reformed *madrasas* opened, first in Tirana then in Shkodër, where the pupils were supposed to receive the same education as in the other schools of the country, with the addition of religious subjects. French was to be taught as a language of business. The other local *madrasas* were also supposed to adopt the new programs.

Following the opening of the Tirana *madrasa*, a reaction came from a group of *'ulama* from Shkodër. They wrote a letter to the Minister of the Interior against the new programs, because they considered that they were not appropriate for the necessary acquisition of religious knowledge, in particular for young *'ulama*. The signatories asked the Ministry not to enforce these measures. If we look at the names of these signatories, we see that, immediately after those of Mehmet Tahir and Rustem Faiku, appeared the names of Muhammed Shaban and Muhammed Bekteshi, the two main figures of the Tijaniyya at that time, while among the following names was to be found also that of Qazim Hoxha. As *'ulama*, the Tijanis took part in this opposition movement with their colleagues from Shkodër, representatives of a strong tradition of religious teaching in that city.

However, their demand was not taken into account. The affair was forwarded to the Ministry of Education, which answered that it was not within its competence, but within that of the Sharia High Council. When the Ministry of the Interior then asked the Sharia High Council, the General *mufti* answered to the Shkodër *ilmîyye* (corps of *'ulama*) that the program had been elaborated in accordance with the Statutes of the Islamic Jemaat. Consequently the Council was not allowed to change the programs. If the Shkodër *ilmîyye* wanted to propose changes, it had to do so during the next congress.<sup>32</sup> This was a clear rejection of the claim.

Apparently, the *ilmîyye* of Shkodër, to which belonged the prominent Tijani figures, was not at the forefront of the resistance which broke out in Shkodër in 1926 against the new *madrasa* that opened in the city, as well as against the organization of the Islamic institutions. This one was led by Molla Rustem Begu.<sup>33</sup> However, a few months later during the winter of 1927, the local *'ulamas* opposed the call for reforms launched by Salih Vuçitern in the Islamic Community's journal. They categorically considered that the rationalization of the mosque and *madrasa* networks proposed by the General Director of the *awqafs* was against the Islamic law. At the bottom of a letter addressed to the Great Mufti in Tirana, the signature of Sheh Shaban is visible besides those of other *'ulama* of Shkodër.<sup>34</sup> So again it was only as members of the group of the *'ulama* of Shkodër that the Tijani leaders were part of the contesting of reforms concerning the life and organization of the Islamic Community.

The Tijanis appeared as such in a contesting movement only in 1929, not in Shkodër, their first bastion, but in Central Albania, around their new figure there, Qazim Hoxha. At that time, the Albanian government of the newly proclaimed King Zog (he was King of the Albanians from 1928 to 1939) had decided to organize a congress of the Islamic Community in order to reinforce its organization, as well as to control it better. On the 13th of June 1929, the Minister of Justice had written to the President of the Sharia High Council that he wished to see the Islamic Community organized “according to modern principles” in following the example of the government, “which initiated laws that opened the path to progress and civilization”.<sup>35</sup> This was not a vague recommendation expressed to the Islamic religious leaders, since the minister even fixed a date for the beginning of the congress which should convene on the 5th of July. The task assigned to the religious leaders was to elaborate new statutes “on a modern basis”, with the help of the government. But the interference of the civil authorities was not limited to this first injunction. Two weeks later, the Ministry of the Interior was asking the prefects to impede the local *muftis* from proceeding to the elections of the delegates for the congress, before they received the list of candidates sent by the Ministry, because the government did not want other candidates. The lists were drawn up by the Ministry of Justice, in charge of religious affairs.<sup>36</sup>

The way the Albanian government acted provoked a reaction in Central Albania, this sensitive Muslim region where, 15 years earlier, a rebellion had broken out. And this reaction was led by the Tijanis. At the end of June, the prefect of Durrës reported to the Ministry of the Interior that the *mufti* of Krujë, instead of getting the government candidate elected, succeeded in getting himself elected.<sup>37</sup> It is probable that Ismail Hakki, a Tijani disciple, was already *mufti* of Krujë at that time.<sup>38</sup> However, the authorities were above all alarmed by the “intrigues” of Qazim Hoxha. A report of the police superintendent of Durrës to the prefecture underlined that, at that time, “Hafiz Qazimi”—who was explicitly presented as a member of the Tijani *tariqa*—was doing propaganda. According to the report, Tijani had formed a solid party in “opening” or promoting his *tariqa* in the city and in other regions within the prefecture such as Shijak, Prezë, Kavajë, etc. The police superintendent thought that, because of the influence gained by Qazim Hoxha, serious problems could arise, as happened during the elections of the delegates to the Islamic congress. Apparently in Durrës (and maybe elsewhere), Qazim Hoxha and his partisans had opposed the election of the candidates the government wanted to impose.<sup>39</sup>

The prefect himself, while transmitting the report to the Ministry of the Interior, explained that, since his arrival in the city, professor Qazim Hoxha, from Shkodër, had proselytized “systematically” his *tariqa*, so that a great party would have been created through this *tariqa*, with branches in Kavajë, Shijak and Krujë, as well as the smallest village in the region. This high official further contrasted “the influence he had gained through this brotherhood, which kept the population in an alarming fanaticism” with the “sacrifices made by the government, at the cultural level, to take away this dangerous disease [i.e., religion] from the ignorant population”. For the prefect, this supposed “fanaticism” became apparent during the election for the Muslim Congress. According to him, everywhere in the prefecture, the members of the Tijaniyya opposed what was planned by the government, as in Krujë where two times the candidate of the *tariqa* won against the candidate of the government. In order to defend the “interests of the state”, the prefect proposed to send away Qazim Hoxha from the prefecture. The answer of the ministry was more moderate. The prefect was ordered to call Qazim Hoxha and tell him to give up such an attitude, before taking any administrative action.<sup>40</sup>

In a way, Qazim Hoxha, who had clearly countered the politics of the Albanian authorities aimed at controlling the organization of the Islamic Community and introducing secularizing reforms, was finally effectively removed from the Durrës region to Tirana, but he was to be integrated in the central Islamic institutions in Tirana.

### Integration into the Central Islamic Institutions

In 1930, the following year, Qazim Hoxha was appointed professor at the new founded General Madrasa of Tirana, the only *madrassa* remaining in the country in accordance with the decision of the Congress. There he taught Arabic language, *mantik* (logic), *tafsir* (commentary of the Quran) and *hadith* (tradition). He also became one of the most listened preachers in the capital. Furthermore, his sermons were regularly published in the columns of *Zani i naltë* (The Supreme Voice), the journal of the Islamic Community. Thus he became a central figure in the religious life of the Muslims in Tirana and in the country. In 1942, at the time of Greater Albania under the umbrella of fascist Italy, he even became vice-president of the ‘Ulama Council, the Highest Islamic authority in the country, as well as president of the Commission for the translation of the Quran.<sup>41</sup>

What is striking is that he was not the only Tijani to occupy an important position within the central Islamic institutions after the important turning point represented by the 1929 Congress. Hasan Tahsin, the author of the booklet published in 1941, was chosen in 1931 as the director of the mixed school opened by the Islamic Community. This establishment was very important for the Islamic Community, since the aim of the school was to offer to the Muslim parents an alternative to the state schools, where morals and religious teachings were considered to have not enough place in the curricula. When the school was closed down by the government as all the private schools in 1933, Hasan Tahsin was integrated into the teaching staff of the General Madrasa, where he taught Arabic.<sup>42</sup> Haki Sharofi, another lay Tijani member, was also professor at the General Madrasa, where he taught Albanian language. Moreover, in 1930, Haki Sharofi became editor in chief of the journal of the Islamic Community, *Zani i naltë*, when it started to be published again after a six-month interruption.<sup>43</sup> It means that a Tijani was responsible for the diffusion of Islam in Albania through the modern means of the press.

Outside Tirana, the Tijanis were also occupying important positions within the Islamic institutions. In 1929, Muhammed Bekteshi had been appointed preacher (*waiiz*) in the prefecture of Shkodër; in Durrës, the *mufti* Mustafa Varoshi belonged to the *tariqa*; in Krujë, the deputy *mufti*, Haxhi Ismaili, was also a disciple of the Tijani path, and later he was appointed *mufti* in Vlorë.

In the 1930s, the Tijaniyya itself was in a way integrated into the structure of the Islamic institutions. In 1936, the *tariqa* formed with three other brotherhoods—that of the Qadiris, the Rifa‘is and the Sa‘dis—an organization, called *Drita Hyjnore* (The Divine Light), under the umbrella of the Islamic Community. According to the Regulations of the organization, the main aim was to publish books in order to reinforce the morality of the disciples by means of sermons, as well as to serve national unity.<sup>44</sup> It is in this framework that the booklet of Hasan Tahsin was published in 1941. The Regulations planned also a rationalized functioning of the four brotherhoods, but we do not know to which degree it was really effective. Except for some official ceremonies on the occasion of Muslim feasts and the publication of a few books, there are no testimonies about the daily work of this organization, which was a product of the reformist

standpoint of the leaders of the Albanian Islamic Community, characterized, among others, by a rational approach. However, the integration of the Tijaniyya into this organization, which seemed to accept the principles imposed by the official Islamic institutions and the state, occurred at a time when the latter was willing to use religion as a tool against the “communist menace”, at a time when religious revivalism was not seen any more as “fanaticism” opposed to the “interests of the state”.

### **Conclusion: Reformism and Revivalism at Work**

The usual narrative concerning the evolutions of Islam in interwar Albania focuses on the politics of Zog and his policy aiming at putting the religious institutions under the control of the state and more generally at reducing the influence of religion and secularizing the state and the society.<sup>45</sup> The introduction of the civil code and the abolition of the religious courts in 1928–1929 are, in this respect, important steps. The support of reformist *‘ulama* and lay Muslims by the state in order to implement reforms within the Islamic institutions is also part of the politics, which seem to culminate with the organization of the Albanian Islamic Congress of 1929. After the Congress, following the adoption of new Statutes, the Islamic religious institutions take a more centralized, more controlled, more rationalized, and even more secularized shape. Beside their functions of *imam* and preacher, the prerogatives of the *muftis* are limited to administrative duties: they are not allowed to give *fatwa*. Even the new appointed head of the Islamic Community does not belong to the corps of the *‘ulamas*: Behxhet Shapati, who succeeded Vehbi Dibra, was a lawyer. Some Muslims are interpreting nowadays these developments as a blow against the liberty of Islam. In fact the appointment of Qazim Hoxha in Tirana and its integration into the central Islamic institutions can also be interpreted as an attempt to neutralize his influence in Central Albania.

However, the study of the diffusion of the Tijaniyya and its complex relationship with the reformist religious institutions allows us to see other aspects of the evolution of Islam in interwar Albania, which are usually not taken into account, when the religious scene is seen only from a normative point of view and when the institutions are considered as homogeneous wholes.

Firstly, because of the interference of the state in the religious sphere, there could have been what Jean-Marie Mayeur has called, in the case of the French Concordat, “a transfer of the religious vitality to a sector which escaped to the state tutelage”.<sup>46</sup> The Tijani path seems indeed to have attracted many people in Shkodër and Central Albania, two regions where the Muslims were strongly attached to Islam, and where there were reactions against certain reforms of the Islamic institutions and against the interference of the state into the religious affairs.<sup>47</sup>

Secondly, the integration of several members of the Tijaniyya at the heart of the official structures of the Islamic Community (the Tirana Madrasa, the head of the journal, the head of the mixed school, as *muftis* or as preachers), in order to control them, contributed to an Islamic revival from within the new reformed Islamic institutions, at a time when these institutions seemed more rationalized, controlled and secularized. This integration of revivalist elements permitted the diffusion, in parts of the Albanian society, of an Islam for which the Prophetic model, as well as the transmission of morals and religious knowledge, were central. Maybe a parallel can be drawn with the present integration of neo-Salafist elements into the official Islamic institutions of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Last but not the least, in the second half of the 1930s, this unexpected Islamic revivalist evolution within the Islamic official institutions came to serve the new politics

of King Zog, who abandoned his secularist politics because he wanted to fight the “communist danger” which had already broken out in Spain. For that very purpose, he notably launched a new nationalist campaign, reintroduced the religious teachings in state schools and tried to solve the issue of the Albanian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, which also led to a religious revival after 1937, despite the reluctance of some civil officials.<sup>48</sup> In fact, neither the stand of the Islamic institutions, nor the politics of the Albanian state, were univocal and invariable during this period.

## NOTES

1. In interwar Albania 20% of the inhabitants were Orthodox Christians, whereas 10% were Catholic Christians. There were also a few Jews and Protestants. Some of the Muslims were attached to the Bektashiyya, a mystical brotherhood, which acquired an autonomous status *vis-à-vis* the official Islamic Community during the 1930s. The members of other mystical brotherhoods remained tied to the official Islamic institutions. If the Muslims did not represent a minority in this Balkan country, as in the neighboring states, one can say that they were, in a way, a “survival majority” (see Nathalie Clayer, “Behind the veil. The reform of Islam in Inter-war Albania or the search for a ‘modern’ and ‘European’ Islam”, in *Islam in Inter-War Europe*, eds N. Clayer and E. Germain, London: Hurst, 2008, pp. 128–155).
2. See Jean-Marie Mayeur, *La question laïque. XIXe–XXe siècle* (The Laicity Issue: 19th–20th Century), Paris: Fayard, 1997.
3. Rita Hermon-Belot, “La genèse du système des cultes reconnus: aux origines de la notion française de reconnaissance” (The genesis of the system of recognized cults: the origins of the French notion of recognizing), *Archives de Sciences Sociales des religions*, Vol. 129, January–March 2005, pp. 17–35.
4. The case of the Bektashi Community is different as it was not fully recognized at that time. In the text of this paper, “Islamic Community” refers to the official Islamic institutions, and not to the Muslims of the country.
5. One hundred times *astaghfirullah*, 100 times *surat al-Fatiha*, and 100 times “*la ilaha illa Allah*”.
6. On the Tijaniyya *tariqa*, see Jamil Abun-Nasr, *The Tijaniyya. A Sufi Order in the Modern World*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965; *id.*, “Tidjaniyya”, *Encyclopedia of Islam*, Second Edition; Jean-Louis Triaud and David Robinson (eds), *La Tijāniyya. Une confrérie musulmane à la conquête de l’Afrique* (The Tijāniyya. A Muslim brotherhood at the conquest of Africa), Paris: Karthala, 2000.
7. He is said to have performed *hajj* at least three times.
8. See Haxhi Faik Hoxha, “Dijetar i njohur” (A well-known scholar), *Drita Islame* (The divine light), Tirana, no. 6, 20/3/1992, p. 2.
9. Hasan Tahsin, *Shtyllat themelore të tarikatit tixhani* (The fundamental pillars of the Tijani Tariqa), Tirana: Shtyp. Gutenberg, 1941 (Organizata «Drita Hyjnore», Sekti Tixhani, nr2); Faik Luli, Islam Dizdari, Nexhmi Bushati, *Në kujtim të brezave* (In remembrance of the past generations), Shkodër: Shtyp. Rozafat, 1997, pp. 175–190; Arkivi Qendror i Shtetit (AQSh), (Central State Archives), Tirana, F. 882, “Komuniteti Mysliman” (Fund of the Islamic Community), pa vit (no date), d. (dossier) 15, fl. (pp.) 19–21. I also corresponded with Faik Hoxha, the son of Qazim Hoxha, in 1992–1993, and his communication matches up more or less with Qazim Hoxha’s own text published on the web: Sheh Faik Hoja, “The coming and the establishment of the Tidjani Tarikah in Albania”, available online at: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/alb-muslimnews/message/8380>.
10. *Tekke* in Turkish, *teqe* in Albanian, is the term used for the centers/lodges of the *turuq*, equivalent to *zawiya* in the Arab world.
11. H. Tahsin, *Shtyllat*, *op. cit.* The author explains that he wrote the book according to the Prophet’s injunction to transmit knowledge. Another reason was the fact that most of his fellows did not know any language except Albanian, so the book was important for them, in order to follow point-by-point the true laws of Islam (see pp. 7–10).
12. According to Faik Hoxha’s communication to the author, the *dhikr* is performed sitting in a circle, on the day of *juma* (Friday), after the prayer of *iqindi*. It consists of the recitation of *astaghfirullah* (30 times), of *surat al-Fatiha* (50 times), of “*la ilaha illa Allah*” (100 times), of the *salat-i jevher* (12 times) and “Allah” (1600 times).
13. AQSh, F. 882 (“Komuniteti Mysliman”), *op. cit.*, pa vit, d. 15, fl. 19–21. The characterization made by Faik Hoxha, in his correspondence, is similar. He describes the path as having a great influence on

- the education of Muslim believers, because of an absolute conformity to the rules and precepts of the Quran and to the Prophet's tradition.
14. H. F. Hoxha, "Dijetar i njohur", *op. cit.*; Hamdi Bushati, *Shkodra dhe motet* (Shkodra through the times), t (vol.) 1, Shkodra: Shtyp. Rozafat, 1998, p. 622; F. Luli, I. Dizdari, N. Bushati, *Në kujtim të brezave, op. cit.*, pp. 175–190; AQSh, F. 882 ("Komuniteti Mysliman"), v. 1934, d. 5.
  15. At that time, the Lahori Ahmadiyya had connections with the Albanian Muslims (see N. Clayer, "La Ahmadiyya lahori et la réforme de l'islam albanais dans l'entre-deux-guerres" (The Lahori Ahmadiyya and the reform of Albanian Islam in the interwar period), in *De l'Arabie à l'Himalaya. Chemins croisés en hommage à Marc Gaborieau* (From Arabia to Himalaya. Crossed Ways dedicated to Marc Gaborieau), eds V. Bouillier & C. Servan-Schreiber, Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2004, pp. 211–228). On the Ahmadiyya at that time, see E. Germain, "The First Muslim Missions on a European Scale. Ahmadi-Lahori Networks in the inter-war Period", in *Islam in Inter-War Europe*, eds N. Clayer and E. Germain, London–New York: Hurst–Columbia Univ. Press, 2008, pp. 89–127.
  16. It is said that some students came to his house after having finished the *madrasa*, in order to obtain, as per tradition, an *ijaza*. Other students came to him to prepare for entry to the *madrasa*, while others were simply searching for religious teaching. For that he had an authorization. It means that, at least in Shkodër, the system of the unique *madrasa* in Tirana was bypassed.
  17. F. Luli, I. Dizdari, N. Bushati, *Në kujtim të brezave, op. cit.*, pp. 281–298; AQSh, F. 882 ("Komuniteti Mysliman"), v. 1934, d. 5. In 1926, he was the delegate of Shkodër to the Albanian Muslim Congress, where he actively took part in the debates.
  18. That is probably where he learned French.
  19. In Tirana, the Friday ritual (*ziker*) was performed in his house.
  20. F. Luli, I. Dizdari, N. Bushati, *Në kujtim të brezave, op. cit.*, pp. 445–458; *Kultura islame*, Vol. III, Nos 10–11, 1942, pp. 292–293; Nazim Berdica, "Mësues, predikues dhe mistik i lartë" (Teacher, preacher and great mystic), *Drita Islame*, no. 16, August 1992, p. 3. Qazim Hoxha corresponded with Tijanis and *shaikhs* in Morocco, Egypt, Sudan and Tunisia (according to his son's correspondence with me).
  21. Faik Hoxha cites among the '*ulama*: Hafiz Sabri Bushati (1889–1971), *mudarris* in Shkodër; Mustafa Varoshi, *mufti* of Durrës; Haxhi Ismaili (or Ismail Hakki), '*alim* in Shkodër, then successively deputy *mufti* of Krujë in Central Albania and *mufti* of Vlorë in the South of the country; Hafiz Muhedini, *imam* in Kavaja, in Central Albania (see his correspondence and Sheh Faik Hoja, "The coming", *op. cit.*). Hafiz Sabri Koçi, the leader of the Albanian Islamic Community after the collapse of Communism, was also a member of the Tijaniyya.
  22. Among them, Faik Hoxha cites: Hasan Tahsin Haveriku, the author of the booklet on the Tijaniyya; and Haki Sharofi (Sheh Faik Hoja, "The coming", *op. cit.*).
  23. Among them, Faik Hoxha cites Riza Kaduku (see his correspondence with me).
  24. My source is an oral testimony given by the daughter of a merchant in Tirana and Durrës, collected in Tirana in 1993.
  25. H. Tahsin, *Shtyllat, op. cit.*, p. 2.
  26. AQSh, F. 882 ("Komuniteti Mysliman"), pa vit, d. 15, fl. 19–21; and my correspondence with Faik Hoxha.
  27. On this episode, see N. Clayer, "Une piste à suivre au sujet des Melamis d'Albanie" (A track to follow on the Albanian Melamis), in *Religion et nation chez les Albanais, XIXe–XXe siècles* (Religion and nation among the Albanians, 19th–20th centuries), ed. N. Clayer, Istanbul: Isis, 2003.
  28. Another disciple of Haxhi Shaban Domnori, Sheh Xhemal Alibali, is said to have spread the Tijani path in Kosovo, more particularly in Prizren and Peç/Pejë. Later on, he is said to have come back to Shkodër, where he became the head of the Tijanis, but I could not verify the veracity of this information. See F. Luli, I. Dizdari, N. Bushati, *Në kujtim të brezave, op. cit.*, p. 180.
  29. AQSh, F. 882 ("Komuniteti Mysliman"), v. 1923, d. 76, fl. 1 (letter of Salih Vuçitern, general director of the *waqfs* to the *waqfs* offices, 23/6/1923); fl. 2 (decision of the Sharia High Council, 1/6/23). Hafiz Ali Korça and the group of '*ulamas* leading the Islamic religious institutions justified this opening of the new *madrasa* by a discourse on the search for the true religion, the religion which prevailed when the Muslim civilization was at its height, with famous sources of knowledge, notably the *madrasas* of Baghdad and Andalusia. They wanted to prove to the detractors of Islam that this religion did not exclude progress. They also wanted to persuade Muslims to return to a true Islam which would allow progress and civilization (see, for example, A (Full name not given), "Si ishim e si jemi" (How we were and how we are), *Zani i naltë* (The Supreme Voice), Vol. 1, No. 5, Tirana, February 1924, pp. 152–158; V. Naili, "Myslimanizma edhe qytetrimi" (Islam and civilization), *Zani i naltë*, Vol. I, No. 4, January 1924, pp. 118–121).

30. “Medreseja e përgjithshme (Universite) e Komunitetit Mysliman” (The General Madrasa (University) of the Islamic Community), *Zani i naltë*, Vol. I, No. 5, February 1924, pp. 121–123; “Letr’e hapët për gjith ulamat e meshajhat qi ndodhen në Shqipëri” (Open letter to the ‘ulama and shaiqhs who are in Albania), *Zani i naltë*, Vol. I, No. 8, May 1924, pp. 238–246.
31. See Nathalie Clayer, “Investing in the intellectual capital: The kadı of Gjirokastrë and Libohova and their descendants”, in *Proceedings of the second international symposium on Islamic Civilisation in the Balkans, Tirana, Albania, 4–7 December 2003*, Istanbul, IRCICA, 2006, pp. 115–124.
32. AQSh, F. 152 (Ministry of the Interior), viti 1924, d. 594, fl. 2–5; F. (fund) 882 (Komuniteti Mysliman), 1924, d. 81, fl. 21 ss. We know that in these programs, in 36 weekly hours, 12 were devoted to the Arabic language, 5 to the teaching of Qur’an and *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), and the rest to profane courses.
33. AQSh, F. 882, v. 1926, d. 90, fl. 17–26. To crush the movement, the religious authorities forbid preaching by those who had no authorization to do so.
34. AQSh, F. 882, v. 1927, d. 101, fl. 7–8 ; letter of 28/4/1927. The Sharia High Council decided to answer to the Shkodër *ilmıyye* that if they want, they could answer by publishing an article in the same journal (AQSh, F. 882, v. 1927, d. 101, fl. 10, decision of 2/5/1927).
35. Here it surely referred to the introduction of the Civil Code and the abolition of religious courts, which was decided in 1928 and applied in the spring of 1929.
36. AQSh, F. 152 (Ministry of the Interior), v. 1929, d. 121, fl. 3–5.
37. AQSh, F. 152, v. 1929, d. 121, fl. 50, report of 28/6/1929. The prefect asked the Ministry to interfere and to make the Sharia High Council invalidate the election.
38. Faik Hoxha cites among the ‘ulama: Haxhi Ismaili (or Ismail Hakki), ‘*alim* in Shkodër, then successively deputy *mufti* of Krujë in Central Albania and *mufti* of Vlorë in the South of the country (see his correspondence and Sheh Faik Hoja, “The coming”, *op. cit.*). However, this has to be confirmed. But the remarks of the prefect below tend to link the *mufti* of Krujë to the Tijaniyya.
39. AQSh, F. 152, v. 1929, d. 121, fl. 73, report of 3/7/1929.
40. AQSh, F. 152, v. 1929, d. 121, fl. 91, correspondence of 10/7/1929.
41. F. Luli, I. Dizdari, N. Bushati, *Në kujtim të brezave, op. cit.* pp. 445–458; *Kultura islame*, 1942, Vol. III, Nos 10–11, pp. 292–293; Nazim Berdica, “Mësues, predikues dhe mistik i lartë” (Teacher, preacher and great mystic), *Drita Islame*, no. 16, August 1992, p. 3. In fact, he quickly resigned from his position as Vice-President of the ‘Ulama Council.
42. On Hasan Tahsin Haveriku (1893–1964), see *Drita Islame* Vol. 16, No. 77, 1995; and F. Luli, I. Dizdari, N. Bushati, *Në kujtim të brezave, op. cit.*, pp. 427–444. He studied in the *rüşdiyye* school in Shkodër, then in a military academy in Istanbul in 1913–1914. Until 1929, he taught in the *madrasa* of Shkodër.
43. No author, *Haki Sharofi dhe vepra e tij* (Haki Sharofi and his work), Tirane: AITTC, 2000.
44. *Rregulore themeltare e organizatës “Drita Hyjnore”* (Regulations of the Organization “The Divine Light”), Tirana: Shtyp. Tirana, 1943, p. 5, art. 1.
45. See, for example, Roberto Morozzo della Rocca, *Nazione e religione in Albania (1920–1944)* (Nation and religion in Albania (1920–1944)), Bologna: Il Mulino, p. 116; and Bernd Fischer, “King Zog, Albania’s interwar dictator”, in *Balkan Strongmen. Dictators and Authoritarian Rulers of South Eastern Europe*, ed. B. Fischer, London: Hurst, 2007, pp. 43–44.
46. J. M. Mayeur, *La question laïque, op. cit.*, p. 27.
47. In Turkey, in the 1940s–beginning of the 1950s, Tijanis opposed the secularist state. Some of them chanted the call to prayer in Arabic in the Parliament, while later on others tried to demolish statues of Atatürk. See, J. Abun Nasr, *The Tijaniyya, op. cit.*, p. 161; and Klaus Kreiser, “Notes sur le présent et le passé des ordres mystiques en Turquie” (Notes on the present and the past of the mystical orders in Turkey), in *Les ordres mystiques musulmans dans l’islam. Cheminements et situation actuelle* (The mystical orders in Islam. Developments and present situation), eds A. Popovic and G. Veinstein, Paris: EHESS, 1985, p. 52.
48. I am preparing a study on this change of politics.