



Kadıncık Ana

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Summary

Kadıncık Ana is an important female figure in the Alevi-Bektashi-Kızılbaş belief, particularly associated with Hacı Bektaş Veli, whose memory has been transmitted through hagiographic narratives-most notably the Vilayetname of Hacı Bektaş Veli written in the fifteenth century-alongside limited historical records and oral culture. In these sources, Kadıncık Ana is depicted as a spiritual guide who was part of Hacı Bektaş Veli's close circle, who sat on the post after his death, and who is described as having played a role in the transmission of belief and processes of institutionalisation. Being known by various titles such as Hatun Ana, Fatma Bacı, Fatma Ana, and Kadıncık Ana, different accounts about her and the inadequacy of historical records may also lead to contradictory interpretation about Kadıncık Ana. The figure of Kadıncık Ana is associated with the narratives of the Bacıyan-ı Rum (Sisters of Anatolia) and, moreover, is sustained in collective memory through ocak (spiritual lineages), traditions, ritual practices, aşık poetry, place names, and Kadıncık Ana's House in Hacıbektaş. Although definite and direct evidence regarding her historical existence remains limited, Kadıncık Ana is today regarded in the Alevi-Bektashi tradition as a spiritual and foundational figure, discussed particularly in relation to women's place within belief, their representation, and modes of remembrance.

Keywords: Ana, Anadolu Orta Çağı, Bacıyan-ı Rum, Dergah, Hacı Bektaş Veli, Kadıncık Ana, Kadıncık Ana Evi, Rum Erenleri, Tekke, Yol Ulusu

Introduction

Kadıncık Ana is an important female figure in the Alevi-Bektashi-Kızılbaş belief, particularly associated with Hacı Bektaş Veli, whose memory has been transmitted through hagiographic narratives, limited historical records, and oral culture. In the literature, it is conveyed that Kadıncık Ana was influential in Anatolia between the thirteenth century and the early fourteenth century and that she held a path-founding role as an “ana” figure within semi-nomadic Turkomans. Kadıncık Ana is associated with the Bacıyan-ı Rum organization mentioned in sources such as *Tevârîh-i Âl-i*

Osman, and in some interpretations, she is regarded as the founder or one of the pioneering figures of Bacıyan-ı Rum. However, it is a known fact that, parallel to the subordination of women following the Ottoman Empire's adoption of the Byzantine imperial tradition from the fifteenth century onwards and subsequently taking the caliphate, Kadıncık Ana was largely excluded from later Ottoman historical records, which led to her being rendered invisible over time, also under the influence of androcentric historiography. By contrast, the building located in the Hacıbektaş district of Nevşehir, today known as the "Kadıncık Ana's House," is regarded as important proof indicating the spatial continuity of her memory. Moreover, in contemporary belief transmissions, the current *postnişin* of the Hacı Bektaş Veli Dergâh, Veliyettin Ulusoy, and the *halife baba* of the Abdal Musa Dergâh, Hüseyin Eriş, define Kadıncık Ana as a *yol ulusu* (spiritual *guide*) who sat on the *post* after Hacı Bektaş Veli's death, who played a role in the transmission of belief and processes of institutionalisation, and who was influential in the training of Abdal Musa. Narratives concerning Kadıncık Ana's historical and religious position have reached the present through limited written sources, interpretations of the *Velayetname*, tribal and place names, oral culture, poetry, and historical buildings.

A Sacred Mother Whose Name is Veiled by Various Titles

One of the principal reasons for the uncertainties and divergent interpretations found in the literature concerning Kadıncık Ana is that she is referred to not by a single proper name, but by various titles and ranks used in different periods and contexts. In the sources, Kadıncık Ana is mentioned under titles such as Hatun Ana, Kadın Ana, Hatuncuk Ana, Kadıncık Ana, Fatma Bacı, Fatma Ana, Fatma Nuriye, and Kutlu Melek; each of these designations carries symbolic meanings shaped around dignity, saintliness, and the maternal figure (Kına 2022, 194). These titles are understood to contain cultural and mythological references

such as archetypal mother figures, light, and the tree of life; in particular, the names Fatma Bacı or Fatma Ana are seen to provide the ground for interpretations that associate Kadıncık Ana with Fatma Ana. Data found in historical dictionaries concerning the etymology of the words *kadın* and *kadıncık* indicate that these terms do not function as diminutives, but rather convey meanings of respect and affection. Indeed, in the *Tarama Sözlüğü* the word *kadıncık* appears with the meaning “lady,” while in the TDK Dictionary it is defined as a form of affectionate address to women; in Andreas Tietze’s etymological dictionary, it is explained as “a householder who manages her household well.”

The widespread use of these titles has, over time, led to the conflation of female figures who lived in different periods or were referred to in different contexts, which has resulted in a common perception that tombs found in various regions of Anatolia and known as “Kadın Ana” or “Kadıncık Ana” belong to the same individual. The Kadıncık Ana Tomb located within the Seyyit Battal Gazi Complex in Seyitgazi, Eskişehir, is cited as an example of such conflation. It is stated that the Kadıncık Ana buried there was a wise woman who served Ümmühan Hatun, a member of the Seljuk dynasty. When historical context and chronology are taken into account, the likelihood that this figure is the same person as the Kadıncık Ana associated with Hacı Bektaş Veli is considered weak. The gradual use of the title *Kadıncık* as if it were a proper name is also seen to have led to conceptual confusions within the research literature. For example, in Mikail Bayram’s *Fatma Bacı ve Bacıyan-ı Rum*, claims are made that Fatma Bacı was first married to Ahi Evran and subsequently to Hacı Bektaş Veli; however, these narratives do not fully correspond with the historical and social context presented in the same work. Interpretations suggesting that there may have been more than one Kadıncık Ana figure in the *Velayetname of Hacı Bektaş Veli* (Aydın 2014) further strengthen the view that the expression “Kadıncık Ana” may denote not a specific historical

individual, but rather a particular spiritual title.

Kadıncık Ana in Written Historical Sources

The earliest known written records concerning Kadıncık Ana and the Bacıyan-ı Rum with which she is associated are found in *Tevârîh-i Âl-i Osman*, written by Aşıkpaşazade in the fifteenth century. In this work, Aşıkpaşazade classifies the nomadic communities of Anatolia into four main groups- Ahiyan-ı Rum (ahis of Anatolia), Gaziyan-ı Rum (gazis of Anatolia), Abdalan-ı Rum (abdals of Anatolia), and the Bacıyan-ı Rum (bacıs/sisters of Anatolia)-and defines the figure referred to as Hatun Ana (Kadıncık Ana) as “the head of the sisters of Anatolia.” In the same account, it is stated that Hacı Bektaş Veli chose the Bacıyan-ı Rum, accepted Kadıncık Ana as his spiritual daughter, and entrusted his *keşif* (revelation) and *keramet* (miracle) to her. The same source also conveys that, following Hacı Bektaş Veli’s death, Kadıncık Ana had the tomb built and that Abdal Musa stayed there for a period of time and he was the disciple of Kadıncık Ana. (Aşıkpaşazade 2017, 203). That Kadıncık Ana is defined in this manner in this work, rather than in other Ottoman-period historical records, may be explained by the fact that Aşıkpaşazade traced his lineage to Baba İlyas, a Turkmen spiritual leader, and was therefore familiar with the presence of leader women within nomadic cultures.

Another indirect record concerning Kadıncık Ana appears in *Tarih-i Peçevi* by Peçevi İbrahim Efendi, one of the sixteenth-century Ottoman historians. While recounting the Kalender Çelebi uprising, Peçevi includes a hagiographic narrative that links Kalender Çelebi’s lineage to Hacı Bektaş Veli; in this context, he relates the account according to which Kadıncık Ana became pregnant from a drop of blood that flowed from Hacı Bektaş Veli’s nose, and that Habib Efendi was her son (Sami 1981, 92). Such narratives are regarded not as historical data, but rather as elements that reflect the belief world of the period and the hagiographic tradition that took shape around the circle of Hacı Bektaş Veli.

Kadıncık Ana in the *Velayetname of Hacı Bektaş Veli*

In the *Velayetname of Hacı Bektaş Veli*, written down in the late fifteenth century, Kadıncık Ana appears together with Hacı Bektaş Veli as a hagiographic figure. Although texts of the *velayetname* genre are not regarded as direct historical sources, they are accepted as important hagiographic texts that reflect the belief world, symbolic narratives, and collective memory of their period. In this context, the narratives conveyed in the *Velayetname* provide clues, through esoteric and symbolic interpretations, to Kadıncık Ana's position within belief and to the relationship established with Hacı Bektaş Veli. The text includes an account in which Kadıncık Ana is said to have received *nasip* from Hacı Bektaş Veli by drinking his bloodied ablution water and to have become pregnant in this way. When considered beyond superficial readings, it is possible to interpret this account as a symbolic expression of the miracle-working power of the saintly figure, the exaltation of Hacı Bektaş Veli, and Kadıncık Ana's spiritual devotion to him and initiation to his path. The presence of a similar account in the *Velayetname* concerning the birth of Hacı Bektaş Veli himself points to the hagiographic coherence of such narratives within the text.

Although these narratives in the *Velayetname* laid the ground for differences of interpretation concerning lineage and *yol* (*spiritual path*) affiliation between the Babagan and Dedegan (Çelebiyyan) branches within the Bektashi tradition, it is evident that both branches share a common recognition of Kadıncık Ana's dignity and her companionship with Hacı Bektaş Veli. Indeed, in a preface written for the *Velayetname*, Safa Ulusoy and Velıyettin Ulusoy, *postnişins* of the Hacı Bektaş Veli Dergâh, emphasise that the relationship between Hacı Bektaş Veli and Fatma Bacı (Kadıncık Ana) should be understood within a framework of *hakikat* (truth), *muhabbet* (affection) and spiritual unity (Şahin 2012, 77).

The *Velayetname* also includes narratives indicating that

Kadıncık Ana acted together with Hacı Bektaş Veli during the period between his arrival in Anatolia and his death. In these narratives, Kadıncık Ana is depicted as the person who saw Hacı Bektaş Veli's entry into Anatolia via Elbistan in *mana âlemi* (spiritual realm) and who introduced him to the *Rum Erenleri* (Anatolian dervishes). In the exoteric (zahiri) meaning of this narrative, Kadıncık Ana is presented as a figure who prepared *lokma* (food) in *gatherings of muhabbet* (a semi-ritual environment); however, in the esoteric meaning, when the symbols of *lokma* (food) and the table in the language of belief are taken into account, these narratives are open to interpretations that attribute a more active and foundational role to Kadıncık Ana. In this context, Kadıncık Ana is, in some assessments, considered a figure who was influential in Hacı Bektaş Veli's acceptance among the Rum Erens and a pioneer associated with the narratives of the Bacıyan-ı Rum.

According to the *Velayetname*, after Hacı Bektaş Veli settled in Sulucakarahöyük, the person who hosted him in the place now known as the Kadıncık Ana House was Kadıncık Ana herself. The account of "becoming a mystery in the tandoor (*tandırda sır olma*) " included in the text can, in esoteric interpretations, be understood as symbolising Kadıncık Ana's withdrawal from the material world, her experience of spiritual transformation, and her full incorporation into the *yol* (spiritual path) of Hacı Bektaş Veli. In this account it is also stated that she donned the *tennure* from the hand of Hacı Bektaş Veli, which may also be inferred that Kadıncık Ana entered the spiritual path of Hacı Bektaş Veli and became the spiritual successor of Hacı Bektaş Veli. Although Kadıncık Ana is not directly referred to as a *halife* in the *Velayetname*, the fact that in some manuscripts (Noyan 1996, 191) she is mentioned as a *şerif* is associated with the attribution of her lineage to the *Ehl-i Beyt*, her wisdom and moral purity. Moreover, in the *Velayetname*, the mention of Kadıncık Ana-named in some manuscripts as "Fatma Ana, the mother of the *eren*"-together with the *halife* Sarı İsmail at the time of Hacı Bektaş Veli's death indicates

that she was positioned within his close circle and among his spiritual companions throughout his life.

Kadıncık Ana and Hacı Bektaş Veli in Oba or Tribal Names

The narrative in the *Velayetname of Hacı Bektaş Veli* concerning Kadıncık Ana's seeing Hacı Bektaş Veli in the *spiritual realm (mana âlemi)* may, when read with attention to historical context, be interpreted as a symbolic indication that there may have been contact or a relationship between them prior to their meeting in Sulucakarahöyük. In the *Velayetname*, Hacı Bektaş Veli's arrival in Sulucakarahöyük in the form of a dove (*güvercin donu*) and his being received as a guest in tKadıncık Ana's House are regarded in some interpretations as narrative elements implying that this relationship was based on a peaceful and pre-established bond. From the perspective of historical data, information suggesting that Hacı Bektaş Veli and Kadıncık Ana were associated with two separate *obas* or tribes belonging to the Çepni lineage provides a basis for the view that such symbolic narratives may have had a historical background. Studies based on Ottoman *tahrir* registers point to the existence of communities bearing the names Bekteş and Kadıncık; these data are discussed in the works of Irène Beldiceanu-Steinherr and in Hamza Aksüt's research based on *tahrir* registers (Aksüt 2018, 69-70). These studies note that the Kadıncık *Oba* moved within a seasonal cycle of summer and winter pastures around Elbistan, and that traces of the Bekteş community are also observed in the same region. Today, place names encountered side by side or within the same areas in Anatolia-such as Kadıncık, Hatuncuk, Bektaş, Bektaşlar, and Hacı Bektaşlar-are likewise regarded as traces of collective memory associated with the historical migration movements and settlement practices of these communities (Kına 2022, 198).

Kadıncık Ana Whose Memory Lives on in Ocaks and in the Verses of Aşiks

Today, the memory of Kadıncık Ana is sustained within the Alevi-Bektashi-Kızılbaş belief, particularly through ritual language and practices in *ocaks* (spiritual lineages) affiliated with the Hacı Bektaş Dergâh and in rural contexts. The expression “This is not my hand, but the hand of Kadıncık Ana” is conveyed as one of the references to Kadıncık Ana’s spiritual authority and mystical hand in certain belief practices, foremost among them the service of *lokma*. Research- and fieldwork-based sources indicate that in the past, women who prepared *lokma* in the Sarıbal *Ocak* in Şiran, Gümüşhane, were addressed by the title “Kadıncık Ana” (Bahadır 2005, 119); similarly, in some *ocaks*-such as the Tozluoğlu *Ocak*, to which Abdals are particularly affiliated-the women who carried out the *lokma* service were given this title, and field research shows that the *gülbangs* (prayers) recited for these women were voiced in the name of Kadıncık Ana or Fatma Ana. Such practices indicate that the name of Kadıncık Ana and the spiritual rank attributed to her continue to be maintained within the *ocak* tradition on a ritual and symbolic level. In addition, it is observed through oral narratives and contemporary belief practices that the memory of Kadıncık Ana is vividly transmitted in the district of Hacıbektaş among both Bektashis affiliated with the Babagan and Çelebiyyan branches and among Abdals.

Traces of the veneration of Kadıncık Ana and her memory can also be found in the poetry of *aşıks* affiliated with the Hacı Bektaş Dergâh, as in the examples below:

*Bilmem nere gider bizim yolumuz
Kan saçarak feta okur dilimiz
Kusur bizim bağladılar kolumuz
Şah Hatun Kadıncık dolu sen yetiş* (Budala İsmail
(1794-1860))

*Mümin olan yakın görür didarı
Müslim olan mihman eyledi canı
Hünkâr Hacı Bektaş Veli’nin şanı
Sırrı Balım Sultan Kadıncık (Ana) Fatma*

Kadıncık Ana'dır Urum'un eri
Ona mihman oldu Horasan piri
Şemsinin şulesi kamerin nuru
Gamınan kaderi araya atma (Kul Fakır (1863?-1938)/ Ali Cem Akbulut arşivi)

Kadını erlerden ayırmak zordur
Erler meclisine sevgisi vardır
Kadıncık ermiştir görmeyen kördür
Arifler meclisi bulan Kadıncık (Durmuş Günel, Sarıbal Ocağı Dedesi (1941-.....)/Kıymet Erzincan Kına Arşivi)

Kadıncık Ana's House

One of the most tangible elements associated with Kadıncık Ana is the Kadıncık Ana House, located within the boundaries of the Hacıbektaş district of Nevşehir and dated to the thirteenth century in official records. This building, which is considered to have existed prior to the present-day Hacı Bektaş Veli Dergâh, is situated opposite the Karahöyük archaeological site. Within the framework of local narratives and hagiographic sources, Kadıncık Ana's House is conveyed as a place where Kadıncık Ana hosted Hacı Bektaş Veli and his circle. Taking into account information found in the literature on Ahi and Bacıyan-ı Rum lodges (Şapolya 2006, 241-242), there are assessments suggesting that Kadıncık Ana's House may not have functioned solely as a residence, but also as a place-or lodge-where Sufi gatherings of *muhabbet* took place (Ürkmez 2020, 257). Indeed, the presence in the *Vilayetname of Hacı Bektaş Veli* of a narrative stating that complaints were made to Seljuk authorities on the grounds that this building was not a lodge (Nihani 2016, 328) is regarded as a hagiographic element reflecting contemporary debates concerning the function of the building. Within the same narrative context, it is related that Nureddin Caca, the governor of Kırşehir, who sought to remove Hacı Bektaş Veli from Sulucakarahöyük, encountered the intervention of the Seljuk Sultan Alaeddin Keykubat.

The Bektashi Dedebaba Bedri Noyan refers to this building as the “Balım House,” an expression that suggests that, in the period after the fifteenth century, the building may have been used as a place where celibate dervishes resided within the framework of Bektashi lodges (Noyan 1995, 54). By contrast, the fact that the building is still known today as “Kadıncık Ana’s House” demonstrates Kadıncık Ana’s strong position in collective memory. Although there is no direct information regarding how the building was affected during the closure of Bektashi lodges in 1826, a repair record dated 1896 suggests that it may have suffered damage during this period. The graves of Emin Baba (1893) and Ahmet Baba (1908), located in the garden of the building and dating to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, indicate that Kadıncık Ana’s House continued to be used during this period as a place associated with the Hacı Bektaş Veli Dergâh. Alongside buildings such as the Meydan House, Pir House, Kiler House, Aş House, and Mihman House, the Kadıncık Ana House is also regarded as part of the overall *dergâh* complex. Information concerning the fountains surrounding the building, tunnel remains, and the repair of the Ak Pınar Fountain in 1775 by Derviş İbrahim further indicate that this area historically had a broader sphere of use.

It is known that following the closure of lodges and *dergâhs* in 1925, Kadıncık Ana’s House passed into private ownership. Detailed information regarding the historical objects and documents once located within the building has not survived to the present. After 1971, the building underwent restoration by the Directorate General of Foundations, and, following the initiatives of the European Alevi Women’s Union and public demands, it was restored again after 2020 by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Directorate General of Foundations, thereby assuming its present appearance.

Conclusion

Kadıncık Ana is an important female figure in the Alevi-

Bektashi-Kızılbaş belief, whose memory has been transmitted through hagiographic narratives, limited historical records, oral culture, ritual practices, and spatial memory. In narratives associated with Hacı Bektaş Veli, Kadıncık Ana is depicted as occupying a central position in relation to the transmission of belief, processes of institutionalisation, and the continuity of the *yol*(*spiritual path*). At the same time, the limited and indirect nature of the information concerning Kadıncık Ana in historiography shaped since the Ottoman period has led to her historical persona being treated as secondary for a long time. Today, Kadıncık Ana is sustained in collective memory through *ocak* traditions, *aşık* literature, place names, and tangible sites such as Kadıncık Ana's House in Hacıbektaş, and is being reconsidered particularly within discussions concerning the place of women and representation within the Alevi-Bektashi tradition. In this respect, Kadıncık Ana constitutes an important point of reference for understanding the continuity of female *spiritual leaders*, their symbolic power, and their position within memory in the Alevi-Bektashi belief world.

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