MULTILAYERED RESONANCE: RE-IMAGINATIONS IN THE HISTORY OF ÂŞIKLIK [MINSTRELSY]*

Çok Katmanlı Rezonans: Âşıklık Tarihinde Yeniden Tahayyüller

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ABSTRACT

This article critically examines the historiography of the Turkish *âşıklık* [minstrelsy] tradition by assessing the agency and histories of *âşıks* through various ontologies to challenge the classifications and generalizations imposed by narrators in the recounting of mainstream âşık history. Specifically, Mehmed Fuad Köprülü's seminal research on *âşıks* and their tradition remains a guiding reference in shaping the overall historical narrative and subsequent academic studies. Traces of Köprülü's canon are still present in contemporary research publications, which allows presuppositions regarding both âşıks and their tradition to persist in the national narrative of *âşık* history. To understand these multilayered circumstances, I use Actor-Network Theory to shed light on the processes by which Köprülü's canon is actively transmitted and reconciled within contemporary research networks, and I investigate the presuppositions held about *âşıks* and their tradition. Through a meticulous analysis of *translations* that contain assemblages of *âşıks* (human entities), objects (non-human entities), and discourses (non-corporeal entities), this article proposes a more inclusive past as a perspective, diverging from an exclusive historical narrative through ANTi-History. Moreover, it conducts an emancipatory ontological inquiry, critiquing the historiography of âşıks by tracing the paths of human actors across a broad spectrum that includes both non-humans and non-corporeal entities.

Keywords: âşık [Minstrel], ANTi-History, ANT, minstrelsy, historiography

ÖZ

Bu makale, Türk âşıklık geleneğinin tarihçiliğini Türk âşıklarının etki alanlarını ve tarihlerini çeşitli ontolojiler aracılığıyla değerlendirerek, ana akım âşık tarihini anlatan araştırmacılardan kaynaklanan sınıflandırmaları ve genellemeleri sorgulamak amacıyla eleştirel olarak inceler. Özellikle, Mehmed Fuad Köprülü'nün (1890-1966) âşıklar ve gelenekleri üzerine önemli araştırmaları, genel tarih anlatısını şekillendirmede ve sonraki akademik çalışmalarda yol gösterici bir referans olarak varlığını sürdürmektedir. Köprülü'nün kanonunun izleri hala günümüzdeki araştırma yayınlarında mevcuttur, bu da âşıklar ve gelenekleri hakkındaki ön kabullerin ulusal âşık tarihi anlatısında varlığını sürdürmesine olanak tanımaktadır. Makalede bu çok katmanlı koşulları anlamak için, Köprülü'nün kanonunun çağdaş araştırma ağlarında nasıl aktif bir şekilde iletilip uzlaştırıldığına ışık tutmak için Aktör-Ağ Kuramı [ANT] kullanılmaktadır ve âşıklar ve gelenekleri hakkında yapılan ön kabuller kritik edilmektedir. Âşıkların (insani varlıkları), nesnelerin (insan olmayan varlıklar) ve söylemlerin (bedensel olmayan varlıklar) bir araya getirildiği *çeviriler*in titiz bir analizi aracılığıyla, bu makale, ANTi-Tarih yoluyla dışlayıcı bir tarihsel anlatısına mesafe alarak, daha kapsayıcı bir geçmişi bir perspektif olarak önerir. Ayrıca hem insan olmayan hem de bedensel olmayan varlıkları içeren geniş bir spektrumda bu kanona etkisi olan aktörlerin izlerini takip ederek âşıkların tarih yazımını eleştiren özgürleştirici bir ontolojik soruşturma yürütmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Âşık, Âşıklık geleneği, ANTi-Tarih, Aktör-Ağ Teori (ANT), Tarihyazımı

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Introduction: Imagining Âşıks As an Actor-Network

In the musical panorama of Turkey in the last century, *âşık-s*[1] or *saz*-poets[2] stand out as essential iconic figures. Âşıks perform virtuosically on the saz instrument[3] while singing poetic verses that use specific formulas learned and derived from over 500 years of tradition. These nomadic musical actors display phenomenal skill on their saz while traveling from village to village and performing in diverse venues, including regional and national competitions. Their extensive journeys are primarily enabled through experiencing diverse interactions that enhance not only their skills in âşıklık and musical productivity, but also contribute to expanding their networks. They become actors in much larger and complex networks, especially through engaging with other âşıks, various melodies, events, nature, and norms of communities and religious legacies. These influences affect their experiences that emerge while traversing different geographies in their encounters.

As âşıks travel to different regions in Anatolia and even the wider world, the saz takes on a vital positionality. A symbiotic relationship emerges between the musician and the instrument, which is made through a combination of outer world influences and their collective creativity. The saz instrument plays an important role in the development and narration of the âşıks' lives. In this way, the âşıks and the saz elevate each other beyond their conventional roles as human and non-human entities. The saz plays a crucial role in experiencing and enacting[4] these processes, and thereby transcends its status as an ordinary object. It establishes itself as a key actor in the development of the âşıklık [minstrelsy] tradition, thereby mirroring the skills of the âşıks. The instrument plays an effective role both in the development of the âşık's musical experience and also in the transmission of his or her musical corpus, which, itself, is shaped through an inter-corporeal process. Furthermore, the saz is an actor that provides a range of possibilities in the form of different timbres and melodic patterns in the hands of âşıks, and makes possible auditory and performative transformations.[5] The saz, the poetic lyrics of the âşıks, the âşıks themselves, and the tradition they individually represent are not merely products of literary narrative and musical agency of both the musician and the saz. Looking at their agency through various actors opens gateways to a socio-material world that is formed through relationality and woven through the ties of culture, history, and materiality.

Various types of materials consisting of books, biographies, magazines [*mecmua-s*], *cönk*-s,[6] music sheets, collections, sound recordings, pictures, and videos about âşıks throughout the centuries show the interactive and variable nature of âşıks and their world. The aforementioned materials demonstrate how the ontologies of âşıks vary according to their relationality within their different circumstances. The consideration of material entities and discourses as actors allows for a nuanced exploration of the âşıklık tradition, acknowledging the diverse actors and their roles in shaping the dynamic and multifaceted historiography of âşıks. A relational ontology necessitates a

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[1] Âşıks are one of the most emblematic musical characters in Anatolia, also known as folk poets (halk ozanı), that play the saz and sing songs under their pen name (*mahlas*).

[2] Saz poets are the most common definition for âşık literature.

[3] Saz means "instrument" in Turkish. In Turkey, "saz" is colloquially used to refer to a type of lute used in the folk music genre.

[4] ANT scholars use the word "enact" to refer to the process of construction and realization of networks through the agency of human and non-human actors.

[5] Bruno Latour calls transformations "translations" in his book *Re-assembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory*.

[6] *Cönk* are leather-covered notebooks in which collections of poems written by various poets from different literary genres are written.

distributed agency model, in which the agent is not innately situated a priori—neither in individuals nor objects—but instead operates through identifiable constellations of agency that leave observable traces (Van Oyen, 2015: 65) used to construct historical translations.

Historians, folklorists, folk music researchers, and other academics who conduct research on âşıks and the âşık tradition refrain from defining the tradition as a relational agency that is reliant on the interaction and circulation of various actors. While displaying literacy in certain areas (Köprülü, [1962] 2004; Başgöz 1968: 11; Kaya, 2003: 5; Kaptan, Yurduşen, 2014: 204), scholars tend to observe flexibility and diversity in the âşıks' performances. In this way, the cultural and performative knowledge associated with âşıks and âşıklık are realized in particular spaces and through rules and processes of transmission within the framework of history. These experiences of âşıks are portrayed through specific combinations of poetic and musical forms concerning their representation.

Scholars often interpreted âşık's divan poems and lyrics in *aruz* meter as mere imitations, ruptures, deviations, or problems resulting from the breaks in tradition and processes of change in the âşık's cultural output. Generally, scholars create a specific actor-network to contextualize their written texts. They also generate narratives that can be considered a vital part of an authentic and valuable historical lineage. This enables us to understand the historiography of âşıklık. This canon, which is robust in historiography, consistently portrays the historians' ideologies about âşıks and their agency today. The canon also normalizes the discursive practices of the networks of âşıklık to the point of being taken for granted. Scholars affect the narrative of their agency through assemblages of specified actors and materials. However, they do not consider that actors from both the human *and* non-human realms form networks of which âşıks and âşıklık are products.

The purpose of this article is to summarize and identify the various types of actors and their creative outputs to understand the historiography of âşıklık. Thus, this paper critiques the categorization of human actors within coherent or stable versions of the past and shows how the historical narratives constructed around these actors are enacted by material delegations which consist of terms, lyrics, music sheets, instruments, and places. Realizing that the past is still unfolding through the actions of different actors requires a recontextualization of all kinds of actors–namely the people, materials, categories, and discourses that have become stabilized by [H]istory.[7] Consequently, the "trajectories of stabilized categories'' (Van Oyen, 2015: 66) calcified in the [H]istorical narrative help us understand how patterns of continuity or stability of the narrative are related to the agency of âşıks. Bruno Latour's Actor-Network Theory focuses on material practices and the re-considering of actors that are scattered in different temporalities. Hence, it paves the way to add various types of actors, who are excluded or concealed from the critical narrative of the history of the âşıklık tradition, to the construction of knowledge of the past.

Theoretical Framework: ANT, ANT-i History and Apparatuses

History is an actor-network in which certain actors and discourses turn the past into a visible and readable object. These actors and discourses that critique the canon, particularly those created by post-Republican historians, explain the tradition of âşıklık. In this manner, rather than adhering to a narrative that is established in the most durable telling of [H]istory in which actors take on specific functions, one can reimagine âşıks and their

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[7] Here, I use the capital "H" to refer to the dominant narrative of âşıklık over time.

traditions within a multilayered context in which different types of actors, encompassing human, non-human, and non-corporeal discourses, are involved.

An actor can be understood by their social definitions and their interactions between people, events, and objects within a network. A network-like ontology allows us to see or define social fabric because it emphasizes relationality rather than a reduction to mere individuals, groups, communities, and institutions (Latour, 1996). The "social" implied by Actor-Network Theory (hereby referred to as ANT) is used to describe the relationship between heterogeneous elements that arise from interactions between humans and non-humans, which are not a priori (Latour, 2005). In a historical narrative, we must imagine the âşık as possessing creative agency through which events and actions performatively transform. As an actor, an âşık continuously rebuilds him/her-self as they encounter and interact with people and things. This viewpoint allows us to broadly consider their creative potentials and their traditions. ANT centers on the idea that agency can emerge in line with the relationships actors establish. Moreover, ANT asserts that agency, as observed in the social sciences, is not shared only among human actors; agency can also be understood through heterogeneous associations by tracing the emergence of a network that is shaped by the inclusion of material objects. Hence, instead of being a feature of a structure based on the understanding of how actors act in accordance with a system, agency is based in the social-ecological system that emerges in associations that occur in interactions between the human and non-human (Diwiartama & Rosin, 2014).

Âşıks possess an instrumentality that goes beyond categorization or generalization. Rather than being predetermined, their agencies are formed in conjunction with other actors and the assemblages of which they are a part. One must imagine the assemblages in which âşıks roam and participate by presenting an inclusive past rather than an exclusive historical narrative. To explore significant discursive concepts, ideological ideals, and convictions that uphold the value and knowledge of âşıklık in a historical flux, an analysis of the historiography of the âşık tradition that academics, particularly historians, have articulated and constructed is necessary. According to Van Oyen, ANT combines its specific approach to material practices and its distributed agency in different places and times (Van Oyen, 2015: 66), thereby opening the door for the inclusion of different types of historical actors. By analyzing the relationality between the history and agency of âşıks, we can critique the historiography in a kaleidoscopic way. ANT's proposal to process evidence left by actors without considering hierarchy leads to understanding and observing a multiplicity of diversity, differences in application, processes of change, discourses, and similarities (Sayes, 2014: 145). Investigating a historical narrative through the lens of an actor-network requires defining and pursuing the influential historians, discourses, âşıks, instruments, and songs as variable actors. This leads us to understand how the changes that occur in situations seen as deviation, that is, during transformation, affect the network-formation process and how certain actors manipulate the ontological situations of other actors (Luo, 2020: 11). Actor's attempts to follow other actors (Latour, 2005) open the door to how a particular historical narrative circulates beyond the construction of historical knowledge through actors and networks. To attempt to critique historiography with such a concept, one must adopt a methodology that allows the creation of different versions of history by recognizing the multi-layered and permeable potential of the past and pursuing countless traces of actors (Mills & Durepos, 2010: 26). Here, I borrow Gabrielle Durepos and Albert Mills's concept of *ANTi-History* (2012), which focuses on the production of history and actors (as human and non-human) (2012: XVIII). As Christopher M. Hartt states, ANTi-History is the "conceptualization that brings together concepts from ANT and historiography, centering its focus on the *production* of history (or knowledge of the past)

as situated in the interactions of a network of actors and actants to produce a result" (history of events) (Hartt, 2013: 23).

ANTi-history adds more nuances in questioning how the past was enacted by a network of heterogeneous actors in the production of current knowledge as history. It also provides the opportunity to interpret how it has influenced the âşık tradition, actors of âşıklık, and multiple versions of the past, by following historians and information they produced while constructing this narrative. An approach of this kind always allows for more possibilities for multiple and alternative versions of reality (Mol, 1999: 77), while remaining at arm's length from the idea that the past must have a single, absolute ontological reality. By tracing the effects of human actors within a broad spectrum that includes non-humans and non-corporeal actants (NACs)[8], one can carry out additional emancipatory ontological inquiry to critique the historiography of âşıklık. Following the various actors as they navigate historiographies allows one to interrogate the established and constantly enacted depictions of the past, which ANT defines as a black box, through various *registers*[9] (Durepos & Mills, 2012). This allows for a variety of perspectives on continuity, representation, tradition, and authenticity, all of which embrace embedded ideologies within historicity.

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[8] NACs are the ideas, values, and beliefs conveyed as discourse in a historical narrative as non-corporeal actants specific to that actor network that connects the actors and actants. NCAs thus enable us to understand the discourses through which history is organized and acted upon by particular networks and actors.

[9] "Registers" refer to evidence with which scholars work to build a narrative.

Associating Specific Actors for Historical Continuity: Âşıks, Definitions, Categorizations

Printed sources produced about the âşık tradition are mostly based on the shaping of a historiography in which the musical elements of the oral tradition could not be recorded until a certain century, but could be read by focusing on the lyrics. The interpretation by researchers of a tradition that produces sounds and lyrics is examined based on the lyrics, often introducing the actor with a biographical introduction (Köprülü, 1930; Öztelli 1965; Eren, 1973). Such a methodology of evaluation will then frame certain properties about the âşıks and their tradition in which they are examined, and create criteria of value that can define âşıks as average, weak, imitative, genuine, etc. For this reason, some âşıks are weighed on an aesthetic scale when examining their relations with the tradition and the variables in the processes of artistic production. It is for this reason that âşıks are not given sufficient attention in [H]istorical narratives. Such an exclusion in a sterilized narrative of the tradition will be imagined around a network that is formed by the interactions of the same actors. In this way, historians, researchers, chroniclers of the past, and the materials they produce, reify. To understand the way that discourses function as non-corporeal actors in a larger network enables critique of the historiography. This perspective allows the history itself[10] to emerge from a network where the agency, identity, and qualities of all types of actors within it have a relational context as assemblages (Jones, 2009: 313).

The canon, that is, the network that results from the emergence of narrators and transmitters participating in historiography of âşıklık and âşıks—who encompass not only historians but also collectivity consisting of materials and discourses—allows us to understand how history is recalled. These actors, including historians, materials, and discourses together create a defined and lasting narrative that becomes part of the canon. Critiquing a narrative that has persisted for almost a century, representing the entirety of past knowledge, also presents challenges in structuring the text's narrative. As Latour states, attempting to draw the relative status of historicity without adequately incorporating all actors creates uncertainties (Latour, 1993: 157). However, scrutinizing continuities, transformations, or ruptures in the references foundational to a particular historiography reveals that historical subjects and objects are shaped not solely by past narratives, but also by events and mediations. Consequently, history is conceived not merely as the arrangement of temporal segments conveying temporal situations and actors, but as an agent of change facilitating the alteration of the past, actors, and discourses, and fostering the emergence of ''multiple realities in practices'' in network (Mol, 1999).

Interrogating âşıks and their tradition allows for a multi-faceted dialogue between the present and the past (Öztürk, 2011: 61) that can examine multiple realities. This is due to the diversity of data types available today and the actors who influenced the past. The knowledge of a performance, which is based on oral tradition and is mostly transmitted by others, results in version differences that can be considered major in the interpretation of many discourses, norms, breaking points, and even the history itself. The sum of literature-centered texts, periodization, information differences, and interpretations that are important in evaluating the âşık tradition demonstrates that the past is interpreted at various levels. As a result, the traces of the âşıklık tradition are constantly structured around these time periods, groups, schools, actors, places and social conditions. In a situation where there are so many variables, ANTi-History gives us a different perspective to understand how actors' effects

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[10] I mention "history itself" as the knowledge of the past.

on the past in the production of history through wider range of processes, including debates, interventions, displacements, translations, continuities, changes in practices and distinctions between actors.

The problematic discourse created by a dominant [H]istory can result in the perpetuity of fundamental inaccuracies. The discourse of Mehmet Fuad Köprülü (1890-1996) and the subsequent academic canon that was reimagined after the Constitutional Monarchy [Meşrutiyet] and the Republican period was based on essentialist, romantic and national references (Dressler, 2013: 168) that not only places the historiography of âşık studies under the umbrella of literary studies, but also centralizes the discourse in shaping further research. The strength of Köprülü's narrative served to create an understanding of the past that matched the discourse of the ruling power, regardless of whether this [H]istory could be assessed as accurate. Due to his influence, the [H]istorical narrative written about the âşıks has been based on a reality that separates institutions and crucial actors from their interactions during the Ottoman period. As a result, common interpretations of âşıklık are perpetuated and the associations, interactions, and separations swing on a pendulum between the narratives of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the construction of national identity was based on cultural taste in music. Literature was fictionalized to a great extent by distinguishing the past from the aesthetic codes of Ottoman cultural heritage. Köprülü's attempt to show that the Turkish nation-state as a continuity of a deep cultural past was realized through a legitimization in which two historically distant actors were grouped together. This kind of attempt to redraw temporal dots as continuous lines brings actors into a context contingent upon the elevation of ideology over fact. In addition, the association of some literary genres and forms with âşık style music causes the actors who follow those genres and forms paired to be defined as good examples in the historical narrative. Thus, the actors chosen to define the âşık style musical tradition take part in the establishment of a socio-political network.

In his book *Early Mystics in Turkish Literature,* which was to remain influential for many years, Köprülü characterizes folk Sufi literature through Hoca Ahmad Yasawi and Yunus Emre on the grounds that it contains elements of national taste and folk literature (Dressler, 2013: 188-189). Today, it is evident that scholars have de-legitimized this narrative (Ocak, 2016: 11-12). However, it is important here to be able to interpret the effects of traces of the past on the transmission of history. Yasawi and Yunus, who lived in distant regions a century apart from each other, are associated in the book through a seemingly organic construction in a narrative that influences the production of our knowledge of the past. This influence is realized through the formation of a reciprocal relationship between human and non-human actors; that is, through the occurrence of material delegation (Durepos, 2009: 142). Through these immaterial sources, Köprülü's ideas allowed the historical narrative, which has been widely disseminated from the 20th century to the present day, to inform related networks and enable the continuation of similar perspectives.

Köprülü's work shows us that while knowledge of the past is constructed as history, in fact, actors and discourses play an active role as new associations and translations in the process of "doing *history*" (Jenkins, 2005: 90). As Fuat Özdemir argues, Köprülü considers Turkish literature as a whole rather than a geographical idea of Turanism. As a result, he brings these Turkic literatures and their actors together, and relates them to each other (Özdemir, 1980: 29). The nationalist emphasis frequently seen in Köprülü's work asserts the essential Turkish character of the cultural tendencies he tries to trace from Anatolia to Central Asia. Traces of the cultural relationship he established, from Ahmed Yasawi to Yunus Emre, can be seen in the popular side of Sufi literature.

This representation is described as a serious element of the distinctive national character of the Turks (DeWeese, 2006: X). Later, in a series of articles on âşıks, he historicizes the theme of a great continuity between past and present by juxtaposing different typologies of actor (sham, baksı, bard, divine poet, saz poet, etc.) of a deep-rooted tradition that has continued from Yunus Emre until today in Anatolia. The act of putting them together and aligning them in a row (Durepos, 2009: 139), which early scholars define as saz-poets (Köprülü, 1914; Köprülü, 1930; Köprülü, 1962; Köprülü, 1964; Eren, 1952), allows all actors to be seen as a single thick-network under the umbrella of the term "âşık" in the historical narrative. Within this narrative, some actors from the past are more important than others.

Although Köprülü associated âşıks (under various names in various time periods) with the *ozans* of Central Asia, he rejected the theory of acculturation in which âşıks would have interacted with periphery culture, such as Byzantines, Kurds, Arabs, Armenians and Persians. As Hande Birkalan Gedik states, since this approach also emphasizes authenticity, the historiography of âşıks has been interpreted with reference to a tradition inherited from different actors from Central Asia (Birkalan Gedik, 2008: 10-11). Histories can circulate under the influence of the actors involved in this case, so that the past can gain legitimacy at a macro or micro level (Durepos & Mills, 2012: 714). Although Köprülü was aware of the fact that Persian, Arab and Ottoman influences were in effect, he reconstructed the development of Turkish folk literature with a narrative based on the mystics and Turkish saz poets by using written archive materials (Öztürkmen, 2020: 160). To strengthen the interpretation of this past and to enable the punctuation of historical continuity (Durepos, Mills, 2012: 713) an actor-network of âşıks and their works are included. In brief, material delegations, associating the ontological grounding related to the historiography of âşıklık with Yunus Emre, attributes to a view of a founder that legitimizes the narrative through a process of folding via relational approach to the constitution of the agency of âşıks.

Additions That Continuously Come or Additions That Continue What Came? Gelenek, Âşıklık, and the Borders of Literary Tradition

Köprülü attempted to punctuate the history of the âşık tradition by making ideological negotiations to strengthen his claim in his [H]istory that folk literature fed âşıklık. For this reason, as we will see in the rest of the article, some actors and their products are documented within the practice of doing-history as examples of counter-enrollment of the past for the purpose of punctuation (Durepos, 2009: 181). The human actors and their crafts that Köprülü punctuated formed a large network to create the socio-political foundation of the past that was employed by future scholars. In Köprülü's (1915) article entitled *The Origin and Evolution of the Minstrel Style in Turkish Literature*, he talks about âşık literature and âşıklık as a separate category alongside folk literature and the classical Ottoman literary tradition. He categorizes the âşık literature as a branch that falls within the research field of folklore study, defined as folk literature [halkiyat], which is different from divan literature in terms of its production style and class (Asılsoy, 2017: 46-48). In *Mecmua-i Esâr numbered Turk 59* at Houghton Library, both examples of *türkü* [in the koşma form] belonging to Kayikçi Kul Mustafa and examples from divan poets can be given as an example for this categorization (Güneş, 2017: 240-241). The fact that the lyrics of both folk and classical poets are written in these mecmua-s reflects an important point; the magazines are personalized by poets according to the taste of their readers and listeners who turn to poetry or music for pleasure without discriminating between the folk and classical genres.

However, magazines are not the only signs of relationships in which the lyrics of separate literary traditions are grouped together. As an alternative to Köprülü's classifications, Hikmet Dizdaroğlu states that the poets âşık Çelebi, Nedim, İzzet Molla, Sultan III. Ahmed, Sultan III. Selim, and Sultan II. Mahmud composed poems in syllabic meter. Although these poets are not defined as saz poets, he states that their poetic form falls into the field of *saz poetry* (1977: 66). Evidently, poets who are not saz poets also had an effect on saz poets. It is known that classical poets such as Nedim and Şeyh Galip of the 18th century, and Enderun Vasıf and İzzet Molla from the 19th century, took care to use simple language that appealed to the folk taste in their *aruz* poems. It is thought that these poets provided the orientation towards and continuity of localization and national taste under the influence of the patronage of sultans such as Selim III and Mahmut II (Can, 2009: 5-18).

It is also possible to see the situation in which there is an opposite orientation in the literary style. Saim Sakaoğlu states that Bayburtlu Zihni is a divan poet, but he differs from other divan poets with the high number of poems he wrote in syllabic measure. *Sergüzeştname* of Bayburtlu Zihni states that there are examples of *koşma* on the margins and the last pages of the manuscripts (Sakaoğlu, 1992: 94-97). Mehmet Efendi kept in his *Memoir of Atıf* about the relationship between the palace and folk music, that Sultan Abdülmecid, on his deathbed, requested the folk song *"Kendim ettim kendim buldum döküneyim tas ile"* from the musicians who came to the palace to play *fasıl*[11] for the feast. In Güneş Ayas' book *Noise That Drowns Out the Music*, the recitation of folk songs by the palace musicians in response to the sultan's request is a significant indicator of the fasıl musicians' familiarity with the folk repertoire (Ayas 2018: 33). In addition, Süleyman Şenel states that the âşıks' orientation to genres written in prosody was for the purpose of being close to the enlightened and remaining in palaces and mansions (Senel, 1991: 554). It draws attention to the representation and economic aspects of relations of production. They imitate pen poets[12] [kalem şairi] by using meter, language, rhyme and themes of divan literature. Senel states that this style of writing and speaking became a necessity among âşıks over time and became a part of the âşık tradition called *classical fasıl*. He states that the types of poetry based on prosody existed in the repertoires of the âşıks, who are considered illiterate. (Ibid: 554). It is possible to say that this orientation is not just a process in which aruz comes to the foreground. Walter Feldman reports that folk songs have been on the rise since the time Itri lived, and that the âşıks sang poetry in prosody and divan literature verses outside of syllabic meter (Feldman, cited in Kalpaklı, 2013: 21). It is possible to say that writing or singing poetry, whether as a divan poet or a saz poet, spread to various layers of society in the Ottoman periphery. The fact that topics covered in the poems are shared between the traditions allowed for the sharing of meaning between social layers. From this point of view, it is not possible to say that the cultural and artistic life inside and outside the palace was completely isolated.

The view that the tradition of âşıklık deteriorated after the 19th century and that qualified âşıks could no longer be raised, leads to an inquiry on how the structure, which is thought to continue as a *tradition*, is seen by scholars. Richard Sennet points out in *The Craftsman* that traditional skills are perceived as something that is passed down from generation to generation. Thus, he emphasizes that in the transmission of a craft [in traditional skill-based

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[11] *Fasıl* is the classical Ottoman court suite.

[12] As opposed to saz poets, pen poets were educated in aruz meter and simply wrote rather than wrote and performed.

societies] inheritance of a skill is prioritized over individual capabilities (Sennet, 2019: 35). Performativity is also seen in the continuity of the âşık tradition and in the transmission of appropriate norms. The perception of continuity in skill[13] that is identified with a particular coterie often refers to the interdependence of the network of agents. It is possible to see this intellectual scheme working in the relationship of the âşık with poetry. Therefore, the emergence of situations in which this continuity changes, transforms, or is interrupted is interpreted as a problem by Köprülü and his supportıng academics who conduct research on the tradition and âşıks in historiography.

Köprülü's interpretation of the relationship between saz poets and prosody and the general structure of the âşık tradition is remarkable. In his book *Early Mystics* [İlk Mutasavvuflar], he characterizes the âşık literature, which meets the artistic needs of a particular class, as a separate product from classical, dervish lodge literature and even folk literature [which falls under the study of folklore]. It connects the content that is the source of the formation of âşık literature to a context that asserts from old folk literature, classical literature that meets the needs of the higher classes, and mystical literature (Köprülü, 1976: 354). According to Köprülü, on the subject of âşık literature:

> Although it completely imitated and followed the old folk literature in terms of meter and shape in the
>
> first periods, later, after Fuzûlî, under the influence of classical literature on the one hand and lodge
>
> literature, which was strongly exposed to Persian influence on the other,- in a very flawed and primitive
>
> way - he also tried to apply Persian verse rules; however, since it is a literature that directly appeals to the
>
> public and the people's taste, Persian verse rules could not make him forget the Turkish tradition; national
>
> meter and national forms remained the essence of âşık literatüre (Köprülü, 1976: 354).

However, the orientation of the âşıks in the following century caused a change in Köprülü's perspective on tradition and the relationship with aruz. He states that the group, which he defines as âşıks around the village and tribe, is different from the profile of the âşık created by the urban life and culture, and they reflect the real taste of folk literature because of the neighborhoods in which they grew up and the rural classes they address in their thematic material (1987: 77). He emphasizes that this group is quite far from the influence of classical poetry and aruz prosody. The following statement is noteworthy:

> Just as the âşık, created by the urban life and culture, was swept away by the charm and spiritual
>
> population of the classical poet and classical poetry, the saz poet who grew up in villages and tribes can
>
> not cease to consider the urban âşık who is the owner and representative of higher culture for an ideal
>
> example for himself (Köprülü, 1987: 77).

Considering that âşıks traveled, this explanation is inevitable. The environments or conditions that enable âşıks in different places to meet in terms of performance and interaction also bring the traces of literary culture to a common and permeable level. It may be possible for âşıks to come to big cultural centers to prove their merits, to

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[13] Sennet states that the origin of the word skill is the word "poiein," that is "to stick," and that it is the ancestor of the word poetry (*şiir*) and that poets (*şair*) in the epic are not just a kind of craftsman (Sennet, 2019: 35-37).

come of age, to perform in the cultural environment of coffee houses, to reinforce continuity, and to show their mastery.

In the 19th century, Köprülü, in his article *Classical Literary Elements in Minstrel Literature*, determined that the inclusion of elements of classical literature into âşıklık was a substitution for elements of folk literature that deteriorated the nature, lyrical structure, and vibrancy of the tradition. He says that by incorporating the concepts of classical poetry into the âşık style, âşık music turned into a rigid and lifeless product that could not evolve beyond poor imitation (Köprülü, 1999: 189-190). Does he believe that âşıks are not oriented toward performance, and, rather, are instead text-oriented like pen poets? Have no âşıks emerged that were successful in pulling off this hybridity? Are no âşıks able to perform in purely classical forms? Although he emphasizes that the âşık style evolved from two different literary traditions, he states that traces of old folk literature [especially the versions of the 16th and 17th centuries] are seen in the expression style of âşık literature (Köprülü, 1987: 79-80). It reflects a process of interaction in which the effects of localization and the existence of âşık literature occupies more space, especially in the literary orientations of the 19th century Ottoman Empire. However, Köprülü pairs the idea that âşık literature moves away from public taste by gaining an identity within the urban life [Istanbul-based] with the charm of classical literature. In his book *Turkish Saz Poets*, Köprülü describes the general situation of the âşık tradition in the 19th century;

> The lodges belonging to various sects in the cities and the Sufi poets who grew up there were agents [the person who did a job] who tried to bring these two currents closer together for a long time. The saz poets, who were alien to and even hostile to the madrasa science, were breathing the air of free wisdom they needed in the neighborhood of the lodge, and they were more or less familiar with classical music and classical poetry there. The desire of the 19th century saz poets to compete with the 'pencil poets' in their language and style, to write in 'aruz' like them, to use 'compositions, foreign words and phrases' even in the poems they wrote with 'hece' was very clear. In more general terms, we witness the phenomenon of 'mutual cohesion and influence' [processing] in literature and music from the 'nobles' to the 'people' and from the people's strata to the distinguished strata, which has started strongly since the 17th century. The event was strengthened completely in the 19th century. However, as a result of this, we see that in the works of saz poets, the real taste of the people is deteriorated, weakened, and hesitant [corruption] (Köprülü, 2004 [1962]: 471-472).

There are some reasons for the process being read in this way by Köprülü. First of all, there were too various âşıks type in the 19th century Ottoman Empire, a disintegration of organizational structures (which had been established in coffeehouses after the dissolution of the Janissary corps), and saz poets of the military class had involved themselves in a *coffeehouse-centered* tradition. 19th-century life, which shaped both the genres played and the format of representation (settling on saz and voice), triggered the âşıks to reformulate their skills. Moreover, some saz poets did not complete the process of becoming âşık through a coffeehouse-centered tradition network and did not have a coterie, which one can interpret as the reason for these changes. Besides, Köprülü,

mentions that the new combination of elements passing from the classical style to the âşık style disrupts the subordination, lyricism and vitality of folk literature. A fixed understanding of art is formed depending on certain norms and rules by including the conceptual features of the classical style in the âşık style (Köprülü, 2018: 244). He thinks that this degeneration is shaped in Semai coffeehouses in big centers, where it gained an entertainment-centered prevalence in the public sphere.

In Köprülü's article entitled "Life and Literature," he interprets the potential of divan literature as a fake product while showing a preference for indirect speech;

> […] a literature that does not openly reflect our sorrows, disasters, and moral wounds is a false and unrelated literature with life. Such a literature may produce jewelers who are very skilled at arranging words and working on them; maybe they can do very fancy, very conspicuous things; but unfortunately all these fake crops are like the large-leafed, brightly colored flowers that grow in neat conservatories: these dazzling crops of those unknown hot climates that seem so wondrous and alluring to us from their distance. Just as it cannot withstand a strong wind in the open air, such a literature that has nothing to do with life is condemned to be swept away in front of the endless whirlwinds of time, or to live in the narrow, fake air of the conservatory (Köprülü, 1987: 42-43).

Pertev Naili Boratav says that the topics of the urban-town âşıks are performed regardless of when or where they belong. For this reason, he states that such products of folk poetry are often imitated and become out of date by being used by everyone. He emphasizes that the productions of these poets are not left to the memory of the people, but take place in written form in conk-s and magazines, just like in the works of divan literature, as a product of art that is learned from technical skills, delicacy and masters (2000, p.89). Suppose if we freeze and evaluate the tradition of âşık literature, we might interpret tradition based on repetition and continuity as a closed system. In that case, we should exclude the new structures added to the tradition through individuals' creativity and the socio-material conditions. However, Boratav's explanation in another study is based on a different context from the above discourse. On the relationship between divan literature and folk literature, Boratav writes:

> I consider folk literature and divan literature as a whole. I cannot excommunicate any of them. Contemporary ideals cannot and should not be in conflict with knowing and evaluating the past culture. The main mazmun [meaning] in our prosody poetry [divan poetry] that we have made from Iran. The poet was chasing after pure [bâkir], masterful, in short, unheard verse. Divan poetry describes some pleasures in a narrow frame. It is also a part of society, it reflects it…. In fact, folk poems said the same things as Divan poetry. There is no big difference other than their language. In every era, there is an infiltration and influence from Divan literature to folk literature. That's why I say our old culture is a whole. Even if it is very difficult to learn, watch and benefit from, we should not break away from it. Folk poetry can also act as a bridge in this field (Boratav, cited in Karaalioğlu, 1973: 576).

Cemal Kafadar mentions the problem of dualism, which is emphasized in the studies on Ottoman civilization, and leaves almost *no intermediate tone and texture*, which causes the dynamic diversity of expression between these two poles to disappear (Kafadar, 2009: 40). Although the distinctions made over the palace and âşık music in the Ottoman periphery are seen as cultural activities at different poles, it does not mean that there is a separate and non-transitive dynamic at the point of cultural exchange and interaction.

Conclusion: Instead of Tradition, Gelen-ek (Coming-addition) As a Non-Corporeal Actant for Historiography

To view the world of âşıks and their history in a kaleidoscopic way, ANTi-history is an analytical approach providing more nuances in questioning how the past as history was produced by a network of heterogeneous actors in the production of current knowledge. It also provides the opportunity to interpret how history-doing has influenced the âşık tradition, its actors, and multiple versions of the past by following scholars and the available information they produced when constructing this narrative. In employing ANTi-History to scrutinize the enduring traces of Köprülü's canon, we unravel a complex network of actors, including scholars, texts, institutions, and discourses. This theoretical lens allows us to trace the dynamic interactions and negotiations that shape contemporary publications, emphasizing the active role of non-human entities alongside human actors in perpetuating and changing the specific presuppositions surrounding âşıks and their history within this scholarly discourse.

In Turkish, tradition (gelen-ek) is a word derived from the verb root come (gelmek). Attaching the word "ek" as a suffix to "gelen" means adding to something extant or to the adding a new form of the continuation of something that already exists. However, when we think of the word come, it gives both the occurrence of something that comes from the past or is transferred, and the addition of something else to something that happened in the past in the present. The tension it creates within its own meaning is exactly as it should be, as it is actually a part of this process. The "ek" (addition) that comes from the past to the present, exists today and will extend into the future as a productive essence or mortar. In other words, it is a discourse that emphasizes the continuity of past practices today and, on the other hand, has references to the present day with its own unique practices (Atay, 2004: 156). Latour's concept of translation is a process in which practices are displaced and transformed to some extent, rather than their precise transfer (Baiocchi, Graizbord, Muniz 2013: 330). Just as Baiocchi interprets translation as displacement, the Arabic phrase for "gelenek," "an'ane," refers to hadiths producing narrations during transmission between people that can differ (Vural, 2003: 161). The formation of these translations allows us to understand the transformation of the actors involved in the critique of historiography, as well as the formation of alliance processes that displace some actors.

Using the concept of tradition according to its meaning in Turkish and basing it on notion of non-corporeal actor (Price, S.T., et al 2017: 24), "gelen-ek" allows us to understand how the actors participating in the writing of history base their actions in the history-making process with other actors. It also shows that they build their ideological positions by marginalizing other actors and discourses used in the construction of the counter-history narrative. In Edward Shils' article in *Tradition*, he draws attention to the distinction between the traditional and the non-traditional. At this point, an ambiguous problem arises, such as defining what is and what is not tradition (Shils, 2002: 160). "Gelen-ek" is a multi-layered interface for the critique of historiography, helping to understand

the impact of actors on the production of knowledge of the past, and will be a facilitating tool in interpreting politics of actor-networks that have a transformative effect on the history-making processes.

The lens of the non-corporeal actor through which all these narratives will be read, seems to be tradition. The evaluations conveyed about âşıks and their cultural outputs are mostly interpreted by attaching them to the orbit of the principle of continuity and the concept of tradition. Therefore, the historiography about âşıklık is itself shaped by the circulation of some actors and their products, just like the products of âşıks. The relationality that emerges between the actors involved in the production of this knowledge can be realized by understanding how the relations between the actors involved in the transmission of this narrative give meaning to the events and how they are politically involved in the determination of meaning (Tureta, 2012: 4). Köprülü and other researchers of that period avoid defining the âşık tradition as a flexible and productive practical agency dependent on the interaction and circulation of different actors. Instead, they jointly define specific space, rules, and specially appointed actors in the transmission of knowledge of the past. By associating them with actors with different names in the past, they interpret âşıklık in an attempt to punctuate history by creating a connection between authentic and distinct actors in different times. Latour points out that the thing that triggers the action is defined as having certain characteristics, and the figuration becomes something beyond that of their general circumstances. He even emphasizes that granting anonymity to an agency can also have a figuration, thus transforming the agent into an *ideo* rather than being anthropomorphic (Latour, 2005: 53) as in the example of Yunus Emre and Ahmad Yasawe. Thus, versions of the past as the subject of history concerning different actors make possible a narrative that allows imaginations and ideologies to be justified. Therefore, what can strengthen the theme of continuity is updating the discourses that legitimize the historian's chosen roles and designated actors in the construction of knowledge of the past. In short, tradition is an apparatus that reads ideo-s of actors that have been derived and translated. Tradition legitimizes discourses as if they were stable or reveals the tensions during a process of change.

Âşık scholars focused excessively on certain conventions while pushing Köprülü's narrative through their chosen tradition-history makers. They developed discourses about the death or degeneration of tradition for situations that fall outside of their definition. However, all the elements of the tradition are not the product of a single historical structure, but of a fragmented and variable whole. At certain times, some of these structures may be more prominent than others. They also may be abandoned altogether as a new feature is traditionalized. Howerever, this does not mean that the tradition is broken or dead. Rather, these structures, namely 'ek,' branch off in order to show continuity in different ways. In her book *Between Past and Future*, Hanna Arendth emphasizes that "without a solid anchor such as tradition," we should mention the existence of many thin, some thicker traditions that emerged in a more rhizomatic way (Arendth, 2012:130). It is important to consider that the powers of tradition arise from the differences between it and their symbiotic relationships with each other. Discourses about what a tradition is or how it should be are not only related to the continuity of the practices of enactment, but also to the processes of interaction in which tradition is produced, namely the actor-network.

Köprülü's translation of some sections of the past for a specific political or ideological purpose legitimizes independent places, times, actors and discourses through an almost uninterrupted continuity. In other words, it causes the socio-history about which he writes to be defined exponentially by combining it with specific actors and an almost linear relationship. However, the political references behind associating the past as history cause the actors to be ranked within certain norms and rules, and as a result, to be read with extraordinary differences of

interpretation. Such an attempt serves to create an established version of the âşıks and their traditions, and to sort the differences and transformations according to the design of the dualist fiction of the [H]istorical narrative. The focus created by this constraint makes the âşık style literary tradition a litmus test among literary groups. While the productions of some representatives enable interactive traditions to be defined by a common literary tradition, others help clarify the distances between this literature and, in turn, create tensions within literary tradition in historiography.

Contradictions and unquestioned beliefs of some important researchers of literary traditions cause an intellectual calcification (a kind of hegemony) that affects the perspectives of all subsequent studies. Although there are many historians that work on âşıks and their tradition, Köprülü is the most influential name. The traces of influence created by his writings gain strength in a network in which historical knowledge becomes traditional as researchers working in this field refer to it using various material delegations. In particular, historical narrative based on continuity, representation, and temporality is constructed as a founding basis during the writing phase of this research. Although it is not necessary in most works to trace the history of âşıklık from the earliest period, this style of writing has also become traditionalized. These trends make the power of Köprülü and the network that perpetuates it visible.

While the indicators of the Republican period that enabled Turkey to become a nation state become the subject of history, researchers reinterpret certain aspects of the past through selection and filtering. During this practice, the decisions made regarding the finalization of the canon, namely, determining its actors and which cultural codes will operate and in what way, produce the socio-political realities of historiography. The process of making such a history is shaped by national ideals, references to modernity, and the attempt to ascertain the designated and desired roots or origins of Turkey. However, the history and culture is more complex than this. Although historians write in their narratives that the origins of the nation are the building blocks of modern society, the cultural temporality of the nation leads to an uncertainty about parameters that covers a much more transitional social reality (Bhabha, 1990: 1-2). The stability that a culture seeks is built on an imaginary representation of social life. However, the whole of society, which is seen or intended to be seen as a monolith, is mixed. In Homi K. Bhabha's words, the emergence of a nation's political rationality as a genre (Ibid: 2) constantly refers to a "self-created" history in the form of its own historical narrative, cultural selection and adaptation, principles, ideologies and strategies.

ANTi-History reveals how actors within historiography produce [H]istory of âşıks and their tradition and how they influence the production of knowledge of the past as history by using specific actors. By examining the writings of this past through the lens of ANTi-History, we can reveal marginalized actors and alternative perspectives that may have been overlooked or silenced in the transmission of canonized history. This approach enables us to comprehend gelen-ek as a more inclusive and articulated organism. We can replace the conservative aspect of tradition, which is used as a non-corporeal actor in the narrative of historiography, as a concept (coming-addition) that allows the inclusion of alternative actors and diverse stories in an attempt to critique the historical narrative.

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