

The Palimpsest Memory of Anatolia: The Cultural Transformation of Turkistan's Narrative and Hagiographic Traditions

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the layers of cultural memory transmitted from Turkistan to Anatolia in the eleventh to thirteenth centuries within the framework of oral tradition. The structural continuity between the *Oğuz Kağan Epic* and the *Book of Dede Korkut*, explored through Vladimir Propp's morphological model and Karl Reichl's research on performance, indicates that epic forms maintained their function despite migration and political disruption. The transmission from Ahmad Yesevî's *hikets* to Yunus Emre's poetry, discussed alongside the findings of Fuad Köprülü and Cemal Kurnaz, highlights the role of mystical verse as pedagogy and as a discourse of consolation during periods of crisis. The *Velâyetnâme of Hacı Bektaş Veli*, the *Saltuknâme*, and the *Menâkıbu'l-Ârifîn*, interpreted through Irene Melikoff, Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, and Nathalie Clayer, show that the hagiographic repertoire functioned as a narrative archive of sanctity and legitimacy. The writings of Kaşgarlı Mahmud, Yusuf Has Hacib, and Aşık Paşa underscore Turkish as a decisive axis of cultural translation and identity-making. Framed by the perspectives of Jan Assmann, Walter Ong, John Foley, Homi Bhabha, and Richard Schechner, this study interprets Anatolia as a palimpsest where the epic, Sufi, and hagiographic inheritances of Turkistan were adapted to new contexts and transformed into a multilayered cultural space.

Anadolu'nun Palimpsest Hafızası: Türkistan Anlatı ve Hagiografik Repertuarının Kültürel Dönüşümü

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ÖZ

Bu makale, 11–13. yüzyıllar arasında Türkistan'dan Anadolu'ya taşınan kültürel bellek katmanlarını sözlü gelenek bağlamında ele almaktadır. Araştırma, epik anlatılar, tasavvufi şiirler, didaktik söylemler ve hagiografik repertuar üzerinden kimliğin oluşumunu ve toplumsal hafızanın biçimlenişini incelemektedir. *Oğuz Kağan Destanı* ile *Dede Korkut Kitabı* arasındaki yapısal süreklilik, Vladimir Propp'un morfolojik modeli ve Karl Reichl'in performans araştırmaları aracılığıyla değerlendirilmiştir; epik formların göç ve siyasi kırılmalar karşısında işlevsel konumunu koruduğu gösterilmiştir. Ahmed Yesevî'nin hikmetleri ile Yunus Emre'nin şiirleri arasındaki aktarım ilişkisi, Fuad Köprülü ve Cemal Kurnaz'ın çalışmalarıyla birlikte ele alınarak, tasavvufi şiirin pedagojik yönünün yanı sıra kriz dönemlerinde toplumsal teselli üreten bir söylem yarattığı anlaşılmıştır. *Velâyetnâme-i Hacı Bektaş Veli*, *Saltuknâme* ve *Menâkıbu'l-Ârifîn* Irene Melikoff, Ahmet Yaşar Ocak ve Nathalie Clayer'in yaklaşımları ışığında incelenmiş; hagiografik repertuarın dini otoriteyi toplumsal meşruiyet alanına taşıyan bir anlatı dağarcığı işlevi üstlendiği ortaya çıkmıştır. Kaşgarlı Mahmud, Yusuf Has Hacib ve Aşık Paşa'nın eserleri ise, Türkçe'nin kültürel çeviri ve kimlik üretiminde belirleyici bir eksen olarak işlediğini göstermektedir. Jan Assmann, Walter Ong, John Foley, Homi Bhabha ve Richard Schechner'in kuramsal perspektifleriyle desteklenen bu çözümleme, Anadolu'yu bir "palimpsest" olarak yorumlamakta; Türkistan'ın epik, tasavvufi ve hagiografik mirasının burada yeni bağlamlara uyarlanarak çok katmanlı bir kültürel mekâna dönüştüğünü ifade etmektedir.

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INTRODUCTION

The eleventh to thirteenth centuries represent a pivotal epoch in the history of Anatolia, marking the transformation of the region into a principal foremost center of Islamic civilization. The migrations of Oghuz groups from Turkistan following the Battle of Manzikert in 1071 initiated not only demographic change but also a transfer of intangible repertoires, epic traditions, poetic idioms, and ritualized narratives, that profoundly altered the cultural horizon of Anatolia.¹ These repertoires operated as mnemonic infrastructures, sustaining collective identity through oral performance and embedding mythic as well as religious codes in a new sociopolitical environment. The consolidation of Seljuk authority with Konya as its capital provided fertile ground for the reconfiguration of oral repertoires, while episodes such as the Babaî uprising in 1240 demonstrated the entanglement of popular religiosity, heterodox movements, and narrative continuity.²

Earlier scholarship has placed emphasis on political consolidation and institutional history. Cahen underscored the administrative and military dimensions of Seljuk power,³ while Kafesoğlu focused on the cultural ideology underpinning Turkish migration.⁴ Köprülü highlighted the intellectual foundations of Anatolian Islam in his study of early mystics, though the performativity of oral culture remained underexplored.⁵ Ocak offered significant insights into heterodox religious currents, yet the narrative functions of oral repertoires as mechanisms of identity formation have received insufficient attention.⁶ More recent research has sought to address this gap: Karaoğlu demonstrated how Turkic ritual elements persisted within Alevi religious practices, showing the endurance of Turkistan's cultural substrata in Anatolian oral traditions,⁷ and Gürer examined Qādiriyya narratives in Turkistan as precursors to Anatolian hagiographic discourse.⁸ These studies highlight the need to reassess the cultural history of Anatolia through oral and performative transmission rather than limiting analysis to political institutions.

The continuity of epic material provides compelling evidence of this cultural transfer. Narratives such as the *Oğuz Kağan Destanı* and the legends surrounding Alp Er Tunga, which originated in the nomadic milieu of Turkistan, migrated with Oghuz groups and re-emerged in Anatolia, most visibly in the *Book of Dede Korkut*.⁹ The palimpsestic layering of heroic archetypes, kinship structures, and ritualized memory illustrates how oral tradition inscribed inherited repertoires onto new social landscapes. By sustaining motifs across geographies, oral narratives enabled the construction of collective identity through hybridity and continuity.

A similar trajectory is evident in Sufi discourse. The *hikets* of Ahmed Yesevî, composed in vernacular Turkic for oral recitation, embodied both a pedagogy of devotion and a form of ritual memory.¹⁰ Their resonance in Anatolia culminated in the poetry of Yunus Emre, who reformulated

¹ Claude Cahen, *Osmanlılardan Önce Anadolu'da Türkler*, trans. Yıldız Moran (İstanbul: E Yayınları, 1994), 55.

² Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Babailer İsyanı: Aleviliğin Tarihsel Altyapısı Yahut Anadolu'da İslam-Türk Heterodoksisinin Teşekkülü* (Ankara: Dergâh Yayınları, 1996), 44.

³ Claude Cahen, *İslamiyet ve Türkler*, trans. Yıldız Moran (İstanbul: E Yayınları, 1984), 73.

⁴ İbrahim Kafesoğlu, *Türk Milli Kültürü* (Ankara: Ötüken Yayınları, 1996), 201.

⁵ Fuad Köprülü, *Türk Edebiyatında İlk Mutasavvıflar* (Ankara: Akçağ Yayınları, 2003), 72.

⁶ Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Türk Sufiliği: Tarihi ve Kültürel Bir Bakış* (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 1996), 89.

⁷ Hamza Karaoğlu, "Anadolu Alevilerinin Dini Ritüel ve Rükünlerinde Geleneksel Türk Dininin İzleri", *JOSHAS Journal* 8/56 (2022), 1215.

⁸ Betül Gürer, "Türkistan'da Kâdiriyye İzleri: Muhammed Sıddık Rüşdî'nin Menâkıb-ı Hazret-i Gavsü'l-A'zam Risâlesi", *Edeb Erkan* 6 (2024).

⁹ Muharrem Ergin, *Dede Korkut Kitabı I* (Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu Yayınları, 2004), 34.

¹⁰ Cemal Kurnaz, *Yesevî'den Yunus'a* (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 1999), 57.

Turkistan's mystical idiom into a distinctly Anatolian articulation marked by accessibility, immediacy, and devotional intensity. The performativity of this poetry facilitated its dissemination across diverse audiences, ensuring that mystical knowledge was mediated through vernacular spirituality.¹¹ In this way, Sufi poetic discourse functioned as a vehicle of cultural continuity and as a mediator between elite and popular religiosity.

Hagiographic texts, miracle tales, and menāqibnāmes further reinforced this process of transmission. Within Ahi fraternities and Sufi orders, oral narratives circulated as didactic instruments that preserved ethical norms and ritual practices, creating what Assmann defines as cultural memory, an enduring framework for identity sustained across ruptures.¹² These repertoires anchored communal cohesion and embedded religious imagination within daily life, illustrating the formative role of oral culture in shaping the Turkish-Islamic synthesis of Anatolia.

This article adopts an interdisciplinary methodology integrating history, literary analysis, and the study of religion. Its theoretical orientation draws upon Jan Assmann's concept of cultural memory to explain how repertoires transcend textual fixity, Walter Ong's analysis of orality and literacy to interrogate the oral-to-written interface, and Vladimir Propp's structural approach to reveal recurring narrative functions.¹³ By applying these frameworks to epic, poetic, and didactic corpora, the study demonstrates how oral repertoires migrated from Turkistan to Anatolia and were re-inscribed as instruments of cultural transmission, how Sufi poetry generated a vernacular spirituality that mediated between different social strata, and how didactic narratives established a mnemonic infrastructure for collective identity. In so doing, the article positions Anatolia not as a passive recipient of Turkistan's legacy but as an active site of cultural reconfiguration, where repertoires of memory, performance, and narrative hybridity produced a distinct Turkish-Islamic synthesis.

1. Theoretical Framework

The investigation of oral tradition and its transmission from Turkistan to Anatolia necessitates a conceptual framework that is historically grounded and theoretically robust. Earlier research has provided indispensable historical and philological contributions, yet a systematic integration of theoretical perspectives has largely been absent. Köprülü's pioneering account of early mystics established the intellectual genealogy of Turkish Sufism but treated oral expression primarily as a reflection of doctrinal evolution.¹⁴ Ocak's inquiries into heterodox movements illuminated the religious dynamics of the thirteenth century, though without sustained attention to the mechanics of oral repertoires as instruments of cultural continuity.¹⁵ More recent contributions reveal the same lacuna: Karaoğlu has demonstrated how Turkic ritual elements persisted within Alevi religious practices of Anatolia, while Gürer has highlighted the role of Qādiriyya narratives in Turkistan as performative vehicles of communal memory.¹⁶ These studies underscore the need for a framework that does not merely juxtapose history and philology but rather integrates cultural memory, oral theory, and narrative morphology within a broader interpretive horizon.

Jan Assmann's formulation of cultural memory offers a crucial foundation for this inquiry.

¹¹ Irene Melikoff, *Uyur İdik Uyardılar: Alevî-Bektaşî Anlatı Geleneği*, trans. Turan Alptekin (İstanbul: Cem Yayınları, 1993), 104.

¹² Emel Esin, *Orta Asya'dan Osmanlı'ya Türk Sanatında İkonografik Motifler* (İstanbul: Kabalcı Yayınları, 2004), 129.

¹³ Jan Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 45.

¹⁴ Köprülü, *Türk Edebiyatında İlk Mutasavvıflar*, 72.

¹⁵ Ocak, *Türk Sufiliği*, 89.

¹⁶ Karaoğlu, "Anadolu Alevilerinin Dini Ritüel", 1215.

Cultural memory consists of those symbolic forms, rituals, canonical narratives, and commemorative performances, that sustain identity across temporal ruptures and geographical displacements.¹⁷ In the case of Turkic migrations, oral repertoires served as mnemonic anchors, carrying with them epic narratives and ritualized stories that secured communal cohesion in new settings. The *Oğuz Kağan Destanı* and the *Book of Dede Korkut* exemplify this principle: their palimpsestic structures preserved ancient mythic codes while simultaneously adapting to Anatolia's sociopolitical realities. In this respect, cultural memory does not simply preserve the past but actively reconfigures it within new spatial and ideological frameworks.

The medium of oral performance itself must also be analysed. Walter Ong's distinction between oral and literate cultures, further developed by John Miles Foley's concept of traditional referentiality, reveals that oral tradition generates meaning not through textual fixity but through the circulation of shared repertoires.¹⁸ Yesevî's *hikmets*, recited in vernacular Turkic, illustrate how rhythm and formula created pedagogical authority in oral form. Yunus Emre's Anatolian corpus, though written, retained the oral cadence and mnemonic structure of earlier Turkistan traditions. Orality and literacy thus intersected rather than succeeded one another, enabling the survival of cultural memory in a medium that was both textual and performative. The subsequent analysis of Anatolian Sufi poetry will demonstrate precisely how this hybrid interface functioned in practice.

Narrative morphology provides a further analytical dimension. Vladimir Propp's structuralist model identified recurrent functions, such as departure, trial, exile, and return, that constitute the grammar of epic storytelling.¹⁹ This model allows us to see that parallels between *Oğuz Kağan* and *Dede Korkut* are not incidental borrowings but structural correspondences, rooted in the syntactic logic of oral narrative. By applying Propp's morphology, it becomes possible to delineate how Turkistan's heroic archetypes were not erased but rearticulated in Anatolia, ensuring continuity through form even as context shifted.

These theoretical perspectives must not be read as discrete strands but as mutually reinforcing dimensions of analysis. Cultural memory provides the framework for understanding the endurance of repertoires, oral theory explains the medium of their enactment, and morphology reveals the structural grammar that guarantees their recognizability. Esin's work on Central Asian iconographic motifs illustrates the visual and symbolic depth of this continuity,²⁰ while Bhabha's notion of hybridity clarifies how Anatolian culture reconfigured inherited repertoires rather than passively receiving them.²¹ Schechner's analysis of performativity adds an embodied dimension, showing how recitation and ritual enactment transformed narrative into communal experience.²² Intertextuality further explains how stories migrated not in isolation but as part of a repertoire, constantly re-embedded in new contexts. By combining memory studies, oral theory, structural morphology, and supplementary concepts of hybridity, palimpsest, repertoire, and performativity, this article establishes a comprehensive framework for analysing the migration of oral traditions from Turkistan to Anatolia. This constellation moves beyond descriptive historiography to demonstrate how narrative, ritual, and performance together operated as formative forces in the making of a distinct Turkish-Islamic synthesis.

¹⁷ Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, 37.

¹⁸ Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London: Routledge, 2002), 33; John Miles Foley, *The Theory of Oral Composition: History and Methodology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 67.

¹⁹ Vladimir Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, trans. Laurence Scott (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968), 21.

²⁰ Esin, *Orta Asya'dan Osmanlı'ya Türk Sanatında İkonografik Motifler*, 129.

²¹ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 112.

²² Richard Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2006), 28.

2. Historical and Cultural Background

The transformation of Anatolia between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries unfolded within a broad geography extending from the Tarim Basin to the western frontier of Asia Minor. The Seljuk victory at Manzikert in 1071 created a political opening, yet the cultural significance of this event lies in the corridor it established for the westward migration of Oghuz groups.²³ These migrations transported not only military institutions but also repertoires of memory: genealogical traditions, epic narratives, ritualized practices, and poetic idioms. The caravan routes connecting Kashgar, Balasagun, and Merv to Bukhara, Samarkand, and Nishapur functioned as conduits of both commerce and cultural translation, embedding oral repertoires into the urban fabric that preceded their transplantation into Anatolia.²⁴

The intellectual landscape of Turkistan was itself a palimpsest of Islamic learning and indigenous oral practices. Barthold demonstrated that the Islamization of Central Asia depended less on textual exegesis than on ritual economy and narrative performance.²⁵ Nishapur's madrasa culture coexisted with the oral pedagogy of Sufi lodges, producing a hybrid environment in which written and oral forms reinforced one another. The *Dīwān Luġāt at-Turk* of Kaşgarlı Mahmud, compiled in the late eleventh century, exemplifies this synthesis.²⁶ It sought to codify Turkic vernaculars, yet in doing so it preserved oral lexicons and poetic fragments that reveal the vitality of oral repertoires prior to their westward transmission. Taken alongside Yūsuf Khāṣṣ Ḥājib's *Kutadgu Bilig*, written in Balasagun, these works illustrate how Turkic oral idioms interacted with Persian and Arabic textual traditions in a process of transculturation.²⁷

The eleventh century may therefore be characterized as a period of migration and initial contact. Sümer's reconstruction of Oghuz tribal organization shows that boy structures provided mnemonic anchors for epic repertoires and genealogical continuity.²⁸ Oral traditions carried within these kinship frameworks survived displacement, functioning as vehicles of identity formation in liminal spaces. By the twelfth century, institutional consolidation under Seljuk authority transformed Anatolia into a domain of cultural negotiation. Konya's emergence as capital symbolized administrative centrality, but also the convergence of nomadic and urban cultures.²⁹ Köymen has documented how madrasas not only institutionalized Islamic scholarship but also absorbed oral repertoires into their teaching practices.³⁰ Lindner has stressed that Seljuk Anatolia cannot be reduced to a sedentary model, since tribal mobility remained integral to its social fabric.³¹ Within this framework, epic storytelling continued in tribal gatherings, while Persianate literary forms flourished in urban courts. The juxtaposition of these repertoires illustrates a mode of cultural translation: oral narratives adapted to an environment dominated by textual authority yet retained their performative power.

The thirteenth century was marked by rupture and transformation. The Mongol invasions destabilized Seljuk structures, producing conditions of liminality in which oral repertoires acquired renewed potency. The Baba'i uprising of 1240 exemplifies this phenomenon. Ocak has argued that the

²³ Cahen, *Osmanlılardan Önce Anadolu'da Türkler*, 55.

²⁴ Peter B. Golden, *Central Asia in World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 88.

²⁵ Vasilii V. Barthold, *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion*, trans. H. A. R. Gibb (London: Luzac, 1968), 112.

²⁶ Kaşgarlı Mahmud, *Dīwānu Luġātī t-Türk*, ed. Besim Atalay (Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu Yayınları, 2006), 23.

²⁷ Yusuf Has Hacib, *Kutadgu Bilig*, trans. Reşit Rahmeti Arat (Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu Yayınları, 1985), 33.

²⁸ Faruk Sümer, *Oğuzlar (Türkmenler): Tarihleri-Boy Teşkilatı-Destanları* (Ankara: Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları Vakfı Yayınları, 1999), 121.

²⁹ Mehmet Altay Köymen, *Büyük Selçuklu İmparatorluğu Tarihi* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1984), 2/301.

³⁰ Köymen, *Büyük Selçuklu İmparatorluğu Tarihi*, 315

³¹ Rudi Paul Lindner, *Nomads and Ottomans in Medieval Anatolia* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), 57.

rebellion cannot be explained solely by economic grievances; it was fueled by oral religiosity, miracle tales, and charismatic authority rooted in heterodox practice.³² In parallel, Anatolia witnessed the rise of vernacular mysticism. Mevlânâ Jalâl al-Dîn Rûmî's circle in Konya produced a literary corpus in Persian, yet its diffusion occurred through oral recitation and ritual performance.³³ Peacock has shown that Turkish began to crystallize as a literary language during this period, shaped by Sufi idioms and epic repertoires.³⁴ This development demonstrates hybridity: oral formulas were canonized into textual form without severing their link to performance.

Epic traditions illustrate the durability of these mnemonic systems. The *Oğuz Kağan Destanı*, composed in the nomadic milieu of Turkistan, contained structural archetypes, heroic trials, exile and return, kinship obligations, that resurfaced in the *Book of Dede Korkut*.³⁵ Propp's morphology of the folktale reveals that these parallels reflect structural correspondences rather than superficial borrowings.³⁶ Reichl has further demonstrated that Turkic epics along the Silk Road share a transregional repertoire sustained by performance.³⁷ From this perspective, Anatolian epics emerge as part of a larger system of oral continuity. Sufi repertoires provided another dimension of transmission. Ahmad Yesevî's *hikmets* embodied mystical pedagogy in vernacular Turkic, producing a form of ritual memory that resonated with nomadic audiences.³⁸ Kurnaz has emphasized how Yunus Emre reformulated this idiom in Anatolia, producing a vernacular mysticism that bridged elite and popular religiosity.³⁹ Oral recitation thus functioned as symbolic economy: knowledge was not passively inherited but actively generated through performance.

Hagiographic and didactic traditions reinforced these dynamics. Menâqibnâmes, miracle tales, and futuwwa narratives circulated orally before textualization. Melikoff's analysis of Bektaşî traditions highlights the capacity of such repertoires to consolidate communal identity.⁴⁰ Gürer has shown that Qādiriyya narratives in Turkistan inscribed spiritual authority into collective memory.⁴¹ Peacock's study of urban notables in medieval Anatolia demonstrates how Ahi fraternities employed oral repertoires to codify ethics and maintain social cohesion.⁴² Moreover, the infrastructure of caravanserais and trade networks facilitated the diffusion of these oral narratives across Anatolia, linking the cultural geography of Turkistan to the economic landscape of Seljuk domains.⁴³

The historical and cultural background of Anatolia between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries must therefore be conceived as a continuum of migration, institutionalization, and transformation. Oral repertoires served as mnemonic systems during migration, as instruments of cultural translation in Seljuk institutions, and as mobilizing narratives during periods of crisis. When read through the lenses of liminality, hybridity, and discursive formations, Anatolia appears not as a passive recipient but as an active site of reconfiguration, where oral traditions of Turkistan were inscribed into the foundations of

³² Ocak, *Babailer İsyanı*, 44.

³³ Franklin D. Lewis, *Rumi: Past and Present, East and West* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2000), 112.

³⁴ Peacock, "The Emergence of Literary Turkish", 99.

³⁵ Ergin, *Dede Korkut Kitabı I*, 34.

³⁶ Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, 21.

³⁷ Karl Reichl, "Oral Epics Along the Silk Road: The Turkic Traditions of Xinjiang", *CHINOPERL* 38/1 (2019), 45.

³⁸ Köprülü, *Türk Edebiyatında İlk Mutasavvıflar*, 97.

³⁹ Kurnaz, *Yesevî'den Yunus'a*, 45.

⁴⁰ Melikoff, *Uyur İdik Uyardılar*, 104.

⁴¹ Gürer, "Türkistan'da Kâdiriyye İzleri".

⁴² A. C. S. Peacock, "Urban Agency and the City Notables of Medieval Anatolia", *Medieval Worlds* 14 (2021), 59.

⁴³ Janet Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony: The World System A.D. 1250–1350* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 212.

a Turkish-Islamic synthesis.

3. Epic Continuity and Narrative Transmission

The continuity of epic traditions from Turkistan to Anatolia demonstrates how oral repertoires functioned as instruments of memory and identity. These narratives must be understood not as inert survivals but as dynamic forms, constantly reshaped through performance and adapted to shifting political and religious landscapes. Jan Assmann's observation that "memory is not reproduction but re-creation"⁴⁴ encapsulates this process: epic storytelling reconstructed the past in ways that rendered it meaningful to each new audience.

The survival of epic material depended not only on narrative content but on the embodied event of its performance. Ozanlar and âşık, accompanied by the kopuz, delivered tales that fused rhythm, voice, and ritual action. Paul Zumthor described *oralité* as "an event that fuses voice, body, and community into a single presence,"⁴⁵ a formulation that captures the social and performative dimensions of Anatolian epic gatherings. Listeners reinforced the narrative with exclamations, emotional responses, or gestures, ensuring that the tale was collectively possessed rather than individually transmitted. In Schechner's terms, each performance was a performative act, generating solidarity through repetition.⁴⁶

A close reading of the *Oğuz Kağan Destanı* reveals the archetype of the culture hero, whose miraculous birth, heroic trials, and cosmic unification of tribes embody the values of kinship and sovereignty. Bahaeddin Ögel observed that "Oğuz is not merely a tribal chief but the cosmic axis around which social and natural order is organized."⁴⁷ Propp's morphological functions, departure, trial, struggle, and reintegration, are all present in the epic,⁴⁸ while Campbell's model of the Hero's Journey resonates in Oğuz's trajectory from miraculous origin to unification of his people.⁴⁹ These structural correspondences demonstrate that Turkic oral traditions possessed a narrative grammar capable of enduring across regions.

The *Book of Dede Korkut* embodies cultural translation by preserving steppe archetypes while embedding them in Islamic frameworks. As Muharrem Ergin notes, "the Oghuz ethos survives in Anatolia, but under the guiding voice of a narrator who binds heroism with faith."⁵⁰ In the tale of Salur Kazan, for example, the hero raises his hands before battle and prays: "O Lord, let me not bring shame to my people; grant me strength in Your path."⁵¹ Such passages illustrate how Islamic devotion was integrated into the epic repertoire, reframing the heroic code through religious sanction. The captivity of Bamsı Beyrek, with its emphasis on loyalty during long exile, "For sixteen years he languished, yet his heart did not waver from his people,"⁵² parallels the Central Asian *Alpamiş* and confirms exile-return as a core motif of Turkic epic imagination.

The role of women within these epics further underscores their social significance. Figures like Banu Çiçek set standards of bravery and loyalty, challenging male protagonists. In one passage she declares: "If you cannot draw the bow, you are not worthy of me."⁵³ Such statements confirm that epic

⁴⁴ Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, 54.

⁴⁵ Paul Zumthor, *Oral Poetry: An Introduction*, trans. Kathryn Murphy-Judy (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), 23.

⁴⁶ Schechner, *Performance Studies*, 28.

⁴⁷ Bahaeddin Ögel, *Türk Mitolojisi* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1993), 1/112.

⁴⁸ Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, 21.

⁴⁹ Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949), 45.

⁵⁰ Ergin, *Dede Korkut Kitabı I*, 34.

⁵¹ Ergin, *Dede Korkut Kitabı I*, 67.

⁵² Orhan Şaik Gökyay, *Dedem Korkut'un Kitabı* (İstanbul: Kabalcı Yayınları, 2000), 132.

⁵³ Gökyay, *Dedem Korkut'un Kitabı*, 98.

tradition encoded gendered expectations as well as heroic ideals, making women custodians of values rather than peripheral figures.

Anatolian adaptations such as the *Battalnâme* and the *Dânişmendnâme* demonstrate how epic structures were appropriated for Islamic and political purposes. Cemal Kurnaz has shown that in the *Battalnâme* “the heroic duel is transformed into jihad, and the defense of kin becomes the defence of the umma.”⁵⁴ Similarly, Ahmet Yaşar Ocak demonstrated that the *Dânişmendnâme* merged epic with hagiography, sanctifying conquest and legitimizing rulers.⁵⁵ Such texts illustrate how epic repertoires were recast to serve the politics of memory, aligning Turkic heroism with Islamic ideology.

Comparative study confirms that Anatolian epics were part of a wider Turkic repertoire. Karl Reichl observed that “from Xinjiang to Anatolia, Turkic epics preserve a repertoire of heroic trials, exile and return, and kinship loyalty, maintained not by texts but by performance.”⁵⁶ The Kyrgyz *Manas* and Kazakh *Alпамыш* display motifs of miraculous birth, heroic struggle, and communal reintegration parallel to Oğuz and Dede Korkut narratives. These correspondences reveal discursive continuity: a shared epic grammar adapted to local needs but recognizable across the Turkic world.

It should be underscored that epics also operated as vehicles of legitimacy. Seljuk and beylik rulers traced their lineage to Oğuz, embedding their authority in epic genealogy. This appropriation exemplifies Assmann's concept of the politics of memory, where narrative serves to anchor power in collective imagination.⁵⁷ The recitation of *Dede Korkut* tales in Anatolia was therefore not mere entertainment but a performative act of social and political significance.

Viewed in its entirety, the epic tradition demonstrates structural persistence, cultural translation, and performative vitality. The *Oğuz Kağan Destanı* provided archetypal forms; the *Book of Dede Korkut* reconfigured them within Islamic Anatolia; the *Battalnâme* and *Dânişmendnâme* harnessed them for religious and political purposes. Comparative evidence confirms that these were not isolated phenomena but part of a transregional repertoire sustained by performance. In sum, epic continuity illustrates how oral tradition preserved Turkistan's memory while generating an Anatolian synthesis, integrating mythopoesis with the demands of new cultural horizons.

4. Sufi Poetic Transmission

The transmission of Sufi poetry from Turkistan to Anatolia reveals how mystical verse operated as a repertoire of memory, pedagogy, and communal identity. Far from being a marginal ornament to theology, Sufi poetry must be regarded as fundamental to the cultural transformation of the region. It functioned as ritualized speech, a mode of mythopoesis that bound oral tradition to mystical devotion.

4.1. Ahmad Yesevî and Vernacular Mysticism

Ahmad Yesevî's *Divân-ı Hikmet* established the paradigm of Turkic vernacular mysticism. Composed in accessible Turkic and designed for oral recitation, the *hikets* transformed mystical doctrine into rhythmic forms that ordinary communities could internalize. His line “Ey dost, senin için ağlarım” [“O friend, I weep for you”]⁵⁸ illustrates the affective pedagogy of his verse. Fuad Köprülü argued that Yesevî “forged the first synthesis of Turkic oral poetry and Islamic mysticism, thereby creating a genre that instructed as much as it inspired.”⁵⁹

⁵⁴ Cemal Kurnaz, “Battalnâme’de İslamî Kahramanlık Anlatısı”, *Milli Folklor* 21/82 (2009), 88.

⁵⁵ Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Dânişmendnâme: Anadolu’da İslam’ın Yayılışı ve Türk Halk İnançları* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2006), 54.

⁵⁶ Reichl, “Oral Epics Along the Silk Road”, 45.

⁵⁷ Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, 112.

⁵⁸ Ahmed Yesevî, *Divân-ı Hikmet*, ed. Kemal Eraslan (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1993), 45.

⁵⁹ Köprülü, *Türk Edebiyatında İlk Mutasavvıflar*, 97.

The performative aspect of his work is of decisive importance. Recited with *kopuz* accompaniment in dervish gatherings, the *hikmets* created the aura of ritual repetition that Walter Benjamin described as intrinsic to sacred performance.⁶⁰ Yesevî's disciples, the Horasan *erenleri*, extended his model across Central Asia and into Anatolia. Süleyman Hakim Ata, his close successor, wrote in the *Bakırgan Kitabı*: "Yol gösteren ışıık oldum / taliplere rehber oldum" ["I became the guiding light / I became the guide for seekers"].⁶¹ Such lines embody the pedagogical function of verse as a guiding repertoire, sustaining communal identity through poetic recitation.

4.2. Anatolian Adaptations: Yunus Emre

In Anatolia, Yunus Emre reshaped the Yesevian idiom into a new vernacular mysticism. His *Divan*, though preserved in writing, retains oral cadence and simplicity. "Ben gelmedim dava için / Benim işim sevi için" ["I did not come for contention / My task is love"]⁶² testifies to his redefinition of piety as love rather than polemic. Another well-known couplet, "Sevelim sevillelim / Dünya kimseye kalmaz" ["Let us love and be loved / The world belongs to no one forever"],⁶³ registers the survival of mystical wisdom in idioms of everyday life.

Placed against the backdrop of Mongol domination and the trauma of the Babaî revolt, Yunus's verse can be read as a therapeutic discourse. His lament "Gel gör beni aşk neyledi" ["Come see what love has done to me"]⁶⁴ signals the transformation of suffering into devotion, creating a language of resilience for communities in crisis. Cemal Kurnaz has remarked that Yunus "adapted Yesevî's pedagogy to Anatolia's plural society, producing a spiritual language of endurance and universality."⁶⁵

4.3. Intertextual Dialogues

The dialogue between Yesevî and Yunus becomes clearer through intertextual comparison. Yesevî's lament "Ey dost, senin için ağlarım" resonates with Yunus's ethical maxim: "Yetmiş iki millete bir göz ile bakmayan / halka müderris olsa da hakikatte âsîdir" ["Whoever does not see seventy-two nations with one gaze / even if a scholar, in truth he is a rebel"].⁶⁶ This comparison brings into relief the continuity of compassion and inclusivity across centuries. Julia Kristeva's concept of intertextuality is useful here: Yunus does not imitate but re-inscribes Yesevî's repertoire into the social fabric of Anatolia, producing new meaning from inherited forms.

4.4. Broader Anatolian Voices: Âşık Paşa and Mevlânâ

The Yesevian current also shaped Âşık Paşa's *Garibnâme*, a massive didactic poem aimed at ordinary believers. He declared: "Türk diline kıldum bu kitabı beyân / ta kim okuyan anlasun her ân" ["I composed this book in Turkish / so that whoever reads may understand at once"].⁶⁷ This statement underscores the deliberate choice of Turkish as a medium of instruction, affirming continuity with Yesevî's vernacular strategy.

Mevlânâ Jalâl al-Dîn Rûmî, composing in Persian, relied on oral recitation in his gatherings. The opening of the *Masnavi*, "Listen to the reed, how it tells a tale / complaining of separations,"⁶⁸ was first a spoken invocation, performed to disciples. Franklin Lewis observed that the *Masnavi* "was heard

⁶⁰ Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 221.

⁶¹ Süleyman Hakim Ata, *Bakırgan Kitabı*, ed. Osman F. Sertkaya (Ankara: TDK Yayınları, 1995), 22.

⁶² Yunus Emre, *Divan*, ed. Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı (İstanbul: İnkılâp Yayınları, 1991), 112.

⁶³ Yunus Emre, *Divan*, 145.

⁶⁴ Yunus Emre, *Divan*, 201.

⁶⁵ Kurnaz, *Yesevî'den Yunus'a*, 54.

⁶⁶ Yunus Emre, *Divan*, 178.

⁶⁷ Âşık Paşa, *Garibnâme*, ed. Kemal Yavuz (İstanbul: TDK Yayınları, 2000), 67.

⁶⁸ Mevlânâ Celâleddîn Rûmî, *Mesnevî*, trans. Reynold Nicholson (London: Luzac, 1926), 1.

before it was read, a performative scripture inscribed in communal practice.”⁶⁹ Such evidence reveals that even Persianate high culture in Anatolia depended upon oral recitation to achieve resonance.

Another striking dimension is the contribution of women. The Bacıyan-ı Rum, a women's Sufi order, preserved mystical teachings through hymns and oral performance. Ahmet Yaşar Ocak stressed that “female mystics played a decisive role in sustaining Yesevian spirituality.”⁷⁰ Their largely unrecorded laments and songs must be regarded as fundamental to understanding the inclusivity of mystical transmission.

Equally important is the musical dimension. Hikmets and ilahis were often accompanied by instruments such as kopuz, ney, and kudüm, producing mnemonic patterns that audiences recognized. Hamza Karaoğlu showed that ritual performance preserved archaic Turkic elements precisely because rhythm and music anchored memory.⁷¹ John Foley's concept of “traditional referentiality” explains why meaning was generated not through textual fixity but through recognizable oral patterns.⁷² Viewed in its entirety, the trajectory from Yesevî to Yunus, reinforced by Hakim Ata, Âşık Paşa, and Mevlânâ, reveals a continuum of mystical poetry that combined orality and literacy, ritual and pedagogy, resilience and love. The inclusion of women's voices and the role of music further attest to the inclusivity of this repertoire. By sustaining memory through intertextual resonance and performative recitation, Sufi poetry anchored Turkistan's heritage while generating a distinct Anatolian synthesis.

5. Didactic and Hagiographic Narratives

Beyond epics and mystical poetry, didactic tales and hagiographic repertoires constituted a crucial dimension of cultural transmission from Turkistan to Anatolia. These forms combined pedagogy with sanctity, producing narratives that instructed, legitimized, and preserved collective memory. Their presence confirms that oral culture was not restricted to entertainment but functioned as a complex system of ethical, spiritual, and political communication. In this sense, they should be recognized as central narrative technologies through which Turkic societies negotiated faith, authority, and identity.

5.1. Didactic Pedagogy

Didactic material circulated in short, memorable forms. Aphorisms, proverbs, and moralizing tales provided instruction in ways that could be easily retained and transmitted. Yunus Emre's verse captures this pedagogical ethos: “İlim ilim bilmektir / İlim kendin bilmektir” [“Knowledge is to know knowledge / Knowledge is to know yourself”].⁷³ The concision of such lines made them ideal for oral transmission in village gatherings, marketplaces, and Sufi lodges. These didactic forms operated as mnemonic anchors that reinforced ethical codes through repetition. Such maxims reveal that oral pedagogy functioned as a durable mechanism of cultural transmission, binding ethical discourse to the rhythms of daily speech.

5.2. Hagiographic Narratives

Hagiographies, particularly menâkıbnâmes and velayetnâmes, represented a more elaborate repertoire of sanctity. The *Velâyetnâme-i Hacı Bektaş Veli* describes miracles that consecrated the saint's authority. One story recount: “Hacı Bektaş Veli placed his hand upon a stone, and the stone softened like wax.”⁷⁴ Recited orally in Bektaşî circles, such tales transformed charisma into communal imagination. The *Saltuknâme* portrays Sarı Saltuk as both warrior and saint. In one celebrated episode,

⁶⁹ Lewis, *Rumi*, 89.

⁷⁰ Ocak, *Türk Sufiliği*, 89.

⁷¹ Karaoğlu, “Anadolu Alevilerinin Dini Ritüel ve Rükünlerinde Geleneksel Türk Dininin İzleri”, 1215.

⁷² Foley, *The Theory of Oral Composition*, 67.

⁷³ Yunus Emre, *Divan*, 134.

⁷⁴ *Velâyetnâme-i Hacı Bektaş Veli*, ed. Esad Coşan (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1983), 56.

"Saltuk struck the dragon with his sword, and the beast fell dead by the will of God."⁷⁵ The motif resonates with *Dede Korkut*, where heroes slay monstrous beings. This comparison brings into relief the porous boundary between epic and hagiographic traditions: both drew upon a shared repertoire of mythic imagination. By inscribing charisma into communal memory, these miracle tales became indispensable instruments for legitimizing both saints and their communities.

The *Menâkıbu'l-Ârifîn* preserves miracle stories of Mevlânâ and his disciples. Aflākî recounts: "When water was lacking, Rûmî struck the ground, and a fountain gushed forth."⁷⁶ Such narratives circulated orally and became emblematic of the saint's charisma, illustrating how memory was ritualized through story. In this process, narrative became a tool of sacralization, transforming biography into communal theology.

5.3. Music, Ritual, and Gender

The vitality of these traditions depended on performance. Hagiographic narratives were retold in cem rituals and meclises, often accompanied by nefes and ilahis performed with saz, ney, or kudüm. Jan Assmann's concept of ritual economy clarifies that memory was preserved through repetitive enactment within symbolic frameworks.⁷⁷ These performances were not passive; they embodied sanctity in sound and gesture, confirming Richard Schechner's insight that performance generates social reality.⁷⁸ Female participation also shaped these repertoires. The Bacıyan-ı Rum transmitted oral hymns, while Kadıncık Ana appears in the *Velâyetnâme* as a luminous figure: "Kadıncık Ana welcomed the saint, and the house filled with radiance."⁷⁹ Ahmet Yaşar Ocak has emphasized that such accounts demonstrate the inclusivity of mystical transmission.⁸⁰ The combination of music, ritual, and gendered participation illustrates that sanctity was not an abstract concept but a lived practice embodied in performance.

5.4. Communal Reception

The communal dimension of these performances is equally critical. Listeners engaged actively, uttering "amin," shedding tears, or responding with gestures of awe. Such interaction reinforced belief, created symbolic capital, and embedded narratives in collective imagination. John Foley's model of oral composition explains that formulaic expressions allowed storytellers to adapt tales in performance while maintaining continuity.⁸¹ Each retelling, therefore, reaffirmed identity through recognition of familiar structures. The active involvement of audiences shows that hagiographic repertoires operated less as monologues than as dialogical acts of collective imagination.

5.5. Political Legitimacy

Hagiographies also carried political weight. During the Seljuk period, miracle stories validated heterodox movements such as the Babaî revolt.⁸² In the beylik era, rulers allied themselves with saints, embedding power in sanctity. In early Ottoman narratives, Bektaşî traditions portrayed Hacı Bektaş as a spiritual patron of the dynasty. Irene Melikoff argued that such tales mythologized Ottoman origins.⁸³ Nathalie Clayer demonstrated that Halvetî hagiographies in the Balkans provided cohesion for frontier

⁷⁵ *Saltuknâme*, ed. Şükrü Halûk Akalın (Ankara: TDK Yayınları, 1988), 78.

⁷⁶ Aflākî, *Menâkıbu'l-Ârifîn*, trans. Tahsin Yazıcı (Ankara: TTK Yayınları, 2006), 211.

⁷⁷ Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, 54.

⁷⁸ Schechner, *Performance Studies*, 28.

⁷⁹ *Velâyetnâme-i Hacı Bektaş Veli*, 74.

⁸⁰ Ocak, *Türk Sufiliği*, 89.

⁸¹ Foley, *The Theory of Oral Composition*, 67.

⁸² Ocak, *Babailer İsyanı*, 44.

⁸³ Melikoff, *Uyur İdik Uyardılar*, 104.

societies.⁸⁴ Through such narratives, political authority was reframed as sacred authority, ensuring that power was naturalized within a symbolic economy of devotion.

5.6. Comparative and International Perspectives

The parallels between Central Asia and Anatolia highlight the transregional scope of these traditions. Devin DeWeese showed that Ahmad Yesevī's miracle tales established authority by dramatizing sanctity.⁸⁵ Betül Gürer's study of Qādirī narratives confirmed that sanctity was enacted through performance, a pattern replicated in Anatolia.⁸⁶ Ahmet Karamustafa demonstrated that hagiographic traditions often celebrated "God's unruly friends," marginal dervishes whose charisma disrupted orthodoxy.⁸⁷ Shahab Ahmed extended this insight, arguing that such repertoires embody the multiplicity of Islamic expression across the "Balkans-to-Bengal complex."⁸⁸ Placed within this broader horizon, Anatolian hagiographies appear as localized variations of a transregional repertoire that defined Islamic societies from Central Asia to the Balkans.

Seen against the backdrop of social, political, and religious change, didactic and hagiographic narratives emerge as indispensable components of cultural continuity. They transmitted ethics, sanctified saints, legitimized rulers, and preserved collective imagination. Their musical, gendered, and political dimensions demonstrate versatility. In this light, didactic and hagiographic traditions emerge not as marginal folklore but as central archives of cultural memory that anchored Turkistan's legacy in Anatolia.

6. Language and Cultural Translation

The transplantation of Turkic repertoires from Central Asia to Anatolia relied not only on epic and mystical forms but also on language as the fundamental medium of continuity. Language was power. Language was memory. By carrying oral repertoires into new geographies, Oğuz Turkish became the principal channel of cultural translation through which identity and imagination were preserved. Without this linguistic framework, the transmission of Turkistan's heritage to Anatolia would have lacked its most vital infrastructure. Language therefore acted not only as a medium of expression but as the structural axis around which the entire cultural transfer revolved.

6.1. Turkistan as Linguistic Reservoir

The cultural weight of Turkic vernaculars had already been recognized in Turkistan. Kaşgarlı Mahmud's *Dîvânu Lugâti't-Türk* (1072–1074) sought to codify dialects and declared: "Türk dilini öğreniniz, çünkü onların uzun sürecek bir hâkimiyetleri vardır" ["Learn the Turkic language, for they are destined to rule for a long time"].⁸⁹ Yusuf Has Hacib's *Kutadgu Bilig* (1069–1070) blended Islamic concepts with Turkic vocabulary, crystallizing a new literary idiom.⁹⁰ These texts register the conviction that the Turkic vernacular carried both political authority and cultural legitimacy. They encapsulate the idea that language itself was already conceived as a bearer of sovereignty and collective memory before the migration to Anatolia. The codification of language in these works also reveals a deliberate

⁸⁴ Nathalie Clayer, *Mystiques, état et société: Les Halvetis dans l'aire balkanique (XVe–XXe siècles)* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 23.

⁸⁵ Devin DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion in the Golden Horde* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), 187.

⁸⁶ Gürer, "Türkistan'da Kâdiriyye İzleri".

⁸⁷ Ahmet Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends: Dervish Groups in the Islamic Later Middle Period* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1994), 12.

⁸⁸ Shahab Ahmed, *What Is Islam? The Importance of Being Islamic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 305.

⁸⁹ Kaşgarlı Mahmud, *Dîvânu Lugâti't-Türk*, 12.

⁹⁰ Yusuf Has Hacib, *Kutadgu Bilig*, 33.

intellectual project to stabilize identity in the face of mobility.

6.2. Oğuz Dialect and Anatolian Turkish

The migration of Oğuz tribes implanted their dialect in Anatolia. Faruk Sümer documented how tribal speech patterns, preserved in oral epics and songs, formed the basis of Anatolian Turkish.⁹¹ While Arabic and Persian dominated theology and courtly expression, Oğuz Turkish endured in oral performance. This coexistence signals what Homi Bhabha describes as discursive hybridity: cultural forms negotiating dominance and vernacular resistance.⁹² The vernacular thus did not simply survive alongside prestige languages but generated new forms of expression through transculturation. This transformation shows that Anatolian Turkish became a site where power relations, cultural negotiation, and everyday speech converged into a new linguistic order.

6.3. Orality and Literacy

A closer reading of Anatolian texts demonstrates the persistence of oral structures in written form. Walter Ong emphasized that oral languages rely on formulaic repetition and rhythm.⁹³ The *Book of Dede Korkut*, though committed to writing centuries later, still preserves performative openings and rhythmic parallelism. Yunus Emre's *Divan* also bears this imprint: "Söz ola kese savaşı / Söz ola kestire başı" ["A word may end a war / A word may cause a head to be cut off"].⁹⁴ These lines crystallize oral wisdom in textual form. John Miles Foley's concept of "traditional referentiality" explains this: meaning resided not in textual fixity but in recognition of a shared repertoire.⁹⁵ The inscription of oral cadence into written Turkish illustrates that literacy reframed orality without extinguishing it. In this respect, textualization functioned less as a rupture than as a reconfiguration of oral repertoires into durable archives.

6.4. Cultural Translation

The reception of Turkistan's repertoires in Anatolia required processes of cultural translation. Yesevî's hikets, once directed to nomadic audiences, were reframed as mystical pedagogy for urban and rural Anatolian communities. Yunus Emre reworked this idiom into a discourse of love comprehensible across classes. Âşık Paşa, in his *Garibnâme*, declared: "Türk diline kıldum bu kitabı beyân / ta kim okuyan anlasun her ân" ["I composed this book in Turkish / so that whoever reads may understand at once"].⁹⁶ His defense of Turkish signals a conscious semantic shift: elevating vernacular to a literary vehicle of inclusion. Peacock has argued that the rise of literary Turkish in the thirteenth century was inseparable from Sufi discourse and oral repertoires.⁹⁷ In this interplay, Turkish became not only the carrier of older traditions but also the instrument through which new cultural economies were forged. The vernacular emerged as an idiom of inclusivity, signaling a shift in the balance between elite discourse and popular religiosity.

6.5. Language, Identity, and Memory

Language was more than a communicative tool; it was a symbolic form of cultural memory. Jan Assmann underlined that memory persists through symbolic systems linking past and present.⁹⁸ Turkish,

⁹¹ Sümer, *Oğuzlar (Türkmenler)*, 121.

⁹² Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 113.

⁹³ Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 33.

⁹⁴ Yunus Emre, *Divan*, 87.

⁹⁵ Foley, *The Theory of Oral Composition*, 67.

⁹⁶ Âşık Paşa, *Garibnâme*, 67.

⁹⁷ Peacock, "The Emergence of Literary Turkish", 99.

⁹⁸ Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization*, 37.

by carrying oral repertoires into both speech and text, served precisely this function. During periods of Mongol domination and internal revolts, the vernacular became a language of resilience, enabling peasants, artisans, dervishes, and beys to articulate shared identity. Anatolian Turkish must therefore be read as a cultural archive in which discursive continuity and collective imagination were inscribed. It follows that linguistic practice itself operated as a performative act of identity, constantly reaffirmed in speech, poetry, and ritual.

The emergence of Turkish in Anatolia illustrates the centrality of language to cultural translation. By sustaining oral repertoires, negotiating with Arabic and Persian, and anchoring memory in vernacular form, Turkish became the axis around which Anatolia's cultural synthesis was constructed. The story of Turkish is the story of continuity itself: the vehicle through which Turkistan's oral heritage was not only preserved but transformed into the foundation of Anatolia's Turkish-Islamic civilization. In sum, language crystallized as the most enduring site of memory, mediating between past inheritances and the creation of a distinctly Anatolian future.

CONCLUSION

The investigation into the transfer of Turkistan's repertoires to Anatolia between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries has revealed that cultural continuity was realized not through passive preservation but through creative reconfiguration. Oral traditions, epics, mystical poetry, hagiographies, and didactic tales, together with the Turkish vernacular, constituted the primary vehicles of memory. Their movement across geography attests to a process of cultural translation in which Anatolia was not simply a recipient but the site where older traditions were re-inscribed into new social and political contexts. Anatolia thus emerges as a palimpsest: an arena where Turkistan's archive was overwritten, layered, and transformed into a new cultural synthesis.

The comparative analysis of the *Oğuz Kağan Destanı* and the *Book of Dede Korkut* renders visible the endurance of narrative structures across migration and crisis. Functions such as departure, exile, trial, and reintegration, identified by Propp's morphology, crystallized as stable components of Turkic storytelling. Reichl's research on Silk Road epics underscored that performance, not textual fixation, maintained this repertoire across centuries and frontiers. The incorporation of Islamic motifs into Anatolian variants, prayers for divine aid, invocations of God's justice, signals the capacity of epic to integrate new ideological frameworks while retaining structural grammar. Epics, therefore, should be understood as mnemonic architecture, simultaneously preserving collective imagination and generating new horizons of legitimacy. By anchoring identity in repeated forms, epics attested to the resilience of oral repertoires as instruments of continuity and transformation.

Mystical poetry embodied another dimension of continuity by translating doctrine into vernacular verse. Ahmad Yesevî's hikmets, transmitted orally with rhythm and refrain, embedded pedagogy in communal gatherings. Yunus Emre rearticulated this idiom into a discourse of love that united disparate audiences, villagers, artisans, dervishes, and elites. His maxim "Sevelim sevillelim / Dünya kimseye kalmaz" ["Let us love and be loved / The world belongs to no one forever"] exemplifies the reframing of mystical devotion as a principle of universality. Cemal Kurnaz has shown that Yunus's adaptation addressed Anatolia's plural society, while Ong's theory of oral residue and Foley's traditional referentiality explain the persistence of oral cadence in his written corpus. Mystical poetry must thus be considered not as ornamentation but as pedagogy, therapy, and cultural memory. By transforming lament into hope and doctrine into accessible idiom, mystical poetry functioned as a repertoire of resilience in an age of upheaval.

Hagiographic repertoires such as the *Velâyetnâme-i Hacı Bektaş Veli*, the *Saltuknâme*, and the *Menâkıbu'l-Ârifin* codified sanctity and infused authority with charisma. Miracle tales, stones that

softened, dragons defeated, fountains summoned, were performed orally, often accompanied by music, and actively received by audiences through gestures of awe and affirmation. Assmann's cultural memory provides a framework for understanding these narratives as symbolic anchors that stabilized identity, while Schechner's performativity underscores that their recitation was an embodied act of devotion. Politically, such texts legitimized rulers, mobilized heterodox groups, and mythologized dynastic origins. Melikoff highlighted how Bektaşî traditions sanctified Ottoman beginnings, and Clayer demonstrated that Halvetî hagiographies provided cohesion in Balkan frontiers. Inclusion of female figures such as Kadıncık Ana further indicates the gendered inclusivity of transmission. Hagiographic narratives, therefore, operated as discursive formations in which sanctity and power were inseparably intertwined.

Perhaps the most decisive factor in this continuity was language itself. The transplantation of Oğuz Turkish into Anatolia ensured that oral repertoires could be preserved and reconfigured. Kaşgarlı Mahmud's *Dîvânü Lugâti't-Türk* articulated the political significance of Turkic speech, Yusuf Has Hacib's *Kutadgu Bilig* fused Turkic idioms with Islamic concepts, and Âşık Paşa explicitly defended Turkish in the *Garibnâme* as a medium of inclusivity. Peacock has argued that literary Turkish emerged within Sufi discourse, and Bhabha's notion of hybridity illuminates the dialogic negotiation between Arabic-Persian prestige idioms and the vernacular. During periods of Mongol domination and rebellion, Turkish functioned as a language of solidarity and resilience. The vernacular must thus be interpreted as a cultural archive in which memory and imagination were inscribed, enabling Anatolia to transform continuity into creativity.

These repertoires did not operate in isolation but intersected in contexts of crisis. The Mongol invasions and the Babaî revolt demonstrate that oral traditions became resources of survival and defiance. Ocağ's analysis of heterodox movements indicates that oral myths and miracle tales served as instruments of insurgent memory. Karaoğlan's study of Alevi rituals confirmed that oral forms preserved archaic Turkic elements in new contexts, while Gürer's examination of Qādirî hagiographies in Turkistan showed that sanctity was performed through narrative repetition. These findings signal that oral repertoires were not neutral residues of tradition but dynamic responses to upheaval. Crisis, far from extinguishing oral tradition, intensified its role as the principal reservoir of collective identity.

The originality of this study lies in its integration of diverse theoretical perspectives. Assmann's cultural memory elucidated the symbolic function of repertoires. Halbwachs's collective memory highlighted their social embeddedness. Ong and Foley explained the endurance of oral structures within literacy. Propp's morphology provided a grammar for epic continuity. Bhabha's hybridity clarified the negotiation of cultural dominance and resistance. Schechner's performativity interpreted narration as embodied enactment. Connerton's insights into ritual memory enriched the analysis of repetitive forms in ceremonies. By synthesizing these frameworks, the study advanced an interdisciplinary methodology for understanding cultural continuity. The result is a conceptual map where oral repertoires emerge as cultural infrastructure rather than peripheral expression.

This research contributes to the historiography of Anatolia by shifting attention from dynastic and institutional narratives to mnemonic structures. Previous scholarship privileged political history and philology; the present study foregrounded epics, mystical verse, hagiographies, and vernacular Turkish as the primary vehicles of identity formation. By demonstrating that these repertoires operated as an interconnected system, the study reframes Anatolia as a palimpsest of memory. The originality lies in situating Turkistan and Anatolia within a single mnemonic continuum, revealing oral culture as the true architecture of endurance. The study not only fills a gap in medieval Anatolian studies but also offers a model for analysing cultural translation across geographies.

The period between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries appears, therefore, not as rupture but as negotiation: a moment when Turkistan’s legacies were re-inscribed into Anatolia’s cultural fabric. Epics provided structural grammar, mystical poetry articulated resilience, hagiographies sanctified power, and the vernacular carried them all into collective imagination. Without these repertoires, Anatolia’s Turkish-Islamic civilization would not have crystallized. With them, memory was transmuted into identity, language into symbolic capital, and performance into history. Anatolia should thus be understood not as the endpoint of Turkistan’s migrations but as the crucible where oral tradition was transformed into civilization, a resonance that continues to shape memory to this day.

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