



Reflections of Ancient Turkish Traditions on The Turkish States Established in The East of Anatolia

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Abstract

After the Turks accepted Islam, they created a Turkish Islamic Culture by combining the principles of the Islamic Religion with the traces of the Old Turkish Culture. Turks, who came to Anatolia and established a brand-new life in a new geography, continued to keep their ancient Turkish traditions alive by adhering to the principles of the Islamic Religion. In this article, we have tried to explain with examples how the Turks, who were a nomadic nation before settling down in the historical course, reacted to new cultural conditions in different lands and how they reflected their centuries-old traditions to a different place. The methodical basis of our determinations and evaluations is the "Comparative (Comparative)" method, especially; "Classification" and "Scanning" methods due to written source research.

Keywords: Culture, Tradition, Ancient Turks, Eastern Anatolia.

1. Introduction

We know that Turks have migrated to this geography since 1071, when the gates of Anatolia were opened to Turks. As in various parts of Anatolia, different principalities and states were established in Eastern Anatolia. Sultan Alp Arslan, who emerged victorious from the "Battle of Malazgirt", allocated certain centers to the heroic Turkish beys who fought with him and paved the way for them to establish states in those cities. These states and their rulers did not hesitate to show their belonging to the Seljuks at every opportunity.

After the Turks accepted Islam, they created a Turkish Islamic Culture by combining the principles of the Islamic Religion with the traces of the Old Turkish Culture. So much so that this culture

contributed significantly to the development of the East and even to the level where the West could take the East as an example. This synthesis led to the emergence of the "Turkish Islamic Civilization". Turks, who came to Anatolia and established a brand-new life in a new geography, continued to keep their ancient Turkish traditions alive by adhering to the principles of Islam. In this context, the Turkish states established in Eastern Anatolia serve as a cultural bridge for the dynamics of Central Asian Turkish Culture to reach the present day during this transition phase.

In this article, we have tried to explain with examples how the Turks, who were a nomadic nation before settling down in the historical course, reacted to new cultural conditions in different lands and how they reflected their centuries-old traditions to a different place. The methodical basis of our determinations and evaluations, especially the "Comparative (Comparative)" method; "Classification" and "Scanning" methods due to written source research.

2. Reflections of Ancient Turkish Traditions on The Turkish States Established in The East of Anatolia

As of 1071 and the following period, Eastern Anatolia had a different identity than today. After the conquest of Istanbul and the developments in the West, the West became the center of attraction. However, in the time period discussed and analyzed in this article, the Orient, and therefore Eastern Anatolia, was a highly developed and advanced region, unlike our time. In the imagination of every sultan, the goal was to possess these lands. Indeed, Byzantium and the Crusader League also wanted to possess this geography at that time, and the region witnessed many bloody wars. Diyarbakır and Mardin, located east of the Tigris, were the most developed cities of that period. Many large and small states were established in the east of Anatolia, which was considered the "Cradle of Civilization" at that time. However, we will focus on the states that left the most traces in this geography. In this context, based on Osman Turan's classification, the "Eastern Anatolian Turkish States" that we include in the scope of the study are as follows: Saltuklu State, Mengucuklu State, Artuqid State (Turan, 2001).

The first state (principality) established in Anatolia after the victory of Malazgirt was Saltuklu. Founded by Abu'l Kasım Saltuk in Erzurum, the state was destroyed in 1202. Erzurum, which is of great importance due to its geopolitical position and was the center of the Saljuqs at that time, is one of the cities that pioneered the survival of ancient Turkish traditions in Eastern Anatolia.

The inscription on the "Tepsi Minare" (clock tower) located within the borders of the city is proof that Old Turkish titles were used in Anatolia (Turan, 2001). In the inscription bearing the name of Emir Gazi, the third ruler of Saltuklu, the title "Yabgu" was used for him. This was the title of the rulers of ancient Turkish states such as the Turks and even the Huns. Therefore, thanks to the inscriptions, it is understood that these states used Old Turkish titles. Ancient Turkic communities, who lived in different tribes, would unite in case of war by helping each other. One of the best examples of alliances between tribes in Central Asian Turkic history is Mete Khan's unification of 24 Turkic tribes under one roof. Saltuklu ruler Izzeddin Saltuk made an alliance with Turkish principalities such as the Sokmenids (Ahlatşahlar) and Erzen Beys against the Georgians.

It is known that ancient Turks established kinship ties between tribes by giving and receiving daughters. These marriages were also important for the interests of states. In the sources, it is found that Mete, the Khan of the Asian Hun State married wives from different Hun tribes, and even various Turkish kings married Chinese princesses in order to strengthen the ties between the states (Terzioğlu, 2010). In this respect, Izzeddin Saltuk, a Muslim Turkish ruler, married his daughter Shah Banu Hatun to another Eastern Anatolian Turkish Khan, Sokmen II, the Shah of Ahlat. In our opinion, this marriage is proof that hundreds of years of Old Turkic tradition is reflected in the east of Anatolia.

In the nomadic lifestyle of the ancient Turkic tribes, tent life was practiced. Since the Uighurs, the first Turkish State to settle down, it is possible to talk about the unique architecture of Turkish buildings. It can be said that this "Central Asian Turkish Architectural Art" was transferred to Eastern Anatolia. The kunbeds in Erzurum, which belonged to Saltuk Gazi's dynasty, are shaped like tents (Turan, 1969). The presence of animal paintings on the walls of the kunbeds is an indication that the Central Asian Turkish Art Tradition also influenced the monuments of the Turkish states in this geography. Because it was quite possible to come across these examples in nomadic times. According to archaeological data, the Huns who lived in BC depicted pictures of horses, horses etc. on rocks (Gumilev, 2002).

"The Book of Dede Korkut", which gives important clues about the ancient times of Turkish language, literature and traditions, is a cultural treasure. In the epic stories in this work Saltuk provinces (for example Bayburt) are mentioned (Kesmecî, 2012). This rare work, which constitutes a part of the Oghuznam, depicts the lifestyle and customs of nomadic Oghuz. The

nomadic Turkmens who migrated to Anatolia and made the Saltuklu lands their homeland preserved and kept alive the ancient traditions they brought with them from Turkistan.

The tradition of minstrelsy became a full-fledged tradition in Anatolia in the 16th century. Before this date, the tradition in question was living in Central Asian Turkish communities in the form of "Bard-Baxi Tradition". Turkmens coming from Central Asia to Eastern Anatolia continued this tradition. Because in historical records, we understand that in Saltuk province and especially in Bayburt Turkmen minstrels performed heroic epics for the continuation of the tradition (Turan, 2001). In 1071, the Seljuk Sultan Alp Arslan asked Mengucuk Ahmet Gazi to conquer the "Upper Euphrates" region. In the name of the Islamization and Turkization of Anatolia, Ahmet Gazi fulfilled this order and established a state centered in Erzincan. Erzincan, which became an important commercial center during the Mengucuk State, was described as a large and developed city by travelers such as Marco Polo and Ibn-i Batuta. (Turan, 2001). After this brief information about the Mengucuk State, let us talk about the ancient Turkish traditions reflected in the life of this state. In ancient Turkish states, custom was a set of laws and rules that had to be obeyed. Even the ruler had to abide by the custom in order not to disrupt the state order. According to the custom, the state was considered the common property of the dynasty. Within the framework of this rule, when the "Khan" died, his eldest son would become the ruler, and the other brothers would rule a certain region of the country, depending on the center. This custom also spread to the Mengucuk rulers established in Eastern Anatolia. When Mengucuk ruler "Melik İshak" died in 1142, the state was divided among his sons and the center was left to the eldest brother, Melik Mahmud.

The bow and arrow, the most important figures of Turkish war culture (along with the horse) were the main weapons of ancient Turkish warriors (Turan, 1945). Turks who could shoot arrows and hit the target quickly and agilely while galloping their horses could easily win these battles. The Turks attached unique features to the bow and arrow. Some of these unique features are that they reinforced their bows made of bone with leather or Mete Khan's invention of the whistling arrow by drilling holes in the tip. Turks also attributed different meanings to the bow and arrow. The arrow is one of the Turkish symbols of sovereignty. The golden bow is the sign of the "Hun" Khan. The Mengucuk people also kept these old, traditional Turkish motifs alive in Eastern Anatolia. Kemah Castle, located within the borders of Mengucuk Province, has two iron gates. It is understood from the sources that there is a bow and arrow on the inner gate. It is highly probable

that the Mengucuk ruler had these symbols placed after conquering the castle in order to indicate that he dominated it.

One of the important political organizations established in Eastern Anatolia is the Artuqid State. Although its name comes from Artuk Bey, the founders of the state were his sons. Artuk Bey and his sons ruled in Jerusalem and Palestine for a short time (1087-1098). Upon the death of Artuk Bey, his sons Sokman and İlgazi established two separate states in the east of Anatolia (Turan, 1958). The "Mardin Artuqid State" founded by İlgazi is an important state that managed to survive for three centuries (1108-1409).

While residing in Jerusalem, Artuk Bey placed three arrows on the ceiling of the "Church of Qiyamah" in his domain. We have already mentioned that the arrow is an ancient Turkish symbol of sovereignty. Artuk Bey, who followed a path based on these cultural values throughout his life, inspired the members of the dynasty that came after him. These symbols of sovereignty lived on among his sons after him. Artuk Bey's grandson Rükneddin Davud even sent "arrows" to his soldiers when calling them to battle (Turan, 2018). According to legend, the Artuqids had the "Kayı Boyu Stamp" on the coins they used on behalf of their state. The stamp (Tamga) was a national symbol also used in ancient Turkish states. Therefore, the Artuqids both preserved and continued this tradition in eastern Anatolia. The nomadic Turkmens who migrated to Anatolia continued to show their loyalty to their lords as in the old Turkish clan organization. As mentioned above, upon the order of Rükneddin Davud, all the warrior Turkmens obeyed the order of the khan and took up arms and went on campaign. Sources report that Artuk Bey was not only a brilliant and heroic statesman, but also that he was never defeated in any battle throughout his life. Independence, one of the most important characteristics of the ancient Turkish states, was also an indispensable motto of the Artuqids. Artuk Bey, who lived a life of nomadic Oghuz traditions, did not hesitate to oppose even the orders of the most important ruler of the period, such as Melik Shah, for the sake of his independence. In fact, these issues are the reflection of the ancient Turkish statesman prototype in eastern Anatolia.

Turkmens constituted the military forces of these states in Eastern Anatolia in the three centuries after 1071, which is the date range of this study. If we explain this issue through the Artuqids, which we include in the scope of our article: There were many nomadic Turkmen warriors in the Artuqid army. The reason for this preference of the Artuqids was undoubtedly that these warriors were accustomed to harsh natural conditions. On the other hand, from the Turkmen perspective,

what was the reason for their inclusion in these armies? In a way, the answer to this question constitutes the core of this article. Namely, from Artuk Beg onwards, his sons and even his descendants who ascended to the throne later on, adhered to ancient Turkish traditions and customs at every opportunity. This situation increased the love and loyalty of the nomadic Turkmens to the Artuqids, who placed ancient cultural motifs at the center of their lives and adopted a life accordingly.

3. Conclusion and Evaluation

In the light of historical data, we can say that ancient Turkic nomads from the Huns onwards had their own regular life in the Asian steppes. In the spring, they would go up with their herds to the highlands where water and pastures were abundant, and in the fall they would descend to the plains where snow was scarce (Gumilev, 2002). Turkmens belonging to Turkic tribes, who turned this cycle into a traditional way of life, maintained this standard of living despite changing geography. The nomadic Turkmens who settled in Eastern Anatolia showed their allegiance to the local ruler at every opportunity.

In addition, they continued to settle in summer summer and winter winter quarters under the rule of their own boy beys. In the inscriptions of the Artuqid and Saltuqid states established in Eastern Anatolia, titles such as beg, alp, yaruk, kutlug are found. At that period, Turkmen beys named Kuş-Timur, Toklu-Buğa, Bey- Demir, Böri are mentioned in Eastern Anatolia and its surroundings. One of Artuk Bey's sons was even named Alp Yaruk. Based on written sources, we understand that old Turkish titles and names continue to be used in this geography. The region referred to as "Oghuz Province" in Dede Korkut points to the geography of the states that constitute the scope of our article. Another proof that Oghuz tribes carried their culture and traditions to this geography is that the famous Turkmen carpets became known here with the arrival of Turks in Anatolia. It is also seen that the traditional art of the Turks, "Carpet-Rug Weaving", was also practiced in Eastern Anatolia after 1071. We understand from the sources that fabric was produced in Erzincan at that time and exported abroad. After the ancient Turks started weaving by exchanging horse-ball silk with China in ancient times, the tradition that continued for centuries was carried to Eastern Anatolia.

In our study, we have made evaluations on some of the traditions reflected in this region. The subject is of a nature to prepare the ground for a much wider study beyond a single article. Therefore, it is certain that there are many more ancient traditions that are not among our examples. These states established in the east of Anatolia are also important because they mediated the transmission of ancient traditions to the present day. Having broken away from their ancestral lands in Central Asia, migrated to a completely different geography and chosen a new religion that would directly affect their culture, the "Eastern Anatolian Turkish States" preserved their national traditions within these new cultural conditions and reflected them to this new geography.

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