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Shamanistic Rituals to Âşiks Performances: Symbolism of Summoning Spirits

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Abstract: Âşiks, renowned for their adeptness at improvisational poetry, are viewed as the inheritors of certain shamanic functions within historical contexts. Originally, shamans assumed diverse roles encompassing poetry, medicine, and priesthood before social and religious transformations prompted a gradual shift of the poetic responsibilities, first to individuals termed *ozan* (bards) and later to *âşık*, beginning from the 15th to 16th centuries. Âşiks share parallels with shamans in their upbringing, developmental stages toward *âşıklık* (bardhood), and esteemed societal positions. Their reverence for deceased masters becomes evident in their artistic presentations, wherein they express homage to the memories, and consequently the spirits, of their masters by reciting the works of esteemed *âşık* masters, notably Köroğlu, during their performances. This practice, referred to as “*usta malı söylemek*” (the performance of the masters’ poems and folk songs) within the Turkish *âşık* tradition, represents an endeavor to establish a connection with the spirits of ancestors. The resemblance between the tradition of *âşiks* evolving within the master–apprentice dynamic and shamans invoking the spirits of departed ancestors, embarking on celestial and subterranean journeys empowered by them, and the *âşiks*’ homage to their masters’ spirits through recitations of their works, thereby sensing their masters’ influence by engaging with them, is striking. This study explores the extent to which contemporary *âşiks* consciously embrace this resemblance. To this end, a sample group of 34 *âşiks* residing in diverse regions of Türkiye was interviewed, and the acquired data were analyzed using the document analysis method. Accordingly, all the *âşiks* who participated in the study were nurtured within the tradition of the master–apprentice relationship akin to shamans. They diligently sought to evoke the spirits of their masters during their performances by reciting masters’ poems and songs, reminiscent of shamans invoking the spirits of deceased shaman ancestors through prayers resembling divine verses. Furthermore, while variations specific to different regions and age groups existed among these *âşiks*, it was observed that consciously reciting the poems of their masters elevated the masters’ spirits. Simultaneously, they harbored concerns about the potential harm that neglecting this practice might inflict upon the tradition, themselves, and their surroundings.

Keywords: Turkish folk poetry; shamanism; kam; ozan; bard; Köroğlu



Citation: Yeşildal, Ünsal Yılmaz, Banu Güzelderen, and Fatih Düzgün. 2024. Shamanistic Rituals to Âşiks Performances: Symbolism of Summoning Spirits. *Religions* 15: 653. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel15060653>

Academic Editors: Mirjam Mencej and Éva Pócs

Received: 26 March 2024

Revised: 20 May 2024

Accepted: 24 May 2024

Published: 27 May 2024



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1. Introduction

Within the rich tradition of Turkish oral poetry, *âşiks*¹ emerge as artists endowed with exceptional talents, weaving improvised poems with skillful ease. Inspired by a given rhyme, they swiftly craft new verses, often accompanying their recitations with the melodious strains of a saz. The saz, which is a stringed musical instrument, is made of wood and played with a plectrum. It has a fretted handle known as a trough attached to the body. The saz is considered to be the current form of the “kopuz”, which was used among Turks in the past. Today, it is also known as a “bağlama” and “çöğür” in different regions.

For some *âşiks*, their proficiency in improvisational poetry and saz playing is attributed to a mystical encounter; they claim to have received a divine elixir in their dreams from a prophet, caliph, saint, or esteemed master *âşık*, viewing this *bade* (elixir) as a sacred talisman

imbued with magical properties. They perceive this gift as a divine reward from Allah. The nature of this *bade* could vary, ranging from a simple glass of water to a piece of bread or a slice of orange, with the provider often embodying religious significance as a prophet, caliph, saint, or esteemed master *âşık*.

Others attribute their prowess to the traditional apprenticeship known as the master–apprentice relationship, within which they honed their craft. As apprentice *âşiks* mature in their artistry and transition from apprenticeship to mastery under the guidance of a master *âşık*, they are bestowed with a pseudonym known as *mahlas* by their masters. This symbolic gesture marks their readiness to partake in performances independently. Additionally, some *âşiks* claim to have consumed the mystical concoction and undergone apprenticeship alongside a master.

Master *âşiks* may not overtly exhibit religious characteristics, akin to shamans. However, historically, *âşiks* undertook roles reminiscent of shamans. Shamans were traditionally responsible for a diverse array of functions such as priesthood, divination, healing, and poetry. With the influence of religion, over time, the poetic functions of shamans were initially passed on to individuals called *ozans* (bards), who were later referred to as *âşiks*. With the influence of Islam, the role of priesthood among shamans gradually faded away. However, the reverence associated with this priesthood persisted, permeating each of the other functions undertaken by shamans.

Due to several *âşiks* being illiterate, some of their poems were transcribed by others. Notably, some *âşiks* managed to transcribe their own compositions. Despite the passage of time, poems that remained untranscribed have not been forgotten, as they continue to be sung by young *âşiks*. This tradition, sustained by the younger generation, is referred to in literary circles as the “reciting of the poems and folk songs of masters”.

Köroğlu holds a revered status among Turkish *âşiks*, being regarded as the greatest master *âşık*. In addition to reciting the works of their own mentors, *âşiks* unfailingly include Köroğlu’s poems in their performances. Failure to do so, they fear, may result in disturbances from Köroğlu’s horse visiting their families. The practice of reciting the poems of long-deceased master *âşiks* likely stems from a desire to honor and appease their spirits. The endeavor to recite the poems of their masters, including Köroğlu, with the aim of elevating and appeasing the souls of deceased master *âşiks* can be perceived as a form of communication with the departed, akin to shamans invoking the spirits of deceased ancestors to aid them during rituals. Young *âşiks* believe they are fulfilling a debt of gratitude to their master *âşiks* through this practice. However, the dynamics at play might not be as straightforward as they seem. Perhaps young *âşiks* fear that if they do not recite their masters’ poems, they will anger their master *âşiks* who granted them the title of master *âşık*, or in a sense, the permission to recite poetry. Moreover, young *âşiks* fear that master *âşiks* will take away this permission. Young *âşiks* who recite the poems of deceased master *âşiks*, including Köroğlu, may indeed be addressing their souls, much like shamans calling upon the spirits of deceased ancestors to help them during rituals, and inviting the souls of deceased master *âşiks* into the environment they are in.

Shamans are known to be able to communicate with the dead and spirits. It is also accepted that *âşiks* are similar to shamans in some of their characteristics (Başgöz 1967; Köprülü 1980, 1999; Günay 1992; Aslan 2009). In this context, the question remains as to whether *âşiks* believe they possess the ability to communicate with the deceased, similar to shamans. This study aims to explain these questions. Accordingly, a sample group of 34 contemporary *âşiks* was randomly selected. A semi-structured interview form, developed by the researchers, was administered to this group. The document analysis method was utilized to analyze the data gathered through these interviews. The objective was to elucidate the perspective of the contemporary *âşiks* on this subject matter through the data gathered in the study. Outlining the fundamental concepts underpinning this tradition is imperative to ensure a thorough analysis of the interview data. Subsequently, these concepts will be interpreted within the context of the *âşık* tradition.

2. The Separation of the Soul from the Body: Death and the Afterlife

The concept of the soul or spirit arises from humans' awareness of mortality, a distinguishing trait separating them from other earthly creatures. Contemplations on the afterlife have led to the development of various ideas, among which is the notion of the soul. The unsightliness of the decaying body after death has prompted the conceptualization of the soul (Uhri 2010, pp. 21–23). In societies with animistic ontologies, they have attributed souls to other living beings and even inanimate objects in their surroundings (Hançerlioğlu 1978, p. 347). According to animism, every entity, whether living or inanimate, possesses an inner essence that can be likened to a soul (Uhri 2010, p. 37).

The concept of the soul is associated with words meaning breath, wind, or gas in several languages (Uhri 2010, p. 43). According to Turkish mythology, the wind embodies a nonhuman entity symbolizing the formidable force of nature. Elucidating the bond between the shaman and the wind in Altai shamanism ceremonies, Potapov described the shaman's rapid spinning with a drum in hand as a representation of the wind. This motion is interpreted as the shaman metaphorically "blowing" like the wind (Potapov 2012, p. 117)². Additionally, the Shamanist Turks' use of the term "tın", which translates to breeze/wind/breath, to denote the concepts of soul and spirit, serves as a significant foundation for this notion (İnan 1986, p. 176). In present-day Turkish-Anatolian culture, the soul is perceived as ephemeral and believed to depart the body upon death. Regarded as the essence sustaining both life and death, the soul is frequently equated with the concept of vitality. While residing within the body during life, the soul symbolizes the individual's existence beyond death (Örnek 1971, p. 61)³.

The concept of the soul is at the basis of rituals related to death (Örnek 1971, p. 105). According to animism, the idea is that the soul originated from the blurring of boundaries between sleep and wakefulness (Hançerlioğlu 1978, p. 347). In animist beliefs, it is held that the soul departs the body even during sleep (Örnek 1971, p. 62). In shamanistic traditions, even a mere sigh during sleep can prompt the soul to exit the body through the mouth (Stutley 2023, p. 132). Therefore, the need to interpret the dreams seen by human beings may have led to the invention of the concept of the soul (Uhri 2010, p. 36).

According to Roux, the rituals of mourning, funerals, and commemorations conducted after death serve to maintain the connection between the living and the deceased. Citing examples of funeral ceremonies among the Shamanist Turks drawn from texts and practices, Roux asserted, "In the Yenisei Inscriptions, the return of the deceased is not perceived as a source of fear but as a longing. The purpose of the funeral rites is to fulfill this longing" (Roux 1999, pp. 11, 156).

The concept of death, defined as "the termination of vital functions in living beings in a way that will not be repeated", is often regarded from a religious standpoint as "the separation of the soul from the body" (Hançerlioğlu 1978, p. 23). Within this context, Pacific and Australian natives may have perceived the act of dying as a journey to an afterlife that extends far beyond the biological realm (Kellehear 2012, p. 54). Life after death is defined as living as a dead person. People used to envision life after death as existing in a corporeal manner, with the dead continuing to live in a physical form in ancient Egypt. However, with the introduction of the concept of the soul, the deceased came to be viewed as disembodied entities. This belief contributed to the tradition of mummification (Hançerlioğlu 1978, p. 25). In monotheistic religions, the afterlife is often conceptualized as being distinctly different from the earthly realm. Conversely, in polytheistic, shamanic, and pagan religions, the afterlife is often perceived as analogous to the world we inhabit (Uhri 2010, p. 25). In this context, proto-Turks believed that graves constructed underground in the form of houses, known as kurgans, and the objects buried alongside the deceased reflect the belief that the departed will continue their existence in a parallel world resembling our own (Çoruhlu 2004, p. 250). In Islam, burial practices diverge significantly from other belief systems. Deceased individuals are wrapped in a simple cloth known as a shroud and buried without any additional items. This is because their new life is believed to unfold in

places referred to as paradise, hell, or purgatory, which are incomparable to anything in this world.

Although the traces of shamanic rituals (invoking the spirits of departed ancestors, embarking on celestial and subterranean journeys empowered by them) regarding the deceased and the living may not necessarily be rooted in a religious context, they persist in contemporary popular beliefs⁴ (such as preaching at funerals), warranting consideration within this framework in present-day Türkiye⁵. Although not widespread, examples can be found in various regions of Türkiye where the belongings of the deceased or various worldly items (such as money, leaves, etc.) are placed in the graves, mouths, or hands of the deceased. In present-day Türkiye, the washing or destruction of personal belongings of the deceased, particularly clothing, is notable as an expression of fear and loyalty (Örnek 1971, pp. 72–73, 105–6).

3. The Reflections of Shamanism in the Pre-Islamic Turkish Belief System

During the period when Turks lived in small social units, their religious beliefs were rooted in totemism. Fuad Köprülü defined totemism as “the religion of the ‘Semiyye Clan,’ which represents the smallest, very small single part of the tribe”. These social units derived their names from plants or animals that they consider to be their ancestors⁶ based on the fundamental principle of totemism. Moreover, these plants or animals were also revered as objects of worship. Traditional ceremonies such as sığır (cattle sacrifices), şölen (feasts), and yuğ (funerals) are believed to have persisted from these periods. Köprülü further noted that beliefs in yir-sub/yer-su (land–water) spirits were integrated into the religious practices of the Turks during the Tu-kiee period. He asserted that shamanism, which is still observed among present-day Altai Turks, was the predominant religion during this era (Köprülü 1980, pp. 14–15).

Abdülkadir İnan asserted that among the Turks, individuals who conduct the rituals and ceremonies of shamanism and serve as intermediaries between spirits and humans are referred to as “kam”. According to Kâşgarlı Mahmud, “kam” was synonymous with the term “kahin” (soothsayer)⁷. The term “shaman”, which is commonly used today, originates from the Tungus language, and it became prevalent in literature from the 18th century onwards. This term is linked to the Pali word “samna” and shares the same root as the Sanskrit word “çramana”, meaning priest/ascetic. Kams were individuals who mediate between gods and spirits, pray to them, deliver the sacrifices offered to appease them and receive the necessary knowledge and power to do this from the heavens and ancestral spirits. To become a kam, one must be a descendant of a kam. However, afterwards, one must undergo training to learn all aspects of shamanism under the guidance of an elder and experienced kam. Kam candidates have expressed that the spirits of their ancestors have possessed them. In other words, they were chosen individuals. The fate of those who did not respond to the shamanic call of their ancestral spirits was to lose their minds and go insane. In fact, these chosen shaman candidates were generally noticed to be more irritable and melancholic types compared with other people under normal circumstances. Young shamans who completed their training under the guidance of a master shaman would go a transitional ceremony known as a “kam bakışı toy”, which is attended by their relatives (İnan 1986, pp. 72–90). In his discussion on the nature of shamans, İnan emphasized that they believe they are chosen by the gods, that spirits serve them, and that they possess imaginative, mystical, and intelligent traits (İnan 1976, pp. 54–58). İbrahim Kafesoğlu referred to the shamans’ understanding of the secrets of the celestial realm and the underworld with the assistance of deceased shaman spirits, noting that these ancestral spirits manifest to the shaman candidate during dreams, illnesses, or ecstatic states (Kafesoğlu 1980, pp. 22–67). According to the belief, only shamans have the ability to perceive spirits (Stutley 2023, p. 131). Harun Güngör suggested that the primary task of shamans is to communicate with spirits and guide them in favor of humans. Fainting, seizures, and asthma attacks are interpreted as signs of shamanism (Güngör 2012, pp. 55–59)⁸. Mircea Eliade emphasized that it is erroneous to use terms

such as shaman, medicine-man, sorcerer, or magician as if they mean the same thing when referring to religiously respected figures in different societies around the world. He outlines in general terms that “the shaman is in fact a magician and an herbalist; like all physicians, he is believed to cure diseases; like all magicians, primitive and modern, he is believed to perform ‘poor’ miracles. But he is also a psychopompe; he can also be a priest, a mystic and a bard”. He also said that magical/religious life revolves around shamans. At this point, he noted that despite all this, shamans are not the only clergymen; priests, as sacrificial offerers, also function as clergymen in society. He emphasized that shamans are still the most important figures in the religious sense, and that this is due to their competent ecstasy (extase) abilities. That was because in shamanist communities, ecstasy is the most important religious experience and ability. Shamans were also considered to be the chief masters of ecstasy. Following these determinations, Eliade’s final definition of the term shaman is as follows: shamanism = the technique of ecstasy. According to Eliade, the most important feature that distinguishes shamans from their counterparts was their unique ecstasy technique. Through ecstasy, shamans could ascend to the sky, in a sense to the level of God. Eliade asked the following important rhetorical question in his work: “In other words, could it not be that the desire to realize both a mystical and a real journey to the Sky at any cost and by any means at all could have led to the perverse states of ecstasy that we encounter?... And finally, could not these behaviors be the inevitable result of a desire to ‘live’ that has turned into a passion, that is, a desire to ‘experience’ on a sensual level something that in our human condition is only accessible on a ‘spiritual’ level?...” (Eliade [1951] 1999, pp. 21–23, 536–37).

Christine S. VanPool explored the continuity of the connection between shaman and priest in her article, “The signs of the sacred: Identifying shamans using archaeological evidence”. While explaining the mechanism of shamanism, Vanpool distinguishes between ASC (altered states of consciousness) and SSC (Shamanic states of consciousness). Accordingly, when entering a world full of spirits and creatures, the shaman first reaches the ASC through drumming, chanting, hunger, thirst, extreme pain, loss of blood, insomnia, or psychotropic plants. Shamans are aware of the physical world in a different way than other people experiencing ASC. With this awareness, shamans reach the spiritual world, where they are able to die and integrate with their guardian creatures, and in the SSC, they are also able to transform into anthropomorphic creatures (VanPool 2009, pp. 180–82). In SSC, shamans almost always speak with the spirits of their ancestors who guide the continuation of their lineage (Steadman and Palmer 1994 as cited in VanPool 2009, p. 182).

It is precisely at this point that the incident of drinking *bade*, where *âşiks* then gain the ability to sing improvised poetry, comes to mind. *Bade*, which is a magical drink or food, is usually offered to the *âşiks* in a state of fainting/ecstasy/trance or sleep. These states evoke a shamanic state of consciousness. When the *âşik* who drank the *bade* in one of the states listed above wakes up, he suddenly picks up a saz and starts singing improvised poetry/folk songs. The fact that those who offer the *bade* are religious elders such as prophets, caliphs, and saints does not escape attention at this point. Although the *âşik* may not be able to reach the sky, i.e., God, by passing out, he comes face to face with the prophet, the messenger of God, the caliphs of the prophet, or religious elders such as the saints in a state of fainting/trance or sleep.

Among the Turks, the earliest folk poets, akin to modern-day *âşiks*, are said to have emerged in Attila’s army during the 5th century. These poets were known to participate in feasts organized by Attila and sing his praises. They also played a role in funeral ceremonies within Turkic society. Over time, these figures retained their significance in society under different names and roles. Synthesizing various scholars’ perspectives on the term *ozan*, Fuad Köprülü argued that among the Oghuz people, the word has long denoted folk poets and musicians. Following the 15th century, the term gave way to *âşik* in Anatolia and Azerbaijan and *baksı*⁹ in Turkmen regions (Köprülü 1999, pp. 131–64). Pertev Naili Boratav highlighted that the term *âşik* began to be employed as a title for artists who performed

various forms of folk poetry and folk tales starting from the early 16th century (Boratav 1968, p. 340).

According to Ensar Aslan, there are many similarities common to the training, development, and societal roles of shamans, as well as the process of becoming and receiving the title of *âşık* (folk poets). Especially noteworthy in this context is that both of these draw their strength from divine aspects or spiritual powers (Aslan 2009, pp. 17–18)¹⁰.

Umay Günay explained that today's folk poets are a version of the pre-Islamic tradition of poets and bards (*ozan/bakşı*) influenced by Sufi structures, but adapted to Islamic principles (Günay 1992, pp. 8–19). İlhan Başgöz noted that the rituals and beliefs identified during the shamanistic period among the Turks continued through the Islamic period in folk tales based on the motif of dreams. According to Günay, there are striking similarities between the acceptance into the profession of a shaman candidate and an *âşık* candidate and the dream motif. The act of *âşiks* drinking *bade* in their dreams while in a state of fainting/trance or sleep is related to the prominent dreams, illnesses, or ecstatic states during the shamanic initiation process. Başgöz presented examples of these similarities through texts of the Islamic period Turkish literature, often referring to Eliade (Başgöz 1967, pp. 1–18). Similarly, the ritual of dying and being resurrected¹¹ seen in shamanism is softened and seen in the process of becoming an *âşık* (Aça 2002, p. 76). The emergence of the *âşık* from a profound slumber, often induced by a spiritual entity (such as the Prophet Muhammad, Hz. Ali, Hz. Khidr, or spiritual guides), typically facilitated by the consumption of a beverage, echoes the ritualistic themes of death and rebirth. The characterization of sleep as the “little death” in Turkish culture (Ergin 2004, p. 234) and Qur'an (Surah Al-Zumar, verse 42) sheds light on this phenomenon.¹² The trance-like state witnessed in the life stories of recent *âşiks* like Çıldırılı *Âşık Şenlik*, Yaşar Reyhani, Mustafa Nihani, and Yusuf Zülali is also prominently depicted in the narratives of *Âşık Garip*, Kerem and Aslı, and Emrah and Selvihan (Aslan 2009, pp. 26–33). The offering of the beverage by a religious figure such as a prophet, caliph, or saint also brings to mind the chosen nature of shamans. Thus, just like shamans, *âşiks* are chosen and blessed by a religious community.

4. Religion, Government, and *Âşiks*

The *âşiks* established close relations with the state during the Ottoman period. It is known that the Janissaries (a type of military unit in the Ottoman army), the most important element of the Ottoman army, had a mystical attachment to the famous mystic Hacı Bektaş Veli. This relationship led to the emergence of a group known as soldier poets (*âşiks*) within the Ottoman army. It should not be forgotten that individuals such as Pir Sultan Abdal and Dadaloğlu also wrote poems in opposition to the authority of the state. However, these dissidents are few in number. In today's Türkiye, dervish lodges and *zawiyas* (or small dervish lodges) possess the status of museums. The state even organizes official ceremonies at the Hacı Bektaş Veli and Mevlana lodges.

It would be correct to analyze the history of Turkish democracy under two main headings, namely the single-party democracy and multi-party democracy. Turkish democracy has also faced many violent military coups. Despite these drastic changes and interventions in the political platform, *âşiks* have continued their art during almost every period. The way to ensure this was to avoid clashes with the state authority.

The proclamation of the Republic led to some changes in social life in Türkiye. One of these was the closure of the dervish lodges and *zawiyas* on 30 November 1925. The dervish lodges and *zawiyas* are religious institutions where some of *âşiks* even receive education and guidance. The new regime took its own measures by closing down these structures that had often interfered in politics in the past. The People's Party (later known as the Republican People's Party/Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi/CHP), founded by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, was the sole power in parliament between 1923 and 1946. In Turkish political history, this period is referred to as the single party era. It is known that poets in this period sang poems praising the new regime—Atatürk and Atatürk's revolutions¹³. The

first election in which more than one party participated was held in 1946. In this election, the CHP won 397 seats, the DP (Democratic Party) 61 seats and independents 7 seats. In the elections held in 1950, the Democrat Party won 416 of the 487 parliamentary seats and came to power with a large majority. In this context, it is worth remembering that the CHP represented the left-wing ideology while the DP represented the right-wing ideology. In the multi-party democratic process in Türkiye, while left-wing parties rarely won elections, right-wing parties came out ahead in the number of seats in parliament. For this reason, even though the dervish lodges and *zawiyas* were closed in principle, they were not seen as a threat by the state authority except during the military coup periods. This is because right-wing parties in Türkiye, as in the rest of the world, have relationships with religious structures, although the degree of closeness varies. Left-wing parties in Türkiye can also be seen to display a closeness with the Bektashi lodges and the ceremonies organized in these lodges through the Hacı Bektaş Veli cult. Bektashism stands out as one of the elements that nourish the rituals of Alevis in Turkey. The political tendencies of Alevis have also been predominantly in favor of left-wing parties. In other words, even though the right- and left-wing parties in Türkiye have different perspectives, they have not taken positions which are radically against lodges and *zawiyas* which are one of the environments where *âşiks* are cultivated. In this way, *âşiks* have managed to survive until today.

5. Reciting the Works of Masters or *Köroğlu* as the Symbolism of Summoning Spirits

Contemporary *âşiks*' dedication to upholding traditions like drinking *bade* in dreams, maintaining the master–apprentice relationship, and adopting *mahlas* (pseudonyms) is notable. Within the *âşik* community, being recognized as a *badeli âşik* is regarded as a prestigious privilege¹⁴. While the master–apprentice dynamic has been affected by migrations spurred by industrialization, it endures among the *âşiks* through various methods. Apprenticeship may involve physically apprenticing under a master, spending time with them, or even spiritually acknowledging someone as a master, regardless of whether they have met in person. In the latter scenario, even *âşiks* who passed away many years ago can be revered as spiritual mentors. The concept of these pseudonyms often serves as the key to the apprentice *âşik*'s transition into the esteemed guild of master *âşiks* during the master–apprentice relationship.

The *âşiks* nurtured within the master–apprentice relationship uphold the legacies of their masters through performances known as *usta malı* (the works of masters) in the gatherings they partake in, both during their mentors' lifetimes and after their passing. The historical origins of the performances of the works of masters likely trace back to the ancestral cult¹⁵ beliefs deeply ingrained in Turkish shamanism. In early Central Asian shamanism, the reverence toward ancestors (*cedd-i âlâ*) holds particular significance amidst the veneration of deities like the Sky God, sun, moon, earth, water, and fire (hearth) (İnan 1986, p. 2). According to Altai customs, shamanism advocates for the unwavering devotion and obedience to Tengri (God) and spiritual entities (Potapov 2012, p. 13). The practice of ancestor veneration emerged from beliefs steeped in reverence and apprehension toward deceased family members. Over time, the early Turkic societies developed a ritualistic reverence, fueled by fear of the soul's enduring presence after death. Central to this apprehension was the belief that the spirits of deceased ancestors could manifest regardless of temporal or spatial boundaries, potentially causing harm to the living descendants.

Bayram Durbilmez delineated the journey of becoming an *âşik* into four stages, “initiation into the art of *âşik*, apprenticeship, journeyman phase, and mastery”. He noted that the apprenticeship period marks the commencement of learning the works of masters, with their actual performance commencing during the journeyman phase (Durbilmez 2008, pp. 73–78). In present-day Anatolian folklore folk tales, the segment referred to as “*döşeme*” is known as “*ustadname*” (*döşeme*/*ustadname* is the section where the works of the master *âşiks* are recited) in the Azerbaijani region. Here, a minimum of three couplets from the master *âşik*'s poems are recited. These poems may belong to a single *âşik* or various *âşiks* (Alptekin 2002, p. 43). During the *hatırlatma*–*canlandırma* (remembrance–revival) segment

of the *âşık* fasils, the *âşiks* recite poems which are the works of their masters to honor them, a tradition integral to the culture. An *âşık* may perform the works of their own master or another master during this period, simultaneously seeking divine mercy for the master *âşık* (Kaya 2007, p. 84). This practice of reciting the works of masters is also colloquially referred to as bringing the works of masters to the fore (Yardımcı 2002, p. 210).

Turkish literature recognizes two distinct Köroğlu, with one as the protagonist of stories and epic sagas¹⁶ and the other as a saz poet (Sakaoglu 2013, p. 127). While opinions vary on whether they are the same individual, (Alptekin 2002, p. 120) this remains a subject for further research. *Âşiks* regard Köroğlu as their spiritual guide, often commencing their performances with a Köroğlu song. Additionally, there exists a folk melody named after Köroğlu, along with a folk dance bearing his name. Moreover, one of the poets of the time called out to his son from his deathbed, saying, “Son, recite me a Köroğlu poem before I die”, as he was pulling the blanket over himself. In light of these observations, Cahit Öztelli reflected, “It is apparent that Köroğlu remains intertwined with the lives of the people, whether in moments of joy, during life, or in death”. This enduring connection signifies that Köroğlu is not merely perceived as a fictional character but rather as a historical figure, the memory of whom is cherished at every juncture of life, akin to a living legacy (Öztelli 1962, p. 7). Notably, contemporary *âşiks*, recognizing Köroğlu as their spiritual leader, ensure his presence is honored by singing poems dedicated to him during their *âşık* gatherings, as documented by Pertev Naili Boratav and Saim Sakaoglu. This belief stems from the notion that Köroğlu imposed a curse on *âşiks* who neglected to sing poems about him. *Âşiks* hold the conviction that by honoring Köroğlu through song, they appease his spirit and avert his potential displeasure (Boratav 2002, p. 32; Sakaoglu 2012, p. 16). According to folklore among the *âşiks* from Erzurum and Kars, Köroğlu purportedly declared, “If *âşiks* conclude their performance without paying homage to me, then my horse will neigh at their mother-in-law’s door”. (Özarslan 2001, p. 236). Fahrettin Kırzioğlu suggested a similar sentiment expressed by Köroğlu, “Swearing an oath against the folk poets/bards playing and singing at weddings and festivities, he said, “May the right leg of my Kırat horse go up the ... of his mother-in-law, if he does not repeat three of my sayings” (Kırzioğlu 1968, pp. 479–80). A diverse array of poems is recited, encompassing various genres such as *divan*, *tecnis* (play on words), rhymes, *koşma* (a type of verse), epic sagas, *semaî* (another type of verse), Köroğlu, riddle, and works of masters’ poems in the *fasil* section of folk tales. Among these, the recitation of Köroğlu poems and songs holds particular significance as it is deemed obligatory (Kaya 2007, p. 318). Notably, one of the bars in Erzurum bears the name “Köroğlu”, and its music features one of the melodies associated with Köroğlu and sung by *âşiks* (Özarslan 2001, p. 99). Furthermore, one of the Alevi *semahs* is known as the Kırat¹⁷ *Semah*, further illustrating Köroğlu’s enduring influence across various cultural expressions (Bayat 2009, p. 47).

6. The Perception of Köroğlu among Contemporary *Âşiks*

The information provided thus far suggests a resemblance between the beliefs and rituals linked with shamanism, referred to as “*kamlık*”, and the tradition upheld by modern *âşiks*. The ceremonial consumption of *bade* reminds us of the shaman apprentice passing out and waking up foaming at the mouth. The relationship between master shamans and their apprentices is similar to the master–apprentice relationship seen in the training of *âşiks*. The recitation of the poems and folk songs of Köroğlu and other master *âşiks* by other *âşiks* is similar to the way shamans call upon the spirits of their deceased ancestors during the ritual. This study was conducted by analyzing data derived from semi-structured interviews executed with a sample group comprising 34 *âşiks*, chosen through a simple random sampling technique.

Of these 34 *âşiks*, 1 (2.9%) was in the age range of 20–29, 1 (2.9%) was in the age range of 30–39, 2 (5.9%) were in the age range of 40–49, 3 (8.8%) were in the age range of 50–59, 20 (58.8%) were in the age range of 60–69, and 7 (20.6%) were in the age range of 70–79 (see Figure 1). Being an *âşık* is a process that starts at a young age. When the distribution of

the *âşiks* in the sample, grouped according to age groups, is analyzed, it is seen that the majority are between the ages of 50–79. Just like shamans, *âşiks* need to reach a degree of maturity in terms of their age in order to reach the level of master (see Figure 1).

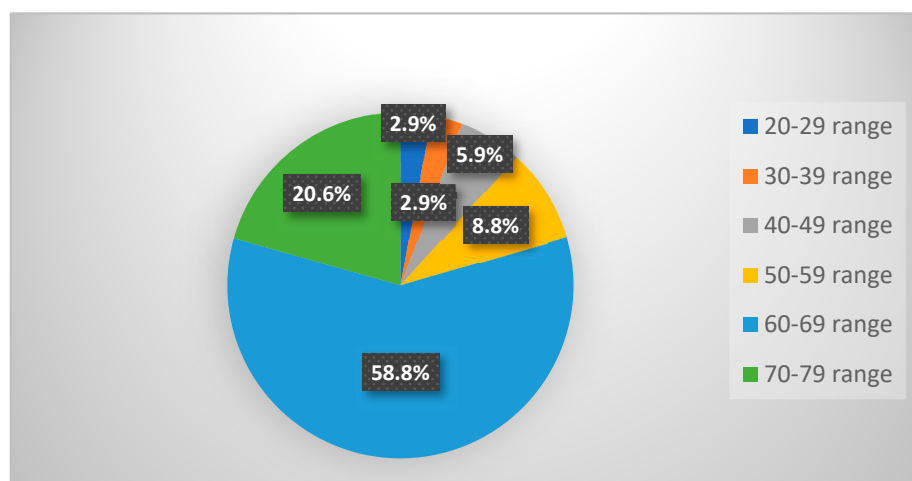


Figure 1. Average ages of *âşiks*.

Among the *âşiks*, 3 (8.8%) were from the Mediterranean region, 22 (64.7%) were from Eastern Anatolia, 2 (5.9%) were from the Aegean, 3 (8.8%) were from Central Anatolia, and 4 (11.8%) were from cities in the Black Sea region (see Figure 2). Eastern Anatolia is the region where the “*âşik*” tradition is most intensely practiced. When Graphic 2 is analyzed, this reality is also seen in the sample group. Koroğlu’s curse directed at *âşiks* who did not recite his poems was also identified in Eastern Anatolia by researchers such as Pertev Naili Boratav and Ensar Aslan between 1940 and 1970.

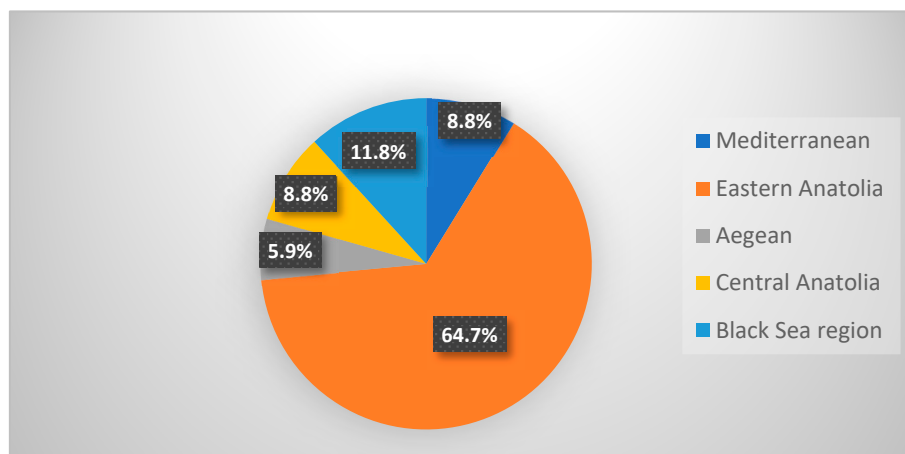


Figure 2. Regions where *âşiks* born.

All 34 *âşiks* interviewed (100%) affirmed that they were brought up within the tradition of apprenticeship. Among them, 22 individuals (64.7%) underwent direct apprenticeship under a master, while the remaining 12 (35.3%) did not have formal apprenticeships but were instead influenced by one or more *âşiks* whom they regarded as spiritual guides (see Figure 3). This result is very striking, because feeling connected to a master in any way whatsoever will result in remembering him after his death. This necessity is the antecedent of the conclusions to be conveyed in the lines that follow.

All 34 *âşiks* interviewed affirmed that they performed the works of masters at the events they attended (100%). Additionally, all the *âşiks* mentioned that the primary reason for reciting the works of masters was to honor and perpetuate the memories of their masters, which they considered a demonstration of loyalty. Commemorating and honoring

the soul of an ordinary dead person is performed through prayers. That is because it is believed that the soul is aware of the prayer. According to Islamic belief, the dead are able to hear. It is recorded in the Holy Qur'an and important hadith and fiqh books that the Prophets Abraham, Jesus, and Muhammad spoke to the dead.¹⁸ The advice of the Prophet Muhammad to greet the deceased lying in graveyards upon entering them is noteworthy at this point. In this context, during "preaching", which is the final stage of the ceremony and takes place after the burial, at Muslim funerals, the Imam calls out to the newly buried deceased, adding the names of the deceased's parents to the name of the deceased (sometimes, only one of them), and reminds the deceased of the questions that will be asked and answered by the angels of interrogation called Munkar and Nekir, and the responses to these questions.

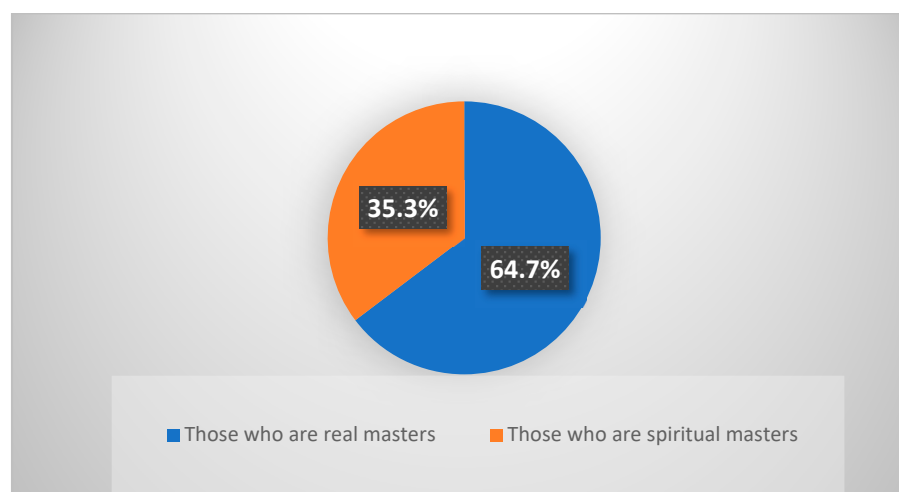


Figure 3. The master-apprentice relationship.

The *âşîks*, who are associated with shamans due to some of the characteristics mentioned earlier, are not seen as ordinary people by society. Just like shamans, *âşîks* also have extraordinary powers. One of the most important of these, which is gained as a result of drinking the *bade* offered by the divine powers, is their ability to recite improvised poetry. Therefore, *âşîks* are already in communication with God. They have even received a gift from God. This gift is of course, *bade*, that is the ability to recite improvised poetry. In a sense, the ability to improvise was given to the *âşîks* by God. From this point of view, those who can communicate with God will also be able to communicate with spirits. *âşîks* believe that reciting masterful poetry is a way of honoring and glorifying the spirits of master *âşîks*. Glorification is realized through prayer. Since displays by *âşîks* are not religious programs, prayer is replaced by the works of masters due to the performance environment. Considering the belief that the ability to recite poetry is given by God, the works of *âşîks* can also be considered to be sanctified. Again, as mentioned before, the living *âşîks*, who call out to their masters by performing the works of the dead master *âşîks*, call the spirits of the dead master *âşîks* to the performance area, just as shamans call the spirits of dead shamans to their rituals. In this way, the spiritual power of the master *âşîk* will be with them. In this process, the works of masters also serve as the vocalization of a call. It should be noted that shamans, *âşîks* and imams who can communicate with the spirits/dead undergo a formal or informal training processes. Shamans and *âşîks* complete their education in a master-apprentice relationship, while imams complete their education in the relevant schools. Communication with the spirits/dead takes place in special settings such as shaman rituals, displays by *âşîks*, or funeral ceremonies. Again, when the selection process of the shamans and the process of drinking *bade* (extaz state) of the *âşîks* are taken into account, it leads to the belief that their talents are given by God and therefore, what they say is necessarily inspired by God or related to God. Imams, on the other hand, speak the direct word of God; that is, prayers.

The image below (see Figure 4), in which we evaluate the relationship between shamans and today's *âşiks*, and imams, summarizes what we have explained so far:

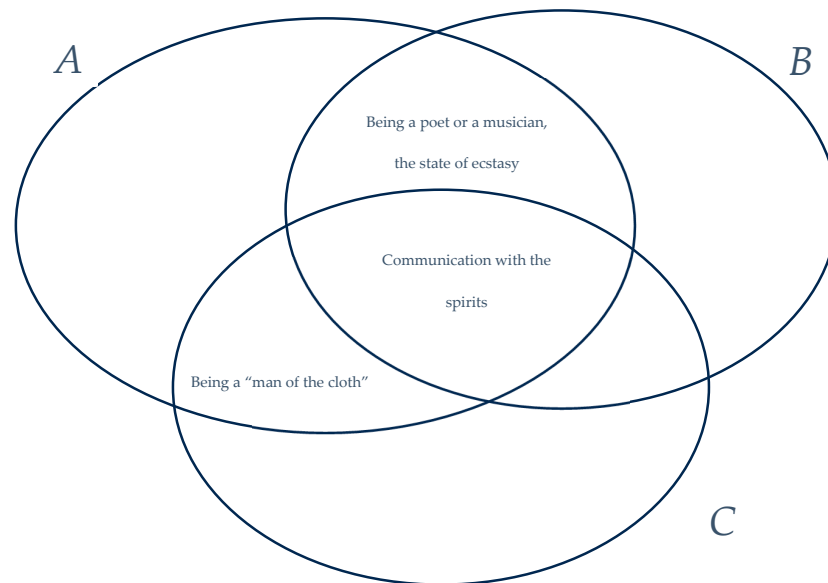


Figure 4. The relationship between shamans (A) and today's *âşiks* (B), and imams (C).

Out of the 34 *âşiks* interviewed, 33 (97.1%) stated that they recited the poems and folk songs of Köroğlu at the events they attended, while 1 (2.9%) mentioned that they did not (see Figure 5).

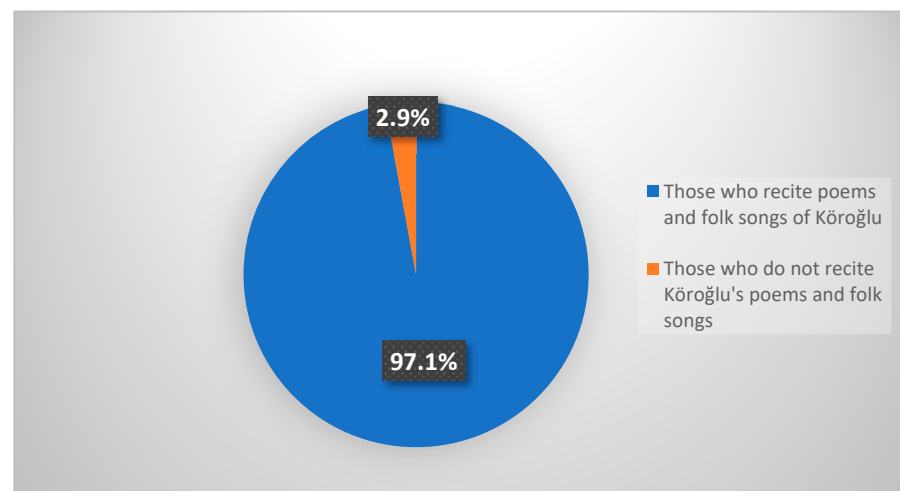


Figure 5. *Âşiks* according to recite Köroğlu's poems and folk songs.

Of the 33 *âşiks* who recited Köroğlu's works, 1 (3%) stated that the reason for doing so was that Köroğlu was considered the master of *âşiks*, 1 (3%) mentioned that this was due to the desire to commemorate Köroğlu, 1 (3%) stated that this was because Köroğlu was famous for his storytelling skills, and 30 (91%) stated that it was because the event should end with a performance of *koçaklama* (heroic epic saga) songs (see Figure 6). *Âşiks* who stated that the needed to end in this way specifically emphasized that Köroğlu came to mind when talking about *koçaklama*.

Among these 30 *âşiks*, 7 (23.3%) mentioned that they learned the phrase "Sazın başı nere, sonu nere?" ("Where is the beginning and where is the end of the instrument?") in response to their masters as, "The beginning is the divan and the end is Köroğlu".

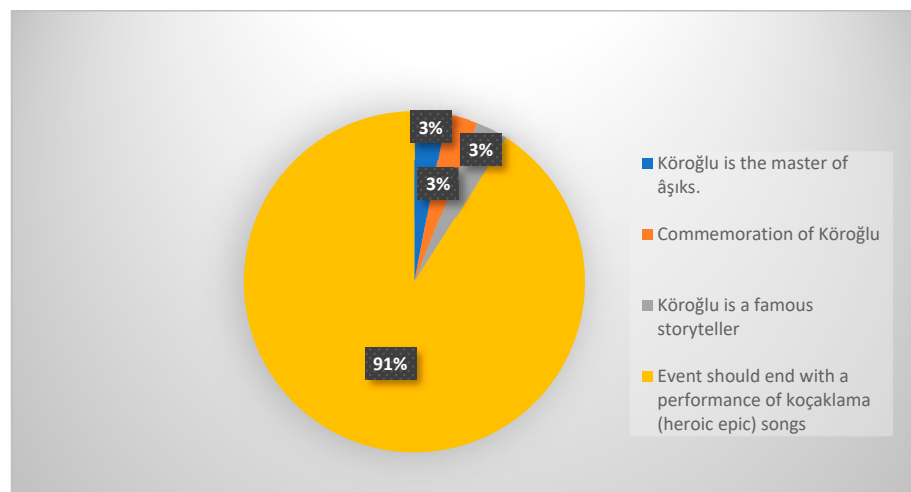


Figure 6. The meaning attributed to Köroğlu's poems from *âşiks*.

One important finding from the study is that of the 33 *âşiks* who stated that they recited Köroğlu's poems and folk songs at the events they attended, 6 of them (18.2%) were aware of the statement, "Whoever does not recite my poems and folk songs, let my horse neigh at their mother-in-law's door until morning", which carries a curse-like nature.

One *âşık* (2.9%) who mentioned not singing Köroğlu's works at the events they attended was brought up under the tradition of the master–apprentice relationship, directly influenced by a master. This *âşık* hailed from the Central Anatolia region and fell into the age group of 20–29. Of the 34 *âşiks* interviewed, only 1 (2.9%) abstained from reciting Köroğlu's works, representing an important finding in the study. The fact that this *âşık* was the youngest among those interviewed suggests that their reluctance to recite Köroğlu's works might stem from a lack of experience rather than a deliberate choice. These data imply a potential risk of the tradition of reciting Köroğlu's works fading away. Drawing such an inference might not be entirely reliable, especially considering that the same *âşık* mentioned their involvement in reciting the works of masters. Moreover, this *âşık* represented just 1 out of the 34 *âşiks* interviewed, suggesting that their perspective may not be indicative of the broader trend among *âşiks*.

7. Conclusions

Âşiks, renowned for their mastery of music and poetry, have historical roots intertwined with shamanism (kam) and persist within the framework of folklore in contemporary times. Their upbringing within the framework of master–apprentice relationships and the performance of the works of masters influenced by this tradition serve as the focal points of this study. Beliefs and practices such as imbibing *bade* in dreams, the sacred bond of master–apprentice relationships, and the exchange of mahlas (pseudonyms), deeply embedded in early Turkish *âşık* tradition, continue to be upheld by modern-day *âşiks*. The act of *âşiks* drinking *bade* in their dreams while in a state of fainting/trance or sleep is related to the belief in ancestral spirits in shamanism, as well as to the prominent dreams, illnesses, or ecstatic states during the shamanic initiation process. Additionally, the practice of taking/giving pseudonyms and performing the works of masters within the tradition of master–apprentice relationships among *âşiks* is also associated with the belief in ancestral spirits in shamanism. The journey from apprenticeship to mastery observed in both shamans and *âşiks* further underscores these similarities. Moreover, the analogous notions of sleep and death, as well as the belief in summoning and communicating with spirits, serve as noteworthy points of convergence between these traditions.

The ancestral cult, a cornerstone of shamanism, entails the reverence of departed ancestors' spirits, notably those of deceased shamans. During rituals, shamans frequently invoke the spirits of their predecessors, beseeching their guidance for traversing the celestial

realms or confronting malevolent forces lurking in the underworld. The act of offering *bade* within the *âşık* tradition, often performed by revered religious figures like prophets, caliphs, or saints, resonates with the idea of shamans being selected. This parallels the belief that *âşiks*, akin to shamans, are chosen and sanctified by their religious community, echoing the spirit of departed shaman ancestors. The act of presenting *bade*, often in a state of trance or unconsciousness, parallels the experiences of shamans in a state of trance, illness, or ecstasy. Similarly, the recitation of divine-like poems resembling prayers by shamans during rituals to summon the spirits of deceased ancestors finds a striking similarity with the participation of *âşiks* in programs where they perform the works of masters. In a study conducted in Türkiye in 2024, all 34 *âşiks* interviewed (100%) affirmed their upbringing within the tradition of master–apprentice relationships and their practice of performing the works of masters in the programs they participated in. All of the *âşiks* (100%) emphasized that the reason for reciting the works of masters was to “preserve the memories of those masters”. Their statements, such as “We will preserve the memories of the masters so that those who come after us will also preserve our memories”, highlight the deep commitment to upholding their tradition and passing it down to future generations.

In the *âşık* tradition, the assignment of a pseudonym, which serves as the special name used in the *âşık*’s poems, is typically bestowed by their own master or another renowned *âşık*. To have a pseudonym is, in a sense, an indication of completing the stages of apprenticeship and journeyman in the *âşık* tradition and reaching the level of mastery; in other words, a sign of maturity. When a master *âşık* grants a pseudonym to an *âşık*, it also implies the giving of permission for the *âşık* to perform independently in programs. Consequently, if deemed necessary, the master also held the authority to revoke this permission from the *âşık*. This dynamic likely contributed to a respect driven by fear, aimed at safeguarding against potential repercussions from deceased ancestors, a fundamental aspect of the ancestor cult. Furthermore, the information and data acquired through literature review, as presented in the study, underscore the intimate connection between the contemporary *âşiks*’ tradition of reciting the works of masters and the deeply ingrained belief in ancestral spirits prevalent in shamanism. In this context, it is crucial to highlight the rule of singing about Köroğlu, which is deemed an essential component of the Turkish *âşık* tradition. Particularly in the compilation-based studies conducted between 1940 and 1970, the *âşiks* of that era regarded Köroğlu as their mentor and believed in his curse, “If you do not sing about me in the gatherings after me, may my Kırat horse neigh at your mother-in-law’s door until morning”. This belief sheds light on the significance of incorporating Köroğlu’s works into the performances of *âşiks*. During the study, of the 34 *âşiks* interviewed, 33 (97.1%) answered “yes” to the question “Do you sing Köroğlu’s songs in the programs you participate in?” The fact that 1 *âşık* among the 34 *âşiks* interviewed answered “no” to the question (2.9%) was also mentioned in the section where data analysis was conducted, indicating that this *âşık* was likely the youngest among them (in the 20–29 age range). This situation could be explained by the possibility that the *âşık* has not yet gained enough experience in singing Köroğlu songs. These *âşiks* are still at the beginning of their journey, and it is highly likely that they will eventually sing Köroğlu songs in the future as they gain more experience and expertise in their craft. Among the *âşiks* who affirmed singing Köroğlu’s songs in the programs they participated in, 90.9% indicated that they did so due to the obligation to perform Koçaklama (epic folk poems) in gatherings, emphasizing the association of Köroğlu with this traditional form of performance. *Âşiks* attribute reciting the works of masters to the concept of loyalty, while they view singing about Köroğlu as an obligation. It seems that the curse attributed to Köroğlu, “If you don’t sing something about me in gatherings after my passing, may my horse neigh at your mother-in-law’s door until morning”, has created a similar effect to the fear of ancestral spirits among Shamanist Turks. During the study, among the 33 *âşiks* who confirmed singing Köroğlu’s songs in the programs they participated in, 6 *âşiks* (18.2%) were aware of Köroğlu’s curse-like prayer. These findings carry significant weight given the historical context associated with the emergence of this curse. Contemporary *âşiks*, motivated by a reverence akin to the shamans

who invoke the spirits of deceased shaman masters through divine-like prayers, invoke the spiritual essence of the master *âşık* by performing the works of masters or folk songs that specifically reference the name of the master *âşık*, in line with the tradition of mahlas (the pseudonym). The objective is to harness the spiritual potency of the master *âşık*, akin to the shamans' practice of invoking the spirits of departed master shamans during their rituals. The formal and functional resemblances between the invocations of shamans and the verses and melodies performed by *âşıks* are also striking. Examining these divine compositions within the realm of religious literature sheds light on their significance and relevance to the topic.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, Ü.Y.Y., B.G. and F.D.; methodology, Ü.Y.Y., B.G. and F.D.; software, Ü.Y.Y. and B.G.; investigation, Ü.Y.Y. and F.D.; resources, Ü.Y.Y. and B.G.; data curation, F.D.; writing—original draft preparation, Ü.Y.Y., B.G. and F.D.; writing—review and editing, Ü.Y.Y., B.G. and F.D.; visualization, F.D. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki, and approved by Akdeniz University Social and Human Sciences Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Board (17.01.2024-831487).

Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement: Data are unavailable due to ethical restrictions in line with the ethical approval granted.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Notes

- ¹ Traditional Turkish folk poet.
- ² This example is important for the function of wind in rituals. “Yel” and the vocabulary related to “yel” predominates in the texts associated with the shaman and their rituals. For instance, in *Divânü Lugâtî't-Türk*, “yelwi” is documented with the meaning of “magic” or “magician” (Ercilasun and Akkoyunlu 2014, p. 362). Potapov suggests that the term “yelbi~yelvi~yelwi” signifies the power of the shaman and the potency of the spirits they invoke (Potapov 2012, p. 162). It is notable that various interpretations can be gleaned from the context of “breeze and wind” in historical Turkish language texts, particularly concerning how shamans utilize the breeze and wind during their rituals. The breeze generated by the shaman during the ritual, symbolized through drumming, belts, fabric, and similar elements, is described as evoking a breeze or wind. It is elucidated that the spirits invoked by the shaman when casting spells also accompany this breeze (Potapov 2012, p. 117). The breeze produced by the shaman during rituals, coupled with Islamic beliefs, lays the groundwork for designations related to “yel” created by sorcerers through “blowing”. In *TIEM 73*, one of the earliest Islamic texts, the term “üf tuf kıluğlı kişi” is used to refer to the sorcerer. The term “üf tuf” refers to sorcerers who practice magic through blowing. The contemporary usage of the word “üfürükçü” (exorcist) for sorcerers can also be traced back to the same origin (Güzelderen 2020, pp. 419–20).
- ³ Jan Assmann highlighted the connection between the concepts of death, memory, and remembrance, linking the continuation of the deceased within the memories of the living to this subject (Assmann 2015, pp. 41–43).
- ⁴ The reason why it is not in a religious context is that Islam does not approve of these customs. For detailed information see Güzelderen (2020, pp. 102–3, 374–76).
- ⁵ According to records in Chinese annals, among the Turks, it was customary for all male or female relatives to sacrifice sheep and horses upon the death of a loved one, placing the sacrificial offerings in front of the deceased's tent as a tribute (Eberhard 1996, p. 86; cited from Çu'şu and Liu-Mau-Tsai by Tryjarski 2012, pp. 161–62). The practice of offering sacrifices to the deceased is influenced by the belief that the souls of the sacrifices accompany the deceased on their journey to the afterlife (Tryjarski 2012, p. 162). Additionally, offering cloth during funeral ceremonies is an old tradition among the Shamanist Turks (Canpolat 1975, p. 29). This tradition is further documented in 11th-century texts such as *Divânü Lugâtî't Türk*. In Kashgarlı Mahmud's work, the term “örtüg” denotes silk fabric laid on the graves of elders, while “eşük” signifies fabric sent to honor lords and gentlemen, which is then distributed to the poor (Ercilasun and Akkoyunlu 2014, pp. 34, 51), serving as expressions of gift-giving. The custom of organizing a meal in the name of the deceased, known as “yoğ”, is also evident in 11th-century texts like *Kutadgu Bilig*, described as a gift presented after the death of the individual: “yoğ aşı bolur ya ölüg atın / ya ol at bulup aş birür yatın” (KB 4577: Arat 2007, p. 459).

- ⁶ Köprülü also notes the presence of Manizm, a religion based on worshipping the spirit of the ancestor, during the Hiyong–Nular period (Köprülü 2005, p. 40).
- ⁷ Mustafa Canpolat suggests that while the equivalent of the word “kam” in *Divânü Lügâti’t Türk* is given as “diviner, shaman”, the function of magic also comes to mind when examining the examples in the text (Canpolat 1975, p. 23). In early Islamic Turkish texts, the word “kam” was used not only to mean “diviner, shaman” but also “sorcerer, fortune-teller, healer”, and “one who has lost his mind” (Güzelderen and Karadavut 2023, p. 169).
- ⁸ Margaret Stutley, discussing the diversity of shamanism practices in different geographical locations and communities, noted three commonalities in all forms of shamanism: “(1) Belief in a spirit world, often in the form of animals, that can influence humans. The shaman must adeptly manage both benevolent and malevolent spirits or collaborate with them for the welfare of their community. (2) When entering the supernatural realm, the shaman achieves a state of trance through singing, dancing, and drumming. (3) Shamans also address certain ailments, typically psychosomatic, and assist clan members in navigating various challenges and adversities” (Stutley 2023, pp. 10–11).
- ⁹ Among the Uyghurs, the term *bakşı/bahşı* was utilized in texts from the Uyghur period in a spiritual and priestly context. In texts influenced by Buddhism, the word is equivalent to Buddhist monks. Köprülü reminds us that before the acceptance of Buddhism, the word *kam* was used among the Turks in various senses, including spiritual, magician, fortune-teller, healer, and surgeon. Presently, the term *bakşı/bahşı* is still used among some Turks to denote a folk poet who sings accompanied by a saz, while among others, it refers to a magician, sorcerer, or folk healer (Köprülü 1999, pp. 145–56).
- ¹⁰ It is known that the functions of Turkish shamans were adapted in various forms in other religions adopted by the Turks. In this regard, in the original translation of the story of the Buddhist Prince Kalyāṇaṃkara and Pāpaṃkara, with culture-specific additions and omissions, the hero Bodhisattva plays the kopuz and sings songs like a poet and manages to gather people around him every night (69–72; Hamilton 2011, pp. 45–47). This striking similarity can be considered a continuation of the function of poetry in shamans.
- ¹¹ The notion of death and rebirth embodies themes of renewal and, in some cases, the attainment of divinity. From a Sufi standpoint, it represents the journey toward becoming a perfected human being prior to death (Aça 2002, p. 82). In this light, burial customs such as the “hocker” style, which mimics the posture of a fetus in the womb, observed not only among Turks but also in other communities, serve as symbols of “rebirth”. Furthermore, the practice of mummification is interpreted as a manifestation of this belief (Çoruhlu 2004, p. 245).
- ¹² For detailed examples Temur (2018).
- ¹³ For detailed examples, see Boratav (1981); Sakaoglu and Karadavut (1998).
- ¹⁴ Boratav highlighted the significance of master *âşık*s, also known as *badeli âşık*s, emphasizing their influence within the *âşık* community, often associated with the symbolic drink known as *bade*. *Bade*, a symbolic libation, is typically presented by a religious figure, such as a spiritual leader or saint, or by a beloved figure deemed appropriate by the religious community. Sometimes, *bade* may also refer to items of food like bread, beans, or apples. It is believed that consuming *bade* enhances one’s poetic abilities (Boratav 1968, pp. 341–42). In the Alevi–Bektaşî tradition, attaining the status of a *badeli âşık* is regarded as a divine blessing. Within this tradition, *mahlas* (pseudonym) names are also conferred by the spiritual leader (postnişin) to whom the *âşık* is affiliated (Artun 2008, pp. 243, 299).
- ¹⁵ For detailed information, see Yeşildal (2018); Yıldız Altın (2021).
- ¹⁶ For detailed information, see Karadavut (2002).
- ¹⁷ Kırat is the name of Köroğlu’s horse with extraordinary features.
- ¹⁸ See <https://www.sabah.com.tr/yazarlar/hatipoglu/2019/07/05/oluler-bizi-duyar-mi> (accessed on 27 April 2024).

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