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"Our Anatolia": Organicism and the Making of Humanist Culture in Turkey

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“OUR ANATOLIA”: ORGANICISM AND THE MAKING OF HUMANIST CULTURE IN TURKEY

The organization of subjects in a major bookstore in Ankara offers a visitor clues about the peculiarities of a Turkish discourse on cultural heritage. In a large section that, for lack of a better term, could be labeled “Anatolia,” one can find a Turkish translation of the *Iliad*, a catalog with exquisite pictures of Hellenistic sculpture, a dictionary of “Anatolian gods,” an anthology of Turkish folk poetry, compilations of children’s bedtime stories featuring the tale of the mythic King Midas or the folk hero Keloğlan, an academic dissertation about Bronze Age cities, and a compilation of Turcoman handicrafts, all of which may be placed next to posters of heavily restored archaeological monuments (most often the Celsius Library of Ephesus) or a yacht lost in a turquoise bay, or juxtaposed with reproductions of proto-Hittite statuettes from Alaca Höyük...the examples can be multiplied. Hence one is compelled to ask: What taxonomy of culture brings all these works and objects together? What project is served by the forcible elimination of disciplinary boundaries between archaeology, anthropology, classical philology, literature, art history, and architecture? Why is this discourse so adamant in negating distinctions between “high” and “popular” cultures, the courtly artistic traditions of the past and the vernacular? And towards what persistent ideological ends?

In the writing of the histories of art and culture of Turkey, the trope of Anatolia has historically intersected with competing political projects.¹ For a generation shaped by defeat in the Balkan Wars of 1912–13, Anatolia, though at the time no less ethnically heterogeneous than Ottoman Macedonia, came to be seen as the source of Turkishness. It was during the last years of the Ottoman Empire that ethnographic expeditions were sent to the heartland to determine its ethnic make up, and that Anatolia—poverty-stricken and “real”—was first contrasted to “Turan,” the mythic homeland of the Turks in Central Asia. In the 1930s the Republic, under the one-party rule of the Republican People’s Party (RPP), made Anatolia

a central metaphor of a national myth of origin, one that sought to establish that the contemporary Turks were the autochthonous “race” of the land. The Neolithic civilizations of Central Anatolia were embraced as an alternative heritage, one that facilitated Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s modernizing reforms and the break with the Islamic traditions of the empire. Corporatist and ruralist ideas (*Köycülük*) continued to shape the perceptions of Anatolia in the 1940s among both “progressive” and “conservative” authors, who adopted positions that occasionally conflicted with the cultural policies of RPP.²

The transformation of Anatolia into an organizing paradigm of aesthetic culture was initiated in the mid-1950s, in the writings of a group of public intellectuals associated with “Anatolian humanism,” or “Blue Anatolia” (*Mavi Anadolu*). Departing from the racist paradigm of the early Republic, the “Blueists” (*Maviciler*) forcefully argued that all the civilizations that flourished in Anatolia from prehistoric times to the present constitute a cultural continuum and should therefore be embraced as the cultural forbearers of contemporary Turkey. Sabahattin Eyüboğlu (1908–73), who had previously played a leading role as a writer, translator, and educator in the state-sanctioned “humanism” of the 1940s, shaped the group’s positions concerning cultural policy and public education.³ The novelist Cevat Şakir Kabaağaçlı (1886–1973), who wrote under the name Halikarnas Balıkcısı, provided the foundations of a characteristically millennialist theory of history, while the philologist Azra Erhat (1915–82) contributed her translations and anthologies of ancient Greek texts.⁴ By 1971 “Anatolian humanism” amounted to a close-knit and meta-historical narrative of cultural heritage. While embracing all past civilizations, the Blueists clearly privileged some episodes in the history of the land: the Hittites, because—or so the Blueists believed—they served as a bridge between the “first” civilizations of Mesopotamia and the Aegean world; Troy, because the Trojans were the “aborigi-

nal” people of Anatolia, who, not unlike the Turks of the early twentieth century, resisted a “Greek” occupation; Ionia, because the Ionians gave the West the Homeric legend and initiated the world’s first philosophical enlightenment. The histories of Islamic art written under the influence of Blue Anatolia tended to emphasize individual creators over courtly traditions, as counterparts of the figure of the genius-artist in Renaissance Europe.⁵

This essay presents an analysis of the discourse on “Anatolia” as both a historiographic category and an aesthetic ideal. I shall treat “Anatolia” as an aesthetic discourse precisely because its chief metaphors, while contingent on historical circumstances and political programs at the time of their enunciation, have outlived those initial conditions. I will begin by outlining a prehistory of the “Anatolia” discourse in the revolutionary historiography of the 1930s. Focusing on the years between 1954 and 1971, I shall then examine the recurrent metaphors of Anatolian humanism within a wide spectrum of interdisciplinary work, such as anthropological survivalism and cultural diffusionism, through which an organicist system is made manifest. A study of the organicist paradigms that underlie Anatolia is, I believe, useful in dismantling the modern Turkish project of aestheticizing the nation and points to some of the paradoxes of cultural modernism at large. Of particular interest for this study are the ways “Anatolia” translated a modernizing ideological project (such as the building of a socially and culturally cohesive nation, Westernization, and rejection of cosmopolitanism) into lasting interpretive categories of art and culture, working as a device both of aesthetic distinction and of cultural authentication.

THE AUTOCHTHON AND THE AUTHENTIC: THE TURKISH HISTORY THESIS AND ITS AFTERLIFE

Printed in 1932 for Turkish schools, *Tarih I* (History I) prefigures in a few sentences what has since become a major concern of Turkish historiography of culture:

Who created Mediterranean civilization?...The tribe [that founded the first Mediterranean civilization] was the Turks who had been driven out of the Turkish motherland of Central Asia...Until not so long ago, people were so misinformed that they imagined and assumed an autonomous Greek civilization in the entire Mediterranean basin...The first inhabitants of the Aegean Sea,

just like those of the land west of the Aegean and of those of Thrace, belonged to the same root and race (they were Turkish).⁶

The unnamed “land west of the Aegean Sea” is, one may assume, Hellas—in the nineteenth-century Romantic imagination the site of the origin of Western European civilization—while the “misinformed” are the educated classes of Europe, brought up in the paradigms of philhellenic humanism.

Having fought the Turkish War of Independence (1919–22) against modern Greece and its Western allies, the revolutionaries led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk came to engage in the 1930s with the idea of the West and its cultural origin. A staunchly independent and sovereign Republic’s suspicions of the imperialist West were tempered by its founders’ faith in the Western idea of progress. Unlike the Ottoman reformists of an earlier generation, the founders of the Republic believed that cultural Westernization, along with technical modernization, was essential for the participation of Turkey in “contemporary civilization.” And yet, as Sibel Bozdoğan has observed in her history of the Turkish architectural culture of the era, the Turkish Republic aspired “to be Western in spite of the West”—and not merely due to the political hostility of the Great Powers and the role they had played in the breakup of the Ottoman Empire. The Western scholars who had hitherto studied Turkey had remained within the confines of an Orientalist paradigm, which represented the Levant as an unchanging civilization in permanent contrast to Europe. Although acknowledged as soldiers and rulers of Muslim empires, “the Turks” had figured in Western studies as inferior to Arabian and Persian civilizations.⁷

The revolutionary history of the Turkish Republic not merely rejected the philhellenic scholarly tradition—that Hellenes created an autonomous and exemplary Western civilization in the fifth and fourth centuries BCE—but also ventured to revise the Orientalist discourse concerning the Turks and the role they had played in history.

In 1931 the Society for the Study of Turkish History (Türk Tarihini Tetkik Cemiyeti)—later renamed the Turkish History Society, was charged with the mission of counteracting the philhellenic and Orientalist bias of European histories by means of a national narrative that could be implemented in republican public education.⁸ Convened in Ankara July 2–12, 1932, under the aegis of Atatürk, the First Turkish History Congress produced a twofold Turkish History

Thesis: First, it sought to establish that “the Turks,” an ancient, “brachycephalic,” and “white” race, had founded the first human civilization in Central Asia and later disseminated it to the rest of the ancient world during their prehistoric migrations. Contemporary Turks therefore could claim to have created all the major civilizations of the ancient world, including Sumerian, Egyptian, and “ancient Mediterranean” (i.e., Greek). Second, the thesis maintained that the Hittites, “the first civilized race in Anatolia,” were “Turkish.” Therefore contemporary Turks were presented as the autochthonous race of Anatolia. The initial reservations of the career historian Fuat Köprülü (1890–1966)—that there was no proof that a prehistoric drought in Central Asia had compelled “the Turks” to migrate to the Fertile Crescent of the early civilizations—were eclipsed by the fervor of more ideologically committed participants such as Afet (İnan) (1908–85), a woman pioneer of republican education reform, and Reşit Galip (d. 1934), who, between September 1932 and August 1933, served as the minister of education.⁹

Initially intended as a defensive rewriting of history for public instruction—with the memory of the recent Greek occupation of Western Anatolia (1919–22) and the threat of Fascist Italy’s territorial claims in the Eastern Mediterranean looming large—the Turkish History Thesis came to serve as the organizing principle of the human sciences of the early Republic in Ankara. Along with the History Society, the Society for the Study of Turkish Language (Türk Dili Araştırma Kurumu, 1932), renamed the Turkish Language Society (Türk Dil Kurumu) in 1936, played a crucial role in shaping the Republic’s officially sanctioned myth of origin.

In November 1935 the Language Society underwrote a series of speculations in glottology to the effect that all the “cultured languages” of the world were dialects of the primal “ur-Turkish” (*ana Türk Dili*). As the general secretary İbrahim Necmi Dilmen put it in a speech of 1937:

As a result of the scientific analysis of the Turkish language, it is now proven that our mother tongue is not different from the Indo-European and Semitic languages, and that Turkish is the main source (*ana kaynağı*) of all languages of culture (*kültür dilleri*). The Turkish language thesis that has uncovered this substantial truth is called Sun-Language Theory (*Güneş-Dil Teorisi*).¹⁰

Assuming that human language originated among the “proto-Turks” of Central Asia who uttered monosyllabic words to symbolize things, the linguists of the society

traced, between 1935 and 1937, the etymology of Turkish and foreign words alike into a handful of roots (*birinci derece radikal kökler*). The theory was called *Güneş-Dil* since, it was argued, anthropological research of the animistic religions of Central Asia confirmed the primacy of the sun among the ancient Turks; hence the “main root” (*ana kök*) of all languages was no other than “ağ,” the monosyllable for “sun.”¹¹

Like the disciplines of history and linguistics, republican archaeology and anthropology were initially expected to yield “proof” of the “Turkishness” of the Neolithic civilizations of the ancient Near East. Among the archaeological sites excavated between 1935 and 1937 by Hamit Zübeyr Koşay and Remzi Oğuz Arık (1899–1954), the proto-Hittite tombs of Alaca Höyük in Central Anatolia revealed the most substantial material culture¹² (figs. 1 and 2). Sponsored by the Turkish History Society, the excavations were aided by anthropologists who compared the ancient skeletons with those of living Turks. Having completed her PhD in 1939 in Geneva under Eugène Pittard, Afet İnan conducted a vast anthropological survey in Eastern Thrace and Anatolia, during which she measured the “skeletons,” “craniums,” and “noses” of some sixty-four thousand men and women. In *L’Anatolie, le pays de la “race” turque*, of 1941, she concluded that a brachycephalic race (*type alpin*) from Central Asia brought Neolithic civilization to Europe, and that the contemporary inhabitants of Anatolia, like the Sumerians, Hittites, Seljuks, and Ottomans before them, were in large proportion the descendants of that prehistoric, civilizing race.¹³

The state’s preoccupation with “origin” also explains the establishment of chairs in Sumerian and Hittite philology in the Faculty of Languages, History, and Geography (Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi) at Ankara University at a time when there were still no departments of classical archaeology or Islamic art. These two civilizations were often singled out as the archaic namesakes of a modern republican identity. The state-run Industry and Credit Bank (Sanayi Kredi Bankası) was renamed Sümerbank in 1933; a state metallurgy company, founded in 1935, was named Etibank (Hittite Bank).¹⁴

While the Turkish History Thesis invented a symbolic ancestry that by implication deemphasized Turkey’s Islamic and Ottoman past and justified the Republic’s modernizing reforms, its scope was more ambitious than cultural Westernization alone. The human sciences were put in the service of building a nation

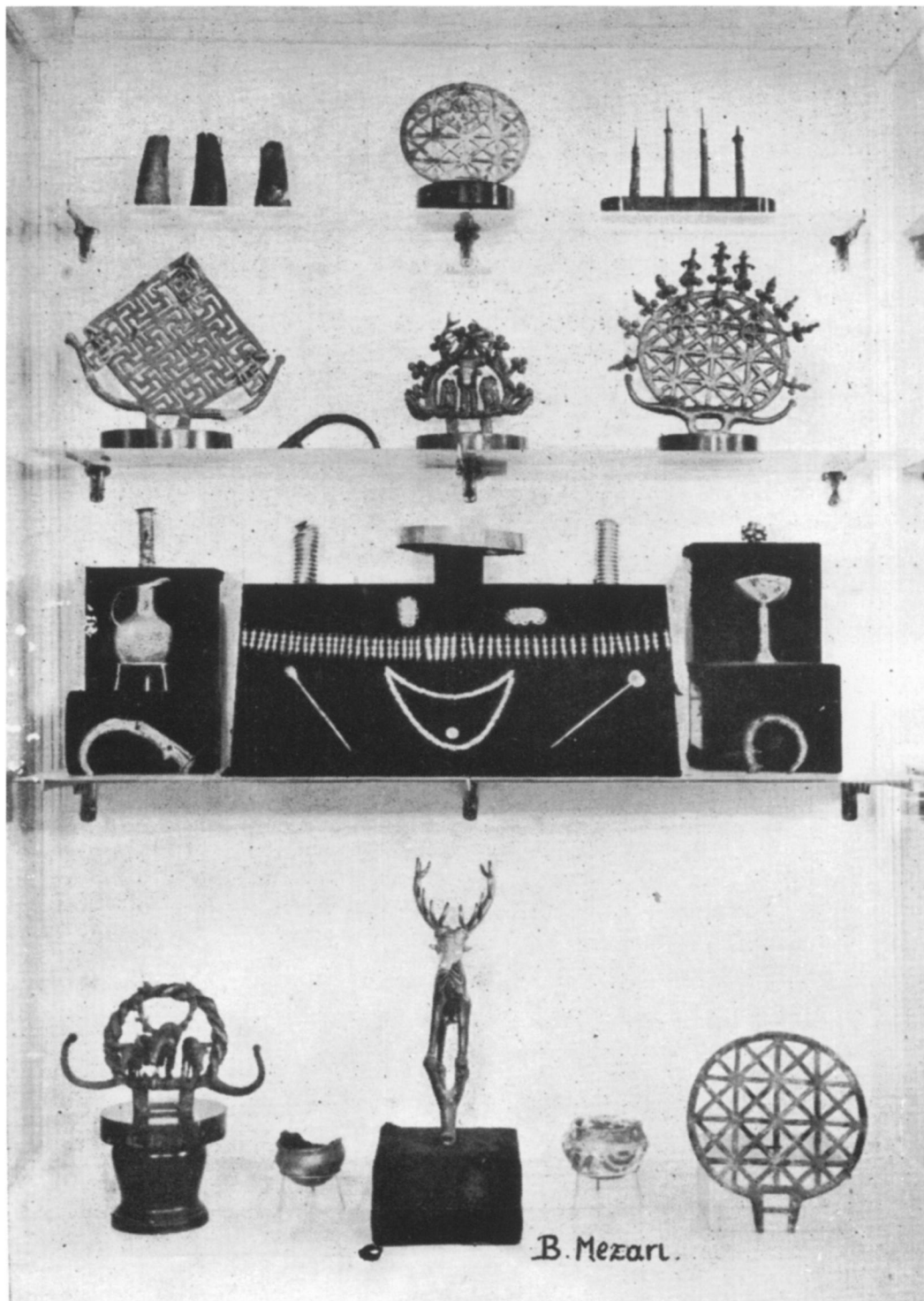


Fig. 1. Finds from Royal Tomb B, Alaca Höyük. (After Hamit Zübeyr Koşay, *Alacahöyük* [n.p. (Ankara?): Turkish Press Broadcasting and Tourist Department, n.d. (1954?)])

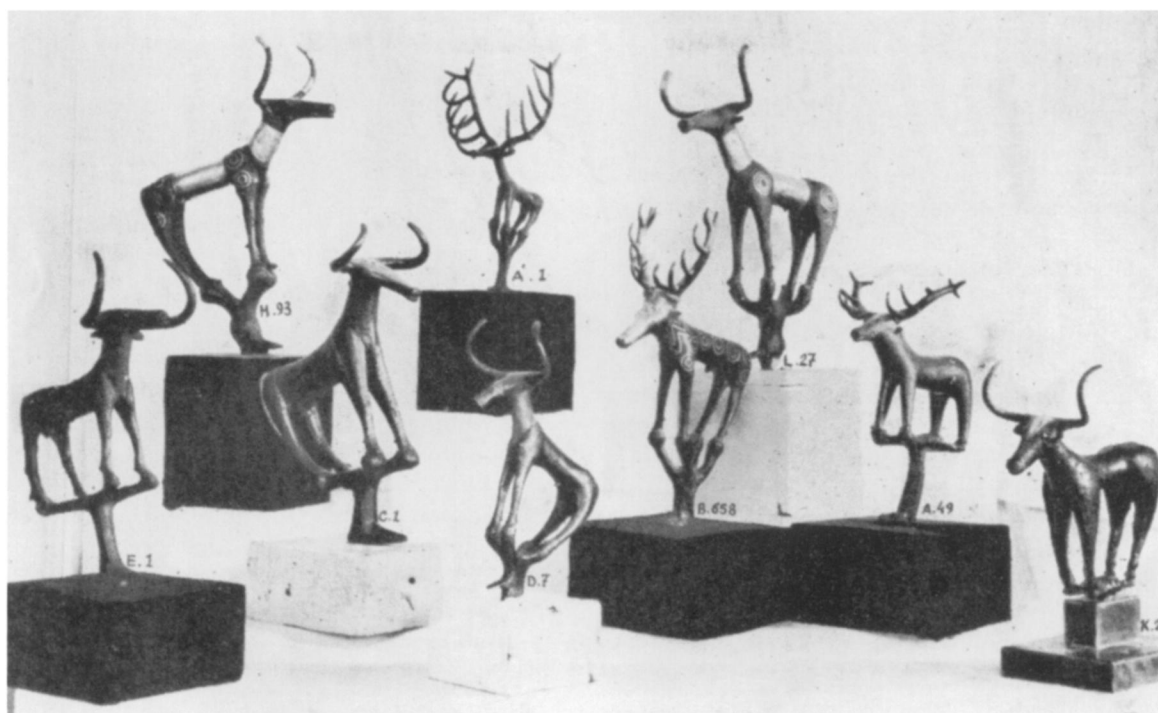


Fig. 2. Comparison of deer statuettes found in royal tombs, Alaca Höyük. (After Koşay, *Alacahöyük*)

around a cohesive and organic “culture,” which, not coincidentally, corresponded with the ethnic and social homogenization of the remains of Ottoman society. The most ambitious and lasting outcome of this sublimated ideal of culture, the “Turkish language revolution” aimed at producing a national language by eliminating the gap between the courtly and the vernacular, or between written and spoken Turkish. It entailed purging words of “foreign origin” (mostly Arabic and Persian) and adopting new ones from a broadly defined “Turkic” corpus, including contemporary Turkish dialects and the extinct languages of Central Asia retrieved during ethnographic and archaeological research.

Notwithstanding the ubiquity of “race” and “origin” in the discourse of the 1930s, the early Republic defined national culture less as a biological, “pure” community than as a synthetically produced identity. In practice, the production of Turkishness hinged on language, offering linguistic assimilation as a “benevolent” alternative to discrimination: in the early 1930s, via campaigns of “Citizen, speak Turkish!” non-Muslim minorities were compelled to learn Turkish and speak it in public spaces.¹⁵

Despite the concerted efforts of Turkish scholars

in the human sciences in constructing a cohesive and Westernized national identity, the Republic’s cultural revolution presented a contradiction as early as the mid-1930s. The Turkish History Thesis, which relocated “the Turks” from the margin to the “origin” of (Western) civilization, perpetuated an essentially Eurocentric narrative without providing the necessary tools to justify Turkey’s cultural Westernization. Simply put, the meta-narrative of the “origin” of the civilization-giving “Turks” could not be translated into a normative aesthetic culture of the present: even if an ethnic or linguistic similarity between the Neolithic civilizations of the Near East and the contemporary Turks were scientifically tenable, the question remained of why Western cultural institutions and practices needed to be taken as a model in the moral and aesthetic education of the new Turkish subject.

Mirroring this contradiction, *Güneş Dil Teorisi* was employed in 1935 not only to assert the Turkish origin of all languages but also to mitigate the particularism of the “language revolution.” It signaled a totalizing perspective, one that was more permissive of words that had been hitherto excluded as “foreign.”¹⁶ Around the same years, the self-made linguists of

the Language Society coined new Turkish words that sounded suspiciously analogous to their Western counterparts. For instance, the very word *kültür*, which, in contradistinction to *hars*, refers both to the unchanging essence of the folk and to the productions of high culture, could be embraced as “Turkish” because, as Dilmen put it, “all the words that refer to culture in all civilized languages” derived from a common root in “ur-Turkish.”¹⁷

After Atatürk’s death in 1938, which deprived the History and Language Societies of patronage at the highest level, the Turkish state consolidated the early Republic’s thesis of origin into an officially sanctioned identity while, for a brief period, it was unequivocally committed to cultural Westernization. Beginning in 1938, the year Hasan Ali Yücel (1897–1961) was appointed minister of education, a new generation of cultural theorists, including Nurullah Ataç (1898–1957) and Sabahattin Eyüboğlu, distanced themselves from the racial particularism of the 1930s and demanded the institution of a Western-oriented “humanism” in Turkey.¹⁸ The state Translation Bureau (Tercüme Bürosu), founded in 1940, undertook the translation of world classics into Turkish.¹⁹ While a few non-Western works were included, the majority were chosen from ancient Greek and French. The state’s commitment to establishing a classical culture, albeit short-lived, was also made manifest in the introduction of ancient Greek and Latin curricula in some high schools. The founding in 1940 of Köy Enstitüleri, the self-help village education institutes, underscores a commitment to reach out with “humanist” education reform to what was still a largely agrarian society.

By the mid-1950s, the Turkish History Thesis had waned along with the initial revolutionary fervor of the RPP. Though never discredited outright by the academic establishment, the emphasis of the thesis on “race” had eventually become objectionable, just as its most overt expressions, such as the *Güneş-Dil Teorisi*, would be remembered with considerable unease. Views concerning the “Turkish” origin of first civilizations were occasionally intoned, most remarkably during the architectural competition and construction, between 1944 and 1953, of Anıtkabir, the monumental mausoleum of Atatürk in Ankara (fig. 3). In 1955, after completion of the mausoleum, the architects Emin Onat and Orhan Arda wrote:

The genius of Atatürk taught us that the greatest civilization of the world, the Sumerian civilization, was created by the Turks. Hence the Turks will discover their

national roots and the origins of civilization as one, not only because [ancient Sumer] was the basis of Mediterranean civilization, but also because it [has come to be understood] as one of the foundations of world civilization.

This is why we decided to construct the monument for Atatürk, who achieved our greatest progress toward Westernization in the classical spirit and along the rational lines of a seven-thousand-year-old civilization, rather than by associating it with the tomb of a [medieval] sultan or a saint.²⁰

Onat and Arda’s recourse to the Turkish History Thesis more than a decade after it had become obsolete in the human sciences underscores an attempt to translate the early Republic’s myth of origin into an architectural language at once “national,” “classical,” and “modern.” Inspired by the Central European *Jugendstil* and the “new German architecture” (*yeni Alman mimarisi*) of the 1940s, the architects interpreted the symbolic program of the “monument-mausoleum,” the symbiosis of the remains of the national hero with the eternal youth of the body of the nation, as a *Gesamtkunstwerk*.²¹ In its sculpture and ornament, Anıtkabir incorporates allegories of the life of the hero Atatürk and of the epic struggle for national independence together with Turkish-Anatolian folklore motifs. Far from being a vacuous rhetorical trope, the Sumerian “origin” of the “seven-thousand-year-old civilization” is equated with an “authentic” folk culture. Hence the architecture of Anıtkabir has come to function as a synecdoche of the nation itself: the monument represents the nation as an aesthetic ideal by equating its mythic origin with its timeless essence (figs. 4 and 5).

The year Onat and Arda’s article was published in the journal *Arkitekt*, a number of intellectuals, including Sabahattin Eyüboğlu, Takiyettin Mengüşoğlu, Mazhar Sevket İpşiroğlu, and Vedat Günyol initiated a debate in the journal *Yeni Ufuklar* concerning Turkey’s cultural and artistic heritage. In 1954 and 1955, the latter journal solicited short answers from public intellectuals concerning the place of tradition in contemporary Turkish society, the significance of the “Turkish language revolution,” the legacy of “Atatürk’s history thesis,” and—with a Nietzschean twist—the relevance of history to contemporary life.²² In his response to a question posed by the editors in 1955, Eyüboğlu writes,

[Atatürk] presented the Turks as the founders of civilization not to boast about their supremacy [over



Fig. 3. Emin Onat and Orhan Arda, Anıtkabir, the mausoleum of Kemal Atatürk, Ankara, completed 1953. (Photo: Can Bilsel)



Fig. 4. İlhan Koman, "The Battle of Sakarya," sculptural relief, mausoleum of Kemal Atatürk. (Photo: Can Bilsel)



Fig. 5. Ceiling of the colonnade around the mausoleum of Atatürk, showing Turkish kilim motifs, a reference to the folk culture in Anatolia. (Photo: Can Bilsel)



Fig. 6. Hüseyin Özkan, lions (two of twenty-four) on the processional road of the mausoleum of Atatürk, a reference to the archaic civilizations (especially Hittite) of Anatolia. (Photo: Can Bilsel)

other nations] but in order to broaden our perspective and break away from the old frames that constrained our thought. By linking the Hittite and the Greek with the Turk, he intended to destroy the rotten, introverted, and limited view of history that hindered the progress of Turkey and to promote a new consciousness of the past... that would enable us to embrace every innovation. Some [historical] proofs might have been steered too forcibly in this direction. Who knows, after all, if one people is more ancient than another, and who descended from whom? He sought to establish not racial [genealogies] but cultural links [with the peoples of the past].²³

Eyüboğlu combines his defense of the Turkish History Thesis with a characteristically vitalist critique of knowledge about history (*küflü tarih görüşü*), embracing a new historical consciousness in the service of a living “culture.” Using comparably vitalist metaphors (e.g., by comparing an archaeological find to a “seed” about

to flourish, as opposed to a “dead stone”), Azra Erhat in 1956 called for the establishment of non-pedantic humanism.²⁴

This “humanist” revision of the Republic’s myth of origin is most succinctly presented in the 1970s in an epic by İskender Ohri, titled alternatively *The Story of Anatolia* or *The Story of Our Land*. Dashing through seven thousand years—from Çatalhöyük to the present—in a mere 190 pages, Ohri concludes his history with a description of Anıtkabir:

There is a monument on one of the hills that surround the plain of Ankara. The Anatolian people had it built for the eternal sleep of its great child and savior who founded new Turkey...As you walk on the streets of the capital toward that monument, which is a synthesis of Ionian finesse and Hittite splendor, you encounter the Hittite lions [fig. 6]...and on the flagpole, the crescent and moon that we inherited from the Hittites.²⁵



Fig. 7. Nusret Suman, “Hittite Sun,” Atatürk Boulevard, Sıhhiye intersection, Ankara. (Photo: courtesy of Candaş Bilsel)

In a history that alternately pledges patriotism and subverts the ethnocentric definition of the nation—for instance by suggesting that the Turkish flag originated from the pagan Hittite religion—Ohri seeks to revise the Turkish History Thesis. He redeploys archaeological references to make the monument the symbol not so much of a “nation” or “race” as of another transcendental identity, “the Anatolian people.”

Similarly, the proto-Hittite statuettes, which were found during the Turkish History Society’s excavations at Alaca Höyük and preserved in the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations in Ankara, have come to be seen less as anthropological proofs about the origin of the Turkish race than as the aesthetic symbols of the homeland. Between 1973 and 1977, Vedat Dalokay (1927–91), the mayor of Ankara, made the “Hittite Sun” a ubiquitous emblem of the city. A gigantic reinterpretation of the Bronze Age statuette by Nusret Suman (1905–78) was erected in Sıhhiye, one of

the prominent squares of the capital (fig. 7). Hence, the early Republic’s preoccupation with “origin” was translated into a monumental culture.

TURKISH TROJANISM AND THE PROBLEM OF HELLAS

The organizing principle of the discourse of Anatolia is a thesis of cultural continuity. Working in an unusually expansive field, Turkish humanists have sought to establish the ancient peoples of the land as the symbolic if not the cultural ancestors of the Anatolian Turks.

By embracing the ancient Trojans as described in Homeric legend as the honorary ancestors of today’s Anatolians, the Blueists were building upon a discourse that had taken root in early modern Europe. In the fifteenth century, when the Ottoman armies conquered

Constantinople (now Istanbul) and came to present an imminent threat to Christian Europe, a debate concerning the origin of the Turks waged among Italian humanists. As James Hankins has shown, while the “humanist Crusader literature” of the second half of the fifteenth century sought to identify the Turks with the ancient “Scythians,” a people described by Herodotus—an identification that connoted barbarous mores—dissenting humanists contended that the Turks had descended from the Trojans. By arguing that the Turks were wreaking vengeance on the Greek Byzantines for the fall of Troy, the Turcophile humanists undermined the Venetian war effort and Pope Pius II’s calls for a crusade to recover Constantinople from the Ottomans.²⁶

Rather than the theories of the fifteenth-century Italian humanists, however, the pronouncements of Sultan Mehmed II were what lent modern Turkish Trojanism its national legitimacy. A Greek manuscript of the fifteenth century, preserved in the Topkapı Palace and first translated into Turkish in 1912, chronicled Mehmed’s conquest of the remainder of the Byzantine Empire during the first decade of his rule. The author, Critoboulos (also spelled as Kritovoulos, Kritoboulos, or Critobulus), a Byzantine Greek scholar in the service of the Ottoman court, reports that, having visited the site of ancient Troy and sought the graves of the Homeric heroes, the sultan, like Alexander the Great before him, pronounced his nascent empire the heir of a distant antiquity:

It was the Greeks and Macedonians and Thessalians and Peloponnesians who ravaged this place in the past, and whose descendants have now through my efforts paid the right penalty, after a long period of years, for their injustice to us Asiatics at that time and so often in subsequent times.²⁷

That the Ottoman sultan Mehmed II avenged Troy by conquering “the Greeks” has often figured in the discourse of Blue Anatolia as a means of emphasizing the classical heritage of Turkey, often without reference to Critoboulos or to the historical role that the Greek-Ottoman governor of Imros played in the handover to the Ottomans of the former Byzantine territories in the Northern Aegean.²⁸ According to the Turkish archaeologist and art historian Ekrem Akurgal (1911–2002), who quotes Critoboulos, Mehmed II’s words at Troy underscore that the “enlightened” sultan, who gathered Italian humanists and Greek (*Rum*) intellectuals in his court, was in command of the

universal “Hellenic culture.” Akurgal laments that the untimely death of the classically minded Mehmed II brought nascent humanism in Turkey to a halt for “five hundred years.”²⁹

A similarly millennialist perspective can be found in the Blueists’ narratives of the Turkish War of Independence of 1919–22 as the epic struggle of native “Anatolia” against the “Greek” invaders. Having defeated the Greek armies in Dumlupınar, Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk) is presented in the narratives of Blue Anatolia as the epic hero who “avenged [the fall of] Troy.”³⁰

Just as the Turkish humanists embraced Troy as a literary topos, so did a number of ethnographies seek to establish the continuity between the ancient and the modern peoples of Anatolia across the millennia. For instance, Eyüboğlu and others frequently offer as anecdotal evidence the apparent similarities between the dances of Dionysus described in the tragedies of Euripides and the “Horon” folk dances of the Turkish Black Sea.³¹ In his books on Turkish Anatolian folklore, İsmet Zeki Eyüboğlu (b. 1925) explores the affinities between the ancient pagan religions and mythologies and the superstitions and practice of “magic” in the countryside.³²

While their approach opened fertile ground in the cultural anthropology of Turkey, the Blueists restricted the critical potential of their studies by insisting that the formal affinities between an ancient and a modern people could be explained not by historical influences but rather by the survivalist paradigm of a folk culture, since all “authentic” practices in the land, from prehistory to modernity, embody a folk essence. Cultural affinities, in other words, were deemed sufficient proof of the survival of the same people throughout history.

Anthropological survivalism has also influenced translations and creative work in literature. Most remarkably, Azra Erhat and A. Kadir’s translation into Turkish of the *Iliad* (1958–67) and the *Odyssey* (1970) sought out similarities between the classical epic and the Turkish/Anatolian vernacular.³³ Erhat’s creative work enabled the Anatolian Turks, which she considered the honorary descendants of the Trojans, to read the Homeric legend in a language that was close to their own folk idiom.

Such sweeping arguments inevitably raise questions not merely about method but also about the availability of a historical archive: how can continuity between the culture of the ancients and that of the moderns

be detected and known? The mores of the ancient inhabitants of Anatolia—who mattered to the Turkish humanists more than, for instance, the medieval populace of the peninsula—were recorded in classical texts. To prove the survival of the ancient culture, the Turkish theorists had to identify an aboriginal village culture, untouched by the supposed degeneracy of the small-town or urban elites.

In fact, long before the Blueists, Western travelers of the nineteenth century had identified the Alevis³⁴ (a distinct religious sect widespread in Anatolia, with influences from Shi'i Islam, Sufi orders, and folk traditions) as a case of anthropological survival, alternatively deemed the “descendants of the [antique] Lydians” or members of an ancient religion. It was in reaction to these accounts by the Western Orientalists that the organization Türk Ocağı (Turkish Hearth) of the ruling İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti (Union and Progress Party) sent Baha Said to study the Anatolian Alevis during the last years of the Ottoman Empire. Said recast the Alevis as a survival of the Turkish tribes of Central Asia, “the most traditional, the purest Turks” (*en töreci, en halis Türkler*), who “preserve[d] the Turkish language, race, and blood” from being alloyed by “the international ideal of the Arab” (*Arap'ın beynelmîlel mefkuresi*).³⁵

Starting from the 1950s the Alevi-Turcoman village for paradoxical reasons came to be seen as an ideal if politically portentous topic of humanist folklore: its supposed syncretism in integrating the ancient religions of the land with Islam made it a survival of the ancients in flesh and blood, just as its isolation in the mountains, inflicted by centuries of persecution, made it supposedly impervious to modernity.

If Anatolian humanism was built on a Romantic nativist ideal, it could claim universal validity only by subscribing to a form of fin-de-siècle diffusionism, according to which the history of civilization originated in the ancient Orient and migrated to the West, to be perfected in ancient Greece. The metaphor of Anatolia as “the cradle of civilization(s)” fulfills a discursive function: it implies that the ancient Anatolians are not merely the cultural forebears of contemporary Turkey, but, more importantly, are among the originators of contemporary (that is, Western) civilization.

Ekrem Akurgal, whose iconographic reading of ancient art can be placed within the German-speaking scholarly traditions of the early twentieth century, played a significant role in coining the category “Anatolian civilizations.” His internationally acclaimed *Orient*

und Okzident: Die Geburt der griechischen Kunst of 1966 (translated as *The Birth of Greek Art: The Mediterranean and the Near East*, published in 1968) traced the evolution of “style” from ancient Mesopotamia to Anatolia and finally to Greece. His excavations of the Ionian settlements of Smyrna (Bayraklı), Phokaia (Foça), Pitane (Çandarlı), and Erythrai (Ildırın) were directed at uncovering the influences of late Hittite and other Near Eastern civilizations on the archaic “Eastern Hellenic culture.” Intended for a Turkish audience, Akurgal's later books and articles described western Anatolia as “the birthplace of Western civilization.” Although he generally agreed with and contributed to Blue Anatolia's thesis of heritage, Akurgal departed from a populist celebration of the Anatolian vernacular or of folk culture. Unlike the Blueists, he understood “culture”—ancient and modern—primarily as pertaining to the elites, or else as referring to a process of acculturation.³⁶

The populist elaboration of “the cradle of civilization” can be traced back to the oeuvre of Halikarnas Balıkcısı (Balıkcı), in whose writing Turkish humanism had to come to terms with what I shall call the “problem of Hellas.” Balıkcı's work as a newspaper illustrator suggests that, as early as the 1920s, he idealized the Turkish peasant as the true owner of the land.³⁷ His political caricatures during the Turkish War of Independence attack the Greek occupation of western Anatolia, ridicule the loyalties of the local Greeks (*Rums*), and lionize the Turkish-Anatolian resistance led by Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk). His support of the Turkish War of Independence, however, would not earn him Ankara's favor. In 1925, the Turkish Revolutionary Court (İstiklal Mahkemesi), angered by a slightly irreverent newspaper article, sent Balıkcı into exile in the then-small town of Bodrum, on the Aegean coast.³⁸ There, and later in Izmir, he authored several novels, short stories, and essays on the history of culture and mythology. In retrospect, the common denominator of all these seems to be his experience as a Romantic—a Turkish Byron (however oxymoronic this may be), whose loyalties were not with the Istanbul elite from which he had been expelled, nor with the state, but with his hosts, the common people of a fishing village; his adoptive name literally means “the Fisherman of Halicarnassus.”

A polyglot of remarkable talents, Balıkcı was familiar with the philhellenic traditions of the nineteenth century, not least due to his Oxford education. He sought in his oeuvre a *détournement*—a turning upside down of what

he perceived as the racist bias against Anatolia and the Turks. He contended that the perfection attributed to Hellas in the European Romantic imagination was a grave misunderstanding, since Ionia on the Anatolian coast, not Hellas on mainland Greece, was where rational (that is, Western) civilization had originated. Similarly, Balıkcı's popular anthologies of ancient mythology assert that the Olympians were not Greek in origin but were instead ancient Anatolian deities later appropriated by the Hellenes.³⁹

Curiously, however, in their methodology the Blueists theses are comparable to the Greek survivalist folklore studies of the early twentieth century. As Michael Herzfeld has shown, in order to legitimize modern Greece as both a cultural ideal and a polity, Greek scholars sought to establish the sameness of the archipelago's Christian-Orthodox populace with the idealized Hellenes of antiquity. (The great powers of Western Europe, who had aided the Greek war of independence, were not uniformly impressed with the modern Greeks' claim to own Hellas, deeming them too "Oriental" to have descended from Europe's honorary ancestor.) The result was the birth in Greece of "laography," a nationally sanctioned discipline that studied Greek folklore exclusively as a survival of antiquity.⁴⁰ Like Greek patriotic folklorists, the Blueists sought to organize the objects of ancient art, mythology, and folklore into a single taxonomy of monumental culture, both ancient and timeless, but with Anatolia substituted for Hellas.

THE ANATOLIAN PEOPLE, FOLKLORE, AND THE POLITICS OF TASTE

The emergence of a public debate concerning "humanist" culture is linked to the political circumstances of the Cold War years and to the precariousness of Turkey's multiparty regime, during which the Blueists were forced out of public service. Eyüboğlu, having served in policy-making positions in the Ministry of National Education under Hasan Âli Yücel and as a professor at Hasanoğlu Yüksek Köy Enstitüsü (the center where the teachers of the country-wide Village Institutes were educated), was relieved of his duties in 1947. In 1948 a conservative constituency in the National Assembly oversaw the dismissal of Azra Erhat, along with three German and four other Turkish professors suspected of harboring left-wing tendencies, from Ankara University's Faculty of Languages, History,

and Geography.⁴¹ In 1960, Eyüboğlu was included in the list of "the 147" (*147'ler*)—academics who were removed from Turkish universities after the coup of May 27—and had to leave the Faculty of Literature of Istanbul University. The disbanding of the Village Institutes in the 1950s had embittered him and provided the Turkish humanists a cause célèbre.⁴²

Successive governments endorsed "Anatolian humanism" only to the extent that it facilitated Turkey's self-presentation as an inheritor of and participant in "universal civilization" and aided Western tourism. But the Blueists' repeated calls for village education reform or peasant "enlightenment" were seen as too menacing. Eyüboğlu taught art history courses at Istanbul Technical University until the coup of 1971, when, shortly before his death, he was jailed along with his wife, Magdi Eyüboğlu, as well as Azra Erhat and others, under the false accusation of having started a secret Communist party. As late as 1965, Eyüboğlu hoped that the RPP, which he believed to have strayed into authoritarian and pro-fascist rule in the aftermath of World War II, would return to Atatürk's original revolutionary program, and he took heart from İsmet İnönü's newfound "left-of-center" (*ortanın solu*) direction for the party.⁴³ In retrospect, Eyüboğlu's evolving concept of "the Anatolian people" proved particularly influential in the symbiosis of cultural "humanism" with the political left: while in the mid-1950s he had argued that Europe offered "an open and generous cultural formula" for other peoples of the world who wanted "their rights and their share of civilization," by 1965 he had become disillusioned with Western-style "liberalism." Since that time, an embrace of the values of common humanity manifested in the works and deeds of "the Anatolian people" and a leftist critique of the imperialist West have coexisted in the Turkish discourse on "humanism."⁴⁴

The 1970s were marked by the rise of a thesis of cultural heritage that defined itself specifically in opposition to Blue Anatolia. Coined by the members of Aydınlar Ocağı (The Hearth of the Enlightened), the "Turkish-Islam Synthesis" aimed at an ethnically defined and religiously committed "national culture"—a syncretism between pan-Turkism and Islamism in the earlier Turkish political tradition. The advocates of this "synthesis" took offense at the Blueists' embrace of antique (i.e., pagan) civilizations as the cultural forebears of Turkey. In a relatively short period, between 1982 and 1986, the staunchly anti-Communist regime that followed the military coup of 1980 enshrined

"national culture" within official ideology.⁴⁵

The subsequent characterization of Anatolian humanism or Blue Anatolia as a "godless nationalism" (*dinsiz milliyetçilik*) is symptomatic of an apparent "culture war" between two reading publics that has often erased historical contingencies and theoretical subtleties.⁴⁶ In fact, despite its marked political differences with Blue Anatolia, the officially sanctioned "Turkish-Islam" was also intended as a "synthesis" seeking a cohesive and organic "culture." It, too, was adopted from a reframing of the Turkish History Thesis and of the "right-wing" Anatolianism of nationalist-corporatist thinkers of the early twentieth century such as Remzi Oğuz Arık.⁴⁷

The widely perceived failure of the state to adopt the precepts of Anatolian humanism seems to have had a peculiar effect in the way Blueists enunciated their thesis. Eyüboğlu, the leading ideologue of Anatolian culture, wrote in the first-person plural, which is characteristically both authoritative and contrarian:

Why is this land ours? Do we own the land merely because we descended from some four hundred horsemen from Central Asia who raided the land [a thousand years ago]? Those who buy into this argument fail to embrace Anatolia as their homeland... The Hittites, Phrygians, Greeks, Persians, Romans, Byzantines, and Mongols also conquered this land. They did not possess but rather were possessed by Anatolia.

This land is simply ours, and not because we conquered it. Even if there are some migrants among us, and surely they are in the minority, they are also melted into the [native] Anatolian people. Hence, we are the conquerors and the conquered. We are the assimilated and the assimilator. Just as we have worked the land, so did the land shape us. Whatever there is in this country from the old times belongs to us. For the history of our people is the history of Anatolia.⁴⁸

This passage from "Bizim Anadolu" (Our Anatolia) of 1956 is remarkable not least because the subject of enunciation is split halfway between the "we" of the first lines and the possessive "our" of "our people." The first "we" refers to the whole nation, including the intellectuals and potential readers who should understand identity as the means to a polity: "Once we were pagan; then we became Christian, and finally Muslim."⁴⁹ On the other hand "our people" refers to "the folk," the aboriginal people of Anatolia who produce folklore as an inevitable, if unconscious, expression of their cultural essence. The first signifies

the communal self, which transcends history, while the second stands for an idealized other.

While Eyüboğlu's essays often assume familiarity with his potential readers, he refrains from identifying his narrative voice—"we"—with "the Anatolian people." In 1949, for instance, he writes:

Whenever we, the intellectuals, call ourselves populists we assume that the people are a confused crowd, living in another world. And yet we are the ones who disseminate from the radio the vulgarities that the people never heard of, just as we publish in our newspapers, journals, and books unspeakable absurdities, and furnish every corner, every home with samples of bad taste...

Let us carry out our work not like populists but like the people. Let us produce not what the people supposedly want but what is borne in our hearts... Children want to be taken seriously and challenged; so do the people.⁵⁰

According to the author, the supposed childlike innocence of the Anatolian people guarantees the quality of genuine folk art, while "our"—that is the intellectuals'—alienation from the traditions of the folk generates the low taste of mass culture.

That Eyüboğlu seems to suggest that the ideal of folk culture should remedy the social stratification of taste in modern capitalist society is far from surprising. Like all modern aesthetic ideologies built upon the organicist principle of *Gesamtkunstwerk*—the community of the arts—the basic task of Anatolian humanism was to supersede the nineteenth-century distinction between high and low art. In fact, the logical conclusion of "the Anatolian renaissance" envisioned by Eyüboğlu and others is the sublimation of art into a monumental folklore.

Here also lies a basic paradox of Turkish Anatolian humanism: like the European humanist education reforms of the nineteenth century, it assumes the perfectability of human nature by culture. But it does not permit the emancipation of the producers of "art" from (a folk) culture. The Anatolian humanists advocate an aesthetic culture in which neither the avant-garde nor mass culture is tolerated: all departure from a supposed folk essence is seen as "irrational" and capricious.⁵¹

ORGANICISM, IDEOLOGY, AND AESTHETIC CULTURE

Within the last decade, an emerging scholarship in the history of Turkish political thought and literary criticism

has duly examined the problem of “hegemony,” the process through which cultural Westernization was presented by the Republic’s founding (“Kemalist”) elites as a return to the national essence. Critics have put into question the ways the Blue Anatolia movement served the Republic’s twofold project of nation building and Westernization. The novels and travel diaries of the Blueists have been reread by Murat Belge as the escapist “discoveries” of the Mediterranean coast by an urban elite, with little or no influence on the general public. In his essay Belge hypothetically imagines a peasant on the Aegean coast who is aware of the ironies of his role in someone else’s fantasized “discovery” of the countryside. He also points out that the subsequent commodification of “Anatolia” by Turkey’s tourist industry was prefigured in the detachment of the Blueists and their followers from the land they idealized.⁵²

Kaya Akyıldız and Barış Karacasu have underscored the importance of Anatolian humanism as a departure from the ethnocentric nationalism of the early Republic both in outlook and in the project of compiling a literary canon. The authors contend that the Blueists remained true to the universal principles of “humanism,” and that the occasional intersections between the positions of the Anatolian humanists and Turkey’s nationalist “official ideology” testify to the pragmatic—as opposed to the strictly doctrinaire—nature of “Kemalism.”⁵³ However, according to Etienne Copeaux and Herkül Millas, who have analyzed the nationalist presentation of history in Turkish school textbooks since the 1930s, there is no significant difference between the cultural perspective of “Kemalism” and that of Blue Anatolia. Millas argues that the apparent philhellenism of the Blueists was marked by a “magnanimous attitude” (*alıcenaþ tutumumuz*) with respect to the contemporary Greeks and that, like the earlier “Kemalist” History Thesis, the aim of Anatolian humanism was merely to dispossess the “other” from the ownership of antiquity.⁵⁴ The Blueists appropriated the early Republic’s ideological program, merely substituting one transcendental identity—“the Anatolian people”—for another, “the Turks.” Similarly, Etienne Copeaux has observed that the Blueists failed to establish a consistent “narrative of history based on the history of the land as opposed to ethnicity,” due to their inability to include in this narrative the Christian Middle Ages, namely, “Byzantium and the Crusader and Armenian kingdoms.” Having associated the pre-Hellenic civilizations of the land with “Turkishness,” the Blueists did not allow the citizens of Turkey who did

not belong to the dominant Turkish-Muslim ethnicity to identify with the land.⁵⁵

A study by Orhan Koçak on the Turkish republican policies of culture from the 1920s to 1970s underscores the persistence of an “organicist” paradigm across rival political and ideological projects of the twentieth century. He observes that the terms of the republican debates had been defined decades earlier, during the last years of the Ottoman Empire, and were most clearly expressed in the “culture and civilization” binary (*hars ve medeniyet*) of Ziya Gökalp (1876–1924). Koçak contends that Gökalp, the founder of pan-Turkist ideology, derived his oppositions of “material/method” and “national content/universal technique” from his reading of fin-de-siècle positivist sociology. Gökalp’s thinking was fundamentally “organicist,” since he saw the salvation of an emerging “Turkish nation” in the harmony of the particular and the universal, of “essence” and form. It was Gökalp’s quest for a synthetic identity and a deep-seated reaction against the cosmopolitan elites of the late Ottoman Empire that framed the republican ideal of “culture.” Koçak convincingly argues that even those who explicitly rejected Gökalp’s thesis—that the Turks should embrace Western technical methods but learn from Western culture only to the extent that it helped them return to their own essence—continued to operate within an equally “organicist” frame of reference.⁵⁶ Koçak cites the argument of Hasan Âli Yücel, the founding father of humanist education reform of the early 1940s, that a Turk who enjoys reading contemporary (French) literature is not necessarily alienated from national tradition or from a culturally defined “taste”: “Each nation that is included in European civilization has its own identity. We also aspire to an identity within the [European] circle of civilization.”⁵⁷ Koçak’s findings may also explain the Blueists’ later position that education in Western classics is a return to the folk essence. When Eyüboğlu suggested that those rejecting humanist education “should be disconnected from the city’s electrical grid” (since one cannot renounce Western civilization while enjoying its benefits), he merely reversed Gökalp’s thesis without altering his paradigm. In other words, the republican project of cultural Westernization was, from its outset, a paradoxical proposition that revolved around the question “How can we be like the West, and remain ourselves?”⁵⁸

In this essay, I have sought to problematize the twofold construction of “Anatolia” as a meta-historical cultural identity and a normative, aesthetic ideal.

The discourse is organicist in the sense that studies in literature, art, architecture, and anthropology in wide array were geared to establish that “the people of Anatolia,” even though not ethnically homogenous, were the sole inheritors of an indivisible and authentic culture, rooted in the land. As İskender Ohri put it in his history of Anatolia: “Along with its people, civilization, and history, Anatolia constitutes an indivisible whole.”⁵⁹ Difference, whether ethnic, regional, or social, is effectively neutralized in the discourse by being cast as a “mosaic of cultures.”⁶⁰

It is my argument that at the very moment Anatolian humanism departed from the early Republic’s preoccupation with racial “origin” it also became an ideology of aesthetic culture, complete with practices that interpolate the position of a modern subject. An apparently innocuous invention, the “blue voyage” (*mavi yolculuk*), during which the self-fashioned intellectuals of Istanbul and Ankara “went native” as had Balıkcı, Erhat, and Eyüboğlu before them, promised the discovery of picturesque landscapes, antique sites, and “authentic” villages.⁶¹ And yet, unlike the nineteenth-century humanist education reforms in Europe, the aim of Anatolian humanism was not the moral and aesthetic education of a national bourgeoisie in the paradigms of high culture, but the achievement of a utopian, constructivist society. Dedicating themselves to reinstituting the village education reform (Köy Enstitüleri) of the early 1940s, the Turkish humanists worked idealistically toward an “Anatolian renaissance” (or an “Anatolian enlightenment”) in which the peasants were expected to return to their own cultural essence by being rationalized and Westernized.

As a means of cultural Westernization, Turkish humanism presents a case no less paradoxical than the national ideologies in Europe, which, since the beginning of the nineteenth century, have invented the idea of “authentic” folklore. The Blueists conflated a nativist identity (Anatolia) with a “universal” ideal (Hellas), not unlike the Greek folklorists who, decades earlier, had constructed a “Hellenic” identity. This required, on the one hand, internalizing the European philhellenism of the nineteenth century—the idea that Mediterranean/Aegean culture is the epitome of civilization—and, on the other, rejecting the political ramifications of such an idea: European imperialism and the Greek invasion of 1919–22. The substitution of “Anatolia” for “Hellas” both established the rootedness of the Republic of Turkey in its present territories and

demanding its inclusion in the “circle” of European civilization.

In the final analysis, “Anatolia” can be understood as a discursive complement to Turkish modernism, as manifested in the Blueists’ vision that a meta-narrative of historical heritage could positively transform the cultural disposition of a nation and initiate a village “renaissance.” Anatolian culture was also presented as a unifying principle that would overcome the discrepancy of taste in a cosmopolitan, mass society. During the very years when the Blueists celebrated the art and culture of the “Anatolian people” as “authentic” and wholesome, migrants from the countryside were engulfing the cities and changing the cultural landscapes of Turkish metropolitan life. Their culture shock on encountering the city would give birth to hybrid, popular forms that did not always comply with the organicist and pastoral ideals of an “authentic” folk culture.

Revisiting the aesthetic culture shelves devoted to “Anatolia” in a bookstore today, what one encounters are the fragments of an earlier discourse. The common tropes of “Anatolia” have been appropriated by Turkey’s heritage and tourist industries, which are oblivious to the Blueist’s original ideological project. The presentation of “Hittite-Sun” statuettes alongside kilims and glossy pictures of “Artemis of Ephesus” are symptomatic of the contemporary reality in which culture, like heritage, is a commodity in the marketplace. Under these circumstances, contemporary “art” has also been compelled to abandon its status as sublimated “folklore” and serve the idea not of social cohesion but of social distinction.

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NOTES

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1. For two recent histories of “Anatolia” as a political project see Seçil Deren, “Türk Siyasi Düşüncesinde Anadolu İmgesi,” and Mithat Atabay “Anadoluculuk,” in *Milliyetçilik*, ed. Tanıl Bora, Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce, vol. 4 (Istanbul: İletişim, 2002).
2. One significant example is the archaeologist and art historian Remzi Oğuz Arık’s *Millet*, a journal of “science, ideas, and art” that promoted a ruralist, conservative, and nation-

- alist culture. The first issue was published in Ankara in May 1942.
3. A public intellectual committed to republican ideals, Sabahattin Eyüboğlu worked as an art historian, cultural critic, film director, educator, and translator. As a recipient of a Turkish government fellowship in 1928, he studied art history and aesthetics in France. Upon his return to Turkey in 1932 he was appointed associate professor at Istanbul University's Department of French and French Literature. He served in the Ministry of Education until 1947, under the influential minister Hasan Ali Yücel. As the head of the ministry's Translation Bureau, Eyüboğlu oversaw the translation of world classics into Turkish. His tenure between 1939 and 1949 as a professor in Hasanoğlu Yüksek Köy Enstitüsü (the central academy for training teachers of the self-help village schools) prefigured his advocacy of education reform in his writing of the 1950s and 60s. He was among the faculty members dismissed from Turkish universities (known as *147'ler*, or the list of 147) in the aftermath of the coup of 1960. He returned to teach art history at Istanbul Technical University (İTÜ) during the last years of his life. This article focuses on Eyüboğlu's later work as a leading figure of the Turkish "humanism" movement after 1950.
 4. Best known for his novels depicting the life of the sea and the fishing village, Halikarnas Balıkcısı (Cevat Şakir Kabaağaçlı) was a freelance journalist, essayist, illustrator, and tourist guide. Exiled by the government in 1925 to a small seaside town, he became a leading figure of Turkish intellectual life, writing essays that celebrate Turkey's Mediterranean heritage and identity. For an account of his early work as illustrator and writer see n. 37 below. Azra Erhat was trained as a classical philologist and is remembered today for her translations of Greek classics, including the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. After being dismissed from Ankara University's Faculty of Language, History, and Geography in 1948 for her political views, she worked as a journalist and librarian in addition to continuing her translating and academic research.
 5. See, for example, Mazhar Şevket İpşiroğlu and Sabahattin Eyüboğlu, *Fatih Albumuna Bir Bakış = Sur l'album du Conquérant* (Istanbul: Maarif Basımevi, 1955), especially the authors' interpretation of "Mehmet Siyah Kalem," an artist known only by the attribution of this name to a series of miniatures in the "Conqueror's Album" in Topkapı Palace. The foreword to the album, in which the authors reflect on the era of Mehmed II as a Turkish Renaissance, was also published in *Yeni Ufuklar* 4, 24 (Sept. 1955): 137–39. See also Eyüboğlu's reinterpretation of Mawlana Jalal al-Din Rumi (1207–73) in "Bizim Anadolu," first published in 1956, repr. in Sabahattin Eyüboğlu, *Mavi ve Kara* (2nd ed., Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası, 2002), 9–10.
 6. *Tarih I* (Devlet Matbaası, 1932), 31–32, cited in Herkül Milas, "Millî Türk Kimliği ve 'Öteki' (Yunan)" in Bora, *Milliyetçilik*, 201.
 7. Sibel Bozdoğan, "The Predicament of Modernism in Turkish Architectural Culture," in *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, ed. idem and Reşat Kasaba (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997). For the writing of Turkish histories of art and architecture in the early Republic as a complement to the Turkish History Thesis see Sibel Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building: Turkish Architectural Culture in the Early Republic* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), 243–55.
 8. The Commission for the Study of Turkish History (Türk Tarihî Tetkik Heyeti) of Türk Ocakları was founded in 1930 with the participation of Yusuf Akçura (president), Samih Rifat, Resit Galip, Ahmet Ağaoğlu, Fuat Köprülü, and Afet İnan. On Apr. 10, 1931, when the independent organization Türk Ocakları was consolidated into Halkevleri, the countrywide organization through which RPP disseminated its revolutionary agenda, the commission was renamed The Society for the Study of Turkish History (Türk Tarihini Tetkik Cemiyeti) and was charged with shaping the Republic's official thesis of history. Soner Çağaptay, "Otuzlarda Türk Milliyetçiliğinde İrk, Dil ve Etnisite," in Bora, *Milliyetçilik*, 245–46; see also Suavi Aydın, "Türk Tarih Tezi ve Halkevleri," *Kebikeç* 2, 3 (1996): 107–130.
 9. *Birinci Türk Tarih Kongresi* (Proceedings of the First Turkish History Thesis) (Ankara: T. C. Maarif Vekâleti, 1932).
 10. İbrahim Necmi Dilmen (General Secretary of the Turkish Language Society), speech on the occasion of *Dil Bayramı*, *Türk Dili Dergisi* 23–26 (1937): 9–14. Reprinted in *Birikim* 2 (June 1989): 59. For a historical analysis see Erik Jan Zürcher, "Güneş-Dil Teorisi ve Türk Dil Reformundaki Yeri," trans. Aysen Ekmekçi, *Birikim* 2 (June 1989), 52–54.
 11. Zürcher, "Güneş-Dil Teorisi," 52.
 12. Hamit Zübeyr Koşay, "Türk Tarih Kurumu Tarafından Alacahöyükte Yapılan Hafriyatta Elde Edilen Neticeler," in *İkinci Türk Tarih Kongresi* (Istanbul: Kenan Matbaası, 1943); idem, *Alacahöyük* (Ankara: Turkish Press, Broadcasting, and Tourist Department, n.p. [Ankara?], n.d. [1954?]). For a critical history of the archaeological excavations of the Turkish History Society see Suavi Aydın, "Batılılaşma Karşısında Arkeoloji ve Klasik Çağ Araştırmaları," in Bora, *Milliyetçilik*, 403–27.
 13. Afet İnan, *L'Anatolie, le pays de la "race" Turque: Recherches sur les caractères anthropologiques des populations de la Turquie* (Geneva: Librairie de l'Université de Genève, 1941), with an introduction by Eugène Pittard.
 14. Çağaptay, "Otuzlarda İrk, Dil ve Etnisite," 254.
 15. *Ibid.*, 259.
 16. Zürcher, "Güneş-Dil Teorisi ve Türk Dil Reformundaki Yeri," 53, writes that by Nov. 1935, when the *Güneş-Dil Teorisi* was introduced, the language revolution was facing insurmountable difficulties. Atatürk, who in 1934 had given speeches in new Turkish, reverted in his later public addresses to more traditional language. Around the same time, the Language Society published a fantastic etymology, claiming alternative "Turkish roots" for 1400 words of Arabic and Persian origin.
 17. Dilmen, *Türk Dili Dergisi*, 60.
 18. During the seven years of his ministry, Yücel oversaw the cultural infrastructure of the state, including the yearly State Painting and Sculpture Exhibitions (1939), the Translation Bureau (1940) for the translation of world classics (mostly ancient Greek and French) into Turkish, the Turkish (*İnönü*) encyclopedia, the State Conservatory in Ankara (1940), the Directorate of Historical Monuments and Museums (1944), and the Law of Universities (1946).

19. Özlem Berk, "Batılılaşma ve Çeviri," in *Modernleşme ve Batıcılık, Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce*, vol. 3, ed. Uygur Kocabaşoğlu, (İstanbul: İletişim 2002), 511–20.
20. Emin Onat and Orhan Arda, "Anıt-Kabir," in *Arkitekt* 280, 2 (1955): 58–59. For a critical history see Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building*, 289.
21. In 1943 the German architect and Istanbul Technical University professor Paul Bonatz brought to Turkey an exhibition about the "New German Architecture" of the Nazi era. For his call for a new "classic" architecture see Paul Bonatz, "Yeni Alman Mimarisi," *Arkitekt* 133–34, 3–4 and 5–6 (1943): 71–75, 119–120. For the reception of the German "classic" architecture in Turkey see Abidin Mortaş, "Yeni Alman Mimarî Sergisi," *Arkitekt*, 133–34, 3–4 (1943): 67–70.
22. The journal published a Turkish translation of Friedrich Nietzsche's "Schopenhauer as Educator" along with the views of Eyüboğlu, Yaşar Nayır, Haldun Taner, Ceyhan Atuf Kansu, and others concerning the "Turkish language revolution": *Yeni Ufuklar* 3, 14 (Nov. 1954).
23. Sabahattin Eyüboğlu, "Cevap II," *Yeni Ufuklar* 4 (June 1955): 7–8; repr. in idem, *Mavi ve Kara*, 195.
24. Azra Erhat, "Anadolu'yu Dile Getirmek," in idem, *Mavi Anadolu* (2nd pr. Ankara: Bilgi, 1969).
25. İskender Ohri, *Yurdumuzun Öyküsü* (İstanbul: Zafer Matbaası, 1977); repr. as *Anadolu'nun Öyküsü* (4th ed. Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1987 [orig. publ. 1978]), 186–87.
26. James Hankins, "Renaissance Crusaders: Humanist Crusade Literature in the Age of Mehmed II," in *Symposium on Byzantium and the Italians, 13th–15th Centuries*, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 49 (1995): 111–207.
27. Critoboulos (Kritovoulos), *History of Mehmed the Conqueror*, trans. C. T. Riggs (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1954), 181–82. Also cited in Hankins, "Renaissance Crusaders," 140.
28. See, for instance, Eyüboğlu, "Tarih Soruşturmasına Cevap," in idem, *Mavi ve Kara*, 196.
29. Ekrem Akurgal, *Türkiye ve Türk Uygarlıkları*, Dışişleri Akademisi Yayınları 39 (Ankara: Dışişleri Akademisi Yayınları, 1976), 37–38.
30. Eyüboğlu, "İlyada ve Anadolu," in idem, *Mavi ve Kara*, 188.
31. Eyüboğlu, "Bizim Anadolu," 12; idem, "Halk Oyunları," in idem, *Mavi ve Kara*, 67–68.
32. İsmet Zeki Eyüboğlu, *Anadolu İnançları, Anadolu Mitolojisi: İnanç-Söylence Bağlantısı* (İstanbul: Geçit Kitabevi, 1987).
33. Homeros, *İlyada*, Turkish trans. Azra Erhat and A. Kadir (Ankara: İş Bankası, 1958); Homeros, *Odyssea*, Turkish trans. Azra Erhat and A. Kadir (İstanbul: Sander, 1970). Blueists were preoccupied with the survival of elements of the Trojan myth in the folk idioms, place names, and oral traditions of Anatolia. See, for example, Halikarnas Balıkcısı's letter to Azra Erhat of Mar. 31, 1957, published in Azra Erhat, *Mektuplarıyla Halikarnas Balıkcısı* (İstanbul: Çağdaş Yayınları, 1976), 21.
34. The English translation of the Turkish words *Alevilik* and *Aleviler* raises politically charged questions. The Blueists and Turkish humanists in general have argued that *Alevilik* is a distinct form of "Anatolian Islam," and is different from the Alawis of Syria or of the Shi'i branch of Islam elsewhere.
35. Murat Küçük, "Mezhepten Millete Aleviler ve Türk Milliyetçiliği," in Bora, *Milliyetçilik*, 901–2; see also Fuat Dündar, "Millî Ezber: Saf Türk—Karışık Öteki," in Bora, *Milliyetçilik*, 893–900.
36. Ekrem Akurgal, *Orient und Okzident: Die Geburt der griechischen Kunst* (Baden-Baden, 1966), trans. into English from German by Wayne Dynes as *The Birth of Greek Art: The Mediterranean and the Near East* (London: Methuen, 1968) and also as *The Art of Greece: Its Origins in the Mediterranean and Near East* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1968). See also Ekrem Akurgal, *Bir Arkeoloğun Anıları* (Ankara: Türkiye Bilimler Akademisi, 1999). For his understanding of "culture" see Ekrem Akurgal, *Türkiye'nin Kültür Sorunları ve Anadolu Uygarlıklarının Dünya Tarihindeki Önemi* (Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1998).
37. In 1914, upon his return to Turkey after his college education at Oxford, Cevat Şakir ("Balıkcı") was convicted of killing his father, Şakir Paşa, an Ottoman general, historian, and ambassador to Greece. During Istanbul's occupation years, Balıkcı, disinherited from Istanbul's upper class and having served a lengthy prison term, struggled to make a living as a freelance painter and journalist. For the early essays, newspaper cover designs, and political caricatures by Balıkcı see Cüneyd Okay, *Mavi Sürgün'e Doğru: Halikarnas Balıkcısı'nın Bilinmeyen Yılları (1921–1928)* (Ankara: Özkan Matbaacılık, 2001).
38. Sadi Borak, *Halikarnas Balıkcısı ve Bir Duruşmanın Öyküsü* (Ankara: Bilgi, 1982).
39. Balıkcı often repeated this thesis in his essays concerning cultural heritage: see, for instance, Halikarnas Balıkcısı, *Hey Koca Yurt* (İstanbul: Hürriyet Yayınları, 1972) and *Sonsuzluk Sessiz Büyür*, Bütün Eserleri 13 (Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1983); see also Balıkcı's letters to Azra Erhat: Azra Erhat, *Mektuplarıyla Halikarnas Balıkcısı* (İstanbul: Can Yayınları, 2002).
40. Michael Herzfeld, *Ours Once More: Folklore, Ideology, and the Making of Modern Greece* (New York: Pella Publishing, 1986).
41. Akurgal, *Bir Arkeoloğun Anıları*, 250.
42. Mehmet Başaran, *Sabahattin Eyüboğlu ve Köy Enstitüleri: Tonguç'a ve Yakınlarına Mektuplarıyla* (İstanbul Cem Yayınevi, 1990). See also Eyüboğlu, "Köy Enstitülerini Kuran Düşünce" (1964) and "Tonguç" (1960), in Eyüboğlu, *Mavi ve Kara*, 156–58, 179–82.
43. Eyüboğlu, "Devrimciliğe Dönüş" (1965), in idem, *Mavi ve Kara*, 114.
44. Since 1965 the cultural theses of Blue Anatolia have come to be associated with Turkey's "national left." Its contemporary theorists, such as İlhan Selçuk, have advocated "Anatolian enlightenment" (*Anadolu aydınlanması*), understood as the emancipation of the "Anatolian people" from religious fanaticism (*yobazlık*) and feudal overlords, and the institution of a system marked by rationalism and equality. For a critique of Selçuk's views concerning "Anatolian enlightenment" and the Anatolian Alevis see Mehmet Soydaş and Atilla Lök, "İlhan Selçuk," in Ahmet İnsel, ed., *Kemalizm, Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce*, vol. 2 (İstanbul: İletişim, 2001), 512–17.
45. Etienne Copeaux, *Tarih Ders Kitaplarında (1931–1993) Türk Tarih Tezinden Türk-İslam Sentezine*, trans. Ali Berktaş (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1998).
46. See, for instance, Yümnî Sezen, *Hümanizm ve Atatürk Devrimleri* (İstanbul: Ayışığı Kitapları, 1997).
47. See, for example, Remzi Oğuz Arık, *Coğrafyadan Vatan* (Ankara: Yeni Matbaa, 1956).

48. Eyüboğlu, "Bizim Anadolu," 9.
49. Ibid.
50. Eyüboğlu, "Halk Kavramı" (1949), in idem, *Mavi ve Kara*, 14–15.
51. Thus, according to Eyüboğlu, the European avant-garde movements "Symbolism, Surrealism, Cubism, and Dadaism, which emerged as the enemies of reason," could be entertained only to the extent that they would eventually open up new horizons for a rational Europe and contribute to the commonly accepted values (*bugün artık makul olarak görülen değerler*): "Batı, Doğru," in idem, *Mavi ve Kara*, 130.
52. Murat Belge, *Edebiyat Üstüne Yazılar* (İstanbul: İletişim, 1998).
53. Kaya Akyıldız and Barış Karacasu, "Mavi Anadolu: Edebi Kanon ve Milli Kültürün Yapılandırışında Kemalizm ile Bir Ortaklık Denemesi," *Toplum ve Bilim* 81 (Summer, 1999), 26–42; see also Barış Karacasu, "Mavi Kemalizm," in İnşel, *Kemalizm*, 334–43. In a separate article Akyıldız has reflected on the "quasi-ontological link" that the Blueists constructed between the subject position that was historically produced by the Enlightenment and the Anatolian-Turkish people: Kaya Akyıldız, "Mavi Anadoluçuluk," in Uygur Kocabaşoğlu, ed., *Modernleşme ve Batıcılık*, Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce, vol. 3 (İstanbul: İletişim, 2002), 480.
54. Herkül Millas, "Millî Türk Kimliği ve 'Öteki' (Yunan)," in Bora, *Milliyetçilik*, 200.
55. Etienne Copeaux, "Türk Milliyetçiliği: Sözcükler, Tarih, İşaretler," in Bora, *Milliyetçilik*, 50.
56. Orhan Koçak, "1920'lerden 1970'lere Kültür Politikaları," in İnşel, *Kemalizm*, 374–75.
57. Hasan Âli Yücel, cited in Koçak, "1920'lerden 1970'lere Kültür Politikaları," 395.
58. Koçak, "1920'lerden 1970'lere Kültür Politikaları," 374–75.
59. Ohri, *Anadolu'nun Öyküsü*, 11.
60. For the aestheticized image of Turkey as a "mosaic of cultures" see Ekrem Akurgal, "Anadolu Uygarlıklarının Özellikleri ve Batılı Dünya Görüşünün Oluşmasındaki Roller" = "Some Particularities of Anatolian Civilisations and Their Contributions to Western Culture," *Müze = Museum* 1 (Jan.–June 1989): 4–29.
61. For Azra Erhat's diaries of the "blue voyage" see idem, *Mavi Anadolu*.