TURKISH SYMBOLS

REFLECTIONS OF HUN PERIOD TURKISH MOTIFS AND SYMBOLS IN ART AND LIFE

Gözde SAZAK

Assoc. Prof. Dr., Istanbul University, Research Institute of Turkology, Istanbul, Turkiye
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To my father-in-law Gün Sazak,
a martyr of Turkish nationalism,
and
my father, a true Turkish scholar
Prof. Dr. Hakkı Ünal Evcim
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gözde Sazak was born in 1973 in Izmir, Turkey. In 1991, she entered Bosphorus University’s Psychological Counseling and Guidance Department and there recognized her curiosity for her first love. That is, immediately after graduation from clinical psychology and therapy classes, she worked with “problematic” children as a speech therapist and later, in 2013, documented her experience as a Family Therapist. In 2008, she felt the spirit of historical buildings (mainly the Ottoman Period) and furthered her love of art history by completing her master’s degree in the protection and restoration of cultural assets.

But still, she wanted truly to “know” this feeling. To discover the essence and meaning of the art of historical monuments, she completed her doctorate in history at Istanbul University’s Turkology Institute in 2014 with her dissertation titled *Reflections of Hun Period Turkish Motifs and Symbols in Art and Life*, for which she was awarded a certificate of appreciation by Russian Turcologist S.G. Klyashtorny and historian T.I. Sultannov. In June 2018, she earned the title of associate professor, based on her work with I.P. Zasetskaya on the Golden Hun Treasures in the State Hermitage Museum.

The author, who has tried to define in detail the metaphysical background and meaning of the Turkish identity as expressed by artists of differing genres during various periods, has published numerous scientific articles regarding miniatures, archaeological finds, and archaeological city and palace finds.

She has also written a column for the popular art magazine *Timeout* and contributed to numerous academic journals and publications. She continues her work in Turkish studies with the State Hermitage Museum.

She is married (Ergün) and has three children (Nilgün, Gün, and Banu).
During the creation of “Reflections of Hun Period Turkish Motifs and Symbols in Art and Life,” the branches of history, archeology, art history, and psychology were implemented. The subject of this work was passed on to me by Professor Dr. Mualla Uydu Yücel, and I with great excitement and curiosity immediately commenced my research.

The subject first brought to mind the following question: What is life? Describing what life is from a biological perspective is not difficult. However, for this study, a philosophical definition of life is necessary. In my opinion, life is where people’s identities flourish, and the purpose of life is to possess a significant identity. But then, what elements form this identity, and how does it come into being?

Identity is embodied by the meanings people give their lives. In other words, one’s beliefs determine one’s identity, like seeds cast into the soil. One does not cast wheat seeds and expect to grow barley. Similarly, art expresses the identity of the seed that falls onto fertile soil.

As will be seen in the concluding section of our work, Turkish identity has come like a stone inscribed with meanings from the oldest Turkish Hakan buried in the Pazyryk burials, to the great rulers of the Ottoman empire. This identity is the most solid foundation of the Turkish nation’s existence.

That all kinds of values hidden in their essence are kept intact and understood as meaningful reveals the meanings reflected in Turkish art and life. Polishing the mirror of meaning, which has gathered dust in recent times so that it reflects the heart, is the mainstay that will distinguish the Turkish nation in a globalizing world where competition and success occur, as in history, on a platform of culture and identity.

In this respect, our work serves to guide us out of our current identity crisis and foster generations able to overcome our country’s future obstacles.

The depth of meaning in our work has been made possible through studies in psychology during my undergraduate education. Analysis and presentation methods developed in this research rely on cognitive psychology and its derivatives, cognitive anthropology and cognitive archeology, which study the human mind’s functioning. Familiarity with conservation and restoration of cultural assets, from my studies in language and art history allowed for evaluation of the study’s findings in terms of materials and art. Finally, for the precious moral assistance of my professors at Istanbul University during my doctoral education, I offer my deep respect and gratitude to: Prof. Dr. Abdulkadir Donuk, my dear Prof. Dr. Mualla Uydu Yucel, and Prof. Dr. Kemal Yavuz, Prof. Dr. Nurhan Atasoy. In addition, to the person who read every line of this work carefully and with great attention, my precious teacher, “my Bozkurt,” Prof. Dr. Mim Kemal Öke, I owe a great deal of gratitude. I would also like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt thanks to my husband Ergün Sazak and my children, my family elders, and all my friends who supported me in my dissertation studies. One of its most important sections resulted in part thanks to my friend who prepared the Archeological Maps of Hun with me, Dr. Hakan Yavaşoğlu, to whom I am especially grateful. I would also like to thank the Türkpetrol Foundation (TPV) for its financial support during my doctoral work and the late Aydın Bolak and the late Fevziye Abdullah Tansel—with much respect and gratitude.

Also I would like to thank my dear friend Maya L. Johnson for her great contributions in the English translation of this book. Last but not least I would like to thank dear Dr. Gülcan İnalcık for her hard work in the reduction of the book.
INTRODUCTION

Gözde SAZAK

One of the motifs of the study is the Kut-Alp Motif which concerns a pre-Islamic Turkish motif that describes the Kutlu Turkish Khan (Blessed Turkish ruler) and symbolizes all the Turkish khans throughout history. This motif is so coherent that it is as if a single soul came to the world at different times and was repeated over and over, taking control of the Turkish nation and saving it from extinction. Understanding Kut-Alp is to understand the deep meanings this work is attempting to penetrate. Indeed, the Kut-Alp motif is a brilliant mirror in which Turkish identity and the Turkish national spirit are fully manifested.

Of course, this research is beneficial in shedding light on Turkish history, especially the period of the Huns. The work’s aim reveals that the Huns established a civilization in which the contemporary Turkish identity has flourished. In fact, this civilization sends us messages from the past through magnificent works of art. These messages’ correct interpretation becomes possible through decoding artworks’ motifs and symbols, and this study’s decoding element is cognitive psychology, which, through my formal education, became a beneficial tool for solving and interpreting the codes hidden in artworks, in service of Turkish history.

When this research started, there existed no previous scale or categories for motifs and symbols, which include: böke, water of life, the kut power deal, wolf, tiger, stag, bull/camel, eagle, alp, and kut-alp (see Table 1 titled Hun Period Turkish Symbols and Motifs). After two years of painstaking and careful research and analysis, I created a ladder into the depths of meanings by classifying symbols under “kut-alp motif” categories. One of the most important foundations of this work was the Russian Federation’s State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg and the trip we made there with the BAP project (no. 21875) of the Rectorate. Our seven-day walk through the State Hermitage Museum’s long corridors resulted in approximately three thousand photographs of archaeological artifacts of Turkish art being recorded. In addition to this study’s physical achievements, the trip served as the gateway to our emotional world. Particularly when I entered the great hall in which the Pazyryk burials were exhibited, sensation was displaced, and the idea that these exhibits were more than simple artwork but actually carry messages from the depths of time engrained the hall forever in my mind. The desire to read and understand these messages became a passion.

Extensive studies, various interpretations of art from various sources, and various philosophical approaches first led to the creation of categories by only visual implementation. Similar elements caught my attention, helping to form categories of repeated motifs: curved serpentine dragon/stag/eagle with horned heads, wings, two horns, the three-point or three-slice pattern, circular motions, pointed teeth, biting movements, fish scale ornaments, and curved motion tree branches. Simultaneously, I began an in-depth study of the Turkish epics, finding that their motifs and symbols were described through the various meanings of a composition. These epics and my gathered visuals allowed for me to begin to unravel their meanings. A unique analysis and presentation method emerged through finding and matching the visuals to the epics (see Table 3 titled Arrival, Analysis, and Presentation Method).
But a third dimension was missing. I wanted to reach the mind structure of the society that created these epics and artworks so as to find their true meanings and to see their reflected faces. At this point, C.G. Jung’s Archetypes and Collective Subconscious Theory helped me in assembling and assigning meanings.

In brief, first categorized visual images were made and then used to search for their repeated symbols and motifs within Turkish epics, matching the visuals together with written word. The key concepts developed from this interdisciplinary method are böke, kut-power exchange, and kut-alp concepts, through which we were able to uncover all other meanings of the motifs. To present this intricate analysis uniquely, we have reached what we call the “method of arrival from process to process” by developing the formula of “the curtain, the light behind the curtain, and the source of light behind the curtain.”

The first part of this work, which can be defined as the six structures of all these studies, is the solid foundation of all analyses in the “Huns on the Stage of History” and “Huns in Archeological Resources.” In Chapter One, we have once again written the usual political history, but the “Hun Culture” subsection, which is more important for our study, is used as an auxiliary element in our Arrival, Analysis, and Presentation Method, that is, analysis of the Huns’ identity from clues that reveal the meaning they give to life. These cultural features helped us imagine the daily life of that era.

“Huns in Archaeological Resources” consists of archaeological reports (the oldest and the most recent) and archaeological findings of Western and Russian scientists in Turkestan. There were discovered works of Turkish culture and art that helped us evaluate the geography and time period. These reports demonstrated that Turkish-Hun archeology occurred in parallel with migrations in political history. In other words, tracing the political history provided a map of archaeological areas. This assessment thus provided the opportunity, for the first time, to develop a ‘Coordinate map of the history and timeline of the Hun Kurgan and its cities’. It is possible to determine the kurgans’ coordinates of time and geography in Map 3 and in the Table of Coordinate Data in History and Time of Hun Kurgan and Cities in Chapter 2.

Finally, images of 115 examined archaeological finds were prepared in catalog form, the labeling system being self-developed. Accordingly, finds in the images were titled first by material and then according to the pre-determined motif category. After the image name, the kurgan, the region, the country from which the findings were extracted, and, finally, its current archive were stated. As seen by the labels, all pictures mentioned as Sazak 2013 belong to the photo archive created during my work in the State Hermitage Museum. Other art history1 and museum catalogs2 which we used in the painting catalog, are the most important works in their respective fields.

This study has benefited from more than two hundred and fifty resources in Turkish, English, German, and Russian. I had the opportunity to meet one of the most important Turkologs of Russia during the two separate Russian trips, one year from the BAP Project No. 21875: Professor Dr. S.G. Klyashtorny, Director of the St. Petersburg Oriental Institute, and Dr. T. İ Sultanov, history professor of

St. Petersburg State University. As a result of our long scientific conversations, I had the chance to
establish personal friendships with these valuable Russian Turkologists. At the State Hermitage
Museum, the friendly relationship I established with Dr. N. Kozlova and Dr. J. Elikhina, the respective
head and assistant of the Oriental Department, still continues on to this day. I must also take the
opportunity and thank Assoc. Prof. Dr. A. Farzaliev for his close attention and assistance during my
trip. In addition, during one visit to the Institute of Oriental Studies, Dr. L. Yu Tugusheva’s warm
conversation and the tea she offered continues to warm my heart.

In addition to the State Hermitage Museum, the St. Petersburg Russian Ethnographic Museum, St.
Petersburg Kunstkamera Ethnography Museum, and the Moscow History Museum were of immense
value for creation of the archive of approximately three thousand photographs.

In Turkey, Ege University’s Turkish World Research Institute’s Fikret Turkmen Library was very
useful for research into the Turkish epics. The Iricica Library, Boğaziçi University Library and the
psychology brought from the United States 3 symbolic anthropology4, anthropology and archeology,5
archeology and humanities6, literature-psychology7, archeology8 books on the latest research and
developments facilitated our overall reflections.

As a result of studies directed by Professor Dr. Mualla Uydu Yücel, we developed an analysis
method that can reach the deep meaning of motifs and symbols, thanks to an interdisciplinary approach.
As ancillary tools of this method, we have established the key concepts of böke, kut power deal
exchange, kut-alp, and bridge.

Again, a presentation method especially for this work was created for ease of understanding these
analyses, Arrival, Analysis, and Presentation Method and expressed it visually in Table 3.

Then, for the first time a classification and naming of motifs according to layers of meaning was
created. This study is titled, Turkish Motifs and Symbols (see Table 1). Through this table, we
developed a narrative methodology that can be applied to training modules at different levels. All the
images in Table 1 are named according to the self developed labeling system and my work is listed in
the Picture List section and catalogued in the Appendix section.

Finally, a map of archaeological excavation areas (kurgan and cities) from which the visual
archaeological finds originate is shown (Table 1; see Map 3 titled Coordinate Map of Hun Kurgan
and its Cities in History and Geography). In this study, maps have been prepared of ten archaeological
regions described in the ‘Huns in Archaeological Resources’ section as Maps 4–13. In the coordinate
list, as part of these maps, the kurgans’ latitude–longitude data, the period of the discovery, today’s

3 Jung, Carl, G., Symbols of Transformation: An Analysis of the Prelude to a Case of Schizophrenia, Trans.
6 Lewis-Williams, David, The Mind in the Cave, 2nd edition, New York USA, Thames & Hudson, 2008; Mithen,
Steven, After the Ice: A Global History 20000-5000 B.C., Cambridge Massachusetts, Harvard University
8 Kuzmina, Elena E., The Prehistory of the Silk Road, Ed.Victor H. Mair, Philadelphia, University of
geographical location names, and the archeological regions map are presented (see Table 2, titled Coordinate Data of Hun Kurgan and its Cities in History and Geography).

For the first time, an attempt has been made to shine light onto the true depths of meanings in Turkish motifs and symbols, in part through the interdisciplinary relations of psychology, archeology, and art history. In my opinion, implementation of this method has been opened the door into the metaphysical infrastructure of the Turkish identity, which culture and art history cannot fully explain. Areas yet to be investigated should be physically explored through interdisciplinary studies (e.g., language, history, archeology, psychology, art history), and results should be evaluated from a multidimensional perspective, one of them, in my opinion, is military discipline. In addition, reflections of pre-Islamic Turkish motifs and symbols during the Seljuk and Ottoman periods should be examined in detail with the Arrival, Analysis, and Presentation Method created and implemented in this study.
Gözde Sazak, who began her PhD studies at our university in January 2010 and, since then, showed that she was a candidate to be a good historian, succeeded in receiving the title of doctor in March 2014, with *Reflection of Hun Motifs and Symbols on Art and Life*. This previously studied topic, along with dates in Turkish history, art history, archeology, viewed through cognitive psychology, have been reviewed and examined by Gözde Sazak, and her remarkable insights have been duly recorded. Her perspective and understanding has led us to new findings. At the same time, the extensive visual archive prepared through her two-year research in four Russian museums (State Hermitage Museum, Russian Ethnography Museum, St. Petersburg History Museum, Kunst Camera and Moscow History Museum) ensured that these cultural balances have become well-established in our collective memory.

As a result of her efforts, the *Turkish Motif and Symbol Table* and the *Hun Archeological Regions and Maps*, created by Gözde Sazak for the first time, have been collected and analyzed in one section. Then, the evaluation of motifs and symbols in terms of art, cultural history, and psychology through an analysis and presentation method developed by the author is another reason this work is original and valuable. Professor Dr. S. G. Klyasthorny and T.I. Sultanov’s followed her studies closely and rewarded them with a commendation contributing to the research’s further success.

I believe that this book by Gözde Sazak, my first PhD student, does great service to the history of Turkish culture, and I am grateful to have examined such a demanding project. Additionally, I wish her many future successes and hope to see more of her beautiful work.

*Prof. Dr. Mualla UYDU YÜCEL*
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<td>AAH</td>
<td>Acta Archaeologica Hungarian</td>
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<td>B.C.E.E</td>
<td>Before the Common Era</td>
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<tr>
<td>c.</td>
<td>century</td>
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