

Article

Metaphorical Language and Function of the “Bridal Pick-Up” Ritual in Anatolian Traditional Weddings with Its Origin and Reflections

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Abstract: In the urban centers of Türkiye, where cultural changes are more widespread and effective, wedding processional is replaced by the solemnization of the marriage at indoor weddings, and the Kūdegū (old Turkic language; refers to bridegroom, son-in-law) awaiting the bride's arrival at the boy's house is replaced by differences in the way of the bride and groom's entry together; moreover, while wedding rituals such as the bridal bath and groom's hammam are being forgotten, bachelor/bachelorette parties are on the rise. The beliefs and practices related to the bride being taken out of the girl's house with a special ceremony have deep meanings, such as blessing the bride who has just joined the family, acclimatizing the bride who feels like an outsider and avoiding her from these feelings, and protecting the bride and groom from the körmös (spirits in Turkic mythology, devilish entities living in the underworld), bad spirits, and the evil eye. In this paper, the structure, function, practices, and beliefs of the rituals surrounding the bride and groom on the last day of Anatolian Turkish weddings are analyzed using a qualitative research method. In addition, this study identified the betrothal, performance, beliefs, and practices surrounding the ritual of “bridal pick up” among Anatolian Turks and evaluated the symbols and signs in the ritual procedures in the functional context of the origins and reflections of traditional Turkish beliefs.

Keywords: marriage; wedding feast; bridal pick-up; bridal migration; wedding processional; ritual; folk beliefs



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1. Introduction

Marriage rites are especially common in human societies that have reached a higher level of culture and among tribes that have been in contact with them (Erdentuğ 1970, p. 235). The wedding, which is a celebration at the beginning of a marriage, may vary from society to society in terms of its ceremonial performance, structure, and function, as well as within subgroups within the same society. The rules to be followed in wedding feasts are passed down and become tradition. Even though traditions change and transform, the traces of the past do not completely disappear (Yolcu 2014, p. 252). Regarding the impact of rituals on the formation of a national identity, (Roche and Hohmann 2011, p. 115) points out that rituals can create indicators that are open to the accumulation of new associations and references. The establishment of a family represents a significant transformation in societal dynamics. Newlyweds often entail a process of relocating to a new residence. Household transition is typically marked by ceremonies that signify not only the financial transition but also separation rituals (van Gennepe 2022, p. 137).

Given the stages of ceremonial structures of traditional Turkish weddings as described in the studies of Boratav (1984) and Örneke (2014) on the Anatolian Turkish folklore, wedding

feasts begin with the intention to marry or to marry off, and continue with phases such as looking for a girl, asking for the bride's hand, betrothal, engagement, wedding, marriage, the migration of the bride, nuptial night, and post-nuptial (Boratav 1984, p. 172; Örnek 2014, pp. 255–84). However, the implementation of these stages has changed depending on the social class. Marriage, which is a turning point in a person's life, is an important transition ceremony in Turkish culture, which is associated with celebrations, entertainment, rituals, symbols, and many other details. Marriage, which represents the transition from singledom to a new life situation, is seen as a ritual in which the family, considered the smallest unit of society, is built. Due to the importance of marriage in the life of the society and the individual, marriage rituals attract the curiosity of researchers because they have a detailed and complex structure, sometimes with regional differences.

Wedding feasts can be seen not only as rites of passage, celebrated to ring out the past and welcome the new; they are also functional structures in which soon-to-be married couples and their families display their social and cultural identities and realize their social status. According to Roche and Hohmann (2011, p. 113), in order to create a common identity, the continuity of traditions in the historical context is emphasized, while cultural rituals of resistance are proposed in which ethnic, local, and national identities are put forward against standardization/homogenization. Tradition, defined as knowledge, customs, and behaviors passed down (Karataş 2014, p. 138), as well as rituals, signs, and symbols that enable the transmission of traditional knowledge conveyed through tradition, are the elements of nonverbal communication in Anatolian Turkish weddings. The definition of human as a social being with rituals and at the same time as a ritual-producing being makes it necessary to explain ritual beliefs and behaviors and the reason behind them (Kutlu 2013, p. 4). In the context of rituals, three concepts come to the fore: the sacred, an order in continuity, and symbols, which gather the expressions of symbolic meaning. Rituals, regarded as the symbolic expressions of traditional beliefs and religious order, are accepted as the forms of behavior toward the sacred. The concept of the ritual, which is used in a wide spectrum, is considered as worship in the sense of religion, but it has also formed a bridge between humans and the state. Rituals are called ceremonies and are found in many phases of social life, sometimes at graduation ceremonies, sometimes at nights of henna or wedding feasts. From schoolyards to concert halls, from entertainment venues to hotel lounges, many places are considered the modern sites of ritual, for ritual is present in every aspect of human or social life. Drinking coffee, talking with a friend, and eating have certain patterns and behaviors, i.e., ritual frameworks (Kutlu 2013, p. 6).

Although rituals occur in all aspects of life, in this study they are expressed in a specific time and place. The bridal pick-up is one of the most important rituals in weddings and signifies the departure of the bride from her father's house, where she has lived for years, with a special ceremony. The people who see the bride off from her family home, and in some regions of Anatolia, the people who are chosen to accompany the bride to the groom's house, or the external participants who formed the wedding processional in earlier times, are the chosen people determined by tradition and ceremony. The games, ceremonies, and prayers in the wedding processional should be studied in detail by identifying their correspondences in the cultural codes. The practices in the process of going from the groom's house to the bride's house, such as blocking the doorway, jug breaking, jumping the broom, planting/flying a flag, picking up the bride from the girl's house, the change and transformation that occurs in line with the rules of the oral law in the process until the bride is brought to the man's new house, and current practices taking place today constitute the subject of our research. Little is known about the symbols and rituals of Turkish weddings and their relationship to beliefs and traditions, or how these elements have shaped picking-up practices in the past and present. Although Anatolian Turkish weddings include a variety of rituals related to bridal pick-up, there are very few studies on this topic. This paper is a complementary study to the previous research and highlights many customs, ceremonies, and practices with religious, magical, and ritual content.

2. The Methodology of the Conducted Research

In this article, literature review and document analysis have been employed as the research methods. Various sources have been utilized to identify and understand traditional knowledge and practices related to Turkish weddings. The written materials among the secondary sources include articles, books, and graduate theses. The focus has particularly been on source works consisting of data obtained from field research and primary oral sources. Literature review and document analysis allow for the systematic examination of the existing information, enabling the categorization and synthesis of the data obtained from various sources. In this article, the traditional structures of Turkish weddings and marriage rituals have been examined using these methods. Relationships between the data have been established, judgments have been formulated, and evaluations have been made.

This article has focused on socio-cultural analysis. Cultural analysis is important for identifying a society's cultural identity, understanding its social structure, solving social problems, or developing policies for societal issues. This article encompasses cultural elements such as beliefs, rituals, values, traditions, and symbols. Socio-cultural analysis has been employed to define and describe the "bride pick up" ritual. In this analysis, the aim is to gain a clearer understanding by examining the oral actions and behaviors of the participants in the event. Therefore, in our study, we focus on socio-cultural analysis to uncover the cultural characteristics of the "bridal pick up" ritual in Turkish culture.

3. Bridal Pick-Up on the Basis of Matriarchal/Patriarchal Order

The research on the family structure of the ancient Turks is characterized by two branches. The first is the idea of the Western sociologist Genard that "the Turkish families are patriarchal", while the second is the view of Gokalp that "the Turkish family structure is based on the equality of men and women". Gokalp emphasizes that a strong family and social structure is formed jointly with men and women, citing examples such as the assumption of joint tasks in social life by women and men among Turks, the joint receptions of the Khan and the Khatun in state authority, the presence of the Khatun in state government, and the portrayal of women as epic heroes in the Book of Dede Korkut, which is one of the exemplary works related to the elucidation of Turkic traditions and customs (Gökçe 1978, p. 13). According to the customs reflected in the marriage traditions, in the ancient Turkish traditions, it is the right of the girl's house to start the wedding. The wedding, therefore, begins in the bride's house and ends in the groom's house (Ögel 1988, p. 269).

Ögel acknowledges the symbol of the marriage as "home" while emphasizing the significance of the "Hearthstone" as the symbol of the home and hearth in Turkish culture. In Yakut Turks, marriage is expressed as "lighting an everlasting fire" (sönmez bir ateş yakma), while the matrilineal family structure of the Mongols brings the concept of "reaching adulthood" (ere varmak) to the forefront. In Uyghur poetry, marriage is approached with a sentimental perspective, and the term "reunion" (kavuşma) is frequently employed. In Anatolia, marriage is conceptualized as "building smoke" (duman kurma) and "kindling a hearth" (ocak tütürme) with the bride being described as "a fire that illuminates the home" (evi aydınlatan bir ateş). In other Turkic communities, emphasis is placed on the "joy of a burning hearth" (yanan ocağın neşesi) and in this context, the hearth and the family are identified with each other through the prayer "May your fire be warm" (Ateşin sıcak olsun). In Anatolia, the phrases "the extinguishing of the hearth" (ocağın sönmesi), "family hearth" (aile ocağı), and "hearth hope" (ocak umudu) for fifteen-year-old children are indicative of the influence of pre-Islamic Turkic folk beliefs (Ögel 1988, pp. 253–54).

Beyond the feelings of honor (reverence), veneration, and sometimes fear toward the family's deceased ancestors, ancestor cult forms the strong basis of patriarchal societies, with their attitudes and behaviors towards living elders. Although patriarchal authority began to falter with the spread of divine religions, women, who lagged behind men in many areas, such as the social and political spheres, occupied a central position in transforming the Turkish family structure into a modern family type. Three years after the establishment

of the Republic of Turkey, men and women became equal with the adoption of the Turkish Civil Code, and as part of the Westernization of the Turkish family to transform into a modern family type with a sociological definition, these ideas were put into practice with the Civil Code (Gökçe 1978, p. 15).

4. Bridal Pick-Up Toy

A wedding is a *toy*¹, and for Turks, the family is considered the nucleus of the country and the continuation of the generation, and the wedding is celebrated in every era with feasts and entertainments. It was, therefore, also called “bridal toy” (*Kelin/gelin toyı*) in the time of the Khwarezmshahs. In the book of Dede Korkut, the betrothal *toy* (ceremony) is called “small wedding”, and the wedding toy is called “supreme wedding”. At the same time, the supreme wedding is also called “wedding of honor”. The Kazakh Turks, on the other hand, used to organize a “two-stage” wedding, namely “bridal pick-up *toy*” and “bridal drop-off”, i.e., “dropping off *toy*” (Ögel 1988, p. 269). In the 15th century, it is known that bridal pick-up, which is called “bridal migration” (*kız göçürür*) and has an important place in family formation among Turks, was a common *toy*/entertainment called “bridal migration *toy*” or “marrying *toy*” (Baykara 2001, p. 205). The process of bridal pick-up from her father’s house to the groom’s house is called “bridal migration” (Çakır 2023, p. 991), and those who participate in the bridal pick-up event from the girl’s house are called the persons who perform the bridal pick-up, which refers in Turkish to: “*gelinci*”, “*gelin alıcı*”, and “*gelin götürücü*” (Büyükokutan Töret 2013, p. 39).

After the bride is picked up from her father’s house with some entertainments, rituals, and practices, she is not immediately taken to the boy’s house by the shortest route. Since it is considered bad luck for the wedding processional to return by the same route (Köksal 1996, p. 77), the bride is taken to her new home by various means (Şişman 2017, p. 53). After the wedding processional picks up the bride, she is led around in a convoy amid horns and firecrackers, accompanied by drums, zurnas, games, and various entertainments. In the past, the wedding processional would pray after picking up the bride through the village, at the cemetery, or at the graves. After this ritual, the guns were fired, drums were beaten, zurnas were sounded, young people danced the *halay*, and the wedding processional continued on its way with joy and fun (Yalman (Yalgın) 1977, p. 263). The bride’s walk around the cemetery has a symbolic meaning: “The first destination is the birth, the second is becoming a bride and the third is the nonexistence, that is, cemetery. This is the last place you go, so act honorably and purposefully!” (Koşay 1944, p. 257), the custom of the bride going around the cemetery three times recalls this thought.

It is said that Anatolian weddings in the past were usually held on Thursday, the wedding processional took place on the same day and the day of the bridal pick-up was popularly called “getting right” (*hak alma*-Bartın) and “day of the bridal pick-up” (*düğüşü günü*-Antalya) (Koşay 1944, pp. 70, 206). Today’s weddings are usually held on Sundays because of the working days. The time for bridal pick-up is the last day of the wedding feast and traditional Anatolian weddings last three or four days. The fact that weddings take place at certain times and not at others is related to religious or magical contexts. Sacred or lucky days are most favorable for marriage (Gökalp 1976, p. 309). For example, Friday is a blessed day in Islam, and since Friday falls on Thursday evening, it is extremely important that the day of the bridal pick-up and the nuptial night coincide with that day. In Anatolian weddings, the timing of the bridal pick-up in the past was also based on the marital status of the bride. Single brides were usually married on Thursday and widowed brides rather on Sunday (Koşay 1944, p. 81; İhtiyar Büyüктаş 2019, p. 94).

In the Ankara province, the neighbors perform the mother’s henna on Tuesday, Wednesday is the henna night, Thursday is the day of the bridal putting down (*gelin indirmesi*), and the *mawlid* is recited on Friday. In the Çankırı province, the wedding starts on Monday, and on Tuesday the neighbors perform pre-wedding parties in the girl’s house. On Wednesday the girl’s trousseau is sent, on Thursday the trousseau is exhibited, and on Friday the henna night takes place. In the Kastamonu province, the wedding begins on

Monday, and the bridal bath takes place on Sunday. On Tuesday, *kashkak* (original name *keşkek*; a ceremonial meat or chicken in Turkish cuisine) is ground, on Wednesday a feast is given, and Thursday is the day of bridal pick-up (originally *gelin göçürme* in Turkish). In the Karaburun district of the Izmir province, on Monday the trousseau is prepared, on Tuesday the trousseau is exhibited and bridal bath is performed, and on Wednesday the boy's house comes and dresses the bride. In the Kırşehir province, the wedding begins on Saturday and lasts until Thursday. In the Kutahya province, on Thursday, the bride is dressed and made ready (*kızönü*, *kızın ihzarı* in Turkish) in the bride's house, and bridal pick-up ceremony is performed in the groom's house. In the Niğde province, the bridal pick-up takes place on Thursday. In Sinop, a henna night is held on Wednesday evening and a bridal pick-up is held on Thursday. Weddings in the Ünye district of the Ordu province start on Monday, and bridal pick-up is performed on Thursday (Koşay 1944, pp. 69–75). As can be seen, there are different practices in Anatolia.

5. Individual Perceptions and Socio-cultural Influences: Wedding Gifts as a Rule of Reciprocity

The traces of the functional effectiveness of the Anatolian Turkish weddings in the formation of the national structure in Anatolia, the dissemination of human values, and the continuation of positive behaviors by the people are clear. The gifts presented at wedding ceremonies function as the symbolic examples of cooperation and solidarity. Influence on the choice of wedding rituals can be families, friends, relatives, and external factors (organizers, social media, etc.). Research shows that the structure of an important and lively celebration such as a wedding is not fixed, but certain culturally specific rituals are incorporated later. Rituals are therefore used by cultural groups to convey and communicate complex ideas to their members without the need for explanations, and in this way, to re-establish social bonds with the group (Phillips 2020, p. 89). In past and present practices, the gifts of gold, earrings, necklaces, bracelets, banknotes, etc., pinned by close relatives in jewelry ceremonies are particularly monitored, and in some ceremonies, the gifts of whom and what are announced aloud, while the video recording of today's ceremonies with cameras increases socio-cultural pressure on individual emotions, influences behavior patterns, and reminds us of the rule of reciprocity (Emiroğlu and Aydın 2003, p. 244).

Özdemir (2008, p. 468) describes the tradition of gift-giving in Turkish society as “a culture-forming tradition, a complex system that creates and sustains social life” and sees the function of the gift-giving as an intermediary system that creates a social bond, keeps culture alive, and transmits and differentiates it. Depending on the degree of attachment to the bride and groom, everyone presents gifts at ceremonies such as betrothal, henna, and wedding ceremonies. In addition, public dinners, presentations (gifts to a superior person), gifts from the bride and groom to each other, and gifts from relatives on both sides to the bride and groom and from them to the bride and groom are considered magical practices to remove the effects of evil spirits or to ensure the happiness of the new family (Gökalp 1976, p. 309).

Those invited to the wedding usually bring the gifts of cows, sheep, goats, cloth for clothes, mares, mules, mules, rams, oxen, carpets, runners, rice, oil, gold, and similar products, varying according to the economic status of the invitee, the closeness of the family and the status of the invitee in society (Koşay 1944, pp. 69, 79), while in today's weddings this tradition has been replaced by items such as banknotes (money) and gold. In some wedding halls in Anatolia, a charity box is common, where it is not clear who gives how much money, but it is used to provide material support to the owner of the wedding. In the past, in addition to gifts such as pots, plates, and copper, the custom of bringing a goat to the wedding was so common among the Anatolian Yuruks that it has become a traditional saying. The expression “Don't ensconce like a majordomo who brought a goat to the wedding” lives on in ancestral sayings to this day as a tradition that shows that those who bring goats to the wedding house act presumptuously, sit comfortably, and that bringing goats as a gift is a privilege (Koşay 1944, p. 95; Yalman (Yalgin) 1977, p. 259).

In the Ayvancık town of the Niğde province, on the day bridal pick-up (Thursday) at noon, the groom and the groomsman are shaved, and the groom is dressed in new clothes accompanied by folk songs sung with drum and zurna. Both wear a long coat called “red cloak”, which is known as local dress, and they go to the meeting place and kiss the hands of the big men there, and the elderly give money to the groomsman and the groom, and the groom kisses his father’s hand and his father grants his vineyards, gardens, and assets to his son (Koşay 1944, p. 205). Gift-giving is intensely experienced at every stage of the Turkish wedding tradition.

6. A Symbolic Ritual in the Wedding Processional: The Wedding Flag

In Anatolia, the wedding flag is at the head of the wedding processional formed when the bride enters or leaves (Bozyiğit 1987, p. 78). We consider it useful to briefly explain the characteristics and symbolic meanings of the wedding flag, which has numerous functions such as affiliation, social demarcation, social activity, union, reunion, and social continuity (Taşdemir 2019, p. 94) at each stage of the wedding. Rituals are symbolic by nature, and according to Mensching, they have at least two elements: the thing symbolized and the spiritual truth that this thing represents. From this point of view, it can be said that collective representations and rituals become the patterns of behavior that evolve from “individualities” to “us” (Kutlu 2013, p. 21). Symbols also exist in the world of objects, but it is people and societies that construct them with the dimension of meaning and ascribe meanings to them. As elements such as mythical narratives, religious beliefs, and traditional behaviors influence the ritual structure of similar elements in symbolic meaning, symbols have a national character and fulfill the unifying function of the religion and culture. The displaying of the flag, also called the “toy or wedding flag”, which is a common tradition among all Turks, is an important indicator (Ögel 1988, p. 269). The flag is the symbol of the beginning of the wedding in traditional weddings in Anatolia, and the side of the boy that announces the beginning of the wedding hangs/erects the wedding flag at the highest point of their house or in a place that can be seen by all.

Although it has no spiritual value as a material, the flag is perceived and identified as a symbol of a sacred being in relation to the values it represents, and a ritual of behavior toward the flag develops. Ögüt Eker (1998, pp. 165–67) notes that the concept of the flag has many connotations for Turks, and since the flag is not only a symbol of independence and honor but also has the ability to bring people together and unite them; the flag is used in wedding ceremonies to symbolize these feelings. The tradition of hanging the flag in the wedding house is a manifestation of the spiritual and national function of the marriage, in addition to its function of bringing together, uniting, and merging. The wedding flag may be a flag with the star and crescent, ornamented with apples, chicken feathers, and onions to the top, as well as decorated tree branches called *shah*, *nahl*, boxwood, rake (*gelbere*), and *yom*” (tree poles decorated with tulle, cloth, and various items)². In this context, the flag is a symbolic sign (Bozyiğit 1987, p. 71). In addition, in the wedding traditions of Karatepe, another symbolic value is attributed to the wedding flag. After the nuptial night, the groom takes apart the flag and fires a shot if he finds the girl as he wishes (as a virgin). If the opposite is the case, the shot is not fired, the flag is not taken apart and the families fall from grace. This is a symbolic sign of sadness (Bozyiğit 1987, p. 80). From the examples, it is clear that the flag has a wide range of meanings in Turkish weddings. The meaning attributed to the flag with different colors, shapes, and symbols reflects the characteristics of the culture.

7. Rituals and Practices before the Bridal Pick-Up

There are various rituals and practices that are performed until the bride is led out of her father’s house and gets into the bridal car. In the old Turkish tradition, the groom goes to his father-in-law’s house with his friends. They sing the traditional refrain “*Hay, hay ü leng, hay ü leng*”³ and the bride’s father offers guest bread to the bride’s buyers according to tradition. Then, the father puts a hand-painted kerchief around the groom’s neck and hands

over his daughter into the hands of his son-in-law after the traditional ceremony. Since the hand-painted kerchief becomes a symbolic ritual, according to Gökalp and Grenard, paternal custody passes to the groom thanks to the hand-painted kerchief. After these practices, a large cup of salt water is brought. The parents of the young woman and the young man soak a piece of bread in this water and present it to the fiancé. After that, the woman can leave her father's house (Gökalp 1976, p. 311).

In Turkish folk culture, the tradition of preparing the bride and groom is common in Anatolia. The tradition of bridal bath and groom's bath, which does not occur in contemporary practice, went beyond a physiological need for cleansing and fulfilled functions such as religious belief and entertainment. The cost of the bath and the entertainment of the guests was borne by the boy's house. The bathing procession was entertained with music, singing, and folk songs. Although the main function was to purify the material and spiritual sense, the function of having fun, entertaining, and enjoying oneself accompanied by the *mani* (a form of Turkish folk song) and folk songs sung here was realized, and the groom was equipped and returned to the boy's house (Ögüt Eker 1998, pp. 158–61). The bath is also a symbol of the material and spiritual purification in ancient Turkish wedding traditions. Today, it can be partially said that this tradition has been replaced by shaving the groom and taking the bride to the barber or bachelor practices, depending on the place and concept of entertainment. In Gaziantep, the groom is dressed by one of the single young people by singing *mani*. In Siirt and Mardin provinces, there is the tradition of tree decorating, in which the groom shaves under a tree taken from the forest and planted in the area where the wedding is to take place, which is then decorated by the groom's friends. In the Muğla province, the groom is shaved first, then the groom is punched, and henna is burned on one hand. In the Kutahya province, the bride's side sends the groom's clothes (the groom's wedding suit) in a bundle, and after the boy's side receives the bundle, the groom is dressed under the prayers of the imam. In Anatolia, these ceremonies are called dressing or outfitting the groom (originally *güveyi giydirme*, *güveyi kondurma*, *güveyi donatma*) (Kabay 2022, p. 788).

Before the bride arrives at the boy's house, the boy's relatives send a mirror and the Holy Qur'an to the boy's house, and the girl's house tips the person who brings the Holy Qur'an (Altun 2004, p. 287). In the Çal district of the Denizli province, henna is applied on the palms of the groom and his groomsman before the wedding ceremony. They also dye the soles of their shoes with henna and the relatives who see this give money to the groom (Kabay 2022, p. 789). Among the Kocaeli/Kandıra Turkmen, the bride is fed eggs before she leaves her father's house, and eggs are laid beside her in the belief that she will lay eggs and have children. A chicken is sacrificed at the girl's feet⁴, and the blood of the sacrifice is spread on the doorstep (Altun 2004, p. 294). The blood of the sacrifice on the threshold can be thought of as a bloody sacrifice offered to the "demonic creatures of the threshold". Eggs as a symbol of the resurrection of man and nature, of productivity and renewal, appear in rituals and ritual practices in many societies (Kalin 2005, p. 17). One of the customs related to the egg takes place in the Gaziantep region between the wedding procession and the young men from the bride's village. When the wedding processional is on its way to pick up the bride, the young men who cut the path receive a tip in exchange for the egg, because it is believed that breaking the egg will bring bad luck, and the egg that the young men receive in exchange for the tip is given to the bride along with the prayers "May the bride be fruitful" (Köksal 1996, p. 77).

The cars of the wedding convoy are decorated in advance; towels, ribbons, or prayer rugs are attached to the side mirrors of the cars that are not the bride's car. In the past, the wedding convoy consisted of horses, camels, donkeys, sedan-chairs, and horse-drawn carriages; today, they are usually automobiles. However, the horse, camel, sedan chair, or car on which the bride rides has always been elaborately decorated and the most spectacular mount of the wedding procession/convoy. The initial letters of the bride and groom's names are written on a specially prepared heart-shaped base, and the bridal car can be decorated with ribbons, flowers, tulle, various ornaments, and general lettering such as

“Just Married”/“We are Happy” as well as lettering based on the couple’s special wishes. On the day of the bridal pick-up, the girl is prepared in her father’s house. In the afternoon, the women come to the girl’s house from the boy’s side and can enter the bride’s house only if they give the required tip. The mother-in-law enters first and recites surah al-Fatiha one time and surah al-Ikhlâs three times to the bride. After this ritual, the bride is subjected to an examination named “*yargınlaşma*”, first with her mother-in-law and then with her sisters-in-law, if any, to ensure that she is dignified and worthy after marriage. If the bride strongly presses the mother-in-law during the examination, it is considered disrespectful, as it means that she does not recognize her authority (Büyükokutan Töret 2013, p. 40). In the context of the global consumer culture, the heart symbol on wedding cars is merging with traditional symbols. Symbols and rituals within Anatolian wedding traditions are significant reflections of the cultural values and social norms interacting with the global consumer culture. Anatolian wedding traditions serve as the important reflections of the local cultural values and social norms. The “bridal pick up” ritual is considered a significant part of these traditions and is often performed as a central ritual of the wedding ceremony.

Before the bride leaves her father’s house, her brother, if any, or her father or uncle, if necessary, ties a red bridal sash around her waist. This bridal sash, also called the “sash of effort”, is a symbol of “having full control of one’s hand, tongue and belly (loins)” (Ataman 1992, p. 35). In Turkish culture, this bridal sash tied around the bride’s waist symbolizes the emblematic belief that the bride will bring wealth, happiness, and blessings to her destination, that she will be hardworking, powerful, and fertile, while today it is said that the perception of virginity is generally emphasized (Aça 2015, p. 79; Çakır 2022, p. 145). In Sivas, the bridal sash tied around the bride by her brother signifies that the departing bride has never been married. In Kayseri, the bride’s father ties a white *yashmak* (a Turkish and Turkmen type of veil) around his daughter’s waist as a symbol of virginity (Yeşil 2012, p. 210). The fact that the word “belly” in the Dictionary of Colloquial Compilation in Turkey means “seed, sperm” (Türkiye’de Halk Ağzından Derleme Sözlüğü 2009a, p. 605) can be seen as an indicator that the metaphorical language of the cultural memory becomes symbolic, as tying the sash around the bride’s waist is seen as a blessing for the continuation of the child’s generation. The person tying the sash ties it closed and unties three times or pretends to tie it twice and ties it the third time. During the ritual of tying the sash, in the Sunni tradition, surah al-Fatiha is recited one time and surah al-Ikhlâs is recited three times, and *salawat* (an Islamic complimentary Arabic phrase which contains Veneration for Muhammad) and prayers are said (Büyükokutan Töret 2013, p. 40). In the Alevi tradition, the bridal sash is tied with the words “Ya Allah, Ya Muhammed, Ya Ali⁵”, and the Alevi *dede* (a socio-religious figure in the Islamic Alevi community) says prayers and gives advice (Taş 2008, p. 60). In the Turkish Cypriot tradition, the sash of effort also symbolizes the couple’s commitment to each other in marriage. The tying and untying of the sash three times is interpreted as a message from the father to his daughter, saying, “Even if I bind you to marriage, the decision is still yours, you can give up even now if you want to” (Yeşil 2012, p. 210). In Anatolia, there is also direct advice from the father to his daughter-in-law⁶. After this ritual, the person who ties the red bridal sash around the bride’s waist covers her veil. Şimşek (2017, p. 106) explains that tying a red bridal sash around the bride’s waist and covering her head with a red bridal veil is preferred to protect the bride from the evil eye and evil because red is a symbol of power and protection in Turkish culture. The red bridal veil is also a symbol of blessing, and tying a red bridal sash around the bride’s waist symbolizes the sovereignty of the house (Ergun 2010, p. 278). In Nevşehir/Urgup, a red sequined veil called “*kıvrak*” was draped over the veil in the past for “keeping the bride away from getting puerperal fever” (Er 1997, p. 200). According to Erdentuğ, the rituals and ceremonies associated with marriage are based on fear and protection. It is believed that invisible creatures frighten the spouses on the occasion of the wedding during the transition period and that the bride is protected from the evil eye thanks to her bridal veil (Erdentuğ 1970, p. 253).

In some parts of Anatolia, the solemnization of the marriage ceremony is a religious ritual performed without informing anyone other than the witnesses of the two parties after the bride has left the bride's house or after the bride has entered the groom's house and confirmed the marriage. The purpose of the secrecy is to hide the solemnization of the marriage from evil people in case of jealousy, enmity, bondage, or bewitchment of the groom (Köksal 1996, p. 76). When the bride gets on the bridal car, she is covered with a carpet, blanket, or sacking to prevent the bride from being seen from the outside. This ritual is performed to protect the bride from the evil eye and evil spirits. Covering the bride using materials such as curtains or sheets to prevent her from being seen as she enters and exits is considered the mythological journey of the bride and symbolizes the prevention of the bride's return by preventing her from seeing the way she came. Although the mythological dimension of this custom has disappeared, it lives on in the Turkish world in the form of rituals (Ergun 2010, p. 278). The custom of hiding the bride is also seen in other Turkish communities.

8. Rituals and Practices Applied during Bridal Pick-Up

In all parts of Turkey, certain rituals and practices are performed at the time of the marriage, which are supposed to bring good luck, an abundance of children, happiness, and protection, among other things. Throughout history, bridal pick-up and getting married has not been easy. In the Göktürk script, another meaning of the word "girl" is "expensive". These expressions for the payment of dowry (tocher) are actually an effort and sacrifice, and this is also considered a legitimization of the marriage (Ögel 1988, p. 261).

When the bride leaves her father's house and gets on the bridal car, cold sherbet is served to the guests in the wedding processional and in the girl's house. The sweetness/coldness symbolized by the sherbet is a separation ritual for the bride to leave her home, get used to her husband's house—her new home—faster, and feel estranged from her father's house that she left behind. Before the bride leaves her mother's house, she is given bread, salt, sugar, plates, cups, and spoons so that she gets her share and goes, does not cause trouble in her husband's house by trusting her father's house, gives up hope for her father's house and gets used to her husband's house in a short time, and accepts it as her own house (Ögüt Eker 1998, p. 348). The bride is a stranger in her new family and home, where she is likely to experience uncertainty and unfamiliarity (chaos) because she has left the order to which she belongs (her father's house). To ensure a healthy, peaceful, and happy transition to a new life and to ease the adjustment, rituals take place around the bride. One of these rituals is the tradition of scattering, one of the examples of bloodless sacrifice in Anatolian Turkish weddings, which can be observed at every stage of the bridal ritual.

Scattering is a traditional custom symbolized in the cultural memory by various objects during the bridal pick-up and the bridal drop-off to bring blessings such as fertility, protection, happiness, constancy, and health. The abundance of wheat among the scattering objects is meant to indicate the easy accessibility of wheat in Anatolian Turkish society as well as the importance of wheat in people's lives and its ritual representation of fertility in important representations. For this reason, it can be assumed that in marriage rituals, the fertility of wheat is to be transferred to the new union. For this purpose, wheat, corn, hemp seeds, rice, barley, etc. are sprinkled on the bride's head, and the bride is welcomed with baked goods (cakes, bread, cereals, etc.) made of these materials or crumbled on the bride's head; these are different practices that feed the rites. The elements applied to the bride in these rituals symbolize the "descendants" related to the seed-lineage generation, as well as fertility since they are applied in the belief of bringing "abundance and prosperity" (Erdentuğ 1970, p. 243). Sprinkling money on the bride's head is also done to ensure abundance and prosperity, and in addition to being sprinkled as a scattering, money is also placed in the shoes of the bride and groom (Koşay 1944, p. 257; Yeşil 2012, p. 226). The purpose of this custom is to wish for abundance, fertility, and wealth, and it is also

considered a means of protection from the evil eye. According to Erdentuğ (1970, p. 255), this ritual is a belief based on sympathetic magic acquired later.

9. Rituals and Practices Applied to Bridal Drop-Off and Afterwards

Although the moment when the bride is taken to the groom's family house and the time after are considered a small period within the marriage customs, it is clear that many rituals and practices are performed in this section when the bride enters her new home. Throughout Türkiye, the practices of "bridal drop-off" during this period show great similarities within the traditional structure. The bride is taken from her father's house with a special ceremony, brought to the groom's house with a special ceremony, and the bridal drop-off (horse, vehicle, etc.) is an important ceremony in all Turkish provinces. The gifts (such as vineyards, gardens, heifers, cows, money, gold, etc.) given to the bride by the groom's house (groom's mother, father, uncle, etc.) when she enters the groom's house are called "*indirmelik*" in Anatolia. The three rituals "*Saçı*", "*sacrifice*", and "*threshold*" in the traditions of the bride's entry have different meanings and functions in themselves (Türkiye'de Halk Ağzından Derleme Sözlüğü 2009b, p. 2541). The archaic traces of "*saçı*" go back to shamanism and appear as different practices in the wedding ceremonies of Muslim Turks (Köksal 1996, p. 75). Among the Yuruks in the Taurus Mountains, when the bride arrives at her new home, the groom watches the wedding procession from a high place in the boy's house with the groomsman, and the groom sprinkles the bride's head with water before the bride drops off in front of the house (Yalman (Yalgın) 1977, p. 264). The sacrifice is also called "*fortune sacrifice*" in Anatolia (Ögel 1988, p. 267). In Diyarbakır province, after taking the "*indirmelik*" the bride jumps over the sacrifice and passes under the Holy Qur'an held by a young girl (Aksu 1997, p. 76). In Kocaeli province, the mother-in-law holds the Holy Qur'an at the threshold when the bride enters the house, and the bride enters her husband's house under the Holy Qur'an. This custom is practiced with the aim and concern that the marriage will be holy, auspicious, and blessed (Altun 2004, p. 287).

In the context of social bonding rituals, rites associated with thresholds and doors are notably intriguing. These rituals are practiced either forcibly or with the consent of the inhabitants within (van Gennep 2022, p. 157). Among the Turks, the threshold is sacred, and in Turkish culture carpets or cloths are laid out to prevent the bride from stepping on the threshold (Ögel 1988, p. 267). The sacred belief in "crossing the threshold without stepping" is based on the belief that supernatural creatures, the "guardians" of the house, stand at the threshold (Boratav 1984, p. 112). Since the threshold of the house is a kind of "taboo" to the bride, she does not step on it (Şişman 2017, p. 58) because it is believed that this might otherwise cause harm. Before the bride's foot touches the threshold, they lead her into the house and take her to the fire that is burning in the house. In this way, the fairy of the bride is introduced to the fairy of the groom (Gökalp 1976, p. 312). It is believed that the present custom of carrying the bride across the threshold on the groom's lap has its origin in this belief. However, the bride usually enters the house by reciting "*Bismillah*" and placing her right foot over the threshold first (Gürbüz 2015, p. 55). Similar rituals also exist in Anatolian provinces such as Ankara, Kırıkkale, and Yozgat (Yeşil 2012, pp. 223–30). Since the threshold is considered the gate of truth (*Hak Kapısı*), the bride says prayers and supplications at the threshold.

In the Bandırma district of the Balıkesir province, the mother-in-law and father-in-law wrestle with each other after the bride arrives at her new home. In this traditional behavior, which is actually a symbolic sign of establishing superiority, the mother-in-law wrestles on behalf of the bride and the father-in-law wrestles on behalf of the groom, and it is believed that whoever wins the fight has authority in the house (Kabay 2022, p. 790). Among the mother-in-law's practices to prove her superiority over the bride is breaking a pitcher of water in front of the bride, with the idea that the bride should obey her and not disobey her. When the bride enters the house, she passes under the arms of the mother-in-law, which is a sign of the status that the mother-in-law is trying to gain from the first day. The

mother-in-law spits in the sherbet which the bride will drink or bites into half of a candy or Turkish delight and make the bride stuff down the rest to make the bride follow her advice and love and respect her in her new home (Büyükokutan Töret 2013, pp. 42–43). The bride and mother-in-law put a fingerful of honey in each other's mouths to sweeten their tongues. Before the bride enters the house, a sheepskin with a gemstone underneath is placed in front of the door (threshold). According to the belief, the sheepskin is a ritual to make the bride docile like a sheep, while the gemstone is a ritual to prevent her from becoming a rebellious and defiant person (Aksu 1997, p. 76). Altunsu Sönmez (2019, p. 1160) argues that the origin of the bride and mother-in-law's conflict lies in the inability of women to share the position assigned to them in the patriarchal family structure; however, it would be incomplete to consider this situation as simple jealousy because although the object of the conflict seems to be the man, the real reason is the power acquired by the man in patriarchal societies.

To put the bride to the test, a broom and rolling pin are placed in the bride's path. If the bride is a neat and tidy person, she will not ignore them but will move them out of the way and set them aside. In another ritual, a rolling pin is used to determine the gender. After the bride arrives, a knife and a rolling pin are placed in front of the door, and the gender of the first child is predicted according to the bride's preference. If the knife is preferred, it is assumed that it is a boy; if the rolling pin is preferred, it is assumed that it is a girl (Büyükokutan Töret 2013, p. 43). In the Diyarbakır province, after the bride is dropped off, her strength is tested with a jug that is broken at the threshold; if the bride fails to break the jug, she is considered "a weak bride"; if she breaks the jug, she is considered "a strong bride" (Aksu 1997, p. 76).

The bride is given oil and honey when she enters the door and is asked to rub the door with it three times. After this ritual, the bride's right hand is put into a flour sack in the hope that it will be fruitful, and then she is given a rolling pin (Büyükokutan Töret 2013, p. 42). This introduces the bride, the new member of the new house, to the *körmös*, demonic creature of the threshold. Oil and honey are bloodless sacrifices made to the demonic creature of the threshold. The practices associated with the rolling pin given to the bride symbolize the tree cult and the tree of life (Ergun 2010, p. 278). It is believed that the hand of the bride is fertile and auspicious. After the bride's arrival, she is placed in the hall, her right hand and foot are washed, and then the water in the basin is poured into the cellar, believing that it will bring prosperity (Aksu 1997, p. 76). Putting the bride's hand in the flour sack reflects this fertility belief, which has evolved into a ritual with the belief of more prosperity. In Erzurum and Erzincan provinces, the groom and the groomsman wait on the roof until the bride is brought. When the bride arrives in front of the house, the groom throws prepared apples on the bride's head, and if the apples hit her, it is said to bring good luck (Köksal 1996, p. 78). In southern Azerbaijan and Kirkuk, a similar ritual is performed with apples or oranges (Tokatlı 1994, p. 34). In Turkish folklore, the apple is a symbol of procreation (offspring), abundance, fertility, and healing (Altun 2008, p. 263). In Safranbolu, the apples are thrown by the bride as a scattering (*saçt*) element, and the guests holding the apples sell them to the groom. It is believed that these apples strengthen the love between the bride and groom and provide fertility and happiness (Şimşek 1996, p. 213).

After the bride's arrival, the groom and the groomsman shake hands with the guests one by one; the guests give money to the groom and congratulate him. The groomsman and the groom's friends leave the boy's house with the groom and stay at the groomsman's house or a relative's house until the Isha prayer. To protect the groom from the evil eye, the groomsman keeps the groom away from the place until the nuptial night following the bride's drop-off. However, in some parts of Anatolia (as seen in the example of the village of Gozyaka in Aydın province), there are traditional practices in which the groom is forced to do so by his friends after the bridal pick-up, and the groom is subjected to various difficulties and entertained (Abalı 2018, p. 114). For the bride and groom, the central figures

of the Turkish weddings, functions such as having fun, entertaining, protecting, supporting traditions and ceremonies, keeping the culture alive, and passing it on are paramount.

10. Religious and Cultural Interactions in Marriage Rituals in Anatolian Culture

In all divine religions, marriage is considered the sole legitimate relationship that ensures the continuity of the human race by establishing the private spheres of both women and men. The wedding ceremonies of marrying couples have profound historical origins in the annals of the human history. Despite showing various details in different cultures and geographies, celebrations generally tend to be oriented towards entertainment and faith.

In Islamic law, there are no specific requirements for a special ceremony or particular festivities regarding the marriage contract. Marriage holds paramount importance as a social and religious event within Muslim Turkish communities, thus warranting a celebration that amalgamates both Islamic and traditional elements. Islam places importance on family structure and societal solidarity, hence seeking societal support in marriages. Marriage customs and ceremonies serve as the tangible examples of the societal support through their broad and inclusive invitations. In Islamic law, the official marriage is established through the contract of the marriage (nikah). Islamic marriage, conducted in the presence of witnesses, is established through the free consent of both the man and woman, alongside the declaration and acceptance of the mehir, which serves as a protection for the woman. In Islamic law, mehir is considered a right that should be given to the woman. Ayat and prayers from the Qur'an may be recited during the marriage ceremony.

The Quran commands support for individuals who have reached the age of marriage and desire to marry. "Marry those among you who are single (whether men or women) and those of your male and female slaves that are righteous (and fit for marriage). If they are poor, God will grant them sufficiency out of His bounty. God is All-Embracing in His mercy".⁷ (The Qur'an, An-Nûr, 24:32). Slavery and concubinage in Anatolia were prohibited by the laws of the Republic of Turkey. Due to the influence of patriarchal traditions, in Turkish societies, it is expected that young individuals of marriageable age seek permission and approval, particularly from their fathers, before marriage. The Quranic verses encouraging marriage do not solely address guardians; even slaves and female slaves cannot marry without their owners' permission. Individuals facing financial hardship within society may lack the opportunity to marry due to their poverty. Allah emphasizes aiding the impoverished individuals who desire to marry by reminding His servants of these truths.

Islam has influenced the legal system and traditions of Turkish communities, integrating Islamic law (Sharia) with some local legal systems. Furthermore, under the influence of Islam, social and moral norms among Turks have also undergone change. However, the Republic of Turkey specifies in its constitution that it has a secular legal framework. Therefore, marriages conducted according to Islamic law or polygamous marriages do not hold legal validity in terms of the state's legal regulations. Turkish traditions have historically advocated monogamy both before and after Islam. In pre-Islamic Arab culture, polygamy was often regarded as a symbol representing wealth and social status. However, the practice of polygamy is restricted to a maximum of four wives as stated in the third verse of Surah An-Nisa in the Quran. In Anatolia, marriages involving multiple women can be explained not only by religious rules but often by the influence of the local culture stemming from social and cultural conditions.

The issue of marrying multiple women in Islam is based on the following verse clearly stated in the Quran. "If you fear that you will not be able to observe their rights with exact fairness when you marry the orphan girls (in your custody), you can marry, from among other women (who are permitted to you in marriage and) who seem good to you, two, or three, or four. However, if you fear that (in your marital obligations) you will not be able to observe justice among them, then content yourselves with only one, or the captives that your right hands possess. Doing so, it is more likely that you will not act rebelliously". (The Qur'an, An-Nisa, 4:3). This rule specifies the permissibility of marrying multiple women

but emphasizes the conditions of justice, consent, and societal rationale, among others, to be fulfilled. Although not widespread, the tradition of marrying multiple women based on Quranic verses has been practiced among the Turks. However, the laws of the Republic of Turkey prohibit marriage with multiple spouses today.

In traditional marriages, the preferences of young individuals regarding marriage are determined through arranged marriages. The Islamic faith allows and approves of such traditional practices. However, Islam emphasizes the consent and free will of women in marriage, hence the significance of a woman's decision to marry. Hence, the Islamic faith encourages the marriage process to occur with mutual consent and harmony. In Anatolian society, when it comes to choosing a spouse, it is generally understood to imply the man choosing the woman. According to Islam, the criteria regarding marriage and the selection of a spouse (woman to be married) are outlined in the hadith as follows: "Women are married (preferred) for these four qualities: wealth, lineage, beauty, and religious commitment. (O believer,) Choose the one who is devout, (otherwise) you may fall into poverty". (el-Aynî n.d., pp. 86–87).

The decision to marry marks a significant milestone in the lives of both a woman and a man. This decision is typically celebrated through wedding ceremonies, publicly announcing it to society. The statement of the Prophet Muhammad "Announce the marriage and celebrate it with the sound of the tambourine" (Ibn Mâce 1992, p. 611, no: 1895) signifies the public announcement of the marriage. The jubilant celebration of weddings with festivity and merriment demonstrates its religious appropriateness (Yaran 1994, p. 15). In the Islamic faith, it is observed that wedding celebrations conducted within legitimate boundaries have shaped and influenced the wedding traditions in Anatolia.

In Anatolia, in accordance with religious traditions, weddings have not exceeded a duration of two days. The Anatolian wedding, commencing after the Friday prayer, concludes at the latest on Sunday afternoon with the arrival of the bride. During this period, festivities are organized for two days, accompanied by feasts. Average two-day wedding ceremonies are based on the saying of the Prophet Muhammad: "The meal of the first day is a rightful celebration, the meal of the second day is a tradition, and the meal of the third day is a display of extravagance. Whoever displays extravagance, God will expose them (on the Day of Judgment)". (Ibn Mâce 1992, p. 617, no: 1915).

The Prophet Muhammad advised his companions, "Even if it is by slaughtering a sheep, hold a wedding feast". (el-Buhârî 1992, p. 139). The form of the wedding feast may vary depending on the financial situation and generosity of the marrying parties. It is crucial for the offerings and organized events at weddings to align with Islamic principles. In today's traditional Anatolian weddings, adherence to Islamic rules is generally observed, with readings from the Qur'an and the recitations of religious hymns (mawlid).

11. Conclusions

Ritual marriage bridal pick-up practices are significant indicators reflecting a society's cultural identity and values. These practices express the deep-rooted beliefs and concepts of the marriage and family within the society. Particularly, the bridal pick-up ritual is a meticulously planned and carefully executed step in many cultures.

Bridal pick-up practices are significant indicators of identity formation, reflecting specific societal roles, gender norms, and family relationships. For example, the details and traditions of the bridal pick-up can reflect a society's approach to gender roles and family structure. These practices often emphasize male dominance and the patriarchal structure of the family, particularly in patriarchal societies based on the authority of the father. Additionally, the bridal pick-up ritual is often used as a symbol of the social status and wealth. For instance, in some societies, bridal pick-up ceremonies are elaborately organized to showcase the family's social and economic status. The traditional attire, jewelry, and other symbols used in these ceremonies emphasize the family's social position and prestige.

Moreover, bridal pick-up practices are also valuable as a part of the transmission of the cultural heritage and traditions from generation to generation. These rituals demonstrate a profound commitment to a society's past, cultural values, and beliefs. The traditional songs, dances, and other rituals used in bridal pick-up ceremonies serve as the expressions of the society's identity and unity.

In conclusion, ritual marriage bridal pick-up practices are significant indicators reflecting a society's cultural identity and values. These practices are valuable not only for highlighting societal roles, gender norms, family relationships, and social status but also as a part of the transmission of the cultural heritage and traditions from generation to generation.

Among the Anatolian Turks, there are a variety of beliefs, practices, rituals, and traditions related to the bridal pick-up. Many of these practices are based on shamanic elements and traditional Turkish beliefs. It can be seen that the customs and ceremonies of bridal pick-up/bride migration (*gelin göçü*) that take place in Anatolia as part of the marriage process, which is an important phase of human life, have great similarities except for minor differences. The fact that the bride and groom are at the center of the bridal pick-up traditions, which we examined from the ritual structure of Turkish weddings, and that the bride plays a greater role among them can be viewed from two perspectives. First, in the Turkish family structure, women have had an important status since historical times, and the bride's adaptation is, therefore, ensured by religious-magical rituals, so that she gets used to her new home and has no problems adapting to her husband's house after her father's house. Secondly, in the Turkish family structure, the wife is also a central figure beside her husband and is considered the "head of the household".

In Anatolian Turkish wedding traditions, it would be insufficient from a cultural analysis point of view to consider the ritual of bridal pick-up/bridal migration as an individual behavior in which two young people unite their lives in order to marry and start a family. Although the bride or groom is at the center of the rituals, as an individual within the phenomenon of event and time, which we have limited in our article, building and strengthening the kinship relations between the bride and groom and consolidating their relations are also one of the most intense phases, involving social rituals to protect the family from demonic creatures and to allow friends, relatives, and neighbors to share in the happiness of the families. However, today's wedding ceremonies, which take place in a limited time and space and with a limited number of guests, are socially incomplete compared to traditional ceremonies and rituals in which everyone participates. The change in the structure of traditional weddings, which last three to four days, is striking, especially in city centers where urban life predominates. In the solemnization of the marriage and wedding ceremonies held together in wedding halls, there is a decline, forgetting, and non-execution of the rituals of bridal pick-up due to the effects of place, participants, and time. Although traditional weddings are preferred in villages, cities, and provinces where traditional life persists, traditions that are not practiced in popular culture lose their vitality and are forgotten over time because they cannot be passed on to younger generations.

Among the main reasons for the change in rituals are factors such as mass media, education, tourism, and migration, and these changes lead to the emergence of some new syntheses. The structure and content of the wedding ceremonies and celebrations are social texts practiced as oral ceremonial texts. Weddings enable the realization of the social, religious, and cultural expectations. However, in a globalizing world, the power of mass communication and social media has a major impact on people's choices and behaviors. Rituals, therefore, may change over time, or the essence of the practices may be forgotten over time and become a consumer ritual. The social and cultural values also have their share in the rapid development and changes of our time. While many traditional practices and rituals have disappeared, some of the traditions that have not have survived with some changes in their structure and function (i.e., carrying the bride across the threshold by embracing her). However, there are also rituals that have persisted for centuries with the

same structure and function (the fertility/chastity belt), while new traditions have emerged more recently, such as the bachelor/ bachelorette parties.

It can be said that the changes and transformations related to the structure, framework, and organization of a wedding are influenced by the contemporary norms and the administrations of living spaces and urbanization, and that mass media promote personal and social changes. However, it can also be assumed that in TV series and films in the media, wedding rituals have been unified in their structure (brought to the same form and quality) and that diversity has been reduced and led to uniformity. In recent years, it can be said that migration, urbanization, and marriages with foreigners have influenced Anatolian Turkish wedding practices. In Anatolia, during the times when the agricultural society was predominant, the autumn time was preferred as the wedding time, but today the wedding time is influenced by processes such as the working time, economic status, and the educational level of the couples to be married. Although the wedding season usually continues in the fall, the end of the harvest season in rural areas, weddings in urban life can occur twelve months out of the year. It is in the nature of culture that folkloric elements, variable because of their dynamic structure, are always appearing or disappearing. However, what is important is that we can determine how and why these changes, forgetting, and appropriation take place, which gives us the opportunity to know the society better.

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Notes

- ¹ The origin and initial usage of the term “toy” have not been definitively determined. This term was originally used in the sense of “state assembly, council, assembly” as a derivation from the religious ceremony, “toy”. However, over time, it evolved to mean “feast, banquet, festive meal, wedding” and similar contexts (Duyumaz 2005, p. 39). In Turkish written languages and dialects, especially in Turkish spoken in Turkey, the word “toy” is commonly used to mean “wedding, festival, feast”. In Azerbaijani Turkish, however, “toy” refers to meanings such as “wedding ceremony, celebration, joyous gathering”. Toy, in Turkmen, refers to a grand feast, celebration, or event marked by lavish festivities held in honor of someone or something. In Kyrgyz, the term “toy” is used to refer to a feast, celebration, wedding banquet, or festival. In Kazakh, the term “toy” signifies meanings such as festival, feast, banquet, or wedding. In New Uyghur, the word “toy” means “wedding”, while in Sakha (Yakut), “toy” signifies meanings such as feast, banquet, celebration, or wedding ceremony. In Altai, the term “toy” denotes meanings such as festival, wedding, or wedding feast. In Karaim, the term “toy” is used to mean “wedding” or “feast”, while in Uzbek, it signifies “entertainment” or “festivity” (Özakdağ 2018, p. 129). In the article, the term “toy” has been used to refer to meanings such as wedding, wedding feast, and marriage ceremony.
- ² In Anatolia, one can encounter various forms of wedding flags. In almost all Turkmen villages, it is customary to hang a flag at weddings, which is hung over the door of the boy’s house. This flag is known for having its own characteristics (Koşay 1944, p. 86; Yalman (Yalgın) 1977, p. 80).
- ³ Today it is estimated that it is a national refrain, the meaning of which is unknown (Gökalp 1976, p. 311).
- ⁴ In Anatolia, it is a matter of pride to honorably marry the girl off, and it is a common custom to make a sacrifice in thanks.

- 5 The expression “Ya Allah, Ya Muhammed, Ya Ali” is a commonly used religious phrase in the folk beliefs of Anatolia. This expression is considered a reflection of Islamic belief and includes prayers to Allah, the Prophet Muhammad, and Ali. Ali, the cousin, son-in-law, and one of the first caliphs of the Islamic Prophet Muhammad, holds special importance for Alevi Muslims. The phrase “Ya Ali” signifies prayers, intercession requests, and requests for assistance directed towards Ali. This expression is commonly used in religious rituals, prayers, and remembrances. Among Sunni Muslims in Anatolia, there is not a significant cult or tradition of prayer directed towards Ali. However, the importance of Ali in Islamic history and his religious values are also respected by Sunni Muslims.
- 6 While the bridal sash is being tied with prayers, the bride’s father wishes his daughter well and gives her the following advice: “Get along well with your mother-in-law and father-in-law. Be happy where you are. Obey them. Get used to it. It is your home. You go in your wedding dress and come back in your shroud” (Er 1997, p. 200).
- 7 “This is not a compulsory order, as marriage depends on the choice of an individual. However, if a person wants to marry but cannot afford it, those responsible for them among their relatives or, in case of their being without relatives, the state should arrange their marriage” (Ünal 2006, p. 688).

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