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# Preservation of Cultural Heritage Reflected in the Musical Tradition

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## ABSTRACT

This paper refers to the musical tradition of the Turkish rural population in the Republic of North Macedonia with a focus on the western part of the country – Municipality Zhupa. The interest is driven from the knowledge of rich historical past of this area with several villages, and specifics of the settled population—Yuruk Turks. Changes in social structures, migration from villages to cities, development of the technology and the Internet, as well as changes oriented from traditional to contemporary social forms are factors that contribute to narrowing the traditional musical repertoire. However, this music is still one of the vital factors that continually sublimate events of the rich history of many centuries. This is confirmed by our field research started during 2013 and still continuing until nowadays by collecting, recording, and monitoring of certain secular events, in which music plays an important role. The performing ensemble depends on the occasion of the traditional rites, and it can be instrumental, vocal, or vocal-instrumental. The instrumental ensemble is still constituted of traditional instruments, davul, and zurna. The musical repertoire consists of local traditional and Rumelian songs (*türkü* and *oyun havasi*) from the wider region in which lyric thematic prevails.

*Keywords:* Music heritage; musical repertoire; Turkish Yoruk in western part of NR Macedonia.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The impact of technology and migrations in contemporary life in the Republic of North Macedonia are the main factors why the folk tradition modifies, not only in urban but also in rural areas. Consequently, rural communities slowly lose their traditional character and authenticity of continuity in transferring cultural traditions. Technical and technological innovations are resulting in a change of musical instruments, where traditional instruments give their place to modern electronic instruments, primarily synthesizer. The reduction of the traditional repertoire and the dominance of contemporary musical trends are very obvious, especially on the younger population through technical and technological means, satellite and cable TV, Internet, and so on.

In contrast to these modern conditions, among the rural settlements in the Turkish population in Macedonia, there are more specific communities that are characterized by geographical, ethnological,

linguistic, and cultural autochthony. Thus, the rural areas have higher levels of physical, cultural, and linguistic isolation leading to pronounced community cohesion. These features, which greatly contributed to longer preservation of cultural heritage, are reflected in the musical tradition. Such a situation is present among the population of the communities in the municipality Zhupa, the Western part of Macedonia [1].

The reasons why in this paper we focused on the musical heritage of this area are based on the following facts:

- 1) It is one of the first regions in the Balkans in which the Turkish population settled,
- 2) The ancestors of Ataturk originate from there, and
- 3) Folklore heritage of this rural area has still retained its authentic form [2].

## **2. Location and Historical Past**

The Zhupa Municipality is located in the southeast area of the country at an altitude of more than 1000 m. and it consists of several villages: Kodzadzik, Novak, Ellesa, Breshtani, Dolgash, Papradnik, Pralenik, etc. Historically the most famous village is Kodzadzik situated on the slope of the mountain Stogova, known as "Kodzadzik heights." The specific geographical location, i.e., steep rock structure that provides a natural defensive position gives Kodzadzik positioning of greater importance. On the western side of the village is located Kale (fortress) which was known earlier under the name of Svetigradsko Kale (holy city fortress) [3].

The first attempt of conquering these territories by the Ottomans (1444-1446) was unsuccessful and ended with the defeat in favor of Skanderbeg. Three years later (1449), at the time of Sultan Murad II, Kodzadzik was conquered by Isa Beg with his soldiers called "Konyans" (originating from the region of Konya, Anatolia). In this region, along with the soldiers, a large number of Turkish population originating from several Anatolian regions were migrated, such as Konya—Karaman, Aydin, and Soke [4]. This population belongs to the Turkmen community named "Kiziloguz" which means "Red Oghuz." From here comes the nickname of Ataturk's grandfather—Ahmed Efendi "K'z'l" (Kizil), who originates from this village. The population that migrated according to geographical conditions was called "Yuruks," and mainly deals with livestock breeding.

According to some sources, because of the important geostrategic position, until the mid-XVI century, Kodzadzik is treated as an urban settlement [5]. In fact, by the look of the built facilities, such as schools, management facilities, etc., this settlement had a character of an urban environment.

## **3. MUSICAL TRADITION**

The music heritage which was brought with the migration of the Turkish population of Anatolia has still retained a lot of its authentic character. Traditional rituals where the music has significant roles are weddings, sunnets (circumcision), rites of Hidirellez, and also the customs during Ramadan and Bayram Hollydays [6].

We realized our study of musical tradition in several villages during 2013 through field collection and continuing until nowadays through recording, and monitoring of certain traditional events, in which music plays an important role. The analyzed recordings were from various periods and that allowed us to make comparative analysis in the transmission of musical traditions of the population over the past two decades.

### **3.1 Analysis of the Musical Repertoire**

We grouped songs from the current repertoire into three categories: traditional folk (local), Rumelian from the wider region, and the newly composed folk from the Republic of Turkey. While analyzing the songs, we have focused primarily on local traditional folk music, because it is characterized by its autochthonous musical idiom created by local events in the villages of this region. Also, several Rumelian songs from the wider regions that were part of the repertoire of traditional collective manifestations were included.

In further analysis, the songs were categorized according to the musical form, thematic content, structure of the text, melodic structure, rhythmic patterns, structure of performers, and musical instruments.

### 3.1.1 Musical form

In the folk music tradition of this population, two basic forms are present: *türkü* (vocal form) and *oyun havası* (instrumental form). More of this musical heritage is in the form of *türkü* in the vocal, instrumental, and vocal-instrumental performance [7].

#### Ex.5: *Ne mahzun durusun gönül karşısındadır* (Turk Aksak 5/8)

#### Ex.6: *Sıra sıra kazanlar* (Nim Sofyan 2/4)

Many of the songs with symmetric rhythm contain punctured rhythmic figures as syncopation. If we take into account the fact that irregular rhythm is one of the most characteristic features of the Turkish music in general, the presence of these metrorhythmic figures could be interpreted as a way of creating an impression of irregularity in the regular rhythm.

### 3.1.6 Structure of performers and musical instruments

If traditions live as they are realized in the performances, then interpretations and performing structures are a mirror of the tradition in a sociocultural environment [15].

The composition of performing structure largely depends on which occasion the specified repertoire is performed. Most of the songs from our database are solo/vocal performances since they are recorded at the request of researchers during the fieldwork during 2013. Most of the performers of these songs (female/male vocals) are members of the older generation.

*The instrumental ensembles* that we met within the assembled material consist of traditional instruments—zurna and cylindric drums (two zurnas and two drums). These ensembles were indispensable during all

occasions in the past. From our observations of the performances of this type of *ensembles*, one can notice that the drums are the main carriers of interpretation and they often join those that are dancing. The leading role is confirmed by the fact that a drum player (drummer) is the entity that defines and leads the repertoire. These traditional musical *ensembles* perform instrumental forms—*oyun havası*, as well as the vocal form *türkü* without performing the text.

Vocal-instrumental performances are present in musical activities of the CAS. Instruments such as *saz*, *darabuka*, *daire*, *tablespoons*, etc. are also used in their performances. The music repertoire of CAS consists of local autochthonous songs and Rumelian songs of the wider region.

**Photo 3: Traditional instrumental ansamble: zurnas and drums / Photo 4: CAS**



#### 4. CONCLUSION

Deepening the research material revealed an inexhaustible source of folk music heritage in which tradition to this day, despite the narrowing of some parts of musical practice, as well as the musical repertoire, still proudly defy the challenges of modern living. All this stems from primordial love, respect and need of the population to preserve the values of inherited tradition as a seal of their personal identity because the songs are a source and a witness, chronological companion and a sort of creative document to many events that were created throughout the centuries or existed among them.

The folk tradition is one of the most important areas in the development of human civilization and the general principle of continuity, on which are based all forms of human activity and culture. In fact, its transmission from generation to generation is the sum of cultural achievements and represents an important indicator of the philosophical and anthropological dimension of the cultural movement.

From the continues study of the musical tradition of this region starting from 2013 until nowadays, one can conclude that the musical heritage brought with the migration of the Turkish population from Anatolia has still retained a lot of its authentic character.

The factors that among other things contributed in preserving the specifics of musical heritage of this population are geographic position of this region, considerable isolation of the population from the surrounding influences, especially from the urban areas, contributes in maintaining the high degree of authenticity in secular and spiritual practices; marriages were solemnized among the villagers; respect for the inherited cultural tradition—despite the fact that over the past two decades due to unenviable economic situation much of the population leaves to work abroad temporarily, authentic elements in all segments of the cultural tradition still remain present in everyday and holiday rituals.

## COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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