

***Characteristics of Ethnocoerological and Etnomusicological for Folk
Dance of the Osmaniye Region of Turkey***

***Dr. Muzaffer SÜMBÜL
TURKEY***

INTRODUCTION

Dance, especially folk dance, has a lot of roles and functions in every society. It prevents people from the daily routine stress making their life more pleasant, and it arises the togetherness feeling within the society. Each folk dance; however, has its own performing characteristics, which is called “performing tradition” which varies from region to region.

This study focuses on the performing tradition in Osmaniye region (the South-east region of Turkey) depending on Ethnocoerological and Etnomusicological characteristics. The performing tradition in this region is a compact of music (turku, folk song) and folk dance. While the performing takes place at the same time songs are performed. Not alike a lot of regions, in Osmaniye region all the songs are performed in “uzun hava” style which is called “Gavurdağı Agzi”.

1. Ethnocoerological Characteristics

There is a leader dancer in performance of Osmaniye folk dance. (**Bkz. SÜMBÜL, 1994:168**); **SÜMBÜL, 2004: 89-98**) A leader dancer is called the “head of the halay”, “team leader” or “main dancer”.

The leader dancer can easily be distinguished from other performers due to his performance abilities. His improvisation brings more colorfulness, much energy, much fun and more structure to the dance. Besides, during the performance the leader himself shows his personal dancing skills.

During the performance, just next to the main leading dancer stands the best performer being followed by other dancers. In a way, the last dancer of the line is assumed the least skilled performer; a new dance member or a learner or a youngster.

The symbol of leadership is the handkerchief since only the leader carries the handkerchief throughout the performance. The person who keeps the handkerchief is so called the leader until he passes it to another dancer, usually the person next to. No one can insist on being the leader since the next leader is being chosen only by the leader himself. No dancer has the right to perform on the right side of the main / leader dancer. If this happens, this dancer is considered to be not respectful to the dance and dancers.

Almost all folk dances in the region show a great cooperative and collaborative communal gathering of the society within any ritual. For instance, in a wedding ceremony even if only bride and groom, as individuals, seem to be the main part of the ceremony, in fact the most important part is the social event taking place around these two people.

Dance is also important in celebrities such as at weddings. Since the wedding hosts believe that the more dancing occurs during the ceremony, the more respectful their wedding will be, they want people to contribute to dancing sessions. Usually the groom side is considered to be the wedding host and the groom's friends and relatives take dancing as a serious duty during the ceremony, so they try to entertain the guests by their dancing performances that lead a joyful wedding ceremony. Moreover, in general the older usually make promises to the younger, especially to children, telling them they would dance in the younger ones' ceremonies to motivate them and convince them to dance, in a way to enjoy and like dancing.

2. Ethnomusicological Characteristics

Osmaniye is a region where most of the settlers are Türkmen tribes (Nomadic Turks). In both temporarily (nomadic) and permanently settling lifestyles, these tribes have to deal with nature. Sadan Guvenir, who has done a lot of researches in the area, says that these tribal lifestyles are reflected in their musics. She also adds the following statements;

"(...) Those living in difficult conditions struggling against natural events sing in a soft, deep and calm tone "uzun hava". While singing out loud, they express their suffers and pains using some exclamanation sounds such as "ay, ey, aman, of, ay dost.)" (GÜVENİR, 1985 124-126)

When sang "Uzun havalar" , which require the singer to have long and deep breathing talent with a strong throat, exactly reflect the nature itself. Emotions such as pain, sadness, missing someone or somewhere and etc. feelings are described in "uzun hava" type of songs.

Mostly the localized nomads in this area earn their life from farming depending on cultivation. They do the necessary labor work in cotton and peanut fields such as hoeing and picking corps and while they are busy with the nature, they sing lots of "uzun hava" songs spontaneously following usually one worker to the other.

One of the Cukurova region "uzun hava" song types 'Gâvur Dağı Havası' is seen in the songs in Osmaniye restrict, which is geographically limited within the area around the Amanos Mountain and the close valleys and small plateaus.

'Gavur Dağı Havası' ballads are different from the other types of "uzun havas" not only because they are sung in an unusual musical way, but also in an cultural aspect they distinguish from other "uzun hava" ballads. These "uzun hava" ballads are very important parts in culturally and traditionally important celebrities and festivals.

Most of the ballads are songs that tell about events. According to Atılğan, there are 27 songs describing some historical and social events in a narrative way:

"1. Hurşit 2. Alo Paşa (Ali Paşa) 3. Han Mahmut 4. Öksüz Ali 5. Karacaoğlan 6. Dadaloğlu 7. Âşık Garip 8. Âşık Kerem 9. Deli boran 10.

Esmâ ile Zeycan 11. Genç Osman 12. Korođlu ve kolları 13. Őah Mayıl 14. Kamber ođlu 15. Elbeyli ođlu 16. Ali ile Fatma 17. Helvacı gzeli 18 Telli Senem 19. Bey Byrek 20. Gzel Ahmet 21. Kılıç Ali 22. AŐık Halil 23. Ahmet Bey ile Gheri 24. Őavo Gelin 25. Őah Mayıl 26. Ceren 27. Arzu ile Kamber” (ATILGAN, 19983-8)

While talking about ‘Gavur Dağı Ağzı’ the ballads or folk songs can be grouped into two categories such as the songs that are sung in a narrative style especially at special occasions and the ones sung during entertainments.

Songs or ballads that are sung telling a social event are usually take place in henna ceremonies at the local weddings. As a lot of skill and talent is required to sing such songs, some people called “Asık” are hired just for this business. The “Asık” starts telling a story and from time to time according to the event in the story he sings some related songs and this goes on and on until the singer feels like stopping. Another place this type of songs can be heard is during some dancing fests, singing in group events with drum-zurna.

Osmaniye cultural structure is illustrated by wedding ceremonies that are the combinations of dances and folk songs going on until late in the mornings with the consumption of alcoholic drinks especially home-made raki. As it can be imagined, tables are set, mezes are prepared, different types of meat are cooked all with music until dawn during these wedding fests. One essential thing is drum and zurna as no wedding ceremony can be imagined without this two. Some musicians are hired to play the instruments and the rest sing and if there is no one singing then the musicians both sing and play the instruments. During the wedding ceremony or at any dancing and singing ceremony, two performances take place as follows: firstly folk songs and ballads are sung, next dance is performed. The dance starts with drum-zurna and then a few minutes pass and one of the dancers start singing, at that moment the zurna stops and the drummer keeps the rhythm alive beating softly on the wooden frame of the drum. After a verse is sung, the drum and zurna players play the sung part and the dance continues as three steps front and one step back.

Throughout the entertainment ceremonies no folk songs containing narrative event are told but only songs or / and take part. However, during a Henna party especially for the bride an “asık” (singer) tells stories and at the same time from time to time sings after and before these stories.

Both of the performing type in ‘Gâvur Dağı’ build a cultural values understanding and prevention among residents, since a bride between the past and the present and future is set through the folk dance and music.

CONCLUSION:

It can be considered that there is a strong relationship between the Osmaniye folk dances with the local music culture and the residents’ attitudes towards their daily life and their life style. The importance of leader dancer, for instance, shows that the relationship between one and his/her family and relative members is very important and in a way respect and loyalty to the elderly is essential in social life.

The attendance to folk dancing as a group of local people shows the cultural aspect of the social gathering. The respect to the wedding host is demonstrated by joining to the dance. This shows the necessity of cooperation and collaboration in one’s life and the continuation of traditions.

The songs telling narrative stories with Gavur Dağı Ağzı recall the past memories and the combination of music and dance is also experienced within these

songs. On the whole, the performances do not have only an artistic value but a cultural importance also.

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