

Ottoman *Türkü*

Süleyman Şenel

The term *türkü* was discussed intensively in terms of identity, purpose and research techniques during the last ten years of the Ottoman Empire and the initial years of the Republic of Turkey. Field work among the people, however, only began with the official collection trips during the second quarter of the 20th century and their results was transmitted to music circles in printed notation collections. Additionally, these collected *türkü*s were introduced to mass audiences by means of vinyl records and radio broadcasts, sung especially by local (*maballı*) and professional musicians. The use of the term *türkü* by science-art communities as a technical caption also contributed greatly to this process. Perhaps the term *türkü* won its greatest fame during this period. Moreover, it became widespread, having been attributed new meanings and perceptions.

Terms such as *Chant populaire*, *Volkslied* or *folk song* as used in folklore studies, which developed in the second half of the 19th century in Europe where initially translated as *balk şarkısı* by Turkist/nationalist Ottoman intellectuals – especially musicians – who followed the printed sources in this field. During the 1920s this term was turkified to *türkü*. In addition, they transformed the word into a term for a musical subform under the general headline of “folk music”, as well as into a technical term including all elements of the repertoire.¹

According to artists from Istanbul society influential among music communities during the first quarter of the 20th century *türkü* had an unnoticed place in the daily city life. Moreover, the term *türkü* met folk songs and especially anonymous songs sung by folk singers who came from different parts of the Empire territory, especially from Anatolia. They lived mostly in the suburbs in Istanbul, and used to perform in recreation spots, coffeehouses, taverns, country weddings and sportive recreational areas like jereed, footraces and wrestling; also they were invited to parties of reputable mansion owners. Within this context, *türkü* met traditional music genres, forms, types and variations. However, the term did not encompass particular cultural characteristics, such as a distinctive poetic form, lyrical topics, their metric-rhythmic or metric-melodic structures; their musical styles and forms, phonetic/dialectic features; traditional instrument timbres; performing locations or religious contexts.

¹ Mahmut Ragıp (Gazimihal) (1928:7) explains the process of defining anonymous songs as *türkü*, that have been notated after vocal or instrumental folk music performances or collected with different recording techniques, with these words: “We used this term to mean *chant populaire* but as the Germans call their songs *Lied*, we called our folk songs generally *türkü*. The term *şarkı* (song) is not known in Anatolia.”

As *türkü*s entered the agenda and the *fasts* of musicians from Istanbul, also compositions whose lyrics described village life with words such as village square, peasant girl, shepherd, kohl, henna, fountain, sheep-lamb, *davul-zurna*, wedding etc. began to be defined as *türkü*. They were performed in *makams* like *hüseynî*, *mubây-yer*, *nevâ*, *tâbir*, *uşşak*, *hicâz*, *mâbur*, *rast*, *müştâr*, *gülizâr*, *karcığar*. *Türkü* was even designated as one of the musical genres or forms² like *kâr*, *kâr-ı nâtik*, *Mevlevî âyini*, *beste* and *şarkı*. For this designation, no distinctive musical structure and idea of form was taken into consideration.

After the first quarter of the 20th century, the term *türkü* which became widespread by means of printed, auditory and visual publications, was used in order to acquire a meaning acceptable to different disciplines of social science and different types of music as well as in public memory. The fact that literary researchers tried to apply a technical and terminological standardization of folk poems impacted on this process. However, over time, *türkü* lyrics was removed from being purely a literary topic. Primarily the recognition and identification of genres and forms of folk literature/*âşık* literature, together with many other topics, started to be explained in association with music.

In the last quarter of the 20th century, hundreds of written documents and tens of thousands of oral and musical reference sources provided by local witnesses were collected in libraries and archives, thus making it an obligation to study *türkü*s in an interdisciplinary manner between literature and music.

This process started in the Ottoman period, but was not carried into effect. In other words, there was an attempt to compile Ottoman *türkü*s via the field works of the 20th century and in the following 90 years, and they made substantial progress.

Aside from field works, written historical sources were discovered and based on these exemplars knowledge grew, primarily due to the efforts of literary researchers. The latter included the discovery and identification of the literary sources of *türkü*s, and the dissemination of information among the scientific/artistic communities. However, these did not garner much attention among music circles, and thus were not studied to a sufficient extent. At least some issues had enough value to enter music literature and also attracted interest within the musical field.

One example is the *Kâbüsnâme* written in the 11th century by Kaikâ'ûs Ibn-Iskandar, the Ziyarid Emir, who dedicated it to his son Gilân Şâh. It was translated from Persian into Turkish by İlyasoğlu Ahmed (Mercimek Ahmed) at the behest of Ottoman Sultan Murad II in the first half of the 15th century (Keykavus 1974).

² Titles such as *peşrev*, *taksim*, *saz semâ'i* and *Mevlevî ayini*, have been mostly defined as a "form" (tr.: *form*) in classical Turkish music circles. Among some of the music lovers in recent periods, the terms *forma* and *tür* (genre) can also be encountered. This issue is a problem of terminology and study of forms, fields that Turkish music researchers have not discussed sufficiently thus far.

While Mercimek Ahmed was translating according to some of the advice of Keykavus on how to make delicate music, he used the words *ırlamak*, *ır ırlamak* and *türkü aytmak*.³ In the text, the verb *aytmak* means making audible a set of words that were built upon a melody, while the verbs *ırlamak* and *türkü aytmak* were used to mean “making music with lyrics.” Instrumentalist (*sâzende*) was defined as an artist who put into practice the verbs *ırlamak* and *türkü aytmak* by using instruments. Most importantly, the expressions *ırlamak/ır ırlamak* and *türkü aytmak* were used in the same sense in the source (Keykavus 1974:259)⁴.

At the end of the 15th century, in his work *Mîzânü'l-Evzân* (The Measure of Metres), Ali-Şîr Nevâyî mentioned a poetical/musical genre that came to be known as *türkü* in Hüseyin Baykara’s gatherings and was inordinately admired and seen as relaxing to the soul, beneficial to people who were fond of pleasure and metaphorically embellishing gatherings. The *türkü*s were arranged in the *remel-i müsemmen-i maksur* metre (*fâ’ilâtün fâ’ilâtün fâ’ilâtün fâ’ilin*). Their singers were called “*türkü-güy*” and reputable *türkü-güys* were kept under the auspices of sultans.⁵ In the *Mecâlisü’n-Nefâis* he names some *türkü-güys*, e.g. Mevlânâ Atâyî, Mevlânâ Mukîmî, Mevlânâ Kemâlî, Mevlânâ Gedâyî, Mevlânâ Haydar and Emir Rüstem.⁶

³ It is understood that this term transformed into *türkü*, *türkü çağırmaq/söylemek* in Anatolia over time. For example, the term *türkü* and the idioms *türkü söylemek*, *türkü çağırmaq* can be seen in two anecdotes recorded in *Latâ’if-i Hâce Nasreddin* (Dersaadet: İkbâl Kütübhanesi, Hilâl Matbaası), a compilation from an 18th century manuscript by *Babâ’î* (Veled Çelebi İzbudak) which was printed for the first time in 1325/1909 (Dersaadet: İkbâl Kütübhanesi, Hilâl Matbaası) (in addition see: Boratav 1995:199-213).

⁴ “When you learn a song, savour its taste, sing it while it is still warm, so that it would be tasteful, rather than when it is cold and has lost its taste. ... If you sing songs, do not sing them in only one emotion. Sing them with feeling. For example, sometimes out of beauty, sometimes out of a reigniting, sometimes out of separation, sometimes out of loyalty and sometime out of sorrow so that the things you said would be emotionally effective.” In the transcription into Latin letters by Orhan Şaik Gökyay (Keykavus, 1974:259): “... *Ve her bir ırçıgaz ve türküçük ki öğrenirsin, zevkini sakla, yani ısıcak ayıt, tâ ki tatlı ola, sovuq ayıtma, tâ ki bilezzet olmaya. (...). Her ırı ki ırlarsın yendek bir manada ayıtma, her birini bir manada ayıt, yani geb hüsnüyyet, geb visâl, geb fırak, geb vefâ ve geb cefâdan türküler ayıt, tâ ki sobbetin müessir düşe...*”

⁵ Ali-Şîr Nevâyî 1993:58-61. For the works of Ali Şîr Nevâyî, see: Levend 1968: 117. For comprehensive information on the biography, art, character and compositions of Ali Şîr Nevaî, see: Levend 1965; Levend 1966; Levend 1967; Levend 1968. For the text in Chagatai that Ağâh Surrî Levend and Kemal Eraslan transcribed into Latin alphabet see: Ali-Şîr Nevâyî, 1993:58-61; Levend 1968:117:

“*Ve yana tınyuk sürüdüdur kim, anı ‘türkü’ dipdürler. Ve bu lafz anga ‘alem boluptur. Ve ol gayetdin taşkari dil-pesend ve rüb-efza ve nihayetdin müteâvüz, ‘ays ehliga suud-mend ve meclis-ârâ sürüdüdur. Andak ki selaatin anı yabşı aytur ihni terbiyetler kılıpdurlar. ‘Türkü-güy’ lakabı bile meşburdur. Ve ol Türkü dağı remel-i müsemmen-i maksur [read as “mabzuş” by Kemal Eraslan] veznide vaki’dur...*” (There is also another type of poetic recitation which they have called *türkü*, and this name has been fitting for it. And it is exceedingly delightful and heartening, and extremely moving; it is a recitation which is beneficial and promoting of conviviality for men of leisure, so much so that Sultans praised it and has cultivated the nation (with it). The *türkü-güy* are well-known. This *türkü* also exhibits the (poetic) meter of *ramal-i musamman-i maqsûr*.)

⁶ Levend, 1968:74, 75, 80, 81, 86.

In the *Mîzânü'l-Evzân*, Ali-Şîr Nevâyî also mentioned some genres known among the Turks of the 15th century, like *tıyüğ*, *koşuk*, *çenge*, *ozmağ*, *buday-buday*, *mubabbetnâme*, *arazvârî* and *müstezâd* which are defined according their metre, purpose of performance and their geography. Additionally, in *Mîzânü'l-Evzân*, the expressions *türki/türkü ayıtmak* are met with the expressions *ır* and *ır ırlamak* in parallel with *Kâbusnâme*.⁷

In the 16th century, the expressions *türkü yakmak* and *türkü yakıcı* are encountered also in the Arabic–Turkish glossary *el-Bâbüs fi tercemeti'l-Kaamûs (el-Bâbüsü'l-vasît fi tercemeti'l-Kâmûsi'l-muhît)* by Merkezzâde Ahmet Efendi.⁸ These idioms are used widespread in Anatolia, probably they are the oldest idiomatic evidence that have a musical meaning.⁹

Besides these materials, Evliyâ Çelebi's *Seyabatnâme*, the most often consulted written source in literary and musical circles, is more evidence for the existence of *türkü*s in the 17th century. In the *Seyabatnâme*, the terms *türki* and *türkü* are both used to mean *folk song*, and again *ırlamak/yırlamak* for “singing folk song”.¹⁰ Another noteworthy point in the *Seyabatnâme* is that the expressions *türki/türkü* are used for the folk songs of Albanians, Greeks (*Rûm*), Serbians, Croatians, Bulgar-

⁷ Following this information, it becomes mandatory to investigate if the musical/poetic examples called *türki/türkü* has reached our time in Anatolia or in the Turkic geography, either in written sources or via the oral tradition of the people. Actually, *türkü*, *atma türkü* and *uzun türkü*s, composed of seven syllable *mânî* verses built upon fast-paced rhythmic melodies, are popular among the people living in the Eastern Black Sea region of Turkey. The literary and thematically similar counterparts of *çenges* with “*yâr yâr*” *redif*, with or without prosodic metre, emotionally effective, who are stated in *Mîzânü'l-Evzân* to have been sung at *zîfaf* (wedding night) and wedding feasts, still continue as songs with *yâr yâr*, *yor yor*, *car car*, or *jâr jâr redifs* and/or with a refrain, as in the Balkans, the Caucasus, the Khazars vicinity up to Anatolia (see: Halızkâde, 1997:192-203).

⁸ See: TDK Tarama Sözlüğü, 1971a:3875. According to the information given by Prof. Dr. İsmail Durmuş, *el-Bâbüs fi tercemeti'l-Kaamûs (el-Bâbüsü'l-vasît fi tercemeti'l-Kâmûsi'l-muhît)* by Firûzâbâdî was translated into Turkish for the first time by Merkezzâde Ahmet Efendi (d. 963/1556). The son of Merkez Efendi, the sheikh of *Halveti-Sünbülî*, Merkezzâde Ahmet Efendi prepared the text according to the Denizli accent and completed it in 950/1543. According to Durmuş' information, the manuscript of the work is kept in the Atif Efendi Library in Istanbul (No. 2692). Various other copies are located in different libraries (for more details, see: Durmuş, 2004:206-207).

⁹ *Türkü yakıcılık* is a kind of folk music composing. The verb *türkü yakmak* means the creation of sets of words with melody by folk artist composers, under the impression of the time, location and emotion that one is currently in, while still adhering to the lyrical and musical patterns and structures of the tradition. In these circumstances, the folk compositions that emerge are called *yakma*.

¹⁰ For the terms *türki* and *türkü* in *Evliyâ Çelebi's Seyabatnâmesi*. M. Sabri Koz took the translation and edition made by Yücel Dağlı, Seyit Ali Kahraman, Robert Dankoff, Zekeriya Kurşun and İbrahim Sezgin as a basis, which was published in 10 volumes by Yapı Kredi Yayınları (1999-2007). In this corpus, the spelling *türki* can be seen in Vol I: 115-2, 340-1, 340-2, 354-2, 355-2, 357-2 and Vol VII: 141-1, 284-2, 286-2; the spelling *türkü* can be seen in Vol I: 280-1, Vol V: 142-2), Vol VII: 271-2 and Vol X: 185-1.

ian-Mazedonians (*Voynık*), Latins, Bulgarians, Bosnians, Circassians, Armenians, Nogai Tatars and Egyptian Fellahs (Koz, 2009:252).

At this point, let us focus on the expressions *ır/yır* and *ır+lamak/yır+lamak*. The usage of “*ır/yır*” in the same meaning with *türki/türkü*, as in *Kâbusnâme*, *Mîzanu'l-Evzân* and Evliyâ Çelebi's texts, can be dated back to the 11th century as proved by the *Dîvânü Lugâti't-Türk* by Kaşgarlı Mahmud. These expressions are known to be used with *yır/yir*, *cır/cir*, *jır/jir* utterances in almost all Turkic areas, in particular in Anatolia, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tartary, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan and mostly in musical texts.¹¹ The existence of these words might be interpreted as expressions of cultural continuity and the frequent reinforcement of this continuity.

The oldest notated evidences of *türkü* are seen in one of the written sources of the 17th century Ottoman period, the *Mecmû'a-i Sâz ü Söz* which was written by Polish-born Ali Ufkî (Albert Bobowski) in the 1650s. In this song collection, the word *türki* is mentioned more than 90 times, in *fasıls* of *hüseynî*, *muhayyer*, *nevâ*, *uşşâk*, *beyâtî*, *acem*, *sabâ*, *çargâb*, *segâb*, *rast*, *mâhur*, *evîç* and *ırak makams* (Ali Ufkî, 1976; Ali Ufkî, 2003). Almost all of them were notated in European staff notation written from right to left.

The *türki* in the song collection carry a kind of identity as music with lyrics, just as one of the other frequently mentioned vocal, instrumental or vocal-instrumental genres such as *beste*, *ceng-i harbî*, *ilâhî*, *murabba'*, *nağme-i 'acem*, *nakş*, *oyun*, *pîşrev*, *raks*, *raksıyye*, *savt*, *semâ'î*, [*saz*] *semâ'î*, *şarkî*, *tekerleme*, *tesbîh*, *tevhîd*, *varsagî* and *yeltme*. However, the notated songs do not seem to have an unchanging literary and/or musical form and structure, and several genres/styles as well as differences with their counterparts are perceptible. This difference leads to the presumption that the songs referred to as *türki* harbour a certain musical diversity and variation.

The *türkis* in the song collection consist of lyrics written in syllabic verses or in *arûz* metres: with regards to their syllable numbers, almost all show a style close to the *âşık* genre. They deal partially with religion but on a large scale deal with topics other than religion. Almost all of the 90 *türkis* are anonymous folk poems in either the *koşma* rhyme style, or in the *âşık* style and/or are under the influence of this style. They are mostly written in 11 and 8 syllables prosody, or more rarely using the *arûz* prosodies *fâ'ilâtün fâ'ilâtün fâ'ilâtün fâ'ilün*, *mef'ülü mefâ'ilü mefâ'ilü fe'ülün*, *mefâ'ilün mefâ'ilün mefâ'ilün mefâ'ilün* and *müstef'ilâtün müstef'ilâtün müstef'ilâtün müstef'ilâtün* which correspond to 14, 15 and 16 syllables. Almost every verse is in the *murabba'* format and the *gazel* format is used rarely. The number of stanzas varies between one and six, most consist of four or five stanzas. Additionally, most of

¹¹ These expressions can be encountered with *ır/ir*, *yır/yir*, *cır/cir*, *jır/jir* sayings and most frequently as musical articles in many *lügâts*, *sakinâmes*, *surnâmes*, *cönks* etc. aside from the *Dîvânü Lugâti't-Türk*. For Anatolia, Azeri, Kyrgyz, Kazakh, Tatar, Turkmen, Tajik dialects and written sources that Besim Atalay referred to for *ır/yır* expressions, see: Kaşgarlı Mahmut/TDK 1986:217, 786.

the lyrics exhibit a *nom de plume* (*mablas*). However, dance songs and compositions called *raks/raksiye/raksiyye* do not carry a *mablas*, while compositions called *türkü oyun*, *türk oyunu* and *türkü oyunu* do. It might hence be a characteristic attached to the term *türkü*. In *türkü* lyrics, additional lines connected to verses as a refrain are not seen frequently and rarely can an additional set of words in one or two lines or non-lexical words (*terennüm*) be found. The function of refrain was mostly left to the last lines of the stanzas, especially lines with *redif* (a common word at the end of lines). Lyrics depict and narrate the rich topics of human life, like birth, death, love, passion, praise, or historical events like religious or worldly advices, bravados, accession to the throne (*cülûs*), mobilization, war, or loss of territory. Some of the poems are written in a conversational style.

Almost all notated songs in the *Mecmû'a-i Sâz ü Söz* have a certain vocal music characteristic, with lyrics written according to the melodies. Some groupings of words and the attachment of an *aranağme* after words remind one of the existence of both vocal and instrumental music in the song collection. Melodies that lyrics were built upon are rather short and plain, their vocal range covers one octave or less and their modulations are negligible. The music generally consists of motives corresponding to one line each, a melodic styles with more or less small divisions, and forms composed of these, with only one single section. *Meyân* parts never appear, or only rarely and in calm and close formation, and in the form of narrow and low volume melodic extensions. Distinctive features in the melodic style are the *seyir*-movement within a narrow range as well as the sharp descent of the *seyir* towards the finalis. The fact that some styles show some variation being carried onto different notes within the melody or which repeat themselves in different melodies is one of the noteworthy structural features. Although verses with refrains are rarely seen in the lyrics, the fact that some melody lines by means of repetitions in cadences give the impression of functioning as a refrain, is almost a reflection of a certain parallelism between melody and lyrics. The fact that some lyrics are built over melody patterns which are almost similar to one another recalls of singing within framework melodies (*tegannide inşâd*) which is frequently seen in anonymous folk music or *âşık* music styles.

Probably one of the most important meanings attached to the terms *türkü/türkü* in *Kâbusnâme*, *Mecmû'a-i Sâz ü Söz* and Evliyâ Çelebi's *Seyabatnâme* is that they represent an element of the social structure in an urban environment. Within this context, it can be said that the word *türkü* defines the melodic, metrical and formal format of literary and/or poetic-musical songs which are in Turkish and represent the traditional style of Turkish elements. In other words, the term *türkü* as is seen in these sources describes both songs either created in an urban environment or which came from the countryside, and demonstrate a unity of genre and style.¹²

¹² Boratav 1995:199-213; Şenel 2005:279-333.

This opinion is backed by two Nasreddin anecdotes of the 18th century in which the expressions *türki çağırmaq/türki söylemek* are mentioned. One of the anecdotes relates:¹³

Nasreddin was trying to seek his lost donkey and at the same time he sang a *türki*. Some called him and said: “Whoever lost his donkey does not sing *türki* but wails with grief.” He answered “My hope left is the back of this mountain; if I cannot find him there, there you will hear me wailing.”

The second one is this:¹⁴

A *subaşı* (a rank in the Ottoman military) lost his donkey. His henchmen saw Nasreddin while he was going to his vineyard and said “Sir! We will all split apart and seek the donkey. As you are heading to the vineyard, may you inspect there too?” Following that, Nasreddin began to wander around the vineyards and singing a *türki* at the same time. As someone encountered him and understood the situation, he said “What kind of seeking a lost donkey is this?” Nasreddin’s respond was “a stranger seeks the donkey of another stranger singing *türki*.”

In these anecdotes Nasreddin does not only sing *türkü*s, he also reminds us of the fact that singing *türkü* while wandering around the mountains, or among the vineyards according to the urban imagination, is an act peculiar to the countryside. In these anecdotes, the expressions *türkü söylemek/türkü çağırmaq* are used to denote both the old and new meanings at the same time. On the other hand, the commonality between the *türkü* expression and the *türkü çağırmaq/söylemek* act in these two anecdotes is that they are used as the opposite to “wailing with grief” (*feryâd etmek*). According to this, they mean “melody/melodies crooned or sung in a joyful, carefree, light-hearted manner.”

It can be said that the information compiled from written/printed sources of the period between the 15th century and the 20th century, such as *dîvân*, *sûrnâme*, song collections (*mecmû’a*), miniature paintings, folk poem collections (*cönk*) etc. and those from dialect researches of the 20th century, match up with each other. In Kastamonu, for instance, *türkü* is defined as a “master property” or “being put into practice without having been prepared”: as one of the 24 *koşma* variations with 6+5=11 or 5+5=10 syllables that can be sung with a melody; *türkü* occurred in the old *âşık fasıls*. This matches up with information on literary forms in folk poem collections (*cönk*) in the 17th, 18th and the 19th centuries.¹⁵

¹³ Boratav 1995:199 [Bahâ’î 1926: 10].

¹⁴ Boratav 1995:213 [Bahâ’î 1926: 193].

¹⁵ For detailed information, see: Ozanoğlu 1940:22-28; Ozanoğlu, HAGEM Arşivi, Bant No: 75.0039. According to our observations, Anatolian people’s use of the term *türkü* is more related to its lyrics than its music. Yet, the verb juxtaposed to the term indicates the existence of music: *Yakım/yakım yakmak, dış/dış okumak, beyit/beyit söylemek, türkü/türkü yakmak, mâni/mâni atmak, deyiş/deyiş demek, koşma/koşma koşmak* etc. During our field work in various regions of Anatolia, however, when we asked informants, especially women who had never left the vicinity that they resided in to sing a *türkü* or *beyit*, they generally recited a poem without melody. Only when we wanted them to sing a *türkü* with *hava* or *kâide*,

The comingled religious communities can be added to this information and also the ways they use the term *türkü*. An example is the use of the word *türkü* on the covers of story books in Armenian, or those in Turkish using Greek letters (*Karamanlı*). Here the term refers to episodic poems that are based on narration and that evoke lyrics with melody. The expression “along with its *türkü*” on the cover of the treatise of *Hikâye-i Âşık Garib*, which was printed in Turkish with Armenian and Greek letters in 1872, and the story titled as *Hikâye-i Âşık Garib and Şâh Senem* (1928) can be counted as other noteworthy evidence in this context (Koz, 2010:241-254)¹⁶.

One of the important points that we need to dwell upon is the fact that the production and consumption areas of these evidences is mainly Istanbul and its language is Turkish. Within this context, we should note that the *Mecmû'a-i Sâz ü Söz* is one of the written sources based on Turkish language, and includes music genres and their subcategories that are in accordance with this. It is even possible to interpret Evliyâ Çelebi's use of the word *türkü/türkü* to refer to the folk songs of

kayde, kayda, gaide, gayda, gada, etc., the local terms that were associated with melody, we witnessed that they sang the same poem with a melody. The melody that the lyrics were built upon was generally the melodic patterns genuine to the region. Moreover, no matter how many verses were sung, generally they were sung with the same melodic pattern or a melodic variant that is close to that melody. Sometimes a regional melodic pattern with a unity of lyrics and melody was sung automatically. If this was an anonymous poem which is built over special melodic patterns; it was not more than a set of words which had been transformed according to time, location, events or skills. Most of the time, we could find similar examples in nearby areas.

Sometimes interrelated terms emerge deliberately, or not among the people, or are kept recorded: *müstezâd dîvân, müstâzed gazel, ibrâbimî dîvân* etc. Some words (person's name, location names, tribe [*aşiret*] names, any event etc.) in lyrics can be given as titles to the melodies. These titles, according to our opinions, are not associated with melodies in a direct manner; rather according to whatever might be wanted to be remembered, a melody that bears a unity with the expressions reminding one of that style thereby emerges. This case is the same with melodies with lyrics or without. For example, the entitlements of compositions like *Köroğlu, Çeng-i Harbî/Çeng-i Harbî, Cezayir, Hey Gaziler* that are played by drum and *zurna* as a *peşrev/güreş havası* (wrestling music) in an instrumental style, are associated with some events etched into the memory of the public, such as heroic themes. As a matter of fact, examples of these with lyrics can be encountered in distant or close regions, and sometimes the people do not even need to name these popular songs. In brief, for either poem or melody, the practice of their titling cannot be mentioned as a common practice in Anatolia. Additionally, there is no rule to attach an expression to indicate a common regional style to the titles of songs.

On the other hand, we see in some regions of Anatolia that some songs are entitled with compound words. For example, *Köroğlu ve Solağı, Osman Paşa ve Yerişmesi, Kandilli Kerem ve Zabması, Tokat Divanı ve Sağması, Yalı Havası ve Düzerlemesi* etc. The terms used here, like *solak, yerişme, zabma, sağma, düzerleme* mostly refer to melodies regardless of the melodies that the first terms refer to. For a similar example to these, in Konya *koşma* is used juxtaposed with the first term in titles like *Hicaz Divanı ve Koşması, Yenikapı Divanı ve 1. Koşması ... Divanı ve 2. Koşması*, but this is an exception and mostly it corresponds to *âşık* style. For more information, see: Şenel 2009: Vol. 1: 220, 221, 222.

¹⁶ *Hikâye-i Âşık Garib* 1872, 1872b. Both books were scanned by M. Sabri Koz and taken from this article: Balta 1987:67, 71, 158.

various nations and communities that lived in the Ottoman Empire as an approach that is based on Istanbul and the Turkish language.

As I mentioned Istanbul, a few things need to be said about the city. Istanbul became the capital city of the Ottoman Empire in the second half of the 15th century, and had without a doubt an important role in terms of the music history of the Ottoman period. With its demographic structure and socio-cultural identity constantly changing over time, Istanbul was one of the most prominent crossroads of culture and art around the globe. Again, there is no doubt that there was a rich cultural life over thousands of years; in the Eastern Rome and Byzantine as well as in the Ottoman period folk art was present in Istanbul, which made contributions to the social mingling of Istanbul and the settling of the socio-cultural order. As a branch of this folk art, there was a folk music that represented various social strata.

I, too, shall put into words what everyone thinks. Of course, the historical folk music of Istanbul has been brought to life anew in every era, progressed, protected and diversified by means of a memory bridge between generations and cultures. And of course, this circle also happened before the eyes of the writers who saved the sources of Ottoman music for history. Therefore, the folk music of Istanbul served as a source for the historical music writers who were located in Istanbul. However, the written sources which were based on incomplete pieces of information regarding the daily life of Istanbul, could not but be perceived as the music of the wider Ottoman territory and covering all cultural developments over more than 600 years; or from being ignored by the writers who are displeased with the fruitless information about daily life. In other words, Ottoman writers could not do what western travellers did to the Ottoman *türkü*.

Aside from exhibiting Istanbul as the centre of music within the cultural area of the Ottoman Empire, even the task of identifying and defining the existence of older cultural and musical traditions in a city like Istanbul, which is cosmopolitan and a centre for migration, requires extensive and tiresome research. Additionally, it would have been necessary to document the persistent aspects of the tradition in urban life and the contributions of the inhabitants of Istanbul to the tradition and its products. However such researches have not been made. Instead, people took comfort in the illusion of thinking of Ottoman *türkü* as *türkü* of Istanbul. Therefore, Istanbul has become the meeting point for most Ottoman *türkü*s, however its traces were found in different periods of time and distant regions.

Immigrants came to Istanbul from every corner of the world, especially Anatolia and its adjacent geography, while other migrants left the city. Thus, although *türkü*s of every era and city are different, the ones who were carried into the historical city, written in the city, produced and cherished in the cultural atmosphere of Istanbul or the ones which were moved from Istanbul introduced themselves to different regions, song by song. On the other hand, not every Ottoman city was as lucky as Istanbul, because none of them had as many writers as Istanbul. Moreover, in every corner of the Ottoman Empire, dozens of smaller artistic and cultural environ-

ments emerged, similar to Istanbul. Some of them gained potential during early eras; some of them became an intercultural co-mingling centre only later, and over time, were abandoned to their fates as a hidden garden behind the mountains.

Maybe, we should imagine a historian and musicologists that aims to enlighten the history of music and identify the cultural-artistic atmosphere of Istanbul. In this case, should we not see it as a natural choice to take the *türkü*s of Istanbul as Ottoman *türkü*s? In particular, one point in this picture needs to be emphasized: It is impossible to understand or interpret any written, printed or visual evidence from Ottoman times that include musical information while ignoring the sources based on Istanbul and its vicinity.

For example, it is necessary to examine the traces of the music information recorded in the *Kitâb-ı Dedem Korkut* with the help of the information in the *Mecmû'a-i Sâz ü Söz* regardless of the fact that the *Mecmû'a-i Sâz ü Söz* was written in Istanbul and deals with information related to the musical life of Istanbul. The reason is that these are the two books that cover the most important information related to the *ozan* and *çöğür şâirliği* periods of the *âşık* tradition. On the other hand, to be able to follow the path of these two evidences over the 18th and 19th centuries, one needs to consult the biographical dictionaries of poets (*şair tezkiireleri*), *sûrnâmes*, *cönks*, miniature paintings or in particular the information that one of the last remainders of *semâ'i* coffeehouses, Âşık Fevzî Efendi passed onto to M. Fuad Köprülü. It could be necessary to consult Turkish sources written with different alphabets, and witnesses from other cities of the period, written or printed evidences that belong to non-Muslims, and of course the accounts of eastern and western travellers. As long as all these informations are not compared and contrasted with the vinyl records of the 20th century, knowledge gained from field works and living cultural carriers, it will be difficult to achieve satisfactory results. More examples can be given.

However, it is essential to seek out the effects of the cultural atmosphere created in Istanbul, in distant or near regions as well. For instance, what does *makam* mean for the legacy of Anatolian music? If one chases the *makams* that are thought to have been forgotten, can they be discovered in folk music collections? Or can one identify the ways that the Anatolian-style *ezân* recitation is nurtured by the local cultures drawing on a folkloric reflex? Can we find the *peşrev* with only one *hane*, whose traces were lost in the 15th century, in the local music of any Ottoman region? Does *zabme*, the name given to the two drumsticks of the *kudüm*, exist in former residences of Sivas, too? Or via what kind of transformation did the janissary band open up new working areas for themselves in public life? Above all, the issue of illuminating *türkü*s in terms of dialect/language, religion, difference and variety of cultural identities entails huge efforts. The analytical, panoramic and interdisciplinary approaches that encompass this diversity will make the silhouette of the Ottoman *türkü* clearer, but will never thoroughly illuminate it.

* * *

The partially-notated written or printed documents and few vinyl records that we encounter searching for the Ottoman *türkü* will eventually lead us back to the Istanbul of the 19th and 20th centuries. Additionally, the perspectives of artists from Istanbul and some intellectuals on *türkü* will direct us in our journey.

For example, the people of Istanbul were introduced to the sound recording technology towards the end of the 19th century and visual technology in the early 20th century. In the first half of the 20th century there was not one house or *meyhâne* that phonograph and gramophone records were not introduced to. Moreover, most of these vinyl records were produced in Istanbul. In short, first, the perception of *türküs* among the people of Istanbul developed and changed. As time passed, in urban or radio *fasıls*, *türküs* followed after *kârs*, *kâr-ı nâtks*, *bestes*, *ağır semâ'îs* and *yürük semâ'îs*, and the audience started to call for an encore again with *türküs*. The music researchers who opened up towards Anatolia in the 1920s, began to search for the Ottoman *türkü* there and they spread what they found among the musicians of the music market in Istanbul. The music world was substantially directed by the perceptions and nominations which developed in Istanbul. Local musicians who came to Istanbul first started an information exchange with musicians of Istanbul and some players of *ud*, *tanbur* or *kemençe* from Anatolia began to bring *türküs* to Istanbul which they learned in small towns. However, it remained impossible to question the perception of the urban contributions that gave these songs their identity, or the additions and formations people of the city made to these foreign, anonymous or composed music.

Moreover, it remained unnoticed that most of the songs that enriched the repertoires of the singers and that were easily labelled as “Istanbul”, were formed by the emotional and aesthetic understanding that emanated from the 19th century to the 20th century. It was forgotten that it was mainly the entertainment life of Istanbul which created the atmosphere and the conditions necessary for this process.

For example, researchers did not consider sufficiently the entertainment programmes of Istanbul, which were filled with musicals, operettas, duettos, *kantos*, *kuartitos*, mimics, *karagöz*, *ortaoyunu*, puppet, improvisational theatres, vaudevilles; nor the music life which was coloured by *semâ'î* coffeehouses, *tulumbacı* coffeehouses with live music, *âşık fasıls*, military bands, or *dvân*, *kalenderî*, *semâ'î*, *koşma*, *yıldız*, *mâni*, *destân* and *mu'ammâ*. Researchers could not trace back the melodies of *davul-zurna* and clarinet music, or the noises of the *ince takıms* in wrestling, jereed, wedding, fair and recreational areas, or the transformations of the music labelled as *türküs* which were formed in the revelries, held in venues from *Naum Theatre* to *Kazablanka Gazinosu*, from theatre troupes to country weddings with music.

Some *türküs* would have needed to be defined within the dynamism of daily life. These include episodic music depending on seller or shopkeeper characters, obviously montaged to a scenario or theatrical narratives, or formed according to dialogues or the music itself; songs that mention neighbourhoods, streets, dead-end streets, or the mostly anonymous songs which were sung by and shaped for

theatre characters in Anatolian, Armenian, Greek, Jewish, Albanian, Kayseri, Laz, Persian, Kurdish, *Küllbanbeyi* dialects, or which were drunken. It was not properly interpreted how the masses acknowledged these and even the most ordinary citizen memorized customs and traditions ascribed to towns in an era when transportation and a comfortable life was still limited. Singing *türkü* styles which were caused by the broken Turkish but sympathetic accents of the non-Muslim artists of Armenian, *Rûm*, Jewish descent where not comprehended sufficiently; they left their marks on the memories of not just the people of Istanbul but every corner of the world and even in vinyl records and movies.

The Istanbul phenomenon which left its mark on Turkish society and which was dominant among cultural life and traditional music remained unnoticed. Furthermore, the existence of an oral folklore repertoire in the name of Istanbul, but created in the vast territory of the Ottoman Empire, in Anatolia, the Balkans, the Caucasus, North Africa, the Aegean islands, Cyprus and Crimea was ignored.

It was not comprehended enough that in Turkish folk music compilations often important expressions are encountered, such as “Istanbul style” (*tarzi*), “Istanbul accent” (*ağzı*), “Istanbul music” (*bavası*), “made in Istanbul” or the detection of “Istanbul *zeybek* from Erzurum”, “*dîvân* in Istanbul accent from Kastamonu”, “*âşık ayakları* in Beşiktaş style” and “*adam aman*” *mânîs* particular to *semâ’î* coffee-houses.

Ottoman music-lovers did not realize the fact that folk singers sang the *sâkinâmes* of Dertli, the renowned head of Tavukpazarı *âşık* coffeehouses, also in Anatolia; or that the *şarkıs* and *köçekçes* of Hammâmizâde İsmail Dede Efendi were spread thousands of kilometres away; or that the *Kâtibim türküsi* was sung and performed in both Anatolia and the Balkans; or that the *mevlîd-i şerîf* of Süleyman Çelebi was seen in distant regions as a folkloric element; or that the well-known *segâh salât-ı ümmiye*, which was attributed to Buhûrîzâde İtrî, spread over three continents.

Yet, the Ottoman *türkü* was hidden in the songs of a mother who whispered words of love to her baby in the sombre room of a palace, a mansion with forty rooms or a wooden shanty and in the memories of the children who played *Aç kapıyı bezirgânbaşı* in the backyards of their houses crooning an *Arapacı* nursery rhyme, or in the *türkü*s, *koşmas*, *tekerlemes*, and *mânîs* of the daily backstreet *salep* sellers, sugar-coated apple sellers, *simit* sellers, *boza* sellers, water sellers, *macun* sellers, cotton candy sellers, ice-cream sellers, pickle sellers, fortune tellers and roasted chickpea sellers. In the melodies of *destân* singers who sold them on their own, the infants who walked in *âmin alays* singing a hymn and the reed whistle sellers who dragged the children along behind them blowing their whistles... In the sounds of coloured *tefs*, whirligigs, reeds and the pitchers whose spout sang like a bird when some water was poured.

In the fiddler of a troupe who set up a circus among vineyards during holidays and played the *zeybek* “*Harmandalı*” to their acrobats; in the belly dancing of

köçeks/çengis (female or effeminate male dancers) who perform at weddings; in the *davul* (drum) rumble which was beat by the wedding door; in the *gelin çıkarma* (taking the bride from her house) songs that *zurna* players played incessantly; in the henna ceremony songs in the house of the bride; in the *türkü*s for *gelin övme* (when the bride is brought to the house of the groom, two women sing *türkü*s to the bride), *gelin oynatma* (the bride is encouraged to dance towards the end of the ceremony), the *türkü*s sung during the Turkish bridal bath; in the young girls who make their mother-in-laws dance and peoples' hearts race with *beyamola* (heave ho) exclamations.

In the melodies for wrestling, jereed or *Koroğlu* played with two *davuls*, two *zurnas* in the squares; in the songs of *Ceng-i Harbi*, *Cezâyir*, *Hey Gâziler*, *Genç Osman* and *Sevastopol*.

In the songs of instruments such as clarinet, *çifte*, *çığırma*, *kaval*, *bozuk*, *çöğür*, *beştelli*, *altıtelli*, *bulgarî*, *nağara* and *zilli maşa* which were aligned on the walls of mansions and coffeehouses.

In the *sinsin* dances where people circle around a bonfire; in *balays* where people are arm in arm; in the hymns (*nefes*, *ilâhî*, *mersiye*, *mirâciye*, *babâriye*) of the *Bektâşî*, *Halvetî* and *Rûfâî* lodges.¹⁷

The fact is that Ottoman *türkü* flew away like a bird as the life of yesterday flew away and there are little fragments left from a great Empire as a local souvenir, a magnificence that ruled three continents.

Conclusion

- Written and printed evidences from the 15th until the 20th centuries document the existence of *türkü*; other terms covering the same meaning even open the doors for historians up to the 21st century. Obviously the term *türkü* has changed its meaning over time, and it is necessary to trace this shift in *türkü*s' meaning by investigating cultural remnants.
- *Türkü* is defined as particular songs that the Turkmens and their fellow Turkic people sang in their native tongues; however, together with its synonyms the term shows rich formal identities depending on its functions. These different kinds of *türkü*s do not have a single type of melody or formal structure; moreover their role in social life is defined by cultural carriers, depending on the conditions of the respective situations.
- Although in the early 20th century the terms *türkü*/*türkü* were tried to be revitalized in association with their historical meanings, the major meaning that intellectuals gave to these terms is that of an attribute for an upper identity encompass in Turkish folk music as a whole. Since the last quarter of the 20th century,

¹⁷ See: Şenel (2011), *İstanbul Çevresi Alan Araştırmaları* (with CD).

the social phenomenon of new communication tools as well as academic approaches developed a very different perception of *türkü*s in the memory of professional music communities. The reasons for this development also need to be discussed.

- Yet, writing the history of Ottoman music cannot be achieved using the approaches of today’s music genres. Moreover, it is an intricate and complicated issue that entails interdisciplinary studies. On the other hand, it would be wrong to approach the sources of the Ottoman period with notions of a general “music genre” like “Turkish Folk Music,” or “Anatolian Folk Music” and a narrow “musical geography.” One must approach these terms with a holistic notion of the culture of the period in which they existed, and hence try to understand the Ottoman *türkü* by analysing the sources of the Ottoman period in their own terms.
- Within this context, it is impossible to describe the scope and history of production and distribution of the Ottoman *türkü* using the concept of “Anatolian Folk Music”. In fact the Ottoman *türkü* has existed in a wider geography, and this geography is even bigger than the geography of the political and administrative Empire that reached three continents and got smaller throughout its history. In terms of historical bonds this cultural geography includes the Turkic geography covering every corner of Asia Minor, Middle Asia and the Far East.
- The main difficulty in identifying Ottoman *türkü* is to find the sound of the history. Although we can reach some of its clues in the 17th century by means of *Mecmû’a-i Sâz ü Söz*, we should also make use of notations, wax phonographs and vinyl records which were published in the 19th-20th centuries; field work recordings of the Republic period as well as contemporary dynamics reflecting the centuries-long life of the people. In other words, on a large scale, there was an attempt to compile Ottoman *türkü* based on recordings made either by the recording industry or during field works conducted during the period of the Republic; those having again been performed by musicians left their mark in the public memory. This process continues even today.
- The necessary connection between the *türkü* of the Ottoman period and that of the Republican era can be achieved not only by examining the insufficient Ottoman notation sources, but also by means of stylistic and formal analysis of literary and musical genres and by giving more importance to the long-neglected musical terminology of the people.
- Istanbul’s importance for the cultural life in the Ottoman period, can also be portrayed via the Ottoman *türkü*. Within this context, Istanbul should be seen with its metropolitan identity that grinds and forms and thus assimilates Ottoman *türkü* rather than taking it under its roof and protecting it. For instance, for Istanbul *Rumeli türkü*s or *serhad türkü*s mean nothing more than a historical memory, although they are not even the memory itself.

- Finally, Ottoman *türkü* is an important social source that covers the *türküs* of many non-Muslim groups, such as Armenians, Greeks, Assyrians, Jewish that lived within the same area, as well as Albanians, Bosnians, Pomaks, Tatars, Circassians, Arabs, Kurds, Persians and others. Our society and art dynamics did not take enough advantage of these rich sources and could not share it with the music world. When this is achieved, our cultural assets will be further enriched and this richness will cement and generate a prospective socio-cultural comingling.

