

## **GLOBAL CULTURAL PROCESSES IN THE CONTINUITY AND THE PROSPECTIVE OF THE MUSICAL TRADITION**

**Aida Islam, Stefanija Leshkova Zelenkovska**

### **Abstract**

When we mention the word “tradition,” we immediately think of the past. Certainly, the past, in a semantic sense, associates something passed that cannot be returned. However, we are witnessing that in the construction of new and contemporary tradition, we often return to the past and in that way we continuously relive it again. The new achievements are not only the product of adaptation and cultural processes, but they are also new qualitative systems of creative motivations that differ from traditional values. We are considering this study through the prism of the Turkish population in rural settlements, which in certain periods has changed and transformed in its way to modernity as evidenced by today's material and spiritual cultural heritage. They are a reflection of this path, which often passes through contrasts and inevitable contradictions that model the emergence of some new values. In this paper, we traced this complex process from the perspective of the most striking indicators of the spiritual and material musical tradition: musical instruments, performing ensembles, repertoire, and dance. We observed these aspects through the most massive and most abundant ritual ceremonies—weddings that were observed and recorded by field research in the rural settlements of several geographical locations in eastern and western Macedonia. Regardless of the location of settlement, new–modern forms of expression of musical culture are prevailing through the dominance of western provenance instruments, imported repertoire that inevitably entail changes in other ethnological features, as in the costume and during the ritual.

**Key words:** Cultural Processes, Continuity Musical Tradition, Turkish population, R. of Macedonia.

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## Introduction

We are considering the relation between the tradition and modernity through the prism of the Turkish population in rural settlements in the Republic of Macedonia. In certain periods tradition of this ethnicity has changed and transformed in its way to modernity as evidenced by today's material and spiritual cultural heritage. One part of this population consists of Yuruks, a tribe of Turkmen origin inhabiting mostly the mountainous areas of eastern and partly western Macedonia. Due to their compactness and specificity, Yuruks are among the most interesting Turkish groups in the Balkans.

We focused our research of the Yuruk community in eastern and western Macedonia on the current situation in the music traditions—the spiritual and material components of musical cultural heritage, above all, on the musical instruments, performing ensembles and the repertoire. We observed these aspects through the most massive and most abundant ritual ceremonies—weddings that were observed and recorded by field research during the last 5 years in the rural settlements of several geographical locations (eastern Macedonia—Kodzali, Alikoch, Pinali, Chalikli; western Macedonia—Kodzadzik, Novak, ?lessa, Breshtanic etc.). As additional knowledge, we used videos of two decades old, recordings on which are registered wedding rites with all attributes of the Yuruk tradition. In our field research, we had interviews with informants, mostly members of the older generation, to directly perceive the situation in the musical tradition that is transmitted by oral tradition. We will also use the comparative method to see the causal and consequential influences of socioeconomic and cultural conditioning of the regions that affect today's image of the music culture in this population.

### 1. The Yörük population in Macedonia

The issue of ethnicity, ethnic consciousness, and ethnic name of Yörüks can hardly be clarified by studying only one scientific field, and this is the main reason that Yörüks are spoken of as a social and not ethnic category.

Yörüks are nomadic tribes that migrated from Anatolia to the territory of Macedonia. We find the oldest records of the presence of Yörüks in the census books (turk. defters) in the Prilep region from 1440, in the Bitola region—1448, Lerin region—1481, where villages are mentioned inhabited by Yörüks. By adapting to the new geographical environment, by changing the nomadic way of life to a settled one, by changing the economic activities, by upgrading the ethnic traits passed from parent area, a Yörük population was formed in Macedonia. Scattered in smaller or larger oases, in different parts, as seminomadic cattlemen or farmers, or as semi-military rows in the Turkish army, through their five centuries of living, Yörüks left traces in the Macedonian toponyms and culture, nurturing their ethnic history through oral tradition. They have preserved their language, which differed significantly from that of the Rumelian Turks and which is very similar to the language of the other Yörük groups in Anatolia. Names of the villages inhabited by Yörüks show that at the time of their settlement they kept the family - tribal organization.

Yörüks exist as specific communities that are characterized by geographical, ethnological, linguistic, and cultural isolation. In the mountainous rural areas that are distant from the urban cores, main roads, infrastructure, and modern social conditions, a greater individuality can be noticed. These features are the result of their long closed social

community and delayed provision of some basic benefits of modern living that contributed to maintaining some certain archaic elements.

### 2. Material cultural tradition

Material culture is conditioned by the level of urban development as confirmed by our field research of some of its elements as architecture, costume, crafts, musical instruments, etc. The houses in which Yörüks live by their program content and architecture reflect the multiple factors that influenced their formation: climate, terrain, materials for construction, material conditionality, etc. Porches and balconies of the houses that were built of crushed stones, mud, and wood, form an integral part of the Yörük houses which have a range of functions in the rural economy. The type of settlements and density of their network were mainly a reflection of the relief features of the terrain, and the size and development of these depended on the socioeconomic conditions of the past and those that prevail today. According to the internal distribution today in most of the settlements, the houses represent a single populated area and very rarely can be seen division into two or three neighborhood (Kodzali with Jukari and Ashagi as two neighborhoods and Dorlomboz with Kuzu Jaka and Orta Jaka Ote Jaka). In the central part of the village, on a broader space, there is a mosque with porch and minaret and fountain built of stone.

Houses that were built during the late 20th century mainly continue the tradition in the spatial organization and in the structures and construction materials used; these are usually buildings with ground and first floor, e.g., of the type of houses "Chardaklija". Today, the urban image of almost all districts is experiencing significant changes with the construction of new, modern houses and paved streets, especially in the villages where the majority of the population constitute migrant workers.

As a part of the material culture, folk costumes of Yörüks in Macedonia have their own features that are preserved to this day and that vary in appearance depending on the region (east and west Macedonia), social status (marital status), and the occasion (daily, ceremonial, and ritual). Generally, these differences are observed in terms of colors, patterns, materials, decorations etc. The feminine dresses are still preserved, the ceremonial and daily ones are ornate with very strong colors and decorations which the Yörük women nurture and develop using some modern materials. We find testimony to the ethnic origin of this social group at the female costumes, which are almost identical to the costumes in some regions of the Republic of Turkey (Kastamonu, Konya, etc.). As far as the male costume is concerned, it can be said that in the recent decades it is almost extinct even from the gathering and ritual events. It is due to their greater communication and adaptation to urban areas due to socioeconomic and sociological conditions (education, employment, etc.).

Handicrafts and weavings among the female population in Yörüks which have always been the expression of the folklore identity are still nurtured almost with the same intensity today. As products of the refined taste, creativity, artistic talent, and manual skills, handicrafts are made for different occasions and different purposes, for example, marriage, clothing and decorations, rugs (bridal, fringed, with pieces, etc.), doilies etc.

### 3. Musical tradition

Music as an integral part of everyday rural life, in which all major moments of life are accompanied with different customs, is subject to changes as a reflection of the new lifestyle imposed by modernization. It resulted in the disappearance and modification of some types of music repertoire (wedding, labour, lullabies, etc.).

Weddings as largest cultural events contribute to the maintenance of social life and community integration, and they are also indicators of the level of maintenance of tradition. Therefore, in our study, greatest emphasis was placed exactly on these occasions. Accepting elements of the urban lifestyle, especially intensified in recent decades, contributes to changing of the image of spiritual and material cultural values of these traditional ritual ceremonies. In terms of the mentality of the population, such changes (eg. costume—modern clothes, traditional - electronic instruments, reduction of parts of the rituals, etc.) are considered to be modernization, which inevitably means acceptance of the compatible elements, but to some extent it is a fad.

Within the wedding ceremony, the bridal ritual called k'na gedzhesi has a great importance and can be traced as a separate traditional rite as it has its characteristic elements. Carriers of this ceremony are members of the female sex. The music segment, characteristic of this ritual which is expressed through collective vocal singing with rhythmic accompaniment by one or more daires, is slowly disappearing, and is being replaced by musical reproduction of modern technical devices.

The occurrence of changes in these collective manifestations varies from one region to another in Macedonia. It was confirmed by the field research, according to which in western Macedonia wedding music tradition still have more authentic character, unlike the east part where they have adapted to more urban elements.

The wedding ceremonies in villages of eastern Macedonia are accompanied by instrumental ensembles of the western provenance with the dominant use of the synthesizer. In addition to the synthesizer are included saxophone, clarinet, electric guitar, and percussion instruments—drums. Musical ensembles that are engaged are from the surrounding cities, and they are with a different structure of performers, which depends not only on the current engagement of the present musicians but also on the cost of their fee.

By contrast, in the western part of Macedonia are still cherished the traditional instruments, drums and zurlas, which is evident from the observed video materials taken during the wedding. Retention of this segment of the musical tradition is due to the geographical location of these mountain villages with emphasized relief features. But we believe that the determining factor is the occupation of the population (which predominantly constitute the migration workers in Italy), which contributes to the nostalgic preservation of the inherited tradition as a symbol of their identity. In this sense, the wedding ceremonies themselves, which are the fundamental collective gatherings especially during the summer, still contain authentic music expression, which confirm their rich tradition.

The music repertoire that is present during the weddings can be divided into traditional and modern. In the first group is present the repertoire in which traditional folk and Rumelian songs of the wider region prevail, while in the second group, the repertoire is dominated by the newly created folk music from the Republic of Turkey.

The traditional repertoire prevails in a small number of rural areas, mainly in western Macedonia where music tradition is still manifested within the inherited tradition. The modern repertoire prevails in east Macedonia, where the choice of music is dictated by the engaged instrumental ensemble, which contributes to the dominant presence of the new folk trend.

### Conclusion

From the analysis, it can be concluded that the musical tradition of the Yörüks population in Macedonia experiences modifications as a reflection of modern musical trends. That is, technical and technological innovations result in changes in musical instruments, where the traditional instruments have ceded their positions to the modern import instruments, with the dominance of the synthesizer. The reduction in the presence of traditional musical repertoire and dominance of global influences are significant, especially among the younger population, as a result of the acceptance of the novelties of modern urban living.

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