



## An ethnobotanical research on handmade musical instruments in Şanlıurfa, South East Anatolia, Turkey

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### Abstract

This study, carried out in 2004/2005, examines the processing of woody plants utilized for the manufacture of traditional musical instruments in the Şanlıurfa city, and identifies their scientific names. The findings indicate that 25 plant species belonging to 17 families are used for the construction of eight musical instruments. Most of these plants belong to the following families: Rosaceae (4), Pinaceae (4), Fagaceae (2), and Moraceae (2). Scientific names of plant species and their vernacular names are also reported.

**Key words:** Ethnobotanic, Folk music, Handcraft, Musical instruments, Şanlıurfa

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### Şanlıurfa (Güneydoğu Anadolu Bölgesi)'da el yapımı müzik aletleri üzerine bir Etnobotanik araştırma

#### Özet

2004/2005 yıllarında yürütülen bu çalışmada, Şanlıurfa'daki geleneksel müzik aletlerinin üretimi için kullanılan odunsu bitkilerin işlenmesi ve bilimsel isimlerine yer verilmiştir. Sekiz müzik aletleri yapımı için 17 familyaya ait 25 bitki türünün kullanıldığı tespit edilmiştir. Bu bitkilerin çoğu Rosaceae (4), Pinaceae (4), Fagaceae (2) ve Moraceae (2) familyalarına aittir. Ayrıca, bitki türlerinin bilimsel ve yerel isimleri de verilmiştir.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Etnobotanik, Halk müziği, El sanatları, Müzik aletleri, Şanlıurfa

#### 1. Introduction

The province of Şanlıurfa is located in Southeastern Anatolia and surrounded with Diyarbakır, Mardin, Gaziantep and Adıyaman. The province of Şanlıurfa extends over a land of 18,584 km<sup>2</sup>. Its population is 1,716, 254 (2011 year). Şanlıurfa is located in the northern hemisphere between the 37 49' 12"- 40 10' 00" eastern meridian and the 36 41' 28"- 37 57' 50" northern parallel. It is located in the Irano-Turanian phytogeographic region and very close to the Euphrates River (Figure 1). Şanlıurfa has been a region of transition and intersection of many cultures, dominated by many states and communities throughout history due to its geographical location. Some roads and routes between Arabic countries, Mesopotamia, center of ancient civilizations in early age and middle age, and Europe passed through Şanlıurfa. Şanlıurfa was and is an important city with the fact that it was located on historical, military, commercial roads connecting east to west (Segal, 1970; Anonymus, 1999-1).

Semiarid mediterranean climate occurs in research area. According to Emberger the precipitation- temperature coefficient (Q) is 42.94. Annual mean temperature is 18.7 °C. The maximum mean temperature (M) is 46.8 °C, in July. The minimum mean temperature (m) is -6.8 °C, in february. Annual rainfall is about 457.8 mm and the seasonal precipitation regime is Winter, Spring, Autumn and Summer. This is the first variant of the East Mediterranean precipitation regime (Meteoroloji Bülteni, 1994).

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Şanlıurfa, in the region known as upper Mesopotamia, has a pretty rich past in Folk Music and it has an important place in this area in Turkey. For this reason, instruments that are used show a great diversity. These instruments take a rather important place in local music, and are used especially in weddings, overnight stays on mountains, and at folkloric night-outs. Most of these instruments are called as ‘Folk Instruments’. Cura, çöğür, bağlama, divan sazı, ud, cümbüş, Urfâ tamburu, kanun, keman, kaval, zurna, davul, def, darbuka, kaşık, zilli maşa, çarpıra and leğen are the most common ones. Both instruments called as neşetkâr and rebap are known that they were played in the past, yet they are not available today (Anonymus, 2002).

Şanlıurfa Folk Music has been an elite posture with the structure of musical instruments, the structure of melody, richness of lyrics, number of songs, systematic and qualified execution. The Folk Music has opened the door of beauty to us with the tone variety and dialect features of local performers who are talented for execution (Anonymus, 2002).

In this study, which woody plants are cultivated in production of instruments and its application purposes have been searched.

In the literature scanning, it has been investigated that there are some studies related with ethnobotanical aspects of woody plants: Açın (1976, 1980, 1987), Kürkçüoğlu (1997), Açın (2004), Balos and Akan (2007), Akan et al. (2008), Yenigün (2010), Aslan et al. (2011), Altay and Karahan (2012), Işık and Uslu, (2012), Sop et al. (2012).



Figure 1. A study area, Şanlıurfa, Turkey  
Şekil 1: Çalışma alanı, Şanlıurfa, Türkiye

## 2. Materials and methods

This study have been realized by consulting resources such as Çekirge Saz Group, Akel Saz Group, Çoban Saz Group taking place in ancient house organized ‘Sıra Gecesi’ in, at the core of Şanlıurfa and ŞURKAV officials (Şanlıurfa Culture Education Art and Research Foundation) in between the years of 2004 and 2005. The findings obtained have been compared with the instructions of literature in the study (Anonymus, 1999-2). The individuals who cultivated woody plants for musical instruments have been found, the craftsmen have been interviewed directly and the information we obtained have been saved in ‘Şanlıurfa Ethnobotanic Data Base’. The original tree of this material, the regional names of instruments and the places to obtain the raw material have been determined. The plant specimens have been identified according to Flora of Turkey (Davis, 1965-1985). Furthermore, the photos of instruments have been taken and numbered in order to file (Figures. 2-9).

## 3. Results

The names of the instruments and the expression which kind of plants they are made of are presented in Table 1 with the scientific names. Moreover, the photographs of all materials are given below and their application fields are stated. It is pointed that the raw materials are generally supplied from Birecik, Siverek, Viranşehir districts of Şanlıurfa; Gaziantep, Nizip, İstanbul and İzmir. The names of the instruments, the resource of the instruments’ parts, scientific names of plants, common used names of plants and regional names are given in Table 1.

**3.1. Saz (Figure 2):** Constitutes from three main parts called body, handhold and Initial part. The body, which resembles a half-pucker, is made of *Morus nigra* L., *Platanus orientalis* L. and *Castanea sativa* by carving. A chest part which is made of generally *Carpinus orientalis* Miller, *Castanea sativa* Mill., *Abies cilicica* (Kotschy) Carr., *Pinus nigra* L. subsp. *Pallasiana*, *Picea orientalis* (L.) Link is put on the body. The handhold part linked with keys appropriate with folk music is made of *Juniperus excelsa* Bieb., *Tilia rubra* DC. which are light and inflexible. The

initial part is made of from *Carpinus orientalis* Mill. and *Rosa damascena* Miller in order to provide appropriate accord and key adjustments. A plectrum, which is made of peel of the body of *Cerasus microcarpa* (C.A.Meyer) Boiss.

**3.2. Kanun (Figure 3):** Is made of wooden (*Carpinus orientalis* Miller, *Junglans regia* L., *Platanus orientalis* L., *Pinus brutia* Tin. The initial part of threshold is made of *Picea orientalis* (L.) Link, *Acer pseudoplatanus* L. *Diospros ebenum* Koen.

**3.3. Def (Figure 4):** The hoops are made of *Carpinus orientalis*, *Juniperus excelsa* Bieb., *Platanus orientalis* L., and *Junglans regia* L.. The craftsmen who practiced def in Şanlıurfa are Abdullah Küçük, Mehmet Küçük and Osman Kaplan.

**3.4. Ney (Figure 5):** Ney, which is a wind instrument, constitutes the basic part of Anatolia Classical Music. The pipe, which is used in practicing ney, must be nine-nodded (*Arundo donax* L.). Ney, which is the part of Mevlevi music, is played in Islamic ceremonies and particular religious ceremonies in Şanlıurfa (Sevgili, 1997). The masters of Ney are Halil Sercan and Gökhan Özkök.

**3.5. Davul (Drum) (Figure 6):** The hoop part is mostly made of *Carpinus orientalis* Miller, *Pinus nigra* L. subsp. *pallasiana*, *Junglans regia* L. and *Fagus orientalis* Lipsiky. The hooks are made of *Junglans regia* L., *Morus alba* L. and *Buxus sempervirens* L. In practicing handle, *Populus alba* L. tree is desired. Also some performers use *Amygdalus communis* L., *Junglans regia* L. and *Pinus nigra* L. subsp. *pallasiana*. trees in order to obtain more effective –stronger tone. The stick is mostly made of parts of *Punica granatum* L. tree.

**3.6. Zurna (Shrill Pipe) (Figure 7):** It is made of *Prunus spinosa* L., *Juniperus excelsa* Bieb., *Carpinus orientalis* Miller, *Fraxinus excelsior* L., *Arundo donax* L., *Morus nigra* L., *Tilia rubra* DC. and *Cornus mas* L. The most famous craftsman practicing Zurna is Cemal Deliköse in Şanlıurfa district.

**3.7. Kaval (Figure 8):** Kaval are made of *Arundo donax* L.. Kavals are made by master Cemal Deliköse in Şanlıurfa.

**3.8. Ud (Lute) (Figure 9):** The body part is made of *Morus alba* L., *Juniperus excelsa* Bieb., *Junglans regia* L., *Diospros ebenicum* Koen. and *Platanus orientalis* L. The chest part is made of *Juniperus excelsa* Bieb. , *Junglans regia* L., *Pinus nigra* L. subsp. *pallasiana* and *Picea orientalis* (L.) Link. The handhold is made of *Junglans regia* L. and *Diospros ebenicum* Koen. The initial part is made of *Picea orientalis* (L.) Link and *Junglans regia* L. The chest covering is made of *Junglans regia* L., *Diospros ebenicum* Koen., *Prunus spinosa* L. and *Fraxinus excelsior* L. Famous Master Hasan Parmaksız has been attending for 25 years in Şanlıurfa. He sells his products to music groups in Şanlıurfa and people he knows in Turkey. Moreover, there are musicians who prefer to be practiced their Uds by Hasan Parmaksız in Greece.



Figure 2. The most famous craftsman practicing Saz, Yahya Çekirge, in Şanlıurfa  
Şekil 2. Şanlıurfa'da en ünlü Saz ustası, Yahya Çekirge





Figure 3: The craftsman practicing Kanun, Semih Rastgeldi.  
Şekil 3: Kanun'un ustası Semih Rastgeldi



Figure 4. The craftsmen practicing Def, Abdullah Küçük ve Mehmet Küçük.  
Şekil 4. Def ustaları, Abdullah Küçük ve Mehmet Küçük.



Figure 5. The craftsman practicing Ney, Gökhan Özkök.  
Şekil 5. Ney ustası, Gökhan Özkök



Figure 6. The hand-made drums in Şanlıurfa  
Şekil 6. Şanlıurfa'da el yapımı davullar



Figure 7. The hand-made Zurna by Cemal Deliköse in Şanlıurfa  
Şekil 7. Şanlıurfa'da Cemal Deliköse tarafından el yapımı Zurna



Figure 8. The hand-made Kavals of Şanlıurfa  
Şekil 8.Şanlıurfa'da yapılan el yapımı Kavallar



Figure 9. The craftsman, Hasan Parmaksız, practicing Ud  
Şekil 9. Ud ustası Hasan Parmaksız

Table 1. The names of the instruments, the resource of the instruments parts, plant scientific names, common used names and local names

Tablo1. Enstrümanların adları, parçaları, bitkilerin bilimsel, yöresel ve yaygın isimleri

The name of musical instrument	Instrument parts	Plants scientific name (Family)	Common used names	Local names
Saz	Tekne (Body)	<i>Morus nigra</i> L. (Moraceae)	karadut	tu
		<i>Platanus orientalis</i> L. (Platanaceae)	çınar	dare mezin
		<i>Castanea sativa</i> Miller (Fagaceae)	kestane	hingiş
	Tekne üstü (chest part)	<i>Carpinus orientalis</i> Miller (Betulaceae)	Doğu gürgeni	gogen
		<i>Abies cilicica</i> (Kotschy) Carr. (Pinaceae)	Toros göknarı	boz ağaç
		<i>Pinus nigra</i> L. subsp. <i>pallasiana</i> (Pinaceae)	karaçam	çama reş
	Saz sapı (Handhold)	<i>Picea orientalis</i> (L.) Link (Pinaceae)	Doğu ladini	soç
		<i>Juniperus excelsa</i> Bieb. (Cupressaceae)	Boylu ardıç	evrist
	Akord düğmesi (Accord switch)	<i>Tilia rubra</i> DC. (Tiliaceae)	ihlamur	axlemûr
		<i>Carpinus orientalis</i> Miller (Betulaceae)	Doğu gürgeni	gogen
Mızrap (plectrum)	<i>Rosa damascena</i> Miller (Rosaceae)	Isparta gülü	gula sor	
	<i>Cerasus microcarpa</i> (C.A.Meyer) Boiss. (Rosaceae)	yabani kiraz	kiraz	
Davul (drum)	Kasnak(hoop)	<i>Carpinus orientalis</i> Miller (Betulaceae)	Doğu gürgeni	gogen
		<i>Pinus nigra</i> L. subsp. <i>pallasiana</i> (Pinaceae)	karaçam	çam
		<i>Juglans regia</i> L. (Juglandaceae)	ceviz	guz
		<i>Fagus orientalis</i> Lipsiky (Fagaceae)	kayın	Doğu kayını
	Çember(hook)	<i>Juglans regia</i> L. (Juglandaceae)	ceviz	guz
		<i>Morus alba</i> L. (Moraceae)	akdut	tu
	Tokmak (Handle)	<i>Buxus sempervirens</i> L. (Buxaceae)	şimşir	şimşir
		<i>Populus alba</i> L. (Salicaceae)	ak kavak	kovik
		<i>Juglans regia</i> L. (Juglandaceae)	ceviz	guz
	Çubuk (Stick)	<i>Pinus nigra</i> L. subsp. <i>pallasiana</i> (Pinaceae)	karaçam	çam
		<i>Punica granatum</i> L. (Punicaceae)	nar	hennar
	Kanun	Tekne (body)	<i>Amygdalus communis</i> L. (Rosaceae)	badem
<i>Carpinus orientalis</i> Miller (Betulaceae)			Doğu gürgeni	gogen
<i>Juglans regia</i> L. (Juglandaceae)			ceviz	guz
Eşik (threshold)		<i>Platanus orientalis</i> L. (Platanaceae)	çınar	dare mezin
		<i>Pinus brutia</i> Tin. (Pinaceae)	kızılaş	çam
		<i>Picea orientalis</i> (L.) Link (Pinaceae)	Doğu ladini	soç
Başlık (initial part)	<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i> L. (Aceraceae)	dağ akçaağacı	kelebek	
	<i>Diospros ebenum</i> Koen. (Ebenaceae)	abanos	ebenos	
Def	Kasnak (hoop)	<i>Picea orientalis</i> (L.) Link (Pinaceae)	Doğu ladini	soç
		<i>Carpinus orientalis</i> Miller (Betulaceae)	Doğu gürgeni	gogen
		<i>Juniperus excelsa</i> Bieb. (Cupressaceae)	boylu ardıç	boz ardıç
Ney	Gövde(body)	<i>Platanus orientalis</i> L. (Platanaceae)	çınar	dare mezin
		<i>Juglans regia</i> L. (Juglandaceae)	ceviz	guz
Zurna (Shrill pipe)	Gövde (body)	<i>Arundo donax</i> L. (Poaceae)	kargı kamışı	mazur kamışı
		<i>Prunus spinosa</i> L. (Rosaceae)	erik	İncaze
		<i>Juniperus excelsa</i> Bieb. (Cupressaceae)	Boylu ardıç	boz ardıç
		<i>Carpinus orientalis</i> Miller (Betulaceae)	Doğu gürgeni	gogen
		<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> L. (Oleaceae)	dişbudak	dare mezin



Table 1. (Continued)

		<i>Cornus mas</i> L. (Cornaceae)	kızılçık	zoğal
	Sipsi (pipe)	<i>Arundo donax</i> L. (Poaceae)	kargı kamışı	masur kamışı
	Lüle(bangle)	<i>Morus nigra</i> L.(Moraceae)	karadut	tu
		<i>Tilia rubra</i> DC. (Tiliaceae)	Ihlamur	ihlamur
Ud (Lute)	Tekne (body)	<i>Morus alba</i> L. (Moraceae)	akdut	tu
		<i>Juniperus excelsa</i> Bieb. (Cupressaceae)	boylu ardıç	boz ardıç
		<i>Juglans regia</i> L. (Juglandaceae)	ceviz	guz
		<i>Diospros ebenicum</i> Koen. (Ebenaceae)	abanos	ebenos
		<i>Platanus orientalis</i> L. (Platanaceae)	çınar	dare mezin
		<i>Juniperus excelsa</i> Bieb. (Cupressaceae)	boylu ardıç	boz ardıç
	Tekne üstü (göğüs) (chest part)	<i>Juglans regia</i> L. (Juglandaceae)	ceviz	guz
		<i>Pinus nigra</i> L. subsp. <i>pallasiana</i> (Pinaceae)	karaçam	çam
		<i>Picea orientalis</i> (L.) Link (Pinaceae)	Doğu ladini	soç
	Ud sapı (handhold)	<i>Juglans regia</i> L. (Juglandaceae)	ceviz	guz
		<i>Diospros ebenicum</i> Koen. (Ebenaceae)	abanos	ebenos
	Burguluk (initial part)	<i>Picea orientalis</i> (L.) Link (Pinaceae)	Doğu ladini	soç
		<i>Juglans regia</i> L. (Juglandaceae)	ceviz	guz
	Göğüs kaplama (chest covering)	<i>Juglans regia</i> L. (Juglandaceae)	ceviz	guz
		<i>Diospros ebenicum</i> Koen. (Ebenaceae)	abanos	ebenos
		<i>Prunus spinosa</i> L. (Rosaceae)	erik	incaze
<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i> L. (Aceraceae)		dağ akçaağacı	kelebek	
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> L. (Oleaceae)		dişbudak	dare mezin	
Kaval	Gövde(body)	<i>Arundo donax</i> L. (Poaceae)	kargı kamışı	masur kamışı

#### 4. Conclusions

Within this study, 25 wooden plant samples which belong to 17 families and 25 species and which are used in obtaining raw materials in order to produce musical instrument in the center of Şanlıurfa have been detected.

It is observed that most of the resources of raw materials in producing instruments in the center of Şanlıurfa belong to the families of Rosaceae (4), Pinaceae (4), Fagaceae (2) and Moraceae (2). The species of *Morus* and *Pinus* is represented by two samples while others are represented by one (Table 1, Table 2).

Table 2. The trees are used in different musical instrument parts and the number of tool use

Tablo 2. Ağaçların kullanıldıkları müzikal enstrüman parçaları ve farklı müzik aletinde kullanım sayısı

Plant name	Family	Part of musical instrument	The number of tool
<i>Abies cilicica</i> (Kotschy) Carr.	Pinaceae	reed boat over	1
<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i> L.	Aceraceae	Threshold of Kanun, lute chest coating	2
<i>Amygdalus communis</i> L.	Rosaceae	drum stick	1
<i>Arundo donax</i> L.	Poaceae	reed flutes, flute	2
<i>Buxus sempervirens</i> L.	Buxaceae	drum circle	1
<i>Carpinus orientalis</i> Miller	Betulaceae	reed boat over, reed tuning knob, drum pulley, Kanun tray, flutes body	5
<i>Castanea sativa</i> Miller	Fagaceae	reed boat	1
<i>Cerasus microcarpa</i> (C.A.Meyer) Boiss.	Rosaceae	saz quill	1
<i>Cornus mas</i> L.	Cornaceae	The body of shrill pipe	1
<i>Diospros ebenicum</i> Koen.	Ebenaceae	boat lute, oud handle, ud chest coating, the threshold Kanun	4
<i>Fagus orientalis</i> Lipsiky	Fagaceae	drum pulley	1
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> L.	Oleaceae	The body of shrill pipe, oud chest coating	2
<i>Juglans regia</i> L.	Juncaceae	drum pulley, drum circle, drum mallet, Kanun boat, boat lute, oud boat higher, ud handle, lute auger., oud chest coating	9
<i>Juniperus excelsa</i> Bieb.	Cupressaceae	reed stem, horn housing, boat lute, oud boat over	4
<i>Morus alba</i> L.	Moraceae	drum circle, lute boat	2
<i>Morus nigra</i> L.	Moraceae	reed boat, horn nozzle	2
<i>Picea orientalis</i> (L.) Link	Pinaceae	reed boat higher, the threshold law, the title of the Kanun, above the boat lute, oud auger	5
<i>Pinus brutia</i> Tin.	Pinaceae	Kanun boat	1
<i>Pinus nigra</i> L. subsp. <i>pallasiana</i>	Pinaceae	reed boat higher, drum pulley, drum, hammer, ud boat over	4
<i>Platanus orientalis</i> L.	Platanaceae	Kanun boat, boat oud, saz boat	3
<i>Populus alba</i> L.	Salicaceae	the drum hammer	1
<i>Prunus spinosa</i> L.	Rosaceae	The body of flutes, oud chest coating	2
<i>Punica granatum</i> L.	Punicaceae	drum stick	1
<i>Rosa damascena</i> Miller	Rosaceae	instrument tuning button	1
<i>Tilia rubra</i> DC.	Tiliaceae	reed stem, horn nozzle	1

As shown in Table 2, in terms of number of usage, *Junglans regia* 9, *Carpinus orientalis* and *Picea orientalis* 5, *Juniperus excelsa*, *Pinus nigra* and *Diospros ebenicum* 4 usage and *Platanus orientalis* has 3 usage. The remaining trees are used in 1 or 2 different musical instrument. Importance of these trees are commonly used in the construction of musical instruments.

Most of timbered trees brought to wood bazaar are planted by river, lake, stream; in gardens and nurseries which are used for specific purposes. Logs brought from the nearest villages to the center and from around Siverek, Birecik, Halfeti and Viranşehir are sold in wood bazaar. Inappropriate plants to be planted are *Castanea sativa* (Chestnut), *Abies cilicica* (Toros fir tree), *Picea orientalis* (Eastern spruce), *Juniperus excelsa* (long juniper), *Tilia rubra* (lime), *Buxus sempervirens* (Boxwood), *Fagus orientalis* (Eastern beach), (*Fraxinus excelsior* (ash tree), *Carpinus orientalis*, (Eastern hornbeam), *Acer pseudoplatanus* (Butterfly), *Pinus brutia* (Reddish pine), *Pinus nigra* (black pine), *Diospros ebenicum* (ebony) and *Cornus mas* (cornelian cherry tree). These are brought to wooden bazaar from Gaziantep, Kahramanmaraş, Adana, İstanbul, and İzmir by order. ‘Neccar’ masters (carpenters) in the bazaar, these raw materials are brought to workshops, are processed and are used in manufacturing the musical instruments when requested. Furthermore, this occupation passes to son from father.

In the talking one to one realizing with musicians in music groups organizing ‘Sıra Geceleri’, we have learnt that the reasons that they prefer handy work instruments are the qualification of the tone, the significant effectiveness of the tone, non-absorptiveness of the tone by the instrument, and accord–fairness. In the case these instruments are broken down, it is possible to be repaired by craftsmen.

In this research, we have made a path for ethnobotanical qualifications of musical instruments made of plants, which are a part of our natural beauty. We expect that this study will shed light on more comprehensive researches concerning ethnobotanical and folkloric studies.

To date, many trees are used in making instruments (Eroğlu, 2003). It was observed that the trees which are used for musical instruments have specific characteristics. The first of these is capable of making a sound of a tree. Hardness of the selected trees, weights, and which parts of the instruments should be used according to the color (Işık and Uslu, 2012).

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