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## TRADITION AND REVIVAL HOW DO MUSICAL STYLE OF KARACHAYS LIVING IN TURKEY CHANGE?

### GELENEK VE YENİDEN CANLANMA TÜRKİYE'DE YAŞAYAN KARAÇAYLARIN MÜZİK STİLİ NASIL DEĞİŞİYOR?

#### Özet

Farklı halkların müzik tarzlarının nasıl değiştiğine ve daha önceki tarzlar üzerinde nasıl yeni biçimlerin oluştuğuna ilişkin araştırmalar etnomüzikoloji için alışılmadık bir şey değildir.

Rus işgalinden kaçarak Kafkaslardan Türkiye'ye göç eden ilk kuşak Karaçaylar arasında bu fenomeni araştırabiliriz. İlk kuşak geleneksel kültürü yaşarken ikinci kuşak var olma mücadelesi içinde zor koşullara uyum sağlamak durumunda kaldı. Dillerini unutmamalarına karşın atalarının şarkılarından uzaklaştı. Şimdi, üçüncü ve dördüncü kuşaklar Anadolu'da çok güçlü asimilasyon gücünün eritme potasında kimliklerini güçlendirmek üzere eski kültürlerinin ve şarkılarının izlerini arıyorlar.

Bu kuşaklar, eski melodilerini yazılı olmayan iki kaynaktan ortaya çıkardılar. Bu kaynakların ilki anneannelerin ve dedelerin bilgisiydi. Anneanneler ve dedeler bir kuşak atlayıp torunlarına şarkılar söyleyerek mırıldanarak melodileri öğrettiler. Diğer kaynak ise Sovyet baskısının gevşemesiyle müzikal süreçler dahil milliyetlerin daha da bilinçlendiği Kafkaslardan geliyordu. 90'lardan beri CD'ler Kabardin-Balkarya ve Karaçay Çerkesya'dan Türkiye'de yaşayan Karaçaylara adeta akıyordu. Gençler birçoğu geleneksel Karaçay müzik kültürü ile ilgisi bulunmayan bu şarkıları coşkuyla öğrendiler ve kimliklerinin ifadesi olarak kabul ettiler.

Bu çalışmada daha eski stillerin çeşitli öğelerinin ölmeye yüz tutmuşken canlanarak yeni müzikal biçimlerin nasıl oluştuğuna değinerek bu öğrenme ve yeniden-öğrenme sürecini ele alacağım. Aynı zamanda, mümkün olursa, özel müzikal biçimler ve kişiler arasında bağlantı kuracağım ve bu biçimlerin ulusal karakterleri ve duygularını açıklayıp açıklayamayacağını veya simgeleyip simgeleyemeyeceği üzerinde duracağım. Müziğin evrensel niteliğiyle bağlantılı olarak daha geniş alanlarda karşılaştırmalı çalışmaların gerekliliği üzerine dikkat çekeceğim.

#### Anahtar Kelimeler

Türkiye, Karaçay, Türkler, etnomüzikoloji

### Abstract

It is not indifferent for the ethnomusicology to study how musical styles of different people change, and how new forms take shape on the base of earlier styles.

We can study these phenomena among Karachays, whose first generation escaped from the Russian occupation and migrated from the Caucasus Mountains to Turkey. They had a living traditional culture, but the second generation was occupied with the mere existence and adaptation to the hard circumstances. Though they did not forget their language, dissociated themselves from the songs of the ancestors. Now the third and fourth generation is searching for the traces of the old culture and songs to strengthen their identity in the Anatolian melting pot with a very strong assimilating power.

Without written tradition, they unearth the old melodies from two sources. One is knowledge of the grandmothers and grandfathers who while looking after grandchildren sing and hum, teaching them melodies skipping over a generation. The other source comes from the Caucasus, where with the loosening of the Soviet pressure nations become more self conscious, which induced new musical processes. Since the 90's CDs flow from Kabardino-Balkaria and Karachay- Cherkessia to the Karachays living in Turkey. Young people learn these songs with great enthusiasm, accepting them expressing their identity, though in many instances these melodies have nothing to do with traditional Karachay musical culture.

In the present paper I examine this learning and re-learning process, touching how new musical forms take shape while several element of older styles continue to live after seemingly dying out. I examine too if it is possible to connect specific musical forms to individual people, and whether they can express and/or symbolize national character and feelings. In connection with the musical universalias I direct attention to the necessity of continuing the comparative work on larger areas.

### Keywords

Karachay, Turkey, Turks, ethnomusicology

### **Tradition and revival: how do musical styles of Karachays living in Turkey change?**

Since 2000 I have been doing research among Karachay people living in the northern slopes and valleys of the Caucasus Mountains and among Karachays who migrated to Turkey. During my field works I made lots of interviews and collected more than 1,300 melodies, which enables me to say a few words about the music of this people.

Huns, Bolgars, Khazars and Alans took part in the formation of the Karachay people, followed by a strong Kipchak Turkish influence in the 13th century. The role of the neighboring Caucasian people has been very important in their ethnogenesis too, as is proved by the significant Kabard, Chechen and Abkhaz linguistic influences in their Pontus-Caspian Kipchak language (Tavkul 1993: 206-214).

Caucasian people have been living in coexistence for centuries and developed a certain kind of common culture (Tavkul 2009: 446-456). As I experienced it several times in the Caucasus Mountains and also in Turkey they easily join each others wedding, because a good deal of their melodies and dances are similar or even identical (see also Gippiysa 1981). In 2005 I was invited to a wedding in Eskişehir: the groom was Karachay and the bride Kabard. They sang the songs in Turkish - a language the whole wedding party knew, and regardless of the nationality everybody knew the dances as well. However as we will see soon, under the all-Caucasian music and dancing styles there are several layers specific to the individual ethnic groups.

### **How did Karachays get into Turkey?**

After 1828 Karachays were forced under Russian rule. When in 1870 the land was redistributed, the fertile parts of the soil were given to tsarist officials, which caused the impoverishment and migration of many Karachay. The first generation migrated to Turkey in 1904, and founded villages in the vicinity of Konya, Eskişehir, Afyon and Ankara. The linguistic and cultural environment of the Anatolian villages was very different from the nomadic stock-raising culture in the Caucasus Mountains. The newcomer had serious adaptation problems, and they withdrew into themselves to protect their culture.

Turkey got out of WW1 economically weak, with many problems, which influenced the situation of the Karachays as well. The second generation borne in Turkey was occupied with the survival and begun to abandon their tradition and forgot their old songs. In the 1960-70s the third generation turned towards the ancient tradition again. Among the oldest people and among the immigrants of WW2 there were people whom it was possible to ask and learn from. Besides in the 1970s Karachays begun to come from the Soviet Union, e.g. to the Izmir International Fair, bringing different music on tapes and records with them. The Karachays living in Turkey were eager to copy these recordings and soon the melodies reached most of the houses and many people learned them.

In the 1990's with the disintegration of the Soviet Union it became even easier to get into contact with the Karachays living in the Caucasus, which strengthened the Karachay identity and the revival of the old layers of their culture. Naturally this culture was not deeply embedded in their everyday life, it lived mainly in the frame of festivals. The social environment where the Caucasian culture had come into being and used to live has changed significantly.

The older people considered the songs coming from the Soviet Union Russian-like and being different from the old melody stock. The subject of the criticism was not the musical structure of the melodies –they did not have the preparedness to judge this– but the interpretation and the sounding. On the

other hand youngsters grown up on pop music were fond of this variegated, vividly orchestrated musical material furnished with harmonies. Many of them learned and sung the melodies accompanied themselves with guitar. From here there was only a single step and this music was played at weddings, and in many place it obtained hegemony. This was facilitated by the fact that in festivity the young generation plays, sings and dances, while old people usually sit in silence.

There are two phenomena which differentiate Karachay music form Anatolian folk music at first sight: the use of the accordion, and a polyphonic vocal bourdon-accompaniment: the *ēju*. Though Karachays consider the accordion and the *ēju* national as features, both of them can be traced back to Russian origin. The accordion preserves its importance even these days: instead of the old *komuz* with buttons, the modern accordion -convenient for multifarious harmonization and played by professional musicians- is gaining ground. On the other hand in the basically monophonic Anatolian musical environment the polyphonic Karachay singing is gradually disappearing. Only old people can sing this way but few of them do it properly.

Evidently the music of the ancestors coming to Turkey had contained several different layers, which went through an inner development reflecting the historical and musical influences in the 20th century. Now let us shoot a glance at some Karachay musical layers concentrating on the fact: how strongly are they represented in the present day Karachay music.

### Rotating melodies

*Koran recitation*

*Ozay melody*

*Gollu melody*

**Example 1.** a) Koran recitation, b) Ozay melody, c) Gollu melody

As we see on ex.1a, similarly to the Azeri, Anatolian or the Kazakh situation the Koran is often recitated on the *B flat-C-D* trichord and closes on C. (Sipos 2000, 2001, 2004a, 2004b, 2010) Similar musical idea can be seen in Karachay children's songs as well. Though the *Ozay* and *Gollu* melodies of the primitive faith (Sipos-Tavkul 2012: 74) are plagal and are closing on C; instead of turning up and (ex.1b-c). Except for the Koran recitation none of these melodies are sung by the Karachays in Turkey. down on a trichord their characteristic melodic movement is a sinking down followed by an ascent

### Lament

The Karachays in Turkey do not sing laments at all; even the oldest people do not remember if they had ever heard one. This is all the more interesting because the musical forms of the laments are usually very stable and often effectively resist change. We know that in several Turkic culture there are connections between the musical forms of the lament and the lullaby (Sipos 1994, 2000). And though we could not find laments, Karachay woman sing lullaby as they call *böllew-böllew*. In ex.2 I show a Karachay lullaby which is similar to the simplest tripodic Anatolian and Hungarian laments with its small-range sections descending to C and B flat.

The image displays two musical examples, labeled 'Karachay' and 'Hungarian', each consisting of two staves of music. The Karachay example shows a melody on the upper staff and a corresponding accompaniment on the lower staff. The Hungarian example shows a melody on the upper staff and a corresponding accompaniment on the lower staff. Both examples are in a key with two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a 2/4 time signature. The Karachay melody starts on G4 and descends to C4, while the Hungarian melody starts on G4 and descends to B-flat4.

**Example 2.** The skeleton of two-sectioned lament  
s a) Karachay lament from Turkey, b) Hungarian lament

### Religious songs

Women do not sing lament, but they sing religious melodies in our days as well. Their Koran recitations in Arabic language called *zıkr* are very similar to that of the Anatolian Turks. However there are *zıkr* melodies sung in Karachay language, different from the *zıkr* tunes of Arabic language. As we see in ex.3 the characteristics of these melodies are four short and descending sections with D, B flat, B flat and G cadences (Sipos 2006: 311-319). This melody form is widespread in the folk music of several Turkic people; probably an important Karachay folk music layer survives here in the guise of religious melodies.

The image displays four systems of musical notation, each consisting of two staves. The top staff of each system is labeled 'Karachay' and the bottom staff is labeled 'Turkish'. Both staves are in 5/8 time and use a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The Karachay staves feature a mix of eighth and quarter notes, often with a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note. The Turkish staves are more rhythmic, featuring eighth notes and quarter notes. The four systems represent different melodic phrases or variations of the zikr melody.

**Example 3.** A Karachay zikr melody and its Turkish parallel

### The "jir" lamenting and love song

The tradition of singing lamenting and love songs is alive only among Karachays older than 50-60 years. The common characteristics of these melodies are:

- a)** Four part musical structure with only a few typical cadence-series contrasting a great variety of melodic movements,
- b)** Odd sections are 10-, 11- or 12 syllable (5+5, 5+6, 6+5, 6+6 divisions), even sections are 8-syllable (3+2+3 or 5+3 division) and
- c)** The most typical time signature is 6/8 or can be traced back to that.

Though these melodies serve as an important symbol of the Karachay identity, they are widespread among Kabards and Ossets as well, see several melodies in (Gippiysa 1981). On the whole it is not unusual that to represent their identity people prefer complicated melodies to everyday folk songs. Karachays probably learned the *jirs* from their neighbors because this melody type is unknown in the folk music of other Turkic people. In ex.4 I show one of the most widespread representations of this musical style.

*Jir (2a-1)*

♩ = 108

Süy - ge - nim ji - ri - ñı men ay - tı - rıq - ma.  
 Süy - mey - le se - ni teñ - le - riñ.  
 Baş - ha ja - tı - ña men qı - zın - ma - uç' - e'm  
 Ja - nı - mı qıy - mayd' köz - le - riñ, a.

**Example 4.** A Karachay “jir” melody

### Dancing tunes

Dancing tunes usually change easily, so it is no wonder that this musical layer contains many melodies arriving from the one time Soviet Union. However in this quite heterogeneous repertoire there are several traditional melodies known and played by everybody. These melodies may be embedded in the Karachay musical soul so deeply that they could successfully survive newer waves and styles. I call the attention to the fact that the characteristic syncopation is absolutely foreign to the Anatolian musical renderings. In ex.5 we see three Karachay dancing tunes of this type.

*Kar 2005 4/4*

a)

*Kar 2005 4/5*

b)

*Tkar 2005 4/6*

c)

**Example 5.** Three Karachay dancing tunes

Every year there is a famous Karachay festival in Yazılıkaya, Turkey, the one-time religious centre of the Phryg Empire (10-7 BC). The obligatory political speeches and contests are followed by traditional Caucasian contests such as shot put and climbing up on an oiled rope. All these is followed by the high spot of the event: the participants dance till darkening. Here the accordion players play a complex repertoire: melodies built up of motives, traditional strophic melodies and melodies of the new stock as well.

### Summary

Karachays in Turkey still resist the Anatolian melting pot. This is all the more remarkable as according to the official position some years before it was forbidden to write or publish in the languages of the minorities. After the 90s the strict prohibition was relaxed, and the ethnic diversity and the minority languages and cultures manifest themselves better.

The Turcification is at an advanced stage among Karachays living in towns; many of them got married to Anatolian Turks, Cherkesses and Adighes, and many children born in mixed marriage speak only Turkish. However the majority of the Karachays living in small villages are bilingual and speaks the language of their ancestors, dance Karachay dances and sing Karachay songs. Their ethnic consciousness will probably be alive in Turkey for a long time but most of the traditional phenomenon survives only symbolically, in the frame of festivals; and the most important carrier of the identity and culture, the Karachay language is in slow erosion. Except for the religious songs, element of the oldest musical layers live only among elderly people, who do not have the occasion and mood to sing in public, and the rather diverse material arriving from the Caucasus increasingly comes into prominence. However this material differs significantly from the surrounding Anatolian musical environment and thus it can fulfill its function: to help to keep the Karachay ethnic consciousness alive for some time.



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