

## An analysis of the art aspect of folk music

Fikri Soysal\*

Corresponding Author:

\*Tokat Gaziosmanpaşa University, State Conservatory, Taşlıçiftlik yerleşkesi, Tokat, Turkey.  
Assoc. Professor. fikrisoysall@gmail.com, <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-3807-0154>

### Abstract

Music has different functions, such as being a communication tool, in human life. It may sometimes apply to people who have the same culture and language, and it may also apply to people who are from different cultures or who speak different languages. Folk music and art music are also communication tools of Turkish society. Folk music is considered as rural music, and art music is considered as urban music, and they are generalized to the population. However, a study should represent the population so that it can be generalized to the population. There are no adequate studies on folk music. Moreover, it is considered that acting as if Turkish music consists of Anatolia does not produce accurate results. In this study, it will be revealed that Turkish folk music has an artistic structure through the example of the Azerbaijani mugham form. The mugham form is a systematic musical form. The succession of sections is not accidental. On the contrary, each section occurs in a certain musical function relationship.

### Keywords

*folk music, mugham form, art, turkish folk music*

Music has different functions in human life. One of them is that music is a means of communication with people. It applies to people who have the same culture and language, and it may also be a communication tool even with people who are from different cultures or who speak different languages. Even if we have a different background, music arouses our deep feelings that we share with each other (Hargreaves & North, 1997, s. 1). Folk music and art music are the communication tools of Turkish society that can perform the same function. According to the report of Storey from Rosselson, folk music is the real music of people with no commercial concern like popular music

since it dates back to the pre-capitalism period (Storey, 2000, s. 116). Based on the same view, folk music and art music are the real music of people with regard to saying something important, valuable and heartily about the world that is lived, loved and worked. It is indicated by Cem Behar that art music is also the music of people, just like folk music. Cem Behar reports that the classifications of “enderun music, divan music or palace music” cannot be defined as in European palaces as they are actually said and performed, at the utmost, it would be more accurate to classify it as urban music (Behar, 2017, s. 172). On the other hand, although a legitimization that started with Ziya

Gökalp and the displacement strategy by marginalizing the art music were applied against folk music in relation to state policies in the face of art music, in fact, this can be considered as an attempt to secure Western music, not folk music because, even though the thesis that the real music of the Turkish people is folk music, there are no adequate studies on folk music. Moreover, acting as if Turkish music consists of Anatolia did not produce accurate results. Therefore, this study was conducted to reveal that folk music does not consist of Anatolia and that the artistic aspect of folk music can only be possible by performing the musical studies of the regions included within the boundaries of Turkish music.

### **Main negative evaluations about folk music**

According to the statement of Yakup Fikret Kutluğ, it is stated that “the primitive melodies created and performed among the people constitute the first periods of society in terms of music history.” Kutluğ later stated that along with the transition from nomadic to urban life, folk minstrels also started to compose accordingly and directed the music in this way. The author states that there were innovations in the civilization level of music in parallel with the transition from nomadic to urban life, that a breakthrough was made, and that this breakthrough also led to the maturation of art music that originated from the same root but had more outstanding rules (Kutluğ, 2000, s. 499-501). Based on the statements of Kutluğ, it is understood that he talked about two different kinds of music, one of them was primitive and the other one had outstanding rules and originated from the same root. It is understood that

Turkish folk music led to the development of artistic music that was considered primitive and had outstanding rules. From the text in general, it is inferred that folk music was not artistic, like art music. It was both primitive and expected to have outstanding rules, and it was considered as separate music from art music with outstanding rules. Kutluğ reached the following conclusions as a result of his own analyses under the title of rhyme in folk music. The first view, which indicates that the concept of maqam does not have a constructive and founding role as in art music and that it is also very difficult to find its place and role, reveals the second view which claims that the concept of maqam has a constructive and founding role as in art music, but not as much as in art music. He emphasizes that the bards did not consider to remain within the framework of maqam and preferred independence while creating their works (Kutluğ, 2000, s. 503-505). The reason for this was attributed to the fact that they had inadequate knowledge of maqam and could not use it properly in their works. Kutluğ later adds that some of the work samples we have today had no maqam (s.538) and the concept of maqam was dominant in the majority of them (Kutluğ, 2000, s. 506).

Suphi Ezgi Ameli and Nazari started a topic by indicating that folk music in Turkish Music work “is the music used by the people outside intellectuals (enlightened) in cities, towns, and villages” (Ezgi, 1933, s. 305). Ezgi thinks that there may be those who know little and very little about music among the people, that it would be a mistake to perform analysis through wrong samples and that it is unreasonable to expect

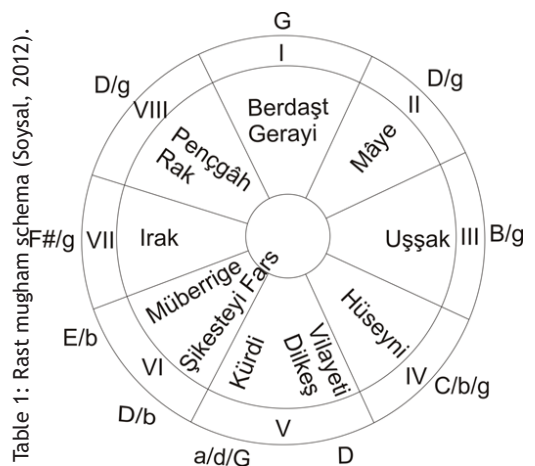
a high invention, such as language or music, from a peasant. When the works of folk musicians are analyzed, it is stated that the elements used by urban musicians are considered artistic and that the people consider their music light and modest (Ezgi, 1933, s. 306). According to the report of Cem Behar from Yekta, it is reported that there is only one Turkish music, that folk music is a wing that addresses the “lower class” and that art music is a wing that addresses the educated class (Behar, 2005).

### Sample of mugham as Azerbaijani folk music

The concept of mugham is used in the meanings of maqam according to the scale-centered maqam expression, terkiib according to the pitch-centered maqam expression, and a form of music. When rast mugham is mentioned, a meaning of mugham in the rast maqam/terkiib appears. The mugham consists of various parts as a form of music. These parts are called şube and guşe, and the one with the smallest structure is called avaze. Tasnif and renk are performed between şube and guşe. The volume of şube is the size of türkü. Avaze forms guşe, guşe forms şube, and şube forms the mugham form. Şube and guşe are modulated within themselves. However, one şube passes to another şube through modulation. Both parts act through improvisation at the disposal of the performer and are not subject to a method. The structures in which şube and guşe that make up a mugham are shown are called the mugham scale (scale as in figure 1). The work with the oldest mugham scale is Vuzuhul Erkam paper of Mir Muhsin Nevvab (Seferova, 2006, s. 254); (Kuşoğlu, 2009).

### Methodology

This is a descriptive study conducted to reveal that folk music is artistic through the sample of the Azerbaijani folk music mugham. In the first stage of the study, a literature review was performed, and negative approaches to the artistic aspect of folk music were determined. In the second stage of the study, a musical comparison was performed with the results of the field research on mugham we conducted previously in Azerbaijan. In the final stage of the study, similar and different musical results of the folk and art music were revealed. The Azerbaijan Rast Mugham scale formed by Üzeyir Hacıbeyli was used as the tool in the study (Figure 1). According to this scale, the rast mugham consists of berdaşt, maye, uşşak, hüseyini, vilayeti, dilkeş, kürdi, şikesteyi fars, müberrige, irak, pencigah, rak, and gerayi sections. Musical analyses were performed within the framework of a pitch-centered and scale-centered maqam understanding. Furthermore, as a result of the destruction in the pitches of Azerbaijani folk music, segâh was changed to buselik, mahur was changed to eviç, and geveşt was changed to irak. In the study, the results obtained by considering these destructions were interpreted.



## **Results and Analysis**

### **Musical Findings in the Mugham Example**

The sections of mugham, such as berdest, maye, ussak, hüseyini, vilayeti, dilkes, kurdi, sikesteysi fars, muberrige, irak, pencigah, rak, and gerayi, are analyzed below in the rast mugham example.

#### **Berdest**

The berdest section, which is the beginning section of the Rast mugham, moves from neva to gerdaniye using the mahur pitch. It first makes a half stop at neva, by taking gerdaniye to its center. It shows ussak at dugah, rast at yegah, and its final stop is at rast(Fig.1).

#### **Maye**

Maye moves through the pitch-centered buselik and stops at rast. It starts with yegah and moves to rast and then extends from neva to gerdaniye. The full stop is at rast (Fig.2).

#### **Ussak**

The ussak section starts from rast by taking buselik to its center. It makes a half stop at cargah, segah, and dugah, and then full stop at rast (Fig.3).

#### **Huseyni**

The huseyni section starts from huseyni and makes a half stop at cargah, huseyni, neva, segah, and dügâh, and then full stop at rast (Fig.4).

#### **Vilayeti**

Vilayeti moves from rast to neva and makes a half stop at cargah, buselik, and dugah. It emphasizes hisar when it moves neva-centered. It is observed to show hicaz at neva, kurdi and buselik at dugah, again hicaz, ussak, and kurdi

at neva, and then finally a full stop at cargah. Afterward, it continues with reng (Fig.5).

#### **Dilkes**

The tar player starts from yegah as rast-centered by making ussak. The singer starts at gerdaniye to sing his own section descending to neva with ussak. Afterward, it makes a half stop at dugah, yegah, cargah, muhayyer, and, finally, a full stop at neva (Fig.6).

#### **Kurdi**

The kurdi section starts from dugah by making kurdi. It slides downward between cargah and dugah with glissando and then makes ussak at yegah. The singer starts to sing at muhayyer and makes a half stop at neva, huseyni, dugah, and, finally, a full stop at rast (Fig.7).

#### **Sikesteysi fars**

The sikesteysi fars section starts from rast and goes forward to neva while showing pencgahı asl (İrden, 2020, s. 35). Finally, it makes a full stop at neva with huzzam (Fig.8).

#### **Muberrige**

Muberrige starts from gerdaniye and makes a half stop at acem, huseyni, neva, and cargah. Its full stop is at segah (Fig.9).

#### **Irak**

The irak section ascends to high buselik, then descends to neva, and finally, it makes a full stop at gerdaniye (Fig.10).

#### **Pencgah**

Pencgah is one of the high-pitched sections in the mugham form. It starts from gerdaniye ascending upwards with

nigar and then descending to neva. It makes a half stop at gerdaniye. The singer emphasizes high pitches, which require significant performance, such as high muhayyer, high buselik, and high cargah (Fig.11).

### Rak şubesi

The rak section consists of the highest pitches in rast mugham, such as high cargah, high neva, and high huseyni, by taking neva to its center. It tends to make a half stop at high buselik repeatedly. Then, it finally makes a full stop at gerdaniye (Fig.12).

### Gerayi

Gerayi starts from gerdaniye and moves to neva using acem. It makes a half stop at neva, cargah, segah, and dugah, and then finally a full stop at rast (Fig.13).

In summary, it can be said that a mugham form is a systematic musical form (table 1). The succession of sections does not occur occasionally. On the contrary, each section takes place within a particular musical function relationship. There is a musical structure that forces the performance abilities of singers.

### Discussion

Kutluğ attributes his evaluation on the maqam of türkü to the bard's inadequate knowledge of maqam (Kutluğ, 2000, s. 499-501). However, it appears that the master generalized the bard's lack of knowledge on maqam to Turkish folk music. On the other hand, there are not sufficient studies to generalize the approach that all bards of Turkish folk music did not have knowledge about maqam. Moreover, it is known that composers in both folk music and

art music memorized certain melodic structures by naming them in old times during which there was no effective use of notes like today. We think that the presence of a large number of maqam names indicates it. For example, if hüseyni maqam acts with acem, it is called necid hüseyni. If a name is given for each maqam and pitch, it is inevitable that there would be more than two thousand maqams. Bards also gave a name to each melody they produced. It is necessary to discuss whether it was due to the lack of knowledge or the understanding and tradition of the period. We do not study edvar; however, according to the information we have encountered in edvar translations, the tradition of telling the theory of music by giving a name to each melody/musical movement rather than telling on the note supports our opinion.

The view of Ezgi (Ezgi, 1933, s. 306) reporting that there may be those who know little and very little about music among Turkish folk music performers and that it would be a mistake to perform analysis through wrong samples supports our criticism for Kutluğ. Since it would be like to say that there are no uneducated people in cities today or in the old days, it would be more accurate to correct the view that "it is unreasonable to expect a high invention, such as language or music, from a peasant" in the form of uneducated because today it is known that people with high specialization live in villages. It is considered that Turkish folk music and art music are not two separate theories of music. According to the report of Behar from Yekta (Behar, 2005), the view that "there is only one Turkish music" supports us. Moreover, which music is art and which music is not



Fig. 1: Berdast section



Fig. 2: Maye section



Fig. 3: Ussak section



Fig. 4: Huseyni section



Fig. 5: Vilayeti section



Fig. 6: Dilkes section



Fig. 7: Kurdi section



*Fig. 8: Sikesteyi fars section*



*Fig. 9: Muberrige section*



*Fig. 10: Irak section*



*Fig. 11: Pencgah section*



*Fig. 12: Rak section*



*Fig. 13: Gerayi section*

art is a controversial issue. If a hazel-eyed black-browed person was regarded as an art criterion, it would not be art anyway. The presence of a criterion in art is a controversial issue (Weitz, 1956). Sometimes, a türkü work, which is composed of three points and said to have no maqam, may be an artwork. On the other hand, a work that complies with the definition of maqam may not be an artwork. If Azerbaijani folk music had been studied, the researchers' views on the artistic status of folk music would have been different.

### **Conclusion**

There are some reasons why Turkish folk music is considered as a culture without maqam and art. The first and foremost of them is associated with state policies in relation to westernization efforts. Another important reason is due to the fact that it considered that Türküs are composed of Anatolia. Researchers start the boundaries of Turkish music from Chinese borders to the Balkans. However, on the contrary, an attempt to generalize the view that Türküs have no maqam and art to the population is made based on the studies conducted in Turkey. It is necessary to establish an accurate sample in order to generalize the idea that folk songs are without art to the population. For this purpose, it is necessary to conduct extensive research in the geography of Turkish music. It is considered that this research planning should be included in the important and priority duties of music schools in Turkey. It is recommended that postgraduate and doctoral students should learn the language, they should be sent to the field, qualified studies should be conducted, and therefore, state mechanisms should provide the necessary financing.

### **References**

- Behar, C. (2005). *Musikiden müziğe*. İstanbul: YKY.
- Behar, C. (2017). *Şeyhülislam'ın Müziği*. İstanbul: YKY.
- Ezgi, S. (1933). *Ameli ve Nazari Türk Musikisi (Cilt 3)*. İstanbul: İstanbul Konservatuarı Neşriyatı.
- Hargreaves, D. J., & North, A. C. (1997). *The social psychology of music*. Oxford: Oxford University Pres.
- İrden, S. (2020). *Türk Musikisinde Düzen Perde Makam Terkib Uygulamaları*. Konya: Eğitim Yayınevi.
- Kuşoğlu, O. (2009). *Mir Muhsin Nevvab'ın Vuzûhu'l Erkam Adlı Risalesi ve Şerhleri*. İstanbul: İSAR.
- Kutluğ, Y. F. (2000). *Türk Musikisinde Makamlar - İnceleme (Cilt I)*. İstanbul: YKY.
- Seferova, Z. (2006). *Azerbaycan Musiki İlimi; XIII-XX Asırlar*. Bakü: Azerneşr.
- Soysal, F. (2012). *Rast Muğamı Çerçevesinde Azerbaycan Muğam Kavramı*. Diyarbakır: Fikri Soysal Yayınları.
- Storey, J. (2000). *Popüler Kültür Çalışmaları Kuramlar ve Metotlar*. (K. Karaşahin, Çev.) İstanbul: Babil.
- Weitz, M. (1956). *The Role of Theory in Aesthetics*. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 15(1), 27-35. doi:10.2307/427491



## Halk musikisinin sanat yönüne dair bir inceleme

### Özet

Müziğin insan yaşamında iletişim aracı olmak gibi farklı fonksiyonları vardır. Bu bazen aynı kültür ve dili konuşan insanlar içinde olabilir farklı kültürlere tabi veya farklı dilleri konuşan insanlar içinde geçerli olabilir. Halk müziği ve sanat müziği de Türk toplumunun bir iletişim aracıdır. Halk musikisinin köy musikisi sanat musikisinin şehir musikisi olarak değerlendirilerek evrene genellenmektedir. Oysa bir araştırmanın evrene genellenebilmesi için evreni temsil etmesi gerekir. Halk müziği ile ilgili yeterince araştırma yapılmamış, hatta Türk müziğinin Anadolu'dan ibaretmiş gibi hareket edilmesi isabetli sonuçlar ortaya çıkarmadığı düşünülmektedir. Bu araştırmada Azerbaycan muğam biçimi örneği üzerinden Türk halk musikisinin sanatlı bir yapı olduğunu ortaya konulacaktır. Muğam biçimi sistemli bir müzikal biçimdir. Şubelerin birbiri ardına gelmesi tesadüfe bağlı değildir. Aksine her şube belirli müzikal fonksiyon ilişkisi içinde vuku bulmaktadır.

### Anahtar kelimeler

*halk müziği, muğam biçimi, sanat, türk halk müziği*