

## Results of the Project “Cultural Diffusion of The Circassians of Russia and Turkey: Art Historical and Socio-Cultural Analysis”\*

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### Abstract

Three years of work under the Project “Cultural Diffusion of the Circassians of Russia and Turkey: Art Historical and Socio-Cultural Analysis” coincided with both difficult epidemiological situation in the world, and with known political and economical problems. Despite these hardships, the research team has managed to produce many research outputs, including an electronic Encyclopedia of Circassian artists, that has information about 162 Circassian artists and more than 500 illustrations with data, from Adyghea, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachay-Cherkessia, different cities of Russia and Turkey. In this paper the result of the project are summarised under the philosophical, cultural, culturological, and socio-cultural clusters. The research study concluded that the phenomenon of ethnic separation is a complex object of study both in theory and practice. In this regard, in our study we first focused on the substantiation of the concept of "ethnic art" and the idea of how the mechanisms of cultural penetration into the existing systems of a divided ethnic group work. In the case of the Circassians the desire for reunification is limited to cultural contacts, where the culture of the metropolis often acts as a donor for the diaspora majority of Turkey. An analysis of the functional ties between parts of a divided ethnic group shows that for the Circassians of the diaspora, contacts with fellow Caucasians are a breeding ground for preserving the language,

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familiarizing with professional culture, and promoting various types of art - musical, theatrical, choreographic. For the Circassians of the metropolis, the culture and folklore of the Circassians of the Diaspora is a resource for the renewal of artistic culture in all its forms and genres. The so-called "genetic memory" is triggered in both, reinforcing the ethnic identity, and allowing the subjects to feel a spiritual unity, a collective sense of security, a common past, a common history and mutual ancestors.

**Keywords:** Circassians, cultural diffusion, artists, art, ethnic art, genetic memory

### **“Rusya ve Türkiye Çerkeslerinin Kültür Yayılımları: Sanatsal ve Sosyo-Kültürel Analiz” Projesinin Sonuçları**

#### **Özet**

Rusya ve Türkiye Çerkeslerinin Kültür Yayılımları: Sanatsal ve Sosyo-Kültürel Analiz” projesi altında gerçekleştirdiğimiz üç yıl süren çalışmalar, hem pandeminin yarattığı zorluklara, hem de bilinen siyasi ve ekonomik sorunlara denk geldi. Bu zorluklara rağmen araştırma ekibi, Adıgey, Kabardey-Balkar ve Karaçay-Çerkes Cumhuriyetlerinden, Türkiye ve Rusya'nın farklı şehirlerinden, 162 Çerkes sanatçı hakkında bilgi ve 500'den fazla görsele dair veri içeren elektronik Çerkes Sanatçılar Ansiklopedisi de dahil olmak üzere birçok araştırma çıktısı üretmeyi başardı. Bu makalede projenin sonuçları felsefi, kültürel, kültürbilimsel ve sosyo-kültürel kümeler altında özetlenmektedir. Araştırma, etnik ayrılık olgusunun hem teoride hem de pratikte karmaşık bir çalışma konusu olduğu sonucuna varmıştır. Bu bağlamda, çalışmamızda öncelikle "etnik sanat" kavramının temellendirilmesine ve bölünmüş bir etnik grubun mevcut sistemlerine kültürel nüfuz etme mekanizmalarının nasıl çalıştığı fikrine odaklandık. Çerkesler söz konusu olduğunda yeniden birleşme arzusu, metropol kültürünün çoğu zaman Türkiye'deki diaspora çoğunluğu için bağışçı görevi gördüğü kültürel temaslarla sınırlıdır. Bölünmüş bir etnik grubun parçaları arasındaki işlevsel bağların analizi, diasporadaki Çerkesler için soydaşlarıyla temasların, dili korumak, mesleki kültüre aşina olmak ve çeşitli sanat türlerini (müzikal, teatral, koreografik) teşvik etmek için bir üreme alanı olduğunu göstermektedir. Metropolün Çerkesleri için diaspora Çerkeslerinin kültürü ve folkloru, tüm biçim ve türleriyle sanatsal kültürün yenilenmesi için bir kaynaktır. "Genetik hafıza" her ikisinde de tetiklenmekte, etnik kimliği güçlendirmekte ve üyelerin manevi bir birlik, kolektif bir güvenlik duygusu, ortak bir geçmiş, ortak bir tarih ve ortak atalar üzerinden bir bağ hissetmesine olanak tanımaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Çerkesler, kültürel yayılım, sanat, sanatçı, etnik sanat, genetik hafıza

### **General Information About The Project**

Three years of work under the Project “Cultural Diffusion of the Circassians of Russia and Turkey: Art Historical and Socio-Cultural Analysis” coincided with both difficult epidemiological situation in the world, and with known political and economical problems. But still, overcoming all the difficulties and following the conventional obligations, the members of scientific group went to three expeditions to Turkey for investigation, prepared and published 40 articles, spoke at 29 international conferences which are at Russia-wide and regional levels; organized 6 scientific events; issued 4 collections of scientific papers, prepared an electronic Encyclopedia of Circassian artists, including information about 162 Circassian artists from Adyghea, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachay-Cherkessia, and different cities of Russia and Turkey; the members of the group also provided more than 500 illustrations with data.

Statistical report demonstrates an over-fulfillment of two to three times of the initially planned quantitative values. This in turn, displays the interest of the members of the scientific group in the study and the intensity of their work.

Although qualitative results of the investigation are more important, they can be divided into several clusters which can be listed as philosophical, cultural, culturological, and socio-cultural clusters. In applied terms, it was sometimes difficult to separate one cluster from another; however, when the study is summed up and the obtained material is classified; we observe its natural division into distinguished rather independent blocks.

### **Philosophical Research Cluster**

The first (philosophical) cluster includes issues of primordialism, which are fundamentally denied by modern theories of constructivism and instrumentalism; yet nevertheless, they are not overcome to a final point and are confirmed in certain phenomena which includes in the field of our study. In the doctrine of the French philosopher René Guenon (1886-1951), ethnicity is manifested as the first principle of traditional culture. All modern

sociologists confirm that ethnic identity is in the first place for the peoples of the North Caucasus [Shadzhe, Lyausheva]. It is ethnic identity that creates a sense of security, peace, a supra-familial kinship, well-being, belonging to a clan, a sense of a secure future and its prosperity.

Almost every Circassian, gives the answer “Сыадыгэ/Si Adyghe” – I am an Circassian, to the question of "who are you?" without hesitation, and the identity of such an answer from men and women, young and old, people in a good or bad mood, indicates the primordial nature of ethnicity for this ethnic group. Yet however, scientific research in this direction was carried out only in Russia. In Turkey the ethnical identity turned out to be vague, and the Circassians gave different answers to the same question “who are you?”, such as: “I am Caucasian”, “I am a resident of Turkey”, “I am a Circassian”, “I am a Turk”.

In the last few decades the problems caused by a divided ethnos became more challenging. I.B. Sanakoev says, that “In political sphere divided parts of ethnos start creating contrasting forms of political self-organization, and accordingly, different political elites are formed. In the socio-cultural sphere, contrasting system-forming markers, including ethno-cultural ones are beginning to appear.” [Sanakoev]. The Circassians of Turkey could assert themselves, make demands from the Turkish government the right to cultural autonomy, organize *Khase* public organizations, hold music and choreographic festivals, and ask the Government for financial support for their cultural events only after the 1970's.

The selection of a separate ethnic group for research automatically entailed the solution of the question of the presence / absence of the problem of ethnic art. In theoretical terms, this problem is still being resolved. Although in Western Humanities the concept of “ethnic art” is recognized as scientific [Leussi], in domestic humanitarian fields, they prefer to use more cautious and subject-specific concepts such as “national themes”, “folk elements of art”, “ethnic origins of painting”, “national identity ” etc. [2, 3].

### **Culturological Research Cluster**

Culturological cluster of this investigation is based on comparing of this value paradigm in question which appears on artistic, educational, and symbolic meaning level; possessing a material and spiritual embodiment. In this respect, significant material was obtained during the second year of project; when scientific group members could visit art workshops of the majority of Circassian artists of Russia and Turkey. We fully made certain of significant difference between artistic attitudes that were instilled in the young artists of Turkey and Russia during their studies. In Turkey, starting from the third year of university studies; the main value orientations are centered on the ideas of non-objective art. On the basis of an infinite number of colorful and abstract-formal combinations, the artist finds himself in the circumstances of searching for his own face and constructing a special personality-oriented space. Such artists as Ahmet Özel, Feride Binicioğlu, and Setenay Özbek could find their own style not only due to the definitely consistent color schemes and recognizable lines, but, to a greater extent, due to the nature of the ideas that were invested in in each abstract or "semi-abstract" canvas. Paintings, regardless named or unnamed, related to a private biography of the artists, their deep historical memory, their connection with the Caucasus, and the life of their ancestors. It is these connections that allowed us to establish ourselves in the idea of the existence of the phenomenon of "ethnic art" regardless of the technique that is used in the painting. "Ethnic art" is not only and not so much the depiction of ethnic subject or symbolic markers, but also it is a combination of several components at the point of application of a single painting or a specific pictorial corpus.

These components are:

- Presentations and ideas of the artists, performed in color and shape;
- Reasonable assessment of presentations and ideas of the artists by critics and the host community;
- Acknowledgement of the artistic value of the created works

- Public and governmental support for artistic activity of the author or public and governmental support for author through exhibitions organization, catalogues publishing, etc.;

- Professional society support of the results of artists activity of the author/authors;

- Public consent and recognition of the representation of the author / authors on his (public) behalf, on behalf of the people and / or the government.

The convergence of all these conditions forms the phenomenon of "ethnic art", but the loss of at least one condition gives rise to a debatable phenomenon. We are talking, for example, about the ethnicity of the artist, the "purity" of his blood. Can ethnic art be represented by a representative of a "different blood" or a half-breed? Practice shows that such situations in the history of art occur and do not even cause much controversy. If a "half-breed" or another by blood artist positions himself as a representative of this ethnic group, if he is a native speaker of a language and a carrier of culture, he has the right to represent this culture and be considered a representative of ethnic art. In almost every *Khase* in Turkey, there are paintings by Faruk Kutlu, an ethnic Chechen whose main theme is Muhajirism: the expulsion / resettlement of Circassians from their historical homeland to Turkey. The artistic value of these paintings lies in the preservation of historical memory, the evoking of the viewer's emotional response to the tragic events of the past, the transmission of information to a new generation of Circassians. At the same time, none of the paintings by Faruk Kutlu entered the world market, nor did they become known in the North Caucasus. Nevertheless, all the work of an ethnic Chechen can be considered an expression of Circassian ethnic art.

The Circassian artists of Russia traditionally placed emphasis on the national content of art, which provided ethnic implicitness and originality in the expression of the national idea. Hence, the epic theme of the Narts, their history, deeds, moral and ethical values are common to all Circassian artists of Russia. Moreover, the Nartiada has become a universal mega-theme for all artists of the North Caucasus, including even ethnic Russians, for whom the

Nart epic is a culturally borrowed phenomenon. The Nart theme has become a conduit for obtaining state orders, moving up the social ladder and receiving certain rewards. Artistic Nartiada took shape as a separate page in the history of Circassian-Russian painting from simple book graphics, watercolor sketches to monumental mosaics and stained glass windows.

Very often, while planning our travelling to Turkey we determined in advance not only to stay in cities, where we would meet artists, but also in the homes of people who were going to be our translators or “guides”. In a nutshell, we met people who positioned themselves as Circassians (Adyghes) and who were interested in the life of their fellow kin in their historical homeland, who expressed their positive attitude towards national politics in Russia. A lot of Circassians of Turkey, not without envy, pointed to the existence of national schools provided with educational and methodical literature; the opportunity to receive higher education in their native language; the presence of a national theater, the presence of State Dance Ensembles, the State Song Ensemble, the presence of Circassian personnel in the system of art education, etc. As a rule of thumb, the Turkish government does not specifically develop national cultures; in fact, Atatürk's policy aimed at the formation of a single Turkish people was based on numerous prohibitions, including the prohibition of giving children non-Turkish names and surnames, a ban on studying in their native language, a ban on writing and publishing literature in their native language, and so on. This in turn, affected a certain population of the Circassians of Turkey who began to consider themselves Turks, who lost their “nostalgic” interest in the people of the Caucasus, who forgot their native language, who acquired and established themselves in exclusively “philistine values” which are to receive a good education, to get a good job or to create their own business, to build a house, to help their children in gaining prestigious professions, and to look as well-off as their neighbors. No one can say for sure how many Circassians preach just such values, however, the representatives of the Circassian diaspora in Turkey themselves say that the number of such people is growing year by year, as some facts may testify for. As an example, the Circassians

of Turkey believe that at least 300 thousand Kabardians and Khatukais (the names of the Circassian sub-ethnic groups) live around the city of Kayseri, but officially 300 people are registered in the *Kayseri Khase* (*Khase* is a Circassian public organization) - these are those who made a formal application for a membership in the public organization and those who regularly pay their membership dues. In Turkey, the members of the scientific group from Russia often had a chance to meet with those Circassians for whom the connection with their historical homeland is an important value, according to Murat Topçu (Papshu), the editor-in-chief of the Turkish high-ranking "Journal of Caucasian Studies (JOCAS)". Because of this, they were unable to realize the scale of the Turkish counterpart of the Circassian diaspora, for which Russian compatriots are nothing more than foreigners, the same as the British or Poles, for example. Nevertheless, a significant number of representatives of the Circassian diaspora in Turkey, like their ancestors, still consider the Caucasus to be a sacred place for themselves, they perceive it as a kind of paradise on earth, they dream of moving there and yet cannot not move because of the perception that economic and political living conditions are worse in Russia, compared to those in Turkey. Russian youth, on the contrary, having studied in Turkey and mastered the Turkish language, finds a job in Turkey quite quickly (sometimes within one day) in accordance with their specialty and, after passing an interview, they receive a full social package, even without the presence of a Turkish passport.

### **Cultural Intersections of the Circassians of Turkey and Russia**

One of the main tasks of the research was determining the way the Circassians of Turkey and Russia interact, to what extent their cultures turned out to be permeable to each other, in what specific expressions these influences manifested themselves. In cultural studies, a rather harmonious theory of cultural diffusions has developed which is based on the ideas of L. White, who asserts the unity of evolutionary and diffusion processes where one generates and the other spreads cultural innovations.



Considering the issues of cultural interaction of the Circassians of Turkey and Russia, we have to mention peculiarities of such interaction.

Firstly, we are going to speak about ethnos, which, due to historical circumstances was divided, and the parts of this ethnos were culturally isolated from each other for about 150 years. Secondly, the number of Circassians in the diaspora is several times higher than the metropolitan population which is why cultural effects of minority or majority are neither direct nor obvious.

Thirdly, the Circassians of Russia and Turkey constitute a minority within their countries; which is a space of a different ethnic environment. Consequently, they face the risks of erosion of cultural characteristics, and the issue of preserving ethnic identity and the degree of its preservation remains important. Since the foreign ethnic environment for the Circassians of Turkey and Russia is different, a parallel problem arises - the degree and forms of foreign cultural influences on the Circassians of the metropolis and the diaspora. At the same time, one cannot ignore the fact that the Circassians in Russia are part of the North Caucasian republics as titular ethnic groups (the Republic of Adygea, Kabardino-Balkaria and Karachay-Cherkessia), and in Turkey they form a large diaspora.

Fourthly, regulated and spontaneous (unregulated) channels of cultural influences and interactions, the degree of their impact on the culture of the metropolis and the diaspora were subjected to our research.

The object of comparison for understanding cultural diffusion between Circassians of Turkey and Russia are listed below:

- creativity of professional Circassian artists;
- creativity of professional Circassian musicians;
- professional dance culture of the Circassians;
- traditional dance culture of the Circassians.

### **Creativity of Professional Circassian Artists of Turkey and Russia**

The Circassians of Turkey and Russia started professional artistic activity independently from each other, with a time difference period for approximately 50 years. Circassian artistic elite of Turkey formed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, while professional Circassian artists appeared in Russia only in the second half of the 20th century. Moreover, the Circassians in Turkey were one of the founders of the school of painting in this country (i.e. Avni Lifij, Mekhri), and in Russia painting schools and trade unions were formed under the patronage of the government. Consequently, we can talk about evolutionary processes in the culture of the Circassians, which up to a certain time developed only within the framework of tradition and did not have a picturesque component. One may ask, why did representatives of an ethnic group living in different countries need a professional occupation in painting, despite the fact that this type of activity did not exist in the tradition? Why are large (or rather large) groups of people engaged in this type of activity, despite the fact that this type of activity is considered not prestigious in traditional society (including modern society) and even more – it was considered reprehensible?

According to the American anthropologist Robert Loewy (1883-1957), “the actual development of a particular culture is not consistent with the existence of natural laws that inevitably lead to certain results: such hypothetical laws are refuted by the practice of contacts with other peoples” [4, p. 434]. Thus, it seems that the actual development of Circassian culture was in tandem with the emergence of professional painters simultaneously for two reasons- firstly, as a result of the natural development of culture (taking into account the images imprinted on mats, or patterns / informational texts on women's costumes and jewelry) and as a result of cultural interactions with a foreign ethnic environment (neighboring peoples). In other words, the potential of professional art was dormant in the traditional art, and groups of folk professionals who earn a living in decorative and applied arts: gold embroidery, embroidery, the creation of national costumes, jewelry craft, wicker weaving, the creation of

equestrian equipment, and so on were singled out. Thanks to such potency, a professional artistic creativity came into being.

The appearance of professional Circassian artistic schools became, on one hand, the result of evolution of culture, and on the other hand – the result of cultural interactions with dominant peoples of resident countries. These interactions took place under different conditions: in Turkey, they took place within the frames of general Turkish cultural paradigm, and in Russia, they took place within the frames of ideological paradigm which claimed to harbor an art form that is “international in form and national in content”. The general Turkish artistic paradigm was built on the European model, determined by the strategies of openness, focused on the development of the most modern trends, the strategy of accessibility of art education in numerous educational institutions in Turkey, the possibility of obtaining European and American grants, active competition and the opportunity to present the results of their activities on the world market. The general Russian artistic paradigm was built on the principles of ideology, strict selection within the professional community of the country and the region, and building an appraisal hierarchy “local government - Moscow”. The status of the artist, his orders, professional growth and professional preferences depended on this vertical. This strategy did not involve international connections or the independent path of the artist. In this case, the circle of interests of the artist narrowed, his figurative world depended on "allowed themes and images."

What has changed over the past 30 years with the opening of borders and the opportunity to have regular contacts both through personal and official channels? The work on the project “Cultural Diffusion of the Circassians of Russia and Turkey: Art Historical and Socio-Cultural Analysis” showed that the Circassian artists of Russia and Turkey knew practically nothing about each other, had no direct or indirect contacts, and did not meet at exhibitions or conferences. An exception, perhaps, was Ahmet Özel, who once became a participant in an exhibition in Nalchik and Maikop. However, his participation did not cause a wide public outcry, nothing followed. Visits to *Khase* in Turkey of artists from Adygea

were carried out with the aim of selling part of the paintings by Nurbiy Lovpache and decorative panels by Ramazan Khuazhev. These works were bought by rich Circassians, thus showing charity and an aim of decorating the interiors of their own homes and public organizations with paintings made by their fellow kin.

Thanks to the project, it became possible to invite artists to an online medium of communication. At conferences and round tables commenced between the years 2020 and 2022, we had the opportunity to hear the speeches of Ahmet Özel, Murat Topçu, Jade Cemre, but no less important, also we have managed to publish articles about the work of Feride Binicioğlu, Sataney Özbek, Ahmet Özel, Mihri Müşfik, Avni Lifij. Through video reports, radio and TV programs and through Facebook and Instagram, the audience of the North Caucasus began to get acquainted with the Circassian artists of Turkey, and also representatives of the Circassian diaspora closely followed all the movements of the scientific group in Turkey and also got acquainted with the work of their compatriots living in different parts of Turkey. The activities of the members of the scientific group from Russia contributed to the informational and physical association of Circassian artists of Turkey and Russia to the extent that establishing this particular association itself, which did not exist before the start of the project, and this informal association can and should be continued in the near future. The fact is that one of the practical tasks that the members of the scientific group tried to solve was to organize an exhibition of works by Circassian artists of Turkey within the walls of the North Caucasian branch of the State Museum of Oriental Art in Maikop. For three years, this task has not been completed for a variety of reasons. In 2020 and 2021, the planned exhibitions did not take place due to COVID-19 restrictions, in 2022, they did not take place due to political reasons. However, our hopes for holding such an exhibition outside the ongoing project remain high, especially due to the fact that the correspondence between large groups of Circassian artists of Russia and Turkey was established thanks to the Encyclopedia of Artists prepared within the framework of the project "Cultural Diffusion of the Circassians of Russia and Turkey: Art Historical and

Socio-Cultural Analysis". The general public could also learn about them through the presentation of books published as part of the project, and through the numerous video and radio reports prepared by journalists from Adygea, Kabardino-Balkaria and Karachay-Cherkessia.

Circassian artists of two countries basically have knowledge of each other; they have never seen works of each other, but this allowed for them to figure out an "ethnic code" of their works, not affected by "external influences".

The Circassian artists of Turkey have always been aware of the Caucasus as their historical homeland; to a certain extent, they possess a sense of nostalgia for it, and they encrypted their feelings towards the homeland in various techniques and styles. What an uninformed viewer could perceive as an abstraction in the artist's ideas, was often a ciphered story about the historical past of fellow kin, about specific family histories or legends (see the works of Ahmet Özel, Feride Binicioğlu, and Setenay Özbek). In amateur paintings by Circassian artists in Turkey, on the contrary, nostalgia for the Caucasus is represented in a subject-based, sensual interpretation with the constant presence of cliché images such as the Caucasian Mountains (landscapes), warriors and riders on Kabardian horses, dancing couples in national clothes, household items, etc.

For the Circassian artists of Turkey, the Caucasian War (1764-1864) served as the temporal reference point of their work; for the Circassian artists of Russia, the Nart epic, dating back to the third millennium BC, has been and is the central axis of creativity. We have already had to say that the Circassian Nartiada was a material and a tool for moving up the social ladder in Russia (when obtaining the status of a professional artist, receiving state orders for work, nominating for awards and prizes, etc.) [5]. For the Circassian artists of Turkey, the main motivation for creativity was (apart from self-expression) commercial success and worldwide recognition. There is no need to talk about any influence of the Circassian artists of Turkey and Russia on each other. They are representatives of different cultures and different art schools, they have different educational backgrounds, different opportunities

for professional work, different social and financial status. Artists are interesting to each other as compatriots and as representatives of different ideological systems. At the same time, they are clearly aware of the difference in the artistic results of their work and understand the parallelism of the activities of each group.

### **Professional and Traditional Dance Culture of Circassians of Turkey and Russia**

It is a commonly known that there is no professional musical band in Turkey – either a vocal or dance ensemble, opera or dramatic theatre or any other. In large and small cities of Turkey where Circassians compactly take root, there are mainly youth dance groups which are affiliated with the *Khase*, and those groups start their practices in autumn, prepare a concert program throughout the year, give a reporting concert at the beginning of summer and then, they stop their activities for the entire summer. Young people of various nationalities go to these dance groups - Chechens, Avars, Abkhazians, Ossetians - all those who consider and call themselves Circassians, whose ancestors were from the Caucasus. Ensembles are now mainly led by representatives of the diaspora, but immediately after the collapse of the USSR, professional choreographers from various North Caucasian republics were invited to Turkey, who introduced the norms adopted in professional dance groups of Adygea, Kabardino-Balkaria and Ossetia into the training of the diaspora groups. Why did the Circassians of Turkey want to see professional choreographers in their *Khase*? This was in particular, a response to the overwhelming reaction that arose from the Circassian public from the concerts of the State Folk Dance Ensemble "Kabardinka" (Nalchik) and the State Academic Folk Dance Ensemble "Nalmes" (Maikop) at the very beginning of the 1990s. The music and dances of the Circassians of Russia seemed to the Turkish Circassians "the pinnacle of perfection", an aesthetic ideal that has the right to represent the culture of the Circassians on world platforms. The call of professional choreographers and, together with them, musicians from Russia, made it possible for representatives of the Circassian diaspora to join to "the top". This situation, firstly,

indicates the recognition of the dance and musical art of the Circassians of Russia as a common "cultural code" and secondly, it indicates the recognition of a high level of development of the dance and musical art of the Circassians of Russia and the desire to move in the same direction. The dance ensembles, which were led by professional choreographers of Russia in the 90s of the twentieth century, had about 500-700 members.

Rehearsals were held on Saturdays and Sundays for 6-8 hours on end. Non-professional musicians (the Ingush, Ossetians, Abkhazians and others) imitated music from video or audio recordings of the Russian dance ensembles, they also used that music to create their own performances. Thus, the influence of the Circassians of Russia on the dance culture of the diaspora can be, without any exaggeration, deemed as colossal.

Does it seem possible to speak about a contrary process as well? To answer this question, it is necessary to admit, first of all, that in diaspora, an original culture has developed which is fundamentally different from dance culture of metropolis, and, in the second instance, dance cultures of the Circassians of Russia and Turkey are not homogeneous. If three traditional dance systems are recognized - Western Circassian, Eastern Circassian and the Black Sea - in the culture of Circassians in Russia, then in the culture of the Circassian diaspora of Turkey today we have identified two fairly independent systems - the dance system of central Anatolia (the area of the city of Kayseri and the surrounding Uzunyayla villages) and dance system of the Circassians of the Black Sea region (Düzce, Samsun). We have not explored the area of the Turkish Mediterranean Sea, where the Circassians also live compactly. It is possible that this area has developed its own dance system. For now, let's talk about the two traditional systems of the Circassian diaspora in Turkey. For the Uzunyayla people, who are mainly composed of Kabardians and Khatukais, the central element of the dance system is the "kafa". For the Black Sea Circassians of Turkey, it is the "zafak". The Uzunyayla people also performed the "scheschen" dance, which, according to them, they brought from their historical homeland. Numerous search

activities that were carried out by M.M. Pashtova and A.N. Sokolova, led us to the following conclusions.

1. In the historical homeland among the Circassians, no dance called "scheschen" existed in the Soviet period. The dance is not recorded in any written source, nor is it mentioned in folklore texts.

2. The dance was "brought" to Uzunyayla, apparently, by the representatives of some local group, which lived in Caucasus neighbouring the Chechens.

3. The dance has a well-established presence among Kabardinians as an imitation of the Chechen dance in order to show respect to the Chechen guests of the holiday or as a comic copy of the dancing plasticity of the neighboring people, which is very different from the plasticity of Circassian dances.

4. Gradually, the dance took a hold in local culture of Uzunyayla people as a special Circassian dance. In order to confirm the autochthonous nature of the dance, several legends have developed among the people explaining the origin of the name "scheschen", the first being, the name of the dance comes from the addition of two words: "shee" - a horse, "yeschen" - to bring out. Since there is a rite of bringing a horse to a house or to a dance circle in Circassian weddings, the unusual move with a full foot in the dance "scheschen" was explained by an imitation of a horse's gait. The second legend is also connected with the horse figure; in the past, there was supposedly a tradition to introduce the horse to the center of the dance circle and give it the opportunity to "dance" to the special melody "shygudzh" (a melody that makes the horse dance). The imitation of the dance of a horse, thus, is the content of the dance "scheschen". The third legend is that when a girl reached the age of 15, she was tested for readiness to participate in an adult dance festival. The "examination" usually took place away from prying eyes, somewhere on the edge of the forest. Then, the girl was given two pots filled with milk. She had to walk on high fingers over uneven terrain without spilling a drop of milk. If the girl passed the "examination", a young rider was promptly sent to the girl's house and he "sold" her mother's milk. "Sche" - in Circassian means "milk", "yeschen" - "sell". When the



rider shouted “Scheschen!”, The mother understood that her daughter had “passed the exam” and from that moment she would be invited to a *dzhegu*. The woman took the milk and gave money to the lucky messenger.

5. Since the mid-70s of the 20th century, when the Circassians of Turkey began to leave the villages, go to study at universities, stay to live in big cities, the “scheschen” dance gradually penetrated to the Circassians of the Turkish Black Sea region. Having received widespread distribution, it acquired "noble" features, and its dance plasticity began to differ greatly from the Chechen prototype.

6. The dance “scheschen” came to its historical homeland thanks to the professional choreographer Amerbiy Kulov, who, after a Turkish tour in 1993, staged a dance called “Necklace of dances of the peoples of the Caucasus” which included the dances observed in an informal setting. For a short time, the dance in Adygea was presented from the stage to the people under the short name "Necklace". The musician was told the word “Ожерелье къегъало” - “Necklace play”. To the tune of "Necklaces", the people began to dance either "scheschen" or "tlyaperysh". Thus, the Circassians of Russia "adopted" the dance "scheschen", including this particular dance in the established dance system as the "dance of the Turkish Circassians".

Thus, in the metropolis and the diaspora, specific dance systems have developed in a way that is thoroughly different from one another. We are talking about musical instruments, places and forms of dance performances, costumes, dance genres, kinesics, and so on. It is striking that, recognizing the significant difference between these systems, not only an inquisitive interest in each other's culture arose in each of the parties, but also a desire to practically master each other's dances became actual. This path went through the professional scene, and literally one decade was enough for Turkish Circassian dances to be performed at weddings and youth parties in the republics of the North Caucasus.

In Russia, the dances of the Turkish Circassians became mandatory in the programs of choreographic training in the region, and performing musicians, choreographers and choreographers

from Russia began to be invited to Turkey in order to teach the dances of the Russian Circassians. However, in recent years, when the number of Circassian dance groups in Turkey began to noticeably increase, and their leaders are former dancers trained under the guidance of Russian choreographers, the orientation towards copying the dances of Russian Circassians is giving way to a new trend which is the search for "one's own face", embodiment on stage characteristic features of the dance culture of the Circassians of the diaspora.

The marking of culture through dances is often demonstrative in nature, indicating a particular closeness and "acceptance" of others, involvement with them, sharing their values, the desire to "get closer" and "dive" into a "different" culture. In response, an attraction arises from any side (from the Latin 'attractio' "attraction"), which forms a stable attachment, respect and love for the new "other". At the same time, both in traditional and professional culture, there is a collective unconscious desire to preserve the "self", to acquire one's own face and a marked recognition. Of course, it will be difficult for the layman to distinguish, for example, the Western Circassian dance from the Kabardian or Ossetian. However, in the North Caucasus, these differences are fundamental, and although there are many universal elements in the dance cultures of the peoples of the North Caucasus, and in many ways the cultural boundaries are not so unambiguous and obvious, the identification markers of each dance culture are inherited and diligently protected. In this sense, the presence and awareness of identification markers of the dance culture of the Eastern, Western Circassians and Circassians of Turkey is presented as a kind of cultural fund from which the energy and content component of Circassian dances is drawn, as a resource for natural evolutionary processes of updating their content, giving this content new features corresponding to the new historical time. That is why, probably, the dances of the Eastern Circassians or the dances of the Circassians of Turkey never turn into the dances of the Western Circassians, but only enrich them and expand their dance system as a whole.

There is another channel by which one can judge the influence of the culture of the metropolis on the culture of the diaspora. We are talking about the remuneration of a musician at public events, primarily at weddings. In Russia, since the end of the 19th century, the work of an accordionist and his ensemble was paid by fellow Caucasians, who ordered this or that dance for themselves or their friends for money. All the money was collected by the manager of the dance circle and at the end of the holiday he gave it to the musicians. The distribution of money was as follows: the harmonist got two shares (for himself and his musical instrument), the remaining three shares were divided among themselves by two phachichao (rattlers) and a hatiyako (master of the dance circle). Thus, the musicians' work was paid by the people, and the remuneration of the harmonist often amounted to his monthly salary in a public position. In Turkey, until the beginning of the 21st century, the work of musicians was not paid with money. Instead, representatives of this or that village came with their accordion player, who played accompanied by blows with sticks on a long board (it was called "takhta" in Turkish or "pkhambgu" in Circassian). 10-15 men, standing shoulder to shoulder, beat the rhythm of the dance, holding short sticks prepared by the host of the celebration. After playing for an hour, the harmonist was presented with a shirt, an undershirt, a towel and socks - a traditional gift set for a person who managed to sweat during incendiary dances. A popular accordion player of Kayseri named Kayhan said that the number of shirts and socks in the wedding season was so large that it was just right to open a shop selling new shirts. However, Russian musicians who came to work in Turkey were not satisfied with the usual "gift sets" and politely asked to pay for their work in cash. Gradually, in the Circassian *Khase*, they began to pay harmonists who were in the lead in instrumental dance ensembles, and pay wedding musicians. Kayhan, again told us that at first it was very embarrassing for him to take money for his play and he was rather ashamed of it. Money was put on the harmonica (accordion) and this fee was called "pshchynetet!" - "payment for the harmonica". As M. Pashtova writes, "money in the folklore discourse of the local diaspora tradition, which existed

for quite a long time isolated from the outside world and far from the historical territory, acts as a category not so much economic as cultural" [Pashtova, 2020]. The work of a musician for representatives of the Diaspora is perceived as not so much as a job, but as a manifestation of the ability to give people a good mood, to demonstrate their talent as a "gift of God". As a gift, the work of musicians is highly valued yet as a form of earning a living, it causes some bewilderment. And only thanks to the example of Russian wedding accordionists, the opinion about the earnings of Circassian musicians in Turkey began to change. Over a long period - almost 20-25 years - in the community of the Circassian diaspora in Turkey, the culture of remuneration for the harmonica player and his ensemble was established. Without contacts with the metropolis, this would not have happened.

Everywhere in Turkey, dance groups began to play melodies of the Circassians of Russia, to sing songs of Russian Circassian composers, not always understanding whose songs and whose words they sing. Representatives of the diaspora perceive the Circassian music of Russia as "folk music", and they replace unusual or unfamiliar words in the song with more familiar ones, treating the melody and text as folklore sources.

The opening of the borders between Russia and Turkey included the expectation of the resettlement of part of the Circassians from Turkey to Adygea and Kabardino-Balkaria, which predisposed certain social risks. The leaders of Circassian public organizations in Turkey also advocated for the relocation. However, the expectations of some and the fears of others were not met, since the level of development of the economy and culture in the North Caucasus was lower than the level in which the Circassians of Turkey were accustomed to. Many potential migrants and students, including, returned to Turkey, getting a stable job there with a high salary.

At the same time, Adygea itself was and remains a cultural donor for the Circassians of Turkey. Bright textbooks on the study of the Circassian language were sent from the Republic of Adygea to public Circassian organizations in Turkey. The State Song Ensemble "Islamey" and the State Academic Folk Dance Ensemble

"Nalmes" almost annually toured numerous cities of the Republic of Turkey, specialists from Maikop began to teach the Circassian language at Turkish universities, musicians and choreographers from Adygea and Kabardino-Balkaria conducted choreography classes for several years in public organizations Khase. Plastics, musical instruments (pkhachich - rattles), melodies, songs, artistic images which were borrowed from the metropolis - all this was accepted in the Circassian environment of Turkey as the art of the "highest standard" and mastered as much as possible in the conditions of oral tradition. Melodies were learned by ear, songs were downloaded from the Internet. Musical products at telecommunicative speed have been imported and are being imported to all countries where Circassians live. After each concert, new hit songs and new dances became popular in the Circassian world. Once in every two years, international festivals of Circassian culture also began to be held in Adygea [7].

However, cultural interactions between the Circassians of the metropolis and the diaspora cannot be specified as universal. Of course, there are objective reasons for the lack of active contacts between the Circassians of Turkey and Russia. These reasons most often lie in the sphere of financing certain projects, the lack of money of citizens who want to have such contacts, and partly they lie in the lack of knowledge of the native language among the Circassian youth of Turkey and the lack of knowledge of foreign languages among the youth of Russia. However, free access to the Internet, the presence of actively updated Circassian Internet portals, numerous festivals allow the Circassians of Turkey and Russia to interact regularly. A common ancestral home, common cultural core, the presence of reliance on the Nart epic in the passive, deeply rooted traditions of honor and duty, reverence for elders, etc. allow to exchange and borrow artistic images corresponding to the values of autochthonous culture. Cultural diffusion between the Circassians of the mother country and the diaspora turned out to be more obvious, more transparent and extensive than the diffusion between the Circassians and other ethnic groups in their countries of residence.

The Russian Circassians and the Circassians of Turkey are united by the memory of the Caucasian War, but in terms of dance culture they are in "parallel" communities of memory. Often what the descendants of Muhajirs value and remember, is not related to their historical homeland, but is associated with certain myths due to various reasons, including other places of residence on the territory of the Ottoman Empire, after the collapse of which the following migrations took place. This applies, for example, to a samovar. In every Circassian house in Turkey, we saw a samovar standing in a place of honor in a hall or on a sideboard. In the collective memory of the Circassians of Turkey, the samovar was brought by their ancestors from their historical homeland, and it has no connection with the Russians, but is perceived as an authentic Circassian historical object. Moreover, craftsmen of arts and crafts also capture the samovar in mats; in special rugs made of differently colored cattail. In the practice of constructing a Circassian identity, such mats play an important role. The attitude of the Circassians of Turkey to the Hohner push-button harmonica is similar. According to their ideas, they brought such a harmonica from their historical homeland, although in fact in Russia, in the Caucasus, from the second half of the 19th century, piano-type harmonicas with the same sounds for compression and unclamping were distributed (mainly harmonics of the Vyatka type). Most likely, Hohner harmonicas with different sounds for compression and expansion appeared among the Circassians as a result of overland migration through Europe [Sokolova, 1995].

Thus, the study of cultural diffusions of the Circassians of Turkey and Russia confirms the ideas of modern scientists about the interaction of evolutionary and diffusion processes in culture [6, 8]. The potential opportunities inherent in culture, expressed by the so-called "cultural code", in contact and interaction with the culture of the diaspora / metropolis, are bestowed a powerful stimulus for development. At the same time, in each subject of interaction, what is "genetically" inherent in it is in a fixed position and that position is a position which is approved by society and does not contradict traditional values. All cultural diffusions can be classified as spontaneous and non-natural (controlled). While the

first diffusions appear on the platform of various social networks, where there are separate dialogues and even polylogues on current cultural topics. The second (managed) cultural diffusions are inspired by public organizations and authorities and they consist in organizing various kinds of regular events (festivals, competitions, conferences, etc.) that have specific goals and objectives. On another basis, cultural diffusion can be divided into two categories which are namely: destructive and constructive. As a rule, destructive diffusions are quickly overpowered in a traditional society, although there are also examples which prove otherwise. Between the Circassians of the metropolis and the diaspora, diffusion of a constructive type is much more pronounced. An example of this would be the borrowing of the dances of the Circassian Diaspora by the Circassians of the metropolis, which in turn changed the structure of the entire traditional dance system. The dialogue between the Circassians of Turkey and Russia actualized the internal needs of culture, became a catalyst for creative activity, put forward a whole generation of actively interacting youth, creating for the benefit of the united people.

### **Conclusion**

The phenomenon of ethnic separation is a complex object of study both in theory and practice. The research approach we have chosen, related to the search for common ground in the artistic field, does not have an established methodology and a specific categorical toolkit. Because of this, the study carried out is more of an applied nature, although certain theoretical provisions were formed in the course of the study. This concerns, first of all, the substantiation of the concept of "ethnic art" and the idea of how the mechanisms of cultural penetration into the existing systems of a divided ethnic group work.

The statement that a divided ethnic group has a natural desire for reunification does not look so categorical in practice. This desire correlates with the economic and political conditions for the existence of the divided parts of the ethnic group in question, and in the case of the Circassians of the metropolis and the diaspora, it

is limited to cultural contacts, where the culture of the metropolis often acts as a donor for the diaspora majority of Turkey. The practical expediency of cultural contacts among the Circassians of the metropolis and the diaspora is based on different grounds. An analysis of the functional ties between parts of a divided ethnic group shows that for the Circassians of the diaspora, contacts with fellow Caucasians are a breeding ground for preserving the language, familiarizing with professional culture, and promoting various types of art - musical, theatrical, choreographic. For the Circassians of the metropolis, the culture and folklore of the Circassians of the Diaspora is a resource for the renewal of artistic culture in all its forms and genres.

Artistic channels of interaction between a divided ethnos are probably the surefire and most correct way to establish friendly and mutually desirable contacts. In this case, the so-called "genetic memory" is triggered, reinforcing the ethnic identity, and allowing the subjects to feel a spiritual unity, a collective sense of security, a common past, a common history and mutual ancestors.

The constant increase in the number of Circassian sites and their significant role for Circassian communities scattered across 50 countries of the world allowed scientists to talk about a "digital Circassia", i.e. about a kind of virtual "state-community", within which there is an active interaction of digital fellow citizens. Using this space, one can also disseminate the results of the study. Its analogues at the world level are not yet known, therefore, it is possible that the study which was carried out and its results will become a kind of springboard for studying the interactions of other divided peoples.



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