

A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE UPCOMING BOOK “THE ATLAS OF MAKAM MUSIC IN ANATOLIA AND THE NEIGHBOURING GEOGRAPHIES”

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Abstract

This review is to introduce and comment on the work “The Atlas of Makam Music in Anatolia and the Neighbouring Geographies”. The book cannot yet be found online in English language. It is an upcoming publication mainly in Turkish, having papers written in English and German language, too. It seems to be important in the context of music research to point towards this publication in advance.

Keywords: Makam music, Anatolia, Geography, Music research

The book entitled “The Atlas of Makam Music in Anatolia and the Neighbouring Geographies” that is being prepared and will be published by the Atatürk Cultural Center, aims at exploring the “makam music culture” that is one of the main aspects for the musical unification of the Anatolian land with neighboring geographies in details, regarding its basic theory, history, and performance practices.

Makams are the specific structures utilized for the melody organization in Anatolia and the neighboring geographies. Like other traditional music cultures, the traditional music structures of Anatolia including the “makam musics” have been evolved and transmitted based on an oral memory culture and a practice-based education strategy. Briefly, in each period of the history, the practice standing as the core of this transmission chain has lived through and was transferred to later generations step by step. The theory generally has been shaped following the traces of the “practice” and performers opened ways to new theoretical horizons. Therefore, the success of a theoretical approach regarding the traditional music structures around Anatolia is closely related to the strength of its bounds with the musical performance lying beneath the theory. In fact, this is the way that the “makam” structures are engaged with the cultural background and that the written theory can reflect the cultural changes occurred in this geography.

The old music theory manuscripts called ‘edvar (cycles)’ are standing as the main sources that are providing a consistency of basic data and the required clues about the improvement of this theory reflecting the cultural roots of the musical structures in Anatolia and the neighbouring geographies. Such manuscripts can be found very frequently during the Medieval Islamic and Ottoman periods. Although the language preferred for the books had been Arabic and Persian before the XIII. century and between the 13th and 15th century, after the 15th century, Turkish has been preferred in many sources. When the theoretical methodology behind these sources is analysed, it can be easily identified that these traditional music theory narratives are the remains of an even more ancient heritage. This ancient chain of music theory was principally dependent on the music theories of Old Mesopotamia and Egypt, which had later on affected and shaped the Ancient Greece music theory after the 4th century B.C. The theoretical sources of Ancient Greece like *Elementa Harmonica* by Aristoxenus of Tarentum (4th century B.C.), *De Musica* of Aristides Quintillianus (4th century B.C.), *Sectio Canonis* attributed to Euclid (3rd century B.C.),

Enchiridion by Nicamachus of Geresia (2nd century B.C.), Harmonica by Ptolemy (2nd century B.C.) and the methodology of Pythagoras (4th century B.C.) had constituted the main pathway of theory within teaching about that period. These theories, also partly representing the music practice of Anatolia for the same period, were transmitted to Medieval Age through the Orthodox Christian Music Tradition of Byzantine. The transmission had continued later on following the discovery of this heritage by the Islamic culture.

Especially after the 8th century, the translation of the music theory sources of Ancient Greece had been accelerated and the acquired knowledge created the basis of a rather general Medieval Islamic music theory. Afterwards, the Medieval Period of Islam hosted a ‘specific’ and ‘comprehensive’ theory enriched by the works of the theorists and performers like İshak el-Mavsili, Ahmed İbn’el-Mekki, Yunus’el-Katib, Ali İbn Yahya ve Zalzal (d.720), El-Kindi (d. 874), Farabi (879-950), El-Masudi (d.957), Ebul’-Feracel-Isfahani (d.967), İbn-i Sina (980-1037) and İbn-i Zaila (d.1048). Safiyüddin Urmevi (1217-1294) and Abdülkadir Meragi (1360-1435), who had placed their methodologies as progressive elements of this chain of tradition following the general trends of the previous studies. Those are remarkable in the sense of initiating the so-called Ottoman Period music theory. The early Ottoman music theorists had adapted the intonation system, a fret-interval organization, a kind of melody production of these theorists to their own activities and enriched it with the musical practices of their time and a philosophical background giving way to a mystical musical perception of nature, human, and the God having been theorized within the ‘Theory of Cycles’. The 17th and 18th century Ottoman theorists like Nayi Osman Dede (1652-1729), Kantemiroğlu (1673-1723), Tanburi Küçük Artin (early 18th century), Chalatzoglu (early-mid 18th century), Hızır Ağa (1725-1795) and Abdülbaki Nasır Dede (1765-1821) had built a detailed theory being adjusted to the increasing musical complexity of the multi-cultural music of the Ottomans. After the 19th century with the effect of ‘Westernization and Modernization’ periods during the late Ottoman and early Republic Cultures, the ‘music theory’ and ‘makam perception’ had begun to experience ‘a western music oriented’ expression that had led to many discrepancies between the ‘modernity and the tradition’. During the last decades, a kind of compromise between the ‘old’ and the ‘modern’ theories has been searched to build the music of the future in a way with consistent past requirements.

As a summary, music theory and the “makam” structures as its main component are reflecting the clues of the cultural transformations, interactions and exchanges experienced in Anatolia and the neighbouring geographies for thousands of years. Therefore, a ‘unifying’ study covering these historical interactions and their currents consequences through the current ‘makam concept’ will not only serve as a historical work dealing with the common cultural roots, but also can open ways to new possibilities for cooperation enabling important cultural dialogues.

Therefore, the book entitled “The Atlas of Makam Music in Anatolia and the Neighbouring Geographies” has been prepared in that sense starting with the initial editorial principles by the editors Murat Salim Tokaç and Cenk Güray coinciding with the foundation principles of the Atatürk Cultural Center as the host institute. The book covers a wide range of topics reflecting the historical depth and the geographical prevalence of the aspect like Ancient Greece and the Byzantine Music Theory; Music Theory in Medieval Islam; Music Theory in Seljuks, Ottoman and the Turkish Republic; Main Theoretical Models in the History of Music/Makam Theory; The Interaction between Theory and Practice in Makam Music; The Theoretical Interactions of Anatolia with the neighbouring geographies (Balkan Peninsula, North Africa, Middle East, Near East and Central Asia); Makam and Polyphony; Makam Music in the Folk and Urban Music Traditions in Anatolia; the Mystical and the Philosophical Side of the Makam Theory; the Current/Future Theoretical Perspectives in Makam Researches written by the distinguished international scholars and music performers of the area.

We hope that this work named “The Atlas of Makam in Anatolia and the Neighbouring Geographies” will be opening new horizons in improving the cultural interactions and dialogues between several cultures sharing this geography. The efforts of the authors have been dedicated to exploring some of the oldest cultural signs of the humanity through researching diverse makam musics. We are sure that “makam music” can be a very strong symbol for an all-embracing humankind carrying the remembrances of an intercultural common life over a thousand years and providing the hope for living together peacefully in the future.

REMARK

This book is not yet published. Please, contact the author for updates.