

The Dynamic of a Community Practice - the Lullaby in the Repertoire of the Turks of Dobrogea

Mirela KOZLOVSKY¹

Abstract: *Dobruja, one of the provinces of Romania, is a good example of multi-ethnic cohabitation. For hundreds of years, it has been the home of peoples which, through their culture, way of life, and tolerance, have yielded the current configuration of the region's profile.*

In Turkish families from Dobrogea, particularly those in rural areas, changes have occurred as to the strictness of the life norms observed and passed on along the centuries. Nowadays traditions and mindsets from patriarchal times coexist with more recent, modern ones. The research strategy I opted for in order to complete my enterprise was the directive interview correlated with the audio recording method. The analysis of the lullaby "Dandini, dandini dastana" from the folklore of the Turks of Dobrogea has revealed that it belongs to the old stratum of traditional creations.

Key-words: *turkish folk repertoire; lullaby; folklore; functionalism; traditions; octosyllabic;*

1. Introduction

Dobrogea is the first Romanian region mentioned by historians and the oldest Roman province of all the Romanian territories (Marian, 2008, 50). Spread between the Danube and the Black Sea, it has been and continues to be a place where the most diverse cultures meet and mix (Atanasiu, 2008, 62). Its current ethnic makeup is amalgamated, comprising, among others, Dacoromanians, Aromanians, Meglenoromanians, Turks, Tartars, Bulgarians, Jews, Armenians, Italians, Lipovan Russians, Albanians, etc.

The ethnic communities of Dobrogea have regarded one another's religion and culture with respect, thus acknowledging the right to ethnic unity of all cohabitants (Ibram, 2011, 107).

Evidence as to the existence Turkish settlements in Dobrogea dates back to the 13th century. Historical records show that in 1262, Sari-Saltık, the legendary leader of the Seljuk Turks, followed by 10,000 families, settled in Babadag (Marian, 2008, 53).

The famous Turkish traveller Evliya Celebi visited Dobrogea in the 17th century, at a time when the region was part of the Ottoman Empire. His travel records provide a series of details about the settlements he visited in the region, the people there, as well as the existence of certain important destinations for Muslim worshippers.

If we were to name some of the evidence attesting to the existence of a Turkish population in Dobrogea encountered by Evliya Celebi in Babadag in the 17th century, the first examples would be the two pilgrimage destinations for all Muslims - the tomb of Sari-Saltık and that of Koyun-Baba (there is a local legend in Turkish folklore according to which the shepherd Koyun-Baba saved Babadag from a flood), then the jamia, built at the turn of the 13th century, and the Muslim School, founded by Gazi Ali Pasha in 1610. Aside from the numismatic discoveries and religious inscriptions in the Dobrogea region and beyond, other places worth mentioning are the tomb of Ishak Baba in Isaccea, that of Muharrem Baba in Mangalia, and that of Mishkin Baba in Ada-Kaleh (Vergatti, 2008, 72; Mustafa, 2017, 24).

¹ "Ovidius" University of Constanța, Faculty of Arts, mirelako@gmail.com

2. The ethno-spiritual traits of the Turks of Dobrogea

Regardless of the region and ethnic group, starting with the second half of the past century, Romanian society has registered a gradual shift from the rural to the urban lifestyle. After almost seven decades of socio-economic transformations during which the mentality of village people has changed, the dynamic of such metamorphoses - irreversible in some respects (the dissolution of agricultural production cooperatives, the discarding of pastoralism and domestic crafts such as weaving, pottery, milk, wood or iron processing) - has generated changes in life norms and traditional culture. For over thirty years, rural society has gained easier access to technology, while the patriarchal way of life, which has preserved all the identity-bearing practices of the ethnic communities of Dobrogea for hundreds of years, has disappeared, being replaced by imported models. All of these transformations are seen as normal for a society that is subject to globalisation and eager to embrace a comfortable way of life, which phases out all that is obsolete or anachronistic.

During my research I learned that in Turkish families, particularly those in rural areas, changes have occurred as to the strictness of the life norms observed and passed on along the centuries. Nowadays traditions and mindsets from patriarchal times coexist with more recent, modern ones.

Elderly Turkish ethnics have said to me that the young generation has given up certain customary practices, which for the past generations had constituted life norms that governed relations both inside and outside the family and the community, starting with hierarchies imposed by age, gender, origins, mentalities, traditions, culture, and religion. All of my interviewees mentioned the marriage ceremony as an example and considered it to be the most affected by the evolution of modern society. In the past, the act of marriage observed a series of ritual and religious moments which unfurled according to specific rules and were meant to contribute to the successful creation of a new family. If, in the old days, it was the parents who chose their children's future life partners and who saw to the organisation of the wedding, today young people are the ones who select their mates and organise their weddings down to the slightest detail (Onal, 1997, 134). Even though Turks in rural areas have difficulty accepting mixed marriages between a Muslim and a Christian, such situations occur with increasing frequency in Dobrogea (Onal, 1997, 140). Naturally, when this happens, certain ritual and religious moments are discarded and a simplified model of the nuptial spectacle is resorted to.

My interviewees informed me that, in the past, Turks used to view a marriage between a Turk and a Tartar as unsuitable and inferior, despite the fact that they share deep similarities as to religion, lifestyle, and culture. Nowadays Turkish parents are highly tolerant of marriages with Tartar ethnics (Onal, 1997, 140).

Another custom which has been discarded for over thirty years, particularly in urban environments, is the one according to which the youngest child in the family was supposed to live in the parent's home after getting married in order to take care of them. Young people today take the liberty of deciding for themselves where they will live with their spouse, often leaving their native places.

For the Turks of Dobrogea, family was the cohesion factor that protected them from all perils. Examples of such perils would be: losing their ethnic identity through alienation or temporary distancing from their native place (for schooling or military service), migration towards developed urban centres in view of a better life (work), marriages to foreign partners (Turkish citizens). I learned from my informants that among ethnic Turks, too, there are more and more cases of young people emigrating in order to build a better future for themselves. While some choose to return home, others decide to settle abroad definitively.

I noticed during my interviews that, whether living in villages or towns in Dobrogea, Turkish ethnics have preserved to this day only those ethnographic and artistic manifestations which have become solidified into durable patterns, capable of ensuring that indispensable mark of their identity in a multiethnic territory such as Dobrogea (Oprea, 2002, 298). After the events of 1989, songs, dances, customs, and rituals which lay dormant in their collective memory have been revived, so that all the recovered identity practices subsequently materialised into performances organised by Turkish communities and contribute substantially to the assertion of their identity both at home and abroad.

My field research has led me to find out that some of these practices could no longer be presented in their initial form, but had to be adapted to present realities. There are shortened versions of songs and dances, with a simplified choreography, in which emphasis is no longer placed on the skill or elegance of the steps, but on the chromatics and ornamentation of the traditional costumes and on adornments.

3. The lullaby - functionality and dynamic

Just like any other ethnic group in Dobrogea, ethnic Turks considered family to be the universe in which a child's integration into his or her ethnic group began. Later on, the child, still aided by family, would learn how to position himself or herself with respect to neighbouring ethnic groups.

Mothers were the ones charged with raising the children and ensuring the conveyance of the language and of all identity-bearing practices to the young generation. The custom of singing while rocking a baby is possibly the most intimate way to instil a sense of belonging to an ethnic group. Although reduced in size, the lullaby continues to be construed by the Turkish ethnics of Dobrogea as a folkloric genre capable of ensuring the identity print they so dearly need in the midst of a society based on globalisation.

The lullaby is, in all traditional cultures, a genre of folklore created by adults with the purpose of calming a baby and creating an atmosphere conducive to sleep (Oprea, 2002, 287). Vocal performance is accompanied by the gentle rocking of the baby either in one's arms or in a cradle. Since it is a mood-setting song, certain conditions need to be fulfilled, the mother having to adopt a calm attitude in order to create the right environment for the song to attain its purpose.

My research has revealed that in both urban and rural areas, due to the disappearance of traditional creators of the genre, the lullaby has in the past few years moved into the passive repertoire of the Turks of Dobrogea. Irrespective of their place of origin, young mothers have ceased to perform lullabies and have instead become "specialised" in discovering videos of lullabies on YouTube. The website hosts lullabies from both the repertoire of the Turks of Dobrogea and traditional Turkish culture. I noted that Turkish songs have been "embellished" through harmonization and are accompanied by animations, the images illustrating the poetic text and featuring pleasant chromatics. The Turkish children of Dobrogea in villages and towns alike now fall asleep to such lullabies. None of the interviewees expressed regret as to the fact that an ancestral custom has so easily been discarded, yet they unanimously agreed that it is the only way in which children could learn Turkish successfully, without the influence of archaic words.

4. A structural and formal analysis of the lullaby "Dandini, dandini dastana"

The research strategy I opted for in order to complete my enterprise was the directive interview correlated with the audio recording method. I travelled to the location of those who were able to provide the information I sought and was pleased to observe that the atmosphere

was relaxed and everyone was eager to participate in the discussions and perform lullabies for me. I requested my interviewees to assume the state of mind and create the atmosphere required for the performance of a lullaby in order to obtain recordings of high musical value.

I noted that, in rural and urban environments alike, interviewees expressed a preference for the lullaby “Dandini, dandini dastana”. The song was invariably mentioned and performed first by informants without hesitation or error, which is why I decided to analyse it. I learned that it is quite old (at least four generations) and that it has been preserved in both towns and villages in a form almost identical to that found in its native land.

In Turkey, which is where the song originates, it is performed both vocally and accompanied by instruments, and can be heard and watched on children’s music websites.

Dandini, dandini dastana

Source: Marius Sorin Banciu

Andante ♩ = 86

Dan - di - ni, dan - di - ni das - ta - na

Da - na - lar gir - miş bos - ta - na

Kov bos - tan - cı da - na - yı

Ye - me - sin la - ha - na - yı

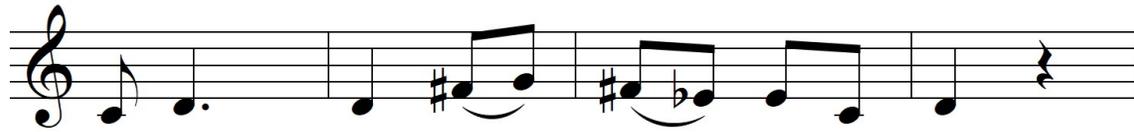
Dan - di - ni, dan - di - ni da - na - lı be - bek



Mi - ni mi - ni el - le - ri k1 - na - lı be - bek



A - nne - si ba - ba - sı çok se - ver



Uy - ur, bü - yür naz - lı be - bek



Dan - di - ni, dan - di - ni da - na - dan



Bir ay doğ - muş a - na - dan



Ka - çın - ma - mış ya - ra - dan



Me - vlam ko - ru - sun na - zar - dan

Dandini, dandini dastana	Dandini, dandini dastana
Danalar girmiş bostana	The cattle entered the garden
Kov bostancı danayı	Gardener, banish the cattle
Yemesin lahanayı	Do not let them eat all the cabbages
Dandini, dandini danalı bebek	Dandini, dandini danali baby
Mini mini elleri kınalı bebek	Baby with tiny little henna hands
Annesi babası çok sever	His parents love him
Uyur büyür nazlı bebek	The coy baby sleeps and grows
Dandini, dandini danadan	Dandini, dandini danadan
Bir ay doğmuş anadan	A moon was born from a mother's
Kaçınmamış yaradan	womb
Mevlam korusun nazardan	Spared from all harm
	Protected from the evil eye

The version of the lullaby “Dandini, dandini dastana” which I will focus on has three stanzas. The performance tempo is *Andante*, at 86 M.M. the fourth. The pattern of the lines is catalectic heptasyllabic and is maintained throughout the song. The isometric transformation of the text into an octosyllabic pattern is accomplished through pauses of a fourth which act as a substitute for the last sound in the sequence of eight. The rhyme of the pseudo-stanzas is realised through the symmetrical combinations of the final feet. Upon analysing the poetic line - musical row relationship, one notes a concordance between the dimension of the melodic row and that of the octosyllabic line.

The melodic stanza per se consists of four lines. The compositional and expressive means encountered in the lines are explicative parallelism, epithets, and diminutives. The melody of the lullaby results from the mobility of identical and varying rhythmico-melodic cells, while the presence of the syncopated rhythm reveals the sensitivity and artistry of the folklore creator.

As the lullaby is a vocal folkloric genre par excellence, its rhythm is giusto-syllabic and bichrone, with the two durations in a 1:2 or 2:1 ratio (eighth and fourth). The form of the melodic stanza is fixed, of the ternary ABBvC type. The form of the A and C phrases remains constant throughout the lullaby. The mode is a chromatic hexachord Do-Re-Mi \flat -Fa#-Sol-La. One may deduce that at its origin lies a chromatic pentachord (Re-Mi \flat -Fa#-Sol-La) with a subtone, the presence of the latter having contributed to the evolution of the mode towards a hexachord. The ambitus of major sixth (Do-La) defines the structure of the melody.

The melodic formulae which make up the musical phrases form intervals of major second, augmented second, and major and minor third, while the preference for gradual melodic structures has contributed to the sinuous profile of all the melodic rows. Another element of the melody which stands out is the recto-tono succession on Re and Sol, both of which play the part of pillar notes.

The importance of the sound Sol within the melody is confirmed by the adjoining of the two anterior simple appoggiaturas found in the Bv phrase of the second melodic stanza and in the B phrase of the final melodic stanza. It is worth noting that the end of the musical phrases is characterised by a propensity for the generally descending path of the melodies.

The inner cadenzas are realised as follows: for the first phrase on the fourth step, through ascending minor second, and for the second and third phrase on the second step, through descending major third. The final cadenza is realised on the first step through the relation of ascending major second between the tonic and the supertonic (Do-Re). The

relation of second through which the cadenzas are realised at the end of the musical pseudo-stanzas is further proof of the pentatonic substrate which lies at the foundation of the mode.

5. Conclusions

I have noted the following characteristics of the poetic text of the lullabies I recorded in villages and towns in Dobrogea: a fixed pattern, short lines, and the presence of sleep-inducing formulae (dandini, dandini).

The melodies showed the following distinctive traits: modes comprising few sounds, quantitatively reduced musical motifs, musical cells sequenced in an identical or varied manner, agogics and dynamics dictated by the function of the song.

The rhythm of the recorded lullabies is giusto-syllabic and the rhythmic formulae result from the ostinato repetition of the iambic or pyrrhic foot, as well as from the use of the syncope.

The analysis of the lullaby “Dandini, dandini dastana” from the folklore of the Turks of Dobrogea has revealed that it belongs to the old stratum of traditional creations. The first piece of evidence to that effect is the fact that all the interviewees, irrespective of their age, knew it and were able to perform it without any major deviations from the melody. The same cannot be said about the text, which I have heard several versions of. The differences concerned the number of stanzas and the order in which they were sung. No longer performing lullabies vocally has emphasised the decline of the sense of belonging to the group in young people living in urban environments. As I have shown, this custom has undergone irreversible changes in rural areas as well and now finds itself on the brink of extinction. In my opinion, the sense of belonging to a group is born through the memorisation and rememorisation of collectively experienced practices, such as singing while rocking a baby. Such an identity-bearing practice can only exist through perpetual practise.

The continuity of the identity of the Turks of Dobrogea can only be achieved through the recovery, preservation, and valorisation of their intangible cultural heritage, since it is well known that collective memory is the medium as well as the means of manifestation of the traditions of a specific group (Iosif, 2014, 16).

List of informants

Deria Halil, 29 years old, radio presenter „Radio T”, Constanța
Iusnie Amet, 50 years old, manager, Constanța
Marius Sorin Banciu, 22 years old, teacher, Castelu, Constanta County
Beatrice-Denis Done, 20 years old, student, Mangalia

Bibliography

- Ibram, Nuredin. 2011. *The Muslim community in Dobrogea* [Comunitatea musulmană din Dobrogea]. Constanța: Ex Ponto Publishing House.
- Iosif, Corina. 2014. *Meglenoromânii din Cerna. Repertoriul muzical și de dans comunitar între practică socială și politici identitare* [The Meglenoromanians of Cerna. The Musical and Community Dance Repertoire between Social Practice and Identity Policies]. Iași: A. I. Cuza University Publishing House.
- Mustafa, Ali Mehmet. 2017. *O istorie a turcilor din Dobrogea* [A History of the Turks of Dobrogea], in *Istorie și identitate la turcii din Dobrogea* [History and Identity among the Turks of Dobrogea], volume coordinators Adriana Cupcea, Kozak Gyula. Cluj-Napoca: Institute for Studying the Problems of National Minorities Publishing House.

- Onal, Mehmet Naci. 1997. *Din folclorul turcilor dobrogeni. Tradiții privind nașterea, căsătoria și moartea* [From the Folklore of the Turks of Dobrogea. Traditions surrounding Birth, Marriage and Death]. Bucharest: Kriterion Publishing House.
- Vergatti, Radu Ștefan. 2008. *Dobrogea, mojar al popoarelor și al religiilor în secolul al XIV-lea* [Dobrogea - a Melting Pot of Peoples and Religions in the 14th Century], in *Dobrogea-model de conviețuire multiethnică și multiculturală* [Dobrogea - a Good Example of Multi-ethnic and Multicultural Cohabitation], coordinator Virgil Coman. Constanța: Muntenia Publishing House.