

# Introduction

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Over the past twenty years the research on the music history of Ottoman and pre-Ottoman times has made remarkable progress. Many important sources, theory books, treatises and song collections, which had been hidden in private collections, have been edited, reprinted, or at least analysed in specific articles and monographs. Western as well as Turkish historians and music historians, beginning with Yılmaz Öztuna, Gültekin Oransay, Eckhard Neubauer, Owen Wright, Eugenia Popescu-Judet, Yalçın Tura, Murat Bardakçı, Walter Feldman, Cem Behar, Recep Uslu and following them many younger scholars, partially replaced musicians and (ethno-)musicologists in the field of Turkish art music research, and with them a historical, sources-based approach has gained increasing weight.

Today the search for and the analysis of sources is a central field of Turkish musicology, and will probably remain so for several more years. Still a great number of sources deserve scientific editions, such as the *Kevserî Mecmuası*, the collections with Hamparsum notation of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, or the only recently discovered post-Byzantine manuscripts (see Kalaitzidis in this book). In particular the scientific edition of music notations (which was in Europe the central field of musicology for more than a century) has hardly begun and will last at least two more decades.

However, together with the increasing knowledge of sources the general historical outline, the cohesion between the growing amount of detail has been in danger of being lost. Whereas the existence of these source gives rise to the hope that a kind of Ottoman-Turkish music history going back to earlier than the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century could be possible (different from so many other music cultures in which no written sources exist), even if concepts of historiography and strategies of writing an encompassing history have hardly been discussed. In order to reflect the conditions of writing music history in Turkey today several authors in the present volume begin their reflections by looking back to the story of music history in Turkey itself, from its beginnings around 1900 until today.

The title of this book already indicates two general problems of the project. The term “Ottoman music” used here obviously replaces the notion of “Turkish music” as used in many Turkish publications, beginning with Rauf Yekta’s pioneering article in the *Encyclopédie Lavignac* (1922), up to Öztuna’s *Encyclopedia of Turkish Music* (1976/90) and many recent Turkish books on music history (e.g. Özalp 1986). Also many older western publications referred to “Turkish music”, and it was only the historical approach that insisted on the foundation of a “Turkish Republic” in 1923, and reminded to the different, even pejorative use of the term “Turkish” before. Together with the influence of Turkish nationalism, also

the impact of western orientalism needs to be taken into account, in particular for the period immediately before the emergence of music history in Turkey (Aksoy, Öztürk).

In particular for the study of folk music history the discussion on Turkish nationalism and its influence on music and musical life in the early Republican era is crucial (Öztürkmen, Öztürk). In this field the turn to a historical approach has dramatic consequences: instead of a history of “Turkish music” that claims to cover virtually thousands of years, beginning in a mystical Central Asian prehistory, a source-based historical approach will in most cases reduce the scope of music history to the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. Oral history is still a comparatively new field in Turkish musicology (Öztürkmen), and written sources – in particular those for earlier times – are rare and in general of limited value (Şenel). The notion of “Ottoman music” in this context is thereby not of great help.

On the other hand it is doubtful if linguistic, ethnical or political categories – such as the term “Turkish” – always meet with musicological categories. Among the many folk music styles of Anatolia there were also several non-Turkish languages (and still are) used, e.g. Kurmanji, Zaza, Armenian, Laz and Greek. On the other hand, many genres of Anatolian folk music would also demand for comparison with traditions outside of Turkey, for example in the Balkans, Armenia, Iran, up to Central Asia.

Even in the field of art music not all scholars agree with the replacement of the notion of “Turkish music” by “Ottoman music” (Ayangil). In addition to its ideological aspect, the terminological discussion raises the question of the framing of the project. A music history defined by the political-historical Ottoman period would set a scope from the 14<sup>th</sup> century until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Again the questions require clarification as to whether a political caesura such as the establishment or the collapse of an empire necessarily also implies a break in music history. Actually our knowledge of the music of the early Ottoman period is still too weak to decide about an adequate historical periodisation. However, research conducted so far suggests that it does not make sense to separate the music of the Seljuq area from the early Ottoman period. Obviously the main musical change seems to have happened much later, that is during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. On the other hand a history of “Ottoman music” would end in the year 1923, or at least around the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Whether or not the changes of the 19<sup>th</sup> century are more important still needs to be discussed.

Moreover, the term “Ottoman music” also implies a particular geography, albeit one that changed over time. However, the musics of the Ottoman territories are far from forming any specific musical unit. Should all these countries and cultures which (at least for some time) were part of the Ottoman Empire – hence most Arabic countries, the Balkans (while not Iran, Central Asia or Azerbaijan) – be included in a “History of Ottoman Music”? Even within the borders of today’s Republic of Turkey the diverse ethnic, religious, social or cultural minorities

would have to be integrated into this concept. The detailed description of the complex interaction between court and *tekke* music, urban art and even folk music spread over a wide territory (given the limited historical knowledge available) harbours serious problems for music historiography. A history of Ottoman music in this larger sense would be extremely difficult to handle, and not very different from a general history of the music of the Middle East. On the other hand a history of “Turkish music” would exclude non-Turkish musicians (or at least place them on a periphery), even those active in relation to the same or near-related music.

The title of the present book places “Ottoman music” in quotation marks, which is a diplomatic solution, aiming to keep the field open for discussion between scholars of different approaches.

The second issue imposed by the title of this book is the idea of “music history”, or “writing music history”, hence the construction of a historical narrative. What should be the object of a musical historiography? Is it only music and musical structures, *makam*, *usul* and musical genres? Or also instruments, the theory of music (Doğrusöz), performance practice, the perception of music, aesthetics, and musical life in general? How to conceptualize, how to write a “history of music” in a comprehensible way, to put it simple how to organize chapters? Should this be according to particular issues (e.g. instruments, theory, structures of compositions and the like) or according to historical periods? Which general concepts need to be clarified in advance, including the notion of source, nationalism, composition as opposed to improvisation, the relationship of composer and performer, and others (Jäger, Haug)?

One crucial point is the question of periodization. The direct adaption of periods known in European music history (e.g. classic, neo-classic, romantic) without any analytical verification and as practised by many contemporary Turkish writers, cannot count as serious historiography (Aksoy). However, today common agreement only exists for a vague historical outline: an early period of international Islamic art music culture between the late middle age and early Ottoman times; the emergence of an “Ottoman music” during the 17<sup>th</sup> century; the rise of this music culture throughout 18<sup>th</sup> century and the growing western influence (with complex consequences) by the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. While this overall outline is mainly based on data on musical life (performance practice, music theory, social history), a periodisation of the musical structures itself is still far from complete. Even worse: the historical analysis of music and musical structures have hardly been done at all, Walter Feldman’s study on *pesrev* and *semâ’î* between the 16<sup>th</sup> and the early 18<sup>th</sup> century remained singular, not to mention the lack of a methodological discussion. Several authors of the present volume even doubt that an individual personal style or historical periods of Ottoman music exists at all, thus calling for radical new concepts of musical historiography (Pekin, Karakaya, Beşiroğlu).

Central problem for the concept of a music history comes down to the lack of notations, hence of sources which could pass down the music of earlier times. As generally known, no notated sources have come down to us earlier than the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century. In his article on the musical changes of the 17<sup>th</sup> century Feldman thus operates on the outer limits of what is possible to construct on the basis of sources: “For the most part, in the music of the Islamate civilization, it is only at this point in time – the early 17<sup>th</sup> century – that one can begin to wrestle with those musicological issues that are properly termed historical” (Feldman).

A short comparison with the European middle ages demonstrates the problems arising from the border between oral and written tradition, and the limited opportunities to reconstruct oral tradition even from existing manuscripts (Haug). Likewise Fikret Karakaya asks: Do early notation collections represent the music of their times? To state a “lack” of notation is an unhistorical perspective, the century-long persistence of *meşk* as the central system of education and transmission of music was not due to deficiency but rather constituted an aesthetic preference (Pekin; Bahar 2006).

The consequence of oral tradition, however, is what Ersu refers to with the metaphor of “cinder” and Fikret Karakaya with that of water in a sieve: In an oral transition music more or less changes constantly and what remains today are almost exclusively musical versions of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, even if the notations pretend to provide music of much earlier time. One central starting point for all analysis of “Ottoman” or “Turkish” music history will hence necessarily be the 19<sup>th</sup> century, its aesthetical, musical and social changes which led to the increasing use of notation, and thus the fixation of orally transmitted music (Paçacı, Jäger), as well as the pseudographia of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (Feldman).

For a music historian today the music transmitted orally (by far the main part of today’s repertoire) turns up as a problem. If history is based on written sources, then how to deal with the main corpus of the art music performed today, which is transmitted without sources (or only via recent ones)? In 1977 Carl Dahlhaus discussed a comparable tension in the historiography of European music between a musical piece as a work of aesthetic reality and as a historical source. History of music cannot ignore the contemporary aesthetic reality and their aesthetic judgements, without, however, being based on them.

In this context the historical reconstruction – or at least the historically informed performance of Turkish-Ottoman music – has to be taken into account. In Europe and America many musicians of the middle ages, the renaissance or of baroque music are at the same time music historians working directly with historical sources. Again the situation in Turkey and the Ottoman empire is obviously different, and once more due to the lack of sources. We hardly have any detailed accounts of musical instruments, the formations of ensembles, playing techniques, and even less on singing techniques, sound, intonation in practice (as opposed to music theory), or melodic embellishment. Nevertheless reconstruc-

tions, how speculative they might be in this situation, might provide important insights into the character of historical Ottoman music.

The articles contained in this volume were originally presented at the conference “Writing the History of ‘Ottoman Music’” / “‘Osmanlı Musikisi’ Tarihini Yazmak”, held at the State Conservatory for Turkish Music (Türk Musikisi Devlet Konservatuvarı) of the Technical University Istanbul (İTÜ) in Istanbul, 25-26 November 2011, organized in cooperation with the Orient-Institut Istanbul. International music historians, some at the same time highly-respected musicians such as Ruhi Ayangil or Fikret Karakaya, discussed the issue of historiography concerning Turkish, Ottoman or Turkish-Ottoman music. In some of the panels Western musicologists added considerations from more or less outside perspectives including, for example, Andreas Haug, a specialist in Western middle ages music, or Ralf Martin Jäger’s comparative analysis of European and Turkish approaches to music history. Some of the speakers enlarged their papers afterwards, incorporating the discussions of the conference, in particular Bülent Aksoy and Walter Feldman, whose article almost provides a second volume to his pathbreaking book (Feldman 1996).

One basic aim of this book is to present different ways of thinking and writing on music history and historiography, and thus it combines essays, overview articles and detailed historical analysis.

The spelling of terms and names in Ottoman, Turkish and other languages has been standardized, a common bibliography will be found at the end of this volume. Without the intense work of the staff of the State Conservatory for Turkish Music İstanbul, in particular its then vice director Prof. Dr. Şehvar Beşiroğlu, together with Doç. Dr. Burcu Yıldız and Yaprak Melike Uyar the conference would not have taken place and neither would this volume have been edited.

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