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**THE SONGS OF THE LOST LAND:
RE-ENVISIONING THE TURKISH FOLK SONGS
FROM ADAKALE THROUGH PREVIOUS COMPILATIONS
AND RESEARCH STUDIES**

Adakale, a center of Turkish culture in the Balkans since the 15th century, has witnessed the establishment of cultural communication between the Balkan people sharing the multicultural life symbolized by the River Danube. After the “loss” of Adakale by being submerged in 1970, music and literature were the only media reflecting this memory. The past studies of Turkish folk poetry and music compiled from the Adakale region will be evaluated within this work. Possible methods of re-envisioning the melodies of the compiled lyrics whose melodies are lost will be discussed by utilizing compilations made from other regions of the Balkan Peninsula and using the folk melodies in Turkey that originated from the Balkan lands.

Keywords: Adakale; the Danube; folk songs; compilations; *makâm* analysis.

Adakale – A Submerged Land of Wisdom

The island of Adakale, being, one of the most strategical Ottoman-Turkish settlements in the Balkan Peninsula along the Danube River (in the Orsova region, which constitutes a point of connection between the current lands of Bulgaria, Romania, and Serbia), was submerged in 1970 due to the building of a hydroelectric station.

The History of Adakale

The Ottomans conquered Adakale during the reign of Yıldırım Beyazıd from its ruler Firuz Bey together with Vidin and Orsova (probably after 1389). After the Ankara War in 1402, the Serbian Ruler Stefan Lazareviç (1377–1427), who had fought on the Ottoman side in the war, occupied Adakale. The Ottomans re-conquered the land during the reign of Çelebi Mehmed (1379–1421). In 1418 Sigismund, the Hungarian king, conquered Adakale (Ağanoğlu 2015: 23). Regarding the island’s defence, Sigismund asked for help from the Teutonic Knights (Solak 2015: 13), a German-based religious, military order aiming to supply assistance for

the health keeping of the pilgrims. This order of knights prepared a report about the island's defence, referring to the different names used to identify the island as Saan or Şans Island (Kayapınar 2016: 481) or Siper island.

The struggle for Adakale continued during the reign of Murad II (1421–1451), too (Menage 1976: 575). After the conquest of Belgrade on 29th August 1521 by the Ottoman Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent, the Ottomans took dominance on the island together with the castles of Kladovo (Feth-i İslam) and Orsova (Ağanoğlu 2015: 24). In 1658 a small Jewish community settled on the island.

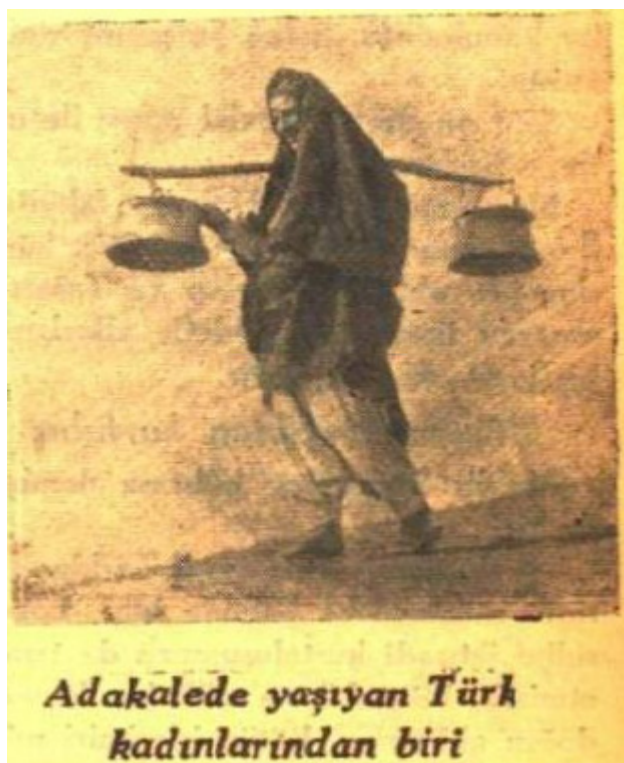


Figure 1: *A Turkish Woman in Adakale (Cumhuriyet 1933: 5)*

Until 1829, Adakale was both a point of cultural interaction and an area of struggle between the Ottomans and, first, the Austria-Hungary Empire and then, Serbia, Romania, and Bulgaria. In 1690 the island was re-conquered by the Ottomans and a strong military post was constructed here (Popescu-Judet 2006: 19). After this date, it is much more possible to follow the traces of the Turkish settlements on the island. The 17th-century gravestones seem to be the strongest evidence of the presence of Turks in Adakale (Ağanoğlu 2015: 24).

The famous 17th-century traveller Evliya Çelebi (1611–1685) describes the island called Demirkapı: “A terrifying and a dangerous place, it is a whirlpool of

Danube River that is famous among the Anatolian, Arabic, Persian and all the European shipmen” (Aĝanoĝlu 2015: 24).

A possible agreement regarding the status of Adakale was possibly forgotten to be reached during the Berlin Agreement in 1878. Thus the island was preserved as the last land (a sub-district connected to Istanbul) of the Ottomans in the Balkans and the Danube region. Finally, on 4th January 1920, Adakale was given to Romania (Aĝanoĝlu 2015: 47). The Turkish delegation raised the question about Adakale due to the symbolic importance of the island, which was surprising for the sides of the Lausanne Meetings in 1922–1923. As a result of the agreement, the Turkish Republic also accepted the inclusion of Adakale within the borders of Romania (Aĝanoĝlu 2015: 47).

In his book called *From Danube to the West*, İsmail Habib Sevük reports the pain of losing Adakale: “We, who had lost half of the past geography, felt a much deeper melancholy for the loss of this small island, much stronger than the loss of the Arabic Lands. The Danube, which could not be kept by the Turks, was still connected to us with this small island. We feel the pain of an injured vessel in our grief” (Sevük 1935: 48–49).

In these lines, the grief from the loss of “the last land” can be observed – Adakale in “the Balkans and the Danube Region” can be regarded as an area witnessing the “initial” realization of an “Anatolia-Khorasan based Sufism” within the constructive perception of the Ottoman State. This melancholy is analogous to the “grief” experienced during the loss of the African lands, including Algeria. It can be observed that the historical mythology beneath the “lost geography”, such as the Balkans and the African lands, has been reflected mostly by musical examples through the symbols of “Algeria and the Danube/Adakale”.

However, this political progress did not prevent the continuation of the habitual daily lives of the inhabitants of Adakale. During the post-war period following the 2nd World War, Germany kept its sailing activities on the Danube under control, which weakened the relations of Adakale with the remaining part of the world. After this period, Yugoslavia and Romania decided to construct the biggest hydroelectric station in the region near Adakale on the bank of the Danube River.

Music in Adakale as a Symbol of Intercultural Habitat and the Related Musical Research in Adakale

“Girls sing folk songs. They are trying to sing in higher tones by vibrating their crystallized voices [...]. The fishermen are singing recitative tunes and finishing them with a sharp ending [...]. Afterwards, evening comes and Adakale rises through the phosphorescence of the water. (Adakale in the early 1900s from the commentary of Alscher)” (Aĝanoĝlu 2015: 132–134).

Adakale has always been a very strong symbol of the “intercultural” way of life in the Balkans. Besides the Muslims (Turks, Albanians, Bosnians, Iranians, Kyrgyz, Kurdish), Jews, Hungarians, Czechs, Serbs, Romanians, and Bulgarians

have lived together in Adakale for centuries. The music was at the center of this “multicultural” life as a base that united the people from different cultures in a common “perception of life” based on “peace and humanity” (Çetiner 1994: 293–294), as indicated by Mihai Tican-Rumano: “Besides their own music, they called Gypsies from other places. The Turks were dancing all over the streets. They were dancing by stepping hard on the ground (Zeybek dances and hora) [...]. Romanian gendarmes were afraid that this fun would not last [...]. Also, the Christians enjoyed this fun” (Ağanoğlu 2015: 132).



Figure 2: *Music in the Daily Life of the People in Adakale*
(Ağanoğlu 2015: 1974)

Another factor behind the strong musical symbolism in Adakale should be the effect of the Bektashi Order, which takes music as the main component of its religious rituals. The spread of the Bektashi Philosophy should be closely related to the settlement of *Janissaries* in the Balkans and in Adakale under the Ottoman reign (Özmen 1998: 4; Temren 1994: 102). But, the culturally constructive power of the 14th–15th-century Sufism, based on a “Khorasan–Anatolia wisdom”, which puts forward a “human-centered perception of nature and God aiming to emphasize the common points of different religions” (Temren 1994: 102), should not be denied during this process. Therefore, the Bektashi symbolism centered around the famous “Miskin Baba Tomb” in Adakale (Ağanoğlu 2015: 141–143) should be another fac-

tor creating an effective “music-based” interaction between different cultures (Özmen 1998: 4).

The music that signifies the “wisdom” symbolizing the past life of Adakale, a land of submerged wisdom, was carried to the current time thanks to the important work of three significant researchers, namely Ignac Kunos, Eugenia Popescu-Judet, and the Cluj University Department of Musicology.

Fortunately, the work of the Hungarian Turcologist Ignac Kunos (1862–1945) in this region after 1890 took a leading part in handing down to the next generations the folkloric production contained in folk poetry, folk lyrics, tales (Kunos 1975: 7–254), and lullabies (Kunos 2013: 41–109) of the Turkish society who had lived here for hundreds of years. However, unfortunately, the melodies of these works do not exist in the research of Kunos.

Adakale was the first stop of Ignac Kunos’ trip to the Ottoman Empire lands to research the Turkish language and culture (Kunos 2011: 3–79). The year was 1885, and Kunos was only 25 years old. The first folk song he heard was a Budin folk song called “*Ötme Bülbul Ötme Yaz Bahar Oldu*” (Kunos 1978: 25).

Kunos compiled a hundred and fifty Adakale folk songs, most of which gave very important clues about the Ottoman history in the Balkans (Kunos 1978: 25), and published eighty of them. According to Kunos, these folk songs were usually sung by men in town coffeehouses accompanied by instruments such as *tanbur*, *darbuka*, and *def*. Apart from that, it was also possible that a person or a team sang folk songs and told stories for fun or ceremony. The folk songs handed down from generation to generation reflect the characteristics of a culture with various elements, as they do not have traces of Arab and Persian literary influences, but in those folk songs, peasant and urban elements are intertwined (Ağanoğlu 2015: 154).

Eugenia Popescu-Judet, a musicologist and art historian, was born and raised in a region close to Turkish culture. Obviously, this “close relation with Turkish culture” greatly impacted her future research. In addition, it should be pointed out that Eugenia Popescu-Judet (1925–2011), who is one of the prominent experts on Ottoman Turkish Music and Balkan folklore, also published a series of important studies on the Adakale region. Judetz, who wrote a monograph on Adakale (Popescu-Judet 2006: 5–143), supported previous work in this area with her own work and memories. Eugenia Popescu-Judet reminisced about Adakale, where she went in 1937 when she was only 12 years old, with the following words: “The village was saved with peace and silence. There were small coffees in the bazaar, patisseries selling Turkish sweets and desserts, and souvenir shops selling souvenirs to tourists [...]. After I was full of dessert, I bought an engraved cigarette holder on which was written: “*Suvenir din Ada-Kaleh*”, which I kept as a treasure for years [...].” (Popescu-Judet 2007: 5–6).

Popescu-Judet noticed that her visit to this mysterious island increased her curiosity about the magical world hidden between Romania and Yugoslavia in the middle of the Danube. She mentioned that the charm of Adakale stayed later in the back of her mind (Popescu-Judet 2007: 6). Adakale was a symbol of a common

cultural sharing for Eugenia Popescu-Judet. She visited the place many times and had interviews with the public of Adakale. In her book named *Adakale*, she greatly contributed to the survival of Kunos' fieldwork in Adakale and the recall of a culture now submerged.

Although we do not have any written documents about whether there were any minstrels living on the island, it is obvious that the poets of these folk songs were influenced by minstrel literature, as denoted by Popescu-Judet too. The *Janissaries* on the island adopted the "tradition of the epical folk poem" (an important form of minstrelsy used by Bektashi minstrels) in their works. They affected the dervish hymns of the northern Balkans. In the texts mentioning the Turkish castles on both sides of the Lower Danube region, "itinerant" minstrels were also noted (Popescu-Judet 2006: 67).

Kemal Altinkaya, a writer, composer, and researcher, was born in Skopje as a member of a Bektashi family in 1895. After working as a translator for eight years (1925–1933) at the Turkish embassy in Belgrade, he settled in Turkey. He regarded his main profession as authorship. He implied his interest in musicianship by saying: "I am occupied with *Garp* (Western) and Turkish music." (Bozkurt 2016: 37)

He was imprinted with music and folk literature belonging to Tuna and Rumeia by Asik Huseyin, whose name he heard from his grandmother Gulsum Hanım. After years passed, he worked passionately to compile and save these folk songs. He was caught in "*Tunamani*" (Danube madness), claims Nurettin Artam, a journalist and poet, speaking of his friend (Bozkurt 2016: 3).

He compiled more than six hundred *Serhat* (the Ottoman frontier in Balkan geography), Danube and Rumelia folk songs, and traditional dance tunes. Only sixty-seven of them have survived until today. Except for these folk songs, this repertoire included "hymns" and "*tekbirs*" he compiled from the "dervish lodge" and his own compositions (Bozkurt 2016: 7). It is possible to come across two folk songs from Adakale in the repertoire compiled by Altinkaya matching with the "lyrics" compiled by Kunos named "*Açıl Ey Ömrümün Varı*" and "*Bir Mahzunluk Çöktü Benim Serime*".

Kemal Altinkaya recorded twenty-five out of all the folk songs he collected with Tanburi Refik Fersan, and twelve of these folk songs were performed on Ankara Radio in April 1939 in a program named "First Danube Night", directed by Mesut Cemil Bey. The program had a tremendous impact. It enabled the culture of the Danube borders to be recalled in Turkey (Bozkurt 2016: 41–42). If there is an aspect that can be implied as "Rumelia and Balkan folk songs" in the memory of Turks today, it will not be wrong to say that this concept is alive owing to the research of Kemal Altinkaya. Altinkaya regards the folk songs produced by the Turks living on the Danube borders as a symbol of cultural interaction among all societies sharing these lands (Bozkurt 2016: 55).

Musicologist Ioan R. Nicola and his team from Cluj University in Romania conducted musicological research in Adakale between 1964–1969, just before Adakale was flooded. The research results were published in 1971 under the name

“*Folclorul Turc Din Insula Ada-Kaleh*”. In addition to the ancient songs produced on the peninsula and coming from various homelands in Adakale, folk songs were brought by Turks from Dobrudja, Serbia, and Bulgaria and folk songs from the other neighbouring languages as well. The inhabitants sometimes sang authentic Romanian songs. The songs sung at weddings and festivals were long-lived (Nicola et al., 1971).

Researching the *Makâm* Side of Adakale Compilations

Kemal Altinkaya, who carried out extensive studies into the Danube folk songs, emphasized the characteristic of the Danube River to connect the cultures. The most commonly used *makâm* structures in Danube and Serhad regions are *evîç*, *mahur*, *zâvil*, *hüseyinî*, *bayâtî*, *gûlizar*, *hicaz* and *uzzal* (Bozkurt 2016: 64). *Segâh makâm* is the most common *makâm* in Budin folk songs. He identified the *evîç* and *ferahnak makâm* structures using the term “*tuna makâm*” (Bozkurt 2016: 65).

Some of the works belonging to Adakale will be studied using the “*makâm analysis*”. The *makâm*-based analyses in this work have been asserted with the “*melodic nuclei approach*”. The melodic nuclei are thought to construct the base of the specific melody structures. Depending on them, the audible products in a specific sound cluster constitute the specific *makâm* structures within a certain functionality and hierarchy (Güray 2017: 116).

The “*melodic nuclei*” idea behind a “*specific*” *makâm* structure can be described by four main components named *Central identifier (M)*, *Co-identifier (T)*, *Reinforcing (P)*, and *Ornamental(S)* frets (Bayraktarkatal, Güray 2020).

The song named “*Bir Mahzunluk Çöktü Benim Serime (I Have a Grief Inside)*” was transferred to the “*Rumelia Folk Songs*” archive of the Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT) by Kemal Altinkaya. It is also involved in *Turkish Music and Composition Forms* by Dr. Nazmi Özalp (Özalp 1992: 265-267).

BİR MAHZUNLUK ÇÖKTÜ BENİM SERİME NOTA:25
BESTENİGAR

USÛLÜ: YÜRÜK SEMÂİ ♩ = 54

BİR MAHZUNLUK ÇÖKTÜ BENE NİM SERİ ME
NE Bİ LE YAKI NİM LER GEÇ
Tİ YE Rİ ME YE Rİ ME Dİ LE RİM Kİ
DOYMA YA SIN YA Rİ NE KA ŞI KE MAN
GÜN LEM HA RAB EY LE
DİN EV VEL AL DİN SIN RA İN KÂR SIN RA
İN KÂR EY LE DİN EY LE DİN



Çargâh (old) melodic nucleus *Bayâti* in *Nevâ* fret Çargâh melodic nucleus



Bayâti in *Nevâ* fret

Irak melodic nucleus



Sabâ (old Çargâh) *Nevâ'da Bayâti Çargâh'da Hicaz*



Uşşak melodic nucleus *Irak* melodic nucleus (ending)

Figure 1a, b,c,d,e: *The Score and the Melodic Nuclei Based Analysis of "Bir Mahzunluk Çöktü Benim Serime"*

As it can be observed in the composition, *bestenigâr* is a *makâm* that starts with *sabâ* (old *çargâh*) and ends with *irak*. The composition starts with the *çargâh* fret and continues with the feel of the colour of *Bayâti makâm* with a melodic movement on the *neva* fret. The transformation of *Saba* fret (C#) to *neva* (D) is a feature of *Bestenigâr makâm* (Kutluğ 2000: 276–277).

According to the research of Cluj University, the most sung songs were mostly about individual events or major social events. In this sense, the folk songs such as “*Budin'in Dört Kapısı* (The Four Gates of Budin)”, “*Bosna'dan* (From Bosnia)”, “*Mapushane Önünde* (In front of the Prison)”, “*Tuna Kanı* (The Blood of the Danube)” about war, love and social life, were important. Epic songs are almost “arhythmic” or “aria” type. Most of the lyric songs are also recitative. Sometimes, such recitative parts can be seen only in the introduction or in the middle of a “*melismatic* song” (Nicola 1971: 129). The folk song below is an example of it.

10) **Budinin dört**
Cintec epic
Inf.: Mustafa Salim, 59 a.

Recitativo (♩ = 90-90)

Bu - di - nin dört ka - pı - sı var - dir,
bi - ri Se - ra ya ba - kar. etc.

Budin'in Dört Kapısı

Segâh melodic nucleus

T S T S M

Rast melodic nucleus

M T S T S T S M

Segâh melodic nucleus

Segâh ending

Figure 2 a,b,c,d,e: *The Score and the Melodic-Nuclei-Based Analysis of "Budin'in Dört Kapısı"*

"*Budin'in Dört Kapısı* (The Four Gates of Budin)" is a sample of the epic song genre. When it is transposed to the sound scale of *Hüseynî makâm*, as seen in Figures 2a and 2b, it is seen that the song gives the features of *Segâh makâm*. *Segâh makâm* is defined in the book named *Tefhimül Makamat* by Tanburi Hızır Ağa: "*Segâh* starts around eviç (F #), decreases with whole intervals and indicates çargâh (C) and rests at *segâh* (B) fret" (*Kutluğ 2000: 409*). Therefore, although the beginning of the melody does not directly fit the definition, the remaining part reflects the characteristics of "*segâh makâm*".

In the general sense, the structure of folk songs' *makâm* determined in the compilations of Adakale reflects the main characteristics of the ancient musical culture of Anatolia and is affected by the components of "folk music" and the "classical trend" of the *makâm* tradition reflected in the specific "theoretical works" after the

15th century (Güray 2017: 65–80), but diversified in terms of local characteristics. It can be stated that the music in Adakale has an idea of representation that is compatible with musical-theory works after the 15th century centered in Anatolia and the neighbouring geographies.

Experimental Musicology: A Brief Introduction of Re-Envisioning the Unknown Melodies by Analyzing the Folk Songs in the Region

Within this study, a melody of a folk song whose lyrics were determined was re-envisioned based on research of the “literary characteristics” of the region and the related “*makâm* structures”. The selected folk song for which the melody is unknown is “*İki Bülbül Karşı Karşı Ötüşür* (Two Nightingales Singing Face-to-Face)”, which is compiled by Kunos. Each verse of the lyrics contained 11 syllables. Therefore, the two songs containing the same syllabic structure, namely “*Bir Mahzunluk Çöktü Benim Serime*”, were examined regarding their melodic organization around the literary form and the rhythmic side of the melody is designed accordingly. The melodic patterns that were accepted to be in “*eviç*” *makâm*, named the *makâm* of the Danube due to its majority in musical representation in the region by Altinkaya, were constructed according to the results acquired from the analysis of melodic structures of different folk-songs in “*eviç makam*”, which was found within the region, and used similar *makâm* structures to “*eviç*”. For example, “*segâh*” and “*bestenigar*” can be achieved among the folk songs compiled in the region, taking advantage of the previously analyzed folk songs of Adakale possessing these *makâm* structures. The final shape of the re-envisioned song can be observed in figure 3:

İki Bülbül Karşı Karşı Ötüşür
(Bir Rumeli Türküsü Üzerine Çeşitleme II.)

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İ ki bü l bül kar şı kar şı ö tü şür (Söz... ..)

Ö t me bü l bül der dim ba na ye ti şir (Söz... ..)

Se her ler de bü l bü l gi bi za rım var (Söz... ..)

Gur bet el de sa rı la cak ya rım var (Söz... ..)

Figure 3: A folk song with
the re-envisioned melodic line “*İki Bülbül Karşı Karşı Ötüşür*”

Conclusion

The island of Adakale, one of the most strategical Ottoman-Turkish settlements along the Danube River, was submerged in 1970 due to the building of a hy-

droelectric station. Adakale symbolizes one of the centers of Ottoman culture in the Balkans, hosting a “multicultural” based life since the end of the 14th century. Adakale also became a center of the “wisdom”– based *Bektashi* belief system emerging from the roots of the Anatolia-Khorasan-based cultural chain “putting humankind” in its center. This order of belief emphasizing the common points of different religions was another factor for the successful practice of multiculturalism-based common life. It is for sure that the loss of Adakale in 1922–1923 was the final remark for the loss of the Balkans and the Danube Region for the Ottoman that once carried the constructive idea of the Ottoman Empire.

Although the Adakale region has not “physically” existed since the construction of the dam in 1970, and although the “people who lived there who composed the folk songs” no longer reside there, the Adakale symbol and its past lives on in the memories of the peoples as an ancient symbol of “common life”. In other words, the submerged “wisdom” that once connected the people of different cultures was sealed in the folk songs of Adakale. Therefore, the most important means of boosting this memory is through the “folk songs produced by the people there”. Remembering these folk songs can guarantee a future for the common life, establishing in the most tangible way cooperation that may be developed further between the Balkan countries. Within this work, the past studies on Turkish folk poetry and music compiled from the Adakale region, like the works of Kunos, Popescu-Judet, Altinkaya, and Nicola et al., are evaluated, and the results analyzed were adapted to performance. Possible methods to re-envision the melodies of the compiled lyrics whose melodies were lost or forgotten were being proposed utilizing compilations made from Adakale, from the other regions of the Balkan Peninsula, and using the folk melodies in Turkey originated from the Balkan lands. We believe that using the “model of Adakale”, it is possible to transfer the cultural interaction and the multicultural heritage of the Balkan land to the present and future as a cultural model of humanity and cultural exchange for living together.

To remember the past to create the future...

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