

Report from the ICTM Ethnochoreology Sub-Study Group on Fieldwork Theory and Methods.

Fieldwork experiment in Turkey, May 2005.

The Sub-Study Group on Field Research Theory and Methods organized in the period 03-10 May 2005 a field research experiment that took place in Turkey in the town Izmir and the surrounding areas, the local organizer being Dr. Mehmet Öcal Özbilgin. Nine researchers from Belgium, Denmark, USA- Germany, USA- Greece, Hungary and Norway, as well as Turkish researchers and faculty members of the Folk Dance Department of the Izmir Ege University State Turkish Music Conservatory were involved with the project.

This fifth fieldwork experiment of the Sub-Study Group had three main working themes:

- 1. The ethnography of H?d?rellez (St. George ritual) enacted by the Gypsies of an Izmir mahalle (quarter) and the Alevi Muslims religious ceremony with dance (semah) in the village Güzeltepe Tahtac?. These occasions offered the possibility of experimenting modalities for collecting relevant information by eliciting comments from the onlookers during the development of the events, and for constructing visual texts (film, photos) that could capture the transient reality and re-present it in the most illustrative way.
2. Recording and analysis 'on the spot' of the dance repertoire performed in the context of a re-enacted wedding in the village Çomakdag-Dibekdere, and especially the study of the men-dance Zeybek - the main dance type of this region - in different individual interpretations and in different places (K?z?lagaç and Bodrum).
- 3. The third theme was dedicated to information and documentation concerning the content and the methods of academic education and of the scientific research (including fieldwork collection, archive systematisation, studies and publications) carried out at the Turkish Folk Dance Department of the Ege University State Turkish Music Conservatory of Izmir. On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Ege University all the participants at the fieldwork experiment were invited to take part at a panel with the theme: "Folk Dancing and Folk Dance Research Around the World".

This dense program was introduced by a comprehensive presentation with fieldwork video-recordings and explanations offering the participants a comprehensive view and understanding of the traditional dance culture in the Izmir region, including ethnic and religious minority groups.

Being prepared in all details by our hosts the fieldwork experiment had primarily a presentational and informative character. Therefore, our role in the field was rather that of attentive, interested and inquiring recorders of a great amount of information filtered through the knowledge and expertise of the Turkish scholars. This new situation taught us about the collaborative work between scholars situated in the position of insider or outsider in relation to a given culture, and about mutual help and understanding.

In this spirit we acknowledge the local organiser Dr. Mehmet Öcal Özbilgin for the efficient work carried out with great energy and competence. We also thank the Turkish Folk Dance Department at the Ege University State Turkish Music Conservatory of Izmir for making possible to realize in practice and in best conditions the complex program set up for this project. We particularly appreciate the inspiring scholarly collaboration with our Turkish colleagues especially Prof. Abdurrahim Karademir, Ömer Barbaros Ünlü and Emir Cenk Aydın. Last but not least we thank our Turkish interpreters for sharing with us their knowledge and for making possible communication across language barrier.

The fieldwork experiment in Turkey resulted in tens of hours of visual and sound recordings, hundreds of photos, 'direct- observation' notes, information, dance descriptions and analysis, personal comments, diaries, and finally systematic catalogues of the collected materials.

The participants at the fieldwork experiment intend to present the tangible and theoretical results their research activity in the form of a panel under the theme "From Field to Text" at the forthcoming 24th Symposium of the ICTM Study Group on Ethnochoreology to be held in Cluj (Romania), July 2006.

Anca Giurchescu