Zeybeks and Features of Zeybek Music Within Historical Process

Between the 18th and 20th centuries, Zeybeks survived in the Western Anatolia and they disagreed with the administration during latter periods of the Ottoman Empire. They stood next to the people and protected them against bullies and robbers, gained their confidence and became heroes due to the success they attained in the defense of the country during the Turkish war of Independence. Today the culture of Zeybeks is maintained as a folkloric component with the help of folk songs composed in memory of Zeybeks, Zeybek dance and Zeybek music.

Zeybek music is one of the important music kinds among Traditional Turkish Folk Music (TTFM) types. It is possible to categorize TTFM into two in terms of its distinguishing structural features; “kırık havalar” and “uzun havalar”. Zeybek music falls into the category of “kırık havalar” in TTFM and its vocal and instrumental variations exist. Zeybek dance and music are performed especially in Aydın, İzmir, Muğla and in Manisa, Denizli, Uşak, Burdur, Antalya, Isparta, Balıkesir, Çanakkale, Bursa, Kütahya, Afyon, Bilecik and Eskişehir. Zeybek music is expressed with 9/2, 9/4 and 9/8 measures (aksak ölçüler). Zeybek musics are divided into two in terms of their tempo; “ağır zeybekler” and “yürük zeybekler”. “ Ağır zeybekler” consist of 9/2 and 9/4 measures. It is performed in the speed of “largo”, “larghetto” and “adagio”. On the other hand, “yürük zeybekler” includes 9/8 measures and performed in the speed of “andante”, “moderato” and “allegro”. Basic instruments used in the performance of zeybek music are the “davul” and “zurna”. The band consists of at least three people. In these bands consisting of a davul and two zurnas, one of the zurna plays the tune while the other one accompanies it at the finale tone-tonic (drone voice) of the tune. In some cases, two davuls and two zurnas or two davuls and three zurnas are used.