



WRESTLER TUNES IN THE CONTEXT OF INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGEⁱ

Sevda Korkmazⁱⁱ

Istanbul Major Municipality Youth
and Sport Directory,
Turkey

Abstract:

Music has been used in sports events and competitions, as well as in sports education since ancient times. The relationship between music and sports, which are among the important elements of culture, has been going on for ages and this heritage has been passed on to the next generations. Music and sports, one of the ways in which a nation expresses itself, have intertwined in a tradition from time to time to create a unique culture. Kırkpınar Oil Wrestling, where sports and music blend together for ages, is one of the longest running events in the world with its unique culture. Historical Kırkpınar Oil Wrestling, besides being a sports event, is an important part of intangible cultural heritage due to its traditions and rituals performed within the event for centuries. Wrestling tunes which is played to motivate the athletes and audience and to prepare them for the spectacle, and to speed up the wrestling at certain times, are among the intangible sports heritage. In this research, wrestling tunes, which on of the important components of Kırkpınar Oil Wrestling are analyzed and interpreted within the context of intangible cultural heritage, and research findings are intended to be evaluated with literature-review model.

Keywords: wrestling, Kırkpınar, culture, intangible cultural heritage

1. Introduction

The oldest written legend of history, the Gilgamesh Epic states that the king of Phratry Gilgamesh initiated his quest/movement with a musical instrument (drum) (Çiğ, 2000). This legend constitutes only one of the signs that the relationship between music and motion is based upon ages ago. Based on the relationship between music and movement it is claimed that the body perceives the music, makes decisions and takes action (Özmenteş, 2007). Starting off from here, the effect of music on motion can be

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ⁱⁱ Correspondence: email svdkrkmz0@gmail.com

summarized as follows: First music, then thought, then motion; so feeling, thinking and acting. Music, which is always present at the eve (preparation) of the movement has always been close to '*sports*' whose essence is movement with this aspect.

At the Kırkpınar Oil Wrestling event music constitutes an important part of the event. Rituals take up an important place in the oil wrestling tradition, wherein music is also included. Kırkpınar Wrestling with its traditional clothes of ceremonial, ceremonial practices, oiling, *cazgır*, pray, salutation, *kispet*, *peshrev*, music, *agha*, wrestlers, wrestling, drum-shawm, which are national cultural elements, have a unique and original cultural texture (Yıldıran, 2000). In wrestling based on the struggle of two people under equal conditions without using any tools, wrestlers fulfill these rules one by one. Before starting the contest wrestlers in oil wrestling wear leather pants that cover their bodies according to Islamic rules from underneath the belly to underneath the knee cap. Wrestlers are subsequently oiled and they pray to their master Hazreti Hamza with three *İhlas* and one *Fatiha* verses by turning to the direction of Mecca. Once these prayers are completed, the announcer introduces the wrestlers to the spectators. Following the prelude consisting of warm-up and physical-fitness exercises, wrestlers are invited to engage accompanied by the drums and clarion (Gümüş, 1990; Şahin, 2003; Atabeyoğlu, 2000). With all these dimensions, the struggle in oil wrestling is also described as musical (Hatipler, 2010). The team of performers consisting of the drum and clarion plays wrestler tunes to accompany the wrestling competition. Due to all these implementations, the Kırkpınar Wrestling Meets that have been continuing for centuries were included in the UNESCO intangible culture assets list in 2011 due to their difference and unique structure. Our investigation tried to draw attention to the importance of the Kırkpınar Wrestling Meet which constitutes a special part in Turkish culture as an intangible cultural heritage with the "Wrestler Tunes" by displaying the effects of music on the wrestling and spectators and their historical aspects through literature search.

2. Method

In this article, the findings obtained by the literature review (Demirci, 2014; Keser, <http://kisi.deu.edu.tr>) method, which makes it possible to examine, compile, classify and synthesize a large number of studies due to the research subject, have been evaluated.

3. Findings

3.1 Intangible Cultural Heritage

Culture consists of areas, traditions, habits and rituals which have been mutually accepted and recognized in the social area, which are transferred from generation to generation and preserved. Tangible and intangible cultural areas, assets, elements and values are located at the basis of the existence and lives of societies. Fulfilling an important task in the preservation of these values and assets, UNESCO signed a charter in 2003 to define intangible cultural heritage as applications, representations, narrations, knowledge, skills and tools, equipment and cultural spaces related to them defined by

societies, groups as described as part of the cultural heritages of individuals in certain situations (Ekici et al., 2011; Oğuz, 2008). The definition of a living heritage transferred with “word of mouth” or “generation to generation” (Oğuz, 2009a) draws attention that the heritage and culture are a continuous existence. Since it carries deep traces of the society where it was born and lives, the heritage that should also be understood as a dialogue between generations and a bridge, is also a living entity. The intangible cultural heritage transferred from generation to generation gives societies a feeling of continuity and identity through being constantly recreated based on the interaction of societies and groups with their surroundings, nature and their histories (Oğuz, 2008). In other words, due to the fact that roots are within the cultural tradition living in that society, the intangible cultural heritage has a representative quality for the society or group that it belongs to and provides a contribution as a strength or connection that holds the society together to its continuity. UNESCO regards the intangible cultural heritage as the common memory of the society that creates and preserves this legacy, then that of all humanity. As much as preservation includes the sustainability of the heritage through identity determination, documentation, investigation, maintenance, development, strengthening and especially with the transfer from generation to generation through in and out of school education (within the master-apprentice relationship in traditional surroundings), it also includes securing through the livening of the different aspects of the heritage (Oğuz, 2009a). Among the values that UNESCO covers within the scope of cultural heritage there are traditional sports and games (<https://ich.unesco.org/en/social-practices-rituals-and-00055>).

3.2 Intangible Sports Heritage

Traditional sports and games taken into the scope of cultural heritage by UNESCO harbor the heritage elements of societies or groups since they are inseparably tied to the culture of a society. Carrying strong and important messages concerning the identities of societies sports heritage has a different and unique significance for people from each layer of society and age group. When a sport that is specific to the society in which it lives is performed, it also displays the cultural habits and traditions of that society.

Sports heritage research is a newly developing field within heritage studies. As a source of today, sports heritage has been used in everything from stadium design to legitimizing and blessing/commemorating contemporary sports practices (Ramshaw, 2011). Certain objects, positions, spaces or experiences of the heritage related to sport have definitive characteristics as indicators of this heritage. Four different sports heritages related to sports are mentioned (Ramshaw, Gammon, 2005):

- a. Tangible Immovable Sport Heritage; covers specific spaces possessing sportive importance having a special connection to the sportive past. These are normally physical structures and stadiums hosting happenings such as famous events, athletes or sports.
- b. Tangible Movable Sport Heritage; consists of objects and things which do not have to possess a spatial root.

- c. Intangible Sport Heritage; includes rituals, traditions, cheers, music, memories, nostalgia and other non-tangible elements related to sports. Rituals and traditions related to a certain physical origin are especially considered non-concrete immobile sports heritage. In certain situations, non-concrete sports heritage can maintain its existence for as long as traditions, rituals, cheers, etc. for as long as the space is present and is accessible.
- d. Goods and Services with Heritage Components; reproduced sports products and serves with heritage components are part of the sports heritage.

It is possible to say that intangible elements have different meanings and associations for everyone within sports heritage that covers quite a wide area and that they are present in memories as a special recollection or story. When considered historically, it is seen that cheers or music that are among intangible heritage elements always find a place for themselves in events such as magic or games where body movements are performed.

3.3 Sports-Music Relationship

As music can be utilized as an element of magic, healing, communication and entertainment as an occurrence that envelops and wraps an individual in almost every phase of life, it can also be used in different areas of life for different purposes as a morale-motivation tool in production activities, wars for the purpose of enhancing courage and sports events (Colombe, 2006; Aydođan, 2001). People were joyed and saddened, calmed and quieted or put into motion with music (Kalpaklı, 2010).

As an element of culture, music interacts with the other elements of culture, therefore it houses the characteristics of the culture where it is created and shaped. It establishes a connection between the “past” and “present” and the “present” and “future” in human life to ensure the sustainability of certain cultural features (Uçan, 1994). These cultural features distinguish a nation from others. One of the branches where emotions are intensified the most, music is the manner of expressing themselves, the carrier of societies and groups. Every nation has its own specific music and each music has a manner of performance specific to itself (Eralp, 1999) and area of utilization. An indication that a nation has a rich musical culture is that the music is used in other areas in their daily lives such as songs, dance, walks, business events in addition to accepting the forms of music it produces (Finkelstein, 1996). Music is in an intense relationship and interaction with sports as in almost every era and every area of our life.

Music, which can create or support the diversity of cultural expression of intangible cultural heritage elements (Ođuz, 2009b), has an intense relationship and interaction with sports as well as almost all aspects of our lives. In ancient Greece, where elegance was as important as physical harmony, most of the physical works were performed with music (Demirgen, Esin, 2016). For example, body exercises such as disc, spear throw, etc. were performed with a flutist. Plato pointed out that music and gymnastics cannot be separated from each other, emphasizing that music educates the soul and the philosophical part of the soul, while gymnastics provides physical health and strength as well as disciplining the psychological aspect of the soul (Dürüşken, 1991).

Similarly, in the Kırkpınar Oil Wrestling, the athletes wrestle with the drum-shawm (Ögel, 1987).

Starting with the ancient Turks possessing shamanist beliefs, music has effectively been included in every area of life such as government order and social life, ceremonies, feasts and entertainment. Flags and drums could not be considered separate from one another, the symbol and drums hanging in front of the tent of the leader were the symbols of government and music was always utilized in religious ceremonies. In addition to religious ceremonies, music was always included in sportive activities. Benefiting from the effectiveness of music in the subject of perceiving the motion rhythm, directing and initiating sports events and contests has been a method that was used in every period of history. In this context, it is known that events such as wrestling, spear throwing, horse races and soapwort are always practiced accompanied by military mehter music or mehter instrument drums and clarion (Sağlam, <https://www.academia.edu/37712355>).

3.4 Wrestler Tunes

Possessing a specific place in Turkish music since it is used in sportive activities, wrestler tunes are among the most colorful, lively and dynamic aspects of the Kırkpınar tradition. It is deemed that wrestler tunes conform to the instrumental ensemble in Nevbet and Mehter music and originated from this order (Çevik, 2011). Nevbet was the display of strength by playing the large drum or kös (drum with a boiler) set up in front of the tent of the leader, who is the head of government in Middle Asian tradition at certain times of day. Born from the tradition of striking Nevbet, Mehter is a type of music with important functions before and during the Ottoman rule as a war music, or to show the strength of the rulers, to sustain the continuity of the power of the government or monarchy during peace time, provide morale to the public and provide warnings at required times, also affecting artistic music in Europe (Elbaş, 2011).

Rituals have an important place within tradition. Before wrestling, wrestlers wear clothing called "kispet" made of leather that covers their bodies from the bottom of the belly to the bottom of the knee according to Islamic rules, then they are oiled, they turn to Qibla, read three Ihlas and one Fatiha, pray to Hamza, their master, and they are introduced to the audience by the announcer. After the peshrev, wrestlers are invited to "hold" with the drum-shawm. The struggle in oil wrestling is defined as musical in all these aspects (Hatipler, 2010). During the oil wrestling matches, the drummer and shawm performers accompany the process by playing wrestler music.

Having a specific and separate legacy due to the traces it left on Turkish music, mehter is utilized in zeybek and wrestler tunes as music to increase heroism, courage and desire. In all three tunes, instruments consisting of drums and clarion are the strict commonalities. The function of accompaniment is common to the essence of wrestler and zeybek tunes. The accompaniment is provided to wrestlers in wrestler tunes and to the dancers in zeybek tunes (Çevik, 2011). Holding a specific place in Turkish music as a unique type, there is no singing in wrestler tunes.

When wrestler tunes are examined, it is seen that they are playing fast when middle weight wrestlers are competing, but that they are playing more slowly when the

heavy weights come out and that clarion tunes are performed with more zest. Wrestler tunes start as heavy and long tunes (carried to a crescendo by bringing wrestlers and spectators to life) and continue and are completed as dance tunes (Çevik, 2011).

There are two basic formats in Kırkpınar wrestler tunes. The first format is the '*ağırlama*' section, performed without song, instrumentally as long-winded tunes, however taksim and similar improvisations are not included. The hosting section being the '*bağlı*' and divan tunes and having the '*dağlı*' sustaining a more treble path are the only significant differences of the melodies offered with a quality of a long tune. The battle section is the second section of the Kırkpınar wrestler tunes. The battle section consists of non-verbal, instrumental dance tunes with a broken pipe feature compared to the '*dağlı*' and '*divan ağırlaması*' (Çevik, 2011).

When the Kırkpınar wrestling tunes are examined melodically, it is seen that they are influenced from the Ottoman period palace music of the area and that wrestling tunes house the modal feature used in Turkish music in this context (Kurtişoğlu, Altuğ, 2009). Wrestler tunes are generally varieties of the Nikriz, Zavil, Uşşak, Karciğar, Hüseyini and Gülizar modes (Erdem, 2013).

It was concluded that the effect of the Kırkpınar wrestling mehter performance in managing and directing wrestling explains the historical heritage of Turkish armies that act with playing drums three times and stopping with playing pipes (Ekşi, 2011). Drums and pipes in the Kırkpınar tradition affect the wrestling rhythm, as well as drums and pipes direct the movement of the army. Wrestler tunes is similar to Mehter music because of its aspects such as contributing to the continuity of the power of the wrestlers during the competition and creating a stimulating effect to excite the audience when necessary. Due to this similarity, it is accepted that the method and influence of music in wrestling in Kırkpınar is a cultural heritage.

Performers of wrestler tunes perform and transfer the melodies they produce and those that come from the past and reproduce them. Musicians who perform wrestler tunes must know wrestling and wrestler tunes very well and must adjust the rhythm of the music according to the performance of the wrestling (Paşaoğlu, 2010). The drum style played in Kırkpınar is neither in Turkish folk music nor in Turkish art music. The performance of the drums played in Kırkpınar Oil Wrestling is an original performance in its stylistic aspect. The shawm melody played on the drum performance is unique in that it is open to improvisation (Ekşi, 2011). No other music other than this music is allowed at the Kırkpınar wrestling fields.

4. Conclusion

Turkish culture has quite a special and rich heritage as far as the diversity of concrete and non-concrete culture elements. Traditional structures, organizations and areas play an important role in the transfer of the present cultural experience to the future generations. One of these areas present in Turkey is the Kırkpınar Oil Wrestling Festival. The wrestling was included by UNESCO into the scope of Non-Concrete Cultural Assets in 2011 and was taken under protection.

Kırkpınar Oil Wrestling reflects the living heritage by going far beyond sports. Wrestler tunes, which is an indispensable element of wrestling, is known to be a culture and information carrier as well as being a way of communication for the Turkish nation. The music carries the codes and traces of historical and social events, emotions, acceptances, victories, experiences as well as the quality of art.

Kırkpınar Oil Wrestling events have a distinguishing position as there is no such long-performed sports event in the world. What provides the sustainability of the Kırkpınar Wrestling Meet is its traditionality. Elements such as music that facilitate and support recollection play an important role in preserving and allowing this traditionality to survive and be transferred to new generations with all their aspects and dimensions by taking care of areas that have a place in social memory. In this context, Kırkpınar Wrestler Tunes are sustained to allow the raising of generations, who have absorbed and internalized the philosophy of these values and also the possibility arises to enact new productions as the presentation influences and inspires while the tradition is performed. The tradition will have the possibility of being enriched thanks to the new productions that take place and new generations that demand them.

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