

Metin And : Turkish Dancing. From folk dancing to whirling dervishes-belly dancing to ballet. With 194 illustrations, 101 of them in color. Ankara, Dost Yayinlari 1976, 182 pages.

Dancing we may call the exteriorization of mental motions made visible with the help of bodily movements. As such it is known to all peoples on earth. This book on Turkish dancing was written by Metin And, who is Associate Professor in the Drama Department of the University of Ankara. He presents the findings of his research work in five parts, that is, Part One, Introduction: Background of Turkish Dancing. Part Two: The Ecstatic and Sacred Dancing. Part Three: Dancing as Spectacle. Part Four: Dancing for the Sake of the Dancer. Part Five: A Newcomer: Classical Ballet.

Ethnologists will take special interest in Part One and Part Two. They show us how Turkish dancing has its roots in sacred realms, that is in the shamanistic rituals of the Ural-Altai region from where the Turks immigrated to the Anatolian Peninsula. There they inherited the traditions of older inhabitants, among them the Hittites, the Greeks, the Phrygians, Isaurians, Cappadocians, and the Byzantines. The Turks accepted the Islamic faith, but heterodox Turkish elements are still scattered in Anatolia, and it is due to them that the specific Turkish elements in dancing have been preserved. Nomadic tribes, such as the Yürük and the Türkmen are of Turkish race and helped to spread and preserve Central Asian culture in Anatolia. Still in the sixties of the nineteenth century the Circassians, whom Czarist Russia was expelling, emigrated to Turkey, bringing along and preserving their own cultural heritage.

The third important factor in forming the Turkish dance is the Islamic culture. About this the author says that since the Islamic religion was antagonistic to dance, this cultural influence was largely negative, mostly because of the taboo forbidding mixed dancing of men and women. On the other hand, since the Islamic faith after the establishment of the Turkish Empire united Turks, Arabs and Persians and some minor nations, it can be said of Islamic culture that it facilitated interplay of these now united nations. Turkish culture was further enriched when large parts of Europe, Asia and Africa were incorporated in the Turkish Empire. Western culture began to influence Turkish dancing on a greater scale first during the nineteenth century and still more so after the first world war. Thus the Turkish dances contain elements from very heterogeneous sources.

The author proceeds by tracing some of the origins and influences through linguistic and iconographical evidence, written records and present-day survivals. It is interesting to follow the author in his elucidation of the history of Turkish dancing with the help of the above mentioned fourfold evidences. Not a few instances show shamanism as the great fountain of dancing. What is said about the various sources and origins of Turkish dancing is a well documented essay in itself which shows the complex ethnological ramification of the topic. It was the same drift of Central Asian Culture which resulted in the similarity of Turkish and Chinese dances and the mode of expression in painting as well. Dances with songs imported from Central Asia were popular in China at least from the Han dynasty on. Medieval Chinese travelers gave descriptions of dancing in Turkestan.

Among the dances of present-day Anatolia some are found which can be traced back to the oldest time of Anatolia. Also there many old dances had a magic-religious significance, only later came the recreational aspects into the foreground. However again and again traces of old pagan beliefs, though suppressed by both Christianity

and Islam, are still discernible among the country people.

Turkish dancing, after having incorporated Central Asian and Anatolian elements, came then under the impact of Islam. Though this religion shows a rather negative trend towards dancing, the interplay between the cultural traditions which had adopted it, was an asset in the development of dancing. The Islamic prohibition against dancing was mainly directed against some orgiastic remnants of Syro-Phoenician worship of Ashtoreth, Maloch, and Baal and against a wide-spread exorcism or devil-dancing found from Malaysia on over to India, Arabia, Persia, the Sudan, Egypt, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Tripolis. The tradition of having men play the parts of women is common in Central Asia and is not only due to Islam.

The establishment of the Turkish Empire led also to a close contact of the Turkish overlord to the various nations in the Balkan, so that Turkish influence through dance is felt as far as Hungary, and at the same time Balkan dances exercised their influence on the Turks.

The further development of Turkish dances took place in the setting of Istanbul and a few other big cities and in that of the village. The Turkish peasantry, that is eighty percent of the entire population, has in a thousand folk dances best preserved the characteristics of Turkish dancing through centuries.

The far greater part of the book is devoted to a detailed treatment of the existing forms of dancing, so in Part Two of the ecstatic and sacred dancing. Part Three: Dancing as Spectacle introduces many dances which are performed for onlookers. The author states that, "like all Asiatic theatre, the traditional Turkish theatre is a total theatre in the sense that many resources such as dance, music, acrobatics, songs, and story are fused together, all being always directed to produce laughter and sensuous pleasure in the spectator" (p. 132)

Part Four: Dancing for the Sake of the Dancer, treats folk dancing which serves as a pastime and recreation, its nature thus being different from both sacred and spectacular dancing. Finally in Part Five, A Newcomer: Classical Ballet, the history and the special features of modern Turkish ballet dancing is outlined. Its history begins with the inviting of an outstanding teacher of ballet dancing and the establishment of a dancing school. In 1947 the Turkish Government invited Dame Ninette de Valois, the choreographer and founder of the British Royal Ballet, to Turkey to establish a school which has already proven a success.

Professor Metin And uses 194 illustrations, the majority of them in beautiful colors, to enable the reader to follow the discourse. Turkish dancing is a subject matter that is first of all art. It also has links with magic and religion, with cultural history and racial psychology. A book like this is a meritorious accomplishment indeed.

M. E.

Andreas Bsteh: *Der Gott des Christentums und des Islams. Beiträge zur Religionstheologie Nr. 2. Mödling, St. Gabriel 1978. 192 Seiten.*

Since the book deals with a theological topic our journal need not take notice of it. But surely also students of religion will read it with interest and so a brief review of it is called for.

Christian theologians, both Catholics and Protestants, had a convention with Islamic theologians in a theological school in Austria (St. Gabriel) and read scholarly papers on the concept of God in their respective religions. Christianity and Islam are both strictly monotheistic but they differ in so far as the Christian God is triune

whereas Islam rejects the doctrine of the Trinity as polytheistic.

From the point of view of the science of religion, perhaps most interesting are the survey by Georges C. Anawati of the history of the encounter of Christendom and Islam [Zur Geschichte der Begegnung von Christentum und Islam] and the thoughts by Karl Rahner on the unity and trinity of God [Einzigkeit und Dreifaltigkeit Gottes]. Rahner argues that the concept of a triune God does not lead to polytheism but is rather an intensification of God's unity.

For students of comparative religion, who are not specialized in Islamic studies, the contributions by Islamic authors may be especially welcome, namely Tathalla Kholeif: Der Gott des Koran [The God of the Koran], Ibrahim Madkour: Der Begriff "Gott" im Islam [The Concept of God in Islam] and M. K. I. Gaafar: Gott ist das Endziel [God is the Final End].

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