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Source: *Asian Folklore Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 2 (1980), pp. 85-104

Published by: Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1178071>

Accessed: 08/09/2009 09:36

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On the Dramatic Fertility Rituals of Anatolian Turkey

By

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Anatolia has long been viewed as the bridge over which the great cultures passed, so Anatolian Turkey is a vast reservoir of various rites and practices. These practices have some embryonic dramatic tendencies, that is as a minimum element they involve an imitation or enactment of some other self or of another reality. And in this embryonic form the elements of the drama are found even in some folk dancing, especially in mimetic dances and choral dancing,—in the latter the dancers are frequently divided into two antiphonal sections. All these are relics of the forgotten cults of our Anatolian and Central Asian forefathers which have persisted until the present day among the peasants of Anatolia, and they were originally connected with a change in nature. They survive in surprising strength in a variety of versions even within single remote villages, they are wide-spread in Anatolia, and show analogous traits not only in general character but also in the coincidence of individual details.

Their existence does not seem to be known among the urban populace or outside of Turkey, perhaps due in part to the isolation of the rural world. They were first described by a distinguished folklorist, the late Ahmet Kutsi Tecer.¹ After his pioneering work great interest was manifested, and the subject has attracted the attention of researchers who have published studies of many features of these remarkable sur-

1. Ahmet Kutsi Tecer, *Köylü Temsilleri*, Ankara 1940.

vivals.² Also studies began to appear in the writings in European languages.³

We know that among all peoples drama originated in the magical rites of heathen worship. We can speak of drama only when a wholly new content has been given to the ritual. The ritual dramas of Anatolia never passed into the literary stage, they never merged with the main current of dramatic evolution. They have lingered on down to the present day in their crude, embryonic form. They are sufficiently graphic in their dramatic sense. The reason, however, why these rites did not develop into a literary drama form like the Dionysiac rites is not due to an inherent fault, but to external causes, mainly on one hand the Byzantine Church, and on the other hand Islam hampered the dramatic evolution of Anatolian folk-customs by their intervention. To a very considerable degree their dramatic elements are preserved in the folklore. Elements of the popular drama are represented very extensively in the rituals connected with the calendar or cycle of the seasons, and also in family ceremonies or the domestic cycle.

They consist of two sharply differentiated elements—the ritualistic and the realistic-comic. The former is the survival of primitive syncretism which has but one object with these rites and ceremonies, namely, to influence the course of nature to supply the community with their material wants. The latter are more recent innovations, either by the interpolation of episodes which had no connection with the magical ceremonies, or fresh comic scenes from everyday life. For Anatolian peasants these comic pieces have remained to the present day as mere shows and games just as has been the case mostly with the ritual parts. The most popular acts were domestic quarrels, conjugal fights, parodies of certain trades and professions. Though some did not evolve out of the ritual dramas, they naturally adopted themes, types and methods of presentation from the rituals as models. However, although we must concentrate on the ritualistic folk-plays, the realistic-comical ones will also be touched upon lightly, because of their remarkable resemblance to the ritualistic ones.

2. Several studies have dealt with these folk plays, among them may be listed the following: Süleyman Kazmaz, *Köy Tiyatrosu*, Ankara 1950; Sükrü Elçin's, *Anadolu Köy Orta Oyunları*, Ankara 1964; Metin And's *Dionisos ve Anadolu Köylüsü*, Istanbul 1962; *Oyun ve Bügü. Türk Kültüründe Oyun Kavramı*, Istanbul 1974, "Dramatik Köylü Gösterilerinin Ritüel Niteliği", *Türk Folkloru Araştırmaları Yıllığı*, Ankara 1975, pp. 1-15; Komşu Kültürlerde Dramatik Köylü Oyunları ve Türk Etkisi", *Türk Folkloru Araştırmaları Yıllığı*, Ankara 1976, pp. 1-25.

3. Metin And's *A History of Theatre and Popular Entertainment in Turkey*. Ankara 1963-64, pp. 53-59; Alessio Bombaci, "Rappresentazioni Drammatiche di Anatolia", *Oriens*, 6 (1963), pp. 171-193.

The nature and origins of these ritualistic folk dramas of peasants the world over may be explained in two ways: the first explanation is still the generally accepted one outlined by Sir James Frazer and developed by the so-called 'Cambridge school' of Classical Anthropology. It maintains that these mummer's plays are survivals of seasonal fertility rites. On the other hand Professor E. T. Kirby of U.S.A., refuting the Cambridge theorists, shows that they derive from shamanism, they are not related to the calendar and are not seasonal in nature.⁴ Between these two theories, as we understand it, there yawns a mighty chasm. Although for the interpretation of Anatolian folk plays we incline more towards the 'Cambridge school', we yet accept largely the share of shamanism in Anatolian folk plays and dances. Of course, it is fair to admit that the original meaning of these folk-survivals is not always obvious. Many of them have undoubtedly suffered a good deal of dislocation. In the course of centuries they have repeatedly been modified and adapted to new uses. However, happily for us, we are able to supply parallels to these relics of the shamanism of our Central Asian ancestors that have remained down to our time. In a recent publication we have endeavoured to describe these relics of Shamanism, and also analyzed four significant elements of a folk play from Kars which suggest the possible shamanistic origin: (1) Two adversaries, one in white and the other in black; (2) The simulated sacrifice of a pig; (3) The use of a stick-horse; (4) The use of a whip as a healing, revivifying instrument.⁵

But evidence to support the Cambridge theorists is more abundant in the Anatolian mummers' plays. Two main pieces of evidence that the nature and origins of these plays are seasonal and they are fertility rites are the following:

(1) Although the dates of the observances are not always uniformly fixed, due to one religion succeeding another and the changing of the calendar, especially the adoption of the Moslem lunar calendar, certain elements are often observed at a special occasion arising from the time of the year and the significance of the season such of harvesting, spring, mid-summer, and especially the rites celebrating midwinter and the turn of the sun towards the ascendant again.

(2) During field research, when peasants were asked why they

4. See Ernest Theodore Kirby's "The Origin of the Mummers' Plays", *Journal of American Folklore*, 84 (July-Sept. 1971), pp. 275-288; "Mummers' Plays and the Calendar", *Journal of American Folklore*, 86 (July-Sept. 1973); "The Shamanistic Origins of Popular Entertainments", *The Drama Review*, 18: 1 (March 1974), pp. 4-15; and his recent book *UR-Drama. The Origins of Theatre*, New York 1975.

5. Metin And, *A Pictorial History of Turkish Dancing*, Ankara 1976, pp. 6-7; 19-21.

performed these mummeries, though usually they would reply either that they were obliged to do so for antiquity or custom's sake, or they did so more for amusement, in some instances they would reply firmly that through these plays they could ensure a successful harvest, personal good fortune, and fecundity for their flocks. Although they are without rational control and rules, these attempts on the part of man to force the powers of nature to his will, fulfill similar functions to those its ritual ancestors still continued to keep up, partly because of the vague and unconscious feeling of probable efficiency and partly because of traditional customs, since peasants are obstinate conservators in outlook. These two are the most valuable pieces of evidence for the demonstration of surviving patterns of ritual in actual folk plays.

These ritualistic rustic plays always keep the same plot and the same unvarying characters from year to year. They are still expressed in a number of varieties of dramatic symbolism, and of social relations and social reality depending on those symbolic acts of which the basic and most widespread elements are the following:

(1) A combat or contest. Elements of combat or contest are a survival of fertility rites in which the contestants of opposed forces symbolize a struggle between the powers of life and death, summer and winter, light and darkness, the old king and the new one, father and son, the Old Year and the New Year. The fight itself might be a mimetic battle between groups, or more often between individuals. As we shall see below, the conflict of a hero with an adversary, the defeat and death of one side, his cure and return to life, form the central theme. In many of the Anatolian peasant plays we find in one instance a black faced character who is dressed in black goatskin or sheepskin and is called the Arab, and his adversary whose face is whitened and who wears a white goatskin or sheepskin. The custom of blackening the face is clearly indicated by the employment of the name Arab in this connection. The contrast between the dormant state of the powers of vegetation in winter and their awakening in spring also took the form of a dramatic contest representing two opposing principles. And sometimes the combat takes place between groups. For instance this can best be illustrated by an old and almost forgotten play called *Tuluk Oyunu* from Bor (Nigde), performed or observed by the trade guild of tanners. There are contestants called *Tulukçu* who wear white drawers and hold bladders made of goatskin filled with air. They fight by hitting each other with the bladders which make a big noise. While they are fighting the men called *Keçiler* (goat-men) dance, jump and encircle the contestants, these *Keçiler* have blackened faces or sometimes masks, and wear goatskins with sheep affixed, and hold packing-needles

with which they interfere by trying to prick the bladders of the *Tulukçu*. Similarly in Southern Anatolia among the Turkomans there is a mock battle called *Arab Oyunu* in which two groups representing Turks and Arabs engage in a sham fight. Sometimes the two adversaries are combined into one person. For instance, among the Turkoman tribes there is a play called *Solagin Oyunu* (The Play of the Left-handed one) in which an armed man enters holding a mirror in his hand. He carries on a long conversation with his reflection in the mirror, and at the end of a long dispute with his reflection, brandishes his sword and breaks the mirror, and thus the play is ended.

(2) We next come to the procession and quest. The plays are either presented as a procession or by repetition at various places in the intervals of a procession, or they may be presented in one place. The original reason for the former was to spread the magic about a whole community. In the latter case plays are presented in the village square where the onlookers are all the village people, and they seek to effect a communal spreading of the magic of a ritual act, by drawing the spectators into the action, or engaging the onlookers in improvised scenes. When it is a procession from house to house of men and children, they sometimes have blackened faces or are masked, and are dressed in the skins of animals. Sometimes they present a play in front of or inside each house to the assembled household, sometimes they sing suitable songs or dance, and they go on to the next house. They solicit contributions and receive largesse at every house. The good omen is communicated to those houses who give contributions, so the players gather a kind of blackmail, before or after the play. Usually at the winter solstice young people, dressed in skins representing camels, foxes, and other animals, go from house to house to the accompaniment of pipe and drum. They carry sheep-bells on their necks or on their waists. The bells attached to them were supposed to be a potent means of expelling demons and of wakening the good spirits of vegetation from their winter sleep. At each house they visit they are offered food, and when any house refuses to offer food (or money) they threaten the household. In certain parts of Anatolia the New Year is celebrated on the 13th of January in accordance with the Julian calendar, and on this day young boys from the village gather together. One of them has a long rope with a bag attached to it and others disguise themselves as a camel with bells on his neck. One boy acts as camel driver and they go from house to house. They lower the rope and bag down the chimneys to collect food. This practice is supplemented with dance and games. After all these collections the evenings are spent in feasting on the proceeds of the house-to-house collections.

In these parades, sometimes a ship or plough was drawn, no doubt a survival of a ploughing and sowing festival, in order to spread the influence of its benign presence over the whole community. There exist a number of rites on the customs of drawing in the furrows of the fields a plough, the central tool of the first spring labor, as an emblem of the agricultural spirit. For instance, in the village Yenigazi in the district of Sarıkamış(Kars), during the months of April and May there is a ceremony observed called *Çift Çıkarma* or *Çift Ekmegi* (Presenting the Yoke or Yoke Bread), to celebrate the first ploughing and the first scattering of seed and to promote the fertility of the ground. The head of the family responsible for preparing this ceremony would wear a fur coat, and to the hairs of this fur some candies were fastened. On his waist in lieu of a belt he would have a rope. To this rope the bag of seed was attached. He would carry a long stick in his hand, and the plough was adorned with many colours. Oxen yoked to the plough were adorned with charms, beads and some oil was smeared on their horns. While the plough was going its rounds the young man guiding in front of the plough distributed slices of bread baked for this occasion. The ploughman had a tail made of rags and his face was blackened with soot. People threw some eggs at his back and sprinkled water on him. An elderly man from the village could break two eggs on the horns of the oxen and offer some bread to the oxen. People would pray for plentiful crops. Dancing took place. The ploughman filled his bag of seed, and the priest of the village could take a handful of seed, and after praying could return the seeds to the bag. Some elderly people added some candles and coins to the seeds. When the seeds were scattered, the children would pick these coins and candies from the ground. After the ploughing was completed the parade could return from the fields to the village, and after deciding who was going to be responsible for preparing the next year's ceremony there was a communal meal, which was followed by various games and dances. In many agricultural festivals in many communities all over the world the presence of a ship led in solemn procession is observed as the emblem of the fertility god. Although in Anatolia the presence of a ship is not real⁶ yet in the Anatolian villages we find representations of ship by men. For instance in İçel, there is a play called *Gemi Oyunu* (The Play of the Ship) in which some fifteen or twenty men holding a long pole upright as the ship's mast, bring their heads together in mass, representing a ship. One person is carried on the ship, and the group collects largesse, and occasionally they

6. In the Ottoman pageants elaborate ships that were moved by men concealed within passed through the streets, or were dragged on wheels. See picture 2 and 86 in Metin And's *Kırk Gün Kırk Gece*, Istanbul 1959.

change the man they carry for another. Another example is from the village Yeniköy in the Pertek district (Tunceli) called *Gemi*, a ship is represented by two men with a large cushion on which the sailor sits and rows; when the ship rolls and the tempest capsizes the ship, the sailor asks for succour, and finally the ship is righted to the merriment of the sailor.

(3) Another important element is the representation of animals. In almost every play animal disguises are used, and occasionally live animals. The most common are camels, horses (sometimes as hobby-horses), bears, mules, wolves, turtles, eagles, hedgehogs, pigs, foxes, storks, rats, partridges, rabbits, cats, deers, gazelles. Sometimes animals are the central figures and the functions of characters are transferred to animal-guises. For instance, the central incident of death and resurrection, which will be dealt with below, is taken up by animal-guises. For instance, a New Year play called *Ali Fattik* from the village Pırnakapan in the Aşkale district (Erzurum) is divided into two parts: *Deve Oyunu* (The Camel Play) and *Ayı Oyunu* (The Bear Play). The camel is made by two persons who under a large cover form the front and hind legs respectively. A horse skull covered with rags forms the head, and in lieu of eyes some small round mirrors are placed. The men carry a framework representing the hump of the camel on their shoulders. The man in the front is also responsible for moving the jaws of the camel. And the bear is simply made by fastening pieces of furs to the player's legs, arms and head. He has a chain and a bell attached to his neck. The other characters are *Eşkiya* (The Brigand) dressed in white, with whitened face, and white moustache and beard, his headdress is of fur stuffed with chaff, and he has a whip. The camel driver dressed in black, carries a stick to beat the camel. *Kâtip* (the secretary or clerk, whose function is to collect the largesse) wears a hump and his trousers are stuffed, a dried turd is hanging on his neck which he uses as a writing pad to make an inventory of the proceeds of his collection with a stick as pen. Also there is the bear tamer, and two brides (men disguised as women). The players start with group dancing. First the camel driver and his 'bride' arrive mounted on the camel's back. The brigand demands the 'bride', and with his stick knocks the camel driver down. And the bride weeps over her husband's body. Meanwhile the secretary records the collection of food, and the camel driver is brought back to life. This part is followed by the bear play in which the bear tamer and bear arrive with pipe and drum players, and the bear dances to music with the others. Suddenly the bear falls down dead, and the bear tamer thinks that his bear has died of hunger and asks for some dough with which he feeds his animal. After eating the dough the bear is restored

to life, this causes general enjoyment and then everybody takes part in the dancing. Those two plays are presented from house to house and food is collected from every house, and finally a communal feast is arranged. Another play, *Geyik Oyunu* (The Stag Play), which we may look upon as another form of the death and resurrection play is from the villages of Tokat,⁷ where the central character is a stag.⁸ Another example of a play where the main accent is on the theme of breeding a camel is the play *Deve Bodlaması* (The Play of Causing a Camel to Give Birth) from the village Çukurbag in the Mut district (Içel)⁹ (Fig. 1).

(4) Other important elements common to most Anatolian plays are the mock or ritual marriage, obscene pantomimes of the sexual act, the presentation of objects such as clubs, sticks or mallets in phallic shape or a mere stick with allusions to its phallic meaning; all are bound up with the fecundity of the earth. Mock marriages and sexual acts have faded out in some regions, and now they are suggested by calling the women's roles invariably *gelin* (bride, usually duplicated characters), or by attempted rapes, paying improper attention to the bride, sexual jokes designed to echo the elements which have disappeared. The display of an artificial phallus suggest that the plays are descended from ancient phallic rituals.¹⁰ Two variants from two different regions are on the topic of sexual intercourse and are relics of phallic worshipping. The first is called *Çırpı Toplama Oyunu* (The Play of Gathering Brushwood) from the village Tozkoparan in the district of Pertek (Tunceli). There are three characters, two are sisters who are gathering brushwood and the third is a man lying on his back with a drum-stick standing upright between his legs. While the two sisters are gathering brushwood, the younger sister seizes and tries to pick-up the drum-stick. Her elder sister finds her shameful, but later both sisters fondle it, and finally with charcoal they paint the phallus black. The play contains scraps of

7. See *A History* . . . p. 57. It is interesting to note that similar but more elaborate plays were presented in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Edirne and Istanbul. See *Turkish Dancing*, pp. 148-150.

8. In the villages of Arkoglu and Serpil it is called *Ceran* (from *Ceylan* that is gazelle).

9. For various animal plays see *Oyun ve Bügü*, pp. 237-243.

10. The clownish demon had the phallus, which will be supported by the analogy to the comic figure Karagöz in the Turkish shadow play. See Metin And's, *Karagöz. Turkish Shadow Theatre*, Ankara 1975, pp. 69-70 and figures on pages 68 and 69, and Fig. 59. It is interesting to note that in the Ottoman processions in the 17th century the display of a giant size phallus was exhibited conspicuously in the presence of women onlookers. See *Turkish Dancing*, p. 137.



Fig. 1. Deve Bodlaması.



Fig. 2. Phallus in Madimak.



Fig. 3. Arab and Şişman (Fatman).



Fig. 4. Two brides.



Fig. 5. Fox.



Fig. 6. Arab Oyunu.



Fig. 7. Arab mounts the camel.



Fig. 8. Barber (Tunceli).



Fig. 10. A puppet show with two puppets.



Fig. 9. Goat Man.



Fig. 11. Living Puppets (Malazgirt).

dialogue with an indecent tone. In the second play, *Madımak*,¹¹ from the village Gümüştepe (Yapaltun) in the Şarkışla district (Sivas), sexual intercourse is more conspicuous and the dialogue is replete with sexual jokes (Fig. 2).¹² In this play also we find two women who are picking *madımak* and a man who is lying on his back, with between his thighs a stick, of which the end has been thickened by wrapping a handkerchief round it to make it resemble the male organ. The two women notice the man and his organ, they dispute among themselves who is going to sit on it and about its size. Both in turn sit on it and engage in shameless acts. Both women seek for the favor of the man. The man proposes to marry both. And finally the women blow out water they hold in their mouths and splash and wet the man, and the man stands up after the splashing. It contains two important elements in connection with notions of agrarian fertility: Copulation takes place in the fields and there is a faint trace of the theme of death and resurrection when the man stands up when water is splashed over him.

(5) There are other and less frequent ingredients with allegorical and ritual functions such as a woman carrying a cradle; throwing ashes or salt, leaping, jumping high; wearing furs; jingling bells to expel winter and evil and others. All have been kept smouldering beneath the ashes of the centuries, and even after the religious content has been emptied out of a ritual drama, some elements can still be recognized. Let us examine an example of the last that is, the expulsion of evil. Connected with this, in the old Turkish calendar between the 25th December (called *Evvel-i Kancolos*, i.e. before *Kancolos*) and the 6th of January (i.e. 12th day or *Ahir-i Kancolos*, that is after *Kancolos*), some mysterious beings can bring evil and endanger the prosperity of the domestic hearth. During this period these creatures must be expelled by making a great noise with chains.¹³ On the Black Sea Coast there is a play called *Karakancilo Oyunu* which is named because of its association with these beings. These spirits are neither human nor animal. They wear pointed hats and they are tall. The characters in the play consist of an old man with a turban and a false beard, holding a stick; a camel devised by covering a person with a rag, on the top of which is a pack-saddle with bells attached; a stoker whose face is blackened; a young man, and a young woman, who is represented by a veiled young man.

11. *Madımak* is a spinach-like vegetable. There is a mimetic song dance by the same name from Yozgat and Sivas imitating the gathering of *Madımak*.

12. For the full text see Nurhan Karadag. *Köy Seyirlik Oyunlarının Özü ve Biçimi*, Ankara 1974 (unpublished doctoral dissertation), pp. 107–114.

13. See J. B. Navon, "Rouzname", *Fundgruben des Orients*, Wien 1814, IV, p. 146.

There is also a collector of contributions with a big pack. They enter every house after a dialogue between the woman and the people inside the house. The old man sits in one corner on top of the camel, the stoker tends the hearth, and the young man and girl dance. This goes on until the family contributes something to the collector. The family tries to identify the players and the players engage in a mock fight with the family. They go from house to house till the *Karakoncilos* have been driven from every house. Afterwards they assemble and eat their collections. In the Balkan countries these spirits are called *Kallikanzaros* or *Karkandzalu*, from the Turkish *Kancalos*, and it is believed that they try to extinguish the fire on the hearth and thus gain access to the house by the chimney.

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There are two central incidents of these mummeries which are widely spread all over Anatolia and Europe: (A) One of the actors falls down as though mortally wounded and is keened for as though dead, but incantations, or the spell of a doctor, restore him to life and he is borne away in triumph; (B) The abduction of a girl, and her return, with her grieving mother; (C) a combination of these two main themes. In both themes one can recognize the symbolical notion of the death and sprouting of the vegetable world. When the death or abduction occurs, not only the characters concerned but the whole assembly of onlookers pretended to mourn over the death or the abducted girl. And when the dead person comes to life and the abducted girl returns, the actors as well as the onlookers express their joy. Let us examine more closely one example of these three types of themes.

(A) The death and resurrection of the fertility god (Adonis, Attis, Osiris, Dionysus) is performed in all parts of Anatolia as well as in Europe to express the idea of the dying and reviving god, by which primitive man explained the decay and growth of vegetation.¹⁴ In the villages of Malatya the play is called *Kıyarısı* (Midwinter). In these villages midwinter is observed on the 28th of January. On the 27th of January young men with drums announce the coming of mid-winter. One of the players is disguised as an old Father, he wears a hump and has a false white beard. His son Arab(oglu) has a blackened face. And four men wearing long robes represent four brides. Together with ten to fifteen men they go from house to house. Letting the household

14. For various examples see *Dionisos* . . . pp. 48-54 and *Oyun ve Büyü*, pp. 196-201.

know that he has a lame Arab son and four daughters-in-law, the old man asks for some charity. All dance to the accompaniment of a drum and sing an appropriate song announcing mid-winter and asking for charity. After the song the old man falls down dead. The brides and the Arab mourn over him. After collecting some food or money they take the body of the old man, who comes to life again. This is repeated at every house, and in the evening after the collection they dance and eat all the food they have collected. In some plays the healing is done by the aid of a doctor, as is the case in the play called *Bitlis Zeybegi*, or by putting some dry fruits and cereals in the dead person's mouth, or by magic or incantations and spells.

(B) The abduction of a girl and her return, symbolizing the descent into Hades and the rise to a new life, as we have the descent of Istar into the realm of darkness and death in search of her lover Adonis, or of Demeter, in the Eleusian mysteries, into the realm of Pluto to visit her daughter Persephone, of Mylitta into the underworld in search of her dead husband Tammuz, of Dionysus to lead his mother Semele out of Acheron, or of Orpheus, in the Orphic rites, to win back his wife, Eurydice, from Hades, and so on, all symbolising the decay and revival of nature. Though numerous examples exist,¹⁵ the theme is best exemplified by a play called *Efe and Kadi Oyunu* from the villages of Burdur where there is also among the characters the mother of the abducted girl, a rustic prototype of Demeter and the Mater Dolorosa. The principal actors in the play are three or four *Efe*, swashbucklers who carry guns and daggers in their hands; a woman *Gürcü* (Georgian), whose face is covered, and finally a character called *Arab* who wears all his clothes turned inside-out and has a sort of hat made of newspaper. His face is painted black, and around his neck hangs a little bag with holes in containing ashes and salt. There is also a judge who has padded his back and chest to make himself appear hunchbacked. His beard and moustache are made of wool and he carries as prayer beads a string of potatoes, onions and snail shells. A member of the audience acts as the village headman. In addition to the characters mentioned, there are also secondary or optional characters, e.g. the Hobby Horse, the 'Satan' with a black face and sheepskin clothing, an old man in white called *Dede* (old man) who holds a bow and mallet (a phalliform wooden object) both of which are the implement of the wool-carder; the girl's mother carrying a small cradle,—the baby in the cradle actually being a chicken (in a different play from Tokat called *Dede or Arab Oyunu*, the same old

15. For various examples see *Dionisos* . . . pp. 62-66 and *Oyun ve Bügü*, pp. 201-207.

woman carries a cradle on her back, and continuously spins wool), the doctor, the garrison commander, a camel, a bear, and a white horse. The play starts with the swashbucklers and Arab walking round the girl, who is soon carried off by a member of the audience. This causes general despair among the audience. The swashbucklers brandish their weapons and ask Arab to tell them where the girl is. Eventually Arab finds the girl and joy takes the place of grief. The second half of the play is called *Kadı* (the Judge). While the girl is dancing, the judge, a camel and the gendarmes arrive. The swashbucklers then carry off the girl so that she may dance only for them. The girl's mother appears on the scene weeping for her abducted daughter and bemoaning her daughter's fate, and she lodges a complaint with the judge. An investigation is carried out, at the end of which the swashbucklers are arrested and tied up together with the girl. The judge then proceeds to marry Arab and the girl (a mock marriage is performed, evidently intended to promote fertility by magical sympathy) during which the swashbucklers become very angry and begin to beat the Judge. Then Arab begins to make wild gestures, and seizing the little bag which he carries round his neck, he throws ashes (probably for purification) and salt on the fire, causing crackling noises to which he dances.

(C) A combination of the two main themes i.e. death and resurrection and the abduction of the girl, can be illustrated by a great number of plays.¹⁶ Here is one example of this type called *Saya Gezme*¹⁷ performed in the villages of the Koyulhisar district (Sivas). The occasion is to celebrate the breeding of the cattle which takes place in April. The play is presented fifty days before April, that is in February. In some villages the same play is enacted at the New Year. The main characters in the play are: *Arab*, who has blackened his face, wears on his head a dried pumpkin, and on his waist some bells; *Şişman* (the Fatman) has a long white beard, his padded coat is turned inside-out and padded and he wears a large hat (Fig. 3); two brides (Fig. 4). The Fox, usually played by a boy with two caps twisted and attached to his head as the ears of the fox, has a tail made of a broom, and carries in his hands ashes or flour (Fig. 5). The play opens with *Şişman*, followed by the two brides. *Şişman* orders *Arab* and the Fox to clear the acting ground, which they do with the help of clubs. *Şişman* dances with the brides, the Fox nuzzles the brides which infuriates *Şişman*, and with his gun he kills the Fox. The onlookers lament his death. One of the brides

16. For various examples see *Oyun ve Bügü*, pp. 208–212.

17. On the meaning of *saya* and its function see Pertev Naili Boratav's, "Saya, une fête pastorale des Turcs d'Anatolie et d'Azerbaïdjan", *TURCICA. Revue d'études Turques*, III (1971), pp. 22–30.

restores the Fox to life, and everybody expresses his joy. Jingling his bells, *Arab* pursues the Fox. Meanwhile one of the spectators abducts the brides. After some disputes and dialogues, the abducted brides return. After that the group of players goes from house to house, singing appropriate songs and making a collection of food. While the songs are sung, they make a loud noise with the bells, and the Fox throws the ashes or flour at the household. After their visits come to an end, they gather and eat the food they have collected.

In some regions and even within one village we find performances which include nearly all the elements and the central themes with which we have dealt so far. For instance in the village Yenice, halfway between Bandırma and Karacabey, a conglomerate of independant playlets linked together like a suite can be seen on the 14th of September to commemorate the liberation of the Karacabey from their enemies during the War of Independence. (1) The first play is *Arab Oyunu* which is very popular and widespread in Anatolia (Fig. 6). The characters are two (or four) swashbucklers (*efe*) holding shotguns, two (or four) men disguised as women, the principal actor Arab (who also appears in the following plays) whose face, hands and legs are blackened with soot and who wears a multi-coloured pointed fool's cap, and a hobby-horse. Arab enters first. His appearance is welcomed by the onlookers. He is followed by the hobby-horse. Arab abducts one of the "girls", the swashbucklers try to stop him, and the man on the hobby-horse abducts the other "girls", both abductions are repeated several times. In the same village a variant of this scene is called *Kadı Oyunu* (The Play of the Judge).

(2) This is followed by a play called *Kasap Oyunu* (The Play of the Butcher). Two men come forward, one holding knives in his hand. While he is dancing with the knives, the other lies on his back and his face is covered by a kerchief. The man standing pretends to rip open and remove the other's intestines while his victim struggles, then he pretends to inflate him by blowing air, and his victim simulates swelling. Then both dance.

(3) The third play is *Çift Sürmek* (The Play of Ploughing). The chief actor holds a pole four meters long and a pickaxe, and two tin oil-cans to make a noise. While he digs the ground, another man comes and claims ownership of this land. After bargaining for a long time they reach an agreement and start measuring the land, using the long stick as a yard-stick. Some onlookers run away so as not to be hit by the stick. After the measuring is completed, the ploughing starts. Two men are yoked to the plough in lieu of oxen. Then the corn is sown. While the ploughman is sleeping, two dogs arrive. These are two

children on all fours, naked from the waist up, and with tails made of twisted newspaper, occasionally these are set on fire. They are followed by a pig (somebody on all fours covered with goatskin, with a nose made of a soft shoe). While he is nuzzling and eating the corn, the dogs walk around the sleeping ploughman and urinate over him. The ploughman awakes and chases them away.

(4) This is followed by the antics of a camel. As already indicated, the Camel play, in which two persons acting as the front and hind legs respectively hide themselves under a large cover is one of the most popular and widespread. In this case Arab mounts the camel and says some jibbering words as if he were talking Arabic (Fig. 7).

(5) The last play of this series, where there are two gypsies, one male and the other a 'she' gypsy, is the most important. First they make a fire where they prepare coffee, and later they pretend to forge and hammer iron (probably a ploughshare). Afterwards a dispute ensues between them, the 'he' gypsy climbs over the 'she' gypsy and mock sexual intercourse is enacted. The onlookers intervene and try to separate them but they continue. All this is followed by folk dancing in which all participate, and it culminates in a communal feast.

The third and fifth skit show a remarkable resemblance to the so-called "Modern Thracian Carnival Play" recorded first by Dawkins,¹⁸ and then used by Frazer and by all the other adherents of "the Cambridge school" as if it were a uniquely comprehensive example, whereas Anatolia offers hundreds of examples of this, besides, even the village where the "Modern Thracian Carnival Play" has been recorded is still within the Turkish border. And in all the Balkan countries there are abundant examples identical to those of Anatolian Turkey. These identical practices may be explained in two ways: either they were of independent origin, and their identity can be explained by the uniformity of the peasant mind, or more likely on the other hand they had a common origin and started from a common center, their dissemination throughout the area coming about through the migration or mixture of races. And with great likelihood this influence can be traced back to Anatolian Turkey. This influence, in fact, seems to embrace several layers of accumulated traditions, mainly from before the Turks first settled in Anatolia and also after Turkish domination of these lands, since the traces can be seen not only in their specific forms and certain of their stage settings, but in Turkish loan words for characters such as *yüzbaşı* (captain), *zeybek*, *Yeniçeri*, *Kadı* (judge), *kadın* (woman), *Bey*,

18. See R. M. Dawkins, "The Modern Carnival in Thrace and the Cult of Dionysus", *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 26 (1908), 191 ff; A.J.B. Wace, "North Greek Festivals", *Annual of the British School at Athens*, 16 (1909-10), 232 ff.

Köroğlu, *asker* (soldier), *Seymen*, *köpek* (dog), *muhtar* (headman), *koç* (ram), or in the names of objects such as *kamçı* (whip), *tulum* (bag), *zurna* (pipe), *siniki* (from *sini* which is a round tray), *kurbania* (from *kurban* which is sacrifice),¹⁹ or even in the general name given to a type of play. We would like to illustrate the importance of these traces by one example which is widespread. This is the word *Cemal*. In some parts of Northern Pindus the mummers are called *Dzhamalari*,²⁰ and in Bulgaria in south-eastern Thrace and the north-eastern part some *kukker* players call themselves *djemale*,²¹ and in southern Yugoslavia or in Macedonia *dzmala*[ri], or *dzamaldziji*.²²

The word *Cemal*, from Arabic, is a proper name for man, or it means the beauty of the face, and *cemal-ullah* means God's blessing which in this case fits the purpose of a fertility rite. In some of the western parts of Anatolia *Camala* is a name given to all entertainments celebrating the completion of the harvest.²³ This is a very widespread rite all over Anatolia under the name *Cemal* or *Cemalcik*. Due to the shortness of space we can give only one illustration from the village Batkın in the Malkara district (Tekirdag) where even today peasants believe in its efficacy in ensuring a successful harvest. It is performed in autumn. There are four characters: two are called *Cemal*, they have bells on their ankles and their waists and wear *Kepenek*, coarse shepherd's capes, which are stuffed with chaff. A third is *gelin* (the bride) and the fourth is *Şeytan* (the Devil) who is blackened, and has a pointed hide cap. They carry lighted torches, and move to the accompaniment of a bagpipe. First they jump and jingle their bells around a bonfire, repeating the lines "Cemal has arrived, have you seen him? / He has saluted, have you acknowledged it?" One hits the other with a stick and knocks him down. He dies. The 'bride' weeps over his body, and when he is hit again, one of his legs lifts into the air. Eventually he is revived. All start jumping. Then they start a procession from house to house, each house gives them some wheat, and before offering it the head of the household throws a handful of wheat at his roof. The players wish good fortune to those who give them wheat. Those who do not

19. For countless Turkish loan words that spring up daily in Greek speech see Konst. Kuklide, *Leksilogion Ellenikon Aekseon*, Athens 1960. For Turkish loan words in Greek folk plays see C. A. Romaios, *Cultes Populaires de la Thrace*, Athens 1949.

20. See A.J.B. Wace and M. S. Thomson. *The Nomads of the Balkans*, New York 1913, p. 139.

21. See R. D. Zlatkovskaia, "On the Origin of Certain Elements of the Kuker Ritual Among the Bulgarians", *Sovetskaia etnografiia*, 3 (1967), p. 34.

22. See Milovan Gavazzi, "Le Masque en Yougoslavie", *Le Masque dans la Tradition Européenne*. Binche 1975, p. 326.

23. See *Derleme Sözlüğü*, III, Ankara 1968, p. 853.

give them any wheat, they curse. They arrange entertainments, children are given some gifts, and they have mixed group dancing in the fields.

The Turkish influence can be detected not only in the Balkan countries, but also in some ethnic groups from different religions living in Anatolia, such as the Armenians. An usually rich variety of forms of performance is linked to the seasonal and rural celebrations which have survived among Armenians in Anatolia: some are ambulatory group performances or collections of food to organize festivities in the houses of the villagers. And there are large group performances of the so-called "Khan-Pasha-Shah" group, enacted particularly during the Shrovetide holidays, in which mummers disguised as Khan, Pasha, Shah, clerk, police, and there are military and mock court scenes. Some reflect elements of fraternal antagonism usually with duels between brothers.²⁴ In a later stage "Khan-Pasha-Shah" groups of plays developed as a political stage, where criticism of local rulers and parodied descriptions of various authorities such as khans and pashas and local officials took place. They have been recorded in more than a hundred variants, frequently differing very widely from one another.²⁵ One of their interesting characteristics is that the language used in these skits often is not Armenian but Turkish; one may conjecture that the reason for that is due to the necessity imposed by the official censorship. Here is an example of a "Khan-Pasha-Shah" type of play whose death and resurrection and abduction themes reflect traits similar to the Turkish ones. The leading characters in the Carnival play called *Porsug*²⁶ are: (a) Porsug (the title role) with a hunchback, wearing a mask with a long nose, a long beard; with a white turban, dressed in white, he holds a whip; (b) *Arab*, wearing a black mask, dressed in black with a leather belt and a long black pointed cap, also holds a whip; (c) *Zeybek*, red mask, with black moustache, short beard, dressed in red, a large sash round his waist, a long cap, and holding a long spear; (d) Judge wearing a yellow mask with moustache and beard, a long black robe and holding a rosary; (e) Doctor, wearing a mask with glasses and

24. Sometimes the adversaries are two brothers, one kills the other, generally slaying him without knowing that he is his brother and only realising it after his death. A parallel instance can be given from England in the Galatian plays. No doubt this motive of one brother killing the other and grieving after his death is related to the ancient Egyptian story of "The Two Brothers", Hata and Ampu. See Sir James Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, XI, 134 ff.

25. See V. Btoyani, *Hay Zoghovrtagan Khagher* (The Armenian Folk Games), Erivan 1963.

26. Btoyani, pp. 111-113.

a black moustache, in European costume, with a hat made of paper, holding a walking-stick; (f) Bride played by a man, 'her' face is covered, she has a silver belt and holds small finger cymbals. Besides these main characters, there are a number of auxiliary and minor characters. First the bride mounted on a camel (made by two men) visits houses. They enact a play in each house. First a group dance takes place, which is followed by the recitation of poems, songs and riddles. Porsug tells nonsensical formulae of fairy tales (*tekerleme*) such as "That is a lie, this is a lie, the snake has swallowed the elephant . . ." and his secretary pretends to record all these on a thin cigarette paper and at the end of each tale he indicates that it is a lie. After these, Zeybek asks the bride to dance, and she does. Porsug tries to win 'her' favor by giving her some gifts, meanwhile Zeybek and Arab quarrel. Porsug abducts the bride, Zeybek pursues them and with his spear kills Porsug. Porsug's aid calls the doctor and the doctor resurrects him with a prescription consisting of twenty-five to thirty names of animals, birds and worms. When Porsug revives they go to the Judge with Zeybek. The Judge takes bribes from both, and lets them go, upon which both claim back their bribes. A second mock trial is enacted, and this is followed by a general dance, and a feast arranged with the money and food collected from the houses, and the remains of the collection are distributed to the poor.

—II—

In addition to the types (A), (B) and (C), there are the following types and categories, some of which are rough and ready dramatic entertainment more for amusement, and divertissement, though in many of them the allegorical notions of rituals can be recognized, and in some the ritualistic function is carefully maintained and they retain the popular belief in their original efficacy on nature in fulfilling certain needs closely bound to the life of the community.

(D) Skits from everyday life and of domestic themes,²⁷ such as marriage; quarrels between the bride and brother-in-law, or between husband and wife; polygamy; sterile women; going to towns or on pilgrimages; and of similar nature. Some mirror social evils.

(E) Parodies of trades and professions.²⁸ These are skits parodying the various trades and professions, they are satiric, and their barbes are directed chiefly against authorities such as judges. The most wide-

27. For various examples see *Oyun ve Bügü*, pp. 212-220.

28. For various examples see *Oyun ve Bügü*, pp. 221-227.

spread professions are barbers (Fig. 8), butchers, doctors, millers, tinsmiths, teachers, brick-makers, etc.

(F) Agrarian skits²⁹ are on the themes of sowing, harvesting, ploughing etc. and also the extermination of animals such as boars, which are harmful to the fields, and measuring fields and determining the boundaries of a field for ownership. There is an interesting vintage ceremony called *Bag Bozumu* (Vintage) from Çankırı performed at the end of October, in which the central character is a fox-guiser, who goes from one vineyard to the other wishing prosperity, and each owner offers him fresh or dried grapes. In connection with this there are skits which are performed to bring about certain natural phenomena favorable to agriculture such as rain. There is a large variety of practices for rain under the names of *Bodi Bodi*, *Bodi Bostan*, *Çömçe Gelin*, *Cula*, *Gelin Gök*, mostly based on puppets and effigies on which water is splashed. Among Armenians in Anatolia one of the observances for causing rain is to make the 'Goat Man'³⁰ (Fig. 9), or 'Kosa Gelin'³¹ a guiser with a goat mask and goat skin, or a goat's or pig's head is stuck on a long pole. When it passes through the streets water is splashed on it from the houses.³² Another practice based on sympathetic magic is directed towards the opposite aim, namely causing the sun to appear. On the Black Sea Coast, where it is called *Kuç Kuçura*, young boys go from house to house carrying torches, singing and dancing. They receive food from the houses and fling their burning torches towards them, after which the sun is supposed to be bound to shine. There are also skits on welcoming the coming spring.

(G) Plays on shepherds and herdsmen.³³ The rites are more on the welfare and increase of the flocks and herds, to ensure prolific ewes, so that many lambs may be born and much wool gained at shearing, such as *Çan Sallama* (Jingling the Bells), *Koç Katımı* (Putting the Rams to the Ewes). To ensure fecundity and to cause the flocks to multiply before the breeding season of animals there are a large variety of ceremonies, of which the most widespread is the *Saya Gezmek* (or *Yüz Kömbesi*) which is performed the hundredth day after putting the ram to the sheep. *Davar Özü* is practiced one month before the birth of the lambs. After the lambing there is a ceremony called *Dal Töresi* to give presents to the shepherds. There are rites against the raids of wolves on the flocks and herds: the *kurt dolaştırma* (Carrying about

29. For various examples see *Oyun ve Bügü*, pp. 227-230.

30. Btoyani, p. 147.

31. Btoyani, p. 259.

32. Btoyani, pp. 165-66.

33. For various examples see *Oyun ve Bügü*, pp. 231-236.

the Wolf) is a ceremony which requires the carcass of a wolf stuffed with hay. A white beard made of raw wool is added and the carcass is carried from house to house, money being collected. Thereupon the following formula is recited:

The evil thou hast done brings thee no gain,
Not even dogs want to take thee now.

and the carcass is flung to the ground on its back, the men hitting it with a stick and dancing on it. For beneficial effect on flocks there is a ceremony in the villages of Konya called *Tekecik* done at the beginning of November, for the occasion when the goat flocks are handed to another goatherd.

(H) Plays arising out of tales, legends.³⁴ The most widespread are plays based on some episodes of the *Köroğlu* legend. Sometimes the central character in these plays is the most popular tale hero Keloglan. There are also heroic plays from the episode of the War of Independence for the liberation of Turkey from her enemies.

(I) Victimizing and joking plays and dumb show plays.³⁵ There are a number of plays of semi-dramatic character victimizing some onlookers by horse play, practical jokes or by frightening them. In some regions there is a special name given to this type of play, for instance in Kars they are called *henek*. Sometimes there is a scapegoat character to receive blows or torture by practical jokes, or fines are inflicted on him. Some include indecent turns, or a sentence involving a fine paid after a mock trial. Some of these plays are dumb show plays, the name given to them is *Samut* (or *Samut*), or *Lal*, where complete silence is commanded during the ceremony.

(J) Among the Anatolian peasants we find also some primitive puppet performances.³⁶ The wide spread method of presentation is unique: a man lies on his back, either on a carriage or a ladder held horizontally, covers his face and body, and holds a puppet in each hand (Fig. 10), and tied to his knees he has a larger puppet. He manipulates the two puppets in his hands. When he draws up his knees he can bring the larger puppet in between the two puppets tied to his hands. Sometimes instead of puppets they use wooden spoons tied to the middle finger of each hand to represent the body of the puppet. They use their index and third fingers as arms and the thumb and little fingers as legs. As already mentioned, puppetry in Anatolia is used as

34. For various examples see *Oyun ve Bügü*, pp. 244–248.

35. For various examples see *Oyun ve Bügü*, pp. 248–252.

36. For various examples see *Oyun ve Bügü*, pp. 252–256.

a rain charm under the names of *bebek*, *çaput adamı*, *Keşçe Kadın*, *Çömçe Gelin*, *Çullu Kadın*, *Keşcecik*, *Bodî Bostan*, *Gelin Gök*, *Keşçe Baş*, *Su Gelini*, *Kodu Gelin* and others. And for puppetry *Korçak*, *Hemecik*, *Bebek* are used. There is also another widespread practice where people are disguised as puppets. In Yozgat it is called *Kasnak*. A player conceals his real head and arms with a cover. A large face is painted on his bare belly, while false arms are attached to his hips, making him appear to be a dwarf with large face, and he has a turban-like headgear where his arms and head are hidden. As he contracts or expands his pelvic muscles, the painted face alternately smiles or droops (Fig. 11).

(K) Mimetic and semi-dramatic dances.³⁷ A bewildering variety of folk dances has a pantomimic character. They can be classified generally in five groups—those representing the actions of animals, those representing the daily routine and work of village life, those personifying nature, those depicting combat (with or without weapons) and those representing courtship and flirtations.

(L) Children's games of a semi-dramatic character. There are games of children with a semi-dramatic character in an overwhelming number.³⁸ These are related to the serious occupations of adults or to rites and customs abandoned by adults. They are preserved thanks to the innate conservatism of children, who have a dread that if the rules of games are infringed or words are omitted from certain rubbishy verses or formulae they recite this may have sinister results. These games possess a definitely religious origin.

One needs to see these Anatolian plays to begin to appreciate their unusually rich variety of forms and their dissemination all over Anatolia. The fact that Anatolia is the richest reservoir of these survivals, more than other Middle East countries and Europe, is not doubted by this author. One can hypothesize about the origin of these rites and their spread from Anatolia-Lydia and Phrygia. But only in Anatolia do we find the greatest number and the fullest versions of these fertility rites.

37. For various examples see *Turkish Dancing*, pp. 152–157.

38. For a complete enumeration and description of these I must refer the interested reader to the pages of *Oyun ve Büğü*, especially to pages 309–315.