

Sound as an Intermedial Category in the 15th-17th Century Ottoman Palace Festivals

Abstract

Since the 19th century, the work of art which included music, dance, architecture, and the visual arts has come to the fore and coined a new concept: “Gesamtkunstwerk”. It is a concept that is used to understand the production of the people working together in different fields and the resulting work of art, and it’s called “complete work of art”. One of the most important examples of this approach, based on collective work in Ottoman culture, is court festivals. The Ottoman palace, which can be established in parallel with the palace cultures in Europe, is one of the best-researched examples in the field of ritual and festivity. As in the European courts, these events were organized for circumcision ceremonies as well as the context of marriage, birth, and military victories and served to depict the representation of power. The history of the tradition of organizing festivals and writing about it in the Ottoman Empire began in 1285 when Sultan Osman I and the daughter of Karaman Bey married and ended with the last festival which was organized by Abdulhamid II in 1899.

These events were not only an entertainment and celebration element but also the performances in which the social, political, economic and cultural characteristics of the period were transferred. As a total performance example, palace festivals occur with the combination of different branches of art increases and this diversity provides material to researchers from different fields such as literature, theater, history, dance, and music. The main aim of this thesis is to determine the organizational function of sound and music performances in the Ottoman palace festivals between the 15th-17th centuries. The date range was chosen to cover the 1582 festival, which is known as the most magnificent of all the Ottoman palace festivals, organized by Murad III and narrow down to this period.