

## DABKE FOLK DANCE WITH LYRICS AND MUSIC IN HATAY ARAB ALAWITE CULTURE\*

Hatay Arap Alevi Kültüründe Söz ve Müzikleriyle Depki Havaları ve Oyunu

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### Abstract

Ethnic communities with different religions and languages live together in harmony in Hatay. Individuals belonging to these communities maintain their cultural ethnic identity along with their national Turkish citizenship identity. The Arab Alawite community is the largest community in Hatay who speak the local dialect Arabic. The dabke, as a folkdance, whose lyrics are spoken in their unique local Arabic dialect, is seen as an indicator of their cultural differences and cultural identities. The musical structure of dabke, which is sung in Arabic in other ethnic communities in Hatay and danced as line called halay in Turkish, is widely danced in Middle Eastern countries and cultures such as Lebanon, Palestine, Israel, Syria, and also in Europe and America where these communities live through immigration.

Until now, there has been no academic study on the folkdance of dabke music and lyrics in Hatay that emerged from events such as cultural life and social solidarity. In this study, the subject of dabke dance's lyrics and music in Hatay Arabic Alawite culture was examined and musical notes were written for the first time. The information obtained by conducting field research with the subject participant-observer method was analyzed within the framework of cultural theories from an academic perspective. The most widespread dabke pieces were determined, musicologically, to consist of six musical works which were compiled and recorded. It was determined that Ala delo'una was the most common work in the Middle East and Hatay region. In this academic study about dabke as a folk dance common in a multicultural region among the folk dances included in the UNESCO sustainable intangible cultural heritage list, the subject was examined in terms of term, etymology, history, cultural, social and social aspects.

**Keywords:** Hatay, Alawite, Dabke, Folk Dance, Ala Delou'na, Levantine.

### Öz

Hatay'da farklı din ve dillere sahip etnik topluluklar bir arada uyum içerisinde yaşamaktadırlar. Bu topluluklara mensup bireyler ulusal Türk vatandaşlık kimliği ile beraber kültürel olarak etnik kimliklerini de sürdürmektedirler. Arap Alevi topluluğu Hatay'da sözlü olarak yerel lehçe Arapça konuşan en kalabalık topluluktur. Sözleri kendilerine özgü yerel Arapça lehçesiyle söylenen depki halayı, kültürel farklılıklarının ve kültürel kimliklerinin bir göstergesi olarak görülmektedir. Hatay'da diğer etnik topluluklarda da Arapça olarak söylenen ve halay olarak oynanan depki, Lübnan, Filistin, İsrail, Suriye gibi Ortadoğu ülkelerinde ve kültürlerinde, ayrıca göç yoluyla bu Ortadoğu toplulukların yaşadığı Avrupa ve Amerika'da yaygın olarak oynanmaktadır.

Kültürel yaşam ve sosyal dayanışma gibi olaylardan kaynaklanarak ortaya çıkan Hatay Arap Alevi kültüründeki dabke halay müzikleri ve sözleri hakkında şimdiki kadar akademik bir çalışmaya rastlanmadı. Bu çalışmada Hatay Arap Alevi kültüründe depki oyunu söz ve müzikleri hakkındaki araştırma konusu ele alınarak incelendi ve ilk defa müzikal notaları yazıldı. Konu katılımcı-

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gözlemci yöntemiyle alan araştırması yapılarak elde edilen bilgiler akademik açıdan kültür kuramları çerçevesinde ele alınarak incelendi. En yaygın depki havaları tespit edildi, müzikoloji ve etnomüzikoloji bilimleri çerçevesinde incelenen altı adet oyun havasının notaları derlenerek kayıt altına alındı. Ortadoğu ve Hatay yöresinde en yaygın depki havası Ala delo'una olduğu tespit edildi. UNESCO sürdürülebilir somut olmayan kültürel miras listesinde bulunan halk oyunları içerisinde çokkültürlü bir bölgede yaygın olan bir halk oyunu olarak depki hakkında yapılan bu akademik çalışmada konu terim, etimoloji, tarih, kültürel, sosyal ve toplumsal açılardan da ele alınarak incelendi.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Hatay, Alevi, Depki, Halk Oyunu, Ala Delou'na, Levanten.

## 1. Introduction

Dance, which is as old as human history, can change by taking different forms and names in different cultures with changes and developments in cultural and social life. As a folk dance “dabke”, which is widespread in the Middle East, continues its existence as a common folk dance in Hatay Arab Alawite culture. With its ancient history and multicultural structure, Hatay has been home to many religions, cultures and societies throughout history. Today, three different religions such as Muslim, Christian, Jewish and many different societies and sects such as Turkish, Arab, Armenian, Uzbek, Alawite, Sunni, Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant live in peace, love and tolerance. Since this situation brings the intercultural interaction to the fore in Hatay, it gains a special importance in academic culture-music research and studies in the field of ethnomusicology.

Folk dances are an important cultural legacy in all societies. For this reason, UNESCO regards as folk dances in the list of intangible cultural heritage that will be transferred from the past to the future and which it deems necessary and supports (URL 1) . Dabke, which is a genre in folk dances, is found in many cultures, societies and geographies in the sense of line dances called halay in Turkish as a folk dance. The dabke, which is very common in the Arab Alawite culture in Hatay with its unique lyrics and music, is performed as a folk dance in different cultures such as Turkish, Arab, Christian and Armenian societies with the same lyrics and music in Hatay. The dabke, which is widely danced with Arabic lyrics and music in Lebanon, Palestine, Jordan, Israel and Syria, especially in the geographical region called Levantine in the Middle East, is kept alive as a symbol of their cultural identity in Europe and America in the regions where the same societies live. There are regional and cultural differences between the lyrics and music of the dance, which are widespread in a wide geographical area, and the forms or style of dance and instruments. In Hatay Arabic Alawite culture, local dialect Arabic lyrics and music, as well as dabke songs, continue to exist widely with a unique dance structure.

There is no academic study on depki music and lyrics in Hatay Arabic Alevi culture. A comprehensive research programme, study or publication on the lyrics and music of dabke performed unprofessionally at weddings, henna, engagement, circumcision and all kinds of celebrations and entertainments in the Arab Alawite

culture in Hatay has not been searched academically so far. When English and Arabic academic publications are scanned, there are a few; one of them about dabke known as the national dance in Palestine: “Dabke by Zionism, Pan-Arabism and Palestinian Nationalism” (Rowe, 2011: 363-380). This article deals with sociologically the subject, not ethnomusicologically. The article contains information about the origin of dabke and how the dabke folk dance was adopted in societies with the idea of Israeli Zionism, the Arab League and Palestinian Nationalism in order to build the dabke and cultural collective identity. In this article, there is no comprehensive information about the lyrics and music of dabke dances.

Another academic work is “Syria’s Radicak Dabka” by Silverstein. In this study, dabke, the symbol of the first collective movement of the protests against President Assad and the resistance against the state in Syria, expressed the feelings of the anti-war people in mass demonstrations in 2011 and it became a part of the real and motivational collective movement of the people, committed to the political visions of the Syrian state (Silverstein, 2012a). Again, there is an academic thesis by Silverstein. This thesis examines the formation of the secular modern nation-state of Syria in relation to historical and contemporary perspectives on popular culture and the body. In the academic thesis, discursive and ethnographic analysis based on fieldwork conducted in Syria examines the performance tradition of dabke, a social dance music typically performed during holidays and ritual events (Silverstein, 2012b).

Another comprehensive and academic work is *Palestinian Arab Music: A Maqam Tradition in Practice* by Dalia Cohen and Ruth Katz. The book presents the results of a major research effort to determine the parameters of the stylistic variability of Arab folk music in Israel. In addition to the Dabke lyrics and musical notes, the concept of makam, the basis of Arab music theory, Palestinian Arabic Music, both musical and non-musical factors, their connection with the characteristics of individual performers, and their interactions with sociocultural phenomena are examined (Cohen and Katz, 2006). In addition, the work *Et-Turasu'sh Shabi Al-Palestinien: Malamih ve Aba'd* written in Arabic by Halil İbrahim Hassuna contains important information about Palestinian folklore, folk dances and dabke lyrics (Hassuna, 2006).

In Turkey, there is no comprehensive academic study on the lyrics and music of the Hatay region dabke folk dances. Although there are hundreds of audio and video recordings about dabke on Youtube channels, there is no field study and academic publication made in terms of ethnomusicology. In this fieldwork and study conducted under difficult conditions and in this difficult period when the Covid-19 epidemic disease is common in the world, the issue of dabke was tried to be examined. For this reason, in this ethnomusicological study about dabke lyrics and music, the etymology, history and cultural aspect of the dance of dabke in the Middle East geography, as well as the dabke lyrics and music in Hatay Arab Alawite society, are examined in detail.

As a method, the fieldwork in ethnomusicology, which is the main tool for the study of music as culture, is the most important work to be done by ethnomusicologists in cultural research and the most critical stage of ethnomusicological research. In this academic study and research on dabke as a folk dance in the Arab Alawite culture in Hatay-Antakya region, firstly, national and international literature sources on the subject were searched. During the research, books, journals, newspapers, scientific studies, researches and articles on the subject, and many national and international web resources on the internet were scanned as a method. Researches, recordings and personal interviews were made in the relevant venue and areas under limited and difficult conditions due to the Covid-19 pandemic epidemic. One-on-one interviews were held with the resource persons, and information, documents and all kinds of data on the subject were collected.

Participant-observer fieldwork, which is one of the qualitative research techniques, was conducted with the perspective of music in culture according to the principles of the ethno-musicology discipline. For the first time, a musical compilation was made and recorded with notes by analyzing the oral recorded and unrecorded musical elements in culture about the folk dance, which has been passed down orally from generation to generation. In Hatay, information and records were collected by conducting interviews with resource people who were knowledgeable about their work and information in the settlements where the Arab Alawite community mostly lived. In the literature review and fieldwork, the place and importance of the phenomenon of dabke in the Middle East and Hatay Arab Alawite culture were examined within the framework of cultural theoretical approaches and theories

## **2. Theoretical Approaches in Cultural Studies**

When music and dance are studied as a cultural product, they are studied in interdisciplinary scientific fields such as ethnomusicology and anthropology. In Alan Merriam's book *The Anthropology of Music*, the relationship between music and culture is discussed within the framework of ethnomusicology and anthropology. (Merriam, 1964: 4-6). In ethnomusicology, such as music as a cultural element, and folk music studies that are considered as music in culture, Eastern art music and modern music cultures are studied within the oral tradition (Myers, 1992: 3-8). While examining a musical genre culturally, an ethnomusicologist should try to examine and understand music in a cultural context (Kaplan, 2008: 25).

In geographically common cultural studies, meanings and codes are analyzed with theoretical approaches. In a diffusionist theory that explains the diffusion, societies and cultures that relate to the phenomenon of migration, which is the main cause of cultural changes and creativity, affect each other. In this respect, in addition to being the creator of human culture, it is also a carrier of culture (Kaplan, 2008: 83). Transported culture becomes widespread. Diffusionism is a theory that theoretically explains the spread of cultural practices in anthropology from one place to another in

time, including musical performance. Cultural propagation in comparative musicology tries to define the similarities and differences between cultures (Stone, 2008: 27-28). The subject dealt with in a diffusionist approach, dabke, which has a long history in written sources, is spread over a wide geographic area and continues its traditional existence in different and similar interactions even though it is the same in terms of term and function in the cultures of different ethnic communities.

In cultural studies, common practices, established traditions and belief systems categorize ethnic communities and cause ethnicity and identity differences, and this leads to the prominent emergence of culture-based identity. Ethnicity is actually another form of identity. Identity facts in culture are important in understanding human behavior. According to Kaplan, music in the context of culture-identity; “It is the expression of the culture that constitutes our identity through symbols and behavior patterns”. Music has the feature of bringing people together as musicians or listeners through musical events. In this respect, music is effective in creating a common consciousness in societies. Music and dance within culture is a way that emphasizes cultural difference in the context of the nation-state (Kaplan, 2008: 38-46). The Hatay Arab Alawite community can maintain their dual cultural identity, such as Turkish-Arab, together in harmony. While there are differences with Arabic elements within the cultural identity, after Hatay joined the homeland, Turkey, in 1939, they maintain their cultural and social traditions and identities in Turkish culture with their official state identities or national citizenship identities.

### **3. A Brief Overview of the Political and Cultural History of the Arab Alawite in Hatay**

The Arab Alawite community living in Hatay are known as Fellah or Arab Uşağı, which means farmer as an ethnic identity in oral and written sources. In the literary language, it is often called Nusayri (Türk, 2005: 31). However, today, the clergy, writers, intellectuals of the community prefer to be defined as Arab Alawites (Mertcan, 2015: 305). They have been living in the southern region of Turkey as well as Lebanon and Syria. Arab Alawites living in Hatay, Adana and Mersin have different characteristics with a more closed community organization and different religious characteristics. These strong beliefs in Hazrat (St.) Ali (Uncle son and son-in-law of the Prophet of Islam), belief in Hızır, belief in a powerful shrine, reincarnation (the belief that the soul lives by entering another body), manifestation (manifestation of God’s existence at various levels) and the paternal tradition in which religious teachings are passed down from generation to generation. The word “*Arap*”, which is the first word in phrases such as Arap Uşağı or Arab Alawite, emphasizes the ethnic origins of the community. In addition, comments are made to determine the ethnic identity through the language spoken in the resources. It is stated in the sources that Alawites living in southern coastal settlements such as Hatay, Adana and Mersin and in Syria and speaking Arabic are of Arab ethnic origin (as cited in Türk, 2005: 31-36).

In the Arab Alawite religious culture, the main reason for the current Islamic belief and worship differences is based on some events in Islamic history. In the tenth year of the Islamic calendar, Prophet Muhammad declared that his son-in-law Ali was the guardian and guardian of the place called Gadiri Hum as the caliph. However, when the supporters of Hazrat Ali did not pay allegiance to Hazrat Abu Bakr, who was the caliph in place of Hazrat Ali, and when Hazrat Ali's son Hüseyin and his followers were martyred in Karbala, it caused the emergence of separations among societies such as Arab Alawites in Islam. Basically, after these events, Arab Alawites, who were supporters of the Hazrat Ali, began to pay allegiance to the ehlibayt (the family of Prophet Muhammad) and twelve imams, who were descendants of the Prophet Muhammad. Later, Muhammad Bin Nusayar, the disciple of the Eleventh Imam Hasan al-Asker, is known as the founder and guide of Nusayris, that is, Arab Alawitesm. In the years after that, although Arab Alawitesm split into seven branches due to differences in thought and interpretation, it is seen that it was divided into two main branches as Haydaris and Kilazi. Haydaris mostly live in Samandağ, Harbiye, Aknehir, Yaylıca and Karaçay in the provincial borders of Hatay. In Antakya, Serinyol, Döver and İskenderun, mostly Kilazis live (Türk, 2005: 33-48).

The sources associate the Arabic language used by Arab Alawites living in Syria and Lebanon with the Cebel-i Nusayriye dialect used in Syria. In Hatay, the local dialect Arabic language is spoken by Arab Alawites, Arab Sunnis, Arab Christians and Arab Jews. Almost most of these Arabic speaking communities in Hatay are illiterate in Arabic. A few people who are raised, educated or served in religious settings can only read or write Classical Arabic with limited grammatical knowledge. Arabic spoken in Hatay continues its existence as a native spoken language in a local dialect style. As stated in the sources, a decreasing change occurred in the Arabic used and spoken in Hatay due to the language change process from Arabic to Turkish. In 1939, after the Hatay State decided to join the motherland, Arabic-speaking communities in Hatay used Turkish officially and daily, and Arabic on the street daily by the family or local people. In addition, although the Arabic spoken in Hatay exists linguistically, it is difficult to find any literary work written in this language on the oral tradition (Ağbaht, 2018: 183-184; Jastrow, 2015: 64-65). Since the local Arabic spoken by the Arab communities in Hatay is not used as a language of reading and writing, it is an oral language that is less used in the daily speaking environment.

With the accession of Hatay to the Motherland, Turkish Republic, Arab Alawites started to continue their social, political and cultural lives in the line of Kemalist, democratic and modern life. In the observations and researches carried out in the field, it can be seen that the Arab Alawite society has adapted to the Atatürk revolutions since 1939 and has a strong love for Atatürk. Clergymen such as Mahmut Reyhani and Nasreddin Eskiocak followed the dress revolution of Atatürk and wore fedora and suits instead of turbans and fez. They state that they see Atatürk as one of them and feel comfortable thanks to his secular regime, and therefore they are detached from

the Syrian regime. They hang Atatürk posters and Turkish Flag on the walls in most of the holy places and tombs (Bulut, 2003: 59-74)

#### 4. Dabke as a Folk Dance: Etymology, Definition, History and Types

In academic sources in the field of Turkish dialect studies, the term dabke means “*Depgi (depcek, depçek, depgü, dabke, depki)*: the wooden part of the agricultural vehicle called a shovel-like waist to be stepped on with feet” (Yavaş, 2016: 113). Dabke means reflective “strikes” as adjectives “dabke instruments” or “dabkeliler” in order to express a kind of percussion instruments (Gazimihal, 1975: 45).

There is generally a common opinion in the sources about in which regions and in which cultures the dance of dabke is found. According to Al-Dajani; Arabic dabke (Dabke, dabke, debka, debkah), known as the Levantine folk dance of Lebanon, Palestine, Jordan, Bosnia, Turkey, Syria and Iraq is widespread and an Arab folk dance unique to the Levant region. It is danced in a circle from right to left in a line style called halay in Turkish on weddings, fun and joyful days. At the beginning of the halay, there is a halay head that dances by turning to both the other dancers and the audience (2013: 85). In another source; Dabke (Dabka, dubki, dabke, dabki, plural: dabkaat) is an Arabic word used in the Levant, which means to hit the ground or make noise. In ancient times, in the fertile Canaanite lands, dropping or jumping meant the expulsion of evil spirits and the protection of small plants. In the Middle East, it is seen that the Dabke folk dance is common in Palestine, Syria, Jordan, the northern regions of Saudi Arabia and Yemen. According to the diffusionist theory, it can be argued that the dabke culture has become widespread through migrations or the influence of cultures due to social life.

In the Levant region, which includes Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Palestine in the east of the Mediterranean, it is suggested that there is evidence that dance was valued up to four thousand years ago. In a 3,800-year-old letter, there is evidence that an emperor from Palestine to Persia sent to Queen Shiptu, the wife of King Mari Zimri-Lim, asking him to appoint a dance teacher named Warad-Ilishu to teach them Subarean dances. Dabke, still one of the best known folk dances in this region called dabke / dabkah is known as an important cultural folkdance of the Levantine region, a group of men and women in line with simultaneous foot movements and a leader who turns a handkerchief in his hand and is often known as a folkdance performed at weddings (Cited in Kreitem, 2017: 372-375). Based on the engravings about the history of this folk dance, it is seen that the dabke was performed among the Arab Alawite communities living in this region before the 1880s. (URL 2).



**Figure 1:** Alawite dance ensemble 1880. Traditional dabke team

It is based on different events in the sources regarding how the folkdance originated. The reason for the emergence of the dance, widely performed by the villages and towns of Lebanon, Syria, Palestine and Jordan, Iraq, semi-Bedouin tribes in these areas and the inhabitants of mountain villages on the Tigris River, along the Mediterranean coastline, the term “aouna / aouni” (Arabic: aid). It is based on the idea of gathering for solidarity. This folkdance was born from the movements of the community gathered on the roof to tighten the tree branches and mud on the roof of a newly built house in the rural areas of the above mentioned regions. The common feature of all types of dabke, which is a collective folkdance performed in the form of a line, is danced by hitting the feet hard. One of the most famous dabke as a folk dance, “dalou’na” means “mutual aid” in Aramaic (URL 3). The folk dance, which is essentially based on solidarity, has emerged as a result of social cohesion for a common workforce.

The story of the emergence of the dabke folk dance in Middle Eastern cultures begins with social solidarity. In ancient times, before tiled roofs were installed on public houses in Lebanon, they built flat roofs from tree branches covered in mud. Change of seasons, especially when winter came, mud would crack and ooze on these roofs and had to be repaired. Since the landlord could not do it alone, he would call for help (Al-a’wneh / help) from his neighbours and the neighbours would gather on the roof. As they walked on the roof to set the mud, they would grab each other’s hands, form a line and start crushing with their feet. After a while, help / “al-A’wneh” came to be known as “dalou’nah”, a form of improvised singing and dancing dabke. It was

accompanied by a darbuka of local rhythmic instruments, a wooden pipe called ney or a mijwiz, one of the local instruments, to keep the men going in cold weather and to energize. (URL 4).

Secondly, there is another opinion about the emergence of the folk dance. It is claimed that olive oil production in the Levant and Iraq region developed from the traditional method of crushing the olives by foot (Al-Dajani, 2013: 190). Dabke is seen as a national symbol of the resistance against Israel in Palestine, and keeping the dance alive means keeping the nation alive (McDonald, 2013: 22). The folk dance, which is seen as a cultural identity and ethnicity for the Palestinian people, is seen as one of the most important symbols of resistance against Israel. By definition, dabke means hitting the ground hard, and hitting hard is the most important feature of the folk dance of dabke. The most common of the dabke types is “dalou’na”. The folk dance named dalou’na almost means dabke (Cohen and Katz, 2006: 272)

### 5. Dabke in Hatay Arabic Alawite Culture

Among the regional dances in Cukurova and Adana, the folk dance called dabke (depi / dephi) can be found in the sources. Folk dances performed in villages, towns and cities by holding on to each other in collective series are called depük or depik, halay or dabke (Baykurt, 477-479). At the same time, dabke is also widely performed in the Arab Alawite community living in Hatay. About dabke, folklorist, journalist and researcher-writer Kalaycıoğlu gives the following information about the dance: “It is danced in Samandağ, Reyhanlı and its surroundings. It is a folk dance performed during the harvest season. The people, whose products are damaged due to the bad weather and then the heat, got upset and rebelled and stamped their feet on the ground as if they took their resentment from the ground. This folk dance, which emerged with these movements, has become traditional and can be danced even if the product is good. (Source person: Taken from zurnist İzzet Özkan, born in 1932, in 1975) (as cited in Kalaycıoğlu, 2018: 165).

That in Hatay folk dances are called “*dabke*” is common in all communities living in Hatay. In the period of Yavuz Sultan Selim (1516-17), the Turkmens who settled in the east of the Asi river are also called dabke for folk dances like halay. However, among the Turkmens living in the foothills of the Amanos Mountains and Taurus, who come from the national tradition, the place of dabke is called “halay” or “oyun” in Turkish (Resource Person 5, Asım Kuzuluk).

Another important source about the Hatay region dabke music is the compilation studies carried out by Muzaffer Sarısözen in 1946. Sarısözen, together with Halil Bedî Yönetken and the technician Rıza Yetişen, conducted some fieldwork about dabke compilations in Antakya and surrounding settlements during his tenth collection trip in July-August 1946. Dabke songs recordings done by Sarısözen and his team, source people and the region where the compilation took place are as follows:

1. Fincâna ya fincâna, (teпки), İsmail Gören, Antakya, İskenderun, Ekver Köyü
2. Acele dabke, İsmail Saidi, Antakya, Süveydiye, Evahiye
3. Bir dabke, İsmail Saidi, Antakya
4. Bir dabke havası (Ale göllü), Mehmet Parlak, Antakya, Kapısuyu
5. Dabke (ağır) (Tıkul) (Çabuk acele) dabke, Panos Çapar, Antakya, Süveydiye Mah
6. Dabke havası, Mehmet Parlak, Antakya, Kapısuyu, Süveydiye
7. Bir dabke, Mehmet Aldış, Antakya
8. Arap tepkisi, Mehmet Aldıç, Antakya
9. Dabke (el aman), Şenköylüler koro halinde, Antakya, Altınözü, Şenköy
10. Dabke, Ah benim, Şenköylüler koro halinde, Antakya, Altınözü, Şenköy
11. Dabke, Ağam bana kar getir, Şenköylüler koro halinde, Antakya, Altınözü, Şenköy
12. Dabke, Sopanı Kıracağım, Şenköylüler koro halinde, Antakya, Altınözü, Şenköy
13. Dabke, hey güzeller, şenköylüler koro halinde, Antakya, Altınözü, Şenköy
14. Kele kız git karşımda (dabke), Antakya, Şenköy
15. Hataylıya Şenköylüyüz (dabke), Şenköylüler, Antakya, Şenköy
16. Dabke, Muhammed Çalar, Antakya, Reyhaniye, Keferoğlu (Çoşkun Elçi, 1997: 294-297)

Despite these compilation studies by Sarısözen, only one dabke song note belonging to the Adana region was found in the TRT repertoire: *Dabke*, TRT Music Office, Row No: 108, Adana Region, Compiled by: Hamdi Özbay (1973) (URL 5). Although there are compilation records of the dabke songs compiled by Sarısözen in the Antakya region of Hatay, no record was found about whether it was recorded or written musical notes. Since the musical notes and lyric records of the works mentioned above in the compilation studies are not available in TRT, it is not possible to compare them with the works compiled in this study.

In Hatay, the people of Harbiye, Serinyol, Antakya and Samandağ districts, where Arab Alawites live heavily, speak Arabic only in a local dialect as a daily speaking language. Grammatical Arabic writing and reading is not used at all. Since Arabic is not used as the written language, it is very difficult to find written sources about local

literary genres. During intensive research, we were able to find teacher, journalist, researcher, and writer Yuşa Arış and his publications, who compiled, researched and published on local literary genres only in Samandağ. With his fieldwork for many years, Arış recorded literary works in many oral cultures that have been passed down from generation to generation in the oral tradition and almost forgotten. He compiled traditional literary genres in the Arabic Alawite oral culture, especially in the Samandağ region, with his mother Mediha Arış as a source person, and published transcriptions of Arabic with Arabic letters and Arabic transcriptions with Latin letters. In the sources, the genre of dabke compiled as literary poetry and is synonymous with “reddi” (anti or responsory) (Arış, 2009). The poems written as a literary form about the dabke recorded in field studies by Yuşa Arış, limited to our subject, are included in the following sources. There is no information about whether these poems were used together with the melody as a song lyrics in the dabke folk dance.

1. El Kihil B @ aynek (2009: 11-19): It includes 6 dabke poems.
2. Ene @niyni @el ğeli (2012: 12-71): It includes 33 dabke poems.
3. Dürüvb El @ şk Me Rehmit Hada (2014: 15-118): It includes 55 poems of dabke.
4. Khaltit Rühvi Biy Rühva (2017: 13-257): It contains 172 dabke poems.

For the first time, dabke and “reddi” were used synonymously in these sources. This word was commonly found in different cultures in the region and pointed to very old traditions. “Redde” in Arabic dictionaries; It means responding to something, responding to something, reflecting and resounding (Mutçalı, 1995: 316). Especially in music and dances performed in ensemble, the tradition of solo-choir and choir-choral mutual singing is found in the musical tradition of all different ethnic groups in this region. The folk song and folk dance named “*Eli elime değdi*” belonging to Turkman in Yayladağ-Şenköy are performed in solo-choral style (Tekin, 2020: 58).

## 6. The Lyrics and Music of Dabke Dances in Hatay Arabic Alawite Culture

In the researches on the Hatay Arab Alawite music culture, no academic compilation or study has been found on the lyrics and music of the dabke folk dance and songs so far. It has been determined that the lyrics and music of the songs performed for dabke differ from region to region in Hatay in oral tradition. It has been determined that there are differences with the Middle Eastern countries in terms of dancing style and story of the lyrics, music and the dance. In this academic study, the lyrics and music of the dabke detected in the field studies and researches in the Arab Alawite habitats and settlements in Antakya, Samandağ and Serinyol in Hatay were recorded. Performed in wedding halls, open-air weddings and entertainment centers in provinces, districts and villages, dabke music is mostly performed with shoulder

drum-zurna, baglama and keyboard (organ) instruments depending on the venue and the social situation of the settlement. While dabke music is performed melodically by every musician and orchestra in the same region, it is determined that there are differences in terms of intertwining, transitions, turns, ornaments and speed, although there is a similarity in the main melody.

In addition, it was observed that this Arabic folk dance was performed in the weddings and entertainment of other communities living in the Hatay region with different cultures. In his work named *Hatay Halk Bilimi/Folklore*, Kalaycıoğlu expressed this interaction as follows; It is stated that intercultural interaction between communities with different cultures such as Turkish, Armenian, Arab, Kurdish, Muslim, Christian and Jewish occurs in the traditions of weddings, henna and feasts, and Arabic and Turkish lyrics and folk songs are danced and song and folk dances are performed at the weddings of these communities (Kalaycıoğlu, 2018: 45-46).

In order to compile musical notes, Turkish and Arabic recorded sound recordings, clips and videos on youtube channels and in the field research on the lyrics and music of dabke songs were examined. Interviews were held with musicians who work as musicians in entertainment centers such as wedding halls, restaurants and cafes in Antioch, and sources with knowledge in the Arab Alawite culture, and the most commonly used dance styles were determined. The words of these dabke songs were written in Latin letters according to the transcription alphabet shown in Appendix-1. As an example, only the first lines were partially translated into English. Since the melodic notes of the dabke songs were not found in any source, it was tried to compile the notes of the main melody by studying the existing youtube recordings and the recordings obtained in the field study. The melodies in the songs of dabke are performed by each musician in the form of different improvisations, taksims, ornamentation, and repetitions or played in the style of Arabic music. In the compilation work as a common point of all, the notes, maqam and rhythm of the main melody were written and the lyrics of the oral works were written under the melodies. In the lyrics, the style and attitude of the soloists and their throat melodies differ. The musical scores of the most common dabke songs in Antakya were written by asking local musicians.

According to the information obtained from interviews with resource persons; It was determined that the dabke as folk dances started with the right foot and mostly danced by hitting the feet on the ground back and forth on the heel as if the feet were making an anchor. In the Arab Alawite culture in Hatay, when only men dance the dabke, the arms are held by the shoulders, and when men and women are danced, they are often danced in the form of a line halay, holding hands by hands. In Serinyol, the dabke of *Sabaviye* (sevens) is performed in the form of kneeling in the seventh step after steps forward and backward. The source said that, according to what he heard from the elderly people living in the region, foot movements were hit like a shovel

in the garden or in the field. This folk dance is performed especially in traditional weddings towards the end with the participation of everyone who is invited at the wedding and the wedding is finished with *Sabaviye*. The lyrics and notes of which are given below are mostly performed by men or men-women mixed in Hatay. The dabke is performed with increasing speed. The dance called *Arji* is performed in the form of a line halay to the right. These dances are usually performed in the “haffle/celebration” event, which means celebration or entertainment (Resource Person 1). Feet are not hit the ground very hard in Hatay, as is commonly performed in the Middle East. It can be observed that the foot movements of the dabke in Hatay showed similarities with the foot movements in the halay style performed in Anatolia.



**Figure 2:** Dabke folk dance in wedding hall.

It was determined that the dabke songs, which was compiled by writing the note below in the field research, was performed in different ways by local musicians. In the interviews with the one of the source person Oktay Yıldız, who has been a freelance musician playing the keyboard (organ) professionally for many years, especially in Antakya and Samnadağ, the most common dabke songs, the notes of which are written below, were determined. According to Yıldız, these songs were mostly performed at weddings and parties of Arab Alawite communities (Resource Person 3).



**Figure 3:** Oktay Yıldız while the dabke dance is performed in the wedding hall

Source person Süleyman Tuncer, who works as a tradesman, also plays local musical instruments such as cümbüş and bağlama as an amateur musician. According to Tuncer, "ataba" which is a kind of local music form, is performed in three makams called dabke "delouna, la lavlala and berde berde", after "miycana and movval". In addition, each region has its own unique lyrics and music (Resource Person 4). The notes and lyrics are written in Antakya, Serinyol and Samandağ regions.

Only the main melodies of the works were noted from the sound recordings of the works as they were performed on the stage. Below are six verbal and non-verbal dabke songs performed most commonly at wedding and entertainment venues. Of the songs with lyrics, only the first stanza was translated. Dabke songs, which are notated with their maqams and rhythms with the method of compilation are: 1. Dabke, 2. Dabke Delouna, 3. Kımhiyyi, 4. Saba'viye, 5. Ayil, 6. Arj.

**Depki Uşşak**

UŞŞAK  
♩=90

Notaya Alan:  
Erhan TEKİN

**Figure 4:** Dabke, maqam: Uşşak, compiled by Erhan Tekin

## DEPKİ

Debki üv debbiyki üv tıbbal

(perform the dance dancer and drummer)

Uv micviz ğenna il kırradi

Uv hıtyar iyredih muvval

(The old man responds “muvval”)

Iyriddo ħalfo irridendi

(The rest came across)

İrriddedi irriddedi

(Face to face, face to face )

Ğanniy lea'ele delu'na

Uv minnik meħlel meycuvna

Iħzami dıħkit i'yuvna

Nızlit e'd dabke ħzemi

Titmeyyel mitlil ye mami

İ'levva timsik kıdemdi

Uv tıħla hed debki izyedi

Uv bizyedi uv bizyedi

Uv lemma ğinnen el yedi

İta'eli ħeddi veyn riħti

Uv a'kli ibراسi suvseħti

Beddi i'tiyki mesbiħti

Meħsubik şahrulil vadi

Vil vadi vil vadi

Uva'l yedi uva'l yedi

## Depki Deluna

UŞŞAK

♩=145

Notaya Alan:  
Erhan TEKİN

Del lu nik den an leş dil en ti ni irif ti ni izğay yar leş heb bey

ti ni Ve li vel he li vey li del hu na Bey yik sa ħıb ne iv i mik mel hu

ne Vey li del hu ne yem mi ced de yil

Figure 5: Dabke Ala Delou'na, the most popular folk dance in Hatay. Maqam: Uşşak, compiled by Erhan Tekin

This song and dance had a story, as it was told by the source people and the elders living in the region. Once upon a time there was a beautiful, very attractive and charming girl in a village. There were some in the village who were jealous of this beautiful girl and could not attract her. These malevolent people made unnecessary rumors and slanders about her, and finally she committed suicide by not being able to withstand these slanders. They sang this song behind this beautiful girl in their beloved village, which was sorry for the death of the girl (Resource Person 2).

### DEBKİ ALA DELU'NA

Delu'nik dele'n leys dile'ntiyni? (My coy dear, why are you being coy?)

İ'rifiyni izğayyar leş hıbbeytiyni (You knew I was small, why did you love me)

Lektob iktebik everak tiyni (Write your wedding promise on a fig leaf,)

Vice'l talakik hıbbit zeytuna (Write the divorce on the olive pip)

Veli velheli veyli delu'na

A'le delu'na ye delu'neti

Beyyik sahibna iv immik melu'na

Min zığri ena ibhibbil beneti

E'le delu'na iv e'le delu'na

hırdeni mertı iv zı'leni ihmeti

İssimir yicreho vil biyd iydevuna

Beddi şı vihdi e'l moda itkuna

Veyli delu'na yemmiccedeyil

İshelta e'n isma elitli süso

Şa'rik sıfsafi ihdudik hameyil

Kılıtilla heddik elitli büvso

Şifti a'mtircof hasra ibyitmeyil

Kılıtilla buvki kalitli düvso

Killik e'ba'dik ecmele meyküna

Kılıtilla immin elit henuvna

## Kimhiyyi

UŞŞAK

♩=90

Notaya Alan  
Erhan TEKİN



Figure 6: Kimhiye-Wheat, maqam: Uşşak, compiled by Erhan Tekin

## KIMĦİYYİ (BUĖDAY)

Bedna a'taba iblehci Őerkiyyi (She wants a song in Eastern dialect)  
 Metkun misluka mitlil kimĦıyyi (Don't be like boiled wheat)  
 Minnek Ėinniyyi uv minni Ėinniyyi (One song from you, one song from me)  
 Yalla tenbelliŐ e'le delu'na (Let's sing to delu'na together)  
 Valla mebeddi Ėeyr il a'taba A'la delu'na uv a'le delu'na  
 Tifra ĥeddiyri uv killiŐebabe Riddiye ye ĥılva sotik ĥanuna  
 Valla mebedde illel e'taba A'la dalu'na uv a'la delu'na  
 Tifra ĥel ĥadra üv killiŐsebeba Lemmil ibŐufabi-ca'ni hona  
 Őü helmeycune uv Őu heliskeba  
 Bedna e'l u'da uv dakkit rebeba Intil mücenned uv ena ittavriyyi  
 Venis semuni i'tris sabiyi Uv int taktuka uv ena ilĖinniyyi  
 Ita'tter Őa'rate vintil fuzuna Uv'ik ye semra i'leyhom letĖari  
 Ena licırta uv huvvi lifrari Bikra teycu'u ibyico duvvari  
 Valla e'n e'ynon mebyimna'una

## Sabaviye

UŐŐAK

♩=110

Notaya Alan:  
Erhan TEKİN

Figure 7: Sab'aviye (seventh), instrumental dabke folk dance, compiled by Erhan Tekin

## Ayil

UŞŞAK

♩=96

Notaya Alan:  
Erhan TEKİN

A yil a yil a yil es mer yeb bül il ce de yil

Figure 8: Instrumental dabke folk dance, compiled by Erhan Tekin

## Arji

UŞŞAK

♩=110

§

Notaya Alan:  
Erhan TEKİN

3

Figure 9: Instrumental dabke folk dance, compiled by Erhan Tekin

## 7. Conclusion

As folk dance in the Arab Alawite culture in Hatay, dabke is a local wedding or festivity halay style as a social and vital cultural identity specific to the region, such as Turkish halay, Kurdish delilo. The folk dance called dabke, which has the characteristics of Arabic music with local Arabic lyrics in the Hatay Arabic Alawite culture and living areas, is seen as an indicator of the cultural identity of the Arab Alawite community living in the region. As a folk dance and folk songs, dabke continues to exist more widely as an important cultural element in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Palestine, Israel, Iraq, Yemen, Arabia. Dabke melodies are also performed in weddings and entertainment of societies such as Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Turkish, Arabian, Armenian, living in Hatay with their Arabic words. It is seen as an important symbol and feature of Arab culture in Hatay. Although this folk dance, expressed as dabke in Arabic, is also common in Middle East countries, there is no academic study on its lyrics and music in Hatay. In this study, the subject was discussed in the context of ethnomusicology and anthropology, and it was tried to be explained within the framework of ethnicity and diffusionist theories. The most commonly performed dabke folk dances in weddings and entertainment venues, which have been recorded by compilation work in Hatay region, are: 1. Dabke, 2. Dabke Delou'na, 3. Kimhiyyi, 4. Saba'viye, 5. A'yil, 6. Arj.

In the field work, which was carried out in a limited way due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the most prominent influence of the Arab music culture in the region is that the dabke songs are performed in the style of Arabic music and rhythm with other instruments such as organ, guitar, baglama, etc., excluding drums and zurna. Of the dabke songs, *Ala Delou'na* is one of the most common songs in Hatay and the Middle East. In Palestine, dabke is seen as a symbol of resistance against Israel, and although it is danced professionally by folklore teams in local folkloric costumes, it is not danced professionally by folk dance teams in the Hatay region. For this reason, there is no folkloric clothing in the dabke dances. It can be observed that it is mostly performed by men-women or only men in the Middle East and Hatay region.

Dabke, in fact, refers to the emergence of helping hand in hand to protect against nature, to share the people who come together in collaboration, that is, it is a phenomenon that has a social function that turns hardship and pain into joy and happiness. Dabke is not just a dance that brings people together for fun in every region in the Middle East, but also contains important messages that represent this dance identity, culture and resistance. Dabke, whose origins are rooted in Middle Eastern Arab culture, is today the symbol of traditional line and circle dance, social protests and a form of expressing enthusiasm and joy in people who participate in weddings, engagements and entertaining events. Dabke, a native Levantine folk dance, is usually performed at weddings in the form of circle and line dance both in the Arab Alawite community and other different societies living in Hatay, with Arabic lyrics and music in Hatay.

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### Oral Resources (Resource Person)

- KK 1: Hasan Özgün, 36, high school graduate, researcher and theater artist, 12.09.2020, Ehliddar Culture and Art Center
- KK 2: Engin Dağ, 42, high school graduate, local musician bağlama artist, 13.09.2020, Serinyol
- KK 3: Oktay Yıldız, 36, high school dropout, local musician organ artist, 10.08.2020, Paşa Restaurant
- KK 4: Süleyman Tuncer, 56, high school graduate, villager, shopkeeper and local amateur musician, 15.09.2020, Kuzeytepe Village in his garden
- KK 5: Asım Kuzuluk, 65, high school graduate, Turkish Folk Music Artist of Ministry of Culture, 20.10.2020, Kisecik Village

