A la turka / A la franka : cultural ideology and musical change

Pamela J DORN
The field research yielded a more complex appraisal of the state of the Sephardic musical art. Differential continuity and change was documented between generations of singers, and between component repertoires (e.g., secular and sacred, kantigas v. pizmonim) within the larger body of tradition. In the ethnographic present of the field study (1982/83), both Middle Eastern and European musical systems were found to co-exist. The native model, alaturka / alafranka, as a symbolic classification for Eastern versus Western cultural orientations, was adopted from the community by the researcher to serve as an explanatory model for understanding the relationship of musical to social change. As the research progressed, it became clear that the categories alaturka / alafranka involved more than musical sound. To the anthropologist, they seemed to be cornerstones of the cultural ideology that characterizes Turkish Sephardic Jewish culture.