

This study examines a general landscape of the field of dance in Turkey at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with an eye on its traditional and modern genres. It explores how ballet, modern dance and folk dance are used in modernization discourses and practices. Dance has been a symbolic cultural form during the nation-building period. Selim Sırrı and his daughters Selma and Azade saw physical education, modern dance and folk dances as a central subject of modernization processes in the last years of the Ottoman Empire and the early Republican era. Ballet, the leading genre of dance performances since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, has developed different styles in Europe and the Americas, and has been influential as a symbolic cultural form of modernization among the newly formed nation-states in the Balkans and the Middle East. Meanwhile, stylized folk dances have also provided a vibrant cultural repertoire for the representation of new nation-states. Modern dance and physical education have also gained visibility as important movement systems of the modernization process. In this context, this project explores the genres of ballet, modern dance and folk dance, which have been examined separately, by putting them in the same context and in their simultaneity. The project also presents a historical ethnography of the dance world of the early Republican era with its dancers, choreographers, trainers and institutions as a case-study. As such, it compares Turkey's relationship with dance and modernization with similar developments in the MENACA region's nation-building processes.