TURKISH COFFEE CULTURE

"A CUP OF COFFEE COMMITS
ONE TO FORTY YEARS OF FRIENDSHIP"

by
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FOREWORD

When I received an offer to write a book on "Turkish Coffee Culture" I wanted to review the literature before I began writing. It was enough merely to peruse the bibliographies of the books in my library to intimidate myself. It appeared that almost everything had already been written on the history of coffee and coffeehouses.

There was one thing I could do: base my work predominantly on literary texts. This was indeed a difficult undertaking: since it was impossible to review the literature in such a short time, I was obliged to content myself with what I could access and strive to produce a text that was different from its precedents. My only reassurance was a folder I had put together over the years due to my keen interest in the history and culture of coffee with the hope that I would, one day, write a few lines on this delicious drink, to which I was "addicted" since my younger days.

I piled all the coffee books I could find in bookstores on my desk along with the ones in my own library. On the day I felt ready, after having leafed through the pages for a while, I made myself a strong cup of Turkish coffee with little sugar, recited a "Bismillah" and settled in front of the computer. While I am at it, I must say that a well-made coffee is indescribably delicious and brings clarity to the mind. You feel, already at your first sip, that you can write better poetry, overcome your writer's block, or conclude your experiment in the best possible way. While drinking Turkish coffee from a small cup brings profound wisdom, if you are to spend considerable mental effort, then it's best that you own a large cup without a handle. I would not advise you to drink it sweetened; after all, the older generation did not take sweetened coffee drinkers seriously.

Still, I find adding a little sugar is just as respectable having an unsweetened cup of coffee.

After I took a sip of my coffee, I began to write. It was a delightful journey across the long road that began from Abyssinia, reached Istanbul via Yemen, the Hejaz, and Egypt, and extended all across the world on diverging paths. Quite frankly, I spent little time between Yemen and Istanbul. Nor did I wander off to the roads originating from Istanbul. My real concern was coffee's adventure in Istanbul. In fact, the book opens with the incident during which the first ships bringing coffee to Istanbul were sunk at the Port of Tophane upon a decree issued by Sheikh-ul Islam Ebussuud Efendi, continues with brief flashbacks and a summary of the adventures of coffee until it reaches Istanbul, and finally casts anchor in this historic city.

Although coffee was met with considerable opposition as soon as it arrived in Istanbul, it eventually established its reign in the city, and managed to convert the majority of its opponents. The intoxicating smell, delectable taste, and other redeeming–stimulant and anti-exhaustion– qualities are not the only factors behind this success; coffee has an astonishing skill in bringing people together. What troubled the Ottoman authorities of the time were the discussions that took place in places –such as coffeehouses– where coffee would be consumed. Those who issued decrees or fatwas to abolish coffee were perhaps drinking their bitter coffees in large cups. However, it was impossible to uphold the prohibitions and succeed at banning coffee altogether; coffee had already entered the Palace and assumed its place in protocol, conquering the castle from the inside, so to speak. The last serious –and even bloody– bans were issued during the reign of Sultan Murad IV. In the ensuing years, rather than closing down the coffeehouses, the state preferred to keep them under close surveillance with the help of spies. Prohibiting coffee as a drink was inconceivable, since by then, coffee, instead of blood, was circulating through people's veins. Foreign travelers have amazedly observed how coffee became an indispensible part of the life style in Turkey. The average Turk began the day with "*kahvalti*"—the Turkish word for breakfast, which is derived from "*kahve-alti*" or pre-coffee. In other words, rather than having breakfast, the Turks had a quick bite in the morning just to drink coffee.

The day still begins with "*kahvalti*" in Turkey; however, tea has replaced coffee by now. The coffee shortages that began during World War I and continued intermittently in the ensuing years, and, even worse, the addition of different kinds of dry legumes and grains such as chickpeas and barley to coffee caused the public to shy away from coffee and turn to tea instead. Today, tea is more commonly opted in coffeehouses. While

coffee more or less maintains its place in traditional ceremonies such as entertaining guests, asking for a girl's hand in marriage, betrothals, and engagements, one can no longer speak of "committing to a friendship of forty years." There is more *theine* than *caffeine* circulating in our bloodstream. Nonetheless, there still exist serious aficionados who would never trade the taste of Turkish coffee with anything else. Their primary concern is the failure to uphold traditions and maintain the standards of making Turkish coffee in its native land, the absence of establishments that pay special attention to serving their customers Turkish coffee in its purest form, and the disappearance of Turkish coffee from the menus of certain hotels, cafés, etc.

Ending with a brief chapter on the transition from coffee to tea, this book is written to once again draw attention to the rich culture and literature that has evolved around coffee, which was once the symbol of the Turkish way of living. All the while, the writing process required the consumption of hundreds of cups of Turkish coffee…

I am indebted to my wife, who prepared my coffee and awaited my return from the long journey I embarked upon in the 'dark' world of coffee in my study for hours on end. I am also sustained by many friends who shed light to my path with their knowledge: I would like to extend my gratitude to Prof. Dr. İnci Enginün, Mustafa Çetin Tükek—a true coffee aficionado and collector, Yusuf Çağlar, as well as the employees of Beyazıt State Library, İSAM Library, and Atatürk Library.

Beşir Ayvazoğlu

Gün yetmedi taştıkça taşan neşvemize
imrendi o gün kahvede kim varsa bize
'Dostlarla' dedim, 'sohbetimiz bal gibidir
ey kahveci gel katma şeker kahvemize! '

(The day fell short of our overflowing glee
Everyone at the coffeehouse was green with envy
"With friends," I said, "our causerie is sweet as honey
Oh coffeemaker, do not add sugar to our coffee!)

Beşir Ayvazoğlu
("Sade Kahve", Kayıp Şiir, p. 33)

1 FROM YEMEN TO ISTANBUL

One day, several ships boarded the Port of Tophane. The year was 1543. We say several, because in *Mîzânü'l-Hak*, Kâtip Çelebi speaks not of a single ship, but of several. Bringing sacks full of coffee from Yemen, these ships, according to Kâtip Çelebi, were pierced one by one and sunk with their cargo as per the fatwa (edict) of Sheik-ul Islam Ebussuud Efendi.[1] As he could so readily issue the fatwa, one might presume that the Sheik-ul Islam was familiar with coffee or that he may even have tasted it. One of the justifications behind this fatwa, which possibly devastated coffee aficionados, was that coffee was roasted until it was charred; the other excuse was that since the coffee cup was passed from one hand to the next among the crowds gathered at coffeehouses –as traditionally done in taverns–, it would eventually lead to debauchery.

Ebussuud Efendi's familiarity with coffee, and more importantly, importing coffee from Yemen by way of sea indicates that this drink had well penetrated the daily life of Istanbul. There was no doubt that during their months-long pilgrimage to Mecca, the hajis were introduced to coffee and possibly brought some back on their return. Once Egypt and Yemen came under Ottoman rule in 1517, coffee automatically became a drink produced and consumed within the borders of the Ottoman Empire; its arrival in Istanbul was thus inevitable.

1 Kâtip Çelebi, *Mîzânü'l-Hakk fî İhtiyâri'l-Ahakk* (ed. Orhan Şaik Gökyay), MEB Yayınları 1000 Temel Eser, Istanbul 1980, p. 39.

The unexpected popularity of the first coffeehouses opened in Tahtakale eight years after the sinking of coffee ships and their evolvement into meeting points for literary crowds indicates that the ban on coffee was not quite effective, that coffee found its way to Istanbul in various ways, and that coffee aficionados increased in number. The verse, "Kahvehane mahall-i eğlence" (959), mentioned in Hafız Hüseyin Ayvansarayî's work *Mecmua-i Tevârih* designates 1551-1552[2] as the opening date of the first coffeehouses in Istanbul, whereas the verse "Zuhûr-ı kahve be diyâr-ı Rûm" (962) quoted in *Esmarü't-Tevarih* points to the year 1554.

Although it is no known when coffee beans were first used to make a beverage, all records indicate that coffee drinking became widespread in the Islamic world during the 16th century. According to Abdülkadir al-Ceziri's booklet entitled *Umdetü'l-safve fi hilli'l-kahve*, the first news about the great popularity of coffee as a drink in Yemen reached Cairo at the turn of the 16th century.[3]

A lesser-known legend suggests that Solomon was the first person to roast coffee beans to make a drink. According to al-Cezirî, someone named al-Zabhanî, who involuntarily lived on the African coast for a while, brought coffee from Abyssinia to Aden and was made popular among the mystic circles. Another legend implies that Sheikh Ali b. Ömer eş-Şazilî brought coffee to Yemen. This honor has been ascribed to several different names; however, Sheikh Şâzilî was embraced as the patriarch of coffee in

2 Hafız Hüseyin Ayvansarayî, *Mecmuâ-i Tevârih* (ed. Fahri Ç. Derin-Vahid Çabuk), İ.Ü. Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, Istanbul 1985, p. 429. In the introduction of the same work, Ayvansarayî gives the date H. 1000 (1591-1592) for the arrival of coffee in Istanbul. See, *ibid*., p. 18.

3 Ralph S. Hattox, *Kahve ve Kahvehaneler: Bir Toplumsal İçeceğin Yakındoğu'daki Kökenleri* (trans. Nurettin Elhüseyni), Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, Istanbul 1996, p. 23.

the Ottoman world. In fact, inscription plates bearing the following verses were hung in coffeehouse throughout the centuries:

Her seherde besmeleyle açılır dükkânımız
Hazret-i Şeyh Şâzilî'dir pîrimiz üstâdımız[4]

Evliya Çelebi adds a "Veysel Karanî" detail to the legend. In recounting "*Esnâf-ı tüccâr-ı kahveciyân*" (coffee merchant guilds) in his *Seyahatname* (Book of Travels), he associates Sheikh Şazilî's role as the patriarch of coffee by way of his affiliation with the *futuwwa* order through Veysel Karanî.[5]

Often confused with the founder of the Shadhili Sufi order Sheikh Shadhili, the legends of Sheikh Ali b. Ömer eş-Şazilî must be regarded as the efforts to legitimize coffee, which was met with strong opposition from the onset.[6] The gist of the legend often recounted in various sources and virtually by every researcher working on coffee is as follows: Sheikh Şazilî departs from the Maghreb to make pilgrimage, his ship drifts off to Yemen during a storm, and the Sheikh ends up in Muha. After building himself a thatched hut, the Sheikh settles down in Muha and attains great fame once he begins to heal with prayers the locals suffering from an epidemic. One day, the breathtakingly beautiful daughter of the Amir of Muha is brought to the Sheikh for the same reason. However, when the Sheikh keeps the young girl in his hut to heal for several days, he is slandered and unjustly exiled to Mount Aswab. The Sheikh and his disciples find nothing but coffee trees in the area; for nourishment, they eat the coffee cherries, boil the seeds, and drink the juice to survive. Soon, a mange epidemic breaks out in Muha; when some locals attribute the misfortune to the slandering of the Sheikh, a few people travel to Mount Aswab, apologize from the Sheikh, and ask for his prayers to end the disease. The Sheikh prays into the coffee

4 "We recite *basmala* (in the name of Allah, the most Gracious, the most Merciful) every time we open shop; Hazret-i Şeyh Şâzilî is our sage and master." (T.N.)

5 *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi I* (eds. Robert Dankoff, Seyit Ali Kahraman, Yücel Dağlı), YKY, Istanbul 2006, p. 276.

6 For further information on and interpretation of these legends and rumors, see Ralph S. Hattox, *ibid*, pp. 10-22.

water and offers it to the sick. Once healed, the Muha locals deliver the good news to town. In the end, the Amir of Muha apologizes from the Sheikh and implores the Sheikh to cure the townspeople. When the coffee he boils for the locals boils over and spills, the surprised Sheikh interprets this as a sign that drinking coffee will become widespread.

Summarized from the account in Kâtip Çelebi's *Cihannüma* with several important changes and additions, this story is recounted in the annotation of a manuscript (H. 1250/1834-35) transcribed into the new alphabet and published by Sabri Koz.[7]

The reality behind this legend and other similar ones is that although coffee as a plant originated from Abyssinia and coffee drinking was popularized among the mystic circles, as a drink, coffee spread to the Islamic world from Yemen. Regarded as "the dark beauty of Yemen" by certain aficionado-poets, coffee appears as the "Gentleman of Yemen" in a graceful riddle:

Sitil cloth

7 Sabri Koz, "Kahvenin Tarihine Derkenar", *Tanede Saklı Keyif*, YKY, Istanbul 2001, p. 156.

Ben ne idim ne idim / What was I, what was I
Yemenli bir beğ idim / A gentleman of Yemen
Felek beni şaşırttı / Fate confounded me and
Fağfuriye düşürttü / Dropped me into chinaware

First reaching Mecca and later to Cairo in early 16th century, as coffee spread across a wide geography, it also gave rise to opponents; the controversial fatwas issued by certain *Faqih*s (experts in Islamic Law) thus led to interminable discussions. The campaign initiated in 1511 by Hayır Bey –Mamluk State's *muhtasib* (supervisor of bazaars and trade) in Mecca– upon seeing a group of Meccans drink coffee one night in candle light on the corner of a mosque; the fatwas issued by a committee of leading Maliki, Shafi'i, and Hanafi scholars based on the views of two doctors; the burning down of coffee stocks in public squares; and the beating of coffee drinkers as a deterrent to others constitute the first important incidents in the history of coffee.[8] Coffee consumption around Al-Azhar in Cairo was also met with considerable opposition from the same neighborhood.

Behind the fatwa of Ebussuud Efendi that led to the piercing and sinking of the ships with their sacks of coffee at the Port of Tophane in 1543 possibly lies the repercussions of these debates and fights, which found their way to Istanbul.

8 Ralph S. Hattox, *ibid*, pp. 27-31.

II COFFEE AND MYSTICISM

Although Sheikh-ul Islam Ebussuud Efendi gave fatwas declaring coffee to be *haraam* (forbidden by religion), he was not quite strict about their implementation. In fact, according to Hammer, he had refrained from issuing fatwas to close to coffeehouses in the ensuing years. We are not certain if the widespread consumption of coffee among Sufi orders was instrumental in changing the views of great religious scholars. Had Ebussuud Efendi continued his opposition, the opening of numerous coffeehouses during the reign of Sultan Süleyman I would have been impossible. Nor would Doctor Bedreddin Kaysunî[1] submit to the Sultan a report in favor of coffee. Although Sultan Süleyman had abolished the Emirate of Hamr in the final years of his reign and shut down all the taverns, this move was partly encouraged by the spread of coffeehouses. A poet in Epicurean spirit, Sânî complained of the circumstances in his famous verses as follows:

Hûmlar şikeste cam tehî yok vücûd-ı mey
Kıldın esîr-ı kahve bizi hey zamâne hey

(The wine jar is broken, the glass empty, there is no trace of wine;
Lo and behold, you have enslaved us to coffee, oh present times!)

1 C. van Arendonk, "Kahve", İA, v. 6, p. 98.

An early 17th-century coffeehouse in a miniature album (Dublin, Chester Beatty Library)

The fact that the word coffee also denoted wine[2] and that it was passed around and drunk from the same cup –like wine– troubled Ebussuud Efendi and other religious scholars.

A couplet from Poet Neylî's *Hasan Çelebi Tezkiresi* reveals that the Epicureans mocked people who drank coffee in this manner. In this couplet, Neylî questions how many times the cup must be passed from hand to hand in social gatherings before coffee can liken itself to rose-colored wine.[3]

In some of his *gazel*s (odes) in *Divan-ı Kebir*, Rumi clearly uses coffee to denote wine. Based on these *gazel*s, some researchers mistakenly claim that Rumi drank coffee.[4] For example, the couplet in which coffee is mentioned alongside almond halva is noteworthy:

Devletimiz geçim devleti, kahvemiz arştan gelmede;
Meclise badem helvası dökülüp saçılmış[5]

(Our State is one of sustenance; our coffee arrives from the Ninth Heaven;
Almond halva is spread all over the gathering.)
Another *gazel* contains the following verses:

A hanımım, fincanımı kahveyle doldur, birbiri ardına sun bana.
Seni ayık olarak ziyaret edenin vay hâline; o da sakınsın bundan, sen de sakın.[6]

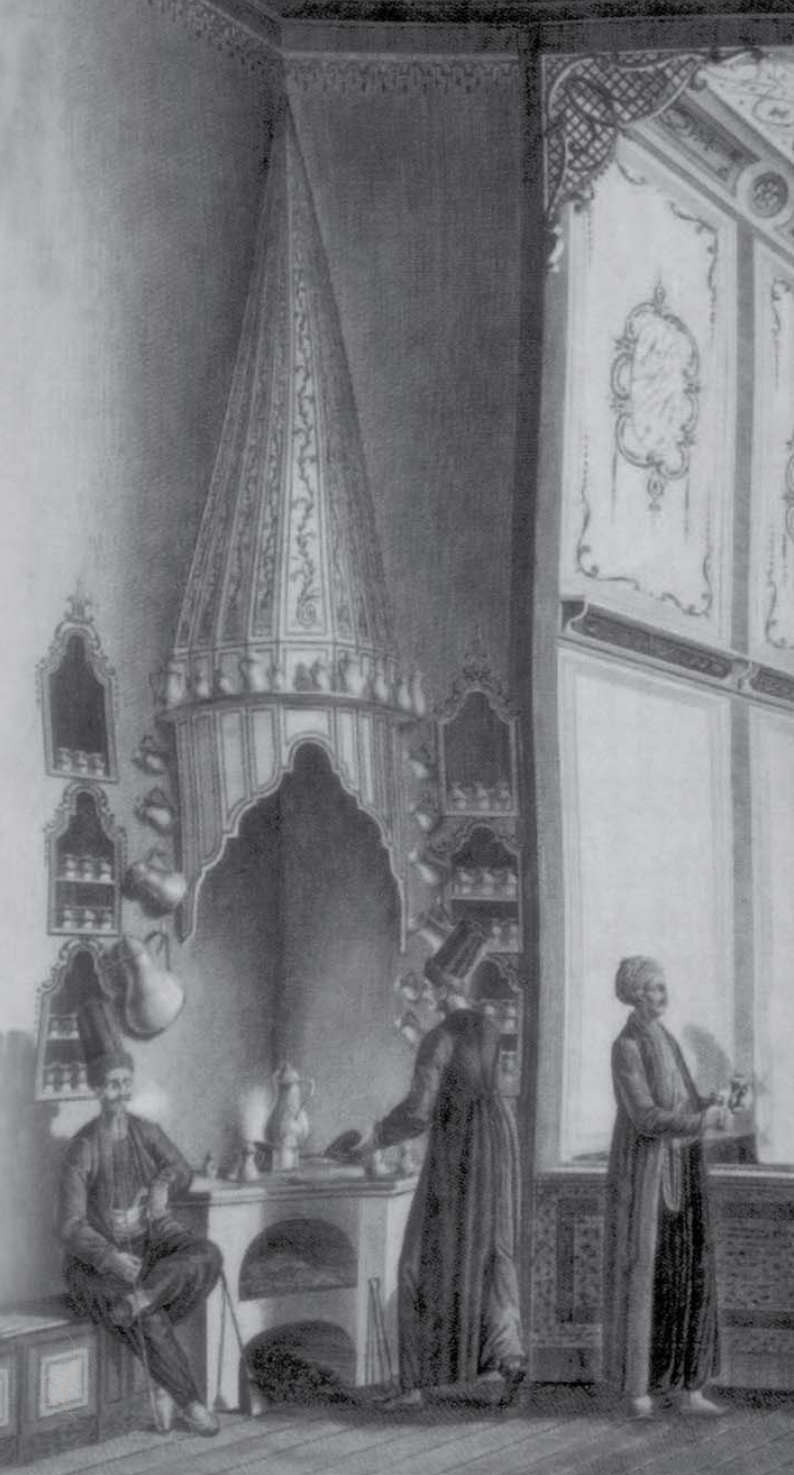
2 Hafız Hüseyin Ayvansarayî notes that coffee is also one of the names given to coffee and speaks of a hadith that declares coffee as forbidden by religion ("El-kıhvetü'n haramün"). See *ibid*, p. 18.

3 Namık Açıkgöz, *Kahvenâme*, Akçağ Yayınları, Ankara 1999, pp. 36-43.

4 Nevin Halıcı, *Mevlevi Mutfağı*, Metro Kültür Yayınları, İstanbul 2007, p. 196.

5 Mevlânâ, *Divân-ı Kebîr I* (trans. Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı), Remzi Kitabevi, İstanbul 1957, Gazel (Ode) 146, verse 1338.

6 Mevlânâ, *ibid*, Gazel 69, verse 631.



(O dear wife, fill my cup with coffee and serve it one after the other. Woe betide anyone who visit you sober; he shall avoid that, as should you.)

Coffee would indeed enter the Mevlevi dervish lodges and become an integral part of the culture formed around this sect. However, a careful study reveals that Rumi used the word *kahve* not as the name for coffee, but to denote wine. In fact, during the time of Rumi, coffee was not yet known as a drink. The prevailing view is that this delicious drink was used by dervishes –due to its stimulating effect– as of the early 15th century in order to stay alert and awake during worship and *dhikr* (invocation). Legends pertaining to when, where, and how coffee was consumed for the first time point to this fact.

Spread across the entire Islamic world through various sects, coffee derived its legitimacy largely from mysticism. According to the entry entitled "Coffee" that Arendonk wrote in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, the Aidarussiya sect held a *dhikr* called *râtib*, which was practiced by drinking coffee. Either a *Fâtiha* or four *Yâsin* prayers were recited before the *râtib*, followed by a hundred *Salawat* (Peace Be Upon Him) pronouncements for Prophet Muhammad, and coffee would be consumed during the one hundred and sixteen "*Yâ Kavî*" invocations. Based on enumeration by the letters of the alphabet, 116 is the numeric value of "Kavî," one of the beautiful names of Allah (*Al Asma-ul Husna*). Adding the numeric values of the letters in the word *kahve* yields the same number: [7]

k v y

100 + 6 + 10 = 116

k h v h

100 + 5 + 6 + 5 = 116

This ritual reveals that in mystic circles, a sacred character was attributed to coffee. In the same entry, Arendonk transmits an interesting aphorism ascribed to Ali b. Ömer eş-Şâzilî in classical sources: "Like *Zamzam*, it serves the intention with which it is consumed." The words of a 16th century Sufi are even more surprising: "A person that dies with a trace of

7 Ayvansarayî, *ibid*, p. 18. Also see, Arendonk, *ibid*., p. 97.

coffee in his bloodstream will not go to hell."[8] Ralph S. Hattox conveys the writings of someone called Ibn Abdul Gaffur on a coffee-involving *dhikr* ceremony of the Yemeni Sufis in Al-Azhar. According to this individual, Yemeni Sufis gather every Monday and Friday night. The Sheikh takes the coffee he puts in a red clay pot and distributes it to the dervishes with a ladle. While the ladle is passed clockwise, the dervishes invoke "*Lâ ilâhe illâllahü'l-hakku'l-mübîn*" (in the name of God, the most manifest) in unison as they drink the coffee.[9]

It appears that the conviction in coffee's sanctity was also transferred to the Ottoman world along with the beans. Mysticism was the source coffee's legitimacy among the Ottomans as well and Sheikh Şâzilî was embraced as the sage of coffee from the onset. In poet Aynî's words, coffee:

Nefes almış cenâb-ı Şâzilî'den
Siyeh hırka giyinmiş ol velîden

(Drew its breath from His Majesty Sheikh Şâzilî
Wear the black dervish coat from the hands of that saint.)

The coffee hearth held a great significance in dervish lodges; the sect member chosen from the senior dervishes of the lodge and appointed to coffee service was called *kahve nakibi*[10] and almost all sects had a *kahve nakibi*. As one of the most widespread sects of the Islamic world, the Khalwati order used the stimulating effects of coffee during *khalwa* (isolation from the world for mystical purposes), whereas in the Bektashi lodges, the first of the twelve pelts spread on the central hall was named "Şeyh Şâzilî Sultan Kahveci Postu".[11]

8 C. V. Arendonk, *ibid*, p. 97.

9 Ralph S. Hattox, *ibid*, p. 66.

10 Mehmet Zeki Pakalın, *Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü II*, MEB Yayınları, İstanbul 1971, p. 139.

11 A. Yılmaz Soyyer, *19. Yüzyılda Bektaşîlik*, Akademi Kitabevi, İzmir 2005, pp. 221, 245, 246.

According to Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, in the lodges of the Bektashis and Sufi orders that have adopted the invocation of names, the door that came after the main gate opening to the garden was the door of the lodge. The room located in the entrance section behind this door was known as *Kahve Ocağı* (coffee hearth) and the actual coffee stove was placed immediately across from the door. The room also included a wooden divan upholstered with kilims, rugs or carpets. The pelt immediately next to the coffee stove belonged to *kahve nakibi*. A guest (*mihman*) visiting the lodge was first taken to *Kahve Ocağı* and served coffee. If the guest had arrived to visit the Sheikh, informing the Sheikh and taking the guest to his audience was also the duty of *kahve nakibi*.[12]

The popularity of coffee in Sufi circles can be seen from the verses of –quite possibly Sufi– poet Mehmed Efendi, who, in reference to the Hadith, "I smell God from Yemen,"[13] wrote that he could sense the smell of God (*bûy-i Rahman*) in Yemeni coffee:

Nefsinden senin ey kahve meşâm-ı câna
Bûy-ı Rahman erişir belki Yemen'den geldin[14]

(O coffee, perhaps the smell of the Compassionate (*Rahman*) reaches the heart and soul from your essence, for you came from Yemen.)

12 Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, *Tasavvuftan Dilimize Geçen Deyimler ve Atasözleri*, İnkılap ve Aka Kitabevleri, İstanbul 1977, pp. 182-183.

13 "İnnî ecidu nefese'r-Rahmânî min kıbeli'l-Yemen."

14 Ahmet Talat Onay, *Eski Türk Edebiyatında Mazmunlar* (ed. Cemal Kurnaz), Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, Ankara 1992, p. 235.

A piece from the set of coffee cups owned by Sultan Abdülaziz's daughter Refia Sultan. The name of the sultan is inscribed on the cup and cup holder.

III COFFEE IS THE EXCUSE

Historiographer Peçevî İbrahim Efendi points to 1554 – three years later than the date offered in the anonymous verse that Ayvansarayî cites– as the year in which the first coffeehouse in İstanbul was opened.[1] In 1554, two Arab coffee makers, Hakem of Aleppo and Şems of Damascus, arrived in İstanbul and opened a coffeehouse in Tahtakale. Some sources reveal that Şems arrived earlier and the two men opened separate coffeehouses.[2] These new venues soon became a popular gathering place for hedonistic intellectuals. Some were busy with books, while others played backgammon or chess, and poets recited to each other the new odes they wrote; in short, they had a pleasant time drinking coffee in exchange for two silver coins (*"iki akçe"*). Often frequented by discharged *qadi*s (judges) and professors, as well as unemployed statesmen, the coffeehouses soon began to accommodate officers and dignitaries, thus running short of places to sit.

A 13-14 year-old boy at the time the first coffeehouses were opened, Gelibolulu Mustafa Âli (1541-1600) must have closely followed the discussions on coffee and coffeehouses during his fifty-nine year-long life. The chapter entitled "On Coffeehouses" in his *Mevâidü'n-nefâis fî kavâidi'l-*

1 *Tarih-i Peçevî*, İstanbul 1281, v. I, pp. 363-364.

2 İsmail Hami Danişmend, İzahlı Osmanlı Tarihi Krnolojisi II, Türkiye Yayınevi, İstanbul 1971, p. 299.

mecâlis is of particular importance in this respect. Offering the date H. 960 (1552) for the first coffeehouses, Âli did not seem to oppose coffee or coffeehouses. It appears that he had also taken a liking to coffee, which he described as the "elixir of the various beverages that good people drink," adding that initially a black poet from Yemen, coffee soon came to loved by everyone thanks to the good fortune in the gaze of Sheikh Hasen eş-Şâzilî, a lover of God. According to Âli, coffeehouses were useful, for they were the places in which dervishes and wise men would gather and converse, and the poor would seek shelter. However, he is also bothered by janissaries and cavalrymen settling in coffeehouses and gossiping all day long, individuals who attempt to show off with words like, "I was an aga back in time, or the chamberlain of so and so," as well as inappropriate figures who were only concerned with playing chess and making gamble money."[3]

Sandor Alexander Swoboda (1826-1896) Shopping in the Harem (National Palaces Collection)

Kâtip Çelebi also recounts that the prohibitions and fatwas against coffee yielded no results, that coffeehouses were opened one after the other, that people eagerly gathered in these places to drink coffee, and that they "even to the risk of losing their lives over a cup of coffee they found extremely pleasurable and invigorating."[4]

Nevertheless, the uncontrollable rise in the number of coffeehouses and coffee aficionados led to discomfort among the religious and political authorities. According to Peçevî, religious fanatics soon began to spread

3 Gelibolulu Mustafa Âli, *Görgü ve Toplum Kuralları Üzerine Ziyafet Sofraları (Mevâidü'n-nefâis fî kavâidi'l-mecâlis),* ed. Orhan Şaik Gökyay, Tercüman 1001 Temel Eser, İstanbul 1978, pp. 180-181.

4 Kâtip Çelebi, *ibid*., p. 40.

word that "ever since the public took a liking to coffeehouses, no one visits the mosques or masjids anymore! " and that preachers delivered sermons mosques against coffee and coffeehouses. They solicited fatwas from muftis that coffee was prohibited by religion, to the extent that some even proclaimed, "Frequenting a tavern is better than going to a coffeehouse!" As asserted in Ebusuud Efendi's fatwa, religious scholars insisted on the view that eating or drinking a substance roasted on coal was prohibited by Islam and that the coffeehouses were the abode of conspiracy. In Orhan Pamuk's novel *My Name is Red*, Dog recounts the discomfort of clerics as follows:

I don't want to burden you with my own problems, my dear friends who have come to hear a story and ponder its moral–to be honest, my anger arises out of the esteemed cleric's attacks upon our coffeehouses (…) but I do regret that I can't sit down like a man and have a cup of coffee with you. We'd die for our coffee and coffeehouses–what's this? See, my master is pouring coffee for me from a small coffeepot. A picture can't drink coffee, you say? Please! See for yourselves, this dog is happily lapping away. Ah, yes. That hit the spot; it's warmed me up, sharpened my sight and quickened my thoughts. Now listen to what I have to tell you: (…) [5]

If we leave the exaggeration aside, "we'd die for our coffee and coffeehouses" in fact reflects the truth. Frustrated by the monotony and boredom of social life, the public did not intend to give up coffee or coffeehouses. Although large coffeehouses were shut down due to the increasing pressures during the reign of Murad III, underground coffeehouses with separate entrances were opened in secluded areas and in the backs of shops; these were run comfortably so long as police superintendents and chief policemen were compensated for. We don't know when and by whom it was written, but the stanza, which includes the famous couplet on the panel hanging virtually in all the old coffeehouses, clearly expresses what these venues meant to social life.

Mademki gelmişiz köhne cihâne
Derdimizi çeksin şu vîranhâne
Gönül ne kahve ister ne kahvehane
Gönül ahbâb ister kahve bahane

(Now that we are born into this old world
This ramshackle house shall endure our burden
The heart desires neither coffee, nor coffeehouse
The heart only desires companionship; coffee is only the excuse.)

5 Orhan Pamuk, *My Name is Red*, translated by Erdağ Göknar, Vintage 2002, pp. 13-14.

As its opponents arduously worked against coffee, the aficionados kept busy as well. The participation of coffeehouse owners in the guilds parade of the 1582 meant that the ban on coffee was removed towards the end of Murad III's reign. The section on the procession of coffeehouse owners in Gelibolulu Mustafa Âli's poetic *surname Câmiü'l-buhûr der mecâlis-i sûr* is quite interesting in this respect. Prepared on the occasion of the birth of Murad III's son Prince Mehmet and documenting this magnificent feast with miniatures, the *surname* also describes a performance by coffeehouse owners, who, along with coffee enthusiasts arrive at the public square and immediately build a small coffeehouse. Coffee is roasted and ground in this miniature coffeehouse; a handsome young man offers coffee to aficionados reciting poetry to one another. Moveable on wheels, the coffeehouse is attacked by several prohibitionists as it passes in front of the Sultan. The coffeehouse owners run away and the drinkers stand aghast. The cups are broken, the coffeehouse is demolished, and the hands of the patrons in the coffeehouse are tied. Thereupon, the aficionados call out to the Sultan:

"O just Sultan, this is what we encounter day and night. As we enjoy our coffee, we are attacked. Spilling our coffee is like pouring water on fire. We are forever grateful to our benefactor and sovereign. That being the case, why are we exposed to this interminable torture?"

Looking affectionately at the miserable condition of the coffee aficionados, the sultan issues a decree to lift the ban on coffee, possible in honor of his son's birth. It is not difficult to surmise the joy of coffee aficionados. Mustafa Âli ends this chapter of his *Surnâme* as follows:

Bir zaman âsûde-ahvâl oldılar
Havf ü haşyetten biraz kurtuldular [6]

(For some time, they were in a tranquil state
They were partly relieved of this fearsome oppression)

This couplet seems to imply that the liberties granted to coffee during the festival were revoked after a while. Indeed, suffocated by the coffee ban in the ensuing years, a preacher named Emir of Štip delivered a twelve-couplet poetic petition to Sheikh-ul Islam Bostanzade Mehmed Efendi in late 1591 or early 1592, listing the justifications of coffee opponents and asking if they had any validity. The petition can be summarized as follows: "Is coffee against religion and harmful to human health? " Perhaps he was a patron at Hakem and Şems' coffeehouses in Tahtakale in his younger days,

6 Mehmet Arslan, *Osmanlı Saray Düğünleri ve Şenlikleri 1, Manzûm Sûrnûmeler*, Sarayburnu Kitaplığı, İstanbul 2009, pp. 485-486.

or perhaps he had been acquainted with coffee during the years in which he served as *qadi* in Cairo, Bostanzade, replied to Emir Efendi with a long answer of fifty-two couplets.[7] The second couplet of this poetic fatwa, thirty-three couplets of which describe the benefits of coffee, is in fact a summary of his entire answer:

Kahve hakkında zikrolunan şübehât
Vehmdür cümlesi medâr-ı riyâ

(The doubts expressed about coffee Are nothing more than unfounded suspicion and hypocrisy)

The procession of coffee makers and sellers as illustrated in "Surname-i Hümayun," which describes the circumcision ceremonies Sultan Murad III held at Atmeydanı (Sultanahmet Square) in honor of his sons. (Topkapı Palace Museum Library)

The detailed fatwa of Bostanzade relieved coffee aficionados and led to an increase in the number of coffeehouses until the reign of Murad IV. Peçevî İbrahim Efendi notes that after the fatwa was issued, preachers and muftis began saying, "It is not in a state of coal; drinking coffee is permissible! " and that all "clerics and sheikhs, viziers and nobles" were drinking coffee. However, on 2 September 1633, a fire that broke out in Cibali during the caulking of a ship turned one fifth of İstanbul, along with cultural assets and art works, into ashes. Using this great fire as an excuse, all the coffeehouses were demolished, and coffee and tobacco were prohibited once again. Afterwards, rumors circulated that

7 For the complete texts of İştipli Emir Efendi's petition and Bostanzade's reply, see Namık Açıkgöz, *ibid.*, pp. 36-43.

this radical decision was made to "eliminate the possibility of disorder" on the grounds that coffeehouses facilitated political gossip or "discussions about the state."[8] Peçevî İbrahim Efendi, on the other hand, argued that coffeehouses caused several big fires in İstanbul. Hence, the coffees were always kept under observation. In one of her letters, Lady Montagu writes, "A minister of state is not spoke to but upon the knee; should a reflection on his conduct be dropped in a coffeehouse (for they have spies everywhere), the house would be razed to the ground and perhaps the whole company put to the torture [sic]."[9]

The Manuscript Found in Saragossa author Potocki, who visited İstanbul in 1784, informs us that viziers, the High Admiral, and even the Sultan would go into disguise and occasionally frequent the coffeehouses –mostly built like pavilions– in order to hear what was said about them.[10] Potocki's observation is accurate; it is known that Sultan Abdülhamid I, who was on the throne at the time, would conceal his identity, visit coffeehouses with his retinue to hear what was thought of him and that he would have the coffeehouse demolished and punish the offenders whenever he witnessed a disturbing "conversation about the state."[11]

Archive documents indicate that during the reign of Selim III, the opposition against Nizam-ı Cedid (The New Order) was largely organized in the coffeehouses and that some of the coffeehouse owners and clients were punished because of this.[12]

The prohibitions enforced during the reign of Murad IV were loosened over time and coffeehouses reassumed their place in social life in the early years of Sultan İbrahim's reign. However, it should be recalled that some of the coffeehouses, particularly the ones opened by janissary bullies as of the mid-18th century, were a source of trouble. Described in detail in various works by Reşat Ekrem Koçu, these coffeehouses were the places where undisciplined and socially disquieting janissaries or swashbucklers would spread out on straw mats or benches, smoke opium, listen to epopees and ballads during daytime, and use the coffeehouses as barracks

8 *Târih-i Na'îmâ* (ed. Mehmet İpşirli), Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, Ankara 2007, v. II, pp. 755-757.

9 Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, *The Turkish Embassy Letters*, Little, Brown Book Group, 1994 edition, p. 66.

10 "Fantastik Edebiyatın Öncüsü Bir Leh Soylusu Potocki'nin Türk Mektupları 1984", İstanbul İçin Şehrengiz, YKY, İstanbul 1991, p. 188.

11 Fikret Sarıcaoğlu, *Kendi Kaleminden Bir Padişahın Portresi: Sultan I. Abdülhamid*, Tarih ve Tabiat Vakfı Yayınları, İstanbul 2001, p. 249.

12 Mehmet Mert Sunar, "Ocâk-ı Âmire'den Ocâk-ı Mülgâ'ya Doğru: Nizâm-ı Cedîd Reformları Karşısında Yeniçeriler", *Nizâm-ı Kadîm'den Nizâm-ı Cedîd'e III. Selim ve Dönemi* (ed. Seyfi Kenan), İSAM Yayınları, İstanbul 2001, p. 526.

at night.[13] Opened with ostentatious "insignia" parades, which the rich residents of the neighborhood were forced to subsidize, each janissary coffeehouse had a Bektashi "baba."

Sitil cloth

Each coffeehouse bore the insignia of the janissary corps to which the bully-owner belonged. In general, these coffeehouses were located in areas with the best views of İstanbul, e.g. on the city walls overlooking the sea. If no such location was available, they were set up on piles embedded on the seabed and meticulously decorated. Reşat Ekrem Koçu continues his account as follows:

Depending on the socioeconomic level of their patrons, the coffeehouses featured wooden or stone benches, straw mats, a bench for the "baba," the details of which were wooden, engraved, painted, gilded, embroidered and carved in floral relief. The central floor was made of marble; there was always a marble jet pool at the center decorated with pots of flowers and basilica in particular. The benches were upholstered with kilims, prayer rugs, pelts of sheep, lamb, and bear, as well as mattresses and cushions; Bektashi panels were hung on the walls. The coffee hearth (kahve ocağı) was decorated like a bridal room; Turkish coffee pots –some lidded, others not– in various sizes, cupboards full of cups, gold and silver cup holders, crystal hookahs at least several which had gold and silver lids, jasmine çubuks (long-stemmed tobacco pipes), and the most precious of pipe bowls constituted an immense wealth.

The coffeehouses also had their share of the havoc during the bloody abolition of the Janissary Corps by Sultan Mahmud II. It is known that the leading janissary coffeehouse of the period was "Avurzavur'un Kahvehanesi" (The Coffeehouse of Avurzavur). Established at the Balıkpazarı İskelesi (Fish market Pier) from which caïques carried passengers from Eminönü to Galata across the Golden Horn, and frequented by the riff-raffs settled in Balıkpazarı, Asmaaltı and environs, this coffeehouse was

13 Reşat Ekrem Koçu, *Yeniçeriler*, İstanbul 1964, pp. 296-299; Koçu, *Tarihimizde Garip Vak'alar*, İstanbul 1952. pp. 41-45.

opened by a Janissary bully who was solely remembered by his moniker. Initially shut down as part of the precautions to maintain the order and safety of the community in 1829 on the grounds that it was a "pest nest," "Avurzavur'un Kahvehanesi" was completely demolished later. Ebüzziya Tevfik Bey notes that this coffeehouse, which was reopened much later at the same location and with the same name, continued to be in service until the early 1900s and was often frequented by rowers, bargemen, as well as porters from the pier.[14]

Even after "Avurzavur'un Kahvehanesi" was completely removed from the stage of history, its name survived in collective memory for quite some time. Until recently, the name of the coffeehouse was used as an expression to define places with lots of commotion and a string of visitors, though it was forgotten over time. Fahri Celâl Göktulga, one of the leading Turkish short story writers, has a short story entitled, "Avur Zavur Kahvesi," as well as a book named after this story.[15]

14 Ebüzziya Tevfik, "Kahvehaneler", *Mecmua-i Ebüzziya,* no. 129, pp. 15-21; no. 130, pp. 44-49; no. 131, pp. 65-70; İstanbul 1914.

15 F. Celâlettin (Fahri Celâl), *Avur Zavur Kahvesi,* Ahmet Sait Kitabevi, İstanbul 1948.

IV
TAHMISHANE

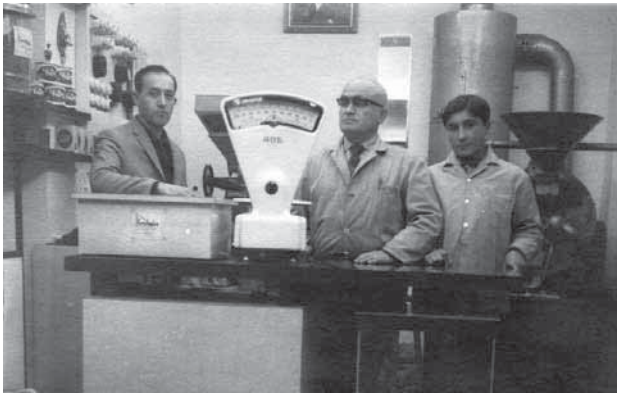
It appeared that the administration realized the futility of prohibitions; they had failed to put an end to coffeehouses and the public's penchant for coffee. Moreover, as there was no tax on coffee entering the country in various ways, the prohibitions caused the state to suffer serious losses. Attempting to disincline the public from coffee consumption by laying heavy taxes as a last resort, the state recognized the serious income derived from these taxes and thus imposed new ones. Hence, coffee sales were monopolized and the "*tahmishane*s," namely the establishments were coffee was roasted and ground, were regulated. A "*Tahmishane Eminliği*" (Superintendence of Coffee Roasting and Grinding) was established to run coffee trade within the scope of laws and regulations.[1]

Evliya Çelebi speaks of two *tahmishane*s in İstanbul; one located in Tahtakale, and the other near Yeni Cami. Comprising three furnaces and a hundred mortars, the *tahmishane* in Tahtakale employed three hundred workers. Supervised by a cook from the Janissary Corps to prevent possible fights, this *tahmishane* roasted and ground the coffee distributed across İstanbul. Evliya Çelebi likens the sound of coffee grinding simultaneously in a hundred mortars to the sound of thunder. The other *tahmishane* accommodated fifty mortars and a single furnace.[2]

1 Mehmet Zeki Pakalın, *Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü*, p. 375.

2 *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi I*, p. 29.

In early 17th century, coffee was introduced to Europe and coffeehouses were opened across all the important cities. This pointed to an increasing demand for the coffee produced in Yemen. Christian merchants transported the coffee they bought from Egypt to European markets by way of sea. When coffee export caused shortages and an increase in prices, the sale of coffee to European merchants was banned in Egypt. Consequently, they directly contacted Yemeni coffee producers and began purchasing coffee at high prices. This endeavor led to a decrease in the coffee quantities imported from Egypt and a further upsurge in prices. There was only one solution: To prevent European merchants from buying coffee from Yemen... In 1719, Kapıcıbaşı İbrahim Ağa, who was in charge of taking the Sürre Alayı[3] to Mecca, was also assigned to meet with the imam of Yemen. Traveling from Mecca to Yemen, İbrahim Ağa delivered an imperial letter from Sultan Ahmed III, which prohibited the sale of coffee to European merchants under any circumstances. The same command was also given to the governors of Egypt and Jeddah, as well as the Sharif of Mecca.[4]



Kurukahveci Cevat Efendi and Sons ((Yusuf Çağlar Archives)

The decrease in coffee import prompted *tahmishane* workers and ground coffee sellers to exploit the circumstances. It is inconceivable to imagine that coffee aficionados would not notice the change in the taste of coffee blended with roasted chickpeas, barley, and ash. As complaints multiplied during the reign of Selim III, the pressing need for a new regulation was felt. Following a review by Head of Ottoman Treasury

3 Procession of gifts sent annually to Mecca by the Sultan (T.N.)

4 Talat Mümtaz Yaman, "Türkiye'de Kahve ve Kahvehaneler", *Ehlikeyfin Kitabı* (ed. Fatih Tığlı), Kitabevi Yayınları, İstanbul 2004, p. 25.

Reşit Mustafa Efendi, it became evident that coffee grinders and herbalists added foreign substances to coffee due to shortage and high taxes, and that they insisted on doing so even at times when coffee import was on the rise. While the new regulation and the precautions served their purpose for some time, it was impossible to completely prevent exploitation. Hence, the demand for *tahmishane*-ground coffee lessened; having grown accustomed to pure coffee, the public leaned towards coffee beans instead. By then, most İstanbulites were grinding their coffee in mortars or hand mills. As mentioned in *Lütfî Tarihi*, once the state's income from *tahmishane* plummeted, in 1828, the public was cautioned against using any coffee other than what was produced in *tahmishanes*.[5]

There is no doubt that European merchants, who were prevented from buying coffee from Egypt and Yemen, found ways to procure coffee and sought ways to grow this plant in their own land. Legend has it that the first person to take coffee seeds or coffee seedlings outside of the Arabian Peninsula was an Indian hajji called Budan. Brought to Amsterdam in 1661, coffee plant was soon taken to Dutch colonies and coffee cultivation began in Sri Lanka and Java in 1658 and 1699, respectively. Next came Sumatra, Bali, Timor, Celebes and, as of 1718, the Dutch Guiana –or Suriname– in South America… The French were able to acquire viable coffee seedlings as late as 1714; within a few years, they began to cultivate coffee on the island of Bourbon, to the east of Madagascar. Finally, it became evident that the climate and soil of Brazil, which the Portuguese bought from the Dutch, was ideal for coffee agriculture. Brazil began to grow coffee in the second half of the 18th century; by the 19th century, Brazilian coffee was unrivalled.[6]

As for the Ottoman world, records in the qadi registries indicate that the Ottoman began importing *"European Coffee"* towards the end of the 18th century to overcome coffee shortages and that special shops were opened to market this coffee. Ottoman Wali of Egypt Kavalalı Mehmed Ali Paşa's interference with coffee export from Yemen to İstanbul to strengthen his power in Egypt against the Ottoman state instigated coffee import from South America, thus condemning the locals of İstanbul to *European Coffee*.[7] Although coffee aficionados paid little attention to anything other than Yemeni coffee, there was hardly anything else they could do.

5 Talat Mümtaz Yaman, *ibid*., p. 28.

6 For further information, see Ulla Heise, *Kahve ve Kahvehane*, Dost Yayınları, İstanbul 2001, pp. 43-49.

7 François Georgeon, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğunun Son Döneminde İstanbul Kahvehaneleri", *Doğu'da Kahve ve Kahvehaneler* (eds. Hélène Desmet-Grégorie, François Georgeon), YKY, İstanbul 1998, p. 56.


Dedeleriniz de BU KAHVEyi içerdi
KURU KAHVECİ
KURUKAHVECİ
MEHMET EFENDİ MAHDUMLARI

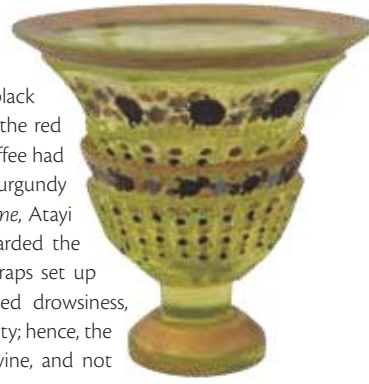
V
WATER OF LIFE

The debates that began once coffee arrived in İstanbul were inevitably reflected in Turkish poetry. A careful study of the old divan poems instantly reveals the ongoing fight between poets against coffee and coffeehouses and those who enjoyed drinking coffee and regarded coffeehouses as the meeting point of intellectuals. At the time when coffee was introduced to İstanbul, Belîğî did coffee justice in the *gahzel* he wrote with the word "coffee" repeated at the end of every couplet. However, he was irate that this mischievous and hot-blooded beauty, which traversed Egypt, Aleppo, and Damascus before it reached Anatolia, had taken over the wine cup; he compared coffee to a prostitute skilled at provoking her clients.[1]

Belittling those who regarded coffeehouses as the gathering place of refined and well-read people and believing that true refinement was never having to set foot in one of these places, Poet Sai was one of the strong opponents of coffee; according to him, coffeehouses were the abode of infamy and caused their regulars to fall from grace. Extremists, such as Manastırlı Keşfî, said that they would rather drink *haraam* wine than *halal* coffee. Agehî resented the replacement of the wine glass by the

1 About this *ghazel* by Belîğî, see Âşık Çelebi, *Meşâiru'ş-Şuarâ* (ed. Prof. Filiz Kılıç), İstanbul Araştırmaları Enstitüsü Yayınları, İstanbul 2010, v. I, p. 427.

coffee cup, "O fate," he wrote, "is this how you and I took an oath?"[2] According to Şeyhî Mustafa, a black crow had perched on the nest of the red parrot; in other words, the dark coffee had confiscated the throne of the burgundy wine.[3] In his work entitled, *Sakiname*, Atayi likened coffee to poison and regarded the vagrant-infested coffeehouses as traps set up for pleasure seekers. Coffee caused drowsiness, whereas wine aroused joy and vitality; hence, the cupbearer was obliged to serve wine, and not coffee.



An unknown poet ascribed all evil to coffee. Arguing that no true pleasure seeker would drink that black liquid, the poet was convinced that this acerbic drink, which caused constipation (*kabız u yabis*) in his opinion, triggered the diseases in the body, that it was as fatal as venom, and that it looked like foul water. Those who frequented this meeting place of sinners and drank coffee were not benevolent looking; the ones who stepped foot in a coffeehouse had to listen to interminable gossip.

This heavy criticism was reciprocated. Apparently a serious coffee aficionado, Amasyalı Sülûkî opined that in labeling coffee as acerbic, the aforementioned poet was in fact attributing the sickness of his own nature to coffee. Unable to notice the delectable taste of coffee hidden like the water of life (âb-ı hayat) out of ignorance and not realizing that coffee-drinking tradition was initiated by Şeyh Şâzilî, a great lover of Allah, this "debauched", this "heedless" person had shown nothing but ignorance by reproaching coffee enthusiasts.

Other poets also compared coffee to water of life (âb-ı hayat); as testimony to those who doubted this comparison, one such poet pointed to the darkness (color) of coffee.[4] A coffee-loving poet named Lebib wrote the following verse for coffee's native land Yemen:

Hâkinde biten kahveye fincan oluversem[5]

(Wish I were a cup to the coffee grown in Hakin)

2 Namık Açıkgöz, *ibid.*, p. 7.

3 Ahmet Talat Onay, *ibid.*, p. 235.

4 A. Süheyl Ünver, A. Süheyl Ünver, "Türkiye'de Kahve ve Kahvehaneler", *Türk Etnografya Dergisi*, no. 5, 1962, Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, Ankara 1963, p. 70.

5 A. Süheyl Ünver, *ibid.*, p. 72.

In the historical poem he wrote for a new coffeehouse, a poet named Macunizade compares this unparalleled coffeehouse, which brings together men of hearts, to heaven. The verse in which the heaven simile is used offers the opening date of the coffeehouse by enumeration with letters of the alphabet: "*Cennet-âsâ bu cây-ı bî-hemtâ*" (H. 991/1583).[6]

According to early 17th-century poet Nağzî's poetic work in which he had coffee debate with wine, coffeehouses had patrons of all socioeconomic levels, ranging from scholars to the ignorant, villagers to urban dwellers, young to old, dervishes to atheists –who did not believe in the afterlife–, gentlemen to slaves, and Damascans to Aleppons. Clearly, both coffee and coffeehouses had become an indispensible part of daily life. In a stanza he wrote possibly on the days during which coffee and coffeehouses were abolished, Poet Nev'i (d. 1599) was pointing to this fact. Even professors could not read books at night or lecture in the morning without drinking two cups of coffee. So, why would the *muhtesib* (inspector) treat coffee sellers like the enemy, as if a Muslim drinking coffee would become a heretic?

Muhtesib kahve-fürûşa ne ta'addî eyler
Yoksa kâfir mi olur içse Müselman kahve
İrte derse çıkamaz gice kitâba bakamaz
Eğer içmezse müderris iki fincan kahve[7]

(Why does the inspector
oppress coffee sellers
Does the Muslim become a
heretic when he drinks coffee
The professor cannot attend
class during day or look at a book at
night
Unless he drinks two cups of coffee)

One must recognize the fact that even its worst enemies grew accustomed to coffee, which entered the Palace in the 17th century, and that the intoxicated began to drink coffee to sober up. Indeed, hostility against coffee did not last very long; this water of life became a symbol of Ottoman lifestyle and hospitality. Virtually all the European travelers who visited Turkey at the time recount stories of coffee and tobacco offering. As there were no more poets reviling at coffee, few others felt the need

6 A. Süheyl Ünver, *ibid.*, p. 53.

7 M. Nejat Sefercioğlu, *Nevî Divanı'nın Tahlili*, Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, Ankara 1990, p. 88.

to belaud it. However, several poets complained of the occasional coffee shortages or high prices. Poet Aynî, for example, booed a coffeehouse owner serving a blend of chickpeas and barley as coffee, telling him that it was not coffee, but "black water."[8] Another poet named Sadullah İzzet cursed the ones augmenting the fixed prices of coffee, telling them to "suffer like coffee." This suffering included burning and roasting, grinding, and drowning in water (cooking): "*Hem yanıp hem rû-siyeh hem hurd ola hem gark-ı âb*".[9]

Defrauders who complained about the rising prices of coffee and sold barley water instead, could not escape the satirical arrows of poets.

8 Ahmet Talat Onay, *ibid.*, p. 234.

9 Ahmet Talat Onay, *ibid.*, p. 235.

VI

FROM MORTAR TO CUP

Various tools and utensils were needed to roast, cool, grind, preserve, cook, and serve the green coffee beans arriving from Yemen. Hakem and Şems may have brought along some of the utensils they used at their coffeehouse in Tahtakale. Initially pans, mortars, and bowls possibly produced for other purposes were used for coffee making. Overtime, more practical and aesthetic utensils were developed to make and serve what came to be known as *Turkish coffee* in the world due to its unique taste and brewing method. Catering to tastes of all levels and suitable for household use, new forms of these utensils were designed as well. It is thus only natural that as coffee offering evolved increasingly into a ceremony, the utensils used in this ceremony were diversified and generated their own aesthetic.

The fresher the coffee, the more delicious it is; therefore, coffee household utensils measure four of five cups at the most. This means that, depending on need, coffee is roasted and ground fresh, making coffee utensils an indispensible part of Turkish kitchens. The first process is performed on the *kahve tavası* (coffee skillet). The size of the skillets varies according to their areas of use—home, coffeehouses with large consumption, or pavilions and palaces. Resembling a ladle in form, these metal skillets have long handles, some of which are foldable to extend when needed. Skillets with small wheels attached to their handles to

provide flexibility can also be encountered in museums and private collections. Both in terms of their graceful forms and their ornate handles, some skillets constitute unique works of art.

Coffee pan with articulated handle

The secret to the delectable taste of Turkish coffee is hidden in the way and the degree with which it is roasted. If it is not roasted enough, or over-roasted like charcoal, coffee loses much of its flavor and smell. It is crucial to roast all the coffee beans equally and wait until they turn golden; in order to achieve this, the skillet must be constantly rotated on fire or stirred and tossed with a spatula. As this is difficult to do with open skillets, over time, lidded skillets and cylindrical boxes with sliding lids were also developed. Coffee beans are roasted perfectly in these rotating skillets that are constantly tuned over fire by holding the curved handles.

After it is roasted, coffee must be aired and cooled. There are special wooden vessels for this process. Known as *kahve soğutucusu* (coffee cooler), they are produced in various ways from different kinds of wood. Apart from plain forms, some are carved and encrusted with mother of pearl, ivory, and various precious stones. In order to facilitate the transfer of cooled coffee beans to a mortar or mill, the coolers feature narrowing spouts, some of which may be lidded.

Next is the grinding process: It is known that before mills were developed, coffee beans were ground in wooden mortars (*dibek*); even after the emergence of coffee mills, mortars were still opted by a large number of coffee aficionados and special guests were offered *dibek kahvesi* (mortar-ground coffee), as it was considered the most palatable of its kind. Quite possibly, multi-purpose mortars were used for grinding coffee at first. Over time, special wooden mortars and metal pestles were manufactured for coffee. Similar to coffee coolers, some mortars were also inlayed with bone, ivory, silver, and encrusted with iron clouts.

Coffee cooler

We do not know when the first wooden

coffee mills were produced. The wooden mill, in which a metal wheel replaces the pestle, is comprised of a cubic or cylindrical body made of solid woods such as walnut, boxwood, or ebony, and a relatively long wooden tray (*tabla*) for coffee grinders to press the mill against their knees. A metal wheel mechanism is set inside the body, which features a wide-rimmed iron or copper bowl with a hole in the middle where the coffee beans are placed. Rotated with a metal crank handle, the mandrel is placed above the bowl.[1] As the handle is cranked, the beans go through the hole, turn into powder, and fall into the wooden container below the wheel. This container is a small, sliding drawer on the tray side of the mill.

Coffee cooler

As wooden coffee mills were bulky, smaller and more practical hand mills (*el değirmeni*) without trays that could easily be used at home were developed. Wooden mills in similar forms that allowed the transition into the now-familiar cylindrical metal mills were also manufactured. The foldable iron crank handles of metal mills can be placed inside the mill by removing the cover. When needed, the cover is opened, the crank handle is taken out, and roasted coffee beans are placed in the same place. After the cover is closed, the handle is attached to the mandrel of the wheel and rotated. The body is small enough to be grabbed by hand. The ground coffee accumulates in

Coffee mill

1 Celâle Ergene, "Ahşap Gövdeli Kahve Değirmenleri", *Antika*, no. 12, March 1986, p. 11.

Coffee jug

the drawer that can be pulled out from the lower section of the body. Hand mills are also produced in compact sizes that can easily be taken along on journeys; some hand mills feature simple lines and decorations, whereas others are ornate with magnificent hand carvings, colorful stones, Qur'anic verses, and aphorisms. While the graceful and priceless hand mills manufactured in İstanbul, Kayseri, Mudurnu and Bursa are no longer used, they are preserved in many homes as memorabilia and decorative objects.

Coffee mill

Special boxes known as coffee containers (*kahve kutusu*) were also designed to store ground coffee. Wooden coffee mills have containers produced from the same wood and decorated in the same manner. More precisely, the mill and the coffee container constitute a set.

Comprised of two separate compartments for coffee and sugar, some of the containers feature sliding lids or covers resembling the lid of a pot. Coffee aficionados prefer wooden containers to protect coffee against humidity.[2] In terms of material value and workmanship, coffee containers that would cater to different budgets and tastes were made of copper, brass, silver, porcelain, or tombac…

At this point, we would like to remind our readers of a coffee container *tekerleme* in one of Kavuklu Hamdi's playful folk narratives. In *ortaoyunu*, a traditional ***Ottoman*** comic ***theater*** form, Kavuklu narrates absurd stories to a naively listening Pişekar to prepare the audience for the play. In the

2 Celâle Ergene, *ibid.*

Sitil (brazier) tray

end, the stories all turn out to be a dream; *tekerleme* is the name given to these stories. In this particular *tekerleme,* Kavuklu begins to work at Ahmet Ağa's coffeehouse as an apprentice; with a cloth around his waist, he serves coffee. One morning, after he gets up early, prepares the coffeehouse, and looks for something else to do, he notices a diamond cutter hookah waving at him. The dialogue continues as follows:

PİŞEKÂR- Yes, but Hamdi, how can a hookah wave at a person?

KAVUKLU- Well, it waved at me!

PİŞEKÂR- That's something else.

KAVUKLU- Then, when the other hookah began complaining, "My! You want him and not me," I pocketed the diamond cutter part of that hookah, and the amber bits of the pipes that have been begging and pleading for a long time!

PİŞEKÂR- Hamdi, you are practically stealing.

KAVUKLU- Come on, what do you mean I'm stealing? They begged me, so look them out for a stroll.

PİŞEKÂR- What if your boss walked in when they are still in your pocket?

KAVUKLU- That's exactly what I was concerned about! Anyway, I opened the door and just as I was about to leave, I suddenly ran into my boss and went straight back in!

PİŞEKÂR- Now, this is the exciting part.

KAVUKLU- Thank God for his morning coffee pleasure, my boss, without noticing the hookah and the pipes yelled, "Hamdi, make me a cup of coffee!" So, just as I opened the lid of the coffee contained and stepped on the ladder to take down a coffee pot, my legs trembled with fear, I slipped, and fell right into the coffee container!

PİŞEKÂR- Come on, Hamdi, can a man fit into a coffee container?

KAVUKLU- Oh, our coffee container is quite large; in fact, it can hold an oke of coffee.

PİŞEKÂR- So, then what? Didn't they take you out of the coffee container?

KAVUKLU- How could they? As soon as my boss appeared before the container, we hid into a corner. Each time he swung the spoon, we scampered away to the other side. But this is a spoon after all, so when he finally scooped us up, we fell into the coffee pot!

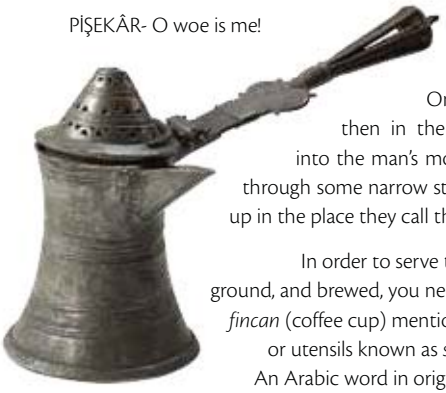
PİŞEKÂR- This is the first I've heard of a man falling into a coffee pot. Let's see where that leads.

KAVUKLU- Just at that moment, my boss poured hot water over us; I was scalded, but we didn't make a sound not to alert my boss.

PİŞEKÂR- Which means, you were practically wretched in the pot.

KAVUKLU- Absolutely! And from there, plop we fell into a large cup, which my boss handed to a customer!

PİŞEKÂR- O woe is me!



KAVUKLU- One swig, two swigs, then in the third swig, we went into the man's mouth, down his throat, through some narrow street, and finally ended up in the place they call the stomach.[3]

In order to serve the coffee you roasted, ground, and brewed, you need the *cezve* (pot) and *fincan* (coffee cup) mentioned in Kavuklu's story or utensils known as *sitil takımı* (brazier set). An Arabic word in origin meaning "ember" or "semi-burnt wood," *cezve* attained an entirely new meaning in Turkish and came to denote a coffee pot with a long handle.

3 Cevdet Kudret, *Ortaoyunu II*, Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, Ankara 1975, pp. 192-193.

The expression "*cezveyi sürmek*" means putting the pot on fire to brew coffee. Cleverly described in the riddle, "sürdüm kustu çektim küstü" (I put it on fire, it sizzled; I pulled in back it fizzled), *cezve* is placed on the brazier or oven by holding the long and slightly erect handle. The base is larger than the rim to take maximum advantage of fire; the mouth features a spout on the left side of the handle to facilitate pouring. Made of metals and alloys such as copper, silver, and tombac, the different sizes of the *cezve* range from a single cup to five cups. It is possible to obtain graceful *cezves* ornate with fine hand carvings. Some of these *cezves* are unique works of art. Some larger forms feature small wheels on the handles to be easily placed on the fire. Some have lids, whereas others have foldable handles to carry easily during travel.

Coffee jug

Special vessels were also designed to carry large quantities of brewed coffee before it began to cool. Filled with coffee, a special, twelve-cup *ibrik* (ewer; the larger ones were called *kahve güğümü* or coffee jug) is placed on *sitil*, a footed brazier with a special central compartment for burning coal. The Turkish coffee ewer is lidded; from its lid to its handle and spout, it has very graceful lines.

Sitil tray

Sitil is carried by chains on three points that converge on top. In order to claim that you own an entire *sitil* set, you must also acquire a large circular tray, as well as two smaller trays with handles, made of beaten silver. The smaller trays should be ovular in form. You must also possess twenty cup holders to complete the set. Similar to other coffee utensils, *sitil* sets made of copper, silver, and tombac feature exquisitely artistic examples decorated with hand-carved motifs.[4] Commonly used in palaces and large mansions where coffee was consumed in large quantities, *sitil* sets gave rise to the birth of a coffee offering ceremony with its own traditions and intricacies.

4 Nureddin Rüştü Büngül, *Eski Eserler Ansiklopedisi*, İstanbul 1939, p. 208.

VII
THE COFFEE CUP

Virtually all the words reflecting Turkish coffee culture are splendidly beautiful: *Kahve, dibek, cezve, telve, fincan*... Taken from Arabic and used without any change, the word *fincan* (cup) does not sound foreign in Turkish. On the contrary, with its sound and connotations, it reflects a fine sensitivity and a rich culture. The second syllable of this word, "*can*," (meaning spirit) seems to point to the elixir in coffee's chemistry. That elixir lends joy and health to those who drink coffee. Every time the word "*fincan*" is pronounced, the first thing you visualize is a cup –with or without a handle– filled with steaming, frothy Turkish coffee.

One cannot imagine a Turkish house without one or more sets of elegant *fincan*s. In earlier times, apart from cups for daily use, the China in the household included valuable cups reserved for guests, as well as special cups used only by the man of the house. Some aficionados bought separate cups for the month of Ramadan; they enjoyed drinking their coffee from these cups after breaking fast. Perhaps the most valuable possession of the nomadic Yuruk people was the *fincan*s they meticulously kept in a bag with -glided

and coral tombac cup holders- and only used for guests.[1] It should be remembered that back in those years, *fincan* sets were quite expensive and difficult to own and that those who possessed them preserved these cups as one of the most valuable objects of the house. Price registries dated to 1640 reveal that some families preferred to buy cracked cups at a lower price. Depending on whether the cracks were two- or three-pronged, the prices would be reduced to a third or fourth of the original.[2] The Turks, who wish to offer their guests this "dark faced" but "face-brightening"[3] "treat for gentlemen" in a beautiful –albeit cracked– cup describe a cup full of coffee with charming riddles such as this one:

Bir küçücük fil taşı	(A tiny piece of ivory.
İçinde beyler aşı	With a treat for gentlemen inside
Çanağı beyaz	(Its cup is white
Çorbası kara	Its soup is black)

A tiny piece of ivory.

Valuable cups were made of jade, agate, hematite, aventurine, ebony, and even rhinoceros horns. Beautiful old cups made of pipe clay in Tophane style can also be encountered in museums or private collections. However, the most common types are made of tile or porcelain. Starting with İstanbul, İznik, Kütahya, and Rhodes, tile cups, –as well as *kallâvi* (large) cups for serious aficionados– catering to different tastes were manufactured in a number of cities.

Paralleling the decrease of tile use in architecture towards the end of the 18th century, the decline in the tile industry -and by extension the

1 Nureddin Rüştü Büngül, *ibid.*, p. 95.

2 Mübahat S. Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlılarda Narh Müessesesi ve 1640 Tarihli Narh Defteri*, Enderun Kitabevi, İstanbul 1983, pp. 203, 204, 304, 305, 311.

3 "*Kahvenin yüzü kara amma yüz ağartır*" (Proverb: "The face of coffee is black, but it brightens the face".)

demand- led to an escalation in all ceramic goods, including *fincan* sets. Noticing this opportunity, European manufacturers begin to produce and export porcelain *fincan* sets that would meet the taste and demands of the Turks. The cups with elegant decorations and illustrations produced in the cities of *Saks* and *Sevr* were highly popular in particular. Abdülaziz Bey notes that the most desirable cups were the kinds known as *eski maden* (old metal) produced in Saxony for Turks; these cups were either plain white or decorated with flower motifs on white, as well as brown and camel in color; the ones made of rhinoceros horns were preferred as they were thought to repel poison.[4]

As the goods imported from Europe were relatively less expensive than their locally produced counterparts, the local industry unfortunately began to disappear altogether. In order to take advantage of the techniques developed in Europe and to revive the almost extinct ceramic art in Anatolia, the Yıldız Porcelain Factory was established and began to operate in 1892.[5] In terms of quality, the porcelain goods manufactured here rivaled the ones imported from Europe.

Since aficionados sought ingredients that enhanced the smell and taste of coffee such as such as *cardamom, coriander, musk, ambergris, violet*, and *jasmine*, tiny, cage-like boxes were screwed into the bottom of some of the cups produced in Europe and at the Yıldız Porcelain Factory. Generally made of silver, these boxes featured holes and could be opened and shut after the spices were placed inside. Museums and some private collections preserve beautiful examples of these kinds of cups.

In the Turkish coffee tradition, *fincan* has no handles. Some miniatures reveal that *kallâvi* cups with no handles were used both with and without a saucer.[6] Designed to avoid burning the hands with a cup full of hot coffee, cup holders (*zarf*, literally "envelope") entered our

4 Abdülaziz Bey, *Osmanlı Adet, Merasim ve Tabirleri I* (eds. Kâzım Arısan-Duygu Arısan Güney), Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, İstanbul 1995, p. 211.

5 For further information, see Önder Küçükerman, *Dünya Saraylarının Prestij Teknolojisi: Porselen Sanatı ve Yıldız Çini Fabrikası*, Sümerbank Yayınları, İstanbul 1987.

6 Nurhan Atasoy-Julian Raby, İznik, TEB Yayınları, London 1989, pp. 34, 36, 45.

lives at an unknown time. However, it can be said that their use became widespread as of the mid-17th century. Made of metals such as gold, silver, brass, and copper, fragrant trees like ebony, coconut, aloe, and substances including tortoiseshell, ivory, and rhinoceros horns, some of the cup holders are breathtakingly beautiful. Inlay, hand carving, and filigree were the three main techniques used in the productions of metal holders. Apart from these, cup holders were also produced with niello, coral, and precious stones. Few examples of this kind have survived to date due to the perishability of wood. According to Abdülaziz Bey, possessing beautiful and valuable cup holders was once a competition among the genteel; some even made it a point of honor to own a similar cup holder they had seen in someone else's possession. "An object of this kind was evidence of both refinement and wealth."[7]

The technique applied in the production of tortoiseshell, ivory, and horn cup holders is also intriguing. Based on the accounts of masters who still apply this technique today, first the male-female molds of the cup holder are produced of metal or hard wood. After the sheet of horn or shell is softened in hot water, it is pressed between the molds and allowed to cool. Such materials can be inlayed with gold or silver, if desired. Ivory cup holders are manufactured with the same technique used in wooden holders; however, because ivory is a precious material, special attention must be paid in applying embossed decorations.[8]

In one of his books, Reşat Ekrem Koçu mentions books -without citing a source- a cup with holder that Serasker Hüsrev Paşa gave to *Enderun Tarihi* author Tayyarzade Atâ Bey as a circumcision present. During a time of financial difficulty, Atâ Bey sold this cup and holder and not only redeemed his house from mortgage, but paid back all his debts as well.[9]

7 Abdülaziz Bey, *ibid*., p. 210.

8 M. Zeki Kuşoğlu, "Fincan Zarfları", İlgi, No. 35, January 1983, pp. 25-28.

9 Reşat Ekrem Koçu, *Osman Gazi'den Atatürk'e 600 Yılın Tarih Panoraması* (supplement of *Cumhuriyet* newspaper) İstanbul, n.d., p. 92.

It is not difficult to surmise that a *fincan* set with cup holders was a very valuable possession transmitted from one generation to the next and was thus meticulously preserved and used in traditional homes. Nevertheless, it should be remembered that such priceless memorabilia of families disintegrated for various reasons have been passed into the possession of others. One such example is as follows: As he sips his sugarless coffee from a handle-free *kallâvi fincan* resembling a yogurt bowl in a shanty coffeehouse in Kanlıca, poet Faruk Nafiz Çamlıbel notices the contrast between the sordid coffeehouse and the fine workmanship of the *fincan* and its saucer. The rim of the cup and the saucer are lined with gold, and the lower sections are decorated with graceful flowers. A coat of arms executed in wash gilding stands between the flowers. When the coffeehouse owner comes to collect the empty cup, Faruk Nafiz tests the waters: "This must be a valuable cup! " Showing no modesty, the coffeehouse owner informs the poet that the cup is indeed valuable, that he purchased it from an auction at the adjoining seaside mansion. The coat of arms on the cup, which he refuses to sell to many demanding customers, belongs to the Sultan.

The coffeehouse owner relates that the *selamlik* section of the mansion had long been demolished and the *harem* section had been expropriated for the expansion of the asphalt road. He adds that mansion belonged to an Egyptian pasha from the Khedive family and that he could only afford to purchase this cup among the possessions auctioned off once the family disintegrated, noting that the rest of the pieces were "sold or stolen." Offering coffee to reputable customers in this cup that once belonged to a coffee set the Sultan had presented to the Egyptian pasha, the coffeehouse owner prepares to bring coffee to yet another influential client in the same cup.

As Faruk Nafiz watches the coffeehouse owner wash the handle-free *kallâvi* cup with the coat of arms of the Sultan

and fill it up with a freshly made coffee to bring it to a retired marine, he conveys his thoughts as follows:

This cup must have experienced a continuous reign in the seaside mansion of the Egyptian pasha. Perhaps the viziers of the period discussed the Egypt problem, the Crimean War, and the Congress of Berlin while drinking coffee from this cup. Yet, in my mind, this cup evoked humorous anecdotes, rather than serious discussions. Keçecizade found his most eloquent epigrams over this cup, the Sovereign let out his loudest laugh across from this cup; as the cup listened to the witty remarks of the humorist of Kanlıca, it witnessed the pouch of gold the late Egyptian had extended, being passed from the hands of one minister, to the lips of another ambassador. It had catered to the pleasures of Ramadan guests and eid visitors; with these thoughts in mind, this single cup appeared before me as the history of pleasures of a century.[10]

The continued use of damaged cups demonstrates the preciousness of *fincan* sets. Keçecizade Fuad Paşa's father Keçecizade İzzet Molla, whom Faruk Nafiz imagined to utter eloquent epigrams while drinking coffee with the cup of the Egyptian pasha, was exiled to Sivas in early 19th century. As he passed through Tokat, he was offered coffee in a cup with a broken handle. The witty remark of the clever poet as he took a swig of coffee from this cup is quite famous: "You shall send this cup to İstanbul; there, they put a handle on everything! "[11]

Cups with handles, which also had elegant saucers, emerged in the 19th century and rapidly became widespread. Yet, true coffee aficionados always preferred to drink the *dibek*-ground Yemeni coffee in cups with no handles. Just imagine what the old coffee-aficionado-cum-poets dreamed of as they looked at a steaming, frothing cup of coffee. Suffice it to say, Enderunlu Fâzıl likened the cup to the sky and the coffee inside it to the night.

10 Hilmi Yücebaş, *Faruk Nafiz Çamlıbel: Bütün Cepheleriyle*, İstanbul 1974, pp. 369-372.

11 In Turkish, the idiom "*kulp takmak*" (to put a handle on) means to find fault with something. (T.N.) Figuratively speaking, *kulp* means excuse. In a verse, Keçecizade İzzet Molla writes, "Bulmadık kulpunu kolayını biz/ Herkese kulpu kolay taktı felek" (We could not find an excuse or an easy way out / Fate easily put a handle on everyone).

VIII
COFFEE CEREMONY AT THE PALACE

Peçevî İbrahim Efendi relates that following the fatwa of Bostanzade, all the elites of İstanbul began drinking coffee, and that even the mightiest of viziers opened coffeehouses to generate income. Nonetheless, coffee opponents did to give up their fight and provoked, with every opportunity, the political authority to shut down coffeehouses. Yet, banning coffee as a beverage had become impossible, as the individuals expected to make this decision had already become coffee aficionados who began the day with coffee and referred to the food they ate in the morning to have a cup of coffee afterwards as "*kahve altı*". Abbreviated and becoming one of the loveliest words of Turkish over time, the word *kahvaltı* (breakfast, dejeuner) clearly demonstrates how coffee became an indispensible part of our lives.

In his travel journal, Jean Thévenot, who visited İstanbul and lived there for nine months nearly a hundred years after the first coffeehouses in Tahtakale were opened and twenty years after Sultan Murad IV demolished all the coffeehouses (1655), speaks of coffee as a distinctly Turkish beverage consumed at all hours of the day. The accounts of this curious traveler reveal that despite all pressures

and bans, coffee had become an inextricable part of daily life over a hundred years.

Thévenot begins his account by describing how coffee beans are roasted in a pan or a similar utensil, ground until they turn into fine powder, boiled in a vessel with a long handle known as *cezve*, and drunk afterwards. He also adds that after coffee is boiled over ten-twelve times, it is poured into cups lined on a wooden tray and offered before it cools. Particularly noting that coffee should be consumed hot, but without haste, as one would fail to savor it, Thévenot's observations are quite intriguing:

This beverage is bitter and black, and smells slightly burned. It is taken in small swigs for fear of burning one's mouth, such that as you walk into a coffeehouse, a lovely music of slurping rings in your ears. This beverage is good for preventing the intoxication in the stomach from reaching the head, serves as a cure for the discomfort in creates and thus causes sleep deprivation. When our French merchants have numerous letters to write and wish to work through the night, they drink one or two cups of coffee; coffee relaxes the stomach and acts as a digestive. The Turks, on the other hand, claim that it cures every known disease; truth be told, it has as many fine qualities as tea does. As for its flavor, after you've sampled it, twice at most, you grow accustomed to coffee and it no longer tastes bland. Some infuse it with cloves and a few cardamom seeds, whereas others add sugar, yet this process of blending for a better flavor not only decreases the benefits of coffee, but in fact make it a less healthier drink. Much coffee is consumed in countries where the Turks live. Yet, rich or poor, there is hardly anyone who drinks less than two or three cups of coffee—one of the most basic needs that a husband is obliged to provide for his wife.[1]

Following these lines, Thévenot speaks of coffeehouses where "coffee is brewed in large cauldrons." Without any discrimination on language, religion, or social class, these coffeehouses are open to everyone; most people prefer coffeehouses to have a pleasant time. Benches with straw mats are placed outside some of the coffeehouses; customers who wish to sit outdoors and watch

1 Jean Thévenot, *Thévenot Seyahatnamesi* (ed. Ali Berktay), Kitap Yayınevi, İstanbul 2009, p. 69.

the passers by assumed their places on these benches. Musicians play and sing in numerous coffeehouses. Some of the polite customers offer coffee to their acquaintances when they arrive at a coffeehouse.[2] Recounted by A. Süheyl Ünver, Fatih tomb keeper and a Melami of the Shabaniyya order Ahmed Amiş Efendi's words confirm Thévenot's observations: "If you are seated at a coffeehouse and someone sits by you, you shall order him coffee; that is what Ottomanism is all about! "[3]

Once the interminable discussions on whether it was prohibited by religion ended and coffee became an indispensible part of daily life, it must have entered the Palace as well. The first coffee registries in the accounting records of the Palace kitchen are dated to the 17th century. However, these registries are uniquely on the sugar allocations made to the coffee consumed by the sultan, the sultana, Divan members, agas, and other members of the court.[4] If one can identify the date on which the *kahvecibaşı* (person in charge of preparing the Sultan's coffee) service began, then the approximate date of coffee's inclusion –if not the entrance to– Palace protocol can be determined. It is known that after a certain date, coffee offering played a unique role in all the ceremonies held

Coffee Ceremony at the Harem

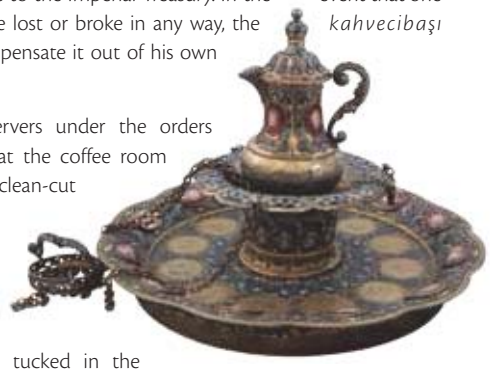
2 Jean Thévenot, *ibid.*, p. 70.

3 A. Süheyl Ünver, *ibid.*, p. 70.

4 Arif Bilgin, *Osmanlı Saray Mutfağı*, Kitabevi Yayınları, İstanbul 2004, pp. 210-211.

at the Palace. It was indeed the tradition[5] to offer his audience the coffee made for the Sultan during a *Rikab-ı Hümayun*.[6] High state officials visiting the Palace on the last days of Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha were taken to the sultan's audience after they were offered imperial taffy and coffee. During the Mawlid ceremony joined by the sultan and held at Sultanahmet Mosque on the 12th day of Rabi-ul Awwal (the third month), a large coffee tent was set up by the *kahvecibaşı* in the open square to the west of the mosque and coffee would be offered to the crowd until the sultan exited the mosque.[7]

A prestigious court position like *tüfekçibaşı* or *sarıkçıbaşı*, *kahvecibaşı* was assigned to talented servants of the royal ward, sometimes with the duty of chamberlain, and at other times only as a rank. *Kahvecibaşı* was in charge of the Sultan's coffee; he would prepare the coffee after a mid-morning meal, dinner, or on other occasions the Sultan deemed fit and, accompanied by the coffee servers under his command, he would present it to the Sultan with a special ceremony. Comprised of priceless pieces such as *güğüm* (jug), *sitil*, *fincan*, bejeweled cup holder, and tablecloth with jewelry, the *sitil* set was entrusted to the *kahvecibaşı* in exchange for a receipt he gave to the Imperial Treasury. In the event that one of these pieces were lost or broke in any way, the *kahvecibaşı* was obliged to compensate it out of his own pocket.



The coffee servers under the orders of the *kahvecibaşı* at the coffee room organization were clean-cut and nimble young men. Embroidered with silk cord, the sleeves of their short jackets were pulled behind and tucked in the back; they would carry silk aprons on their waists and towels on their shoulders. When coffee was requested, they would grab their *sitil* sets and begin to serve. The *kahvecibaşı* would take lead with a brocaded towel in his hand; he was followed by the coffee server carrying a large tray

5 Tayyarzâde Atâ, *Osmanlı Saray Tarihi Târîh-i Enderûn I* (ed. Mehmet Arslan), Kitabevi Yayınları, İstanbul 2001, p. 342.

6 The Sultan's presence when on horseback on a state occassion (T.N.)

7 Tayyarzâde Atâ, *ibid.*, p. 333.

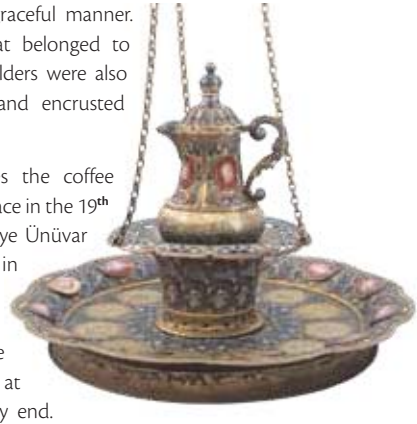
of upward-facing empty cups and cup holders. The third coffee server would hold a *sitil* tray with a jug full of hot coffee; his right hand would be underneath the tray and his left hand would grab its three chains. The fourth coffee server would follow them with a large and empty tray. The *kahvecibaşı* would walk through the door, skillfully fill up all the cups in one single move, and begin distributing the cups. The fourth coffee server was required to collect the empty cups once the coffee server bearing the *sitil* tray left the room.

In the *harem*, coffee-serving concubines took over the same role. Coffee making and offering methods were an important part of the concubines' education. Concubines married to statesmen or leaving the palace for one reason or another helped spread coffee traditions, as well as other courtly conduct.

Based on the accounts of Leyla Saz and Safiye Ünüvar, who witnessed coffee offering ceremonies in the harem, coffee was brought in a golden, covered coffeepot, which would then be placed on a golden, footed brazier with hot ash inside. One of the concubines would hold this *sitil* from the three long chains extending from the rim and connected at the top. Two concubines would carry the gold tray lined with cups placed in bejeweled holders. As these young women carried the tray, they would hold in their palms a velvet or satin fabric with cotton lining, magnificently embroidered with gold thread, pearls, and precious stones. *Sitil* fabrics were ornate with a diamond-embroidered motif in the center; golden tassels would hang from the corners of these exquisite works of art. Slightly folded and surrounding the gold tray with one end stretching to the ground, the fabric would be held with the tray. The coffee master would take a cup holder from the tray and after carefully placing a cup in it, she would hold the coffee pot with a piece of lined fabric always to be found on the tray, pour the coffee to the cup, and offer it to the Sultan with utmost grace. This manner of presentation required skill, because the coffee master had to carry the cup with the cup holder she supported with her thumb at the tip of her index finger as she offered the coffee. Safiye Ünüvar writes, "The way in which graceful and well-mannered Circassian girls offered coffee with two fingers left the onlookers in awe." The wives of Sultans were also offered coffee –if

Sultan Abdülhamid II's coffee cup bearing the sultan's coat of arms.
(IMM City Museum Collection)

ordered– in the same graceful manner. Similar to the ones that belonged to the sultan, their cup holders were also delicately ornamented and encrusted with precious stones.[8]



Leyla Saz describes the coffee ceremony held at the Palace in the 19th century. Considering Safiye Ünüvar portrays the ceremony in more or less the same way, it can be surmised that this cumbersome ceremony continued at the Palace until the very end. However, Samiha Ayverdi notes that during the reign of Abdülhamid II, coffee ceremony using a *sitil* set was only held on occasion of religious holidays and wedding ceremonies and that *cezve* and *fincan* replaced coffee jugs.[9] Ayşe Sultan's memories of her father confirm this observation. Only drinking Yemeni coffee, Sultan Abdülhamid would ask for coffee six or seven times outside of the ones he drank after meals. His *kahvecibaşı*, who served him since his days as crown prince, was a man named Halil Efendi he deeply trusted. Halil Efendi would constantly sit at the coffee stove next to the guardroom; when he was summoned, he would put on his white gloves and make the coffee in a silver *cezve*, place it on a small gold tray along with two cups bearing the sultan's coat of arms, personally take it to the harem door, ring the bell, and deliver it to the treasurer in charge. Ayşe Sultan notes that the golden tray on which coffee was brought to the sultan was a family heirloom given to him by his mother Tirimüjgân Kadınefendi. Abdülhamid would drink two consecutive cups of coffee with his cigarette; if he were to enjoy his coffee with one of his official wives (*kadınefendi*), then a second set of the same cups would be placed on the tray.[10] Ayşe Sultan's memoirs also reveal that his children never drank coffee in Sultan Abdülhamid II's audience and that young people who smoked and drank coffee were reproved at the Palace.

Ayşe Sultan relates that after Halil Efendi passed away, his son-in-law Ali Efendi was appointed as *kahvecibaşı*. Ragıp Akyavaş heard from Ali

8 Leyla Saz, *Anılar: 19. Yüzyılda Saray Haremi*, Cumhuriyet Kitapları, İstanbul 2000, p. 41; Safiye Ünüvar, *Saray Hatıralarım*, Cağaloğlu Yayınevi, İstanbul 1964, p. 82.

9 Samiha Ayverdi, İbrahim Efendi Konağı, İstanbul Fetih Cemiyeti İstanbul Enstitüsü Neşriyatı, İstanbul 1964, p. 18.

10 Ayşe Osmanoğlu, *Babam Abdülhamid*, Güven Yayınevi, İstanbul 1960, pp. 28-29.

Efendi the story of the way and quantity with which Sultan Abdülhamid drank coffee:

The Sovereign had his unique way of drinking coffee. Based on what I heard from his kahvecibaşı Ali Efendi, he drank thirty or forty cups of coffee per day. Two plain white cups were brought to him; after emptying half of the cezve in the first cup and drinking it, he would drink the rest in the second cup. His personal coffee was brought from Yemen in small sacks of five kilograms each.[11]

Similar to his older brother Abdülhamid II, last Ottoman sultan Mehmed Vahdeddin VI was addicted to coffee and cigarettes. In her memoires, Rumeysa Hanım, the maid of honor of Vahdeddin's official wife Nazikeda Kadınefendi, writes that two cups of coffee were brought to the Sultan, that he drank them consecutively with a cigarette, and that he was served coffee three or four times a day.[12]

11 A. Ragıp Akyavaş, Üstad-ı Hayat II, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, Ankara 2005, p. 280.

12 Rumeysa Aredba, *Sultan Vahdeddin'in San Remo Günleri* (ed. Edadil Açba), Timaş Yayınları, İstanbul 2009, p. 75.

IX COFFEE SERVICE AT OTTOMAN MANSIONS

An important character in Midhat Cemal Kuntay's famous novel *Üç İstanbul*, Hidayet's mansion (*konak*) in Cağaloğlu was filled with old and very valuable objects. The Oriental room in particular was decorated meticulously and Hidayet offered coffee to his friends in a *sitil* in this room, as it was done in the old mansions. In order to reenact the traditional ceremony, he dressed three of his maids as concubines.[1] As seen from the passage in the novel's chapter entitled, "The Banquet," which describes this ceremony in detail, coffee service with *sitil* had largely been forgotten at the turn of the previous century; like Hidayet, those who were interested gathered information by consulting the elder members of long-established families. A. Süheyl Ünver learned the intricacies of this ceremony from Reşad Fuad Bey[2] he visited with Painter Hoca Ali Rıza Bey, who harbored a particular interest in coffee culture.[3] It can thus be said that as of the mid-19th century, coffee service with *sitil* had largely been abandoned and the *cezve* had become widespread.

1 Midhat Cemal Kuntay, Üç İstanbul, Sander Yayınları, İstanbul 1976, pp. 411-412.

2 Reşad Fuad Bey is the son of Keçecizade Fuad Paşa, one of the leading statesmen of the Tanzimat era.

3 A. Süheyl Ünver, *ibid.*, p. 79.

According to Abdülaziz Bey, who wrote the most beautiful book on the old İstanbul life, the basement halls of Ottoman mansions had a room known as "Kahve Ocağı" (coffee hearth), which featured a stove with a stone base, tile-covered sides and four burners. Since hot water was needed at all times, one of the burners of the stove was allocated to a large copper jug with tap; the other burners were used for placing the *cezves*. There was a locked cupboard on one side of the stove; forbidden to anyone except the *kahvecibaşı*, the cupboard contained the private cups and cup holders of the mansion's owner, as well as exquisite coffee sets (including trays, cups, cup holders, gold embroidered tablecloths) provided for guests. The cupboard on the other side held cups and cup holders in a plethora of shapes and colors, used for other guests and people who frequented the mansion for various reasons. "Kahve Ocağı" also served as a waiting lounge; benches with carpet and kilim spreads were nailed along the wall for guests and the staff to sit.[4]

Kahvecibaşı was one of the "veteran" agas of the old mansions; he personally prepared and served the coffee to the mansion owner and his important guests, had coffee made at the end of every meal and had it sent to the rooms of the mansion's inhabitants, and offered coffee to those who frequented his "hearth." The coffee of the mansion owner was roasted and ground under his supervision; after the sufficient amount of cardamom was added to the coffee, it would be preserved in special jars.

According to Abdülaziz Bey, *kahvecibaşı* made it his mission to deliver coffee to the mansion owner and his important guests; this was a ceremony all by itself. He would place the coffee pot on a trivet at the center of a graceful, embellished tray made of a precious metal, line the cups and cup holders around it, throw a gold embroidered cloth over his right shoulder, walk into the room, and wait respectfully by the door. When he was signaled, he would take the cup filled with coffee in his right hand, keep his left hand five fingers below his chest, slowly take the cup to its destination, stand briefly in front of the person being offered, and when the mansion owner or guest stretched his/her hand to take the coffee, he would do a semi-bow, deliver the cup, take a few steps back, turn around and wait by the door, and finally collect the empty cups in the same manner. *Kahvecibaşı* would not deliver the coffee to just any guest; he would assign two of the coffee agas to do the task.[5]

In her work entitled, İbrahim Efendi Konağı, Samiha Ayverdi notes that selected young women in the harems assumed this task performed

4 Abdülaziz Bey, *ibid.*, p. 180.

5 Abdülaziz Bey, *ibid.*, p. 189.

by agas in the selamlık. Depending on the number of guests, the *sitil* cloth was brought by one or two concubines. Another concubine carried the tray. The duty of the third concubine was to offer guests the cups she filled from the coffee jug on the tray. Coffee-serving concubines did not leave the chambers when coffee service was over; they waited in a corner to refresh the coffee and collect the empty cups. According to Ayverdi, coffee service with *sitil* proceeded in the Ottoman mansions as follows:

In a *sitil* set of three, the cloth was placed not on the hand but over the shoulder. The round *sitil* cloth was velvet or satin, embroidered with gold thread, silver and gold sequins, with a golden fringe around it. Some featured jewels or pearls. Always folded in two diagonally, they were hung down from the shoulder to the waist. The outfits of the coffee servers changed over time as well. During the reign of Selim III, the young concubines wore shalwars under long silk dresses with the back divided from the two front panels by vertical gores. During the reign of Sultan Mecid, on the other hand, they wore front-slit dresses with the hems pulled up to their waists; they put bejeweled brooches on their headdresses. After the Tanzimat' era, the agas of the selamlık were dressed in a long, button-down frock coat known as *stambouline*.[6]

In speaking of some of the old traditions in Ottoman mansions, Abdülaziz Bey mentions adding ground cardamom to coffee. Today, some people still make coffee in this manner. Others added flower water to the coffee or steamed their pot with ambergris fumes. We should note that coffee infused with musk was known as *mümessek kahve* and perfumed with ambergris as *muanber kahve*.

Abdülaziz Bey relates another style he defines as *paşa kahvesi*: water and coffee are placed together in the pot. After they boil, a small amount of ash is added to the mixture and coffee is drunk only after the coffee grounds sink to the bottom.[7]

6 Samiha Ayverdi, *ibid*, p. 18.

7 Abdülaziz Bey, *ibid*, p. 278.

We also learn from Abdülaziz Bey a list of inappropriate behaviors while drinking coffee. These include, nosily sifting coffee through the mouth, offering a second cup of coffee to a guest before the appropriate time has elapsed, and, when the coffee arrives, pointing the guest to the servant with one's hand to tell him/her to give the coffee first to the guest…[8] A comic story of such an over-hospitable host and his guests is beautifully portrayed in a play by Kel Hasan, one of the greatest names of Turkish improvisational theater. According to Malik Aksel:

Kel Hasan walks in with a coffee tray in his hand and extends the coffee cup first to the host. Without speaking, the host signals Hasan to give it to the guest. He turns to the guest, but this time, the guest begins to mimic, "The host is older, you should give it to him first." Hasan returns to the host, and this time, the host slightly frowns, as if to say, "What are you waiting for? " He turns back to the guest, the guest gesticulates with his arm, signaling, "You are so dim-witted! Didn't you understand what I said? Is it not disrespectful to give me coffee when he is sitting right there? " After oscillating several times between the host and the guest, Kel Hasan wipes his seat, sits on the floor, drinks the first, then the second coffee, and licks the coffee grounds from his fingers. As he does all this, one can read the expressions of rage and admonition in their faces, mimics, hands, and eyes; Kel Hasan's indifference is a local play, a pantomime in the truest sense.[9]

8 Abdülaziz Bey, *ibid*, p. 277.

9 Malik Aksel, İstanbul'un Ortası, Kapı Yayınları, İstanbul 2011, p. 29.

X
COFFEE IN DOMESTIC LIFE

From asking for the bride-to-be's hand to weddings, coffee was once an integral part of the ritual of marriage. In his book in which he details all the Ottoman customs and ceremonies, Abdülaziz Bey remarks that families seeking for a bride for their sons are always be taken to the guest room during family visits to prospective candidates and would be offered coffee and long-stemmed tobacco pipes. As the guests enjoy their coffee, the prospective bride is beautifully dressed and coifed in a separate room. At this stage, a green dress must be worn; as "green" is the symbol of "wish," a young girl dressed in green means that she has attained her wish. After the girl is prepared, she stands at the door of the guest room; it is now time to serve coffee. As the guests are offered a second round of coffee, she enters the room, salutes the guests and sits in the chair across from them. While the guests drink their coffee, they inspect the marriageable girl; as they need time to watch her carefully, drinking coffee in a prolonged manner is not considered rude. Per tradition, the ones who bring coffee remain standing.[1] After the coffee is finished and the cups are collected, the girl gets up and leaves the room. In Anatolia, the girl may express her unwillingness by mixing salt instead of sugar to the prospective groom's coffee. In some regions, if the coffee is brewed without any froth, it means, "You have to chance! "

1 Abdülaziz Bey, *ibid.*, p. 107.

The inscription on the coffee cup preserved at the IMM City Museum reads,
"Bir fincan kahvenin kırk yıl hatırı vardır"
(A cup of coffee commits one to forty years of friendship.)

In Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar's famous novel *Kuyruklu Yıldız Altında Bir İzdivaç* (A Marriage under the Comet), the guests who visit such a marriageable young girl expect such a ceremony, but face disappointment; the girl is modern and well-educated and does not take such traditions seriously.

Coffee Ceremony at the Harem

It is customary to place a chair at the center. The girl comes in with the coffee and sits down. Once the cups are handed back, she leaves. This was the kind of marriageable-girl visit we were accustomed to… They offered us coffee long afterwards. We handed back the cups. The girl never got up and left. She spoke to us more comfortably than her mother did. She made fun of the women scared of comets. We stood up to leave. She accompanied us all the way to the middle door. She was so comfortable that as we departed, I thought she would say, "Greetings to the gentleman who will marry me."[2]

Ceremonies similar to the one described above still survive in Anatolian cities; the expression "having drunk someone's coffee" indicates that the young girl is betrothed by her family.[3] However, in Anatolia, the marriageable girl prepares and serves the coffee with great care; the guests closely observe how she makes the coffee and whether or not she abides by traditions.

If the girl is approved, the men of the two families have to convene after a certain while. Senior family members who ask for the girl's hand in marriage and visit to complete the betrothal are also welcomed with coffee and long-stemmed tobacco pipes.

Before performing a marriage ceremony in the girl's house, it is important to restock the pantry and prepare the sherbet and coffee sets in particular. Following the marriage prayer, the guests are offered dinner, coffee and tobacco pipe. Similarly, it is important to arrange for coffee, tobacco, and sherbet service in the women's section. Also mentioning

2 Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, *Kuyruklu Yıldız Altında Bir İzdivaç*, Hilmi Kitabevi, İstanbul 1958, pp. 147-148.

3 Müjgan Üçer, *Anamın Aşı Tandırın Başı*, Kitabevi Yayınları, İstanbul 2006, p. 263.

when and how coffee and tobacco is offered when he details the wedding ceremony, Abdülaziz Bey identifies the coffee set as a separate item among the objects that must be included in the dowry of a marriageable girl from an affluent family.

Coffee set. 40 old metal cups in sets of ten; 10 gold, 10 enamel on gold, and 10 silver cup holders, 30 in total; 5 silver *sitil* and ewers. 10 coffee trays, 5 of which are silver and the other 5 velvet-covered and ornate with silver embossed flowers.[4]

A careful reading of the novels of Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, who was skilled at writing about the daily life of old İstanbul, reveal how coffee and coffeehouses were an inextricable part of this lifestyle. The same is also valid for all the different regions of the Ottoman Empire. As the expression of an ascetic modesty, "Please, have a cup of our bitter coffee," or "Would you like a cup of our bitter coffee? " were often used as a means of invitation. Empathetic guests who kept their visit brief were shown courtesy with the phrase, "But dear sir/lady, the cup is not even cold! " The famous proverb, "A cup of coffee commits one to forty years of friendship" is an exaggerated expression of gratitude and also points to the prominent place of coffee in welcoming guests.

Although coffee appears to have relinquished its throne to tea as of the early 20th century, it still maintains its prestigious place as a protocol drink. The first question to be directed at a guest is: "What would you like to drink? Coffee or tea? " It should also be remembered that after sending off their husbands to work and their kids to school, housewives, who get together at one of the neighbors' houses, drink coffee, and have their fortune told, have generated a "Morning Coffee" culture that resembles the "Five o'clock tea."

In her article entitled, "Tek Kalan Fincan" (The Only Cup Left), prominent Turkish novelist and storywriter Sevinç Çokum recalls how coffee was brewed in tinned, wrought copper coffee pots over the incinerating coal on the brazier in the days she refers to as "Put on the *cezve*, I'm on my way! " According to Çokum, Turkish coffee is all about "relaxation, mingling, sharing"; after the coffees are finished, the cups are turned upside down to relax and receive pleasant news about the future. Why else would anyone make out "a windfall, loaded camels, bundles of money, blessings, luminous doors, commodious roads, and powerful animals such as lions, horses, and eagles" from the figures coffee grounds leave on the cup and saucer?

4 Abdülaziz Bey, *ibid*., p. 117.

Sevinç Çokum's following lines describe the meaning of coffee for a Turkish house in an excellent manner:

There came a day when people suffered from the absence of coffee, yearned for it and even settled for roasted chickpeas. In fact, they even made coffee from the leftover grounds, joined queues during shortages. At one point, sold-by-hand coffee beans entered the households. I used to take great pleasure in stirring and roasting these beans in a tinned copper pot with a wooden spoon. The teal color gradually turns to light brown, the smell of coffee pervades the air, the oil begins to shine on the beans; you can't help but crunch a few of them in your mouth. Then, you grind the roasted and darkened beans in your yellow brass hand mill in small amounts. The beans strain you as they break and grind; however, once the pulverized coffee spills onto the plate. Oh, what a difference the freshly-ground beans make!

Morning gatherings aside, one cannot imagine "visiting days" of women without coffee. When talking about the coffee shortage of the late 1950s in his essay entitled, "Bir Fincan Kahve" (A Cup of Coffee), renowned Turkish novelist Selim İleri describes how his mother made it a prerequisite to offer coffee to her daily visitors. A *cezve* or two of coffee was kept ready on the gas oven in the kitchen; some of the ladies took it sweet, whereas others preferred it with little or no sugar. After marveling at how his mother made them all in time, and, more importantly, made sure that they had enough froth with bubble "rings", and occasionally gave café-au-lait –but not Nescafé, Turkish coffee– to kids, he continues as follows:

Suddenly, Turkish coffee vanished from sight. How and why in the world did it disappear? Sometimes a small quantity arrived at the coffee store and people would wait in line for hours. It was quite possible that they'd run out of stock by the time it is your turn.

Women Drinking Coffee

Then, there is that time when coffee was on the black market. It was bought under the counter, at incredible prices.

Coffee was among the most precious gifts during that period. Our neighbor Müeyyet Hanım would bring us coffee in a small paper bag. An air of joy and even squeals of delight would fill the hallway. On such nights, my parents would slurp their coffees after dinner.[5]

People who like coffee, not just enjoy the taste, but everything else about it, from its smell to its utensils, from its conversation to literature; they even take the risk of suffering in order to get a fine cup of coffee. For such people, coffee is not just any beverage, but a kind of elixir that needs to be respected and consumed with due etiquette. Distinguished Turkish essayist Ali Çolak regards coffee as the "drink of "mellowness, tranquility, causerie—a private moment of pleasure." The following sentences in his essay entitled, "Kahveye Saygı" (Homage to Coffee) are like the manifesto of the coffeeophile:

Coffee should be drunk slowly, with much relish. It requires to reflect on the moment and on life; to wander across high ideas and overflowing emotions. It makes one forget what came before it; once it is imbibed, coffee unites the setting, the friends in company. Do the juvenile, who are ignorant, unreflecting, and even disdainful of all this, have the right to drink coffee?

I must say, right off the bat, that what I consider "coffee" is the genuine "Turkish coffee," as the name implies. Of course, we are familiar with the name and taste of Nescafé, espresso, or cappuccino. We've sat at a Starbucks in New York and sampled European flavors. Yet, none of these can replace the true Turkish coffee. Neither the smell, nor the flavor... What you call coffee is to be consumed in small cups like ours, which point to the unattainability, the intransience of that taste. Treasuring a limited and scarce savor means appreciating its value, multiplying it in a limited time, and making it eternal. What people, such as the Americans, guzzle by the gallon in paper cups like fruit juice is not what I call coffee! Long story short, coffee is no ordinary drink. Someone who respects coffee should abide by its rituals. Otherwise, s/he should not drink it at all.[6]

5 Selim İleri, *Ay Hâlâ Güzel*, Kaf Yayıncılık, İstanbul 1999, pp. 64-65.

6 Ali Çolak, *Bilmem Hatırlar mısın?*, Kapı Yayınları, İstanbul 2009, pp. 43-45.

XI
COFFEE ADDICTION

In one of his essays, Malik Aksel describes the coffee aficionados gathered at the outdoor coffeehouse in front of the Horologe Room of the Hagia Sophia. As he wallops his hookah, a *tiryaki* (coffee aficionado) refuses his coffee and scolds the apprentice bringing his coffee, "Did I not tell you that the forth should not be cracked? Go on, take this back and bring me a new one! " On the contrary, another *tiryaki* demands a non-froth, long-boiled coffee; this time, the apprentice is admonished for boiling the coffee over. Yet another one barges into the coffee room and has his pot washed, for he has no tolerance for the smell of sugar in his *cezve.* Some order coffee brewed over hot ash, others demand little coffee and plenty of water... Referring to coffee as "*ehl-i irfan şerbeti*" (sherbet of the master of wisdom), the majority of these coffee aficionados is also addicted to cigarettes, hookah, or snuff and are skilled conversationalists. Their pleasure is "complete" once "coffee and tobacco" come together.[1]

A plate illustration depicting a Greek and a Turk drinking coffee together (Çetun Tukek Archives)

There are some addicts, who have become fixated on coffee. According to Ahmet Cevdet Paşa's account in his

1 Malik Aksel, İstanbul'un Ortası, p. 191.

Warwick Goble, Coffee Hearth

famous *Tarih* (History), Chief Military Judge Mollacıkzade Ataullah Efendi –an incorrigible *tiryaki*– suddenly wakes up from his catnap during an important meeting and, thinking he is at his mansion, claps his hands and shouts, "Bring me my coffee! " In order to save the Judge from embarrassment, Provincial Governor Şakir Ahmet Paşa responds, "Truth be told, we are tired as well; let us take a small coffee break! "[2] Ragıp Akyavaş claims to know aficionados that cannot awaken unless they slurp a cup of coffee as soon as they get up in the morning, adding their minds do not function without coffee, they are fixated on coffee no matter what else you offer them, and always feel like there is something missing. Akyavaş was a coffee aficionado himself; even when he was on the line of fire in Rumania, his aide-de-camp prepared him his coffee and came to his rescue with a *fincan* in one hand and a *cezve* in the other.[3]

Ercümend Ekrem Talû describes the coffee and cigarette pleasure of a "pasha efendi" in an old mansion as follows:

Pasha efendi has his own way, as usual. As soon as he returns to the mansion from the office in the afternoon, he rolls that fine Grand Prix tobacco in JOB rolling paper, as thick as a stuffed vegetable, inserts the fringy cigarette in the jasmine, long-stemmed tobacco pipe with the amber tip and lights it.

- Girl! Is my coffee ready?

After devouring a few greedy gulps from the large, wide-rimmed Viennese cup of coffee flavored with coriander or cardamom, he heaves a sigh of relief. Ah, the pleasure!

Is his mind clear now? Absolutely. Bring on the conversation…[4]

Old aficionados who cannot get a clear head before they smoke and slurp their frothy coffee from cups as large as bowls are beautifully described in Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar's novels. Hekim Senai Efendi of *Cehennemlik* is one such character. In one of the scenes from the novel, the servants of hypochondriac Hasan Ferruh Efendi carry this old man like a fragile object, pick up him carefully and set him down on his armchair. After Senai Efendi rests for a while, he lifts up his eyes disappearing behind the shiny lenses of his spectacles, addresses the servants waiting for his orders, and says, with a weak and staccato voice, "A glass of water… And my coffee! " Quickly, he adds, "My coffee shall be mixed with musk, but

2 Faik Reşad, *Letaif* (ed. Ahmet Özalp), Kitabevi Yayınları, İstanbul 1995, p. 338.

3 A. Ragıp Akyavaş, *ibid*, p. 279.

4 Ercümend Ekrem Talû, *Gecmiş Zaman Olur ki* (ed. A. Karaca), Hece Yayınları, İstanbul 2005, p. 72.

simmered (*matbuh*), not infused (*menku*)!" The servants rush to fetch the coffee. Alone in his room, Senai Efendi mutters to himself, "The art of cooking retrogressed just as much as medicine has. Where are those old mansions? The former servants? That ancient way of making coffee? Nowadays, instead of coffee, they bring a tasteless, flavorless, black chestnut juice."

After transmitting these words, Hüseyin Rahmi adds that his drowsiness does not disappear until the stimulating effects of these three pleasure-inducing substances can be seen on tobacco and snuff addict Hekim Senai Efendi's ninety year-old worn-out patience, that the haze in his eyes will not fade away and that his senses of hearing and touch will not function.[5] It is interesting to note that Senai Efendi compares the light-colored, dissatisfactory coffee to chestnut juice. This metaphor appears in other novels by Hüseyin Rahmi as well. For example, we encounter the following sentence in *Can Pazarı:* "Baba, make us two sweet coffees. We are tired; make sure that they are not like chestnut juice."[6]

It is worth recalling the coffee pleasure of Makbule Hanım, a female protagonist in the novel *Sonuncu Kadeh* by serious coffee aficionado Refik Halid Karay.[7] In order for her to enjoy her coffee, she always has the cinereous coals burning on her copper brazier brightly polished with lemon rind. Whenever she desires coffee, she slightly grubs and crackles the brazier, and grabs the tray from the shelf; covered with immaculate pieces of cloth on top and bottom, the tray is always ready with coffee, sugar, a pot and cups. Still, rinsing the cups once again and drying them with dishtowel used only for this purpose, Makbule Hanım sets the *cezve* on the brazier, though not on medium heat. Let us hear the rest from Refik Halid:

She never forgets to put a small amount of the heating water into the cups to take away their coolness. She pours the water, but adds a little more extra hot water in the cup. As the coffee begins to bubble, that water is poured back in the pot to re-boil. Who has patience for this ritual today? Yet, frustrated with the world, Çemit sits on the side, and watches her make coffee with great pleasure on most mornings.[8]

5 Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, *Cehennemlik*, Atlas Kitabevi, İstanbul 1966, pp. 52-53.

6 Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, *Can Pazarı*, Atlas Kitabevi, İstanbul 1968, p. 70.

7 Waking up every morning at six and making his coffee after eating a single "shimmery Turkish delight," if Refik Halid Karay was not hung-over or had decided on what to write, he would sit at his desk to work, and, after drinking a second coffee at 11 AM; he would continue to write until noon. See Necmi Onur, "Refik Halid Pullu Lokum Yapıyor", *Hafta*, no. 35, 2 September 1955, p. 6.

8 Refik Halid Karay, *Sonuncu Kadeh*, İnkılâp ve Aka Kitabevi, İstanbul 1965, p. 60.

In Abdülhak Şinasi Hisar's novel *Fahim Bey ve Biz,* the greatest pleasure of Fehim Bey's wife Saffet Hanım is to smoke her cigarettes with the consecutive coffees she makes on the brazier that keeps her warm. She is happiest on the days her husband brings her a new kind of coffee, a different cup or pot as a gift.[9]

When out of coffee, one should stay away from aficionados – almost all of which exclusively drink Yemeni coffee– such as Senai Efendi, Makbule Hanım and Saffet Hanım. In his memoirs, renowned Turkish journalist writes that he is not a coffee aficionado and thus does not suffer during coffee shortages. Reflecting on a period during which coffee had become a bizarre mixture of chickpeas and barley, he mentions a coffee aficionado and friend named İzzet. Fuming before his cup of morning coffee, Kanlıcalı İzzet Bey would ramp and rage when he was told there was no coffee at home, and turn İstanbul inside out to find coffee. One day, when Saraçoğlu asked, "Dear sir, just pretend coffee is not to be found in İstanbul anymore. Instead, wouldn't you favor perhaps cocoa or a well brewed cup of bright red tea? " İzzet Bey opened his eyes wide and replied with an irritable voice, "My friend, noting in the world could ever replace a cup of frothy, well-made Turkish coffee infused with musk! True aficionados know this well; please stop talking nonsense for God's sake! "[10]

Mustafa Kemal Pasha was a coffee aficionado. In this photograph, he is seen drinking coffee with his wife Latife Hanım, Kâzım Karabekir Pasha and other commanders.

It is known that Peyami Safa, an aficionado-cum-novelist like Refik Halid, had a strong liking for coffee and cigarettes and that any time he was in a jovial mood, he would ask his friends, "Come on, let's have a cup

9 Abdülhak Şinasi Hisar, *Fahim Bey ve Biz*, Varlık Yayınları, İstanbul 1966, pp. 93, 95.

10 Ahmed Cemaleddin Saraçoğlu, *Eski İstanbul'dan Hatıralar* (ed. İsmail Dervişoğlu), Kitabevi Yayınları, İstanbul 2005, pp. 233-235.

of coffee! " Cahit Sıtkı Tarancı's old friend Peyami Safa, whom he spoke of in the following verses:

Ya kahvesini içtiğim *dost*
Hepsinin hakkı yok mu bende

(Oh friends whose coffees I drank
Am I not indebted to them all)

suffered considerably due to a lack of coffee during his journey to Europe in 1937. His notes in *Büyük Avrupa Anketi* on the Turkish coffee that a newly arrived Turkish lady at his Paris hotel offered him not only reveal his passion for coffee, but also speak for other aficionados. The text is as concentrated as coffee itself:

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk drinks coffee as he meets with İsmet Pasha

In the smell of Turkish coffee, which I have yearned for two weeks now, is a miracle of taste that completes all the flavors missing from my life. A miracle that sweeps away all my travel fatigue and concerns about the world: newspaper, survey, right, left, revolution, the political, social, spiritual, literary, etc. state and conditions of Spain, France, or the ninth heaven and the universe. That superbly delicious drop of coffee, that essence of my homeland spreading between my tongue and my palate, that hot, bitter, astringent, yet sublime taste brings a breath of fresh air and dilutes all the constricted cells of my brain, calms my nerves, leaving no trace of concern or exhaustion.[11]

In speaking of Peyami Safa, it is important to recall a dialogue on frothless coffee from his novel *Yalnızız* (We are Alone). In the novel, Ferhat,

11 Peyami Safa, *Büyük Avrupa Anketi*, Kanaat Kitabevi, İstanbul 1938, p. 89.

who is in strong disagreement with his sister Meral, comes home early one evening. When he finds out that she is not home yet, he becomes furious and asks for a cup of coffee from his maid Emine:

As Ferhat reached out his hand to take the coffee, he stopped:

- "What is this? " he said, "what kind of coffee is this? There is no froth and it's pitch black."

- "Let me make another one."

- "No need. Give it to me."

Ferhat spilled some of the coffee on his hand and in the saucer as he took the cup. He let out an expletive. Looking at him out the corner of her eye, Emine asked:

- "Are you upset about the letter, young master? "

Placing the coffee cup on the piano, Ferhat lighted a cigarette and yelled:

- I'm angry at the letter, Selmin, Meral, you, this that, coffee, myself, fate, the universe, everything. This house has gone off its hinges. The world has gone off its hinges.[12]

The first thing that springs to mind about Turkish coffee is the froth that accumulates at the top. The coffee of an influential guest is prepared with great care to make sure it has plenty of froth. In Midhat Cemal Kuntay's novel *Üç İstanbul*, Hacı Kâhya goes to great pains to add extra froth to the coffee he prepares for the great scholar Ali Emirî Efendi, from whom he hopes to solicit information about the ancestors of the protagonist Adnan. However, as soon as he hears Adnan's name, Emirî Efendi becomes annoyed and desists from drinking the coffee grounds.[13]

One must be very careful when making coffee, for a moment of distraction may cause the pot to overflow and the froth to disappear. This is exactly why meticulous housewives pay attention to the way they make coffee for their husbands or guests. This brief passage from Halide Edip Adıvar's novel *Seviye Talib* contains fine clues about Turkish coffee indulgence and culture:

A little further ahead, by the brazier, Macide was seated in her white nightgown, taking some things from the coffee set with the immaculate table cloth in slow, greedy movements, pushing back the little ringlets

12 Peyami Safa, *Yalnızız*, Ötüken Neşriyat, İstanbul 1976, pp. 295-296.

13 Midhat Cemal Kuntay, *ibid*., p. 172.

curling underneath her thick braid. Yet, all the while, her concentration was focused on not boiling the pot over…[14]

The same is true for Sabire Hanım, a character from the same author's novel *Handan*; as she prepares her husband's frothy coffee, she pays as much attention as possible, for his greatest pleasure is to drink -in bed- the two cups of coffee she made.[15]

Coffee aficionados do not even glance at frothless coffee, scoff at split foam, and, if they are in a foul mood like Ferhat, they establish a connection between the froth and their misfortune. It requires skill and experience to make that frothy Turkish coffee the French call *Café à la Sultane*. For that one must opt for a copper *cezve* if possible; the size of the *cezve* must be chosen according to the number of servings. It might be difficult to froth the coffee if a single coffee is made in a large *cezve*. Measured by cup, the water must be cold, non-calcareous, chlorine-free, and previously boiled and cooled, if possible. Two heaping teaspoons of coffee is added per cup; enough sugar is added depending on the desired level of sweetness. This mixture is well stirred with a wooden spoon before the *cezve* is placed on fire; initially, it is boiled slowly over low heat. If the coffee is impatiently boiled over high heat, it loses much of its flavor. The next step is to distribute the froth formed in the first boil, place the *cezve* back on fire, and boil it for the second time before completely filling the cups with it. Thus, the essence and juice of the coffee mixes with water and the coffee grounds are set in the bottom of the cup, yielding a delicious and aromatic blend in the color of dark beer.

Of course, there may be different ways of making coffee; however, the aforementioned is the most common way to do it. Unfortunately, today, Turkish coffee is prepared only in four different ways in

14 Halide Edip Adıvar, *Seviye Talib*, İstanbul 1342, p. 10.

15 Halide Edip Adıvar, *Handan*, İstanbul 1342, pp. 69-70.

Turkey: plain, with little sugar, with medium sugar, or sweet. Yet, in former times, epicurean coffee aficionados demanded special care for their coffee and fussed over the amount of coffee, the degree of heat, and the time of boiling. Elias Petropoulos has identified forty-six ways of drinking Turkish coffee in Greece. These include: *plain strong, plain boiled, plain light, plain light-ish, plain half boiled, plain semi-strong, plain light semi, plain light-ish semi, strong with little sugar, boiled with little sugar, light with little sugar, strong with medium sugar, boiled with medium sugar, medium light,* or *medium half-boiled*.[16]

Petropoulos may have exaggerated her list; however, it is known that Turkish coffee drinking tradition is not so poor to be confined to *plain,* or *with little, medium,* and *plenty of sugar.* What we described above based on Malik Aksel and Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar indicates that the various ways of drinking coffee are more diversified than we know today. The manner of offering coffee requires etiquette and refinement. Scrupulous housewives and coffeehouse owners rinse the cups with hot water in order to preserve the heat of the coffee. A few sips of water must be drunk before the coffee to eliminate other flavors from the mouth, which is why coffee is always severed with half a glass of water. Drinking the water afterwards is impolite, as it signals that the coffee is not enjoyed. In describing the coffeehouses of İstanbul, Théophile Gautier reminds readers that Turks drink the water first and the French afterwards and describes the astonishment of a European who fluently spoke eastern languages and assumed he would be taken for a local due to his Muslim attire. When the European demanded a bedoin, who addressed him as "European" how he made the distinction, he received the following reply: "Because you drank the water after the coffee! " [17]

It is traditional to place a piece of Turkish delight (*lokum*) next to the coffee cup. Although some insist that one can only enjoy the flavor of coffee by slurping it, it should be remembered that this sound might be offensive to others. For instance, renowned critic and writer Nurullah Ataç was often discomforted by his uncle's visits, because, without brining the cup to his lips, the poor man would suck on his coffee with a loud "slurrrpp" for almost an hour, without realizing how this frustrated his nephew.[18]

16 Elias Petropoulos, *Yunanistan'da Türk Kahvesi* (trans. Herkül Milas), İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul 1995, pp. 16-17.

17 Théophile Gautier, *İstanbul* (trans. Çelik Gülersoy), İstanbul 1971, p. 121.

18 Meral Tolluoğlu, *Babam Nurullah Ataç*, Çağdaş Yayınları, İstanbul 1980, p. 58.

Coffee crowns the meal at a Turkish table; few Turks refuse a cup of well-made Turkish coffee after a lovely meal or not fret when their coffee is late. When his coffee is delayed by a few minutes, Enişte Bey (uncle-in-law), the protagonist in Abdülhak Şinasi Hisar's novel *Çamlıca'daki Enişte*mi*z*, reproaches the waiter as follows: "Waiter! Where is the coffee? I've been waiting for an hour and it's still not here! No, you have gone too far! I'll split your head open right this instant! Just so you know!" [19]

A vivid banquet scene takes place at the beginning of Halid Ziya Uşaklıgil's novel *Mai ve Siyah* (Blue and Black): It is the end of the banquet thrown for the writers of the newspaper at Tepebaşı Garden by its owner Hüseyin Baha Bey to commemorate the tenth anniversary of his newspaper *Mir'at-ı Şuun.* The scene, which details the miserable view of the table after the banquet, brightens when Ali Şekip, one of the seven guests, shouts, "Coffee! Won't we have coffee? Coffee!.." Suddenly, the guests realize that something its missing and that they are still there because they are waiting for that something. So, they begin to chant with Ali Şekip: "Coffee!.. Coffee!.."

Thereupon, Hüseyin Baha Efendi points to the waiter brining the coffee from afar; however, the young writers have no intention of calming down; they stomp their feet, gesticulate, and call out the same reprise until the waiter gets to their table:

"Coffee!.. Coffee!.."[20]

19 Abdülhak Şinasi Hisar, *Çamlıca'daki Enişte*mi*z*, Varlık Yayınları, İstanbul 1967, p. 151.

20 Halid Ziya Uşaklıgil *Mai ve Siyah*, Özgür Yayınları, İstanbul 2001, p. 17.

XII
BRAZIER AND ASH COFFEE

The brazier pleasure of Makbule and Saffet Hanims was indeed quite widespread among the Turks. Whenever there were guests involved or the heart desired coffee, the *cezve* would be placed over the hot ashes on the side of the brazier. The ancients delightfully explain how one cannot get enough of the pleasure of the brazier, particularly on winter days. This pleasure is summarized in the following verse by an anonymous poet:

Mangal kenarı kış gününün lâlezarıdır

(The brazier-side is the rose garden of the winter day)

The brazier as an inextricable pleasure of life in İstanbul is most beautifully expressed in the following verse from Necip Fâzıl's poem "Canım İstanbul":

Boğaz gümüş bir mangal, kaynatır serinliği

(The Bosphorus is a silver brazier, boiling the chill air)

In one of his poems, Nâzım Hikmet describes how the sheet metal braziers of İstanbul wake up from their ashes:

No. 124 Cafédji turc.

A Mobile Coffee Seller

Koparmış ipini eski kayıklar gibi yüzer
kışın, sabaha karşı rüzgârda tahta cumbalar
ve bir saç mangalın küllerinde
uyanır uykudan büyük İstanbul'um.

(Free from their ropes, the wooden oriels
float in the wind like old caïques in the winter at dawn
And on the ashes of a metal brazier
Wakes up my grand İstanbul from her sleep.)

Upon hearing these verses by Nâzım Hikmet, a reader familiar with Turkish poetry would possibly respond with this line from Mehmed Âkif's poem "Seyfi Baba":

Üşüyorsan eşiver mangalı, eş, eş de ısın

(If you are cold, poke the brazier; poke it so you can keep warm)

Poking the ashes of the brazier with tongs was one of the routine pastimes of daily life during the winters of old İstanbul. Imagine Makbule Hanım waking up on a winter's day; of the first things she'd do would be to poke the brazier to jeep warm, fan the cinders if they have flamed out, and, after nibbling on something as *kahve altı*, place her *cezve* on the hot ashes. In her memoirs, Halide Edip Adıvar, whose maternal grandfather was the *kahvecibaşı* of Sultan Mehmed Reşad V, recounts how women traditionally gathered before the brazier at night in the "house with wisteria" where she spent her childhood, how prominent family member Havva Hanım made her coffee on the brazier with a cigarette glued to her lips, and how she would pour a bit of coffee on the saucer and make Halide Edip lick it like a kitten.[1] Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar's novel *Gulyabani* describes the pleasure of coffee on the brazier as follows: "The head of female servants pulled the small brass brazier next to the mattress where the elderly were seated. She placed the *cezve* on the brazier and began shooting the breeze." [2]

There is a widespread belief that the "ash coffee" (*kül kahvesi*) cooked slowly on the brazier has a more beautiful smell and taste and yields more froth. We know that until recently, certain coffeehouses still used braziers and were thus preferred by true aficionados. At the time A. Süheyl Ünver wrote his famous article on coffeehouses, the brazier tradition was still alive at the Paşababa Coffeehouse at the Harem Pier. The owner of this

1 Halide Edip Adıvar, *Mor Salkımlı Ev*, Atlas Kitabevi, İstanbul 1967, p. 36.

2 Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, *Gulyabani*, Hilmi Kitabevi, İstanbul 1944, p. 25.

coffeehouses insists that coffee prepared on gas stoves lacks flavor.[3] While some attempt to attain the flavor of "ash coffee" by setting the *cezve* on a sand-filled pan on the stove, they obtain no results. The public belief in the better taste of ash coffee is so widespread that it has even been the subject of a folk poem:

Eriği dalda devşir
Kahveyi külde pişir
Her kahveyi içende
Beni aklına düşür

(Collect the plums from the tree
Make the coffee on ash
Each time you drink coffee
You must think of me)

Abdülaziz Bey talks at length about the different kinds of braziers, once used as heating devices in homes. While there are extremely artistic braziers made of precious metals like silver for palaces and mansions, the most commonly used kinds are manufactured of copper and brass. More durable than copper, brass braziers include numerous types. The kind known as *sarı* (yellow) is the brass brazier. For instance, the hexagonal brazier with short feet and a brass oval tray known as *erkân minderi mangalı* was highly popular among women. You can rest assured that the small brazier upon which Makbule Hanım heartily placed her coffee pot was of this kind. According to Abdülaziz Bey, the foremost types of "yellow brass" braziers were as follows: the large and circular *sarı mangal* with flat sides; to be placed at the center, the large, thick-cast, *Süleymaniye mangalı* with lobed edges; the circular, tall *Edirne mangalı* with yellow brass plates welted to the edges; the lobed Thessalonica-made *yüksek orta mangalı* (hall brazier) resembling a flower pot; the *büyük sarı mangal* (large yellow brass brazier), the edges of which are decorated with thick yellow brass wires like a fruit basket...[4]

According to the accounts of Nureddin Rüştü Büngül, the majority of the "yellow" brass braziers were manufactured in Süleymaniye. Although *Eski Eserler Ansiklopedisi* (The Encyclopedia of Antique Works) includes numerous old braziers as antiques, the Süleymaniye braziers are the most famous among these. *Büngül attests to the presence of a brazier manufactured in Kastamonu, with* an encomium that starts with the verse

3 A. Süheyl Ünver, *ibid.*, pp. 78-79.

4 Abdülaziz Bey, *ibid.*, p. 213.

"a brazier burned with the fire of love" inscribed, though he admits that the brazier in question has a poor workmanship.[5]

Abdülaziz Bey also mentions other types of braziers. The copper *oda mangalı* (chamber brazier), resembling a flower pot, with a round base and a pan inside; *kısa bakır mangal* (short copper brazier), the lower body of which is made of brass, with a fire pot placed inside; *küçük sarı mangal* (small brass brazier) designed to keep tobacco pipe fire ready during summer days; *Edirne mangalı* (brazier) with a walnut tree edge, short feet, and a brass or copper frying pot inside; the long, metal sheet *yemek mangalı* (dining brazier), which has iron grids on top to place pots; the copper *kahveci mangalı* (coffeemaker's brazier) with a sheet plate-covered back and set on a tripod… According to Abdülaziz Bey, the pans of the brass braziers used in the spacious and high-ceilinged rooms of large mansions were produced in larger sizes to accommodate more fire. These brazier pans had four rings on the edge; after the charcoal was placed on the brazier, the hooks of the four brass chains would be slipped through these rings and a bar would be put through the ring at the top. The charcoal-filled pan would be shouldered by two attendants to be taken to the room where the brazier was set.[6]

Having spent his childhood in an old İstanbul mansion in Üsküdar, Prof. Dr. Ahmet Yüksel Özemre describes braziers as follows in his book entitled, *Hasretini Çektiğim Üsküdar*:

Another heating device was the brazier. It was made of brass or copper. The braziers comprised seven different types: konak mangalı (mansion-type brazier), Süleymaniye brazier, Selanik (Thessalonica) or Manastır brazier, Bursa brazier and Siirt brazier. They were each distinguished from one another by their heights, ornamentation, and the number of parts they featured. As the most ornamented braziers were produced in the Süleymaniye district, they were known as Süleymaniye mangalı.[7]

It is important to note that as there were coffee hearths at the palaces and mansions, braziers were largely used in homes and coffeehouses for making coffee. One should also remember that burning charcoal on the brazier is toilsome and finding a brazier to make coffee in any given place is also quite difficult. Therefore, spirit stoves known as *kamineto* have traditionally been quite popular among coffee aficionados. Through it might not yield the unique flavor of *ash coffee*, it is possible

5 Nureddin Rüştü Büngül, *ibid*., pp. 160-162.

6 Abdülaziz Bey, *ibid*., p. 213.

7 Ahmet Yüksel Özemre, *Hasretini Çektiğim Üsküdar*, Kubbealtı Neşriyatı, İstanbul 2007, p. 104.

to make coffee with these portable stoves anywhere and at any place. In speaking of old İstanbul fires in his work entitled, *Beş Şehir*, Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar recounts that İstanbulites keen on watching fires would take their *kaminetos* along to the fire site and would make themselves coffee as they witnessed these unfortunate events.[8]

There is yet another short story on portable coffee stoves. Accompanying Sultan Abdülaziz during his journey to Egypt, Ömer Faiz Efendi carried along his coffee set, including the stove, as he was a serious coffee fiend. Strolling aboard the ship one day, the Sultan saw the stove burning and -terrified of fires- had it immediately put out. Known as witty and quick at repartee, Ömer Faiz Efendi is reported to have said, "Good God! His father had gotten rid of the 'Janissary Hearth' and now he did the same with our coffee hearth! "[9]

8 Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, *Beş Şehir*, MEB 1000 Temel Eser, İstanbul 1969, p. 199.

9 A. Süheyl Ünver, *ibid.*, p. 75. For further information on braziers and the brazier culture, see Münevver Alp, "Eski İstanbul Evlerinde Isıtma", *Türk Folklor Araştırmaları Dergisi*, no. 175, February 1964; Gündağ Kayaoğlu, "Mangallar I", *Antika*, no. 7, October 1985, pp. 14-21; "Mangallar II", *Antika*, no. 8, November 1985, pp. 19-23.

XIII
COFFEE SHORTAGES

Imagine the grief of aforementioned coffee aficionados in the absence of coffee. The history of Turkish coffee is a "bitter history" during which the aficionados struggled not only with coffee bans, but with shortages as well. Occasionally vanishing into thin air and thus making way for profiteering and fraud, coffee has always been a valuable commodity. A riddle mentioned earlier contains the phrase "treat for gentlemen" (*beyler aşı*) to indicate that coffee is not for everyone. In a *koşma* (free-form folk song), Karacaoğlan says that "agas" and "begs" drink coffee.[1]

As the prices skyrocketed during times of shortage, the perplexed aficionados knocked on every possible door in order to find pure coffee and when they could not, they hardened their hearts and quit drinking coffee rather than drinking the chickpea blend. It is known that during such times, the cheap chickpea coffee was immediately put on the market. When some aficionados began drinking chickpea coffee out of despair during a shortage at the turn of the 18th century, this following couplet by Osmanzade Tâib spread from mouth to mouth:

1 *Ağalar, beyler içerler*
Kahve de kara değil mi? (Agas and begs drink it / Isn't coffee black after all?)

Jean Baptiste Vanmour - "Coffee Seller"

Olalı kahve-i Rûmî nümâyân
Nohudî-meşreb oldu cümle yârân

(Ever since Anatolian coffee appeared
All our friends began drinking chickpea coffee)

This couplet reveals that at the time, chickpea coffee was referred to as "*Kahve-i Rumî*", or "Anatolian coffee." Another poet of the times remonstrated against the stiff prices of Yemeni coffee, complaining that it was sold little by little "like time" and that some of the refined Anatolians began drinking chickpea water instead of coffee.[2] It is known that during times of shortage, coffeehouse owners dried and reused coffee grounds, which came to be known as *cavcav*.[3] Records indicate that certain shabby coffeehouses served *cavcav* even when there was no shortage and that tightfisted housewives offered *cavcav* to their guests.

Coffee spread across the world over a period of two hundred years and became an indispensable drink in every country it was introduced to. Consequently, the demand for coffee rapidly increased; as the production in Yemen was unable to meet this demand, frequent coffee shortages occurred and thus efforts were made to grow coffee in other countries as well. The coffee grown on the Dominican Island in the first half of the 18th century and later in Brazil would enter the Ottoman world under the name "*Kahve-i Efrencî*" (European Coffee) and although it could not replace Yemeni coffee, it was inevitably preferred to chickpea coffee.[4] The allure of the Ottoman coffee market prompted European manufacturers to produce artificial coffee as well. When, in the late 19th century, the coffee of the Heinr Franck Söhne Company in Lins was not admitted

2 A. Süheyl Ünver, *ibid*., p. 49.

3 We do not know if this connected to Karagöz's way of addressing Hacivat as "Hacı Cavcav." Ahmet Vefik Paşa explains the word *telve* as follows: "Coffee residue, grounds, dull, bland man, irremovable smear, ugly, addict. Otherwise known as pulp, sediment, or residue." Accordingly, *cavcav* means coffee grounds or residue. See *Lehçe-i Osmanî I*, İstanbul 1306, p. 303.

4 Mübahat S. Kütükoğlu, "Osmanlı Ülkesinde Avrupa Sun'i Kahvesi", *Kaynaklar*, no. 6, Winter 1988, p. 44.

through customs, the incident became an international issue. Unable to resist the pressures of foreign embassies to revoke the decision, the Tanzimat administration took a step back. However, since artificial coffee types known as "*Franck Kahvesi*" and "*Sultan Fîcan*" did not appeal to the palate of the public, they were not in demand. The analysis of these coffees yielded equally interesting results: "Sultan Fîcan" coffee was predominantly comprised of the seeds of figs produced in the Aegean Region.[5]

The worst shortage occurred during the years of World War I; as imports had completely ceased, blended and imitation coffees took over the market. Chickpea was the most commonly used substance in imitation coffees. It is told that beans, shelled broad beans, barley, figs, and even nutshells were ground and sold as coffee to a public that knowingly purchased it. Tea emerged as a serious rival to coffee during the years of shortage and ousted coffee from "*kahvaltı*" (breakfast) menus, through not from its name. Although not as grave as the previous war, the years of World War II also witnessed a serious shortage and coffee was rationed, just like bread.

A Coffeehouse at the Grand Bazaar

Suffering from lack of coffee poet and professor of texts explanation ("şerh-i mütûn") Ferit Kam, traveled from Hereke to İstanbul one day and went from door to door to find a small amount of coffee, but to no avail. Just as he lost hope and decided to return to his hometown, he ran into Dr. A. Süheyl Ünver in Beyazıt and explained his tribulations. Thereupon, Süheyl Bey gave the old professor the two hundred and fifty grams of

5 For forther information, see Mübahat S. Kütükoğlu, *ibid.*, pp. 45-49.

raw coffee, which he received as a gift but kept in his office, as no one in his household drank coffee. Ecstatic, Ferit Kam prayed for the young doctor and recited a couplet, the second verse of which stresses the near impossibility of finding coffee in those days: "Finding coffee is more difficult than conquering Yemen."[6]

Coffee shortages not only devastated aficionados, but also instigated the decline of Turkish coffee culture. According to writer Halil Erdoğan Cengiz, who lived during the years in question, coffee disappeared from coffee shops, coffeehouses, and coffee jars for years and made its fiends suffer; the blessed thing was like a precious metal—it was only a matter of time before someone finding a sack of coffee would strike gold. Those who were able to procure a mere 50 grams of coffee from the black market would blend it with ground barley, chickpeas, acanthus seeds, hackberries, and even nutshells to increase their stock, as long as there was a whiff of coffee smell and flavor. It is best to read this "bitter" story from Halil Erdoğan Cengiz's entertaining pen:

Being able to leave the house of certain ladies, who were rumored to dry the used coffee ground and re-serve them for subsequent guests, was considered a success worth of the grand prize in competitions among women. While coffeehouse owners offered the almost-pure coffee kept in a special box for their regular or influential customers, they served a black water called coffee to foreigners and other clients under the guise of plain (or bitter), or coffee with little, medium, and lots of sugar. Known for never stepping foot outside their homes, many have become coffeehouse regulars for the sake of a cup of coffee they couldn't find at home. Numerous coffeehouses sold "out" to coffee demanders and those who were able to stock coffee became famous. Countless aficionados were forced to abandon the coffee-less coffeehouses and migrate to those where they could find coffee. Some had to overcome their reluctance to demand a favor and ask for a cup of coffee from friends and acquaintances. The business of fortunetellers was in the doldrums; honored at house visits and known to have a "gift," fortunetellers had fallen a bit from grace, as coffee was no longer served to guests. Conversely, café-au-lait, which had no grounds to read and was disdained by our ancestors, gained prestige in certain regions. Per common practice, coffee was added milk as a precaution for brats that insisted on drinking coffee along with adults, so that their faces wouldn't turn dark. According to true aficionados, it was born from the poor taste of non-aficionados or the snobbery of those who wished to live to a ripe old age and could not drink their milk without wasting one or two spoonfuls of coffee. For, it was neither milk, nor coffee... This is why some called wimpy and effeminate types "café-au lait." What brought this type of coffee to the fore was not a new taste or fashion, but plain old shortage. Five

6 A. Süheyl Ünver, *ibid.*, p. 50.

or six cups of café-au-lait were made from a cup of Turkish coffee, more people could be served with less amount of coffee, and the coffee jar was kept full. Since coffee was not even available on the black market for exorbitant prices during the years in which patched socks and trousers, resoled shoes, reversed fabrics and jackets were frequently encountered, not being able to offer coffee was not considered rude or improper. Yet, when it was indeed served, it made a splash and was much appreciated.[7]

The 1950s also witnessed considerable coffee shortages that pained aficionados. In 1956, a news piece about a Turkish citizen producing artificial coffee and another one about Israel's desire to sell artificial coffee to Turkey for 60 Pounds per ton, not only made the headlines for some time, but also became a heated topic of discussion among the public. The article entitled "*Kahve Problemi*" (The Coffee Problem) appearing in the daily *Yeni İstanbul* notes that since World War I, pseudo coffees made of chickpeas, nuts, nutshells, broad beans, acorn, figs, and watermelon seeds had failed, that coffee aficionados began complaining, "We were already discontented with the quality of real coffee, and now there is the artificial version! " and that in Turkey, coffee was not merely appealing for aficionados, but that it was used by everyone as a means of welcoming guests.[8]

Released from State Monopoly (Tekel) in 1942 upon these criticisms, the import and sales of coffee was assigned to the General Directorate of Tekel (then known as İnhisarlar Umum Müdürlüğü) in 1957 with the issuing of decree number 1088 based on the Law of Turkish National Security. It was thus decided that Kızılay (The Red Crescent Society) would distribute the coffee cleared from customs.

An associate professor of "texts explanation" at İstanbul University at the time, Ali Nihat Tarlan was discontent with the coffee shortages of the 1950s. Unable to live without coffee, Tarlan always carried along his *kamineto, cezve*, and *fincan*. One day, when he failed to procure any coffee despite his efforts, he wrote a petition in verse, entitled "*Atabe-i vilâyet-penâhîye arz-ı hâl-i manzûm*"[9] and presented it to Fahrettin Kerim Gökay, then-Governor of İstanbul. In his petition comprised of ten stanzas with the repeating verse "*Kahve lütfet varsa imkânın eğer*" (Please grant us coffee, if you have the means) at the end of each stanza, Ali Nihat Bey complained that he was devastated from the coffee shortage, that his knees had no strength, that he once enjoyed coffee brands such as "Afiyet"

7 Halil Erdoğan Cengiz, "Kahvenin Kirli Çamaşırları", *Tarih ve Toplum*, no. 101, May 1992, pp. 282-283.

8 Hasene Ilgaz, "Kahve Problemi", *Yeni İstanbul*, 18 October 1956.

9 Ali Nihat Tarlan, *Kuğular*, İstanbul 1970, pp. 90-91.

and "Tiryaki", but that the current coffee brand "Keyif" on the market bore no trace of their flavor. The petition continues as follows:

Kahve kuvvet kalbe, dermandır dize
Kahve ruha neşvedir, ferdir göze
Şairim ben isterim bir caize
Kahve lütfet varsa imkânın eğer

(Coffee brings strength to the heart, vigor to the knees
Coffee is joy to the spirit, light to the eyes
I am a poet; I desire a gift for a poem of praise
Please grant us coffee, if you have the means)

Kahvenin pek başka zevk u lezzeti
Meyden üstündür bunun keyfiyyeti
Anda buldum zevk u şevk u sıhhati
Kahve lütfet varsa imkânın eğer

(Coffee gives a unique pleasure and taste
We enjoy it much better than wine
I find pleasure, zest, and health in haste
Please grant us coffee, if you have the means)

In the ensuing stanzas, Ali Nihat Bey quips that his thirst can only be quenched if he is offered coffee by the ton, adding that his mind stopped functioning due to caffeine deficiency, that he is depressed and unable to work. As part of this attempt to arouse pity for himself, he references the similes of divan poets he is familiar with: due to its color, he compares coffee to the world of darkness hiding the water of life and the mole on Layla's cheek. Thus, he is like Alexander in search of eternal life, or Qays, who falls madly in love with Layla. In yet another stanza, he compares himself to Veysel Karani, as a mad lover in pursuit of coffee in the Yemeni desert. His concern was to convey how lack of coffee made him desperate and arouse the mercy of "Vali Paşa" (Governor Pasha). The two-verse postscript at the end of the poem humorously threatens Fahrettin Kerim Gökay, who was a psychiatrist by training.

Kahve lûtfetmez isen Vali Paşa
Eylerim darüşşifâna ilticâ.

(If you do not grant us coffee Governor Pasha
I shall seek refuge in you hospital)

XIV
FORTUNE IN A CUP

We do not know when the interest in reading fortune from coffee cups was born. Some say that it was a kind of game devised by black female servants, nannies, and nurses to add color to the monotony of home life, have a pleasant time, and make the coffee-drinking ceremony more enjoyable.[1] Overtime, this "pastime" generated its own symbols. It can indeed be debated whether coffee cup reading is a kind of fortunetelling in the real sense, as the intention of this reading is to convey good news, make life more livable, and offer a hopeful outlook on the future. Although coffee fortune is traditionally comprised of good wishes, advice, and warnings of the reader, some fortunetellers deliver unfortunate news as well.

As I stated above, coffee reading generated its own symbolism. This symbolism encompasses the art of interpreting the figures created by coffee grounds as soon as the cup is turned upside down and placed on the saucer; it is the art of deriving meanings from the figures on the cup's interior and saucer in line with the expectations of the person who drank the coffee. As *telve* (coffee grounds) is unique to Turkish coffee, fortunetelling from coffee grounds can be regarded as one of the exciting subjects of Turkish culture. Although the word *telve* is associated with the Persian word *telvasi* in Ahmet Vefik Paşa's Ottoman lexicon *Lehçe-i*

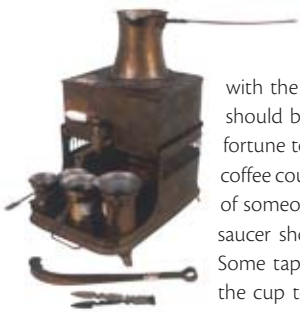
1 Deniz Gürsoy, *Sohbetin Bahanesi Kahve*, Oğlak Yayıncılık, İstanbul 2005, p. 103.

Discovering the Future with Coffee Grounds

Osmanî (1306), its absence from subsequent dictionaries indicates that this view was not entirely adopted. In the *Turkish and English Lexicon* by Redhouse, Sir James William notes that this word is Turkish in origin. Sevan Nişanyan's etymological dictionary *Sözlerin Soyağacı* (2002) has a question mark next to the world, whereas *Kubbealtı Lugatı* bears the note "origin unknown."

In *Üç İstanbul*, Cemal Kuntay's depiction of the way Ali Emirî Efendi drinks his coffee reveals that some of the serious aficionados, who took an aversion to coffee reading, even drank the coffee grounds. Even today, some coffee fiends stir and shake their cups to leave no grounds behind as they drink their coffee. Several authors note that children scared with the words, "if you drink coffee, you'll turn dark," furtively licked off the coffee grounds in the kitchen. For example, the following lines in Ayfer Tunç's *Bir Maniniz Yoksa Annemler Size Gelecek* are worthy of note: " [...] the kids were desperate to drink coffee, so they were told the lie, 'don't drink coffee, or you'll turn dark.' So, the child of the host would either lick the grounds or drink the coffee from the bottom of the pot in the kitchen."[2]

For those who wish to have their fortunes told, *telve* holds a different meaning. As certain figures in the upside-down cup or on the saucer are interpreted in the same way by those who know how to read coffee grounds, it can be argued that a common language, or a kind of *telve* symbolism developed over the years. However, fortunetellers with vivid imaginations, sharp minds, and strong instincts can discover new figures, procure more interesting metaphors, and ascribe new meanings to known figures. If the person, who makes the coffee, has a gift for fortunetelling, then s/he can start from the froth: for example, s/he can interpret the large air bubbles as evil eye and say, "Oh, my dear Ayşe Hanim, there is so much evil eye upon you, I'm exhausted from popping them! "



According to those who have mastered the art of coffee reading, if the person stirs his/her cup clockwise, with the words, "whatever my fortune shall hold, should be told" then s/he wishes to have his/her fortune told, whereas the person who stirs his/her coffee counterclockwise wishes to have the fortune of someone else's read. At this point, the reversed saucer should be placed on the cup and cooled. Some tap or cross their fingers on the bottom of the cup to make a wish. The half-side of the cup

2 Ayfer Tunç, *Bir Maniniz Yoksa Annemler Size Gelecek*, YKY, İstanbul 2001, p. 323.

facing the person who has his/her fortune told is their "abode," whereas the other side is the "abode" of others. First making interpretations based on the color and thickness of the coffee grounds, the fortuneteller begins to carefully "read" the figures formed inside the cup. For example, the piece of *telve* stuck to the cup when its turned upside down may be interpreted as property, whereas a flat line with three dots at the end can be a sign of "travel in a period three (days/months/years)." If there is a bulge at the bottom of the cup, that points to "a troubled heart," whereas the darker color on the circumference may represent "worry." A stain on the peak of a bird-like figure signifies good news. Splotches of coffee heralds gossip. Figures of horse and fish are taken as good fortune, whereas a double-humped camel points to wealth, and the serpent to enemies and animosity… If there is a moon-shaped white patch in the saucer or at the bottom of the cup, it means good things are about to happen, leading to this cliché: "The moon will rise above your home! "

Once positive prospects are seen and the reading is completed, the cup must stay upright. Otherwise, it is believed that the fortune will be ruined.

Some attempt to determine the symbol system of coffee reading by drawing the figures appearing on the cup and saucer once they were turned upside down. Kurukahveci Mehmet Efendi and Sons has a mini catalogue comprised of twenty-four figures. The book entitled, *Kahve Telvesiyle Keşf-i İstikbal* (1338/1922; Discovering the Future with Coffee Grounds) Ragıp Rıfkı translated from the work of a writer named F. Garnier includes three different tables in which the figures of *telve* are interpreted. The first table carries the heading "Well-being", whereas the second is titled "Harm." We learn from the first table that a short flat line indicates "calm, relaxed, monotonous, happy, mediocre life," whereas a long flat line points to "a disturbed life, voyage with benefits." In the second table, an interrupted, short line is interpreted as "dangerous illness, death risk," and a curved line is read as "deceitful friends, hypocrisy, disingenuousness, manipulation, and machination."[3]

3 *Kahve Telvesiyle Keşf-i İstikbal* was later published in Latin letters in Ankara as *Fennî Aile Eğlencelerinden Kahve Falı* (1946) by its translator Ragıp Rıfkı, who took on the last name Özgürel.

In her book entitled, *Yunanistan'da Türk Kahvesi*, Elias Petropoulos presents the drawings and possible explanations of the symbols that can be discerned from coffee grounds.[4] As narrated by Reşat Ekrem Koçu in *İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*, after a love affair that ends in disappointment, Agâh Bey, an art teacher at Darüşşafaka, draws the figures he sees in numerous coffee cups he reads and writes his own interpretations next to the figures. Noting that an unprecedented work has thus come to life, Reşat Ekrem hopes that this "invaluable" work preserved by Agâh Bey's grandchildren, must be donated to the Turkish National Library.[5] Unfortunately, today the whereabouts and owner of this work remains unknown. In his novel *The Black Book*, Orhan Pamuk uses Agâh Bey's story with small modifications:

Think of the left-handed calligrapher—who so loved reading fortunes in coffee cups that he felt drive to produce a three-hundred-page manuscript in which reproduced the fortunes ha had found in the grounds of the many thousands of cups of coffee he had drunk in his lifetime, writing out the fortunes they illuminated in his beautiful handwriting in the margins—what to make of his obsession with order and symmetry? [6]

In the "Fortune telling, Fortunetellers" item in which he narrates this story, Reşat Ekrem Koçu says that amateur fortuneteller Âşık Râzi of Üsküdar married off a prematurely widowed relative named Binnaz Hanım to a young man named Bilal, whom he picked from a coffee reading, and directs the reader to the item, "Binnaz Hanım, Telli." This item includes a long epic in which he describes how Râzi picked a suitable husband for Binnaz Hanım by reading her future from a cup.[7]

While some truly believed in coffee fortunetelling and had their fortunes read in order to receive good news every time they drank coffee, others were quite disturbed by having their fortunes told. Nurullah Ataç's daughter Meral Tolluoğlu recalls that although her father was serious coffee aficionado, he was terrified of having his fortune told, never trusted words like, "Don't be afraid, I swear I will only tell you positive things," stirred his coffee grounds with a matchstick in case someone else would turn over his cup without his knowledge, and sometimes took the cup into the kitchen and rinsed it.[8] In his poem "Otobiyografi" (Autobiography), Nâzım Hikmet admits that he never set foot in a mosque, church, or synagogue or visited a clairvoyant after 1921 and adds:

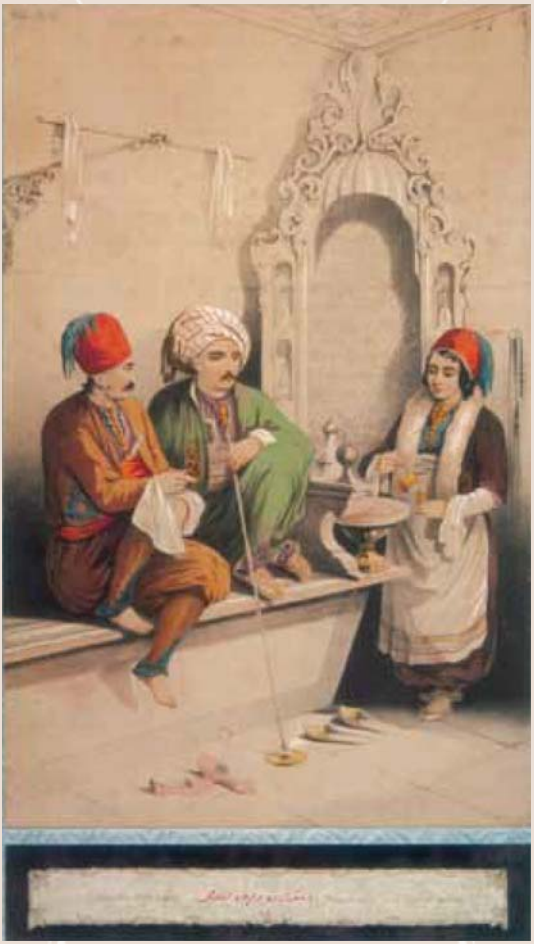
4 Elias Petropoulos, *ibid.*, y. 68-71.

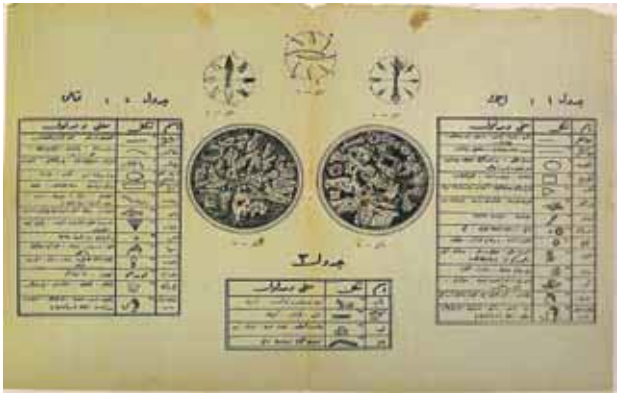
5 Reşat Ekrem Koçu, "Fal, Falcılar", İstanbul Ansiklopedisi, v. X, p. 5508.

6 Orhan Pamuk, *The Black Book*, trans. Maureen Freely, Vintage, Rep Tra Edition, 2006, p. 393.

7 Reşat Ekrem Koçu, "Binnaz Hanım, Telli", İstanbul Ansiklopedisi, v. 5, p. 2803.

8 Meral Tolluoğlu, *ibid.*, p. 70.





List of symbols from Kahve Telvesiyle Keşf-i İstikbal

But I did have my coffee cup read.[9]

While coffee fortunetelling is a pastime often enjoyed at home, particularly among women, professional clairvoyants also existed and read futures in coffee cups in exchange for money. In his short story "Fal"[10] (Fortune-telling), Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar describes such a clairvoyant with great mastery. The story involves two people who visit a clairvoyant to have their fortunes told; the author feels no need to introduce them. First, the shabby house where the *madam* "practices her art" is described in detail through the eyes of one character. Next, the *madam*'s assistant brings two coffees on a tray. Both characters regard the cups with suspicion, but relax once they realize they are clean. Moreover, the coffee is well made. "Evidently, this was a prerequisite, or better yet the only means of this art. The coffee utensils in this house were meticulously treated, like the way a leveler takes care of his level, a doctor handles his sphygmomanometer, or a chemist adjusts his scales; they made sure that everything was clean and functioned well."

After some time, the door opens and first the *madam*'s cat and later the *madam* herself walk through the door. Resembling a madwoman with small turtle shells hanging from her right shoulder, her short skirt, blue jacket, and strange demeanor, the clairvoyant offers a brief welcome, scans the clients with her blue eyes, asks for their names, and shakes their hands with her sweaty palms. After carefully eyeing them again from head to toe, she recites *bismillah* and reaches for the cup on the right:

9 Nâzım Hikmet, Şiirler 7: Son Şiirleri, YKY, İstanbul 2001, p. 105.

10 Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, "Fal", İstanbul, no. 70-71, 1 November 1946, pp. 21-23.

"Whose is this? "

After sitting upside down for ten or fifteen minutes, the cup was stuck to the saucer. The blue gaze turned back on us, wrapping us up in a bundle of wet, dirty rags:

"You are affected by the evil eye, son..."

She scrutinized the coffee grounds on the edge of the saucer as if looking into eternity; perhaps she was looking with a kind of sadness that she wanted us to emulate.

Neither of us moved. Is there anyone who has not experienced the effortlessness of speaking about the ambiguous, the indeterminate? Yet, the clairvoyant was right. Why not believe in evil eye, if you believe in fortune telling? They are the beads of the same rosary.

"You know anyone named Cemal? "

Although it was asked with an increasingly hardening look that seemed to be veiled by mystery, the question left us indifferent. There are hundreds of Cemals. Yet, the woman continued to probe like a gold-digger that hit a good vein. If not Cemal, then Cemile, Cevat, Cevdet, Cahit... In a few fell swoops, the letter C transformed into a sack emptying out a pile of faceless, figureless people right before our eyes. The first futile attack did not deter the woman. She was at the doors of fate; she possessed the secrets of the past and the future; she spoke with that language. She could say anything, make any prediction. She was looking at our lives from such a high point and with such wide perspective that she could see things that did not even exist in our imagination and memory.

The clairvoyant *madam* had been wrong about every guess she made by looking at the figures appearing in the cup and saucer, but within a matter of ten minutes, she had narrated numerous stories about life, and summarized a heap of drama. After exchanging meaningful glances, the two friends gave her the money and left. When the woman called out, "If your wish comes true, I want a box of sugar," the narrator began to laugh, but his friend stopped him. "What more do you want? " he asked, "In ten minutes, she recounted the novel of the world. Isn't that enough? "

In fact, if the cup is stuck to the residue, it means the person having his fortune told will attain his/her desire, which is why the clairvoyant *madam* should have said "I can't read this fortune! " Instead, she kept her clients waiting for a long time and wanted to increase the impact of her predictions by trying the patience of her clients. People who wish to have their fortunes told are often impatient; in fact, they sometimes place a ring on the reversed cup to cool it faster –and to bring good luck–.

In his poem "Fal" in his only poetry book *Cehennem Meyvası* comprised of prose poems, Prof. Kaya Bilgegil –renowned for his important research on modern Turkish literature– demands a quick reading from "the woman who has others sip patience from her cup of coffee":

Kahve fincanından yudum yudum sabır içiren kadın; falıma çabuk bak!

Ağzındaki düşünce posaları dudağımı yakmada; cezvende merak ne kadar da kaynamış kadınım, ne kadar da kaynamış!

Fincanından tabağa bir şehir kalabalığı boşanıyor.
Dibinden tortu tortu umutlar sökün etti.
Kenarında saç mı toplanmış? Muhakkak tuzaktır.
"Yol" deme; yolum yarıda kaldı.
"Sana açılmış el var" diyorsun; elim geride kaldı.
Deste deste kâğıtlar mı var? Muhakkak cezvene alın yazılarım dökülmüş olacak.
Kalabalık görüyorsun: Fincanıma zihnimi boşalttımdı, bu az mı?
İstemem, istemem, *fincanın senin olsun; zihnimi geri çevir!* [11]

("Woman who makes me sip patience from a cup of coffee; quick, read my fortune!
The pulps of thought in your mouth burn my lips; how boiled is patience
In your pot, my woman, how boiled!
The crowds of a city pour from the cup to the saucer.
Grounds and grounds of hope descend to the bottom.
Is that hair swept on the rim? It must be a trap.
Don't say "path; " my path is interrupted.
"A hand begs for you," you say; my hand is left behind
Bundles and bundles of paper?
Surely, my fates have fallen into your pot.
You see a crowd: I emptied my mind into the cup, isn't that enough?
No, no, keep your cup; reverse my mind!)

11 Kaya Bilgegil, *Cehennem Meyvası*, İstanbul 1944, pp. 55-56.

Yes, people who wish to have their fortunes read are impatient. Although the pessimistic protagonist of Tarık Buğra's short story "Fal" never opens his cup after turning it over with the words, ""whatever my fortune shall hold, should be told,"[12] those who are curious about the future with the hope of receiving good news from the coffee grounds will want their cup to cool as soon as possible. As poet Arif Nihat Asya says:

Bir izbe ki kalmıştır umut telvelere
Kül bağlar ocak, kahve biter, fal bitmez.[13]

(A dark hope clings to coffee grounds
The stove turns to ash, the coffee runs out, but fortune never does.)

12 Tarık Buğra, *Oğlumuz*, İstanbul 1949, pp. 56-63.

13 Arif Nihat Asya, *Kova Burcu*, Ankara 1967, p. 115.

XV
COFFEE SCENES FROM OLD ISTANBUL

According to the accounts of Ignatius Mouradgea D'Ohsson in his three-volume *Tableau general de l'Empire Othoman* published in 1787, there was no mention of the bans on coffee and coffeehouses in the 18th century. Despite its eternal opponents, coffee seemed to have declared victory. It was possible to encounter coffeehouses on every avenue and street; in fact, the majority of these coffeehouses were built as pavilions and located in scenic areas. Countryside coffeehouses, on the other hand, were set up under colossal trees and grapevine pergolas. People would gather at these locations at all hours of the day and play checkers or chess, drink coffee, smoke tobacco, and chat. During winter months, public storytellers (*meddah*) and magicians displayed their talent at the coffeehouses, which some frequented only to have a cup of coffee and rest.

According to D'Ohsson, the East's passion for coffee was beyond any estimation. Coffee was the protocol drink in all levels of the state; men, women, and even children drank coffee, not only at breakfast, but during all hours of the day. Without fail, coffee was offered in all the visited places; if the visit lasted long, second or third rounds ensued. In recounting these observations, D'Ohsson also mentions that the cups were much smaller than the ones used in Europe and that since they had no handles, they were placed in copper or silver cup holders to avoid burning the hands.

D'Ohsson also notes that the cup holders of the rich were made of gold and often encrusted with precious stones.

After indicating that Yemeni coffee was preferred in the Ottoman world as it was easier to prepare, he goes on to detail the entire process, from roasting to service. Accordingly, the coffee beans are to be roasted and cooled, ground into powder in marble, brass, or wooden mortars, and kept in tightly shut leather pouches or wooden boxes to preserve the aroma. Ground coffee is brewed slowly in tinned copper pots; as the water begins to boil, five or six small teaspoons of are added and the pot is taken off the fire once it begins to simmer and froth. Coffee is done once it releases its essence into the water after this frothing process. Since fresh coffee has better flavor, large households roast as much coffee as needed every day.

Recording that there are countless shops selling fresh coffee in İstanbul and across various cities of the Empire, D'Ohsson mentions the opening of large shops, known as *tahmis*, which only concentrate on the roasting and grounding of coffee. He adds that the public often takes their coffee to these shops and have their coffee roasted and ground in exchange for a small amount, and that *tahmis* managers are adamant on not altering the quality and quantity of the coffee their clients brought in.

D'Ohsson documents another important fact: Unlike the Europeans, Turks do not add milk, cream, or sugar to coffee in order not to spoil the flavor; however, offering liquid (sherbet) or solid sweets (Turkish delight) with bitter coffee is customary. Coffee taken after dinner is never served with sweets. The health-conscious eat one or two spoonfuls of jam and drink a glass of water for breakfast and have a cup of coffee afterwards. Some people prefer to have their coffee after a more hefty breakfast. One must drink coffee slowly while it is still hot; tobacco fiends double this pleasure by smoking their pipes with their coffee.[1]

Having penned his impressions of İstanbul a hundred years after (1874) D'Ohsson must have misobserved the coffee tradition when he wrote, "coffee is made fresh for every customer, and is brought to him already sugared, together with a glass of water".[2] One must recall the prevailing belief that sweetened coffee was deemed appropriate for women, whereas men were expected to drink bitter coffee. The emergence of different ways of making coffee –low sugar, semi-sweet or sweet– over time must be considered a natural development.

1 D'Ohsson, *18. Yüzyıl Türkiye'sinde Örf ve Adetler*, Tercüman 1001 Temel Eser, İstanbul nd., pp. 59-61.

2 Edmondo de Amicis, *Constantinople 1878*, Cornell University Library 2009, pp. 61-62.

Before moving on to De Amicis' impressions of coffeehouses, it is important to review the accounts of Théophile Gautier, who arrived in İstanbul twenty-two years in advance. This romantic poet, who seems to have imagined spectacular eastern coffeehouses like the Alhambra Palace after having read the exaggerated depictions of travelers, was greatly disappointed at a coffeehouse considered as one of the most beautiful ones in İstanbul. Gautier describes a coffeehouse with whitewashed walls, furnished with ottomans and a small, marble jet pool at the center; a coffee maker constantly prepares coffee in copper pots on the stove with screen. Similar to other writers, Gautier mentions that this coffeehouse also functions as a barbershop.[3] It is important to note that unlike his predecessors, Gautier notices the paintings on the walls –which he finds unrefined– and offers detailed information about them.

It is only natural that Gautier regarded the paintings with disfavor. Run by merchant janissaries until the Janissary Corps was disbanded, coffeehouses survived the memory of the Bektashi sect with which the Corps was affiliated. Executed by folk artists, the naïf paintings reflecting Bektashi beliefs decorated the coffeehouses. Considering that the accounts of coffee aficionados in *Vehbi Surnamesi* included the depictions on the walls,[4] this tradition was quite dated and survived even after the Corps was abolished. Some of the images that Gautier describes could be encountered in almost any given coffeehouse in those years. For example, one such image features a dervish cap placed on a three-legged stool inscribed with Qur'anic verses. Another displays a sheikh (Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli) seated on a deerskin, trying to tame a blood-red lion, as well as calligraphic inscriptions of Allah and Ali, decorated with flowers…[5] Later, images of various folk tales, Şehname characters, and prophet tales, as well as legends of Prophet Ali, Hamza, and Seyyid Battal were added to these. With "*Ah min'el-aşk*" (Oh, love) calligraphic panels in particular, various inscriptions-images, and couplets of wisdom are indispensible decorations of coffeehouses.

Artist Malik Aksel, who has a special interest in Turkish folk painting, details and evaluates coffeehouse paintings in two of his important books.[6] Renowned poet Mehmet Âkif, on the other hand, sarcastically treats the same subject in his famous poem "Mahalle Kahvesi" (Local Coffeehouse) in which he drags local coffeehouses through the mud:

3 Théophile Gautier, *ibid*., p. 119.

4 Mehmet Arslan, *Osmanlı Saray Düğünleri ve Şenlikleri 3, Vehbî Sûrnâmesi*, Sarayburnu Kitaplığı, İstanbul 2009, p. 224.

5 Théophile Gautier, *ibid*., p. 120.

6 Malik Aksel, *Anadolu Halk Resimleri*, Kapı Yayınları, İstanbul 2010; *Türklerde Dinî Resimler*, Kapı Yayınları, İstanbul 2010. Also see, Balıkhane Nazırı Ali Rıza Bey, *Eski Zamanlarda İstanbul Hayatı* (ed. Ali Şükrü Çoruk), Kitabevi Yayınları, İstanbul 2001, pp. 37, 271.

Duvarda türlü resimler: Alındı Çamlıbeli,
Kaçırmış Ayvaz'ı ağlar Köroğlu rahmetli!
Arab Üzengi'ye çalmış Şah İsmail gürzü;
Ağaçta bağlı duran kızda işte şimdi gözü.
Firaklıdır Kerem'in "Oft! " der demez yanışı,
Fakat şu "Âh mine'l-aşk"a kim durur karşı?
Gelince Ezraka Bânû denen acûze kadın,
Külüngü düşmüş elinden zavallı Ferhâd'ın!
Görür de böyle Rüfâî'yi: Elde kamçı yılan,
Beyaz bir arslana binmiş, durur mu hiç dede can?
Bakındı bak Hacı Bektâş'a: Deh demiş duvara!
Resim bitince gelir şüphesiz ki beyte sıra.
Birer birer oku mümkünse, sonra ma'nâ ver...[7]

(Various pictures on the wall: Çamlıbeli takes offense,
Having missed Ayvaz, the late Köroğlu cries!
Shah Ismail's mace resembles an Arab stirrup;
His eye is now on the girl tied to the tree.
Melancholic is Kerem's enamored sigh,
Yet who can resist love?
When that vixen named Bânû arrives in Ezrak,
Poor Ferhad drops his iron crowbar!
So appears Rüfâî with a serpentine whip in hand,
Riding on a white lion, can the sheikh stop?
He looks for Haci Bektash, giddyup he says to the wall!
No more paintings, now is the time for verse,
Read them one by one if possible, then make sense...)

7 Mehmed Âkif, *Safahat* (ed. Ertuğrul Düzdağ), İz Yayıncılık, İstanbul 2009, pp. 109-110.

Gautier also mentions paintings with foreign themes, such as "Napoleon at the Battle of Ratisbon," "Spanish Girl", and "Battle of Austerlitz" on the walls of the coffeehouses he visited. In the ensuing years, folk paintings reflecting Western culture were also encountered in coffeehouses. "Young Moor Coming to Kill the Sultan" (Othello), "Girl-like Boy Embarking his Lover on the Ship" (Paris abducting Helen), "Shepherd who Cradles his Lover in his Arms and Crosses over the River" (Paul and Virginia), and "Beautiful Shepherd Gazing at his own Reflection in the Pool" (Narcissus).[8] Diversified over time, the subjects of coffeehouse paintings also included current events. For example, images of "Symbol of Liberty" and "Mother Liberty," which Enver Bey and Niyazi Bey –regarded as heroes after the proclamation of the Second Constitution– released from the chains of despotism, soldiers of the 'Action Army' with their felt caps and cartridges on their shoulders, and ungroomed Namık Kemal portraits had assumed their places in the coffeehouses. Among other popular coffeehouse portraits were those of Sultan Mehmed II (Fâtih) leading his gray horse to the sea, and Sultan Selim I (Yavuz) with his earring and handlebar moustache.[9]

It is surprising that a writer as observant as De Amicis failed to notice the coffeehouse paintings. Although he depicts –in meticulous detail– the interior of the coffeehouse where he stops by to have four or five cups of coffee and watch the spectacular view of İstanbul as he strolls through Kasımpaşa, he never mentions the paintings. Who knows? Perhaps, there were no paintings in this particular coffee house! In describing his experiences from that day, De Amicis briefly summarizes the exciting history of coffee –which undergoes a bloody stage during the reign of Sultan Murad IV–and notes that this "sources of dream genies and reveries" against which a strict Muslim scholar fought as the "enemy of sleep and children," is now the sweetest consolation of even the poorest of Muslims. Nowadays, coffee is not only served in coffeehouses, but everywhere: at the summits of Galata and Serasker Towers, on the ferries, in the cemeteries, in Turkish baths, and even in the markets. No matter where you are in İstanbul, all you have to do is yell, "Coffee maker! " and within a few minutes, a steaming cup of coffee appears before you.

De Amicis painstakingly describes this small coffeehouse in Kasımpaşa, which seems to have left an indelible trace in his memory:

Our café was a large whitewashed room, wainscoted with wood to the height of a man, with a low divan running all around it. In one corner

8 Reşat Ekrem Koçu, *İstanbul Ansiklopedisi VII*, pp. 3678-3679, 3684.

9 Malik Aksel, *Anadolu Halk Resimleri*, p. 81.

there was a stove at which a Turk with a forked (*sic*) nose was making coffee in a small copper coffee-pot, and turning it out as he made it into tiny cups, putting in the sugar at the same time; for, at Constantinople, coffee is made fresh for every customer, and is brought to him already sugared, together with a glass of water that every Turk drinks before approaching the cup of coffee to his lips; upon the wall was suspended a small mirror, and beside it a sort of rack containing razors with fixed handles; the greater part of the cafés being also barber's shops, and not unfrequently the café keeper is also a dentist and a blood-letter, and operates upon his victims in the same room where the other customers are taking their coffee. Upon the opposite wall hung another rack full of crystal *narghilés*, with long flexible tubes, twisted like serpents, and *chibouks* of earthenware with cherry wood stems. Five pensive Turks were seated upon the divan, smoking the *narghilé*, while three others sat in front of the door on law straw seats without backs, one beside the other, pipe in mouth, and their shoulders leading against the wall (…).[10]

Similar to the coffeehouse De Amicis visited in Kasımpaşa, it was possible to find simple and beautiful coffeehouses at the most unexpected parts of old İstanbul, from which one could observe the spectacular views of the city. We know that European travelers had a special interest in such picturesque coffeehouses. Francis Marion Crawford, who visited İstanbul in the 1890s, sings praises for the spot on the corner of the first coffeehouse on the left going toward İstanbul over Galata Bridge. Adding that this large, airy, and clean coffeehouse unknown to most Europeans is perfect for sitting for hours in undisturbed enjoyment of coffee and cigarettes, and watch the busy life of the city, he begins to describe –from where he is seated– the scene as "dazzling and kaleidoscopic in its variety of color and quick motion."[11]

French writer Pierre Loti's favorite coffeehouse is located in Eyüpsultan; stopping by at Rabia Kadın Kahvesi[12] upon the hill each time he visited İstanbul and enjoying the views of İstanbul and the Golden Horn along with his coffee and *nargileh*, the wrtier must have eulogized this pleasure to his friends. Although we cannot identify exactly when this coffeehouse took on the name "Piyerloti," we learn from Abdülhak Şinasi Hisar's *İstanbul ve Pierre Loti* that the French who visited İstanbul always wanted to see the coffeehouse and that other authors particularly mentioned this spot in their works. According to Hisar, the magical view

10 Edmondo de Amicis, *ibid.*, pp. 61-62.

11 Francis Marion Crawford, *Constantinople*, Adamant Media Corporation, July 2002, pp. 12-15.

12 M. Mesut Koman, *Eyüp Sultan, Loti Kahvesi ve Çevresi*, TTOK Yayınları, İstanbul 1986, p. 8.

Loti watched from this location remained mostly unchanged in the 1950s. The historic silhouette of İstanbul on one side, the treeless view of Okmeydanı and the Jewish cemetery on the other; the remains of the Byzantine walls, the large sultanic mosques, and, beyond, Galata Tower, Galata Bridge, and Topkapı Palace...[13]

During a journey to İstanbul in 1911, in which he visited every nook and cranny of the city, Le Corbusier stopped by at a coffeehouse in Mahmutpaşa Bazaar with a friend. He excitedly described this coffeehouse where coffee is offered in small bowls –in other words, large, *kallâvi* cups with no handles–, tea is served in pear-shaped glasses, and delicious tobacco is smoked.[14] What would this famous architect have written, had he also visited the "Çınaraltı Kahvesi" in Emirgân? During the years in which he was appointed as ambassador abroad, Yahya Kemal always longed for this coffeehouse. We have no information on whether or not he frequented any coffeehouses in Warsaw. However, we know that while in Madrid, he traversed the streets of the city in his free time, that he took a rest at cafés when he was tired, but that he disliked the commotion of the cafés and the boisterousness of the Spanish.[15] Dreaming of "Çınaraltı Kahvesi" in Emirgân on such a day, he describes his favorite coffeehouse in his poem entitled "Madrid'de Kahvehane" (Coffeehouse in Madrid):

Durdum, hazin hazin, acıdım kendi hâlime
Aksetti bir dakika uzaktan hayalime,
Sakin Emirgân'ın Çınaraltı Kahvesi,
Poyraz serinliğindeki yaprakların sesi.

(I stood, ruefully, feeling sorry for myself
For a minute, it flashed on my memory from afar
The calm Çınaraltı Coffeehouse of Emirgân
The sound of leaves in the cool of the northeast wind.)

Experiencing the same illusion once more when he lived abroad and describing it in his poem entitled,

13 Abdülhak Şinasi Hisar, *İstanbul ve Pierre Loti*, İstanbul Fethi Derneği İstanbul Enstitüsü Yayınları, İstanbul 1958, pp. 176-177.

14 Le Corbusier, Şark Seyahati-İstanbul 1911 (trans. Alp Tümertekin), İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, İstanbul 2009, pp. 96-99.

15 Adile Ayda, *Yahya Kemal'in Fikir ve Şiir Dünyası*, Hisar Yayınları, Ankara 1979, pp. 69-82, 85-91

Hüzün ve Hatıra (Sorrow and Memory), Yahya Kemal was content with merely recalling Emirgân's Çınaraltı Kahvesi, the conversation between the wind and the leaves of the magnificent sycamore, the marble fountain, and the magnificent Yesârî calligraphy that decorated it.

Similar to Yahya Kemal, Ruşen Eşref also traversed İstanbul and wrote about the city. In the essay, "Çınaraltı Kahvesi" he wrote after a visit to Emirgân, Eşref talks about the same coffeehouse, fountain, and the Yesârî's *ta'lik* script as follows:

Its beauty is derived from the harmony of three simple things: the sycamore, the marble, and the sea… Four or five sycamores occupy a slope-like public square along the water. Large as tree trunks, the entangled branches extend to the upper level of the white minaret of a mosque with marble columns. The colossal bunch of greens in the blue sky spread over the wide portico of a hundred and fifty year-old fountain. The Turkish Rococo fountain resting in the six or seven-month-long shadow of this sycamore thicker than the columns of a temple from Antiquity, is as graceful as a water mihrab… Inscribed on a green background, the tablets on all four sides reflect the golden calligraphic script of Yesârî', taken for sparks of sun from afar.[16]

The Çınaraltı coffeehouse was one of Yahya Kemal's favorite venues during the times he spent in İstanbul. His close friend Halis Erginer recounts that he would get together with Kemal at least four times a week between 1941 and 1948, adding that their first stop would always be Emirgân, where the master would talk to his admirers for hours about poetry and Ottoman history.[17]

16 Ruşen Eşref Ünaydın, *Bütün Eserleri 3, Hatıralar I* (eds. Necat Birinci-Nuri Sağlam), TDK Yayınları, Ankara 2002, p. 281.

17 Halis Erginer: "Yahya Kemal'den Hâtıralar", *Yahya Kemal Enstitüsü Mecmuası I*, İstanbul 1959, p. 85.

XVI
LOCAL COFFEEHOUSES

One Turkish painter, namely, Hoca Ali Rıza Bey of Üsküdar was able to see the beauties of old Turkish coffeehouses that foreigners such as De Amicis, Pierre Loti, and Le Corbusier appreciated as foreigners. Looking at the same beauties from the inside, Hoca Ali Rıza Bey strived to eternalize these scenes with his brush. A regular of the Çiçek Kahvesi in Selimiye, as well as the Saraçlar Kahvesi in Haydarpaşa's Saraçlar quarter, this grand master was interested in everything about his favorite drink and would immediately take out his notebook and pen to begin drawing whenever he was at a coffeehouse. For example, his cup after he drank his coffee… He is known to have scribbled the note, "One must profit at once after drinking coffee" below such a depiction.

Süheyl Ünver sips his coffee

Recognized as the founder of "Üsküdar School" in Turkish painting and having relentlessly portrayed the historic and natural wonders of İstanbul on his canvas through various techniques like

oil, watercolor, and pencil throughout his life, Hoca Ali Rıza sought to be a "devoted and true translator" to the life of his country and nation. It can be argued that his art was a gentlemanly defiance against those who belittled and degraded the beauties of their country. During the times in which İstanbul still preserved the garden-city character Le Corbusier admired, he would loyally transmit to pictorial language the narrow and shadowed streets, modes wooden houses, masjids, fountains, cemeteries with cypress trees, the Bosphorus and the spectacular views from its slopes, moonlit nights, characteristic trees –particularly the stone pines he so loved– the various objects used in daily life, countryside and neighborhood coffeehouses, and their interiors with the pens, brushes, and paints he always carried with him. Yet, his realism was distinct from any Western painter; he would delve into an object or a scene with a fine poetic sensitivity and a mystic thrill. The colors on his palette were transparent; a careful scrutiny of his paintings conveys the sense that he was able to show the invisible behind the apparent.

A local coffeehouse

In a small book, Hoca Ali Rıza's student and friend A. Süheyl Ünver brings together some of Ali Rıza's watercolors and pencil drawings that reflect Turkish coffee culture.[1] It appears that Hoca Ali Rıza, who meticulously depicted sea- and countryside coffeehouses he encountered as he strolled through İstanbul, as well as their interiors and objects such as *coffee cupboard, coffee cooler, coffee box, coffee mill, pot, cup, nargileh* and portable coffee stoves, etc., had a particular interest in small, simple

1 A. Süheyl Ünver, *Ressam Ali Rıza Bey'e Göre Yarım Asır Önce Kahvehanelerimiz ve Eşyası*, Ankara Sanat Yayınları, Ankara 1967.

Çiçekçi Kahvesi (Coffeehouse) from Süheyl Ünver's brush

coffeehouses. For example, Hoca Ali Rıza had hastily sketched an overall view of a seaside coffeehouse he had discovered in Rumelihisarı, but returned to the same venue -with more time on his hands- to depict it in full detail. He was so fond of these coffeehouses that sometimes he would reconstruct in his notebook a sea- or countryside coffeehouse from his imagination. If he were to ever open a coffeehouse, he would probably have designed it to resemble the ones he sketched from his "imagination." Through his paintings, we are able to obtain significant information about some of the coffeehouses that were in operation at the turn of the pervious century. Among these are the coffeehouses of Kıvırcık Ahmet Ağa along the Üsküdar coast and of Broş Dayı in Değirmendere, Taşdelen Suyu Kahvehanesi in Alemdağı, and the coffeehouse right beside İshak Ağa Fountain in Beykoz ...

Carefully portraying the interior of the coffeehouses he appreciated and regularly frequented, Hoca Ali Rıza also has pencil drawings that reveal the details of the coffee hearths at Cemal Ağa's coffeehouse in Merdivenköyü, as well as a coffeehouse in Doğancılar. The backgammons Cemal Ağa places on the divan, as well as the cups and glasses on the shelves can be counted one by one in these drawings. Coffee utensils were one of the passions of this master, who painted numerous interior and exterior depictions of the Saraçlar Coffeehouse in the İbrahimağa quarter of Haydarğaşa where he lived for years. His notebooks are filled with pencil drawings of cups, pots, coffee boxes, coffee coolers, etc., such as the coffee and sugar boxes that belonged to coffee aficionado and painter Müfide

Kadri's father Kadri Bey, a coffee jar on a tray, a pot and cup, a coffee cupboard…

On one such day, for example, Hoca Ali Rıza painted the coffee mills as he sat in a coffeehouse in the village of Bulgurlu, and included the *narghile*s and the coffeehouse regulars in his depiction.

A local coffeehouse

It can be said that the Çiçekçi Kahvesi Hoca Ali Rıza regularly frequented was a typical local coffeehouse. According to Burhan Felek, this red ocher coffeehouse in Üsküdar –which is no longer intact– was located in the middle of the street that ran from Doğancılar to Duvardibi along the cemetery via Tunusbağı, across from the fountain bearing the signature of Sultan Selim III, right above the rampart on the corner; it was accessed by three or four steps.[2] A watercolor by A. Süheyl Ünver vividly portrays Çiçek Kahvesi, which was run by a certain Haci Ahmet, who was both a coffee maker and a barber in his final years. Çiçekçi Kahvesi was a kind of club that catered to the men of İhsaniye and Selimiye quarters; one could enjoy the gentle breeze in the garden during summer days and sit in the well-heated interior. We do not know why Hoca Ali Rıza never painted this coffeehouse or, if he had, where that painting is today.

Originally from İhsaniye, writer Burhan Felek describes at length the interior of Çiçekçi Kahvesi: As you walked through the door, there was a mirror and a barber seat on the left; the brass washbasins used during shaving hung close to the ceiling. Hacı Ahmet sat in his chair

2 Burhan Felek, *Yaşadığımız Günler*, Milliyet Yayınları, İstanbul 1974, p. 81; also see A. Süheyl Ünver, *ibid.*, p. 65.

immediately next to the coffee stove. The coffeehouse was comprised of two sections; the eighty or ninety cm-high upper section (seat of honor) was reserved for the notables of the neighborhood. Furthermore, when poets like Üsküdarlı Talat Bey, calligraphers like İlmî Bey and Necmeddin Okyay, and painters like Hoca Ali Rıza Bey frequented the coffeehouse, they were seated in this section surrounded by divans and engaged deep in conversation. The lower section belonged to the tradesmen of the neighborhood, who carefully listened to the conversations above.[3] Everyone knew his place in this coffeehouse.

There is no doubt that coffeehouses reflected a natural social structuring that was formed outside the control of the authority. Neighborhood coffeehouses, coffeehouses frequented by the young, coffeehouses of the boatmen and porters at the piers, coffeehouses of cooks and horse carriage drivers in various places, aficionado coffeehouses, coffeehouses of public storytellers or *semai* singers, and coffeehouses for fellow townsmen and the retired provided the opportunity for various social groups and professions to communicate with and support one another.

Evidently, not all coffeehouses were innocent; jobless drifters would sometimes gather at coffeehouses, cause unrest, and disturb the locals. Ahmet Rasim notes that at one point, not only women, but young men did not dare walk past the coffeehouses in neighborhoods like Aksaray, Çeşmemeydanı, Cerrahpaşa, and even Direklerarası.[4] Coffeehouse opponents such as Mehmed Âkif and Fish market superintendent Ali Rıza Bey strongly condemned such places partly for this reason. From the perspective of the fish market superintendent, local coffeehouses were awful, impossibly dirty places with crude paintings, frequented by tobacco, snuff, and hashish-addicts, coughing, sneezing, downbeat, gossipy, ignorant, grumpy old men who thought they "had a grasp on the news of the world." [5]

Ali Rıza Bey, the protagonist of Reşat Nuri Güntekin's novel *Yaprak Dökümü,* was initially an uncompromising coffeehouse opponent like Mehmet Âkif and his namesake, the fish market superintendent. During his public service, he kept complaining, "I would shut down all of them if only I had the power to! " Once he was retired and began to nag the members of his household, he realized that coffeehouses were "irreplaceable corners of consolation" for miserable retirees. He would

3 Burhan Felek, *ibid*., pp. 82-83.

4 Ahmet Rasim, "Kahve Kahvehanelerimiz", *Akşam*, 26 March 1926.

5 Balıkhane Nazırı Ali Rıza Bey, *ibid*., pp. 37-40.

first stop by at a few countryside coffeehouses to rest during his walks to Çamlıca or the Üsküdar Market, and gradually, he grew accustomed to local coffeehouses. Let us hear the rest from Reşat Nuri:

At first, he would sit alone in a corner and read his newspaper. He had still not overcome his repugnance for the regulars of these coffeehouses. He was determined never to mingle with them. He could be nothing more than a spectator here. What did he see and hear? There were some elderly men who would portray the intimate details of their home life without any embarrassment, detailing what they ate and admitting that sometimes they starved due to lack of food.

Others constantly played backgammon or cards, stopping occasionally to pick at each other with dirty cracks, only to continue their game as though nothing had transpired. In fact, one day, he had witnessed the beating of a retiree known for his successful career. In Ali Rıza Bey's mind, this man had to go into seclusion and even die after such a scandal. Yet, he found him at the same coffeehouse the very next day, playing backgammon as if nothing had happened.

First, he lent an ear to a couple of helpless souls in search of someone to chat with. Over time, the acquaintances slowly grew in number. Yet, his pride was still strong.

Although he always listened to others, he never uttered a word of his own troubles.

A local coffeehouse

He finally realized that the coffeehouse was the only bastion against the pains of unemployment and cantankerous families. Without it, retirees had little else to do but die.[6]

Abdülaziz Bey did with his pen what Hoca Ali Rıza achieved with his brush; he was one of the writers to have noticed that the coffeehouses of that period were not the abode of the lazy, but rather "the only bastion against the pains of unemployment and cantankerous families." He thus strived to bring to fore the positive and useful aspects of coffeehouses. The "abridged" version of his more than four pages long encomium on local coffeehouses is as follows:

The venues dismissed as local coffeehouses were *Encümen-i Dâniş* (Academy of Science) in form; they acted as institutions of science and education or associations of social welfare. They assumed the important mission of strengthening social structure, as well as the bonds between the public. They continued to serve this purpose as long as I could remember; unfortunately, however, they first lost their social status and subsequently vanished among the forgotten, the unknown.[7]

Çiçekçi Kahvesi that Burhan Felek describes is essentially an *Encümen-i Dâniş* coffeehouse like those of Abdülaziz Bey. Despite his strong opposition to local coffeehouses in his famous poem "Mahalle Kahvesi," poet Mehmed Âkif failed to stay away from this coffeehouse during the years he lived in Üsküdar.

6 Reşat Nuri Güntekin, *Yaprak Dökümü*, Semih Lütfi Kitabevi, İstanbul 1944.

7 Abdülaziz Bey, *ibid.*, pp. 301-306.

XVII
KIRAATHANE

We regrettably have no information available on Mehmed Âkif's relationship with coffee. However, in his aforementioned poem "Mahalle Kahvesi," he likens local coffeehouses to sly murderers disguised as beggars and waylayers that rob people during daytime; he regards them as nests of laziness and filth that steal time and discourage people from working and strives to portray how disgusting they are by depicting a local coffeehouse in detail. A ruthless opponent of Âkif and his conception of poetry, literary critic and essayist Nurullah Ataç would probably only agree with him on their mutual hatred of coffeehouses. The following sentences in his unpublished essay entitled "Kahve" (Coffee) are akin to an interpretation of "Mahalle Kahvesi":

The coffeehouse is the sanctuary of those who do not know how to organize their lives or homes or how to make friends. In short, it is the place for those running away from reality. There they find an atmosphere that soothes their daily worries and inconsolable loneliness, acquaintances that chance has to offer. Their imagination runs wild: the faces they see as ghosts in fact imagine an entirely different life for themselves; they count sorrow and joy, which are nothing more than a delusion or memory, like the beads of a rosary. Each coffeehouse –whether it permits opium and hashish or not– is a drug house. They even show life as a dream to those who watch the crowds on the street from their wide, glass façades.[1]

1 Nurullah Ataç, "Kahve", *Haber Akşam Postası*, 10 August 1937.

Despite these views, Nurullah Ataç frequented İkbal Kıraathanesi during the years he spent in Yahya Kemal's entourage, and Küllük Kahvesi in the 1940s. We know from the laudatory verses he wrote on the cafés in Berlin that Mehmed Âkif was not opposed to clean, well-lit coffeehouses in which people could eat, talk, and spend enjoyable time. Furthermore, he would stop by Hacı Mustafa's teahouse in Direklerarası, Ârif's coffeehouse on Divanyolu, and Çiçekçi Kahvesi in Üsküdar to converse with friends.

From the start, some coffeehouses had been preferred by scholars, artists, and intellectuals; regarded as "mecma'-ı zurefa" (*place of the witty*) and "*mekteb-i irfan*" (school of learning), the coffee served in such coffeehouses was known as "*ehl-i irfan şerbeti*" (sherbet of the master of wisdom). However, it is clear that not all coffeehouses were of the same nature. In the short stories and novels of Ahmed Midhat Efendi and Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, we encounter coffeehouses similar to the ones Mehmed Âkif lampooned.

As meticulously depicted by artists such as Van Moor, Melling, Thomas Allom, and Preziosi, the spacious, airy, and pleasant coffeehouses set up in the most scenic locations of the city were nothing like the ones Mehmed Âkif criticized. Mostly perished by fires and partly destroyed by the wrath of developers, these coffeehouses appealed to European travelers as well. Suffocated in the Pera district during a visit to İstanbul in 1843, French poet Gérard de Nerval disguised himself as an Iranian on a Ramadan night, crossed over to old İstanbul and watched a Karagöz performance in a coffeehouse in Beyazıt and listened to a public storyteller in yet another coffeehouse.[2]

Melling- A Coffeehouse in İstanbul

2 Gérard de Nerval, *Doğuya Seyahat* (trans. Muharrem Taşçıoğlu), Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, Ankara 1984, pp. 57-68, 95-97.

During the time of Nerval's visit, Divanyolu was still the picturesque avenue of the old period; with wicker stools scattered in front, the coffeehouses of "*ehl-i keyf*" (masters of pleasure) were destroyed in the great Hocapaşa fire that broke out in 1865 and the expropriation that ensued. Only four coffeehouses remained; decorated with silk carpets four lovely coffeehouses, one with a jet pool and the other three with mirrors… In İstanbul Ansiklopedisi (Encyclopedia of İstanbul), Reşat Ekrem Koçu conveys the long poem in which a Bektashi poet describes these four coffeehouses. According to the poet named Nebil Baba, young, handsome, and immaculately dressed young waiters served in these posh coffeehouses with elite customers. The stoves were adorned and the pipes of cherry and jasmine wood were hand carved. With their porcelain cups and filigree cup holders, these select venues could even host the Sultan.[3] Perhaps the drawings Preziosi executed in the 1850s portray these coffeehouses that Nebil Baba belauded.

İstanbul coffeehouses conveyed a unique architecture. The information Dr. Rifat Osman Bey offers in an article[4] on the architecture he thoroughly researched, overlaps with the coffeehouse depictions whose names are mentioned above. Similar to the audience halls of old mansions, with walls adorned from floor to ceiling with the aesthetic taste of the period, wooden ceilings carefully executed in çıtakâri technique, marble jet pools, graceful, screen ovens, lines of cups, pots, *narghiles*, and pipes on the shelves, and spectacular views, the coffeehouses fascinated both local and foreign visitors alike. The coffeehouses were comprised of two sections: *orta mekan* (central space) and *başsedir* (seat of honor). Accessed by a narrow staircase of two steps, *başsedir* resembled the private enclose for the Sultan in the mosque; it was covered with carpets and surrounded by divans. Accommodating twenty or twenty five, this section, also known as *köşe* or *sedirlik*, was reserved for privileged customers poet Nebil Baba refers to as "eşraf, âyan, paşalar" (gentry, notables, and pashas):

Dört aded kahve-i safâ-bahşâlar
Müşterisi eşraf, âyan paşalar
Biri havuzludur üçü aynalı
Cümle döşenmişdir kadife halı

3 Reşat Ekrem Koçu, "Divanyolu Kahveleri", İstanbul Ansiklopedisi, v. IX, pp. 4626-4627.

4 Rifat Osman, "Memleketimiz Tarihinde Mükeyyifata Bir Bakış: Kahvehaneler", İstanbul Belediyesi Mecmuası, no. 87, İstanbul 1931. Also, see İbrahim Numan, "Eski İstanbul Kahvehanelerinin İctimai Hayattaki Yeri ve Mimarisi Hakkında Bazı Mülahazalar", *Kubbealtı Akademi Mecmuası*, no. 2, April 1981, pp. 64-74.

(There are four coffeehouses of enjoyment
The clients of which are the gentry, notables, and pashas
One has a pool and the other three have mirrors
They are all decorated with velvet carpets)

It appears that such ostentatious coffeehouses disappeared in the 19th century; they were replaced by simpler versions in which chairs and tables were used instead of divans. However, some of the coffeehouses depicted in Hoca Ali Rıza's paintings maintain their traditional architecture for some time. The previously mentioned Çiçekçi Kahvesi also had a *başsedir* (seat of honor) that accommodated prestigious dwellers of Selimiye and İhsaniye quarters.

Cemiyet-i İlmiye-i Osmaniye's (Ottoman Society of Science) establishment of a *kıraathane* (literally, "reading room") demonstrates that after the Tanzimat era, intellectuals felt the need for quiet, club-like coffeehouses with books and newspapers. The Society's *kıraathane* operating out of the coffeehouse of Taş Mektep behind Yenicami had in stock more than thirty different newspapers in various languages. Furthermore, it was also possible to take advantage of the books in the Society's library. According to a news piece in *Mecmua-i Fünun*, the *kıraathane* was open every day from three until eleven o'clock except Tuesdays; there was no discrimination of ethnicity or religion against its members. Those who wished to become a member had to be nominated by a member of the Society or the *kıraathane;* they were also obliged to pay upfront a membership fee of six months.[5]

A. Adnan Adıvar rightfully argues that the *kıraathane* opened by the Ottoman Society of Science had nothing to do with a coffeehouse, adding that the "most evident example of the relationship between coffee and intellectuals," in other words, the first *kıraathane* (Salle de Lecture) in the most modern sense was Sarafim'in Kıraathanesi in Okçularbaşı. Sarafim Efendi, who started running his *kıraathane* immediately across from Koca Reşit Paşa Tomb in Çarşıkapı by offering his customers the newspapers *Cerîde-i Havâdis* and *Takvîm-i Vekayi* released on Tuesdays and Thursdays, respectively, soon began purchasing all the magazines and newspapers and converted his coffeehouse into a reading hall and, by extension, a cultural center frequented by intellectuals of the period. As these newspapers and magazines were not thrown out after they were read, over time, they constituted important archive collections that researchers such as Osman Nuri Ergin and Adnan Adıvar utilized. Attaining a special status as the sales and distribution point of all the newly released books and renowned as

5 For further information, see Ali Budak, *Batılılaşma Sürecinde Çok Yönlü Bir Osmanlı Aydını: Münif Paşa*, Kitabevi Yayınları, İstanbul 2004, pp. 197-208.

an intellectuals' club, Sarafim'in Kıraathanesi also organized, particularly on Ramadan evenings, poetry and literature discussions in which famous figures like Namık Kemal occasionally participated.[6] According to Ahmet Rasim, "consisting of small, clean marble tables set between long and narrow divans on both sides, a library of newspaper collections books arranged on shelves in the back, and a coffee stove,"[7] Sarafim'in Kıraathanesi demanded certain rules of conduct and manner of reading newspapers and books. For example, it was impossible to encounter any violation of etiquette, such as setting one's cap by the window, pulling the legs underneath and spreading out on the divan, banging on the table and yelling, "Bring me a cup of coffee! " or talking loudly.[8]

Thomas Allom- A Coffeehouse in İstanbul

Organized against Abdülhamid II in the Kuledibi coffeehouses of Thessalonica, members of the Committee of Union and Progress must have regarded coffeehouses as harmful institutions, for after the proclamation of the Second Constitution, they sought to ban the name "*kahvehane*" (coffeehouse) and replace it with *kıraathane.* The most famous of the coffeehouses that inevitably began to stock several newspapers and use the name *kıraathane* included Kânunuesasi Kıraathanesi in Tepebaşı frequented by the Committee members, Fevziye Kıraathanesi in Şehzadebaşı, also serving as a conference hall at times, and Ârif'in Kıraathanesi in Divanyolu, which more or less maintained the tradition of the old, ostentatious coffeehouses.

6 For further information, see A. Süheyl Ünver, "Sarafim Kıraathanesi", *Belleten*, v. XLIII, no. 170, April 1979.

7 A. Adnan Adıvar, *Bilgi Cumhuriyeti Haberleri*, T Neşriyatı, İstanbul 1945, p. 200.

8 Ahmet Rasim, *Muharrir, Şair, Edip* (ed. Kâzım Yetiş), Tercüman 1001 Temel Eser, İstanbul 1980, p. 170 et. al.

Often frequented by civil servants due to its proximity to their offices, Arif'in Kıraathanesi was an important *kıraathane*, the regulars of which included famous poets and writers such as Şinasi, Namık Kemal, Ahmed Midhat Efendi, Ebüzziya Tevfik, Muallim Nâci, and Mehmed Âkif. This *kıraathane* held an important place in collective memory, as it was the place where great names such as Meddah Aşkî, Meddah İsmet and Hayalî Kâtip Salih once performed their art. For example, leading Turkish actor and director Muhsin Ertuğrul associates his passion for theater with Ârif'in Kıraathanesi, where his father occasionally took him to watch Meddah İsmet Efendi perform.[9]

While the name *kıraathane* is still used in some of the coffeehouses, it was never fully embraced. In an article he wrote against the 1988 campaign to convert coffeehouses into *kıraathane*s, writer Tarık Buğra, who spent almost all his time at the Küllük Kahvesi in Beyazıt during his college years in İstanbul, regards this initiative as an "attempt to destroy one's right and freedom to kill time." As someone who has experienced the golden age of Şehzadebaşı, Vezneciler, Beyazıt, Divanyolu and Sultanahmet coffeehouses, Tarık Buğra argues that no one at the coffeehouse would read books unless they are forced, adding that he has never encountered anyone reading books at such places except for retirees –who devoured newspapers down to the classifieds– and students because their accommodations were not well heated and they could not find any other place to study.[10]

Thomas Allom- A Coffeehouse in İstanbul

9 Ertuğrul Muhsin, *Benden Sonra Tufan Olmasın*, İstanbul 1989, p. 64.

10 Tarık Buğra, *Bu Çağın Adı*, Ötüken Neşriyat, İstanbul 1990, pp. 214-217.

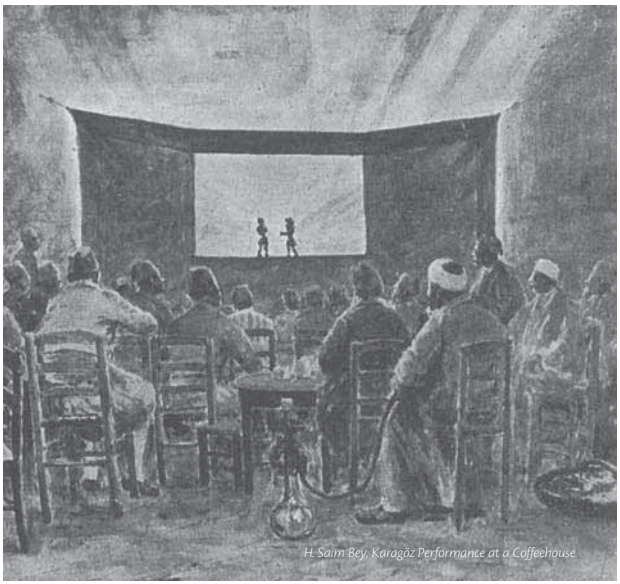
XVIII
ENTERTAINMENT AT THE COFFEEHOUSE

We mentioned earlier that Gérard de Nerval disguised himself as an Iranian on the first night of Ramadan in 1843, crossed over to the İstanbul side, watched a Karagöz shadow theater at a coffeehouse in Beyazıt Square and listened to a *meddah* (public storyteller) performance at another one. Noting, "Had I not mentioned the performers who tell admiringly beautiful stories for a living in the leading coffeehouses of İstanbul, the information I would have conveyed on the allure and entertainment of Ramadan nights in İstanbul would have been incomplete,"[1] Nerval's *Meddah* story sounds similar to a tale from his own imagination. However, his observations on the vivaciousness of Ramadan nights in İstanbul and the beautiful stories told at certain coffeehouses are accurate. This means that coffeehouses were simultaneously used as performance centers and that theatrical arts were survived in such places.

Certain coffeehouses staged Karagöz shadow plays –particularly on Ramadan nights– whereas others held *meddah* performances. Karagöz players often convened in a coffeehouse located in Tahtakale, where the first coffeehouses were opened. According to Metin And, who is recognized for his research on traditional Turkish theater, some of the coffeehouses that staged Karagöz plays during Ramadan months at the turn of the 20th century were as follows: Mehmet Efendi, Fevziye and Şems Kıraathanesi

1 Gérard de Nerval, *ibid.*, p. 95.

in Şehzadebaşı, Ârif'in Kıraathanesi in Divanyolu, Meserret Kıraathanesi in Sultanahmet, Kıraathane-i Osmanî in Vezneciler, Dilküşa Kıraathanesi in Yeşiltulumba, Mahmut Ağa Kıraathanesi in Çeşmemeydanı, etc.[2]



H. Saim Bey, Karagöz Performance at a Coffeehouse

Other special coffeehouses featured *meddah* performances.[3] Thomas Allom, who visited İstanbul nine years before Nerval did and included coffeehouses in his engravings, depicts a *meddah* named Kız Ahmet recounting a story from his seat on a high platform in one of the large coffeehouses –possibly– in Tophane. This particular engraving demonstrates that a special place was reserved for *meddah*s at the aforementioned ostentatious coffeehouses. John Auldjo writes that as the *meddah*s recounted their stories, the audience sat in a semi circle, adding that the front rows were reserved for high standing clients and the *meddah* platform called "*koltuk*" was placed on a higher level.[4]

As seen in an engraving by Preziosi, musicians were allocated a special place in coffeehouses. In this engraving, one can see a group of musicians playing a *baglama*-like instrument and *zurna* in the large niche immediately next to the coffee stove across from the entrance. On the

2 Metin And, *Geleneksel Türk Tiyatrosu*, Bilgi Yayınevi, Ankara 1969, pp. 168-169.

3 Metin And, "Eski İstanbul'da Meddah Kahveleri", *Folklor*, 1/3, 1969.

4 John Auldjo, *Journal of a visit to Constantinople and some of the Greek Islands in the Spring and Summer of 1833*, London 1855 (Cited by Metin And, *ibid.*, p. 77.)

divan in front of the niche, a Mevlevi dervish drinks coffee, whereas a roughneck type smokes çubuk.[5]

It is difficult to estimate when music entered coffeehouses; however, it can be argued that Janissary coffeehouses staged music performances from the onset and that after the Janissary Corps were abolished (1826), these coffeehouses were transformed into âşık kahveleri, as well as *semai kahveleri* also known as "çalgılı kahveler" (coffeehouses with music) run by firefighters. Folk poet-singers (âşık) of Turkish music arriving in İstanbul from Anatolia and Roumelia would come together with their local counterparts at the Tavukpazarı coffeehouses near Çemberlitaş, carry out song contests known as "poetry duels" (*atışma*) and thus were put through a test. As researcher Ekrem Işın correctly observes, the Ottoman countryside culture was represented –to a certain extent– in the urban life of İstanbul through the *semai*[6] coffeehouses in this neighborhood.[7]

Once *saz* poets increased in number and became active in İstanbul in the 19th century, a guild known as Âşıklar Cemiyeti (Association of Folk Poets) was established and a renowned âşık was appointed as its warden (*kethüda*). In charge of organizing *semai* coffeehouses and preventing lowlifes from frequenting these coffeehouses, the "Âşıklar Kethüdası" received his salary from the state. While there were famous *semai* coffeehouses in districts like Beşiktaş, Unkapanı and Aksaray in the 19th century, the coffeehouse that served as the headquarters of the guild was located in Tavukpazarı. In order for poets to perform in İstanbul, they had to obtain a certificate of competency from the Tavukpazarı Association of Folk Poets. The poets affiliated with this guild were sent to leading cities as of October of every year to inform the public on a range of subjects. The great reputation *saz* poets earned during the reign of Mahmud II indicates that they were used as propagandists to introduce the new reforms to the public.

Painter Muazzez, Karagöz Performance at a Coffeehouse (IMM Painting Collection, oil, 101x80 cm)

5 *Amadeo Preziosi* (ed. Begüm Kovulmaz), YKY, İstanbul 2007, pp. 42-43.

6 A form special to vocal music with a rhythmic pattern of three beats (T.N.)

7 Ekrem Işın, İstanbul'da Gündelik Hayat, İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul 1995, p. 242.

A coffeehouse by Preziosi

Dertli, one of the great names of *saz* poetry, was put through a serious test at the aforementioned coffeehouse in Tavukpazarı. Legend has it that when he arrived in İstanbul as a reputable poet, others became jealous and put together a difficult riddle to solve in order to discredit this countryside poet. Dertli had two options: He would either use all his intelligence to solve the riddle or leave İstanbul, never to return. Glancing at the riddle framed riddle written in *celî sülüs* script hanging from the wall, Dertli relaxed, took the *saz* given to him by the warden, and after playing a few keys, he masterfully resolved the riddle in a song. The *kethüda* put his arm through Dertli and accompanied him to the seat of honor in the coffeehouse. Dertli broke the ice once he shared the award money with the poets in the coffeehouse.

It was possible to listen to *saz* poets at âşık coffeehouses on every day of the year; *semai* coffeehouses, on the other hand, were only set up during the month of Ramadan. In the "Çalgılı Kahveler"[8] (Musical Coffeehouses) entry he wrote for Ekrem Koçu's İstanbul Ansiklopedisi, Vasıf Hiç, who opened a *semai* coffeehouse in Üsküdar on every Ramadan for twenty years, notes that *semai* coffeehouses were particular to İstanbul and were opened in coffeehouses frequented by the *tulumbacı* (firefighters). More importantly, it was not necessary to own a coffeehouse to open a *semai* coffeehouse; acquaintanceship with firefighters was sufficient. Someone with enough courage to run a *semai* coffeehouse reached an agreement with a coffeehouse owner in exchange for a certain share and began preparations the day after *Sürre Alayı*[9] sets out to Mecca. Next, the ceiling was decorated with chains and roses made of colorful paper, the walls were plastered with pictures and photographs, and a high platform was set up for musicians in one corner. A minimum of four musicians –playing *klarnet*, *darbuka*, çifte *nakkare* and *zurna*– were necessary for a *semai* coffeehouse.

Looking forward to these coffeehouses throughout the year, the regulars would assume their places immediately after the *tarawih* prayer on the first night of Ramadan. According to Vasıf Hiç, the crier of the coffeehouse first recited a *semai* or *divan*, followed by a few *mani* poems, and later announced by whom the coffeehouse was prepared. This constituted a kind of opening ceremony in which the coffeehouse was presented to customers. It was necessary for the coffeehouse crier to be a lofty, handsome firefighter. Although the musical coffeehouses were open to customers of all social classes, youngsters with no facial hair ("şab-ı emred," which literally means "beardless young man") were not admitted. With a wide selection of regulars ranging from swashbucklers and ruffians ready to make a scene, to the serious and distinguished, and from bureaucrats to porters, *semai* coffeehouses gave rise to poets, singers, and story tellers of considerable renown. However, the majority of these performed works written by others, in other wolds, great *saz* poets like Dertli, Gevherî, Emrah, Âşık Ömer, Seyranî and Bayburtlu Zihnî. Nevertheless, it is said that those trained in *semai* coffeehouses have mastered the art of reciting *ayaklı mani*. Among *mani*[10] readers, the rhyme

8 İstanbul Ansiklopedisi VII, pp. 3683-3687. For further information on Semai Kahveleri, see Ahmet Rasim, "Semai Kahveleri", *Resimli Tarih Mecmuası*, Yeni Seri, no. 4 (76), April 1956, pp. 248-251; Osman Cemal Kaygılı, *İstanbul'da Semai Kahveleri ve Meydan Şairleri*, Eminönü Halkevi Dil Tarih ve Edebiyat Şubesi, İstanbul 1937; Tahir Alangu, *Çalgılı Kahvehanelerdeki Külhanbey Edebiyatı ve Numuneleri*, İstanbul 1943.

9 See footnote 40 (T.N.)

10 The smallest verse form of Turkish poetry (T.N.)

and *radeef*[11] of a *mani* is called "*ayak*." *Ayaklı mani* begins with "Adam aman" format and is assigned an *ayak*. This *ayak* determines the *radeef* with which the *mani* would be recited. Once receiving the *ayak*, the *mani* teller often recites a punned ("*cinaslı*") rhyme. For example,

Adam aman "sürüne"
Madem çoban değilsin ardındaki sürü ne?
Beni yârdan ayıran sürüm sürüm sürüne

The *ayak* may not require a pun, but, as seen in the example below, it should be repeated exactly in the rhyme:

Adam aman "-çe midir"
*Nefesin gül kokuyor, içerin bağ*çe midir
*Beni baştan çıkaran, yârimin per*çemidir

Recited with a unique rhythm and style, *mani*s were also a means through which poets competed against one another in the *semai* coffeehouses.[12] Vasıf Hiç notes that some of the *mani* readers simply repeated known *mani*s in parrot fashion, so that when they ran through their repertoire, they were both defeated and forlorn. Master *mani* poets extemporized *mani*s of quick wit and thus never ran short of material. Ahmet Rasim, Osman Cemal Kaygılı and Vasıf Hiç have recorded the names of numerous *mani* masters. Renowned for his works on old İstanbul Sermet Muhtar Alus opens his novel *Onikiler* with a *mani* poet known by the pseudonym Etyemezli, who recites a *mani* in "yara bir" *ayak* at a *semai* coffeehouse in Çukurçeşme.[13]

During a visit to Eyüpsultan in the Ramadan of 1922, Yahya Kemal stops by at a *semai* coffeehouse at the Defterdar pier, run by chief firefighter Sami known by the moniker 'Bilâder' and listens to a songster that goes by the pseudonym Ayrancı.[14] The day brings good news from Anatolia. The large square extending from the street to the sea is filled with music and the red flags hang from trees, heralding the imminent victory in Anatolia. Yahya Kemal and his friends sit at a table under the trees in front of the coffeehouse. Possessing all the subtleties of İstanbul's spirit and running around with the agility of firefighters, the coffeehouse servers order tea, coffee, or *narghile* from the stove with melodious tunes. With much pleasure, Yahya Kemal watches the swanky young men who

11 Word or phrase repeated at the end of every couplet of a poem (T.N.)

12 For further information on *mani* and various *mani* examples, see Ahmet Rasim, *Muharrir Bu Ya* (ed. Hikmet Dizdaroğlu), MEB Yayınları Devlet Kitapları, Ankara 1969, pp. 135-143.

13 Sermet Muhtar Alus, *Onikiler* (eds. Eser Tutel-Faruk Ilıkan), İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul 1999, p. 13.

14 Yahya Kemal, "Saatler ve Manzaralar", *Tevhîd-i Efkâr*, no. 3359-331, 10 May 1922.

carry trays of eight or ten tea glasses on two fingers. Next, a high and touching improvisation emerges from the clarinet. Suddenly, four hundred year-old memories of Kâğıthane begin to pour into the square.

Thomas Allom- "Meddah/Storyteller"
Kız Ahmet at a Meddah Coffeehouse

As he listens to the improvisation, Yahya Kemal journeys into the past and shivers with the excitement of a child. As the *çiftenara* (*kudüm* or double drum) and *darbuka* join the clarinet and a bass voice begins to recite divan poetry, the group goes inside. Roughnecks, braggarts, rascals, firefighters, in other words, all the jovial figures of Turkish İstanbul are there. The ceiling and the walls are decorated with small flags and paper lanterns; a picture of Mustafa Kemal hangs on one side and the picture of wrestler Kara Ahmed on the other. Although the presence of Yahya Kemal and his friends is foreign to the coffeehouse, no one bats an eye. Yet, from time to time, they scrutinize these uninvited guests from the corners of their eyes and smile with the knowing look of roughnecks when they recognize the pleasure of music in their faces. After divan come the *semai*s. When the old songster known as Ayrancı begins his *semai* with a touching voice, Yahya Kemal is overcome by a flood of emotions. Having come from a wealthy family and choosing instead to become a firefighter, selling *ayran*[15] and singing *semai*s in musical coffeehouses, this graceful İstanbul man and a graduate of Law School hides an entire civilization in his voice.

It was possible to watch Karagöz plays and listen to *meddah* performances and *incesaz* in some of the coffeehouses during the month of Ramadan. For example, Meddah Aşkî would tell stories and Hayalî Kâtip Salih would set up a screen and light a wax-taper at Ârif'in Kıraathanesi. Sermet Muhtar Alus' essays contain a plethora of information about Kâtip

15 A yogurt drink, hence the moniker "Ayrancı", meaning *ayran* vendor (T.N.)

Sâlih's performances at Ârif'in Kıraathanesi.[16] In his memoire (*Hatıralar*), composer Lem'i Atlı writes that a *saz* group under the direction of Memduh and Tatyos played music day and night on Fridays and Sundays at Ârif'in Kıraathanesi. It is known that a noteworthy composer himself, Tatyos Efendi formerly played at Fevziye Kıraathanesi, but he was fired because his drinking and disorderly conduct caused him to fall out with his musician friends.[17]

Ahmet Rasim notes that violinist Tatyos Efendi, whom he watched for the first time at a *kıraathane* in Direklerarası had attained considerable fame during the time he played at Fevziye Kıraathanesi.[18] Fevziye Kıraathanesi, where he and his group played music on Fridays and Sundays for many years, was the most famous of musical coffeehouses in İstanbul during the reign of Abdülhamid. Featuring a large garden, this coffeehouse transformed into an attractive arts center during the month of Ramadan and it would be possible to listen to all the great musicians and singers of the period, including Tanburi Cemil Bey, at this location.[19] Large enough to accommodate one hundred and fifty people, the coffeehouse was also used as a convention hall during the period following the proclamation of the Second Constitution. Unfortunately, the exact opening and closing dates of this coffeehouse remains unknown.

Possibly in operation until the Armistice, Fevziye Kıraathanesi was replaced by Darüttalim Kıraathanesi located in the ground floor of Letafet Apartment during the years of World War I. The coffeehouse was duly named as it was used by the music association "*Darüttalim-i Musiki*" (Music School) Fahri Kopuz and friends established in 1916. The coffeehouse was preferred by a group of intellectuals that referred to themselves as "*Esafil-i Şark*" and made literary history with Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar's novel *Saatleri Ayarlama Enstitüsü* (The Time Regulation Institute).

Starting with Darüttalim Kıraathanesi, *Darüttalim-i Musiki* introduced a higher form of music to the public by organizing concerts at various coffeehouses in Şehzadebaşı; however, the association was resolved in 1931, only to leave its name behind to a coffeehouse. By then, the gramophone had become widespread, radios were established, and music performed live at coffeehouses had become obsolete.

16 Sermet Muhtar Alus, *İstanbul Kazan Ben Kepçe* (ed. N. Sakaoğlu), İletişim Yayınları, İstanbul 1995, p. 103 et. al.

17 Lem'i Atlı, "Hâtıralar", *Canlı Tarihler IV*, İstanbul 1947, p. 118.

18 Ahmet Rasim, *Cidd ü Mizah*, İkbal Kütüphanesi, İstanbul 1326, p. 146.

19 Reşad Mimaroğlu, "Fevziye Kıraathanesi", İstanbul Ansiklopedisi (Koçu), v. X, p. 5727.

XIX
LITERARY COFFEEHOUSES

The coffeehouses of Sultanahmet, Divanyolu, Nuruosmaniye Beyazıt and Şehzadebaşı were quite lively during the final period of the Ottoman Empire and the early years of the Turkish Republic. Due to the presence of Babıâli, the university (Darülfünun) and the press in these neighborhoods, they had become venues in which intellectuals of the period came together to discuss art, literature, and politics. University students who flocked to such coffeehouses at every opportunity learned much from the veteran frequenters, to the extent that they named one of the terraced coffeehouses in Sultanahmet "Akademi" (The Academy). Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, for example, made the acquaintance of numerous literary figures and young artists –such as Zeki Faik İzer and Elif Naci– at this coffeehouse. In fact, on a Ramadan night, he had witnessed Rıza Tevfik perform imitations and do a *zeybek* dance in front of a crowd mostly comprised of his own students.[1] According to Peyami Safa, who interpreted the name "Akademi" as "respectful mockery," the reference very well expressed the function that Beyazıt, Divanyolu and Nuruosmaniye coffeehouses assumed:

Indeed, during that period the coffeehouse assumed, to the best of its ability, all the duties of an academy, a professional guild, a club, a hall, and a council of ideas and art, around the small wooden tables. Only then

1 Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, *Beş Şehir*, p. 210.

did I realize that we are a nation of coffee drinkers. Be it in the village, in the neighborhood, in front of the school or the masjid, coffee cooks the national and religious sense in its pot, brews the collective conscience in its ewer, and connects the public and the intellectuals at its counter. Simple as it is primordial, yet profound and alive as it is customary, it is the single and most complete center of community.[2]

Recognized as one of the cofounders of modern poetry in Turkish literature, Yahya Kemal had settled in İkbal Kıraathanesi in Nuruosmaniye with his students at Darülfünun during the years of the Armistice. The coffeehouse was used as the headquarters of the *Dergâh* magazine published under his guidance. During the ten years he spent in Paris in his younger days, he had frequented coffeehouses such as Soufflet and Vachette and had carried to İstanbul the pleasure of the final days of literary causerie he had enjoyed in these coffeehouses.

Abdülhak Şinasi writes that Yahya Kemal initially visited the cafés in Quartier Latin and that he mostly preferred Closerie des Lilas after 1908.[3] Frequented by numerous poets, writers, and intellectuals from Nerval to Verlaine, from Mallarmé to Valéry, and from Rodin to Lenin, this café had granted Yahya Kemal the pleasure of coffee and causerie.[4] According to A. Adnan Adıvar, as some of the cafés in Paris acted as the venues in which poets, writers, and artists once convened, they were known by the name *cénacle*, the room where the Last Supper took place. However, after World War I, this tradition almost completely vanished; the habit of stocking newspapers at cafés was only maintained in one or two large cafés foreigners frequented in Montparnasse, which kept at hand a couple of long-haired poets and artists to draw in foreigners who learned about the French lifestyle from novels.[5]

Upon his return from Paris (1912), Yahya Kemal discovered coffeehouses across various neighborhoods of İstanbul, where he could spend time and write poetry. In this regard, İkbal Kıraathanesi holds

2 Peyami Safa, "Gençlik ve Kahve", *Yeni Mecmua*, v. V, no. 87, 27 Birincikânun 1940.

3 Abdülhak Şinasi Hisar, *Ahmet Haşim-Yahya Kemal'e Veda*, Varlık Yayınları, İstanbul 1969, pp. 159-166.

4 Nameplates are affixed to the tables where the famous individuals once sat at the abovementioned coffeehouse. The first attempt to put Yahya Kemal's name on his table was made by Taha Toros in the early 1960s. His wish was fulfilled almost twenty years later, on 28 February 1980. Through the efforts of Melih Cevdet Anday, who was serving as the Cultural Advisor in Paris at the time, a ceremony was organized under the auspices of Ambassador Hamit Batu and the nameplate bearing Yahya Kemal's name was affixed to a table at Closerie des Lilas. On the occasion of this ceremony, a small book entitled, *Yahya Kemal 1884-1958* was published in French. See, Sermet Semi Uysal, *Şiire Adanmış Bir Yaşam: Yahya Kemal Beyatlı*, İstanbul 1998, pp. 118-119

5 A. Adnan Adıvar, *ibid.*, pp. 198-199.

Beyazit I (Y. Çaglar)

a special place in Kemal's life. Described at length in Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar's *Beş Şehir,* this coffeehouse[6] served as a refuge for university students during the years of Armistice.

Located at the end of Nuruosmaniye Caddesi, on the left corner, İkbal accommodated several generations of intellectuals until the 1960s. It was first discovered by Hasan Âli [Yücel] from the philosophy department of Teacher's College and his friend; once it became a popular meeting point among Darülfünun students, it began to rival the coffeehouses of Sultanahmet and Divanyolu. As the Darülfünun students listened to the songs a uniformed White Russian officer played on his mandolin, they would lunch on *simit* and tea for five *kuruş*, share the pains of the occupation in their camaraderie, secretly read the newspapers issued in Anatolia despite the permanent presence of British soldiers, and receive the latest –and censored– news about the National Struggle for Independence from their journalist friends, who would stop by the coffeehouse late at night. The majority of Darülfünun professors and the generation of literary figures who would release their works during the early years of the Republic were all denizens of İkbal.

The marble table where Yahya Kemal and his admirers sat was located on the left side of the entrance. When the discussions got heated, the circle would expand and take over one side of the coffeehouse. Amidst the sounds of billiard cues, backgammon checkers, and screaming waiters, the crowd would discuss French poets like Baudelaire and Verlaine, divan poets such as Fuzuli, Nedim and Şeyh Galib, the conquest of İstanbul, the French Revolution, Bergson's philosophy, daily politics, the incidents in Anatolia, and produce brilliant projects, most of which would be forgotten on the same day.

6 Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, *Beş Şehir*, pp. 210-211.

Acclaimed modern Turkish poet Ahmet Haşim occasionally visited İkbal. However, even his closest friends were not aware that Haşim preferred neighborhood cafés to literary coffeehouses. Enjoying his *narghile* at Acem'in Kahvesi on Kadıköy İskele Caddesi, Haşim would gossip –sometimes using foul language– about the people he disliked. In the eyes of his coffeehouse friends who did not know what a great writer and poet he was, Haşim was nothing more than a foul-mouthed, facetious, loud lampooner with a hearty laugh—an unconventional local who entertained them with his strange, funny, and racy remarks.[7] Haşim once explained to his close friend Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu his need to mingle with ordinary people at ordinary coffeehouses:

I always spend my spare time at tea- or coffeehouse corners, chatting with strangers and drinking tea, coffee, and smoking *narghile*. How comforting it is to live like the simple folk. Yes, a man of the people may be ignorant and philistine, but this saves him from complicating his life. The creature we call an intellectual is a wretched soul suffering from endless worries; his conceit and his complacency make him nothing more than a grotesque puppet.[8]

Yakup Kadri also recounts that after every love affair, Haşim sought refuge at Acem'in Kahvesi on Kadıköy's İskele Caddesi, spent his time drinking tea and playing backgammon, and occasionally listened to neighborhood tattle, sometimes joining in with the most salacious gossip to console himself.[9]

Once *Dergâh* magazine was closed and its staff was scattered to the four winds, İkbal was left to journalists for a long time. In the 1950s, the coffeehouse became a popular haunt for novelist Orhan Kemal and his friends. Known to write his novels in coffeehouses, Orhan Kemal's coffee journey, which began at a coffeehouse in Adana, continued in the coffeehouses of Kasımpaşa, Fener and Eyüp after he arrived in İstanbul. Next came Meserret... Meserret Kıraathanesi held a significant place in Turkish political history, as Committee of Union and Progress supporter Yakup Cemil had planned a coup d'état in this coffeehouse. Meserret Kıraathanesi also marked the beginning of Orhan Kemal's "endeavors to earn a living in Babıâli."[10] Striving to write his novels amidst the rattle of backgammon pieces, rustling papers, and the smell of cinder, a young

7 Abdülhak Şinasi Hisar, *Ahmet Haşim-Yahya Kemal'e Veda*, pp. 67-72.

8 Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, *Gençlik ve Edebiyat Hâtıraları*, p. 117.

9 Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, *ibid.*, p. 130. Yakup Kadri ascribes Haşim's "consort with people who represent despair, misfortune, material and spiritual impoverishment and disclosure of his private life to such types" to his hatred of intelligent and powerful figures.

10 Nurer Uğurlu, *Orhan Kemal'in İkbal Kahvesi*, Cem Yayınevi, İstanbul 1972, p. 9.

Kemal once noted that countless budding writers such as Sait Faik, Yaşar Kemal, Haldun Taner, and Melih Cevdet, who would eventually become leading names of Turkish literature, frequented this coffeehouse. Once Meserret Kıraathanesi was shut down and converted into a baklava-pastry shop, the young writers tried out various coffeehouses in the neighborhood and finally settled down at İkbal Kıraathanesi in Nuruosmaniye. İkbal was popular among writers, printers, poets, novelists, and painters who earned their bread at Babıâli. Orhan Kemal recalls that his father once frequented this historically appealing coffeehouse that he and his friends fondly referred to as "Kahvetü'l-İkbal." "They say," adds Kemal, "that this coffeehouse is quite old and that the likes of Namık Kemal once passed through its doors; we built such dreams on these questionable pieces of information. Some even remembered the days of Ahmet Rasim and Mahmut Yesari."[11]

During the years Orhan Kemal and his friends frequented İkbal Kıraathanesi, Küllük Kahvesi was the most popular summer joint among the Turkish and foreign professors of İstanbul University, as well as the famous poets and writers of the period. Renowned for its delectable dishes, the presence of the legendary Emin Efendi Lokantası (Restaurant) in the same location had granted this coffeehouse additional prestige. Küllük was located on the side of Beyazıt Mosque facing Ordu Caddesi, in an area shadowed by chestnut, locust, and plane trees; although its patrons enjoyed playing backgammon and domino, they mostly preferred to discuss philosophy, art, and literature. In his long poem published as *Küllükname* (1936) in small book format, poet Sıtkı Akozan introduces the elite denizens of this coffeehouse in the 1930s with their most distinguishing characteristics.[12] Also popular among the group of figures known in the history of Turkish literature as the "1940 Generation," Küllük is often mentioned in literary memoires and novels written after the 1940s.

Apart from great names, young writers and poets representing new trends also frequented Küllük. While the coffeehouse served as a second university for students interested in literature, it was also a dangerous trap for others. After having graduated magna cum laude from Konya High School and directly admitted to Medical School, when Tarık Buğra came to İstanbul, he happened upon his Turkish teacher from Akşehir –and *Esafil-i Şark* member– Rıfkı Melul Meriç, who immediately took him to Küllük. Here, the young literature enthusiast met some of the most

11 Nurer Uğurlu, *ibid.*, pp. 9-15.

12 For further information on the names mentioned in Sıtkı Akozan's *Küllükname* ve *Külllükname*, see Ali Birinci, "Kesriyeli M. Sıtkı ve Küllükname'si", *Müteferrika*, no. 19, Summer 2001, pp. 35-49.

famous poets and writers of the period and soon fell under the spell of Küllük as one of its most devoted regulars. Skipping classes and feeling no need to take the final examinations, he failed his first year and was thrown out of the Medical School Dormitory. Once homeless, Buğra pulled the chairs together, used the backgammon board as a cushion, and made Küllük his home for a month and a half. In his short story entitled, "Küllük," Tarık Buğra offers a detailed account of this coffeehouse, which holds a crucial place in his life. Nonetheless, Buğra never regretted the years he spends at Küllük. In fact, like many other, he considered himself a Küllük graduate. In writing, "Küllük is an epoch all by itself. Those who are familiar with it regard Küllük as a complement to Darülfünun –and the university- and even consider it a university on it own,"[13] Buğra quite possibly hints at Sait Faik's essay on *kıraathanes*. In the essay in question, Sait Faik notes the following:

If a student has never set foot in a *kıraathane*, I consider his university education incomplete. Someone who sees the scenes and hears the sounds these entirely autonomous universities with no deans, professors, budget, or faculty amidst the rattle of backgammon pieces can keep their fingers on the pulse of a nation; whether that pulse is beating fast or slow, or if there is any intermittence, he can make his observations without needing a degree in medicine.[14]

As Küllük was an outdoor coffeehouse, it would be as busy as a beehive between spring and early winter. In his short story "Küllük," Tarık Buğra likens the regulars of this coffeehouse to swallows migrating to coffeehouses of Aksaray and Şehzadebaşı in wintertime and describes the quiet and gloomy air that prevails in their absence.[15]

The "swallows" that preferred the coffeehouses –particularly Darüttalim– in Şehzadebaşı, were mostly members of *Esafil-i Şark*. The most distinctive feature of this group that we briefly mentioned in the previous section was the fact that it encompassed a number of intellectuals who suffered through the pains of Balkan Wars, World War I, and the Armistice period and eventually came to relax and look at life from a humorous perspective. In the presence of this group comprised of university professors, poets, writers, doctors, lawyers, educators, and even unemployed intellectuals, no serious subject could escape the fate of being ridiculed eventually.

13 Tarık Buğra, "Küllük", *Politika Dışı*, Ötüken Neşriyat, İstanbul 1992, p. 204.

14 Sait Faik Abasıyanık, "Kıraathaneler", *Yedigün*, no. 22, 14 August 1948, p. 20.

15 Tarık Buğra, *Yarın Diye Birşey Yoktur*, İstanbul 1952, pp. 6-9.

XX
FROM COFFEE TO TEA

In his novel *Çamlıca'daki Enişte*miz (Our Uncle in Çamlıca), Abdülhak Şinasi Hisar writes that the crazy gourmet uncle, who is keen on upholding old customs and habits pertaining to food, and the people in his household drink a cup of morning coffee as soon as they get out of bed, without even taking off their nightgowns. After roaming around the mansion, the residents decide to have breakfast, but pay no attention to tea; instead, they prefer to drink coffee, milk, and –if it is wintertime– sahlep and eat olives, cheese, jam, and bread, making fun of younger family members for drinking tea.[1]

The oldest record on the custom of tea drinking in İstanbul is found in Evliya Çelebi's *Book of Travels*. A serious coffee and tea opponent, this charming traveler highly recommends drinking spicy sherbet, tea, and sahlep, which he finds more beneficial than coffee.[2] 17th-century traveler Ovington also mentions tea among popular drinks in Turkey, which indicates that Turks were introduced to tea much earlier than the Europeans were. Nonetheless, it is certain that the culture of tea and samovar became widespread after the

1 Abdülhak Şinasi Hisar, *Çamlıca'daki Enişte*miz, p. 82.

2 *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi I*, p. 274.

Tanzimat era. Particularly the teahouses Iranians and Azerbaijani Shiite Turks opened in Beyazıt and Şehzadebaşı constitute important venues in Turkish literary history. The teahouse of Çaycı Hacı Reşid that Ahmed Rasim harps on in *Şehir Mektupları* was among the famous gathering places of literary figures during the reign of Abdülhamid.

The proliferation of tea and tea drinking culture in Anatolia as a breakfast ingredient (ore more precisely the preference of tea over chickpea coffee) can possibly be attributed to coffee shortages during World War I. In a pleasant dialogue from Âsım, Mehmed Âkif describes how tea was drunk with grapes due to the sugar shortage of the same period.

Thank God, tea is finally here.
Shall we find sugar, if you care for some?
- Four hundred?
- There is no way I'm buying that, long live the grapes of İzmir;
They are both cheaper and more delicious!
- And have no seeds.
- After you.
- Go ahead, no need for formalities!
- First, you chew the grapes, then you drink the tea...
Let us drink in the love of God!
- Aye aye! [3]

Based on the information he conveys in several of his essays, Yahya Kemal preferred tea in addition to alcoholic beverages. The word "kahve" (coffee) always denotes "kahvehane" (coffeehouse) in his poems. He speaks of tea only in a single poem, entitled "Ric'at," (Retreat) in which he drinks tea with a beautiful woman in a lovely corner of İstanbul.

In the poem that begins with the verse,

He was drinking Chinese tea from chinaware

3 Mehmed Akif, *ibid.*, p. 340.

Yahya Kemal first describes the mesmerizing beauty of the woman seated across from him and then expresses his burning desire to experience a new love affair in İstanbul. Just as he begins to dream of completing his life with the taste of this love amidst the unparalleled beauties of İstanbul, he feels that his heart cannot endure such an affair and he "retreats."[4]

As seen in its reflections in literature, tea became increasingly more widespread and took over the throne of coffee, gradually creating its own culture and aficionados over time. Considered as one of the cofounders of modern Turkish poetry, Ahmet Haşim was a tea aficionado who made tea drinking a refined pleasure. Thus, he was the first to immediately notice Japanese scholar Okakura Kakuzo's *Book of Tea*. Haşim first briefly introduced the said book in an essay and later translated the chapters entitled "Flowers" and "Tea Room" and published them in *Akşam* newspaper in 1926.[5] Evidently, Haşim had identified a similarity between Japanese tea culture and rituals and his own enjoyment of tea. Haşim also smoked cigarettes and *narghile,* and drank coffee, but he was only addicted to tea. His friends fondly recall the evening hours during which he brewed tea with much pleasure and meticulousness and offered it in Chinese cups (*piyale*) in front of his window. As Ruşen Eşref conducted his famous interview with Haşim, a Russian samovar was boiling on the green table and the teapot was emanating the delicious aroma of tea from its delicate spout. Haşim explained why he wrote poetry whilst he sipped his blood-red tea from the Chinese porcelain cups with blue decorations: "I write poetry for the same exact reason I drink tea from this China cup. It is simply a question of savor!"[6] Perhaps, the rose-colored cup (*piyale)* he described as "full of fire, do not hold it or you will burn" in his poem, entitled "Piyale" was a tea cup.

Teatime was one of the pleasures that lent meaning to Haşim's impoverished life. One day, he reprimanded a friend who failed to brew the tea properly and on another day, he made another friend walk for hours on the streets of İstanbul and Beyoğlu, just to be able to find some good tea. After noting that Haşim's passion for tea began to develop during the time he frequented the Persian teahouses

4 Yahya Kemal, *Kendi Gök Kubbemiz*, Yahya Kemal Enstitüsü Yayınları, İstanbul 1961.

5 Ahmet Haşim, *Bütün Eserleri III, Gurabahane-i Laklakan-Diğer Yazıları* (eds. İnci Enginün-Zeynep Kerman), Dergâh Yayınları, İstanbul 2004, pp. 324-332.

6 Ruşen Eşref Ünaydın, *Bütün Eserleri I, Röportajlar I* (eds. Necat Birinci-Nuri Sağlam), Türk Dil Kurumu Yayınları, Ankara 2002, pp. 185, 190.

in Direklerarası, Yakup Kadri describes how offering tea became a ritual for Ahmet Haşim:

Looking at the meticulous way with which he prepared, brewed and poured the tea into the cups he rinsed with boiling water, it was impossible not to recall teahouse owner Şahin Efendi. In order to complete this recollection, one had to imagine Ahmet Haşim alone, in front of a brightly shining samovar. Unfortunately, poor Haşim lacked a samovar, like many other things he was deprived of, and he longed for one until the day he died.[7]

Much like his friend Haşim, Refik Halid Karay was also a scrupulous tea aficionado. In an essay, he expresses his preference of dark and crimson colored tea brewed in a samovar over colorless and unseasoned European tea, "on the condition that one has to brew the tea himself, listen to the crackling sound of boiling water, and swallow until it reaches that proper consistency…" Refik Halid, who could imagine a more peaceful place than a warm room with a boiling samovar, once admitted that when he was immersed in the steam of the samovar and began to sip his delicious tea, he became an eloquent, joyful, companionable, gracious, and optimistic man, who utterly enjoyed life particularly if the weather was rainy, foggy, or stormy. So, how should one brew and drink a fine cup of tea, according to Refik Halid?

Tea is of no value unless it is brewed with much care and sipped in a slow, comfortable manner. On the condition that one drinks it in loose-fitting clothes, lounging on comfortable cushions in the most informal

7 Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, *Gençlik ve Edebiyat Hâtıraları*, Bilgi Yayınevi, Ankara 1969, p. 105.

manner, tea is the most delicious beverage in the world. However, its water must be pure, its color fiery, its cup crystalline, its sugar low, and its aroma light. Most unfortunately, few among millions of tea drinkers pay attention to these fundamentals. Those who think it simple to brew tea are mistaken and thus fail to drink good tea. Boiled in a common porcelain pot with lukewarm water -in other words the tea we generally drink- is so tasteless and unpleasant; one should pity those who swallow this for tea and resent the ones who brew it as such.[8]

As much as Refik Halid lauded tea, he never betrayed coffee. He would get up every morning at 6 o'clock, eat a piece of Turkish delight, and make himself a cup of Turkish coffee. If he was not hung over and had decided on his subject of the day, he would sit at his desk to begin working, make himself another cup of Turkish coffee at 11 o'clock, and continue working until noon.[9] It is quite a loss for Turkish literature and Turkish coffee culture that Karay, who combined the traditions of the old and the young in his daily habits, never penned a single essay on coffee, as he did on tea. The Yıldız Porcelain Factory coffee cup he preserved in a corner of his living room can be interpreted as the symbolic expression of the predicament that from now on, Turkish coffee culture will be confined to private collections and museums.[10]

8 Refik Halid Karay, *Ay Peşinde*, Semih Lütfi Kitabevi, İstanbul 1939, pp. 43-46.

9 Necmi Onur, *ibid.*, p. 6.

10 Gavsi Ozansoy describes the coffee cup he saw in Refik Halid Karay's living room during an interview as follows: "Apparently, this cup was of a series specially manufactured during the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid to be offered as a gift to dignitaries of the state. One could read the following dedication inscribed in gold by a master calligrapher: 'To the eminent wife of the Grand Financial Treasury Chief Treasurer Halid Bey.' See, Gavsi Ozansoy, "Refik Halid'in Kaşık Koleksiyonu", *Amatör*, no. 9, September 1945, pp. 10-11.

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