1.
Writing the History of Ottoman Music

Preliminary Notes on the Possibility (or Impossibility) of Writing Ottoman Musical History

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Ottoman-Turkish music, as is known, reached us through an oral tradition. Just like the history of anything else, however, a history of music becomes possible only by documented material. The endeavour of building up a history which exists by means of written sources for a music that is based on oral tradition is contradictory. Whether we will be able to speak about a history of Ottoman-Turkish music depends on a solution to this contradiction, which of course is only possible if the contradiction is solvable as such. But even if a solution to this contradiction remains impossible it should be dealt with it in order to justify the writing of Ottoman-Turkish music history; firstly because, in my opinion, there is a necessity to locate Ottoman-Turkish music within that of world music culture.

Seen from a musicological perspective, the musical traditions of the world can be categorized into four different genres. The first is Western European classical music. Since European classical music depends on a written culture, its history is accepted to have been written. In this sense it is unique among all the musics of the world. The second genre is tribal music, produced and performed by preliterate cultures. Since the past and evolutionary timeline of these musical forms cannot be documented, nothing (or very little) is known about their history. Music traditions within this second category might be called music "without history". The third category, which might be seen as similar to the second category, is that of folk music, in other words the music of rural and urban people. Folk music relies on local oral traditions; there is no need to document its history nor is there any curiosity to do so. A research area related to this category involves the collecting of as many new songs as possible. One of the objectives of these collections is to find old and forgotten songs so that attempts to recover their history can be made possible. Finally, there is "high culture" music which is in between Western European music and the traditional musics of preliterate people, and whose history has not been written yet: music at courts, music of religious/spiritual, upper class or well-educated circles. This field includes Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Indian, Iranian, Arab, Turkish (Ottoman) music and the like.

It is possible to categorize all these genres into two types: those that depend on oral transmission and those that depend on writing. In fact, the only musical genre that has a written tradition is Western European music, whereas the rest depend on oral tradition. However, it would be a crude and unrefined attitude to classify all musics of the world in one single category that excludes Western Euro-

pean music. We need other categories to distinguish some musical genres from others, in other words, cultivated musical genres that reflect the taste distinctions of a high society but still dependant on oral tradition. The *makam* music of the Eastern Mediterranean basin, i.e. the music of the Middle East, is an outstanding subcategory of this latter category. There is a theory of this music and books are written to explain this theory. In the regions where it is performed and listened to it has satisfied, so to speak, the need for "art". Of course we cannot talk about a written history of these musical traditions similar to the written history of Western European music, although they do not completely lack sources or records which might encourage thinking about it. However, it is very difficult to document this history and for some traditions it might even be impossible.

For Ottoman music, as an outstanding example of those cultivated musics, we can categorize the factors that preclude analysing its history into two groups: objective factors, which arise from the music's foundations or nature; and subjective factors, derived from our historical-conjunctural fallacies and also from our lack of knowledge.

We know that the renowned music repertoire performed and listened to in Turkey today reached us through 19th century styles and tastes. The oldest source for these compositions goes back to the mid-19th century (the oldest oral source is Dede Efendi, who died in 1847). The emergence of this music repertoire, however, can be traced back to the end of the 16th century. In this repertoire, old compositions mixed with new styles and renewed tastes, and dissolved in the same melting pot. This transformation can also be seen in musical notations. For instance, a melody that Cantemir put into notation in the late 17th century can differ from Rauf Yekta's 20th century notation to an extent that it seems to be a completely different piece. While the taste of every new period overlays the previous one, the development within the flow of history enriched music, evolving from simple to increasingly complex musical structures. This process made it increasingly difficult to observe the evolution of the music. Therefore, it is impossible to write a convincing history of music just by looking at this repertoire. If we examine the history of music only in this context, there is nothing we could say. This is, in fact, an objective factor.

However, the material concerning the history of Ottoman music extends beyond this context. Although music and culture depend upon an oral tradition, Ottoman music has an advantage over other *makam* musical genres in the region. This musical genre has left a number of written sources such as musical theory books (*edvâr*), theoretical treatises (*risale*), collections of lyrics (*mecmû'â*) and official records of the musical activities in the imperial court. Furthermore, dissimilar to other *makam* music traditions in the region, it is not an anonymous music. There are composers whose names have been recorded in history. Many composers can be identified, and we are able to collect biographical information about a remarkable number of them. Additionally, there are miniature paintings that de-

pict the musical instruments used. There are also useful references to musical issues in texts that are not directly concerned with music, such as collections of poets' biographies (*tezkire*). Other sources can be found in archives of non-Muslim communities that are a part of the Ottoman music tradition. Among other things, there are texts written and pictures painted by Europeans who visited Turkey over four centuries. Furthermore, there are collections of notations, even though they were not used in music education, in performance and the transmission of repertoire. In addition, all of these materials that are stored in libraries and archives have not been completely discovered and examined. There are texts written on music in European and American libraries and in countries that once were part of the Ottoman territory, especially in the Balkan states. For these reasons, Ottoman tradition overshadows Iranian and Arab traditions. The written sources on Ottoman music that we are currently aware of have also increased the academic interest in the topic.

However, in Turkey a fictional music history was also constructed, based on the music repertoire transmitted by oral tradition instead of via sources and documents. A music that existed for over five centuries was reduced to the repertoire notated in the early 20. century. Publications about musical history, radio programs, and concerts dealt with this repertoire, and a historical line was drawn up that extended from 'Abd al-Qâdir Marâghî to Dede Efendi, from Dede Efendi to Hacı Arif Bey and down to Suphi Ziya Özbekkan. This genealogy was simply inferred from the surviving repertoire. Some authors went even further and divided Ottoman music into historical periods in terms of style. The odd thing is that this kind of history could have been constructed although the present repertoire that exists after five centuries contains only five percent of the estimated corpus. This does not mean that the effort to construct a history does not at all deserve respect. The need to incorporate this eminent musical tradition into the artistic heritage of Turkey also contributed to the effort to the construction of a music history. However, I will not deal with this aspect.

In fact, there was a grand project: writing a holistic history of this music. A holistic history means that there is a particular direction perceived in terms of its historical development, and this history can be separated into periods following each other in an explicable way, in order to shape a coherent history. These objectives were challenging. The first step on this road was to collect what remained of a five hundred year old repertoire of Ottoman music. Within a short time great success was achieved in collecting and transcribing the repertoire. However, the collection of the repertoire and writing its music history were conducted simultaneously. The project of collecting was thus in practice largely reliant on the oral tradition, while the existence of a history of this music was already presumed to exist. As a result *nolens volens* – a musical historiography lacking a historical dimension – was formed and this historical approach became standardized and officially sanctioned. It is here that subjective factors become visible. If our focal point is the

writing of history, then we have to start by criticizing this existing fictional history which has, in the meantime, been standardized and would possibly become even more standardized over the course of time as long as such work is not discouraged. The least that we can do is to expose the blanks, contradictions, incoherencies and mistakes of this fictional music history.

Subjective factors that degrade the critical understanding of the history of Ottoman music in Turkey already played a part in the approach to the history of *makam* music. *Makam*, which made its presence felt all along the Mediterranean basin, is one of the oldest musical traditions in the world. The origins of this style, however, are unknown. We are able to understand the past of *makam* music better by investigating Islamic sources that emerged in and after the tenth century. The belief that these sources have led us to is that *makam* music originally was an international genre, popular in the élite musical centres of the Middle East. However, this common style influenced local traditions over time, and as it became widespread it turned into styles we might call local or "national". Hence, besides having an international influence, the term *makam* also has local aspects. *Makam* music displays diversity (in terms of both theory and practice) and we can talk about Iranian, Arab and Turkish musical styles. These styles can be categorized even more specifically: for example, there are prominent differences within Arab music, such as the Egyptian style and the Northwest African style (for example Algerian). Differences in historical sources should be added to the list of distinctions in theory, practice and taste.

The main question concerning the history of *makam* music is how a music showing a common stylistic structure until the fifteenth century could have developed new concepts and delights later within regional and local traditions. Clues for the answer can be searched for in music books written between the 10. and 15. centuries. However, what kind of music do these books define? Do these books – that present the theory of an international musical genre – define the live, concrete and performed musical phenomena of the period or rather a flawless, ideal and non-performative musical world and its tonal system and dominant elements? In other words, we are not able to see the bond between theory and practice.

Since the idea that the theoretical information aroused, cannot be confirmed by notated examples of living and actually performed music, we do not know the music that was performed at the time. As we do not have this information, we also cannot explain what kind of changes the old music with international qualities went through in its local and international contexts, and neither can we tell what the specific conditions of these changes were. At least it is clear that a change or a transformation took place.

This transformation needs to be explained in order to determine the place, share and contribution, not only of Ottoman-Turkish music, but of all *makam*-centred musics of the whole East Mediterranean region. This is the first and the darkest spot in writing a history of *makam* music.

However, in Turkey this crucial breaking point has not become clear yet. Under the pressure of the objective and historical conjuncture, almost every country in the region wrote its own "national" musical history. At this point, I will therefore introduce a new term, or rather adapt a term that already exists, that of *official history*. As there is a form of historical writing called "official history" in the sphere of politics, it is also possible to talk about an official perspective on the history of Ottoman-Turkish music, or even several official perspectives.

It is advantageous to look at how official history in Turkey has been formed so far. In the period from the late 19th century until the early 20th century Ottoman music needed to define its existence *vis-à-vis* Western music. When traditions and cultures are isolated, in other words, not disturbed by the outside world, they live in their own shell. But when the day comes and this inner world realizes with its own eyes open that there are other worlds outside, this also is an opportunity to take a glance inside at the point where the shell breaks. Hence, time comes to a point when it becomes necessary to make advances towards the entire buildup of the past. At this moment, it also becomes possible for music to be seen as an object of study. The people who followed this path, which was shaped by the conditions of their period, also showed an interest in musical history. In Turkey, this interest generated the aspiration to write a history of the musical genre in question, or at least to write its outlines. Thus, the work of writing a musical history was based on the objective existence of a repertoire based on oral tradition, and thus on its transcription into notation.

In terms of evaluating Turkey's artistic legacy it was certainly an important step to take up the writing of an Ottoman-Turkish musical history. However, a historical perspective was affected under conjunctural conditions by the nationalist movements of the time. Thus, the "Ottoman tradition" was perceived as a "national music" (*millî musıki*). At this junction two processes where interlinked, the intention to attach Ottoman tradition to a national culture, and the transition from Ottoman identity to Turkish identity, the latter as required by the Republican ideology. A new process began, which although independent of the will of individuals, nevertheless affected people individually as they were not able to remain unaffected by this conjuncture.

It is advantageous to look at this process more closely. At the beginning of this process one can find the publications of the 19th century European Orientalist circles. In the circles of these Orientalists the music of the Turks was not considered to be original, but rather a derivation of Persian-Arabian music. According to some of the Orientalists, the music of the Turks had its origins in Byzantium and others also thought that Byzantine music was related to ancient Greek music. Of course, this point of view was not limited only to music. Turkish poetry (*divan* poetry), for example, was also considered a derivation of Persian poetry. In fact, the entire social and cultural heritage of the Anatolian Seljuk and Ottoman periods was a mixture of one or all Greek, Byzantine, Persian and Arab civilizations;

nothing that was Turkish was original. This point of view, which was prominent among Orientalists in the 19th century also affected a group of Turkish intellectuals. Some of those Turkish intellectuals imported the Orientalist perspective and repeated it, others who did not voice this opinion still explicitly retained this idea and inferred rational conclusions from it.

During the Republican period the opinion that the Ottoman musical legacy did not have a "national" identity, and that the genuine Turkish music was Anatolian folk music, led to an ethno-nationalist cultural policy that leaned on folklore, and eventually formed the Republic's official musical viewpoint. In this context, the followers of Ottoman music took it as their duty to purge it of Greek, Byzantine, Arabian and Persian influence. This was, of course, an ideological reaction. A different ideological argument was formed contradicting this ideology which proclaimed the music of the whole Middle East, East Mediterranean and Balkans as Turkish music. According to this idea Ottoman music was Turkish music in an absolute sense; Turkish people brought this music from Central Asia to Anatolia. Theorists (including al-Fârâbî, Safî al-Dîn, 'Abd al-Qâdir Marâghî et al, who lived long before the rise of the Ottoman Empire were made out to be of Turkish origin. Thereby, the Orientalist/ethnic nationalist viewpoint was exactly reversed. This answer to the official viewpoint, which had taken its initial impetus from Orientalism, was adopted by the Ottoman-Turkish music community; this community thus formed its own "official" view. In short, two official viewpoints that contradicted each other emerged. This situation had its effects on music history: the assertion that the whole of *makam* music was of Turkish origin in a sense made it unnecessary to examine its history and origins. (This belief, too, must also have drawn on the fact that Turkish researchers were not interested in the musical world of neighbouring countries.)

The tension caused by the opinions derived from Orientalist sources did not end there. It also created an opposition between folk music and *fasıl* music. According to the early Republican-era followers of folk music and the ideologues of that time, the genuine music of Turkey was the music played with the *bağlama*s (long-necked lutes of folk music) and *kaval*s (shepherds' flutes) of Anatolia. This music was seen as the music which carried the true national character. This idea, which was suggested in the early 20th century and staked its theoretical grounding after the foundation of the Turkish Republic, became the official view of the folk music community. Reacting to this argument, the followers of *fasıl* music, starting with Rauf Yekta, saw Anatolian folk music as a "primitive", inferior version of *incesaz* music. Rauf Yekta's approach became the official negative opinion of the *fasıl* music community regarding folk music. In fact these two musical genres had coexisted for five centuries. In addition it was also necessary to acknowledge this fact: At least some of the melodies from Anatolian folk music must have been the products of traditions older than Ottoman-Turkish *makam* music. If pre-Ottoman *makam* experienced a transformation in Anatolia, local traditions must have

played a part in this. However, during these five centuries of coexistence, it should have been considered natural that *makam* music also left some marks on folk traditions. However, the argument was not handled in a productive manner, and instead the discussion fell victim to the ideologically-based "pentatonicism thesis".

When the global political situation changed after the Second World War, the issue of history originating from Central Asia lost its primary importance, relevant arguments were forgotten and articles about it slipped into oblivion among the withered pages of magazines and newspapers. If the argument would have reached a sufficient depth, it might not have ended up this way. Seen from an ideological point of view instead of a cultural one, ideology always crushes culture and art, and a history of the arts becomes inhibited.

Countries on their way to founding a nation-state are afraid of being confronted with their own histories. These periods are guided by nationalist interests; nationalist ideology also creates a historiography that leads to new formations. This was also the case with Turkey; issues that had not caused any discomfort in the Ottoman times became troubling during the early Republican period. Musical debates that have continued for more than a century, lacking scientific objectivity and academic composure, or rather, musical disputes that resembled an ideological controversy, had their origins in the very nationalism that penetrated politics, culture and artistic life in Turkey.

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During the years when musical historiography, based on the repertoire transmitted by oral tradition, was established, Ali Ufkî's collection was not yet discovered. This manuscript was discovered in 1948, but it was only after its publication in 1976 that it finally reached music communities. As for Cantemir's theory book and music collection, it was already known in the early 20th century and published in *Şehbal* magazine (nos. 12-85, 1909-1913). However, this publication had no impact on musical historiography for another fifty years. The book was not seen as worth examining, remaining ignored and even underestimated. Moreover, in general all of the theory books and treatises shared the same fate; they were all seen as primitive. They were interpreted or rather only skimmed through, not in order to understand the past and make an inference from that, but rather to see if they were compatible with current theories. In this context, it is not without significance that the Romanian-American scholar Eugenia Popescu-Judetz's articles published in the 1960s and her comprehensive book in 1973 for the first time situated Cantemir in the history of Ottoman music theory.

The publication of Cantemir's *edvâr* in form of fascicles by Yalçın Tura in 1976, though incomplete, led to the rebirth of Cantemir's music theory. This publication and that of Ufkî's *mecmû'â* can be seen as remarkable steps for music historiography. The first twinkles of light that lead us to a historical perspective thus be-

came perceptible. Additionally, foreign experts published important studies based on these two sources. The most serious studies on the history of this music thus emerged after 1980.

Musical groups, which performed the songs notated by Ali Ufkî and Cantemir, were founded after the 1980s. After listening to the concerts of these musical groups, some people did not want to identify with this old Turkish musical style, even today there are people who are not willing to accept this identification. Some look down on these two *mecmû'âs* or do not show any interest in this repertoire. These are mostly musicians of the older generations who grew up with a repertoire based on an oral tradition. They reject this rediscovered repertoire questioning such as: "Are these simple songs the remnants which belong to those old glorious days?" However, the same people identify with a 17th century composition in a form notated in the 20th century, or with a composition attributed to 'Abd al-Qâdir Marâghi without any hesitation.

If we put aside the Ufkî and Cantemir collections and look through the narrow perspective of the repertoire based on the oral tradition, we have a body of material which is suspicious regarding its authenticity. Although in the 1930s Suphi Ezgi showed obvious evidence that the *kâr*s ascribed to Marâghî could not belong to him (for example, Marâghî did not discuss *usûl*s such as *hafif* and *semai*, and *makam*s like *bestenigâr, uşşak,* and *segâh* in his books), compositions like *bestenigâr yürük semaî*, *nihavend-i kebir kâr*, *uşşak kâr*, *segâh kâr-i şeş-âvâz* and more were accepted as his own in many encyclopaedic articles and educational institutions, and were performed during concerts without any caution concerning his ascribed authorship. There are compositions that have traditionally been ascribed to al-Fârâbî and Kâtip Çelebi, and they are performed in most professional radio concerts, in concert-halls and even abroad without any reservation regarding their authorship. One may offer an apology: These musicians are not music researchers, and they lack a historical consciousness; professional music researchers, musicologists and music historians have already provided necessary information on this issue. These claims are true in a sense, but not sufficient. The fact that this music today is no longer the same as it was five centuries ago and reached today through transformations and evolutions over time, has now become a subject that is to be given significance in official institutions and music schools, and even at performances in concert halls and radio broadcasts. We are now in the 21th century. A historical consciousness should be instilled in a wider set of audiences and, most importantly performers, and beyond a small circle of researchers and writers. I want to give an example relating to my plea: There is not one historical document proving that Sultan Bayezid II was a composer; this fact was pointed out in serious articles, but nevertheless recent television and radio programs, featuring professional Turkish musicians, in addition to three remarkable albums, ascribed one *eviç saz semaisi* and two *neva peşrev* to Bayezid II.

People who consider music based upon an oral repertoire to be "real" history are rather unduly self-confident. If a composition was recorded in a certain *makam*, they believe that if there is a composition in the repertoire, there must be a hidden reason for that. However, this sort of historiography has many shortcomings. Many of the issues written as musical historiography contradict each other. Such self-confidence in oral tradition is observed also in the official view of the Greek Orthodox Church. Although the religious repertoire performed in the Greek Orthodox Church also resembles the case with the central Ottoman music and was notated in the 19th century, the official stance of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople on this issue is that before the conquest of Constantinople, Byzantine music was under the protection of *Magna Ecclesia* (Hagia Sophia). Therefore it has retained an unspoiled purity until today. We also know that Armenian church music was notated in the 19th century. If we do not want to believe in a fictive history, it is necessary to break this self-confidence, and to put all oral traditions under question. Every oral tradition simplifies the past, imprisoning us in conventional ideas and, most importantly, they are also susceptible to distortion.

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New historicism opened up the possibility of revised historical perspectives. Former historicism tried to fix what occurred in the past and what was recorded in historical sources to an exact point in history. A historian working in a conventional method asks: "What are the events that happened in the past? What do these events tell us about history?" Thus, he attaches a meaning to the past. Instead, a historian who opines according to new historicism asks: "How have these events been interpreted? What do they tell about the political, cultural and ideological context of that time and also about its commentators?" The historian, who reasons in a conventional way, sees history in a holistic manner and presumes that history displays totality. However, life, real and concrete life, is an enormous entity and with an abundance which does not fit into this kind of conceptual totality. Our knowledge of the reality cannot be reduced to the reality itself. The new historian who knows about this epistemology does not present historical knowledge as forming a concrete history. The historian who uses the former historicism as his perspective chooses events from this enormous history for his own purposes and tries to establish coherence in these events. Since he speculates in search of attributing a meaning to a totality and wants to give an exact import to it, thereby putting aside particularities, details and singular events, which he neglects, leaving them out of history or putting them into a dark corner. Another historian who also works in a conventional manner might select events in a very different way, and he could interpret them differently. Thereby different versions of a fictive historical knowledge emerge. From this holistic perspective, the cases that may fit together and the events that are similar to each other are put forward or are highlighted, while deviations and fractures are pushed aside. The new histo-

rian, on the other hand, reflects small pieces of information, smaller and more singular cases, dwelling on details as well as deviations and fractures. He uncovers the cases that were pushed into a dark corner, exposes frauds, and introduces hidden values. If he reflects patiently on fragments of information, on things that look small, he might on these grounds discover valuable or formerly unknown issues. As he pursues this method, he can encounter more and more new issues. Thereby, he can advance towards a more convincing and a more genuine history by means of these small pieces of information and fractures. During such a process, if the subject is music, not only musical texts should be used as sources. It is also the case in texts on very different topics – even in otherwise irrelevant texts – it is possible to find relevant records that can change the perspective on music. An abundance of information can emerge out of such small pieces of information and their combinations; the emerging new history might again evoke a sense of totality. However, we should acknowledge that this, again, is fictional. Because our purpose is not to write a "real" history, but to create a platform where we can shape a non-linear history and thereby to reflect on it from different perspectives. This is the most meaningful thing to do. I assume that we can also adapt this perspective –one aspect of which I explained in a rather abstract way–to musical historiography, because in the field of musical historiography I can detect traces of such a fictional holistic perspective. This is the case even with Western (tonal) music. Its history is written linearly and relies on abstraction: It starts with Bach and Handel, later the names of Haydn, Mozart, Schubert, Beethoven and Brahms appear and then a "main road" is drawn adding Mahler, Wagner, Richard Strauss. The wayfarers along the road are accorded value based on their contribution to this primary route. In fact such a canon does exist, this music is studied in music historical monographs, taught in schools and performed at concerts. Music not on the main road has been pushed aside. There is a written history of Western music, but it is not a history without unknowns, gaps or absences. For musical historians these are new tasks. Especially in the last twenty five years, studies that aim to understand and introduce music outside the canonical history have become increasingly noticeable.

Since the beginning of the 20th century, most of the articles on music written in Turkey are based on the concept of "Turkish music history". Many of them are even titled as such. There are also quite a number of "Turkish music along the centuries" themed music records and concerts which consist of musical works, from the oldest examples to works of contemporary composers. On the other hand, there are few studies that analyse single small events, a tiny historical record, only one treatise or just a single *mecmû'â* in detail. Such specific and singular topics have only recently gained importance.

Eventually, I regard such works on "micro", not "macro" topics as significant. I will give some examples about this issue. The individual pasts of *makam*s are one of these cases. Although Abdülbâki Nâsır Dede wrote in 1797 that the *sûzidil*

makam had been arranged by Abdülhalim Ağa (approximately in the last quarter of the 18th century, in oral tradition a *saz semai* and a *peşrev* in this *makam* ascribed to Gazi Gıray Han (r. 1554-1607) have has been transmitted. The *makam sûzidil* is thus thrown back two centuries. Although *makam şedaraban* should have been considered a modern *makam* in terms of its range, tones and intervallic structure (again, Abdülbâki Dede confirms that it is a new *makam*), and the first works composed in this *makam* were a "*takım*" that consists of two *beste*s and two *semai*s by Sadullâh Ağa (d. 1801?) and Tanbûrî İzak (1745-1814), one *peşrev* and one *saz semai* in this *makam* by Gazi Gıray Han are part of the orally transmitted repertoire. Sadullâh Ağa is said to have revived the *makam bayatî-araban* by composing a *takım*. Only one *peşrev* and one *semai* are known as older examples of this *makam*: both belonging to, yet again, Gazi Gıray Han. Like *suzidil* and *şedaraban*, *bayatî-araban* was one of the *makam*s not even mentioned before. In this case, will we believe that this *makam* was a creation by Gazi Gıray? Of course we can come to this premature conclusion, announcing him as a musical "genius". According to a similar rationale, we should conclude that the *makam hisarbuselik* is the creation of Tanburî Mustafa Çavuş who is said to have lived in the first half of the 18th century (as the oldest song in this *makam* transmitted orally belongs to him). Gazi Gıray seems to be one of the dark topics in musical history.

None of these three *makam*s is mentioned in Ufkî, Cantemir, Kevserî or Nâyi Osman Dede, which means they were not used in the music of the 17th and 18th centuries, in other words for two hundred years. Were Gazi Gıray Han's songs in these *makam*s performed or known in these years in Istanbul? There is not a single positive clue regarding this. The case of *makam sûzidilârâ*, which is described everywhere as a creation of Sultan Selim III, is also awkward: one *peşrev* and one *semai* are ascribed each to Gazi Gıray, Cantemir, and Arapzade Abdurrahman (first half of the 18th century) in the orally transmitted repertoire. Instead of approaching Ottoman music history in a holistic manner, it seems more reasonable to deal with such singular situations.

The compositions that Cantemir gave in his collection as his own do not correspond to the compositions ascribed to him in the oral tradition. While he refers to *sazkâr* as an obsolete *makam*, his nowadays most performed composition of the repertoire collected from the oral tradition is a *sazkâr peşrev*. The compositions that Cantemir introduced as his own, on the other hand, were not performed until very recent times. Only a few of his *peşrev*s and *semai*s from the oral tradition, including *sazkâr peşrev*, have been performed. The oral tradition has been so indifferent to the notated material. Until recently such inconsistencies did not attract attention from anyone except a few researchers. In order to understand how Ottoman music has evolved, one should concentrate on the gaps and contradictions that can be observed in the repertoire of the oral tradition. The history of *makam*s, their development, and the transformation of their structure can be a reference point to discover an evolutionary line.

The music theory which dominates the musical life of today is based on compositions from the orally transmitted repertoire. In theory books *makam*s are generally defined as frozen in the forms that they took at the end of their journey. Even a custom of giving a notation sample for each *makam* took shape (although exemplifying a *makam* with only one notation sample is methodologically faulty). Therefore, in the definition of *makam*, its historical dimension was neglected. Moreover, the musical concept called *makam* has changed as times and tastes changed. *Makam* does not have a finalized or isolated structure, but rather an *open* one. It is always open to add new scales, new elements and new flavours. If there were not any written sources left to us from the past, it could perhaps be seen as acceptable to detach *makam*s from their historical context and meaning. A chronological examination of old treatises in a comparative fashion could yield meaningful new clues and indications about the historical evolution of *makam*s. Thereafter, it serves a major purpose to compare the definitions of *makam*s given by the oral tradition and with those in the historical sources: if we can reconcile these two different ends, we can have a happy ending; otherwise we will end up empty handed. It becomes thus inevitable to approach more of the written sources in a more serious manner. Could we ever consider a situation a part of history, although it is not backed up by a written source? It would be advisable to concentrate on every contradiction individually within the oral tradition, which would at least help eliminate some of the incoherencies. I would like to mention a recently published study. In his seven-volume work titled *Türk Musikisinde Makamlar* (Makams in Turkish Music, 2000), the result of much hard work, Fikret Kutluğ put the oral tradition ahead but on the other hand also dared to point out gaps and incoherencies in the definitions of *makam*s .

There are further absences in relation to the information we have regarding the eras in which composers lived. For example, Tanburî Mustafa Çavuş was credited as being called a "musical genius" in the first half of the 18th century, although there are no other examples of his style during that period. The songs that were credited to Mustafa Çavuş have a typical 19. century style. In fact, according to the anthology of Fuat Köprülü and the research of Sadettin Nüzhet Ergun, Mustafa Çavuş was one of the 19th century bards (see also endnote 1).

Another example is Dilhayat Hanım. Her works were referred to in the *Hekimbaşı Mecmû'âsı*, which is thought to have been written around the year 1775 (as well as in other 18th century collections). Since Dilhayat was featured in such a prestigious anthology, she must have flourished in the mid-18th century. However, it was often repeated as fact that she was a composer who belonged to the school of Selim III, even down to the period of Mahmud II. As Sultan Selim was born in 1761, he was fourteen years old in 1775. Most probably because of Abdülbâki Nâsır Dede's statements about Sultan Selim being the devisor of *makam evcârâ*, the lifetime of Dilhayat Hanım was dated to about fifty years later.

Also, the ascription of *makam evcârâ* not to Küçük Mehmed Ağa who composed two excellent *beste*s and two *semâî*s in this *makam* but to Selim III, who has only one composition in the same *makam*, is one of the assumptions of the musical history that is hard to understand. When it comes to such issues regarding in which periods composers lived and which songs they composed, we see it is not enough to just take a look into the *mecmû'â*s, they also need to be studied seriously.

Abdülali, who has four compositions ascribed to him in today's repertoire (*kâr*s in the *makam*s *evc*, *rast*, and *segâh*, and a *sabâ nakış aksak semâ'î*), has been discussed – due to a mistake by Suphi Ezgi – in articles, encyclopaedias published thereafter and even some articles in foreign languages – as a 16th century composer who flourished towards the end of the Kanunî Süleyman era (before 1566). As I was informed by unpublished remarks from Gültekin Oransay, of which I have a copy, Abdülali was a Shiite composer and a poet who died in either 1643 or 1644 in Basra, hence he flourished as late as the first half of the 17. century. Oransay was a capable researcher who discovered such historical black holes and tried to rectify mistakes by analysing the sources carefully (see also endnote 2).

Having underlined all these issues, I would like to state the following:

(i) Historiography has produced a history that cannot be claimed to be factual history. What we really need is a music-historical consciousness that is more than a music history book. Even the most stable musical genres change over time. Nothing can be rejected simply for the reason that it does not fit the music we know today. It appears that the repertoire of Ottoman-Turkish *makam* music has changed faster than expected. Here is a striking example: Only three of the 165 songs which Şeyhülislam Esad Efendi mentioned together with their lyrics in his *tezkire* (collection of biographies) *Atrabu'l-âsâr*, reached the present time (see Behar 2010: 118). However, Esad Efendi was a musician of a distinguished circle, hence the compositions he referred to must have been distinguished products in his time. Furthermore, while the celebrated *neva kâr* of Itrî is not mentioned by Esad Efendi, he quotes the lyrics of other Itrî compositions that have not actually survived down to today. Collections of lyrics (*mecmû'â*s) are of major importance because they reflect the acceleration of change and show how the repertoire changed over time.

Not only the historical aspect of *makam*s but also the historical aspect of *usûl*s, the compositional forms and the transformation of musical instruments fall within the scope of this issue. Dealing with musical history, those texts that shed light on this historical transformation will be the most valuable.

(ii) The compositions we have today can be said to resemble a tangled web in which the tastes of the old music masters and older times overlap with each other. Furthermore, even the compositions that have reached today can have ten different versions. The compositions that are based on oral tradition, in a word, lack an objective existence. Thus, the authentic repertoire should be the first thing to

consider in historiography. The manuscripts of Ufkî, Cantemir, Nâyî Osman Dede, Kevserî, Abdülbâki Nâsır Dede, and the Hamparsum manuscripts are what constitutes this repertoire. Cantemir and Osman Dede connect the 18th century with Ufkî in the 17th century; thereafter Kevserî emerges and brings the music to the mid-18th century. Abdülbâkî Dede takes us to the end of the 18th century and the Hamparsum manuscripts transmit music of the 19th century to us. The compositions in these sources encompass a period extending from the 17th to the 20th century, although naturally they have gaps.

(iii) If a composition lacks an objective existence, it cannot be subjected to analysis. The form in which it reached us today cannot be called the work of the same composer. We cannot talk about a personal style anymore. It reaches today with a creativity that can be called "collective". Of course, the structure of any composition can be analysed, but one cannot regard the composition as the personal product of its composer. Therefore, if compositions cannot be analysed, periodization also becomes a meaningless framework. However, instead of periods such as "classical", "romantic," or "neo-classical" that are fictional and a reflection of an inferiority complex in relation to Western music, in a more realistic manner at least the following periods could have been distinguished:

The period between the 14th and 16th centuries was characterised by a common style in the main centres of the Islamic world. In this period the compositions of Marâghî and those which, under the name *acemler* (Persians) and *hindliler* (Indians), had been introduced by neighbouring countries were performed at the Ottoman court, as well as epics sung by the *ozan*s (Anatolian folk bards).

The 17th century was characterised by a rejection of this common style, the formation of an own style, and the development of an own characteristic taste. The 18th century was a period when this Istanbul style was further developed, and in the 19th century it reached its culmination. Finally, in the last period the influences or traces of Western music became visible as we can see, for example, in some of the compositions of Şakir Ağa or Dede Efendi.

I have already mentioned that the separation of Ottoman-Turkish music from pre-Ottoman *makam* music has not has not been dealt with yet. This ongoing lack of clarity is symptomatic. The official approach has seen this music from its very beginnings (hence pre-Ottoman times) as "Turkish music" and labelled it accordingly. The emergence of a perception of an Ottoman musical style with its own identity has thus been taken out of consideration. In his book *History of the Growth and Decay of the Ottoman Empire* Cantemir refers to this situation by noting that the music of the Turcs had developed in the times of Sultan Murad IV. Later some European orientalists also touched on Cantemir's original note. Poor answers were given to this question in Turkey during the 20th century. Today, some foreign musicologists who study Ottoman music return to this issue equipped with an amount of information that is incomparable with that of the past and write comprehensive studies. As Owen Wright pointed out recently, "the specifi-

cally Ottoman tradition, which lies at the basis of present-day classical music in Turkey, can be traced back no further than the early 17. century" (Wright 1992: 284). We can conclude that Cantemir's remark has not been meaningless.

(iv) Basing the history of Ottoman-Turkish *makam* music on oral tradition may lead us to study the music of the élite community as if it was folk music. The history of Ottoman-Turkish *makam* music can only be written on the foundation of written material and to the extent that these sources allow us to do so. This means that orally transmitted material should always be evaluated with caution. Material based on oral tradition which is not verified by recorded sources cannot be considered to be historical fact.

(v) I am not arguing that we should completely ignore the repertoire of the oral tradition. It is not true to say there are absolutely no facts that we can infer from the oral tradition, but if they become the only reference point, mistakes become inevitable. From this point of view, there is a great advantage in placing the oral repertoire data within brackets, not in order to ignore them, but rather acting as if we have ignored them for some time.

Conclusion

Now that a historical study of Ottoman-Turkish music had already begun, it should be sustained. Why should it not be? First of all, there is an increased interest in the topic. Claiming without any consideration that it is impossible to write the history of this music, can again lead us back to the holistic historical perspective. If we compare the knowledge on musical history available in the early 20th century and at the end of the same century, we will see a substantial difference. However, historiography needs (metaphorically speaking) an "archaeological" examination similar to digging a well with a needle. Even an outline of the past, based on such a research strategy of putting the sources under the microscope, is more valuable than the fictional history that we have in Turkey today. Our first task should be to concentrate on the incoherencies of this fictional history. Examining every delusion and mistake in this so-called history and drawing attention to its contradictions, faults and gaps will pave the way for a new historiography. Some people have adopted formerly written texts without any question, spread faulty information and misdirected others after them, hence blurring history. Worse than that are those who distort the historical record deliberately, and such people should be detected and exposed. The historical perspective should be purged, not only of an attitude that tends to generalisations based on the oral repertoire, but also from ideological prejudices, legends, tales and superstitions. Thus, there is a dire need for a general cleansing. This can be put into practice only with effort being devoted to working on the "micro" level.

There are still many steps to be taken; the scarcity of material at hand and the inadequacy of the sources should not prevent us from thinking about a more convincing history of Ottoman-Turkish music. History books have never represented history itself or its factual existence. They are just the interpretation of history from individual perspectives. The important thing is to be able to think about history. Every work, even the smallest one, which leads us to contemplate the past is valuable. Generally, I believe all that can be said for historiography is also a valid statement for Ottoman-Turkish music.

Notes

(1) see Köprülü 1964: 649-650; in this anthology Köprülü provides the lyrics of a *buselik düyek şarkı* starting with the line "*Kerem kâni efendim gel gül yüze*" in *koşma* form and those of a *muhayyer aksak şarkı* starting with "*Hâlâ gönlüm bir güzelde*", both by Tanburî Mustafa. See also Ergun 1930: 56-57.

(2) I wrote the musical articles for *Türk ve Dünya Ünlüleri Ansiklopedisi* (*Encyclopedia of the Famous People of Turkey and the World*, published by Adam Yayıncılık) which started to get published in fascicles, during the year 1983. I wrote the Abdülali article, consulting Suphi Ezgi as a source. After the fascicle, which included this article, was published, Gültekin Oransay sent a letter to Prof. Oya Köymen who was the chief editor of the encyclopaedia. After having pointed out the anachronism in this article, he shared information about the biography of the composer showing some books as evidence and also interpreted this information. As I would not like this warning that is based on a serious examination to stay hidden in my hands, I transcribe the relevant part of the letter:

> [...] this manuscript which Suphi Ezgi took into consideration (Bağdatlı Vehbi in Süleymaniye 1002) consists of three parts.
>
> a) 64 folios from the beginning of the manuscript, which might have been copied from an older *mecmû'â*, encompass composers such as Ali Sîtaî, Usta Bayezîd, Cüneyd, Gazanfer, Hace 'Abd al-Qâdir (Merâghî), Rıdvan Şah and Şeyh Safa who are included in the collection) "*nevbet-i müretteb*" (in Nuruosmaniye) that dates back to the mid-15th century.
>
> b) In the next 78 folios, composers of the 16th century, among them Kastamonulu Mevlânâ Şavur (the writer of the *mecmû'â*), become prominent. According to the fact that Şaver, as Turkish literary historians call him, but who is also sometimes spelt as Şâbûr or Şâpûr in the collection, had died before Latîfî wrote his *tezkire* (biographical dictionary) in 953 AH, he must have lived in around the period of Süleyman I and Selim II. On folios 1-162 the name of Abdulali is never mentioned.
>
> c) Regarding the current folio numbers, 143-166. folios of the manuscript, the folio without an ordinal at the beginning, and the front face of the first folio, as it may be inferred, remained empty for seventy or eighty years and thereafter were filled with cramped and careless writings in the second and third quarters of the 17th century. In this part, the name Küçük İmam is mentioned once, Itrî four times, Nazîm once,

Koca Osman four times, Şerîf once, Şeştârî once, Hâce thirty five times, and apart from the latter also the name Hâce Abdulali ten times. It is not clearly known if the lyrics which are presented as being composed by Hâce, actually belong to 'Abd al-Qâdir or Abdulali. If we omit this, we confirm, briefly speaking, that in the third part of the collection that was written in the mid-17th century, there is one lyric each of which by Koca Osman and Şeştârî from the Murad IV period, one lyric of Şerif, who is known to have lived before 1650, and four lyrics of Itrî, one lyric of each by Küçük Mehmed and Küçük İmam from the Mehmet IV period. In other words, the fact that there are three lyrics from before 1650, and six lyrics from after 1650, proves that this part was written in the third quarter of the 17th century. My examinations of the collections of lyrics duplicated for my "Küğsel Yapraklar" series prove the given number of the compositions provide enough evidence.

Dr. Suphi Ezgi is a well-meaning, honest person but as a writer he does not have methodological understanding and his knowledge particularly falls short with regards to history. Hence in his theoretical compendium *Nazarî ve Amelî Türk Musıkisi*, after talking about 'Abd al-Qâdir who died in the period of Murad II, and Abdülaziz b. 'Abd al-Qâdir who wrote a book in the period of Mehmet II, Ezgi transfers the composers mentioned in the first two parts of Bağdatlı Vehbi's manuscript from the 16th century back to the 14th century, and separated Abdül Ali, without giving any reason from Itrî and Nazîm – who are mentioned together – and placed the former one hundred years earlier, at "the end of the period of Süleyman the Magnificent." However, as I have briefly explained before, when the manuscript is examined, it becomes clear that Abdül Ali was not a 18th century composer, but rather a 17th century one and even if he had led a long life (we have no information about his birth and death dates) at best he could have been only a baby during "the end of the Süleyman the Magnificent period."

The quotation that the encyclopaedia used as a source is cited from the second page of *Nazarî ve Amelî Türk Musikisi*, vol. 4. The part that exposed Ezgi's ignorance of history are to be found on page 262 of the first volume: "Based on the fact that Abdülaziz offered his work *Nekavet-ül Edvâr* to Süleyman the Magnificent, it becomes clear that this *mecmû'â* was written in the latter's lifetime. The existence of works ascribed to Itrî, Nazîm and Hoca Abdül Ali in a different chirography from the writing in the first part of the *mecmû'â*, might convince my readers that Abdül Ali appeared towards the end of the Süleyman the Magnificent period."

However, 1) the *Nekavet-ül Edvâr* was dedicated not to Süleyman, but to Mehmed II, forty years earlier, that is, in the second half of the 15th century. 2) As a result of this, Itrî and Nazîm, were also supposed to have "appeared at the end of the times of Suleyman the Magnificent".

We can see that the examination based only on the Bağdatlı Vehbi manuscript bears a clear result, considering the information about Ali Kulu's biography: Ali Kulu (Ali bin Nâsır bin Rahmet-ul Huveyzî) was a poet and a writer who died in 1643/1644 in Basra. He recited poems in Turkish, Persian and Arabic, some of which were composed by him. Ali Kulu called himself "Kel Ali" (Kelb-ü Ali) because he was a shiite, and again he used to call himself Abd-ı Ali in Persian and Abd-ü Ali in Arabic. He is known as an author of two books of commentary (*şerh*) on religion, other than his collected poems (*divan*).