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The *Cümbüş* as Instrument of "the Other" in Modern Turkey

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of

the requirements for the degree

Master of Arts in Music

by

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Acknowledgments

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If we can say that in some respects the literal jungles of yesteryear's ethnographer have been replaced by that dense tangle called critical theory as the "place" where today we find much of our hardest work, I have Dr. Sonia Tamar

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this project has been. Ethnographic interest in specific material culture ebbs and flows with the tide, but music instruments are not only the sine qua non of much of what we encounter in the field, they are part and parcel of the symbol systems that make social communication possible, and I thank her for making this clear to me as I prepared my thesis project.

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ABSTRACT OF THE MASTER'S THESIS

The *Cümbüş* as Instrument of "the Other" in Modern Turkey

By

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The *cümbüş* (a Turkish, twelve-string, fretless, banjo-like music instrument) is an object whose figure in the Turkish public imagination has been charged, throughout its seventy-five year existence, with the work of symbolic representation. Despite efforts on the part of its inventor (and at times that of government institutions) to popularize the cümbüş as an authentically Turkish instrument, it was never widely adopted by self-described ethnic Turks. In recent decades it has been associated mainly with working class minority Román ("Gypsy"; pl. Romanlar) communities but oral, photographic and archival evidence show that the cümbüş and its analogues were employed in the early-twentieth century by a variety of minority groups: urban professional musicians from the non-Muslim populations (mainly Greek, Armenian and Jewish) of Istanbul, Izmir, and (newly Greek) Thessalonica and Piraeus, as well as by Muslim Romanlar in the same areas. It has also been used as a folk music instrument in the culturally diverse and economically underdeveloped southeast of Turkey. In recent years it has appeared in a particular orientalizing "faux

Arab" pop genre (*arabesk*), as well as in mass-mediated Turkish pop music in Western-style "rock" and "techno pop" formats, played both by the instrument's "traditional" minorities and newly by a younger generation of ethnic Turks.

The hypothesis of this project is that the cümbüş has been inscribed with the symbolic meaning of Otherness from shortly after its invention in 1930, and that this inscription has remained—or more precisely, has been continually performed—even when the specific Others to which it has referred have changed. Following five months of field research in Turkey, interviewing, listening to and playing with musicians from the aforementioned ethnic groups, I analyze a particular history of Otherness in the Turkish Republic as traced through the shifting ideas of Otherness symbolically inscribed onto the cümbüş between 1930 and 2005.

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Pronunciation Guide

The Turkish language has been written in a variation of the Latin alphabet since 1928 and the pronunciations of the consonants may be considered, for our purposes, identical to those of the same letters in English, with the following exceptions:

C, c sounds like the "j" in *judge*
Ç, ç sounds like the "ch" in *church*
G, g sounds always like the "g" in *get* (never "soft" as in *gin*)
Ğ, ğ is silent but extends the preceding vowel
J, j sounds like the "s" in *measure*
S, s sounds always like the "s" in *simple* (never "voiced" as in *is*)
Ş, ş sounds like the "sh" in *share*

The eight vowels in Turkish are as follows, and their given pronunciations are approximately those of a hypothetical standard dialect:

A, a sounding like "a" in *father*
E, e sounding like "e" in *fed*
I, ı sounding like "uh," e.g., in the second syllable of *nation*
İ, i sounding somewhere between the "i" of *machine* and the "i" of *bit*
O, o sounding like "o" in *no*
Ö, ö sounding like "eu" in the French *peu* (i.e., setting the lips as if to say *ooh* and pronouncing the second syllable of *nation*)
U, u sounding like the "oo" in *pool*
Ü, ü sounding like "ü" in the German *über* (i.e., setting the lips as if to say *ooh* and pronouncing the "i" in *machine*)

The vowel *a* with a caret over it (*â*) is pronounced with a slight "y" sound before it (e.g. *kâr* sounds like *kyar*); other vowels may also carry such a caret but their pronunciation remains unchanged.

Syllabic stress is unpredictable and not marked by written accent. I have nevertheless used one such accent mark for the word *Román* in order both to show spoken syllabic stress, and to distinguish it from the similar word in the English language referring to the city and/or empire of Rome. This usage is *not* conventional in the Turkish language. The same mark appears in the text, indicating syllabic stress, on several Greek words and names, which (though using a different alphabet) would normally carry them there—the exceptions being names of authors whose publications in English use unaccented spellings, and place names that have standard English forms.

Figure 1. A variety of cümbüş-es: a. standard, b. tanbur, c. mandolin (front and back).

Part One   Critical Foundations

Introduction

My ascent into the world of this peculiar instrument, and in fact into ethnomusicology itself, began from an encounter with it entirely outside of its context of origin. I bought a *cümbüş* on a camping trip to northern California in the summer of 2001 on its merit as an inexpensive substitute for a desired but prohibitively expensive fretless guitar.[1] At the time I had never heard of the cümbüş, nor had I ever heard any Turkish music, but as a composer and guitarist I was interested in the instrument's possibilities for creating microtonal music. At first I found its characteristic timbre—as in Karen Linn's book on the North American banjo, a "half-barbaric twang"—frankly off-putting. Thankfully, I also found it to be an acquirable taste. After a few months sitting with it, a friend of mine in UCSB's Middle East Ensemble invited me to play cümbüş with the group in the fall quarter of 2001. This was less than a month after the World Trade Center bombings and I was not exactly seeking to join a group labeled "Middle Eastern" anything, but I went to a rehearsal despite my reservations. The first sheet of music the very welcoming ensemble leader Scott Marcus put in front of me was a classical Turkish *saz semaisi*; Sadi Işılay's Muhayyer Kürdi. Despite its taxation of my sight-reading abilities, this piece's metric scheme, microtones, and melodic development opened up a whole new world of

[1] Although cümbüş-es are available with a variety of neck types (see fig. 1), in its unqualified form the word refers to the *standart* (standard) form shown in fig. 1a.

musical possibilities for me. As a composer ever on the lookout for something exotic sounding to steal, I felt I had stumbled across an unguarded goldmine.

Playing cümbüş with the Ensemble that first year, I came to appreciate and love Turkish (and several other Middle Eastern) musics on their own merits, and my desire to compose with their materials had turned into one to learn the native compositional theories and practices—*makam* and the art of *taksim*—and the cultural contexts of their genesis, history and performance. With the encouragement of Dr. Marcus and several ethnomusicology graduate students in the Ensemble I decided to pursue these studies more seriously, and was accepted into the UCSB ethnomusicology program in the fall of 2002.

I was very lucky that year that the university offered a year of Turkish language study, apparently for the first time and, to date, also the last. The classes were taught by Religious Studies graduate student and fine *saz* player (now Doctor) Mark Soileau. He was also the first to point out to me that the cümbüş was emphatically not an instrument used in Turkish classical music, giving me cassettes of the instrument in one of its normal contexts, the *sıra gecesi* music of Şanlıurfa province. The arrival not long afterward of Dr. Sonia Seeman to UCSB's ethnomusicology program, with her deep knowledge of traditional Turkish urban popular musics, was the further brightening of a beacon on my long trek toward "authentic" cümbüş use, its contexts and symbolic associations in Turkish society.

My makam knowledge and chops on the cümbüş and *ud* slowly developed year by year under the careful tutelage of Dr. Scott Marcus here in Santa Barbara

(though emphasizing an eastern Arab understanding of the art), and also with Turkish ud-ist Necati Çelik, with whom I studied first at the annual Mendocino Middle Eastern Music and Dance Camp in the summer of 2002, and later during recording sessions in Santa Barbara in the fall of 2002, and again during my first trip to Turkey in the summer of 2003 for two months of intensive language study at Boğaziçi University, Istanbul. Back home I was also playing *rebétika* and *smyrnéika* music with the Greek group Mesógeios, and eastern Mediterranean Sephardic music in the band Flor de Kanela, thereby expanding my understanding of the cümbüş as part of the history of the music cultures of minority groups of the former Ottoman Empire. When it came time to choose the subject of my master's thesis, the cümbüş—this very Turkish instrument that turns out to have been more often plucked by minority players in Turkey than by ethnic Turkish musicians—was a natural.

I set out again for Turkey in July 2005 looking for all I could find on the instrument, the contexts of its uses both historical and current, and utilizing the proto-hypothesis that the cümbüş was in some way functioning as a symbolic marker of Otherness in Turkish society. I returned to Santa Barbara at the end of the next November having spent around six weeks traveling the western third of the country and the remainder of those five months in Istanbul.[2] Although in fact the cümbüş appears to be very seldom played today in many of its traditional haunts, there remains a rich if sparsely recorded remembrance of the instrument in the popular literature of the last seventy five years, in the memories of older urban musicians and

[2] This trip was funded in part by the UCSB Music Department.

music aficionados, in living traditions among the Romanlar ("Gypsies") of western Turkey, and in several folk musics of the southeastern provinces. Unexpectedly it has recently begun to appear in the recordings and videos of urban popular "rock" and "techno-pop" musics as well. In this context it is played by some of the instrument's traditional minority musicians, but also by ethnic Turkish musicians, a group that had traditionally shunned the cümbüş.

My days—and often, nights—were spent talking, jamming, gigging and generally hanging out with, and of course listening to, musicians and music aficionados in both formal settings (university classes, classical concerts) and less formal ones (homes, restaurants, *Ramazan* evening gatherings).[3] Many days were spent trolling dozens of book and instrument vendors' shops, as well as those of several luthiers, looking for references, recordings, photos, stories—anything available—about the instrument. Some of my "interviews" were formal enough to merit the name—I am especially grateful for the time granted me by brothers Fethi and Ali Cümbüş, great-grandsons of the instrument's inventor and current owners of the Cümbüş Music Instrument Company—but much information was also gained in informal and serendipitous conversations. This is especially true for what I came to learn about the reception of the cümbüş on the part of members of the current youth culture of Istanbul whose thoughts were as often shared on a college campus as in

[3] The university classes to which I refer here were mainly at İstanbul Teknik Üniversitesi, where I was fortunate enough to meet professors Şehvar Beşiroğlu and Robert Reigle (ethnomusicology) and Mehmet Emin Bitmez (classical ud), and where I delivered a paper on the cümbüş at an international conference on "Representation in Music/Musical Representation" in early October 2005.

Internet cafés, communal taxis, tea houses and at a particularly popular downtown Istanbul Burger King.

The information I gathered during this time forms the basis of the present study, now tested under the more formal hypothesis that the cümbüş has been inscribed with the symbolic meaning of Otherness from shortly after its invention in 1930, and that this inscription has remained (or more precisely, has been continually performed) even when the specific Others to which it has referred have changed.[4] As I shall show, the cümbüş as a nexus of symbolic Otherness has been shaped by:

- traditional (late Ottoman) concepts of Otherness
- Republican ideologies regarding "ethnicity"
- various popular ideas about the traditional multicultural mixes and groupings of Turkish citizens
- concerns for a distinct and sophisticated image of Turkey in terms of its relations with Europe on the level of mass-mediated popular culture

This thesis is thus a particular (and by no means complete) history of negotiated social identities in the Republic of Turkey to the present day as reflected in the yet more particular history of the cümbüş as a carrier of symbolic inscriptions of Otherness.

In addition to my fieldwork, the thesis is much informed by the works of Anderson, Hobsbawm, Gellner, and Kertzer on nationalism, as well as the more

[4] Or *were changed*: the acts of inscription themselves, it must be noted, have been performed by "ethnic Turks" as well as by the named Others—sometimes toward themselves and sometimes toward one or more of the other Others—as well as by yet more Others present in the Turkish Republic.

particular "ethno-symbolic" approach to nationalism of Smith and Canefe; by works of Wolf, Andrews, Stokes, Radano, and Bohlman concerning race, ethnicity and identity; by the politico-historical writings of Shaw, Braude, and Karpat, as well as those of Bozdağlıoğlu, whose post-structuralist version of the relational, agency-inclusive constructivist approach to national identity and politics I have favored; and by writings on organology by Linn, Kartomi, Picken, Gazimihal, Feldman, and particularly A.J. Racy, whose "dialectical approach" to organology I have followed as a model in describing the cümbüş as an instrument embedded in and responding to culture. As Dr. Racy puts it:

> [M]usical instruments are interactive entities. Being both adaptive and idiosyncratic, they are not mere reflections of their cultural contexts, nor are they fixed organological artifacts that can be studied in isolation from other social and artistic domains. Instead instruments interact dialectically with surrounding physical and cultural realities, and as such they perpetually negotiate or renegotiate their roles, physical structures, performance modes, sound ideals, and symbolic meanings. (Racy 1994: 38)

The present work is divided into four parts. The following two chapters in Part One, "Critical Foundation," detail the sources informing my theoretical approach and address other specific critical concerns. Part Two, "The Instrument Itself," has as its focus the origins and physical organology of the cümbüş, while Part Three, "Use of the Cümbüş and Symbolic Inscriptions," bridges the gap between physical and symbolic organology by examining how the instrument's initial use by non-Turkish minorities set the patterns informing its future as a sign of Otherness. Part Four, "Later Cümbüş Use and Recontextualizations," examines how these patterns came to be altered by reinterpretations of the trope of Otherness on the part of members of the

current Istanbulite youth culture and their subsequent acceptance of the cümbüş as a marker of Turkish Otherness.

1

Theoretical Positioning

In order to analyze the cümbüş as a carrier of symbolic inscriptions of Otherness and the shifts of these inscriptions over time, I have employed an interpretive anthropology approach in the tradition of Clifford Geertz and combined with it several analytical devices from other theoretical paradigms, first listed here, and afterward explicated in detail:

- symbolic anthropology and performance theory models as articulated by Victor Turner and Michael Taussig
- the semiotic model of philosopher Charles Peirce (and certain clarifications of it in the work of Thomas Turino)
- one particular idea—that of "[discursive] nodal points"—from neo-Gramscian political theorists Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe
- two ideas of my own:
    - a "(semantic) modulation" between two "nodal points" by switching between meanings of a polysemic sign shared by both,[5] and
    - the extension of Turner's "liminality" (qua condition) to the idea of "liminal pathways" connecting "nodal points"

[5] In the manner of a musical modulation between two keys which share certain chords, all of which have distinct functions in each key. Thanks to Dr. Jonathan Secora Pearl for suggesting the idea of such a "modulation," though he used it to describe a rhetorical device in prose, poetry and speech.

My first task in presenting a synthesis of these is to explicate what I see as the compatibilities and conflicts (or at least differences) between them. Clearly we are dealing on the whole with the world of meanings and of their symbolic representations, and with the creation, maintenance and interpretation of such representations. The compatibilities between Geertz, Turner and Taussig should therefore be fairly clear in that they are all dealing directly with symbolically performed social actions and socially manipulated symbols/signifiers. My reason for examining all of these approaches is in the details—in many cases what I am calling here particular "analytical devices"—unique to each.

My "base theory" is interpretive anthropology as practiced by Geertz, having an emphasis on "culture" ("the integrated ethos and worldview of a society," see Ortner 1984:128-132) rather than "society" itself or "the individual," thick description, interpretation of action-as-symbolic through Ricoeurian action-as-text, etc. From early Turner I use and extend the ideas of "social drama" schematized in the progression: breach→crisis→redressive action→resolution/split, and "liminality"—the state of being between two (discursive) positions.

From Turner's later writings, and from their development by Richard Schechner, I employ the general outlook of performance theory. I see performance theory as the systematic application to social behaviors of the trope "all the world's a stage and [we] are merely players,"[6] using this as a point of departure from which to

[6] Extended well beyond the "life cycle of man" metaphor meant by Shakespeare (*As You Like It*, ii: vii) in this quote. The word "merely" might be inappropriate here, considering the structuralist implications it might convey, though this seems to have been Schechner's approach.

explain the performative aspects of social actions. Schechner basically takes Turner's work on ritual and "social drama" and explores it in seven distinct realms (Goffman's "frames," really) of social life: ritual, play, games, sports, theater, dance, and music. It seems to me that symbolic inscription is a kind of performance, whether enacted (semi-ritually) by government decree, by venue owners and record producers, audiences, or by musicians themselves. As such it involves some of the same devices analyzed in performance theory: backstage and frontstage activities, specially designated spaces, "props" (like the cümbüş itself), insider jargon, etc. Although this outlook does not appear formally in my concluding analysis, I would be remiss not to credit Schechner and the later writings of Turner as important influences on my thinking throughout this research project.

Taussig, who, like Turner, moved toward performance theory and often uses psychological theories (basically Freudian, but as altered by Lacan and, through him, Žižek) in his analyses.[7] What I draw from Taussig comes mainly from his 1993 *Mimesis and Alterity*; ideas about Otherness (alterity) as a device for *Self*-definition, and as a quality symbolically transferred to (thus-fetishized) objects, by way of mimesis of some quality of an Other, in order to gain symbolic power *from* and *over* that Other. It seems to me that shifts in concepts of Otherness inscribed upon the cümbüş—for instance between "ethnic Turks in regard to minority groups-as-Others"

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[7] All of the "symbolic" writers mentioned above rely to some extent on Freudian psychology, though it is mostly implicit except in Goffman and Schechner. Note that Taussig, originally a Turnerian, criticizes Turner for promoting a romantic notion of the symbol in his 1991 *The Nervous System*.

and “Turks-as-Others in regard to Western Europeans”—readily lend themselves to these aspects of Taussig’s analytical frame.[8]

I referred earlier to symbolic anthropology approaches as dealing directly with symbolically performed social actions and socially manipulated symbols/signifiers. As regards the latter—objects-as-signifiers—most of the theorists mentioned above found it sufficient to refer to them rather vaguely as simply symbols or as signifiers or even less clearly, alternating between these terms in describing a single object.[9] My reason for including the semiotics paradigm of Charles Peirce (and certain clarifications of it by Turino) is to remedy this lack of clarity by introducing Peirce’s precise vocabulary of signs into my analysis. This move is strictly utilitarian; it does not endorse the structural-linguistic premises of the model’s origins or seek to extend other aspects of its intended analytical uses to my own analyses. Peirce’s paradigm itself is rather too intricate to reproduce wholesale at this point; it appears (in Turino’s synopsis) in section 9.3, and I will give an example of how I use its terms later in this chapter.[10]

The remaining theoretical materials to be explained consist of an idea developed by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, and my incorporation of it into two

[8] More on Taussig’s treatment of alterity appears in the following chapter, section 2.1.

[9] Ortner (1984: 131) gives Turner credit for focusing more on “symbols” themselves than the Geertzian school did, but his vocabulary remained fairly general; Taussig has been using a more discriminating vocabulary of signs since at least the 1990s.

[10] See also Turino 1999. I should mention that although I support Turino’s proposal that ethnomusicologists use Peircian semiotics to examine the “un-languaged” connections between music, emotion, direct experience and social identity (1999: 233-4), my use of the model is focused elsewhere since the symbolic aspects of the cümbüş that I am tracking are, in the main, mediated by language.

of my own analytical devices. As explained by Lowi, Laclau and Mouffe espouse a theory of discourse having to do with:

> ...the centrality of articulatory practices, or, "the construction of nodal points which partially fix meaning" ([1985]: 113). It is important to understand that, from this perspective, meaning is *never* able to be completely fixed, therefore, openness remains a constant feature of the social. ... Nodal points are relatively stable points in a discursive field. This fixity is attained through hegemonic practices or exercises of power through which nodal points...come to be seen as natural or given. (Lowi 2005: 9)

Without intending further to work the post-Marxian socio-political soil from which the idea was grown, I place *discursive nodal points* in my analysis as social "objects" that influence decisions and actions in social behavior, such as symbolic inscription. My interest, however, is not only in their genesis or maintenance (though these will come up), but also in the ways people shift, or *modulate*, from one to another—whether semi-permanently or in the course of a day—as subject positions from which to perform a particular (part of their) identity.

An example would be: two nodal points, one called "Ottoman Heritage" and the other "Modern (Progressive) Republicanism." Though each refers to a direction in time (a past known—or constantly recreated—through ideals, and an imperfectly-fulfilled ideal future, respectively), their coexistence in the present may be bridged through what I am calling a "liminal pathway," for instance one we might label "Nostalgia."[11]

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[11] Perhaps there are even more than one with that name; nostalgia for the distant, pre-Republican past, and nostalgia for the early-Republican hopeful idealism toward the future. In any case, they both qualify, in my definition, as liminal pathways. That the re-creation of an ideal Ottoman past is itself

This conception of liminality is an extension of what for Turner was a brief, temporary, psychological and social state occurring in the course of a ritualized "social drama" with a definite end.[12] But liminality, rather than being the temporary disruption of a norm that Turner describes, seems to me more like a standing wave-form in a river—ungraspable yet a forceful presence, lasting as long as the interaction between the normal flow and the riverbed of governing structure supports the (also quite normal) "anomaly." In some cases in the social realm, a kind of "permanent liminality" itself appears to be the norm or goal of a system; the never-satisfied consumerism and commodity fetishism ascribed to capitalism in Marx, for instance, or the state of *satori* in Zen Buddhism.

It is particularly easy to understand "nostalgia" as *liminal*—neither here nor there, perhaps experienced mainly in an emotional sense—but such a pathway may be of a more ideational nature as well. Syncretisms consisting of individual ideas drawn from competing discourses may result either from an overlap of nodal points, or as a (liminal) discursive position (on a pathway) between nodal points where a new discursive nodal point may form as an alternative to having to choose (or constantly move) between the original two disparate discourses. When does this happen? In an irreconcilable split after the redressive phase of a Turnerian social drama. By what mechanism does it happen? By the reinterpretation of polysemic signs shared by

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also influenced by nostalgia may not be merely incidental to this particular case; in fact, traveling in the opposite direction this same pathway could be called "Progressivism."

[12] The word "end" is here used in both of its senses, that is, the ritual has a psycho-social *purpose*, and the state of liminality will definitely end when that purpose is fulfilled.

both—though with different meanings in each—a *semantic modulation.* To illustrate this I offer the continuation of our example in diagrams:

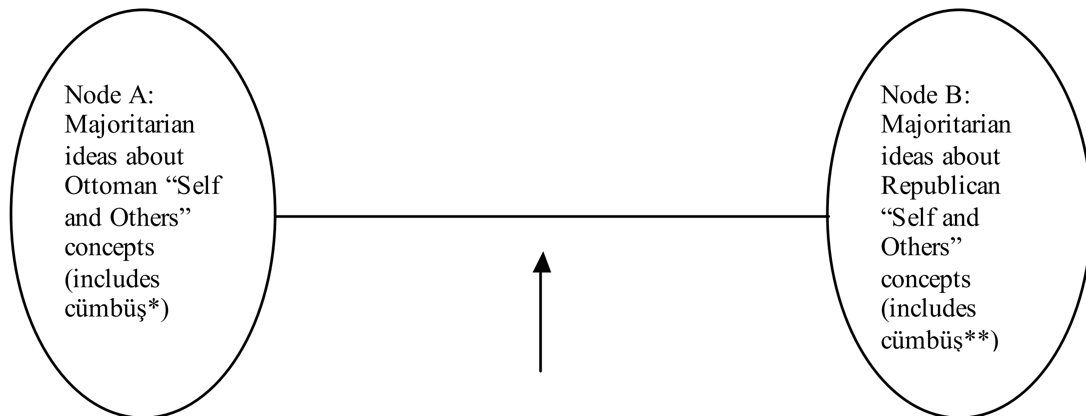

Figure 2. The connecting line represents a liminal pathway called "Nostalgia" when going right to left, "Progressivism" when moving left to right. The arrow represents an impending *crisis* (in the Turnerian sense).

In this example (fig. 2) the single asterisk in Node A refers to the idea, popular especially among younger Turks, that the cümbüş is an Ottoman-era instrument—a crucial fiction in the story to come—or at least that the instrument *refers* (nostalgically) to "the past." The double asterisk in Node B refers to the fact that the cümbüş is being used now in "modern/ist" rock and "techno-pop" music—by ethnic Turks, new to the cümbüş—created and received by members of an urban youth culture thoroughly indoctrinated in a (to insiders) de-ethnicized ideology that posits that *all* the citizens of Turkey are "Turks." The arrow represents the "crisis phase" in a Turnerian social drama about to happen; the crisis may be called in this

case “the desire to appear hip and modern in terms of European popular cultural norms while maintaining a (self-) image as distinctly Turkish.”

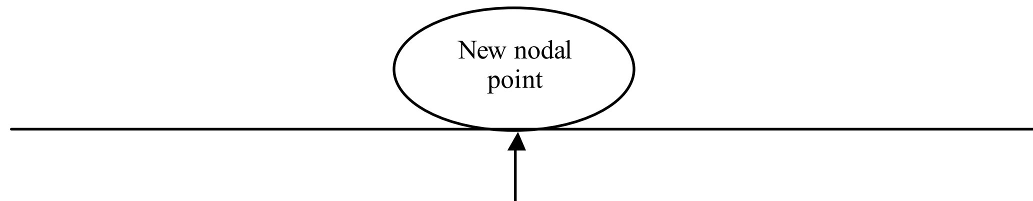

Figure 3. Creation of a newly syncretized discursive “nodal point” upon a “liminal pathway.”

The crisis, as shown in figure 3, is manifested as a disruptive impact at a point on the liminal pathway “Nostalgia/Progressivism” where members of the Istanbul youth culture have syncretized a variety if ideas about Self and Otherness from competing discourses.[13] In this case the cümbüş, inscribed with “Ottoman” and “Otherness” in Node A and offering a de facto (new) use in techno-pop music in Node B, is one of several possible “pivot signs” for a *semantic modulation*.[14] These members of the youth culture are receiving the cümbüş’ presence in techno-pop as 1) still marking Otherness but 2) representing a Turkish face on a Euro-pop body, thus addressing the crisis in a way neither previous discourse node was able to facilitate.

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[13] This particular “crisis” exerts pressure over the whole of society, but social dramas are particular, manifesting in and between different points—it might be resolved differently in the frames of sports or law, etc.

[14] Rock/techno-pop musicians do not make explicit their reasons for using the cümbüş, however the instrument’s reception by the aforementioned members of the Istanbulite youth culture is as a marker of Turkish-(Other)-ness in regard to European pop music (Q.E.D.).

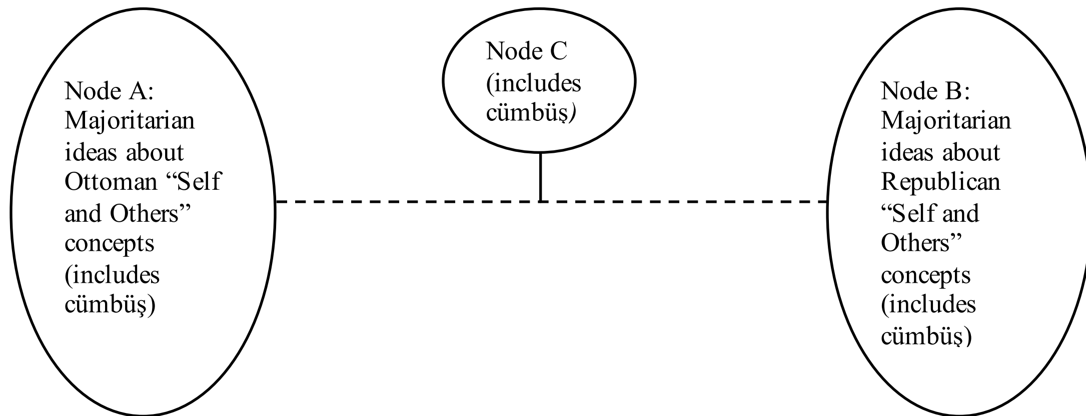

Figure 4.

Figure 4, then, represents a new discursive landscape after this social drama has resulted in a split from normative discourse. Node C is a new discursive formation that addresses Turkish relations with Europe, using the recontextualized cümbüş in its vocabulary of signs. Bringing in Taussig, we could say that pop music on a European model is the fetishized object employed to gain symbolic power *from* and *over* (or at least in agonistic relation to) the European Other, while, I would add, the cümbüş is being used as a complementary *counter-fetish* to mark ownership and control of the power wielded.

Expressing an aspect of the above process using Peircian semiotic terminology, we could say that the *object* (meaning) of the cümbüş as a *dicent-indexical-legisign* (Otherness, by the instrument's association with non-Turkish players) was expanded when its *indexical* quality (as a sign by co-occurrence with the signified) was exchanged for a *symbolic* one through a new association with the concept of Otherness (rather than through co-occurrence with specific, non-Turkish

Others). The *dicent* quality of this new *dicent-symbolic-legisign* was thus expanded, the cümbüş being now interpreted as signifying Otherness-including-Turks by association with its use by "Others" whether ethnically Turkish or not. (See section 9.3 for a fuller explanation).

The synthesis of ideas presented in this chapter—consisting of approaches from interpretive and symbolic anthropologies, performance theory, semiotic devices from Peirce, the "discursive nodal point" found in Laclau and Mouffe, and my own additions—thus served as my theoretical model for analyzing the shifts in inscriptions of Otherness onto the cümbüş (and the attendant shifts in behavior surrounding it) over the last seventy-five years.

2

Other Critical Concerns

2.1 On the concept of Otherness

This work deals much with the concept of "Otherness" and the term therefore merits some definition here. In ethnographic work the term usually refers to the acknowledgment of a minority/majority relationship where the majority is privileged as primary, although of course even the smallest group of Others must themselves have Others in order for the distinction to remain. It is a categorization that may be imposed from the outside of a social group, or it may be generated and self-perpetuated from within it, but in practice it is the performance of a dialogue between the two.

People use acknowledgment of Otherness strategically: as a tool for negotiation in the marketplace of expectations and rights, to give, refuse or petition privileges, to remember or subvert particular versions of history, to capitalize on popular attraction to the exotic, fulfill traditional concepts of hierarchy, et cetera.[15] Otherness can also serve as a conceptual repository for a social group's "dark side," those desires and repulsions whose manifestations, even if extant within the group's overall repertoire of social behaviors, are cognitively dissonant with accepted/acceptable ideals of self-identification. By projecting negative qualities and

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[15] See also Seeman 2002: 349 on self-ascribed essentialism (in re: Turkish Román).

forbidden desires onto an Other, or a series of Others, these issues may be addressed and criticized without pointing in a direct way to structural or endemic inconsistencies within the group.

Taussig treats the process of "Othering" not only as a kind of performance, but one inextricably linked to the human capacity to mimic well (1993: 19), and to define and maintain a sense of Self:

> Pulling you this way and that, mimesis plays this trick of dancing between the very same and the very different. An impossible but necessary, indeed, an everyday affair, mimesis registers both sameness and difference, of being like, and of being Other. Creating stability from this instability is no small task, yet all identity formation is engaged in this habitually bracing activity in which the issue is not so much staying the same, but maintaining sameness through alterity. (ibid.: 129)

And in regard to "[T]he search for identity through the many circuits of mimesis and alterity":

> [A]lthough there is no such thing as identity in any grand sense—just chimeras of possible longings lounging in the interstices of quaint necessities—nevertheless the masks of appearance do more than suffice. They are absolutely necessary. (ibid.: 254)

Working in concert with the idea of Otherness-as-negotiation-tool is Taussig's assertion (drawing on David Stout) that "...the cultural politics of alterity should be seen as composed not simply of one-on-one [interactions]...but as a hierarchy of alterities within a...mosaic of attractions and repulsions..." (ibid.: 144). It is with this concept of alterity—as a normative mechanism that individuals employ in negotiating social relations in terms of group identity—that I am working throughout this thesis.

It should be noted that the social practice of "Othering"—actively constructing and perpetuating concepts of difference between social groups—does not necessarily require or proceed from a racist stance or "philosophy," although it often does, and the reverse cannot be said to be true; racism necessarily includes Othering. Racism is fundamentally a belief that behavioral characteristics expressed at the social level are determined by genetic imperatives and perpetuated by genetic reproduction (though often characterized by the romantic trope of "blood"). Given present-day physiological evidence, this appears to be a gross misunderstanding of the kinds of information that genetic material—much less blood—is capable of reproducing and transmitting, but such beliefs persist nonetheless. A distinction must also be made between prejudicial behavior and racism per se; a person may attribute particular behavioral characteristics to members of a class of socially constituted Others with or without believing that the characteristics are transmitted genetically. Furthermore, such prejudice may be intended as praise (e.g., "Gypsies are all great musicians…") and result in "positive" outcomes ("…so don't hire anyone else for your wedding band!") or scorn (e.g., "Gypsies are all thieves…") resulting in "negative" outcomes ("…so don't hire them to work in your shop!") or anything in between.

The present work, while recognizing the social construction of Otherness and tracking particular strands of it within Turkish society, is not a study in the constitution of those constructions in terms of race or prejudice, though these are noted where the concepts are prominent in the discourse of a particular group's

Otherness. For the purposes of examining the symbolic ascriptions of Otherness to the cümbüş by way of its players it has been sufficient to accept the de facto ethnic (and other) distinctions present in common social discourses, regardless of such attitudes informing their construction, which have no doubt been various and changing throughout time and from case to case. Likewise, it must be noted that the definition of "ethnic Turk," which is taken as the norm against which such notions of Otherness are herein contrasted, is itself a multiply-interpreted construction. Again, the de facto self-ascription of "Turkish ethnicity" is here accepted as sufficient where special distinction is not otherwise noted.[16]

2.2 On the Terms "Multiculturalism" and "Pluralism"

The terms "multicultural/ism" and "pluralism" are sometimes used interchangeably,[17] but I wish to make a distinction between them here, even if it is an idiosyncratic one. As used throughout this work, the term "multicultural" is intended to describe group entities whose social and cultural practices are a syncretism of practices originally generated from within several distinct cultural entities (which may continue to exist as such). In contrast I use the term "pluralism" to describe

[16] See Andrews 1989 (esp. 41-2 and 54-6) on normative Turkish identities. Readers interested in early Republican-era concepts of Turkish self-definition and "Othering," both racist and non-racist, may find van Bruinessen (1997) particularly interesting. Also see Seeman 2002: 88, fn. 22 where she notes that in Turkey the term *etnik* (ethnic/ethnicity) has only recently been introduced to talk about what had long been referred to as *ırk* (race).

[17] This is the case in the Turkish language as well; although there is a separate word for "pluralism" (*çoğulculuk*), in modern Turkish "multiculturalism" (*çok-kültürlük*) is often made to stand for both concepts.

social entities composed of several distinct cultural entities whose members maintain their groups' distinctions even as extensive interactions between such groups occur.

These are both matters of perception and performance. Probably most heterogeneous societies could be described using either term, or both of them, but the way a group perceives and performs its own culture by leaning toward one or the other of these definitions governs to some extent the way it "Others," the way it decides who is "in" and who is "out" of a group's identity structure. I posit that a multicultural view lessens negative ascriptions of Otherness, while a pluralistic one allows and/or encourages distinctions of all kinds, including negative ones.

2.3 On the Cümbüş as Sign in Turkey, and Primary Sources

In regard to the exploration of social discourses which frame the "meaning" of the cümbüş, it needs to be mentioned that, although I am advocating the recognition of symbolic associations between the cümbüş and certain minority groups in Turkish society, it would be incorrect to say that the instrument is a widely acknowledged "symbol," or even universally known as a cultural object.[18] The cümbüş, in short, is not considered important by most Turkish citizens, regardless of their ethnicity, and their seeing or hearing (about) a cümbüş does not instantaneously evoke a clear meaning in the sense that a simplified figure ("icon" in Peircian jargon) of a human

[18] For instance, many people in Turkey do not recognize its name as referring to a music instrument until it is described, usually (in Turkish) as "that 'banjo' thing Gypsies strum at weddings." Interestingly I have also met Turks who did not know what a cümbüş is (one asked, "What is it called in Turkish?") but recognized with reverence its inventor, Zeynel Abidin Cümbüş, as a great advocate of peace and modernization of the early Republican period.

being in a dress painted on a door in a public place will universally be understood by adults to “mean” that there is a women-only bathroom on the other side of the door. Nonetheless, the presence of the cümbüş in social activities that are more obviously part of important discourses is more than coincidental and, consciously or not, forms part of the feedback loop of interpretation that creates social meaning.

I must also make the reader aware that the general lack of attention to the instrument extends to Turkish writings, whether popular or scholarly, even in musicological sources. “Lack of attention” in this case is not quite accurate: there is reason to believe that the cümbüş has been deliberately ignored and excluded from musicological literature for ideological reasons (explained in section 5.2.1). Turkish musicologist and organologist Mahmut R. Gazimihal, who studied with Curt Sachs in Berlin, spent only three paragraphs on the cümbüş in the epilogue of his 190 page book on Turkish plucked string instruments (*Ülkelerde Kopuz ve Tezeneli Sazlarımız*) only to disparage the instrument, listing six reasons why one should not play it. Biographies that include musicians known (from photographs and recordings) to have played cümbüş professionally, such as Mustafa Rona’s 1955 *20. Yüzıl Türk Musıkisi: Bestekârlar ve Besteleri Güftelerile* and İbnülemin İnal’s 1958 *Hoş Sada: Son Asir Türk Musıkisinasları* routinely leave out mention of the instrument. Even L.E.R. Picken’s otherwise comprehensive 600-plus page 1975 *Folk Musical Instruments of Turkey* spares but two paragraphs to describe instruments that remind him of the cümbüş, but states that the original “does not fall within the scope of this volume”

(295);[19] it does not even appear in the index. Although there are scattered magazine and newspaper articles in which the cümbüş is mentioned, photographs and recordings of its players, and particularly oral histories about them and the instrument, were much more important to the research informing this thesis.

[19] Presumably because he considered it urban and therefore not "folk," though photographs and recordings of the instrument in the folk musics of several southeastern provinces exist from at least forty years before he published (see Akbıyık 2004).

Part Two   The Instrument Itself

3

Origins of the Cümbüş

3.1 The Question of Roots

The history of music instruments in general offers us more a handful of scrawled notes than a set of finished genealogies. For most instruments we have only origin myths and vague lines of descent from supposed prototypes rather than a clear picture of which culture created which instruments, much less the stories of who, within the generating society, was playing them and for whom. In terms of a family tree for the cümbüş, the list of possible ancestors is as long and vague as this norm would lead us to expect. Skin-faced plucked lutes seem first to have appeared, independently, in Central Asia and West Africa, apparently diffusing by migration throughout the Muslim world and nearly all of East Asia via China from the former source, and to North America and thence to Europe by the late nineteenth century from the latter.[20] But despite the fact that the cümbüş was invented in the twentieth century its recognized creator left no written or verbal clues and little physical evidence as to previously existing instruments that may have inspired it. [21]

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[20] See Gura and Bollman 2005, and Linn 1991 regarding African-American banjo; Picken 1955 and 1975 regarding Asian skin-faced lutes.

[21] Turkish organologist Mahmut R. Gazimihal (d. 1961), in a thoroughly disparaging passage on the "*cünbüş*" in his posthumously published 1975 *Ülkelerde Kopuz ve Tezeneli Sazlarımız* ("Our Kopuz [a lute type; see glossary s.v. kopuz] and Plucked Instruments in the Nations") asserts without citation that the instrument is an adaptation of the banjo; rather than crediting any particular inventor, he gives the names of several master luthiers who "worked very hard on it," (presumably independently)

From photographs (e.g., in Özdamar 1991) we know that there were at least a few banjos of the African-inspired North American "tenor" type in Istanbul by the 1930s, played in European novelty jazz bands, but prototypes of pre-cümbüş instruments in the family collection of this instrument's inventor more strongly suggest the influence of the Central Asian type vaguely known as *kopuz* or *rabâb* (see figure 5).[22]

including—and subtly privileging—one "Zeynelabidin." Lacking documentation beside this piece to contradict the most common, best documented story of the instrument's invention by Zeynel Abidin (Cümbüş), in this thesis I have taken the latter narrative as the correct one. Since Zeynel Abidin secured the patent for the instrument in 1930, and since the dating of possibly previous examples are imprecise (e.g., Rice 1999 and Seeman [personal comm.] regarding "*džumbuš*" in "early-twentieth century" Skopje), I refer to the other versions of the instrument (whose production effectively ceased by 1935) as "variants" (see section 4.3).

[22] "Vaguely" because the words *kopuz* and *rabâb* had, by the time of the cümbüş's invention, come to cover a wide variety of long-necked lutes, whether faced in skin, wood or both (see Picken 1975:263-272, Feldman 1996:117-119, Gazimihal 1975 passim). The prototypes in question feature a mainly wooden face with an oval cutout covered by skin (in this case from underneath), attached with glue and/or tacks, beneath a floating bridge.

Figure 5. Pre-cümbüş experimental *saz* by Zeynel Abidin, late 1920s (from the Cümbüş family collection). Note skin head beneath bridge.

These were historically present in Anatolia but by the twentieth century existed probably only in the form of images in antique miniature paintings and as relic examples of the then quite obscure *kopuz-i rûmî, kopuz-i ozan,* and Azerbaijani *rûd-i hânî,* plucked lutes formerly used in court music (see Feldman 1996: 117-9, Gazimihal 1975: 14-20). Some versions of the Persian *barbat*—thought to be the

immediate forefather of the Arab *'ud*—closely resemble the cümbüş in its large skin face, neck length and number of courses of strings, but this lute type seems to have disappeared at some point during the Safavid era (1501-1736), resurfacing as a reconstructed instrument only in late-twentieth century Iran (Behroozinia 2006). Despite striking similarities between the cümbüş and the barbat, it seems unlikely that Zeynel Abidin would have encountered a barbat in 1930s Turkey.

Cümbüş family history emphasizes the inventor's eclectic and experimental character without identifying specific influences on the instrument (A. and F. Cümbüş, 8/31/05 interview). Although in practice the various types of the instrument (saz, mandolin, etc., see fig. 1) have usually been purchased and used as separate entities, in this narrative the feature of interchangeable neck-forms was originally considered integral to the basic instrument. Since all of the neck-forms except the one that has come to be known as the "standard" mimic those of previously existing instruments—saz, *cura*, mandolin, (twelve-string) guitar, *tanbur*, and ud—it can be said that the cümbüş is multiply descended from that family of lutes that originated in Central Asia and that spread westward from there (mainly with wooden faces) by Arab conquerors from the eighth century (New Grove 1980 s.v. "'Ud").[23]

The origin of the taut skin face over a metallic body is more the mystery. Picken notes:

> In view of the account in *Chiu T'ang Shu* (Old T'ang History) of a lute made of copper (or a copper alloy) found in an ancient tomb during the reign of the Empress Wu of T'ang (648-705) (Picken 1955, 7) it is worth bearing in mind

[23] See Glossary for definitions of the above-mentioned instruments.

> that lutes with a metal body are not exclusively a recent development. A report in the *Shan-chü hsin-hua* of Yang Yü (completed between 1357 and 1360; see Franke 1956, 66) states that *qūbūz* (*hu-pu-szŭ*) of damascene steel are the most commonly used musical instruments of the Muslims. (Picken 1975: 295)

But practicality and inventiveness are credited for the invention in the Cümbüş family narrative; as the family business had for centuries been the manufacture of arms (first swords, then artillery), metal bodies were relatively easy to configure in the existing workshop, and the skins of calf or goat were both cheaper and easier to work than wood or a combination of wood and skin.

3.2 Early History of the Cümbüş

Despite the vagueness of an "ancestral" version of its origin story, by the time the cümbüş exists as a discrete type of plucked chordophone our information on it exceeds that of many other music instruments. Whatever inspired it, the cümbüş was apparently invented in Istanbul in 1930 by a man named Zeynel Abidin (b. Skopje 1881, d. Istanbul 1947), a self-described Turkish Muslim who later took the surname Cümbüş, after the instrument.[24] Even the origin of its name is well known: cümbüş means "revelry" or "fun" in Turkish, probably from the Farsi *jombesh*, meaning

[24] The Surname Act of 1934 required families to take inheritable last names (see Shaw 1977: 386). The word (and name) appears also as "Cünbüş" in some early promotional literature and as stamped on the metal rim of some of the first commercially available instruments. Ali Cümbüş explains this as a spelling mistake stemming from a lack of standardized spelling norms at the time of the switch from the Ottoman (Arabic) alphabet to the Latin one (officially beginning in 1928). N.b. Özalp erroneously records Zeynel Abidin's birth as being in Izmir, 1885 (1986: 72).

"movement" (New Redhouse 1968 [1890] s.v. "Cümbüş," Larger English-Persian Dictionary 1960 s.v. "Movement").[25]

The story recounted today by Cümbüş's great-grandsons tells us that Zeynel Abidin had brought his family's sword and firearms business to Izmir from Skopje, Macedonia in late Ottoman times, and again moved it to Istanbul after the War of Independence (1919-1923). As a distinguished veteran of that war and an up-and-coming entrepreneur, he was invited to a dinner party on January 14 of 1930 hosted by Turkey's "founding father," Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk) (Gesthuisen 2002, A. and F. Cümbüş, 8/31/05 interview). When conversation about the new republic's modernization and "Turkification" efforts came around to the subject of music, Zeynel Abidin announced that he was transforming his family business from war production to the support of peace through music and enthusiastically described his latest invention: an inexpensive instrument easy to transport and hard to break, capable of playing both Eastern *alaturka* music and, with a quick change of removable necks, Western *alafranga* music as well.[26] Atatürk reportedly loved Ottoman classical music and was at that time looking for a way to modernize the art

[25] Cf. the reference to "dzhumbush" as "a joyous noise" in the context of Bulgarian wedding celebrations in Rice 2003:11, and further compare with "džumbuš" (i.e. the cümbüş) in Macedonian *čalgija* music in Seeman 2002: 21, fn. 14, and in Rice's article in the Garland Encyclopedia of World Music 1999 s.v. "Macedonia."

[26] The term "alaturka," which has a different connotation in Western musicological usage, is meant throughout this work to refer to traditional Ottoman/Turkish modes of cultural expression, little or not at all influenced by European modes in similar media. The contrasting "alafranga" refers to Western cultural imports and influences, for instance in music: the tango, fox-trot, operetta, etc. For a succinct overview of alaturka/alafranga definitions and debates, especially in relation to *arabesk,* see O'Connell 2005.

rather than replace it wholesale with the Western classical music that he felt also had to be promoted for the sake of modernization.[27] Atatürk is supposed to have been enthused by the enterprising Zeynel Abidin's forward-thinking invention and invited him back to provide a demonstration.

Zeynel Abidin set up a private concert for Atatürk ten days later in which the inventor's son Cemal played the as yet unnamed instrument,[28] and all parties agreed that it was a thoroughly modern—and thoroughly Turkish—instrument, affordable to the "common man" due to its ability to be mass produced at low cost (ibid.). Atatürk is said to have been favorably impressed by the sound and possibilities of the instrument and he pronounced it "cümbüş," that is, "fun," which word Zeynel Abidin asked the president if he could use as the instrument's name. Atatürk thus "named" the cümbüş and within three days had the chief of his Presidential Music Committee write a letter certifying that it was suitable for use in government-sponsored orchestras, both Turkish and Western, classical and popular (Üngör 1999).[29] Zeynel Abidin received the patent for his invention later that year. With such auspicious beginnings he hoped it would soon be amongst the preeminent Turkish instruments

[27] Though in response to "reactionaries" in the Turkish classical music establishment, he would later ban it from broadcast and shut down schools, both religious and secular, where it was taught. These bans, except for that on the religious schools, were later rescinded (see Shaw 1977: 383-6, Kinross 1969: 439).

[28] Unnamed but for the functionally descriptive *madeni otomatik saz*—"metallic automatic instrument" (A. and F. Cümbüş 8/31/05 interview).

[29] The chief (*şef*) of the committee (*Cumhuriyet Mûsikî Heyeti*) was Osman Zeki Üngör, a composer and virtuoso violinist who was accomplished in both Ottoman and Western composition. He is probably best known for composing the music for the Turkish national anthem, *İstiklâl Marşı*.

used for music in both the Ottoman classical and other *alaturka* styles, as well as other, more Western-oriented genres. At Zeynel Abidin's low, mass production prices, and endorsed by Atatürk no less, his prediction that there should soon be a cümbüş—the people's instrument—in every Turkish home in no time seemed plausible, if ambitious.

The first "symbolic inscription" onto the cümbüş, then, was the result of these beginnings, promoted by advertisements (e.g., Z..A. Cümbüş 1938), official proclamation and soon, inclusion in national primary school music programs.[30] The intended symbolic messages of the instrument were: modernity, progress and forward thinking (especially through peace rather than war); Turkishness, populism, Republicanism and national pride; and creating a bridge—like the new republic itself—between East and West. Although official government support soon waned and, as we will see, has even been antithetical to the cümbüş at times, the Cümbüş family's promotion of the instrument continues to sound these themes and to retell these stories. The family's patent on the instrument is still in effect and despite early variants (and current reproductions thereof, described in the next chapter), only the

[30] In addition to the endorsement by the Presidential Music Committee, there are a few cümbüş-es still extant with small metal plaques attached to the headstocks saying, "Milli Eğitim ve Spor Bakanlığı" (National Education and Sport Ministry, which was disbanded in 1953), corroborating Ali Cümbüş's story of the instrument's official inclusion in a nationwide music education curriculum (though I could not ascertain the year such inclusion began [A. Cümbüş, 8/31/05 interview]). The cümbüş appears to have been dropped in favor of the mandolin in this capacity around the time of the ministry's disbanding/reorganization (ibid.). I heard little complaint of this from the Cümbüş brothers, whose company is possibly Turkey's largest manufacturer of mandolins as well. In fact the company makes a wide variety of instruments, and the cümbüş-type instruments—selling at an average rate of 1,000 to 2,500 per year—have never been their leading sellers (ibid.).

Cümbüş Music Instrument Company manufactures and can legally license for sale any cümbüş-type instrument to this day.

4

Organology

4.1 Physical Properties of the Cümbüş

As mentioned previously, the cümbüş was invented with certain "modernizing" practicalities in mind. Its thin, spun aluminum body and light-weight removable necks were deliberately designed to minimize carrying weight and total size to ease shipment by post at a time when packages, shipped by train within Turkey, were restricted in those aspects (Z.A. Cümbüş 1938, A. and F. Cümbüş, 8/31/05 interview). Shipping fragile instruments from the western urban centers where the luthiery guilds were centered had always been a delicate business, but the cümbüş's sturdy construction minimized breakage in transit. Another motivation for using aluminum and mechanically attachable necks was that, relative to the instruments it mimics, the materials used to make the cümbüş and the fact that they are less labor-intensive to work made the instrument available to potential buyers at much lower cost. Today a new cümbüş can be bought in Istanbul from between 80 and 100 US dollars, whereas "decent" ud-s start around $220 and go into the low $2,000s. This appears to be about the same ratio of difference between the two instruments from the time the cümbüş was introduced onto the market (A.

Cümbüş/company records, 8/31/05 interview).[31] A detailed look at the cümbüş's several parts follows.

4.1.1 Parts: Bodies, Necks, Skins, etc.

As mentioned, the standard cümbüş body (*gövde*, lit. "belly")—that is, the resonating chamber—is made of spun aluminum.[32] In its earliest form these were basically bowl shaped, with rounded backs (see fig. 6a), but by the 1960s the shape had been changed to the lighter, ridged, flat-sided and flat-bottomed "cooking pot" shape now considered the norm (fig. 6b). A fancier version of this body is engraved with floral patterns (fig. 6c). Since 2000 there is also a heavier, wooden-bodied version, the *ağaç* (wood) *cümbüşü* (also known as the "extra cümbüş"), whose body, like that of the tanbur, is a flat-bottomed bowl made of strips of wood (fig. 6d).[33]

[31] Cf. Gazimihal 1975:189 where he lists in his complaints about the cümbüş its "high cost" due to "imported European metal"—but note that wherever the metal was from, no-one else seems ever to have considered the instrument expensive.

[32] "Spinning" is a technique for shaping metal objects on an open-ended lathe.

[33] See section 4.3 on the wooden-bodied *ahenk*. I have also played an engraved copper-bodied version that Ali Cümbüş was displaying at a trade show in Istanbul in late November of 2005, but because that metal is both heavy and expensive, the model has never been in production.

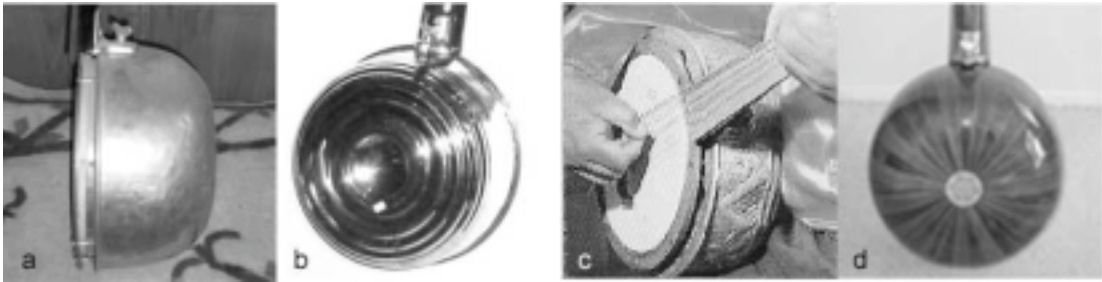

Figure 6. Cümbüş bodies: a) round, b) "cooking pot," c) engraved, d) wood

Over the open top of each of these body-types fits a two-part aluminum rim, 30 cm. or about 1 foot in diameter, which holds the skin head taut with nine adjustable bolts, a key for which comes with the instrument. Three of these bolts also secure the cast aluminum or bronze tailpiece to the top of the rim; this is where the loop-end steel strings are attached to the body. The skins themselves (*deri*) were originally goat or calf hide, but have been made of Mylar (clear or opaque) since the 1960s.[34] Etched around the face of the upper rim are the words "Mucidi [inventor] Zeynel Abidin Cümbüş Türkiye İstanbul [+ varying neighborhood designation; currently 'A. Bulvarı'—Atatürk Boulevard]" (visible in fig. 1a-c). The lower part of the rim, set directly into the body, is cast with twenty small sound holes, although they are covered and obscured by the upper rim about one centimeter above it.

A wooden "floating" bridge with two (saz, cura, tanbur, mandolin) or three ("standard," guitar, ud) round feet sits atop the taut skin to hold the strings up and

[34] Today they may also be "textured" to look and feel more like goat skin. The company logo is printed on all skins (visible in fig. 1a and 1b). These have varied over the years from stylized signatures of the name Cümbüş to the original design of a naked woman sitting atop the backlit earth, playing cümbüş—apparently a statement about Western-cum-modern aesthetics.

transfer sound directly into the face of the instrument. The ability to adjust the placement of this bridge, and thereby adjust the vibrating string-length, is crucial for setting the intonation of fretted necks, though this is not so important when using the "standard," fretless kind. When the tanbur type cümbüş is used as a bowed instrument (*yaylı cümbüş tanbur*), players may alter the bridge to make the highest "melody" course higher (from the face) than the rest so the bow does not accidentally play the lower "drone" strings at the same time.[35] The bridges space the strings a little more than one and a half times wider than at the nut.[36]

Necks (*saplar*, sing. *sap*; lit. "handle, stem") are attached to the body by means of a cast aluminum joint with two faces at a ninety degree angle (fig 6a, b and d); the face of its "horizontal" plane is screwed onto the neck, while its slotted fulcrum fits over the ridge of the rim, kept in tension by both the strings and a butterfly bolt running through the joint's "vertical" face into the body. The necks are thus attached rather loosely, effectively held in position by the tension of the strings. Turning the butterfly bolt counter-clockwise loosens the strings and increases the

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[35] However by causing the bow hair to make contact with the strings above the body (i.e. where neck and body meet) this effect can be avoided by changing the angle of the bow instead. Compare with the violin, violoncello, etc. which require rounded bridges, radiused fingerboards and "c-bouts" to avoid unwanted "double stops." Although the smaller *cümbüş saz* is intended to be plucked, some innovative players, such as Ali Jihad Racy in Los Angeles, bow it like a yaylı cümbüş tanbur (in this case without altering the bridge; personal comm.).

[36] On the standard/guitar version approximately 3 cm. (1.5 in.) at the nut, widening to 6.9 cm. (2.75 in.) at the bridge (measured from the outside of outer strings); approximately 2 cm. (13/16 in.) to 3 cm. (1 3/16 in.) on saz, cura, mandolin and tanbur types. Note that all doubled courses are in the same octave except for the lowest courses on the saz, cura, and tanbur types, which have one thick (low) string and one thin string tuned an octave higher.

"action"—the distance (and angle) between strings and fingerboard—while turning it clockwise has the opposite effect.[37]

The necks themselves, like the bodies and skins, have changed in style over the years. As previously mentioned, cümbüş necks have been available in "standard," saz, cura, mandolin, twelve-string guitar, tanbur, and ud types, though the ud type was discontinued early on, for lack of interest. Originally all necks were hardwood and commonly faced with ebony fingerboards inlaid with mother-of-pearl designs, sometimes only partway up the neck (compare fig.s 7 and 8b). In order to save on the costs of materials and labor, by the 1960s these were changed from hardwood to painted pressboard, and faced with Formica or other plastic surfaces—or nothing at all—in place of the ebony fingerboards (fig. 8c).[38] However the *ağaç* (or "wood") *cümbüşü* (also known as the "extra cümbüş") features a heavier, five-part laminated hardwood neck in three woods (rosewood and two shades of mahogany) whose mahogany veneer fingerboard is simply decorated with pine and ebony marquetry (see fig. 8a).[39]

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[37] Adjusting the action, a relatively difficult thing to do on most stringed instruments, is important for "getting the right feel"; lower action allows for applying less finger pressure (which is generally desirable for playing speed and endurance), but if it is too low the strings will buzz against the fingerboard or frets. Very subtle adjustments to the action may also be effected by changing the tension of the skin head, thereby raising or lowering the bridge.

[38] The necks are often brush-painted in two shades of brown to simulate wood. The most common styles of Formica facing are white faux marble, closely followed by brown faux wood, and the rarer but eye-catching neon orange.

[39] It should be noted that the ağaç/"extra" cümbüşü is the top-of-the-line model, available only with a "standard-style" neck (though one could put any style neck on it, if the difference in quality is aesthetically acceptable); it presently costs about four hundred dollars—four times as much as a "normal" standard cümbüş.

Figure 7. 1930s band, female cümbüş player front row, third from left. Note partial inlay on neck and ud-like headstock.

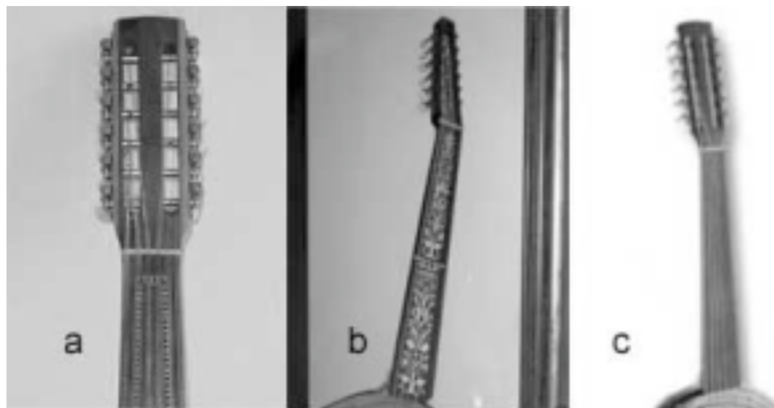

Figure 8. Necks and headstocks: a) ağaç, with current headstock style, b) fully inlaid, with older headstock, c) post-1960, faced with faux wood Formica.

Headstock designs have mainly remained the same, that is, a basic tapered rectangle, a little wider than the neck itself, angled slightly backward from the neck. Exceptions are the ud and "standard" necks whose headstocks originally imitated the ud's though without its extreme backward angle (see fig.s 7, 8b)—this was also changed to a guitar-like rectangular headstock in the 1960s (fig.s 8a and c).

In the 1930s one of the cümbüş's most "modern" features was the use of "machine head" tuners, a standard on guitars and mandolins even then (though these were rare in Turkey) and are still generally considered too newfangled to apply to traditional instruments like the ud, saz, and plucked tanbur. Note also that machine head tuners allow for higher string tension. All cümbüş types are intended to use metal strings (which apply greater tension to an instrument than gut or nylon strings), though string tension on these instruments probably does not positively necessitate machine head tuners except in the cases of the standard and mandolin types, for which the older style wooden peg tuners would not be sufficiently strong.

All forms of the cümbüş are made to be played with a plectrum, though the tanbur version is historically more often played with a bow.[40] Plectra (and the manner of plucking) are different for each type of instrument, following those of the instruments whose (neck) type are imitated; the "standard" cümbüş is played with an ud plectrum (*mızrap*) (see fig. 9).

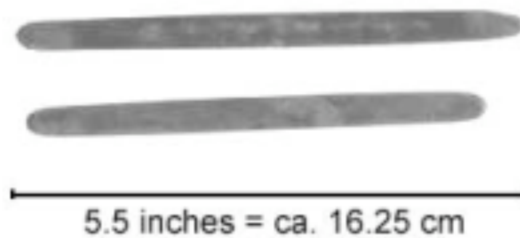

Figure 9. Ud plectra (*mızraplar*); usually made of plastic or tortoise shell.

[40] The plucked tanbur being the arch-classical stringed instrument, most players prefer the traditional wooden-bodied variety. Two famous exceptions were Selahattin Pınar (1902-1960) and "Malatyalı" Fahri Kayahan (1918?-1969).

4.2 Sonic Properties of the Cümbüş

The metallic body and skin resonating membrane make for a considerable increase in volume over traditional instruments like the ud and tanbur. This configuration, as with all banjo-type instruments, also increases the timbral presence of upper partials, creating a "twangy" tone.[41] These aspects (volume and tone) caused the instrument to stand out, or at least "hold its own," in a band setting before the advent of electronic amplification, in a way that the ud could not do.[42] This was especially important since the relatively loud clarinet was coming into greater use in urban popular music about the same time as the cümbüş's invention, and these characteristics were apparently considered desirable in early phonograph recordings, on which the middle range of the ud, particularly, became indistinct in a group setting (see Ünlü 1998). However, these same properties in a more intimate, live setting (e.g., small classical ensembles) appear to be a factor in its rejection by the classical music establishment (see section 5.2.1).

Another such factor may have been that despite having a loud "attack" (initial struck sound) the "sustain" (duration of resonance of the struck pitch) of the cümbüş is rather short in comparison to the instruments it mimics, especially on fingered

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[41] Parenthetically, at weddings in some areas (e.g., Kayseri) it is apparently common for guest-singers, when taking the stage, to sing into the face of a ("standard") cümbüş (held by a musician) for the "reverb" effect produced by these properties and by the sympathetic vibration of the open strings. This may be done with or without amplification (B. Işıktaş, 10/19/05 interview). Without the metal body, the ağaç or "extra" cümbüş's sound is mellower (i.e., sounding fewer upper partials), and was designed to sound "more like an ud" (A. Cümbüş 8/31/05 interview).

[42] In these respects it is like the tenor banjo and metal-bodied "resonator guitar" in American popular musics of the 1920s and 1930s; since the invention of microphones and electronic pick-ups, these are now mainly "novelty" instruments with small niches of their own.

tones (as opposed to those played on open strings); it therefore invites a playing technique that emphasizes continuous playing, tremolo, and ornamentation to a greater extent than the "original" instruments.[43] Informants from the current classical music establishment often explain that the cümbüş interferes sonically with the well-established ud and tanbur (i.e., is too much an indistinct mixture of the two), as well as being too competitively loud in a mixed group (2005 interviews with Bitmez, Erdemsel, Işıktaş, Baloğlu, and Dural). The exception is the cümbüş yaylı tanbur, whose increase in volume is considered desirable over that of the "normal" tanbur when bowed (a technique effectively no longer in use for that instrument) and whose timbral differences from it have been considered minimal and/or acceptable for use in Turkish classical music ensembles (ibid.; also see photos of the instrument in state ensembles in Körükçü 1998).

Tunings for the various types of cümbüş follow those of the instrument imitated. The "standard" cümbüş generally uses a tuning a perfect fourth higher than that of the Turkish ud:[44]

Cümbüş:	AA2	BB2	EE3	AA3	DD4	GG4
Ud:	E2	F#F#2	BB2	EE3	AA3	DD4

[43] In fact the term used by influential classical Turkish composer Mesut Cemil Bey for "excessive ornamentation" in the early twentieth century was "cümbüş" (see section 5.2.1), though it is not clear whether he modeled the term after the instrument, which it is nonetheless clear he disliked. In any case the physiological reason I propose for these playing techniques is not mentioned in the literature, critical or otherwise; I present it as the intuitive speculation of a player of both ud and cümbüş.

[44] In this depiction, letters indicate pitch and double or single course of strings, while numbers indicate octave level where A4 = 440 Hz (Torun 2000).

However, many players tune the cümbüş down to ud level. It must be noted that tunings for both ud and cümbüş vary, especially regarding the lowest course of strings, which is often changed to suit the melodic mode (makam) of a particular piece. The conservatory-taught standard tuning for ud puts the lowest course at concert C#2, but the configuration here given is both common and, for cümbüş, preferred.[45]

4.3 Variants and Alternatives

Please note that hereafter, the term "cümbüş" will be used to refer only to the "standard" type unless otherwise specified. This is consistent with usage in Turkey.

Despite the uneven reception alluded to in section 3.2, there were a number of imitations of and hybrid alternatives to the cümbüş that appeared soon after its debut on the music scene. Some of them, like those made by renown ud luthier Onnik Karibyan, were virtually identical to it (see figure 10, top),[46] while former Cümbüş workshop employee Süleyman Suat Sezgin created the *ahenk,* a version with a sturdier, non-detachable neck, thick ebony fingerboard inlaid with mother of pearl, mixed wood and skin face with two carved rosettes, and tanbur-like wooden body

[45] Note that written music in Turkey is transposed a perfect fourth up, such that written middle C sounds at the G below it. Solfege syllables—commonly used to refer to note names—reflect the transposition, thus a package of cümbüş strings advertises the tuning "Re Mi La Re Sol Do," resulting in concert ABEADG.

[46] N.b.: Karibyan is spelled Garipyan in Gazimihal (1975: 189). I played an example of one from the collection of luthier Cengiz Sarıkuş, which had a wooden cylinder "side" and flat metal back; inscribed in the rim is "Onnik Karibyan" which is repeated in Ottoman (Arabic) letters. Another cümbüş-variant in the same collection, from an unknown (but not Cümbüş-approved) luthier, is certified as having belonged to famed ud-ist Mısırlı İbrahim Effendi.

(fig. 10). This more expensive (in a visually evident way), softer-timbred and longer-sustaining instrument drew more favorable attention from the *Darülelhan* (classical conservatory),[47] but apparently only a few were made around 1931 before Zeynel Abidin won a court suit against him for patent infringement.[48] According to Gazimihal (1975: 189) luthiers Ali Rıza, Sadık Büyükçağlar "and other master instrument makers" also made variants but all had given up by 1935.

In addition to these there was at least one hybrid instrument, invented by ud-ist Arap Neş'et Bey, "[C]omposed of a cümbüş neck attached to a lavta body, and dubbed the 'Neşetkâr', it was well-received and in demand in Anatolia" (Özpekel 2004:60) (see fig. 11).[49] These are today very rare, the only recordings of them appear to be those of Neş'et himself, and even "reproductions" going by that name are likely to be flat-backed ud-s with slightly longer than usual (though not necessarily cümbüş-like) necks. Nevertheless, the existence of the aforementioned cümbüş-variants and

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[47] See Üngör 1999. Luthier Cengiz Sarıkuş makes reproductions of the ahenk (at 7-8 times the price of a new cümbüş); speaking to his workshop assistants, they seemed to me unaware and unconcerned of any patent issues. Fethi Cümbüş estimates that "around 100" original ahenk-s were produced, but I suspect the number is lower, and have only seen two; one in a ca. 1931 photograph of (Armenian) smyrnéika musician Aghápios Tomboúlis, and one (in unplayable condition) in the collection of Istanbul Sephardic musician/collector Selim Hubeş.

[48] The similarity between the tanbur-like wooden body of the ahenk and that of the ağaç cümbüşü is unmistakable, but Ali Cümbüş would not credit the ahenk as an influence in the creation of the newer instrument, saying only that the denser body was meant to give the instrument a more ud-like tone (A. Cümbüş 8/31/05 interview).

[49] According to the same source it was also known as the *şerâre* ("spark"). This source gives the artist's year of death as 1930, the year the cümbüş was patented, which may raise a question as to whether the instrument's neck was genuinely "cümbüş," merely cümbüş-like, or perhaps custom made by Zeynel Abidin himself. The latter's great-grandsons cannot substantiate this last possibility, nor have they record or recollection of the company having manufactured either the instrument or its necks for other makers. See also Kürkçüoğlu's mention of the neşetkâr in Şanlıurfa folk music (n.d.), and see the glossary of this thesis for a definition of the lute-type *lavta*.

hybrid alternatives tells us something about the popularity of the original, both as an instrument and as a model of desired innovations in plucked-string instrument design at the time.

Figure 10. Top: Author playing a 1930s variant of the cümbüş made by luthier Onnik Karibyan, next to a recent reproduction of an ahenk by luthier Cengis Sarıkuş, in the latter's shop. (Photo: Sinan Erdemsel.) Bottom: Side view of original ahenk body (from the collection of Selim Hubeş).

Figure 11. An original 1930s variation of the neşetkâr (luthier unknown), played by owner Sinan Erdemsel.

Part Three Use of the Cümbüş and Symbolic Inscriptions

5

Initial Receptions and Inscriptions: 1930 to 1960

5.1 Turkey, Pluralism and Multiculturalism

The Republic of Turkey was created in 1923 out of the remnant Anatolian and Thracian parts of the Ottoman Empire, whose loss in World War I had precipitated partition of its massive territory into a plethora of new nation-states, many of them now its neighbors. In addition to the majority ethnic Turks and Muslim refugees from formerly Ottoman lands (mostly Balkan—Turkish, Greek, Slavic, or mixed),[50] Turkey's new borders contained small numbers of non-Turkish ethnic groups (Christian Slavs, Armenians and Greeks; Jews; nomadic Turkmen; Laz, Abkhaz and other Caucasians; Arabs) as well as a plurality of the world's Kurds.[51]

Traditionally, that is to say in the context of the Ottoman Empire, different ethnic and linguistic groups had been classified only by religious adherence. The four recognized *millet*-s or religious groups-qua-nations were: Orthodox Christians, Monophysite Christians (which nonetheless came to include Protestants and

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[50] Zürcher (2003) states that around twenty percent of Turkey's 1923 population were such refugees, having started arriving in the 1820s.

[51] This list of peoples is extremely condensed in comparison to Peter Alford Andrews's 1989 *Ethnic Groups in the Republic of Turkey,* which interested readers should certainly see. In it he documents the bewildering variety of ethnicities in Turkey, beginning with 47 distinct "ethnic groups" and moving into detailed subdivisions among these. The Turkish saying "Türkiye'de altmışaltı [or sometimes "yetmişiki"] buçuk millet var" ("In Turkey there are sixty-six [or seventy-two] and a half nations"—the half being Gypsies) is probably not too great an exaggeration in either form.

Catholics), Jews (both Rabbinical and Karaite) and Muslims, which included but also repressed "heretical" Shiites, including the Alevi (Shaw 1976:152-3).[52] As Islam dictates the protection of non-Muslim subjects in Muslim-ruled lands who are "people of the Book" (Arabic *dhimmi*-s, Turkish *zimmi*-s—adherents to Christianity, Judaism or the apparently extinct Sabianism),[53] the non-Muslim millet-s were given wide autonomy in terms of self-governance. Though zimmi subjects of the Empire were always subject to Islamic law in regard to interactions between Muslims and non-Muslims, and in some ways were treated as "second-class citizens," this "millet system," combined with an essentially inclusive attitude toward ethnic diversity within Islam, created a sense of tolerance among "nations" often compared favorably to that of "Christian" Europe during the same period.

Additionally, Ottoman culture—which must be understood as that of the ruling class, and at no time participated in universally anywhere in the Empire—was a syncretism of Turkic, Persian and Arabic languages and cultural practices. Entry into it—though at the higher levels of government service dependent on the profession of Islam, by conversion if necessary—was relatively easy for subjects

[52] This concept of "the millet system," a standard trope in Ottoman historiography, has been deconstructed by Braude (1982) and Karpat (1982), who see a much less systematic social structure in the Empire. They posit that even the idea of a traditional "millet system" was a late-nineteenth century invention on the part of reform-minded political elites. Nonetheless, in Turkey today it remains the dominant conception of the historical situation, and I reproduce it here without these authors' critiques (which I, like historian Stanford J. Shaw, do not find wholly convincing) because it informs certain current conceptions of Self and Other with which we will be dealing later.

[53] A very small minority of Kurds are adherents to the pre-Islamic Yezidi faith, which uses "the Book" but reveres a divinely redeemed fallen angel figure; though reviled as "Satan worshippers," they may have survived amongst their Muslim neighbors under the assumed cover of Sabianism, which seems to have referred originally to Mandeans (see Joseph 1919; Andrews 1989:33 and 349).

from any ethnic or religious background. Ottoman music culture, particularly, was a multiculturally-created practice, bound within an elite, Islamic framework (B. Aksoy 2002, Feldman 1996). We may therefore characterize Ottoman *culture* (which did not include all the subjects in the empire) as multicultural and Ottoman *social structure* (which did include all imperial subjects) as pluralistic.

With the establishment of the Republic, and largely guided by its first president, the charismatic war hero and national leader Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, separation of citizens by religion or (non-Turkish) ethnicity—and with it a pluralist-oriented society—was abandoned. Having freedom of religious choice in a laic state, all citizens were to be accorded the same rights and responsibilities, speak the (reformed) Turkish language, and refer to themselves as Turkish (see Shaw 1977: 375-88). That this term was also the ethnonym of the majority of the population was in accord with the European model of modern nationhood to which Atatürk aspired (ibid.).[54]

A great deal of effort was and still is spent creating and reinforcing ideals regarding society and good citizenship along these lines, which is part of an overall political philosophy called *Kemalism* (after Mustafa Kemal Atatürk), and for the most part these efforts may be counted as having been successful. However the awareness of an ethnically mixed heritage informing the actual expression of those ideals, and particularly as it relates to a desired historical continuity, has, since the foundation of

[54] In the earliest years of the Republic (1924-25) there had been a movement called "Anatolianism," which advocated a geographic rather than ethnocentric national identity, but it lost out to the version promoted by Atatürk (see Andrews 1989: 35). I have met a few (mostly younger, politically liberal) Turks who say they wish it had gone the other way, but this appears to be a rare opinion.

the Republic, been part of the greater discourse defining the self-identity of the modern Turkish citizen (see Andrews 1989: 17-48, Bozdağlıoğlu 2003: 45-50).

Now that the Western, post-World War II ideal of progress has, at least in theory, abandoned the nation-as-monoethnic-entity model in favor of one recognizing the equal rights and "cultural value" of minorities, Others, and, multiculturally constituted societies, the debates over multiculturalism and pluralism in Turkey—which aspires strongly to join the European Union—are flourishing in a variety of patterns that pit past against future, religion against a secular state, "Eastern" tradition against "Western" modernity. As music is one of the few cultural expressions in Turkey that has at once a continuity with the Ottoman past, multicultural roots, and the capacity to convey expressions of all factions of the polemics just mentioned, it has played a unique role in representing different aspects of this discourse.

5.2 Initial Receptions of the Cümbüş

As mentioned in Chapter Three, the cümbüş was intended to be an "everyman's instrument," usable for playing both alaturka and alafranga genres. Aside from its close association with populist, progressive and Western-oriented Republican ideals, it was basically a "blank slate," an instrument without history that was offered (that is, advertised) as appropriate for all kinds of music, be it classical, urban popular or folk. The music scene into which it was introduced, however, was rather complex, bound up as it was with far-reaching social structures then undergoing rapid and radical change. The following sections detail the receptions

(and rejections) of the cümbüş, and first inscriptions of the idea of Otherness onto it, in the Turkish classical, urban popular, and folk music scenes of the early-Republican period, roughly 1930 through 1960.

5.2.1 In Turkish Classical Music

The Turkish classical music establishment, centered in Istanbul but to some extent active in all the large urban centers, had been gradually weakening for decades before the Republic was founded due to loss of court patronage (see Pennanen 2004: 3-4 and 7). In the early years of the Republic it found itself on the defensive side of a battle for legitimacy against the supposedly more modern and progressive Western classical (and other alafranga) music genres (ibid.: 13, see also Stokes 1995). In response to perceived "reactionaries" in the classical music establishment, much of whose transmission had traditionally taken place in religious contexts (e.g., *teke*-s, or Sufi lodges), Atatürk shut down schools, both religious and secular, where it was taught, and even banned it from radio broadcast from 1934 to 1938 (see Shaw 1977: 384-8, Kinross 1969: 439).

In this climate classical musicians seem to have been little enthused by the prospect of trying to integrate the cümbüş into their standard instrumentation: not only was it intimately bound up with the Republican political structure that threatened Turkish classical music's very being, the instrument's populist *raison d'être* seemed to include relegating their centuries-old and court-oriented art to the realm of working class popular amateurism. Criticism of the cümbüş was harsh from these circles: the

instrument was said to be "degenerated" (Özalp 1986), excessively loud, timbrally inappropriate and cheap (therefore undignified) in appearance (Gazimihal 1975, Üngör 1999), "not radiophonic," impossible to keep in tune, deceptively seductive "with its gleaming construction and forceful sound" and even "damaging to the chest when cold," not to mention a threat to reputable ud luthiers (Gazimihal 1975: 189-90).

A sub-plot of this story is an apprehension on the part of classical ud players that in the rush to "Turkify" society by removing Persian and Arab influences (most prominent in the language reforms), the cümbüş would become a forced replacement for the ud (classical fretless lute), which was perceived as being Persian in origin (N. Çelik, personal comm.). It did not help matters that the word "cümbüş" itself was a term in use to describe a frivolously over-ornamented style of playing, out of fashion since the advent of a clear, sparsely ornamented style promoted by composer Mesut Cemil Bey, who, unfortunately for the cümbüş, was in these early years working at Radyo İstanbul and soon to be director of Radyo Ankara, the main outlets for broadcasting classical performances (E. Aksoy 1995).[55] He ignored the Presidential Music Committee's recommendation to accept the instrument and would not allow the cümbüş in broadcast ensembles.[56]

[55] Note that all radio and television broadcasting in Turkey was run by government monopolies from 1927 to April of 1994 (US Library of Congress 1995).

[56] Fethi and Ali Cümbüş recall a family story of there being some sort of fight or quarrel between Zeynel Abidin and Mesut Cemil, but could not remember if it was the *result* or a *cause* of this decision (8/31/05 interviews).

The single exception to an otherwise total rejection of the instrument by the conservative classical music establishment—and the only kind of cümbüş never associated with Otherness—seems to be the cümbüş yaylı tanbur, the bowed version of cümbüş with a long (around 3 feet/1 meter; see figure 1b) tanbur neck. It appears to have been included in official ensembles from the 1950s onward as an acceptable substitute for the "normal" tanbur used as a bowed instrument (see photos of the cümbüş version in state ensembles in Körükçü 1998). Even so, this instrument, along with the standard cümbüş and *darbuka* (goblet-shaped hand drum) would be explicitly banned from broadcast ensembles by Turkish Radio and Television in 1965, apparently as an oblique way of banning *arabesk* (TRT 1971, and see section 7.2).[57]

5.2.2 In Urban Popular Musics

The cümbüş seems to have found its first home in the urban *meyhane,* or drinking establishment-cum-cabaret, in Istanbul and Izmir, and briefly in the similar *tavérna*-s and *tekké*-s of Thessalonica and Piraeus in Greece (F. Cümbüş 8/31/05 interview; see also Pennanen 2004, Zat 2002, Sakaoğlu and Akbayar 1999). Since the drinking of alcohol was officially (if not always actually) forbidden to Muslims during imperial times, these establishments invariably belonged to members of non-Muslim minority millet-s, usually to Greek proprietors, and this pattern of venue

[57] My thanks to Dr. Mitsuru Saito for sharing with me the information on this ban, and for his opinion on it in regard to *arabesk*.

ownership continued through the first decades of the Republic (Sakaoğlu and Akbayar 1999, Paçacı and B. Aksoy 1995).

The music played in such establishments, and in the similarly-owned *kahve aman*-s (coffee-house cabarets) and urban (indoor) theaters, was a mixture of popular urban folk songs (often with alternate lyrics in Turkish, Armenian, Greek and Ladino), adaptations of Western light classical pieces, and Ottoman light classical genres, e.g., "light classical" *fasıl* and *gazel* (see Penannen 2004, B. Aksoy 2002, Ünlü 1998). Professional Román musicians, who readily took up the cümbüş, also played substantially the same repertoire at this time but were by custom restricted to playing in "lower class" bars, as well as for wedding receptions. The musicians who played in the "better" establishments, however, were drawn mainly from the sizeable Greek, Armenian and (to a lesser extent) Jewish communities of the meyhane-s' environs (see Seeman 2002:176-187, B. Aksoy 2002, Ünlü 1998). Additionally, many of the outstanding classical players and composers of the times found—and despite the disapproval of purists, seem to have enjoyed—work in the meyhane-s, etc., replacing the income now withheld by ruling class patrons (see Pennanen 2004: 6-7).[58]

[58] For the sake of convenience, future references to "meyhane" music culture in this paper are meant to include those of the kahve aman and urban, indoor theater unless otherwise specified. It should be noted that the term *meyhane* (lit. "wine-house") today refers to a kind of restaurant in which alcohol is served. Light musical entertainment is still featured in them. The kahve aman has ceased to exist; there is at least one old fashioned theater remaining in Istanbul, though it is now used for Turkish improvisational *tulûat* theatrical performances.

This last category of musicians caused a rise in both the technical sophistication and popularity of urban popular music while simultaneously alarming the art music purists, from whose point of view insult was being added to injury as classical music was now not merely evicted from the palace, but made to live amongst drunken infidels in the grand cities' less respectable (i.e., non-Muslim) neighborhoods as well. Significantly, but for no explicitly documented reason, most of those among them who played the cümbüş or cümbüş-like inventions in these venues, such as Mısırlı İbrahim Efendi, Kadri Şençalar, and Arap Neş'et Bey, appear mainly to be ethnically non-Turkish.[59]

Whether this acceptance of the cümbüş by non-Turkish players and its apparent rejection by Turkish ones were in some way deliberate or even conscious is unknown. The instrument seems to have been chosen by its players in these genres for its volume in venues where the audiences were loud, and for its novelty in an age of modernization and innovation, whereas its rejection (in classical circles) is voiced in aesthetic or implicitly political terms rather than ethnic ones. Nonetheless one of the major issues of the day centered on what it meant to be Turkish in the new Republic, and in the western urban centers, this necessarily included critical scrutiny of the cultural practices of the Greek, Armenian and Jewish minorities. Whatever the

[59] But note mention of Turkish cümbüş player Şevket Bütüner in Pennanen (2004: 8). His sobriquet notwithstanding, "Egyptian" İbrahim Efendi was apparently a Syrian Jew; Özpekel and others affirm that he was from Syria (and, I would note, therefore possibly Mizrahi rather than Sephardic), however Selim Hubeş claims he has seen family records showing that İbrahim was Sephardic, born and raised in Istanbul, and asserts that his nickname came from long travels in Damascus and Cairo. I am inclined to accept that "Arab" Neş'et Bey, about whom little is known, actually was Arab (though see Seeman 2002: 235 for an example of a Román musician using that nickname). Şençalar, who played in the generation after these two, was one of the few (known) Román classical musicians.

motivations for “ethnic Turks’” rejection of the instrument, from this time through the 1950s the cümbüş is associated most strongly with these popular urban genres and with the Greek, Armenian, Jewish and Román professional musicians who performed them at that time. These constitute the first inscriptions of Otherness onto the cümbüş. The Romanlar’s association with the cümbüş began in these early years, probably with less prominence than that of the aforementioned groups due to their de facto restriction to lower-profile playing venues, but would eventually grow to become the dominant inscription of Otherness on the instrument (see section 7.1).

As for the cümbüş in popular *alafranga* musical contexts, few players appear to have picked it up. The tenor banjo (though rare), mandolin and guitar apparently seemed more “authentic” for the performance of a music whose main attraction was, after all, that it was *not* Turkish.[60] There was nonetheless a spate of interest in it among musicians of the “new” (post-Ottoman era) *kanto,* a mixture of Turkish popular song with Italian light opera and European/American dance forms (tango, Charleston, fox trot, etc.) played *entr’actes* in improvisational theater produced and performed almost entirely by Istanbul Greeks and Armenians between 1935 and 1945 (Ünlü 1998, Seeman 2002:176-187), thus strengthening these groups’ association with the instrument.

Seeman notes the popularity in *kanto* performances of comic portrayals of Román and other ethnic stereotypes in the manner of traditional *karagöz* shadow puppet theater (ibid.). Although the cümbüş probably was not at that time employed

[60] But see Ünlü 2004:346 for cümbüş in a Western-style jazz band.

as a “prop” specifically signifying such Otherness, the co-occurrence of these portrayals and the instrument—used to play music iconically supporting the stereotypes—likely did a great deal to further specific inscriptions of non-Turkish Otherness onto the cümbüş.

Additionally, the current owners of the Cümbüş Music Instrument Company, Fethi and Ali Cümbüş, maintain that the firm originally sold many mandolin-necked versions of the instrument to early *smyrnéika* and *rebétika* musicians in Greece, but as this music turned into a symbol of nascent modern Greek nationalism, the cümbüş, whose metal rim is stamped “İstanbul Türkiye” was necessarily rejected and the *bouzouki* became the main instrument, first in rebétika, then as the iconic national instrument of modern Greece (see Pennanen 2004: 14).[61] I did meet, however, on two separate occasions, Greek smyrnéika/rebétika revival musicians visiting Istanbul to buy cümbüş-es.

5.2.3 In Folk Musics

As well as being shunned by the classical music establishment, the cümbüş remained on the far periphery as a popular folk music instrument in Turkey. However there is an area in the rugged southeast, centered around the cities of Şanlıurfa,

[61] The symbolic nationalism of these genres must be understood as always coming from an “underground” position and in direct opposition to civil authorities, who had their own version of national symbology in mind; these authorities regarded rebétika as incurably oriental/decadent, regardless of its choice of instruments (see Holst[-Warhaft] 1975, Petropoulos 1975/2000, and Herzfeld 1996). Also see Pennanen 2004 passim for a detailed analysis of the relations between Greek nationalism and Ottoman popular musics.

Diyarbakır, Elazığ and Gaziantep, where the cümbüş caught on as a folk instrument from the mid-1930s (see Akbıyık 1999).[62]

The performance context of the music played in these regions is as different from the Istanbul meyhane scene as are their respective environs. The usual venue for this music, especially in Şanlıurfa, is the *sıra gecesi* (pl. *sıra geceleri*), or "turn evening," small gatherings of men in private houses, with a different group member hosting the meeting each week (thus the "turn" in its name).[63] These gatherings are often ritualized by uniform traditional dress and follow an expected unfolding of the evening's events: tea, long conversation, poetry recitals, an invocational prayer, the playing of music (which also serves as lessons for the less experienced), and the sharing of traditional regional dishes. Unlike the urban meyhane scene, in which a thoroughly secular and "modernist-oriented" environment provided opportunities for the mixing of social classes, genders (and gender preferences—see Zat 2002: 134-9) among strangers, the sıra gecesi is an intimate and spiritually-oriented venue in which pre-existing traditional hierarchies are reinforced among a community of

[62] Kürkçüoğlu expands this region, stating "...we can count Elazığ, Diyarbakır, Kerkük [N. Iraq] and Aleppo [Syria] as Şanlıurfa's [musical] region of interactivity. Outside of this, if there is interactivity with Erzurum, Bayburt, Erzincan, Sivas, Kahramanmaraş and Gaziantep, it is in very low ratio" (n.d., trans. mine). Although I refer etically to this music as "folk" music—as do most Turks not from the region, and even many within it (e.g. Akbıyık 2004)—it is often considered emically (by participants) to be both classical and popular, a mixture of folk, religious and classical musics (see fn. 64). Dr. Scott Marcus notes a similar emic conceptualization of repertoire in eastern Arab music (personal comm.).

[63] Though I use the term by which this music/musical phenomenon is best known in Turkey (*sıra gecesi,* pl. *sıra geceleri*) throughout this thesis, it should be noted that the sıra gecesi itself is only its wintertime manifestation; in summer the meetings are held in orchards or gardens, and in spring and autumn the same groups meet for this purpose on overnight trips to nearby mountains (*yatı gecesi* or *dağ gezisi;* see Akbıyık 2004:136). In Elazığ the same phenomenon is known as *kürsübaşı,* "head (host) of the table," and in Gaziantep may be called *barak gecesi,* ¨grace evenings.¨

acquaintances: host and guests, teachers and students, old and young, man and (absent) woman, God and man. The cümbüş, while not displacing the ud or saz, is a central and expected instrument in the performance of the music of these evenings.

The ethnic make-up of these eastern areas (some of which border on Syria and Iraq) is most often described as "mixed," the elements in this mix being Turkish, Kurdish and Arab, with Kurdish predominating as we move further south and eastward. The sıra gecesi repertoire reflects this mixture in both the use of several languages and that of several modal systems.[64] Through national television broadcasts of (staged) sıra geceleri over the last ten years, produced mainly by and for internal migrants from these regions to western urban centers, the cümbüş has also become associated with this region and its religious, conservative and multicultural mix of people.

Use of the cümbüş as a folk instrument seems to have spread outward east and southeast from Şanlıurfa, Diyarbakır, Elazığ and Gaziantep, outside of the sıra gecesi zone, particularly among Kurds, and further northeast to the few remaining rural Armenian villages (about which see Andrews 1989: 127-8). Many of these musicians do not actively publicize their ethnicity, but increasingly more Kurdish musicians are producing songs or whole albums in the formerly banned Kurdish languages (though Armenian-language albums are more rare within Turkey), some including cümbüş

[64] Urfa composer/singer Bedirhan ("Bedran") Kırmızı (see fig. 12), who writes and sings in Turkish, Arabic, Kurdish and Persian, explained to me that pieces in the repertoire are classified by the "makam" system of each of these four traditions, and further into three categories (*edebiyatlar*, literally "literatures"): *divan* (courtly), *halk* (folk), and *dini tasavvuf* (religious), thus providing twelve sub-repertoires (10/22/05 interview).

accompaniment.[65] Illustrating a further extension of the southeastward diffusion of the cümbüş, I am told by an informant from the frontier province of Şırnak that on either side of Turkey's long border with Iraq the cümbüş has also been a popular folk instrument among Kurds, both Muslim and Jewish (S. Tatar 7/16/05 interview), but I could not ascertain when the instrument arrived there or what repertoires are played on it.[66]

[65] For instance Aynur's 2004 *Keçe Kurdan* (in Kurdish) and Knar's 1999 *Armenian Folk Music of Anatolia.* It should be mentioned in regard to a broad term like "Armenian music" that there are important differences between the (in Turkey) none too publicly prominent, eastern Turkey/western Armenia, Armenian language folk music, and the urban, cosmopolitan, mainly Turkish (or Greek, or Ladino) language music of the *meyhane* in early Republican times, in which Armenian instrumentalists played a major (perhaps even predominant) role. Regardless, Armenian musicians outside of western Asia (e.g., in the U.S.) tend to play from both repertoires.

[66] But cf. Kürkçüoğlu (n.d.) on interactions between Kirkuk (northern Iraqi) and Şanlıurfa folk musics.

Figure 12. Composer Bedirhan Kırmızı (center) accompanied by Mehmet Emin Bitmez on ud (left) while anonymous cümbüş player (on right, with rare 7-course cümbüş) sits it out at a sıra gecesi in Şirinevler, Istanbul.

Figure 13. Mehmet Emin Bitmez takes a cümbüş solo during a sıra gecesi in Şirinevler, Istanbul. Though he teaches classical ud in the State Conservatory at Istanbul Technical University, Bitmez grew up playing cümbüş in Şanlıurfa.

5.3 Other Cümbüş Players

In addition to the uses of the cümbüş mentioned so far in this chapter, the "groups" presented in this section—women, Balkan *göçmen* (immigrants), "rural poor," and the Abdal—each has some minor though noteworthy involvement with the instrument. In none of these cases is the cümbüş particularly associated with the group, nor do they particularly associate themselves with it.

5.3.1 Women Cümbüş Players

Although at least from early Republican times there have been many famous professional female singers, traditionally professional instrumentalists in Turkey have been men. There is a history of amateur music making in the home, wherein women played principally for other women or for family gatherings.[67] Amateur musicianship seems to have been encouraged by mandatory music education in the new public schools of the early Republic, in which the cümbüş was an optional instrument of instruction, and where gender equality was an explicit Kemalist goal (see Shaw 1977: 385).

I have heard several times, usually from (older) ethnic Turks, "my mother/aunt/grandmother played the cümbüş!" These memories invariably refer to the period from 1935 through about 1960, and always in private, recreational, non-professional contexts, although it must be mentioned that there are photos of

[67] See Saz 1994 for the best-documented description, albeit in a ruling class domestic context.

(anonymous) professional female cümbüş players from the late-1930s.[68] From the beginning of production the Cümbüş Music Instrument Company produced a model especially for women, having a shorter neck and shallower body than the "normal" cümbüş, but this was discontinued in the 1960s due to lack of interest (F. Cümbüş, personal comm.).

Virtually no documentation exists on these early women cümbüş players, nor on any that may have played it since. Whether or not this is the result of a deliberate marginalization within a marginalization in the literature is a question worth pondering, as is the question of whether this brief acceptance of the instrument by (Turkish) women had anything to do with its rejection by Turkish men. Lacking documentation, these remain merely matters for speculation.

Although a separate study on the cümbüş as a factor in the spread of equal rights for women in Turkey would also be fascinating and no doubt fruitful, even a survey as modest as mine here was fraught with research difficulties: aside from the lack of documentation, few of these early players are now living, and of the apparently small percentage of women who played it most seem to have done so in entirely private home performances, yet without transmitting the practice to subsequent generations. As mentioned, women as a category form no part of the general associations with the cümbüş in Turkey today.

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[68] For instance in the *Kadınlar fasıl heyeti* (Ladies *Fasıl* Committee), an all-female band playing in a 1930s meyhane in a photo in Sakaoğlu and Akbayar (1999: 239); see also fig. 7.

5.3.2 Balkan *Göçmen*

A number of informants on the Aegean coast of Western Anatolia relate that the cümbüş was a popular instrument among Muslim *göçmen* (immigrants) who arrived in Turkey from Albania and Macedonia, first during the "population exchanges" (i.e., deportations) of 1922-24, and in a second wave in the 1950s (see Andrews 1989: 98-105).[69] It was especially played in wedding bands (called *daireciler* or "frame-drummers" after the female players of the *daire* frame drum). This was apparently the case until the late 1960s or early 1970s by which time, according to informants, these göçmen and their descendants had assimilated into mainstream culture, leaving both wedding bands and the cümbüş in the hands of local Román players (E. Kahya 8/7/05 interview).

This phenomenon is mentioned here in the interest of thoroughness, though it must be noted that göçmen do not figure at all prominently in the popular image of the cümbüş and its players, and even the second (and later) generation descendants of these Balkan immigrants themselves associate the instrument more with Román professional musicians than with a part of their own musical heritage. The fact that

[69] They are also known by the Arabic term for immigrant, *muhacir*, meaning specifically "Muslims made to leave formerly Muslim-ruled (e.g., Ottoman) lands." Zürcher estimates that 20% of the Turkish population at the 1923 start of the Republic was muhacir (including Atatürk's own family, from Thessalonica). "Göçmen," the general, unqualified term for immigrant, was the word preferred by these informants. See also Andrews 1989: 95 on "muhacir" as referring to pre-1950s immigrants and "göçmen" referring to those coming from 1950 onward.

the cümbüş's inventor himself came from Macedonia (though at the time it was a province of the Empire) is neither well known nor advertised.[70]

5.3.3 "Rural Poor"

The cümbüş is sometimes referred to in urban settings as an instrument of the *kıro,* the "bumpkin straight off the mountain" (B. Beer, S. Tatar, personal comm.). Since the 1960s there has been mass migration from the countryside to three or four major cities in western Turkey. Istanbul has been the most popular destination for internal emigrants, ballooning from 3 million people in the greater metropolitan area in 1970 to an officially estimated 10 million in 2005 (Mehmet 1997, Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü 2005).[71] This phenomenon has resulted in conditions of high social stress—for immigrants and previous inhabitants alike—in the receiving cities, which were unprepared to deal with the quick and massive influxes of people either in psychological terms or as regards physical infrastructure—housing, water and sewage, electricity, gas, social services, employment opportunities, etc.

In regard to the (relatively few) cümbüş players involved in this migration, however, the majority seem to be—or at least are popularly imagined to be—of Román and Kurdish origin. The use of the term *kıro* in this context (at least in Istanbul) may well be a derogatory euphemism for a person from either of these

[70] Note that although Rice (1999) and Seeman (personal comm., and 2002: 21, fn. 14) report the use of the "*džumbuš*" in Skopje, Macedonia "in the early-twentieth century," my informants indicated that their ancestor's use of the instrument began after their arrival in Turkey.

[71] Unofficial (e.g., newspaper and "common knowledge") estimates are rarely below 13 million, often reaching 25 million or higher for the Greater Istanbul Municipality.

groups—both of which are associated, justly or not, with rises in the crime rates during this period of intense urban migration—rather than merely a (derogatory) reference to newcomers from rural regions of the country per se. For that reason I have placed quotation marks around the term “rural poor” as a category of cümbüş-player (see Andrews 1989: 332-353, 364-368 and sections 6.2 and 6.3 for more on the perceived Otherness of Romanlar and Kurds, respectively, in Turkey).

5.3.4 The Abdal

The Abdal are a small group of partially or formerly nomadic Alevi Türkmen spread throughout western and central Anatolia (see Andrews 1989: 71-3). Their tribal and clan structure are very similar to those of Turkish Román groups, as are elements of a “secret” language they use when not speaking Turkish (or Kurdish in Kahramanmaraş) (ibid.). Andrews states that they are primarily “bards and musicians” by occupation. Alevi researcher Dr. Mark Soileau reports that the cümbüş is an instrument commonly played by the Abdal in the Mediterranean region around Antalya (personal comm.), though he did not ascertain when they began using it.[72]

The Abdal, a group already marginalized by their belonging to the Alevi sect and their (formerly?) itinerant lifestyle, are often popularly mistaken for Romanlar and symbolic inscriptions in terms of their use of the cümbüş appear to be conflated with those signifying “Gypsiness” (about which see section 6.2).

[72] Special thanks to Dr. Soileau for informing me of cümbüş use among the Abdal.

5.4 Chapter Five Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter we have seen that the cümbüş appeared on a complex music scene at a time of tremendous social change in Turkey. Initially the only ideas associated with the newly invented instrument were those reflecting the goals of the Kemalist state: modernization, Westernization—yet also "bridging" East and West, "Turkishness" in a broadened national definition, and popular/equal access, in this case reified by its low cost, easy shipment throughout the country, and inclusion in national education programs. It otherwise had no history, no traditional symbolic connection with any people or genre.

Initial evaluations of the instrument differed in the classical, urban popular and folk music worlds. Classical musicians regarded the cümbüş as undignified in appearance, excessively loud and inappropriate in timbre. Due to its promotion in a state ideology often hostile to the classical music establishment they—and particularly the ud-ists among them—seem to have regarded it as potentially threatening as well. Urban popular musicians, mainly ethnically Greek, Armenian, Jewish, and Román, accepted the instrument, partly for its "modern" novelty and partly because its sonic prominence was well suited to playing in crowded venues whose patrons could be expected to be competitively loud. Of the many classical musicians who played in urban popular venues, those who played cümbüş or cümbüş-like alternatives therein appear mainly to have been ethnically non-Turkish. As a "folk" instrument in the countryside, the cümbüş was only widely accepted in the

(multicultural) sıra gecesi traditions of the southeast, whence it apparently spread, though not as widely, to Kurdish and Armenian communities further east.

These receptions and rejections of the instrument came to form the basis of symbolic inscriptions on the cümbüş. It soon became known as a non-classical (and note, therefore not "classy," even a "low class") instrument, played by Greek, Armenian, Jewish, and Román musicians in urban venues and genres, and by religiously conservative and ethnically "mixed" folk musicians in the more rural southeast. As I shall show in Chapter Seven, these inscriptions would shift in emphasis over time, but "common knowledge" about the cümbüş from the 1930s through the 1950s seems to have included these associations, which, I found through dozens of conversations, are still known by musicians and older music aficionados.

The following chapter provides condensed histories of the groups whose members played cümbüş in these early-Republican times in order to show the particular ways in which each was constituted as being Other in the Turkish imagination.

6

Particular Histories of Cümbüş-Playing Groups

6.1 Traditional Non-Muslim Minorities

The Otherness of Greeks, Armenians and Jews in the Ottoman, and later, Turkish, public imagination stemmed firstly from their being segregated non-Muslims throughout the Imperial era (effectively 1453-1923), unassimilated and following their own laws and customs, and secondly from their economic position as the basis of the merchant class. This was a median position much lower than the ruling class but, until the 1950s, relatively much higher than ordinary Turkish Muslims. This position also necessarily meant having a privileged access to the outside world, and particularly to the West, with which they had always been associated.

Today the remainder of these populations—all of which, for different reasons, are greatly reduced in number compared to pre-Republican times, and almost all of whom now live in Istanbul—are, if not thoroughly assimilated, at least accommodated to a virtual public invisibility in terms of separateness from the general population. Apart from a common (and negatively valued) stereotype that members of these groups fall on the "material" side of a spectrum of values between spirituality and worldliness, their Otherness today appears for the most part in two distinct discourses: played out in relative safety within nostalgic negotiations over the

place of multiculturalism in traditional society,[73] and as the screen onto which projections of Turkish relations with other nation-states are displayed. The following three sub-sections take each of these groups—the only "officially recognized minorities" in Turkey (Andrews 1989: 144)—in turn.

6.1.1 Rum (Greeks in Turkey)

To understand the long-standing tension between Turks and Greeks it must be recalled that all of Turkish Thrace and most of the western half of Anatolia were themselves once Greece—first colonized in the eighth century BCE, and ruled in turn by feudal lords, Byzantium, Alexander the Great and the successor states of his generals Lysimachus and Seleucus, and finally the (Hellenized, Eastern) Roman Empire (395 CE to 1453)—and that what is today known as Greece was for the most part conquered and held by the Ottomans from the late fifteenth to the early nineteenth centuries. The memory of Hellenic glory (and the indignity of its subjugation) were kept alive by the Orthodox Church, the only remaining vestige of the (Eastern) Roman imperial apparatus, which was allowed and encouraged after 1453 to continue as the ruling authority of the millet of the Rum (literally

[73] Such negotiations do not usually reference the cümbüş, which would probably be taken as a signifier of "Gypsiness," a quality that is normally excluded from reconstructions of traditional multiculturalism. A quick perusal of the recording catalogs of such popular Turkish music producers as Kalan Records, Golden Horn Productions, Pozitif/Doublemoon, and İmaj Müzik (a Universal label) will show copious examples of projects extolling the virtues of Turkey's traditional multiculturalism. See also Aksoy 2002, for a rhetorical example. Dr. Sonia Seeman pointed out to me that this discursive development only began in the mid-1990s (personal comm.).

"Romans"—the common word for Ottoman Greeks),[74] and at various times of other Christian groups as well. In spite of the imposition on rural Greeks (and other Balkan Christians) of the *devşirme* tax—the forfeiture of one male child per family to be converted to Islam and trained to serve as a slave in the reigning sultan's personal service—the Greek population prospered in relative autonomy as merchants and craftsmen in the cities, and in rural areas as shepherds and farmers, purportedly enjoying more rights than they had under Christian temporal sovereigns (Shaw 1976:152-3).[75]

The modern nation-state of Greece, more or less as we know it today, gained its independence in 1821 but 1.25 million Rum remained in the Ottoman Empire until the 1922-24 "population exchanges" that resulted from the failed Greek attempt to regain Thrace and western Anatolia (Zürcher 2003).[76] These "exchanges," from which established residents of Istanbul were exempt, left the Rum population of the new Republic of Turkey at a mere 200,000, at which level it remained until mass

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[74] *Rum* is still the term used to refer to "Turks of Greek ancestry," to distinguish them from the *Yunan*—"Ionians"—citizens of the modern nation-state of Greece. Technically the millet was that of the Orthodox Christians, including South Slavic and Rumanian subjects, but the majority, and the leadership, were always Greek (Shaw 1976: 152-3). The seat of the Greek Orthodox church, presided over by a Patriarch, is still in "Constantinoúpolis" (only officially called Istanbul by Turks since 1926).

[75] According to Shaw and others, the *devşirme* was at first seen as an inhumane imposition but soon became thought of as an unequalled opportunity for upward mobility such that urban families (exempt from this "tax") would bribe court officials to allow their sons to enter the service (ibid.).

[76] Known in Greece as the Great Idea (*Megáli Idéa*, now sometimes called the *Megáli Katástrophe*), and in Turkey as the War of Independence. The "population exchanges" (or deportations), formalized in the Treaty of Lausanne, were instituted on the basis of religion rather than ethnicity or language; many Greek and Slavic Muslims, as well as Turkish Christians, were forced to move (see section 5.3.2 on *göçmen*). Exempt from deportation were around 200,000 Muslims in Greek Thrace and an equal number of (Greek) Christians in Istanbul (see Zürcher 2003, McCarthy 1983, Andrews 1989).

emigration following the anti-Greek “Istanbul Riots” of September 1955, and later 1964 deportations over conflicts with Cyprus left the Rum population at today’s estimated 2,000-3,000 persons (ibid.).[77]

The issue of Cyprus remains major due to the conflict between Turkey’s ardent desire to join the European Union and its refusal to recognize the (Greek) Republic of Cyprus, which has already been accepted for membership. Article 305 of the current Turkish Penal Code specifically criminalizes “making propaganda of [i.e., speaking positively about] withdrawal of Turkish troops from Cyprus.” As of this writing, Turkey has begun the first round of talks to gain entry to the EU, and Turkish newspapers report fresh objections to the project on the parts of the presidents of Greece (Papoúlias) and Cyprus (Papadópoulos) on a daily basis.

The fact that the aforementioned remaining Rum-Turkish citizens are so few in number makes their Otherness, from the current Turkish perspective, mainly historical. At the level of the stereotype they may still be regarded as materialist (i.e. “cheap”), rude (e.g. too direct in speech) and confrontational, but the only local issue

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[77] The Istanbul Riots (or Pogrom), known in Greek as the *Septemvrianá* and in Turkey as *Eylül 6-7 Olay* (the Event of September 6-7), were two days of looting, violence and property destruction aimed at Greeks (and incidentally or accidentally Armenians and Jews as well) organized by president Adnan Menderes (later hanged by a military tribunal) ostensibly in retaliation for alleged Greek Cypriot atrocities against Turkish Cypriots and a faked bombing of Atatürk’s birthplace in Thessalonica. It is speculated that the real impetus behind it was to relieve—and divert from the government—frustration on the part of the underemployed working class by portraying their economic problems as stemming from monopolies on capital accrued to Greek (et al.) merchants. Commemorations of the riots on the fiftieth anniversary in Istanbul were mainly of a contrite, soul-searching nature, but I also witnessed a small demonstration by ultra-nationalists attempting in some way to justify the event. It was quickly broken up by waiting riot police. Between 1942 (Wealth Tax) and 1965 (Cyprus-related deportations) roughly 198,000 Rum left Istanbul, mainly for Greece and the United States (Zürcher 2003).

of note is a struggle on the part of the Patriarch Bartholoméos to regain ownership of, and the right to reopen, an historic seminary on a small island in the Sea of Marmara.

Figure 14: *Smyrnéika* "stars" (left to right) Dimítris Sémsis, Aghápios Tomboúlis (Hagop Stambulian) and Róza Eskinázi (Sarah Skinazi), ca. 1931. Greek, Armenian, and Jewish respectively, this group is emblematic of the multicultural make-up of bands performing in the *café aman* or *meyhane*-style urban popular music of late Ottoman/early Republican times (see Pennanen 2004). The instrument in Tomboúlis's hands appears to be an *ahenk,* but Fethi Cümbüş thinks it possible that his great-grandfather Zeynel Abidin (who was active in the Smyrna/Izmir music scene during the time Tomboúlis was) may have made it especially for him.

Figure 15. Eskinázi and Tomboúlis (this time with authentic cümbüş) with other band members, evidently a few years after the previous photograph was taken.

The approximately 2,000-3,000 remaining Istanbul Rum are mostly older persons who appear to participate seamlessly in Turkish national culture while maintaining religious autonomy and speaking Greek, if at all, in their homes, in private schools for the few children, and at church gatherings (see Andrews 1989: 142-4).

6.1.2 Armenians

Like that of the Greeks, the constitution of the Otherness of Armenians in Turkey is rooted in a long history. The Kingdom of Armenia was founded in 190 BCE, but fell to the Roman Empire in 66 BCE and was from then more or less continually politically dependent on foreign occupiers—including several waves of Turkish invader-occupiers between the eleventh and early twentieth centuries—until the establishment of the Republic of Armenia in 1991. In Ottoman times, the Armenian millet (established in 1461), under the leadership of the head archbishop of the Armenian Apostolic Church, came to represent and govern not only its own

members but those of all non-Muslim millet*s* not represented by the Greek and Jewish millet authorities: Armenian Uniates (and later Protestants as well), Lebanese Maronites, Latin Catholics of Hungary, Croatia and northern Albania, Assyrians, Syrian Monophysites, the quasi-Manichean Bogomils of Bosnia and all Romanlar (the largest of these sub-groups, then referred to mistakenly as *Kıbti*—Copt;, see Shaw 1976:152, 1991: 41).[78]

During the roughly 470 years they were under Ottoman rule, the great majority of Armenians lived in the far east of the Empire, in the western part of historic Armenia, often at odds with mainly Kurdish neighbors and nearly constantly in the crossfire of invading Persian and rebel Turkish armies' advances against the Ottomans (ibid., passim). A minority also established a community in Istanbul, where the see of the church was brought from Echmiadzin—outside of the Empire at the time—and this community became relatively prosperous in crafts (including instrument making), manufacturing and international trade.

From the writings of Ottomans both Turkish and Armenian, the relationship between the two peoples appear to have been peaceful and mutually beneficial until the 1890s. I refer readers interested in the change in that relationship between then and 1924 to the works of McCarthy (1983) and Bloxham (2005)—each of whom favors a different position on the subject—but for the purposes of this thesis it must suffice to say that relations worsened to the extent that by the end of the Turkish War

[78] The Armenian millet was established as distinct from the Greek one largely because, as the Armenian Church was monophysite, the Greeks considered them heretics, and vice versa (Shaw 1991: 41). Presumably the Romanlar were mostly professing Christianity at that time; today almost all of Turkey's Romanlar profess Islam (see Andrews 1989: 138-42).

of Independence the Armenian population of Turkey had been reduced from somewhere between 1.2 million (McCarthy 2001) and 2.1 million (Hovannisian 1992) to around 100,000 (Shaw 1977). Estimates of Armenian dead run between 600,000 (McCarthy 2001) and 1.5 million (Hovannisian 1992). In Turkey this is explained as the unfortunate consequences of famine, epidemics, just political "relocations" and a civil war prosecuted defensively by the now long defunct Ottoman Empire. Armenians (particularly outside of Turkey, see Andrews 1989: 129, Avakian 1999), and by law in some countries, these events are referred to as an act of genocide on the part of the Turks. Relations between the two peoples have been very poor since these events and the Turkish government has kept the border between Turkey and Armenia closed since 1994, ostensibly over the Armenian occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Today population estimates for Armenians in all of Turkey range from 40,000 (US Library of Congress) to 82,000 (Armenian Patriarchate), but most scholarly sources seem to agree on a ratio of ninety-five percent (43,000-68,400) residing in Istanbul to five percent (2,000-3,600) living in scattered villages in the east.[79] Hoffman reports widespread prejudice, both official and non-official, against the remaining Armenians in Turkey (ibid., see also Andrews 1989: 129), though I did not

[79] The low estimate is the most common in Turkish newspapers, liner notes etc., and has often been repeated in American popular literature of the same kind, without attribution. The Federal Research Division of the US Library of Congress uses this number, but has not updated this part of its "Country Study" for Turkey since 1995. Hoffman estimates 68,400 in Istanbul and 72,000 in all of Turkey (Hoffman 2002). In interviews Armenian Patriarch Mesrob II has estimated 60-65,000 in Istanbul and 80-82,000 in all of Turkey, putting the number of rural Armenian Turks at a much higher 15-17,000 (Avakian 1999).

see or hear of any specific instances during my stay there, other than that article 305 of the Turkish Penal Code criminalizes “propagandizing the idea of an ‘Armenian genocide’.”[80] The only publicly evident tensions I saw during my stay revolved around Armenian president Robert Kocharian’s recent trips to various European senates to convince the EU to make “recognition of the genocide” a condition for Turkey’s entry as a member. I heard of no Armenian-Turkish reaction; as Andrews notes,

> The [Armenian] community in Turkey tends to regard the catastrophe of events at the turn of the century as past history (and in 1978 the Patriarch issued an appeal to Armenians elsewhere to take the same view); it is now more interested in peaceful co-existence with the Muslim majority. (Andrews 1989: 129. See also Avakian 1999)

6.1.3 Jews

The great majority of Jews in Turkey are Sephardim, descendants of those Jews who were expelled from Spain (culminating in 1492) and Portugal (culminating in 1497), and their language—now called Ladino—and customs have become the norm for Turkish Jewry. Nonetheless it should be noted that there were other groups of Jews in the Ottoman Empire previous to the arrival of the Sephardim, and yet others who entered it afterward. The former were mainly Greek-speaking Romaniotes and Karaites who had been in Greece and western Anatolia at least since the time of Alexander (ca. 320 BCE), as well as a small number of Ashkenazi Jews and Karaites

[80] Beyond being prejudicial to Armenian Turks specifically, this article is currently a point of public debate over whether or not Turkish citizens—and especially journalists and authors—actually have the right to free speech, again an issue jeopardizing Turkish EU membership (see Belge 2005).

fleeing persecution in Poland, France, Austria, and Bohemia in the early-fourteenth century. Among those who came to be Ottoman subjects after the arrival of the Sephardim were Jewish inhabitants of Palestine, Syria, Egypt, and especially the city of Baghdad after the sixteenth century Ottoman conquests of much of the Arab world, and occasional small waves of Krymchak (Rabbinical) and Karaim (Karaites) from the Crimea (Shaw 1976: 152-3, 1999: 44-8).[81]

According to Shaw the Jewish millet was formed soon after that of the Greeks, though internally less structured than other millet-s and without official charter until 1839 (1976: 152-3, 1991: 41-3). The millet was under the nominal authority of the externally-created position of Chief Rabbi but he was always more an ambassador than a leader, while real authority devolved onto rabbis from within separate, self-segregated neighborhoods (*kahal*-s), the Karaite communities being virtually autonomous within the millet (1991: 44-51).[82] The arrival of the Sephardim at the end of the fifteenth century, along with their considerable wealth, craft skills and fully-formed trade networks throughout Europe and the Mediterranean, made of

[81] See also Dilmen 2001: 41-3, Andrews 1989: 157-61, Epstein (in Andrews) 1989: 519-24, Tütüncü et al. 2001. All of the groups here mentioned are "Rabbinical," that is, accepting the canonic biblical interpretations called the *Talmud,* except for the Karaites (among whom, at least nominally, Crimean Karaim), who have historically been considered heretics and even non-Jews by the Rabbinical Jews for favoring individual responsibility for interpreting the *Torah* ("Old Testament"). Confusion and/or strategic obfuscation may arise from the use of the more formal/politically correct Turkish term for Jews, *Museviler* (Followers of Moses), which technically applies to both groups.

[82] The tiny minority of Karaites are here treated as a distinct group (or groups) and apparently play no part in the history of the cümbüş. This is also the case for the *Ma'min* or *Dönmeler* ("Those Who Turned"), Muslim-convert followers of the Rabbinical Jewish messiah figure Shabbatai Zvi who was forcibly converted to Islam in the seventeenth century. They are also a tiny minority in Turkey, apparently extremely discrete about their beliefs and customs, rejected by Jews and regarded with suspicion by other Muslims (see Shaw 1991, Tütüncü et al. 2001; see also O'Connell 2005 for other current meanings of the term *dönme*).

the Jewish millet a prosperous group relative to the other (much larger) millet-s and it seems to have been favored by the Ottoman establishment (see Shaw 1991 passim).

Turkish prejudice against the Jews appears to have been minor and limited mainly to occasional disproportionate taxation in times of financial crisis (continuing into the Republican period, e.g. the "Wealth Tax" of 1942)—they seem to have suffered more at the hands of Christian neighbors than Muslim ones (ibid.). Though as a group among other middle class national Turks they are no longer disproportionately wealthy, the common stereotype of Jews as too highly valuing material wealth continues. Apparently due to their low numbers, low public profile, and concentration in traditionally cosmopolitan urban centers, this stereotype seems mainly to be conceived of as humorous rather than threatening except in politically Islamist rhetoric (S. Hubeş and Y. Siliki 9/22/05 interviews; see also Bozdağlıoğlu 2003: 141-58, Shaw 1991: 268-70).

Part of the reason for smoother relations between Jews and the Empire than with the other non-Muslim millet-s was no doubt due to their lack of historical territorial claims to Ottoman lands—by the time Palestine was incorporated into the Empire in the sixteenth century Ottoman Jewish communities were so well established and prosperous in the western urban centers that neither they nor the sultans who derived monetary benefit from their activities were keen to see them moved to the desert backwater of Jerusalem (see Shaw 1991: 223-8).[83] Another,

[83] Where, according to Shaw's interpretation of Ottoman census data, some 24,000 Jews already lived. Between the mid-nineteenth century and WWI another 60,000 Jewish immigrants from Europe had

similar reason for Ottoman favor was that the Jews, unlike Christian subjects, were not strongly self-identified with their European trading partners, who also happened to be perennial military enemies of the Empire. Their integration into Republican national culture seems to have gone fairly easily, though Bali opines that the *Vatandaş, Türkçe Konuş!* ("Citizen, Speak Turkish!") campaign, accompanying a 1930 act of parliament forbidding publications in languages other than Turkish, was aimed primarily at Jewish citizens (Bali 2004). Nevertheless mainstream ideas of the Otherness of Jews, whether during the Ottoman or Republican period, do not seem very pronounced.

Voluntary mass migration to the State of Israel in the decade after its establishment in 1948 (and other, smaller waves of migration, mostly to the Americas) left the Turkish Jewish population at around today's numbers of some 27,000 (24,000 in Istanbul and 3,000 in Izmir and other western cities), down from an estimated 463,000 in 1900 (Zürcher 2003, Alliance Israélite Universelle 1904).[84] Because of the aforementioned relatively easy relations between Turks and Jews, and Turkey's usually friendly relations with Israel,[85] and despite some peripheral damage to Jewish-owned property during the Event of September 6-7, 1955, mutual perceptions of Otherness appear to be mostly "unthreatening" (S. Hubeş, Y. Siliki, M.

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also arrived in the Jerusalem and Nablus areas, though without establishing citizenship (ibid.: 215-6, cf. Karpat 1978 who posits smaller numbers of immigrants).

[84] Epstein opines, "The official Jewish figure for the size of the community is 25,000, but in actuality it must be considerably less" (in Andrews 1989: 322).

[85] But see Bozdağlıoğlu 2003: 141-58 regarding occasional and short-lived anti-Israel policies by Islamist political blocs.

Bitmez, S. Erdemsel et al., personal comm.). Though many bookstores sell rightist-authored books on conspiracy theories involving supposed Jewish "control of the world," etc., they are usually well outnumbered on the same shelves by books on historically good Turkish-Jewish relations, memoirs of late-Ottoman Jewish notables, Sephardic cookbooks and other benign subjects.

Although there are numerous examples of Jewish composers and performers of Ottoman classical music (see B. Aksoy 2002, Dilmen 2001), the current emic perception is that there were in all periods very few Jewish professional musicians in Turkey. The best known Jewish Turkish performers of popular music from the twentieth century were female singers of the meyhane-cum-smyrnéika repertoire such as Róza Eskinázi (see fig.s 14 and 15), Stella Haskil, Amalia Baka, and Victoria Hazan (the latter two having risen to fame in the U.S., see Holst-Warhaft 2002: 189, fn. 10), who were not emically accepted as "respectable" artists (S. and Y. Hubeş 9/22/05 interview), and popular 1960s multilingual singer Dario Moreno.

6.2 Romanlar

It is presumed on the strength of linguistic evidence that the ancestors of the Romanlar migrated westward from northwestern India. Andrews asserts, "They left before A.D. 800. It is known they had reached Greece via Anatolia by ca. A.D. 1300" (1989: 141). As noted in Seeman, historical documentation on them from the Byzantine and Ottoman periods in what is now Turkey is scant and "tend[s] to contain a high degree of negative information," reflecting their marginalized status

(2002: 97). They appear to have (been) converted to Christianity *en masse* at some time during Byzantine period (4th-15th centuries C.E.) and maintained that affiliation, under the administrative aegis of the Armenian millet authority, throughout Ottoman times (effectively late-15th through early-20th centuries) (Shaw 1976: 152-3).[86] At what point and under what circumstances they (were) converted to Islam is not clear, but the great majority of Turkish Romanlar today profess Islam (see Andrews 1989: 138-42, Seeman 2002: 94).

The Otherness of the Romanlar is perhaps the most elaborately articulated case of "Othering" in the Turkish imagination. Common ascriptions include insincere profession of Islam, laziness, criminality, uncleanliness, poor education and general untrustworthiness. Their Otherness is sometimes also posited as being mainly economic in nature. That is, aside from the associations with poverty and property crimes per se, the perceived criminal intent and lack of education of the Romanlar are sometimes thought, in an "optimistic" version of the mainstream view, to be contingent on a lack of economic integration and prosperity, and therefore possibly "remediable."

But another issue is that of the separateness of the Romanlar from general society, a separateness desired by many Romanlar as a conservative measure against loss of cultural heritage but viewed with disdain by the Turkish public generally as an

[86] Many Román nonetheless maintained pre-Christian religious practices (see Seeman 2002: 110). Assertions (or accusations) of Román religious insincerity run through much of the etic literature on them, both Christian and Muslim, and continue to be a common etic belief about them (see Seeman 2002: 94-163, q.v. also for a much more detailed history of the Román in Byzantine and Ottoman times).

impediment to overall cultural integration. The main reason for this disdain is not (posited as) an intolerance for cultural difference per se, but stemming from perceived incompatibilities between the normative modern/modernizing, industrial, bureaucratic-style political economy and two aspects of traditional Román professional life: the professions themselves, and what we might call a "work style."

The professions, e.g., animal training (including, until recently, bears), smithing and tinkering, music making, carting, small scale weaving, et al., are considered retrograde and obsolescent by most non- Román Turks but have long formed the basis of Román clan affiliations, and are therefore bound with cultural identity beyond questions of economic practicality (Yükselsin 2005). The "work style" is seen, in Turkish society, as existing somewhere on a continuum between a total unwillingness to work and a general laziness or irresponsibility, coupled with a preference for the supposed ease of professional criminal activity and begging. Emically the same "work style," while not ubiquitous among Turkish Romanlar, are sometimes downplayed or denied, sometimes explained as a traditional attitude toward personal professional freedom (i.e., that freelance and short-term occupations, invisible to the tax collector and other institutional employment trackers, offer sufficient remuneration without impinging on personal freedom the way a "regular job" would), and sometimes explained as the only option, given prejudice in Turkish hiring practices (H. Tuzsuz, D. Öyündür et al. 10/25/05 interviews). Adding to the tension of this dialogue are popularly held beliefs, espoused from both sides, that such behaviors are genetically inherited traits (or are "in the blood"), and are

therefore “irremediable,” regardless of how they are valued. In terms of music the Romanlar often describe themselves and are widely described by ethnic Turks as having musical talent “in their blood” in a way that “ordinary” Turks do not. Racist ascriptions of Otherness in Turkey appear to be at their most pronounced in regard to the Romanlar.

This discourse of separateness seems to be a difficult divide for those Romanlar who are, or are trying to become, integrated into the Turkish mainstream,[87] particularly as recent portrayals of Romanlar in music videos and popular television series promote a softer, more tolerant view toward traditional Román culture (Kurtişoğlu 2005).[88] Paraphrasing Tohumcu, a Román person working in a bank may hide his or her ethnic identity for twenty-five years while Román musicians, publicly promoting the “traditional carefree life-style” in videos, films and on television are ethnically “out,” proud of it, and possibly making more money than the banker (Tohumcu 2005).

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[87] Though there is currently no way of ascertaining their numbers or percentage of the total Román population.

[88] To the point where one scholar has told me the Román have become Turkey’s “cute minority.”

Figure 16. Retired Román cümbüş player Dalip Öyündür, Gaziosmanpaşa, Istanbul.

Here it is worth mentioning that the Romanlar of the region of Trakya, though by far the most prominent (and probably most populous) “Gypsy” group in Turkey, are not the only such group.[89] In addition to other groups along the Aegean coast who also refer to themselves as Romanlar and whose Romany dialects (Romanés) are identical to or mutually intelligible with those of the Trakya Romanlar, there are others such as the Lom—also known to local outsiders as Poşa—who mainly inhabit the northeastern provinces, and whose dialect is not mutually intelligible with those of the western groups (for more on whom see section 7.1).[90]

[89] Government census statistics do not ask about or represent ethnicity, and social scientists studying “Gypsy” groups have a notoriously hard time acquiring accurate information on their total numbers (see Andrews 1989: 138-142).

[90] Andrews notes that some Lom speak only Armenian (1989: 139-40 and 368-9). See also Yükselsin 2005, but cf. Seeman 2002: 100 and 135, noting Poşa communities in and around Istanbul from the seventeenth century.

6.3 Kurds

The Kurds, whose languages are closely related to Farsi, are thought to have been in what is now southeastern Turkey (as well as adjacent areas of modern Syria, Iraq, Iran and Armenia) since at least the fourth century BCE, though some claim they descend from the resident third millennium BCE Hurrians (e.g., Arnaiz-Villena et al. 2001). There has nonetheless never existed a Kurdish state, and the term "Kurdistan" was invented by the Ottomans to refer to an administrative unit of the Empire roughly encompassing the area mentioned.

Historic relations between Turks and Kurds might best be described as distant and based on convenience. Living in a more or less barren area peripherally claimed by both the rival Ottoman Turkish and Safavid Persian dynasties, Kurdish warlords exploited (and were exploited by) both parties, switching loyalties between them often in exchange for a relatively independent suzerainty and whatever bribes could be got (Shaw 1976: 82-3). Even after Safavid rule ended in 1736, the Kurds kept their independent stance, rebelling against the Empire in 1834, and again in 1843, and took the Russian side in the 1877-1887 Russo-Turkish War. In the post-WWI Treaty of Sèvres they had been promised by the British, French and Russian victors a nation of their own, but during the Turkish War of Independence (1919-23)—during which this treaty was declared void—they sided with Turkey. They were certainly complicit in the demise of the Armenian population of eastern Anatolia mentioned in the previous section, and some apologists for the Turkish side prefer to assign them the major part of blame (see Shaw 1976: 153).

At the end of the war, however, the Kurds found themselves distributed amongst the previously mentioned, mostly new nation-states, none of which was called "Kurdistan." In each of them they were now an unwanted minority. In the case of Turkey (where nationalism, in the European mold, was based on ethnic unity), their languages were banned and they were referred to as "Mountain Turks," though in theory they had the same rights and responsibilities as any other citizens. At somewhere between 14 and 17 million persons, they now form 20-25% of Turkey's overall population of 70 million, and 40-56% of the world's 25-40 million Kurds (Chatterjee 2003, CIA 2005).[91]

This de facto second-class status never sat particularly well with Kurdish citizens of Turkey, but resistance was expressed within the Republican system until 1984 when—after numerous dissolutions of their political parties, decades of unpopular programs to enforce assimilation (especially linguistic), and little modern development in the provinces in which they lived—the communist Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK, now considered a terrorist organization throughout Europe and the Americas, as well as in Turkey) began an armed rebellion with the aim of establishing an independent, Marxist-governed Kurdistan. Accurate numbers of casualties in the resulting decade-long conflict are difficult to ascertain but may have run as high as

[91] Andrews deals separately with five subcategories of what I refer to here as Kurds: Sunni, Alevi and Yezidi Kurds, and Sunni and Alevi Zazas (1989: 110-124). He notes that "JAFAR (1976: 94) has pointed out that the number of Kurds in Turkey given by a writer generally tends to perform the function of an indicator that reflects the writer's attitude towards the Turkish authorities" (111). My intention in using these larger, aggregate numbers is not to support a political position, but since such an undifferentiated accounting represents the common Turkish one, it is useful for understanding ascriptions of Otherness to all Kurds in Turkey.

thirty thousand on each side, with more than a million internally displaced persons (Belge 2005, CIA 2005). PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan was captured in February of 1999 and a cease fire was called in 2000 which lasted until a brief August 2005 breach.[92]

The Otherness of the Kurds, then, is taken as a threat to the state, and cultural expression that emphasizes this Otherness, including musical expression and sung poetry, is traditionally understood as being dangerous and antisocial to an extreme. The results, in terms of those media, have been bans on the language(s) and music, and nationalist Turkish protests of performers singing in a Kurdish language, even when, as is the case at the time of this writing, such performances are legal.[93] In large urban centers, where Kurdish internal migration has been high, they are often seen by non-Kurds as an unsophisticated, permanently poor underclass disproportionately involved in crime, drug use and trafficking, and begging.

6.4 In Sıra Gecesi

It must be mentioned that the phenomenon of the sıra gecesi and its music, though it may be performed by ethnically mixed ensembles or even by groups of ethnically homogeneous minorities, is not thought of as an expression of ethnicity per

[92] The three bombings attributed to the PKK, targeting foreign tourists in popular resort towns and killing 7 European visitors, were so reviled, even among Kurdish citizens, that the hostilities stopped, but whether or not the cease fire has resumed is unclear.

[93] The language ban, which included song lyrics, was lifted in 1991, but was not extended to teaching in schools until 2002. Some 3,000 Kurdish-language songs remain banned by individual adjudication (Chatterjee 2003).

se either emically or etically in Turkey. Emically, ethnicity is only important here to the extent that traditional Islam celebrates the multiculturalism of the totality of its believers in the spirit of *vahdet* (“unity”; see Andrews 1989: 41-2). The main sense in which its performers are considered Other (both emically and etically among Turks) is in terms of regional associations, most strongly with the province of Şanlıurfa (on the Syrian border, and considered one of the most religious regions of Turkey) and its capital of the same name.

However, due to both the music’s and the region’s further association with the popular *arabesk* musical style and the Kurdish identity of its biggest star, İbrahim Tatlıses—as well as that of jailed Kurdish separatist leader and Şanlıurfa native Abdullah Öcalan—as well as the province’s relative piety in “secular” Turkey, there has been in the last few decades a growing nationwide perception of the region’s “differences” (see more in section 7.2 in regard to arabesk). This perception has been aided inasmuch as internal migrants from the region to Istanbul and other large urban centers in the west of the country over the last forty years have brought the sıra gecesi with them,[94] and by the consequent proliferation of professional audio recordings and televised sıra geceleri recreations made for that community but distributed in an open market available to all.

[94] At least in its wintertime manifestation, though in the absence of orchards and mountains in urban areas it may occur in this form year-round. It should be mentioned that these events, unlike televised simulacra of them, are usually invitation-only and neither open to the public nor widely known to exist, at least in Istanbul.

Part Four Later Cümbüş Use and Recontextualizations

7

Shifts in Cümbüş Use and Symbolic Inscriptions: 1960 to the Present

7.1 In Urban Popular Musics

While the cümbüş remained anathema to the classical music establishment, it was nevertheless allowed to appear in government-sponsored radio shows and recordings as a folk and urban popular instrument from around 1950—the year Mesut Cemil gave up the directorship of Radyo Ankara—until a Turkish Radio and Television ban on it (as well as on the cümbüş yaylı tanbur and *darbuka* goblet drum) in 1965, apparently as an oblique way of banning arabesk (TRT 1971; see also section 7.2). The urban popular musics mentioned in section 5.2.2 gradually receded from vogue while at the same time the popularity of the meyhane (etc.) was being displaced by the fancier, "upwardly mobile," and more often Turkish-owned *gazino*-s, in which the musical mix was more influenced by Western popular music to suit the tastes of the rising Turkish upper-middle class (see Beken 1998, Zat 2002, Tekelioğlu 2003).[95]

As the Greek, Armenian and Jewish citizens assimilated into republican "Turkish" culture and their ownership of theater and music venues declined—especially after the "Istanbul Riots" of 1955—so did these groups' participation in

[95] Sakaoğlu and Akbayar (1999: 255) state that the first "*gazino*-s" were opened in the early 1900s, some Turkish owned and some minority or immigrant owned, but at the time known as *alafranga meyhaneleri*.

professional music making. This also extended to home-made folk music, in which younger generations, under great peer pressure to appear completely assimilated, did not show interest, causing the cümbüş to virtually disappear in these communities (S. Hubeş, Y. Hubeş, Y. Siliki 2005 interviews).[96] This remained the case until several concurrent "revival" movements began in the 1990s, possibly encouraged by the advent of "world music" as a marketing category.[97]

As a consequence of Greek, Armenian and Jewish withdrawal from the scene, Román musicians became predominant among all classes of urban professional instrumentalists, whether playing the old-fashioned meyhane repertoire in restaurants and bars,[98] pop music in the more upscale *gazino*-s, for weddings and circumcision parties, or as studio musicians.[99] Today if you ask most self-described ethnic Turks to

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[96] Selim Hubeş, who sang and played plucked-string instruments with the Sephardic revival group Los Paşaros Sefardis and produced two albums by Sephardic band Sefarad, asserted that the guitar had always been the preferred instrument in Jewish homes anyway, far eclipsing the cümbüş (9/22/05 interview), which nonetheless figures prominently in his musical projects of "authentic" Jewish folk/non-commercial music.

[97] More on these revivals appears in section 7.3.1. See Seeman 2002: 322 -70 for the Román experience with "world music." It should be mentioned that traditional liturgical musics continued to be sung in Greek and Armenian church services and in synagogues despite this precipitous drop in instrumental music production by these groups.

[98] This repertoire is broadly known as *fasıl*, often described as "restaurant music." Note that the term "fasıl" had traditionally refered to a classical suite form in which all pieces are in the same makam, progressing from complex-metered genres to simpler-metered ones (cf. Arabic *waslah*, see New Grove 1980 s.v. "Arab Music"), It seems to have shifted in meaning to include all *alaturka* urban popular music—songs of the *şarkı* and *türkü* types, as well as light classical pieces, whether or not presented in old fasıl form—around the time classical musicians began playing in meyhane-s, etc. (see Pennanen 2004: 8-10, Feldman 1991: 76-7). This is now the common meaning of the term *fasıl*; classical musicians who wish to refer to the suite form must qualify it with "*eski*" (old) or otherwise describe it. "Classier" terms for the market (*piyasa*) style *fasıl* bands (and by extension, the music) are *ince saz* or *ince calgı*, both literally meaning "refined instrument" (see Pennanen 2004: 9, Seeman 2002: 271-2, 300).

[99] See Seeman 2002: 271 on emic Román divisions of labor among professional musicians.

give you a few words they associate with the cümbüş, one of those words will almost certainly be "Gypsy."[100] As Román musicians were among the few people who consistently played cümbüş professionally between the 1960s and the 1990s the greater part of the instrument's ethnic associations shifted to focus on them, causing popular traditional stereotypes of uneducated poverty, moral laxity and antisocial criminal tendencies to be enfolded into these inscriptions.

The transference—inscription—of these characteristics onto the cümbüş during these decades was so prevalent that even among Román musicians performance and counter-performance of them play out in the dynamic negotiation of Román Otherness: some musicians, such as "King of the Gypsies" Çeribaşı Mehmet Ali play into a stereotype (see fig. 17),[101] while at least since the 1990s many Román musicians actively seeking to improve their status, for instance by playing in increasingly upscale venues, often eschew the cümbüş in favor of the "classier" and more expensive ud, even when, due to lack of amplification, the ud cannot be heard (whereas the cümbüş could be). In this fairly common situation, the use of the ud—that is to say the deliberate abandonment of the cümbüş—turns that particular musician into a purely symbolic rather than a sonic contributor to the performance, embedding one Otherness within another. I heard over and over again from Román

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[100] The word most likely to be used in this case is "Çingene," the historical, common, and disparaging Turkish term for Romanlar; even among educated persons—including ethnomusicologists who study Román communities, I found—the newer, "politically correct" term "Román" is far from universally employed. Note that this association between Romanlar and the cümbüş is particularly held by Turks over the age of 30—see section 8.4.

[101] See Seeman 2002: 349 on self-ascribed essentialism among Román musicians.

musicians playing in Istanbul restaurants that (in 2005) “no-one plays cümbüş anymore,” asserting that it was “low class” and “rural.”

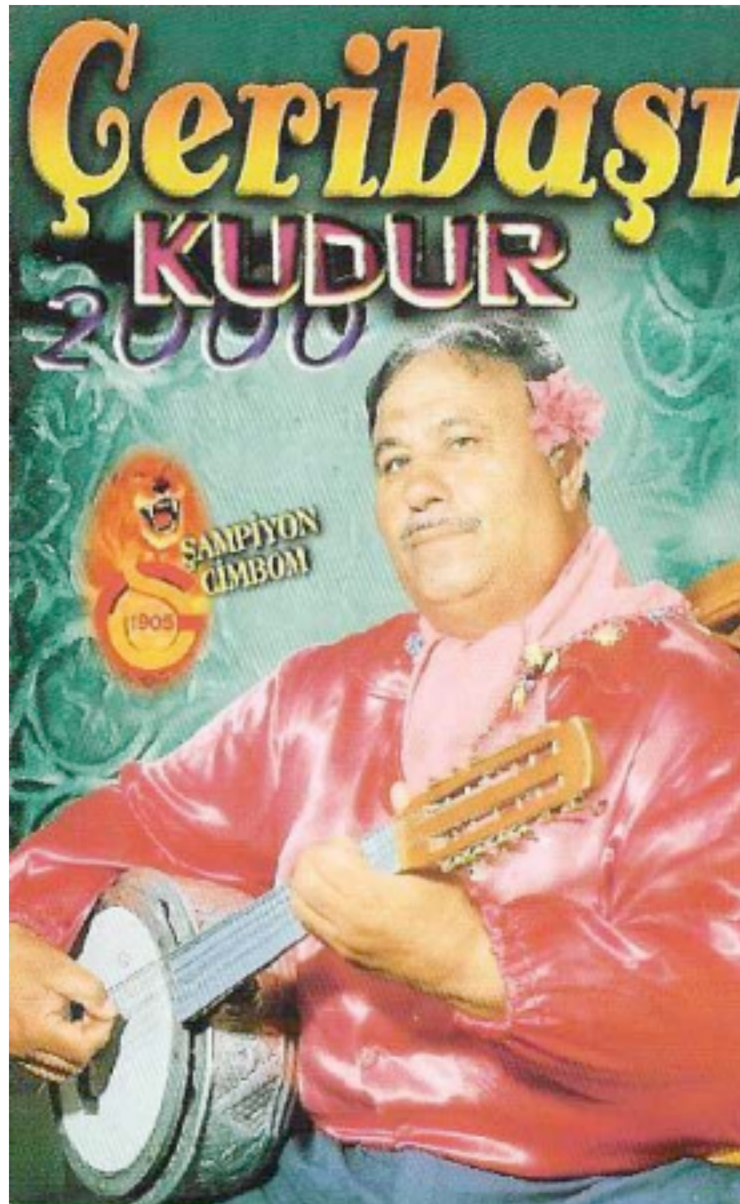

Figure 17. Performer “Çeribaşı” (Gypsy Chief) Mehmet Ali plays into a flamboyant Román stereotype.

When pressed further to point me toward cümbüş players in the city these musicians would advise me to look in particular neighborhoods (e.g. Kumkapı, Gaziosmanpaşa) where they considered the musicians to be less sophisticated, but the musicians in these places told me the same story, recommending that I go westward into the country, to Trakya, to find players. My trips there were brief, but the few Román musicians I met in the Thracian city of Edirne told me the same tale: no-one plays cümbüş anymore; maybe deeper in the western countryside.[102] Even there it is apparently now used as often as not for playing *dempo* (from Italian *tempo*): strumming rhythmically on open chords in syncopated patterns against the percussion. In this capacity it is often given to an "extra" performer to play, perhaps an inexperienced or superfluous drummer. A cümbüş player of this kind, or one who simply does not play well, is sometimes referred to as a *çoban* (shepherd, i.e., "hick," cf. the designation "*kıro*" in section 5.3.3), behind his back, in any case (S. Seeman, personal comm.).

Román musicians have steadily increased their presence in the recorded music market since the 1960s as well, both in "traditional" and more recently in "world music" and "techno-pop" formats.[103] While Román use of the cümbüş in live

[102] See also Seeman 2002: 272 on cümbüş players in rural Trakya switching to synthesizer in the late 1990s. I did meet one man in Edirne who confessed to playing cümbüş, but he was from the *kürsübaşı* tradition of Elazığ, and was playing percussion when I met him.

[103] Seeman writes extensively about this phenomenon (see especially 2002: 235-56 and 322-65). See also Kalan Records' *Keşan'a Giden Yollar* and Doublemoon-produced *Kırkareli İl Sınırı* for respective examples of recently recorded "traditional" and "world/techno" Román music. *Tekno-pop* is an emic term used to qualify music produced using multi-track recording techniques, electronically-enhanced and amplified instruments, synthesizers and underlying synthesized rhythm tracks ("Fatih," "Arif" 9/10/05 interviews; S. Erdemsel personal comm.).

situations appears to be declining currently, on recordings, both traditional and techno-mixed, the instrument figures more prominently. The medium itself may be the cause of this; a studio-produced and commercially available recording probably has a legitimizing effect that offsets negative associations that are more apparent in live settings, allowing the cümbüş's apparently positive connotation of "authenticity" to override negative ones (see Seeman 2002: 235- 56, 360-65).

Yükselsin reports that the recent rise in prominence among Trakya and Istanbul Romanlar in the Turkish mass media (particularly through music recordings, films and television series),[104] combined with efforts to consolidate some form of pan-Román identity to increase political representation (mostly generated in Europe, e.g., at the Roma World Congress, Łódź, Poland May 1-3, 2002) has resulted in a phenomenon in which the Lom (Poşa) and other Turkish Román groups are taking up Trakya Román-style musical practices. This is the case at least for attempts at entering the professional music market, and to some extent for internal consumption as well (Yükselsin 2005, but see also Kurtişoğlu 2005 on resistance to same). The use of the cümbüş has long been part of the musical practices of Aegean-centered Román groups, but as the Lom (Poşa) are a remote and dispersed group with few musical recordings available to the public, it is difficult to ascertain whether the use of the cümbüş is prevalent among them, and if it is, whether their acquisition of it was part

[104] Especially the popular situation comedy *Cennet Mahallesi* ("Paradise Neighborhood"), in which Román musicians—including a cümbüş player—figure prominently (see Kurtişoğlu 2005).

of the eastward spread of the instrument mentioned in section 5.2.3 or by (probably more recent, and possibly mass-mediated) contact with western Román groups.

7.2 *Arabesk*

Born of a complicated marriage between negotiated ideas of East and West, the pop music phenomenon called *arabesk* has been the music of Turkey's working class—and especially of rural migrants to big cities (see section 5.3.3)—since the mid-1960s, enjoying massive popularity in the 1970s and '80s. According to some it has formed the basis of most Turkish pop music ever since (see Tekelioğlu 2003).

The cümbüş's appearance in the genre is sporadic, one of several instruments associated with traditional, "authentic" folk music used to reference "back home" for audiences of internal migrants from the eastern provinces. In earlier arabesk this was mainly done through the use of the saz (in its electrified and heavily "reverbed" form), but the cümbüş appears to have come in, in the same capacity, along with the ascendance in fame of arabesk singers from Şanlıurfa, particularly megastars İbrahim Tatlıses and Müslüm Gürses (neither of whom plays the instrument). Despite the relative rarity of cümbüş use in arabesk, the genre's high profile in the mass media and political discourse, and its connections with Şanlıurfa Province and Kurds make its relationship to the instrument a special case.

Although the issues of Otherness in arabesk intersect with those mentioned under the sections on Kurds and the sıra gecesi, and with the "rural poor" of section 5.3.3, the genre has also come to stand in a unique way for the "East" side in the

ruling elite argument within a current discourse (or "debate") on the appropriateness of "Eastern" versus "Western" cultural norms in Turkish society.[105] The following brief history of the genesis of arabesk will help us see how this Otherness was constructed:

- Arabic language movies of the 1930s and 1940s, mostly from Egypt, as well as Turkish art music (TAM—"light classical music," see fn. 109) are banned and/or controlled by Republican elites as retrogressive, un-Western, and possibly subversive, but continue to be popular and available.[106]

- TAM composers of the 1940s and 1950s, forced to popularize and Westernize their art by state closures of their schools and broadcast outlets, exploit the structurally relatively free TAM song form called *şarkı* (now the common general term for song) and turn it into the new form/genre called *fantezi* by mixing light song in the Turkish language and "arranged" (homophonic) orchestration taken from semi-Westernized Egyptian movie scores. The genre

[105] I refer to the anti-*arabesk* position as "elitist" because it was originally articulated by the Republican intelligentsia who had disproportionate unilateral power to effect policy regarding it, but the position is now common among the broadening middle class and the college educated, including among children of its original fans. For fans of the genre the issue was never one of defending "East" over "West," but one regarding power relations between an official apparatus telling them constantly how to be properly Turkish and the majority working class expressing its own version of Turkishness; see Stokes 1992—a quite detailed ethnomusicological look at arabesk.

[106] Particularly via offshore radio broadcasts (see Stokes 1992: 93, Markoff 1986). Arabic-language songs and films were banned 1938-1944, and TAM banned from radio broadcast in 1934 for 20 months, then heavily controlled/censored by the state-owned TRT—Turkish Radio and Television—media monopoly, which lasted until 1994.

is allowed broadcast through radio and in Turkish film scores because the homophonic "arrangements" appeared to Republican elites to be the sort of Westernizing synthesis that would "redeem" TAM of its "oriental character."

- Widely popular stars emerge in the new genre (e.g., Zeki Müren, Müzeyyen Senar),[107] attractive especially to non-elite internal migrants from country to city who can see them perform live in *gazino* nightclubs. Their popularity spreads throughout Anatolia via the burgeoning Turkish film industry.[108]

- In the 1960s the politically-oriented *Anadolu* (Anatolian) *Pop* emerges as a new genre, mixing Turkish film music (TAM as *fantezi*)[109] and Western pop with electronic instruments as well as traditional Turkish folk instruments. Orhan Gencebay becomes its first big star, singing and playing electric saz. Republican elites denounce the genre as degenerate (i.e., oriental, backward-looking) and disparagingly call it "arabesk." It is banned from TRT but flourishes in gazino-s, 45 r.p.m. records and on easily replicable tape cassettes.

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[107] Parenthetically, a photo of Senar accompanied by an anonymous cümbüş player, apparently in a 1940s gazino, appears in Sakaoğlu and Akbayar 1999:257.

[108] Including the popularity of actor/singer Malatyalı Fahri Kayahan, usually playing cümbüş with a tanbur neck in his films.

[109] For some, the idea of "Turkish art music as fantezi" is superfluous; they prefer the term *Türk klasik müziği* (Turkish classical music) to refer to what was once called "Ottoman music," and *Türk sanat müziği* (Turkish art music) as a separate genre associated solely with fantezi (see Beken 1998). The word "fantezi" itself is used in some record stores as the name of the genre. It is also known as "light classical music."

- By the 1970s arabesk becomes arguably the most popular Turkish pop music genre (some, like Tekelioğlu, opine "virtually the only Turkish popular music") and singers from other genres like Zeki Müren (TAM) and İbrahim Tatlıses (Şanlıurfa and Kurdish folk) switch to singing arabesk in order to remain commercially viable as artists. (From Tekelioğlu 2003)

Central to the "elite" conception of arabesk's Otherness is its projection of "oriental" characteristics (unsophisticated, overemotional, irrational, backward-looking, non-secular) first onto a bogeyman figure of the Arab—a stereotype of long standing[110]—and thence onto the working class audiences who were not satisfied with the government-sponsored versions of "music appropriate for Turks"—European classical music and an homogenized amalgam of folk musics from different regions in Turkey (see And 1991). This projected specter of "orientalness" has been carried yet further to include the Kurds within its scope—the genre is sometimes half-jokingly referred to as "kürdibesk"—apparently mainly due to the Kurdish origins of the genre's current mega-star (the "Emperor of Arabesk") İbrahim Tatlıses (see fig. 18).

[110] Visible in caricatures from 18th century painted miniatures (e.g., the *Surname-i Vehbi*) and traditional *karagöz* shadow-puppet figures, essentially racist and not so different from 18th and 19th century American depictions of the African "darkie." See also Bozdağlıoğlu 2003: 53 on early-Republican negative attitudes toward Arabs, and 113-116 on mutual antipathies.

Figure 18. "Arabeskin İmperatoru" (the Emperor of Arabesk) İbrahim Tatlıses.

Although Tatlıses is not a representative for the Kurdish separatist movement, he had agitated authorities and ultranationalists by singing in the Kurdish language in concert.[111] At least a shadow of this "orientalist" projection also stretches back to Şanlıurfa; both Tatlıses and rival arabesk megastar Müslüm Gürses are from the province, which is demographically about half Kurdish (though not considered a stronghold of separatist sentiment), with a major Arab component as well. It is common for people from Şanlıurfa to claim arabesk as a local invention, whether they appreciate the genre or not.

Again, the cümbüş is not a particularly characteristic instrument in the genre; Tatlıses includes one prominently in a recent hit video, *Kavur Balıkları,* but in it he and his band are pretending to be Román musicians. However, the perceived interrelatedness—perhaps conflation—of "oriental" arabesk, Kurdish self-expression,

[111] However since at least 2001 he has been a darling of the ruling Justice and Development Party (about which see more in section 8.1), which benefited from his popularity among their power base.

and Şanlıurfa religious conservatism seemed threatening enough to the Turkish governing elites to place a TRT ban on the instrument in 1965.[112] Use of the cümbüş subsequent to the ban appears to have remained the same in arabesk (i.e., relatively rare) and in the sıra gecesi traditions (i.e., prominent), but seems to have gained in popularity in (cassette) recordings of Kurdish folk music. Although I was unable to confirm the cause of this, I think it plausible that the instrument gained such popularity among Kurdish musicians and audiences precisely because, like their languages and music, it had been banned by the government (though this topic deserves further research).

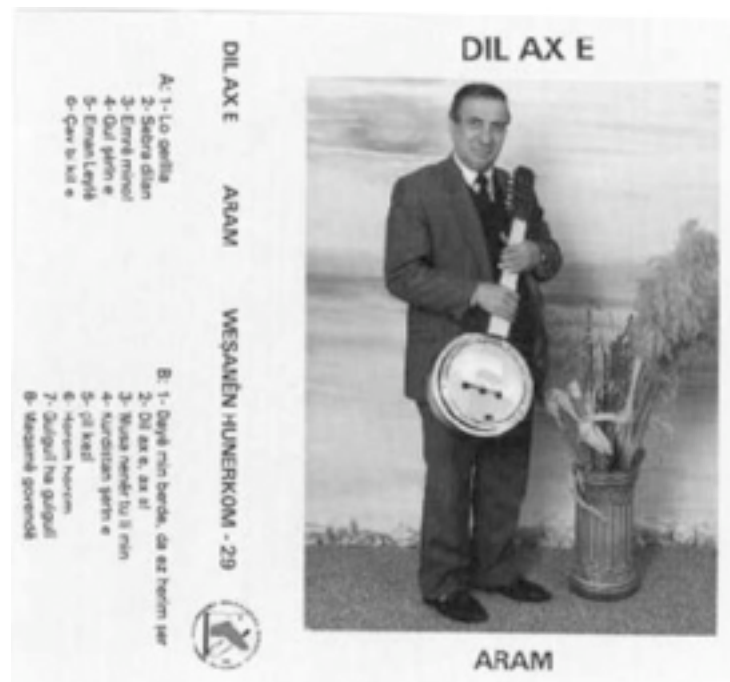

Figure 19. J-card from undated cassette of Kurdish folk singer Aram Tigran (a.k.a. Aram Dikram).

[112] I was unable to ascertain when or whether the ban actually ended; since the TRT monopoly ended in 1994 (and considering the current arabesk-friendly government), it is presently something of a moot point. (See Güvenç 1997 on free market radio and television and Turkish identity politics.)

7.3 Resurgence and Broadening of Cümbüş Use Since the Mid-1990s

In the mid-1990s there developed a surge of public interest in Turkey's "traditional multiculturalism" (and pluralism), nostalgically referencing an Ottoman past—identification with which had been strongly discouraged in Republican times (see Stokes 1995 passim, Paçacı and Aksoy 1995).This seemed to encourage a more public recognition that there remained distinct, "traditional" ethnically non-Turkish minorities in Turkey. This interest manifested itself in the music world in music historiography (e.g., Aksoy, Paçacı); classical concerts featuring the works of Ottoman *zimmi* (i.e., Greek, Armenian and Jewish) composers, including shows performed by government-sponsored ensembles in prestigious venues like Istanbul's Cemil Reşit Rey Concert Hall; commercial recordings of minority folk musicians and re-releases of neglected early classical and urban popular recordings (especially by the pioneering Kalan Records); and in the formation of "revival" and "multicultural" popular bands. It is significant that this phenomenon coincided with the advent of "world music" as a marketing category, making many previously obscure musics available in American and European markets—as well as domestic ones—though I hesitate to say to what extent the "world music" phenomenon catalyzed this public interest.[113]

[113] See Seeman 2002: 322-65 on "world music" and the Román. I am aware that Turkish classical musicians touring abroad came to include the music of non-Turkish composers in their repertoire at this time as a strategy for widening their "world music"-savvy audiences and promoting Turkey as a "traditionally multicultural" place; this worked particularly well in the U.S., which has relatively large numbers of Jewish, Greek and Armenian citizens, though few Turkish ones (N. Çelik, H. Karaduman, personal comm.).

While the cümbüş has been predictably absent from classical iterations of this trend, it has since the mid-1990s enjoyed a small renaissance in a variety of folk and popular genres, some using what was termed by younger fan-informants "techno-pop" instrumentation and techniques—multi-track recording, electronically-enhanced and amplified instruments, synthesizers and underlying synthesized rhythm tracks. The remainder of this chapter details specific groups and genres in which the cümbüş has seen a resurgence since the mid-1990s.

7.3.1 Revivals

As mentioned in section 7.1, there had been a precipitous drop in (secular) music making among Turkish citizens of Greek, Armenian and Jewish extraction from about the mid-1950s. This had been accompanied by a general dearth of even previously made commercial recordings of music created by members of these groups, but since the mid-1990s many older recordings of classical and popular urban musics have been re-released, and a few groups formed to revive traditional folk musics as well.

Revivals of Rum (Greek-Turkish) musics are scarce, though bands playing smyrnéika and rebétika in restaurants exist in Istanbul and Izmir. Live-playing revival bands of these musics appear to be more the vogue in Greece itself (see Pennanen 2004: 14, Holst-Warhaft 2002: 40-6), though concerts and recordings of Greek and Rum musicians, often playing with Turkish musicians, have become a minor market

staple in Turkey.[114] The cümbüş is still rare in such revivals, though during my five month stay for this project I did meet six Greek musicians who had come to Istanbul to buy instruments—including cümbüş-es—as well as recordings and sheet music of what had been an essentially shared (*kahve aman* and Ottoman classical) repertoire. Within Turkey, the "multicultural" band Kardeş Türküler (see section 7.3.5) occasionally uses the *cümbüş saz* (credited as the "*sazbüş*") apparently as a sonic marker on its versions of Rum tunes (e.g., in "Manaki Mu" on the album *Hem Âvâz*).

Recordings and performances of Armenian music are also rare in Turkey. Although it is legal to sing in the Armenian language, it should be noted that there are many dialects, and not all are mutually intelligible. The Armenian-Turkish folk revival group Knar has produced two albums, in the liner notes of the first of which they say eastern Anatolian Armenian songs were traditionally sung in Turkish and Kurdish as well as in local Armenian dialects (which they prefer to use) (Avedikyan 1999).[115] Little is known about the use of the cümbüş (again, patented in 1930) in rural Armenian music, but it appears quite prominently in this group's recordings, which are posited as "authentic" and in a traditional, revivalist mode. Re-released recordings of Ottoman/Turkish classical and early-Republican meyhane-style musics created by Armenian composers (the latter including cümbüş) are better represented

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[114] For example *bouzouki* player Lakis Karnezis with *kanun* [zither] player Halil Karaduman, *kemençe* [spike-fiddle] and *lauta* player Sokratis Sinopoulos with *kemençe* player Derya Turkan, singer Stelyo Berber with accordionist Muammer Ketencoğlu.

[115] Avedikyan does not say, and I have not ascertained, what dialect(s) the group sings in, or whether the choice would matter to Armenian consumers of their recordings.

in the market than folk music revivals. In liner notes and other writings on music, credit for a once-popular music notation system invented by Ottoman Armenian Hamparsum Limoncıyan is widely noted and often used—mainly by ethnic Turks—to form part of a positive, supporting argument in a discourse regarding "traditional multiculturalism" in Turkey (see B. Aksoy 1999b, Ünlü 1998). Imported recordings of Armenian-American cümbüş player Ara Dinkjian's jazz-inflected folk fusion are perennial favorites in Istanbul record stores.

Parenthetically—though not necessarily pertinent to a musical "revival"—in a recent three-minute "human interest story" on CNN Türk Television, the folk music of the northeastern province of Kars (on the Armenian border) was featured, portraying the cümbüş and accordion as a typical combination. Though the ethnicity of the players was not made clear, it seems likely that they were Armenian.[116]

Today most available recordings of Jewish Turkish music are of the nostalgic "multicultural classical" variety, though the revival band Los Paşaros Sefardis made several albums drawing from both urban folk and traditional paraliturgical repertoires, and Kalan Records has produced two albums of Jewish music; one—*Maftirim*—of an obscure tradition of paraliturgical choral music modeled, since the 16th century, on Sufi hymnody, and the other—*Yahudice*—of urban folk music from

[116] *Her Evde Bir Haber Var,* CNN Türk, November 6, 2005—thanks to ethnomusicologist Dr. Mitsuru Saito for pointing this out to me. It is common in Turkish television portrayals of regional cultural activities not to mention specific ethnic affiliations, apparently with the understanding that the audience will be able to distinguish them for themselves by visual or sonic markers such as music, dress, and speech patterns. Dr. Saito did not identify anything particularly marking ethnicity in the scene *except* the not-very-Turkish instrumentation; without wishing to propose a circular argument here, I would guess that the players *were* ethnic Armenians, and the instruments—perhaps especially the equal-tempered accordion—were markers of that.

the early twentieth century.[117] The pop group Sefarad has put out two hit records—produced by Selim Hubeş of the now defunct Los Paşaros Sefardis—in which they "continue the tradition of Sephardic ballads" (Hubeş n.d.) by playing them with late twentieth century techno-pop instrumentation and techniques (while including the cümbüş), and singing both Turkish-language and Ladino versions of their repertoire. The rhetoric on the liner notes of these two albums—the 2003 *Sefarad* and later but undated *Volume 2*—emphasize the band's intention to "modernize" Sephardic music. This theme was reiterated to me in an interview with producer Selim Hubeş, who sees the project as a move to "update" Turkish Jewish culture and make it more accessible to Turkish audiences in general (9/22/05 interview). Inclusion of the cümbüş is meant as a reference or tribute to famed late-Ottoman/early-Republican Jewish composer, ud-ist and cümbüş player Mısırlı İbrahim Efendi, the message being: classy, nostalgic, yet modernist (ibid.). Photographs of İbrahim—with cümbüş—are prominent in the booklet accompanying Los Paşaros Sefardis's album *Zemirot*.

7.3.2 Kurds and Romanlar

Despite intermittent bans on the language(s), Kurdish music is widely recorded and available in Turkey. The best known cümbüş player in Kurdish music is Aram Dikram (see fig. 19),[118] who uses it to accompany his folk songs, but the

[117] Produced in collaboration with Israeli ethnomusicologist Hadass Pal-Yarden, who is also the principal singer on the album.

[118] Also spelled/pronounced Tigran. An Armenian raised by Kurdish foster parents, he is known as a Kurd and his music is presented and received as Kurdish.

instrument also appears in techno-pop albums such as Aynur's 2004 *Keçe Kurdan* ("Kurdish Girl," the title song of which was banned for a few months in 2005), and on her 2005 release *Nûpel* ("New Page"—both mainly in a Kurdish language) (see fig. 20). She also has a feature spot in German-Turkish film maker Fatih Akın's 2005 documentary *Crossing the Bridge* (*İstanbul Haritası*), singing solo in a Kurdish language accompanied by (acoustic) cümbüş. The instrument also appears in certain Kurdish language pieces by the ethnically diverse "folk pop" group Kardeş Türküler (see section 7.3.5).

Figure 20. Kurdish singer Aynur Doğan with cümbüş accompanist playing with the Nederlands Blazers Ensemble, Amsterdam, April 2006 (photo: Ewoud Rooks).

In the same way that the Kurdish music in these cases cannot really be called "revivalist"—it was simply that it became legal at this time to record it at all—the many recordings of Román music from this time (much of it including the cümbüş,

e.g., Deli Selim with Kadir Ürün, Metin Urs, Selim Sesler and many others) are not truly "revivalist" either, but rather the beginning of a trend among Román musicians to make and record music specifically expressing Román-ness (see Seeman 2002, esp. 240-65). Additionally there are techno-pop albums of Román music on which the cümbüş figures prominently, such as Burhan Öçal and the Trakya All Stars' 2003 *Kırklareli İl Sınırı* which, like the Sefarad, Aynur and even Ara Dinkjian examples given earlier may be seen as an "updating" of the music, the ethnic group's public image, and incidentally the cümbüş as well.[119] A Román cümbüş player also appears in the popular television series *Cennet Mahallesi*, though this representation cannot be attributed to Román agency, and much less so arabesk star İbrahim Tatlıses's mimicry of Román musicians (with cümbüş) in his 2005 hit video *Kavur Balıkları*.

7.3.3 Sıra Gecesi

The growing mass media prominence of the music of Şanlıurfa sıra geceleri also cannot be counted as a revival since it had never ceased to be a living tradition in its home province. But whereas before the 1990s it had been little known outside of the southeast, mass marketed recordings of the music (e.g., by now-deceased cümbüş player "Kazancı" Bedih Yoluk and his son Naci, Halil Kendirli, İsmail Akagün, Akif Çekirge, et al.) and televised versions (or simulacra) of sıra geceleri since the mid 1990s brought the genre—and the cümbüş—to greater general exposure. Kalan

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[119] Multi-instrumentalist and record producer Burhan Öçal, it should be noted, is not himself Román, though he does not go out of his way to disabuse the ignorant of that notion; he has made a lot of money both for and from Román musicians in his employ.

Records has also produced an album, *Urfa'dan Üç Musiki Ustası*, re-releasing recordings of three master Şanlıurfa singers from the 1920s and 1930s, in which the cümbüş is prominent.

Although the genre is now better known to the public, the primary consumers of both recordings and televised sıra geceleri appear to be residents of the southeastern provinces where it is native, and migrants from there to Istanbul (estimated by two informants to be around one million) (M. Bitmez personal comm., B. Kırmızı 10/22/05 interview). Weekly sıra geceleri are still held by these migrants in various Istanbul neighborhoods, though they are invitation-only affairs and their existence is little known outside of circles of participants. As mentioned in section 5.2.3, fn. 63, this tradition is known as *barak gecesi* and *kürsübaşı* in the provinces of Gaziantep and Elazığ, respectively, but the term *sıra gecesi*—and association with Şanlıurfa province—dominate in mass media presentations. Both the genre and its players are characteristically conservative and little attempt is made to "update" the presentation of the music (excepting the use of heavy reverb), but Elazığ native Erkan Oğur, who grew up playing cümbüş, is a popular and well known experimental musician who often uses southeastern (and other regional) folk tunes as the basis of improvisations and compositions (Martinelli n.d).[120]

[120] In an undated interview with Martinelli, Oğur states, "Cumbuş is very common in that area [Elazığ], but in fact it's a new instrument, perhaps just over a hundred years old. It came originally from the Suryan [sic; Süryani = Aramean "Assyrian" Syrian Orthodox Christians, see Andrews 2004: 161-3] people. It used to be made of wood but now is made with a metal body and a wooden neck. It has a smaller body; it is easier to make and has a big volume, but with a metallic tone. I played a Suryan cumbuş, so it was wooden, and my first band experience was with that instrument, the cumbuş." I have asked several Syriac Christians, eastern Assyrians and Elazığ natives about such an

7.3.4 The Cümbüş Abroad

Outside of Turkey, the cümbüş has been incorporated into the works of American musicians Steve Vai, David Lindley, Carmine Guida and Ry Cooder; multi-instrumentalist Lu Edmonds (both solo and with the pop group 3Mustafa3), ex-Pink Floyd guitarist David Gilmour in Britain; Italian guitarist Roberto Zanisi and Algerian-French artist Rachid Taha; Israeli composer Arie Shapira; a variety of Sephardic music groups (e.g., L'Ham de Foc and Aman Aman of Spain, Flor de Kanela in the U.S.);[121] Syrian-Swedish folksinger Sabri Yousef, Armenian-Syrian singer Haig Yazdjian, and Armenian-American Ara Dinkjian. This last artist is best known (including in Turkey) for fusing Armenian and Turkish music with various kinds of jazz in his group Night Ark, but has also collaborated extensively with Turkish pop singer Sezen Aksu, Turkish-American musician Omar Faruk Tekbilek, Greek singer Elefthéria Arvanitáki and Turkish-Armenian percussionist Arto Tunçboyaciyan, and is probably the world's most famous cümbüş player. Although there has been sporadic mention of cümbüş use in Turkish newspaper, magazine and Internet articles on foreign musicians who play the instrument, I met no-one apart from the Cümbüş brothers who knew of any foreign players other than Ara Dinkjian in connection with the instrument.

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instrument but none of them had ever heard of such a thing (but see Picken 1975: 295 on a wooden "folk imitation" of the cümbüş from Denizli, several hundred miles west of Elazığ).

[121] In the interest of full disclosure I should reiterate that I myself am the cümbüş player for Flor de Kanela.

Additionally, a small number of cümbüş-es have apparently made their way to Turkish and Kurdish (and possibly Román) immigrant communities in Germany, Sweden and Norway as an amateur pastime instrument, and the same seems to be true among some Armenian immigrants in the United States, as well as among curious guitarists around the globe, but their numbers, repertoires and ascriptions of cultural meanings are beyond the scope of the present study.

7.3.5 New Turkish Players

Perhaps the most interesting and novel development in cümbüş use since the mid-1990s—though mostly occurring after 2000—is the instrument's adoption by ethnic Turkish musicians. One of the first instances of this phenomenon is on New York-based Turkish musician Omar Faruk Tekbilek's 1996 *Mystical Garden*, a "world music" album expressing Turkish Sufi religious sentiments (though note that the cümbüş player is Armenian-American Ara Dinkjian). 2002 was the next big year for the cümbüş in Turkish-made music: classical ud-ist Yurdal Tokcan recorded and toured with the instrument with eclectic neo-Sufi techno artist/DJ Mercan Dede, both on the latter's album *Nar* and supporting Peter Murphy's album/tour *Dust* (which Mercan Dede co-produced). That same year saw the cümbüş and *cümbüş saz* at work on the album *Hem Âvâz* by the very popular "multicultural" band Kardeş Türküler

whose repertoire consists of folk songs from a broad sampling of ethnic groups living in modern Turkey.[122]

The most visible use of the cümbüş in 2002 was its appearance in the anti-Bush video *Cambaz* (meaning "Acrobat," "Horse Trader" or "Swindler") by the rock band Mor ve Ötesi (see fig. 21), from their album *Dünya Yalan Söylüyor* ("The World is Telling Lies"). Although the instrument appears only briefly at the beginning of the piece, Ali Cümbüş reported a noticeable rise in cümbüş sales after the video's release (8/31/05 interview).

Figure 21. Harun Tekin (left, with cümbüş) and Ozan Tügen of Turkish rock band Mor ve Ötesi. Their popular 2004 video "Cambaz" begins with Tügen playing the cümbüş.(Photo by Ali Soner, courtesy of More Management.)

[122] Kardeş Türküler presents these musics as fusions of folk and world pop, with electric bass, African and Indian percussion instruments, moments of polyphony, breaks, etc. The cümbüş (played by Mehmet Erdem) and *cümbüş saz* (or "*sazbüş*," played by Ozan E. Aksoy) are used extremely sparingly, seemingly only as sonic markers of ethnicity in Román, Kurdish and Greek songs.

Yurdal Tokcan again took the lead among Turkish cümbüş players, appearing on Akın's *Ateş Ve Su* ("Fire and Water") in 2003, and Mercan Dede's *Sufi Traveler* as well as on his own foray into the world music market *Bende Can* ("The Soul in Me") in 2004.[123] In 2005 Erdem Şentürk played cümbüş on Serkan Çağrı's *Nefesim* ("My Breath"), and it appears again twice on Kardeş Türküler's *Bahar* ("Spring") of the same year (one piece Román and the other Kurdish, played by Mehmet Erdem).

This recent use of the cümbüş by ethnic Turks—whose mass media exposure has been much more prominent than that of previous players—marks a major new phase of symbolic inscription onto the instrument. Although I was not able to interview musicians in these bands in order to ascertain why they decided to include the cümbüş in their projects, dozens of young consumers of this music shared with me their interpretations of what it signifies in reception.

Whereas to their grandparents the cümbüş had been a marker mainly of Rum, Armenian and Jewish professional urban popular musicians, and to their parents it had symbolically pointed mainly toward southeastern folk musics and Román professional *fasıl* and wedding musicians, at least some members of the current

[123] For a classical ud-ist Tokcan seems to play the cümbüş an extraordinary amount, a fact I was not aware of until after my return from Turkey. I met him once and am a friend of two of his teachers and four of his students, only one of whom ever mentioned (in passing) his name in connection with the instrument, though they all well knew the subject of my research. Absent other reasons, I assume that their reticence on Tokcan's involvement with the cümbüş reflects the continuing lack of legitimacy of the instrument in "respectable" classical music circles. Nonetheless one informant from the conservatory pointed out to me that "all ud players like to play cümbüş; just not in public" (B. Işıktaş, personal comm.) On reflection I recalled that I had seen nearly all the Turkish classical ud-ists I know—including the six friends mentioned here—playing the instrument in moments of leisure. Special thanks to the anonymous questioner at the SEMSCC conference in San Diego in March 2006, who pointed me toward the Mercan Dede/cümbüş connection.

Istanbul youth culture are now taking the instrument to stand as a marker of *Turkishness* in the context of an otherwise European-shaped pop music landscape.

I take this reception of the cümbüş to reflect certain shifts in the perceptions and understandings of "Turkishness" and "multiculturalism" on the part of members of the current Istanbulite youth culture. The following chapter is an exploration of those shifts and their implications for a symbolic recontextualization of the cümbüş, in which the trope of Otherness is maintained while symbolic inscriptions of "minorities in Turkey" as the specific Others to whom it has referred are abandoned and replaced by inscriptions signifying ethnic Turks themselves.

8

Recontextualization of the Trope of Otherness Regarding the Cümbüş

As mentioned in section 2.3, the cümbüş as a consciously recognized symbol in Turkish society is weak in the extreme: virtually no one is thinking about, debating the meaning of, or choosing social strategies for using the cümbüş. Nonetheless, its presence in social activities that are more obviously part of discourses considered important in Turkish society makes the instrument's inclusion or exclusion discursively significant, especially since music is very much a part of the conscious, symbolic communication of positioning within such discourses.

One of the most historically important discourses in Turkey circumscribes ideas about what constitutes the ideal Turkish society, and within it are nested two other discourse-sets emically considered to be of major importance: the proper place and value of cultural norms associated with The West (supposedly secular Europe and North America) compared to those associated with The East (Muslim countries of the Near East and Central Asia), and the proper place and value of multiculturalism. It is within the context of these discourses that the recontextualization of the trope of Otherness in regard to symbolic inscription of the cümbüş is taking place.

8.1 The Ideal Turkish Society

As mentioned in Chapter Three, the "Kemalist" political philosophy created by Atatürk was successfully implemented as a hegemony, in the Gramscian sense; it has come to constitute the norm for what most Turkish citizens think about ideal social and governmental virtues and limits.[124] This political philosophy extols (and, as practiced, enforces) a centrally run and strictly secular government, which includes regulation of all levels of education (including, ironically, institutional Muslim religious training and job placement), and seeks to advance Turkish *culture* as well as Western *civilization* as defined in the writings of influential sociologist Ziya Gökalp. Gökalp, especially in his 1918 *Turkism, Islamism and Secularism*, posits that "civilization" is constituted by the traditions of social government, created by and belonging to different ethnic groups, but that are capable of being transmitted from one group to another, whereas "culture" is the specific and unique set of mores of a particular "nation." Culture is here seen as being more basic than a *civilization*, which can only be developed from within a culture (see Gökalp 1918 [2001], Berkes 1959).[125]

Aside from small numbers of fascists and communists on either end of the political spectrum, the main contenders for altering (or, rarely, replacing) "orthodox

[124] This is not to say that alternative political concepts have not co-existed alongside it throughout the Republican period—see Bozdağlıoğlu 2003: 35-55—only that they are posited in all political discourse to be in opposition to/in dialogue with the dominance of Kemalist ideals. The professional military has always been Kemalism's staunchest supporter, to the point of taking over the government when officers thought it to be endangered (e.g., in 1960, 1971 and 1980) (ibid.: 135-8).

[125] But cf. Bozdağlıoğlu 2003: 45-6; he suggests that Atatürk did not wholly agree with this distinction, and wanted all Turkish citizens to live within both Western civilization and Western culture.

Kemalism" come from among various stripes of religious conservatives.[126] In a nutshell, the Kemalists fear that erosion of the secular ideal would lead to the replacement of democracy with a theocracy, and the religious conservatives fear that the broadly perpetuated and enforced secularism is leading to a widespread loss of Muslim faith and ethical norms (see Toprak 1993). From the beginning of the Republic this dialectic was characterized by the politically dominant Kemalists as a question of successful Western modernism versus failed Eastern traditionalism. The religious conservatives, having to work within that ideological framework, have mainly responded with variations on the theme that Islam—or Islamic *civilization*—too, can be modernized without being Westernized, and a democratic state maintained without secularization (see Bozdağlıoğlu 2003: 1-9, 54-5).

But the political leaders and theorists who shaped Kemalist ideology had put all of their eggs into one basket; by constructing and strenuously promoting a national self-identity associated exclusively with the West—and particularly with Europe, of which they see Turkey a part—left that identity vulnerable to partial dissolution in the event of Europe's rejection of that self-identity (Bozdağlıoğlu 2003, passim). Although Turkey's self-definition as a Western and European nation has been reinforced at the international level through its participation for decades in Western-

[126] Various communist parties have existed in Turkey since 1920, though they have usually been banned from participation in elections. The Communist Party of Turkey currently operates legally in Turkey but drew less than one per cent of the vote in the last (2002) general election; its vehement anti-Zionist stance and the fact that the Kurdish separatist PKK have been the most active Marxist-Leninists in the country seem to make it unpalatable to the majority. The most prominent form of rightist political opinion expresses itself in a form of ultra-nationalist Pan-Turanism, usually accepting secularism and modernization but wishing to unite politically with ethnic (or "racial") Turks from Thrace to Xinjiang in a Turkic megastate, rather than with Europe (see Bozdağlıoğlu 2003: 96-105).

oriented international institutions,[127] Western challenges to it have also been consistent and were often taken quite hard domestically.[128] These challenges gradually led to an identity crisis in which Islamist political voices grew and adapted to offer an attractive cultural and socio-political alternative. In the words of political analyst Yücel Bozdağlıoğlu:

> Especially throughout the 1980s and 1990s, "the role of religion in politics became one of the most central and contentious questions in Turkish politics and...a religious outlook became firmly embedded in the ideology and program of the mainstream conservative parties in Turkey." The influence of Islam also became evident in every sphere of social and political life. During this time, Islamic influences in the media, fashion, art, music, literature and cinema have been more visible and assertive. "Among the wide range of cultural preferences, artistic expressions and lifestyle choices that can be observed in Turkey, it is no longer possible to detect a consensus regarding modern Turkish identity." (Bozdağlıoğlu 2003: 87-91)[129]

Eventually Islamist voices gained enough popular credibility to challenge the secularist status quo at the level of national politics. The current (2005) Turkish government, in power since a landslide victory in the 2002 general elections, is run by the rightist and moderately Islamist AKP (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* or Justice and Development Party), whose base of support is the rural poor and a developing

[127] E.g., the OECD (1948), Council of Europe (1949), NATO and the UN (1950), Association Agreement with European Community (1963 later the EU), EU Customs Union Agreement (1995) (see Bozdağlıoğlu 2003: 58-68, Shaw 1977: 400).

[128] Continual postponement of accession to the European Union since Turkey's first application to it in 1959 is the main one, but other major blows were: the removal of Jupiter missiles from Turkey during the Cuban missile crisis of 1962-3; President Johnson's, NATO's and UN's rejection of the Turkish position in Cyprus 1963-4 and again in 1974 (see Bozdağlıoğlu 2003: 60-8); and involvement in the first Gulf War, which resulted in an uncompensated loss of $20 billion in trade revenues and the exacerbation of "the Kurdish [separatist] problem," Turkey's aggressive handling of which was then used as an argument against EU accession (ibid.: 128-30).

[129] Both internal quotes reference Kasaba and Bozdoğan 2000, pages 6 and 12, respectively.

entrepreneurial class in the east of the country and the millions of immigrants from those regions to the large cities. But despite campaign promises to combine elements of Islam with Turkey's everyday democratic and secular political life, few explicitly Islamist policies have been enacted and even fewer structural changes have been made to the basic Kemalist political apparatus. The party remains popular mainly due to its successful control of inflation and dealings with the European Union. Nonetheless, the rhetoric of *vahdet* (Muslim unity) as an endogenously non-ethnocentric model of multiculturalism has become more prominent, a standing challenge to the secular-nationalist version of communal unity.

8.2 Multiculturalism(s)

Although throughout the Republican era the idea of multiculturalism has been prominent in discourses regarding the ideal Turkish society, it has mainly been talked about in two frameworks of reference: in the context of an overall list of ethnicities that makes up the total of “Turkish” citizens, undivided (and previously, of the four Ottoman millet-s, beneficially divided), and in terms of the official treatment and inclusion of ethnically non-Turkish citizens, often as a measure of Turkey’s fitness for entry into the supposedly better integrated European Union. Apart from such monolithic concepts of multiculturalism, however, it appears as though there are at least two distinct concepts of multiculturalism at play in current Turkish discourse,

each with its own positioning in the East/West polemic, and associated with physically eastern and western territories in Turkey (see Andrews 1989: 41-2).[130]

The Western type of "multiculturalism," prevalent in Thrace and the Aegean coast where the larger cities and other endpoints of internal migration are, is envisioned by those who perpetuate it as a core group of Turks—throughout the country, and for practical purposes including Laz and other Muslim Caucasians—as distinct from the small but historically important non-Muslim minorities, and the (potentially separatist) Kurds (2005 interviews: E. Kahya, "Fatih," "Arif," B. Işıktaş, B.Ş. Baloğlu, S. Dural, S. Erdemsel, et al.). This version is generally held by urban, cosmopolitan persons who broadly speaking tend to favor "modernism" (and center-left Kemalism) over "tradition," though not usually to the point of exclusion.

Musically, this point of view has been represented in recorded reproductions of Rum, Armenian and Sephardic Jewish urban folk musics, *fasıl* performance in bars and restaurants (usually played by Román musicians), pop music other than arabesk, and classical Turkish music, particularly that which celebrates composers from the non-Muslim millet-s. Debates occur within this sub-discourse as to the value and extent of Turk-Others relationships, but the above parameters are its conceived limits.

[130] I say "at least two" such concepts because I have only examined those of the western and southeastern regions, there being little cümbüş use in the north and northeast of Turkey. "Eastern" probably would be an accurate and sufficient qualifier for what I here call the southeastern type of multiculturalism, but not having information on the northeast in this regard, I have chosen to use the more restrictive term. Andrews, without referring to specific regions, succinctly elucidates the histories of two such concepts of multicultural identity discourse, referring to them as Westernized Mediterranean and Muslim fundamentalist (1989: 41-2).

The Southeastern-type concept of multiculturalism is instead envisioned by those who perpetuate it as consisting of a core of rural or small town Muslims (Turks, Kurds, Arabs, Laz, etc.) in relation to a secular urban culture in the west of the country that has long been a genetic as well as cultural mix of Turks and the non-Muslims of the millet system (who, aside from rural Armenians, were never present in great numbers—nor thought important—in the east of the country), and various Anatolian Christian communities (East and West Aramean, Arab, et al., see Andrews 154-7, 161-7) (2005 interviews: "Şenol," "Hakkan," "Taylan," S. Tatar, M.E. Bitmez, et al.). This version is generally held by culturally and politically more conservative persons who broadly speaking favor "tradition" over "modernism," though not usually to the point of exclusion. Musically it could hardly be better represented than in the conservative, quasi-religious sıra gecesi, although arabesk is a more popular and widespread genre favored by people using this conception of multiculturalism. Again, much debate occurs within the framework of this sub-discourse.

These two ideas of what multiculturalism means have met, clashed, and fed into syncretic reformulations of dominant discourses in various ways in the western cities where easterners have been flocking for the last forty years. One "place" where they meet to do so is in the market for fusions of traditional music and techno-pop, where young consumers of fresh popular music are both the arbiters of taste and the next-generation interpreters of the discourses mentioned above.

8.3 Recontextualization of the Cümbüş in the Youth Market

Turkey is often described as a "young country" and demographic statistics by age distribution bear this out: 53% of the population is under the age of 30 (Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü 2005). As the primary consumers of continually newly-produced music, the 15-30 year old demographic niche, at 27% of the overall population (ibid.), is generally eclectic in taste but favors a variety of "pop" musics from America and Europe, and Turkish pop music in a Western style (2005 interviews: B. Işıktaş, B.Ş. Baloğlu, S. Dural, "Fatih," "Arif," "Taylan," et al.). There is a definite sense of national pride in Turkish popular music, especially if it sounds to them both "authentically Turkish" and "modern" in a Western (consumer culture) sense (ibid.).

In speaking with Turks in this 15-30 year old demographic niche about their impressions of the cümbüş I brought up the earlier-mentioned techno-pop pieces and bands that feature the instrument, and they were generally aware of them and most had at least one CD from among the recordings. The most popular (or at least best known) with the 18-25 year olds were *Cambaz* by the rock band Mor ve Ötesi (whose members are ethnically Turkish), and various tunes by the (Sephardic Jewish) band Sefarad; among 25-30 year olds (Armenian-American) Ara Dinkjian and (Kurdish) Aynur were favored and/or better known. The Kardeş Türküler albums *Hem Âvâz* and *Bahar*, with songs in Turkish, Kurdish languages, Romanés, Armenian and "Circassian," were popular with both, as were the works of Mercan Dede.

Answers to questions about the "meaning" of the cümbüş in these pieces and repertoires (e.g., "why do you think they chose to include the cümbüş there?") fell

broadly into two categories, depending on whether or not the respondent was him/herself a practicing musician. Musicians (especially those studying Turkish classical or Turkish folk music) tended to think that the instrument was chosen for the novelty of its (little heard) sound and/or because its sound is "*içli,*" interior or emotional in a nostalgic or personally spiritual sense, which to them had always suited certain strains of popular music in Turkey (2005 interviews: B. Işıktaş, B.Ş. Baloğlu, S. Dural). Non-musicians, however, had a less technical take on it; to them the cümbüş is a marker of both Turkishness (in a broad, Kemalist, "national citizenship" sense) and of "old fashioned" musical taste—most were not aware that it was invented in Republican times and thought of it as a traditional if rare Ottoman instrument (2005 interviews: "Fatih," "Arif," et al.). The mixture of old and new was taken as "cool," and one respondent even called it "post-modern," a sonic representation of where Turkey is headed marked by another of where it had been (2005 interview: "Fatih").

The cümbüş was also recognized as an instrument played by the poor, by members of a struggling underclass, society's underdogs (2005 interviews: S. Erdemsel, B. Işıktaş, B.Ş. Baloğlu, S. Dural, "Fatih," "Arif," "Taylan," et al.). If it was the case that in earlier times ethnic Armenians, Jews and Rum, and lately Román and Kurds had played the instrument (as evidenced by commercially available recordings, though these were not very popular purchases among this demographic), it followed that this was because these people were in some way underprivileged in society. But this was posited as an economic position rather than an ethnic one. I note

as significant that in no case did informants from this age group attribute specifically ethnic associations to the cümbüş,[131] whereas informants roughly 30 to 70 years of age had often referred to it as a "Gypsy," Armenian or (Rum) smyrnéika instrument.

To the "young and hip," raised in the western cities but many of whose parents had come from the rural east, the syncretic reconfiguration of ideas about multiculturalism seems to have been subsumed into the larger Kemalist vision of Turkishness-as-national citizenship. This had been drilled continuously throughout their education and (for males) military service, while the cümbüş was brought along for the ride and recontextualized out of its associations with Otherness along the way. More specifically, the Otherness of the cümbüş is being transferred from "traditional minorities," alive in both versions of multiculturalism, onto a newly imagined sense of Turkishness itself. The instrument is thus a marker of distinction from amongst American and European versions of a "modern" pop music in an international consumer culture in which the Turks are seen, both from within and without, as the clear underdogs.

This process may be seen as obliquely fulfilling a Kemalist dream, at least symbolically; the international (but Western-shaped) pop culture market has become a primary forum in which to advertise the "modernity level" of a culture while participating in a Western or "international" civilization. It functions as an indicator of "democratic values" such as freedom of speech and the rights of women and

[131] At least not in a pop music context; all were aware that it was used in traditional wedding bands—composed of Román musicians, of course—playing "Turkish music." Many had also seen it on television in simulacra of the sıra gecesi, another "Turkish" musical practice.

minorities, and implies an economy fit to participate in the consumer capitalist model considered integral to Western-ness and modernity. Atatürk had supported familiarity with and participation in Western classical music for the same reason, at a time when it was considered the height of sophistication on an international level. But "global" popular culture has far superseded that genre's reach, and has done so in a populist rather than an elitist format. Under the rubric of "Turkish" pop music are now available CDs, videos and international concerts of Kurdish, Sephardic, Román et al., players, as well as those by ethnic Turks from all regions of the country, crossing freely between different versions of multiculturalism, sidestepping the East/West ideological trap that arabesk fell into forty years ago, and participating, at least at a symbolic level, in the kind of ideal Turkish society consistent with what mainstream Turks believe to be the European standard for a "culture" favorably positioned to join the EU "civilization."

9

Theorizing the Recontextualization of the Cümbüş's Otherness

9.1 The Discursive Landscape

Generational changes in social attitudes and means of expression are normal enough dynamics in any society, but what factors of recent changes of this sort in Turkey encouraged the sudden inclusion of the cümbüş, an object of cultural expression formerly relegated to marginal out-groups? To analyze this development let us look at the discursive landscape in which the recontextualization of the cümbüş's inscriptions of Otherness has taken place. Using a term from Laclau and Mouffe as explained in Chapter One, I will refer here to discrete, competing discourses as "discursive nodal points." Three relevant nodal points in play throughout the lifetimes of the current Istanbul youth culture—roughly 1975 to the present—are:

- a monoethnic, secular, Eurocentric national identity in which the term "Turk" refers to all the citizens of Turkey, regardless of ethnicity. These Kemalist ideals were continually reinforced through mandatory public education and (for males) military service, and until 1994 through the government-run monopoly on television and radio broadcast.
- Islamist—though usually moderate—alternatives to absolute Kemalism, advocating political alliances and national identity with "Islamic nations"

rather than with Europe and the West. Initially associated with the more conservative, rural southeast, Islamist rhetoric became more widespread with massive internal westward migration and rising Islamist political involvement. Islamist attitudes toward multiculturalism reflect an ideal of the unity (*vahdet*) of the community of Muslims, regardless of ethnicity, and classification of Others in terms of religious affiliation.

- Sufism (*Tasavvuf*)-qua-liberal Islam; a traditional yet heterodox, non-dogmatic and currently apolitical mode of Muslim spiritual expression and self-identity. Originally opposed by Atatürk and subsequent Kemalist officialdom as non-rational and reactionary (see Toprak 1993: 239-40), current conceptions that emphasize an inclusive humanism offer an alternative to the religious orthodoxy of the Islamists. Based on teachings and religious orders founded in Anatolia by several thirteenth century poet-saints (e.g., Mevlana Celaluddin Rumi, Yunus Emre and Hacı Bektaş-i Veli), this form of spiritual identity also carries native Turkish associations, in contrast with the orthodox Sunni ways of the Islamists, considered by many liberals as more reminiscent of Arab cultural practice.[132]

[132] Although Rumi and Hacı Bektaş both migrated to Selçuk Anatolia from Khorasan (in present-day Afghanistan), they are considered indigenous saints in Turkey. Followers of Hacı Bektaş may either be Sunni or Alevi Shi'a. In my estimation it would be incorrect to say that there is a strong opposition between Tasavvuf and orthodox Sunni identity or ideology in Turkey; the majority of Turkish Muslims seem to think of themselves simply as Muslims. However many persons whose religious practice may be described on a continuum from "not strict" to "virtually non-existent"—drinking alcohol, smoking tobacco (not forbidden, but frowned upon by many among the pious), not praying daily, etc.—find in Tasavvuf ideology a traditional precedent for what orthodox Sunnis would view as laxity in religious practice (although there are certainly Tasavvuf adherents whose religious observance is "strict").

To this discursive environment we now add the current Istanbulite youth culture's exposure to the cümbüş over the same 30 year period.

As previously mentioned, the cümbüş is hardly a ubiquitous item in Turkey. Little is written or taught about it, and its appearances on mass media have been fairly sparse. The current Istanbulite youth culture's exposure to the instrument previous to its use in techno-pop musics, whether performed by minorities or ethnic Turks, have come mainly through the following:

- Physical (if not prominent) presence in music instrument shops
- Román musicians playing traditional urban Turkish popular music live at weddings, circumcision parties, and in meyhane-style restaurants (though cümbüş use in these situations has diminished during the lifetimes of the generation in question)
- Infrequent appearances in arabesk recordings and, later, videos
- Since the 1990s in televised and recorded sıra geceleri
- Since 1991 in commercially available recordings of Kurdish folk music
- Since the 1990s in re-released recordings from the 1930s through 1950s—having much overlap with the above-mentioned Román repertoire—and a few revival recordings from Armenian and Jewish artists

This list is in chronological order of appearance on the popular culture scene; in terms of frequency of exposure, none of them appears to have been very strong or particularly popular with informants born since 1975, though the fading Román

cümbüş use and televised sıra geceleri were more familiar to them than the others. Most of these media could be associated with an Eastern discursive node (Román, Kurdish, arabesk, sıra gecesi) or a Western one (older classical music composed by non-Turks, re-released *kanto* recordings, revivals), and with specific ethnic minorities. However, members of the current Istanbulite youth culture with whom I spoke do not associate the instrument with specific ethnicities (as their parents and grandparents had done), but they instead associate it with the past—through its use in old and old-fashioned musics—and with an economic class; the cümbüş seems to them to be played by poor musicians, social underdogs, whether urban or rural, and was absent from high-prestige musics whether Turkish (i.e. classical) or Western (2005 interviews: S. Erdemsel, B. Işıktaş, B.Ş. Baloğlu, S. Dural, "Fatih," "Arif," "Taylan," et al.).

9.2 Social Drama: Popular Culture and the Turkish National Identity Crisis

It is thus with fairly weak recognition of previous inscriptions of *ethnic* Otherness, but vague associations of it with the early-Republic and economic under-classes that this demographic encountered the cümbüş in rock and techno-pop musics after about the year 2000. The increasingly popular genres of rock and techno-pop were created in response to desires to be and to *appear* to be hip, modern and Western—particularly, European—and acted to counter the insecurity about their Western identity caused by rebuffs to it from the West (as described in Bozdağlıoğlu 2003 and in section 8.1). This particular response assumed a West-as-normative

outlook (and also took on the genres' tropes about non-conformity, youth rebellion etc.) but the overall crisis within which the current Istanbulite youth culture grew up was more than an issue of Western identity; it was the competition, at all levels of society, of the political, religious and social discourses described earlier in this chapter, compounded by continual pressures from without (America, Europe, other Muslim societies) to "choose a side" and behave appropriately before the eyes of the world (ibid.).

Anthropologist Victor Turner provided a way of theorizing such crises. Turner saw crisis as a phase of what he called a "social drama." In his reworking of van Gennep's idea of the "rite of passage" (see Turner 1987: 33-5, cf. van Gennep 1960 [1909]), Turner described the social drama as a process consisting of the following phases:

breach→crisis→redressive action→resolution/split
└ liminal period ┘

A "breach" is the phase in which a person or subgroup challenges a societal norm or norms. I see the efforts of early Republican Turkish political elites to effect a wholesale Westernization and secularization of Turkish society as the breach that precipitated the current crisis. A "crisis," in Turner's scheme, is the phase of a social drama in which others in the society reflect upon the transgressed norms and on the proposed changes, and "choose sides." This setting up of a competition between "sides," the crisis's "contagious" nature to spread through society, and the tendency for other unresolved issues to surface and become part of competing discourses at

such times are what make it a crisis (1987: 34-5). The “redressive” phase of a social drama consists of attempts to reconcile competing sides in order to resolve the crisis. It may be effected through any number of means, from the giving of advice to official adjudication to rituals or “rites of passage” designed to publicly legitimize a change of status. If such action is denied (by the authorities) or refused (by the transgressors), or for some reason too long delayed, the transgressors—or a determined subset of them—may resolve the crisis by splitting off from the normative authority and establishing a new social category; this may not last beyond the specific case, but it may even grow to become the new normative authority. The final phase of a social drama is reached either when such an irreconcilable schism is recognized and legitimized or when the transgressors are brought back within the previous norms (ibid.).

Turner characterized the period between the initiation of crisis and its resolution (or split) as one of “liminality,” that is, of being “betwixt and between” socially recognized categories, neither here nor there (Turner 1987: 8-12, 25). As the competition—that is, the crisis—between proponents of the two discursive nodes West/future/modern/secular and East/timeless/traditional/religious has occurred over Turkish national identity since at least the 1970s, today’s Istanbulite youth culture has grown up in a liminal period in terms of communal identity. Traveling through and between the discursive nodal points, they forged compromises as they went through daily life—if piety rises as a social value, can one still be a good Muslim and drink, smoke, keep up with Western fashions, not pray daily? If Europe continues to resist

Turkish accession to the EU, can we just declare ourselves European anyway? Should we look to other Muslims for a sense of identity, whether we are Europeans or not? Who is the young woman studying particle physics, listening to Euro-pop, who cannot take her exams because she refuses to uncover her head? Who is the young Laz man receiving a monoethnic Turkish indoctrination in the army along with his Kurdish, Armenian, Bosniak et al., compatriots?

Different social situations require different identity assertions, and in the aporia around a single national identity, syncretic reformulations of various elements present in the dominant discourses were formed on and between the "liminal pathways" along which the Turkish youth travel between discursive nodal points (fig. 22).

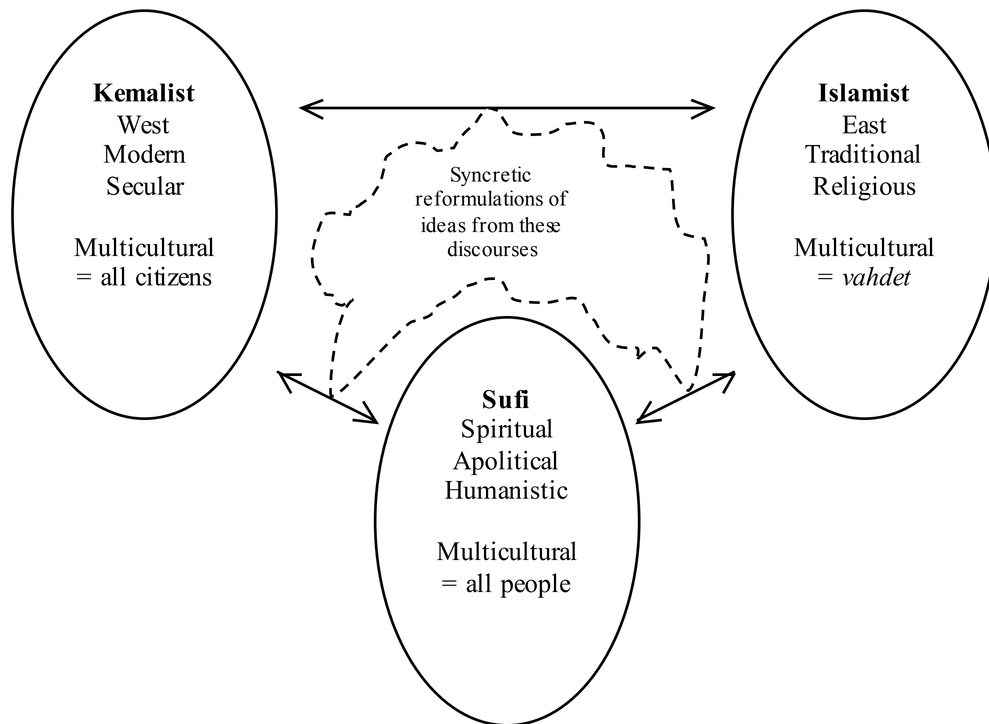

Figure 22. Syncretic reformulations among discursive nodal points connected by liminal pathways.

The formal authoritative institutions continually exert pressure by promoting their own diverse discursive identity ideals, but as they have not been able to positively resolve the aporia, manifestations of alternative identities—including newly syncretized ideas about multiculturalism, identity, religion etc.—have been created by a young generation unsatisfied either by continual liminality or the rhetoric of the original discursive positions (fig. 23).

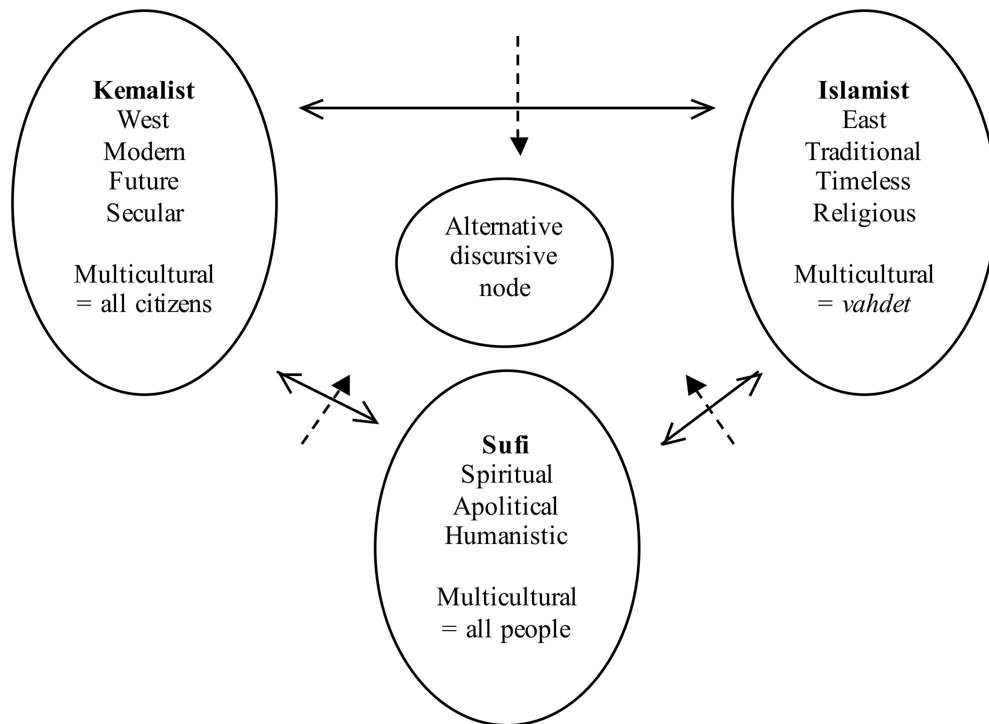

Figure 23. Continual pressure to resolve the identity crisis (represented here by dashed arrows) catalyses the consolidation of a new discursive node where syncretic reformulations of previous ideas had formed.

Certain such alternatives—Turnerian "splits"—have been manifested in the realm of popular music culture in the form of Western-style rock and techno-pop musics with markers of Turkishness such as Turkish lyrics, vocal styles and instruments, and in some cases the use of makam or folk scale formations. Informants (e.g., S. Erdemsel, B. Işıktaş, B.Ş. Baloğlu, S. Dural, "Fatih," "Arif," "Taylan," et al.) saw this as a cultural self-assertion of Turks as European and Western with or without their acceptance as such by Europe and the West—as one man in Fatih Akın's musical documentary of Istanbul *Crossing the Bridge* said, "he who *seeks* to be European is not European." Cultural moves like Mor ve Ötesi's *Cambaz*, criticizing

Bush and American foreign policy, demonstrate a way to express independence from the West while continuing to participate in Western-shaped popular culture. Some popular culture manifestations of this are secular (Mor ve Ötesi, Burhan Öçal, et al.) while others express a Muslim spiritual identity through references to liberal, heterodox and nationally Turkish Sufi ideologies (Mercan Dede, Yurdal Tokcan, et al.). All of these, however, may be seen as attempts on the part of members of the current Istanbulite youth culture to resolve the longstanding national identity crisis, at least for themselves if not for the whole of society.

When the cümbüş began to appear in Turkish-created rock and techno-pop musics simultaneously with "updated" versions of Kurdish, Armenian and Jewish Turkish musics, and recordings of early-Republican popular musics, my informants in the Istanbulite youth culture took the instrument as a signifier of multicultural Turkishness vis à vis Europe and the West, a marker of Turkey's Other-qua-underdog status, Muslim but modern—inasmuch as the instrument referenced the past in a technologically advanced musical setting, even postmodern. Following Taussig's analysis, we might say that this mimesis of Western pop culture is a form of performed fetish, created in order to gain symbolic control *from* and *over* its object. I would assert that the cümbüş, as a marker of Turkishness in these musics, is then a kind of counter-fetish, a claim of ownership, control and investment within the mimetic performance.

How else had the cümbüş functioned symbolically in this Turnerian split, and how did the trope of Otherness inscribed upon it shift from its earlier associative

meaning of ethnically non-Turkish Others to that of Turks-as-Others? The next section addresses these questions in terms of the linguistic paradigms of *meaning* (semantics) and *signs* (semiotics).

9.3 The Cümbüş as Sign, and Semantic Modulation

In the paradigm provided by the pragmatist philosopher Charles Peirce for discerning different types of signs and the way they are perceived as such, there are three main elements involved in semiosis—the conveyance of meaning through signs:[133]

- the *sign*: something that stands for something else for someone in some way: not a self-evident idea or entity, but a catalyst for an effect.
- the *object* of the sign: the "something else" stood for, be it real or an abstract concept.
- the *interpretant*: what the sign creates in the observer, including feeling and sensation, physical reaction, as well as ideas articulated and processed in language. There are three types of interpretant:
    - *emotional interpretant*: a direct, unreflected-upon feeling caused by a sign. (Turino proposes *sense, feeling* or *sentiment interpretant* rather than emotional, which may involve other kinds of signs.)

[133] The following description of Peirce's paradigm is taken largely from Turino's succinct synthesis of it (1999: 223-32).

- *energetic interpretant*: a physical reaction caused by a sign, e.g., unnoticed foot tapping to music, rise in heart rate upon hearing a siren, drawing finger away from hot stove.
- *sign-interpretant*: an abstract, linguistic-based concept.

Furthermore, sign, object and interpretant each have three modes:

- Of the **sign**:
  - *qualisign*: a pure quality imbedded in a sign, e.g., redness, or a particular timbre, or a harmonic/melodic relation.
  - *sinsign*: actual specific instances of a sign, e.g., each instance of the word “the” on this page, the redness of a particular rose.
  - *legisign*: the sign as a general type, e.g., the Star Spangled Banner, apart from any actual performance of it, the concept “the color red.”
- Of the **object**’s relation to the sign:
  - *icon*: a sign related to its object by some kind of similarity between them, e.g., by quotation, rising melodic line/speed/volume imitating tension in same in speech.[134]
  - *index:* a sign that is related to its object through co-occurrence in actual experience, e.g., smoke as an index of fire, a TV show theme song as an index of the program.

[134] Furthermore, there are three types of icon: a) *image*—e.g, a direct quote, b) *diagram*—having analogous relations of parts between sign and object, e.g., a map, and c) *metaphor*—juxtaposed linguistic signs (not iconically related to their objects or to each other) positing parallelisms or similarities between the objects of the signs, e.g., ‘a mountain of a man.’

- *symbol*: a sign that is related to its object through the use of language rather than being fully dependent on iconicity or indexicality. "Symbols are themselves of a general type (*legisigns*) whose objects are also general classes of phenomena; most words are symbols, and language is the only semiotic mode that can express symbolically, and the symbolic function of language is to facilitate thinking in/expressing generalities. Symbols are *signs about* and not *signs of* other things" (227).

- Of the **interpretant** (the way in which the sign is interpreted):
  - *rheme*: a sign interpreted as representing its object as a qualitative possibility (i.e., not judged as true or false, but as a possibility). Any single word—cat, unicorn, God, pie—suggests its possibility without indicating its truth or falsity; a painting of an unknown or imaginary person is a rheme.
  - *dicent*: a sign understood to represent its object in respect to actual existence, e.g., a weathervane is a *dicent-index* for (the *object*) 'wind direction' because the wind direction actually affects the position of the weathervane. A linguistic proposition is a dicent-symbol because the truth of the sign is interpreted as really being affected by the relation of the objects as expressed through the symbols. (Turino notes that its importance is that it is *interpreted as really being affected by its object*. See 229, especially in re: body language/kinesics.)

- *argument*: (involves symbolic propositions and their required language-based premises—arguments will not be pertinent here.)

The cümbüş as previously inscribed with the meaning of non-Turks-as-Others can be seen as a *legisign*—a sign as a general type of cultural phenomenon, that is *indexical*—its associations are due to the instrument's co-occurrence with what is signified (non-Turkish Others), and a *dicent*—that is, its continued use by those it signified affected and reinforced its symbolic meaning (and helped perpetuate the pattern of non-use by ethnic Turks). The *object* (meaning) of the cümbüş as such a *dicent-indexical-legisign* was Otherness, specifically associated with non-Turks. When the instrument was taken up by ethnic-Turkish players its *indexical* quality was exchanged for a *symbolic* one through a new association with the *concept* of Otherness (rather than through co-occurrence with specific, non-Turkish Others) which allowed the inclusion of Turks-as-Others. Its *dicent* quality was thus expanded, the cümbüş being now interpreted as signifying Otherness-qua-underdog by association with its use by "underdog Others" whether ethnically Turkish or not.[135]

What is not accounted for in this paradigm is how the object of the cümbüş-as-sign—Otherness—was caused to lose its association with non-Turks and allowed to include Turks-as-Others.[136] In order to explain this phenomenon I will apply the

[135] The cümbüş thus became a *dicent-symbolic-legisign.* However if it continues to be used as a sign of Otherness, and is seen as such by way of its co-occurrence with actors performing Otherness in some way, the instrument will revert to being a *dicent-indexical-legisign*, albeit with an expanded object.

[136] Peirce holds that new signs may be created in a process of *semiotic chaining* when the interpretant of a sign itself is taken as a new sign (1991: 239, 70-75), but I do not see that as what is happening in this case; here, the sign has remained while its relation to its object has changed.

concept of *semantic modulation* to two analogous points in our analysis: to the point where the relationship between sign and its object changes, and to the transfer of the cümbüş-as-sign from previous discursive nodal points to the newly synthesized one described above.

A semantic modulation is achieved by switching between meanings of a polysemic sign shared by two contexts, in the manner of a musical modulation between two keys which share certain chords, all of which have distinct functions in each key. A linguistic example would be: a story about a child collecting shells on a beach, remarking on their hardness, how shiny they are, how she will be able to sell them to help feed her family, which was devastated when the shells fell on them from the sky and blew up her uncle. At first most readers probably assume that the term "shells" refers to the carapaces of some kind of marine gastropods, but a change in context leads the reader to understand "shells" as referring to artillery pieces. The word "shells" has served here as a *pivot sign* in a semantic modulation.

At the point where the meaning (object) of the cümbüş (sign) changed, the relationship between them had been indexical, that is, the meaning of the cümbüş was founded on the instrument's physical co-occurrence with non-Turkish Others. This definition of Otherness inherently reflected the idea of certain peoples not being expected to gain equality or dominance, and the attitude that this was the proper relationship between minorities and the majority. As the rhetoric of monoethnicity permeated Republican Turkish society, and as this society turned toward its perennial Others in the West to reshape its identity, the concept of Otherness, strenuously self-

applied, had instead a definition inherently reflecting the idea of a people who are not expected to gain equality or dominance, but who are *hoped to do so*—the Other as *underdog*. When members of the current Istanbulite youth culture made their move to establish for themselves a sense of Turkish identity they saw themselves as Other-qua-underdog, and saw the cümbüş as a sign of Otherness, outside an ethnic context but played by underdogs. The concept of "Otherness" had become a pivot sign for changing the relationship between sign and object from indexical (played by specific Others) to symbolic (played by any possible Others-as-underdog).

Analogously, as the cümbüş had appeared with different meanings in the rhetoric and social activities of proponents of the competing discourses mentioned earlier—whether as the government-endorsed "people's instrument," as a piece of early-Republican nostalgia, as a vulgar, low-class nuisance, as a traditional folk instrument, as an arabesk rebuke to Kemalist elitism—when the instrument showed up in Westernized yet independently Turkish pop music it was understood to be an instrument of the underdog in Turkey, of the marginalized whose struggle is hoped to succeed.[137] In this case the cümbüş, signifying a new sense of Otherness, can be seen as a pivot sign (though not a particularly instrumental one) in a move out of one discursive environment and into another.

[137] One would think that such hopes for "success" might be excepted in the case of Kurdish causes, yet many of my young informants regarded Kurdish social equality—though not separatism—as a "hip" liberal cause.

Summary and Conclusion

We began by looking at the situation of the cümbüş, an instrument created in Turkey—as Ali Cümbüş notes, possibly the only instrument invented there, rather than imported—endorsed and even named by the nation's revered founding father Kemal Atatürk, briefly part of music programs in the national education system, and yet an instrument whose players, throughout its seventy-five year history, have come almost entirely from within Turkey's minority communities. We then examined some of the ways in which Rum, Armenians, Jews, Kurds, and Romanlar in Turkey, as well as players of arabesk and in the sıra gecesi tradition, have been constituted as Others in the Turkish public imagination, and how these groups have employed the cümbüş in their musical lives, whether playing indigenous folk music or repertoires shared with ethnic Turks, or both. This caused the instrument to be associated with these peoples, and to be inscribed with the qualities of Otherness projected upon them by the majority.

We then examined a period of declining use of the instrument among these minorities—from about 1960 to the mid-1990s—excepting Román professional musicians (playing Román and non-Román Turkish music) and in the mostly amateur southeastern folk musics, which groups came to be those most closely associated with the cümbüş. In the mid-1990s the instrument began to appear in Armenian and Jewish folk music revivals as well as in recordings of Kurdish and Román folk musics. These were soon followed by techno-pop presentations of these traditional repertoires,

through which such minority musicians positioned themselves and their ethnic groups as modern and vital rather than merely anachronisms or contentedly marginalized people, exposing wider audiences to their music as sonic reminders of their continued presence. We saw that very soon afterward the cümbüş was taken up by certain ethnic Turkish rock and techno-pop musicians, some promoting secular social critique (particularly of the West) and some in an apolitical, humanistic neo-Sufi spiritual mode.

We came then to an overview of competing discourses regarding the ideal Turkish society, its relation to dogmatic and non-dogmatic religious expressions, concepts of East and West regarding the music of the non-Turkish Others in this study, two versions of "traditional multiculturalism," and finally to a syncretic reconfiguration drawing from all of these by members of the current Istanbulite youth culture and expressed through the medium of international pop music. This resulted in a recontextualization of the Otherness associated with the cümbüş, from that of internal minorities to that of Kemalist-style multicultural Turkishness vis à vis Europe (especially) and the world. The key to this recontextualization was a *semantic modulation* on the part of members of the current Istanbulite youth culture from an understanding of the cümbüş as an indexical sign of non-Turks-as-Others to one in which the cümbüş is a symbolic sign of underdogs—including Turks—as Others.

In terms of the original inscriptions of Otherness associated with the minority groups mentioned in this study, I am suggesting that the cümbüş as a polysemic sign, however weak in public discourse, had first come to reflect majoritarian projections

of poverty, "poor education," non-Muslim-ness (or insincere faith), immorality, political instability, and even criminal activity, as well as concepts regarding either an anti-modernist support of traditional hierarchy and religiosity (e.g., in the case of the sıra gecesi) or the corruption of beloved traditions (e.g., from the point of view of the classical music establishment). Also reflected were ambivalent desires about "natural musical talent"—manifest in projections of musical superiority onto the Romanlar, who "have it in their blood" in a way that ethnic Turks supposedly do not—and others of nostalgia for the days when Atatürk was in charge and progress was still married to confidence, or even from before the Republic, when all minorities were both autonomous and firmly part of the system.

The process of Othering itself, however, is subject to negotiation, especially by contestations on the part of the people serving as the objects of stereotyping, who, as has been noted, may at times desire an acknowledged distinction from the majority, even in fictional terms, and even at the level of the stereotype. It is also subject to alteration by parties within the majority, such as the subset of the Istanbulite youth culture described herein, who are not as invested in maintaining traditional stereotypes as previous generations had been. As Taussig notes, the process of Othering is integral to the definition of Self; as that self-definition changes, so change definitions of and relationships to the Other. This leaves specific concepts of Otherness and their associated signs—as well as the qualities of their images when used as reflectors of taboo behaviors—open to recontextualizations such as we have seen in the cases of nationally Turkish musicians of Kurdish, Armenian, Sephardic

Jewish and Román extraction "updating" their group images via techno-pop performances and recordings—while continuing to use the Other-marked cümbüş—as well as in the cases of ethnic Turkish musicians newly employing the same instrument as a marker of national identity.

As increasingly fewer musicians from the groups of traditional Others described in this study choose to continue using the cümbüş in traditional contexts—as appears to be the trend with all but the sıra gecesi—and the instrument becomes recontextualized as a marker of Turkishness in a local version of modern international popular consumer culture, it is possible that the instrument's associations with particular minority Others in Turkey will stand only as an historical artifact in the memory of an older generation of Turks.

This leaves open the question of whether the "updated" musical images created by traditional Others will be taken as the expressions of distinct minority groups, or as part of the general, ethnically unmarked modern Turkish pop scene—potentially grounds for another productive syncretic reformulation. However, the cümbüş's newly forged symbolic inscription is itself another marker of Otherness, this time facing outward toward the world—particularly toward Europe—as a signifier of a mature and multiculturally created "culture" participating in a modern, international "civilization," whether or not that view is validated in the West. Thus has the cümbüş served and continues to serve as a polysemic "instrument of the Other" in modern Turkey.

Glossary

ahenk. (Literally "harmony" in the Western sense, formerly "in tune-ness.") A music instrument "invented" by one-time Cümbüş Music Instrument Company employee Süleyman Suat Sezgin around 1931 as a "classier" version of the cümbüş. It featured a sturdier, non-detachable neck, ebony fingerboard inlaid with mother of pearl, mixed wood and skin face with two carved rosettes, and tanbur-like wooden body. Though it briefly gained interest among the classical music establishment, its production was halted by a patent infringement lawsuit brought by Zeynel Abidin (later known as Zeynel Abidin Cümbüş).

alafranga. (Fr. Italian, "in the Frankish manner.") Music or other cultural expression in (any) Western (i.e., European) style; conceived of by the mid-18th century as exemplifying modernist ideas and trends. Currently an old-fashioned term (see O'Connell 2005).

alaturka. (Fr. Italian, "in the Turkish manner.") Music or other cultural expression in a traditional Turkish style; conceived of (by the 19th century) as the opposite of *alafranga*, and exemplifying backward-looking traditionalism. Currently an old-fashioned term (see O'Connell 2005).

arabesk. (Fr. French, *arabesque* "in the Arab manner.") A style of Turkish pop music emerging in the mid-1960s from the southeastern region of the country, popular especially with working class men and quickly associated with an urban and unemployed/criminal underclass. Incorporating certain features of Egyptian film music (particularly orchestration techniques), it was/is vocally criticized by intellectuals, government officials and music critics as being "oriental," un-Turkish, and retrograde, and therefore an impediment to the spread of modernism (in the westernizing style adopted by Turkish authorities) (see Stokes 1992).

barak gecesi. See *sıra gecesi.*

barbat. A five-course, long-necked Persian plucked lute believed to be the immediate ancestor of the Arab *'ud* (q.v.). The instrument apparently disappeared during the Safavid era (1501-1736) but recreations of it have been gaining popularity in Iran since the late-twentieth century. Some of these are faced in wood, but the original (and a minority of the current reproductions) had a partly wooden, partly skin face.

cura. The smallest version of *saz* (q.v.).

Çingene. The common, historic and disparaging Turkish language term for Román (q.v.).

çoban. (Literally "shepherd.") A derogatory term used by Román musicians in western Turkey to refer to an unskilled or inexperienced instrumentalist.

darbuka. A goblet-shaped hand drum.

daire. (Literally "circle.") General term for a frame drum.

daireciler. (Literally "frame drum players.") The name for a kind of wedding band of Balkan immigrant groups on the Aegean coast of Anatolia. It refers to the female drummers in such bands, which also included singers and at least one cümbüş player.

dempo. (Fr. Italian *tempo,* "time; speed of a piece of music.") The playing of the cümbüş by strumming on an open chord in patterns syncopated with those of the percussion in traditional Román wedding bands. Associated with unskilled players.

dhimmi. (Turkish, *zimmi.*) "People of the Book" Adherents to Christianity, Judaism or the (apparently extinct) Sabianism under Muslim rule. This status accorded rights of protection by the Muslim ruler which included exemption from forced conversion and the right to limited self-government.

emic. From an insider's point of view.

etic. From an outsider's point of view.

fantezi. (Fr. French *fantasie.*) A song form (and genre) mixing Turkish classical music with Western orchestration techniques (taken from Egyptian movie scores); forefather of *arabesk.*

fasıl. Formerly a suite of pieces in a particular order, in the same makam. *Fasıl* has since about the 1930s referred to the performance of *alaturka* music in bars, *meyhane*-s and *gazino*-s, currently usually by professional Román musicians.

gazel. An improvised vocal solo in makam, using a more or less fixed text.

gazino. (Fr. Italian *casino.*) An upscale restaurant/cabaret serving alcoholic drinks, from the 1950s through the 1980s (see Beken 1998).

göçmen. (Literally "immigrant.") Refers here to Muslim immigrants to the Republic of Turkey from the formerly Ottoman Balkan provinces; also known as *muhacir.* Andrews asserts that "*muhacir*" is used to refer to pre-1950s immigrants and "*göçmen*" to those coming from 1950 onward (1989: 95).

ince çalgı. Also **ince saz.** (Literally "refined instrument," both) "A [music] group consisting of instruments suitable for performing Ottoman classical or semi-classical music..." (Pennanen 2004: 9). Also a "classy" term for bands playing *fasıl* (q.v.).

kahve aman. (Literally " 'mercy!' café.") Coffee house cabaret.

kıro. (Literally "bumpkin.") Here refers to unsophisticated rural immigrants to large urban centers. In connection with cümbüş players, possibly a derogatory euphemism for Romanlar and Kurds.

kopuz. A general term for long-necked plucked lutes, currently used specifically for a kind of saz, but formerly for a saz-like instrument with a face partially of wood and partially of skin.

kürsübaşı. See *sıra gecesi.*

Ladino. (Ladino: "[vulgar] Latin") the everyday language of the Sephardic (q.v.) Jews; an archaic dialect of Castilian Spanish with borrowings from Hebrew, Arabic, Turkish and Greek (barring which, it is mutually intelligible with modern Castilian). Historically the word Ladino was used to denote word-for-word translations (calques) of Hebrew and Arabic texts into the Spanish vernacular, but in the twentieth century it came to replace the terms *judezmo, judeo-espanyol,* and (the Turkish) *yahudice* to mean the commonly spoken language of Sephardic Jews.

lavta. (Possibly fr. Spanish/Ladino *lauta,* fr. Arabic *al-'ud* [the] wood; "lute.") A long-necked plucked lute having frets sufficient to accommodate the most-often used tones of the Turkish 53-tone equal tempered scale, and four doubled courses of strings tuned in perfect fifths.

makam. (Fr. Arabic *maqām,* "place; hand position on the 'ud," thus musical mode.) The general term for musical mode and the system of such modes that form the basis of classical Turkish (and Arab) music theory.

meyhane. (Literally "wine-inn.") Wine bars, usually providing musical entertainments. Formerly owned almost exclusively by Ottoman Rum, currently the (old-fashioned) word refers loosely to any bar/restaurant with musical entertainment, particularly *fasıl* music.

millet. (Literally "nation.") A unit of social division by religious affiliation in the Ottoman Empire. There were originally four millet-s: Muslim, Orthodox Christian, Monophysite Christian, and Jewish, each with its own laws, customs and leaders,

though the Muslim one was supreme, and any crimes perpetuated against Muslims were necessarily tried in Muslim courts.

mızrap. (Pl. *mızraplar*.) Plectrum.

muhacir. (Arabic: "immigrant.") See *göçmen.*

neşetkâr. A music instrument invented and played by famed ud-ist "Arap" Neş'et Bey in the late 1920s, consisting of a cümbüş neck on a *lavta* body. Also known as the *şerâre* ("spark"). Rare in its day and rarer still now.

rebétika. (Greek: "[music] of the *rebétes,*" outlaw ruffians, possibly from Arabic *ribaat* "[hangers-on at a] frontier fort.") A genre of music from Piraeus, Thessalonica and Athens, developed as the music of the underclass/underworld in close association with *smyrnéika* (q.v.). Associated with decadence and particularly the smoking of hashish (see Holst-Warhaft, 1975; Petropoulos 1975/2000).

Román. (sing. and adj.; pl. Romanlar, fr. Romany "people; man.") The most common self-designation for the totality of clan and regional groups of people known otherwise as "Gypsies" (in Turkish: *Çingene*). Despite it being for the last decade or so the well-known "politically correct" term, it is still not as commonly uttered as *Çingene*, and even some ethnographers studying such groups refuse to refer to them by the term Romanlar.

saz. (Literally "music instrument.") A family of long-necked plucked lutes, having three courses of strings (two double and one triple) traditionally made of three pieces of carved mulberry wood, fretted microtonally and having a sound hole at the end of the body rather than in its top. Also known as *bağlama* ("tied," i.e., fretted) or *bağlama saz*. There are several sizes of saz, from the tanbur-sized *divan sazı* to the diminutive *cura*.

Sephardic. (Fr. Hebrew "Spanish; Iberian.") The qualifying term for those Jews who lived in the Iberian Peninsula (Hebrew *Sefarad*) between the first century C.E. and their expulsion by the monarchies of the Catholic Reconquest (from Spain 1492; from Portugal 1497), a majority of whom fled to and settled in the Ottoman Empire.

sıra gecesi. (Pl. sıra geceleri; literally "turn evening.") Semi-formal, weekly wintertime musical gatherings in the Turkish provinces of Şanlıurfa, Elazığ and Gaziantep. Each week it is a different participant's "turn" to host the evening. Groups are usually organized at the level of neighborhood acquaintances. In other seasons the same phenomenon occurs but is known merely as "musical evenings" or, if held in the mountains, as *yati geceleri* or *dağ geceleri* "mountain evenings."

May be known also as *kürsübaşı* “head (host) of the table” in Elazığ and as *barak gecesi* “grace evening” in Gaziantep.

şerâre. (Literally “spark.”) See *neşetkâr*.

smyrnéika. (Greek: “[music] of Smyrna” [modern-day Turkish city of Izmir].) A multiculturally-created music genre, basically identical to the one described in this text as *meyhane* music, played in the city of Smyrna/Izmir. It was given this name in Greece after the “population exchanges” of 1922-24 sent the city’s Greek (and some other Christian) inhabitants there, and the Greek-language versions of the repertoire became the norm. It was then played mainly in the *tavérna*-s and *tekké*-s (q.v.) of Piraeus, Thessalonica and Athens. Though distinct in repertoire and instrumentation, it is considered the predecessor to, or at least heavily influential upon, rebétika (q.v.).

tanbur. A (very) long-necked lute, having three or four doubled courses of metal strings, a wooden top without sound hole, and frets sufficient to accommodate the most-often used tones of the Turkish 53-tone equal tempered scale.

tar. (Fr. Farsi “string.”) A long-necked Persian and Azerbaijani plucked lute with an hourglass-shaped body, faced with skin, having moveable frets and three doubled courses of metal strings.

tavérna. (Greek: “tavern.”) Synonymous with *meyhane* (q.v.) in this text, but for being mainly in Greece rather than in Turkey.

tekké. (Fr. Turkish *teke,* Sufi ritual meeting hall.) Greek hashish dens, where *smyrnéika* and *rebétika* (q.v.) were performed.

Turkification. (Turkish: *türkleştirme.*) A series of government-sponsored campaigns, begun in 1923 and re-intensified in 1931, to standardize a national identity, based on a supposedly normative Turkish ethnicity, using such tactics as shaming speakers of other languages into speaking only Turkish (at least in public) and referring to Kurds as “Mountain Turks.”

ud. (Fr. Arabic al-‘ud, “[the] wood; stick.”) A short-necked, fretless lute, precursor to the European *lute* (and later, guitar).

vahdet. Oneness, unity (in the community of Islam, regardless of ethnicity, language, etc.)

zimmi. See *dhimmi.*

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Interviews

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By Sonia Tamar Seeman:

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Selim Hubeş, Yavuz Hubeş, Yehudah Siliki. September 22, 2005, Istanbul, Turkey.

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Bekir Işıktaş, Bilen Şahin Baloğlu, Sami Dural. October 19, 2005, Istanbul, Turkey.

Bedirhan Kırmızı, Mehmet Bitmez et al. October 22, 2005, Istanbul, Turkey.

Hüsnü Tuzsuz, Dalip Öyündür et al. October 25, 2005, Istanbul, Turkey.

Ferhan Şensoy, Mitsuru Saito, Sinan Erdemsel, "Hafız." November 13, Istanbul, Turkey.

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Personal Communications

Additionally I had personal communications regarding this project—undated, and varying in frequency—with the following persons: "Arif," Bilen Şahin Baloğlu, Bob Beer, Şehvar Beşiroğlu, Mehmet Emin Bitmez, Ramazan Calay, Jack Campin, Beth Bahia Cohen, Ali Cümbüş, Necati Çelik, Sami Dural, Sinan Erdemsel, "Fatih," Dr. Tufan Hiçdönmez, Bekir Işıktaş, Halil Karaduman, Dr. Jonathan Secora Pearl, Dr. A.J. Racy, Dr. Mitsuru Saito, Dr. Sonia Tamar Seeman, Selma Tatar, "Taylan," Hüsnü Tuzsuz.