

## 2

# Encounter and Memory in Ottoman Soundscapes

## An Audiovisual Album of Street Vendors' Cries

*Nazan Maksudyan*

Sait Faik, one of the greatest writers of short stories in Turkish, describes his itinerant merchant, “Cotton Candy Man” (*Ketenhelvacı*), as a curiosity.<sup>1</sup> At the beginning of the story, the narrator hears the cry of the cotton candy man from a distance: “*Vay ne güzel ketenhelvam!*” (“Oh, my cotton candy is so delicious!”). He thinks that, in 1942, under circumstances of war and scarcity, “cotton candy man is a fairy tale creature. And maybe he is the last of a dying breed; maybe cotton candy sellers will become extinct.”<sup>2</sup> He goes on to exalt this itinerant merchant as a poet, as the cotton candy man was crying out, reciting little poems, apparently as part of his *métier*.<sup>3</sup> All of a sudden, the narrator burns with the desire to see him and talk to him. Following the direction of the voice, he comes across a roasted chestnut seller on his way. The latter says that the cotton candy man earns enough money to drink *rakı* every night. Finally, the narrator meets him and they talk a great deal. The man says he has been in this business for the past forty-two years—that is, since 1900. As a compliment, the narrator asks: “The cotton candy sellers are all poets, aren’t they?” The man looks embarrassed and does not answer. Then, he says he will make another round before the next ferry comes and walks away reciting another poem:

I am all skin and bone  
I tramp up and down the neighborhoods<sup>4</sup>

This short story has the richness to introduce the main themes of this chapter on the sonic presence of street vendors in nineteenth-century Ottoman soundscapes. First of all, the research is conceived as an auditory history

tracing multiple encounters,<sup>5</sup> much like the encounter of the narrator with the seller in the story. Second, I emphasize that sound should be analyzed as a relationship between a listener and something listened to.<sup>6</sup> In the story, the narrator is fascinated by what was for him the voice of a rare poet passing by, whereas for the chestnut seller this was the sound of a habitual drinker. Focusing on street vendors' sonic practices, this chapter analyzes different listening habits and subjectivities along the lines of religion, class, language, ethnicity, gender, and other categories of difference. I stress the way cultural difference, especially intra-imperial difference, emerges in an urban soundscape like Istanbul. Thus, the soundscape is defined following Thompson, as "simultaneously a physical environment and a way of perceiving that environment," both as a world and "a culture constructed to make sense of that world."<sup>7</sup> I use the term, then, in the plural, as "soundscapes," taking into account multiple sensory experiences of a diversity of peoples.<sup>8</sup> Third, the chapter is based on four encounters and relations that itinerant sellers' cries delineate: migration (how rural migrants listened to Ottoman urbanites, and vice versa); multilingualism and diversity; human-nonhuman encounters; and the audibility of gender. Lastly, as Sait Faik's "Cotton Candy Man" suggests, there was a romantic fascination with the practice of itinerant merchants, due to their imagined "oriental" character and authenticity, as well as their anticipated extinction. In this way, a skinny, tired, poor old man could have been heard as a poet—and Sait Faik's insight underscored this irony.

The chapter contributes to recent scholarship on sound's uses and functions in Ottoman culture and society;<sup>9</sup> how Ottoman subjectivities, sociabilities, and power relations were reflected in the lives of sounds; and how sonic practices shaped Ottoman identities, bonded communities, and elevated or undermined power.<sup>10</sup> The chapter asks: if we could listen to the street vendors' cries, what traces of empire, environment, migration, diversity and gender might we hear?

### **An Audiovisual Album of Street Vendors' Cries**

Aurality, as an "object" of historical enquiry, is elusive and its sources are dispersed. However, as Alain Corbin showed some three decades ago in his *Village Bells*, it is possible to work on novel questions of sound and sound perception on the basis of relatively traditional sources.<sup>11</sup> More

recently, Nancy Hunt has suggested a new reading of the sources, old and new, through the senses, through fields of hearing and sound, to create an “acoustic register.”<sup>12</sup> Ziad Fahmy, in his elaboration on Middle Eastern sound studies, has also stressed that many different forms of typical written sources (memoirs, letters, diaries, official documents, travelogues, literary sources) include records of what was heard.<sup>13</sup> This chapter also relies on typical written sources, including materials from the Ottoman archives, literature in different Ottoman languages, ego-documents, travelogues, scientific writings, newspapers, letters, diaries, legal documents, musical notation, and court records. It is also necessary to stress that visual sources from the period point to a crowd of street vendors. In innumerable photographs depicting Ottoman urban centers, streets and squares are populated by a multitude of different itinerant vendors at the same time. Assuming that they were all actively trying to sell their merchandise simultaneously, we can imagine their collective cries as a kind of polyphonic chorus that was part of an even broader urban polyphony. In this sense, the visual sources also hint at the vendors’ impact on the soundscape.

The main source for this chapter is a unique and extraordinary audiovisual media object: an album of photos and musical transcriptions of street vendors’ cries in Western staff notation, bringing to light the intersection of the visual and sonic. Every vendor category in the album is photographed and coupled with their typical “vending song,” the “lyrics” written in transliterated Turkish and the name of the occupation in English. Twenty-three different occupational groups were documented in this album, featuring mostly (but not only) adult males, including a bread vendor, milkman, yogurt vendor, vegetable man, corn vendor, fishmonger, water carrier, fruit peddler, boot blacks (children), garbage collector, “bon marché” (silk man), and broom peddler (female, selling a different sort of broom). The sellers were photographed in the streets, in other words in the setting of their daily labors. We see them walking around the city with their merchandise and accompanying animals when relevant.

The original of the album was until recently kept in a personal archive in Istanbul, belonging to Rezan Benatar.<sup>14</sup> Formerly, it was part of Edward S. Sheiry’s (1900–1980) estate (*tereke*). He was the head of the engineering department at Robert College in the 1930s. Sheiry is not the author of the album. Based on the outfits (and especially the kinds of headgear in the album), it is apparent that it was prepared in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century, before the 1920s.



**Figure 2.1** "Where East and West meet—Istanbul." Opening page, "İstanbul'un sokak satıcıları—Street vendors of Istanbul" album, Salt Research, Photographs and Postcards Archive, <https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/195592>. Reproduced with permission.

The album opens with a panoramic view of Istanbul, presented with the caption, "Where East and West meet – ISTANBUL" (Figure 2.1), as the typical orientalist trope goes. The work can be considered a sort of Orientalist collection, like the so-called costume albums of different ethnicities or Ottoman palace servants.<sup>15</sup> Yet, the "collector" of this album was mainly interested in capturing the sound of Istanbul, along with the sights of street vendors.<sup>16</sup> Despite the brevity of the melody, he treated vending cries as musical sounds and he had the necessary education and experience to transpose these cries into musical notation. It is also necessary to note the collector's effort to put sounds into notes and words while transliterating the sound of a cry in a foreign alphabet/language. Without doubt, the musical notation reduces some of the sonic complexity of these calls. Some amount of information is presumably lost through transcription into the pitch and rhythmic structures of Western musical notation.<sup>17</sup> Despite the prevalence of the visual senses and representations of the "Orient" through paintings, photographs, and

postcards, the existence of such sources emphasizes the interest in the auditory culture of the “East.”<sup>18</sup>

Adhering to the conventions of the “city cries” genre, which became popular for the metropolitan cities of London and Paris in the early modern era,<sup>19</sup> this album represents the transfusion of this genre with Orientalist photography.<sup>20</sup> “Street vendors” were a popular topic for European as well as local Istanbulite photographers, and an especially successful postcard series in the Orientalist depiction of Constantinople in the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>21</sup> The fascination with the practice of itinerant sellers appears to result from both its assumed peculiarity and its predicted extinction, as suggested by Sait Faik’s story. Thanks to this Orientalizing bias, street vendor postcards, much like this album, refashioned a typical, and without a doubt unenviable, job for the newly migrated urban poor, as a quintessentially exotic, disappearing, and even romantic occupation. In that sense, the representation of street vending also makes visible a semi-colonial encounter with regards to how the Ottoman state, society, and culture were imagined, constructed, and depicted, both visually and audibly. The album could be considered part of this larger discourse and encounter, where European imperialism affects Ottoman life even though the empire was never technically colonized.

In the rest of the chapter, I will discuss how circulating sounds of vendors suggest cultural, political, and economic relations. After a brief discussion of mobility through urban space in general, I focus specifically on four encounters that are embodied through the sonic presence of street vendors and that shed light upon Ottoman subjectivities, social relations, and power relations. The first section delineates the aspect of rural-urban migration of street vendors, and thus focuses on social and economic relations. The second section examines the representation of multilingualism and diversity in the sonic practices of itinerant sellers. The next section sheds light upon the human-animal encounters that were inherent to the practices of street vendors. The final section focuses on the audibility of gender in street vendors’ sounds. It is important to highlight the centrality of the *medium of documentation* for this research, namely the unique audiovisual booklet of street vendors’ cries. The album invites us to contemplate especially the intersections of the visual and the sonic. The other *medium* that this chapter engages with is the street—as both the *stage* and the *channel* for urban sonic phenomena.

Each of the four parts opens with a vignette referring to a twentieth-century cultural and artistic product, offering insight into the persistence

of the practices of itinerant sellers in post-Ottoman Turkey. These sensory recollections show how salient these urban sounds are in broader Turkish cultural representations and suggest some kind of collective memory of late Ottoman soundscapes. The presence of street vendor sounds in different formats—song, novels, film, journalistic interviews—also suggests a fascinating medium-focused question: what happens when cultural memory is preserved specifically in these different formats? What can a song embed that a photo cannot? The vignettes, in that sense, refer to the evocative nature of street vendors' cries, in reenacting the way intra-imperial differences emerge in urban soundscapes of Istanbul and persist in cultural memory.

### Mobile Lives, Mobile Sounds

In a 1988 song by Barış Manço, a famous Turkish musician, singer, and songwriter with countless hits from the 1970s onwards, a guy is in love with a girl and wishes finally to confess his love to her. However, as he is about to hold her hand and open his mouth, he is interrupted by the echoing voice of the vegetable vendor calling from the streets: "*Domates, Biber, Patlıcan*" (also the title of the song; "Tomatoes, Peppers, Eggplants"). Even though the words awaken a colorful image in the listener's mind (with the vegetables' red, green, and purple colors), the guy feels like his entire world is going black:

The streets echoed with this voice:  
"Tomatoes, peppers, eggplants."<sup>22</sup>

Manço's song intertwines the audio with the visual—there is the voice coming from the street and the world goes to black. He also describes the sound as if it were causing the streets themselves to vibrate and echo. The song is also ethnographic: the way he sings "*Domates, biber, patlıcan*" reflects how the vegetable sellers shouted—though his voice is a bit too loud. Yet, most importantly, the vendor's mobility is foregrounded by the song, with a silent moment suddenly broken with the arrival of the vegetable seller.

Itinerant sellers had a considerable impact on the Ottoman acoustic environment. Earwitness accounts stress that the cries of street vendors were quite dominant in the Ottoman soundscape. The 1871 *Handbook for Travellers in Constantinople* underscores that when a traveler first arrives in the city, he would be surprised by "the silence that pervades so large a capital." After all, the "only sounds" to be heard during the day were "the cries of



bread, fruits, sweetmeats [*helva*], or sherbet, carried in a large wooden tray on the head of an itinerant vendor.”<sup>23</sup>

Victor Eskenazi (1906–1987), a Sephardic Jew who spent his childhood in the early twentieth century in a neighborhood on the Golden Horn, noted in his memoirs that especially in morning hours, all kinds of “hawkers, offering an endless variety of merchandise, each with his own traditional and distinctive cry, would follow one another” down the street.<sup>24</sup> These included an Albanian who sold sheep’s brains and feet, a yogurt man, a fish-monger, a vegetable and fruit vendor, tinkers, knife-grinders, lace-vendors, and also artisans who could mend or manufacture virtually anything on the spot. These were “the sights, the *cries* and the *turmoil*” on the street in the morning.<sup>25</sup> “The *toing and froing of street vendors* and the confusion would come to a standstill in the afternoon.”<sup>26</sup>

Peddling was a ubiquitous extension of every kind of product and production. It was impossible to have a functioning system of buying/selling wares without mobile peddling, and so the “suppliers” had to be on the streets and cry out loud to sell their products. Most of the fruit and vegetable sellers, bread vendors, yogurt sellers, and innumerable others were itinerants, who carried and marketed fresh fruits and vegetables to the areas where they were to be sold.<sup>27</sup> According to the memoirs of Hagop Mintzuri, who came to Istanbul in 1890 as a ten-year-old child to work as a peddler for his father’s and uncle’s bakery and worked there until 1907, bread was not sold in the bakery. No one would ever go to the bakery to buy bread. Grocers would not sell bread either. Instead, bread was taken to all the neighborhoods and to the suburbs, directly to the customers’ doors.<sup>28</sup> Beşiktaş Square hosted a full crowd of street vendors, including a bread vendor, a broom peddler, a liver seller, a *helva* peddler (who would sell yogurt in summer), and a shoeshine boy.<sup>29</sup> Sinan Paşa Mosque in the square, which was visited twice a year by the Sultan, also attracted rosary sellers, scented oil sellers, blind people, and beggars.<sup>30</sup>

Considering that new communication infrastructures, such as wider roads, squares, cobbled streets, ferries, and trams, were limited to a few areas in the city, in many neighborhoods far from the tram lines and seashore, the sound of the street vendors must have been the most audible sound in residential areas.

### Encounter 1: Migrating Shouts

In *Züğürt Ağa* (The Broke Landlord), a 1985 movie directed by Nesli Çölgeçen, a former *agha* (or rural landlord) who had owned a whole village

in eastern Turkey is forced to migrate to Istanbul. Having no practical knowledge about urban life and no work experience, he tries to make a living in the city by doing various street vending jobs. He first tries selling tomatoes with a pick-up and amplifier, also using a microphone. Yet, he is incredibly shy about shouting out loud in the middle of urban Istanbul neighborhoods. He basically whispers “*Domatessss*,” with a funny pronunciation of the “e” and a lisping “s.” His former servant, now friend and helper, asks him to raise his voice, but he says it would disturb the quiet of urban people.<sup>31</sup> The movie is full of uncomfortable moments in the life of a rural migrant in a metropole, in his daily habits, attire, and interpersonal relations. The *agha* realizes that itinerant vending is a suitable occupation for migrants, but he has difficulty incorporating his own voice into the urban soundscape.

Like the *agha*’s story, one encounter that street vending reflects is between the urban and the rural: street vending was an urban profession that gave insight into the rural reality. The irregular and ambulant peddling of some well-known and easily sellable consumer goods at a small profit was an easily accessible “poor man’s trade.” A newly arriving and nonqualified rural migrant could expect to at least work as a street vendor and join the urban poor.<sup>32</sup> From the perspective of Ottoman guild structures, itinerant vendors were a threat and viewed as competitors from the eighteenth century onwards. Due to the growing population and the demand for affordable food, the number of itinerant sellers had increased in larger cities, especially Istanbul. The guilds often requested that the government carry out regular inspections of bakeries, workshops, commercial buildings, and bachelors’ rooms (*bekar odaları*) to evict rural migrants, who lacked guarantors and membership in the guilds.<sup>33</sup>

What they peddled was also compartmentalized according to their places of origin, since generations followed one another to the city through locally-built networks of migration. The help of connections and the network of relatives and fellow townsmen already settled in the city were almost always a necessity. Mıntzuri’s life story was a prototype of this rural-urban migration, and intergenerational and continuous mobility. He stressed that those from Pokr Armıdan (today Küçük Armutlu, Erzincan) had been coming to Istanbul for decades to work as bakers and bread vendors and he had no other chance to become anything else. Besides people from Armıdan becoming bakers, migrants with Central Asian backgrounds became *börek* sellers in Istanbul, one example of which is found in the album (Figure 2.2). Armenians from Muş would come to Istanbul and work as porters (*hamal*).

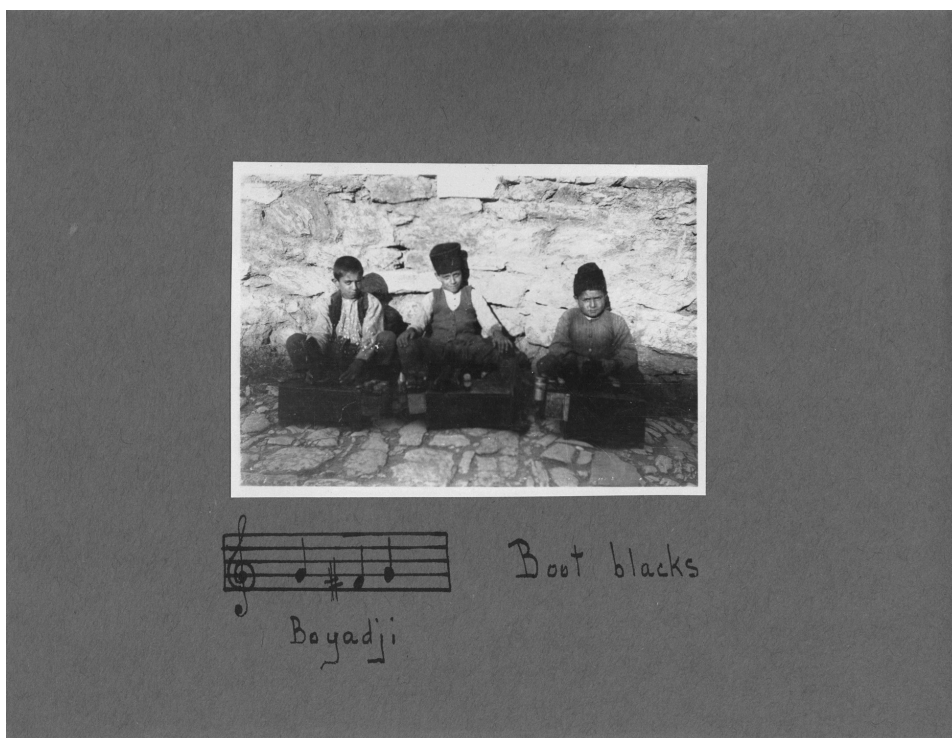




**Figure 2.2** “Beoreg [*börek*] pedlar—Beoreg beoreg.” “İstanbul’un sokak satıcıları—Street vendors of Istanbul” album, Salt Research, Photographs and Postcards Archive, <https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/195592>. Reproduced with permission.

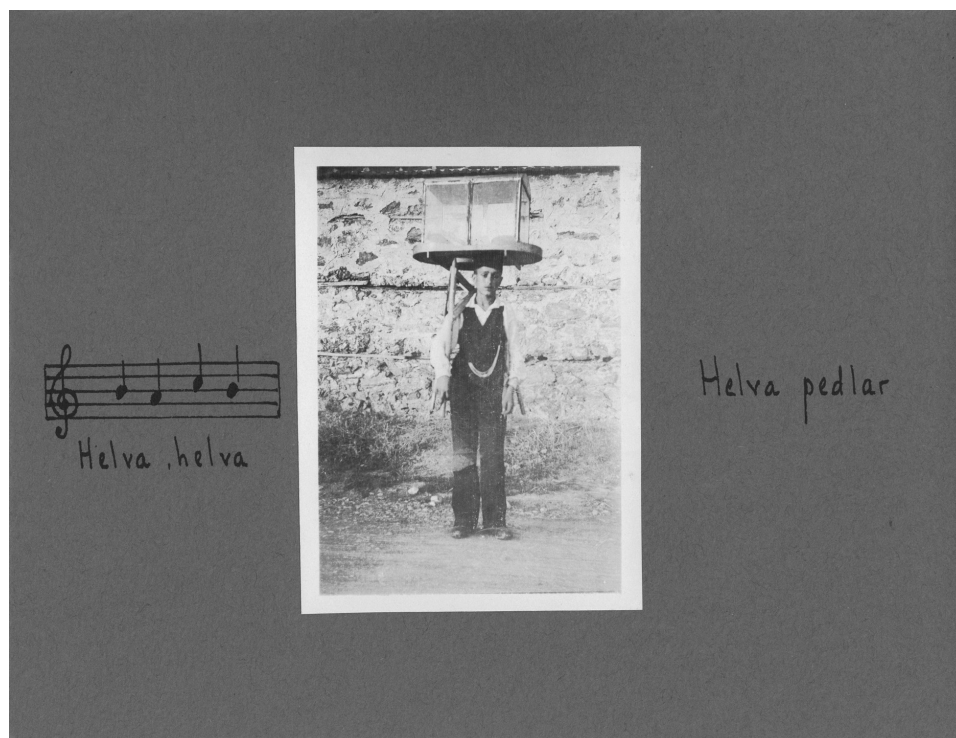
In Abdülaziz Bey’s (1850–1918) *Âdât ve Merâsim-i Kadîme* (Ancient Customs and Rituals), the professions generally performed by those coming to Istanbul from various provinces were listed according to their places of origin. To name a few, those from Eğin would become butchers, wax producers (*balmumcu*), and coal sellers; those from Ioannina would sell grilled liver or tripe soup (*işkembe*) in the streets; those coming from Bar and Shkodra (Albania) would do vegetable and flower gardening; those coming from Safranbolu would sell pastry products (*börek*, *poğaç*); people of Kastamonu would sell traditional sweets (*helva* and *kadayıf*); and “Arabs” coming from “Ottoman Arabia” would sell hazelnuts and other sweets.<sup>34</sup>

In general, it was customary for occupational groups to “transfer” apprentice boys, children of 10–12, from their native villages. Therefore, numerous itinerant vendors were children or quite young boys. Three shoeshine boys figure in the album with their cry, “*Boyacı*” (Figure 2.3), as it was a common “occupation” for underage boys and little children. There are also other very



**Figure 2.3** “Boot blacks—Boyadji [*boyacı*].” “İstanbul’un sokak satıcıları—Street vendors of Istanbul” album, Salt Research, Photographs and Postcards Archive, <https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/195592>. Reproduced with permission.

young vendors in the album, such as the *helva* peddler (Figure 2.4) and *leblebi* (roasted chickpeas) vendor (Figure 2.5). As mentioned above, merchants of “luxury products,” such as *helva* and *leblebi*, often had longer cries and in some cases little poems. These little poems, called *manzume*, constitute a fascinating oral literary genre. Several of these poems are recorded in literary or ethnographic works such as Abdülaziz Bey’s *Âdât ve Merâsim-i Kadîme*. He notes that sometime in the nineteenth century, composing poetry had become almost like a hobby, such that even the street vendors composed their own poems pertaining to their product. Ramadan drummers, *boza* sellers, corn sellers, pudding (*muhallebi*) sellers, beggars, and cotton candy sellers would walk the streets, reciting the poems they had composed to attract customers.<sup>35</sup> Indeed, they would sell more goods this way. As much as children would love listening to them and buying their sweets, the adults were also quite interested in the performance and would say: “Look, here is so-and-so, let’s go listen to this.” The poem of the pudding seller would read as:



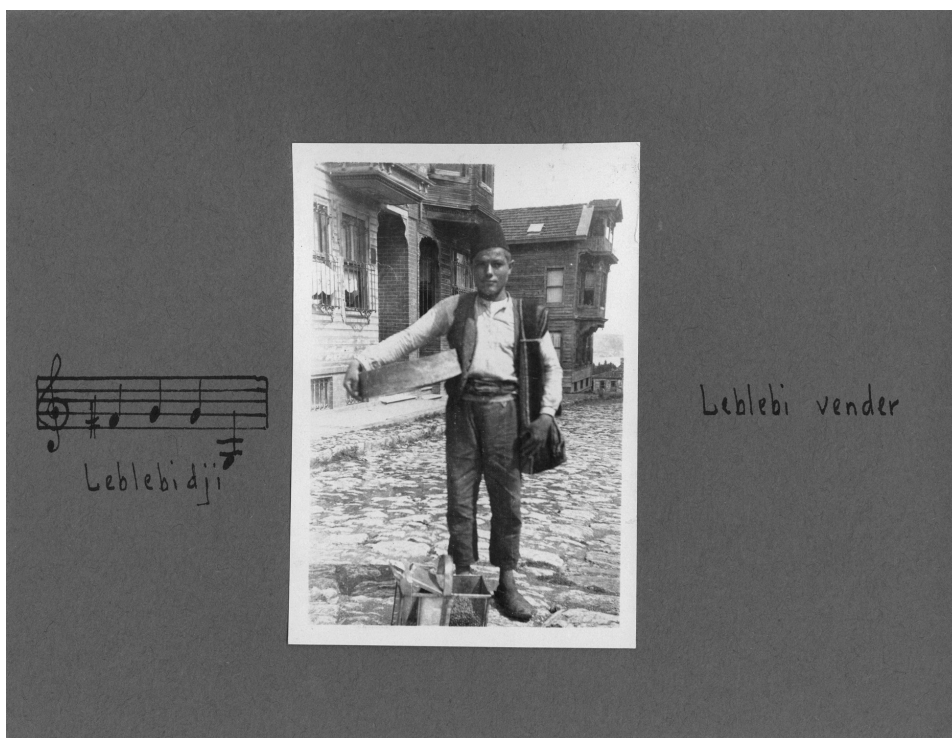
**Figure 2.4** “Helva pedlar—Helva, helva.” “İstanbul’un sokak satıcıları—Street vendors of Istanbul” album, Salt Research, Photographs and Postcards Archive, <https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/195592>. Reproduced with permission.

My pudding is creamy / It shines on plates / Those who praise it are quite right / Little gentlemen, come and get it

My pudding is sugar in milk / Pulls money out of pockets / But somehow is worthy of praise / Little gentlemen, come and get it . . .<sup>36</sup>

These rural migrants brought their special clothing and head gear from their places of origin, and the colors of shirts and vests and cuts of their pants were usually explained at great length along with their selling cries in earwitness accounts. In addition to clothing and head gear, the presence of local dialects is also discernible in the sounds of the street vendors, who frequently had rural origins. Mintzuri was warned a number of times that he should no longer “speak like a villager” and had to learn an urban style of speaking, a more complex linguistic register. This included speaking in a much quieter voice and using different vocabulary for several words. He gives a number





**Figure 2.5** “Leblebi vender—Leblebidji [*lelebici*].” “İstanbul’un sokak satıcıları—Street vendors of Istanbul” album, Salt Research, Photographs and Postcards Archive, <https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/195592>. Reproduced with permission.

of examples of local expressions he used. He began saying *hee* instead of *evet* for “yes,” *yoh* instead of *hayır* for “no,” *ecük* or *bir pırtık* instead of *biraz* for “a little.”<sup>37</sup> Mintzuri also notes that the way the language was spoken in the city was quieter than that of the countryside. In his *Istanbul Memoirs*, he recounts an anecdote from his very first day in the city in 1890. When he and his father were passing by the Dolmabahçe Palace, he asked if the sultan lived there. Suddenly, he was scolded by his father, saying: “Do not talk loudly. They talk slowly here. You are not in the village anymore.”<sup>38</sup>

## Encounter 2: Acoustics of Multilingualism

Yeşim Ustaoglu’s 1999 movie, *Journey to the Sun* (*Güneşe Yolculuk*), which is set in Istanbul, tells the story of Mehmet, a young man whose job is to find leaks in the water pipes below the ground. He uses a long brass rod he

places on the pavement, listening through it to catch the rumbles. The rod becomes a magic tool, as Mehmet discovers an entire world his senses alone could not detect: he can hear turmoil under the streets but not above them. Then he meets Berzan, a Kurdish man and a street music vendor, who is constantly harassed by the authorities for selling Kurdish music cassettes in his cart in Eminönü. Mehmet's friendship with Berzan teaches him about ethnic violence and persecution. He experiences the suppression of Kurdish identity and of the Kurdish language, while his German-born girlfriend freely tells him, "Ich liebe dich."<sup>39</sup> *Journey to the Sun* gives a voice to the Kurds who were unable to speak out for most of Turkey's republican history. The brutal silencing of the Kurdish language since the 1920s constitutes a clear rupture from the multilingual urbanity of the Ottoman period.

The second issue that the sonic practices of itinerant vendors raises—and which appears repeatedly in *Journey to the Sun*—is the acoustics of multilingualism. Research on the practice of street vending not only provides a glimpse of the sonic lives of streets, it also opens up a discussion on the presence of empire in the lives of sounds. Multilingualism, in the form of communication in more than one language, was widespread in Ottoman cities.<sup>40</sup> The coexistence of different ethnicities, religions, and languages, at least in urban centers, offered an Ottoman imperial experience to the ear. Cities such as Istanbul, Smyrna, Salonika, Beirut, or Aleppo were referred to as the "Babel of languages,"<sup>41</sup> where many languages could be heard and many inhabitants were multilingual. In Ottoman Salonika, at least four languages were commonly used in daily life: Ladino, Greek, Turkish, French (the principal language of the local press).<sup>42</sup> Quadrilingual cities or regions could also be found in Macedonia and in Smyrna.<sup>43</sup>

For Edmondo de Amicis (1846–1908), writing in the nineteenth century, Galata Bridge was the beating heart of the city of Constantinople and embodied this "Babel." He described the bridge as "one continuous tramp and roar, a concert of exotic sounds, of guttural notes, incomprehensible aspirations and interjections."<sup>44</sup> It was "the Babel of sounds," bringing to the ear all possible languages and a wide range of low and high pitched sounds:

Above the babel of sounds made by all this multitude one hears the *piercing cries of the Greek news-boys*, selling newspapers in all languages under heaven, the *stentorian tones of the porters*, loud laughter of the Turkish women; the *infantile voices of the eunuchs*; the *shrill falsetto* of a blind beggar reciting verses from the Koran; the *hollow-resounding noise of the bridge*

*itself* as it sways under this multitude of feet; the bells and whistles from a hundred steamboats.<sup>45</sup>

The notated street vendor album contains cries only in Turkish. However, there is overwhelming evidence that other languages were used to sell products in the streets. Eskenazi noted that fishmongers, whose selling cry was “*Balık*,” like the one in the album, were usually Sephardi Jews and they would mostly speak Ladino, and sometimes Greek. The vegetable and fruit vendor in Eskenazi’s neighborhood, who came right after the fishmonger, was Greek and would announce his various commodities on sale “with precise and particular modulations, in demotic Greek.”<sup>46</sup> The Turcoman artisan, originating from Chinese Turkestan, “would utter in Ladino a strange sing-song call ‘Adobar cinis . . . Adobar cinis,’ meaning he could repair porcelains and ceramics.”<sup>47</sup>

Mintzuri remembers a little Greek vending boy, crying like “*O bakal isirte*.” He did not know what he was saying or what he was selling, but he assumed this boy had to shout in Greek to the women from Greek households, as they did not speak any Turkish.<sup>48</sup> De Amicis also noted that it was possible to hear selling cries in several different languages, including Armenian, Greek, Turkish, Italian, French, and more:

At every step some fresh cry assailed the ear: Turkish porters yelling, “*Sacun ha!*” (Make room!); Armenian water-carriers calling out, “*Varme su!*”<sup>49</sup> and the Greek, “*Crio nero!*” Turkish donkey-drivers crying, “*Burada!*” venders of sweetmeats, “*Scerbet!*”<sup>50</sup> newsboys, “*Neologos!*” Frankish cab-drivers, “*Guarda! Guarda!*”<sup>51</sup>

In Rezaizade Mahmut Ekrem’s *Araba Sevdası* (Love of Cars, 1896), there is a newspaper boy’s selling cry and interaction with a customer revealing the usage of three different languages—Turkish, French, and Greek—in the course of a very short conversation. It opens with a list of newspapers the boy is selling:

- “*La Turquie, Courrier d’Orient, Ceride-i Havadis, Vakit, Manzume-i Efkâr!*”
- “*Gazeteci! Gazeteci! Donnez-moi un Courrier d’Orient!*” (“Paperboy! Give me a Courrier d’Orient.”)
- “*Oriste!*” (“Here you are!”)



- “*Combien?*” (“How much?”)
- “*Un guruh.*”
- “*Un piastre?*”
- “*Malista . . .*” (“Yes . . .”)<sup>52</sup>

The paperboy, selling newspapers in French (*La Turquie, Courrier d'Orient*), Turkish (*Ceride-i Havadis, Vakit*), and Armeno-Turkish (*Manzume-i Efkâr*) is most probably a Greek, since he answers automatically in Greek when he says “*Oriste!*” and “*Malista!*” The buyer speaks mostly French, but also Turkish, when he addresses the newspaper seller with the Turkish term *gazeteci*. This scene illustrates the linguistic diversity that characterized everyday life in the capital (and many other cities) of the Ottoman Empire. The mixing of several languages was also practiced often by the vendors themselves. Alka Nestoroff’s letters from 1907 refer to an itinerant yogurt seller yelling “*Jaurt, jaurt, freski jaurt!*”<sup>53</sup> and an offal seller shouting “*Linguo cervello, cervello linguo!*”<sup>54</sup> She noted that combining different dialects and foreign expressions together in their shouts and having a special jargon was specific to street vendors.<sup>55</sup> In other words, street vendors’ sonic presence in urban spaces complemented Ottoman multilingualism with their selling cries.

Previous research on “Ottoman cosmopolitanism” has focused largely on the bourgeoisie of the port cities, and their liberal and multicultural ideals.<sup>56</sup> Scholarship on multilingual and multicommunal links in urban centers and dynamic interaction between different ethnic, religious, and regional groups has also stressed the development of an “Ottoman identity” beyond particularities. These works focus on how a multilingual press and civil society facilitated the exchange of ideas, expectations, and political demands among the urban middle classes.<sup>57</sup> More recently, “cosmopolitanism” has been used more cautiously due to its bias towards elite interactions between different ethnic and religious communities and its disregard for conflict.<sup>58</sup> Works on “conviviality” stress heterogeneous and interacting communities beyond the middle classes that have complex, contextualized, and variable relationships with their neighbors.<sup>59</sup> The cries of street vendors also invite us to reconsider the multilingualism of the Ottoman peoples beyond the bourgeoisie and attest that urban inhabitants of lower and migrant classes also embodied this multilingualism.<sup>60</sup>

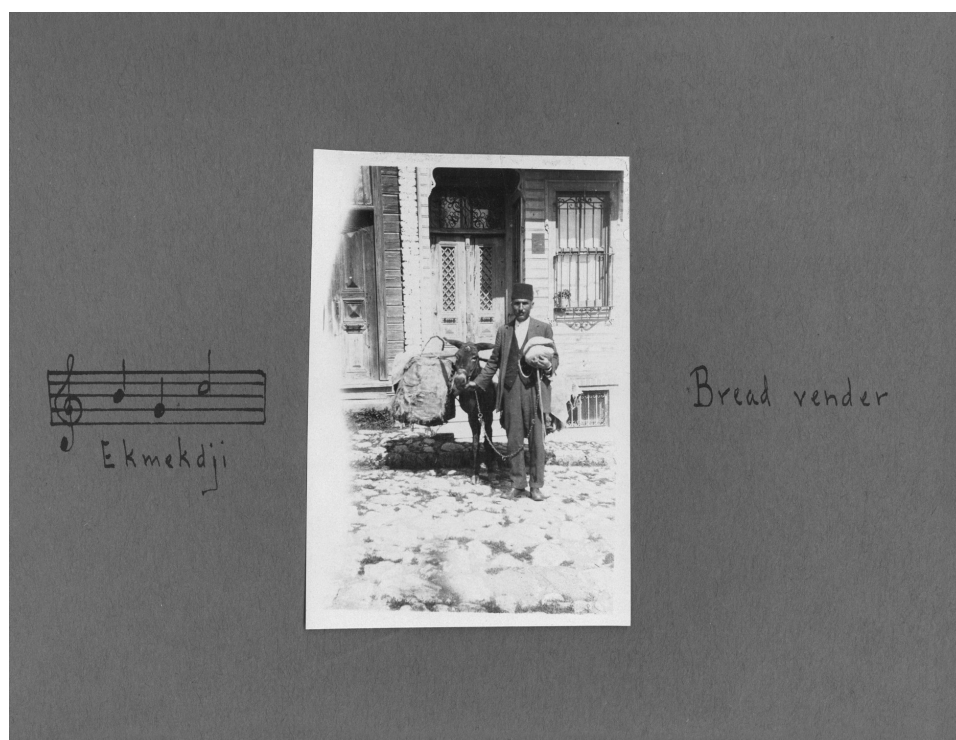
### Encounter 3: Humans and Animals

The *boza* seller, Mevlut, in Orhan Pamuk's *A Strangeness in My Mind* (Kafamda Bir Tuhaflık, 2014) wanders "the poor and neglected cobblestone streets" by night, selling his *boza* from door to door. His selling cry—"booozaaaaa," "İiiyiii booozaaaaa . . ."—usually arouses stray animals, also on the streets, and barking dogs circulate along with his *boza* shouts. The packs of dogs that follow him in the darkness of the city usually appear to him as a menace and a threat. Mevlut thinks they can sense his fear and so might attack him. He is convinced that "street dogs watched him at night from cemeteries and empty lots."<sup>61</sup> The *boza* seller's story not only brings into light non-human mobility and sonority in urban streets, but also highlights the contrast between the perception of sounds during the day and the night.

Thus the third encounter emphasized through the sonic practices of street vendors is the intermingling of human and non-human animal sounds in urban space. Sounds expose dualistic conceptions that divide "us" from "them." Dichotomies such as rural versus urban, Oriental versus European, native versus foreign, colony versus empire, and human versus non-human became especially exaggerated in listening practices. Sounds of animals are often heard (and listened to) with reference to loudness/noise against silence, implying an essential difference between humans and nonhumans.<sup>62</sup> The circulation of street vendors within urban spaces often coincided with the circulation of thousands of stray dogs and cats, newly introduced horse-pulled trams after the 1870s, and crowds of pigeons in mosque courtyards, squares, and other open spaces. The sonic presence of itinerant sellers, in that sense, often intermingled in urban space with animal sounds.

First of all, it was common for certain itinerant sellers to have accompanying animals, specifically donkeys and horses. In the album, the bread vendor (Figure 2.6) and *ipekçi* (silk product seller) have donkeys, while the water carrier (Figure 2.7) and garbage collector have horses. As such, their everyday sonic practices were intimately coupled with their animals' noises. According to the memoirs of Mintzuri, a Macedonian vegetable seller, Lazo Curo, would always appear in the central marketplace of Beşiktaş with the loud sounds of his horses as if a caravan was approaching: "*Cangıl, dungıl, dangıl, dungul.*"<sup>63</sup>

As might be expected, an itinerant seller with an animal was perceived as a pair, and the inhabitants of neighborhoods would recognize and have a connection with them both. In his *Ancient Customs and Rituals*, Abdülaziz Bey mentions a pudding seller, Mehmet Ağa, who made his donkey a part of his



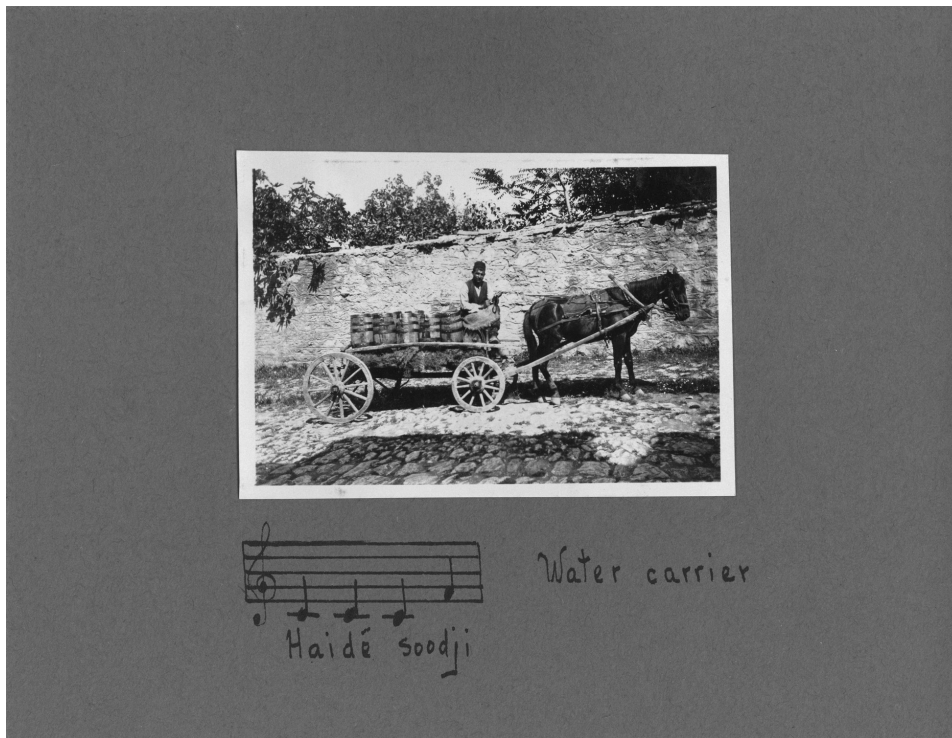
**Figure 2.6** “Bread vender—Ekmekçi [ekmekçi].” “İstanbul’un sokak satıcıları—Street vendors of Istanbul” album, Salt Research, Photographs and Postcards Archive, <https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/195592>. Reproduced with permission.

famous performance. Apparently, Mehmet Ağa had several poems, based on his complaints about his donkey. He would accept money to recite these poems, which children eagerly listened to, such as the following:

Let me talk about my donkey / I don’t know what I will do / Give it to him  
and I’ll go / That’s the kind of donkey I have

My donkey is reluctant / Sometimes naughty / Throws his saddle and  
blows like the north wind / That’s the kind of donkey I have.<sup>64</sup>

Moreover, stray animals often followed itinerant sellers, depending on the attractiveness of the product. Albanians who typically sold sheep’s brains and feet were especially popular for cats, as noted in many accounts and depicted on postcards (Figure 2.8). As stressed by innumerable accounts (including Pamuk and his *boza* seller), however, thousands of stray dogs figured most



**Figure 2.7** “Water carrier—Haidé soodji [*hayde sucu*].” “İstanbul’un sokak satıcıları—Street vendors of Istanbul” album, Salt Research, Photographs and Postcards Archive, <https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/195592>. Reproduced with permission.

prominently in the soundscape of Ottoman cities. Dr. A. Neale claimed in 1806 that there were 10,000 of them in the city, while Albert Smith raised the number to 80,000 in 1852 (Figure 2.9).<sup>65</sup> Along with cats and birds, dogs were fed by the inhabitants of the city, who gave them food and water. Urban spaces were literally occupied by dogs, lying and sleeping in the middle of a street, in search of the kindness of strangers who would feed them. Even though they were targets of random human cruelty and state-ordered extermination, the dogs were mostly considered useful by the inhabitants, since they served as street sweepers and natural composters to collect the garbage and leftovers of households.<sup>66</sup>

The neighborhoods of the city were owned by different gangs of dogs, each with its own district. They would attack or expel strange animals coming from other neighborhoods, as trespassers on their own territory. Mintzuri noted that “if a dog from the neighborhood of Kılıçali appears in the neighborhood of Paşa, all the dogs of the neighborhood would





**Figure 2.8** “Souvenir of Salonica—Itinerant dealer,” Postcard of an offal seller with a cat, Cats Museum in Kotor, Montenegro. Reproduced with permission.



**Figure 2.9** “Group of dogs in the Grande Rue de Péra [İstiklal Caddesi], Salt Research, Photographs and Postcards Archive, <https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/99487>. Reproduced with permission.

rise and bark.” People’s ears would be assaulted by the barks of dogs and they would shout angrily, “*Bre sus!*” (“Shut up!”).<sup>67</sup> Since the dogs had divided the city into districts, each controlled by one pack under a leader, they were responsive to strangers and would warn the neighborhood of intruders. Therefore, they were also considered as aides to the guards and nightwatchmen. They were assumed to “guard the houses and streets at night.”<sup>68</sup>

The sonic relationship between street vendors and animals was further intensified by the fact that criticisms of barking dogs and sellers’ cries were often coupled with discussions about urban noise. The visibility and voices/noises of stray animals, as well as itinerant sellers, appear as a nuisance in a number of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century accounts.<sup>69</sup> Meftun Bey, for instance, the main character in the novel *Şipsevdi* (Emophilia, 1911) by Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, was an overly Westernized caricature, who would constantly complain about “the beating of the stick of the *mahalle* nightwatchman in the streets at night; dogs barking; the sounds of *boza* sellers following close on each other’s heels.”<sup>70</sup> In an article that appeared in *Servet-i Fünun* (*Wealth of Sciences*), the famous literary and scientific magazine of the period, introducing Julia Barnett Rice’s “The Society for the Suppression of Unnecessary Noise” (1906), the author listed the unbearable sounds in Istanbul. He stressed that many itinerant merchants were harassing people “by shouting as much as they can” (“*sesleri çıktığı kadar bağırarak*”), just to earn a little bit of money; cartwrights were hanging rattles around the neck of their horses; the bells and horns of the trams were constantly making noise; and the whistles of the steamers were used gratuitously.<sup>71</sup>

*Servet-i Fünun*’s Rice piece should be seen in light of the global circulation of knowledge and scientific discussion on the noise of modern cities. The Ottoman public was also following developments on the subject. Despite the emergence of an awareness of the side-effects of noise, Ottoman municipal regulations did not entail relevant regulations, as shown by documents and complaints in the Ottoman archives.<sup>72</sup> Nineteenth-century criticism of street sellers was mostly concentrated on the smell and dirtiness (*koku ile pislik*) caused by rotten fruits and vegetables that food sellers threw away here and there.<sup>73</sup> The main concern of the city administrators was not the noise, but sanitary order, hygiene, and the prevention of diseases. The street vendors were often accused of selling non-sanitary food and drinks.<sup>74</sup> The other frequently raised concern about the omnipresence of street sellers in the city



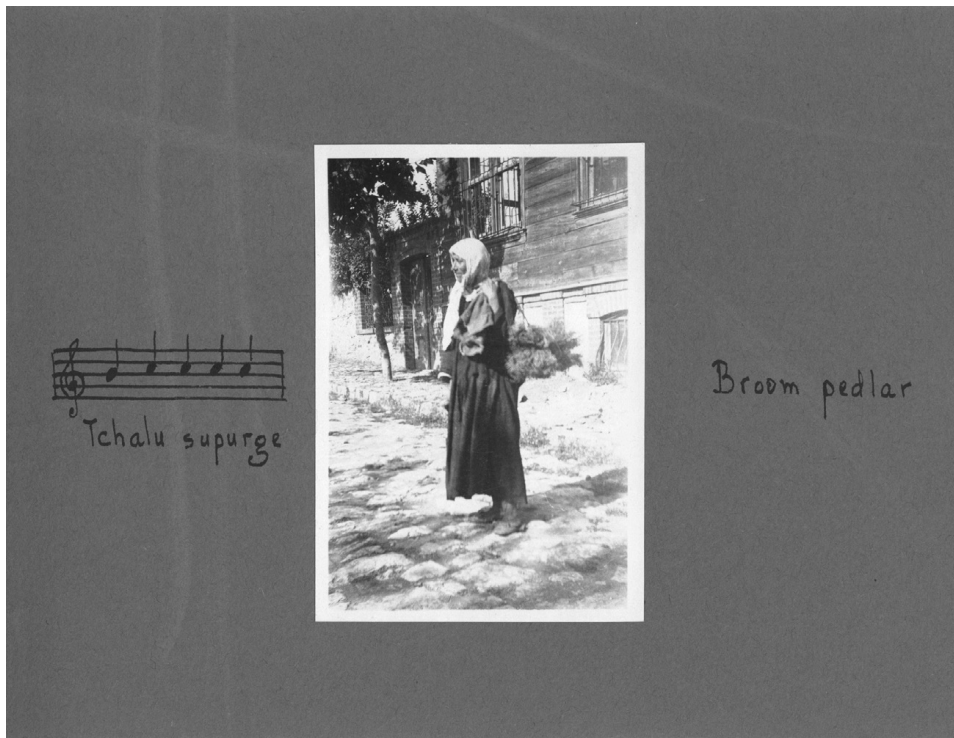
was their abundance (*kesret*)—just like stray animals—such that they were accused of blocking the pedestrian traffic even in large avenues.<sup>75</sup>

Noise legislation also reveals a great deal about the changing sounds of modernity. Which sounds were considered noise? Which sounds, on the other hand, were desirable, and according to whom? In the case of Istanbul, anti-noise regulations were established only after the 1930s, prohibiting, along with other things, the street vendors' cries. However, to what extent these laws were enforced in Turkey remains unclear.

#### Encounter 4: The Audibility of Gender

The great novelist Yaşar Kemal (1923–2015) made a series of journalistic interviews with poor, migrant street children in 1975 for the daily newspaper *Cumhuriyet*. The only girl that he interviewed was Zilo, the twelve-year-old daughter of a Kurdish migrant porter, who left home to escape her stepmother's cruelty. Sleeping in empty lots, parks, and sometimes her aunt's cellar, she started selling bird food in the courtyard of Yeni Cami (New Mosque). The passersby would buy fodder to throw to the birds of the mosque as a good deed.<sup>76</sup> Kemal thought this tiny girl had a velvet voice, the voice of a woman's warmth and affability. Before long she had "regular customers," and men would sit on the stairs of the mosque, stare at her, and sigh longingly from morning to evening. Due to constant harassment, she decided pickpocketing and collecting scraps were safer. Kemal's writing on Zilo sheds light on the gendered layers of subordination in urban streets and the ways sound became part of those gender dynamics. The audibility of women's voices in the streets was typically curtailed by age, social status, and the dictates of morality.

In a similar manner, gender manifested itself vocally in the cries of street vendors more generally. The album contains only one woman, a broom peddler (*çalı süpürge*). The photograph shows a relatively old woman (Figure 2.10). As will become clearer in this section, Ottoman female itinerant sellers were most likely older women. This was possibly determined by the dictates of urban sexual geography, in which the freedom to roam the streets was a male freedom. For women, however, it was only the lower classes and older women who could have a public presence without concerns about honor and shame. There were other common products peddled predominantly by women, such as fabrics (*bohça*), handkerchiefs (*mendil*), lace products



**Figure 2.10** “Broom pedlar—Tchalu supurge [*çalı süpürgesi*].” “İstanbul’un sokak satıcıları—Street vendors of Istanbul” album, Salt Research, Photographs and Postcards Archive, <https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/195592>. Reproduced with permission.

(*ipek*), and flowers. These women, who also acted as matchmakers, were often invited into the houses to open their bundle and show the variety of their wares.<sup>77</sup>

Among the itinerant vendors that visited his neighborhood in the Golden Horn, Eskenazi lists only one female, the boiled corn vendor, an old woman. In contrast to those who came in the morning to sell daily necessities (such as the fishmonger or the fruit vendor), she would come in the afternoon about teatime, to sell a “luxury” with a “subdued call.” It is interesting that he depicts the sound of this woman seller as “subdued,” as opposed to other more “acute sounds” or “characteristic and colorful cries,” such as “the shriek of the Albanian who sold sheep’s brains and feet,” or the “deep-voiced call of the peasant who sold yoghurt,” or the “raucous call issued from the parched throat of a robust Kurd” selling melons.<sup>78</sup> Why was the corn seller’s shout heard as “subdued,” as opposed to male cries defined as a “shriek” or a “deep-voiced call”? Was it because she was old? Or was it simply because she was a woman?

In Abdülaziz Bey's *Ancient Customs and Ceremonies*, he refers to a specific group of female street vendors, selling stuffed wine or cabbage leaves (*yaprak dolma*, *lahana dolma*), a certain sweet made with sesame (*susam*), and tea biscuits (*kurabiye*).<sup>79</sup> These were older black women, former slaves manumitted through marriage or old age, yet impoverished by the passing of their spouses or masters. They lived in difficult circumstances in bachelor rooms in Arasta (Eminönü), Salmatomruk, Karagümrük, and Çukurbostan (Fatih).<sup>80</sup> They strived to make a living by making and selling *dolma* or *susam*. These women wore a chador, tying an outer belt in their waist. They would have a headscarf wrapped around their necks, and would tie a colored kerchief (*yemeni*) called *kaşbastı* under and over it. They would then carry the basket of *susam* in their hands and the *dolma* pot on their heads and go out into the street.

For their *dolma* business, they would choose areas where many artisans and bachelors frequented, such as the gates of the Grand Bazaar, especially the bazaar door on the “Kaşıkcılar” side of Bayezid Mosque. They would put the *dolma* pot on a stool they brought with them, sit next to it, and solemnly wait for customers without making any particular sound. In order to sell *susam*, on the other hand, they had a different sonic strategy. They would go to the women's side of bathhouses in the Bazaar area or to houses where they had heard that weddings were taking place. As the following example shows, their interaction with women customers was completely different. They would act in a more informal, witty, and intimate manner. They used to make jokes to attract the attention of women and children:

“Hey, I sold *susam* to your mother as well, did you forget the nanny (*dadı kadın*)?”

“Come on, nanny has brought *susam*.”<sup>81</sup>

Street selling practices also facilitated public or semi-public encounters between (selling) men and (buying) women. Mintzuri's memoirs give a number of examples as to how male vendors interacted with their female customers. These scenes often contain eroticizing tropes, exaggerating the aspect of desire in the interaction, but nevertheless give some sense of the ways sound mediated these interactions. Non-Muslim women they encountered did not hesitate to open the doors or converse with the sellers.<sup>82</sup> Eskenazi also noted that after “the sharp cry” of the fishmonger (“*balık*”), the Jewish housewives in their neighborhood “would rush to their windows and a colorful exchange

of scurrilous wit would ensue during their bargaining.”<sup>83</sup> Due to the rules of seclusion, the business with Muslim households or Muslim neighborhoods were different. Itinerant merchants carried out their transactions from outside in the street. They would shout their selling cries at the door. If there was a man or a boy in the house, they would come out. If not, then women would do the shopping. The main customers of street vendors in residential areas were mostly women. Hagop’s friend Yusuf, the broom peddler, would always “listen to the female voices coming from beyond latticed windows.” Sometimes a door would open slightly and he would hear the voice of a woman, who was hiding and careful not to be seen. When she called him, “Broom peddler, come!” he would run to the door. As a norm, women would interact with the vendors from behind doors and windows without being seen. Mintzuri tried to guess the identity of the woman with whom he was interacting by her voice. Was she young, middle-aged, or old? Was she white or black? Was she a female slave (*halayık*) or an adopted girl (*besleme*)? However, in some households, women did not even speak in an audible voice (“*duyulabilecek tonda konuşmazlar*”). It seemed to him that they were even hiding their voices (“*seslerini bile gizlerlerdi*”). Their light whispers made it difficult to understand if they wanted two, three, or four loaves of bread.<sup>84</sup>

As part of the discussion of the audibility of gender within Ottoman soundscapes, one also comes across frequent references to the voices of eunuchs. They were at times referred to as “infantile,” and at other times as reflective of the “gentility of their manners,” as “insinuating, clear, and sonorous,”<sup>85</sup> and at yet other times as “hoarse.”<sup>86</sup> When referring to “the infantile voices of the eunuchs” in his description of the Babel of the Galata Bridge (as quoted above), de Amicis was also underlining the audibility of gender more generally in the streets of Istanbul.<sup>87</sup> Reserving an entire section of his book for the eunuchs, de Amicis claimed that these mutilated men, “belonging to neither sex,” were to be seen in every corner of Istanbul. Encounters with them, as an audible experience, were perceived as a disturbing realization of the gendered regime of slavery in the empire:

These unfortunates are to be met at every street-corner, just as they are encountered on every page of history. . . . And the same way in Constantinople: in the midst of a crowded bazaar, among the throng of pleasure-seekers at the Sweet Waters, beneath the columns of the mosques, beside the carriages, on the steamboats, in kaiks [boats], at all the festivals, wherever people are assembled together, one sees these phantoms of men,

these melancholy countenances like a dark shadow thrown across every aspect of gay Oriental life.<sup>88</sup>

These observations by de Amicis, while crude and reductive in many ways, point to the complex, intersectional bodies and identities that could be heard and seen throughout Istanbul as crucial pieces of the economies of empire.

## Conclusion

All traces of the past are transient in a certain way, and sounds maybe even more so. Past sounds and the experiences that individuals have had with them have naturally disappeared. Still, auditory historians try to reconstruct past sonospheres and listening experiences from essentially silent sources. The effort to listen to Ottoman soundscapes requires the mediation of contemporary observers. This chapter on the sonic practices of street vending relies on a rare audiovisual album with notated cries of street vendors. The History Foundation (*Tarih Vakfı*) in Turkey published the album as a small booklet for the January 2018 (no. 289) issue of *Toplumsal Tarih* (Social History) with the support of Irvin Cemil Schick. The Foundation also commissioned a YouTube video of the album, where notated vendors' cries are vocalized by Hami Ünlü, Yasemin Göksu, and Aydan Çelik.<sup>89</sup> It is interesting that this multimedia album almost demands a medium like YouTube—created more than a century later—both to document its visual and sonic dimensions and to allow it to circulate beyond the place/time it was created.

In this chapter, I have drawn on literary descriptions of the street vendors' sonic practices—rich accounts of both Europeans and locals contained in archives, letters, memoirs, travel writing, and ethnographic collections—analyzing different listening habits and subjectivities defined by cultural differences. On the one hand, the *peaceful sound* of the *ezan*, the *melancholic silence* of the Golden Horn, the *wild barking* of the dogs, and the *joyful cries* of the street vendors have all been typical Orientalist stereotypes to describe the soundscape of Istanbul. Further listening, on the other hand, complicates the picture. Listening to the sounds of itinerant vendors brings into focus a range of social encounters, highlighting histories of urban-rural migration, a multilingual street life, human-animal relations, and the selling cries of women vendors. The sonic traces of street vendors' presences—as evidenced by nineteenth-century accounts as well as novels, films, and other media from

the twentieth-century, and even YouTube videos today—gesture toward histories of the empire and intra-imperial difference, offering an affective reminder of the cultural, political, and economic relations of Istanbul’s past.

## Notes

This work was supported by the research project: *Ottoman Auralities and the Eastern Mediterranean: Sound, Media and Power, 1789–1922*, selected as a European Research Council Starting Grant, funded by UK Research and Innovation.

1. Sait Faik Abasıyanık, “Ketenhelvacı,” in *Tüneldeki Çocuk* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2016), 7–11.
2. Ibid., 7: “Ketenhelvacı bir masal mahlukudur. O da göçüp gittikten sonra belki ketenhelvacıların nesli tükenecek.”
3. Ibid., 8: For example, “Fakirin halinden anlar fakir. / Benden ketenhelvası alan hanım, çakır. / Kapıdan bir tane daha çıkarsa / Kara gözlüm / Kutum kalacak tamtakır.” And shortly thereafter: “Kimseler bilmedi. / Gözüm yaşım silmedi. / Oğlum sekiz, torunum yedi. / Ben kazandım o yedi. / Vay ne güzel ketenhelvam!”
4. Ibid., 11: “Kaldım bir kemik bir deri, / Volta vurdum mahalleleri.”
5. Ana María Ochoa Gautier, *Aurality: Listening and Knowledge in Nineteenth-Century Colombia* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015), 75; Gavin Steingo and Jim Sykes, “Introduction: Remapping Sound Studies in the Global South,” in *Remapping Sound Studies*, ed. Gavin Steingo and Jim Sykes (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019), 21.
6. Steven Connor, “Rustications: Animals in the Urban Mix,” in *The Acoustic City*, ed. Matthew Gandy and B. J. Nilsen (Berlin: Jovis, 2014), 16–22; Ochoa Gautier, *Aurality*, 33, 63, 74; Alejandra M. Bronfman, *Isles of Noise: Sonic Media in the Caribbean* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016), 6; Steingo and Sykes, “Introduction,” 17.
7. Emily Thompson, *The Soundscape of Modernity: Architectural Acoustics and the Culture of Listening in America, 1900–1933* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004), 132.
8. John M. Picker, *Victorian Soundscapes* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2003); John M. Picker, “Soundscape(s): The Turning of the Word,” in *The Routledge Companion to Sound Studies*, ed. Michael Bull (London: Routledge, 2018), 147–155.
9. Adam Mestyan, “Upgrade?: Power and Sound during Ramadan and ‘Id al-Fitr in the Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Arab Provinces,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 37/2 (2017), 262–279; Adam Mestyan, “Sound, Military Music, and Opera in Egypt during the Rule of Mehmet Ali Pasha (r. 1805–1848),” in *Ottoman Empire and European Theatre*, vol. 2, *The Time of Joseph Haydn: From Sultan Mahmud I to Mahmud II (r. 1730–1839)*, ed. Michael Hüttler and Hans Ernst Weidinger, (Vienna: Hollitzer, 2014), 539–564; Nina Ergin, “Ottoman Royal Women’s Spaces: The Acoustic Dimension,” *Journal of Women’s History* 26/1 (2014), 89–111.



10. For a similar discussion, see Richard Cullen Rath, *How Early America Sounded* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005).
11. Alain Corbin, *Les cloches de la terre: Paysage sonore et culture sensible dans les campagnes au XIXe siècle* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1994).
12. Nancy Rose Hunt, "An Acoustic Register: Rape and Repetition in Congo," in *Imperial Debris: On Ruins and Ruination*, ed. Ann Laura Stoler (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013), 39–66.
13. Ziad Fahmy, *Street Sounds: Listening to Everyday Life in Modern Egypt* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2020); Ziad Fahmy, "Coming to our Senses: Historicizing Sound and Noise in the Middle East," *History Compass* 11/4 (2013), 305–315; Ziad Fahmy, "An Earwitness to History: Street Hawkers and Their Calls in Early 20th-Century Egypt," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 48/1 (2016), 129–134; see also Chapter 3 in this volume.
14. Recently, a copy of the album has been added to the online collection of SALT Research Archives, <https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/195592>, accessed February 1, 2023.
15. Such albums were prepared as early as the early modern era by European diplomats to the Ottoman court. Famous examples include the Ralamb, Luyken, and Brindesi albums. During the nineteenth century, the Ottoman sultans started to officially sponsor and produce them. During the reign of Sultan Abdülaziz, photographs comprised an integral part of the Turkish pavilions at the 1867 (Paris) and 1873 (Vienna) World Expositions, for which albums of Ottoman "ethnicities" and costumes were produced. Abdülhamid II's photographic albums followed the same tradition. Ayshe Erdoğan, "The Victorian Market for Ottoman Types," *History of Photography* 23/3 (1999), 269–273; Wendy M. K. Shaw, "Ottoman Photography of the Late Nineteenth Century: An 'Innocent' Modernism?" *History of Photography*, 33/1 (2009), 80–93.
16. On the collector, see note 89. A contemporary example that seeks to capture the sound of Istanbul was Fatih Akin's *Crossing the Bridge: The Sound of Istanbul*, which had strong orientalist tropes as well. See Nazan Maksudyan, "Bir, İki, Üç, Kaç İstanbul? Fantazi, Nostalji, Ütopya," in *Bir Kapıdan Gireceksin: Türkiye Sineması Üzerine Denemeler*, ed. Umut Tümay Arslan (Istanbul: Metis, 2012), 159–166.
17. Stefan Helmreich, "Transduction," in *Keywords in Sound*, ed. David Novak and Matt Sakakeeny (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015), 222–231.
18. David Gramit, "Orientalism and the Lied: Schubert's 'Du liebst mich nicht,'" *19th-Century Music* 27/2 (2003), 97–115; Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1993), 134–157; Paul Robinson, "Is Aida an Orientalist Opera?" *Cambridge Opera Journal* 5/2 (1993), 133–140; Edward W. Said, *Musical Elaborations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991); Ralph P. Locke, "Cutthroats and Casbah Dancers, Muezzins and Timeless Sands: Musical Images of the Middle East," *19th-Century Music* 22/1 (1998), 20–53.
19. Dozens of its kind were produced especially for the metropolitan cities of London and Paris in the early modern era. For further information, see Karen F. Beall, *Cries and Itinerant Trades: A Bibliography/Kaufleute und Straßenhändler. Eine Bibliographie* (Hamburg: Ernst Hauswedell, 1975).

20. Ali Behdad notes the importance of “the Orient” in the development of photography as a new form of representation. Ali Behdad, *Camera Orientalis: Reflections on Photography of the Middle East* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016).
21. Here one should note that Orientalist photography was not a production solely of Europeans, but was a new mode of representation produced through cultural encounters. Behdad, *Camera Orientalis*, 7.
22. “*Bu sesle sokaklar yankılandı / Domates, biber, patlıcan.*” For the music video of the song (though not featuring street vendors), see [https://youtu.be/mmcy\\_woJmY](https://youtu.be/mmcy_woJmY), accessed February 1, 2023.
23. Anon., *Handbook for Travellers in Constantinople: The Bosphorus, Dardanelles, Brousa and Plain of Troy* (London: John Murray, 1871), 66.
24. Victor Eskenazi, *Beyond Constantinople: The Memoirs of an Ottoman Jew* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2016), 11.
25. *Ibid.*, 13.
26. *Ibid.*, 14.
27. Cem Behar, *A Neighborhood in Ottoman Istanbul: Fruit Vendors and Civil Servants in the Kasap İlyas Mahalle* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), 43.
28. Hagop Mintzuri, *İstanbul Anıları (1897–1940)*, trans. Silva Kuyumcuyan (Istanbul: Aras, 2017), 54.
29. *Ibid.*, 31.
30. *Ibid.*, 35.
31. For a short clip of this scene, see <https://youtu.be/xPoxw47DoGw> (after 1:00), accessed February 1, 2023.
32. Behar, *A Neighborhood in Ottoman Istanbul*, 115.
33. Fariba Zarinebaf, *Mediterranean Encounters: Trade and Pluralism in Early Modern Galata* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2018), 176–177.
34. Abdülaziz Bey, *Osmanlı Âdet, Merasim ve Tabirleri: Âdât ve Merâsim-i Kadîme, Tabîrât ve Muâmelât-ı Kavmiyye-i Osmâniyye* (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1995, [1910]), 140.
35. *Ibid.*, 451.
36. *Ibid.*, 453: “*Muhallebim kaymaklıdır / Tabaklarda revnaklıdır / Medhedenler pek haklıdır / Küçük beyler gelin alın / Muhallebim süde şeker, / Paraları cepten çeker / Her nedense medhe değer / Küçük beyler gelin alın . . .*”
37. Mintzuri, *İstanbul*, 91.
38. *Ibid.*, 128.
39. For a short synopsis of the movie, see [https://www.europeanfilmawards.eu/en\\_EN/film/journey-to-the-sun.5517](https://www.europeanfilmawards.eu/en_EN/film/journey-to-the-sun.5517), accessed February 1, 2023.
40. Johann Strauss, “Linguistic Diversity and Everyday Life in the Ottoman Cities of the Eastern Mediterranean and the Balkans (Late 19th–Early 20th century),” *The History of the Family*, 16/2 (2011), 126–141.
41. *Ibid.* While Strauss notes that Ottoman cities were often a Babel of different tongues and dialects, the number of languages spoken was limited in number, changing according to geography. In the capital, the main languages were Turkish, French, Greek, Armenian, and Ladino. In the Arab provinces, Arabic was the dominant language in nearly all cities.

42. Mark Mazower, "Salonica between East and West, 1860–1912," *Dialogos: Hellenic Studies Review* 1 (1994), 104–127; Mark Mazower, *Salonica: City of Ghosts* (London: Harper Collins, 2004).
43. Jouko Lindstedt, "Multilingualism in the Central Balkans in late Ottoman times," in *In Search of the Center and Periphery: Linguistic Attitudes, Minorities, and Landscapes in the Central Balkans*, ed. Maxim Makartsev and Max Wahlström (Helsinki: Helsingin yliopisto, Nykykielten laitos, 2016), 51–67; Sibel Zandi-Sayek, *Ottoman Izmir: The Rise of a Cosmopolitan Port, 1840–1880* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012).
44. Edmondo de Amicis, *Constantinople*, vol. 1, trans. Maria Hornor Lansdale (New York: Merrill and Baker, 1896 [1877]), 49.
45. *Ibid.*, 55. Emphasis added.
46. Eskenazi, *Beyond Constantinople*, 11.
47. *Ibid.*, 12–13.
48. "I also didn't understand what he said. Yes, 'bakka' [meaning 'groceries'], but what did 'o' and 'isirt'e' mean? To whom was he shouting; what was he selling? Doors also remained closed and there was no one on the streets. I used to ask him, but he wouldn't answer; he kept walking and cried out in such a way I thought he was crying. Much later I noticed he was calling out to the houses. Like him, the Greek women of the Paşa neighborhood [*mahalle*] didn't know Turkish." Mintzuri, *İstanbul*, 89.
49. This is actually a cry in the Turkish language, meaning "Anybody want water?" ("*Var mı su?*").
50. This word is not transliterated correctly; it is more meaningful as sherbet (*şerbet*), which was a sweetened fruit juice.
51. de Amicis, *Constantinople*, 89.
52. Rezaizade Mahmud Ekrem, *Araba Sevdası* (Istanbul: İnkılâp, 1985), 110. Cited in Strauss, "Linguistic Diversity and Everyday Life," 126–127.
53. A corruption of the Italian word *fresco* (fresh).
54. Corruptions of the Italian words *lingua* (tongue), and *cervello* (brain).
55. Klara Volarić, ed., *The Istanbul Letters of Alka Nestoroff* (Bonn: Max Weber Stiftung, 2015), 35.
56. Edhem Eldem, Daniel Goffman, and Bruce Masters, *The Ottoman City between East and West: Aleppo, Izmir, and Istanbul* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Marc Baer, "Globalization, Cosmopolitanism, and the Dönme in Ottoman Salonica and Turkish Istanbul," *Journal of World History* 18/2 (2007), 141–170.
57. Michelle U. Campos, *Ottoman Brothers: Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Early Twentieth-Century Palestine* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010). See also Julia Phillips Cohen, *Becoming Ottomans: Sephardi Jews and Imperial Citizenship in the Modern Era* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2014); Vangelis Constantinos Kechriotis, "The Greeks of Izmir at the End of the Empire: A Non-Muslim Ottoman Community between Autonomy and Patriotism" (PhD dissertation, Leiden University, 2005); Bedross Der Matossian, *Shattered Dreams of Revolution: From Liberty to Violence in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2014).

58. Will Hanley, "Grieving Cosmopolitanism in Middle East Studies," *History Compass* 6/5 (2008), 1346–1367; Ulrike Freitag and Nora Lafi, eds., *Urban Governance under the Ottomans: Between Cosmopolitanism and Conflict* (London: Routledge, 2014).
59. Ulrike Freitag, "'Cosmopolitanism' and 'Conviviality'? Some Conceptual Considerations Concerning the Late Ottoman Empire," *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 17/4 (2014), 375–391; Nora Lessersohn, "'Provincial Cosmopolitanism' in Late Ottoman Anatolia: An Armenian Shoemaker's Memoir," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 57/2 (2015), 528–556.
60. Edhem Eldem has noted that prostitutes, petty criminals, and barkeepers were highly mobile and carriers of cosmopolitanism. Edhem Eldem, "The Undesirables of Smyrna, 1926," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 24/2 (2009), 223–227. Malte Fuhrmann has also written about the presence of lower migrant classes in Ottoman port cities and the emergence of a particular type of sociability and public sphere in taverns and pubs. Malte Fuhrmann, "Down and Out on the Quays of Izmir: 'European' Musicians, Innkeepers, and Prostitutes in the Ottoman Port-Cities," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 24/2 (2009), 169–185.
61. "Geceleri sokak köpeklerinin mezarlıklardan, boş arsalardan kendisini sandığından daha da çok seyrettiklerini de yazıyı okurken anlamıştı." Orhan Pamuk, *Kafamda Bir Tuhaflık* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2014), 80.
62. Ochoa Gautier, *Aurality*, 74.
63. Mintzuri, *İstanbul*, 31.
64. Abdülaziz Bey, *Osmanlı Âdet*, 454: "Eşeğimden bahsedeyim / Bilmem elinden nideyim / Ona verin de gideyim / Böyle benim eşeğim var. / Eşeğim bana nazlanır / Bazı defa haylazlanır / Semer atar poyrazlanır / Böyle benim eşeğim var."
65. Albert Smith, *A Month in Constantinople* (Boston: Bradbury & Guild, 1852), 64.
66. For more on Istanbul's stray dogs, see Cihangir Gündoğdu, "The State and the Stray Dogs in Late Ottoman Istanbul: From Unruly Subjects to Servile Friends," *Middle Eastern Studies* 54/4 (2018), 555–574; Irvin Cemil Schick, "İstanbul'da 1910'da Gerçekleşen Büyük Köpek İtlâfı: Bir Mekân Üzerinde Çekişme Vakası," *Toplumsal Tarih* 200 (2010), 22–33.
67. Mintzuri, *İstanbul*, 74.
68. Anon., *Handbook for Travellers in Constantinople*, 117.
69. For a European account, see Smith, *A Month in Constantinople*, 64: "The yelping, howling, barking, growling, and snarling, were all merged into one uniform and continuous even sound, as the noise of frogs becomes when heard at a distance. For hours there was no lull. I went to sleep, and woke again; and still, with my windows open, I heard the same tumult going on: nor was it until day-break that anything like tranquility was restored." Emphasis added.
70. Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar, *Şipsevdi* (Istanbul: Everest Yayınları, 2015 [1911]), 67.
71. Anon., "Madam Rays ve Sokak Gürültüleri," *Servet-i Fünun* 33/851, August 15, 1907.
72. A series of documents focuses mostly on the prohibition against using church bells. Ottoman Christians were only allowed to use the *semantron*, a wooden board pounded by a wooden hammer. Prime Ministry's Ottoman Archives (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, hereafter BOA), HR.MKT., 132/57, 12.01.1856; BOA, C.ADL., 66/3952, 04.09.1868; BOA, DH.TMIK.M., 43/57, 20.11.1897.

73. BOA, A.MKT.MHM., 189/99, 31.07.1860; BOA, DH. MKT., 2006/6, 28.09.1892.
74. BOA, DH. MKT., 732/38, 04.07.1903.
75. BOA, A.MKT.NZD., 310/23, 04.04.1860; BOA, A.MKT.MHM., 450/100, 28.03.1873; BOA, DH. MKT., 2659/27, 16.11.1908.
76. “Zilo, Polisi Kırk Günlük Yoldan Görse Hemen Tanıyiverir Bu Allah Vergisidir . . .,” *Cumhuriyet*, September 23, 1975.
77. Abdülaziz Bey, *Osmanlı Âdet*, 106.
78. Eskenazi, *Beyond Constantinople*, 10–11.
79. Abdülaziz Bey, *Osmanlı Âdet*, 321.
80. *Ibid.*, 321, 371.
81. Abdülaziz Bey, *Osmanlı Âdet*, 321: “Hu, ben senin anana da susam sardım, dadı kadını unuttun mu? Haydi bakalım mam dadı susam getirdi.”
82. Mintzuri, *İstanbul*, 45.
83. Eskenazi, *Beyond Constantinople*, 10.
84. Mintzuri, *İstanbul*, 45–46.
85. Jane Hathaway, *The Chief Eunuch of the Ottoman Harem: From African Slave to Power-Broker* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 152.
86. Hathaway cites Sir Richard Francis Burton’s claim that Beshir Agha’s “hoarse voice inspired awe and respect, thus contributing to an authoritative aura.” Jane Hathaway, *Beshir Agha: Chief Eunuch of the Ottoman Imperial Harem* (New York: Oneworld Publications, 2012), 21.
87. de Amicis, *Constantinople*, 55.
88. *Ibid.*, 181–182.
89. <https://youtu.be/JE2RK0VuQE0>, accessed February 1, 2023. Based on a recent discovery by Els Curry, student at the Faculty of Music at the University of Cambridge, there is another copy of the album at the Skilliter Centre for Ottoman Studies, Newnham College, Cambridge. The archival box containing the album was donated by Amanda Beart and includes letters of the family, photographs, and postcards. According to the Skilliter collection, including a family history by Beart, the albums were originally made by an Alfred W. Sellars (great uncle of the donor). The Sellars family was connected to Robert College and had long resided in the Bebek area. According to a 1950 article, “Alfred Sellars of Bebek, Istanbul” was still a resident of the city in 1934–1935 and took photographs of the Hagia Sophia after a storm carried away the conical roofs of the two eastern minarets. See William Emerson and Robert L. van Nice, “Hagia Sophia and the First Minaret Erected after the Conquest of Constantinople,” *American Journal of Archaeology* 54/1 (1950), 28–40, at 31. Beart’s book and other objects in the archival box state that a copy of the album had been given to a “local museum in Bebek.” I assume this copy was part of the Robert College Museum and later found its way into Edward S. Sheiry’s estate, and then passed to Rezan Benatar.