

CHAPTER 3

INVENTING SCIENTIFIC FOUNDATIONS FOR OTTOMAN MUSIC: ON THE WAY TO 'CIVILIZED NATIONS' WITH THE HELP OF 'POSITIVIST FAITH'

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ABSTRACT

The 19th century is conspicuous for the Europeanization movements that were introduced to the Ottoman world. The domain of music theory exerted a predominant and specific influence on Ottoman music in the 1800s. A series of events related to an individual named Rauf Yekta occurred in the second half of the century. These occurrences evince the course that established the content and framework of present-day Turkish music theory. The world views and attitudes of 19th century Ottomans educated according to the European style primarily exhibited an understanding of modernization based on concepts such as science, progress, evolution, positivism, and measurement. Auguste Comte promised that the transition from the theological stage, which indicated a state of backwardness, to the positive stage could only be achieved through science. Believing in this promise, Yekta adhered to the tenets of Comtean positivism, which appeared dominantly positioned in his scientific orientation and allowed him to conduct his music theory studies completely within this framework. This chapter focuses on the individuals engaged in theoretical investigations initiated with the claim of discovering the scientific foundations of Ottoman music. It further evaluates the roles discharged by these researchers. This prosopographical study aims to construct a unique history of events and to highlight the significant difficulties and deficiencies in contemporary circumstances. Historian Yılmaz Öztuna, one of Arel's best-known students, wrote a stereotypical and fictional narrative claiming that three Mevlevi sheikhs and three followers accomplished studies in music theory. However, Öztuna confused the names of Ataullah Dede and Hüseyin Dede when he was a student in Paris; this major inaccuracy caused the publishing and dissemination of erroneous information. Apparently, Öztuna preferred to silently witness the proliferation of his invented misinformation throughout his long career as a writer rather than rectify the simple mistake. It was subsequently revealed that a process that began with Yekta's efforts to introduce scientific theory to Ottoman music transmogrified, especially by Arel, into content that completely imitated European harmonic tonality. The study disclosed that individuals desirous of modernizing Ottoman music theory were intimately linked with diverse political and social groups,

including bureaucrats, sheikhs of religious orders, foreign schools, political parties, missionaries, foreign embassy officials, literary circles, freemasons, and especially the press. The chronological exposition of the findings of the study elucidates the significant functions performed successively by Rauf Yekta, Ataullah Dede, Celaleddin Dede, Suphi Ezgi, and Sadettin Arel to shape music theory studies in Turkey. Further, Salih Zeki Bey, Mihail Mishaqa, S. Murat Uzdilek, and Yılmaz Öztuna were indirectly involved in the process, discharging diverse roles over varied time periods.

Keywords: Ottoman/Turkish music theory, westernism, modernization, comtean positivism, science, evolution, progress

I have no doubt that those who cast their first astonishment over them would see positive religion as an unexpected solution to their fundamental concerns. Moving directly from Islam to positivism without any metaphysical transition, they will feel directly as an honorable follower of their great prophets, who methodize the love of humanity and universal happiness. Thus, they will refuse to regret the inevitable dissolution, accepting the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire as an ordinary practice of social law restricting the living space of temporal administrations, turning to rejecting unnecessary political unity.

A. Comte, 1853¹

I say with deep regret that Turkish music, which has a wide scientific field, a wide range of makams and meters, is dead.

Dr. Suphi Ezgi, 1933

Today, those who want to learn the theory of Turkish music come across a Westernist theory whose intellectual foundations are based on such concepts as ‘civilization’, ‘progress’, ‘evolution’, ‘scientific positivism’, and ‘certainty’ at the end of the 19th century.² There is a widespread and stereotypical narrative about the development of this new theory. According to this narrative, three Mevlevi dervishes ‘in favor of modernization’, Ataullah, Celaleddin, and Fahreddin pioneered these new studies in the field of music theory. They believed that the scientific foundations of Oriental music must be re-learned from pre-Ottoman sources, such as Safiyüddin Urmevi and Abdülkadir Meragi, and that a new theory should be constructed in

1 From the letter which was written to the Grand Vizier M. Reshid Pasha by Comte. See Demir (2004).

2 There are various qualifications for this theory, such as ‘Arel’s theory’ (Akdoğu, 1993), ‘Arel’s system’ (Signell, 1977; Tura, 1988), ‘Arel’s school’ (Behar, 1987), ‘Arel-Ezgi’s system’ (Özkan, 1987), ‘Arel-Ezgi-Uzdilek’s system’ (Can, 2002), ‘modern Turkish music theory’ (Zeren, 1999). For some studies dealing with the various effects of the specified concepts and processes on Turkish modernization, see (Aksoy, 1985), (Can, 2019), (Çam, 2013), (Doğan, 2013), (Ederer, 2010), (Göçek, 1996), (Güler, 2019), (Hanioglu, 1997), (Korlaelçi, 2014), (Lewis, 1961), (Mardin, 2000), (O’Connell, 2013), (Shaw, 1977), (Uyanık, 2011).

accordance with the ‘spirit of the times’. By transferring these beliefs to their young followers, Rauf Yekta, Suphi Ezgi and Sadeddin Arel, they encouraged them to study in this direction.

Since this narrative is repeated without being questioned in many publications by Turkish and foreign researchers, it must be investigated and addressed through primary sources that testify to its chronological course. This research aims to clarify the process of constructing a new theory in light of historical documents and information, and to reveal some important aspects of the current clichéd narrative that remains in the background. Here, (i.) information on the six names involved or claimed to have played an active role in the process has been compiled and evaluated, and, (ii.) the main orientations and environments that have had an impact on the understanding of the new science presented by these people are emphasized.

Leading Names in the Initiative to Construct a ‘Scientific’ Music Theory in Ottoman Istanbul

Rauf Yekta (1871-1935): ‘the protagonist’

The first efforts to construct a European-style scientific and modern theory for Oriental/Ottoman music dates back to the last quarter of the 19th century. All the documents and information, including various statements by Yekta, clearly show that he was the person who initiated this process.³ In 1899, Yekta, in an article addressed to the respected journalist Ahmet Mithat Efendi⁴, explained his personal attempts to reveal ‘the scientific foundations of Ottoman music’ and expressed clearly that those efforts in the field should be appreciated. Rauf Yekta claimed to be ‘the first to speak of the theory of Ottoman music’, which no one had ever known before.⁵

The ‘scientific positivism’ tendency of Yekta in ‘discovering the theoretical foundations of Ottoman music’ certainly has aspects that need to be explained. First of all, Yekta, with some scorn and prejudice, thought that the contents of the works written under the title of

3 See (Akdoğan, 1993), ([Arel], 1909), (Batanay, 1950), (Baykara, 1950), (Erev, 1950a), (Erev, 1950c), (Erguner, 2003), (Ezgi, 1933, 1950a, 1950b), (Nettl & Bohlman, 1991), (Özalp, 2000), (Özkan, 2010), (Öztuna, 1969, 1986).

4 Ahmet Mithat Efendi (1844-1912): A leading journalist, writer and publisher of the *Tanzimat* period. Especially with his articles in the newspaper *Tercüman-ı Hakikat* [The Dragoman of Truth], he became one of the important spokesmen of Ottoman modernization. In 1899, he actively participated in a series of discussions with Rauf Yekta on the past and present condition of the subject of music theory in the Ottoman world.

5 Yekta expressed his pioneering role in an article from 1899: “if it is accepted that the discovery of our music theory is somehow a success that has not been achieved so far, and it is also appreciated that it is more or less an honor for its owner -because it is the product of a serious work of ten years-, this honor which is my clear right [...]” (Çergel, 2007, p. 429).

edvâr [the cycles] in the Ottoman world were ‘full of superstitions’. According to him, in the Ottoman world the theoretical dimension of music had not been given the importance it deserved. Therefore, the theory developed by theorists such as Safiyüddin and Meragi had been completely forgotten in time. Finally, Yekta believed that music maintained only by the traditional method defined as ‘*düm-tek*’⁶ syllables ‘puts it in serious danger of becoming extinct’.

In accordance with his European education, which had a decisive role in his personal training, Yekta, before anything else, understood ‘science’ as a quantifiable and measurable concept based on physics and mathematics. In this context, it is understood that the foundations of Yekta’s concern for science were based entirely on a ‘positivist’ perspective. The reflections of the Pythagorean music theory tradition⁷ in the works of Safiyüddin⁸ and Meragi⁹ appeared to provide an important basis for his numerical-oriented modern scientific approach. Therefore, with his own positivist understanding, Yekta accepted the theoretical approach and content in the works of Safiyüddin and Meragi, which were written in the 13th and 14th centuries (pre-Ottoman period) as ‘basic and principal’. For the same reason, he claimed that this scientific approach had not been known by anyone in the Ottoman world. Together to this, scientific positivist thinking seemed to have had great importance for Yekta.

Rauf Yekta, who pioneered the development of studies in the field of music theory with his own efforts, reports that his first guide and master was Mehmed Atullah Dede (d. 1910), the sheikh of the Galata Mevlevihane. The year was 1889¹⁰; it had been five years since Yekta had graduated from the School of Languages [*Lisan Mektebi*]¹¹, where he studied French when he was eighteen years old. In 1885, he started to learn classical pieces from reputed composer

6 *Düm-tek*: Theoretical oral notation syllables representing the strong (*düm*) and weak (*tek*) strokes of the Oriental rhythmic cycles (*usuls*).

7 For some basic publications on this subject, which has a wide literature, see (Barker, 2000, 2004, 2007), (Burkert, 1972), (Crocker, 1963), (Godwin, 1993), (Guthrie, 1987), (Mathiesen, 1999), (Wuidar, 2010), (Zhud, 2012).

8 About Safiyüddin’s writings on music theory, see (Shiloah, 1979), (Wright, 1978, 2019c).

9 For Meragi’s life and his works on music theory, see (Agayeva, 2015), (Fallahzadeh, 2005), (İhsanoğlu & Şeşen, 2003), (Wright, 1994, 2019b).

10 Bardakçı (1986, p. 9) gives this date as 1895.

11 The School of Language is a school that the Ottoman Empire officially opened and closed three times in order to train cadres who knew foreign languages, which were needed in the fields of foreign affairs and diplomacy. The adventure of the school, which started in 1866, ends in 1892 (Balçı, 2008). Yekta, whose biography sources seem to be uncertain about the date he graduated from this school, is very likely among its last graduates. The fact that in 1894 he was invited to Aleppo because of his French, confirms the specified date for his graduation (Yekta, 1986, p. 9).

Zekai Dede¹² and during those years he became interested in the theoretical aspects of music. The need for a master to lead him in this field opened the way to meet Ataullah Dede.

While I was working with the late, famous composer Zekâi Dede, I was also looking for a teacher who would explain the rules set by Turkish theoreticians like Farabi and his followers. I finally found what I was looking for with the late Ataullah Efendi, the sheikh of the Mevlevi lodge in Beyoğlu. [...] He was a person of very high rank in science; he knew French and Italian, and he was an extraordinary player of the *kanun* [psaltery] and *ud* [lute]. He had studied the works of old Turkish, Arab and Iranian theoreticians; but [...] he had not deepened his theoretical observations. Upon my request, he agreed to give me private theory lessons once a week. [...] After a year, I was as strong as my teacher in music theory. [...] Then, he invited me to publish the results of our research. (1986, p. 54)

Another statement by Yekta, pointing to Ataullah Dede's pioneering role in the field, is in the form of a dedication found in Abd al-Rahman Jami's manuscript, which he translated himself. "This translation is a gift from his apprentice, to the soul of the late Ataullah Efendi, the mature tempered Master, Sheikh of the Kale Kapusu [Galata] Mevlevihane, as grateful remembrance of the first music theory lessons I took from him".¹³

From 1897 onwards, Yekta's studies in music theory and history, in addition to his articles in various newspapers of the period, clearly showed the extent of his intensive efforts. Yekta was fully committed to these issues and developed the idea of discovering and revealing the scientific foundations of Ottoman music. He overcame several challenges as he learnt about musical issues with enthusiastic desire and determination. He brought French books from Europe and read them carefully, took detailed notes, made some comparisons, and strove to support scientific thought. It is possible to find traces of the wide scope of his interests in M. Mishaqa's study¹⁴ that discusses the 25 equal-tone system of Arab music. It appears that Mishaqa's study contributed to Yekta's scientific efforts in measuring and naming the frets or sounds of the *tanbur*.

In light of these clear statements, we need to examine the guiding role Ataullah Dede played at the beginning of the process. It is clear that Ataullah Dede's 'positivist' tendency

12 Mehmed Zekai Dede (1824-1897): Turkish music composer, performer and music master. He was attached to Osman Selahaddin Dede, the sheikh of Yenikapı Mevlihane, in 1864. Between 1845 and 1858, he went to Cairo, becoming a subject of the Egyptian Mustafa Fazıl Pasha. He gave music lessons in *Darüşşafaka*, which provided Western-style education. His son Hafız Ahmet Irsoy, Sheikh Hüseyin Fahreddin Dede, Rauf Yekta, Suphi Ezgi and Ahmed Avni Konuk were among his students.

13 For whole text, see (Verdemir, 1998, p. 82). For some basic information on Euclid and the monochord in relation to the subject, see also (Adkins, 1963), (Barker, 2004), (Creese, 2010), (Mathiesen & Euclid, 1975), (Shehadi, 1995).

14 For detailed information and some evaluations about Mihail Mishaqa and his studies, see (Bardakçı, 1986, 2001), (Maalouf, 2003), (Marcus, 2019), (Öztürk, 2020), (Tura, 2017), (Wright, 2019a).

has some background aspects that need to be explained, especially considering the fact that he was a Sufi sheikh. Therefore, it is important to focus on some details of his life to understand the reasons for this modernist tendency.

Mehmed Ataullah Dede (1842-1910): ‘the first guide’

Ataullah Dede, one of the most interesting personalities in the development of ‘scientific’ music theory, was the Sheikh of the Galata [Pera / Kulekapısı / Beyoğlu] Mevlevihane. He studied Arabic and Persian as part of his traditional Mevlevi education but he was also educated according to European style, learning French, Italian, German and English.¹⁵ He ordered many books from Europe and read them with great interest. The fact that he had numerous opportunities to come into contact with Europeans in the Galata environment, of course, significantly differentiated him from the other sheikhs who had gone through an exclusively classical Mevlevi teaching.

The Galata Mevlevihane had a peculiar place among the other lodges in Istanbul. Throughout its history, Galata had maintained an extremely cosmopolitan structure and culture. Describing the Galata Mevlevihane as one of the main cultural centers of Istanbul, Küçük (2003) states that this lodge had a cultural structure open to ‘the Westernization movements’ in the Ottoman Empire (p. 86). One of the leading researchers in this field, Işın (2010)’s assessment is as follows:

The İstanbul-based post-*Tanzimat* Mevlevi order progressively followed the political lines of the Ottoman constitutionalist trends; its members assumed an active role in these movements and as a consequence of the close ties set with the *İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti* (Committee of Union and Progress), starting with the ideology of Turkism, the Western schools of thought found an audience within the Mevlevi organization. (p. 40)

The fact that Ataullah Dede had been exposed to European culture since his youth seemed to have influenced his understanding of science. His acceptance of the theoretical content of *Makasıdülelhan*, written by Abdülkadir in the 15th century, was an important indicator of his Comtean positivistic tendency. Therefore, it is noteworthy that he chose to turn to pre-Ottoman sources such as Safiyüddin and Meragi with the claim that they were ‘essential’, instead of the works of innovative Mevlevi theorists such as Nayi Osman and Abdülbaki Nasır, who were his ancestors.

However, what really set him apart from the other Mevlevi sheikhs was his entry into

15 For some sources that provide information about Mehmed Ataullah Dede’s life, see (Ambrosio, 2010), (Işın, 2010, 2013), (İnal, 1958).

the Freemasonry, in the lodge that British Ambassador Lord Henry Bulwer had established under his own name at that time.¹⁶ This difference had significant effects on Ataulh Dede's intellectual development and positivist tendencies.¹⁷ Ataulh Dede had a strong interest in geometry, philosophy, and sociology, as well as music theory. As it is well known, the name 'sociology' was given to the new 'science of society' by Auguste Comte (Wright 1941, p. 417). Comte's primary publications in this area began in 1830 and he gave a definition and scope to this new science in 1851. Ambrosio (2012) and Zarcone (2010) agree that the sociological interest of Ataulh Dede stemmed from his reading of Comte and Durkheim. Both the understanding of the 'religion of humanity' and the approach of 'mind in the service of the heart' obviously played a key role in Ataulh's adoption of 'the positivist faith.' When the Masonic discourse of 'the universal brotherhood and peace' is added to this background, it can be easily understood that Ataulh Dede had an understanding that comprised such concepts as 'progress', 'evolution', and 'science'. Various sources clearly point out that there were close ties between scientific positivism, liberal republicanism, and Freemasonry.¹⁸

The culture acquired within the Freemasonry had an important place in Ataulh Dede's interest in subjects such as geometry and music theory. However, geometry is especially noteworthy here because it is an 'art' that is closely related, or even identical, to Freemasonry. According to Case (1981): "In the old Masonic constitutions, it is specifically stated that Masonry and geometry are one and the same" (p. 2). Mackey (1996), one of the main scholars to comprehensively discuss the relationship between Freemasonry and geometry, describes it in the following terms:

The manuscript continues by a declaration that Geometry and Masonry are identical. Thus, in enumerating and defining the seven liberal arts and sciences, Geometry is placed as the fifth, 'which science,' says the Legend, 'is called Masonrye.' Now, this doctrine that Geometry and Masonry are identical sciences, has been held from the time of the earliest records to the present day by all the Operative Masons who preceded the 18th century, as well as by the Speculative Masons after that period. In the ritual of the Fellow Craft's degree used ever since, at least from the middle of the last century, the candidate is informed that 'Masonry and Geometry are synonymous terms.' (p. 41)

16 See (Ambrosio, 2012), (Apak, 1958), (Layikteç, 1999), (Soysal, 1988), (Zarcone, 2010).

17 According to the observations of A. D. Schinas, the Great Master of the French *l'Union d'Orient* lodge in 1842, Freemasonry was used in Istanbul as a synonym for infidelity, revolutionism, and atheism; Freemasons were also seen as disgusting 'hell demons' (Dumont, 2007, p. 146). When these observations are especially taken into consideration, despite the change in time and understanding, the shocking and exceptional nature of Ataulh Dede's Freemasonry can be better understood.

18 Some of the most important works on these connections are the following: (Hanioglu, 1989), (Lomas, 2003), (Nord, 1991), (Pickering, 2019), (Steele, 2002, 2019), (Turnaoğlu, 2017).

Ambrosio (2012) discusses the relations developed by Ataullah Dede through Freemasonry and makes some important points:

Thanks to Ataullah, the Mevlevi Order has demonstrated the capacity to adapt to different social and political situations and has shown that it is open to other spiritual and esoteric cultures and experiences. Just as Shi'ism influenced the sect in the 16th century, European thought and esoteric forms of the West were influenced the sect at the end of the 19th century (not only for the Mevlevi Order). Ideologically so open-minded, the Mevlevi spent the 19th century devoting themselves to the search for their spiritual path. He [Ataullah] has a special interest in European culture and philosophy. Speaking French and German enables him to read important philosophical and sociological works of the period. He read the works of writers such as Comte and Durkheim. His private library, which has been sold piece by piece due to a financial crisis, (perhaps because of his great interest in the Mason brothers) reflects this man's vast culture. [...] At the end of the 19th century, Ataullah became close to British Freemasonry. He joined the United Kingdom Grand Lodge, which was active in Istanbul from 1861 to 1895. This lodge, [...] would have expressed his belief in God. At the age of 26, on 10 March 1870, Ataullah enrolled in the Bulwer Lodge under the name 'Atta Efendi', and his profession was recorded as a 'dervish.' (pp. 80-82)

When considering Ataullah Dede as an 'unusual' and 'extraordinary' Mevlevi sheikh, two names must be mentioned. The first is Sir Henry Bulwer (1801-1872), the British ambassador of the time, who established the first Masonic lodge in Istanbul under his own name (Mardin 2000, p. 116), (Koloğlu n.d., pp. 45, 61).¹⁹ As a very effective diplomat and politician, he was also the master of the Turkey Grand District of the Grand Lodge of England. Bulwer built two castle-style mansions in Yassiada, which he had bought in 1857. These mansions had been hosting various private meetings for years. As mentioned above, Ataullah Dede's entry into freemasonry took place in the lodge of this ambassador. In 1865, he opened another lodge of the same name in Cairo under the supervision of the Egyptian Abdülhalim Pasha²⁰. The members of these two lodges named Bulwer had an important place in the musical and political relations between Cairo and Istanbul in terms of Europeanization.

19 For Henry Bulwer's personality as a diplomat and his important roles in the Ottoman-British relations, see (Bell 2019), (Guymer 2011).

20 The Egyptian Abdülhalim Pasha (1830-1894): He was one of the sons of the Egyptian Governor Mehmed Ali Pasha. He was influential in the spread of English Freemasonry in Istanbul and Egypt and took part in political events. He played a role in the abdication of Sultan Abdulaziz and supported the rise of Murad V to the throne. As a composer and musician, Abdülhalim Pasha was also known for his encouragement to transcribe Ottoman classics in European notation. In his own time, he ensured that a significant number of classical Ottoman works were transcribed in European notation and thus also had a valuable collection.

The second, important figure for Ataullah Dede was John Porter Brown (1814-1872).²¹ He served as a consul, translator, lawyer, and secretary at the American embassy in Istanbul between 1835 and 1872. He was also an important Orientalist, Protestant missionary, and Masonic master. He published *The Dervishes: or Oriental Spiritualism* (1868), and the cover of the book contained a painting of Ataullah Dede's father, Seyyid Kudretullah, with the inscription 'the Mevlevi Sheikh of Istanbul Pera'. We understand that Brown had a close friendship with Ataullah and his father, and collected most of the information about dervishes and Mevlevi from them (Ambrosio, 2010; Zarcone, 2008).²²

The Freemasons' Monthly Magazine (2019), which was published in the same year (1868), also featured an extensive article on *Dervishes and Masonry*, which included the introduction to Brown's work. Through this article, it became known that Brown granted admittance to a 'dervish' in the Bulwer Lodge. It is obvious that this dervish was no one else but Ataullah Dede. All of these connections show that strong and concrete relations between various groups such as the 'Young Turks', the Mevlevi and other dervish orders like Naqshbandis, the Freemasons, and Protestant missionaries had been established in the political, social, and cultural climate of the time. In other words, from a sociological point of view, intense connections between various 'reformist' groups within the Ottoman political opposition existed at that time.

All these acquaintances, connections and interactions, which were unusual for a Mevlevi sheikh, undoubtedly enabled Ataullah Dede to look differently at the social, cultural, and artistic issues of the society in which he lived. Some examples of this approach were Ataullah Dede's interest in pre-Ottoman sources for Oriental music and evaluating their contents as scientific. Inspired by these sources, the fact that he used a sonometer and made musical interval measurements on this instrument reflected another typical tendency of his encouraged by the new conception of science-based 'experimentation'. In 1899, Yekta wrote about his teacher:

Ten years ago, my master Ataullah Efendi, who had a high understanding of the secrets of sciences and techniques, turned his attention to a small treatise found in a mock book that circulated as a decoy, and bought it with the other books. And guess what this treatise was

21 For a comprehensive study about the life and works of J. P. Brown in Turkey, who also known as 'the father of Turkish-American relations', see (Conn, 2019). For some information about the relationships between Bulwer, Brown and Abdülhalim Pasha through Freemasonry see (Koloğlu, n.d.).

22 His statement on this subject is as follows: "I have endeavored to obtain my information from the most authentic sources within my reach, both oral and written, as well as printed. To offer a criticism on the belief of my Mussulman friends (for among the Dervishes of Constantinople I have several estimable and valued friends) [...]" (Brown 1868, p. 58).

about? The name of the book was *Makasidü'l-elhan* [*The purposes of melodies*] and its author was Hoca Abdülkadir-i Meragi! He thought that music, like any science, should of course have a theory, since he had already worked on the books written by the great old masters. He began to study the book very gladly after this coincidence. When it was understood from the first lines that *Makasidü'l-elhan* was a serious scientific book, he gave more weight to its study. [...] In fact, we must all be grateful to His Holiness, as he determined the proportions between the sounds used in our music on the sonometer for the first time. [...] Therefore, there is no doubt that his supreme name [of Ataullah Dede] will decorate the first pages of the history of the progress of our music. (Çergel 2007, pp. 423-424)

Yekta clearly stated Ataullah Dede’s leadership in his writings about the development of music theory studies. This pioneering role made Ataullah Dede the initiator of and even an arbiter in this approach. He encouraged Yekta to publicize their theoretical studies. This point is extremely important. While Ataullah Dede paid attention to the widening of Rauf Yekta’s modern and scientific horizon, it is clear that he was greatly influenced by the positivist tendency he himself had newly come across. In addition to that, his involvement with the Masonic brotherhood network suggests that he was more than a Mevlevî, adopting the belief in Comte’s ‘religion of humanity’, which formed the basis of the latter’s ‘positive philosophy’.²³

Details about Ataullah Dede’s remarkable involvement with the freemasonry can be found in the research works of Ambrosio and Zarcone.²⁴ According to them, Ataullah Dede frequently organized events displaying complete ‘Oriental hospitality’ towards his Masonic brothers and other European or American –Protestant missionary– friends.²⁵ However, after

23 The subject of Ataullah Dede’s Freemasonry seems to have caused both silence and condemnation in Mevlevî circles. The most common example of this can be seen in the following words of Mehmet Ziya, published in the *Yenikapı Mevlevihanesi* in 1911:

In these days, it is heard an effort has been made to participate in a community which supposedly serves mankind. [Moreover], we have even heard that some of our fellows connected with our mystical order were invited to join in this community too. We were astonished by this. [...] How can we, [as Mevlevîs], dare to include Freemasonry in Islam? Our religion is, essentially and truly, sublime and always commands to advance and rise. In short, [it is such a religion that] it has gathered all kinds of ascents, physical and spiritual, in its own wisdom and perfection. (pp. 232-33)

Another issue to be addressed and to be meticulously paid attention to are R. Yekta’s dedications. He first used the title of ‘first teacher’ for Celaledin Dede, in contradiction with his previous statements, in the dedication of his theory book published in 1924. As can be seen in the related section, he made the same declaration to Celaledin Dede’s grandson Gavsî Baykara in 1930s. This change in attitude on the part of Yekta requires further investigation and explanation. The statements of Mehmed Ziya show that the phenomenon of a Mevlevî sheikh being a freemason was perceived as unacceptable for at least some Mevlevîs.

24 P. Dumont, one of the foremost experts in the field, gives the following description of the Masonic lodges: “The lodges were also places for the discussion and exchange of ideas about current themes: socialism, feminism, venereal diseases, progress of science, etc.” (2005, p. 481). For some works on Freemasonry and modern science, see also (Lomas, 2003), (Lynch, 2001), (Steele, 2002).

25 For some basic sources on the development and organization of Freemasonry and Protestant missionary in the Ottoman and Islamic world in terms of imperialism, see (Ambrosio, 2010), (Conn, 2019), (Haksever, 2009), (Hanioglu, 1989), (Kologlu, 2012, n.d.), (The Freemasons’ Monthly Magazine, 2019), (Sommer, 2016), (Soysal, 1988), (Zarcone, 2010, 2014).

all these events, the Galata Mevlevihane was dragged into a serious economic crisis. The following passage shows how Ataullah Dede's 'worldly experiences'²⁶ within the framework of the Masonic 'universal brotherhood' had caused both him and his Mevlevihane to collapse.

According to Zarcone (2010, pp. 68-70):

There exists a lesser-known account on Ataullah and the Mevlevihane of Galata written by a Persian traveler, Hajji Muhammad Ali Pirzada, who visited the tekke in 1870-71, [...] He confirms that the sheikh enjoyed associating with the Europeans (*ferengi*) and that he was affiliated to the Freemasonry upon their advice. [...] Ataullah began to increasingly keep company with the Europeans and through his close contact with them, lost his dervish spirit. He entered the Freemasonry (*Faramuşhane*) and organized banquets at his place [...] As a consequence; he sold the library and other properties of the tekke. He covered the expenditures of the Europeans. He fell ill and suffered from attacks of paralysis and convulsions.

Additional remarkable evidence confirming this state of affairs is found in İnal's book, *Hoş Sada [The Pleasant Voice]*:

Although the lodge had enough wealth, it was damaged by the negligence and mismanagement of the rulers, so that Sheikh Efendi [Ataullah] and the other dervishes were devastated. Those who knew the situation would say that the blame mainly belongs to the director of the lodge, but that some of the blame came from the Sheikh, who could not, for some reason, get rid of that dishonor. (1958, p. 86)

Mehmed Celaledin Dede (1849-1908): 'the second master'

Dervish Celaledin Dede was the second teacher of Rauf Yekta who made important contributions to his theoretical studies. When Celaledin Dede's grandson Gavsı Baykara asked to study theory with him in the '30s, Yekta gave him the following answer: "We have received the science of music as a bond from your grandfather, the late Celâleddin Efendi. By giving it to his grandson now, we will return this trust to the owner and therefore, we will have done our duty" (1950, p. 22). In his dedication in a theoretical book published in 1924, he made the following statement: "I consider it a conscientious duty to glorify and celebrate

26 Sayyid Ahmed Rifat bin Ismail (d. 1876), who has important works in the field of Sufism, makes a radical distinction between 'real dervish' and 'so-called dervish'. This distinction is based entirely on the 'worldly tastes' and he makes the following assessment: "The asceticism of the 'so-called dervish' is only in his tongue. Their hearts depend on worldly greed. They are engaged in bodily flavors day and night and are proud and accustomed to the world property. They [...] are frustrated and wasted because they have spent their lives for the sake of the temporary world desire" (2014, pp. 76-77). As evident in this quote, Ataullah Dede's increasingly secular life experience, due to his positivist and rationalist tendencies, was in clear contrast to traditional dervish morality. It seems that Ottoman daily life, which was becoming increasingly positivist, had significant effects on the traditional morality and behavior of the dervishes. Ataullah Dede seemed to be consciously willing to go beyond this traditional attitude.

the sacred remembrance of the late Celaleddin Efendi, my teacher, who gave the first ideas to the author of this book about the theoretical rules on which our national music is based” (Yekta 1924, p. 3). In a reply letter to Mehmed Ziya on April 18, 1909, he wrote about the role of Sheikh Celaleddin Dede in his theoretical studies (2005, pp. 189, 206, 209):

Celaleddin efendi [...] was ahead of his predecessors in terms of his scientific and practical ability in the science of music. [...] He was also my second teacher for music theory. Many theoretical issues unknown in our music so far were discovered by his efforts. His superiority on the theoretical side of the science of music was derived from his own efforts and readings.

Gavsi Baykara describes his grandfather Celaleddin Dede’s participation in theory studies as follows:

The late Rauf Yekta Bey undertook theoretical studies with Sheikh Celaleddin Efendi at the Mevlevihane of Kulekapısı [Galata]. Once, Celaleddin Efendi took a book from his personal library and showed it to Rauf Yekta Bey, and he said, “ – I myself have been dealing with theory for quite some time. If you wish, let’s work together, hereafter.” [...] since then, the triangle of Celaleddin Efendi, Ataullah Efendi, Rauf Yekta Bey formed [...] and they managed to identify many principles in the scientific field. (1950, pp. 2-3)

Yekta made the following statements, published in the newspaper *İkdam* in 1899, regarding the pioneering and encouraging roles of both dervishes: “Among Ottoman musicians, there is no one who knows our music theory except two virtuous figures whose distinguished names are written above with respect [Ataullah and Celaleddin]” (Çergel 2007, p. 428). Yekta reiterated this in his article on Turkish Music, which he wrote in 1913 for the *Encyclopedie de la musique et dictionnaire de conservatoire*: “There are only two people in Istanbul who know the theory of Turkish music; one is the Sheikh Ataullah Efendi of the Beyoğlu Mevlevihane and the other is the Sheikh Celâleddin Efendi of the Yenikapı Mevlevihane” (1986, p. 56).²⁷ Among the Mevlevihanen of Istanbul, these two were known to have a leading and privileged places in the movements of Westernization and political opposition. There was also a deep-rooted kinship (Figure 1) between the sheikh’s families of these Mevlevi lodges.²⁸ Among these, the Galata lodge was at the forefront of Westernization and contact with European

27 R. Yekta himself wrote two important texts, which included his personal experiences of studying music theory. The second is a summary and confirmation of the first. In both texts, Yekta describes the series of events he was personally involved in, with some definite chronological references. See (Yekta, 1899, 1986). For two important texts that reiterate the truth of Yekta’s remarks, see also ([Arel], 1909), (Ezgi, 1933).

28 For detailed information about the sheikh families of these two Mevlevi lodges, see (Küçük, 2003), (Mehmed Ziya, 2005).

culture, while Yenikapı became one of the most important centers for Young Turk political opposition. According to Işın (2010):

Yet, among these, the one Mevlevi family that has had a profound impact on the Ottoman modernization process in both a political and cultural sense is the family of Ebubekir Dede, the postnişîn of the Mevlevihane of Yenikapı. [...] The said Mevlevi family gained political power by supporting reformist sultans such as Selim III and Mahmud II and later actively took part in politics through the Young Ottoman and Jön Türk (Young Turk) movements. (pp. 30-31)

It is not possible to separate the Yenikapı Mevlevihane from the political developments of the period, particularly during the reign of Sheikh Osman Selahaddin²⁹, father of Celaleddin Dede. Besides the Young Turks and Unionists, the freemasons, the ‘*dönmes*’³⁰ (Sabbatians), the Mevlevi were also included in the Ottoman political scene.³¹ For this reason, it is clear that these general ‘modernizing positions’ are a major determinant behind the support for both Ataulah and Celaleddin Dedes in relation to their innovative studies in the field of music theory.³²

29 Osman Selahaddin Dede (1819–1886): He belonged to the famous sheikh family of Ebubekir Dede and became the sheikh of the Mevlevihane of Yenikapı. He is one of the Mevlevi sheikhs about whose life we have most information. From 1831 onwards, at a young age, he took up the position of sheikh. He was in close contact with the most influential figures of the political opposition of his time and led the lodge to become an important meeting center. The Grand Viziers Keçecizâde Fuad Pasha, Mehmed Ali Pasha, Midhat Pasha, Egyptian Kamil Pasha, Prince Mustafa Pasha, Adile Sultan’s husband Damat Mehmed Ali Pasha, Sheyhülislâms Mehmed Sâdeddin and Mehmed Refik were among the names that the Sheikh was in close contact with.

30 The *Dönmes* (Jewish Converts): The Crypto-Jews under Turkish rule. Since they were the followers of the so-called Messiah Sabbatai Tsevi (1626-1656), they were also known as Sabbateans. Tsevi became the religious leader of the biggest messianic movement in the Ottoman Empire during the second half of the 17th century. After his death in 1676, his followers divided into three sects (Yakubi, Karakaş, and Kapancı) and played active roles in the social, economic and political life of the Ottoman and Republican periods. “The first known Dönme Mevlevi dervish (later, the sheikh) was Karakaş İshak Efendi/Dede, who was affiliated with a sufi convent (Mevlevihane) in 1825. Due to his erudition in mysticism, Ishak Efendi is said to have been a Sufi sheikh and ogan (rabbi) of the Dönme community at the same time. Among those Dönmes who were actively involved in Sufi orders, Mehmed Esad Dede (1843-1914) was perhaps the most interesting” (Sisman, 2015, p. 239). Baer makes the following assessment: “This was also a period when some Dönme became leading Mevlevi. Mehmet Esad Dede, for example, [...] became one of the leading turn-of-the-twentieth-century Mevlevi sheikhs in Istanbul” (2010, p. 59). It is useful to look at the following sources about this subject which has a wide literature because of its connections with freemasonry, sufism, and politics: (Baer, 2010), (Bali, 2008), (Kedourie, 1971), (Sholem, 2016), (Sisman, 2015).

31 According to Baer (2010), “[m]any prominent Dönme were Freemasons as well as Sufis, which facilitated their entry into the CUP [Committee of Union and Progress] (p. 94). For detailed studies on this subject, which is important for the history of Ottoman society and politics, see also (Bali, 2008), (Gündüz, 2008), (Haksever, 2009), (Hanioglu, 1989), (Iacovella, 1998), (Kedourie, 1971), (Koloğlu, 2012), (Landau, 2007), (Sholem, 2016).

32 As regards the Freemasonry of Murad V, Eldem gives the following assessment in terms of the 19th century Ottoman politics: “[...] in the second half of the nineteenth century, freemasonry played an important role in expanding the field of politics and opposition that was felt to be incompetent and lacking in the Ottoman territory, but also enabled the interaction with certain political actors in Europe at the same time” (2019, p. 19). For a similar evaluation see (Zarcone, 2014, pp. 238-239).

It is understood from various sources that the works of Yekta and Celaledin Dede are not merely dependent on the reading and interpretation of old theory books. An important part of these studies consisted of research, experiments and measurements of the system upon which the frets on the neck of the *tanbur* were based. This aspect was related to the scientific discoveries and efforts in the construction of the 25-tone system, believed to be more consistent with the practice of the day, leaving aside the 18-tone system through which information had historically been acquired. As one of the leading *tanbur* players of the period, it is clear that Celaledin Dede’s views, experiences, and evaluations on the sound system had special importance for Yekta because he paid particular attention to the comparison between experimental measurements he made himself on the sonometer and the information from old theory books and the *tanbur* practice of the time. Celaledin Dede’s confirmation and positive attitude on these issues seemed to encourage Yekta more and more (Ezgi, 1950a; Yekta, 1899).

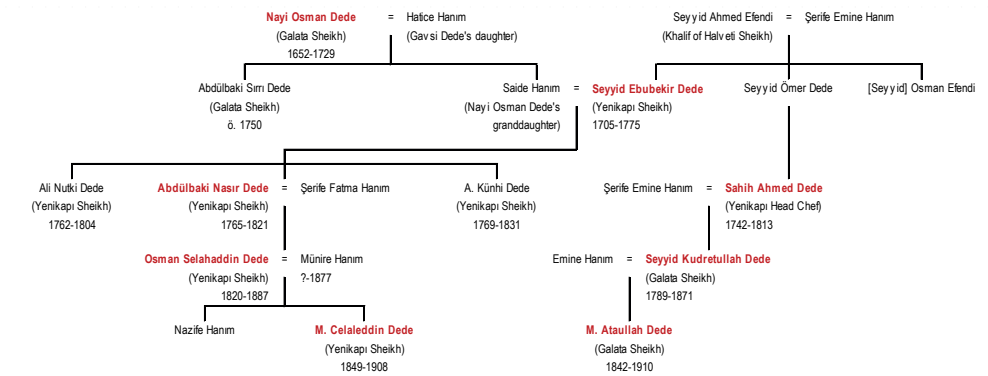


Figure 1. Kinship chains between the sheikh families of the Mevlevihanes of Galata and Yenikapı (Fahreddin Dede is also brother-in-law of Celaledin Dede).

Suphi Ezgi (1869-1962): ‘the meddling Jacobin’

After the death of Yekta, S. Ezgi became a prominent figure and author of the most radical interventions not only in the theory of Ottoman music but also its classical repertoire. Adapted various aspects of Western music theory to Turkish music and ‘re-composed’ some of the classical works claiming that he had repaired them. Together with Arel, they set forth the Western C-major tone as the ‘main scale of Turkish music’ under the name of *Çargah makam* and reduced the traditional ‘complete tones’ (*tam perdeler*) such as *segah* and *eviç* to the status of half-tone.³³ Ezgi is the person who contributed to the development of the Arel theory, which is widespread today, and who laid its foundations.

33 For a comprehensive review of this application, see (Wright, 1990).

He met Yekta at the age of seventeen and took advantage of his knowledge throughout the process. He describes those times as follows:

My music friend, Rauf Yekta, gave us the interval ratios of twenty-five tones [...], which consisted of unequal divisions of the octave, which I guess has been used in our music since ancient times. We also accepted these proportions, which were calculated by the information obtained from Safiyüddin's *Kitabüledvar* (*Kitab al-adwar*, 'Book of cycles') and *Şerefiye* (*Risāla al-Sharafiyya*) and from Abdulkadir's *Camiülelhan* (*Jami al-alhan*, 'Compendium of melodies'). (1933, p. 6)

In the same page, Ezgi uses the expression 'the ones who first examined the proportions and sounds of the unequal-24-intervalled-system recently', for Ataullah, Celaleddin and Yekta.³⁴ As it can be noticed from the passage, he took a different stance, especially against Yekta. Ezgi, in principle, always used adjectives full of praise and gratitude for the masters and friends he personally worked with. For example, he referred to Arel as 'the music scholar', 'our high composer', 'my old friend', and Fahreddin Dede as 'my friend and master', while mentioning Yekta – only once – as 'my music friend.'³⁵

When we look more deeply into his attitude against Yekta, an interesting situation comes to light. According to Ezgi, Yekta had fallen out with Arel during the First World War and interrupted their collaboration as a result. Ezgi and Arel had continued to work together; however, Yekta was not aware of the alternative ideas they had developed during their studies. In the section titled 'The critics of Rauf Yekta'³⁶ in volume 4 of the *Nazari Ameli Türk Musikisi* (The Theoretical and Practical Turkish Music) and, in 1950, in his responses to Muhittin Erev in various issues of *Türk Musikisi Dergisi* (The Turkish Music Magazine) he explicitly accused Yekta and did not hesitate to list his 'mistakes.' In these responses, Ezgi

34 Another important figure who witnessed the pioneering roles of Ataullah Dede, Rauf Yekta and Celaleddin Dede in the studies of music theory is Akmed Avni [Konuk]. In 1900, he made the following statements in his famous anthology, *Hanende*: "In our time, knowing the theory of Oriental music in the full sense is exclusive for the Galata Sheikh Ataullah Efendi, Rauf Yekta Bey and so on, and we hope that a distinguished work will be published together with their superior efforts" ([Konuk], 1900, pp. 4-5).

35 In 1950, Muhittin Erev criticized Suphi Ezgi for his distant attitude towards Rauf Yekta in the 28th issue of The Turkish Music Magazine. As a result of this criticism, the quarrel between Ezgi and Erev continued in the same magazine for six issues. Throughout and despite these controversies, Ezgi gave provided important information about the development of music theory studies, especially for himself and the Arel front. This information is significant in terms of determining the differences of opinions between Yekta and Ezgi-Arel couple. See (Erev, 1950a, 1950b, 1950c, 1950d), (Ezgi, 1950a, 1950b, 1950c, 1950d, 1950e, 1950f). In fact, the same attitude against Yekta, which is the subject of Erev's criticism, can be seen in Arel's writings. Arel did not mention Yekta's name in his articles which were published in the magazines of *Türklük* (The Turkishness) and *Musiki Mecmuası* (The Music Magazine). See (Arel, 1969, 1993).

36 For Ezgi's criticism against Yekta, Öztuna (1974) makes the following assessment: "Rauf Yekta worked with Ezgi and Arel for many years. [...] Then all three were scattered, [...] Rauf Yekta Bey worked alone. He was deprived of the exchange of ideas and put forward some of his own assumptions as theory. Some of it was criticized in the final volume by Subhi Ezgi with a somewhat harsh expression" (p. 170).

accused Yekta to be ambitious, especially for his old age, and someone who would not admit to have made mistakes in various subjects, primarily the main scale and rhythmic cycles of Turkish music (1950d, p. 23).

In his work with Arel, Ezgi thought that they had corrected various mistakes made by Yekta, putting forward more mature approaches not only in relation to theory but also to notation, classification and nomenclature.

[...] three people [Ataullah, Celaledin, and Yekta] determined the intervals and proportions of sounds with the help of old books and by using *tanbur* frets extending for an octave, and were inspired by the use of those sounds in our music; however, they did not know the scientific reason for the division of an octave into 24 unequal intervals; when we asked Rauf Yekta Bey about the scientific reason and necessity of this division, he replied by showing evidence of the presence of 25 frets on the necks of the *tanburs* and the use of those sounds in our music as evidence. [...] Although Bedr-i Dilşad [...] wrote that 24 intervals were used in an octave, he did not report its scientific reason. Sadettin Arel and Doctor Suphi Ezgi have discovered its true and scientific reason [...] for the second time (1936-1937) [...]. (Ezgi, 1940, p. 186)

In another statement made by Ezgi in 1950, it is seen that there are unclear aspects to his evaluations of the process. This time, Ezgi relegated Yekta to the second place and surprisingly claimed that he was the real explorer of the unequal 25-tone ‘scientific’ system:

These discoveries of the Sheikh efendis and Rauf Yekta Bey were of secondary importance. After forty or fifty years passed, and after Rauf Yekta Bey passed away and after three volumes of the Theoretical and Practical Turkish Music were published, seven or eight years ago, the first real reason for the division of an octave into 25 sounds was discovered by Dr. Suphi Ezgi, accompanied by Sadettin Arel.

It is clear from these lines that after Yekta, Ezgi developed a belief that he was the main actor or ‘the founding father’ of the whole ‘scientific’ process with remarkable ‘egocentrism’ and began to make declarations in this direction.³⁷ Thus, Suphi placed himself at the forefront of the construction process of scientific music theory, minimizing Yekta’s role. This attitude most likely arose from the differences of opinion between Ezgi and Arel. While the publication of Ezgi’s five-volume work was in progress, Arel went into a different direction from Ezgi’s. The results of their collaborative work were transformed into a different theory based entirely on Arel’s construction. Thus, Arel gained the reputation of being the sole founder of ‘modern

37 In this context, it is noteworthy that Arel stated that the truths about the 25-tone system had been revealed through Ezgi’s researches (1993, p. 33). As this expression clearly shows, Arel and Ezgi agreed in considering Yekta to have had a secondary role.

Turkish music theory'. The 'Arel system' was used without hesitation as the new theory clearly shows.

In 1948, he began to publish the *Musiki Mecmuası* (The Music Magazine). He also published [...] his thoughts on the theory under the title of Turkish Music Theory Courses [...] in this magazine. Some reasons such as the distribution of the magazine within the subscriber system, its low price, and that it was sent to people by direct mail suddenly made this magazine the most important music publication in Turkey. From this point of view, Arel became the first person to inform the music community extensively in the field of theory since the second half of the 20th century. (Akdoğu, 1993, p. xiv)

One of Arel's loyal students, Yılmaz Öztuna, praises the theory developed by his teacher as the only theory that has achieved 'excellence' among others:

First, Rauf Yekta Bey published his works. It is the first real work of Western methodology and Turkish musicology. But it is scattered and carries the flaws and [tolerable] mistakes of being the first publication. Then Dr. Subhi Ezgi published his huge 5-volume work. His progress in this work is clearly seen when compared to Rauf Yekta's work. However, it is deprived of and differentiated from the logic and the methodology of Arel. Arel's Turkish Music Theory Lessons are excellent, and they are published after a time period long enough to correct the mistakes of his two friends. (1986, p. 89)³⁸

It is clear here that the process that started with Yekta and continued with the participation of Ezgi and Arel actually resulted in the emergence of three different approaches, which differ from each other at various levels. Figure 2 shows the time period and types of publications of Yekta, Ezgi and Arel on music theory and history.

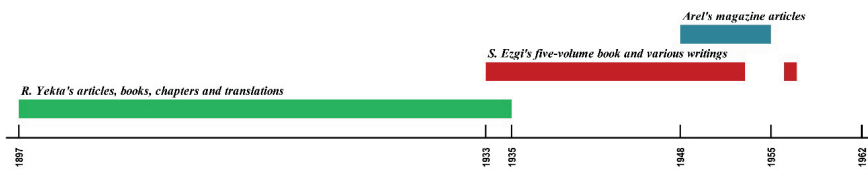


Figure 2. The date ranges of the main publications of Yekta, Ezgi and Arel on music theory and history.

38 His other statements on the same subject see, (Öztuna, 1969, 1987).

Fahreddin Dede (1854-1911): ‘the fictional narrative’s third sheikh’

Although Fahreddin Dede was included in this fictional narrative as the third sheikh, it is noteworthy that Yekta, who is the central figure in these theoretical studies, never mentioned in his writings that Fahreddin Dede had been part of the process. Although Yekta does not give any information about his active participation in theoretical studies, he praises the mastery of Fahreddin Dede in ‘various sciences’, ‘musical practice’, and ‘composition’ in 1902 (2000, p. 35). Therefore, there are some obvious differences between the assessments of Ezgi and later Arel sources (particularly Öztuna, 1969) about who dominated the field after Yekta, but most believe that pioneering work in music theory belongs to the ‘three’ Mevlevi sheikhs.

Ezgi seems to have been influential in the efforts to include Fahreddin Dede as a historical reference of the Mevlevi sheikhs who led pioneering theoretical studies. As mentioned above, Fahreddin Dede was not actively involved in those studies. However, there are some pieces of information revealing that Ezgi and Arel learned various religious pieces from him. As one of the leading *ney* players of his time, Fahreddin Dede was an intellectual person also interested in Western music, knew European notation, and spoke French.³⁹ However, all of these characteristics are not sufficient to show Fahreddin Dede as an ‘active participant’ or a ‘pioneer personality’ in theoretical studies. References to him are only found in the ‘fictional narrative’.⁴⁰ Indeed, as noted by Tura (2017, p. 320), Ezgi (1940, p. 278) did not count Hüseyin Fahreddin Dede among the names involved in the tone system inquiries, which constituted the basis of the ‘Europeanized Ottoman music theory’ studies, and mentioned only five people: Sheikh Ataullah, Sheikh Celaledin, Rauf Yekta, Sadettin Arel and Suphi Ezgi. As shown by Öztürk (2020), in the 67th issue of *The Music Magazine*, Y. Öztuna (1953, p. 197), when referring to that statement of Ezgi, obviously confused the names by writing Fahreddin Dede instead of Ataullah Dede. However, in his later publications, instead of correcting this simple mistake, he revealed the misleading narrative, still widely used today and which is entirely his own fit, about three sheikhs and three followers. Therefore, there is an obvious problem regarding the reliability of this information. It is a fact that references to the dedication of Fahreddin Dede to theory are based largely on Öztuna’s writings. This is, clearly, an issue. For this reason, it should be taken into consideration that Yekta did not include him among the names involved in the process. In the fictional narrative that appears to have been shaped

39 For some information about Fahreddin Dede, see (Ergun, 1943), (İnal, 1958), (Kaya, 2019).

40 Öztuna expresses a version of his own fictional narrative as follows: “It was the two Mevlevi sheikhs who first paid attention to the decline of Ottoman culture. Because they speak Arabic and Persian well, they read the old *edvars*. They learned that excellent books were written before the 16th century, [but] that the information included there was not known in their time. Moreover, they also knew French. [...] Arel’s teacher [...] Hüseyin [Fahreddin] Dede should be added to these names” (1986, pp. 87-88).

by Öztuna on a large scale, the inclusion of Fahreddin Dede along with other sheikhs and the underestimation of Yekta's role compared to Ezgi's constitute evident problems.

H. Sadeddin Arel (1880-1955): 'the only founder of the excellent theory'

Arel, after meeting with Yekta, became interested in the work that developed around Yekta, regarding both his identity as a publisher and his intellectual persona. Arel participated to certain stages of these studies. Arel, however, was neither the initiator of the process nor the pioneering personality in perfecting the theory. The theory, commonly known as the 'Arel system', has been subject to various reviews and reforms by 'the Arelist names' themselves in order to survive until the present day. Among the reformers of his theory in the post-Arel period, the names of Şefik Gürmeriç (d. 1967) and İsmail H. Özkan should be mentioned.⁴¹ Today, Özkan's book, which is used as the main textbook in many Turkish music conservatories, is a mirror of these concrete changes. So the role of Arel in theoretical studies should be emphasized separately.

Neither Arel nor Ezgi participated to the initial studies that claimed to reveal the scientific foundations of Ottoman music, and which were begun by Yekta. Yekta began to transfer his work, which he had started with two sheikhs, enriched by notable mathematician Salih Zeki's knowledge, to Ezgi and Arel in 1906, as stated by Ezgi (1940). Prior to this date, these two researchers did not have any theoretical works like Yekta's studies that were the subject of a concrete document or narrative. Ezgi, primarily as a singer, performed various classical and religious *fasıls* under the guidance of Zekai Dede and learned the old *tanbur*-playing style from Abdülhalim Efendi⁴². Thus, the kind of motivation or orientation that Yekta exhibited regarding the theory was not available to Ezgi in those years. Arel, while writing articles for *Şehbal* (Shehbal), mostly under the pseudonym 'Bedi Mensi', about the necessity for music to be promoted throughout the process of Ottoman modernization, was not interested in research that focused specifically on the question of theory.⁴³ Issues such as 'applying the science of harmony to Oriental music', 'the progress of our music', 'Turkish Opera', and Western-style polyphonic composition were priorities in Arel's writings.⁴⁴ For this reason, Ezgi and Arel

41 For some details, see (Aksoy, 1997).

42 Sheikh Halim Efendi (d. 1896): He was the Sheikh of Kozyatağı Rifai Tekke in İstanbul, music teacher, and *tanbur*, *ney* and violin player. He was one of the last representatives of the old style of *tanbur*-playing, and also became music, *tanbur* and *ney* teacher of Suphi Ezgi and Fahreddin Dede.

43 For detailed information about *Şehbal* (Shehbal) magazine and its staff, which had a special place in the history of Ottoman modernization, see (Ahmetoğlu, 2010), (Ataman & Pekman, 2008).

44 See (Arel, 1911, 1948, 1949, 1964).

only later became aware of Yekta’s theoretical studies and also became familiar with some of the details of his work.

Arel was a highly intellectual figure who had received elite, European style education in the European in terms of upbringing, and he had a great interest in music. Signell’s assessment of Arel’s place in theory studies is as follows: “In 20th century Turkish music theory, three names stand out [the system]: Yekta, Ezgi and Arel. [...] The third and by far the most influential member of the trio was H. Sadettin Arel” (1977, pp. 7-8). Yekta made clear, in his footnote no. 154 of the text he wrote in 1913, that he had benefited from Arel’s ‘scholarly views’ in his specific investigations of the elements constituting the *makam* (1986, p. 67). Arel was strongly influenced by the theoretical work led by Yekta and took his participation as an intellectual endeavor. However, after a short while, it seems that the differences between the two began to emerge and Yekta preferred to follow his own path.⁴⁵

Yekta’s loss enabled Arel and Ezgi to continue as a duo. This was cause for the development of a more competitive process. Arel did not work with such masters as the ones who had guided Yekta or Ezgi. He took lessons from two different oud instructors, first in Izmir and then in Istanbul. However, he did not have a specific reference for learning classical works and also did not have a traditional teacher to lead him in the field of theory. Therefore, there were important differences in Arel’s musical education compared to the other researchers. It is clear from this that the learning process itself played a major role in the infrastructure of Arel’s total Westernist orientation. Arel seemed to have tried to compensate for his personal insufficiency through his connection with Ezgi. However, it is a fact that Arel had the opportunity to compare and enrich his wide culture of European music through sources in English or German, whereas Yekta had known such sources only through French. Arel also studied composition and harmony with E. Manas, which led him in a different direction, towards Western music. In this way, Arel should be considered completely apart

45 Öztuna, who played a major role in shaping the fictional narrative, claims that these three names worked together until 1920. However, Ezgi stated that Yekta was disappointed with Arel during the First World War and left the collaboration; however, he himself and Arel continued as colleagues. The time frame of the trio’s collaboration should be placed between 1906 and 1918. But what is certain is that the trio’s study did not last until 1920.

from Yekta's attitude, as he is a loyal representative of total Westernization⁴⁶. Although Yekta believed in scientific positivism and rationality, he did not see Westernization as a major goal. However, in every sense, Arel was a total Westernist⁴⁷ and his basic views were to simplify music theory as much as possible⁴⁸ and to turn all the elements of Ottoman music into musical materials for a Western understanding of composition.

Unlike Yekta and Ezgi, Arel had a more simplified theoretical orientation. His theory was the closest one to Western music theory, for it included all the positivist tendencies of the previous approaches. He believed that the only condition for survival of Ottoman music was the Westernization of all its elements. For instance, Arel's tendency to consider the *makams* within Western tonality was, in fact, a typical reflection of his efforts to bring the Ottoman classical tradition to Western culture. In this sense, he seemed to prefer integration to originality. Although Arel himself said that he had no contact with Mevlevism⁴⁹, the fictional narrative is that the entire process was developed primarily under the guidance of the three Mevlevi sheikhs, which is suspicious, in this sense. Here, it is clear that there is a mindset of underestimating Yekta's role and giving the pioneering role to 'three' Mevlevi sheikhs. In fact, it has been determined that the fictional narrative was developed by Arel's student Yılmaz Öztuna but it does not fully reflect the process and even contains some serious distortions.

Discussion

When the process that Yekta personally experienced and embodied in his publications as well as his witnessing of events is carefully followed, extremely interesting pieces of information, names, and neighborhoods can be uncovered. In fact, a significant portion of

46 In the debate that characterised Ottoman modernization, there are two basic attitudes in terms of Westernism. The first one advocates total Westernization, while the second states that partial Westernization will be sufficient and appropriate. In terms of both attitudes, the scientific and technological superiority of the West has been accepted as a fundamental aspect. But those who advocated partial Westernism favored the preservation of traditional values in fields other than science and technology, in particular in culture and the arts. When evaluated within this framework, it is clear that Arel was a total Westernist. Yekta, on the other hand, was a supporter of partial Westernism. For some important considerations on the subject, see (Ayas, 2018), (Öztürk, 2018a, 2018b).

47 According to the statements of Öztuna, who earned preeminence with his career as a musicologist and historian among Arel's students: "He [Arel] is the founder of the movement called the Arel School which advocates principles such as polyphonic composition and orchestral performance of Turkish music, besides training in Western musical sciences" (1987, p. 109). As one of Arel's passionate followers, Öztuna reveals Arel's total Westernist approach in a way that does not require interpretation.

48 It is possible to see Arel's latest ideas about not only Westernizing the theory of Oriental / Turkish music but also giving it the simplest possible content, in his utopian writings titled '*Bu bir başka âlem* (This is another world)' published the *Musiki Mecmuası* in 1954. For details see, (Arel, 1954).

49 See (Arel, 1969, p. 82). Although Arel composed 51 Mevlevi Ayini, none of those works are included in the Mevlana ceremonies even today. His statements may have a place in this negative attitude against the performance of his works.

this documentary evidence contains information that clearly refutes the fictional narrative mentioned above. The first important evidence of Yekta’s personal learning and research experience is the claim that ‘the scientific foundation of Ottoman music’ is related to dervish Ataullah Dede.

Interestingly, in Europe, mathematicians and physicists such as J. Sauveur (d. 1716), L. Euler (d. 1783), E. Chladni (d. 1827) worked in the field of sound physics in the 18th century, when music was the subject of scientific research. Among the priorities they focused on in order to research music scientifically, were that the calculations related to a tone/sound system were the most important ones (Christensen 2006). In a similar effort, Yekta and Ataullah Dede also performed calculations for the acoustic field in order to give Ottoman music a scientific character. In this context, it seems that some of the main issues they faced were: (i) finding the exact, correct and available octave division for Ottoman music through the frets used in the *tanburs* of that time, (ii) making measurements of the tone system (the invention of the sonometer first by Ataullah Dede and then by Yekta), (iii.) correct matching of the Ottoman *perdes* (pitches, sounds) with European notes to transcribe Ottoman music with European notation, (iv.) making new alteration signs for the adaptation of ‘incomplete notes’ (the half tones) used in Ottoman music. It is very clear that the idea of presenting European science as the most advanced science had undoubtedly been widely accepted by the 19th century Ottoman world (especially among those with a European-style education). This conception also appeared as a dominant feature in almost all ideological groups that carry the Young Turks’ spirit together with components such as positivism, materialism, naturalism, and rationalism.

The entrance of positivism to our country was not directly through a philosophical channel but through literary movements, courses about positivistic science were put into school programs of that period, schools provided education directly in French, some students were sent to Europe, foreign experts came to our educational institutions, various associations, and so on. (Korlaelçi 2014, p. 143)

The Westernist Young Turks, who literally adopted the recommendations of Comte in his letter to the Grand Vizier Mustafa Reshid Pasha, tended to consider the relationship between Islam and positivism as a legitimate and constructive basis for the new order they wanted to establish.⁵⁰ This attitude seems to have played a central role in all approaches to Islam and progress since the *Tanzimat* period. This tendency to use Islam as a tool for the

50 There is a comprehensive literature on the relation of concepts such as progress, evolution and civilization with music and its place in Turkish modernization. For some of the sources based on this study, see (Behar, 1987), (Can, 2019), (Doğan, 2013), (Ergin, 1977), (Flotzinger, 2012), (Göçek, 1996), (Güler, 2019), (Gündüz, 2008), (Kabakcı, 2008), (Kurmuş, 2007), (Lewis, 1961), (Mardin, 2000), (Pickering, 2019), (Salgar, 2015), (Shaw, 1977), (Steele, 2002), (Uyanık, 2011), (Zurcher, 2003).

transition to the Comtean ‘positive religion’ is clearly seen particularly in the case of Abdullah Cevdet⁵¹ (Hanioğlu 1997). According to Işın, “the most important point made by Ottoman intellectuals, who advocated positivist and materialist views and united in order to save the state from collapse, was that the pathway to change should be realised according to reasoning and science” (1985, p. 352). Looking at their attitude towards reform movements of the 19th century, it is seen that the Mevlevihanes of Istanbul openly supported the initiatives towards modernization. Although the sheikh of the central lodge of Mevlevism in Konya, Mehmed Said Çelebi opposed Selim III’s attempt to form a new army called *Nizam-ı Cedid* (The New Order), the sheikh of Yenikapı, Galib Dede supported the Sultan in every respect. Osman Selahaddin Dede, who was the sheikh of the same Mevlevi lodge, took part in the Young Turk opposition against Abdülhamid II; and because of this attitude, he incurred the displeasure of the Sultan for a long time.⁵² It is remarkable in all respects that the basic attitudes of the Mevlevi sheikhs in these positions were on the side of ‘innovation’ and ‘change of order.’ During the 19th century, the Mevlevi sheikhs in Istanbul made significant contributions to the reformist movements. The pioneering and central role undertaken by Yenikapı Mevlevihane, in particular, has been documented (Gölpınarlı, 1983), (Kaya, 2019). For this reason, the sheikh’s families’ intense contacts with political opposition in Istanbul, starting with the Galata Lodge, also played a key role in attempts for innovation in music theory. From this point of view, it becomes even more meaningful that Rauf Yekta and Ataullah Dede’s beliefs about ‘making progress in Ottoman music’ in accordance with ‘the requirements of the age’ and saving it from ‘collapse’ were directly based on the idea of ‘scientific positivism.’ It is possible to see reflections of this tendency in Ataullah Dede’s approaches, such as finding an old text written at the beginning of the 15th century which includes numerical proportions and, for the first time, making measurements on the intervals used in Ottoman music by means of a sonometer. As previously mentioned, the issues such as measuring pitches and intervals, determining the ‘ideal’ octave division and discovering the ‘real’ tone/sound system had all become the basic problems that must be solved due to the newly adopted scientific positivism approach. In light of the information gathered from these discussions, it is possible to determine the important ‘key’ events of this progression between 1885 and 1913 in a chronological order. While the First World War interrupted these studies, it is possible to

51 Dr. Abdullah Cevdet (1869-1932): he was the leading defender of total Westernization movements in the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey, journalist, ophthalmologist, and politician. He was one of the first founders of the Committee of Union and Progress. He was the editor-in-chief of the *İchtihad* newspaper and had left very deep impressions on the Ottoman political circles with his Westernist and positivist writings and ideas.

52 See (Haksever, 2009, pp. 28-29), (Küçük, 2003, p. 126), (Ösen, 2015, pp. 242-244), (Mehmed Ziya, 2005, pp. 146-153).

follow the chronological order of events until 1913, as shown in Figure 3 in the light of the information collected from various sources.

Furthermore, it should be mentioned that the ‘fictional narrative’ presented two groups working in the field of theory. The first was represented by Yekta-Ataullah-Celaleddin and the second consisted of Ezgi-Arel-Fahreddin. The second group finally excluded Fahreddin with only the names of Ezgi and Arel remaining. Including Fahreddin Dede was due to an effort to establish an alternative connection with Mevlevi roots. It is understood that Ezgi used names such as Fahreddin and Abdülhalim Dedes to ensure the historical legitimacy of his knowledge and opinions. Fahreddin Dede and Ahmed Avni Konuk had very similar positions in narratives on theoretical studies. Both were among the names in Yekta’s circle and would have certainly heard about these studies in the context of friendly conversations. It is possible that these conversations led them to develop interest towards some theory-related issues.

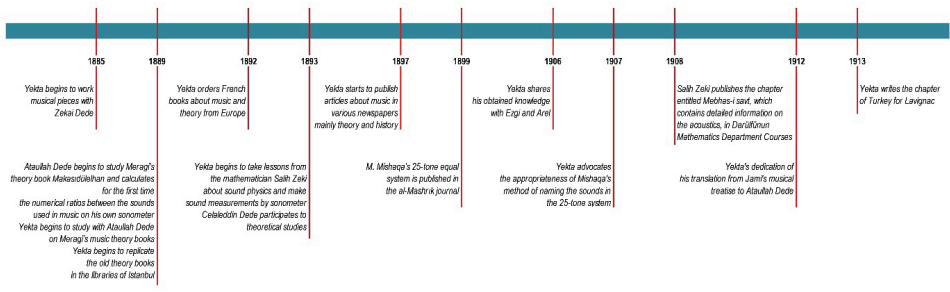


Figure 3. Chronological order of the main events in the ‘scientific positivism’ oriented studies in the field of music theory (1885-1913)

Moreover, it is known that Abdülkadir [Töre] (d. 1946) and Muallim İsmail Kazım [Uz] (d. 1943) carried out studies in the field of theory.⁵³ The two theorists of the second group, Ezgi and Arel, considered the work of the first group scientifically inadequate and thus, paid more attention to their own approaches and preferences. The ‘fictional narrative’ declares that the second group is the main originator of the process. For Ottoman music theory, which had turned into a bundle of patchwork by the end of this process, the following evaluation seems to be very accurate: “If there has been one dominant, quasi-official theory for Turkish music in the second half of the twentieth century, it is that particularly associated with Ezgi and Arel” (Wright 1990, p. 224).

53 Starting from the late 19th century, for the main figures who carried out studies and suggested alternative models to the sound/tone system and theory of Turkish music, see (Aksoy, 1997).

Another striking aspect of the fictional narrative is the contradictory and inadequate evaluation of the reputed mathematician Salih Zeki in the process. Öztuna, in his famous encyclopedia, used only the phrase, “Turkish musician” (1974, p. 203) for Salih Zeki, while he defined Salih Murad Uzdilek as a “Turkish scholar of mathematics and physics”, presenting a wide biography full of praise (1974, pp. 357-358). However, in the article related to Rauf Yekta in the same volume, he stated that he had learnt the physics and acoustics of music from ‘the great mathematical scholar Salih Zeki Bey’. This contradictory attitude on the part of Öztuna seems to have led him to make obvious mistakes in his later publications and, perhaps unwittingly, to subvert some important details of the subject: “[...] Arel saw the help of Uzdilek, his two friends [Yekta and Ezgi] who worked before him were deprived of the help of such a scientist” (1986, p. 89). However, Salih Zeki not only actively participated in the discussions between Yekta, Ahmet Mithat Efendi and Nuri Şeyda on the sound/tone system, music theory and in particular the Pythagorean scale, but also published the first book entitled *Hikmet-i Tabiiyye-i Umûmiyyeden Mebhas-ı Savt (The Acoustics in General Physics)*.

However, Rauf Yekta, in a chapter he wrote for the French encyclopedia, described the active role of Salih Zeki in a detailed manner:

This time, there was a debate between Salih Zeki and Ahmet Mithat about the physics of music. At the beginning of his literary life, Ahmet Mithat Efendi, who bravely touched all the scientific issues, felt very sorry for the fundamental criticisms of the famous physicist Salih Zeki Bey. Readers began to say that the reputation of this very pedantic scholar was over and that the time for specialization for the Turks had now emerged. [...] In his book of physics, which was accepted by the Ottoman Ministry of Education for schools, Salih Zeki Bey wrote on the subject of acoustics according to Western writers. And while writing this, he showed interest in recognizing the proportions among the sounds used in Eastern music. This quarrel gave him the opportunity to communicate with me. I explained the results of my research to a famous physicist on a sonometer I made myself; he found them correct and congratulated me publicly for the first time in many of his articles, having shown the courtesy of praising my work, but for the first time explaining the physical foundations of the theory of Eastern music, which had been dealt with in the form of purely imaginary science. He also told his students at length in the course of physics classes in the *Darülfünun* [University]. (1986, p. 56)

Conclusion

This study initially focused on the pioneering men and the stages of development of a process that aimed at revealing the scientific foundations of Ottoman music, but some important issues became clear. The first was to determine how and by whom the process was

developed. It was possible to produce a detailed chronology of the steps related to the search for a ‘scientific theory’ for Ottoman music, and the data available from various publications in the bibliography were evaluated together with important events of the Ottoman 19th century Europeanization- Westernisation process, which shaped this article. As a result, the chronological order presented in the appendix (Table 1) gives a concrete idea about the course of events related to theoretical studies within the horizon of modernization. According to this study, the people who aimed to make the field of music theory scientific in a European sense grew up with a positivist frame of mind. One question to ask is what these people understood about innovation, science, and civilization. It is evident that the events of modernization cannot be considered separately from the sociological and cultural contexts in which people lived. The situation does not seem to be different in terms of the modernizers discussed here. A great deal of European and especially French-system based learning shaped their views of modernization. The modernizers Yekta and Ezgi speak only French, while Ataullah Dede and Arel speak other European languages such as English, Italian, and German. According to this viewpoint, these theorists tried to follow a path based on their own personal experience and understanding of how to make Ottoman music theory scientific. The preferences here were directly influenced by personal traits and dispositions, including political attitudes. These views of education, science, civilization, progress, and evolution developed according to the European values of Yekta, Ataullah Dede, Ezgi and Arel. This may have been both the main determining and the limiting factors in their studies of music theory.

Accordingly, the leading theorist of this whole process, which developed as a passionate and even obsessive ideal, was Yekta. From 1889 onwards, he and his guide Ataullah Dede shared an understanding shaped entirely by the ideas such as ‘scientific positivism’, ‘civilization’, ‘progress’, and ‘evolution’. During the process, Yekta also received some assistance from renowned mathematician Salih Zeki Bey⁵⁴ and prominent *tanbur*-player Celaleddin Dede; but ultimately he was the one who made the greatest effort in the initiative of building a modern and scientific theory for Ottoman music. An important part of his intensive efforts was to read and analyze French books on music acoustics, history, and theory, while studying manuscripts written in Arabic, Persian and Turkish.

54 Salih Zeki Bey (1864-1921): He was a well-known mathematician, physician and astronomer. His first education was in Darüşşafaka. He studied electrical engineering in Paris. He became manager of the Galatasaray High School, and was the Rector of Darülfünun. After meeting with Yekta, he published scientific articles and book chapters on sound physics. The first article introducing Comte’s positivist understanding of science and philosophy was written by him. For detailed information see (Saraç, 2001).

It is noteworthy that until 1935, the year of Yekta's death, Ezgi and Arel had not yet produced the greatest part of their alternative studies. However, when the first volume of his book was published in 1933, Ezgi began to develop a 'new narrative' that did not emphasize Yekta's pioneering role in the process and highlighted instead the theme of 'common study' with Yekta, including himself. Although they did not work with Ataullah Dede or Celaleddin Dede, they filled the gap represented by religious works with the help of Fahreddin Dede. The fact that Yekta never mentioned the name Fahreddin Dede in his studies in the field of music theory makes it impossible to overlook this important difference of the inclusion of Fahreddin Dede in Ezgi's statements. As mentioned above, the information that Fahreddin Dede participated in theory studies became widespread as a result of a simple mistake of Yılmaz Öztuna. Why did Öztuna prefer to propagate his fictional history instead of correcting this mistake? This question seems reasonably critical for Öztuna, who tries to fit the events around Rauf Yekta into an Arel-centered historical fiction.

The newly acquired positivist belief of the main actors, Yekta, Ataullah Dede, Celaleddin Dede, Ezgi and Arel has, above all, caused them to misunderstand and ultimately not find a suitable scientific approach for the real model of Ottoman music, the melodic motion-oriented one, which is the product of a completely different paradigm shaping the works of Ottoman music theory. They had identified the sources of this as a pile of superstitions and a chaos of contradictions because of the various 'expressions' contained by them that were not deeply analyzed by these researchers. According to them, these sources lack numerical proportions and also make various esoteric connections between music, the cosmos, time and medicine. Their over-confidence in their newly acquired European mentality caused them not to take into account the possibility of confronting an original theoretical model shaped in a different direction. Within this framework, it is possible that all three, Yekta, Ezgi, and Arel, shared a kind of blindness caused by the positivist orientation they adopted. This shows that the positive orientation is not only considered to be the only solution to the problems they face, but also widely accepted as a fundamental 'ideology of salvation', just as Comte had suggested to the Grand Vizier Reşid Pasha. In terms of the modern scientific thought they were trying to keep up with, it is a fact that all three approached the Ottoman world in which they lived with completely Orientalist prejudices. Typical reflections of this approach are particularly evident in their view about the sources for music or music theory written in the Ottoman world. Since Yekta, all acquired prejudices that the theory of music was an area that had been forgotten, ignored, filled with superstitions or never known by Ottoman musicians, and this seemed to have been an obvious obstacle to their correct understanding of these

original texts. The fundamental tendency that dominated the whole process was linked to ideas such as innovation, modernization, civilization, progression and evolution. All these concepts were seen as imperative and inevitable necessities in order to relate to a superior civilization. The fact that this understanding became a passionate obsession reveals less an original approach to the production of scientific knowledge than the tendencies of the Western civilization defenders who were involved in the process.

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Appendix

Table 1. A comparative chronology for the idea of ‘finding the scientific foundations of Ottoman music’ (modified from Öztürk, 2020).

Music – Culture – Mevlevism	Year	Society – Politics
Ataullah Dede’s father Kudretullah Dede became sheikh of the Galata Mevlevihane	1816	
Birth of Osman Selâhaddin Dede, father of Mehmed Celaledin Dede	1820	Lord Stratford Canning’s first visit to Istanbul as British Ambassador (until 1828) The arrival of the missionaries Pliny Fisk and Levi Parsons to the Ottoman Empire to organize The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) activities
	1821	The Greek Rebellion The establishment of the <i>Babialı Tercüme Odası</i> (The Translation Chamber of Sublime Porte)
	1822	The execution of Mehmed Said Halet Efendi during his exile in Konya because of his significant role in the Greek Rebellion
Birth of Mehmed Zekai Dede	1824	The establishment of the ABCFM Syrian Protestant College
	1825	The establishment of the <i>Beşiktaş Cemiyet-i İlmiyyesi</i> (The Beshiktash Scientific Society) hosted by İsmail Ferruh Bey, who was accepted as a freemason during his ambassadorship in England
The establishment of the <i>Musika-yı Hümayun</i> (The Royal Music Ensemble) as European military band and orchestra	1826	The abolition of the Janissary Quarry and slaughter of janissaries The prohibition of Bektashism The prohibition of Freemasonry
	1829	The death of İzzet Molla, father of future Grand Vizier Keçecizade Fuat Pasha and close friend of Halet Efendi, in his exile in Sivas
Osman Selâhaddin Dede became the deputy sheikh of the Yenikapı Mevlevihane	1831	The establishment of the first ABCFM mission schools in Istanbul
	1832	The rebellion of Mehmed Ali Pasha of Kavala in Egypt
	1833	Signing of the Treaty of <i>Hünkâr İskelesi</i> [The Sultan’s Pier] between Ottomans and Russians due to the Egyptian Rebellion Mehmed Emin Ali Pasha’s entrance to the Translation Chamber of the Sublime Porte
	1834	Mustafa Reşid Pasha’s appointment as ambassador to Paris The establishment of Pera Boys’ School by ABCFM
	1836	The establishment of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mustafa Reşid Pasha’s appointment as ambassador in London and his entry to Freemasonry
	1837	Mustafa Reşid Paşa’s appointment as the Minister of Foreign Affairs Keçecizade Fuat Pasha’s entrance to the Translation Chamber of the Sublime Porte
	1838	Signing of the Balta Port Trade Agreement, granting British commercial concessions

	1839	Death of Mahmud II Abdülmeçid’s sultanate Mustafa Rashid Pasha’s appointment as the Grand Vizier The proclamation of the <i>Tanzimat</i>
Mihail Mishaqa’s presentation of the 25-tone equal system in Arabic, entitled <i>Risâletü’ş-şehâbiyye fi’s-sinâati’l-müsikiyye</i> [The Shehabian treatise on the art of music]	1840	The establishment of the Bebek Protestant Theological School by Cyrus Hamlin
	1841	Lord Stratford Canning’s second British ambassador to Istanbul (until 1858) Mehmed Emin Ali Pasha’s appointment as ambassador in London
Birth of Mehmed Ataulah Dede	1842	
Zekai Dede’s visit to Cairo under the auspices of Mustafa Fazıl Pasha	1845	The permission of the Ottoman Empire to establish a Protestant Church in Jerusalem Establishment of the ABCFM Pera Girls’ Boarding School Establishment of ABCFM Pera Girls Boarding School
	1846	Mustafa Reşid Pasha became the Grand Vizier for the second time Mehmed Emin Ali Pasha’s appointment as the Minister of Foreign Affairs Establishment of the first Evangelical Church in Pera
Mishaqa’s conversion to Protestantism	1848	Lord Stratford Canning’s second visit to Istanbul as ambassador
Birth of Mehmed Celaleddin Dede	1849	
	1850	With the support of British ambassador Stratford Canning, the Ottoman Protestant community gained national status
A short summary of Mishaqa’s work in English by Eli Smith, published in the <i>Journal of American Oriental Society</i> , titled <i>A Treatise on Arab Music by Mikhail Meshakah of Damascus</i>	1851	Establishment of the Consulting Council
Publication of Haşim Bey’s <i>Mecmûa-i kârha and nakşha and şarkıyyât</i> (<i>The collected works of various compositions</i>)	1852	Mehmed Emin Ali Pasha’s appointment as the Grand Vizier and dismissal in the same year
Birth of Hüseyin Fahreddin Dede	1853	A. Comte’s letter to the freemason Grand Vizier Mustafa Reşit Pasha inviting Islam to positive religion and politics The Crimean War
	1855	Mehmed Emin Ali Pasha’ appointment as the Grand Vizier for the second time Keçecizade Fuad Pasha’s appointment as the Foreign Minister
	1856	Mehmed Emin Ali Pasha’s dismissal from the Grand Vizier for the second time Mustafa Reşid Pasha’s appointment as the Grand Vizier again The Treaty of Paris The announcement of Islahat Edict The establishment of the Oriental Lodge connected to British obedience (until 1949)

	1857	Opening of the <i>Mekteb-i Osmanî</i> providing education in French, in Paris The establishment of the Grand Lodge of Turkey connected to French obedience in İzmir (until 1949) Mehmed Emin Ali Pasha's appointment as the Foreign Minister Abdurrahman Sami Pasha of Mora's appointment as the Minister of Education
	1858	Mehmed Emin Ali Pasha's appointment as the Grand Vizier for the third time and dismissal the following year The establishment of the <i>L'Etoile du Bosphore</i> Lodge connected to French obedience (until 1901)
Mishaqa began to work as a deputy at the American Consulate in Damascus (until 1870)	1859	
	1861	The establishment of the Old and Adopted Scottish Rit in Istanbul with the help of the French Supreme Council under the leadership of Egyptian Prince [Kavalalı] Abdulhalim Pasha The establishment of the Bulwer Lodge by the British Ambassador Sir Henry Bulwer in Istanbul-Buyukdere, under the United Great Lodge of England The establishment of the <i>Cemiyet-i İlmiye-i Osmaniye</i> (The Ottoman Society of Science) Death of Abdülmecid Abdülaziz's sultanate Keçecizade Fuad Pasha's appointment as the Grand Vizier, his dismissal and as the Grand Vizier again Mehmed Emin Ali Pasha's appointment as the Minister of Foreign Affairs for the sixth time
Upon the death of his father Nazif Dede, Hüseyin Fahreddin Dede's appointment as the Sheikh of the Beşiktaş Mevlevihane	1862	
The second edition of Haşim Bey's treatise	1863	Sultan Abdülaziz's visit to Egypt with <i>Şehzades</i> Murad and Abdulhamid The establishment of Robert College, the American Missionary School providing education in English by Cyrus Hamlin The establishment of the <i>L'Union d'Orient</i> Lodge connected to French obedience (until 1901)
Birth of Salih Zeki	1864	The establishment of the <i>Cemiyet-i Tedrîsiyye-i İslamiye</i> (The Islamic Education Society) (later ' <i>Darüşşafaka</i> ') The prohibition of all Protestant missionary activities by Supreme Porte
	1865	The establishment of the <i>Yeni/Genç Osmanlılar Cemiyeti</i> (The Young Ottomans Society) The establishment of Cairo Bulwer Lodge
	1866	The first opening of the School of Languages, which provided education in French (<i>Elsine Mekteb'</i>)
		The establishment of the Assembly of Sheikhs (<i>Meclis-i Meşayih</i>) and the presidency of Osman Selahaddin Dede The establishment of the Ser Lodge

	1867	Sultan Abdulaziz’s visit to England The formation of the Young Ottomans in Paris under the auspices of freemason Kavalalı Mustafa Fazıl Pasha Abdullatif Suphi Pasha, son of Abdurrahman Sami Pasha of Mora, became the Minister of Education
Zekai Dede’s affiliation to Osman Selahaddin Dede Ataullah Dede’s entry to Freemasonry at the Bulwer Lodge The publication of John Peter Brown, US Embassy Secretary and Dragoman in Istanbul, entitled <i>The Dervishes: or Oriental Spiritualism</i> Publishing a detailed report about Brown’s book in <i>The Freemasons’ Monthly Magazine</i> (4 th July)	1868	The establishment of the <i>Galatasaray Mekteb-i Sultanisi</i> providing education in French The establishment of the <i>I Proodos</i> Lodge, where many names that played important roles in Ottoman political history were members The initiations of İbrahim Ethem Pasha and the Egyptian Prince Mustafa Fazıl Pasha to the Freemasonry at the French lodge of <i>l’Union d’Orient</i>
Birth of Suphi Zühdi Ezgi Upon the call of H. Bulwer to London, J. P. Brown’s appointment as the Grand Master of the Bulwer Lodge	1869	Death of Keçecizade Fuad Paşa Adoption of the Maarif-i Umumiye Nizamnamesi, which allowed the opening of foreign schools and which was modeled on French education Opening of the Suez Canal
Birth of Rauf Yekta Upon the death of his father Kudretullah Dede, freemason Ataullah Dede’s appointment as the Sheikh of Galata Mevlevihane	1871	Death of Mehmed Emin Ali Paşa
	1872	The initiations of the Şehzades Murad, Kemaleddin and Nureddin to freemasonry at <i>I Proodos</i> Lodge Death of John Porter Brown
Salih Zeki’s entrance to the <i>Dariüşşafaka</i>	1874	
	1876	The assassination of Sultan Abdulaziz Three-month sultanate of freemason Murad V Abdulhamid II became the sultan The adoption of the <i>Kanun-ı Esasi</i> (First Constitutional Monarchy) The Grand Vizierate of freemason Midhat Pasha Opening of the ABCFM Antep Protestant School and Üsküdar Girls’ College
	1877	The Ottoman-Russian War
	1878	The Grand Master Freemason C. Scalieri’s unsuccessful attempt to reinstate Murad V to the throne Cyprus under British administration according to the Berlin Conference
	1879	Second opening of the School of Languages
Birth of Hüseyin Sadeddin Arel	1880	
	1882	The British occupation of Egypt
	1884	The appointment of Celaleddin Dede as <i>Meclis-i Meşayih</i> (The Assembly of Sheikhs) Death of Midhat Pasha
R. Yekta began to study with Zekai Dede	1885	
S. Ezgi joined to Zekai Dede’s musical performance lessons and meeting with Rauf Yekta	1886	

Upon the death of his father Osman Selahaddin Dede, Celaleddin Dede's appointment as the Sheikh of Yenikapı Mevlevihanesi	1887	
R. Yekta's meeting with Ataullah Dede , his work in the <i>Divan-ı Hümayun</i> Office, his education at the Languages School Death of M. Mishaqa	1888	
Ataullah Dede saw and bought A. Meragî's <i>Makasidü'l-elhan</i> (The purposes of melodies) Beginning to study on this book with R. Yekta R. Yekta begins to copy various music theoretical boks in İstanbul libraries (until 1892)	1889	The establishment of the <i>İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti</i> (The Committee of Union and Progress)
R. Yekta's graduation from the Languages School (?) Ataullah Dede and Yekta began to make detailed readings on copied theory books R. Yekta brought books from France to learn more about the European music S. Ezgi's entrance the Military Medical School	1892	Closing of the Languages School The affiliation of Mehmed Ziya, the author of the book <i>Yenikapı Mevlevihanesi</i> (1911) to Celaleddin Dede
R. Yekta made a sonometer in light of his work with mathematician Salih Zeki Bey Celaleddin Dede's participation in theory studies S. Arel began to study oud and musical repertoire from the Sheikh Cemal Efendi in İzmir	1893	
R. Yekta's official assignment to Aleppo	1894	
Yekta returned to İstanbul and continued his theoretical studies with Ataullah Dede	1895	Closing of the Bulwer Lodge in İstanbul
Arel returned to İzmir from İstanbul and started taking oud lessons from Ufî Şekerci Cemil Appointment of Salih Zeki as the Director of the Observatory (until 1909)	1896	
Appointment of Salih Zeki Bey to Resimli Gazete (Illustrated Newspaper) as a manager R. Yekta began to publish various articles on music theory under the title of <i>Lisan-ı elhan</i> (The language of melodies) in Resimli Gazete Death of Zekai Dede	1897	

R. Yekta began to publish articles in <i>İkdam</i> newspaper about music, theory and history	1898	
Debates on ‘Pythagorean Scale’ between Salih Zeki, Ahmet Mithat Efendi and R. Yekta Publication of Mishaqa’s work in the third issue of <i>al-Mashrik</i> magazine R. Yekta’s detailed article on ‘the Pythagorean Scale II’ published in <i>İkdam</i> , addressed to Ahmet Mithat Efendi, giving information about the beginning and development of theory studies	1899	
S. Ezgi’s meeting with S. Arel	1901	
	1902	The establishment of the <i>Macedonia Risorta</i> Lodge in the Italian Grand Orient in Thessaloniki
	1904	Death of Murad V The establishment of the <i>Veritas</i> Lodge in the French Grand Orient in Thessaloniki
R. Yekta’s presentation of his studies on the 25-ton system to S. Ezgi and S. Arel and their adoption of this system Yekta’s taking segah and eviç pitches as the complete notes and not using alteration signs for them Unlike Yekta, S. Ezgi and S. Arel’s naming Western C Major as Çargâh makam and accepting it as the main scale of Turkish music	1906	The establishment of the <i>Labor et Lux</i> Lodge in the Italian Grand Orient in Thessaloniki
Yekta’s modeling the method of M. Mishaqa for naming sounds in Turkish music in his article titled <i>Tanburda nagamatin mevaki-i fenniyyesi</i> [Scientific positions of pitches on the tanbur neck] which was published in <i>İkdam</i> on May 31 The publication of Yekta’s various articles on music theory in the magazine of <i>La Revue Musicale</i> Death of Celaleddin Dede S. Arel started to take private lessons on harmony, counterpoint and fugue from E. Manas	1907	The establishment of the <i>Phillipos</i> Lodge in the Greek Grand Orient in Thessaloniki The establishment of the <i>Persevincia</i> Lodge in the Spanish Grand Lodge in Thessaloniki
Salih Zeki’s publication the chapter entitled <i>Mebhas-i savt</i> (The subject of sound), which contained detailed information on the physics of phonics, in Darülfünun Mathematics Department Courses The publication of Salih Zeki’s article introducing Comte and his positivist philosophy in the <i>Ulûm-i İktisadiyye and İçtimaiyye</i> (Journal of Economic and Social Sciences)	1908	The declaration of the Second Constitutional Monarchy Government of the Committee of Union and Progress (The Masonic State period, 1908-1918) Mehmet V’s sultanate The establishment of the <i>Steaoo Salonicului</i> Lodge in the Romanian Grand Lodge in Thessaloniki The establishment of the <i>L’Avenir de l’Orient</i> Lodge in the French Grand Orient in Thessaloniki

R. Yekta expressed his views on Celeleddin Dede in a letter to Mehmet Ziya Arel began to publish the <i>Şehbal</i> magazine, which brought together writers known for their proximity to the Committee of Union and Progress. Arel praised Yekta and his studies with a title 'About a contemporary music writer' in the first issue of <i>Şehbal</i> , March 8 Arel's introducing Subhi Zühdi [Ezgi]'s works in the field of music in the fifth issue of March 28, entitled 'An unrecognized master of music'	1909	The establishment of the Ottoman Grand Orient (<i>Maşrık-ı Azam-ı Osmani</i>) The Freemason Talat Pasha became the first Grand Master of the Lodge
Death of Ataullah Dede	1910	
Death of H. Fahreddin Dede As one of Celeleddin Dede's associates, Mehmed Ziya's publication of the book, <i>Yenikapı Mevlevihanesi</i>	1911	Tripoli War
R. Yekta's publication of his own translation from A. Jami's musical treatise and dedication to his first master, Ataullah Dede	1912	The First Balkan War
Chapter about Turkey in <i>the Encyclopedie de la Musique et Dictionnaire du Conservatoire</i> written in French by R. Yekta (published in 1922) Publishing of the French translation of Mishaqa's treatise in the 6 th issue of the <i>Melange de la Faculte Orientale</i> by Sebastien J. Ronzevalle, born in Edirne	1913	The Second Balkan War
R. Yekta's separation from S. Ezgi and S. Arel (before 1918) Preparations for the establishment of <i>Darülbedayi</i>	1914	The First World War Entry of the Ottoman Empire into the First World War
The establishment of <i>Darülelhan</i> (Ottoman National Conservatory) and the appointment of Yekta as a teacher of Turkish music theory and history	1917	
	1918	The defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the First World War The Committee of Union and Progress ceased its activities Wilson Principles The establishment of The Association of Wilson Principles
[The end of the collaboration among Yekta, Ezgi and Arel (?)] (according to Y. Öztuna)]	1920	
Death of Salih Zeki	1921	
	1922	The collapse of the Ottoman Empire Abolition of the sultanate by Parliament's decision
Continuation of the collaboration of Arel and Ezgi in Izmir	1923	Treaty of Lausanne Declaration of the Republic of Turkey Republican People's Party rule

Yekta’s publication of Turkish Music Theory (‘Gavsiyye’)	1924	Abolition of the caliphate by decision of the Grand National Assembly
	1925	Abolition of Dervish lodges The Hat Law
Conversion of Darülelhan’s name to Istanbul Municipality Conservatory by decision of the Fine Arts Board and end of Turkish music education Yekta’s appointment as the chairman of a committee established under the name of the Board for the Transcription and Classification of Historical Turkish Music Works	1926	The Civil Law
Arel’s two lectures on the advancement of Turkish music at Izmir Turkish Hearth	1927	
Returning of Arel and Ezgi to Istanbul and the continuation of their collaboration here	1928	Acceptance of the new Turkish alphabet
The appointment of Ezgi as a member of the Classification Committee of the Istanbul Municipal Conservatory thanks to Arel’s support	1929	
Beginning of the collaboration between violinist Abdülkadir Töre and Ekrem Karadeniz on an alternative theory for Turkish music	1930	
Yekta’s participation to the Cairo Congress of Arab Music with Mesud Cemil, where he chairs the Committee of Maqams, Usuls and Composition	1932	
Publishing of the first volume of Ezgi’s <i>Nazari Ameli Türk Musikisi-NATM</i> (Theoretical Practical Turkish Music)	1933	
Ending the broadcasting of Turkish music on the radio by decision of the Ministry of Interior	1934	The Surname Law Women given the vote and the right to hold office
Death of Yekta Publication of the second volume of NATM	1935	Closing of Freemason lodges
Publication of the third volume of NATM	193?	
		Death of Atatürk
	1939	World War II (until 1945)
Publication of the fourth volume of NATM	1940	
Appointment of Arel as Director of Istanbul Municipal Conservatory	1943	
Publication by Arel’s close friend physicist S. M. Uzdilek, entitled <i>Science and Music: Studies on Turkish Music</i> , by the Istanbul Municipality Conservatory	1944	

Y. Öztuna's beginning to prepare a dictionary for Turkish music	1945	
	1946	USS Missouri battleship's visit to Istanbul Establishment of the Democratic Party
	1947	Marshall Plan Truman Doctrine Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement between USA and Turkey
Arel's resignation from Istanbul Municipal Conservatory Arel founded the Association of Advanced Turkish Music Conservatory in Istanbul and began publishing the series-articles on Turkish music theory in the <i>Musiki Mecmuası</i> , which is the organ of the Association Öztuna's began to publish his dictionary for Turkish music in <i>Musiki Mecmuası</i> as a series-article	1948	The resumption of Turkish Freemasonry
	1950	Democratic Party rule Turkey's sending troops to Korea
	1952	Turkey's accession to NATO
The publication of the fifth volume of NATM	1953	
Death of Arel	1955	
	1957	The Treaty of Rome and the establishment of The European Economic Community (EEC), or 'Common Market'
	1959	Turkey's application to the European Economic Community
Death of Ezgi	1962	
Publication of Arel's Two conference presentations on Turkish Music as a book, by the Association of the Advanced Turkish Music Conservatory	1964	
Publication of an alternative book on Turkish music theory by E. Karadeniz, under the title of <i>Türk Musikisi Nazariye ve Esasları (The Theoretical principles of Turkish Music)</i>	1965	
Publication of Arel's articles on <i>Turkish Music Theory Courses</i> as a book, by the Association of the Advanced Turkish Music Conservatory	1968	
Publication of Arel's articles about <i>Whose is Turkish Music?</i> The publication of the first volume of <i>The Encyclopedia of Turkish Music</i> by Öztuna	1969	
	1974	Cyprus Peace Operation
Establishment of the Turkish Music State Conservatory, also known as 'the Arel Conservatory' in Istanbul by initiative of Arel's students and friends	1975	USA embargo against Turkey

Publication of Ahmet S. Teymur’s book about Turkish music theory based on Arel theory	1979	
	1980	Military Coup of September 12
Publication of Özkan’s book, <i>The Theory and Usuls of Turkish Music</i> , based on Arel theory	1984	
Publication of the Turkish translation of Yekta’s French chapter on Turkish music written for Lavignac’s Encyclopedia by O. Nasuhioğlu Publication of the book <i>Sadeddin Arel</i> by Öztuna	1986	
Publication of Arel’s article series about <i>Turkish Music Theory Courses</i> as a book, edited by Onur Akdoğu	1991	