I ki hezar aferin bon nidge Sultan olur
Dervishes Ceremonies in Constantinople Described by Western Travellers and Painters between Sixteenth and Eighteenth Century

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Abstract   Between the sixteenth century and the eighteenth century many Europeans visited Constantinople, the new Ottoman capital, and wrote reports that took various aspects of its cultural and musical life into consideration. Among the recurring elements of such reports, we note the description of Dervishes and their ceremonies, often accompanied by engravings and more rarely by musical transcriptions. Through time, such a description became a topic (and a stereotype) both in literature and in fine arts. Without claiming to be exhaustive, my article retraces and comments descriptions of Dervish ceremonies, in a chronological order, by Western travellers and scholars between sixteenth and eighteenth century, between the so-called Age of Exploration and Modernity.


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1 Introduction

Between the sixteenth century and the eighteenth century many Europeans visited Constantinople, the new Ottoman capital, and wrote reports that took into consideration various aspects of its cultural and musical life. Among the recurring elements of such reports, we note the description of Dervishes and their ceremonies. In particular, at a certain point of their sojourn in Constantinople, ambassadors, aristocrats, wealthy merchants, and other worthy travellers invariably would be taken, or at least directed, to the lodge of the famous mevlevî dervishes, better known as ‘Whirling Dervishes’, situated in Pera, the European part of town. Upon their return at home, the observers published books containing, amidst many other subjects, the description of such Dervish rituals, often illustrated by engravings and more rarely by musical transcriptions: through time, these ceremonies became a topic (and a stereotype) both in literature and in fine arts.

The whole inclusions and exclusions process of what was (and what was not) noted and reported in Constantinople by Western travellers would be capable of raising many questions, yet, it is worth saying that, at the time, almost every Sufi brotherhood of the vast Ottoman world had a centre in the capital: according to Ottoman historian Evliyâ Çelebi (1611-1684), in his time in Constantinople there were five hundreds and seventy seven tekkes (large centres) and six thousands zaviyas (small centres) of dervishes. For this reason meeting a dervish in the street must have been a rather common experience for Western travellers. Yet, if such a curiosity for these ‘strange’ figures, was, after all, rather normal, I am wondering why did Ottomans think that European visitors would have enjoyed such dervish ceremonies or been impressed by it? What the mevlevî ceremonies was likely to have represented for Ottoman hosts? Was it a ‘performance’ of which they were especially proud? And for their part, why were Europeans almost invariably fascinated? What did they see in such rituals, aside from mere picturesque element?

Without any pretension of exhaustiveness, in the following pages I will focus on some first traces of such a curiosity that we find both in travellers reports and in fine arts between sixteenth and eighteenth century, a fervid period between the so-called Age of Exploration and modernity. Of course, Western curiosity for the Dervish-

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1 Called, in order of magnitude and importance, tekke, zaviya, dargâh. In addition to these general terms, the more specific asitâne was applied to the headquarters of a given Sufi order, while mevlevîhâne was used only for the bigger mevlevî dervishes centres.

2 Musicologically, it seems rather interesting that, despite the distance, a dervish coming from Bukhara could meet, for instance, a brother from Baghdad and find a common musical background made by hymns (ilâhi) and other more sophisticated genres.
es ceremonies continued, after our chosen time frame, throughout nineteenth century, from Romantic exoticism reveries about a ‘far’ East, to hippies staying at the Pera Palas during their travel to India; little by little the engravings, devoured by curious upper class Westerners during XVI-XVIII, gave way to photographs and videos, arriving to nowadays Istanbul, where tourists crowd the reopened Pera/Galata centre (a recurring place in our travellers descriptions) and many ‘secular’ theatres propose each day ‘dervish ceremonies’ for the tourists in town.

2 Nicolas de Nicolay, Les quatre premiers livres des navigations et peregrinations orientales (1568)

The same term dervish seems to appear for the first time in Europe in a book of travels, as is Nicolas de Nicolay (1517-1583), Les quatre premiers livres des navigations et peregrinations orientales published in Lyon by Guillaume Rouillé in 1568. In 1551 French king Henry II (1519-1559) ordered de Nicolay to follow Gabriel de Luetz, Baron et Seigneur d’Aramon et de Vallabregues (?-1553) in Constantinople, where he was French ambassador to Suleyman the Magnificent (Ka

nuni Sultan Süleyman, 1494-1566). Aramon’s entourage included many famous scholars as Pierre Belon (1517-1564), Pierre Gilles (alias Petrus Gylius, 1490-1555), André Thevet (1516-1590) and Guillaume Postel (1510-1581). Translated in many Western languages, de Nicolay’s book had an enormous success and became a source for Orientalism through the centuries thanks also to the precious copper engravings made by Louis Danet, probably after de Nicolay original drawings. In our perspective, among the peculiarities of Constantinople, the author noted ‘men of religion’ and classified them in four categories; according to such a classification, the chapter XVII of the third book is devoted to the third category, De la tierce secte des religieux turcs, appeliez deruis. As stated above, the meetings with such religieux turcs, appeliez deruis must have been rather frequent in Constantinople, yet, de Nicolay chapter is mostly devoted to a harsh and Eurocentric description of the severe ascetic practices of the most unorthodox (and picturesque) dervishes named qalandâr (Ottoman-Turkish kalender), still existing nowadays in Indo-Pakistan area and in Xinjiang [figs. 1-2].

Given the academic public of this review, I hope it is not redundant to briefly remember here that, according to current knowledge, the term *deruis* come from Persian *darvish*, equivalent to Arab *faqīr* and *mishqīn* (‘poor’), probably indicating who is ‘poor’ in front of the only One who, according to the Ninety-Nine divine names/divine attributes (*al-asmā al-husnā*), is *al-ghānī* (‘Rich’, ‘Self-sufficient’). According to another possible etymology, the term derives from Persian *dar* (door, threshold) so that *darvish* would literally mean ‘the one standing at the door’. Yet, such a ‘door’ may have different meanings: the dervishes may have moved from door to door (Persian, *dar ba dar*) during the begging; in a second sense they moved from one spiritual threshold to another asking for divine revelations, in a third sense they stood on the door between this and other worlds (see Papas 2001, 3: 129-35). Be that as it may, during the Middle Age the term began to be used for those who adopted a style of life in which detachment and renunciation were both material and spiritual.
From the same French environment in Constantinople, Guillaume Postel (1510-1581) was a highly gifted French linguist, astronomer, cabbalist, and diplomat who possessed a particular interest in spirituality. His travels were made during a period of alliance between the French King François I, who reigned from 1515 to 1547, and his new ally Sulayman ‘the Magnificent’ (Kanuni Sultan Süleyman), who ruled the Ottoman Empire between 1520 and 1566, and continued under the reign of Henri II. In his *De la republique des Turcs*, published in 1560, Postel describes the travels that he made in the 1530s and provides a description of a dervish ceremony.

This and the following passages cited in the article preserve the original orthography and punctuation, despite obvious differences from modern forms of French, Italian, or English.
Commancent en branlant la teste, et tout le corps, l’un vers l’autre, disans ‘alla, alla, alla, alla’ tant des fois et long de temps repentant qu’ils cheent à bas comme estourdis, et disent que alors leur esprit va avec Dieu porter lassala, ou l’oraison. En la Surie et Natolie ou Turquie en y a qui se mettent à fort tourner disant ‘alla, alla’ etc. que jamais pirouette n’est fist imitation, en fin que tous estourdis demeurent comme mors, et en extase, et alors dient que leur esprit va avec Dieu. (Postel 1560, 52)

They begin by bowing the head, and all the body, one toward the other, saying ‘alla, alla, alla, alla’ so many times and repeating it for so long that they fall as if they were stunned, and they say that their spirit takes the prayer⁵ to God. In Syria and Anatolia or Turkey there are some who begin to whirl so powerfully while repeating ‘alla, alla’ etc. that a pirouette could never imitate them; so that finally they are all stunned and remain as if dead, in ecstasy, and they say that their spirit goes with God.

If the first observation made by Postel seems to depict a dhikr jāhri (vocal invocation) of the qiyyam (standing) type, the second phrase, with his precise verb tourner (to whirl), suggests a Mevlevî semâ. However, in the absence of any remarks about musical instruments, the whirling of the dervishes while repeating the name of God seems similar to the raqs-i samō diffused in Central Asia and among the Naqshbandî jāhri (or Naqshbandî āfāqi) in what is now Xinjiang (De Zorzi 2013, 173-210).


The third report is that of the Roman antiquarian, composer, musicologist and Orientalist Pietro della Valle (1586-1652). Between 1614 and 1626, his journeys took him to the Holy Land, through the Middle East and North Africa, and as far as India. In his second letter from Constantinople, he describes a visit to the centre of the Mevlevî dervishes in Pera, the European quarter of the city.

Un venerdì, che secondo il costume de’ Turchi si va più del solito alle meschite, e vi si predica, andai qui ne’ borghi di Pera, dove noi abitiamo, in un luogo di dervisci, che ci è, dove aveva inteso che si soleva fare in tal giorno una buona musica... andai al luogo di costoro, che hanno qui fra le vigne di Pera, e trovai che già vi si predicava... finita la predica, si raunarono i dervisci in mezzo della meschita in giro; e quivi al suono di quattro o cinque flauti, fatti di canne, che con distinzione di

⁵ In the French original, lassala probably represents lasalāt. In Arabic, salāt is the stipulated ritual prayer, meant to be performed five times in a day, rather than spontaneous prayer.
tutte le voci, basso, tenore, contralto e soprano facevano una bellissima armonia, cominciarono a ballare: talora sonando senza ballare e talora ballando insieme a vicenda: e ballando, ora tutti insieme, ora alcuni di loro, ed ora alcuni solo. Il moto de' piedi, ne' lor balli, è appunto il medesimo che quello degli Spagnoli nelle loro ciaconne; che i Morì, nella Spagna, dovettero insegnarlo, ma questi, ballando, si girano sempre attorno sopra un piede; e chi gira più presto, e dura più a girare, è più valent'uomo. Nel principio cominciano con moto lento e soave, adagio adagio: ma poi, poco a poco riscaldati, lo vanno ogni ora più affrettando; finché al fine, cresciuto quasi in eccesso il fervore, si danno tanta fretta e si aggirano con tanta velocità, che appena gli arriva la vista di chi gli riguarda. Nel girare invocano spesso Dio; replicando forte, volta a volta, la parola Ḥū, che si interpreta Esso, ovvero E', e s'intende per Dio, che solo ha vero essere... Però la musica che fanno è galante, e degna in ver d'essere sentita: e quei flauti che chiamano nai, ovvero nei, che in persiano significa propriamente canna, come di canna sono fatti, non si può credere quanto dolce suono rendano. (Della Valle 1843, 47-8)

One Friday, the day on which by custom Turks go more than usual to the mosques, and listen to sermons, I went in the area of Pera, where we live, to a place of dervishes that is there, where I heard that good music would be played... I went to the place that they have there among the vineyards of Pera, and I found that they were already listening to the sermon... When the sermon had finished, the dervishes gathered in the middle of the mosque; and here, to the sound of four or five flutes made of reed, with a sweet harmony produced by all the voices, bass, tenor, alto and soprano, they began to dance: at times they played without dancing and at times they were playing and dancing at the same time: and at times they all danced together, at times some of them danced, and at times only one. The movement of the feet, in their dances, is the same as that in the dance of the Spanish, in their chaconnes; the Moors, in Spain, must have taught them, yet, when they dance, they whirl always on one foot; the one who whirls faster and longer is considered to be the most able. At the beginning they start with a slow and sweet pace, adagio, adagio: but after a while, they accelerate the movement little by little, constantly increasing the pace; at the end, attaining an almost excessive fervour, they whirl with such a speed that is difficult to follow them with the eyes. When they are whirling, they often invoke God; repeating loudly the word Ḥū, which means ‘He’, God, the only Being... But the music they play is really gallant, and worthy of being heard: and the flutes that they call nai, or more correctly nei, a term that in Persian means ‘reed’, because they are made of reed, it is impossible to believe what a sweet sound they make.

The remarks of Pietro della Valle about harmony are quite puzzling and may simply reflect his Western musical education, because Ottoman music is monophonic and heterophonic. While there are indeed many sizes of ney, even if they were played together, they would play in unison by transposing the melody. Instead, his observation that the musicians alternated sections of music with sections of music and dancing accurately reflects the structure of a mevlâvî ceremony (āyın) in which purely musical sections, such as na‘at-i Mevlânâ, peşrev, and baş taksim, are included along with sections in which the semâżens are in motion. His remarks about the speed of the semâżens, gradually accelerating and attaining a great velocity, may recall comments by the musicolo-
gist Jean During (1988, 172) about the gradual shift of the Mevlevî sêmâ from an ecstatic ceremony, disordered and full of energy, as it appears in the observations of Pietro della Valle and in commentaries produced by the Mevlevî themselves, to the more formal and composed performances of modern Mevlevî ceremonies. Finally, his remarks on the ney accurately reflect the etymology and the sweet sound of the flute and confirm the status among the Mevlevî of an instrument dear to Mevlâna when he composed the eighteen distiches that open his Mesnevi.

5 Two Western Residents in Town: Wojciech Bobowski and Demetrius Cantemir

Our next encounters are with two European residents of the city, rather than the occasional travellers who provide the majority of our accounts. Dervishes are present in their pages but in a subtler way, beyond their simple and picturesque description: the first of these European residents is a multitalented man called Wojciech Bobowski, alias Albertus Bobovius Leopolitanus alias ‘Ali Ufûkî, alias ‘Ali Beg el-santûrî (Bobowa, 1610?-Constantinople, 1675?): born near Leopolis, a city known through times as Lemberg in German, Lwów in Polish, and Łviv in Ukrainian, he was captured by Tatar marauders, sold at the slave market in Constantinople and set to work at the court as içoğlan (pageboy), playing, among other duties, the hammered zither known as santûr. Moreover, thanks to his studies, to his colleagues’ amazement Bobowski transcribed the musical compositions that he had been learning by ear according to the meşk method, so that he could refresh his memory.

In our particular perspective, it seems worthy of note that it is generally believed that he converted to Islam, taking the name ‘Ali Ufûkî, and entering a Sufi brotherhood, the Celvetîye. If this is true, dervishes were not a mere picturesque element in his life. Apart

6 More precisely as a ‘music pageboy’; in the title of the Italian version of the Serrai Enderum (Ottoman Seray Enderûn) we read, in fact: “Serrai Enderum Del Serraglio detto nuovo delli Gran Signori Ottomani descritto da Alberto Bobouio Leopolitano Polacco, il quale [...] hà iui con officio di paggio di musica parecchi anni abitato”. Cf. Cornelio Magni, Quanto di più curioso e vago ha potuto raccorre Cornelio Magni nel primo biennio da esso consumato in viaggi e dimore per la Turchia. Resta distribuito in questa Prima parte in varie lettere scritte in Italia, le quali principalmente includono l’esame della metropoli di Costantinopoli, de’ luoghi soggiacenti e dell’esercito Ottomano, si in marchia, come in campo, Dedicaui la relazione del Serraglio del Gran Signore, e delle parti più recondite di esso, distesa da Alberto Bobouio Leopolitano trattenutosi con nome di Bey in qualità di paggio (Parma, Rosati 1679, 502).

7 The Celvetîye was a branch of the Halvetîye founded by Şeyh Uftâde (d. 1580) that was very active at the Ottoman court during the seventeenth century. According to the descriptions that have survived, Celvetî dervishes seem to have performed a distinctive zikr with musical instruments. Cf. Feldman 1996, 63, 68.
from his inner life, the dervishes repertoires that he transcribed in his private carnet and that arrived to our days are of great importance: in fact, at the end of his life, after a career as a man of letters and translator (Dragoman, tercuman), he entrusted two copies of his private notebook containing his musical transcriptions to some travellers. These two copies, not identical, are preserved at the British Library in London (GB Lbl Sloane 3114) and the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris (F BnF Turc 292). Both are precious sources of information about the music of the time because the author transcribed all the music that he heard at court and elsewhere – as a sort of avant la lettre ethnomusicologist – of secular as well as spiritual genres, including folk songs (türkü), urban popular songs (şarkı), the songs of the dancing boys (köçekçe), calls to prayer (ezan) and, in our perspective, dervishes hymns (ilâhi and tevşih).

Mevlevî culture seems to have influenced in a subtler way the treatise composed by the second European resident, the Moldavian prince Dimitrie Cantemir (1673-1723), entitled Kitâbu ʿİlmiʾl-Mûsiki ʿalâ Vechiʾl-Hurûfât (The Book of the Science of Music according to Alphabetic Notation). Written in Constantinople between 1700 and 1703, when Cantemir was held hostage in the capital to ensure that his father remained loyal to the sultan, the treatise comprises a theoretical section written in Ottoman that is followed by a second section of 351 entirely instrumental compositions, mostly peşrev and semâî, which are anonymous or attributed to various composers. They are all written in a notational system often said to have been invented by Cantemir and therefore known as Kantemiroğlu Notası. However, according to recent scholarship, his system was a revision of an earlier and similar system of musical notation invented by the Mevlevî dervish Osman Dede (1652-1729), a composer and musician revered as the kutb-u nâyi (Pole of the Ney) of his epoch. In this sense, as above for Bobowski, also for Cantemir the relations with dervishes were far from a mere picturesque description.

8 Kutb (pole) referred to the axis around which the heavens turned. The term was applied to a figure of unrivalled sanctity and also to the foremost exponent of an art or science. For Cantemir’s treatise, see Wright 1992 and 2000. On the relationship between the musical notation system invented by Osman Dede and Cantemir, see Feldman 1996, 33, 52, 92.
Jean Antoine du Loir, *Les voyages du Sieur du Loir* (1654)

After these residents, we return to the description of a Mevlevi ceremony written by another traveller, this time French aristocrat Jean Antoine du Loir (XVII), published in 1654 and accompanied by a valuable and innovative – albeit very short – musical transcription from a setting of the verses beginning with *I ki hezar aferin bon nidge Sultan olur*, that inspired the title of this article [fig. 3]. The transcription is accompanied by a precious and accurate translation from Ottoman into French, that can be intended here as a sign of a deeper curiosity for the ‘Other’ and, at the same time, one of the first examples of Orientalism.

Deux fois la sepnaine un des leurs fait une predication dans leur couvent, & les femmes qui par tout ailleurs n’ont point d’entrée aux lieux où sont les hommes y assistent par un privilege particulier, estant bien raisonnable qu’elles soient admises aux devotions de ces Religieux amans. Celuy qui preche prend pour texte quelque versets de l’Alcoran & je vous assure que les plus devots Chrestiens pourroient profiter de la Morale de son Sermon.

Cependant tous les dervichs sont renfermez dans une balustrade pour n’estre pas emportunez de la foule des assistants, & pour n’estre pas troublez dans l’exercice de leur ordre, que ie vais vous descrire.
La predication estant finie, les Chantres qui sont dans une galerie, comme sont icy les orgues dans les Eglises, accordant leur voix avec des fluttes, qui pour estre merveilleusement harmonieuses sont defendues à tout autre sorte d’usage, commencent un Hymne à la cadence d’un tambour de biscoye. Voicy les paroles de cet Hymne, que j’ay notées, afin que ceux qui sçauent la Musique en puissent juger.9

I ki hezar aferin bon nidge Sultan olur,
Kouli olan kichiler husie-u hhakan olur,
Ayaghinung tozini sureme theken guceuzine,
Nesne guur gueuze xiim valihu heïran olur,
Che beiinnung catresin her kim ither dgiuresin,
Gungli guhert doluben sinesi umman olur,
Sanga direm, dedey salma deui dunsade,
Nefsi deuin zapriden dinde suleyman olour,
Sen malungne tapmaghil, xiochku saray yapmaghil,
Ol dourouchub yaptughung sung oudgi viran olour,
Beslemeghil icnugni nimet-u bircan ile,
Bir gun olur ol tenung damoude briaïain olour,
Her xichi kimal bolour senma ki deuler boulur,
Deuleti boulan kichi allah: boulan olur,
Her ki bougun velede inanuben yuz sure,
Yokhsoul ise bai olour, bai ise soultan olur.

Voicy l’explication de cette Hymne, dont asseurement vous trouverez le sens meilleur que le chant.

Ha combine de loüanges merite, & combien est grand ce Seigneur, dont toutes les esclaves sont autant des Rois. Quiconque frottera ses yeux de la poudre de ses pieds, verra quelque chose qui luy donnera tant d’admiration qu’il tombera en extase. Celuy qui boira une goutte de son breuvage, aura le sein comme un Ocean remply de piergeries & de liqueurs precieuses. Je te le dis, ò pere! Ne lasche point dans ce monde la bride à tes passions, quiconque le reprimera sera un vrai Salomon dans la foy. Ne t’amuse point à adore les richesses, n-y a bastir des kiosks, & des palais. La fin de ce que tu aurais basty n’est que ruyne, Ne nourris point ton corps avec tant des delicatessen & des friandises. Il arriveroit un iour que ce corps resteroit dans les enfers. Ne t’imagine point que celuy qui trouve des richesses trouve du bon-heur. Celuy qui trouve le bon-heur n’est autre que celuy qui trouve Dieu. Tout ceux qui se prosternent avec respect & humilité, croiront aujourd’hui en Velé, Seront riches, s’ils estoient pauvres, & s’ils etoient riches deviendront des Rois.

I ne vous ay point escrit cette traduction interlineaire, parce que la phrase du François ne se rencontrent pas avec celle du Turc, & i’ai cru que ce seroit traduire ces Vers assez exactement que de mettre ligne pour vers comme je vous l’enuoyer. Vous remarquerez

9 The following words appear in a small typeface under the musical score: Dons les caracterces on esté fournis par monsieur Ballard, seul imprimeur du Roy pour la musique (Whose characters were provided by M. Ballard, sole musical printer of the King).
seulement que le ay, ay qui est une particule d’exclamation, ni le mot agianum qui signifie mon ame, ne sont point partie des deux premiers Vers, mais que souvent il les mettent à la cesure & à la fin des couplets, & qu’ils ont plusieurs semblables mots qu’ils appliquent de mesme en chantant, mais a propos et selon le sujet.

Durant le premier Verset de cet Hymne tous les Dervichs sont dans une posture fort devote, assis sur les talons, les bas croisez & la teste baissée. Le Superieur qui est dans la queblé, orné d’une estolle de poil de chameau, frappe des mains aussitôt que le second commance, & tous les dervichs s’estant incontinent levée, les plus proche de luy passant devant le saluë, avec une profonde inclination de teste, & se met à tourner, pirouëtant petit à petit d’un mouvement si viste qu’à peine peut on s’apercevoir ; Celuy qui suit en fait autant, & aussi tous les autres qui sont trente ou quarante. Cette danse circulaire ayant duré quelquefois plus d’un demy-quart d’heure, dans son plus rapide mouvement cesse tout d’un coup au mesme signal qu’elle a commancé, & les dervichs, comme s’ils n’auoient bougé de la place où ils se trouvent, se remettent assis sur en leur premier posture jusques à ce que leur Superieur les fasse encore recommencer. Ainsi cette danse continûe quelquefois une heure et plus, a quatre ou cinq reprises dont les derniers durent toujours plus longtemps, parce que les dervichs sont plus en haleine & plus en bransle pour tourner, estans vestus fort à propos pour ce suiet d’une espece de lupon volant, taillé en rond comme les chemisettes des femmes en France. (du Loir 1654, 153-7)

Twice a week one of them makes a sermon in their convent, and the women who cannot enter elsewhere in places where there are men are granted a special privilege, so it is reasonable that they be admitted to the devotions of these religious lovers. The one who preaches takes as a text some verses from the Qurʾan and I assure you that many devout Christians could benefit from the moral of these sermons.

Meanwhile all the dervishes are gathered within a balustrade in order not to be disturbed by the crowd of the audience, and to avoid being troubled in the exercise of their order, which I am going to describe to you.

When the sermon is over, the singers, who are in a gallery like those which exist where the organs in churches are [kept] here, begin to tune their voices with some flutes, which are beautifully harmonious and are prohibited for any other use, beginning a hymn to the beat of a frame drum. Here are the words of this hymn, which I have written, so that anyone who knows music can judge.

Here you have the translation of this hymn, whose sense you will assuredly find better than the song.

Ah, how many praises he deserves and how great is this Lord, all of whose slaves are so many kings!

Whoever will rub on his eyes the dust of His feet will see something so admirable that he will fall in ecstasy.

Whoever will drink a drop of His wine, his breast will be like an ocean full of precious gems and liqueurs.

10 According to Soullier 1870, a tambour de biscayne is a sort of ‘tambour de basque avec grelots et castagnettes’, which means that it was a frame drum with cymbals. Du Loir very probably depicted an Ottoman def or daire.

11 The transcription from the Ottoman, beginning with the line I ki hezar aferin bon nidge Sultan olur, is provided above.
I tell you: O father! Do not let your passions run unbridled in this world, whoever will tame them will be a real Solomon of the faith. Do not indulge yourself by worshipping wealth; do not build kiosks and palaces: The end of what you have built is nothing but ruins. Do not feed your body with so many delicacies and sweetmeats: The day will arrive when your body will remain in hell. Do not imagine that one who finds wealth finds happiness. He who finds happiness is none other than he who finds God. All those who prostrate themselves with respect and humility, who believe today in the Friend, Will become rich if they are poor, and if they are rich will become kings!

I did not provide an interlinear translation, because the phrases in French do not correspond with those in Turkish, and I also thought that it would be tedious for you if I translated these verses so exactly that the lines were placed together. You will notice that I have omitted from the first verses the exclamations ay, ay, just as I have omitted the recurring term agianum, which means ‘my soul’, but often these are in the caesura and in the end of the couplets, and there are many similar words that may be used in the same way while singing, but according to the subject.

During the first verse of this hymn all the dervishes are in a very devout posture, sitting on their heels, their arms across the breast and their heads bowed. The Superior who is in the qibla, dressed in a robe of camel hair, claps his hands as soon as the second begins, and all the dervishes rise up at once, the nearest passing in front salutes him, with a deep bow, and begins to whirl, spinning little by little to attain a movement so rapid that it is difficult to see. The one who follows does the same, and so do all the others, who are thirty or forty. This circular dance, having sometimes continued for more than half of a quarter of an hour, suddenly stops at its maximum speed with the same signal that began it, and the dervishes, as if they had not moved from the place where they were, return again to the same posture, as if nothing had happened, remaining sitting in their initial posture until their Superior makes them begin once again. So this dance continues sometimes for an hour or more, four or five repetitions of which the final ones continue for longer, because the dervishes are more transported and aroused for whirling, being dressed very suitably for this task in a sort of a flying petticoat cut round like the chemisettes worn by women in France.

Many remarks could be made about this long passage written by du Loir, from the presence of women at the ceremony to the accurate and pioneering translation of the Mevlevî hymn Hey Ki Ezar Afer-
in, that inspired part of this article title, at a time when the study of Turkish was only beginning in Europe. The hymn, which is often reduced to its first four verses, recurs many times in the corpus of Melevi ceremonies, from the third selâm (salutation) of the ceremony (âyn) in makâm pençgâh, which is considered to be the earliest Melevî âyn, onward.13 While interested readers can listen to the hymn in many versions, I suggest the warm and intimate performance by the late Nezih Uzel (1938-2012).14

About the musical transcription, it seems worthy of note that, according to Turkish musicologist Feza Tansuğ, the du Loir transcription should have been the source of inspiration for the famous chorus of Dervishes entitled: ‘Du hast in deines Ärmes fallen’ from Ludwig Van Beethoven (1770-1827) The Ruins of Athens, performed in February 1812 and concluded by the ‘Turkish March’, still quite famous today.

Finally, the posture of the dervishes while they are sitting and the deep bow that they make to the shaykh before they begin turning are the same that we see today, although once again the speed with which they are said to turn seems very different from the severe and highly composed performances of the modern era.

7 John Covel, Extracts from the Diaries of Dr. John Covel, 1670-1679

The next description is that of John Covel (1638-1722), an English cleric and scientist who became Master of Christ’s College at Cambridge and Vice-Chancellor of the University. While serving in Constantinople as Chaplain to the Levant Company,15 Covel travelled widely in Asia Minor in search of ancient Greek texts. His diaries were published between 1670 and 1679 and contain a rather different account of dervishes, music, and musical instruments because they include so many details about finance and administration.

I was at the Dervises in Galata, which Dervise Mustapha the Näizam bashè,16 or head of the players of the pipe which they call Näi.17 He hath been there 14 years, his pay is 45 aspers; to the rest he payes 5, 6, 7, 8, or more, as they are deserving.

13 Texts of the hymns that are sung in the ceremonies (âyn-i şerîferîn güftelerîn) are conveniently presented in Heper 1979, 533-60.
15 The Levant Company was an English chartered company formed in 1581 and reformed in 1592 to oversee trade with the Ottoman Empire. See Wood 1935 and, more recently, Mather 2009.
16 ‘Head ney player’, i.e. neyzenbaşi.
17 Näi = a flute made out of a reed (note by John Covel).
They have 100 kilos of wheat per annum vacoof,\textsuperscript{18} 3000 aspers per man; from the G. S.\textsuperscript{19} 10 sheep at little Beiram,\textsuperscript{20} 100 at Ramazan. They have usual prayers in the houses, and he that is devout may pray all night long, fast etc. There are 4 Tekyes or monasteries, of them here one, two Kasoumpasha, 3 Bisicktash, 4 Yenicapon;\textsuperscript{21} on Stambal side there are eighteen sorts of them. These founded first by Molâh Hunkyöri, Harset meulanâh, for he goeth by both the names. Heretofore they preach’t, danc’t, and piped every Tuesday and Friday. 3 lyè here buried. 1. Arzéh Mahmet Effendi, a great benefactor to them; 2. Ismél Effendi, another benefactor, who was once their sheik (or head, though it signifies prince) and benefactor. 3. Ismaél Effendi, another benefactor, who built them 10 chambers and left 1,000 dollars. They let their neighbours be there buried for their money. Formerly, the Baltagee\textsuperscript{22} of Galata seraglio were buryed; now they have a corner apart. There Govisè Achmet is their Sheich now, who receives all the money and himself 1 ½ d. per day. Their musick is a Tamboor, and a long week small lute with wire strings, to which they sound their Nai or pipe, whereof they have two sorts, a base and a treble; for the middle ones partake of that to which they are nearest. The little pipes have 7 holes on the upper side all in a row, and an eighth at the bottom, a little of one side, and just in the middle (measuring from that lowest eighth hole upwards) on the back in a 9th hole. Some of these are a foot and ½ long; some lesse, some more. The long pipe hath six holes, on one side three, and three at equal distance, and on the back side, just half way there is a 7th hole. There is neither a fipple\textsuperscript{23} above, nor noze\textsuperscript{24} in the mouth, but the head is a horn sloped up and brought to a very fine edge, which leaning sideways to the mouth, gives the sound, as boyes (with us) used to whistle in acorn cups, this πλαγιαυλος;\textsuperscript{25} whence our flagiolet. Shepherds use small pipes of wood with such mouths, and some I have seen of the wings and thigh bones of Crowes, Bistards, Pelicanes etc.,\textsuperscript{26} from whence of old were cal’d tibia. These dervish pipes are very dear, not one of twenty proving good and true. The smallest and deepest he ask 3 dollars for, and some of the largest he valued at 20 dollars. One (which had belong’d to the Convent these 300 years) he valued at 50 dollars.; yet more for its sweetness, than antiquity. They play mournfull tones, but seldom any point of musick. They are all made of Indian canes, just as we make our fishing rods in England of; the workmanship and luck in proving good give them their price.\textsuperscript{27}

\textsuperscript{18} Vakouf = money from the mosque property (note by John Covel).
\textsuperscript{19} I.e. Gran Signore.
\textsuperscript{20} I.e. Ramazan Bayramı, at the end of Ramazan.
\textsuperscript{21} I.e. the Mevlevihânes of Kasımpaşa, Beşiktaş, and Yenikapı; Beşiktaş later moved to Bahariye on the Golden Horn.
\textsuperscript{22} I.e. baltacı, lit. a maker or seller of axes, a halberdier in the palace.
\textsuperscript{23} Fipple = a stopper. “In recorders, which go with a gentle breath; the concave of the pipe, were it not for the \textit{fipple}, that straiteneth the air much more than the simple concave, would yeild no sound” (Bacon, \textit{Nat. Hist.}, 116) (note by John Covel).
\textsuperscript{24} Noze = nozzle (note by John Covel).
\textsuperscript{25} πλαγιαυλος = Mod. Gr. a transverse flute (note by John Covel).
\textsuperscript{26} Still in use in the Greek islands (note by John Covel).
\textsuperscript{27} Dallam, Covel, Bent 1893a; 1893b, 168-70.
As we remarked above, Covel provides a pragmatic or even mundane account of the Mevlevî that might in places seem rather dull. Nevertheless, it includes very valuable information. After all, Covel is the first visitor who mentions the four Mevlevîhânes in Constantinople at the time, rather than the most famous Mevlevîhâne at Pera to which ambassadors, diplomats, and travellers were evidently taken as part of the usual tour of the city. He is also very accurate and indeed modern in his approach to musical instruments.

8 **Charles de Ferriol, *Recueil de Cent Estampes représentant différentes Nations du Levant* (1714)**

We shall examine now another description of Mevlevî ritual, which is accompanied by a precious musical transcription made by the Sieur Chabert. They appear in the famous *Recueil de cent estampes représentant les diverses nations du Levant*, published in 1714 and reprinted with additional plates in 1715 [figs. 4-5].

When Charles de Ferriol (1652-1722) was sent by Louis XIV as ambassador to the Ottoman court, he invited a young Flemish nineteen-year-old artist named Jean-Baptiste Vanmour (1671-1737) to accompany him. The collection of engravings in the *Recueil de cent estampes*...
représentant les diverses nations du Levant were made by Vanmour and served as models for a large number of later painters and engravers and, moreover, was the source for the most important engravings that depict Ottoman instruments, i.e. the *Gabinetto armonico pieno d’Instromenti* of Filippo Bonanni (1639-1725) published in 1716, immediately after the *Recueil*, which provides the first modern essay in musical organology, well described by Cristina Ghirardini (2013, 53). In our perspective, Ferriol in his *Recueil de cent estampes* wrote a few paragraphs entitled ‘Dervichs qui tournent’ in order to describe an engraving depicting Mevlevi dervishes and to introduce the rare musical transcription made by Chabert.

Cette Planche represente le Temple des Dervichs de Pera, qui est fait en Dôme; il est clair, & bien parqueté: il y a une Tribune où l’on met la Musique. On a joint icy l’Air noté que les Musiciens jouënt pour faire tourner les Dervichs: ils tournent les bras ouverts, & paroissent extasiez: les jeunes tournent d’une vitesse incroyable. Le Superieur & les vieux tournent plus lentement, & quand ils sont las, ils se mettent à genoux le visage contre terre. C’est la Musique qui les anime; ils prétendent qu’elle a quelque chose de divin: plusieurs ont assuré M. de Ferriol que, sans la Musique, ils ne pourroient pas faire trois tours sans tomber, au lieu qu’ils tournent près d’une heure.

La danse est précédée par la lecture de quelques passages de l’Alcoran que le Superieur, ou un des ses principaux Dervichs explique aux Assistans.
Le double cercle, qui est suspendu en l'air, ne sert qu'à mettre des Lampes dans les tems du Ramazan; & les Inscriptions qu'on voit au-dessus des colonnes, & autour du Dôme, sont des Sentences, ou des passages de l'Alcoran à la louange de Dieu. Il y a encore un Couvent des mêmes Dervichs sur le canal de la Mer noire.

This table shows the temple of the Pera Dervishes, which is a dome; it is clear and well parquetted: there is a gallery where the music is performed. We have added here the musical notation of the air which the musicians play in order to make the dervishes turn: they turn with open arms and seem in ecstasy: the young turn at an incredible speed. The Superior and the elders turn more slowly, and when they are tired they place themselves on their knees with their faces to the ground. It is music that animates them; they claim that it is in some way divine: many have assured M. de Ferriol that, without the music, they would not be able to perform three turns without falling, while they turn for nearly an hour.

The dance is preceded by the reading of some passages from the Qur'an, which the Superior, or one of his principal dervishes explains to the audience.

There is another convent of these same dervishes on the Black Sea channel.

Although concise, the description provided by Ferriol is accurate when compared to the travellers who preceded him. The passage “C’est la Musique qui les anime...” raises an important and difficult question. For centuries, Westerners believed that the dervishes whirled in response to the music. Dervishes themselves, however, offered a different explanation: ecstasy lies in human soul from the primordial covenant between man and God known in Turkish as bezm-i elest. The act of listening (samāʿ) revives this immanent but often disconnected inner state. What counts is the intention of the listener (niyya) toward the act of listening. With this in mind, it should be emphasised that there is no Sufi music per se, but, rather, music listened to by the Sufis. The views attributed to the dervishes by Ferriot are therefore intriguing and need to be explored in greater detail and at greater length.

28 Charles de Ferriol 1714. The expanded edition published in the following year included a second title page: Explication des cent estampes qui representent differentes nations du Levant avec de nouvelles estampes de ceremonies turques qui ont aussi leurs explications (Paris: Jacques Collombat, 1715). The passage cited above appears on page 26. The music score appears on page 27. In some editions, the caption above the score contains not only “Air sur lequel tournent les Derviches de Pera” but also “Noté par le Sieur Chabert qui était avec Mr. de Ferriol, et qui en a compose la Basse” (Air to which the dervishes of Pera turn, written down by the Sieur Chabert who was with Mr. de Ferriol and who composed the bass).

29 I.e. the Bosphorus.

30 Lit. ‘Assembly of Alast’. The first word is the Persian basm (assembly, meeting, banquet) and the second is Arabic, adopted from the question that God asked mankind on the Day of Creation: alastu bi-rabbikum (Am I not your Lord?). See Qur’an VII: 172.
Filippo Bonanni (1639-1725) copied five instruments from the above-mentioned *Recueil de Cent Estampes* for his *Gabinetto armonico pieno d’Instromenti* (1716): among these a rim blown flute *ney*, a central instrument for *mevlevî* dervishes culture, that he apparently interpreted as a cornet, and then a kettle drum, a long-necked lute, a zither and castanets. According to Cristina Ghirardini (2013, 53), Bonanni probably used a copy of the *Recueil*, which lacked the captions that gives useful information on each plate: this is maybe the reason why he does not mention the whirling dervishes of the *mevlevihâne* of Pera, which, as we saw, were one of the most renowned attractions of Istanbul for Western travellers, and where the music of *ney* were heard as in the reports we quoted above.
10 On Some Jean Baptiste Vanmour Works

The Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam preserves three paintings made by Jean Baptiste Vanmour (1671-1737), probably after the de Ferriol’s *Recueil* mentioned above. Two of them correspond to engravings of the same subject that we find in the *Recueil*: the ritual of the whirling dervishes at the temple of Pera [fig. 7], and a single dancing dervish [figs. 9-10]. A third painting depicts a group of dervishes during a convivial meeting in a private house [fig. 8].

His return to the topic should suggest that the picturesque theme had become, somehow, a stereotype. The very relaxed atmosphere of ‘Dervishes at dinner’ seems worthy of note: here three mevlevî dervishes, easily recognizable from their high conical hat (sikke), are playing ney flutes. The rendering is not accurate, but the flutes seem different in sizes: one may suppose a şah ney for the upstanding dervish while two mansûr, or a mansûr and a kız, for the sitting ones. Be that as it may, while they are playing other brethren are laughing, smoking and chatting, in an inner state rather far from the concentration required during a samâʿ (listening, audition, spiritual concert). The flask in the foreground, one may think, should know the reason for such a gaiety as well as for the flushed cheeks of the laughing dervish.

11 Charles Fonton, *Essai sur la musique orientale comparée à la musique européenne* (1751)

I mention only in passing a long and detailed essay written in 1751 at Constantinople by a French dragoman named Charles Fonton (1725-1793), illustrated by his friend Jean-Baptiste Adanson (1732-1803) and entitled *Essai sur la musique orientale comparée à la musique européenne*. The essay, unpublished and unknown until recent times, does not discuss the question of dervishes aside from an illustration in which two Mevlevî dervishes with their conical hats (sikke) are depicted playing the ney.

De Zorzi

*I ki hezar aferin bon nidge Sultan olur*. Dervishes Ceremonies in Constantinople

Figure 7 Jean Baptiste Vanmour, whirling dervishes at the Galata Mevlevihâne in Pera. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

Figure 8 Jean Baptiste Vanmour, dervishes at dinner. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam
Figure 9 Jean Baptiste Vanmour, *Dervich ou Moine Turc qui tourne par devotion*. From Ferriol, *Recueil de Cent Estampes*, pl. 25

Figure 10 Jean Baptiste Vanmour (workshop), *Dervish*. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

*De Zorzi*

*I ki hezar aferin bon nidge Sultan olur*. Dervishes Ceremonies in Constantinople
12 Lady Mary Wortley Montagu,  
*The Turkish Embassy Letters* (1763)

After this long procession of male travellers and artists, the next report comes from a woman, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689-1762), wife of the British ambassador Edward Wortley Montagu, who followed his husband in the capital when, in 1716, he was appointed British ambassador to the Sublime Porte. There, ‘on the field’, as modern anthropologists would say, she wrote many letters that recorded her impression of Ottoman society and culture. The letters were published posthumous in 1763 and among her acute observations, I will focus on her visit to a dervish centre, already a ‘must’ among Westerners, and the description of the Whirling Dervishes ceremony:

I had the curiosity to visit one of them and observe the devotions of the dervishes, which are as whimsical as any in Rome. These fellows have permission to marry, but are conned to an odd habit, which is only a piece of coarse white cloth wrapped about them, with their legs and arms naked. Their order has few other rules, except that of performing their fantastic rites every Tuesday and Friday, which is in this manner. They meet together in a large hall, where they all stand, with their eyes fixed on the ground and their arms across, while the imam or preacher reads part of the Alcoran from a pulpit placed in the midst; and when he has done, eight or ten of them make a melancholy consort with their pipes, which are no unmusical instruments. Then he reads again and makes a short exposition on what he has
read, after which they sing and play till their superior (the only one of them dressed in green) rises and begins a sort of solemn dance. They all stand about him in regular figure, and while some play the others tie their robe, which is very wide, fast round their waists and begin to turn round with an amazing swiftness and yet with great regard to the music, moving slower or faster as the tune is played. This lasts above an hour without any of them showing the least appearance of giddiness, which is not to be wondered at when it is considered they are all used to it from infancy, most of them being devoted to this way of life from their birth, and sons of dervishes. There turned amongst them some little dervishes of six or seven years old who seem no more disordered by that exercise than the others. At the end of the ceremony they shout out; ‘there is no other god but God, and Mohammed is his prophet’, after which they kiss the superior’s hand and retire. The whole is performed with the most solemn gravity. Nothing can be more austere than the form of these people. They never raise their eyes and seem devoted to contemplation, and as ridiculous as this is in description there is something touching in the air of submission and mortification they assume. (Montagu 1994, 130-1)

13 Giambattista Toderini, *Letteratura turchesca* (1787)

Our final encounter is with a scholar who is considered to be the last European traveller in the eighteenth century who made a significant contribution to the study of Ottoman music, bringing to an end an epoch that had been marked by a curiosity for Turkeries. Giambattista Toderini (Venice, 1728-1799) was a Jesuit abbot who arrived at Constantinople in October 1781, after a busy career as a scholar and teacher, in the entourage of the Venetian ambassador (*bailo*) Agostino Garzoni and his wife Pisana Querini Stampalia who had asked him to serve as a theologian and preceptor for their son. As he wrote in the introduction to his *Letteratura*, he remained in the city from October 1781 to May 1786 and lived in the house of the ambassador. During the first months of his sojourn, he began to devote any available time to research that followed his earlier interests. Little by little, however, the idea occurred to him that he should write a history of printing in Constantinople that would include a survey of all the books that had been published there. As the idea grew, he began to study Turkish literature in its entirety, pursuing his investigation through the main archives and libraries of the imperial capital and eventually producing the three volumes of his *Letteratura Turchesca* (Turkish Literature). They were published at Venice by Giacomo Storti in 1787, only a year after Toderini returned from Constantinople. The wide circulation and enthusiastic reception of his work by a European readership consisting of scholars and intellectuals seems to be proven by the many reviews that it received immediately after
its publication and by the two translations, into French and German,\textsuperscript{32} that were published within three years of its appearance. In the midst of the eighteenth-century curiosity for Turcherie, which had been nourished by the accounts of travellers, \textit{Letteratura Turchesca} provided a solid point of reference that was increasingly admired as a reliable source of information about Ottoman culture.

Through the centuries, \textit{Letteratura Turchesca} has also served as a source for the study of Ottoman music. The reason for its importance to musicologists is the lengthy Chapter XVI, consisting of thirty pages and two engravings, which appears at the end of the first volume. Entitled ‘Musica’, it contains observations on the subject that are often the fruit of Toderini’s conversations with Mevlevî dervishes. He deals with many topics and themes, from the history of Ottoman music, in which he follows Cantemir,\textsuperscript{33} to its theoretical basis in the context of Arab-Persian musicology, an alphabetical Greek and Arab-Persian notation, and a description of musical instruments and the division of the octave into twenty-four unequal microtones, ending in a series of epistolary exchanges with his Jesuit colleagues Abbott Pizzati (1732-1803) and Abbott Juan Andrés (1740-1817). Moreover, the chapter concludes with two illustrations that have become very famous: the first depicting a long-necked lute known as a \textit{tanbûr}, including its fretting and its inherent musical system of 24 unequal microtones, and the second of a composition entitled \textit{Concerto Turco Nominato Izia Semaisi}.

From a dense chapter written in eighteenth-century Italian, I have extracted only the passages that concern the Mevlevî:

\begin{quote}
La maggior parte de’ ragguardevoli Turchi, e signori piglian piacere della Musica, la quale, come usavan li Greki, entra nel sistema della loro educazione. Su false relazioni scrisse il Niebuhr,\textsuperscript{34} che i Turchi di condizione signorile crederebbono disonorarsi apprendendo la Musica. Nella sua Repubblica determinava Platone,
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{33} See Demetrius Cantemir, \textit{Histoire de l’Empire Othoman, où se voyent les causes de son aggrandissement et de sa decadence} (Paris: Le Clerc, 1743). The treatise \textit{Kitâbu ‘Ilmi’l-Mûsiki ‘alâ Vechi’l-Hurûfât}, which has been mentioned above, was not in wide circulation during the life of Toderini.

\textsuperscript{34} Toderini provides the following note: “Niebuhr, \textit{Voy. En Arabie, T.I.} p. 142”. He is referring to Karsten (or Carsten) Niebuhr (1733-1815) and to his \textit{Reisebeschreibung von Arabien und anderen umliegenden Ländern}, which was first published in 1772. French and Dutch translations of Niebuhr’s narratives were published during his lifetime. Toderini seems to have used the French translation that was published in the Netherlands: C. Niebuhr, \textit{Voyage en Arabie \& en d’autres pays circonvoisins}. Amsterdam: S.J. Baalde/Utrecht: J van Schoonven, 1776.
Most of the notable Turks and the nobility take pleasure in music, which, as it was among the Greeks, has entered their system of education. Based on an unreliable source Niebuhr wrote, that Turks of high social standing are convinced that their honour is diminished if they learn music. In his *Republic*, Plato recommended that the young apply three years to the study of this science. The Turks study and practice music for a long time, in particular on stringed instruments and on the Neî. They keep male slaves, and female slaves, who can play for their amusement. Yet, the nobles of high rank do not want to be heard in public, unless they play the Neî among friends, because it is considered to be an instrument of study.

This I learned from Ibraimo Efendi in the meadows of Bojux-derê, when a man of religious learning who was a friend of mine played for me in the company of the most talented Mevlevî dervishes, who came that day in order to make me listen to the sweetest sound of that instrument.

I Dervis Mevelî, così nominati dal Fondatore, avendo introdotto qual religioso culto la danza nel loro Oratorio (che in nessuna maniera vuol chiamarsi Moschea) coltivano molto la musica, e sono de’ migliori sonatori. Usano stromenti da fiato, e timpani, come vidi trovandomi presente alle turbinose lor danze, ove celeramente s’aggirano quasi un palèo. Suonano finamente il Neî, non usando, come noi, dell’estremità delle dita, fuorchè del mignolo, ma delle seconde giunture. Stromento egli è questo di malagevole imboccatura, essendo tutto aperto nell’alto, di singolare dolcezza, e somigliante alla voce umana. (1787, 241-2)

The Mevelî dervishes, who are named in this way after their founder, having introduced the dance as a religious devotion in their oratorio (which they would...
in no way call a mosque) practice music assiduously, and are among the best musicians. They play wind instruments, and kettledrums, as I saw when I was at their whirling dances, where they turn quickly in the manner of a spinning top. They play the Neï well, not using, as we do, the top joint of the finger, apart from the little finger, but using the second joint. It is a difficult instrument to play, being all open on the top, but of a singular sweetness and similar to the human voice.

Toderini makes the following comment about attempts at musical transcription in Ferriol, made by Chabert, that preceded him.

The melody, to which the dervishes dance, can be seen in European notes in the illustrious work of the Ambassador de Ferriol. However, when it was read and played on the violin by a talented master, the Turkish listeners did not recognise it at all and had a good laugh. To be honest, some tones are inexpressible in European notes. It is necessary to form new figures, and give them the correct value: a thorny task that requires prolonged meditation and unusual skill, both in our music as well as in Turkish.

Now let us see Illustrations I and II, which present to the reader a new attempt, a tentative approach to expressing Turkish music in our European notes, approved by the real experts in this music. Even non-experts, when listening to these Ottoman arias and sonatas, will be able to perceive in these notes the genius

39 Recueil de cent estampes de Mr Ferriol, 26. à Paris, 1714 (Toderini’s footnote). Here the author refers to the above quoted “Air sur la quelle tournent les Dervichs”: an analysis of this very particular musical transcription would give material for a whole other article.
and the spirit of this music, which will not happen if they play the musical scores arranged by Mr. Ferriol, French Ambassador at the Porte, or the earlier ones by bailo Donado mentioned above.

This knowledge may perhaps open a new field for the maestros to enrich and embellish Italian music. In this way they can shed new light upon scientific theory, and enlighten the obscure history of the ancient music of Greek and Latin authors.

Toderini is very acute in identifying Plato as a common source for the Ottoman conception of music as an ennobling practice while at the same time citing Islamic assumptions that music as an abstract science or as a source of amusement is licit, even if making a living by performing it would not be thought suitable for a member of the Ottoman elite. As he says, ‘the grandees do not want to be heard in public’. The descriptions of the Mevlevi are standard, aside from the conversation that he seems to have conducted with them in the meadows of Büyükdere. Again, he seems to have made a very acute distinction between a semâhâne and a mosque. He demonstrates that he knows the musical transcriptions that preceded him and he criticises them on the basis of a new formulation in which the musical scale is divided into twenty-four unequal microtones, a remarkable innovation if we remember that the Cairo Congress of Arab Music, at which the octave was divided into twenty-four equal quartertones, would not be held until 1932. The last part of his chapter is primarily concerned with theory, transcription, and interval ratios as well as the two famous illustrations. The first of these illustrations, which represents a tanbûr with its fretting and its inherent microtonal musical system, is discussed in detail by Toderini throughout the chapter.
The second illustration is of greater interest. It presents a composition to which Toderini gives the name *Concerto Turco Nominato Izia Semaısi*. With some variation, this is a composition that is now very well known: the *Hicâz Saz Semaısi* that concludes at least three Mevlevî âynîler. In chronological order, it concludes the âynî in *makâm beyâtî* composed by Derviş Küçek Mustafa Dede (d. 1683), the âynî in *makâm hicâz* composed by Musahip Vardakosta Ahmed Ağa (1724-94) and the âynî in *makâm hicâz* composed by Abdürrahim Kunhi Dede (1769-1831). Toderini or his assistants could have listened to the *hicâz son yûrûk semâı*i from at least one of these âynî and decided to transcribe it because they admired its beauty or because its presence in Ottoman music was so noticeable.

### 14 Final Remarks

The curiosity for the ‘different’, for the ‘other’, for ‘what we don’t have’ is maybe a key for all the descriptions and reports we listed above and this naïve curiosity should be also intended as one of the first signs of what became later a mass phenomenon as is modern tourism.

The publication of travel diaries had, of course, political implications that went beyond cultural curiosity: observing and describing the culture of the ‘other’ also meant to study the culture of the ‘enemy’, as were often considered the Ottomans, at least from the masses; at the same time, showing interest for such a culture was also an opening diplomatic move.

If European observers reactions to such ‘picturesque’ figures as the dervishes, were, after all, rather normal, I am wondering, as in the beginning, why did Ottomans, granting permissions to visit a dervish centre, think that European visitors would have enjoyed such ceremonies? What the *mevlevî* ceremonies was likely to have represented for Ottoman hosts? Was it a ‘performance’ of which they were especially proud? From a cultural and political point of view, *mevlevîye* brotherhood was certainly regarded by the Ottomans as a learned Sunni brotherhood, with many poets, musicians and calligraphers among its ranks, and with many adepts among the high-class milieu. Far from its aura, the political and symbolical role of the brotherhood for the Ottomans was evident in the enthronement ceremony itself of a new sultan, in which the so called ‘sword of Os-

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40 The *Concerto* has been recorded several times, for example by *Concerto Köln* with the Ensemble Sarband in *Dream of the Orient*, Deutsche Grammophon (2003), CD: 474 193-2, track 4.

41 During my first visit to Konya in 1990, the composition could be heard incessantly almost everywhere in the city and it resonated in my memory long after my return to Venice.
man’ (taklid-i seyf) was girded on to the new sultan by the prior of the brotherhood (tarikatçı dede), the Sharif of Konya. Such a privilege was reserved to the mevlevîs from the same Osman I (?-1323), mythical founder of the Ottoman dynasty, when he had established his residence in Konya in 1299, before the capital was moved to Bursa and then Constantinople. Yet, despite such an intellectual and political ‘respectability’ of the brotherhood, mevlevî ceremonies were, and still are, deeply rooted in a particular Sufi tradition as is samâ‘ (‘audition, listening, spiritual concert’), not exactly perceived as ‘orthodox’ in Islam and, rather, often severely criticized or radically prohibited elsewhere. This, somehow, reflects the multifaceted personality of its saint eponym, Persian language mystic poet Mevlânâ Jalâl ud-Dîn Rûmî (1207-1273), who was at the same time a renowned man of letters, a professor, an ‘alîm (scholar), a faqîh (doctor of the law) esteemed by the Seljuk rulers and an ecstatic, capable of whirling for days, according to the hagiography al-manaqib al-ʿarifin written by Aflaki (d. 1360), as it was for Mevlânâ’s friend and tutor, the wandering dervish Shams al Din Tabrizî (1185-1248) held in great esteem by unorthodox dervishes qalandār, that we met above in de Nicolay.

Europeans, in their reports, did not seem to perceive the complexity of Mevlânâ that, instead, had to be clear to Ottomans. Rather, they describe a ceremony in which dervishes whirl as spinning top, as a paléo, with the archaic Italian language by Toderini, somehow falling to the ground in ecstasy, shouting, like it happened, until recent times, in nowadays Xinjiang, in Indo-Pakistan area and elsewhere in the territories of Sufism. There is no need to say that all this is rather distant from nowadays mevlevî rite (âyin) in Turkey and its somehow forced composure.

In the light of Ottomans knowledge of Mevlânâ work, of his concept of samâ‘, of the multiple levels of the rite, of the beauty of the verses sung, of the complex compositions in Art music (maqâm) style, and of the intense whirling in itself, yes, a mevlevî ceremony must have been considered a ‘performance’ of which Ottomans were proud.

From another point of view, dervishes themselves should have been well aware of their position, and were not ashamed to be the subjects for engravers and painters, as is in our reports, as well as for early photographers, between 19th and 20th century, maybe foreboding the severe closure of all the Sufi orders and centres that would be arrived in 1925.

Few among Europeans observers, as Lady Montagu or Toderini, perceived that there must have been something ‘more’ in the rite, beyond its global atmosphere. Yet what did Europeans see in such rituals, aside from mere picturesque element? Maybe it is worthy to remember the simplistic current interpretation diffused through the world nowadays (not only among Europeans), which read in the mevlevî ceremonies the reflex of the ‘cosmic dance’: the Creation, the
stars, the planets, the angels, human beings, all moves and rotates in the drunkenness (mast) of Love. The evident platonic resonances in this must have resonated, even unconsciously, in the observers. Such a theory is partial, simplistic and does not take into consideration the emic interpretation, given by dervishes themselves, about the rite, but for the moment it seems better to stop here this already too long journey, thanking the kind reader for sharing with me a long stretch of road.

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