



## THE AESTHETICS OF TURKISH COFFEE CULTURE IN OTTOMANS

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### ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes the Turkish coffee culture as one of the most significant parts of dining culture in Ottoman period, and presents how holistic this tradition is with grand serving rituals, as well as interesting practices from coffee making tools and serving to exceptional serving traditions. The research also examines general composition schemes of the tools used during the service of the coffee and the motifs on these utensils. The purpose of this paper is to introduce one of the most characteristic attributes of the Ottoman period in terms of aesthetics, taste and socio-cultural life, and it presents the status and significance of coffee in Turkish culture.

**Key Words:** Coffee Culture, Turkish Coffee Culture, Ottomans Culture.

### INTRODUCTION

Turkish coffee in Ottoman Empire was one of the main beverages together with sherbet and compote (Kut, 2000, 145). Coffee arrived in Istanbul around 1550s and created a culture around its consumption in a very short period of time, and even though it is presumed that the court residents were first introduced to the coffee in the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, the first records in kitchen books about coffee dates back to 17<sup>th</sup> Century. These records however shows the sugar allocation for coffee that could only be consumed by the sultan, the mother of sultan, divan members, agas and other elites (Bilgin, 2004; 210-211). Therefore, we can only obtain information on general public's coffee consumption through notes written by that period's travelers and from literary scripts and records about coffeehouses.

Suleiman the Magnificent was the first sultan who appointed a *kahvecibaşı* (chief coffee maker) who was in charge of preparing and serving the coffee as well as the coffee sets, and he was the one who recorded when the coffee will be served and how the ceremony will be conducted (Bobovius, 2004; 91 - Bakla, 2007; 31-32).

Serving coffee in Ottomans; done with a ritual, using glamorous, finely crafted materials, holds a major significance in Ottoman's material cultural history. These coffee serving materials as part of our material cultural assets can be classified into three groups as coffee making tools, coffee serving materials and materials that enrich the ceremony. Turkish coffee making tools include containers used for roasting, cooling, grinding and storage; coffee serving materials include coffee *sitil* sets, coffee *güğüm*<sup>1</sup>, cups with or without handles, *zarf*<sup>2</sup>, trays, sugar cups, milk jugs and tray spreads embroidered with precious stones; and the materials used for elevating the process include dessert *hokka*<sup>3</sup>, jam cups, Turkish delight cups and sugar cups used for serving Turkish delight, jam and paste before or during coffee. All of these materials used for serving coffee are the elements that supplement this culture in Ottoman courts and mansions.

<sup>1</sup> Kettle

<sup>2</sup> A metal holder in which a cup or glass is seated in the middle

<sup>3</sup> Small, glass or earthenware cups



Serving coffee was bound by a protocol and a set of rules, and those serving the Turkish coffee worked as a team that could amount to seven people in palaces and wealthy households. One of the servers would carry the tray holding the *zarf* and cups, another one would carry the *sitil* set, and another server would follow them to the guest room carrying the macramé, one server would pick up the *zarf* and the cup, another server would pick up the coffee *güğüüm* from the one carrying the *sitil* and serve the cup with the *zarf* to the guest. The coffee tray, *zarf*, *sitil* and *güğüüm*, and macramé were all carried by different hands.

## CLASSIFICATION OF MATERIALS USED IN TURKISH COFFEE CULTURE

### 1.1. COFFEE MAKING MATERIALS

#### 1.1.1. Roasting

##### 1.1.1.1. Hand Roasting Tool

Coffee bean's contact with air causes changes in its physical and chemical composition. This is why the first factor that determines the taste of the coffee in a cup is the roasting. Required materials for roasting are: stirring pan and spoon. This procedure is done with a pan that has a long handle to keep the hand away from the fire, and a spoon, again with a long handle, connected to the pan with a chain. This tool is crafted with a delicate aesthetic and fine labor. A variety of engravings and intricate patterns decorate the handle. Sometimes, the name of the craftsman is also inscribed on the handle (Bursa, 2015; 252).



**Image 1:** Two coffee roasting pans foldable in the middle. One of them has a spoon connected with a chain. These spoons were used to stir the coffee roasted in the pans with long handles. Topkapı Palace Museum Collection 25/2927, 25/3478.

##### 1.1.1.2. Coffee Roasting Tool with Cylindrical Chamber

This tool used for coffee roasting is more suitable for coffeehouses or when larger portions of coffee are needed. The pan part has castors, so it can move more freely on the stove. To make storage easier, the pans were sometimes made foldable. The cylindrical shape was believed to



be inspired from brass coffee mill with a cylindrical housing, known as Turkish mill around the world (Ukers, 617). This tools are usually stripped from decorations and had no patterns.

**Image 2:** Coffee roasting tool with a cylindrical chamber that rotates around a shaft and roasts the coffee in a covered housing, Nihal-Murat Sungur Collection, Bursa



### 1.1.2. Coffee Cooler

This is a tool used for cooling the roasted coffee beans before they are grinded. They were made from wood or ceramic. Since ceramic is a fragile material, the coolers that survived are usually the wooden ones. These containers are generally palm sized and have flat, elliptical and circular shapes. On one end, there is a spout-like form that narrows like a funnel, with or without a lid, for emptying the coffee more easily. These containers look like decorative ornaments on their own since they have decorations that are specific to the period. These decorations mostly include geometric motifs, as well as botanical and animal figures. In addition, they are decorated with beads, metals, bones or antlers embedded into the wood. These decorations are not only for aesthetic or decorative purposes, but they also have functional properties that eases the process. These tools sometimes have handles in a tortoise or snake form as a general composition scheme.



**Image 3:** Wooden and ceramic coffee cooler with an open top, Turkish and Islamic Art Museum 4; Istanbul Archaeological Museums (Tiled Kiosk) 41/342.

### 1.1.3. Grinding

Grinding is the method of converting the roasted coffee beans into fine powder. For this purpose, mortars made from marble, wood, and bronze or brass mills were used.

#### 1.1.3.1. Coffee *Dibek*

It is a mortar used for grinding the coffee beans. These were usually carved from solid logs and had cylindrical bodies. Fresh coffee beans were roasted and cooled, then transferred into the coffee *dibek*, and grinded until they turn into small particles or powder. Grinding was made with a grinding handle or mallet called *dibek eli*.



Today, *dibeks* in the form of garlic crushers exhibit a large variety from most primitive and plain ones to highly embellished examples. These usually have cylindrical shapes and various gnarled decorations on their bodies. On one side, they have knob handles for holding with hand. Most of the wooden types have adornments with zigzag or linear patterns.

**Image 4:** Wooden *dibek*, Nihal-Murat Sungur Collection, Bursa.



### 1.1.3.2. Coffee *Değirmen*<sup>4</sup>

Coffee *değirmen* is a tool with cylindrical wheels used for grinding the coffee beans and operated manually. The large ones were usually for daily use, to grind and offer fresh coffee when guests arrive. They typically have a copper brass or wooden domed-like lid, a chamber where coffee beans are placed and a portable handle that rotates the wheel. The hand mills made from metal or sometimes from wood and metal, have a two-piece cylindrical body. The iron shaft of the lid is connected to the rotating handle. The coffee beans are placed into the chamber from the top, the lid is seated, and the handle is rotated. The grinding handle can be removed, and stored in the lid after folding. Ottoman coffee *değirmen*'s metal or wooden bodies usually had decorations. Apart from these *değirmen*s, other types include *oturak* mills that look like a small closet with a drawer on the front side of the cylindrical or cubic wooden or metallic body, and designed for use on a table or countertop with a rotating handle



connected to the iron shaft at the top and a broad, metallic bowl where coffee beans are poured. Underneath the bowl, there were wheels that crush and grind the beans. These *değirmen*s had a tray adjacent to the body on the front side. Therefore, this tool is called *değirmen*. Most of them had natural and botanical motifs carved by engraving.

**Image 5:** Coffee *değirmen*s with different forms, Nihal-Murat Sungur Collection, Bursa.

### 1.1.4. Coffee Storage Containers

#### 1.1.4.1. Wooden, Metal and Ceramic Storage Containers

These containers are boxes designed to keep the grinded coffee protected from air and light in order to preserve their aroma and taste for long periods of time. They were made from wooden, copper, brass, tombac or ceramic materials. Their inner chambers hold very little coffee. This is because coffee needs to be consumed rapidly, so it is grinded in small amounts. These boxes usually exhibit animal figures on their lids. Lion and birds are among the most used motifs. These figures are decorative portions of the container that also served as handles. It is believed that bird and lion figures were chosen because of their cultic characteristics. The surfaces of these boxes were adorned with low or high embellishments and by embedding certain stones.

<sup>4</sup> Coffee mill



**Image 6:** Ottoman, 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Tophane ceramic, h: 12.5 cm. dia:10 cm. Topkapı Palace Museum Collection 3434/1069.34/1069

**Image 7:** Ottoman, 19<sup>th</sup> Century, brass, w: 23 cm, h:9 cm, d: 3 cm. Nihal-Murat Sungur Collection. Bursa.

**Image 8:** Ottoman, 19<sup>th</sup> Century, wooden, w:17 cm, h:15 cm, d:8 cm. Nihal-Murat Sungur Collection, Bursa.

**Image 9:** Ottoman, 19<sup>th</sup> Century, wooden, Topkapı Palace Museum Collection 52/357.

### 1.1.4.2. Leather Storage Containers

Coffee bags were also used for storing coffee; but unlike others, were made from leather or fabric and their openings were closed by twisting a string. They were sometimes embroidered with silver threads or tinsels.



**Image 10:** Ottoman, leather, silver thread, dia: 30 cm. Topkapı Palace Museum Collection 31/251

### 1.1.5. Coffee Making Materials

#### 1.1.5.1. Cofeee Güğüm

These are materials used for making and serving Turkish coffee. They can be found in two types as metal and ceramic. Their body is enlarged towards the top, have lids and handles, have a beak-like opening in various sizes and usually made from brass or tombac. Coffee and cold water were poured into these beaked containers, then placed on a grill with cooled ember or on a stove top, and brewed slowly for a long time.

They usually have a thin neck, a round body at the bottom, a pear-like form with a slim waist, handles, and dome-like lids. The upper lid seats on a narrow opening. In the middle of the body, the sultan's signature (*tuğra/tughra*) or the craftsman's seal shaped like a *tuğra*, and sometimes the engraver's seal shaped like a *tuğra* is located. Their size changes between 16 to 22 cm. The lower part is wider to ensure it receives as much of the flame as possible, and its narrow opening is suitable to keep the volatile essence of the coffee. (Hattoks 2020,86)



Some of them had hand-drawn, engraved decorations. The ornaments were mostly botanical, naturalist embellishments. In addition, the top part of the handles were decorated with three dimensional figurines that look like small sculptures. *Güğüms* were generally made from copper and tombac metals, but it is also possible to see ceramic ones made in Yıldız Porcelain, Tophane Work (Kocabaş, 1962:12-13) and Çanakkale Ceramic (Yücel, 1985) (Yılmaz, 2002:93).



**Image 11:** Copper and tombac *güğüms*, Ottoman, 18<sup>th</sup> Century, Topkapı Palace Museum Collection 25/3517 and 25/3839.

#### 1.1.5.2. Cezve<sup>5</sup>

During early Ottoman periods, coffee was made in *güğüms*, but in later periods *ibriks*<sup>6</sup>, that have a slimmer body were used to make, or even boil coffee (Tarım, 2015; 214). In 19<sup>th</sup> Century (Yenişehirlioğlu, 2015; 307), *cezve* became the chief coffee making tool which was made from copper, brass or silver with a cylindrical body and a long handle to make coffee directly on the fire or a grill in coffeehouses. *Cezves* were inspired from the styles of *ibrik* and *güğüm*, and had lids initially, but then manufactured without lids in later periods. The reason behind this evolution in form might be to reduce the time it takes to make the coffee.

In some *cezve* samples, the opening had a beak-like form. The lid would seat on top, and the long handle was foldable. In addition, there were ones with castors to make rolling onto the



stove easier. These tools were usually very plain, without any adornments, but it is also possible to see richly decorated ones with their bodies, handles and lids adorned with engraving, embossing and openwork. The ends of the handles were made from ebony.

**Image 12:** Copper, brass *cezves*, 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Nihal-Murat Sungur Collection, Bursa.

<sup>5</sup> A small coffee pot

<sup>6</sup> Lidded pots used for serving coffee with a bulging body, thin long neck, a curled spout coming out of the body, and large handles



### 1.1.6. Coffee Serving Materials

#### 1.1.6.1. Coffee *Sitil* Set

*Sitil* set is a mechanism in the form of a bowl with legs and has a pit in the middle where ashy ember is placed; the coffee *güğüüm* is placed on this and has a chain attached to three points where they join in a ring at the top to be able to carry the set by hand. During the serving stage, the coffee preserves its heat, is poured into the coffee cups from the *güğüüm* and offered to the guests. Coffee *sitil* sets were made from gold, copper, brass and silver and decorated with carving, openwork, engraving and embossing techniques. *Sitil* sets crafted for the court contains tombac, silver and gold examples. This mechanism forming a set with the grill and coffee *ibrik* also have versions decorated with enamel and jewelry craftsmanship. On Topkapı Palace collections, there are a number of silver coffee *sitil* sets and *ibriks* with Harem-i Hümayun (Imperial Harem) women's names scripted on them.



**Image 13:** Coffee *sitil* and *güğüüm*, Ottoman, 19<sup>th</sup> Century, silver, dia. (*sitil*) 25 cm, Topkapı Palace Museum Collection, 166/594.



#### 1.1.6.1.1. Coffee *İbrik*

These are classic *ibrik* shaped containers with a bulgy body, narrow and long neck, and large handles with curled spouts. These are different from coffee *güğüüms* because of their shape and spouts. In addition to metallic coffee *ibriks* made from copper, tombac or silver, there are also earthenware samples in Ottoman period such as Yıldız Porcelain and Tophane Work.

**Image 14:** Coffee *İbrik*, Nihal-Murat Sungur Collection, Bursa.



### 1.1.6.2. Coffee *Sitil Puşidesi*<sup>7</sup>

These are richly decorated spreads used for serving coffee and demonstrate the peak Ottoman embroidery reached with their delicate and elaborate patterns. In the courts and mansions, these were used in coffee serving ceremonies by suspending from the tray the coffee was served or placing on the shoulder of the server holding the tray.

These were usually made from silky materials such as atlas or velvet, or woolen textiles called *lahuraki*<sup>8</sup> with approximately one meter in diameter and decorated with tinsels or silver threaded fringes around the edges. For coffee *puşides* made for the court, precious and semi-



precious stones, mostly pearls were used for decoration. Materials used in the embroidery of these spreads include gold and silver threads embroidered with *dival*<sup>9</sup>, *tohum işi*<sup>10</sup> and *sarma*<sup>11</sup> techniques as well as sequin techniques with silver or gold sequins on silk, velvet or taffeta. In decoration of the spreads, mostly flowers, leaves and branch motifs were preferred. The edges had silver thread fringes and the backs were covered with linings.

**Image 15:** Coffee serving *puşide*, Ottoman, 19<sup>th</sup> Century, woolen woven silver thread, sequin, dia. 64 cm. Topkapı Palace Museum Collection, 31/568.

### 1.1.6.3. Cups

The coffee cups used for serving coffee in Ottomans were usually made from ceramic and porcelain materials (Altındağ, Bayraktar, 1987; 22-24) which are earthenware materials.

In addition to Chinese porcelains and European porcelains, ceramic coffee cups were used that were made in Eser-i Istanbul (Taşçı, 1986: 88), Yıldız Porcelain (Ömür 1996: 99- Kalyoncu, 2015:), Tophane Work, Iznik Ceramic and Kütahya Ceramic. There were also cups made from antler, amber, onyx, Süleymaniye stone, jade hematite, crystallized porphyry quartz or aventurine. Initially *kallavi* (huge) cups without handles were used, but then their dimensions shrank in time, and saucers, *zarfs* and handles were added (Raby-Yücel 1986: 57). Coffee sets with handles made from Chinese porcelains can be dated back to 1735 – 1750 (Krahl, 1327).

“Coffee cups made in Tophane Work usually had 50-60 ml volume. Coffee cups without *zarfs* made in Kütahya Ceramic on the other hand, can be classified into two groups: normal sized cups with saucers and long-bodied cups with saucers” (Bakla, 230-237).

<sup>7</sup> Embroidered spread used during coffee service

<sup>8</sup> A kind of shawl fabric made in Lahore

<sup>9</sup> Gold or silver embroidery on velvet padded by cardboard

<sup>10</sup> Knot work

<sup>11</sup> Crewelwork



The opening of some these cups are sliced. Yıldız Porcelain Factory's cups on the other hand dated back to 1897 and 1905 generally, and had saucers and handles. Among Yıldız Porcelain cup examples are high and stemmed cups, those who bear the sultan's portrait, crested ones, and cups with or without handles, with or without saucers, and ones with or without *zarfs*. These cups were stamped with green star and crescent or gold. The cups stamped with gold bronze were specifically for the use of the sultan and royal family. Some of these cups were signed, and in crest decorations, interwoven geometric motifs were used extensively. (Kalyoncu, 2015).

By Europeanization of the coffee, milk was added, and the forms changed and diversified. With the start of 19<sup>th</sup> century, coffee cup sets evolved into coffee sets with the additions of creamers and sugar bowls (Ömür, 2015: 230).



**Image 16:** Cup without handles bearing the portrait of the sultan, and signed as "Rifat", 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Yıldız Porcelain Factory, dia: 5.8 cm, Topkapı Palace Museum Collection, 34/1642.



**Image 17:** Embossed stamp, cup and saucer bearing the portrait of the sultan, and signed as "Ali", 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Porcelain Factory, dia: 6 cm, h:4 cm, Topkapı Palace Museum Collection, 34/815.

#### 1.1.6.4. Cup Zarfs

These are containers, usually with stems, where cups without handles were seated during serving. The hot cup with no handles is placed into the *zarf* to avoid burns. These were part of the coffee cup sets, and the ones used only with cups without handles were usually metal (Tarih ve Toplum; 57-Bilirgen, 2002; 98). Those made from copper, tombac, brass, silver and gold are metal *zarfs*. *Zarfs* were also made from different materials such as ceramic and porcelain. In their manufacturing process, metalwork techniques were used including niello, embossing, carving, engraving, openwork and filigree; and for the ones specially made for the court; lacquer, gold, gold bronze, enamel and jewelry were used. There were also *zarfs* made from precious and semi-precious stones such as onyx, turquoise, crystallized quarts, hematite and lapis lazuli in addition to the organic materials such as wood, antler, tortoise shell, ivory, bone, pearl, rosewood, ebony, baobab, sandalwood, cherry and coconut shell. In Ottoman period, it is possible to see various examples of *zarfs* in terms of materials and craftsmanship (Kuşoğlu, 1987: 26-27).

There were also earthenware *zarfs* made from European porcelains as well as Kütahya Ceramic and Tophane Work. The uniqueness of Kütahya *zarfs* is especially noteworthy. Kütahya ceramic *zarfs* can be grouped into three as openwork (ajour, perforated) *zarfs*, cup and *zarf* combined forms, and cup and *zarf* combined forms where the *zarf* is decorated with perforations (Kaya, 2008; 560-564).



**Image 18:** Silver-diamond cup *zarf*, Ottoman, 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Sadberk Hanım Museum Collection.

### 1.1.6.5. Coffee Tray

These are materials used for serving Turkish coffee and made from copper, brass, wood, silver or porcelain with a flat surface. The trays with varying sizes and forms such as round, rectangular and oval had botanical prints on them in earlier periods, and embellishments in baroque style in later periods. The royal family in the court had special silver or gold trays. There were also enamel, gold bronze and jeweled trays. Gold and silver trays were decorated with various metalwork techniques including engraving, applique and filigree. Trays that could only hold one or two coffee cups were called “cup trays”. Round ones include ceramic or tombac trays.



**Image 19:** Tray, ottoman, 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Tophane Work, dia: 29 cm, Topkapı Palace Museum Collection, 31/568.

### 1.1.7. Coffee Serving Supplements

#### 1.1.7.1. Dessert Cups

In the harem, to supplement and enrich the presentation, it became a tradition to serve Turkish delight, jam and paste before the coffee. Dessert *hokkas*, jam cups, Turkish delight cups and sugar cups used for this purpose were among the other elements that complement the coffee culture in Ottoman courts. Dessert coupes were introduced with European table settings with European porcelains. It is possible to describe dessert coupes as glasses with lids and handles, sometimes with saucers. Dessert coupes were made from Eser-i Istanbul and Yıldız Porcelains as well as Tophane works (Kalyoncu, 2015).

The lidded glass form also called as dessert coupe are also described as sugar cup, dessert *hokka* (Altındağ-Bayraktar, 2007; 31), cups with handle, lidded cup, and “*maa tabak kapaklı beyaz bardak*”<sup>12</sup> (Kalyoncu, 2015-Delibas, 1988;69,70,82,87), “*kapaklı tatlı çanağı*”<sup>13</sup>. Cups

<sup>12</sup> White glass with saucer and lid

<sup>13</sup> Lidded dessert bowl. The indicated phrase is taken directly from the 1880 Heritage records of Rafia Sultan, daughter of Sultan Abdülmecit. For the document, please see: Özge Samancı, Continuity and Change in the



with handles and lids usually formed a set with their saucers. There are examples of Europe, Eser-i Istanbul, Yıldız Porcelain and Tophane works cup sets. Yıldız Porcelain cup sets usually had green star and crescent stamps. These cup sets were decorated with subjects from the nature such as botanical and animal motifs (Kalyoncu, 2015).

The reason why Chinese porcelain and Iznik ceramics had no coupe forms might be that the sultan was using “coupes made from onyx, crystal, jade and turquoise” (Withers, 1996; 90-91) in 19<sup>th</sup> century, and dessert was being served in bowls. During 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the forms of Chinese porcelains included “lidded glasses” (Raby-Yücel, 1986; 68).



**Image 20:** Hokka-dessert set with saucer and lid, dia: 22 cm, h: 18 cm, Yıldız Porcelain, Topkapı Palace Museum Collection, 34/ 383.

**Image 21:** Hokka-dessert set with saucer and lid, dia: 29 cm, h: 13.5 cm, Yıldız Porcelain, Topkapı Palace Museum Collection, 34/ 390.

**Image 22:** Hokka-dessert set with saucer and lid, dia: 38.5 cm, h: 13 cm, Yıldız Porcelain, Topkapı Palace Museum Collection, 34/ 1716

### 1.1.7.2. *Gülabdan*

These are bottles used to sprinkle rose water with pear-shaped body, thin long neck, narrow opening with a lid, usually perforated. There are *gülabdans* made from gold, silver, porcelain, glass, crystallized quartz, tombac and ones decorated with precious stones. Together with censers, they ensure spaces and people smell nice. There are examples of *gülabdan* made from different materials as well as sets with trays made from the same material and technique used for the service.

In the harem, by the second coffee maker (steward/vekilharç) foreman, *guests were served rose water with gülabdan*<sup>14</sup>. The rose water was served with *gülab* (rosewater) macramé or *gülab* towel”.

Culinary Culture of the Ottoman Palace in the 19th Century, Unpublished Master’s Thesis, Boğaziçi Ü. Social Sciences Institute, 1998, p: 127.

<sup>14</sup> The Turkish culture has the tradition to serve rose water and use rose oil since Central Asia. They preserved this tradition when they arrived in Anatolia. Similar to the Edirne Palace, the Topkapı Palace had rose gardens, too. On the south side of the Sur-i Sultanı area forming the topography of the Topkapı Palace, there were large gardens where rose and various plants were grown. This is why these gardens are called “Gülhane (rose-home) Gardens”. In Gülhane Pavilion located in these gardens, rose water was produced from beautiful roses, and since this was not enough for the court, roses were brought in from the Edirne Palace. Especially when “Helvahane Books” are examined, it is clear that fresh roses, rose water and rose sherbet was being purchased from Edirne <sup>14</sup>.The most important rose kinds provided to the court’s consumption from the gardens were “verd-i ahmer” (red rose) and “verd-i sakız” (rosa damascena).



**Image 23:** Chinese made *gūlabdan*, Ottoman, 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Porcelain, silver, h: :23 cm, Topkapı Palace Museum Collection, 15/5578.

### 1.1.7.3. *Buhurdan*<sup>15</sup>

Incense is a substance burned in a censer for its aromatic vapors during religious ceremonies and meetings or after meals to eliminate foul odors. *Buhurdan* on the other hand are containers where fragrant plants are burned in crowds and confined spaces to make them smell nicer. Ash and ember were placed inside the *buhurdan*. Over these, dry, fragrant plants were placed such as agalwood, sandalwood, spruce and amber. *Buhurdans* were used in Ottoman courts, mansions and religious spaces. They form a significant part of ceremonial tradition. They had legs, and perforated or caged lids for dissipating the vapors. It was placed on a board. Their lids had pointed or dome-like shapes. They were made from copper, brass, silver, tombac and porcelain. Some were also decorated with precious stones. In addition to small *buhurdans* carried on a tray, there were also large, permanent ones placed inside the religious spaces specifically.



On *ulufe* (salary) days and ambassador visits, while *Mehterbaşı* (head of janissary band) and *Vekilharç* (steward) used to serve rose water to the ambassador and their entourage, *Mutfak Emini* (kitchen custodian) served incensory to the Grand Vizier and other senior officers (Bilgin, 2004; 36). Especially after the fifteenth day of Ramadan, it was a tradition to serve rose water to the sultan. The rose water produced in Seferli Ward in Enderun was distributed to the court members, council of ministers, harem and ulema in elegant crystal bottles (Divan-i Lügati Türk, 359).

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**Image 24:** Silver *buhurdan*, Ottoman, end of 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Sadberk Hanım Museum.

<sup>15</sup> Censer



## Conclusion

In this study where coffee culture of the Ottoman period is explained, coffee serving materials that were used in Turkish coffee culture's grand rituals that are still popular today were examined. The research demonstrates that serving coffee was a ceremony in Ottomans, a visual feast, and drinking coffee was a magnificent whole from its making to serving and the rituals afterwards. In line with Turkish Islamic art's general philosophy, the coffee culture was one of the characteristic demonstrations of simplicity on the outside and magnificence on the inside. In fact, all tools specific to the coffee serving culture exhibit rich decorative elements beyond their functionality and parallel to Turkish Islamic art's embellishing tendencies. Decorations applied in other traditional arts were adapted to materials and forms of the coffee tools' as well as the surfaces of the materials. One of the most noteworthy elements is the use of miniature animal figures as decoration elements on these tools.

With this study that sheds light to the Ottoman period's socio-cultural structure by taking coffee culture as example, it becomes clear that how rich this culture's roots are, how this tradition still continues by adapting to modern era and how it will survive the future in line with current conditions. The reason behind this is in Turkish culture, drinking coffee has become a cliché phrase, and became synonymous with deep, quality and pleasant conversations. The source and roots of this phrase is clearly based on Ottoman period's coffee culture, traditions and splendid rituals.

In addition, this exceptional and grand culture is one of the most significant indicators of the magnificence of the Ottoman period, and an important element that demonstrates the Turkish socio-culture's richness to the world.

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