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Coffee and Turkish Coffee Culture

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INTRODUCTION

Coffee ranks as one of the world's major commodity crops and is the major export product of some countries for centuries. In fact, coffee ranks second only to petroleum in terms of legally-traded products worldwide. In 2003, coffee was the world's sixth largest agricultural export in terms of value, behind wheat, maize, soybeans, palm oil and sugar (Lloyd's, 2006). Coffee represents 71% of all the world caffeine consumption followed by soft drinks and tea. Coffee, along with tea and water, is one of the most frequently-drunk beverages (Anonymous, 2003).

The name of coffee is thought to come from the name of Kaffa, a city in the southeast Ethiopia, where coffee is produced. The name of coffee, which is used as the word wine in Arabic, has been accepted widely in daily life with the passing of time (Gürsoy, 2005). Another explanation about coffee is that it is derived from the word "kuvvah" which is used with reference to power as a beverage itself gives people refreshment. It is assumed that coffee is called in this name due to its effect to prevent sleep (Hattox, 1998; Çağlarırnak and Ünal, 1999).

Coffee production: Although coffee has almost 70 kinds, only ten of it is produced commercially. Most widely produced types are; *Coffea Arabica*, *Coffea Canephora* and *Coffea Liberica*. The most widespread of all these is *Coffea Arabica* (90%) (Desem, 2000; Kummer, 2003). The type of arabica having the origin of Brasil and Central America is a type of coffee blended with high quality coffee beans and neatly roasted.

Coffee is a delicate plant grown laboriously in tropical zones. Coffee tree starts giving fruit when it is 3-4 years of age (Gürsoy, 2005). The part where coffee is produced is the bean. A fruit generally has two beans. When the beans turn into red, it means that they are ripening and they are collected without damaging them. Coffees are roasted; this darkens their color and alters the internal chemistry of the beans and therefore their flavor and aroma. Blending can occur before or after roasting and is often performed to ensure a consistent flavor. Once the beans are roasted, they become much more perishable (Toros, 1999). It takes heat to spark the chemical reactions that turn carbohydrates and fats into aromatic oils, burn off moisture and carbon dioxide, and alternately break down and build up acids, unlocking the characteristic coffee flavor (Nebesny and Budryn, 2006).

Coffee in history: When we examine the legends about the discovery of coffee, it is clear to us how the culture of coffee developed. A shepherd named Khaldi living in the region of realized one day that his sheep mostly wandering around lazily in the heat became very active after eating the fruit of a tree and got surprised and he himself boiled the tiny fruit of this tree and drank it. After a while his energy increased and he realized that the beats of his hearth also increased (<http://www.denizce.com>, 2008).

According to another legend; Prophet Solomon visited a town during his travel and saw that the residents were suffering from an unknown disease. Over the command of the Archangel Gabriel, he gave the drink obtained from the coffee beans brought from Yemen and they recovered from that illness (Hattox, 1998).

Depending on hearsay, highlands of southern Ethiopia is the region where coffee plant naturally grows. In the antiquity, local people used to grind the beans of this plant and bake bread and this food was one of the basic needs of the tribal people in this period. Coffee was first recorded as the fruit of an evergreen tree grown in the size of a bush in Ethiopia. Over time, it was cited in the records of wanderers that these fruit were collected before they were ripen, dried and roasted and after grinding they were turned into a thick soup with an addition of salt and oil and then they were consumed in the form of dried bread. It was added in the materials of a caravan for long journeys for the purpose of bread. Coffee was used as a nutrition material before it was used as a beverage. Coffee was also used as a natural healing medicine by religious people for the first time and using it as a beverage became widespread (Hattox, 1998; Desem, 2000; Batur, 2001; Gürsoy, 2005).

According to another legend; a person named Ash-Shazili, a sufi from Moha, managed to live in the desert for a while without eating and drinking anything but coffee. Over the fact that it healed a kind of disease as scabies, some of the students of Shazili turned back to Moha with the knowledge of its uses and they made it widespread from that time onwards (Hattox, 1998).

It is claimed in another legend showing coffee used by sects that the Sheikh of a sect, Ali Ibn Omar ash-Shazeli introduced coffee to the people around him in the period when he was exiled to Mokha by Emir Sadeddin, and it became widespread among the members of the sect. The major cause why coffee became common in the

culture of Sufism is that coffee makes the mind awake due to the caffeine it contains and eliminates sleep, dervishes become energetic during long praying meetings and that it ensures mystical feelings to become more profound (Batur, 2001).

The spread of coffee throughout the world: Though the exact date when coffee was brought into the Ottoman Empire isn't known, it is reported by historians that coffee was brought to Istanbul after military campaign to Egypt by Selim I in 1519 (Gürsoy, 2004). However, only a small group was able to taste coffee in this period. Coffee was consumed as a relaxing beverage instead of alcoholic drinks, which are forbidden to consume in Islamic thought (Gürsoy, 2005). Over time, the habit of drinking coffee became a dispensable part of the daily life of both men and women. According to Evliya Çelebi, famous traveller and historian, there was a coffee house for Kösem Valide Sultan, the mother of the Sultan, in Topkapi Palace in Istanbul, Turkey (Gürsoy, 2005).

The introduction of coffee to the cuisine of the palace was in the period of Mehmet IV. Coffee was offered to the guests in the palace together with sweets and sherbets, sweetened fruit juice. It is claimed that there was a position of "head of coffee makers" in the palace. The importance paid to coffee increased so much that the water of the coffee to be presented to the Emperor was brought from the fountain of Gümüşsuyu at the hill of Eyüp in Istanbul. The coffees of the Emperor and the guests visiting the palace were offered in golden gilded cups and Turkish delight (lokum) was accompanied with it. In 1475, the world's first coffee shop was opened and that was followed by the establishment of more coffee houses in Istanbul (Gregoire, 2004).

A century after coffee was introduced to Ottoman in the early 17th century, it was taken to Italy first and to France later by Ottoman tradesmen. An Indian named Baba carried coffee to India. However, coffee was not a significant commodity in this country until the British occupation of it (<http://www.focusdergisi.com>, 2008). Venetian tradesmen visiting Istanbul in 1615 imported coffee from Mecca to Europe. Also, first coffee import was made from Alexandria to Marseilles in 1660 and a coffee house was opened in Marseilles in 1670 (Desem, 2000). The fame of Turkish coffee was first become known by Ottoman Ambassador nice chat Süleyman Aga (1669). Women tried hard to have the honor of drinking a cup of coffee in the palace of Süleyman Aga in the period he was in the office; it is not known the whether it was the ceremony where coffee was offered in small cups or the taste of coffee attracting people. It is also obvious that Turkish coffee became a fashion among Parisian society, that Ottoman left sacks of coffee beans behind during the siege of Vienna and that a person frequently visiting Ottoman side during the siege asked what they were doing with those beans and



Picture 1: Drinking a cup of coffee in the street was a way of life of modern woman in 1900. Laureano Barrau, "A spring Day in Boulevards" Richard Bongun wooden gravure



Picture 2: Coffee Roaster

after learning the function of coffee beans he introduced coffee beans to Vienna (Hanauer, 1907; <http://www.denizce.com>, 2008).

The biggest problem of spreading coffee throughout the world in those years was that the coffee producing areas and transit trading routes were in the dominance of Ottoman Empire. Europeans attempted a few times to import coffee directly from Arabia in order to eliminate the means Ottoman use. However, their efforts were a failure. The Dutch attempted a highly risky operation in 1600s. They carried the coffee saplings they bought in Arabia to their colony, Indonesia, through ships. They started to grow coffee in Jawa Island in particular. They extended their plantation to Sumatra and Bali Islands later on. On the other hand, France didn't want to stay



Picture 3: Hand Mill



Picture 5: Wooden Hand Mill



Picture 4: Hand Mill



Picture 6: Coffee Roasting Ladle

behind such a trading (Heise, 2001; <http://www.focusdergisi.com>, 2008). Bringing coffee plant to France from Holland was through diplomatic ways. A French delegation visiting Yemeni Sultan in 1715 was able to obtain a few branches of coffee sapling. This pillage was neatly carried to Reunion Island and coffee plantation was started in this island. This attempt of France caused the British and Dutch to react suddenly. In 1715, Dutch ships were carried to Surinam and British ones was directed to Jamaica. In this way, Central and Latin America were introduced with coffee after Far East and Pacific islands (Lloyd's, 2006; Hopkins, 2006; <http://www.focusdergisi.com>, 2008).

Due to the fact that Brasil, in particular, has a convenient climatic condition for coffee, it became the most significant trading commodity in Brazil. Today the largest producer of coffee is Brazil. Brazil made some reforms in order to become independent from Portugal colony in 1882. Brazil became a coffee producer for the world with such facilities as constructing more roads, slaves and cheaper labor force (Toros, 1999; Pendergrast, 1999; Heise, 2001; <http://www.focusdergisi.com>, 2008).

Types of coffee and turkish coffee: Coffee is named according to the way it is brewed not to the land it is grown. Here are the types of coffee depending on how they are prepared; Turkish Coffee, Mirra, Espresso, Capuccino, Vienna Coffee, Ireland Coffee, Mazagran Coffee etc. (Desem, 2000). Coffee was named as Turkish coffee with a method prepared in cezve, a narrow-topped small boiling pot, or *güğü* developed by Turks.

Turkish coffee is coffee that is prepared in a specific way. It is common throughout the Middle East, North Africa, Somaliland and Balkan countries. The method of preparation is believed to have originated in Damascus and become widespread during the Ottoman Empire-hence the eventual appellation 'Turkish coffee'. Coffee culture is highly developed in the Balkans region, where this kind of coffee is the dominant method of preparation. As for preparation features of Turkish coffee, it is the oldest method of preparing coffee. It is made up of foam, coffee and grounds. It is a type of coffee leaving a long lasting taste at someone's palate



Picture 7: Coffee Cooler



Picture 10: Brass Cezve



Picture 8: Coffee Cup



Picture 11: Cezve with a foldable handle



Picture 9: Coffee Cup Casing Cup, Ladle, Cup and Tray

thanks to its soft and velvet like foam. With its thick syrup, it stimulates flavor buds in the mouth extremely and causes a permanent flavor in the mind. It is softer, more aromatic and has more consistency than other types of coffee. It is easy to distinguish from others with its aroma and foam peculiar to it. It is the only coffee of which ground is used to tell the fortune. It is peculiar because there is no need to filter the coffee grounds as it sinks at the bottom of the cup after it is cooked. As sugar is added while it is cooked, there is no need to

add sugar later on as is the case in other coffees. It is healthy because the ground at the bottom is not consumed (Küçükkömürlü and Seren Karakus, 2009). In a recent study the composition of roasted coffee was given like this; 0.8-1.8% caffeine, 9% protein, 30.3% lipids, 0.4% volatile acids, 4.2% nonvolatile acids, 1.6% alkaloids, 4% ash, 2.5% water, 35% phenolic components and coloring chemicals peculiar to coffee (Işıksoluğu, 2001).

Tools used in the preparation of Turkish coffee: Several examples of tools used in the preparation and offering of coffee are given below. Coffee grinding mill called *degirmen* is the necessary equipment to prepare Turkish coffee consists of a narrow-topped small boiling pot called *cezve* or a teaspoon and a heating apparatus. The ingredients are finely ground coffee, cold water and (if desired) sugar. It is served in cups (*fincan*) Some modern cups do have handles. Traditional cups did not, and coffee was drunk either by handling the cup with the tip of the fingers or, more often, by placing the cup in a *zarf*, a metal container with a handle.



Picture 12: Casing Coffee Cup



Picture 14: Wooden Hand Mill



Picture 13: Brass Hand Mill



Picture 15: Coffee Box

Older type of Turkish coffee is usually prepared sugar free. When someone desired to give different and nice aromatic feature to the coffee, he would place a piece of aroma-giving material at the bottom of the cup in a small box. Mostly used materials were jasmine, camation and cardamom. (Gürsoy, 2004).

Turkish coffee is brewed from the highest quality coffee beans of Arabia, which is not grown in Turkey. The reason why it is called Turkish coffee is the way it is brewed (<http://www.mehmetefendi.com>, 2008).

Preparation of turkish coffee: The ways of preparing coffee, the best Turkish coffee is made from freshly roasted beans ground just before brewing. A dark roast is preferable but even a medium roast coffee will yield a strong aroma and flavour. The grinding is done either by pounding in a mortar (the authentic method) or using a mill (the more usual method today) and the end result is

a fine coffee powder. Beans for Turkish coffee are ground even finer than the grind used in pump-driven espresso makers; therefore, Turkish coffee should be powdery. It is the finest grind of coffee used in any style of coffee making. For best results, the water must be cold. Therefore, if sugar is desired, an easily dissolvable form should be chosen (<http://www.mehmetefendi.com>, 2008).

The amount of water necessary can be measured using the cups. The coffee and the sugar are usually added to water, rather than being put into the pot first. For each cup between one and two heaped teaspoons of coffee are used. In Turkey, four degrees of sweetness are used. The Turkish terms and approximate amounts are as follows: plain, no sugar, little sugar, half a leveled teaspoon of sugar, medium sugar, one leveled teaspoon and a lot of sugar, one and a half or two leveled teaspoons. The coffee and the desired amount



Picture 16: Coffee Box



Picture 17: Coffee peddler (coffee seller on street in the 7th century form (<http://www.coffee.com>, 2008)

of sugar are stirred until all coffee sinks and the sugar is dissolved. Following this, the spoon is removed and the

pot is put on the fire. No stirring is done beyond this point, as it would dissolve the foam. Just as the coffee begins boiling, the pot is removed from the fire and the coffee is poured into the cups (<http://www.mehmetefendi.com>, 2008).

Coffee in folk medicine: Coffee has been used for different purposes for many years. It is known that it has been used as a treatment for diarrhea in summer time in the form of a pill made up of lemon juice and coffee by consuming and consumed when hungry. It has also been applied in the case of a headache by spreading a piece of coffee on sliced potatoes and put it on the forehead and it is believed that it is a less dangerous painkiller compared to usual ones. It is also reported that when someone has a whitlow, the finger is dipped in hot coffee and that it gives relief to the finger. It is a well-known application of public vets giving a poisoned animal coffee (Küçükkömürter and Seren Karakus, 2009).

When a towel is hold over the burnt coffee, the smoke of coffee penetrates into it. As it is applied to the chest, it helps relieve bad cough. People suffering from rheumatism and kidney stones drink coffee. Those addicted to coffee have a headache unless they drink it. It is reported that the active material in coffee, caffeine, gives a relief in the case of headache as it has a function of stimulation over brain. Coffee is also used for the treatment of gout and kidney nephrological diseases (Üçer, 1998; Tan, 1999). It was reported that green coffee bean was used in the treatment of rheumatism, kidney stones and as antipyretic. The liquid prepared of roasted and grinded coffee was used as an anti-drowsiness cure, a relief from headache, a heart strengthening cure and an antidote against alkaloid poisoning (Baytop, 2001).

As coffee helps digestion system, drinking coffee, especially after meals, has become an indispensable tradition of Turkish cuisine. Besides, it is reported that it strengthens mind and has a sedative effect on body. When it was first introduced in London, it was sold as a medicine at pharmacies. Some writers, poets and painters would perform their arts over a cup of coffee, as they believed that coffee refreshes their mind (Toros, 1999).

Coffee is not solely a drink in Turkish culture, but it is also a medicine in the absence of a doctor or medicine and the symbol of hospitality and a good reason for coming together for chatting as in a Turkish proverb; "I feel like neither coffee nor coffeehouse, what I need is just a chat and coffee is only a reason for it". Due to the need for chatting, people established coffeehouses in such a way that they believe the saying "A cup of coffee has an influence on the guest lasting for forty years" wholeheartedly.

Although tea replaces coffee in daily life, the saying of "drinking someone's coffee" is considered to be the start of him/her to marriage in Turkish culture and tradition. When decided on wedding one week before engagement ceremony, coffee and sweet are offered to the guests and these are brought to the house of the boy in the morning of the ceremony (Üçer, 1998). On the other hand, when people visit the house of the girl, she prepares coffee for the guests and the fact that she prepares coffee with a great deal of foam is an indication of how skillful she is. Therefore coffee is a significant symbol at the first step of marriage (Tan, 1999).

The black coffee offered in Turkish culture has become creditable for someone. The saying "the coffee pot of the pheasant is black, but it lasts for ever" shows how sincere the person in offering it (Üçer, 1998). Coffee has a distinctive place at the hospitality of Turkish people and it still has the same importance in this culture (Küçükömürler ve Seren Karakus, 2009).

Another tradition for Turkish coffee is reading and telling fortune looking into the coffee cup after drinking coffee, which is very common among women. They keep their wishes in their mind and make coffee cups upside down and leave them to cool. As they are turned upside down, coffee grounds make some traces and symbols on coffee cup and the plate and some specialists in this issue comments on the traces and people have fun. Even if it is said that telling fortune through coffee cups belong to Turkish Ottoman world, such a habit is encountered in some earlier Ottoman states, such as Greece, Bulgaria, Egypt, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina ([http:// www.ilef.ankara.edu.tr](http://www.ilef.ankara.edu.tr), 2008).

Coffee in verbal culture

Coffee at proverbs and sayings: The most common Turkish proven is "A cup of bitter coffee has an influence on the guest lasting for forty years". Those drinking coffee from each other are friends from that time on and this friendship lasts for a long time, symbolically forty years. Another saying "The face of coffee is black, but it makes your face white (creditable) means that although blackness of coffee recalls some negative meanings, this negativity is eliminated by offers which make people creditable on others. A similar approach is visible at the saying "the coffee pot of the pheasant is black, but it lasts for ever" (Açıköz, 1999).

The Other Proverbs with Coffee:

- He is the helper of coffee grinder
- You can send the poor with a cup of coffee, but what about the rich.
- As dark as the hell, as strong as death, as sweet as love.
- Be dear as coffee, be rich as its grounds
- Coffee is black but it is offered to gentlemen (Fowler, 2005).

Coffee in mania: While coming together and chatting, people tell each other manias having coffee culture in

them. First two lines of these manias, which are considered to be the preparation lines, help the teller and the listener communicate easily and they are adorned with coffee vocabulary.

Coffee comes from Yemen
Nightingale comes from the grass
White heeled girl with white chest
Comes from bath every day.

As a drink, coffee addresses to the taste of those keen on his palate and is considered as a drink of pleasure for the addicted people. However, there were some activities against coffee as in the case of a reaction to a new product in the earliest times. It was claimed that it is forbidden by the religion, as it is turned into coal and detrimental to health. Some fat was (religious decisions) by Sheikh Ul-Islam were given in the period of Ottoman Empire and coffee was forbidden. In this period, coffee lovers opposed to these decisions and there became two groups around coffee. People applied to Bostan-zade Mehmet Efendi, Sheikh ul-Islam in the period of 1589-1598 and Bostan-zade replied the letter with his poem and said that coffee is not detrimental for health but useful, it relieves pains, prevents vomiting, it is a cure for eye lip acnes, good for asthma and also it removes grief and gives pleasure.

Coffee in folk tale: Coffee in folk tales is not a component of metaphor and simile as in poems but it is also described as a special drink. In the folk tale named "My Only God", a boy drinks coffee in the coffeehouse of the Lords and offers coffee to a man. It is of importance that coffee is a drink to be offered in this folk tale.

It is shown in classical poetry that coffee included in literature just as a drink to be offered during chats was varied in folk tales (Jacob, 1998; Açıköz, 1999).

Coffee in tongue twisters: The most common of these tongue twisters, which are not expressed in any, written texts and considered to be a saying, are;

I feel like neither coffee nor coffeehouse,
What I need is just a chat and coffee is only a reason for it
Gets pleasure the lover of coffee from boiling of coffee
Becomes tempted the donkey from the play of pony

By residing, by moving
By drinking coffee,
By smoking tobacco
By picking up tulip and hyacinth

Oh! My friend of pleasure,
Be free from grief
Let your firman be in your purse
Let your folk tale be told
We never eat just bread,
However hungry we become

We eat sugar, drink Yemen coffee and smoke,
We drink and smoke if we find it
Unless we find, we give it up (Açıkgöz, 1999)

Coffee in puzzles: During the times when chatting becomes the best while drinking coffee, some puzzles are asked to make chatting enjoyable. People ask puzzles giving some clues dealing with the color of coffee, its smell, where it comes from, its preparation, the ingredients it has, cup, mortar, mill and so on (Üçer, 1998; Birsal, 1983; [http:// www. focusdergisi.com](http://www.focusdergisi.com) 2008).

Some of the puzzles concerning coffee are:

- Its cup is white, its soup is black and a sip of it forty liras.
- Black boiler boils, black boy plays
- They say it comes from Yemen, they say it is drunk easily, the addict knows its taste
- Pie cooks in Istanbul, you smell it.
- I had a strange dream; I saw a meal cooked without salt.
- As I put it on fire it enlarges, as I pull back it dies.
- I put it on fire and it vomited, I pulled it back it reserved (Açıkgöz, 1999).

Conclusion: Coffee is one of the mostly consumed beverages. Due to the fact that coffee beans imported from Ethiopia was prepared by roasting in order to offer it to the rulers and it was admired by many people as it has very pleasant taste have a distinctive place in establishing coffee culture in the period of Ottoman. Although it was forbidden by the Emperors hanks to its stimulant effect, it was made widespread in Europe first and in America Continent in coming years. Besides its effect of giving pleasure, it has been used widely at coffeehouses and verbal culture.

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