Defining a Turkish Drum: Musical Instrument Classification and the Politics of Power

By Nicholas Ragheb

Since the 1970s, there has been a sustained scholarly interest in the musical instrument classification schemes of local communities, and increased attention to the ways that these schemes reflect culturally specific concepts and values (Kartomi 2001:298–303). Emphasizing the need to account for the socially embedded nature of musical instruments and their conceptualization, Jan Mrázek notes how much is lost when we "separate the physical object from local meanings, contexts, associations, and experiences" (2008:101). He argues that "each kind of instrument is different, not primarily because of what vibrates in or on the instrument (as the standard classification would lead us to believe), but because each grows from and into human lives and worlds differently" (ibid.:59). Mrázek's succinct and well-crafted statement implies that the differences that act to define musical instruments in our worldviews are not stable, unchanging categories. Instead, our understanding of what distinguishes one instrument from another is the result of an ongoing production of difference that is shaped through social interactions, including the production of embodied meanings in musical performance and instrument construction and the production of discourses within formal written texts and informal speech. In this article, I explore how the conceptualization of the Turkish goblet-shaped drum is shaped by different modes of discourse that share certain structural features, which reinforce hierarchical power relationships. Specifically, I examine how the act of classifying a goblet-shaped drum as either a "*darbuka*" or a "*dümbelek*" is implicated in hierarchies of gender and class.

Recently, ethnomusicologists have paid increased attention to the direct impact that musical instruments have on people and things, understanding this capacity to impact human and non-human entities as a form of agency (Bates 2012; Roda 2014, 2015; Tucker 2016). While these approaches have produced new insights through a focus on material culture and a recognition of the potential influence of non-human actors on social networks, their efficacy is limited when dealing with phenomena that are unique to the human experience, which include social norms and taxonomic conceptualization. Some scholars have proposed models for integrating materialist approaches into larger theoretical frameworks that incorporate both materialist and interpretive perspectives (e.g. Rancier 2014; Waksman 2003:251). However, these models have generally taken either the physical or the conceptual boundaries of the instrument for granted. Building on the observation of Erich von Hornbostel and Curt Sachs that musical instruments (and their taxonomic boundaries) are "alive and dynamic" (1961 [1905]:4), as well as Ali Jihad Racy's insight that both the physical structure and the symbolic meaning of a musical instrument exists in a dynamic and dialectical relationship with "surrounding physical and cultural realities" (Racy 1994:xi), I will examine the musical instrument as a dynamic concept whose articulation to particular physical forms is socially and historically contingent.

The Socially Conceived Musical Instrument

In order to illustrate how the conceptualization of a musical instrument goes well beyond a consideration of its physical characteristics, I will begin with a brief story attributed to the journalist Refii Cevat Ulunay (1890-1968) by the great Turkish folklorist Sadi Yaver Ataman. This story revolves around the ambiguity between two Turkish percussion instruments, the *kudüm* and the *çifte na?ara*. Although clearly different from the darbuka drum, these instruments also exhibit a similar ambiguity in their delineation. Similar to the types of goblet-shaped drums that I will discuss below, the kudüm and the çifte na?ara are physically indistinguishable, while at the same time presenting a stark contrast with regard to the performers, spaces, and linguistic referents associated with them. Both the kudüm and the çifte na?ara are closed-bottomed, paired kettle-drums played with mallets. However, the term kudüm references a history associated with the *tasavvuf* music of Sufi orders, the caretakers of an Ottoman art music tradition, while the term çifte na?ara is associated with supposedly itinerant Romany musicians (often referred to by the more derogatory term "gypsy" or the Turkish equivalent "*çingene*") performing in folk and popular music idioms. Ataman's retelling of this story presents a confrontation between the two social worlds in which these instruments and their identities are embedded:

Gypsies [*çingeneler*] gathered in the field next to the Yenikap? Mevlevi Temple merry-making, while playing

zurna and çifte na?ara. The gypsy playing the çifte na?ara got so excited that the çifte na?ara burst. One of the gypsies was sent forth to the Mevlevi Temple. To the head kudüm-player he said:

-- “Give me your ‘çifte nara’ for a little and let us play it. Afterwards we’ll bring it back” he said.

-- “This is a kudüm-ü ?erif, buddy. Get lost!”—and like that he kicked out the gypsy, retreated to the presence of Seikh Osman Salahaddin Efendi and explained the situation.

Sheikh Efendi:

-- You shouldn’t have ruined his good time. You should have given it to him.

The head kudüm-player, distainfully:

--“But sir!” he said “He calls the kudüm-ü ?erif a çifte nara”

Sheikh Efendi with a charming smile:

--“Dear one” he said “In the hands of a gypsy it is a çifte na?ara, and when it enters the temple it is a kudüm-ü ?erif once more…”

(Ataman 1997:441–442) [1]

In this story we see two instruments, the kudüm-ü ?erif and the çifte na?ara, distinguished by characteristics going well beyond their physical composition. The wise Sheikh is able to understand the transformative power of their social context and explains to his indignant disciple how the same musical object may be one instrument “in the hands of a gypsy” and another instrument when it enters the Sufi temple. In one instance the instrument is defined in relation to the performer, and in another its identity is shaped by the physical and social space in which it resides. While the çifte na?ara (now often referred to as the “*nakkare*”) and the kudüm are physically indistinguishable, their positionality within a broader social context provides the associations necessary for us to distinguish them. In other words, the existence of two distinct instruments known as the çifte na?ara and the kudüm is the result of differences that are socially constructed. Any historical examination that reduces these instruments to purely physical artifacts will obscure their socially constructed origins, as will any examination of their social context that ignores the socially constructed quality of their identity. An examination of the Turkish darbuka and dümbelek must take the Sheikh’s lesson to heart, and take into account not simply the physical structure of an instrument, which is itself variable and historically contingent, but also the interconnected nature of performer, space, and language that contribute to the identity of the instrument. A final lesson also emerges from this short tale: the passionate reaction of the disciple indicates to us that these distinctions matter to those who construct and maintain them. Being conscious of the socially contingent nature of the darbuka and dümbelek helps us to understand how the perception of these instruments and the boundaries of their identities have changed over time, but this awareness also leads us to question why these perceptions and distinctions matter.

In order to better understand how the conceptualization and representation of musical instruments are connected to broader underlying social processes, it is useful to clarify the positionality of those who are classifying and representing them. While scholars of organology have often distinguished between instrument classification schemes produced by the foreign researcher and those that emerge tacitly from within a local context, it is important to note the ambivalence inherent in this perspective. Margaret Kartomi distinguishes between “culture-emerging” and “observer-imposed” organological classification schemes, describing culture-emerging schemes as those that “emerge informally within a culture” and “tend to reflect the broad socio-cultural ideas of the culture that produced them” and observer-imposed schemes as those that are “conceived and imposed by an insider or outsider musician, scholar, or museologist, usually in written form" (Kartomi 2001:298). While Kartomi’s categories of culture-emerging and observer-imposed schemes are useful for emphasizing the different goals of classificatory frameworks and their relative embeddedness in particular cultures or subcultures, at a more fundamental level these terms are built upon a dichotomy of cultural insider versus cultural outsider that is easily problematized. These categories obfuscate a number of interrelated power relationships that are culturally and historically contingent, including the relative authority of written culture over aural culture, the authority of explicit knowledge over tacit knowledge, the power of the foreign researcher over the local informant, and the authority of

knowledge produced within the bounds of large academic institutions over knowledge produced within the course of everyday life. In particular, one might point to the ambivalent status of the Turkish scholar or professional musician who is part of the music culture being studied through upbringing and has a shared ethnic or national identity, while at the same time separated from it through his or her academic training and place in an elite academic institution. While Kartomi appears to identify professional training as well as the choice of written communication as more important than insider or outsider status as an indicator of the degree to which a classification scheme reflects “broad socio-cultural ideas” of a particular culture, I would argue that this is not always true, particularly when culture is understood as encompassing marginalized communities and spaces associated not only with so-called authentic or folk life but also empowered communities and power-laden spaces associated with urban life, academic institutions, and the influence of transnational cultural flows and shared cosmopolitan ideologies.

I limit the scope of my discussion here to the classificatory and representational practices involving the goblet-shaped drum within Turkish and late Ottoman culture. I argue that observer-imposed schemes produced by Turkish music theorists and folklorists in written publications and the culture-emerging schemes, explored in historical studies as well as in my own ethnographic observations of Turkish musicians and instrument makers, are better understood as interrelated cultural practices of classification and representation that are all embedded in the same power structures of a shared cultural milieu. I explore the interrelated nature of these practices through language, tracing the fluid transformation of linguistic referents for the Turkish goblet-shaped drum and the gradual coalescence of the terms darbuka and dümbelek as broadly applied organological categories. Following this, I discuss how associations between particular spaces, performers, and the physical instrument reveal further connections between gender and the imagining of an exotic Other, and how these images feedback to shape the Turkish conceptualization of the musical sound of the drum. Finally, I explore how these social expectations concerning the gender and ability of the performer filter back into language by musical instrument names as derogatory slang terms. Because my primary focus in this article is to reveal the contiguous nature of dominant social hierarchies between different cultural domains, I focus primarily on forms of classification and representation that are produced by empowered groups: namely urban male academics, musicians, and instrument makers. I hope that this study will provide some context for future research exploring the perspectives of Turkish women drummers, and the ways in which these gendered hierarchies are maintained, resisted, or subverted.

The Rise of the Darbuka and the Dümbelek

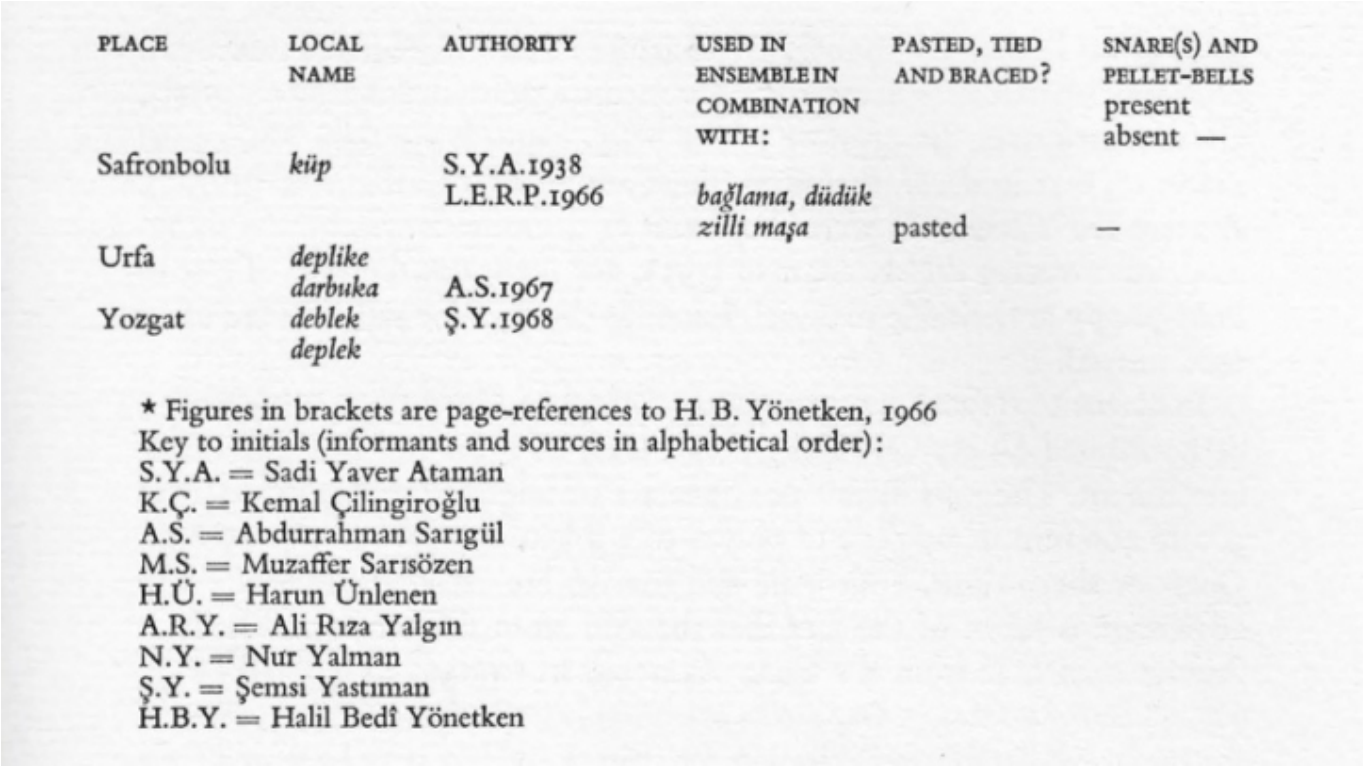
When I first began researching the Turkish darbuka, I understood it to be a drum consisting of a roughly two-foot long necked cylindrical shell made from metal or ceramic materials and topped with a synthetic or animal skin head. In addition to its physical structure, I saw the instrument being used frequently in countries across the Middle East, in performances ranging from those recognized as the most traditional, authentic forms to more explicitly hybridized popular musics, intermingling folk and art musics with transnational jazz, hip hop, and rock. I assumed that the widespread use of the instrument, along with its many different local names and idiosyncratic methods of production were the indicators of a long history of diffusion and diversification of the instrument in the region. In modern times, the names *tabla*, *dirbakki*, *dumbak*, and darbuka all refer to physically similar goblet-shaped drums in different regions of the Near East, in addition to countless regional variants (Marcus 2007:46; Picken 1975:116; Hassan 1999:416). In 2007, near the end of my first year of studying percussion instruments in Istanbul, I began to meet members of an older generation of drummers who performed Turkish *sanat* and tasavvuf music and would sometimes identify their drums as darbuka-s but also use the name dümbelek- in an effort to distinguish the physical construction and performative context of their instruments. Several years later I studied tabla with a professional Egyptian drummer in Austin, Texas, and while his technique, repertoire of rhythms, and aesthetic sensibilities were quite different from those that I was exposed to in Turkey, he clearly identified the Egyptian tabla and the Turkish darbuka as the same instrument. As I began to formulate research questions regarding the goblet-shaped drum, it was this ambivalence that drove me to question my object of study and how to delineate its boundaries. Is the Turkish darbuka the same instrument as the Egyptian tabla, or the Iraqi *dumbek*, or are these separate but related instruments? Is the modern cast aluminum darbuka that emerged from workshops in Turkish cities the same instrument as the variety of goblet-shaped ceramic drums that have existed in Turkish villages for centuries, or are these different instruments? Rather than adopt a set of distinctions that privilege one perspective or another, I examine the different strategies through which these perspectives are formed. In doing so, I focus on the different identities of the Turkish goblet-shaped drum and the eventual consolidation of these identities into two instruments known as the darbuka and dümbelek. I argue that the representational boundaries formed by the conceptualization of the Turkish darbuka and dümbelek reveal

embedded hierarchies of power that implicate gender, ethnicity, and social status.

Historically, the name darbuka has most often been associated with goblet-shaped drums that were constructed with copper or aluminum shells in cities such as Istanbul or Ankara, while the ceramic goblet-shaped drums that were commonly used in villages were locally made and their names varied across different regions of Turkey. Laurence Picken's organological reference *The Folk Musical Instruments of Turkey* contains an entry for goblet-shaped drums that draws on the work of nine prominent Turkish scholars between 1938 and 1968, and includes information on the local names and physical characteristics of goblet-shaped drums in thirty-one Turkish provinces (Picken 1975:115-33). Picken's survey indicates that the name dümbelek was the most common regional name for ceramic, village-made drums during this period, followed by the names darbuka, *dümbek*, and *deblek* or *deplek* (ibid.:117-9). This historical survey, as well as my conversations with drummers living in Istanbul who had migrated there recently from different regions of Turkey, confirm that locally produced ceramic drums appear throughout Turkey, more commonly in southeastern provinces bordering Syria, and relatively rarely on the eastern Black Sea coast (ibid.:131). While the term darbuka applied to a much narrower subset of Turkish goblet-shaped drums in the early 20th century, this term was applied more expansively over time. The variety of names for goblet-shaped drums in Picken's survey is striking. While it is possible to dismiss these differences as purely linguistic, it is important to note that the drums also contain a number of physical differences. Picken notes some of these differences such as the overall size of the drum, the use of pellet bells or snares, and whether the head is attached with paste, rope, or both (see Figures 1a and 1b below). One interpretation of the presence of these physical differences, the use of strikingly different names, and the differences in the typical music and accompanying instruments in different local contexts is that these goblet-shaped drums are distinct percussion instruments.

PLACE	LOCAL NAME	AUTHORITY	USED IN ENSEMBLE IN COMBINATION WITH:	PASTED, TIED AND BRACED?	SNARE(S) AND PELLET-BELLS present + absent —
Ankara	*dümbelek*	N.Y.1967			
Antalya	*deblek*	Ş.Y.1968			
	deplek				
Aydın	*debülbek*	H.B.Y.			
	dümbek				
Balkesir		H.B.Y.(138)*1959	*ut, keman, saz, cura, tef, düdük, kemançe*		
Dursunbey	*darbuka*				
		L.E.R.P.1961	*cura, bağlama, kaşık, zilli maşa*	pasted and braced	
Edremit	*darbuka*	H.B.Y.(142)1959	*bağlama*		
Bitlis	*dümbelek*	L.E.R.P.1966		small, pasted; large, pasted and braced	
Bodrum	*dünbek*	H.B.Y.(148)1959	*kemane*		
Bolu	*dümbek*	L.E.R.P.1966			
Mudurnu	*dümbelek*	L.E.R.P.1966			
Bursa	*dümbelek*				
	tesdümbek	H.B.Y.1967			
Çankırı	*dümbelek*	Ş.Y.1968			
Denizli	*darbuka*	L.E.R.P.1962		pasted	—
Edirne	*dabruka*	L.E.R.P.1966		pasted	—
Elâzığ	*dömbek*	L.E.R.P.1966		pasted	—
	dümbelek	H.B.Y.(99)1944			
Eskişehir	*dümbek*	Ş.Y.1967			
	dümbelek				
Gaziantep	*darbuka*	L.E.R.P.1962		small, pasted;	—
	deblek			large, braced	—
	deplek	Ş.Y.1968			
Hatay					
Reyhan	*dümbek*				
(Türkmen)	*deblek*	H.B.Y. (private communication)			
İzmir					
D.K. 986	*darbuka*	M.S.1962		tied and pasted	+ 3 pellet-bells
Kars	*dömbelek*	K.Ç.1950			
Kırklareli	*dabruka*	L.E.R.P.1966		pasted	—
Kırşehir	*dümbelek*	Ş.Y.1968			
Konya	*dümbelek*	Ş.Y.1967			
Kütahya	*dümbek*	H.B.Y.(112)1938			
		L.E.R.P.1961		pasted and tied	—
Manisa	*dümbelek*	H.B.Y.(143)1959	*def, voice*		
Soma	*dümbek*		*def, cura, zilli maşa*		
Tarhala K.					
Muş	*damburka*	L.E.R.P.1966			
Niğde	*deblek*	H.Ü.1966			
Seyhan					
Adana	*darbuka*	L.E.R.P.1966		pasted	—
Trabzon	*tarbuka*	H.B.Y.(77)1946			
Türkmen	*deblek*	A.R.Y.1940		pasted and braced	+
Zonguldak	*darbuka*				
Ereğli	*dömbelek* (old name)	L.E.R.P.1966			

FIGURE 1A: Survey of goblet-shaped drum nomenclature and construction based on sources from 1938 to 1968 (Picken 1975:118)



PLACE	LOCAL NAME	AUTHORITY	USED IN ENSEMBLE IN COMBINATION WITH:	PASTED, TIED AND BRACED?	SNARE(S) AND PELLET-BELLS present / absent —
Safronbolu	*küp*	S.Y.A.1938 L.E.R.P.1966	*bağlama, düdük* *zilli maşa*	pasted	—
Urfa	*deplike* *darbuka*	A.S.1967			
Yozgat	*deblek* *deplek*	Ş.Y.1968			

* Figures in brackets are page-references to H. B. Yönetken, 1966
Key to initials (informants and sources in alphabetical order):
S.Y.A. = Sadi Yaver Ataman
K.Ç. = Kemal Çilingiroğlu
A.S. = Abdurrahman Sarıgül
M.S. = Muzaffer Sarısözen
H.Ü. = Harun Ünlenen
A.R.Y. = Ali Rıza Yalgın
N.Y. = Nur Yalman
Ş.Y. = Şemsi Yastıman
H.B.Y. = Halil Bedî Yönetken

FIGURE 1B: Survey of goblet-shaped drum nomenclature and construction based on sources from 1938 to 1968 (Picken 1975:119)

In contrast to the variety of names for these regional ceramic percussion instruments, goblet-shaped drums made from metal in Turkish cities have consistently been referred to as darbuka-s over the past century. The popularization of the metal goblet-shaped drum in urban musical genres is generally associated with its use by Hasan Tahsin Parsadan in the nightclub style of *fas?l* music, popular in the 1930s and 1940s (Rona 1970:469; Öztuna 1989:140). While there is little evidence concerning the construction of the earliest metal drums in Turkey, a number of musicians and instrument makers with whom I spoke with in Istanbul credit Parsadan with introducing the material innovation of copper and brass drum vessels. Ahmet Külik, a darbuka player working with Turkish Radio and Television remarked to me in an interview that Parsadan commissioned his first metal darbuka from the artisan Emin Taflan in the Beyaz?t area of Istanbul (interview, 16 August 2011, Istanbul). This introduction of new instrument production methods using new materials and a new urban context led to the emergence of the darbuka drum as distinct from numerous regionally produced, ceramic goblet-shaped drums. Picken alludes to this twice, first by explaining that his survey of folk instruments does not include a discussion of the copper darbuka-s that "are made . . . largely for concert use . . . in Istanbul" (1975:119), and later in his discussion of the use of the term darbuka in the area of Safranbolu to refer exclusively to "city-made drums with aluminum or copper shells" (ibid.:117). Mahmut Gazimihal's book *Türk Vurmal? Çalg?lar?* (Turkish Percussion Instruments)[2] confirms this distinction noting the use of the goblet-shaped drum deblek in Yürük and Cenup, alongside a separate entry on the darbuka, which reads: "This name was not used by us" (*Bizde bu adla kullan?lmazd?*) (Gazimihal 1975:28), indicating the absence of the term darbuka in Turkish village culture.

The handful of references to the term darbuka among other regional names recorded by Picken may be understood as the beginning of a gradual expansion of the use of the term to define goblet-shaped drums throughout Turkey. This is supported by the fact that each instance of the term darbuka used to describe a locally-made drum was recorded between 1959 and 1966, the last seven years of the forty-year period Picken

examined. Moreover, the areas in which the term darbuka was used were often found to employ multiple names for the drum. Picken even writes the phrase “old name” next to the term dömbelek in Ere?li, while reporting the use of darbuka in the Zonguldak province within which Ere?li is situated, implying the replacement of one term by the other (Picken 1975:118). The gradual expansion of the application of the term darbuka from city-made metal drums to all varieties of the goblet-shaped drum appears to have parallels in the textual representations of the instrument.

In Turkish musicological literature from the last half of the twentieth century, the term darbuka is often the standard, unmarked term for all forms of goblet-shaped drums while alternate names are marked as local terminology with associations to particular rural areas and situated in binary opposition to the term darbuka. Vural Sözer’s *Müzik ve Müzisyenler Ansiklopedisi* (Encyclopedia of Music and Musicians) contains an early example of the use of the term darbuka as an umbrella category for a variety of different goblet-shaped drums (1964:180). Later books on regional folk dances such as Abuzer Akb?y?k’s work on the folk dances of ?anl?urfa, or Çinkayalar’s volume on the Turkish folk dances of Cyprus, label goblet-shaped drums as darbuka-s and notate the local term for the instruments parenthetically (Akb?y?k 1989:34; Çinkayalar 1990:88). These musicological publications are the culmination of a trend beginning in the early twentieth century in which a drum produced in cities using the relatively recent innovations of mechanical lathes and aluminum casting became the dominant image of the instrument, grouping together drums previously defined in relation to a regional identity, rural environment, local performers, and older ceramic production technologies.

In addition to the use of the term darbuka as a more general name for goblet-shaped drums in publications on specific regional music and dance traditions, works dealing with Turkish music in a broader, more theoretical sense began to utilize different categories that emphasize an urban/folk division. Öztuna’s *Türk Musikisi Ansiklopedisi* (Turkish Music Encyclopedia), first published in 1969, defines goblet-shaped drums plated in tin or copper as darbuka-s, ceramic variants as dümbelek-s and goblet-shaped drums used in folk music as *çömlek*-s (Öztuna 1989:152). Öztuna’s initial tripartite classification does not, to my knowledge, appear elsewhere in Turkish musicological literature. However, his use of the term dümbelek as another general category of goblet-shaped drum in opposition to darbuka reappears in later scholarship as a shared conceptualization of the dümbelek, as the folk darbuka.

A prime example of this use of dümbelek as a referent for goblet-shaped drums associated with folk culture is Göktan Ay’s book *Folklora Giri?* (Introduction to Folklore) (1990). Ay’s pedagogical text contains a chapter exclusively devoted to Turkish folk musical instruments that describes all goblet-shaped drums associated with Turkish folk music using the overarching category of dümbelek (ibid.:70). Similarly, Vural Sözer associates the term dümbelek with “folk” (*halk*) culture and ceramic construction (Sözer 2005:203). While Picken has demonstrated that goblet-shaped drums with different physical characteristics and associated with different performers and spaces have been referred to by a variety of names over the course of the twentieth century, this linguistic diversity has diminished increasingly over time. It has been replaced by two dominant terms: darbuka and dümbelek. Interestingly, I noticed a number of recurring associations in the way that my interlocutors in Turkey would use these two terms. Most striking was the way musicians and instrument makers in Istanbul would often refer to female drummers as *dümbelekçi* (those who play the dümbelek) while calling male drummers in similar contexts *darbukac?* (those who play the darbuka). Upon examining the different ways these terms were deployed by individuals in casual conversation, as well as in pedagogical literature, I have concluded that the term darbuka implies connections to metal working technologies, urban spaces, and professional male performers, while the term dümbelek is generally deployed as a term for Turkish goblet-shaped drums that are connected to older ceramic production technologies, rural spaces, and non-professional female performers. Importantly, this distinction embodies a hierarchical relationality: all dümbelek-s are considered to be darbuka-s but only a subset of darbuka-s is considered to be dümbelek-s. Building on my discussion here of more recent naming practices in academic scholarship, I will now provide some historical context for the current associations between these two terms and certain collective expectations surrounding the gender and status of the performer.

The Goblet-shaped Drum as a Historical Other

Associations between the goblet-shaped drum, overt sexuality, and immoral behavior have roots extend?ng beyond Early Turkish history into the late Ottoman period. Eremya Çelebi Kömürciyan refers to the existence of neighboring communities of Armenian-speaking Christian Roma and Greek Roma in Istanbul during the 17th century, and he recounts the disparaging comments of one Armenian chronicler:

Bizim po?alar, ekmeklerini al?n terleri ile kazan?rlar; halbuki sizinkiler ellerinde dablaklara, meyhanelerde dola??rlar ve zevk ticareti yaparlar. Yan?k yüreklere ?eftali ver, gele koynuma gir heman gibi aç?k saç?k ?ark?lara sevdal?, garip gençleri tahrik ederek onlar?n kar??s?nda göbek atarlar.	Our Armenian Roma Po?a-s earn their living through sweat, but [Greek Roma] ply their pleasure trade with drum [dablak] in hand wandering around taverns. They offer a peach to burning hearts, th love-crazed youth with indecent songs such as 'Come to my breast now' and throw their bellies in front of them.

(Kömürciyan 1988:22, translated by Sonia Seeman)

The term *dablak*, here referencing a goblet-shaped drum, is a term that is still used for similar drums in areas of southern and southeastern Turkey, such as in the area of Adana (personal communication, Murat Kaytarm??, May 2008, Istanbul). This is a very early example of how the goblet-shaped drum and its performer are depicted prior to the differentiation between the darbuka and the dümbelek. Here the dablak drum is associated with itinerant Romany musicians, drinking, indecent songs, and highly sexualized dancing.

Re?ad Koçu's *?stanbul Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul Encyclopedia), a series whose first editions began publication in 1958, is a collection of entries describing the city of Istanbul, and it offers a more recent example of the changing perceptions of the goblet-shaped drum in the mid-twentieth century. The entry on darbuka contains a description of the instrument and says that it is used in Istanbul by the "common people" (*avam*), and "riffraff" (*ayak tak?m?*), especially Romany musicians (*k?bti sazendeler*) (Koçu 1966:4240). While the gender of the performer of the drum is not made explicit in this entry, the subsequent entry for *darbukac? civan?* clearly indicates a "handsome young male" (*civan*) and is the singular entry discussing a darbukac?, a term meaning one who plays the darbuka (ibid.). The author's depiction of the darbukac? centers on an excerpt of *?ehrengiz* poetry, a term that can be translated as "city thriller," referencing a form of poetry that can be traced back to the early tenth century Persian *?ehra?ub* poetic tradition. These styles of poetry focus on descriptions of attractive craftsmen and beautiful young boys (Andrews and Kalpakl? 2005:40).

Darbukac? Civan? - Kalender me?reb ?airler taraf?ndan "?ehrengiz" ad? verilen manzum risalelerle medhedilen esnaf güzelleri aras?nda Darbukac? civanlar?na da rastlan?r; ?ehrengiz yollu yaz?lm?? "Hübannamei Neveda" adl? manzum mecmuada Darbukac? civan? ?u beyitlerle övülmü?dür:	Darbuka-playing civan - Darbuka-playing civan are also encountered among the handsome young artisans that were praised by poets of the Kalender dervish order with booklets of verse named "?ehrengiz." A darbuka-playing youth is praised in these couplets from the ?ehrengiz poetry collection "Hübannamei Neveda":
Darbukac? civan k?bti güzeli Sürmesi kudretten gözleri gamzeli	The darbuka-playing civan, a beautiful gypsy From the force of his kohl, his eyes are coquettish
Siyeh çerde dilber kü?ade me?reb Nazik olsa dahi mahrumi edeb	A beauty of dark complexion with a loose disposition While he is polite he is also deprived of good manners
Nakli macerada ?uhi bi perva Sofii senkdili eylemi? igva	In recounting adventure he is lively and unreserved He has tempted the hard-heartedness of a Sufi

(Koçu 1966:4240)

While this late Ottoman poem from the collection *Hübannamei Neveda* quoted by Koçu is a relic of an earlier period in Turkish history, his choice of this poem as the sole depiction of a performer of the goblet-shaped drum indicates the relevance of this representation to the image of the darbuka player in the 1960s, and it demonstrates associations between the darbuka, a marginalized ethnic group, and non-normative expressions of gender and sexuality. In the poem, the handsome young darbuka player is described as "*k?bti*," which literally means "Coptic," a word whose contemporary meaning references the indigenous Coptic Christians of Egypt. The words "Coptic" and "k?bti" both have roots in the earlier Greek term *Aigyptos* meaning "Egypt" and it was Egypt that was imagined by many as the homeland of the Roma people (Iskander 2012:11-17; Botros 2006:183). Thus the term here refers to the Roma as the performers of the drum (Gökbilgin 1963:421). The depiction of the darbuka player as Romany, a member of a socially marginalized group in Turkey, codifies the status of both the instrument and performer as Other. At the same time, while the Roma are an ethnic group that is widely (albeit erroneously) regarded as itinerant by Turks and the world at large, this young Romany man is the denizen of a city. In this way, the image chosen by Koçu maintains an association between the darbuka and urban spaces, while also evoking the marginalized identity of a supposedly nomadic people with imagined roots in Egypt.

In addition to the Romany origins of the handsome young man, the poem further reveals his appearance as "a beauty of dark complexion" (*siyeh çerde dilber*). The Turkish word *dilber* is generally used to describe young beautiful women, and kohl is a beauty product typically used by women, however this poetic image presents a break with these normative associations. The darbuka player in this poem is depicted as a male with sexualized feminine attributes, and his "loose disposition" implies a disregard for sexual mores that further codifies his status as Other. Despite these non-normative depictions of beauty, references to immoral behavior, and the objectification and eroticization of the darbuka player as the recipient of the male gaze from both the perspective of the poet and the perspective of the "sufi" character in the poetic narrative who is tempted by his beauty, the darbuka player is nevertheless a male performer. These associations between the darbuka, urban spaces, and male performers frequently reappears in later writings and in verbal discourse. However, as a more rigid dichotomy between the darbuka and dümbelek emerges, it is generally the dümbelek that is articulated to socially marginalized group identities. One interesting example of this dynamic can be observed in the verbal imitation of the sounds of the darbuka and the dümbelek by one Istanbul drum maker.

Difference Expressed Through Musical Sound

In 2009, I conducted interviews in Istanbul with men who worked in different areas involving the production, retail sales, and performance of the darbuka. One of these men, Emin, had immigrated to Istanbul from Iskenderun as a young percussionist and was now the proprietor of a small instrument workshop and a successful retail business specializing in percussion instruments. I asked him if the performance technique used with the goblet-shaped drum was different in Turkish villages than it was in Istanbul. He responded through a combination of conversation and verbal imitation of drumming, portraying the rhythm first in village style and then in the style characteristic of Istanbul city drummers. The former demonstrated a very straightforward, unornamented rhythm with the syllables "*düm-lege düme-leg düme düme leg lege*."

This was followed by a verbal imitation of Istanbul technique that was spoken much more sharply and employed some ornamentation as well as a hard rhythmic breathing that added energy to the demonstration. In this second demonstration, he used the syllables "*düm*" and "*tek*" which are the syllables normally associated with the bass and treble strokes in contemporary Turkish art and folk music traditions.

As I watched him demonstrate this second style of drumming, I told him that it appeared to be a cleaner technique with more embellishments. He responded:

Emin: —tabii, kad?nlar, kad?nlar böyle çalar… veya bacak aras? böyle…Tepsi çalarlard?, tepsi. Bak?r tepsi, alüminyum tepsi.—	**Emin:** —of course, women, women they play like this [--he pau

	"drums" with voice--] or between their legs like this. [--he "drums again--] They played the serving tray. Copper trays, aluminum t

(interview, Emin Bolat, 13 August 2009, Istanbul)

This shift in focus to women clearly indicates that Emin associated women with village drumming. I asked him why there were so few women that played the goblet-shaped drum in Istanbul compared to Turkish villages. In response, he gave a candid depiction of female village drummers that distinguished them from urban male darbuka players, characterizing them as "*alayl?*" or "skilled but uneducated."

Emin: —birinden bir?ey görmemi?ler. Teknik ö?renmemi?ler. Ses ç?karm??lar. Ritim tutmu?lar yani. … **Emin:** Onun için… alayl? denir. Anlad?n m?, alayl?? Okumam?? yani. … **Emin:** —üniversite okumam??. I?? lise okumam??. Kendi kafas?ndan kula?? duyarak. Ona ritim tutmu? ?ark?.	**Emin:** —they don't see anything from anyone else. They don't technique. They make the sound. They play the rhythm, yani. … **Emin:** Because of this… they are alayl? [skilled but withou education]. You understand alayl?? They haven't studied. … **Emin:** They haven't studied at university. They haven't be high school. They learn to play the song rhythms by ear.

(ibid.)

It is worth noting here that when describing his own abilities as a percussionist and instrument maker, Emin also claimed that he had had no teacher or formal training, and had learned through imitation and individual study. At times in our conversation this even appeared to be a source of pride for him. In contrast, he characterized the imitative learning of the female village drummer as alayl? and without technique, terms that he never used when referring to himself. His explanation, while obviously not ill intentioned, points to the way in which the similar behavior of the female village musician and the male city musician are interpreted differently through the lenses of their constructed representations. The female dümbelek player is constructed as the non-professional participant in a form of recreation, who has learned to play the drum through a form of imitation that is too superficial for the transmission of true "technique," while the male darbuka player is seen as a professional musician who may gain proper technique through imitation and other auto-didactic methods.

This dichotomy between the darbuka and dümbelek emerged repeatedly during my interviews with several prominent darbuka players and instrument makers in Istanbul between 2007 and 2011 as well as through representations of the performers associated with these instruments. This association between women and village drumming in Turkey is common, and it also influences the meaning of dümbelek, which is often understood as the village darbuka, and therefore a woman's darbuka. In this context, the goblet-shaped drum is articulated to concepts of place (urbanity/village-ness), gender (masculinity/femininity) and language (darbuka/dümbelek) as well as notions of professionalism and musicality that distinguish the darbuka player from the dümbelek player.

One important distinction between the female dümbelek player and the male darbuka player is how the notion of vocation is associated with each role. While a certain number of Turkish women are professional or semiprofessional musicians who sing and perform with the dümbelek drum and other percussion instruments at village weddings (see Reinhard 1990; Ziegler 1990), female dümbelek players are typically characterized as amateur or non-professional musicians, if they are considered to be musicians at all. This is in contrast to the clear identity of the urban male darbuka player as musician, exemplifying how the social logic of vocation can reinforce the subaltern status of women through the collective expectations surrounding the instrument, as Pierre Bourdieu has suggested (2001:57).

Traces of Meaning in Language

While the use of the terms darbuka and dümbelek in reference to musical performance demonstrate how different imagined performers are embedded in gendered hierarchies of power, other uses of the term dümbelek

reveal an even more deeply rooted set of negative connotations. *?stanbul Ansiklopedisi* contains no mention of the dümbelek as an instrument, but instead describes the use of the word as an insult:

Dümbelek - Halk argosunda “Abdal”, “Enâi” anlamlar?nda kullan?l?r, misaller: Arkada??na sokakdan geçen birini göstererek sorar: --Kim bu kasalak herif --Dümbele?in biri!.. Akl?n?n almad???, idrakinin yetmedi?i i?lere kar??an, fikir beyan?na kalk??anlara da “Ukala dümbele?i” denilir. K?ymetli dil bilgini Ferid Devellio?lu “Türk Argosu” isimli eserinde bu kelimenin “me’bun” (mef’ul cinsi sap?k anlam?nda[)] da kullan?ld???n? kaydediyor; biz ne halk a?z?nda ne de p?rp?r? haneberdu?lar, apa?lar a?z?nda bu anlamda kullan?ld???n? i?itmedik.	Dümbelek - In folk vernacular it is used to mean abdal[3] or egot for example: One asks while passing by a friend on the street: --Who is this stuck up guy? --He is one of the dümbeleks! “Smart aleck dümbelek” is also said of those trying to annc an idea, interfering with work that they don’t appreciate or understand. The use of this word to mean “catamite” (an object of sexual perversion) is also recorded in philologist Ferid Devellio?lu’s wo “Türk Argosu””; We haven’t heard this meaning used in folk vernacular, or in the vernacular of dissolute vagrants or gangste

(Koçu 1968:4818)

While the complete absence of any reference to the dümbelek drum in a work focused on urban life is unsurprising considering associations between the term dümbelek and rural spaces, this entry describing the dümbelek as a derogatory term, completely divorced from its musical context, is surprising. This is a noteworthy example of the construction of difference through a linguistic mechanism. In this case, not only has the name darbuka been attributed to the goblet-shaped drum in its new urban context, but also the older term dümbelek has been rebranded as an insult divorced from its musical context, and more firmly articulated to negative sexual connotations. *Türkçenin Argo Sözlü?ü* (The Turkish Slang Dictionary) contains a similar entry for the term dümbelek with three distinct definitions (Püsküllüo?lu 2004). The first definition equates dümbelek with the terms “undiscerning” (*anlay??s?z*), “stupid” (*aptal*), “gullible” (*bön*) and “foolish” (*sersem*) (ibid.:65, translation by author). The second definition takes dümbelek to mean a submissive male homosexual, and the third meaning of dümbelek is a pimp (ibid.). In addition to these definitions for the term dümbelek, Püsküllüo?lu’s more recent work contains the entry “*dümbelek çalmak*,” which literally means “to play the dümbelek”. According to Püsküllüo?lu this phrase means “to tell a lie” or “to act like one doesn’t know something” (ibid.).

One younger Turkish man I spoke with about the slang use of dümbelek presented a slightly different meaning for the term (personal communication, Cumali Özcan, January 2012, Austin, Texas). He painted a hypothetical scenario in which a good friend had made plans with him to go out for a night on the town and at the last minute called him up and canceled with a lame excuse. “Come on, don’t be a dümbelek!” (*Yani dümbelek yapma!*) his friend might have replied. The meaning here may be translated roughly as “don’t be a jerk!” While the use of the term dümbelek in this way is regarded as somewhat old fashioned and is more likely to be used by older generations of Turks, its meaning appears to be widely understood. Despite the fact that some of the negative significations of the term are no longer in common use, the term dümbelek carries with it associations to ineptitude and crudeness in the image of the unsophisticated and amusical dümbelek player.

These lingering associations of meaning are akin to what Derrida referred to as the “trace” of a linguistic sign, or the history of a sign (i.e. all of its past significations), which remains associated to the sign in any new context. In *Of Grammatology,* Derrida expands on Saussure’s argument that signs are understood through their difference to other signs within the same system and thus implicitly reference them. He refers to this form of implicit signification as a “trace” and claims that “[t]he (pure) trace is différance” (Derrida 1974:62). As Arthur Bradley notes, this term “différance” combines two senses of the French verb “différer” implying senses of both “differing” and “deferring”: “On the one hand, it signifies the way in which any sign is extended or spread out across space in

the sense that its identity necessarily refers to other elements that exist alongside it in the system. On the other, it connotes the way in which any sign is deferred or postponed in time in the sense that its identity always refers to elements that exist before or after it in the linguistic system" (Bradley 2008:70–71). This temporal deferment, which is referred to by Bradley, is present in the semantic evolution of the goblet-shaped drum. While the more overt negative significations of the term dümbelek have receded from public consciousness, the trace of these associations lingers and is reinforced by articulations to other marginalized groups and socially condemned actions.

Conclusion

What is the difference between a darbuka and a dümbelek? In order to answer this question, one might appeal to the writings of Turkish folklorists and music researchers who provide a roughly similar set of physical characteristics and extramusical associations that distinguish each instrument. One might instead appeal to the depictions of the instruments in popular literature and poetry, or to the spoken opinions of musicians and instrument makers and their performative expression of imagined sounds. What becomes apparent when the practices of classification and representation in each of these contexts are examined together is that the articulations between the term darbuka and notions of urbanity, masculinity, and professionalism, as well as between dümbelek and notions of village life, femininity, and amateurism, permeate each set of discourses. In this instance, a focus on either observer-imposed or culture-emerging classifications schemes would obscure how these semantic articulations transcend each context and are implicated in a much broader cultural politics. Sherry Ortner (1974) has argued that the root of the subjugation of women across cultures may be tied to the persistent association of women with nature, as opposed to culture. Understood in this light, the conceptualization of the darbuka and the dümbelek as two different musical instruments reinforces a gender hierarchy in which darbuka is more closely linked to culture and dümbelek to nature.

The particular meanings and acts of classification that I have surveyed in this study have been those of only male scholars, performers, and instrument makers. Therefore, these classificatory practices should be understood as part of a larger cultural dialectic between what Michel de Certeau has identified as the "strategies" of empowered groups that seek to reinforce structures of power, and the "tactics" of disempowered groups, in this case women, that continually adapt and sometimes act to resist these dominant structures (de Certeau 1984). In order to gain a more complete understanding of how these gendered hierarchies are both maintained and contested, it will be necessary to conduct further research, especially ethnographic research that focuses on the perspectives of female drummers.

The dichotomy between darbuka and dümbelek is part of a larger process of differentiation that exerts what Ruth Solie refers to as a "strong and virtually subliminal influence on the ways we position and interpret groups of people, their behavior, and their works" (Solie 1995:11). While Mrázek has rightly drawn our attention to the way in which musical instruments "grow from and into human lives and worlds differently" (2008:59), we should not forget the agentive strategies that direct this growth, including the role of nomenclature in perpetuating gender or class-based marginalization. When the conceptualization and categorization of musical instruments are understood as social strategies, we see how the distinctions between instruments are shaped by the agendas and worldviews of individuals out of a multitude of possibilities. By acknowledging the ways in which the classification of any musical instrument reflects the structural inequalities of the society from which that classification emerges, we may begin to identify and perhaps resist one of the many strong and virtually subliminal influences through which these social hierarchies are formed and maintained.

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[1] All the translations are by the author unless otherwise noted.

[2] Initially titled *Türk Depki Çalg?lar?* and later renamed *Türk Vurmal? Çalg?lar?*, it was published posthumously in 1975 but written decades earlier.

[3] The term *abdal* is an Ottoman term that could be translated as “intellectual,” however its contemporary Turkish usage in the form *aptal* has ironically taken on the meaning of “stupid” or “foolish.” It appears that this usage may incorporate both the notion of “intellectual” but also the negative valence of the more contemporary form of the word, indicating someone who is both educated and intellectual, yet also foolish or lacking common sense.