Orienting a Nation: The Turkish National Anthem Controversies

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Abstract

As Turkey's ruling elite founded a nation from the collapsed Ottoman Empire in the early 1920s, competitions for the Turkish national anthem's lyrics and musical setting did not immediately yield clear winners. The original winning composition by Ali Rıfat Çağatay draws on Ottoman-era musical and literary conventions; however, the anthem was redacted six years after selection and replaced in 1930 by the current national anthem by Osman Zeki Üngör, a work iconic of European anthems yet infamous for its "broken" prosody. The anthem's prosodic errors and enigmatic selection process have fueled national debates since its adoption. I argue that the Turkish ruling elite's selection of a national anthem reflects the challenges of a broader nation-building project premised on rejecting a presumed Ottoman past and oriented towards the modernity associated with the imagined West. More broadly, I assert that understanding the anthem genre requires interrogating the Eurocentrism of non-European anthems that are thought to emulate European exemplars. Exploring nearly a century of anthem controversies in Turkish media and film illuminates how prosodic errors have served as an innocuous proxy for politically sensitive topics, including tensions over religion in public life and governance as well as the Turkey-US relationship since the Cold War. On the other hand, the many-layered meanings within the anthem as well as its indexical iconicity of the nation have enabled those acting in the name of the state to deploy the anthem as a tool of violent state coercion to discipline nonconforming subjects.

As the Turkish War of Independence against the Allied Powers of World War I ended and Turkey's ruling elite established the Republic of Turkey in 1923, the new nation's Ministry of Education struggled to select the words and music that would represent the ideals of the new country born out of the collapsed Ottoman Empire. After Turkey's founding, a series of nation-wide competitions for the Turkish national anthem's lyrics and musical setting elicited hundreds of submissions, and the official selection was a contentious process which did not immediately yield a clear winner. Even after the Ministry selected Mehmet Akif [Ersoy]'s poem "İstiklal Marşı" ("Independence March") for the anthem's lyrics in 1921, debates over which musical setting would prevail ensued for the following decade.[1] Composer Ali Rifat [Çağatay]'s anthem was officially chosen in 1923, yet various other anthem renditions circulated in different cities of Turkey. The circumstances under which Ali Rifat's anthem was replaced with composer Osman Zeki [Üngör]'s anthem remain obscured in the historical record; primary sources from this period are limited and scholarly accounts brush over the six years between Ali Rifat's anthem's selection and replacement with Osman Zeki's, whose clumsy melodic breaks dividing the lyric's text into nonsensical pseudowords feature conspicuously. Although Osman Zeki's rendition, with its infamously awkward prosody, continues to mark graduation ceremonies and football matches alike, it also has fueled many politicized waves of debate.

This article recounts the commission and composition of the lyrics and music of the Turkish national anthem while also illustrating inconsistencies in their historical narrativization. In the absence of

[1] Male heads of household in Turkey adopted last names under the Surname Law of 1934. Throughout this article, I refer to Turkish figures using their given names, indicating these adopted last names with brackets.

Music & Politics 17, Number 2 (Summer 2023), ISSN 1938-7687.
Article DOI: https://doi.org/10.3998/mp.4573

archival records offering a definitive explanation for the anthem change, I suggest that the compositional and prosodic choices of anthem composers Ali Rifat and Osman Zeki reflect the newly formed Turkish government's concurrent efforts to direct the socio-cultural trajectory of the nation. I argue that the selection by the Turkish ruling elite (namely Grand National Assembly speaker and future Turkish president Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and his ministers) of a national anthem iconic of European anthems was part of a broader nation-building project oriented towards attaining a Eurocentric modernity. Moreover, interrogating the anthem as a genre reveals the interpenetrations and mutual influences that animate imaginations of the Ottoman Empire, Turkey, Europe, and the West. Thus, the enigmatic circumstances of the national anthem's selection as well as debates over its compositional merits have mediated broader sociopolitical conflicts since the nation's founding, particularly as different political factions have asserted conflicting visions of national values.

The anthropologist David I. Kertzer has observed that "nations can be perceived by only symbolic means," including the use of collective rituals that stimulate powerful emotions, such as the singing of national anthems: "What is instructive about these songs is not their content per se, but rather their use of martial music together with graphic symbolism to create a highly charged emotional atmosphere of national solidarity."[2] He notes, however, that the manipulation of symbols through dramatically changing their context can promote a particular view of the political order or alternatively introduce ambiguities that engender conflict over their meanings.[3] Exploring nearly a century of public debates about the anthem in Turkish media and film illuminates broader political tensions over the role of religion in public life and governance as well as Turkey's alliance with the US since the Cold War. An examination of these long-standing contentions can reveal how the anthem has served as a mediating discursive realm for sociopolitical issues and national ideals in Turkey. As political circumstances have increasingly rendered explicit discussions of national identity fraught, prosodic errors have served as an innocuous proxy for politically sensitive topics in public discourse. On the other hand, those acting in the name of the state have drawn upon how the anthem emblematized the nation; utilizing the layered and contested meanings of belonging it indexes, such actors have deployed it as a tool of violent state coercion to discipline nonconforming subjects.

National anthems have garnered scholarly interest since the late 1980s. Benedict Anderson cited national anthem singing as a "unisonance," an instance of people uttering the same verses to the same melody, which generates an experience of community.[4] Musicological scholarship on national anthems has examined composition, music and text, performance, and public reception, frequently interrogating how anthems shed light on the complexities of nation-building and national identity. Some of these examples emphasize the influences on national anthems of composers and musical styles not indigenous to those countries.[5] Thomas Turino and Martin Daughtry both offer approaches to studying musical nationalism through anthems that probe Eurocentric and capitalist ideological agendas that shape representations of

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[2] David I. Kertzer, *Ritual, Politics, and Power* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988), 73.
[3] Kertzer, *Ritual, Politics, and Power*, 87, 92.
[4] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1991).
[5] Thomas Turino, "Nationalism and Latin American Music: Selected Case Studies and Theoretical Considerations," *Latin American Music Review* 24, no. 2 (2003): 169–209, https://doi.org/10.1353/lat.2003.0024; J. Martin Daughtry, "Russia's New Anthem and the Negotiation of National Identity," *Ethnomusicology* 47, no. 1 (2003): 42–67, https://doi.org/10.2307/852511; Nancy Guy, "'Republic of China National Anthem' on Taiwan: One Anthem, One Performance, Multiple Realities," *Ethnomusicology* 46, no. 1 (2002): 96–119, https://doi.org/10.2307/852809; Robert Neustadt, "Reading Spanish American National Anthems: 'Sonograms' of National Identity," *Music and Politics* 5, no. 1 (2011), https://doi.org/10.3998/mp.9460447.0005.102.

"the nation," particularly in non-European contexts.[6] Robert Neustadt's approach to anthems as "sonograms" of national development which "reveal images of identity in formation" echoes Daughtry's understanding of national identity "not as the static reflection of a monolithic ideology but rather as a polysemous text through which national identity is constantly being negotiated."[7] National anthems provide an ideal opportunity to analyze genre as an assemblage, as "a mutual mediation between two self-organising historical entities—musical formations (on the one hand), and social identity formations (on the other)—both in the process of becoming, both reliant on the collective production of memory as well as the anticipation of futures."[8] I assert that creating the Turkish national anthem (and the broader curation of Turkish national identity) has not been a unidirectional Turkish reaction to an imagined West, as is often represented in scholarship on Turkish nation-building; indeed, the national anthem genre was born out of centuries of Ottoman and European war and peacetime encounters. Understanding anthems as a genre requires interrogating not only European exemplars, but also the apparent Eurocentrism of those non-European anthems that are thought to emulate them. Contestations over the many-layered meanings and associations within the Turkish national anthem (and ideas of an "anthem" itself) reveal long-standing contentions over national identity, particularly in relation to discourse around the Republic's orientation to its Ottoman past and imaginations of the West.

In the sections that follow, I consider how the broad social reforms to regulate "national music" in Turkey resonated in the national anthem's creation. Acknowledging substantial gaps in official and scholarly records, I then describe the national anthem's commission and selection process, considering the sociopolitical pressures that appear likely to have motivated the replacement of Ali Rifat's anthem with Osman Zeki's. The following section offers a comparative examination of Ali Rifat's and Osman Zeki's musical settings of the lyrics as well as reflection on how the ultimate selection of the latter reflects the sociopolitical upheaval that resulted from Turkish nation-building efforts. The final section demonstrates how contentions over national values found a proxy in debates over the national anthem's composition and selection. Analyzing archival sources drawn from Turkish film and media over the decades since the nation's founding uncovers how broader anxieties about sociopolitical issues and national values emerge through engaging with controversies over the national anthem. Ultimately, the long-standing contentions over the anthem's composition and selection demonstrate its potency as a symbol of the Turkish nation; as such, controversies over the anthem bring to the fore deeply seated struggles to shape notions of Turkish citizenship.

Creating a National Music

Creating national music in the budding Turkish Republic paralleled many other swiftly and often harshly implemented reforms aimed to assert a more "modern" Turkey aligned with European values. Following the 1923 formation of the Republic of Turkey, Mustafa Kemal (given the surname Atatürk, "father of the Turks") ushered in reforms "designed to root out the Ottoman past and replace it with a

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[6] Turino, "Nationalism and Latin American Music"; Daughtry, "Russia's New Anthem and the Negotiation of National Identity."
[7] Neustadt, "Reading Spanish American National Anthems," 17; Daughtry, "Russia's New Anthem and the Negotiation of National Identity," 42.
[8] Georgina Born, "Music and the Materialization of Identities," *Journal of Material Culture* 16, no. 4 (2011): 384, https://doi.org/10.1177/1359183511424196.

Western orientation in all areas of national life."[9] Atatürk's government ushered in sweeping reforms that dramatically transformed institutions and civic life. Regulations on measurement systems, self-presentation, religious institutions and expression, and language were among many that the ruling elite established as part of a broader mission to shape a purportedly more modern and progressive Turkish nation, often instigated rapidly and in some cases oppressively. These radical transformations included the banning of fez hats, enfranchisement of women, elimination of the caliphate and Islam-based civil codes, free and compulsory primary education, and rapid introduction of a Latinized phonetic alphabet to replace the Arabic one; the language reforms also sought to eliminate words with Arabic and Persian roots, replacing them with words in "original Turkish" ("Öz Türkçe") (even as many of the latter were in fact neologisms rather than discoveries). The Kemalist reforms projected many of the ruling elites' aspirations towards a redefinition of "Turkishness" as modern, secular, Western, and decidedly non-Ottoman, a sort of rebuttal to Western imperialism through a self-led orientation to the West.[10] This ideological pursuit introduced a broad scope of dichotomies that positioned modernity and progress in contradistinction with values and practices the administration attributed to the Ottoman Empire, likening Ottoman-ness to backwardness (*gericilik*), both moral and temporal.

Kemalist reforms and the propagation of state control extended to sites and modes of musical production.[11] Ayhan Erol writes, "There is no doubt that music had an important place within the reforms that Atatürk wanted to realise. Music reform was an example of the most important symbolic violence aimed at imposing a particular vision of the state."[12] Indeed, the labeling of the tradition variously referred to in this article as "alaturka" or "Turkish classical music" reflects the difficulties and paradoxes that abound when attempting to synthesize a disparate collection of musical traditions with roots from the Ottoman Empire through the modern day.[13] Reformers in the early Republican period laid the groundwork for dividing Turkish musical traditions into categories including Turkish classical and Turkish folk music. Denise Gill terms Turkish classical music an "invented tradition" which is imagined to include "a unique splattering of diverse repertoires including instrumental and vocal works patronized by and heard in the Ottoman court, beginning in the fourteenth century, repertoires of Mevlevi and other Sufi orders, and late-nineteenth and twentieth century light art (*sa'nat* or *sanat*) pieces heard in urban and nightclub (*gazino*) settings."[14] Ensembles frequently feature singers and instruments such as the ud, ney, tanbur, kanun, kemençe, violin, and bendir, and perform compositions as well as improvisational forms (such as *taksim*) within the conventions of the musical tradition. Turkish classical music is rooted in *makam,* melodically determined microtonal modes, and is heterophonous by way of characteristic melodic embellishments and ornamentations. This wide range of music was influenced by religious and secular

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[9] William L. Cleveland and Martin Bunton, *A History of the Modern Middle East* (Boulder, CO: Routledge, 2016), 180.
[10] Cleveland and Bunton, *A History of the Modern Middle East,* 180–2.
[11] Martin Stokes, *The Arabesk Debate: Music and Musicians in Modern Turkey*, Oxford Studies in Social and Cultural Anthropology (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1992), 10.
[12] Ayhan Erol, "Music, Power and Symbolic Violence: The Turkish State's Music Policies during the Early Republican Period," *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 15, no. 1 (2012): 40, https://doi.org/10.1177/1367549411424947.
[13] Hilmi Yazici, "Nationalist Approach to the Music Culture in Early Republican Period in Turkey," *World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 8, no. 5 (2014): 1265–66. For a more extensive discussion of how Republican national engineering efforts influenced the genre labels applied to musical practices in Turkey, see Ayas, *Mûsiki Inkılâbı'nın Sosyolojisi*, and John Morgan O'Connell, *Alaturka: Style in Turkish Music (1923-1938)*, SOAS Musicology Series (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013).
[14] Denise Gill, *Melancholic Modalities: Affect, Islam, and Turkish Classical Musicians* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 9. See also John Morgan O'Connell, "Fine Art, Fine Music: Controlling Turkish Taste at the Fine Arts Academy in 1926," *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 32 (2000), 125–26, https://doi.org/10.2307/3185245; and *Alaturka: Style in Turkish Music (1923–1938)*, SOAS Musicology Series (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013).

practices from modern-day Turkey, Greece, Armenia, Syria, and Balkan regions. However, the choice to group this repertoire under a singular genre is reflective of the early twentieth century ruling elite's efforts to engineer a national culture, with musicians and cultural bureaucrats ultimately seeking to distance the musical tradition from its Ottoman contexts, elevate it to an elite "classical" status, and claim it for the "Turkish" nation. Particularly after the Allied Forces' extensive partitioning of the Ottoman Empire at the end of World War I, ideologues of the nascent Turkish Republic increasingly turned to the idea of Turkish identity (as opposed to the empire's cosmopolitan, multilingual, and ethnoreligious plurality) as a means of recognizing or excluding subjects in the remaining areas under their control. These efforts culminated in widespread policies that promoted the homogenization and assimilation of the populace, often by coercive and violent means.

Kemalist politicians in this period premised creating a Turkish national identity on rediscovering an inherent "Turkishness" in contrast to the values and culture they associated with the Ottoman state. Such efforts emerged through discursive dichotomies such as *geri/ileri* (backwards/advanced) and *saray/halk* (court/folk), which correlated markers of the Ottoman Empire (including the musical traditions descended from the Ottoman court) with an irrational, primordial, and undeveloped Easternness decidedly foreign to a genuine Turkish identity.[15] For proponents of Kemalism, "becoming Westernized means to be rescued from Arabization; at the same time, it is to be Turkish-ized."[16] Applied to music, this classificatory rubric enforced a schism in which *alaturka* music (melodically monophonic, texturally heterophonic, and improvisatory) stood in stark and supposedly deficient contrast to Western classical music (melodically polyphonic, texturally monophonic, and composed). These divides underscored the shortcomings of Turkish classical music, and by association, the Ottoman state they sonically indexed—thus justifying the Republican rejection of both.[17] Kemalists viewed a self-led Westernization process and elevation of *alafranga* music as well as the "authentic" Turkish folk music (*Türk halk muziği*) found in Anatolian villages as vehicles for attaining a more authentic manifestation of Turkish national culture and identity. In 1926, the Ministry of Education reestablished Dârü'l-elhân, the Ottoman state-affiliated institution of musical instruction, as the İstanbul Konservatuvarı (Istanbul Conservatory) to provide instruction solely in Western music, effectively ending Turkish music instruction at the institution.[18] Apparently after seeing a group of musicians' "undisciplined" performance of Turkish music, Atatürk reacted in a speech in 1934 to the National Assembly:[19]

> The degree of change in a new nation can be understood by its ability to change its music. What they put out as music these days is far from representing anything of quality. . . . It is necessary to collect the noble songs and poems which express the subtle national feelings and thoughts, and treat them according to universal laws of music theory as soon as possible.[20]

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[15] Güneş Ayas, *Mûsiki Inkılâbı'nın Sosyolojisi: Klasik Türk Müziği Geleneğinde Süreklilik Ve Değişim*, (İstanbul: Doğu Kitabevi, 2014), 54.
[16] Falih Rıfkı Atay, *Çankaya* (İstanbul: Doğan Kardeş Maatbacılık, 1969), 446, as cited in Ayas, *Mûsiki inkılâbı'nın sosyolojisi*, 66.
[17] O'Connell, "Fine Art, Fine Music," 125–26.
[18] Ayas, *Mûsiki Inkılâbı'nın Sosyolojisi*, 8.
[19] Munir Nurettin Beken, "Musicians, Audience and Power: The Changing Aesthetics in the Music at the Maksim Gazino of Istanbul" (Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland, Baltimore County, 1998), 119–20, http://search.proquest.com/docview/304465890/abstract/1B348DF1FD5B49F9PQ/1.
[20] "Bir ulusun yeni değişikliğinde ölçü, musikide değişikliği alabilmesi, kavrayabilmesidir. Bugün dinletmeye yeltenilen musiki yüz ağartacak değerde olmakdan uzakdır. Bunu açıkça bilmeliyiz. Ulusal, ince duygulari, dusunceleri anlatan yüksek deyişleri, söyleyişleri toplamak, onları bir an önce genel son musiki kurallarina göre işlemek gerektir." Beken, "Musicians, Audience and Power," 120.

While many scholars and musicians debate whether these words were the catalyst or merely a reflection of an ongoing cultural engineering project, the following day marked the beginning of a nearly two-year ban on *alaturka* music being broadcast on state radio.[21] The dissolution of the Ottoman court and 1925 Republican government's closure of Sufi *tekke-s* (meeting places of Sufi brotherhoods) eliminated significant structures for musical transmission. At the same time, members of the ruling elite extolled Turkish folk music as an expression of authentic Turkish culture, which they sought to elevate through the use of Western harmonization and orchestration.[22] In 1934, the Turkish Ministry of Culture invited composer Paul Hindemith to support the establishment of Western musical pedagogical practices in Turkey, and in 1936, Turkish composer Ahmet Adnan Saygun and Béla Bartók traveled Anatolia conducting proto-ethnomusicological work collecting recordings of folk songs; in the following year, the newly-opened Mûsikî Muallim Mektebi (predecessor to Ankara State Conservatory) opened a department for Turkish Folk Music.[23] With the encouragement and sponsorship of state institutions, Turkish ethnomusicologists led multiple expeditions to Anatolian villages to collect folk songs, subsequently published as collections and often with invented Turkish lyrics and accompanying new rhythmic structures to replace their original lyrics in Armenian, Kurdish, Greek, and many other languages.[24]

Turkish classical musicians worked to adapt music for the new ideals of the Republic. Musicologists and composers such as Suphi Ezgi, Hüseyin Sadeddin Arel, and Salih Murat Uzdilek put forward their visions of a music theory system for Turkish classical music that was highly standardized but often didn't represent the actual practice of the musical tradition. In 1938 Mesud Cemil (son of legendary multi-instrumentalist and composer Tanburi Cemil Bey) introduced the use of a conductor and banned percussion instruments and *gazel* (unmetered vocal improvisation) in Turkish classical music group singing performances on the state radio; this created an very different sound and ensemble format for Turkish classical music group singing performances and represented a transformation many musicians today mark as the genre's first *koro* (choir).[25] New systems of patronage, including Turkish state radio, the recording industry, and state choirs ushered in the concept of music as a respectable full-time occupation, and along with it, the concept of a "professional" musician.[26] It was in the midst of these shifts that Ali

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[21] Ayas, *Mûsiki Inkılâbı'nın Sosyolojisi,* 150.

[22] Stokes, *The Arabesk Debate,* 16; Rebecca Bryant, "The Soul Danced into the Body: Nation and Improvisation in Istanbul," *American Ethnologist* 32, no. 2 (2005): 226.

[23] "Hindemith's Reforms in Turkey," *New York Times*, March 20, 1938, sec. Music; Tolga Ürün, "Cumhuriyet Dönemi (1923–1950) Müzik Politikalarina Asker Müzisyenlerin Katkilari," *The Journal of Academic Social Sciences* 88 (2019): 600; Koray Degirmenci, "On the Pursuit of a Nation: The Construction of Folk and Folk Music in the Founding Decades of the Turkish Republic," *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 37, no. 1 (2006): 58–59.

[24] O'Connell, "Fine Art, Fine Music," 129; Degirmenci, "On the Pursuit of a Nation," 60; Stokes, *The Arabesk Debate*, 104.

[25] Beken, "Musicians, Audience and Power," 17–19.

[26] It is important to note that performing music as a primary occupation long predates these institutions; however, while music was certainly a valued undertaking for which one could receive monetary reward, it was not regarded as a "professional pathway" (as it would become later in the twentieth century) with a singular educational route, stable income from regular work, and respected status. Most of the revered musician-composers of the Ottoman Empire had primary non-musical occupations that sustained their livelihoods; musicologist Cem Behar's study of musicians in the eighteenth century asserts that only about 10% of their income was derived from music. Pursuing music as a primary occupation in the Ottoman Empire usually condemned a musician to the lower-status and hardly desirable title of *çalgıcı*, a category that included itinerant wedding band musicians, buskers, and nightclub performers. The term often carries disparaging associations with the Romani ethnic group (as well as Greeks and Armenians), whose extensive historical engagements as guild-based and freelance musical entertainers and dancers (in addition to work in many other trades) were coupled with centuries of social marginalization in the Byzantine and Ottoman Empires. Although they met an active demand for performance at weddings, festivals, and public entertainment venues, their engagement with music and dance (regarded in Islamic philosophical thought as "morally degenerate and potentially dangerous") contributed to the perception that they were both "polluted" and "polluting." For further discussion of Romani musical labor in the Ottoman Empire and Turkey, see Sonia Tamar Seeman,

Rifat and Osman Zeki sought to strike the right balance while creating the song of the new nation.

Creating an Anthem

Centuries of war and peacetime exchanges between Ottoman and European powers as well as ideologically charged disputes about how to regard these encounters and influences ensued during the Turkish national anthem competitions. Anthems had long been a feature of the Ottoman state, particularly from 1827 after Sultan Mehmet II incorporated Muzika-i Hümayun, a musical ensemble for the Ottoman court that for the first time included a European-style military band (under the direction of Italian composer Giuseppe Donizetti).[27] Indeed, the military band tradition Sultan Mehmet II sought to emulate was one that emerged from European encounters with Ottoman *mehter* (Janissary band) music. Europeans in the fourteenth through eighteenth centuries encountered mehter music during the Ottomans' many military incursions, from the 1453 conquest of Constantinople (the seat of Christianity under the Byzantine Empire) to the 1529 and 1683 sieges of Vienna. Harrison Powley and Edmund Bowles note that European observers in this period frequently referred to the "noisiness," "ugliness," "tonelessness," and general inferiority of mehter music.[28] Mehter became "the music by which Europeans judged all 'Turkish music.'"[29] The psychological terror inflicted by the sound of the mehter created a "lingering trauma" Europeans associated with Turks more broadly and contributed to a widespread practice of parodying Janissary bands (alongside "wild men, pygmies, or 'Indians'") in European court festivals and pageants.[30] As the Ottoman Empire's military and economic dominance declined and diplomatic relations warmed (particularly after Ottoman defeats in Europe in the late seventeenth century), Bowles describes a notable "Turkish craze" that engulfed much of Europe embodied by the use of mehter (or Western ensembles fashioned after mehter) for dramatizations of Ottoman defeat and musical accompaniment at courtly festivals and celebrations (including royal weddings).[31] By the eighteenth century, many courts sought to produce their own "Turkish" ensembles, whose instrumentation and sonorities were often derided for varying significantly from that of the Ottoman mehter. These "simulations" provided musical inspiration for imaginations of the exotic that increasingly featured in the European art music tradition; Matthew Head writes that in eighteenth-century Viennese musical culture, "Turkish music involves 'parodies, caricatures, grimaces, eccentric postures, and comic gestures' which for Bakhtin are 'the essence of the [carnivalesque] grotesque'. These postures and gestures deform and reform conventional elements of

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Sounding Roman: Representation and Performing Identity in Western Turkey (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019). For further discussion of amateurism as a strategy for musicians to maintain respectability, see Audrey Wozniak, "A Discipline for the Nation: Turkish Classical Music Choirs in History and Practice" (forthcoming).

[27] Etem Üngör, *Türk Marşları* (Ankara: Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü, 1966), 320.

[28] Powley and Bowles each present a diverse range of European sources describing their encounters with mehter music as well as its imitations at European courts. See Harrison Powley, "Mehter: Western Perceptions and Imitations," *Journal of the American Musical Instrument Society* 39 (2013): 143–81, 234; Edmund A. Bowles, "The Impact of Turkish Military Bands on European Court Festivals in the 17th and 18th Centuries," *Early Music* 34, no. 4 (2006): 533–59.

[29] Powley, "Mehter," 152, 143. See also Nasser Al-Taee, *Representations of the Orient in Western Music: Violence and Sensuality* (London: Routledge, 2017), https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315088877.

[30] Bowles, "The Impact of Turkish Military Bands," 533, 540.

[31] Bowles, "The Impact of Turkish Military Bands," 554. See also Mary Hunter, "The Alla Turca Style in the Late Eighteenth Century: Race and Gender in the Symphony and the Seraglio," in *The Exotic in Western Music*, ed. Jonathan Bellman (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998).

Mozart's music."[32] Nonetheless, the mehter-inspired instrumentation in these ensembles contributed the martial associations of these and subsequent military bands as well as the signification of Turkishness in European art music compositions of the period.[33] Importantly, the Turkish ruling elite's growing embrace of European art music also entailed an adoption of the orientalized signification of Turkishness from which much of the tradition emerged.

Following the Turkish War of Independence, in 1920 the Chief of Staff İsmet Bey [İnönü] discussed with National Education Minister Riza Nur the nascent nation's need for a national anthem; they aspired to one, which, in the manner of the French national anthem "Marseillaise," would enliven its citizens.[34] To this end, İsmet Bey held two separate competitions to choose a poem and musical setting for the anthem, awarding the substantial sum of 500 liras to each winner.[35] In October that year, the newspaper *Hâkimiyet-i Millîye* announced the contest for the anthem's lyrics, calling for works that would capture the essence of the people's liberation struggle against the occupying Allied Powers after World War I.[36] By its closing deadline in December 1920, the competition had received 724 entries, according to one source; however, allegedly due to the inferiority of the other entries, and at the encouragement of Education Minister Hamdullah Suphi [Tanrıöver] and parliamentarian Hasan Basri [Çantay], parliamentarian Mehmet Akif (who had not initially entered the contest) composed a ten-stanza poem for the contest, which became one of the final seven considered by the Turkish Grand National Assembly in early 1921.[37] The majority of the assembly members warmly received Mehmet Akif's poem "İstiklal Marşı" ("Independence March"), deemed the contest winner on March 12, 1921; however, in the following years, various parliamentary deputies criticized the poem's selection on the basis of its selection process, prosody, apparent religious sentiment, and anti-Westernization-oriented lyrics.[38] The Ministry of Education held a second competition for a national anthem in 1925 but failed to conclusively select a replacement, and Mehmet Akif's "İstiklal Marşı" remained as the anthem.[39]

Upon selection of Akif's "İstiklal Marşı" for the lyrics, in March of 1921 *Hâkimiyet-i Millîye* announced a second competition to select a musical setting. The competition received fifty-five submissions, and the Ministry of Education debated how to select a winner. The committee considered sending submissions to an institution listed as the Paris Music Academy for evaluation, but due to pressure by Kazim Karabekir, a high-ranking commander who had submitted his own composition, the group could not concur about which to even send.[40] In the meantime, contest entrants promoted their own anthem settings in their localities, and for a time various national anthems could be heard in different

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[32] M. M. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, trans. Hélène Iswolsky (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1984), 39-40, as cited in Matthew William Head, *Orientalism, Masquerade and Mozart's Turkish Music* (London: Royal Musical Association, 2000), 88.
[33] Bowles, "The Impact of Turkish Military Bands," 554.
[34] Nurullah Çetin, "İstiklâl Marşi'mizi Anlamak," *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Türkoloji Dergisi* 21, no. 2 (2014): 32.
[35] Çetin, "İstiklâl Marşi'mizi Anlamak," 33; Mehmet Önder, "İstiklâl Marşı Belgeleri," *Türk Edebiyatı Aylık Fikir ve Sanat Dergisi*, no. 158 (1986): 35.
[36] Çetin, "İstiklâl Marşi'mizi Anlamak," 33.
[37] Çetin, "İstiklâl Marşi'mizi Anlamak," 33–35; Ayaydin-Cebe suggests that this high number of entries was severely inflated by researchers to amplify Mehmet Akif's reputation. Günil Özlem Ayaydin-Cebe, "Smile of the Crescent: Constructing a Future Identity Out of Historical Ambiguity in İstiklal Marşi (with Translation)," *Die Welt Des Islams* 63, no. 1 (2021), 4, https://doi.org/10.1163/15700607-61040001.
[38] Çetin, "İstiklâl Marşi'mizi Anlamak," 25; Ayaydin-Cebe, "Smile of the Crescent," 6–9.
[39] Çetin, "İstiklâl Marşi'mizi Anlamak," 35; Ayaydin-Cebe, "Smile of the Crescent," 9.
[40] Önder, "İstiklâl Marşı Belgeleri," 36; Nuri Özcan, "İstiklâl Marşi," in *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul: TDV İslâm Araştırmaları Merkezi, 2001), https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/istiklal-marsi#2-musiki.

regions of Turkey: Ahmet Yekta [Madran]'s version around Edirne, Ali Rifat's in the Asian side of Istanbul through western Anatolia (except Izmir), Mehmed Zati [Arca]'s in the western "Rumeli" side of Istanbul, İsmail Zühtü's in Eskişehir, Hasan Basri's version in Balıkesir, and Osman Zeki's in Ankara.[41]

In 1923, the Ministry of Education formed another committee headed by Minister Yusuf Ziya Paşa, former ambassador to Washington as well as first president of the Ottoman music institution Dârü'l-elhân. On July 19, 1923, the Ministry of Education announced the formal adoption of the musical setting composed by Ali Rifat.[42] Ali Rifat was a composer, ud virtuoso, and founder of a number of Turkish classical music societies. Contrary to those calling for a complete reorientation to Western classical music at the expense of Turkish music, Ali Rifat emphasized the inherent potential of adapting Turkish music on its own terms to serve the purpose of developing a national music.[43] He had previously composed a musical setting of Mehmet Akif's poem "Ordunun Duası" ("The Prayer of the Army"), a composition intended to be performed for all military units during the War of Independence. Ali Rifat also served as the first vice-president of Dârü'l-elhân, working alongside Yusuf Ziya Paşa.[44] Many of the ruling elite soon voiced criticisms of Ali Rifat's anthem, disparaging the composer's apparent lack of familiarity with Western classical music harmony and contending that it was unsuitable for a Turkish classical musician to compose an *alafranga* (Western music-style) anthem.[45] One such critic was aforementioned competition participant and composer Mehmed Zati, a former head instructor at the musical institution Makam Hilafet Muzikası (previously known as Musika-i Hümayun during the Ottoman era); Mehmed Zati's anthem was notably the other (besides Ali Rifat's) that gained prominence in Istanbul. As musicologist Hikmet Toker has written, rumors that Ali Rifat's anthem selection was the result of his brother Samih Rifat's position at the head of the Ministry of Education began circulating. In 1923, Mehmed Zati drafted a formal request to revoke the selection of Ali Rifat's work on the basis that the anthem should give voice to the national spirit and be irreproachable and devoid of deficiencies; this petition apparently criticized the anthem for failing to adhere to basic rules of harmony and also suggested that its selection had been a fait accompli.[46] According to historian Muhittin Nalbantoğlu, that year Arca appealed to Atatürk in Izmir, who in turn referred the petition to Marshal Fevzi Çakmak; soon after (likely 1924), Ali Rifat's anthem lost its status as the nation's official anthem.[47]

The historical record of Osman Zeki's anthem remains relatively opaque. Osman Zeki had conducted the symphony orchestra of the Ottoman court-affiliated symphony orchestra ensemble Musika-i Hümayun (the Imperial Orchestra), which in 1924 would be reincorporated as Riyaset-i

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[41] Murat Bardakçı, "İstiklâl Marşı'nı orkestraya bir Ermeni vatandaşın uyarladığını bilir misiniz?," *Habertürk*, March 9, 2014, https://www.haberturk.com/yazarlar/murat-bardakci/928073-istiklal-marsini-orkestraya-bir-ermeni-vatandasin-uyarladigini-bilir-misiniz; Hikmet Toker, "İstiklal Marşi Resmî Bestesinin Serüveni," *Z Dergisi* 4 (2020): 297; Çetin, "İstiklâl Marşi'mizi Anlamak," 36; Önder, "İstiklâl Marşı Belgeleri," 36; Nilgün Doğrusöz and Ali Ergur, *Musikinin Asrî Prensi Ali Rifat Çağatay* (Ankara: Gece Kitaplığı, 2017). Other anthem composers include Hüseyin Sadettin [Arel], Lemi Atlı, Hasan Basrı [Çantay], İsmail Hakkı Bey, İsmail Zühdü, Sadettin Kaynak, Kazım Karabekir Paşa (with his own lyrics), Mehmet Baha Pars, Rauf Yekta, Mustafa Sunar, and Kazım Uz. See Üngör, *Türk Marşları,* 3–65.

[42] Önder, "İstiklâl Marşı Belgeleri," 36.

[43] Ali Rifat Çağatay, *Mûsikî Yazıları*, Ed. Nilgün Doğrusöz and Celal Volkan Kaya (İstanbul: Vakıfbank Kültür Yayınları, 2021): 62; see also Doğrusöz and Ergur, *Musikinin Asrî Prensi*.

[44] Orhan Okay, "İstiklâl Marşi," in *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul: TDV İslâm Araştırmaları Merkezi, 2001), https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/istiklal-marsi#1; Nuri Özcan, "Çağatay, Ali Rifat," in *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul: TDV İslâm Araştırmaları Merkezi, 1993), https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/cagatay-ali-Rifat.

[45] Önder, "İstiklâl Marşı Belgeleri," 37.

[46] Hikmet Toker, "İstiklal Marşi Resmî Bestesinin Serüveni," 297.

[47] Muhiddin Nalbantoğlu, *İstiklal Marşımızın Tarihi* (İstanbul: Cem Yayınları, 1964), 151, as cited in Toker, "İstiklal Marşi Resmî Bestesinin Serüveni," 297.

Cumhur Musiki Heyeti (Musical Ensemble of the Presidency) and then in 1933 as Cumhurbaşkanlığı Filarmoni Orkestrası (Presidential Philharmonic Orchestra); he also founded the Mûsikî Mu'allim Mektebi (Music Teachers' School, precursor to the Ankara State Conservatory).[48] According to a number of scholars, Üngör's anthem's creation was not a solo effort; some allege that composer and music teacher Edgar Manas orchestrated the anthem while composer and conductor Hüseyin İhsan Künçer arranged it for military band.[49] Musicologist Seyit Yöre writes that Eduard Zuckmayer, German pianist and instructor at Ankara State Conservatory, arranged the piano accompaniment.[50] Citing Nalbantoğlu, Mehmet Önder writes that Manas was particularly instrumental in helping Osman Zeki set Mehmet Akif's poem to the melody, composed prior to the lyrics.[51] Some critics have claimed that Osman Zeki had composed the work for Ottoman Sultan Mehmet Vahdeddin years before the anthem competition, taking sections of the melody from Romanian composer Iosif Ivanovici's waltz *Carmen Sylva*; in fact, Istanbul deputy Osman Şevki Uludağ voiced concerns about the anthem's plagiarism during the Republican People's Party (CHP) parliamentary session on May 7, 1940.[52] Osman Zeki vehemently denied these claims, asserting that on September 9, 1922, overcome by emotion upon learning of the Turkish cavalry's entry into Izmir during the War of Independence, he promptly sat at his piano to compose *İstiklal Marşı*.[53,54] In an interview in newspaper *Tarihli Aksam* in 1952, Osman Zeki recalls that Atatürk summoned him and the Muzika-i Hümayun military band ensemble to Ankara after the composer sent him the notation and a recording of his composition.[55] As the full ensemble was unable to immediately travel from Istanbul to Ankara, Osman Zeki visited Atatürk and his wife Latife Hanım alone. According to the composer, Atatürk asked why the ensemble had not accompanied him. Osman Zeki promised to bring Muzika-i Hümayun to Atatürk but explained it had not been possible so quickly, and then returned to Istanbul to prepare the group, who promised to follow the composer to Ankara. Osman Zeki recollected that Abdulmecid II, descendant of the fallen Ottoman dynasty and reigning caliphate, was angered by Muzika-i Hümayun's intention to depart to Ankara and declared that he no longer wanted the military band; this apparently eased the

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[48]Ali Uçan, *Eduard Zuckmayer ve Cumhuriyet Müzik Eğitimi* (Ankara: Müzik Eğitimi Yayınları, 2012), 34; Üngör, *Türk Marşları,* 145; Ürün, "Cumhuriyet Dönemi (1923–1950) Müzik Politikalarina Asker Müzisyenlerin Katkilari," 596.

[49] Seyit Yöre, "İstiklal Marşı'nı müziğiyle analım," *Aydınlık Gazetesi*, June 7, 2021, https://www.aydinlik.com.tr/koseyazisi/istiklal-marsini-muzigiyle-analim-246732; Gültekin Oransay, *Batı Tekniğiyle Yazan 60 Türk Bağdar: Anıların Işığında Oransay* (Ankara: Selma Oransay Kitaplığı, 1965); Ayas, *Mûsiki Inkılâbı'nın Sosyolojisi*, *123;* Özcan, "İstiklâl Marşi"; Önder, "İstiklâl Marşı Belgeleri," 38; Bardakçı, "İstiklâl Marşı'nı orkestraya bir Ermeni vatandaşın uyarladığını bilir misiniz?"; Buğra Koçak, "Osman Zeki Üngör ve Türk Müzik Eğitimine Katkıları," *Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi Buca Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi* 21 (2007): 141.

[50] Seyit Yöre, "İstiklal Marşı'nı müziğiyle analım."

[51]Önder, "İstiklâl Marşı Belgeleri," 38.

[52]Önder, "İstiklâl Marşı Belgeleri Murat Bardakçı, "İstiklâl Marşı muamması," *Haberturk*, December 8, 2010, https://www.haberturk.com/yazarlar/murat-bardakci/579227-istiklal-marsi-muammasi; Özcan, "İstiklâl Marşi"

[53]Üngör, *Türk Marşları,* 165; Önder, "İstiklâl Marşı Belgeleri," 38.

[54] In a 1952 feature article on Osman Zeki in the newspaper *Akşam*, the composer recalls sending his work to a professor of music in Vienna, asking whether the melody unintentionally sounded too similar to other existing anthems. According to Osman Zeki, the professor (whose name he could not recall) assured him it did not bear resemblance to other works and congratulated him on having composed such an anthem; Osman Zeki also noted that he regretfully lost the letter, having forgotten it in his desk at the Mûsikî Mu'allim Mektebi, the institution of musical instruction at which he had previously worked. Cemaleddin Bildik, "Bir Müzisyenin Aşksiz Yaşıyacağına Inanmam," *Akşam*, February 10, 1952, 3; Nihad Sami Banarlı, "İstiklâl Marşı," *Hürriyet*, December 5, 1952, sec. Haftanın Düşüncesi, Dosya No: 127 İstiklal Marşı ve Marşlar, İstanbul Şehir Üniversitesi Kütüphanesi Taha Toros Arşivi.

[55] Osman Zeki's assertion that he sent a recording is likely apocryphal given the difficulty of accessing studios in 1922 as well as cutting a 78-rpm record. Many thanks to an astute anonymous reviewer for pointing this out as well as Onur Öner for contributing his opinion on the matter. For a thorough examination of the early recording industry in Turkey, see Cemal Ünlü, *Git Zaman Gel Zaman: Fonograf-Gramofon-Taş Plak*, 2nd ed. (İstanbul: Pan Yayıncılık, 2016).

ensemble's transition to its new administration in Ankara.[56]

The details of the installation of Osman Zeki's composition as the official Turkish national anthem are particularly nebulous, and most scholars tend to eschew description of the six years between the demotion of Ali Rifat's composition and instatement of Osman Zeki's.[57] Güneş Ayas speculates that this "hasty" decision was an effort to "showcase a purely Western façade" while Önder suggests that Turkish first lady Latife Hanım's enjoyment of Osman Zeki's composition during a benefit concert for Balkan migrants at Istanbul's Milli Sinema played an important role in its selection.[58] Whatever the case, Osman Zeki's anthem was officially confirmed as the anthem of the Turkish Republic in 1930.[59] However, one confronts an absence of definitive sources explaining why the decision to select Ali Rifat's anthem was overturned as well as the circumstances that led to its replacement with Osman Zeki's composition; even the extent to which Osman Zeki composed the work is ambiguous.[60] In light of these exiguities, I argue that prosodic and musical analysis of Ali Rifat's and Osman Zeki's anthem settings may suggest, if not entirely reveal, the competing priorities at play as Turkey's ruling elite sought to establish the values the nascent nation would promote.

The Poem and Its Setting

Akif's poem exemplifies the *manzume* style of epic narrative, often moralizing, rhyming poetry common in *divan* poetry of the Ottoman classic literary tradition, which was heavily influenced by Persian and Arabic poetry and language and found its primary audience in elite and court circles.[61] "İstiklal Marşı" is composed using *aruz*, a closed form of poetic rhythm which emerged in Ottoman divan poetry via Arabic and Persian classical poetic forms, particularly Islamic poetry. Turkish classical music composers frequently used lyrics taken directly from Ottoman divan poetry. Although Walter Feldman has argued that "theoretical writers from Cantemir to Rauf Yekta Bey never point to the *aruz* of poetry as having any special relevance to the vocal repertoire," Cinuçen Tanrıkorur and Tolga Bektaş have suggested that there are strong concordances between the *usul* (rhythmic cycle) and *aruz* (and particularly between the *usul* and *bahir*, the class of *aruz* patterns, akin to meter).[62] Feldman nonetheless notes that vocal genres of religious and secular music using short *usuls* demonstrate their composers' attention to *aruz*, and in secular music "there is a basic practice of avoiding longer musical notes corresponding to short prosodic syllable."[63]

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[56] Bildik, "Bir Müzisyenin Aşksiz Yaşıyacağına Inanmam."

[57] Önder, "İstiklâl Marşı Belgeleri," 38; Özcan, "İstiklâl Marşi"; Hüsnü Özlü, "İstiklal Marşı'nın Yazılışı ve Kabulü," in *Atatürk Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: T.C. Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu - Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Başkanlığı, February 12, 2021), https://ataturkansiklopedisi.gov.tr/bilgi/istiklal-marsinin-yazilisi-ve-kabulu/.

[58] Ayas, *Mûsiki inkılâbı'nın sosyolojisi*, 123; Önder, "İstiklâl Marşı Belgeleri," 37.

[59] Önder, "İstiklâl Marşı Belgeleri," 37; Toker, "İstiklal Marşi Resmî Bestesinin Serüveni," 298.

[60] Journalist and music historian Murat Bardakçı also acknowledges that, despite years of perusing the archive, he has not encountered a single document offering information about when, how, and under which authority Osman Zeki's composition replaced Ali Rifat's. Murat Bardakçı, "90 küsur senelik arayış: İstiklâl Marşı'nın bestesini 1924'te Mustafa Kemal de değiştirmek istemişti," Habertürk, March 25, 2018, https://www.haberturk.com/yazarlar/murat-bardakci/1890318-90-kusur-senelik-arayis-istiklal-marsinin-bestesini-1924te-mustafa-kemal-de-degistirmek-istemisti.

[61] Atakan Kurt and Mehmet Kara, "An Algorithm for the Detection and Analysis of Arud Meter in Diwan Poetry," *Turkish Journal of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science* 20, no. 6 (2012): 958.

[62] Walter Feldman, "The Art of Melodic Extension Within and Beyond the Usûl," in *Rhythmic Cycles and Structures in the Art Music of the Middle East*, ed. Zeynep Helvacı, Jacob Olley, and Ralf Martin Jäger (Würzburg, Germany: Ergon Verlag, 2017), 156; Cinuçen Tanrikorur, "Concordance of Prosodic and Musical Meters in Turkish Classical Music," *Turkish Music Quarterly* 3, no. 1 (1990): 1–7; Bektaş, "Relationships between Prosodic and Musical Meters in the Beste Form of Classical Turkish Music," *Asian Music* 36, no. 1 (2005): 1–26.

[63] Feldman, "The Art of Melodic Extension Within and Beyond the Usûl," 157.

The *aruz* of Akif's poem, which belongs to the *bahir* called *remel*: this defines its syllabic meter, whose sequence of poetic feet can be described using *taf'ila*, a mnemonic notation, as *feilâtün* (or *fâilâtün*) *feilâtün feilâtün feilün* (or *fa'lün,* alternatively).[64] Each of these words indicates a number and stress pattern of syllables (as shown below); *feilün*, for instance, corresponds to a three-syllable short-short-long pattern. This form entails a prosodic scansion of long (–) and short (•) syllables totaling 14 or 15 per line, with the final syllable (or in some cases, final two syllables) of each line rhyming. Each of the ten stanzas of Akif's poem contains four lines (excepting the final stanza, which has an additional fifth line, a refrain of the last line of the second stanza). A short syllable consists of only a vowel or a consonant with a short vowel (such as *a, i, ü, u,* etc.; Turkish-origin words, as compared to Arabic-origin words, have only short vowels) while a long syllable is comprised of such combinations as short vowel-consonant or consonant-vowel-consonant-consonant.[65]

Characteristic "anomalies" and "flaws" in scansion, which have been conventionalized as prosodic rules, appear in Turkish *aruz*-based poetry, particularly as *aruz* is well-suited for use with Arabic and Persian languages but does not lend itself easily to Turkish.[66] Such anomalies, which do not require alteration of the *aruz*, include the interchangeability of *feilün* and *fa'lün* at the end of a verse. Although *feilün* has three syllables while *fa'lün* has two, this is considered a standard alteration that occurs regularly in *aruz*-based poetry. In Akif's "İstiklal Marşı," the final feet of the first two lines *"sancak"* and *"son ocak"* correspond to *fa'lün* and *feilün,* respectively. Atakan Kurt and Mehmet Kara define flaws as standardized alterations in the reading of an *aruz*-based poem in order to ensure appropriate scansion. These include 1) *imale*, the elongation of a short syllable where the meter calls for a long one (• → –); 2) *zihaf*, the shortening of a long syllable by replacing it with a short one (– → •); 3) *med*, the insertion of a short syllable into a verse where the meter calls for one (– → • –); and 4) *wasl*, the phenomenon whereby two consecutive words, the first ending in a consonant and the second beginning with a vowel, are read together and divided such that the final consonant of the first is considered part of the second word to fulfill the needs of the *aruz* (– → •).[67] This division occurs when the end of the first word requires a short syllable instead of a long one.[68] For example, in "İstiklal Marşı," *wasl* appears in the fourth line in the word "benim" ("mine"). Although the word is composed of the morphemes "ben" ("I") and "-im" (first-person possessive suffix), for the purposes of the *aruz*, which calls for a short foot followed by a long foot, the "n" of "benim" is grouped with the "im" to form "nim" (a long foot) rather than following morphemic breaks.

Ali Rifat's anthem adheres to Turkish classical music conventions, particularly in terms of melody, rhythmic structure, and text-setting. The composition uses the *makam Acemaşiran*, whose notated pitch material is the same as a Western F major scale; it also uses the *usul Nim Sofyan* (akin to a 2/4 time signature in Western classical music). Ayas posits that Ali Rifat was a prominent advocate for Westernization policies, and thus chose a *makam* and *usul* for his composition with parallels in Western classical music while also

[64] Erol Başara, "Yüz Yıllık Bir Nota Defterinde Giriftzen Asim Bey'in İstiklal Marşı," *Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 17, no. 2 (2014): 39; Atakan Kurt and Mehmet Kara, "An Algorithm for the Detection and Analysis of Arud Meter in Diwan Poetry," 958; Tolga Bektaş, "Relationships between Prosodic and Musical Meters in the Beste Form of Classical Turkish Music," 2–3.

[65] Kurt and Kara, "An Algorithm for the Detection and Analysis of Arud Meter in Diwan Poetry," 950. See article for detailed description of *aruz* application and rules in Ottoman and Turkish language poetry.

[66] Kurt and Kara, "An Algorithm for the Detection and Analysis of Arud Meter in Diwan Poetry," 953; Gözde Çolakoğlu Sarı, "Melody-Usul-Poetic Prosodic Meter Relations in Ottoman-Turkish Music," *Journal of Literature and Art Studies* 5, no. 2 (2015): 131.

[67] Kurt and Kara, "An Algorithm for the Detection and Analysis of Arud Meter in Diwan Poetry," 954; Sarı, "Melody-Usul-Poetic Prosodic Meter Relations in Ottoman-Turkish Music," 131.

[68] Kurt and Kara, "An Algorithm for the Detection and Analysis of Arud Meter in Diwan Poetry," 953.

being rhythmically reminiscent of Ottoman *mehter* music.[69] Ali Rifat's note in the manuscript about the possible *aruz* that would suit the melody he had composed as well as the instruction that "the number of beats in the prosody should be four or eight" indicates the composer's concern with ensuring that any words set to it would conform to prosodic conventions.[70]

Figure 1 presents the prosodic structure of the first stanza of the poem as set in Ali Rifat's composition.[71] Each line has been broken into syllables, whose totals per line appear at the beginning of the row (i.e., the first line has 14 syllables). Underneath each line is the *aruz*'s taf'ila mnemonic notation rendering, and below that is the symbolic notation of the same (long and short syllables indicated by – and •, respectively), proceeded by the corresponding letter to reference each line of the poem (A, B, C, or D).[72] The numbers below this correspond to the number of beats corresponding to each syllable in the composition, with the total per line at the beginning of the row. In the case of lines with two rows of beats, the second row refers to the repetition of part of the line in the musical rendering; for instance, in the first line, the phrase "al sancak" is repeated in the musical setting.

What is particularly noteworthy is how each line, whether 14 or 15 syllables, consistently has a 16-beat (8-measure) duration through rests and elongating certain syllables with multiple beats. The syllables elongated to create this consistency coincide with long syllables as determined by *aruz* and Turkish pronunciation conventions. While Ali Rifat set only the poem's first and last verses, this structure enables any of its stanzas to be substituted in the melody. The musical repeat of the last line (D) facilitates setting of the poem's final verse, which has five lines instead of four, meaning that the poem's distinct final line can easily be substituted in place of the repeated fourth line in the previous stanzas. Indeed, due to the manuscript note mentioned above, Hikmet Toker has suggested that it is possible that Ali Rifat adapted one of his earlier works for the anthem setting; although Toker writes this is not enough evidence to determine whether or not Ali Rifat specifically composed the work for the anthem lyrics, it suggests that the composer was deliberate in considering poetic meter and potential prosody when writing his work.[73]

Osman Zeki's anthem setting is arranged using Western polyphonic harmonization techniques and does not organize syllables and rhythmic choices around an *usul*. The melody resembles many military marches in the Western classical music tradition, especially in its use of a 4/4 time signature and a galloping dotted eighth-note followed by a sixteenth note motif (particularly in the last beat of measures). In an article entitled "Prosody in Music" ("Musikide Prozodi"), composer and music theorist Hüseyin Sadettin Arel avers the precedence of text before melody, writing, "When connecting any lyrics to music, we must give the greatest importance to the emotional stresses from the lyrics."[74] In contrast to this wisdom as well as Ali Rifat's version of the anthem, Osman Zeki's setting does not take the poem's scansion into account. Specifically, musical sentences do not correspond to the poem's line breaks, thus creating aural illusions of

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[69] Ayas, *Mûsiki inkılâbı'nın sosyolojisi,* 123; Murat Bardakçı also emphasizes that Ali Rifat's setting is evocative of mehter music. See Bardakçı, "İstiklâl Marşı'nı orkestraya bir Ermeni vatandaşın uyarladığını bilir misiniz?"

[70] Hikmet Toker, "Ali Rif'at Çağatay Evrakında Yer Alan İstiklal Marşı Ile Alâkalı Belgelerden Hareketle İlk Resmî İstiklal Marşı Bestesi," in *Musikinin Asrî Prens Ali Rifat Çağatay*, ed. Nilgün Doğrusöz and Ali Ergur (Ankara: Gece Kitaplığı, 2017), 177–78.

[71] I have notated the beat distributions across syllables per the audio recording of Ali Rifat performing his anthem setting rather than the notation in the appendix.

[72] Başara, "Yüz Yıllık Bir Nota Defterinde Giriftzen Asim Bey'in İstiklal Marşı." 39; Kurt and Kara, "An Algorithm for the Detection and Analysis of Arud Meter in Diwan Poetry," 953, 958; Bektaş, "Relationships between Prosodic and Musical Meters in the Beste Form of Classical Turkish Music," 4.

[73] Hikmet Toker, "Ali Rif'at Çağatay Evrakında Yer Alan İstiklal Marşı Ile Alâkalı Belgelerden Hareketle İlk Resmî İstiklal Marşı Bestesi."

[74] H. Sadettin Arel, "Musikide Prozodi," *Türk Musiki Dergisi*, November 1, 1947.

nonsensical words through grouping together syllables and dividing words. For instance, Osman Zeki's setting generates a musical sentence which begins "larda," which the unfamiliar listener may not interpret as the suffixes of the word "şafaklarda" (meaning "at dawn"), but rather as a separate, semantically undefined pseudoword ("larda"), as seen in Figure 2.

14 syllables	kork	ma	sön	mez	bu	şa	fak	lar	da	yü	zen	al	san	cak		(rest)
Aruz	*fâ*	*I*	*lâ*	*tün*	*fe*	*i*	*lâ*	*tün*	*fe*	*i*	*lâ*	*tün*	*fa'*	*lün*		
A	–	•	–	–	•	•	–	–	•	•	–	–	–	–		
Beats per syllable	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1		1
Reprise **24 beats total**												3	3	1		1
15 syllables	sön	me	den	yur	du	mu	n-üs	t-ün	de	tü	ten	en	son	o	cak	(rest)
Aruz	*fâ*	*I*	*lâ*	*tün*	*fe*	*i*	*lâ*	*tün*	*fe*	*i*	*lâ*	*tün*	*fe*	*i*	*lün*	
B	–	•	–	–	•	•	–	–	•	•	–	–	–	•	–	
Beats per syllable	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Reprise **24 beats total**													5	1	1	1
15 syllables	o	Be	n-im	mil	le	ti	min	yıl	dı	zı	dır	par	la	ya	cak	(rest)
	fe	*i*	*lâ*	*tün*	*fe*	*i*	*lâ*	*tün*	*fe*	*i*	*lâ*	*tün*	*fe*	*i*	*lün*	
C	•	•	–	–	•	•	–	–	•	•	–	–	•	•	–	
16 beats total	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
14 syllables	o	be	n-im	dir	o	be	n-im	mil	le	ti	min	dir	an	cak		(rest)
Aruz	*fe*	*i*	*lâ*	*tün*	*fe*	*i*	*lâ*	*tün*	*fe*	*i*	*lâ*	*tün*	*fa'*	*lün*		
D	•	•	–	–	•	•	–	–	•	•	–	–	–	–		
16 beats total	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1		1

Figure 1: Prosodic structure of Osman Zeki's setting of Ali Rifat's national anthem[75]

[75] I am grateful to Özata Ayan, Mehmet Güntekin, and Himmet Taşkömür for their feedback while preparing this chart.

Original text	**Phono-aural realization of musical sentences in Osman Zeki's setting**
Korkma, sönmez bu şafaklarda yüzen al sancak; Sönmeden yurdumun üstünde tüten en son ocak. O benim milletimin yıldızıdır, parlayacak; O benimdir, o benim milletimindir ancak.	Korkma, sönmez bu şafak larda yüzen al sancak; Sönmeden yurdumun üstünde tüten en son ocak. O be nim milletimin yıldızıdır, parlayacak; O benim dir, o benim milletimindir ancak.

Figure 2: Original text and implied word breaks in Osman Zeki's anthem setting

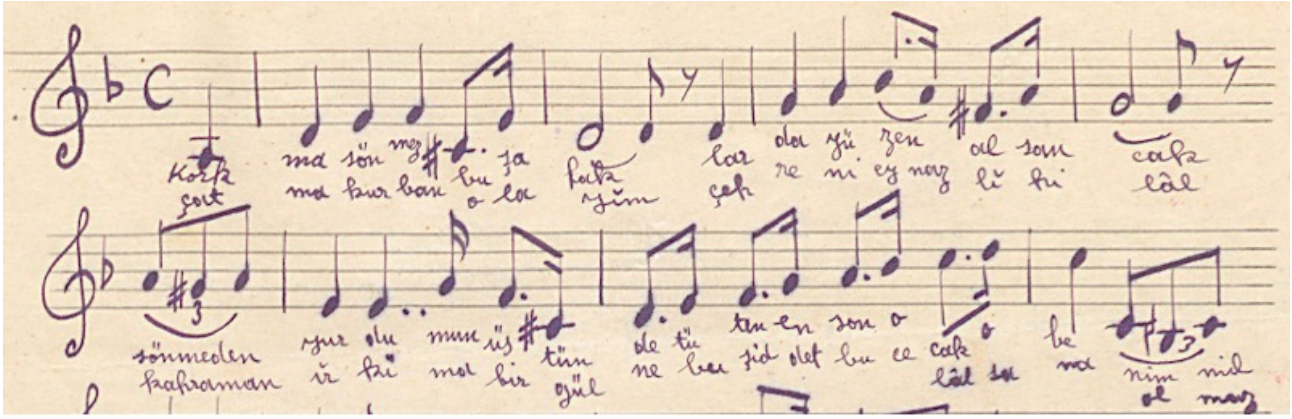

Figure 3: Excerpt from Osman Zeki's setting of "İstiklal Marşı."

An ascending scale followed by a descending octave leap which serves as a pickup for the following measure creates a separation between syllables through pitch and beat emphasis. This creates the sonic illusion of the pseudoword "obe" instead of the two words "o benim" ("that is my. . .") (see Figure 3).[76] Furthermore, there is an arbitrary relationship between the lengths of notes and relative lengths of syllables. According to Turkish syllable length conventions as well as the *aruz* of the poem, the "du" of "yurdumun" is a short foot and should not be extended as a longer foot.[77] However, in the second line of Osman Zeki's composition, "du" is held for the longest duration of any non-cadential note in the melody. These prosodic choices are quite telling of the fact that Osman Zeki composed the melody before setting the text.[78] He was therefore tasked with fitting the poem to an existing melody. This task was complicated by a melody whose first few musical sentences are four measures long, far shorter than the fourteen- or fifteen-syllable lines of the poem. Thus, it is not possible to fit the poem lines into the same space as the musical sentences without fundamentally changing the melody's rhythm.

[76] Or perhaps even the informal interjection "Öf be!," somewhat akin to "Bejesus!"
[77] Ahmet Hatipoğlu, "Karşılaştırmalı ve Uygulamalı Türk Musikisinde Prozodi," *TRT Müzik Dairesi Yayınları* (Ankara, 1983), 3, as cited in Sarı, "Melody-Usul-Poetic Prosodic Meter Relations in Ottoman-Turkish Music," 138.
[78] Önder, "İstiklâl Marşı Belgeleri," 38.

While there are no known extant sources that reveal a definitive explanation for the official change of the Turkish national anthem, the rejection of Ali Rifat's Janissary-reminiscent and prosodically sound anthem in favor of Osman Zeki's allegedly inferior prosodic setting indicates the prioritization of a certain overall musical sound over the structure of the language and intelligibility of the text. Osman Zeki's setting situates the anthem within a Western military band tradition, which itself emerged from centuries of European fear and mockery (and later emulation) of Ottoman Janissary military bands and the battles they accompanied. In its prioritization of Western march compositional conventions, Osman Zeki's version subordinates the language of the march to the music, which itself recalls its own origins as a Western orientalist imitation of Janissary music. Although much of the music of Turkey tends to foreground the singing voice and lyrics over instrumental accompaniment, many marches of the Ottoman Empire had set a different precedent. The imperial marches of the Ottoman sultans in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, largely composed by Italian composers such as Giuseppe Donizetti and Italo Selvelli, followed Western classical compositional rules of harmonization and lacked lyrics altogether. If one overlooks the lyrics, the operatic orchestration of Osman Zeki's anthem renders it more or less interchangeable in its typical style with many other national anthems of European nations (as well as those of other non-European nations founded in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries).[79] As Thomas Turino has noted regarding the anthems of many Latin American republics,

> Rather than indexing cultural uniqueness, the official anthems were adopted to exhibit iconicity with other legitimate states in cosmopolitan terms; that is, the assertion of legitimacy and sovereignty for emerging states was based on *similarity* with existing states *not difference*. . . . The use of European forms resulted from and functioned to support the elite identity of the active citizen.[80]

Similarly, Osman Zeki's composition is emblematic of the broader category of "anthem-ness" while avoiding cultural specificity; therefore, the "broken" prosody further minimizes the remaining aspect that might differentiate the anthem as particularly "Ottoman."

Osman Zeki's invocation of an indexically iconic "anthem" sound at the expense of prosodic conventions (thwarting Mehmet Akif's diligent observation of an *aruz*-based poetic structure) came at a moment when many ideologues of the early Turkish Republic were seeking to unify a population around nationalism premised on divorcing Turkishness from its previous Ottoman imperial contexts, including in music and language. Elite and courtly consumption of divan poetry and its musical settings in what is today referred to as Turkish classical music cemented these cultural forms' associations with the Ottoman Empire and the dominant place of Islam in governance and civil society. Following the Turkish ruling elite's 1924 abolition of the Caliphate, which had for centuries given significance to the Ottoman Empire as the religious seat of the Islamic world, the aforementioned 1925 closure of *tekke*-s (Sufi lodges)

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[79] Turino discusses a parallel phenomenon in many Latin American republics in the nineteenth century, where the ruling elite's desire to distinguish themselves from other social groups within their states motivated the use of European musical forms and importation of European composers to mark cultural prestige. Turino, "Nationalism and Latin American Music," 179.

[80] Turino, "Nationalism and Latin American Music," 179. It should be noted that Turino's use of "icon" here could potentially lead to confusion: while there is iconicity between the anthems themselves as well as potentially between states, there is not iconicity between the anthems and states; however, the relationship between the anthem and the state can come to be perceived as an icon in its own right (indexical iconicity). He describes anthems (indices) as part of a larger juxtaposition of indexical associations from which the icon (nation) emerges. For more on national anthems' role as indices within the "semiotic formula" producing the icon of "nation", see Turino, "Nationalism and Latin American Music," 195–196. For more on indexical iconicity, see Susan Gal and Judith T. Irvine, *Signs of Difference: Language and Ideology in Social Life* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 123.

uprooted these important centers for the transmission of both religious and musical knowledge. After the eradication of this pillar of the pedagogical systems that had trained many musicians in both religious and secular music for centuries in the Ottoman Empire, the effective ban on Turkish music instruction at the state music conservatory Dârü'l-elhân in 1926 preceded the aforementioned language reforms in which Arabic script was replaced with the Latin alphabet. The Republican government's subsequent efforts to eliminate Arabic and Persian words from the Turkish lexicon laid the foundation for the systematic dissemination of "pure" Turkish through nation-wide education campaigns. In parallel to polemics decrying musical traditions associated with the Ottoman court while developing of a "national music" (*millî musiki*) that drew upon apparently indigenous musical resources, literary reformers called for a "national literature" (*millî edebiyat*) that utilized the features, forms, and genres associated with Turkish folk literature to express nationalist subject matter, particularly in reaction to the linguistic restrictions of *aruz*-based divan poetic composition and its prevalence of Arabic and Persian-origin words. State-led relegation of linguistic and musical conventions associated with the Ottoman court, including the increased use of folk or quantitative syllabic meter (*hece vezni*) rather than 'classical' or qualitative syllabic meters (*aruz vezni*) in poetry, laid the foundation for rendering Ottoman-era literature and lyrics largely obsolete and inaccessible for contemporary Turks.[81]

From this perspective, Ali Rifat's setting draws on musical and prosodic conventions that locate the national anthem within a legacy of Ottoman elite culture. By contrast, Osman Zeki's disregard for long-standing prosodic conventions for setting *aruz*-based poetry can be read as a reflection of intellectuals' ongoing questioning about composing for a national public rather than simply elite audience, and specifically whether and how their works should and could resonate with a nation founded on the collapse of an empire. However, tensions over Turkish national values and identity have remained a constant feature since the Republic's founding. The Turkish government's non-democratic selection of Osman Zeki's work to replace Ali Rifat's seems to prefigure the state's often-coercive measures to discipline non-conforming cultural products and subjects in the name of the Turkish nation. Ensuing public debates over the anthem, itself an indexical icon of both the Turkish nation as well as the image of a break of the Ottoman Empire, demonstrated that such measures have inevitably invited contestations about how to delimit national belonging. As the next section argues, the prosodic awkwardness as well as the non-democratic selection of Osman Zeki's composition have made the anthem a notable proxy for historical and present contentions over Turkey's national values and geopolitical position.

Debating the Anthem, Debating the Nation

These historical ambiguities as well as the prosodic awkwardness are significant because they have provided fodder for the decades of ongoing impassioned public debate in Turkey.[82] Within a few years of the official adoption of Osman Zeki's setting, an editorial in the newspaper *Tarihli Cumhuriyeti Gazetesi* asserted that new competitions should be held to select the anthem's text and musical setting because Osman Zeki's rendition set only the first two stanzas and omitted lines from Mehmet Akif's poem the column writer deemed imperative. Following WWII, national newspaper editorials as well as heated live discussions in public forums brought to the fore tensions over the words and music featured in Osman

[81] John Morgan O'Connell, *Alaturka: Style in Turkish Music (1923–1938)* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), 19.
[82] "Gene Milli Marşı," *Cumhuriyet*, March 18, 1933, Dosya No: 127 İstiklal Marşı ve Marşlar, İstanbul Şehir Üniversitesi Kütüphanesi Taha Toros Arşivi, 3.

Zeki's anthem setting. One 1953 editorial from the newspaper *Yeni Sabah* called for a new national anthem on the basis of the mismatch between the lyrics and music, while another argued against changing the anthem but deplored the dirge-like tempo at which it was played on official radio broadcasts.[83] A different editorial that same year printed in the Islamist-oriented magazine *Sebîlürreşâd* reprovingly asserts that those who would seek to change Mehmet Akif's lyrics were "a microbe of Communism"; it notes that Islam and Turkishness compete against one another and that the lyrics are a shield of the nation's religion.[84] A 1961 article in *Sebîlürreşâd* describes proponents of the anthem defending calls from riled university students at the Ankara Halk Ocağı (Ankara Turkish Hearth) to change Mehmet Akif's lyrics on the basis of their apparent religiosity.[85]

This wave of debate arose in the 1950s as the newly elected Democratic Party (DP) relaxed long-standing restrictions on public expressions of religion, an overall stance that invited backlash from more secular-leaning educated elite. In 1924, Turkish sociologist, politician, and major architect of Kemalist social reforms Ziya Gökalp had suggested that the *ezan* (*adhan*, Islamic call to prayer) be sung in Turkish rather than Arabic, a recommendation that became an official decree in 1932. This change remains a moral wound for those who view such policies as damaging to the practice of Islam. In addition to prohibiting religious brotherhoods (*tarikat*) and closing schools of religious instruction (*medrese*), the ruling elite used the military to suppress public uprisings protesting the Turkish *adhan* and criminally persecuted those who refused to comply with the ruling.[86] After the DP took power in 1950, the country's leadership reversed many of these policies, reinstituting the Arabic adhan, expanding religious education in schools, and allowing the sale of religious literature.[87] This sharp departure from the Kemalist elites' dedication to secularism arrived in tandem with "the exploitation of Islam as a means to counter communism."[88]

Indeed, the aforementioned editorial denouncing those who would want to change the national anthem as a "microbe of Communism" also alludes to Turkey's shifting geopolitical relationships at the onset of the Cold War. After the end of World War II, Turkey became a primary site of American investment as Turkish political leaders in the DP pursued economic assistance and the US government sought to counteract the Soviet Union's influence through developing pro-American regimes. The 1947 Truman Doctrine had urged economic investment in Western European nations to support independent democracies and thus fight the spread of communism, a call that laid the foundation for the economic recovery policies included within the Marshall Plan. In 1948, the American government approved Turkey's request for inclusion in the Marshall Plan, which supported the creation and construction of Turkey's extensive highway system, the Istanbul Hilton Hotel, and the Turkish tourism industry, among many other projects; it also paved the way for substantial military support to Turkey, Turkey's admission

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[83] "Güleriz Ağlanacak Halimize! İstiklâl Marşımız," June 11, 1953, sec. Haftanın Düşüncesi, Dosya No: 127 İstiklal Marşı ve Marşlar, İstanbul Şehir Üniversitesi Kütüphanesi Taha Toros Arşivi. In response to such critiques, Osman Zeki asserted that the radio orchestra had erroneously recorded the anthem at 60 BPM rather than the 80 BPM at which he had composed the anthem and thus the nation's listeners had heard a much slower rendition of the anthem. See Bildik, "Bir Müzisyenin Aşksiz Yaşıyacağına Inanmam," 3.

[84] Yeni Sabah, "Komunizm Mikrobu," *Sebilürreşad* 8, no. 180 (1959): 78.

[85] Mehmet Ali Uz, "İstiklal Marşı Şairi Mehmet Akif," *Sebilürreşad* 14, no. 333 (1962): 123.
For a compelling discussion of Turkish national identity construction in the context of the lyrics' composition by Mehmet Akif, see Günil Özlem Ayaydin-Cebe, "Smile of the Crescent."

[86] Hidayet Aydar and Mehmet Atalay, "The Issue of Chanting the Adhan in Languages Other Than Arabic and Related Social Reactions Against It in Turkey," *İstanbul Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, no. 13 (2006): 54, 60.

[87] Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017), 233.

[88] Tanıl Bora, "Narrating the Enemy: Image and Perception of the 'Communists' Among the Radical Right," in *Turkey in Turmoil*, ed. Berna Pekesen (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020), 147, https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110654509-008.

to NATO in 1952, and the establishment of major American military bases holding nuclear warheads within the country.[89]

The DP's stated quest to develop Turkey into a "little America" coincided with receiving American economic aid between 1950 and 1964 that amounted to 35 percent of total public investment in Turkey.[90] Turning towards the US entailed promoting the values of a superior imagined West, and similarly, suppressing dissent through the use of divisive Cold War rhetoric. Reem Abou-El-Fadl writes, "[The DP] began working to bring Turkey politically, economically and culturally into the 'Free World' and its 'democratic community'. These and other buzzwords—the 'red menace', the 'traitors to the nation'—sank deep into the Turkish political lexicon, colouring it with the stark palette of the Cold War."[91] For the young nation, the anthem provided an outlet for public discourse about broader national values. Calls for its alteration or removal, subsequently met with accusations that dissenters were a "microbe of Communism," reveal internal tensions over the role of religiosity in public life and governance as well as the outsized role American influence was beginning to play in shaping those dialogues.

Over the 1970s, Turkey's significant reliance on the US as well as tensions over the sovereignty of Cyprus after its independence from British rule empowered the rise of leftist rhetoric, which depicted a subordinate relationship comparable to to how Ottoman Empire had succumbed to the demands of many European nations.[92] Extremist groups on the left and right engaged in violent clashes and political assassinations, while insurrections in the southeast fueled tensions between the government and Kurdish separatists. At the same time, Islamic fundamentalism was gaining traction; sympathizers held a mass demonstration in Konya in 1980 calling for a return to Islamic holy law (*şeriat*), where they refused to sing the national anthem.[93] Following the 1980 military coup, the government suppressed many localized forms of folk music, particularly music with non-Turkish lyrics or politically left-wing lyrics, and banned Kurdish language outright while also imprisoning and torturing many Kurdish musicians and accused leftists, including thousands of intellectuals, journalists, political party members, and other suspecting dissenters.[94]

As a result, marches (such as the national anthem) were utilized to demonstrate and test loyalty to the Turkish nation, often to oppressive ends. After the 1980 coup, political prisoners in Turkey faced sonic torture hearing the Turkish national anthem and marches like "Türkiye'm Türkiye'm Cennetim Benim" blasted over speakers for hours; prisoners were also instructed to sing the anthem repeatedly.[95] Journalist

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[89] Reem Abou-El-Fadl, *Foreign Policy as Nation Making: Turkey and Egypt in the Cold War*, *The Global Middle East* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 93.

[90] Yavuz Köse, "'Coca Cola Is Poison, Don't Drink It!'—From Enthusiasm to Hostility: American Consumer Goods, Tourists and Hippies in Cold War Turkey," in *Turkey in Turmoil*, ed. Berna Pekesen (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020), 68, https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110654509-005.

[91] Abou-El-Fadl, *Foreign Policy as Nation Making*, 75.

[92] Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 274.

[93] Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 268-269.

[94] Martin Greve, *Makamsız: Individualization of Traditional Music on the Eve of Kemalist Turkey*, Istanbuler Texte Und Studien 39 (Würzburg, Germany: Ergon Verlag in Kommission, 2017), 249.

[95] Emre Aköz, "Cuntacılar işkenceden de sorumlu," *Sabah*, April 6, 2012, https://www.sabah.com.tr/yazarlar/akoz/2012/04/06/cuntacilar-iskenceden-de-sorumlu; Pelin Ünker, "12 Eylül: Şarkılarla işkence," *Deutsche Welle Türkçe*, September 12, 2019, https://www.dw.com/tr/12-eyl%C3%BCl-%C5%9Fark%C4%B1larla-i%C5%9Fkence/a-50385544. Testimony about the warden of Mamak Prison Raci Tetik included recollections of his practice of forcing prisoners to sing certain stanzas of "İstiklal Marşı" and beating those who made mistakes to the point of unconsciousness. Raci Tetik was accused of "torture and ill-treatment, threats, murder and abuse of power" in 2011, but the case was ultimately closed on the basis that the statute of limitations had expired. See Türker Karapinar, "Diyarbakır'dan Sonra Mamak," *Milliyet*, April 28, 2011, https://www.milliyet.com.tr/gundem/diyarbakir-dan-sonra-mamak-1383304; Burcu

and writer Ertuğrul Mavioğlu, who spent eight years between 1980 and 1991 as a political prisoner on the basis of his affiliation with the leftist Devrimci Sol movement, writes in his memoir about the extensive use of the Turkish national anthem as one of many forms of extreme physical, psychological, and sonic torture used against prisoners.[96] He describes that those released from Diyarbakır Prison would not share the details of what they had experienced there with incoming detainees, but only give one warning:

> Everyone insistently told us, "Oh, you must memorize the national anthem. When you come to Diyarbakır Prison, you have to know the national anthem." We did not take these warnings seriously. Then we were arrested and set off for the prison.[97]

He recalls daily sessions in Erzincan Prison in which prisoners were singled out and instructed to sing multiple stanzas or the entirety of the anthem and subjected to physical beatings and/or weeks of solitary confinement for mistakes or unsatisfactory performance. This torture was so distressing that the prisoners staged a 15-day hunger strike against the forced singing of the anthem.[98] Reflecting on these practices, he writes:

> Alongside torture, I believe that practices such as singing the national anthem are a part of the conceit of terrorizing an entire society. The word we heard the most in Mamak was "traitors." They were all patriots and we were traitors. In this context, I believe that the greatest damage was done to members of MHP [Milliyet Halk Partisi, the National People's Party]. This is because nationalism is their symbol and was constantly used against them there. The national anthem was forced to be sung, and so on. If they tried to make me recite "The Internationale" by beating me morning and evening, it would have without a doubt devastated me, too.[99]

The utilization of the national anthem as a means of determining a subject's belonging and allegiance under duress creates a "symbolic dramatization of conflict" that seeks to legitimate authority and make it "palpable."[100] Through deploying the national anthem as a tool of torture (against even those associated with the MHP, a highly nationalist party), the 1980s coup-era government sought to exploit the symbolic meanings and collective imbued in the anthem; using the anthem as a means of intimidation and arbitration projected their power and disempowered potential challengers' visions of the nation (as well as the subjects it included).

In fact, a scene from the 2006 film *Beynelmilel* (*The Internationale*), which depicts a fictional story based on the political violence of the 1980s, portrays wedding guests in the southeast and majority Kurdish city of Adıyaman beseeching local gevende (wedding musicians) to perform "Lorke" (a Kurdish song), which is among the long list of pieces the military has banned. When military officers show up to the wedding, the musicians abruptly change tunes to perform the march-like song "Türkiye'm Türkiye'm Cennetim Benim" ("My Turkey, My Turkey, My Paradise"). After being recruited to form a military band, the musicians unwittingly perform the left-wing anthem "The Internationale" at a formal ceremony and are

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Günüşen, "'Karıştır-Barıştır' Işkencesinin de Mimarıydı," *Haber Sol*, March 5, 2019, https://haber.sol.org.tr/turkiye/taniklari-iskenceci-raci-tetiki-anlatti-karistir-baristir-iskencesinin-de-mimariydi-262224.

[96] Evren Kenan, leader of the 1980 coup, also told journalist Fikret Bila that the prison guards "made them [inmates] sing İstiklal Marşı" as part of the discipline and "education" given to political prisoners at Diyarbakır Prison. See Fikret Bila, "'Kürtçeye ağır yasak koyduk ama hataydı,'" *Milliyet*, November 7, 2007, https://www.milliyet.com.tr/siyaset/kurtceye-agir-yasak-koyduk-ama-hataydi-221703.

[97] Ertuğrul Mavioğlu, *Asılmayıp Beslenenler: Bir 12 Eylül Hesaplaşması* (Istanbul: Ithaki Publishing, 2006), 120 (translated by author).

[98] Mavioğlu, *Asılmayıp Beslenenler*, 267 (translated by author).

[99] Mavioğlu, *Asılmayıp Beslenenler*, 111 (translated by author).

[100] Kertzer, *Ritual, Politics, and Power*, 120.

jailed and tortured. In this context, the cultural non-specificity of the march form renders the Turkish national anthem (and the form itself) a double-edged sword—a means of demonstrating loyalty and assimilation as well as a tool of torture used to enforce non-deviation from a narrow vision of Turkishness.[101] For the musicians in the film, the interchangeability of marches that adhere to iconic anthem ideal also creates the conditions for dangerous confusion between works such as "İstiklal Marşı" and "The Internationale"—indeed, like over seventy of the world's extant national anthems, both "İstiklal Marşı" and the "The Internationale" begin with an ascending perfect fourth from dominant to tonic.[102]

Broader public debates in newspapers on the suitability of the national anthem emerged in the 1990s, especially after the strict state monopoly on TV and radio as well as the ban on Kurdish music were relaxed in 1991.[103] The Ministry of Culture's 1990 commission of a third-party public opinion survey on changing that national anthem triggered widespread reactions, as evidenced by many letters to the editor of newspapers such as *Cumhuriyet* in the next few years.[104] Composer Ahmet Adnan Saygun publicly stated his support of changing the anthem, while writer Orhan Pamuk mocked the idea of changing the anthem with each new ruling party.[105] Some writers bemoaned that children grew up having difficulty understanding the meaning of the national anthem because of the prosodic errors or avowed the importance of quality polyphonic music education so that Turkish citizens could properly perform the anthem.[106] One writer finds that Osman Zeki's anthem invites ridicule at national football matches, as when sung in unison it is "discordant and scream-like."[107] In response, another writer contends that he has only witnessed people moved to tears (rather than laughter) when singing the anthem, and that even bringing up the topic of changing the national anthem is an act that should be viewed with suspicion.[108] One writer refers to the thought of changing the anthem as a "nightmare" that would contradict Turkey's national values of freedom and democracy, rhetorically contrasting a Turkish anthem change with the frequent changing of the Afghan national flag as an example of what Turkey is not and should not become.[109] Leftist-Kemalist intellectual İlhan Selçuk, who had been tortured following the 1971 coup, even satirically called for a new anthem with words and music that better represented the hypocrisies of

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[101] Unfortunately, representatives of the state in Turkey have continued to animate the practice of using the national anthem as a way of violently assimilating apparently subaltern subjects: in March 2023, police officers abducted a 14-year-old boy in the Kurdish-majority town Licê in Turkey's Diyarbakır province, telling him to blaspheme Kurds and praise Turks, beating him with a gun, blindfolding him, handcuffing him to the ground, and telling him to memorize all ten stanzas of "İstiklal Marşı," the patriotic poem "Mehmetçik Marşı," and Atatürk's "Address to the Youth" ("Gençlik Hitabesini") by the morning or be killed. Even after the boy was found still alive by a farmer, police continued to threaten his family as well as the doctor giving the official report on his condition. See "AMED LİCE'DE 14 YAŞINDAKİ ÇOCUĞA POLİS İŞKENCESİ," 2023, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fcd5RhCSrRo.

[102] Daughtry, "Russia's New Anthem and the Negotiation of National Identity," 63.

[103] Greve, *Makamsız*, 249; Şükrü Tahirgil, "İstiklal Marşımız," *Cumhuriyet*, July 9, 1981, İstanbul Şehir Üniversitesi Kütüphanesi Taha Toros Arşivi, Dosya No: 127 İstiklal Marşı ve Marşlar.

[104] "İstiklal Marşı Için Kamuoyu Araştırması," August 4, 1990, Dosya No: 127 İstiklal Marşı ve Marşlar, İstanbul Şehir Üniversitesi Kütüphanesi Taha Toros Arşivi; "İstiklal Marşı'na Anket," *Hürriyet*, August 26, 1990, İstanbul Şehir Üniversitesi Kütüphanesi Taha Toros Arşivi.

[105] "İstiklal Marşı Için Kamuoyu Araştırması."

[106] Ahmet Günlük, "Marşı Doğru Söylemek Kolay," August 15, 1990, Dosya No: 127 İstiklal Marşı ve Marşlar. İstanbul Şehir Üniversitesi Kütüphanesi Taha Toros Arşivi.

[107] Altan İplikçi, "İstiklal Marşı Üzerine," August 18, 1990, Dosya No: 127 İstiklal Marşı ve Marşlar. İstanbul Şehir Üniversitesi Kütüphanesi Taha Toros Arşivi.

[108] İplikçi, "İstiklal Marşı Üzerine."

[109] Ayhan Ulubelen, "İstiklal Marşımız Değiştirilemez!" August 8, 1990, Dosya No: 127 İstiklal Marşı ve Marşlar. İstanbul Şehir Üniversitesi Kütüphanesi Taha Toros Arşivi.

how Turkey proclaimed its independence yet conceded to the US' political demands (an "American mandate").[110]

While the national survey found that an overwhelming majority of Turkish citizens surveyed did not wish to change the anthem, strains of such debates continue to penetrate public discourse to this day.[111] Although some commenters on YouTube videos of Ali Rifat's rendition praise for its intelligibility, note that it is a beautiful example of Turkish classical music, or assert that it does a better job than the current anthem of reflecting national culture, it still garners much criticism for failing to resemble a Western march.[112] Tellingly, although many YouTube comments bemoan the prosody of Osman Zeki's setting or are remorseful that the lyrics were not better incorporated with the music, they also express relief that the earlier anthem was rejected in favor of a more "serious" composition. In response to commenters asserting that Ali Rifat's rendition does not seem to suitably capture the spirit of a Western-style march, one commenter writes, "I do not hesitate to tell the truth, whether it is a crime or not. First discuss how they had the right to change our first accepted anthem [by Ali Rifat]. . . . As a member of this nation, I have the right to criticize this disrespect towards the poet and poetry."[113] Others say that it is a good thing that Ali Rifat's anthem was passed over, and even exclaim, "How the hell could we have sung this at national and league football matches?"[114] In 2018, current Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan expressed the current national anthem's composition did not properly match the lyrics; he furthermore called for a new national anthem with lyrics that conveyed the events of the 2016 failed coup attempt (the fallout of which has led to the purging of 180,000 judges, teachers, soldiers, and journalists, and civil servants) as well as the government's decades-long struggle against terror.[115] To date, there has been no significant official action to change the anthem following this proposition.

As with many issues deemed politically sensitive in Turkey, discussing one's attitudes towards the national anthem presents a relatively benign strategy for exchanging views and channeling dissent about Turkish politics and national identity. Reflecting on the years after the 1980 coup, in 2016 Turkish writer Kaya Genç wrote,

> We lived in a continuous present—talking about history was dangerous, historians were despised. . . . The modernist coup was a big project to cleanse public life from "dirty" things like identity, individualism, religious beliefs, expressions of sexuality. . . . Back in Istanbul, it was all clean and military-like and soulless and dead. The coup made us all self-repressors.[116]

While Genç describes the post-coup era in 1980s Turkey, his assertion of a cleansing of public life rings true in the aftermath of the most recent 2016 coup attempt. The brutal suppression of protestors,

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[110] İlhan Selçuk, "İstiklal Marşını Değiştirelim. . .," *Cumhuriyet*, September 30, 1990, sec. Pencere, Dosya No: 127 İstiklal Marşı ve Marşlar, İstanbul Şehir Üniversitesi Kütüphanesi Taha Toros Arşivi.

[111] Sefai Acay, "İstiklal Marşımız," November 1, 1992, Dosya No: 127 İstiklal Marşı ve Marşlar, İstanbul Şehir Üniversitesi Kütüphanesi Taha Toros Arşivi.

[112] See comments on Videokaresi, *İstiklal Marşı'nın Ilk Hali - Ali Rifat Çağatay*, 2012, YouTube, https://youtu.be/1IN16h3qB1I.

[113] "[S]uç olsa da olmasa da doğruyu söylemekten geri durmuyorum. Evvelâ kabul olan marşımızı hangi hakla değiştirmişler onu konuşun. . . . Zira bu milletin bir ferdi olarak şaire ve şiire yapılan bu saygısızlığı sonuna kadar eleştirmeye hakkım var." Videokaresi, *İstiklal Marşı'nın Ilk Hali - Ali Rifat Çağatay*.

[114] Videokaresi, *İstiklal Marşı'nın Ilk Hali - Ali Rifat Çağatay*.

[115] "Erdoğan: En büyük üzüntüm, İstiklal Marşı'nın hakiki manasını yüreklere nakşedecek bestenin bulunamaması," T24, March 14, 2018, https://t24.com.tr/haber/erdogan-en-buyuk-uzuntum-istiklal-marsinin-hakiki-manasini-yureklere-naksedecek-bestenin-bulunamamasi,581208.

[116] Cited in Suzy Hansen, *Notes on a Foreign Country: An American Abroad in a Post-American World* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2017), 183.

intimidation and imprisonment of journalists, stringent government control of appointments at universities, arrests and trials of citizens for allegedly defamatory social media content criticizing the government, imprisonment of political opposition party leaders, and the many other regular grievances of those living in Turkey contribute to self-censorship (alongside coercive externally driven censorship) and explicit non-self-differentiation. In this sense, discussions of the national anthem's broken prosody used as a proxy for debate about the state of democracy and national values can be seen as precursors to Turkey's vibrant meme culture on Twitter (which many regard as the country's only reliable source of news); where criticizing the ruling elite for inflating olive oil prices 200% over the course of a month is dangerous, posting a comedic photo of Turkish oil wrestling (*yağlı güreş*) or a video of a groom receiving olive oil instead of the traditional gift of gold at his wedding offers a relatively safer way of expressing one's frustrations.[117]

Conclusion

In this article, I have suggested that creating a national anthem was an effort that paralleled the authoritarian means by which many other social reforms were swiftly implemented in the nascent Turkish Republic. Both the selection of the poem by the competition's non-entrant Mehmet Akif for the lyrics as well as the enigmatic overturning of Ali Rifat's anthem in favor of Osman Zeki's insinuates underlying conflicts among the Turkish ruling elite about how to represent the nation. Regulation and creation of musical traditions in Turkey became one outlet for such contentions. Ali Rifat's anthem sought to satisfy the demands of a Turkish national anthem through relying on conventions of Turkish music, drawing on centuries-old prosodic methods of linking music and language through *aruz* and *usul*. This rendition, although compatible with aspects of Western classical music compositional principles, gave prominence to the text and to some evoked the sound of Ottoman Janissary bands. In the context of the sweeping and forcefully enacted reforms Atatürk and his government ushered into nearly every dimension of social life, the national anthem became another site to publicly demonstrate a shift away from the Ottoman ruling system and its associated cultural values.

I have argued that the anthem was just as much intended as a means of sounding a modern, autonomous, Western-oriented nation on the international stage as it was meant to rally its own citizens; to this end, the emergent pseudowords were a secondary concern to presenting a legitimately Western-style march. The leadership prioritized a musical setting which undermines the intelligibility of the lyrics while more closely resembling the anthems of the nations with which Turkey had just warred and bested to win its independence after World War I. As a result, Turkish emulation of an imagined West through anthem choice contributed to the normativization of a conceptual Eurocentric modernity. This approach suggests that, particularly in the Turkish context, dominant ideas of an anthem (and the nation for which it is perceived to stand) are not simply non-European replicas of a European model; rather, I suggest bringing contestations of the model to the fore and seeking out the interpenetrations and mutual influences inherent in the very model itself. The waves of debate around the anthem, more of which seem sure to emerge in the years to come, offer a compelling indication of how the meeting of words and music in anthems can reveal the ongoing negotiations and contestations from which a nation emerges.

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[117] See https://twitter.com/DrOziKozi/status/1500416661953916936 and https://twitter.com/MalumKi20573127/status/1500441107162972161 for examples of such memes.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful for conversations with Martin Brody, Oktay Üst, and Onur Öner which enriched this research. I extend special thanks to Richard Wolf, Katie Callum, and Siv Lie for their insightful comments on drafts of this article. I also wish to acknowledge the institutional support I received from Koç University's Research Center for Anatolian Civilizations, the British Institute at Ankara, the Fulbright-Hays DDRA Grant, the Orient-Institut Istanbul, and the American Research Institute in Turkey, which supported me during this research period.

Appendix

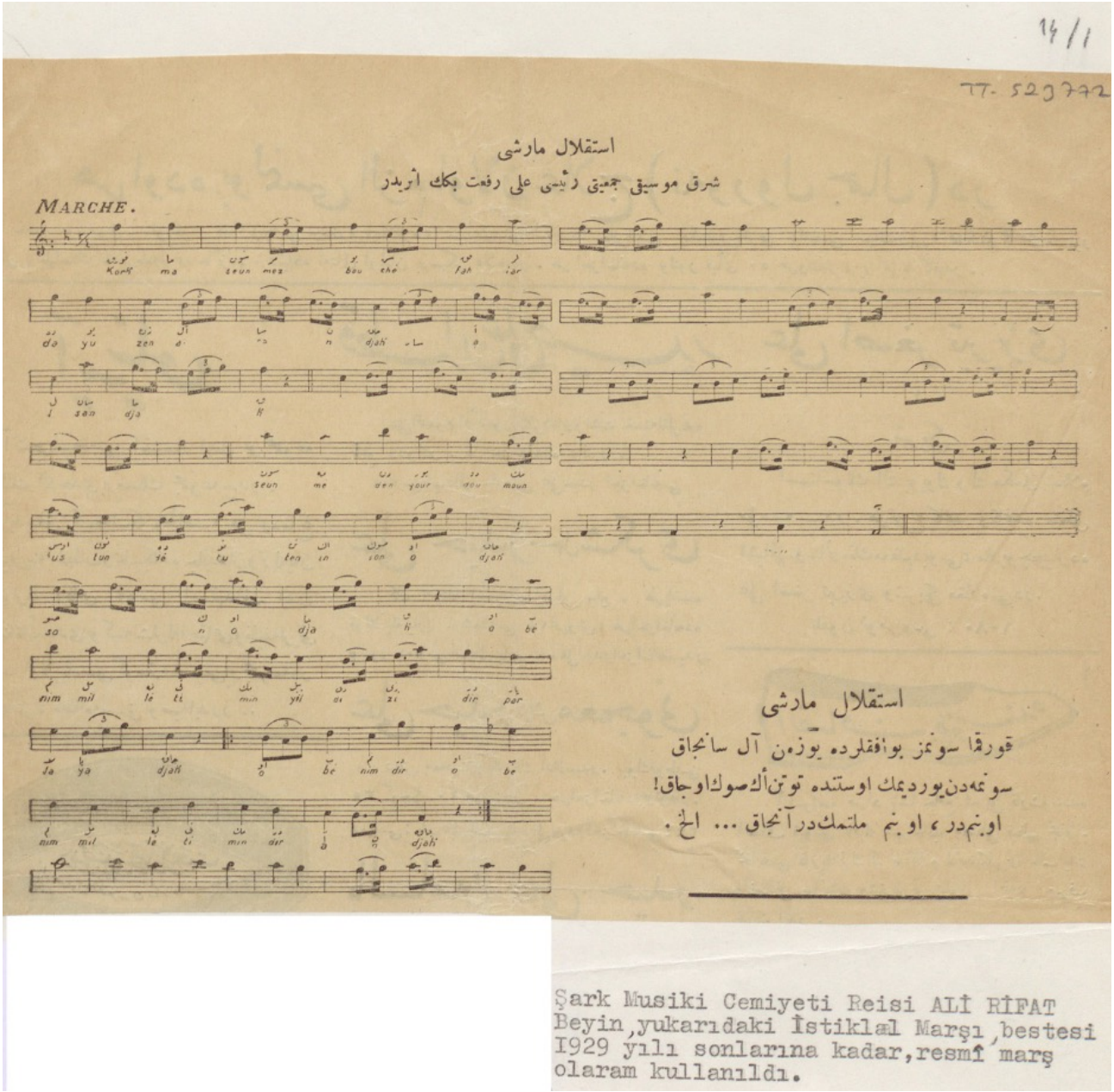

Figure 4: Ali Rifat's setting of "İstiklal Marşı"

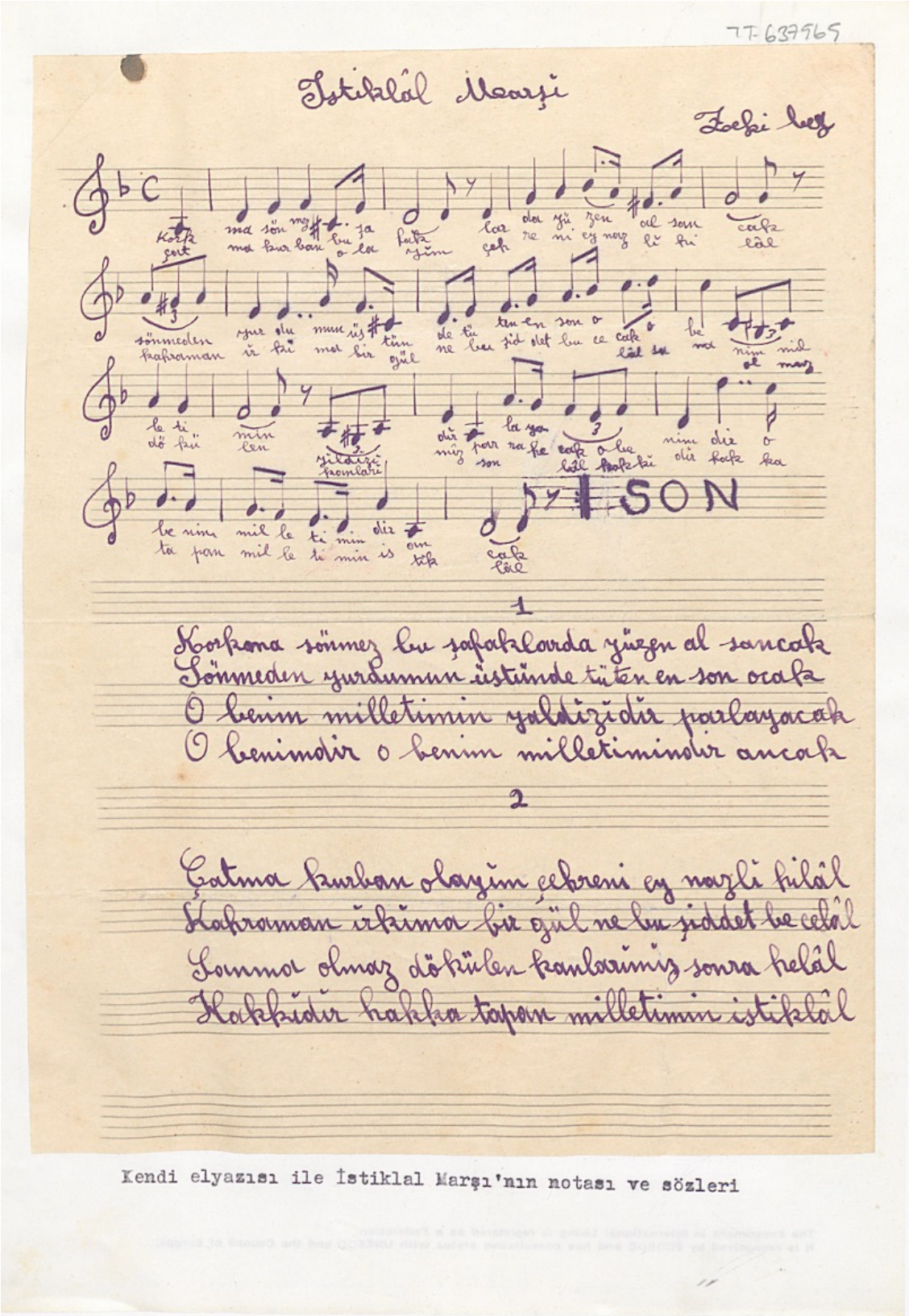

Figure 5: Osman Zeki's setting of "İstiklal Marşı"

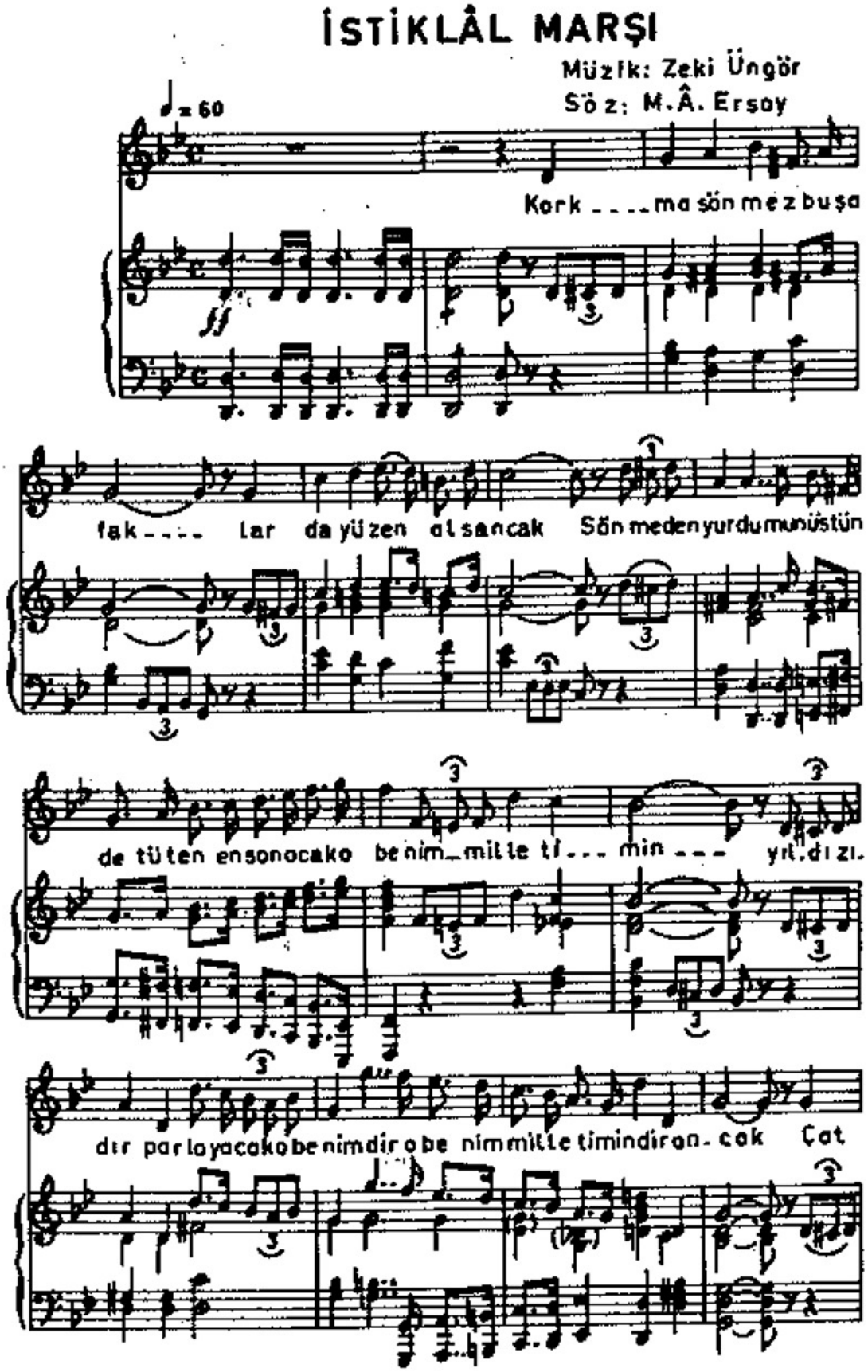

Figure 6: Osman Zeki's setting of "İstiklal Marşı" (harmonized)

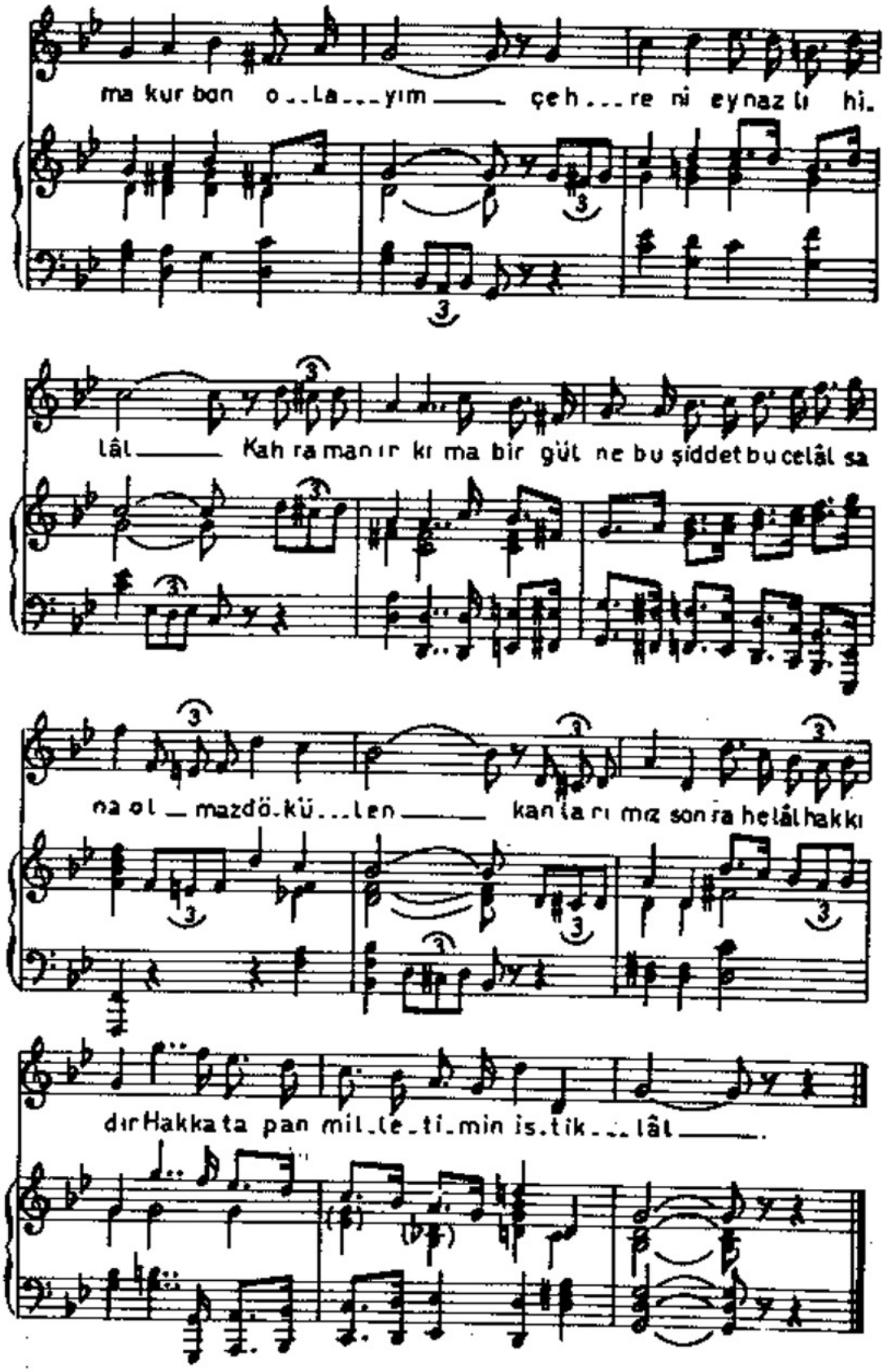

Figure 6 (cont.): Osman Zeki's setting of "İstiklal Marşı" (harmonized)

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