“Nourishment of the Soul” – Music, Medicine, and Food in Ottoman Culture

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Abstract

The phrase “music is the nourishment of the soul” reflects a century-old complex of musical, medical, and astrological thinking; integrated notions of celestial and terrestrial harmony, humoral medicine and ethos theory that reach back to Ancient Greece. Adopted into Islamicate philosophy, those theories were combined with a modal system that amplified them. The present paper traces them in various Ottoman texts with the aim of understanding how concepts of music theory, astrology, medicine, and food interacted. A crucial question is whether music theory sources can be brought into a relationship with descriptions of musical (therapy) practices in hospitals.

Keywords

Ottoman music history – music theory – Edvar – astrology – music therapy

Introduction

The impression that in Early Modern Ottoman culture music, food, and healing were understood as interwoven, that a holistic view placed artistic expression in the context of science and medicine and that connections with spiritual and symbolic implications played a considerable role, is readily acquired but rests on a relatively small group of sources which are not necessarily related to each other. Research into the history of Ottoman music theory encounters instances of such an integrated view of music, astrology, medicine, and sometimes also
explicitly food. This is especially visible in the *edvār* (“circles”) treatises of the so-called Anatolian school, where modes⁵ were organized according to and put into connection with extramusical characteristics in accordance with Islamic numerology: Four is the number according to which earthly phenomena are organized (elements, primary qualities, seasons, humors etc.), seven (originally six) stands for the seven (six) spheres of planets and twelve for the signs of the Zodiac. All of them exert power over the human body and soul.³ The theoreticians under discussion here, for instance Seydī,⁴ stress the importance of the choice of the right modal entity for a certain person and situation. Those theoreticians however do not mention correlations between the named extramusical concepts and kinds of food in the sense of how food will act as a factor in receiving music. Music therapy in hospitals is described for example by Evliyā Çelebī (1020/1611–after 1095/1683), but the scarcity of concrete proof leads scholars to doubt the general validity of his statement.⁵ What is much easier to verify is that in Near Eastern medicine generally many foodstuffs, especially spices and herbs, were also used as medical ingredients. The present contribution follows the traces of such interwoven scientific, artistic, and spiritual notions with the intention of reconstructing a coherent image. It is also meant as a critical look at the state of the art with the goal of identifying open questions and desiderata for future research.

The saying “music is the nourishment of the soul” is encountered regularly in Middle Eastern writing, in connection with both Galenic and Prophetic medicine, in music treatises of various kinds as well as in popular discourse.

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2. Presently, the term *makam* designates all the melodic modes in Ottoman-Turkish music. However, during the period and in many of the sources under consideration here, *makāmlar* is the name of a subgroup. In order to avoid confusion due to the multiple uses of the word, the umbrella term “modes” is employed here. Evidently foreign terms should be avoided, but in this case it seemed the most practical solution.


to the present day. Compiling his collection of notations in mid-17th-century Istanbul, the court musician ʿAlī Ufuḳī recorded a Peşrev with the title “Ghedairuh segiah vssul Duwek” (Ḡıẕa-yı rūḥ Segāh uṣūl-i Düyek, “Nourishment of the Soul, [makaḥm] Segāh uṣūl Düyek”). Peşrev compositions are regularly accompanied by such titles, meaning they were older Persian songs adapted as Ottoman instrumental pieces. But what did the title “nourishment of the soul” mean to ʿAlī Ufuḳī: Was it just a saying, a beautiful phrase, or did it imply a deeper meaning? In any case, the title shows the prevalence of the concept that right listening to music preserves mental and physical health. Music is accorded not only a therapeutic but also a prophylactic function. Balance and temperance are conditions for health, and balance on the micro-scale can be achieved through the pleasure music brings and the cosmic harmony it transfers from the macro-scale into the listener.

The idea that music was the nourishment of the soul or, more concretely, mental health, lived well into the modern age and makes regular appearance in Turkish publications on music therapy. The foreword Süheyl Ünver wrote for a book authored by the psychiatrist Bekir Grebene is entitled “Ruh sağlığıının gıdası musiki” (music, the nourishment of mental health), while Adnan

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7 ʿAlī Ufuḳī (Albert Bobowski), [Compendium] (MS Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Turc 292), fols. 367b/282b. The double numbering refers to the multiple foliation systems of the manuscript.

8 Eckhard Neubauer, “Zur Bedeutung der Begriffe Komponist und Komposition in der Musikgeschichte der islamischen Welt,” Zeitschrift für Geschichte der arabisch-islamischen Wissenschaften 11 (1997): 343–47. These observations have been supported and augmented by Arastoo Mihandoust in several personal communications, verbally and per e-mail, in 2020 and 2021.


Çoban’s book on music therapy is subtitled “Cana Şifa Ruha Gıda …” (healing for the heart, nourishment for the soul).¹¹

**Historical Perspective**

The foundation of an integrated view of science, medicine, and art lies in Ancient Greek ethos theory, the belief that music has the potential to exert influence on the human soul and move it to good or evil.¹² In medical terms this was expressed most prominently by Galen who contended that the choice of music a person listened to was as influential on the character of their soul (ēthos) as food and exercise.¹³ Here, the concept of the six non-naturals plays a crucial role. In addition to the four naturals (i.e., the four humors), which were, in turn, linked to the four elements and the four primary qualities, six external factors played a role in Galenic medicine: 1) air and environment, 2) food and drink, 3) sleeping and waking, 4) exercise and rest, 5) retention and evacuation and 6) mental states.¹⁴ Among the six non-naturals it is the mental state that is affected by music through ethos.¹⁵ The root of this enduring notion lies with the Pythagoreans.¹⁶ This theory was received and further developed within the Islamicate tradition over a long time,¹⁷ as the writings of 18th-century music inspectors reveal: “nourishment of the soul” […].

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¹¹ Adnan Çoban, Müzikterapi: Cana Şifa Ruha Gıda … (İstanbul: Timaş, 2005).
¹⁵ My thanks to Shahrzad Irannejad for pointing this connection out to me.
¹⁷ For a comprehensive study of the Greek sources and the transmission processes into the Arabic tradition see Elke Kazemi, *Die bewegte Seele: Das spätantike Buch über das Wesen der Musik (Kitāb ‘uṣur al-mūsīqī)* von Paulos/Būlos in arabischer Übersetzung vor dem 10.1163/18778372-12340020 | ORIENS (2023) 1–33.

**Translation:**

kısa ve özü bir tanımla ifade edilebilen müzik [...]” (Music, which can generally be expressed by a very short and pithy description like “nourishment of the soul” [...]).
Theorician and physician Gevrek-zâde Ḥāfız Hasan Efendi attest. He refers to “Eflāṭūn” (Plato) who said that the sages had created music with the aim of spiritual pleasure, healing of the soul and balancing of the humors.18 Those notions were popularized in Latin Europe in the guise of the widely disseminated Tacuinum sanitatis: “Igitur sic se habent toni ad ægros, sicut medicinæ ad corpora ægra” (Thus, tones relate to sick people just like drugs relate to sick bodies).19 The belief that stars and planets exert influence over the human mind and body likewise has Ancient Greek roots reaching back to Ptolemy, who devotes a series of chapters in his Tetrabiblos to the power of the planets and the fixed stars. Celestial bodies are classified according to their qualities and divided into beneficial and harmful, male and female, diurnal and nocturnal. Those properties are rationalized, e.g., the hot and dry nature of Mars is explained by its fiery color and its proximity to the sun. Constellations are explained by way of the properties of the stars contained in them.20

Greek ethos theory was not only transferred into Arabic-Islamic science but adapted to the extant musical system and further developed together with it. The inclusion of extramusical, i.e. humoral/medical or astrological, elements was effected at this point, creating connections both with Islamic medicine as represented by the Qānūn of Ibn Sīnā, but also with Prophetic medicine.21 Recommendations of music for healing purposes were taken over into the Arabic tradition despite Islamic anti-musical stances.22 According to Ibn Sīnā, pleasure-seeking, here in the sense of listening to music (samāʾ) was justified if it served health purposes by “strengthening the essence of the soul.”23 Ibn at-Ṭalḥān (d. after 449/1057) stresses that the benefits derived from refined, meaningful music are way beyond mere enjoyment but extend into the realm

Hintergrund der griechischen Ethoslehre (Frankfurt am Main: Institute for the History of Arabic-Islamic Science, 1999).

19 Al-Muḥtār b. al-Ḥasan Ibn Buṭlān, Tacuini Sanitatis Ellvchasem Ellîmîthat Medici de Baldath [...] (Strasbourg: Schott, 1531), 28–29, Kümmel, Musik und Medizin, 158.
20 Ptolemy, Tetrabiblos, transl. by Frank Egleston Robbins (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1949), 34–59. My thanks to Andrew Hicks for making me aware of this.
of “therapy (mudāwāt).” An anecdote related by Abū l-Farağ al-İsfahânî (284/897–360/971) describes the healing power of singing: “It gladdens the heart and pleases the soul, it is a condiment and water of life, and a medicine for insane people” (dawā’ al-mağānîn).

Al-Kindî (d. after 256/870) is one of the central sources of Middle Eastern music theory. He adopted Greek, mainly Pythagorean thought together with the notion of “music as a mathematical science” and established the crucial connection between music and extramusical, e.g., cosmological concepts through his “ethical, cosmological and therapeutic approach the guiding spirit of which is the concept of harmony in its broadest sense.” Acknowledging the four humors as equivalent to the four elements, he established a direct connection between the macro- and the micro-scale of cosmos and humankind.

He “developed considerably the ancient concept of ethos; the four strings of the lute and the rhythmic modes were linked in a comprehensive fashion with the Zodiac, the four elements, the four humours, the seasons, the faculties of the soul, personal traits, colours, perfumes, the time of day, and so forth. Concerning its therapeutic value, al-Kindî integrated music thoroughly with the humoral theory; all notes, melodies, and rhythms had a humoral value.” However, his systematic distributions of strings and tones into the fourfold system of elements and humors do not translate directly into musical modes,
meaning the connection with musical practice is tenuous.\textsuperscript{30} The four strings of the lute ‘\textit{ūd}’ were dyed in different colors indicating the four elements, thus integrating the sense of seeing.\textsuperscript{31}

Al-Kindī’s teachings were widely received. For example, the Kitāb Maṣāliḥ al-abdān wa-l-anfīs (On the welfare of bodies and souls) by Abū Zayd al-Balḫī (ca. 235/850–322/934) devotes a chapter to the issue of “How to Listen to Music.” In his view, listening to music works both curatively and preventively. He argues that because hearing and seeing are the noblest senses, the properties of any food (and, by implication, also any medical substance) consumed while listening to appropriate music are amplified. Equally important is the ability of music to both elevate the human soul and provide a spiritual pleasure that is never wearisome.\textsuperscript{32} Ibn Hindū (d. 420/1029) asserts that while details of the theory may have been lost in the centuries past “we know in a general manner” the validity of ethos theory and the beneficial effects of music. He recommends that physicians should enlist the help of musicians for therapy, which he does not describe in detail.\textsuperscript{33} In the worldview of the 4th-/10th-century Ḥwān aṣ-Ṣafāʾ (Brethren of Purity), an esoteric brotherhood from Basra,\textsuperscript{34} different mathematical, astronomical, musical, and spiritual concepts interact. The number four was of paramount importance to them, representing the seasons, humors, elements, winds, primary qualities, natural and mental faculties, moral qualities, and emotions etc. Into this scheme of tetrads (\textit{murabbaʿāt}) elements of music were arranged, e.g., the strings of the ‘\textit{ūd},’ and their meanings all interconnected.\textsuperscript{35} They even included the relationships between diameters of the planets, which correspond to the harmonic relationships of the string (3:2, 4:3 ...) into their calculations.\textsuperscript{36} There is a brief mention of the use of music in hospitals (albeit in the past): “They [the sages] also created another type of melody that they used around dawn in hospitals. It alleviates the pain patients suffer from illness and disease, reduces their severity, and [actually] cures many

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\end{thebibliography}
diseases and sicknesses.” This statement, again, does not yield insights into practices of treatment or proves its existence.

The root of the music-medicine-nexus lies in the Graeco-Arabic heritage of ethos theory connected with a common heritage of music theory that links the macro-scale of the cosmos to the micro-scale of the human soul. Harmony and balance are the states to be achieved, and music with its properties of celestial and terrestrial harmony can, if applied correctly, influence the composition of the humors – both in a therapeutical and a preventive sense. We will see that the musical system of the region is well-fitted to accommodate music therapy because it can be directly connected to humoral medicine. Humoral medicine was all-pervasive, hence it made sense that the connection between music, humoral medicine and therapy was developed by Islamic scholars. The difficult question here, however, is what happened in musical practice about which theoreticians give little solid information.

**Anatolian Music Theory**

Connections between modal entities and extramusical concepts are characteristic for the so-called Anatolian school. With its distinctly pedagogical outlook the Anatolian school lacks the mathematical calculations of the so-called Systematist school in the succession of Şafi ad-Dīn al-Urmawī (see below). In contrast, they introduce a new fourfold classification of modes that dovetails with extramusical concepts: “All this was done to meet better the requirements of musical ‘dietetics’ or ‘therapy’, in which astrological, medical and musical aspects are interwoven.” The main difference between the Anatolian and the Systematist schools is the symbolic use of esoteric, extramusical concepts from astrology and cosmology as well as verbal descriptions of modes on the one side, the reliance on mathematical calculations and physical concerns and the use of Tetrachords in the description of modes on the other.

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37 Wright, *Epistles*, 83.
The interwovenness of concepts is clearly visible for instance in Ḫızır b. ‘Abdullah’s Kitāb-i edvār (“Book of Circles,” 844/1441). Based on Arab and Persian precursors, among them the Iḫwān as-Ṣafā’, he attaches great importance to cosmological and other extramusical connections. In a passage describing the powers of music over the human soul and the necessity for different kinds of music to address different kinds of people and situations, Ḫızır b. ‘Abdullah remarks:

“Ve hem bīmār-ḥānelerde çalarlardı ḥastalarıñ şifāsīcīn [...]. Su’al hem cevāb çūn bildiler kim āvāz ve ol nesne kim āvāz üzerine konulmuşdur temām esēr eđer. Nefsi ten üzerine ġalebe ďətdürür. Bu ‘ilmı ve ‘ameli bünüyăd ďətdiler. Tā nefs andan esēr kabūl eđe ve tene lezzet vəre. Ve teni kendü ḥālinden döndüre. [...] Her ḥastalıḳ kim vardur tende ve nefse müskiķide anuñ muḳabilibinde bir nev’ vardur kim aña siḥḥat vērür” (And they used to play also in the hospitals for the cure of the sick. [...] They knew both the question and the answer that the voice/melody and that which is based on the voice/melody makes the effect complete. It makes the soul prevail over the body. They founded this science and practice. [With the aim] that the soul accepts the effect from there and gives pleasure to the body. And returns [the body] from its own [faulty] state. [...] For every illness that exists in body and soul there is a corresponding kind of music that cures it.)

Further on, he explains his view of the place music has among the sciences:

“Ve daḫı bilgil ki bu ‘ilm-i müskiķi ‘ilm-i tibbuñ muḳaddimesidür. Ya’ni ‘ilm-i tibbi kemāli vech üzerine bilmek ‘ilm-i müskiķi bilmeyince bilmmez” (Also know that this science of music is the origin of the science of medicine. That is, knowing the science of medicine in a perfect way is impossible without knowing the science of music).
It is doubtful, however, whether this allows the conclusion that music therapy was administered.

The following example of modal classification is taken from Yusuf b. Niżāmeddin Kırlı (fl. c. 853/1450). Since his Kitāb-ı edvār was originally composed in Persian, we are using the Ottoman Turkish translation by Derviş Ḥarîb b. Mîhmed (dated 873/1469). It must be kept in mind that the distribution, evaluation and certainly also the interpretation of several modal entities would be different in other sources. It should also not go unmentioned that while most of the discourse deals with melodic modes, the connection between the rhythmic modes (uşūl) and the human pulse, which goes back to Ibn Sīnā and is mentioned, e.g., by Gevrek-zāde, is less in the foreground but does exist. The chart shows the fourfold scheme according to Kırlı:

The chart shows how the modal system is structured in four groups or classes, which, in turn, connect to different kinds of extramusical concepts. The number of terkibler varies; initially there were twenty-four of them to match the hours of the day. Without this kind of ordering and the numbers of modes

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46 Turabi, Gevrekzade, 193.
47 On concepts of modal classification see also Yakup Fikret Kutluğ, Türk Musikisinde Makamlar: İnceleme (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2003), 105–6, 117–19.
contained in each category, extramusical connections could not have been established so readily and enduringly. It becomes obvious how the connection to medicine and food can be easily established: The qualities hot, cold, dry, and wet are relevant for humoral medicine since besides the humoral qualities of human beings also foodstuffs and \textit{materia medica} are characterized according to them by pairs of qualities (dry or moist; warm or cold).\footnote{Savage-Smith, “Four Humours,” 92.}

The twelve \textit{makāmlar} are then arranged according to the signs of the Zodiac, represented here by three treatises from the Anatolian tradition:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sign</th>
<th>Kırşehirli (873/1469)</th>
<th>Seydi (before 910/1504)</th>
<th>İhzâr Ağâ (d. 1174/1762)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aries / Ḥamal</td>
<td>Räst / ﬁre</td>
<td>Räst / ﬁre</td>
<td>Räst / ﬁre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taurus / Șevr</td>
<td>ʿIrâk / earth</td>
<td>ʿIrâk / earth</td>
<td>ʿIrâk / earth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gemini / Cevzā</td>
<td>Iṣfahān / air</td>
<td>Iṣfahān / air</td>
<td>Iṣfahān / ﬁre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cancer / Seretān</td>
<td>Zirefkkend-i küçek / water</td>
<td>Zirefkkend-i kücek / water</td>
<td>Küçek / water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leo / Esed</td>
<td>Büzünk / ﬁre</td>
<td>Büzünk / ﬁre</td>
<td>Büzünk / ﬁre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virgo / Sünbüle</td>
<td>Zengüle / earth</td>
<td>Zengüle / earth</td>
<td>Zirgüle / air</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libra / Mizān</td>
<td>Rehāvi / air</td>
<td>Rehāvi / air</td>
<td>Rehāvi / earth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scorpius / ʿĀkreb</td>
<td>Hūseyni / water</td>
<td>Hūseyni / water</td>
<td>Hūseyni / air</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sagittarius / ʿKavs</td>
<td>Hicāz / ﬁre</td>
<td>Hicāz / ﬁre</td>
<td>Hicāz / ﬁre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capricorn / Cedy</td>
<td>Būselik / earth</td>
<td>Hicāz / earth</td>
<td>Būselik / earth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aquarius / Delv</td>
<td>Nevâ / air</td>
<td>Nevâ / air</td>
<td>Nevâ / air</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pisces / Ḥuṭ</td>
<td>ʿUşṣāk / water</td>
<td>ʿUşṣāk / water</td>
<td>ʿUşṣāk / air</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textbf{Chart 2} Arrangement of the twelve \textit{makāmlar} according to the signs of the Zodiac


The reasons why certain modes are connected to certain signs of the Zodiac are explained in an anonymous treatise (\textit{risâle}) from the 12th/18th century:

“Ve edvârda makâmun hod on iki burca nisbeti vardur. [...] Husûsen hûkmê-i ışrâkiyye istlîhânda ʿirâk’a şiddet-i lezzet, ısfaḥân’a şiddet-i hût [hûr?], küçek’e şiddet-i hüzn, buzûrk’e şiddet-i havf, zirgüle’ye şiddet-i nevm, rehâvi’ye şiddet-i bükâ, hûseynî’ye şiddet-i hüsn, hicâz’a
şiddet-i tevâzu, büselik'e şiddet-i kuvvet, nevâ'a şiddet-i şecâ'at, uşşâk'a şiddet-i dihk dirler." (And in the “circles” [treatises] there is a corresponding sign of the Zodiac for every maḳām. [...] Particularly the sages of the Pythagorean tradition in their terminology call 'Irāḳ the faculty\(^{50}\) of pleasure, İşfahân the faculty of the virgins of paradise, Kūçek the faculty of melancholy, Bûzûrg the faculty of fear, Zîrgûle the faculty of sleep, Rehâvî the faculty of weeping, Ḥüseynî the faculty of beauty, Ḥicâz the faculty of humility, Bûselik the faculty of force, Nevâ the faculty of courage, and 'Uşşāḳ the faculty of laughter.)\(^{51}\)

Concerning the arrangement of the seven āvâzeler according to the celestial bodies, the same three examples again show obvious similarities, but also differences:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Celestial body</th>
<th>Kirşehir (873/1469)</th>
<th>Seydi (before 913/1524)</th>
<th>Hızır Ağâ (d. 1174/1763)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moon / Ƙâme</td>
<td>1 Gerdâniye cold and wet, water</td>
<td>1 Ḥişâr cold and wet, water</td>
<td>7 Gerdâniye cold and wet, water, silver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturn / Zâhâl</td>
<td>2 Gevašt cold and dry, earth</td>
<td>7 Gevašt cold and dry, earth</td>
<td>1 Gevašt cold and wet, earth, lead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jupiter / Mûşṭerî</td>
<td>3 Nevrûz hot and wet, water</td>
<td>6 Nevrûz hot and wet, air</td>
<td>2 Nevrûz hot and wet, air, tin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mars / Mîrûş</td>
<td>4 Selmek hot and dry, fire</td>
<td>5 Selmek hot and dry, fire</td>
<td>3 Selmek hot and dry, fire, iron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun / Ƙem</td>
<td>5 Şehnâz hot and wet, fire</td>
<td>4 Şehnâz hot and dry, fire</td>
<td>4 Şehnâz hot and dry, fire, gold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venus / Zûhre</td>
<td>6 Ḥişâr cold and wet, water</td>
<td>3 Mâye cold and wet, water</td>
<td>5 Ḥişâr cold and wet, water, copper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercury / “Uṭārid</td>
<td>7 Mâye ambiguous</td>
<td>2 Gerdâniye ambiguous</td>
<td>6 Segâh Mâye ambiguous, mercury</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chart 3** Arrangement of the seven āvâzeler according to the celestial bodies and their distribution to the four elements


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\(^{50}\) The Ottoman word "şiddet" can also be translated as “violence,” “force” or “strength”. With my choice of “faculty” I follow Biesterfeldt who translates the Arabic "quwwa” in this way. Biesterfeldt, “Music for the Body,” 184. Kazemi translates as “Krâfte”; the faculties named by Bûlos are however different from those listed above. Kazemi, “Die bewegte Seele”, 161.

\(^{51}\) Nilgün Doğrusöz, Mûşkî rîsâleleri (Ankara Millî Kütüphane, 131 numaralı yazma) (İstanbul: Bilim Kültür ve Sanat Derneği, 2012), 102. This list goes back to al-Urmawî, see Farmer, “Influence of Music,” 110.
The picture is less clear than above, especially considering the sequence of the planets (indicated in the chart with numbers preceding the āvāze names). The style of presentation also differs between the sources: Kıırşehirî has a circle diagram to be read counterclockwise, Seydi’s is arranged in clockwise direction, and HECKÂ atypically uses a chart, also adding the respective chemical elements. Furthermore, Heckâ’s mentioning of Segâh Mâyê instead of Mâyê draws interest. Segâh is, according to the traditional classification to which he still adheres, one of the four şû‘beler, and Segâh Mâyê, being a compound of two entities, is strictly speaking a terkîb. It seems, however, that developments in modal interpretation between the 16th and the middle of the 18th century had caused this shift. In the notation collections of ‘Ali Ufuḵî, written before 1675, a piece was attributed to Mâyê in one and to Segâh in the other. In the early 18th century, Dimitrie Cantemir’s describes in his edvâr two variants of Segâh, one of which “is executed as the terkîb which is called Mâyê.”

The succession of the şû‘beler is fixed since their names correspond with the Persian numerals one, two, three, and four (yek, dō, se, čahâr) combined with -gâh meaning “place.” In the manuscript version represented by the edition used here, Kıırşehirî did not enter the names of the elements into the circular diagram demonstrating the şû‘beler, however, the ordering shown in the chart can be inferred from the preceding text. Differences between the treatises

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Kıırşehirî (873/1469)</th>
<th>Seydi (before 910/1504)</th>
<th>Heckâ (d. 1174/1760)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Dûgâh</td>
<td>Yekgâh</td>
<td>Dûgâh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air</td>
<td>Segâh</td>
<td>Dûgâh</td>
<td>Segâh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earth</td>
<td>Çârgâh</td>
<td>Segâh</td>
<td>Çârgâh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire</td>
<td>Yekgâh</td>
<td>Çârgâh</td>
<td>Yegâh</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chart 4** Arrangement of the four şû‘beler according to the four elements


open the question of how these deviations would have been perceived and discussed at the time. Mentioning deviations of other theorists from the mode classification he proposes, an anonymous Syrian-Egyptian theorist elegantly nips discussion in the bud: “only God knows what is correct.”

The question that immediately arises is why a certain modal entity should be linked to a certain celestial body, humor, or sign of the Zodiac. On this, Kırşehirli shares the following insights:

“Ve [Safiyüddin Abdülmümin] on iki burûcdan on i makâm tasnif eyledi. Ve yidi yıldızdan yidi âvâze aldi. Ve dokuz felekden dokuz dürülü darb ve usûl peydâ eyledi. Ve her makâmın aslını âvâzeden fârık eyledi; gördü ki dört nev’dür. Bu dört nev’i dört ‘anâsira mukâbil eyledi ki od ü yil ü su ü toprak dur ve her birine bir dürülu ad kod. [...] Emma bundan sonra bilünn kim ol üstâdlar kim bu ilm-i músikîyi bünyâd eyelediler ilm-i hikmet-den ve ilm-i hey’etden ve ilm-i nükûmdan ve ilm-i tibdan çünkâmîşlurdu. On iki burûc ve yidi yıldız ve dört âvâz ve dört anâsir ve gece gündüz ki yigirmi dört saatdür; terkiib eyelediler. Şöyle ki âdem oğlanın aslını dört aşârîndur yâ’ni oddan ve sudan ve yilden ve toprak dur ve toprak dur.” (And Safiyüddin Abdülmümin, i.e., Şâfi ad-Dîn al-Urmawî, see below) composed twelve makâmlar from the twelve signs of the Zodiac. And from the seven stars [celestial bodies] he took seven ävâze-lar. And from the nine spheres he found nine different beats and usûller. And he distinguished the essence of each makâm from the ävâze; seeing that there are four types. Those four types he aligned with the four elements, namely, fire and air and water and earth, and to each one he gave a different name. [...] But from now on you must know that those masters who have founded this science of music produced this from philosophy, astronomy, astrology, and medicine. They combined twelve signs of the Zodiac and seven stars and four elements and night and day which make twenty-four hours. Likewise the essence of the human being is [made up of] the four elements, i.e., of fire and of water and of air and of earth).

Similar wordings are encountered frequently. Reference to Şâfi ad-Dîn al-Urmawî (d. 693/1236) as the scholar whom the connections between modal entities and celestial bodies, signs of the Zodiac and elements rely on is

54 Cited in Neubauer, “Arabische Anleitungen,” 245.
55 Kırşehirli Yusuf, Risâle-i Mûsîkî, 18, 20–21.
customarily made in this context, e.g. by Seydī in his *El-Maṭlaʿ fi beyānu'l-edvār ve'l-makāmāt* (written before 910/1504) or Kemānī Ḥızır Āḡā (*Teffīmū'l-makāmāt fi tevli'din-nāgāmāt*, d. 1760).\(^5\) However, interestingly, al-Urmawī makes no mention of astrological or other extramusical connections, neither in his *Risāla aš-šarafiyya*\(^5\) nor in the *Kitāb al-adwār*. He does apply ethos theory, ascribing characters to the *šudūd* modes.\(^6\) Nevertheless, the title of the latter, “The Book of Cycles” may subsequently have been interpreted cosmologically, and later sources show that his twelvefold organization of modes (*šudūd*) which became so influential in Middle Eastern music theory, indeed was often ahistorically understood to refer to the Zodiac.\(^6\) Ibn Sīnā even speaks expressly against establishing connections between celestial bodies (*aškāl as-samāʾīyya*), humors of the human soul (*aḥlāq an-nafsānīyya*), and musical intervals (*abʿād*), dismissing such theories as dated and uncritical.\(^6\) This, however, does not preclude the use of music in therapy – at this point, the concepts of healing with or through music on one hand and esoteric notions are not yet connected.

Esoteric music theory proved persistent, even as repertoire, theoretical concepts, and practical interpretations changed.\(^6\) The song-text collection-cum-treatise of Mūezzin Ḥācı Hāşim Bey (1815–1868) includes three schematic drawings of a male torso. The first has the names of the twelve *maḳāmlar* written on different parts of the body, for example Būzürg on the throat and Būselik on the abdomen. The accompanying text says:


\(^{61}\) Neubauer, “Arabische Anleitungen,” 235–36. I am grateful to Eckhard Neubauer for additional personal communications in November and December 2021. See also Popescu-Judetz, *Summary Catalogue*, 21–22, on the importance of al-Urmawī as a “mythical personage.” In his foreword to the *Kırşehir* edition, Öztürk points out the conceptual and structural differences between that text and al-Urmawi’s *Kitāb al-adwār*. *Kırşehirli Yusuf, Risāle-i Mūsikî,* 13.


Going one step further, the question we would like to see answered is whether the cosmologically inspired ordering of the modal entities had any bearing on actual musical practice. It is useful to compare the Anatolian treatises to a second important source type, namely, modally arranged song-text collections, so-called güfte mecmû’aları which are a cornerstone of Ottoman music historiography. The succession of modal entities in the güfte mecmû’aları does usually not correspond with the 12+7+4+n-structure of the edvâr treatises. While Râst is generally the starting point analogously to most theoretical works, the continuation is very different and not completely standardized, showing individual solutions favored by the respective compilers. Such are the requirements of performers, teachers, and learners, for whom it made sense to find related modes in successive chapters which facilitates the construction of a performance sequence. Adjacent modes to which a modulation

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would most frequently occur during a faṣıl or nevbet (“suite”) can be found in close proximity, even though they may in theory belong to different classes. In the abovementioned 19th-century song-text collection of Hāşim Bey, for instance, makâm Rāst is followed by makâm Rehāvi, a succession of terkībler starting with Sāzkār and ending with Pesendide, then makâm Büzürğ etc. What connects them all is their common final pitch (ḳarār), rāst. Apart from practical concerns, the constant creation of new entities and classes weakened the system. Güray contends that due to the increase in modal entities over the centuries the four-category system became overburdened and that during the 17th century slowly a different concept or ordering began to take hold, namely, classification according to the perdel (the final pitches). This is why Evliyā Çelebi, in the 1640’s, speaks of makāmlar, although he mentions examples from other classes as well (see below).

**Descriptions of Music Therapy**

Research on music therapy relies on a group of sources from the Ottoman Empire which mention music therapy predominantly in connection with mental illness, but is unclear on how they relate to each other and to the practical realities of their time and place. As early as 1990 Neubauer had pointed out that the existence of connections between musical modes and cosmological or other extramusical elements neither proved actual musico-therapeutical practice nor does it explain its functionality.

One important voice is Şu’ūrî Hasan Efendi (d. 1105/1693–4). His medical treatise Ta’dile-yi emzice (Balancing the humors) was completed in 1677. It contains one chapter on music therapy, according to Neubauer translated from the Arabic, which includes the foundations of music theory according to the Anatolian tradition. Apart from the later treatise by Gevrek-zāde Ḥāfiz

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68 Meḥmed Hāşim, Mūsiḳī Mecmū‘ası, table of contents p. 89.
70 Güray, Bin yılın mirası, 114–15.
71 This is true not only for the Middle East, see Kümmel, Musik und Medizin, 268–76. During, “Délectation,” 178.
74 Neubauer, “Arabische Anleitungen,” 255–59. See also Gre bene, Müzikle tedavi, 28–34. Ak, Müzikle tedavi, 148–51, 158–64; Ak has had access to the manuscript which is kept in a private collection.
Ḥasan Efendi (1140/1727–1216/1801, see below) who was a physician and a music theorist, this is the only known source of this type from its time and place. Şu‘ûrî Ḥasan Efendi describes the hospitals of the past:

“Bu dahi meşhûr ve ma‘rûf ve menkûl ve mevsûfdur ki, kadîmü‘l-eyyâmدا emspîr ve medâyinde væki’ olan bîmâr-hânelerin vazîfe-dâr ve râtîbe-hâr sâzendeleri olup darûş-şîfiâlarîn hazâîn ve kîlîr, belki der ve divârlarîn envâ-i [sic] sâz ile ârâste ve perdâhte ve âmâde ve mâl-â-mâl ve nihâde idî ki bîmâr ve dil-haste ve mecânîngîrden-bestelere, anîrîn sîyt ve sadâyîyle mu‘âlece ve müdâvâ kûlmîp, herkesîn hâline muvâfîk ve marazîna mutâbîk sâz nüvâht olunurdu. [...] Ma‘lûm ola ki, âvâze-i rûh-efzâ ve nağamât-i gam-fersâyî sâmi’ olmak, ekser tabâyi’a nâfi’ ve emrâz-i bûtîneye ve çâyî-i bedenîgyeyi fîl-cûmle dâfi’dir, hukemâ-yi râsi-hîn ve ‘ukalâ-yi ârifîn, bu ilmîn şerefin mubîr ve akvâl-i sahîhalarî, sâz ve sözün menâfi’in müş’îrdîr ki bu mahalde iرادî mûnâsîb görüldû [...]” (It is also renowned, well-known, much-told and described that in the old days in the cities and towns there were instrumentalists employed and paid in the hospitals, and that in the treasuries and storerooms of the houses of healing, rather, doors and walls were adorned and resplendent and prepared and hung all over and filled with [all] kinds of instruments so that the infirm and the sick of heart and those gripped at their throat by madness could be attended to and treated with their voices and strains; music was played matching each one’s condition and appropriate for their illnesses. [...] It shall be known that listening to the soul-reviving melodies and the grief-dispelling tunes, especially those who are beneficial for the character and chase away all internal illnesses and bodily want, the reliable scholars and the understanding sages who spread the honor of this science and its truthful words, tell us that the benefits of vocal and instrumental music are such that it was considered appropriate to transmit them here, in their entirety [...]”

This text is of course exciting due to its assuredness and generalization, but unfortunately the author names no concrete examples of hospitals where this kind of therapy had been practiced. Wordings such as “in the old days” make this text sound rather like a wish that hospitals would return to former practices, a golden age when music was a standard in medical treatment. In a similar vein, Gevrek-zâde in his Risâletü'l-Mûsîkiyye mine'd-devâîr-rûhâniyye

76 Turabi, “Şuûrî Hasan Efendi,” 162.
(dated 121/1798), which is based partly on Şu‘ūrı Hasan Efendi’s work, describes music therapy as a usual practice of the past. However, he gives a reason why it was discontinued: Hospitals had filled up with malingerers.77

The special feature of Şu‘ūrı Hasan Efendi’s text is that two levels of interaction are visible, namely the classification of illnesses according to humoral medicine, and the classification of both makāmlar and bodily parts according to the signs of the Zodiac. Thus, the circle is closed between the three ingredients music, medicine, and astrology. For example, Iṣfahân, belonging to the sign of the Gemini, the element of air, is recommended for the treatment of cold and dry diseases.78 Kırşehri also mentions that this makām is especially suitable for people which a lighter complexion (buğday tenlü), whose nature (ṭabîat) is hot and moist, i.e. the opposite of the diseases to be treated.79 However, inconsistencies between the various authors have been noted.80 Another connection that is made with modal entities concerns the hours of the day during which they are most effective. For instance, makām Rāst would have reached the peak of its effectiveness right after sunrise. Aḥmed-oğlı Şükullāh states: “Ve çün gün iki süñü boyi ḵalka Rāst muvāfīkdur” (“And when the sun has risen two lengths of the spear, Rāst is appropriate”).81 This way of thinking goes back to Ibn Sinā.82

Here is where we must address the crucial problem: The historical processes resulting in untraceable change in makām interpretation. This, together with the absence of mathematical calculations in the Anatolian treatises which makes the reconstruction of tunings and interval sizes impossible, thwart any attempt to recreate the described effects in modern performance, since both theoretical explanation and practical interpretation of the melodic modes of Ottoman music have changed significantly.

The arguably most frequently cited source is Evliyā Çelebi, who describes a concrete hospital where he witnessed music therapy being administered.

77 Turabi, Gevrekzade, 70, 92–95, 100, 149–50.
79 Kırşehril Yusuf, Risâle-i Mûsîkî, 65. For the wide range of possible connections between modes and extramusical phenomena see also During, “Délection,” 175–77.
81 Murat Bardakçı, Ahmed Oğlu Şükullâh: Şükullâh’ın Risâlesi ve 15. yüzyıl Şark musikisi nazarıyeti (İstanbul: Pan Yayıncılık, 2012), 112.
While there is no mention of this in the endowment deed, according to him the II Bayezid Darü’s-şifası at Edirne (established 1488) employed ten professional musicians:

“Hattâ merhüm u mağfûrun leh sâhibül-hayrât Bâyezid Hân, hastalara şifâ ve derdilere devâ ve divânelerin ruhuna gâdâ ve def’-i sevdâ olmak için on aded hânende ve sâzândegântan gülâm-ı sadî-misâl üç hânende ve bir neyzen ve bir kemânî be bir musikâri ve bir sîntûrî ve bir çengî ü santûrî ve bir üdî ta’yîn edüp haftada üç çerre gelüp bu on aded üstâd-ı hânende ü sâzândegânlar hastalara ve deli birâderlere fasl çalarlar. Hâlâ bu mutribân dâ’îmdir. [...] Hakka kim ilm-i müsikide makâm-ı râst u nevâ ve düğâh u segâh ve cârgâh [u] süznâk makâmâldrîr âmmâ makâm-ı zengûle ile makâm-ı büselikde râst karâr olunsa âdeme hayatî verir. Cemî’i makâmâldrada ve sâzâlarda rûha gâdâ vardı. Âvâz-ı kös-i hâkânî ve tablbâz u dühül ise de mehîb sadâsî olup divâneler bile [istimâ edüp] kesb-i safâ ederler” (Even the owner of pious foundations Sultan Bâyezid, who has been received into God’s mercy and whose sins have been forgiven, for the cure of the sick and healing of the afflicted and nourishment for the souls of the mentally ill and banishment of melancholy had appointed ten singers and instrumentalists, peers of Gülâm Şâdi, three singers and one player of the ney [reed flute] and one player of the kemâne [spike fiddle] and one player of the müsîkâr [panpipes] and one player of the santûr [psaltery] and one player of the çeng [harp] and one player of the santûr [psaltery, sic] and one player of the ‘ûd [lute], and these ten master singers and instrumentalists come three times a week and play art music (faşl) to the sick people and the “crazy brothers” [mentally ill]. These musicians are even permanently established. [...] It is true that in the science of music the makâmâlîr Râst and Nevâ and Dûgâh and Segâh

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83 Semavi Eyice, “Beyazıt II Camii ve Külliyesi,” in Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi, vol. 6, ed. by Bekir Topaloğlu and the Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı (Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Basimevi, 1992), 44.


85 Gülâm Şâdi (d. after 924/1518) was a Transoxanian composer and singer from the school of ‘Abdülkâdir al-Marâğî. He is often invoked in Ottoman-Turkish music literature as an example for a highly accomplished musician. Nuri Özcan, “Gülâm Şâdi,” in Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi, vol. 14, ed. by Bekir Topaloğlu and the Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı (Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Basimevi, 1996), 186–87.
and Çârgâh [and] Sûznâk are makâmlar\(^86\) but when makâm Zengûle and makâm Büselik conclude together on Râst [?] this gives life to man. In all makâmlar and instruments there is nourishment for the soul. As for the royal kös and tablbâz and dûhûl [three types of drums used in mëhter-hâne military music], even when their awe-inspiring sound rings out, the mentally ill hear it and are uplifted.\(^87\)

Despite his notoriety as a writer tending to exaggerate, Evliyâ Çelebi may be considered a credible witness when it comes to musical details, being himself an accomplished musician. He describes a realistic ensemble setup for the time of writing. Instruments such as spike fiddle, panpipes, and psaltery would subsequently lose importance, but during the first half of the 17th century this can be considered representative. However, the selection of modes he mentions seems rather random when we compare it with the list by Şu’ûri Hasan Efendi as well as the traditional disposition of modal categories.

The karâr, the final note and one of the defining characteristics of the mode, is stated according to Cantemir,\(^88\) in absence of a treatise contemporaneous to Evliyâ Çelebi (cf. Chart 5). He mentions eight modal entities, stressing Râst, but he does not explain why he chose especially these and why against the stated (mental) illnesse.\(^89\) Further, I contend that Evliyâ Çelebi’s list of modes – if his list really counts makâmlar as being especially beneficial – exemplifies an approach to music therapy (or, rather, the use of music as a beneficial influence in the treatment of the mentally ill) that is different and independent from the one based on Anatolian music theory (for as much as the latter existed in practice). It is the approach of the performing singer outlined above. This is also the reason why he speaks about makâmlar although the modes he cites are taken from different classes according to the theoretical system.

Horden quotes the passage on Edirne preceded by the telling introductory sentence, “I saw something strange.” This is however not part of the 1999 edition used here. But the continuation common to both manuscripts contains an equally important detail:\(^90\)

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\(^86\) Ergin, “Healing by Design,” 26, translates: “[...] the tonal modes [list] are especially for them.” It appears a meaning in this respect was intended.


\(^88\) Tura, Edvâr, 48–53, 58–61, 80–83. Cantemir mentions (142–45) that the old form of Zengûle closed on çârgâh.

\(^89\) Neubauer, “Arabische Anleitungen,” 231–32.

\(^90\) Horden, “Hospital Music Therapy,” 178–79. Grebene, Müzikle tedavi, 28, has the wording “Bu Hakir Evliya garip bir vey [sic] gördüm.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Şu‘ūrī Ḥasan Efendi / trad. 12 maḳāmlar</th>
<th>Mentioned by Evliya Çelebi</th>
<th>class</th>
<th>ḳarār</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rāst</td>
<td>Rāst</td>
<td>maḳām, generally considered the main mode of the system</td>
<td>rāst</td>
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<tr>
<td>‘Irāḳ</td>
<td>Nevā</td>
<td>maḳām</td>
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<td>‘Uşṣāḳ</td>
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**Chart 5** Modal entities referenced by Evliya Çelebi

Note: Süznāk or, more commonly, Süzināk, features neither Cantemir’s edvār, nor, for instance, in Seydī’s treatise. In modern Turkish theory it is a *maḳām* located on the final pitch nevā. İsmail Hakkı Özkan, “Süzinak,” in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 38, ed. by Bekir Topaloğlu and the Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 2010), 8–10.

“Bu mertebe takrîr u tavṣifden murâd [u] me‘al oldur kim bu timârhaneye-i Bâyezîd Hân gibi Edirne’dé bir dârü’s-ṣifâ yokdu. Gayrîsînî evkâflarî harâb olmuşdur” (The intention and meaning of this whole report and description is that there is no other hospital like the hospital of Sultan
Bâyezîd at Edirne. The endowments of the others are completely run down).\textsuperscript{91}

The important point here is that Edirne was not the rule, but a noteworthy exception. Apart from Edirne, Evliyâ Çelebi mentions musical practices in two more hospitals, namely, in the Nûr ed-Dîn Zengî hospital in Damascus (founded in 1154),\textsuperscript{92} and in Istanbul's Fâtih Darü’ş-şifâsî. Whether the one sparse sentence devoted to music in the latter hospital can be understood as describing organized music therapy is at least an open question:

“Ve hastalara ve divâanelere def’-i cünün için mutribân hânendegân ta’yîn olunmuşdur” (And to drive away the madness of sick people and the mentally ill, musicians [and] singers have been appointed).\textsuperscript{93}

In a similar vein, it is said about a hospital founded in Aleppo in 755/1354 by the Mamluk Sultan an-Nâşir that “music was played for [mentally ill patients’] benefit.”\textsuperscript{94}

This, evidently, is not proof for organized music therapy. Research should probably take one step back and reflect where a line should be drawn between music being played for a general benefit to soothe, distract, and entertain the patients, and systematic music therapy. As Uçaner Çifdalöz points out referring to present-day music therapy in Turkey, “having the patient/client listen to music is not music therapy.”\textsuperscript{95} However, several authors have taken the rather restricted source situation as basis for general claims to the historical use of music in hospitals.\textsuperscript{96} The sources that would give reliable information on the matter are the endowment deeds. For instance, Grebene quotes the vakfî-nâme for a foundation of Lütfi Pâşâ at Tire, which expressly stipulates the employment of musicians to play for two hours each afternoon for the therapy

\textsuperscript{94} Cited by Dols, Majnûn, 121.
\textsuperscript{95} Uçaner Çifdalöz, “Music Therapy,” 15–16. For a criticism of modern applications see also Arslan, Mûsîkî, 340.
\textsuperscript{96} Uçaner Çifdalöz, “Music Therapy,” 4–5.
(“tedavi”) of the mentally ill.97 But such documents are not necessarily very specific,98 or, as in the case of the Edirne hospital, even refer to music at all.

An intriguing point that should not go unmentioned is that ʿAlī Ufuḳī, who was a palace page and musician from roughly the 1630s to the 1650s and wrote a description of Topkapı Sarayı for Western audiences before 1665, makes no mention of music therapy while supplying countless valuable details on other aspects of musical life. The fact that he was a musician and at the same time interested and quite proficient in medicine,99 makes the reader wonder why the topic does not come up, especially since the ground plan of the palace shows the hospital, and diet food and other types of medical care are described.100 Clearly ʿAlī Ufuḳī was aware of the relevant strain of music theory.101 He was a practitioner of both music and medicine, so it can be assumed that he would have made mention of music therapy if it had existed.

**Medicine and Food**

In the Galenic tradition the connections between medicine and food are very strong and there is basically no hard line between what is food and what is materia medica, which is especially true for spices and herbs: “[…] the medical tradition itself regarded foods and drugs as being part of a continuum, as shown by the many books treating simple drugs bearing the title Kitāb al-aġḏiya wa-l-adwiya, ‘the book of foodstuffs and drugs’.”102 A recipe in the

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97 Grebene, Müzikle tedavi, 28. Ak, Müzikle tedavi, 167–70.
101 Haug, Ottoman and European Music, 277–89. However, there is reason to believe that substantial parts of ʿAlī Ufuḳī’s writings are lost, ibid. 107–8. ʿAlī Ufuḳī was however aware of European music theory that connects music and astronomy, cf. the untitled and unreferenced Italian excerpt on folios. 380a/222a/376a–380b/222b/376b: “Altri modi sono collaterali […] acioche rispondano ad altre tante sette pianeti ai quali Tolemeo vi acresce il octauo [...]” Judith I. Haug, Ottoman and European Music in ʿAlī Ufuḳī’s Compendium, MS Turc 292: Analysis, Interpretation, Cultural Context. Vol. 1: Edition (Münster: readbox unipress, 2020), 367–68.
musical commonplace book of ‘Ali Ufuḳī shows this clearly. It is entitled “Terkīb-i eczā-yı ḥabbūl-mezbūr bunlardır ẕikr-i beyān olundı” (This is the composition of the abovementioned medicinal pill, as recorded and listed).103 “Abovementioned” unfortunately leads nowhere, hence the intended use of the pill remains unknown. Among the many ingredients of the compound there are bezr-i benc (henbane), çūp-i çini (China root), asārūn-i hindī (valerian), rāwend-i çinī (Chinese rhubarb), za’frān (saffron), ḳaranfīl (clove), rāvend-i çinī (cardamom), sa’leb (sahlep), cevz-i hindī (nutmeg), ḳāḳūle (cardamom), s̲aʿleb (sahlep), cevz-i hindī (nutmeg), r āziyāne (fennel), şeker (sugar), fıstıḳ (pistachio), maṣṭagā (mastic), būyān balı (licorice extract), and dārcīn (cinnamon) could be identified. It is a mixture of Middle Eastern spice staples and less everyday ingredients such as the hallucinogenic henbane. The 7th/13th-century pharmacist’s manual from Cairo analyzed by Chipman contains very similar combinations; an equivalent recipe could unfortunately not be identified.104

Prescriptions for singers are yet another connection between music, medicine, and food. Ahmed-oğlu Şükrullah’s Risāle min ‘ilmü’l-edvār (“Epistle on the science of the circles”, first part of the 9th/15th century) contains advice for vocal performers about how to preserve and enhance their vocal quality by choosing or avoiding certain foodstuffs:105

“Oturuzıncı faṣl āvāzı açan otları bildürür. Bezr-i kātūnuñ lu’ābını cülābile ıstub içmek āvāz[i] açar. İsfenāḥ daḫı bişürib yēmek ve ebemgümcı daň yēmek semiz tavuk şorvasın içmek ve käti bismemiş yumurda şarusın yēmek ve tāze süde şeker katub yēmek ve şeker kāmişın şol[y]maḳ ve kereyağın yēmek ve aş šeker yēmek ve melisi närî ʃıkib şuyına şeker katub içmek ve çāle iṣınmış şuyu mu’tedil Ḥammâmda ̱garara eyl[e]mek ve [...] zencefili aḳ incirile ḳaynadub yēmek ve aḳ ʃ̲ar>bı hēzek ve bal şerbetin içmek ve bàdom ɣağıyyla yiyecek yēmek ve hārdal bişürib yēmek ve kelem şorvasın ērkek şiʃeg etiyle yēmek. Bu yazılanlar āvāzı aça ve şafi ̱eder” (Chapter 30 lists which herbs open the voice. Heating squeezed fleawort seeds with rosewater


and drinking it opens the voice. Also cooking spinach and eating it and also eating mallow, drinking thick chicken soup and eating soft boiled egg yolk and drinking fresh milk with added sugar and peeling sugar cane and eating butter and eating white sugar and drinking squeezed pomegranate with added sugar and gargling with heated water in a medium-heat hammam and eating ginger boiled with white fig and singing on empty stomach and eating cooked beans and drinking honey sherbet and eating food prepared with almond oil and eating cooked mustard and eating cabbage soup with the meat of a young mutton. Those written here open the voice and make it clear).106

The following foodstuffs and types of behavior must be avoided:

“Otuza birinci faṣl āvāzı ḫarāb ėden nesneleri bildürür. Ḋar ṣuyn içmek ve mā-nūş yemek ve ekşi ta’āmlar yemek ve şiğr yağıyla ta’ām yemek ve esrār yemek ve şovuq şuda ġusl eylemek ve cimāʾi çok eylemek ve yatur iken nesne okmaq ve çok istifrāğ eylemek ve başların açmış tutmak. Bu çàmus āvāzı ḫarāb ėder boģär” (Chapter 31 lists the things which destroy the voice. Drinking iced water and eating while drinking water and eating sour food and eating food prepared with beef fat and consuming drugs and performing ablutions with cold water and having much intercourse and singing while lying down and vomiting frequently and keeping the head uncovered. All these things destroy the voice and choke it).107

Unfortunately, we are not told why certain things are considered good and others harmful.108 Looking back in history, it seems as though lifestyle and nutrition advice given to singers and orators in Greek and Roman antiquity was quite similar, based on healthy, meaning frugal eating and sexual abstinence.109 Among the foodstuffs most frequently mentioned are eels, lettuce, garlic, bone marrow and honey (of which only the latter features in Aḥmed-oğlu Şükrolläh’s list), but Melidis points out that it is “somewhat

106 Bardakçî, Ahmed Oğlu Şükrollah, 128–29, 268.
107 Bardakçî, Ahmed Oğlu Şükrollah, 130, 268.
108 Soysal, Kızılaslan and Soysal analysed the foodstuffs mentioned in the treatise for their nutritional and medicinal value (or respectively, their harmfulness), concluding that his recommendations were generally meaningful but that he gives the impression of having a holistic view rather than addressing only the vocal apparatus. Gonca Soysal, Nilđem Kızılaslan and Fikri Soysal, “Şükrollah Celebî’nin Edvar-ı Musiki eserinin 30. ve 31. fasılları: Ses sağlığı,” Rast Müzîkoloji Dergisi 6 (2018): 1843–52, especially 1846–47.
difficult to understand the logic behind these food choices,” suggesting that frugality and easy digestion were the relevant criteria. The situation of forbidden foodstuffs is roughly the same, with alcohol possibly being replaced by “drugs” (esrār) more generally. The largest overlap with Ancient Greek and Roman vocal technique is sexual abstinence which was generally recommended to singers and orators in “order to preserve their voice and safeguard their artistic delivery.”110 The advice not to sing on a full stomach is regularly encountered in European sources at least since the 16th century.111 Ibn aṭ-Ṭaḥḥān gives another example of instructions for singers.112 There are some common points, especially perceptible in the propensity for sweet and sugary foods and drinks (sugar, sugar cane, date juice, oxymel, sweet stew, rice pudding etc.) as well as fat-rich soups and stews (“fatty and tasty broth”). Substances common to both treatises are soft boiled egg (yolk), sugar cane, cabbage dishes and warm water (or, analogously, avoiding iced water). While Aḥmed-oğlū Şikrullāh recommends almond oil, Ibn aṭ-Ṭaḥḥān prefers walnut oil. In some cases, he includes statements as to why a certain substance is recommended or not. For example, he advises singers with “phlegmatic throats” to prefer salty dishes which work against the phlegm.113 In a later chapter he mentions a full stomach and vomiting as harmful for the voice and vocal performance (albeit together with factors such as “an ugly riding animal”).114 In the final chapters of his Makāsīdul-ELhān, the Systematist theoretician and composer ʿAbdulḵādir Merāği gives advice on many aspects of vocal art, however there is no mention of suitable or unsuitable foodstuffs. On the other hand, his chapter on correct behavior as a performing artist shows his awareness of ethos theory, especially in his remarks on the choice of modes appropriate to the situation.115

Concluding Remarks

The present brief study did not result in the hoped-for coherent picture. While in the treatises of Şuʿūrī Hasan Efendi and Gevrek-zāde theoretical concepts converge, proof of practical relevance and application is still insufficient. Extant descriptions of music therapy or music played in hospital contexts are vague and do not refer specifically to the modal/iatro-astronomical theory. The

111 Kümmel, Musik und Medizin, 208–9.
112 Sawa, Ḥāwi l-Funūn, 93–95. My thanks to George Sawa for pointing this out to me.
113 Sawa, Ḥāvi l-Funūn, 94.
114 Sawa, Ḥāvi l-Funūn, 123.
discourse visibly existed, and we can trace how music, astrology, medicine, and food formed part of a philosophical continuum whose roots go back to Greek Antiquity, but the link with practice is not sufficiently established.

Questions that still need to be asked are for example whether composers and performers were aware of this nexus and what bearing did all this have on practical music. Further, since Anatolian music theory was preceded in the 13th and 14th century by a previous trend discernible in Persian writings, it is important to compare with neighboring traditions. As Owen Wright's recent work on a Safavid treatise has shown, the esoterically influenced strand of music theory survived there. Another point that seems important is the question whether there are two thought systems, one theoretical/speculative and one practical, exemplified by the writings of Şu‘ūrī Hasan Efendi and Evliyâ Çelebi. And is it, in the latter, not eminently important which mode is played exactly when and for whom, because there is a general trust in music being beneficial? The saying “music is the nourishment of the soul” was the starting point for the present brief study, and with this sentiment, on which a general agreement can surely be reached, I conclude.

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