

B. Kohn and the Promotion of Professions in the Ottoman Empire

by Erdal Tanil

B. Kohn was an important postcard editor and publisher during the late Ottoman Empire period. Operating in Istanbul from the late 19th century to the early 20th century, Kohn not only produced postcards but also documented the social structure, daily life, and professions of the time through visual means. One of Kohn's most notable contributions was his photographic portraits of various professions in Istanbul, which were then printed as postcards. These portraits reflect the rich diversity of Ottoman society and the daily order of traditional occupations.



*Basket Maker, Editor B.Kohn No 412,
Monochrome Collotype, UDB*



*Halva (helva) Vendor, Editor B. Kohn No 408
Monochrome Collotype, UDB
Philatelic Levant cancelation on the front*

Professions Reflected on Postcards

B. Kohn photographed individuals from various neighborhoods of Istanbul and different professional groups, and published these photographs as postcards. Kohn's postcards are not only visual documents but also important historical records that help us understand the social structure of the time. Among the professions featured on these postcards are the watchman, boatman, mancacı, toy seller, thread maker, grinder, water carrier, halva seller, fruit seller, and basket maker. Each profession carries traces of the daily lives of people in Istanbul. These professions reveal both the social fabric of the people and how trade operated.



*Fruit Seller, Editor B. Kohn
Monochrome Collotype, UDB
Posted to Montfavet at 1902
by Levant stamp & cancellation*



*Apple Seller, Editor B Kohn No 275
Monochrome Collotype, UDB
Posted to Dijon in 1903
by Levant cancellation*

Professions such as "watchman" and "boatman" were particularly significant in the streets and waters of Istanbul during the Ottoman period. Watchmen ensured the security of the city, while boatmen managed daily transport across the Bosphorus. On the other hand, professions like "mancaci" (vendor of food for street animals) and "toy seller" played important roles in meeting the entertainment and consumer needs of the people. By featuring these professions on postcards, Kohn provided a deep insight into how trade and social relations were shaped.



Holy Water Carrier, Editor B.Kohn

Monochrome collotype, UDB

*Posted to Wien with 20 paras stamp
& Austrian Post Konstantinopel cancelation*



Knife Sharpener, Editor B. Kohn

Monochrome collotype, UDB.

*The age of Knife Sharpener was mentioned
specifically as 101 years old*

B. Kohn's postcards not only reflect professions and professional groups but also different aspects of daily life. Elements like coffeehouses and tradespeople were important parts of social life at the time, and these places and social interactions are also present in Kohn's postcards.

Coffeehouses in Ottoman society were not just places to drink beverages, but also centers for social and cultural interaction. People would not only have tea or coffee but also discuss current events, converse, entertain themselves, or simply spend time. In

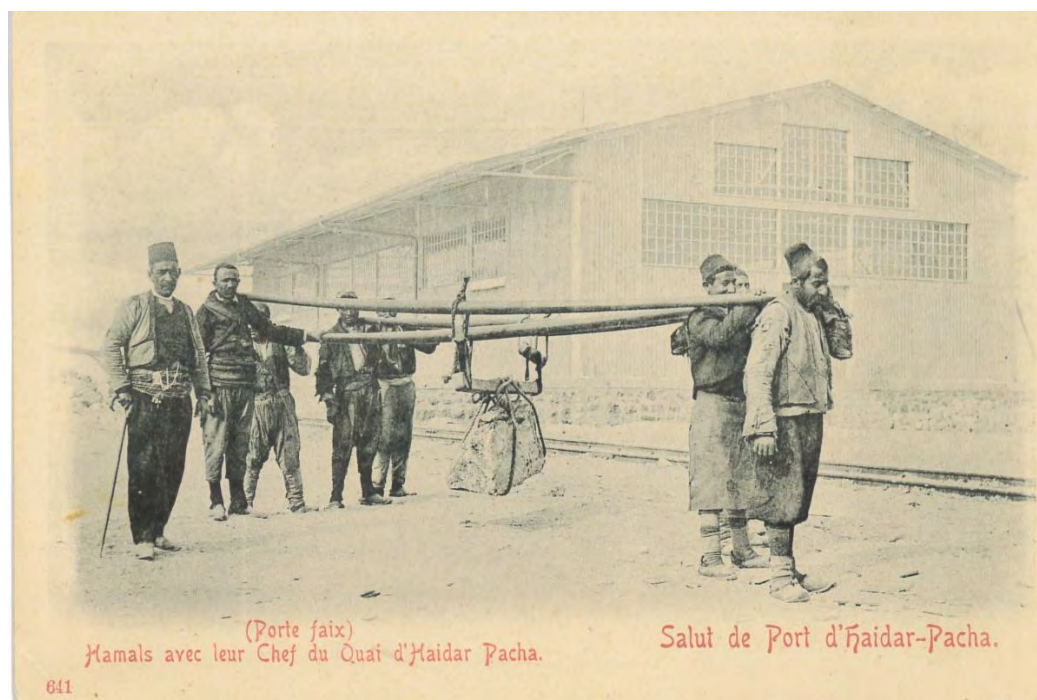
Kohn's postcards, scenes of people talking, playing chess, or waiters serving coffee might have been depicted. This is a detail that helps us understand the socio-cultural fabric of Istanbul at the time.

Tradespeople were another crucial element of daily life in Ottoman society. Various artisans and shopkeepers were an essential part of the city's economic life. In B. Kohn's postcards, groups like Street Vendors or tradesmen represented individuals interacting with the public and sustaining Istanbul's commercial life. These postcards not only promoted these professions but also reflected the lifestyle of the people of that era.

*Bohemian
tinsmiths*

Editor B. Kohn

*Monochrome
collotype, UDB*



*Porters with their
Chief from Haidar
Pasha quay*

Editor B.Kohn

*Monochrome
collotype, UDB*

All these elements make Kohn's postcards more than just visual documents; they serve as historical sources that help us deeply understand the social fabric of Ottoman society. Kohn's works are like seeing the city through the eyes of someone spending a day on the streets of Istanbul; they are a time capsule carrying traces of both commerce and social life.



Kaïkdjilar d' Eyoub

Salut de Constantinople.

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Rowers "Kaïkdjilar"

Editor B. Kohn No 46

Monochrome Collotype, UDB

*Eyüp Vet and the Pharmacist
Military Junior High School in
the background.*

Monkey Trainer

Editor B. Kohn

Monochrome Collotype, UDB



Montreur de singe.

Salut de Constantinople.

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The Intersection of Art and Commerce

B. Kohn was not only a postcard editor but also a cultural ambassador. He worked with artists from various cities and rural regions of the Ottoman Empire, ensuring each postcard was produced with great care. Kohn's postcards also reflect the printing technology and artistic understanding of the era. Often prepared as black-and-white photographs, these postcards serve as both nostalgic mementos and unique documents of social history that have survived to the present day.

Dog Sellers
Editor B. Kohn
Monochrome collotype, UDB



Toy seller
Editor B. Kohn
Monochrome collotype, UDB



B. Kohn's printing techniques were very similar to those used by other prominent editors of the period, such as the Ludwigsohn Brothers. Both Kohn and the Ludwigsohn Brothers employed high-quality printing methods that ensured their postcards were not only visually striking but also durable, allowing these historical documents to survive over time.

*Yarn
Manufacturer
Editor B. Kohn
Monochrome
Collotype, UDB*



An important distinguishing feature of B. Kohn's postcards, in contrast to the Ludwigsohn Brothers' work, was the presence of a period (.) at the end of the "Salut de Constantinople" or "Salut de Brousse" text. This subtle detail set Kohn's postcards apart, making them easily recognizable to collectors and enthusiasts of the period.



Grocer (Ironmonger), Editor B.Kohn No 510

Monochrome Collotype, UDB

Posted to Belgium in 1906 with Brousse double language cancelation

All of the postcards featured in this article were printed before 1906 and exhibit the "Undivided Back" (UDB) style, which means the back of the card is not divided into sections for an address and message. This feature was standard in the postcard design before the introduction of the divided back in 1906 by the Universal Postal Union.

Coffee Shop

Editor B.Kohn

Monochrome

Collotype, UDB

Posted to France at

9.11.1905 with

French Levant

Stamp and

Constantinople

Pera Poste France

cancelation



We have also seen DB style postcards of B. Kohn in his last period of life.



Guard "Bekdji", Editor B. Kohn

Monochrome Collotype, UDB

Posted to Paris at 20.01.1904

It seems like it was written as if it's a letter

During the period when Kohn was active, postcards were of great interest in Europe and other parts of the world as well. These postcards, depicting every corner of the Ottoman Empire and various professional groups, became important souvenirs not only for the local population but also for foreign tourists and collectors.

Conclusion

B. Kohn's work created a visual archive that offers important clues about the social structure of the Ottoman society. Each postcard serves as a promotional tool for a profession and a visual document of Istanbul during that time. Kohn's efforts can be considered a cultural heritage and a pioneering contribution to postcard collecting. These postcards allow us to better understand the lifestyle, people, and professions of the era.



Feeder of Street dogs "Mancaci"

Editor B. Kohn

Monochrome Collotype, UDB

In the Ottoman Empire, there was a profession called "mancacılık". A "mancaci" sold food for cats and dogs, which were called "manca."

People would buy this food from the mancaci and feed it to the animals. The mancaci regularly fed the street animals in place of others. This profession reflects the society's sense of responsibility and care for animals at the time.

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Professions subject to postcards at Ottoman Empire (Refik Erdal TANIL)

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