

# J. PAVLIKEVITCH

(Russian 20th Century)

85

## *Constantinople Street Café*

signed and inscribed 'Constantinople/Pavlikevitch' (lower right)  
watercolour over pencil  
30 x 20 cm (11 $\frac{7}{8}$  x 7 $\frac{7}{8}$  in)

**C**ONSTANTINOPLE STREET CAFÉ ENCAPSULATES the coffeehouse culture that epitomises Istanbul; the scene is bustling with social activity. In the shade of the trees and umbrellas, numerous clusters of customers sit talking and drinking. In the centre, a fez-wearing waiter makes his way through the street clutching a tray, whilst in the foreground, an empty chair and two stools wait to be occupied.

The drinking of coffee in a coffeehouse is fundamental to Turkish culture. The date when coffee first arrived in Istanbul is disputed, though most believe it

was introduced by two Syrian traders in 1555, and the drink became known as the 'milk of chess players and thinkers'. The Ottoman historian İbrahim Peçevi chronicled that 'until the year 962 (1554-55), in the High, God-Guarded city of Constantinople, as well as in Ottoman lands generally, coffee and coffeehouses did not exist. About that year, a fellow called Hakam from Aleppo and a wag called Shams from Damascus came to the city: They each opened a large shop in the district called Tahtalkala, and began to purvey coffee.'<sup>1</sup> So ingrained in Turkish culture is the custom of coffee drinking, that the Turkish word for breakfast, *kahvaltı*, is translated literally as 'before coffee'.

<sup>1</sup> Lewis, B., *Istanbul and the Civilization of the Ottoman Empire* (University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 1963) p. 132.

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## *A Market Scene*

inscribed, dated and signed 'Stanboul 14/Pavlikevitch' (lower left)  
watercolour over pencil  
43.5 x 27 cm (17 x 10 $\frac{1}{2}$  in)

**A**MARKET SCENE SHOWS THREE MEN IN CONVERSATION amidst market stalls selling an assortment of rugs and carpets. Centrally placed in front of two Doric columns, two men are seated on stools whilst the third stands over watching. Evidently a business transaction is taking place between the two seated men. The bearded man writes on a piece of paper, and in front of him is a small table complete with ink well and papers held in place by a rock. The seated figure on the left watches the writing, and from the glove worn on his right-hand one can assume that it is winter in Istanbul.

Behind the three men is a long line of market stalls all with rugs and *kilims* hanging from the roof. It is most likely that this scene is set within of one of the several historic covered markets found in Istanbul. The production of rugs is synonymous with Turkey since weaving was introduced to Anatolia in the twelfth century. Turkish weaves have been coveted as household items since the fourteenth century when Marco Polo commented on their beauty and artistry, and they are distinctive due to their rich colours, warm tones, and traditional motifs.

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## *Street Vendors*

inscribed, dated and signed 'Stanboul 919/Pavl...' (lower left)  
watercolour over pencil  
43.5 x 27 cm (17 x 10 $\frac{1}{2}$  in)

**S**TREET VENDORS IS A DELIGHTFUL WATERCOLOUR, where Pavlikevitch captures a local street market in Istanbul. Under several umbrellas, vendors selling a variety of wares have set up their stalls. On the right-hand side a stall selling fresh produce, presumably watermelons stacked high, receives attention from a couple of interested customers. An upturned circular basket is placed in front of the stall, possibly containing the dried fruits, nuts or spices so commonly found in Turkish markets.

In the foreground on the left, a discussion is occurring between two men at

another stall. While holding his purchases, the customer gestures towards the vendor as if haggling or disputing the amount quoted. Nearby, another man looks on with guarded interest. The produce of the vendor is unclear, though it may be long strands of dried spices. The background is dominated by two opposing cupolas, and the single minaret suggests that this market fronts the local mosque. The nature of the market as a place for social interaction is clear in *Street Vendors* from the various clusters of local people and shoppers scattered around the area.

