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**Between the Transnational and the Local:
Assessing the Changing Profile of the Islamic Art Collections
in Museums in Türkiye**

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Beyza Uzun

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The dissertation of “Between the Transnational and the Local: Assessing the Changing Profile of the Islamic Art Collections in Museums in Turkey” is approved.

PhD Program Coordinator: Prof. Maria Luisa Catoni, IMT School for Advanced Studies Lucca

Advisor: Assoc. Prof. Emanuele Pellegrini, IMT School for Advanced Studies Lucca

Co-Advisor: Prof. Amos Bertolacci, IMT School for Advanced Studies Lucca

The dissertation of Beyza Uzun has been reviewed by:

Prof. Isabelle Gadoin

Dr. Mirjam Shatanawi

IMT School for Advanced Studies, Lucca

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to Nina

VITA

Education

- November 2017-** PhD. Candidate, IMT School for Advanced Studies Lucca,
Analysis and Management of Cultural Heritage
- 2014-2015** M.A. University of Kent,
History and Philosophy of Art with a term in Rome
- 2012-2014** M.A. Koç University,
Art History
- 2008-2012** B.A. Bahçeşehir University,
Business Administration

Presentations

- 2023** “Ottoman Olfactory Traditions in an Imperial Residence: Incense Burners from the Topkapı Palace Collection” conference paper presented at the workshop *The Mediterranean Senses. Sensual Knowledge and Perceptive Culture in the Early Modern Mediterranean*, Berlin, 8 September 2023.
- 2022** “Objects Between Secularism and the Sacred at Istanbul’s Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art” conference paper presented at the virtual panel *At Global Displays of Islamic Art Today: Agency, Identity and Politics*, Toronto, 12 February 2022.
- 2021** “Between the Transnational and the Local: Assessing the Changing Profile of the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art, Istanbul” conference paper presented at the virtual panel *The 2021 Annual Meeting of the Middle East Studies*

Association (MESA), 30 November 2021.

2017 “Display of the Sacred Relics Gallery in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art, Istanbul” conference paper presented at the international conference *From Malacca to Manchester: Curating Islamic Collections Worldwide*, Manchester Museum, Manchester, UK, 22-24 February 2017.

2014 Beyza Uzun and Nina Ergin, “Scenting an Imperial Residence: Objects from the Topkapı Palace Collections,” conference paper presented at the workshop *Empires of the Eye: Ottoman Material Culture and its Place in Birmingham*, Birmingham Museums Trust, Birmingham, UK, 4-5 April 2014.

PUBLICATIONS

Book Chapter “Display of the Sacred Relics Gallery in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art, Istanbul” *Curating Islamic Art Worldwide: From Malacca to Manchester* (Palgrave MacMillan, Autumn 2019).

Journal Articles [with Nina Ergin] “Scenting the Imperial Residence: Objects from the Topkapı Palace Museum Collections,” *The Senses and Society*, vol. 17, no. 1 (2022), 68-89.

“From the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic: Formation and Display of the Earliest Islamic Art Collection in the Imperial Museum, Istanbul,” *Diyâr: Journal of Ottoman, Turkish, and Middle Eastern Studies* (forthcoming 2025).

ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to explain the multiple motives behind the transformation of the display methodologies of Islamic art collections in a museum context by considering the global circumstances such as politics and society. It investigates the shifting ways of displaying the Islamic art collections in Turkish national museums through analyzing both physical and conceptual elements of their permanent galleries starting from the formation of the collections—the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries—to the present day.

Starting from the early years of the twenty-first century, especially after September 11, 2001 the debate about Islam in the West was reflected within the general institution of the museum. During the last two decades, most of the important private and state museum collections of Islamic art around the world—such as the MET, the Benaki Museum, the David Collection, the Louvre Museum, the V&A Museum and the British Museum—have undergone substantial reinstallation. While this global trend exists, each institution follows its own individual agendas, often or partly motivated by local political influences as well as practical purposes such as renovations. In line with this current global process, two major Islamic art museums in Turkey, which were inherited from the Ottoman Empire—the Museums of Turkish and Islamic Art in Istanbul and Bursa—have recently redesigned their galleries in 2014 and 2021 respectively. In addition to the existing museums in Edirne and Erzurum, established during the Republican era, a new Museum of Turkish Islamic Art was recently opened in İznik in 2020.

Considering such international and local factors, this research examines how and why the connotations of displaying the visual and material culture of the Islamic world have changed for state museums in Turkey starting from the late nineteenth century to the present day. Through a comparative and a comprehensive analysis, this study aims to understand how national public museums in Turkey display their Islamic art collections within the changing frameworks of global and local museology and as part of distinct social, cultural and political environments. Based on fieldwork and archival research, this research will conclude by presenting new results about the various layers of meaning displaying Islamic art in a Turkish museum context, affected by both transnational cultural and academic trends as well as local political

dynamics tied to the AKP's cultural conceptualizations of Turkey's Islamic past.

Even though scholarly literature on the history of collecting and displaying of Islamic art has extended in parallel with the transformation of the museum galleries for the last two decades, this area of study still needs further research. Being the first study that focuses on Islamic art collections in Turkey, this thesis will hopefully contribute to the existing literature by bringing new perspectives to the meaning of exhibiting the cultural heritage of Muslim societies.

Keywords: Museum Studies, Ottoman museology, Museology in Türkiye, Islamic art collections.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DABOA	<i>Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı Osmanlı Arşivi</i> (Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye Directorate of State Archives and Ottoman Archives)
DABCA	<i>Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı Cumhuriyet Arşivi</i> (Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye Directorate of State Archives Republic Archives)
H.	<i>Hicri</i> (Hijri calendar)
M.	<i>Miladi</i> (Common era)
İ.HR	<i>İrade Hariciye</i>
İ.MF.	<i>İrade Maarif</i>
MF.	<i>Maarif Nezareti</i>
MF.MKT	<i>Maarif Nezareti Mektubi Kalemi</i>
ŞD.	<i>Şûra-yı Devlet Evrakı</i>
HR.SRF.	<i>Hariciye Nezareti Belgrat Sefareti</i>
Y.MTV.	<i>Yıldız Mütenevvi Maruzat Evrakı</i>
TİEM	<i>Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi</i> (the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts)
TDVİA	<i>Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi</i> (Turkish Religious Foundation Encyclopedia of Islam)
DAI	The Deutsches Institute

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INTRODUCTION

“This carving of a terrapin is identifiable as a female of the *Kachuga dhongoka* species native to the River Jumna, which joins the Ganges at the sacred Hindu city of Prayag (later fortified and rename Allahabad, or ‘City of God’, by the Mughal emperor Akbar). Given the highly skilled carving and the life size scale, this object was most likely commissioned by an elite patron such as a Mughal prince or a Hindu Mughal aristocrat. Mughal India (found at Allahabad), the early 1600s Bequeathed by Thomas Wilkinson, through James Nairne, Esq., 1830,0612.1”

This is an object label written to accompany a jade terrapin sculpture displayed at the Albukhary Gallery of the Islamic World in the British Museum (Fig.1). The Albukhary Gallery was opened in October 2018 to replace the previous Islamic art gallery of the British Museum. Since 2018, the jade terrapin has been exhibited in an L-shaped display case (no. 4 in Room 43) entitled “Islam in South Asia: Layered Traditions 1500-1900.”¹ As the title suggests, the section label aims to explain the layered visual traditions formed through the contributions of both foreign and local artisans and patrons from this geography, with a focus on the Mughals, since all the other sultanates in the region were eventually incorporated by the Mughal Empire (1526–1858). To represent the diversity in terms of typology, material, and period almost sixty objects—including a musical instrument, jade cups, metal ewers, tiles, and an architectural tile inscription fragment, jewelry, thumb rings,

¹ The transcription of the section label of display case number 4 reads:

“Arab Muslim traders first reached India’s west coast during the 600s. By the late 1100s, a sizeable Muslim population had settled in South Asia under Muslim rule. The most prominent of these new rulers, the sultans of Delhi (1192–1526), introduced both Islam and Persian culture to much of the religion. Over time, other sultanates were established throughout the Indian subcontinent, some which were Shi’a with ties to Safavid Iran. Most were eventually subsumed into the Mughal Empire (1526–1858), which was ruled by Central Asian descendants of the Timurids (1370–1507). This empire officially lasted until 1858, when the British took control of the subcontinent until 1947.

Local and foreign patrons and artisans contributed to South Asia’s layered visual traditions during the Islamic period. Jade appealed greatly to Mughal rulers such as the emperor Jahangir, who was a keen collector of Timurid objects like this jug. After acquiring the vessel, he commissioned an inscription bearing his name, the date and verses alluding to the drinking of wine.”

blades, a shield, and a portrait of an Indian ruler—are displayed in this case. The jade terrapin is placed slightly below and farther from the objects, as can be seen in Figure 2.



Figure 1. The jade terrapin, inv. no. 1830,0612.1. Source: British Museum website “Collections.”

Figure 2. A view of the display case “Islam in South Asia: Layered Traditions 1500-1900” in the Albukhary Gallery of the Islamic World in the British Museum. Source: British Museum website “Collections.”

The jade terrapin entered the collection of the British Museum in 1830 via the bequest of Lt Thomas Wilkinson. However, the object was originally possessed by Lt-General Alexander Kyd (d. 1826), an engineer in the East India Company in the early nineteenth century. The jade terrapin, dated around 1600 and produced under the Mughal Dynasty, was found at the bottom of a tank during engineering work in 1803 at the Mughal fort at Allahabad, northern India. When the terrapin entered the collection of the British Museum, with an inlaid marble table bequeathed together with the terrapin as its pedestal, it was not considered an example of Islamic art in the museum context. In fact, it was on display solely on the basis of its material qualities without its context, between 1850 and the 1880s in the Mineral Gallery, located in the Long Gallery section.

In the 1850 guide of the British Museum, there is no mention of a single so-called Islamic object except this life-sized sculpture of

terrappin, carved from a single block of green nephrite.² The guide reads: “The Sculptured Tortoise, in the middle of the gallery, was found on the banks of the Jumna in Hindoostan; it is wrought out of nephrite or Jade.”³ The terrappin can be clearly seen with its marble pedestal in the room filled with crowded walls and table displays in a photograph dated around 1859 (Fig. 3).⁴



Figure 3. Photo of the Mineral Gallery, British Museum, c. 1859 by Roger Fenton (1819–1869). Source: Getty website “Museum Collection.”

The aesthetic qualities of the terrappin must have been acknowledged at least somewhat by the curators since it was isolated from the crowded wall and table cases and displayed in the middle of the gallery until the gallery was dispersed in the 1880s. The natural history collection of the British Museum—including the jade terrappin—

² Sheila R. Canby, “The Jade Terrappin in the British Museum: Context and Meaning,” *South Asian Studies* vol. 24, no.1 (2008) 85-90: 85-86.

³ Henry Warren, *A Guide to the British Museum* (London: J.H. Storie, 1850), 33.

⁴ The British photographer Roger Fenton (1819-1869) was commissioned to photograph some galleries of the British Museum. Some of these photos were published in *The Stereoscopic Magazine: A Gallery of Landscape Scenery, Architecture, Antiquities, and Natural History*, vol. 2 (1859-1861).

was transferred to the newly established Natural History Museum in South Kensington in 1881.⁵ In 1886, the curator of the British Museum, Augustus Wollaston Franks (1826-1897), took the terrapin back and moved it to the Department of British and Medieval Antiquities and Ethnography.⁶ This transfer of the terrapin proves that its aesthetic value was gradually recognized. The department names in which the turtle was registered continued to change over time. In 1933, it probably became a part of the Department of Oriental Antiquities (later Asian) and was eventually transferred to the Department of the Middle East.⁷

As far as I am aware, if and how the jade terrapin was displayed between the 1880s and 1989 is not known.⁸ The terrapin was exhibited in the first Islamic art gallery created within the British Museum, “John Addis: Islamic Art Gallery” (which later became the John Addis Gallery of the Islamic World), which was opened in 1989. The focus of this gallery was the art of the major Islamic dynasties, and the display was mainly arranged in chronological order and with a dynasty-based approach. The curatorial arrangement of the John Addis gallery was in accordance with the other major Islamic art galleries at the time, such as the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Metropolitan, the Museum für Islamische Kunst in Berlin, and the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts in Istanbul.

Four display cases were reserved for the Mughal Dynasty in the John Addis Gallery. Each of the display cases contained more than ten

⁵ Rachel Ward, “Augustus Wollaston Franks and the Display of Islamic Art at the British Museum,” in *Discovering Islamic Art: Scholars, Collectors and Collections, 1850-1950*, ed. Stephen Vernoit (London & New York: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2000), 105-116: 106. However, Sheila Blair states that the terrapin always stayed in the museum: “...when all the minerals except the terrapin were transferred to the Natural History Museum in South Kensington. Fortunately, the artistic merit of the terrapin was recognized, and it remained in the British Museum as part of the then Oriental (now Asian) collection.” Sheila R. Canby, “The Jade Terrapin in the British Museum,” 85. But there is a Report from Franks to the Trustees, 6 January 1887, which reads: “Mr Franks has also received from the Natural History Branch the jade tortoise found in the River Jumna together with the marble table on which it was exhibited...” British Museum Archives, receipt for terrapin, 27 November 1886.

⁶ Rachel Ward, “Augustus Wollaston Franks and the Display of Islamic Art at the British Museum,” 107.

⁷ Initially, it was the Department of Oriental Antiquities and Ethnography, which was divided into two sections— “Oriental Antiquities,” and “Ethnography”—in 1946. For the department structure of the British Museum until 1988 see David M. Wilson, *The British Museum: A History* (London: The British Museum Press, 2002), 379; Canby, “The Jade Terrapin in the British Museum,” 85.

⁸ I communicated with the former and current curators from the Department of the Middle East in the British Museum, however they also do not have this information on the subject.

objects, except the one where the jade terrapin was located. Today, the majority of these objects can be seen in a single display case entitled “Islam in South Asia: Layered Traditions 1500-1900” in the Albukhary Gallery. The jade terrapin was the only object in the John Addis Gallery exhibited alone in a self-standing display case (Fig. 4). A mirror was placed underneath the terrapin so visitors could appreciate the object from another angle.

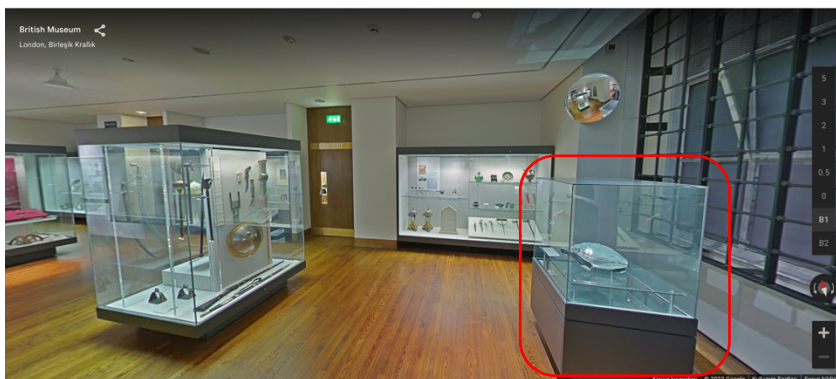


Figure 4. A view of the John Addis Gallery. The jade terrapin’s display case is highlighted with a red rectangle. Source: Google Arts & Culture website.

The terrapin’s display case was placed next to the wall-display case entitled “Mughal India: AD 1526–1858.” The section label of the Mughal India case provides brief information on the main political history of the Mughal dynasty and also states that “The Mughal rulers were lavish patrons of the arts and architecture” without contextualizing this statement. The last sentence of this section label reads:

“[...] Although Aurangzeb (AD 1658–1707) dominated the rest of the Deccan, Mughal India entered a long decline after the AD 1739 sack of Delhi until AD 1858 when it became part of the British Empire.”⁹

This implies that the decline of the Mughal Empire had been stopped when it became a colony of the British Empire. The last sentence of this

⁹ Transcribed from the section label entitled “Mughal India: AD 1526–1858,” which was photographed by the author in 2014.

section label is an example of how internalized imperial and colonial language is reflected in the museum space.¹⁰

The object label of the terrapin in the John Addis Gallery also presents the colonial past of the museum collection uncritically by providing information on how the terrapin was initially found in the early nineteenth century. It reads:

“Jade Terrapin

Mughal India, Allahabad, 1600-1605

Carved of green nephrite of jade, this lifelike terrapin was discovered in 1803 at the bottom of a water cistern in the Allahabad Fort, India. It was presented to Lieutenant-General Alexander Kyd of the Bengal Engineers.

The Carving represents a female of the species *Kachuga Dhongaka*, native to the Ganges and Yamuna Rivers which meet at Allahabad. In 1583 Mughal Emperor Akbar renamed the Hindu holy city Prag as Allahabad, making it one of his capitals.

By 1600 Prince Selim, the future Emperor Jahangir, had rebelled against his father and occupied the Allahabad Fort. The naturalistic rendering of the terrapin, with its head slightly off-centre, is in keeping with Selim’s liking for realism and his interest in Indian wildlife.

The terrapin has recently returned after a tour of the United Kingdom as part of the British Museum’s Partnership UK programme.

Bequeathed by Lt. Thomas Wilkinson, through James Nairne AN 1830,0612.1”¹¹

The jade terrapin has been in the collection of the British Museum for almost two hundred years now. The terrapin is also one of the visual icons of the British Museum. A photo of the terrapin is placed at the left corner of each website page of the museum’s website.¹² Looking at the

¹⁰ Mirjam Shatanawi “Making and Unmaking Indonesian Islam: Legacies of Colonialism in Museums,” unpublished PhD. Thesis (Amsterdam: Universiteit van Amsterdam, 2022), 15; Magnus Berg and Klass Grinell, *Understanding Islam at European Museum* (Elements in Critical Heritage Studies) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 31.

¹¹ Transcribed from the object label, which was photographed by the author in 2014. All the spelling mistakes and typos left untouched intentionally. The tour of the terrapin was still ongoing in June 2006; therefore this label cannot be older than that date. “Free Lunchtime Talk — The Emperor’s Terrapin,” press Release of the National Museum of Cardiff, 27.06.2006.

¹² British Museum website, [accessed 08.04.2023], <https://www.britishmuseum.org/>.

physical and conceptual change in the display of the terrapin within the museum is very meaningful.

It is one of the earliest objects to enter the collection of the British Museum from the Islamic world. It was an “exotic” object, made from a precious stone, coming from colonial India. Therefore, it was displayed solely according to its material significance in the Mineral Gallery. Thanks to its aesthetic qualities, the terrapin was kept in the museum collection. Although a book dedicated to jade objects briefly mentions the terrapin, if and how it was displayed within the museum is unknown between the 1880s and 1989.¹³ If displayed, the terrapin was probably located in the Oriental Gallery, where objects from the Islamic World and the Far East were exhibited together. The status of the jade terrapin evolved into an example of “Islamic art” within the John Addis Gallery. Today, the way it is represented in the Albukhary Gallery can be classified as in between the concepts of “Islamic art” and “Islamic material culture.” The jade terrapin’s story is intriguing because it represents how the status of an object from the Islamic world can shift even within the same museum over time.

Museums’ strategies of collecting and displaying have been constantly influenced by social, political, and cultural conditions.¹⁴ The presentation of Islamic art objects has evolved from applied/decorative/industrial art or ethnographic materials to “works of art” over the course of time.

This thesis aims to explain the multiple motives behind the transformation of the display methodologies of Islamic art collections in a museum context by considering global circumstances such as politics and society. It investigates the shifting ways of displaying Islamic art collections in national museums in Türkiye¹⁵ by analyzing both physical and conceptual elements of their permanent galleries starting from the formation of the collections—the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries—to the present day.

¹³ Jock Pegler Palmer, *Jade* (London: Spring Books, 1967), 43.

¹⁴ Susan Kamel, “Representing Objects from Islamate Countries in Museums” in *Religion and Museums: Immaterial and Material Heritage*, edited by Valeria Minucciani (Torino: Umberto Allemandi & C., 2013), 53-70: 57.

¹⁵ In June 2022, Turkey changed its official name to “Türkiye,” which is the official name of the country in Turkish.

Background

Even before the second half of the nineteenth century, which was a fruitful period for collecting Islamic art for both individuals and institutions, museums such as the British Museum, established in 1753, and the Louvre Museum, opened to the public in 1793, had few objects we now regard as Islamic. When the Royal and church treasuries were incorporated into the French national collection, objects such as the ewe from the treasury of Saint-Denis, the Baptistère de Saint Louis, a Spanish bronze peacock, and hardstone objects inlaid with gold and gems became a part of the Louvre Museum.¹⁶ Physician and collector Sir Hans Sloan's (1660-1753) collection of 71,000 items provided a foundation for the British Museum, which also contained objects from the Islamic world—such as a contemporary astrolabe, dated 1712, produced in Iran under the Safavid Dynasty, a costume album produced in Isfahan, and at least twelve amulets belonging to the seventeenth century.¹⁷ Unfortunately, as far as I am aware, there is no record of the display of these objects during the early years of the Louvre and the British Museum. However, the earlier museum guidebook for the British Museum entitled *The General Contents of The British Museum*, dated 1761, shows that materials from the Islamic world were treated as “curiosities,” like other items in the “Natural and Artificial” collection in the early days of the museum.¹⁸

The second half of the nineteenth century was the first period when the objects from the Islamic world started to be collected systematically by museums, especially in Europe, but also in Islamic

¹⁶ Sophie Makariou, “History of a Collection,” *Islamic Art at the Musée Du Louvre* (Paris: Hazan, 2012), 11.

¹⁷ For example, “Amuleta Mahumetica,” that I discuss in Chapter 2. *The Making of the Albukhary Foundation Gallery of the Islamic World* (London: The British Museum, 2018), 33.

¹⁸ The British Museum was initially located in Montagu House, a 17th-century mansion. Back then there were three departments: Manuscripts, Medals and Coins; Natural and Artificial Production; and Printed Books. In this guide, there is a section entitled “Antiquitates variae” under the Natural and Artificial Production. As the name indicates, different kinds of objects—such as pots, lamps, snuff boxes, rings, idols from America, and sculptures from ancient Egypt or Rome—were on display together without clear classification including objects that would be classified as Islamic today. For example, there were “Turkish Talismans, or Charms, with Arabic Inscriptions, being generally a Sentence of the Alcoran [Quran]” and some seals “(inscribed with Arabic Words) which the Turks use instead of signing their Names.” Next to these objects there were “some talismans and Abraxas, a Kind of Spells or Charms” from the “first ages of Christianity.” *The General Contents of The British Museum: With Remarks* (London: Printed for R. and J. Dodsley, 1761), 33.

lands such as Cairo, Algeria, and Constantinople (Istanbul).¹⁹ At this time, many Muslim lands were politically and economically incorporated within the European empires;²⁰ this incorporation increased access to and interest in the cultural heritage of Muslim societies.²¹ Islamic art collections started to be displayed publicly for the first time at the first international exhibition of manufactured products, known as the Great Exhibition, in London in 1851. Stephen Vernoit summarizes the new meanings attributed to the Islamic art collections after their first public display as follows:

“The first public displays of Islamic items in Europe staged at the international exhibitions with the Great Exhibition, held at the Crystal Palace in London in 1851. At these exhibitions a diverse range of products and manufactures were displayed, largely on the basis of their ‘national’ origins. As it was expected the collections were labeled mainly based on their nations or peoples such as Persian, Arab, Turkish, or Indian. The displays at the international exhibitions promoted a new awareness of the commercial aesthetic qualities of non-European artefacts.”²²

Art and architecture from the Islamic world continued to be exhibited through the second half of the nineteenth century within the context of international exhibitions in various cities such as London, Paris, Vienna, Berlin, and Stockholm.²³

Since their inception, the universal exhibitions became a source for both private and state-sponsored collections of Islamic art. The South Kensington Museum (renamed the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1899, hereafter V&A) was initially established under a different name—the

¹⁹ Wendy M.K. Shaw, “Islamic Art in Islamic Lands: Museum and Architectural Revivalism,” in *A Companion to Islamic Art and Architecture* edited by Gülru Necipoğlu and Finbarr Barry Flood (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2017), 1136-1155.

²⁰ Stephen Vernoit, “Islamic Art and Architecture: An Overview of Scholarship and Collecting, c. 1850-c.1950” in *Discovering Islamic Art: Scholars, Collectors and Collections, 1850-1950*, ed. Stephen Vernoit (London & New York: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2000), 2.

²¹ Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom, “The Mirage of Islamic Art: Reflections on the Study of an Unwidely Field,” *The Art Bulletin* (2003), 152-184: 154.

²² Stephen Vernoit, *Discovering Islamic art: Scholar, Collectors and Collections* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000), 14.

²³ For a detailed discussion on the subject see Zeynep Çelik, *Displaying the Orient: Architecture of Islam at Nineteenth-Century World’s Fairs* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); for a discussion on the display techniques of Islamic art in the 1878 Exhibition see Moya Carey and Mercedes Volait “Framing ‘Islamic Art’ for aesthetic interiors: revisiting the 1878 Paris exhibition,” *International Journal of Islamic architecture* vol.9, no.1 (2020): 31-59.

Museum of Manufacturers—and a location following the closure of the Great Exhibition in 1852.²⁴ Some of the first “Islamic” materials were bought from the Great Exhibition of 1851 by the V&A for their collection. As Zeynep Çelik investigates in her prominent book entitled *Displaying the Orient: Architecture of Islam at Nineteenth-Century World’s Fairs* (1992), France was at the forefront of organizing these international exhibitions entitled “Les Expositions Universelles,” in the second half of the nineteenth century. Mainly private collectors—such as Swedish-born Frederik R. Martin (1868-1933), diplomat, collector, dealer, and scholar of Islamic art, and Albert Goupil (1840–1884), a collector and an art dealer—were able to display their collections in temporary exhibitions parallel to the Universal Exhibitions.²⁵ The Expositions Universelles in Paris in 1867, 1878, and 1889 served as events where private collectors and museum agents could collect objects from the Islamic world without traveling to those lands.²⁶

Apart from the universal expositions, ones devoted exclusively to Islamic art opened in various locations such as Paris, London, Algeria, and Munich during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.²⁷ The first general exhibition solely devoted to objects from the Islamic world, entitled “L’art Musulman” (The Exhibition of Muslim Art), was organized in Paris in 1893.²⁸ Various private collectors and dealers lent more than 2500 items. According to the exhibition catalogue, a variety of objects including rugs, ceramics, tiles, musical instruments, costumes, and metalwork were displayed in a theatrical environment.²⁹ In his exhibition review, published in *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, Georges Marye,³⁰ the curator and organizer of the exhibition, confesses that the exhibition

²⁴ Many of the objects in the Exhibition were the basis of the first collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

²⁵ On introducing such exhibitions, see David Roxburgh, “Au Bonheur des Amateurs: Collecting and Exhibiting Islamic Art, ca. 1880–1910,” *Ars Orientalis* 30 (2000): 9–38.

²⁶ Stephen Vernoit, “Islamic Art in the West: Categories of Collecting,” in *A Companion to Islamic Art and Architecture* edited by Gülru Necipoğlu and Finbarr Barry Flood (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2017), 1156-1176: 1161; Carey and Volait “Framing ‘Islamic Art’ for aesthetic interiors,” 32.

²⁷ For a detailed discussion and comparison of some of these early temporary exhibitions organized between 1880 and 1903 see David Roxburgh, “Au Bonheur des Amateurs: Collecting and Exhibiting Islamic Art, ca. 1880–1910,” *Ars Orientalis* 30 (2000): 9–38.

²⁸ Rémi Labrusse, “Islamic Arts and the Crisis of Representation Art in Modern Europe,” in *A Companion to Islamic and Architecture* edited by Gülru Necipoğlu and Finbarr Barry Flood (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2017), 1196-1217.

²⁹ *Exposition d’art Musulman: Catalogue Officiel* (Paris: Imprimerie A. Bellier, 1893).

³⁰ Georges Marye was the curator at the museum of national Algerian Antiquities, in which he created a section dedicated to “arts musulmans” in 1897.

was not able to react against the common Orientalist display practices.³¹ He also adds that the exhibition should have been arranged “methodologically that one would have wished to find.”³² Possibly, the first discussions about the possibility of exhibiting Islamic art collections with a different vision—which can be translated as a move away from Orientalist practices—emerged in this period.³³ Marye also praised the exhibition, since it helped “to affirm the taste” and increase the “sympathies for aesthetic manifestations of these objects.”³⁴ On the other hand, the exhibition was still criticized due to its Oriental associations by contemporaries. Even ten years later, Gaston Migeon (1861-1930), a leading figure during the establishment of the Islamic art collection in the Louvre Museum, described and criticized this exhibition as “a touristic bazaar environment.”³⁵ In these early examples, the objects were generally displayed based roughly upon their types or materials in an exoticizing way to resemble an oriental residence, a bazaar atmosphere, or even a department store ambiance in order to emphasize their decorative, aesthetic, and commercial features as commodities,³⁶ because one of the primary motivations behind these exhibitions was to increase the economic value of Islamic art collections.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the systematic musealization of objects from the Islamic world started mainly under two motivations in the West.³⁷ In the book entitled *Understanding Islam at European Museum* (2021) Magnus Berg and Klas Grinell summarize these museums as follows:

“One was related to handicraft and its future development; the other related to the history of art and culture. The first reason was thus primarily aimed towards the future, the other towards the past. [...] The second reason for the museums’ interest in Islamic art thus had to do

³¹ “[...] c’est la première exposition Générale d’art musulman qui ait été tenté; sa réussite est destinée à affirmer notre gout et nos sympathies pour des manifestations esthétiques don’t avons été les premiers à reconnaître la Valeur. La France a ouvert la route ou d’autres depuis se sont engagés sans risques, profitant de ses efforts et de ses travaux.” Georges Marye, “L’Exposition d’art musulman,” *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* (December 1, 1893): 490-499: 491.

³² Marye, “L’Exposition d’art musulman,” 490.

³³ Roxburgh, “Au Bonheur des Amateurs,” 16.

³⁴ Marye, “L’Exposition d’art musulman,” 499; Gaston Migeon, *L’exposition des arts musulmans au Musée des Arts Décoratifs* (Paris: Librairie Centrale des Beaux-Arts, 1903), 2.

³⁵ Roxburgh, “Au Bonheur des Amateurs,” 20.

³⁶ Susan Kamel, “Representing Objects from Islamicate Countries in Museums,” 58; Roxburgh, “Au Bonheur des Amateurs,” 20.

³⁷ Berg and Grinell, *Understanding Islam at European Museum*, 12.

with the history of art and culture. This was a time when science was busy producing series and taxonomies. On the assumption that younger forms had developed from older ones, historical objects were classified in order to determine how they were connected in time. The perspective was highly evolutionistic. The elementary converted into the complex step by step, the rough into the refined and the inferior into the superior.”³⁸

The objects from the Islamic world were seen as one possible muse for industrial design. As Gülru Necipoğlu states, “The nineteenth-century aestheticization of the Islamic visual tradition facilitated its adoption as a neutral transcultural model for the industrial arts and architectural design in the museum context.”³⁹ The V&A was established with an aim to educate and improve designers, manufacturers, and the public in art and design.⁴⁰ This novel approach led to the formation a new type of museum dedicated to “applied” or “industrial” arts.⁴¹ The concept, which focuses on education, became very popular throughout Europe at the end of the nineteenth and the early twentieth century, which contributed to the formation of collections of Islamic art in various cities such as Vienna (Handelsmuseum,⁴² 1864), Berlin (Kunstgewerbemuseum, 1867), and Paris (the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, 1905).⁴³ Non-Western objects, regardless of their origin, entered into the collection of such museums, since the main aim was to present examples of good design in order to enhance manufacturing.⁴⁴

³⁸ Ibid., 12, 14.

³⁹ Gülru Necipoğlu, “The Concept of Islamic Art: Inherited Discourses and New Approaches,” in *Islamic Art and the Museum: Approaches to Art and Archaeology of the Muslim World in the Twenty-First Century* eds. Benoît Junod, Georges Khalil, Stefan Weber and Gerhard Wolf (London: Saqi, 2012), 57-75; 61.

⁴⁰ It was first located in Marlborough House as the Museum of Ornamental Arts in 1852 and moved to its current home on Exhibition Road in 1857. The V&A website, “Building the Museum,” [accessed March 2023], <https://www.vam.ac.uk/articles/building-the-museum>.

⁴¹ Tim Stanley, “Islamic Art at the V&A,” in *The Making of the Jameel Gallery of Islamic Art at the Victoria and Albert Museum*, edited by Rosemary Crill and Tim Stanley (London: V&A Publications, 2006), 1-25: 1; Vernoit, “Islamic Art and Architecture: An Overview of Scholarship and Collecting, c. 1850-c.1950,” 22.

⁴² Also known as “Museum für Kunst und Industrie.”

⁴³ Some others were opened in the cities like Budapest, Brno, Dresden, Frankfurt, Leipzig, Hamburg, Kiel, and Kassel. Vernoit, “Islamic Art and Architecture: An Overview of Scholarship and Collecting, c. 1850-c.1950,” 22-23.

⁴⁴ Tim Barringer, “The South Kensington Museum at the colonial project,” in *Colonialism and the Object: Empire, material culture, and the museum*, edited by Tim Barringer and Tom Flynn (London and New York: Routledge, 1998) 11-27: 15.

Even national museums, which are outside the category of “decorative arts,” such as the British Museum and the Louvre Museum also started to incorporate objects from the Islamic world into their collections with an evolutionary approach in the second half of the nineteenth century. The V&A’s main policy was to acquire items “[...] for improving manufactures; beauty and excellence of style as decorative works, and for skillful workmanship; as illustrations of technical processes, both from an artistic and scientific point of view.”⁴⁵ Differing from the V&A model, the British Museum mainly focused on the medieval periods when collecting Islamic objects and on their historical significance, in addition to the aesthetic and material qualities of the objects. The properties of the objects to be collected are defined in the British Museum Trustees report dated 1855 as follows:

“[...] are not only good of their kind, but which have on them a date, the name of the artist or some interesting historical association [...] documents on the several branches of art to which they belong.”⁴⁶

However, a significant overlap can be seen between the purchases of the V&A and the British Museum. Sometimes, even the same set of objects was divided between the two museums, such as the four Mamluk candlesticks, produced for export to Italy, and one of which bears a coat of arms of a Venetian family.⁴⁷ These four candlesticks were sold as two different lots in 1855; therefore, two of them found their way to the V&A, while the other two entered the collection of the British Museum.⁴⁸ On the other hand, for example, the British Museum did not collect carpets and left that part of the Islamic world to the V&A.

The objects from the Islamic world started to be collected systematically for the first time in the British Museum thanks to the initiative of the British curator and collector Augustus Wollaston Franks (1826-1897).⁴⁹ Although Franks was consistently collecting Islamic

⁴⁵ *Third report of the commissioners for the Exhibition of 1851* (London: George E. Eyre and William Spottishwoode, 1856), 200.

⁴⁶ Rachel Ward, “Augustus Wollaston Franks and the Display of Islamic Art at the British Museum,” 111.

⁴⁷ Inventory Number. 1885.1201.6. It is registered in the Department of Britain, Europe and Prehistory. The other pair is in the Department of the Middle East

⁴⁸ The one with the coat of arms was purchased by the British Museum, probably because it provides historical information about the object.

⁴⁹ Even though, he was not an authority on Islamic art, Franks had a major impact in the establishment of the Islamic art collection once he was appointed to the British Museum in

material, he was not consciously creating an “Islamic collection.”⁵⁰ As Rachel Ward states, “Franks saw the Islamic realm as both a geographical and a cultural buffer zone between Europe, Asia, and Africa and as a bridge linking the artistic achievements of Antiquity with Renaissance Europe.”⁵¹ His main motivation to collect objects from the Islamic world was to create a more complete classification of decorative arts by showing the technical, artistic, or trading connections between the medieval Islamic world and Renaissance Europe.⁵² During his curatorial years, Franks arranged the medieval collections according to media because he didn’t want to isolate the objects from the Islamic world in a separate gallery. British Orientalist and archaeologist Stanley Lane-Poole (1854–1931), describes a display in the British Museum in his book entitled *The Art of the Saracens in Egypt* dated 1886. Lane-Poole’s description shows the intermediary role that the objects from the Islamic world had under Franks. It is also possible to confirm the overlaps between the collections of the V&A and the British Museum with this quotation. It reads:

“The number of these Venetian and Italian specimens in the British Museum is considerable, and the series has been instructively arranged so that one can trace the gradual transition from the Mamluk style

1851. He then became the first keeper of the newly created Department of British and Medieval Antiquities and Ethnography in 1866 and stayed in that position until 1896. Collecting material from the Muslim world was not so easy for Franks at the beginning of his career in the British Museum. The museum authorities were firmly opposed to the acquisition of oriental, medieval, and later materials, especially due to the lack of space in the museum building. Nevertheless, he managed to bring together over 3,000 objects from the Islamic world during his career in the museum. These objects were mostly given by him and his wealthy friends, whose purchases and bequests were guided and arranged by Franks. In addition to “decorative art,” Franks developed the existing ethnographic collection of the museum by purchasing material mostly from Turkey, Iran, North Africa and India dated to the 17th and 18th centuries. Fahmida Suleman, “Islamic Art at the British Museum: Strategies and Perspectives,” in *Islamic Art and the Museum: Approaches to Art and Archaeology of the Muslim World in the Twenty-First Century* eds. Benoît Junod, Georges Khalil, Stefan Weber and Gerhard Wolf (London: Saqi, 2012), 276-284: 277. He was “... collecting not only British and medieval antiquities but also prehistoric, ethnographic and archaeological material from Europe and beyond as well as oriental art and objects.” For detailed information on the role of A. W. Franks, see Marjorie Caygill and John Cherry, eds., *A.W. Franks: Nineteenth-Century Collecting and the British Museum* (London: British Museum Press, 1997); Rachel Ward, “Augustus Wollaston Franks and the Display of Islamic Art at the British Museum,” 107.

⁵⁰ Rachel Ward, “Islamism, not an easy matter” in *A.W. Franks: Nineteenth-Century Collecting and the British Museum*, edited by Marjorie Caygill and John Cherry (London: British Museum Press, 1997), 272-276: 272.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*, 273.

through the Venetian school to the other still semi-oriental salvers of medieval Europe. The South Kensington Museum has also a few fine examples of the Venetian style of metal-work, including a specimen of Mahmud El-Kurdy's skill [...]"⁵³

Another similar example of the relationship between the V&A and the British Museum in terms of collecting objects from the Islamic world can be seen in Paris in the early twentieth century. The Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris was founded following the V&A model in 1905.⁵⁴ The museum was inaugurated at the Marsan pavilion, located in the north wing of the Louvre. The Musée des Arts Décoratifs was not competing with the Louvre Museum collections but instead tried to complete what was not included there.⁵⁵ Safavid vessels, textiles (which were excluded from the Louvre, with a few exceptions), and most of the carpets, as well as Ottoman tiles, were given to the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, though most of the medieval works went to the Louvre collections.⁵⁶ Since its opening, the Louvre and the Musée des Arts Décoratifs have interacted with each other. When the Islamic Art Department was founded in the Louvre in 2003, the Musée des Arts Décoratifs loaned its collections to the Louvre to create a more comprehensive and complete collection for the reinstallation of the Islamic art gallery, which opened in 2012.

Throughout the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, European museums were using various display approaches for objects from the Islamic world. The V&A is a telling example, since it employed various display approaches—even sometimes simultaneously—during this period. The early displays of the V&A were mainly arranged didactically on the basis of material, typology, and technique to satisfy the educational mission of the

⁵³ Stanley Lane-Poole, *The Art of the Saracens in Egypt* (London: South Kensington Museum, 1886), 203-204.

⁵⁴ The Union Centrale des Arts Décoratifs, founded in 1877, was organizing temporary exhibitions and it developed as a state-approved society in 1882. This institution finally evolved into the Musée des Arts Décoratifs. The president of the museum M. Georges Berger (1934–1910) described its aim as follows: “le temple consacré au génie artistique de notre race et à son ingéniosité sans rivale dans les applications du bel art à l’industrie, considérée dans l’universalité de ses productions, depuis les plus magnifiques jusqu’à celles d’un charme usuel.” Gustave Babin, “Le musée des Arts décoratives au pavillon de Marsan, qui sera inauguré le 29 mai 1905,” *l’Illustration* (27 May 1905), 344-345: 345.

⁵⁵ Raymond Koechlin, “Le Musée des Arts Décoratifs et la collection Peyre au pavillon de Marsan,” *La Revue de l’art ancien et moderne* (10 June 1905) t. XXVII, 429-441: 430.

⁵⁶ Sophie Makariou, “History of a Collection,” 15.

museum.⁵⁷ As was expected, the material culture from the Islamic world was displayed according to their materials in diverse galleries such as metalwork, textile and ceramics, and glass departments. The “Ceramic Galley” opened in 1868 on the first floor and was arranged to display the collection of “Earthenware, Stoneware and Porcelain” of the museum.⁵⁸ The objects were exhibited in crowded wooden cases based on their types and nations. It seems like there was no consistent chronological order in the gallery. The museum guide, published in 1870, starts with a description of British pottery from the 17th and 18th centuries and continues with other European pottery examples (such as Italian, French, German, and Flemish).

Although, again, the focus was on the aesthetic and technical qualities of the objects from the Islamic world as specimens of good design, galleries were also presented within the museums in a way that can be described as Orientalist. In 1864, a gallery entitled “Oriental Courts” (now galleries 34 to 36) was created at the east side of the V&A’s South Court.⁵⁹ The decorative scheme for the Oriental Courts was commissioned in 1863 by the prominent British architect Owen Jones. This gallery was designed to evoke various historic styles of ornament, which became common practice starting from the Great Exhibition staged in London in 1851, where some pavilions were designed in a similar manner by Jones.⁶⁰ There are several drawings on paper in the archive of the V&A which help to visualize the interior design of the gallery; however, it is not certain which drawings were used exactly, since there are no other visual representations.⁶¹ The drawings are

⁵⁷ *Guide to the South Kensington Museum*, no. 1 (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1857); Tim Barringer, “The South Kensington Museum at the colonial project,” 14-15.

⁵⁸ *A guide to the art collections of the South Kensington Museum* (London: Spottiswoode & Company, 1870), 33.

⁵⁹ See “the Ground Plan of the Proposed New Museum at South Kensington for the Science and Art Department,” designed and illustrated by the architect Francis Fowke and artist John Hackett dated 1863, The V&A Museum website “Collections,” [accessed in March 2023], <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O551562/ground-plan-of-the-proposed-design-fowke-francis-captain/>.

⁶⁰ Julius Bryant, *Designing the V&A: The Museum as a Work of Art (1857-1909)* (London: Lund Humphries: in association with V&A Publishing, 2017), 108.

⁶¹ Some of the arcade designs of the Oriental Courts by Owen Jones can be seen in the V&A Museum Website “Archives,” [accessed in March 2023]: <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O1159364/design-for-decoration-of-the-design-jones-owen/>; <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O746979/decoration-of-the-oriental-court-design-jones-owen/>; <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O746980/decoration-of-the-oriental-court-design-jones-owen/>; <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O746982/decoration-of-the-oriental-court-design-jones-owen/>;

reflecting the so-called Moresque style and were entitled “Alhambra” schemes by the museum. The windows of the gallery were designed in a Moorish style, too, with stained glass (now lost) by Jones’ brother-in-law, James W. Wild. With these windows, the aim was to create an impression of the interior of a mosque.⁶² Jones’s preference for “Moresque” visual culture reflects his hierarchical classification between various Muslim societies also found in his book *The Grammar of Ornament* published in 1856. He ranks certain styles such as “Moresque ornament” as the highest among other nations such as Arab, Persian, and Turkish.⁶³

A review of the gallery published in 1870 in *The Building News* provides an idea about the displayed objects and criticizes the execution of the decoration of the galleries, done by a professional decorator, Thomas Kershaw.⁶⁴ It reads:

“Mr Owen Jones has erred in endeavoring to give an Oriental aspect to the portion of the exhibition in which the cases of draperies, dresses, and arms from India and Turkey, and the pottery, &c., of China and Japan, are shown. In the first place, however excellent the design of such decoration may be, it is next to impossible to find English workmen capable of executing it with the same freedom and grace as the cunning craftsmen of the East.”⁶⁵

The museum guide also dated 1870, gives information on the content, although vague, and the purpose of the gallery, which reads: “Here are shown examples of the Art workmanship of the East Indies, China,

jones-owen/; <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O746981/decoration-of-the-oriental-court-design-jones-owen/>; <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O1159363/design-for-decoration-of-the-design-jones-owen/>; <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O746983/decoration-of-the-oriental-court-design-jones-owen/>.

⁶² Bryant, *Designing the V&A*, 109.

⁶³ According to Jones, the “Arabian ornament” comes in second. “Persian” and “Indian” follows these styles in less “pure” forms. The lowest rank is reserved for the “unimaginative Turks.” Jones gives reference to the Great Exhibition of 1851 and emphasizes the “inferior” quality of “The productions of the Turks ... [which] were the least perfect of all the Mohammadan exhibiting nations.”⁶³ Although, the racial hierarchy shifted a bit, and “Persian art” became the most praised style towards the end of the nineteenth century, the perception of “Turkish art” stayed inferior for a long time, until the 1950s. Owen Jones, *Grammar of Ornament* (London: Day and Son, 1856), “Turkish Ornament” part, unpaginated.

⁶⁴ Bryant, *Designing the V&A*, 109.

⁶⁵ Anon., “Sundry decorative works at the Kensington Museum,” *The Building News* (5 August 1870), 93.

Japan, Persian, &c.; and for convenience of comparison, objects on loan, if of Eastern origin, are also exhibited in this Court."⁶⁶

A book entitled *Travels in South Kensington*, published in 1882, both praises and criticizes the interior design aspects of the gallery. The author appreciates the elements of "Oriental decorations;" however, he points out the negative effects that the floor design created. It reads:

"...and in the series of 'cloisters,' as the spaces beneath the picture-gallery may be called, there are further experiments in floor tiles which militate against the effect of the articles exhibited in them. The ceilings in these cloisters, or side spaces, have been covered with Oriental decorations by the late Owen Jones; they are Indian, Persian, Moresque, and the greatest beauty, each coffer in the ceiling and each archway presenting a new design, and yet all in harmony: these being too far above the show-cases to affect any objects in them, are rightly placed; but the floor, as the necessary background to many objects in the rooms—many of which depend on delicate shades of color for their effect—will eventually, I suspect, have to be reconstructed, and made entirely of the grave hue which has happily been already adopted for the greater part of it."⁶⁷

Apparently, the ostentatious interior of the gallery reflected in the glass of the cases and interfered with the visibility of the displayed objects. The author does not provide information about the content of the exhibited objects, he only focuses on the design of the decorative elements of the gallery. This display was an example of the domination of the imperial design over the colonial object.⁶⁸ Through this gallery, which was very different from the rest of the museum's interior design, oriental art was grouped together and set apart from the rest. Art historian Tim Barringer explains the purpose of the decoration of the gallery as follows:

"South Kensington's desire for a similarly evocative interior for the Oriental Courts indicates the Museum's use of display techniques balancing education and popular entertainment. The decorations served to enhance the 'otherness' of the objects by creating an 'oriental' ambience and also demonstrated the ways in which Indian, Japanese and Islamic decoration could serve as source materials for contemporary British design. The Oriental courts, in fact, stood as an

⁶⁶ *A guide to the art collections of the South Kensington Museum* (1870), 17.

⁶⁷ Daniel Moncreu Conway, *Travels in South Kensington: with notes on Decorative art and architecture in England* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1882), 43-44.

⁶⁸ Barringer, *Colonialism and the Object*, 17.

example of the type of design the museum's founders hoped would catch in Britain"⁶⁹

Presenting Chinese, Japanese, Persian, and Indian—or even sometimes objects from the Ancient Near Eastern civilizations—under the umbrella term “Orient” was a mainstream approach for nineteenth-century exhibitions also in other European countries, as well. In France, a Musée des Arts Décoratifs exhibition, dated 1882 and organized by the Union Centrale des Arts Décoratifs, was mainly arranged according to material. However, only for the Chinese, Japanese, Indian, and Persian objects only, a *Salle Orient* was created, regardless of the content of the object's materials. It seems possible to interpret these Oriental galleries as a tangible example of Said's concept of “Orientalism” within a museum context.⁷⁰ This gallery was a creation of an imaginary and uniform image of the “Orient” via a combination of various architectural decorative elements and objects from different cultures under an umbrella term and in a single space. The Oriental Courts in the V&A were dismantled in the early twentieth century or even before, somewhere between 1886 and 1906. The museum guide, dated 1885, still shows the Oriental Courts on the ground plan; however, the gallery disappears from the ground plan dated 1906.⁷¹

It is also possible to follow the increasing relations between states from the museum collections and exhibitions. In addition to the material-based displays and the Oriental Courts, a new space entitled “The Persian Court,” located in the North School-Corridor, was created in the V&A. It is not clear when exactly it was created; however, the Persian Court was probably formed between 1873 and 1876,⁷² when Major R. Murdoch Smith (1835-1900) was purchasing objects for the museum in Iran. A land telegraph for efficient and fast communication between the British Empire and India was needed, and Tehran was one of the linking places for this system. In 1863, the first Telegraph Convention was signed in Tehran. Major R. Murdoch Smith was one of the British experts who went to Tehran to supervise the construction of

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁷⁰ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, 1979), 19, 204.

⁷¹ *The Red-Line Guide to the Victoria & Albert Museum* (London: J.J. Keliher & Co., 1906).

⁷² Robert Murdoch Smith, *Persian Art* (London: G. E. Eyre and W. Spottiswoode, 1876).

the telegraph line, and he had a long career in Iran between 1864 and 1888.⁷³

The V&A commissioned a publication entitled *Persian Art* from Smith in 1876. The gallery was probably formed because, as Smith states in his book, an “extensive and valuable collection” of Persian art created the need for a separate space.⁷⁴ Still, the formation of a gallery solely devoted to “Persian art,” is a curious choice while there was the Oriental Court—which also contained material from Persia—in the museum. In addition to the political agreements between the British Empire and Iran, the decision to establish a new gallery for Persian objects reflects the rise of the status of “Persian art” in scholarship. As Necipoğlu summarizes, “Due to their Indo-European, Aryan pedigree, the Persian and Indo-Persian schools were eventually ranked above those of the Semitic Arabs and nomadic Turks.”⁷⁵

In the second half of the nineteenth century, exhibition practices underwent a continuous transformation, as new methods of displaying objects and new exhibition spaces were explored.⁷⁶ The 1910 “Meisterwerke muhammedanischer Kunst” (Masterpieces of Muhammedan Art) exhibition in Munich was a turning point in many ways, such as the usage of terminology, its display techniques, and creating a library within the exhibition space to promote academic knowledge on the subject. The 1910 Munich exhibition was curated by prominent German scholars in Islamic art and archaeology Friedrich Sarre (1865–1945) and his assistant at the time Ernst Kühnel (1882–1964). The curators applied the concept of “masterpieces” to objects from the Islamic world for the first time.⁷⁷ Even though the appellation of

⁷³ For detailed information on Robert Murdoch Smith, see Jennifer M. Scarse, “Major General Sir Robert Murdoch Smith KCMG and Anglo-Iranian Relations in Art and Culture,” in *Anglo-Iranian Relations Since 1800*, edited by Vanessa Martin (London & New York: Routledge, 2005), 21–35. After 1888, he became the director of the Edinburgh Museum of Science and Art, where he also collected materials from the Islamic world, especially from Iran. He stayed in this position until his death in 1900.

⁷⁴ Smith, *Persian Art*, unpaginated.

⁷⁵ Gülru Necipoğlu, “The Concept of Islamic Art: Inherited Discourses and New Approaches,” eds. Benoît Junod, Georges Khalil, Stefan Weber, and Gerhard Wolf, *Islamic Art and the Museum: Approaches to Art and Archaeology of the Muslim World in the Twenty-First Century* (London: Saqi Books, 2012), 57–75: 60.

⁷⁶ David Roxburgh, “Au Bonheur des Amateurs: Collecting and Exhibiting Islamic Art, ca. 1880–1910,” *Ars Orientalis* 30 (2000): 9–38: 12.

⁷⁷ Eva-Maria Troelenberg, “Framing the Artwork: Munich 1910 and Image of Islamic Art,” in *After One Hundred Years The 1910 Exhibition “Meisterwerke muhammedanischer Kuns” Reconsidered*, vol.82 (2010), 36–64: 60; Susan Kamel, “Representing Objects from Islamicate

“Muhammadan” was used by Whitechapel Gallery in London in a 1908 exhibition entitled “Muhammadan Art and Life (in Türkiye, Persia, Egypt, Morocco, and India),” here it was used with the term “masterpieces,” which suggests a shift in the presentation of Islamic art. The curators wanted to present Islamic art “on an equal footing with the great works of Western art history,” with an “unhistoric” and “unethnographic” perspective.⁷⁸ This was the first time that each region had its own room, and the objects were displayed in front of the light, ornamentless walls without crowded display cases. Exactly because of this “simplicity” of the interior design, the exhibition was criticized, mostly by French reviewers.⁷⁹ Despite this, as David Roxburgh states, “[...] the installation tenets pursued there [the 1910 Munich exhibition] were quickly seen in permanent and temporary exhibitions across Europe and North America.”⁸⁰ After the second half of the twentieth century, another approach was generally adopted by art museums and objects from the Islamic world started to be displayed based on their historical and aesthetic values. Chronological and dynasty-based arrangements, rather than the material-based categorization, became preferred among the curators in the following years.

Starting from the early years of the twenty-first century, especially after September 11, 2001, the debate about Islam in the West was reflected in the museum space. Islamic art collections started to be treated as cultural ambassadors which could overcome the stereotypes about Muslims. Museums with Islamic art collections are seeking to find new ways to present their collections in order to satisfy their visitors’ needs, who visit the museum not only to look at beautiful objects, but also with to seek answers to today’s questions about history, geography, culture, and religion. For the last two decades, most of the important

Countries in Museums,” 58. For a detailed discussion on the 1910 Munich Exhibition see Andrea Lerner and Avniom Shalem (eds.) *After One Hundred Years: The 1910 Exhibition “Meisterwerke muhammedanischer Kunst” Reconsidered*, vol.82 (2010).

⁷⁸ Eva-Maria Troelenberg, “Framing the Artwork: Munich 1910 and Image of Islamic Art,” 48.

⁷⁹ David Roxburgh, “After Munich: Reflections on recent Exhibitions” *After One Hundred Years: The 1910 Exhibition “Meisterwerke muhammedanischer Kunst” Reconsidered*, vol. 82 (2010), 157-186: 363; “On aurait souhaité pour l’art musulman un autre cadre que celui de l’exposition de Munich. Imaginez des salles, grandes ou petites, peintes à la chaux, avec parquets en ciment, une simplicité monacale qui vous glace. C’est tout de même une gageure que d’être arrivé à donner aux salles où triomphe le plus grand des arts décoratifs un aspect froid, rigide, compassé.” Claude Anet “L’art musulman à Munich” *Revue Archéologique* (January-June 1911),173-176: 175-176. Italics added for emphasis.

⁸⁰ Roxburgh, “After Munich,” 363.

private and state museum collections of Islamic art around the world—such as the MET, the Benaki Museum, the David Collection, the Louvre Museum, the MIA in Cairo, the V&A Museum, the British Museum, and the Islamic Art Museum in Qatar—have undergone substantial reinstallations. The Museum of Islamic Art in Berlin is still in the process of redesign and is scheduled to open its new display in the near future. Each institution has its own individual reasons for reinstallations, which might be motivated by indirect political influences as well as practical purposes such as renovation. Therefore, the installation of Islamic art collections in museums has been experiencing changes from a traditional to a reformed museum model which focuses on education, audience-appealing exhibition, and interpretation of the cultural heritage of Muslim societies from various perspectives.⁸¹

Parallel to the current global fashion, two major state Islamic art museums in Türkiye, which were inherited from the Ottoman Empire—the Museums of Turkish and Islamic Art in Istanbul and Bursa—have either recently redesigned their galleries or are in the process of doing so. In addition to the existing museums in Edirne (1971) and Erzurum (1994), established during the Republican era, a new Museum of Turkish Islamic Art was recently opened in İznik in 2020. Through the transition from a caliphal imperial identity to a constitutionally secular republic with a majority Muslim population, Türkiye holds a particular position in terms of dealing with its Muslim heritage. Through chosen case studies this research analyzes the display of Islamic art collections in national Turkish museums by looking at both physical and conceptual elements of its permanent galleries starting from the formation of the collections—in the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries—to the present day. By doing so, it seeks to explore how museums in Türkiye reflect on and respond to the international display trends of Islamic art collections in their socio-political framework. Consequently, through a comprehensive analysis, this study aims to present new results about the meaning of collecting and displaying Islamic art in a museum context in Türkiye.

⁸¹ Miriam Kühn, "Museums and Their Formation," in *Islamic Art and the Museum: Approaches to Art and Archaeology of the Museum World in the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Benoît Junod, Georges Khalil, Stefan Weber and Gerhard Wolf (London: Saqi Books, 2012), 215-224: 215.

The Current State of the Research and the Scope of the Thesis

Research and literature on collecting and displaying Islamic art has been increasing, especially since 2000. The scholarly literature on the subject has mainly grown through the proceedings of several conferences held in Europe and North America. The book entitled *Discovering Islamic Art: Scholars, Collector and Collections, 1850-1950* was the proceedings of a conference that was held at the V&A Museum in 1996.⁸² The fifteen essays in this book, which were written by prominent scholars and curators of the field, examine how the historiography of Islamic art developed between 1850 and 1950. In particular, Stephen Vernoit's essay is an important source because it provides a general overview of the history of scholarship, collecting, and exhibiting of Islamic art in this formative period of the field.⁸³

The *Discovering Islamic Art* conference and its book became an inspiration for another significant conference held at the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto in 1998. As a result of this conference, a special volume of *Ars Orientalis* entitled "Exhibiting the Middle East: Collections and Perceptions of Islamic Art" was published in 2000. This special volume can be seen as a complement to the previous publication, since it looks at the formative period of Islamic art history by focusing on collections and temporary and permanent exhibitions in the United States, Western Europe, and Türkiye.⁸⁴

The third major book entitled *Islamic Art and the Museum: Approaches to Art and Archaeology of the Muslim World in the Twenty-First Century* was pushed after the conference "Layers of Islamic Art and the Museum Context." The conference was organized in Berlin in 2010 to begin a discussion about the strategies for exhibiting Islamic art in museums.⁸⁵ The twenty-nine essays were organized under several titles

⁸² *Discovering Islamic Art: Scholars, Collectors and Collections, 1850-1950*, ed. by Stephen Vernoit (London: I. B. Tauris, 2000). The conference was entitled "The History of Islamic Art History. Collectors, Collections, and Scholars, 1850-1950."

⁸³ Stephen Vernoit, "Islamic Art and Architecture: An Overview of Scholarship and Collecting, c. 1850-c. 1950," *Discovering Islamic Art: Scholars, Collectors and Collections, 1850-1950*, ed. Stephen Vernoit (London: I. B. Tauris, 2000), 1-61.

⁸⁴ Linda Komaroff, "Exhibiting the Middle East: Collections and Perceptions of Islamic Art," *Ars Orientalis* 30 (2000), 1-8: 1-2.

⁸⁵ Benoît Junod, Georges Khalil, Stefan Weber and Gerhard Wolf, eds., *Islamic Art and the Museum: Approaches to Art and Archaeology of the Museum World in the Twenty-First Century* (London: Saqi Books, 2012).

such as “Presentation of Islamic Art,” “Context and Aesthetics,” “Foundation and Change,” and “Examples from The Museum World.” The essays focus on three main themes: the relation of “objects and concept,” the discussion of “Islamic art or material culture,” and the “meaning of audience.”⁸⁶ The first theme discusses questions such as “what is an object” and “how should objects be displayed.” Within the framework of the second theme, the authors re-evaluate the display methodologies of some of the previous and current permanent exhibitions in museums around the world, such as the Museum of Islamic Art (Berlin), the British Museum, and the Victoria & Albert Museum. Under the third theme, the authors try to understand the audience of Islamic art exhibitions and discuss new ways to communicate Islamic art in a museum context.

Curating Islamic Art Collections Worldwide: From Malacca to Manchester (2020), edited by Jenny Norton-Wright, is again an outcome of a conference held in 2017 in Manchester.⁸⁷ Both the theoretical and practical approaches in the newly arranged Islamic art galleries were discussed in this book with a focus on current trends. The same year, another international conference was held in Zurich, and its proceedings were published in 2019 with the same title: “À l’orientale. Collecting, Displaying and Appropriating Islamic Art and Architecture in the 19th and early 20th centuries.” This book focuses on the artistic revival of Islamic art and architecture in the West through the collecting and displaying of both individuals and institutions. Different from the earlier examples, this publication focuses also on lesser-known geographies such as Eastern Europe, Russia, and Central Asia.

In addition to the conference proceedings, there are monographs analyzing collections and—both permanent and/or temporary—displays of Islamic art or material culture in state museums. There are a few featured publications that discuss the representation of Islam in museums from a sociopolitical perspective. Ian P. Heath’s book, based on his PhD research, examines the representation of Islam in British museums between 1976 and 2001 through the analysis of various permanent museum exhibitions, including the British Museum.⁸⁸ The

⁸⁶ Benoît Junod et al., “Islamic Art and the Museum,” 15.

⁸⁷ Jenny Norton-Wright (ed.) *Curating Islamic Art Collections Worldwide: From Malacca to Manchester* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020).

⁸⁸ Ian P. Heath, *The Representation of Islam in British Museums* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2007).

representation of Islam within the museum context in the Netherlands is examined by Mirjam Shatanawi through the Tropenmuseum's collection.⁸⁹ Diletta Guidi's *L'islam des musées: La mise en scène de l'islam dans les politiques culturelles françaises* published in 2022, is the first study that focuses on the interpretation of Islamic art collections in France through the examples of the Louvre Museum and the Arab World Institute.⁹⁰ *Understanding Islam at European Museum*, written by Marcus Berg and Klass Grinell, examines the representation of "Islam" within European museums with a focus on the national museums of the UK and Germany and how these collections can contribute to the "tolerant understanding of Islam."⁹¹

The existing literature provides a general overview of the historiography, collecting, and displaying of Islamic art in museums such as the British Museum, the V&A Museum, and the Museum für Islamische Kunst in Berlin. Research on the Ottoman museology and its Islamic art collections in the Imperial Museum before the Republican era has been published by prominent scholars such as Wendy M. K. Shaw and Edhem Eldem.⁹² In particular, Wendy M. K. Shaw's article entitled "Islamic Arts in the Ottoman Imperial Museum, 1889-1923," and Edhem Eldem's book chapter "The Genesis of the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts" are significant contributions to the study of the collecting and exhibition of Islamic art in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Ottoman Empire.⁹³ However, there is a place for a study that draws a more comprehensive picture of the changing display methodologies and trends of Islamic art collections in Türkiye starting from the second half of the nineteenth century to the present day.

⁸⁹ Mirjam Shatanawi, *Islam at the Tropenmuseum* (Arnhem: LN Publishers, 2014); Mirjam Shatanawi "Making and Unmaking Indonesian Islam: Legacies of Colonialism in Museums," unpublished PhD. Thesis (Amsterdam: Universiteit van Amsterdam, 2022).

⁹⁰ Diletta Guidi, *L'islam des musées: La mise en scène de l'islam dans les politiques culturelles françaises* (Zurich and Geneva: Éditions Seismo, 2022).

⁹¹ Magnus Berg and Klass Grinell, *Understanding Islam at European Museum* (Elements in Critical Heritage Studies) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).

⁹² Wendy M. K. Shaw, *Possessors and possessed: museums, archaeology, and the visualization of history in the late Ottoman Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Edhem Eldem, "The (Still)birth of the Ottoman 'Museum: A Critical Reassessment'," Maia Wellington Gahtan and Eva-Maria Troelenberg (eds.), *Collecting and Empires: An Historical and Global Perspective* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018), 258-285.

⁹³ Wendy M.K. Shaw, "Islamic Arts in the Ottoman Imperial Museum, 1889-1923," *Ars Orientalis* vol. 30 (2000), 55-68; Edhem Eldem, "The Genesis of the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts," ed. Massumah Ferhad, *The Art of the Qur'an: Treasures from the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts* (Smithsonian Books: 2016), 119-139.

This study aims to understand how museums in Türkiye display their Islamic art collections within the changing framework of museology according to the social, cultural, and political environment. Therefore, it investigates the multiple motives behind the transformation of the display methodologies of Islamic art collections in a museum context starting from the late nineteenth century to the present day. The formation and display of the public Islamic art collection, first in the Ottoman Empire and then in the Republic of Türkiye, is deeply researched for the first time. This thesis focuses on the first and largest existing Islamic art museum in Türkiye, the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts in Istanbul (TIEM), as a case study to analyze the shifting displaying discourses and methodologies. TIEM is discussed in detail for the first time in this thesis within the broader political, cultural, and social context. This study will hopefully contribute to the existing literature by bringing new perspectives to the meaning of collecting and exhibiting the cultural heritage of Muslim societies.

Research Questions and Methodology

In line with the aim and scope of this project, the main research questions are formulated as follows:

Primary Question:

- How and why the connotations of displaying the visual and material culture of the Islamic world have changed for state museums in Türkiye with regards to the evolving social and political role of museums from the late nineteenth century until today.

Secondary Questions:

- How and why the physical and conceptual components—such as the content, exhibition design, choice of objects, and labels—of the display of Islamic art collections have evolved in the state museum in Türkiye based on the social and political environment from the late nineteenth century until today.

- How and why the terminology of the visual and material culture of the Islamic world has changed. What are the implications of the shift in terminology in the museum context?

- What is the role of individuals (such as directors and curators) and institutions (such as government agencies and sponsors) in display methodologies?
- Are there any significant similarities (patterns and trends) or differences between various museums in terms of display methodologies?

I use a range of qualitative methods in collecting and analyzing materials. Apart from a critical analysis of literature, official documents, and publications partly found through archival research, I examine permanent displays and the collection through written and visual sources. My primary archival source was the former Prime Ministerial Archive (*Başbakanlık Arşivi*), now the Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye Directorate of State Archives (*Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Cumhurbaşkanlığı Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı*). The state archives have been started to be centralized and digitized following the transition from parliamentary system to presidential system after the 2017 referendum in Türkiye. I mainly benefited from the Ottoman Archives (hereafter DABOA) to understand the formative years of the Islamic art collections in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by the Ottoman government. In addition, the Republican Archives (hereafter DABCA) of the State Archives was consulted for this research.

In addition to the State Archives, I consulted documents such as architectural drawings and plans, and photographs from the Hüsrev Tayla Archive, located in the Atatürk Library (*Atatürk Kitaplığı*). Throughout my research SALT Research (*SALT Araştırma*) was one of the main privately owned archives. Here, I found newspaper articles and visuals related to display of the Islamic art collections in the Imperial Museum and TIEM. To reach the previous display photographs of the TIEM, I benefited from the Ara Güler Archive and the Deutsches Archaeology Institute (DAI) in Istanbul.

I use texts including museum and exhibition catalogues, collections' inventories, exhibition reviews, gallery panels, and labels. In addition, I analyze the choice of objects, the physical arrangement of the galleries, and photographic records of the previous permanent displays. Moreover, I conducted semi-structured interviews with exhibition makers such as the museum directors and curators of the galleries.

Finally, I evaluated all these data by conducting a qualitative comparative study between different state museum collections.

Outline of the Thesis

Following the Introduction, Chapter 1 overviews various terminologies which were created to categorize and study the material and visual culture of the Islamic world. The chapter starts by looking at the emergence of concepts such as “Islamic,” “Mohammedan,” and “Muslim” in the second half of the nineteenth century. It continues to explore other terms that started to be used in the same period, such as “Oriental” and “Saracenic.” The third subsection of Chapter 1 investigates the implications of the usage of the term “Islamic art” term by Ottoman scholars in the late nineteenth century. The introduction of the term “Islamic art” in museums is reviewed in the following subsection. The last two subsections first define the scholarly concept of “Islamic art” and then examine the objections raised by scholars in the field of Islamic art and architecture. This chapter is necessary to understand the implications of the shift in terminology in a museum context and to justify the usage of the term “Islamic art” throughout this thesis.

Chapter 2 looks at the formation and display of the earliest Islamic art collection in the Ottoman Empire, which was created in the late nineteenth century within the Imperial Museum (*Müze-i Hümayun*) in Istanbul (then Constantinople). The first subsection of this chapter provides a brief history of Ottoman museology with a focus on the development of the Imperial Museum. The second subsection concentrates on the different stages of the display of the Islamic art collection under the management of the Imperial Museum between 1889 and 1939. This chapter helps to understand the increasing importance over time of the earliest museum collection of Islamic art in the Ottoman Empire over time.

Chapter 3 examines the formation and display of the first Islamic Art Museum, *Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi* (Islamic Pious Foundations Museum, Istanbul), which opened in the Ottoman Empire in 1914 just a few months before the outbreak of World War I. The first subsection of this chapter discusses the reasons behind the creation of this new museum. In the second subsection, the display of the museum is

analyzed both conceptually and physically through archival documents, photographs, and reviews of academic journals and newspapers. The evaluation of the museum display in this chapter ends in 1925 when both the name and management of the museum changed under the new nation-state, the Republic of Türkiye (established in 1923).

Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi was renamed as the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts (*Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi*, hereafter TİEM) within the context of the new regime's strong nationalist discourses. Chapter 4 analyzes the shifting narratives of the display of TİEM when it was still located in the soup kitchen (*imaret*) of the Süleymaniye Mosque complex (until 1983).⁹⁴ The chapter is divided into two main subsections on the basis of chronology. The first subsection of this chapter explores the period between 1925 and 1939 until the closure of the museum because of concerns over World War II. The second subsection focuses on the period after the reopening of the museum in 1949 until its transfer to a new location in 1983.

Chapter 5 looks at TİEM in its new location, known as İbrahim Pasha Palace, a sixteenth-century Ottoman building located on the ancient Hippodrome just across from the seventeenth-century Sultanahmet Mosque. The first two subsections provide a brief history of on the new building and how the relocation was realized in 1983. The third subsection reconstructs and examines the conceptual and physical features of the first ethnographic gallery in TİEM. The following subsection focuses on the installation of the "Turkish and Islamic art" collection of TİEM to understand the changing display techniques and discourses of the collection after more than seventy years.

⁹⁴ Since the connotations of the term "soup kitchen" in the Anglo-Saxon world is different from the Ottoman context, I would like to clarify the term "soup kitchen" (*imaret* in Turkish). Soup kitchen or *imaret* is widely used by scholars of Ottoman history to refer to the imperial public kitchens of mosque complexes. The mosque complexes typically contained tombs, schools, a caravanserai, and a hospital and other dependencies like bath houses. A soup kitchen was a type of endowment where food was cooked and served to the poor and needy. In addition, the food was distributed to travelers, scholars, pious mystics, and employees working around and in the mosque complex. For detailed information on the socio-political role of the soup kitchen system in the Ottoman Empire see *Feeding People, Feeding Power: Imarets in the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Nina Ergin, Christoph Neumann, and Amy Singer (Istanbul: Eren, 2007); Amy Singer, *Constructing Ottoman Beneficence: An Imperial Soup Kitchen in Jerusalem* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002); Nina Ergin, "'And in the soup kitchen food shall be cooked twice every day': Gustatory aspects of Ottoman mosque complexes," in *Rethink Place in South Asian and Islamic Art, 1500–Present*, ed. Deborah S. Hutton and Rebecca M. Brown (London and New York: Routledge, 2016).

TiEM went under complete restoration and reinstallation in 2012 and reopened in 2014. Chapter 6 analyzes the exhibition of the newly installed permanent galleries of the museum to explain both the changing and constant display techniques and discourses of the museum. The first subsection of this chapter introduces the new architectural features of the museum building after restoration. The second subsection focuses on the display of the newly installed galleries of TiEM. This subsection is also divided into two parts according to the main exhibition principles of different galleries. The galleries, arranged according to chronological and dynastic orders, are discussed. Then, three thematic galleries, created for the first time within the museum's one-hundred-year history, are examined in detail to understand the motivations behind their formation. All the galleries are discussed based on their physical and conceptual elements, as in the previous chapters. Throughout this thesis, the museum display analyses are supported by a comparative approach. Various museum display examples—such as the British Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Museum für Islamische Kunst in Berlin, the MET, and the Islamic Art Museum in Cairo—are discussed within the chapters when possible.

CHAPTER 1

Overview of the Terminology in the Field of Islamic Art and Architecture

“The designation of new Islamic collections allowed for the display of a new category of objects without disturbing the time-space progression established by universal survey museums. The positivist organization of such European museums relied on a unique and hierarchical model for progress that would have been challenged by the presentation of multiple cultures, parallel in space and time, differing yet not competing in aesthetics and values. For an object to be displayed as Egyptian, Iranian, or Ottoman would have connoted its use in a locale with a secular history that could compete with the evolutionary model presented in the main body of the museum. Redefined as Islamic, the value of such an object came to be equated with an aesthetic practice assumed to span a wide range of histories, languages, cultures, and customs—indeed, perhaps to exist outside of time and even geography. In effect, by calling these objects Islamic, museums could render them external to time and place.”⁹⁵

As Shaw accurately points out in her prominent book *Possessors and Possessed* (2003), the field of Islamic art is a modern category created primarily by European scholars in the nineteenth century to categorize and study the material and visual culture of the Islamic world.⁹⁶ One of the earliest usages of the term “Islamic art” appears in a global art history book written in the 1840s.⁹⁷ Contemporaneously, other umbrella terms such as “Mohammedan,” “Muslim,” “Saracenic,” “Oriental,” or ethnogeographic terms were in use in publications, temporary exhibitions, and museum displays. The term “Islamic art” became widespread

⁹⁵ M. K. Wendy Shaw, *Possessors and Possessed: Museum, Archaeology, and the Visualization of History in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2003), 174.

⁹⁶ Stephen Vernoit, “Islamic Art and Architecture: An Overview of Scholarship and Collecting, c. 1850-c. 1950,” *Discovering Islamic art: Scholar, Collectors and Collections, 1850-1950*, ed., Stephen Vernoit (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2000), 2; Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom, “The Mirage of Islamic Art: Reflections on the Study of an Unwidely Field,” *The Art Bulletin* (2003), 153.

⁹⁷ Franz Theodor Kugler, *Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte* (Stuttgart: Ebner & Seubert, 1842), 393.

among scholars only in the twentieth century.⁹⁸ More than a century after of the establishment of the research field, the term “Islamic art” is still one of the least well-defined art historical terms.⁹⁹ Especially for the last two decades, the validity of the term—among scholars and curators—is highly controversial because of its flattening effect.¹⁰⁰ One of the most prominent scholars of the field, Jonathan M. Bloom, who uses the term in his publications, candidly states that:

“Nevertheless, after some forty years of studying and writing about Islamic art, I have come to the conclusion that ‘Islamic art’ is the worst term to describe the subject, except for all the alternatives that have been tried.”¹⁰¹

Still, most of the survey texts in the field of Islamic art and museum galleries use the term “Islamic art” as a section name. On the other hand, major museums including Islamic art collections, such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the British Museum, dropped the title of “Islamic art” after reinstalling their permanent galleries in 2011 and 2018, respectively. This chapter reviews the changes in the terminology in the field of Islamic art and architecture with an aim to understanding the implications of the shift in terminology in a museum context.

1.a. The Formation and Construction of the Terms “Islamic,” “Mohammedan,” and “Muslim” Art in the Second Half of Nineteenth Century

Before “Islamic art” became a dominant concept in the field after the 1950s, other terms were also in use from the nineteenth to the mid-

⁹⁸ Heghnar Z. Waternpauagh, “Resonance and Circulation: The Category of “Islamic Art and Architecture,” in *A Companion to Islamic Art and Architecture*, vol. 2, eds. Finbarr Barry Flood and Gülru Necipoğlu (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2017), 1201-1219: 1202; David J. Roxburgh, “Au Bonheur des Amateurs: Collecting and Exhibiting Islamic Art, ca. 1880-1910” *Ars Orientalis*, vol. 30, *Exhibiting the Middle East: Collections and Perception of Islamic Art* (2000), 32.

⁹⁹ Ania Bobrowicz and Sara Choudhrey, “Shifting Boundaries How to Make Sense of Islamic Art,” The Arts Society Conference, 25-27 June 2014, Rome, Italy, <https://kar.kent.ac.uk/44138/>. (No proceedings)

¹⁰⁰ Waternpauagh, “Resonance and Circulation,” 1202.

¹⁰¹ Jonathan M. Bloom “A Cultural History of the Material World of Islam,” in *Cultural Histories of the Material World: Cultural Histories of the Material World*, edited by Peter N. Miller (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013), 240-248: 241.

twentieth century. One of the earliest usages of the term “art of Islam” appears as a chapter heading “*Die Kunst des Islam*,” in possibly the first global art history book entitled *Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte* (Handbook of Art History), written by German art historian Franz Kugler (1808–1858) and published in 1842.¹⁰² Kugler’s book is significant, because he was probably the first scholar who included “non-European” (*außer-europäische*), i.e., Islamic art, into the universal history of art narrative.¹⁰³ Horst Bredekamp states the book of Kugler “[...] opened to view a history of world art that did not restrict the concept of ‘art’ to Europe, but described it as a possibility of all peoples.”¹⁰⁴

In 1842 publication, Chapter 12 of “*Die Kunst des Islam*” [The Art of Islam] is twenty pages long and placed in the third section, entitled “*Geschichte der römischen Kunst*” [History of Roman Art], probably because of its relation to antiquity.¹⁰⁵ Although, Oleg Grabar lists exceptions to the following generalizing statement in his prominent book *The Formation of Islamic Art* (1973), he states “[...] the monuments of early Islamic art fully belong to the succession of the vast empires of Rome, early Byzantium, and Iran.”¹⁰⁶ The first examples of Islamic art and architecture were strongly influenced by the artistic language of the preexisting techniques, styles, and forms of Greco-Roman, Byzantine, and Sasanian elements. Secular buildings such as the so-called desert

¹⁰² Franz Theodor Kugler, *Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte* (Stuttgart: Ebner & Seubert, 1842), 393; Eric Verfasser Garberson, “Art history in the University: Toelken – Hotho – Kugler” *Journal of Art Historiography* 5 (2011), 1-89: 3. For more information on Franz Kugler and his role within the field of art history, see Michel Espagne, Bénédicte Savoy, Céline Trautmann-Waller, eds., *Franz Theodor Kugler Deutscher Kunsthistoriker und Berliner Dichter* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2010).

¹⁰³ “Kugler, must be noted, was the first scholar to ever discuss the ‘außer-europäische’ within art history (*Kunstgeschichte*). Moreover, it appears as if Kugler uses the objective academic gaze while integrating Islamic art into the history of art.” Avinoam Shalem, “Dangerous claims: On the “othering” of Islamic art history and how it operates within global art history,” *Kritische Berichte: Zeitschrift für Kulturwissenschaften*, 40 (2) (2012), 71-76: 73.

¹⁰⁴ Horst Bredekamp, “Franz Kugler and the Concept of World Art History,” in *Cultural Histories of the Material World*, edited by Peter N. Miller (University of Michigan Press, 2013) 249-262: 250. “Among the first was Kugler, who made a comprehensive claim to understand art history as a universal human history of artifacts. His *Handbuch* is the implementation of this goal. The material and its iconology lie at the beginning of a development from which art history can be understood as a history of humankind and its disconnection from the animal kingdom.” 257.

¹⁰⁵ The following and last section of the book is entitled “*Geschichte der modernen Kunst*” (History of Modern Art).

¹⁰⁶ Oleg Grabar, *The Formation of Islamic Art* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1973), 208.

palaces of the Umayyads, the first Islamic dynasty, were the inheritors of Roman and Byzantine fortresses both architecturally and decoratively.¹⁰⁷ Even the buildings with religious functions—such as the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem and the Great Mosque of Damascus, dated to the late seventh and early eight centuries, respectively—were built and decorated by using and appropriating the vocabulary of the empires of late antiquity such as the Byzantines and Sasanians.

Other chapters (11, 13, and 14) located in the “*Geschichte der römischen Kunst*” are as follows: Chapter 11) *Die altchristliche Kunst* [Ancient Christian Art], which mainly discusses Byzantine art and architecture; Chapter 13) *Die Kunst romanischen Styles* [The art of Romanesque styles]; and Chapter 14) *Die Kunst des germanischen Styles* [The art of Germanic style]. Except Chapter 12 [*Die Kunst des Islam*], all the other chapters in the third section are made up of two subsections: *Architektur* [Architecture] and *Bildende Kunst* [Visual art]. Kugler uses a different approach for Chapter 12 and does not divide it into “architecture” and “visual art.” The following subtitles shows the structure of the chapter:

1. *Die Stellung der Kunst des Islam im Allgemeinen* [The position of the art of Islam in general]
2. *System der muhamedanischen Architektur* [System of Mohammedan architecture]
3. *Die Monumente von Spanien* [The monuments of Spain]
4. *Monumente in Ägypten, Syrien und Sicilien* [Monuments in Egypt, Syria and Sicily]
5. *Monumente der europäischen Türkei* [Monuments of European Turkey]
6. *Monumente in Indien und Persien* [Monuments in India and Persia]

The subtitles clearly demonstrate the usage of multiple terminology in a single chapter, such as “*der Kunst des Islam*,” “*der muhamedanischen Architektur*,” or ethno-national or geographical terms, which were commonly preferred to describe the visual and material culture of the Islamic world in that period. The term “*der muhamedanischen Kunst*” appears three times, whereas “*die Kunst des Islam*” occurs only once throughout the chapter.¹⁰⁸ He does not use the term “*Islamische Kunst*,”

¹⁰⁷ Barbara Brend, *Islamic Art* (London: British Museum Press, 1991), 22-32.

¹⁰⁸ Franz Theodor Kugler, *Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte*, First edition (Stuttgart: Ebner & Seubert, 1842), 393-414.

which is a mainstream terminology today in the world of German scholarship. The usage of “*Die Kunst des Islam*” is an unusual preference as a heading because there is no entry on the word “Islam” or “Islamic” in dictionaries of various languages such as English, French, or German until the second half of the nineteenth century. The term “*muhamedanischen,*” (mohammedan in English), which means the follower of the Prophet Muhammad, is simply used as a synonym for “Muslim” or “Islamic” by Kugler without any definition or explanation.

In the preface of the second edition, written in 1847,¹⁰⁹ Kugler draws attention to the fact that the knowledge of the field of art history is still limited and young.¹¹⁰ Therefore, it is not surprising to see major changes in the new editions of the book in the next years. In the third and completely revised edition, published in 1856,¹¹¹ Kugler states that the constantly progressing work in the art history field made this edition necessary, and it is essentially a new work.¹¹² The first volume of the third edition consists of eleven chapters, starting with “the origins of art” from the prehistoric times and finishing with a chapter on Islamic art; and it differs from the previous two by including images for the first time.¹¹³ The chapters are mainly arranged according to time periods, and

¹⁰⁹ For the bibliographic entry of the second edition of the volume please see footnote 14.

¹¹⁰ “Und allerdings liegt dieser Grund klar genug zu Tage: das Ganze unserer Wissenschaft ist noch gar jung, es ist ein Reich, mit dessen Eroberung wir noch eben erst beschäftigt sind, dessen Thäler und Wälder wir noch erst zu lichten, dessen wüste Steppen wir noch urbar zu machen haben; da wird noch die mannigfaltigste Thätigkeit für das Einzelne erfordert, da ist es schwer, oft fast unausführbar, ein behagliches geographisches Netz darüber zu legen und Provinzen, Bezirke, Kreise und Weichbilder mit säubern Farbenlinien von einander zu sondern.” Franz Theodor Kugler, *Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte* (Stuttgart: Ebner & Seubert, 1847), x. “And in any case this reason is clear enough: the whole of our science is still very young, it is an empire that we are only just now busy conquering, whose valleys and forests we have yet to clear, whose desert steppes we still have to cultivate there the most diverse activity is still required for the individual, there it is difficult, often almost impossible, to lay a comfortable geographical network over it and to separate provinces, districts, circles and delimitations from each other with clean colored lines.” Translation by the author.

¹¹¹ For the bibliographic entry of the third and revised edition of the volume, please see footnote 16.

¹¹² “So erscheint die dritte Auflage des Handbuchs als ein wesentlich neues Werk.” Franz Theodor Kugler, *Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte: Erster Band* (First volume) (Stuttgart: Ebner & Seubert, 1856), Dritte, gänzlich umgearbeitete Auflage (Third, completely revised edition), xi.

¹¹³ The headings of the three preceding chapters (8, 9 and 10) are: *Die Altchristliche Kunst* (Ancient Christian art); *Die reiche der Sassaniden und der Indo-Skythen* (The Empires of the Sassanids and Indo-scythians); *Die Kunst der Hindu's und ihre Ausläufer* (The Art of the Hindu's and their Foothills). This edition does not contain the section on “Geschichte der modernen Kunst” (History of Modern Art).

then each period is divided into two subtitles, *Architektur* [architecture] and *Bildende Kunst* [visual art], similar to the previous edition.¹¹⁴ Even though, Kugler again uses the period categorization method in Chapter 11, there is no subcategory for architecture or visual arts, as in the first edition. It is possible to see the reason for this absence within Chapter 11, where Kugler writes “*Kunst des Islam ist also in der Hauptsache nur Architektur*” [The art of Islam is therefore mainly architecture].¹¹⁵ As it is expected, the chapter on Islamic art was also revised and enlarged in the new edition. The number of pages increased from 20 to 46, including fifteen figures visualizing the historical buildings. In this edition, Kugler prefers to use “*Die Muhammedansiche Kunst: und die verwandten Gruppen orientalischn christlicher Kunst*” [The Mohammedan art and the related groups of Oriental Christian art] instead of “*Die Kunst des Islam*” as the chapter title. The contents of the chapter are as follows:

Bedingniss [Bedingen] und Charakter [Condition and Character]

Erste Periode der muhammedanischen Kunst [First Period of Mohammedan art]

Die armenische und südkaukasische Kunst [Armenian and South Caucasian art]

Zweite Periode der muhammedanischen Kunst [Second Period of Mohammedan art]

Vierte Periode der muhammedanischen Kunst [Fourth Period of Mohammedan art]

Die russische Kunst [Russian art]

This time, the author uses the “*muhammedanischen*” in a consistent manner throughout the subtitles of the chapter. Both the heading of the chapter and the shift in terminology—within 14 years—is a curious choice. It is quite unusual to find “groups of Oriental Christian art”—in this case Armenian, South Caucasian, and Russian art—categorized under the chapter on Islamic art.¹¹⁶ They were probably grouped

¹¹⁴ The previous version of the sentence Chapter 8 (*Die altchristliche Kunst*), mainly on the Byzantine art, was according to periods, similar to Chapter 11, however each period had two subtitles: *Architektur* (architecture) and *Bildende Kunst* (visual art).

¹¹⁵ Franz Theodor Kugler, *Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte: Erster Band* (First volume) (Stuttgart: Ebner & Seubert, 1856), Dritte, gänzlich umgearbeitete auflage (Third, completely revised edition), 338.

¹¹⁶ Survey books on Islamic art do not have similar kinds of categorization. The books after the 1950s are commonly organized according to material, typology, or dynasty. Gaston Migenon, 1907; Dimand, 1930; Rice, 1965; Ernst J. Grube, *The World of Islam*, 1967, Art of Islam (1971), Robert Hillendbrandt, 1999.

together because of the influence of Byzantine visual culture on both Islamic and “Oriental Christian” (Orthodox Christian) architecture.

As stated above, Kugler uses the terms “Islam” and “*muhammedanischen*” throughout the volume interchangeably in the first edition, and he repeats this pattern in this edition, too. Another similarity with the first edition is that the term “*muhammedanischen*” appears more frequently than “Islam” as an adjective. In addition to these umbrella terms, ethno-national terms like “*der indisch muhammedanischen Kunst/Architektur*”¹¹⁷ [the Indian Muhammedan art/ architecture] unsurprisingly, appear in the chapter. Kugler’s inconsistency of terminology continued over time. In the first volume of *Geschichte der Baukunst*, published in 1859, he went back to using “Islam” in the chapter entitled “*Der Islam: und die ihm anzureibenden Gruppen christlicher Architektur*.”¹¹⁸ However, this time he removes the word “art” from the title, because it is an architectural history book. He follows similar patterns in this book. Both the usage of terminology and categorization of the contents in *Geschichte der Baukunst* is like his previous publications. As Wendy Shaw stated, above the categorization of art and architecture on the basis of religion provides flexibility, to some extent, to art historians. Grouping regions or periods under the rubric of religion helps Kruger in writing a “linear” and “hierarchical” narrative of European civilization without the interference of non-European cultures which existed in parallel space and time.

Kugler’s publications served as a model for global art and architectural history books for other scholars.¹¹⁹ Therefore, Kugler was not the only scholar who used various terms inconsistently in nineteenth-century publications. Carl Schnaase, another prominent German art historian, published the first edition of *Geschichte der Bildenden Künste im Mittelalter* in 1844, where he devoted a section to

¹¹⁷ Kugler, *Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte*, 375.

¹¹⁸ The subtitles of the chapter are: 1. Die Grundzüge der muhammedanischen Architektur; 2. Arabien, Palästina, Syrien; 3. Ägypten; 4. Kairwan und Sicilien; 5. Spanien und West-Afrika; 6. Mesopotamien; 7. Armenien und die Kaukasuslande; 8. Klein-Asien; 9. Die europäische Türkei; 10. Persien; 11. Ostindien; 12. Russland. Franz Kugler, *Geschichte der Baukunst* (vol. 1, 1859).

¹¹⁹ Andrea Meyer, “Museums in Print: The Interplay of Texts and Images in the Journal *Museumskunde*,” *Images of the Art Museum: Connecting Gaze and Discourse in the History of Museology*, ed. Eva-Maria Troelenberg and Melania Savino (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2017), 93-110: 95.

Islamic art (including music) entitled “*Die muhammedanische Kunst.*”¹²⁰ Unlike Kugler’s *Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte*, there are separate chapters on Russian, and Georgian, and Armenian art in Schnaase’s book. The five chapters in “*Die muhammedanische Kunst*” section are as follows:

1. *Charakter und Kunstrichtung der Araber.* [Character and Art Movement of the Arabs]
2. *Die Muhamedaner*¹²¹ *in Persien und Indien.* [The Mohammedans in Persia and India]
3. *Die Araber in Aegypten und Sicilien.* [The Arabs in Egypt and Sicily]
4. *Die spanischen Araber und die Türken.* [Arabs in Spain and the Turks]
5. *Ueber den Geist der moslemischen Kunst.* [On the Spirit of Muslim Art]

In the preface of the 1869 revised and expanded edition, Schnaase states that the organization of the book sections remained mainly untouched compared to the previous publication. However, the section devoted to “the Mohammedan peoples” was reorganized under the same main heading according to chronological order instead of geographically.¹²² The “*Die muhammedanische Kunst*” section again contains five chapters, and they are as indicated below:

1. *Charakter und Kunstrichtung der Araber.* [Character and Art Movement of the Arabs]
2. *Erstes Auftreten der Araber. Syrien, Palästina, Aegypten* [First appearance of the Arabs. Syria, Palestine, Egypt]
3. *Die Araber in Westafrika, Sicilien und Spanien* [The Arabs in West Africa, Sicily and Spain]
4. *Muhammedanische Baukunst in Persien und Indien und unter türkischer Herrschaft* [Mohammedan Architecture in Persia and India and under Turkish Rule]
5. *Ueber den Geist moslemischen Kunst* [On the Spirit of Muslim Art]

¹²⁰ Carl Schnaase *Geschichte der bildenden Künste im Mittelalter*, Erster Band. Altchristliche und muhammedanische Kunst. (Düsseldorf: Julius Buddeus, 1844), viii-ix.

¹²¹ The author purposely does not change the spelling of this word purposely.

¹²² “Die Einteilung des Stoffes und die Folge der Kapitel ist im Wesentlichen dieselbe geblieben, wie in der ersten Auflage. Nur bei der Betrachtung der muhammedanischen Völker habe ich statt der geographischen eine dem chronologischen Hange der arabischen Kunst besser entsprechende Reihenfolge, ...” Carl Schnaase, *Geschichte der bildenden Künste im Mittelalter*. Erster Band. Altchristliche, byzantinische, muhammedanische, karolingische Kunst. (Düsseldorf: Verlagshandlung von Julius Buddeus, 1869), vii. “The organization of the material and the order of the chapters has remained essentially the same as in the first edition. Only when looking at the Mohammedan peoples I have a sequence that better corresponds to the chronological tendencies of Arabic art than the geographical one...”

Different from Kugler's publications, where there was a change in the main heading of the sections from Islamic art to Mohammedan Art and vice versa, there is no difference between the two editions of *Geschichte der Bildenden Künste im Mittelalter* in terms of the usage of terminology since "*Die muhammedanische Kunst*" remains a section title. However, even only looking at the chapter titles, it is possible to see that Schnaase also uses various terminology besides *muhammedan*, such as the expected ethno-geographic terms and an unexpected one—"moslemischen Kunst"—in the title of the fifth chapter. In addition, throughout this chapter, the term "*Die Kunst des Islam*" appears on the top of several pages (running headers) independent from the content of those pages.

The probable reason for the choice and more frequent usage of the word "Mohammedan" in the nineteenth and early twentieth century is because it was already a common term in the Western world at least from the seventeenth century.¹²³ It is easy to find the concept of "Mohammedanism" or "Mohammedan" in dictionaries—with its various spelling versions in different languages such as "Muhammedan" or "Mahometan." An early example of the classification of the material and visual culture from the Islamic world under the umbrella term "Mohammedan" appears in the manuscript catalogues of Sir Hans Sloane (1660–1753), who formed the founding collection of the British Museum by bequeathing his collection to the nation after his death in 1753. An amulet belonging to a Muslim slave entered his collection, and it was registered in Latin as "*Amuleta Mahumetica*" in the collection catalogue in the early 1730s.¹²⁴

Between the seventeenth and the nineteenth centuries, the term "Mussulman" appears in the same dictionaries where there is an entry on "Mohammedan;" however, the word is defined through the concept of Mohammedan.¹²⁵ For example, in *A Dictionary of the English Language* (1755), "Mussulman" is described as simply "a Mahometan believer,"

¹²³ Edward Philips, *The New World of Words or A General English Dictionary* (London: W.R. for Obadiah Blagrove, 1658); Elisha Coles, *An English Dictionary: Explaining the Difficult Terms that are used in Divinity, Husbandry, Physick, Phylosophy, Law, Navigation, Mathematicks, and Other Arts and Sciences* (1676).

¹²⁴ *The Making of The Albukhary Foundation Gallery of the Islamic World*, ed. Sarah Faulks (London: British Museum, 2018), 33-35.

¹²⁵ Edward Philips, *The New World of Words or A General English Dictionary* (London: W.R. for Obadiah Blagrove, 1658), link: <https://archive.org/details/39020024845789-thenewworldofwo/page/n5/mode/2up>; Nathan Bailey, *An Universal Etymological English Dictionary* (London: T. Ofborne, 1763), unpaginated.

and or even the word “Mosque” explained as “a Mahometan temple.”¹²⁶ There are some others which give a bit more explanation of the term, such as a dictionary from the 1650s which describes “Mussulmans” as “an Arabick¹²⁷ word signifying a people faithful in their religion, being an attribute which the Turks and Mahometans arrogate to themselves.”¹²⁸ Another one dated 1730 writes: “a Title which the Mahometans attribute to themselves.”¹²⁹

The term “Mohammedan art” continued to be used among the Western scholars for both temporary exhibitions and publication titles until the 1950s.¹³⁰ Interestingly, even though this umbrella term was not preferred for the permanent gallery displays in European museums, it was a popular choice in the early twentieth century for temporary exhibitions both in Europe and in the United States. For example, the earliest example under this title is an autumn exhibition entitled “Muhammedan Art and Life (in Turkey, Persia, Egypt, Morocco, and India),” which was organized in the Whitechapel Art Gallery in London in 1908.¹³¹ As one can see, the title includes geographic designations as well as the religio-cultural term “muhammedan.” Unfortunately, there is no further explanation about the choice of title in the exhibition catalogue.

Another example is the 1910 exhibition “*Meisterwerke muhammedanischer Kunst*” (Masterworks of Muhammedan Art), which took place in Munich. It was a turning point for the presentation of

¹²⁶ Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language vol.II* (London: W. Strahan, 1755), unpaginated. In the same dictionary the word “Mosque” is explained as “a Mahometan temple,” too.

¹²⁷ The author purposely does not change the spelling of this word purposely.

¹²⁸ Edward Philips, *The New World of Words or A General English Dictionary* (London: W.R. for Obadiah Blagrove, 1658).

¹²⁹ Nathan Bailey, *Dictionarium Britannicum: or a more complete universal etymological English Dictionary* (London: T. Cox, 1730).

¹³⁰ Zeynep Simavi, “Mehmet Ağa-Oğlu and the Formation of the Field of Islamic art in the United States,” *Journal of Art Historiography* 6 (2012), <https://arthistoriography.files.wordpress.com/2012/06/simavi.pdf>, 11; An early example of a museum publication is the *Catalogue of the ivory carvings of the Christian era with examples of Mohammedan art and carvings in bone in the Department of British and Mediaeval Antiquities and Ethnography of the British Museum* dated 1909. In 1933, the V&A published a catalogue series devoted to the “masterpieces” in the museum’s collection. The first two books of the series are: *Early Christian and Mediaeval and Renaissance and Modern* (1931). The third and last one is entitled *100 Masterpieces: Mohammedan and Oriental* (1930).

¹³¹ *Muhammedan Art and Life in Turkey, Persia, Egypt, Morocco, and India*, exhibition catalogue (London: Whitechapel Art Gallery, 1908).

Islamic art collections since it applied the concept of “masterpiece.”¹³² In this exhibition, objects from the Islamic world were displayed with an “unethnographic” perspective to position the collection “on an equal footing” with Western art. The curators of the exhibition explain the choice of the exhibition title in the catalogue as follows:

“The term ‘Muhammadan’ or ‘Islamic’ Art is appropriate insofar as it stresses the religious character of its unity. However, in order to avoid misunderstandings, the term ‘Arabic’ art—much as ‘Saracenic’ art—is no longer used in a general sense, but refers to the art of Middle Islam (Egypt, Syria, Asia Minor) in order to distinguish this group from the ‘Persian’ and the ‘Moorish’ (North Africa and Spain). Of course, a strict tripartite division is impossible because, as with the shifting political realities, influences of one school on another have shifted back and forth.”¹³³

According to Avinoam Shalem, the adjective “Muhammedan” was chosen to define the objects because it recalls the usage of the adjective “Christian.” Within the framework of this exhibition, the terminology indicates a seeming attempt to raise and equalize the position of the material and visual culture of the Islamic world.¹³⁴

Ottoman-born, Armenian-American archaeologist, collector and art dealer Hagop Kevorkian organized an exhibition entitled “Mohammedan Art” in New York in 1912.¹³⁵ Kevorkian gives a similar explanation to the curators of the Munich exhibition regarding the term “Mohammedan Art” in the exhibition catalogue. It reads:

“The term ‘Mohammedan Art’ is generally recognized as embodying artistic achievements of all times by nationalities professing

¹³² Eva-Maria Troelenberg, “Framing the Artwork: Munich 1910 and Image of Islamic Art,” in *After 100 Years: the 1910 Exhibition “Meisterwerke muhammedanischer Kunst” Revisited*, edited by Andrea Lerner and Avinoam Shalem (Leiden & Boston: 2010), 60; Susan Kamel, “Representing Objects from Islamicate Countries in Museums,” 48, 58.

¹³³ Shalem, “The 1910 Exhibition,” 8. English translation of the exhibition catalogue (1910); *Die Ausstellung von Meisterwerken muhammedanischer Kunst in München*, edited by Friedrich Sarre and Fredrik Robert Martin, exhibition catalogue (Munich: F. Bruckmann, 1910).

¹³⁴ “The use of the adjective ‘muhammedanisch’ clearly refers to a specific scholarly notion of defining the arts of the Islamic world as related to its messenger Muhammad, similar to the use of the adjective Christian when referring to art inspired by the religious teaching of Christ. This seemingly equal treatment of the art of the Orient emphasizes a shift in the perception of Islamic art, which no longer necessarily characterizes it as it relates to race, i.e. Arab, Persian, Turkish or Saracen art.” Shalem, “The 1910 Exhibition,” 7.

¹³⁵ Hagop Kevorkian *Catalogue of Mohammedan art, comprising a collection of early objects excavated under the supervision of H. Kevorkian* (New York: New York: Folsom Galleries, 1912).

Mohammedan faith, but the term, however, comprises a meaning of greater significance.

As Christianity caused the foundation of a new school capable of expressing in terms of art the conception of life contained in this new religion, so did Mohammedanism contribute to art a new freedom of expression, thus establishing a new form of art (Mohammedan Art), the power of which was indicated by the manner in which it adapted itself in the course of centuries to different races in the East and in the West, a fact that has been generally ignored."¹³⁶

The term was still popular in the United States during the 1930s as we can understand from the title of the first English survey book of the field of Islamic art, entitled *A Handbook of Mohammedan Decorative Arts*, written by M. S. Dimand (1892–1986) and published by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1930.¹³⁷ Dimand, referred to at the time as a the Near Eastern Art scholar, was one of the few academics within the field of Islamic art in the United States. In the second and revised edition of the book, published in 1947, “decorative” was dropped from the title, and it became *A Handbook of Mohammedan Arts*. A shift started with the 1910 Munich Exhibition from “applied” or “decorative” to solely “art,” as slowly reflected into the literature.

It is possible to see the beginning of the shift towards “Islamic art” in terminology in the 1930s in the United States by looking at exhibition titles and their reviews. The first professor of Islamic art in the United States Mehmet Ağa-oğlu (1896–1949), organized a temporary exhibition entitled “A Loan Exhibition of Mohammedan Decorative Arts” at the Detroit Institute in 1930, probably influenced by the choice of his colleague Dimand. An exhibition review entitled “Detroit Shows Precious Art of Islam,” states that it was “the first exhibition in this country to assemble all branches of Islamic art into a single comprehensive group.”¹³⁸ Seven years later, Ağa-oğlu curated another exhibition held at the M. H. De Young Memorial Museum in San Francisco. However, this time he preferred “Exhibition of Islamic Art,” as a title. A review of the exhibition entitled “Art of Islam” indicates the usage of both terms as follows: “[...] an imposing loan exhibition of Islamic—or in popular parlance Mohammedan—art.”¹³⁹ According to

¹³⁶ Kevorkian, *Catalogue of Mohammedan art* (unpaginated).

¹³⁷ M. S. Dimand, *A Handbook of Mohammedan Decorative Arts* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1930).

¹³⁸ “Detroit Shows Precious Art of Islam,” *The Art Digest* (1930), 11

¹³⁹ “Art of Islam,” *The Art Digest*, 11, 1 March 1937, 12.

this exhibition review, dated 1937, the term “Mohammedan art” was still a “popular parlance” in the 1930s. However, there was still no standardization of the terms. Both “Islamic” and “Mohammedan” were still in use, even in the same article, interchangeably.

Another term used to describe the material and visual culture of the Islamic world was “Muslim art.” As mentioned above, the choice of the concept “*moslemischen Kunst*” as a subtitle in *Geschichte der Bildenden Künste im Mittelalter* (1844) by Schnaase seems a puzzling preference because of the early date of this German publication. The first exhibition devoted solely to Islamic art was entitled “*D’art musulman*” (The Exhibition of Muslim Art), organized in Paris, in 1893.¹⁴⁰ The title of this exhibition caused controversy among scholars and collectors who were expecting to see a classification based upon races and nations such as the usual umbrella terms *l’art arabe* (Arab art) and *l’art persan* (Persian art).¹⁴¹

At least to my knowledge, one of the earliest usages of the term *l’art musulman* in France was in 1869. A blue, enameled part of an embossed copper cup was described as “*produit de l’art musulman*” in the visitor guide of an exhibition entitled “*Musée oriental*.” The term occurs only once within the catalogue. Apart from the term “*l’art musulman*” no other adjective was used to describe objects in this catalogue based on religion. The objects that would fall under the present-day category of Islamic art were classified under the umbrella term “Persian.” So again, it is possible to observe the confusion among of the terms.

The concept “*art musulman*” was used before the exhibition “*D’art Musulman*” in two well-known books on Islamic art, both entitled *L’art Arabe*, published in 1877 and in 1893 respectively.¹⁴² However, this universalizing category (Muslim art) was favored by scholars and became widespread after the “*Exposition d’art Musulman*” exhibition,

¹⁴⁰ Stephen Vernoit, *Discovering Islamic art: Scholar, Collectors and Collections* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000), 20.

¹⁴¹ Georges Marye, “L’exposition d’art musulman,” *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 10 (1893): 490; Stephen Vernoit, “The Rise of Islamic Archaeology,” *Muqarnas* vol.14 (1997), 1-10; 3; Vernoit, *Discovering Islamic art*, 32; Roxburgh, “Au Bonheur des Amateurs,” 16, 32. On the other hand, as was usual, the objects were labeled on the basis of their ethno-national or geographic origins such as Persian, Turkish, Arab, Algerian, or Samarkand, Bukhara in the exhibition catalog. *Exposition d’art musulman*, exhibition catalogue (Paris: A. Bellier, 1893); Roxburgh, 16.

¹⁴² Emile Prisse, d’Avennes, *L’art arabe d’après les monuments du Kaire depuis le VIIe siècle jusqu’à la fin du XVIIIe* (Paris: J. Savoy & Cie editeurs, 1869); Albert Jean Gayet, *L’art Arabe* (Paris: Ancienne Maison Quantin, 1893).

particularly in France at the end of the nineteenth century.¹⁴³ For example, the “*Exposition des Arts Musulmans*,” dated 1903, took place in the Pavillon de Marsan in Paris. Two years later, in 1905, “*Exposition d’Art Musulman*,” was organized in Algeria. Even two decades later, the appellation “*l’art Musulman*” was still favored by French scholars.

The term was also used in the museum context: a “Muslim arts” section was created at the Musée du Louvre in 1893. In addition, the first permanent room devoted to exhibiting objects from the Islamic world was opened in the Louvre in 1905 under the same appellation.¹⁴⁴ Two years later, in 1907, an important survey book *Manuel d’art Musulman*, written by Gaston Migeon and Henri Saladin, was published in two volumes.¹⁴⁵ This umbrella term continued to be used both for exhibitions and publications, especially in French, roughly until the 1970s.¹⁴⁶

1.b. Usage of the Terms “Oriental” and “Saracenic” in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century

“Oriental art” was used occasionally as a collective term to categorize the objects from the Islamic world, usually together with objects from the Far East. For example, during the 1860s, Persian, Indian, Chinese, and Japanese objects were being shown together as the examples of “object of Eastern origin”¹⁴⁷ in the Oriental Court in the Victoria and Albert Museum (thereafter V&A).¹⁴⁸ A museum guide of the V&A dating to 1870¹⁴⁹ contains “Oriental Court” and “Persian Ware,” “Hispano-

¹⁴³ Finbarr Barry Flood and Gülru Necipoğlu, “Framework of Islamic Art and Architectural History: Concepts, Approaches, and Historiographies,” in *A Companion to Islamic Art and Architecture*, eds. Finbarr Barry Flood and Gülru Necipoğlu (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2017), vol. 1: 52.

¹⁴⁴ Sophie Makaïou, “History of a collection,” in *Islamic Art at the Musée du Louvre*, ed. Sophie Makaïou (Paris: Hazan, 2012), 13.

¹⁴⁵ The revised edition of the volumes was published in 1927 under the same title and these manuals were the main consulting books in the field for almost more than fifty years. Ernst Kühnel, *Islamic Arts* (London: G Bell & Sons, 1963), 247.

¹⁴⁶ Exhibition catalogue, *Arts de l’Islam: des origines à 1700: dans les collections publiques françaises* (1971), 10.

¹⁴⁷ *A guide to the art collections of the South Kensington Museum* (London: Spottiswoode & Co., 1885), 31.

¹⁴⁸ Tim Barringer, “The South Kensington Museum and the colonial project,” in *Colonialism and the Object: Empire, Material Culture and the Museum*, eds. Tim Barringer and Tom Flynn (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 15; Rachel Ward, “Islamism, not an easy matter,” in *A.W. Franks: Nineteenth century collecting and the British Museum*, eds. Marjorie Caygill and John Cherry (London: The British Museum Press, 1997), 274.

¹⁴⁹ *A guide to the art collections of the South Kensington Museum* (London: Spottiswoode & Co., 1885).

Moresco Ware,” and “Oriental Porcelain” sub-titles on the contents page. Although, the “Oriental Court” contained objects from Persia, Japan, and China, the “Oriental Porcelain” chapter encompassed Chinese and Japanese objects only. Therefore, the term “oriental” seems to have been quite confusing for both scholars and non-expert visitors.

As mentioned above, in 1869, a retrospective exhibition entitled “Musée oriental” was organized by l’Union centrale des beaux-arts appliqués à l’industrie, established in 1864 in Paris.¹⁵⁰ The exhibition catalogue vaguely describes the displayed items as “œuvres de l’Orient” (works of the orient), similar to the V&A, and contains objects from China, Japan, Persia, India, Cochinchina, and Türkiye (*Turquie*).¹⁵¹ The exhibition catalogue was classified according to materials; for example, the section on objects made of bronzes contains two subtitles: “Chine et Japon” and “Inde, Perse, Etc.”¹⁵² Other than the catalogue, there is a visitor guide for the “Musée oriental” exhibition which aims to lead the visitor through the rooms.¹⁵³ According to this guide, objects that would fall under the category of Islamic art were displayed in “Room F: Persia” (*Salle F. Perse*). Although the name of the room is Persia, there were objects on display belonging to other Muslim dynasties too. For example, the copper and glass mosque lamps, which were most probably produced under the rule of Mamluks were on display in the Persia Room.¹⁵⁴

After 20 years, it is not surprising to see several canonical glass mosque lamps from the Mamluk dynasty in a display case entitled “Oriental Glass” in the new Glass and Ceramic Gallery of the British Museum, located in the White Wing in 1888, where the new gallery of Islamic art, opened in 2018, is located today (Fig. 1).¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁰ The current Musée des Arts décoratifs.

¹⁵¹ *Union centrale des beaux-arts appliqués à l’industrie : Catalogue du Musée oriental* (Paris : Au siège de l’Union centrale, 1869), not paginated.

¹⁵² *Catalogue du Musée oriental*, 35.

¹⁵³ *Guide du visiteur au Musée oriental*, 1869, not paginated.

¹⁵⁴ *Guide du visiteur au Musée oriental*, 1869, 36.

¹⁵⁵ *The Making of The Albukhary Foundation Gallery of the Islamic World*, ed. Sarah Faulks (London: British Museum, 2018), 35.



Figure 5. "The New Glass and Ceramic Gallery of the British Museum," signed by F. Watkins, London Illustrated News, c. 1888. Source: *The Making of the Albukhary Foundation Gallery of the Islamic World* (London: The British Museum, 2018), 35.

The catalogue of the Glass and Ceramic Gallery, published in the opening year, repeats this categorization by assigning cases 59 through 61 under the name of "Oriental Glass," with one case reserved for China and the other two containing examples from the Islamic world. They were sub-divided into ethno-national or geographical terms such as Persian, Arabic or Damascus, Mosul, Egypt, or Rhodes (which was a misnomer for Iznik pottery at that time).¹⁵⁶ As this example shows, ethno-national or geographic terms were used to classify the material and visual culture of the Islamic world under umbrella terms. Sometimes, regardless the origin of the objects, they were categorized under the umbrella term "Arab" or "Persian" art, especially in a museum context.¹⁵⁷ According to an art and archaeology dictionary published in 1885, "Arabian" or "Mohammedan" architecture were the synonyms for

¹⁵⁶ Augustus W. Franks *Guide to the English ceramic ante-room and the glass & ceramic gallery* (London: British Museum. Dept. of British and Mediaeval Antiquities, 1888), 16-17.

¹⁵⁷ However, some scholars such as a British writer and painter Henry Wallis (d. 1916) were against to labelling various regions and etho-nations under the single term as "Arab art." He supported the idea that each "...Muslim countries should bear the appellation of their separate nationalities." Henry Wallis, *The Godman Collection: Persian Ceramic Art in the Collection of Mr. F. DuCane Godman, F.R.S: The thirteenth century Lustered Vases* (London: published privately, 1891), 9; Roxburgh, "Au Bonheur des Amateurs," 32.

“Moorish architecture,”¹⁵⁸ which is no longer a valid description anymore. Even in the 1920s, this term was still in use, especially in sales catalogues such as “Oriental collection catalogues” published by the Ottoman-Armenian art dealer Hagop Kevorkian. There are several reasons why “Oriental” is not a popular term within the academia anymore. It was quite confusing and generalizing. The term contains too many various connotations, and it is difficult to be precise. With the development of the art history field, terms with such flattening effects fell into disuse by the scholars.

“Saracenic” deriving from the word “Saracen” was another term, which was in use both in publications and museums. One of the first users of the term as an umbrella category was the British Orientalist and archaeologist Stanley Lane-Poole (1854–1931), who was the author of the book entitled *The Art of the Saracens in Egypt*, published in 1886. The author defines the term Saracen “[...] as the universal designation of Muslims in the Middle Ages [...]”¹⁵⁹ He criticizes the usage of umbrella terms such as “Mohammedan” or “Arab” and explains why he prefers to use “Saracenic” as follows:

“The subject of the following chapters is what has been commonly known as ‘Arab’ or ‘Mohammadan’ Art. Both these terms are misleading—for the artists in this style were seldom Arabs, and many of them were Christians—and the general term ‘Saracenic’ has therefore been substituted.”¹⁶⁰

Throughout the book, Lane-Poole mentions various Saracenic styles such as Saracenic art of Syria, Egypt, Morocco, and India. Therefore, he uses the term “Saracenic” as another umbrella term to show the multicultural side of Islamic artistic production.¹⁶¹

Sir Banister Fletcher’s (1866–1953) well-known book entitled *A History of Architecture*¹⁶² (first published in 1896) is another example that uses the term “Saracenic” to define the architecture of the Islamic world. The fourth edition, published in 1901, went through a major revision,

¹⁵⁸ John W. Mollet, *An Illustrated Dictionary of Words Used in Art and Archaeology* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1883), 217.

¹⁵⁹ Stanley Lane-Poole, *The Art of the Saracens in Egypt* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1886), page v.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ Roxburgh, “Au Bonheur des Amateurs,” 32.

¹⁶² Full name of the book: *A history of architecture on the comparative method for the student, craftsman, and amateur.*

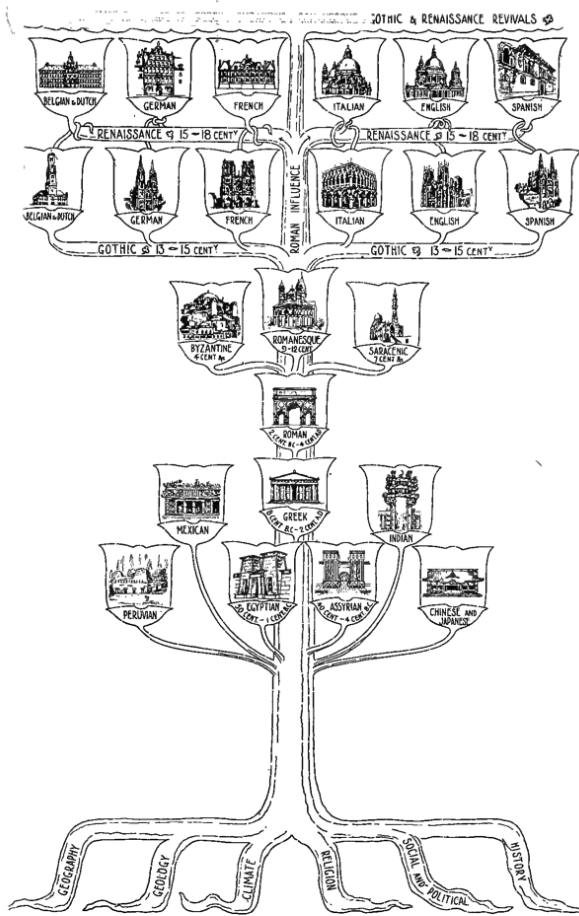
and the non-Western architecture was included for the first time. In this edition, Fletcher categorizes western and non-western architecture and coined the terms “historical styles” and “non-historical styles.” As expected, architecture from China, Japan, India, central America and Saracenic appears in the part entitled “non-historical styles.” Unsurprisingly, within the “Saracenic Architecture,” there are a few instances where the term “Mohammedan architecture” appears, probably because, unlike Stanley Lane-Poole, these two terms were almost interchangeable for Fletcher. At the beginning of the chapter, Fletcher first defines the “Saracenic architecture” and then explains the term Saracenic. It reads:

“Saracenic architecture differs from many other styles in being the product of a religion which had no special country. Differing widely in general treatment and in detail, the style was imposed on each country brought under its influence. The term Saracen was that employed by the Greeks and Romans for the tribes occupying the deserts west of the Euphrates. Its exact origin appears to be unknown, but it is generally taken as being derived from the Arabic ‘Sahra,’ a desert. The name was given to the followers of Mahomet, and is so used throughout this chapter irrespective of nationality.”¹⁶³

Like Lane-Poole, Fletcher also uses “Saracenic” as an umbrella term. On the other hand, different from Lane-Poole, Fletcher emphasizes the role of religion on the formation of an architectural style. The 1901 edition also depicts the infamous “Tree of Architecture” diagram showing “the main growth or evolution of the various styles” (Fig. 6). It depicts “historical” European styles and various cultural/geographical locations classified as non-historical styles, such as Chinese, Japanese, Mexican, and Saracenic. Unlike the historical ones, there is no room in the diagram to grow for non-historical styles. The non-progressive and solely decorative Saracenic architecture is placed as a separate entity and stuck under the “Gothic” branch.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶³ Banister Fletcher, *A History of Architecture* (1905), 653-654.

¹⁶⁴ Gülru Necipoğlu, “The Concept of Islamic Art: Inherited Discourses and New Approaches,” in *Islamic Art and the Museum: Approaches to Art and Archaeology of the Museum World in the Twenty-First Century*, eds. Benoît Junod, Georges Khalil, Stefan Weber and Gerhard Wolf (London: Saqi, 2012), 58; Gülsüm Baydar Nalbantoğlu, “Towards Postcolonial Openings: Rereading Sir Banister Fletcher’s *History of Architecture*, *Assemblage* no. 35 (April, 1998), 6-17: 9.



THE TREE OF ARCHITECTURE,
 Showing the main growth or evolution of the various styles.
The Tree must be taken as suggestive only, for minor influences cannot be indicated in a diagram of this kind.

Figure 6. “Tree of Architecture” Banister Fletcher, *A history of architecture on the comparative method for the student, craftsman, and amateur* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1905).

Fletcher’s *A History of Architecture* became a standard reference book throughout the twentieth century. It was revised twenty times and the last revision was published in 1996. It is a significant example to

follow the evolution of the terms used to describe architecture of the Islamic world. A new footnote attached to the headline “Saracenic Architecture” appears in the 1950 edition stating that “Islam is the name Mahomet gave to the religion he founded, and the architecture is also known as Islamic, Moslem, Muslim, or Mahometan.”¹⁶⁵ It points out the lack of nomenclature standardization in the field of Islamic art. Until the 1960s, the term “Saracenic” was used in Fletcher’s revised publications. In the 1961 edition, instead of “Saracenic,” the term “Muslim” started to be used.¹⁶⁶ Again, a footnote was added to explain the irregularity and change of terminology in the field. It reads:

“This style of architecture is known by many names: ‘Arab’ or ‘Arabian’ because it was first evolved by the Arabs; ‘Muhammadan’ (also spelt ‘Mahommedan’ or ‘Mahometan’) because it was used by the followers of the prophet Muhammad (or Mohammed or Mahomet), who found the religion of Islam; ‘Muslim’ (or ‘Moslem’) because those followers were called Muslims (or Moslems); ‘Islamic’ (for the same reason); and ‘Saracenic’, a name of Greek origin, applied by the Romans and afterwards by the Crusaders to the nomad Arab tribes of the deserts of Egypt and Western Asia. In North Africa, it is sometimes called the ‘Moorish’ style after the Moors; in Turkey its earlier stages are called ‘Seljuks’ and its later stages ‘Ottoman’, after Turkish dynasties; in India its later phases are called ‘Mughal’ or ‘Mogul’ after a line of emperors, all as explained hereafter.”¹⁶⁷

The dynasty names such as Seljuks, Ottoman, or Mughal were presented as if they mean the same thing as the umbrella terms such as Islamic, Mohammedan or Muslim. This definition is misleading and not valid in the field of Islamic art.

Starting in the 1980s, the term “Islam” started to be used in the revised editions of the book instead of “Saracenic” and “Muslim.” Apparently, the author tried to eliminate confusion about the terminology chaos. Therefore, in Part 3, entitled “The Architecture of Islam and Early Russia,” the author writes, “It includes all those buildings previously termed Saracenic, Moorish and Mohammedan.”¹⁶⁸ On the other hand, “Muslim” and “Islamic” architecture are used on the same page interchangeably.¹⁶⁹ More than 120 years after Kugler’s

¹⁶⁵ Banister Fletcher, *A history of Architecture* (1950), 934.

¹⁶⁶ In this edition, the historical and non-historical style division disappears.

¹⁶⁷ Banister Fletcher, *A history of Architecture* (1961), 1223-1224.

¹⁶⁸ Banister Fletcher, *A history of Architecture* (1987), 536.

¹⁶⁹ Banister Fletcher, *A history of Architecture* (1987), 552.

Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte, then, the architecture of Russia and Islam were again grouped under a single chapter. Although there is no explanation for this choice within the chapter, it was probably, again, the influence of the Byzantine visual culture on both Islamic and Russian architecture. The twentieth and the last revised version of the book was published in 1996.¹⁷⁰ In this version, Russia was removed from Part 3, which was entitled “The Architecture of Islam,”¹⁷¹ since this appellation had started to be the prevailing term within the field.

1.c. The Term “Islamic art” in the Ottoman Empire in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century

Although Western scholars have preferred various terms, Ottoman scholars almost always used the term “Islamic,” both for museum collections and publications. It seems like the term “Islamic” was a deliberate and collective choice among Ottoman scholars starting from the 1870s. For the Universal Exposition of Vienna in 1873, a trilingual book entitled *Usûl-i Mi'mârî-i Osmanî* (Ottoman Architecture) was published. The earliest known example of the term “Islamic architecture” (“*mimari-i İslamiye*”) was used by Ottoman scholars in this book, which was the first text written on the history and theory of Ottoman architecture.¹⁷²

In 1889, a regulation was issued by the Council of State (*Şura-yı Devlet*) that reorganized the collection of the Imperial Museum (*Miize-i Hümayun*) in Istanbul into six sections. A new department of “Islamic Fine Arts” (*Sanayi-i Nefise-i İslamiye*) was created as one of these sections.¹⁷³ Another archival document dating to 1894 states that there are enough objects and textiles to form a separate gallery of “Ancient Islamic Arts” (*Sanayi-i atıkayn İslamiye*) within the Imperial Museum.¹⁷⁴ After one year, the first gallery solely devoted to Islamic art within the Imperial Museum was opened in 1895.

¹⁷⁰ Dan Cruickshank (ed), *Banister Fletcher's A History of Architecture* (Oxford: Architectural Press, 1996).

¹⁷¹ This chapter was organized chronologically and dynastically with an addition of a “Vernacular Building and the Paradise Garden” theme.

¹⁷² Edhem Paşa, *Usûl-i Mi'mârî-i Osmanî / L'Architecture Ottomane / Die Ottomanische Baukunst* (Constantinople, 1873).

¹⁷³ Mustafa Cezar, *Sanatta Batı'ya Açılış ve Osman Hamdi*, vol.II (Istanbul: Erol Kerim Aksoy, Kültür, Eğitim, Spor ve Sağlık Vakfı Yayını, 1995), 548.

¹⁷⁴ DABOA İ.M.F. 2/46, H-25-03-1312 [26 September 1894].

Some objects from the Ottoman Empire's collection were requested for the above-mentioned 1910 exhibition entitled "*Meisterwerke muhammedanischer Kunst*" (Masterworks of Muhammedan Art), opened in Munich. Archival documents related to sending objects to the "*Meisterwerke muhammedanischer Kunst*" exhibition shows that the Ottomans didn't prefer to use the term "Muhammedan." Instead, again, the term "*âsar-ı İslamiye*" (*Islamic art*) was in use throughout the documents.¹⁷⁵ For example, a document related to the exhibition invitation to the Ottoman state described the exhibition as an "Islamic art exhibition that will be opened in Munich" (*Münihi'de küşad edilecek Sanayi-i Nefise-i İslamiye sergisi hakkında*).¹⁷⁶ Another document with similar contents repeats the description "Islamic Art exhibition in Munich."¹⁷⁷ The first Islamic art museum in the Ottoman Empire devoted solely to Islamic art collections, opened in 1914, was also named *Evkaf-ı İslamiye* (The Museum of Pious [Islamic] Foundations).

An Ottoman collector and dealer, Hakky-Bey, published a bilingual journal (French and Ottoman-Turkish) devoted to Islamic art named *Le Miroir de l'Art Musulman/Mir'at-ı sanayi-i islamiye* (Mirror of Islamic Art) in Paris in 1898.¹⁷⁸ Here, I would like to draw attention to the Ottoman-Turkish title of the journal, where Hakky-Bey chose to use "Islamic Art" instead "*Müslüman*" which is the direct translation of the word "Muslim." Although he didn't comment on the preference of the terminology in the journal, it seems like the term "Islamic" had become a well-accepted term among the Ottoman scholars. Another example that shows the preference for the term "Islamic" over "Mohammedan" is the translation of Stanley Lane Poole's book entitled *The Mohammadan Dynasties*¹⁷⁹ (1894) into Ottoman Turkish. Halil Edhem (1861-1938), a pioneer figure of Ottoman museology and the director of the Imperial

¹⁷⁵ A few examples from the Directorate of the State Archives Ottoman Archives (*Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı Osmanlı Arşivi*): DABOA İ.MF. 16/37, H-03-09-1328 [1909]; DABOA MF.MKT. 1149/68, 29 Safer 1328 [12 March 1910]; DABOA İ.MF. 16/1328 N-1, 13 Şaban 1328 [20 August 1910]; DABOA MF.MKT. 1169/89, 3 Rabiulahir 1329 [3 April 1911].

¹⁷⁶ DABOA İ.HR. 421, 1328, S-03 (18 Zilkade 1328) [1 December 1909].

¹⁷⁷ DABOA İ.HR. 421, 1328, S-03 (27 Muharrem 1328) [8 February 1909].

¹⁷⁸ Only two volumes were published in March and April in 1898. For detailed information on the journal see Deniz Türker "Hakky-Bey and His Journal *Le Miroir de l'Art Musulman*, or, *Mir'at-ı şanâyi'-i islâmiye* (1898)" *Muqarnas* (2014) vol.31: 277-306.

¹⁷⁹ Stanley Lane Poole, *The Mohammadan Dynasties: Chronological and Genealogical Tables with Historical Introductions* (Westminster: Archibald Constable and Company Publishers of the India Office, 1894).

Museum between 1910 and 1931, translated the book under the title *Düvel-i İslâmiye*¹⁸⁰ (Islamic States) in 1927.

The above-mentioned Turkish-origin art historian Mehmet Ağa-oğlu (1896–1949) was an exception among Ottoman scholars, who using the term “Mohammedan” for a short period. His education life started in Russia, and then he went to Berlin for his art history education. Completing his education, Ağa-oğlu established a prominent career in the United States as an Islamic art professor and a curator. In 1930, he organized an exhibition entitled “A Loan Exhibition of Mohammedan Decorative Arts” in the United States. Ağa-oğlu’s choice of terminology was probably an influence of his German educational background and his American colleague M. S. Dimand,¹⁸¹ who wrote the first English survey book on Islamic art under the title of “Muhammedan Art.” However, Ağa-oğlu dropped the term “Mohammedan” for his future exhibitions and publications and continued with the term “Islamic.” In addition, Ağa-oğlu was the founder and editor of *Ars Islamica*, the first academic journal dedicated solely to the history of Islamic art.¹⁸² It was published between 1934 and 1951. The journal was eventually not able to cover the expenses, and therefore the Freer Gallery of Art of the Smithsonian Institute in Washington took over the journal and changed the name in *Ars Orientalis: The Arts of Islam and the East* (1954 to the present).¹⁸³

No Muslim would call herself/himself a Mohammedan, since it means a follower of the Prophet Muhammed.¹⁸⁴ Muslims believe that they only follow the rules of the God, and the Prophet Muhammed is the messenger of the God. Therefore, defining a Muslim as Mohammedan would be offensive. Most likely, this was the reason why Ottoman scholars avoided the term “Mohammedan.”

Another reason why the Ottoman scholars collectively preferred the term “Islamic” was political, rather religious. In the late

¹⁸⁰ Halil Edhem (trs.) *Düvel-i İslâmiye: Tarihi Medhaller ile Takvimi ve Ensâbi Cevvelleri Muhtevîdir* (Istanbul: Milli Matbaa, 1927).

¹⁸¹ Maurice Sven Dimand was also influenced by German-Austrian art history. He was born in Austria and he did his PhD. in Vienna under the supervision of Josef Strzygowski. I thank Constance Jame for bringing this link to my attention.

¹⁸² Zeynep Simavi, “Mehmet Ağa-Oğlu and the Formation of the Field of Islamic art in the United States,” *Journal of Art Historiography* 6 [online version] (2012), 1.

¹⁸³ Semavi Eyice, “Ars Islamica,” *TDVİA* (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1991), vol.3: 395-396.

¹⁸⁴ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 280.

nineteenth and the early twentieth century, the Ottoman Empire faced the threat of nationalism and imperialism. Sultan Abdülhamid II (r. 1876–1909) used Islamic identity, emphasizing his caliphal status as a unified power within and outside the Ottoman Empire, specifically against the Arab nationalism and the Christian imperial powers.¹⁸⁵ The Ottoman Empire promoted its political identity as a leader of the Islamic world, by emphasizing the connection between Islam and the Ottomans. In an article dated 1895, the same year of the opening of the Islamic art gallery in the Imperial Museum, Halil Edhem, the assistant director of the Museum at that time, underscores the role of the Ottoman Empire as the protector of the Islamic world through the caliphate. It reads:

“At one time during the Middle Ages when in Europe and in Asia no trace of civilization remained, and knowledge and science had become nearly completely extinct, Islam and the Arabs appeared as a vehicle for the formation of a new civilization. The advancement of knowledge and science and literature and art spread across the world and the Ottomans were the inheritors of this with their acquisition of the caliphate.”¹⁸⁶

In addition, Halil Edhem states the dependence of Europe on the Islamic world, translating into dependence on the Ottoman Empire. Choosing the umbrella term “Islamic” for the museum collections, the Ottoman sultan wanted to avoid the problems of Arab nationalism and to diminish the association between Arabs and Islam. Moreover, as Halil Edhem points out, a direct link between the empire and Islam was wanted to be created. Therefore, instead of using national/racial or geographical terminology, the Ottoman state preferred to use “Islamic.” As Shaw points out, “the neutralization of difference promoted by a category of art designated as ‘Islamic’ supported the Ottoman cause as effectively as it did that of colonial European powers.”¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁵ Hasan Kayalı *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1919* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 35; M. K. Wendy Shaw, *Possessors and Possessed: Museum, Archaeology, and the Visualization of History in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2003), 172.

¹⁸⁶ Halil Edhem, “Müze-i Hümayun,” *Tercüman-ı Hakikat/Servet-i Fünun* 1313 [1895] (numéro spécial et unique), 104; English translation by M. K. Wendy Shaw, *Possessors and Possessed: Museum, Archaeology, and the Visualization of History in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2003), 176.

¹⁸⁷ Shaw, *Possessors and Possessed*, 175.

1.d. The Term “Islamic art” in Museums starting from the Mid-Twentieth Century

The term “Islamic art” eventually became more visible within the museum space, especially after the 1950s. Apart from the above-mentioned examples within the Ottoman Empire, the earliest usage of the term as the title of a permanent museum gallery was the “Department of Persian-Islamic Art” (*Abteilung der persisch-islamischen Kunst*) in the Kaiser-Friedrich Museum (currently Bode Museum), opened in 1904 in Berlin.¹⁸⁸ In the ground plan, dating to 1910, rooms entitled *Persische Kunst*, *Islamische Kunst*, and *Fassade Mschatta* are visible (Fig. 7).

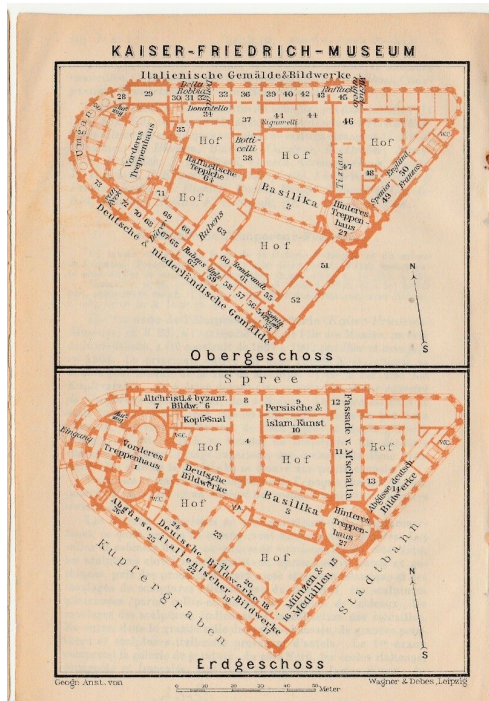


Figure 7. Ground plan of the Kaiser-Friedrich Museum in Berlin (now Bode Museum) in 1910. Source: *Berlin and its Environs*, fourth edition (London: Karl Baedeker, 1910).

¹⁸⁸ *Führer durch das Kaiser Friedrich-Museum* (Berlin: Druck und Verlag Georg Reimer, 1904).

This collection grew into a separate museum, and it became the Museum für Islamische Kunst (the Museum of Islamic Art, Berlin) in 1932. The term “Persian” was dropped from the title.

For the first time in the V&A’s history (almost after 100 years after its establishment) the Islamic art collection gained an individual permanent gallery space under the name “Islamic Art” in 1950. The gallery was reinstalled in 2006 and reopened under the name “The Jameel Gallery of Islamic Art.”¹⁸⁹ The curator of the gallery, Tim Stanley, stated “the definition of Islamic art used for the Gallery is not ‘the art of Islam as a religion,’ but the art of a culture in which Islam played a dominant role.”¹⁹⁰ On the other hand, on the website of the museum, the name of the gallery appears as “Islamic Middle East: The Jameel Gallery,” which is a recent modification. This change points out another shift within the field of Islamic art.¹⁹¹ In 1951, just one year before the Egyptian Revolution of 1952, the name “The Museum of Arab Art” changed, and it became “The Museum of Islamic Art.” The reason for this change is expressed in the museum guide: “[...] as [the museum] comprises objects of Islamic art produced in Arab countries as well as in other countries where Islamic art dominated, such as Turkey and Persia.”¹⁹²

The names of the galleries in the Louvre have changed from “Muslim” to “Islamic” in the 1970s. In 1971, a temporary exhibition entitled “Arts de l’Islam: des origines à 1700: dans les collections publiques françaises” was opened in the Musée de l’Orangerie. The exhibition catalogue explains the term “art musulman” was not used as the name of the exhibition because of its limiting meaning and its religious connotations. It reads:

“Quant à l’expression «art musulman», naguère encore usuelle, nous y avons renoncé parce qu’elle nous semble désigner au sens propre l’art au service de la religion islamique. Or la création artistique des peuples musulmans est loin d’être uniquement une création religieuse, alors même que la religion impose ses lois plus fermement qu’ailleurs.

¹⁸⁹ The Jameel Family was the sponsor of the renovation and the reinstallation of the gallery.

¹⁹⁰ Tim Stanley, “The Concept of the Jameel Gallery,” in *The Making of the Jameel Gallery of Islamic Art at the Victoria and Albert Museum*, edited by Rosemary Crill and Tim Stanley (V&A Publications, 2006), 59.

¹⁹¹ The author is not sure—and could not make it to London due to the Covid 19 pandemic—if the entrance label of the gallery has been changed lately or it is still the same.

¹⁹² Mohamed Mostafa, *The Museum of Islamic Art: A Short Guide*, 3rd edition (The General Egyptian Book Organization, 1979), 2.

Souvent elle n'est que profane et, ce faisant, néglige les prescriptions canoniques ou leur tourne délibérément le dos.¹⁹³

The British Museum had objects from the Islamic world since its establishment in the eighteenth century, and it opened its first gallery solely devoted to Islamic art in 1989 under its donor's name: "John Addis Islamic Art Gallery." Before this gallery was created, the objects were displayed in the Oriental Gallery.

New galleries or museums solely devoted to objects from the Islamic world continued to open in the second half of the twentieth century. For example, the Museo Nazionale del Bargello in Florence opened its first galleries devoted to the Islamic art, entitled "Sala Islamica" (Islamic Room), in 1982. Starting from the 1980s, an impressive Islamic art collection was formed by the Qatari government, and they opened a museum entitled "The Museum of Islamic Art, Doha" in 2008. The collection that Qatar has mostly belonged to other Muslim dynasties such as the Mamluks and Ottomans. Therefore, Qatar is also embracing the umbrella term "Islamic" to position the country within a broader Islamic heritage.

1.e. Defining an "Anomaly:" The Concept of "Islamic art" after the Mid-Twentieth Century

Although "Islamic art" became the dominant term in art history studies, it is still a confusing concept.¹⁹⁴ Looking at descriptions of the term in major academic publications, it seems like it is easier to understand what Islamic art is not than what it is.¹⁹⁵ For example, Mehmet Ağa-oglu, already mentioned as the first professor of Islamic art in the United States, begins to explain Islamic art with a comparison, which is still a common approach. In 1954, he writes "Islamic art, unlike the art of

¹⁹³ *Arts de l'Islam: des origines à 1700*, 10. "As for the expression "Muslim art," which was not long ago still common, we have given it up because it seems to us to designate, in the proper sense, art in the service of the Islamic religion. But the artistic creation of Muslim people is far from being solely a religious creation, even though religion imposes its laws more firmly than elsewhere. Often it is only profane and, in doing so, neglects the canonical prescriptions or deliberately turns its back on them." English translation by the author.

¹⁹⁴ Mirjam Shatanawi, *Islam at the Tropenmuseum* (Volendam: LM Publishers, 2014), 18; Jonathan M. Bloom and Sheila S. Blair, "Islamic Art," *The Grove Encyclopedia of Islamic Art and Architecture*, ed. Jane Turner (New York: Grove Dictionaries, 1996).

¹⁹⁵ Jonathan Bloom, *Islamic arts* (London: Cornell University, 1997), 5.

China, is a composite art. It is a manifestation of a civilization and not of a culture."¹⁹⁶ The notable scholar Oleg Grabar starts his definition by stating that "'Islamic' does not refer to the art of a particular religion [...]" in *The Formation of Islamic Art*, published in 1973.¹⁹⁷ Unlike Aga-oğlu, Grabar states that the term "Islamic" "[...] refers to a culture or civilization in which the majority of the population or at least the ruling element profess the faith of Islam."

Blair and Bloom state in the book entitled *Islamic arts* (1997) "Unlike such terms as 'Renaissance' or 'Baroque,' 'Italian,' or 'French,' Islamic art refers neither to art of a specific era nor to that of a particular place or people."¹⁹⁸ They define the field of Islamic art as an "anomaly" since "[...] it fits none of the standard categories of art history. It is neither a period nor a style, it is restricted to one country of region, and it studies things not normally considered art."¹⁹⁹ According to the *Grove Encyclopedia of Islamic Art and Architecture* edited by the same scholars, the current and basic definition of "Islamic art" appears as follows:

"The art made by artists or artisans whose religion was Islam, for patrons who lived in predominantly Muslim lands, or for purposes that are restricted or peculiar to a Muslim population or a Muslim setting."²⁰⁰

It means that the term encompasses a time frame of fourteen centuries—from the seventh to at least to the early twentieth century—and spread over three continents from western China to Spain at various points in history. However, this short explanation is not sufficient to understand what the term covers. Therefore, the encyclopedic article continues by stating that there were "significant" exceptions. There are many examples of artwork or architecture that were executed by Muslims for non-Muslim patrons. For example, a canteen, today in the collection of the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, dated to the mid-thirteenth century, produced with Syrian or northern Mesopotamian inlaid metalwork technique bears Christian scenes, which was probably

¹⁹⁶ Mehmet Aga-Oğlu, "Remarks on the Character of Islamic Art," *The Art Bulletin* vol. 36, no. 3 (1954), 175.

¹⁹⁷ Oleg Grabar, *Formation of Islamic Art* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1973), 1.

¹⁹⁸ Bloom, *Islamic arts*, 5.

¹⁹⁹ Blair and Bloom, "The Mirage of Islamic Art," 155.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 152.

commissioned by a Christian patron.²⁰¹ Another example is the so called “Aleppo Room,” which is formed with the painted wall panels of the entrance room from a house at the beginning of the seventeenth century, today displayed in the Museum für Islamische Kunst in Berlin.²⁰² The painted wall panels are executed in the “Islamic” fashion, which constitutes a composition of floral and geometric design in the traditional Ottoman style at that time. The patron of the room was a wealthy Christian broker who lived in Aleppo under Ottoman rule; therefore, Christian figural scenes and psalms were incorporated into the decoration. This example clearly shows how non-Muslim communities would have shared the same collective artistic language.²⁰³ Moreover, the material and visual culture produced by and for non-Muslim communities such as Jews and Christians who lived in the Muslim world can be categorized as examples of Islamic art.²⁰⁴ Mirjam Shatanawi summarizes this complexity and diversity as follows:

“As a category, Islamic art therefore may include both a wine cup used by an Arab nobleman and a Christian image painted by an Armenian artist under Ottoman rule.”²⁰⁵

1.f. Oppositions to the Term “Islamic art” since the Early Twenty-first Century

The concept of “Islamic art” has been—legitimately—highly criticized for several reasons by scholars, especially in the last twenty years. Yet, the term still maintains its canonical status because no satisfactory alternatives have yet been found.²⁰⁶ First, the adjective “Islamic” is found

²⁰¹ Jonathan M. Bloom and Sheila S. Blair, “Islamic Art,” *The Grove Encyclopedia of Islamic Art and Architecture*, ed. Jane Turner (New York: Grove Dictionaries, 1996), 99-100.

The museum inventory number of the canteen is F1941.10.

²⁰² [Annette Hagedorn, “Aleppo Room” in *Discover Islamic Art, Museum with No Frontiers*, 2019.](#)

http://islamicart.museumwnf.org/database_item.php?id=object;isl;de;mus01;39;en.

Museum inventory number of Aleppo Room is I.2862.

²⁰³ Necipoğlu, “The Concept of Islamic Art: Inherited Discourses and New Approaches,” 69-70.

²⁰⁴ Grabar states that there is Jewish Islamic art or Christian Islamic art such as Coptic art in Egypt after the birth of Islam since large non-Muslim “communities lived within the predominantly Muslim world.” Oleg Grabar, *Formation of Islamic Art* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1973), 1.

²⁰⁵ Mirjam Shatanawi, *Islam at the Tropenmuseum* (Volendam: LM Publishers, 2014), 18.

²⁰⁶ Shatanawi, *Islam at the Tropenmuseum*, 19.

to be highly misleading because of its strong religious connotations.²⁰⁷ As Grabar states, “for a vast proportion of the monuments have little if anything to do with the faith of Islam.”²⁰⁸ It is easy to categorize some objects or architecture such as a manuscript of the Quran or a mosque under the category of Islamic art since they may have been executed by Muslims for Muslims to use in a religious context. However, the term actually encompasses the so-called “secular” arts, since the majority of the monuments and objects were produced for non-religious and functional purposes. One can rightly ask what is Islamic about the above-mentioned example of the Aleppo room, which was not even designed for a Muslim patron, or a ceramic bowl from Kashan from the early thirteenth century—most probably used during a secular feast by a Muslim subject—which bears a figural decoration.²⁰⁹ A Muslim artist wouldn’t think of his work as “Islamic.” Why one should categorize an object or an architectural monument, which were designed for non-religious use, under a religious adjective? To solve this problem, the term, “Islamicate,” was coined by the American historian Marshall Hodgson in the 1970s. He defined the term as follows:

“[Islamicate] would refer not directly to the religion, Islam, itself, but to the social and cultural complex historically associated with Islam and the Muslims, both among Muslims themselves and even when found among non-Muslims.”²¹⁰

The term has started to gain acceptance, in particular among scholars who are interested in the intercultural adoption of artistic practices and forms that are rooted in the Islamic world.²¹¹ However, it is still not widely accepted. This aspect of the concept of Islamic art has been discussed since the 1970s among scholars, so today the term “Islamic”

²⁰⁷ Doğan Kuban, “Perspectives on Islamic History and Art” in *Faith and the Built Environment: Architecture and Behavior in Islamic Cultures*, edited by Süha Özkan (Lausanne: Comportements, 1996), 31.

²⁰⁸ Grabar, *Formation of Islamic Art*, 1.

²⁰⁹ The Museum inventory number of the ceramic bowl is C.85, which is in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum. The V&A Museum Website “Collections,” [accessed in March 2023], <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O85593/bowl-unknown/>.

²¹⁰ Marshall Hodgson, *Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, vol 1: *The Classical age of Islam* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), 59.

²¹¹ Finbarr Barry Flood and Gülru Necipoğlu, “Frameworks of Islamic Art and Architectural History: Concepts, Approaches, and Historiographies,” in *A Companion to Islamic Art and Architecture*, edited by Finbarr Barry Flood and Gülru Necipoğlu (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2017), vol. 1: 52; Blair and Bloom, “The mirage of Islamic art,” 153.

refers to culture rather than religion in the academic and museum context, for example, in the case of the V&A's Islamic art gallery.

The validity of the concept of "art" is also debated when used with the adjective "Islamic." At the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, it was possible to see terms like "decorative," "minor," or "applied" before the term "art." However, all these terms gradually disappeared from publication titles, such as in the example of Dimand's book.²¹² The term "art" remained in use, since other labels are not meaningful in the context of the arts of Islam.²¹³ There is no formal doctrine about the arts in Islam, and medieval literary sources of the Islamic world do not draw lines between the arts and crafts.²¹⁴ However, they clearly show the high appreciation of the artistic creation of work, both in terms of mental and material dimensions.²¹⁵ This ambiguity between arts and crafts is also valid for medieval Christian art in Europe and Byzantium, though, and for many other periods.²¹⁶ A prominent art historian, Gülru Necipoğlu, states:

"The post-Renaissance distinction between fine and applied arts found no counterpart in the Islamic lands, where architecture continued to be the predominant monumental art form, orchestrating the applied arts in the manner of a Gesamtkunstwerk (total artwork)."²¹⁷

Therefore, lately, the question of Islamic "art" or "material culture" has been raised among scholars. It is even possible to see the shift in terminology from art to material culture both in scholarship and the museum context. As mentioned before, after reinstalling and enlarging its permanent Islamic art gallery, the British Museum decided to change the title from the "John Addis Gallery of Islamic Art" to "The Albukhary Foundation Gallery of the Islamic World" in 2018. The curators explain

²¹² For example, the previously mentioned book *A Handbook of Muhammadan Decorative Arts* (1930) was republished in 1944 with a revised title *A Handbook of Muhammadan Art*.

²¹³ Avinoam Shalem, "What do we mean when we say 'Islamic art'? A plea for a critical rewriting of the history of the arts of Islam," *Journal of Art Historiography* 6 (2012), 8.

²¹⁴ Grabar, *Formation*, 77-78; Bloom and Blair, "Islamic Art," *The Grove Encyclopedia of Islamic Art and Architecture*, not paginated; Necipoğlu, "The Concept of Islamic Art," 72; Shalem, "What do we mean when we say 'Islamic art?'," 7.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 23; Shalem, "What do we mean when we say 'Islamic art?'," 8.

²¹⁶ Necipoğlu, "The Concept of Islamic Art," 72.

²¹⁷ Necipoğlu, "The Concept of Islamic Art," 26.

the reason behind this shift as follows: "Islamic art remains an artificial concept imposed upon the material culture of an enormous area."²¹⁸

Necipoğlu suggests removing "or" in between these two concepts and connecting them with "and," because both approaches would be useful to better contextualize the Islamic art field.²¹⁹ On the other hand, Julia Gonnella, the director of the Museum of Islamic Art, Doha, finds the term "art" more useful and easier to communicate. She points out that the concept of material culture is an invention of the nineteenth century, like the Islamic art, and a material cultural approach can be a misleading when interpreting incomplete material of the earlier periods. Therefore, she prefers the term "art," since it has developed into a "fairly universal denominator of global achievements, which can help to bridge gaps on a much more neutral and flexible basis than material culture."²²⁰

Another important criticism raised against to the term is its very broad coverage of time and space, which results in anachronization and homogenization of cultural practices in the Islamic world.²²¹ As mentioned before, the term encompasses material from the seventh to the early twentieth century and from China to Spain. The concept of "unity" in Islamic art was created by scholars to make sense of including such a broad time period and geographic area. Instead of focusing on a wide variety of cultural practices, scholars focused on the unifying elements in order to classify and easily manage the material and visual culture of the Islamic world. This discourse also coincided with nineteenth-century colonial and imperial perspectives. This approach is reductive and hardly explains different approaches or traditions within the Islamic world. Even though, the concept of unity was a product of Western thought, it was also well-accepted by some Muslim scholars, who have focused on the spiritual dimension of the production of the visual language of Islamic art and architecture.²²² On the other hand, especially after the rise of the nation-states in the twentieth century, such as Türkiye or Iran, the umbrella term Islamic art and the concept of unity

²¹⁸ Ladan Akbarnia et al., *The Islamic World: A History in Objects* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2018), 8.

²¹⁹ Necipoğlu, "The Concept of Islamic Art," 72.

²²⁰ Julia Gonnella, "Islamic Art Versus Material Culture: Museum of Islamic Art or Museum of Material Culture?" in *Islamic Art and Museums* eds. Benoît Junod, Georges Khalil, Stefan Weber and Gerhard Wolf (London: Saqi, 2012), 147, 148

²²¹ Wendy Shaw, "The Islam in Islamic art history" *Journal of Art Historiography* 6 (2012), <https://arthistoriography.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/shaw1.pdf>, 10.

²²² Shalem, "What do we mean when we say 'Islamic art'?" 11-12.

have not been, well-embraced since these discourses didn't coincide with the cultural policies of the newly-established countries: these nation-states were more interested in searching for the "uniqueness" of their cultural practices and turning to their Turkish or Persian roots, rather than the idea of sharing a unified Islamic visual culture. To emphasize the Turkish nationalistic discourses after the establishment of the Republic of Türkiye, the name of the Museum of Islamic Pious Foundations (*Evkâf-ı İslamiye*) was changed to the "Turkish and Islamic Art Museum" (*Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi*) in 1925.

After the 1950s, the concept of unity slowly started to be questioned by the scholars, since it was not accurate enough to explain the very different practices across time, space, and ethnicities. For example, in the article entitled "What Makes Islamic Art Islamic?" (1976), Oleg Grabar writes the following:

"...it is foolish, illogical, and historically incorrect to talk of a single Islamic artistic expression. A culture of thirteen centuries which extended from Spain to Indonesia is not now and was not in the past a monolith, and to every generalization there are dozens of exceptions. The glorious Selimiye in Edirne reflects an entirely different aesthetic from the one found in the mosque of Cordoba, and the Alhambra is not the Taj Mahal."²²³

As the field of Islamic art grew, especially during the 1970s and 1980s, the concepts of "diversity in unity" or "unity in diversity" appeared in publications. Today, these concepts have nearly lost validity in the scholarship and in the museum space. As mentioned before, the Metropolitan Museum of Art re-opened its permanent "Islamic galleries" in 2011 under the name "The Galleries for the Art of the Arab Lands, Turkey, Iran, Central Asia, and Later South Asia." Even though, the title is not practical because of its length, the curators of the MET decided to use it to indicate the diversity of the Islamic world and to deemphasize the religious connotations of the term "Islamic."²²⁴ On the other hand, the curator of the Islamic art gallery of the V&A, Tim Stanley criticized the new galleries of the MET. He points out that the

²²³ Oleg Grabar, "What Makes Islamic Art Islamic?," in *Islamic Art and Beyond: Constructing the Study of Islamic Art* (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2006), vol. 3: 247. (First published in *AARP*, 9 (1976), pp. 1-3.)

²²⁴ Nasser Rabbat, "The New Islamic Art Galleries at the Metropolitan Museum of Art," *Artforum* (2012), <https://www.artforum.com/print/201201/the-new-islamic-art-galleries-at-the-metropolitan-museum-of-art-29813>.

revolutionary approach of the museum does not go very far, since the wall label in the introductory gallery starts to describe objects and manuscripts as examples of Islamic art.²²⁵ In addition, the conceptual display features of the renovated galleries are still in the same manner of other historical Islamic art museums or galleries, which are organized according to same broad chronological and geographical categorizations in survey books of Islamic art.²²⁶ The Aga Khan Museum in Toronto, which was established in 2014, can be another example of how museums with Islamic art collections are reflecting on these criticisms. This museum completely moved away from any umbrella term and does not incorporate the term “Islamic art” into the name of the museum.

1.g. Concluding Remarks

Even though the terms “Muslim,” “Muhammedan,” “Oriental,” or “Arab” were used as synonyms of “Islamic art,” there was no single institutionalized terminology to categorize the visual and material culture of the Islamic world. Different terms were used interchangeably and usually without a justified explanation. Usage of various umbrella terms in a single publication or throughout the long career of scholars—when their careers cover a period from the second half of the nineteenth century to the second half of the twentieth century—was quite common.²²⁷ Especially after the 1950s with the institutionalization of the field of Islamic art, both academic publications and museum galleries adapted their names to the new conventions.

After a while, with the growth of the Islamic art field, criticism about the appellation has started among scholars. These oppositions gradually caused a shift in the titles of both museum galleries and publications.²²⁸ Rethinking the terminology and trying to find alternative solutions is an important step for the evaluation and development of the field of Islamic art. However, it seems that, to overcome the ambiguous

²²⁵ Tim Stanley, “New Islamic Galleries,” *The Burlington Magazine* (2013), 399.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*

²²⁷ For examples, such as K. A. C. Creswell; see Richard Ettinghausen, “Bibliography of the Writings of K. A. C. Creswell,” *Ars Orientalis* 2 (1957): 509-512.

²²⁸ For example, one of the major annual journals of the Islamic art field, which began in 1983, changed its subtitle in 1996 from *An Annual on Islamic Art and Architecture* to *An Annual on the Visual Culture of the Islamic World*. Gülru Necipoğlu, “Reflections on Thirty Years of *Muqarnas*” *Muqarnas* (2014), p. 4.

connotations of the category of Islamic art, it is not enough only to direct attacks and critical investigations towards the term itself. Therefore, some scholars, such as Avinoam Shalem, suggests a complete “rewriting of the history of the arts of Islam,” since it is strongly under the effect of western art historical terminology and concepts, which are misleading for the field.²²⁹ In addition, Gülru Necipoğlu, together with acknowledging the problems of the term, defends the usage of “Islamic art” until “a truly brilliant” or a “prizewinning” alternative can be found.²³⁰ To reduce the ambiguity of the term, Necipoğlu proposes redefining the concept with three initial, practical steps:

“The first step is to start thinking of Islamic art as a multicultural ‘civilisational’ category, just like Western art, instead of reifying it as the art of a religion or religious culture propagated by ethnologised peoples. The second step is to rethink the canon, and the third step is remapping the Islamic art field through chronological structuring principles.”²³¹

With the growing Islamic art scholarship and the reevaluation of Islamic art galleries in museums all around the world,²³² the meaning and the content of the term “Islamic art” is evolving. Although, the problems that come with the usage of the term are well-acknowledged, both in academia and in museum spaces, it seems that, at this stage of the scholarship, “Islamic art” is still a valid term and serves for the needs of both art historians and curators.

²²⁹ For further discussion on how these concepts and terminologies are affecting the study of Islamic art see Avinoam Shalem, “What do we mean when we say ‘Islamic art’? A plea for a critical rewriting of the history of the arts of Islam,” *Journal of Art Historiography* 6 (2012), 1-18, <https://arthistoriography.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/shalem.pdf>.

²³⁰ Gülru Necipoğlu and Finbarr Barry Flood, *A Companion to Islamic Art and Architecture* (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2017), 52.

²³¹ For further discussion on these steps see Gülru Necipoğlu, “The Concept of Islamic Art: Inherited Discourses and New Approaches,” in *Islamic Art and the Museum*, eds. Benoît Junod, Georges Khalil, Stefan Weber and Gerhard Wolf (London: Saqi, 2012), 64-67.

²³² Moya Carey and Margaret S. Graves, “Introduction: the historiography of Islamic art and architecture,” *Journal of art History* 6 (2012), 1-15, <https://arthistoriography.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/introgravesandcarey2.pdf>;

Most of the important private and public museum collections of Islamic art have undergone reinstallation around the world in the last fifteen years including the Benaki Museum, Athens (2004); the V&A Museum, London (2006); the Brooklyn Museum, New York (2009); the David Collection, Copenhagen (2009); the MET (2011), New York; the Louvre Museum (2012), Paris; the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art, Istanbul (2014); the British Museum (2018), London; and the Museum of Islamic Art, Berlin.

CHAPTER 2

Formation and Display of the Earliest Islamic Art Collection in the Ottoman Empire: from the Late 19th to the Early 20th Century

The earliest public Islamic art collection was formed and displayed in the Imperial Museum (*Müze-i Hümayun*) in the Ottoman period. A gallery solely devoted to Islamic art was created within the Imperial Museum in 1899. This chapter analyzes the formation and display of the Islamic art collection in the Imperial Museum both physically and contextually between 1899 and 1909.

2.a. A tool of Modernization: Brief History of the Imperial Museum (*Müze-i Hümayun*)

Ottoman museology, as a concept in Western sense, started with a reflexive and anti-imperialist character in the 1840s. Motivation to create a museum was both political and practical for the Ottomans. Establishing a museum was part of a wider modernity and Westernization reform “checklist” of the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century.²³³ The reforms contain cultural, intellectual, and educational reorganization of the Ottoman State. At first, the idea of forming a museum was driven by the desire to prevent the exportation of antiquities found in Ottoman lands by Western foreigners. The Ottoman state tried to find a way to turn down the request of foreigners who wanted to purchase antiquities for their countries. An archival document dated 1845 demonstrates probably one of the first formal discussions on the necessity to establish a museum among the ministers. It reads:

“...some advantages could be derived from establishing, under the glorious auspice of His Majesty the Sultan, a place known as a museum (*müze*), where ancient stones that are thus found in certain areas of the Imperial Lands would be placed and collected, that this matter could be

²³³ Ethem Eldem, “The (Still)birth of the Ottoman ‘Museum: A Critical Reassessment’” Maia Wellington Gahtan and Eva-Maria Troelenberg (eds.), *Collecting and Empires: An Historical and Global Perspective* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018), 258-285: 267.

handled in the future, and that after that, even if such requests should be made, it would evidently be easy to reject them,...”²³⁴

The starting point of museology in the Ottoman Empire is accepted as the rearrangement of an armory warehouse into a museum in 1846.²³⁵ However, the term “museum” was not applied to the institution until 1864.²³⁶ The Church of Hagia Irene, located in the first courtyard of the Topkapı Palace, had already been in use as an arsenal to store weapons since the takeover of Constantinople in 1453.²³⁷ In addition to the collection of ancient arms (*mecma-i esliha-i atika*), there was also a collection of antiquities (*mecma-i asar-ı atika*) in the Church of Hagia Irene. The antiquities collection was formed of mostly Greek, Roman, and Byzantine remains such as sarcophaguses, sculptures, and reliefs. In 1871, a very rough catalogue was prepared by the first director of the museum, the Irish origin British citizen Edward Goold,²³⁸ however there is no sign that there were artifacts that could be entitled as “Islamic” today.²³⁹ The prime display space in the vestibule, the main body, and the apse was reserved for the ancient arms. Antiquities were located into the lateral atrium of the church (Fig. 8).²⁴⁰

²³⁴ Ibid., 263. For the Turkish transcription of the archival document see Eldem’s article.

²³⁵ Turkish Republic State Archives, İ. HR. 32/1478, 2 Muharrem 1262 (31 December 1845).

²³⁶ The Imperial Armor and Antiquities collection took the official name of “museum” in 1864.

²³⁷ The Church of Hagia Irene was one of the few churches in İstanbul which was never converted to a mosque. Bilge Ar, “Osmanlı Döneminde Aya İrini ve Yakın Çevresi” unpublished PhD Thesis (İstanbul Technical University, 2013), 73.

²³⁸ Little is known about Edward Goold’s life. It is not known when he arrived in İstanbul. He was a teacher at *Mekteb-i Sultani* (Le lycée impérial de Galata Serai) before he was appointed as the museum director. After serving as a museum director in the Imperial Museum for two and a half years, he was dismissed and went back to his teaching job at *Mekteb-i Sultani*. It is not known why he was dismissed. Semavi Eyice, “Arkeoloji Müzesi ve Kuruluşu,” *Tanzimat’tan Cumhuriyete Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, vol.6 (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1985), 1596-1603: 1598-1599.

²³⁹ Edhem Eldem, “The Genesis of the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts,” ed. Massumah Ferhad, *The Art of the Qur’an: Treasures from the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts* (Smithsonian Books: 2016), 119-139: 124.

²⁴⁰ Wendy M. K. Shaw, *Possessors and possessed: museums, archaeology, and the visualization of history in the late Ottoman Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 49; Edhem Eldem, “The Genesis of the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts,” 123.

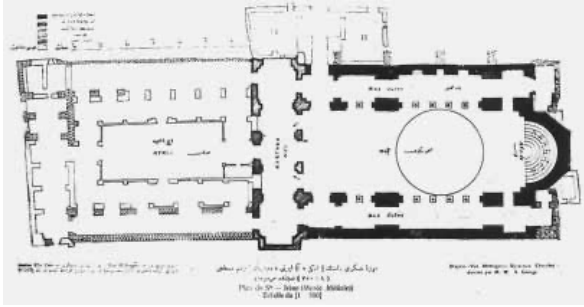


Figure 8. Hagia Irene's ground plan. Source: Sermed Muhtar [Alus], *Topkapı Sarayı Hümayunu Meydanında Kkâ'ın Müze-i Askeri-i Osmani Züvvarına Mahsus Rehber* (Istanbul: Necm-i Istikbal Matbaası, 1336/1920).

Starting from the late eighteenth century, military reforms took place in the Ottoman Empire until the nineteenth century. One of the most dramatic transitions was the replacement of the centuries-old Janissary corps with a modern army in 1826. Among the display of ancient arms in the museum at stake there were Janissary costumes placed on wooden mannequins. In 1850, French novelist Gustave Flaubert (1821-1880) visited the museum, and he shared his experience in *Voyages*. His account reads:

“Nice hall of arms with a dome, vaulted, with simple naves of fusillages in a bad state; on the ceiling, in the upper story, ancient arms and of an inestimable value, damasquined Persian caps, coats of arms, for the most part communal, huge Norman two-handed spears [. . .]. The sword of Mohammad, right, large and flexible like a whalebone, the scabbard covered with green leather; everybody took it and brandished it, except for me. They also showed us, under glass, the keys of cities taken by the sultans. [...] [A]ll the fantastic and heavy artillery of the past.”²⁴¹

²⁴¹ M.K. Wendy Shaw, *Possessors and Possessed: Museums, Archaeology, and the Visualization of History in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2003), 50. “— Arsenal dans l'ancienne église Saint-Irène. — Belle salle d'armes en dôme, vouûtée, avec nefs pleines de fusils en mauvais état ; au fond, à l'étage supérieur, armes anciennes et d'un prix inestimable, casques persans damasquinés, cottes de mailles, communes la plupart, grandes épées normandes à deux mains. — Sabre de Mahomet, droit, large et flexible comme une baleine, la garde recouverte d'une couverture en peau verte ; tout le monde l'a prise et brandie, moi seul excepté. — On nous montre aussi, sous verre, les clefs des villes prises par les sultans. — Vieilles espingoles à bois usé, noir, colutté, tromblons épatés, toute l'artillerie fantastique et lourde d'autrefois.” Gustave Flaubert, *Oeuvres complètes: Voyages* (Paris: Société des Belles Lettres, 1948), vol. 2, 331. Faubert refers to Sultan Mehmed II, who captured Constantinople.

The museum was projecting a distanced but glorious Ottoman history, which was equal to the military success. Military relics such as the chain commemorating the conquest of Constantinople were on display next to ancient sarcophaguses or the keys of the cities taken over by the sultans.

Need for a bigger space appeared due to the increasing number of ancient artifacts and the decision to move from the overcrowded church was made in 1872. However, the transfer of the collection of antiquities to their new location, the *Çinili Köşk* (the Tiled Kiosk), was only possible after 8 years. The *Çinili Köşk* is a tile-covered kiosk in Persianate style, executed during the sultanate of Mehmed II in the fifteenth century. It is located in the outer garden of the Topkapı Palace and is one of the oldest structures within the palace complex. Although the *Çinili Köşk* was accepted as an authentic example of national architecture, it was heavily restored. The interior walls were white-washed, and a double staircase was added to the façade of the building which can be seen in Figure 9. During the opening ceremony in August 1880, the minister of education Münif Pasha (1828-1910) emphasized the importance of the building and why it was chosen as the new location:

“The building where we gathered today is in itself an ancient monument. It dates back to the glorious reign of Sultan Mohammed Khan II, the Conquer, and constitutes a beautiful example of the ancient architecture of the time. For this reason, its selection as a museum is a most auspicious event.”²⁴²



Figure 9. Photo of the *Çinili Köşk* (Tiled Pavilion) from 1892. Source: Edhem Eldem, “The Genesis of the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts,” ed. Massumah Ferhad, *The Art of the Qur’an: Treasures from the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts* (Smithsonian Books: 2016), 119-139: 124.

²⁴² “Inauguration du Musée impérial.” *La Turquie*, August 19, 1880. English translation of the article was taken from Edhem Eldem, “The Genesis of the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts,” 125.

German historian, archaeologist, philologist, and painter Philipp Anton Dethier²⁴³ (1803–1881) was the second director of the Imperial Museum. Following his death, Osman Hamdi Bey (1842–1910) became the third but—the first Muslim—Ottoman director of the Imperial Museum in 1881. Osman Hamdi is considered the founder of the Turkish museology, along with his brother Halil Edhem [Eldem] (1861–1938), whom I will mention in detail in the following paragraphs. Osman Hamdi and Halil Edhem were the sons of an Ottoman bureaucrat, Ibrahim Edhem Pasha (1818–1893), who served as an ambassador, a minister, and the prime minister (grand vizier) for some time. Ibrahim Edhem Pasha was one of the first Ottoman students sent to Paris for education as part of Ottoman modernization. After learning French in *L'Institution Barbet*, he studied geology in *École des Mines* (today known as *École Nationale Supérieure des Mines de Paris*) and became a mining engineer.²⁴⁴ Like his father, Osman Hamdi was also educated in Paris. Although he was sent to study law, Osman Hamdi focused on painting. He was educated in the *Paris Ecole des Beaux Arts* and took lessons in the ateliers of the Orientalist painters like Jean-Leon Gerome (1824–1902) and Boulanger (1824–1888). He stayed twelve years in Paris and returned to Istanbul in 1869.

Osman Hamdi was a multifaceted and influential intellectual figure of his time who had close relations with Europe. He was a painter, bureaucrat, museum director, and representative of the Ottoman elite. Before being appointed as the director of the Imperial Museum in Istanbul, Osman Hamdi worked as an Ottoman officer in various bureaucratic positions. For example, he was the exhibition commissioner of the Ottoman pavilion in the Vienna Exhibition of 1873. In addition, he took part in the formation and implementation of the first antiquities law in 1874 (*Asar-ı Atika Nizamnamesi*). This law was revised and extended by him in the following years, and it was in use until the 1970s in the Republic of Türkiye. Osman Hamdi is also known as an archaeologist

²⁴³ For detailed information on Dethier's life and work see Meltem Begüm Saatçi Ata "Müze-i Hümayun Müdürü Dr. Philipp Anton Dethier'nin Osmanlı Maarif Nazırları Dönemindeki (1872-1881) Faaliyetleri Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme," *Belgi Dergisi* 21 (2021), 459-482: 466.

²⁴⁴ Salih Erol, "İstanbul'dan Paris'e Gönderilen İlk Osmanlı Talebelerinden Edhem Efendi'nin Eğitim Hayatı," *İçtimaiyat Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* (2019) year 3, no.1, 53-69: 62. For detailed information on Ibrahim Edhem Pasha see his bibliography by Salih Erol, *XIX. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Devlet Adamlarından İbrahim Edhem Paşa* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2021).

because following his appointment as the director in 1881, he led the archaeological excavations of the museum thanks to the practical experience he acquired in the field of archaeology. Therefore, he was not only a prominent museum scholar but also a leading figure on cultural heritage management in the Ottoman Empire.

Osman Hamdi served the Ottoman museums for thirty years. His tenure in the Imperial Museum lasted until his death in 1910. Osman Hamdi's first aim was to scientifically classify the collection and organize the display according to the modern museum standards. Right after he became the director in 1881, French archaeologist Salomon Reinach (1858–1932) was invited to museum to classify and catalogue the collection. With his archaeology knowledge Reinach became an informal teacher and mentor for Osman Hamdi. Although Reinach strongly criticized and opposed the 1884 Ottoman Antiquities Law, revised for the third time by Osman Hamdi to protect the rights of the Ottoman State, these two scholars established a life-long friendship.

According to Reinach, after the death of previous Imperial Museum director Dethier, the museum collection displayed in the Çinili Köşk was in a messy condition.²⁴⁵ Reinach prepared *Catalogue du Musée Impérial d'Antiquités* (1882) for the "general public" (*grand public*) to promote the museum and its collection.²⁴⁶ As the catalogue shows there was no object that can be categorized as Islamic art at that time within the museum. The collection of the Imperial Museum started to be formed rather unsystematically. At first, antiquities were mainly collected from aboveground remains and various archaeological digs conducted by foreign states like Germany, France, and the United Kingdom. According to this catalogue, the museum collections were categorized without a clear strategy (Fig. 10). The classification was established through various elements such as civilization, geography, medium or typology under seven titles, as follows:

²⁴⁵ Edhem Eldem, *Osman Hamdi Bey Sözlüğü* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 2010), 444. Salomon Reinach, "Hamdi Bey," *Revue Archéologique, quatrième série*, t. VX (janvier-juin 1910), 407-413: 409.

²⁴⁶ "Le présent catalogue, étant surtout destiné au grand public, ne contiendra pas de discussions scientifiques sur les problèmes que cette collection soulève, et laissera de côté, les objets mutilés ou intéressants seulement pour les spécialistes. Nous y indiquerons la provenance des différents objets, toutes les fois qu'il nous aura été possible de la découvrir à l'aide des inventaires manuscrits du Musée." Salomon Reinach, *Catalogue du Musée Impérial d'Antiquités* (Constantinople: Levant Times, 1882), 7.

- I. Antiquités de L'Égypte et de L'Assyrie
- II. Statues Grecques et Gréco-Romaines
- III. Antiquités Chypriotes
- IV. Objets Byzantins et du Moyen-Âge
- V. Bronzes et Bijoux
- VI. Céramique Vases et terres cuites Verreries
(Objets Placés dans les Armoires, Salle des Bronzes, Salle des bas-reliefs Funéraires, Salle Égyptienne, Salle du Prêtre de Sylvain)
- VII. Inscriptions (Grec, Latin, Chypriote, Himyarite, Assyrien, Égypte)



Figure 10. View of the interior of the Çinili Köşk showing a statue from Cyme and Egyptian objects, ca 1892. Sebah & Joaillier studio album prints, INHA library, Paris. Source: Edhem Eldem, "The Genesis of the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts," ed. Massumah Ferhad, *The Art of the Qur'an: Treasures from the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts* (Smithsonian Books: 2016), 119-139: 128.

Another innovation that happened during his management was the opening of a fine arts school under the directorship of Osman Hamdi. Establishing a boutique school next to the museum building that would provide education on antiquities and coins for twelve students was discussed for several years; however it was never realized, mainly due to the war (between Russia and the Ottoman Empire) and financial reasons.²⁴⁷ The fine arts school, entitled "*Sanâyi-i Nefîse Mektebi*" under

²⁴⁷ Mustafa Cezar, *Sanatta Batıya Açılış* (Istanbul: Erol Kerim Aksoy Kültür, Eğitim, Spor ve Sağlık Vakfı, 1995), 182. BOA, Y. EE. 41/160; (Müze-i Hümayun mektebi); Mehmet Şahin,

the management of the museum was opened in 1883 as an initiative of the Ministry of Commerce (*Ticaret Nezareti*) with the aim of improving national art, culture, and heritage.²⁴⁸ Three years later, in 1886, both the school and the museum were placed under the Ministry of Education. The management history of the fine arts school recalls the first School of Design in London which became a part of the South Kensington Museum (now the V&A). In 1837, the School of Design was founded “[...] to stimulate trade by making articles of commerce more artistic [...]” and managed by the Board of Trade.²⁴⁹ In 1856, the management of the School of Design was given to the Council of the Education Department in 1856.²⁵⁰

Sanâyi-i Nefise Mektebi evolved into the University of Fine Arts during the republican period. The education system and curriculum of the school was based on the model of the *Paris École des Beaux-Arts*. This is not surprising, since Osman Hamdi was responsible for the organization of the education model of the school. The school was formed of four departments: Painting, sculpture, architecture, and engraving. The earliest available curriculum document, dated 1898, shows that history, art history, perspective, anatomy, arithmetic, and geometry were some of the compulsory courses.²⁵¹ Osman Hamdi was also influential for establishing branches of the Imperial Museum in other cities around the Ottoman Empire such as Bursa, Konya, İzmir, and Edirne.²⁵²

In accord with the ever-increasing numbers of collection in the late nineteenth century—thanks to archaeological digs—the need for a bigger museum space emerged. The new museum building was designed in the Neoclassical style by the Levantine architect Alexandre Vallaury (1850–1921), who studied at the *Ecole des Beaux Arts* in Paris.

“Osmanlı’da Cumhuriyet’e Müzecilik 1846-1938,” unpublished MA thesis (Ankara: Hacettepe University, 2019), 91.

²⁴⁸ Fatma Ürekli, “Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi’nin Kuruluşu ve Türk Eğitim Tarihindeki Yeri,” unpublished PhD. dissertation (Istanbul: Istanbul University, 1997), 103–6; Nilay Özlü, “From Imperial Palace to Museum: The Topkapı Palace During the Long Nineteenth Century,” unpublished PhD thesis (Istanbul: Boğaziçi University, 2018), 289.

²⁴⁹ *Victoria and Albert Museum. General Guide to the Collections (With plans & 45 illustrations.)* (London: Printed Under the Direction of His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1914), 106.

²⁵⁰ *Victoria and Albert Museum. General Guide to the Collections (With plans & 45 illustrations.)* (London: Printed Under the Direction of His Majesty’s Stationary Office, 1914), 106.

²⁵¹ Özge Gençel, “Contemporary artists İstanbul exhibition: 1980-2011,” unpublished PhD. Thesis (Ankara: Hacettepe University, 2021), 72, 82.

²⁵² Mehmet Şahin, “Osmanlı’da Cumhuriyet’e Müzecilik 1846-1938,” unpublished MA thesis (Ankara: Hacettepe University, 2019), 98.

The museum collections, particularly the Sarcophagus of the Mourning Women, inspired the architect (Figures 11 and 12).²⁵³



Figure 11. Sarcophagus of the Mourning Women (374-358 BC), stonework, Sidon. Source: "Sarcophagus of the mourning women" in "Sharing History," Museum With No Frontiers (MNWF) Website, 2023.



Figure 12. View of the new museum building, ca 1892. Sebah & Joaillier studio albumen prints, INHA library, Paris. Source: Ethem Eldem, *Mendel-Sebah: Miize-i Hümayun'u Belgelemek/Mendel-Sebah: Documenting the Imperial Museum* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2011), 40-41.

The museum was built in 1887–1889 but opened in 1891. Shortly after the construction of the new building once again the space became inadequate. Therefore, additional buildings were constructed to the right and left sides of the first building in the following years. The second extension to the north was built in 1905 and the construction of the third extension to the south completed in 1908.²⁵⁴ The art and literature journal *Servet-i Fünun*, published between 1891 and 1944, shows the ground plan of the Imperial Museum (*Miize-i Hümayun*) in 1904, when the buildings were under construction (Fig. 14).²⁵⁵ Today, this museum is known as the Istanbul Archaeological Museums (*İstanbul Arkeoloji Müzeleri*).

²⁵³ Zeynep Çelik, *About Antiquities: Politics of Archaeology in the Ottoman Empire* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2016), 14.

²⁵⁴ Çelik, *About Antiquities*, 14-15.

²⁵⁵ *Servet-i Fünun* [Year 13] 26, no. 676 [25 Mart 1320/ April 7, 1904].

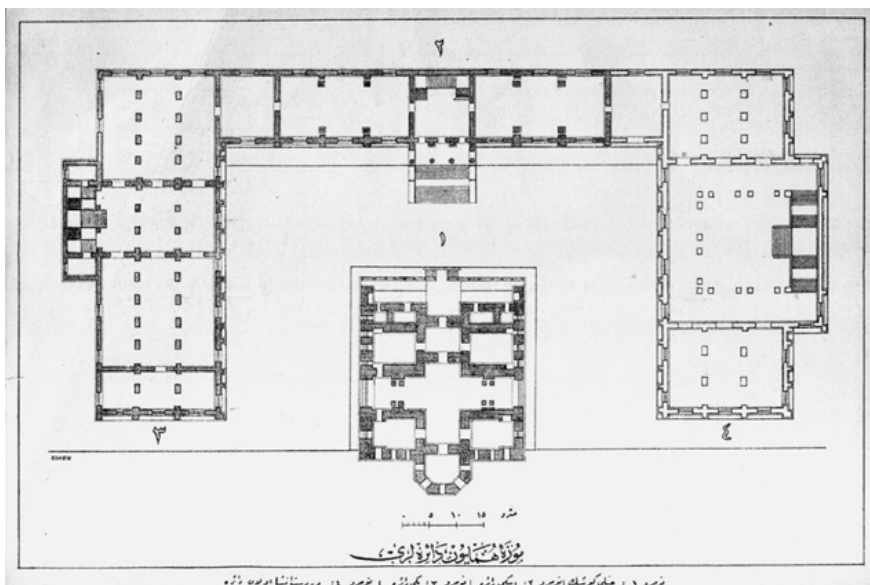


Figure 13. The Imperial Museum, plan showing the museum building with its extensions. *Servet-i Fünun* [Year 13] 26, no. 676 [25 Mart 1320 / April 7, 1904]. Source: Zeynep Çelik, *About Antiquities: Politics of Archaeology in the Ottoman Empire* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2016), 15.

2.b. Display of the Islamic art collection in the Imperial Museum, Istanbul

“[The Turkish government] has every right to consider Greek and Roman antiquities found in its lands as we in France would consider construction rubble. These are assets it can take advantage from, and which it can convert into cash. If the state were to auction every two or three years the antiquities entering its domains, one would see in Constantinople a series of brilliant sales, where all museums of Europe would be represented and the proceeds of which could be used to repair ruined mosques and, if need be, to buy back from Europe the precious weapons, the Kütahya and Bursa tiles, and other reminders of ancient Turkish art which have long left the country. Chinily Kiosk Museum [Çinili Köşk], that work of Mehmed II, the present use of which would scandalize the Conqueror, would become a museum of Ottoman art unique in the world. One would not even need to buy much abroad: it would suffice to centralize the treasures dispersed in storerooms, old palaces, and mosques. Turkey would cease to be ungrateful toward its artists, and the dome of Yeni Djami would no longer threaten to fall

upon the heads of the believers who have paid for the establishment of a museum of antiquities.... We wish to believe that at the end the Porte will abrogate a law that deceives it while harming art and civilization. We hope to see that Mehmed II's kiosk shall eventually be turned into a sanctuary for the treasures of Muslim art."²⁵⁶

This is a paragraph from the article entitled "*Le vandalism modern en Orient*," written by Salomon Reinach in 1883 on the eve of the forthcoming changes to the abovementioned 1884 Ottoman Antiquities Law. Reinach believed that each civilization should focus on its "own" heritage because the sole inheritors of "classical and other antiquities found on the Ottoman soil were Western museums and collections." He went even further by stating that the "'Turkish race' had its own 'national art,' which had nothing to do with the Greco-Roman past."²⁵⁷ He was not an exception who thought antiquities should be given or sold solely to Western museums and collections—in fact this was a commonly shared view among Western scholars.²⁵⁸ Therefore, Reinach was strongly opposing to the planned alterations of the antiquities law.

During the 1880s, Islamic objects had not yet been considered as collectable heritage within the Ottoman state. Although Reinach wrote these sentences with a Eurocentric arrogance, he was the first scholar who advocated that the Çini Kiosk should be turned into a museum of

²⁵⁶ "Quant aux antiquités grecques ou romaines qui sont entre ses mains, ou qui couvrent le sol dont il est possesseur, il a le droit de les considérer a peu près comme nous considérons en France les matériaux de démolition. Ce sont des valeurs dont il lui est permis de tirer parti, qu'il peut convertir en espèces sonnantes. Si l'état mettait aux enchères, tous les deux ou trois ans, tous les objets antiques qui entrent dans son domaine, on verrait à Constantinople une succession de ventes brillantes, ou tous les musées d'Europe se feraient représenter, et dont le produit servirait à réparer les mosquées en ruines, à racheter au besoin en Europe les armes de prix, les faïences de Koutaïeh [Kütahya] et de Brousse [Bursa], tant d'autres souvenirs de l'ancien art turc qui ont passé les mers depuis longtemps. Le musée de Tchiny-Kiosk [Çini Kiosk], cette oeuvre de Mahomet II dont la destination actuelle scandaliserait le conquérant, deviendrait un musée d'art ottoman sans égal au monde. Il ne serait mem pas nécessaire pour cela de faire beaucoup d'achats à l'extérieur : il suffirait de centraliser les trésors épars dans les garde-meubles, l'anciens palais, les mosquées. La Turquie cesserait d'être ingrate envers ses artistes et la coupole de Yeni-Djami [Yeni Cami] ne menacera pas de s'effondrer un jour sur la tête des fidèles qui ont payé les frais d'un musée d'antiques. ... Nous espérons en un sanctuaire des trésors de l'art musulman." Salomon Reinach, "*Le vandalism modern en Orient*," *Reveu de deux mondes* 56 (March 1, 1883), 133-166: 165-166. English translation of the quotation is taken from Edhem Eldem, "The Genesis of the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts," ed. Massumah Ferhad, *The Art of the Qur'an: Treasures from the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts* (Smithsonian Books: 2016), 119-139: 129.

²⁵⁷ Çelik, *About Antiquities*, 44; Eldem, "The Genesis of the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts," 129.

²⁵⁸ Çelik, *About Antiquities*, 43-44.

"*l'art musulman*" (Muslim art) by considering the "national" character of the building and the prospective collection of Islamic art.²⁵⁹ Only after 25 years was Reinach's expectation realized, and the Çinili Köşk was assigned solely to the Islamic art collection of the Imperial Museum. However, an Islamic art collection and its gallery within the Imperial Museum did not happen suddenly, it was an ongoing process that started in 1889 and continued gradually to 1908.

2.b.a. The first display: a gallery within the museum (1895–1908)

The collection of items from the Islamic world began relatively late in the Ottoman Empire. The process of gathering and displaying objects from the Islamic world was not a straightforward one.²⁶⁰ Collecting Islamic objects was not the primary aim for the Imperial Museum, and they started to be collected in the late nineteenth century without a clear strategy.²⁶¹ Although the first Islamic art gallery was opened during the directorship of Osman Hamdi, he lacked scientific interest in Islamic art. For example, Osman Hamdi's note in his travelogue reads "some Byzantine and Arab bronze medals of no value whatsoever" during his search for "ancient medals and stones" in the bazaars of Urfa (ancient Edessa).²⁶² Eldem explains the probable neglect as follows:

"[...] like much of the Byzantine material, they were medieval at best and therefore too recent to be treated on a par with objects of much greater antiquity. The fact that he [Osman Hamdi] used such objects as props in his own paintings further confirmed their secondary status as curiosities and decorative objects."²⁶³

Osman Hamdi was primarily interested in the decorative aspects as stage props for his paintings of objects that would be classified as Islamic art. For example, a painting entitled *Âb-ı Hayat Çeşmesi* (The Fountain of Life, 1904) is a telling example of Osman Hamdi's usage of objects and architecture of Islamic art for the creation of a rather typical

²⁵⁹ Salomon Reinach, "Le vandalisme moderne en Orient," *Reveu de deux mondes* 56 (March 1, 1883), 133-166: 166.

²⁶⁰ Eldem, "The Genesis of the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts," 123.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Ibid., 127.

²⁶³ Ibid.

Ottoman/Islamic/Oriental setting (Fig. 14).²⁶⁴ Similar to his other paintings, Osman Hamdi depicts himself in an oriental costume, reading a Quran, in front of a fountain in the Çinili Köşk. Some of the objects depicted in the painting, such as the mother-of-pearl inlaid Quran case are very similar to the ones that entered the collection of the Imperial Museum later, as seen in Figure 16.²⁶⁵



Figure 14. Osman Hamdi, *Âb-ı Hayat* (The Fountain of Life), 1904. Source: Edhem Eldem, "The Genesis of the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts," ed. Massumah Ferhad, *The Art of the Qur'an: Treasures from the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts* (Smithsonian Books: 2016), 119-139: 126.

²⁶⁴ Edhem Eldem, "Making Sense of Osman Hamdi Bey and His Paintings," *Muqarnas* vol. 29 (2012), 339-383: 355.

²⁶⁵ M.K. Wendy Shaw, *Possessors and Possessed: Museums, Archaeology, and the Visualization of History in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2003), 178; V. Belgin Demirsar, *Osman Hamdi Bey Tablolarında Gerçekle İlişkiler* (Istanbul: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1989), 131-133.

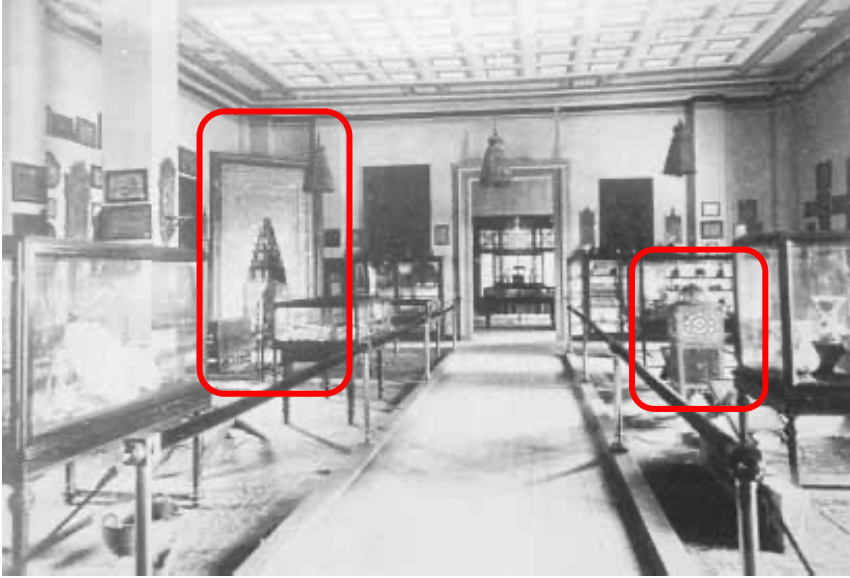


Figure 15. “Ancient Islamic Arts” (*Sanayi-i atıkayı İslâmiye*) collections upstairs in the Imperial Museum, c. 1903. Source: Wendy M. K. Shaw, *Possessors and possessed: museums, archaeology, and the visualization of history in the late Ottoman Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 177.

The Ottoman government began to collect Islamic objects, entitled *sanayi-i nefise İslâmiye âsârı*, mainly from religious endowments such as mosques, madrasas, and mausoleums which were under threat of theft had appeared. As Reinach stated in his article (1883), “[...] ancient Turkish arts which have long left the country.”²⁶⁶ For example, some objects such as precious shawls and ornaments were stolen from the tomb of Abdülhamid I (r. 1774–1789). Objects from the Islamic world had started to be highly appreciated among European collectors and museums in the second half of the nineteenth century. Therefore, the Ottoman Empire with its still-huge geography (filled with a Muslim population) became a “market state” for the art market in Europe. The first Ottoman Antiquities Law (*Âsâr-ı Âtika Nizamnamesi*) was created in 1874 and a modified one was released in 1884 to protect mainly Helleno-Byzantine antiquities.²⁶⁷ However, Islamic and Ottoman heritage was not

²⁶⁶ Salomon Reinach, “Le vandalism modern en Orient,” 165.

²⁶⁷ For the transliteration of the Ottoman Antiquities Law of 1869, 1874, and 1884, which were published in official gazette *Takvîmi Vekâyi* (Cerîde-i Resmîyye-i Devleti Âliyye-i see

clearly protected under the law until the final revised version appeared in 1906.²⁶⁸ As Shaw rightly points:

“Like Helleno-Byzantine antiquities, Islamic antiquities gained legislative interest only after they began to be smuggled out of the country with impunity.”²⁶⁹

In the absence of a comprehensive law items such as tiles, carpets, candlesticks, lamps, or Qur’an stands were stolen quite easily and frequently from ancient buildings. One of the main motivations behind collecting these objects was explained by Wendy Shaw:

“It was not so much the inherent value of the objects that led to their collection but a distaste for the idea that Europeans would benefit from their theft by making them acquire aesthetic and exotic value in their museums. [...] The danger of their loss lays not in their absence but in the degree of profit possible once they entered European collections.”²⁷⁰

The Imperial Museum’s administrative scheme and the organizational practices were revised with a regulation issued by the Council of State dated May 1889 and the department of “Ancient Islamic Arts” (*Sanayi-i atıkayı İslamiye*) became one of the six sections of the museum.²⁷¹ The 1889 regulation is interesting because the department of “Ancient Islamic Arts” was founded before the Antiquities Law of 1906. The new arrangement was as follows:

“The Imperial Museum is divided into six parts. The first is for Greek, Roman, and Byzantine antiquities. The second is for Assyrian, Caledonian, Egyptian, Phoenician, Hittite, and Himariote antiquities, as well as for works by Asian and African tribes. The third is for works of

Hâmit Zübeyr Koşay, M.E. Zarif Orgun, Sadi Bayram, Erdoğan Tan, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Çağlarında Türk Kazı Tarihi: Arkeolojik Hafriyat ve Müzecilik Tarihimizi Aydınlatacak Osmanlı Dönemi Resmi Yazışmalarına Ait Muhtelif Belge Örnekleri*, vol. 1, no. 2 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2013), 750-833. The first article of the Ottoman Antiquities Law of 1874 states that “*Ezmine-i kadîmeden kalan her nevi eşyayı masnua âsar-i atika’dandır.*” (“Every item made with art from ancient times is an ancient work.”) Koşay, Orgun, Bayram, Tan, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Çağlarında Türk Kazı Tarihi*, 760.

²⁶⁸ The 1906 antiquities law was recognized by the Republic of Türkiye after its establishment in 1923 and remained in effect with only minor modifications until 1973. For the transliteration of the Ottoman Antiquities Law of 1906, see Burcu Kutlu Dilbaz, *Osmanlı Devleti’nin Arkeoloji Politikası* (Istanbul: Okur Tarih, 2018), 128-142.

²⁶⁹ Shaw, *Possessors and Possessed*, 183.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 209.

²⁷¹ Mustafa Cezar, *Sanatta Batı’ya Açılış ve Osman Hamdi*, vol. II (Istanbul: Erol Kerim Aksoy, Kültür, Eğitim, Spor ve Sağlık Vakfı Yayını, 1995), 548.

Islamic fine arts. The fourth is for ancient coins. The fifth is for examples of natural history. The sixth is for the collection, in a library, of books concerning the history and science of antiquities.”²⁷²

An archival document dated 1894 states that there are enough objects and textiles to form a separate gallery of “Ancient Islamic Arts” (*Sanayi-i atıkayı İslamiye*) within the Imperial Museum.²⁷³ The archival document continues with the necessary budget, 20,700 *kuruş* (piastres), to establish the new gallery space.²⁷⁴ The collection of the museum was growing. About fifty objects were recorded without a detailed description in the catalogue of the museum dated between the 1st of February and 2nd of March 1895. These objects came from mosques such as Hagia Sophia, Selim I, Şehzade, Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, Laleli, Zeyneb Sultan; the imperial lodge of Yeni Cami; the tombs of Bayezid II, Selim II, Ahmed I, and Ibrahim Pasha; and the library of Hagia Sophia.²⁷⁵ The entries contains the following objects: 15 glass and porcelain lamps, two Chinese porcelains, seven carpets, three armchairs, one console, three porcelain vases, two Qur’an cases, six Qur’an stands, two incense-burner plates and two incense-burners, one celestial globe, three lanterns, one ewer and basin, three book bindings, and one wooden ceiling.²⁷⁶ The majority of the objects can be categorized as “Islamic,” though some of them does not fit any particular category in this museum such as “two Chinese porcelains,” or “three armchairs.”²⁷⁷

The first gallery, solely devoted to Islamic art, within the Imperial Museum was opened in 1895 long before the Islamic art galleries in Europe. For example, as stated in Chapter 1, the gallery in the Kaiser-Friedrich Museum was opened in 1904, and the one in the Louvre was created in 1905. A catalogue of the Islamic art collection was not published until 1938. Other written sources such as an article about the museum and travel guides to Constantinople (Istanbul) of the time

²⁷² Mustafa Cezar, *Sanatta Batı'ya Açılış ve Osman Hamdi I-II* (Istanbul: Erol Kerim Aksoy Kültür, Eğitim, Spor ve Sağlık Vakfı Yayını, 1995), 547–548. English translation of the document by Shaw, *Possesors and Possessed*, 172.

²⁷³ Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye Directorate of the State Archives: BOA. İ.MF. 2/46, H-25-03-1312 (26 September 1894)

²⁷⁴ In 1895, the admission fee of the Imperial Museum was 5 piastres per person, which gives an idea of the requested amount to create a gallery space. Demetrius Coufopoulos, *A Guide to Constantinople* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1895), 88.

²⁷⁵ Eldem, “The Genesis of the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts,” 129–130.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 130.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

provide an idea about the displayed objects. As far as I am aware there are no other visual documents of the gallery other than a few photographs that show the gallery from opposite perspectives (Figures 15 and 16). The gallery was located on the second floor of the museum.



Figure 16. “Ancient Islamic Arts” (*Sanayi-i atikayı İslamiye*) collections upstairs in the Imperial Museum, c. 1903. Istanbul University, Nadir Eserler Kütüphanesi, inv. no. 90518/9. Source: Seracettin Şahin, Sevgi Kutluay, and Miyase Çelen (eds.) *100 Yıl Önce ve 100 Yıl Sonra: Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi* (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2014), 18.

In 1895, in an article on the Imperial Museum, written by Halil Edhem [Eldem], assistant director of the museum, the Islamic art collection was mentioned briefly. It reads:

“[A]t one time during the Middle Ages when in Europe and in Asia no trace of civilization remained and knowledge and science had become nearly completely extinct, Islam and the Arabs appeared as a vehicle for the formation of a new civilization. The advancement of knowledge and science and literature and art spread across the world and the Ottomans were the inheritors of this with their acquisition of the caliphate.

Since today old Arab works and old Ottoman works are among quite desirable and rare antiquities, these are also now being collected in the Imperial Museum and are being arranged for display in a special hall. In this section, the most striking item is in the corner: an ornate tile mihrab [prayer niche] from Karaman that is from the time of the Seljuk ruler Ala' al-din I. Stones with Kufic writing from the time of the Ahmed al-Malik of the Umayyad Caliphate; writing samples of famous calligraphers; book bindings, which are testimony to the fine handicraft of Ottoman artisans; Edirne-work cabinets; mother-of-pearl inlay book-stands; ringstones with Kufic writings; and quite breathtaking Persian carpets decorate this hall."²⁷⁸

Edhem states the significance of the Islamic world for the development of European civilization. He presents the Islamic world as a bridge between the uncivilized and the civilized world. According to Edhem, the Ottomans were the heir of the civilized world thanks to their caliphal status. Edhem's usage of terminology is parallel to the scholarship of the time, with a shift of emphasis on Ottoman art. To my understanding, Edhem uses the term "Arab works" as an equivalent of "Islamic." In addition, Edhem alludes to the theft of items around the Ottoman Empire by emphasizing the changing status of Islamic art, which became highly appreciated collectable in Europe.

According to Edhem's description, objects and architectural elements made of various materials such as woodwork and stonework, manuscripts, calligraphy, tiles, and textiles were displayed in the new gallery. Although Edhem was a specialist on Islamic art and architecture, he falsely attributed the tiled mihrab from Karaman falsely to the time of the Seljuk ruler Ala' al-din I (1190–1237, r. 1220–1237). The tiled mihrab,

²⁷⁸ "Arz ve beyanından müstağni olduğu vechile bir aralık Kurun-u vesatâda Avrupa ve Asya'da medeniyet denilen şeyden hiçbir eser kalmayarak ulum ve fûnun hemân kâmilen münkariz olmuş iken İslâmîyetin zuhuruyla Arablar vasıtasıyla bir yeni medeniyet teşkil ederek ulum ve fûnûnun ve harf ve sanâyi'in terkisi gibi sanâyi'-i nefise-i Arab dahî bütün dünyaya istilâ eylemiş ve Osmanlılar bu yolda Arablara hayrî'l-halef olmuşlardır. Âsâr-ı kâdime-i Arab ve âsâr-ı kâdime-i Osmâniyye bugün a'yân-ı makbûl ve nâdir antikarlardan ad olunmakla bunlar dahi müze-i hümâyunda peyderpey cemi'i olunarak şube-i mahsusasında mevk'i teşhire vaz' olunmaktadır. İşbu şu'be en ziyade nazar-ı dikkat celb eden Konya'da vaki'i Karaman'dan gelen gayet müzeyyen ve çiniden mamul bir mihrabdır ki bu Melik-i Selçuk'dan ve Aladdin-i evvel zamanından kalmadır. Halife-i Emeviyye'den Abdül-melik zamanından kalma küfî yazılı taşlar ve hattâtin-i meşhuranın yazı numuneleri ve hünervân-ı Osmâniyye'nin çiredestf-i mahâreti olan kitâb cildleri ve Edirnekârî çekmece ve kuburları ve sedefli rahleler ve küfî yazılı yüzük taşları ve gayet enfes Acem halıları ile bu salonu tezyin eder." Halil Edhem, "Müze-i Hümayun," Tercüman-ı Hakikat/Servet-i Fûnun 1313 [1895] (numero special et unique), 104. Turkish transcription by the author and Orçun Kural. English translation from Shaw, *Possessors and Possessed*, 176.

dated to the early fifteenth century, was brought from the İbrahim Bey Mosque (imaret) in Karaman close to Konya (Fig. 18). The imaret was built by II. İbrahim Bey (1423–1464) who was the ruler in the *beylik* (principality) of Karamanids (Fig. 17). The mihrab was placed in the corner of the gallery, as can be seen in Figure 15. Edhem categorizes and describes displayed items according to features such as dynasty, race, medium, typology, and place of production. This approach provides an idea about the possible label descriptions within the gallery.



Figure 17. Tiled mihrab of the İbrahim Bey Mosque in Karaman, 15th century.
Source: <https://twitter.com/KaraaslanMzffr/status/1306845457860132869/photo/2>.

Travel guides to Constantinople give an idea about the gallery and its marginalized position. Compared to the antiquities of the Imperial Museum, the Islamic art collection gallery occupied limited space. This approach is understandable, since the Islamic art collection had recently started to be collected recently and the gallery was still quite new in comparison to the antiquities collection. Moreover, in terms of the hierarchy of the collections, antiquities were more prestigious and ranked above within the art history and archaeology compared to Islamic art collections.

A Guide to Constantinople, written by a dragoman Demetrius Coufopoulos and published in 1895 describes the content of the new gallery concisely. It reads:

“In the room on the right-hand side is a small collection of old Oriental carpets, one of which is said to have belonged to Muhammad the Conqueror; and some furniture, comprising two chairs, one of which belonged to Sultan Muhammad, and the other to Sultan Ahmed. In a corner of the room is a *mihrab* or Mussulman altar, from a mosque at Kuttahiyeh [Kütahya], a place famous for the blue tiles made there.”²⁷⁹

Coufopoulos describes the objects which had belonged to the Ottoman sultans by underlining their owners rather than their aesthetic or technical features. In addition, he provides incorrect information about the provenance of the above-mentioned tiled mihrab, which came coming from Karaman, not Kütahya.

Another guide published by a major English publication house for travel guides, John Murray, provides information about the display. *Handbook for travelers in Constantinople, Brusa, and the Troad* first published in 1900 and republished with an index and a directory in 1907, reads:

“On the walls of the *staircase* leading up to the first storey [...] In the third room are interesting specimens of *Oriental* and *Osmanli* [Ottoman] *art*, old *Persian* and *Turkish carpets*, of good design but rather worn, one of which is said to have belonged to Ahmet I. (1603-17); a *Kurân box* inlaid with mother-of-pearl, belonging to Ahmed III. (1703-30); *furniture* belonging to Selim I (1512-20), and Ahmet III.; in a corner a beautiful *Mihrab* from the mosque of Sultan Ala ed-Dîn in Konia; fine inlaid *woodwork*, &c. In glass presses and cases are fine old mosque lamps, embroidered girdles, gold plats, a model of Yeni Jami’ [*Yeni Cami* (Mosque)], & c.”²⁸⁰

Here the author uses the umbrella term “Oriental.” Like in Coufopoulos’ guide, the sultan’s objects were described by their owners and not with a focus of their aesthetic or technical features. Also, here the name of the mosque of the tiled mihrab was falsely written here as Ala ed-Dîn, maybe because this was written on the label of the object, if there was one. Almost all Islamic art collections in the museum would contained

²⁷⁹ Demetrius Coufopoulos, *A Guide to Constantinople* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1895), 112-113.

²⁸⁰ *Handbook for travelers in Constantinople, Brusa, and the Troad* (London: John Murray, 1907), 72.

mosque lamps made of glass, metal, or porcelain: Unsurprisingly, they are also here. However, the model of Yeni Cami which was built in 1665 by the mother of Sultan Mehmed IV, Turhan Hatice Sultan, in Eminönü, Istanbul, is something unexpected to see in an Islamic art collection.

A Guide to the Eastern Mediterranean (1904) including Constantinople provides more detailed information about the exhibited items compare to other written sources. It reads:

“In the room to the left are several ancient Persian carpets found in different mosques in Constantinople; on the wall at the left-hand side of the inner door is a silk prayer-rug said to have belonged to Sultan Ahmed I. In the extreme left-hand corner is a Mihrab of Seljukian *faince* of the best period, about 1400 A.D., which is from an ancient mosque at Karaman, near Koniah. The adjoining glass case has examples of Arab and Turkish Khoran binding, and of ancient *fir mans*. The case at the right hand of the entrance door contains specimens of glass made at Beicos [Beykoz] in imitation of the “yeux de rossignil” Venetian glass. The first cases on the north and south walls contain samples of pottery from Chanak Kalesi [Çanakkale] on the Dardanelles. In the second case on the right-hand side of the passage are specimens of Arab, Persian, Turkish, and Cufic calligraphy. In the third case are two large vases, very valuable, manufactured at Constantinople or Kutayah during the reign of Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent. The other vases in that case are Persian. There are also in the room Khoran boxes and Khoran stands, the two carved sides of the ascent to a Minbar from Koniah, writing materials, time-measuring instruments, weights, etc.”²⁸¹

This guide provides more detail about the displayed objects. From a photograph dated around 1903, it is possible to identify the wall-display case which contained “examples of Arab and Turkish Khoran binding, and of ancient *fir mans*” in the gallery (Fig. 18). Based on this description, the gallery appears like a decorative art museum with its contemporary design objects such as samples of Beykoz glass and Çanakkale pottery, which were the productions of the nineteenth century.

²⁸¹ *Guide to the Eastern Mediterranean: Including Greece and the Greek Islands, Constantinople, Smyrna, Ephesus, Etc.* (London: Macmillan and CO. Limited, 1904), 179

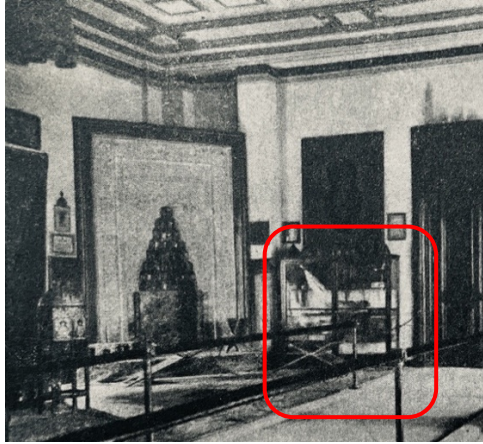


Figure 18. Close up of Figure 20. “Ancient Islamic Arts” (*Sanayi-i atikayı İslamiye*) collections upstairs in the Imperial Museum showing a wall-display case next to the mihrab, c. 1903.

Baedeker, one of the main publication companies specialized in the tourist guide genre, published *Konstantinopel und das westliche Kleinasien: Handbuch für Reisende* (Constantinople and Western Asia Minor: A Traveler's Guide) in 1905. A very brief section entitled “VI.-VII: SAAL: Erzeugnisse des TÜRKISCHEN KUNSTGEWERBES”²⁸² (Room 6-7: Products of Turkish handicrafts) is devoted to the gallery. This guide does not provide detailed information about the Islamic art collection of the museum. Different from the other guidebooks, though, it states the exact location of the gallery in rooms 6 and 7 (Fig. 19). It reads as follows:

“Fayencen und Glasgefäße, eingelegte (Koranstander und Schränkchen mit Kuppeln), geschnitzte und vergoldete Holzarbeiten; in einer Vitrine (im zweiten Saal) türkische und arabische Schriftproben; zwei Thronessel Sultan Selim's I.; am Ende schöne Lederarbeiten; in der Südecke Gebetsmische aus schönen Kacheln aus dem Palaste des Sultan Ala-eddin in Konia (S. 168), getriebene und ziselierte Metallarbeiten; geschnittene Steine; von der Decke herabhängend Moscheelampen; u. a. m.”²⁸³

²⁸² Capital letters were left purposely, the same as the source.

²⁸³ *Konstantinopel und das westliche Kleinasien: Handbuch für Reisende* (Leipzig: Verlag von Karl Baedeker, 1905), 113. “Porcelain and glass vessels, inlaid (Quran stands and cabinets with domes), carved and gilded woodwork; Turkish and Arabic writing samples in a showcase (in the second room); two thrones of Sultan Selim the First; beautiful leatherwork

The objects detached from their religious connotations were defined as “historic” and “artistic” items within the museum space. In this period, for the first time the Ottoman Empire defined its national identity through the material culture of the Islamic heritage, just as Reinach recommended in his above-mentioned article dated 1881. The photographs of the gallery taken from opposite directions confirms the description of the travel guides. Based on the written and visual sources, it is possible to state that there was no systematic categorization of the objects on display. Objects made from various material or with various techniques from different time periods were scattered around the room detached from their original contexts. As the photographs of the gallery demonstrate, only the large-scale carpets, calligraphic panels, *kavukluk* (fez shelves), and metal lanterns hanging from the ceiling were exhibited as used in their authentic functions. One of the displayed lanterns seems very similar to the one transferred from Sultan Beyazid the II’s Mosque in Amasya, today in the collection of the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, Istanbul (TIEM) (see Fig. 21). However, the carpets—which were transferred from mosques or tombs—were detached from people who would freely walk, pray, sit, or even lay on them in their original context.²⁸⁴ Although there are modern approaches to the display techniques, such as hanging the small-scale carpets or textiles on the walls as if they were paintings, or separating the visitor route from the displayed items with a rope, the overall display seems rather chaotic. The tiled mihrab from Karaman, which all the written sources refer to, is visible in the corner of the room in each photograph. It is understandable that it was mentioned in every source, since its size impressive with its size in each photograph. In addition, its colorful tiled decoration must have been impressive to visitors of that time. In Figure 21, it is possible to count at least four Quran stands placed on each side of the room behind the ropes on the carpets. The Quran cabinet decorated with mother-of-pearls, which is also referred to be almost every written source, is also located on the carpet in the middle of the room.

Smaller objects were displayed in display cases with wooden frames, rather typical for museum displays of that period. However, it is not possible to understand from the photos what type of objects were displayed in the wall display cases. It is possible to detect a group of mosque lamps in one of the free-standing display cases on the right side,

²⁸⁴ Shaw, *Possessors and Possessed*, 176.

however (see Fig. 21). One of the mosque lamps, dated to the sixteenth century and produced in İznik, is recognizable (see Fig. 22). This type of lamps was one the signature items of the Ottoman Sultan Süleyman's reign (r. 1520–1566).

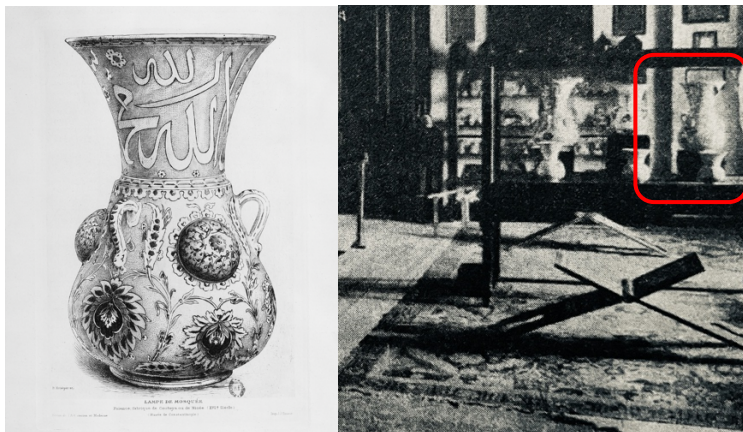


Figure 21. Close up of Figure 21. Porcelain Mosque lamp, 16th century, Ottoman period. Source: Gustave Mendel, "Les nouvelles salles du Musée de Constantinople," *La Revue de l'art ancien et modern* 26 (July-December 1909), 337-352.

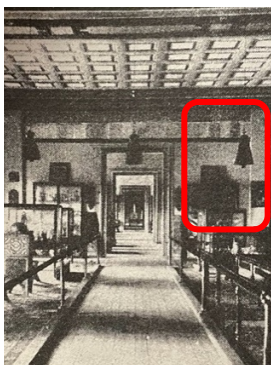


Figure 22. Close up of Figure 17. Metal Lantern, c. 1481-1512, Ottoman period, Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts (TIEM), Istanbul, inv. no. 170. Source: Seracettin Şahin, Sevgi Kutluay, and Miyase Çelen (eds.) *100 Yıl Önce ve 100 Yıl Sonra: Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi* (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2014), 214.

2.b.b. The second display: Transfer to the *Çinili Köşk* (the Tiled Kiosk) (1908–1939)

When construction of a second wing of the museum was completed in 1908, the overall museum display was reorganized. As part of the reinstallation process, the Islamic art gallery was transferred to the *Çinili Köşk* in the same year. The above-mentioned vision of Reinach was realized after twenty-five years, and the *Çinili Köşk* was solely devoted to the Islamic art collection. Halil Edhem was content with this transfer, too. He emphasizes the development and richness of the Islamic collection and draws attention to the relation between the collection and its new repository by stating the “Turkish and Islamic art” collection “found its exact location.”²⁸⁵

French archaeologist Gustave Mendel (1873–1938) worked many years on the collection of the Imperial Museum to prepare a comprehensive new catalogue consisting of three volumes entitled *Catalogue des sculptures grecques, romaines et byzantines* and completed in 1921. As far as I am aware of, a catalogue of the Islamic collection was not requested from the museum management. In 1909, Mendel published a series of articles where he promoted the new reinstallation of the Imperial Museum.²⁸⁶ He reserved one of his articles for the Islamic art collection which had gone on display in the *Çinili Köşk* at that time. Mendel starts the article with a criticism of the previous Islamic art gallery display and continues with a praise for the new installation and the efforts of Halil Bey [Edhem Eldem], who was responsible for enriching the museum collection. It reads:

“Two years ago, once these marbles had been moved into the museum’s new wing, *Çinili Köşk*, discreetly restored, became a museum of Muslim antiquities. Until then the objects of Muslim art were piled up on the first floor of the Sarcophagi Museum, in a room which—one can say it today—had a bit of the chaotic look of an antique shop. Once they were seen in the kiosk, each of them properly placed a grouped by families, it was as if hidden treasures were suddenly revealed, for so beautiful was the setting, and so soft the light that embraced them. Halil

²⁸⁵ “[...] pek zengin bir hale giren Türk ve İslam eserleri de kendi başına *Çinili Köşk*’e teşhir edildiler ve tam da yerlerini buldular.” Halil Edhem, “Müzeler,” Ali Artun (ed.), Halil Edhem: Modern Sanat Müzesinin Tasarımı (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2019), 148. The article of Halil Edhem was first published in 1932.

²⁸⁶ Gustave Mendel, “Les nouvelles salles du Musée de Constantinople,” *La Revue de l’art ancient et modern* 26 (July-December 1909), 337-352.

Bey had devoted himself to this long and delicate task; and together with his excellent taste, he had brought to it his deep knowledge of Oriental history and Islamic arts."²⁸⁷

Here I would like to draw attention to the role of Halil Edhem [Eldem] and his contribution to the development of the Islamic art collections. As mentioned before, Halil Edhem was the younger brother of Osman Hamdi. Halil Edhem was educated in Istanbul, Berlin, Zurich, Vienna, and Bern. He studied geology and chemistry at the Polytechnic Vienna. Later he went to Switzerland and earned a PhD in philosophy at the University of Bern and returned to Istanbul in 1885.²⁸⁸ He also took archaeology classes during his education.

He became an assistant director at the Imperial Museum in 1892. After his elder brother Osman Hamdi's death in 1910, he was appointed as a museum director and stayed in that position until 1931. It wouldn't be wrong to say he dedicated his lifetime to the Imperial Museum and museums both in the Ottoman State and in the newly established Turkish Republic. I will discuss his role in the establishment and curation of the Museum of Pious Islamic Foundations (*Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi*) in the following chapter. Right after his retirement, Halil Edhem was chosen as a member of the Turkish parliament. Through his publications and collaborations with foreign scholars, he became a well-known historian, art historian, and museum director. In addition, Edhem was specialized in numismatics and archaeology.

²⁸⁷ “[...] Il y a deux ans, après que ces mêmes marbres eurent été transportés dans l'ail nouvelle du musée, Tchিনি-Kieuchk, discrètement restauré, devint un musée d'antiquités musulmanes. Rarement il y eut harmonie plus intime entre un édifice et sa destination. Les objets d'art musulmans étaient jusque-là, accumulés au premier étage du musée des sarcophages, dans une salle qui avait un peu, - on peut bien le dire aujourd'hui, - l'aspect chaotique d'un magasin d'antiquaire. Quand on les vit dans le kiosque chacun en bonne place et groupés par familles, ce fut comme une révélation de trésors ignorés, tant la beauté du cadre et la douceur de la lumière les mettaient en valeur. Halil bey s'était dévoué à cette tâche longue et délicate; il y avait apporté, avec un goût très sûr, sa connaissance approfondie des histoires orientales et des arts islamiques. Ces notes lui doivent beaucoup, et je l'en remerciais s'il n'avait à l'avance refusé tout remerciement.” Gustave Mendel, “Les nouvelles salles du Musée de Constantinople,” *La Revue de l'art ancien et moderne* 26 (July-December 1909), 337-352: 340; English translation of the quotation from Edhem Eldem, *Genesis*, 134.

²⁸⁸ Semavi Eyice, “Halil Ethem Eldem,” *TDVİA* (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1995), vol. 11: 18.

Halil Edhem was almost twenty years younger than Osman Hamdi and naturally belonged to a different generation, one which was filled with sharper sensibilities about the nationalism and national heritage concepts.²⁸⁹ Edhem Eldem summarizes the ideological difference between the two brothers in a simple but profound way:

“To the very Parisian and Eurocentric Hamdi, Islam never acquired much greater significance than the artistic and aesthetic value he attached to it in his paintings and the practical dimension of its connection to local crafts and tradition. To the German- and Swiss-educated Halil, Islamic heritage came with an erudite and scientific interest that eventually would lead to a number of pioneering scientific publications. This intellectual discrepancy between the two brothers was also reflected in their political and ideological makeup. While Hamdi was certainly a patriot, he was too imbued with an old-fashioned notion of Western civilization to espouse a nationalist stand. Halil, however, seems to have been much closer to the ideological trends of the time, especially after the 1908 Young Turk Revolution and the wave of Turco-Islamic nationalism that followed.”²⁹⁰

The changing syllabus of the above-mentioned School of Fine Arts can also give an idea about the different management styles between Osman Hamdi and Halil Edhem. Only in 1911, one year after Halil Edhem became director, a course on Islamic art and Ottoman architecture was added to the curriculum for the first time after a major revision of the school curriculum.²⁹¹ Halil Edhem would have been influential in this change since he was interested in promoting and preserving the Islamic heritage of the Ottoman Empire and even published some articles on the subject. The revision of the curriculum is meaningful considering the changing political environment and raising nationalism trends after the Second Constitution period that began with the Young Turk Revolution in 1908.²⁹²

²⁸⁹ Eldem, “The Genesis of the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts,” 134.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

²⁹¹ Gençel, “Contemporary artists İstanbul exhibition: 1980-2011,” 142.

²⁹² The Ottoman Turkish transcription of the documents: “Sanat-ı Nefisenin Ehemmiyeti ve faidesi.”

“(Şark) - Mısır: Mezheb ve itikadın sanatın tesiri - mabed, ehram (piramit) - sfenks - Menhûtat ve menkuşatı - Geldanistan ve Asuristan- İran-Fenike.

(Yunanistan) - Ezmine-i esatiriyye - Arkaik devri: Mimari, mabed, nizamat-ı mimariye - naht: Poliklet, Miron- Devr-i itila: Beşinci asırda Atina - Mimari: Partenon ve Perikles - naht: Fidyas - Dördüncü asır Yunani: Mimari, naht: Skopas, Praksiteles, Lizip - Helenistik devri: Jigantomaşi- sanat-ı sagire (terrakotalar- vazolar) – Nakş: Zeuksis, Paraziyos, Apel.

Before turning to the article of Gustave Mendel, I would like to share the detailed syllabus of the history of art course (*tarih-i sanat-ı nefise* in Ottoman Turkish) dated 1911. It follows a similar structure of an art history survey book at the time, with a few exceptions. The timeline of the course starts with the ancient civilizations of the “East” (“Şark”) such as Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria, Persia, and Phoenicia, and then it continues with the ancient Greek and Roman periods. Following this is a part entitled “Middle Ages” (*Kurun-u Vasati*) and including the Byzantine period. Interestingly, under the Byzantine period, different from a Western art history survey, there is a subtitle which reads “mosques converted from churches” (“*camie tahvil olunmuş eski kiliseler*”).²⁹³ Probably, Hagia Sophia was included under this subtitle, along with some other churches such as Chora (*Kariye Camii*) which were converted to a mosques after the conquest of Constantinople in 1453. A section of the syllabus contains Arab, Iranian, and Turkish art and architecture; it comes after the Byzantine period, as expected. This section of the curriculum reads:

“Principles of Arab Art – Architecture: [its] prominent qualities and monuments- [its] influences [on other civilizations]- [its] decorative art- Iranian Art- [its] prominent monuments- Turkish Art: [its] general qualities and prominent works and monuments of Seljuks- Purity and nature of the Ottoman Architecture and the character of [the] decorative features of Ottoman buildings/monuments (mosques, tombs, and palaces [in] İzmir, Bursa, Edirne, and Constantinople)[.]”²⁹⁴

(Roma)- Etrurya Sanatı, Yunanistan’ın Roma üzerine tesiri ve nüfusu - mimari: Evsaf ve mahiyeti, saraylar, tak-ı zaferler, mabedler, anıteatrlar, bazilikalar, kaplıcalar- Naht, nakş, sanat-ı sagire.” “(Kurun-u vasati) - Sanat-ı Hristiyanıye, katakomblar, Mimari, nakş ve naht - Bizans Sanatı: Evsaf ve asari, camie tahvil olunmuş eski kiliseler.” The Republic of Türkiye Presidential State Archives “Meclis-i Maarif-i Kebir, Tatbik-i ahkâmı zamanında maarif Nezaret-i Celilesi’nden bâ- tezkere Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi Müdüriyeti’ne tebliğ olunan belge,” 25 Haziran 1327/1911, 180-9-0-0, 86/417, sıra no. 16. *Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi Talimatname ve Ders*.

²⁹³ “(Kurun-u vasati)- Sanat-ı Hristiyanıye, katakomblar, Mimari, nakş ve naht - Bizans Sanatı: Evsaf ve asari, camie tahvil olunmuş eski kiliseler.”

²⁹⁴ “Arap Sanatı’nın esası- Mimari: Evsaf ve abidat-ı meşhuriyesi - Aktar-ı muhtelifede icra eylediği tesirâtı - Sanat-ı tezyiniyye - İran Sanatı, abidat-ı meşhuresi - Türk Sanaatı: Evsaf-ı umumiye ve Selçuklular’ın asar ve abidat-ı meşhuresi - Mimari-i Osmanî’nin saffet ve mahiyeti ve usul-ü tezyinatı mebani-i Osmanî (İznik, Bursa, Edirne, Dersaadet’teki cevami, çeşmeler, mezarlıklar, saraylar)”

Meclis-i Maarif-i Kebir, Tatbik-i ahkâmı zamanında maarif Nezaret-i Celilesi’nden bâ- tezkere Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi Müdüriyeti’ne tebliğ olunan belge, 25 Haziran 1327/1911. Document from the Turkish Republic State Archives, 180-9-0-0, kutu no. 86, gömlek no. 417, sıra no. 16. *Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi Talimatname ve Ders Progamları* (Dersaadet [Constantinople]: Mahmud Bey Matbaası, 1327/1911), 33.

This section differs from the others in categorization because it is not defined with a subtitle like the other sections such as “East,” “Greece,” “Rome,” or “Middle Ages.” Moreover, the adjective “purity” used to describe the character of the Ottoman architecture is significant. Neither Arab, nor the Persian sections of the syllabus included this adjective. Since the 1870s, the Ottoman government had tried to create an independent and individual place for the art and architecture of the Ottoman Empire. The above-mentioned book on Ottoman Architecture (*Usûl-i Mi’ârî-i Osmani*) prepared for the Vienna Exhibition in 1873, was the first attempt to elevate the status of Ottoman architecture.

Mendel’s article provides information both about the architecture of the Çinili Köşk and the types of the displayed items, such as architectural pieces, woodworks, metalworks, ceramics, and textiles. Mendel focuses on the decorative and technical details of the objects, rather than their historical contexts. According to Mendel, the display is based on typology and material rather than race, dynasty, or geography, which is a typical beaux arts school approach. The majority of the objects on display were rather typical for an Islamic art collection, such as mosque lamps, stucco pieces, armories, ceramic sherds, ceramic vases, carpets, astronomical devices, incense burners, coins, calligraphy, book bindings, and Quran stands. On the other hand, there were objects which are surprising to see in the collection, such as musical instruments, *kavukluk* (fez shelves), and a large gilded console both in Rococo style.²⁹⁵ One cannot help remember the above-mentioned first inventory of the Islamic collection formed in 1895, where a console was registered. Maybe the one on the display and the registered one were the same item.

Some of the works that Mendel introduces in the article were well-known examples within the international academic circles. For example, carved wooden door panels²⁹⁶ were already published by, French Gaston Migeon (1861–1930), the father of the Louvre’s Islamic art collection, in his prominent book *Manuel d’art Musulman* (1907). Today, the wooden door panels are on display in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, Istanbul. Another internationally recognized object was a carpet, which had recently been published by “Dr. Martin.”²⁹⁷ Mendel must be referring to the Frederik R. Martin (1868-1933)—diplomat,

²⁹⁵ Mendel, “Les nouvelles salles du Musée de Constantinople,” 344.

²⁹⁶ “Un des gloires du musée, c’est sa collection de portes sculptées.” Mendel, “Les nouvelles salles du Musée de Constantinople,” 343

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 349.

collector, dealer, and scholar of Islamic art—who published a two volumes book entitled *A History of Oriental Carpets Before 1800* few years previously.²⁹⁸ Mendel also points out a resemblance between a wooden minbar in this collection and the one in the V&A Museum (see figures). This wooden minbar must have entered the museum collection before 1908, because it was not on display at the previous gallery in the main museum building.

“Les arts du bois sont représentés ici par un certain nombre de pièces d’un très beau style. Un grand *mimber* (chaire à prêcher) d’Ourfa [Urfa], l’ancienne Édesse, avec ses parois recouvertes de motifs géométriques, dessinés par de fines baguettes profilées, et sa rampe ajourée rappelle de très près les œuvres de l’école du Caire, en particulier le *mimber* de la mosquée de Kait bey, au Kensington Museum [the V&A], qui est du xv siècle.”²⁹⁹

This comment indicates that the management of the Imperial Museum was aware of the content of the foreign museum collections, which is not so surprising, since museum catalogues were requested or sent from foreign museums such as the British Museum and the so-called “Egypt Museum.”³⁰⁰ In addition, the V&A was a world-renowned museum, with its innovative concept and rich collection. Mendel was trying to position the Islamic art collection of the Imperial Museum next to these well-established museums through emphasizing the similarities.

²⁹⁸ Fredrik Robert Martin, *A History of Oriental Carpets Before 1800* (Vienna: Reproduced and printed by the printing Office of the Imperial-Royal Austrian Court and State, 1906-1908).

²⁹⁹ Mendel, “Les nouvelles salles du Musée de Constantinople,” 342.

³⁰⁰ Republic of Türkiye Presidential State Archives, BOA.A.MTZ. (05) 17-134, H-28-04-1324; BOA.HR.SRF.3., 537-84, M-29-01-1903 “Müze-i Hümayun’a konulmak üzere British Museum’un neşriyatının sefarete gönderildiği.”; BOA.HR.SRF.3., 646-14, M-18-04-1911 “British Museum Merkez Kütüphanesi Müdürü tarafından Müze-i Osmani’ye hediye olunan kitapların gönderildiği.”; BOA.MF.MKT.1128-42, H-24-05-1327, “Müze-i Osmani’ye gönderdiği tarihi eserlerden dolayı Londra British Museum Müdürü Mösyö Mondakson’a Müze-i Osmani adına teşekkür yazısı gönderilmesi.”

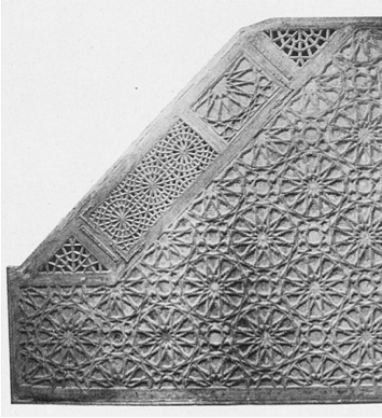


Figure 23. Minbar at the Imperial Museum, 16th century, Urfa. Source: Gustave Mendel, “Les nouvelles salles du Musée de Constantinople,” *La Revue de l’art ancien et modern* 26 (July-December 1909), 337-352: 349.³⁰¹



Figure 24. Minbar at the V&A, 15th century, Cairo. Source: V&A website “Collections,” [accessed March 2023], <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O48775/minbar-unknown/>.³⁰²

Mendel finishes his article by emphasizing the educational role of the museum:

“Je voudrais terminer en formulant un vœu: c’est que ce joli musée ne servit pas seulement aux l’études des savants et au plaisir des amateurs, mais qu’il fournisse à l’artisan turc des modèles et des leçons, qu’il le rende à ses traditions anciennes, qu’il l’affranchisse des influences occidentales qui, depuis si longtemps, s’imposent à lui, et sous les formes les plus grossières et les plus viles. En s’efforçant de faire comprendre à leurs compatriotes la beauté et le charme du vieil art national, Hamdy bey [Osman Hamdi] et ses collaborateurs contribueront de la manière la plus efficace à la richesse et au développement économique de leur pays.”³⁰³

According to Mendel, this collection should help “Turkish craftsmen” (*l’artisan turc*) to restore their “ancient traditions,” which had been under Western influence for so long. The museum section would show “the charm of the old national art” to the *l’artisan turc* and would be the most

³⁰¹ Photograph from Mendel, “Les nouvelles salles du Musée de Constantinople,” 349.

³⁰² Accession Numbers: 1050 :1 to 2-1869.

³⁰³ Italics have been added for emphasis. Mendel, “Les nouvelles salles du Musée de Constantinople,” 3452.

effective contribution to the wealth and economic development of the Ottoman state. Although with different intentions, both Reinach and Halil Edhem advocated Islamic art collections as the national cultural heritage of the Ottoman Empire. Mendel, too, underlines the role of the Islamic art collections as the “national” art of the Ottoman state. Moreover, Mendel’s comments on the educational role of this collection recalls the mission of the Victoria and Albert Museum, which was established in 1852 with an aim to educate and improve designers, manufacturers, and the public in art and design.³⁰⁴

In the 1910 edition of *A Guide to Constantinople*, Coufopoulos dedicates almost two pages to the new display. The increasing page number indicates the growth of the collection and the given importance given to it. It reads:

“Chinili Kiosk [...] is used now as a Museum, and it is well worth a visit. Holders of tickets to the museum proper are entitled to a free visit to this building as well. The objects in it are of pure Muhammadan and Turkish art, and they mostly consist of objects of the decorative art.

Among others, on the wall, a large Ispahan rug of the 15th century. The Mihrab or niche of blue tiles taken from a ruined mosque in Asia. It is one of the finest specimens of early encaustic art, and it is noted for its resemblance to the famous Mihrab of the Blue Mosque in Bursa. A collection of Persian and Turkish tiles and vases, some carved wood and a fairly good collection of Rhodian plates.

Some of the old wooden doors taken from ruined mosques are well worth inspection, as they are artistically carved and inlaid with ivory and mother-of-pearl. The yellow rug lying on the floor is said to have been used for many years in the Mosque of St. Sophia.”³⁰⁵

In the new edition, Coufopoulos erases his previous false comment about the origin of the tiled mihrab. The information that he provides about the displayed items parallels Mendel’s. This time, Coufopoulos does not mention about the objects which had belonged to the sultans. The emphasis that the museum was worth to visiting is important, since this is a revised opinion of the author after the new installation of the collection. Different from the earlier guide, this time he uses the term

³⁰⁴ It was first located in Marlborough House as the Museum of Ornamental Arts in 1852 and moved to its current home on Exhibition Road in 1857. The V&A website “Building the Museum,” [accessed March 2023] <https://www.vam.ac.uk/articles/building-the-museum>.

³⁰⁵ Demetrius Coufopoulos, *A Guide to Constantinople*, fourth edition (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1910), 119-120.

“Muhammedan and Turkish art.” It is curious that he separates these two terms from each other. It is significant to see that Coufopoulos categorizes the collection as “decorative art.”

Konstantinopel, Balkanstaaten, Kleinasien Archipel, Cypern; Handbuch für Reisende, a German travel guide dated 1914, presents detailed information about the display layout of the collection under the part entitled Çinili Köşk. It states that both old and new Islamic art works are exhibited in the kiosk.³⁰⁶ The emphasis of “old and new” objects is curious and recollects an understanding of a decorative art museum. Maybe this guidebook perceives the collection as a decorative art museum. According to this guidebook, there are ten sections of the display including the Lobby, which is numbered I (see Fig. 25).

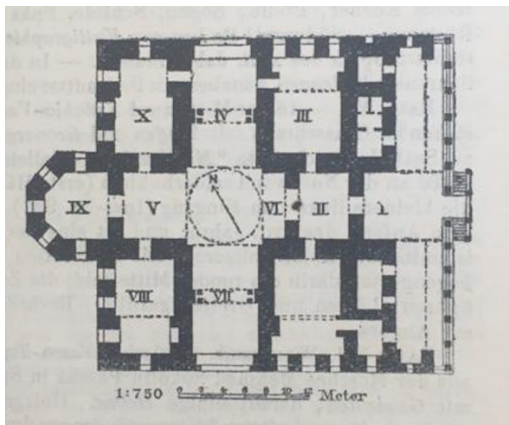


Figure 25. Ground plan of the Çinili Kiosk, around 1914. Source: *Konstantinopel, Balkanstaaten, Kleinasien Archipel, Cypern; Handbuch für Reisende* (Leipzig, K. Bædeker, 1914).

As mentioned above, Gustave Mendel wrote each object was “properly placed a grouped by families” for the new display in the Çinili Kiosk.³⁰⁷ However, by looking at the 1914 guidebook, it is difficult to see a rational and proper categorization within the display. Like in the previous one, again it seems rather random. Categorization can only be spoken about for some of the display cases. For example, a group of early Islamic

³⁰⁶ *Konstantinopel, Balkanstaaten, Kleinasien Archipel, Cypern; Handbuch für Reisende* (Leipzig, K. Bædeker, 1914), 205.

³⁰⁷ Gustave Mendel, “Les nouvelles salles du Musée de Constantinople,” 340

pottery from Raqqa was displayed in a freestanding display case in room X³⁰⁸ In room V, a wall display case contains various armors.³⁰⁹ However, a prayer rug, samples of calligraphy, and a Qur'an stand can be seen next to the armory case in the same room. Therefore, it is not easy to detect a consistent and meaningful display techniques.



Figure 26. Islamic antiquities in the Tiled Pavilion, c. 1909. Source: Wendy M. K. Shaw, *Possessors and possessed: museums, archaeology, and the visualization of history in the late Ottoman Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 211.

Thanks to the few photographs of the Çinili Kiosk interior, it is possible to visualize the display. Figure 26, dated 1909, shows probably the central area of the building (numbered as II, IV, V, VI, and VII in the above-mentioned ground plan). There are similarities with the pre-1908 display. The same display cases were in use, and it is even possible to see a very similar arrangement of ceramic mosque lamps as in the previous gallery (see Fig. 15). Here again, the large-scale carpets are laid on the

³⁰⁸ *Konstantinopel, Balkanstaaten, Kleinasien Archipel, Cypern*, 207.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 206

floor, but this time a platform was built under the carpets for their preservation. A rope encircles the platform to separate the visitor and the exhibited objects. Again, Qur'an stands and a Qur'an cabinet are placed on the rugs. Another similarity is the display of the metal lantern hanging from the ceiling.

The book entitled *Meisterwerke der Türkischen Museen zu Konstantinopel: Die Sammlung türkischer und islamischer Kunst im Tschinili köschk* (1938), written by the German Islamic art and architecture expert German Ernst Kühnel (1882-1964), can be accepted as the first catalogue of the Islamic art collection of the Imperial Museum.³¹⁰ In the foreword, Kühnel states that Halil Edhem suggested preparing this book more than a decade before, but it was not possible to publish it until this date without the efforts of the German Orient Institution.³¹¹ This catalogue dedicated to the Turkish and Islamic art in Çinili Köşk was the third volume of the museum catalogue series entitled *Meisterwerke der Türkischen Museen zu Konstantinopel*, which began publication in 1928.

The name of the catalogue gives a clue about the changing mindset about the museum. The masterpiece approach became popular for Islamic art objects after the "Meisterwerke muhammedanischer Kunst" exhibition, which was organized in Munich in 1910. Ernst Kühnel was 28 years old at the time, and he was an assistant curator of this exhibition. One year after the 1910 Munich exhibition, Kühnel started to work as the assistant to Friedrich Sarre, who was the first director of the "Department of Persian-Islamic Art" (*Abteilung der persisch-islamischen kunst*) in the Kaiser-Friedrich Museum (currently Bode Museum) in Berlin, established in 1904. As stated in Chapter 1, this department grew into the museum of Islamic art, which is today known as the *Museum für Islamische Kunst* in Berlin. Kühnel took over the position from Friedrich Sarre and served as the director of the museum in Berlin between 1931 and 1951. Therefore, he was still the director of the *Museum für Islamische*

³¹⁰ Ernst Kühnel and Aziz Ogan, *Meisterwerke der türkischen Museen zu Konstantinopel: Die Sammlung türkischer und islamischer Kunst im Tschinili köschk* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1938).

³¹¹ "Die Vorarbeiten zu dem vorliegenden Bande, zu dem Herr Halil Edhem die Anregung gab, liegen bereits über ein Jahrzehnt zurück. Erst jetzt wurde durch die Bemühungen des Deutschen Orient-Vereins, vor allem des uns kürzlich durch den Tod entrissenen Vorsitzenden des Wissenschaftlichen Ausschusses, Straatsrat Dr. Wiegand, und durch das Entgegenkommen des Verlages W. de Gruyter & Co. eine Drucklegung ermöglicht." *Ibid.*, unpaginated.

Kunst in Berlin when he was writing *Meisterwerke der Türkischen Museen zu Konstantinopel* for the Imperial Museum.

Although Halil Edhem was an expert on the Islamic art collection of the Imperial Museum, he invited Kühnel, who was a well-known scholar with many publications on Islamic art and architecture, mainly written in German and English.³¹² The field of art history in general but also the field of Islamic art and architecture was dominated by foreigners, particularly German and Austrian scholars, in those years. In Türkiye, art history as a separate branch had started to be taught for the first time at the University of Istanbul by the Austrian art historian Ernst Diez (1878–1961) in 1943.³¹³ This could also be the reason why Ernst Kühnel was asked to write the Islamic art catalogue of the museum. On the other hand, inviting a well-known scholar and museum director for the preparation of *Meisterwerke der Türkischen Museen zu Konstantinopel* shows the importance given to it. Probably, Halil Edhem was trying to promote and position the Islamic art collection of the Imperial Museum to a wider and international audience.

The Islamic art collection of the Imperial Museum remained in Çinili Köşk until 1939. Based on the postcards of the Çinili Köşk interior from the 1930s, the display of the collection seems unchanged over the years (see Figures 27 and 28). Therefore, the concept of masterpiece might be limited to the catalogue and not to the display. Although the museum director of the time, Aziz Ogan (1888-1956), who was appointed in 1931, was against this move, the Islamic art collection of the museum was dispersed among different museums in 1939.³¹⁴ As far as I am aware, the reason behind the dispersal of the Islamic art collection in Çinili Köşk is not clear. Considering the objections of the museum director and the recent catalogue of the Islamic art collection, which was published with

³¹² For his bibliography see Kurt Erdmann, "Bibliography of the Writings of Ernst Kühnel," *Ars Orientalis* vol.1 (1954), 195-208.

³¹³ Oktay Aslanapa, *Türkiye'de Avusturyalı Sanat Tarihçileri ve Sanatkarlar/Österreichische Kunsthistoriker und Künstler in Der Türkei* (Istanbul: Eren Yayıncılık, 1993), 9. Also, Diez worked in the "Department of Persian-Islamic Art" in the Kaiser-Friedrich Museum between 1908 and 1911. Semavi Eyice, "İ.Ü. Edebiyat Fakültesi Sanat Tarihi Kürsüsü'nün Kurucusu Prof. Dr. Ernst Diez (1878–1961)," *Istanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Sanat Tarihi Yıllığı XIV* (1997), 3-15: 3.

³¹⁴ "Müzeler 1939 da iki grupta ayrılmış, Türkiye'nin esaslı eski bir Müzesi ve milletlerarası büyük bir şöhreti olan Arkeoloji Müzesinin islâmî koleksiyonunu ihtiva eden Çinili Köşkdeki Türk, Arap, Acem eserleri diğer müzelere dağıtılmışdır." Aziz Ogan, *Türk Müzeciliğinin Yüzüncü Dönümü/ A Historical Survey of a Museum of Antiquities at Istanbul* (Istanbul: Türkiye Turing ve Otomobil Kurumu, 1947), 11-12. Typos are left purposely as in the source.

international collaboration, the closure of Çinili Köşk is a curious decision.

In 1953, *Fetih Müzesi* (The Museum of Conquest) was opened in Çinili Köşk to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the conquest of Constantinople (Istanbul). The museum was devoted to Sultan Mehmed II (r. 1444–1446, 1451–81), byname Fatih Sultan Mehmed (Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror), who captured Constantinople in 1453. The costumes and armories of Sultan Mehmed II, which were brought from the collection of Topkapı Palace, were displayed in Çinili Köşk.³¹⁵ The nature of the objects can be categorized under the umbrella term “Islamic,” but the attributed meanings and the narrative of the museum had been changed significantly. As such, the story of the Islamic art collection in the Imperial Museum (renamed after the establishment of the Turkish Republic and later Istanbul Archaeological Museums) came to an end.



Figure 27. The interior of the Çinili Köşk, c. 1930s. Source: Salt Research Archive, <https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/85266>.



Figure 28. One of the tiled rooms of the Çinili Köşk, c. 1930s. Source: Salt Research Archive, <https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/79309>.

³¹⁵ *Fetih Müzesi*, museum catalogue (Ankara: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 1953).

2.c. Concluding Remarks

The earliest public Islamic art collection in Ottoman Turkey was created in the late nineteenth century within the Imperial Museum. The formation and display of the earliest Islamic art collection in the Ottoman Empire from the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century was a complex and multifaceted process that involved various political, cultural, and intellectual factors. The earliest public Islamic art gallery was formed in 1895 in the Imperial Museum almost a decade before the Islamic art galleries in the well-known museums of Europe such as the Kaiser Friedrich and the Louvre. This initiative was started under the directorship of Osman Hamdi and developed by the efforts of Halil Edhem in the early twentieth century. The establishment of the Islamic art gallery within the Imperial Museum had both cultural and political implications. The initial and strongest motivation behind the formation of the collection was to protect Islamic art objects from being collected and benefitted from by westerners. Collecting and displaying Islamic art in the museum also represented an effort to preserve and promote the artistic achievements of the Islamic world. On the other hand, it served as a tool for Ottoman nationalism and identity-building, as it showcased the cultural and historical connections between the Ottoman Empire and broader Islamic civilization.

The physical display of the Islamic art collection in the Imperial Museum shifted within the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The first gallery “had a bit of chaotic look of an antique shop,” as described by Mendel. After moving to Çinili Köşk, the gallery was reinstalled according to typology and material, with a focus on the aesthetic and technical details of the objects like in a decorative art museum display. The travel guide reviews and the articles about the collection written by Europeans after the reinstallation in 1908 praise the collection and emphasize the similarities between the Islamic art collection of the Imperial Museum and other significant collections such as the V&A. The changing perception of the Imperial Museum’s Islamic art collection demonstrates its growing importance. The analysis of the earliest Islamic art collection in the Ottoman Empire shows that the management of the Imperial Museum tried to improve the Islamic art collection and display as a part of national heritage and wanted to put it on par with international museums.

CHAPTER 3

Formation and Display of the First Islamic Art Museum in the Ottoman Empire

Although gathering and displaying Islamic art objects from mainly pious foundations was started earlier, as stated in Chapter 2, a museum solely devoted to Islamic art was not established until 1914. A museum was founded under the name of *Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi* (Museum of Islamic Endowments) at the former soup kitchen of the Süleymaniye Mosque Complex just before the World War I as the last museum of the Ottoman Empire.³¹⁶ After the proclamation of the Turkish Republic, under the strong nationalism policy, the name of the museum was changed in 1926 to *Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi* (TİEM) (the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts).³¹⁷ Today, the museum is located in Sultanahmet. It moved from the Süleymaniye soup kitchen to İbrahim Paşa Sarayı (İbrahim Pasha Palace) in 1983/4. This chapter examines the museum display both conceptually and physically during the Ottoman period between 1914 and 1922.

3.a. A Museum Solely Devoted to the Islamic Art Collections: *Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi*

Considering the development of the Islamic art collection and reinstallation of the gallery within the Imperial Museum in 1908, the formation of an individual museum solely devoted to the objects from the Islamic world in Istanbul is rather curious. As far as I am aware, the first mention of an establishment of a museum under the management of the Islamic Endowments (*Evkaf*) is dated December 8, 1907.³¹⁸ An

³¹⁶ Mustafa Göleç, "Siyaset İdeoloji ve Müzecilik: II. Meşrutiyet'te Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi," *Türk Kültürü İncelemeleri*, vol. 30 (Spring 2014), 141-160: 153.

³¹⁷ Nazan Ölçer, *Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi* (Istanbul: Akbank, 2002), 17.

³¹⁸ "Bursa'daki cevami-i şerife ile türbelerden bazısında mevcut kıymetli mushaf-ı şerife ve levhalar ile halı ve seccade gibi asar-ı atıkanın hüsn-i muhafazası için Evkaf İdaresi namuna bir müze tesisiyle bunların oraya nakilleri yahut şimdilik Vilayet Maarif İdaresi'ne ait müze-i hümayunun şubesinde ayrıca bir mahalde muhafazaları hakkında Hüdavendigâr Vilayeti'nden varid olan tahrirat." Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye Directorate of the State Archives: BOA, BEO, dosya no. 3204, gömlek no. 240300, Hijra-03-11-1325 [8 December 1907]. "Ancient works such as the valuable Qur'an, calligraphic panels, carpets, and prayer rugs existing in some of the mosques and tombs in Bursa should be transferred

archival document states that a museum will be established on the behalf of the Islamic Endowments to protect valuable ancient works (*asar-ı atika*)—such as Quran manuscripts, carpets, prayer rugs, and calligraphic panels—collected from mosques and mausoleums in Bursa. The correspondence orders keeping these collected works at the Bursa branch of the Imperial Museum until a museum of Islamic Endowments is ready. Nevertheless, *Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi* (the Museum of Islamic Endowments) in Bursa was never realized.

Before going into detail about *Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi* in Istanbul, I would like to briefly mention the provincial Imperial Museums, including the branch in Bursa. Under the protection policy of ancient artifacts within Imperial territory, branches of the Imperial Museum were planned in various cities. A small museum in Konya, founded in 1899, was the first provincial museum branch.³¹⁹ Other provincial “modest” museums were formed in Sivas, Thessaloniki, and Izmir.³²⁰ The Imperial Museum branch in Bursa was the second one and was inaugurated on September 1, 1904, to coincide with the anniversary of the enthronement ceremony (*cülus töreni*) of Sultan Abdülhamid II (r.1876–1909).³²¹ This practice became common in the short museum history of the Ottoman Empire. The different buildings of the Imperial Museum in Istanbul were also inaugurated on the days like this. The public buildings and clocktowers, which were one of the symbols of Abdülhamid II’s reign, were always inaugurated during the anniversaries of enthronement (*cülus*) or ascensions to the throne.³²²

to a museum established by the Pious Foundation Administration for preservation; or, these items should be transferred to the branch of the Imperial Museum belonging to the Provincial Education Administration to be preserved for now. Correspondence from Hüdavendigâr Province in Bursa.” Translation of the archival document from Ottoman Turkish to English by the author.

³¹⁹ Gustave Mendel, *Catalogue des sculptures grecques, romaines et byzantinesdu musée de Brousse: musées impériaux ottomans* (Athens, Impr. Sakellarios, 1908), Introduction, unpaginated; İsmail Yaşayanlar, “Devlet, Arkeoloji ve Âsâr-ı Atıka: Bir Vilayet Müzeciliği Örneği Olarak Müze-i Hümâyûn Bursa Şubesi” *Uludağ Üniversitesi Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* (2018) vol. 19, no. 35, 555-585: 566.

³²⁰ In addition, storage was created to keep the ancient works safe in places like Bergama, Kuşadası and Cos. Mendel, *Catalogue des sculptures grecques, romaines et byzantinesdu musée de Brousse*, unpaginated; Yaşayanlar, “Devlet, Arkeoloji ve Âsâr-ı Atıka: Bir Vilayet Müzeciliği Örneği Olarak Müze-i Hümâyûn Bursa Şubesi,” 566.

³²¹ The ascension to the throne of Sultan Abdülhamid II was August 31, 1876. Mendel, *Catalogue des sculptures grecques, romaines et byzantinesdu musée de Brousse*, unpaginated.

³²² Mustafa Göleç, “Siyaset, İdeoloji ve Müzecilik,” 153.

Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi in Istanbul was, indeed, opened at the enthronement anniversary of Sultan Mehmed V Reşad (r. 1909–1918).³²³

According to the *Catalogue des sculptures grecques, romaines et byzantines du musée de Brousse* (1908) by Gustave Mendel—who also prepared a detailed catalogue for the Imperial Museum collections in Istanbul—the museum collection of Bursa consisted of Greek-Roman, Byzantine, and “musulmane” (Muslim) sections.³²⁴ However, as the title of the catalogue indicates, it does not contain information about the Islamic art collections, and Mendel points out that the Muslim section would deserve a separate study.³²⁵ Two rooms and the garden of the Bursa high school (*Mekteb-i İdadi*) building started to be used as museum galleries. Islamic works such as inscriptions, manuscripts, and coins were on display in one of the rooms.³²⁶ Although in Bursa—which was the capital of the Ottoman Empire from 1326 until the capture of Constantinople in 1453—it is significant to see that the government had been planning to build a museum for Islamic art collections since 1907.

In 1908, the Minister of Islamic Endowments (*Evkaf-ı İslamiye Nazırı*), Rezaizade Ekrem Bey (1847–1914), consulted the Director of the Imperial Museum, Osman Hamdi (1842–1910), to establish a museum to protect precious ancient works in the pious foundations such as mosques and mausoleums from theft.³²⁷ The construction of a new museum building was approved in 1909. However, this plan was never realized because of the economic struggles of the Ottoman Empire. The soup kitchen (*imaret*)—which had already lost its original function in the nineteenth century—of the Süleymaniye Mosque complex (*kiilliyeye*) was chosen as a new museum building in 1911. The soup kitchen is enclosed by a domed arcade and has a central square courtyard. As its name

³²³ DABOA ŞD. 200/22, H-27-05-1332 [23 Nisan 1914].

³²⁴ Mendel, *Catalogue des sculptures grecques, romaines et byzantines du musée de Brousse*, unpaginated.

³²⁵ “et une section musulmane qui serait digne déjà d’une étude spéciale.” Mendel, *Catalogue des sculptures grecques, romaines et byzantines du musée de Brousse*, unpaginated.

³²⁶ Yaşayanlar, “Devlet, Arkeoloji ve Âsar-ı Atfika: Bir Vilayet Müzeciliği Örneği Olarak Müze-i Hümâyûn Bursa Şubesi,” 569.

³²⁷ Istanbul Archaeological Museums’ Archive no: 35/1, September 10, 1324 Hijri calendar [September 23 1908]. Osman Hamdi was invited “[...] to discuss the construction by the Treasury of the Imperial Pious Foundations of an appropriate museum to rescue from loss the precious objects and ancient works found in some mosques and museums, as well as the means of safely preserving these objects until then.” English transcription of the document from Edhem Eldem, “Genesis,” 135. For the Turkish transliteration of the document, see Nazan Ölçer, *Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi: Kilimler* (Istanbul: Eren Yayıncılık, 1988), 32.

suggests, this multi-functional complex was established by Sultan Süleyman I (r. 1520–1566). It was designed and built by the infamous architect Sinan (d. 1588).³²⁸ The Süleymaniye Mosque complex is accepted as one of the most prominent examples of Ottoman architecture. The mosque complex was completed in October 1557. Apart from the mosque, the complex contains four schools (*medrese*) of various levels for fields such as Islamic law, hadith studies, and medicine. In addition, a hospital (*dariüşşifa*), a soup kitchen, a bathhouse (*hammam*), guest rooms (*tabhane*), mausoleums—including those of Sultan Süleyman and the architect Sinan—and many shops were located in the complex (Fig. 29).³²⁹

³²⁸ For a comprehensive scholarly biography of Sinan see Gülru Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire, 1539-1588* (London: Reaktion Books, 2005).

³²⁹ Selçuk Mülayim, "Süleymaniye Camii ve Külliyesi," *TDVİA* (Istanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2010), vol.38: 11.

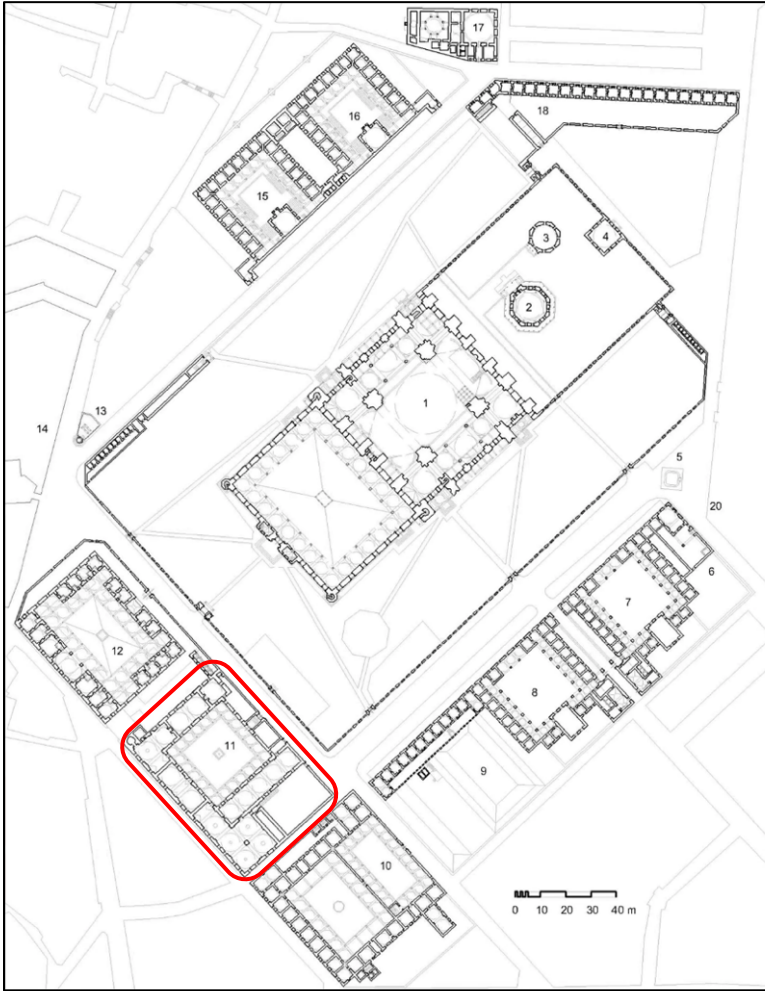


Figure 29. Floor plan of Süleymaniye Mosque complex. (1) Mosque, (2) mausoleum of Sultan Süleyman, (3) mausoleum of Hürrem, (4) Koran recitation school, (5) public fountain, (6) elementary school, (7) first (*evvel*) madrasa, (8) second (*sani*) madrasa, (9) remains of medical school, (10) hospital, (11) soup kitchen, (12) guesthouse, (13) Sinan's tomb with domed sabil and empty plot of his endowed school and residence, (14) the janissary agha's residence, (15) third (*salis*) madrasa, (16) fourth (*rabi*) madrasa, (17) bathhouse, (18) hadith college. Source: Gülru Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire* (London: Reaktion Books, 2005).³³⁰

³³⁰ The floor plan of Süleymaniye Mosque complex is taken from Gülru Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire* (London: Reaktion Books, 2005).

Friedrich Sarre (1865–1945), a pioneering German figure in the Islamic art and archaeology field, who had close relations with the Ottoman scholars and state,³³¹ was also friends with Osman Hamdi and Halil Edhem outside of their professional cooperation.³³² He conveyed his concerns to the Ottoman officials about matters such as the high humidity and insufficient amount of natural light in the chosen museum building.³³³ Nevertheless, the decision was made, and the restoration of the soup kitchen lasted three years. An invitation letter (Fig. 30), purchased at auction by the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts and registered in the *Yazı ve Yazma* (Writing and Manuscript) section of the museum, shows the inauguration date and time: *Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi* was opened on the 27 April 1914 at 3:30 pm, just a few months before World War I (28 July 1914).³³⁴

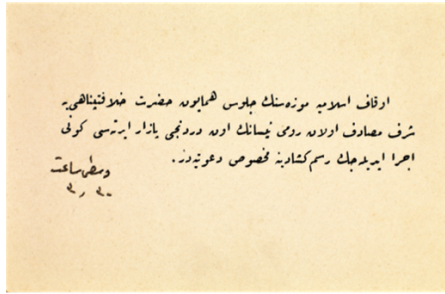


Figure 30. Invitations of the *Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi*, 1914. Source: Seracettin Şahin, Sevgi Kutluay, and Miyase Çelen (eds.) *100 Yıl Önce ve 100 Yıl Sonra: Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi* (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2014), 32.

³³¹ Friedrich Sarre was given a medal by the Ottoman State in 1911 for his role in and contribution to the 1910 Munich Exhibition. Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye Directorate of the State Archives: BOA. MF.MKT. 1169-89, H-15-04-1329 [15 April 1911].

³³² For detailed information on the life and environment of Friedrich Sarre, see Julia Gonella and Jens Kröger (eds.) *Wie die islamische Kunst nach Berlin kam: Der Sammler und Museumsdirektor Friedrich Sarre* (Berlin: Museum für Islamische Kunst - Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, 2015).

³³³ Sevgi Kutluay, “Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi’nin Kurulmasını Hazırlayan Ortam ve Kurucuları,” eds. Seracettin Şahin, Sevgi Kutluay, and Miyase Çelen in *100 Yıl Önce ve 100 Yıl Sonra: Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi* (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2014), 7-42: 32.

³³⁴ “Evkâf-ı İslâmiye Müzesi’nin cülus-u hümayun hazret-i hilâfetpenâhiye şeref müsâdif olan Rumî Nisanın Ondördüncü pazartesi günü icrâ idilecek resmi küşâdına mahsûs da’vetiyedir, Destur Saati 3,30.” Transcription of the invitation letter from the *Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi*, Yazı ve Yazma Section of the Museum and Islamic Arts, Istanbul, inv. no. 4972.

As stated above, a significant day for the Ottoman dynasty was chosen for the inauguration date, which was the enthronement anniversary of the sultan. Although the sultan didn't attend the opening ceremony in person, it was still an important event for government officials. Sultan Mehmed V Reşad gifted his pen and writing case to the museum (Fig. 31).



Figure 31. Writing set gifted by Sultan Mehmed V Reşad. Yazı ve Yazma Section, inventory number 3374. Source: Seracettin Şahin, Sevgi Kutluay, and Miyase Çelen (eds.) *100 Yıl Önce ve 100 Yıl Sonra: Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi* (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2014), 37.

It must have been a crowded event since treats (such as cookies and biscuits) and drinks (such as tea, lemonade and orange syrup) for the opening ceremony were prepared for 250 people.³³⁵ Many important guests attended the inauguration ceremony: for example, the honorary guest was the crown prince Yusuf İzzettin Efendi (1857–1916).³³⁶ The grand vizier Said Halim Paşa (1864–1921), the Minister of Islamic Endowments and the *şeyhülislâm* (the highest state official who made decisions on religious matters), Ürgüplü Hayri Efendi (1867–1921), also

³³⁵ Erdem Yücel, "Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi," *Sanat Dünyamız* (1980), 25-30: 25-26; Sevgi Kutluay, "Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi'nin Kurulmasını Hazırlayan Ortam ve Kurucuları," eds. Seracettin Şahin, Sevgi Kutluay, and Miyase Çelen in *100 Yıl Önce ve 100 Yıl Sonra: Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi* (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2014), 7-42: 32.

³³⁶ Göleç, "Siyaset, İdeoloji ve Müzecilik," 153.

attended the ceremony. In addition, undersecretaries of various ministries—such as the internal, foreign, military, agriculture, finance, telegraph, and post departments—were present at the opening. Moreover, representatives of *İttihad ve Terakki* (the Union and Progress Party) and the Imperial Museum, foreign diplomats, and local and foreign press members were among the guests.³³⁷ The importance of the museum is reflected in the long list of the guests. Also, Fredrich Sarre emphasizes the grandeur of the opening ceremony in his museum review.³³⁸

The director of the Imperial Museum Halil Edhem's speech during the opening ceremony for *Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi* in 1914 drew attention to the problem of smuggling in the previous years and the necessity of collecting the objects residing in pious foundations to ensure their safety—like the National Museum of Arab Art in Cairo, officially established in 1881.³³⁹—. His speech reads:

[...] At the same time, great interest, and curiosity, I would even say respect, developed among Europeans for Islamic works; as well as the rich and the powerful, started to form collections of such objects. The antique dealers acting as middlemen, visited houses in Istanbul and in the provinces and acquired whatever sacred buildings, those places too were violated. The employees in charge of sacred buildings and libraries, paid barely enough to feed themselves and finding it difficult to make a living, slipped into deceit. Setting aside the provinces, an endless number of books and objects, even tiles torn out of walls, have been taken from the mosques, mausoleums, many tiles and even whole panels and window pediments are exhibited that have been taken from the mausoleums of Eyyüb Sultan; the mosques of Sultan Ahmed, Piyale Pasha, Takkeci and Yeni Cami; from the mausoleum of Şehzade and Murad III; the library of the Hagia Sophia; and the Baghdad Kiosk of the Imperial Palace of Topkapı.

Given the destruction to which our greatest monuments have been subjected, the time had come to consider an urgent solution for the preservation of those removable objects that have survived. As in Egypt years earlier, that solution was to collect these objects together in a designated location and to entrust them to the management of a responsible director. That is why, with the greatest joy and pride, we applauded the inauguration, on the first day of Cemaziyülahir 1132

³³⁷ Ibid., 32

³³⁸ Fredrich Sarre, "Ein neues Museum muhammedanischer Kunst in Konstantinopel," *Kunstronik*, 36 (1914), 522-526: 523.

³³⁹ Marx Herz Bey, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the National Museum of Arab Art*, translated by G. Foster Smith, second edition (Cairo: National Printing Department, 1907), preface, unpaginated.

[April 27, 1914] the anniversary of the accession of His Majesty the Caliph of the museum founded under the name ‘Museum of Pious Foundation [Evkaf-ı İslamiye].’”³⁴⁰

Even after the 1906 Antiquities Law, which protected Islamic antiquities, theft continued within the Ottoman territory. Eventually, it led to the foundation of a museum to protect objects under the management of the Ministry of Islamic Endowments.

A board member of *Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi* Mehmed Ziya Bey (1866/67–1930), also gave an opening speech, and it was charged with nationalist discourse. He emphasized the importance of learning the fine arts of one’s own ancestors for progress. According to Mehmed Ziya Bey, this museum would help to form a “national memory” (*milli hatıra*), “develop moral” (*ahlakın gelişmesi*), and “mature national manners” (*milli terbiyenin olgunlaşması*).³⁴¹ Mehmed Ziya also believed that the Islamic world was “the first teacher of the European fine arts” and only with research and learning can we appreciate our ancestors’ contributions to civilization and science.³⁴²

An illustrated museum catalogue that describes the “historical” and “artistic” significance of the museum objects was planned to be published even before the official opening of the Evkaf-ı İslamiye Museum.³⁴³ The Minister of Education (*Maarif-i Umumiye Nazırı*), Emrullah Efendi (?–1913), recalled the importance of a “complete” (*mükemmel*) museum catalogue in a letter written to the new director of the Imperial Museum, Halil Edhem, on April 9, 1910.³⁴⁴ However, it took

³⁴⁰ Manuscript draft of a text on the inauguration of the Museum of Pious Foundation by Halil Edhem [Eldem]. Edhem Eldem’s collection. Edhem Eldem, “The Genesis of the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts,” ed. Massumah Ferhad, *The Art of the Qur’an: Treasures from the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts* (Smithsonian Books: 2016), 119-139: 120,138.

³⁴¹ A document from the archive of the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, published by the former assistant museum director Kutluay, “Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi’nin Kurulmasını Hazırlayan Ortam ve Kurucuları,” 37.

³⁴² Kutluay, “Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi’nin Kurulmasını Hazırlayan Ortam ve Kurucuları,” 37.

³⁴³ “Komisyonun nazar-ı takdirine tevdi eyledeğim diğer bir mesele vardır ki bu da mebânî ve âsar-ı menkulenin tarihiyeleri ile sanat kıymet-i bedialarını tarif edecek mükemmel bir nüsha-i musavverenin telifi çaresini istihzar eylemektir. Bu nüsha-i bedia ve âsârın bir mahfaza-i kitâbîsi olacağından ehemmiyetini beyana hacet yoktur. [...]” Transcribed in Hâmît Zübeyr Koşay, M.E. Zarif Orgun, Sadı Bayram, Erdoğan Tan, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Çağlarında Türk Kazı Tarihi: Arkeolojik Hafriyat ve Müzecilik Tarihimizi Aydınlatacak Osmanlı Dönemi Resmî Yazışmalarına Ait Muhtelif Belge Örnekleri*, cilt 1, kitap 1 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2013), 349.

³⁴⁴ Ibid.

another 29 years and a change of regime for the first catalogue of the museum to be published.

An archival document dated May 1912 shows the correspondence between the Ottoman state and the “Kensington Museum” in London. The Kensington Museum mentioned in the archival document should be the South Kensington Museum, which was renamed as the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) in 1899. According to this document, the Ministry of Imperial Islamic Endowments (*Evkaf-ı Hümayun Nezareti*) requested the directory of the “Şark” (East) and Islamic collections and copies of the related museum catalogues from the V&A to set an example for *Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi*, which was planned for Istanbul.³⁴⁵ British archaeologist and the director of the V&A at the time, Cecil Smith (1859–1944), replied to the request of the Ottoman state through the Ottoman embassy. Smith’s letter, dated 25 May 1912, reads:

“Dear Sir,

I have pleasure in sending, as requested in your letter of the 16th instant, two copies each of the General Museum Regulations and the Library Regulations for the use of the Ottoman Embassy.

I am sorry that I cannot furnish the Embassy with a Catalogue of the works on Islam and Islamic Art and Oriental Culture contained in the Museum. The collection of books on Islamic Art and Oriental Culture in the Library of this Museum is very extensive and no special Catalogue or List of it is available. If, however, any particular branch of Islamic Art is specified it might be possible to draw up a list of some of the most important works dealing with it in the Library, or if it should be convenient to you to visit the Museum yourself, the Officers of the Library will be glad to give you all the assistance in their power in the selection of books required.

Yours faithfully”³⁴⁶

The first request of the Ottoman state was met by the V&A, and the museum and library regulations were sent. However, the second request related to the catalogues could not be fulfilled by the V&A. Although the V&A Library contained many books on the different branches of the Islamic art, there was no catalogue solely dedicated to the Islamic art collection of the V&A. Smith invited the Ottoman officials for a visit to

³⁴⁵ DABOA HR.SRF.3/673-48, M-25-05-1912.

³⁴⁶Letter from Cecil Smith to the Ottoman Embassy. DABOA HR.SRF.3/673-48, M-25-05-1912.

the library of the V&A to benefit from the sources. As far as I am aware, there is no record (in the state archives of Türkiye) of an Ottoman official visiting the library of the V&A following this letter.

This correspondence during the formation period of the *Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi* is a telling document, since it shows the international ties of the museum management. The Ottoman officials were clearly following the work in the international arena and were aware of significant Islamic art collections outside the Ottoman Empire. As stated before, the British Museum was also sending catalogues to the Imperial Museum and various books to the library of the Sultan Abdülhamid II (r. 1876–1909) and Sultan Mehmed V (r. 1909–1918).³⁴⁷ In addition, the collaboration between German-speaking scholars and the Ottoman state is reflected in the archival documents in the cultural heritage areas, particularly in the archaeological field. There was also a strong relationship between France and the Ottoman scholars, since the majority went to study in Paris in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

This specific request from the V&A is intriguing, since there were other museums which had Islamic art collections and even Islamic art galleries by the 1910s. Other museums such as the British Museum in London, the Louvre in Paris, the Hermitage in St. Petersburg, the Metropolitan Museum in New York, the National Museum of Arab Art (renamed the Museum of Islamic Art in 1951) in Cairo, and the complex of museums in Berlin started to form their collections during the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.³⁴⁸ As stated before, the Louvre and the Kaiser-Friedrich Museums had already opened galleries solely devoted to their Islamic art collections in 1904 and 1905, respectively. On the other hand, as discussed in Chapter 1, the V&A

³⁴⁷ DABOA Y.MTV. 232-94, H-16-04-1320 [23 July 1902]; DABOA HR.SRF.3/346-74, M-15-11-1888; DABOA HR.SRF.3/494-6, M-26-05-1900; DABOA HR.SRF.3/505-35, M-21-06-1901; DABOA HR.SRF.3/505-36, M-21-06-1901; DABOA HR.SRF.3/522-27, M-28-06-1902; DABOA HR.SRF.3/537-84, M-29-01-1903; DABOA HR.SRF.3/537-85, M-03-02-1903; DABOA HR.SRF.3/549-8, M-17-01-1905; DABOA HR.SRF.3/582-37, M-11-03-1908; DABOA HR.SRF.3/614-15, M-24-05-1910; DABOA HR.SRF.3/646-14, M-18-04-1911; DABOA HR.SRF.3/646-18, M-04-05-1911; DABOA HR.SRF.3/673-21, M-13-03-1912.

³⁴⁸ Stephen Vernoit, "Islamic Art in the West: Categories of Collecting," in *A Companion to Islamic Art and Architecture*, eds. Finbarr Barry and Gülru Necipoğlu (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2018), 1159

“was the first institution in the world to form a systematic and purposeful collection of Islamic art.”³⁴⁹

The aim of *Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi* was defined simply in the directory:

“[The] establishment purpose of *Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi* (Islamic Pious Endowments Museum) is to summon (collect) and display all the objects (*teberrûkât*) of mausoleums and mosques and rare ancient works (*âsar-ı kadime-i nadire*) and Islamic arts (*nefise-i İslâmiye*).”³⁵⁰

There is no clue in this directory that the mission of *Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi* was to be a decorative art museum. However, the archival correspondence dated 1912 brings to the mind that if *Evkaf-ı İslamiye Museum* was initially planned to be established as a decorative art museum, it took the V&A as an example.

Three months after the opening of *Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi*, “Gazette des beaux arts,” one of the most important periodicals of the time, published a one paragraph review of the new museum:

“On a inauguré dernièrement à Constantinople un nouveau musée; œuvre de l'architecte Kemal Bey, consacré spécialement à l'art musulman et qui a été créé, pour combler une lacune que tout le monde déplorait, par le ministre Evkaf (dont il porte le nom), aidé d'un comité de organisateurs parmi lesquels le directeur des Musées ottomans [Ahmed] Hakki Bey. Le musée est divisé en plusieurs grandes sections : tapis, étoffes, manuscrits, objets de métalliques, céramiques et boiseries.”³⁵¹

The museum collection was categorized based upon typology—such as carpets and manuscripts—and material—like metalworks, woodwork, and ceramics. Interestingly, the article states that this type of museum

³⁴⁹ Stephen Vernoit, “Islamic Art and Architecture,” in *Discovering Islamic Art: Scholars, Collectors and Collections, 1850-1950*, ed. Stephen Vernoit (London & New York: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2000), 22.

³⁵⁰ English translation of the directory is by the author. Transcription of the “Evkâf-ı İslâmiye Müzesi'nin maksadı tesisi bilumum hayratı şerife ve mahalli sairedeki teberrûkât ve eşya-i vakfiye meyanında âsar-ı kadime-i nadire ve nefise-i İslâmiyeden icad edenleri celp ile teşhirden ibarettir.” The Turkish is transcribed in Hâmit Zübeyr Koşay, M.E. Zarfı Orgun, Sadi Bayram, Erdoğan Tan, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Çağlarında Türk Kazı Tarihi: Arkeolojik Hafriyat ve Müzecilik Tarihimizi Aydınlatacak Osmanlı Dönemi Resmî Yazışmalarına Ait Muhtelif Belge Örnekleri*, cilt 1, kitap 1 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2013), 337.

³⁵¹ Italics belong to me. *La Chronique des arts et de la curiosité: supplément à la Gazette des beaux-arts* (Paris: Gazette des beaux-arts), no. 26, 11/07/1914, 202.

was in demand, and it was opened to fill a gap that everyone deplored. The article might be referencing to theft incidents that were happening quite often.³⁵² Also, an article entitled “How are our national antiquities being destroyed?” (*Asar-ı Atika-ı Milliyemiz Nasıl Mahv Oluyor?*)—written by the Imperial Museum director, Hallil Edhem, in 1911,—the same year that the restoration of the soup kitchen began for the museum—might have been echoed in this French article.³⁵³

Another review was published on the newly opened museum in one of the foremost periodicals of the period, *Kunstchronik*, in 1914. In the review entitled “*Ein Neues Museum muhammedanischer Kunst in Konstantinopel*,” Sarre states that the collection of Çinili Köşk was still not sufficient to present the importance of Islamic art. Moreover, the capital of the Caliphate should have a comprehensive museum of “Mohammedan art.”³⁵⁴ Italian Orientalist Ugo Monneret de Villard (1881–1954)³⁵⁵ also wrote an article about the museum, which he visited in 1921, during the Italian occupation of southern Türkiye between 1919 and 1922. Monneret mentions the difference between the Çinili Köşk display and *Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi* as follows:

“Al museo dell'Evgaf non si devono cercare gli esempi della grande arte decorativa turca strettamente collegata con l'architettura: per questo bisogna salire la collina del Serraglio e visitare Tchিনিli-Kiosk, [...] Quivi si potranno studiare alcuni esempi delle belle maioliche di Kutaja, i legni scolpiti di Brussa e di Konia, le ceramiche di Raka, le iscrizioni calligrafiche monumentali, le fontane, i mihrab, le sculture: al museo dell'Evgaf si trova solo la suppellettile religiosa.”³⁵⁶

³⁵² For archival sources on this matter see Hâmit Zübeyr Koşay, M.E. Zarfî Orgun, Sadi Bayram, Erdoğan Tan, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ve Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Çağlarında Türk Kazı Tarihi: Arkeolojik Hafriyat ve Müzecilik Tarihimizi Aydınlatacak Osmanlı Dönemi Resmî Yazışmalarına Ait Muhtelif Belge Örnekleri*, cilt 1, kitap 1 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2013).

³⁵³ Halil Edhem, “Asar-ı Atika. Asar-ı Atika-ı Milliyemiz Nasıl Mahv Oluyor?”

Şehbal 2, no. 36 (Julian Calendar date March 15, 1327/CE March 28, 1911), 226-230. This article mainly focuses on the neglected architecture of the Ottomans and Seljuks. Edhem also discusses the condition of the Islamic art objects such as mosque lamps and Quran cases from the Mamluks contained in these Ottoman and Seljuks monuments.

³⁵⁴ Aber die Bedeutung der islamischen Kunst vermag der Tschinili-Kiosk trotzdem nicht zum Ausdruck zu bringen, und man suchte bisher vergebens in der Hauptstadt der Vormacht des Islams und am Sitz des Kalifats ein umfassenderes Museum muhammedanischer Kunst.” Sarre, ““Ein Neues Museum muhammedanischer Kunst in Konstantinopel,” 523.

³⁵⁵ For detailed information on Ugo Monneret de Villard see Silvia Armando “Ugo Monneret de Villard (1881-1954) and the Establishment of Islamic Art Studies in Italy,” *Muqarnas* vol. 30 (2013), 35-72.

³⁵⁶ Ugo Monneret, “Il Museo degli Evgaf a Costantinopoli,” *Rassegna D'Arte: Antica e Moderna*, vol. 4 (1921), 123-127: 126.

Not surprisingly, he categorizes the new museum as a container of “religious furnishings” (*la suppellettile religiosa*). However, this was not a valid statement. Both museum collections were mainly coming from various pious foundation (*evkaf*) buildings, and the objects—even the ones arriving from mosques—were not classified as “religious” and “non-religious.” These objects gained secular connotations such as aesthetic and historical meanings through the transfer from their original locations to a museum context. The only difference between these two museum collections could be the Islamic archaeological items, such as the finds coming from the Samarra and Rakka archaeological digs. In the following years, mostly in 1941, these archaeological finds entered the collection of the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, Istanbul (formerly *Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi*).

The Islamic art collections of the Imperial Museum and *Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi* were notably similar, both in terms of content and provenance. In fact, it is possible to say that they would overlapped. In addition, both museums were in Istanbul, and the distance between the two buildings was less than 2 kilometers. The Islamic art collection at the Imperial Museum was developing and had just recently been transferred to the Çinili Köşk in 1908. As discussed in Chapter 2, the Çinili Köşk display was already like a separate museum by itself, with its historical building as an example of Islamic architecture and its broad collection. Therefore, one cannot stop wondering why the state wanted to create another Islamic art collection during the most difficult political and economic times of the Ottoman State.

Establishing similar public collections within the same city recalls the Islamic art collections of the V&A and the British Museum. Both museums started to systematically develop their Islamic art collections at the end of the nineteenth century in London. Although the collections of these two museums sometimes overlapped, there was a subtle difference between the two. The V&A curators were more concerned with collecting objects with highly decorative, artistic, and technical value, whereas the British Museum’s infamous curator A. W. Franks (1826–1897) was interested in forming a collection with historical value to complete the Eurocentric narrative of the museum display. However, to my knowledge, no conscious separation was made by the

authorities between the Imperial Museum and *Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi* collections according to provenance, period, or material.

Sultan Abdülhamid II (r. 1876–1909) used Islamic identity by emphasizing his caliphal status as a unified power within the empire against Arab nationalism and Christian imperial powers.³⁵⁷ After the Young Turk Revolution and the establishment of the Second Constitutional Era in 1908, the meaning of Islamic heritage shifted. Collecting and displaying Islamic art became an expression of Turkish nationalism and resistance against European cultural hegemony. As Shaw summarized: “The collection of Islamic arts in the late Ottoman Empire marks a moment of transition from the sectarian to the national, from the religious to the secular, and the imperial against the colonial.”³⁵⁸ Unfortunately, as far as I am aware there is no certain answer to this question other than the necessity of forming a museum to protect the Islamic heritage of the Ottoman Empire from destruction and theft and creating a “national” museum which defined through Islamic identity.

3.b. *Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi* Display: Between 1914 and 1925

Although a detailed museum catalogue was initially planned even before the opening of *Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi* in 1914, it was not published until 1939. A few written sources in German, Ottoman Turkish, and Italian described the museum display. Friedrich Sarre describes the museum courtyard and the building as follows (Fig. 32):

“Mit feinem Verständnis hat man die Örtlichkeit für das Ewkaf-Museum gewählt. [...] Nicht unähnlich einem mittelalterlichen abendländischen Klosterhof zeigt das künstlerisch sehr fein komponierte Gebäude einen von alten Platanen beschatteten Säulenhof, den rings gewölbte Säle umgeben. Und wenn auch diese Anlage, die unwillkürlich an das Thermen-Museum in Rom erinnert, von ganz besonderem Reiz ist, so sind doch, das darf nicht verhehlt werden, die Lichtverhältnisse für ein Museum nicht gerade günstig. Man hat versucht, diesem Mangel durch künstliche (elektrische) Beleuchtung abzuhelfen; aber die ausgestellten Schätze werden wohl

³⁵⁷ Hasan Kayalı, *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908–1918* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 3; Wendy M. K. Shaw, *Possessors and possessed: museums, archaeology, and the visualization of history in the late Ottoman Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 172.

³⁵⁸ Shaw, *Possessors and possessed*, 173.

erst richtig zur Geltung kommen, wenn man sich entschließt, auf Kosten des Gesamteindrucks und ohne Rücksicht auf Pietät größere Lichtöffnungen zu schaffen als die winzigen Fenster, die in möglichst unvoreilhaftester Weise an den Längswänden, einander gegenüber, angebracht sind."³⁵⁹

Sarre only criticizes the insufficient natural light of the museum building due to the tiny windows mounted on the walls opposite one another. As stated in Chapter 2, he warned the Ottoman authorities about insufficient lighting and humidity problems in the building before the opening of the museum. Setting the right lighting in museums was a popular topic in those years.

Two Ottoman authors, İhsan Şerif Bey (1866–1939) and Ahmed Süreyya (1848–1923), wrote brief reviews of the museum in 1914 and 1918, respectively. Both praise the chosen museum building and emphasize the harmony between the architecture and the collection itself. İhsan Şerif writes “The Islamic Endowments Museum is a treasure with its case (*zarf*) and content (*mazruf*).”³⁶⁰ Like Sarre and İhsan Şerif, Ahmed Süreyya touches on the coherence between the collection and the building. He interprets “the match between the jewelery (*mücevher*) and its box (*mahfaza*) as a beautiful coincidence” (*hüsn-i tesadüf*).³⁶¹ These comments recall the similar remarks when the Islamic art collection of the Imperial Museum was transferred to Çinili Köşk.

³⁵⁹ Sarre “Ein neues Museum muhammedanischer Kunst in Konstantinopel,” 523.

³⁶⁰ “Evkaf Müzesi zarfıyla ve mazrufuyla cidden bir hazinedir.” Transcribed by the author. İhsan Şerif, “Evkaf-ı İslâmiyye Müzesi,” *Tedrisat Mecmuası*, year iv, vol. 26, 15 Haziran 1330 [28 June 1914], 288.

³⁶¹ “[...] mücevherle mahfaza arasında bir hüsn-i tesadüf [...]” Ahmed Süreyya, “Evkaf-ı İslâmiyye Müzesi,” *İslâm Mecmuası*, IV/56, 15 Cemaziyelahir 1336 [28 Mart 1914], 1112-1117: 1114.



Figure 32. The courtyard of *Evi-kaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi*, c. 1921. Source: Fredrich Sarre “Ein neues Museum muhammedanischer Kunst in Konstantinopel” *Kunstronik*, 36 (1914), 522-526.

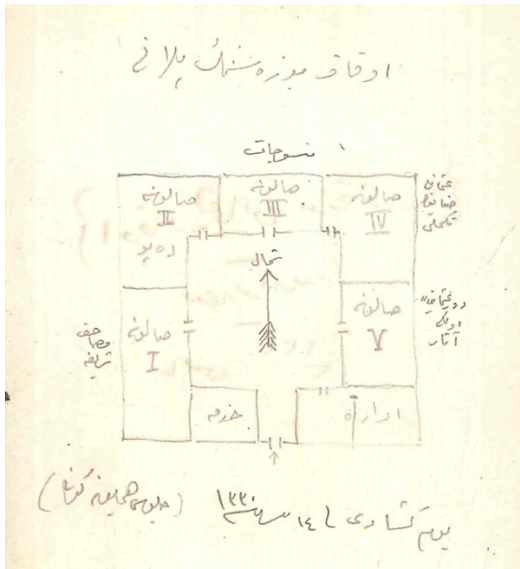


Figure 33. Ground plan sketch of *Evi-kaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi* from the notebook of Halil Edhem, c. 1914. Source: Edhem Eldem, “The Genesis of the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts,” ed. Massumah Ferhad, *The Art of the Qur’an: Treasures from the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts* (Smithsonian Books: 2016), 119-139: 121.

Figure 33 shows the sketch of the museum ground plan drawn by Halil Edhem. This image comes from a personal notebook of Halil Edhem (dated around 1914), which was published by Ethem Eldem in 2014.³⁶² The notebook provides a rather detailed description of the initial exhibition of the collection. However, it is not known how much of this plan was implemented. There are seven rooms in total around the courtyard: Four of them were reserved for the display, and one room was planned as a storage area. The other two rooms were assigned for the usage of the museum management.

According to the notebook, Room I consists of mainly manuscripts and things related to them: Qurans, calligraphic panels—some of them written by Ottoman sultans—, ancient book bindings, marbled papers, Quran cases, and the above-mentioned writing set (inv. no. 3374) used and donated to the museum by Sultan Mehmed V Reşad (see Fig. 31).³⁶³ In addition, there were carpets hanging on the walls of Room I. Room II served as a storage area. Room III, entitled “textiles” (*mencsusat*), contained various types of materials such as carpets, prayer rugs, silk brocades, and leather goods. In addition, garments of Ottoman sultans—including belts and shoes—were exhibited in wall display cases.³⁶⁴ As in Room I, there were again items outside the theme of the room such as a cardboard *tuğra* (calligraphic monogram) of Selim III (r. 1789–1807) with a rococo frame and a pulpit in rococo style from the mausoleum of Zeynep Sultan (1714–1774), daughter of sultan Ahmed III (r. 1703–1730).³⁶⁵

The first rooms were categorized roughly by material and typology, but Room IV was classified on the basis of period. It is entitled “apex of Ottoman art” (*Osmanlı sınaatının tekamülü*).³⁶⁶ Anatolian and eastern Anatolian carpets (known as Armenian carpets in Europe), two Quran cases, two large candlesticks, and various incense burners made from different materials such as porcelain, silver, and tombac were

³⁶² Edhem Eldem (born in 1960) is the grandson of Halil Edhem [Eldem] and therefore obtained his personal archive. Edhem Eldem, “The Genesis,” 121.

³⁶³ Today, this item is exhibited at the entrance of the museum, I will go into details in Chapter 7. Sevgi Kutluay, “Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi’nin Kurulmasını Hazırlayan Ortam ve Kurucuları,” eds. Seracettin Şahin, Sevgi Kutluay, and Miyase Çelen in *100 Yıl Önce ve 100 Yıl Sonra: Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi* (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2014), 7-42: 33; Eldem, “The Genesis,” 121.

³⁶⁴ Eldem, “The Genesis,” 121.

³⁶⁵ Ibid.

³⁶⁶ Ibid.

visible in the gallery.³⁶⁷ Moreover, many small objects such as silver lamps, pendants from mausoleums, and lanterns from mosques were exhibited in a display case.³⁶⁸ The last gallery, Room V, was also categorized based on a vague chronology as “pre-Ottoman works” (*devri Osmanî’den evvelki asar*) coming mostly from Anatolia. For example: Two wooden window panels and the oldest Anatolian carpets from Konya; a wooden cenotaph from Alaşehir, Manisa; Arab and Mamluk metal lamps; glass, celadon, and porcelain lamps; pendants; plates; Damascus³⁶⁹ and Kütahya porcelains; and a few illustrated Iranian manuscripts were exhibited in Room V.

The overall structure of the museum was lack of consistency. Two of the rooms were mainly organized according to material but still contained objects outside the designated category. The other two were divided into a vague chronological order which centered the Ottoman period and defined time as “Ottoman” and “pre-Ottoman.” The only common thing among the objects in the museum collection was the provenance, since all the items were collected from places under the custody of the Ministry of Islamic Endowments.

A few days before the official opening of the museum, Friedrich Sarre visited the museum and wrote a review of it. He does not provide information room by room like Halil Edhem but lists the objects by their material. He states that the most significant items were carpets, which numbered around 700. According to Sarre, the carpet collection of this museum presents the development of patterns:

“Speziell der kleinasiatische Teppich in seinen mannigfachen Variationen ist in dem neuen Museum in einer bisher nirgends vorhandenen Vollständigkeit zu sehen, und seine Entwicklung, die Entstehung der Muster, wird erst mit Benutzung des hier vorhandenen Materials recht verstanden und gewürdigt werden können.”³⁷⁰

Fabric and “Turkish” brocades were the second significant category for Sarre. The display of manuscripts was not ready a few days before the opening, and therefore he didn’t make any comments on their display. However, he mentions the abundance of Qurans, especially

³⁶⁷ Some of these incense burners are still on display in the museum.

³⁶⁸ Eldem, “The Genesis,” 122.

³⁶⁹ As mentioned in Chapter 2, “Damascus” was a misnomer for the porcelains produced in Iznik during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

³⁷⁰ Sarre, “Ein neues Museum muhammedanischer Kunst in Konstantinopel” 524–525.

from later epochs, and considers the collection of Qurans equal to the National Library in Cairo: “[...] und die Sammlung von Koranen steht vielleicht der Vizeköniglichen Bibliothek in Kairo an Bedeutung nicht nach.”

Sarre continues the review by listing other exhibited items:

“Unter den sonstigen Kunstwerken seien einige wenige mittelalterliche Metallarbeiten mit Silber- und Gold-Tauschierung, sog. Mossul-Bronzen, ein paar Glaslampen, auch jüngerer Zeit, ferner sog. Damaskus-, Rhodos- und Kutahia-Fayencen zu nennen. Schöne Holzschnitzereien der mittelalterlich-seldschukischen Epoche, Türen und Sarkophage, sind aus dem Innern Kleinasiens, aus Konia und anderen Städten, gesandt worden. Daß charakteristische Beispiele der jüngeren, speziell türkischen Kunstindustrie, vor allem auch imposante Koranstände und andere Möbel mit Einlagen in Schildpatt und Perlmutter nicht fehlen, ist begreiflich; diese Gegenstände treten mit den Metallarbeiten des türkischen Rokoko, die in reicher Fülle vorhanden sind, hinter den vorerst erwähnten Schätzen in den Hintergrund.”³⁷¹

He uses the term “mittelalterliche” (medieval) often while describing the objects, such as “mittelalterliche Metallarbeiten mit Silber- und Gold-Tauschierung” (medieval metal works with silver and gold inlays) and “Holzschnitzereien der mittelalterlich-seldschukischen Epoche” (wood carvings of medieval Seljuk period).³⁷²

As quoted above, the term “medieval” also appears at the beginning of the article when he describes the museum building (“Not dissimilar to a medieval occidental monastery courtyard [...]”).³⁷³ The underlying reason for this approach might be the positioning of Islamic art and architecture in survey books after Byzantine or Medieval art and architecture.³⁷⁴ In addition, the usage of the term “medieval” by Sarre was a way to make European readers to understand the content of this collection. The closing remarks of Sarre are significant to understanding how *Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi* wished to be positioned by the state, which

³⁷¹ Ibid., 526.

³⁷² Ibid.

³⁷³ Original sentence: “Nicht unähnlich einem mittelalterlichen abendländischen Klosterhof zeigt das künstlerisch sehr fein komponierte Gebäude einen von alten Platanen beschatteten Säulenhof, den rings gewölbte Säle umgeben.” Sarre, “Ein neues Museum muhammedanischer Kunst in Konstantinopel,” 523.

³⁷⁴ For detailed examination about this see Chapter 1.

was defined as an indicator of “modernity” and a “scientific endeavor.”³⁷⁵

Ahmed Süreyya emphasizes the national character of this museum in his article dated 1918. He states that, with a better classification and modifications, *Evkaf-ı İslamiyye Müzesi* would be the best and the most beneficial museum in the Ottoman Empire.³⁷⁶ Süreyya didn't mention the interior features of the museum building; however, he provides brief information about the displayed items, like other sources. The author mentions some objects which were not commented on by other authors such as Sarre and Monneret, who also wrote reviews of the museum. For example, Ahmed Süreyya wrote that there are *lihye-i saadet* (the beard of the Prophet Muhammed) which is accepted as a sacred relic by Orthodox Muslims (*sunni*). Today, the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts contains a gallery, formed in 2014, devoted to the sacred relics of the Prophet Muhammad. This gallery is examined in detail in Chapter 6. In addition, he mentions an architectural model of Yeni Camii, completed in the seventeenth century by the mother of sultan Mehmed IV (r. 1648–1687), Hatice Turhan Sultan (d. 1683).³⁷⁷ Other than these, he lists the expected items such as textiles (*cihazlar*) including carpets, prayer rugs, fabric fragments, silk brocades, and the garments of the Ottoman sultans, as the products of the national industry (*tarih-i sanayi milliyemiz*).³⁷⁸ Different from other reviews, Ahmed Süreyya states that the richest part of the museum is the manuscript collection consisting of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish examples.

The latest written source that I was able to find about the museum in the Ottoman period is dated 1921. Ugo Monneret starts the article by narrating the wishes of the current museum director

³⁷⁵“Das neue Museum muhammedanischer Kunst in der türkischen Hauptstadt ist ein Zeichen der ernsten *wissenschaftlichen Bestrebungen* in der modernen Türkei.” Italics by the author. “The new museum of Mohammedan art in the Turkish capital is a sign of serious scientific endeavors in modern Turkey.” Sarre, “Ein neues Museum muhammedanischer Kunst in Konstantinopel,” 526.

³⁷⁶ “Türk ruhunu yaşatan, hayat-ı milliyeyi temsil eden âsârı arz etmek suretiyle Evkaf-ı İslamiyye Müzesi ananevi bir şekil ve hüviyeti iktisap etmiştir. [...] daha iyi bir tasnif kazandıracak tadilata nail olmak şartıyla bu müzenin en iyi ve hayırlı müzemiz olacağından şüphe yoktur.” Ahmed Süreyya, “Evkaf-ı İslamiyye Müzesi,” *İslâm Mecmuası* IV/56 (15 Cemaziyelahir 1336, [28 Mart 1918]), 1112-1116: 1116.

³⁷⁷ Twenty years later, a newspaper article also mentions about this architectural cast very enthusiastically. This source will be discussed in the following chapter.

³⁷⁸ I Ahmed Süreyya, “Evkaf-ı İslamiyye Müzesi,” *İslâm Mecmuası* IV/56 (15 Cemaziyelahir 1336, [28 Mart 1918]), 1112-1116: 1115.

“Mohammed-Ali-bey” (Mimarzade Mehmed Ali Bey, who was the director of the museum between 1919 and 1922). It reads:

[...] egli ha voluto che il suo museo non fosse un sepolcro dell'arte, ma qualcosa di vivo, dove gli oggetti avessero il loro posto secondo un criterio estetico, pur osservando le grandi ragioni delle successioni storiche e delle differenziazioni tecniche. Nulla di schematico, di scolastico, di rigido. Le opere d'arte delle più differenti materie possono trarre reciproco vantaggio anche se a scuole diverse appartengono e sono giunte dai più diversi paesi dell'Impero. Il dotto musulmano, che non ne parla alcuna lingua, può ben dare delle lezioni ai meno modesti e più ciarlieri colleghi d'Europa.”³⁷⁹

The museum director wanted to display objects primarily according to their aesthetic qualifications, while historical and technical features could be observed.

Also, Monneret does not provide information about the display layout room by room. He gives a glimpse of the displayed objects. Unsurprisingly, he praises the variety of the carpet collection, like Sarre. Monneret emphasizes that all provenances and all schools such as Persian, Turkmen, and Egyptian were represented in the museum.³⁸⁰ Then, he mentions the woodwork, lamps, manuscripts, and book bindings. Monneret was mainly interested in the medieval Islamic world and its interaction with the West. Later in his life in the 1950s, he was working on a catalogue entitled “Opere di arte islamica in Italia.” Therefore, expectedly, his text on this museum contains references to similar objects finding their way to Italy and influence on Veneto-Saracen technique. Monneret concludes his article by emphasizing the richness of the new museum’s collection:

“Queste in rapido cenno le ricchezze del nuovo museo che gli studiosi occidente li ancora ignorano. Farne un esame completo vorrebbe dire scrivere una storia dell'arte decorativa turca, libro che ancora manca nelle nostre biblioteche [...]”³⁸¹

Monneret criticized Western scholars for ignoring this collection and stated the need for a Turkish decorative art book for the field. One of the first books dedicated solely to Turkish art was written by Celal Esad

³⁷⁹ Ugo Monneret, “Il Museo degli Evgaf a Constantinopoli,” 126. Italics have been added for emphasis.

³⁸⁰ Ugo Monneret, “Il Museo degli Evgaf a Constantinopoli,” 126.

³⁸¹ Ugo Monneret, “Il Museo degli Evgaf a Constantinopoli,” 127.

Arseven in 1928.³⁸² Just as the guidebooks discussed in Chapter 2, it seems like Monneret also perceived this museum as a Turkish decorative art collection.

Another source that provides an idea about the exhibit is the display case and object labels. Unfortunately, throughout this research, it was not possible to reach and examine the labels firsthand in the museum archives. Therefore, I don't know how many examples there are in the museum archive. A few labels, likely from display cases, and an object label were published in an article written by the previous head curator of the *Yazma Eserler* section and the assistant museum director.³⁸³ The labels, 13 in total and written with black ink in Ottoman Turkish, have identical dimensions and technical features (see Figures 34-36). All the labels were framed by a golden rectangle border, and the outside of the borders is marbled (*ebru*). Nine of them indicate geography or nation: "İsfahan Tezhibatı" (Isfahan illuminations); "İran Ciltleri" (Persian book bindings); "Türk Tezhibatı" (Turkish illuminations); "Murakkat-ı İraniye" (Persian calligraphy albums); "Murakat-ı Osmaniye" (Ottoman calligraphy albums); "Hutu-u Arabiye" (Arabic calligraphy); "Memâlik-i Mısır Devri Masnuatından," (artistic things/objects from the Egyptian state); "Türk Ciltleri" (Turkish book bindings); "İran Usulü Tezhibat" (illumination in Persian style); and "Malumat-ı Osmaniye" (Ottoman products/objects). Almost all these labels, except "Malumat-ı Osmaniye" and "Memâlik-i Mısır Devri Masnuatından," refer to manuscript display. The label "Memâlik-i Mısır Devri Masnuatından," probably refers to the objects from the Mamluk period. Three of the labels are classified roughly on the basis of typology. For example, a label entitled "Ferman-ı Temlikname" means imperial orders about given lands. Another label, "Şehzâdeğân ve Ricale Mahsus Sorguçlar," is about the aigrette of Ottoman princes and dignitaries. The last label, "Asâr-ı Tarihiyeyi Nâdire," indicates the objects which were rare historical objects.

³⁸² Celal Esad Arseven, *Türk Sanatı* (Istanbul: Akşam Matbaası, 1928).

³⁸³ Kutluay, "Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi'nin Kurulmasını Hazırlayan Ortam ve Kurucuları," 33-36.



Figure 34. Display label. “Murakkat-ı Osmaniye,” (Ottoman calligraphy albums). Source: Seracettin Şahin, Sevgi Kutluay, and Miyase Çelen (eds.) *100 Yıl Önce ve 100 Yıl Sonra: Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi* (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2014), 34.



Figure 35. Display label. “İsfahan Tezhibatı,” (İsfahan illumination). Source: Seracettin Şahin, Sevgi Kutluay, and Miyase Çelen (eds.) *100 Yıl Önce ve 100 Yıl Sonra: Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi* (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2014), 34.



Figure 36. Display label. “Hutu-u Arabiye” (Arabic calligraphy). Source: Seracettin Şahin, Sevgi Kutluay, and Miyase Çelen (eds.) *100 Yıl Önce ve 100 Yıl Sonra: Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi* (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2014), 35.

An example of an object label from the early years of the museum can be seen in Figure 39. Since it was written in Ottoman Turkish, this label cannot be later than 1928, because of the alphabet reform³⁸⁴ (*harf inkılâbı*) enacted in that year. I couldn't find the size of the label. Its design seems rather simple. Both the Turkish transliteration and English translation of the label are seen in Table 1. The label carries the name of the object, “Ancient Quran,” at the middle-top and the inventory number. It continues with the date based on the Hijri calendar, the name of the calligrapher, the material, and the style of the calligraphy. In addition, it states that there are eleven illuminated panels in the Quran. Figure 38 shows a highly decorated panel from this Quran; the last sentence on the label probably referred to this type of panel.

³⁸⁴ When the Latin alphabet was accepted for official use in the Turkish language.

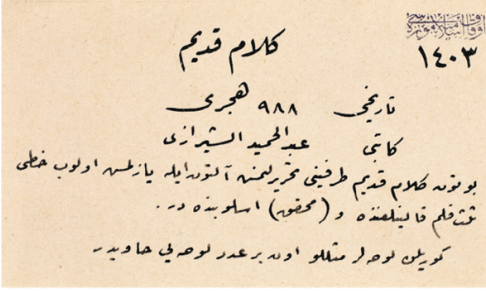


Figure 37. Quran label, previous inv. no. 1403. Current inv. no. 506. Source: Seracettin Şahin, Sevgi Kutluay, and Miyase Çelen (eds.) *100 Yıl Önce ve 100 Yıl Sonra: Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi* (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2014), 36.



Figure 38. Illuminated page (panel) of the Quran, previous inv. no. 1403. Current inv. no. 506. Source: Seracettin Şahin, Sevgi Kutluay, and Miyase Çelen (eds.) *100 Yıl Önce ve 100 Yıl Sonra: Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi* (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2014), 36.

Turkish transliteration:	English translation:
<p>Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi 1403 Kelâm-ı Kâdim Tarihi 988 Hicri Kâtibî Abdulhamid Eş-Şirazi Bütün kelâm-ı kâdim tarafeyni tahrirlenmiş altun ile yazmış olub hattı sülüs kalem kalınlığında (muhakkak) üslubundadır[.] Görülen levhalar misillü on bir aded levhayı havidir.</p>	<p><i>Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi</i> 1403 [inventory no] Ancient Quran Date 988 Hijra [1580/81] Calligrapher Abdülhamid eş-Şirazi The entire Quran was written on both sides in gold and [its] calligraphy is in the <i>muhakkak</i> style[.] [It] contains eleven similar panels [like this].³⁸⁵</p>

Table 1. Turkish transliteration and English translation of the object label probably dated around 1914.

³⁸⁵ This sentence probably refers to the displayed illuminated page.

As far as I am aware, there are no photos—neither in the archive of the museum nor in the publications—that show the interior display of the museum in the early years.³⁸⁶ However, there are three photographs in the archive of the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut Istanbul (DAI) that show the galleries of *Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi* (see Figures 39, 40, 41). The date of the photos is unknown. However, they were probably one of the earliest photos of the museum galleries taken between 1914 and 1934. According to the archival entry of the DAI, these photos were taken by the Sébah & Joaillier studio, which was established in Constantinople in 1888.³⁸⁷ The name of the studio was changed to “Foto Sabah” in 1934 under the increasing Turkish nationalism in the newly established republic.

These three photos seem to visualize three different rooms in the museum. One of the rooms is filled with horizontal wooden display cases which were quite typical for the period and can be described as Victorian. The room was probably in rectangular form. The display cases were placed in a double row in the middle of the room and in front of the walls. Calligraphic panels, prayer rugs, and carpets were hung on the walls in this room. Six round calligraphic panels were placed symmetrically above the hanging carpets on the walls. In front of this wall, two wooden Quran cases from the Ottoman period were located on each side of a display case. Folded fabrics on the display cases are seen in the photo. The fabric was laid out over the display case placed in the left corner. Although the contents of the display cases are not visible in the photo, the shape of the display cases and the covers on them suggest that manuscripts were exhibited in this room. The overall appearance of this room recalls Halil Edhme’s description of Room I, where mainly manuscripts and things related to them were displayed.

³⁸⁶ The museum librarian said that there are no photos of the display from the years in Süleymaniye soup kitchen, only the ones that were published in the first museum catalogue dated 1939.

³⁸⁷ Pascal Sébah (1823–1886) opened his first studio in 1857 in Constantinople, he became the Sultan’s official photographer. Following the partnership between Sébah and Polycarpe Joaillier (1848–1904), a French photographer resident in Istanbul, the studio renamed as Sébah & Joaillier in 1888. For detailed information on the subject see Engin Özdenes *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda Fotoğrafçılık (1839 - 1919) / Photography in the Ottoman Empire (1839 - 1919)* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1995); Engin Özdenes *From Sébah & Joaillier to Foto Sabah: Orientalism in Photography* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık, 1999); Bahattin Öztuncay, *The Photographers of Constantinople: Pioneers, Studios, and Artists from the 19th century Istanbul* (Istanbul: Aygaz A.Ş., 2003).

In addition, Room I in the ground plan sketch of Halil Edhem is a long rectangular shaped room, just similar the one in this photograph.



Figure 39. One of the galleries in *Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi*, taken by the Sébah & Joaillier studio between 1914 and 1934. Source: The Deutsches Archäologisches Institut Istanbul (DAI) Archive.

The other photo visualizes a part of another room, where the larger-size carpets were hung on the walls side by side. At least six wooden and inlaid mother-of-pearl or ivory Quran cases from the Ottoman period are visible in this photo. The Quran cases were scattered around the room, but just like in the Imperial Museum display, they were placed on stands cover with carpets or prayer rugs and surrounded with ropes. This placement reminds the visitor that now these objects, which have lost their original function, can only be experienced through the gaze. A wooden lectern was also placed next to one of these Quran cases. Two standing display cases are also seen in this photo; however, the content is not visible. Two objects hanging in one of the display cases resemble a hanging ornament and an astrolabe, but it is not possible to be sure due to the visual quality of the photograph.

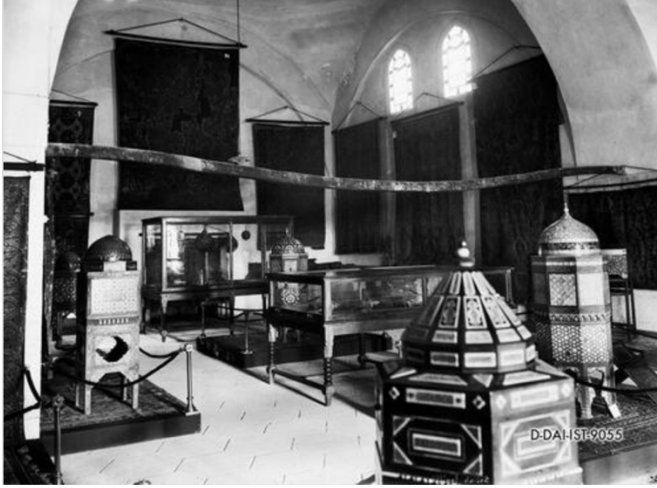


Figure 40. One of the galleries in *Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi*, taken by the Sébah & Joaillier studio between 1914 and 1934. Source: The Deutsches Archäologisches Institut Istanbul (DAI) Archive.

The last photograph shows a part of a room where at least four standing display cases of various sizes were placed in the middle of the room. Some of the objects inside only one of these showcases are recognizable. There are several incense burners, rose-water sprinklers, and a mug or a jar with a handle. In addition, the wall display case on the left is filled with caftans and textiles. Like in the other rooms, carpets of various sizes and a few calligraphic panels hung on the plain walls. A throne was placed on a raised floor covered with a carpet at the end of the room in front of hanging carpets. Two lecterns were located on either side of the throne. Two other lecterns are also visible in the photograph, each of them again placed on a raised floor. Underneath the lecterns prayer rugs were laid on the raised floor. This room also seems like it fits Halil Edhem's description of Room III, entitled "textiles."



Figure 41. One of the galleries in *Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi*, taken by the Sébah & Joaillier studio between 1914 and 1934. Source: The Deutsches Archäologisches Institut Istanbul (DAI) Archive.

3.c. Concluding Remarks

The establishment of both the Imperial Museum and *Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi* was a significant effort by the Ottoman Empire to preserve and display its Islamic heritage. The similarities between the two collections and their close proximity to each other in Istanbul raise questions about the necessity of having two separate institutions. The presence of similar collections in London's V&A and British Museum illustrates that the coexistence of overlapping collections within a single city is not unique to the Ottoman context. However, the case of the Imperial Museum and *Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi* is particularly curious, since these museums had overlapping collections and even some of the same curatorial team, such as Halil Edhem. However, the political and cultural context of the time provides some possibilities for this decision. The increasing emphasis on the Islamic caliphate status of the Ottoman sultan and rising Ottoman and Turkish nationalism led the way for prioritizing the Islamic heritage within the empire. Additionally, the initial mission of *Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi* might have been planned to follow the footsteps of the V&A and create a decorative art museum to preserve and promote traditional arts and crafts.

The display of the museum showed some similarities with the Imperial Museum's Islamic art collection in Çinili Köşk, which is quite expected, since Halil Edhem was involved. The carpets and manuscripts were the strongest part of the collection, and it was reflected into the display. Although the majority of the carpets were displayed like paintings on the walls, some of them—particularly small-sized rugs—were laid under other objects like a stage props. Therefore, it was possible to see both fine art and decorative art approaches in a single gallery. One of the rooms was devoted to the manuscripts, and they were categorized according to their race or geographic location, rather than a dynasty names. It seems like the names of the Muslim dynasties were not used within the museum except for the Ottomans. Based on the museum reviews, the overall display seems to have been roughly organized on the basis of typology or materials, which was a common approach in those years, especially in decorative art museums. However, the photographs show a bit more chaotic display where carpets, calligraphic panels, and wooden Quran cases were placed in almost in every gallery independent of the assigned categorization.

Halil Edhem's ground plan sketch and his description dated around 1914, which is the earliest source on the subject, are significant. The categorization of two galleries entitled "apex of the Ottoman art" and "pre-Ottoman works" was an authentic, specific way of narration for an Islamic art collection that was not be found anywhere else. None of the museum reviews—written by either the Ottoman or the foreign authors—after Halil Edhem mentioned this categorization. Therefore, it is not obvious if all these display details given by Halil Edhem were implemented in reality. But this classification of periods revolving around the Ottoman state is quite idiosyncratic. Even if not implemented, this narration, which placed the Ottoman dynasty in the center of the Islamic era, is a stance against the Western narrative of history—particularly Islamic art and architectural history.

CHAPTER 4

Transition from *Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi* to the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts in Istanbul (TİEM), 1925– 1983: In Süleymaniye Soup Kitchen

The Republic of Türkiye was founded on 29 October 1923. The change of regime was reflected in cultural policy, as well. Under the ethnocentric nationalist vision of the new government, the name of *Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi* became *Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi* (Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, abbreviation: TİEM) in 1926. The museum administration was taken from the Ministry of Islamic Endowments (*Evkaf Nazırlığı* founded in 1826) and attached to the Ministry of Education. In addition, the museum management was linked to the Directorate of Topkapı Palace Museum, which was linked to the Museum of Antiquities (*Asar-ı Atika Müzeleri*, the name of the Imperial Museum in Istanbul after the foundation of the republic) in 1925.³⁸⁸

TİEM remained in the Süleymaniye soup kitchen until 1983. The museum stayed open to the public until the beginning of the Second World War. Due to the Second World War, TİEM had to be closed, like other museums in Türkiye, for a decade. Some parts of its collection were sent to cities in Anatolia to preserve it from the possible destructive effects of the war. After staying closed for a decade, TİEM was reopened in 1949 with a new display. In 1964, the collection of TİEM was reorganized, and some display changes were made after its management became independent from the Topkapı Palace Museum administration.

After a long restoration period, the museum was transferred to a new and more central, popular, and touristic location in 1984. *İbrahim Paşa Sarayı* (Ibrahim Pasha Palace) is located in *Sultanahmet Meydanı* (Sultanahmet Square)—also known as the Hippodrome of Constantinople—which became the new house for the museum. As its name indicates, *İbrahim Paşa Sarayı* was built by the grand vizier, and the brother-in-law of Sultan Süleyman I (r. 1520–1566), İbrahim Paşa (1495–1536), in 1521, with major renovations and additions to an existing mansion.³⁸⁹ TİEM is still located in this building, and it went under a

³⁸⁸ Nazan Ölçer, "Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi," *TDVİA* (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2012), vol. 41: 543-544: 543; DABCA 30-18-1-1, 14-40-2, 03.06.1925.

³⁸⁹ Semavi Eyice, "İbrahim Paşa Sarayı," *TDVİA* (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2000), vol. 21: 345.

complete renovation and reinstallation in 2012. The museum welcomed visitors to its reinstalled galleries in 2014. This chapter examines the conceptual and physical display techniques of TİEM to understand its shifting exhibition discourses starting from the early republican period to its transfer to the İbrahim Pasha Palace in 1983.

4.a. Years between 1925 and 1939

4.a.a. Sources from Newspapers and Journal Articles

Written and visual sources provide information on the museum through the 1930s. A newspaper article published in *Milliyet Gazetesi* on 19 January 1935 is probably one of the earliest sources about TİEM in the early republican period.³⁹⁰ Although the name of the museum had been changed almost a decade previously, the title of the article did not use the new appellation. Instead, the article was entitled “Evkaf Müzesi” (Endowments Museum) and stated that *Evkaf Müzesi* is one of the most important museums in Istanbul. The museum was referred to as “Evkaf-ı İslâmiye Müzesi” among the public (in colloquial usage) even until the 1960s.³⁹¹

This article was probably written to announce the visit of the Ministry of Culture and the planned improvements to the museum. According to the article, there were concerns about the physical and preservation conditions of the museum collection and its building such as damp, which could cause moth damage to the carpets. According to the article, the Minister made an announcement to reassure the concerns about the problem. Although, the minister tried to assure the public, the author of the article still kindly reminds the readers of the necessity of establishing a heating system to reduce the threat of damp (“[...] müze salonlarının kalorifer ile ısınması [...]”).³⁹²

This newspaper article does not provide much information about the galleries of the museum, but the author praises the carpet collection. He writes that both American and European museum

³⁹⁰ Ahmet Şükrü Esmer, “Evkaf Müzesi,” *Milliyet Gazetesi*, 29 January 1935, 1.

³⁹¹ Elif Naci, “Bağımsızlığına kavuşması münasebetiyle Türk ve İslâm eserleri müzesi,” *Cumhuriyet* 13 November 1964.

³⁹² Esmer, “Evkaf Müzesi,” 1.

curators (*müzecileri*) recognize TIEM for its carpet collection. The article strongly emphasizes the “Turkishness” of the museum collection. For example, the phrase “one of the most beautiful examples of Turkish virtue” is used to describe boxes (probably Quran cases but secularized as a boxes) and a lectern (*rahle*) made of wood and inlaid with mother-of-pearl. The article narrates that the carpet was a Turkish invention and that research had shown that even Iranians learned how to weave carpets from Turkish craftsmen. Another example that shows the nationalist tone of the author is the following sentence: “This valuable museum which contains all these valuable Turkish virtues should be protected with a high priority.”³⁹³ The article concludes with the suggestion that a small amount of money would be enough to improve the museum’s conditions. “Le Musée des Arts Turcs et Musulmans,” a journal article, was published in *La Turquie Kemaliste* in 1936 to promote the museum, mainly to foreign audiences.³⁹⁴ *La Turquie Kemaliste* was published 49 issues between 1933 and 1949 by the Turkish Republic Press General Directorate (*Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Basın Genel Müdürlüğü*). The Republican regime was trying to present itself as a state with Western qualities. The aim of the journal was to introduce and familiarize mainly Western readers with the “developing” and “modern” Türkiye through the Kemalist revolutions. For that reason, the journal was published mainly in French, but also German and English. As discussed in Chapter 1, Ottoman-Turkish scholars preferred the term “Islamic art” rather than “Muhammadan” or “Musulman.” However, it is not so surprising to see the term “Musuluman” instead of “islamique” in the title of this article since the targeted audience was the Westerners.

The article contains nine photographs of the museum galleries and some of its objects. A newspaper article from 1937, which I will discuss in the following paragraphs, republished the same photo from this article (see Figure 42).

³⁹³ “Bu kadar değerli Türk erdemlerini bir araya toplayan müzeyi Türk ulusunun gözbebeği gibi korunması yerindedir.” Esmer, “Evkaf Müzesi,” 1.

³⁹⁴ “Le Musée des arts turcs et musulmans,” *la Turquie kamâlisme* 15 (October 1936), 9-14.

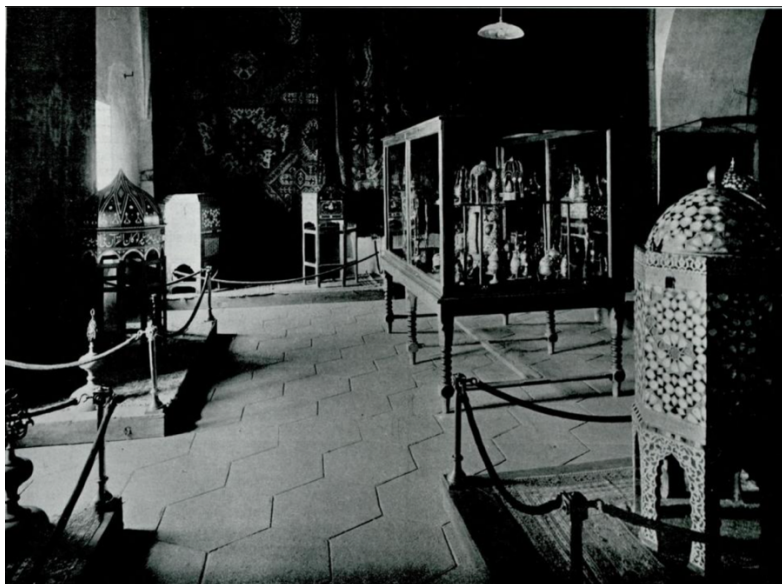


Figure 42. The second gallery in TiEM according to the 1939 catalogue. Source: “Le Musée des arts turcs et musulmans,” *la Turquie kamâliste* 15 (October 1936), 9-14: 10.

This journal article is also one of the earliest sources that discusses physical and contextual elements of the museum. The article starts by briefly introducing the historical building of the museum, like previous and later articles written before and after the republican period: The museum has “three large rooms” and contains six thousand works “of great historical and artistic value.”³⁹⁵ The collection was categorized into four groups: 1- books, 2- carpets, 3- woodwork, and 4- metalwork. The Quran copies were “classified and subdivided according to the style of calligraphy, gilding, and binding.”³⁹⁶

Although the author of the article is not given in the journal, the content was crafted to be coherent with the new regime’s propaganda. The emphasis on Turkish history, language, and features of the objects is

³⁹⁵ “Dans sa forme actuelle, le Musée comprend trois grandes salles contenant six mille œuvres de grande valeur historique et artistique.” “Le Musée des arts turcs et musulmans,” 9.

³⁹⁶ “La collection des Corans est celle qui parmi les livres religieux mérite de retenir le plus l’attention. Elle est classifiée et subdivisée selon le style de calligraphie, de dorure et de reliure.” “Le Musée des arts turcs et musulmans,” 10.

the prominent subtext of the article. The stress on the Turkish language and its dialects played a crucial role in creating a common identity based on ethnocentric nationalism. The new regime desired to pull away from its Ottoman heritage and extend its roots to other Turkish groups to achieve a pure Turkish identity. A paragraph from the article reads:

“Une autre collection, introuvable autre part, qui fait aussi la richesse du Musée des Arts Turcs et Musulmans est la collection de Corans traduits à différentes époques par différents érudits en dialectes Ouygour, Tchagatay et Anatóliens aussi bien qu’en Turc. Ainsi le Musée peut donc être considéré comme contenant la plus riche source de matériel pour les recherches des différences existant entre dialectes et langues d’origine turque.”³⁹⁷

The emphasis on “Turkishness” continues throughout the article. For example, well-known Ottoman calligraphers became “famous Turkish artists.”³⁹⁸ Nomadic Turkish women are praised for their “artistic spontaneity” and their originality in the carpet and prayer rug production. It reads:

“On y voit aussi toute une collection superbe de tapis de prière exécutés dans le temps sur les métiers des femmes Yürüks qui, vivant dans leurs montagnes d’Asie Mineure, Arabe ou entendu même le n’avaient jamais vu un nom de l’Iran et connaissaient en conséquence encore moins l’art Arabe et Persan. Ces tapis de prière constituent un vrai trésor pour ceux qui s’intéressent à l’étude de la finesse du sentiment et de la spontanéité artistique des villageoises anatoliennes qui ont trouvé leur inspiration dans les branches délicates et fleuries des plantes sauvages ornant les berges de leurs ruisseaux. On y découvre aussi la reproduction stylisée de tous les motifs propres aux graveurs turcs, ainsi que des poinçonnages employés comme signes distinctifs sur les oreilles des bœufs et des moutons de chaque troupeau.”³⁹⁹

Another example is the description of the woodwork in the museum collection. Window panels and sarcophaguses belonging to the Seljuk period were described as “an example of the perfection achieved by fine arts (*beaux-arts*) in Türkiye, a perfection we can be justly proud [of].”⁴⁰⁰ The term “*beaux-arts*” instead of “*art décoratif*” to describe the

³⁹⁷ “Le Musée des arts turcs et musulmans,” 10.

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 12.

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 13-14.

⁴⁰⁰ “[...] un exemple de la perfection atteinte par les beaux-arts en Turquie; perfection dont nous pouvons à juste titre être fiers.” *Ibid.*, 13-14.

woodwork is a curious choice for this period. One of the prominent survey books in the Islamic art field, *A Handbook of Muhammedan Decorative Arts*, was written by the MET curator M.S. Dimand in 1930. The second edition of the book was published in 1947 as *A Handbook of Muhammedan Art*. Apparently, the position of Islamic art had been elevated from “decorative art” to “fine art” within 17 years. It is important that this article shows the transition from “decorative art” to “fine art” at such an early stage.⁴⁰¹

The description of the metalwork in the museum collection is another significant example of the success of the “Turkish” race. The ones produced by “ancient Turkish jewelers” were defined as the examples of the “delicacy of execution.” The following sentence simply reports that there is also metalworks from Syria, Mosul, and Egypt.⁴⁰² The metalworks from these areas were not described and were downgraded to secondary importance compared to “Turkish” productions. To justify the presence of these non-Turkish objects within the museum, the author reminds the reader that these works have historic value because most of them “are signed.”⁴⁰³

Throughout the article, there is an emphasis on the uniqueness of the museum collection. The collection of “remarkable” literary manuscripts written in Turkish, Persian, and Arabic provide a “preponderant rank among all the museums of the world.”⁴⁰⁴ The carpet collection is unsurprisingly praised in the article, since it was one of the most significant features of the museum collection. The article shows the competition between museums. For example, a carpet from the Seljuk period, displayed in the first gallery of the museum, is praised because of its good and complete condition: “[...] tapis Seldjouk, datant de six ou sept siècles [Hijra calendar], mais dans leur splendeur entière alors que les Musées d’Égypte ne peuvent exhiber que des morceaux de semblables tapis.”⁴⁰⁵ The comparison between “the Museum of Arab Art” in Cairo (the name of the museum was changed to the Museum of Islamic Art in 1951) and TIEM is quite relevant within the context of this journal article. The targeted audience was mainly the West; therefore, it

⁴⁰¹ Celal Esad Arseven, *Türk sanatı* (İstanbul: Akşam Matbaası, 1928).

⁴⁰² “On y rencontre aussi certaines œuvres des bijoutiers de Syrie, de Mossoul et d’Égypte.” Ibid, 14.

⁴⁰³ “Il est à remarquer que la plupart des métaux travaillés sont signés.” Ibid, 14.

⁴⁰⁴ “[...] un rang prépondérant parmi tous les Musées du monde.” Ibid, 12.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid, 13.

was important to stress the uniqueness of the museum and compare it with another Islamic art museum.

A comment on the manuscripts and calligraphic panels written with the Arabic alphabet is another example that shows the position of the new regime towards its Ottoman and Islamic heritage. It reads:

“On peut affirmer sans contradiction possible que par la richesse et la diversité de ses collections de calligraphies, le Musée peut être considéré comme le lieu de référence le mieux équipé pour l'étude de l'évolution de l'ancienne écriture, passée maintenant dans l'histoire.”⁴⁰⁶

Showing the artistic value of the objects is the main discourse of the article. Any contradictory object was justified by its historical importance as a relic of the past. Here, the term calligraphy, *hat* in Turkish, was renamed “ancient writing” because the alphabet reform had taken place only eight years ago. The closing paragraph of the article unsurprisingly contains praises of the current government and its “generous aid” for the opening of a new gallery. This fourth gallery was planned for displaying keys, locks, antique doorknobs, basins, ewers, and many various metal objects which were “produced by the old national craftsmen.”⁴⁰⁷ The content of the planned gallery recalls the example of the V&A or the Metropolitan Museum, where daily objects were exhibited as examples of good design to inspire the new generation of craftsmen and artists.⁴⁰⁸

Another newspaper article—again using the name of “Evkaf Müzesi”—was published in *Akşam Gazetesi* on 11 April 1937.⁴⁰⁹ This is the article that republished the photo (Fig. 45) from the article “Le Musée des Arts Turcs et Musulmans.”

⁴⁰⁶ “We can affirm without possible contradiction that by the richness and diversity of its collections of calligraphy, the Museum can be considered as the best equipped reference place for the study of the evolution of ancient writing, now passed into the history.” *Ibid*, 12.

⁴⁰⁷ “Grâce à l'intérêt pris par le Gouvernement de notre République et à l'aide généreuse qu'il donne, le Musée sera prochainement enrichi d'un nouveau salon où seront réunis des clefs ouvragées, des serrures et des heurtoirs antiques, des cuvettes et des aiguères ainsi qu'un grand nombre d'autres objets en métaux de tous genres, produits par les anciens artisans nationaux.” *Ibid*, 14.

⁴⁰⁸ *The Period Rooms: Allestitimenti storici tra arte, collezionismo et museologia*, edited by Sandra Costa, Dominique Poulot, Mercedes Volait (Bologna: Bologna University Press, 2016).

⁴⁰⁹ Hikmet Feridun Es, “İstanbulda iki Sultan Ahmed camii, iki yenicamii vardır: Bunlardan birer tanesi fildişindendir ve evkaf müzesinde saklıdır,” *Akşam Gazetesi*, 11 April 1937, 7.



Figure 43. A gallery from *Evkaf Müzesi* in 1937. Source: Hikmet Feridun Es, “İstanbulda iki Sultan Ahmed camii, iki yenicamii vardır: Bunlardan birer tanesi fildişindedir ve evkaf müzesinde saklıdır,” *Akşam Gazetesi*, 11 April 1937, 7.

This article is significant to understanding the audience of the museum. Like the Imperial Museum, TİEM was also more popular among foreign visitors than Turkish citizens. Hikmet Feridun Es (1909–1992), the journalist and author, explains how he ended up in the museum. A foreign tourist asked him the location of the museum, and he realized that, although he had lived in Istanbul for almost 30 years, he had never been to TİEM. Therefore, he decided to visit the museum and promote it to the public.

Some of the objects that Es mentions are unexpected. Usually, the carpet and manuscript collections stand out from the rest of the collection both in foreign and Turkish articles. This author enthusiastically mentions architectural casts—one of them made of mother-of-pearl—of two celebrated mosques from the Ottoman Empire: *Sultanahmet Camii* and *Yeni Camii*. Even the title of the article is giving references these architectural casts: “İstanbulda iki Sultan Ahmed camii, iki yenicamii vardır: Bunlardan birer tanesi fildişindedir ve evkaf müzesinde saklıdır” (There are two Sultan Ahmed Camii [Mosque], Two Yeni Camii [Mosque] in Istanbul: One of them is made of mother-of-pearl and held in *Evkaf* Museum). From the first museum catalogue,

published in 1939, it is possible to detect the locations of these architectural models, which were displayed in the third gallery in the display case entitled “no. 28.”⁴¹⁰ Except for their inventory numbers and materials, the museum catalogue does not provide further detail about these objects.

Another unexpected object that Es narrates is a dustpan (*faraş*). The author emphasizes the dustpan’s luxurious design and provenance. It was made of mother-of-pearl and “rare wood” and came to the museum from a palace. The 1939 museum catalogue mentions a dustpan (inv. no. 40) as follows “*sadef ve bağa işlemeli süpürge faraşı*” (a dustpan inlaid with mother-of-pearl and tortoise shell).⁴¹¹ Probably, the dustpan that Es describes is this one, since it is the only dustpan in the museum catalogue, and the description overlaps. The author of the article does not mention tortoise shell when he describes the dustpan. He likely was not able to recognize the material, and there was no explanatory label for the object. The dustpan was placed in display case “no. 36” with other objects in the second gallery. Like the architectural casts, the museum catalogue provides only the material and the inventory number of the object.

A “bizarre-shaped wooden object” placed in a display case is another object that Es mentions.⁴¹² When he asked what this object was, the museum guide’s answered: “[...] it is an extinct, forgotten musical instrument, today no one knows what it is or how to play anymore.”⁴¹³ This sentence indicates the perception of the museum in the new regime. TIEM was filled with extremely luxurious objects that belonged to the old regime and were doomed to be forgotten.

This article also gives an idea about object labels in the 1930s. A “*hurka*” (shirt) of Sultan Beyazid (r. 1389–1402) was on display with other similar garments.⁴¹⁴ The object label reads: “This is the *hurka* of Sultan Beyazid I.” He “wore this shirt under his armory in all wars.” The author probably describes a typical “*talismanic shirt*” (*tılsımlı gömlek*),⁴¹⁵ but he does not know the proper terminology for the object. The same room

⁴¹⁰ *Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi Rehberi* (Istanbul: Devlet Basımevi, 1939), 36.

⁴¹¹ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁴¹² Hikmet Feridun Es, “İstanbulda iki Sultan Ahmed camii, iki yenicamii vardır,” 7.

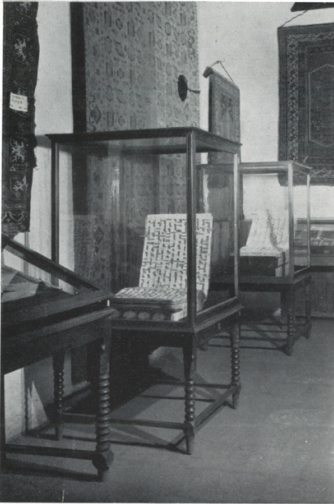
⁴¹³ *Ibid.*

⁴¹⁴ Probably it was displayed in the same room with the aforementioned musical instrument.

⁴¹⁵ Talismanic shirts (*tılsımlı gömlek*) were designed to protect the wearer in wars or from diseases; they were inscribed with Quranic verses and prayers.

contains the garments of crown princes, so it was likely the third gallery in the museum.

The other gallery seems like roughly classified as an “art of the book” gallery which contained manuscripts, miniature paintings, bindings, calligraphies, and writing tools. There were “invaluable” and “rare” “Iranian” and “Eastern” miniatures and ancient Qurans on display. The author specifically mentions that the guide pointed out a half-meter Quran written on gazelle leather (Fig. 44) and other Qurans attributed to Caliph Ömer, Caliph Ali, and Caliph Osman. These Qurans were mentioned in almost every article or book that is published about TIEM. In addition, examples of imperial orders (*fermanlar*) of the sultans were decorated with illuminations. According to Es, the contents of the imperial orders were quite amusing (*gülmünç*), and he could have filled many pages by only writing about their ridiculousness.



No : 358

Salon V

Ceylân derisi üzerine yazılmış oniki asırlık
bir mushaf

Figure 44. A photograph of the Quran written on gazelle leather from 1939. The inscription reads: “12 centuries old Quran written on gazelle leather. No: 358, Salon V” Source: *Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi Rehberi* (Istanbul: Devlet Basım Evi, 1939), unpaginated.

A long display case located in the same room contained straws (*kamışlar*), inkwells (*divitler*), *rıhdanlıklar* (small-perforated cups to dry the ink on the straw), and pens, presenting the change of writing utensils from straw to pen over time. Again, the narrative in this display is about leaving the old habits of the previous government behind. *Kamış, divit,*

and *rıhdanlık*, the tools to write Ottoman Turkish with Arabic script, belonged to the pre-republican era. They could only continue to survive in a secularized museum space by virtue of their historical, aesthetic, or technical features.

Two “splendid” ceilings, taken from old buildings in Istanbul, were also displayed in the museum at that time. These ceilings were mentioned probably for the first time in a source. I am not sure if they are still in the collection of the museum. Es gives their monetary value and states that an American wanted to buy them 15 years ago for 10,000 dollars. This anecdote demonstrates that these kinds of objects’ value had started to be measured in money. Lastly, Es mentions a preparation of a new carpet gallery (*halı müzesi*) within the museum, which was planned to be the richest in the world.

A radical newspaper article regarding TİEM was published on 27 May 1937.⁴¹⁶ It starts as follows:

“One of the magnificent treasures we have in Istanbul is the ‘Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum.’ I don't know if you've been to this museum. But if you haven't, you should definitely go and feel sorry for this museum, which is crammed into three small halls in a building disguised as a soup kitchen [...]”⁴¹⁷

This article is full of criticism of the previous regime (Ottoman), the content of the collection, and the display of the museum. The Ottoman government is blamed for being ignorant, inadequate, and corrupt. The author recalls the thefts of Islamic works “[...] that have swept libraries, lodges and mosques [...]” and how the Ottoman sultans failed to stop them.⁴¹⁸ “This museum is somehow a remnant of the dreadful ignorance and inattention [...] It is necessary to visit British, German, and Italian museums in order to understand the degree of thefts [...]”⁴¹⁹

The establishment of TİEM is reflected as if it was only the work and achievement of Seyhulislam Hayri Efendi (1867-1921), who was also the head of the Ministry of Endowments. Since he was the highest official of the religious affairs in the Ottoman Empire, he would have known

⁴¹⁶ Ensari Bülent, “Türk ve İslam eserleri müzesi hakkında...” *Haber Gazetesi*, 27 May 1937, 2.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid. Translation from Turkish to English by the author.

⁴¹⁸ Ensari Bülent, “Türk ve İslam eserleri müzesi hakkında...” *Haber Gazetesi*, 27 May 1937, 2.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid.

“very well the excessiveness of the thefts of the zealots (*softa*).”⁴²⁰ According to the author, Seyhülislam Hayri Efendi used the word “museum” even without being aware of what it was. To support his argument, the author states that “If [Hayri Efendi] had been aware, of course, he might have thought of constructing a new museum building [...],”⁴²¹ instead of using an existing building. Because, apparently, Hayri Efendi’s “[...] construction curiosity is well-known to everyone.”⁴²² It seems that the author of the article didn’t know or ignored the fact that a new building for an Islamic art museum had been planned in the 1910s. However, due to financial reasons at the time, it had never been realized, and the Süleymaniye soup kitchen was chosen to hold this collection.

Ethnocentric Turkish nationalism is at its highest level throughout this article. The author does not hesitate to exaggerate the role of Turkishness in the artworks. He even provides a percentage of the amount of Turkishness of the collection. It reads:

“Although it is called the ‘Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts,’ the high and unmatched success of this museum in various fine arts belongs eighty-nine percent to the Turks. There is very little honor that falls on the service and shares of other Muslim nations in the occurrence of this art treasure.”⁴²³

After sorting all the “masterpieces”—such as various examples of metalwork, manuscripts, woodworks, jewelry, and carpets—that are produced by Turks, the author goes further and states:

“In short, almost all of the works exhibited [in TİEM] were created by pureblooded Turkish artists (*Türkoğlu Türk san’atkârlar*). The participation of Arabs and Persians in this [Islamic] art is rather weak (even if not inadvertently).”⁴²⁴

The approach to elevate the status of Turkish art and emphasize nationalistic pride is quite extreme in this article.

⁴²⁰ “Şeyhülislâm olduğu için, softaların hırsızlığındaki ölçüsüzlüğü pek iyi bilen bu zat [...]” Ibid.

⁴²¹ Ibid.

⁴²² Ibid.

⁴²³ “Adına ‘Türk ve İslâm Eserleri Müzesi,’ denmesine rağmen bu müzenin muhtelif güzel sanatlarda göze vurduğu yüksek ve misilsiz başarış yüzde sek sen dokuz Türküdür. Bu san’at hazinesinin terekübünde diğer müslüman milletlerin hizmeti ve hisselerine düşecek şeref pek azdır.” Ibid.

⁴²⁴ Ibid.

Finally, the author shares his findings and recommendations about the content and display in order to make it a “real” museum.⁴²⁵ First, he starts by stating that “it is not a museum but a warehouse (*ambar*).” Second, except for the Qurans and manuscripts, the objects are not classified. Third, some of the objects in this collection must be sent to other museums, or objects from other museums should be brought to the collection of TİEM.

Then he continues by giving practical recommendations about how the specific objects should be transferred to other collections and displayed differently. For example, aigrettes belonging to the sultans and kaftans belonging to the crown princes (*şehzade*) should be sent to the Topkapı Palace Museum to display in the gallery of sultans' garments.⁴²⁶ Two talismanic shirts (“*tılsımlı harp gömleği*”) that belonged to the sultans (Bayezid I and Selim II) must be sent to the Military Museum or the Topkapı Palace Museum's treasury. The last criticism was of a display of a straw pen (*kamış*) belonging to Sultan Abdülaziz and an inkwell set once owned by Sultan Mehmed V (Reşad).⁴²⁷ According to the author, these objects were irrelevant and shouldn't be exhibited in this museum. In addition, the author states that the museum needs a new building space, just like the Archaeological Museums (previously, the Imperial Museum). Moreover, more calligraphic panels should be added to the collection of TİEM, since its collection was not rich enough.⁴²⁸

A prominent historian and epigraphist, İbrahim Hakkı Konyalı (1896–1984), published three newspaper articles on the museum in 1938. Like Es, Konyalı complains that even people who live in Istanbul were not aware of museums. Therefore, he started to write articles to introduce museums and “masterpieces” of their collections to the public. He chose to start with TİEM because it is a museum which held the “most national features.”⁴²⁹ Konyalı criticizes the continued absence of a catalogue of the museum. One year later in 1939, the first museum catalogue was published, by then the director of the museum Abdülkadir Erdoğan (1877–1944), which will be discussed in detail in the following paragraphs.

⁴²⁵ Ibid.

⁴²⁶ Ibid.

⁴²⁷ Ibid.

⁴²⁸ Ibid.

⁴²⁹ İbrahim Hakkı Konyalı, “Türk-İslâm Eserleri Müzesindeki Tarih Yadigârları,” *Tan Gazetesi*, 20 April 1938, 5.

The number of galleries increased from three to five in the previous two years. Five galleries of the museum were described in this article series. Konyalı assigns numbers for each room. The first article focuses solely on the first gallery, entitled “kitabiyat salonu” (gallery of manuscripts) by Konyalı. The second one contains descriptions of three other galleries enumerated by Konyalı as numbers two, three, and four. The final article details gallery number 5.

According to Konyalı, TİEM is a public institution (*halk müessesesi*). He describes the collection of the museum as an assembly of objects from “philanthropic” (*hayır*) and “educational” (*irfan*) institutions which were established by the public.⁴³⁰ However, the accuracy of this statement is doubtful, since these objects were mainly donated to mosques, mausoleums, and schools by Ottoman sultans, their family members (mostly mothers and daughters), high palace officials, and government dignitaries. Therefore, it is difficult to discuss a “public.” Probably, Konyalı was trying to integrate the Ottoman (mainly dynastic) heritage with a more nationalistic and populist understanding which would better suit early republican period politics.

Throughout these articles, national and racial discourses are notably in the foreground. Konyalı emphasizes the educational role of this museum for traditional and local arts and crafts, which recalls the V&A’s initial mission. For example, he reminds us that a catalogue of the carpet collection would play a significant role in the development of the Turkish carpet industry which had started to “awaken” in recent years. In addition, this kind of catalogue would eliminate the foreign influence on carpet designs.⁴³¹ In the third article, he raises the necessity of using historical carpets as examples to “save” (*kurtarmak*) the recently-developing carpet industry from “degenerated” (*soysuz*) imitations and maintains its “nobility” (*asalet*).⁴³²

Konyalı presents the new regime as a savior of the country and constantly compares it with the old regime throughout his articles. His second article starts as follows:

⁴³⁰ “Bu müze aynı zamanda bir halk müessesesidir. Bu müze asırlardan beri halkın hayır ve irfan müesseselerine teberru ettikleri eserlerin toplanmasından doğmuştur.” Konyalı, “Türk-İslâm Eserleri Müzesindeki Tarih Yadiğârları,” 5.

⁴³¹ İbrahim Hakkı Konyalı, “Türk-İslâm Eserleri Müzesi: Müzelerdeki Eşsiz Tarih Yadiğârları Arasında,” *Tan Gazetesi* 3 May 1938, 7.

⁴³² “Yeni inkişafa başlayan halıcılığımızı soysuz tiplerin taklidi olmaktan kurtarmak ve asaletini temin etmek için bu örneklerden mutlaka istifade edilmelidir.” Konyalı, “Türk ve İslâm Eserleri: Halıcılığımızın en Kıymetli ve Seçme Örnekleri,” 7.

“Here we find the most vivid mementos/ relics (*yadigârlarını*) of a bright and rich past (*mazi*). The new regime saved this nation, which was dragged into the pit of collapse by the caliphs. Now we are on the threshold of a future worthy of our great past, which walks together with creation. We will take the necessary speed for rapid growth and progress in every field from the magnificent memories here. Every artifact hidden here under the domes of Sinan is a projector to illuminate our path.”⁴³³

In addition, he stresses the “Turkishness” of the displayed items. He uses adjectives like “Turkish hand” (*Türk eli*) and “Turkish art” (*Türk sanatı*). Konyalı tries to increase the position of “Turkish art” among others accepted as Islamic art.

Here, I would like to comment on the historiography wars among scholars on the position of “Turkish art.” As discussed in Chapter 2, the Persian race was ranked superior compared to “Semitic Arabs” and “nomad Turks” due to their Aryan pedigree (Indo-European) starting from the end of the nineteenth century.⁴³⁴ Arab art was the second and Turkish art was the last in this ranking. The discussion about the status and value of Turkish art started in the early twentieth century and became heated in the 1930s. This was more of a one-sided war waged by mainly Turkish and Austrian scholars against Orientalist European scholarship.

Celal Esad Arseven (1875–1971), a prominent Turkish art historian, critic, and professor of architectural history at the Academy of Fine Arts in Istanbul, dedicated his entire career to elevate the status of “Turkish art.” He was one of the pioneering figures who used the term “Turkish art” as early as 1909.⁴³⁵ In his book, published in 1928, entitled *Türk Sanatı* (Turkish Art), Arseven criticizes Orientalist European scholarship for dissolving the concept of Turkish art and architecture into the umbrella term “Islamic.” Almost five decades before Edward

⁴³³ “Burada parlak ve zengin bir mazinin en canlı yadigârlarını buluyoruz. Yeni rejim, halifelerin inkıraz çukuruna sürüklediği bu ulusu kurtardı. Şimdi yaratılışla at başı beraber yürüyen yüce mazimize layık bir istikbalin eşiğindedir. Her alanda çabucak serpilme ve ilerleme için lâzım olan hızı buradaki muhteşem hatıralardan alacağız. Burada, Sinanın kubbeleri altında saklanan her eser yolumuzu aydınlatacak bir projektördür.” Konyalı, “Türk ve İslâm Eserleri: Müzelerdeki Eşsiz Tarih Yadigârları Arasında,” 7.

⁴³⁴ Gülru Necipoğlu, “The Concept of Islamic Art: Inherited Discourses and New Approaches,” eds. Benoît Junod, Georges Khalil, Stefan Weber, and Gerhard Wolf, *Islamic Art and the Museum: Approaches to Art and Archaeology of the Muslim World in the Twenty-First Century* (London: Saqi Books, 2012), 57-75: 60.

⁴³⁵ Celal Esad Arseven, *Constantinople: De Byzance à Stamboul* (Paris: H. Lauvens, 1909).

Said's influential book *Orientalism* (1979), Arseven points out the "imaginary Orient" that was created by Westerners, who misleadingly generalize the complexity, plurality, and diversity of Turkish art into others such as Indian, Persian, and Arab.⁴³⁶ Arseven defends the individuality of Turkish art and that it should be examined independently from the Islamic art concept, because the Islamic influence was only one part of the whole art history of the Turkish race.

Arseven was not the only scholar who argued that Turkish art needed an individual analysis. The alliance with the Austro-Hungarian Empire (later Austria) started in the late nineteenth century continued after the proclamation of the Republic of Türkiye. The alliance was reflected in academic research, and many Austrian scholars like Josef Stryzowski (1862–1941), Heinrich Glück (1889–1930), and later Ernst Diez (1878–1961) contributed to elevating the status of Turkish art within the field of art history.

Right after the declaration of the republic in 1923, the *Türkiyat Enstitüsü* (Turcology Institute) was founded at Istanbul University in 1924 to promote the Turkish language, culture, and history. The leading nationalist historian of Turkish literature and culture, Fuad Köprülü (1890–1966), was the director of the institute, and he started a journal entitled *Türkiyat Mecmuası* (Journal of Turcology). Josef Stryzowski and his student Heinrich Glück were invited around 1926–27 by Köprülü to write articles on the origins and status of Turkish art for an issue of *Türkiyat Mecmuası*, and the journal was published almost a decade later in 1935.⁴³⁷

Stryzowski's 80-page text entitled "Türkler ve Orta Asya San'atı Meselesi" (The Turks and the Question of Central Asian Art) was the opening article.⁴³⁸ This article was an expanded and adjusted version, of his 1917 work on the art of the Altay region of Central Asia and Iran. The additions were tailored to the audience and the times.⁴³⁹ "Türkler ve Orta Asya San'atı Meselesi" explains the fundamental characteristics of

⁴³⁶ Celal Esad [Arseven] *Türk San'atı* (Istanbul: Akşam Matbaası, 1928), 5; Sibel Bozdoğan "Reading Ottoman Architecture Through Modernist Lenses: Nationalist Historiography and the 'New Architecture' in the Early Republic" *Muqarnas*, vol. 24 (2007) 199-222: 203.

⁴³⁷ Gülru Necipoğlu, "Creation of a National Genius. Sinan and the Historiography of "Classical" Ottoman Architecture," *Muqarnas* vol. 24 (2007), 141-183: 159.

⁴³⁸ Joseph Stryzowski, "Türkler ve Orta Asya San'atı Meselesi," *Türkiyat Mecmuası* 3 (1926-1933): 1-80.

⁴³⁹ Scott Redford, "'What Have You Done for Anatolia Today?': Islamic Archaeology in the Early Years of the Turkish Republic," *Muqarnas* vol. 24 (2007), 243-252: 244.

pure Turkish art. In addition, Stryzowski defends the idea that “Turkish art should be displayed separately, in order to free it from the tyranny of the standards of representational art of the Greeks and the Mediterranean (read: Semitic).”⁴⁴⁰

Heinrich Glück’s Turkish article entitled “Türk Sanatının Dünyadaki Mevkii” (The Status of Turkish Art in the World) was a revised version, with a more ethno-racial emphasis, of his two previous publications: a proceeding of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences Conference published in 1917 and a detailed article published by the *Museum für angewandte Kunst* in Vienna in 1920.⁴⁴¹ Glück criticizes the fact that Turkish art is seen as mere eclecticism of other cultures. Glück states that although Turks encountered many different civilizations, they always succeeded in maintaining their principles and unity in art.⁴⁴² Moreover, he writes “the Turks only benefited from other cultures to ennoble their national art.”⁴⁴³

As Scott Redford puts it, “These two articles staked out the position of the Viennese school of art history, the most influential in Turkey [...].”⁴⁴⁴ In addition, Gülru Necipoğlu explains the impact of Glück’s article, and it reads:

“Emphasizing the simultaneously international and national character of ‘Turkish art,’ Glück’s publications found an enthusiastic reception in early republican Turkey, with its modernist mission to join the European cultural sphere coupled with its desire to preserve an individual identity, increasingly defined in ethno-racial terms.”⁴⁴⁵

Konyalı’s articles should be read keeping in mind these art historical debates, as his articles contain references to the superiority of “Turkish art” over “Persian art.” For example, these overtones can be read through the description of three lecterns:

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁴¹ Heinrich Glück, “Türk San’atının Dünyadaki Mevkii,” *Türkiyat Mecmuası* 3 (1926–33), 119–128.

⁴⁴² Redford, “What Have You Done for Anatolia Today?,” 244.

⁴⁴³ “Yalnız Türkler yabancı harslardan ancak millî san’atlarını asilleştirmek maksadıyla gıda almak için istifade etmişlerdir.” Glück, “Türk San’atının Dünyadaki Mevkii,” 127.

⁴⁴⁴ Redford, “What Have You Done for Anatolia Today?,” 244.

⁴⁴⁵ Gülru Necipoğlu, “Creation of a National Genius,” 159.

“As we leave the hall, we see three lecterns on the left. Two of them are Iranian work. There are traces of high art on them. The third lectern, engraved with ivory, is an Istanbul work and is a precious and unique work. When compared with others, the superiority of Turkish art immediately shows itself.”⁴⁴⁶

Like the above-mentioned newspaper articles about the museum, also Konyalı also focuses solely on the artistic and historic importance of the objects. He never mentions the religious importance of the objects, such as the sacred relics of the Prophet Muhammad. Considering these articles within the context of the new regime’s extremely secular political stance, ignoring the religious connotations of the objects is not surprising.

4.a.b. The First Official Catalogue of TİEM

As stated, the first museum catalogue entitled *Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi Rehberi*, was published in 1939 and written by the museum director of the time, Abdülkadir Erdoğan (1877–1944).⁴⁴⁷ Apart from being the first catalogue, the importance of this source is the photographs that show the museum galleries. The catalogue is descriptive and more like an inventory of the museum collection. After a very brief information about the artistic importance of the museum building, the catalogue starts with the first gallery (*birinci salon*). These room numbers do not coincide with the room numbers in the articles of Konyalı.⁴⁴⁸ For example, gallery number 1 in the museum catalogue is gallery number 5 in Konyalı’s article. Only gallery number 3 is the same both in Konyalı’s article and in the first museum catalogue. Unfortunately, there is no museum ground plan from this period; therefore it is not possible to identify the galleries precisely. Konyalı’s description of the museum, except gallery number 1, does not coincide with Halil Eldem’s definition either.

⁴⁴⁶ “Salondan çıkarken solda üç rahle görüyoruz. Bunlardan ikisi İran işidir. Üstlerinde yüksek sanat izleri vardır. Fildişi ile işlenen üçüncü rahle İstanbul işidir ve nev’i şahsına münhasır kıymetli bir eserdir. Diğerleriyle mukayese edilince Türk sanatının üstünlüğü derhal kendisini gösterir.” İbrahim Hakkı Konyalı, “Türk ve İslâm Eserleri: Halıcılığımızın en Kıymetli ve Seçme Örnekleri,” *Tan Gazetesi*, 17 May 1938, 7.

⁴⁴⁷ He served in the museum between 1932 and 1944 as an assistant museum director, a deputy director, and finally became museum director in 1937. Semavi Eyice, “Abdülkadir Erdoğan,” *TDVİA* (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1995) vol.11: 288.

⁴⁴⁸ *Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi Rehberi* (İstanbul: Devlet Basımevi, 1939).

Based on the catalogue, an additional gallery was added to the existing ones sometime in twenty-five years between the opening in 1914 and 1939. The displayed objects in each gallery, five in total, were listed with their inventory number. Today, the inventory numbers seem to vary for some of the objects. In addition to the inventory number, if known, the provenance, date, and sometimes a brief description of their artistic and technical qualities were listed. If an object carried an inscription, it was transcribed in Arabic script, but not transliterated into the Latin-script Turkish alphabet (see Fig. 45). Apparently, although the alphabet reform had been a decade previous, (printed/*matbu*) Arabic script was accepted by literate people.

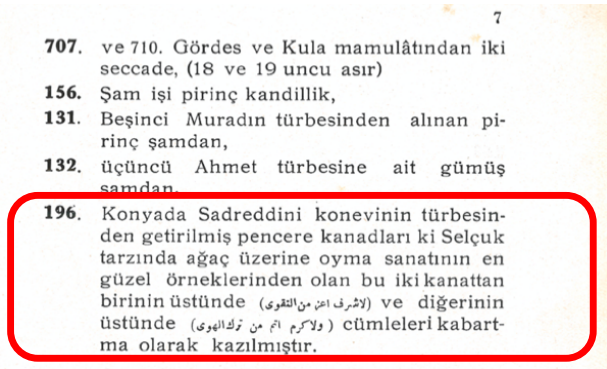


Figure 45. A page from the 1939 museum catalogue showing the listed objects. Source: *Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi Rehberi* (Istanbul: Devlet Basım Evi, 1939), unpaginated.

According to the 1939 catalogue, the museum galleries were overwhelmingly filled with objects. Konyalı states that the museum collection, almost 7000 “historical trophies” (*tarih bergüzarı*), was categorized into *kitabiyat* (manuscripts), *medeniyat* (civilizations), *mencusat* (textiles), and *haşebiyat* (*woodworks*) in general.⁴⁴⁹ Galleries from 1-5 contained 108, 170, 104, 76 (at least), and 226 items, respectively. In total, at least 700 objects were on display. The catalogue does not provide any titles for the galleries. It seems like there was not a clear

⁴⁴⁹“İçindeki yedi bin kadar tarih bergüzarı kitabiyat, medeniyat, mencusat ve haşebiyat [ağaç işeri] umumi vasıfları altında tasnif edilmiştir.” Konyalı, “Türk-İslâm Eserleri Müzesindeki Tarih Yadigârları,” 5.

categorization, except for room five, which mainly exhibited things related to reading and writing such as manuscripts, calligraphic panels, and Quran cases.

According to the museum catalogue list, some of the objects on display included carpets, prayer rugs, manuscripts, miniature paintings, Quran cases, incense burners, rosewater bottles, candlesticks, mosque lamps, lecterns, ornamental hangings (*top askular*), standards (*alem*), snuff boxes, flasks, bowls, prayer beads, ewers, basins, pitchers, cullenders (*kevgir*), stoves for heating rooms (*ateşdan*), window panels, door panels, doorknobs, keys and locks, faucets (*hamam musluğu*), cenotaphs, handkerchiefs, belts, shoes, aigrettes, *mütteka*,⁴⁵⁰ various textile pieces, cloths of the Kaaba, sacred relic boxes, and drawers containing sacred relics of the Prophet Muhammed. In addition, a coconut with a silver ring coming from a tomb,⁴⁵¹ an ostrich egg decorated with precious stones, an altitude panel (*irtifa tahtası*), and a globe brought from the library of sultan Abdülhamid II were on display.⁴⁵² The list of the exhibited objects indicates the diverse and accidental character of the museum collection. The display of the museum galleries projected the character of the collection; therefore, a vague categorization welcomed the visitors.

Photographs of the galleries help to visualize the display of the museum. Each gallery was represented with a single shot showing the general view of the room. There are some common features in each gallery. Carpets of various sizes and prayer rugs were displayed both on walls and floors. The whitewashed walls were filled with carpets and prayer rugs in all the galleries. Some of the carpets and prayer rugs were laid under objects, which were placed on an elevated base and roped off from museum visitors. Each carpet and prayer rug bears a small white label which probably contains the date and the school information of the object. Another common thing among the galleries was the crowded display cases. Analyses of the gallery photos and the museum catalogue show that the contents of the display cases were not well-defined.

⁴⁵⁰ A *mütteka* is a type of cane used by dervishes to not fall asleep during their seclusion periods.

⁴⁵¹ "Hazreti Halid türbesinden gelme gümüş çemberli hindistan cevizi." Inv.no. 205. *Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi Rehberi*, 23.

⁴⁵² *Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi Rehberi*, 23, 27,28, 36.



Figure 46. Photograph from the 1939 catalogue showing a corner from the first gallery of TİEM. Source: *Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi Rehberi* (Istanbul: Devlet Basım Evi, 1939), unpaginated.

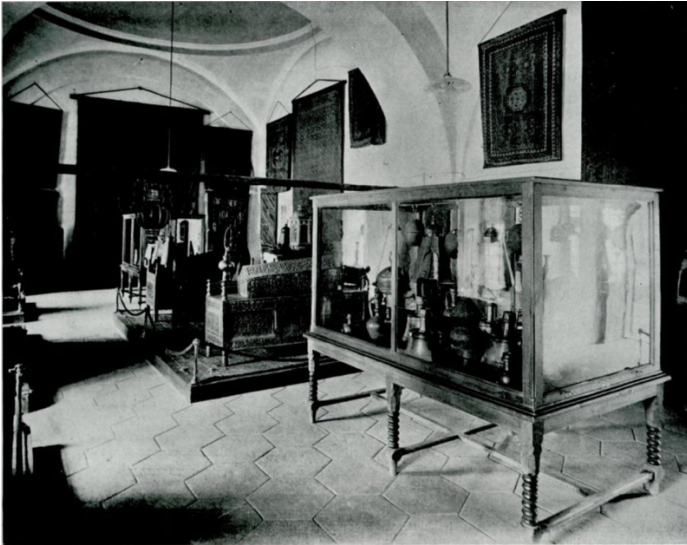


Figure 47. First gallery in TİEM. Source: "Le Musée des arts turcs et musulmans," *la Turquie kamâlisme* 15 (October 1936), 9-14: 10.

Konyalı states that the first gallery is the richest room in the museum.⁴⁵³ Three lanterns hanging from a low wooden tie-road, are displayed in their original function, can be seen in the photo of the first gallery. Two of them were brought from the mausoleum of Barbaros Hayreddin Pasha (d. 1546), a “great Turkish sailor.”⁴⁵⁴ Konyalı describes the aesthetic features and materials of these lanterns by emphasizing their local, meaning “Turkish,” production qualities.⁴⁵⁵

In addition, the photo of the first gallery shows three wooden cenotaphs placed on an elevated base which was covered with a large carpet (Fig. 46-48). Different from the others, this carpet laid on the floor retained its original spatial function. A metal candlestick and an *alem*⁴⁵⁶ (standard) in the shape of a crescent are placed in between the cenotaphs. The cenotaphs were roped off from the visitors to maintain their security and to raise the status of the objects. Konyalı describes these cenotaphs from the Seljuk period as “masterpieces” for their delicate woodwork.⁴⁵⁷ The cenotaphs were brought to the museum because one of them was stolen.⁴⁵⁸ Through these cenotaphs, Konyalı reminds readers of the problem of cultural heritage theft with a very nationalist overtone and writes “especially for the last fifty years precious Turkish works in Anatolia were possessed by thieves [...]”⁴⁵⁹ The stolen one eventually entered the collection of the David Collection in Copenhagen in 1976.⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁵³ İbrahim Hakkı Konyalı, “Türk ve İslâm Eserleri: Müzelerdeki Eşsiz Tarih Yadigarları Arasında,” Tan Gazetesi, 3 May 1938, 7.

⁴⁵⁴ İbrahim Hakkı Konyalı, “Türk ve İslâm Eserleri: Halıcılığımızın en Kıymetli ve Seçme Örnekleri,” Tan Gazetesi, 17 May 1938, 7.

⁴⁵⁵ “Salonun ortasına asılı altın yıldızlı iki büyük fener büyük Türk denizcisi Barbarosun Beşiktaştağı türbesinden getirilmiştir. İkinin de askıları altın yıldızlı çapadan yapılmıştır. [...] bu kıymetli hâtıraları camları, şekiller ve kenar ve kubbe süsleri itibarile tetkike değer eserlerdir. Karpuz fenerde muhtelif renklerin kaynaşmasından doğan doyulmaz bir ahenk vardır. Camlardaki renk bolluğu bizde camcılığın ne kadar ilerlemiş olduğunu gösterir. Uzun fenerin ahşap çerçevelerinde ince nakışlar insanın kalbinden büyülüyor. Bu fenerin iki yüzünün camları kırmızıdır. Dedelerimizin daha eskiden gemilerde renkli fener kullandıklarını gösteriyor. Camlar yerlidir.” Konyalı, “Türk ve İslâm Eserleri: Halıcılığımızın en Kıymetli ve Seçme Örnekleri,” 7.

⁴⁵⁶ *Alem* means an indicator. Made of metal an *alem* can be used for different purposes. An *alem* in the shape of crescent like in the photograph was used to put on top of the mosque domes in architecture in the Ottoman period. *Alems* of various designs were used in wars as flags.

⁴⁵⁷ Konyalı, “Türk ve İslâm Eserleri: Halıcılığımızın en Kıymetli ve Seçme Örnekleri,” 7.

⁴⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵⁹ “Bilhassa son yarım asırdanberi Anadoludaki kıymetli Türk eserlerine musallat olan hırsız eller bu sandukalardan birsinin tabutunu aşırıldığı için diğerleri buraya getirilmiştir.” *Ibid.*

⁴⁶⁰ The inventory number of the cenotaph from the mausoleum of Mahmud Hayrani in Akşehir, Türkiye, in the David Collection is 26/1976.

One of the three cenotaphs is still on display in the Seljuk period gallery at TIEM. I will discuss its current display discourse, which points out the problem of illicit trafficking and reclaiming of objects, in detail in Chapter 6.



Figure 48. Sarcophagus belonging to Seyyid Mahmud Hayrani, Seljuk period, 1251 CE, inv. no. 191-192. Source: Seracettin Şahin, Sevgi Kutluay, and Miyase Çelen (eds.) *100 Yıl Önce ve 100 Yıl Sonra: Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi* (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2014).

According to the museum catalogue, there were two display cases in the first gallery entitled “43 no. *vitrinde* (in display case number 43)” and “46 no. *vitrinde*.” However, only one of them is visible in the photo. Based on the museum catalogue description, the central display case was probably the one entitled “46 no.” If so, it contained at least 14 objects including oil lamps, candlesticks, lanterns, and other small objects such as ewers and basins.⁴⁶¹ Konyalı comments on this display case and unsurprisingly emphasizes the artistic and historical importance of these with, again, nationalist overtones. According to him, these objects are significant sources of the Turkish goldsmith industry and Turkish history.⁴⁶²

The examination of the first gallery shows that there were various approaches even for the same objects within the same gallery. For example, three different display techniques were in use for lanterns. First, some of the lanterns hang from the ceiling as if in their original

⁴⁶¹ *Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi Rehberi*, 13-14.

⁴⁶² “Ortakdaki cemekeânda Osmanlı imparatorluğunun muhtelif vakıf müesseselerinden getirilen ve memlûk hükümdarlarından Kansugori, Sultan Berkok ve diğer hükümdarlar adına Musulda ve Suriyede yapılmış kandillikler, şamdanlar, ibrikler, güğümler, taslar ve bilhassa dört müşebbek kandillik Türk kuyumculuk ve işlemecilik sanatının erişilmez örneklerindedir. Türkün eli demirleri, tunçları, bir sabun kalıbı gibi işlemiş ve hendesenin en zor şekillerini yapmıştır. Birçoklarının üstlerinde devirlerini, sahiplerini gösteren yazılar vardır. Bunlar Türk tarihi için cömert kaynaklardır.” Konyalı, “Türk ve İslâm Eserleri: Halıcılığımızın en Kıymetli ve Seçme Örnekleri,” 7.

spatial condition. In late nineteenth-century Europe, this approach was a common practice for lanterns in private spaces such as collector houses and art dealer shops. A photo from a book entitled *Catalogue des objets d'art de l'orient et de l'occident* (1888) shows the collection of Albert Goupil (1840–1884), a collector and an art dealer, where lanterns were suspended from the ceiling (see Fig. 49).⁴⁶³ In addition, this photo shows that a carpet and some door or window panels were displayed on a wall. Some metal objects such as ewers, trays, and candlesticks were exhibited in front of these items, which recalls the display in TIEM.



Figure 49. A photo showing the collection of M. Albert Goupil from *Catalogue des objets d'art de l'orient et de l'occident*. *Tableaux, dessins, composant la collection de feu M. Albert Goupil* (Paris: Mannheim, 1888), not paginated.

⁴⁶³ Mercedes Volait, “Les intérieurs orientalistes du comte de Saint-Maurice et d’Albert Goupil: des ‘Cluny arabe’ au Caire et à Paris à la fin du XIXe siècle,” in *The Period Rooms: Allestimenti storici tra arte, collezionismo et museologia*, edited by Sandra Costa, Dominique Poulot, Mercedes Volait. (Bologna: Bologna University Press, 2016), 103-114; Rémi Labrusse “Récottes: Albert Goupil, collectionneur,” *Islamophiles. l’Europe moderne et les arts de l’Islam*, edited by Rémi Labrusse and Salima Hellal (Paris: Somogy, 2011), 139-151.

Second, some of the lanterns were exhibited inside a display case with various objects. However, different from other contemporary European museum displays of Islamic art, the display cases in TIEM seem rather chaotic. Third, a lantern from the Mamluk period was placed on a small table (most probably a historical one but used as a pedestal) in front of a carpet. Another very similar lantern was also placed on a small wooden table on the other side of the room, as vaguely seen in the photo of the first gallery. Although these lanterns look alike the ones in the central display case, these ones were chosen to be exhibited differently. As the photo indicates, a large hanging carpet provides a background for the lantern, which was brought from the mausoleum of Çoban Mustafa Pasha in Gebze (Fig. 50).⁴⁶⁴ The lantern placed in front of a hanging carpet recalls two different display techniques. First, it recalls an arrangement of an antique shop like Goupil's, where carpets were used as backgrounds, divorced from their contexts (Fig. 49). Second, it recalls two art museum display techniques from different periods. An Italian bust was displayed in front of a Persian carpet (known as the Bode-Animal carpet) in the Kaiser-Friedrich Museum (now Bode Museum) around 1892 (see Figures 51-52.). The destroyed Bode-Animal carpet was an example of those carpets which Renaissance paintings had made familiar. Therefore, this carpet was chosen to be exhibited as a background for a Madonna and child sculpture from the Renaissance period.



Figure 50. Lantern from the Mamluk period in the first gallery in 1939. Source: *Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi Rehberi* (Istanbul: Devlet Basım Evi, 1939), unpaginated.

⁴⁶⁴ Konyalı, "Türk ve İslâm Eserleri: Halıcılığımızın en Kıymetli ve Seçme Örnekleri," 7.



Figure 51. Detail of Sculpture galleries of Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum (now Bode Museum), Berlin showing a Persian carpet behind an Italian bust; around 1892. Source: A display label from the Museum für Islamische Kunst.



Figure 52. Sculpture galleries of Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum (now Bode Museum) showing a Persian carpet (known as the Persian-Bode- Animal Carpet) behind an Italian bust; around 1892. Source: A display label from the Museum für Islamische Kunst.

Placing an object or some furniture in front of an “oriental” carpet was not just a late nineteenth-century habit for curators: this installation type continued in a museum space. For example, it is possible to see different examples of this approach in the galleries of the MET. Display photographs from the 1920s show that decorative art objects of different cultures and mediums were displayed together in the Altman Collection galleries in 1926 (see Fig. 53).



Figure 53. Altman Collection Galleries in 1926 at the MET, New York. Source: Rebecca Lindsey, “Displaying Islamic Art at the Metropolitan: A Retrospective Look,” *The Metropolitan Museum Blog*, 2 February 2012.

Another example from the 1920s in the MET is the Ballard carpet donation. A photo of the display of this collection shows a Mudejar chest placed on a carpet and standing in front of a large Ottoman carpet (see Fig. 54).⁴⁶⁵ In 1944, this method was still in use at the MET galleries. A photo of gallery D-3 from the exhibition entitled “Great Rugs of the Orient” demonstrates a large jar standing on a pedestal placed in front

⁴⁶⁵ Rebecca Lindsey, “Displaying Islamic Art at the Metropolitan: A Retrospective Look,” online source: <https://www.metmuseum.org/blogs/now-at-the-met/features/2012/displaying-islamic-art-at-the-metropolitan>. 2 February 2012.

of a large carpet (Fig. 55). It seems like this approach falls in between an antique shop and an art museum.



Figure 54. A photo of the Near Eastern Galleries at the MET, New York, in 1923. Source: Rebecca Lindsey, "Displaying Islamic Art at the Metropolitan: A Retrospective Look," *The Metropolitan Museum Blog*, 2 February 2012.



Figure 55. The exhibition entitled "Great Rugs of the Orient," at the MET in 1944. Source: Rebecca Lindsey, "Displaying Islamic Art at the Metropolitan: A Retrospective Look," *The Metropolitan Museum Blog*, 2 February 2012.

The motivation behind the display of TİEM and other art museums was possibly different. Most probably, the curators of TİEM were not aware of the 1892 display in Berlin. TİEM curators may have been familiar—although this is unlikely—with the display at the MET via museum photographs. The lantern in TİEM, though, was probably placed in front of a carpet because of lack of space. Still, it is surprising to see similar methods in use, even for different purposes.

The second gallery was the kitchen of the soup-kitchen complex; therefore, a furnace was still visible in the room.⁴⁶⁶ The photo of the second gallery provides a limited view of the room but still gives an idea about the crowded display. Figure 56 shows a different perspective of this gallery, which was published in the abovementioned newspaper article in 1937. Like the rest of the museum, the hanging carpets and prayer rugs were displayed side by side on the white walls. In addition, some prayer rugs were again placed under Quran cases, which were put on an elevated platform and roped off from the visitors.

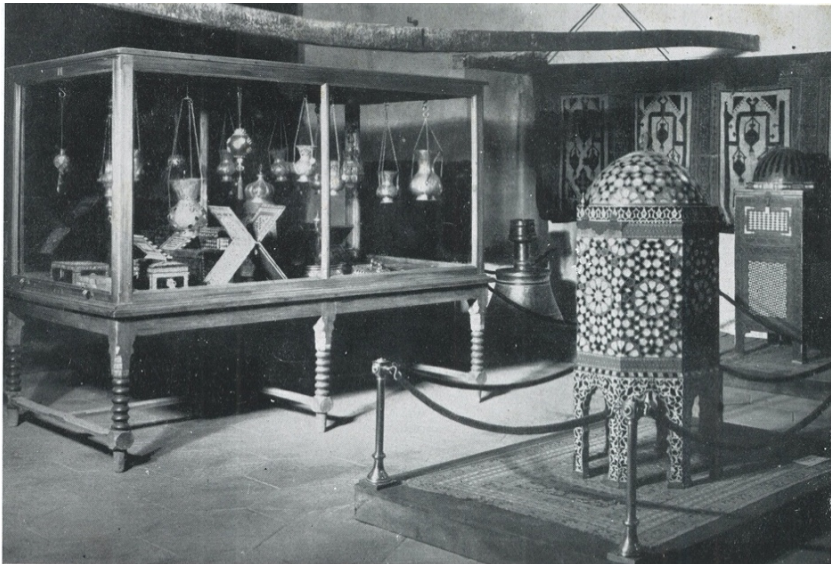


Figure 56. View of the second gallery of TİEM, 1939. Source: *Türk ve İslâm Eserleri Müzesi Rehberi* (Istanbul: Devlet Basım Evi, 1939), unpaginated.

⁴⁶⁶ Konyalı, “Türk ve İslâm Eserleri: Halıcılığımızın en Kıymetli ve Seçme Örnekleri,” 7.

Konyalı describes the contents of the second gallery as follows:

“There are pieces that are priceless. The mother-of-pearl, ivory, tortoise-covered and domed Quran and fascicle of Quran (*ciiz*) cases, which were collected from the tombs of Istanbul, are extremely valuable in terms of their interior and exterior art. We cannot find their counterparts in other museums. Three century-old lecterns covered with mother-of-pearl and ivory are living expressions of Turkish taste and ancient Turkish art. These works keep foreigners busy for hours. Silver drawers in a showcase and oil lamps decorated with precious stones are the diamonds of the art of jewelry. [...]”⁴⁶⁷

Once again, Konyalı emphasizes the uniqueness of the museum collection and its representative power of “Turkish taste.” He also briefly mentions a tombac ewer and basin set which was donated to the mausoleum of Pertevniyal Valide Sultan (wife of Sultan Mahmud II and mother of Sultan Abdülaziz, d. 1883). It was displayed in display case no. 37 with many other objects. This set has been always on display throughout the museum’s history.

Apart from the carpets hanging on the walls and scattered objects, there are three display cases in this gallery. The central display case seen in the photo was probably the one entitled “no. 36” in the museum catalogue. It contains twenty-six objects, such as four sacred relics drawers (*lihye-i saadet çekmecesi*), a set of a ewer and basin, a Quran case, a prayer rug from Kula, and a dustpan (*faraş*) decorated with mother-of-pearls and tortoise shell. In addition, lecterns, mosque lamps, and *top askı* (hanging ornament) hanging from the top of the display case were once again exhibited in their original spatial function. There is no consistent categorization of the display case contents. The dates of these objects, unless it is a carpet or a prayer rug, were not given in the museum catalogue. If an object was made of precious materials, like the above-mentioned dustpan example, then it was specified in the catalogue. The provenance of some of the objects was written in the catalogue. However, it does not seem like this was a determinative factor

⁴⁶⁷“Paha biçilemeyecek kadar kıymetli olan parçalar vardır. İstanbul türbelerinden toplattırılan sedef, fildişi, başa kaplı ve kubbeli kuran ve cüz mahfazaları iç ve dışlarındaki sanat incelikleri yönünden fevkalade kıymetli haizdirler. Bunların eşlerine diğer müzelerde rastlayamayız. Sedef ve fildişi kaplı 3 asırlık rahleler Türk zevkinin, eski Türk sanatının yaşayan birer ifadeleridir. Bu eserler ecnebileri saatlerce meşgul ediyorlar. Bir vitrindeki gümüş çekmeceler ve kıymetli taşlarla süslenmiş kandillikler, kuyumculuk sanatının pırlantalarıdır. [...]” Konyalı, “Türk ve İslâm Eserleri: Halıcılığımızın en Kıymetli ve Seçme Örnekleri,” 7.

in the categorization. Therefore, it is not possible to see a pattern within the classification of the display cases.

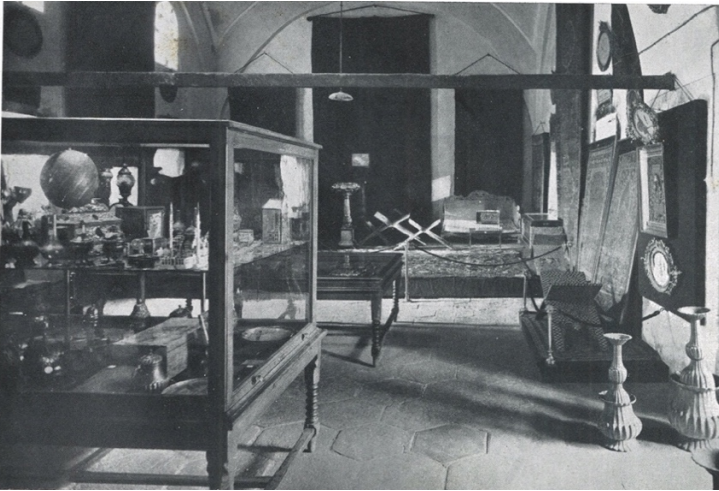


Figure 57. View of the third gallery of TIEM in 1939. Source: *Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi Rehberi* (Istanbul: Devlet Basım Evi, 1939), unpaginated.

As Figure 57 visualizes, the general display principle of the third room was parallel to the first two galleries. There were nine display cases: 27, 28, 30, 31, 32, 33, 29, 34, and 35. Curiously, the numbering of display cases did not follow numerical order. The display cases in this gallery were relatively better categorized than the others. For example, cases numbers 27 and 32 contain aigrettes and belts that belonged to Ottoman sultans and princes, respectively. According to the 1939 museum catalogue, the majority of the display cases held textile items. Cases numbers 30 and 31 displayed only textiles, and cases numbers 29, 33, 34, and 35 also contained various textiles, including cloths, boots, headgear for men (*takke*), turbans (*sarık*), talismanic shirts⁴⁶⁸ of Ottoman princes, batons (*asa*), prayer beads, a Kaaba cover, a bundle cover (*bohça örtüsü*), and (weirdly enough) tablecloths. The randomness in terms of the categorization of the exhibited objects reappears in this gallery, too. Moreover, lecterns, boxes containing the hair from the Prophet

⁴⁶⁸ Sultan Bayezid I and Selim II's talismanic shirts were displayed in case number 33. *Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi Rehberi*, 40. The talismanic shirts drew the interest of all the authors who wrote a reviews of the museum.

Muhammad's beard (*lihye-i saadet*), a qiblenuma (an astronomical instrument to show the direction of Mecca), incense burners, candlesticks, calligraphic panels, and the above-mentioned architectural models of mosques⁴⁶⁹ were on display almost haphazardly.

The fourth gallery was formed mostly by carpet and prayer rug displays (Fig. 58). Although the gallery contained more than a hundred carpets and prayer rugs of various sizes, it seemed less chaotic than the three other galleries.⁴⁷⁰

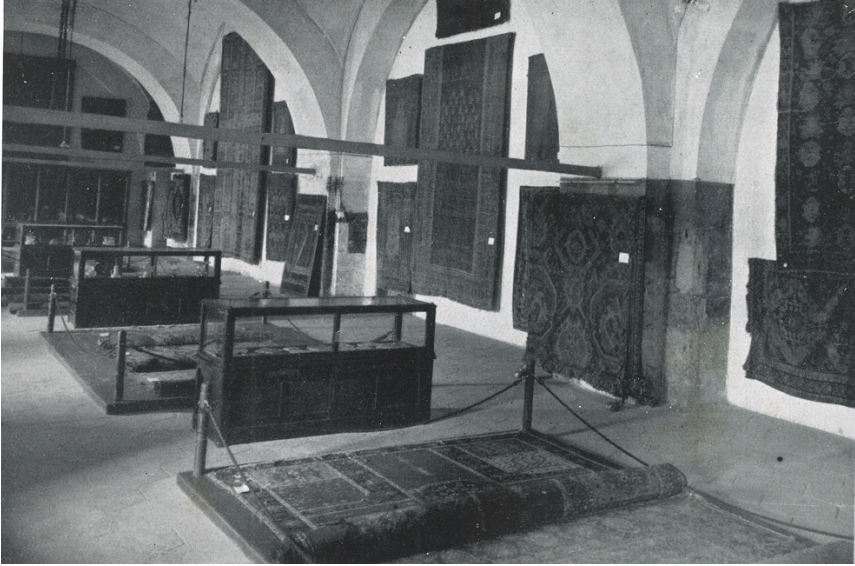


Figure 58. View of the fourth gallery of TİEM in 1939. Source: *Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi Rehberi* (Istanbul: Devlet Basım Evi, 1939), unpaginated.

In 1938, Konyalı wrote that this newly opened gallery was classified by “a good hand and a specialized knowledge.”⁴⁷¹ Different from other galleries, the carpets laid on the floor were exhibited on their own, without any objects on them, recalling the display of carpet galleries at

⁴⁶⁹ A cardboard architectural model of Yeni Camii (Mosque, inv. no. 1080) and an ivory architectural model of Sultanahmet Mosque (inv. no. 1079) that were mentioned in the newspaper article by Feridun Es, published in 1937. For a description of the architectural models see *Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi Rehberi*, 36.

⁴⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷¹ Konyalı, “Türk ve İslâm Eserleri: Müzelerdeki Eşsiz Tarih Yادigârları Arasında,” 7.

the MET from different periods of time. The first MET exhibition specifically on Islamic art, entitled “A Loan Exhibition of Early Oriental Rugs,”⁴⁷² had a similar method for displaying carpets (Fig. 59).



Figure 59. View of “A Loan Exhibition of Early Oriental Rugs,” which took place between 1 November 1910 and 5 January 1911 at the MET, New York. Source: Rebecca Lindsey, “Displaying Islamic Art at the Metropolitan: A Retrospective Look,” *The Metropolitan Museum Blog*, 2 February 2012.

From the photo, it looks like there are at least three display cases in the fourth gallery. However, the 1939 museum catalogue only mentions two cases—numbers 48 and 49—very briefly. It reads: “Glass and tile works (*malumâtı*) from various periods, *çeşmi bülbüller* from the old Beykoz factory and etc.”⁴⁷³ *Çeşm-i bülbül* is a type of filigree glass that started to be produced in the nineteenth century. A glass factory was established by the Ottoman state in Beykoz to compete in the international arena of the glass industry.⁴⁷⁴ *Çeşm-i bülbül* and other types of Beykoz glasswork,

⁴⁷² The exhibition was curated and had an illustrated catalogue by Decorative Arts Curator Wilhelm Valentiner, *Catalogue of A Loan Exhibition of Early Oriental Rugs* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1910). Lindsey, “Displaying Islamic Art at the Metropolitan: A Retrospective Look,” unpaginated.

⁴⁷³ “Muhtelif devirlere ait cam ve çini malumâtı, eski Beykoz fabrikası mamulâtından çeşmi bülbüller ve saier.” *Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi Rehberi*, 46.

⁴⁷⁴ Nurşen Özkul Fındık, “Son Dönem Osmanlı Cam İmalatı Sektörünün Oluşumu ve Avrupa Etkisi,” *Dini Araştırmalar* (Mayıs-Ağustos 2007), vol. 10, no. 28, 163-189: 169. For

an example of “good and national design,” are still produced in Türkiye. The *çeşm-i bülbül* type of glass is no longer exhibited in TIEM, however other Beykoz glasswork is on display in the Ethnography section of the museum. The establishment of the TIEM’s ethnography collection in the 1970s and its display methods will be analyzed in detail in Chapter 6. In addition, the changing display methods of Beykoz glasswork will be discussed.



Figure 60. View of the fifth gallery of TIEM in 1939. Source: *Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi Rehberi* (Istanbul: Devlet Basım Evi, 1939), unpaginated.

As mentioned above, the fifth and last gallery of the museum was described as the gallery of manuscripts by Konyalı. Compared to the first three galleries of the museum, it had a better classification. The theme of the room was the art of books and writings (Fig. 60). The fifth gallery had 36 display cases.⁴⁷⁵ Although the display cases’ numbers seem to be in order until 26, there are many missing numbers. For example, the display cases between 27 and 35 were located in the third

detail information on the subjects see Fuat Bayramoğlu *Turkish Glass Art and Beykoz-Ware*, translated by Leyla Melek Kermenli (Istanbul: İstanbul Matbaası, 1976).

⁴⁷⁵ The display cases in the fifth gallery are ordered in the museum catalogue as 22, 26, 53, 44- 45, 23, 18, 12, 52, 6, 51, 65, 50, 5, 11, 17, 21, 41, 40, 20, 16, 54, 14, 24, 10, 19, 25, 15, 8, 13, 2, 9, 1, 7, 3, and 4.

gallery. Display case no. 36 was placed in the second room, whereas no. 46 was in the first gallery. Therefore, one can understand why Konyalı referred to this room as the first gallery of the museum in his article. The display cases 40, 41, 44-45, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, and 65 might have been placed over time, after the initial installation of the museum galleries. The reason why most display cases were in this gallery is that some of the manuscripts were displayed singly. This gallery was also very similar to the rest of the museum in terms of display techniques. The difference was that more individual display cases presented some of the manuscripts as “masterpieces.” In addition, instead of carpets covering the walls of the gallery, this time mainly calligraphic panels were hanging on the walls side by side.

Konyalı unsurprisingly, emphasizes the Turkishness and uniqueness of the collection by also narrating the foreign visitor’s experience. It reads:

“This is a national wisdom and an ocean of history. It is impossible to see the old writings (*eski yazılar*), illuminations (*tezhipler*), miniature paintings (*minyatürler*) and bindings here in any museum in the world. The most vivid examples of the transformations (*istihaleler*) of Arabic script from the first centuries of Islam until our revolution in writing, and the most distinguished pieces created by Turkish painters (*nakkaşlar*) and illuminators (*müzehhipler*), are gathered here. A former hall officer of the museum says:

—Foreigners who enter here do not want to leave. Especially American women stand in front of miniature paintings that show ancient Turkish clothes for hours as if they were worshipping, watching them as if they were sucking them with their eyes. There are also those who visits this hall for weeks.”⁴⁷⁶

The stress on the admiration of foreign visitors is quite remarkable. The attempt to raise the value of the collection is very familiar, since it is still a valid discourse. Starting with the early republican period and in the following years, the West was the ultimate role model for the Republic of Türkiye. The state determined its reforms and modernization in comparison to the standards of the West. Therefore, it was very significant to have a cultural institution and collection which was appreciated and recognized by not just foreigners but Western ones.

⁴⁷⁶ Konyalı, “Türk ve İslâm Eserleri: Halıcılığımızın en Kıymetli ve Seçme Örnekleri,” 7. Translated from Turkish to English by the author.

According to the museum catalogue, the display cases in the gallery contained Persian manuscripts with miniature paintings, illuminations, and book bindings in Persian style,⁴⁷⁷ book bindings and illuminations in Arab style,⁴⁷⁸ Turkish illuminations, miniature paintings, and calligraphies in various forms (such as endowment deeds (*vakfiye*), prayer books, Qurans, and manuscripts on literature or history). Some of the Turkish and Persian illuminations were exhibited in the same display case. On the other hand, some of the cases solely contain Turkish, Persian, or Arab items.

Display case no 41 was reserved for the Ottoman sultans' miniature paintings. Display case number 65 contained items related to calligraphy, such as an inkwell, a decoy (*mühre*), a seal, a reed pen, a pen box (*kalem dan*), a scissor, a gilding plate, and a cylinder box to hold documents (*kubur*).⁴⁷⁹ The museum catalogue entry describes these items as "Turkish," which might be an indication of the origin of these tools. In his article, Konyalı mentions the owners of some of these writing tools such as a *makta*⁴⁸⁰ carrying the seal of a famous poet and calligrapher Cevri or silver inkwell belonging to the poet Ayaşlı Esat Muhlis Pasha.⁴⁸¹ The museum catalogue does not give such details, so it is curious where Konyalı learned this information. For the first object, he might have been able to read and recognize the seal of the owner. However, he does not provide information on whether there was a seal on the silver inkwell or not. Could there have been object labels inside display case no. 41, or did he hear these details from the museum staff while he was visiting? We don't know.

Again the "Turkishness" of the objects and calligraphers were highlighted by both the museum catalogue and Konyalı. For example, Konyalı states that although a certain style of calligraphy, *talik*, known as a type of Iranian official writing, a Turkish calligrapher, Şeyhülislam Veliyüddin Efendi, made it complete with his *celi* and *nesih talik* writings, and his work is the representative of the highest example of "Turkish

⁴⁷⁷ "26. No. Vitrinde: Hicri dokuzuncu asır mamulatından İran üslubunda tezhibler." *Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi Rehberi*, 47.

⁴⁷⁸ Display cases no. 11 and 21 respectively.

⁴⁷⁹ "No. 65 Vitrinde: divit, kubur, kalem dan, cilbent, muşta, şem'a, mühre, kalem, kalemtraş, mak'ta, hokka, makas, yıldız tabağı ve mühür gibi Türk işi yazı alât ve edevatı vardır." *Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi Rehberi*, 53.

⁴⁸⁰ A tool used for cutting the reedpen (*kamış*).

⁴⁸¹ Konyalı, "Türk-İslâm Eserleri Müzesindeki Tarih Yadiğarları," 5.

skill.”⁴⁸² The contents of some display cases in this gallery was described in the catalogue as “Turkish illuminations decorated with the writings of the most important Turkish calligraphers of the century.”⁴⁸³

Calligraphic panels written by the Ottoman sultans such as Mahmud II (1808–1839), Mustafa III (1757–1774), and Abdülmecid (r. 1839–1861) were also displayed in this gallery. Interestingly, the museum catalogue solely writes the names without stating that they were Ottoman sultans, so the reader himself/herself should understand they must have belonged to sultans. This approach changed in the most recent reinstallation, completed in 2014, which will be discussed in Chapter 6. In addition to objects related to manuscripts, prayer rugs dated between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries from various regions of Türkiye such as the Aegean, the Black Sea, and central Anatolia were also on display. Each of the prayer rugs was categorized in the catalogue on the basis of its production location, such as Gördes, Lâdik, Kula, and İncesu.⁴⁸⁴ In addition, one or two Persian carpets were displayed on the walls. Due to the Second World War, TİEM and other museums in Türkiye were closed in 1939.

4.b. Years Between 1949 and 1983

Staying closed for a decade, TİEM was reopened in 1949 and reinstalled based on chronological order.⁴⁸⁵ One of the main newspapers of the time, *Cumhuriyet*, announced the opening of TİEM as a significant event in cultural life.⁴⁸⁶ The importance of the manuscript and carpet collection of the museum was again emphasized in this newspaper article. The article also states that the museum had gained an international reputation and it was filled with valuable and rare Turkish and Islamic works which cannot be found in other “world museums.”⁴⁸⁷ The museum was open

⁴⁸² Ibid.

⁴⁸³ *Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi Rehberi*, 1939, 50.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid, 48.

⁴⁸⁵ “Türk ve İslâm Eserleri Müzesi Açılıyor,” *Cumhuriyet*, 29 October 1949.

⁴⁸⁶ “[...] halka açılması kültür hayatımızda mühim bir hadise telâkki edilmeğe değer.” “Türk ve İslâm Eserleri Müzesi Açılıyor,” *Cumhuriyet*, 29 October 1949.

⁴⁸⁷ “Beynelminel en kıymetli müzelerden biri olduğundan bugün bütün dünyanın ittifak ettiği Müze, muhteiyatı bakımından İslam ve Türk eserlerinin dünya müzelerinde eşine tesadüf edilmeyecek kadar değerli ve nadide eserlerini toplamaktadır.” “Türk ve İslâm Eserleri Müzesi Açılıyor,” *Cumhuriyet*, 29 October 1949.

“for now” on Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday afternoon between 13.30 and 16.30 for “everyone.”⁴⁸⁸

Another article in the same newspaper was published the very next day after the museum opening. The museum director gave a tour to the journalist and introduced “ancient” (*eski*) and “valuable” (*kıymetli*) works of the museum collection.⁴⁸⁹ Therefore, this article gives insights on the content of the galleries. The museum was organized into four galleries. The first one was dedicated to the manuscripts (*yazı seksiyonu*), including Turkish, Arab, and Persian calligraphy (*yazı*), illumination (*tezhib*), and miniature paintings.⁴⁹⁰ The word that the author uses for the term “calligraphy” in the article is curious. Instead of the Arabic word “hat,” which is a term for calligraphy from the Ottoman period that is still used today, the author uses the Turkish word “yazı,” which literally means “writing” in English. This small detail is also a reflection of the changing ideology of the new regime.

The second gallery contained Seljuk carpets from the thirteenth century: Anatolian “masterpiece” carpets from Uşak, Gördes, Ladik, and Kula dating to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁴⁹¹ The third gallery exhibited objects from the dervish lodges like Quran lecterns, drawers, rosewater sprinklers, incense burners, and candlesticks. In addition, Persian, Caucasian, and Kazak rugs were displayed for “decorative purposes.”⁴⁹² “Exquisite” and “precious” Turkish carpets of recent times were displayed in the fourth gallery.⁴⁹³

Ahmed Şükrü Esmir (1891–1982), the General Director of Press and Broadcasting, stated during his visit to the museum that TİEM would provide an idea to foreign visitors with its well-organized display.⁴⁹⁴ The Twenty-Second Congress of Orientalists was held in Istanbul in 1951, and the participants visited TİEM in groups. The director of the New York Metropolitan Museum, Francis Henry Taylor

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid; “Türk ve İslâm Eserleri Müzesi Dün Açıldı,” *Cumhuriyet*, 2 November 1949.

⁴⁸⁹ “Türk ve İslâm Eserleri Müzesi Dün Açıldı,” *Cumhuriyet*, 2 November 1949.

⁴⁹⁰ “Türk ve İslâm Eserleri Müzesi Dün Açıldı,” *Cumhuriyet*, 2 November 1949.

⁴⁹¹ Ibid.

⁴⁹² Ibid.

⁴⁹³ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁴ “Türkiyeye gelecek yabancılara fikir vermek bakımından çok güzel tertiblendiğini söylemiştir.” “Şükrü Esmir Türk ve İslâm Eserleri Müzesini Gezdi,” *Cumhuriyet*, 21 November 1949.

(1903–1957), was among the visitors, and he congratulated the museum administration for the attentive display.⁴⁹⁵

Journalist, author, and translator Fikret Adil (1901–1973) wrote an article 40 days after the reopening of TİEM. He was being toured by the museum director, Elif Naci. Adil pointed out the museum was in great demand since its reopening and at least 150 people—excluding school groups—were visiting daily.⁴⁹⁶ The museum collection had 20,000 items in this period. The new organization of the museum contained four galleries. Two of them were reserved for Turkish carpets, and more than 500 pieces were on display. One of the galleries exhibited carpets and prayer rugs dated between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries. The second carpet gallery displayed items from the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. The name of the third gallery was “muhtelif eşyalar salonu” (various items gallery). The name is self-explanatory, but the author mentions a few things such as talismanic shirts which he describes as “the most precious” (*en kıymetli*). In addition, a few samples of Persian and Caucasian carpets were hanging on the walls in the third gallery. The fourth gallery was reserved for manuscripts and things related to them. This gallery comprised the most detailed part of Adil’s article. The author also reported news on the future plans of the museum at the end of the article. Another part of the Süleymaniye Mosque complex, known as the *tabhane*, would be repaired and used to display items from the Seljuk and Mamluk periods, and ceramics from the Mesopotamian digs.

A journal article written by the director of the museum, painter Elif Naci (1898–1987), is an important source to understand the post-war display of the museum. Another building of the Süleymaniye Mosque complex, the *tabhane* (a place that functioned as a house of rest), was planned to be renovated and given to the museum to display more objects.⁴⁹⁷ The number of galleries increased to four, but fewer objects were on display after the reinstallation.⁴⁹⁸ Two galleries were reserved

⁴⁹⁵ “Müşteşrikler Türk ve İslâm Eserleri Müzesini Gezdiiler,” *Cumhuriyet*, 19 September 1951.

⁴⁹⁶ Fikret Adil, “Türk ve İslâm Eserleri Müzesi,” *Yeni İstanbul Gazetesi*, 12 December 1949, 4.

⁴⁹⁷ Elif Naci, “Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi,” *Türkiye Turing ve Otomobil Kurumu Belleteni* (Nisan, 1950), 27-30: 27.

⁴⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

for the carpet collection. The other two halls displayed manuscripts and “muhtelif eserler” (various works), respectively.

The carpet galleries were chronologically arranged and subdivided according to the geographic location where they were woven. The first gallery exhibited carpets on the walls from the thirteenth to seventeenth centuries. This “big gallery” contained carpets from the Seljuk and Ottoman periods. However, the term “Ottoman” never appears in the article: instead, the carpets were named based on their production places such as Uşak, Kula, Gördes in Anatolia. Like other authors, also Elif Naci also emphasizes the rareness of the carpet collection through this sentence:

“It is possible to see rare and untouched (*bakir*) carpets only in here [the museum] that have not been cataloged in any foreign land (*ecnebi diyarı*), except for a few sent to the New York exhibition.”⁴⁹⁹

In addition to the carpets, woodwork from the Seljuk period, such as door and window panels, sarcophaguses, and tiles, were displayed in this gallery next to the Seljuk carpets. The second carpet gallery was reserved for the “Turkish” ones dating to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which were available for deeper research.⁵⁰⁰ The director complained about the insufficient space to display more Turkish carpets.

The third gallery entitled “various works,” had no particular theme, as its name suggests. There were “typical examples of various periods,” such as candlesticks, drawers, ewers, bowls, incense burners, belts, aigrettes, lanterns, faucets (*musluk*), talismanic shirts, prayer beads, Kaaba covers (*Kâbe örtüleri*), sacred relics of the Prophet Muhammad (*lihye-i saadet*), Quran lecterns, and cases.⁵⁰¹ The director describes this gallery as follows: “[... these objects] were irrelevant to each other in terms of historical and artistic value.”⁵⁰² In addition to the various objects, just a few samples of objects of Persian, Caucasian, Dagestan, and Balochistan were displayed in the third gallery due to a lack of space.

⁴⁹⁹ “Bunlarda New-York sergisine gönderilen bir kaç müstesna hiç bir esnebî diyarında Kataloge edilmemiş nadir ve bakir halıları ancak burada görmek mümkündür.” Elif Naci, “Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi,” 28.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid, 29.

⁵⁰² “[...] eşyaları gibi tarih ve san’at kıymeti bakımından mütenevvi ve birbirleri ile münasebeti olmayan birçok eserlerin içtimağâhıdır.” Ibid, 29.

The museum management was planned to exhibit more items after the renovation of the *tabhane* building.⁵⁰³

The fourth gallery was filled with manuscripts, calligraphic panels, book-binding examples (*cilt*), miniature paintings, and illuminations. This gallery was divided into subsections: Arab, Turkish and Persian. On the right side of the room, the Arab works—including the Qurans attributed to the first caliphs and works of well-known calligraphers—were placed in showcases according to chronology, starting from the seventh century.⁵⁰⁴ The Turkish works were located on the left side of the room and start from the fifteenth century. The Turkish section was arranged to provide a complete idea on how Turks changed and advanced the Arabic script.⁵⁰⁵ In addition to the manuscripts, miniature paintings, imperial orders (*ferman*), and objects related to writing were on display in this section. The Persian works such as miniature paintings, manuscripts (such as the infamous *Shahname* of Firdevsi), Qurans, and lacquer bindings were displayed, again on the basis of chronology, opposite side of the Turkish works. The walls of this gallery were filled with calligraphic panels that were written by important “Turkish calligraphers” and Ottoman sultans. Again, the term “Ottoman sultan” was not used by the author; he only provides the names of the sultans informally, such as Mahmud II, Osman III, Ahmed, and Abdülmeçid.⁵⁰⁶ In addition, some objects related to the manuscripts, such as Quran lecterns and cases, were “scattered among the showcases for decorative purposes.”⁵⁰⁷ From this description, a photo from the article that shows a corner of one of the galleries was probably an image of the fourth gallery (see Fig. 61).

⁵⁰³ Ibid, 29.

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid, 29.

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid, 30.

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid, 30.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid, 30.



Figure 61. A corner, probably from the fourth gallery of TİEM. Source: Elif Naci, "Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi," *Türkiye Turing ve Otomobil Kurumu Belleteni* (Nisan, 1950), 27-30: 29.

The director concluded the article by stating the necessary need for more space. More objects from the Seljuk and Mamluk periods; and items from the Rakka and Samarra digs were still waiting in the warehouse for the renovation of the *tabhane*. Finally, he shared his satisfaction for the tenfold increase in visitor numbers compared to before.⁵⁰⁸

Another article entitled "Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi" was published in 1953 in the weekly journal *Yirminci Asır*.⁵⁰⁹ The content of the article is quite parallels with the museum director's article. Again, there is an emphasis on the significance and value of the carpet collection and the need for more space to exhibit objects from the warehouse. This article starts by stating that the museum was divided into three sections: Turkish, Arab, and Persian. However, this is not entirely correct. Only the fourth gallery, the manuscripts, was divided according to ethno-racial and chronological order. There are a few points that are unique to

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid, 30.

⁵⁰⁹ "Türk ve İslâm Eserleri Müzei," *Yirminci Asır* (İstanbul), vo.38, 30 April 1953, 4.

this short article. Firstly, there is an emphasis on the “pricelessness” (*paha biçilemez*) of the whole collection. Secondly, the museum director, Elif Naci, was praised for his efforts to improve and promote the museum through writing articles, giving radio talks, and conferences. He helps to increase visitor numbers, especially by encouraging students of the Fine Arts Academy and its newly established Turkish Art History Institute (Fig. 62).⁵¹⁰ Thanks to his efforts, TİEM became one of the most visited museums in the country.⁵¹¹



Figure 62. Two students from the Turkish Art History Institution of the Fine Arts Academy examining the carpet collection for their paintings. Source: “Türk ve İslâm Eserleri Müzei,” *Yirminci Asır* (Istanbul), vol. 38, 30 April 1953, 4.

4.b.a. After TİEM became an independent directory in 1964

In 1964, Elif Naci, the director of TİEM for now over twenty years, wrote a short newspaper article on the occasion of the “independence” of the museum.⁵¹² TİEM was put under the Topkapı Palace administration to create a central museum administration in 1927. Naci heavily criticized the central administration system by stating “the museum stayed linked to the Topkapı Palace administration until today because of a stubborn

⁵¹⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹¹ Ibid.

⁵¹² Elif Naci, “Bağımsızlığına kavuşması münasebetiyle Türk ve İslâm eserleri müzesi,” *Cumhuriyet* 13 November 1964.

Ottoman Hacivat.”⁵¹³ Unfortunately, I couldn’t identify who this criticized character was. Naci happily announced the independence from the Topkapı Palace Museum administration.

He starts the article by narrating how objects were miserable before the formation of this museum during the Ottoman period. He repeats this statement throughout the short article by writing things like carpets from the Seljuk period were tread under the boots of “invasion armies” and just a few examples reached the present day.⁵¹⁴ Artistic and historical objects such as carpets, incense burners, candlesticks, and lecterns were saved from mosques—where people trampled them—and brought to the museum. This rhetoric criticizing the pre-republican period still resonated strongly in the 1960s in Türkiye. Naci says that this is the most important museum in Türkiye, especially for its carpet collection, which is one of a kind in the world. He also mentions the importance of Islamic archaeological findings from Rakka, Samarra, and Baalbek that entered the collection of the Imperial Museum a decade before.

The second catalogue of the museum, entitled *Türk ve İslâm Eserleri Müzesi*, was published in 1974, thirty-five years after the first one. After the museum became an independent directorship in 1964, its collection was reclassified under six sections: writing and manuscripts (including miniature paintings); carpets (including kilims); ceramics, tiles, and glass wares; woodworks; metalworks; and stonework and inscriptions.⁵¹⁵ The collection of the museum continued to enlarge over the previous ten years. The number of galleries increased from four to five. Unfortunately, this catalogue does not describe the display of each gallery.

The preface of the museum catalogue reflects the ideology of the 50-year-old republican regime. Although the founding father of the republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881–1938), had passed away just 15 years after the announcement of the Republic, his ideology, known as “Kemalism,” was still very much influential among political authorities. Kemalism is formed by six principles: republicanism, nationalism,

⁵¹³ Hacivat is one of the lead characters of the traditional Turkish shadow play. Hacivat is known for his sneaky and vigilant character.

⁵¹⁴ Naci, “Bağımsızlığına kavuşması münasebetiyle Türk ve İslâm eserleri müzesi,” unpaginated.

⁵¹⁵ Can Kerametli and Zahir Güvemli, *Türk ve İslâm Eserleri Müzesi* (Istanbul: Akbank Yayınları, 1974), 8.

populism, statism, secularism, and revolution. Reforms enacted radical changes in political, economic, social, religious, and cultural life, such as the alphabet revolution. The aim of these reforms was to reach the level of contemporary civilizations and to adopt the Western lifestyle.

Therefore, unsurprisingly, the language of the preface revolves around the ideology of Atatürk, such as the necessity of finding the genuine sources of Turkish history to reveal the integrity (*bütünlük*) and indivisibility (*bölünmezlik*) of the Turkish race and to raise awareness of the national unity.⁵¹⁶ Surprisingly, the authors state that Atatürk did not reject the Ottoman legacy but that the institutions around him misunderstood the "indivisibility principle." The works of the Turkish Language and Turkish History Society (*Türk Dil ve Tarih Kurumu*), established in 1931 by Atatürk, "caused a whole Ottoman period to be denied."⁵¹⁷ After the strict avoidance of the Ottoman dynastic legacy since the establishment of the Republic of Türkiye, this new approach towards Ottoman heritage can be understood within the contemporary political atmosphere. The Ottoman dynasty members had to leave the country for an indefinite exile after the abolishment of the Caliphate on March 3, 1924. The right to return to the country was given to the female members of the family on June 16, 1952, whereas the male members had to wait 22 more years. The 8th article of the General Amnesty issued on May 15, 1974, provided the right to male members of the Ottoman dynasty to enter and live in Türkiye. Fifty years after the foundation of the republic, the fear of losing the regime to a monarchy had disappeared.

"Of course, the six hundred years of the richness of this land we call Anatolia could not be denied. By giving the necessary directives for the preservation of the countless examples of the Islamic period in our history in Anatolia, ethnography and folk arts, architecture and other works of art, Atatürk ensured the permanence of a time and civilization integrity towards to the future. The transition from the Evkaf-ı İslamiye Museum to the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts should be seen as the result of such an understanding."⁵¹⁸

⁵¹⁶ Kerametli Güvemli, *Türk ve İslâm Eserleri Müzesi*, 5.

⁵¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁵¹⁸ "Anadolu dediğimiz bu yurdun, altıyüz yıllık zenginliği elbette inkâr olunamazdı. Tarihimizdeki İslâmlık devrinin Anadolu'da kalan örnekleri, etnoğrafya ve halk sanatlarıyla, mimarlık ve diğer sanat eserleriyle ilgili o sayısız örneklerin korunması için gerekli direktifleri vererek, Atatürk, geleceğe yönelmiş bir zaman ve medeniyet bütünlüğünün kalcılığını sağlıyordu. Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi'nden Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi'ne geçişi, böyle bir anlayışın sonucu olarak görmek gerekir." *Ibid.*

Although the establishment of TİEM went back to the Ottoman period, the catalogue almost ignores this fact to strengthen the role of the new regime. The foundation history of TİEM was reduced to two figures, as if they were independent of the Ottoman government. The role of Atatürk and his ideology were presented as the main driving power behind the continuation of this museum.

The other significant point discussed in the preface is the status of the concept of Turkish art within the art history field. The author heavily criticizes Western researchers for considering Turkish art solely under the umbrella term “Islamic art” and not considering it as independent and distinctive (*kendine özgü*):

“As is known, scientists and researchers, whom we call Western, were not willing to adopt the existence of an independent and unique Turkish art until recently. [...] they would see and show pure Turkish works of art within the framework of general Islamic art.”⁵¹⁹

The changing perspective on the status of Turkish art among western researchers was seen as a result of the new understanding of Turkish history and the museums filled with “art treasures” in the 1970s.⁵²⁰

A journal article written by the director of the museum, Erdem Yücel (b. 1936), describes the museum collection according to the above-mentioned six sections.⁵²¹ This article also states that a new direction was given to museology in Türkiye and scientific studies increased after the proclamation of the Republic.⁵²² According to Yücel, after the reorganization of the collection, the museum became a reflection of “Medieval Islamic art” (*Orta Çağ İslâm Sanatı*) thanks to the efforts of the previous museum director, Can Kerametli.⁵²³ For probably the first time, an article mentions the planned transfer of TİEM from the Süleymaniye soup kitchen to İbrahim Paşa Palace in Sultanahmet Square. Due to the lack of space, the transfer of the museum was planned in the late 1960s. The restoration project started at İbrahim Paşa Palace in 1967, and almost

⁵¹⁹ “Bilindiği gibi, Batılı dediğimiz ilim adamları ve araştırmacılar, yakın zamanlara kadar bağımsız, kendine özgü karakteri olan bir Türk sanatının varlığını benimsemeğe yanaşmazlardı. Çevre ve millet olarak katıksız Türk sanat eserlerini de genel İslâm sanatı çerçevesinde görürüler ve gösterirlerdi.” Ibid.

⁵²⁰ Ibid, 6.

⁵²¹ Erdem Yücel, “Türk-İslâm Eserleri Müzesi,” *Sanat Dünyamız*, vol. 7, no. 20 (September 1980), 25-30.

⁵²² Ibid, 26.

⁵²³ Ibid.

20 million Turkish lira was spent in 13 years.⁵²⁴ However, it would take another three years to move to the new location. Like the previous articles, ethno-racial Turkish nationalist discourse was dominant in this one, too. Turkish culture started to be introduced with conference series and exhibitions for the first time in 1980.⁵²⁵

Yücel devoted a paragraph to each section of the collection; writings and manuscripts, carpets and kilims, metalwork, woodwork, ceramics and glass ware, and stonework. In addition, probably for the first time, the ethnographic collection is mentioned in this article. Writings and manuscripts were organized based on chronology and dynasties—such as the Abbasids, Umayyads, Mamluks, Ilkhanids, Muzaffarids, Timurids, and Safavids— which was a common display methodology to show the “development” of Arabic writing. The Muzaffarid dynasty, founded in the late fourteenth century and demolished in 1583,⁵²⁶ was not one of the mainstream dynasties, which one can easily see in survey books on Islamic art or encompassing Islamic art collections in universal museums. This is why it is an interesting detail that shows the particular features of TIEM’s collection. The description in the writings and manuscripts section continues with the names of the founding figures of the art of calligraphy (*hat sanatı*), known as “Aklâm-ı sitte.” These calligraphers brought novelty to the art of calligraphy by determining the classical measures of *Aklâm-ı sitte*.⁵²⁷ It is interesting to see these names in detail because today it is not possible to encounter with these names in detail, because today it is not possible to encounter these names in the museum. It seems like the museum display context was arranged according to more technical and historical details in the 1970s.

The emphasis on the term “Turkish” can again be seen throughout the article: “The most beautiful examples of Turkish calligraphy” and illumination were also displayed according to show the “development.”⁵²⁸ This section contains bindings, *tughras* of sultans, endowments, seals, scissors, pencil sharpeners, inkwells, and architectural inscriptions from various periods. Different from today,

⁵²⁴ Ibid.

⁵²⁵ Ibid.

⁵²⁶ İsa Eryılmaz, “Muzafferîler” (Malatya: İnönü University, 2018), unpublished Ph.D. thesis, vii.

⁵²⁷ Nihad M. Çetin, “Aklâm-ı sitte,” *TDVİA* (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet, 1989), vol.2: 276.

⁵²⁸ Yücel, “Türk-İslâm Eserleri Müzesi,” 27.

there is no mention of a genre called “hilye-i şerif,” a certain type of calligraphic composition created in the seventeenth century. This composition depicts the physical description of Prophet Muhammad. It is one of the most promoted calligraphic panels in the new display of TİEM, which I will discuss in detail in Chapter 6. The author gives many names of “famous Turkish calligraphers” such as Şeyh Hamdullah, Ahmed Karahisari, Hafız Osman, Yesarizâde Mehmet İzzet, Mustafa Rakım, Hakkı Bey, Şefik Bey, Alaeddin Bey, Faik Efendi, Mehmet Ekrem Bey, and Halim Efendi.⁵²⁹ The calligrapher-oriented approach towards the art of calligraphy recalls the Western type of art history approach. The 1939 catalogue of the museum used this method.

The metalwork section is defined as a very rich collection. Metalwork from the Seljuk period in particular was described as the “continuous and flawless documents of our art history.”⁵³⁰ The word “continuous” is significant, since the early republican regime wanted to trace back the root of Turkish people as far back as it could go. This, absurdly, even led to an attempt to find a connection between the Turks and the Hittites and Sumerians in the 1930s and 1940s. Although it was not possible to go that far back in history and create connections with these ancient civilizations, the Seljuks were enough to weaken the direct link between the Ottoman Empire and the republican period. In addition, the importance of inscriptions as a historical document on the metal objects was underlined.⁵³¹ A photograph that shows an example from the metalwork section, where various tombac objects such as ewers, candlesticks inlaid with precious stones, incense burners, and a hanging lamp were exhibited on a white surface in a display case (Fig. 63). The display case with white wooden frames looks like the ones that can be seen in the earlier photos of the museum; however, they had probably been painted white in recent years.

⁵²⁹ Ibid.

⁵³⁰ Ibid, 29.

⁵³¹ Ibid.



Figure 63. A display case from the metalworks section. Source: Erdem Yücel, "Türk-İslâm Eserleri Müzesi" *Sanat Dünyamız*, vol. 7, no. 20 (September 1980), 25-30: 28.

4.c. Concluding remarks

Ottoman citizen Ziya Gökalp (1876–1924) was an intellectual, a sociologist, an educator, and a political activist whose theories were influential during the late period of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment period of the Republic of Türkiye. He published many articles and books on how the Turks should adopt Western civilization while adjusting the values of their race and religion.⁵³² Therefore, Gökalp is known as the theorist of the Turkism movement. Some of his most-influential publications were *Türkleşmek, İslamlaşmak, Muasırlaşmak* (Turkification, Islamization, Modernization, 1918), *Hars ve Medeniyet* (Culture and Civilization), and *Türkçüşüliin Esasları* (*The Principles of*

⁵³² Niyazi Berkes, "Ziya Gökalp: his Contribution to Turkish Nationalism," *The Middle East Journal* (1954) vol.8 no. 4, 375-390: 375-376. For detailed information on the subject, see *Turkish Nationalism and Western Civilization: Selected Essay of Ziya Gökalp*, translated and edited with an introduction by Niyazi Berkes (New York: Colombia University Press, 1959).

Turkism, 1923).⁵³³ In *The Principles of Turkism*, under the chapter entitled “Strengthened National Solidarity,” Gökâlp compares the Imperial Museum, which he refers to as Osman Hamdi’s museum, and *Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi* to explain why the latter is nationally more valuable because of its content. It reads:

“The scientific, civic and international worth of Hamdi Bey’s museum may be very great, but its cultural and national worth is relatively much less. Indeed, in this respect, almost all of the items in the Evkaf Museum may be considered more valuable, since they are examples of Turkish culture. [...] for the present there is an urgent need for a national museum that would collect only works reflecting Turkish culture.”⁵³⁴

As Gökâlp states, almost a decade after its foundation, a new mission was given to *Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi*. Both the management and the name of the museum were changed within the new regime. Even a glance at the changing museum name hints at the shift in ideology. Now there was not only an “Islamic” civilization, but also a “Turkish” one, and Islam was only a part of the Turkish identity, as Gökâlp emphasizes. Although the collection and the display remained almost same, the attributed meanings shifted in the newly founded national state. From the national heritage of the Ottoman Empire, the collection evolved into a tool which could manifest a “pure” Turkish culture.

Starting from the early days of the republic until the 1980s, the display of TIEM had changed slightly within the Süleymaniye soup kitchen. The years from the late 1920s until the Second World War were a transition period. Comparing the earliest photographs⁵³⁵ of the museum taken by the Sébah & Joaillier studio and those in the 1939 first museum catalogue visualizes some of these minor changes. The main difference was the increasing number of the displayed items in the galleries. This is not surprising, given that the museum’s collection was growing. Overall, the objects were classified according to their types, materials, dynasties, or demographic/linguistic properties, and sometimes based on chronology, in the Süleymaniye soup kitchen over the previous five decades.

⁵³³ Ziya Gökâlp, *Türkleşmek, İslamlaşmak, Muasırlaşmak* (Istanbul: Yeni Mecmua, 1918); Ziya Gökâlp, *Türkçüşünlün Esasları* (Istanbul: Varlık Yayınevi, 1969, first edition in 1923)

⁵³⁴ Ziya Gökâlp, *The Principles of Turkism* translated from Turkish and annotated by Robert Devereux (Leiden: Brill, 1968), 67.

⁵³⁵ Discussed in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 5

Relocating TİEM: Display between 1983 and 2012 at the İbrahim Pasha Palace

This chapter chronologically evaluates changing physical and conceptual display features of the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts (TİEM) between 1983 and 2012. TİEM moved to its current location, the sixteenth-century Ottoman palace known as Ibrahim Pasha Palace (*İbrahim Paşa Sarayı*), on the 22nd of May 1983. Almost thirty years after the relocation, a complete restoration and reinstallation project started in 2012 and was completed in 2014. This chapter focuses on the period between 1983 and 2012 to understand the shift in display discourses.

The relocation of TİEM started to be considered by the museum management due to several reasons. The Süleymaniye soup kitchen couldn't keep up with the growing and evolving collection, because the building was not big enough. Although the museum building was restored and its gallery conditions such as lighting and humidity levels improved during the last restoration carried out at the end of the 1970s, the soup kitchen was failing to meet the developing needs of TİEM. It was not possible to create an up-to-date display space, storage area, library, workshops, and laboratories to restore and analyze the objects in the collection.⁵³⁶

The neighborhood and the environs of the museum (Süleymaniye), once a distinguished quarter, started to transform over the years and turned into a district filled with commercial centers.⁵³⁷ The change in the neighborhood affected visitor numbers, which decreased radically. Some days, not even one visitor arrived.⁵³⁸ The transfer of the museum from the soup kitchen to the Ibrahim Pasha Palace, located at the edge of the ancient Hippodrome in Istanbul's historic center, was decided at the end of the 1960s. The restoration of the Ibrahim Pasha Palace lasted from 1968 to 1982. Only in 1983, after fifteen years of restoration and refurbishment, was the Ibrahim Pasha Palace ready to

⁵³⁶ Nazan Tapan Ölçer, "The Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts: rebirth of a sixteenth-century palace," *Museum International* (1984) vol. 36, no.1, 42–48: 44.

⁵³⁷ Nazan Ölçer, *Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts* (Istanbul: Akbank, 2002), 19.

⁵³⁸ Nazan Ölçer, "Bir Müzenin Yüzyılı," *Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi: 100 Yıl Önce 100 Yıl Sonra* (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2014), 94–103: 95.

host the TIEM collection. However, the complete reinstallation of the museum was not finished until 1984.

5.a. The New Location: Brief History of the Ibrahim Pasha Palace

The Ibrahim Pasha Palace is a significant building both historically and architecturally. This structure is one of the few remaining examples of grand vizier (*sadrâzam*) palaces. According to a seventeenth-century Ottoman historian, Solakzâde Mehmed Hemdemî (1590–1658), the palace was built during the reign of Bayezid II (1481–1512).⁵³⁹ However, it is not certain when and for whom it was built for the first time. An archival document (TSM. Archive D 9621; E 7624) dating to 1520 shows that Sultan Süleyman I (r. 1520–1566) renovated the building to gift to his grand vizier and later brother-in-law Ibrahim Pasha (1494–1536).⁵⁴⁰ After the completion of the renovations in 1521, the palace was given to Ibrahim Pasha. The wedding ceremony, which lasted 15 days and nights, of Ibrahim Pasha and Hatice Sultan (d. 1543), the sister of Sultan Süleyman I, was celebrated in this palace in 1524. It was the first ceremony known to have taken place in this location. Other royal ceremonies such as circumcisions and weddings took place in this palace in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

A circumcision ceremony for Sultan Süleyman I's three sons in 1530 was a well-documented event.⁵⁴¹ Ottoman miniature paintings from a manuscript entitled *Hünernâme* (1524) depict some of the scenes from this ceremony, where the palace buildings are visible in the background (Fig. 64).⁵⁴²

⁵³⁹ Nurhan Atasoy, *İbrahim Paşa Sarayı* (Istanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayını, 1972), 13–14.

⁵⁴⁰ Sedat Çetintaş, "İbrahim Paşa Sarayı Çok Önemlidir," *Son Posta*, 11 June 1947.

⁵⁴¹ Atasoy, *İbrahim Paşa Sarayı*, 17.

⁵⁴² For further information on the subject see Nurhan Atasoy, *İbrahim Paşa Sarayı* (Istanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayını, 1972).

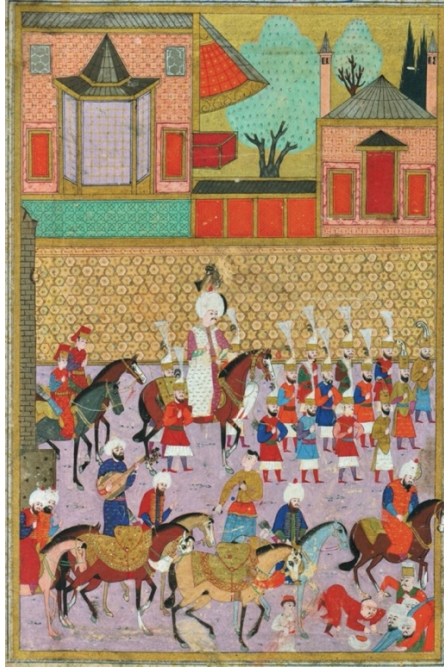


Figure 64. A miniature painting depicting the arrival of Sultan Süleyman I at Ibrahim Pasha Palace for the circumcision festival of his sons Mehmet, Süleyman, and Mustafa. *Hünernâme*, vol. II, Topkapı Palace Library, Treasury (*Hazine*) 1524, folio 103b.

The palace also hosted the celebrations for the circumcision festival of the son of Sultan Murad III's (r. 1574–1595) in 1582. Thanks to the realistic miniature depictions of this grand event, the palace structure is well-documented from the outside. *Surnâme-i Hümmâyün* (1588), a book written to describe this circumcision ceremony, contains more than two hundred miniature paintings. Figure 65 depicts the palace façade overlooking the hippodrome, where it is possible to identify temporary wooden loges built for this ceremony. It should also be noted that, since the early fifth century CE, the Hippodrome of Constantinople—where the Ibrahim Pasha Palace was built in the sixteenth century—had been home to the celebrations and weddings of the royal family members of the Byzantine Empire.⁵⁴³

⁵⁴³ Engin Akyürek, *The Hippodrome of Constantinople* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 106.



Figure 65. *Surname-i Hümayun* (1588), Topkapı Palace Library, inv. no. H. 1344, folio 190b-191a.

In 1536, the grand vizier Ibrahim Pasha was executed by the order of Sultan Süleyman I. After his death, Ibrahim Pasha was referred to as *makbul* and *maktul* (“he who was esteemed and slain”), which is still a popular description among the public.⁵⁴⁴ The palace became the property of the government treasury after Ibrahim Pasha’s death. Following this, some written sources refer to the palace as “Atmeydanı Palace” instead of “Ibrahim Pasha,” probably so as not to recall the name of the deceased grand vizier.⁵⁴⁵ However, it didn’t last long, because even centuries after Ibrahim Pasha’s death, both local and foreign authors such as Ahmed Cevdet Pasha (1822–1895) and Antoine Ignace Melling (1763–1831) continued to use the name “İbrahim Paşa Palace” in their books in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁵⁴⁶

⁵⁴⁴ Ölçer, *Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts*, 22.

⁵⁴⁵ Atmeydanı was the name for the Hippodrome in the Ottoman period; today, this area is known as Sultanahmet Square. Atasoy, *İbrahim Paşa Sarayı*, 25.

⁵⁴⁶ Atasoy, *İbrahim Paşa Sarayı*, 37, 39.

The palace became a government residence and continued to be used until the eighteenth century by not only grand viziers but also governors-general (*beylerbeyi*), admirals (*kaptanpaşa*), and royal gun-bearers (*silâhdar*) who had married into the royal family.⁵⁴⁷ Ostentatious wedding and circumcision ceremonies of the sultans' families continued to take place in this palace through the sixteenth century. However, the palace was never as grand as it was in Ibrahim Pasha's time, and some parts of the buildings were re-purposed through architectural changes or additions. A part of the palace was already allocated to the apprentice court pages (*acemi oğlanları*) for their housing and education in the seventeenth century. The palace structure needed to be restored from time to time because of earthquakes and fires throughout the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. Starting in the late nineteenth century, the remaining palace structure was used as the official registry (*defterhane*), the headquarters of the royal band (*mehterhane*), a mental hospital, a prison, and a textile workshop.⁵⁴⁸

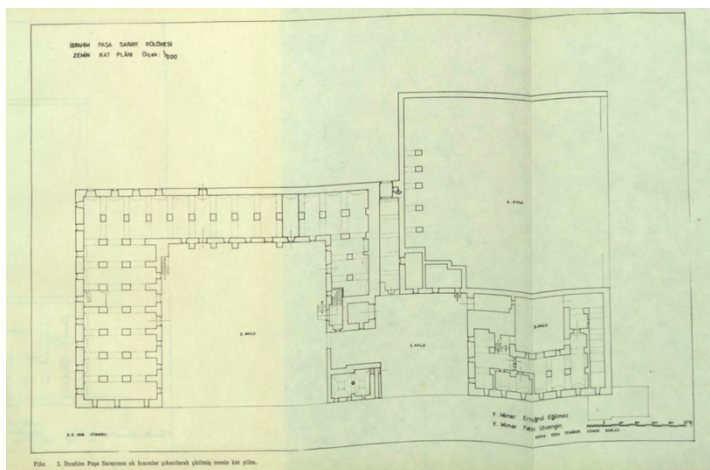


Figure 66. Ground plan showing the four courtyards, 1946. Source: Nurhan Atasoy, *İbrahim Paşa Sarayı* (Istanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1972), 89.

⁵⁴⁷ "Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi," Archnet website [accessed October 2022], <https://www.archnet.org/sites/3647>.

⁵⁴⁸ Atasoy, *İbrahim Paşa Sarayı*, 37, 41, 43

Originally, the palace structure was formed around four courtyards (Fig. 66). Today, just a small part of the palace structure remains, and only the second courtyard has been reutilized as a museum building. A part of the third courtyard was demolished to build *Tapu ve Kadastro Müdürlüğü* (General Directorate of Land Registers) in 1908. In 1939, the fourth courtyard of the palace complex was torn down to build a courthouse (*İstanbul Adalet Sarayı*).⁵⁴⁹ The demolition and construction was a highly controversial decision between the government and the scholars, and the discussions were even reflected in the newspapers.⁵⁵⁰ Particularly Sedat Çetintaş (1889–1965), an architect, was extremely opposed to this decision. Through his newspaper articles and letters to government officials, Çetintaş fought extensively to prevent the palatial structure from being demolished. In one of his newspaper articles, Çetintaş stated that the decision to demolish this structure “[...] is nothing but a direct ‘rape’ (*tecaviiz*) of the history of Turkish civilization.”⁵⁵¹ He was only able to save the second and third courtyards. Since 1984, TİEM has been located in the second courtyard, whereas the third courtyard was used as an archive (*Adliye Arşivi*) by the courthouse until 2012 (Fig. 67). The third courtyard was requested to be given to TİEM in the 1980s to expand the museum and protect the integrity of the remains of this historical palace complex.⁵⁵² After the court archive was transferred, the building was restored and given to TİEM. The current director of TİEM, Ekrem Aytar (b. 1969) recently said that the third courtyard will soon host the museum collections.⁵⁵³

⁵⁴⁹ The courthouse was active in this building between 1955 and 2012, until it was transferred to a newly build location in Çağlayan, İstanbul.

⁵⁵⁰ Some of the articles on the subject written by Sedat Çetintaş and published in various newspapers follow: “İbrahim Paşa Sarayı Niçin Yıkırılamaz?” *Cumhuriyet*, 17 August 1938; “İbrahim Paşa Sarayı ve Bir Sulh Meselesi,” *Yapı*, no.33 (15 March 1943); “İbrahim Paşa Sarayı Çok Önemlidir,” *Son Posta*, 11 June 1947; “Adliye Sarayı’na Ait Ciddi Münakaşalar: İbrahim Sarayı Tarihçesi,” *Yeni Sabah*, 19 September 1947; “Saray mı, Fil Ahır mı?,” *Yeni Sabah*, 23 September 1947; “İbrahim Paşa Sarayı Macerasının Tarihçesi,” *Yeni Sabah*, 3 October 1947; “Sayın Adalet Bakanı’na: Adalet Sarayı Adaletsizlik Abidesi Olmamalıdır,” *Son Saat*, 9 July 1950; “Boğuşan İki Saray,” *Son Saat*, 16 January 1951.

⁵⁵¹ “[...] doğrudan doğruya Türk medeniyet tarihine tecavüzden başka bir şey değildir.” Sedat Çetintaş, “Adliye Sarayına Ait Ciddi Münakaşalar: İbrahim Paşa Sarayı’nın Tarihçesi,” *Yeni Sabah*, 19 September 1947.

⁵⁵² Nazan Ölçer, “Bir Müzenin Yüzyılı,” 103.

⁵⁵³ Ekrem Aytar, “Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi,” (online talk, Kuşadası Dijital Akademi, 25 October 2022).



Figure 67. Satellite view of TIEM (red rectangle), the courthouse (yellow rectangle), and the third courtyard of the Ibrahim Pasha Palace (green rectangle), October 2022.

5.b. “A Turning Point:” The Relocation of TIEM in 1983

Nazan Ölçer (b. 1942) started as a curator in the carpet collection of the museum in 1972 and became the museum director in 1978. She stayed in this position until her retirement in 2003. Serving at the museum for more than a quarter century, Ölçer was a significant figure in the formation of the new display of the museum, both physically and contextually. She defines the relocation of TIEM as “a genuine turning point in the life of the museum.”⁵⁵⁴

As mentioned in the previous chapters, the museum collection is mainly formed of Islamic artworks collected from religious endowments such as mosques, madrasas, and mausoleums of the Ottoman Empire. In addition, libraries, dervish lodges, archaeological excavations, purchases, and donations enlarge the museum collection. Finally, in the 1970s, “traditional Turkish folk art” from the eighteenth, nineteenth, and first half of the twentieth centuries started to be

⁵⁵⁴ Nazan Ölçer, “Living the past: the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art,” *Museum International* (1999) vol. 51, No. 3, 32-37: 34.

collected, mainly from Anatolia, to preserve Turkish culture and life.⁵⁵⁵ Today, the collection of the museum consists of approximately 40,000 pieces and contains various objects from the seventh to the early twentieth century.

Although the opening date of TIEM is stated as the 22nd of May 1983, it was not until 1984 that the permanent display installation of the museum was completed. A series of exhibitions in various venues under the title of “Anatolian Civilizations” (*Anadolu Medeniyetleri Sergisi*) opened in Istanbul on the 22nd of May 1983 as the 18th art event of the Council of Europe.⁵⁵⁶ The new location of TIEM, Ibrahim Pasha Palace, was inaugurated as one of the venues as part of this event.

In 1949, the Council of Europe was founded to “promote the main principles of Human Rights.”⁵⁵⁷ Beginning in 1954, a series of art exhibitions was organized “to increase knowledge and appreciation of European art as one of the highest expressions of Europe's culture and common values” by the Council of Europe.⁵⁵⁸ The organization states that the concept of the exhibitions was determined as a response to current political and societal challenges.⁵⁵⁹ The main message of these events was “being Europe and its unity”⁵⁶⁰

The “Anatolian Civilizations” exhibition series at the 18th Council of Europe exhibition covered from the prehistory to the end of the Ottoman period, roughly from 8000 BCE to the early 20th century. The exhibitions were divided into three categories: “Prehistory, Hittite, and First Iron Age;” “Greek, Roman, and Byzantine;” and “Seljuk and Ottoman.” Franz Karasek, the General Secretary of the Council of Europe at the time, summarized the role of this exhibitions as follows:

⁵⁵⁵ Nazan Ölçer, “Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi,” *Sandoz Bülteni* vol.3, no.12 (1983), 11-20: 18.

⁵⁵⁶ Today, the council is formed of 46 member states.

⁵⁵⁷ “About the Council of Europe” in the Council of Europe website, [accessed 10 October 2022], <https://www.coe.int/en/web/yerevan/the-coe/about-coe#:~:text=Founded%20in%201949%2C%20the%20Council,action%20throughout%20the%20whole%20continent.>

⁵⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid.

“[This exhibition] documents the earliest historical sources of Mediterranean and European civilizations and displays the development of the Council’s easternmost member state. [...] The common contributions of Anatolian cultures to all civilizations, especially to Europe, will be exhibited in this exhibition.”⁵⁶¹

The timing of the “Anatolian Civilizations” exhibition was quite significant for the Turkish government. In 1978, it had already been decided to organize the 18th exhibition of the Council of Europe in Türkiye. However, Türkiye was going through an unsteady political period again. After a military coup in 1960, a second one took place in 1980 in the country. Although Türkiye was invited to the Council of Europe as a founding member in 1949, its membership was in danger. Ölçer, the director of TIEM at the time, also stated the significance of this exhibition for the military government:

“We were told to do this exhibition at any cost. Of course, there was a reason for this. Türkiye was going through a military period and the continuation of the membership of Türkiye was being discussed in the Council of Europe.”⁵⁶²

Figures 68 and 69 show the opening program of the “Anatolian Civilizations” exhibitions. Several exhibitions can be seen in the opening program that took place in seven different locations, such as St. Irene, the Topkapı Palace, Ibrahim Pasha Palace, Istanbul Archaeological Museums (previously the Imperial Museum), Hagia Sophia, the Military Museum, and Galata Dervish Lodge Museum (*Mevlevihane*).

⁵⁶¹ “[...] Akdeniz ve Avrupa medeniyetlerinin en eski tarihi kaynaklarını belgelemekte ve Konseyin en doğudaki üye ülke toprakları üzerindeki gelişimi gözler önüne sermektedir. [...] Bu sergide, Anadolu kültürlerinin başta Avrupa olmak üzere tüm medeniyetlere yaptığı ortak katkılar sergilenecektir.” Franz Karasek, “Preface,” *Anadolu Medeniyetleri: Tarih Öncesi, Hitit, İlk demir Çağı* ([Ankara]: T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 1983), 9-10.

⁵⁶² “[...] ne pahasına olursa olsun bu sergiyi yapacaktık. Bunun elbette nedeni yok değildi. Türkiye askerî bir dönemden geçiyordu ve Avrupa Konseyi üyesi Türkiye’nin üyelige devamı tartışılmaktaydı.” Ölçer, “Bir Müzenin Yüzyılı,” 99.



Figures 68-69. The brochure of the “Anatolian Civilizations Exhibition” (*Anadolu Medeniyetleri Sergisi*), dated 1983. Source: Salt Research Archive, <https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/201213>.

Meanwhile, another exhibition, from TIEM’s collection, entitled “Metal and Woodwork” was organized in the Süleymaniye soup kitchen as part of the “Anatolian Civilizations” event. However, the exhibition at the Süleymaniye soup kitchen was not included in the brochure but had its own exhibition catalogue.



Figures 70-71. Views of the “Metal and Woodwork” exhibition in the Süleymaniye Soup kitchen in 1983. Source: Ara Güler Archive.

There are a few photographs taken during the restoration and exhibition installations period by the architect Hüsrev Tayla (1925–2014)—who was responsible of the restoration of the Ibrahim Pasha Palace—that help to visualize the museum interior. In addition, the well-known Armenian-Turkish photographer and journalist Ara Güler (1928–2018) took photos of the museum in 1983, which are extremely valuable sources in reconstructing the early years of the museum display. Figures 73 and 74 show the Ibrahim Pasha Palace courtyard after the restoration. The palace is a two-story building. The ground floor contained storages, laboratories, and the ethnographic section displays (Fig. 72). The display on the first floor is reached from the stairs at the entrance to the courtyard, which is possible to see in Figure 73.

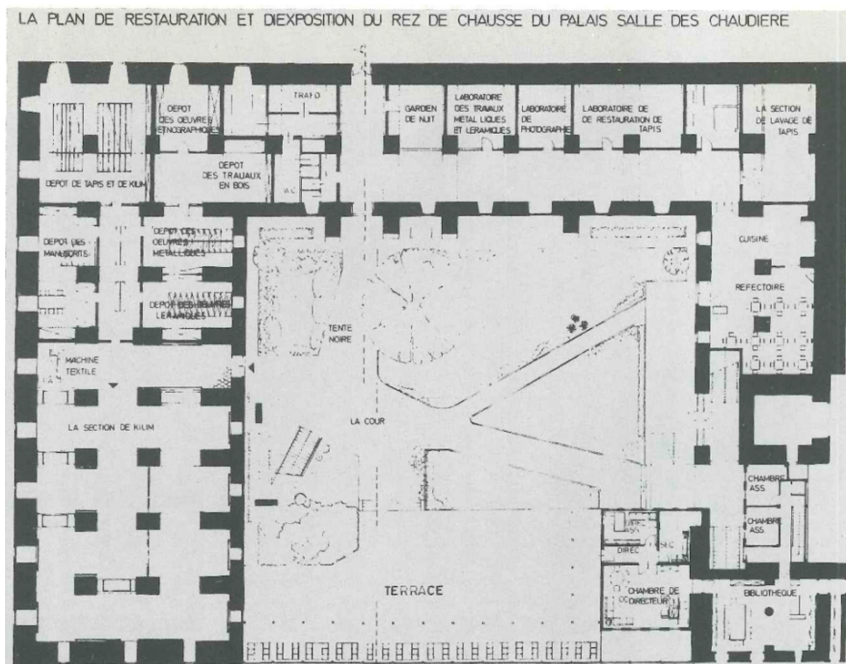


Figure 72. Ground plan of TIEM's ground floor. Source: Hüsrev Tayla, 1983, 1835.

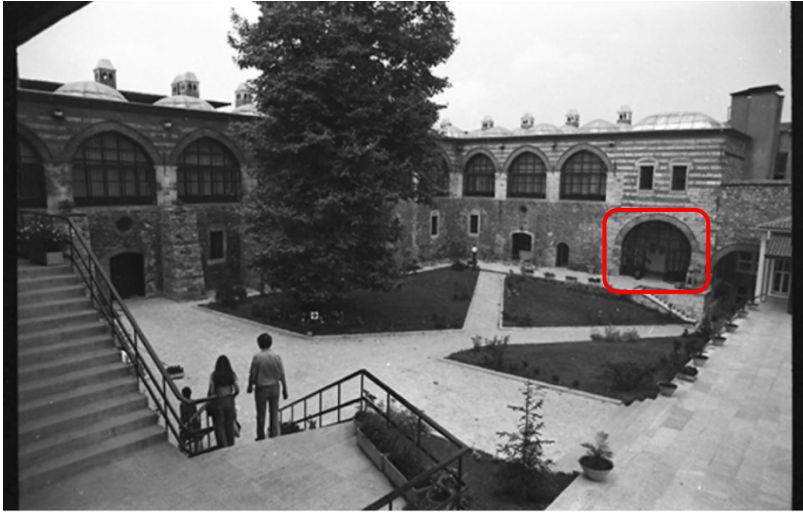


Figure 73. View of the courtyard from the ceremonial hall (*divanhane*). The red rectangle shows the entrance of the first floor to the museum in 1983. Source: Ara Güler Archive.



Figure 74. View of the ceremonial hall (*divanhane*) in 1983. Source: Ara Güler Archive.

5.c. First Ethnographic Gallery of TİEM

The ethnographic collection which started to form in the 1970s was displayed for the first time in the Ibrahim Pasha Palace within the scope of the temporary exhibition “Anatolian Civilizations.” Ölçer explains the principal motives behind the formation of the ethnographic (“Geleneksel Türk Halk Sanatı”) collection:

“Migration from rural to urban areas of Turkey during the last quarter of the 20th century in particular, and factors such as mass media have led to radical changes in all aspects of traditional life, from architecture to clothing and the habits of daily life to handicrafts. With the transformation and disappearance of traditional arts and artefacts it became crucial to seek out what remained and gather a representative collection.”⁵⁶³

Ölçer sees “folk art” as a “natural extension of the fine arts and at the same time their roots.”⁵⁶⁴ Forming an ethnographic collection was not an easy path for TİEM. She criticizes art historians for giving secondary importance to and seeing ethnographic objects as “coarse” and “rough” things.⁵⁶⁵ When TİEM finally started to collect ethnographic materials for the museum, she felt it was too late because the local traditions and manufactures had started to die out.⁵⁶⁶

A major part of the ethnographic collection was acquired from southern and western Anatolia, the province of Bursa, the northwest region of Trakya, around Adana, Bergama, Balıkesir, Manisa, and Uşak.⁵⁶⁷ In addition, Ottoman costumes dating the nineteenth century were another significant section of the ethnographic collection. The clothes were donated or purchased from old Istanbul families.⁵⁶⁸ Moreover, more specific items such as shadow play puppets and tools for making the puppets, a prayer bead lathe and related instruments and materials, and a collection of eighteenth and nineteenth-century Istanbul embroideries were purchased for the collection.⁵⁶⁹

⁵⁶³ Ölçer, *Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts*, 360; Ölçer, “Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi,” 18.

⁵⁶⁴ Ölçer, “Living the past: the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art,” 32.

⁵⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁵⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁵⁶⁷ Ölçer, *Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts*, 360.

⁵⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

The Ethnographic Gallery was located on the ground floor within a vaulted hall and had a separate entrance. According to the opening program, Ibrahim Pasha Palace hosted five thematic exhibitions including “Turkish Rooms” (*Türk Odaları*), “Turkish Costumes” (*Türk Giyimi*), “Turkish Carpet and Kilims” (*Türk Halı ve Kilimleri*), “Turkish Candy Shop” (*Türk Şekerci Dükkanı*), and “Turkish Coffeehouse” (*Türk Kahvehanesi*). A few photographs from various perspectives taken by Ara Güler help to visualize the “Turkish Coffeehouse.” Rather than a passive museum display, the coffeehouse theme was conveyed through a museum café concept (Figures 75-76). Objects related to Turkish coffee culture such as cups, a coffeepot, a ewer, a hookah, and a pipe (*liile*) were displayed within a traditional architectural setting. The visitors were also able to drink Turkish coffee, tea, and the “now forgotten” sherbet within the “atmosphere of the past.”⁵⁷⁰



Figures. 75-76. The Museum Café as a “Turkish Coffeehouse” setting in 1983. Source: Ara Güler Archive.

⁵⁷⁰ Ölçer, “Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi,” 19.

I was not able to locate the “Turkish Candy Shop” display within the museum space. The closest thing to a candy shop was the museum shop, which was designed and decorated to reflect a traditional shop of the nineteenth century in the Ottoman Empire (Fig. 77). Probably, like the “Turkish Coffeehouse,” the “Turkish Candy Shop” theme was exhibited through the museum shop.



Figure 77. Museum shop of TIEM in 1983.
Source: Ara Güler Archive.

In 1983, “Transitional Ceremonies in Social Life” and “scenes illustrating ceremonies relating to birth, circumcision, and marriage” were created “with as much imagination as the architectural limitations allow present glimpses into traditional Turkish life” in the Ethnography Gallery.⁵⁷¹ This gallery mainly exhibited Turkish rural life with a great focus on kilim and carpet production, Turkish ceremonies in social life, and the daily life of Turkish people in some main cities in the nineteenth century such as Istanbul and Bursa. Various ethnographic items related to the exhibition themes such as textiles, clothing, kitchenware, faucets from Turkish hammams, wooden decorative panels, furniture, carpets, and kilims were exhibited as a part of a display scenes or in individual

⁵⁷¹ Ölçer, “Living the past: the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art,” 35-36.

showcases with similar examples. Photographs and information panels with photos and drawings, written in both Turkish and English, provided technical and descriptive information to visitors.



Figure 78. General view of the Ethnography Gallery in 1983. Source: Ara Güler Archive.

The 1983 display started with the “Kilims” display, where three mannequins—two women and a man—dressed in traditional costumes stood next to a weaving loom and in front of a large-size kilim example hung on the wall. Photographs of the “Kilims” display from 1983 and 2012 show that the scene remained the same, with minor physical changes such as the removal of two mannequins and the replacement of the hanging *kilim* with another example (probably for conservation reasons). In addition, a protective glass barrier was added in front of the display, which was not unique to the Kilims display. The overall analysis of the 1983 and 2012 photos shows that the glass barriers were also added to the other thematic displays later sometime. However, because of the limited visual and written sources, it is not possible to understand when it was added.



Figure 79. Entrance of the Ethnography Gallery. Kilim display is on the right; 1983.
Source: Ara Güler Archive.



Figure 80. Kilim display, 2012. Source: TIEM Archive.

Two “important” elements of the Turkish nomadic culture, *topakev* (also known as a *yurt*)—a typical domed and felt-covered tent in Anatolia— and *kara yötük çadırı* (a black nomad tent), which were in use

until the 1970s, were displayed with their authentic contents.⁵⁷² Both the tents and the related objects were gathered from their original locations through scientific field research and installed in accordance with the museum context.⁵⁷³ Topakev was the second display of the ethnography gallery after the Kilim (Fig. 81). This tent was installed in 1983 and stayed there for 29 years. The displayed topakev is an example from Emirdağ, in the province of Afyon, Anatolia. The information label emphasizes the continuity and geographic prevalence of this type of tent. According to the information panel, topakev were used by the Turks and Mongols for over 1000 years.⁵⁷⁴ It was in use over a vast geography such as from Manchuria to Anatolia, and from the Ural region to Afghanistan.⁵⁷⁵ This display was supported by the ethnographic photographs of American photographer, traveler, and collector Josephine Powell (1919–2017), who was specifically interested in Anatolian ethnographic objects and textiles. Josephine Powell was also consulted during the preparation of the ethnographic section of TİEM.



Figure 81. Topakev display in 1983. Source: Ara Güler Archive.

⁵⁷² Ölçer, "Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi," 18.

⁵⁷³ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁴ Ölçer, *Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts*, 360.

⁵⁷⁵ Topakev Information label dated 2012 from TİEM Archive.



Figure 82. Topakev display in 2012. Source: TİEM Archive.

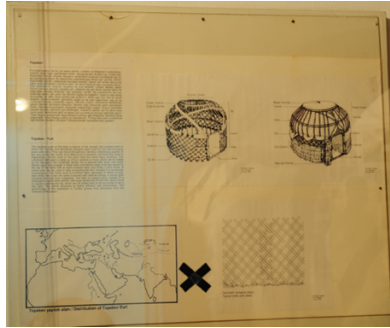


Figure 83. Label of Topakev, 2012. Source: TİEM Archive

A comparison of the 1983 and 2012 photographs of the same installation proves that the display remained almost the same. As mentioned above, a protective glass was installed in front of the tent (Fig. 82). Another change was a removal of a dummy dressed in a “regional” woman’s costume.⁵⁷⁶ Instead, a shepherd’s dress (*aba*) was added to the

⁵⁷⁶ Nazan Tapan Ölçer, “Yeni Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi,” *Türkiyemiz* vol. 14, no.43 (1984), 7-17: 9.

display, probably because of the rotation needed for textiles' preservation. The last detectable difference between the 1983 and 2012 display is the information label of the topakev (Fig. 83). Although the technical drawing of the tent seems the same, the overall panel seems a bit different. Unfortunately, without a better image and written documentation of the previous label, it is not possible to understand the changes. Since the overall display of the topakev didn't change either physically and conceptually over 29 years, it seems likely that the changes in the label were insignificant and maybe solely practical, such as a need for renewal.

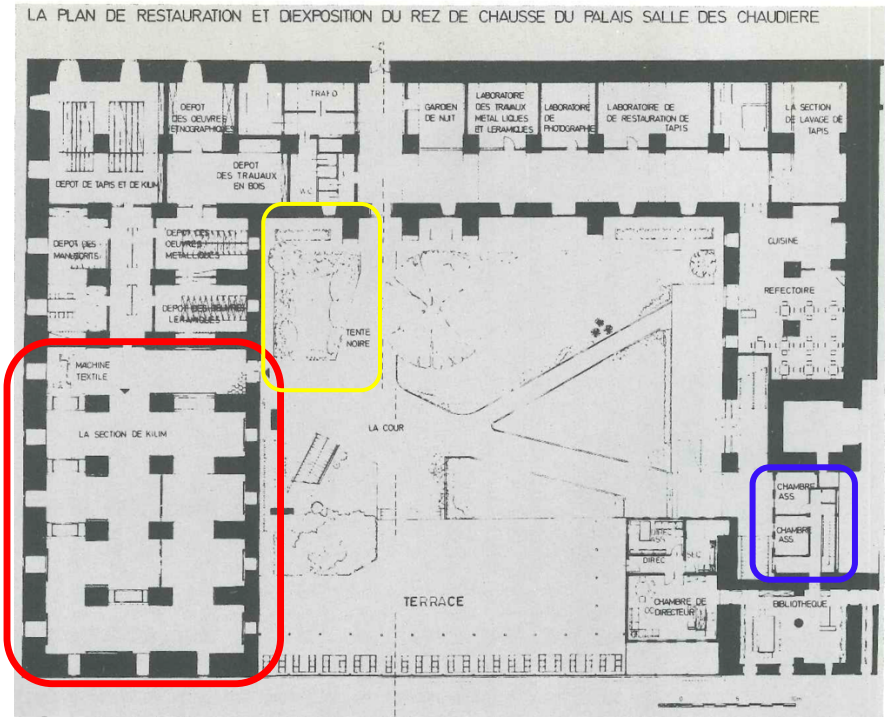


Figure 84. Ground plan of TİEM's ground floor. The red rectangle shows the Ethnography Gallery. The yellow rectangle shows the *kara yöruk çadırı* (*tente noire*).
Source: Hüsrev Tayla, 1983, 1835.

The second significant tent example, the *kara yöriik çadırı*, was first displayed in the courtyard of the palace for the “Anatolian Civilizations” exhibition. The entrance of the Ethnography section and the life-size, fully equipped *kara yöriik çadırı* display in the courtyard are visible in Figure 85 and the ground plan dated 1983 (Fig. 84)



Figure 85. The view of the “black tent” in the courtyard of the Ibrahim Pasha Palace, 1983. The red rectangle shows the entrance of the Ethnographic Section entrance. Source: Josephine Powell Slide collection at Koç University Suna Kiraç Library, slide no. A2508-27-1.

Later, probably right after the exhibition, the *kara yöriik çadırı* display was moved to the Ethnography Gallery. The reason for taking the tent inside was probably for a need for preservation. The *kara yöriik çadırı* stayed in the Ethnography Gallery until the dismantling of the museum for renovation in 2012 (Figures 86-87). The information label, written in both Turkish and English, was didactical, technical, and descriptive. It provides knowledge about the typical structure, material, and interior organization of this type of tent. In addition, it states the importance of tea within the nomadic society. The label continues with the responsibilities of women in the nomadic society. Lastly, the label describes what four women mannequins were doing within the tent display: making a type of local cheese, sewing a dress, carding, and spinning wool.⁵⁷⁷

⁵⁷⁷ Label of the *kara yöriik çadırı* display from the TIEM Archive.



Figures 86-87. Photos of the *kara yürük çadırı* display, outside and inside view. Probably replaced with the “Circumcision Room” display. Source: TIEM, 2012.

As mentioned above, there were also rituals from various Turkish ceremonies and daily life scenes on display. For example, one display recreates a circumcision ceremony, with a boy mannequin dressed in a traditional costume and a bed decorated with traditional embroideries (Fig. 88). Another display depicts a part of a wedding ceremony, called a *kına gecesi* (henna night) with several women mannequins dressed in traditional Ottoman costumes from the

nineteenth century (Figures 89 and 90). This is a celebration that traditionally takes place one day before the wedding among women, where they dye henna on their hands. Following this scene, a bridal chamber with a Western-style brass bed and an Ottoman-style divan was created in the Ethnography Gallery. A woman mannequin dressed in a traditional Ottoman bridal costume standing among various examples of embroideries and other traditional costumes were exhibited in the room. These scenes of transitional life ceremonies were displayed until 1985.



Figure 88. Circumcision room display in 1983. Source: Ara Güler Archive.



Figure 89. Wedding ceremony display in 1983. Source: Nazan Ölçer, "Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi," *Sandoz Bülteni* vol. 3, no. 12 (1983), 11–20: 14.



Figure 90. Bridal Chamber display. Nazan Ölçer, "Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi," *Sandoz Bülteni* vol. 3, no. 12 (1983), 11–20: 17.

Another significant cultural event for Turkish people, especially for women, was to go to a hammam at least once a week with their friends, relatives, or neighbors and spend the day together. Therefore, a simple hammam setting was recreated with two women mannequins wrapped in Ottoman embroidered towels and wearing *nalın* (clogs), a traditional type of clog specifically used in hammams (Fig. 91). One of them was holding a metal cup to wash herself next to a hammam fountain.

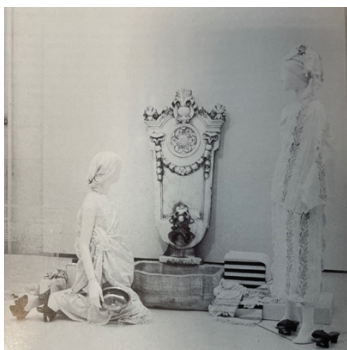


Figure 91. Hammam display. Nazan Ölçer, "Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi," *Sandoz Bülteni* vol. 3, no. 12 (1983), 11–20: 18.



Figure 92. A view of the Ethnography Gallery. From right to left, the *karaca*dır, the village house, the Bursa house, and the clothing shop displays in 2012. Source: TİEM Archive.

The displays of these social life rituals were renamed and rearranged sometime around 1985 (Fig. 92).⁵⁷⁸ The circumcision display was removed. The henna night display turned into a house of Bursa, which was the first capital city of the Ottoman Empire (Fig. 93 and 94). The overall setting was almost the same with traditional furniture and objects such as a *divan* and brazier (*mangal*), and only a few details and the position of the mannequins were changed. A typical village house in Yutdağ (Manisa) was recreated with authentic objects including rugs, trays, cups, and a lectern to use while reading Quran (Fig. 95-96). The construction details and social context of the village house were narrated to the visitors with an information label.



Figures 93-94. A view of the Bursa House display from outside and inside in 2012. Source: TIEM Archive.

⁵⁷⁸ Ölçer, "Living the past: the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art," 35.



Figures 95-96. A view of a village house display from outside and inside in 2012. Source: TIEM Archive.

In an article dating 1999, Ölçer explains the display rearrangements by stating that the “Next thematic exhibition was planned to create scenes of craftsmen and tradesmen in an urban setting.”⁵⁷⁹ A small display represents a nineteenth-century street shop next to a street fountain with the label “buying clothes in a shop,” was probably installed sometime after this statement. A seller and a female customer can be seen in the display (Fig. 97).

⁵⁷⁹ Ölçer, “Living the past: the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art,” 36



Figure 97. A clothing shop next to the Bursa house display in 2012. Source: TİEM Archive.

Sometime after 1983, two new thematic displays representing domestic life in Istanbul in the nineteenth century were created. One of them, entitled “The Daily Life in an Istanbul House,”⁵⁸⁰ presents an example of domestic life with women mannequins, dressed in Western nineteenth century fashion, sitting and doing crafts such as decorating a textile together (Figures 98 and 99). The “Istanbul House” display included nineteenth century Western types of furniture, but calligraphic panels on the walls and the rugs provided an Ottoman background to the display. This display demonstrates the “Western influence of this period and the changing way of life.”⁵⁸¹ This display was described in the 2011 museum catalogue “Late Ottoman Period Home Furniture” (*Geç Osmanlı Dönemi Ev Eşyaları*); however, the label on the display stayed the same.⁵⁸²

⁵⁸⁰ The original information label read “a.”

⁵⁸¹ Ölçer, “Living the past: the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art,” 35.

⁵⁸² *Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi*, museum catalogue (Istanbul: BKG, 2011), 140.



Figure 98. One of the “The Daily Life in Istanbul House” displays in 2012. Source: TİEM Archive.



Figure 99. One of the “The Daily Life in Istanbul House” displays in 2012. Source: TİEM Archive.



Figure 100. A view of the “Bridal Chamber” display in 2012. Source: TİEM Archive.

The more traditional “Bridal chamber” display was removed, and instead, an urbanized bridal chamber display was installed next to the Istanbul house (Fig. 100). Although the new bridal chamber again dated to the nineteenth century, it was “modern” compared to the previous one. Rather than a traditional local costume, the bride was wearing a white Western-style bridal dress. In addition, the room was decorated with Western-style furniture, along with nineteenth-century eclectic oriental-style chairs and a coffee table. Across from the new bridal chamber, there was a new hammam display. I am not sure if the hammam display was redesigned in the same spot or if its location was changed. From a more theatrical scene, the hammam display became a more didactic one. The new hammam display contained various objects such as faucets, cups, *nalın* (clogs), and towels (Fig. 101).



Figure 101. A display of bathhouse culture in 2012. Source: TIEM Archive.

Traditional costumes on mannequins (mostly women), rugs and *kilims* on the walls, weaving looms for various kinds of textiles, madder (*kök boya*) types and their production methods, and various objects to produce rugs were on display almost without any change from 1983 to 2012 (Figures 102 and 103).



Figures 102-103. Figure 102 shows a woman dyeing looms for rug production. Figure 103 displays a weaving loom and various objects used in rug production, 2012. Source: TIEM Archive.

Although it does not show the display themes or cases, the plan of the ground floor published in 1983 helps to recreate the gallery display (Fig. 104).

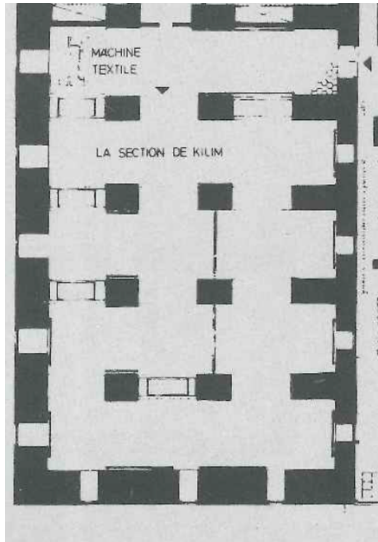


Figure 104. Detail of the ground floor ground plan showing the Ethnography Gallery section, around 1983. Source: Hüsrev Tayla “La Restauration du palais de Ibrahim Pacha-Istanbul,” *Prof. Mout Sopoulos Armağanı III* (Selânik, 1991) 1817-1839: 1835.

The route of the gallery starts with a Turkish nomadic culture shown through tents and the production of rugs. Then, a simple Turkish village house structure and its lifestyle were presented. Following this, a typical urban house example from the nineteenth century was displayed in the “Bursa House” section. A glimpse of trade life in an urban setting was exhibited with a street shop.

A setting of domestic life in Istanbul in the nineteenth century with a focus on women was displayed. The Ethnography Gallery concludes with a display of a hammam. Also, the gender roles seem quite restricted in this gallery. Only a single man mannequin was placed in the gallery, who was the shop seller. The rest of the daily life scene displays solely women mannequins. The overall arrangement of the Ethnography Gallery indicates the evolution of the Turkish nation from primitive

nomad life to urban life right before the republican period. Like any empire, the Ottoman Empire, too, had a multiethnic, multilingual, and multireligious society. Since this museum collection focuses on Islamic societies, not representing the ethnographic heritage of non-Muslim minorities is understandable. However, it was not possible to find the cultural heritage of subsets of Islam such as *şafi*, *alevi*, and Shiite within the Ethnography Gallery. The museum display didn't mention any of these different subsets and solely focused on the *sünni* (orthodox) population, which was and still is the largest Islamic sect of the Turkish population, at more than seventy percent. The gallery exclusively exhibits the cultural heritage of *sünni* Muslim, Turkish-speaking Anatolian communities with a simplistic approach. The physical and conceptual analysis of the Ethnography Gallery between 1983 and 2012 shows that the display remained almost the same after the closure of the "Anatolian Civilizations" exhibitions on October 30, 1983, until 2012 (Fig. 105).

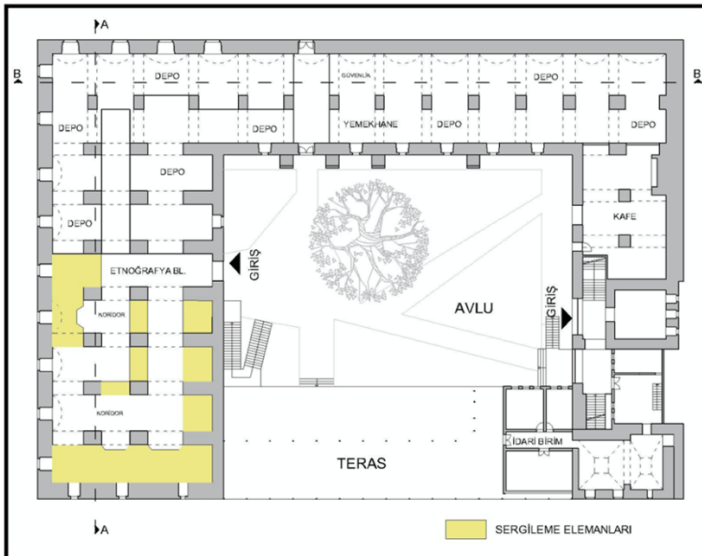


Figure 105. This ground plan shows the 2010 version of the Ethnography Gallery, and the yellow parts represent the display cases. Source: Esra Özkan Yazgan, "Anıtsal Kültür Varlıklarını Müze Olarak Kullanımına Yönelik Yaklaşımın İstanbul İbrahim Paşa Sarayı Örneğinde İrdenilmesi," unpublished PhD Thesis (Ankara: Gazi University, 2011), 65.

5.d. Display of the “Turkish and Islamic Arts” collection in the Ibrahim Pasha Palace

The upper floor of the museum was reserved for the “classical Turkish and Islamic arts” collection of TİEM.⁵⁸³ Although the museum was opened in May 1983 during the “Anatolian Civilization” exhibition, the permanent display on the upper floor was not completely ready until 1984.⁵⁸⁴ The upper floor has an L-shape and consists of a long corridor, small rooms (*hiücre*), and winter and summer ceremonial halls (see the ground floor). In 1983, the small rooms were still empty, and only the corridor and the ceremonial halls were installed. In 1984, after completing the museum installation in the Ibrahim Pasha Palace, TİEM was granted the Special Commendations award under the category of the European Museum of the Year Award (EMYA).⁵⁸⁵

A few photographs taken in 1983—right before and after the opening of the exhibition—provide an idea about the early stage of the museum displays. However, it is not possible to entirely reconstruct permanent exhibitions because of a lack of written and visual sources. Therefore, it is difficult to comment on the small changes and rearrangements of the display. According to the current museum authorities, there are no visual or written sources before 2012 in the museum archive except various exhibition and museum catalogues. There are photos of the last version of the permanent display just before the museum was closed for restoration and reinstallation in 2012. A 30-minute documentary about TİEM, which was taken when Istanbul was the European Capital of Culture⁵⁸⁶ in 2010, helps to visualize the museum display. However, there is a gap between 1984 and 2010, especially since the reconstruction of the display of the small rooms is more difficult in the early years of the museum. As stated above, the photographs taken during the restoration and installation by the architect Hüsrev Tayla, and his ground plan drawings are extremely helpful for insights about the earlier years of the museum display (Fig. 106). In addition, the

⁵⁸³ Ölçer, “Yeni Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi,” 14.

⁵⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁵ “Special Commendations are given to museums that have developed a new and innovative aspect of their public service and from which other European museums can learn.” <https://www.europeanforum.museum/en/winners/special-commendations/>.

⁵⁸⁶ The European Capital of Culture is a project which started in 1985 to promote cultural richness and diversity in the European continent.

photographer and journalist Ara Güler’s photos help to understand the display of the early years.

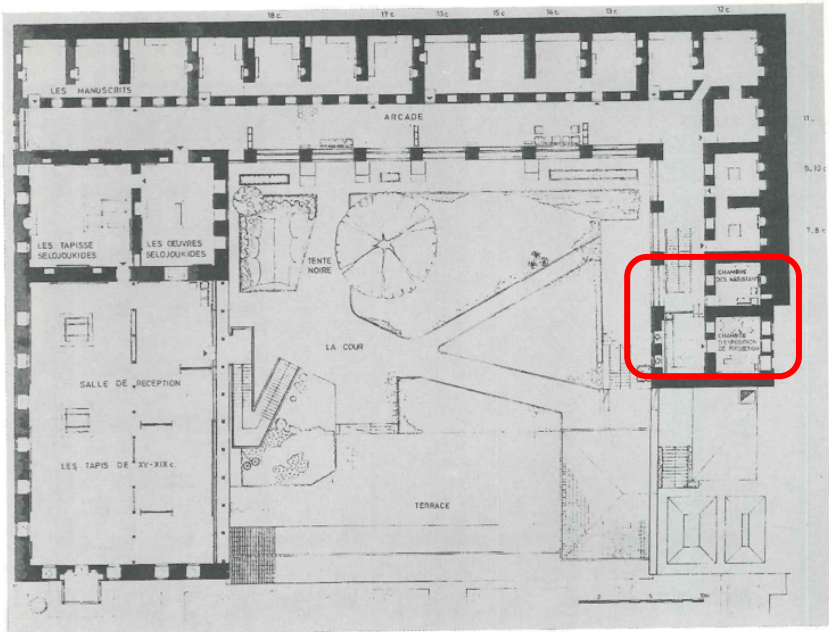


Figure 106. Ground plan of the upper floor, prepared during the restoration of the Ibrahim Pasha Palace, around 1983. Source: Hüsrev Tayla “La Restauration du palais de Ibrahim Pacha-Istanbul,” *Prof. Mout Sopoulos Armağanı III* (Selânik, 1991) 1817-1839: 1836.

Before trying to reconstruct and understand the physical and conceptual features of the permanent galleries of TİEM’s Turkish and Islamic arts collection, I find it useful to keep in mind the mission and principles of the museum as stated by then-director Ölçer:

“What kind of mission should be adopted by a museum dedicated to Islamic art, in a country with a long past in the context of Islamic culture? What should its attitude to a changing society be, and what targets should it embrace? [...]

First, priority is given to the finest examples of Islamic art, and at the same time strict compliance with conservation principles is observed. In this respect the museum should set an example and offer guidance to the public and to the increasing numbers of private collectors in this field who come here to learn.

Second, the message is conveyed that worn and damaged objects (which in our collection generally means carpets and kilims that have been spread on the floors of mosques for centuries) are important, have aesthetic and historic value, and even in their worn state represent an invaluable cultural heritage. Only in this way can there be hope for objects in private hands which are in danger of being destroyed because their owners do not appreciate their value.

Third, by means of exhibiting objects illustrating well-defined art movements, styles, or the tastes of specific centuries, either in total or in the context of a theme, the visitor should be encouraged to think, to forge links between the objects, and in looking at the details not to lose sight of the whole.

Finally, when exhibiting an object, not just the work of art itself but the conditions under which it was made and the social and economic history behind it should be taken into account, and explained not only in the catalogue but at least on information panels and preferably (if means allow) by means of audiovisual techniques.⁵⁸⁷

The ground plan, published in 1983 by Hüsrev Tayla and entitled "*Le musée des œuvres turques et islamiques. Le plan de restauration et d'exposition du rez de chausse du Palais de Ibrahim Pasha,*" provides an idea of the initial planning of the museum display. Two rooms entitled "*Chambre d'exposition de projection*" and "*Chambre des assistante*" appear on the ground plan. I am not sure about the function of the "*Chambre d'exposition de projection,*" but it can be translated roughly as the "projection room." The route for the museum visit was directed through small arches on the museum ground plan, and one of these arches led to the "*Chambre d'exposition de projection.*" There was no introductory label at the museum entrance in the early years: this was added later, sometime before 2012. Bearing in mind the principles of the museum regarding the usage of audiovisual techniques when possible, one can speculate that this room was initially designed to project an informative video or some other educational visuals related to the museum, its collection, and even the Ibrahim Pasha Palace. On the other hand, the "*Chambre des assistante,*" which can be translated as a "room for assistance/assistants," must have been a room for the museum staff, because two other rooms with the same title were shown on the ground

⁵⁸⁷ Ölçer, "Living the past: the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art," 36–37.

plan in the plan (see Fig. 107). There are no arrows in front of the “*Chambre des assistante*” and, considering its possible function, it can be assumed that this room was not accessible to visitors.

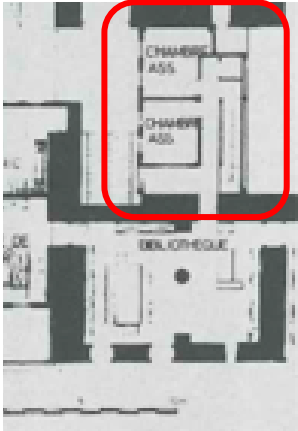


Figure 107. Detail from the ground plan of the ground floor. The red rectangle shows the rooms entitled “Chambre Ass.” Source: Hüsrev Tayla “La Restauration du palais de Ibrahim Pacha-Istanbul,” *Prof. Mout Sopoulos Armağani III* (Selânik, 1991) 1817-1839: 1835.

A photo from Hüsrev Tayla’s archive shows the corridor in front of these rooms. At the end of the corridor, in front of the entrance of the “*Chambre d’exposition de projection*” in the ground plan, there is a sitting area reached via a few steps (Fig. 108). It is not possible to see in the photograph, but there is a standing sign in front of the stairs. This sign might indicate the starting point of the permanent exhibition route for visitors and at the same time block the entrance of the other room.

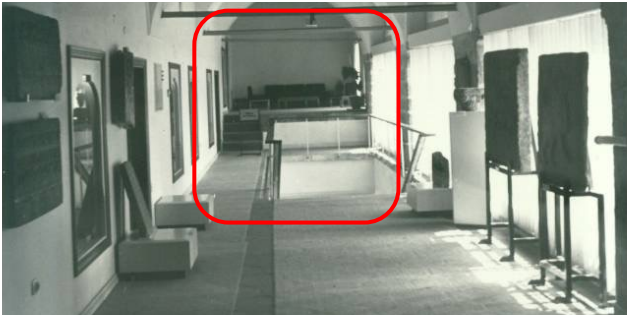


Figure 108. The photo of the entrance and the corridor around 1983. Source: Hüsrev Taylan Archive in Atatürk Library.

I am not sure if the ground plan of Hüsrev Tayla was fully implemented. However, if it was implemented, these two “chambers” must have been relocated. If the “*Chambre d'exposition de projection*” had a didactic role, as I assume, then it could not have been placed behind the standing sign, where visitors could not pass through. Maybe the implementation of the display was rearranged, and the room located at the end of the corridor became a room for assistants.

According to the ground plan, the initial plan was to arrange the museum collection based on various factors such as chronology, medium, and period. An article written by Nazan Ölçer in 1984 confirms the planned layout of the ground plan in some respects. Objects were categorized on the basis of their periods and exhibited in the small rooms in chronological order. The permanent display of TIEM covered a period from “the seven-to-eighth centuries up to the nineteenth century.”⁵⁸⁸ In addition, small-scale carpets were planned to be displayed in these small rooms (possibly regardless of their periods). This choice was necessary because of the architectural structure of the historical building. Large-scale carpets were slated for display in the ceremonial halls, since they provided a bigger space with a high-ceilinged area.

The first 13 small rooms—after the “*Chambre d'exposition de projection*” and “*Chambre des assistante*”—were chronologically ordered. According to the ground plan of the upper floor, the 13 rooms were also divided architecturally into four sections. This means that some of them were connected to each other internally through the demolition of some walls. The first section contained two galleries, the second section had three galleries, and the third and the fourth sections consisted of four galleries.

As the ground plan demonstrates, the first room in chronological order contained materials from the seventh and eighth centuries. The one next to it displayed objects from the ninth and tenth centuries. It was possible to move from the seventh and eighth centuries to the ninth and tenth centuries internally, creating a section. Another room was devoted to the eleventh century, whereas two rooms were reserved for the twelfth century. Each room was assigned for the to the thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries, and once again these rooms were connected to each other. One room was devoted to the seventeenth

⁵⁸⁸ Ölçer, “Living the past: the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art,” 36-37.

century, whereas three rooms were reserved for eighteenth-century materials. Following the chronological arrangement, a medium-based display with three rooms was devoted to the manuscript collection of TIEM. Ölçer does not mention this type of theme- or medium-based display in her article. Unfortunately, the lack of written or visual sources from the early years of the museum display prevent confirming or rebutting this display arrangement; therefore, I am not sure if this was realized or abandoned.

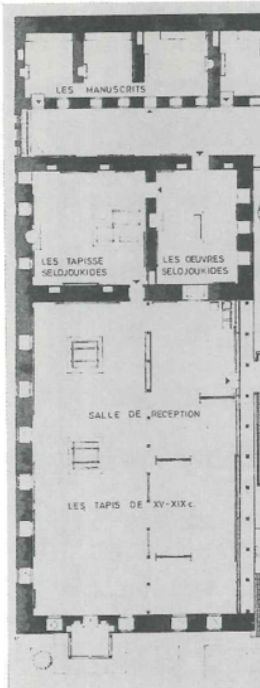


Figure 109. Detail of the Seljuk and Ottoman galleries from the ground plan around 1983. Source: Hüsrev Taylan Archive in Atatürk Library.

The winter and summer ceremonial halls were installed during the temporary exhibition (Anatolian Civilizations). These ceremonial halls were reserved for the objects and carpets from the Seljuk and Ottoman periods (Fig. 109). The ground plan shares the main elements of the display program, and it does not contain the word “Ottoman:” rather it is only labelled “carpets xv-xix centuries.” Ölçer describes the summer ceremonial hall, where large-sized carpets and objects from the Ottoman period were displayed:

“... and finally, the 16th century Ushak carpets, which are the peak of the Ottoman art, took their place together with the few but striking objects placed intermittently in showcases.”⁵⁸⁹

The photographs of the display just before and after its opening show that the display of the Turkish and Islamic art collection starts with five stone inscriptions from the Abbasid and Umayyad periods. These stone inscriptions were mounted on the walls and welcomed the visitors at the entrance of the permanent exhibition (Fig. 110) The choice of these inscriptions, which are some of the earliest dated objects in the collection, also confirms that the display was chronologically arranged.



Figure 110. Five stone inscriptions mounted on the wall at the entrance. A photo taken during the installation of the museum display before the opening in May 1983. Source: Hüsrev Taylan Archive in Atatürk Library.

⁵⁸⁹ Ölçer, “Yeni Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi,” 14.



Figure 111. A view of the corridor and the display of niche showcases in 1983. The red rectangle shows a niche where Mamluk mosque lamps and a ewer were displayed together. Source: Ara Güler Archive.

The objects were displayed inside niches and freestanding display cases throughout the long corridor. Visual sources show that a few sitting areas for visitors and a few plants were placed in the corridor, as well. Window openings to the small rooms in the corridors were turned into display niches, which can be seen in the photos taken by Ara Güler (Figs.111-116). The design of the niches referenced the *Bursa kemerî* (Bursa arch), with the sides in the form of a quarter circle and the flat middle. *Bursa kemerî* is a classical element of Ottoman architecture. This type of arch can be found in both public and civil buildings such as mosques, tombs, and palaces. Some of the most well-known examples are the Green Mosque in Bursa (*Yeşil Camii*) and Sultan Murad III's room in the Topkapı Palace, dated to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, respectively (see Fig. 112). *Bursa Kemerî* was used as a decorative element for the museum coffee shop's design, too (Fig. 113).



Figure 112. An example of *Bursa kemei* from the privy room of Sultan Murad III, sixteenth century, Topkapı Palace Museum.



Figure 113. *Bursa kemei* decoration in the museum coffee shop in 1983. Source: Ara Güler Archive.

In 1984, before completing the installation of the small rooms on the upper floor, Ölçer explained the function of these niche display cases as follows:

“This solution allows visitors with a limited amount of time to visit the collection in chronological order by passing down the corridor in front of these cabinets, while those with more time may go in and out of any of the rooms they choose.”⁵⁹⁰

The niches were lit from the top and probably covered with light-colored fabric in the early years. The photographs dating from 1983 are black and white, and therefore it is not possible to tell the exact color. A few photographs help to visualize the display and identify some of the exhibited objects. The niches were not so crowded: some of them contain a single object. For example, a Mamluk basin (*badiye*) dating to the second half of the fifteenth century—brought from the Topkapı Palace Museum to the collection of TİEM in 1964⁵⁹¹—was displayed with a masterpiece approach (see Fig. 114).

⁵⁹⁰ Ölçer, “The Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts: rebirth of a sixteenth-century palace,” 46.

⁵⁹¹ Seracettin Şahin *Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi: Emevilerden Osmanlılara 13 Asırlık İhtişam* (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2009), 163.



Figure 114. A niche where the Mamluk basin was displayed in 1983. Source: Hüsrev Taylan Archive in Atatürk Library.



Figure 115. Basin, Mamluk period, 1470–1490 CE., inv. no. 2959, brought from the Topkapı Palace Collection to TİEM in 1964. Source: Seracettin Şahin, Sevgi Kutluay, and Miyase Çelen (eds.) *100 Yıl Önce ve 100 Yıl Sonra: Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi* (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2014).

Several small objects were also exhibited in a single niche. For example, Figure 116 shows that glass Mamluk mosque lamps and an ewer were displayed in a niche together. The arrangement of the niches was roughly chronological, and it seems that only the objects with the utmost aesthetic qualities were on display within them.



Figure 116. A view of the corridor of TİEM in 1983. The rectangle shows where the Mamluk basin was displayed. Source: Ara Güler Archive.

In addition to the niche displays, three standing display cases with glass shelves were placed in the corridor. The *Bursa kemeri* motif was used in these display cases, too. Compared to the Süleymaniye soup kitchen, the number of displayed objects in the Ibrahim Pasha Palace was generally much smaller. Ölçer states that this choice was a main display principle for the new museum arrangement.⁵⁹² The curators of TİEM tried to maintain a balance between the Ibrahim Pasha Palace and the displayed collection. In other words, in order to not overshadow the historical building, fewer objects were exhibited. Therefore, the standing display cases were not cluttered. As far as I can identify from the photos, a few small-sized objects, including incense burners, rosewater sprinklers, a pitcher,⁵⁹³ a small casket, and an animal figure, were displayed without a particular theme. Analyzing the photographs gives me an impression of a chronological categorization of each showcase. One of the display cases contained incense burners and rosewater sprinklers that resemble the ones produced during the Ottoman Empire (Fig. 117). Therefore, these standing showcases could have been arranged chronologically, too; however, with the limited data, it is not possible to be certain.



Figure 117. A view of the corridor of TİEM in 1983. Source: Ara Güler Archive.

⁵⁹² Ölçer, “Living the past: the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art,” 36.

⁵⁹³ As far as it can be detected from the photos, the pitcher could be the one with a fish-shaped mouth made with turquoise glazed dated to the thirteenth century during the Great Seljuks rule. This pitcher was brought in 1975, for TİEM collection and its inventory number is 3704.



Figure 118. A view of the corridor of TIEM in 1983. Source: Hüsrev Taylan Archive in Atatürk Library.

In addition to the objects displayed in the niches and standing cases, various stone works from different periods such as inscriptions, a column capital, and a sphinx head (from the Anatolian Seljuks, thirteenth century) were on display in the corridor (Fig. 118).



Figure 119. A view of the corridor of TIEM during the opening preparations in 1983. Source: Hüsrev Taylan Archive in Atatürk Library.

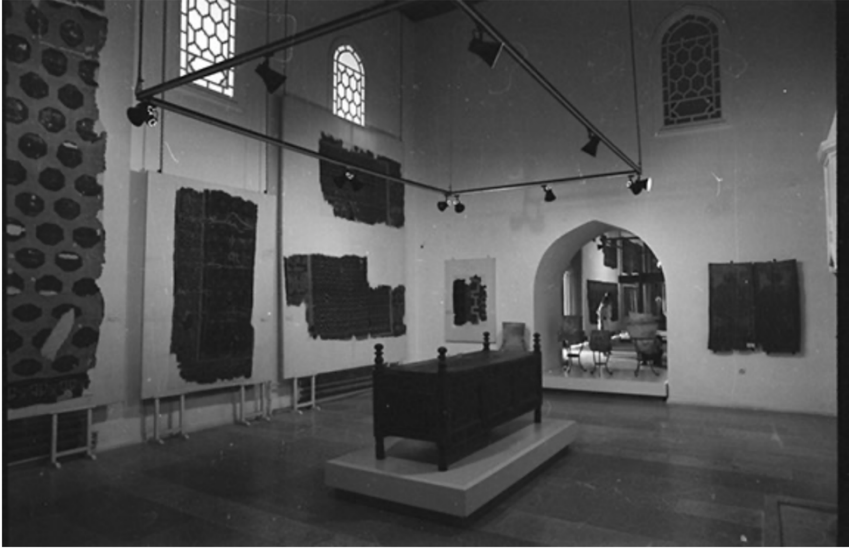


Figure 120. A view of one of the Seljuk Galleries located in the winter ceremonial hall (*Kışlık divanhâne*) in 1983. Source: Ara Güler Archive.

The Seljuks period objects of various materials such as textile, wood, and ceramics were on display in the winter ceremonial hall (*kışlık divanhane*), which contains two rooms. A photo dated 1983 shows a general view of one of the Seljuk galleries (Fig. 120). This is the only photo of the Seljuk galleries from the 1980s. Although it is not seen in the photo, there is a fireplace in the room, which reminds visitors of the original function of the building. As can be seen from Figure 120, large-sized carpet fragments⁵⁹⁴ were displayed on light-colored panels in front of the whitewashed walls. This room, with its high ceiling, provided enough space to exhibit large-sized carpets of the Seljuks. Apart from the carpets, an unidentified wooden panel on the wall, a cenotaph on a raised base, and several large-sized ceramic jars⁵⁹⁵ were on display. This cenotaph (inv. no. 191), dated to 1251, was brought from the mausoleum of Seyyid Mahmud Hayrani in Konya in 1911 to Çinili Köşk. In 1915, the

⁵⁹⁴ Seljuk carpet with octagon patterns, thirteenth-fourteenth centuries, inventory number 689; Seljuk carpet, thirteenth-fourteenth centuries, inventory number 693.

⁵⁹⁵ This group of jars was brought to TIEM on 3 April 1941 from Çinili Köşk (Tiled Pavilion), where they were stored. Only one of the jars (inv. no. 3796) was donated to TIEM in 1976. Ölçer, Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art (2002), 122-137.

cenotaph was transferred to the collection of TIEM (then, the Pious Islamic Foundations Museum back then).⁵⁹⁶ The cenotaph belonged to Necmeddin Ahmed, brother of sufi Seyyid Mahmud Hayrani and the son of a Seljuk statesman, Mesud Pasha.⁵⁹⁷ This object seems to have been on display, both in the Süleymaniye soup kitchen and the Ibrahim Pasha Palace, since its arrival in the collection of the museum. Originally, an iwan connected the winter ceremonial hall with the summer ceremonial hall, where objects from the Ottoman period were displayed. The original function of the iwan was abandoned, and it was turned into a display area for the ceramic jars.

The route of the museum ends in the summer ceremonial hall, where the Ottoman Period Gallery was located. This was the biggest gallery in the museum, which indicates the given emphasis given to the Ottoman collection. Many large-sized carpets and their fragments were displayed vertically, hanging from either the walls or self-standing panels (Fig. 121). A minor novelty for the display of large-size carpets was executed in this gallery, which was a method used in the MET since the 1940s.⁵⁹⁸ One of the large-sized carpets was hanging from the ceiling but its end was placed on a raised platform so that visitors could observe the carpet in its authentic position (Figs. 122-124). Large-sized metal candles, mother-of-pearl inlaid wooden Quran cases, a reading desk, and lecterns were placed on raised platforms and scattered among the carpets (Figs. 125-126). Smaller objects such as jeweled belts of the sultans and manuscripts were installed in standing display cases. Object labels can be seen in the photographs, but unfortunately, it is not possible to read them. We do not know if there were introductory labels at this early stage of the display. Unfortunately, no written sources are available today.

⁵⁹⁶ Şahin, *Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi*, 129.

⁵⁹⁷ Ethem Cebecioğlu, "Mahmûd-ı Hayrânî," *TDVİA* (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2003), vol. 27: 367.

⁵⁹⁸ See Figure 55.



Figure 121. A view of the *divânhane* (summer ceremonial hall) in TIEM in 1983. Source: Hüsrev Taylan Archive in Atatürk Library.



Figure 122. A view of the *divânhane* (summer ceremonial hall) in TIEM in 1983. Source: Ara Güler Archive.



Figure 123. A view of the *divânhane* (summer ceremonial hall) in TİEM in 1983. Source: Hüsrev Taylan Archive in Atatürk Library.



Figure 124. A view of the *divânhane* (summer ceremonial hall) in TİEM in 1983. Source: Hüsrev Taylan Archive in Atatürk Library.

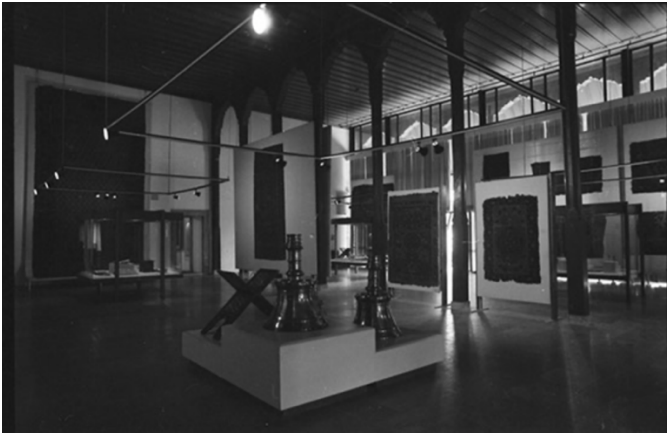


Figure 125. A view of the *divânhane* (summer ceremonial hall) in TİEM in 1983. Source: Ara Güler Archive.



Figure 126. A view of the *divânhane* (summer ceremonial hall) in TİEM in 1983. Source: Ara Güler Archive.



Figure 127. A view of the *divânhâne* (winter ceremonial hall) in TİEM around 1994. Source: *Bir Müzenin Gelişimine Bakış/A Look at the Development of a Museum: 1913-1983 Süleymaniye İmareti, 1983-1993 İbrahim Paşa Sarayı* (Istanbul: TİEM, 1994?), unpaginated.

A photograph, dated 1994, shows that the summer ceremonial hall was not the only Ottoman gallery within the museum (Fig. 127). This photograph shows a glimpse of the “Classical Ottoman Period” gallery (Fig. 128). The “classical” title of the gallery indicates that there were early and late periods, too. A white wall-display case with a white background furnishing contained several objects such as İznik ceramic tiles, plates, a vase, and a tombac object.⁵⁹⁹ In addition, there were (at least) two mother-of-pearl-inlaid wooden Quran cases displayed alone in standing display cases. Moreover, at least two small-sized carpets were displayed vertically on white panels.



Figure 128. A view of the “Classical Ottoman Period” Gallery in TIEM, around 1994.
Source: *Bir Müzenin Gelişimine Bakış/A Look at the Development of a Museum: 1913-1983 Süleymaniye İnareti, 1983-1993 İbrahim Paşa Sarayı* (Istanbul: TIEM, 1994 ?), unpaginated.

As stated above, because of the limited written and visual sources, it is difficult to draw a comprehensive picture of the display of the small rooms. Temporary exhibitions affected the permanent display to some degree over time. Several major temporary exhibitions such as “The Imperial Fermans” and “Turkish Carpets from the 13th to 18th centuries,” which opened in 1986 and 1996, respectively changed the permanent galleries of the museum. Moreover, temporary exhibitions entitled “One Man One Messenger: The Sacred Relics of the Prophet Muhammad,” and “The Qur’an at its 1400th Year,” organized in 2007

⁵⁹⁹ I was not able to detect this tombac object from the photo.

and 2010, also transformed some of the permanent display cases. These changes are discussed in the following paragraphs of this chapter. Photographs taken in 2012, just before the closure of the museum for renovation and reinstallation, are the only source that helps to fully grasp the display of TIEM fully. Therefore, I will move into the 2012 photos to analyze the small rooms.

5.d.a. Installation of the Small Rooms

There were 16 small rooms on the upper floor which were installed around 1984, sometime after the opening of the museum. Each room shared a few common physical elements. All the small rooms were lit artificially, because none of them were received natural light after their windows were turned into display cases. The majority of the rooms contain fireplaces, which were original to the palace. These fireplaces are an authentic detail in the galleries that remind the museum visitors of the previous role of the building to. The walls of the small rooms were dyed white (light-colored). Each room had one or two wall-display cases for small-sized objects. Pedestals for architectural elements or standing display cases were used for bigger and more delicate objects. The majority of the galleries had small-sized carpets and prayer rugs, which were hung on the walls. In addition, calligraphic panels, written documents such as firmans (imperial orders), and maps were exhibited either on the walls or in display cases in some of the galleries.

Looking at the 2012 photographs proves the lack of consistency among the galleries in terms of physical display elements. Different display cases were used in the museum: for example, the wall-display cases in the small rooms were made of wooden frames, whereas the standing display cases in the ceremonial halls were made of metal. These display cases were probably produced at different times and/or by different manufacturers. The inconsistency was not limited to different rooms: even in the same room, different display cases were in use. In addition, the fabric furnishings of some of the display cases changed with time. It was possible to see two different colors for the background furnishing of the display cases in some galleries. It does not seem like a deliberate choice but rather simply the need for a renewal of the worn-out display furnishings. Other inconsistencies might have been the result of updates to replace worn out materials, additions, and changes made during the temporary exhibitions through time.

The discrepancy of the physical features in the galleries continued with the information labels. Some of the galleries contained a section, gallery, or display case label, whereas some of them had no explanatory labels, not even a gallery title. There was no standardization among the section information panels, either. For example, the section panels in the Qajar and Safavid dynasty rooms were different from each other, although they were located side by side. The panel of the Qajars was smaller, shorter, and had a different graphic design and framing than the Safavids panel (Fig. 129).



Figure 129. A view of the Safavids and the Qajars period room in 2012. Red rectangle show the sections panels within the gallery. Source: TIEM Archive.

The rooms were mainly ordered chronologically and dynastically. However, the sequence of the chronology was irregular in some cases. Concurrent dynastic periods were reflected as if they were successive eras. For example, the Ottoman period was the final gallery, although the Qajar dynasty ruled concurrently. Additionally, the chronological order was disrupted with the summer and winter hall displays. Although there were Great Seljuks and Anatolian Seljuks galleries, the winter ceremonial hall was reserved for the objects from the Seljuks period. Again, in addition to the small galleries dedicated to objects from the Ottoman period, the winter hall contained more Ottoman-period objects. The practical reason for this was purely

architectural: the ceremonial halls were able to provide the necessary space for the large-sized carpets, with their high ceilings. However, this choice created an interruption within the chronological order of the museum display.

Sixteen small rooms were grouped architecturally into five sections. In other words, the dividing walls between the rooms were torn down “to aid the circulation” of visitors.⁶⁰⁰ I used the ground plan of Hüsrev Tayla to visualize the gallery setting. To understand the order and to determine the subsections of the display, I have assigned a letter to each room and defined each section—an area grouped architecturally, not conceptually, by the curators—through these letters (see Fig. 130). In addition, I prepared a table that presents the headlines, labels (not objects), and maps of the sections and/or rooms, if available (see Table 2).

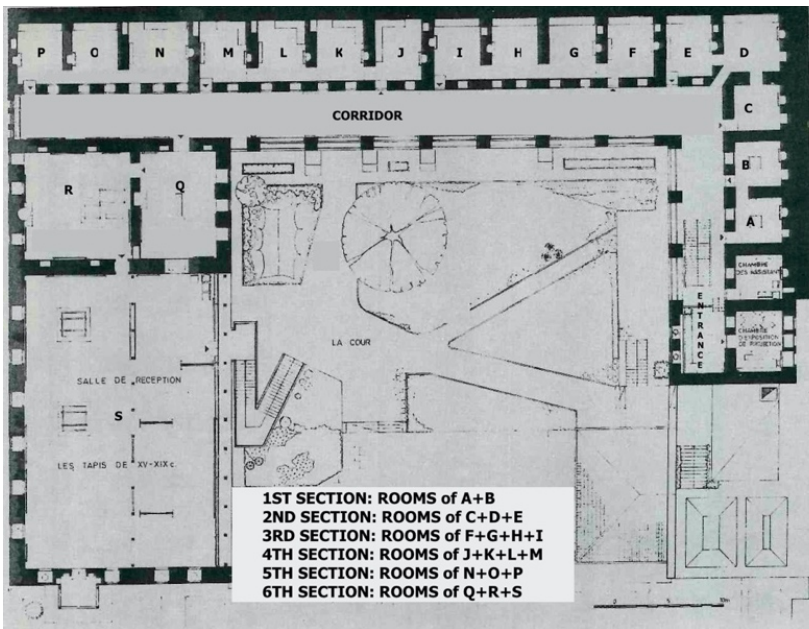


Figure 130. Ground plan of TIEM by Hüsrev Taylan with author’s additions.

⁶⁰⁰ Ölçer, “The Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts: rebirth of a sixteenth-century palace,” 46.

Section/Room(s) (These sections were created by the author)	Official title(s) of the section and rooms (If any)	Containing (Information Labels) and/or Maps
Section 1	n/a	Rooms A and B
Room A	n/a	<p>Bilingual Section Label(s):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>“İslam Sanatı/ Islamic Art”</i> [information label] 2. <i>“Erken İslam Dönemi Sanatı (700-1050)/ Early Islamic Art Period (700-1050)”</i> 3. <i>“Bağdad/ Baghdad”</i> <p>Bilingual Section Map(s):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>“10. Yüzyılda İslâm Dünyası/ The Islamic World in the 10th century”</i>
Room B	n/a	<p>Bilingual Section Label(s):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>“Samarra/ Samarra”</i> 2. <i>“İki Dansöz Figürü/ Two Dancers”</i> [Reconstruction drawing dated 1912 of a mural fragment]
Section 2	<p>Bilingual Title: <i>“Anadolu’da Ortaçağ Sanatı Cizre Ulu Camii Kapısı / Anatolian Medieval Art: The Doors of the Great Mosque of Cizre”</i></p>	Rooms C, D, and E
Room C	n/a	Bilingual Section Label(s):

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>"Cizre Ulu Camii/The Great Mosque of Cizre"</i> 2. <i>"Cizre (Cezire-i İbn Ömer)/ Cizre (Cezire-i İbn Ömer)"</i> 3. <i>"El-Cezeri ve Ünlü Eseri "Otomata" / El-Cezeri and His Automata</i> 4. <i>"Cizre Ulu Camii Kapısı ve Kapı Tokmakları / The Door of Cizre Great Mosque and Its Door Knobs"</i>
Room D	n/a	<p>Bilingual Section Label:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>"Cizre Ulu Camii Kapısı Restorasyonu / Restoration of Cizre Great Mosque Door"</i>
Room E	n/a	n/a
Section 3	n/a	Rooms F, G, H, and I
Room F	n/a	<p>Turkish Section Map:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>"Büyük Selçuklu Devleti"</i> [The Great Seljuks]
Room G	<p>Bilingual Display Case Title:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>"Anadolu Selçuklu Devleti/ Anatolian Seljuk Period (1071-1308)"</i> 	<p>Turkish Section Map:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>"Anadolu Selçuklu Devleti"</i> [The Anatolian Seljuks]
Room H	<p>Bilingual Display Case Title:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>"Mamluk Dönemi Sanatı/ Mamluk Period Art"</i> 	<p>Bilingual Section Label:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>"Mamluk Dönemi Sanatı/ Mamluk Period Art"</i>

Room I	n/a	Bilingual Section Label 1. <i>"Timurlu Dönemi ve Sanatı (1395-1506)/ Timurid Period Art (1395-1506)"</i>
Section 4	n/a	Rooms J, K, L, and M
Room J	Bilingual Display Case Title: 1. <i>"Beylikler Osmanlı Geçiş Devri/ The Beylik Ottoman Transition Period"</i>	Bilingual Section Label: 1. <i>"Osmanlı Devrinde Sanat/ Art of the Ottoman Period"</i> [information label] Turkish Map: 1. <i>"Osmanlı İmparatorluğu 1299-1683"</i> [map]
Room K	Bilingual Display Case Title: 1. <i>"Osmanlı Klasik Devri/ The Classical Ottoman Period"</i>	n/a
Room L	n/a	n/a
Room M	Bilingual Display Case Titles: 1. <i>"Safavi Devri/ The Safavid Period (1501-1786)"</i> 2. <i>"Kaçar Devri/ The Kajar Period (1721-1924)"</i>	Bilingual Section Labels: 1. <i>"Safavi Dönemi ve Sanatı (1506-1722)/ Safavid Period Art (1506-1722)"</i> 2. <i>"Kaçar Dönemi ve Sanatı (1722-1924)/ Qajar Period and Art (1722-1924)"</i>

Section 5	n/a	Rooms N, O, and P
Room N	n/a	Bilingual Section Label: 1. "Anadolu'da İslam Yazı Sanatı/ Islamic Calligraphy in Anatolia"
Room O	Bilingual Display Case title: 1. <i>Geç Osmanlı Devri/ The Late Ottoman Period</i> "	n/a
Room P	n/a	n/a

Table 2. The list of the small rooms with their information labels and maps based on the 2012 photos.

All the labels (introduction, section, and object) in the museum were written both in Turkish and English. On the other hand, the maps—except the one in Room A—were prepared only in Turkish. In addition to the section labels, Raqqa, the Ayyubids, the Mamluks, and the Timurids information labels' photographs exist in the museum archive. The photographs of these labels were taken after they were removed from their original places. Unfortunately, these labels are not seen in the 2012 display photographs. Therefore, I was not able to determine the exact location of these labels in the museum space, except for the section panels of the Mamluks and the Timurids, which were probably placed in the relevant galleries, Room H and I, respectively.

After the stonework inscriptions from the Umayyad dynasts (661–750 CE) at the entrance, the permanent museum display started with the first section, which contained rooms A and B. The entrance of this section was located in room B. A single door was used both to enter and exit this section. Since the permanent display was arranged chronologically, it is not surprising to start the exhibition with the early period of Islamic art. Therefore, rooms A and B were mainly reserved for

the Abbasids (750–1258 CE), the second caliphal dynasty. There was no gallery headline in the rooms, such as “the Abbasid period.” However, four section panels entitled “Islamic Art,” “Early Islamic Art (700–1050 CE),” “Baghdad,” and “Samarra” provided information about the content. A map entitled “The Islamic World in the 10th century” was accompanied these section panels, as well.

The “Islamic Art” section label (in English), placed in Room A, tried to explain this highly controversial term in less than 250 words. It reads:

“Islamic art encompasses a broad geographical area stretching from Spain in the West to China in the East, and a time span of over 1400 years.

Despite this broad dispersal, there is an astonishing degree of coherence due to certain distinctive characteristics. Decoration covering an entire surface is one such feature, using either geometric forms or extremely stylized floral patterns.

Although both geometric and floral patterns were widely used in pre-Islamic times in these regions, particularly in Roman Byzantine and Persian art, Islamic art carried these forms to a consummate level unique in world art history, creating extremely intricate and complex compositions and abstractions.

The most distinctive feature of Islamic art is undoubtedly the use of calligraphy.⁶⁰¹ The Arabic script predates Islam, but with its use in the Quran gained unprecedented significance. Calligraphy came to be regarded as the highest of all the arts, as a result of which the most talented artists focused their skills on the discipline, and the script underwent extensive diversification.

While calligraphy was considered to be a plastic art form, Islamic art did not confine itself entirely to calligraphy and abstract decoration, but encompassed a rich iconography and pictorial art depicting human figures.

Within this extensive geographical area and time span, ethnic and regional influences and trends played a role of undeniable significance leading to fascinating syntheses.”

According to the label, although Islamic art spreads over a vast geographic area and time span, it still has a coherent character regardless of time or geography. This argument is also highly controversial because of its flattening effect and not well-accepted among Islamic art scholars anymore. The other introductory section label, “Early Islamic Art (700–1050 CE),” provides information on how pre-Islamic and non-Islamic

⁶⁰¹ In the Turkish version of this label, the word “*yazi*” was used instead of “*hat*.”

traditions were influential on Muslim dynasties’ artistic language such as the Umayyads and the Abbasids.⁶⁰²



Figure 131. Photograph of the “Early Islamic Art (700-1050)” section label in 2012. Source: TIEM Archive.

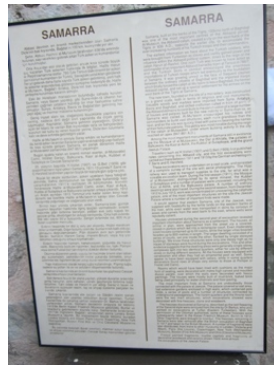


Figure 132. Photograph of the “Samarra” section label in 2012. Source: TIEM Archive.

⁶⁰²“The early period of Islamic art was naturally one of the transition[s], in which pre-Islamic traditions continued to exert an influence on artists.

Damascus, capital of the Omayyad [Umayyad] dynasty and first Islamic state, was situated in the Eastern Mediterranean, home to many civilizations which all left their mark on the art of the region.

The classic-naturalistic art was influenced from the 8th century onwards, by motifs reminiscent of Sassanid art. This process of change, which is particularly evident in depictions of scenery, animals and plants, and in metalwork, became even more conspicuous during the Abbasid dynasty which overthrew the Omayyads [Umayyads] in the mid-9th century. The Abbasids moved the Islamic capital to Baghdad and later Samarra.

The bevel technique, a new style which derived from Central Asia, emerged in Baghdad and Samarra, occurring first in abstract reliefs and plaster wall decoration, and later being applied to woodcarving, metalwork and ceramics, spread from the Middle East to Egypt and Iran.

During the Samarra period, the use of colour and painted decoration increased, the luster technique was used in ceramics, and large murals depicted scenes from nature and daily life, with dancers and other human figures.

While changed in early Islamic art were greatly influenced by tastes and attitudes in the capital cities and the court as well as by the rulers themselves, in peripheral regions local styles emerged within the general frameworks of Islamic art. The most fascinating example is the art of Nishapur (Iran) in the 11th and 12th centuries, which is characterized by compositions, ceramics and wall decorations featuring calligraphy of striking simplicity.” Transcribed from the photograph of the “*Erken İslam Sanatı Dönemi (700-1050)*/ Early Islamic Art (700-1050)” section label, which was taken in 2012. All the spelling mistakes and typos are intentionally left untouched. Source: TIEM Archive.



Figure 133. General view of Room A in 2012. Source: TIEM Archive.

Galleries A and B can be described as the Islamic archaeology section. Both rooms had two wall-display cases for each room to exhibit archaeological findings such as coins and ceramic shreds. In addition, architectural elements like mural fragments, marble capitals, and wooden and marble panels from the ninth and tenth centuries were on display. Although there are Qurans, Quran pages, and fascicles of the Quran from the Abbasid period in the museum collection, those manuscripts were not displayed in these galleries.

The majority of the archaeological finds in this section were excavated in Samarra, which was the second capital city of the Abbasids (from 836-892 CE), after Baghdad. The “Baghdad” section label in the gallery gives brief historical information and illustrates the urban planning of the city, which had a circular plan that was “reputedly one of the most important examples of early Islamic urban planning.”⁶⁰³ Samarra was the first large-scale Islamic site that was excavated with

⁶⁰³ “The city of Baghdad was founded by al-Mansur, the Abbasid caliph in 762 A.D., eight years after his accession to the caliphate. Its foundation was the culmination of a long search by the Abbasids for a site suitable for a new, more eastern capital to replace Damascus, after certain political and social changes forced them to move eastwards to the fertile Tigris-Euphrates delta.

The city, circular in plan, was surrounded by double fortifications of mud-brick, pierced by four major gates bearing the names of Kufa, Basra, Khorasan and Damascus, to which they were linked by road.

The foundations of the city were laid in 762, and it was completed in 766/67.

The city, stretched for 2638 meters, is said to have contained a palace, a grand mosque and administrative buildings. Its circular plan was reputedly one of most important examples of early Islamic urban planning. It is a plan used earlier in the military garrisons of the Assyrians, and adapted later to urban structures in the settlements of Zincirli, Mantinea, That-i Suleiman, Harran and Isfahan.

It is a plan which is already notably sophisticated as it is adapted in Baghdad, and frequently used in various forms in later Islamic cities.” Transcribed from the photograph of the “*Bağdad* / Baghdad” section label, which was taken in 2012. All the spelling mistakes and typos are intentionally left untouched. Source: TIEM Archive.

archaeological techniques.⁶⁰⁴ This excavation is accepted as the most important Islamic site dig because it set an example for later ones.⁶⁰⁵ The Samarra excavations were headed by the German archaeologist Ernst Herzfeld (1879–1948), who prepared many important publications, between 1911 and 1914. The mural painting fragments from the Jawsak Palace in Samarra were exhibited in a wall-display case in Room B. An information label that depicts one of Herzfeld’s reconstruction drawings of one of these wall paintings entitled “Two Dancers,” was placed in the display case to visualize the fragments as a whole (Figs. 134-135).⁶⁰⁶



Figure 134. Information label that depicts Herzfeld’s reconstruction drawing. Source: TIEM Archive, 2012.

⁶⁰⁴ Alastair Northedge, “Ernst Herzfeld, Samarra, and Islamic Archaeology,” in *Ernst Herzfeld and the Development of near Eastern Studies, 1900-1950* by Ann C. Gunter, Stefan R. Hauser (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005) 385-403: 395.

⁶⁰⁵ Stephen Vernoit, “The Rise of Islamic Archaeology,” *Muqarnas* vol. 14 (1997), 1-10: 5.

⁶⁰⁶ “Abbasid period, 9th century Wall painting in the Domes Chamber of the Harem in the Jawsaq palace Reconstruction by E. Herzfeld 1912.” Transcribed from the photograph of the “İki dansöz Figürü / Two Dancers” section label, which was taken in 2012. All the spelling mistakes and typos are intentionally left untouched. Source: TIEM Archive.



Figure 135. General view of Room B in 2012. The “Samarra” information panel can be seen on the wall, whereas the “Two Dancers” panel can be seen inside the display case.
Source: TIEM Archive.

According to the almost 1000-word section label entitled “Samarra,” all the mural and decorative woodwork fragments, marble capitals, and ceramics shown in this section were from the Jawsak Palace excavations.⁶⁰⁷ Therefore, there was a great emphasis on the city of

⁶⁰⁷ “Samarra, built on the banks of the Tigris, 100kms north of Baghdad was one of the most important centres of the Abbasid period. Al-Mutasim, the Abbasid caliph, created a city on the west bank of the Tigris in 836 A.D., opposite the earlier city to accommodate the ever-increasing numbers of his Turkish troops and their commanders.

The earliest information we have about the Turkish soldiers, who were brought from Turkestan as slaves and swiftly gained power and influence within the Abbasid political system, dates to the reign of the caliph Harun al-Rashid. One such Turk was known to have acted as commander of an important Abbasid barracks-town at Tarsus in 786/7, and the Turkish skills in combat encouraged the enormous importations of Turkish troops which led eventually to the foundation of Samarra. It was growing unrest in the face of frequent clashes between the ordinary citizens of Baghdad and the imported troops which finally forced the caliph al-Mu’tasim to leave Baghdad, the former Abbasid capital, and set up a special settlement for his armies on the west bank of the Tigris at Samarra.

The new town, founded on the site of a monastery, was constructed on a grand scale, both in terms of religious and civil monuments. Valuable woods and marbles were imported from Syria, Antakya, Basra and Baghdad, and skilled craftsmen called in from all parts of the Abbasid domains to contribute to the construction of a large number of houses and palaces built for the new nobility of Surra-man-ra, as Samarra was called. Al-Mu’tasim encouraged his nobles and commanders to build vast structures, each more grandiose than the next, and so the site was quickly filled with palaces bearing the names of their fortunate patrons. This policy was most notable during the reign of the caliph al-Mutawakkil, under whom building activity in the city reached an apex (847-861 A.D.).

Among the most important monuments of Samarra still in existence are the Mosque of al-Mutaqakkil, the Dar al-Khilafa, the palaces of Balkuwara, the Kasr al-Ashik, the Kubbat al-Sulaybiyya, and the grand Jawsak Palace.

Samarra and this relatively long section label can be interpreted as proof of this given attention. Like the “Baghdad” section label, the “Samarra”

Travelers such as H. Viollet (1907) and G. Bell (1909) first published notes concerning this Abbasid city, and the first excavations were carried out there between 1911 and 1913 by the German archaeologists F. Sarre and E. Herzfeld.

These excavations were undertaken on a vast scale, and consisted of a complete survey of the site with aerial photographs. The Hijaz railway was used to transport supplies to the site, for what was a sizeable excavation team. During the first season (1911), the Mosque of al-Mutawakkil, distinguished by its spiral minaret, the Kubbet al-Sulaybiyya and a number of palaces were uncovered, including the Kasr al-Ashik, and the Balkuwara palace. A number of ordinary dwellings were also traced. During the second season, from December 1912 to 1913, work was concentrated on uncovering the caliphate palace, one of the most important structures on the site—the Jawzak Palace—where a number of important finds were made.

It would appear that eastern Samarra, site of the Jawzak, was supplied with foodstuffs by the fertile lands on the western banks of the river, while even water was transported in skins by convoys of asses and camels from the west bank to the east, where wells were reputedly salient.

Houses uncovered during the second year of excavation revealed imported information about Samarra as a settlement. The houses, all similar in plan, were approached from the street via a covered, closed-in portico which let into a rectangular court. Even moderately sized houses contained up to 50 rooms, while the larger villas boasted facades up to 800 metres in length. The larger dwelling consisted of a series of courts, set one inside the other, flanked by single storeyed buildings. We know these structures were only one storey high as no traces of stairways were found during the excavations. This and other evidence suggests that the dwelling areas were generally single-storey complexes split into two identical quarters, either for use by different sexes or during different seasons. All the houses were equipped with canalization and often they had an ornamental pool as well. Some appear to have been equipped with cellars, while in some quarters excavators found row of shops very similar to those at Pompei or Fostat (old Cairo).

Rooms which would have been lined with cushions as the major form of seating, were decorated with metre-high carved and moulded stucco panels, over which the walls were decorated with fresco paintings. The houses were mostly built of mud-brick, baked brick being used principally for water-channels and floor-paving.

The most important finds at Samarra are undoubtedly those connected with the palace at Jawzak. The palace covered a vast area, had extensive gardens enclosed in high walls, which contained polo fields, a series of pools and a number of structures connected by underground passageways. The harem quarters and the throne room were the two main structures, which excavations showed were decorated with fine frescoes, stone and woodwork.

The frescoes discovered at Samarra, described by the last flowering of the Sasanid style were removed from the site by Dr. Bartus, who also worked on excavations at Turfan (Eastern Turkestan). With the permission of the Ottoman authorities, some of these frescoes were subsequently taken to the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin in 1913. Other fragments were brought to Istanbul. The frescoes remaining in Samarra were later removed after the British occupation of Baghdad in 1917 and taken to the British Museum. A number of fragments were later distributed, from there to other museums in London (Victoria and Albert), Paris (the Louvre), Copenhagen, New York (Metropolitan Museum), Boston (Fine Arts Museum) and Ohio (Cleveland Museum).

Fresco painted fragments, marble capitals and fragments of decorative woodwork and ceramic shown here were all from the excavations of the Jawzak Palace.” Transcribed from the photograph of the “Samarra” section label, which was taken in 2012. All the spelling mistakes and typos are intentionally left untouched. Source: TIEM Archive.

label gives information on the historical and urban planning aspects of the city, but in a more detailed way. There is also an emphasis on the "once-slave Turkish soldiers," who eventually gained power in the political system of the Abbasid Dynasty. The section label states that these powerful Turkish troops "[...] led eventually to the foundation of Samarra."⁶⁰⁸ In addition to the historical background, studies and excavations carried out in the early twentieth century are briefly mentioned briefly in the label. The label also brings up the division of the archaeological findings of the Samarra excavations. It reads:

*"With the permission of the Ottoman authorities, some of these frescoes were subsequently taken to the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin in 1913. Other fragments were brought to Istanbul. The frescoes remaining in Samarra were later removed after the British occupation of Baghdad in 1917 and taken to the British Museum. A number of fragments were later distributed, from there to other museums in London (Victoria and Albert), Paris (the Louvre), Copenhagen, New York (Metropolitan Museum), Boston (Fine Arts Museum) and Ohio (Cleveland Museum)."*⁶⁰⁹

I will discuss the division of the findings in the next chapter with a comparison of the latest installation of TIEM, dated to 2014.

The second section included three rooms which were—C, D, and E. This section had different physical features than the rest of the small rooms. The section title, "Anatolian Medieval Art: The Doors of the Great Mosque of Cizre," was placed at the entrance of the section, which was unique to this section (Fig. 136).

⁶⁰⁸ Transcribed from the photograph of "Samarra" section label, which was taken in 2012. All the spelling mistakes and typos left untouched intentionally. Source: TIEM Archive.

⁶⁰⁹ Transcribed from the photograph of "Samarra" section label, which was taken in 2012. All the spelling mistakes and typos left untouched intentionally. Source: TIEM Archive.

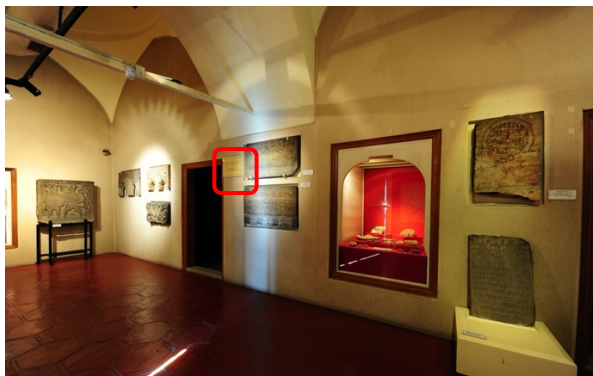


Figure 136. A view of the entrance to the third section from the corridor in 2012. The section label “Anatolian Medieval Art: The Doors of the Great Mosque of Cizre” is indicated with a red rectangle. Source: TIEM Archive.



Figure 137. A view from Section 2 in 2012. The door panels from the Great Mosque of Cizre can be seen at the end of the gallery. Source: TIEM Archive.



Figure 138. The door handle, 13th century, Artuqid period, inv. no. 3749. Source: MNWF “Discovering Islamic Art” website.



Figure 139. Detail from Figure 130. The Section 2 contains Rooms C, D, and E. The red rectangle represents the door panels from the Cizre Mosque. The blue square represents the wall-display case containing “Damascus Documents.”

The walls of the rooms were completely black, and the lighting was quite dramatic, as can be seen in Figure 137. Apart from the masterpiece display approach to the door panels and its handle, rooms C and D were filled with technical details of the restoration process. As the name of the gallery indicates, the focus of this room was the door panels dated to the early thirteenth century and its two doorknobs in the shape of two dragons joined by a lion head in the center (Fig. 138). The door panels were brought from the Great Mosque of Cizre, built in 1155 in Şırnak, Türkiye. The door panels and its handles were later additions during the renovations of the mosque in the thirteenth century. The patterns of the door panels and the shape of the door handle were inspired by the manuscript entitled *Kitab fi marifat al-hiyal al-handasiyya*⁶¹⁰ (The Book of Ingenious Mechanical Devices), written Ismail al-Jazari, a Muslim scholar, mechanical engineer, and inventor who worked in the service of the Artuqid dynasty in Diyarbakır. This book is also known as “Automata,” since it contains many inventions of “humanoid metal robots.”⁶¹¹ A section panel that shows drawings of patterns and the dragon-shaped door handles from *Automata* was located in the gallery (Fig. 140).

⁶¹⁰ *Kitâb fi ma‘rifeti’l-hiyeli’l-hendesiyye*

⁶¹¹ “Miniature from a copy of al-Jazari’s *Kitab fi marifat al-hiyal al-handasiyya*. Machine Pouring Wine.” David Collection website.



Figure 140. A section label from Section 3 in 2012. Source: TİEM Archive.

The musealization story of the Great Mosque of Cizre door panels, together with its door handles, recalls the formative years of the Islamic art collection in the Ottoman Empire. When the theft of Islamic art increased, the objects and architectural elements started to be collected and sent to the capital of the Empire to establish TİEM (then the Pious Islamic Foundations Museum back then). After more than 50 years, this was still the way of including new objects in the collection. In 1964, Murat Katoğlu, a registration specialist (*tescil uzmanı*) of the Directorate General of the Antiquities and Museums (*Eski Eserler ve Müzeler Genel Müdürlüğü*), requested that the two door handles should be taken to a museum.⁶¹² His request was approved by the High Council of the Real Estate Antiquities and Monuments (*Gayrimenkul Eski Eserler ve Anıtlar Yüksek Kurulu*) on 20 October 1964. However, the door handles remained in their original place until a theft in December 1969.⁶¹³ The theft incident was not reported at the time but was mentioned in a report written by the district governor of Cizre to the head of the Religious Affairs (*Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı*) in 1975. While removing one of the door handles, a part in the shape of a lion's head was broken by the thief/thieves, and only the part with two intertwined dragons was able to be detached. Therefore, the lion head remained on the door. After the

⁶¹² Erdem Yücel, "Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesinde Ejder Figürlü Bir Kapı Tokmağı," *Türk Kültürü* vol. 183 (1978): 168-174:170.

⁶¹³ Ölçer, *Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art*, 97

theft, the remaining lion head and the other dragon-shaped door handle were removed from the door by the order of the governor. Then, these objects were given to a local association (*dernek*) instead of the Directorate General of Foundations or the Directorate General of Museums.⁶¹⁴ After some time, Ülker Erginsoy, then a PhD candidate in art history back then, revealed this incident through her personal efforts, and the Directorate General of the Antiquities and Museums had to intervene. The remaining lion-head figure and the door handle were given to the Mardin Museum.⁶¹⁵ Eventually, the door handle and the lion-head-shaped piece were sent to TIEM on 19 April 1976.⁶¹⁶ According to a section label in the room, the door panels were brought to TIEM's collection in 1982 from "storage that did not offer any proper protection."⁶¹⁷

As shown in Table 2, there were five section labels in Section 2. The label entitled "Cizre (Cezire-i Ibn Ömer)" gives geographic and brief historical information about the city of Cizre between the tenth and thirteenth centuries.⁶¹⁸ The label "The Great Mosque of Cizre" provides brief architectural details about the mosque briefly. In addition, it states that the mosque's door handles were removed from their original location "for safekeeping in 1966;" however, as stated above, this is not the correct date. This section label also states that a drawing of the door handle is taking place in al-Jazari's manuscript.⁶¹⁹ The importance of al-

⁶¹⁴ Yücel, "Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesinde Ejder Figürlü Bir Kapı Tokmağı," 171.

⁶¹⁵ Ibid, 172.

⁶¹⁶ Ibid.

⁶¹⁷ Restoration of Great Mosue Cizre Door section label.

⁶¹⁸ "Cizre, or Cezire-i Ibn Ömer as it was formerly known, is an old town on the west bank of the Tigris in southeast Anatolia. The word *cezire* means island in Arabic, since when the river flooded its banks this area became an island accessible only by means of bridges. According to the 17th century Turkish writer Kâtip Çelebi in his book entitled *Cihannüma*, the name was given by the Umayyad caliph Ömer bin Abdül-Aziz.

Cizre reached the height of its prosperity in the 10th century as a centre of trade along the Tigris, and grew into a large port city ruled first by the Umayyads and then by the Zengids. The Zengids were at first a tributary state of the Great Seljuks, later becoming independent under the rule of an atabey based in Mosul. The Zengid atabey state of Mosul (1127-1262) was followed by those established at Aleppo (1146-1183), at Sincar (1170-1220), and finally at Cizre (1170-1227). The Zengid dynasty was brought to an end by the Ayyubids.

Ulu Mosque is the most famous of the Zengid monuments in Cizre, which include a castle, bridges, Hans and *kervansaray*s." Transcribed from the photograph of the "Cizre (Cezire-i İbn Ömer)" section label, which was taken in 2012. All the spelling mistakes and typos are intentionally left untouched. Source: TIEM Archive.

⁶¹⁹ "The Great Mosque of Cizre built in 1155 is noted particularly for its segmental dome over the prayer niche. In accordance with the architectural tradition of southeast Anatolia and Syria, the walls of the mosque and its medrese are built of basalt stone and the minaret

Jazari, his designs, and his manuscript were explained in another section label entitled “El-Cezeri and His Automata”⁶²⁰ The section label with visuals that shows the drawings from al-Jazari’s manuscript was placed next to the section label “El-Cezeri and His Automata.”

Another section label entitled “The Door of Cizre Great Mosque and its Door Knobs” provides detailed information about the technique, style, and inscriptions on the door panels.⁶²¹ The label continues with the

of brick. Traces of blue glazed brick showed that the minaret was once colourfully decorated.

The prayer niche has been altered by an addition at the west side.

The medrese or college consists of two eyvans (large exterior alcoves) and cells on two storeys. There are no exterior windows on the ground floor, which has doors to the rear opening into the private quarters. Of these, the double doors in the north wing of the medrese facing the prayer niche of the mosque are among the most important works of art of mediaeval Anatolia. Drawings of these doors, which were removed for safekeeping in 1966, are to be found in an early 13th century book of automata, the Book of Ingenious Mechanical Devices by the celebrated artist and engineer of the period, el-Cezeri.”

Transcribed from the photograph of the “*Cizre Ulu Camii/ The Great Mosque of Cizre*” section label, which was taken in 2012. All the spelling mistakes and typos are intentionally left untouched. Source: TIEM Archive.

⁶²⁰ “The famous artist and engineer Ebû’l İzz İsmâil bin er-Rezzâz el-Cezerî who entered the service of the Artukid sultan Nureddin Muhammad bin Kara-Arslan (1167-1186) in 1174-75 was, as his name shows, born in Cizre. After becoming palace engineer el-Cezeri moved first to the town of Hasankeyf, and in 1183 to Diyarbakır (the former Amid), when the Artukid court moved to that city.

His Book of Ingenious Mechanical Devices, often referred to in short as Automata, was written in 1206 and consists of diagrams and written explanations of water clocks, mechanical in containers, machines in the form of people and animals, water fountains, musical machines, pumps, coded locks and other devices. The book also includes drawings of the doors and doorknobs of the Artukid palace in Diyarbakır. The scale drawing is for doors measuring 450 x 300 cm and bearing an inscription to Muhammad bin Kara-Arslan, showing that they date from before this ruler’s death in 1185.

The bronze doors with their metal inlay ornamentation are proudly described by el-Cezeri as a masterpiece. The magnificent door knobs consist of brass plated bronze snakes entwined together and looking at one another.

These doors which el-Cezeri designed for the palace in Diyarbakır have not survived to the present day. However, the door and brass plated knobs of Ulu Mosque in his birthplace of Cizre fully demonstrate his creative genius.”

Transcribed from the photograph of “*El-Cezeri ve Ünlü Eseri ‘Otomata’/ El-Cezeri and his Automata*” section label, which was taken in 2012. All the spelling mistakes and typos are intentionally left untouched. Source: TIEM Archive.

⁶²¹ “These double doors from the Great Mosque of Cizre measure 300x112 cm and consist of a timber frame plated with beaten copper sheets attached to the wood by iron nails. They are elaborately decorated with brass rods forming an interlocking design of twelve-pointed stars, in the spaces between which are plaques with openwork designs of scrolls with rumipalmette motifs. The border surrounding both doors contains motifs resembling four-leaf clovers fixed to the door by domed studs.

The sülüs inscription band running across the top of both doors reads, “Azza li Mevlana as Sultan al Malik a R(adder?) Abû al-Kasım Mahmûd Sancar Şah.” Mahmud Sancar Şah was the Zengid atabey of Cezire, who ruled from 1208 onwards, showing that the doors must have been a later addition in the course of repairs.

iconography of the door handles and states the location of the stolen door handle, but in this label the date of the theft was correct. The label reads:

“[...] One of the two identical door knobs with their pair of curving dragons was stolen in 1969 and taken to the David Collection in Copenhagen. However the lion's head attached to the door between the two dragons was left behind. [...]”⁶²²

The longest section label was entitled “Restoration of Cizre Great Mosque Door.”⁶²³ As the title indicates, this label focuses on the

One of the two identical door knobs with their pair of curving dragons was stolen in 1969 and taken to the David Collection in Copenhagen. However the lion's head attached to the door between the two dragons was left behind. The other knob was removed for safe keeping, first to Mardin Museum, and in 1976 to the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art in Istanbul.

The combination of dragons and lions is frequently encountered in Anatolian Artukid art, and is thought to have been attributed with protective significance and to have symbolised the sun and the moon.

The double dragon motif is frequently found on Artukid coins.” Transcribed from the photograph of “*Cizre Ulu Camii Kapısı ve Kapı Toknakları / The Door of Cizre Great Mosque and Its Door Knobs*” section label, which was taken in 2012. All the spelling mistakes and typos are intentionally left untouched. Source: TIEM Archive.

⁶²² Transcribed from the photograph of “*Cizre Ulu Camii Kapısı ve Kapı Toknakları / The Door of Cizre Great Mosque and Its Door Knobs*” section label, which was taken in 2012. All the spelling mistakes and typos are intentionally left untouched. Source: TIEM Archive.

⁶²³ “From the description of the doors published in 1911 by the scholar Conrad Preusser, who saw the doors in 1909, we know that the doors were subsequently clumsily repaired. The interlocking decoration on the lower part of the doors evidently came apart, and some of the pieces were lost. In addition the ornamentation was painted over several times in later years, and the astragal was replaced and plated with zinc.

The doors were removed into storage that did not offer proper protection, and in 1982 brought to Istanbul, where first the surface was cleaned, and after being displayed in the Anatolian Civilizations exhibition in 1983 were fully restored at the Central Restoration and Conservation Laboratory, a task that took several years.

When the brass rods and openwork plaques were removed for cleaning from the copper plating of the doors, it became apparent that parts of the copper sheeting on the left hand door were missing, and had been patched by small metal plates. What was astonishing was that these metal patches beneath the openwork plaques were found to be sections cut from circular metal vessels and then beaten and flattened. On some of these pieces could be discerned, some clearly and others more faintly, hunting scenes, inscription bands in knotted kufi script, and helical motifs that still bore faint traces of colour.

When the restorers realise that the patches had not been placed in any particular order, so as not to spoil the entire surface for the sake of searching for them, they enlisted the aid of the Nuclear Energy Institute of Istanbul Technical University. Radiographic images of the second door revealed that the brass patches had been attached sometimes in a confused way one on top of the other, and in other places more regularly; and that the timber frame beneath the metal plating was of varying thickness.

By locating the differences in thickness it was possible to produce a 'map' of the patches consisting of decorated or painted metal plates. All the pieces bearing designs were removed and the timber frame again covered with copper sheeting.

previous renovations around the fourteenth century and the recent scientific restorations completed in 1983. The door panels were exhibited in a museum context for the first time at the “Anatolian Civilizations” exhibition in Ibrahim Pasha Palace in 1983. However, I was not able to determine the exact display location of the door panels. Since it was a heavy object, maybe it was installed in the same gallery back then.

Before moving to Section 3, I would like to return to the stolen door handle issue. The stolen door handle was located in the Islamic art collection of the David Sammling (David Collection) in a publication entitled *Dauids Samling, islamic kunst (The David Collection, Islamic art)* printed in 1975.⁶²⁴ According to this publication, the door handle (inv. no. 38/1973) entered the David Collection’s inventory in 1973.⁶²⁵ This door handle is still in the collection of the David Collection.⁶²⁶ The doorknob is on display in a wall showcase next to a miniature page from

In the course of this radiographic examination it was revealed that pieces with clearly visible hammer marks belonged to those bearing repoussé decoration which had been beaten flat, and that other pieces showing a different radiographic character were those bearing traces of undercoat and organic paint.

The ornamental elements on the first door which had been removed during restoration were then subjected to neutrographic examination to locate the painted sections, while ultrasonographic examination of both doors was used to measure the varying thicknesses.

As a result of this work the following discoveries were made:

- The metal plates and timber frame displayed diverse structures, demonstrating that the doors had undergone repairs at various different times.
- The painted metal sections on the first and second doors differed from one another, and therefore had a different origin.
- The patches on the second door varied in character, and were thinner than those on the first door.

By examining all the patches with repoussé decoration, it was revealed that they had been cut from the same rounded vessel (perhaps a bowl), whose designs were similar to those of Anatolian Artukid art of the 12th and 13th centuries.

Either as a result of ordinary wear and tear or of damage, it had evidently become necessary to repair the doors, which dated from the reign of Abul Kasım Mahmud Sancar Şah. The repairers had been unable to obtain the necessary metal sheeting to cover the doors, and instead had made use of old metal vessels, from which it was possible to deduce that this must have been a time of economic difficulty. The fact that the 14th century traveler Ibn Battuta reported most of the city to be in ruins confirmed that the repairs had been carried out around this period.”

Transcribed from the photograph of “Cizre Ulu Camii Kapısı Restorasyonu/ Restoration of Cizre Great Mosque Door” section label, which was taken in 2012. All the spelling mistakes and typos are intentionally left untouched. Source: TIEM Archive.

⁶²⁴ André Leth, *Dauids Samling, islamic kunst = The David Collection, Islamic art* (Copenhagen: Davids Samling, 1975), 69.

⁶²⁵ Yücel, “Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesinde Ejder Figürlü Bir Kapı Tokmağı,” 172.

⁶²⁶ The Islamic art collection of the museum is mainly organized chronologically and geographically, and also grouped according to material.

a copy of al-Jazari's manuscript (inv. no. 20/1988). The website of the David Collection describes the doorknob as follows:

"This door handle comes from the Ulu Jami, the main mosque in Cizre. Between the necks of the dragons there was originally a spike with a lion's head, as seen on the door's other handle, which is now in Istanbul. This piece has been newly restored and has a golden shine, while the door handle in the David Collection has retained its 800-year-old patina."⁶²⁷

The comparison of the patina of the door handles between the door handle in Istanbul and the one in Copenhagen is telling. The David Collection states that the door handle in TIEM was recently restored, but incorrectly. By emphasizing the "800-year-old patina" of the door handle in Copenhagen, the David Collection authorities emphasize that the object is in better hands than in its "original" location, where even a decent restoration is still not possible.⁶²⁸

The final room of Section 2, Room E, contained a long wall-display case where manuscripts, Qurans and their pages, and bindings were displayed without a context (Fig. 141). This group of documents was called the "Damascus Documents," because they were brought from the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus to the museum during World War I in 1917, just before the British occupation of Damascus. This collection contains thousands of documents such as Quran pages, Quran sections, and Quran tomes from the late eighth to the nineteenth century. As far as I know, there was no section title or a section label for this wall display. Two tile friezes (inv. nos. 1994 and 1995) from Raqqa—dated to the eleventh or twelfth centuries, Great Seljuk period—were displayed on a black wall next to the Damascus Documents showcase.

⁶²⁷ "Door handle, cast and engraved bronze," The David Collection website, <https://www.davidmus.dk/islamic-art/the-late-abbasids-atabegs-and-ayyubids/item/187?culture=en-us> [Accessed January 2023].

⁶²⁸ I will further discuss the display of the door handle after 2014 in Chapter 6.



Figure 141. General view of Room E in 2012. The display case contains the Damascus Documents. Source: TIEM Archive.

Section 3, which had no official section title, contained four galleries—F, G, H, and I. Room F, without a gallery title, contained metal and ceramic objects from the Great Seljuks (1037–1194) and the Ayyubid period (1171–1260). As far as I am aware, there was no section label, but a map entitled “Büyük Selçuklu Devleti” (The Great Seljuks) in Turkish can be seen on the wall from the photos dated 2012. The Ayyubid dynasty is explained as follow in the official catalogue of TIEM (2002):

“The political legacy of the Seljuk Empire, which extended over a vast area centered around Iran and Iraq, was shared out among diverse successor states founded by powerful Seljuk military leaders known as atabeks or emirs in the complex geography of western Asia. The most important of these dynastic Atabek states, all of which were short lived, was the Ayyubid, which survived until 1260.”⁶²⁹

Therefore, it is not surprising to see objects from the Great Seljuks and the Ayyubids in the same gallery (Fig. 142).

⁶²⁹ Ölçer, *Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art*, 56.



Figure 142. A view from Room F in 2012. Source: TIEM Archive.

Two wall-display cases contained 26 small objects in total from Iran, Syria, and Raqqa. One of the display cases was reserved for various ceramic objects like a stool (inv. 1548), a ewer, a vase, bowls (inv. nos. 1591 and 1585), and a fruit stand (inv. no. 1557) from the Great Seljuks and the Ayyubid periods. Although, it is not possible to see any section label within the 2012 photographs of this gallery, the above-mentioned section labels “Ayyubid Periods Art” and “Raqqa”⁶³⁰ might have been

⁶³⁰ “Raqqa was one of the oldest urban centres in the Near East.

Founded by Alexander the great, the city was formerly called Callinicum, after Nicephorium Gallienus (d. 268 A.D.) and later Leontopolis after Leo II (d. 473 A.D.). After its capture by Arabs in 639 A.D., it was re-named “Raqqa,” meaning “swamp,” a reference to the swampy ground surrounding the city to the east.

A twin city, ar-Rafiqqa was founded by the caliph al-Mansur West of the old settlement in 772, as quarters for the caliph’s Khurasanian troops. As the old city fell progressively to ruin, this quickly became the more important settlement of the two, and eventually adopted the name Raqqa. It was established as the most important Abbasid urban centre of its time when the caliph Harun al-Rashid moved his capital there in 769 A.D. Raqqa was later demolished in 1321.

The city plan was inspired by that of the round city of Baghdad, but modified here into a horse-shoe form.

It was surrounded by high, double fortifications of mud brick, punctuated at intervals by round watch towers. The most notable monuments in the city included the grand mosque and the palace in the city centre, and the square-towered Baghdad gate.

The Euphrates once flowed past the southern flank of the city, although the course of the river is now considerably changed.

Fine pottery and shreds of the Ayyubid period, the last great are of this settlement were recovered during excavations carried out at Raqqa between 1911-1914.” Transcribed from

placed in this room, since there were objects from the Ayyubids, especially ceramics produced in Raqqa.⁶³¹ In addition to the “Raqqa” section label, “Ayyubid Period Art,” also emphasizes the significance of Raqqa ceramics and explains the artistic influence of the Great Seljuks:

“[...] The city of Raqqa was the principal centre of Ayyubid ceramics, and large finds have been excavated in the area. Ayyubid ceramics, which generally feature a glossy turquoise glaze, included oil lamps, jugs, vases, stool and other artefact. Some examples in the form of animals are interesting evidence of the widespread influence of Great Seljuks art. [...]”⁶³²

The other display case exhibited metal (probably bronze) objects such as oil lamps, an incense burner (inv. no. 4250), an astrolabe (inv. no. 2970) from the Muhavvid dynasty (1130-1269), and two very similar small caskets.⁶³³ The majority of the objects in this gallery were brought from the collection of the *Çinili Köşk* (Tiled Pavillion) in 1941 to TIEM. In addition to the small objects within the display cases, a marble architectural fragment (inv. no. 2515) was displayed in the gallery.

the photograph of the “*Rakka/Raqqa*” section label, which was taken in 2012. All the spelling mistakes and typos are intentionally left untouched. Source: TIEM Archive.

⁶³¹ “The Ayyubid state was founded in 1171 when Selahaddin Ayyubi defeated the Shiite Fatimid rulers of Egypt. The military achievements of the Ayyubids led to recognition of the dynasty by the Abbasid caliph in 1175, and before long Selahaddin Ayyubi had conquered a vast area of North Africa, the Arabian peninsula, Palestine and Syria. His recapture of Jerusalem from its Christian rulers resulted in the Third Crusade, which was brought to a close in 1192 when a treaty was signed ceding the coastal plain to the Christians and giving them permission to make pilgrimages to Jerusalem.

Following the death of Selahaddin Ayyubi, the Ayyubi states was weakened by civil strife, finally succumbing to the soldier slaves known as Mamluks in 1250.

Ayyubid art produced masterpieces of metalwork, ceramics and glassware was decorated with silver inlay inscriptions and elements from Christian pictorial art, such as figures of saints.

Glassware had traditionally been made in the Syrian region since antiquity, and under the Ayyubids, enameled and gilded work of outstanding beauty was produced. The city of Raqqa was the principal centre of Ayyubid ceramics, and large finds have been excavated in the area.

Ayyubid ceramics, which generally feature a glossy turquoise glaze, included oil lamps, jugs, vases, stool and other artefact. Some examples in the form of animals are interesting evidence of the widespread influence of Great Seljuks art.” Transcribed from the photograph of the “*Eyyubi Dönemi ve Sanatı/ Ayyubid Period Art*” section label, which was taken in 2012. All the spelling mistakes and typos are intentionally left untouched. Source: TIEM Archive.

⁶³² Transcribed from the photograph of the “*Eyyubi Dönemi ve Sanatı/ Ayyubid Period Art*” section label, which was taken in 2012. All the spelling mistakes and typos are intentionally left untouched. Source: TIEM Archive.

⁶³³ For example, the metal caskets inventory numbers 1330 and 1327.

The gallery title of the next room (Room G) was “Anadolu Selçuklu Devri” (The Anatolian Seljuk Period 1071-1279). The Anatolian Seljuk period was represented almost exclusively through small ceramic objects and stucco architectural fragments. Objects such as ceramic jugs and water flasks,⁶³⁴ ceramic fragments, and architectural fragments such as stucco reliefs⁶³⁵ from Konya Palace were on display in wall-display cases of this gallery. In addition, two wooden panels, one of them a window shutter (inv. no. 248), were displayed on the white walls.



Figure 143. A view of the “Anatolian Seljuks Period Art” Gallery in 2012.
Source: TIEM Archive.

This window shutter, seen on the left side of Figure 143, was one of the earliest objects that was taken from its original place to be preserved in a museum context. It was brought from Karamanoğlu İbrahim Bey *İmaret* (built in 1432) to the Imperial Museum (today Istanbul Archaeology Museums) in 1898.⁶³⁶ Based on its style and iconography, the window shutter is dated around the twelfth or thirteenth century and was reused in this fifteenth-century *imaret* building. In the official museum catalogue, dated 2002, the window shutter was published in the Artuqid (1098–1409) section. Although the Artuqids dominated southeastern Anatolia after the fall of the Great Seljuks politically and artistically, the

⁶³⁴ One of the exhibited water flask inventory numbers is 2256.

⁶³⁵ Inventory numbers of the stucco fragments: 23 40/7, 2339, 2340/5, 2340, 2340/3.

⁶³⁶ Ölçer, *Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art*, 92. The mihrab of this structure (mentioned in Chapter 3) was also brought to the Imperial Museum’s collection in 1907 and mounted in Çinili Köşk, where it is still on display.

exact motivation behind the display of this window shutter in the Anatolian Seljuk Gallery instead of Section 2—next to other significant objects from the Artuqids, the door and the door handle of the Great Mosque of Cizre—is unknown.⁶³⁷

Alaadin Keykubat, who ruled the Anatolian Seljuks between 1220 and 1237, built a mosque in Sinop known as the Great Mosque. A door of a marble minbar from the Great Mosque in Sinop was also on display in the Great Seljuks gallery (Room F). This minbar was ordered during the renovations of the mosque by another principality in Anatolia known as *Candaroglu* (1291–1461), who ruled around modern day Sinop and Kastamonu after the Anatolian Seljuks fell.⁶³⁸ It is curious to exhibit this marble panel in The Great Seljuks Gallery, instead of the Anatolian Seljuks Gallery.

The third room (Room H) of Section 3 was reserved for the Mamluk dynasty, and the gallery title “Mamluk Period Art” was placed on the wall-display case (Fig. 144). There was also a section label with the same title,⁶³⁹ where the political and cultural history of the Mamluk

⁶³⁷ Ölçer, *Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art*, 92.

⁶³⁸ Tiem katalog, 2011, 81.

⁶³⁹ “The Mamluks were soldier slaves (as indicated by their name, which comes from the Arabic “mulk”) who served as the Ayyubid imperial guard. Having overthrown their masters in 1250 the Mamluks continued the tradition of conscripting slaves from neighbouring countries. Among them were many Turkish slaves, who rose to important posts in the army and finally took over rule of the state entirely.

With one or two exceptions, the Mamluk sultanate did not pass from father to son, but instead to those with superior political and military power.

The Mamluks played a critical role in the balance of power in the Near East during the Anatolian Beylik period (13th to early 14th century). With their powerful army the Mamluks were able to hold their own against the Crusaders and the otherwise invincible Mongols, and maintained their rule over Egypt until 1516, when they were defeated by the Ottomans under Sultan Selim I.

Mamluk art is notable for its plain lines and limited forms. Figures become a secondary motif, supplanted by inscriptions in a large sulus script, often forming a band around the object. Interlaced designs, and particularly intricate geometric patterns or interlocking polygons opening out from a centre point in a continuously changing pattern are the principal themes of Mamluk decoration. These designs can be seen at their finest on metalwork, woodwork, and the carpets which developed in Egypt in the 15th century. The use of armorial devices and emblems in Islamic art begins with the Mamluks, whose armorial devices, unlike those of European royalty and aristocracy, were not passed down in families, but were unique to the individual and indicated his position in the state hierarchy.

Glassware has a distinctive place in Mamluk art, as a continuation of the traditional glassware of Syria. During the Mamluk period outstanding mosque lamps were produced. Generally they were inscribed with verses from the Koran in blue enamel on transparent glass, and in some instances decorated with coats of arms. Green blown glass lamps bearing inscriptions and decoration in white enamel are less common.” Transcribed from the photograph of the “Mamluk Period Art/*Memlik Devri* (1250–1517)” section label,

sultanate was explained briefly. The formation of the Mamluks, with an emphasis on soldier slaves with Turkish origins “who rose to important posts in the army and finally took over rule of the state entirely,” is written in the section label.⁶⁴⁰ In addition, the state structure and the military role of the Mamluks in the region were explained. Then, the art of the Mamluks in metalwork, woodwork, textiles, and glassware with an emphasis on the “outstanding mosque lamps” were mentioned briefly.⁶⁴¹ Manuscripts (probably Qurans) and metal objects such as candlesticks, plates, a box, and a lamp were displayed in the room. In addition, a typical glass mosque lamp was placed at the center of the wall-display case. Glazed ceramic fragments with “armorial devices”⁶⁴² (coats of arms) were also displayed in this gallery. The fragments, dated to the fourteenth century, were gifted from the Museum of Arab Arts in Cairo (renamed the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo in 1951) on 18 January 1945.⁶⁴³ The section label in the gallery briefly explains the function of the “armorial device:”

“The use of armorial devices and emblems in Islamic art begins with the Mamluks, whose armorial devices, unlike those of European royalty and aristocracy, were not passed down in families, but were unique to the individual and indicated his position in the state hierarchy.”⁶⁴⁴

which was taken in 2012. All the spelling mistakes and typos are intentionally left untouched. Source: TIEM Archive.

⁶⁴⁰ Transcribed from the photograph of “Mamluk Period Art/*Memlik Devri* (1250-1517)” section label, which was taken in 2012. All the spelling mistakes and typos left untouched intentionally. Source: TIEM Archive.

⁶⁴¹ Ibid.

⁶⁴² Ölçer, *Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art*, 194. The inventory numbers of the fragments are 2781, 2784, 2790, 2794, 2796, 2807, 2808)

⁶⁴³ Ölçer, *Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art*, 194.

⁶⁴⁴ Transcribed from the photograph of “Mamluk Period Art/*Memlik Devri* (1250-1517)” section label, which was taken in 2012. All the spelling mistakes and typos left untouched intentionally. Source: TIEM Archive.



Figure 144. General view of the “Mamluk Period Art” Gallery in 2012.
Source: TIEM Archive.



Figure 145. General view of the “Timurid Period Art” Gallery in 2012.
Source: TIEM Archive.

The next gallery (Room I) was dedicated to the Timurids (1395–1506) (Fig. 144). The title of the gallery, like the gallery of the Mamluks, was written on the wall-display case. The section label of the gallery provides information on the political and artistic history of the Timurids.⁶⁴⁵ The art of the Timurids was mainly represented via

⁶⁴⁵ “Timur, a ruler of mixed Turkic and Mongolian stock, emerged on the stage of history with a series of conquests which disrupted life throughout western Asia between 1395 and 1405. He appointed generals from his own family to govern the regions which he conquered, forging a vast empire stretching from Iran to Transoxania Anatolia was

manuscripts, together with their exquisite bookbinding examples and two brass jugs (inv. nos. 289 and 2963) in the gallery. The reason behind this choice can be found in the section label:

incorporated into this empire after the Ottoman armies led by Sultan Bayezid the Thunderbolt were defeated in their attempt to stem his advance at the Battle of Ankara in 1402.

Timur's son Shah Ruh who succeeded to the throne on his death, moved the capital from Samarkand to Herat (in Afghanistan), and annexed India to the empire.

Following the death of Shah Ruh in 1447, the Timurids were weakened both by civil strife between rival claimants to the throne, and war with the Akkoyunlu and Karakoyunlu dynasties, both of Turkmen origin. Not until 1469 did the Akkoyunlus emerge as the clear victors, seizing the territories of both the Karakoyunlus and Timurids. All that remained of the Timurid empire was Herat and the eastern region of Khorasan, where the Timurids enjoyed a brief respite under Sultan Huseyin Baykara Herat (1469–1506).

During this period all the arts enjoyed the patronage of the Timurid rulers, who attached great value to scholarship and culture. Timur, his son Shah Ruh, and grandson Baysungur were all patrons of the arts, while another of his grandsons, Ulug Bey, was a notable scholar and astronomer.

The surviving architecture of the Timurid period is remarkable for its monumental scale and the exceptional intricacy and rich colours of its surface decoration. In comparison to the arts of the book, which were held in highest esteem during the Timurid period, few examples of the minor arts have survived. These are mainly ceramics, metalwork, carved jade ornaments and some jewellery.

The arts of the book—calligraphy, -binding and miniature—which had developed under the Ilkhanids and the Mongol Jalayrid sultans (14th century) attained their maturity under the Timurids. All the noted artists and their apprentices who had been employed by the Ilkhanids and Jalayrids were taken to Samarkand. Meanwhile, many artists from Iran, Iraq and Syria fled from the upheavals which followed the Mongol invasions and took refuge in China. Here they were influenced by the history, scholarship, painting, binding and lacquer work of this ancient culture.

Both the artists who had made their way to China and those who were taken by the Timurids to work at the court of the sultans Shah Ruh, Iskender Sultan, Baysungur and Huseyin Baykara produced illuminated divans (anthologies) of works by major Iranian poets and illustrated them with miniatures.

The arts of the book attained their culmination in Herat during the reign of Sultan Huseyin Baykara, last of the Timurid sultans.

The famous poet Ali Sir-Nevai, the decorator Nakkas Behzad and the miniaturist Aka Mirak were those who above all set their stamp to the period. The most notable calligraphers were Sultan Ali Meshedi and Semseddin Baysungur.

Unlike the Ilkhanid and Mamluk Korans, those of the Timurids were inscribed in the nesih and sulus scripts. Illumination made use of bright greens, oranges and pinks, and the designs were based on panels, cartouches and medallions whose centres were filled with gilded patterns of tendrils and flowers. Helical tendrils featured in almost every piece of decoration.

The art of binding also produced outstanding masterpieces during this period. As well as kaat'1 decoration, in which diverse figures and patterns were cut out of card, lacquering was widely used. Although the latter was of Chinese origin, Muslim artists created a synthesis of their own featuring designs of peonies, leaves, tendrils, rumi motifs and cloud bands." Transcribed from the photograph of the "*Timurlu Dönemi ve Sanatı* (1395-1506)/ Timurid Period Art (1395-1506)" section label, which was taken in 2012. All the spelling mistakes and typos are intentionally left untouched. Source: TIEM Archive.

"[...] During this period all the arts enjoyed the patronage of the Timurid rulers, who attached great value to scholarship and culture. [...] In comparison to the arts of the book, which were held in highest esteem during the Timurid period, few examples of the minor arts have survived. These are mainly ceramics, metalwork, carved jade ornaments and some jewellery. [...] The arts of the book-calligraphy, -binding and miniature-which had developed under the Ilkhanids and the Mongol Jalayrid sultans (14th century) attained their maturity under the Timurids. [...]"

Section 4 included four rooms like Section 3. The first three galleries (Rooms J, K, and L) contained objects from the Ottoman period, and the last gallery (Room M) was reserved for the Safavids and the Qajars. The gallery entitled "The Beylik Ottoman Transition Period" mainly contained early İznik ceramic bowls known as "Miletus ware," dated to the fifteenth century. In addition, a manuscript (probably a Quran copy) and an inlaid ivory wooden Quran case (inv. no. 33) were displayed next to the ceramics in the wall-display case. Like the majority of the other small rooms, a prayer rug was hanging on the wall. Another wooden Quran case was on exhibit separately in a standing display case, probably because of its large size. This gallery contained a section label entitled "Art of the Ottoman Period" and a map of the Ottoman Empire between 1299-1683. The label narrates the political and artistic/cultural history of the Ottomans chronologically.⁶⁴⁶ The label emphasizes the

⁶⁴⁶ "The Mongol invasion and fall of the Seljuk state left the Turkish lords who had been subject to the Seljuk sultans ruling over a dozen or more independent beyliks or principalities in Anatolia. The Ottomans won the resulting struggle for supremacy, becoming the dominant power and heir to the Seljuk legacy.

The Ottoman Empire expanded steadily, the conquest of Istanbul (1453) marking its emergence as a world power straddling three continents. The Empire reached its peak of cultural achievement and political power during the 16th century under Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent (1520-1566). Thereafter, with intermittent periods of renewed energy, the empire declined, until it was finally extinguished in the early 20th century.

Encompassing peoples of diverse ethnic origin, language, religion and culture, the Ottoman state was a kaleidoscope whose art attained a spectacular synthesis. Profound influences from Seljuk and Beylik periods remained evident in concepts of colour and composition during the early period of Ottoman art.

However, with the dawning of the 16th century, and the Empire's emergence as a centralist world power, we find a court style becoming increasingly dominant.

All the great artists of the period worked under court patronage. Including engravers, illuminators, calligraphers and painters producing outstanding works in every field of art. Whether in fabrics, tiles, carpets or books, decorative art turned increasingly away from geometric designs in favour of floral motifs. Meanwhile the annexation of Egypt, Baghdad, Western Iran and other longstanding cultural centres into Ottoman territory, brought about profound changes in aesthetic tastes and chromatic concepts. The arts of the book, and notably compositions inspired by Iranian bookbinding, remained at the fore

diversity within the Ottoman Empire in terms of ethnicity, language, religion, and culture. In addition, the shift of the Ottoman court's artistic style was explained through the influences of the Seljuks, Iranians, and western artistic styles. However, it seemed like the gallery didn't represent diversity through the displayed objects.

The next gallery (Room K) was the above-mentioned "The Classical Ottoman Period" display (Fig. 145). The wall-display case of the gallery exhibited various examples of sixteenth-century İznik ceramics and tiles, gold-gilded (*tombak*) metalworks such as incense burners, a rose-water sprinkler, a candlestick, and a jug (or a pitcher). Fragments of carpets and a mother-of-pearl inlaid wooden Quran case were displayed in the same way as "The Beylik Ottoman Transition Period" gallery.

throughout the 16th and 17th centuries, which correspond to the classic period of Ottoman art. Colours were used with increasing flamboyancy, while gold and silver thread were widely used in silks velvets and other fabrics. The compositions of fabrics and carpets became increasingly monumental in style.

The coordinated compositions of tiling, woodcarving and fabrics created for the great sacral buildings of Ottoman classical architecture clearly illustrate the integral values of this period of art.

In the 18th century as the Ottoman Empire went into decline, art too diminished in stature. However, sporadic revivals of the earlier creativity did occur, such as that during the so-called Tulip Era in the early 18th century, when a long period of peace and prosperity allowed art to flourish once more.

As western European influence grew in the 19th century, Ottoman art interpreted the floral compositions of which it was so fond into a delayed baroque and rococo context, typified by large roses and bouquets.

The early Ottoman items in the exhibition, including tiles, metalwork, woodcarving, manuscripts and carpets feature the uncluttered and largely geometric compositions of Seljuk and Beylik art.

Those of the classical period dating from the 16th and 17th centuries bring us dazzling displays of intricate mother-of-pearl and tortoiseshell inlay, glazed tiles and ceramics in superb patterns and colours, a rich diversity of carpets and fabrics, manuscripts and a monumental style of calligraphy, and metalwork in *tombak* (coppergilt) and studded with gems.

The late period marked by western influence from the turn of the 18th century, is represented by glassware, ceramics, calligraphy and carpets in this section." Transcribed from the photograph of the "Art of the Ottoman Period / *Osmanlı Devrinde Sanat*" section label, which was taken in 2012. All the spelling mistakes and typos are intentionally left untouched. Source: TIEM Archive.



Figure 146. A view of the “The Classical Ottoman Period” Gallery in 2012.
Source: TIEM Archive.

The third room of Section 4 (Room L) had one big wall-display case without a section or display case title. There was no section label, either. The earliest visual of this room that I was able to find is dated 1996. A documentary on TIEM dated 1996, produced by the metropolitan municipality in collaboration with the museum, shows this gallery (Fig. 147). The wall-display case was filled with various objects from the Ottoman period such as metal hanging lamps, gold-gilded stand finials (*tombak alem*), jeweled gold belts, jeweled hanging ornaments (made from various materials like gold, silver, pottery, and ostrich egg), a key and a lock of the Kaaba with their decorated cases, a jeweled glass box (inv. no 49/A), and a piece of a *kiswa* (cover) of the Kaaba (Figs. 147-149). This display case seems arranged without a particular theme, except that objects were dated to the seventeenth century and later. When the camera focuses on the objects related to the Kaaba, the voice-over of the documentary states that “These objects belonged to the Ottoman period” and continues with a rhetorical question: “who knows which doors were opened by this key in the past.”⁶⁴⁷ The jeweled glass box—used to contain the hair from the beard of the Prophet—was described by the voice-over as “it is a box from the Ottoman period” without mentioning its real purpose, probably because its label simply said “box.”

⁶⁴⁷ The voice-over sentence in Turkish as follows: “Kim bilir hangi kapıları açıyordu geçmişte bu anahtar?” from the documentary on TIEM filmed in 1996, produced by the Metropolitan Municipality of Istanbul in collaboration with the museum.



Figure 147. A view of Room L in 1996. Source: TIEM Documentary, 1996.



Figure 148. Key of the Kaaba, early 18th century, inv. no. 311. Source: Seracettin Şahin, Sevgi Kutluay, and Miyase Çelen (eds.) *100 Yıl Önce ve 100 Yıl Sonra: Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi* (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2014), 283.



Figure 149. Box (*Lihye-i Saadet Kutusu*), 18th century, inv. no. 49A. Source: Seracettin Şahin, Sevgi Kutluay, and Miyase Çelen (eds.) *100 Yıl Önce ve 100 Yıl Sonra: Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi* (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2014), 250.



Figure 150. Lock of the Kaaba, early 18th century, inv. no. 312. Source: Seracettin Şahin, Sevgi Kutluay, and Miyase Çelen (eds.) *100 Yıl Önce ve 100 Yıl Sonra: Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi* (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2014), 284.

This wall-display case continued to change through time based on the needs of temporary exhibitions. For example, the temporary exhibition entitled “One Man One Messenger: The Sacred Relics of the Prophet Muhammad” was curated by the museum director Seracettin Şahin and the other museum specialist of TIEM in 2007. The museum

collected almost 120 objects from various museums and mosques in Türkiye to create the first major exhibition with a sacred relics theme.⁶⁴⁸ Both visual and non-visual design elements, such as the black walls, lower-level lighting, and the Salawat⁶⁴⁹ sound, were applied for the first time in this exhibition to create a dramatic ambiance. Therefore, this temporary exhibition could be regarded as the first attempt to display sacred relics from a religious perspective. After this exhibition, the above-mentioned permanent wall-display case in the Ottoman Gallery experienced major changes, and it was reorganized by adding new objects such as Qur'ans, prayer books (some of them with miniatures of the Kaaba), and calligraphic panels, along with two pairs of silver candlesticks (probably dating to the nineteenth century). One of the calligraphic panels in the form of a tryptic belonged to a genre entitled *hilye-i şerif*, which describes the physical appearance and personality of the Prophet Muhammad.⁶⁵⁰ The calligraphic form of this genre was created in the seventeenth century by a well-known calligrapher Hafız Osman. This highly decorated tryptic was painted in the *Edirnekari* technique and dates to the eighteenth century. The wings of the tryptic were closed therefore it was not possible to see the calligraphic composition of the *hilye-i şerif*. The aesthetic features of this calligraphic panel, through its elaborately painted surface, were focused on this display. Some of the metal hanging lamps and jeweled hanging ornaments from the previous display were still visible in the display case. The key, lock, and *kiswa* of the Kaaba have remained in the same place within the display case, too. The only difference in the display of this trio was that the *kiswa* was framed. Even though the curators and the director of the museum do not remember the exact time of the reinstallation of this wall-display case, they thought it was arranged between 2007 and 2009.⁶⁵¹

⁶⁴⁸ "Hz. Muhammed'le İlgili Gözlerden Uzak Bekleyenler 'Bir Kul, Bir Resûl' Sergisiyle Gün Yüzüne Çıkıyor," exhibition bulletin published in 2007.

⁶⁴⁹ Salawat, an Islamic idiom referring to saluting the Prophet Muhammad's spiritual personality, is a major part of the ritual of the sacred relics visitation. Muslims recite it during the visit to the sacred relics, hoping to earn a good deed in return. Mehmet Suat Mertoğlu, "Salâtü Selâm," *TDVİA* (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2009), vol. 36: 23.

⁶⁵⁰ It is believed that *hilye-i şerif* panels protect from misfortune. Thus, this type of calligraphic panels would hang on the walls of secular places such as homes and sacred buildings like mosques and mausoleums.

⁶⁵¹ Interview with the museum director Seracettin Şahin in 2017.



Figure 151. A view of Room L before 2010. Source: *Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi*, museum catalogue (Istanbul: Bilkent Kültür Girişimi Yayınları, 2011), 36.

In 2010, this permanent Ottoman Gallery wall-display case was rearranged one more time as a part of another temporary exhibition entitled “The Quran at its 1400th Year.”⁶⁵² The third arrangement of this gallery’s wall-display case was particular because the sacred relics such as the belongings of the Prophet Muhammed—his footprint and the hair from his beard—were displayed in a permanent gallery for the first time in the history of the Ibrahim Pasha Palace (Fig. 151). In addition to the previous ones, another calligraphic panel was added to the new display. This calligraphic panel (inv. no. 2780) bears the name of God and the Prophet Muhammad and was written by Sultan Abdülmecid (r. 1839–1861) and then gifted to the museum during its opening in 1914 by Sultan Mehmed V (r. 1909–1918). The key, lock, and cover (*kiswa*) of the Kaaba and the jeweled glass box (to store sacred relics), the prayer books, and the two pairs of silver candlesticks were still on display in this gallery. A seventeenth-century Ottoman period Quran with a *kiswa* attached to its binding was added to the wall-display case (Fig. 152). The metal hanging

⁶⁵² 1400. Yılında Kur’an-ı Kerim, ed. Müjde Unustası, exhibiton catalogue (Istanbul: Antik A.Ş., 2010).

lamps and the jeweled hanging ornaments were removed from the wall-display case. With the last reorganization, the display of this gallery was changed completely compared to its initial arrangement. The final version of the display case became a prototype for the Sacred Relics Gallery (*Mukaddes Emanetler Galerisi*), which was created in 2014 after the complete renovation and reinstallation of the museum.⁶⁵³

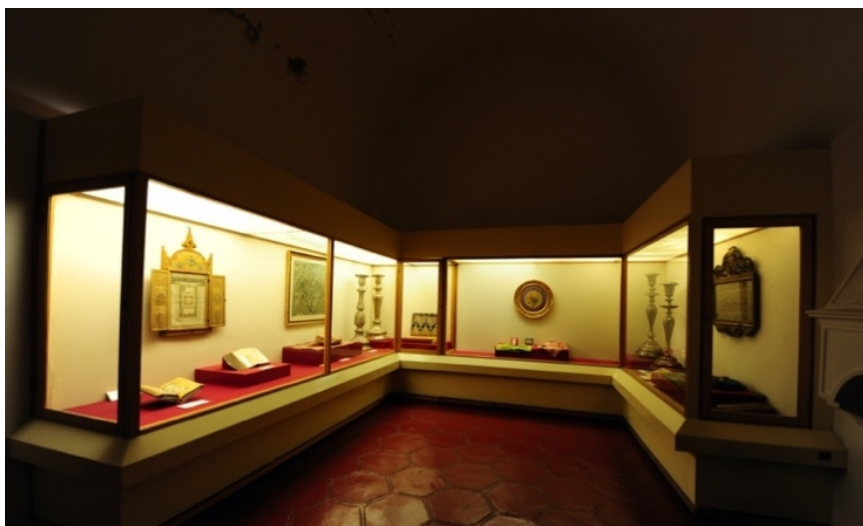


Figure 152. A view of Room L in 2012. Source: TIEM Archive.

Objects belonging to the Safavid (1506–1722), and Qajar (1722–1924) periods were displayed in a single small wall-display case in the fourth gallery of this section (Room M). There were a few objects such as manuscripts, a lacquer pen case, and two mirrors with portraits of the Qajar (1722–1924) shahs in the gallery (Fig. 153). In addition, two carpets and a kilim, most probably not Iranian, hung on the walls. Next to the wall-display case, two section labels—where the political and cultural

⁶⁵³ I will discuss the physical and conceptual features of the Sacred Relics Gallery in detail in Chapter 6.

history of the Safavids⁶⁵⁴ and the Qajars⁶⁵⁵ was introduced briefly—were placed.

⁶⁵⁴ “The first indigenous dynasty to come to power in Iran was the Safavids, who defeated the Akkoyunlu Turkmens and took Tabriz in 1506. They went on to capture the regions of Khorasan, Herat and Qazvin, consolidating their rule over all of Iran. The most notable of the Safavid sultans were Shah Ismail (1500-1524), Shah Tahmasp (1524-1576) and Shah Abbas (1587-1629). Following the war against the Ottoman Sultan Yavuz Selim during the reign of Shah Ismail, the Safavid capital was moved to Qazvin, where it remained until that city was taken by the Afghans in 1722.

Shiite doctrine was the principal vehicle of unification among the various regions of Iran. As the Safavids consolidated their military power, they embarked on long and hard-fought wars with the Ottomans—representing Sunni Islam—to the west, and with the Uzbeks to the east. The constant conflict between the Ottomans and the European powers occasionally prompted European nations to ally with the Safavids against their common enemy and these relations with Europe are reflected in Iranian art of the late Safavid period.

Safavid architecture is represented at its finest in the mosques, medreses and palaces of Isfahan, with their superb proportions and striking ceramic decoration.

The period saw new forms in ceramicware, blue and white designs reminiscent of Chinese porcelains, and lustre tiles and plates.

Calligraphy and book decoration continued to be the most valued branch of art under the Safavids, the traditions of the pre-Safavid states in Herat, Khorasan and Qazvin continuing to be in evidence. The exaggerated school of miniature inherited from the Akkoyunlu Turkmens, with its dragons, other creatures, and similar traces of Shamanist influence, was gradually incorporated into the refined style of Herat.

The Korans of this period are written in the sulus, muhakkak and nesih scripts on alternate pages. The illumination consists of gilding and brightly coloured floral arabesque designs. Decorative techniques used on the bindings include kaat’i (paper-cut work), lacquer, and embossed tendrils and stylized flowers on a background of gold leaf.

The masterpieces of the Safavid period were the Shahnames or epic histories illustrated with miniatures.

Like the arts of the book, metalwork, ceramics, textiles and carpets evolved out of earlier Timurid and Turkmen traditions.

The Safavid silk carpets with designs of gardens and vases woven in the 16th and 17th centuries are the finest of all Iranian carpets. Kashan, Tabriz, and Isfahan became major carpet weaving centres, and the palace weaving shops made extremely fine carpets with strictly symmetrical designs of medallions, vases and animals. The “Polonaise” carpets woven with gold and silver thread in the weaving shops established during the reign of Shah Abbas are a rare and fascinating type of Iranian carpet.

Safavid textiles display the same fine technique and colourful compositions as the other arts. While figurative designs were favoured during the 16th century, the 17th century saw the emergence of naturalistic floral compositions with butterflies and birds. By the end of the 17th century, the flowers had become much smaller, and gold and silver threads were no longer used for the background.” Transcribed from the photograph of the “Safavid Period Art (1506-1722)/ *Safavi Dönemi ve Sanatı* (1506-1722)” section label, which was taken in 2012. All the spelling mistakes and typos are intentionally left untouched. Source: TIEM Archive.

⁶⁵⁵ “The Safavid period drew to a close with the capture of the capital Qazwin by the Afghans in 1722, and the Zand dynasty rose to power in Iran. The changes which arose in the arts of the book and other crafts during this period, continued under the succeeding Qajar dynasty.

Most of the art works of this period consist of artefacts made for daily use.



Figure 153. A view of the Safavids and the Qajars Gallery (Room M) in 2012.
Source: TIEM Archive.

Section 5 consisted of three galleries where various objects from the late Ottoman period were displayed. Room N contained calligraphic panels, *muraqqas* (*murakka*),⁶⁵⁶ cases to hold written documents (*kubur*), pen cases, writing sets—including a burnishing tool (*mühre*), knife (*kalemtraş*), pen-cutting slab (*makta*), and inkwell (*divit*)—and other objects related to calligraphy. A writing set (inv. no. 3374) which was gifted to the museum during its opening by Sultan Mehmed V, was placed in one of the display cases, too. In addition, three firmans (imperial edicts/orders) and a prayer rug were hung on the walls of the gallery. These three firmans were probably installed during the temporary exhibition entitled “Imperial Ottoman Firmans/Osmanlı Padişah Fermanları Sergisi” in 1986 and stayed in the gallery until 2012 (Fig. 153). The Ottoman firmans were exhibited with a focus on their aesthetic features and historical importance as written sources in this temporary exhibition.

The influence of European painting and portraiture on the Iranian art of this period is evident in the paintings of members of the royal dynasty and military leaders, the lacquered pencil boxes, and mirror backs.” Transcribed from the photograph of the “Qajar Period and Art (1722-1924)/ *Kaçar Dönemi ve Sanatı 1722-1924*” section label, which was taken in 2012. All the spelling mistakes and typos are intentionally left untouched. Source: TIEM Archive.

⁶⁵⁶A *muraqqqa*, is an album formed of various Islamic miniature paintings and/or specimens of Islamic calligraphy (*hat*), usually collected from various sources.



Figure 154. A view of Room N in 2012. 3 firmans can be seen on each side of the fireplace. Source: TIEM Archive.



Figure 155. A view of Room N in 2012. The red rectangle shows the section label. Source: TIEM Archive.

Although the gallery solely contained objects from the Ottoman period, a section label entitled “Islamic Calligraphy in Anatolia” can be seen from the photograph taken in 2012 (Fig. 154). It reads:

“Arabic script, written with reed pen and ink made of soot, became a masterpiece in the hands of Turkish artists who gave it a new life, developing the art of calligraphy according to their own perceptions. Arabic script is composed of twenty-two letters, the vowels being indicated with diacritical marks. It is written from right to left, holding the reed pen so that it forms a forty-five degree angle with the paper.

The earliest Qurans were written in the Hijaz during the tenth century in Makili script. A new script was developed towards the end of the seventh century, which was a combination of Makili and another script used in Kufa. This new form, called Kufic, was in use until the end of the tenth century for writing Qurans, official documents and inscriptions.

Inspired by Kufic, Ibn-i Muqla (d. 940) invented the Naskhi and Thuluth scripts in the tenth century, Ibn-i Bavvap (d. 1032) invented the Reyhani and Muhaqqaq scripts in the eleventh century and Ahmed bin Muhammed İbn-i Fazl (d.1124) introduced the Tavqii and Rik'a scripts in the twelfth century.

In Baghdad the thirteenth century marked a revolution in the art of calligraphy. The scribe of the Abbasid Caliph Msua'sim, a Turk named Yaqut, laid a foundations for the script styles –“Aqlam-i Sitte”– further developed by the Ottomans during the sixteenth century. “Aqlam-i Sitte” consisted of six different forms: Thuluth, Nashi, Muhaqqaq, Reyhani, Tavqii and Rik'a.

The Turks arrived in Anatolia together with Seljuks, settled in the region of Söğüt and established the Ottoman Principality. They expanded their territories and finally conquered Istanbul in 1453.

Calligraphers of the period of Mehmed the Conqueror included Ali bin Yahya Sof and Abdullah Amasi. Sheyh Hamdullah (d.1520) who developed a new school in calligraphy, is referred to as the father of calligraphy and wrote all six major scripts with great skill. There is a saying which illustrates this fact. 'The Quran was revealed in the Hijaz, recited in Cairo, and copied in Istanbul.'

A new style emerged during the sixteenth century ahmed Karahisari (d.1526) excelled particularly in Thuluth and Naskhi, which he had learned from his teacher Esadullah-i Kirmani. His works is notable for its very fine composition.

Hafız Osman, known also under the name of Sheyh-i Sani, was a master in calligraphy in the seventeenth century. Having developed the script styles of the school of Sheyh Hamdullah, he has inspired several calligraphers of later periods.

Mustafa Rakim (1757–1826), Yesarizade Mustafa İzzet (d. 1849), Mahmud Celaledin (d. 1829), Kazasker Mustafa İzzet (d. 1876), and many other talented artists developed the art of calligraphy to perfection along the lines laid down by Mustafa Rakim, Hafız Osman, Sheyh Hamdullah, and Yaqut Mustasim.

Among the masters of calligraphy of the twentieth century are Necmeddin Okyay (1883–1976), Tuğrakeş İsmail Hakkı (1872–1946), Halim Ozyazici (1898–1964), and Hamid Aytaç (1891–1982) who continued the classical forms whereas Emin Barın (1913–) developed a new, contemporary style.”⁶⁵⁷

⁶⁵⁷ Transcribed from the photograph of the “Anadolu’da İslâm Yazı Sanatı/Islamic Calligraphy in Anatolia” section label, which was taken in 2012. All the spelling mistakes and typos left are intentionally untouched. Source: TIEM Archive.

The section label narrates the development of Arabic calligraphy styles from the seventh century to the twentieth century, with a focus on Turkish calligraphers of the Ottoman period. The quotation of the saying about how the Quran was best scribed/written in Istanbul is a well-accepted one. It can still be seen in both temporary and permanent calligraphy exhibitions in Türkiye. For example, this saying is written on the gallery wall where the calligraphic panels are exhibited within the Museum of Turkish-Islamic Arts in İzmit, which was inaugurated in July 2020 (Fig. 156).

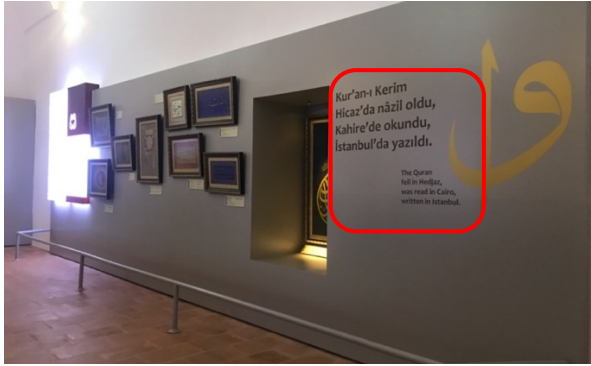


Figure 156. A view of one of the galleries with calligraphic panels on display in the Museum of Turkish-Islamic Arts, İzmit, in 2020. The red rectangle indicates the quotation. It reads: “The Quran dell in Hedjaz, was read in Cairo, written in Istanbul.” Source: Photo was taken by the author, 2020.

Calligraphers of the twentieth century were also mentioned in the section label, although none of these calligraphers’ works are displayed in the gallery or even in the museum (as far as I am aware). Although the exact date of this section label is unknown, it is very likely that it was written before 1987 and not updated until 2012, because Emin Barın passed away in 1987, though according to the label, he was still alive.



Figure 157. A view of the “The Late Ottoman Period” Gallery (Room O) in 2012. Source: TIEM Archive.

The next gallery (Room O), “The Late Ottoman Period,” was reserved for the various objects from the late Ottoman period, as its name indicates. Calligraphic panels, several boxes made of silver,⁶⁵⁸ enamel, and mother-of-pearl, writing drawers (*yazı çekmecesı*), *sarraf çekmecesı* (cash drawers), a *qiblenuma* (a device showing the direction of Mecca, inv. no. 157A/B) were displayed in this gallery without a theme (Fig.157). A framed textile with an embroidered Ottoman coat of arms and another firman were hanging on the walls. In addition, like the majority of the other small rooms, a fragment of a carpet was hung on the wall.



Figure 158. A view of Room P in 2012. Source: TIEM Archive.

⁶⁵⁸ One of the silver boxes inventory number is 48.

The last gallery (Room P) of Section 5 again solely contained objects from the late Ottoman period, mainly from the nineteenth century, without any section title or label (Fig.158). Objects such as silver incense burners, rosewater sprinklers, a candlestick, porcelain cups called “*eser-i İstanbul*” (because of the production location), Kütahya ceramics such as water flasks, hanging ornaments, and a barometer were exhibited together in the display case altogether. As expected, three carpet fragments were on the walls of the gallery. In addition, a map of the Ottoman Empire showing its borders and some of its regions in 1901, such as Thessaloniki, Manastir, İstanbul, Bursa, Edirne, Damascus, Baghdad, and Sanaa, was placed on the gallery wall. With this gallery, the exhibition of the small rooms ended.

5.d.b. Changes Through Time in the Display of the Turkish and Islamic Art Collection

Naturally, the display of the L-shaped corridor of TIEM changed over time between 1983 and 2012. The sitting area, reached through a few steps, in front of the (possible) “*Chambre d'exposition de projection*” and “*Chambre des assistante*” was walled up at some point. The five stone inscriptions dating to the Umayyads and Abbasids were moved from their initial location—opposite the entrance door—to in front of this new wall, which can be seen in Figure 159.

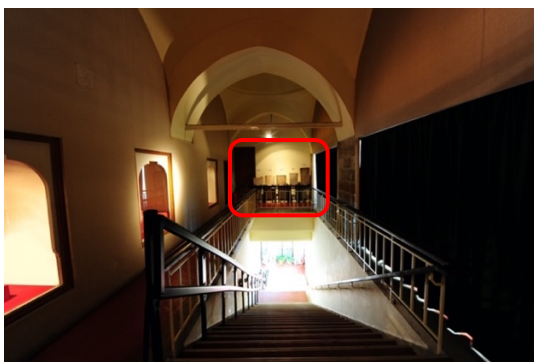


Figure 159. A general view of TIEM in 2012. The red rectangle shows the stone inscriptions. Source: TIEM Archive.

These stone inscriptions were replaced with introductory labels both in Turkish and English (Fig. 160).⁶⁵⁹ A label that shows a miniature painting of the İbrahim Paşa Palace from *Surname-i Humayun* (folio 18b, 1582) was placed next to the introductory label. This introductory label must have been prepared after 1985, because the awards that TIEM won in 1984 and 1985 were mentioned in the label, which is not a piece of standard information for museum introductory labels. As expected, the label provides information on the history of TIEM, where the museum was described as “[...] the first in Turkey to bring together Turkish and

⁶⁵⁹ “The museum was the first in Turkey to bring together Turkish and Islamic artwork. Preparations for the founding of the museum commenced in the late 19th century and were completed in 1913. Known as the ‘Museum of Islamic Foundations’, the museum was opened to the public in 1914, housed in the imaret of the masterpieces by the 16th century architect Sinan. Later on the museum was renamed the ‘Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts.’

The museum moved from the Süleymaniye İmaret to İbrahim Paşa Palace in 1983. The palace is one of the principal surviving examples of 16th century Ottoman secular architecture, built on the edge of the Roman Hippodrome. The exact date of construction and the original function of the building are unknown, but in 1520 the palace was presented by Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent to İbrahim Paşa, who was to serve as his grand vizier for 13 years.

Historians record that İbrahim Paşa Palace was even larger and more magnificent than Topkapı Palace, and the scene of many weddings and other celebrations. Following the murder of İbrahim Paşa in 1536, the palace kept his name. After being used as a residence by succeeding grand viziers, the building was variously. Used as a barracks, a residence for foreign ambassadors, the Land Registry, quarters for the palace mehter band, a clothing manufactory and prison.

Built around four large courtyards, the palace is unusual in being constructed of stone than timber like most secular Ottoman buildings. After the restoration carried out between 1966 and 1983, the palace became the new home of the museum. The section around the courtyard which houses the museum today consist of the great ceremonial hall and the surrounding structure as depicted in Ottoman miniature as well as engravings and paintings by western artist.

One of the foremost museums of its kind in the worlds, the museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts contains a collection of over forty thousand items representing almost every period and genre [genre] of Islamic art.

Comprising the most outstanding carpet collection of antique carpets in the world, the carpet section has always been of particular interest and the museum’s main claim of fame. However, the museum also contains large collections of manuscripts and miniatures dating from the 7th to the 20th century, and Seljuk, Mamluk, Timurid, Persian and Ottoman period metalwork, glassware, ceramics, woodwork and stone carving.

The newest part the museum is the ethnographic section, where carpet and kilim looms, textile weaving, wool dyeing techniques and other features of folk life and art are displayed in their original settings.

In 1984, the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts was awarded the Special Commendation in the Museum of the Year Competition organized by the council of Europe, and in 1985 received a second award for activities aimed at introducing children to their cultural heritage from the Council of Europe and Unesco.” Transcribed from the photograph of “Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts” section label, which was taken in 2012. All the spelling mistakes and typos left untouched intentionally. Source: TIEM Archive.

Islamic artwork.”⁶⁶⁰ The architectural and social history of the Ibrahim Pasha Palace was mentioned in detail. The collection of the museum was introduced to visitors as follows:

“Comprising the most outstanding carpet collection of antique carpets in the world, the carpet section has always been of particular interest and the museum’s main claim of fame. However, the museum also contains large collections of manuscripts and miniatures dating from the 7th to the 20th century, and Seljuk, Mamluk, Timurid, Persian and Ottoman period metalwork, glassware, ceramics, woodwork and stone carving.

The newest part the museum is the ethnographic section, where carpet and kilim looms, textile weaving, wool dyeing techniques and other features of folk life and art are displayed in their original settings.”⁶⁶¹



Figure 160. A view of the entrance in 2012. The introductory labels are seen on the right. Source: TIEM Archive.

Some time later, the standing display cases, sitting areas, and plants were removed from the corridors. As stated above, the temporary exhibitions caused permanent changes within the museum display. A

⁶⁶⁰ Transcribed from the photograph of the “Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts” section label, which was taken in 2012. All the spelling mistakes and typos are intentionally left untouched. Source: TIEM Archive.

⁶⁶¹ Transcribed from the photograph of “Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts” section label, which was taken in 2012. All the spelling mistakes and typos left untouched intentionally. Source: TIEM Archive.

part of the corridor was rearranged during the “Imperial Ottoman Firmans” exhibition in 1986. The white walls were painted dark blue for the exhibition, which can be seen in Figure 161. At the end of the corridor, a calligraphic panel dated to the nineteenth century (inv. no. 2737), a *tugra*⁶⁶² of Sultan Osman III, was placed, and it stayed in the same location until 2012 (Figs. 162-163). This wall color and some of the exhibited objects from this exhibition stayed in place at least until 1994; however, instead of firmans, carpets were started to be displayed, as can be seen in Figure 162.



Figure 161. A view of the corridor in 1993. Source: Tülay Ergil, *Museums of İstanbul/ İstanbul müzeleri* (İstanbul: İstanbul Eğitim ve Kültür Vakfı, 1993), 77.

⁶⁶² *Tugra* (*tuğra* in Turkish) is a calligraphic monogram of a sultan that was used in the official documents, correspondances, and even on buildings. Each Ottoman sultan has his own *tugra* design.

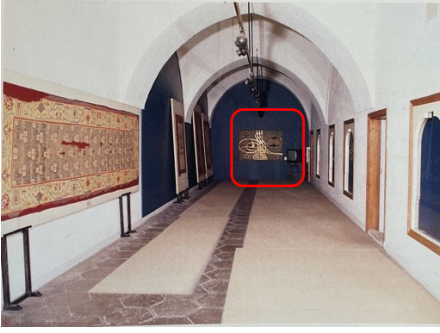


Figure 162. A view of the corridor in 1994. The tugra can be seen at the end of the corridor. Source: *Bir Müzenin Gelişimine Bakış/A Look at the Development of a Museum: 1913-1983 Süleymaniye İmaretî, 1983-1993 İbrahim Paşa Sarayı* (Istanbul: TIEM, 1994?), unpaginated.



Figure 163. Tugra of Sultan Osman III, 19th century, inv. no. 2737. Source: *Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi, museum catalogue* (Istanbul: Bilkent Kültür Girişimi Yayınları, 2011), 49.

The number of displayed objects increased, and the corridor became more and more crowded over time. The stone works from various dynasties had already been exhibited in the corridors without a theme in roughly chronological order. More carpets were added both to the corridor and ceremonial halls during the above-mentioned “Turkish Carpets from the 13th to 18th centuries” exhibition. To display more examples of carpets, zig-zag display panels were placed in the corridors during this carpet exhibition, which took place in 1996 (Fig. 164).



Figure 164. A view of the corridor with zig-zag panels in 2012. Source: TIEM Archive.

This temporary display arrangement stayed like this until 2012. With the placement of these panels, the museum corridors became darker, because the panels were blocking the windows. This approach was necessary to protect the carpets from exposure to natural light. On the other hand, the panels blocked the original features of the building. When more works were added to the display, the Ibrahim Pasha Palace structure started to be less visible over time. This was a situation that the curators tried to avoid in the first place.

The part of the corridor where first the firmans and then carpets were exhibited changed again after some time (Fig. 165). Nine calligraphic panels, written by important calligraphers such as Yesarizade Mustafa İzzet Efendi and Sami Efendi from the late Ottoman period were exhibited on the white walls without a consistent theme. For example, four *hilye-i şerif*—at least two of them from the nineteenth century—were on display.⁶⁶³ The calligrapher Sami Efendi (1938–1912) wrote praise of Sultan Abdülhamid II in *talik* style, and his calligraphic composition was inlaid by Vasıf Efendi with mother-of-pearl. This calligraphic panel (inv. no. 4086), dated to the nineteenth century, was also on display. These calligraphic panels may have first been displayed within the framework of a temporary exhibition such as “One Man One Messenger: The Sacred Relics of the Prophet Muhammad,” organized in 2007. As is seen in Figures 166 and 167, these calligraphic panels were placed on the walls somewhat randomly. Some of the panels were not even hung at the eye level of visitors.



Figure 165. A view of the corridor in 2012. Source: TIEM Archive.

⁶⁶³ The inventory numbers of the *hilye-i şerif* panels I was able to find are 2854 and 2718.

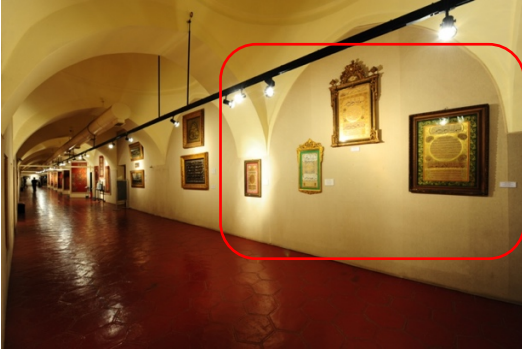


Figure 166. A view of the corridor in 2012. The red rectangle indicates the *hilye-i şerif* calligraphic panels. Source: TIEM Archive.



Figure 167. A view of the corridor showing the display of calligraphic panels and Beykoz glassware in a wall display case around 2011. Source: *Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi, museum catalogue* (Istanbul: BKG, 2011), 46.

The winter ceremonial halls did not change conceptually, but there were a few physical changes. The ceremonial halls didn't carry a title; therefore, I have assigned a letter to them, as seen in Figure 130. Some of the objects like the wooden cenotaph and large-sized Konya carpets were moved from Room O to Room R. In addition to the Seljuk carpets and the wooden cenotaph, other wooden objects such as a minbar panel, a door panel, and a lectern (*rahle*) were on display. Various small objects made of ceramics and bronze were exhibited in the standing display cases in the middle of the room, as seen in Figure 168. There was a section label entitled "Konya Carpets" in this gallery; unfortunately, it is not possible to read the content from the photograph.



Figure 168. A view of Room R in 2012. A wooden cenotaph is in the left corner of the gallery. Source: TIEM Archive.

The additional carpets are visible in one of the winter ceremonial halls (Figs. 169-170). The walls of Room O were covered with carpets, which were attached to white panels. With these additional panels, Room O almost seems like a white-cube gallery. The authentic atmosphere of the Ibrahim Pasha Palace was lost. Again, the architectural characteristics of the palace disappeared over time.



Figure 169. A view of Room O from the entrance in 2012. Source: TIEM Archive.



Figure 170. A view of Room O from the iwan side in 2012. Source: TIEM Archive.

Two section labels, one of them is entitled “Carpets from the XV-XVI Century Early Ottoman Era (Holbein Group),” can be seen in the photographs of Room O. However, like the “Konya carpets” label, it is not possible to read them. I have found photographs of other section labels related to carpets in the TIEM Archive, such as “Seljuk Carpets,” “Konya Carpets,” “Ushak carpets,” “Holbein Carpets,” “Lotto Carpets,” and “Carpets with the design of Persian Garden” and “*Türk ve Anadolu Halıcılığının Tarihiçesi*” (History of Turkish and Anatolian Carpets). These labels might have been previously prepared during a temporary exhibition such as the above-mentioned “Turkish Carpets from the 13th to 18th centuries,” and then some of them could have been left in the galleries until 2012.

5.e. Concluding Remarks

The collection of TIEM was displayed in 16 small rooms (*hücre*), the ceremonial halls (*divanhâne*), and the corridor (including the niche display cases). The chronological and dynasty-based arrangement of the museum was rather usual, mimicking the art history survey books of the time. For example, the display started with the Umayyad (661-750 CE) and Abbasid dynasties, which was a typical beginning for Islamic art survey books after the 1950s and other museum catalogues such as the

Arab Museum in Cairo (renamed the Islamic Art Museum in 1951) and the MET in New York.⁶⁶⁴ On the other hand, the collection and the display of TIEM exhibited some unique aspects such as objects from the Anatolian principalities. The continuity narrative of “Turkishness” could be observed through the display, starting from the “once-slave Turkish soldiers” of the Abbasids to the formation of the Mamluks dynasty by the Turkish soldier slaves. The narrative of continuation became more visible in the Seljuks’ displays, which were presented as the direct ancestors of the Ottomans.

All the displayed objects had a label providing the name of the object (sometimes with its material), its date, and inventory number; however, contextual information on the objects was superficial or nonexistent. Objects were displayed based on their aesthetic and historical features. This started to change within a specific display was located in Room L. Objects, categorized by Sunni Muslims as “sacred relics” started to be displayed with a mainly religious emphasis for the first time in the museum’s history.

One of the main display principles of the founding curatorial team of TIEM was not to overshadow the architectural features of the historical building. To achieve this, they wanted to create a balance between the number of exhibited objects and the Ibrahim Pasha Palace. Analyzing the 2012 photographs of the museum shows that the desired balance between the displays and the historical building was lost over time through the addition of carpets and other objects. Compared to Süleymaniye soup kitchen, the number of displayed objects in the Ibrahim Pasha Palace was much less in general, and it only became more crowded over the years.

Although the museum became more cluttered over time, the conceptual display elements of most of the rooms remained almost the same. The display of the small galleries seems to have hardly changed. A comparison of the 1994 and 2012 photographs of “The Classical Ottoman Period” gallery shows that the overall contextual and physical

⁶⁶⁴ Max Herz Bey, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Arab Museum* (Cairo: National Printing Department, 1907); Marie G. Lukens, *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Guide to Collections: Islamic Art* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1965); Ernst J. Grube, *The World of Islam* (New York and Toronto: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1967); David Talbot Rice, *Islamic Art* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1965); Ernst Kühnel, *Islamic Art and Architecture*, translated by Katherine Watson (New York: Cornell University Press, 1966); Carel J. Du Ry, *Islamic Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrahams Inc, 1971).

display features stayed the same, through a few objects were removed or added over time (Figs. 171-172). Also, an example of Emin Barın's biographical information in the section label entitled "Islamic Calligraphy in Anatolia" shows that the labels were not renewed or updated. Moreover, the displayed objects within the niches in the corridor seem almost unchanged. Some of the objects, such as the Mamluk basin and the Mamluk mosque lamp, had been exhibited since 1983. The Mamluk basin stayed on display nearly without a change, although it was slightly fitted so the inside of the object could also be seen by visitors. In addition, the background fabric was replaced with a red one at some point.



Figure 171. Mamluk basin (inv. no. 2959) in the niche display case in the corridor in 2012. Source: TIEM Archive.



Figure 172. The niche where the Mamluk basin was displayed in 1983. Source: Hüsrev Taylan Archive in Atatürk Library.

The winter and summer ceremonial halls, containing objects from the Seljuk and the Ottoman periods, were installed during the temporary exhibition (Anatolian Civilizations) in 1983 and stayed essentially the same until 2012. Although small rooms were reserved for both the Seljuks and the Ottomans, the ceremonial halls, the largest and the most architecturally significant galleries of the museum, were also reserved for these dynasties. This is another indicator that shows the emphasis

given to the Seljuks and the Ottomans. The roughly arranged chronological order of the small rooms was interrupted by galleries of the Seljuks and the Ottomans located in the ceremonial halls.

The museum displays aged over time, both physically and conceptually. The initial idea of TIEM—namely, to create a display that reflected modern museological principles—became outdated. The conceptual and physical rearrangements and modifications became insufficient, and the museum underwent a complete renovation and reinstallation in 2012, which lasted two years.

CHAPTER 6

TİEM after 100 Years: New Installation in 2014

“In recent years, Ministry of Culture and Tourism has realized significant projects to optimize Turkey’s museums housing thousands examples of historical and cultural heritage. Within the framework of the studies carried out to increase the number of museums in our country, and to renew our museums in accordance with the present understanding of contemporary museum, 13 new museums opened their doors, 42 museums went through renovations, 29 museums are still under renovation. The project and application management processes are still on-going for 27 museums.”⁶⁶⁵

Abdullah Kocapınar, the Director of the General Directorate for Cultural Heritage and Museums at the time, gives the numbers related to the museum policy of the government in the paragraph above, written in 2014. The same year, the Minister of Culture and Tourism, Ömer Çelik, stated that the maintenance, repair, restoration, and reinstallation of 123 museums had been completed since 2003.⁶⁶⁶ As discussed in Chapter 1, Islamic art collections have been reinstalled in museums or turned into individual museums in the last two decades all around the world, from New York to Qatar. The Museum of Turkish-Islamic Arts in Edirne, located in the sixteenth century Selimiye Mosque complex, was reopened to the public after restoration and reinstallation on 18 May 2012.

The Museum of Turkish-Islamic Arts (İznik) was inaugurated at *Nilüfer Hatun İmaretî*, a fourteen-century Ottoman soup kitchen, on 3 July 2020 in the middle of the covid pandemic.⁶⁶⁷ The Museum of Turkish-Islamic Arts in Bursa, located in an early fifteenth-century Ottoman

⁶⁶⁵ Yakup Harmanda and Soner Ateşoğulları, *Değişen ve Gelişen Türkiye'nin Müzeleri: Yenilenmesi Devam Eden Müzeler / Progressive Museum in Turkey: Museums under Restoration* (Ankara: Özel Matbaa, 2014), 3.

⁶⁶⁶ Speech of the Minister of Culture and Tourism at the opening ceremony of TİEM on 19 December 2014.

⁶⁶⁷ Roman, Byzantine, and Ottoman collections have been exhibited in the Nilüfer Hatun İmaretî since 1960. Recently, it was decided to construct a new building for the archaeological collections and Nilüfer Hatun İmaretî has been reserved for Ottoman material culture only.

madrassa, known as *Yeşil Medrese* (Green Madrasa) was also reopened on 24 December 2020, following a restoration and reinstallation. In line with these local and global events, the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts in Istanbul (TIEM) went through a complete restoration and reinstallation in October 2012 and reopened on 19 December 2014 with the attendance of the Minister Ministry of Culture and Tourism. This chapter examines the physical and conceptual features of the display of TIEM after its reinstallation in 2014. It aims to understand the changing and unchanging display techniques and discourses of the museum.

6.a. New Display of the Turkish and Islamic Art Collection

The newly restored museum building mainly follows the former 1983 restoration in layout, since it is a historical building. The ground floor of the İbrahim Pasha Palace contains the entrance area with an information desk, a temporary exhibition gallery, a museum shop, a restroom, storages for the collection, and, again, the Ethnography Gallery, which was opened in 2019. A new discovery related to the Roman Hippodrome of Constantinople was made during this second restoration of the İbrahim Pasha Palace. During the cleaning work carried out in the room where the boiler was previously placed, levels and tunnels of the Hippodrome were uncovered. This significant finding was further studied and restored. These levels and tunnels have been made available to visitors for the first time. In addition, during the restoration process, elevators were added to the structure to make the museum more accessible for visitors, who would have different needs. Moreover, the plaster/coating of the walls of the museum was stripped and left bare.

“More than 30 large display cases of various types that feature the highest levels of preventative conservation” were purchased from the world-leading company in the display case business, Goppion.⁶⁶⁸ The company explained their task at TIEM as follows:

“Once again, Goppion finds itself taking on a challenge having to do with Islamic arts - highlighting the preciousness and painstaking attention to detail and protecting the most delicate pieces and the various ways in which the Islamic arts are interpreted. In fact, before

⁶⁶⁸ The website of Goppion Technology, “Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum,” [accessed in 7 February 2023] <https://www.goppion.com/projects/turkish-and-islamic-arts-museum>.

working on the museum in Istanbul, Goppion created the installation for the Islamic galleries at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London, the Islamic Art Museum in Cairo, which, unfortunately, was recently damaged during a terrorist attack, and in Paris, worked on the Institut du Monde Arabe and the new section of the Louvre.”⁶⁶⁹

The previous clients of the company were the well-known, and leading institutions, specifically among the Islamic art collections. Compared to the first restoration and installation process of TIEM in the years following the military coup in 1980, the budget of the museum was quiet flexible in the 2010s. As the Minister of Culture and Tourism stated during his speech for the opening ceremony of TIEM, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism spent 16.4 million Turkish Lira for the restoration and reinstallation of the museum.⁶⁷⁰ Nazan Ölçer, the former director of TIEM, was trying to install the museum with “modern furnishings” with a limited budget, and she specifically preferred local producers in order to decrease costs, as well as in case if further service would be needed. Almost three decades later, these concerns had changed, and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism wanted to work with the leading companies of the market for the prominent Islamic art collection of Türkiye, just like French, British or Egyptian museums.

As expected, the upper floor of the Ibrahim Pasha Palace is still formed by the small rooms (*hücreler*), the long corridor area, and the ceremonial halls, with minor changes in terms of architecture. A significant architectural novelty was a single, newly-created, large gallery space. A part at the end of the corridor, just before the ceremonial halls, was closed with a separator and merged with three small rooms to turn it into a large gallery. The new installation maintained some of the previous curatorial divisions by following a chronological and dynastic arrangement of the objects (see Fig. 173).

⁶⁶⁹ The website of Goppion Technology, “Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum,” [accessed in 7 February 2023] <https://www.goppion.com/projects/turkish-and-islamic-arts-museum>.

⁶⁷⁰ Speech of the Minister of Culture and Tourism at the opening ceremony of TIEM on 19 December 2014.

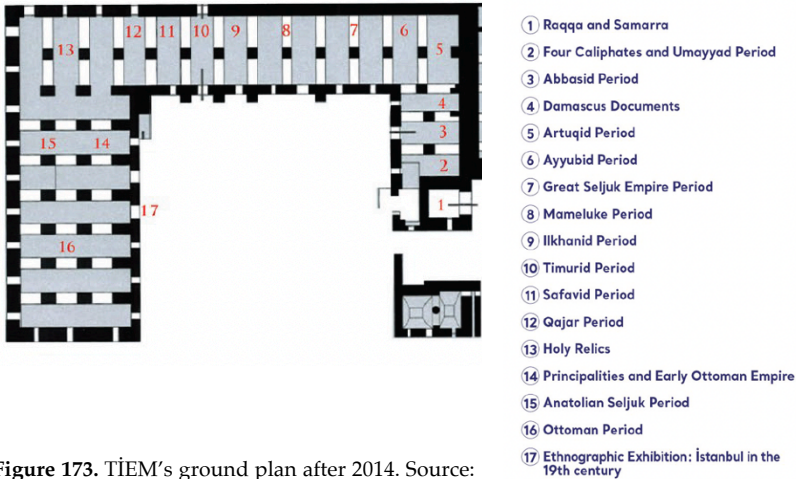


Figure 173. TİEM’s ground plan after 2014. Source: TİEM brochure prepared by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

However, the most significant change in the presentation of the collection was the introduction of specific thematic displays, such as “Islamic Archaeology” from Iraq focusing on the Abbasid royal cities of Raqqa and Samarra (Gallery 1); “Damascus Documents” display (Gallery 4); and thirdly, “Sacred Relics” gallery (Gallery 13), as the Minister of Culture and Tourism emphasized in his opening speech.⁶⁷¹

There are common features of the museum display and labels (including introduction, section, and object). None of the small rooms are natural light, like the previous display. All the small rooms are lit artificially. In addition, they are dimly lit, and the lighting is arranged to emphasize the aesthetic features of the objects. The walls of the galleries and the display cases are dark grey (hard coal), which creates a darker environment and makes the lighting more dramatic. Compared to the previous display in the Ibrahim Pasha Palace, even fewer objects are on display in this new installation. Also, different from the previous display, there are no carpets displayed in the small rooms. There are wall display cases of various sizes and/or niche cases in the small rooms. The

⁶⁷¹ Speech of the Minister of Culture and Tourism at the opening ceremony of TİEM on 19 December 2014.

window niches of the small rooms, which were turned into display cases in the previous display, are again used as a display cases. However, this time these window niches can be seen in the room rather the corridor, and single objects are displayed with a masterpiece approach once again. These window niches display cases in the second restoration are built as if they are windows, but they continue to function as display niches within the galleries (see Fig. 174).



Figure 174. A view of the corridor of TIEM in 2021. The red rectangle indicates the window, which is a display niche. Source: Photo was taken by the author, 2021.

Apart from the introductory label at the entrance of the museum, each gallery has a section label and object labels. The museum labels are written both in Turkish and English. However, the Turkish content is translated badly into English. There is a lack of standardization in terminology usage, and it seems like there has been no proper editing or proofreading done on the content of the labels.

Section labels of the galleries, reserved for an Islamic dynasties, provides brief historical backgrounds. Some of these labels also contain

information about the artistic developments of that specific dynasty. Each dynasty section label carries a timeline and a map showing the lands ruled by that dynasty. The content of the timelines is bilingual. On the other hand, the content language of the maps seems random, sometimes written in Turkish with only a few words in English. Apart from the dynasty section labels, there are also thematic section labels in the thematic galleries, such as the “Sacred Relics,” and in some of the dynasty galleries, such as a label entitled “Patronage in Islamic Arts” was placed in the Mamluks gallery.

As stated above, an introductory label at the entrance of the Islamic art galleries, entitled “From Islamic Foundation (*Evkaf-ı İslamiye*) to Turkish and Islamic Art Museum...,” briefly narrates the history of the museum:

“Islamic Foundation Museum was the first museum established by foundation ministry, and *the last museum established during Ottoman Empire for exhibiting and preserving Islamic-ottoman art.* Islamic Foundation Museum was opened [...] with the *enthronment of Mehmed V* on 14 April 1330/ 27 April 1914. [The museum] was established with the aim of preventing the art-works consecrated to the mosques, shrines, libraries etc. taking out of the country, preserving them and transferring them to the next generations. After 1926, its name was changed to Turkish and Islamic Art Museum.

The minister of foundation ministry and Shaykh Al-Islam Ürgüplü Hayri Bey, the manager of imperial museum Halil Edhem Bey, the members of administration of the museum Keçecizade Reşad Bey, İsmet Bey, Armenak Sakızıyan Bey, İbnü'l Emin Mahmud Kemal İnâl Bey, Mehmed Ziya Bey and the manager of the museum Ahmet Hakkı Bey's gathering foundation art-works of Ottoman Empire in Islamic Foundation Museum [Museum] *despite all difficulties* enabled a magnificent cultural heritage to reach today. This magnificent heritage consisting of islamic geography's unique artworks produced between 8th and 20th centuries has made Turkish and Islamic Art Museum one of the most important museums of the world.

Turkish and Islamic Art Museum was moved to İbrahim Pasha Palace in 1983. This has enabled exhibiting a big part of its art-works in accordance with contemporary museology criteria and opening temporary exhibitions which contributed to develop Turkish museology.”⁶⁷²

⁶⁷² Transcribed from the section label entitled “From Islamic Foundation (*Evkaf-ı İslamiye*) to Turkish and Islamic Art Museum...” All the spelling mistakes and typos are intentionally left untouched. Italics have been added for emphasis.

The content of this introductory label is different than the previous one, which had been prepared at least 25 years ago. The new introductory label does not mention the architectural importance of the museum building, though it was strongly emphasized in the previous introductory label. The reason for this is simple: another introductory label was placed at the entrance of the museum building before reaching the galleries section.

The new introductory label brings the Ottoman roots of the museum to the fore. It emphasizes the motivation for preservation of the Islamic heritage, “despite all the difficulties” of the period. The label also names the founding figures of the museum, starting with the Ottoman Sultan of the time, Mehmed V. Other founding figures of the museum, the board of directory—Mehmet Ziya Bey, İbnü'l Emin Mahmud Kemal (İnal) Bey, Keçecizade Reşad Fuad Bey, İsmet Bey, Armenak Sakızıyan Bey, and Ahmed Hakkı Bey—encounters the museum visitor at the entrance. A visual created from the photo of the museum opening ceremony has been placed next to the introductory label. In addition, copies of eight black and white photographs taken in the first building of the museum, the soup kitchen of Süleymaniye, hang at the entrance. The photos show the first director of the museum, Ahmet Hakkı Bey, and the board of directors at the opening ceremony of the museum in 1914. Some of the gallery photographs published in the first official catalogue of the museum in 1939 are among these (Fig. 175). As stated in the previous chapters, an image of a calligraphic panel (inv. no. 2780) bearing the composition of “Allah and Muhammed,” written by Sultan Abdülmecid and gifted to the museum by his son Sultan Mehmed V during the museum’s opening ceremony, is included in the introductory label without historical background. The information on how this calligraphic panel entered the museum collection is given in the object label, where it is placed at the entrance of the Sacred Relics Gallery (*Mukaddes Emanetler Galerisi*).⁶⁷³ I discuss the Sacred Relics Gallery in detail in the following paragraphs.

⁶⁷³ “Hat Levha, 1494 tarihli, 53 cm, Sultan Abdülmecid tarafından yazılan ve oğlu Sultan V. Mehmed Reşad’ın Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi’nin açılışını kutlamak üzere müzeye hediye ettiği hat levha.” [Calligraphic plate, dated 1494, 53 cm, scribed by Sultan Abdülmecid and gifted to the museum by his son, Sultan Mehmed V. Reşad, to celebrate the opening of TIEM]. Translation from Turkish to English by the author.



Figure 175. The introductory label at the entrance of TIEM. The red circle indicates the photo of the gifted calligraphic panel. Source: Photo was taken by the author, 2020.



Figure 176. A view of the three standing display cases at the entrance. From left to right: The writing set and other writing tools, museum honor book, and first museum labels and seals. Source: Photo was taken by the author, 2014.

Figure 176 shows three small standing cases placed next to the introductory label panel containing the first section labels of the museum written in Ottoman Turkish (see Figs. 34-36 in Chapter 3), the museum honor book from the early twentieth century (*Müze Şeref Defteri*), the first seals of the museum, and writing tools such as a pen sharpener, scissors, and a pen box gifted to the museum collection by the board members—İbnü'l Emin Mahmud Kemal (İnal), and Mehmed Ziya—of the museum.⁶⁷⁴ The writing set (inv. no. 3374), gifted to the museum by Sultan Mehmed V, was displayed according to its function and aesthetic features in the first permanent galleries of Ibrahim Pasha Palace. This writing set was on exhibit with various objects related to calligraphy in Room N, where a section label entitled “Islamic Calligraphy in Anatolia” was placed. Unfortunately, I am not able to access the object label of the previous display, but today, the object label reads: “Writing Set, Ottoman Period, Late 19th century, Donated to the museum by Sultan Mehmed Reşad, Inv. No. 3374.” With the 2014 installation, the meaning attributed to this object has been shifted. In the new display setting, the writing set has become a significant tool that represents the patronage of the Ottoman sultan during the establishment period of the museum. Through the contextual and physical features of the new display, the Ottoman roots of TIEM are underlined, starting with the entrance of the museum.

6.b. Galleries of TIEM after 2014 Installation

This part is divided into two categories. In total, there are sixteen galleries in the upper floor. As stated above, three thematic displays were introduced after the reinstallation: Islamic Archaeology (containing the Samarra and Raqqa displays), the Damascus Documents, and the Sacred Relics Gallery. The rest of the galleries are arranged chronologically and based on dynasties. Although the museum display starts with the first thematic display, Islamic Archaeology, the other two thematic galleries interrupt the dynastic and chronological order of the display route. First, I introduce and discuss the chronologically and dynastically arranged galleries. Then, I analyze the thematic galleries.

⁶⁷⁴ Inventory numbers of the displayed objects are 3341, 3343, 3354, and 3359.

6.b.a. Chronological and Dynastic Galleries

After the introductory panel and display, the staircase takes visitors to the second floor, where the rest of the exhibition is installed. The Umayyad and the Abbasid collections of the museum are displayed with a different approach in the new installation. The previous display also started with the objects and architectural fragments from the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties, but the chronological narrative was more dominant, rather than a dynastic narrative. Today, both the collections of the Umayyads and the Abbasids have their own gallery space.

The first dynastic galley is Gallery 2, entitled “Four Caliphs (Hulefa-yı Raşid Period) 632–661 and the Umayyad Period 661–1031.” The Umayyad period gallery starts with the history of the first four caliphs (*Hulefâ-ı Râşidîn Dönemi* 632-661), which is a novelty in TİEM. After the death of the Prophet Muhammed, the four caliphs period, called “Rashidun,” started.⁶⁷⁵ The section label starts with how the caliphates expanded Islamic territory by conquest.⁶⁷⁶ The second and third paragraphs of section label continue:

“[...] Institutions created in the period of Four Caliphs and Prophet Mohammed were continued during the Umayyad period. But the imperial expansion made mandatory the establishment of new institutions. Institutions created in this period were accepted also by the Islamic states after the Umayyad State.

During the Umayyad period, history, commentary, medicine, chemistry were studied. *Important science books were translated into Arabic. Despite the impact of Sasanian and Hellenistic periods, Islamic art began to develop in all aspects including handicrafts and architecture.*”⁶⁷⁷

⁶⁷⁵ These four caliphs were Abū Bakr (r. 632–634), ‘Umar (r. 634–644), ‘Uthmān (r. 644–656), and ‘Alī (r. 656–661).

⁶⁷⁶ “After the felicity period ending with the death of Prophet Mohammed, Hulefa-yı Raşid period began. The borders of islamic state founded by Prophet Mohammed during the four caliphs period was expanded with conquests of notifying Islam. During the Umayyad Period, it became an empire which reigns in North Africa, Southern Spain, India’s northwest, Merv, Bukhara and Semerkand in Central Asia. After Abbasids put an end to the Umayyad State, Umayyad Andalusian State was founded and remained in the scene of history until 1031.” Transcribed from the section label entitled “Four Caliphs (Hulefa-yı Raşid Period) 632–661 and the Umayyad Period 661–1031/ Dört Halife (Hulefâ-ı Râşidîn Dönemi) ve Emeviler Dönemi” in the second gallery in 2014. All the spelling mistakes and typos are intentionally left untouched.

⁶⁷⁷ Transcribed from the section label entitled “Four Caliphs (Hulefa-yı Raşid Period) 632–661 and the Umayyad Period 661–1031/ Dört Halife (Hulefâ-ı Râşidîn Dönemi) ve Emeviler Dönemi” in the second gallery in 2014. All the spelling mistakes and typos are intentionally left untouched. Italics have been added for emphasis.

Differently from the previous display narrative in the Ibrahim Pasha Palace, in the 2014 display there is an emphasis on how the Islamic states were institutionalized. After this political history, the last paragraph of the label is reserved for the cultural history of the period. Although there is a mention of translation of science books into Arabic, it does not say what language they were translated from (Greek). As discussed in Chapter 5, two section labels were previously devoted to the concepts of “Islamic art,” and “Early Islamic art.” However, there are no such labels in the new display. The formation of Islamic art is only mentioned in the final sentence of this section label.

As stated before, the English translation of the labels in the museum is quite poor. The insufficiency of the translation becomes more obvious when one compares the Turkish and English versions of the last sentence of the section label. The Turkish version reads:

“Sasani ve Helenistik Dönemlerinin etkisi görülmele birlikte mimarlıktan küçük el sanatlarına, İslam Sanatı her yönüyle gelişmeye başlamıştır. El yazmaları, maden ve seramik eserler müze koleksiyonundaki Emevi dönemine ait eserlerdir.”

In the English version of the sentence, they use the term “despite” for “görülmele birlikte.” Although, in Turkish there is no negative connotation of this term, the term “despite” adds a negative connotation. The ethnic and regional influences of various cultures such as Roman, Byzantine, Sassanian, and Central Asian, which led to the formation of early Islamic art, are well accepted by the scholars.⁶⁷⁸ The influence of the Byzantine and Sassanian artistic language, especially, is stated in the various museum section labels such as in the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), the British Museum, the MET, and the Museum für Islamische Kunst. The V&A’s “The Jameel Gallery of Islamic Art” (renamed “Islamic Middle East: The Jameel Gallery” sometime after 2014), which was renovated and reopened in 2006, contains a section label entitled “Creating Islamic Art.” It starts with the following sentence:

⁶⁷⁸ “The formation of Islamic art can be seen, then, as an accumulation and novel distribution of forms from all over the conquered world, as a conscious sorting out of the meanings associated with the forms, and as a creation of a limited number of new, characteristic forms.” For further information on the subject see Oleg Grabar, *The Formation of Islamic Art* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978), 210.

“Islamic art adopted many of the decorative ideas of the Byzantine and Sasanian worlds from which it arose – inscriptions, geometric patterns, and designs incorporating plants, animals and people.”⁶⁷⁹

The previous Islamic art gallery (entitled John Addis: Islamic Art Gallery) in the British Museum was first installed in 1989 and remained mainly unchanged until its closure in 2017 for reinstallation. However, some of the displays were updated with the modification of information panels and labels over time. A section label entitled “Early Islamic art in Syria, Iraq and Iran: around 700–1000” in the British Museum’s Islamic art gallery provided information on the inherited pre-Islamic decorative language (Fig. 175). It reads:

“The cultures of the regions conquered by the Muslims in the seventh century clearly influenced the styles and techniques used in early Islamic art. For example, silver plate and stucco (plaster) ornament from the eastern Islamic lands once ruled by the Sasanians (AD 224–642) sometimes includes motifs borrowed from the previous period. Designs such as *senmurv* – the Iranian mythical bird – continue to appear on objects well into the ninth century AD. Techniques and artistic decoration used in late antiquity appear in mosques and palaces in the Umayyad period (AD 661–750). Examples are the coloured floor mosaics and the use of vine scroll and acanthus leaf decoration on stucco panels and ivories. The early coins closely follow Sasanian and Byzantine pieces.

During the reign of the early Abbasids (AD 750–1258), who were great patrons of the arts and sciences, important technological and artistic advances began to take place in art and architecture. Now the influence of earlier cultures had been absorbed, artists found new sources of inspiration, notably from China.”⁶⁸⁰

⁶⁷⁹ Transcribed in 2014 from the section label entitled “Creating Islamic Art” in the V&A.

⁶⁸⁰ Transcribed in 2014 from the section label entitled “Early Islamic art in Syria, Iraq and Iran: around 700 – 1000” in the British Museum’s John Addis: Islamic Art Gallery.

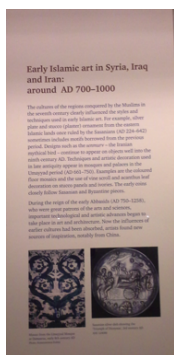


Figure 177. Section label from the British Museum's John Addis: Islamic Art Gallery in 2014. Source: Photo was taken by the author, 2014.



Figure 178. Section label from the Museum für Islamische Kunst entitled "The Umayyads (661-750)" in 2019. Source: The photo was taken by the author in 2019.

A section label from the Museum für Islamische Kunst entitled "The Umayyads (661-750)" also contains a paragraph dedicated to the influence of pre-Islamic traditions (Fig. 178). It reads:

"[...] Developments in the arts initially drew their inspiration from Byzantine traditions of late antiquity in Syria as well as from the arts in the conquered empire of the Sasanians in Iraq and Iran. [...]"⁶⁸¹

Outside Europe, the reinstated Islamic art collection of the MET contains an information panel in Gallery 451 entitled "Arab Lands and Iran under the Umayyads and Abbasids, 661- 1258," where formation of a distinct Islamic artistic identity is explained through the appropriation of pre-Islamic forms. It reads:

"[...] Under the Umayyads (661-759), a distinct Islamic identity gradually emerged. Early Islamic art synthesized forms inherited from Late Antiquity and Byzantine Egypt and the eastern Mediterranean and Sasanian Iran. [...]"

The Abbasids (750-1258) overthrew the Umayyads in 750 and founded a new capital, Baghdad, in Iraq in 762. New styles and techniques

⁶⁸¹ Transcribed in 2019 from the section label entitled "The Umayyads (661-750)" in the Museum für Islamische Kunst.

characterized Abbasid art, including pottery with luster glaze or Chinese-inspired shapes. [...]”⁶⁸²

Compared to the previous section label in TIEM⁶⁸³ and the other section label examples from the leading Islamic art collections, the new information label underestimates the role of the influences of pre-Islamic cultures in the formation of Islamic art.

Some of the objects in “The Four Caliphs and the Umayyads” gallery were already exhibited before the reinstallation, such as the inscription from a masjid (inv. no. 2512), a milestone (inv. no. 2511), and two ceramic jars. As in the previous display, the inscriptions are not transcribed. The two jars (inventory numbers 1990 and 3524), dated to the eighth or ninth centuries, are placed in the niche display case, just like before. The only difference is that the niche display case was located in the corridor in the previous permanent exhibition. A Quran page (inv. no. ŞE87) dated to the early eighth century from the Damascus Documents collection is also placed in this gallery.

Although the timeline chart, placed on the section label, ends in 1031, there are two objects dated outside of the given period, a Quran and an astrolabe, whose with object labels read:

“Qur’an
Umayyad period
North Africa, late 12th or early 13th century
Inv. no. 359”

“Astrolabe
Umayyad period
Seville, dated 650/ 1210
Inv. no. 2071”

Like the rest of the objects in the gallery, these two objects are also displayed with minimal information. The museum catalogue, published 5 years after the reinstallation, provides the name of the dynasties in which these objects were produced. The Quran was from the Nasrid Dynasty (1240–1492), and the astrolabe was made during the Almohad

⁶⁸² Melisa Forstrom, unpublished PhD Thesis, 311

⁶⁸³ “[...] Within this extensive geographical area and time span, ethnic and regional influences and trends played a role of undeniable significance leading to fascinating syntheses.” Transcribed from the “Islamic Art” section label in the pre-2012 display.

Dynasty (1130–1269), a new Berber dynasty from North Africa.⁶⁸⁴ According to the inscription on the astrolabe, it was made in 1252 and belonged to Muhammad bin Batut of the Hamairi family in Ishbiliya (modern Seville).⁶⁸⁵ These two objects show that neither the section label nor the object labels are sufficient to provide the necessary contextual information about the displayed objects. The background information is rather superficial and does not reflect the complexities of the objects. Considering the timeline on the section label, the given information can be even confusing for visitors.

As expected in a chronological and dynasty-based display, the following room is dedicated to the Abbasid Dynasty. The section label states how the art and architecture which developed during the Abbasids became a source for later Muslim dynasties:

“Abbasid State was established by Ebu'l Abbas Seffah, who descends from Abbas bin Abdülmotalip the uncle of Prophet Mohammad (p.b.u.h). Abbasids State, who reigned over the territories from Middle East to Spain, Anatolia to Hedjaz, was terminated when Ilkhanids penetrated to Baghdad in 1258 but they survived till 1517 under the auspices of Mamluks in Cairo.

City planning, architecture, ceramic art and calligraphy in the Abbasids Period showed a great evolution and this new style became a source for the Islamic arts in the later periods. Cities of Baghdad and Samarra, Samarra Ulu Mosque - which is the first big dimensional mosque of Islamic architecture history - palaces, hand-written [*hat yazılı*] ceramics and manuscripts are some of the art works of Abbasids. [...]”⁶⁸⁶

The label continues with “[...] the greatest contribution of the Abbasid Caliphates to the history of humanity [...]”

“[...] they had Syriac, Farsi, Greek, Hindi, Hebraic, Pehlevish and Chaldean literature, science and philosophy books translated into the Arabic. These translations were collected in Beytül Hikme (House of Knowledge), which was established in Baghdad and provided an environment for new scientists, philosophers and artists who created a

⁶⁸⁴ Seracettin Şahin, *The Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts* (Istanbul: Korpus Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık, 2019), 18-19, 21. The first capital of the Almohads was Marrakesh. Starting from the mid-twelfth century, Morocco, Seville, Cordoba, Badajoz, and Almeria in the Iberian Peninsula were taken by the Almohads.

⁶⁸⁵ Nazan Ölçer, *Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art* (Istanbul: Akbank 2002), 90.

⁶⁸⁶ Transcribed from the section label entitled “The Abbasid Period 750 – 1250/ *Abbasiler Dönemi*.” All the spelling mistakes and typos are intentionally left untouched.

golden era in the Middle Ages in terms of science, literature and philosophy.”

This time, the translated languages are provided in the section label. Mural fragments, decorative wooden and marble architectural fragments,⁶⁸⁷ a marble bowl with a lid (inv. no. 2244), a ceramic plate (inv. no. 2370), and a tomb inscription (inv. no. 2525) are displayed in this gallery. The mural fragment, dated to the ninth century from the wall painting in the Harem of the Jawsaq al-Khaqani Palace (or Dar al-Khalifa), depicts “two dancers” and is displayed without any further explanation about its context.⁶⁸⁸ Before the 2014 installation, a reconstruction drawing and a short explanation of the fragment was placed next to it to provide some context to visitors. Today, its label simply reads “Mural Fragment” and continues with the date, the dynasty name, and the inventory number of the displayed item. Other mural fragments depicting figures such as a bird and a portrait of a person are exhibited in a niche display case with a dramatic lighting without any contextual information.⁶⁸⁹

The fifth gallery is reserved for “the Artuqid Period.” The section label reads:

“Artuqids Dynasty, the name of which comes from the descendant of Döger descent of Oghuzs, Artuk b. Ekseb (death date 1090), is one of the Turkmenian Atabeyliks of the Seljuk Empire. Artuqids, who had the idea that state was the common property of the dynasty members, ruled their state with three branches; Sökmen Bey ruled around Diyarbakır and Hasankeyf, Necmeddin İlgazi ruled around Mardin and Meyyafarikin (Silvan, and Belek b. Behram, who was the grandson of Artuk Bey ruled in Harput Artuqids, who made efforts for public improvements, built mosques, madrasas, bazaars, bridges, hospitals and Turkish baths for the prosperity of public, *and left an important cultural heritage by contributing to the book arts and metal working art.*

The door and the door knob of the Cizre Ulu Mosque, which are the unique examples of metal working art, ceremony drums, candlesticks, lower parts of the kettles, mirrors and architectural items ornamented

⁶⁸⁷ The inventory numbers of the decorative wooden fragments are 239, 872, 876; the marble fragment is 2434.

⁶⁸⁸ The inventory number of the “two dancers” mural is 2433.

⁶⁸⁹ The inventory numbers of the mural fragments are 2342, 2345, 2347, 2354, 2357, 2359, 2364, and 2379.

with reliefs of figures are the creations belonging to the Artuqid Period in the museum collection.”⁶⁹⁰

The wall display case contains only nine metal (probably bronze) objects such as mortars, mirrors, a drum, a candle stick, and an ewer body. However, there is no manuscript in this gallery that could represent the contribution of the Artuqids in the arts of the books, as stated in the label. It is not clear if the museum has manuscripts belong to the Artuqids or not.

Apart from the objects in the display case, there is the door and the door handle of the Great Mosque of Cizre, located in the exact spot where they were previously exhibited. Compared to the pre-2014 display, the content of the other section labels gallery—entitled “Door Restoration,” “Cizre (Cezire-i Ibn Ömer),” and “El-Cezeri and Automata”—in this gallery remained almost unchanged. An addition was made to the label entitled “The Great Mosque of Cizre.” Both the transcription of the inscription of the mosque from Arabic and its Turkish translation are included on this label. The most significant novelty in this room is the label entitled “The Door Knob of Cizre Great Mosque Taken Place at Davids Samling Museum” (*David Samling Özel Koleksiyonu’nda Bulunan Cizre Ulu Camii’nin Kapı Tokmağı*). It reads:

“One of the two door handles on the door of Cizre Great Mosque was removed and stolen on December 1969. It was determined by the investigations that the piece is in the David Collection at Copenhagen – Denmark. The attempts for returning the piece have being proceeded since 1990. The subject was negotiated in the special meeting held in Copenhagen in 2001. The attempts for returning the piece are still being proceeded. But it still couldn’t be provided to return the piece because of the strict policies of the Davids Samling Private Museum’s authorities however a memorandum between the two countries signed in 1995 in the field of culture and education.”⁶⁹¹

This label brings the discussions about the illicit trafficking the restitution of cultural heritage into the museum space for the first time

⁶⁹⁰ Transcribed from the section label entitled “The Artuqids Period/ *Artuklular Dönemi* yak. /Approx. 1102 – 1409.” All the spelling mistakes and typos left are intentionally untouched. Italics have been added for emphasis.

⁶⁹¹ Transcribed from the label entitled “The Door Knob of Cizre Great Mosque Taken Place at Davids Samling Museum/ *David Samling Özel Koleksiyonu’nda Bulunan Cizre Ulu Camii’nin Kapı Tokmağı*.” All the spelling mistakes and typos are intentionally left untouched.

in TIEM's history. Another label like this one is placed in the "Anatolian Seljuks Period" Gallery next to the wooden cenotaph (inv. no. 191). As mentioned in Chapter 5, this cenotaph was brought to the collection of Çinili Köşk from the mausoleum of Seyyid Mahmud Hayrani in Akşehir, Konya in 1911, and four years later, it was transferred to TIEM's collection. Since then, the cenotaph has always been displayed in the museum, based on its aesthetic and historical features. Today, the cenotaph is on display next to architectural woodwork examples in the "Anatolian Seljuks Period" Gallery. In addition to its aesthetic and historical qualities, another layer of meaning has been added after the new installation. The section label next to this cenotaph narrates that another very similar cenotaph from the same mausoleum was stolen in 1908, and today it is in the collection of the David Collection (Davids Samling) in Copenhagen, Denmark.⁶⁹² The label reads:

"After the robbery in 1911 at Seyyid Mahmud Hayrani Mausoleum in Akşehir, the pieces was found; the sandukas and coffins belong to Seyyid Mahmud Hayrani and his brother Necmettin Ahmed and the sanduka belongs to Seyyid Ali son of Seyyid Mahmud Hayrani was brought to our museum. But it was determined that the coffin belongs to Seyyid Ali which was stolen from same Mausoleum in 1908 is in the Davids Samling Private Museum at Copenhagen - Denmark. The attempts for returning the piece have being proceeded since 1990 by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. But it still couldn't be provided to return the piece because of the strict policies of the Davids Samling Private Museum's authorities however a memorandum between the two countries signed in 1995 in the field of culture and education."⁶⁹³

These two labels, one in the Artuqid Period Gallery and the other one in the Anatolian Seljuks Gallery, emphasize the illicit trafficking of cultural

⁶⁹² The cenotaph (inv. no. 26/1976) in the David Collection is on display and the collection entry on the museum's website reads: "The wooden coffin bears witness to the high quality of the woodworking that was done in Anatolia under the Seljuks of Rum. The many gently receding spirals that form the vines' shoots and ends of the leaves are typical features. The inscriptions on the cenotaph use poetical phrases to describe the various aspects of death and paradise, while the name of the deceased, Sayyid Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Mahmud, is inscribed on the box-shaped base, which is found today in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art in Istanbul." From the entry of the object entitled "Cenotaph, carved walnut, from the mausoleum of Mahmud Khayrani in Akşehir," on the David Collection Website, [accessed 20 February 2023], <https://www.davidmus.dk/islamic-art/the-seljuks-of-rum/item/223?culture=en-us>

⁶⁹³ Transcribed from the label entitled "Seyyid Ali Ibn Muhammed's Wooden Coffin Taken Place at Davids Samling Museum/ *David Samling Özel Müzesi'nde Bulunan Seyyid Ali İbn Muhammed'e Ait Ahşap Tabut.*" All the spelling mistakes and typos left untouched intentionally.

heritage. These labels boldly state that the David Collection in Copenhagen is displaying these stolen artifacts. In addition, through the labels, the museum demonstrates its wish to reclaim these stolen objects.

These labels can be evaluated within the framework of efforts carried out by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism for the last two decades. 4143 artifacts have returned to Türkiye in 10 years through the efforts of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the Prime Ministry, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁶⁹⁴ The Justice and Development Party (AKP) government has attached great importance to the recovery from abroad of the illicitly-taken objects. The AKP defines itself as a conservative democratic party and has held the majority in parliament in Türkiye since 2002.⁶⁹⁵ The recovery of the illicitly-taken objects can be read as part of a nationalist discourse, a trend that exists to various degrees across all political parties, from the far left to the far right, in Türkiye.⁶⁹⁶ However, the nationalist discourse led by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who is also the leader of AKP, has been increasing in the last decade.⁶⁹⁷ Together with an upsurge of nationalism, anti-Westernism is also taking new directions in the politics of Türkiye.

Türkiye's repatriation of many objects has been much in the news for more than 20 years now. For example, even the title of a newspaper article dated 2021, "Nearly 5,000 cultural assets returned to Turkey in last 18 years," directly gives the message that the government

⁶⁹⁴ Şenay Ünal "Anadolu Mirasına Sahip Çıktı," *Anadolu Ajansı* website, 9 January 2014, [accessed on 23 February 2023], <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/kultur-sanat/anadolu-mirasina-sahip-cikti/191814>.

⁶⁹⁵ "AKP explains charter changes, slams foreign descriptions," *Hürriyet Daily News*, March 28, 2010, [accessed 27 November 2016] <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/default.aspx?pageid=438&n=akp-explains-charter-changes-slams-foreign-descriptions-2010-03-28>.

⁶⁹⁶ For further information see M. Hakan Yavuz, *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

⁶⁹⁷ For further information see Max Hoffman, Michael Werz, and John Halpin "Turkey's 'New Nationalism' Amid Shifting Politics: Further Analysis of Polling Results," 11 February 2018, [accessed 3 February 2023], <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/turkeys-new-nationalism-amid-shifting-politics/>; Ihsan Yılmaz and Galib Bashirov "The Akp after 15 years: emergence of Erdoganism in Turkey," *Third World Quarterly* vol. 39, no. 9 (2018), 1812-1830.

wants to propagate.⁶⁹⁸ There are plenty of examples of how the Turkish government is working on the recovery of stolen artifacts.⁶⁹⁹

Even after the reinstallation in 2014, TİEM hosted and displayed a few repatriated objects, which would fall into the category of Islamic art. For example, a sixteenth-century İznik tile panel, which was stolen in 2004 from Çarşamba Mehmet Ağa Msoque, was found in London and brought back to Türkiye in 2019. The tile panel went on display in the Ottoman Gallery of TİEM. This event was publicized during the opening ceremony of the Ethnography Gallery of TİEM, which the Minister of Culture and Tourism was also attended (see Fig. 180). The Minister Mehmet Nuri Ersoy stated that “I am very happy to include this work of ours in the exhibition on the occasion of the opening.”⁷⁰⁰

⁶⁹⁸ “Nearly 5,000 cultural assets returned to Turkey in last 18 years” *Hürriyet Daily News*, 17 June 2021, [accessed on 23 February 2023], <https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/nearly-5-000-cultural-assets-returned-to-turkey-in-last-18-years-165590>.

⁶⁹⁹ Karya Naz Balkız, “Finders keepers: Turkey’s quest to reclaim lost cultural heritage,” TRT World, 4 October 2021, [accessed on 26 February 2023], <https://www.trtworld.com/magazine/finders-keepers-turkey-s-quest-to-reclaim-lost-cultural-heritage-50464>; “Turkish Parliament to seek cultural property abroad,” A News 26 July 2017, [accessed on 26 February 2023], <https://www.anews.com.tr/turkey/2017/07/26/turkish-parliament-to-seek-cultural-property-abroad>; Handan Kazancı, “In restive region, Turkey fights rising tide of antiquities trafficking” Anadolu Agency, 23 October 2020 [accessed on 26 February 2023], <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/culture/in-restive-region-turkey-fights-rising-tide-of-antiquities-trafficking/2016111>; Seva Dursun, “Türkiye Kabusları Oldu: Müzayede Evleri Kaçak tarihi eserleri ‘başımız belaya girer’ diye satmıyor,” 2 November 2022, [accessed on 26 February 2023], <https://www.yenisafak.com/hayat/turkiye-kabuslari-oldu-muzayede-evleri-kacak-tarihi-eserleri-basimiz-belaya-girer-diye-satmiyor-3867824>.

⁷⁰⁰ “Açılış münasebetiyle bu eserimizi de sergiye dahil etmekten büyük mutluluk duyuyorum.” “Türkiye’ye Getirilen 16. Yüzyıla Ait İznik Çinisi Pano İstanbul’da Sergileniyor,” 27 June 2019, T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı website, accessed on 26 February 2023], <https://basin.ktb.gov.tr/TR-239069/turkiyeye-geri-getirilen-16-yuzyila-ait-iznik-cinisi-pano-istanbulda-sergileniyor.html>.

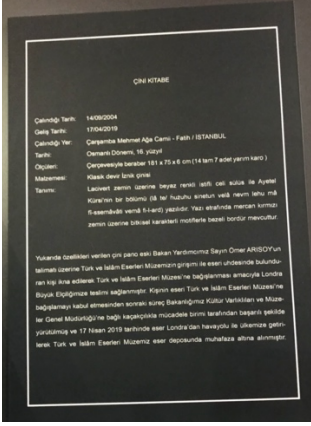


Figure 179. Object label of the tile panel. Source: Photo taken by the author, 2019.



Figure 180. The Minister Mehmet Nuri Ersoy in front of the recovered İznik panel placed in the Ottoman Gallery in TIEM in June 2019. Source: T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı website.

The object was displayed for some time with a detailed object label written only in Turkish (see Fig. 179). In addition to the physical and historical information about the object, the label gives the details about when and where the object was stolen, and when it was returned. Moreover, the label shares all the details about how the object was brought to the country:

“On the instruction of our former Deputy Minister, Mr. Ömer ARISOY, the above-mentioned tile panel was delivered to the Ambassador of London in order to be donated to the Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum, with the initiative of the Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum. The process after the person accepted to donate the artefact to the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art was successfully carried out by the anti-smuggling unit of the General Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museums of our Ministry, and the work was brought to our country by air from London on April 17, 2019 to be preserved in the warehouse of the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art.”⁷⁰¹

⁷⁰¹ Transcribed and translated from the object label entitled “Tile Inscription Panel.” The Turkish version reads: “Yukarıda özellikleri verilen çini pano eski Bakan Yardımcımız Sayın Ömer ARISOY’un talimatı üzerine Türk ve İslâm Eserleri Müzesinin girişimi ile eseri uhdesinde bulunduran kişi ikna edilere Türk ve İslâm Eserleri Müzesi’ne bağışlanması amacıyla Londra Büyük Elçimize teslimi sağlanmıştı. Kişinin eseri Türk ve İslâm Eserleri Müzesi’ne bağışlamayı Kabul etmesinden sonraki süreç Bakanlığımız Kültür Varlıkları ve Müzeler Genel Müdürlüğü’ne bağlı kaçakçılıkla mücadele birimi tarafından başarılı şekilde yürütülmüş ve 17 Nisan 2019 tarihinde eser Londra’dan havayolu ile ülkemize getirilmiştir.”

A recent example which was brought from the Netherlands to TİEM is a stone inscription from Bozgoca Mosque in İstanbul.⁷⁰² The inscription went on displayed in the Ottoman Gallery of TİEM following its arrival on 29 September 2022. It was placed in between two large-sized candlesticks dated to the fifteenth century, which were brought from Selimiye Mosque in Edirne to the collection of the museum (see Fig. 179). As expected, the object label of the inscription, written only in Turkish, states that it was brought back to the country from abroad. The label reads:

“Our inscription, which was located at an auction in the Netherlands, was returned to our country by the initiatives of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, with the cooperation of our Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Justice.

On our inscription dated H.17 Safer 1285 (M. 9 June 1868), it says, “This Mosque is a charity of El Hacı İbrahim Zade Hurşid Bey of Bozgoca, village of Şile District.”

Our work was brought back to our country on September 29, 2022 and started to be exhibited in our museum [TİEM].”⁷⁰³

The language of the label is quite possessive, with an emphasis on “our” object.

ülkemize getirilerek Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzemiz eser deposunda muhafaza altına alınmıştır.”

⁷⁰² Eda Özdenler and İsa Toprak, “Hollanda’ya kaçırılan kitabe yeniden ait olduğu topraklarda,” *Anadolu Ajansı*, 30 September 2022, [accessed 26 February 2023], <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/kultur/hollandaya-kacirilan-kitabe-yeniden-ait-oldugu-topraklarda/2698822>.

⁷⁰³ The label in Turkish reads: “Hollanda’da bir müzayedede tespit edilerek ülkemize iadesi sağlanan kitabemiz Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığımızın girişimleri Dışişleri Bakanlığımız ve Adalet Bakanlığımızın işbirliğiyle ülkemize getirildi.

H.17 Safer 1285 (M. 9 Haziran 1868) tarihli kitabemizin üzerinde ‘Şile Kazasının Bozgoca Kariyesinin El Hacı İbrahim Zade Hurşid Bey’in Camii Şerifi Hayratıdır.’ Yazmaktadır. Eserimiz 29 Eylül 2022 tarihinde ülkemize geri getirilerek müzemizde sergilenmeye başlanmıştır.” Transcribed and translated from the object label of the inscription.



Figure 181. The stone inscription between 15th century candlesticks in the Ottoman Period Gallery in TIEM in 2022. Source: Eda Özdener and İsa Toprak, “Hollanda’ya kaçırılan kitabe yeniden ait olduğu topraklarda,” *Anadolu Ajans*, 30 September 2022.

The aggressive recovery policy of the Turkish government became highly visible in the museum context starting with the 2014 reinstallation. As these recent examples have shown, this policy is still very active and visible in the display of TIEM.

The sixth gallery is devoted to the Ayyubid Period, which is dated between 1171 and 1250. The section label reads:

“The Ayyubid State, which covered a territory extending from Trablusgrap to Hamedan and to Ahlat and from Yemen to Malatya, was established after Selahaddin Eyyubi’s *destroying of the Fatimid Empire in Egypt*. Some notable political achievements of the Ayyubids, who had two centers, one in Cairo and one in Dımeşk (Damascus), were their struggle against the Crusaders and Selahaddin Eyyubi’s *taking back of Jerusalem and Palestine from the Crusaders Kingdom*. Selahaddin Eyyubi distributed his land before his death among his sons and appointed his son El-Melikü'l-Efdal as his successor, but he could not prevent the onset of internal conflicts which brought the end of the Ayyubid Empire.

The Ayyubids, who attached importance to military architecture as they were in constant struggle with the Crusaders, made Cairo a famous science center of the Middle Ages and thus enabled the preservation of important works by patronising scientists and artists. Medical and pharmaceutical written works were prepared with illustrations for the first time in the Ayyubid period. Mosul, Aleppo and Raqqa became major centers where glass, metal and ceramic works were produced. Turquoise coloured and brightly glazed Raqqa ceramics produced for

daily use and *wooden pillars covered with kufic script are important works of the Ayyubid period in the museum collection.*"⁷⁰⁴

The pre-2014 "the Ayyubids" section label was different than the new one in some respects, but I would like to touch on two differences. It previously stated that the Fatimids followed the Shiite branch of Islam, whereas the new label does not mention it. The previous label wrote that the Ayyubids used "[...] elements from Christian pictorial art, such as figures of saints" for the decoration of the objects.⁷⁰⁵ The new label does not mention this detail when providing information on the artistic heritage of the Ayyubids. After bringing an end to the Shiite Fatimid rule, the Ayyubids started to systematically reestablish Sunni ideology in Egypt through religious schools (*madradas*).⁷⁰⁶ This information is given in various museum catalogues labels, but the TIEM label omits this information. The pre-2014 label about the Ayyubids didn't mention this detail, too.

There is no manuscript from the Ayyubids in this gallery. Small ceramic objects and a few fragments from the Raqqa excavation are exhibited in a wall display case without a context. Most of these ceramics such as the ceramic stool (inv. 1548), the fruit stand (inv. no. 1557), and the bowl (inv. no. 1585), were already exhibited in the same way together with other ceramic examples from the Great Seljuks period in the previous display. After the reinstallation, the Ayyubid collection was separated from the Great Seljuks and gained a separate gallery space. In addition to the ceramics, a pair of wooden columns, mentioned in the section label, with floriated kufic script (inv. no. 145 A/B), are placed in the niche display case with an emphasis on their aesthetic value. The object label of these columns reads:

"Wooden Column

⁷⁰⁴ Transcribed from the section label entitled "The Ayyubid Period / *Eyyubiler Dönemi* 1171 – 1462." All the spelling mistakes and typos are intentionally left untouched. Italics have been added for emphasis.

⁷⁰⁵ Transcribed from the photograph of "*Eyyubi Dönemi ve Sanatı / Ayyubid Period Art*" section label, which was taken in 2012. All the spelling mistakes and typos left untouched intentionally. Source: TIEM Archive.

⁷⁰⁶ *Pergamonmuseum Berlin*, museum guide book (Berlin: Prestel 2017), 157; Bernard O'Kane (with contributions by Mohamed Abbas and Iman R. Abdulfattah), *The Illustrated Guide to the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo* (Cairo and New York: The American University in Cairo Press, 2012), 90; a section label entitled "Syria and the Jazira: around AD 1100–1250" in the John Addis: Islamic Art Gallery in the British Museum in 2014.

Ayyubid Period
Damascus, 13th century
Inv. no. 145 A/B''

One of the columns features verses 96-98 from Surah Maryam and verse 285 from Surah Bakara from the Quran. The origin of these columns is thought to be Damascus, but it is not known from which building they were taken. The Quranic inscriptions suggests that they might have been used in a religious building.⁷⁰⁷ Although the museum catalogue published in 2002 provides information on the inscriptions of the objects, there is no information about them in the museum space.

The following two rooms are "the Great Seljuks Galleries." Each room contains a wall display case and a niche display case. The section label reads:

"Great Seljuk Empire was founded after the Ghaznavid dynasty was defeated. Tughril was declared as the Sultan. Seljuks, who reigned in Afghanistan, Iran, East Anatolia, Iraq, Syria and Arabian Peninsula, had the widest borders and became an empire during the period of Alp Arslan and Malik-Shah. Seljuk Empire got an end with its last sultan Sanjar's death after the Kara Khitan invaded Transoxiana. Seljuk Empire, having its name from Seljuk who was the chief of Kinik Tribe of the Oghuz Turks, made Anatolia Turks' homeland with the victory of Battle of Manzikert. After the end of the Great Seljuk Empire, it continued as Anatolian Seljuk Empire

Seljuks' cultural heritage is extremely rich. The effect of the Seljuk art was felt over a wide area extending from Syria to India. *Seljuk art between the years 1000-1200 led to the establishment of a common language in the islamic world.* Wealth and prosperity prepared the environment for increasing the number of art works in all branches of art from architecture to handicrafts. Artists of Seljuk era brought together known shapes and ideas and made them reach to perfection. Manuscripts, ceramics and metal artifacts are the works belonging to the Seljuk period in the Museum's collection.

1040 Battle of Dandanaqan. Seljuk army in the command of Tughril and Chaghri Beg defeated Ghaznavids."⁷⁰⁸

The label states that the art of the Seljuks created a common language for the following Muslim dynasties. However, how this "common

⁷⁰⁷ Ölçer, *Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts*, 76-77.

⁷⁰⁸ Transcribed from the section label entitled "The Great Seljuks Period / *Büyük Selçuklular Dönemi* 1040 – 1157." All the spelling mistakes and typos are intentionally left untouched.

language” was formed is not explained. Although the museum contains manuscripts from the Seljuk period, there are only ceramics and metalworks on display in both galleries with simple object labels like the previous display.⁷⁰⁹ Only a ceramic bowl with a bird figure (inv. no. 4293) from Iran, which is placed alone in one of the niche display cases, has an interesting display note. Its object label reads: “One of the very rare examples of its period.” But again, there is no further explanation on why it is a rare example. In other Islamic art galleries or museums, the visual or material culture of the “Great Seljuks” is usually referred to as the “Seljuks in Iran,” such as in the Museum für Islamische Kunst, the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo, and the British Museum’s previous Islamic art gallery. However, the term “Great Seljuqs” is used in the new gallery, entitled “The Al-Bukhari Foundation Gallery: The Islamic World,” of the British Museum.⁷¹⁰

The collection of the Mamluk Dynasty is also placed in two galleries, like the Great Seljuks Gallery. In TIEM, the Mamluk galleries are placed just after the Great Seljuks. In other museums the collection of the Mamluks is generally placed after or together with the Ayyubids.⁷¹¹ The section label of the gallery states that the collection of the Mamluks is one of the richest collections of TIEM:

“The Mamluk State was born politically as a continuation of Eyyubids and became one of the greatest Empires of Medieval Age. Stopping the Mongol invasions and preventing the Middle East from coming under domination of the Mongols, Mamluks faded from the history scene after Sultan Yavuz Selim annexed Egypt and Syria to Ottoman territories.

Mamluks enhanced the Islamic Art in every area from architecture to handicrafts by making Cairo one of the most important cultural centre of Medieval Age Islam World, building kulliyes (complex of buildings in the Ottomans), mosques, madrasahs, mausoleums etc. in Cairo, Damascus and Aleppo and decorating inside with gorgeous manuscripts, gold and silver inlaid lecterns, oil lamps, candlesticks, carpets, etc.

⁷⁰⁹ Most of the displayed items were already exhibited before the reinstallation more or less in the same way. However, the metal hanging lamp (inv. no. 192) was exhibited alone in one of the niche display cases in the corridor between 1983 and 2012. Today it is placed next to other small objects.

⁷¹⁰ For example, the term appears in the section label entitled “Iran and Central Asia: Samarqand to Kashan 800–1250” in the new gallery (opened in 2018) of the British Museum.

⁷¹¹ Like the John Addis Islamic Art Gallery in the British Museum, the Museum für Islamische Kunst, and the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo.

In this period, it is an interesting and unprecedented characteristic of Mamluks to engrave emblems [blazons] indicating rank (degree) on artifacts. These emblems, which belonged to rulers like Sultans, Monarchs and public servants of high degree, had the designs of such simple objects as Panthers, lilies, cups, polo sticks etc. These emblems [blazons] which were generally found on daily goods are the indicators of soldier aristocracy of the Mamluk Sultanate in a regime based on the military units.”

Art works of the Mamluk Period are one of the richest collections of the museum.”⁷¹²

Different from the previous section label in the Ibrahim Pasha Palace, this time there is no mention of soldier slaves with Turkish origin “who took over the rule of the state.”⁷¹³ The previous label also started with the etymological description of the word “*mamluk*,” means “to own” in Arabic, referring to slave soldiers. This is a very standard information for the museum labels and museum catalogues when explaining the Mamluks. For example, the labels about the Mamluks in the MET, the Museum für Islamische Kunst, the V&A, and the British Museum’s previous Islamic art gallery start with the etymology of the word “*mamluk*.” On the other hand, these museum labels don’t contain any information on the Turkish roots of the Mamluks,⁷¹⁴ except, for the label from the previous Islamic art gallery (1989–2018) of the British Museum. This stated that the slave soldiers of the last Ayyubid sultan were “[...] Qipchaq Turks from the Southern Russia”⁷¹⁵ This detail about “Qipchaq Turks” separates it from the modern Turkish state connections.

Apart from the museum labels, a museum catalogue of the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo, dated 2012, briefly discusses the ethnicity of the Mamluks’ rulers:

⁷¹² Transcribed from the section label entitled “The Mamluk Period – *Memluk Dönemi* 1250–1517.” All the spelling mistakes and typos are intentionally left untouched.

⁷¹³ Transcribed from the photograph of the “Mamluk Period Art/*Memlük Devri* (1250–1517)” section label, which was taken in 2012. All the spelling mistakes and typos are intentionally left untouched. Source: TIEM Archive.

⁷¹⁴ Transcribed from the section label entitled “The Mamluk dynasty: AD 1250–1517,” in the John Addis: Islamic Art Gallery in the British Museum in 2014.

⁷¹⁵ “The term ‘*mamluk*’, meaning slave, is from the Arabic ‘to own’. Brought to Egypt to serve as bodyguards to the sultans, the mamluks of the last Ayyubid sultan were Qipchaq Turks from the Southern Russia. They overthrew the last Ayyubid and made his wife Shajarat al-Durr the first ruler of the new Mamluk dynasty.” Transcribed from the section label entitled “The Mamluk dynasty: AD 1250–1517” in the John Addis: Islamic Art Gallery in the British Museum in 2014.

“The Mamluks preserved many of the administrative features of their predecessors, but their ethnic separateness was maintained by imports of young Turkish slaves from the Caucasian and central Asian steppes.”⁷¹⁶

Like the British Museum label, here too the ethnicity of the Mamluks is given as Caucasian and central Asian, rather than just using the word “Turkish” as an umbrella term as the previous TIEM label of did. The overall analysis shows that the narrative about the Turkish ethnicity of the Mamluks seems outdated in the displays installed after the 2000s,⁷¹⁷ including TIEM.

The third paragraph of the section label is devoted to the blazons (heraldic symbols). The previous display’s section label explained the context of these emblems through a comparison to the coats of arms of European royal and aristocratic families. However, this time there is no such reference. The first gallery of the Mamluks contains five large-sized manuscripts. Some of these manuscripts—including two Qurans, two Juz (a section of the Quran), and an “album”⁷¹⁸—are displayed with their pages open, and the others are closed to exhibit their exceptional book bindings. The bronze hanging lamp (inv. no. 154) from the fifteenth century is placed alone in the niche display case as a “masterpiece.” Again, there is no transcription of the inscription on the lamp or further contextual information.

The second room contains three glass mosque lamp examples; which almost every Islamic art collection would contain at least one example. However, one of the examples in TIEM, the green one specifically, is a rare one because of its color. It is one of the first objects which entered to TIEM’s collection. This glass lamp was brought in 1898 from the mausoleum of a thirteenth-century Sufi mystic and poet, Mevlana Jalaluddin al-Rumi, in Konya to *Çinili* Kiosk and transferred to TIEM in 1911.⁷¹⁹ In addition, two bronze candlesticks and emblem

⁷¹⁶ O’Kane *The Illustrated Guide to the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo*, 115.

⁷¹⁷ The Museum für Islamische Kunst reinstalled its collection after 2001, but not until 2010 were the storages in the east and west reunited and reorganized. Stefan Weber, “New Spaces for Old Treasures: Plans for the New Museum of Islamic Art at the Pergamon Museum,” *Islamic Art and the Museums: Approaches to Art and Archaeology of the Muslim World in the Twentieth-First Century*, edited by Benoît Junod, Georges Khalil, Stefan Weber, and Gerhard Wolf (London: Saqi Books, 2012), 293-320: 294, 359.

⁷¹⁸ A manuscript (which was formed by merging three different treatises written by three different calligraphers) to present to the Mamluk Sultan Kayıtbay.

⁷¹⁹ Ernst Kühnel and Aziz Ogan, *İstanbul Arkeoloji Müzelerinde Şaheserler*, vol. III, *Çinili Köşk’de Türk ve İslam Eserleri Koleksiyonu* (Berlin and Leipzig: Werlag von Walter de Gruyter

fragments displayed in the previous Mamluk gallery are on display. The astrolabe (inv. no. 2970) from the Muhavvids dynasty, which before 2014 was displayed in Room F next to the objects from the Great Seljuks and the Ayyubids periods, is exhibited in the new Mamluk gallery, together with various small-sized objects. The object label states that it belongs to the “Mamluk period.”

A ceramic flask (inv. no. 1803), from the Mamluk period, displayed in the Anatolian Seljuks Gallery next to similar unglazed ceramic objects in the previous display, is now located in the “correct” gallery. In the niche display case of this gallery, a large basin (inv. no. 2959) is displayed, just like it was previously in a niche display case located in the corridor between 1983 and 2012. The Turkish object label of this basin contains a transcription of its inscription, whereas the English one does not have. There is another section label in this gallery entitled “Patronage in the Islamic Arts.” This is a new content created for the new installation for the first time in the museum’s history. It reads:

“In the Islamic world, all kinds of arts varying from architecture to handcrafts in every region and in every period were lively thanks to the patronage support of the caliphs, sultans and the state officials for the arts and artists.

As sciences and arts were supported by the sultans, who were scientists and artists themselves, scientists and artists were respected, rewarded, and were provided with the necessary conditions to enable them to create. The works and studies of scientists and artists were developed in the royal palaces reflecting the cultural level, power, wealth and glory of their period. It was even to the degree that artists were seen as precious as the war booties as seen in the example of Shah Ismail, who brought the famous muralist, Behzad to his palace together with the Timurid Sultan, Hüseyin Baykara’s rich library to his court in Tabriz and asked him to create art works for himself after conquering Herat in 1507.

These art works, which were prepared with the support of the arts patrons, also provide information about the period to which they belong (information regarding the date, artist name, for whom it was prepared etc.) and serve as documents with their records on them besides their artistic features. The museum collection has art works commissioned for the Ilkhanid Sultan Olcayto, Timurid Sultans Baysungur and Hussein Baykara, the Mamluk Sultans Kayitbay and

& Co., 1938), 24, 42. The lamps were made for the Jaukandar Sayf al-Din Ilmalak, who served the Mamluk sultan al-Nasir Muhammad and who built a madrasa in Cairo in 1319.

Gansu Gavre and the Ottoman sultans Bayezid II, Sultan Suleiman, Ahmed III and Murad III." ⁷²⁰

There is no specific relation between the displayed objects in this gallery and this section label.

The following gallery is the Ilkhanids. The section label emphasizes the contribution of the Ilkhanids into natural science, astronomy, and historiography. It reads:

"The Ilkhanid state was founded by Hülâgû, the brother of Mongolian Khan Mengü (1251-1259) in Iran in 1256. This state, which was referred as the Ilkhanid state due to the "ilkhan" title of Hülâgû, severed its ties with the Mongolian Empire completely after 1294, and was disintegrated as a result of the fights for the throne which started after Ebû Sa'îd Khan's death in 1323.

Ilkhanids attached great importance to architecture and book arts despite wars and civil unrest, and turned the cities of Tabriz and Sultâniye into science and culture centers where natural sciences, history writing and astronomy flourished. They patronized scientists, artists, architects, and craftsmen, and contributed greatly to the development of Islamic book arts. Many manuscripts showcasing the art of calligraphy, illumination and book binding with or without miniatures were prepared for the Sultan's treasury in this period, during which great masters of calligraphy produced artworks. Many copies of the "World History" with illustrations and "Shahnama" commissioned by the Ilkhanid Vizier Reşidüddin were prepared in subsequent periods.

Magnificent manuscripts of the Ilkhanid period, which include Koran fascicules prepared for the Sultan Olcaytu 's treasury, form the artifacts belonging to the Ilkhanid period in the museum collection." ⁷²¹

However, there are only Quran and juz copies—ten in total are exhibited in the gallery. All the object labels contain the calligrapher information of the displayed Qurans and juzs.

The Timurids gallery comes after the Ilkhanids which is a standard approach in Islamic art survey books and Islamic art museum displays when they follow a dynasty-based arrangement. The section label of this gallery, like the Ilkhanids, underlines the contributions of

⁷²⁰ Transcribed from the section label entitled "Patronage in the Islamic Arts/ *İslam Sanatında Hamilik (patronaj)*." All the spelling mistakes and typos are intentionally left untouched.

⁷²¹ Transcribed from the section label entitled "The Ilkhanid Period/ *İlhanlı Dönemi 1256 – 1353*." All the spelling mistakes and typos left untouched intentionally.

the Timurids in the arts of the book and even provides the names of the calligraphers and miniature artists. It reads:

“The foundation of one of the greatest empires of the Middle Ages, extending from Anatolia to India and from the Caucasus to Oman, was laid in 1370, after Timur's taking Samarkand. Although Timur distributed his land among his sons and grandsons, and appointed his grandson Pir Muhammed as the crown prince, he could not prevent the crown fights resulting with the fact that Timurid state could only survive until 1507.

Herat, Shiraz, Isfahan and Samarkand became culture-art centers during the Timurid period, and architecture and book arts overshadowed the other arts as it is the case with the Ilkhanids. Miniature painters such as Mevlana Halil Hâce, Gıyas el-Dîn, Behzâd, and famous calligraphers such as Tebrizli Cafer, Şultan Ali Meşhedî worked for the Timurid princes, artists themselves, who turned their palaces into art academies. During the Timurid period highly distinguished illustrated copies of the most important works of Persian literature were prepared, and manuscripts whose book bindings were prepared with great care, were decorated with high-quality illumination. After the Timurid period, which was the most brilliant period in terms of Islamic book arts, artists endeavored to make the “style,” which was demonstrative of this period more perfect.

Manuscripts and metal trophies are the artifacts from the Timurid era in the museum collection.”⁷²²

The reinstalled Timurids gallery and the previous one are quite similar in terms of displayed objects. Before, there were two brass jugs exhibited next to each other in a wall display case, and today there are three of them. Today, there are eight manuscripts, including a juz and copies of the Masnavi, whereas there were six manuscripts previously. Some of the manuscripts were displayed closed to show their highly decorated bindings. A page of the manuscript (inv. 1950) contains miniatures, including human figures, and is the only miniature painting example in the gallery.

A section label entirely devoted to the Timurids entitled “The Timurids (1370–1507)” in the Museum für Islamische Kunst in Berlin provides an interesting comparison. It reads:

⁷²² Transcribed from the section label entitled “The Timurid Period/ *Timurlu Dönemi* 1370–1507.” All the spelling mistakes and typos left untouched intentionally.

“From 1369 on, Mongols and Turks under the emir Timur, set out once again from Central Asia to devastate the eastern part of the Islamic world. In 1402, Timur defeated the Ottomans and conquered both Iraq and Syria.

Timur’s successors became renowned partly for their sponsorship of the arts and sciences. His grandson Ulugh Beg, the ruler of Samarkand from 1447–1449, was an important astronomer. Another grandson, Baisongqur, founded an academy for calligraphy and painting at his court in Herat in around 1414. Jâmi, one of the great Persian poets, also lived here. *Timur’s successor Babur established the dynasty of the Moghals in northern India in 1526.*

Timur ordered craftsmen and artists to be brought into his capital, Samarkand from the conquered towns and cities. *Europe learned about Timur’s court and Samarkand through the Spanish envoy Clavijo. The Timurid buildings in Central Asia, Iran and Afghanistan were lavishly decorated with ceramic tiles, and especially with brightly coloured faience mosaics.*

As under the Il-Khans, a strong Chinese influence was apparent in the arts. Large quantities of Chinese blue-and-white porcelain made their way to Iran, where they increasingly brought about changes in local ceramics manufacture. Few of the famous carpets, silks and brocade fabrics, have survived. Alongside Herat, Shiraz and Tabriz were centres for the arts of the book.”⁷²³

The section label in Berlin starts by stating that the Timurids defeated the Ottomans in 1402. However, there is no such information in the Timurids Gallery in TIEM. Unlike the label in the Museum für Islamische Kunst, the TIEM label does not mention about the Mughals, a dynasty which was founded by Timur’s successor in 1526. This may be because a Mughal collection does not exist in TIEM. Additionally, the TIEM label seems limited compared to the label in the Museum für Islamische Kunst in terms of conveying the artistic/ cultural history of the Timurids, where architecture, ceramics, textiles, and manuscript production are discussed. The TIEM label almost exclusively focuses on the arts of the book, both in the section label and in the display.

In the new display, the Safavids and the Qajars have separate galleries. The Safavid Gallery in TIEM contains four manuscripts (three Quran copies and a juz) and four metal objects—two candlesticks (inv.

⁷²³ Transcribed from the section label entitled “The Timurids (1370–1507)” in the Museum für Islamische Kunst in Berlin in 2019. Italics have been added for emphasis.

nos. 99-100), a “beggar’s bowl”⁷²⁴ (*keşkül*, inv. no. 2960) and an “astronomical sphere”⁷²⁵ (inv. no. 3989, spherical astrolabe used by both astronomers and astrologers). Once again, no information is provided about the functions and histories of these objects. Although, a separate gallery for the Safavid collection was formed, the section label is less detailed about the arts of the Safavids compared to the previous one. The label reads:

“The Safavid Empire, which was to be qualified as the first national state, was established after Shah Ismail's victory over the Akkoyunlu State [Aqqoyunlu] in 1501 resulting with his domination first in Tabriz and then in whole parts of Iran. The Safavids established diplomatic relations with Europe, and strengthened trade and cultural ties with the Europeans whereas they *had to constantly fight with the Ottomans in the west* and with Uzbeks in the northeast until their final removal from the history scene by the Afghans in 1722.

Owing to the fact that Safavid Shahs patronised artists and the arts, the cities of Tabriz, Kazvin, Isfahan, Herat, Shiraz, Kashan and Mashhad became important art centers leading to countless productions of works of literature, arts of the book, ceramics, metal, carpet and fabric crafts and architecture. During the Safavid period, architecture developed most in Isfahan, which was embellished with mosques, madrasahs and palaces. Blue-and-white ceramics reminiscent of the Chinese porcelain, wall tiles produced with the luster technique, silk carpets, garden carpets, carpets with vases, “Polonaise” carpets, gold and silver threaded embroidery, brocades, velvets, gold covered or lacquered-bound manuscripts with or without miniatures are the demonstrations of the support for arts during the Safavid period.

Carpets and manuscripts are artifacts belonging to the Safavid period in the museum collection.”⁷²⁶

The new label has significant differences from the previous TIEM label. Shiism, the second largest branch of Islam, became the state religion for the first time in Iran under Safavid rule. The conflict between the Sunni Ottoman Empire, who followed the first and largest branch of Islam, and

⁷²⁴ This is how the object label describes the object. In the museum catalogue dated 2002, it is described as a “brass keşkül” which was used to accept alms or collect food by dervishes to distribute in their lodges. Ölçer, Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art, 353.

⁷²⁵ This is how the object label describes the object. The correct term would be “celestial globe” or “spherical astrolabe.” It was used by both astronomers and astrologers. Ölçer, Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art, 352.

⁷²⁶ Transcribed from the section label entitled “The Safavid Period/ *Safeviler Dönemi* 1501–1722.” All the spelling mistakes and typos are intentionally left untouched.

the Shiite Safavid Empire was almost constant, and the doctrinal differences contributed to the conflict. This information was provided in the previous Safavid section label:

“[...] Shiite doctrine was the principal vehicle of unification among the various regions of Iran. As the Safavids consolidated their military power, they embarked on long and hard-fought wars with the Ottomans-representing Sunni Islam-to the west, and with the Uzbeks to the east. The constant conflict between the Ottomans and the European powers occasionally prompted European nations to ally with the Safavids against their common enemy and these relations with Europe are reflected in Iranian art of the late Safavid period.”

Although this section label was probably written around the 1980s, the information was still valid. Following the Shiite branch and making it the official religion of the state was one of the most significant aspects of the Safavid period, since this is still true today. The information about the Safavids being Shia can be seen in various museum labels of the important Islamic art collections. The previous Islamic art gallery in the British Museum had a section label entitled “Iran under the descendants of Timur (Tamerlane) and the early Safavids: AD 1370–1576.” The last paragraph of this label states:

“[...] The Safavid leader, Isma’il, defeated the Turkmans and was crowned shah in Tabriz in AD 1501. By AD 1510 he had reunited Iran under the mantle of Shi’ism, the state religion, Isma’il’s son, Shah Tahmasp (AD 1524–76) was an inspired patron of illustrated and illuminated manuscripts, but lost interest in art when he shifted his capital to Qazvin and adopted stricter religious practices.”⁷²⁷

“The Jameel Gallery of Islamic Art” in the V&A has a label entitled “Iran under the Safavids” that reads:

“The Safavid dynasty was established in 1501 by Shah Isma’il, the young but charismatic leader of the dervish brotherhood to founded by his ancestor, Shaykh Safi al-Din. Isma’il reunited Iran and made a branch of Islam known as Shi’ism the religion of the state, which it has remained until today.

⁷²⁷ Transcribed from the section label entitled “Iran under the descendants of Timur (Tamerlane) and the early Safavids: AD 1370–1576” in the John Addis: Islamic Art Gallery in the British Museum in 2014.

Many of Shah Isma'il's successors, including his son Tahmasp, were great patrons of the arts. They developed a dynastic style in which human figures played an important role, in strong contrast to their main rivals, the Sunni Ottomans, who generally avoided such motifs.

The first Safavid capital was Tabriz, followed by Qazvin and Isfahan, from where Shah Abbas the Great (ruled 1588–1629) reorganized the state on more efficient lines. The country was opened up to international trade and the economy grew. In 1722, however, Isfahan fell to Afghan invaders and the Safavid state collapsed.⁷²⁸

A label entitled "The Safavids in Iran (1501–1737)" in the Museum für Islamische Kunst in Berlin begins by directly stating that the Shiism was accepted as the state religion. However, this label does not provide information about any of the wars the Safavids fought. The label in Berlin is more focused on the trade relations of the Safavids and their artistic production:

"Ismail I (1501–1524), the founder of the Safavids dynasty, made the Twelver Shia into the state religion and Tabriz his capital city. Shah Tahmasp (1524–1576) subsequently moved the capital to Qazvin. The empire had its heyday under Shah Abbas I (1587–1629) when it also reached its maximum territorial expansion. The centrally located city of Isfahan developed into the most important trading centre and became the country's capital. Iran enjoyed especially good relations with the Mughal rulers in India. Economic problems, unrest within the country and the Afghan invasion in the early 18th century triggered the empire's decline and dissolution.

Under Abbas I, some of the most beautiful buildings and squares in the Islamic world were completed. Building decoration was characterized by faience mosaics, as well as compositions of painted tiles and wall frescos. From the illumination studios of the residences of Tabriz, Qazvin and Isfahan came masterpieces of Persian miniature painting and calligraphy.

Inspired by Chinese porcelain, master ceramics from Kirman, Mashad and Yazd created very fine vessels, painted in polychrome as well as blue and lustre colours. The Safavids were renowned for their armourers and coppersmiths, instrument makers, wood-carvers and intarsia masters.

From the carpet manufactures in Tabriz, Kashan, Isfahan, Kirman and Herat came the finest carpets for the court of the Shah, as well as for the domestic and foreign market. The textile manufacturers in Kashan,

⁷²⁸ Transcribed from the section label entitled "Iran under the Safavids" in "The Jameel Gallery of Islamic Art" of the Victoria and Albert Museum in 2014.

Tabriz, Yazd, and Isfahan supplied damasks, brocades, velvets and embroideries of great beauty and elegance."⁷²⁹

Finally, one can see that the section label entitled "The Early Safavids, 1501-1587" located in the MET's Islamic art galleries also contains the information about the state religion of the Safavids:

"In the early sixteenth century, the Safavids, a dynasty descended from the Sufi shaikhs of Ardabil in northwestern Iran, united eastern and western Iran. In 1501, Isma'il I (c.1501-24) wrested control of Azerbaijan from the Aq Quyunlu Turkmen with the help of the Qizilbash (Turkmen warriors) and was crowned in Tabriz as the first Safavid shah. Upon his accession, Twelver Shi'i Islam became the official religion of the Iranian state. Royal patronage of the arts focused on illustrated manuscripts and exquisite portable objects. [...]"⁷³⁰

Like the Ottoman state, the majority of the Muslim population in Türkiye more, more than seventy percent, is Sunni. Following the establishment of the Republic of Türkiye, the caliphate was abolished on March 3rd, 1924, and the Directorate of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı*) was founded the same day by orders of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881–1938). The role of the Directorate of Religious Affairs is to regulate Sunni Islamic doctrine, practice, education, and the maintenance of mosques and masjids. Since its establishment, the Directorate of Religious Affairs has been a politicized institution, but it became even more politicized after 2010.⁷³¹ The difference between the previous "the Safavid Period" section label and the current one can be interpreted in view of the cultural policies of the current government in Türkiye. The government mainly describes its national identity through the Ottoman and Sunni Islamic heritage and promotes this ideology via cultural policies.⁷³² Therefore, it may not be so surprising to see a neglect of Shiite narratives.

⁷²⁹ Transcribed from the section label entitled "The Safavids in Iran (1501–1737)" in the Museum für Islamische Kunst in Berlin in 2019.

⁷³⁰ Section label entitled "The Early Safavids, 1501-1587" from the MET's Islamic art galleries, located in Gallery 462. Melissa Forstrom "Interpretation and Visitors in Two Islamic Art Exhibitions," unpublished PhD thesis (London: The University of Westminster, 2017), 326.

⁷³¹ For detailed information on the subject see Ahmet Erdi Öztürk and Semiha Sözeri, "Diyanet as a Turkish Foreign Policy Tool: Evidence from the Netherlands and Bulgaria," *Politics and Religion* (September 2018) vol.11, no.3, 624-648: 630.

⁷³² Ayşe H. Köksal, "Ekonomi ve Siyaset Bağlamında Müzeler," *Marka Takva Tuğra: AKP Döneminde Kültür ve Politika*, edited by Kemal İnal, Nuray Sancar, and Ulaş Başar Gezgin (Istanbul: Evrensel Kültür Kitaplığı, 2015), 250; Taner Timur, "AKP: Sosyal Sınıf, Siyaset ve Kültür," *Marka Takva Tuğra: AKP Döneminde Kültür ve Politika*, edited by Kemal İnal, Nuray

The Fatimids, another significant Shiite dynasty in the history of Islamic art, active between 909 and 1171 in North Africa, with their center in Cairo, are not represented in TIEM. Even the name of Cairo, meaning the “victorious,” was given by the Fatimids following the conquest of Egypt in 969. Large parts of Syria, Arabian Peninsula, and Sicily were also ruled by the Fatimids for a time. There are not so many treasures that have survived from the Fatimids, due to the destruction of their palaces and libraries. However, highly skillfully-made, and luxurious objects—such as ivory caskets and oliphants decorated with animal figures and inscriptions, rock-crystal bottles, lustered ceramics, inscriptions on stone, decorative architectural fragments made of stucco, stone, or wood, and textiles known as “tiraz”—have survived and found their ways to museum collections. Comprehensive Islamic art collections around the world—such as the British Museum, the V&A, the MET, the Museum für Islamische Kunst, the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo, and the Aga Khan Museum—include the Fatimids dynasty’s heritage into their displays.

It is a surprise that TIEM, which describes itself as a comprehensive collection of Islamic art and encompasses almost 40,000 items from the eighth to the twentieth century in its collection, does not have a collection of Fatimid objects, except for a manuscript—chapters of the Quran (inv. no. 431 A-B)—brought to TIEM in 1914 from the mausoleum of Murad Hüdavendigâr (1362–1389) in Bursa.⁷³³ The lack of a Fatimid collection in TIEM can be justified in light of the fact that not many items have survived from this dynasty. However, surprisingly, only the Quran copy, the “holy script” which is believed by Muslims to be unchanging, was worth keeping in the sultan’s mausoleum. Since the majority of the collection of TIEM was formed during the Ottoman Empire, the absence of Fatimid material culture can be explain by a lack of interest on the part of the Ottomans in this dynasty. The disinterest of the Ottomans might be explained with a quotation from Nazan Ölçer, who wrote a short section about the Fatimid dynasty in the 2002 museum catalogue: “Consequently their philosophy and art diverged from that of

Sancar, and Ulaş Başar Gezgin (Istanbul: Evrensel Kültür Kitaplığı, 2015), 24; Kemal İnal, “AKP’nin Bitmeyen Pedagojik Sınavı,” *Marka Takva Tuğra: AKP Döneminde Kültür ve Politika*, edited by Kemal İnal, Nuray Sancar, and Ulaş Başar Gezgin (Istanbul: Evrensel Kültür Kitaplığı, 2015), 458-464.

⁷³³ Ölçer, Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art, 54.

the Islamic lands further to the east.”⁷³⁴ There is no evidence of an attempt to include and developed the Fatimid collection within TIEM through the museum’s more than 100-year history, showing that the Shiite culture is still neglected, just like in the previous ethnography and art galleries of TIEM.

The next gallery is “The Qajar Period” room. The section label provides brief information on the political history of the dynasty with a focus on their conflict with the England. In addition, the influence of European painting styles on Qajar portraits is superficially mentioned:

“Qajar Empire was founded after Agha Muhammed, the leader of Qajar Turks, who settled in Iran coming from Turkestan during the Timurids era by their ruling out the Afsharid Dynasty and getting the title of Shah in 1796. Qajar Empire, which faced an intense English oppression after the defeats against Russia which resulted in the losing of Caucasus territory, came under the sway of the English, and was erased from the history scene after Riza Pehlevi forced the last Qajar Shah Ahmed Mirza to leave the throne in 1925.

A striking characteristic of Qajar Art is that the portraits of members of Dynasty and army commanders are portrayed on the works produced with the effect of European painting and portrait. In this Period, small daily usage stuffs like pencil case, mirrors, manuscript were produced generally by using lacquer paint technique.

Pencil cases, mirrors and manuscripts form the pieces in the museum collection belonging to the Qajar Period.”⁷³⁵

As the label states, there are many objects decorated with the lacquer technique: for example, three book bindings of four manuscripts, pen boxes, hand mirrors, game cards (inv. no LT 765), and hookah parts (inv. no. LT 670-671) are on display. The hookah part and the game cards were probably donated to the museum probably after the death of Leyla Turgut in 1988. In addition, three metal objects—a ewer and two jars from the eighteenth century—were placed next to these objects. All the objects in this gallery are display with an emphasis on their aesthetic qualities rather than their cultural meanings.

Comparison between the section labels on the Qajars in the previous Islamic art gallery of the British Museum, current Islamic art

⁷³⁴ Ibid.

⁷³⁵ Transcribed from the section label entitled *The Qajar Period/Kaçar Dönemi*, all the spelling mistakes and typos are left intentionally untouched.

gallery of the V&A, and TIEM provides an interesting perspective. The label entitled “Qajar Iran: AD 1779-1924” in the John Addis: Islamic Art Gallery in the British Museum reads:

“Qajar art takes its name from the Qajar rulers of eighteenth and nineteenth century Iran.

After the fall of the Safavid Dynasty in AD 1722, a ruthless general, Nadir Khan, emerged as a new leader and declared himself shah in AD 1736. Although he sacked and looted Delhi in AD 1739, he was an ineffective ruler and was assassinated in AD 1747. In the anarchy that followed a tribal chief, Karim Khan Zand, seized power. Unlike his predecessor, Karim Khan Zand commissioned significant buildings in his capital, Shiraz, and oil paintings, including portraits of himself with his kinsmen.

Upon Karim Khan Zand's death in AD 1779, the leader of a rival tribe, Agha Muhammad Qajar killed the last Zand ruler and took the throne for himself. His successor, Fath Ali Shah, strove to equate his dynasty with the Achaemenids of Iran's glorious pre-Islamic past. *In reality Iran grew increasingly weak during the nineteenth century AD as a result of European competition, Russian military pressure and friction between conservatives and reformers.* The eclectic style of Qajar art which ranges from European-style portraiture to Shi'a processional standards reflects these various historical strains.⁷³⁶

The section label entitled “Iran under the Qajars” in the “The Jameel Gallery of Islamic Art” of the Victoria and Albert Museum reads:

“The Safavid state collapsed in 1722. The crises that followed were brought to an end when the Qajar dynasty reunited the country in the 1790s. They ruled until 1925.

The second Qajar ruler was Fath All Shah, who commissioned art on a grand scale during his reign from 1797 to 1834. Because Iran had been isolated for so long, the work done for him mixes richness with a certain naïveté. Soon, though, contact with the outside world was re-established, and over time Qajar art began to reflect developments elsewhere, such as the use of photography by painters.

An awareness of Iran's past remained strong. In the late 19th century, there was a revival of Safavid decoration, which was popular both locally and among European collectors.⁷³⁷

⁷³⁶Transcribed from the section label entitled “Qajar Iran: AD 1779-1924” in the John Addis: Islamic Art Gallery in the British Museum in 2014. Italics have been added for emphasis.

⁷³⁷ Transcribed from the section label entitled “Iran under the Qajars” in the “The Jameel Gallery of Islamic Art” of the Victoria and Albert Museum in 2014.

Both the British Museum and the V&A have comprehensive and diverse collections of Islamic art. They both are the leading figures not just for the museum world in general but also specifically for the display of Islamic art collections. That neither of these institutions mention the conflict between the British Empire and the Qajars is surprising, whereas the curators of TIEM obviously think that this information is relevant for the Qajars gallery. For an institution like the V&A, which used agents in the field like Major General Robert Murdoch Smith⁷³⁸ (1835–1900) to collect objects from both Safavids and Qajar dynasties, is not mentioning the political interaction between Iran and Britain is curious.

The ceremonial hall (*divanhane*), originally divided into the winter and summer ceremonial halls, contains three galleries. The winter ceremonial hall has two galleries entitled “The Beyliks [Emirates/Principalities] and Early Ottoman Period in the first half of the 14th–15th centuries” and “Anatolian Seljuk Period 1075 – 1308.” The summer hall is reserved for the “Ottoman Empire.” Between 1983 and 2012, the transition between galleries was slightly different. After the first winter ceremonial hall—where the gallery of “the Beyliks and Early Ottoman Periods” is located today—the visitor had to pass through the Anatolian Seljuks gallery. The Ottoman Empire gallery could only be reached through the Anatolian Seljuks gallery. Today, after seeing the small rooms and the corridor, the museum visitor enters the “the Beyliks and Early Ottoman Period,” where he/she can move to the Anatolian Seljuks gallery or the Ottoman Empire gallery.

Before moving to the display of the galleries, I would like to provide brief information on the Anatolian Seljuks (also known as the Seljuks of Rum, 1075–1308) and the beyliks (principalities or emirates),

⁷³⁸ Smith was engaged by the museum as their agent to collect objects in the field starting from 1873 until 1884. A contract to construct a telegraph line for efficient communication between London and India was consequently signed in Tehran after prolonged discussions in 1863. According to the current conventions, British experts should have supervised the construction. Smith was charged to supervise the construction in Iran in 1864. He became the director of the Iranian section of the telegraph line belonging to the Indo-European Telegraph Department and had a long career in Iran until 1885. After 1888, he became the director of the Edinburgh Museum of Science and Art (Royal Scottish Museum), where he also collected materials from the Islamic world, especially from Iran. He stayed in this position until his death in 1900. Stephen Vernoit, *Discovering Islamic Art*, 214. For detailed information on Robert Murdoch Smith, see Jennifer M. Scarse, “Major General Sir Robert Murdoch Smith KCMG and Anglo-Iranian Relations in Art and Culture,” in *Anglo-Iranian Relations Since 1800*, edited by Vanessa Martin (London & New York: Routledge, 2005), 21–35. He had a long career in Iran from 1864–1888.

and their historical relationship to the Ottoman dynasty. The Anatolian Seljuks were “a federation of Turkish tribes, each led by its own bey, or leader, who recognized the sovereignty of the Seljuk dynasty.”⁷³⁹ The Ottoman *beylik* was one of these tribes until the decline of the Seljuks, who were defeated by the Mongols in 1243.⁷⁴⁰ The Seljuks became a tribute-paying vassals to the Mongols and lost their power. Following this, the Turkish principalities, except the Ottomans, declared independence. However, the Ottomans remained loyal until the very end of the Seljuks but eventually declared independence in 1299/1300.

The gallery “The Beyliks and Early Ottoman Period, The first half of the 14th–15th centuries,” contains large-sized carpets, prayer rugs, and various objects from different mediums. Looking at the gallery timeline, one expects to see carpets/objects from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. There is only one prayer rug from Konya, dated the late fifteenth century (inv. no. 744). The other four are dated to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In the pre-2014 period, this room had more carpets and prayer rugs on display. Small objects such as İznik Milletus ceramics dated to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, İznik tiles from the sixteenth century, and an inlaid ivory wooden Quran case dated to the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century (inv. no. 33) are placed in a standing display case in the middle of the gallery with minimal information. A tile inscription from Konya dated to the thirteenth century (inv. no. 1997) is hung on the wall. How and where this inscription came from to the museum collection is not given, maybe because the origin is unknown. In addition to the date and inventory number, its object label provides the translation of the inscription both in English and Turkish: 35th and 34th verses of the surah Fatir from the Quran.⁷⁴¹ The section panel of this gallery reads:

“The period of Beyliks refers to the time period, during which statelets appeared after the weakening of Anatolian Seljuk Sultanate and later reunited under the flag of Ottoman Empire. This time period also refers to the ‘Early Ottoman Period’ of the Ottomans, which were named after their founder and became an empire ruling over three continents.

⁷³⁹ Feroz Ahmad, *Turkey: the Quest for Identity* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2003), 1.

⁷⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴¹ The English transcription of the object label: “Translation of the Inscription: “Praise to be Allah, who has removed from us (all) sorrow: for our Lord is indeed Oft – Forgiving Ready to appreciate (service) Quran 35/34, Konya, 13th century, Inv. no. 1997.”

The fact that these Beyliks fought with each other in a trial to survive and felt the intense pressure that came from some powerful states such as Ilkhanids, Karakoyunlus and Akkoyunlus, affected their art considerably.

The arts of the Beyliks, among which architecture was more important than handicrafts, were reflected in different ways in different places. These differences are new pursuits of art for creating a resource for Ottoman Art in western Anatolia, keeping the art tradition of Seljuks in the central Anatolia, creating a new style beside the art traditions of Mesopotamia and Syria and shaping the art under the political effect of Azerbaijan in Eastern Anatolia.

Some carpet, wood, ceramic tile, ceramic and mineral artworks reached to present day from the Period of Beyliks."⁷⁴²

The label states that Ottoman art formed as a result of various styles, but the Seljuks were the direct and most significant influential source for the Ottomans. Although the some of the Anatolian principalities such as Aqqoyunlu and Qaraqoyunlu produced highly artistic manuscripts, some with miniatures, none of them are displayed in this gallery. Like in the pre-2014 display, the early Ottoman period is displayed with the beylik period in a single gallery space. The beylik period is overlooked in the historiography. Prominent historian Cemal Kafadar (b.1954) criticizes how the "beylik" period is evaluated in historical studies:

"[...] a 'beylik' (emirate, principality) period' is recognized but almost always located within the orbit of the rising Ottoman state: worse, it is also conventional to move straight into a narrative of 'Ottoman Anatolia' at the turn of the fourteenth century. [...] the period of four and a half centuries between Manzikert (1071) and the Kalender Çelebi revolt (1526), instigated during the Ottoman incorporation of the Dulkadirid lands, the last remaining principality, needs to be characterized in its own right, at least for the purpose of cultural and social history."⁷⁴³

The permanent display of TİEM has followed this approach in the Ibrahim Pasha Palace displays since 1984.

⁷⁴² Transcribed from the section label entitled "The Beyliks and Early Ottoman Period The first half of the 14th – 15th centuries/ *Beylikler ve Erken Osmanlı Dönemi 14. – 15. Yüzyılın ilk yarısı.*" All the spelling mistakes and typos are intentionally left untouched. Italics have been added for emphasis.

⁷⁴³ Cemal Kafadar, "A Rome of One's Own: Reflections on Cultural Geography and the Identity in the Lands of Rum," *Muqarnas* vol. 24 (2007), 7-25: 8.

The second room of the winter ceremonial hall was devoted to the Anatolian Seljuks, like the pre-restoration display.⁷⁴⁴ The Anatolian Seljuks were called the Seljuks of Rum (*Selçükiyân-ı Rûm*) in their own time.⁷⁴⁵ However, the terms “Anatolian Seljuks” (*Anadolu Selçukluları*) and “Seljuks of Türkiye” (*Türkiye Selçukluları*) are in use today. “Anatolian Seljuks” is the most mainstream term, which is also used in schoolbooks in Türkiye. Following the establishment of the secular Republic of Türkiye in 1923, “[...] ethnocentric nationalist perspectives have led native scholars to highlight the ‘Turkish’ element over the ‘Islamic’ in Seljuk, Beylik, and Ottoman [...]” cultural heritage.⁷⁴⁶

Following the reinstatement, TIEM presents the heritage of the Seljuks as if there were two different dynasties. The pre-2014 display in the Ibrahim Pasha Palace exhibited the Great Seljuks and Ayyubids in a single gallery and then the Anatolian Seljuks in the following one, which was followed by the Mamluks. Just like today, between 1983 and 2012, the Anatolian Seljuk objects were also placed in one of the rooms of the ceremonial hall. This detail breaks the chronological arrangement of the museum to emphasize the link between the Ottomans and the Anatolian Seljuks.

Today, the Great Seljuks have their own galleries, which are located in between the Ayyubid and Mamluk galleries. Although the Anatolian Seljuks are accepted as the followers of the Great Seljuks, the distance within the museum space between these two galleries makes this connection difficult to understand. The arrangement of the Anatolian Seljuks, the beylik period and the early Ottomans, and the Ottoman Period galleries creates a narrative of continuity, which is rooted in the late Ottoman period but became much stronger in the early republican period and which still seems valid.

⁷⁴⁴ “The Turkic tribes, under the leadership of the Seljuks, established their foothold in Anatolia in 1071, five years after the Norman invasion of England. Alparslan defeated the Byzantine emperor Diogenes at the battle of Manzikert and laid the foundations of the Seljuk Empire, the Seljuks of Rum, with their capital at Konya. Rum was the term used by early Muslims to describe the Byzantines as ‘Romans’ and their empire was called the ‘land of Rum’. Later the term was applied to Asia Minor or Anatolia and, until the present, to the Greeks of Turkey.” Ahmad, *Turkey: the Quest for Identity*, 1.

⁷⁴⁵ Kafadar, “A Rome of One’s Own,” 8; Faruk Sümer, “Selçuklular,” *TDVİA* (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2009) vol. 36: 380.

⁷⁴⁶ Sibel Bozdoğan and Gülru Necipoğlu, “Entangled Discourses: Scrutinizing Orientalist and Nationalist Legacies in the Architectural Historiography of the ‘Lands of Rum,’” *Muqarnas* vol. 24 (2007), 2-6: 3.

The section label of the gallery provides brief information about the political history and cultural heritage of the Anatolian Seljuks:

“Anatolian Seljuk Sultanate, which was established as a half-independent Atabeylik by Turkish emirs under the auspices of Seljuk Sultanate after the Manzikert victory, became a powerful state and got the other Atabeyliks under control in a short time. Seljuk Sultanate, which survived in Anatolia for 233 years in spite of the fight against the other Atabeyliks in Anatolia, Eastern Rome, Crusaders and the Mongolian invasion, succumbed to the Mongolian Invasion after the War of Köseadağı and became a Mongolian state in 1308.

Seljuk Sultanate left a splendid cultural heritage including a variety of arts from architecture to handicrafts in Anatolia. *Architecture showed a different evolution process compared to those in other Islamic countries and new plan schemes have emerged. Stone materials were used in the buildings.* During this period, in which all types of glamorization with glazed and baked soil (tile, tile mosaic, glazed brick), stone, plaster and wood workings developed to their highest point, geometric, vegetable and figured (human and animal) compositions were mostly used.

Plaster - stone embosses, carpets, wooden and ceramic creations in the museum collection are among the authentic samples of Seljuk art.”⁷⁴⁷

The label states that “new plan schemes have emerged” in the Anatolian Seljuks period, however it does not explain what these are.



Figure 182. A general view of the Anatolian Seljuks Period Gallery in TIEM. Source: Photo taken by the author, 2021.

⁷⁴⁷ Transcribed from the section label entitled “The Anatolian Seljuk Period/ *Anadolu Selçuklular Dönemi* 1075 – 1308.” All the spelling mistakes and typos are intentionally left untouched.

The gallery displays rare examples of large-sized carpets and fragments from the thirteenth century on the wall (Fig. 182). The room also contains stoneworks with inscriptions or figures and woodworks such as window and door panels, a Quran lectern, and the above-mentioned cenotaph. In addition, there is a Quran copy (inv. no. 437) exhibited together with the wooden lectern in a niche display case. The translation of the lectern's inscription is written on its object label. There is also a standing display case holding stone and plaster objects of different sizes, such as jars, cups, and a flask, along with their fragments.

An Anatolian Seljuks collection is not a common display theme in other Islamic art collections. Usually, the visual and material culture of the Great Seljuks (1040–1157) and the Anatolian Seljuks (Seljuks of Rum, 1075–1308) are presented together, since the latter is accepted as the continuation of the Great Seljuks. For example, the previous Islamic art gallery (John Addis, active between 1989 and 2017) of the British Museum only included the Great Seljuks material in their permanent exhibition and not the Anatolian Seljuks. On the other hand, “the Seljuks of Rum” have a gallery in the Museum für Islamische Kunst. The collection in Berlin is similar to TIEM in some ways, such as both displaying mainly wooden objects and ceramic pieces. The recently renewed object labels provide an interesting insight on how different countries interpret similar collections based on the contemporary needs of their expected audiences. The section label in Berlin aims to show the positive side effects of immigrants through the example of thirteenth century Konya, ruled by the Seljuks of Rum. The label reads:

“Central Asian Seljuk Turks conquered Anatolia in the 11th Century and laid the foundations for today's Turkey. They brought new languages and Islam with them. In the ensuing two centuries, the Anatolian Seljuks invested in supra-regional trade routes. In addition to prosperity, this also brought many goods and people into the dynasty. Magnificent buildings such as mosques, schools and mausoleums adorned their capital city, Konya.

Artisans, of the highest caliber, created artistic masterpieces. Trained in working with materials like wood, ceramics and metal they produced some of the finest examples of art. In the 13th Century, many people, among them scholars, artists, and religious mystics, fled before the Mongol invasion in Central Asia, and came to Konya. They brought their traditions and their knowledge with them. The city benefitted from the immigration and thus became an artistic and intellectual center.

One of these immigrants was the famous poet and mystic Mevlana Rumi, who came with his family from Afghanistan to Konya. Rumi's teaching inspired the foundation of the Order of the Mevlevi and the dancing dervishes."⁷⁴⁸

The display of TİEM finishes with the "Ottoman Period Gallery 1299/1300–1922," in the summer ceremonial hall, the largest gallery in the museum. The section label reads:

"The Ottomans, one of the Anatolian Seljuk Beyliks, who declared its independence after the collapse of the Great Seljuk State, established the biggest empire of the Islamic world and were dominant for 600 years over three continents. Ottomans, after uniting Anatolian principalities under his rule started to make conquests in the Balkans, seized Istanbul in 1453 and became the leader of the Islamic world after receiving the title of caliph. The most brilliant period of the Ottomans was during the reign of Sultan Suleiman, and they became the greatest power in the Islamic world. The Ottoman Empire entered a period of decline at the end of the 17th century, and was removed from the history scene, after the proclamation of the Republic in 1923.

Ottoman art, which was developed under the auspices of the Ottoman State was under the influence of the Principalities and Seljuk era Art in the early period (1300-1501), created its own style while showing a great improvement in the classical period (1501-1703). Ottoman sultans and state dignitaries, who supported famous artists of the period, enabled the production of exceptional works. Western art began to influence the Ottoman art starting with the Tulip Period (1703-1757) and this influence was observed in every branch of Ottoman arts from architecture to handicrafts until 1922.

The museum has a rich collection, which provides the opportunity to evaluate all stages of the Ottoman art."⁷⁴⁹

The first paragraph of the label provides brief information on the political history on the Ottomans. The historical narrative of the label is quite standard, with a lineage from the Anatolian Seljuks to the establishment of the Republic of Türkiye. The Ottoman period is divided into rise and decline periods. The capture of Constantinople in 1453 is a classic example of the rising period. The pinnacle of the Ottoman

⁷⁴⁸ Transcribed from the section label entitled "Konya and the origin of today's Turkey/ Konya unde die Entstehung der heutigen Türkei" in the Museum für Islamische Kunst in 2019.

⁷⁴⁹ Transcribed from the section label entitled "The Ottoman Period/ Osmanlı Dönemi" in TİEM.

Empire's power is represented through the period of Sultan Süleyman (1520–1566) in the sixteenth century. He was a significant patron who contributed to creating an Ottoman imperial identity through arts. One of the section labels about the Ottomans in the V&A's Islamic art gallery is solely devoted to the reign of Sultan Süleyman.⁷⁵⁰ There is no such label in the Ottoman Gallery of TIEM. The second paragraph of the label is about Ottoman art. The common feature of the Ottoman section labels in other Islamic art galleries—such as the MET⁷⁵¹ and the British Museum⁷⁵²—is the emphasis on Sultan Süleyman's period. The standard narrative of “early,” “classic,” and “western influence” are used to describe the artistic production of the Ottomans. No further contextualization is provided in either the section label or object labels.

⁷⁵⁰ “Sultan Süleyman I was the tenth ruler of the Ottoman dynasty. Born in 1494, he came to the throne in 1520 on the death of his father, Sultan Selim I. Selim had doubled the size of the empire, and Süleyman extended it by further conquests in Hungary, Iraq and elsewhere.

His greater achievement, however, was the creation of a system of government for these vast territories. For this reason, he is known in Turkish as Kanuni, ‘The Lawgiver’.

The wealth generated by his huge empire enabled Süleyman to become the most important Ottoman patron of the arts. Decoration in red appeared for the first time on the Iznik tiles, lamps and other ceramic fittings made for his great Süleymaniye mosque in Istanbul, completed in 1557. Through this and other changes, a new Ottoman style emerged in textiles, ceramics and other media by the time of his death in 1566.” Transcribed from the section label entitled “Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent” in the V&A, dated 2014.

⁷⁵¹ “[...] An impressive transformation of the city took place during the reign of Sultan Suleiman “the Magnificent” (r.1520-66), ushering in the golden age of Ottoman art and culture. Suleiman undertook a massive building campaign, headed by the architect Sinan, constructing great mosques, with domes that rivaled the Byzantine Hagia Sophia, and renovating the Topkapı royal palace.

Under Suleiman the Magnificent, The Ottomans centralized artistic production in a variety of imperial workshops. The designs produced in these ateliers were applied to works in many media- textiles, carpets, ceramic, and metalwork- creating an identifiable imperial style. Many of the projects on display here are the work of Suleiman's court artists, as well as later generations of imperial craftsmen.” The section label entitled “The Ottoman Empire, ca.1299-1923” in the MET's Islamic art galleries, located in Gallery 460. Melissa Forstrom, “Interpretation and Visitors in Two Islamic Art Exhibitions,” unpublished PhD thesis, University of Westminster, 2017, 326.

⁷⁵² “[...] The sixteenth century was the golden age for the Ottoman empire. Syria and Egypt had been captured from the Mamluks in AD 1517 and the Ottomans were now guardians of the Muslim sanctuaries at Makka, Madina and Jerusalem. Suleyman the Magnificent (AD 1520-66) was a key figure at this time. The empire expanded dramatically during his reign and his patronage of architecture, with his well-known architect Sinan, transformed the cities of his realm.” Transcribed from the section label entitled “The Ottoman empire in Turkey, Egypt and Syria: AD 1517-1923” in the British Museum's John Addis: Islamic Art Gallery in 2014.

When the museum re-opened in 2014, this gallery was full of natural light, thanks to its authentic architecture, which can be observed in Figure 183, dated 2014.



Figure 183. A general view of the Ottoman Period Gallery in TIEM in 2014. Source: “Goppion at the Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum in Istanbul” Goppion Webpage, [accessed 27 February 2023], <https://www.goppion.com/journal/goppion-at-the-turkish-and-islamic-arts-museum-in-istanbul>.



Fig 184. A general view of the Ottoman Period Gallery in TIEM after 2017. Source: Photo taken by the author, 2021.

Since this is the summer ceremonial hall, it is a semi-closed area. One façade of the room, facing to the courtyard, was originally open. During the restoration, it was closed with glass. Initially, the gallery only contained four standing display cases and nine carpets (four of them are large). Later, a few objects were added and placed on pedestals, such as the above-mentioned candlesticks (inv. no. 139/A, see Figure 181) and a tombstone, along with two more standing display cases. In addition, small-sized carpets and prayer rugs started to be displayed on dark gray panels located in front of the complete glass wall for the exhibition organized within the scope of Carpet Week (in cooperation with Istanbul Carpet Exporters' Association) in 2017 (Fig. 184). Before the addition of these small-sized rugs, the gallery was spacious and full of natural-light. This temporary display became a part of the permanent display. A label entitled "Ottoman Carpets from the 15th to the 17th century," prepared for exhibition, is also remains in the gallery. The label of this exhibit reads:

"The art of Turkish Carpets that started with the Seljuks in Anatolia in the 13th century was further developed in the 15th century, flourishing especially in the 16th century. Certain types of carpet exported to the West have become known by the names of European painters who often portrayed them. They have been included in carpet literature as Holbein, Lotto, Crivelli, Memling and Bellini carpets. Although Ottoman carpet manufacturing became intense in many regions, the most important center is Ushak, where there were giant looms. Bergama is another important center. Konya, which was famous as the artistic center of the Seljuk period, has also maintained its importance to carpet manufacture.

In the 17th century, the main carpet weaving centers were notably Ushak, Bergama, Ghiordes, Demirci, Çanakkale in Western Anatolia and Konya, Aksaray, Niğde in Central Anatolia. In the 18th century, the carpets of Konya, Lafik, Ghiordes, Kula, Mucur, Bergama, Milas, Çanakkale, Kırşehir and Sivas gained importance."⁷⁵³

Compared to other displays of the Ottoman carpets, such as in the Museum für Kunst Islamische, there are no technical details about the production of the carpets in TIEM's gallery. The carpets are exhibited to impress the visitors first with their aesthetic features and then with their huge sizes. The large-sized carpets hang on the walls like in the previous

⁷⁵³ Transcribed from the section label entitled "Ottoman Carpets from the 15th to the 17th century," in TIEM. All the spelling mistakes and typos are intentionally left untouched.

display in TIEM. The horizontal display of a few carpets, as they would have been seen in their original context, is a novelty for TIEM. These new horizontal display cases are mirroring the carpets so the visitor is able to observe them both horizontally and semi-vertically at the same time. These cases also provide an opportunity to exhibit more carpets, as seen in Figure 185. Following the later additions in 2017, the number of the displayed carpets may also draw attention.

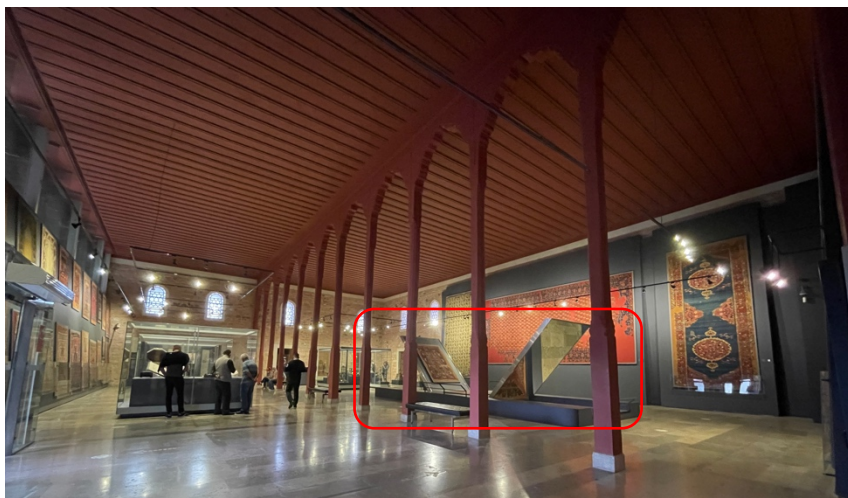


Figure 185. A general view of the Ottoman Period Gallery in TIEM in 2021. The red rectangle shows the horizontal carpet displays. Source: Photo taken by the author, 2021.

This room is the most diverse gallery in terms of medium. There are ceramics, manuscripts, woodwork, metalwork, carpets, and stonework. The displayed carpets are dated to the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. Initially, there was a video presentation about “The art of Turkish carpets and kilims.” However, this multimedia tool broke sometime after the opening and has never been fixed, like the sound element in the Raqqa gallery. One of the displayed carpets contains the name “Holbein” in its object label without any further explanation (see Fig. 186).



Figure 186. A carpet object label from the Ottoman Period Gallery in TIEM in 2021.
Source: Photo taken by the author, 2021.

Many European artist depicted carpets imported from the Ottomans in the early fifteenth century. These paintings help to determine the dates and typology of carpets. A type of carpet called “Holbein,” after the German artist Hans Holbein (1497–1543), entered the literature with this terminology.⁷⁵⁴ However, information about the connection between the carpets and the artists was missing in the Ottoman Period Gallery until the 2017 exhibition, mentioned above.

It seems like the display cases do not have a specific theme, but mostly are related to calligraphy. The first display case contains manuscripts like Qurans copies in different sizes from the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries. Two of these objects are known as starboard (*sancak*) Qurans. These are very small Qurans that come with finely decorated boxes and a chain. One can carry this type of Quran on them or hang it on the banner of the army. The display of these small-sized Quran copies is a reminder that the Ottomans were warriors of the

⁷⁵⁴ Discover Islamic Art website, [accessed 6 February 2023] https://islamicart.museumwnf.org/database_item.php?id=object;ISL;tr;Mus01;39;en&cp

holy war (*gaza*). In addition to the Quran copies, there is a calligraphic album containing Surah Al-An'am, written by a prominent calligrapher, Ahmed Karahisari, from Sultan Süleyman's period. There are also Ottoman Sultans' endowment deed books decorated with gold illuminations in this display case. Finally, a manuscript with miniature paintings entitled, *Zubdat al-Tawarikh* ("The Essence of Histories"⁷⁵⁵), which was made for the Treasury of Sultan Murad III, is exhibited with one of the pages with miniatures is open.

The second display case contains larger objects. Two wooden Quran cases decorated with mother-of-pearl and ivory are placed in this case, together with two wooden Quran lecterns also decorated with ivory. The third display case has imperial decrees (*ferman*) of various sultans and the boxes to carry them, known as *kubur*. The *firmans* are placed on zigzag panels, probably to display more, just like the firman exhibition that took place in TIEM in the 1980s. The fourth display case contains small-sized İznik and Kütahya porcelains and silver and gilt-copper (*tombak*) metal objects dated to different periods. There are incense burners, a rosewater sprinkler, candlesticks, an ewer, a pitcher for *salep*, a mug with inscriptions, hanging ornaments, hanging candles, İznik ceramic vases from the sixteenth century, and a Kütahya ceramic barometer (inv. 4185) from the nineteenth century. The two display cases added later exhibit aigrettes, a head ornament of Hürrem Sultan, the wife of Sultan Süleyman, and gold belts ornated with precious stones without context about the history of the Ottoman clothing traditions.

Most of the displayed objects in the Ottoman Period Gallery were already exhibited before the reinstallation. Between 1984 and 2012, the Ottoman Galleries were divided into categories: early, classic, and late. Today, only the early Ottoman period is separate from the Ottoman Period gallery. As stated before, the early Ottoman collection is displayed in with the objects from the beylik period, just before the Ottoman Period gallery. The classic and late Ottoman periods are displayed together in a single gallery. Unsurprisingly, this gallery, too, displays objects with an emphasis on their aesthetic meanings without context.

⁷⁵⁵ Seracettin Şahin, *Islamic Art: The Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts* (Istanbul: Kültür Sanat Basımevi, 2019), 132.

6.b.b. Display of the Newly Created Thematic Galleries in TIEM

The themed section entitled “Islam[ic] Archaeology,”⁷⁵⁶ formed by the two displays of Samarra and Raqqa and located on the second floor, is the first display of the museum. The first one is the Samarra wall-display placed in the corridor, in front of the Raqqa Gallery. Samarra is the first display in the museum, after the small display where things related to the early years of the museum are displayed as an introduction. The archaeological materials from Samarra and Raqqa were found in the early twentieth century and sent to the Imperial Museum; they were transferred in 1941 to the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art. Unfortunately, I couldn’t find information about if or how these items were exhibited in the Süleymaniye Mosque complex between the 1950s and 1970s. However, archaeological items were exhibited chronologically based on their dynasties in the new museum building starting from the 1984, as discussed in Chapter 5.

The wall display case entitled “Samarra” contains various archaeological artifacts from the Samarra excavation, such as column capitals and fragments from architectural structures dated to the Abbasid period. The background of the display case is covered with an illustration that shows a map of Samarra, the spiral minaret of the Great Mosque of Samarra, and wall decoration fragments. The section label of the display reads:

“Samarra was founded by Caliph Mutasım (833–842) in 836–839, at a location 125 kms North of Baghdad due to problems between Turkish soldiers, who were the military forces of the Abbasids, and local people, and it was the administrative center of the Abbasids for approximately 47 years. It was completely abandoned in 892 after Baghdad’s redesignation as the administrative center of the abbasids in 883, and was buried under the sands of the desert.

After Caliph Mutasım decided to establish an administrative center in Samarra, he demanded from the notables and commanders of the Abbasids State to build palaces which were to be named after them, in Samarra. Thus, a great construction activity started. The best craftsmen from all over the country and different kinds of construction materials (wood, marble etc.) from centers such as Syria, Antioch, Basra and Baghdad were brought to Samarra. After Caliph Mutasım; Caliph Vasık (842–847), Caliph Mütevekkil (847–861) and Caliph Mutezz (866–869) continued the construction activities and Samarra, which covers an area

⁷⁵⁶ A plate labelled “Islam Archaeology” is hung in front of the “Raqqa Gallery.”

of 150 square kilometers, became one of the most magnificent cities of the Middle Ages.

Samarra excavation was carried out by Friedrich Sarre and Ernst Emil Herzfeld between the years of 1911 and 1913 with the permission taken from Ottoman Empire in 1910 after many years of an intensive surface research. The excavation work, which continued for 19 months, was carried out in an area of 60 square kilometers on the edge of Tigris River, where Caliph palaces, government buildings, civil structures and mosques were located.

During the excavation (1911–1913); Cami-i Kebir, which was constructed by Caliph Mütevekkil, Kasr al-Aşık, Kubbestü's Süleybiye, Balkuvara palace and houses on the west part of the city Dar'ül Hilafe palace and extraordinary findings were revealed.

An important part of the findings of Samarra excavation was transported to Berlin Museum für Islamische Kunst, a small part of the findings belonging to Dar'üi Hilafe palace was sent to Müze-i Hümayun, the rest was taken to London after the First World War (1921) and was distributed to various museum collections such as British Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum, New York Metropolitan Museum, Museum of Fine Arts Boston, Cleveland Museum of Art and Louvre Museum. The findings, which were sent to Müze-i Hümayun, became a part of the collections of Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum on 3rd of April 1941."⁷⁵⁷

The label provides information about the establishment of the city and early twentieth century excavations, which were carried out “with the permission” of the Ottoman Empire. Compared the previous “Samarra” section label in the Ibrahim Pasha Palace, the new one is shorter. Some parts about the architectural layout of the city are not included in the new label. However, it still emphasizes how the find of the Samarra excavations were dispersed among European and American museums.

This label should be analyzed within the context of the restitution crises between Türkiye and western countries that flared up in 2011. As a 2011 the New York Times article states, “[...] Turkey wants [objects] returned from the museums of half a dozen Western countries, including the United States and Britain.”⁷⁵⁸ The Minister of Culture and

⁷⁵⁷ Transcribed from the section label entitled “Samarra.” All the spelling mistakes and typos are intentionally left untouched.

⁷⁵⁸ Susanne Güsten, “Turkey Presses Harder for the Return of Antiquities,” *The New York Times*, 25 May 2011, [accessed 7 February 2023]

Tourism of the time, Ertuğrul Günay (deputy of the AKP), was threatening “not to renew the excavation license” of Western archaeologists until the requested artifacts were returned to Türkiye.⁷⁵⁹ The renewal of archaeological digs’ licenses in Türkiye was a routine affair, issued on an annual basis.⁷⁶⁰ Many of the archaeological digs in Anatolia have been ongoing for decades. In 2013, Ömer Çelik (deputy of the AKP) was appointed as the new minister of Culture and Tourism. However, the government’s approach to the restitution crises and other political issues such as the postponement of European Union membership, remained the same.⁷⁶¹ For example, the Ephesus excavation, run by The Austrian Archaeological Institute (AAI) since 1895 and only interrupted during the two World Wars, was cancelled in 2016 due to international politics.⁷⁶²

The TIEM label emphasizes on the excavations being conducted with the “permission” of the Ottoman Empire, which can be read as a reflection of modern international politics. The discourse about how excavation findings, objects, and architectural pieces were taken from the Ottoman Empire to display in Western museums is also a result of the ongoing restitution crises. The section label entitled “The Abbasids and Their Palace-City of Samarra” in the Museum für Islamische Kunst provides a comparative perspective of the narratives of highly similar collections. It reads:

“The Abbasids (749-1258) were the second large dynasty to rule over the Islamic Empire, which stretched from North Africa to western Central Asia on the borders of China. When the capital of Baghdad was created in 762, Iraq became the hub for international trade, with political connections to both the courts of the Chinese and Byzantine emperors, as well as to that of Charlemagne. It was a time when culture and science flourished, with the translation of ancient works and enduring accomplishments made in geography, philosophy, medicine,

<https://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/26/world/europe/26iht-M26C-TURKEY-RETURN.html>.

⁷⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁶¹ Von Joel Stonington, “Permit Runout: Politics Slow Archaeologists in Turkey,” *Spiegel International*, 4 June 2013, [accessed February 2023], <https://www.spiegel.de/international/zeitgeist/german-archaeologists-waiting-for-dig-permits-in-turkey-a-902913.html>

⁷⁶² Erik Stokstad, “Turkish government shuts down important archaeological dig, apparently to punish Austria” *Science*, 6 September 2016, [accessed February 2023], <https://www.science.org/content/article/turkish-government-shuts-down-important-archaeological-dig-apparently-punish-austria>.

astronomy and mathematics. The Abbasid Empire ended with the destruction of Baghdad by the Mongols in 1258.

In 836, caliph al-Mu'tasim (833-842) founded a new capital 125km north of Baghdad: Samarra. Samarra developed into one of the largest cities of the Ancient World, stretching 50km along the Tigris. With its spacious palace complexes and monumental buildings, it remained the political centre of the empire for almost six decades. However, by 892, financial crises forced a return to Baghdad, and Samarra was abandoned by the court.

Friedrich Sarre, the first museum director, and Ernst Herzfeld, an archaeologist, excavated in Samarra from 1911-13. Their campaigns were the first archaeological investigation of a city in the Islamic Middle East. Some of the finds were sent to the Museum for Islamic Art in Berlin. They provide evidence of discerning taste and worldwide trade connections in the 9th century.⁷⁶³

Different from the label in TIEM, the label in the Museum für Islamische Kunst does not comment on the dispersed archaeological finds or who owned the area to be excavated.

As the label in TIEM states, the British Museum is another collection where Samarra findings were “distributed.” Their new gallery, opened in October 2018 and entitled “The Albukhary Foundation Gallery: The Islamic World,” contains a display about the Samarra findings. A part of the section label entitled “Samarra: an imperial city” mentions the Samarra excavations:

“[...] The site was excavated by German archaeologists Friedrich Sarre and Ernst Herzfeld between 1911 and 1913. Following the end of World War I in 1918, an extensive collection of material from these excavations came to the British Museum. [...]”⁷⁶⁴

⁷⁶³ Transcribed from the section label entitled “The Abbasids and Their Palace-City of Samarra,” in the Museum für Islamische Kunst in 2019. Looking at the graphic design and physical features of this label, it must have been created after the permanent galleries’ labels.

⁷⁶⁴ “Samarra was the residence of the Abbasid caliphs from 836 to 892 and was the grand vision of the caliph al-Mu'tasim (r. 796-842). The city, situated some 125 km north of Baghdad on the Tigris River, spanned a remarkable 57 square kilometres. Its buildings included two congregational mosques with tall, spiralling minarets, as well as grand houses, baths, military compounds, polo grounds and racecourses. The main palace and seat of government was the Dar al-Khilafa. [...]

The buildings of Samarra were primarily made of mud brick. Their interior walls were adorned with elaborately decorated plaster. The fragments with painted faces shown here were parts of friezes found in palaces and private houses.” Transcribed from the section label entitled “Samarra: an imperial city” in display case 15 in Gallery 42, the Albukhary Foundation Gallery: The Islamic World in the British Museum.

Like the other two labels in TIEM and the Museum für Islamische Kunst, the one in the British Museum also briefly mentions the Samarra excavation led by Friedrich Sarre and Ernst Herzfeld. The entry date of the Samarra collection is given as 1918, after the World War I. However, the section label in TIEM states that finds were taken to London in 1921. I am not sure why there are two different dates in these information panels. Previously, the finds from Samarra excavations were displayed based on their historic and archaeological importance in TIEM between 1984 and 2012. Today, the display narrative of the Samarra findings has been rewritten with stronger nationalist undertones.

The room, devoted to Raqqa, portrays an archaeological dig scene from the early twentieth century. It shows broken pieces of ceramics dispersed throughout the sandy soil, some of them in wooden boxes inscribed “Imperial Museum” in Ottoman Turkish (Fig. 187). Both the lighting of the room and the background visual of the display case imitate sunrise. “The pearl of the Euphrates Raqqa...” is written on this background photo. There was also a sound element in the room, as if the *ezan* (azan) is heard from far away. However, it is not possible to hear it today because the sound structure was broken sometime after the opening of the museum, and it has never been fixed. The *ezan* was a powerful display element, since it reminded the visitor that these lands were Muslim and once under Ottoman rule.



Figure 187. A view of the Raqqa gallery in TIEM.
Source: Photo taken by the author, 2021.

There are two section labels in this gallery about the political history of the city and the history of ceramic production, entitled “The Famous Ceramic Centre of the Medieval Age ‘Raqqah.’”⁷⁶⁵ The label entitled “Raqqa” reads:

“Raqqah, one of the most important settlement areas in Northern Syria, was founded with the name of Nikephorion by Demetrius I Nicator (246–226 BC), King of Syria and predecessor of Alexander the great. The city (aka Kallinikon and Leontopolis) entered into the domination of the Umayyad in 630 and was named Raqqah, which means ‘damp land/mud’.

The heyday of Raqqah, which is located on the Silk Road, was during the rule of Caliph al-Mansur and Caliph Harun al-Rashid in the Abbasids Period. Caliph al-Mansur founded a new city with the name of ar-Rafika that means ‘peer’ 200 m northwest of Raqqah in 772 in order to deploy Khorasanian soldiers and when Raqqah was abandoned and turned into debris, ar-Râfika started to be caked Raqqah. Caliph Harun al-Rashid made Raqqah the capital in 796 and turned it into the second biggest city of Abbasids after Baghdad. Raqqah, which maintained its importance as ceramic production centre in the Ayyubids Period too, could not go back to its heydays. *Raqqah that was destroyed greatly during the Mongols and Timurid invasions and Mamluk and Aq Qoyunlu struggles, entered into the domination of the Ottomans in 1517.*

Mosque of El-Mansous (Al-Mansur) that was built in Raqqah in the Abbasids Period, Kasr’ül Selâm (Palace of Caliph), Kasr’ül Bânu and city walls that were

⁷⁶⁵ “Many ceramics that were produced with traditional methods in centres such as Esfahan, Rey, Kashan, Baghdad, Samarra, Damascus, Aleppo, Raqqah and Rusefa throughout the Medieval Age, were transported through Silk Road to different cultural environments and from different cultural environments to these centres. Spectacular masterpieces of Islamic ceramic art that developed greatly during this cultural interaction were named after the centres where they were produced.

The most well-known ceramics of the Medieval Age are light turquoise or transparent colourless Raqqah ceramics that are produced with glaze and lustre techniques from red clay and glazed white clay. Examples of ceramics that survived up to day enable us to have adequate information about production techniques, patterns, sizes and shapes of Raqqah ceramics. Artefacts being unearthed in the archaeological excavations in Raqqah, which proves the existence of a fully-equipped glass workshop and pottery industry within the palace complex of Harun al-Rashid, reveals that glass and ceramic production was being made in Raqqah since 9th century.

Raqqah ceramics that are one of the most important collections of the museum are artefacts unearthed during two-month Raqqah excavation that was launched by Mr. Theodor Makridi on January 14th, 1905 on behalf of Imperial Museum. These artefacts that are preserved in Çinili Köşk (Tiled Pavillion) and Topkapı Palace were transferred to the Museum on April 3rd, 1941 and April 20th, 1944.” Transcribed from the section label entitled “The Famous Ceramic Centre of the Medieval Age ‘Raqqah’ /Orta Çağın Ünlü Seramik Merkezi ‘Rakka’ın the Raqqa” Gallery in 2014. All the spelling mistakes and typos are intentionally left untouched.

repaired substantially in the Ottoman Period are among the architectural masterpieces that survived up to day.”⁷⁶⁶

The section label narrates the history of the city chronologically, starting from ancient times and how it came under Muslim rule in the Abbasid period. The content of this label is as if the curators assume that the museum visitor has background information about the history of Muslim dynasties. The label goes into details about the Muslim dynasties such as Aqqoyunlu (1378 – 1501), which a non-academic visitor probably wouldn't know at this point in his/her museum visit, since it is the first gallery on the museum visitation route. Unlike the previous display, the history of Raqqa is extended back to the Ottoman period in the new section label to underline its Ottoman past. The timeline of the city ends with the Ottoman period around 1800, as if the city disappeared after that date. To emphasize that Raqqa was once an Ottoman city, the information on how the Ottomans “saved” the cultural heritage of the city from the Abbasid period is also provided without any relevant displayed objects in the gallery.

The fourth room is devoted to the Damascus Documents (*Şam Evrakları*) collection. Although the museum was mainly arranged with a chronology and dynasty-based approach, this theme-based gallery breaks this order. As stated in Chapter 5, the so-called Damascus Documents collection is formed of thousands of documents such as Quran pages, bindings, and sections in the museum collection since 1917. Three archival documents dated 1917 emphasize the importance of this collection and state that leaving it in the Great Mosque of Damascus for a long time was not permissible (“*caiz değil*”).⁷⁶⁷ Another document states that this collection of documents, Qurans, and bindings are “*asar-ı nadire* (rare antiquities) and they must be studied and categorized by an expert; therefore, the collection must be sent to TIEM (then *Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi*).”⁷⁶⁸ These correspondences show the importance given to this collection by the Ottoman government. It seems like the government decided to transfer this entire collection to the museum in Istanbul before losing its Syrian territory to British forces during the World War I.

⁷⁶⁶ Transcribed from the section label entitled “Raqqa/Rakka” in the Raqqa Gallery in 2014. All the spelling mistakes and typos are intentionally left untouched. Italics have been added for emphasis.

⁷⁶⁷ State Archives of the Republic of Türkiye: BOA DH.ŞRF. 72/3; BOA DH.ŞRF. 73/70; BOA DH.ŞRF. 73/73.

⁷⁶⁸ State Archives of the Republic of Türkiye: BOA DH.ŞRF. 72/3.

Various precious objects such as candlesticks, incense burners, rosewater sprinklers, and textiles donated by Ottoman sultans and their family members to the mausoleum of the Prophet Muhammed in Medina throughout the years were also brought back to the Topkapı Palace (Istanbul) by commander Fahreddin Pasha (1868–1948) in 1918 during the World War I.

Within the display, single Quran pages are exhibited in a polygonal display case, likely a design reference to the “Dome of the Treasury” (*Qubbat al-Khazna*), the octagonal structure located in the courtyard of the Great Mosque of Damascus. There are two information panels in this room, one of which uses a secular, academic tone that briefly provides information about the collection, how it entered the museum, and its importance as a historical source. It reads:

“Damascus Documents are a collection consisting of thousands of pages preserving the Quran sheets accepted as its first copies of the Quran al-Kareem and put into writing in the beginning centuries of Islam, along with the volumes that are the first examples of the Islamic art of books. Named as Damascus Documents because they were brought from the Damascus Umayyad Mosque, this collection consists of thousands of pages of various documents and volumes of the Quran al-Kareem collected for ten centuries (between end of the 8th-19th century). Records on the pages of Quran, which were written on parchments (made of leather) in the beginning centuries of Islam, enable us to know about the tradition of waqf (foundation) in Islam and to go back to the earliest date of Islamic period mentioned in the records, which is the year 876.

Prepared by the calligraphists, illumination artists and bookbinders with great ability and patience throughout centuries, the copies of the Quran al-Kareem are the masterpieces of the art of books in Islam, without any doubt. Therefore; with their calligraphy, illumination and binding, the Quran pages in the collection of Damascus Documents form an unbelievable treasure helping us to follow the development of the Islamic art of books.

The Damascus Documents collection was brought to Istanbul in 1917 during the First World War with the attempts of the Ministry of Foundations together with the efforts of Ismet Bey, a member of the founders committee of Islamic Foundations Museum.”⁷⁶⁹

⁷⁶⁹ Transcribed from the section label entitled “Damascus Documents/*Şam Evrakı*.” All the spelling mistakes and typos are intentionally left untouched.

In stark contrast, the second label, entitled “The Miracle of the Koran” uses belief-centric language. To my mind, these labels appear to be written by different people because of their content and language use. It reads:

“The Koran, which was revealed to Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) as the word of Allah by angel Gabriel in Mecca in 610, was sent to direct the humankind to the true path. The Koran, which always exists in the life of a Muslim with prayers at any moment, is a miracle with its words and meaning. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) is the implementer and the elucidator of the Koran.

Verses of the Koran were revealed to Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) intermittently and the revelation of the verses lasted 23 years. The Koran, which consists of 30 parts, has 114 suras and 6666 verses (ayahs). 'Alâk' (96/1-5) was revealed first and 'Mâide' (5/3) was revealed last. As Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) put the incoming verses in order and dictated them to the revelation clerks, Koran's putting in written form was completed when Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was alive.

The Koran, which was put in written form during the era Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), was written on the homogenous (monotype) pages and was put between 2 covers (was put in the form of the actual Koran) during the era of the first Caliph Abu Bakr. 6 copies of this Koran, which was kept by Hafsa bint Umar, wife of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), were written by the revelation clerks in the era of Uthman ibn Affan and sent to the important Islamic centers. Thus, the Koran not only extended to every region of the expanding Islam geography, but also reached our day without any damage.”⁷⁷⁰

To better grasp the belief-centric language of the label in TIEM, I suggest looking at another section label about the Quran from the “The Albukhary Foundation Gallery: The Islamic World” in the British Museum. In a display case, an unbound Quran and carrying case from West Africa (dated to the late nineteenth or early twentieth century) and a prayer beads from Istanbul or Yemen (dated to the late nineteenth century) are displayed together. The label of the display, entitled “Divine Revelation: The Holy Qur’an,” reads:

“Muslims believe that the Qur’an is the Word of God, revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (d. 632) in Arabic over a period of 20 years beginning around 610. It includes spiritual principles, codes of

⁷⁷⁰ Transcribed from the section label entitled “Miracle of Koran/ Kur’ân Mucizesi” in the Damascus Documents Gallery. All the spelling mistakes and typos are intentionally left untouched.

behaviour and stories about past prophets. The text was standardized under Caliph Uthman (r. 644–56) and later ordered into 114 *suras* (chapters), each comprising numerous *ayat* (verses).⁷⁷¹

As can be seen, the approach between these two museums is quite different from one another. The British Museum is a universal museum, a product of the enlightenment period and imperialist ideology based in a country where the official religion is Christianity. On the other hand, TIEM was initially established by the Ottoman Empire, which was also the Islamic caliphate. Soon after its foundation, the museum had to serve for a secular nation state, which tried to distance itself from its imperial and caliphal past. For the last two decades, this has changed with the AKP government's policies on Ottoman and Islamic heritage. The Damascus Documents Gallery and the section label "Miracle of the Koran [Quran]" reflects the shift in Türkiye's political atmosphere.

Different from other written documents in the museum collection, the Damascus Documents have a separate inventory book, probably due to the large size of the collection.⁷⁷² The importance given to the Damascus Documents collection has fluctuated through the years. Even though the Damascus Documents have been in the collection of the museum for more than 100 years, they became one of the most popular exhibits within the last decade not only in TIEM, but also in another museum, as a part of the Damascus Documents from TIEM went on display in the Museum of Islamic Civilization (*İslam Medeniyetleri Müzesi*, hereafter IMM), inaugurated in April 2022. The IMM is located in a newly-constructed, huge mosque complex in Istanbul commissioned by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. The museum was quickly prepared and opened on the direct order of President Erdoğan. The whole collection of this museum is an assemblage of objects from other state collections such as the National Palaces, like Topkapı Palace and TIEM. The Damascus Documents were loaned from TIEM to the IMM. A long wall-display case containing more than 50 pages and several book bindings from the Abbasids is located on the second floor of the IMM (Fig. 188). The section label of this display reads:

⁷⁷¹ Transcribed from the section label entitled "Divine Revelation: The Holy Qur'an" in "The Albukhary Foundation Gallery: The Islamic World" in the British Museum.

⁷⁷² Seracettin Şahin, Sevgi Kutluay, Ali Şerkander Demirkol "Envanter Kayıtları ve Müze Koleksiyonlarının Oluşumu," *Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi: 100 Yıl Önce 100 Yıl Sonra* (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2014), 151-211: 154.

“The Damascus Documents are a priceless collection of ancient documents and manuscripts that include the earliest written works in Islamic history. Examples are various leaves from a Koran that was first compiled into a book known as the Mushaf during the time of Abu Bak [Abu Bakr] and of which copies were made during the time of Uthman; endowment documents from various regions with links to Islam; pilgrimage scrolls; and bound books.

Damascus was ruled in turn by the Umayyads, Abbasids, Fatimids, Ayyubids, Seljuks and Ottomans, and this collection reflects every aspect of the lives of the Muslims in the city. Altogether the collection consists of 250,000 items, such as seals, leaves from manuscript Korans, leather bindings, and literary, historical and scientific texts.

As the Muslim population of Damascus expanded in the early years of Islam, part of a fourth century Roman temple was converted into a mosque where Muslims could worship. Today known as the Umayyad Mosque, the building has suffered numerous fires and other natural disasters over the centuries. Following a major fire in 1894, the building was repaired and from 1911 all the remaining documents were brought to Topkapi Palace. In 1913 the Museum of Islamic Endowments (today the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art) was founded to undertake the restoration and conservation of the Damascus Documents.”

Although, there are archival documents in the state archives, curiously, the transferred place and date of the Damascus Documents collection is incorrect in this section label.



Figure 188. A view of the display of the Damascus Documents in the IMM. Source: Photo taken by the author, 2022.

As mentioned above, the last three small rooms and a part at the end of the corridor in TİEM were merged to create a space for the third new thematic gallery, entitled “Sacred Relics Gallery” (*Mukaddes*

Emanetler Galerisi) (Fig. 189). Before examining the Sacred Relics Gallery, I would like to provide brief information on the definition of the sacred relics according to the understanding of the Sunni branch of Islam and their traditional usage in Ottoman society. The Encyclopedia of Islam (TDVİA), published by the Directorate of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı*), defines sacred relics as the belongings of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions, other prophets, some important Islamic elders, and Haremeyn (Mecca and Medina).⁷⁷³



Figure 189. A view of the first room of the Sacred Relics Gallery at TIEM. Source: Photo by Servet Dilber.

Visiting of the sacred relics of the Prophet Muhammad used to be an important ritual for the Ottomans. Starting from the early sixteenth century, the sacred relics, including the Holy Mantle of the Prophet Muhammad, were kept in in the Privy Chamber (*Has Oda*) in Topkapı Palace, by the Ottoman sultans (Fig. 190).⁷⁷⁴ The tradition of Qur’an recitation in the Privy Chamber—twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week—was initiated when the relics were started to be kept here. On the

⁷⁷³ Nebi Bozkurt, “Mukaddes Emanetler,” *İslam Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul: TDV, 2006) vol. 31: 108-111, 108.

⁷⁷⁴ Topkapı Palace was the main location for both administrative and domestic life.

fifteenth day of Ramadan, the visitation of the Holy Mantle of the Prophet Muhammad used to be performed under the leadership of the sultan. State officials and clergymen attended the ceremony, as well. Even after Ottoman sultans and their family members left Topkapı Palace to live in the nineteenth-century, newly-constructed Dolmabahçe Palace, this ceremony was still carried out with great care. This tradition continued to be practiced until the abolition of the Ottoman monarchy.



Figure 190. Privy Chamber (*Has Oda*) in the Topkapı Palace. Source: Sabah Newspaper website.

During the Ottoman period, some of these sacred relics, like the hair from the beard of the Prophet, were donated to mosques and tombs by the sultans and their family members. People visited those places on holy days, such as the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad (*Mevlid*), during religious holidays, or in the month of Ramadan. This tradition is still maintained to some extent in today's Türkiye. For example, the mausoleum of Sultan Ahmet, built in 1617, which is just few meters away from TIEM, contains a sacred relic. The mausoleum was re-opened to the public after restoration, with the attendance of the Minister of Culture and Tourism, at the beginning of 2018. The sacred relic (a hair of the Prophet Muhammad) went on display in the mausoleum in its original environment so people are able to see the objects while they are visiting the mausoleum (Fig. 191-192).



Figure 191. Container of the hair from the beard of the Prophet Muhammad in Sultan Ahmed Mausoleum. Source: Ministry of Culture and Tourism website.



Figure 192. Re-opening ceremony of Sultan Ahmed Mausoleum after the restoration with Minister of Culture and Tourism and other state officials attending in March 2018. Source: Ministry of Culture and Tourism website.

As the name indicates, the Sacred Relics Gallery includes several Islamic holy relics, defined as objects associated with the Prophet Muhammad and his companions, and other related items. The Minister of Culture and Tourism emphasized in his speech during the museum's reopening ceremony that the sacred relics were installed as a separate, permanent exhibition gallery for the first time in TIEM's history. The theme of the gallery was summarized by the Minister as "the reflection of the love of the Prophet to art."⁷⁷⁵ According to the previous director of the museum, the gallery was formed to attract Muslim from all types of branches of Islam.⁷⁷⁶ In addition, the museum wanted to share the importance of the Prophet to Muslim society with its non-Muslim visitors.⁷⁷⁷

⁷⁷⁵ "Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi 100 Yaşında ve Yeni Yüzüyle Ziyaretçilerini Bekliyor," Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı website, December, 2014, accessed 2016. <<http://basin.kultur-turizm.gov.tr/TR,121998/turk-ve-islam-eserleri-muzesi-100-yasinda-yeni-yuzuyle-z-.html>>

⁷⁷⁶ Interview with the museum director Şeracettin Şahin, İstanbul, December 28, 2016. Şahin has been the director of the museum since 2003. The SR Gallery's curatorial team consisted of Şeracettin Şahin (Director of the museum) and Sevgi Kutluay (Former Assistant Director and curator of the Calligraphy and Manuscripts Department). Other curators in TIEM contributed to the formation process of the gallery occasionally.

⁷⁷⁷ Ibid.

The size of the Sacred Relics Gallery is another element that underscores its importance. The gallery is the second largest in the museum, after the Ottoman Period Gallery. As expected, there are some common features shared by each gallery in the museum. On the other hand, some distinctive elements were added to the Sacred Relics Gallery. The gallery has a darker environment compared to other small rooms, due to its black walls and half-light illumination, which creates a dramatic environment. The curators also added some sensory religious elements to the gallery. A verse from the Quran written in Arabic, Turkish, and English reading “We have sent you [Prophet Muhammed] not, but as a Mercy for the Alâmin [universe] (Surah Al-Anbiya, verse 107)” is projected on the wall of the gallery. The most significant sensory element is the inclusion of the recitation of the *salawat* to create a spiritual ambience in the gallery. The *salawat*, which is a pious Arabic phrase in saluting the Prophet Muhammad and his family, is a major element of the ritual of visiting and gazing upon the sacred relics. Many Muslims repeat the *salawat* during a visit to the sacred relics in order to honor the Prophet and earn blessings from the experience.⁷⁷⁸ It is possible to see visitors reciting the *salawat* while they visit the gallery.

Two section labels written by the curators and approved by theologians include the definition of the sacred relics, the history of these objects, and the significance of their display for Muslims. The section label welcomes visitors at the entrance of the gallery:

“Belongings owned by the Prophet Mohammad, the people who belonged to his family (Ahl al-Bayt) and other three great Prophets to whom holy scriptures have been sent, belongings of Kaaba are called sacred relics or Teberrukat (belongings granted by the philanthropists).

Companions of the Prophet of the end of time Mohammad (p.b.u.h), who is loved much, kept the material elements of Mohammad (p.b.u.h) as a sacred reminder and the manifestation of this love while they have implemented the principles of Islam to their lives. Many reminders including the shoes, clothes of (p.b.u.h) the pots from which he drank water, his guns, the stick he leaned, his flag, his tooth which was broken at the battle of Uhud and his hair which was cut during the shaving have been conveyed to the next generations with love. When the books of the sayings of the Prophet Mohammad (p.b.u.h) are reviewed, it is observed that his companions approached to the love of Allah and the Prophet with love.

⁷⁷⁸ Mehmet Suat Mertoğlu, “Salâtü Selâm,” *İslam Ansiklopedisi* vol. 36 (Istanbul: TDV, 2009), 23-24: 23.

Relics of the Prophet and the additional pieces as the memories of Islam authorities who lived later were kept by his companions with great care and with great attention. Some of the Relics, a great portion of which is kept at the Pavilion of the Holy Mantle in Topkapı Palace, were donated to charities such as mosques, mausoleums and dervish lodges in order to meet people's longing for the prophet, as the visit of the relics is an opportunity to say salawat and to show their respect and love for the prophet."⁷⁷⁹

The usage of "p.h.u.b." after the name of the Prophet Muhammad in the written text is a new practice in the museum context. This abbreviation, which stand for "peace be upon him" is used by Muslims to show respect to the Prophet Muhammad when mentioning his name.⁷⁸⁰ When writing the name of the Prophet Muhammad, Muslims often follow it with the abbreviation "SAWS." These letters stand for the Arabic words "*sallallahu alayhi wa salaam*" ("may God's blessings and peace be with him"). Muslims use these words to show respect to one of God's Prophets when mentioning his name. It is also abbreviated as "PBUH," which stands for the English words of similar meaning ("peace be upon him"). This abbreviation is also used in the section label "Miracle of Koran" in the Damascus Documents Gallery. The usage of this abbreviation in the information texts shows the changing language of the museum from secular to more belief-oriented approach. The abbreviation "PBUH," can also be seen in the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo (Fig. 193). For example, a section label entitled "the Fatimids Period" starts with this sentence: "The Fatimids are attributed to 'Fatimah al -Zahra' daughter of prophet Muhammad (PBUH) [...]" A more recent example is the museum catalogue of the Louvre Abu Dhabi, which uses this abbreviation, too: in the essay where "The Universal Religions," located in Gallery 4, is explained, the name of the Prophet Muhammed is followed by "PBUH."⁷⁸¹

⁷⁷⁹ Transcribed from the section label entitled "The Sacred Relics / *Mukaddes Emanetler*." All the spelling mistakes and typos are intentionally left untouched.

⁷⁸⁰ Rabie E. Abdel-Halim, "PBUH (Abbreviation)," *Encyclopedia of Science and Religion* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2013), 1608-1609: 1608.

⁷⁸¹ *Louvre Abu Dhabi: The Complete Catalogue* (Paris: Skira, 2018), 118.



Figure 193. A section label in the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo entitled “the Fatimids Period.” Source: Trip Advisor, 2019.



Figure 194. Container of the hair from the beard of the Prophet Muhammad (*Sakal-ı Şerif*), 18th or 19th century, Ottoman period, height 10,5 cm. TIEM, inv. no. 200. Source: Seracettin Şahin, Sevgi Kutluay, and Miyase Çelen (eds.) *100 Yıl Önce ve 100 Yıl Sonra: Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi* (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2014), 375.

The second section label in the Sacred Relics Gallery is specifically about the category of one of the most common sacred relics, which is known as *sakal-ı şerif* (a hair from the Prophet Muhammad, Fig. 194). The label

explains how these hairs were collected, based on the hadith⁷⁸² sources, and survived to the present day, as well as the tradition of visiting *sakal-ı şerif* on significant religious days:

“It is known from the prophetic biography and hadith books that Hz. Muhammed allowed his beard to be distributed among Muslims after taking off his djellaba and shaving his beard. Sakal-ı Şerif, the whiskers of which companions of prophet did not lose, is protected carefully today.

While the box in which Sakal-ı Şerifs are kept are one of the unique of metal working and wood art, the packages of them are the gorgeous examples of weaving art of Ottomans. The main part of Sakal-ı Şerif is protected in Topkapı Palace. Records on the protection boxes Sakal-ı Şerif show that Sakal-ı Şerif was protected by the sultans, the sultan’s wives and elite figures of the palace. After their demise, they were transferred to the deposit treasure. However, some part of the Sakal-ı Şerif was donated to some mosques and mausoleums.

The inscription on the boxes in which Sakal-ı Şerif is protected says ‘Leyle-i Regaib’te ziyaret edilen Lihye-i Saadet budur’. The meaning of this sentence is that if Sakal-ı Şerif is visited during Qhadir night and holy nights, it will have a positive effect on people. That is why some parts of Sakal-ı Şerif were donated for the visit of believers. The tradition of protecting Sakal-ı Şerif wrapped with forty layered packages and opening these packages slowly by saying Allahuekber is carried out today. This tradition of Sakal-ı Şerif visits brings Muslim an incredible feeling peace because it leads to remembering the Prophet Muhammed with respect by saying Salat and Allahuekber.”⁷⁸³

The display consists of over 40 objects, predominantly from the Ottoman period. The objects can be categorized into two groups on the basis of their compliance to the definition of the sacred relics. The first category consists of objects that conform to the above-mentioned definition of sacred relics. These are objects associated with the Prophet Muhammad and his belongings, such as hair from his beard (*called lihye-i saadet or sakal-ı şerif* in Turkish, Fig. 195) and its containers and his footprint on a stone (*kadem-i saadet*). In addition, there are objects believed to be affiliated with the Prophet Muhammad’s companions, like

⁷⁸² The hadith is a “[...] corpus of the sayings or traditions of the Prophet Muhammad, revered by Muslims as a major source of religious law and moral guidance.” Asma Sayeed, “Hadith,” *Britannica* (last updated) 12 January 2023, [Accessed 1 March 2023], <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Hadith>.

⁷⁸³ Transcribed from the section label entitled “Sakal-ı Şerifler (Lihye-i Saadetler) / Beard of the Prophet Muhammed.”

a Qur'an dedicated to the last caliph, Ali. There are also objects associated with the Kaaba such as the belt, the door cover, the key, the lock, and the *kiswa* (the cloth of the Kabaa) attached to the binding of the seventeenth-century Qur'an. The above-mentioned verse from the Quran projected in the gallery is also written on one of the displayed Kaaba clothes, but this connection is not explained in the gallery space via labels.

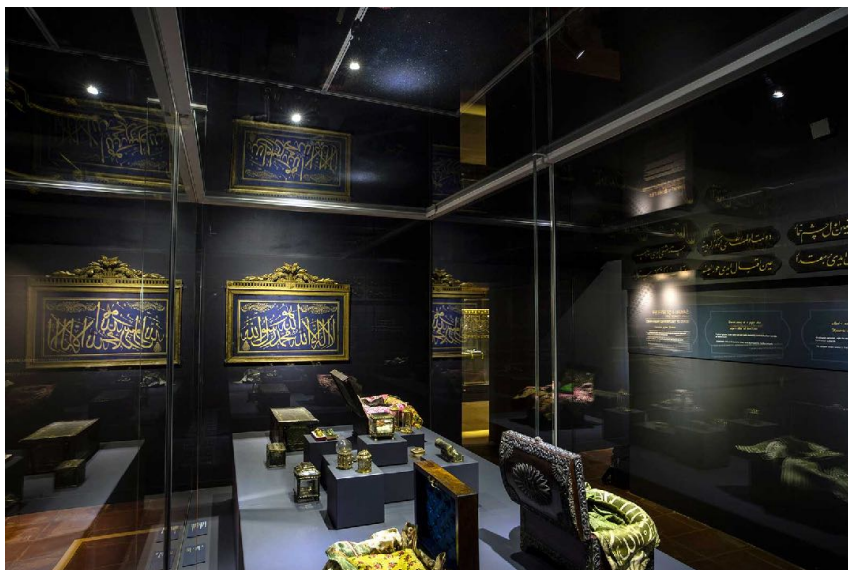


Figure 195. The hairs from the beard of the Prophet Muhammad (*lihye-i saadet* or *sakal-i şerif*) and its containers are exhibited in a free-standing case. Source: Sabah Newspaper website.

The second group of the objects do not falling into the category of sacred relics. These objects in this category are associated with Islam, and some of them were used for devotional purposes. However, these objects do not have a direct link with a person or a place which are accepted as sacred relics. Manuscripts such as Qur'ans, Hadith books, prayer book, a biography of the Prophet, a genealogy of the Prophet Muhammad; calligraphic panels which describe the physical appearance of the Prophet Muhammad, known as *hilye-i şerif*, are included in the second category. There are three calligraphic panels related to the Prophet and Islam, written by the Ottoman Sultans. For example, the one

written by Sultan Abdülmeceid and gifted to the museum in 1914 by Sultan Mehmed V is placed at the entrance of the Sacred Relics Gallery. In addition to the manuscripts and calligraphic panels, a *qiblanuma* (an astronomical device showing the direction to the Kaaba, inv. no. 157A/B) and a standard (*alem*) from the Ottoman period are displayed here (Fig. 196-197). Finally, a pilgrimage proxy scroll from the Ayyubid period (inv. no.4737, 4746), dated to 1206, is solely on display in a standing display case, just like the *qiblanuma*. Actually, it can be said that this gallery is a second Ottoman Gallery, since all the objects belong to the Ottoman period, except for a few objects such as the pilgrimage scroll.



Figure 196. Qiblanuma, 1738-1739, Ottoman period, diameter 31 cm. Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art, inv. no. 157 A-B. Source: Seracettin Şahin, Sevgi Kutluay, and Miyase Çelen (eds.) *100 Yıl Önce ve 100 Yıl Sonra: Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi* (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2014), 352.



Figure 197. A wall display case in the Late Ottoman Gallery in 2012. The red rectangle shows the *qiblanuma*. Source: TIEM Archive.

An identical *qiblenuma* (inv. no. 3348) dated to the eighteenth century from the Ottoman period in the collection of the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo is displayed in a thematic gallery entitled “Pilgrimage, Funerary Monuments, Epigraphy.” Both the one in Istanbul and in Cairo are signed by Barun al-Mukhtara, an Armenian, who was employed by the Ottoman grand vizier Yeğen Mehmet Pasha (?–d. 1745).⁷⁸⁴



Figure 198. The display of the *qiblanuma* in the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo in November 2020. Source: Trip Advisor website.

A photo shows that the *qiblanuma* is displayed together with a Kaaba key (inv. no. 15133) from the Mamluk period (Fig. 198) in gallery of the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo. The object label of the key provides information about its material, geographical location, dynasty, date, owner, and its inscriptions. The *qiblanuma*'s object label in the museum in Cairo reads:

“Qibla finder of wood, lacquered
 Turkey-Ottoman
 12th AH/18th AD century
 MIA no. 3348

Finding the Qibla was an important task, both for those erecting new mosques and for the travelers. It is signed by the maker ‘Barun al-Mukhtara’, in the times of the Ottoman Sultan Mahmud I.”⁷⁸⁵

⁷⁸⁴ Bernard O’Kane (with contributions by Mohamed Abbas and Iman R. Abdulfattah), *The Illustrated Guide to the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo* (Cairo and New York: The American University in Cairo Press, 2012), 267.

⁷⁸⁵ Transcribed from the object label of *qiblanuma* (inv. No. 3348) in the Museum of Islamic Art Cairo.

Although the display of *qiblanuma* in TIEM shifted dramatically through time, one thing seems to have remained the same. Although this *qiblanuma* shows the complexities and layers of Ottoman society, the biography of this object has never been discussed in TIEM. The display in Cairo at least provides the function of the object, its material and decoration technique, and the name of its producer, whereas the object label in TIEM does not (see Fig. 199).

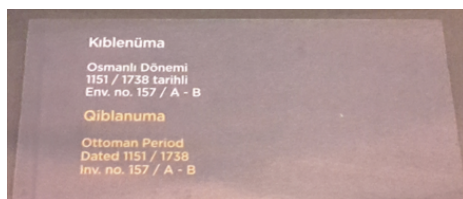


Figure 199. Object label of the *qiblanuma* in the Sacred Relics Gallery. Source: Photo taken by the author, 2021.

Before the establishment of the Sacred Relics Gallery, most of the other objects were displayed through a secular lens in the museum based on their type, material, or dynastic chronology. In fact, even the sacred relics were displayed with an emphasis on their aesthetic and historical features and not their religious significance. Most of the displayed objects in this gallery were exhibited in the Ottoman galleries between 1984 and 2012, as almost all of them belong to the Ottoman period. Now, all the objects in the Sacred Relics Gallery are interpreted from a purely religious point of view. Interestingly, today, even the objects even without religious meanings are presented in this spiritual environment. For example, the exact *qiblanuma* displayed in the Sacred Relics Gallery used to be displayed with other objects—such as a Qur’an stand, calligraphic panels, and writing boxes—in the “Late Ottoman Period” gallery until the restoration of the museum (see Fig. 197). It is also interesting to see how identical objects in different museum can be interpreted differently, as it can be seen in the example of the museum in Cairo.

As discussed before, the collection of TIEM was mainly formed from objects collected from mosques and mausoleums at the beginning of the twentieth century. These objects, including Islamic sacred relics, were brought to the museum to be protected and exhibited as a part of a narrative of national heritage. As a result of a shifting of gaze from a

spiritual to a secular context, these relics and objects, removed from their original contexts, obtained aesthetic and historical meanings when they transferred to the museum space.⁷⁸⁶ However, beginning in 2007, the museum decided to shift the historical and aesthetic meanings of these objects from a secular standpoint back to a spiritual one by creating a holy relics-themed display as a result of temporary exhibitions discussed in detail in Chapter 5.⁷⁸⁷ This ultimately led to the formation of the Sacred Relics Gallery in 2014.

The motivations behind the creation of a separate gallery with a sacred relics theme can be explain by both internal and external factors. The administration (its director and curators) of the museum and the hosting of sacred relics in its collection were the main internal driving forces to form a separate section for sacred relics. The temporary exhibitions “One Man One Messenger: The Sacred Relics of the Prophet Muhammad” and “The Qur’an at its 1400th Year,” organized in 2007 and 2010, respectively, can be seen as the earlier versions of the Sacred Relics Gallery, since they have several characteristics in common, such as the theme, the content of the displayed objects, and the physical environment. The high visitor numbers to these two temporary exhibitions were another internal factor that motivated the museum management to create a separate gallery for the sacred relics that the museum already had in its collection. As reported by the newspapers, the enthusiasm for the exhibition in 2007 and 2010 exceeded the yearly visitor number of the museum.⁷⁸⁸ The curators of the two temporary exhibitions were the same museum director and curators of the Sacred Relics Gallery.

The museum administration considered the possibility of becoming more competitive and attracting more visitors by forming a

⁷⁸⁶ Wendy Shaw, *Possessors and Possessed: Museums, Archaeology, and the Visualization of History in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Berkeley and London: California University Press, 2003), 177; Mustafa Göleç, “Siyaset Ideoloji ve Müzecilik: II. Meşrutiyet’te Evkaf-ı İslamiyye Müzesi,” *Journal of Turkish Studies* (Spring 2014), vol. 30: 141-160, 143.

⁷⁸⁷ The exhibitions entitled “One Man One Messenger: The Sacred Relics of the Prophet Muhammad” and “The Qur’an at its 1400th Year,” organized in 2007 and 2010, transformed some of the permanent display cases.

⁷⁸⁸ “Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi’nin yıllık ziyaretçi sayısını 3 ayda yakaladı.” (Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art reached its annual visitor numbers within three months.) “1400. Yılında Kuran-ı Kerim Sergisi,” *Ülker* website, December 23, 2011. Accessed 2016, <http://www.ulker.com.tr/tr/haberler/haber-detay/-yilinda-kuran-i-kerim>; “Kutsal Emanetler Müzeye Tavan Yaptırdı,” *Uluslararası Kur’an Haber Ajansı*, December 29, 2007. Accessed 2016, <http://www.iqna.ir/tr/news/1615747/kutsal-emanetler-m%C3%BCzeye-tavan-yapt%C4%B1rd%C4%B1>

sacred relics gallery. TIEM is located on the Sultanahmet Square (Hippodrome), which is in an area full of historical monuments and museums, such as the Topkapı Palace, which contains a sacred relics gallery and is just several minutes walking distance from TIEM. The Sacred Relics Gallery of the Topkapı Palace Museum, with its spiritual ambiance, is the most-visited gallery of that museum. The previous director of TIEM, Seracettin Şahin, stated that the exhibition in 2007 in TIEM holds the record in terms of the visitor numbers, reaching 10,000 visitors in a day.⁷⁸⁹ Therefore, the management of the museum created the gallery with an expectation of receiving high levels of attention, considering the success of the previous holy-relics themed exhibitions. In addition, to using their collection in this way increases their competitiveness in the neighborhood, by considering the Topkapı Palace example.

There were also external factors that indirectly related to the creation of the Sacred Relics Gallery. Carol Duncan's statement that "[...] museums, [...], whatever their stated aims and potentials, must function within existing political and ideological limits" seems to be valid for the example of TIEM.⁷⁹⁰ The political and cultural environment of Türkiye should be evaluated as an external source of motivation to create the Sacred Relics Gallery. As stated before, the AKP government's cultural policy has mainly revolved around Islamic and Ottoman heritage. Cultural activities such as conferences and exhibitions on "The love of the Prophet Muhammad" have been organized frequently by the government initiatives or with the NGOs close to the government.⁷⁹¹ The Ministry of Culture and Tourism has organized the Prophet- and holy

⁷⁸⁹ Interview with the museum director Şeracettin Şahin, İstanbul, December 28, 2016; <http://www.tiem.gov.tr/neler-gorecegim/#/neler-gorecegim/mukaddes-emanetler/> "Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi'nde 2006 yılında gösterime sunulan 'Bir Kul Bir Resul' başlıklı sergi günde on bin ziyaretçi tarafından gezilmiştir. Mukaddes emanetlerin işlendiği bu sergide yer alan eserlerin çoğunun Müzeye ait olması ve bu eserlere gösterilen yoğun ilgi nedeniyle müze teşhir salonunun son üç oda ve geniş koridoru Mukaddes Emanetler Bölümü olarak düzenlenmiştir."

⁷⁹⁰ Carol Duncan, "Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship" *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, eds. Ivan Karp and Stephen D. Lavine (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 88-103: 91.

⁷⁹¹ Wendy M. K. Shaw, "National Museums in the Republic of Turkey: Palimpsests within a Centralized State," in *Building National Museums in Europe 1750-2010*, edited by Peter Aronsson and Gabriella Elgenius (Linköping: Linköping University Electronic Press, 2011), 925-951: 937; Kemal İnal, "Sınıf, Kültür, ve Akp," 42; Aydın Çubukçu, "AKP'nin Kültür Politikası," *Marka Takoa Tuğra: AKP Döneminde Kültür ve Politika*, edited by Kemal İnal, Nuray Sancar, and Ulaş Başar Gezgin (İstanbul: Evrensel Kültür Kitaplığı, 2015), 30-41: 33, 39.

relics- themed exhibitions in various cities in Türkiye such as Istanbul, Ankara, Bursa, Edirne, and Gaziantep particularly within the scope of the Prophet's birthday.⁷⁹² The above-mentioned 2007 temporary exhibition in TİEM was prepared as part of this commemoration, as well.

It is also possible to see that the government attaches great importance to sacred relics. The AKP government has supported the creation and renovation of the permanent sacred relics galleries in various museums over the 15 years and more. In 2007, the Holy Relics Gallery at the Topkapı Palace Museum was reopened following reinstallation with the participation of President Erdoğan (he was a prime minister at the time).⁷⁹³ Here, I would like to provide brief background information on the history of the Privy Chamber to understand how it became a tool for political matters. Although the Topkapı Palace became a museum in 1924—one year after the declaration of the Turkish Republic of Türkiye—, the Privy Chamber, containing the sacred relics, was not opened to the public until 1962. Starting from the 1950s, the Privy Chamber has always been on the agenda of right-wing governments in Türkiye. The Ottoman Sultan Selim I (r. 1512–1520) brought sacred relics to the palace after the seizure of Cairo and ending the fall of the Abbasid caliphate in 1517. He also captured the holy cities, Mecca and Medina. After his return to the palace, the tradition of Qur'an recitation twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week started. The recitation of the Quran in the Privy chamber was cancelled when the palace turned into a museum. After more than 70 years, this tradition was started again in 1996 by the Minister of Culture, who was a member of a conservative-right wing party (called *Refah Partisi*).

During the opening ceremony of the Holy Relics Gallery in Topkapı Palace, President Erdoğan strongly emphasized that this gallery is “not just dead history” and “not just a museum:” rather, “it is a house of living civilization.”⁷⁹⁴ Even several years later, during the post-

⁷⁹² “Bakanlıktan Kutlu Doğum Haftasına Özel Program,” *Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı* website, April, 2014, accessed 2016. <<http://basin.kulturturizm.gov.tr/TR,93018/bakanliktan-kutlu-dogum-haftasina-ozel-program.html>>.

⁷⁹³ Hasan Fırat Diker, *Müzelerde Teşhir ve Tanzim: Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kutsal Emanetler Dairesi Örneği*, unpublished thesis (Ankara: T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Kültür Varlıkları ve Müzeler Genel Müdürlüğü, 2008), 11.

⁷⁹⁴ “Başbakan Erdoğan, Restorasyonu Tamamlanan Topkapı Sarayı Kutsal Emanetler Bölümünün Açılışını Yaptı,” *Haberler.com*, December 29, 2007.

restoration inauguration ceremony of some other new sections of the Topkapı Palace Museum, President Erdoğan again emphasized the significance of the sacred relics and stated that “Even just for the sacred relics, Topkapı Palace deserves all kinds of respect (reverence).”⁷⁹⁵ Moreover, Erdoğan and the Minister of Tourism and Culture expressed their desire to keep traditions alive in the Topkapı Palace through ceremonies such as the visitation of the Holy Mantle of the Prophet Muhammed, according to Ottoman tradition.

In 2006, a separate gallery for sacred relics was formed in the Museum of Turkish Calligraphy Art (*Türk Vakıf Hat Sanatları Müzesi*), which was established in 1984.⁷⁹⁶ This museum has been under redesign for a long time, but the new version also plans to create a gallery devoted to the sacred relics. The above-mentioned Museum of Islamic Civilization (*İslam Medeniyetleri Müzesi*) is a recent example that shows the interest of the AKP government in this topic is still high. The sacred relics, loaned from the Topkapı Palace collection, are on display in this museum in a theme-based display entitled “Items Attributed to the Holy Prophet PBUH” (*Hz. Peygamber’e SAV Atfedilen Eserler*).⁷⁹⁷ The displayed objects in this section are very similar to the ones in TIEM.

6.c. Concluding Remarks

TIEM reflects the complex socio-cultural and political transformations that have taken place in Türkiye throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The new installation of TIEM is more dynasty-focused compared to previous one created in the 1980s. The Ottoman period is the ultimate gallery in the display, like it used to be. Including labels about dispersed heritage or illicitly-taken objects is a new practice which can be interpreted as an emphasis on a nationalist discourse that has been ongoing since the twentieth century. However, the nationalism has

<http://www.haberler.com/basbakan-erdogan-restorasyonu-tamamlanan-topkapi-haberi/>.

⁷⁹⁵ T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, <http://basin.kulturturizm.gov.tr/TR-126174/yillar-sonra-ziyarete-acildilar.html>.

⁷⁹⁶ “Beyazıt’taki Türk Vakıf Hat Sanatları Müzesi’nde Yer Alan ‘Kutsal Emanetler Bölümü’ Ziyarete Açıldı,” Haberler.com website, September, 2006, accessed 2016. <https://www.haberler.com/beyazit-taki-turk-vakif-hat-sanatları-muzesi-nde-haberi/>.

⁷⁹⁷ *İslam Medeniyetleri Müzesi*, museum catalogue (Istanbul: Milli Saraylar Başkanlığı Yayını, 2022), 18-27.

been increased during the last fifteen years and shifted away from an ethnocentric direction, which emphasized the Turkish race, towards a revival of Islamic and Ottoman heritage. This new practice in the museum context promotes the government's attitude regarding illicit trafficking.

Previous museum labels and catalogues about the Damascus Documents were written using secular language. Today, the Damascus documents are presented as more than historical and aesthetic documents, with an emphasis also on their religious context. This new shift in meaning assigned to the same group of objects is striking. The museum's display was renovated when the Syrian Civil War was at its height and Türkiye was trying to be influential in Syrian politics by emphasizing the country's former Ottoman heritage. During the re-opening ceremony of the museum, the Minister of Culture and Tourism also mentioned the importance of protecting and displaying historical cultural heritage to gain a determinant role in future politics as a country.⁷⁹⁸

From 1983 to 2007, these sacred relics, such as the hair of the Prophet Muhammad or the footprint, were not exhibited in the museum. They disappeared from the permanent gallery space and were not even mentioned in the museum catalogues. The changing display method of sacred relics from secular to religious did not happen suddenly: it was an ongoing process that continued gradually from 2007 to 2014.⁷⁹⁹ The motivations behind creating a sacred relics gallery can be explained by both internal and external factors. The internal factors relate to the museum's rich and unique collection of sacred relics associated with the Prophet Muhammad and his companions. In addition, the museum administration's vision of creating a permanent gallery to accommodate public demand to view them was the other prominent internal factor.

There are also external factors at play relating to the political and cultural environment of Türkiye, which greatly influenced the formation of the gallery. The representation of faith with modern museum display methodologies, combined with sensory spiritual elements, positions the

⁷⁹⁸ Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi 100 Yaşında ve Yeni Yüzyüle Ziyaretçilerini Bekliyor," Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı website, December, 2014, <http://basin.kulturturizm.gov.tr/TR,121998/turk-ve-islam-esereri-muzesi-100-yasinda-yeni-yuzuyle-z-.html>.

⁷⁹⁹ Beyza Uzun, "Display of the Sacred Relics Gallery in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art, Istanbul" in *Curating Islamic Art Worldwide: From Malacca to Manchester*, edited by Jenny Norton-Wright (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 73-82: 79.

Sacred Relics Gallery somewhere in between the secular and sacred. Ultimately, the display of Islamic art in a state museum in Türkiye is shaped by transnational, cultural, and academic trends, but mainly by local political dynamics tied to the AKP's cultural conceptualization of Türkiye's Islamic past within the last two decades.

CONCLUSION

Having transitioned from a caliphal imperial identity to a constitutional and secular republic with a large Muslim population, Türkiye is embedded in a complex socio-cultural matrix regarding the handling and presentation of its Ottoman and Muslim heritage. Examining shifting ways of displaying Islamic art collections in national museums in Türkiye, in light of socio-cultural and political factors, reveals layered meanings of collecting and exhibiting the cultural heritage of Muslim societies. This dissertation analyzes both physical and conceptual elements of permanent Islamic art galleries and museums starting from their formation in the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries to the present day. The permanent displays of the Islamic art collection of the Imperial Museum (*Müze-i Hümayun*)—first opened in 1895, and the second created in 1909—were analyzed in detail to understand how the Ottomans perceived and presented Muslim heritage for the first time. Moreover, this research mostly focuses on the first museum of Islamic art, *Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi* (the Museum of Islamic Pious Foundations). Founded in 1914 just a few months before World War I under unstable economic and political conditions, this was the last museum opened in the Ottoman Empire before its fall. Under the new Republic of Türkiye, the museum was renamed the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts (TİEM), to reflect the increasing Turkish nationalist policies of the new regime. TİEM is the first and longest-existing Islamic art museum, and it has the most comprehensive Islamic art collection in Türkiye. This thesis explores how and why the connotations of displaying the visual and material culture of the Islamic world have changed for state museums in Türkiye with regards to the evolving social and political role of museums from the late nineteenth century until today. The history of TİEM serves as the basis for this exploration.

From its inception to the present day, TİEM has been a crucial site for adjusting and representing "national heritage," first in the Ottoman Empire and later in the Republic of Türkiye. National heritage was determined by negotiating identities such as Sunni-Islamic, Turkish, and Ottoman. Initially, the main emphasis was on the Islamic heritage, even over Ottoman, to push against Arab nationalism and Christian imperial powers. Displaying the Islamic art collection in the Imperial Museum was an example of soft power that helped to create a direct link between the Ottoman Empire and Islam. Even the usage of the term

“Islamic art” in a gallery name instead “Turkish” or “Ottoman” art indicates that Islamic heritage was perceived and presented as the “national heritage” of the Ottoman Empire. The name of *Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi* also follows this path.

The various changes in the museum's collection and display over the years have mirrored the evolving political and ideological events in Türkiye, from the early days of the republic with its emphasis on Turkification and secularism to the more recent revival of Islamic and Ottoman heritage under the AKP government. With the increasing Turkish nationalism in the republican era following the proclamation in 1923, the *Evkaf-ı İslamiye Müzesi* was renamed and rearranged to emphasize its “Turkish roots” over Ottoman heritage. For example, the famous Ottoman calligraphers started to be described as “famous Turkish artists.”⁸⁰⁰ It was still possible to see an emphasis on Turkishness within the new museum display in the Ibrahim Pasha Palace in the 1980s. However, this began to change in the mid-2000s starting with the increasing power of the AKP government.

For the last two decades, the AKP government has promoted cultural policies that define the country's national identity mainly through its Ottoman and Islamic heritage. State museums' Islamic art collections in Türkiye have been a center of the focus in the recent years. As stated in Chapter 6, for the last ten years, several museums with Islamic art and ethnography collections underwent complete renovation and reinstallation. In addition to the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art in Istanbul, there are four other museums: Museums of Turkish-Islamic Arts in four different cities—Bursa, Edirne, İznik, and Erzurum—in Türkiye. These museums have several common features. First, they are mainly formed from the ethnographic collections from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Small parts of their collections contain objects from the earlier periods, such as the Ottoman dynasty, the Seljuks, and other Anatolian principalities. Second, each of these museums is located in a historical buildings, generally a part of a mosque complex such as a soup kitchen (*imarethane*) or a madrasa. Though the one in Erzurum is located in an early fourteenth-century madrasa built by the Ilkhanid dynasty, the other three museums in Bursa, Edirne, and İznik are in the Ottoman period constructions. Third, the museums in Bursa, Edirne, and İznik were initially part of Archaeological Museums

⁸⁰⁰ “Le Musée des arts turcs et musulmans,” *la Turquie kamâliste* 15 (October 1936), 9-14.

but were later separated. The Museum of Turkish-Islamic Arts in Edirne—detached from the Archaeological Museum and opened as an individual museum in 1971—was reopened on 18 May 2012.⁸⁰¹ The Museum of Turkish-Islamic Arts in İznik was separated from the Archaeological Museum and inaugurated on 3 July 2020 in the middle of the covid pandemic.⁸⁰² The Museum of Turkish-Islamic Arts in Bursa was created as an individual museum in 1975, after the archaeology collection was moved to a purpose-built museum building in 1972. The museum in Bursa was reopened following restoration and reinstallation on 24 December 2020.⁸⁰³ The Museum of Turkish-Islamic Arts and Ethnography in Erzurum was opened the anniversary of the proclamation of the republic on 29 October 1994, after the ten years of restoration.⁸⁰⁴

I would like to conclude this thesis through the introduction of the most recent display example of Islamic art collection in a state museum, which can be a future research direction for my studies. The Museum of Islamic Civilizations (*İslam Medeniyetleri Müzesi*, hereafter IMM) is the latest example that shows the growing interest in the Islamic art collections as the main heritage of Türkiye in the recent years. As stated in Chapter 6, while examining the display of the Damascus Documents collection, the IMM opened in April 2022. The museum is located in a newly-constructed, huge mosque complex (*külliye*). The name of the mosque *Büyük Çamlıca Camii* (The Grand Çamlıca Mosque), comes from its location on top of Çamlıca hill on the Anatolian side of Istanbul. The construction of the mosque began in 2013, and it opened to prayers on 7 March 2019 on a holy day (*Regaip Kandili*) for Sunni Muslims.⁸⁰⁵ In addition to the mosque and the museum, the mosque complex contains spaces for a conference hall, a library, an art gallery, eight art workshops, and a parking lot. This mosque complex was built

⁸⁰¹ The Archaeological Museum in Edirne was established in 1924 by the order of the founder and the first president of the Republic of Türkiye, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (18881–1938). The name of the museum later became the Archaeological and Ethnography Museum in 1971.

⁸⁰² As stated in Chapter 6, the archaeological collections in İznik will be moved to a new location which is currently under construction.

⁸⁰³ As stated in Chapter 4, this collection was initially a part of the Imperial Museum of Bursa, founded in 1904. The Imperial Museum, renamed as the Archaeology Museum of Bursa, moved to its current building, known as *Yeşil Medrese* (Green Madrasa), in 1930. Between 1955 and 1956, it was closed for renovation and reopened in October 1956.

⁸⁰⁴ The madrasa was used as a barracks until the 1970s.

⁸⁰⁵ The final cost of the complex was 290 million dollars.

by the order of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. The architectural design of the mosque, with its six minarets and a central dome, gives direct reference to Sinan, who served under three different Ottoman sultans in the sixteenth century and built mosque complexes such as Süleymaniye and Selimiye. Sinan has been accepted as a “national genius” since the early Republican era.⁸⁰⁶ Every detail of this mosque complex “was built with inspiration from Turkish-Islamic history and culture.”⁸⁰⁷

Since the beginning of the project, establishing a museum within the mosque complex project was planned; however, its preparation period had to be quickly arranged after the President Erdoğan’s direct order. In his “Preface” to the IMM catalogue, President Erdoğan presents this new museum as follows:

“[...] As it is known, with the Egypt campaign of Yavuz Sultan Selim in 1517, the caliphate passed to the Ottoman dynasty.

Thus, unique works representing Islam came from the holy lands to the Ottoman capital Istanbul, which was the center of the caliphate.

A collection of spiritual and historical importance, such as the Calligraphy plates, talismanic shirts, Quran and its cases, Damascus Documents, and the case of the Holy Mantle [of the Prophet Muhammad] are located in this museum.

The traditional spiritual values that have been shaped over the centuries and the sensitivity towards them are also evident in each work that carries all the traces of Turkish-Islamic civilization, which has a rich history.

Islamic civilization and culture have applied the finest and most elegant understanding of art throughout history, especially in its works of faith/religion.

These precious works exhibited for the first time in the Museum of Islamic Civilizations are an important source in terms of reflecting Islamic philosophy with all its fineness. [...]”⁸⁰⁸

⁸⁰⁶ Sinan and his works have been instrumental for each government, regardless of their different political tendencies. For a detailed discussion on the subject see Gülru Necipoğlu *The Age of Sinan* (London: Reaktion Books with the Princeton University Press, 2005); Gülru Necipoğlu, “The Creation of a National Genius: Sinan and the Historiography of ‘Classical’ Ottoman Architecture,” *Muqarnas* vol. 24 (2007), 141-183.

⁸⁰⁷ *İslam Medeniyetleri Müzesi*, museum catalogue (Istanbul: Milli Saraylar Başkanlığı, 2022), 9.

⁸⁰⁸ “[...] Bilindiği gibi, Yavuz Sultan Selim’in 1517 yılındaki Mısır seferiyle birlikte halifelik makamı Osmanlı hanedanına geçmiştir. Böylece kutsal topraklardan hilafetin merkezi olan Osmanlı payitahtı İstanbul’a İslâmiyet’i temsil eden eşsiz eserler gelmiştir. Hat levhaları, tılsımlı gömlekler, Kur’ân-ı Kerîm ve mahfazaları, Şam Evraki, Hırka-i Saâdet sandukası gibi manevi ve tarihî önemi haiz bir koleksiyon da bu müzede yer almaktadır.

The caliphal past of the Ottoman Empire is highly emphasized by President Erdoğan in his politics for his audience both in and outside Türkiye. This political framework influences cultural policy. For the last two decades, Türkiye has been presented as the representative of the Islamic civilization and culture, as the direct heir of the Ottoman Empire, in the museum context.

The IMM covers 10,000 square meter area and consists of 15 thematic displays containing more than 500 objects dated from the seventh to the nineteenth centuries. The whole collection of this museum is an ensemble of objects from six state collections administrated either under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, like TİEM and Istanbul Archaeology Museums, or the National Palaces (*Milli Saraylar*) such as the Topkapı Palace Museum.⁸⁰⁹ The thematic displays are:

- Turkish weaving art (*Türk Dokuma Sanatı*)
- Works attributed to the Holy Prophet (P.h.u.b.) (*Hz. Peygamber's S.A.V atfedilen eserler*)
- Architectural and Decorative Elements in Islamic Art (*İslam Sanatında Mîmari ve Dekoratif Öğeler*)
- The First Temple Kaaba (*İlk Mabed Kabe*)
- The Damascus Documents (*Şam Evrakı*)
- The Holy Quran and Its Cases (*Kuran-ı Kerim ve Mahfazaları*)
- Science in Islam (*İslam'da Bilim*)
- Imperial Charters and Orders (*Beratlar ve Fermanlar*)
- Calligraphy (*Hüsn-i Hat*)
- Talismanic Shirts (*Tılsımlı Gömlekler*)

Zengin bir geçmişe sahip Türk-İslâm medeniyetinin tüm izlerini taşıyan her bir eserde, yüzyıllar boyunca şekillenen geleneksel manevi değerler ve bunlara duyulan hassasiyet de kendini göstermektedir.

İslâm medeniyeti ve kültürü bilhassa inanca yönelik eserlerinde tarih boyunca en ince ve en zarif sanat anlayışını uygulamıştır. [...]” *İslam Medeniyetleri Müzesi*, 5. Translation of the quotation from Turkish to English by the author.

⁸⁰⁹ Topkapı Palace Museum’s management was taken from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and given to the Directorate of the National Palaces on 6 September 2019. The Directorate of the National Palaces contains five pavilions (Maslak, Aynalıkavak, Beykoz, Küçüksu, and İhlamur), a chalet (Yıldız), three palaces (Topkapı, Dolmabahçe, and Beylerbeyi), two factories (Yıldız Tile and Porcelain Factory and Hereke Carpet and Silk Fabric Weaving Factory), and six museums including the IMM (the others are the Painting Museum, Beykoz Glass and Crystal Museum, Aynalıkavak Music Museum, Dolmabahçe Clock Museum, Museum of Palace Collections), and the early republican period building called Ankara Palace. The Directorate of the National Palaces was administrated by the Turkish Parliament (TBMM) until it was transferred to the management of the Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye with a decree on 16 July 2018.

- Clothing in the Ottoman (*Osmanlı'da Giyim*)
- The tradition of *Destimal* and Cloths for the Sarcophagus (*Destimal Geleneği ve Sanduka Puşideleri*)
- The Conquest of Islam (*İslam'da Fetih*)
- Turkish Tile Art (*Türk Çini Sanatı*)
- Islamic Coins (*İslami Sikkeler*)

Although the name of the museum is “Islamic Civilizations,” most of the collection and the themes are from or related to the Ottoman period and traditions. Therefore, it is safe to say that the Ottoman Empire is presented as the culmination of the Islamic civilization, like in TIEM. The IMM and TIEM have similar collections and common thematic displays, like the Damascus Documents and the sacred relics. As can be seen from the list, sacred relics are categorized under the title of “works attributed to the Holy Prophet” in the IMM. TIEM’s new installation is dynasty-focused, emphasizing the importance of the Ottoman period and incorporating nationalist discourse on illicitly-trafficked heritage. The display of sacred relics has shifted from a secular to a more religious approach, reflecting the growing influence of Islamic values and sensibilities in the country’s cultural and political landscape, which is also seen in the curation of the IMM.

Until recently, most of these objects were displayed in the museum based on their types, materials, or dynasties from a secular perspective. Even the sacred relics used to be displayed without their religious meanings by emphasizing only their aesthetic and historical features. Now, the sacred relics are exhibited by underlining their religious and spiritual nature in the sacred relics-themed galleries. Interestingly, today, even the objects without religious meanings are presented in this spiritual environment. For example, the qiblanuma from the eighteenth-century Ottoman period (inv. no. 157 A/B) discussed in Chapter 6 is exhibited without context in the Sacred Relics Gallery of TIEM though it is a holy object. Considering the changing display methodologies—both physically and conceptually—of the Islamic art collections in museums in Türkiye reminds us of how meanings attributed to objects, from secular to spiritual, are created within the museum space. With its recent installation, TIEM (and the newly-created IMM) are the latest tangible examples that demonstrates the shifting conceptual and physical display features of Islamic art collections in state museums in Türkiye.

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