The newly introduced art of painting, which carries great importance among civilized nations in terms of its procurement of many public funds, is an open and clear public/universal (umumi) language that brings forth the strength of imagination that allows all peoples to understand it. It is a type of writing.¹

In 1913, in the first book about Ottoman art published in Turkish, the Ottoman painter Hüseyin Zekai Pasha used this sentence to present painting as part of a universal discourse of representation bridging the past and the future. Even though art in the Western modality had begun to enter the empire in the late eighteenth century, it remained, over a century later, very new, unavailable, and controversial for much of the public. Now much has changed—but how much? While there is a lot of art in Turkey—including ancient, traditional, folk, modern, and contemporary—the institutionalization of it has developed in such a way as to continue the foreignness of art as a concept. While many aspects of the visual and built worlds have been incorporated into national identity through tropes of heritage, use of the meta-narratives of art as a mechanism to bring cohesion to the visual world and a means through which to interpret aesthetic experience has been largely restricted to arts associated with the West. While the foreignness of this language is most apparent in relation to arts in the Western modality and their inscription through public institutions, the taxonomy both within and among museums of Turkey has to a large extent foreclosed the domain that art has carved out for itself in the Western frame of reference.

This is not an issue of what art is, but of what art does. Situated in the perspectival tradition of viewing, art in the Western tradition positions the subject as if looking through the object towards something beyond. In the modern era, this became not simply a practice of representation, a window onto the world in the Albertian sense, but a window onto thought as well.² Developing within this tradition, the European discourse of art (including art history) depends on this mode of looking, in which art is a vehicle for thought and is dependent on a subject for the proliferation of its meanings. In addition, Western art history developed in concert with nationalism and, along with it, a mapping of the relationships between nations and cultures on the world stage. Certainly not all art-historical practices took on a Hegelian structure, but the dominance of the German tradition made a Hegelian historiographic scheme—in which the spirit of civilization, moving forward in time from East to West, contributes to the development of history, a process that ends with the capacity for self-reflexivity—a common feature of the art-historical narrative, visible in universal survey museums in both Europe and the United States, as well as in survey textbooks.³ The modern understanding of art has developed between these two structures—the one a mode of communication and the other an indication of a broad national spirit brought to view through the vehicle of art. Seen in this light, art in each national narrative is not simply a means of viewing the present but also of understanding that present in an ongoing relationship with a past, to which it is linked through an unbroken sequence or grand narrative of artistic progress. This has had profound implications for the organization of museums, since the European model of the museum developed concurrently with the discipline of art history. In contrast, in the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey, museums developed not in alignment with a discipline focusing on the visual but rather in direct association with narratives of territoriality, ethnicity, and nationhood. Like the painting that Hüseyin Zekai Pasha describes, it could be said that such museums, and the art within them, present less an experience of the perceptual through which ideology can be accessed—less a form of art—than a form of writing. If myth, as discussed by Roland Barthes, is a means of transforming culture into nature, then the museums of the Ottoman Empire and many of
their counterparts in modern states of the Middle East reflect a transcription of culture based on a very different understanding of the supposedly natural relationship between objects and identity.

MUSEUMS IN THE WESTERN TRADITION

In contrast to the overarching perspective on civilization presented by many European and American museums, the institution of the museum as it has developed in the Ottoman Empire, Turkey, and elsewhere in the Middle East often has segregated collections, each determined by period and or content, in entirely separate institutions. In doing so, these institutions have often displayed objects as collective icons of highly circumscribed readings of history and identity, readings that provide little opportunity to construct new means of engaging various eras and cultural practices. Where narrative structures within museum-display strategies are weak, the only meaning assigned to objects becomes their categorization, reducing the possibility of multiple readings. As suggested by Hüseyin Zekai Pasha, even painting has often been understood less as a visual language than as a means of writing history, both as a record of the past and as a mode of identification with the West. Rather than being subsumed within an overarching discourse of art, various types of objects—archaeological, religious, ethnographic, etc.—retain quite disparate realms of association. Art is not simply foreign in itself; it is made foreign by the very taxonomy of and within museums of the region. This taxonomy removes a vast array of objects from consideration as works of art. Instead, museums and the objects within them become icons of reified understandings of meaning that preclude their inclusion within a more comprehensive art-historical discourse, in which eras such as the archaic, pre-classical, classical, late classical, and modern can be considered mutually related and reflexive parts of a contemporary set of identities. These identities, while not necessarily based in the arts of Europe, came to be perceived as part and parcel of a shared European heritage. The discourse of art history allowed for works excavated and imported from the East to be divested of their territorial identities and reinscribed with Western cultural associations, while works from more modern eras could be marked as foreign.

Each major European metropolis underwent profound changes over the course of the nineteenth century. The Grande Galerie of the Louvre Palace had been transformed into a museum for the display of paintings during the eighteenth century and first opened to the public in 1793, after the French Revolution, but it was not until the plunder of Italy under Napoleon, which allowed France to obtain classical antiquities, that Dominique Vivant Denon instituted a more chronological exhibition scheme at the Musée Napoléon at the Louvre. With the opening in 1826 of a department of Egyptian antiquities under the directorship of Jean-François Champollion and the creation of a department of Assyrian antiquities, made possible by a shipment of works by the French consul to Mosul Paul-Emile Botta in 1847, a wider chronological and geographical profile became part of the French national art museum. For the first time, a single institution could display a wide variety of objects brought together through a meta-narrative of art rooted in cultural connections and aesthetic properties.
The Napoleonic plunder of artworks and their collection throughout Europe during the early nineteenth century brought about similar developments in Germany, where the Neues Museum (today the Altes Museum) opened in Berlin in 1830. Under the guidance of its architect, Karl Friedrich Schinkel, whose design was interpreted as a bold attempt "to grasp Antiquity in its intellectual principles and at the same time to expand them in keeping with the terms of a new epoch of world history," the Berlin museum adopted a chronological approach similar to that at the Louvre. While, like the Louvre, the Neues Museum was originally designed to house both antiquities and the paintings of the grand masters in an attempt to provide a comprehensive view of world art history, it soon became clear that its space would not be sufficient for such a task. Plans for an additional museum, to house paintings, were underway as early as 1834, although this second Neues Museum opened only in 1859 and was supplemented by the National Gallery in 1876. By 1904, Schinkel’s building had been transformed into a repository entirely of antiquities.

With the rapid acquisition of artifacts and monumental architecture from the territories of the Ottoman Empire, the Bode Museum, built in 1904, and the Pergamon Museum, built between 1910 and 1930, completed the consortium of museums that make up the Museum Island of Berlin and continue to work in concert to present a vision of world civilization not too distant from Schinkel’s Hegelian interpretation of the museum, although not under a single roof as at the Louvre.

Developing later than their European counterparts, museums in the United States, such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, founded in New York in 1872, closely followed the continental European art-historical model, reifying the tendency to present within a single institution a comprehensive, chronological, art-historically informed display ranging from antiquities to the arts of various civilizations and of the Western world. As in many museums of Europe, most notably the Altes Museum, when original artifacts could not be found to illustrate particular moments in the narrative of art history, plaster casts of originals served as convenient and important additions to the collection, underscoring the emphasis then given to comprehensiveness. Similar patterns of collecting and display were used at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and the Art Institute of Chicago, both of which were founded in the 1870s, and continue to inform more recent museum collections.

While the primary focus of these museums was on presenting a trajectory of Western civilization based on the Hegelian model of history, by the end of the nineteenth century many were beginning to include collections, often culled from colonial possessions and including works from China, India, Africa, and the Islamic world, that did not fit this model. For all these collections, problems arose even in the process of categorizing the objects in them as works of art, since they did not fit the aesthetic categories of art in the West. Expositions of “Muhammedan” art took place in France, Sweden, and Germany beginning in the 1890s. During the same era, in response to industrialization, writers seeking forms of design and pattern appropriate for modern industrial production began to collect examples of Islamic “design” decontextualized from their geographic, temporal, and material contexts, and Islamic art provided an important inspiration for Art Nouveau motifs. Thus Islamic art became doubly coded: on the one hand as a form of cultural production always invested with religious significance, and on the other as a primarily decorative form divested of intrinsic meaning. Islamic collections found a home in Berlin with the opening of the Bode Museum in 1904. The first Islamic gallery opened at the Louvre in 1922. While the Metropolitan Museum of Art had begun to develop a collection of Islamic works as early as 1874, it was under the curatorship of the department of decorative arts until the institution of a separate department of Near Eastern art in 1932. As an important inspiration for the Arts and Crafts movement in England and Art Nouveau in Europe, Islamic art also found a home during the late nineteenth century in museums devoted to decorative arts, such as the Victoria and Albert Museum in London and the Museum für angewandte Kunst in Vienna.

EARLY MUSEUMS IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

While the institutions of Ottoman modernization are often discussed within a discourse of belatedness, the above survey shows that the establishment of museums in the mid-nineteenth century was both timely and comparable to museum development elsewhere. As in Britain, where the royal collections generally
remained dispersed in various castles rather than being united in museums, the collections of Ottoman museums emerged separately from the treasury collections of the imperial palace. As in Berlin, the early museums of the empire developed in immediate proximity to one another. Like the United States, the Ottoman Empire was deeply invested in proving its participation in Western civilization through the museum institution. Like all three Western nations, it devoted enormous resources to developing museums during the nineteenth century and used them as a competitive signal of its national strength and ownership of the legacy of civilization.

However, the new museums of the empire were also radically different from their Western counterparts, and this difference has continued well into the modern period. It can be outlined through several trends manifested before the dissolution of the empire and repeated in institutional patterns of twentieth-century museums throughout the Middle East. First, Ottoman museums emerged at the same time that the empire was adopting Western practices in art and thus did not draw on a long tradition of regarding art as a central element in the discourse of culture. Second, the types of collections and the classification of objects in both Ottoman and republican museums were considerably different from those in the West. Third, the spatial arrangement of displays and the relationships set up between museums, whether neighboring or distant, held far fewer conceptual links. Ultimately, the lack of an overarching narrative in Ottoman, Turkish, and other Middle Eastern museums was no less ideological than were the grand narratives espoused in the universal survey museums of Western nations, but fragmentation has made its ideology more difficult to discuss or contest.

Museums in the Ottoman Empire developed during the same era as their Western counterparts but responded to a very different set of precedents and needs. While the Imperial Palace (built ca. 1459–78 and known today as the Topkapi Palace) included several treasury collections—of manuscripts, porcelains, saddles, jewels, costumes, weapons, and other valuables—these were more in keeping with the princely collections of Europe, intended for the gaze of the sultan and his guests rather than for public shows of power, edification, or the taxonomic presentation of a worldview. The Ottoman Imperial Museum was rooted in collections housed at the Church of Hagia Irene. Located in the outer courtyard of the palace, the church had been used as an armory since soon after the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, presumably in concert with the palace institution. In 1730, the armory was converted into a space of display not only for antiquated weapons but also for many of the relics that the Ottomans had inherited from the Byzantine state. In 1846, the Marshal of the Imperial Arsenal (Topkapi Amire Müşiri) Ahmet Fethi Pasha established the Magazine of Antiquities (Mecmuâ-i Asar-i Atika) and the Magazine of Antique Weapons (Mecmuâ-i Eslîha-i Atika) in the former church. The displays, heavily biased towards a comparison between historical military spolia and new weaponry signaling the recent Ottoman reforms of the Tanzimat, were illustrated with mannequins of the defunct Janissary order and culminated in a display of the sword of Sultan Mehmed II (r. 1444–46, 1451–81) flanked by important artifacts of conquest. By 1852, the display of the mannequins had moved to a separate location, called the Ancient Costumery (Elbise-i Atika), located on the Hippodrome, a site of public exhibition that memorialized the dress reform of 1826. Around the same time, antiquities were relatively haphazardly assembled in the Magazine of Antiquities and were first catalogued in 1868 by the traveling French archaeologist Albert Dumont. The space was less for display than for the storage of works sent by forward-thinking administrators from various provinces where archaeologists had been amassing the vast collections of antiquities quickly filling Western collections. Scattered among the military spolia, marked with temporary labels indicating only provenance, and making no organizational reference to aesthetic value or cultural development, the antiquities housed within the dual collections were conceived not as art but as markers of territorial possession.

These established spaces of display were nevertheless not technically museums. This changed in 1869, when the grand vizier Ali Pasha changed the name of the Magazine of Antiquities to the Imperial Museum (Müze-i Hümâyûn) and appointed as its first director E. Goold, a teacher at the modern French-language Galatasary Lycée. The same year, the minister of public education Safvet Pasha officially ordered local governors to send artifacts to the capital. After Goold lost his position in 1871 following the fall of his patron, Ali Pasha, and an artist named Teranzio briefly and ineffectually succeeded him, Anton Philip
Dethier was appointed director. Under him, the acquisition of antiquities was partially secured through the first imperial antiquities legislation of 1874, and the museum itself moved. In 1877, following the deposition of Sultan Abdülaziz (r. 1830–76) and the subsequent closing of the Magazine of Weapons soon after the ascension of Sultan Abdülhamid II (r. 1876–1909), the growing antiquities collection moved to the Tiled Pavilion (Çinili Köşk, completed in 1472), the first building of the palace, which was remodeled to hide its Timurid influence and look more reminiscent of the neoclassical temple form commonly used in the facades of Western museums (fig. 1). The move rendered the archaeological collections fully independent from the military collections, which would continue to play an important role in Ottoman and Turkish museums, but as part of separate institutions.

With the appointment in 1880 of the first Ottoman director of the museum, Osman Hamdi (1842–1910), the museum gained an ideological vision that would inform its growth. The son of İbrahim Edhem Pasha, a high-ranking Ottoman administrator, Osman Hamdi had returned a decade earlier from Paris, where he had begun his education in law but completed it as an artist trained in the studios of Jean Léon Gérôme and Gustave Boulanger. Both as the director of the Academy of Fine Arts (Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi), opened in 1883, and through his painting practice, Osman Hamdi was a seminal figure in the development of Western-style painting in the empire. Through his repeated revision of the antiquities law in 1884 and 1906, his leadership of the first Ottoman archaeological excavations at Nemrut and Sidon in 1885 and 1887, and his curatorship of the Imperial Museum—
which continued until his death in 1910—Osman Hamdi used the museum as a means of expressing a collective Ottoman identity that would include classical civilization as part of its territorial heritage, thereby constructing a meta-narrative of identity rooted in intrinsic links between the empire and Western civilization. Thus the Ottoman museum narrative was rooted in a discourse of territory, not of art, as a metonym for culture.

In 1891 the Imperial Museum collection moved to a neighboring, purpose-built neoclassical building, initially called the “Sarcophagus Museum” after the sarcophagi discovered in the first Ottoman archaeological expedition in Sidon (fig. 2). Although in the monograph on the excavation Osman Hamdi suggested the sarcophagi as the core of exhibition planning in the new museum, the Imperial Museum (today the Istanbul Archaeology Museum) instead developed a geographically based display strategy, rooted largely in the excavation location. The museum’s uncharacteristic aversion to the acquisition of copies precluded its display of a fully art-historical, developmental progression of objects displayed. The resulting meta-narrative based on territorial identity was strengthened by extensive information on provenance in the catalogue. While universal survey museums used the story of art history, strengthened by education in the literature of classical antiquity, to abstract works from their

![Image](https://example.com/image.jpg)
Istanbul, as yet saw the investment in Western-style painting and radical works by Courbet and the Barbizon school, assembled a notable collection of classical French art. That a similar undertaking was within the capability of Istanbul is illustrated by the fact that during a brief stay in Paris in the late 1860s Halil Şerif Pasha, a relative of the khedive who was active in Ottoman politics, assembled a notable collection of classical French painting and radical works by Courbet and the Barbizon school. Neither administration, in Cairo or in Istanbul, as yet saw the investment in Western-style art as a worthwhile contribution to the development of a modern identity, however, and upon his return to the empire, Halil Şerif Pasha almost immediately sold his collection. While the new palaces of Istanbul were in the process of commissioning and collecting both wall paintings and works by European artists, these were conceived as modern palatial furnishings, not as museum displays that would have a public audience.

Indeed, when the Council of State (Şura-şı Devlet) issued a directive indicating the structure of the Imperial Museum in 1889, departments devoted to Western or modern art were not included. Rather, the museum was divided into six parts: one for Greek, Roman, and Byzantine antiquities; a second for Assyrian, Caledonian, Egyptian, Phoenician, Hittite, and Himatian antiquities as well as works by Asian and African tribes; a third for Islamic fine arts; a fourth for ancient coins; and a fifth for natural history. The sixth department was the museum library. The natural history museum, although important in the West for providing a “biological” model of growth and development that was adapted to survey art museums, never materialized as part of the Imperial Museum. Without a structural spine, little sense of cohesion was created between adjacent collections, and what might have become a “museum peninsula” akin to the Museum Island of Berlin ultimately dispersed, leaving the collections of classical and ancient antiquities dissociated from the narratives of Islamic and Western art.

In contrast, the Imperial Museum in Istanbul and the Egyptian Museum in Cairo instituted collections in Islamic art almost as soon as the category emerged in the West. A department of Islamic art opened at the Imperial Museum in 1891 on an upper floor of the new building (fig. 3). Collecting did not gain full momentum, however, until the antiquities law of 1906 began to prohibit the export of Islamic antiquities from the empire. When a third wing of the museum opened in 1904, providing enough room for all the antiquities still housed in the Tiled Pavilion to move to the main building, the Islamic collections moved into the Tiled Pavilion, where they remained until 1914. In contrast to exhibits of archaeological works, which created meanings for a new set of artifacts, displays of Islamic art transformed the meaning of objects that already had use value, sometimes as part of worship. Presenting them for their aesthetic rather than their utilitarian qualities, these museums recon-
textualized devotional objects through the secular category of art.

Osman Hamdi died in 1910, ceding his place as administrator of both the Imperial Museum and the academy to his younger brother, Halil Edhem (1861–1938). While he soon relinquished administration of the school, Halil Edhem remained as the head of the Imperial Museum until after it had become the Istanbul Archaeology Museum and had been joined by the Topkapâ Palace, established as a museum in 1924. He retired from this position only in 1931, when he became a member of parliament. While overshad owed in memory by his brother, Halil Edhem played an important role in maintaining the collections of the Imperial Museum, operating the Fine Arts Academy during the difficult war years, and developing an antiquities and restoration policy during the early republican period.

LATE MUSEUMS IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

The years after the Second Constitutional Revolution of 1909–10 were characterized by a relaxation of restrictions concerning public expression, resulting in numerous publications and new institutions as the empire fought to build a modern state structure. Even during the troubled years between the beginning of the Balkan Wars in 1912 and the fall of the empire in 1923, new museums and collections emerged. As the growth of the collections of the Imperial Museum slowed and they lost their predominance, there were new ventures towards using the administrative areas of the palace as display spaces, plans were formulated for a painting collection, and the military museum reemerged as the dominant museum of the empire.

In 1910, the Ministry of Public Education established a commission to investigate the best methods for the preservation of “Islamic and Ottoman arts,” for the first time differentiating religious from dynas-
tic in the museum context. As a result, the Ministry of Pious Foundations was made responsible for the conservation of consecrated buildings, while the Imperial Museum was to house mosaics, tiles, and other removable ornament. Friedrich Sarre (1865–1945), who would become the director of the Berlin Museum of Islamic Art in 1921, curated the museum collections between 1911 and 1913; they were moved from the Imperial Museum to the former charitable hospice (imaret) of the Süleymaniye Mosque, which opened as the Museum of Pious Foundations (Evkaf Müzesi) on the anniversary of the accession of Sultan Mehmed V Reşad (r. 1909–18) (fig. 4). While focused on arts made in the past, the collection seems to have been viewed as representing living tradition, since a calligraphy school was opened in conjunction with the museum. Art in the Western modality had been grounded in antiquities through the inclusion of a Fine Arts Academy on the grounds of the Imperial Museum; here, in contrast, the drive to preserve living local culture was, for the first time, expressed through a museum devoted to Islamic art.

During the early years of Ottoman museums, institutions associated with the visual arts were linked by their placement in a single area. It was certainly not coincidental that the Academy of Fine Arts was founded on the grounds of the Imperial Museum, where students engaged in a curriculum based on that of the École des Beaux Arts in Paris could make use of the antiquities collections nearby. However, the gradual segregation of the collections of Islamic art from the antiquities collections ultimately precluded the construction of a holistic grand narrative comprehensive of both the classical and the Islamic pasts of the empire. Similar patterns of disconnection between types of museum collections are evident elsewhere in the Middle East where colonial rule did not play a major factor in the institution of museums. While the Museum of Arab Art in Cairo was initially founded under the auspices of the French in 1885 in the ruined...
mosque of al-Hakim, in 1903 it was established in an expressly built, monumental neo-Islamic structure. The Coptic Museum, created in 1895, and the Greco-Roman Museum, founded in 1892, completed the segregation of antiquities into separate arenas spread across the urban fabric of the city. Although Donald Preziosi maintains that “the ideal tourist visitor was urged to visit the history of Egypt from its earlier to later periods by visiting museums in the chronological order of their contents,” it would seem that such an objective would have been far more efficiently realized in a single building akin to the Louvre, where such an itinerary, although exhausting, would be at least feasible. Rather, this process of distributing antiquities to various sites can be read as a pattern in which antiquities and Islamic works were designated as entirely discrete elements of heritage and not connected through a discourse of art. When Iran commissioned the French architect André Godard to build its National Museum in 1937, the museum was designed to exhibit pre-Islamic works; a far larger wing, for Islamic art, was added much later, in 1996. While antiquity and Islam were both considered part of the heritage of the new nations of the Middle East, museums there structured them less according to a continuous grand narrative than as a series of discontinuous and layered histories. This enabled these nations to dissociate their religious and dynastic roots from the secularist, republican ones posited by ideologies of modernism.

One reason for this was the absence of a single, coherent narrative of art based on a model of dialectical progress and the linking of cultures of the past with those of the present. Indeed, given the singular nature of such a progressive ideal, the existing narrative of Western art as the model of progress precluded the construction of a parallel narrative. In Turkey, early republican art historians such as Celâl Esad Arseven and İsmail Hakkı Baltaçoğlu argued for interpreting Islamic art as an early expression of the modernist tradition; their interpretations can also be understood as reading the past through the modernist use of non-Western art for inspiration. More important, their attempt to engage the arts of the past in a relationship with arts in the Western modality never entered the exhibition practices of museums, where segregated collections made contiguous exhibition of various types of objects and artworks nearly impossible.

During the same era, artifacts of the Ottoman past were increasingly being interpreted as part of a national heritage. As a result, two collections were culled from the treasury, which under Abdülhamid had contained, in the same cabinets, organized but mixed collections including Chinese porcelains, jewels, weapons, clocks, and pipes (fig. 5). During the reign of Mehmed V Reşad, two exhibits drawn from these collections were arranged in the treasury—one of sultans’ costumes and one of Chinese porcelains—but these were accessible only with special permission (fig. 6). Designed to display the glamour of the sultans through the ornate fabrics of their costumes, their bejeweled thrones, and their vast collection of porcelains, these exhibits inadvertently created a category absent from Western conceptions of Eastern art. In a Western museum, costumes of the Ottoman sultans would have represented examples of Islamic textiles and been understood in terms of aesthetics rooted in cultural practices such as ornamentation, and Chinese porcelains would have belonged to an entirely different cultural context, far removed from the Islamic frame of reference. By not including the costumes within the collections of Islamic art at the Imperial Museum, Ottoman museum administrators...
museums and narratives of display

(Professor Halil Edhem) effectively displayed them as markers of dynastic history, coded by the reign of the sultans to whom they had belonged. Chinese porcelains were exhibited as cultural markers, not of the culture that produced them, but rather of the historic wealth of the palace in which they had been used. Remaining as part of the imperial collection, the works retained their political histories in a manner not possible when works of Islamic art entered European collections.

In 1917, the Fine Arts Academy moved out of its building, providing separate quarters for the Imperial Museum’s collections of Near Eastern antiquities. However, as Istanbul came under allied occupation in 1919 and, with the fall of the empire in 1923, ceded to the small town of Ankara its role as capital, the Imperial Museum lost its dominance. Ironically, it was during these uncertain times that art in the Western modality came to the fore, albeit briefly and in contexts quite different from those of Western museums: the academy’s peripatetic collection of paintings, most of them copies, and those in the Military Museum. As soon as he gained control of the Imperial Museum, Halil Edhem had instituted what was called the Collection of Decorated Panels (Elvah-ı Nakşiyе Koleksiyonu) associated with the Academy of Fine Arts—a project that he claimed to have been the fond desire of his late older brother. (Osman Hamdi had controlled the reins of state-supported art institutions for over thirty years, however; his lack of action regarding this painting collection, compared to his prodigious activity in relation to both the museum and the school, suggests that Halil Edhem’s intentions may have diverged from his.)

For the first time in the discourse of the empire, Halil Edhem associated the museum institution with art:

Fig 6. Exhibit of sultans’ costumes and throne during the reign of Mehmed V Reşad. (After Halil Edhem, Topkapı Sarayı [Istanbul: Kanaat Kütüphanesi, 1931], 33)
When we find ourselves across from a painting, old or new, knowing which school it is from is difficult without a lot of knowledge and experience. Even an artist who is not familiar with painting collections or is foreign to art history would have difficulty in this regard and would hesitate. In many countries, museums worth millions have been established not only to protect these works, but also to enhance the knowledge and talent of artists and then to increase the knowledge of the people.24

In contrast to the Imperial Museum’s project of stocking the museum with originals, however, the painting collection was initially conceived as an institution affiliated with the academy and was to be filled with copies of important Western paintings. Although paintings by Turkish artists were occasionally purchased for the collection at the annual Galatasaray exhibitions, which began in 1916, and the collection was given many of the works from the Exhibit of Turkish Artists sponsored by the military for exhibition in Vienna and Berlin in 1917, state support of the collection was minimal, and rather than being displayed, it moved with the academy to various sites around the city between 1916 and 1921. In 1924, the Parade Pavilion (Alay Köşkü) of the Topkapı Palace was designated as an exhibition site, but the paintings did not find a permanent home until many years later, when they became the seed collection of the Istanbul Museum of Painting and Sculpture, founded in 1937. By then, the copies in the collection were considered useless, and they remain in the possession of the academy.25

Although the Fine Arts Academy had been located beside the Imperial Museum in order to foster a link between its collection and the museum institution, this association did not become part of the public experience of museums for many years. To people who lacked opportunities for arts education at, for instance, the elite military and medical academies, and who had no links to the palace, Western painting remained foreign and inaccessible. This changed, however, in 1916, with the remodeling of the Military Museum, which had reopened at the former Church of Hagia Irene in 1913 under the leadership of the General Ahmet Muhtar Pasha (1861–1926) and his son, Sermet Muhtar (Alus) (1887–1952). The museum had the potential to reach a wide audience, since the first courtyard of the palace, where it was located, was used as a staging ground for new military recruits and hosted these young men and any family members who accompanied them. In the museum, a vast range of weaponry from all eras of Ottoman history was variously brought to life: by a display of the Janissary mannequins brought back from the Hippodrome, by live performances of a military Janissary band (Mehter Takımı), by one of the empire’s first cinema salons, and, throughout the museum, by portraits of Ottoman sultans and leaders as well as paintings glorifying battle scenes that illustrated the exhibits. The exhibits in the Magazine of Antique Weapons had culminated with the sword of Mehmed II; in the new museum, they culminated with his portrait. In a world where representational images were limited to black-and-white photographs, lithographs, and caricatures, the display of large oil paintings, accompanied by long textual explanations of the events they depicted, must have been very affecting. The strategy was replicated at the Naval Museum, founded in 1895 at the dockyards, which moved from its former location to a site in Kasımpaşa, with the painter Ali Sami (Boyar) (1880–1967) at its helm. There, new mannequins were costumed to represent Turkish naval glory, and paintings by the recently deceased artist Hasan Ræza illustrated the exhibits.26 For the first time, paintings in the Western modality were on display to the public in Ottoman museums. Nevertheless, these were not museums of art, but of history.

NEW MUSEUMS IN ANKARA

Once the dust had settled after the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923, the new government in Ankara became engaged in redefining the imperial institutions and planning new ones in line with the needs of the nation-state. In their capacity as spaces of heritage preservation and dissemination, museums were intended to play an important role in characterizing the shared culture of the nation.

During the later years of the War of Independence, a committee charged with the preservation of antiquities was already in charge of gathering works in a depot in Ankara, the as-yet undeclared capital city of the new Republic. While later historiography makes this seem like a centralized effort, the memoirs of those involved suggest that the early years of Turkish museums were largely the product of esoteric individual efforts during a time of war, when such efforts seemed superfluous to many. According to one of the founders of the depot, Halil Nuri Yurdakul, several
individuals were interested in preserving works for the new nation as early as 1920, before any government agencies could be convinced of this necessity. Not all efforts were in Ankara: in 1921, a small museum of the revolution was opened in Eskişehir. It received support from the regional government, which sent requests to smaller towns for relevant acquisitions. After working with this museum and being wounded at the battle of Sakarya, Halil Nuri found himself in Ankara, where he again became involved in a museum project, this time with the support of Muharrem Galip, the youngest brother of Osman Hamdi. Halil Nuri proposed four possible sites: the fortress, the central market (bedesten), the Temple of Augustus, and the empty area behind the Ministry of Education. Due to the ongoing war, the fortress was chosen as the safest spot for the collection of a cultural museum. This depot, located in the Akkale tower of the Ankara fortress, comprised two small rooms with some glass cases and received little attention. However, even at this early stage, it was envisioned as a national rather than an archaeological museum, one that would bring together not just archaeological artifacts but also historical signet rings, small collectibles, embroideries, lacework, printed fabrics, and costumes. While it was difficult to persuade the municipal leader, Ali, of the importance of the project, Halil Nuri eventually managed to get the key to the fortress from the nearby dervish lodge. He obtained the first works for the museum collection when he lowered himself by rope into the dungeons, where he discovered shields and arrows. Returning after another military stint, he found that many works had been dumped in sacks within the museum. The Ministry of Culture’s request to reorganize and display these works went unanswered by the Ministry of National Defense, but the museum was nevertheless established in 1921, even though its staff frequently had to return to the front. The earliest remaining records of this collection are documents from 1924 that discuss the necessity for the production of an inventory and budget for works to be purchased from various areas in Anatolia and collected at the center. When the collection opened in 1925, it had—in the words of Cemil Sema Ongun, a philosophy teacher at the Haydar Paşa High School, who worked there—“no works” in it.27

By now the government was also beginning to make plans concerning museums. One was to establish an ethnographic museum at the market, complete the unfinished portion of the Ministry of Education as a museum of the revolution, and establish an archaeological museum at the fortress. After the area around the fortress museum had been cleared and trees planted, an aerial cableway would connect the museum to Tamerlane Hill across the way, providing public entertainment. The fortress would also house pigeon coops and a firing range, the latter already a popular attraction at the Military Museum.28

The Directorate of Culture and the Cultural Commission were instituted in 1925, with the mandate to “protect national culture and raise our youth within [it].”29 The minister of public education Hamdullah Suphi (Tannröver) took on the project of a museum. He consulted the Turcologist J. Mészáros, with whom he had taught at Istanbul University; Mészáros was the director of the Hungarian National Museum, which included the ethnographic exhibits that had been assembled at the Ethnography Village in the City Park of Budapest in 1896.30 Mészáros’s recommendations, expressed in a 1924 report, included the organization of works according to type; the inclusion of a photography studio, a phonographic studio to save popular songs on gelatin rolls, and an anthropological laboratory; archaeological research to establish a scientific museum; and the sending of collecting missions around Anatolia to gather objects for the museum.31

Following Mészáros’s suggestions, a committee led first by art historian and statesman Celâl Esad Arseven and then by Halil Edhem began to plan the museum. The Ministry of Education acquired the site of the Muslim cemetery in the Namazgâh district of Ankara from the General Directorate of Pious Foundations in 1925. While its significance is often overlooked, the Namazgâh (literally, “place of prayer,” an open-air mosque) had been an important area for collective holiday prayer and even during the war had hosted meetings of national and religious significance.32 Thus a site of public worship was transformed into a space symbolic of national culture. The nation’s premier young architect, Arif Hikmet (Koyunoğlu), utilized traditional elements of mosque architecture such as an arcaded portico, a domed central hall, and ornate tile decoration to produce a space at once secular and reminiscent of a place of worship.33 The importance of the museum was underscored when it came to share its site overlooking the city with the building of the Turkish Hearth Organization (Türk Ocağı,
also known as the Ankara People’s House, or Halkevi, an organ of the ruling People’s Republican Party designated to host public meetings, entertainment, and activities to encourage party objectives, including modernization, secularization, and Westernization), also designed by Arif Hikmet.

At the foundation-laying ceremony of the new museum, Hamdullah Suphi explained,

In our Ankara, which carries so many recent memories old and new, painful and sweet, I am laying the foundation of the State Museum. And my imagination is content with seeing monuments to knowledge, art, and history such as this following one after another in the other corners of the country.

As construction began, what type of museum would be placed on the hill was still unclear, and it was variously called the Imperial Treasure (Hazine-i Hümayun), the Museum of the People (Halk Müzesi), the National Museum (Milli Müze), and the Culture Museum (Hars Müzesi) before receiving the name Ethnography Museum.

After the completion of the building, its first director, Hamit Zübeyr (Koşay), began to assemble its collections, purchasing 1,250 works in 1927. Atatürk toured the museum on April 15, 1928 and ordered that it be open during the 1928 visit of Afghanistan’s King Amanullah Khan. Its public opening, however, was on July 18, 1930. Bringing together costumes from throughout the country, the Ethnography Museum visually served to unify the customs of diverse groups within a single setting. Aided by dioramas of “traditional” life, it also helped oppose the “folk” and “traditional” to the modernism espoused by the young nation. This opposition was enhanced by the collections culled from the defunct dervish lodges, which had been ordered closed in 1924, their contents to be sent not to the Islamic art collections in Istanbul but to the Ethnography Museum. Thus numerous works including books, miniature paintings, sheikhs’
robes, carpets, mihrabs, and minbars came to be displayed in relation to folk traditions that were to be discarded during the processes of modernization. The halls on the right side of the museum began with costumes, embroideries, and small woven kilims and progressed to metalwork and a complete seventeenth-century Ankara living room. On the opposite side of the main hall, the museum’s trajectory continued with two rooms devoted to the memorabilia of the defunct dervish orders and culminated in a display of Seljuk woodcarvings collected from mosques and tombs around the country.\(^3\) Much as in Osman Hamdi’s famous painting, Mihrab, mihrabs lost their patently religious function; in the museum display they were not only dissociated from places of prayer but also oriented in multiple directions. Minbars, also in multiples, were now not sites of teaching but stairways leading nowhere (fig. 7).

The Ethnography Museum largely took over the function of the Museum of Pious Foundations (still located in the imaret of the Süleymaniye complex), which after 1924 continued to operate as the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art. During much of the Republican era (until approximately the 1970s), its collections were distributed to many other institutions, ranging from the Topkapı Palace Museum to local museums around the country, to develop their own ethnographic displays. The organizing principle of the museum changed in 1983, when the entire collection was reunited at the restored Palace of Arhman Pasha at the Hippodrome, where a largely chronological sequence naturalizing the links between classical Islamic, Seljuk, and Ottoman Turkish art history informs the displays. An ethnographic display was also appended to the museum, associating the nomadic tents, weaving, and embroidery on the bottom floor with the palatial carpets in the vast collection displayed upstairs.

The Ankara Ethnography Museum remained in its original form until 1939, when its central courtyard was transformed into the temporary mausoleum of Atatürk and was used for state visits. His permanent mausoleum, Anıtkabir, was completed in 1935; when the museum reopened on November 6, 1956, during International Museum Week, it had been transformed into a monument celebrating both the nation’s folk heritage and its leader. Preceded by a room full of religious calligraphy and books, the former tomb area itself was surrounded by military memorabilia. These additions suggest the quandary inherent in memorializing this secular leader: prayers might be provided, but at a distance.

In the meantime, the plans for an archaeology museum in Ankara had been realized. In 1930, the site of the former bedesten (covered market) of Mahmoud Pasha and the Kursunlu han (commercial inn) beside it were first suggested for a museum of ancient Anatolian history. In 1931, the German urban planner Hermann Jansen and the Hittitologist Eckhard Unger presented reports on the restoration of the buildings, and the Swiss architect Ernst Egli formulated plans for their renovation. Purchased in 1933, the buildings were still occupied by squatters a year later, suggesting that the museum project was not foremost in the minds of those in power. When in 1936 still no progress had been made, the director of the Istanbul Archaeology Museum, Turhan Dağhoğlu, again expressed a need for the establishment of an archaeology museum in the capital. In his memoir concerning the museum, Hamit Zübeyr Koşar remembers how, as a renter in a nearby apartment before 1938, he would often look down on the ruined bedesten and hans and imagine what they could become; only later did he learn that they had already been purchased, even though the storeowners tried to maintain operation of the market by using the area in front of and around its main gate.

Thus would a market—a commercial center—be transformed into a museum—an ideological one. With an architectural vocabulary clearly bespeaking the Ottoman era, the multi-domed bedesten, when used for the museum exhibits, would create a Turkish frame for prehistoric artifacts. A visitor entering the building would thus perceive these artifacts within not a neutral context but one that contextualized them locally. Since the museum project was intimately connected with the construction of ties between prehistoric roots and contemporary national identity, the visual link between a recent Ottoman memory and unremembered, prehistoric artifacts helped serve this objective.

Between 1937 and 1945, the buildings were cleaned and organized under the direction of the minister of culture Hamit Zübeyr, the German archaeology professor Hans Güterbock, and the Turkish architect Macit Kural. The stores, houses, and lots surrounding the structures were purchased and razed in 1939, giving the museum its current large garden and its
sense of existing outside of the urban fabric. A second round of property expropriation took place in 1945, again extending the park area surrounding the museum. The market was rebuilt by razing the walls between stores, and the corners of the domes were supported by columns instead of the original walls to allow circulation within the museum.

During this period, the museum collection continued to grow and provided impetus to the project. The Ministry of Culture received word that attempts were under way to export the large relief sculptures discovered at Kargamış by Sir Leonard Wolley. These were stopped at the border and sent first to Adana and then to Ankara. Likewise, the monumental lion-sphinxes discovered at Alaca Höyük were transported to the Ethnography Museum, where they guarded the entry. Other prehistoric works may also have been displayed at the museum.

The Hittite Museum, with exhibit halls located in the bedesten and offices in the han, finally opened in 1945–46. Its catalogue, written by Güterbock and translated by Nimet Özgüç, was published by the Ministry of Education in 1946. The large architectural reliefs from Kargamış and others from eight separate areas of Anatolia were placed together in the central hall, and associated smaller finds were displayed in the outer corridor. Güterbock pointed out that this provided an opportunity “unparalleled in any other museum of the world” to see and compare works from various stages of Hittite history and contributed to the notion of Ankara as a “natural” capital city associated with the Hittite past, which he explains as “not a specific people, nor a state, but an Anatolian-Syrian culture as a whole,” underscoring a tendency to view Hittite culture as a comprehensive prehistoric, autochthonous identity for the nation.

Neither aesthetic concerns nor the definition of a continuous civilization from prehistory onward were part of the program of the museum. Güterbock favored monumental archaeological remains, which were placed, as noted above, in the center of the museum, over smaller artifacts, which were arranged by excavation site in the surrounding areas. In 1960, the western galleries of the building were expanded, allowing for a more chronological display. This was revised again in 1968 with the addition of two large maps indicating the location of excavations in Turkey, display cases color-coded according to era, bird cages and aquariums, and Turkish and Western music played near a small museum cafe. By 1966, the museum was generally known as the Ankara Archaeology Museum, although it also retained its initial name. It was renamed the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations in 1968. The han was repaired to serve as offices, while the stables underneath it were used as the museum storage area. Exhibits surrounding the main hall were arranged chronologically. The earliest exhibits at that time were Neolithic-era works from Çavuştepe. These were followed by Chalcolithic-era works and the Early Bronze Age finds from Alaca Höyük, in particular the grave goods including the famous “Hittite Sun.” The southern galleries exhibited works from the third level of the Alişar excavations and the Assyrian colonies at Kültepe, as well as artifacts from the Hittite era. The eastern galleries displayed Phrygian works from Gordium, Pazarlı, and other excavations, and were followed by Urartu-era and classical objects.

Chronologically organized, the museum in many ways reflects the epistemological scheme of archaeological collections in most universal survey museums. However, whereas the chronological arrangement of artifacts in such settings abstracts them from their geographical origins and places them into a narrative of art, at the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations they are positioned instead in a narrative of national unity. Following a trajectory from prehistory to the Hellenistic era, the visitor gets the sense of a uniform historical progression of peoples across all of Anatolia. While the maps added to the exhibit after 1968 show the excavation sites of the works, it would take an exceedingly careful visitor to note that each people lived not in all of Anatolia, but in only a part of it, making of modern Anatolia what might be thought of as many separate countries constantly changing their borders and overlapping with much of modern Greece and Mesopotamia. Whereas the universal survey museum features the story of civilization moving across both time and space, in the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations a single geography moves across time, setting the groundwork for a national, rather than regional, prehistory. Indeed, the desire or tendency to narrativize history might even preclude understanding exhibits as clumps of different but related societies emerging across time at different places, even if this were a more appropriate way of rendering the broad time swaths of early history.

The pairing of archaeological and ethnographic
museums would be repeated regionally throughout the nation.42 Often housed in the same building, each would reenact locally the ideology presented by the museums in the capital. The archaeological section of a local museum would recapitulate the local portion of the chronological history presented at the Ankara museum, while the ethnographic section would place premodern objects safely behind glass, signaling that they belonged to the past. A third type of museum, devoted to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and likewise often located in regional centers, usually contained artifacts of a visit by the nation’s founding figure and/or memorabilia from the War of Independence. Every city came to have a museum, but the absence of collections labeled as art underscores the functional difference between Turkish museums and their Western counterparts. Although both are deeply invested in producing narratives of heritage, Western museums use a meta-discourse of art to frame civilization. In contrast, Turkish museums look at objects as metonyms of heritage itself, without recourse to a discourse of art.

While art had not completely receded from the consciousness of the state, it was not considered important enough to warrant the foundation of a new museum. Although the state began to sponsor exhibits as early as 1926, a directive formalizing annual exhibitions was not passed until 1939, two years after the founding of the Istanbul Museum of Painting and Sculpture.43 Despite state commissioning of both public art—including numerous portraits of Atatürk—and memorial sculptures for city squares, Turkish art of the modern era was not yet conceived as something that could convey, through its arrangement in a museum, a useful ideological message of national identity.

NEW MUSEUMS IN ISTANBUL

Although the state was deeply invested in making Ankara the center of the new nation, its cultural heart remained in Istanbul, whose identity now depended on its reconfiguration from imperial capital to a city that would play an auxiliary role in the country. Part of this shift involved the transformation of its major monuments from representatives of the dynasty to representatives the nation. In 1924, Topkapi Palace was designated a museum, and after initial restorations it opened to the public in 1927.44 (In actuality, however, much of the palace remained closed until after renovations undertaken between 1939 and 1942 transformed it into a museum emphasizing the apogee of Ottoman power. The religious core of the palace—the Pavilion of the Mantle of the Prophet, symbolic of the sultan’s role as caliph—opened to the public only in 1962.) In 1934–35, the Hagia Sophia Mosque was converted to a museum dedicated to Byzantine and Ottoman artworks. Finally, the Dolmabahçe Palace opened in 1952. Together, these museums provided a new way of looking at the religious and dynastic Ottoman past through the lens of a secular republic.

By admitting the public into parts of the Topkapi Palace immediately after the fall of the empire, the state signaled a new relationship with its citizens: rather than owning the treasures of the empire in the sultan’s name, the state could for the first time be said to hold them in trust for the people. At the Louvre, the exhibition of the king’s crown and scepter beside the regalia of the church had represented the institution of a secular republic; likewise, at the Topkapi Palace, the public exposition of the administrative center and home of the sultan-cum-caliph established a new order of power. At the time that it was made into a museum, however, much of the palace was in ruins. Sedad Hakkı Eldem (1908–88), one of the Republic’s premier architects and a nephew of Osman Hamdi, described the palace as a place full of valuable treasures piled on top of one another, fabrics sometimes in rags and sometimes echoing their former resplendence, all in tiny decoration-filled rooms, some of which were so small one couldn’t stand up in them, with narrow stairwells in between, most of them covered by trap doors. Eldem notes that the palace remained as it was in 1908, home to the elderly serving staff, the remaining eunuchs, and even some dwarfs.45

One might expect that the best-preserved parts of the palace would have been opened first. By this logic, the Pavilion of the Holy Mantle of the Prophet Muhammad, which was ceremonially visited annually by the sultan on the fifteenth day of Ramadan, and the Baghdad Pavilion, where he rested during these excursions, should have been among the earliest exhibits of the museum. While the Baghdad Pavilion was opened, however, the Pavilion of the Mantle remained closed, and the continual reading from the Qur’an that had taken place within it was dis-
continued. Possession of the relics of the Prophet—obtained in large part during the 1517 conquest of Egypt and the acquisition of suzerainty over Mecca and Medina—had in the nineteenth century allowed the Ottoman sultans to assume the title of caliph; just as these relics had been an important symbol of Ottoman dynastic right, so their being shut away and the Qur’an readings suspended were signs of the ending of the caliphate and the secularism of the new state. After their traditional keeper gave the keys to Tahsin Öz (1887–1973, museum director between 1938 and 1952) in 1927, the objects within the Pavilion of the Mantle were inventoried with the respect due not only to their religious significance but also to their artistic and historical value. The pavilion was opened to visitors on August 31, 1962, but Qur’an readings did not begin again until the displays were reorganized in 1982. Likewise, in response to pressure to restore Hagia Sophia to its status as a mosque, a new section for Muslim prayer was added at the side entrance of the museum during Ramadan in 1990. The use of museums as places of worship thus became a means for the religious populace to engage with public institutions on its own terms, even within the secular institutional structure of the state.

Similarly, the conversion of Hagia Sophia from the empire’s most important ceremonial mosque into a museum memorialized the Ottoman political power manifested in the conquest of the Byzantine Empire and at the same time secularized it. In 1931, the director of the Byzantine Institute, Thomas Whittomore, received permission to uncover the mosaics of Hagia Sophia. On August 24, 1934, Aziz Ogan (1888–1956), then the director of the Istanbul Antiquities Museums (İstanbul Asar-ı Ataka Müzeleri), the new name of the Imperial Museum, which also administered the Topkapı Palace Museum and the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art, suddenly received orders to convert the mosque into a museum. In addition to the restoration of the building, the stores surrounding it were to be demolished. Initially, the new museum was to include cabinets with Byzantine and Ottoman exhibits, and the appointment as its director of Ali Sami (Boyar), who since 1923 had directed the Pious Foundations Museum/Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art, suggested that it was conceived along similar lines as the latter institution. By the time it opened, however, the Hagia Sophia Museum had no exhibits beyond the juxtaposition of the recently uncovered mosaics in the apse and the upper galleries with features that had been added during the Ottoman era, such as the mihrab, the minbar, the loggia of the sultan (built under Abdülmecid), six large calligraphic panels, and a verse from the Qur’an replacing the original Christ Pantocrator in the main dome.

These two acts of “museumizing” bore an ideological significance that the public could readily understand. As the poet Yahya Kemal wrote in 1922,

I learned one truth in my travels. This state has two
spiritual foundations. The call to prayer that Mehmed
the Conqueror had sung from the minarets of Hagia
Sophia—it is still sung! The Qur’an that Selim had read
in the Pavilion of the Mantle of the Prophet—it is still
read! The young soldiers of Eskişehir, Afyonkarahisar,
and Kars, you fought for such things of beauty!

If the purpose of the War of Independence was to
preserve the nation, symbolized by such key monu-
ments, from colonial predation, then what was to be
made of their reinscription with new meanings? The
Pavilion of the Mantle of the Prophet and the Hagia
Sophia have remained contested sites, consecrated for
both the religious and the secular sectors of society.

The restoration of Topkapı Palace finally under-
taken during the 1940s often served to minimize later
historical layers from the eighteenth and nineteenth
centuries, yielding a relatively anachronistic and static
view of the palace, whose identity as a museum had
originally been envisioned to feature Ottoman archi-
tecture from all eras of its history. As Sedad Hakki
Eldem pointed out,

Most of these places that I mention have been cleaned,
that is destroyed, and the essential cut-stone foundations
and arches brought out. Those dizzying, layered perspec-
tives reminiscent of Piranesi have disappeared.

Eldem allows that many parts of the palace were crum-
bling and uses photographs taken in 1937 to serve as the “before” images in his discussion. In a 1949
article, Tahsin Öz describes the choices made during
the restoration process as recovering the palace of
Mehmed the Conqueror and saving it from additions
“stuck on during the period of decline.” Although
with the establishment of the Republic the palace was
officially tied to the administration of the Archaeology
Museum, it was in effect run by its existing staff,
many of whom had been in service there since early
childhood, and none of whom had any concept of a
museum. What is most striking about Öz’s descrip-
Fig. 8, a–c. Three phases of the 1939–42 restoration of the fireplace in the apartments of the Valide Sultan, Topkapı Palace. (After Tahsin Öz, “Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Onarımıları,” *Güzel Sanatlar* 6 [1949]: 63–64)
tion of the abandoned and rotting complex is not simply its neglect but its neglect in light of contemporary efforts throughout the late nineteenth century to establish museums, including museums of Islamic art, in which many of the objects that had rotted in the deserted palace rooms might have found a home. While from their inception many collections of Islamic art abroad had included items of everyday use, the situation at Topkapı Palace suggests that in the late empire Islamic art was not perceived within such a broad cultural frame: in the Turkish context, objects of use were not unified by their conception as art but rather were perceived as memorials of the past. The Topkapı Palace Museum can be read as a showcase for what in Western museums would be categorized as Islamic art; within Turkey, however, it is more accurately characterized as a palace museum that monumentalizes the apogee of Ottoman power.

The decisions made during the restorations of the palace between 1939 and 1944—remarkable given the general lack of funds during the years of World War II—underscore this perception of the palace as a memorial to the Ottoman “classical age,” an era that could be celebrated without posing a monarch threat to the Republic. As Eldem explains,

I could not share in the decisions made concerning the Council Chamber (Kübbaaltâ). The existing decoration of the first room was taken down and carried “as is” into the second room. The wall painting was redone based on some remaining signs of the original painting, and a wall of tiles was put up as though it were original—that is, a real décor, albeit baroque, was replaced with a half-imaginary reconstruction.51

 Likewise, he notes that neither the Treasury nor the Tiled Pavilion was restored with appropriate internal divisions or wall decorations, and that each was instead left whitewashed. Similarly questionable restoration decisions can be seen through a sequence of photographs documenting the reconstruction of a sixteenth-century-style fireplace in the chamber of the sultan’s mother, replacing an eighteenth-century niche and a wall of tiles was put up as though it were original—that is, a real décor, albeit baroque, was replaced with a half-imaginary reconstruction.51

As a result of the restorations, the Topkapı Palace Museum lost many of the meanings invested in its complex architecture, which had evolved since the fifteenth century. The Tiled Pavilion, which today serves as a ceramics museum, was left entirely out of the narrative of the palace, thus erasing visual memory of the so-called International Timurid style adopted by Mehmed II to express the universal claims of his empire. The large Archaeology Museum interposed between the pavilion and the rest of the palace served to cut off their connection, the only visible remnant of which is the shared park of Gülhane. Many later additions to the palace, including a number of the humbler and later-era rooms of the harem and the last pavilion of the palace, the Mecediye Lodge—a replica of a French hunting lodge—were either closed or given over to contemporary uses—for example, as a restaurant—that erase their former function within the palace. Indeed, the museum constructs a sense of Ottoman history that is entirely divested of specific historical events, and that erases much of the dynamism of six centuries of rule. Neither a museum of Ottoman architecture as originally envisioned nor one that framed the artifacts within it through the rich aesthetic and cultural narratives they could represent, the Topkapı Museum was instead transformed into a sign of a glorious imperial past from which the Turkish Republic could garner a sense of historic importance, but sufficiently remote not to constitute a monarch threat to the modern state.

As the most recent imperial residence, the Dolmabahçe Palace presented a far more complex problem. Although wary of resembling royalty, Atatürk used it as his residence during visits to Istanbul. While it also became a space of display when it hosted the exhibits associated with the second congress of the Turkish Historical Society in 1937, it continued as a residence until, in November 1938, Atatürk died in an upper room of its harem (a site that became a main attraction when the harem was opened to visitors in 1985). Although the main hall (sâlemâbâ) of the palace did not admit visitors until 1952, long after the threat of monarchist sentiment had passed, one portion of the palace, the apartments of the heir apparent (Veliâd Dairesi) had already been opened to the public in 1938, as the country’s first Museum of Painting and Sculpture (İstanbul Resim Heykel Müzesi). An important development for artists in Turkey, this institution, unlike the more central ethnographic and archaeological museums in Ankara, did not become a model for many others in the country: only in Izmir in 1952 (as
ART MUSEUMS AND THE USE OF GRAND NARRATIVE

By the 1950s, the major museums of the Republic (excluding those devoted to Atatürk, which are not addressed in this paper) could be categorized as follows: museums of archaeology in Istanbul and Ankara; an ethnographic museum in Ankara; combined archaeology and ethnographic museums throughout the country; former religious institutions categorized as or within museums—Hagia Sophia Museum, the Shrines of Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi in Konya, Hacı Bektaş in Nevşehir, and Seyyid Battal Gazi in Kırşehir (not discussed in this paper), and the Pavilion of the Holy Prophet; palace museums; military museums (also not covered here); and art museums—the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art and the Museum of Painting and Sculpture, both in Istanbul. Divided among a wide array of institutions, works within these museums were associated with multiple and disparate systems of value. In contrast to the model of museums in the West, Turkish museums, by not using the discourse of art as a systemic meta-narrative, functioned not to bring together material culture into a systematic grand narrative of heritage but rather to provide each aspect of heritage with a separate relationship to national identity.

Could this have been otherwise? As already mentioned, the sense of the segregation of multiple aspects of heritage is a common feature in many museums of the region beyond Turkey where colonial rule did not determine institutional patterns. Where colonial governments did establish museums in the Middle East, however, these museums have tended to follow a system similar to that of universal survey museums. In French Algiers, a National Museum of Antiquities and Islamic Art was established in 1897, unifying the types of collections that remain separate in Istanbul and Cairo. The Alaoui Museum in Tunis was established in 1882 as a museum of antiquities, but by 1899 a second section had been added for Islamic art, and now the museum includes prehistoric, Carthaginian, Roman, Christian, and Islamic collections. Likewise the Rabat Museum, established in 1937, includes prehistoric, Roman, and Islamic sections. The National Museum of Damascus, founded between 1918 and 1920 and housed in an expressly constructed building in 1936, includes preclassical, Arab-Islamic, classical, and Byzantine collections; while many Arabs sought to emphasize the Arab heritage on display within it, the French used the scope of the museum as a means of emphasizing pre-Islamic and non-Arab works, thus serving contemporary political ends. Similarly, the National Museum of Beirut, formulated in 1923 and established ten years later, comprises a chronologically arranged survey of works that includes small displays of Arab art but emphasizes the Phoenecian period in order to promote a pre-Islamic, pre-Arab national identity.54 The National Museum of Baghdad, established in 1921, included exhibits from the Stone Age and the Sumerian, Akkadian, Babylonian, Chaldean, Arab, and Islamic periods. Similarly, the Archaeology Museum of the Citadel of Amman, founded in 1951 and closely following the model of the Museum of Palestinian Archaeology of Jerusalem, which had been the sole museum of the region before Jordanian independence, belied its name by displaying a chronological survey of works from prehistory through the Umayyad, Abassid, Ayyubid, and Mamluk eras.55

In all these cases, national museums have emphasized cultural heritage as a wellspring of identity from the past, dissociated from the modern and contemporary world. In contrast to universal survey museums of Europe and America, which encompass everything from the prehistorical to the modern, Middle Eastern museums of modern and contemporary art are, without exception, separate institutions established much later. The National Museum of Fine Arts of Algiers opened in 1930 and the Gezira Center for Modern Art in Cairo in 1931; the Museum of Painting and Sculpture was established in Istanbul in 1938, the National Museum of Modern Art in Baghdad in 1958, and the Contemporary Arts Museum of Tehran in 1977.56 Each of these museums is not only segregated from any National Museum but also suffers from a lack of funds and attention, much as does the Museum of Painting and Sculpture in Istanbul.

A comprehensive plan for Turkish museums was actually once envisioned by the Austrian scholar Joseph Strzygowski (1862–1941); it suggests an alternative to both the grand narrative of Western museums and the present organization of Turkish museums. Strzygowski recognized in the close proximity of the Istanbul Archaeology Museum, with its emphasis
The primary problem, however, was conceptual. Grounded in art history, Strzygowski imagined the discourse of Turkish art as responding to the Hellenistic focus of Western art history against whose humanism he rallied. Like his more famous, slightly older colleagues Aby Warburg and Carl Einstein, he sought an alternative to the increasingly reified, linear grand narrative that remains prevalent in art history surveys today, both in textbooks and in museums. For Strzygowski this lay in Central Asian Turkish art, through which he imagined a Turkish nation that could prove, via the logic of artifacts, its credentials as a civilization in its own right. In Turkey, however, as has been noted, such artifacts were contextualized through narratives of history, not of art, and Turkish museums did not perceive a need to counter dominant art-historical discourse by producing a grand narrative.

The efficacy of following a Strzygowskian model is illustrated by the exhibit “Turks” at the Royal Academy in London (January–April 2005), assembled from the collections of the Topkapı Museum and the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art as well as from those of the Hermitage in St. Petersburg and the National Museums in Berlin. As described by John Carswell, the exhibit’s “avowed intention [was] to show through the choice of several hundred carefully chosen artifacts how the Turkic race moved westwards from its origins in Central Asia bordering on China.” Proceeding through the chronologically arranged exhibit, Carswell writes, “one is immediately aware of being led by the hand of a master designer who knows exactly what responses he wants to evoke.” Similarly, Norman Rosenthal, exhibitions officer of the Royal Academy, explains, “We did the exhibition because we’re trying to tell a story—we are trying to do it through wonderful objects.” Thus the exhibit presented a narrative that could integrate the notions of culture, art, and nation in a way that Turkish museums have chosen not to.

The absence of a survey museum in Turkey doubtless results in part from the complex history of multiple institutions founded at different times to address different needs; if established today, such a museum would have to reclaim hundreds of thousands of works from established institutions and create appropriate conditions for their maintenance—an arduous project, particularly in an era of decentralization. The lack of a survey museum, however, makes it difficult to imagine for Turkey any art-historical trajectory akin to the grand narrative of Western art history, which flows with seeming fluidity from “then” to “now,” seamlessly blending Mesopotamia with New York or Paris in a flow of artistic development driven by a model of dialectical progress. The construction of such a narrative is deeply embedded in the tradition of Western art history as rooted in the Renaissance. As Stephan Melville points out,

The Renaissance achievement of rational perspective becomes the condition of possibility of the art-historical discipline, and we are compelled to its terms whenever we look to establish another world view that would not, for example, privilege the Renaissance, because we can neither “look” nor imagine a “world view” without reinstalling at the heart of our project the terms only the Renaissance can expound for us...[Panofsky’s] valoriza-
tion of perspective forges an apparently nonproblematic access of the rationalized space of the past. We are freed then to imagine ourselves henceforth as scientists of a certain kind, and within this imagination the grounds of privilege become invisible and profoundly naturalized.62

Museums in Turkey are organized from precisely this kind of problematic viewing position, a world-view that does not privilege the Renaissance. If we envision the institution of the universal survey museum as the frame of a painting through which we, as spectators, gaze from the present towards a past envisioned at the distant vanishing point on the horizon, then the spectator of Turkey is out of place: from his or her position, each unit within the frame is no longer arranged within a properly illusionistic perspectival structure. Turkish museums view the material of art history from an anamorphic perspective, looking at it not head-on as intended, but from the side, where perspective loses its power to produce spatial illusion. While the survey model accounts for several elements of the heritage on which Turkey draws—the prehistoric, the Hellenistic, the Byzantine, the Islamic, and even the modern—the relationship between these elements is structured from a Western viewing position. Even the two paradigms of Turkish history that dominated the early republican era—that of a succession of Anatolian dynasties from Seljuk through Ottoman, and that of the pan-Turkic from China to Anatolia—never proposed a dialectic continuity with the present or provided key links between multiple aspects of Turkish national culture, including folk, Islamic, and modernist traditions. Museums followed neither native historiographic models nor those provided through Western meta-narratives of culture grounded in art. Nationalist historiography informed museum collections as independent strands of the cultures of Turkey, but museums did not use art as a means of constructing links between these cultures.

During the early years of the Republic, several scholars—most notably Celal Esad Arseven, Ernst Diez and Oktay Aslanapa, and Doğan Kuban—attempted to write art histories of Turkey, but these histories do not encompass the broad spectrum of material culture (which could also be narrated as art) represented in Turkish museums. Rather, they depend on the dominant paradigms of Turkish historiography first promoted during the republican era: the dynastic model and the pan-Turkic narrative. Rather than including works of prehistoric Anatolia, the art of nomadic Turks, the Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine legacies, and the modern art of Turkey, these books bracket the art history of Turkey between the Seljuk entry into Anatolia and the era of classical Ottoman culture and link it with broader Islamic art history. Just as Islamic art is outside the framing narrative of Western art history, so are elements of Western art outside the frame of Turkish art. Without an overarching perspectival structure, even those museums—such as the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art and the Museum of Painting and Sculpture—that envision their holdings as art enclose these works within mutually exclusive historical frames. "Art," as a concept developed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, depends on a broad enabling discourse that can cross time and space, placing select objects within its diachronic embrace. Rather than flowing from one geo-temporal zone to another, as in a survey of Western art history, the concept of art in Turkey starts and stops in an entirely disconnected manner that weakens the construction of seemingly logical, but actually ideological, links between the histories of multiple objects and the present.

Established largely as independent institutions, both the museums inherited from the Ottoman Empire and those established during the Republic used segments of various historiographies of the nation without following or developing a unified narrative of culture that could tap the wide variety of sources constituting the heritage of the Turkish nation. One might imagine a “museum without walls,” such as that suggested by André Malraux, that could root the present culture of Turkey in the prehistory of Anatolia, proceeding through Hellenistic, Roman, Mesopotamian, and Central Asian antiquities into the Christian and Byzantine legacies and thence from the Seljuk and Beylik to the Ottoman era and into the modern and contemporary periods. Such a museum of ideas would serve to bring out the complex ethnic, religious, and cultural roots of a nation often deeply vested in a singular identity.

On the other hand, in a postmodern era when overarching meta-narratives have come to be regarded with suspicion, the complex independence of Turkey’s museums may represent an alternative means of exploring culture through the juxtaposition of multiple, and even contradictory, narratives. Rather than limiting options on how to interpret the world, however, this alternative narrative structure may well expand them. From a poststructuralist, critical point
of view, it is possible to interpret the absence of grand narrative as an opportunity towards a non-Eurocentric and more heterogeneous and pluralistic reading of the past. In the process of rendering history as a natural system rather than a cultural artifact, survey museums provide the appearance of a teleologically necessary history. Emerging from an effective museum narrative, the visitor leaves with a sense that the world must indeed be as logically ordered as it appears within the museum. The availability of alternative systems of myth, or alternative systems of museum organization, renders visible this process of mythical inscription. In the rupture between narratives effected by the disjunction of Turkish museums lies the possibility of seeing the ideologies that structure national identity in Turkey, revealing them to be, as much as those of any other nations, figments of the historical imagination. Rather than gazing at art history through a metaphor of perspective, such a model suggests a metaphor located instead in another geometric system grounded in Euclidean geometry: that of the regular patterns, or girih, that underlie much of Islamic art. As Gülru Necipoğlu explains,

...composed of interlocking stars and polygons rotating around multiple foci of radial symmetry, [girih] embodied a multiplicity of viewpoints contradicting the Renaissance concept of the picture plane as a window frame that cuts through the spectator’s cone of vision on which rays converge at a central vanishing point. The absence of a fixed viewpoint in the abstract geometric matrices of girih yielded an infinite isotropic space that amounted to a denial of naturalistic representation of the visible world. Girih patterns filtered the visual data offered by the natural world into mental abstractions.65...Their infinitely extendable, nondirectional patterns of line and color, with no single focal point or hierarchical progression toward a decorative climax, required the insertion of subjectivity into the optical field; they presupposed a private way of looking.66

A system of museums based on girih rather than on perspective as an enabling metaphor for art-historical discourse might look a lot like the panoply of Turkey’s museums. Rather than following a modernist model of naturalizing historical change through a teleology of progressive development, such a system would follow a more Foucauldian model, where historical change is characterized by discontinuity. In the panoply of Turkey’s museums today, however, this discontinuity is conceived as a series of absolute ruptures: the system of objects within each museum space is presented as mutually exclusive and epistemically unrelated to those in other museums. Each of these ruptures, emerging ex nihilo, seemingly provides an alternative and yet comprehensive answer to the problem of national heritage, like a meal on a menu of histories. But as Foucault suggests, even rupture involves a “redistribution of the episteme” that preceded it.67 Thus the girih model of art history would permit, and even emphasize, a fluid investigation of the relationships between the isotropic nodes set up by geography and history. It would allow for questions across nodes of knowledge ordered sequentially within a perspectival system, such as: how did the nomadic past inform the Islamic? How did largely Christian and Muslim communities relate to antiquities and to the ancient sites in their midst? How do we construct the difference between a village carpet and one made for the palace? How and when did paintings, tiles, and calligraphic panels coexist in living spaces? What aesthetics might govern a system of art not grounded in perspective and the human form? In asking questions that thus cross the disciplinary boundaries erected by museum collections, such an art history would also follow the model of Foucauldian archaeology, in which discourse comes to reflect upon its own processes of systematization by looking at the boundaries constructed by its epistemic structure.68 Such concerns echo Strzygowski’s discomfort with the humanism of his era, providing an alternative model again rooted in the arts associated with Turkey but based in theories of history not yet available to him.

Museum exhibits, like art, rely on the proliferation of meanings. The more associations the viewer can make with objects on display, the richer that display becomes in the viewer’s mind. Sophisticated exhibits do not just memorialize the past and put it in a coffin; they use it in order to reflect upon often-difficult issues in the present, issues that even if put in boxes never really go away. If Turkey’s museums can begin to use the diversity of their collections and approaches to engage the past in modes that provide alternative perspectives on present-day issues, viewers will be smart enough to add these alternative perspectives to their own, broadening their relationships with and constructing their own understandings of the objects and spaces within the institutions that house them. Such an approach might generate an art history of multiplicity as perceived in each visitor and might also provide the seedling for a non-perspectival model of art-historical discourse.

Faculty of Communications, Bahçeşehir University
Istanbul Museum of Modern Art
## APPENDIX

### Museums of the Late Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Name of Institution</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Istanbul</td>
<td><strong>Church of Hagia Irene</strong></td>
<td>1723–1869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>House of Weapons (Dar ül-Esliha)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Magazine of Antiquities (Mecmu-ı Asâr-i Atika) and Magazine of Antique Weapons (Mecmu-ı Esliha-i Atika)</td>
<td>1846–69</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Imperial Museum (Müze-i Hamayun)</td>
<td>1869–77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Military Museum</td>
<td>1913–30</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Tiled Pavilion</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Imperial Museum (Müze-i Hamayun)</td>
<td>1877–91</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Imperial Museum, Department of Near Eastern Antiquities</td>
<td>1891–1908</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Imperial Museum, Department of Islamic Art (in main building since 1891)</td>
<td>1908–14</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Museum of Mehmed the Conqueror (Fatih Sultan Mehmed Müzesi)</td>
<td>1953</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Archaeology Museum Building</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(built 1891; additions 1903, 1908)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sarcophagus Museum</td>
<td>1891–93</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Imperial Museum (Müze-i Hamayun)</td>
<td>1893–1923</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Istanbul Archaeology Museum</td>
<td>1923</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Academy of Fine Arts Building</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(built 1885)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Istanbul Academy of Fine Arts (Sanayi Nefise Mektebi) (founded 1881, opened 1885); name changed to Güzel Sanatlar Okulu, 1924</td>
<td>1883–1916</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Museum of Near Eastern Antiquities (Eski Şark Eserleri Müzesi)</td>
<td>1917</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Topkapı Palace Museum</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Museum of Treasures Collection</td>
<td>ca. 1910</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chinese Porcelains Collection</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Topkapı Palace Museum</td>
<td>1924</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Topkapı Palace Museum, Relics of Holy Prophet (closed in 1924)</td>
<td>1962</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Building on Hippodrome</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Antique Costumery (Elbise-i Atika)</td>
<td>1852–1916</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(established in the House of Weapons around 1846; moved to Military Museum, 1916)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art</td>
<td>1981</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(renamed collection of the Pious Foundations Museum, located in the imaret of the Selimiye Mosque since 1914; renamed 1924)</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Hagia Sophia</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hagia Sophia Museum</td>
<td>1935</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Quarters of the Crown Prince</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Istanbul Museum of Painting and Sculpture</td>
<td>1938</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Main Hall</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dolmabahçe Palace Museum</td>
<td>1952</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Harem</td>
<td>1985</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Harem section of museum (with deathbed of Atatürk)</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Ankara</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ethnography Museum</td>
<td>1928</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Archaeology Museum</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hittite Museum</td>
<td>1946–68</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Museum of Anatolian Civilizations</td>
<td>1968</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Ankara Turkish Hearth Building</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Ankara Türk Oçağı Binası)</td>
<td>1981</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ankara State Museum of Painting and Sculpture (Ankara Devlet Resim ve Heykel Müzesi)</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Izmir</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ethnography Museum</td>
<td>1927</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Archaeology Museum</td>
<td>1964</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kültürpark</td>
<td>1952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Museum of Painting and Sculpture</td>
<td>1973</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NOTES

1. Hüseyin Zekai Pasha, Mührəcər Hzinənər (Holy Treasures) (İstanbul: İstanbul Şehir Matbaası, 1329/1913), 146.
8. Vernoit, Discovering Islamic Art, 29, 32.
11. Although Osman Hamdi is often remembered as the first director of both the museum and the academy, he actually took over preexisting projects. The museum was more developed when he became its first Turkish director, but the academy had actually grown out of the Academy of Drawing and Painting, founded in Perza in 1874 by the French artist Pierre-Désiré Guillemet. After Guillemet’s death, in 1877, the project was left hanging until 1881, when Osman Hamdi applied to the government to revive it. A new building was built, and classes began in 1883.
13. Donald Malcolm Reid, Archaeology, Museums, and Egyptian National Identity from Napoleon to World War I (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002). 196. The traveler W. J. Loftie expressed a diametrically opposed interpretation of the museum in 1879, noting its concerted effort to arrange its objects in a strict developmental sequence of style and complexity; his words are quoted in Donald Preziosi, “The Museum of What You Shall Have Been,” in Nezar AlSayyad, Irene Bierman, and Nasser Rabat, Making Cairo Medieval (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2005), 138. The conflict between Mariette’s interpretation and that of Loftie, a museum visitor, may have resulted from their different degrees of intimacy with the works at hand, as well as from Mariette’s convincing portrayal of a naturally developing aesthetic of Egyptian art, which had previously been considered scandalously regressive after distant antiquity. Indeed, like early arrangements of the Ottoman Imperial Museum at the Tiled Pavilion (see Shaw, Possessors and Possessed, 155), an early display at the Egyptian museum (see Reid, Archaeology, Museums, and Egyptian National Identity, 107) shows a vignette-like approach to the display of objects, reminiscent less of developmental taxonomies than of the foreground of the famous frontispiece of the Description de l’Egypte, which is littered with enticing antiquities that pave the way towards uncharted French conquests.
19. Reid, Archaeology, Museums, and Egyptian National Identity, 238.
22. The rooms of the exhibits are indicated in Halîl Edhem, Topkâpa Sarayî (İstanbul: Kanaat Kitâbîphanesi, 1931), 25–26. Permission is mentioned in Enver Behnan Eşapolyo, Müze ve Turizm (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1936), 78.
23. According to Remzi Oğuz Arık, the head of the Istanbul Antiquities Museum, these collections were reorganized “in scientific fashion” in 1925. See R. O. Arık, L’Histoire et l’organisation des musées turcs (İstanbul: Millî Eğitim Basvurumu, 1953), 14.
24. Halîl Edhem, Elêhû Naksîye Nöleşiyonu (İstanbul: Matbaâ-i Amire, 1924), 20.
25. The name of the academy first changed in 1928, when it was titled ➔Académie des Arts de l’Ottoman. It became the Fine Arts Faculty of Mimar Sinan University in 1969. The museum opened on September 20, 1937.
MUSEUMS AND NARRATIVES OF DISPLAY

28. Ibid., 96–124.
29. Hamit Zübeyr (Koşay), Etnografya Müzesi Kılavuzu (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1965), 2.
33. As Færat himself said with regard to the project, “As most of the works to enter the museum are of national and religious significance, it is appropriate that the building suit the works inside it and take inspiration from old Turkish architecture”: ibid., 21.
34. Koşay, Etnografya Müzesi Kılavuzu, 1–2.
35. Ibid., 6–10.
38. Koşay, Etnografya Müzesi Kılavuzu, 310.
41. Koşay, Etnografya Müzesi Kılavuzu, 312.
42. Erdem Yücel, Türkiye’deki Müzeleri (İstanbul: Arkeoloji ve Sanat Yayınları, 1999) 78–79.
43. See: Tavuş, Çağdaş Türk Sanatı (İstanbul: Resmi Kitap ve, 1986), 161.
44. Arsh, L’histoire et l’organisation des musées turcs, 14.
46. Taşsin Öz, Hıra-i Suadet Dairesi ve Emamet-i Muhaddese (İstanbul: İsmail Akgün Matbaası, 1955). For more information on the earlier history of the chamber see Necipoğlu, Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power, 151–32.
47. Turkey, Prime Ministry Archives, no. 11195, code 30.18.1.2, place no. 49.15.6 (Nov. 24, 1954).
49. The note, originally published in the newspaper Teşhid-i Efkar (Mar. 30, 1922), was reprinted in his posthumously collected works, Aziz İstanbul (İstanbul: Yahya Kemal Enstitüsü, 1964) and quoted in Hilmi Yavuz, Hıra-i Suadet Dairesi ve Muhaddese Emametleri (İstanbul: Kaynak Kitabevi, 2004), 40.
51. Eldem and Akozan, Topkapı Sarayı, 1–2.
59. An alternative to the pan-Turkic framework of this exhibition was exemplified by the prior exhibition “Anatolian Civilizations,” held in Istanbul in 1983, which traced all civilizations within Turkey’s national borders in diachronic sequence but did not link past civilizations with contemporary artistic modes. See the exhibition catalogue: Ferit Edgü, L’histoire et l’organisation des musées turcs en Jordanie (Santa Monica: Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1995), 166.
60. Ibid., 294.