Homer, Troy and the Turks: Heritage & identity in the Late Ottoman Empire 1870-1915

Uslu, G.

Citation for published version (APA):

General rights
It is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), other than for strictly personal, individual use, unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

Disclaimer/Complaints regulations
If you believe that digital publication of certain material infringes any of your rights or (privacy) interests, please let the Library know, stating your reasons. In case of a legitimate complaint, the Library will make the material inaccessible and/or remove it from the website. Please Ask the Library: https://uba.uva.nl/en/contact, or a letter to: Library of the University of Amsterdam, Secretariat, Singel 425, 1012 WP Amsterdam, The Netherlands. You will be contacted as soon as possible.
II

Classical Antiquities and Ottoman Patrimony

Muslim Elite and their Involvement with Classical Civilization
Employees of the Imperial Museum in front of the Alexander Sarcophagus and the entrance of the museum in the late nineteenth century (Cezar, 1995).
Although faced with massive internal and external political, social, and economic problems in the 1870s, the Ottomans strove not to lose their grip on the excavations of Schliemann. The authorities clearly refused to give Schliemann free play and put Troy under strict vigilance. By tightening the excavation conditions and demanding priority rights on Trojan artefacts, they clearly tried to strengthen their position and make their mark. This attitude was in line with the Ottoman aspirations concerning antiquities, museums and archaeology.

Aware of the value of antiquities and concerned for the preservation of their classical heritage, the Ottomans were increasingly keen to collect artefacts themselves. This resulted in an accelerated development of their Imperial Museum. In fact, Schliemann’s following archaeological venture, in 1882, would occur in a period in which the Ottoman Empire had entered a new stage in its history of museology and archaeology.

The appointment of Osman Hamdi Bey (1842 – 1910) as the director of the Imperial Museum (1881) is decisive for this new era. For the first time a native-born Ottoman-Turkish director held sway over the collection of the Imperial Museum. As a matter of fact, mainly due to Osman Hamdi’s efforts, the Ottoman-Turks participated increasingly in archaeological excavations, using scientific methods, and the Museum developed from a small collection into an institution with empire-wide ambitions.¹

1. Antiquities and Museum: Interests and Conflicts

As a result of the expanding collection of the Imperial Museum the confined space of the artillery storehouse was no longer adequate to house the Ottoman collection of antiquities. From the middle of the 1870s a new and larger museum

was needed. The prestigious Tiled Pavilion – built in 1478 under Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror as the first building of the Topkapı Palace – was selected as the new place for the antiquities collection, and soon the work to transform the building into a ‘European-style’ museum started. As a result, the early Ottoman architectural characteristics of the pavilion were reduced to make it look more like neoclassical museums in the west (fig. 1).²

The restoration of the Tiled Pavilion and the transfer of the collection were taken seriously. A museum committee was established in 1877.³ This commission was charged with the responsibility of overseeing ‘the completion of the repairs to the Tiled Pavilion that [was] being made into a museum, the transport of the antiquities and coins already in the collection to the new space without being damaged, to conserve antiquities outside of the museum in their present state, to make a path for excavation and research, to make the museum into a place of spectacle that [would] attract everybody’s attention, and to categorize and organize the existing works’.⁴ Thus, as this document demonstrates, the museum was referred to as a place of public manifestation, with a mission to organize antiquities and to attract visitors. As the Turkish-American art historian Wendy Meryem Kural-Shaw maintains, even though ‘the collection had become a museum in 1869, it was only after its move to the Tiled Pavilion that it acquired the didactic functions that distinguish a museum from a collection’.⁵

Official correspondence discloses a clear Ottoman awareness of the important role of the museum for the definition of the modern state. According to the authorities the museum was ‘an essential institution of a civilized nation’, ‘a school’ and, moreover, ‘the initial site of visit for foreign dignitaries and travellers’. These correspondences also reveal the view that ‘it was the presence

³ Mustafa Cezar, Sanatta Batıya Açılış ve Osman Hamdi (İstanbul 1995) 251.
⁴ Kamil Su, Osman Hamdi Bey’e Kadar Türk Müzesi (İstanbul 1965) 60-62; Mustafa Cezar, Sanatta Batıya Açılış ve Osman Hamdi, 251; Translation into English in: Shaw, Possessors and Possessed, 92.
⁵ Shaw, Possessors and Possessed, 92-94.
of the Imperial Museum that rendered the archaeological remains in the empire a part of the Ottoman state’s cultural property, or, in the Ottoman bureaucratic vernacular, “the valuable produce of the [Ottoman] land of plenty”.  

The opening of the new museum, on 16th August 1880, received due attention. Grand Vizier Cenani Mehmed Kadri Pasha (1832-1884) attended the ceremony, at which the Minister of Public Instruction, Mehmet Tahir Münf Pasha (1828-1910), delivered the opening speech. Münf Pasha was not only a prominent Ottoman statesman and reformer, he was first and foremost one of the most important members of the literary and philosophical scene and a leading figure of the nineteenth-century Turkish-Ottoman Enlightenment Movement. The salons in his mansion were instrumental in introducing western ideas in the Empire.

Münf Pasha’s opening speech gives a good impression of the concepts and ideas of the ruling and intellectual elite concerning museums, archaeology and antiquities. According to Münf Pasha, museums were instrumental in presenting ‘the level of civilization of past peoples and their step-by-step progress’, and that ‘from this, many historical, scientific and artistic benefits’ could be obtained. He then went on to emphasize the Ottoman interest in antiquities, but also his concerns about the European exclusion of the Ottomans to the classical heritage: ‘Until now, Europeans have used various means to take the antiquities of our country away, and they did this because they did not see an inclination toward this in us. For a long time this desire has been awakened among Ottomans and recently even a law was passed concerning antiquities. Since the foundation of the Imperial Museum is the greatest example of this, we can now hope that the

---

6 IBA (Ottoman Archives division of the Prime Minister’s Office at Istanbul) 2348; (Dahiliye) 41355; (Sura-yi Devlet) 547; (Meclis-i Vala) 24685, in: Ahmet Ersoy, ‘A Sartorial Tribute to Late Ottomanism: The Elbise-i ‘Osmaniyye Album’, Muqarnas, 20, (2003) endnote nr 17, 204.  
Europeans will change their opinions about us’.  

The Ottoman Empire and Europe: conflicting interests and views

Münif Pasha’s above-mentioned words reveal the Ottoman view of the museum as a clear product of progress. Evidently, the Empire was trying to balance modernity with heritage. Their claim to antiquities linked them to a cultural heritage ‘shared with Europe, thereby emphasizing the empire’s modernity’. From this perspective, Münif Pasha’s speech clearly reveals the desire to show Europe the Ottoman progress and to convince and teach Europeans to respect them as equals and as participants in a contemporary culture that collects artefacts. In this respect, it was not the Byzantine or Islamic heritage that took centre stage in the Tiled Pavilion, but classical civilization, ‘a shared patrimony for all European culture’. The display of the antiquities collection functioned as a symbol of the Tanzimat.

The cultural aspirations of the contemporary ruling elite were primarily oriented towards describing the Ottoman Empire as a modern state that valued and preserved its non-Islamic cultural legacy. The Ottoman claim to antiquities, however, was a very complex enterprise. According to Münif Pasha, Europe treated the Empire unfairly, in particular when compared to its treatment of Greece. ‘Even if today’, he said, ‘the Europeans spend vast sums to excavate in Greece, the finds are not taken to their countries but remain in Athens’.
believed this should be the Ottoman situation as well, but in order to do so Europe had to respect Ottomans as heirs to the cultures whose physical elements they collected. However, as Shaw aptly suggests ‘ancient Greek heritage, underlying much of the Ottoman territories, had already been appropriated by Europe and incorporated into the nationalist patrimony of modern Greece’. Considering themselves the legitimate claimants of ancient Greece, European nations believed that they had to protect this heritage against the ‘barbarian’ inhabitants of these regions in the East – the former rulers of Greece – who could not have any historical relationship to ancient sites and antiquities.15

Then again, the Ottomans ruled over Eastern Europe, Anatolia and Arab territories as they had been doing over the last few centuries and these provincial areas acknowledged the Ottoman state and the fundamental legitimacy of their enterprise. Although there were uprisings, the revolting peoples never aimed to break out of the Empire. As their rule was on the whole a matter of course, the Ottomans did not feel the need to justify their position of being the rulers or to claim the lands they had already controlled for centuries. In the course of the nineteenth century, however, the Ottoman Empire – economically, technically and militarily weakened – was faced with serious revolts by separatist Ottoman subjects, who were inspired by the emerging nationalism and supported by the newly emerged nation states in Western Europe.16 These nations and nationalist movements within the Empire saw the Ottoman Empire as ‘an imperial power

considered national property belonging to all the Greeks in general’ (article 61). It also stated that ‘all ruins remaining on or underneath national land, on the bottom of the sea, rivers or public streams, lakes or swamps, or other archaeological artefacts, of any name, are the property of the State’ (article 62). However, ‘those on private land or underneath, in walls or under ruins or lying in any other way, discovered after the existence of this law, half belong to the state’ (article 64). The Ottoman antiquities law of 1874, the promulgation of which was stimulated by Schliemann’s illegal actions of 1873, see chapter 1 of this survey, was mainly ignored and did not stop large-scale illegal expropriation of antiquities found in the Empire. See for information on Greek legislation concerning antiquities among others: Vasileios Ch Petrakos ‘Ta Prota Chronia Tis Ellinikis Archaeologies’ (The Early Years of Greek Archaeology), Archaeologia ke Technes 25 (December 1987) 54-63; Vasileios Ch Petrakos, Dokimio gia tin ArchaiologikI Nomothesia (Essay on the Archaeological Legislation) (Athens 1982) and Anastasia Sakellariadi, ‘Archaeology and Museums in the Nation Building Process in Greece’; In: P. Aronsson and A. Nyblom, (eds.), Comparing: National Museums, Territories, Nation-Building and Change (Norrköping, Sweden 2008) 129-142.

15 Shaw, Possessors and Possessed 93-96, 103.
16 Quataert, The Ottoman Empire, 55.
that had imposed its governance on preceding peoples, usurping the land and the antiquities beneath’. In their process of separatism, the local nationalists constructed romantic visions of their historical past, and started to lay ideological claims to archaeological sites within these territories. They saw the Ottoman rule merely as an ‘occupation’ of their lands.17

European moral superiority empowered transport of antiquities and intervention.18 Practises of European archaeologists on Ottoman soil justified European claims on Ottoman territories. By discovering the ancient ‘heritage of Ottoman territories and including these artifacts in museums that used them to write European narratives of progress, they made the Ottoman claim to the empire’s territories appear spurious’.19

The European drive to possess antiquities on Ottoman lands, on the other hand, urged Ottoman appropriation of classical antiquity. The Ottomans were trying to hold on to their territories by collecting antiquities and ‘uniting them in the hierarchical, orderly world’ of their museum. Europe, in contrast, was ‘eagerly collecting trophies from recent colonial conquests’.20

Gradually the Ottomans became engaged in a struggle to engrave the past of their land into their imperial identity. Within this framework, finding an appropriate imperial image that balanced modernity with heritage was high on the agenda of the Ottoman Empire.21 Accordingly, in the tradition of the western nation-states, Ottoman ruling elite reformulated the imperial Ottoman ‘dynastic history along nationalist lines’, and considered it necessary ‘to situate and secure this history’ within ‘a universal history of civilization as it was defined by the west’.22

19 Shaw, Possessors and Possessed, 105-108.
20 Ibidem, 149.
22 Ersoy, ‘A Sartorial Tribute to Late Ottomanism: The Elbise-i ‘Osmaniyye Album’, 187-207, 188, 190. For the nineteenth-century European tradition of linking classical antiquity with
Inclusion or Exclusion

Ottoman appropriation of classical civilization took place in a period in which European ‘anti-Turkish’ sentiments had reached a climax. Moved by a highly romanticized Hellenism, Europe was unwilling to include the Ottomans in the universal history of civilization. However, by embracing the multiple layers of the history of their land, the Ottomans rejected their cultural distance from Europe and upset European assumptions.

A clear expression of the Ottoman aspiration to subscribe to the narrative of civilization was the Ottoman exhibition at the Vienna International Exposition in 1873 and the scholarly publications in this context, namely *Usul-i Mimari-i Osmani; L’Architecture ottomane* (Istanbul 1873), *Elbise-i Osmaniyye; Les costumes populaires de la Turquie* (Istanbul 1873), and *Der Bosphor und Constantinopel* (Vienna 1873).

The publications were supplements to the ethnographic, architectural and archaeological exhibits in the Ottoman section. The archaeological exhibits in particular, ‘reflected an emerging concern in the empire not only to view and present the antiquities through a historical depth of field that was shared with the West, but also to possess and protect them as an integral part of imperial property’.

Their exclusion from this European narrative frustrated many Ottoman Muslim intellectuals, such as Münif Pasha, who had been intellectually inspired by the ancients to a large extent. Münif Pasha had a great scholarly reputation. His communications with Heinrich Schliemann demonstrate an erudite and sophisticated bureaucrat with a deep passion for archaeology and antiquities. So

---


26 See correspondence Münif Pasha directed to Schliemann in Gennadius Library of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens: Letters received by Schliemann (B), to give a
he noticeably appreciated the archaeological research at Troy, for instance, and perceived it as exceptionally important for the sake of the science of archaeology and for the Imperial Museum in particular, as he wrote to Schliemann: ‘En effet tout le monde savant ne peut que reconnaître la grande utilité de vos travaux, dont le résultat est d’une importance incontestable pour la science archéologique. Le ministère partageant ces appréciations se fait un devoir de vous exprimer ses remerciements et sa pleine satisfaction de ce que vous avez mené à bonne fin les recherches archéologiques dans l’ancien ville de Troie, pour le bien de la science en général et de notre Musée en particulier’.27

Ottoman versus Greek claims

Ottoman exclusion from ancient heritage and the modern Greek nationalist claims to it made the position of Ottoman intellectuals undeniably complex. Illustrative for this situation are the writings of Ahmed Midhat Efendi (1844-1912), a most popular Ottoman writer and publisher of his time, fluent in French, Persian, Arabic and Ottoman Turkish and most probably also able to read Greek. Ahmed Midhat Efendi felt the need to make a clear distinction between modern Greeks and ancient Greeks. He praised the ancient Greeks and wrote various articles on Greek philosophers and adopted Aesop’s fables in his novels, such as Kissadan Hisse (From Tale to Moral) in 1870.28 In his ‘History of Greece’ (1882), however, inspired by the then controversial ideas of Jacob Philipp Fallmerayer (1790-1861) concerning the origins of the Greeks,29 Ahmed Midhat Efendi maintained that the inhabitants of modern Greece were of mixed origins, and had nothing in common with the ancient Greeks.

He criticized the modern Greek chauvinism and complained that ‘the fact that in language of sciences and art many terms are adopted from ancient Greek makes

---

27 Mümin Pasha to Schliemann, 20th June 1879 (B 80/432).
28 Already in 1851 a Turkish version of Aesop’s fables in Cyrillic script was available, see: Johann Strauss (2003), ‘Who Read What in the Ottoman Empire (19th-20th centuries)?’, Middle Eastern Literatures, 6, 1, 49.
them even more arrogant. Such a degree of fanaticism makes one speechless. But in comparison with the books on sciences, which exist today in Europe, it is fair to say that the libraries of the modern Greeks are quite empty. If the Greeks therefore persist in their fanaticism, they shall certainly not progress beyond their present level. This distinction between modern Greeks and ancient Greeks made the exclusive Greek claim to classical heritage appear spurious.

2. Zealous for Civilization

Enlightened Ideas and Ideals in the Empire

Dissatisfaction among the cosmopolite and well-educated Muslim subjects of the Empire with their imposed disconnection with antiquities, which they perceived as the ‘valuable produce’ of their lands, was not surprising. Sivilizasyon, sivilize (from French) were main topics of the Tanzimat. The strong pro-west orientated statesman Mustafa Reşid Pasha (1800-1858), who was most instrumental in introducing the Tanzimat reforms, was convinced that ‘the salvation’ of the Empire lay on ‘the way of civilization’. With the westernization policies and the modernizations of the Tanzimat, the connection between ancient Greece, studying Greek literature and civilization became prominent. Particularly from the 1850s onwards Ottoman Muslim subjects increasingly concentrated on the intellectual heritage of the ancients. Greek philosophy and culture rose in status and, consequently, Greek language and civilization began to occupy a more and more prominent place in Ottoman Turkish intellectual life.

---

31 IBA (Meclis-i Mahsus) 2348; (Dahiliye) 41355; (Sura-yi Devlet) 547; (Meclis-i Vala) 24685, in: Ahmet Ersoy, ‘A Sartorial Tribute to Late Ottomanism: The Elbise-i ‘Osmaniyye Album’, Muqarnas, endnote nr 17, 204.
Within this course, ancient history and civilization on the whole became popular among the Muslim elite. The biographies of ancient philosophers written by Münif Pasha in the 1860s, for instance, were well liked by Muslim intellectuals at the time.

Münif Pasha’s earlier work *Muhaverat-i Hikemiyye*, a translation of *Philosophical Dialogues*, a selection of dialogues translated from a variety of eighteenth-century French writers, such as Voltaire (*Dialogues et Entretiens Philosophiques*), Fénelon (*Dialogues*) and Fontenelle (*Dialogue des Morts*), was a success as well. In *Muhaverat-i Hikemiyye* Münif Pasha introduced the dialogue as a literary genre in which ‘the ancient Greeks had composed many famous works’.

This work, which is generally considered to be the first translation of western literature into Ottoman Turkish, was instrumental in introducing the Ottomans to the ‘basic creeds of European Enlightenment’ in Turkish. The selected dialogues encountered themes such as change, enlightened absolutism advised by philosophers, patriotism, religious tolerance, philosophical rationalism, freedom of speech, the benefits of education of women and hard work instead of passivity. These eighteenth-century enlightened ideas concerning the society suited the progressive late-*Tanzimat* environment of the Ottoman Empire. Since Ottoman reformers and the intellectual elite of the nineteenth century believed that the salvation of the Empire lay on modernizations and reforms, change was

---


Influential in the development of Ottoman intellectual activities was the Ottoman Scientific Society (Cemiyet-i İlimiye-yi Osmaniye), founded by Müنيf Pasha in 1860. The intention of the decidedly secular government-subsidized programme of this Society, which also included non-Muslim subjects as members as long as they were able to speak Turkish, Arabic or Persian and knew at least one western language (French, English, German, Italian, or Modern Greek), was to promote scientific study by publishing books and organizing translation activities. The Society’s aim was to provide teaching materials for a future university. It sponsored public lectures in the natural sciences, geology, history and economics. A perhaps more effective instrument in the spreading of western scientific thought and enlightened ideas in the Empire was the Society’s journal, Mecmua-i Fünun (Journal of Sciences), also introduced by Müنيf Pasha. In fact, this was the first Turkish scientific journal in the Empire that covered a wide range of translations and original writings. Published between 1862 and 1867 Mecmua-i Fünun introduced popularized European scientism to the Empire and ‘exerted a lasting influence on the generation that saw its first appearance’. In this respect, it may be revealing to pay attention to the fact that from the 1850s French had become the vernacular in which educated speakers of different linguistic communities of the Empire communicated. Also the knowledge of the Greek language was quite common in the Empire, in particular among the non-Muslim Ottomans. However, the Muslim community was also accustomed to

---

39 Religion and politics were excluded; see the first issue of Mecmua-i Fünun, July 1862 (Muharrem 1279) 2-13.
spoken Greek. Johann Strauss, an expert on Ottoman-Turkish history, underlines that a large number of Ottoman intellectuals of the *Tanzimat* are reputed to have known some Greek.42

In the course of time, Greek became a kind of semi-official language. The official gazette of the Empire and several provincial newspapers, including that of the Province of the Dardanelles, appeared in both Greek and Ottoman-Turkish in the second half of the nineteenth century.43 In this respect, the Greek letter of the governor of the Dardanelles, Mustafa Pasha, to Schlieman in 1882 actually confirms that the Greek language was not alien to Ottoman officials. It demonstrates all the more clearly that at times formal communication also took place in Greek.44 Münim Pasha had presumably mastered Greek as well, besides French, German and English. As a matter of fact, his unpublished work ‘Greek words in Turkish, Arabic and Persian’ demonstrates a profound interest in Greek.45

With regard to Münim Pasha’s scientific reputation, it might be useful to emphasize that he was not an exception. Nineteenth-century bureaucrats of the Empire in general had impressive literary and scientific reputations and played a vital role in the intellectual scene of the Empire. Ahmed Cevded Pasha (1823-1895), for example, besides being Minister of Justice, was an eminent historian and sociologist as well. As a legist, moreover, he played a major role in the preparation of the civil code (*Mecelle*) of the Empire. Ahmet Vefik Pasha (1823-1891), similarly, held top positions in the Ottoman political arena, such as Grand Vizierate, Minister of Public Instruction, ambassador to Tehran and Paris, being at the same time one of the most famous intellectuals of his time. He translated plays of Molière, initiated theatre plays in western tradition and was a pioneer in the establishment of the first Ottoman theatre in western form.46 He was in close


44 Mustafa Pasha to Schliemann, 8th July 1882 (BBB 431/89).


contact with the Greek scene of Istanbul and was familiar with the Greek language. His versions of Molière’s plays included many Greek words and in his Ottoman Turkish dictionary *Lehçe-i Osmani* (1879) he paid attention to the Greek origin of Turkish words and specified them systematically. In his historical and geographical works, however, he put emphasis on pure Turkish and Turkism. He is considered to be one of the founding fathers of the Pan-Turkish movement.

*Terceme-i Telemak*

Translation of Fénelon’s *Les Aventures de Télémaque* into Ottoman-Turkish, another example of a work of a bureaucrat with a scholarly reputation, was made by the prominent statesman and Grand Vizier (in 1863) Yusuf Kamil Pasha (1808-1876). *Les Aventures de Télémaque* – after the adventures of Odysseus – was a mythical account of the travels of Telemachus, the son of Odysseus. François Fénelon (1651-1715) wrote this didactic work full of morality in best philosophical tradition for King Louis XIV’s grandson, the Duke of Burgundy, in preparation for his accession. The first translation of *Les Aventures de Télémaque* into Ottoman-Turkish was completed in 1859 but printed three years later in 1862. In the period between its manuscript form and its publication, however, *Terceme-i Telemak* was an integral part of the reading material of the capital’s artistic and intellectual scenery and circulated in manuscript form in Ottoman salons. The members of these private literary and philosophical conversation groups mainly gathered in the Yalı’s (Bosporus waterfront mansions) of the cultural and political elite (fig. 2).

*Terceme-i Telemak* was a great success. The work had already been reprinted six times.

---

months after its first publication in 1862 and again in 1867 and 1870. The second translation, made by another distinguished figure in the political and cultural arena, Ahmed Vefik Pasha (1823-1891), in 1869, yet printed in 1880, was also popular and was reprinted more than once.

The mythical story of the young prince Telemachus searching for his father – stirred by the love of his country and guided by his instructor Mentor who condemned war, luxury and self-centeredness and emphasized loyalty and brotherhood – was reading material in Ottoman schools and used in high school to teach prose composition. The work was comparable with the Ottoman classics of ‘Mirrors for Princes’, such as Siyasetnâme of the Selçuk vizier Nizam ül-Mülk (1092), the Kutadgu Bilig (1070) and the Kabus Nâme (1082). Moreover, the Platonism interwoven in Télémaque could also be found in Islamic political treatises, and therefore accessible for Ottoman readers. Still, Télémaque’s form of a novel was something new. Ideals and ideas concerning the monarch and the society in this form were pleasant to read, which made the work so popular in the second half of the nineteenth century.

According to Télémaque the king was subject to the laws of his country and was responsible for the happiness of its citizens. The work implicitly criticized the absolute monarchy and defended the right of participation of the subjects, at least the elite, in political matters. Moreover, the work maintained that parliaments were an essential component of a monarchical government and protested against

---

corruption and the expanded bureaucracy of Louis XIV. These enlightened ideas and the subtle criticism against the ruling system had appeal to the critical younger generation of the Tanzimat: the Young Ottomans.

Young Ottomans
According to the Ottoman poet and journalist Ibrahim Şinasi Efendi (1826-1871), a prominent member of the Young Ottoman movement, Téléméaque was a superior work. He states: ‘While on the surface, the work of the famous French author, Fénélon, entitled the Adventures of Téléméaque, conveys the impression of being a romance, its true meaning is in the nature of a philosophical law which includes all the arts of government that have as purpose the fulfillment of justice and happiness for the individual’. Indeed, Téléméaque was influential in the shaping of the ideas of the Young Ottoman movement, which pioneered with political protest and gained importance in the years between 1867 and 1878.56

The Young Ottomans belonged to a generation nurtured in a period in which reform ideals of the Tanzimat had already been translated into policies. Due to the efforts of the early Tanzimat reformers, the Young Ottomans grew up in a climate in which knowledge of western society, civilization and languages was officially encouraged and facilitated. But now, this critical second ‘generation nurtured in the ways of the West’, became opposed to the first-generation Tanzimat reformers, who were ‘quite blunt and merciless in enforcing the political, social, and intellectual Westernization of Turkey’. For the first time Ottoman society had to deal with an intelligentsia that criticized the government by using mass media. The Young Ottomans accused the Tanzimat statesmen and the new ‘upper class’ of adopting ‘the most superficial parts of European culture’ such as theatres, ballrooms, and liberal ideas about women.57

Central themes of the new ideology were the constitutional monarchy and Ottoman nationalism.58 Searching for a synthesis between Islam and European enlightened ideas and political systems, the movement was in fact a product of

56 Mardin, The genesis of Young Ottoman Thought, 241-245.
58 Findley, The Turks in World History, 164.
the modernizations within the Ottoman society, but also a result of the unstable condition of the Empire and the interference of European powers in Ottoman affairs. These developments nourished patriotic feelings of the intellectuals of the Young Ottoman movement. The Young Ottomans were thinking ‘of reform for Ottomans, by Ottomans, and along Islamic lines’.  

To get a better understanding of the absorption of enlightened or so-called western ideas in Ottoman culture and the involved internal dynamics of the intellectual life of the late Ottoman Empire, it might be useful to briefly sketch the innovations during the Tanzimat, the underlying motives and channels through which western ideas entered Ottoman society.

**European World of Ideas in the Empire**

Interaction between European and Ottoman art and culture was essentially not a novelty. As art historian Günsel Renda emphasizes, both cultures ‘met in different geographies under different conditions and through the centuries the rulers and art patrons as much as the political, diplomatic and trade relations had a great role in the cultural exchange’. These cultural contacts enriched each other's artistic and technical achievements.  

The *Turquerie* fashion in Europe from the sixteenth until the nineteenth century was a clear expression of western inspiration drawn from the Ottoman culture. The movement influenced European painting, literature, architecture and music, in particular opera. The most famous operas using Turkish themes are Reinhard Keiser’s *Mahomet II* (1693), Handel’s *Tamerlano* (1724) and Mozart’s *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (1782).

In the Ottoman Empire, on the other hand, significant European cultural influence was not noticeable until the nineteenth century. From then on, however, the interest became mutual, and European culture and art turned into a source of inspiration for the Ottomans as well. The Ottoman-European cultural contacts contributed rich contents to both European and Ottoman art and culture. Exemplary for the Ottoman-European interactions in the sphere of arts are the undertakings of the Ottoman diplomat, art collector and patron, Halil (Khalil) Bey (1831-1879). During his stay in Paris in the mid-1860s, Halil Bey did not only include works from significant artists such as Ingres, Eugène Delacroix, Rousseau, Corot, Troyon and Daubigny in his art collection, but he is also assumed to have commissioned Gustave Courbet’s Les Dormeuses and L’Origine du monde.62

The Ottoman political and cultural elite widened its knowledge particularly in the fields of philosophy, mythology, literature, science, history and historiography through the study of foreign languages.63 As early as 1829 the first Ottoman students were sent to Paris for their education. These young men, including Ibrahim Edhem Pasha, the father of Osman Hamdi Bey, subsequently brought back new ideas to the Empire. Soon other students followed. In the years 1834, 1835, 1836 and 1838 several groups of students were sent to London, Paris and Vienna. After their education at European schools, these graduates returned to their country and received teaching posts in the newly founded Military Academy. Besides sending students to Europe, western instructors were also employed at the Academy to train pupils. By 1855, an Ottoman school was even established in Paris to prepare Ottoman military students for the examination of schools like Polytechnique, École des Mines and St. Cyr. In 1846, 1850, 1854 and 1855, public-servant trainees, too, were sent to Europe for education. These ‘early contacts of the army with the European world of ideas’, as Mardin states,
‘had already created a self-sustaining cultural effervescence by the 1870’s’.64

The Translation Office of the Sublime Porte (1821) is considered to have been the true ‘nursery of westernizing civil officials and writers’.65 Its establishment, and the founding of the Translation Office of the Imperial Artillery (1834) as well, was related to the need for more and superior interpreters as a result of the intensifying contacts between the Empire and the West in the early nineteenth century. The urge to train Muslim subjects in foreign languages was also triggered by a strong Ottoman suspicion of Greek interpreters and their possible disloyalty to the government, generated by the Greek Revolution. By the 1840s the Translation Office had developed into one of the most important training bases of young men for governmental careers. In fact, generations of statesmen, from Ministers to Grand Viziers, got their training and started their careers with the Translation Offices. Older generations, moreover, encouraged and supported younger generations to increase their knowledge of foreign languages.66

As Lewis rightly highlights, by then French in particular had become ‘the talisman that made the clerk a translator, the translator an interpreter, the interpreter a diplomat, and the diplomat a statesman’. The Ottomans, after all, had to deal with ‘an aggressive and expanding Europe’. As a consequence ‘the positions of trust and decision inevitably went to those who knew something of Europe, its languages, and its affairs’.67 Under these circumstances, western literature became more widely available from the 1850s onwards. French works were read both by educated Muslims and non-Muslim subjects of the Empire and knowledge of French or German had become more widespread among Muslim government officials.68

Subsequently, from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards a new elite

---

67 Bernard Lewis, The Emergence of Modern Turkey, 118.
of power sprang from the Translations Offices and the Embassy secretariats. This new ruling elite included, besides bureaucrats, a new group of critical Muslim intellectuals as well. Almost all members of the influential Young Ottoman movement started their careers as clerks on these Offices. After some time, the Translation Office of the Porte even developed the reputation of ‘the opposition division’ of the Ottoman government.\(^{69}\)

The opening of the *Galatasaray Mekteb-i Sultani* (Imperial Ottoman Lycée at Galatasaray) in 1868, which was influenced by the French Lycée model, is very illustrative for the changing atmosphere in the Empire in this era.\(^ {70}\) The *Galatasaray Lycée* provided a modern and western curriculum of secondary education. The students were instructed in French and various other western and eastern languages. Moreover, for the first time Muslim, Christian and Jewish pupils were educated in one and the same classroom. In this respect, the establishment of the *Lycée* demonstrates a strong determination of the government to provide modern education to Ottoman youths, regardless of religion or ethnicity. These efforts, as a matter of fact, were in line with the *Tanzimat* policy of egalitarian Ottomanism (*Osmanlılık*), which aimed at equality among Ottoman subjects, irrespective of religion, in order to work against separatist nationalisms – regularly supported by western states – and to bind the subjects of the Empire.\(^ {71}\)

The influence of the *Galatasaray Lycée* on Ottoman society as well as outside the Turkish sphere was significant. Its Alumni became leading figures in the political and cultural arena of the Empire and, later, in the Turkish Republic and other twentieth-century countries. As Lewis puts it appropriately, the *Galatasaray Lycée* ‘had no playing-fields, but not a few of the victories of


\(^{71}\) See for a general account of Tanzimat reforms and policies, Ottomanism, European pressure and criticism: Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 116 and Findley, *The Turks in World History*, 160.
modern Turkey were won in its classrooms’.\textsuperscript{72} Not only did many Ottoman grand viziers, ministers, governors and important members of cultural life graduate from the \textit{Galatasaray Lycée}, but prominent twentieth-century foreign statesmen as well. Just to list a few: King Zog of Albania, Mehmed Ali El-Abid, President of Syria, Yitzhak Ben Zvi, Second President of Israel, Mirza Sadık Khan, Minister of Internal Affairs of Iran, Konstantin Velichkov, Minister of Education of Bulgaria.\textsuperscript{73}

Even a quick glance at the names of the above-mentioned list forces one to pay at least some attention to the ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity within the Ottoman Empire, their cultural productions, and, even more, to their relations and cultural interactions. Only then will it be possible to come to some understanding of the disappointment of the Muslim cultural elite regarding their exclusion from classical heritage but above all of the ‘complex historic fabric of an empire’.\textsuperscript{74}

\section*{3. The Cosmopolitan Muslim Elite of a Multifarious Empire}

The Ottoman society included Greeks, Armenians, Arabs, Sephardic Jews, Levantines, people of the Balkan and not to forget the ruling element ‘Muslim Ottoman-Turks’. These subjects of various communities, professing different religions, speaking a variety of languages, using different scripts to write down these languages were living within one Empire. And to make matters even more complex, not all the Armenians spoke Armenian but some preferred Ottoman-Turkish; some Arabs were Christians or Jewish; the cultural language of the educated Bulgarians and Rumanians was Greek; Phanariote Greeks or Greek-Orthodox Karamanlı spoke and wrote Ottoman-Turkish; the Ottoman Turkish elite on the other hand, besides speaking Arab, Persian, Ottoman and French,

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{72} Lewis, \textit{The Emergence of Modern Turkey}, 122.
\textsuperscript{73} See the official website of Galatasaray Lisesi: www.gsl.gsu.edu.tr.
\end{flushright}
could frequently understand Greek as well; Sephardic Jews whose ethnic language was (Judaean-)Spanish wrote in Hebrew, yet also in French and Turkish; although Persian was not an ethnic language, still it functioned as the cultural language of the Ottoman-Turks; ethnic Albanian or Bosnian Muslim subjects were, besides with their mother tongue, mostly familiar with languages such as Greek, Persian, Arab, Ottoman-Turkish and western languages; and let us not forget the Ottoman Turkish residents of Paris who published their works in French.  

Hence, the cultural manifestations of the pluralist Ottoman society are difficult to classify. Moreover, the literary activities of the various communities of the Empire were connected and interrelated with each other. In this respect, Strauss correctly emphasizes the complexity of categorizing the literary activity in the Ottoman Empire with the concept of ‘national’ literature in mind. Highlighting the tendency of modern historians to restrict literature as the ‘production of one “nation” in one single language’, he notes that literature developed in an Ottoman context does not fit the nationalist paradigm and may be strange to those who are accustomed to the usual framework of ‘national’ literatures. He exemplifies his point of view by paying attention to the literary productions of the Turkish speaking Greek-Orthodox (Karamanli) community and the Turkophone Armenians. Their Ottoman-Turkish works do not fit within any national literary heritage.

As historian Edhem Eldem underlines, ‘even at a much more mundane level, if one were to study the basic dynamics of the Ottoman society in the nineteenth century, a more demotic form of coexistence (…) would necessarily emerge at practically every level.’ But then, as Eldem rightly points out, the multiple identities within the Empire ‘have been literally bulldozed into national uniformity by the simplistic and pragmatic discourse of the nation-state’. By

---

58 Eldem, ‘Greece and the Greeks in Ottoman History and Turkish Historiography’, 38.
doing so, the history of the Ottoman Empire ran parallel to that of other European empires, such as the Habsburg Empire.  

The nineteenth-century ‘polyglot’ capital of the Ottoman Empire ‘was a fertile breeding ground for learned societies and scholarly journals, published in a variety of languages spoken or used as lingua franca’. The Muslim political elite of the Empire was by far the most cosmopolitan group of the Empire. The intellectuals of the Tanzimat, including the Young Ottomans, were capable of harmonizing western cultural values – which they had largely internalized – with Ottoman identity.

Driven by the spirit of the Ottoman modernization, it was the Muslim elite of the Empire, leading reformist statesmen in particular, who took the initiatives in establishing societies and journals. Illustrative for this is the list of founders and members of the forerunner of the Cemiyet-i İlimiye-i Osmaniye, the Encümen-i Danış (Imperial Academy of Arts and Sciences), founded in 1850. In fact, all the prominent statesmen of the Tanzimat, reformist politicians as well as bureaucrats with literary and scientific reputations, were members of this Academy, which was founded to help to break a ground for the creation of a future state university. The list of founders and members included names such as the Grand Viziers Mustafa Reşid Pasha, Mehmet Ali Emin Pasha, Yusuf Kamal Pasha, but also other scholarly bureaucrats such as Cevdet Pasha and Ahmed Vefik Pasha. With these actions they actually served as an example to the non-Muslim communities of the Empire. Impressed by their progressive acts for the benefit of

---

81 Edhem Eldem hesitates to describe the capital city as cosmopolitan, since according to him modernization processes in the Empire were rather superficial in character; the ‘internalization’ of the new cultural and social structures by Ottoman society was fairly limited. However, where the Muslim political elite of the Empire is concerned, Eldem maintains that this group rightfully deserves to be described as by far the most cosmopolitan group of the Empire, in: Edhem Eldem, ‘Batılaşlaşma, Modernleşme ve Kozmopolitizm: 19. Yüzyıl sonu ve 20. Yüzyıl Başında İstanbul’, in: Zeynep Rona (ed.), Osman Hamdi Bey ve Dönemi. Sempozyum 17-18 Aralık 1992 (İstanbul 1993) 12-27.
82 Mardin, The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought, 226.
the intellectual progress of the Ottoman society, members of the Greek community decided to establish the *Greek Literary Society*. The Ministers of Public Instruction Safvet Pasha as well as Münif Pasha were honorary members of this Society.\(^3\)

**Connection with Greeks and Greek lands**

The cosmopolitan Muslim Ottoman-Turkish elite was in fact to a considerable extent interrelated to the Ottoman-Greek communities and Greek territories of the Empire. The first Muslim translator of the Translation Bureau of the Porte, Yahya Naci Efendi, who was the Grandfather of the later Grand Vizier and translator of Molière’s plays Ahmed Vefik Pasha, was believed to be a Greek-Orthodox convert. This also applies to Osman Hamdi Bey’s father, the Grand Vizier Ibrahim Edhem Pasha (1818-1893). Born in the Greek-Orthodox village of Sakız (Chios), he survived the massacres of Chios as a child (1822). He was brought to the capital by Hüsvem Pasha (at that time head of the Ottoman Navy, later Grand Vizier) and became a member of his household. Hüsvem Pasha sent him to Paris, with three other boys from his family unit, to study military science under the protection of the Orientalist Amedéé Jaubert in 1830. After his graduation in 1839, Ibrahim Edhem Pasha served diverse high-rank administrative positions and even became Grand Vizier in 1877.

Next to the converts with top positions in the Ottoman bureaucracy, members of the cultural scene and political life were descendants of Muslim or Turkish families of Peloponnesus and other Greek lands. The mother of the leading Young Ottoman poet Namık Kemal, for instance, was a descendant of the family of governors of the province of Morea. The poet Kazım Pasha (1821-1889), moreover, was originally from Konitsa. Likewise, the administrator and poet Giritli Sırrı Pasha (1844-95) and his wife Leyla Saz Hanımeşendi (1850-1936), composer, poet and writer, belonged to families of Cretan Turkish origins. Especially Muslim Cretans were quite capable to speak and write Greek and

made translations of Greek dramas into Ottoman Turkish.\textsuperscript{84}

The Albanian Muslim Ottomans educated in Greek schools played a role in the intellectual scenery as well. The brothers Frashëri, born in Frashër (now Albania), educated at the Greek school Zosimea in Ionnina, at that time part of the Ottoman Empire, are in this context exemplary. The brothers mastered Ottoman-Turkish, Persian and Arabic, also French, Italian, and, moreover, ancient and new Greek, thanks to their education at Zosima. The brothers served as Ottoman officials and lived in Constantinople for a considerable part of their life.

In particular the eldest of the two brothers, Şemseddin Sami Frashëri (1850-1904), was a significant member of the Ottoman intellectual scene with a widespread reputation.\textsuperscript{85} \textsuperscript{86} As a novelist, journalist, lexicographer and self-taught linguist, his contribution to the Turkish intellectual world is substantial. Besides translations of works such as \textit{Les Misérables} and \textit{Robinson Crusoe} into Turkish, he also published a French-Turkish dictionary in 1882, a Turkish-French dictionary in 1885, and a modern Turkish dictionary \textit{Kamus-i Türki}.\textsuperscript{87} in which he replaced words of Arabic or Persian origin in the Ottoman written language by Turkish terms from eastern Turkish. This dictionary, which is still used in the Turkish Republic, served as the basis of modern Turkish literary language (fig. 3).\textsuperscript{88} His scientific booklets on mythology, women, Islamic civilization, astronomy, geology, anthropology and history of Islam are worth

\textsuperscript{84} Strauss, ‘The Greek Connection in Nineteenth-century Ottoman Intellectual History’, 56.
\textsuperscript{85} He is claimed by the Albanian nation as well as Turkey and is seen as one of the most important nation builders of these modern states. Şemseddin Sami’s engagement with the Ottoman intellectuals in Istanbul and his contribution to the Ottoman-Turkish national identity, and, simultaneously, his role in the construction of the Albanian national identity are subjects that will receive more attention in chapter 4. See also: Bülent Bilmez, ‘Sami Frashëri or Şemseddin Sami? Mythologization of an Ottoman Intellectual in the Modern Turkish and Socialist Albanian Historiographies based on “Selective Perception”’, \textit{Accueil}, VII/2, (December 2003) 341-371.
\textsuperscript{86} His son Ali Sami Yen (1886-1951) is the founder of the Galatasaray Football club connected to the prestigious Galatasaray Lycee in Istanbul and was the president of the Turkish National Olympic Committee between 1926-1931.
\textsuperscript{87} Şemseddin Sami, \textit{Kamus-i Türk-i} (Istanbul 1318) (1900-1901).
mentioning. Şemseddin Sami also published a major encyclopedia (six volumes), *Kamus-îl Alam*, including information about Troy, Homeric heroes and locations.\(^{89}\)

His brother Na’im Frashëri (1846-1900), poet and writer, who became head of the censorship department in Constantinople in 1882, is considered to be the first to have translated a part of the *Iliad* into Turkish in 1885/1886.\(^{90}\)

One could say that the Ottoman society was pluralistic, and that its culture was multiethnic, but at the same time the various communities were interrelated to each other and were influenced by each other on a regular basis as well. Although complicated from a nationalist perspective, these basics have to be taken into consideration with respect to the Ottoman relation with ancient heritage and their claims to antiquities.

### 4. Osman Hamdi Bey

**A New Era in Ottoman Archaeology and Museology**

The appointment of Osman Hamdi Bey (1842-1910) as director of the Imperial Museum in 1881 was a result of the growing Ottoman appreciation of antiquities as part of their imperial property. The appointment of an Ottoman-Turkish director, in fact, suited the contemporary drive to assume control over the antiquities as part of the Ottoman historical and cultural legacy.\(^{91}\) After the death of museum director Anton Déthier in 1881, the Minister of Public Instruction initially intended to appoint another European director. At the very last minute this appointment was cancelled and Osman Hamdi was moved into the position. According to the prominent Turkish historian Mustafa Cezar, the authorities preferred an Ottoman Muslim subject. They believed that the development of the museum under Sultan Abdülhamid II was an act of Allah and therefore they...

---


\(^{91}\) Shaw, *Possessors and Possessed*, 96.
urged the appointment of a Muslim instead of a Christian as its director. However, Osman Hamdi’s influential father Ibrahim Edhem Pasha could have played a role in this appointment as well.\textsuperscript{92} At any rate, the museum got its first Ottoman-Turkish director on 3\textsuperscript{rd} September 1881.\textsuperscript{93} With the appointment of Osman Hamdi, noticeably a significant member of the late nineteenth-century cosmopolite Ottoman intelligentsia, the government had brought in a kingpin of contemporary arts and modern ideas.

**Background**

Osman Hamdi belonged to the second generation of men who had been nurtured in an environment in which the spirit of the modernizations was dominant. Indeed, born into a family of the ruling class, brought up in a liberal and cosmopolite environment, Osman Hamdi was a distinctive product of the modern era (fig. 4).\textsuperscript{94} His father, Ibrahim Edhem Bey (later Pasha), already mentioned before, was one of the first four Ottoman-Turkish students who were sent to Europe for their education approximately in 1829. After studying metal engineering in Paris at the *Ecole des Mines*, Ibrahim Edhem Bey returned to the Empire in 1839, where he obtained various high-level administrative functions at different departments of the government. After serving as an army engineer, he became the French tutor of sultan Abdülmecid I and in 1856 he was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs. In 1876, he served as ambassador to Berlin and subsequently to Vienna between 1879 and 1882. He was, moreover, Grand Vizier between 1877 and 1878 and served as Minister of the Interior between 1883 and 1885.\textsuperscript{95}

Grown up and formed in the most prominent cultural capital in Europe, Ibrahim Edhem Pasha had a thorough command of European politics, science and arts. He was known as an eminent statesman with a broad knowledge, which he also

\textsuperscript{92} Cezar, *Sanatta Batıya Açılış ve Osman Hamdi*, 253-255.
\textsuperscript{93} IBA: I.D: 67168: 09/L/1298 (04/09/1881).
transmitted to a wider public by writing articles about among others geology in scientific periodicals. He was also the leading man behind the publication of the two already mentioned major works on Ottoman arts: *Usul-i Mimari-i Osmani; L’Architecture ottomane* (Istanbul 1873), *Elbise-i Osmaniyye; Les costumes populaires de la Turquie* (Istanbul 1873).\(^{96}\)

As president of the commission responsible for the Ottoman delegation to Vienna International Exposition in 1873, Ibrahim Edhem Pasha appointed his son Osman Hamdi as commissioner for the exhibit and created the opportunity for him to assist in the collection of materials for the scholarly publications, and to become the co-author of *Elbise-i Osmaniye*.\(^{97}\)

Ibrahim Edhem Pasha took his son now and then with him to professional trips. In this respect, Osman Hamdi was able to see Belgrade and Vienna already in 1858. In Vienna he visited museums and observed works of visual arts. These elements could have triggered him to urge his father to send him abroad for education.\(^{98}\)

In 1860, Osman Hamdi left to Paris to study law. However, Osman Hamdi’s interest in art prevailed and he started to take painting lessons at the ateliers of the French Orientalists Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824-1904) and Gustave Boulanger, (1824-1888). Subsequently, he began to paint in the Orientalist style. Meanwhile, he took also courses in archaeology. He was in contact with Ottoman students in Paris, who were mainly engaged in a study of arts. These young men were to become leading characters in Turkish art history.\(^{99}\) It is known that Osman Hamdi displayed three of his early paintings at the *Exposition Universelle de Paris* in 1867. When Sultan Abdülaziz, as the first sultan travelling to Western Europe, visited Paris in that same year, Osman Hamdi was one of the fortunate ones to witness that particular moment.

---

\(^{96}\) Cezar, *Sanatta Bațiya Açılış ve Osman Hamdi*, 201-204.  
\(^{98}\) Cezar, *Sanatta Bațiya Açılış ve Osman Hamdi*, 208.  
\(^{99}\) These artists are Ahmed Ali Efendi (Şeker Ahmed Pasha), Süleyman Seyid, Ahmed Ali. Halil (Khalil) Bey’s stay in Paris corresponds also with Osman Hamdi’s years in Paris. Also Ahmed Vefik Efendi (later Pasha) was present in Paris at that time; he stayed in the same pension as Osman Hamdi.
After his study in Paris, Osman Hamdi returned to Istanbul in 1869. Married in the meantime, he took his French wife and two daughters with him. Almost immediately after his arrival in Istanbul, Osman Hamdi entered the government service and after a year he moved to Baghdad to serve as a staff member of the Foreign Affairs Office.

Back in Istanbul he held various positions in the Department of Foreign Affairs. In 1876 he was appointed director in charge of foreign-language publications in Istanbul and a year later he was assigned to the directorship of the Istanbul 6th Municipal Office in Beyoğlu district, the ‘European’ quarter of Istanbul. He held this position until his appointment as director of the Imperial Museum in 1881.100

Director of the Imperial Museum

Under Osman Hamdi the Museum functioned as ‘a battleground for possession’ of classical artefacts.101 His role in the development of Ottoman archaeology is an impressive one. Thanks to his efforts formal archeological research and the active collection of antiquities increased. Already during his stay in Baghdad in his young years, he carried out excavations in situ and sent the discoveries to the capital. Once he had become the director of the Museum, he made archeology a state matter. In fact, it was he who conducted the first archaeological research carried out by an official Ottoman team. Important excavations on behalf of the Imperial Museum included sites as Nemrut Dağı (1883), Lagina and Sidon (1887) (fig. 5).102

To document the archaeological activities of the Imperial Museum, Osman Hamdi produced two illustrated publications. These works in fact spoiled the act of European proprietorship through the very act of Ottoman participation. The publication of the finds of Nemrut Dağı, where Germans had plans to excavate, demonstrated the Ottoman discoveries and emphasized the exclusion

100 Cezar, Sanatta Batıya Açılış ve Osman Hamdi, 210; Shaw, Possessors and Possessed, 97-100.
101 Shaw, Possessors and Possessed, 108.
102 During the Sidon excavation, Osman Hamdi and his team uncovered close to twenty sarcophagi. In fact, because of the number of artefacts brought to light in the excavations at Sidon, the need arose for a larger and more substantial museum building, which opened to visitors in 1891, see: Cezar, Sanatta Batıya Açılış ve Osman Hamdi, 257-262.
of the Germans from the expedition to Nemrut Dağı. In *Une nécropole royale à Sidon*, moreover, Osman Hamdi published illustrations of the newly acquired sarcophagi from Sidon and with that their absence in European Museums. The luxurious publication included unique details of inscriptions and portraits, and colour plates based on traces of the original colours of the sarcophagi. Osman Hamdi produced the work in corporation with the leading French scientist Théodore Reinach (1860-1928) and in consultation with Ernest Renan (1823-1892), another prominent French scholar, specialized on ancient civilizations in the Middle East. The publication and the collaboration between the Ottoman director of the Imperial Museum and the French scholars accentuated the contribution of the Ottomans to universal science and demonstrated equality between the Ottomans and the Europeans in archaeological matters.

Osman Hamdi played a crucial part in overseeing the new antiquities regulation, *Asar-ı Atika Nizamnamesi*, which was put into force in 1884. The Ottoman claim to antiquities became more tangible with the new antiquities regulation. The law was much stricter than the previous legal frameworks.

Next to his position of director of the Imperial Museum, Osman Hamdi was also closely involved in the institution of the School of Fine Arts, *Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi*, which was related to the urgent need of creating social awareness of archaeology and antiquities (fig. 6). In 1882, he became also the director of *Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi*. The school created opportunities to educate Ottoman subjects in aesthetics and artistic techniques within the Empire. Following

---

103 Osman Hamdy Bey and Osgan Effendi, *Le Tumulus de Nemroud-Dagh* (Constantinople 1883).
104 O. Hamdy Bey and Théodore Reinach, *Une nécropole royale à Sidon. Fouilles de Hamdy Bey* (Paris : Ernest Leroux, 1892); See also the comments of the historian Edhem Eldem on the publication. This was part of research material for the exhibition of the Lebanese filmmaker, photographer and curator, Akram Zaatari, in *Salt* Beyoğlu, Istanbul (2015): https://vimeo.com/117724682 (10/06/2015).
105 *Asar-ı Atika Nizamnamesi* is dealt with in chapter 3; Remzi Öğuz Arık, *Türk Müzeciligine Bir Bakış* (Istanbul 1953) 1-4.
106 The institution of a school of fine arts by the Ministry of Public Instruction was a topical subject as early as 1873, see: *Hakayık-ul Vekayi*, 11/Ra/1290 (06/05/1873); there were serious plans to establish a school for archaeology in 1875 as well, see: Cezar, *Sanatla Batıya Açılış ve Osman Hamdi*, 244-248; Arif Müfidd Mansel, ‘Osman Hamdi Bey’, *Belleten*, XXIV/94, (1960), 291-301.
European tradition, the students learned to draw and sculpt by copying ancient sculptures and friezes.\textsuperscript{107}

The Sultan and the Antiquities Management

The Museum’s rapid expansion during the directorship of Osman Hamdi in the years between 1881 and 1910 took place under the supervision of Sultan Abdülhamid II (r. 1876-1909). Abdülhamid II’s focal point was religion. He believed in the idea of a legal autocracy founded on the Islamic principle of justice.\textsuperscript{108} The revival of Islamist-traditional consciousness in the Ottoman Empire was related to the disastrous territorial losses resulting from the catastrophic Russo-Turkish War. The majority of the Ottoman society had become Muslim, which urged Islamist-traditional thoughts. By re-emphasizing Islamic values, Abdülhamid II met also an emerging Muslim reaction to the cultural westernization generated by the reformations.\textsuperscript{109}

Abdülhamid II’s legacy is ambiguous and his reign has been the subject of great controversy. As Carter Vaughn Findley points out, Abdülhamid II is considered a ‘bloodthirsty tyrant who massacred rebellious subject peoples, suppressed constitutionalism, and instituted a regime of internal espionage and censorship that left no one secure’.\textsuperscript{110} Especially nineteenth-century Europeans saw Abdülhamid II as a bloodthirsty and reactionary Muslim tyrant. The Hamidean massacres of the Armenians between 1894 and 1896 were instrumental in forming this image.

The historians of the Turkish Republic, until the 1960s, also perceived him as ‘a reactionary, who for a generation halted the regeneration of the Empire’.\textsuperscript{111} Actually, paranoia and suspicion was an essential element in Abdülhamid II’s reign. His mistrust and his desire to master territory created an envirionment in which people with different positions were encouraged to report on the activities

\textsuperscript{107} Shaw, Possessors and Possessed, 99.
\textsuperscript{108} Şükrü Hanoğlu, A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire (Princeton 2008), 123.
\textsuperscript{109} Zürcher, Turkey. A Modern History, 79 -83; Findley, The Turks in World History, 162-165.
\textsuperscript{110} Findley, The Turks in World History, 164-166.
\textsuperscript{111} Zürcher, Turkey. A Modern History, 76-78; Hanoğlu, A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire, 123-130.
of others. Afraid of the Empire’s military forces, feeling insecure and constantly suspicious of his servants, Abdülhamid II became more and more hesitant to leave his palace. Actually, he never visited any other place outside Istanbul within the Empire, but rather used modern technology, such as photography, the railroad and the telegraph, to control the Empire. Hence, as earlier mentioned, in contrast with the Tanzimat era, during his reign the secretariat of the palace became the most ‘dreaded power centre’ of the Empire, whereas the Sublime Porte, the Grand Vizier’s headquarters, became a remote place.\footnote{Findley, The Turks in World History, 164-166.}

However, modern historians of Turkey, such as Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, emphasize the way in which Abdülhamid II’s reign marked a continuation, or even culmination, of the Tanzimat and the benefits it brought to the Empire and its population.\footnote{Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, 2, Reform, Revolution, and the Republic: The rise of Modern Turkey 1808-1975 (Cambridge 1977); Zürcher, Turkey. A Modern History, 76-78; See also: Şükrü Hanioğlu, A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire (Princeton 2008) 123-130.} Indeed, Abdülhamid II’s rule extended the programmes of the Tanzimat era in many aspects. Technological reforms continued and many Ottoman students went to Europe for training. He emphasized the Muslim, therefore the non-western aspects of the Empire, but on the other hand he also attempted to modernize the army, civil service, and the educational system along European lines.\footnote{Quataert, ‘The Age of Reforms, 1812-1914’, 766.}

Sultan Abdülhamid II has now and again been charged with having no interest in classical artefacts whatsoever.\footnote{Marchand, Down from Olympus, 201 and Shaw, Possessors and Possessed, 120-122.} A considerably understaffed antiquities administration, consisting of a few trained officials only, might well be seen as a result of the lack of explicit royal support for the antiquities management during the Hamidean era. Abdülhamid II frequently exchanged antiquities for western support or used them as gifts in order to mark ties of friendship with European countries such as the German Empire or Austria. As Turkish-German economic, diplomatic and military ties strengthened from the 1880s onwards, Germany in particular benefited richly from Abdülhamid II’s exceptions and his tolerant
attitude towards granting profitable permits (fig. 7). Abdülhamid II, indeed, handed out classical artefacts for political gain, but on the other hand, the antiquities regulation of 1884, which was much stricter than the previous regulation of 1874, was put into force during his reign. Moreover, the antiquities section of Abdülhamid II’s photography albums demonstrates rather a substantial interest in archaeology. His pictures of archaeological sites are exceptionally detailed and show not only overviews of entire settlements, but also individual buildings and details. In a certain way these photographs are visual reports of the archaeological research carried out at the sites. Photographs of responsible Ottoman figures and local workers at the sites and pictures of the removal of valuable antiquities, on the other hand, emphasized the Ottoman interest, but even more their participation in the archaeological activity.

Although the museum developed in a period in which the Islamic identity of the state was underlined, instead of ‘creating an easily acceptable cultural backdrop for the empire’, the museum, constituted largely of Helleno-Byzantine objects, linked chiefly ‘non-Islamic histories with Ottoman lands and national patrimony’. Because of the focus on Graeco-Roman archaeology, the Islamic arts sections of the Imperial Museum received no explicit importance during Abdülhamid II’s reign and Osman Hamdi’s directorship. Despite a state directive identifying the Islamic arts section as one of the six principal organizational units of the museum in 1889, Islamic antiquities only gained prominence after the Young Turk Revolution of 1908-1910 and the succession of Osman Hamdi’s brother Halil Eldem as director of the Imperial Museum in 1910.
Figure 1
Exposure of the imperial antiquities collection in the Tiled Pavilion in the second half of the 1870s (Cezar, 1995).

Figure 2
Bosporus waterfront mansions in Yeni Köy, Istanbul (Gravure, unknown, nineteenth century) (Duran, 1998).
Figure 3
*Kâmus-i Türki* (Istanbul 1318: 1900/1901) by Şemseddin Sami who is considered to be one of the most important Ottoman Language reformers of Turkish history. *Kâmus-i Türki* is a modern Turkish dictionary in which Arabic and Persian words in Ottoman written language are replaced by archaic Turkish terms. *Kâmus-i Türki* is still used in the Turkish Republic.
Figure 4
Osman Hamdi Bey (1842-1910), director of the Imperial Museum in Istanbul (Cezar, 1995).

Figure 5
Osman Hamdi during excavations at Nemrut Dağı on behalf of the Imperial Museum in 1883 (Cezar, 1995).
Figure 6
School of Fine Arts (Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi) in Istanbul, established in 1882 (photo 1927) (Şerifoğlu, 2013).
Turkish-German economic, military and diplomatic ties strengthened from the 1880s onwards. This resulted in a tolerant attitude towards German archaeological activities in the Ottoman empire and profitable permits. On the left: Sultan Abdülhamid II (1842-1918), on the right: Kaiser Wilhelm II (1859-1941) (L’Illustration, 22 October 1898).