

Scraping the layers: Tahsin Öz and his stylistic restorations in Topkapı Palace Museum

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Received: January 2018 • Final Acceptance: September 2018

Abstract

State-led heritage conservation was first experienced in Tanzimat Period in Ottoman Empire. State continued being the major custodian of cultural heritage throughout the 1950s. The general approach towards conservation of these early years was the maintenance of symbolic buildings that had been regarded as monuments. Yet, we can speak of a selective ideal of determining which monument to conserve and which period to exhibit.

Starting his career as the chief accountant and later the deputy director of the Museum of Antiquities, Tahsin Öz was among the people who dominated the field of heritage preservation in the early Republican years. He acted throughout his life as an influential figure in decision making processes of heritage conservation. As one of the most important roles in his career, Öz was appointed as the director of Topkapı Palace Museum, which became a museum in 1924 with the approval of the young parliament. Although much neglected and in need of urgent repair, the buildings of the palace were still witnesses of the 19th century Ottoman taste. Until 1953, he was responsible and in charge of some rather ambitious restorations, which favored to erase the traces of one period and return back to a specific one.

This paper aims to introduce the controversial approaches of Öz in Topkapı Palace Museum with an overview of what he realized and wrote, and focus simultaneously on the atmosphere of preservation in Turkey until 1950s with voices of intellectuals and professionals supporting or disagreeing his decisions.

Keywords

Tahsin Öz, Topkapı Palace Museum, Viollet le-Duc, Restoration.



doi: 10.5505/ituja.2018.41033

1. Introduction

By the 19th century, approaches to historic monuments by Eugène Viollet-le-Duc in France and Sir George Gilbert Scott in England challenged the idea of architectural conservation in Europe. For these architects, restoration of monuments used to mean the completion and recreation of a building according to its most significant period, using analogy and historical research. These monuments then became 'frozen illustrations of particular moments' in one nation's history (Jokilehto, 1999, 7). The restorations they had undertaken were mostly shaped by their particular desire of creating an imagined aesthetic unity and generally disregarded the buildings' history and development over time. Today they are considered as subjective interventions by conservation experts, which caused the loss of the authentic material of the monument.

In England A. W. N. Pugin, John Ruskin and William Morris opposed to Scott's church restorations which favored to return the monument to a specific time of its history and scrape off the later historic stratification and additions it had put on as it evolved through time. Dehio (1905), another leading personality for anti-restoration movement in Germany wrote in the early years of 20th century:

The Historicism of the 19th century has- as well as its genuine daughter, Conservation- fathered an illegitimate child, Restoration. They are often confused but they are diametrically opposed. Conservation strives to preserve existing things, restoration aims to recreate nonexistent things. The difference is striking. On the one hand sits reality, reduced and faded, but always real- on the other sits fiction (Huse, 1996, 141).

The conservation theory which has developed after the WWI, is based on this conservationist approach which had developed as a reaction to the ongoing restorations in Europe and aimed at the preservation of historic stratification and avoided falsification. Athens Charter, as an outcome of Athens Conference held in 1931 is the first international document outlining modern conservation policy. It discouraged stylistic restorations in

favour of conservation and repair (Orbaşlı, 2008, 21).

Although conservation theory has adopted the conservationist approach as the main path to follow, in practice many others who have been occupied with the restoration of monuments followed the footsteps of Viollet le-Duc and proposals to rebuild historic buildings or to restore them with additions that may have been used at the time when they were built, continue to be proposed. When it is at stake to restore historic buildings, it is not hard to say that architectural conservation as a practice has never truly abandoned stylistic unity approach.

Tahsin Öz in Turkey, an influential figure in conservation history is among these 'others', who like Viollet le-Duc, preferred to see historic buildings at a specific time of their lives. He guided the extensive restorations of 1940's at the Topkapı Palace Museum where he acted as the director. In order to evaluate his contributions and his personal approach to conservation of monuments, one needs to have brief information on the period of Öz, in the scope of architectural conservation in Turkey.

2. Conservation of monumental heritage in Turkey throughout 1923-1950

State-led heritage conservation initially started to be institutionalized in Tanzimat Period (1839-1876) in Ottoman Empire and continued throughout the early Republican period without many changes. The general approach of these early years towards architectural conservation was the maintenance and safeguarding of symbolic historic buildings that had been regarded as monuments. During the foundation years of the Republic, the nation lacked enough economical sources in all fields and thus, there were also limited activities in the construction industry. The few conservation activities in the country generally aimed at saving the lives of symbolic buildings, such as mosques, inns or caravanserais in Anatolia. Only a small group of architects and technicians were commissioned in the restoration projects of these monumental buildings, some of which were

given new functions such as museums or state offices. Whilst founding a new state in the post-war period starting from 1920s, the focus was on the capital city, Ankara and surroundings, which carried undoubtedly new meanings for the nation building process. Bilsel (2011) suggests that İstanbul, as the former capital city of Ottoman Empire might have been intentionally deprived of public funds in the early republic years, in order to let the recent traces of the Imperial rule die away. On the other hand, no matter how scarce the resources had been, there was still a continuous activity for rescuing significant buildings from demolition. Decisions on how to preserve some of the most important monuments, like Hagia Sophia¹ or Topkapı Palace complex were discussed thoroughly and they were eventually given new functions as museums² (Coşkun, 2012; Açıkgöz, 2014).

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's telegram to İsmet İnönü from Konya during his Anatolia trip in March 1931 highlighted the issue of neglected monumental buildings in the country which needed urgent care. The telegram can be considered as a warning for the dilapidated state of architectural heritage in central Anatolia. With the motivation derived from the telegram, a commission for the protection of historic buildings was immediately established. The commission published a report in 1933 which drew attention to issues like the need for a central institution managing the facilities related with the conservation of monuments and the significance of raising public awareness for protection of historic buildings (Madran, 2002).

The Turkish Republic had inherited 'a comprehensive legislative framework and some weak institutions' from the late-Ottoman period (Şahin Güçhan and Kurul, 2009). In İstanbul, the Commission for the Preservation of Antiquities (Muhafaza-i Asar-ı Atika Encümeni), established in 1915, was active for the decision making processes of the preservation of historic monuments for a long while (Madran 2002; Güçhan Şahin & Kurul, 2009). The commission was ratified by the republican government in 1925 and with its founding members, Kemalettin Bey, Halil Edhem (Eldem), and Celâl Esad

(Arseven), maintained their positions, it acted as the main advisory body on preservation in İstanbul (Altınyıldız, 2007, 287). The first official governmental institution of the Republic which deals with issues of preservation of historic buildings throughout the country was established much later, in 1951 and undertook the duties of this Commission. The mission of the *High Council for Historic Real Estate and Monuments* (Gayrimenkul Eski Eserler ve Anıtlar Yüksek Kurulu) was to determine the principles of protection, repair and restoration of architectural and historical monuments in the country and organize the programs related with these principles. The Council primarily acted as the chief supervisor on the realization of these principles. It commented on complex issues and solved conflicts related with historic monuments while providing scientific assessment in the decision making process.

In 1943, Ali Saim Ülgen, an experienced state-architect who worked on restoration of historic buildings published the first book in Turkey on the topic of conservation of monuments. 'Anıtların Korunması ve Onarılması I' ('The Conservation and Repair of Monuments I') reflected Ülgen's knowledge and experiences he gained during his apprenticeship in France at the beginning of his career and at the times he worked in state institutions responsible of various restorations of mainly monumental buildings (Ülgen, 1943). Introduced by a short text by Albert Gabriel, the book had a introduction section on the history of architectural conservation in Europe and gave information on some general concepts of conservation of historic buildings. In his bibliography, Ülgen included the proceedings book of Athens Conference, which involved the current discussions on the theory of architectural conservation. In his book, it is clear that Ülgen respected the existing identity of a monument and he simply suggested consolidation when there was shortage of evidences on the building. He also preferred truth in materials, in other words, to show the additions and new materials at the restorations (Binn, 2001, 109-117).

¹Shaw (2007) sees the conversion of the Empire's most important ceremonial mosque, Hagia Sophia into a museum in 1934-35 as an act of 'memorializing the Ottoman political power manifested in the conquest of the Byzantine Empire and at the same time secularizing it.'

²Giving historic buildings new function as museums was a preference that the state favored in the early years of the Republic, while this allowed the state to select and easily visualize a particular past, construct an identity out of it and then represent it to its people. This also helped clear off all the other (perhaps contested?) narratives these buildings used to house. Shaw (2003) argues that this helps reflect the perception of the past in the modern era, when museums as institutions became more established and expanded.

During the time when Ülgen published his book, Tahsin Öz was occupied with extensive restorations at the Topkapi Palace Museum and from his general attitude towards historic buildings it can be suggested that either Öz hadn't read Ülgen's book or that he didn't take it seriously as a guide throughout the restorations he had undertaken at the museum.

3. Topkapi Palace, from the imperial palace to a museum

Topkapi Palace had been the home for Sultans; an educational institution of the Empire and a administrative and judicial centre for the Empire. Its structural skeleton embodied an Ottoman language of imperial power housing both government offices and the monarch's household (Mansel, 1995). Having moved out from the Old Palace in Beyazıt, the Ottoman dynasty started residing in Topkapi Palace (a name given to the complex in 19th century) in 16th century. Throughout its settlement during almost 400 years and the population of palace inhabitants growing larger, there was a demand for new buildings which eventually gave the current appearance to the palace. Buildings loosely grouped around courtyards had been built side by side with others which were used as residential buildings. From archival resources³, it is known that some of the initial structures had been swept away due to inevitable disasters like fires or earthquakes and some had been heavily renovated with the taste of a new era (And, 2011, 100). However, the palace complex still embodies a uniquely Ottoman imperial tradition invented in the 15th century and consolidated in the 16th (Necipoğlu, 1992). On the other hand, each sultan including Abdulmecid I, who moved to Dolmabahçe Palace and abandoned Topkapi, ordered new additions and repairs for the dilapidated parts of the complex⁴. Today it is easy to recognize different tendencies in decoration and architecture which had been applied to the same buildings throughout their lives.

Sultan Abdülmecid I's decision to move to Dolmabahçe Palace in the midst of 19th century was the start of a

new era for the Topkapi Palace. Since then, the Imperial Palace was no longer a place of residence for the sultan and his family and consequently evolved into a ceremonial area, then towards the beginning of 20th century, to a visitor centre mostly for the highly respectable foreign visitors of the Empire. During these years the complex was not looked after as well as it deserved and many buildings in the complex were in need of urgent care and repair. As Altınyıldız (2007) stated, towards the end of 19th century, the demise of the Empire had also a direct impact on Istanbul's monuments, particularly transforming them into dilapidated and dysfunctional buildings.

Tahsin Öz (1991) described the palace he personally witnessed in 1920s as being "neglected for a long time and dilapidated"⁵ and gave a detailed observation:

"During the time when the Republic was being constituted, ... Imperial Council (Kubbealtı) was in a rotten state, with its plaster, crumbling into pieces, due to the long period of dereliction. Because of the frowzy smell inside, it was not easy to enter in. The kitchen rooms were all filthy and messy, having been abandoned for long years without a proper lead roof cover over their domes. The roof of the Enderun School leaked and its cellars were packed with piles of worn-out stuff. ..the roof cover of Ağalar Mosque no longer existed, while the interior was full of rubble and dirt. Even from the dome of the Baghdad Pavillion, which used to be one of the most cared and beloved places in the palace, water leaked inside. Not to mention the Harem, all deserted, where there used to be rooms of great importance with windows having neither frames, nor glass".

Eldem also noted that the palace remained the same as it was in 1908. He described the palace he had seen in 1920's as a place full of valuable treasures piled on top of one another. Like Öz, Eldem also notes that many parts of the palace lost their unity and were falling apart and uses photographs taken in 1937 to demonstrate the "before" images in his discussion (Eldem and Akozan, 1982; Shaw, 2007).

Önder (1990) states that having visited and witnessed the neglected state

³Also the well-known miniature painting from early 16th century, *Hünernâme* depicts the buildings and the ceremonies performed in/ around these buildings.

⁴Tamer (1986, 139) who took responsibility at Topkapi Palace restorations many times at different periods of her career, mentions in her article that these repairs often neglected the authentic materials and didn't respect previous periods. She writes she witnessed many at different parts of the palace rooms or furniture with rich decorated surfaces merely covered by limewash or plain paint which were traces of these late 19th century restorations.

⁵The other historic buildings in the city had similarities with Topkapi Palace complex buildings as a whole. Sedat Hakkı Eldem (1908-88), a prominent Turkish architect and one of the members of the Council for the Preservation of Monuments, described Istanbul between 1925 and 1930 as "vacated neighborhoods, but [with] houses, mansions, and seaside residences still standing as if living their final days" (Altınyıldız, 2007).

⁶Many parts of the palace remained closed until after renovations undertaken between 1939 and 1942 (Shaw, 2007).

⁷The preservation board declared in a report dating 1935 that Topkapı Palace complex, a museum at that time, like Fatih, Süleymaniye and Şehzade Complexes was about to collapse due to neglect (Altınyıldız, 2007, 290).

⁸At those days, the palace was officially part of the administration of the Archaeology Museum, but it was 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 (Shaw, 2007).

⁹Halil Edhem, Osman Hamdi Bey's younger brother, was an influential Ottoman intellectual in the fields of history, art, archaeology, architecture, and preservation. He had replaced his brother Osman Hamdi Bey as the director of Müze-i Hümayun, the Imperial Museum, in 1910 and held this post for 21 years, which also allowed him to be responsible for the supervision of monument preservation in the Empire. He had proposed the constitution of the Council for the Preservation of Monuments in 1915, as a consultative body to the imperial museum. He presided over the conversion of the Topkapı Palace into a museum in 1924 as well as its ensuing restoration (Altınyıldız, 2007).



Figure 1. Tahsin Öz with his wife (Yücel, 2009).

of the complex, it was Mustafa Kemal Atatürk who thought that opening the palace complex to visitors as a museum would be a convenient solution to rescue the buildings with their imperial belongings inside. He shared his idea with İsmet İnönü and Vasıf Çınar, the former minister of Education and following a very short period after the declaration of the Turkish Republic in 1923, the palace complex was designated to a museum with the full approval of the former parliament. Following the initial administrative work and basic repairs, a small part of the palace was opened to public visits on 9th October 1924 (Karahasan, 2005, 33)⁶. Some scholars'd rather interpret this fact as a symbolic act "seeking to relegate the recently demised Ottoman Empire into a distant past, and terminate its contemporary political relevance" (Shaw, 2007 and Açıkgöz, 2014). Shaw (2007) describes Turkish Republic at early times of the republic as "a highly centralized nation with highly ideological narratives of national cohesion". In this regard, the program selected for Republic's emerging museums also considered what was worthy of being told to visitors and had a consistency with national ideology of the period. Topkapı Palace Museum would definitely try to reflect a past that supported unity and the glorious history of the Turks, rather than the years of decline.

The initial restorations of the palace were noted in different sources. One of the first ones, which was a structural consolidation, was conducted in 1925 at Ağalar Mosque and was documented with an inscription on its masonry entrance wall. Later in Ülgen's publication, a tower in Topkapı Palace was included in a list of monuments that had been restored. The tower which had been restored in 1933 is likely to be the Tower of Justice. In the same list Baghdad Pavillion was listed as restored in 1935 and the Imperial Kitchens in 1936 (Ülgen, 1943)⁷.

4. Tahsin Öz, an influential figure in the history of Topkapı Palace Museum

Tahsin Öz (Figure 1) was born in 1887 in Hakkari, a small city at the northern border of Turkey, due to his father's occupation, who was a judge in Ottoman Empire. He studied law at Istanbul University, but didn't fully accomplish his studies. At the age of 20, he became an accountant at Asar-ı Atika Museums (the Museum of Ancient Artifacts). He started his personal researches on Turkish-Islamic monuments around this time. In 1923 he became the deputy director to Museum of Antiquities/the Imperial Museum in Istanbul and in 1928, one year before Refik Bey, the traditional keeper of the palace⁸ who had become the first director of the museum, retired, Öz was appointed to the position of Topkapı Palace Museum director which he continued until his retirement in 1953 (Yücel, 2009). Halil Edhem⁹, the director of the Imperial Museum was the person who engaged him to this post and his future career in museum management. Another important figure in Turkish history with whom Öz was acquainted, was Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Önder (1997) notes that from time to time Atatürk consulted Tahsin Öz on issues related with museums and cultural assets. He noted that Atatürk told Öz how much he had been effected by Pergamon Museum on his visit to Berlin at the end of 1917 with Vahdettin, who had been a heir to the throne in those days. This indicates Atatürk's special interest on museums as part of the cultural life of a nation which he apparently had

on the days when he was a young and bright military officer serving the Empire and accompanying its future ruler.

Tahsin Öz was undoubtedly one of the most influential actors of state led architectural conservation in Turkey. His holding the post of the director of Topkapı Palace Museum made him a natural member to the emerging advisory committees that reflected the national conservation approach towards historic monuments at different periods. He was among the members of Istanbul Commission of Preservation of Ancient Buildings, as well as the commission¹⁰ which had been responsible of the decisions for the restorations of Hagia Sophia in 1930s (Akan, 2008, p. 36). Later in 1942-43, when Yeşil Türbe (Tomb) in Bursa was decided to be restored, Öz acted as the head of the advisory council, which consisted of Nihat Nigizberk, Sedat Çetintaş and Zühtü Başar. The restoration which was undertaken by Macit Kural (Kural, 1941) and has later been subject to praises (Akın, 2006, p. 10) had been approved by this council.

It is known that Tahsin Öz undertook later some of the restorations and management of Sultan tombs in Istanbul, as well.

He was a member of different institutions, such as Turkish History Institution, ICOM, Unesco Museology Branch and lectured at the History of Art Department in Istanbul University and for a short period he taught at English Highschool for Girls in Beyoğlu. After his retirement, Öz continued his career in the Directorate of Pious Foundations in Istanbul.

Tahsin Öz (1949), who wrote articles generally on buildings of Turkish-Islamic art in journals such as Vakıflar Dergisi (Journal of Pious Foundations), Yedigün, Güzel Sanatlar Mecmuası (Journal of Fine Arts), Türk Tarih Vesikaları also wrote a detailed, 70 page long article in *Güzel Sanatlar* on the restorations conducted in Topkapı Palace Museum starting from 1940's, when he was the director of the museum.

One of the most important responsibilities in Öz's career was being involved in the High Council for Historic Real Estate and Monument (Gayrimenkul



Figure 2. Topkapı Palace in 1940's, picture from Tahsin Öz's article dating 1949 (Öz, 1949).

Eski Eserler ve Anıtlar Yüksek Kurulu) as a committee member.

In 1951 Tahsin Öz was appointed as one of the first committee members of the *High Council for Historic Real Estate and Monuments* (GEEAYK) and 5 years later in 1956, he became the head of the council. He continued this position until 1969¹¹. This period, when he was the head of the council, marked the controversial urban transformations conducted by Istanbul Municipality and the prime minister, Adnan Menderes himself. The council was criticized heavily by the intellectuals of the time for not intervening on time to prevent the loss of the urban fabric of the historic core of Istanbul caused by the urban transformation project implemented between 1954-1958 (Ünsal, 1960; Eyice, 1993, p. 197).

5. Tahsin Öz's restorations at the Topkapı Palace Museum

In 1939, the Topkapı Palace Museum Administration decided to close its doors to visitors to start the extensive restoration works at different parts of the museum. During 4 years, between 1940-44, most of the dilapidated buildings of the palace were restored, with a comparably high budget derived from the government. These restorations marked the first restorations undertaken at the museum complex after the palace had been converted into a museum. Although there were no project drawings developed for the restorations, an advisory body consisting of experts (all architects: Sedat Çetintaş, Ali Saim Ülgen, Nihat Nigizberk, Arif Hikmet Holtay and Sedat Hakkı Eldem) had been asked to give their remarks on the potential

¹⁰ Aziz Ogan was the head of this commission (Arkan, 2008).

¹¹ Tahsin Öz remained a member in the Council until 1973.

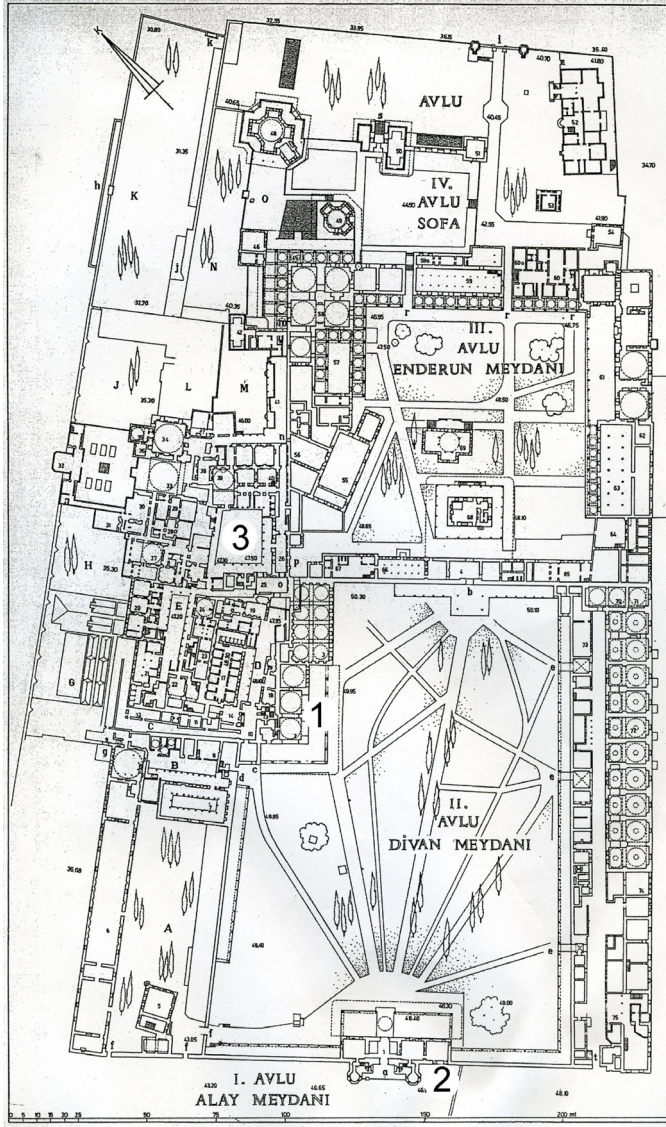


Figure 3. Topkapı Palace Complex general siteplan, the selected restorations are numbered (Eldem and Akozan, 1982).

restorations of some of the buildings in the museum (the Tiled Kiosk, Fatih Pavillion, the Council Chamber and the Middle Gate) (Öz, 1949, 11, p. 14; Eldem ve Akozan, 1982, p. 96; Altınyıldız, 1997).

Later in 1949, in his long article Tahsin Öz described the decisions they made during the restoration process liberating the buildings from additions “stuck on during the period of decline” (Shaw, 2007) (Figure 2). Admitting that there had been shortcomings during the restorations because of the inexperienced restoration crew, he expressed his thoughts for the restorations as:

“Although the dynasty neglected its own home, Topkapı Palace, Turkish Republic gave it a new life with the attention it nourished for art” (Öz, 1949, 17).

Tahsin Öz (1946, 17) also stated that “these repairs helped not only save the lives of the buildings, but also return back the full architectural character of these buildings by removing plaster on top of the tiles, liberating decoration under the limewash and unveiling the doors, windows and fireplaces behind the additions”. These are words to indicate that while consolidation works were the primary goal, there was special effort to return the buildings to the day they were built. After the restorations Selahattin Kandemir, an archaeologist who published a book in 1935 entitled “Tarihi Eserleri Araştırma ve Koruma Kılavuzu” (A guidebook for the Investigation and Preservation of Ancient Monuments) wrote a critique in 1949 in the *TTOK Bulletin* and blamed the Commission for the Preservation of Antiquities for the wrong implementations that had taken place in the museum.

Kandemir was not the only person to criticize the restorations in 1940’s. The controversial decisions taken primarily by Tahsin Öz, as he was the museum director, has long been a debate of discussion.

In this point, some of these restorations will be studied in detail to discuss the level of intervention in general (Figure 3).

5.1. Kubbealtı (High cupola)- Divan (The council hall)

The building that used to house Imperial Divan (*the Council Hall*) of the palace is located on the left of the second courtyard next to the Treasury of Mehmed II. It was built in 16th century. This was the chamber where the Grand Vizier and other viziers debated regularly (four times a week) on policy and decided law-suits (Figure 4).

In the early periods, also the Sultan used to be present in the Divan together with his viziers. However, due to security reasons this tradition gradually changed over time and the Sultan started attending the Divan behind a curtain, sitting in an alcove which overlooked the council room. The alcove was covered with a curtain intentionally, so the viziers wouldn’t be sure whether the Sultan was behind it listening the issues being discussed, or not

(Mansel, 1995). It was a place of interest for the foreign visitors. Early in 19th century, Antoine-Ignace Melling, who was commissioned by Hatice Sultan and came to Constantinople, depicted the Council of State in his engraving of the second courtyard (Figure 5).

The High Cupola (Kubbealti) was the main room for the meetings of viziers. Divan (the council hall) had 3 rooms attached to each other. In front of these 3 rooms, there is a portico covered by large eaves which are carried by 11 columns. Öz (1946) describes the High Cupola of 1920's when the palace was converted into a museum as being in such a neglected state that it had almost been impossible to enter in (Figure 6).

During the restorations in Tahsin Öz's period in 1940's, there was quite a lot of intervention applied to the decoration of the room. The plaster on the interior walls had been scraped and samples of rococo style decoration and underneath the rococo decoration, 16th century style classical decorations had been discovered. It was then decided to remove all the rococo decoration and return back to the early period inside the first room which is located on the corner. The rococo style wooden panel placed on the centre of the dome was removed and carried to the dome of the next room. The porphyry panels on the walls were also removed and placed inside the next room. Classical Iznik tiles were preferred for the empty surfaces where the porphyry panels used to stand. The latticework covering the alcove of the Sultan was taken off and replaced by a ironwrought railing, typical for 16th century. Öz didn't refer to any archival document for these decisions, however D'Ohhson's picture (*Tableau general de l'Empire othoman*) depicts a feast featured both of these decorative elements, the ironwrought railing and the tiles (Figure 7). It is possible that Öz took his references from this picture. Another element which is seen in D'Ohhson's picture is the marble door frame between these two rooms. In Tahsin Öz's restorations a door frame, which is thought to have belonged to Arz Odasi was carried and placed between the rooms, probably to reinstate a similar appearance as the



Figure 4. Divan, the current state (Coşkun, 2011).

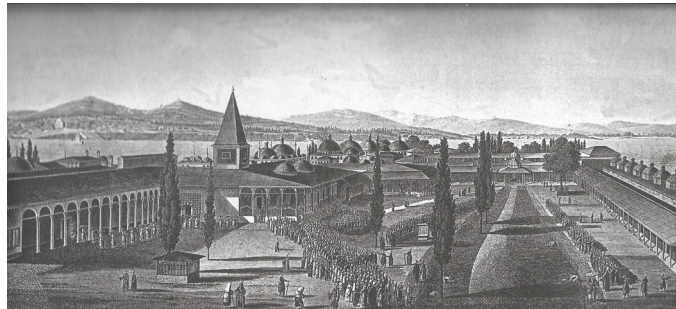


Figure 5. The second courtyard depicted in Melling's picture (Özgencil Yıldırım, 2008).

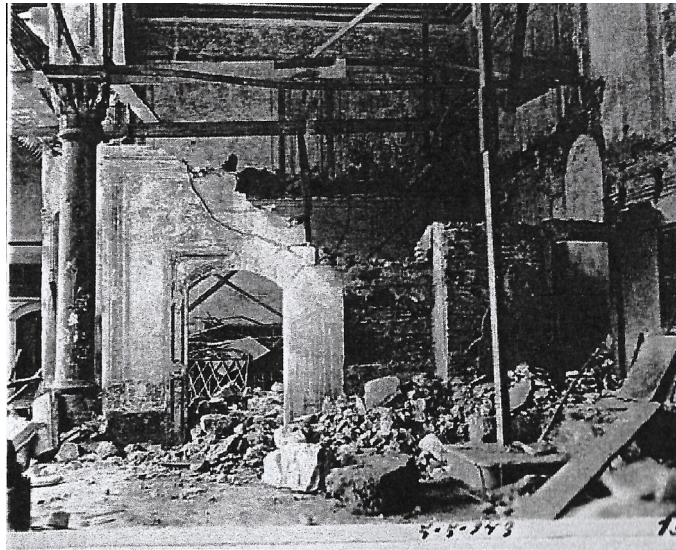


Figure 6. The Council Chamber before Tahsin Öz period interventions (Karahasan, 2005).

one in D'Ohhson's picture (Necipoğlu, 1992; Karahasan, 2005). Today these decisions can only be interpreted as imaginary reconstructions of the past.

Eldem, who had been a member of the advisory group during the restorations explained later (in 1982) that he could not share in the decisions made by the Museum concerning the Council Chamber (Shaw, 2007).



Figure 7. D'Ohhson's picture depicting a feast in Divanhane (the Council Chamber), (*Tableau général de l'Empire othomanîdan aktaran Necipoğlu, 1992, 94*).



Figure 8. The middle gate, today (Coşkun, 2011).



Figure 9. Babüsselam, before 1942 restoration (Başgelen, 2006, 43).



Figure 10. The baroque decorations which were scraped off the masonry walls on both sides of the gate (Karahasan, 2005, 56).

5. 2. The Bab-üs Selam (The gate off salutation / The middle gate)

The stone gate to the second court from the first court had been the main entry to the palace and today serves as the main entrance of the museum for the visitors (Figure 8).

It admits to the second court, a gathering place for courtiers and a place surrounded by a series of low, arcaded, wide-eaved buildings (Mansel, 1995). The gate was initially constructed in Mehmed II's period and since then had been through some alterations. Architect Vedad Bey was commissioned for the first restoration of the gate in 1916. During this restoration new windows had been added to the facade overlooking the second court in order to hinder the humidity of the rooms of the gate keepers (*kapı ağaları*) (Karahasan, 2005). One of the major decisions of the restoration during 1941-1944, conducted by Tahsin Öz was changing the form of the conical roofs of the octagonal towers rising on both sides of the entrance gate (Figure 9) which drastically transformed the appearance of the gate. After the restoration the gate resembled the depiction in Grelot's 1680 dated engraving. Although Öz (1949) mentioned in his article to have consulted some archival documents, he didn't refer to a specific source which had inspired him to take this decision. During the restoration, decoration on the portico walls facing the 2nd courtyard which was dating to the late Ottoman period were cleared off, as well as the ones on the fringes of the vaults which faced the 1st courtyard. The rococo style ceiling above the passageway was also removed. The roof and its wide eaves needed a thorough structural consolidation and when this was being implemented some decoration dating to earlier periods were discovered. This led to the scraping late period landscape depictions off the portico walls and the baroque decorations off the masonry walls on both sides of the gate (Figure 10). The 18th century decoration discovered was finally reproduced on the facades. Öz (1949), later mentioned the decorations that had been scraped off the facades as "artifacts of voluptuous acts dating to the the late period of the

Empire". These words reveal Öz's preferences very clearly which affected the whole decision making process for the restorations in the museum in 1940's.

5.3. The quarters and the court of the Queen Mother (Valide) in Harem

The palace was the residence of the Sultan and his household and the Harem section of the palace consisted of a labyrinth of rooms, passages and courtyards. Queen Mother's quarters are the most imposing of the Harem after the Sultan's quarters. Queen Mother (Valide), the Queen Mother, enjoyed a majestic suite of bathroom, prayer room, throne hall, dining room and bedroom. Her quarters were easily accessible to all quarters of the Harem (Figure 11). The Valide apartments were rebuilt after the second fire in about 1667. In the 18th century other royal rooms were added to this area. Although the court of the Valide is known to be dating from several different periods, there are still traces of the works of the early period when Harem was first built (Goodwin, 1972), which can also be examined in the drawings of Eldem ve Akozan (1982), the scholars who studied the court's spatial development in detail.

In the restoration dating approximately 1942, the large eaves of the courtyard and the decoration on the facades of the buildings facing the courtyard were removed (Figure 12, 13). The masonry walls around the Golden Path were stripped off their plaster and exhibited bare, unplastered. The late spatial additions consisting of rooms above the ground level carried by the wrought iron tie rods were demolished. The tiles which were placed irregularly on the facades were replaced by reproduced tiles with similar patterns. Having been stripped off the tiles and decoration resembling Iznik tiles, the Valide Bath's facade was also left plastered, without any decoration (Karahasan, 2005).

Extensive repairs for the facade of Valide apartments were also undertaken the same year. The wooden coating on the masonry walls were removed and the tiles underneath were repaired. The fireplace discovered on the niché was reconstructed¹². It is



Figure 10. The baroque decorations which were scraped off the masonry walls on both sides of the gate (Karahasan, 2005, 56).



Figure 11. The Valide Courtyard, today (Coşkun, 2011).



Figure 12. 1942 restoration in charge of Ekrem Hakkı Ayverdi (Atay, 2016).



Figure 13. . The eaves on the facades of the courtyard were removed during Tahsin Öz interventions (Anhegger-Eyüboğlu, 1986).

clear that the repairs fundamentally aimed to bring back the first phase of the courtyard and the apartments and present the history of a selected, in other words 'preferred' period of time by Tahsin Öz.

¹²Shaw (2007) states that the 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 creating a visually confusing mix of decorative features.

6. Conclusion

Most of restorations during 1940-44, which Öz had personally undertaken involved consolidations as an intervention method, structural and/or material consolidation. These aimed primarily rescuing the buildings in the palace from their poor structural state. However, scraping off the later additions on the walls, especially the decoration of late period, to reproduce an earlier period was another method which was much favoured in the restorations. Some reconstructions undertaken during the restorations ignored the authentic material and craftsmanship. Shaw (2007) stated that the restoration of parts of the Ottoman Palace with little proven evidence during 1940's minimized the later historical layers dating to eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and introduced a rather anachronistic view of the palace. Looking at what has been conserved and what has been lost, it is clear to see the perception, understanding, interest and ambition which a person- whether architect, conservator or restorer - has approached an object. The presentation of the palace after 1940's restoration simply allows a single narrative to its audience; the glorious past of their ancestors throughout 16th century, what Tahsin Öz probably wanted to achieve.

Sedad Hakki Eldem highlighted what was lost during these extensive interventions: “most of these places he had mentioned had been cleaned, destroyed, and the essential cut-stone foundations and arches brought out. Those dizzying, layered perspectives reminiscent of Piranesi had disappeared” (Eldem and Akozan, 1982).

Yerasimos (1995) touched upon the same issue more generally stating that national history favoured a selective view and the nationalistic approach to cultural heritage thought that there was ‘good’ cultural heritage to be valued and ‘bad’ heritage to be looked down on and ignored. Cultural heritage is being exploited in seeking ways to justify certain periods of national history. Restorations undertaken during Tahsin Öz's period is just one example to Yerasimos' thesis.

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