Homer, Troy and the Turks

Published by Amsterdam University Press

Homer, Troy and the Turks: Heritage and Identity in the Late Ottoman Empire, 1870-1915.
Amsterdam University Press, 2017.
Project MUSE. muse.jhu.edu/book/66400.

For additional information about this book
https://muse.jhu.edu/book/66400
II Classical Antiquities and Ottoman Patrimony

The Muslim Elite and Their Involvement with Classical Civilization

Despite the massive internal and external political, social and economic problems that the Ottoman Empire faced in the 1870s, the government still strove to maintain a grip on Schliemann’s excavations. The Ottoman authorities refused to give him a free hand and kept tight control on Troy. By imposing strict terms on excavations and demanding prior rights to any Trojan artefacts found, they tried to strengthen and maintain their position in line with Ottoman ideas and aspirations regarding antiquities, museums and archaeology.

Aware of the value of antiquities and concerned for the preservation of Classical heritage, the Ottomans were increasingly keen to collect artefacts themselves. This led to an accelerated development of the Imperial Museum, so that Schliemann’s next archaeological venture in 1882 occurred in a period in which the Ottoman Empire had entered a new phase of museology and archaeology.

The appointment of Osman Hamdi Bey (1842-1910) as director in 1881 represented a decisive change for the Imperial Museum. For the first time a native-born Ottoman Turk held sway over the collection of the Imperial Museum. Indeed, it was mainly through Osman Hamdi’s efforts that the Ottoman Turks became increasingly involved in archaeological excavations based on scientific method, and that the museum developed from a small collection into an institution with empire-wide ambitions.\(^1\)

1 Antiquities and Museum: Interests and Conflicts

As the Imperial Museum collection expanded, the confined space of the artillery depot was no longer sufficient to contain the Ottoman collection of antiquities. By the mid-1870s, a new and larger museum was needed. The prestigious Tiled Pavilion – built in 1478 under Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror, the first building at Topkapı Palace – was selected as the new

\(^1\) Shaw, Possessors and Possessed, 92-98; Arık, Türk Müzeciliğine Bir Bakış, 1-4.
location for the antiquities collection, and soon work began on transforming this into a European-style museum. The early Ottoman architecture of the pavilion was adapted to make it look more like the neoclassical museums of the West (Fig. 20).²

A major effort was made to restore the Tiled Pavilion and transfer the collection in a responsible manner. A museum committee was established in 1877.³ This was charged with 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 As its mandate shows, the museum was to be a place for public presentations, its mission being to organize antiquities and to attract visitors. Turkish-American art historian Wendy M.K. Shaw explains that 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 reveals an understanding in Ottoman circles of the important role the museum played in defining the modern state. For the authorities the museum was ‘an essential institution of a civilized nation,’ ‘a school’ and moreover ‘the first place to visit for foreign dignitaries and travellers.’ From the correspondence it is clear that ‘it was the presence 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.”’⁶

The opening of the new museum on 16 August 1880 was well attended. Grand Vizier Cenani Mehmed Kadri Pasha (1832-1884) appeared, and the minister of public instruction, Mehmet Tahir Münif Pasha (1828-1910), delivered the opening address. As well as being a prominent Ottoman

---

² Shaw, ‘From Mausoleum to Museum,’ 430; Shaw, ‘Museums and Narratives of Display,’ 257; Shaw, Possessors and Possessed, 92.
³ Cezar, Sanatta Batıya Açılış ve Osman Hamdi, 251.
⁴ Su, Osman Hamdi Bey’e Kadard Türk Müzesi, 60-62; Cezar, Sanatta Batıya Açılış ve Osman Hamdi, 251; English version in Shaw, Possessors and Possessed, 92.
⁵ Shaw, Possessors and Possessed, 92-94.
⁶ IBA, 2348; (Dahiliye), 41355; (Sura-yi Devlet), 547; (Meclis-i Vala), 24685, in Ersoy, ‘A Sartorial Tribute to Late Ottomanism,’ 204n17.
statesman and reformer, Münif Pasha was a leading member of the literary and philosophical scene and a major figure in the nineteenth-century Turkish-Ottoman Enlightenment Movement. The salons in his mansion were instrumental in introducing Western ideas into the Empire.

Münif Pasha’s speech offers an insight into the way the ruling intellectual elite viewed museums, archaeology and antiquities. He noted that since museums presented ‘the level of civilization of past peoples and their step-by-step progress, […] from this, many historical, scientific and artistic benefits’ could be obtained. He emphasized the Ottoman interest in antiquities and voiced his concern about the European exclusion of the Ottomans from 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 Europeans will change their opinions about us.’

The Ottoman Empire and Europe: Conflicting Interests and Views
Münif Pasha’s speech shows how the Ottomans viewed museums as symbols of progress. The Empire was attempting to balance modernity with heritage. The Ottoman claim to antiquities linked them to a cultural heritage they ‘shared with Europe, thereby emphasizing the Empire’s modernity.’ The speech reflects a desire to present Ottoman progress to Europe and to persuade Europeans to respect them as equals and as participants in a contemporary culture of which collecting artefacts was a part. So it was not 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 served as a symbol of the Tanzimat.

8 Fuad, ‘Münif Paşa’; Mardin, The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought, 233; for bibliographical information on Münif Paşa, see: Budak, Münif Paşa.
9 Vakit, 11 Ramazan 1297 (17 August 1880); quoted in Cezar, Sanatta Batıya Açılış ve Osman Hanımı, 41; English translation in Shaw, Possessors and Possessed, 93–97.
10 Pictures of several museums in photography albums of Sultan Abdülhamid II illustrate this notion. Apart from the artefacts and the public, these photographs emphasized ‘the institution itself as a marker of progress,’ in Shaw, Possessors and Possessed, 144.
11 Çelik, ‘Defining Empire’s Patrimony,’ in Essays.
12 Shaw, Possessors and Possessed, 95, 156.
The cultural aspirations of the contemporary ruling elite focused primarily on presenting the Ottoman Empire as a modern state which valued and preserved its non-Islamic cultural legacy. Yet the Ottoman claim to antiquities was a complex issue. Münif Pasha complained that Europe treated the Empire unfairly, especially compared to its treatment of Greece. “Today,” he said, ‘if the Europeans spend vast sums to excavate in Greece, the finds are not taken to their countries but remain in Athens.” He believed the Ottoman government should follow a similar policy, which meant that Europe should respect the Ottomans as heirs to the cultures whose physical remains 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 inheritors of Ancient Greece, European nations believed that their role was 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.

Yet the Ottomans ruled over Eastern Europe, Anatolia and Arab territories as they had been doing over the last few centuries and these provincial areas had always acknowledged the Ottoman state and the fundamental legitimacy of their rule. Although there had been uprisings, the rebellious peoples had never sought to leave the Empire. Since the sultan’s position was beyond challenge, the Ottomans did not feel the need to justify their role as rulers or to claim the lands they had controlled for centuries. In the course of the nineteenth century, however, an economically, technically and

13 Ersoy, ‘A Sartorial Tribute to Late Ottomanism,’ 187-207, 188, 190.
14 Greece was one of the first countries in Europe to place its cultural heritage in a legal framework. The Greek antiquities law of 1834 – drafted by the German legal historian Georg Ludwig von Maurer and the architect Anton Weissenburg – forbade the export of antiquities. The law stated that ‘all antiquities within Greece, being works of the ancestors of the Greek peoples, are 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, encouraged by Schliemann’s illegal actions of 1873 (see Chapter 1 above), was mainly ignored and did not stop large-scale illegal expropriation of antiquities found in the Empire. For information on Greek legislation concerning antiquities, see: Petrakos, ‘Ta Prota Chronia Tis Ellinikis Archaeologies’; Petrakos, *Dokimio Gia tin Archaiologiki Nomothesi*; and Sakellariadi, ‘Archaeology and Museums in the Nation Building Process in Greece.’
militarily weakened Ottoman Empire faced a series of revolts by subject peoples who were inspired by the emerging nationalism and supported by the newly emerging nation-states of Western Europe. These nationalist movements among subject peoples of the Empire saw the Ottomans as ‘an imperial power that had imposed its governance on preceding peoples, usurping the land and the antiquities beneath.’ As these separatist ideas emerged, the local nationalists formed romantic visions of their historical past, which also involved laying an ideological claim to archaeological sites within their territories. In this new vision, Ottoman rule represented an ‘occupation’ of their land.

Europe’s sense of moral superiority legitimized the export of antiquities from Ottoman lands and political intervention in local affairs. Indeed, the activities of European archaeologists justified European claims on Ottoman territories. By discovering the Ancient ‘heritage of Ottoman territories and including these artefacts in museums that used them to write European narratives of progress, they made the Ottoman claim to the Empire’s territories appear spurious.

Meanwhile, the European desire to possess antiquities from Ottoman territories encouraged the Ottoman appropriation of Classical Antiquity. Collecting antiquities and ‘uniting them in the hierarchical, orderly world’ of their museum expressed the legitimate foundation of Ottoman rule over their empire while Europeans were ‘eagerly collecting trophies from recent colonial conquests.

Gradually the Ottomans became engaged in a struggle to incorporate the region’s past into their imperial identity. Finding an appropriate imperial image to balance modernity with heritage was therefore a high priority. As the nation-states of the West had done, the Ottoman ruling elite reformulated the imperial Ottoman ‘dynastic history along nationalist lines,’ and made a point ‘to situate and secure this history’ within ‘a universal history of civilization as it was defined by the West.

16 Quartaert, *The Ottoman Empire*, 55.
20 Shaw, *Possessors and Possessed*, 149.
21 Çelik, ‘Defining Empire’s Patrimony,’ in *Scramble for the Past*.
22 Ersoy, ‘A Sartorial Tribute to Late Ottomanism,’ 188, 190. For the nineteenth-century European tradition of linking Classical Antiquity with European civilization, see among others: Díaz-Andreu, *A World History of Nineteenth-Century Archaeology*. 
Inclusion or Exclusion
This Ottoman appropriation of Classical civilization took place at a time when European anti-Turkish sentiments were reaching new heights. Rooted in a highly romanticized Hellenism, Europeans rejected the Ottoman part in their universal history of civilization. Meanwhile, by embracing the multiple layers of history in their empire, the Ottomans denied this cultural distance from Europe and so undermined these European assumptions.

This desire to be part of the narrative of civilization was clearly expressed in the Ottoman presentation at the Vienna International Exhibition in 1873 and in the accompanying scholarly publications: 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 Constantinopol (Vienna, 1873).

These publications were supplements to the ethnographic, architectural and archaeological exhibits in the Ottoman presentation. 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.

The exclusion of the Ottomans from the European version of the Classical narrative frustrated many Ottoman Muslim intellectuals such as Münif Pasha, who had been greatly inspired by Ancient culture. Münif Pasha had an impressive scholarly record. His correspondence with Heinrich Schliemann reveals an erudite and sophisticated bureaucrat with a deep passion for archaeology and antiquities. He appreciated the archaeological research at Troy, for instance, and recognized its exceptional importance for archaeology and for the Imperial Museum in particular, as he wrote to Schliemann: ‘Indeed, the entire scholarly world recognizes the enormous value of your work, the results of which are of undeniable significance to archaeology. The ministry shares this view and expresses its thanks and appreciation for your successful completion of the archaeological investigation.

---

23 Özdoğan, ‘Ideology and Archaeology in Turkey,’ 112.
25 Ersoy, ‘A Sartorial Tribute to Late Ottomanism,’ 190.
26 See Münif Pasha’s letters to Schliemann in the Schliemann Archive at Gennadius Library of the American School of Classical Studies in Athens: Letters received by Schliemann (B) include: 21 October 1878 (B 78/574); 21 January 1879, (B 79/52); 17 February 1879 (B 79/140); 3 April 1879 (B 79/249); 26 June 1879 (B 80/432).
at the ancient city of Troy for the benefit of scholarship in general and our museum in particular.'

**Ottoman versus Greek Claims**

Ottoman exclusion from Ancient heritage and contemporary Greek nationalist claims to be its sole proprietor placed Ottoman intellectuals in an undeniably complex position. This is illustrated in the writings of Ahmet Midhat Efendi (1844-1912), an immensely popular Ottoman writer and publisher in his day, fluent in French, Persian, Arabic and Ottoman Turkish and probably also Greek.

Midhat Efendi felt it essential to distinguish clearly between the Greeks of his own day and Ancient Greeks. He praised the Ancient Greeks, wrote articles on Greek philosophers and adopted Aesop’s fables in his novels, such as *Kissadan Hisse* (From tale to moral) in 1870. However, in his ‘History of Greece’ (1882), inspired by the then controversial ideas of Jacob Philipp Fallmerayer (1790-1861) regarding the origins of the Greeks, Midhat Efendi maintained that the inhabitants of modern Greece were of mixed origins, and had nothing in common with the Ancient Greeks.

He criticized modern Greek chauvinism, complaining ‘the fact that in language of sciences and art many terms are adopted from Ancient Greek makes 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 contemporary Greeks and Ancient Greeks made the exclusive Greek claim to Classical heritage appear spurious.

---

27 ‘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 bon fin les recherches archéologiques dans l’ancienne [sic] ville de Troie, pour le bien de la science en général et de notre Musée en particulier.’ Letter from Münif Pasha to Schliemann, 20 June 1879 (B 80/432).

28 A Turkish version of Aesop’s fables became available in Cyrillic script in 1851, see: Strauss, ‘Who Read What in the Ottoman Empire (19th-20th Centuries)?’, 49.

29 Fallmerayer in his ‘Vorrede’ to the *Geschichte der Halbinsel Morea während des Mittelalters*; see also: Leeb, *Jakob Philipp Fallmerayer*; and Veloudis, ‘Jakob Philipp Fallmerayer.’

Zeal for Civilization: Enlightened Ideas and Ideals in the Empire

It is hardly surprising that the cosmopolitan, well-educated Muslim subjects of the Empire felt aggrieved that their connection with antiquities which they perceived as the ‘valuable produce’ of their lands was being denied. For the Tanzimat, *sivilizasyon* and *sivilize* were essential principles. The powerful pro-Western statesman Mustafa Reşid Pasha (1800-1858), a key initiator and supporter of Tanzimat reforms, was convinced that ‘the salvation’ of the Empire lay in ‘the way of civilization.’

Westernization and Tanzimat modernization gave a new prominence to the connection with Ancient Greece, the study of Greek literature and civilization. Ottoman Muslims began increasingly to focus on the intellectual heritage of the Ancient world. Greek philosophy and culture gained a new status, while Greek language and civilization began to occupy a more prominent place in Ottoman Turkish intellectual life.

Ancient history and civilization became popular among the Muslim elite. Münif Pasha’s biographies of Ancient philosophers written in the 1860s, for instance, were widely read by Muslim intellectuals at the time.

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

---

31 IBA (Meclis-i Mahsus), 2348; (Dahiliye), 41355; (Sura-yi Devlet), 547; (Meclis-i Vala), 24685, in Ersoy, ‘A Sartorial Tribute to Late Ottomanism,’ 204n17.
Muhaverat-i Hikemiyye is generally considered the first translation of Western literature into Ottoman Turkish and instrumental in introducing the Ottomans to the ‘basic creeds of European Enlightenment’ in Turkish. The chosen dialogues addressed themes such as change, enlightened absolutism advanced by philosophers, patriotism, religious tolerance, philosophical rationalism, freedom of speech, the benefits of education of women and hard work as opposed to passivity. These eighteenth-century Enlightenment ideas about society suited the later progressive 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 in modernization and reform, change was the central theme of the Tanzimat.38

An institution which played a central role in the development of Ottoman intellectual activity was the Ottoman Scientific Society (Cemiyet-i Ilmiye-yi Osmaniye), founded by Münnif Pasha in 1860. The society’s deliberately secular government-subsidized programme – it admitted non-Muslims if they could speak Turkish, Arabic or Persian and knew at least one Western language (French, English, German, Italian or Modern Greek) – promoted scientific study by publishing books and organizing translations. The society provided teaching materials for a proposed university as well as sponsoring public lectures in natural science, geology, history and economics.40

Possibly an even more effective instrument for the spread of Western scientific thought and enlightened ideas in the Empire was the society’s journal, Mecmua-i Fünun (Journal of sciences), also founded by Münnif Pasha. This was the first Turkish scientific journal in the Empire to offer a wide range of translations and original writing. Published between 1862 and 1867, Mecmua-i Fünun introduced popularized European science to the Empire and ‘exerted a lasting influence on the generation that saw its first appearance.’41

39 Religion and politics were excluded; see the first issue of Mecmua-i Fünun, July 1862 (Muharrem 1279), 2-13.
40 The society offered a reading room, access to European newspapers, a library of 600 volumes and free instruction in French, English and Western jurisprudence. See: Belin, ‘De l’Instruction Publique,’ 230, in Mardin, The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought, 238.
In this respect, it may be relevant to note that since the 1850s French had become the lingua franca in which educated speakers from the Empire’s different linguistic communities communicated. Knowledge of Greek was also quite common in the Empire, particularly among non-Muslim Ottomans – although, the Muslim community was also accustomed to spoken Greek. Johann Strauss, an expert on Ottoman-Turkish history, emphasizes that a large number of Tanzimat intellectuals are thought to have known at least 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 Dardanelles province, appeared in both Greek and Ottoman Turkish in the second half of the nineteenth century.43 Indeed, the Greek letter from the governor of the Dardanelles, Mustafa Pasha, to Schliemann in 1882 confirms that Greek was not unknown to Ottoman officials. It shows that formal communication also took place in Greek.44 Münnif Pasha had presumably mastered Greek as well as French, German and English. In fact, his unpublished work ‘Greek Words in Turkish, Arabic and Persian’ demonstrates a profound interest in Greek.45

Significantly, Münnif Pasha’s academic accomplishments were not the exception. In the nineteenth century many of the Empire’s bureaucrats 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 also an eminent historian and sociologist. He played a major part in drawing up the Empire’s civil code (Mecelle). Similarly, a leading intellectual of the day, Ahmet Vefik Pasha (1823-1891), held top positions in the Ottoman political world, including the grand vizierate, minister of public instruction, and ambassador to Tehran and Paris. He translated plays by Molière, produced theatrical plays in the Western tradition and pioneered the first Western-style Ottoman theatre.46 He was in close contact with Istanbul’s Greek scene and was familiar with

44 Letter from Mustafa Pasha to Schliemann, 8 July 1882, Schliemann Archive, Gennadius Library, American School of Classical Studies, Athens, (BBB 431/89).
46 For biographical information, see: Inal, Osmanlı Devrinde Son Sadrazamlar 651-739; Mardin, The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought, 67, 209-211, 249, 261; Yıldız, ‘Adaptasyon Meselesi.’
the Greek language. His versions of Molière’s plays included many Greek words and in his Ottoman Turkish dictionary *Lehçe-i Osmani* (1879) he noted the Greek origins of Turkish words and specified these systematically.\(^{47}\)

In his historical and geographical works, however, he emphasized pure Turkish and Turkism. He is considered one of the founding fathers of the Pan-Turkish movement.\(^{48}\)

**Terceme-i Telemak**

Another example of a work by a civil servant with a scholarly reputation is the translation of Fénelon’s *Les Aventures de Téléméaque* into Ottoman Turkish by the prominent statesman and grand vizier (in 1863) Yusuf Kamil Pasha (1808-1876).\(^{49}\) *Les Aventures de Téléméaque* – based on the *Odyssey* – is a mythical account of the travels of Telemachus, son of Odysseus. François Fénelon (1651-1715) wrote this didactic work with moral advice for King Louis XIV’s grandson, the Duke of Burgundy, in preparation for his accession. The first translation of *Les Aventures de Téléméaque* into Ottoman Turkish was completed in 1859, although it was only printed three years later in 1862. In the period between its completion and its publication, *Terceme-i Telemak* formed an integral part of the reading material of the capital’s artistic and intellectual scene, circulating in manuscript form in Ottoman salons. These private literary and philosophical conversation groups would gather in the *yalıls* (Bosporus waterfront mansions) of the cultural and political elite.\(^{50}\)

*Terceme-i Telemak* was a huge success. The work was reprinted six months after its first publication in 1862, and again in 1867 and 1870.\(^{51}\) A second translation by another distinguished figure in the political and cultural arena, Ahmed Vefik Pasha (1823-1891), completed in 1869 and published in 1880, was also popular and was reprinted more than once.\(^{52}\)

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 egotism while emphasizing loyalty and brotherhood – was read in Ottoman schools and used in high school to teach prose

---


\(^{50}\) On the reception received by of *Terceme-i Telemak*, see: Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought*, 241-245; on the salons in Istanbul, see: 229-232.


composition. It was on a par with the Ottoman classic ‘Princes’ Mirrors,’ including Siyasetnâme of the Selçuk vizier Nizam ül-Mülk (1092), the Kutadgu Bilig (1070) and the Kabus Nâme (1082). Moreover, the Platonic ideals in Télémaque also reflected ideas in Islamic political treatises, and were easily understood by Ottoman readers. As a novel, Télémaque was new. Ideals and ideas about the monarch and society were quickly imbibed in this form, which made the work especially popular in the second half of the nineteenth century.

In Télémaque the king was shown to be subject to the laws of the land and responsible for the happiness of its citizens. The work implicitly criticized absolute monarchy and defended the right of subjects, at least the elite, to participate in politics. Moreover, the author argued that parliaments were an essential aspect of monarchic government and protested against corruption and the expanded bureaucracy of Louis XIV. These enlightened ideas and subtle disapproval of the ruling system appealed to the critical younger generation of the Tanzimat: the Young Ottomans.

Young Ottomans
Ibrahim Şinasi Efendi (1826-1871), an Ottoman poet and journalist and prominent member of the Young Ottoman movement, considered Télémaque a superior work. He stated: ‘While on the surface, the work of the famous French author, Fénelon, entitled the Adventures of Télémaque, 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 fulfilment of justice and happiness for the individual.’ Indeed, Télémaque was influential in shaping the ideas of the Young Ottoman movement, which spearheaded political protest and became increasingly important in the years 1867 to 1878.

The Young Ottomans came from a generation that emerged after the reform ideals of the Tanzimat had already been translated into policies. Thanks 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 enabled. However, this critical second ‘generation nurtured in the ways of the West,’ came to oppose the first-generation Tanzimat reformers, who were ‘quite blunt and merciless

53 Enginün, Yeni Türk Edebiyatı, 177-179.
54 Mardin, The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought, 97; see also: Von Grünebaum, Medieval Islam; Alberts, ‘Der Dichter des Uigurisch-Turkischem Dialekt’; Prince Gurgan, A Mirror for Princes.
56 Mardin, The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought, 241-245.
in enforcing the political, social, and intellectual Westernization of the Ottoman Empire. For the first time Ottoman society had an intelligentsia that criticized the government using the mass media. Young Ottomans accused Tanzimat statesmen and the new ‘upper class’ of adopting ‘the most superficial parts of European culture’ such as theatres, galas and liberal ideas about women.57

Central themes of the new ideology were constitutional monarchy and Ottoman nationalism.58 While adherents searched for a synthesis between Islam and enlightened European ideas and political systems, the movement was actually a product of the modernization of the Ottoman society, and at the same time a result of the Empire’s instability and the interference of European powers in Ottoman affairs. All this gave rise to a powerful sense of patriotism among the intellectuals of the Young Ottoman movement. The Young Ottomans wanted ‘reform for Ottomans, by Ottomans, and along Islamic lines.’59

To get a better understanding of the way enlightened or so-called Western ideas were absorbed into Ottoman culture and the internal dynamics of intellectual life in the late Ottoman Empire, it is useful to sketch the innovations achieved by the Tanzimat, their underlying motives and the channels through which Western ideas entered Ottoman society.

**European World of Ideas in the Empire**

Interaction between European and Ottoman art and culture was not new. As art historian Günsel Renda notes, these 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.’ Cultural contact enhanced artistic and technical development in both directions.60

Turquerie, a Western fashion inspired by Ottoman culture, emerged in Europe in the sixteenth century and continued to be popular in the nineteenth century. The style influenced European painting, literature, architecture and music, in particular opera. Famous operas on Turkish themes include Reinhard Keiser’s *Mahomet II* (1693), Handel’s *Tamerlano* (1724) and Mozart’s *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (1782).61
It was in the nineteenth century that European culture began to make a significant impact in the Ottoman Empire as a new mutual interest developed and European culture and art began to inspire the Ottomans. Ottoman-European cultural contact brought rich content to European and Ottoman art and culture alike. Examples of this interaction in the arts include work by Ottoman diplomat, art collector and patron Halil (Khalil) Bey (1831-1879). While in Paris in the mid-1860s, Halil Bey acquired work by major artists such as Ingres, Eugène Delacroix, Rousseau, Corot, Troyon and Daubigny for his art collection, and is even thought to have commissioned Gustave Courbet’s *Les Dormeuses* and *L’Origine du Monde*.

Through their study of foreign languages the Ottoman political and cultural elite expanded knowledge in fields such as philosophy, mythology, literature, science, history and historiography. As early as 1829, Ottoman students were already being sent to Paris for their education. These young men, including Ibrahim Edhem Pasha, father of Osman Hamdi Bey, brought back new ideas to the Empire. More students soon followed. In 1834, 1835, 1836 and 1838 several groups of students were sent to London, Paris and Vienna. As graduates of European schools, they returned to their country and took up teaching posts in the newly formed Military Academy. In addition to students being sent to Europe, the Academy also employed Western instructors to train pupils. In 1855, an Ottoman school was established in Paris to prepare Ottoman military students for exams at schools such as the École Polytechnique, the École des Mines and the École Spéciale Militaire de Saint-Cyr. In 1846, 1850, 1854 and 1855, civil service trainees were also 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 1870s.’

The Translation Office of the Sublime Porte (1821) is considered the true ‘nursery of Westernizing civil officials and writers.’ Its establishment, and the founding of a Translation Office of the Imperial Artillery (1834), addressed the need for more and better translators as contact between the Empire and the West intensified in the early nineteenth century. There was a perceived need to train Muslim subjects in foreign languages based on a strong Ottoman suspicion of Greek interpreters and their possible role in opera and its connection with Classical heritage, Europe versus Asia, East versus West, see: Bruls, *Ontvoering*.

---

65 Findley, *The Turks in World History*, 158.
disloyalty to the government following the Greek Revolution. By the 1840s, the translation offices had developed into the principal training facilities for young men entering governmental service. In fact, generations of statesmen, from ministers to grand viziers, were trained and launched their careers as graduates of these offices. Older generations, moreover, encouraged and supported young men to increase their knowledge of foreign languages.66

As Lewis rightly notes, 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.’ After all, the Ottomans faced ‘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 In the 1850s, Western literature started to become more widely available. French books were read both by educated Muslims and non-Muslims in the Empire, while knowledge of French and German became more widespread among Muslim government officials.68

In the second half of the nineteenth century, a new elite emerged from the translation offices and the embassy secretariats. Besides bureaucrats, this new ruling class included a new group of critical Muslim intellectuals. Almost all members of the influential Young Ottoman movement started their careers as clerks at these offices. Indeed, the Translation Office of the Porte developed a reputation as ‘the opposition division’ of the Ottoman government.69

The opening of Galatasaray Mekteb-i Sultani (Galatasaray Imperial Ottoman Lycée) in 1868, based on the French lycée model, illustrates the changing atmosphere in the Empire at this time.70 Galatasaray Lycée followed a modern Western secondary education syllabus. 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 the same classroom. The establishment of a lycée demonstrates the government’s

67 Lewis, The Emergence of Modern Turkey, 118.
determination to provide Ottoman youth with a modern education regardless of religion or ethnicity. These efforts were in fact in line with the Tanzimat policy of egalitarian Ottomanism (Osmanlılık), which envisaged equality among Ottoman subjects irrespective of religion, to counter the separatist nationalists often supported by Western states, and to bind the subjects of the Empire.\(^{71}\)

Galatasaray Lycée’s influence on Ottoman society and beyond the Turkish sphere was significant. Its alumni became leading figures in the Empire’s political and cultural arena and, later, in the Turkish Republic and other countries in the twentieth century. As Lewis notes, Galatasaray Lycée ‘had no playing-fields, but not a few of the victories of modern Turkey were won in its classrooms.’\(^{72}\) Not only did many Ottoman grand viziers, ministers, governors and important members of cultural life graduate from Galatasaray Lycée, but prominent twentieth-century foreign statesmen as well. To list a few: King Zog of Albania, Mehmed Ali El-Abid, president of Syria, Yitzhak Ben Zvi, second president of Israel, Mirza Sadik Khan, Iranian minister of internal affairs, Konstantin Velichkov, Bulgarian minister of education.\(^{73}\)

A survey of these names provides an indication of the ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity within the Ottoman Empire, their wide-ranging cultural production, and especially their cross-cultural relations and cultural interaction. With this in mind it is possible to understand the disappointment felt among the Muslim cultural elite at being excluded from Classical heritage and above all the ‘complex historic fabric of an empire.’\(^{74}\)

3 The Cosmopolitan Muslim Elite of a Multifarious Empire

Ottoman society included Greeks, Armenians, Arabs, Sephardic Jews, Levantines, Slavs and other Eastern Europeans as well as the ruling Muslim Ottoman Turks. These subjects of various communities, professing different religions, speaking a variety of languages and using different scripts to write their languages all lived in the same empire. Meanwhile, to make matters even more complex, not all the Armenians spoke Armenian, some

\(^{71}\) For a general account of Tanzimat reforms and policies, Ottomanism, European pressure and criticism, see: Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 116; and Findley, *The Turks in World History*, 160.

\(^{72}\) Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 122.

\(^{73}\) See the official website of Galatasaray Lisesi: http://www.gsl.gsu.edu.tr/.

\(^{74}\) Eldem, ‘Greece and the Greeks in Ottoman History and Turkish Historiography.’
preferred Ottoman Turkish; some Arabs were Christians or Jewish; the cultural language of the educated Bulgarians and Romanians was Greek; Phanariote Greeks or Greek-Orthodox Karamanlı spoke and wrote Ottoman Turkish; the Ottoman Turkish elite on the other hand, besides speaking Arabic, Persian, Ottoman and French, could frequently understand Greek as well; Sephardic Jews whose ethnic language was (Judaeo) Spanish wrote in Hebrew, yet also in French and Turkish; while Persian was not an ethnic language, still it functioned as the cultural language of the Ottoman Turks; ethnic Albanian and Bosnian Muslims had their own mother tongue, but were also familiar with languages such as Greek, Persian, Arabic, Ottoman Turkish and Western languages; and then there were the Ottoman Turkish residents of Paris who published in French.75

The cultural manifestations of the pluralist Ottoman society are difficult to classify: the literary activities of the various communities of the Empire were connected and interrelated. Strauss correctly emphasizes the complexity of categorizing the literary activity in the Ottoman Empire according to the concept of ‘national’ literature. Citing the tendency of modern historians to define literature as the ‘production of one “nation” in one single language,’ he notes that the literary genres which developed in the Ottoman context do not fit a nationalist paradigm, which may appear strange to those who are accustomed to the usual framework of ‘national’ literatures. He illustrates his point with the literary productions of the Turkish-speaking Greek-Orthodox (Karamanlı) community and the Turkophone Armenians. Their Ottoman-Turkish works do not fit within any national literary heritage.76

As historian Edhem Eldem notes, ‘even at a much more mundane level, if one were to study the basic dynamics of Ottoman society in the nineteenth century, a more demotic form of coexistence […] would necessarily emerge at practically every level.’77 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.’78 In this way, the history of the Ottoman Empire paralleled that of other European empires, such as the Habsburg Empire.79

The nineteenth-century polyglot capital of the Ottoman Empire ‘was a fertile breeding ground for learned societies and scholarly journals,

75 On reading and literary activity in Ottoman Society, see: Straus, ‘Who Read What in the Ottoman Empire (19th-20th Centuries)?; on publishing: Strauss, “Kütüphane ve Resail-i Mevkute.”
76 Strauss, ‘Who Read What in the Ottoman Empire (19th-20th Centuries)?,’ 39.
77 Eldem, ‘Greece and the Greeks in Ottoman History and Turkish Historiography,’ 30-32.
78 Eldem, ‘Greece and the Greeks in Ottoman History and Turkish Historiography,’ 38.
79 Kann, A History of the Habsburg Empire; Kann, The Multiple Empire.
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 in the Empire. The intellectuals of the Tanzimat, including the Young Ottomans, managed to harmonize Western cultural values – which they had largely internalized – with Ottoman identity.

Driven by the spirit of modernization, it was the Muslim elite of the Empire, especially the leading reformist statesmen, who took the initiative in establishing societies and journals. This is reflected in the list of founders and members of the forerunner of the Cemiyet-i Ilmiye-i Osmaniye, the Encümen-i Danış (Imperial Academy of Arts and Sciences), set up in 1850. In fact, all the prominent statesmen of the Tanzimat, reformist politicians and bureaucrats with literary and scientific reputations, were members of this academy, which was intended to prepare for the creation of a state university. The founders and members included people such as grand viziers Mustafa Reşid Pasha, Mehmet Emin Ali Pasha, Yusuf Kamil Pasha, as well as scholarly bureaucrats such as Cevded Pasha and Ahmed Vefik Pasha.

They also served as an example to the non-Muslim communities of the Empire. Inspired by this progressive promotion of intellectual development in Ottoman society, leading figures in the Greek community established a Greek Literary Society, whose honorary members included ministers of public instruction Safvet Pasha and Münif Pasha.

**Connection with Greeks and Greek Lands**

The cosmopolitan Muslim Ottoman-Turkish elite was intricately involved with the Empire’s Ottoman-Greek communities and Greek territories. The first Muslim translator at the Translation Office of the Porte, Yahya Naci Efendi, the grandfather of later grand vizier and translator of Molière’s plays Ahmed Vefik Pasha, was believed to have been a Greek-Orthodox convert. So too Osman Hamdi Bey’s father, 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

---

81 Edhem Eldem hesitates to describe the capital as cosmopolitan, since he sees the modernization processes in the Empire as rather superficial in character; the ‘internalization’ of the new cultural and social structures by Ottoman society was fairly limited. However, Eldem maintains that the Muslim political elite of the Empire may rightly be described as by far the most cosmopolitan group of the Empire. See Eldem, ‘Batılılaşma, Modernleşme ve Kozmopolitizm.’
Hüsrev Pasha (at that time head of the Ottoman Navy, later grand vizier) and became a member of his household. In 1830, Hüsrev Pasha sent him to Paris, with three other boys from his family, to study military science under the protection of the Orientalist Amedéé Jaubert. After graduating in 1839, Ibrahim Edhem Pasha served in high-ranking administrative positions and even became grand vizier in 1877.

Besides converts with leading positions in the Ottoman bureaucracy, other members of these cultural and political circles included descendants of Muslim or Turkish families of Peloponnesus and other Greek lands. For example, the mother of the major Young Ottoman poet Namık Kemal was a descendant of the family of governors of the province of Morea. The poet Kazim Pasha (1821-1889) was originally from Konitsa. Likewise, the administrator and poet Giritli Sırrı Pasha (1844-1895) and his wife, Leyla Saz Hanımefendi (1850-1936), composer, poet and writer, belonged to families of Cretan Turkish origin. Muslim Cretans were able to speak and write Greek and translated Greek dramas into Ottoman Turkish.

Albanian Muslim Ottomans educated in Greek schools also mixed in intellectual circles. Among them the Fraşeri brothers, born in Frashër (now Albania) and educated at Zosimea, the Greek school in Ionnina, then part of the Ottoman Empire. At Zosimea they mastered Ottoman Turkish, Persian and Arabic, also French, Italian, as well as Ancient and Modern Greek. They served as Ottoman officials and lived in Istanbul much of their life.

The eldest of the brothers, Şemseddin Sami Fraşeri (1850-1904), was a celebrated figure in the Ottoman intellectual scene. As a novelist, journalist, lexicographer and self-taught linguist, his contribution to the Turkish intellectual world is substantial. Besides translations of works such as *Les Misérables* and *Robinson Crusoe* into Turkish, he also published a French-Turkish dictionary in 1882, a Turkish-French dictionary in 1885, and a modern Turkish dictionary *Kamus-i Türk-i*, in which he offered words from eastern Turkish to replace Arabic or Persian terms used in the Ottoman written language. This dictionary, which is still used in the

---

85 He is claimed by the Albanian nation as well as Turkey and is seen as one of the leading 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 dealt with in Chapter 4. See also: Bilmez, ‘Sami Fraşerî or Şemseddin Samî?’ His son Ali Samî Yen (1886-1951), a founder of Galatasaray Football, was connected to the prestigious Galatasaray Lycée in Istanbul and was the president of the Turkish National Olympic Committee between 1926-1931.
86 Sami, *Kamus-i Türk-i*. 
Turkish Republic, laid the foundation for modern literary Turkish.87 His scientific booklets on mythology, women, Islamic civilization, astronomy, geology, anthropology and the history of Islam are also worth mentioning. In addition, Şemseddin Sami published a major encyclopaedia (six volumes), Kamus-ül Alâm, containing information about Troy, Homeric heroes and locations.88

His brother Na‘im Fraşeri (1846–1900), a poet and writer placed in charge of the censorship department in Istanbul in 1882, is considered the first to have translated part of the Iliad into Turkish in 1885/1886.89

While Ottoman society was pluralist and its culture was multiethnic, the various communities were interrelated and influenced each other continually. Account must be taken of this complex kaleidoscope of national identities within Ottoman society when discussing the Ottoman connection to Classical heritage and Ottoman 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 resulted from a growing Ottoman appreciation of antiquities as part of the Empire’s heritage. The advent of an Ottoman-Turkish director reflects the contemporary desire to assume control over the antiquities as part of the Ottoman historical and cultural legacy.90 When museum director Anton Déthier died in 1881,91 the minister of public instruction first planned to appoint another European director. This was cancelled at the last minute and Osman Hamdi was given the position instead. Prominent Turkish historian Mustafa Cezar points out that the government preferred an Ottoman Muslim. Osman Hamdi’s influential father, Ibrahim Edhem Pasha, may also have played a role in the decision.92

87 On the role of Şemseddin Sami in Ottoman language reforms, see: Trix, ‘The Stamboul Alphabet of Shemseddin Sami Bey’; and Levend, Şemsettin Sami. For a general account of Turkish language reforms, see: Şimşir, Türk Yazı Devrimi; and Levend, Türk Dilinde Gelisme ve Sadelesme Evreleri.
88 Sami, Kamus-ül Alâm.
89 Kreiser, ‘Troia und die Homerischen Epen.’
90 Shaw, Possessors and Possessed, 96.
91 Little is known about Anton Déthier, least of all about his influence on the development of Ottoman archaeology and the legislation; his role was clearly more important than the available information might suggest. See: Eldem, ‘Philipp Anton Dethier.’
92 Cezar, Sanatta Batıya Açılış ve Osman Hamdi, 253-255.
Either way, the first Ottoman-Turkish director was appointed on 3 September 1881. With the arrival of Osman Hamdi, a leading member of the late nineteenth-century cosmopolitan Ottoman intelligentsia, the government introduced a major figure in the contemporary arts and a man with modern ideas.

Background
Osman Hamdi belonged to the second generation of those nurtured in an environment already dominated by the spirit of the modernization. Born into a leading family and raised in a liberal and cosmopolitan environment, Osman Hamdi was a product of the modern age.

As we have seen, his father, Ibrahim Edhem Bey (later Pasha) was one of the first four Ottoman-Turkish students to be sent to Europe to study around 1829. Having studied metal engineering in Paris at the École des Mines, Ibrahim Edhem Bey returned to the Empire in 1839, where he held various high-level administrative posts in different government departments. Following a term as a military engineer, he became the French tutor to Sultan Abdülmecid I. 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. In addition he was grand vizier in 1877 to 1878 and minister of the interior from 1883 to 1885.

Raised 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, reaching a wide public through his articles on subjects such as geology in scientific periodicals. He was also the leading figure behind the publication of the two major works on Ottoman arts, *Usul-i Mimari-i Osmani: L’Architecture ottomane* (Istanbul, 1873) and *Elbise-i Osmaniyye: Les costumes populaires de la Turquie* (Istanbul, 1873), mentioned above.

As president of the committee overseeing the Ottoman contribution to the Vienna Weltausstellung (International Exhibition) in 1873, Ibrahim Edhem Pasha appointed his son Osman Hamdi to organize the presentation.
enabling him to assist in collecting materials for the accompanying scholarly publications and to co-author *Elbise-i Osmaniye*.  

Ibrahim Edhem Pasha occasionally brought his son on official journeys. In 1858, for example, Osman Hamdi was able to see Belgrade and Vienna. In Vienna he visited museums and saw works of art. This may well have encouraged him to urge his father to send him to study abroad.  

In 1860, Osman Hamdi left to study law in Paris. Yet his interest in art prevailed and he started taking painting lessons at the studios of French Orientalists Jean-Léon Gérôme (1824-1904) and Gustave Boulanger (1824-1888) and began to paint in the Orientalist style. He also took courses in archaeology. He was in contact with other Ottoman students in Paris, who were mainly involved in the arts. These young men would later emerge as leading figures in Turkish art history.  

Osman Hamdi displayed three of his early paintings at the Exposition Universelle (International Exhibition) in Paris in 1867. When Sultan Abdülaziz, the first sultan to travel to Western Europe, visited Paris in that year, Osman Hamdi was there to witness the event.  

Having completed his studies in Paris, Osman Hamdi returned to Istanbul in 1869. He was married by then and brought his French wife and two daughters back with him. Soon after he arrived in Istanbul, Osman Hamdi entered government service and a year later he was in Baghdad, serving on the staff of the Ottoman Foreign Office.  

Back in Istanbul he held various posts in the Foreign Affairs ministry. In 1876, he was director in charge of foreign language publications in Istanbul and a year later he was appointed to head the Istanbul 6 Municipal Office in Beyoğlu district, the city’s so-called European quarter. He held this position until he became director of the Imperial Museum in 1881.  

**Director of the Imperial Museum**  
Under Osman Hamdi, the museum became ‘a battleground for possession’ of Classical artefacts. His role in the development of Ottoman archaeology is significant. It was thanks to his efforts that formal archaeological research and active collection of antiquities increased. While in Baghdad in his early  

---  

99 These artists are Ahmed Ali Efendi (Şeker Ahmed Pasha), Süleyman Seyid and Ahmed Ali. Halil (Khalil) Bey’s stay in Paris corresponds also with Osman Hamdi’s years in Paris. Ahmed Vefik Efendi (later Pasha) was also in Paris at that time; he lived in the same building as Osman Hamdi.  
career, he carried out excavations and sent his finds to the capital. Later, as museum director, he made archaeology a state concern. In fact, it was he who conducted the first archaeological investigation by an official Ottoman team. Major excavations for the Imperial Museum included sites at Nemrut Dağı (1883), Sidon (1887) and Lagina (1891) (Fig. 21).102

To document the Imperial Museum’s archaeological activities, Osman Hamdi produced two illustrated volumes. These countered Europe’s assumed proprietorship by the simple expedient of Ottoman participation.

The publication of the Ottoman investigation of Nemrut Dağı, where German archaeologists had planned to excavate, showcased Ottoman scholarship and emphasized the exclusion of the Germans from the expedition.103 In Une nécropole royale à Sidon, Osman Hamdi published illustrations of the newly acquired sarcophagi from Sidon, highlighting their absence from 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 leading French academic Théodore Reinach (1860-1928) and in consultation with Ernest Renan (1823-1892), another prominent French scholar who specialized in the Ancient civilizations of the Middle East. The publication and this collaboration by the Imperial Museum's Ottoman director with French scholars brought attention to the Ottoman contribution to global scholarship and demonstrated the equality of Ottomans and Europeans in archaeological matters.104

Osman Hamdi played a key role in overseeing the new antiquities regulation, Asar-ı Atıka Nizamnamesi, which came into effect in 1884. This new law made the Ottoman claim to antiquities more tangible, providing far stricter measures than the previous legal frameworks.105

In addition to serving as director of the Imperial Museum, Osman Hamdi was also closely associated with the School of Fine Arts, Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi, which became involved in the urgent quest to create social awareness

---

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.

103 Hamdy Bey and Effendi, Le Tumulus de Nemroud-Dagh.

104 Hamdy Bey and Reinach, Une Nécropole Royale à Sidon; See historian Edhem Eldem’s comments on the publication, part of research material for an exhibition by Lebanese filmmaker, photographer and curator Akram Zaatari the SALT Beyoğlu gallery in Istanbul in 2015: Eldem, ‘The Royal Necropolis of Sidon.’

105 On Asar-ı Atıka Nizamnamesi see Chapter 3; Arık, Türk Müzeciliğine Bir Bakış, 1-4.
for archaeology and antiquities (Fig. 22). In 1882, he was appointed director of Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi. The school taught young Ottoman subjects the elements of aesthetics and artistic techniques in the Empire. Following the European tradition, the students learned to draw and sculpt by copying Ancient sculptures and friezes.

The Sultan and Antiquities Management
Osman Hamdi’s rapid expansion of the museum in the years 1881 to 1910 took place under the auspices of Sultan Abdülhamid II, who reigned from 1876 to 1909. Abdülhamid II’s focus was on religion. His ideal was a legal autocracy founded on the Islamic principle of justice. The revival of traditional Islamic consciousness in the Ottoman Empire followed the huge territorial losses of the catastrophic Russo-Turkish War. The majority of Ottoman society was now Muslim, which spurred traditional Islamist ideas. By emphasizing Islamic values, Abdülhamid II also engaged with a growing Muslim reaction to the cultural Westernization generated by the reforms.

Abdülhamid II’s legacy is ambiguous and his reign has been the subject of controversy. As Carter Vaughn Findley notes, 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.’ The Hamidean massacres of the Armenians between 1894 and 1896 were especially instrumental in forming this image of Abdülhamid II as a vicious, reactionary autocrat.

Until the 1960s, historians of the Turkish Republic also viewed him as a reactionary, who for a generation halted the regeneration of the Empire. Paranoia and suspicion were rampant in Abdülhamid II's reign. His mistrust and his desire to expand his authority over territory created an environment in which officials were encouraged to report about each other’s activities. Fearing the Empire’s military establishment, insecure and suspicious of his servants, Abdülhamid II was increasingly hesitant to leave his palace.

106 The institution of a school of fine arts by the Ministry of Public Instruction was discussed as early as 1873, see: Hakayik-ı Vekayi, 11/Ra/1290 (06 May 1873); serious plans existed to establish a school for archaeology in 1875 as well, see: Cezar, Sanatta Batıya Açılış ve Osman Hamdi, 244-248; Mansel, ‘Osman Hamdi Bey.’
107 Shaw, Possessors and Possessed, 99.
108 Hanioğlu, A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire, 123.
109 Zürcher, Turkey, 79-83; Findley, The Turks in World History, 162-165.
110 Findley, The Turks in World History, 164-166.
111 Zürcher, Turkey, 76-78; Hanioğlu, A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire, 123-130.
He never visited any part of the Empire outside Istanbul, and relied on modern technology such as photography, trains and the telegraph, to control his empire. In contrast to the Tanzimat era, during his reign the palace secretariat became the most ‘dreaded power centre’ of the Empire, while the grand vizier’s headquarters at the Sublime Porte became a remote place.¹¹²

Modern historians of Turkey, such as Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, tend to emphasize Abdülhamid II’s reign as a continuation, or even culmination, of the Tanzimat and the benefits it brought to the Empire and its population.¹¹³ And Abdülhamid II’s rule did indeed extend the programmes of the Tanzimat era in many ways. Technological reforms continued and many Ottoman students attended schools in Europe. While the sultan emphasized the Muslim, non-Western aspects of the Empire, he also attempted to modernize the army, the civil service, and the educational system along European lines.¹¹⁴

It was said of Sultan Abdülhamid II that he had little interest in Classical artefacts.¹¹⁵ The considerably understaffed antiquities administration, with only a handful of trained officials, may well have been the result of this lack of royal support for the antiquities management during the Hamidean era. Abdülhamid II often exchanged antiquities for Western support and gave objects as gifts to mark ties of friendship with European countries such as Germany or Austria. As Turkish-German economic, diplomatic and military ties strengthened in the 1880s, Germany benefitted from Abdülhamid II’s largesse and his liberal attitude to profitable permits (Fig. 23).¹¹⁶

Yet while Abdülhamid II handed out Classical artefacts for political advantage, the new antiquities regulation of 1884, far stricter than the previous regulation of 1874, also came into effect in his reign. Moreover, the antiquities section of Abdülhamid II’s photograph albums demonstrates a substantial interest in archaeology. His pictures of archaeological sites are exceptionally detailed and show overviews of entire settlements, as well as individual structures and details. These pictures form visual reports of the archaeological research at various sites. Photographs of Ottoman officials and local workers at the sites and pictures of the removal of valuable

¹¹² Findley, The Turks in World History, 164-166.
¹¹³ Shaw and Shaw, A History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, vol. II; Zürcher, Turkey, 76-78; See also: Hanioğlu, A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire, 123-130.
¹¹⁴ Quaert, The Ottoman Empire, 766.
¹¹⁵ Marchand, Down from Olympus, 201; and Shaw, Possessors and Possessed, 120-122.
¹¹⁶ Shaw, Possessors and Possessed, 117-121. Marchand, Down from Olympus, 197-201; see also: Baytar, ‘İki Dost Hüükümdar.’
antiquities emphasized Ottoman interest, and even more their participation in the archaeological activity.117

Although the museum developed in a period in which the state was emphasizing its Islamic identity, rather than ‘creating an easily acceptable cultural backdrop for the Empire,’ the museum with its largely Hellenic-Byzantine objects linked chiefly ‘non-Islamic histories with Ottoman lands and national patrimony.’118 Since its focus was on Greco-Roman archaeology, the museum’s Islamic arts section received no real encouragement during Abdülhamid II’s reign and Osman Hamdi’s tenure. Despite a state directive identifying the Islamic arts as one of the museum’s six principal organizational units in 1889, Islamic antiquities only gained prominence after the Young Turk Revolution of 1908-1910 and the advent of Osman Hamdi’s brother Halil Eldem as director of the Imperial Museum in 1910.119

118 Shaw, Possessors and Possessed, 147, 172, 208.
Figure 20  Display of the imperial antiquities collection in the Tiled Pavilion in the later 1870s

Source: Cezar, Sanatta Batıya Açılış ve Osman Hamdi

Figure 21  Osman Hamdi during excavations at Nemrut Dağı for the Imperial Museum in 1883

Source: Cezar, Sanatta Batıya Açılış ve Osman Hamdi
Figure 22  Istanbul School of Fine Arts (Sanayi-i Nefise Mektebi), established in 1882. Photo, 1927

Source: Ömer Faruk Şerifoğlu, 2013
Growing Turkish-German economic, military and diplomatic ties in the 1880s paved the way for a greater tolerance of German archaeological activities in the Ottoman Empire and profitable permits. Left: Sultan Abdülhamid II (1842-1918), right: Kaiser Wilhelm II (1859-1941).
Figure 24  View of the Substructural Wall at Troy in Schliemann’s *Troja: Results of the Latest Researches and Discoveries on the Site of Homer’s Troy, 1882* (London, 1884)

Source: Schliemann, *Troja*, Plate 15 (55)