ABSTRACT

This dissertation is a historical reconstruction of the last Ottoman palace in Istanbul known as Yıldız. Using a diverse and largely untouched collection of archival sources (including maps, architectural drawings, pattern-books, newspapers, photographs, and countless expense records), the five subsequent chapters chronologically examine the building and growth of the now fragmented site, situating it in the international circulation of ideas and forms that characterized the accelerated and porous world of the nineteenth century. This understudied palace may belong, nominally, to the rarefied realm of the Ottoman elite; the history of the site, however, is profoundly connected to Istanbul’s urban history and to changing conceptions of empire, absolutism, diplomacy, reform, and the public. The dissertation explores these connections, framing the palace and its grounds not only as a hermetic expression of imperial identity, but also as a product of an expanding consumer culture.

The first chapter tackles the site’s static historiography that has overlooked its extremely dynamic architectural evolution. The literature overview contextualizes the reasons for such scholarly lacuna: Sultan Abdülhamid II’s contested presence in nationalistic narratives factor into the discussion. Yıldız’s neglect is part of an endemic dispossession in scholarship of Ottoman art and architectural output from the eighteenth century onwards, because its forms are believed to be foreign and threatening to local craft traditions. The chapter argues instead that Yıldız’s patrons and artists approached their commissions with historical rigor and with an eye for artisanship and the vernacular.

The second chapter follows Yıldız’s eighteenth-and nineteenth-century histories through the eyes of the Ottoman court chroniclers. Their meticulous day-to-day descriptions of the lives of sultans and how they used their capital’s royal grounds show us that for a long time before Yıldız became Abdülhamid II’s
royal residence, it belonged to the sultans’ powerful mothers and wives. The collective efforts of these entrepreneurial women converted Yıldız from a minor imperial retreat to an income-generating estate. The site started its life, then, as an exemplary gendered space that uproots conventional notions of the Oriental harem.

The third chapter traces the grand landscaping project undertaken at Yıldız by Christian Sester, the court’s Bavarian head-gardener. Not only does this chapter outline the site’s dramatic physical transformations under Sester’s tutelage from the 1830s to the 1860s, but it also tracks his establishment of a cosmopolitan gardeners’ corps. The diverse members of this corps, the chapter shows, deeply impacted the urban landscapes and marketplaces of Istanbul well into the 1910s.

The fourth chapter examines Yıldız’s light, pavilion-like structures in the context of the century’s Alpine appeal as well as the world expositions that commodified the use of these small-scale typologies. While exploring the functions of these structures in the courtly context, the chapter also highlights the mass-appeal of catalogue-order chalets among the Ottoman bureaucrat classes and the competition these buildings engendered in Istanbul’s domestic spaces. This chapter also speaks more broadly about the nature of architectural styles, designs and taste in the Ottoman world of the late-nineteenth century.

Yıldız’s history cannot be written without photograph albums, central to Abdülhamid II and his reign. The fifth and final chapter does precisely that by focusing on the previously unknown, last and most intimate photograph album that the sultan commissioned of the site. The album exhibits Yıldız in its most up-to-date incarnation and in the way that Abdülhamid II wanted it to be seen: grounds that required active engagement, that were simultaneously intimate and sublime, and that incorporated both untouched and cultivated landscapes. The chapter draws formal comparisons with earlier, better-known photograph albums of the palace that were prepared for an international audience. Unlike any other, this album gets us closest to Abdülhamid’s own biography of imperial spaces, the precedents that he inhabited during his princely years. These sites, in turn, influenced his architectural patronage in Yıldız. Therefore, the album is conceptualized here as a revealing visual biography of the most elusive of sultans and his similarly elusive palace.
Lastly, I take *victoriana* in the title to imply a global designation, a trigger that to my mind best describes the push and pull of tradition at the onset of modernity. At no other site than Yıldız is this tension played out so clearly in the Ottoman lands. I mean to draw thematic connection between Victorian England and the Ottoman Empire at specific moments in which the latter found itself negotiating between local craft and global industry, between its imperial image and its newly emerging social classes, between royalty’s austerity and its requisite international presence, and between tradition and invention.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## I. Introduction to Abdülhamid II’s Yıldız Palace

- Yıldız as a Fortress, City, and Neighborhood  
  15
- Yıldız’s Ubiquitous Dā’ires  
  25
- The Sultan’s Self-Designed Sightseeing Tour  
  30
- Yıldız’s Layout  
  38

## II. Yıldız Kiosk and the Queen Mothers of the *Tanzimat* Era: Gender, Landscape, and Visibility

- Women of the Court and the Lure of Beşiktaş  
  59
- The First Yıldız Kiosk and its Echoes Across the Shore  
  67
- The Favorable Winds of Yıldız Kiosk, Mahmud II, and Archery  
  77
- Yıldız as the Quintessential Valide Estate  
  81
- Yıldız, Ottoman Women, and Profligacy  
  93
- The Yahya Efendi Convent as Yıldız’s Spiritual Crux  
  99
- Conclusion  
  106

## III. From Çırağan’s Backyard to the Heart of the Gardening Corps: Yıldız and its Gardeners

- The First European Head-Gardeners in the Ottoman Court  
  113
- Christian Sester and the English Garden in the Ottoman Capital  
  118
- Istanbul’s Germanic Networks and Royal Gardeners After Sester  
  138
- A Change of Hands in the Final Years of the Corps  
  159
- Conclusion  
  165

## IV. The Architecture of Yıldız Mountain: Pre-fabs, Chalets, and Home-Making in Istanbul

- Abdülhamid II, Woodwork, and a Taste for Timber Construction  
  171
- Nordic “Frame Houses” and the Global Typology of Domestic Bliss  
  187
- The First Portable Structures in the Ottoman Domains  
  193
d. Scaled-down Architecture, Intimate Diplomacy  204

e. Hamidian Bureaucrats and their House and Garden Competition  210

f. Building Practices, Architectural Sources, and Resources  221

  Conclusion  231

V. “Town and Country” (Belde ve Şahrāʾ): An Ottoman Album of Imperial Sites from 1905

  a. Order, Materiality, and Frame  240

  b. Abdülhamid’s Own Biography of Places  249

  c. Souvenir’s Recipients  257

  d. Souvenir’s Precedents  265

  e. Abdülhamid and Architectural Preservation  271

  f. Inclusions  277

  g. Souvenir’s Yıldız  282

  h. Partitions  288

  Conclusion  292

VI. EPILOGUE  296

VII. FIGURES  305

VIII. BIBLIOGRAPHY  421
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LIST OF FIGURES

1.1 Map undertaken by Yıldız Technical University outlining Yıldız Palace’s current occupants, 2010, Istanbul.

1.2 Map undertaken by Yıldız Technical University highlighting the different sections of the Yıldız Palace complex and its adjacencies under Abdülhamid II, 2010, Istanbul.

1.3 Çadır Kiosk fronted by an artificial lake, building attributed to the Balyans, 1861-1876.

1.4 Malta Kiosk, building attributed to the Balyans, 1861-1876.

1.5 Abdülhamid II’s private residence (Hususi Daire), building attributed to Vasilaki (kalfa) Ionnidis, 1880s, photographer unknown, Dolmabahçe Palace Museum, Abdülmecid Efendi Library, k86-26.

1.6 Twin palaces (çifte saraylar), no longer extant, built for the palace’s head-scribe and head-chamberlain in Teşvikiye built by Abdülmecid, 1839-1861.

1.7 Shaykh Zafir tomb and library fronting the Ertuğrul Mosque, Raimondo D’Aronco, post-1894.

1.8 Imperial stables at Yıldız, attributed to Raimondo D’Aronco, post-1894.

1.9 Imperial library at Yıldız, photographer unknown, Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection.

1.10 Imperial tile factory at Yıldız, photographer unknown, Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection.

1.11 Imperial theater at Yıldız, architect unknown, repairs attributed to Raimondo D’Aronco.

1.12 Gāh-i ābyāz (white palace), Gulistan Palace, Tehran.

1.13 Elevation drawing of the gallery of paintings (no longer extant) between Abdülhamid II’s private residence and the Şale Kiosk, Topkapı Palace Museum, Istanbul.

1.14 “The general plan of the railways that are conceptualized for the garden of the imperial palace of Yıldız” (Yıldız sarayı-i hümâyûnu bağçesinde inşâsi mutasavvir olan demiryollarının ḥarîta-i umûmiyesidir), Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection, 93283.

1.15 “Interior view of the imperial wagon” (rückûb-i şâhâneye mahrûs vâgonuñ dâhîli manzarasi), Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection, 93283.

1.16 “The imperial wagon” (rückûb-i şâhâneye mahrûs vâgon), Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection, 93283.

1.17 Partial layout of the Yıldız Palace complex under Abdülhamid II with emphasis on the administrative (selâmlık) and residential quarters (harem).


1.20 Enamel perfume box depicting the Mabeyn Kiosk and the gate of sovereignty (*saltanat kapısı*), artist and date unknown, Yıldız Palace Museum Collection.

1.21 “Interior view of the imperial ironworks,” (*taʾmīrāne-i hümâyûnlarımı manzara-i dâhîliyesi*), Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection, 90552.

1.22 Gate leading to Yıldız’s *harem* from the Mabeyn courtyard, repairs attributed to Raimondo D’Aronco.

1.23 (*from left to right*) The pedimented residence of the valide, the erstwhile Small Mabeyn, and the first, prefabricated version of Abdülhamid’s private residence, photographer unknown, Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection, 90407.

1.24 Present state of the residence of the hazinedarusta with a closed bridge connecting to the servants’ quarters on the right and the quarters for the sultan’s wives on the left.

1.25 Present state of the one-story quarters for the eunuchs-in-waiting, connecting to the palace theater via a gallery.

1.26 Princess Naile and Şeker Ahmed Paşa in one of the greenhouses in the harem, photographer and date unknown, Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection.

1.27 Present state of the residence of the chief black eunuch surrounded by greenhouses and the terraces of the inner garden.

1.28 Recently unearthed mural of the Ottoman domains under the entrance dome of the quarters of the sultan’s wives.


1.30 Present view of the Island Kiosk in the inner garden of Yıldız, building attributed to Raimondo D’Aronco, post-1894.

1.31 View of Yıldız’s inner garden with the Şale Kiosk in the background, photographer and date unknown, Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection, 90407.

1.32 Yıldız’s Mecidiye Portal providing access from the waterfront avenue to the palace’s outer gardens.

1.33 Map with the central “pool of the valley” (*dere havuţ*), the artificial lake in the inner garden and pond in front of the Çadır Kiosk.
1.34 Present view of the bridge connecting the waterfront palace of Çırağan with Yıldız’s outer garden, attributed to the Balyans, 1861-1876.

2.1 Sedad Hakkı Eldem, Reconstruction of Franz Phillip von Gudenus’s plan of the yalı of Çırağan in Köşkler ve Kasırlar (1969).

2.2 Louis-François-Sébastien Fauvel, Vue d’un Kiosque entre Defterdar-Bournou et Kourou-Tchechmè in Marie-Gabriel-Auguste-Florent Choisel-Gouffier, Voyage pittoresque de la Grèce (1792-[1824]).

2.3 Sedad Hakkı Eldem, Reconstruction of the plan of Fauvel’s Kiosque entre Defterdar-Bournou et Kourou-Tchechmè in Köşkler ve Kasırlar (1969).

2.4 Antoine Ignace Melling, Palais de la Sultane Hadidgé à Defterdar-Bournou in Voyage pittoresque de Constantinople et des rives du Bosphore (1819).

2.5 Extant stone epitaph of Mihrisah Valide Sultan’s fountain on Serencebey Road, 1797-1798, Beşiktaş, Istanbul.


2.7 Tomb and sebil of Nakş-ı Dil Valide Sultan, 1817, Fatih, Istanbul.

2.8 Two extant and adjacent archery stones in Ihlamur (in Yıldız’s northeast) marking Mahmud II’s records, 1811, Istanbul.


2.10 The Bezmialem Valide Sultan Fountain, 1839, Maçka, Istanbul.

2.11 Extant wooden epitaph of Bezmialem Valide Sultan’s pavilion in Yıldız with the inscription of Raşid’s poem, Dolmabahçe Palace Museum, Istanbul.

2.12 Mıgırdıç Melkon, Marmara Strait, 1844 (?), oil on canvas, wood and silk, 60x90cm, Deniz Müzesi, Istanbul, 507.

2.13 Map showing the farmlands, strawberry fields, and residences of the employees of the farmstead belonging to the queen mother in the vicinity of Yıldız Kiosk, undated, Topkapı Palace Museum, Istanbul, 9494.

2.14 Bezmialem Valide Sultan’s fountain near Yıldız, 1843, which was relocated to the Topkapı district of Istanbul between the years 1957 and 1959.

2.15 Pertevniyal Valide Sultan Mosque, 1871, attributed to Serkis Balyan, Aksaray, Istanbul.

2.16 Yıldız’s Mabeyn Kiosk, 1861-1876, attributed to the Balyan family of architects, Beşiktaş, Istanbul.
2.17 Validebağ Kasrı (the mansion of the queen mother’s orchard), 1861-1876, attributed to the Balyans, Koşuyolu, Istanbul.

2.18 Contemporary view of the Yahya Efendi Tomb and Mosque, Beşiktaş, Istanbul.

2.19 Perestu Valide Sultan’s Townhouse in Maçka, date and architect unknown.

3.1 *Vue du kiosque du Bostandji-Bachi à Kourou-Tchechmé* [View of the Head-Gardener’s Kiosk in Kuruçeşme] in Marie-Gabriel-Florent-Auguste de Choiseul-Gouffier, *Voyage pittoresque de la Grèce* (1782–[1824]).

3.2 Baron von Hübsch’s residence in the right foreground. Antoine Ignace Melling, *Vue de la partie centrale de Buyuk-Dère sur la rive européen du Bosphore* [The View of the Central Part of Büyükder on the European coast of the Bosphorus], *Voyage pittoresque de Constantinople et des rives du Bosphore* (1819).


3.4 Contract signed between “Bahçivan Kretyen Sester” and Fethi Paşa, BOA, D. DRB. I 2/12.

3.5 Detail from the Ottoman Imperial School of Engineering’s 1840s reprint of the Von Moltke map in Burak Çetintab, *Dolmabahçe’den Nişantaşı’na* (2010).

3.6 Çırağan Palace, artist and date unknown, gouache on engraving, 52x70 cm, Milli Saraylar Resim ve Heykel Müzesi, Istanbul, 12/2838.


3.8 Migirdiç Melkon, Pen box depicting the Beşiktaş Palace, undated, oil and *papier-mâché*, 60x90 cm, Topkapı Palace Museum, Istanbul, CY 454.


3.10 Carlo Bossoli, Çırağan Palace, *Topkapı Beyond*, undated, tempera on linen canvas, 116x180 cm, private collection.

3.11 Sester’s Ottoman seal, “head-gardener of the waterfront palace of Çırağan,” BOA, HH. d. 18928.


3.13 Sketch map of the Ortaköy section of Yıldız’s gardens with Sester’s garden and residence highlighted, 1867(?), Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection, 93332.

3.14 The new Yıldız pavilion that replaced Sester’s residence, photographer unknown, 1902(?), Atatürk Library, Istanbul, Alb. 156.

3.16 The Sester family tomb, St. Esprit Cathedral, Istanbul.

3.17 Current view of the German Consulate’s summer residence in Tarabya with its terraced forest in the background, Istanbul.

3.18 Advertisement of the Koch nurseries in Ortaköy and Kağthane in the *Annuaire oriental* (1898).

3.19 A section of Jacques Pervititich’s insurance maps showing the location of the Kochs’ nursery in Ortaköy on the lower left-hand corner, 1922.

3.20 Announcement of Adam Schlerff’s death in *Die Woche* (1907).

3.21 A page from a *defter* detailing the gardeners’ register, BOA, Y. PRK. SGE. 10/36.

3.22 View of a greenhouse in the garden of Şale Kiosk (Şāle kaşr-ı hümāyünları civârındağım limonluğun manzarası-ı umûmiyesi), photographer unknown, undated, Istanbul University Rare Works Collection, 90552.

3.23 Gustave Deroin’s advertisement in the *Annuaire oriental* (1893-1894).

3.24 The remarkably congested surroundings and shrunken grounds of today’s Koubbeh Palace, Cairo.

4.1 Vasilaki Kargopoulo, *Tchaïr kiosque à Yeldez* (precedent to the kiosk made of twigs?), 1878, Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection, 90407.

4.2 Çit Kiosk, 1867-1876, attributed to the Balyans, Yıldız Palace, Istanbul.

4.3 “A view of the Island and Swiss pavilions from the island inside the imperial garden” (*hadika-i dâhilinde adadan ada kaşr-ı ʿâlileriyle İşvec kaârî hümâyünları manzarası*), photographer unknown, after 1894, Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection, 90552.

4.4 A neo-Mamluk console attributed to Abdülhamid II, 1901-1902, 130x236x43.5 cm, private collection, Italy.

4.5 The office of İzzet Holo Paşa in the center foreground in a photograph titled “the view in the direction of Beyoğlu from the conservatory of the new noble pavilion,” (*ye numérique kaşr-i ʿâliniîn câmekânîndan Beyoğlu cihheiti görünişû*), photographer and date unknown, Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection, 90552.

4.6 The office of the aides-de-camp on duty, attributed to Raimondo D’Aronco, after 1894, Yıldız Palace, Istanbul.

4.7 The Small Mabeyn from the lake inside Yıldız’s inner garden, attributed to Raimondo D’Aronco, after 1894.

4.8 Guillaume Berggren, view of Abdülhamid II’s private residence on the left and the Şale Kiosk at the center, 1889, Dolmabahçe Palace Museum, Abdülmecid Efendi Library, k128-30.
4.9 One of the five extant princes’ chalets, architect and date unknown, Yıldız Palace, Istanbul.


4.11 Abdülhamid II’s private residence (hususi daire), photographer and date unknown, Dolmabahçe Palace Museum, Abdülmecid Efendi Library, k86-30.

4.12 Pastoral vignettes on the ceilings of Maslak Pavilion, artist and date unknown, Maslak, Istanbul.

4.13 Victor Petit, Châlet du lac de Thure, undated, chromolithograph, Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection, 93220.

4.14 V. Olbrich, Farmhouse, undated, watercolor on paper, 29x40cm, Milli Saraylar Resim ve Heykel Müzesi, İstanbul.


4.16 “Villa Tuscan Style,” M. Thams & Cie.’s Catalogue of Norwegian Houses, after 1889, Istanbul University, Rare Works Collection, 92352.

4.17 “Villa Swiss Style,” M. Thams & Cie.’s Catalogue of Norwegian Houses, after 1889, Istanbul University, Rare Works Collection, 92352.

4.18 “Cardboard Construction” (Muḳavaḏ Inṣāāt), Front page of Şervet-i Fünūn, no. 25 (1892).

4.19 “Interior view of a barrack belonging to the offices of the Yıldız Hospital, among the charitable institutions of the sultan Yıldız Hospital” (müʾessasât-ār ḥayriyêt-ê gâyît cenâb-i mülkânedên olan Yıldız ḥastâhâne dâʾirelerinden bir koğuşuñ derûnu), Frontpage of Şervet-i Fünûn, no. 331 (1897).

4.20 “The operating room belonging to the Yıldız Hospital, among the charitable institutions of the sultan Yıldız Hospital” (müʾessesât-ār ḥayriyêt-ê gâyît cenâb-ê ẖilaftepenâhîden olan Yıldız ḥastâhânesinîn ʾameliyât dâʾiresi), Şervet-i Fünûn, no. 331 (1897).


4.22 Swedish Pavilion (no longer extant) inside the inner garden of Yıldız, M. Thams, after 1889.

4.23 “Châlet no. 222,” Kaeffer & Cie.’s catalogue, Châlets Suisses Bois Découpés, 1884, Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection, 92007.


4.25 “Châlet no. 222,” Kaeffer & Cie.’s catalogue, Châlets Suisses Bois Découpés, 1884, Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection, 92007.

4.27 Japanese Kiosk in the inner garden of Yıldız, undated, attributed to Vasilaki Kargopoulo, Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection, 90407.

4.28 Plan and elevation of the chalet-extension to Osman Paşa’s townhouse in Beşiktaş, 1894, architect unknown, BOA, HH. d. 27830.

4.29 Contemporary view of Hereke Kiosk, attributed to Serkis Balyan, İzmit.

4.30 The actual prefabricated kiosk in Hereke assembled for the visit of the German emperor and empress, Le Monde illustré (1898).

4.31 Persian (ʿAcem) Kiosk at Yıldız, photographer and date unknown, Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection, 90508.

4.32 Wooden binding of the photograph album gifted by Wilhelm II to Abdülmecid II depicting the German emperor’s hunting lodge in Rominten, photographer and date unknown, Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection, 91380.

4.33 View of the prefabricated lodge in Rominten, photographer and date unknown, Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection, 91380.

4.34 “Casino Norwegian Style,” M. Thams & Cie.’s Catalogue of Norwegian Houses, after 1889, Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection, 92352.

4.35 Süreyya Paşa’s Nişantaşı townhouse and observation (seyir) pavilion, Collection of Nurhan Atasoy, Istanbul.

4.36 Wooden kiosk above a grotto in the harem garden of Kamil Paşa’s townhouse, Collection of Nurhan Atasoy, Istanbul.

4.37 Kiosk in the garden of Münire Sultan’s mansion, Collection of Nurhan Atasoy, Istanbul.

4.38 Nişantaşı’s “town of pashas” with Süreyya Paşa’s property in the foreground, 1890s.


4.41 Contemporary view of Khedive Abbas II’s Qasr al-Montaza, architect unknown, Alexandria.

4.42 “The private study of the surgeon Cemil Paşa” (operâtör saʿâdetli Cemil Pâşâ hażretleriniñ hücre-i müttâla’aları), Şervet-i Fünûn, no. 378 (1898).

4.43 Charles Dickens’s Swiss chalet, Gad’s Hill, Higham, after 1865.

4.45  Sultan Abdülaziz’s hunting lodge at the Validebağ estate, 1867-1876, attributed to Serkis Balyan, Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection, 90474.

4.46  J. Boussard, “shed for sheep and ibexes at Paris’s *Jardin des plantes,*” in *Constructions et décorations pour jardins, kiosques, orangeries, volières, abris divers* (1881?).

4.47  Cross-section of a stable found among a set of building construction and repair documents, undated, Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection, 93209.

4.48  Emile Thézard, elevation of a chalet and its accompanying pricing legend, from *Petites constructions françaises* (1894).


4.51  Hogélin & Sundström Society’s advertisement for their inexpensive and salubrious homes, *Gènie civil ottomane* (September, 1913).

4.52  Cross-section, elevation, and plan of the “elaborate” (*mükellef*) residence in Mehmed İzzet’s “house” (ev) entry, *Rehber-i Umur-i Beytiyye* (1902).


5.1  “Tophaneli Hasan bin Tahsin Efendi, civil agent in the service of the police force of Galatasaray, his leg injured by a bomb exploding in front of Galatasaray,” Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection, 779-71.

5.2  “Pre-and post-operation photograph of a patient with a rather large hernia” (*gāyet büyük fitik illetine mübtelâ marazânı ameliyâtından akdem ve soňra alınan fotoğrafı*), Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection, 90506.

5.3  *Souvenir*’s Tarnavski binding, Atatürk Library, Istanbul, *Alb. 156*.

5.4  *Souvenir*’s split flyleaf displaying the recycled book and name of the gilder.

5.5  *Souvenir*’s opening shot, the ceremonial greeting spot (*mülāḵāt mahalli*) in the Şale complex of Yıldız.

5.6  *Souvenir*’s closing shot, the promenade of Kağithane.

5.7  Scene from Yıldız’s outer garden, *Souvenir 1905*.

5.8  Scene from Yıldız’s outer garden, *Souvenir 1905*.

5.9  One of the bridges spanning the “pool of the valley” (*dere havâz*) inside Yıldız’s outer garden,
Souvenir 1905.

5.10 A shot from over the bridge depicted in figure 5.9, Souvenir 1905.

5.11 Map of the Maslak estate, undated, Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection, 92586.

5.12 The imperial tile factory in Yıldız’s outer garden, Souvenir 1905.

5.13 The Maslak Pavilion, Souvenir 1905.

5.14 The stud farm in Kağthane, Souvenir 1905.

5.15 The imperial farm of Ayazağa, Souvenir 1905.

5.16 Ma‘iyyet (retinue) Kiosk in the imperial estate of İhlamur (Nüzhetiye), Souvenir 1905.

5.17 The English gardens of the Şale Kiosk, Souvenir 1905.

5.18 The D’Aronco additions to the Şale Kiosk called the ceremonial apartments, Souvenir 1905.

5.19 Photograph of a no longer extant chinoiserie-inspired pavilion in Yıldız, Souvenir 1905.

5.20 Postcard from a Guillaume Berggren photograph depicting Abdülhamid’s selamlik ceremony.

5.21 Vasilaki Kargopoulo in the garden of the Edirne Palace, photographer and date unknown.

5.22 Vasilaki Kargopoulo, photograph of a no longer extant rustic hut in Yıldız’s outer garden, 1879, Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection, 90751.

5.23 Photograph of a no longer extant rustic cabin in Yıldız’s outer garden, Souvenir 1905.

5.24 William Henry Fox Talbot, Gate of Christchurch, 1844.

5.25 “The imperial palace of Yıldız, imperial pavilions of Ayazağa and Kağthane, and the extant properties around them” (Yıldız sarayı-ı hümâyûnuya Ayazağa ve Kâğıdâne kaşr-ı hümâyûnları ve evironmenti civârında vâkı’-‘arâzî), Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection, 92911.

5.26 Celal Esad (Arseven)’s sketch of Yıldız after the Young Turk Revolution, L’Illustration (1909).

5.27 Partitions separating the newly added Ortaköy section of Yıldız from the main waterfront avenue below, Souvenir 1905.

5.28 Picket-fences of the menagerie belonging to Yıldız’s expanded section, Souvenir 1905.

5.29 Halil Paşa’s painting of the entrance to the Çamlıca garden in Recâ’izâde Mahmûd Ekrem, ‘Araba Sevdası, Muşavver Millî Hikâye (1314 [1896]).
NOTE ON TRANSLITERATIONS FROM OTTOMAN TURKISH

I have written out all the transliterations that contain complete diacritical markings myself; these are from unpublished sources. I have otherwise remained faithful to the transliteration systems used by the editors of the published Ottoman Turkish sources.

I have made sure to provide complete diacritical markings of frequently repeated words like mābeyn and selāmlık the first time they appear, retaining the modern Turkish spelling in their subsequent appearances.

NOTE ON TRANSLATIONS

I have supplied the translations of Ottoman, Turkish, German, French and Persian sources myself, unless a published source or the generous help of a colleague is cited.
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BOA  Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (Prime Ministry Ottoman State Archives)
DBİA  Düren Den Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi
DİA  Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi
İAK  İstanbul Atatürk Kitaplığı (Istanbul Atatürk Library)
İÜMK  İstanbul Üniversitesi Nadir Eserler Koleksiyonu (Istanbul University Central Library, Rare Works Collection)
PVSE  Pertevniyal Valide Sultan Evrakı (Pertevniyal Valide Sultan Archives)
TSME  Topkapı Saray Müzesi Evrakı (Topkapı Palace Museum Archives)
I.

Introduction to Abdülhamid II’s Yıldız Palace

Soon after the turbulence that characterized the months between the failed reinstitution of the constitution and the deposition of Abdülhamid II (r. 1876-1909) had momentarily subsided, Francis McCullagh, a British war correspondent who lived through these events in Istanbul, was excited to report that the doors of Yıldız, the mysterious prison-like palace of the mad sultan, “afflicted with a monomania of fear,”¹ were finally going to be opened following the government’s Young Turk takeover:

For many years past Yildiz has been regarded by all Turkey as an ogre’s den into which the best of the Osmanli [sic] were dragged and devoured; as an impregnable stronghold wherein priceless booty was accumulated; as a mysterious residence littered with evidences of a thousand crimes, undermined by secret passages, and provided with all the mysterious chambers, labyrinths, trap-doors, &c. which one would naturally expect to find in the house of a man who has all his life employed a staff of translators to render into Turkish the dregs of the low-class, sensational novels of intrigue and crime that are written in Europe.

The fall of the hoary monster who inhabited this lair constituted therefore, so far as the Ottomans were concerned, one of the most sensational events of their whole amazing history, inasmuch as it laid bare to them all the secrets of Yıldız Kiosk.²

As soon as its royal inhabitants left Yıldız, the new bureaucrats of the incumbent constitutional monarchy—the Committee of Union and Progress, the political body of the Young Turk Movement and the new titular sultan, Mehmed V (r. 190-18)—set out to itemize the contents of the vacated grounds. McCullagh likened this grueling task to sending a “tax-collector to make


² Ibid., 287.
out a list of the goods in Ali Baba’s cave.” Aided by one of the eunuchs, whose life was spared for his knowledge of the location of safes full of bank-notes, company shares, gold, silver, decorations, medals, and jewelry, the commission spent months compiling lists, numbering and reallocating objects, furniture, and books, dispersing the thousands of animals that made up the imperial menagerie, and classifying the palace’s archives, which included countless unopened reports (journals) from sycophants who sought Abdülhamid’s protection. However, all the parties involved, including McCullagh, were utterly dismayed by what they saw. Expecting a treasure trove of secrets, quirky layouts, and invaluable imperial objects, they were instead stuck with an abundance of ordinary Oriental knick-knacks, Victorian technologies, and the kinds of items—Japanese fans, hanging scrolls, and screens—easily attainable from a specialized Pera merchant or department store: “Enough rosaries, sticks, and chibouks were discovered to start a hundred Oriental antique merchants in business, but the only objects in the accumulation of which Abd- ul-Hamid displayed the true zeal of a collector were pianos, gramophones, clocks, shirts, collars, keys, and modern fire-arms, especially revolvers.”

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3 McCullagh, 287. For the inventories of this commission, see Murat Candemir, Yıldız’da Kaos ve Tasfiye (Istanbul: İli Kültür Sanat, 2007). For a more focused analysis of the contents of Yıldız’s imperial museum that were itemized by the commission, see Murat Candemir and Hanefi Kutluoğlu, Bir Cihan Devletinin Tasfiyesi: Yıldız Sarayı Müzesi Tasfiye Komisyonu Defteri (Istanbul: Çamlıca, 2010). On the formation and early work of the commission, the memoirs of Halid Ziya (d. 1945), the novelist and then-head-scribe of Mehmed V is indispensible; see, Halid Ziya Uşaklıgil, Saray ve Ötesi: Son Hâtraları (Istanbul: Özgür, 2003).


5 McCullagh, 297. The interest of the nineteenth-century sultans in Victorian technological equipment can be surveyed in the nicely categorized publications of the Turkish National Palaces Institution (Milli Saraylar), a branch of the Turkish Parliament; Milli Saraylar Aydınlatma Araçları Koleksiyonu: Chandeliers and Lamps in the National Palaces (Istanbul: TBMM, 1998); Milli Saraylar Isıtma Araçları Koleksiyonu: Heating Devices in the National
The sultan’s interests were not unlike those of a well-to-do European bourgeois. He wanted his shirts aplenty and starched, his ashtrays handy, and American gilt clocks in each of the rooms he most frequently occupied, always synchronized. The cataloguers discovered many trade journals from which he bought objects, furniture, locks, revolvers, and mail-order, prefabricated houses. He referred to the quarters he inhabited in Yıldız as his home. The structures he built for himself and his family were modest in scale and cost—“he required little more space than a cat and was evidently not a monarch who delighted in striding up and down lofty halls.” Their interior furnishings that in their abundance resembled “an auctioneer’s showroom,” displayed an array of styles from Japanese and art nouveau, to Empire and Louis XVI.

Yıldız’s historiography has been overwhelmingly dominated by narratives that align the palace with Abdülhamid, its longest resident and patron. Numerous accounts of the site penned by supporters of the Young Turk Movement read the palace’s architectural idiosyncrasies as representative of Abdülhamid’s twisted mind and of the paralyzing fears that made him a prisoner of his own home: “his house is a standing monument to the greatness of his cowardice and the littleness of his mind.” The most famous Ottoman version of these accounts linking the palace’s labyrinthine unwieldiness with its proprietor is the two-volume Abdülhamid II and the Era of his Rule: His Personal and Political Life (‘Abdülhamid-i Sâni Devr-i Salıhanatı, hayât-i

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6 Ziya Şakir, Sultan Hamit, Şahsiyeti ve Hususiyetleri (İstanbul: Muallim Naci Gücuyener Anadolu Türk Kitap Deposu, 1943), 328.

7 McCullagh, 258.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid., 255.
written by Osman Nuri (d. 1909), an obscure military member of the Young Turks, who died before seeing his publication through. This work, which is indiscriminately cited today in discussions of Yıldız’s architectural layout, has often been mistakenly attributed, but it was not, in fact, the product of an official court chronicler nor was it based on archival sources of any kind, let alone the memoirs of individuals who lived or worked at the site. Rather, the work is composed of a collage of often grossly exaggerated stories translated and assembled from foreign newspaper articles and travel narratives. Abdurrahman Şeref (d. 1925), the last court-appointed historian of the Ottoman state under Abdülhamid’s successor Mehmed V (r. 1909-1918), likens Abdülhamid II’s Yıldız to the garden of Şeddād. A barrage of these kinds of texts, whose impartiality and evidential value are deeply questionable, has continuously crippled our understanding of the palace and its architectural history. This is, in part, the reason why a monograph on this site has never been produced: simply parsing through what is real and what is not is a task unto itself.

10 From what I have been able to identify, especially for the palace and garden related sections, Osman Nuri seems to have translated indiscriminately from Bernhard Stern, Abdul Hamid II, seine Famillie und sein Hofstaat, nach eigenen Ermittelungen (Budapest: S. Deutsch, 1901). Other red flags that make Osman Nuri’s text unreliable are the invented names of a lot of the palace employees, especially the local ones, during a time when the archives of the palace contained meticulous lists of its personnel, and many local outsiders had palace informants to fill in the missing details in their narratives.

11 Şeddād (Shaddād) is thought to be the despotic ruler of the tribe of ʿĀd in Yemen, who denied the primacy of God and built a garden in the likeness of paradise and with lofty pillars. Mention of this city appears in the Koran as the garden of Irem (Iram). In the view of this historian, Abdülhamid was not unlike Şeddād, an oppressor, while Yıldız’s high, impenetrable walls were like the mythical pillars of the notorious ancient ruler’s Irem. Both tyrannical rulers were doomed to fall, along with their ostentatious dwellings. See Abdurrahman Şeref, Son Vak’anıvis Abdurrahman Şeref Efendi Tarihi, II. Meşrutiyet Olayları (1908-1909), ed. Bayram Kodaman and Mehmet Ali Ünal (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basimevi, 1996), 9.

12 In its sensationalist tendencies and popularity at the turn of the century, the European counterpart (and possible precedent) to Osman Nuri’s work is Georges Dorys, pseud., Abdul-Hamid intime (Paris: P. V. Stock, 1901). This scathing, pseudonymous biography quickly received numerous translations and a wide readership; it was written by Anastase Adossidis, an early member of the Young Turks and the son of the former governor of Crete, Adossidis Paşa. For Adossidis, see M. Şükru Hanioglu, The Young Turks in Opposition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 183 and 189; and Kemal H. Karpat, The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 444.
Some scholars, seduced by these undeniably attractive apocryphal narratives, still try to discover secret, underground tunnels (of which there are none), and continue to be fixated by the notion that Abdülhamid slept in different rooms every night to bewilder his assassins. It is also difficult to reinscribe a site that has received designations like “ogre’s den,” or “the lair of a hoary monster,” as one that merits examination within the broader historiography of Ottoman architecture, especially when the cultural output of the nineteenth century is neglected by the field of Islamic art as a period irrecoverably subservient to Western forms, ideas, and modes of representation.\(^\text{13}\)

It is true that to many early-twentieth century Ottomans, who were seeking a parliamentary monarchy, the eradication of censorship, and a level of transparency in the remaining decades of the Ottoman sovereignty, Abdülhamid and his palace were infamously enigmatic and deserving of public enmity. In their eyes, Yıldız had become “a fortress of despotism” and “a synonym for dark misgovernment.”\(^\text{14}\) Its former occupants and employees frequently laced their accounts with sensationalist stories to appeal to this very audience—an audience that was ready to despise the dethroned sultan and the spaces and symbols of his rule.

\(^{13}\) As scholars of Ottoman art and architecture of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, we always seem to have to preface our historiographical concern that what we study is perpetually left out with this kind of plea. However, recent scholarship on the period is gradually shedding this burden of having to continually carve out a discursive niche representing levels of continuity (and rupture) with the past to be able to find a voice. To my mind foremost among these works in the eighteenth century are those of Tülay Artan that I cite extensively in the subsequent chapter. For the nineteenth century, I have benefited tremendously from the scholarship of Ahmet Ersoy, especially his most recent publication: *Architecture and the Late Ottoman Historical Imaginary: Reconfiguring the Architectural Past in a Modernizing Empire* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015). Among the architectural histories that are dismissive of Yıldız’s lack of architectural cohesion, monumentality, and “palatial magnificence” is Doğan Kuban’s entry on the site in his *Ottoman Architecture* (Woodbridge: Antique Collectors Club, 2010), 626-628. Although Kuban’s interpretation is dispirited, he does identify Yıldız as a trendsetting site in the late-nineteenth century garden culture, an argument that I make in Chapters 3 and 4. There are others in the genre of heritage studies that are written to raise cultural awareness of the fragmented palace, which although lagging in historically grounded arguments, still attempt to place the site’s idiosyncratic melding of Ottoman traditional palace building and landscaping with studied foreign imports; see Metin Sözen, *Devletin Evi Saray* (Istanbul: Sandoz Kültür Yayınları, 1990), 201-202.

\(^{14}\) McCullagh, 299.
These narratives had quickly cornered a profitable market through the popular dailies. Carrying a spectrum of favorable to hostile impressions, and with some written in response to others, they not only collectively dominated the world of newspaper serials but also continued to appear well into the second half of the twentieth century.\(^\text{15}\)

Perhaps the single most stirring anecdote reflecting the level of public antipathy to Yıldız comes from a close member of Abdülhamid’s family. Aided by an atmosphere of freedom felt in Istanbul immediately after the sultan’s removal, his great-niece Mevhibe Celaeddin was able to visit the palace, which was opened to the public by the Young Turk government for a period of time before Mehmed V moved in. She provides one of the most compelling anecdotal descriptions of the public’s reaction to Abdülhamid’s deposition and Yıldız’s place in their urban consciousness. When she first enters the site, Mevhibe is struck by the masses touring the palace grounds; Yıldız seemed to her to have become an excursion site (mesâr).\(^\text{16}\) But gradually the true nature of this popular interest revealed itself. Participants in this outing were there to display their anger in visceral ways. Mevhibe was horrified to witness a woman coaxing her son to publicly urinate on the Gobelin upholsteries in one of the chalets in the palace’s private garden. There is a long history of gawking at and despoiling a deposed ruler’s official dwelling that has continued into the present day. Only recently, in February 2014, when the Ukrainian president

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\(^\text{15}\) The most famous among these serialized recollections of life under Abdülhamid’s palace which were later published as memoirs are: Ayşe Osmanoğlu, Babam Abdülhamid (Istanbul: Güven Yayınları, 1960); Tahsin Paşa, Sultan Abdülhamid: Tahsin Paşa’nın Yıldız Hatraları (Istanbul: Boğaziçi Yayınları, 1990); and Ismail Müşat Mayakon, Yıldız’da Neler Gördüm (Istanbul: Sertel Matbaası, 1940). The beauty of this triad is that the authors represent different groups within the palace; Ayşe Sultan is the sultan’s daughter and views the site as her home. Tahsin Paşa is its principal administrator and a functionary working closely with Abdülhamid, and Mayakon, a lowly scribe. An overlooked but equally informative serial-cum-memoir is Örikağasızade Hasan Sırrı’s Sultan Abdülhamit Devri Hatraları ve Saray İdaresi (Istanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 2007). This last work is possibly the most insightful with regard to the administrative breakdown of the palace and its functionaries, and surprisingly is featured the least in the historiographies of Yıldız and in the biographies of Abdülhamid.

Victor Yanukovych was ousted by the Euromaidan demonstrations, the protestors opened up to
the public to experience his one-hundred-hectare residence and park, the Mezhyhirya, which not
unlike Abdülhamid’s Yıldız, featured a Finnish-made Victorian chalet, a zoo, a barge, shooting
range, and gazebos.  

In the early days of the Turkish Republic, it was precisely the enigmatic nature of Yıldız
that made it a perfect hideaway for the military school of this new nation, which prided itself on
the might of its army. Presumably in an effort to parallel the Hamidian spy network that was
thought to have been at the palace’s core (which was not, in fact, as organized as has been
speculated), the republic’s intelligence agency also set up shop in one of the palace’s buildings.  
The fact that there is not a single extant locally drawn map of the complex from the reign of
Abdüllhamid is, I believe, connected to the site’s furtive republican transformation into a military
zone and the subsequent redaction of the blueprints of its headquarters. It is also telling that the
famous insurance maps of Jacques Pervititch (or Pervitić), which date from the first decade of
the republic, gloss over the palace with an abrupt transition from the busy commercial center of
Beşiktaş to the more residential district of Ortaköy. Yıldız’s martial inhabitants commissioned
a meager first attempt at a monograph of the palace with indiscriminate borrowings from Osman
Nuri’s work.


18 Süleyman Kâni İrtem, Abdülhamid Devrinde Hafiyelik ve Sansür: Abdülhamid’e Verilen Jurnalier (İstanbul Temel Yayınları, 1999); Emre Gör, İI. Abdülhamid’in Hafıye Teşkilatı ve Teşkilat Hakkında bir Risale Örneği ‘Hafiyelerin Listesi’ (İstanbul: Ötüken Neşriyat, 2015). Also see Mayakon, 179-188.


20 Fuad Ezgü, Yıldız Sarayı Tarihiçesi (İstanbul: Harb Akademileri Komutanlığı, 1962).
The palace was soon parceled out even further (fig. 1.1).21 The Şale compound, which under Abdülmecid II was designed to host his imperial guests, came to be operated as a casino by an American in the 1920s, while the site’s park became a public promenade.22 The numerous apartments and individual chalets of the sultan’s family—the palace’s most private, residential section—were turned into a university. A mammoth curvilinear hotel took over a segment of its gardens, towering over the elegant timber Ertuğrul convent, mosque, tomb and library complex of the North African shaykh Muhammed Zafir Efendi (d. 1903) of the Shadhiliyya Sufi order, lauded today as the best example of Ottoman art nouveau architecture. Today, a modest research institution shares the same space with a building that was recently converted into a ceremonial hall for the use of the prime minister. What is more, there are plans to restore this fragmented site to its full glory as a garden palace, not to open it up to the public as a museum like the Topkapı Palace, but to convert it into the Istanbul residence of the Turkish president.23 The official name selected to describe this project is külliye, a word that is appended to describe Ottoman mosque complexes with many charitable adjacencies and never applied to secular structures like palaces or civic institutions.

Although Yıldız still occupies a sizable portion of the urban core of Istanbul’s European side, the complex history of its fragmentation and its incredibly voluminous and hard-to-parse archives have caused scholars to approach it with astonishing trepidation.24 And, although parts

21 For a brief history of the site’s fragmentation, see Çelik Gülersoy, “Yıldız Parkı,” in Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi (DBIA), vol. 7 (Istanbul: Kültür Bakanlığı ve Tarih Vakfı, 1993), 519-520.


of the site have been reconfigured as museums—the beautifully restored Şale compound administered by the National Museums (an administrative branch of the Turkish Parliament) and the more haphazard Istanbul City Museum converted from the palace’s aides-de-camp building by the municipality—on any given day they receive only a handful of visitors. It is surprising and at the same time incredibly sad that such a large and unorthodox site that bears evidence of nineteenth-century Ottoman material culture is willfully forgotten. One scurries while walking along its boundary walls always fearing that one is trespassing in an area belonging to a governmental body, and more often than not, guards appear to tell you that, in fact, you are.

In the few historical descriptions of the site—mostly ensconced in encyclopedia entries—the most surprisingly overlooked fact is that for more than a century Yıldız provided a blank canvas, a literal and metaphorical landscape, onto which its various patrons projected their personal architectural predilections, and where they reinvented and played out their courtly status and imperial identities. If this dissertation is nominally a chronological history of Yıldız’s evolution from a royal retreat to a palace complex, it is also an examination of how certain royal personages fashioned themselves and their monarchic ambitions through this site. Principal among these patrons were not, as would be expected, the sultans of the reform era, but their powerful mothers, the valide sultans. Yıldız first emerged as the royal retreat of these women and continued to function as such until Abdülhamid II ordained it his palace in 1878. This fascinating and unknown history of ownership is what I detail in Chapter 2.

While Mahmud II (r. 1808-39) was rebuilding the royal waterfront residence of Çırağan as his official palace, he was trying to redefine the architectural symbols of his rule. The sultan was not the only one, however, who was looking to recast himself as a reformist. His hired

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25 For the best-known overview of Yıldız, see Afife Batur, “Yıldız Sarayı,” in Tanzimat’tan Cumhuriyet’e Türkiye Ansiklopedisi, vol. 4 (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1985), 1048-1054; and in DBİA, vol. 7 (İstanbul: Kültür Bakanlığı ve Tarih Vakfı, 1993), 520-527.
Bavarian head-gardener Christian Sester, appointed to restore this new palace’s vast and hilly backyard, also fashioned a complex identity for himself in the Ottoman cultural landscape of the 1830s. This was a period when most of the bulwark institutions like the janissary corps on which the state had rested for centuries had recently been overhauled, causing every major player, from sultans to *valides* and viziers to bureaucrats, to scurry to redefine their public roles. In the relatively freewheeling atmosphere of imperial recastings, a talented and status-seeking foreign gardener could become much more than the sum of his horticultural knowledge and past experience. Over the course of his thirty-year life in the Ottoman Empire, he appears to have successfully gone native and become a confidante to the sultans and high-ranking palace officials, and a guardian angel to European renegades and expatriates. European newspapers even reported that Sester had been elevated to knighthood by the Ottoman court. The monumental landscaping project in Çırağan that was initiated by Mahmud II, and continued by Abdülmecid (r. 1839-61) thanks to Sester’s local fame and international expertise is central to Chapter 3.26

The palatial and extra-courtly gardening trends that we observe in the Ottoman Istanbul of the nineteenth century developed in tandem with the interests of the sultans and their mothers, and the foreign and local experts they employed in crafting ingenious landscaping projects to complement their new residences. The horticultural developments in Yıldız under the *valides* as well as the gardens of Çırağan under Mahmud II and his son and successor Abdülmecid pioneered an enthusiasm for horticulture that permeated all levels of society, from the city’s affluent tradesmen and low-level state officials to members of the court’s inner circle. All the

26 An abridged version of this chapter has recently been published; see Deniz Türker, “‘I don’t want orange trees, I want something that others don’t have’: Ottoman Head-Gardeners after Mahmud II,” *International Journal of Islamic Architecture (IJIA) 4:2, Special Issue on the Conception and Use of Expertise in the Architecture of the Islamic World since 1800* (2015): 257–285.
city’s houses and gardens began to look like Yıldız, its winding park, artificial lakes, concrete grottoes, gazebos, and various other types of garden architecture. This kind of unabashed, one-to-one modeling was felt the strongest during Abdülhamid’s long tenure, and newspaper articles, photographs, and memoirs from the period offer direct evidence of such architectural emulation. The palace’s buildings, modest in scale and price, but easy to customize, motivated the local residential building industry to answer to the demand of the city’s locals from varying socioeconomic backgrounds and allow them to make decisions about the design of their own homes all the way down to the roof fringes, window frames, and hobby-specific rooms.

The remainder of this chapter will provide an architectural overview of Yıldız, as it appeared while it served as Abdülhamid’s palace. I will attempt to underline how he conceived it and how some of his closest family members, court officials, and his most intimate guests saw it. Instead of framing it as a palace built around courtyards, as a handful of short descriptions that identify tenuous linkages to Topkapı Palace have tried to do, I will discuss prominent segments of the Hamidian compound, which were intended to serve purposes similar to its antecedents, functional and ceremonial, public and private.27 To his privileged viewers, Abdülhamid wanted to appear attentive, at times perhaps overbearing so.28 Therefore, the souvenirs and the spaces inside Yıldız that commemorated these relations and encounters were always charged and ceaselessly celebratory. While walking through the vacated palace, the British journalist McCullagh poignantly observes, “one is inclined to conclude that the house had been furnished

27 There are a number of courtyard-centered descriptions of Yıldız. Afife Batur’s encyclopedia entry and Fuad Ezgü’s brief history, for example, follow this architectural principle in analyzing the site, but see also Bülent Bilgin, “Yıldız Sarayı,” Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi (DIA), vol. 43 (Istanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2013), 541-544.

28 Selim Deringil’s seminal work on Abdülhamid’s separate and meticulously crafted appeals to his subjects and foreign allies highlights the strategic symbols of his rule, see The Well-ProtectedDomains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909 (New York: I.B. Tauris, 1998).
with presents, books and samples of furniture, &c., sent by foreign firms and foreign
potentates.” The ensuing section will serve to clarify the physicality of a space that has been
the subject of a great number of speculative interpretations. My approach to the description of
Abdülhamic’s Yıldız will be a centripetal one: beginning with the broadest possible designations
of the site and its relationship to its larger urban environment, I will gradually narrow my focus
towards a definition of its internal parts by means of a comprehensive narrative walkthrough.

Abdülhamic was a meditative and frugal architectural patron. Even the most defamatory
of biographies spares countless pages detailing his prudent patronage, his “natural taste and
talent for architecture,” and his “marked preference for the modern and for the new.” One of
them highlights his ability to read plans, request scale models and often design his own
buildings:

More than one plan, executed with his own hand, has surprised his architects. He
understands their explanations very well, and recognizes the correctness of the
observations they make...For the smallest building he insists on the construction of a
model elaborately studied out, in which all the details are shown with the most
conscientious minutiae, so that the building he is putting up is only a mathematical
enlargement. He counts himself, in advance, the number of bricks which should be used
in building, and keeps this model, after having had it signed by the architect on each of
the sides representing the façades of this edifice, in order to be able to see later if his
orders have been strictly carried out.

Besides the natural protection that the site provided, two other factors that brought
Abdülhamic to Yıldız were its assumed air quality (shielded, as it was, against the lodos, the
warm, southwesterly wind the sultan deemed bad for his health), and its spaciousness, which

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29 McCullagh, 259.

30 I have relied on the 1901 English translation of Dorys’s Abdul-Hamid intime; see Georges Dorys, The Private Life
of the Sultan of Turkey (New York: Appleton and Co., 1901), 118.

31 Dorys, Private Life, 118-119.

32 M. Metin Hülalü. Sultan II. Abdülhamid’in Sürgün Günleri: Hususi Doktoru Atif Hüseyin Bey’ in Hatrattı, 1909-
1918 (İstanbul: Pan Yayıncılık, 2007), 340. This underutilized text is perhaps the most intimate biography of the
sultan in exile. It is a much more reliable primary source on Abdülhamid’s character and beliefs than the apocryphal
satisfied his desire to maintain the active lifestyle that he had grown accustomed to in the great outdoors afforded by sites such as the Maslak and Kağıthane Pavilions. In fact, the understudied railway project that I will expand upon later in this chapter is indicative of his vision to turn Yıldız into an Alpine estate with its requisite typologies. “Above the green slopes, in among the tree-trunks, we passed innumerable châlets,” one visitor to his palace would later observe. Another ascertained that “The Sultan’s own residence is a graceful and simple wooden building of the Swiss style of architecture.”

The final two chapters of this dissertation explore Abdülhamid’s architectural taste for economical, light wooden structures and read it within a global nineteenth-century country villa aesthetic. A somewhat fractious foreign diplomat recalls having shivered in one of these structures while meeting the sultan: “These houses, built in haste from light materials and barely heated, are glacial. I have rarely been as cold as I was during that audience” (Ces maisons batées à la hâte, en matériaux légers et à peine chauffées sont glaciales. J’ai eu rarement aussi froid que pendant cette audience). Even Abdülhamid’s deeply confessional recounting of his princely years to a physician, appointed to his care while in exile, often revisits these airy mansions, gardens and estates he inhabited. One of them in particular highlights how he disagreed with his uncle, the then-reigning sultan Abdülayız, on the latter’s suggestion to rebuild

autobiographies written after his deposition that have been accepted as his: Abdülhamid II, II. Abdülhamid’in Hattra Defteri (Istanbul: Selek Yayınları, 1960); Abdülhamit Anlattıyor (Ankara: Kardeş Matbaası, 1964); and İsmet Bozdağ ed., Abdülhamid’in Hattra Defteri: Belgeler ve Resimlerle (Istanbul: Kervan Yayınları, 1975). Scholars continue to refer to these biographies as Abdülhamid’s dictated recollections, even after their real writers have been identified.

I return to a more focused analysis of the imperial spaces that Abdülhamid inhabited before he settled in Yıldız in Chapter 5.

Anna Bowman Dodd, In the Palaces of the Sultan (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1903), 71.

Dorys, Private Life, 121.

Prince Abdülhamid’s Tarabya yalı in stone: “I do not fancy buildings made of stone and bricks (kārgīr). In my opinion, they are better wooden,” (Ben ise kargirden hoşlanłam, böyle ahşap olması daha iyidir).³⁷

These last two chapters challenge the preconceived notion that Yıldız’s buildings were willfully eclectic and were impulsively and haphazardly borrowed from examples found in the period’s famed world expositions.³⁸ Broadly, they underscore Abdülhamid’s preference for chalets, identify their sources, and consider the way he used wooden pavilions to counter the prevailing palatial taste for Tanzimat neoclassicism that he intensely associated with his predecessors. Whether or not his architectural choices were a deliberate affront to the architectural culture of the preceding period, Abdülhamid saw in wooden kiosks and pavilions the best means to display crafts. Instead of reminiscing about his vast palace while in exile, his thoughts wandered again and again to his mentorship of capable artisans (erbāb-i ṣanʿat) in the ateliers of Yıldız, and their skills in carpentry, woodcarving, and turnery, as well as his own creations. Had he not been a sultan, he said, he would run an arts-and-crafts school.³⁹

Yıldız’s history cannot be written without photograph albums, which were undeniably central, in representational terms, to Abdülhamid II and his reign. The fifth and final chapter focuses on the last and most intimate, previously unknown photograph album that the sultan commissioned of the site in 1905. The album exhibits Yıldız in its most up-to-date incarnation and in the way that Abdülhamid II wanted it to be seen: grounds that required active engagement, that were simultaneously intimate and sublime, and that incorporated both

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³⁷ Hülagü, 151-152.
³⁸ Georgeon, Sultan Abdülhamid (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2006), 178-179.
³⁹ Hülagü, 221-222, and 337.
untouched and cultivated landscapes. Created around the time that Marcel Proust started writing his epic semi-autobiographical society-tale À la recherche du temps perdu, a saga that commences with the narrator’s recollection of the long nature walks he took in his youth along the fictional village of Combray, and contemporaneous, also, with Leoš Janáček’s famous piano cycle On an Overgrown Path (Po zarostlém chodníčku), the album is about exploratory walking and sightseeing in Istanbul’s imperial sites and promenades, a representation of nineteenth-century private parks and wanderlust. But, more importantly, the album craftily infuses Abdülhamid’s biography of places into its visual narrative. The chapter draws formal comparisons with earlier, better-known photograph albums of the palace that were prepared for an international audience. In contrast to its renowned antecedents, this album brings us closest to Abdülhamid’s conception of Ottoman imperial spaces through the many versions that he inhabited during his princely years. These sites that he occupied until the age of thirty-four deeply influenced his architectural patronage in Yıldız. Therefore, I conceptualize this album as a revealing visual biography of the most elusive of sultans and his similarly elusive palace. In its attempt to reveal the history of this enigmatic space and the intentions of its patrons, the dissertation comes full circle: it begins with and makes its way back to Abdülhamid.

a. YILDIZ AS A FORTRESS, YILDIZ AS A CITY, YILDIZ AS A NEIGHBORHOOD

To Yıldız’s contemporaries and later historians, Abdülhamid’s palace appeared to carry architectural ambitions beyond those of an imperial residence (fig. 1.2). The sultan, for fear of

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40 Pedestrianism and nature walks were incredibly popular pastimes in this period; not only mini-manifestoes on walking, novels, paintings and hiking guidebooks, but also photograph albums increasingly detailed these pleasure activities. Two works have historicized this nineteenth-century novelty; see Edwin Valentine Mitchell, The Art of Walking (New York: Loring & Mussey, 1934); Rebecca Solnit, Wanderlust: A History of Walking (New York: Viking, 2000); and Geoff Nicholson, The Lost Art of Walking, The History Science, Philosophy, and Literature of Pedestrianism (New York: Riverhead Books, 2008).
being dethroned, or worse, assassinated, retreated from urban life and public visibility, and over the course of thirty years, built himself a city.\footnote{In the nineteenth century, a sovereign’s fear of assassination was only too real. Most famously, multiple attempts were made on Queen Victoria’s life. See Paul Thomas Murphy, \textit{Shooting Victoria: Madness, Mayhem, and the Rebirth of the British Monarchy} (New York: Pegasus, 2012). The Qajar ruler Nasir al-Din Shah was killed by an Iranian revolutionary, Mirza Reza Kermani. A more obvious reminder is perhaps the fact that the nominal cause of World War I was the assassination of the crown-prince of Austria-Hungary Franz Ferdinand by Gavriolo Princip, a member of the Serbian nationalist group, Young Bosnia (\textit{Mlada Bosna}).} The first visitor to write about the palace as a city in microcosm was the Qajar ruler Muzaffar al-Din Shah (r. 1896-1907). The shah saw the palace in its most complete state, and almost at the end of Abdülhamid’s thirty-three-year reign. On the return leg of his third and last trip to Europe, the shah was hosted by Abdülhamid in Yıldız, in the lavish garden compound of the Şale Kiosk, which was built and expanded many times over to accommodate, entertain, and impress foreign heads-of-state.

Perhaps not as succinct and expressive a diarist as his father Nasir al-Din Shah (r. 1848-96), who had pioneered European diplomatic travel for the Qajar state, Muzaffar al-Din Shah highlighted what he found interesting in his sojourn through frequent repetition. In his travelogue, Yıldız’s city-like appearance receives this kind of emphatic treatment. The shah observes, “Yıldız is actually a small town surrounded by walls and is exclusive to the sultan and the royal family. It is not only a garden and building, but a royal citadel which is quite vast and extended.”\footnote{Muzaffar al-Din Shāh Qājār, \textit{Safarnāmah-i Farangistān: safar-i avval} (Tihrān: Intishārāt-i Sharq, 1363 [1984]), 220.} A few pages later, he repeats: “Yıldız palace, which is actually the fortress (\textit{arg}) of government and is a town unto itself.”\footnote{Ibid.}

Nasir al-Din Shah’s experience of this site in 1867 as the guest of Sultan Abdülaziz (r. 1861-76) was remarkably different from that of his son. Then constituting Çirağan’s backyard, the many “detached structures” that would be absorbed into Abdülhamid’s palace had just begun...
to be built when Nasir al-Din surveyed them from a carriage. The buildings whose construction the shah witnessed must have been the two masonry pleasure pavilions, the Malta and Çadir kiosks that occupied the northern and southernmost knobs of the imperial park (figs. 1.3–1.4).44 According to Nasir al-Din, this site was conceived as Abdülaziz’s private zoological garden boasting specimens that the shah had not seen even in Europe.45 Here, Nasir al-Din encountered peacocks, a roaring tiger, a leopard, an aviary that housed rare Australian golden pheasants, and dovecotes filled with pigeons. The Azizian version of the site carried architectural echoes of Napoleon III’s and Empress Eugenie’s Jardin zoologique d’acclimatation inside Paris’s Bois de Bologne—rustic animal sheds of wood, wire-fencing, and thatched roofs, miniature structures for the guests’ respite, dainty gazebos, and neoclassical island hermitages. In two short decades, and from one shah to the next, ricocheting avenues, buildings, and intricate street patterns had already been laid over a landscape that would become Abdülhamid’s city:

Yıldız garden, which is in the middle of the Ottoman lands, is known as sarāy. As we mentioned, it is a town [shahr] with several edifices [‘imārāt], a forest [jangal], a hunting field [shikārgāh], a lake [daryācha], and various facilities for excursion [asbāb-i tafarruq]. It also includes excellent barracks [sarbāzkhāna]; up to thirty thousand regular troops reside in this garden. In fact, it is an enormous citadel [ark] surrounded by very solid walls and fortifications. No one without the permission of the government is allowed in or out… A museum, a library, a zoo, a number of workshops [fabrik], several private residences for the sultan’s family [haramkhāna], and all equipment of a great Ottoman royal apparatus [dastgāh-i sultanat-i buzurg-i ‘umānī] is provided in the Yıldız palace complex [sarāy].46

Indeed, the site’s high and mighty walls, which for the palace’s nineteenth-century observers bore an ominous quality resonating with the seclusion of the sultan, turned the palace

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46 Safarnāmah-i Farangistān, 221-222. I thank my colleague Farshid Emami for helping me with the English translation of this passage; I have preserved the glosses from the original text that he has provided in the Persian transliteration.
into a fortress. Today the congested urban sprawl and a modern hotel encroaching upon its walls obscure what must have been an intimidating physical presence in the lives of the nineteenth-century residents of Beşiktaş and Ortaköy. Like the shoreline walls of the Topkapı Palace that protected it from possible threats from the land and sea, Abdülhamid erected walls around his complex to shield his court from a potential siege by Russian battleships on the Bosphorus during the Russo-Turkish War that ended in 1878, and also from insurgents against his sovereignty who might try to storm the palace.47 The infamous case of the Young Ottoman journalist-theologian Ali Suavi, who in 1878 attempted a coup by charging into Çırağan from its shore in an effort to free and reinstall the deposed sultan Murad V, strengthened Abdülhamid’s resolve never to leave Yıldız.48 It is not surprising then that to Muzaffar al-Din, Yıldız resembled a fortress (ark). Another factor that probably contributed to his observations is the fact that Gulistan, the shah’s palace complex in Tehran, which was made up of a variety of pavilions like Yıldız, was built inside the Safavid ruler Shah Tahmasp’s sixteenth-century fortifications.49

Yıldız’s interior partitions reinforced the fortress-like appearance created by its monumental outer walls. The Romantic-novelist Anna Bowman Dodd (d. 1929), who accompanied the American ambassadorial delegation to Abdülhamid’s court a few years before Muzaffar al-Din Shah’s visit, was similarly struck by the palace’s countless inner walls. To her, Yıldız appeared to be a “medieval,” “living fortress,” made up of “walls within walls.”50 In her observations “the chief residence of His Majesty, the harem, and the pavilions where his younger

47 Georgeon, Sultan Abdülhamid, 174-175.

48 Ibid., 175.


50 Dodd, 74 and 82.
sons and their households live,” were enclosed within an inner wall, like the keep of a fortress, and set on a terrace occupying the summit of the highest hill.\footnote{Dodd, 74.}

The somewhat apocryphal descriptions of Yıldız found in The Private Life of the Sultan of Turkey, a lurid biography written under the pseudonym Georges Dorys and likely commissioned by the Young Turks as one of many anti-Hamidian narratives at the turn of the century, imagined this segment of the palace as a hexagonal fortress. In Dorys’s imaginings, it constituted “what is popularly called the Small Enclosure of the Palace, the iron doors of which, opening only on the outside, could not be forced in case of a popular rising or military mutiny.”\footnote{Dorys, Private Life, 120.}

Impenetrable doors, gateways, fences, barriers and walls were central, both physically and metaphorically to Abdülhamid’s reign. Even the soldiers and guards that lined the palace walls or accompanied the sultan to his highly ceremonial public Friday prayers (Cum’ə selâmilîği) were often described as a “wall of steel” or a “fence of glistening muskets.”\footnote{Dodd, 49.} Moreover, Dodd likened the crowded protocol of a diplomatic reception for the American delegation, which the sultan attended with his “aides-de-camp, household guards, officers, courtiers, and even priests [imams],” to a silent progression through a “living wall of eyes:”\footnote{Ibid., 88.}

The shapes of uniformed men met one at every turning. A line of tall officerly figures would be passed, framed in one of the long, damask-hung passages. Groups of others, close to the doorways of salons, stood as if posing for caryatids…young officers in showy uniforms caught the eye and held it though the groups were rooms and rooms beyond, in the distant perspective.\footnote{Ibid.}
Yıldız’s most circumspect historiographers are those who have built their observations on Muzaffar al-Din’s repetitive rendering of the palace as an urban settlement. In the only useful but limited encyclopedia entry on the palace, Afife Batur’s analysis rests upon the fact that it grew over time and organically acquired an urban layout: “a milieu unlike that of a palace, was it intended as a town?” Batur reads the palace made up of interwoven streets and buildings as a site devoid of geometry and axially. Neglecting its pre-palatine history as a much smaller imperial site that formed the kernel of its subsequent growth and reconfiguration, she concentrates on its unsystematic planning. She is quick to argue that additions to and connections between buildings were carried out spontaneously and without premeditation, whereby a fabric of streets and small irregular piazzas emerged to give the palace the appearance of a “medieval city.” François Georgeon, the historian who has produced the most balanced biography of Abdülhamid II, also calls the palace “a town within a town,” which like any growing city appeared to be a permanent worksite. It is true that Yıldız was always in need of a building to accommodate a new government office, or an additional residence to house a family member or imperial guest. The lands around it—most of which were privately owned gardens and orchards—were often seized to allow for its continual development. Countless official documents show how the palace gradually engulfed its surroundings and grew piecemeal into a fifty-hectare complex by the turn of the century.

To understand the eventual palatial evolution of Yıldız’s architectural layout, it is important to recognize that for a long time the Yıldız estate and its buildings served as an

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57 Ibid.
58 Georgeon, Sultan Abdülhamid, 180-181.
imperial retreat much like a traditional urban mansion (konak) which consisted of administrative quarters allocated for the sultan and his male retinue (selamlık) and a more private residential one for the female members of the court (harem). A high wall, bearing a baroque fountain with heavy reliefs of flowers arranged inside bulbous vases and exaggerated rustication, separated the two zones of this estate when Abdülhamid selected it as his palace. The Mabeyn Kiosk, which formed the physical kernel of the site’s eventual development, was built during Abdülaziz’s reign, a time when a typology closely resembling eighteenth-century French urban mansions with subtle neoclassical trimmings was adopted especially for such royal retreats. This estate was allocated for the use of his mother, Pertevniyal Valide Sultan (d. 1883); an almost identical version was simultaneously being built for her in the woods of Acıbadem, known today as the Validebağ (the orchard of the sultan’s mother) Kiosk. The shared trademark features of these cross-axial structures were the pronounced cornice that separated the two floors, Serlian fenestrations, composite double-pilasters as quoins, blind balconies with crenellated consoles, and friezes banding through every aperture. Like the Validebağ Kiosk, at some point there may have been plans for a Mansard roof with oeil-de-boeuf windows for the Mabeyn. Pertevniyal Valide Sultan was an earnest architectural patron and directly involved in the upkeep of her properties. It is very likely that the repetitive typology of the French hôtel particulier in sites associated with her is reflective of her particular stylistic preference for retreats. A much simpler building with a pedimented roof belonging to an earlier period—either from the time of Mahmud II or that of his son Abdülmecid—formed the main structure of the estate’s harem section.

Abdülhamid II’s palace grew up around these two pre-existing sections of a single estate, with

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other structures being built in and around them to accommodate the needs of an expanding palace.

Another of Muzaffar al-Din’s Shah’s perceptive descriptions of Yıldız noted its centrality with respect to surrounding neighborhoods. A retinue of Ottoman and Qajar viziers, ambassadors, and translators, who accompanied the shah, must have informed him that Yıldız’s presence extended beyond its fortress walls. In his diary entry, the neighborhoods of Ortaköy, Dolmabahçe, and Beşiktaş appear to him to be irrevocably and symbiotically linked with the palace in a constant circulation of goods, services, and people. These peoples and places, he says, constitute “Yıldız’s neighborhood” (*mujāvir-i qaṣr-i Yıldız*).*60 To the shah, not only the houses and shops of ordinary locals, but Dolmabahçe—recently demoted to mansion (*‘imārat*) as opposed to palace status—its mosque, and the imperial foundry of Tophane seemed to have all been subsumed under the authority of Abdülhamid’s Yıldız.

The innumerable employees of Yıldız, from the Arab and Albanian regiments inhabiting the Orhâniye and Ertuğrul barracks girding its walls, to its eunuchs, its chief bath keepers, and its quilt-makers, would populate Beşiktaş’s bustling marketplace, its ramshackle coffee-shop that “hung like a cage above a lumber warehouse,”*61* its bakeries, butchers, and food-sellers. The palace’s affluent bureaucrats, on the other hand, were given sumptuously endowed mansions in the plateaus of Nişantaşı that Georgeon calls the “town of pashas.”*62* Because Yıldız under Abdülhamid had upstaged the Sublime Porte as the empire’s administrative center, the ministers were strongly encouraged to live close to the palace, because they would be indiscriminately

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*60* Safarnāmah-i Farangistān, 221.


called upon at any hour of the day.\textsuperscript{63} The imperial treasury covered the cost of construction and of furnishing the mansions for the grand-vizier, the chief religious official, and the minister of war, and even subsidized rents for the homes of many low-ranking officials.\textsuperscript{64}

The sultan commissioned photographs that meticulously documented the process of building the houses of his viziers. Among the expenses of the imperial treasury, one comes across room-by-room furniture lists for their interiors.\textsuperscript{65} It is not surprising that one of these lists begins with the grand-vizier’s study (\textit{yazı odası}) with its bureau, library, and requisite cigarette stand, because it was the dedicated and industrious governmental work that he was expected to undertake in this space that earned him this well-appointed residence. We are told by a contemporary insider that these mansions were often preferred to Yıldız as sites for the ministerial gatherings at which important decisions regarding the state were discussed, because they offered a privacy that the palace’s Mabeyn often did not.\textsuperscript{66} To encourage these bureaucrats to remain as close as possible to the newly designated governmental palace (where members of the administration were always on call, and viziers, scribes and aides worked in twenty-four-hour shifts at times of emergency), the sultan’s calculated benevolence extended beyond the appointment of opulent mansions and luxurious furnishings to landscaping and the provision of

\textsuperscript{63} On Yıldız Palace’s transformation into the empire’s administrative heart, see Carter V. Findley, \textit{Bureaucratic Reform in the Ottoman Empire: The Sublime Porte, 1789-1922} (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 239-269.

\textsuperscript{64} \textit{Tahsin Paşa’nın Yıldız Hatıraları}, 226-227.

\textsuperscript{65} Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA), Y. PRK. HH. 34/38.

\textsuperscript{66} Mustafa Ragıp Esatlı, \textit{Saray ve Konakların Dilinden Bir Devrin Tarihi} (Istanbul: Bengi Yayınları, 2010), 91-92, and 94-95; most recently on the salon-like gatherings and cultured discussions in these mansions of the Ottoman elite, see Şemsettin Şeker, \textit{Ders ile Sohbet Arasında On Dokuzuncu Asır İstanbul’unda İli, Kültür ve Sanat Meclisleri} (İstanbul: Zeytinburnu Belediyesi Kültür Yayınları, 2013). For an intimate eyewitness account of life inside the mansions of the \textit{paşas}, see Semiz Müm茨 Sedes, \textit{Eski İstanbul Konakları} (İstanbul: Kurtuba Kitap, 2011).
greenhouses and delicate wooden pavilions to keep his officials content in their domestic worlds.\textsuperscript{67}

Even more than the many military barracks situated on the high plateaus to the palace’s north and northwest, it was the police station in Beşiktaş’s square and its chief, Yedi-sekiz Hasan Paşa (who killed Ali Suavi during the latter’s Çırağan raid to reinstall Murad V), that were believed to be responsible for the surveillance around Yıldız. The station controlled all the properties surrounding the palace and handpicked their tenants, from the Hasan Paşa creek to Ihlamur and Yenimahalle, from Ortaköy to the entrance of the Şale Kiosk, and from the hillside street of Serencebey to Yıldız’s Mabeyn. A palace scribe recalled that this station was where Yıldız really started: “it was the beginning, door, and lock of the palace” (\textit{Burası Yıldızın mebedi, kapısı, kilididir}).\textsuperscript{68} The station’s personnel were often covertly integrated into the neighborhood’s shopkeepers, posing as tailors, cobblers, or beggars.

Amid the urban chaos of the capital’s new center, Yıldız imposed an implicit hierarchy over its neighborhoods. A baker with an oven in Beşiktaş had to abide by it when distributing bread via his itinerant vendors (tablakār): starting with the devout attendees of the sixteenth-century mosque-dervish convent of Yahya Efendi, then the mansions of the sultan’s closest aides bordering the palace—Tahir Paşa, the imperial head-guard, Rıza Paşa, the minister of war, Ali Bey, the sultan’s secretary—and proceeding to the stately homes of viziers, ministers, and scribes in Nişantaşı. Yıldız’s kitchens, their stone buildings located beside the Mecidiye Mosque, not only fed its own inhabitants and employees, but also catered large round trays full of food covered in dark cloth three times a day to the yalıs (shore mansions) of the court’s extended

\textsuperscript{67} For vibrant recollections of the grueling Mabeyn shifts and the palace clerks’ conception of their workplace as an extension of their time as students in the Imperial Public Service School, see Kayahan Özgül, ed., \textit{Ali Ekrem Bolayır’ın Hatıraları} (Ankara: Kurgan Edebiyat, 2013), 319-328.

\textsuperscript{68} Mayakon, 11.
members that dotted the shorelines from Kuruçeşme and Ortaköy to Findıklı. When about forty *tablakars*, dressed in their pitch-black, high-collared stambouline frocks, walked in single file along the avenue behind Çirağan, “they cast long shadows on the sidewalks.” The court’s savvy food-vendors also sold the large quantities of leftovers to Beşiktaş’s locals, while broughams carrying the court’s female members crisscrossed the roads connecting Yıldız with the waterfront mansions of their relatives. This deeply enmeshed economy that spanned the palace and its surroundings was also constantly invigorated by the spectacle that was Abdülhamid’s Friday prayer ceremonies. The shopkeepers of Beşiktaş served halvah and zythum (*boza*) to the immense crowds that gathered each week to witness the sultan’s grand yet unchanging devotional act.

b. YILDIRIZ’ S UBIQUITOUS DĀʾĪRES

The government officials who received Abdülhamid’s highest esteem were given offices within the palace that often doubled as overnight lodgings. Dāʾire, the word that defined a government office in the spatially and functionally hyper-compartmentalized *Tanzimat* bureaucracy, was also adopted in Yıldız to describe floors, rooms, and apartments inside buildings as well as individual pavilions designated for a particular person, office, or function. This word’s prevalence in Yıldız’s spatial demarcations not only indicates the unusual integration of imperial residence and offices of government at this site—a blurring of sorts between domestic and official spaces—but also the way in which Abdülhamid showed his partiality towards his retinue. The dictionary

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69 Mintzuri, 42-43.

70 Ibid., 55.


definitions of the word from the period highlight the fact that it applied both to a professional office as well as to a segment of the domestic residence. *Kāmūs-i Tūrkī*, compiled by the Ottoman Albanian writer Şemseddin Sami (d. 1904), who was the head-scribe to the military inspections commission located in the Çit Kiosk of Yıldız, described *daire* first as “a collection of rooms inside a large mansion” (*bir ḳonāḵ vesāʿir binānuν münkāsım olduğu aḳsānuν beheri ki bir ḳağ ᵗda vesāʿɪreden mürekkebdir*), and only second as “each of the governmental departments responsible for the affairs of state and the buildings that house their offices or assemblies” (*umūr-i devleti idāre eden şuʾbāṭuν beheri ve beheriniν aḳlām ve mecālis vesāʿiresini ḥāvī ebniyesi*). ⁷³

Although *daire* was used to refer to more obvious Ottoman governmental institutions, like the office of the grand-vizier, the scribes and members of the Mabeyn, its was also used to describe incredibly idiosyncratic ones created by Abdülhamid himself—instiutions that transformed his paşas and close acquaintances into his private political advisors and informants. When outlining the civil offices of Yıldız, Tahsin Paşa, Abdülhamid’s head-scribe after 1894 who served until his deposition in 1908, identified some of them by the officials who were appointed to run them, rather than the specific functions of the offices: the offices (*daire*) of İzzet Paşa (the second scribe of the Mabeyn, head of the revenues’ office, and high-commissioner of the Hejaz Railways), Derviş Paşa (a specialist of politics in Albania), Kamphofner Paşa (a German military expert), Aleksandr Kara Todori Paşa (an experienced diplomat), Şakir Paşa (head of the military commission), and Dragoman Nişan Efendi (an Armenian daily translator of French newspaper articles on issues regarding the Ottoman state). ⁷⁴ İsmail Miştak (later Mayakon), a clerk working under Tahsin Paşa, writes in his memoirs, which were serialized in


the early years of the Turkish Republic, that if given a bird’s-eye-view of Yıldız under Abdülhamid, would see “a gloomy neighborhood composed of tiny offices [daires].”

In the official language of Yıldız’s archives and the memoirs of its bureaucrats and various other members of the court, a building’s name is hardly ever mentioned, while the word daire is more frequently used to describe an administrative office serving a palace function or the quarters designated to its many inhabitants. Şadiye Sultan, another one of Abdülhamid’s memoir-writing daughters, described Yıldız as “a palace broken up into apartments” (Dairelere taksim edilmiş saray). This practice of demarcating both buildings and official functions with the name of the person or office that held them makes it difficult to attribute any one building to a person or an office. However, all of the palace’s inhabitants thought of their assigned lodgings in terms of collections of rooms or apartments within a larger complex, rather than as independent structures. Even Abdülhamid’s own residence, a stately Victorian home, was referred to as his personal quarters (Huşūşî Dâ’ire) (fig. 1.5).

Some of these daires were more idiosyncratic than others and were a result of Abdülhamid’s own brand of generosity, his personal whims and preferences. For years, he hosted Dr. Blane, a French physician who had formerly practiced his trade on transatlantic ships, in two rooms (iki odalı bir daire) inside the Small (küçük) Mabeyn, because he found the doctor’s medical wisdom and quirky habits (of carrying around two bags full of antique artifacts and leaving his room only for short strolls in the palace park) to his liking. Blane became “a

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75 Mayakon, 180.


77 Hülagü, 294.
personal doctor and mentor” (hem doktorum hem akl hocam idi), according to the sultan’s recollections, and was one of the few advisors who dined with him every night.  

High-ranking state employees were not the only recipients of Abdülhamid’s tactical munificence, distributed as part of a strategy he called isticlāb, or the act of drawing near. He hosted influential Arab and Kurdish notables in the Double Palaces (Çifte Saraylar) located in the Teşvikiye quarter of Nişantaşı for considerable lengths of time, keeping them occupied with gratuitous state protocol, honors, and gifts in order to weaken their control over populations and regions that Abdülhamid wanted to consolidate under his caliphal authority (fig. 1.6). These structures, constructed by Abdülmecid to house the head-chamberlain (basmābeynci) and scribe (bāskātib) and once the first residential buildings of what would become the town of pashas, were transformed under Abdülhamid II into guest apartments (misāfirin dā’iresi). To the neighborhood’s local inhabitants, these figures with their sumptuous accommodations were exiles in the empire’s capital under the sultan’s constant surveillance. The memoirs of government officials label them quite caustically as provincial tyrants (taşra mütěgallibesi) or bandit chiefs (sergerdeler), whose family members seem to have led palpably sober, interiorized lives (namahremlik) amid the vibrant sociability that had emerged in Yıldız’s residential extensions in Nişantaşı. An itinerant local food vendor recalled how difficult it was to communicate with the non-Turkish-speaking residents of these conservative households, female

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78 Hülagü, 220.


80 The sultan’s inauguration of the Imperial School for Tribes to educate and integrate the sons of these leaders for governmental jobs was another aspect of his tightening grip on the empire’s remaining and predominantly Muslim provinces, see Eugene L. Rogan, “Asiret Mektebi: Abdülhamid II’s School for Tribes (1892-1907),” International Journal of Middle East Studies 28, 1 (1998): 83-107.
members would speak in whispery tones and only extend their hennaed hands through doors to receive their daily share of the goods.\textsuperscript{81}

The most conspicuous architectural example of Abdülhamid’s strategic detainment of influential Arab notables in Istanbul and close to his palace was his commission of a stately devotional and residential complex for Muhammed Zafir, the aforementioned North African shaykh. The Ertuğrul convent mosque—“an adorned and modest prayer space”\textsuperscript{82} adjacent to the palace’s western walls—was appointed to Zafir’s Sufi order, and his extended family were moved into two monumental timber mansions within the same garden. His family members continued to occupy the same residence in the republican years, and the memoirs of one of his last remaining descendants indicate that Abdülhamid’s surreptitious overprotection eventually resulted in the loss of ties with their North African origins.\textsuperscript{83} I will return to the importance of this shaykh in the sultan’s life in Chapter 2. Here, however, I want to mention that the sultan’s confidante and decades-long \textit{selamlik} companion Gazi Osman Paşa (d. 1900),\textsuperscript{84} a seasoned battle-mastermind and hero of the Russo-Ottoman War of 1878, who was the highest-ranking member of Abdülhamid’s administration and had an entire floor of offices allocated to him in the Mabeyn Kiosk, was also given an urban estate which occupied the same imperial street as the shaykh’s complex.\textsuperscript{85} This still extant street—named Serencebey Yokuşu—held considerable prestige in the hierarchy ofYGıldız’s surrounding neighborhoods, and the most influential members of Abdülhamid’s cabinet employed in decisions regarding the state, religion, and

\textsuperscript{81} Mintzuri, 24-25.

\textsuperscript{82} “Ziynetsiz, külfetsiz bir ibadetgâh,” in Mayakon, 113.

\textsuperscript{83} Güngör Tekçe, \textit{Şeyh Zafir Konağında Bir Tuhaf Zaman} (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2008).

\textsuperscript{84} On Osman Paşa’s formal and extremely fettered relationship to Abdülhamid and the palace, see Semih Mümtaz, \textit{Tarihimizde Hayal Oluuş Hakikatler} (İstanbul: Çığraçan, 1948), 98-101.

\textsuperscript{85} Ibid., 98-103.
warcraft were made to reside therein. The sultan’s commemoration of figures important to his rule and conduct extended even into death: after the shaykh’s passing, he commissioned the Italian Art Nouveau architect Raimondo D’Aronco to build a small domed tomb and adjacent library in front of the timber dervish convent (fig. 1.7). The small scale of these pavilion-like twin structures were in line with Abdülhamid’s patronage of person-specific and customized buildings in which he conducted his brand of intimate diplomatic gatherings. These are discussed at length in Chapter 4.

c. THE SULTAN’S SELF-DESIGNED SIGHTSEEING TOUR

Inside Yıldız, Muzaffar al-Din Shah shows great interest in a particular group of palatial structures that formed the itinerary of Abdülhamid’s carefully choreographed sightseeing tour for his guests of honor. These comprised of the museum, library, zoo, and factories. “The Sultan had said that we were to see his museum, library and garden,” 86 observed the German Orientalist Max Müller’s wife Georgina in 1894. Another female visitor vibrantly recalled, “a manufactory of porcelain, an arsenal, a museum containing the Imperial library and a magnificent collection of miniatures, enamels and jewels, meanwhile, as on and on we had been driven, past lawns, lakes, gardens, and kiosks, we came, in due time, to an archway, beyond which a number of low buildings within an inner courtyard proved to be the imperial stables.” 87 Conducted by a courtier, Abdülhamid’s privileged visitors were first made to see the museum inside his private garden in which he preserved and displayed the treasured gifts of his foreign counterparts:

Here are collected and beautifully arranged all the presents that he has received as well as innumerable valuable objects that belonged to some of his predecessors. Countless clocks and watches, inlaid armour, objects in jade, caskets, wonderfully bound books, china of

87 Dodd, 75.
all sorts, pictures, miniatures, jeweled ornaments of every kind, all so arranged in their cases that one could examine and enjoy them, a delightful contrast to the confusion in which treasures of the old Seraglio are heaped together. One upright case contained four dozen of the most perfect deep blue Sèvres plates, a present from the Emperor Napoleon, sunk into velvet, twenty-four on each side of the stand. Each plate was a picked and perfect specimen...We could have spent hours examining everything, but time was limited, and we were taken on to the private stables, still within the Harem walls, holding twelve of the most perfect Arabs, used by the Sultan for riding and driving in the park of Yildiz.  

In the Imperial Stables, located close to the Malta Kiosk, the many prized Russian, Austrian and Arab steeds were “put through their paces” for the guests (fig. 1.8). If world-renowned scholars were a part of the retinue, they would be brought to the library at the edge of the Mabeyn courtyard staffed by a “devoted librarian along with “six or eight intelligent assistants,” and containing “a carefully prepared and full catalogue,” “exquisite Persian MSS.,” “modern Indian works on Indian music,” “fine MSS. of the Koran with glosses and commentaries,” “bookcases of the best construction and movable shelves,” “a very good collection of English, French, and German classics,” “glass cases, filled with gorgeously bound, illustrated works, chiefly gifts to the Sultan, and “photographs of places in the Sultan’s dominions and of public buildings in Stambûl (fig. 1.9). The guests would also walk across the suspended footbridges—“the sultan’s favorite rickety bridge”—hovering above the park’s lakes or take a carriage across its valley to reach the tile factory (fig 1.10). Muzaffar al-Din Shah tells us that three Qajar students apprenticed in the factory. Depending on which side of the park

88 Dodd, 54-55.
89 Ibid. 55.
90 Ibid., 57-58. In fact, aside from the main library, many of Yıldız’s residential buildings contained their own library rooms, one of which was reserved for Abdülhamid’s collection of books from his princely years. The initial reconnaissance reports of Abdurrahman Şeref, who was appointed the court chronicler to Mehmed, after the deposition of Abdülhamid as well as the commissions subsequently employed to list all of the books housed in the palace identified at least four of these spaces. See Murat Candemir, Son Yıldız Düşerken (Istanbul: Çamlıca), 2011, 144-146.
91 Enid Layard, Twixt Pera and Therapia: The Constantinople Diaries of Lady Layard (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2010), 253.
the guests began their tour, the Çadr or Malta Kiosks were often outfitted for their respite. For some time, Çadr served as an annex to the imperial Hereke factory; looms were installed inside this kiosk to supply necessary furnishings and repairs for the palace, augmenting the palace’s self-subsistence function and image as facilitator of local craftsmanship. The structures inside the park were indeed seen as stations for artisanal work. Once the Italian artist Fausto Zonaro (d. 1929) received his court appointment, the Çadr Kiosk was assigned to him as a private atelier.  

Although most of the palace’s buildings were not geometrically ordered, and its courtyards lacked a linear sequence, thus, to Batur, resembling a medieval town, the experience of its grounds followed a systematic courtly order. It was expressly choreographed by the sultan and implemented by his master of ceremonies (teşrifât nâzîr), who was also the head-dragoman of the court (divân-i hümâyûn tercûmân). The sultan would later attribute his excessive gift-giving—especially to the wives of foreign ambassadors—and the controlled intensity of his hosting in the palace grounds, to the timeworn decorum that was upheld by the “wisdom of the government, and the government of wisdom” (o zaman böyle hareket etmek ‘hikmet-i hükûmet, hükûmet-i hikmet’ icabı idi).

To the palace’s most important guests, for whom the Şale Kiosk was reserved, Abdülhamid opened up the doors of his private residential space and his “” theater (fig. 1.11). Inconspicuous from the outside, this latter structure was located in the transitional zone between the sultan’s personal residential quarters and study, the Huşûşî Dâ’ire and Small Mabeyn, and

92 BOA, HH. d. 16536.
94 Örkağasızade Hasan Surri, 149-152; for the medieval town analogy, see Afife Batur, “Yıldız Sarayı,” in DBİA, vol. 7, 522.
95 Hülagû, 245.
the gate that opened into the compound of the Şale. In Muzaffar al-Din Shah’s memoirs, we come across the mention of an enclosed gallery that connected his Victorian residence with the Şale. It was in this gallery that Abdülhamid exhibited paintings depicting members of the House of Osman and Ottoman battle scenes; a surviving cross-sectional representation of these paintings in situ suggests how they would have been arranged (fig. 1.12). The sultan’s visual glorification of his dynastic past in the space reserved for his most intimate guests seems to have worked on the shah, who wrote the following: “Most of this gallery’s walls are decorated with paintings of the Ottoman sultans’ wars, which are really spectacular and reveal the high dignity of this family.”

The impressions of this grand display of gifts and glories as well as the sultan’s museological impulse must have had a lasting impression on Nasir al-Din Shah, who designed a small museum inside the Gulistan Palace to store the gifts he had received from Abdülhamid called gāh-i abyaż (white palace) (fig. 1.13). With its classical plasters and subtle floral stucco window frames, this Qajar repository of gifts may have carried architectural similarities with Abdülhamid’s museum or imperial library, or might have been a small replica of the Mabeyn. The sultan spent hours personally showing Nasir al-Din’s son and successor Muzaffar al-Din the most valuable manuscripts from his collection of “twenty-thousand books,” and presented him with a Quran handwritten by the eighteenth-century court calligrapher Yedikuleli Seyyid Abdullah Efendi. The shah also read out his fortune from pages of an album (murakkāʾ) of calligraphy by the sixteenth-century Persian master of the nastaliq script, Mir Emad Hasani.

96 Safarnāmah-i Farangistān, 224.


98 Safarnāmah-i Farangistān, 225; and, Kilerci, 104.
Abdülrhamid’s preoccupation with structures that reinforced diplomacy within his palace gardens continued unabated all the way into the third decade of his reign, at a time when he recycled a design undertaken by the Levantine architect Alexandre Vallaurry for the crown princes and intended for the suburban imperial estate of Kurbağalıdere to serve as a new pavilion for court banquets. Abdülrhamid placed this building immediately next to the tile factory, on the last plot of land to be absorbed by the palace grounds from the neighborhood of Ortaköy. Bearing the profile of an eighteenth-century French townhouse, this structure and its landscaped gardens concluded the sultan’s architectural project to stage his diplomacy in relation to his extended family (a central subject of Chapter 5) or foreign heads-of-state (examined through his construction of ephemeral buildings in Chapter 3).

The buildings that Abdülrhamid most wanted his guests to see were distributed inside the palace’s park. To speed up the movement of visitors between these structures, an elaborate, one kilometer and six hundred meter-long railway track carrying an imperial wagon (rüküb-i şahānaye mahşus vagon) was even projected for this part of the palace (fig. 1.14). ⁹⁹ This novel mode of travel must have been considered a less cumbersome way to traverse the steep slopes of the park that were, moreover, bisected by a natural gorge bearing cascades and lakes. Though unrealized, we can see from the royal presentation copy of the railway plans that this was an incredibly dramatic project—quite unusual for a palace. It came with a topographic cross-section detailing how the tracks were to be laid out, the locations of the bridges and tunnels along the route, and the design of the imperial wagon including its interior furnishings of sumptuous Hereke carpets, textiles and Orientalist-Alhambresque furniture (fig. 1.15). The creator of the

⁹⁹ The original drawings of this project are housed in the Istanbul University Library’s Rare Works Collection (İÜMK), and filed under the catalogue number 93283.
project is unknown, but it seems to bear Abdülhamid’s imprimatur. The first folio containing the elaborate plan bears the Ottoman coat of arms and the caption above it suggests with the word mutaṣavver that the project was conceived, at least partly, in-house: “the general plan of the railways that are conceptualized for the garden of the imperial palace of Yıldız” (Yıldız sarāy-i hūmâyūnu bāğcesinde inşāst mutaṣavver olan demiryollarını ḥarīṭa-i umūmīyesidir).

Tracing almost exactly the spots that Yıldız’s many foreign visitors saw, the wagon was set to pick up the sultan’s guests from a spot between the Mabeyn and Çit kiosks. Not by coincidence, this zone was where the foreign dignitaries awaiting their audience with the sultan gathered after the selamlık. The sultan, who loved to conduct his private diplomatic meetings with delegations and royal guests inside the park’s kiosks and pavilions, might have seen this high-altitude ride as a novel and exciting diversion. An interesting parallel to note here is the fact that Nasir al-Din Shah seems also to have installed two wagons inside the gardens of his palace that according to the French ambassador Paul Cambon (d. 1924) resembled “our first class wagons with three compartments upholstered in gray fabric.”100 These two wagons, otherwise sheltered in a purpose-built hangar and without rails on which to travel, were revealed only when distinguished guests were visiting the grounds. These diplomatic guests were made to spend time inside the rail cars, “opening and closing the doors, or playing with the windows” (Quand un visiteur de distinction se présente on le fait monter et séjourner pendant quelques instants dans un compartiment. On ouvre et on ferme les portières, on fait jouer les vitres).101 A photograph from Nasir al-Din Shah’s extensive photograph collection—one that he may have taken

100 Cambon, 389.
101 Ibid.
himself—shows women, children, and eunuchs of his harem inside this stationary vehicle, peering out of its windows.\footnote{Kilerci, 176.}

On the map of Yıldız’s imperial railway project, which is drafted in minute detail (down to the site’s diverse flora), the wagon’s route commences by first crossing the Mabeyn courtyard following the downward slope of the ridge along the arsenal and stopping in front of the imperial library. From here the wagon enters a short bridge, resting on arcaded piers, and traverses the artificial lake in front of the Çadır Kiosk (marked as köşk on the plan, possibly as a reference to its earliest incarnation as an open structure not intended for overnight habitation, while the Malta Kiosk, here, is marked as a kaşır). After the first bridge, the rails curve towards the north as the wagon enters a tunnel that tracks along the high walls that separated the sultan’s private garden from the park. This tunnel leads the wagon onto the second, longer bridge (with high castellated towers, bearing the Ottoman banner), stopping at the final site of the tour, the imperial stables, before depositing its prospective passengers at their lodgings in the Şale Pavilion.

Batur only briefly mentions this project as part of her argument that the palace was conceptualized as an industrializing city unto itself.\footnote{Afife Batur, “Yıldız Sarayı,” in Tanzimat’tan Cumhuriyet’e, 1050.} Surprisingly, since then, no close analysis of this unconventional palatial addition has been undertaken, despite the fact that the plans contain a detailed map of Yıldız under Abdülhamid, one of only a handful that survive. Though undated, the project was likely conceived before 1894, because the layout of the Şale on the map appears to date from a period before the Italian architect Raimondo D’Aronco’s extensions to this structure. The partial map of the grounds—covering almost the entirety of the external park, the Mabeyn courtyard and the environs of the Şale—exhibits minute topographical measurements and painstaking representation of the park’s diverse plantings (flatter grounds
were reserved for kitchen gardens and formal flower parterres, while the slopes were densely wooded) that must have necessitated access to and an intimate knowledge of the site. The terraced platform on which the sultan’s private garden rested was conspicuously left out, but its walls were carefully demarcated. Therefore, this project for the park may have been developed at around the same time that Abdülhamid was designing his personal gardens, which would have commanded spectacular views of the wagon and tracks traversing the grounds down below.\(^{104}\)

During Abdülaziz’s reign, each time a railway line was completed in the imperial domains, often by a European company that had received concessions for its construction, the sultan received an imperial wagon and also its scale model as gifts.\(^{105}\) This unrealized prestige project for Yıldız may have been the result of a similar international deal that was struck during Abdülhamid’s time (fig. 1.16). Under the protective hand of the Ottoman Public Debt Administration, which was established in 1881 to regulate the bankrupt empire’s foreign debt and revenues, countless European investors vied for concessions to maintain their power over the region by installing railway lines that connected Anatolia with Baghdad and beyond.\(^{106}\) These lavish drawings likely represented the recreational side of what was otherwise a cutthroat environment of negotiations between European entrepreneurs and ambassadors, Ottoman ministers, and the bankers and superintendents employed by the Administration. To extort

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\(^{104}\) For a detailed on-site, archaeological study of the palace’s inner garden, see Münevver Dağgülü Şen, “Yıldız Sarayı Selamlik Bahçe Düzeni,” Yayınlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Yıldız Teknik Üniversitesi, 1984. For an abridged version of this unpublished master’s thesis, see Münevver Dağgülü Şen, Yıldız Sarayı Selamlik Bahçesi: Has Bahçe-İç Bahçe (Tesbit ve Envanter Çalışması) (İstanbul: Yıldız Teknik Üniversitesi Yayın No: 267, 1993).

\(^{105}\) For examples of wooden scale models of the imperial wagons produced for Sultan Abdülaziz during the construction of the İzmir-Aydın line and the Rumelia line, see Şennur Şentürk, Demir Yol: Tren Çağı (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık, 2003), 44 and 46. The original version of the imperial wagon that would have been attached to the train operating between İzmir and Aydın is now exhibited in the Rahmi M. Koç Museum in Istanbul.

\(^{106}\) Murat Özyüksel, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu’nda Nüfus Mücadelesi: Anadolu ve Bağdat Demiryolları (İstanbul: Türkiye İşbankası Kültür Yayımları, 2008), 22-26.
construction rights, the parties involved also had to appeal to the reigning sultan’s sensibilities. In the case of Abdülməhid, the project’s unknown planners knew the sultan’s tastes all too well. The imagined interiors of the wagon were upholstered in his beloved Hereke fabrics and the furniture featured the kind of Damascan inlays that the sultan himself was skilled in crafting. They were also attuned to Abdülməhid’s conception of his palace. The makers of the project correctly identify the key stops along the sultan’s sightseeing tour, and they also seem to grasp the appeal that the site’s Alpine topography held for the sultan, overemphasizing it in the drawings. The landscapes that form the backdrop to the watercolor cross-sections of the bridges and the view depicted through the wagon’s window, in particular, greatly dramatize Yıldız’s hills, transforming them into mountains with deeper valleys and denser forests.

d. THE LAYOUT OF ABDÜLMƏHİD’S YILDIZ

The impenetrable “high walls of Abdülməhid’s fortress” (kal’a səru) that to many were a source of tremendous consternation were punctured by heavily guarded doors servicing the different segments of the palace complex (fig. 1.16). The Albanian tüfekçis of the Second Squadron, whose frequent unruliness made them seem no different from the pre-Tanzimat janissary corps in the eyes of the palace officials, patrolled their gates. Three main doors, clustered around the Mabeyn, were used the most. Of the three, the one that remained open every day from morning till midnight was located right below the Set Kiosk and its terrace, an elevated pavilion and dais reserved for the foreign delegations invited to watch Abdülməhid’s selamlık (fig. 1.17). Off to the side and at the foot of the hill that climbed up to the other two ceremonial gates, this portal

108 Mayakon, 134-141.
was referred to as the servant’s entrance (*koltuk kapı*) by the palace’s royal residents. But to the numerous clerks employed in the Mabeyn and the head-scribe’s office, who had to pass through it everyday, it was the palace’s main door (*cümle kapı*).

When the highest-ranking students of the Imperial School of Public Service (*mekteb-i mülkiye-i şahane*) were recruited to the coveted scribal positions within the palace, they entered Yıldız through this portal and were immediately taken into the office of the head-scribe to be told the requirements of their post. The memoirs of these recruits provide the best descriptions of the human traffic in and out of this portal. The crowded pageantry that paraded through this main door day and night included grand-viziers (Saturdays and Tuesdays), ministers (Mondays and Thursdays), senior to lowly office-holders, and dragomans and palace’s first-time visitors, rich provincials, concession-seeking foreigners, formidable contractors, robed members of the *ulema*, the merchant class, nondescript middlemen, jewelers, Ottoman dandies in European garb, and the requisite small-time informants.\(^{109}\) One of these scribes in particular provides a colorful breakdown of these visitors according to the degree of recognition they received from the palace’s doormen, who to him represented “the plainest of measurements of what the palace was” (*sarayı anlamak için sadeliği ile beraber en doğru mıyaslardan biri kapıcılardır*).\(^{110}\)

Osman Nuri, Abdülhamid’s contentious and obscure biographer, tells us that this door opened up to the now broken-up first segment of the palace.\(^{111}\) This expansive area fronting the Mabeyn included the *daires* that were employed in the upkeep of the palace and the most important offices responsible for communications between the sultan and the ministries. Once

\(^{109}\) Mayakon, 117-124.

\(^{110}\) Ibid., 119.

inside this portal, the stately Mabeyn and its appendage, the Set Kiosk, stood on an elevated terrace to the right, while the mammoth imperial kitchen and pantry that fed the multitude of palace employees multiple times a day were found on the left, on lower ground along a slope.

The majority of the heavily trafficked buildings of the palace were constructed as understated gallery-like apartments with discrete, often tediously undifferentiated neoclassical façades. They were elongated for practical reasons, to accommodate the internal separations of the various daires that served as the quarters of individuals or subgroups within an administrative office. These structures were often placed in barrack-like parallel blocks, one after the other, resting on the sloping terrain’s ridgelines. For instance, parallel to the imperial kitchen and separated from it by a large courtyard, stood the building allocated to the countless aides-de-camp who were not on active duty inside the palace. Those who were on their shifts, meanwhile, were given lodgings inside a chalet-like building on the other side of the Mabeyn, conveniently adjacent to the harem door.

The segment of the palace’s selamlik or administrative quarters that the koltuk kapı opened onto also housed the office of the head-scribe (a non-extant small timber structure), a stone repository for the scribal archive (hazine-i evrak dairesi), and the offices of the eunuchs (agavat dairesi), who serviced the individual Yıldız residences of the sultan’s extended family. The sultan’s unmarried daughters and sisters, the young princes as well as married ones with small families, were all expected to reside inside Yıldız’s grounds.

Although there may have been no ceremonial linearity in the organization of the palace’s selamlik section, the Mabeyn Kiosk, Yıldız’s main administrative structure, physically bisected it

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112 Although this structure cannot be identified today, an unrealized project has emerged from among Raimondo D’Aronco’s papers of a structure resembling a Roman sarcophagus for an imperial archive in Yıldız that might have been planned to replace this old one. For the drawing, see Ezio Godoli, “D’Aronco e Vienna: un dialogo a distanza,” in Atti del Congresso Internazionale di Studi su “Raimondo D’Aronco e il suo tempo”: 13 giugno 1981 (Udine: Istituto per l’Enciclopedia del Friuli Venezia Giulia, [1982]), 189. Also see Şakir, 361.
in two: the more public zone into which the *koltuk kapı* led its visitors and the relatively more private one allotted to the sultan’s closest retinue. An aerial photograph taken during the early years of the Turkish Republic, when Yıldız became the nation’s military academy, best reflects the centrality of the Mabeyn and the way it splits the *selamlık* into these zones (fig. 1.18). The second, elevated and relatively more private section was often inaccessible even to an employee of the scribal offices, and housed only the officials on duty whose responsibilities were divided between the sultan’s study and the Mabeyn. The cluster of buildings around this second section was much smaller; most were made of timber, had residential appeal, and contained far more inventive wooden ornamental decoration as a marker of the rank of the office holders who occupied them. The now non-extant office of Abdülhamid’s beloved second-scribe İzzet Holo Paşa (d. 1924), the lodgings of the aides-de-camp on duty, and the Çit Kiosk which served multiple intimate functions from emergency wartime convocations, theological discussions in the presence of the sultan during Ramadan (*ḥuţţar dersleri*), and intimate post-Friday prayer gatherings between the sultan and foreign ambassadors, were the central structures of the *selamlık*’s more selective zone. If a visitor, who had entered the palace through the *koltuk kapı*, was allowed into this second section of the *selamlık*, he was made to pass through the office of the head-guard (*sertüfekçi*), situated between these two zones and aligned with the Mabeyn’s elevated basement floor, right below the Çit Kiosk. In many ways, this division of the public zones according to a gradation of closeness to the sultan could be thought of in terms of the traditional splitting of Islamic audience halls into public (*divân-i ʿāmm*) and private (*divân-i ḥāṣṣ*) chambers. And, perhaps more closely, Abdülhamid’s use of the Mabeyn (where he was largely absent) and Small Mabeyn (where he was present to a small circle of officials) is reminiscent of the sixteenth-century sultans and their absent-presentation in the crowded Council.
Hall in the second courtyard of the Topkapı Palace, and secluded dwelling in the Privy Chamber in its third courtyard.  

Mabeyn, as a structure relating to a transitional space between the private residential quarters and a site to accommodate the perpetual administrative role of the sultan, seems to have emerged under the reign of Abdülhamid I, when he erected a Mabeyn Kiosk next to the Privy Chamber in the Topkapı Palace, a pattern also repeated in the Edirne Palace.

The palace’s second and third portals opened onto this more private section of the selamlık. The one referred to as the imperial gate (saltanat kapısı) was in line with the koltuk kapı. These two portals both faced the Hamidiye Mosque. Directly facing the slope that led up to the Mabeyn was the third and last portal, the gate of the sultan’s mother (valide kapısı). With the exception of the gate of sovereignty, the names of the two others were not fixed for the disparate inhabitants of the palace. While a scribe may have known the main entrance as the koltuk kapı, indicating a kind of servitude, to Abdülhamid’s daughter it was known as the aş kapısı (“stew gate”) because of its proximity to the kitchens and the constant circulation of its tablakars in and out of the gates carrying food to Yıldız’s employees, guests, and affiliates, all living in the peripheries of the palace. The sultan’s daughter recalled the gate of the sultan’s mother as the gate of departure or “official journey” (gidiş kapısı), a door that was used only by the members of the court. However, as will become clearer in the dissertation’s second chapter, this portal was most likely named after Yıldız’s pre-palatine owners, the queen mothers of the previous

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114 Ibid., 195.

115 Ayşe Osmanoğlu, 90-91.
sultans, and the tradition of preserving the names of sites in the memory of their owners meant it maintained this designation.

Bearing composite pilasters identical to those found on the façade of the Mabeyn, the imperial gate was probably also erected during the reign of Abdülaziz (fig. 1.19). After Yıldız became a palace, this gate was reserved specifically for Abdülhamid’s use on days when he ventured beyond the palace walls: the Friday prayer ceremonies at the Hamidiye Mosque, the official greetings (muʿāyede) for the two religious festivals (bayrām) in the domed ceremonial room of the Dolmabahçe Palace, and the imperial visitation on the fifteenth day of Ramadan of the mantle of the Prophet Muhammad in the Topkapı Palace (Ḥirka-i Şerîf, or interchangeably, Ḥirka-i Saʿādet).116 The valide gate was used by the members of the household who lived in the palace, and like the imperial gate, it received its name from the fact that it was used by the sultan’s adopted mother and her retinue during the Friday ceremonies when she left the palace in her carriage to witness the pomp and circumstance of her son’s public appearance.

The sultan’s foreign guests, who were invited to see the palace and granted the privilege of meeting him informally, were also brought into Yıldız through this gate, because it provided easy access to Abdülhamid’s abovementioned sightseeing route. It was, in fact, the very spot from which the imperial railway project would have begun. A right turn from this gate and down the slope towards the shore led the visitors to the Imperial Library fronted by a dovecote (used later as the Imperial Pharmacy and today the headquarters of the Turkish State Intelligence Agency) and the Çâdir Kiosk, with its lake and island in the palace’s park.

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116 On the sultan’s processional to visit the Prophet’s mantle in the Topkapı Palace, see Hakan T. Karateke, *Padişahım Çok Yaşal!*: Osmanlı Devletinin Son Yüz Yılında Merasimler (Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2004), 195-199; and on the grand bayrām receptions for the ‘id-i ḥafr (feast marking the end of the fasting month of Ramadan) and ‘id-i aṣḥâ (the Feast of the Sacrifice) under Abdülhamid II, see Karateke, *Padişahım Çok Yaşal!,* 82-92.
The buildings that lined the Hamidian sightseeing route hid their mundane functions behind their embellished façades, like the chalet-esque offices of the aides-de-camp and the columned-facade of the palace’s armory (the silahhane initially served as the palace’s dining facilities but was later converted into a makeshift museum of weaponry or simply the repository, mahzen, as Abdülhamid called it) (fig. 1.20). Following the hill’s downward gradient, Abdülhamid’s ironworks atelier stood adjacent to the armory and contained a coach house on its entry level (fig. 1.21). Later on, while in exile in Thessaloniki, the deposed sultan recalled this site with greater frequency and fondness than any of the other crafts facilities that he had installed in Yıldız. He praised its steam-operated machinery and metal-casting technologies for objects such as locks, bolts, keys, and coins, and the fact that he had tirelessly recruited talented apprentices from the Tophane Imperial Foundry to the atelier’s diverse operations ranging from the building of royal carriages to the manufacture of furniture and of a small boat made of imported aluminum planks for the palace’s artificial lakes. This part of Yıldız, where Abdülhamid had placed all the manufacturing facilities and museums that fulfilled the palace’s refurbishing needs also made for a memorable segment of the palatial tour that was intended to show the sovereign actively engaged with the advancement of imperial crafts and their local artisans. Although this area shared the same irregularly shaped courtyard of the Mabeyn, the scribes, for instance, were barred from visiting the Imperial Library.

If the palace’s selamlık was bifurcated by the Mabeyn into two segments, one for the workaday employees and one more exclusive, there was a similar division in its harem. The quarters of his immediate family consisting of his wives, young and unmarried children, and the

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117 Hülagü, 155, 221-222, and 335.

118 Örikağaşazade Hasan Sirr, 161.
servants allocated to their individual daires, were closest to his own residence. Demarcated by a wall, this tightly spun area was the palace’s real harem. However, Abdülhamid also gave individual apartments within the palace grounds to married members of his family, which were located farther up the complex’s hilltop and constituted their own neighborhood of parks, ponds, chalets, servant quarters, and a school for the education of the princes (referred to as the efendis). In his memoirs, the sultan’s head-scribe describes this harem extension as a remarkably interiorized neighborhood (“muhir”) of its own. He ponders, “what kind of life did they lead in this neighborhood was unknown to me, but it was certainly not one where they [the princes] strove to perfect their personhood.” Furthermore, he believed that the instructors of the school lacked merit and competence, while most of the princes were unenthusiastic recipients of their teachings. In a similar vein, one the sultan’s scribes saw this neighborhood as a separate appurtenance of the palace itself (devâr-i merbûta).

A curiously narrow door through the wall decorated with high reliefs that separated the selamlik from the harem led the sultan’s family members and his closest aides, scribes and hand-picked visitors into a relatively cramped courtyard, an exterior antechamber that preceded the harem (fig. 1.22). This outdoor waiting room was often called the zülveçeyn, a word meaning two-sided or bidirectional, which is generally ascribed to transitional zones between the men and women’s quarters in an affluent Ottoman household. This designation not only implied that the zone offered access to these two segments of a wealthy residence, but in the case of Yıldız also meant that this antechamber provided the only royal passage between the sultan’s quarters and the Şale—that is, between the sultan’s family quarters, his most intimate space, and the court’s

119 Tahsin Paşa’nm Yıldız Hatıraları, 30.
120 Ibid.
121 Örikağasızade Hasan Sırı, 30.
royal guest lodgings. It was also this quirky zülvecheyn that provided access, via an arch-like opening between the sultan’s private residence and workspace (Hususi Daire and Small Mabeyn), to the harem’s oblong, heavily landscaped English garden.

To the female members of the court, who saw the area bordered by the harem wall with high sculptural reliefs as the threshold of their private residences, the small courtyard of the zülvecheyn constituted the actual selamlık of their home.\(^{122}\) This was the quarter where the head of their family always conducted his business, because the sultan hardly ever ventured into the two zones of the Mabeyn. To them, the Mabeyn courtyard with all its administrative and service facilities was a separate entity, a distinct neighborhood of government employees and offices, removed both physically as well as hierarchically from the privacy and sanctity of their home. Thus, as a spatial and functional designation, the selamlık indicated different zones for the members of the harem and the government officials on the other side of the wall.

Abdülhâmîd’s private residence (the Hususi Daire, discussed in detail in Chapter Three), his workspace inside the Small Mabeyn, and the residence of the valide (once the Azizian Mabeyn’s main harem structure) were perhaps unusually located in this transitional zone (fig. 23). What I called Yıldız’s real harem, where the sultan’s immediate family and their numerous attendees resided, was clustered inside a small, terraced area on the northeast border of the sultan’s private garden. Its largest structures were the conglomeration of three interlinked, two-story apartment blocks, which were built respectively for the female servants (cariyeler dairesi), the female supervisor of the harem and her retinue of kalfas (hazinedar usta dairesi), and the wives (kadınefendiler dairesi) of the sultan (fig. 24). These three connected units were compressed from the north by the Şale Kiosk. In fact, the earliest version of the Şale, likely

commissioned by Abdülaziz and extant during the site’s palatial conversion under Abdülhamid, dictated the eventual irregularity of the harem’s layout and its spatial confinement. A steep declivity to their east limited its expansion, but allowed a citadel-like border forming a natural belvedere from which the private harem garden enjoyed a commanding outlook over the palace’s park below.

The quarters allocated to the servants of the harem were located in transitional spaces, often squeezed between two zones or two apartment units that they serviced. An archway underneath the residence of the sultan’s eunuchs-in-waiting (musahib ağalar dairesi) marked the harem’s threshold on the Şale side (fig. 25). This transitional structure was connected to the sultan’s private residence, because as the foremost harem chamberlains, these eunuchs scurried between the sultan and the selamlik on the Mabeyn side to report the needs of the former to the office of the head-scribe. These individuals also took turns keeping vigil in the Hususi Daire to communicate Abdülhamid’s orders to the members of the harem. Nadir Ağâ (d. 1935), the third musahib who was Abdülhamid’s favorite thanks not only to his devotion to the sultan but to his athletic daring (he tested the first automobile to be brought into the palace and operated the barges on the harem’s lake), was able to evade persecution in the aftermath of the sultan’s deposition by showing the commission formed by the Young Turk government the numerous hidden safes inside the harem apartments.123

Similarly, the apartment of the hazinedar usta, who as the female counterpart to the sultan’s head-chamberlain in the Mabeyn was responsible for the management of the harem, was situated between and connected by enclosed bridges to the apartments of the sultan’s wives on its one side and, on the other, to those of the female servants under her purview. Within the harem,

123 McCullagh, 288; Ayşe Osmanoğlu, 84.
the hazinedar usta wielded “considerable discretionary powers” (selahiyet-i vâsi’a sahibi),\(^{124}\) was held in higher esteem than the sultan’s wives, and had direct access to the sultan. She was the harem’s financial accountant, its master of ceremonies, and often the preferred bearer of the sultan’s decrees over his eunuchs, who were, in turn, relegated to acting as the hazinedar’s personal messengers between the harem and the offices within the Mabeyn—especially the one in constant communication with the accountants of the imperial treasury, located in the Dolmabahçe Palace.\(^{125}\)

The outdoor space between the residence of the eunuchs-in-waiting and these three apartments was incredibly tight, labyrinthine and tiered, and defined overall by a cluster of terraces that ended with the wall separating the harem from the grounds of the Şale. Three iron-frame greenhouses with grottoes once ran along the harem-side of this wall. In the family albums shot inside the palace’s interiors, these greenhouses and their elevated rostra-like grottoes frame the poses of the sultan’s young children and their instructors, favorite among them the celebrated artist and sultan’s aide Şeker Ahmed Paşa (d. 1907) (fig. 1.26).

Perched like a jewel-box on the first tier of these staggered sets, and between the apartments of the eunuchs-in-waiting and the rest of the harem structures, was the residence of the chief black eunuch (kızlarağası or darıssaade ağası) (fig. 1.27). With its Roman windows, high-relief sculptures of flower-vases in place of keystones, pronounced quoins, and strikingly small scale, this delicate two-floor building carries echoes of Ottoman pleasure pavilions from earlier decades, such as those at Göksu, Küçüksu and Ihlamur, and may be one of the last remaining fragments of the site’s pre-palatine history as a much smaller royal estate.\(^{126}\) It is no

\(^{124}\) Örikağasızade Hasan Sirri, 168-169; Ayşe Osmanoğlu, 77-82.

\(^{125}\) Örikağasızade Hasan Sirri, 169.
surprise that this standout structure from the recent past was repurposed to fit the office of the chief eunuch, who held the same rank as the grand-vizier and chief religious officer in court hierarchy—though it seems merely titular in the Hamidian era.¹²⁷

As I have touched upon before, to ease the busy circulation between the different daires inside the harem, almost all of the individual buildings were physically linked with their service quarters. In fact, from the multipurpose Çit Kiosk of the selamlık, which offered access to the harem’s antechamber (zülvecheyn), a visitor was able to walk all the way to the lofty turreted ceremonial hall inside the Şeale Kiosk without having to step outside once. Similarly, Abdülhamid could move between his study inside the Küçük Mabeyn and the Şeale, where he visited his royal guests, or meet with the grand-vizier, who was assigned a set of rooms there on his twice a week audience with the sultan. Abdülhamid’s private residence (Hususi Daire) was not only connected to the quarters assigned to the eunuchs in his service, it also had private access through a gallery to the already interconnected apartments of the female servants, the hazinedar usta, and, finally, his wives.

The younger sons and daughters of the sultan received their initial co-educational instruction in the otherwise nondescript apartments appointed to the sultan’s wives until the former were old enough to continue their schooling in the aforementioned separate building. The main entrance to these apartments supported a dome painted with a map of the Ottoman territories, while a reflective pool right below it (which was later removed) reversed the mural and made it available for close-up study (fig. 1.28).

¹²⁶ The pronounced cornice on the first-floor level, similar to the one found on the Çit Kiosk, indicates to us that when it was first built, it was a one-floor structure, adhering in many ways to the general typology of subsidiary buildings to imperial konaks like the Mabeyn from the reigns of Abdülmecid and Abdülaziz.

¹²⁷ Tahsin Paşa’nın Yıldız Hatıraları, 141.
Life inside the Hamidian harem was often quiet and understated. Abdülhamid kept a strict and unchanging schedule of work, repose, diet, and an oft-cited bedtime ritual of listening to detective novels by the French writer Émile Gaboriau (d. 1873) read to him by the keeper of his wardrobe (esvapçıbaşı). The monotony of the sovereign’s day-to-day existence was so ingrained in Yıldız’s administrative functioning that his aide-turned-biographers each consistently dedicated a chapter to the sultan’s daily life in their publications.\(^{128}\) The inhabitants of each of the apartments inside the spaces of the harem lived their own nuclear lives, and to a great extent, their social activity mimicked that of the Ottoman elites outside the palace walls. Despite their uncomfortable physical proximity, communication between the different daires allotted to his wives, daughters, and married sons was still highly formal, and regulated by a flurry of servants, and written invitations.

The different members of the sultan’s extended family had to see a lot more of each other during religious holidays or on the anniversary of Abdülhamid’s accession to the throne (cülüs), when they were required to participate in the associated ritualized practices of these events. Often, the large reception rooms (sofâ) dividing the individual apartments became stages for musical or theatrical performances, including recreations of the operas that the members of the harem watched in Yıldız’s theater—favorites among which were Giuseppe Verdi’s *Aida* and *Il Trovatore*, Georges Bizet’s *Carmen*, Vincenzo Bellini’s *Norma*, and Charles Gounod’s *Faust*.\(^{129}\)

The children enacted pantomimes based on popular Victorian fairy-tales.\(^ {130}\) On warmer days, these performances would be held outside, on a small stage built on the garden side of the


\(^{129}\) Ali Said, 40; Ayşe Osmanoğlu, 68; Refik Ahmet Sevengil, *Saray Tiyatrosu* (Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1962), 117-139. İÜMK houses an inventory of the operas and librettos performed in Yıldız’s theater under the catalogue number 8998.

\(^{130}\) Şakir, 289-290; and Leyla Saz, *Harem’ın İçyüzü* (Istanbul: Milliyet Yayınları, 1974), 131-133.
sultan’s private residence. A memoir highlights a remarkable if little known occasion when the members of the harem devised an elaborate “public exposition” (umumi sergi), a globally popular if demanding nineteenth-century phenomenon, in celebration of the twenty-fifth year of the sultan’s accession.\footnote{Şakir, 290-291.} We are told that the women, dressed as merchants, turned the zülvecheyn overnight into a bustling marketplace, selling everything from grains to cheese, soaps, drapery, haberdashery, and sweets. A separate exhibition of imperial jewelry (not available for sale but for the pleasures of viewing) was also curated, with dramatic electrical lighting installed for the occasion. All the royal production facilities of the palace and beyond, its dairy farm, kitchen gardens and greenhouses, the private safes of its members, the on-site porcelain factory as well as the Hereke textile factory in İzmit were mobilized to contribute goods and objects for this night-market.

The small palace theater, located in the zülvecheyn and literally squeezed between the residence of the sultan’s mother and that of the eunuchs-in-waiting, served as another recreational site for the members of the harem. Whenever a daire hosted an important visitor, such as a high-ranking female member living outside of the palace such as Abdüllhamid’s sister Cemile Sultan, the Egyptian khedive’s mother (Valide Paşa), or the wife of a foreign ruler or ambassador, the hazinedar usta and her servants would organize and execute the visit following an admixture of European and traditional protocol.\footnote{Ibid., 290-291; Ayşe Osmanoğlu, 45-49.} The sultan would request a performance to be staged in the theater following the harem visit, and the sultan’s wives, daughters and other close female relations would be expected to attend, looking on from its grilled second-floor balconies. Inconspicuous as it was, the theater’s location meant that it served as an important ceremonial threshold for the palace. A stripped-down triumphal arch next to its entrance
conducted the privileged guests of the Şale into the palace’s harem, and, passing through it, the
harem’s women were allowed to spend a day in the royal guest lodgings after the Bayram
ceremonies.

On the first day of each of the major religious holidays, the Şale was reserved for the
sultan’s immediate family to host their relatives. These incredibly prolonged visits always
commenced with a tour of its multiple rooms and apartments. In many ways, in fact, the female
members of the harem replicated the exact tour that the sultan devised for his royal guests. The
Şale, referred to more often as the ceremonial apartments (merasim dairesi) than by its
typological designation, was the tour’s shining glory. The first among other palace buildings to
be supplied with electricity (its massive generators still stand inside its garden compound), it was
furnished with lavish Hereke textiles and enormous carpets, and boasted Yıldız’s painting and
clock collections. The Şale appeared to members of the court and palace officials alike as a
permanent world exhibition, each one of its apartments designed in the style of a different nation
and intended to appear as a kind of Gesamtkunstwerk: “the Arab style, the work of the English,
or the French and German styles, with furniture equipped with that nation’s (kavim)
adornments.”

While men enjoyed the sultan’s shooting range (known as the Poligon Kiosk) on
the far corner of this complex, or watched military parades from its adjacent miniature Gothic
castle, the Talimhane Kiosk, women took walks around the Şale’s grottoes, ponds, round
palmhouses and monumental greenhouses, which were fronted by bronze animal sculptures, gifts
from the compound’s first guest, the German emperor Wilhelm II (fig. 29).

The urban make-believe played out in Yıldız’s harem was also observed inside its private
garden. The members of the court referred to this site as the inner garden (iç bahçe) or the garden

133 Ali Said, 44.

134 Ayşe Osmanoğlu, 58.
of the selamlık (taking into the consideration that for members of the harem, the transitional zone of the zülvecheyn was thought of as the sultan’s administrative quarter). This garden, which was designed in the shape of “an attenuated ellipse” (ṭūlānī bir beyẓ), was laid out over a shallow gradient between the platforms carrying the Hususi Daire on its north and Cihannūma (Belvedere) Kiosk to its south. A thick retaining wall on the garden’s east side separated it from the palace’s park below and bore a discrete portal that provided private access between these two heavily landscaped spaces. The centerpiece of this private garden was a serpentine lake, built in the late 1880s, which formed a moat around an island and supported docking stations for barges and launches and pavilions for respite along its shores. Each of the docking stations was named after a Bosphorus neighborhood, and in keeping with the desire to carry as much of life outside the palace into the harem as possible, the single-room art nouveau pavilion on the island (Ada Köşkü) was conceived as a neighborhood coffeehouse (fig. 1.30).

Abdülhamid’s critics used this picturesque garden’s make-believe of artificial lakes, grottoes, cascades, rustic bridges, railings and gazebos (all poured concrete over iron) as a metaphor for his ever-suspect mental state. In their eyes, the garden’s landscape, like its owner, was “strangely crooked in form” (garīp bir şüretde i‘vicaclı). Georgina Müller, the first and possibly only foreigner to record her time inside the then newly landscaped harem garden with relative impartiality, would see it as it was intended to be understood, as a space that was “as well kept as the best English gardens:”

136 McCullagh, 263.
Yıldız stands on the summit of the highest hill of the capital, and here before us lay a large lake or artificial river, covered with kaiks and boats of all shapes, an electric launch among others. The gardens sloped to the lake on all sides, the lawns as green, the turf well kept as in the best English gardens. Exquisite shrubs and palms were planted in every direction, whilst the flower borders were a blaze of colour. The air was almost heavy with the scent of the orange blossom, and gardeners were busy at every turn sprinkling the turf, even the crisp gravel walks with water. The Harem wall, now on our right, rose no longer bare, but covered to the top with yellow and white Banksia roses, heliotrope, sweet verbena, passion flowers &c. Thousands of white or silvery-grey pigeons—the Prophet’s bird—flew in and out of a huge pigeon-house, built against the walls, half hidden by the creepers...\footnote{140}

For individuals with intimate access to this inner garden, it was a place of miniature pavilions, architectural landscaping feats, and aviaries, all housing the period’s most “precious novelties” (bedāyi).\footnote{141} The rarest of bird breeds, trees, plants and flowers, as well as the most popular architectural styles of the day were reserved for this space (fig. 1.31). It contained the best of what the recreational world of the nineteenth century had to offer.

The narrow southern strip of the Mabeyn courtyard (where the Imperial Library and Çırağan Kiosk were situated), along with the Şale compound on the complex’s northeast, formed an imperfect crescent around the grand park of Yıldız. Two pathways at the tips of this crescent led the members of the harem and Abdülhamid’s guests into the park’s woods and pavilions. However, the real experience of the palace’s park—or “outer garden” (diş bahçe), as it is termed in narrative accounts of the site—commenced after one had passed through Yıldız’s oldest gate, the portal of Mecidiye situated behind the Çırağan that once provided access to the gardens when they served the latter palace (fig. 1.32). The female members of Abdülmecid’s and later Abdülaziz’s harems used a bridge rather than this door that was level with the street.

\footnote{139} Müller, 53.

\footnote{140} Ibid.

\footnote{141} Tahsin Paşa’nn Yıldız Hatraları, 316.
Abdülmecid’s understated Mecidiye Mosque flanked it on the right, and the stone barracks of the imperial guards on its left.

The park’s natural ravine (*dere*), or strait (*boğaz*), as an onlooker would call it, contained a large lake, one hundred and fifty meters in length, with a cascading stream of varying widths of ten to thirty meters, whose waters were pumped from the lake inside the harem gardens. Due to its placement between the two hills of Yıldız, this artificial lake was called “the pool of the valley” (*dere ḥavuz*) ([**fig. 1.33**](#)).

The Çadır and Malta Kiosks, the two neoclassical pleasure pavilions built during Abdülaziz’s conversion of the site into a miniature *Bois de Bologne*, were surrounded by the heavy foliage of trees, and occupied the peaks of this ravine’s two hills. These pavilions afforded protected views, allowing their royal occupants to repose in a contemplative daydream (*meşgül-i ḥayālāt*). From their earliest incarnation as structures conceptualized within the grand project to convert the hills of Çırağan into an English garden (discussed at greater length in Chapter 3), they were conceived as hermitages complementing the Romantic landscape. Their secluded siting also later worked in Abdülhamid’s favor when he used them to imprison the high-ranking officials of Abdülaziz’s reign—most famous among them the influential *Tanzimat* statesman Mithat Paşa (d. 1883), one of the creators of the first Ottoman constitution of 1876—while the new government prosecuted them for conspiring to assassinate the late sultan. In the short and ill-fated span of Murad V’s rule during the spring and summer months of 1876, whenever his

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mental illness visibly disrupted his ability to govern, he was rushed to the Malta Kiosk which also functioned then as a kind of asylum or sanatorium, for treatment and isolation and to hide him away from the prying eyes of a curious public and the bewildered members of his household at Dolmabahçe, especially his ambitious mother Şevkefza.145

Yıldız’s pre-Hamidian use—a historically forgotten period spanning forty years of pioneering imperial patronage and groundwork in the area—is consistently dealt with in summary fashion. In the site’s scant historiography, its use by Abdülhamid II’s predecessors consistently receives almost identical capsule descriptions.146 The chronological histories of this hilly ground between Beşiktaş and Ortaköy often match each of the nineteenth-century sultans and the structures that they commissioned for the site with their most hackneyed personality trait or best-known imperial achievement. The spiritless list begins with Selim III’s construction of a baroque fountain and prayer stone, Mahmud II then follows with the building of a pavilion from which to command his new army after his destruction of the janissary corps. Later, the Romantic lothario Abdülmecid builds a pleasure pavilion and installs one of his favorite concubines. Finally, known for his indiscriminate construction of palaces, Abdülaziz and his Ottoman-Armenian court architects transform this pavilion into the Mabeyn Kiosk, along with the Malta and Çadır Kiosks, and connect the Çirağan Palace with Yıldız’s woods by a monumental bridge (fig. 1.33).

If Abdülhamid’s Yıldız appeared medieval and discordant to many, it was because the empire’s last palace constituted merely a layer of construction over a century of building history

145 For Şevkefza’s highly publicized competition with Abdülaziz’s mother Pertevniyal, see Nahid Surri Örik, “İki Valide Sultan Arasında,” in Bilinmeyen Yaşamlarıyla Saraylılar (Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2002), 74-80.

146 The carbon-copy pre-Hamidian histories of Yıldız perpetuated in the work of Batur, Bilgin, Georgeon, and Ezgü, which are all based on the chronology found in the unabashedly nationalistic survey of Ottoman palaces (elaborated as Turkish Ottoman monuments) in Ahmed Ağın, Saraylarmız (Istanbul: Eyyübsultan, 1965), 128-131.
that preaced it. In the next chapter, I trace Yıldız’s architectural evolution through the works of the Ottoman chroniclers and poets who commemorated the buildings and the patrons of this hilltop estate. Yıldız’s location was historically tied to places and spaces belonging to the eminent women of the Ottoman harem. A closer reading of these eulogies have shown that the site grew out of and reflected the ambitions and predilections of the powerful mothers of the century’s last sultans, a curiously forgotten and entirely overlooked aspect of its vibrant architectural history.
II.

The Yıldız Kiosk and the Queen Mothers of the Tanzimat Era: Gender, Landscape, and Visibility

If we were to point to a uniquely gendered space in the Ottoman capital from the late eighteenth to early nineteenth century, the area demarcated by the Çırağan Palace on the waterfront and extending up to the valley between Beşiktaş and Ortaköy fits the bill. This particular imperial segment of the nineteenth-century capital, which eventually developed into Abdülhamid II’s Yıldız Palace complex, was reserved exclusively for the powerful mothers (valides) of the sultans for almost a century. Selim III’s mother Mihrisah Sultan (d. 1805), 1 Abdülmecid’s mother Bezm-i Alem Sultan (d. 1853), and Abdülaziz’s mother Pertevniyal Sultan (d. 1883) all focused their philanthropic activities on this hilly site as part of the sultans’ increased preference for the waterfront palace of Beşiktaş (that later come to be known as Dolmabahçe) over the grand, but secluded Topkapı.

Here, the valides first erected fountains, principle infrastructural requisites for any newly urbanizing neighborhood and easy perfunctory markers of ownership. Most importantly, however, they pioneered a taste for imperial structures in the form of countryside retreats and farming estates—a fact which has been surprisingly overlooked—thereby proving the existence of a “pastoral ethos” that scholars have long hoped to see more vividly exemplified in the

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1 Hilâl Uğurlu, a dear friend and colleague, first directed my attention to Selim III’s mother Mihrisah Sultan’s rather obscure orchard estate, bağ kasrı, located on the skirts of Yıldız’s hill and close to the convent of Yahya Efendi. This reference sparked my interest in studying the developments in and around this estate, and my research on this topic has gradually revealed a previously unknown aspect about the inner lives of the nineteenth-century valides: they were avid gardeners and horticulturalists. Ayşe Hilâl Uğurlu, “III. Selim’in İstanbul’u: Siyasi ve Askerî Dönüşümler Işığında İmar Faaliyetleri,” PhD diss., Istanbul Teknik Üniversitesi Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü, 2012, 261.
eighteenth-century revival of the Ottoman court’s *villegiatura* practices.² Throughout the nineteenth century and right up to the point when Abdülhamid II made it his palace in 1878, Yıldız was inhabited by a succession of these charitable, architecturally discerning mothers of sultans, who frequented the site not only to enjoy its privileged views, but also to inspect their adjoining farming estate while remaining close to the sacred sites of Beşiktaş that resonated with their spiritual and religious sensibilities—sensibilities which, due to their inherently more circumscribed and private lives within the patriarchal system of the Ottoman court, were necessarily reserved.

a. WOMEN OF THE OTTOMAN COURT AND THE LURE OF BEŞİKTAŞ

The site’s first proprietors were the daughters of sultans. The consummate mid-seventeenth-century traveler Evliya Çelebi was witness to the allocation of its waterfront, later known as the yalı of Çırağan, to one of the court’s high-ranking women. In his voluminous description of Istanbul, he records that the mansion and garden that was previously known as the garden of *Kazancıoğlu* and located next to the imperial garden of Beşiktaş, was granted to Kaya Sultan, the

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² The intertwined leisure activities of gardening and other courtly pastimes in the Ottoman suburban retreats were first historicized by Gülru Necipoğlu, “The Suburban Landscape of Sixteenth-Century Istanbul as a Mirror of Classical Ottoman Garden Culture,” in *Theory and Design of Gardens in the Time of the Great Muslim Empires*, ed. A. Petruccioli, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997), 32–71. Tülay Artan’s dissertation, which has now become a reference to all Ottoman architectural historians of the eighteenth century, documented the structural and formal continuations and transformations in these gardens into more full-fledged palaces, and their increasingly more variegated proprietors (prominent women most significant among these new elite groups), see “Architecture as a Theater of Life: Profile of the Eighteenth-Century Bosphorus” PhD diss., Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1989. Shirine Hamadeh has deepened our understanding of how Istanbul’s suburbs expanded and urbanized in the eighteenth century with the introduction of smaller but striking monuments such as fountains and *sebils* and the purposeful language of poetry that was used to convey their centrality, see *City’s Pleasures: Istanbul in the Eighteenth Century* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008). I borrow the wonderful phrase the “pastoral ethos” from her to describe the practice’s continuation especially and most poignantly by the queen mothers in the nineteenth century; Hamadeh, 55.
daughter of Murad IV. Evliya, who was a devoted member of the intimate courtly circle of Kaya Sultan’s husband Melek Ahmed Paşa, knew this residence reasonably well, and he describes it as “a mansion that needs to be seen” (vâcibü’s-seyr bir yahûdî). Its singularity, according to this diligent observer, lay in its unusual two-story fountain (fevkâni şâzrevân).

It is very likely that a pattern of property succession was put in place soon thereafter, or had already been partially established, stipulating that this waterfront lot (with its ever-changing buildings) should be allocated solely to the daughters and sisters of sultans. A parallel can be drawn with the continual designation of a cluster of yalis along the landing dock of Eyüp to the same group of high-ranking women. Although Ahmed III’s grand-vizier Nevşehirli Damad İbrahim Paşa’s celebrated nighttime festivals around illuminated flowerbeds in its gardens forever sealed the mansion’s name as Çirağan (after the word çirâğ meaning lamp, light or candle), and ascribed ownership to the vizier, the residence’s real proprietor was Fatma Sultan, the sultan’s daughter and the grand-vizier’s wife. Ahmed III’s letters to his vizier inquiring after


4 Evliyâ Çelebi, Evliyâ Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi, 191.

5 Ibid.

6 For the remarkably consolidated and prolific architectural patronage of the high-ranking women of the Ottoman court in Eyüp (a previously elusive topic marked by patchy information) Tülay Artan’s work has been indispensable. Kernels of discussion of these gendered spaces appear first in her dissertation, “Theater of Life,” 79-87, and deepen and develop into focused and/or comparative studies of their role in the building of different segments of the Bosphorus in later works; see Tülay Artan, “Sayfiye ve Sahil Saraylar,” in Eyüp: Dün/Bugün: sempozyum, 11-12 Aralık 1993, ed. Tülay Artan (Beşiktaş, İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1994), 106-114. Also see, Tülay Artan, "Boğaziçi’nin Çehresini Değiştiren Soylu Kadınlar ve Sultanefendi Saraylar,” in Istanbul Dergisi 3 (October 1992): 109-118. This last article is also republished in English as: “Noble Women Who Changed the Face of the Bosphorus and the Palaces of the Sultans,” Biannual Istanbul 1 (1993): 87-97.

7 Unfortunately, information on the social lives, tastes, and internal worlds of these imperial women, as Tülay Artan also frequently laments, are often found in fictionalized narratives of twentieth-century popular history that appeared in the early days of the Turkish Republic as sensationalist newspaper serials. For an overly dramatized biography of Fatma Sultan, see Ahmet Refik, Tarihte Kadın Simaları (İstanbul: Muallim Ahmet Halit Kitaphanesi, 1931), 59-127. Refik, whose works popularized sensationalized designations like the Tulip Era, also coined the phrase “women’s
the health of his daughter, who was plagued with smallpox, offer an unusually intimate portrayal of a father deeply anguished by Fatma Sultan’s sickness and desperate to discover antidotes.\(^8\)

This intimate view of a father’s concern for his daughter is evidence of a belief—commonly held by members of the court and promoted by the paterfamilias himself—that a princess held a crucial position in the imperial hierarchy as a figure with political and institutional agency. Once married, she was, along with her own household, a symbolic extension, a satellite of the sultan’s court, and had to conduct her married life as such.\(^9\)

Sedad Hakkı Eldem, who left behind the most comprehensive study on the Ottoman waterfront residences, documents what this Çırağan mansion might have looked like in the time of Kaya Sultan and how it may have changed over the course of the eighteenth century. As evidence, he compares the descriptions and architectural sketches of Franz Philipp von Gudenus, a member of the Austrian delegation that visited Mahmud I’s court in 1740, with an engraving from the expanded second edition, published in 1842, of the French ambassador Marie-Gabriel-Florent-Auguste de Choiseul-Gouffier’s *Voyage pittoresque de la Grèce.*\(^{10}\) Gudenus’s sketch of

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sultanate” (*kadınlar saltanatı*) in his lurid renditions of rivalries between the prominent mothers of sultans in the seventeenth-century; see Ahmet Refik, *Kadınlar Saltanatı* (Istanbul: Kütüphane-Askeri/Ibrahim Halimi, 1923). Tülay Artaş traces the property ownership of eighteenth-century princesses through archival research; for Fatma Sultan’s Çırağan, see “Theater of Life,” 368-369.


\(^9\) Once Ahmed III and his retinue returned to Istanbul after the court’s decade-long retreat to Edirne due to frequent insurgencies in the capital, he revived the practice of strategic marriage alliances with considerable vigor, see Tülay Artaş, “Istanbul in the 18\(^{th}\) Century: Days of Reconciliation and Consolidation,” in *From Byzantium to Istanbul: 8000 Years of a Capital*, ed. Koray Durak (Istanbul: Sabancı Üniversitesi Sakıp Sabancı Müzesi 2010), 300-313.

Leslie Peirce’s seminal work on the political and socio-cultural history of the Ottoman harem’s composition from its formation to the seventeenth-century traces the origins of this tactical practice in earlier periods and assesses the context of shifts in the empire’s marriage-based political alliances throughout the centuries, see Leslie Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

the property’s layout and accompanying narrative account, like Evliya Çelebi’s, focuses on the site’s most distinctive feature, Kaya Sultan’s double-tier fountain with brass waterspouts shaped as flowers, whose waters collected in a large marble pool embellished with prominent fish reliefs (fig. 2.1). The erstwhile structures at this site, furthermore, read less like a hardy mansion and more as light, exposed buildings to be used for temporary stays.

When superimposed, Eldem finds remarkable similarities between Gudenus’s plan and Choiseul-Gouffier’s engraving of the mansion’s waterfront façade, especially in the layout of the central assembly hall projecting over the water. During the time of the ambassadorial visit, the site contained two small kiosks, one with the reception hall on the water and the other set back against an arbor of vines and separated from the former by the central marble pool (fig. 2.2). Overall, it appears that the site was initially used for semi-informal court ceremonies, when high-ranking officials like the vizier and grand admiral hosted and entertained foreign delegations with theatrical and circus performances on its lawns. The architecture of the kiosks, though heavily gilded according to Gudenus, was still meant to provide temporary shelter and were not generally intended for overnight stays. They were light, open, and often ephemeral timber buildings. Outdoor structures like the fountain, pool, terraces and flower parterres were more central to the use and overall experience of the space than the buildings themselves.

Selim III’s sister Beyhan Sultan (d. 1824) had become the owner of the wooden mansion when Choiseul-Gouffier saw it a few decades later. Her residence was a considerably enlarged

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12 Selim III’s daily memoirist Ahmed Efendi refers to the site as the yah of Çırağan that became the waterfront mansion of Beyhan Sultan (the word yah most likely meaning the plot of waterfront land rather than the structure itself): “Beyhan Sultan Sähilsarayı olan Çırağan Yalısı.” Ahmed Efendi also informs us that Selim III visited the site to inspect the construction in the spring months of 1794; see Sırkâti, Ahmed Efendi, III, Selim’ın Sirkâti Ahmed Efendi tarafından tutulan Rüzâname, transliterated by Sema V. Arıkan (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1993), 184. Two foreign travelers (among many) have described Beyhan Sultan’s version of the Çırağan
version of the waterfront kiosk outlined by Gudenus, with two wings having been added on its sides, in place of the two large flower parterres that had once served as makeshift stages for performances during the hosting of foreign delegations. The expansion of the kiosk into a mansion reflected the privatization of the property in the time of Selim III, exemplifying the moment when the princesses began to take real ownership of their designated Bosphorus mansions, forming their own sub-courts, and inhabiting them for long periods of time rather than allowing their yalis to be among the sites in constant circulation for various court ceremonies. This was especially the case with widowed princesses like Abdülhamid I’s daughter Esma Sultan (d. 1848), and Selim III’s sister Beyhan Sultan, both of whom never remarried and enjoyed unprecedented levels of independence in presiding over their own households inside their designated waterfront mansions. They entertained individuals such as the celebrated poet and sheikh of the Galata Mevlevi dervish lodge, Şeyh Galib (d.1793) and brought in decorator-architects and landscape designers to reinvent their interiors and their outdoors. The best female tastemaker of the period is, of course, Selim III’s charismatic sister Hatice Sultan, who notably employed Antoine Ignace Melling, the German draftsman, as her style-maker for the

see James Dallaway, Constantinople Ancient and Modern, with Excursions to the Shores and Islands of the Archipelago and to the Troad (London: T. Cadell, junr. & W. Davies: 1797), 138–41; and, J. C. Hobhouse, A Journey Through Albania and Other Provinces of Turkey through Europe and Asia to Constantinople During the Years 1809 and 1810, vol. 2 (Philadelphia: M. Carey and Son, 1817), 860.

13 Tülay Artan, "From Charismatic Leadership to Collective Rule: Introducing Materials on Wealth and Power of Ottoman Princesses in the Eighteenth Century," in Toplum ve Ekonomi IV (1993): 53-94. Her second, shorter article shares a similar introduction as well as the almost identical title (the first part of both are “From Charismatic Leadership to Collective Rule”). They are both invaluable in discussing the economic power of the eighteenth-century princesses, but diverge in that the longer one highlights their sources of income while the earlier version focuses on the particularities of the deliberate ways they displayed their wealth.

construction of an Empire Style tripartite addition to her Defterdar Burnu waterfront mansion in Ortaköy (fig. 2.3).\textsuperscript{15} Her numerous letters to Melling continually and forcefully listing her decorative needs reflect a dogged, if temperamental discernment.\textsuperscript{16} Among a plethora of symbols, pediments, garlands, crests, monograms, eye-catching colors, heavy gilding and copious amounts of silks and porcelain objects became the choice decorative markers for these princesses, and by acquiring and displaying them they appear to have created a lively culture of collecting and self-fashioning.\textsuperscript{17}

The busy social lives of these princesses and the spaces they inhabited were intimately bound by and located in specific neighborhoods of the imperial capital: they continually crisscrossed between their mansions in Eyüp or others along the coastline from Tophane to Kuruçeşme. Both the residential properties that were tenurially ceded to the female members of the imperial household, and revenue sources such as agricultural lands and tax-farms assigned to them, retained a remarkable degree of continuity in how they were inherited. For instance, the yalıs in Eyüp were initially exclusively allocated to the daughters of Ahmed III and Mustafa III.\textsuperscript{18} After the death of Ahmed III’s daughter Esma Sultan the Elder (d. 1788), a progressive host

\textsuperscript{15} A shorter version of Artan’s article referenced in footnote no. 12 analyzes the decorative vocabulary that these women selected for themselves, see Tülay Artan, "From Charismatic Leadership to Collective Rule: Gender Problems of Legalism and Political Legitimation in the Ottoman Empire," in Proceedings of the Sixth Internationale d’histoire économique et sociale de l’Empire Ottoman et de la Turquie (1326-1960), 1-4 June 1992, ed. Daniel Panzac (Aix-en-Provence, 1995), 569-580. For Hatice Sultan’s Neşetabad Pavilion, see Antoine-Ignace Melling, Constantinoïde et de rives de Bosphore, D’après les dessins de M. Melling (Paris, 1819).


\textsuperscript{17} Artan, "From Charismatic Leadership to Collective Rule: Gender Problems of Legalism and Political Legitimation in the Ottoman Empire," 575. For their collector’s identities, see Tülay Artan, “18\textsuperscript{th} Century Ottoman Princesses as Collectors: Chinese and European Porcelains in the Topkapı Palace Museum,” Ars Orientalis 39 (2010): 113-147.

able to speak her mind to Baron de Tott’s wife about her dissatisfaction with arranged marriages between young princesses and elderly statesmen, her agricultural properties were passed on to her namesake, Abdülhamid I’s abovementioned daughter Esma Sultan the Younger. The latter was an even more independent woman, who along with her bevvy of female courtiers sustained a lively, autonomous court, and was renowned enough to be considered a regent, albeit sardonically, when Mahmud II remained the sole male heir.19 A similar transfer of inherited wealth occurred between Selim III’s sisters, Hatice Sultan (d. 1821) and Beyhan Sultan (d. 1824), and between Mustafa III’s wife Şebsefa Kadın and Hibetullah Sultan—an as yet understudied pattern of property hand-offs that I believe continued into the nineteenth century.20

In a calculated move to curb the rising power of the military-administrative elite, Ahmed III revived this revenue redistribution model and, through the enormous economic independence it accrued for the princesses, encouraged them “to engage in public manifestations of dynastic sovereignty” in the capital.21 A remarkable study on the sources of revenue of the eighteenth-century princesses has linked a targeted redistribution of imperial wealth that favored them, undertaken during that period, to the burst of imperial female patronage of lavish residential architecture along the Bosphorus.22 It asserts that the increased visibility of these women as pioneers of taste and consumers of novelty was connected with the state’s assignment of the

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21 Ibid., 62.

22 This study undertaken by Artan is first cited in footnote no. 13. For the genesis of this income allocation for the women of the court, see Peirce, 126-127, 212-216, and 247-248.
invaluable and increasingly precarious Rumelian properties as tax-farms to these women as a way of safeguarding the most important revenue-generating sources within the family and out of reach of more and more powerful local landlords. Furthermore, these princesses were married off to influential dignitaries to secure the latter’s allegiance to the sultan, as in the case of Fatma Sultan and Nevşehirli İbrahim Paşa. By the turn of the century, the imperial princesses had attained unprecedented agency in the way they conducted their lives, which had tangible repercussions on the layout of their mansions. The central spaces were designated as the apartments of the sultan, who often frequented the courts of his sisters or nieces. Even the stewards (kethüdas) hired to manage the incomes of these women received statelier lodgings than the husbands, whose apartments were comparatively humble and inconspicuous.²³

The wealth of the daughters and sisters of the eighteenth-century sultans was seemingly so vast that they retained substantial disposable incomes to spend on their own sizable households, residential architecture, and luxury objects that they did not have to protect through monumental pious endowments. In contrast, the valide of the eighteenth century are curiously less visible as patrons and consumers. It is only with Selim III’s mother, Mihrişah, that we begin to see the reemergence of the status of the valide as a prominent personage of the court and a savvy builder of residential and civic structures. The most monumental work attributed to Mihrişah is the Valide Dam (Valide Bendi) in the Belgrade Forest, while the most intriguing one in terms of its overall Baroque schema is her tomb and imaret in Eyüp.

²³ Peirce, 91. Already in her dissertation “Theater of Life” Artan senses a pronounced hierarchy of public visibility in the case of the sultans’ daughters over the sons-in-law, the latter group’s prestige would dwindle by the end of the eighteenth century. Artan tells us that the separate yalis of the husbands, often appended to their wives more visible statelier versions, appeared “in an unassuming manner” even in the Bostancıbaşı defters that meticulously outlined the wealthy occupants of the Bosphorus shoreline; Artan, “Theater of Life,” 381. On the eventual stripping off of power of the sons-in-law definitively under Abdülhamid II’s rule, see the journalistic tell-all Nahid Sırır Örik, Bilinmeyen Yaşamlarıyla Saraylılar, 11-32.
In the case of the two powerful *valides* of the nineteenth century, Bezm-i Alem and Pertevniyal, we can identify—albeit cautiously, as we still know little of their lives let alone their patronage patterns—a definitive turn towards the patronage of monumental civic and religious architecture. While they do indeed build personal residences (and the developments in and around Yıldız estate are a prime example), they are not of the level of ostentation seen in the previous century; this is perhaps due to a possible shift in recommended courtly decorum to channel more of their personal wealth into public service. The change in their sources of income may have been caused by the loss of the lucrative Balkan territories, rather than by the kind of profligate spending often attribute to the female members of the court and the interdependent fraudulence of financial advisors and scheming non-Muslim moneylenders. For example, the fact that the majority of the properties assigned to Bezm-i Alem’s largest endowment, her hospital complex in Fatih, were olive orchards in Edremit on the west coast of Anatolia (probably among the most profitable lands then remaining in the empire’s domains), suggests that geopolitical changes were behind the geographical shifts in the income sources assigned to the powerful women of the court.²⁴ These women might have had to rethink how they were going to present themselves vis-à-vis their fiscal capabilities and their roles as the mothers of reformist sultans; their architectural presence alongside their sons and daughters on the Bosphorus waterfront, however, persisted well into the reign of Abdülhamid II.

b. THE FIRST YILDIZ KIOSK AND ITS ECHOES ACROSS THE SHORE

If Ahmed III revitalized the courtly practice of frequenting the royal suburban mansions and gardens through his daughters, sons-in-law and various high-ranking officials, the patronage of

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Mahmud I (r. 1730-1754) firmly established it by meeting the infrastructural needs of the European shoreline of the Bosphorus that stretched from the Imperial Foundry of Tophane to the Çirağan palace.\textsuperscript{25} He built his monumental waterworks projects of 1732 on what his predecessor Ahmed III had initiated by constructing a dam in Sarıyer’s Bahçeköy neighborhood. The water was brought by aqueduct from the wooded hill close to the Black Sea, first to Taksim, named after its distribution facility, and from there down to Fındıklı. An observer of the period noted that before Mahmud I, the boroughs (kasaba) of Tophane and Fındıklı were blessed with good weather, closeness to the walled-city of Istanbul, and a propitious orientation towards the qibla (indicating the cardinal direction of Mecca, to the south), and their only shortcoming was a lack of drinking water.\textsuperscript{26} Furthermore, by rallying many of the city’s elite including his mother, to endow fountains and sebil\textsuperscript{s} in Tophane and Fındıklı, Mahmud I distributed water to a larger swath of this shoreline and the suburban villages in its hills. The same observer counted an estimated eighty fountains that benefited from this collective effort.\textsuperscript{27} What started out as an intention to improve a very specific segment of the shoreline resulted in the increased habitability of many neighborhoods of the imperial capital, from Galata to Kasımpaşa, Dolmabahçe and Beşiktaş.

Yıldız Kiosk first appears in the late-eighteenth-century chronicle of Cabi Ömer Efendi as a structure that was built by Selim III and came at the tail-end of two colossal building projects that were completed in 1795: the restoration of the arsenal and the construction of the

\textsuperscript{25} For Mahmud I’s prolific yet understudied architectural patronage, see Ünver Rüstem, “Architecture for a New Age: Imperial Ottoman Mosques in Eighteenth-Century Istanbul,” (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2013, 91-226. Also see Hamadeh, 76-78.


\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 31.
Imperial School of Engineering both along the Golden Horn. Lauding its views, the chronicler describes Yıldız as a belvedere, “the world showing kiosk” (köşk-i cihannüma). A few sub-imperial pleasure pavilions in Arnavutköy and Akıntiburnu accompanied the construction of this building. Built in succession, these residences shared the common feature of being constructed on privileged higher ground as belvederes (nezâreti şâmil), overlooking the rapidly populating, enlivened waterfront of the Bosphorus. Aware perhaps of the trendsetting patronage of Selim III’s sister Hatice Sultan and cousin Esma Sultan, Cabi Ömer lists their upland pavilions before the sultan’s own. For these competitive patrons, the principal motivation to build these belvedere-like structures was to enjoy their glorious vistas. In Selim III’s case, his Yıldız Kiosk was given the name “north” after the cardinal direction also associated with the powerful north wind, called Yıldız, that blew at this very spot and was coveted for its strength by Selim and his retinue of expert archers and rifle-shooters.

A concern for safety might have been another reason for the court’s pursuit of shelter in the imperial hills. Selim III’s reign was notoriously plagued with janissary insurgencies in the capital. A historian of a slightly later period spoke of the precarious position of the yâlis, noting that they were often easy targets. A particular battalion of five thousand janissaries (Beş Ortalar), greatly feared among Istanbul’s inhabitants, fled the capital by merchant ships, but not before riddling the windows of the waterfront mansions of the notables living in Beşiktaş—starting with the yali of the famous diplomat and minister Halet Efendi (d. 1823)—and in


29 Atif Kahraman, Osmanlı Devleti’nde Spor (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yay, 1995), 416-417. I thank Professor Günhan Börekçi, an Ottoman historian and amateur archer, for this reference. For Selim III’s rifle-shooting and archery hobby I have also consulted Ünsal Yücel, Türk Okçuluğu (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Başkanlığı, 1999). For a mention of the site’s renowned winds, see the Ortaköy description in Mehmed Râ’îf, Mir’ât-ı İstânbul (İstanbul, [1314]-1896), 287.
Ortaköy with bullets, until the residences were turned into “sieves” (misâl-ı gîrbâl). Although it may seem to be merely a colorful anecdote, events like these could have precipitated the building of Mahmud I’s first belvedere behind Beşiktaş Palace, aptly named såyebân (lit. gölgeilik, meaning both baldachin tent and shelter) for the shade and refuge it provided.

Beginning with Selim III, we witness a pronounced display of reverence towards the family matriarch—the valide reclaims her prominence above the sultan’s sisters. Her patronage becomes complementary to the sultan’s empire-wide reforms and her position next to the sultan clearly suggests an attempt at dual-rule that would become much more pronounced in the nineteenth century. In comparison to Mahmud I’s personal upland refuge, what was most remarkable about Selim III’s Yıldız Kiosk was the fact that it was built for his mother Mihrîşah Sultan, and was connected with a comprehensive royal project to redesign all of her residences.

When the kiosk was erected, Selim III had already restored his mother’s apartments in Topkapı Palace and renovated its harem gardens according to her liking. Yıldız Kiosk was to be her retreat, positioned at the top of the hill, both literally and metaphorically, of a hierarchy of

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32 A Baroque fountain with an attenuated trunk and exaggerated eaves still remains from the time of Mihrîşah’s Yıldız Kiosk, which the landscape designers of Abdülhamid II at the end of the nineteenth century used as the focal monument when they redesigned the inner, harem, and its artificial lake around it.
33 The redesigning of Topkapı’s harem seems to have been undertaken first by Ahmed III with the court’s return from Edirne to Istanbul. We begin to see changes in the decoration of the queen mother’s quarters during the reign of Abdülhamid I with a new aesthetic in wall paintings of part realistic and part imaginary landscapes with garden pavilions. The foundational work on the subject is Günsel Renda, Batılaşıma Döneminde Türk Resim Sanatı, 1700-1850 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basimevi, 1977), 89-108. Selim III continues the process of renovating the harem by building a new kiosk for himself in the private third courtyard of the palace and commissioning the landscaping of the harem garden in the process. See my forthcoming article on his hire of a German head-gardener Jacob Ensle for the project, Deniz Türker, “Ottoman Horticulture after the Tulip Era: Botanizing Consuls, Garden Diplomacy, and the First Foreign Head-Gardener,” in Botany of Empire in the Long Eighteenth Century, ed. Yota Batsaki, Sarah Burke Cahalan, and Anatole Tchikine, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library Publications (forthcoming).
buildings that belonged to the princesses, which were located on the shores down below and bracketing the sultan’s residence at Beşiktaş. To no one more than Selim III was this architectural hierarchy—aided by the site’s topography—as central to the experience of this imperial quarter: he spent an astoundingly large portion of his days shuttling between his official summer residence and the waterfront residences of his sisters.

In 1803, Mihrişah’s Yıldız Kiosk quickly began to grow and transform into an estate. A day-to-day account of Selim III’s life records that it was his mother (and not the sultan acting on his mother’s behalf) who initiated the building of a “garden pavilion” (bağ kasrı). This building was not at the very summit of the hill, which was held by the Yıldız Kiosk, but downhill and on the meadows to its southwest, occupying the neighborhood of Yahya Efendi, named after the sixteenth-century theologian and Sufi shaykh who had built his convent there. A fountain inscription from 1797, today inserted into the façade of a modern apartment building (fig. 2.4), attests to Mihrişah’s patronage of this segment of the site: “Our Mistress, the illustrious Mihrişah Sultan, the mother of the sovereignty’s highest [Selim III], may glory be upon her, granted and ordained to be included in her noble endowment half a māşūra of fresh water to this fountain from the large aqueduct that she had built as a duty to God’s munificence” (Mehd-i ʿulyā-yi salṭanat, devletlii Mihrişah Vālide Sultān ʿaliyyetü’s-şān efendimiz ḥazretleriniñ li-vechillāhül-kerīm müceddeden binā buyurdukları bend-i kebīrden işbu çeşmeye daḥî yarım māşūra mā’-i

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34 For a modest but insightful study on Ottoman Istanbul’s orchard typologies, see Süleyman Faruk Göncüoğlu, Üsküdar ve Boğaziçi (İstanbul: İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi, 2015).

35 A measurement corresponding to the volumetric flow of water, which was one-quarter of a lüle (26 meter-cubes), therefore about 6.5 meter-cubes of water per day. While masura was the preferred indication of quantity in judicial documents, lüle was the preferred designation for the allusion of an abundance of water in prose; see Mehmet Zeki Pakalın, Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü, vol. 2 (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1983), 372.
legz iz ihsans ve vakfl-ı șeriftlerine ilhak buyurdular). Her monumental aqueduct fed the fountain of her estate.

Soon after this kiosk and orchard estate were built, Selim III added them to his busy recreational itinerary in Beşiktaş, visiting his mother at least as often as he did his sisters. Çırağan also came to be Selim’s preferred summer residence. It presumably offered a more intimate mabeyn for his male retinue than the sprawling and unwieldy Beşiktaş Palace next-door, which by now had become a version of Topkapı with its collection of pavilions from different periods. He used Beşiktaş only for official meetings with his ministers. Often, the sultan and his prized halberdiers (serhengân) would take a quick trek up from Çırağan to his mother’s new estate in order to practice archery and musketry, play the game of jereed, and watch wrestling, javelin-throwing, and log-cutting (kütük darbi). If his mother joined the sultan in observing these courtly pastimes, fireworks would follow suit until the early morning hours, when the estate would be prepared for their overnight stay, instead of a return to either of the two waterfront palaces.

On any given day in Selim’s court, leisure activities intended to display physical prowess and strength were paired with religious ritual for the contemplation of the otherworldly. The three royal properties, Çırağan, the estate of Mihrışah Sultan, and Yıldız, physically layered on top of one another from waterfront to hilltop, offered a neat and balanced cohabitation of these

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36 Egemen, 601. Egemen provides the inscription in full. The fountain was originally across from the non-extant Topal Hoca Mescid in Çırağan. The inscription stone was later moved to an apartment’s entrance façade on Sinan Paşa Mescidi Sokak.

37 I thank my advisor Gülru Necipoğlu for pointing out the very likely fact that the eighteenth-century Ottomans continued to enact a hierarchy of decorum on Istanbul’s geography with their building patterns. While shores were given to the princesses, the more remote elevated estates were reserved for the mother, the latter practice perhaps being a sign of respectful veneration removed from the public gaze that emphasized their much loftier status.

38 Mihrışah’s orchard estate is mentioned with great frequency in the diary of Selim III’s unnamed scribe, see Mehmet Ali Beyhan, Saray Günlüğü: 25 Aralık 1802-24 Ocak 1809 (İstanbul: Doğu Kütüphanesi, 2007), 122-126, 128-129, 145-146, 148, 150, 152 and 154.
two courtly spheres, the Mevlevi lodge of which Selim III was a devoted member, Mevlevi poet and composer also being located adjacent to Çirağan. In a way, the new imperial strip in Beşiktaş replicated the same conjoining of worldly pleasure and material effusiveness that the female members of the court exhibited in and through their Golden Horn yalıs, which were likewise clustered deliberately close to the mosque-complex of Eyüp Sultan, a holy site central to the ceremonial legitimation of the Ottoman house.

The appearance of Mihrisah’s pavilion and the overall layout of her farm estate are currently unknown. However, its typological designation as a bağ kasrı (garden or orchard pavilion) appears to be a novelty in court chronicles otherwise preoccupied with waterfront palaces and mansions. To translate the site’s designation as a garden pavilion is to deny its singularity as a newly-formulated property type, which was probably more analogous to the rural Palladian farming estates of sixteenth-century northern Italy, where austere but luxurious small-scale neoclassical villas perch commandingly above cultivated lands full of fruit trees and vineyards. While we also cannot know why Mihrisah Sultan wanted this kind of estate instead of a waterfront palace or an inland urban konak—was it conceived as an infirmary or private sanatorium, or simply an income-generating farm?—it subsequently served as a model for many others that were constructed by the mothers of successive sultans. The most prominent among its successors is the still extant Validebağ Kasrı in Acıbadem, a vast wooded retreat on a hilltop on Istanbul’s Asian side attributed to Sultan Abdülaziz’s mother Pertevniyal, but a few decades


earlier Mahmud II’s mother Nakṣ-1 Dil Sultan also built a lesser-known one in Çamlıca’s hills in 1813 that was celebrated during its time.41

Although very little is known about the person and patronage of Nakṣ-1 Dil Sultan, she also seems to have preferred elevated sites on which to build her extra-palatial residences.42 It has been suggested that Mahmud II’s court began to commission highland retreats in the capital for medical purposes.43 Both suffering from tuberculosis, and later from a mystery disease with

41 Whether Mihrisah, Nakṣ-1 Dil and Pertevniyal’s Validebağ estates were one and the same or inhabited the same plot of land is currently unclear. However, they seem to be incredibly close when Helmuth von Moltke’s Istanbul map (1839) is superimposed onto the still extant Validebağ today. The plot given to Nakṣ-1 Dil might have been expanded for Pertevniyal as in the case of Mihrisah’s Yıldız estate expansion for Abdülmecid’s mother, Bezm-i Alem. There is persistent confusion of provenance with regards to the estates of courtly women that need to be remedied through a detailed study of their endowments. Today, Validebağ’s ownership is attributed solely to Abdülahiz’s sister Adile Sultan with no mention of a line-up of queen mothers who owned and cultivated the site, an oversight which is all the more surprising given that the site’s designated name is derived from their title. Baha Tanman, “Korular,” DBIA, vol. 3 (Istanbul: Kültür Bakanlığı ve Tarih Vakfı, 1993), 72-75. A brief entry on “Valide Sultan Sarayı” places Selim III’s mother Mihrisah Sultan’s mansion in Çamlıca in Kısıklı where the first public park would later be built; Ibrahim Hakkı Konyali, Âbideleri ve Kitâbeleriyle Üsküdar Tarihi, vol. 2 (Istanbul: Türkiye Yeşilay Cemiyeti, 1976-77), 273.

42 The apocryphal nineteenth-century stories that align Nakṣ-1 Dil with Empress Josephine’s missing cousin Aimée du Buc de Rivéry, who was presumably caught by the Barbary pirates on her way from her native Martinique to France and gifted to Abdülahamid I’s court, have a long and exciting history of their own. The made-up tale was initially published in an English newspaper and quickly transformed into many corsair swashbucklers in France. The Ottomans, perceptive of the story’s European popularity occasionally used it for their own benefit during their encounters with the French. Ahmet Refik historicizes the reasons for this made-up genealogy as a tactical appeal to the west, first in allying Mahmud II’s reforms with his half-European ancestry and later during Abdülmecid’s rule when the court sought the support of the French in diplomatic negotiations around the Crimean War. The Ottomans, whether they believed the story or not, willfully played with the ruse by earthening it again during Abdülahiz’s visit to the Napoleon III’s court, when French con-artists posing as Nakṣ-1 Dil’s French relatives expressed their desire to meet with the sultan. Moreover, Abdülahiz, very much convinced of his French parentage, demanded that his men find the remaining members of the Du Buc family, who then refused his invitation to meet. The most accurate biography of the Circassian-born Nakṣ-1 Dil is found in the best biographical compilation of the Ottoman court’s female members: Necdet Sakaoglu, Bu Mülkün Kadın Sultanlar: Vâlide Sultanlar, Hâşünlar, Hasekiler, Kadınefendiler, Sultanefendiler (Istanbul: Oğlak Bilimsel Kitaplar, 2008), 355-361. Both Ahmet Refik’s corrective essay, which I have not been able to locate, and Abdülahiz’s quest to find his relatives that first appears in Ali Kemâli Aksüt’s account of Abdülahiz’s trips to Egypt and European cities, are cited in this volume. Regardless of the fact that the Nakṣ-1 Dil- Aimée connection is long-refuted, it is still replicated in less circumspect histories; see Çalıştay M. Uluçay, Padişahın Kadınları ve Kızları (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basimevi, 1980), 107-108.

43 The history of Ottoman medicine has yet to produce substantive material on how epidemics were managed and perceived, especially with regards to the early-nineteenth century case of tuberculosis, when its etiology was universally not well understood. However patchy, the nineteenth-century harem suffered greatly from the disparate but devastating symptoms of tuberculosis, and it is agreed upon that Mahmud II and Abdülmecid both died of this disease as well as many of their female relatives, mothers, sisters and daughters. For the suggestive links between Nakṣ-1 Dil and her sanatorium-like estate in Çamlıca, see the introduction of Rahşan Gürel to the divan of the court
varied symptoms (which was therefore impossible to diagnose without an autopsy), the sultan and his mother sought curative airs in Istanbul’s hills, especially in the forested segment of Çamlıca perched above the Beylerbeyi Palace. It is unclear whether they believed that tuberculosis was contagious—physicians of the era were split in their approach to the etiology of the disease, majority still believed it was hereditary. If, however, the Ottoman court was aware of the disease’s transmission from person-to-person, the construction of and subsequent retreat to these imperial hideouts was a smart move on the part of the court’s most prominent members to quarantine themselves and protect the other inhabitants of their crowded palaces.

Yıldız Kiosk and its association with the mothers of sultans factored greatly in Nakş-ı Dil’s residential commission in Çamlıca, where she appears to have built an identical structure. It may be that by constructing a similar garden pavilion on the hill exactly opposite the one that was previously linked with her predecessor, Nakş-ı Dil was instating herself as the new valide. But, it may also be that with two of these royal sites in her name, she was laying claim to the imperial capital’s two prominent hilltops; while the palaces of Beylerbeyi and Çırağan were her son’s properties, the elevated sites above them were hers. Even though the first topographic map of Istanbul, drawn up by the Prussian officer Helmuth von Moltke (d.1891), neither demarcates the estate’s boundaries nor provides its layout, it still generously labels Nakş-ı Dil’s Çamlıca estate as “the palace of the Queen Mother” (Valideh Sultan Serai) (fig. 2.5). In the German map, this imperial site is the only residence reserved specifically for the valide.

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An ode (kaside) composed by the renowned court poet Vasıf in commemoration of Nakş-ı Dil’s Çamlıca pavilion—which we are told was built in her son’s name—stresses the fact that in its hilltop siting it was modeled on Mihrişah’s Yıldız Kiosk, and commanded over the Asian slopes like a beacon of light. “If the kiosk of Yıldız brought radiance to the neighborhood of Beşiktaş,” wrote the poet, “this [building] bestowed grace to the quarter of Üsküdar” ( Eğer verdiyse Yıldız Köşkü fer semt-i Beşiktaş’a, Bu sütü-ü Üsküdär’a zib-bahş-i iftihār oldu). Playing with astrological imagery, the poet finds that with respect to its high altitude, this royal pavilion was no different from Yıldız in its closeness to the Pleiades, a star cluster most visible to the naked eye. He therefore likens it to its predecessor in their mutual resemblance to a light-scattering moon (Bunuñ beyne’s-Süreyya ve’s-şerā yok farkı Yıldız’la, Bu kaşr-i Yıldız’a nisbet meh-i pertev-nışār oldu). Even though this unusually long ode does not provide detailed architectural information beyond the usual Persianate allusions to the four-quarter gardens of Isfahan and the forty-columned pavilion, it is still wonderfully awash in imagery befitting a fecund rural villa. Vasıf revels in the color and taste of the estate’s cherries, its freshly sown dewy saplings and moist earth, its pleasant balmy winds, and the overall capaciousness of its structures. It is with this kind of imagery that the ode signals the typological novelty of this imperial estate, and indeed, defines it quite precisely as such with the word me’vā, meaning shelter or retreat. These pastoral allusions were as much about the court’s desire to be close to

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46 This Yıldız-Çamlıca connection through the valide estates is alluded to Vasıf’s kaside cited in Haluk Şehsuvaroğlu, “Yıldız Kasrı,” Cumhuriyet Gazetesi, 5 July 1952, 5; for the transcribed version of this long poem, see Gürel, 255.

47 Ibid.

48 More specifically, Vasıf calls this retreat that Mahmud II’s mother built for him the shelter of the just one, me’vā-yi ‘adlı, and ‘adlı being the pen name of the sultan.
nature, a Romantic appeal, as they were reflective of the tubercular imperial family’s pursuit of recovery in nature’s restorative potential.

c. THE FAVORABLE WINDS OF YILDIZ KIOSK, MAHMUD II, AND ARCHERY

In the early years of Mahmud II’s reign, the Yıldız Kiosk and especially its adjacent farming estate almost completely disappear from the record. Only in 1811 do we find the fifteen-year-old ruler using Yıldız to watch through binoculars the destruction of over one hundred bachelors’ rooms across the shore in Üsküdar, which was undertaken in an effort to crackdown on prostitution and what appears to be a surge in venereal disease. In the same year, a historic deluge seems to have caused a significant disruption to the court’s visits to Yıldız. The deluge that “throttled forward a whirlpool of water” not only destroyed many buildings and bridges in the famous promenade of Kağıthane, but also flooded streams in Beşiktaş, turning the latter neighborhood into a sea (Beşiktaş gıyâ bir deryâ olmağıla).⁴⁹ A great number of properties located in these two suburban villages were greatly affected with many ordinary lives lost.

Ottoman chroniclers record the destruction of the old stone bridge of Beşiktaş, the town’s mill, public baths, shops, and the barracks of the gardeners’ corps. The deluge was strong enough to bury all the upland gardens and orchards close to the Yıldız estates under water. Had Nakş-ı Dil lived longer—she died in 1817—we surely would have seen her restore and repurpose this area for her own use in the same way that she undertook the construction of the Çamlıca estate and her modest yet exquisite Baroque tomb and adjacent sebil in Fatih (fig. 2.6).⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Şâni-zâde Mehmed ‘Ata’ullah Efendi, 474.

⁵⁰ Haluk Şehsuvaroğlu, “Nakş-ı Dil Valide Sultan Türbesi,” in a bound compilation of his articles on Istanbul’s forgotten architectural heritage for the newspaper Cumhuriyet, Asırlar Boyunca İstanbul: Sarayları, Camileri, Abideleri, Çesmeleri (İstanbul: Cumhuriyet, 197-), 138.
Mahmud II’s preoccupation with perfecting his archery and his relentless desire to compete with the most skilled men in his retinue led to the reinstatement of Yıldız as a prominent imperial retreat after 1818, when the sultan first picked up the sport.\footnote{Hâfiz Hızır İlyas Ağa, \textit{Osmanlı Sarayında Gündelik Hayat: Letâf-i Vekayî-i Endûrûniyye}, edited by Ali Şükrü Çoruk (İstanbul: Kitabevi, 2011),165; Süleyman Kâni İrtem, \textit{II. Mahmud Devri ve Türk Kemankeşleri} (İstanbul: Temel, 2005).} A curious little diary, kept only to document the record-breaking ranges—measured in \textit{gez}\footnote{Each \textit{gez} is sixty-six centimeters. An archer was only qualified for the title of \textit{kemançe} or \textit{tirendaz} (master bowman) once his shots with an arrow containing a metal spearhead (\textit{azmayış oku}) were able to reach eight-hundred \textit{gez}, and nine-hundred \textit{gez} with an arrow made with a bone-edged tip (\textit{peşrev oku}). Ünsal, 399; and Pakalin, 664.}—of the sultan and his bowmen, clues us into the fact that Yıldız was second only to Okmeydanı (archery field), the traditional imperial site for the sport established by Mehmed II (d. 1481).\footnote{Mehmet Zeki Kuşoğlu, \textit{Türk Okçuluğu ve Sultan Mahmud’un Ok Günülüüğü} (İstanbul: Ötüken Neşriyat, 2006). Strangely, this publication, which provides a facsimile of the diary, does not cite its source.} To document the sultan’s fledgling hobby, professional archers began to publish detailed how-to guides\footnote{Mahmud II commissioned his archery tutor and chamberlain Mustafa Kâni Bey to research and compile a comprehensive guide, which was then written down by the period’s most celebrated calligrapher Yesarizade Mustafa Izzet Efendi (d.1849); Mustafa Kâni Bey, \textit{Oçuluk Kitabı, Telhis-i Resâ’ilât-i Rumât}, edited by Kemal Yavuz and Mehmed Canatar (İstanbul: İstanbul Fetih Cemiyeti, 2010). This volume contains a facsimile of the original manuscript.} and court panegyrist\textemdash quickly shifted their focus to Mahmud II’s mastery in bowmanship. Poets popularized the phrase \textit{Yıldız havası} referring to the aforementioned strong north wind that blew in the hilltop site and provided the ideal currents for the longest shots. A couplet from the statesman, poet and the court’s most prolific chronogram composer Sadık Ziver Paşa (d. 1862), one of many, lauds the sultan’s talent aided by the wind of Yıldız: “By delivering his opening arrow with the Yıldız wind, the shah made it apparent to us that he was the moon to the sign of majesty” (\textit{Tirîne Yıldız havası ile virüf ol şey güşâd, Mâh-ı burc-ı şeyket oldûğun bize kıldı ʻayân}).\footnote{Mahmud II’s preoccupation with perfecting his archery and his relentless desire to compete with the most skilled men in his retinue led to the reinstatement of Yıldız as a prominent imperial retreat after 1818, when the sultan first picked up the sport. A curious little diary, kept only to document the record-breaking ranges—measured in \textit{gez}—of the sultan and his bowmen, clues us into the fact that Yıldız was second only to Okmeydanı (archery field), the traditional imperial site for the sport established by Mehmed II (d. 1481). To document the sultan’s fledgling hobby, professional archers began to publish detailed how-to guides and court panegyrist\textemdash quickly shifted their focus to Mahmud II’s mastery in bowmanship. Poets popularized the phrase \textit{Yıldız havası} referring to the aforementioned strong north wind that blew in the hilltop site and provided the ideal currents for the longest shots. A couplet from the statesman, poet and the court’s most prolific chronogram composer Sadık Ziver Paşa (d. 1862), one of many, lauds the sultan’s talent aided by the wind of Yıldız: “By delivering his opening arrow with the Yıldız wind, the shah made it apparent to us that he was the moon to the sign of majesty” (\textit{Tirîne Yıldız havası ile virüf ol şey güşâd, Mâh-ı burc-ı şeyket oldûğun bize kıldı ʻayân}).}
The physical boundaries of the imperial retreat of Yıldız expanded with Mahmud II’s continual archery gatherings. Numerous stone inscriptions marking and celebrating his records are found in the meadow of Ihlamur, the future site of another royal retreat built by Abdülmecid and named Nüzhetiyye, to the northwest of the Yıldız Kiosk (fig. 2.7). Due to the fact that the group moved in search of the best wind conditions, portable arbors (gölgelik) traveled with them and were put up to provide shade on the selected spots. The archery diary also points to specific, often highly localized names of places around Yıldız. It is here that we receive the first mention of a still extant door belonging to this property, the “mountain gate” (dağ kapısı), which apparently faced the main road leading to Kağıthane (it appears that the property also had another south-facing door). The diary also refers to a smaller structure, a kiosk visited for brief excursions (biniş köşkü) in the estate and next to the fountain of Selim III that had a porch (sundurma), from which the sultan shot arrows in the direction of the non-Muslim cemetery by the Ortaköy stream. The biniş kiosk was a site from which they preferred to take shots towards

55 Ahmed Sâdik Ziver Paşa, *Dîvân ve münşe‘ât*, transliterated by Mehmet Aslan (Sivas: Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi, 2009), 388-389. For the poet’s biography, see İbnülemin Mahmut Kemal İnal, *Son Asr Türk Şairleri*, vol. 3 (İstanbul: Türk Tarih Ençümeni Külülyatı Orhanyte Matbaası, 1930), 2090-2094.

56 There are a great many books on the sculptural remnants of Selim III and Mahmud II’s archery and marksmanship in Ihlamur. Sedad Hakkı Eldem provides the best topographic layout of the extant stones’ positions in the meadow; Sedad Hakkı Eldem, *Türk Bahçeleri* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1976), 30. For an architectural history of the meadow, see Çelik Gürsoy, *Beşiktaş’da Ihlamur Mesiresi ve Tarihi Kitabeler* (İstanbul: Türkiye Turing ve Otomobil Kurumu Yayınları, 1962). A much more specialized and beautifully illustrated study that has reenacted Mahmud II’s recorded arrow and rifle ranges in order to identify the missing stones have shown that their sculptural elements were carefully considered and merit an analysis all of their own; see Şinasi M. Acar, *Osmanlı’da Sportif Atıcılık: Nişan Taşları* (İstanbul: YEM Yayın, 2013). Kahraman also draws out Mahmud II’s shooting geography, 579-585.

57 The diary refers to the cemetery rather nondescriptly as the “infidel cemetery” (kâfir mezarlığı), which is probably one of the two Armenian cemeteries that existed at the time close to Yıldız. One of them, the Ambarlıdere Ermeni Mezarlığı, which was set on a meadow to the north of the Yıldız complex, was confiscated by the municipality to be turned into luxury apartments in the 1960s. The other possibility is the cemetery that was to the northeast of the complex, which in the 1930s was absorbed into the military headquarters established next to the palace’s park, and which has only recently been returned to its inaugural endowment. However, the diary might have also been referring to the Jewish cemetery bordering the Armenian cemetery adjacent to the park. In fact, the diary is occasionally more specific when it comes to location names and records at one point that the sultan shot arrows in the direction of the Jewish cemetery by the Ortaköy stream.
a granary (harmanlık), a storage facility that was probably connected with the valide farming estate. Often, Mahmud II liked to shoot arrows from the corner of the orchard of Gazrazbaşı, located next to the Yıldız Kiosk where he had placed an archer’s column (ayak taşı) called the “orchard’s worth” (bağ bedeli), towards a cemetery that was locally known as Güvercinlik, the pigeonry. On days when the sultan wanted to practice (meşk) and not compete, he gathered his archers in front of a coffeehouse close to Yıldız and took aim at a group of mastic trees. The coffeehouse also occasionally served as an informal shooting range in the direction of the extant Muslim cemetery in Ortaköy. As evidence of this estate’s importance to Mahmud II, Moltke’s map depicts it as a structure with a pronounced cross-axial layout set inside a garden surrounded by walls. Moreover, the map also marks the spots that were important shooting locations for the archers and identified in the sultan’s archery diary, such as the smaller pavilion with the porch, the coffeehouse, and the surrounding cemeteries (fig. 2.8).

The Yıldız estate fell from Mahmud II’s favor in the tumultuous period of the Greek Uprising of 1821. During this time, the court chose not to relocate to its summer estate on the hills of Beşiktaş and Ortaköy, two neighborhoods that were traditionally inhabited by the capital’s Greek Orthodox subjects, while the state searched for the Greek clergymen who had been sent there from different European cities on a mission to incite support for their independence movement. Şanizade Mehmed Ataullah Efendi, a historian born and raised in Ortaköy, recorded having witnessed the rounding up and execution of six priests in the area. These executions drew tremendous crowds (especially women) that prevented the executioner

from finding an available public space for his act and delayed the court of Mahmud II from moving to their summer palaces, Beşiktaş and Çırağan.\(^{60}\)

d. YILDIZ AS THE QUINTESSENTIAL VALİDE ESTATE

The hilltop property was revived once again under the patronage of Abdülmecid’s mother, Bezm-i Alem Valide Sultan. Sensationalist histories of the Ottoman harem as a site of continual competitive scheming belie the fact that, not unlike their male counterparts, the affluent women of the house of Osman were eager to model their disposition, legacy, and architectural imprint on their female antecedents. This remarkable but understudied genealogical intent is most visible in one of Bezm-i Alem Sultan’s first architectural undertakings. She erects an open-air mosque (namâz-gâh) in Yıldız for her husband Mahmud II’s mother Nakş-ı Dil Sultan. The short chronogram, which was once again composed by the court favorite Ziver Paşa, refers to Bezm-i Alem’s successor as Nakşî Kadın, a name that the latter used only in the intimacy of the harem.\(^{61}\)

It is also important to note here that more than twenty years had passed after the death of Nakş-ı Dil before Bezm-i Alem took the title. This is a considerable amount of time for the harem to remain without a head, so it must have made it all the more important for Bezm-i Alem to commemorate her predecessor, the mother of her husband, and also be able to present herself as the new queen regent.

We have a clearer picture of Bezm-i Alem’s architectural patronage than that of her predecessors. She was a prolific builder of fountains and a philanthropist dedicated to the improvement of public health and education in the capital. Her most significant contribution to

\(^{60}\) Şâni-zâde Târhi, vol. 2, 1131-1135.

\(^{61}\) Ahmed Sâdik Ziver Paşa, Divân ve münşe’ât, 518. For the Nakşî designation, see Uluçay, Padişahın Kadınları ve Kızları, 107-108.
the mid-century capital was the richly endowed hospital in Fatih. This large complex was the first healthcare institution to be called a hospital (the modern term hastahâne as opposed to the outdated şifâhâne) and was intended to target the treatments of smallpox and cholera, two diseases that brought the worst global epidemics in the period. Smallpox, especially, was believed then to be a disease carried by the poor; therefore, Bezm-i Alem’s demographic target for the hospital was Muslim men in need.62 She also founded the first civil high school that prepared its students for the capital’s university, which was being built at the time, as well as a preparatory school for girls to which she donated her own manuscript library and for which she established a lithographic press to print the school’s textbooks.63 The second bridge between Galata and Eminönü was also undertaken at her initiative in order to relieve the congested circulation on Mahmud II’s first wooden one.64

Bezm-i Alem’s numerous and grand public philanthropic works made her a very popular presence among the Istanbulites. Adolphus Slade (d. 1877), the British admiral of Abdülmecid’s navy, provides a moving account of her funerary procession that highlights the connection between the queen mother, women and the poor, the capital’s most underprivileged demographic:

as the procession passed along the streets, lined at intervals with troops, numerous female spectators in open spaces sobbed audibly; and although Eastern women have ever tears as well as smiles at command those shed on this occasion were sincere, for the sex had lost that day an advocate, the poor a friend.65

62 Carpenter, 103.

63 Can Alpgüvenç, Hayırda Yarışan Hanım Sultanlar (Istanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2009), 161. Alpgüvenç notes that the library was later transferred to the Beyazıt State Library in Istanbul.

64 Alpgüvenç, 165.

65 Adolphus Slade, Turkey and the Crimean War: A Narrative of Historical Events (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1867), 87-88.
The curative powers of water undergirded Bezm-i Alem’s charitable institutions in the capital. She endowed the revenues of the Terkos Lake, which supplied a large portion of Istanbul’s water needs, to the hospital complex. The poems dating her fountains and sebilts refer to her as a person of purity (zât-i pâk) alluding both to her virtuousness and her attention to health and cleanliness. We understand from her surviving letters to her son Abdülmecid that she frequented the natural springs of Yalova that supplied her with fresh air, a place where she could breath (ferah ülemek), and enjoy the facilities by bathing and receiving mud treatments (suya girdi, çamura süründü). Not unlike the contemporary German Romantics, she found storms and gales exciting subjects to report to her son. She peppered her letters with references to sublime meteorological events. It was unusual for members of the harem to take this kind of balneological trip at such a considerable distance from the capital. Hence, this is indicative of a further opening up of the court’s previously guarded private entertainment and medical practices as well as the public presence of the queen mothers.

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66 Alpgüvenç, 167.

67 Ahmed Sâdık Ziver Paşa, Divân ve minse'ât, 427 and 455.


69 In fact, one of the earliest portrayals of Bezm-i Alem comes to us from the letters of an Austrian physician, Siegmund Spitzer, who served as Abdülmecid’s personal doctor from 1845 to 1850. Spitzer examines her one-on-one in her quarters in Çirağan and remembers the visit as follows: “Once I had arrived in the court of Tschiragan, I saw in the distance an armchair where a woman covered in a veil and jacket was sitting. It was the sultana-mother, whom I respectfully approached, following behind my black escort. After he gave her the sultan’s message, she received me warmly and invited me to sit down, though the only place I could sit was on the ground. Through the half-transparent veil I could see a trace of the redness on her cheeks as I told her about the delicate scrupulousness with which her noble son had mentioned her health that day. She answered my medical questions, calmly and freely, and I couldn’t help but notice the perfect beauty of her fine, brilliantly white hand as well as the regularity and energy of the features of this roughly thirty-five-year-old, very well-maintained Georgian woman. As she left, she dismissed me graciously and told me to prepare the medicine she needed myself and took from the bag of her feradsche a gold-filled purse, which she had the aforementioned eunuch hand over to me. I rushed immediately to the sultan in Beylerbey to tell him about my visit. Emphasizing how important the treatment of his mother was, he said in a moving tone: “We’re not talking about a tree here that should blossom and bear new fruit, but at least it shouldn’t rot!” With naïve affability, he also asked me if I couldn’t also give his mother the same medication that he had recently used (for a completely different indisposition) with great success. “So, did you need to be so nervous?” he added. “The Europeans still judge our family life from a flawed point of view. Aren’t we all people like you?
From 1842 onwards, Bezm-i Alem was definitely engaged in restoring Yıldız as the valide estate. She not only erected the abovementioned open-air mosque in honor of her predecessor, but also built a considerable number of fountains on the boundaries of the walled estate and around the shrine complex of Yahya Efendi that aided in the neighborhood’s urban transformation. The inscription poems of these fountains praised her as a benefactor who improved the living standards of Beşiktaş. The grandest of her five fountains around Yıldız, a meydan fountain with pronounced quoins and four embellished and inscribed façades, provides its inauguration date of 1839 with this line by Ziver Paşa: “With water the Queen Mother brought contentment to this quarter” (Bu semti қildи Vәlide Sultan әb ile dil-(Build) (fig. 2.9).

Most significantly for the architectural expansion of Yıldız, Bezm-i Alem built a second kiosk next to the one that was constructed during the time of Selim III. Two commemorative poems written by two different poets from 1842 and both referring to the site once again, after Mihrişah’s time, as a bāğ (an orchard or cultivated land), competed for this new kiosk’s epitaph. The competition pitted the court-endorsed Ziver Paşa against a lesser-known poet, İbrahim Raşid Efendi (d. 1892). This poet kept his day-job as a lowly bureaucratic scribe, but fashioned his artistic persona as a commoner, interspersed his poems with urban patois, and was beloved by an extra-courtly readership.

Have you ever heard something unpleasant about me or my people? Be unbiased, we’ve had the time to get to know each other. Dost olduk (we’ve become friends).” Siegmund Spitzer, ”Am Hufe Sultan Abdul Medjid’s,” Deutsche Rundschau 99 (April-Mai-Juni,1899), 123-124.

70 For a complete list of her fountains, see Egemen, 208-215.

71 Egemen, 208. Also see Çetintaş, 139-140.

72 For an intimate and often amusing biography of this lesser-known scribe whose chronograms seem not to have impressed the biography compiler, perhaps because they were too low-brow, see İbni’l-Emin Mahmud Kemal İnâl, Son asr Türk şairleri, vol. 2, 1365-1369. Ibrahim Raşid’s di‘van has been transcribed, though the list of his chronograms is incomplete because it was compiled early in the poet’s career (1835), see Kamile Çetin, “Râşid (?-1310?)-1892) Divânı İncelemesi-Tenkitli Metin” (Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi, Isparta, 2006).
Bezm-i Alem deliberately did not choose Ziver’s poem, which is otherwise laden with sharp-witted and complex celestial metaphors, because it overlooked the prominence of her urban project to rejuvenate the hilltop. Her landscaping in Yıldız ran in tandem with the rest of her efforts to build and restore fountains in Besiktas in order to improve the neighborhood’s water facilities. She also surely knew that Yıldız’s name was related to the wind and not the star; therefore, to her, Ziver’s astrological imagery was a misreading, one that overlooked the most important fact about the site, namely its function a royal archer’s favorite retreat. The poet had changed the meaning of its imperial designation and that was unacceptable to Bezm-i Alem, who was clearly driven by a commemorative impulse to preserve the legacy of Yıldız’s former inhabitants, male and female. The valide’s rejection of this poem must have been especially hard for the poet who prided himself on his knowledge of astronomy, and had even authored a treatise on comets.73

In Ziver’s discarded poem, this new “pleasure pavilion” (meserret-gāh) was placed on the summit of a hill (rūtbe-mürtefi’) to replicate, together with the adjacent Yıldız Kiosk, the formation of the twin polestars of the Ursa Minor constellation, Pherkad and Kochab: “That elevated building of this lofty pavilion, / Is worthy of being a noble constellation for the stars in the heavens” (O rūtbe-mürtefi c bünüyām bu ḵaṣr-1 berēnuḵ kim, / Feleḵde yıldza burc-1 şeref olsa sezā her ān).74 Sublime astral imagery derived from the adjoining placement of these two highland pavilions and a play on the meaning of Yıldız as the Pole Star form the poem’s lyrical

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73 İnal, *Son Asır Türk Şairleri*, vol. 3, 2092.

74 Ahmed Sâdik Ziver Paşa, *Dīvân ve münşeāt*, 470. I am grateful to András Riedlmayer for helping me parse through the difficult metaphors of this poem. He pointed to the fact that certain words contained double meanings. For instance, burc means both constellation and battlement, and yıldız is both the Pole Star and the name of the estate. Thus, the building’s architecture and layout is equated in its height and nobility to a group of stars in the sky.
apex: “Together with this pavilion, the pavilion of Yıldız is like Pherkad, / It is as if this place were made indistinguishable from the apogee of the sphere of the heavens” (Bu kaşr ile beraber kaşr-i Yıldız Ferşadân-âsâ, nola eylerse evc-i çarh ile bu mevki’yi siyyân). The poem ends with only the briefest of allusions to the site’s strong winds: “The new kiosk’s windows chime each time the Yıldız winds stir with a rhythm that instills joy in Venus in the sky” (Şadâ virdîkçe her bir revzeni yıldız hevâstyyla, o aheng ile lâ-büdd eder gökke zühreyi şâdân).

Bezmi Alem’s intention to connect with her public is also apparent from the fact that she chose the commoner’s poet over the upper-class court favorite. Compared with the language of Ziver’s poem, Raşid’s invocation of the site is much more accessible and centered upon the concrete changes the queen mother brought to this particular segment of the imperial Beşiktaş neighborhood. Raşid’s poem—whose wooden epitaph still exists—aims to describe the new building, and rather than making clever astrological connections to the site’s name, it accentuates the patron’s piety and generous philanthropy (fig. 2.10). It reads:

Abdülmecid Khan of celestial rank, king of the kings of the world,

The mother of this Shah is Bezmi Alem, of the noblest name,

When she, who is as virtuous as Hâcer, as chaste as Şeddika, and of the disposition of Râbi’a,

extended her munificent hand, it became a fount of benefaction to the garden of the

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75 A bright star in the constellation of Ursa Minor that appears to revolve around the Pole Star in the night sky. For the role of Pherkad/Farqadân in celestial navigation, see Medieval Science, Technology, and Medicine: An Encyclopedia, ed. Thomas Glick, Steven J. Livesey, and Faith Wallis (New York: Routledge, 2005), 365-366.

76 Hagar, the mother of Abraham’s first-born son Ismâ’il (Ishmael), a forebear of the Prophet Muhammad.

77 Meaning “Truthful, veracious,” as well as “a title of honor given to Mary, the mother of Jesus, and to Ā’îsha, wife of the Prophet Muhammad.” Sir James W. Redhouse. A Turkish and English Lexicon (Beirut: Libraire du Liban, 1996), 1172.

78 Râbi’a al-‘Adawiyya, Muslim saint, Sufi poetess; see Margaret Smith, Râbi’a the Mystic and her Fellow-Saints in Islam (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1928; reprt. 1984). Ibrahim Raşid seems to have used the model of Râbi’a frequently for the funerary chronograms he composed for women, see Çetin, 91-92.
world.

When she bestowed her favor on Yildiz, it is wondrous how a mountaintop turned into an orchard.

There she also built an ornate mansion, of lofty structure, whose gentle breeze is so soul-reviving, its water so delicious, and its views so grand that next to it the Arch of Chosroes remains but an aged edifice.

What a sublime pavilion, its appearance so exalted, and its garden so exquisite that if Sinimmār were to see its layout he would place his finger on his mouth [in wonderment].

As long as that munificent [lady] dwells there, grant o Lord, in good health, that each moment spent inside it may bring nothing but pleasure.

The one who utters this prayer is her slave Rāṣīd, as do the singing nightingales that always keep watch over its rose garden.

Seven planets came and told the following chronogram

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79 The Arch of Chosroes (Tāk-i Kīsrā), a sixth-century Sassanian monument from the ancient city of Ctesiphon located in today’s Iraq, is perhaps the most commonly used archetype for palatial architecture in poetry from the Islamic world along with the castle of Khawarnaq. The structure’s monumental arch, one of its only remaining segments, boasted the largest single-span brick vault of its time. Not only in poetry but in the actual building practices starting with the Lakhmids and the Abbasids, this building was a source of inspiration and spolia; see Lionel Bier, “The Sassanian Palaces and their Influence in Early Islam,” Ars Orientalis 23, A Special Issue on Pre-Modern Islamic Palaces, ed. Gülru Necipoğlu (1993), 59-60; also see Eva R. Hoffman, “Between East and West: The Wall Paintings of Samarra and the Construction of Abbasid Princely Culture,” Muqarnas 25 (2008), 123.

80 For the legend of the Greek architect Sinimmār, the Lakhmid King Nu’mān ibn Imru al-Qays and the building of the castle of Khawarnaq, see Encyclopaedia Iranica, s.v. "Kawarnaq" http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/kawarnaq: “Traditions on Kawarnaq castle can mostly found in Arab historical works, in cosmographies, where famous buildings are dealt with, and in geographical literature. There exist three legendary accounts that are closely related to it. The first is connected with the building of the castle. No’mān engaged the Greek architect Sinemmār to construct it. After completion, the king and Senemmār climbed to the pinnacle of the castle. What followed is told in three versions. The king either asks Senemmār if he is able to construct an equal castle, and Senemmār answers in the affirmative; or Senemmār, delighted at his princely payment, confides to the king that he would have constructed a more splendid palace if he had been aware of the king’s generosity before; or Senemmār reveals that he knows of a certain stone in the wall which, if removed, would let the whole building collapse. The king asks him if someone else knows this stone, which is not the case. The outcome is always the same: No’mān crushes Senemmār by throwing him down from the battlements. This story prompted the proverbial saying “Senemmār’s repayment,” often quoted in the form jazāhu jazā’a Sinimmār “he repaid him as they had repaid Senemmār,” that is, “he repaid him good with evil” (Maydānī, I, pp. 159-60, no. 828).” For a more condensed account of this ill-fated Greek architect and his domed palatial construction, see Gülru Necipoğlu, “An Outline of Shifting Paradigms in the Palatial Architecture of the Pre-Modern Islamic World,” in Ars Orientalis 23, 4.
The mansion of the sultan’s mother is as a moon to Yıldız.  

Raşid pronounces her role as a builder, who transforms an otherwise arid mountaintop. The poet alludes to the sudden verdancy of the site by calling it an orchard with an exquisite layout (bāğ-i ra’nāraising), a world of gardens (riyāž-i dehare), and, using a recurrent and familiar trope, a rose garden (Gülistān). It appears that Bezm-i Alem initiated the first radical transformations at the site and it is with her that Yıldız’s history as an important imperial garden complex really begins. It is also with her that the quest to outfit this sui generis hilltop estate with the requisite farm typology starts, a quest that continued to shape Yıldız’s palatial development, when unceasing architectural experiments with chalets, suburban cottages, and French hôtels particuliers were

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81 Here, I am indebted once again to András Riedlmayer for his help in figuring out the correct ebcde calculations for the chronogram providing the building’s date. Raşid seems to have composed an incomplete chronogram (tamiyeli tarih), in that the sum of the letters in the final line is supposed to be intentionally seven short, i.e. 1251. The Seven Planets of classical Islamic astrology, heralds of fortune, mentioned in the penultimate line, enter and should add the missing numbers, and thus give the total of 1258, which equals the date of construction of the Queen Mother’s Pavilion. However, when the numerical values of the letters in the last line are added up we get the date 1241, which leaves us ten short. Riedlmayer points to the fact that if the final vowel of Kamerdir were spelled with a yā (numerical value 10) that would supply the amount missing from the total. But writing -dir plene is also the less common spelling, so perhaps the woodcarver followed the more usual orthography and by the time it was noticed it was too late to redo the entire inscription.

82 Şehinsäh-i cihân Abdülmecid Hân-i felek-pāye
O şahni maderidir Bezm-i ‘Alem nâm-i ‘âli-şân
O Hâcer-haslet Siddîka-i‘ifet Râbi‘a-ṭab’în
Yed-i cûdu riyâz-i dehre oldu menba‘-i ihsân
Edince Yıldız’a rağbet ‘aceb tâg üstü bâğ oldu
Ki yapdı hem de bir kaşr-i müzeveyen şâmihi’l-erkân
Neşimi cânfezâ âbu latîf nezzâresi ā’lā
Bunun yanunda kaldi Ţâk-i Kısırâ bir kühen bûynân
Zehi kâh-i mu’allâ resm-i vâlâ bâğ-i ra’nâ‘î kim
Sinîmmâr tařhun gôrse olur engüşt-i leb-i hâyrân
Nişin oldu kança yâ Rabb ‘âfiyetle ol kerem-pîrâ
Derûnu’dâ şefâdan başka bir şey görmeye her ân
Du‘âsîn bendesi Raşid gibi vird-i zebân eyler
Gülistânâdu’dâ dâim bekeylen hep bülbül-i gûyân
Gelüb seyvâre-i seb’a bu gânâ söyledi târih
Kamerdir Yıldız’a gûyâ bu kaşr-i vâlide sülûn
1258 (1842)
undertaken.

The model for both Nakş-ı Dil’s and her devoted successor Bezm-i Alem’s hilltop orchard estates was perhaps the garden palace of Nurbanu Valide Sultan (d. 1583), the formidable wife of Sultan Selim II (d. 1574). In fact, Nakş-ı Dil may have inherited the actual property of this sixteenth-century valide. Nurbanu’s extra-palatial summer residence accompanied her hilltop mosque in Üsküdar, which came to be known as Atik Valide Sultan (Old Queen Mother). Having outlived her husband, Nurbanu became the first queen regent to take on the title of valide, and her mosque complex was the first valide project that the court architect Sinan designed. A sixteenth-century Ottoman geographer would describe Nurbanu’s building project in Üsküdar as one attracting interest in this suburb, a practice (and literary trope) that we observe in the charitable acts of her nineteenth-century successors.84

A waterfront view of Çırağan executed in marquetry and embellishing an imperial pen box gives us a distant view of Bezm-i Alem’s estate and her new pavilion erected next to the Yıldız Kiosk, both of which are circumscribed by a wall (fig. 2.11).85 Her endowment measures this complex of two pavilions to be around eighteen hectares.86 The same pen box also depicts a fragmented view of the farm building adjacent to, but not included in, the walled complex of the


84 “Before the above-mentioned lady established these charitable buildings, their site and environs had been vacant plots. With the construction of new housing, they attracted around them a large population, and they augmented Üsküdar’s inhabited region by at least one-third.” Aşık Mehmed’s description of the site cited in Necipoğlu, Sinan, 292.

85 When Von Moltke’s map is overlaid onto today’s extant Yıldız structures, Bezm-i Alem’s new pavilion coincides with the Azizz Mabeyn, while the site of Selim III’s Yıldız Kiosk is replaced by Abdülhamid II’s private residence. However, the small masonry pavilion that was designated to the chief eunuch of Abdülhamid II’s harem due to its elegant neoclassical stuccos is reminiscent of Mahmud II’s Çırağan and was likely a part of the original Yıldız complex.

two pavilions. A later Ottoman reworking of Von Moltke’s map calls Bezm-i Alem’s farming estate vâlide çiftliği and marks the site with an elongated building fronted by a fountain. This farming estate was probably an expanded version of the one that Selim III’s mother Mihrişah retreated to in order to convalesce when in ailing health. Contrary to her predecessors, Bezm-i Alem was a keen and respected horticulturalist, personally involved in producing as many different varietals of each fruit and vegetable as possible, and hence always in need of more land. The products of her farm at Yıldız were substantial enough to be sold, to great demand, in the city’s markets.

Another map, which was drawn to formally demarcate the fields designated for Bezm-i Alem’s use and accommodate her farm’s expansion, shows us that they were large enough to surround the walled in Yıldız Kiosk to its north, west and south—the east being divided between the endowment of the Yahya Efendi convent and the grove cascading down to Çırağan (fig. 2.12). This map also highlights the same coffeehouse indicated both on Von Moltke’s map and in Mahmud II’s archery diary, which fell outside of the south-facing walls of the Yıldız Kiosk, and aligned with the open-air mosque that Bezm-i Alem erected for her predecessor Nakş-ı Dil.

The court’s head physician, Hekimbaşı Salih Efendi (d. 1895), sparked Bezm-i Alem’s horticultural interests. Salih Efendi was one of the first graduates of the imperial medical school founded by Abdülmecid and an expert botanist, whose mansion and botanical gardens in Üsküdar were renowned as a facility for the production of herbal remedies. He was also a

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87 I thank Hilal Uğurlu for providing me the reference of a source that contains a reprint of the Ottoman reprint of the original Von Moltke map. The reprint is also only a fragment of the original, which otherwise covers Istanbul, Galata, Üsküdar, and all of the city’s urbanizing coastline; Çetintaş, 32.

celebrated instructor of natural sciences in the capital’s imperial high schools, who even bewildered students in the school of civil service like Ahmed İhsan—the future journalist and founder of newspapers—with his expansive knowledge of botany. The physician and the valide not only collaborated on her hospital project, but also put together the capital’s largest collection of fruit specimens. All the gardens in Istanbul and beyond were mobilized to contribute to Bezm-i Alem’s orchard, which in its completed state boasted five hundred and seventy three different kinds of fruits: “206 types of pears, 98 types of apples, 25 quinces, 43 peaches, 13 sour cherries, 31 cherries, 21 apricots, 9 pomegranates, 11 figs, 11 mulberries, 15 medlars, 59 grapes, 31 oranges.” Each varietal had a particular name conjured up by the valide and her botanical advisor Salih in accordance with its color, weight, country of origin, taste or scent. Thirty-one types of cherries came from a certain İbrahim Bey’s garden in İstinye, medlar the size of an egg from the garden of İzzet Ağa the gardener (but grafted from Europe), Lebanese peaches from Beirut, large, smooth-skinned and tart pope’s peaches from the Tarabya Pavilion, apple-scented pears weighing three-hundred drachmae from Varna, grapes from as close as Erenköy and as far as Erzurum. Seeds and flowers continually circulated between the imperial gardens of Istanbul for Bezm-i Alem and Salih Efendi’s joint ventures. And, although there is currently no indication that Abdülmecid came to inspect the produce of his mother’s farms, it

293-317; Erdem Yücel, “Hekimbaşı Salih Efendi Yalısı,” DBİA, vol. 3 (İstanbul: Kültür Bakanlığı ve Tarih Vakfı, 1993), 41-42.

89 Ahmet İhsan Tokgöz, Matbuat Hattalarım, 1888-1923 (İstanbul: İletişim, 1993), 31. The journalist remembers his instructor as follows: “The words he [Salih Efendi] uttered carried the most profound rules of philosophy. With his worn-out fez bearing the blue fringes worn only by a handful of others at that time, he was an invaluable “Turkish” type. The garden of his yali in Kandıra boasted the first botanical garden in Turkey. When he presented us with scientific explanations of the plant lives of flowers and leaves that he culled from his garden he would wipe clean our minds filled with empty beliefs.” See also Şerif Mardin, Religion, Society and Modernity in Turkey (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2006), 113.

90 Şehsuvaroğlu, Asırlar Boyunca İstanbul, 171.
was his father Mahmud II’s common practice to do so regularly for the imperial estates that had cultivated lands.\(^{91}\)

Even though we have no information on what Bezm-i Alem’s new wooden pavilion next to the Yıldız Kiosk would have looked like (besides the pedimented roofs shown on the pen box), a grand marble fountain (later moved to the district of Topkapı outside of the city walls) in the form of a triumphal arch that she had erected beside these two structures reflects a taste for a classical idiom with simple but striking iconographic sculptural reliefs (fig. 2.13).\(^{92}\) Two Corinthian pilasters carry the inscription stone, and five oval medallions framed by floral wreaths crown the fountain. A niche was created through a high-relief arch on the ornamental slab above the spout, which bears a classroom globe resting on a sturdy pedestal and surrounded by a halo of rays. Though at present smoothed by erosion, it is easy to imagine that the globe at one point bore an outline of the imperial domains. Bezm-i Alem’s iconographic intent with this fountain was to convey her philanthropic drive as the complement to her son’s institutional reforms, and in accordance with this vision of dual-rule through shared-patronage, the inscription poem by Ziver Paşa lauds their collective charitable acts and not just those attributed specifically to Bezm-i Alem.\(^{93}\)

To the artists under the sultan’s and his valide’s joint-patronage, this dual-rule was evident. When Guiseppe Donizetti (d. 1856), the Italian composer and director of the imperial band, composed a hymn in “the new style” (şarkı-i cedid) for Abdülmecid I, he also created one

\(^{91}\) Hâfiz Hızır Ilyas Ağa, 316.

\(^{92}\) Bezm-i Alem erected this fountain on the outer wall of the Yıldız complex, between the site of her new pavilion and the farmlands belonging to her estate. Eyewitness accounts from Abdülhamid II’s reign recall that the fountain was located across from the Hamidiye clock tower, a corner which probably marked the entrance to her Yıldız complex. Egemen, 211-212. A beautiful freehand rendering of this strikingly tall fountain can be found in Reşat Ekrem Koçu, “Bezmiâlem Vâlîdesultan Çeşmesi,” *İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 5 (İstanbul: Istanbul Ansiklopedisi ve Neşriyat Kollektif Şirketi, 1958-1971), 2736-2737.

\(^{93}\) Egemen, 214.
for Bezm-i Alem. The presentation copy of the song for the valide is embellished with depictions of garlands and bouquets bursting with flowers, a knowing nod to her green thumb and her own brand of imperial imagery, while the Turkish lyrics of the song allude not only to her mirage-like gardens (serâb), but also her beneficence as a patron (elțâf, feyţ, cûd, and ‘inâyet).

e. YILDIZ, OTTOMAN WOMEN, AND PROFLIGACY

Ahmed Cevdet Paşa (d. 1895), perhaps the shrewdest historian of the nineteenth-century empire, attributes part of its economic downturn to the increase in competitive consumption between the women of the Ottoman court and the female members of the Egyptian viceroyalty. The latter group’s display of their family’s newfound fortune (derived from cotton production during the worldwide shortage caused by the American Civil War) through the building of lavish residences along Istanbul’s shores fueled their rivalry with their Ottoman counterparts, inciting conspicuous profligacy, especially in the acquisition of European goods. The death of Bezm-i Alem, the principal authority of economic and social life inside the harem, was an important factor in the

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95 Ahmed Cevdet wrote two works on the history of the Ottoman state in the nineteenth century, unusual in their presentation of historical accounts, which then found two very different audiences. He prepared a copy of his Tezâkir (meaning notes-to-self or advice), a text written in the form of forty-some individual letters, as a preparatory source for his successor in the role of the official court historian, Ahmed Lütfi Efendi (d. 1907). Ahmed Cevdet wrote a version of the Tezâkir, which he named Ma’rûzât for Abdülhamid II as a narrative of private council on the sultan’s succession and at his request. The first of the five notebooks that make up Ma’rûzât is today missing, but we do know that Abdülhamid kept this compilation close at hand throughout his rule. The two works touch upon almost the same historical events of the eras of Abdülmecid and Abdülasiz, but Ma’rûzât is more loquacious due to the fact that it was an imperial commission. Cevdet Paşa, Tezâkir, ed. Cavid Baysun, vol. 1 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1986), 20.

emergence of this unchecked extravagance, which led Abdülmecid, a sultan portrayed by Ahmed Cevdet as subservient to the whims of his women, to seek the first foreign debt.\textsuperscript{97}

According to Cevdet Paşa, one of these women in particular, a wife of Abdülmecid called Serfiraz, was the main offender.\textsuperscript{98} This shockingly libertine woman apparently lodged herself unannounced in the now unoccupied Yıldız, took up lovers from Beşiktaş’s marketplace like a Victorian \textit{demi-mondaine}, appeared unchaperoned in the capital’s public promenades and gardens, and led Abdülmecid by the nose, often not allowing him inside her hilltop mansion. We can never know whether all of these allegations are true, or whether they were part of a recurrent trope in patriarchal history writing where women, especially those with considerable power, are seen as easier targets than their male counterparts and derided as figures of debauchery, moral decay and, its frequent companion, unbridled spending.\textsuperscript{99} Selim III’s sisters were critiqued by their contemporaries in exactly the same manner, as was Abdülhamid I’s daughter Esma Sultan.\textsuperscript{100} However, this incomplete story of a woman who one way or another declared her independence from the court, still underscores an important fact about Yıldız. This imperial property held a coveted position among the female members of the harem, because it was an autonomous space with spacious gardens and farms designed for and used specifically by women, and not a part of a small segment of a palace with a much more congested shared harem quarter.

\textsuperscript{97} \textit{Tezâkir}, vol. 2, 131.

\textsuperscript{98} Ibid., 3-4, 8, 59, 64-65, 100, and 131.

\textsuperscript{99} A number of revisionist family histories have been published in recent years. A good example of an attempt at clearing Serfiraz’s name is in one such modest publication; see Harun Açıba, \textit{Kadın Efendiler} (Istanbul: Profil, 2007), 71-73.

\textsuperscript{100} The inspiration for my argument that women were frequently scapegoated during times of economic downturn is another Artan article: Tülay Artan,“18\textsuperscript{th} Century Ottoman Princesses as Collectors: Chinese and European Porcelains in the Topkapı Palace Museum,” 138-139.
The public prominence of the valide reemerges—and Yıldız’s rightful ownership is once again restored—during Pertevniyal’s tenure (1861-1876). Like most of her antecedents, information on her life is fragmented, and like Bezm-i Alem her similarly sizable charities and monumental endowments are overshadowed by the opulent palaces and mansions of her son.\footnote{Pertevniyal’s patronage pattern closely resembled that of Bezm-i Alem. She established a women’s only hospital in Mecca, initiated another preparatory school in Istanbul, and donated an even larger library of manuscripts to her mosque in Aksaray: Alpgüvenç, 172-178.} Even her mosque in Aksaray—a structure unique for its time due to its church typology with two minarets and unusual Gothic ornaments flooding all of its surfaces—is often discussed as the best example of a new state-sanctioned architectural idiom, and not as an instance of a valide participating in making formal and stylistic decisions (\textit{fig. 2.1}).\footnote{To begin to find answers to the question of nineteenth-century valides’ involvement in the architectural choices for buildings bearing their name, their extant correspondences with their financial advisors, the kethüdas, are sources of great potential. We need not resort to attributing unusual decorative motifs to distinctly gendered taste as naively argued by Ülkü Bates, “Women as Patrons of Architecture in Turkey,” in \textit{Women in the Muslim World}, ed. L. Beck and N. Keddie (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), 249-250.} In one of the many popular history narratives, a genre to which the lives of high-ranking Ottoman women are all too often relegated, we are told that Pertevniyal wanted her mosque’s courtyard to surpass Bezm-i Alem’s mosque in Dolmabahçe and employed her kethüda Hüseyin Hasib Bey to see the project through to its completion.\footnote{Şehsuvaroğlu, \textit{Asırlar Boyunca İstanbul}, 155; Sakaoğlu, 392.} However, unlike Bezm-i Alem who was not present at the opening of her hospital, Pertevniyal attended the inauguration of her mosque.\footnote{Ahmed Lütfi Efendi, \textit{Vak’a-nüvis Ahmed Lütfi Efendi Tarihi}, transliterated by M. Münir Aktepe, vol. 14 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basmevi, 1988-), 15-16.} Another publication mentions that this kethüda was also appointed the mayor (şehremini) of Istanbul and consulted the dowager queen on matters related to the capital’s infrastructure.\footnote{Sakaoğlu, 392.} In trying to understand how Pertevniyal conceived of herself when navigating such disparate pieces of insight, one should not
lose sight of the fact that she lived during the heyday of Queen Victoria’s long reign and was informed of her European counterpart’s popularity. Inhabiting the monumental apartments built specifically for her use in the Dolmabahçe Palace, surely Pertevniyal saw parallels between her matriarchal role and the British monarch, especially after her son Abdülaziz personally met the English queen during his European trip—a historical first for the Ottoman court.\footnote{Ali Kemâli Aksüt, \textit{Sultan Azizin Avrupa ve Mısır Seyahati} (Istanbul: A. Sait Oğlu Kitabevi, 1944); Cemal Kutay, \textit{Sultan Abdülaziz’in Avrupa Seyahati} (İstanbul: Boğaziçi Yayınları, 1991).}

From her frequent employment of the Bavarian gardener Christian Sester, and her practice of tipping him for performing services that lay outside the duties of his official post as the head-gardener of Çırağan, we can gather that Pertevniyal sustained the farming activity next to her Yıldız estate. The closest we get to understanding Pertevniyal’s taste in residential structures is through the Yıldız estate and its almost identical pair on the hills of Üsküdar (\textit{figs. 2.14-2.15}). She selected the same typology of the eighteenth-century French urban mansion for her two wooded estates—analogous to the way that her predecessor Nakş-ı Dil had once seen the two as a pair, Yıldız serving as a model for her pavilion in Çamlıca.\footnote{See a description of Pertevniyal’s identical French mansions in Chapter 1.}

Selim III’s much-publicized attachment to his mother was in all likelihood a part of his new imperial self-fashioning, a dual-rulership based on filial piety. This pairing would continue to be highlighted in the reigns of all the succeeding sultans. Abdülaziz and his mother Pertevniyal made the strongest impression on the Ottoman public, not only in their co-patronage of mosques, palaces and mansions, but also and most importantly during the sultan’s tumultuous and very public dethronement. News quickly circulated that Pertevniyal’s harem quarters were ransacked, the jewelry she was wearing forcibly removed, and the deposed valide was dragged without her veil to the police station. Istanbulites became even more preoccupied with the
grieving Pertevniyal after her deposed son committed suicide, so much so that a brief but
dramatic fictionalized memoir of her recollections of her son’s tragic death titled Sergüzeştname
(“An Account of Events”) was published soon thereafter.\textsuperscript{108} The former dowager, who dedicated
her life to children, prayer and flowers after the death of her son, strikes uncanny parallels with
Queen Victoria, the widow who lived in eternal mourning following the death of her husband
Prince Albert in 1861.\textsuperscript{109}

During their short but memorable co-rule, this mother and son cohosted banquets
celebrating high-ranking governmental appointments. The sultan’s favorite retreat, the farming
estate in İzmit was the preferred setting of these royal celebrations, and Pertevniyal coordinated
the preparations there (İzmit tarafında kâin çiflik-i hümâyûnda Vâlide Sultan hazretlerine
mahsûsen ziyâfet tertibî).\textsuperscript{110} In the Ottoman official histories, Pertevniyal also appears as a
central figure in the court’s frequent diplomatic encounters with the khedival family of Egypt.\textsuperscript{111}
When Abdülaziz officially sanctioned the title that the Egyptian governors had selected for
themselves, he bestowed on the newly appointed khedive Ismail Paşa (d. 1895) the right to
succession from father to son, rather than from brother to brother. With the Ottoman
acknowledgment of their title, the Egyptian family attained an elevated status in the Ottoman

\textsuperscript{108} Baha Gürfirat, “Pertevniyal Valide Sultan’ın Hatıratı: Sergüzeştname,” in Belgelerle Türk Tarihi Dergisi 2
(1967), 57-59. It has been argued that she dictated this account for the trial, which ensued after her son’s death, and
was coordinated by Abdülhamid II to turn his uncle’s suicide into an assassination and oust the old-guard ministers
like Midhat Paşa. Therefore, the document—likely a testimony—found its way into the Yıldız archives, and was
later copied by Ahmed Tevfik Bey, the brother of the prolific historian İbnü’l-Emin Mahmud Kemal İnal. Her
account was fictionalized in Mehmet Coral, Konstantiniye’nin Yitik Günceleri (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 1999), 85-
108.

\textsuperscript{109} Ayşe Osmanoğlu, 112. On Queen Victoria as the archetypal eternal widow, see Pat Jalland, Death in the
Victorian Family (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 318-338; also, David Cannadine, “War and Death,
Grief and Mourning,” in Mirrors of Mortality: Studies in the Social History of Death, ed. Joachim Whaley (New
York: St. Martin’s Press, 1982), 190-191.

\textsuperscript{110} Ahmed Lûtfî Efendi, vol. XIV, 122.

\textsuperscript{111} Ibid., 47-48, and 137; also, Ahmed Lûtfî Efendi, vol. XV, 21.
courtly order and a tangible presence in Istanbul’s social life. Whenever the Egyptian vice-royals initiated their prolonged summer sojourns in Istanbul, Pertevniyal would welcome them to the capital, and undertake the first of many gift exchanges in familial recognition. Personal family ties also bolstered Pertevniyal’s role in this otherwise novel diplomatic task as she was the sister of Khedive Ismail Paşa’s mother, Hoşyar Kadinefendi (d. 1886), who was the first to carry the title, Valide Paşa.\(^ {112} \)

Ottoman men of letters were very much aware of Pertevniyal’s centrality in Ottoman politics and administrative decisions. In an ironic twist of faith, Ahmed Cevdet, the otherwise ruthless critic of women’s improvidence (especially in the Ottoman and Egyptian courts), sought a patronage relationship with Pertevniyal. In the same advice manuals that he would eventually present to a newly enthroned Abdülhamid II, he mentions sending her lavish textiles from Aleppo and a pony for her grandson, the future heir to the throne Yusuf İzzeddin, but perhaps more unusually, he made sure that she received the first copy of each of his voluminous works.\(^ {113} \) By ingratiating himself with the sultan’s mother and often appearing at political gatherings in her Dolmabahçe quarters, Cevdet would eventually obtain his desired post of governor of Syria, although Abdülaziz’s deposition forced him to relinquish it after only a short time.

\(^ {112} \) The title, meaning the mother of the governor of Egypt, designated considerable status, because the Egyptian khedive was the highest-ranking of all Ottoman paşas. The valide paşa came after the Ottoman valide in court ceremonies.

\(^ {113} \) Tezâkir, vol. 4, 91-93, 120-123, 126-127, 132-133, and 152.
f. THE YAHYA EFENDİ CONVENT AS YILDIZ’S SPIRITUAL CRUX

As noted above, an important factor that made Yıldız and its waterfront dwellings so compelling for the female patrons of the Ottoman harem was the connection that these women felt towards this neighborhood’s principal spiritual nexus: the tomb, mosque, and dervish convent of the sixteenth-century Sufi scholar and polymath Yahya Efendi (fig. 2.16). A foster brother to Sultan Süleyman, Yahya Efendi acted as an adopted father to the sultan’s daughter, Raziye, who was the first female member of the court to be buried there. This devotional bond between the revered Sufi scholar and a courtly female disciple must have strengthened the spiritual significance of the site for the succeeding women of status, because the cemetery of the shrine complex eventually developed into one exclusively reserved for the women and children of the court throughout the nineteenth century. There is a compelling parallel between the attachment that the nineteenth-century dowager sultans had to this holy site, and the eighteenth-century mothers, sisters, and daughters of sultans building of their royal waterfront retreats in Eyüp in proximity to the tomb and mosque of the seventh-century saintly figure, Ayyub al-Ansari.

The legends regarding Yahya Efendi portray him as an ascetic, who after having fallen out of favor with Sultan Süleyman chose to live out his days as a recluse, building his home outside of the imperial capital. An auspicious dream would guide him to Beşiktaş where he bought a sizable property from a pauper for a dime and built himself a dervish lodge that also

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114 Referred to as “tāsasiz Rāziye” (Raziye without sorrow), Sultan Süleyman’s coffin shares the same space as that of her spiritual guide, Mir‘āt-i İstanbul, 291. Şehsuvaroğlu, Asırlar Boyunca İstanbul, 146; M. Çağatay Uluçay, Padişahların Kadınları ve Kızları (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1980), 39.

115 Şehsuvaroğlu, Asırlar Boyunca İstanbul, 147-148.

served as a makeshift medical facility to seekers of health. The land that Yahya Efendi owned was much larger than the tiny walled-in park that his complex inhabits today. The seventeenth- and eighteenth-century literary surveyors of Istanbul’s coastlines mention that the only structure on the hill between Beşiktaş and Ortaköy was the little domed tomb of Yahya Efendi.

Well into the last decades of the eighteenth century, Yahya Efendi’s property still covered a large swath of land that extended from the waterfront Ferîye Palaces into the valley that stretched behind them. Gradually, segments of the property got absorbed into the imperial projects that within a century became the parkland of Abdülmirham II’s palace. Aşık Çelebi, the sixteenth-century biographer of poets, described the Herculean building efforts that Yahya Efendi personally undertook on the uninhabited hilltop of Beşiktaş as follows: “For years, he built buildings and took them down, made landfills, dug the earth, and carried stones” (Niçe nice yıllardur ki ol diyärda gâh yapup gâh yıkup deñizler țoldırup țopraklar kazdırup țașlar țașdır). When describing his choice of a life in seclusion, Yahya Efendi wrote about himself in the third-person as someone “playing with soil in his Beşiktaş.” Evliya Çelebi describes this property of Yahya Efendi, apparently a miracle-working gardener, as a vast mountainous meadow, inside of which sunlight never penetrates, and which is adorned with grand plane trees, willow trees with their heads turned down, mastic trees, cypresses, and walnuts of Rum. It is

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120 Aşık Çelebi, Meşâr’îrû’-ş-Şu’arâ, vol. 2 (İstanbul Araştırmaları Enstitüsü, 2010), 796.
121 Yahya Efendi cited in Mir‘ât-ı İstanbul, 293.
122 Evliyâ Çelebi, Evliyâ Çelebi Seyahatnâmesi, vol. 1, 192.
quite tempting to think that the site and its landscapist owner served as models for the queen mothers as they conceived of their own verdant retreats.

Yahya Efendi believed that his newly adopted home was where Moses, guided by God to find the one man wiser than him, encountered Hızır (Khidr). Much in the way of Moses, Yahya Efendi saw himself as a disciple of Hızır in his theological pursuits. He must have reveled in imagining the topography of Beşiktaş as the exact embodiment of the rocky junction where Hızır finally revealed himself to Moses. It was a meeting site that like Beşiktaş saw the convergence of the two seas (mecmaʿül-bahreyn) described in the Koran. Yahya Efendi stipulated in his will that he should be buried at the exact spot where he imagined the two prophetic figures met. For the courtly figures of the later centuries, who frequented his tomb inside the complex, the Koranic story must have resonated and imbued the site with talismanic power—not just for the valide and their sons, but also for outsiders like the Bavarian landscape designer Christian Sester who, when hired by Mahmud II to transform this hill into a Romantic garden, was asked to find water sources, expressly like Moses and Hızır, to accommodate more fountains, lakes, and ponds.

Furthermore, water in the poetic chronograms of the era—especially those installed by the sultans and their mothers in the neighborhood of Beşiktaş—alluded to Hızır and his association with springs as the discoverer of the “water of life” (āb-ı hayât) or the “spring of life” (/aynʿül-hayât) on a “mountaintop” (Hızırlık taşı) that gave this elusive prophetic figure immortality. These chronograms also often referred to the origin story of Hızır as a vizier to Alexander (Hızır-ı İskender), who at the end of Alexander’s life went on a quest to find the source of immortality, only to upstage his king and vanish expected only to reappear in mystical-religious narratives to steer the spiritually misguided.
The valide continually contributed to the restorations of this shrine, whose lands gradually shrunk into a hamlet nestled inside a garden full of trees, as their surrounding pavilions and farmlands grew and absorbed it. The earliest example of the patronage links between the mothers of sultans and the Yahya Efendi shrine complex speaks to this give and take, and comes to us in a chronogram composed by the court’s poet Vasif. It states that Selim III “beautifully restored” (raʿnā-i tecdīd) the mosque in 1806 for which he used funds from his mother Mihrişah Sultan’s endowment. The court’s piety did not always mean that it left properties belonging to a different endowment untouched. The large parcel of land that once belonged to the sixteenth-century dervish seems to have been gradually taken over by the imperial properties. The first Yıldız Kiosk, farming estate, and fountain of Mihrişah Valide Sultan were all, it seems, parceled out of the high plateau that belonged to Yahya Efendi.

Bezm-i Alem also took great interest in the upkeep of this complex. As stipulated in an addendum to her endowment deed from 1842, her generosity implied that a shaykh in the dervish convent of Yahya Efendi in Beşiktaş had to recite the Koran in accordance with the practice of the Naqshbandi sect and mention her name during the prayers. The mosque’s imam, cantor and caretaker, on the other hand, each had to participate in the recitation by reading a surah. Pertevniyal followed suit and took an active role in repairing the mosque-cum-shrine. A visitor on his or her ascent to the mosque would pass through a portal bearing an inscription that not only announces her repairs to the mosque at the site, but also lists her four most visible public

123 Gürel, 579.

124 Tülây Duran, ed., Tarihimizde Vakıf Kuran Kadınlar: Hanım Sultan Vakıfiyyeleri (İstanbul: İstanbul Araştırma Merkezi, 1990), 537-547.
works as the valide: a sebil, a school, a mosque, and, what appears to be most exciting to the poet Hayrî,\textsuperscript{125} a state of the art pool in the arsenal to receive the imperial battleships.

At the time when it served as Abdülhamid II’s palace, Yıldız continued to be surrounded by small religious convents of symbolic importance, which should not necessarily be ascribed only to Abdülhamid’s reinstitution of his caliphal role and his desire to unite all Sunni Muslims under his leadership. Pertevniyal was a politically adept queen mother, and having foreseen that Abdülhamid was a likelier candidate for the throne over the clinically anxious Murad, she cultivated an intimate relationship with Abdülhamid while he was the crown prince and retained considerable sway over his personal choices regarding his family life as well as his personal religious affiliations. Even though access was forbidden to princes who had passed adolescence to freely enter the harem quarters, Pertevniyal encouraged Abdülhamid to pay her frequent visits to converse and play the piano.\textsuperscript{126} It was during these visits that she introduced the future ruler to Müşfika, an orphan girl she had fostered from a young age, who would eventually become Abdülhamid’s favorite and most devoted wife.

Prince Abdülhamid found his spiritual guidance in the teachings of Shaykh Muhammed Zafir Efendi of the Shadhiliyya Sufi order from Tripoli also through Pertevniyal’s mediation.\textsuperscript{127} She was the patron of the order’s first convent in Unkapanı, but soon after Abdülhamid became the sultan, he moved the order’s headquarters close to Yıldız, and assigned the shaykh two large mansions in the same garden as the dervish convent’s mosque—one for his immediate family

\textsuperscript{125} Though I am not certain about the identity of this poet selected by Pertevniyal, he is most likely Süleyman Hayri Bey (d. 1891), a bureaucrat educated in the palace school (enderun mektebi), who was known for the eulogies that he composed for Sultan Abdülaziz annually that resulted in his promotions; see İnal, \textit{Son Asır Türk Şairleri}, vol. 2, 606-610.

\textsuperscript{126} Şakir, \textit{Sultan Hamit}, 76-77.

and the other for the sheikh’s incessant stream of North African guests, mentioned in the Chapter 1. In maintaining such a close relationship with Abdülhamid, bound both through marriage and through faith, she was able to continue to live in the imperial center in one of the Fer‘iye Palaces in Ortaköy instead of being confined to the cramped harem quarters of the Topkapı Palace, and to maintain her attachment to the two convents on the outer rims of Yıldız.

It is also important to note here that women of rank, especially the valides, were political agents perhaps not necessarily in the international arenas of war, debt or trade, but in maintaining marriage alliances indispensable to the court’s order and the continuation of tradition. Even in the nineteenth century, the sultan’s wives (kadınefendiler) and most of the other women who were employed to serve the members of the harem were exclusively selected from among certain Circassian families of the North Caucasus. This continued to be a region of strategic importance, which the nineteenth-century Ottomans maintained as a buffer against Russia as the latter intensified her encroachment upon the Orthodox Christian subjects of the Ottoman state.

Tribal affiliations contributed greatly to the composition of the retinues of the sultans’ mothers, sisters, and principal wives. Loyalty to their erstwhile family members often prompted them to secure administrative posts for their male relatives, and many of those who retained their familial ties channeled their charity work solely to their villages of origin.128 Recent scholarship of a modest scale, which is based on the recollections of the wives of the last sultans, has highlighted the fact that most of them were the daughters of Circassian tribal nobility. These women continued to maintain their inherited aristocratic rank even after joining the Ottoman court, most visibly in the preservation of their family crests and in their practice of following

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exclusive patterns of socializing. In line with this exclusivity, the valides groomed members of their own retinues, daughters of their own tribes, for their reigning sons as well as future heirs. Once adopted by the harem, these girls were given elaborate new names by the most erudite, bibliophilic women of the court. Mahmud II’s sister Esma Sultan’s presentation of Bezm-i Alem to her brother Mahmud II, and later of Perestu—who would become Abdülhamid II’s beloved foster mother and the empire’s last valide—to her nephew Abdülmecid, as well as Pertevniyal’s abovementioned introduction of Müşfika to Abdülhamid II, are three of the more conspicuous examples of such in-house marital politics.

After encountering a few assassination attempts in rapid succession soon after his accession, Abdülhamid II decided to make Yıldız his palace. He moved his immediate family and personal servants to the modest, pedimented two-story mansion that functioned as the harem structure to Pertevniyal’s hôtel particulier, which in turn became his administrative quarters, the Mabeyn. The site did not yet have enough accommodations to support a large household, so before the move the harem was downsized: the retinues of the wives, unmarried sisters, and married sons shrank, as did the sultan’s number of household attendees. Abdülhamid had appointed his foster mother Perestu to the post of valide immediately after his accession ceremony (cülus). From then on, this extremely reserved woman became the head of his harem and, apparently much to her dismay, had to preside over all the court ceremonies. Her carriage was always first in line in a harem cortège, and every diplomatic visit to the harem had to begin with a requisite first reception at her apartments. As more structures were fitted into Yıldız’s harem, the building that Abdülhamid had initially moved into was appointed for her use. But Perestu, equipped with the freedom that her predecessors had secured for the post of valide,

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130 Esatlı, 345.
frequently retreated to her mansion in Maçka (fig. 2.17). The latter was a building that her husband Abdülmecid had appointed for her years ago, at a time when another of his wives, the presumed libertine Serfiraz chose Yıldız for her own residence.¹³¹

CONCLUSION
The Ottoman gardening culture in the first half of the nineteenth century revolved around these women as much as, if not more so than their male counterparts. And Yıldız, in particular, was manifestly a product of their personal efforts, created and used by them for almost a century. Furthermore, it was a visible architectural signifier of their status as queen mothers, often paired with their estates in Çamlıca. While Bezm-i Alem expanded the Yıldız estate with her botanist advisor Salih Efendi, her son Abdülmecid continued in his father’s footsteps in converting the hills between his mother’s residence and Çırağan into a grand Romantic park. The next chapter will follow the landscape history of Çırağan’s gardens under Mahmud II and Abdülmecid, and through a description of the site’s physical transformations, it will also discuss the evolution of the court’s gardeners’ corps throughout that time. Like the valides, Mahmud II and Abdülmecid saw this vast and central site as ripe for rebuilding. With a complete redesign, it would be the poster palace for the court’s new imperial image, which it was in dire need of after the elimination of the janissaries and the subsequent initiation of empire-wide reforms. A court poet, who was an early witness to the project to make Çırağan and its gardens the royal residence nonpareil, built to reflect the state’s radical restructuring, praises Mahmud II alternately as a

¹³¹ For descriptions and photographs of the Maçka mansion of the last valide Perestu see Çetintas, 240-241; and Esatlı, 440-441.
renovator (*müceddid*) and a capable architect (*mi‘mār-i kudret*) both referring to his building of the palace and government of the empire at large.\(^{132}\)

III.

From the Backyard of Çırağan to the Heart of the Gardening Corps: Yıldız and its Gardeners

This chapter is as much about the evolution of landscaping on the grounds that would become the Yıldız palace, as it is about the ambitious European head-gardener (*bostancıbaşı*), Christian Sester (d. 1866), who installed a large portion of the site, and the horticultural legacy he left behind in the Ottoman capital. The site’s tandem development from the valide estate as described in the previous chapter and from the backyard of the Çırağan with Sester’s involvement—the principal subject of this chapter—speaks directly to the new imperial image quest of the century’s first two rulers, Mahmud II and his son Abdülmecid. As two reform-centric sultans, they eagerly sought out advisors to transform their environments to befit the enlightened, politically engaged, and blatantly public role they cast for themselves. The site that they chose as their new residence would become emblematic of this imperial refashioning.

Yıldız and its makers, most of whom were Sester’s self-taught recruits, instituted a predominantly German dynasty of gardeners—a new kind of corps crafted from the long-established Ottoman state institution of the *bostancısı*—that would only be disrupted at the turn of the nineteenth century when the court began to value different modes of horticultural expertise and directed its attention to France. If, in very broad strokes, nineteenth-century Ottoman garden history is characterized by grand landscaping projects modeled on Yıldız, the twentieth century marked an obsessive attention to cultivation and acclimation of plants inside the intimacy of the

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1. An abridged version of this chapter has been published, see Deniz Türker, “‘I don’t want orange trees, I want something that others don’t have’: Ottoman Head-Gardeners after Mahmud II,” International Journal of Islamic Architecture (IJIA) 4:2, Special Issue on the Conception and Use of Expertise in the Architecture of the Islamic World since 1800, (July 2015): 257–285.
most technically advanced greenhouses and palmhouses. Ultimately, these shifts of interest were not only related to matters of taste, but also always tinged with the competitive spirit of changing diplomatic alliances, as well as national and international political networks.

By narrowing its focus on the European members of the nineteenth-century gardening corps, this chapter aims to complement the extant scholarship on Ottoman garden and landscape. Using strictly Ottoman sources, existing scholarship has inevitably shrouded the names and identities of these figures in paleographic puzzles and under nationalistic sentiment. In many ways, my emphasis on these individuals—who found long-term employment in the Ottoman court—comes as a corrective.

Until Mahmud II’s overhaul of the janissary corps in 1826, Ottoman imperial gardening history, from its variegated designs to aspects of its production and associated expenses, was tied to one of its most prominent branches—the bostâncı ocağı (imperial corps of gardeners), whose members were conscripts largely of Christian origin (‘acemî oğlân). From their inception, the bostancis were an indispensable part of the military state organization: when needed they would graduate into the janissary corp. It is no coincidence, then, that a few months after the janissaries were violently disbanded, the gardeners’ corps was completely (but, much more innocuously)

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2 Here, I refer to the dated, but oft-cited Gönül Aslanoğlu Evyapan, Tarih İçinde Formel Bahçenin Gelişimi ve Türk Bahçesinde Etkileri (Ankara: Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi, 1974), 28-29; and for a reading that takes Evyapan’s transcriptions to heart and tackles the context of the nineteenth-century gardens uncritically and dismissively within the paradigm of Ottoman Westernization as a loss of local identity and vernacular taste, see Nurhan Atasoy, A Garden for the Sultan: Gardens and Flowers in the Ottoman Culture (Istanbul: Aygaz, 2002), 299-302.

restructured under a military charter (*niẓāmnāme*) on August 5, 1826. The eldest members were made to retire with lifetime pensions (*köydi ḥayāt*), while the able-bodied ones were redeployed to train with Mahmud’s new army (‘*asākir-i manṣūre-i Muḥammediye*), and serve as officers (*żābiṭ*) in the gates, barracks, and police offices on the Dolmabahçe-Ortaköy shoreline where the court now resided full-time. A decade later, members of Sultan Mahmud’s retinue, who undertook ambassadorial trips to European capitals, returned with an idea that addressed the upkeep of the many imperial gardens: a European garden-director, a professional with knowledge of the latest practices and trends in landscape design, botany, and horticulture, would restore the vacant post of the court’s *bostancıbaşı* (translatable to head or chief-gardener) to its erstwhile garden-centered métier. This practice would continue until World War I with Yıldız, the longest serving imperial palace of the nineteenth century, transformed in half a century into its operational headquarters.

In the corps’ earliest incarnation under Sultan Mehmed II (r. 1444-46/1451-81), its members attended to the palace gardens and royal retreats, while their superior, the bearded *bostancıbaşı*, held the privileged position of helming the sultan’s boat during the latter’s maritime excursions along the Bosphorus. The structure of this corps would undergo drastic transformations, and shed the fifteenth-century horticultural requisites of the young non-Muslim janissary conscripts converted to Islam. Especially with the increase of the janissary corps’ unrest in the seventeenth century, the corps of *bostancı* became responsible for the personal

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4 Vak’anüvîs Ahmed Lâtﬁ Efendi Tarihi, vol. 1, 146-147.
5 Ibid.
security of the sultan and his household. By the time Marie-Gabriel-Florent-Auguste de Choiseul-Gouffier (d. 1817), the French ambassador to the court of Abdülhamid I (r. 1774-1889) and dilettante-antiquarian of ancient Greek artifacts, published his *Voyage pittoresque en Grèce* (1782), the head-gardener had become *la police intérieure du sérail*, who presided over the Bosphorus in an austere waterfront building in Kuruçeşme, which was allocated to his office and in the immediate vicinity of the sultan’s summer retreat in Beşiktaş (fig. 3.1). (The allocation of an office for the head-gardener physically close to the court’s newly favored palace was in keeping with the corps of gardeners guarding the Topkapı palace in its walled fortress towers.) As proof of Sultan Selim III’s trust and dependence on his *bostancı*-bodyguards, the first recruits of his new model army, the ill-fated *nižam-i cedid*, wore the easily recognizable red-felt *barata* headgear of the gardeners’ corps.

In the rapidly expanding eighteenth-century capital, the head-gardener’s function of policing the shores of the Bosphorus and Golden Horn also included granting residential and commercial construction licenses. The head-gardener kept track of the growing geography under his jurisdiction by keeping track of the proprietors of the shorelines, each one filled into one of the boxes inside his *defters*’ easy-to-read checkerboard layout.

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7 Mustafa Nuri Paşa, *Netayic il-Vukat, Kurumları ve Örgüťleriyle Osmanlı Tarihi*, vol. 3 (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basmevi, 1980), 122-123. A recent publication has further explored the transformation of the gardeners’ corps into the sultan’s personal police; see Murat Yıldız, *Bahçevanlıkta Saray Muhabirliğina Bostancı Ocağı* (İstanbul: Yitik Hazine Yayınları, 2011).

8 Marie-Gabriel-Florent-Auguste de Choiseul-Gouffier, *Voyage pittoresque de la Grèce*, vol. 2 (1782-[1824]), 489.


10 The first historian to alert us to the existence of these documents is Reşat Ekrem Koçu, see his “Bostancıbaş Defterleri,” *İstanbul Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 6 (İstanbul Ansiklopedisi ve Neşriyat Kollektif Şirketi, 1958-1971), 2979-2995. Tülay Artan’s dissertation, “Theater of Life,” has accentuated the importance of these records in not only understanding the pattern of ownership along the coveted shores of Istanbul in the eighteenth century, but also highlighted the centrality of this geography in the growing visibility and centrality of the extra-courtly elite in urban
Information on actual gardening work that was undertaken in the eighteenth-century imperial outdoors is lackluster, and most of the Ottoman garden histories of the century are preoccupied with the sources for (rather than the makers of) the cascading marble pool of Ahmed III’s Sa’dabad residence in Istanbul’s Kağıthane meadow, or more recently, with the changing social dynamics between the court and its public.\(^{11}\) (In fact, Ottoman garden history comes to a standstill after Sa’dabad’s inception as the ultimate social space, and declinist narratives usurp the empire’s later two centuries, vibrant especially for the built environment.) Ignatius Mouradgea d’Ohsson (d. 1807), the Armenian historian of the Ottoman state and dragoman of the Swedish court, speaks of a dissipated interest and a loss of taste among the capital’s grandees in garden-life after Mahmud I (r. 1730-54)—the last of the practitioners of the tulip illuminations (çerāgān) instituted by his predecessor Ahmed III and the grand vizier Nevşehirli Damad İbrahim Paşa. He informs us that Istanbul’s mid-eighteenth-century gardeners were mostly made up of émigré Greek islanders.\(^{12}\) These eighteenth-century migrants, who, it appears, were not a part of the official gardening corps and were possibly the unrecorded first group of non-Muslim

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\(^{11}\) The work that spoke of the Ottoman ambassador Yirmisekiz Mehmed Çelebi’s visit to France as the empire’s erstwhile opening up to the West, and selected Ahmed III’s garden residence as its material symbol is, Fatma Müge Göçek’s *East Encounters West: France and the Ottoman Empire in the Eighteenth Century* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987). Two most recent works of architectural history have problematized this assertion by demonstrating the site’s reliance on traditional building methods, familiar sources, and as Ottomans’ response to the Safavids. See Shirine Hamadeh, *The City’s Pleasures: Istanbul in the Eighteenth Century*; and, Can Erımtan, “The Perception of Saadabad: The ‘Tulip Age’ and Ottoman-Safavid Rivalry,” in *Ottoman Tulips, Ottoman Coffee: Leisure and Lifestyles in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Dana Sajdi (London and New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 2007), 41–62. The temptation to link all the European garden treatises in the Topkapı Palace Library, with disparate publication dates spanning the entirety of the eighteenth century, to Yirmisekiz Mehmed’s ambassadorial bounty from the 1720s, is evident in Gül İrepoglu, “Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesindeki Batılı Kaynaklar Üzerine Düşünceler,” *Topkapı Sarayı Yıllık* 1 (İstanbul, 1986), 56-72, and 174-197.

experts to infiltrate the gardening arts in the capital. D’Ohsson does not provide much information beyond their origin, but a reason for their nondescript origins and backgrounds may be due to the fact that they did not serve the Ottoman court, but the extra-courtly elite. We are told, however, that they were experts in grafting, maintenance of trees, crop cultivation, and the preservation of fruits, flowers and vegetables, but had very little to offer, in the various ways that could transform land into artifice that had already taken rest of Europe by storm in the eighteenth century. It is also d’Ohsson who mentions two new palace posts under Abdülhamid I: the superintendents of fruits (Yémischdjy-Baschy) and flowers (Tschitschekdjy-Baschy), who were tasked with supplying the sultan’s table with the finest of their products, and attended to the hothouses to satisfy the off-season cravings of the pregnant women in the harem.13

a. THE FIRST EUROPEAN HEAD-GARDENERS IN THE OTTOMAN COURT

It was during Selim III’s reign that the court first experimented with a foreign head-gardener for its imperial gardens in the capital. Later on, Mahmud II’s revival of most of the novel offices that Selim had instituted extends to this post as well. The now widely known story goes that the terraced gardens of the Russian and Danish consuls to Istanbul, Monsieur de Bulgakoff and Baron von Hübsch, layered over the verdant groves behind their summer residences in Büyükdere on the Bosphorus, had gained such popularity among the affluent Muslim and non-Muslim residents along its shores that even a female member of the court—Selim III’s intrepid sister Hatice Sultan—paid multiple visits to the latter’s home (fig.2.4).14 Diplomatic decorum

13 D’Ohsson, Tableau général de l’Empire Ottoman, 177.

14 Antoine Ignace Melling, Voyage pittoresque de Constantinople et des rives du Bosphore, ed. Rezan Benatar, transl. Irvin Cemil Schick and Ece Zerman (İstanbul: Denizler Kitapevi, 2011), 231. I have used this trilingual new edition, based on the 1819 Treutel and Würtz edition for ease of access.
prevented Sultan Selim from visiting these two sites, but like his sister, who commissioned a garden maze in her Defterdarburnu yalt from her dessinateur Antoine Ignace Melling and his collaborator-engineer François Kauffer, the sultan himself demanded a gardener be found to create a “European” garden in the summer quarters he started to construct for his harem at Topkapı’s sloping, peninsular tip.\(^\text{15}\)

Baron von Herbert, the Austrian internuncio to Selim’s court, imported a gardener from Rastatt called Jacob Ensle (d. 1832), who was fortunate enough to be in residence with his stepbrother (the distinguished naturalist Franz Boos, botanical gardener and menagerie director of the Schönbrunn palace in Vienna) during von Herbert’s recruitment efforts. Ensle, who appears to have led many a late-eighteenth-century European traveler through the doors of the Topkapı palace’s new sections, but remained anonymous as “M. Jacques from Rastadt” in their accounts, himself left a narrative of his time at the Ottoman court. He boasts that “through the skillful leveraging of a connection [he] managed to achieve an assignment as the chief-gardener of the Bostandjis [der Obergärtners der Bostandji’s] in the palace.”\(^\text{16}\) He continues to say that he was the first Christian to fill this post only because Selim III’s mild regime made it possible.

In the autumn of 1794, after a swift journey down the Danube and a short stop in the Ottoman vassal principality of Wallachia, governed at the time by the Greek Phanariote

\(^{15}\) For the lesser-known Kauffer, see Frédéric Hitzel, “François Kauffer (1751?-1801), ingénieur-cartographe français au service de Selim III,” *Science in Islamic Civilization* 7, ed. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoğlu and Feza Günergün (Istanbul, Research Centre for Islamic History: Art and Culture, 2000), 233-243. For biographical information on Jacob Ensle, the first foreign head-gardener to the Ottoman court, see Franz Gräffer, *Historische Raritäten*, vol. 2 (Wien: Tendler und v. Manstein, 1825), 153-172. However, the expanded German edition of Joseph Eugène Beauvoisins’s travel account, footnoted by Ensle, also contains the full biographical text of the gardener’s time at the Ottoman court; Joseph Eugène Beauvoisins. *Nachrichten über den Hof des türkischen Sultans, sein Serail, seinen Harem, die kaiserliche Familie, sein Militär und seine Minister. Nebst einem historischen Versuch über die mohammedanische Religion, ihren Kultus und ihre Priester*, transl. Johann-Friedrich Kessler (Karlsruhe: C.F. Müller, 1811).

dragon man Alexander Mourosis (d. 1816), Ensle found his way into the comfortably interstitial and convivial life of the dragomans and their diplomatic employers in Istanbul. Once settled and with a plush six-thousand piaster salary, he had to go native in order to better adapt to his three-year appointment—he ended up serving for eight. For his initiation into courtly life, Baron von Hübsch would aid in shaving his head and gird him with Turkish clothing. Instead of a turban, however, he would be made to wear a “kalback” (kalpak) as worn by the dragomans, the ultimate go-betweens in the Ottoman world. A timber house “in the light style of the Turkish art of building” (im leichten Styl türkischer Bauart) with four spacious rooms and a kitchen was built for him along the garden wall of the palace.\(^\text{17}\) Ensle was assigned to bostancibaşı Ahmed Ağa, a favorite among Selim’s courtiers, whom the gardener calls the chief-overseer of the palace garden (Oberaufseher der Gärten im Serail). An exceptionally rare rapport must have developed between the two, because Ensle recalls Ahmed to be his “source of support and protector” during his undeniably challenging service as the only foreigner in-residence inside the palace with such a high official post: “no one aside from [Achmet] in the government had the slightest authority over me.”\(^\text{18}\)

I have described his work inside the Topkapı palace elsewhere.\(^\text{19}\) It is also traceable in the detailed map that Melling provides in his Voyage pittoresque de Constantinople et de rives du Bosphore (1819), and the description that the Austrian historian of the Ottoman empire, Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall, provides in his Constantinopolis und der Bosporos (1822). But Ensle also contributed to the gardens in Selim III’s Beşiktaş palace and Eyüp. In Topkapı, he worked


\(^{18}\) Ibid.

on a set of terraced spaces reserved for Selim and for the women’s quarters, and as per the sultan’s request, instituted the “French and Dutch conventions [Sitte]” rather than the picturesque landscapes that the Europeans had begun to install in their estates (fig. 3.2). With Hübsch’s considerable involvement, Ensle built flower parterres, which were traversed by linear gravel walks, trellised arcades, the requisite jets d’eau, and hothouses for exotic fruits. It appears that the Ottoman court wanted, first and foremost, to display the rarest and finest of flowers, so Ensle grew “16,000 florins worth of hyacinth bulbs sent from Holland, and planted more than 6,000 florins worth of Persian buttercup and anemone.”20 Like the tulip, hyacinthus orientalis had traveled over to the Netherlands in the sixteenth century and came back to the empire as an import.21 He potted all of this expensive naturalia in glistening Chinese porcelain, imported by the thousands for “150 to 200 piasters per pot.”22

If Napoleon had not conquered Egypt in 1798, an event, which came as a total shock to the unsuspecting Ottomans, Ensle’s work in the gardens of Topkapı and other summer dwellings of the court would have had a chance to flourish. Kauffer and Melling had plans to build a completely new palace over the previously mentioned new sections, and Ensle, a member of their artistic clique, was going to have the opportunity to make a grander aesthetic statement.23 However, not wanting to remain in an environment suddenly hostile to foreigners and volatile due to ceaseless uprisings against Selim’s reforms, he left for his fatherland in 1802. At the end

20 Gräffer, Historische Raritäten, vol. 2, 160. Hyacinths were previously imported in huge quantities from Caffa in the Crimea, what differs is the place of import now Europe, not the act of importation which was standard imperial practice; see Necipoğlu, Topkapı Palace, 202.

21 In the sixteenth-century, Istanbul was a botanical paradise visited by European botanists such as Joseph Pitton de Tournefort (d. 1708). For a description of the gardens of the Topkapı Palace in the sixteenth as a botanical paradise and a microcosmic representation of the empire’s floral diversity, see Necipoğlu, The Topkapı Palace, 202-203. In the eighteenth century, the east to west flow of specimen was completely reversed.

22 Ibid.

of his letter, he paints a devastating picture of the Balkan geographies in turmoil, torn between Pasvantoğlu Osman, a powerful provincial notable, Russia, and the plague. Unlike his swift arrival, this time Ensle had to dress up like a Tatar to traverse northern locales now under Russian control, and make it to the Danube river port of Silistra where he could obtain passage back to Vienna.

The subsequent decades pitted a young Sultan Mahmud II (r. 1808-1839) against influential viziers, powerful provincial rulers, Balkan insurgencies, Russian advances, and most significantly, insubordinate janissaries, and seem to have been devoid of another prominent foreign hire to calibrate the taste of the court. These events also made the kind of Eastern European crossing that Ensle had undertaken impossible for even the most adventurous Westerner. Aside from a few European renegades, expatriates were hard to come by in an increasingly unstable Istanbul. The English travel-writer Julia Pardoe observed that foreign gardeners of varying European nationalities were attending to each of the terraces of Mahmud II’s garden in the Beylerbeyi palace in 1836 (fig. 3.3). It was only after a beleaguered but resolute Mahmud restored a semblance of order in his empire through a complete overhaul of the military and political bodies, that the multi-lingual Ottoman bureaucrats of his newfangled administration began a hunt for foreign experts to furnish the backdrops of their homes. It seems that after the 1830s the capital was once again better habitable for European expatriates.

24 Gräffer, 168.


b. CHRISTIAN SESTER AND THE ENGLISH GARDEN IN THE OTTOMAN CAPITAL

Ahmed Fethi Paşa (d. 1858), Mahmud’s Anglophile son-in-law, an enterprising industrialist of glass factories, and longtime marshal (müşîr) of the Tophane armory, signed a contract with a Bavarian called Christian Sester, while serving as ambassador to Austria (fig. 3.4).27 According to the loosely worded agreement, once the thirty-one-year-old landscape gardener arrived in Istanbul, he would begin “ordering the grounds” (arzîn nizâm ve intîzâmına mûbâşeret eylemek) allotted for the sultan’s imperial gardens, “draw out the plans appropriate for growing multifarious trees” (gûnûgûn eşcâr yetişdirmeye iktizâ iden zemîn ve resimleri çıkarmak) and “closely supervise all aspects related to gardens and their walkways himself” (bâççe ve yollarîn her bir huşûşuna kendîsi bi’n-nefs nezâret itmek).28 Promised a generous annual stipend of two thousand florins, comfortable lodgings, candlewax, coal, and firewood, “protection from any hindrances to his work” (bâççe tanzîmine dâ’îr huşûsîlariÎn içrâsîyînîn kendîsine bir ruhsat-î kâmîle olarak hiç bir tarafdan kimesne mânî ve mûzâmîm olmamağı), and an option to quit with a six-month notice, Sester arrived in Istanbul in 1835 along with an assistant (mu’âvin). He was given, or, rightfully borrowing from his European precedents—the lofty title of “Imperial Garden Director” (großherrlicher Gartendirektor).29 Until his death in 1868, Sester would remain in the service of three of the four nineteenth-century sultans, Mahmud, Abdülmecid and Abdülaziz, and transform most of the imperial gardens of the period in Istanbul.

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27 Biographical information on Ahmed Fethi Paşa is divided. Positive ones focus on his diverse cultural enterprises to rekindle empire-wide artisanal production; see Munefer Ayash, Dersaadet (Istanbul: Bedir Yayınevi, 1993), 109-110; his opponents exaggerated his western leanings by spreading rumors that he supplied Sultan Abdülmecid with medicine from Europe to improve his sexual potency; Ahmed Cevdet Paşa, Ma’râcî (Istanbul: Çânrî Yayınlari, 1980), 10.

28 BOA, D. DRB. 1/2/12.

29 Sester’s provisions are outlined in the contract. His girding as a garden director in Vienna is described in his obituary: A.W., “Ein unterfränkischer Landsmann als Gartendirektor des Sultans,” Erheiterungen, Belletristisches Beiblatt zur Aschaffenburger Zeitung, December 17, 1867, 1194.
The Bavarian parvenu’s résumé played a significant role in his selection to the Ottoman post. Born and raised in Aschaffenburg, he descended from a family of gardeners employed in the upkeep of the picturesque park of Schönbusch palace, then belonging to Karl Theodor von Dalberg (d. 1817), the prince-primate of a confederation of Rhenish states that, in alliance with Napoleon I, had declared their independence from the Holy Roman Empire. At a very young age, Sester abandoned training in Latin in order to completely devote himself to “the noble art of gardening.” He grew up amid a world of affluent provincial patrons and their German garden experts, who traveled around Europe to master the various branches of the practice. His obituary, published in a local Aschaffenburg newspaper, mentioned Sester’s hereditary calling for the garden arts from a very young age: “The seed that slept in him, suddenly awoke to unfold itself into a blossom, which shone forth as alone in its kind.” With this familial predisposition, he first apprenticed in his hometown under Schönbusch’s head-gardener Christian Ludwig Bode. Under his supervision, Sester honed his skills “as a gardener in general, and as a landscape gardener [Landschaftsgärtner] in particular.” Soon after that young Sester initiated his scholastic grand tour (often referred to as the gardener’s “journeyman years”) with the botanical gardens of Munich-Nymphenburg, which were conceptualized by Schönbusch’s first


33 Ibid.

34 For a good overview of a European head-gardener’s training trajectory in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and their so-called “journeyman years,” see Toby Musgrave, The Headgardeners: Forgotten Heroes of Horticulture (London: Aurum, 2007), 75-78.
landscape gardener, Carl Ludwig von Sckell (d. 1828), as extensions to the Baroque summer palace of the Bavarian rulers. Bode was a discipline of Sckell, and was entrusted to create English gardens with a German bend—a complete turn to nature, and an economical use of garden structures—which he must have imparted to his apprentice in Schönbusch. Following his training in Munich, Sester was appointed head-gardener to Dalberg’s smaller country estate in Bohemia—his first venture into the Habsburg domains—and then back to Bavaria in 1832 when he was “tasked with the supervision of the gardens of Frauendorf’s horticultural society (dem Sitze der praktischen Gartenbaugesellschaft). He had only recently been hired as a head-gardener (Obergärtner) by the Prince von Dietrichstein to lay out the gardens of his new Viennese summer residence—a neoclassical structure with an uncanny resemblance to the Dolmabahçe palace, if the latter were to be stripped of its sculptural reliefs—when his eastern adventure beckoned. Having interacted with diplomatic circles, Dietrichstein had recommended him to Sultan Mahmud II.

Although I have not yet identified a drawing or plan from Sester’s own hand of the Ottoman gardens he created, he has left behind a short ekphrasis from 1832, which appeared in Frauen dorfer Blätter on July 3, 1845, on how he envisioned the gardens while he served as a head-gardener. Borrowing from the hackneyed European parlance of describing the Tanzimat courts of Mahmud and Abdülmecid as stalwartly progressive, Sester’s erstwhile hosts in Frauendorf heralded him in this news item as the artistic counterpart to these two reform-oriented sultans. The piece was republished in 1845 with a lengthy prologue praising his international success:

A letter from Constantinople that was printed in the daily newspaper on the 12th of last month emphasized that the young Sultan [Abdülmecid], like his father [Mahmud II],

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35 Carl Ludwig von Sckell, Das königliche Lustschloss Nymphenburg und seine Gartenanlagen mit einem Plane. (München: In Commission bei George Jaquet, [between 1837 and 1840?]).
found a great deal of pleasure in everything new and better. For example, when setting up his palaces, the Sultan expressly ordered on numerous occasions that he no longer wanted the Old, but rather the New according to better European taste. Thusly, the garden at Tschera gan Palace, which was installed some six years ago by one of our countrymen, Herr Sester of Aschaffenburg, pleased the Sultan so extraordinarily that while he was recently moving from his palace to Beylerbeyi, he ordered that Tschera gan should be outfitted for the next winter so that he could spend fall and also the winter there... We are pleased by this news all the more because we have not heard from our old friend Herr Sester for quite some time. What a wonderful direction human fate can take! In 1832, Herr Sester was still helping to install the gardens in Frauendorf. While this garden was later destroyed by high winds and hail, we can take solace in the fact that the spirit of progress managed to transplant [verpflanzt] a refined taste for gardens in Turkey in the form of Herr Sester, placing him at the summit of that country’s artistic reform [Herr Sester mit großartigen Mitteln an die Spitze der schöpferischen Reform gestellt].

In Sester’s ekphrasis, titled “On the Cliff Bench in Frauendorf, May 8, 1832,” appended to this flattering introductory exposé, the gardener describes his walk through the garden of his own creation in a manner resembling a musical composition. The sentimental tone of the narrative, what the gardener intends to evoke with his garden, is in dialogue with those of his literary companion Hirschfeld, and with Pückler-Muskau whose treatise reads like a real-time walk through his own gardens, where each view fosters different sets of emotions. From a stage-like vast clearing, Sester enters a steep and narrow path lined with a thick mass of conifers with only a “handrail made of bark-stripped branches” to hold onto, having been seduced by the violets under the shade of a spruce tree down below. As he descends, he gently exposes his horticultural knowledge by pairing up plants that share a symbiotic relationship—cherry trees against the pine, hardy berries with delicate dayflowers, primrose entwined about the pear tree—but the experience is so immersive and natural that the environment belies the human hand that put it together. At some point, he comes across a bench, where he sits to listen to the sounds of starlings, blackbirds and the rushing creek and contemplates the moss-covered precipice and what lies beyond. As night descends and nature’s sublime takes over, Sester reveals his

philosophical inspiration: Herder’s short prose titled *Kalligenia, Die Mutter der Schönheit* (1803) which inquired into the aesthetic qualities of nature and its laws, and the happy convergences between an artist and scientist when studying them. The gardener, who crafted himself from a bit of both of these professions, writes: “The philosopher should hurry to this spot, disdaining the trinkets of the masses, and devote serious contemplation to the purpose of man; and celebrated goddess will come to him (as Kalligenia did to Kallia) in the dreams of Herder.”

The article ends with the author’s appeal to the Persian king to hire a professional of Sester’s caliber to “refine their taste for decorative garden arts among the masses there,” because he suggests, “progress in the garden arts and garden culture [*der Fortschritt der Gartenkünste und Gartenkultur*] is in all countries a measure of the level of cultivation of their people!”

Frauendorfer Blätter’s push to connect the English landscape garden with liberal rule might not be too much of a stretch, and in fact, is reflective of the sentiment of the era. German writers of garden treatises, who were Sester’s contemporaries as well as his literary and technical primers, believed in the close correlation between an enlightened, benevolent ruler, and the manner in which he laid out his estate. One of the most widely read among these figures, a member of the landed nobility from the north and an obsessive landscape designer himself, Prince Hermann Ludwig von Pückler-Muskau (d. 1871) propounded that the best garden model

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38 “Wohlgefallen des türkischen Kaisers an englischen Gärten,” 203.

39 Ibid.
for an estate-owner was the English one, because with all of its philosophical connotations it offered the best contrast to Le Nôtre’s Versailles and Vaux-le-Vicomte that had become one of the preeminent paragons of French autocratic rule alongside the structures they circumscribed.\(^{40}\) By deliberately including the working lands of the ruler—a hint of a peasant here, a farm there—and with untouched nature, the English landscape garden was for Pückler-Muskau a “microcosm of the civilized world.”\(^{41}\) So, if Mahmud II, and later Abdülmecid, strove to make distinctive visual claims about transformations to their rule as reform-oriented sovereigns eager to instate a completely new administrative, judiciary, and cultural system for their public, it is not unlikely that they selected a similar aesthetic scheme to the benevolent German gentry for their surroundings that best fit their newfangled, reinvented image.

It is not surprising that Sester was acquainted with the writings of German philosophers. Excerpts from their most popular texts would be printed and circulated even in the monthly gardener’s almanacs of Frankfurt. Herder’s *Kalligenia*, written close to his death, was one of these short but evocative narratives that also made its way into the homes of the working classes.\(^{42}\) Starting with Kant, figures like Herder, Goethe, and Schiller upheld garden art among the highest plastic arts of their time. For them, and their minstrel in all-things related to landscape art, C. C. L. Hirschfeld who penned his popular *Theorie der Gartenkunst* (1779 to 1785), a gardener was equal to, if not more privileged than, a landscape painter in his command over space, light, and sound. He would write:

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\(^{41}\) Ibid., 14.

\(^{42}\) “Retrospect of German Literature,” in *The Monthly Magazine: Or, British Register*, vol. 14, issue 2, 1803, 653.
On the strength of these comparisons of the two arts, it is easy to see that at base the art of gardening is as superior to landscape painting as nature is to a copy. None of the mimetic arts is more entwined with nature herself, which is to say more natural, than the art of gardens. Here the portrayal is merged with the actual. Movement is not merely perceived as suggestion but truly felt. Water, which in a landscape painting is animated only through reflections, offers the pleasure of its presence through site and sound. The eye is offered colors glowing or shimmering with a luster, gaiety, and warmth unrivaled by the magical power of any Titian. The gradual experience of garden scenes offers more protracted and entertaining pleasure than the most lovely and detailed landscape painting, which the eye can only quickly encompass.

These thinkers of aesthetics not only gave the gardening profession incredible agency in shaping nature, but also fueled the garden artist’s creative powers with the German proto-national ideas of freedom of the mind and creative expression. Rustic, seemingly untouched landscapes were the perfect backdrop for their fiery ideas, their best visual representatives. Sester was also geographically close to these members of the Sturm und Drang movement of arts and letters, preoccupied with the shackles of Enlightenment rationalism, and was certainly spurred on by the romantic fervor of their aesthetic inclinations. If Goethe’s novella Elective Affinities (Die Wahlverwandtschaften) of 1809 is any indication, the patrons of garden estates were also deeply involved in the landscape projects alongside their gardeners. They would look through “volumes on English country houses, with the engravings then [the patron’s] map of the estate,” survey the terrain, and make planning decisions together. Dalberg, who was Sester’s first patron and his family’s benefactor, was a close-friend, intellectual equal, and travel companion to Herder—they journeyed together in the Tyrolean Alps and Italy—who would find gainful employment for this ubiquitous theologian, because as a powerful political figure

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45 Elective Affinities, 46.
Dalberg (later the Archbishop of Regensburg) also held great sway in ecclesiastical appointments. Therefore, Schönbusch afforded a young garden-artist both the practical and intellectual stage to develop his creative inklings.

His obituary also recounts Sester’s first interactions with Mahmud II, who unlike Selim III did not want orange trees in his gardens—an eighteenth-century fad, now too commonplace—and instead desired something that “others did not have.” In their four-year interaction, Sester installed a spacious portico on the side of Mahmud’s wooden Dolmabahçe palace. Under this section, and protected from the “icy winds that the Pontus not so seldom sends, a fantastical artwork [fantasiereiches Kunstwerk] arose, whose depiction we encounter only in a Thousand and One Nights.” He installed waterfalls with alcoves molded out of grottoes, and planted flowering evergreens—azaleas, rhododendrons, and only recently acclimatized dryandra, a native of Oceania—alongside his beloved exotic conifers, the araucaria. The gardener’s undertakings did not end with simple gardening; he won a building commission over the costly proposition of the unidentified imperial architect for a garden house. When it was discovered that the new garden lacked the necessary running water—unclear whether a stream, lake, or water for the newly built pavilion—Mahmud asked him to find closer wells or springs (Quellen). Sester’s response, which the translator was reluctant to convey to the Sultan was, “Lord, I am not Moses.” The obituary claims that Mahmud took his statement as a sign of honesty, but he must


47 In Sester’s obituary, Mahmud is personified and declares, “Ich will keine Orangenbäume, ich will Etwas was Andere nicht haben,” see A.W., “Ein unterfränkischer Landsmann als Gartendirektor des Sultans,” 1195.

48 Ibid.

49 Ibid., 1194.

50 Ibid., 1195.
also have appreciated Sester’s biblical reference to Moses, who struck a desert rock from which water flowed, a story from the life of a prophet shared in the Koran which was certainly familiar to and that resonated with the Ottoman ruler. This nineteenth-century anecdote unknowingly but compellingly participates in the Ottoman saintly narratives (menâkıbnâmes), especially the sixteenth-century architect Sinan. In his biography, Sinan was compared to the miracle working, immortal Hızır (Khidr) because of his discovery of “life-giving springs” and the hydraulic feats he achieved when building the Kırkçeşme aqueducts.⁵¹

Sester also laid out the designs for the İhlamur Pavilion in the valley behind Dolmabahçe, which would later serve as a favorite inland retreat for Abdülmecid, and restored Ensle’s additions to the Topkapı palace.⁵² His horticultural contributions to Sa’dabad are found in the construction expenses from the summer of 1863, where, referred to as the chief-gardener (bâğıvânbâşı), he supplies the site with rose and linden trees and a set of rustic railings (fig.**).⁵³ He was also assigned semi-imperial commissions from wealthy bureaucrats like Abdülmecid’s minister of war, serasker Rıza Paşa, who wanted an identical version of the sultan’s English-style garden for his own residence.⁵⁴ Moreover, Mahmud II’s wife and

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⁵³ BOA, HH. 19355.

⁵⁴ “Wohlgefallen des türkischen Kaisers an englischen Gärten,” 202. I have not, yet, been able to locate the whereabouts of this yalı, and gardens. However, Ahmed Lutfi Efendi’s chronicles of the Mecidian era often pit the seemingly more conservative Rıza Paşa against the dandyish ambassador to many European capitals and Sester’s sponsor Ahmed Fethi Paşa. Although we cannot identify the exact location of Rıza Paşa’s waterfront mansion, we get insights on his gardens through an English woman’s visit to his inland mansion and interactions with his wife “Madame Rıza,” who would describe her the newly constructed gardens of her yalı to her foreign guest: “There are hanging gardens with a stream leaping from rock to rock amongst the orange-trees...there are also beautiful fountains, and rose-gardens.” Mrs. Edmund Hornby, In and Around Stamboul (Philadelphia: James Challen & Son, 1858), 258.
Abdülaziz’s mother, Pertevniyal Valide Sultan’s monthly domestic expenses from 1857 to 1858 list the gardener from Austria (Nemçeli bağçıvan), consistently on top of the ledger. His work on her residence in the walled-off hilltop pavilion that contained sizable market gardens especially for strawberries was not inexpensive compared to the boatmen’s fees, the kavasses (armed attendants of an ambassador or consul), and maintainers of water conduits (su yolcu). The earliest map drawn up by the Ottoman-employed Prussian officer, Baron Helmuth von Moltke, from 1839, of which we also have the Ottoman Military School’s redeveloped versions, identifies two small structures perched on the elevated grounds behind Çırağan. One is labeled the kiosk of Valide Sultan, and the other, smaller, cross-axial one, Yıldız (fig. 3.5). These two structures were the earliest incarnations of what would develop into a country estate (labeled as çiftlik in the above-mentioned map), surrounded by a multitude of arable fields (tarlā) and protected by guard posts (karağolhâne) in the map mentioned in the preceding chapter, which were allotted to the mothers of sultans from Selim III to Abdülmecid (fig. 2.13). This latter map, although drawn without topographic conventions, not only shows the generous sprawl of the nineteenth-century valides’ income-generating properties in the new imperial zone of the capital, but also clarifies the site’s relationship to Çırağan on the shore: they are connected by a grove (Çerâğân nâm sarây-ı hümâyûnu Yıldız Köşkü tarafında koruluq mahallî). By the time the map was made, the wall that separated the two kiosks on the hill belonging to the valide estate from the waterfront palace was taken down. Its drafting must have coincided with the second stage in Sester’s landscaping of the grove during Abdülmecid’s reign when the gardener connected the two sites to form a majestic garden-boasting complex.

55 İstanbul Atatürk Kitaphığı (İAK), Pertevniyal Valide Sultan Evrâk (PVSE) 757, 1086, 1125, 1126, and 1128. The vast strawberry fields are identified in an undated map from the Topkapı Palace, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Evrâk (TSME) 9494.

56 Again, TSME 9494.
Indeed, Sester’s biggest contribution to the capital’s outdoors was his gradual two-step conversion of the ravine-bisected hills behind Mahmuď II’s marble colonnaded Çırağan palace that cupped the shoreline between Beşiktaş and Ortaköy to form a sprawling romantic landscape. Under Sultan Mahmuď, Sester had to work within the bounds of the traditional terraced aesthetic, but also naturalized these spaces as much as he could by turning the large flower parterres into uneven lawns and adding multiple bodies of water with undulating frames. Ziver Paşa composed an ode to mark the completion in 1839 of the first round of landscaping done under Sultan Mahmuď for the garden behind Çırağan, which was once inscribed on the door opening out to the garden. The ode is unusual not only because it was for a garden gate suggesting perhaps that the court wanted to emphasize the importance and physical centrality of its construction, but also because it highlights, briefly but eloquently, the site’s terraced architecture:

The exalted Mahmuď Khan, the spring season of the garden of imperial grandeur,
Made a new rose garden full of embellishment and glory.
When he commanded this meadow to be adorned in layers [kat kat],
Without a doubt, it became the envied and agreeing [țabâk] garden of paradise.57

An undated oil painting from the Dolmabahçe palace collection offers a view from this hillside garden looking onto the back of the crenellated palace, the delicate footbridge that

57 By selecting this particular word, the poet not only alludes to the overall harmony of the design, matching the garden of paradise, but also intends to reiterate the poet that it was physically stacked like plates, a reiteration of the phrase kat kat that appears in the previous line.

58 “Nev-bahar-i bâg-ı şevket Hağret-i Mahmuď Hân
Eyledi bu bahçeçeyi nev gülşen-i pü-r-zîb ü sân
Kat kat bu ravzayı tezîne fermân idicek
connects it to the garden, and the walled elevation of the terraced parterres. It captures the early phase of Sester’s work comprising the swelling ha-has that hold up the two ponds, a white classical temple-like fabrique, which must have been one of his architectural commissions, and mounds of soil removed to open up the pools occupying the foreground (fig. 3.6). On the flatter ground, immediately behind the Dolmabahçe palace’s administrative structure (mabeyn), the painting reveals a fragment of a garden developed for private use with similar pools. Julia Pardoe, who likened the horticultural activity in the gardens of Beylerbeyi to a tower of Babel of gardeners, also witnessed the frenzied activity behind Çırağan. Sester and his assistant must have started on the projects within months of their arrival since her travel account was published in 1836, only a year after his contract signing. Her description of what Sester pursued behind Çırağan animates the content of the undated painting, as well as the engraving corresponding to the traveler’s account (fig. 3.7):

The gardens of the palace are extensive, but will require time to make them worthy of description; at present, a great portion of the hill-side, behind the building is left in its original state, boasting for all ornament sweeps of fine cypresses, and here and there a tuft of almond trees, a group of acacias, or a majestic maple; while the white tents of the Bulgarian workmen employed upon the walls, give to the scene the picturesque and cheerful appearance of a summer encampment.59

Sester’s obituary further expands on his accomplishments in this “great compound [die große Anlage] of Ortaköi,” the region where the palaces of the royal were sited, hence the connection with the queen mothers in nearby Yıldız.60 Under his supervision, “mounds had to be removed, rocks blown up, and basins filled in,” in order to properly realize “the conceits of painterly garden scenes, and to faithfully imitate the images of nature.”61

59 Pardoe, 18

The famous Weimar botanist Karl Koch (d. 1879) included a visit to Turkey in one of his three pioneering scientific quests to collect plant specimens in the Caucasus. In 1843, he was perhaps the first to leave an account of Sester’s gardening work in Çırağan. With a horticulturalist’s eye for landscaping, tempered with a bit of hearsay, he spots the already extant, walled-in parterres that Sester had to work with, and the earliest phase of the gardener’s attempt at building up the foliage with trees and shrubs:

As soon as one reaches Fündüklü [sic, Fındıklı] and the rifle factory that borders it, the royal winter palace of the pumpkin garden (Dolmabaghsche), gradually comes into view. This palace was used by Mahmud II during a large portion of the winter season. Mahmud was responsible for the way in which the palace is currently set up. The current Sultan now prefers to live on the Asian side of the city, as if he sensed the extent to which he and his people now no longer fit in Europe. At this point the visitor encounters a series of developed areas, some of them enclosed by high walls, while others are open for the enjoyment of the public. The pleasure garden Wiegenstein (Beschiktasch) then follows, which boasts an excellent location between two ravines. A stream flows through each of these ravines. Adjoining this garden is Tschiragan [Chiraghan] Palace, which was built by Sultan Mahmud II. It is here that the current sultan [Abdülmecid] lives during a portion of the hot summer months with his royal retinue. A German gardener was commissioned with the job of landscaping in European style the inner areas that are enclosed by walls. And, as far as one could see from the outside, the gardener seemed to have a particular liking for green lawns, while trees and shrubs were relegated to the background. Viewed from our distant vantage point, the garden did not appear to be particularly handsome due to the stark contrast between its spartan appearance and the surrounding naturally thick vegetation. Yet it was said that the garden was particularly beautiful up close. Mahmud II spared no expense in order to improve the gardens that he had created. The servant of the church, Abdul-Medschid, had bountiful shipments sent each year to Constantinople from Vienna containing seed stores and decorative bushes. However, I think that Constantinople possesses such beautiful plants that one does not have to rely on foreign varieties. But man is rarely satisfied with the beautiful and wonderful things that he possesses in close proximity, and is hardly able to resist the inner drive to possess the foreign, even if it is not as beautiful.62

Foreign visitors privileged enough to visit the site with the imperial gardener in tow, stress its terrain’s pre-Sester aridness, and provide insight into stages of its progress under his command. Before Sester began the second phase of forestation for Abdülmecid, and only seven


years into his directorship, Countess Ida von Hahn-Hahn (d. 1880), novelist to the German aristocrats and a pen-pal to Prince Hermann von Pückler-Muskau, met Sester by chance at the lodgings of the Pera proprietress Madame Balbiani in the Fall of 1845. The gardener, a frequent guest of the Balbiani boarding house, offered to take his compatriot on a tour of Mahmud’s Çırağan. In a letter to her mother, after providing a lengthy description of the palace interiors, from its porcelain collection to its sundry mirrors and clocks, the Countess lets her in on the garden that was only recently being developed:

The garden of this palace is quite new, situated on the steep and totally bare side of a hill, where as yet, nothing is to be seen that would give us the idea of a garden—no flowers, no shade, no verdure, no water, nothing but the heavenly view of the Bosphorus; perhaps in ten or twelve years it may be transformed into a garden. In the centre, between the pavilions, is a parterre of flowers, where, however, you see nothing rare or handsome but what you find in ours—climbing roses, dahlias, and the like. Orange and lemon trees stand in pots, as with us, and are kept in winter in hot-houses.63

Prince Leopold, Duke of Brabant (and the future king of Belgium), who was hosted by Abdülmecid in 1860, who took a guided tour of the palace garden with Sester and recorded its transformation into his travel diary on April 13.64

After lunch, we went down the Bosphorus by boat to the gardens and kiosks of Tschéragan. This garden, drawn by a German, is large and handsomely created. One sees Constantinople, the Bosphorus, and even a bit of the Sea of Marmara. The soil, rocky here, is not overly favorable for vegetation, also the garden provides no shade. Near here, in the lower part of the garden, is another kiosk of the Sultan, all in white marble and richly adorned, but in bad taste.65

Both the Countess and Duke’s observations over the garden’s barrenness, and lack of shade find its representation on the lid of an Ottoman writing box. Executed in oil by the Armenian artist

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65 Ibid. “Après déjeuner, nous descendimes en caïk le Bosphore jusqu’aux jardins et kiosques de Tschéragan. Ce jardin, tracé par un Allemand, est grand et joliment établi. On voit Constantinople, le Bosphore, et même un peu de la mer de Marmara. Le sol, rocheux ici, n’est pas excessivement favorable à la végétation, aussi le jardin ne possède pas d’ombre. Tout près d’ici, dans un fond, se trouve un autre kiosque du Sultan, tout en marbre blanc et orné d’une façon très riche, mais de mauvais goût.”
and marquetry specialist Mıgırdıç Melkon, the painting is not only a rare local depiction of Mahmud’s version of Çırağan, but also the single mid-century visual proof of Sester’s completed output (fig. 3.8). An earlier version of this object, a painting by Melkon is mentioned in the previous chapter, but depicts the site without the addition of a central circular pavilion.)

Melkon’s painted lid shows the full span of the garden that reaches all the way up to a second, larger, green-painted kiosk that has the exact same billowy roof resting on thin columns as did the tent [çadır] kiosk, once perched right besides Sa‘dabad’s canal. This structure is likely the earliest incarnation of the brick and stone pavilion that would later replace it during Abdülaziz’s additions to the garden, but maintain its original shape-derived designation (fig. 3.9). The artist’s pronouncement of Sester’s winding paths and burgeoning saplings presents a sharp contrast to the even more arid hilltops to the garden’s right, and the urban sprawl to its left. A curious dun-colored wall behind the southern wing of the palace appears to support a greenhouse, whose glass panels are visible next to the temple-like garden folly—the same structure from the undated oil-painting in Dolmabahçe’s collection. Small greenhouses indeed began to be imported from England with Fethi Paşa’s initiative in Abdülmecid’s time.

A recently discovered painting by the Italian painter Carlo Bossoli (d. 1884), more or less taking the same bird’s-eye-view side glance of the reworked backyard with its aforementioned undated other, depicts Mahmud II’s terraced first segment and the English garden behind it under brilliant, saturated sunlight (fig. 3.10). To access this terraced section, the palace inhabitant

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66 For Mıgırdıç Melkon, see Garo Kürkman, Armenian Painters in the Ottoman Empire, 1600-1923, vol. 2 (İstanbul: Matıasalem Publications, 2004), 619-631.


68 Bossoli was an itinerant artist looking to find lucrative patronage in Europe’s east much like Melling. He painted for the Russian aristocracy, and spent a considerable time in the Crimea working on the construction of the Odessa
either had to use the covered footbridge that crossed over the public road, or if on horseback or in a carriage, the ramp that was leveled with the road. Bossoli’s painting also tells us the heavily landscaped terrace is separated from the Romantic garden above it (where figures are depicted strolling the grounds) by a stately one-story stone greenhouse with a façade consisting of pediments and pilasters and potted plants lining its entrance. The terrace itself contains a carefully laid out set of round flower parterres with a central pool bearing a cascading fountain. It is very likely that with his unusual ode to Mahmud’s new garden, “adorned in layers,” Ziver is referring to the site that Bossoli foregrounds in his painting.

What these paintings do not show, however, is how Sester filled up the barren valley that was sandwiched between the valides’ walled in, hilltop residence, and the thicket of cypresses surrounding the saintly precinct of Yahya Efendi’s tomb, nestled on the northeast of Çırağan.

This was the second phase of Sester’s expansion, commissioned under Abdülmecid. Although no paintings like the two previously mentioned examples have survived of what would first become the forested extension of the Çırağan gardens with lakes and waterfalls, and later the centerpiece of Abdülhamid II’s Yıldız palace, there are seventy-five, single-page expense accounts spanning weekly work that started on February 5, 1849, that indicate intense gardening activity in the area.

Each of these expense accounts only sparsely fills a single page and lists the day laborers’ rates (rençber yevmiyesi), without unfortunately providing a detailed plan of Sester’s overall undertaking. However, they all bear his Ottoman seal, which identifies his position in Abdülmecid’s court as the chief-gardener of the Çırağan waterfront palace, Çerâğan sâhîlsarây opera house. His work in Istanbul is largely unknown and unpublished, unlike his celebrated genre scenes of the Crimean War and lithographs depicting the Second Italian War of Independence (1859); see, Carlo Bossoli, The War in Italy (London: Day & Son, 1859); and, Cristina Vernizzi, et. al. eds., Carlo Bossoli: cronache pittoriche del Risorgimento (1859-1861) nella collezione di Eugenio di Savoia, principe di Carignano (Torino: Artema, 1985).
serbağçivânı Sester, embellished with a single stemmed flower (fig. 3.1). They also do provide a general overview of the landscaping project by describing it as the “leveling” (tesviye) of the new garden between Çırağan, its mountains (Çerâğân tâğlari) and Yıldız pavilion, as well as the construction of the gardener’s home (bağçivânbâşi mûşyö Sestâr’în ĥânesî) adjacent to the Ortaköy side of the new garden. Leveling most likely meant the knocking down of walls that divided the shoreline Çırağan palace’s garden with the barren site next to it, as well as the Yıldız estate, once intact and outlined on Melkonyan’s writing box. Finally, some of these accounts document the aggregate cost of multiple weeks’ worth of work: for example, under the oversight of Selim Efendi, the head-chamberlain (mâbeyn ferîki) of the sultan, the treasury disburses Sester over two million ǧurûş from its fiftieth to one hundred and thirtieth week.

The Austrian Jewish writer and ethnomusicologist Ludwig August von Frankl (d. 1894), who followed the recommendation of the Ottoman ambassador to Naples and met with Sester in Istanbul on his journey to Jerusalem in 1856, had the opportunity to spend time in this one-storied stone house of the chief gardener, perched close to the imperial gardens, which contained “a large hall, the windows of which framed the low-lying Bosphorus, offering a huge picture.” He emphasized the fact that a house made of stone reflected a certain kind of privilege “in Constantinople, where conflagrations are a regular feature,” and added that the beautiful house “had been constructed by the Sultan for Sester, whom he loves and holds in high esteem.” (The

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69 The seventy-five notebooks begin with BOA, HH. d. 18928, and end with 22266. Often there are jumps in the numbering, and some notebooks are missing, so 18940 follows, for example, 18937. However, if searched on the archive’s index, the combined words “Çırağan,” “bahçe,” and “tesviye,” generate a list of all of these short defters. In Sester’s seal, the name of the palace is misspelled Çerâğân when it should have been Çerâğân.

70 BOA, H.H. 22245.

71 Ludwig August Frankl, Nach Jerusalem! (Leipzig: Baumgärtner's Buchhandlung, 1858), 173.

72 Frankl, 174.
house’s foundations still exist on the northeastern edges of Yıldız’s park, adjacent to the porcelain factory. Space for his house and garden is now taken over by the haphazardly built dormitories for the employees of the neighborhood’s fire department.) It was in this intimate space that the Austrian traveler was able to observe the gardener, in full Oriental garb, convalescing from a poisoning attempt by an unidentified, “jealous” underling. In a seated position, Sester entertained his guests along with his Armenian-Catholic wife Rosa (née Askerian). Frankl describes him as “a man with a serious demeanor, a demeanor that exudes an Oriental calm that is pleasant, as it is not caused by thoughtlessness.” Almost two decades into his service as a gardener at the time of Frankl’s visit, Sester seems to have created a familial environment inside his home that combined native practices with touches from his homeland: “We were presented with food and drink in an Oriental fashion; yet we were also given the opportunity to think about our German homeland, thanks to an extremely fine wine from Rhineland.”

Overall, Sester experienced better luck at integrating into the Ottoman court than his predecessor Ensle: the gardener from Bavaria cultivated a deeply personal relationship with Sultan Mahmud and his successors in the relatively more forbearing atmosphere of the empire’s period of reforms that Selim III had attempted to initiate. A foreign member of the court, he still yielded considerable authority over a large group of workers. A short memo passed between the office of the Grand Vizier and the ministry of superintendence in 1852 reports that an unruly gardener, the Croatian Zeynel, was brought over to the head-gardener, accompanied by the

73 Frankl, 174.
74 Ibid.
75 Ibid.
capital’s gendarme.\textsuperscript{76} His obituary adds that while working on his ambitious Ortaköy project he had already grown strong in the Turkish language, so he must have been able to communicate directly with his staff.\textsuperscript{77}

A few remaining requisites of the role of the pre-1826 \textit{bostancıbaşı} seem, then, to have been required of Sester. One of these was the fact that Sester’s home was adjacent to Çirağan, the court’s preferred residence in the first half of the nineteenth century, paralleling the traditional practice of assigning the \textit{bostancıbaşı} an official office inside the Topkapı Palace and later one in Kuruçeşme close to the Beşiktaş Palace.\textsuperscript{78} The Stolpe map drawn out between the years 1855 and 1863 (and, later expanded in 1882) gives us a cartographic sense of Sester’s gardening feats in the area labeled “\textit{Grossherrlicher Lustgarten},” and his adjacent residence as the imperial garden directorate (\textbf{fig. 3.12}). While most other expatriate court officials such as Sester’s contemporary Guiseppe Donizetti, the instructor-general of the Ottoman Imperial Music band, chose to reside in Pera, the garden-director combined his office and family home in the privileged zone around the palace.\textsuperscript{79} Sester and his gardeners likely kept the now no-longer extant plans and drawings here.

In keeping with earlier designatory practices, Sester retained control over his gardeners in a militaristic manner by arranging them into squadrons (\textit{bölük}), all in accordance with their postings among the various imperial gardens of the capital. The salary registers of the gardeners all still referred to their employees as \textit{nefer} (individual, soldier) and continued to be documented

\textsuperscript{76} BOA, A.]MKT.NZD. 65/79
\textsuperscript{77} A.W., “Ein unterfränkischer Landsmann als Gartendirektor des Sultans,” 1196.
\textsuperscript{78} On the dormitories of the gardening corps and the office of the head-gardener (\textit{bostancı çardağı}, or the gardener’s arbor) inside the Topkapı Palace, see Necipoğlu, \textit{The Topkapı Palace}, 207.
\textsuperscript{79} Emre Aracı, \textit{Donizetti Paşa}, 54.
and paid by the Ottoman imperial treasury. However, the martial terminology found in registers of these late-nineteenth-century recruits seems to have become merely descriptive, maintaining such designations for bureaucratic ease rather than indicating the direct link between the conscripted members of the pre-1826 gardening corps and the janissaries, where the former would be expected to join the latter.

Sester’s reputation, at least in the imperial neighborhood of Beşiktaş, survived posthumously. Two maps of Ortaköy undertaken by members of the imperial army under Abdülhamid II identified the site of the garden directorate as belonging to the former head-gardener Sester (sâbîk bağcîvânbaşı Sester Efendiniî  han ve bâğcesî) (fig. 3.13). These maps were drawn between 1899 and 1900 at the sultan’s behest under the project to expand Yıldız’s gardens into Ortaköy by absorbing the gardens of the Ferîye Palaces and the small plots of land owned by the neighborhood’s tradesmen, in order to create a palatial extension replete with a new imperial mansion to host and entertain diplomatic guests around a porcelain factory and a completely new picturesque garden. While one of the maps details the lodgings for Abdülhamid’s trusted Albanian zouave regiments (fesîl zuhâf birinci tabûrunuî iki bölûk efrâdi şâhâneleriniî ikâmetine mahsus bârâkalâr), the other one focuses on the immediate surroundings of Sester’s house and pinpoints its commanding location in a small town’s square with a fountain in the middle and the house of the head-gardener’s assistant (bâğcîvân  kalfa).

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80 Two examples of the military formations implemented for the gardeners installed in various imperial gardens of the capital can be best observed in the Ottoman imperial treasury registries BOA, Y. PRK. SGE. 11/45 from December 20, 1908, as well as, Y. PRK. SGE. 39/19 from the same year.

81 The two maps numbered 93332 and 93405 are preserved in the Istanbul University Library’s Rare Works Collection. The third one is located in the Istanbul Atatürk Library’s Map Collection under 5908.

82 On this regiment inaugurated by the Sultan Abdülmecid to participate in public ceremonies and named as such for the elongated fez that they wore known as zu‘âf (or zuhâf), see Karateke, Padişahım Çok Yaşalı!, 256 n. 32, and 272. The regiment was composed solely of Northern (Gega) Albanians. Abdülhamid II also kept a turban donning zouave regiment composed of North Africans Arabs, which was adopted from Napoleon’s Algerian footmen; see Karateke, 278.
sandwiched between the head-gardener’s residence and that of the caretaker (türbedär) of the Yahya Efendi convent. The mansion that was built over Sester’s residence under Abdülhamid would continue to be known among the palace officials as the head-gardener’s pavilion well into the reign of Mehmed V (r. 1909-18), likely implying its function as an official structure (fig. 3.14). When Mehmed V chose to make Yıldız his palace after a brief and unpleasant stint inhabiting the drafty Dolmabahçe, his sons would host banquets for the palace officials in this mansion.83 Twice in his hefty memoirs, Sultan Mehmed’s head-scribe Halid Ziya talks about the new building’s banqueting function, and how it retained the name of the site’s famous former inhabitant. In his first recollection, Halid Ziya ponders why the name “Bahçıvanbaşı Sesvter [sic] köşkü” was adopted, but later on, having found out the backstory, yet still unsure of the foreigner’s name, he describes it as “a pavilion that was built for the head-gardener Chester [sic] on the clearing in the forest cascading from Yıldız to Ortaköy, and these days referred to as the world-viewing, or Belvedere [Cihannüma] Pavilion,” for its resplendent views of the Bosphorus.84

c. ISTANBUL’S GERMANIC NETWORKS AND ROYAL GARDENERS AFTER SESTER
In the empire’s new century where renegades and émigrés could acquire privileged posts, Sester fashioned himself an aristocrat, through his professional title as a garden-director of the Ottoman court, at the very least among the foreign residents in the capital. Frankl presents a Salon-like gathering in the gardener’s home, where the government’s reforms were discussed among a diverse group from the doctor of the German hospital in Istanbul, a Dr. Stolle and his entourage, to the gardener’s wife, and his niece. While Sester’s visitors were in agreement that the “Hat

83 Halid Ziya Uşaklıgil, Saray ve Ötesi (İstanbul: Özgür Yayınları, 2012), 199.
84 Ibid.
Humajum” (Ḫāṭṭ-ı Humāyūn or Islahat Fermanı of 1856) was bound to fail, because of the great opposition it garnered from the conservative members of the Turkish government, to Frankl’s dismay, the gardener remained quiet.85 He would light up only when his wife and daughter walked into the room, and declare: “Do you see, my good men! This is my Reich, where permanent peace reigns, which one cannot say of every Oriental peace treaty.”86

Sester’s political reticence was a different matter, however, when he was dealing with the embassy through whose agency he was first brought to the empire and under which he was therefore registered. Taking advantage of the gardener’s access to Mahmud I and Abdülmejid, the Austrian ambassador to Constantinople, Anton Graf Prokesch von Osten (d. 1876), seems to have employed Sester as a palace informant during his time in the diplomatic service, from 1855 to Sester’s death in 1866. Jotting the gardener down as Hofgärtner in his diaries, Prokesch von Osten encouraged Sester to visit him regularly to share his views on the newly appointed sultan, Abdülaziz. The gardener must not have been in the new ruler’s good graces, or was disappointed over the fact that he was not permitted the same courtly intimacy that he had shared with the two preceding sultans. In 1863, Sester would describe Abdülaziz to Prokesch as “ignorant, fickle, heartless, and spiteful.”87 (Counter-claims by confidants of the new sultan would characterize the gardener to Prokesch much in the same terms.) Prokesch feared that Abdülaziz would thwart the reform efforts to allow more rights for the Christian populations in the empire, a topic continually on the competitive agenda of the Austrians and the Russians. According to Prokesch’s diary, Abdülmejid seems to have forewarned his gardener, in dramatic fashion right

85 Frankl, 174.

86 Ibid.

before his death, that his chosen successor was against granting privileges to the Christians. The state of the empire’s religious minorities affected the gardener’s life personally as well. As a Catholic Armenian, his wife and her family must have experienced the often-violent outcomes of the schism between and among the empire’s Apostolic, Catholic and Protestant Armenian populations in the early half of the century with respect to rightful representation and the involvement of external bodies (Rome and the European protector powers) over local ones (Sultan, Patriarch, the Mekhitarists, and the wealthy and influential Catholic amira families like the Balian and Bezjians, who were members of the Armenian National Council).\footnote{The most cogent overview of the complicated divisions, disagreements, and religio-political motivations is offered in Charles Frazee, Catholics and Sultans: The Church and the Ottoman Empire, 1453-1923 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 256-274. There is a new, but more speculative and anecdotal work on the nineteenth-century Armenian community of Istanbul that centers on the Catholic amira families, Saro Dadyan, Osmanlı’da Ermeni Aristokrasisi (Istanbul: Everest Yayınları, 2011).}

Sester might have relied on Austrian protection for his foreigner’s rights, but in his private hours, he worked for the German community in Istanbul. For example, in May 1855, he petitioned to the German Federal Assembly (\emph{Bundesversammlung}) to advocate the purchase of a hospital building in the Ottoman capital that would be financed by German mutual aid societies of the governments of the various member states of the German Confederation (\emph{hohe deutsche Bundesregierungen}).\footnote{Protokolle der Deutschen Bundesversammlung vom Jahre 1856, Sitzung 1 bis 33 (Frankfurt am Main: Bundes-Präsidial-Druckerei), 15.} The petition was for the German Hospital founded in 1846 that kept on relocating until a permanent building was established for it through the aid of the German federal charity funds to which Sester appealed. In the aftermath of the Hungarian uprising of 1848-49 and the influx of émigrés into the Ottoman lands, he also provided gardening employment in Çırağan’s expanded grounds for six renegades of the Hungarian army, who were all German volunteers from Baden and Württemberg fighting for the Magyar cause.\footnote{Protokolle der Deutschen Bundesversammlung vom Jahre 1856, Sitzung 1 bis 33 (Frankfurt am Main: Bundes-Präsidial-Druckerei), 15.} Istanbul’s expatriate
clubs enabled the formation of these kinds of networks. The hundreds of soldiers of the Hungarian army, found their way into the colony-like club run by a young Hungarian baron called Balázs Orbán, who would find jobs for them in the capital.\textsuperscript{91} Similarly, for the German-affiliated émigrés, the Teutonia Club, which was established in 1847, fostered a lively community of Germans, Austrians and Swiss, where the proactive and resourceful head-gardener likely presided over the convivial pan-German atmosphere of which he was a perfect example.\textsuperscript{92} After all, he was born in Bavaria, trained in Austria and Switzerland, and had been employed on both Prussian and Habsburg estates.

In European courts, the office of the head-gardener was a much respected post, which Sester was well familiar with from his apprenticeship with Bode, and intimate knowledge of Sckell, as well as the latter’s mentee and Sester’s contemporary Peter Joseph Lenné (d. 1866). The latter was the illustrious garden-director of Prussia’s imperial palaces (Sanssouci as their ultimate pride and glory) and landscape engineer of its cities (Potsdam and Berlin). The nineteenth century was a period when this occupation was solidified as an indispensable one for every European ruling house that maintained grand parks and gardens as much as palaces.

There can be no doubt that Sester bolstered his garden-directorship with his knowledge of the now-defunct role of the once powerful \textit{bostancıbaşı} in the Ottoman system of governance.

\textsuperscript{90} György Csorba, “Hungarian Emigrants of 1848-49 in the Ottoman Empire,” in \textit{The Turks}, vol. 4, ed. Hasan Celal Güzel, Cem Oğuz, and Osman Karatay (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye, 2002), 227-228. Not all renegades managed to continue their military professions, and most had to adapt to a diverse set of jobs, from sailors to servants and gardeners as well as house painters— from among them, a lucky artillerist Károly Rényi got to decorate the Dolmabahçe Palace. On Orbán’s club for the Hungarian émigrés, called the Hungarian Society, their activities in Istanbul and social work to support the newcomers’ transitions to a completely new life as smooth as possible, see Heléna Tóth, \textit{An Exiled Generation: German and Hungarian Refugees of Revolution, 1848-1871} (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 186-191.

\textsuperscript{91} Ibid., 228.

that he had partly inherited. In 1845, when he took the waters in the German Baden Baden and then Austrian Bad Gastein—for reasons to which I will return—and reconvened with the rest of the European Sesters in Aschaffenburg, he also had the privilege of being granted an audience with the Bavarian king, Ludwig I, as well as his consort, the Grand Duchess Mathilde, and his daughter Princess Alexandra. He would later lunch with the Bavarian keeper of the royal silver collection (Herr Oberstsilberkammerer Freiherr von Mamboldt-Umstadt), a palace employee whose courtly status most likely paralleled that of a royal head-gardener. Sester’s visit to his king earned him a “valuable golden watch.” A year later, when Ludwig’s son Luitpold was Abdülmecid’s guest in Istanbul, Sester would conduct him on a private tour of his grand garden designs behind Çırağan.

A small news item that appeared on October 23, 1845 traces Sester’s five-month vacation away from Istanbul. Permission to leave was granted to him after eight years of service in the Ottoman palace. He started his journey in the early summer months and arrived first in Baden Baden, “the queen of the Spas in Germany,” right on time for the lively bathing season, and

93 “Ein Schönes Familienfest,” Passavia, Zeitung für Niederbayern, 23 October 1845. The newspaper item lists the remaining members of this bourgeois family by vocation. What is of note is that two more of his brothers also continued the family trade: Jakob Sester was gardener to a Herr von Bethmann in Frankfurt—likely August von Bethmann-Hollweg, a famous Prussian jurist and politician—while Joseph Sester was an art and trade gardener in Aschaffenburg. Christian Sester’s sister Julia Rinz was married to a municipal and trade gardener by the name of Jakob. Surprisingly, families with the last name Sester that I have been able to trace reside in the United States, and they must be from the lineage of Franz Sester, another brother who had already immigrated there at the time of the family reunion.


95 Augustus Bozzi Granville, The Spas of Germany: In Two Volumes, vol. 1 (London: Henry Colburn Publisher, Great Marlborough Street, 1837), 7. This two-volume publication written by an Italian physician, who had made London his home, reads in part as a guide-book of all of the popular spas and spa towns of Germany that include maps and insights on where to stay and road conditions, and in part, it is a pseudo-scientific study of balneology. Granville is equally interested in the who’s who of the European aristocracy as he is in the mineral compositions of each of the hot springs.
already decorated with an Ottoman order. The news report eagerly highlights the fact that “the royal gardener Christian Sester…had received splendidiferous gifts from the deceased Sultan Mahmud, from the current Sultan Balide [Valide mispelled], and from Abdul Medschid, and…had also been awarded the Turkish medal of honor.” It was important to display one’s status markers in the lively social scene of Baden’s promenade, a site which was visited daily by kings, queens, and their retinue, but more importantly, to distinguish one’s courtly bearings from the moneyed bourgeois upstarts that occupied the seasonal tabloids. Sester stayed in Baden for seven weeks only to leave for Bad Gastein, where “he was honored with great attention and homage.” The gardener’s ailment due to being poisoned by an underling, an incident to which Frankl alludes in his observations in 1856, might have been the main reason for his long leave-of-absence from courtly service in 1845. Baden Baden’s Ursprung and its “vegeto-animal deposits,” however, seemed to have not been restorative enough (and indeed, Baden was less a town for invalids and more for luxury vacation), so he was likely recommended by the town’s physicians to try his luck at the remote, hard to reach heights of Bad Gastein. This Austrian town’s social scene had very little to offer compared to Baden’s weekly balls, but its

96 BOA, A. MKT. MHM 210/56. This document from 1861 indicates that Sester would be given a Mecidiye of the fourth order, and his assistant “Estefel” would inherit his third. Although it is not clear when Sester received his first medal (of the third order), it is safe to assume that it was around the time he completed the first section of the Çırağan’s hilly backyard, represented in Melkon’s two paintings. In fact, Sester was most likely one of the first set of honorees of the Mecidiye as it was instituted in 1851, the date of completion for the monumental garden project. The Turkish medal of honor that the news item refers to was the Order of Glory (nişān-i iftihār) that was founded by Mahmud II in 1831; see Edhem Eldem, Pride and Privilege: A History of Ottoman Orders, Medals, and Decorations (Istanbul: Ottoman Bank Archives and Research Centre, 2004), 110-125.

97 “Ein Schönes Familienfest,” unpaginated newspaper article.


99 “Ein Schönes Familienfest.”

100 Granville, 33.
caloric waters were known to “excite, disturb, [and] agitate the nerves,” and would perhaps will the gardener’s legs into action, as they famously did those of a lame Bavarian cavalry officer. The waters must have revived the royal gardener a little to allow him to press on through to Switzerland, and into Frankfurt, where he picked up his siblings along the way to reach his parents’ final resting place in Aschaffenburg. The local report eulogizes filial affection and prizes this stalwart small-town trait: “They [the Sesters] also went to the cemetery, where they honored their dear parents with tributes of childhood love.”

Penmed by an anonymous author, A. W. Sester’s obituary confirms the gardener’s degenerative health problems, and links them to his frequent trips to the various European centers of balneology:

A Turkish tobacco pipe that was bestowed upon him as an honor by a visiting Armenian was designed first and foremost to destroy him. Various signs alerted Sester to the danger, and he had the pipe extinguished. Yet he was nevertheless unable to avert his fate: a cup of coffee and later the ingestion of a type of candy called Glico by the Greeks were sufficient to fulfill their purpose—arsenic had been intermixed in these items in such quantity that despite medical attention and visits to various European spa towns, Sester’s lower extremities were afflicted by permanent paralysis. As a result, he was forced to ride a small horse in order to conduct his rounds in the royal gardens. The Sultan did not overlook this dastardly deed, which was motivated by envy. We know from Sester’s own mouth that the Sultan summoned a high-ranking official who had been generally suspected of committing the poisoning, who was then stripped of this honors, offices, and medals.

His predecessor, Ensle, also mentions poisoning attempts on his life. In the first instance, he was rushed out of the palace by Melling, and was treated in the artist’s summer residence in

101 Granville, xxxii.

102 Granville’s lists all the disorders for which the Bad Gastein waters work miracles, but stresses the fact that they were particularly good for the diseases of the nervous system (ibid., 329-330). “…Gastein baths, judiciously and sufficiently used, will not disappoint the patient. Universal debility, dependent on a derangement of the nervous system, without any apparent inward disease to account for it—depression of spirits and general languor of the constitution, from anxiety of mind—paralysis, in young as well as aged people, consequent on repeated rheumatism, gout, or apoplectic attacks, and such as is produced by irregularities of every sort—affectations of the spine— …these form the catalogue of disorders in which the Gastein water has evinced its marvelous power.”

103 “Ein Schönes Familienfest.”
Büyükdere by an old Armenian woman. The second time was when the Sultan asked him to attend to the garden of one his wives inside the Topkapi Palace, and her eunuch “handed [Ensle] a cup of coffee, along with a cloth that had a coat of arms stitched onto it.” Ensle continues, “What he intended by handing me these things…I am not sure, and I poured the coffee out onto the ground, instead of drinking it, for fear that it was tainted.”

The palace eunuch’s wrath may very well be a fabulist’s trope employed in foreign accounts, coupled with racist sentiment. Ensle contextualizes this animosity against him with the widespread xenophobia that erupted among the Ottoman domains against expatriates after Napoleon’s conquest of Egypt. It is unclear why and by whom Sester was targeted, but in both cases a foreigner employed in the court’s most intimate surroundings (for these two, palatial gardens that were used only by the Sultan and his family) attracted strong resentment.

Both Frankl and Sester’s obituary mention the gardener’s inability to attend to his work on foot, and that he used a donkey or a small wagon to survey the grounds. Frankl witnesses a “train” (Zug), possibly a horsecar, which Mahmud II imported from Europe with Sester’s recommendation. This vehicle could also have been none other than the commodious horse-drawn carriages called the Britschkas (or Britzsckas) that were used to shuttle visitors between spa towns before the mid-century arrival of the railways and even for overnight journeys across the Alps, where the versatile interiors could be turned into bedrooms.

The gardener must have experienced its comforts during his palliative quests and may have thought it best to install one

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104 Gräffer, 168.

105 Ibid.

106 Frankl, 179.

in the hilly garden he constructed for Mahmud, and later expanded for Abdülmecid. His home, a very short distance from his workplace, also made his physical handicap slightly more bearable. 

*La Turquie* announced Sester’s passing a day after he died from an ambiguous “*attaque d’apoplexie*” on December 17, 1866. This was an undifferentiated diagnosis given to all sudden deaths at that time. He was interred in a marble tomb in the catacombs of the Catholic Cathedral of St. Esprit in Pangaltı in 1867, and he shares a central aisle with the empire’s eminent dragoman families, consuls, and with Giuseppe Donizetti (fig. 3.15). This small, neoclassical church had served as the main ecclesiastical site for the city’s Catholics (often referred to as Latins), and was built by the Swiss architect Giuseppe Fossati in 1846. From its inception, the sultan’s gardener had donated stately sums to the upkeep of this church. There he also maintained a family chapel that was attended to by a chaplain, Nicholas Perpignani from the Aegean island of Tinos, who was summoned to Istanbul by the British admiralty to provide “spiritual services” to the British hospital in Tarabya (along the Bosphorus) during the Crimean war. The family chapel must have had special significance for Sester’s wife, because for a long time Catholic Armenians did not have their own churches, and had to use sites designated by the state for the Catholic Levantine communities.

Rosa was buried next to her spouse in 1896—Sester appears to have gotten the interment permissions during his lifetime to have it be a family tomb, with the help of the then-grand

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108 *La Turquie*, no. 273, 19 December 1866.


110 Sac. Ph. Victor Del Giorno, *Chroniques de La Basilique Cathédrale du Saint-Esprit*, 3 vols. (Ankara: 1983), vol. 1, 478. I owe the greatest gratitude to the effusive and generous Don Nicola Masedu for taking me down to the catacombs to visit Christian and Rosa, and for sharing the cathedral’s chronicles however meager they may have been.

111 *Chroniques*, vol. 1, 89-90.
vizier, and one of the preeminent Tanzimat bureaucrats, Mehmed Emin Âli Pasha (d. 1871). Cholera outbreaks, and often-refractory protocols of the Vatican made burial in prestigious catacombs, especially in foreign lands, difficult. Another indication that a lot of planning went into the tomb’s making is evidenced in its sculptural marble reliefs. These stand apart from their relatively more austere neighbors. A knight’s helmet, a stand-in for invulnerability and protection, and four swans, a motif representing grace, wisdom or harmony, furnish the prominent Baroque crest of the tomb (fig. 3.16). The eminent garden-director created it for his family: the knight for himself, and four swans, for his wife, and three children. The larger swan is perched on top of the knight as a devotional gesture towards Rosa’s role in the family. Behind the crest, there was once a stained glass depiction of Christ’s resurrection, noted for its beauty by the church’s chronicles. Below the crest, the tomb’s two roundels preserve the Victorian reliefs of the husband with his stately mustache and wife in her creased blouse, both bearing expressions of a hard-earned life. They face each other in the fashion of a marriage portrait under the flowering branches of a holly, the heraldic symbol of truth. They are festooned with the literal fruits of their service to the court: apricots, apples, figs, and poppies hang from garlands around the couple. The centralized placement of the poppies among the bouquet of fruit is intriguing. In this extremely autobiographical iconographic scheme, Sester may very well be alluding to the fact that he cultivated these opiates to relieve himself of the debilitating pain caused by arsenic.

Soon after his death, Sester’s post was taken up by his assistant Steffel, who had come along with him to Istanbul in 1835. Among scarce archival evidence, we come across Steffel’s

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112 Chroniques, vol. 3, 1378.

113 Ibid.
wife’s plea following his passing in 1870 to recover the amount promised to him from the imperial treasury for the construction of his Ortaköy residence that he had designed and built, in the vicinity again of the imperial gardens of Çırağan, which was deemed “too intrusive in its proximity to the palace” (Çerāğan bāģesine nezāreti var), and its second floor completely demolished.\footnote{BOA, HR. TO., 164/90.} A Hakkı Paşa had bestowed the site to Steffel (ḥadaik-i ṣāḥāne direktörü mōsyö Steffel) for his satisfactory work in “levelling and laying out” (tesviye ve tanzīm) the Kağithane garden and park—a word that appears in the document, referring to the segments of the riverside strip at the head of the Golden Horn reserved for public promenades.

From Sester’s to Steffel’s time, the personal relationship between the head-gardener and his royal patron appears to have turned ceremonious, the former’s proximity to his site and the sultan, therefore, curtailed. It is unclear whether or not the site that Steffel was granted was Sester’s former home, or the existing one allocated to the head-gardener’s assistant, but it was definitely in the vicinity of the square made famous by Steffel’s superior. We also know, however, that Steffel grew in his skills from the palace’s young tiller (sarāy ekincisi) to director under Sester’s close tutelage.\footnote{BOA, A.]MKT.MHM. 210/56.} In 1865, the Allgemeine Zeitung published a telegraphic dispatch that celebrated the “artistically gifted” (kunstsinnig) work of Obergärtner Steffel on the gardens and park —now an inseparable landscaping pair in every Ottoman imperial outdoor site, and corresponding documents—of Abdülabziz’s newly built Beylerbeyi Palace.\footnote{“Telegraphische Berichte: Türkei,” Allgemeine Zeitung, 5 April 1865.} The dispatch notes that Steffel achieved paradisiacal results under the supervision of the head-inspector “Chevalier von Sester,” whose many achievements had finally won him his noble accreditations, both a
“chevalier,” and a “von.”117 Anticipating Abdülaziz’s move from Dolmabahçe to Beylerbeyi, the news also reports that many yalıs were rented in the vicinity of the new palace for the court officials.

In Sester and Steffel’s experiences, under Abdülaziz, the Ortaköy Lustgarten they built for Mahmud and Abdülmeid as a refuge for quiet, philosophical contemplation increasingly became a site for the sultan’s harem. This is perhaps why the prospects of Steffel’s residence are deemed obtrusive. The closest observer of life in the imperial harem of that period, the preeminent female composer Leyla Saz (d. 1936), records her detailed recollections of the German duo’s Çırağan garden. Her memoirs carry an awareness of the garden’s different building stages; Mahmud II’s terraced backyard succeeded by Abdülmeid’s expansion into the hills beyond, the connection with the valides’ rural country retreat later converted by Abdülaziz into the neoclassical Mabeyn kiosk, and the site’s ultimate conversion into Abdülhamid’s sprawling garden-city, Yıldız.118 Her insights highlight the garden’s amenities for the women of the harem, objects of their precious outdoor entertainment. If for the preceding two sultans the site offered its appeal through varied vistas from different sectors of the gardens—what German garden treatises, as well as Frankl’s account, called “Räume”—for the women, its chief attractions were the experience of the artificial lakes connected by moving footbridges, shaded repose under monumental plane and fruit trees, greenhouses, exotic plants, and gazebos.119 It


119 Ibid., 36. Frankl, 179. Late-eighteenth-century German landscape architects saw their work as landscape artists. The created sections within a garden that provided individual, differentiated vistas, each called a room, much like a painterly vignette. The complete experience of the garden was, then, a group of experienced pictorial vistas. On the way that the German landscape philosopher-architects conceived of their overall design and the desired effect of strolling inside their sites, see Lee, The German “Mittleweg”, 59-112.
also seems from her account that before the now extant monumental bridge connecting Abdülaziz’Çırağan to the park was built to accommodate a street below for the public tram, the terraced garden was accessed first through stairs—the ruins of which remain to this day—and later through the bridge’s delicate first incarnation, visible in the abovementioned undated oil painting:

The land sloped behind the Palace, the garden was on a small terrace to which one had access by stairs placed in front of the gate. A vast courtyard full of big trees came before the actual garden and was always open, while the entrance to the garden was closed by a grill in order to keep the little girls from entering without surveillance. This grill was opened two times each week and then everybody could walk around freely under the vigilant eye of the kalfas… A big lake surrounded by layers of flowers and fruit trees had a little island in the middle and was shaded by ancient plain-trees. This was the main ornament of the garden. The island was connected to the garden by four turning bridges covered with lawns and which could be opened or swung to the side in such a way as to completely free the lake for rowboats.  

The Yıldız Park, or rather the gardens of the Mabeyin [sic], were connected to the garden of the old Çırağan Palace by a bridge enclosed with grills. This bridge crossed the street just like the present passage only with the difference that the street was far narrower in those days than it is now.  

Foreign accounts, tinged with Oriental fantasies of garden orgies—like the Crimean War memoirs of the Prussian legate’s chaplain to Constantinople Carl Nathanael Pischon—talk of Sester’s annoyance at the women’s disregard for his handiwork manifest by their indiscriminately plucking the newly planted flowers: “[T]he most precious and rare flowers were ripped asunder by these women and used as missiles; they writhed around in wild lust on the flower beds, and in one night the product of months of the most careful horticultural labor was thoroughly

120 Leyla Saz, The Imperial Harem, 30.

121 Ibid., 36.
devastated.” How Pischon represents the Ottoman harem’s outdoor hours stands in sharp contrast to the mid-century idyll that Leyla Saz reminisces about:

First, the little princes and the little princesses, sometimes even the Sultan himself, slowly crossed the bridge followed by their Great Kalfas and the girls of the service which were directly attached to them; then came all the other girls of the Serail with the exception of those who were on duty. They poured in like a torrent and spread throughout this immense park where they frolicked about freely, running from flower to flower like butterflies, climbing the trees, leaping and dashing about, and having no idea of the passage of time…All of these young people who had so freely dashed about inhaling fresh air for the whole day were now to be reintegrated into the Serail, a little sad as they passed the grilled bridge in small groups holding in their hands flowers and fruits gathered during their excursion and telling one another thousands of little unimportant stories which for them were the great events of that day.

After Sester and Steffel the post of the head-gardener and his assistant became a well-oiled system in the palace’s roster of employees. Similar to the way he took in German renegades after the Hungarian Revolution of 1848-49, Sester brought in a steady stream of his compatriot experts to expand his royal horticultural team most likely to be able to adequately service the expanded gardens of Çırağan under Abdülmecid. For a brief period, Fritz Wentzel became Sester’s secretary, after the head-gardener was introduced to him while Wentzel was convalescing from rheumatism at the German Hospital, the very institution that Sester had helped fund. Wentzel would later take up the position of head-gardener in the recently inaugurated German Consulate of Istanbul, after Abdülhamid granted the shoreline site that he once occupied as a prince in Tarabya to the unified German Reich.

122 Carl Nathanael von Pischon, *Die Einfluss des Islâm auf das häusliche, sociale und politische Leben seiner Bekenner: eine culturgeschichtliche Studie* (Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus, 1881), 33. Pischon also managed the German Hospital while in Istanbul during the War, and was in correspondence with Florence Nightingale.

123 Saz, *The Imperial Harem*, 37.


At this consular site, Wentzel employed a program of forestation that was similar to the one Sester undertook in the process of converting the barren hills of Çırağan into the grove-like park of Yıldız (fig. 3.17).\(^\text{126}\) His collaborator in this landscaping project in Tarabya was Eduard Petzold (d. 1891), who got his training in the erstwhile English landscape garden in Germany, the Park von Muskau of the influential aristocrat-landscapist Prince Hermann von Pückler Muskau.\(^\text{127}\) Among Sester’s students, Wentzel seems to have carried the tenor of his master the most, both in the way that he fashioned himself and his gardening practice. The young Wentzel, a childhood friend of the renowned pathologist Rudolf Virchow (d. 1902) who fought in the Crimean War, learned the combined arts of gardening and landscape design through experience and by accident under Sester’s close supervision. In his post-war Istanbul days, while convalescing from war wounds, he took care of Sester’s children and was initiated in the practice of the man who took him under his wing. Wentzel, too, chose to go native in his sartorial choices, appearing at the Düsseldorf botany exhibition wearing a fez, which he had to don while working in the Ottoman gardens. Like Sester, Wentzel was eager to orient his expatriate compatriots, looking to find gainful employment, “who would otherwise be lost in the colorful tumult of people and languages in Constantinople.”\(^\text{128}\) In the recollections of Árpád Mühle from Temesvár (now Timișoara, Romania), one of Sester’s renegade-trainees from Hungary who would become an important landscapist and rose expert, Wentzel appears as a monkish recluse, attending to his nursery of rare plants, a secluded verdant Ciceronian Tusculum to his intimates.

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\(^{128}\) Klausmeier and Pahl, 120.
An anonymous reporter of the weekly journal *Gartenwelt* would happen upon a few of Sester’s pupils including Wentzel in Istanbul in 1907, and find out about the legacy of their tutor, their professional lives in Istanbul, and the state of gardening in the Ottoman capital. In the same neighborhood where Sester’s residence was located, Wentzel and the reporter’s second German informant, an old German gardener J. D. H. Koch from Darmstadt, had opened nurseries, which served the ever-increasing gardening enthusiasts of the city. Koch ran a family business with his two sons, had a branch in Kağıthane, and responded to private commissions to design the parks of the capital’s grandees (fig. 3.18). The Levantine-Croat Jacques Pervititch’s impressive insurance maps from the first half of the twentieth century indicate that Koch’s large Ortaköy orchards at the bottom of the valley below the Jewish cemetery (grand jardin d’horticulture de Mr. Koch), where he kept his home and, according to *Gartenwelt*, “enjoyed a well-earned rest,” survived well into the 1920s (fig. 3.19). \(^{129}\)

Among the many foreign kalfas that joined Sester’s team along the way, Adam Schlerff of Frankfurt, who had entered into service as a foreman in 1857, would take the helm as the garden-director after Steffel and Wentzel (fig. 3.20). Like Sester before him, Schlerff would also be given a home in Ortaköy’s green valley, in the vicinity of the Armenian-Catholic church and the Greek cemetery, as well as Koch’s residence and nursery. \(^{130}\) For a long time the residential and devotional refuge for the city’s many minorities this neighborhood now also had to make room for the court’s foreign gardening experts. \(^{131}\) In 1882, in the early years of Abdülhamid’s

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\(^{130}\) BOA, Y. PRK. MYD. 2/39.

\(^{131}\) The eighteenth-century Armenian geographer İnciciyan leaves us with the best descriptions of the non-Muslim ethno-demographic composition of the neighborhoods of Beşiktaş and Ortaköy, alongside their associated religious
reign, Schlerff would receive the Mecidiye Order of the fourth degree as the head-gardener of the imperial gardens (ḥadāık-i ḥasṣa serbāğçivānī). The German horticultural journal, Gartenflora, dutifully reported on the news by calling him the Hofgartendirektor, and his assistant August Wienhold the Hofgärtner. Wienhold was also the principal caretaker of the greenhouses along with the Lombardian Romeo Scanziani in Abdülhamid’s Lustgarten, enclosed within the harem quarters. Schlerff’s son was also employed in the imperial gardens, first working in the greenhouses (ṣobacı), which were placed in front of the ceremonious apartments, the extension appended to the the Şale Kiosk, and later appointed to the gardens of the Maslak estate. Schlerff and Wienhold’s collaboration appears to have been going strong in 1901, when the German-Baltic reporter Bernard Stern interviewed various employees of the palace complex and left a thorough account of its different aspects. Each gardening assistant would eventually supervise a different segment of Yıldız’s garden, which was compartmentalized according to the main structure at that particular site, so the hierarchy between each of the head-gardeners and their kalfās became less pronounced than one between Sester and Steffel. For example, a kalfā appointed to the harem gardens of Yıldız, depending on his seniority and years of service, would

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132 BOA, L.DH. 848/68081.

133 “Personal-Nachrichten,” Gartenflora 48 (1899), 87.


135 BOA, Y. PRK. SGE. 10/36, and, Y. PRK. HH. 39/19.

be paid substantially more than another employee, who was designated head-gardener of the Mabeyn gardens.\textsuperscript{137}

Along with the growth in the size of the gardening corps, a new kind of professionalization began in its conduct and associated documentation. These foreigners and the men who worked under them would all begin to be overseen by an Ottoman bureaucrat who was assigned to keep systematic ledgers for all the gardening expenses and salaries, and present them directly to the imperial treasury. During Stern’s inquiries, a Rauf Bey was appointed to the task. Rauf Bey was joined by a site inspector named Reşid Paşa. Four years later, these two separate bureaucratic posts were combined under a single one, the superintendent of the imperial gardens (\textit{ḥadāık-i hāşsa-i şahāneleri nāţiri}), and was assigned to a high-ranking member of the scribal office, its vice-director İzzet Holo Paşa (d. 1924).\textsuperscript{138}

Schlerff’s Ottoman seal marks a register of gardeners employed in the imperial sites in 1883. This particular register seems only to list the two hundred and fifty two Muslim members of the troop, but perhaps the most intriguing aspect of the document is the fact that it itemizes each individual’s physical attributes, height, age, eye-color, and facial hair —whether he dons a mustache or beard—as well as the village, settlement, city, and province from which he hailed (fig. 3.21).\textsuperscript{139}

\textsuperscript{137} BOA, Y. PRK. HH. 39/19.

\textsuperscript{138} BOA, Y. PRK. SGE. 10/36.

\textsuperscript{139} This documentary practice is, of course, rooted in earlier defters registering janissary conscripts. Some examples from the sixteenth century include even more detailed physiognomic information, including moles and scars on a bostancı’s face; see İbrahim Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, \textit{Osmanlı Devleti Teşkilâtında Kapıkuşu Ocakları, vol. 1 Acemi Ocağı ve Yeniçeri Ocağı} (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1943), 16-17; an example from a 1569 book of records (mühimme defteri) about a specific acemi conscript from the district of Limni, we witness him being described as “tall, blond, eyes the color of the sky, brown eyebrows, a scar above his right eyebrow, and moles on his right ear and right hand,” 23 n. 1. At the same period that the nineteenth-century gardeners’ sicils were drawn up, Anatolian towns kept records of men on the move: individuals needed court approval to leave the districts under which they were registered at birth. These registers (designated as mürür tezkireleri) give physical descriptions
From the village of Kızara\textsuperscript{140} in the Safranbolu district of the province of Kastamonu

...tall, with hazel eyes, brown hair and a mustache...

Hüseyin Ağa son of Hasan

Age 40

Joined on 13 June 1880, salaried on 13 April 1884

From the village of Nikşiç\textsuperscript{141} in the province of Shkodër

...of middling stature, with hazel eyes and a sparse mustache...

Haşim Ağa bin Abdullah

Age 28

Joined on 9 December 1884, salaried on 9 December 1884

From the village of Bar in the province of Shkodër

(down to the length of the mustache) of individuals leaving for other places within the imperial domains identical to the gardeners' registers. A sample of these sicles belonging to the district of Kastamonu in the years 1836 and 1837 have been published; see Abdulkerim Abdulkadiroğlu, et. al., \textit{Kastamonu Jurnal Defteri (1252-1253/ 1836-1837)}, 2 vols. (Ankara: T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet Arşivleri Genel Müdürlüğü, 1998).

\textsuperscript{140} The birthplace of Cânboğlu Hüseyin Ağâ bin Hasan is in fact the village of Kızara in the district of Safranbolu, in the northern Anatolian province of Kastamonu. See Recep Karacakaya, Ismail Yücedağ, and Nazım Yılmaz, eds., \textit{Arşiv Belgelerinde Karabük (İstanbul and Karabük: Karabük Valiliği Kültür Yayınları, 2013)}, 193. However, this source lists the village as karye-i Kızara, in the kaza of Ulak, in an undated register of the annual tax revenues of villages in the region.

\textsuperscript{141} Haşim Ağâ bin ‘Abdullah was a native of Nikşiç, which at the time he was born was part of the Ottoman province of Işkodra (Shkodër). In the disastrous war of 1877-78, a few years before this register of palace gardeners was compiled, Nikşiç was lost to the Ottoman Empire, taken by the Montenegrin army, as was the Adriatic seaport of Bar, the home town of Haşim Ağâ's colleague Rüstem Ağâ bin Edhem. Most of the local Muslim inhabitants—Albanians, Bosniaks, and Turks—were either killed or forced to flee. The Ottoman provincial capital Işkodra (Shkodër) held out until 1913, when it too fell after a brutal seven-month siege by the Montenegrin and Serbian forces. Nikşiç and Bar are now part of Montenegro, while Shkodër is part of Albania. Sultan Abdülhamid II's fondness for surrounding himself with Muslim Albanians was not merely sentimental, but an embodiment of his worries about the shrinking frontiers of his empire.
of middling stature, with hazel eyes, brown hair and a mustache

Rüstem Ağa son of Edhem

Age 55

Joined on 24 February 1881, salaried on 24 February 1881

Their year of entry into service and date of their first salary were also jotted on the sides of their tags. The physiognomic detail in the registry reflects a pre-photographic practice of keeping employee identity cards, going back to early Ottoman times. The registry is also proof of a nineteenth-century imperial practice of recruiting gardeners from either the central Black Sea province of Kastamonu, or Shkodër in Albania’s northwest. If Abdülhamid’s deep trust in his Albanian bodyguards is any evidence, choosing the caretakers of his most immediate surroundings from Albania will not come as a surprise. However, the fact that more than half of the gardeners were selected from two specific districts of the empire is indicative of the continuation of an earlier recruitment pattern, one that was likely undertaken for the bostancı

142 BOA, HH. 17679.

corps that got folded into the gardening corps of the nineteenth century. Reinforcing the idea that a martial language was maintained for these employees, other ledgers list a “corporal” (onbaşı), who was appointed as a designated buffer between the kalfa, or head-gardener of the particular imperial garden or section of one, and the rest of the gardeners. Each squadron enlisted five to twenty men. They were supplied with rations of food, summer and winter uniforms, shoes, and haircuts, and their dormitory units were arranged according to their lands of origin, and associated with that, the type of food they cooked: “The Turks from Asia and Roumelia, Albanians, Montenegrins, Bosnians, and Greeks,” who were defined by the last imperial head-gardener as “shirkers” (embusqués), keeping side jobs or owning shops in the city. Members of Abdülhamid’s Albanian battalion (Prizren taburu), too, spent their free time working the land in the fields of Ortaköy, close to their assigned barracks. They were happy members of this diverse neighborhood’s culture of gardening that according to the recollections of one of these soldier-cum-gardener was the Yıldız’s principal produce hinterland.

The fact that a majority of these individuals were brought in to work in the imperial gardens in 1877 or soon after—immediately following Abdülhamid’s ascension to the throne—speaks to an effort to expand gardening activity in the imperial gardens in general, and Yıldız as its shining example, in particular. Another important indication that Abdülhamid was eager to attend to the crown’s green spaces instead of commissioning costly palatial structures appears in

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145 BOA, Y.PRK. MM. 1/36. Also, see Stern, 25.


147 Ibid.

the announcements of Adam Schlerff’s death in German and English horticultural journals of 1907, where the list of the late director’s achievements boasted of his superintendence of sixteen imperial gardens. Bernhard Stern notices Abdülhamid’s deep and abiding love of the natural world, and of greenery, and his penchant to decorate diplomatic banquets and court ceremonies with flowers and fruits, especially out-of-season ones, that were cultivated in his own lavish surroundings:

Fresh plants have to be available at all times, not least because of the colossal effort that is put into providing decorative flowers and plants for dinners and receptions that are hosted by the Sultan. The Sultan loves transforming the salons in which he receives guests or hosts a dinner into gardens full of the rarest plants and flowers, and he takes great pleasure when his guests admire the living decorations more than the dead luxury of the marble or the colorful sheen of the carpets.

d. A CHANGE OF HANDS IN THE FINAL YEARS OF THE CORPS

Through the insights that his two seasoned informants provide, Gartenwelt’s patriotic reporter laments the demise of the more than half a century long, industrious “German influence” (deutscher Fleiß) on the gardens and parks of Istanbul’s ruling elite. Charles Henry soon replaced the septuagenarians Schlerff and Wienhold in rank and file.

Henry was a French greenhouse expert who was initially brought to the imperial gardens to operate one that was built with a hot-water system in favor of the preexisting, inefficient ones heated by dry canalization. Gartenwelt’s reporter, disheartened by the German fall from grace in the garden arts, still admits to Henry’s “superior ability in rearing exemplary plant cultures in forcing houses” (ein ausgezeichneter Leiter der Treibereien und Kulturen) (fig. 3.22).

149 “Death of the Sultan’s Gardener,” in The Gardener’s Chronicle, February 16, 1907, 105. Also see, “Bilder als Aller Welt,” Die Woche 9, 2 February, 1907, 222. The latter publishes a photograph of Adam Schlerff in his Ottoman regalia.

150 Stern, 23.

Although the old Germans stayed on without a salary reduction they became *kalfas* under Henry, the new head-gardener (*Serbāḡçtīvān Mösyō Hanrī*). His French seal read, "*Jardinier en chef de S. M. I. le Sultan*." To better command more than three hundred gardeners in the final years of Abdülhamid’s reign, Henry was appointed two Ottoman scribes to keep the books, a *kāṭib* named Osman Şadi Efendi, and Mehmed Tahir Efendi bin Mustafa.

If there really was solidarity among garden laborers belonging to the same nationality, it is tempting to think that Henry preferred to work with Gustave Deroin, who was “responsible for carrying out the plans and drawings for changes that are to be made to royal gardens, as well as for arranging ornaments and decorations,” at the turn-of-the-century Ortaköy expansion of the palace around Sester’s old residence. Deroin was hired by the court in 1882, but had started his professional life as a horticulturalist in Istanbul in 1856, serving the obscure “*chez MM. Gabared et Karakiaya,*” as a “*chef des cultures,*” and later owning his own nursery on Büyükdere Road from which he supplied European-imported seeds and saplings of fruits such as wild pears, cherries, almonds, and plums, and mushrooms, for the consumption of the inhabitants of Yıldız (fig. 3.23). While employed by the court’s gardens presided over by Henry, Deroin would find his own classification as “a gardener without a specific placement inside Yıldız’s building-centered garden compartments” (*mevāḵī ḥāricinde ḥidmeti olan bāḡçivānlar*), possibly because

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152 BOA, Y. PRK. SGE. 11/54.
153 BOA, Y. PRK. HH. 39/19.
154 Stern, 25.
156 BOA, Y. PRK. HH. 16/63.
his expensive services were requested only on occasion, and he often acted as an agent for European horticultural products.\footnote{BOA, Y. PRK. HH. 39/19.}

The “blond, fez-donning, and sweetly affable,” Monsieur Henry, experienced the best and worst decade in Yıldız as its head-gardener.\footnote{Marcelle Tinayre, *Notes d'une voyageuse en Turquie: jours de bataille et de révolution; choses et gens de province; premiers jours d'un nouveau règne; la vie au harem* (Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1910), 286-291.} In the early years of the new century, the functions of the different sections of the palace’s outdoors were solidified, and their respective attendees in place. (Henry clarifies for us why Yıldız’s gardens are identified in the archival documents solely around different structures by saying, “contrary to [European gardens], which we regard as sites of rest and pleasure, the Orientals see them as annexes to buildings, hermetically enclosing them”).\footnote{Charles Henry, “Les Jardins,” 57. “Il ne faut pas considérer les jardins en Orient comme nous les considérons chez nous; a l'encontre des nôtres, qui sont regardés comme lieux de repos et d'agrément, ils ne sont, en réalité, que des annexes aux constructions hermétiquement closes, dans lesquelles se passe la vie des Orientaux; c'est ce qui explique la très petite quantité de beaux jardins que l'on voit dans ces pays.”} Under his jurisdiction, the imperial gardens saw the highest number of employees. And, although in retrospect he complained of their organizational incoherence, he was satisfied with the results of their work overall.\footnote{Ibid, 55.} Furthermore, a few years before Abdülhamid’s thirty-year reign came to a crashing end, and the Salonican army of the Committee of Union and Progress descended upon the site on 1909, he was asked to take a botanical expedition in the environs of Bursa to identity specimens for a royal botanical garden (*nebātāt bāgcesi*) in the capital, which shared a similar climate to its neighboring region across the Marmara Sea.\footnote{BOA, Y. PRK. SGE. 11/22.} It is unclear from the account he leaves behind whether or not this garden was intended solely for the palace; nevertheless it coincided conceptually with Abdülhamid’s
many didactic projects to educate his urban subjects in zoology, botany, and other natural sciences.

The account of Henry’s trip, available only in the Ottoman translation but still bearing his seal, is filled with descriptions of the different kinds of indigenous trees, shrubs, and flowering plant specimens that grew around Bursa’s Mount Olympos (Uludağ, then referred to as Keşiş Mountain where Henry locates another Yıldız Pavilion), Lake Uluabat (the gardener uses its ancient Greek name Apollonia) with its striking isthmus town of Gölyazı, the well-fortified Iznik, and the gardener’s favorite, the thermal springs of the mountainous regions of Çitli and Olyat close to İnegöl.¹⁶² He is struck by the destruction of forests in these regions, and warns his imperial audience of the “unrestrained [Balkan] refugee settlers with their axes” (muhācirler bilā-pervā bālīṭa čalmaḳṭan čekinmiyorlar) and the shepherds with their flocks that grazed on the saplings of oak trees.¹⁶³ In his medical knowledge, Henry thoroughly comes across as a man of the nineteenth century. He believes that miasmatic airs are a cause of malaria—a disease by that point proven to be mosquito-borne but perhaps not yet commonly accepted as such—which he reads in the yellowed faces of Iznik’s lakeshore inhabitants.¹⁶⁴ His description of the two thermal springs reads like a pristine Alpine landscape of cliffs, winding roads, deep valleys, pine and beech forests, invigorating waters and curative airs—lingering I am sure in his visual memories of Europe’s best sites, not unlike Sester—that he encourages the sultan “to consider transforming it into a spa-town, bedecked with thermal baths and hotels with ample potential to surpass its European counterparts” (sāye-i muvaффaḳiyet-vāye-i ḥaţret-i şehriyārīde mūkemmel bir ḫālīuckles

¹⁶² The Ottoman translation of Henry’s trip is provided in Sinan Çuluk, “Bahçivanbaşı Charles Henry’nin Bursa Çevresinde Araştırma Gezisi,” in Arşiv Dünyası Dergisi 7 (İstanbul: Türk Arşivciler Derneği, 2006): 43-45.

¹⁶³ BOA, Y. PRK. SGE. 11/22.

¹⁶⁴ BOA, Y. PRK. SGE. 11/22.
Henry’s entrepreneurial enthusiasm and managerial charge over the gardening corps is brought to an abrupt end, when a complete overhaul of Abdülhamid’s established court order inside Yıldız along with thousands of its employees and objects were first itemized by a commission and then disbanded to prepare for Mehmed V’s nominal rule under the revolutionary Committee of Union and Progress. During that transitional phase, when the coffers that financed the smooth running of this mammoth imperial complex were dwindling, Marcelle Tinayre, a beloved French novelist visited the ghostly, decaying grounds and was led on a tour by her countryman. In the gardens, Mme. Tinayre was struck by how quickly “real nature” was taking over its carefully manicured imitations: “The fittings of the greenhouses are rusting, water in the basins are stagnant, grass has started infesting the walkways, dead tree-branches block the thicket.” Palace functionaries were all cleared out, gardeners were on strike, because no one was paying them, and over two thousand lemon trees inside the orangery that needed to be brought out for the spring and summer were rotting indoors. However, soon enough Henry found fast and gainful employment in Cairo, managing the gardens of Egypt’s last khedive, Abbas Hilmi Paşa (d. 1944). He would sign his extensive review of the once grand gardens of Yıldız, which he published in the *Revue horticole* under “Ch. Henry, ex-jardinier en chef du Sultan, jardiner en chef de S. A. le Khédive, Palais du Koubbeh.” Henry had found himself working for the Ottoman elite’s biggest competition in aesthetic matters.

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165 BOA, Y. PRK. SGE. 11/22.

166 Tinayre, 290.

167 Ibid.
The khedive considered the Koubbeh Palace his “real home,” a sprawling site nestled around a bizarre Italo-Mediterranean palazzo outside of Cairo with agricultural facilities, schools, stud farms, brick kilns, and the economically pertinent, extremely lucrative cotton plantations (fig. 3.24). Among the many lavish khedivial palaces in and around Cairo, this place with its vast territories was where he was better able to fashion himself, like his nineteenth-century peers including Abdülhamid, as a “gentleman farmer.”\(^{169}\) He had started completely remodelling the gardens surrounding the palace, when, in 1905, he received the French-American reporter Amédée Baillot de Guerville for an interview. Their interaction would stretch over a few days and Abbas Hilmi would take the reporter to inspect his grand estate on foot, horseback, and by boat, only after unrolling “a large colored plan of his property, on which he showed [the reporter] the tour we were to take together.”\(^{170}\) At the start of the tour, Guerville notices “that the garden was in a state of confusion, huge ditches, heaps of stones and a hundred or so men busy with picks and shovels.”\(^{171}\) To which the khedive responds by boasting about his hiring of the “greatest master of modern gardening,” French landscape architect, Édouard-François André (d. 1911) to refashion his leisure grounds. The head-gardener of the city of Paris, André was also an accomplished botanical explorer in the Humboldtian tradition, who had traveled extensively in Equatorial America to collect rare specimens, and a practitioner with immense global renown and reach, who laid out private and public parks from Uruguay to Russia, and now Egypt.\(^{172}\) Also a scientist, André edited *Revue Horticole*, to which Henry

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\(^{168}\) Henry, “*Les Jardins*,” 58.


\(^{170}\) Ibid., 116.

\(^{171}\) Ibid., 117.

\(^{172}\) Also a scientist, André edited *Revue Horticole*, to which Henry
contributed articles. They were likely in correspondence, which facilitated the gardener’s placement in the Koubbeh project André had undertaken. Henry disappears from all records at the onset of the First World War. Later the British deposed his patron and installed a Sultanate in Egypt. Abbas Hilmi, who ended up having to side with the Ottomans during the War, had to spend his later years in exile in Switzerland. Both Yıldız after Abdülhamid and Koubbeh after Abbas Hilmi quickly began to serve their new inhabitants under new regimes, the former site with considerably less pomp than the latter, which became the Egyptian Kings’ favorite residence throughout the twentieth century.

CONCLUSION
In brief, the legacy that these landscapists cast during their lifetime as foreign garden experts over Istanbul’s landowners incited a frenzied bourgeois interest and competition in botany, horticulture, and their many accessories. Among the Ottomans garden arts became an almost academic preoccupation, and therefore, continued to provide employment to some of these foreign expatriate experts as well as their trained personnel. If some of the Germans remained in the city as successful nursery owners, Albanian and Black Sea migrants of the Ottoman imperial gardens dominated the gardening profession in the city’s many market gardens. Throughout the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, affluent Ottomans presided over the delicate contents of their own greenhouses, collected gardening books for their private libraries, imported rare seeds

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172 For a concise overview of André professional life, see Victoria Padilla, “Édouard Francois André: Explorer, Botanist, Gardener, City Planner and Landscape Designer,” in Pacific Horticulture 45 (1984): 3-7. Among many of André’s own travel accounts, as well as botanical and horticultural publications, the most prominent is his treatise on garden designs; see Édouard François André, L’art des jardins: traité général de la composition des parcs et jardins (Paris: G. Masson, 1879).

173 In an article on how he cultivated a flowering yucca in Koubbeh’s park, Henry talks about André’s introduction of these plants in the gardens six years prior to his taking up the post. Charles Henry, “Dasylirion Glaucophyllum,” in Revue horticole, v. 83, 1911, 87.
from around the world, converted their overgrown groves into picturesque parks, and dotted them with ambitious rockery and miniature pavilions.\textsuperscript{174} Although, this hobby had become a competitive trend, each of these sites reflected the patron’s discretionary taste, which played an immensely important role in the variegated architectural profile of the city, as well as its designer’s training and creative prowess. Neither one ended up looking like the other.

Ultimately, however, Yıldız, first as the grove and gardens of the shoreline palace of Çırağan, its later transformations under Abdülmecid and Abdülaziz, and final incarnation as the last Ottoman imperial palace complex, remained at the center stage of the city’s overall fascination with the picturesque and a rediscovery of the Bosphorus’s topography under a new light that would result in their play on novel, experimental and, ultimately, refreshingly hybrid residential typologies.

A one-of-a-kind publication titled \textit{Rehber-i Umûr-i Beytiyye: Eve müte\textsuperscript{c}allik bilcümle umûru\textsuperscript{n} rehberidir} (A Guide to Household Matters: This is a guide to all matters related to the home) by Mehmed İzzet, a member of the palace’s translation office, beautifully illustrates the trickle-down effect of consumption patterns from Yıldız’s inhabitants to the capital’s city-dwellers. Inspired by North American and European practical advice publications on home economics, the palace bureaucrat-cum-author intends to provide Ottoman families with information from recipes, basic pharmacology and medical triage to gardening and home-building, the second of the three-volumes tellingly distributed by the printing press of the Women’s Journal (\textit{Hânımlara Mahşûş \Gazete}). Even though the structure of the guide may have

\textsuperscript{174} I thank Edhem Eldem for his suggestion of interpreting this intriguingly widespread consumer competition in terms of a burgeoning bourgeois culture in the Ottoman capital, and generously sharing his unpublished essay, “[A Quest for] The Bourgeoisie of Istanbul: Identities, Roles, and Conflicts.” The kernel of the following chapter is a preliminary paper I presented on the garden-related consumption of Abdülahmid II’s bureaucrats in a panel on taste organized by Adam Mestyan and Toufoul Abou-Hodeib; Deniz Türker, “Ephemeral Architecture in the Ottoman Capital,” (the Annual Conference of Middle East Studies Association (MESA), New Orleans, Louisiana, October 10-13, 2013).
followed European practical household management guides, Mehmed İzzet deliberately uses specific examples from Istanbul to illustrate his entries. One of these, the renowned local examples for his entry on the “waterfall” (çägliyän), directly relates to horticultural competition among Istanbul’s elite. With his entry Mehmed İzzet implies that his readers would instantly recognize the sites he enumerates alongside their owners, while pointing to a landscaping obsession to imitate nature, and the niche-jobs that emerged through this popular interest:

In the gardens of our city, beautiful waterfalls imitating a natural cascade [‘ädetä ṭabī‘ī bir kāškād taklidi] are constructed next to central pools, or, against a wall in a corner of the garden. Moreover, in our city there are individuals called cascade-builders [kāškādler], who have made this their sole occupation and craft.

In Istanbul [Derse’a‘ādet] mostly in large mansions [konāk] and some homes [ev] there are waterfalls both big and small. Especially the waterfall in the Kuruçeşme waterfront mansion [yālı] of the late Abdullah Efendi, the head of calligraphers [re‘isä’i-ḥaṭṭätin], and the ornamental fountain in the shape of a ruin [selsebil ḥarābesi] from which the water drops down from fifty meters in the Çengellköy home of the late Selim Paşa, a high-ranking member of the artillery, are considered to be among the most delightful works of this art [enāfis aşär-i šanä‘iyye].

The origins and nationalities of these specialized landscapists such as the cascade-builders to whom Mehmed İzzet refers in passing are not knowable. However, the proto-nationalist rumblings that we witness at the turn of the nineteenth century with respect to the empire’s cultural agents—such as the architects not being “Ottoman,” “Turkish,” or “Muslim,” but being made up of religious minorities, Levantines, or foreign expatriates easily swayed by European trends—seem to have permeated into the discourse on landscape design. Cevad Rüştü (d. 1939), an agriculture expert, who wrote prolifically on the history of a native garden culture during the Turkish War of Independence, laments the fact that the German and French nursery owners had

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175 On Abdülhamid II’s court appointed head-calligrapher and examples of his work, see M. Uğur Derman, Letters in Gold: Ottoman Calligraphy in the Sakıp Sabancı Collection, Istanbul (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1998), 128.

176 I am grateful to Yavuz Sezer for lending me his copy of this incredibly quirkily and informative text on Ottoman city life at the turn of the twentieth century; Mehmed İzzet, Rehber-i Umûr-i Beytiyye: Eve müte‘allik bilêcümlê Umûruñ Rehberidir, vol. 3 (Dersa’a‘ādet: Mahmûd Bey Matba‘äsü, 1327 [1909]). The first volume was published in 1901 by the printing press of the newspaper, İkdâm, the second was published in 1902, and the third in 1909.
blunted the traditional tastes of their local clients and that the “Turkish” gardening heritage was long lost.177 According to the incensed author, the Koch brothers and Gustave Deroin were promoting their skills as landscape-engineers only to sustain a demand for expensive imported, regionally inappropriate seeds. It was high time, Cevad Rüştü argued, to set up agricultural and horticultural institutions, closely study past practices such as the competition to produce rare flower specimens, and shed all foreign-inspired artifice. Although atavistic impulses and burgeoning xenophobic sentiment were serious and, in part, inevitable in the aftermath of the war and collapse of the empire, the publications that attained widespread popularity were the ones incredibly nostalgic of a past where gardens of waterfront mansions and townhouses were as central to the narrative as the people inhabiting them.178

177 All of Cevad Rüştü’s articles have been compiled under a single publication; see N. Hikmet Polat, ed., Türk Çiçek ve Ziraat Kültürü Üzerine Cevat Rüştü’den Bir Güldeste (Istanbul: Kitabevi, 2001, 332. His mention of the Kochs and Deroin are in the article titled “Umumî ve Hususî Bahçelerimiz” (Our Private and Public Gardens).

178 The most prominent of these elegiac memoir genres all of which initially appeared as newspaper serials are Abdülhak Şinasi Hisar, Boğaziçi Mehtaplari (Istanbul: Hilmi Kitapevi, 1942); Abdülhak Şinasi Hisar, Boğaziçi Yalıları; Geçmiş Zaman Köşkleri (Istanbul: Varlık, 1968); Semih Mümtez, Tarihimize Hâyal Olmuş Hakikatler (Istanbul: Çığiraçan, 1948); and, Münevver Ayaşlı, Dersaadet (Istanbul: Bedir Yayınevi, 1993).
IV.

The Architecture of Yıldız Mountain: Pre-fabs, Chalets, and Home-Making in Istanbul

Neither sources from the nineteenth century nor contemporary studies reveal much about Yıldız’s Alpine appearance, especially after it was converted into a walled palatial complex under Abdülhamid II. Nonetheless, the site’s topographic designation, which is recorded as a mountain (tüğ) in court registers from the first half of the nineteenth century onwards, factored greatly in its later conceptualization as a hilltop palace. Typological choices made during the site’s architectural transformations from hilltop retreat to garden palace were attuned to its topography. Although very little is known of the structures that constituted the Yıldız estate when it served as the summer retreat of the valide in the early 1800s, Istanbul’s upland imperial residences of that period were designed as pastoral hamlets to complement their rural, woodland settings. For instance, the French poet Alphonse de Lamartine (d. 1869), who had aspirations to settle in İzmir and manage a farm, was most taken by Abdülmecid’s small hermitage in Ihlamur’s verdant glen, which he likened to a Swiss valley.

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1 Surprisingly, only a few scholars mention the prevalent chalet-aesthetic of Yıldız. For a discussion of Raimondo D’Aronco’s chalet-esque contributions to Yıldız, see Diana Barillari and Ezio Godoli, Istanbul 1900, Art Nouveau Architecture and Interiors (New York: Rizzoli, 1996), 70. A study of the summer residences of European embassies that followed the chalet aesthetic in Istanbul pinpoints the source of influence as Abdülhamid’s predilection for this typology. See Paolo Girardelli, “Power or Leisure? Remarks on the architecture of the European summer embassies on the Bosphorus Shore,” in New Perspectives on Turkey, no. 50 (2013), 42. A prolific nineteenth-century Armenian journalist and linguist, Diran Kélékian, contributed a scorching description of Abdülhamid’s life inside the palace to European readership, in which he depicted the palace’s chalets as the sultan’s individual harem, each structure given to one of his wives: “He [Abdülhamid] possesses fifty beds in the private apartments of his legitimate wives, in the imperial gynceum, in the chalets of the park.” Diran Kélékian, “Life at Yıldız,” The Contemporary Review, vol. LXX (December, 1896), 784-792.

2 Alphonse de Lamartine, Le nouveau voyage en Orient (Paris: Administration, 1851-53), 78. For Lamartine’s ill-fated farm in İzmir, for which he had received a concession from Sultan Abdülmecid, see Ahmed Refiğ. Lâmârtîn: Türkiyeye muhâceret карârî, İzmirdeki çiftliği, 1849-1853. İstanbıl: Orhâniye Maṭba‘ası, 1925.
The official practice of the Ottoman court of continuing to use the original designations of its buildings—even after the structures themselves were replaced by new ones—suggests to us that at the very least a light, wooden kiosk made up of twigs (Çit Köşkü) was one of the Yıldız estate’s dependencies (figs. 4.1–4.2). An early member of Abdülhamid’s translation office, who would have experienced Yıldız before it was transformed into a palace complex, refers to this structure as “rustic” (rustaï) and likens it to a gossamer birdcage among lofty trees and delightful meadows. To a French diplomat, visiting the site at around the same time, the estate’s main residential structure resembled a “country home” (maison du champagne), elegant and restrained in its luxury.

Christian Sester’s landscaping project on the “mountains of Çırağan” (Çerāğān taşālārī) and the attempts of the queen mothers at irrigating their arid, rocky soil in order to transform the property into gardens (taşū ʻustū bāğ oldū), heralded a particular kind of building aesthetic under Abdülhamid’s patronage. Soon after his relocation from Dolmabahçe Palace to Yıldız’s hills, the sultan found its extant masonry buildings to be as humid and airless as their statelier shoreline neighbor. Taking his cue from Yıldız’s precipitous geography, its successful forestation under his immediate predecessors, and the prevalent medical sentiment that advocated for the salubrity

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3 Örikağasızade Hasan Surri, Sultan Abdülhamit Devri Haturlari ve Saray İdaresi, 186–187. Hasan Surri laments Abdülhamid’s conversion of this ephemeral birdcage of a kiosk into the one-story masonry pavilion with a pronounced, heavily corbelled cornice. According to Hasan Surri, in its later stone incarnation, this building was used for intimate diplomatic gatherings between the sultan and visiting diplomats after the Friday-Prayer ceremonies. It also contained a map room where the Hamidian war commissions would meet. Overall, however, it was a space that served as a transitional unit between the sultan’s private quarters and the official, public courtyard of the Mabeyn. It had a door that opened into the palace’s harem quarters. Precisely due to its interstitial position between the Mabeyn and the sultan’s private domain, commentaries on Koranic verses (hüzūr dersleri) would be delivered here in the format of a meclis for eight days during the holy month of Ramadan, attended by Abdülhamid, the highest functionaries of his Mabeyn, cabinet members, his sons and sons-in-law. See Tahsin Paşa’nın Yıldız Haturları, 177–178. For the eighteenth-century implementation of these intimate gatherings at the court of Mustafa III (r. 1757-1774), see Madeline Zilfi, “A Medrese for the Palace: Ottoman Dynastic Legitimation in the Eighteenth Century,” Journal of the American Oriental Society, vol. 113, no. 2 (April-June, 1993): 184-191.

4 Charles de Möuy, Lettres du Bosphore: Bucharest, Constantinople, Athènes (Paris: E. Plon et Cie, 1879), 250. De Möuy identifies this building as Abdülaziz’s favorite retreat. He is perhaps referring to the neoclassical structure that would later serve as Abdülhamid’s Mabeyn offices.
at higher altitudes, Abdülhamid started to construct a multitude of wooden residential structures with pitched roofs, irregular plans, and intricate fretwork. These buildings reflected the Ottoman take on a pervading global taste for the “cottage style.” From European spa-towns and sanatoria to the Himalayan hill-stations of the British Raj in India, the country cottage, due to its formal and stylistic versatility, had become the structure of choice especially for affluent highland sanctuaries. As an imperial estate, Yıldız functioned as a summer retreat (sayfiye) for members of the Ottoman court, but the architectural vocabulary of its hilltop siting was only definitively established during the reign of Abdülhamid.

a. ABDÜLHAMID II, WOODWORK, AND A TASTE FOR TIMBER CONSTRUCTION

Official palace documents and captions included in the Hamidian photograph albums often acknowledge these structures’ source of origin. They are referred to as chalets (phonetically recorded as şâle) or Swiss kiosks (İsviçre kaşrî) (fig. 4.3). While some of these commissions imitated chalets overtly, others were constructed to look like their close (and often interchangeably used) typological relatives: the Victorian cottages and suburban villas, which were popularized by the Scottish landscapist John Claudius Loudon (d. 1843) in his numerous publications such as A Treatise on Forming, Improving, and Managing Country Residences (1806), and An Encyclopedia of Cottage, Farm, and Villa Architecture and Furniture (1836).

5 For a discussion of how medical knowledge on curative airs versus miasmas was popularized and mobilized in transforming sanatoria into popular tourist destinations, see Alison Frank Johnson, “The Air Cure Town: Commodifying Mountain Air in Alpine Central Europe,” in Central European History 44, no. 2 (2012): 185-207.

6 For a discussion of the eclectic, country/Alpine domestic architecture of Simla (Shimla), which served as the summer capital of the British Raj, see Dane Kennedy, The Magic Mountains: Hill Stations and the British Raj (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 3, 105, and 163.

7 Abdülaçiz frequented the site during the hot summer months with his mother. A defter from his time details the cost of the Yıldız Kiosk’s furnishings before Pertevniyal Valide Sultan’s arrival and refers to the site as a summer residence (sayfiye); BOA, HH.d.12570.
These commercial publications fashioned the persona of the nineteenth-century gentleman farmer, who was advised to balance his life in the industrial city with studious work and contemplative rest in nature. Diverse residential specimens presented in these lengthy, prescriptive volumes were suitable for all pockets.

As one of the earliest “lifestyle” publications, these volumes propounded comfortable suburban living, and quickly transformed their sizable readership of small to large estate owners into amateur architects and landscape designers. The villas and their dependencies that were reproduced in them were inspired by the notion of a cozy, scaled-down picturesque: the structures were always surrounded by irregular terrains while their internal configurations, intimately domestic, accommodated the individual needs of the household members. They were playfully asymmetrical in their massing and easily customizable in the placement of their apertures, roofs, balconies, verandas, oversized towers, and chimneys. Their particular styles— noted in these publications as a building’s “expression,” rendition of the owner’s taste on its exteriors—were defined by their architectural projections (e.g. French Mansard roofs, Swiss gables, Italianate towers) and their various revivalist cladding (e.g., Gothic moldings, Tudor beams, Grecian columns). For Loudon, Gothic features prevailed among a wide array of historicist styles in domestic architecture at a time when Gothic was deemed most indigenous to English architecture and was revived for most of the civic and ecclesiastical monuments of the Victorian era.  

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8 Professor David Roxburgh brought Gustave Flaubert’s wonderful satirical work on the bourgeois fad in estate building to my attention: Gustave Flaubert, Bouvard et Pécuchet. Œuvre posthume (Paris: A. Lemerre, 1881). As soon as one of the two protagonists, both middling Parisian clerks, inherits a fortune, he and his companion retreat into the countryside to live off of their land as gentlemen-farmers, and tragically experiment with ideas and products of the nineteenth century, only to return to their menial desk jobs.

Abdülhamid’s Yıldız library collection evinces a preference for the publications of Victor Petit (d. 1874), Loudon’s French counterpart. Petit was an archaeologist and restorer of medieval French architecture, whose textless, but beautifully illustrated works extended the appeal of country living in general, and the chalet aesthetic in particular, to a similarly wide ranging Francophile readership of different social strata. The idiosyncratic way in which the Ottoman imperial librarian catalogued Petit’s titles in Ottoman Turkish reflects how the court, its patrons, builders, and craftsmen, prioritized the contents of these volumes. The Ottoman cataloguer did not translate the titles verbatim, but instead created his own versions by providing descriptions of their illustrations. His classification system enabled the user to quickly consult the model for a building he was planning to construct. For instance, what must have been Petit’s *Habitations champêtres; recueil de maisons, villas, châtelets, pavillons, kiosques, parcs et jardins* of 1848 was listed as “designs for kiosks, country homes, chalets, pavilions, gardens, arbors, and orangeries in different architectural styles” (*Her şarz miʿmarīde köşk, köy ebniyesi, şale, pavyon, bağçe, ƙemeriye, limonluķ resimleri*). The architectural catchwords that the Ottoman court was most interested in indexing inside these compilations of “Viṣṭor Pōtī” were “models and plans for rural homes” (*köy ebniyesi modeli ve planlari*), “farms” (*çiftlik*), “chalets in the French, German and Swiss styles” (*Fransa, İngiltere ve İsviçrekâri şale*) and their complementary garden accessories such as a “waterfall,” “cascade,” or “rockery” (*kaskad*), “pool” (*ḥavuz*), “arbors” (*kameriye*), “aviary” (*kuşluķ*), and “orangery” (*limonluķ*). Throughout the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, versions of these structures and their decorative appendages were

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10 After Abdülhamid II’s abdication in 1909, a commission that was put together by his successor Mehmed V would itemize Yıldız’s entire object, furniture, and book collections. The *defters* that catalogued the books are an invaluable resource in understanding how this sizable collection was grouped according to genre as well as how the foreign titles were translated. For Petit’s titles more specifically and the architecture and landscape design related volumes, I have consulted the catalogue registered under BOA, Y. EE. d. 400.
assembled in the “most beautiful and airy” (Yıldız Sarayı’nın en güzel ve en havadar mevkii) spots of the palace grounds in varying sizes and for diverse purposes.  

To some visitors of the palace, Abdülhamid’s architectural choices appeared frivolous, insubstantial, or downright ugly: “shacks” (barracche) an Italian journalist would observe. On the contrary, however, the sultan was deliberate in his selection of this pliable domestic typology, which stood somewhere between the rustic Alpine chalet and the eclectic country cottage. His architectural penchant for this type of building stemmed, in part, from artisanal hobbies that he cultivated in his princely years. He was a skilled carpenter, who produced intricate pieces of furniture from bookcases to cabinets that resembled small architectural objects. In order to continue practicing his craft (and also to answer the palatial complex’s need for in-house repairs), he installed a carpentry atelier overlooking the palace’s harem gardens. And, during his exile in Thessaloniki after his deposition in 1909, he would request his carpentry tools to be brought over from Yıldız. The trademarks of his virtuosity as a craftsman were carvings of architectural fragments onto pieces of neo-Mamluk and Alhambresque furniture that he himself built, all adorned with tiers of cupolas, crenellations, niches, pilasters, reliefs, and columns (fig. 4.4). His affinity with wood, its properties and capacity to render movement and

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11 Ayşe Osmanoğlu, 103.

12 Giuseppe Antonio Borgese, Autunno di Constantinopoli (Milano: F.lli Treves, 1929), 73.

13 Although the location of his palace carpentry atelier is still unidentified, with differing opinions as to its whereabouts, it appears that the palace had multiple carpentry-related facilities of various sizes. A photograph from the Yıldız Albums shows a large gallery with workbenches and employees, while an architectural section of a greenhouse in İÜMK depicts how this facility was fitted with sawmills to be operated as a smaller atelier, catalogued under 96601. See, Fuat Ezgü, Yıldız Sarayı Tarihişesi, 10.

14 BOA, BEO. 3624/271784, dated 21 February 1912.

15 Abdülhamid II appears to have inherited his interest in woodworking from his father, Abdülmecid, and learned the skill from his father’s instructor, Halil Efendi. The carpentry tools of the two sultans bore the insignia of this master. According to his daughter, Abdülhamid liked to work in wood and mother-of-pearl inlay, and was skilled enough to produce scenes of “country-life” in wood intarsia as well as intricate miniature furniture. We are told that he gifted
descriptiveness onto facades, must have played a part in his penchant for these light residential structures that displayed their craftsmanship of their making through elaborate carpentry work. With such ornamental detailing, these buildings were legible to him, ones that he himself could easily construct.

Abdülhamid was also not too fastidious about limiting the use of this typology to residential buildings. Often, the sections of the palace where these structures were used most conspicuously were also the ones that were occupied by government officials closest to the sultan. In fact, his building commissions often served as an affront to the monumental Neoclassicism of the Azizian Mabeyn. For example, Abdülhamid would intentionally crowd the courtyard of the Mabeyn with two parallel pavilions in the form of unusually attenuated chalets: one for the office of the second scribe (the now non-extant Kâtib-i sâni Dâ’iresi, built solely for the sultan’s right-hand man and director of his prized Hejaz railways project, İzzet Holo Paşa), and the other for his aides-de-camp (an extant structure built by D’Aronco) (figs.

16 Although this structure was built to serve as a summer residence for Abdülaziz and had the central-sofa layout of Ottoman domestic architecture, once Abdülhamid moved his court to Yıldız, it was expanded and converted into the main governmental body of the palace. For renderings and structural constituents of the Hamidian Mabeyn, see Eldem, Köşkler ve Kasılar 1, 444-447; and, Selda Kılıçoğlu, “Yıldız Sarayı Büyük Mabeyn Köşkü Oda-i Ali Restorasyonu,” Master’s thesis, Yıldız Teknik Üniversitesi, 1984. For an in-depth, contextual assessment of how Abdülhamid subsumed the members and Tanzimat institutions under one roof in the Mabeyn and turned it into the empire’s “most important bureaucratic agency,” see Carter V. Findley, Bureaucratic Reform in the Ottoman Empire: The Sublime Porte, 1789-1922 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 229-290.

17 In many of the accounts of Abdülhamid’s ‘camarilla’, the Damascene İzzet Holo Paşa (at times referred to as Arap İzzet Paşa) bears a level of infamy due in large part to his closeness to the sultan. His centrality among the palace functionaries is evidenced by the fact that Abdülhamid commissioned a special office building for him instead of designating a room for him in the crowded Mabeyn, where the palace’s other scribes, including the head-scribe, were located. Although this office building of the second scribe has not survived, a photograph of the structure depicts its likeness to its neighboring one, the offices of the aides-de-camp, as well as Abdülhamid’s personal study inside the Harem quarters. The latter two buildings were built by D’Aronco, which makes the Italian architect the likeliest author of İzzet Paşa’s study. Serialized memoirs that came in the wake of Abdülhamid’s dethronement often dedicated entire chapters to this much-resented personality. See, Örikâgasızâde Hasan Sırrı, Sultan Abdülhamit Devri Hatıraları, 143-144; and Tahsin Paşa’nın Yıldız Hatıraları, 184-188. For a German
4.5–4.6). These two gallery-like structures, simple in their plans but delicately embellished in their decoration, not unlike exhibition pavilions, bore repetitive sequences of dormer windows that were framed by lacy timber fretwork, each demarcating an apartment unit assigned to a member or group of palace functionaries holding a governmental or palatial office. Aware of Abdülhamid’s crowding of the Mabeyn courtyard with his preferred buildings, Mehmed V asked his scribe to write a petition for the removal of these “lousy timber offices from the square” (ahşaptan kötü kötü daireler). İzzet Paşa’s office was quickly removed, in part to symbolically expunge his maligned political authority from Mehmed V’s new rule.19

Under Abdülhamid’s patronage, not only a building’s form but also its ornamental features continued to highlight the Ottoman courtly decorum among its occupants.20 The building assigned to İzzet Holo Paşa was topped with pronounced gable crowns, and displayed square wood panels of art nouveau floral carving between each of the second-story windows below the roofline.21 Its rich ornamentation echoed the Paşa’s authority over the members of the aides-de-camp, whose building was a considerably more subdued version. D’Aronco quoted these square, florid ornamental panels in the exterior decoration of the small Mabeyn (Küçük Mabeyn) that functioned as Abdülhamid’s private study and the palace secretariat in the

account of this figure’s place in the palace hierarchy, which refers to him as der Vice-Sultan, see Bernhard Stern, Abdul Hamid II, 131-140.

18 For a discussion and examples of D’Aronco’s early studies for this building and how he derived inspiration from simple gallery-like World Exhibition structures, see Barillari and Godoli, Istanbul 1900, 72-75.


20 Of course the idea that palace hierarchies were reflected in architectural decorum was not new to nineteenth-century Ottoman patrons and architects but was a culturally-ingrained sensibility best exemplified in the incredibly nuanced building practice of the sixteenth-century court architect Sinan for his varied elite clientele, see Gülru Necipoğlu, The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 71-124.

transitional zone between his private quarters and the Mabeyn courtyard described in the introductory chapter (fig. 4.7). Through these two structures, the Italian architect sustained the continuum of domestic scale, largely wooden material, and expressive ornamentation that Abdülhamid had sought in his palace commissions. But the architect also calibrated the nature and hierarchy of relations between the sultan and his favored office holders.

Reinforced by period photographs of Yıldız as well as the Friday ceremonies they foregrounded, the Mabeyn and the Hamidiye Mosque jointly acted as the de facto face of the palace to the outside world. However, it was the lighter, smaller pavilions inside this governmental courtyard that best defined Abdülhamid’s personal taste. In their attenuated forms, the offices of the second scribe and that of the aides-de-camp sat on a leveled platform on the ridge of the hill and ran along the gradient of the site’s topography. Placed between the busy governmental court and the idyllic pleasure gardens of the harem, they formed a fluid wall dividing the public part of the palace from its private zones. The siting of the pavilion for the aides-de-camp as a “go-between” was especially well matched to the official role of its inhabitants, whose principal task was to carry imperial decrees between Abdülhamid’s personal quarters and the scribal offices located in the Mabeyn courtyard. These two pavilions also contained private sleeping quarters for the aides on guard duty; therefore, the structures’ homelike scale and ornamental schema were deliberately chosen to accommodate the dual purpose of workspace and lodgings.

If the sultan meant to convey an architectural connection between his private workspace (D’Aronco’s small Mabeyn) and those of his closest officers through the flexible typology of the chalet, he sought a similar formal and functional unity between his private residential quarters (the Ḫuṣūṣī Dā’ire built by the sultan’s favorite ḵalfā Vasilaki and the members of the palace’s
carpentry atelier) and the Şale Kiosk. These two buildings were built around the same time and were meant to be identified as a unit especially when the sultan hosted important guests. His residential quarters, a Victorian villa with pitched roofs and balconies, were completed soon after the birth of his daughter Ayşe in 1887, while the first version of the Şale—listed as the old Şale Kiosk in the registers of the Privy Purse—appears slightly earlier, around 1879. As soon as these two imperial lodgings were completed, period photographs recorded their intentional formal dialogue: the Victorian Gothic roofs of Abdülhamid’s residence blended into the broad eaves of the Şale. One of these photographs, shot by the Swedish-expatriate photographer Guillaume Berggren (d.1920) and reproduced in the widely read French journal L’Illustration in 1889, best illustrates the typological transformations that Abdülhamid undertook inside his palace grounds (fig. 4.8). The photographer’s chosen viewpoint in Ortaköy shows an awareness of the sultan’s turn away from the Tanzimat-ordained bureaucratic classicism that marked the site towards a homier, lighthearted, picturesque idiom. Moreover, through this image, the

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22 The Şale, in its tertiary expansion after 1898 by D’Aronco, would be referred to as the Ceremonial Apartments (Merâşim Dâ‘iresi). For its multi-phased building and expansion, see Yıldız Sarayı Şale Kasrî Humâyûna (Istanbul: TBMM Millî Saraylar Daire Başkanlığı, 1993). For a nuanced reading of D’Aronco’s additions and their awareness of the structural elements of Sarkis Balyan’s first version of the building, see Afife Batur, “Şale Köşkü,” in DBİA, vol. 7 (İstanbul: Kültür Bakanlığı ve Tarih Vakfı, 1993), 132-135. The elusive Hususi Daire, which would burn down during Vaheeddin’s reign and which is often confused either with the prefabricated pavilion that was temporarily erected on the platform which would later receive it, or with the ceremonial pavilion (known as Sester’s or Gardener’s Kiosk) that would be built in the early 1900s in the palace’s Ortaköy expansion, is best discussed by architect Can Binan, see his “Yıldız Sarayı Yanmış Hususi Daire Kuzey Avlusu Mekansal Oluşumu Sorunlar ve Değerlendirilmesi Üzerine bir Araştırmá,” Master’s thesis, Yıldız Teknik Üniversitesi, 1984. On this structure’s builders, approximate location, inhabitants, and interior decoration, see Ayşe Osmanoğlu, 103-104. Sedad Hakkı Eldem published a little known photograph taken from Üsküdar’s Sultantepe showing Çırağán’s shoreline and Yıldız’s hilltop settlement captures the commanding position of Abdülhamid’s private residence, see S. H. Eldem, Reminiscences of the Bosphorus (İstanbul: Alarko, 1979), 50-51.

23 BOA, Y.PRK.MM. 1/39, dated 20 July 1889, a few short months before Wilhelm’s visit, refers to the an old chalet and an extension to the Şale Kiosk. The old chalet is most likely the no longer extant cottage with a centrally placed clock below its gabled roof that rested atop the cascaded stream and perpendicular to the Şale’s earliest 1878 version. This old chalet was later taken down to accommodate the extensions to the Şale introduced by D’Aronco.

photographer highlights the new, increasingly intimate and informal diplomacy that Abdülhamid sought to nurture with his foreign allies (especially the German Emperor Wilhelm II for whom the original Şale was twice expanded). The sultan’s “home” was placed immediately next to the one that he built for his European ally, the structures were formally alike, and together they occupied the highest and most privileged point of the palace complex. This pair of royal residential structures also participated in a contrarian architectural statement vis-à-vis their neighboring predecessors that once constituted the site’s Tanzimat-era harem quarters: the stubby and formerly pedimented sultan’s pavilion (Hünkâr Da’iresi), the two-story, tripartite, brick-and-mortar row of apartments, designated for the use of some of the harem members known today as the Sunken Palace (Çukur Sarayı) and the Princes’ Apartments abutting the same sloping ridgeline. 

The Şale compound was accessed from a steep road along Ortaköy that led to its private entrance labeled the “mountain gate” (tâğ kapısı). The building and its gardens most likely fell within the former grounds of the valideler’ mountaintop estate due to the gate’s designation that hinted at its earliest users, once actively preoccupied with its topography. The Şale divided the compound into a section reserved for the imperial guest’s vita activa and another for the vita contemplativa, modelled on the vocational duality expected of a visiting head of state, who would quickly identify with the space’s functions. This heavy-set structure—due to its many

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25 The pre-Hamidian sultan’s pavilion is now the main administrative office of the Yıldız Technical University and is inaccessible. It is attached to the palace theater, and was occupied, during the Hamidian era, by the sultan’s adopted mother. Ö. Köse, “Yıldız Sarayı Hünkâr Dairesi (Valide Sultan Kasrı),” Master’s thesis, Yıldız Teknik Üniversitesi, 2002. For the “Sunken Palace” there is also a lacuna of information. A plaque on its façade attributes its use to the widowed and unmarried members of the Hamidian harem. The “Sunken Palace” was the second largest residential structure in Abdülhamid’s palace after the expanded Şale, which came to be known as the Ceremonial Apartments (Merasim Dairesi). Esra Görgülü, “Yıldız Teknik Üniversitesi (Yıldız Sarayı) Çukur Saray Yapısı Koruma ve Restorasyonu Üzerine bir Çalışma,” Master’s thesis, Yıldız Teknik Üniversitesi, 2004.
expansions—separated the flat and orderly ceremonial grounds to its north, which were used for the performance of military drills and as a shooting range for the privileged occupants of the compound, and the cascading romantic pleasure gardens to its south. Unlike the sultan’s selamlek ceremonies, which were open to the city’s inhabitants and drew a larger cast of local and foreign dignitaries, the ones held inside the grounds of the Şale, in keeping with the scaled-down intimacy of their structures, were always kept private. The sultan accessed this compound through an enclosed private gallery between his personal quarters and the small palace theater—another intimate diplomatic setting—without having to traverse the northwestern section of the complex to reach the ceremonial roadside gate.26

Abdülhamid’s princes followed suit and lined up a multitude of small, irregularly shaped, timber-framed chalets for their private use, which were built along the narrow but forested garden alongside their official row of apartments (fig. 4.9).27 Separated from one another by a thicket of trees and landscaped cascades, the cozy kiosks gave the young princes individualized and intimate personal zones “in nature” that their monolithic and interconnected apartments could not. Each of these chalets was unique and reflected the interior arrangements and decorative choices of their respective owners. Their walls were covered in murals depicting snowy landscapes, waterfalls, lakes, and mountain cottages. If the 1894 earthquake directly affected the preference for these structures, their enabling of an autonomous family life maintained their popularity among the members of the court for another decade. After Mehmed

26 Hasan Sirri comments upon the arduous, twenty-five-minute walk between the gate next to the Mabeyn that was open to the palace functionaries and the mountain gate. Örkağaşızâde, Sultan Abdülhamit Devri Hatıraları, 188.

27 Of the six extant kiosks for the princes, five are built as balloon-frames with their walls either of cement-plastered galvanized wire or lath and plasterwork (bağdâdi), only one of them known today as the pink kiosk is constructed of wood paneling. For individual analyses of these six kiosks, see Güçlü Arapoğlu, “Yıldız Sarayi Şehzade Köşkleri ve Şehzade Burhaneddin Efendi Köşkü Restitüsyonu,” Master’s thesis, Yıldız Teknik Üniversitesi, 2005.
V returned his court to Yıldız, his princes continued to inhabit these kiosks with their immediate families.28

Domestic structures that supported communal life in the Hamidian harem began to break down into smaller family units, suggesting the court’s turn to a bourgeois lifestyle and habits: each of the married members would play house.29 For instance, as soon as his Victorian private residence was completed, Abdülhamid moved in with only one of his seven wives, Müşfiqa Kadınefendi, replicating, as noted by their daughter Ayşe, a nuclear family life.30 Furthermore, the decoration of the exteriors and interiors of Yıldız’s domestic spaces under Abdülhamid were treated separately to cater to their inhabitants. Şeker Ahmed Paşa, the beloved court aide to Abdühamid’s children and an established painter with a military school background, decorated the increasingly privatized interiors of this family residence with his trademark still lifes, while the main room in Müşfiqa’s quarters had painted iconographic representations of the four seasons.31

The court’s appreciation of seasonal changes in nature went hand in hand with the siting of the sultan’s bourgeois family residence.32 The murals of its interiors were meant to reflect the building’s surroundings. From its large set of windows, Ayşe and Müşfiqa Sultans enjoyed commanding views of the sloping gardens and forests of the palatial complex. A series of rare photographs of this private residence and its landscaped gardens that have emerged from the


29 Georgeon, Sultan Abdülhamid, 191-200.

30 Ayşe Osmanoğlu, 103-104.

31 Ibid.

32 Professor Edhem Eldem introduced me to the unpublished diary of Prince Salahaddin Efendi (d.1915), Murad IV’s grandson, which contain the prince’s obsessive recording of weather conditions in Istanbul while imprisoned in Çırağan: Edhem Eldem, “History 2876: Ottoman Paleography and History,” (seminar, Harvard University, Spring 2010).
private collection of the last caliph Abdülmeclid Efendi (d. 1944) further reinforces the court’s recognition of (and obsession with) Yıldız’s privileged topography and the theatrical atmosphere the site produced through its complementary buildings. Now unbound, these photographs were most likely once part of a much larger Winter album of the complex’s newly landscaped harem compound with its artificial lake and smaller chalet-like pavilions (fig. 4.10). They are intriguingly selective in their depiction of the chalets in the sultan’s private garden, under the climate that was felicitous to their typologies. It is as if a photographer was quickly mobilized to capture the fleeting moment, crafting a visual narrative that validated the typological choices of its patron, the photographs later bound and gifted to the court’s extended members who did not have the opportunity to experience the mountainous wintery Yıldız in person. These photographs are also among the best available representations of the sultan’s non-extant private residence at the time that it was built in the late 1880s, providing close-ups of its one-piece mahogany doors, windows, balconies, and gable brackets whose expensive materials made a lasting impression on Ayşe Sultan (fig. 4.11).\(^{33}\)

The Ottoman court’s penchant for chalets, the globally popular architectural vocabulary of suburban villas, and their accompanying landscape designs, all preceded Abdülhamid’s reign. What became a trademark Hamidian typology in Yıldız first began with a taste for its representation. Abdülaziz Efendi, a high-level bureaucrat in the judicial offices of the nineteenth century, who left behind a detailed but underutilized ethnographic study on the daily practices of Ottoman urban life, marks Mahmud II’s reign as a transformational period in domestic details.\(^{34}\)

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\(^{33}\) Ayşe Osmanoğlu, 103-104.

\(^{34}\) For a biography of Abdülaziz Efendi, see İbnülemin Mahmut Kemal İnal, *Son Asr Türk Şairleri*, vol. 1, 44-47. For a Turkish transcription of the fourteen-defter manuscript of Abdülaziz Efendi’s study (unpublished during his lifetime), see Abdülaziz Bey, *Âdât ü Merâsim-i Kadime, Ta’birât ü Mu’aâmelât-i Kavmiye-i ‘Osmânîye*, ed. Kâzım Arısan ve Duygu Arısan Günay (İstanbul: Türk Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1995).
Along with a complete overhaul of the way interiors were furnished—such as divans being replaced by clustered arrangements of sofas and chairs—Abdü laziz Efendi observes that the walls began to display framed or painted vignettes of cottages in floral and sylvan settings. The imperial Maslak estate, which is made up of two distinctly Loudonian Gothic villas, displays the best examples of ceiling paintings of snow-capped mountains, waterfalls, and rustic cabins (fig. 4.12).

Sultan Abdülme cid’s decorative instinct was to exhibit all kinds of European products on tables and mantelpieces in his palace’s public zones, objects which were paired with “colored lithographs, exhibiting views of Switzerland, hung in gold frames against the brightly painted walls of many apartments [in Çırağan].” The German aristocrat and prolific novelist Countess Ida von Hahn-Hahn (d. 1880), who was shepherded around the interconnected waterfront pavilions of Çırağan by the head-gardener Sester in the 1840s, was quick to identify the Central European source of these images, because she had only recently taken the then extremely fashionable tour of Switzerland’s mountainous regions. Petit’s lithographs of Alpine towns such as Bern, which foregrounded chalets, were collated inside the red Yıldız bindings for Abdülhamid’s library and clue us into what kinds of framed images Countess von Hahn-Hahn could have seen on the walls of Abdülme cid’s palace. Abdülhamid, a curator of objects in his surroundings, who frequently chose works of art and books from the imperial treasury to furnish Yıldız’s rooms and libraries, must have selected these types of images for his own library.  

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35 Abdülaziz Efendi, Ādāt ā Merāsīm-i Kadīme, 163.
36 Hahn-Hahn, Letters from the Holy Land, 70
37 The Ottoman journalist Ebüzziya Tevfik (d. 1913) provides us with the earliest instance of Abdülhamid II’s curatorial instinct. Ebüzziya Tevfik, “Cülüşsundan soňra ‘Abdülhamid hān ile ilk mülākātim bu idi,’’ in Mecmā‘ā-ı Ebüzziyyā, no. 139, March 28, 1912, 321-329. While installing paintings in a gallery that was going to be made accessible to Wilhelm II, the sultan would consult Tevfik on the lighting conditions for a nature scene. An
These lithographs (stripped from their original volumes and collected inside new bindings) may very well have been the ones that his father exhibited in Çırağan’s galleries (fig. 4.13).

The representational appeal of the Alps did not cease in the Ottoman court as Mehmed V and Vahdeddin, the two sultans who succeeded Abdülhamid, quickly return to Yıldız’s high grounds at the start of their respective reigns. The currently inaccessible collection of the School of Fine Arts (Ṣanāyī'-i Nefise Mektebī) contains almost identically sized watercolors (approximately 27 to 30 by 40 centimeters) by V. Olbrich, all dated between 1917 and 1918, of multistoried rustic chalets basking in sunlight and exposing their broad gables, supporting consoles, balconies, and verandas.38 One of these watercolors reveals the contents of the basement below the first-floor veranda, the homeowner’s carpentry workshop with wooden beams, wheelbarrows, and window frames, suggesting that the chalet was crafted and continued to be built up by its very owner (fig. 4.14).

The earliest examples of the Ottoman court’s construction of chalets can be traced to the end of Abdülaziz’s reign (1861-1876). In his political memoirs titled Mirā'-i Şu'ūnāt (The Mirror of Events, 1912), Abdülaziz’s head-scribe Mehmed Memduh Paşa (d. 1925) records the sultan’s patronage of a great many wooden imperial pavilions along Istanbul’s popular meadows

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of Kağthane, Alemdağ, and Karakulak. Likely built by Abdülaziz’s court-architect Sarkis Balyan, these structures were placed in the most public spots of the city’s suburbs, apparently to great recrimination, as an attempt to conceal the empire’s fiscal downturn. Abdülaziz’s imperial pavilions in Kağthane, made up of the grand, cross-axial İmrahor with its heavy clipped gables and its smaller pair Koşu, have only survived in photographs, but are the earliest products of the court’s interest in and experiments with the Alpine typologies (fig. 4.15). The mathematician-illusionist Léon-François-Antoine Aurifeuille (d. 1882), who went by his nom de plume Alfred de Caston when writing about the famous Ottoman men-of-letters of his time, published an interview with Sarkis Balyan wherein he provided a list of all the buildings the architect constructed for the court, one of which is a chalet on Abdülaziz’s farm in İzmit (le chalet dans la ferme du Sultan à Ismid). The predecessor to Abdülhamid’s Şale inside Yıldız, which is referred to in building repair documents as the old or small chalet, is also probably from the early 1870s, and a product of the architect’s diverse repertoire of buildings, each one fine-tuned to its specific function and locale. An expansion in the corpus of building types for pleasure and courtly pastimes—not just kiosque, palais, and serail, but maison, chalet, and ferme appear in Sarkis Balyan’s list—during Abdülaziz’s time coincides with the increased circulation of volumes by draftsmen like Loudon, Petit, and others that introduced these new domestic specimens.

39 Mehmet Memduh, Tanzimattan Cumhuriyete (Mir‘ât-i Şûnât) (İstanbul: Nehir Yayınları, 1990), 102-103.

40 It is safe to assume that Sarkis Balyan introduced the chalet typology to the court. Tuğlaci, The Role of the Balyan Family, 492-494. Although a more definitive work (compared to the now-dated work of Tuğlaci) has recently been published on the life and production of the Balyan family, their inventive and extremely variegated domestic structures have yet to receive proper attention. For the most recent study on the Balyan family practice, see Alyson Wharton, The Architects of Ottoman Constantinople: The Balyan Family and the History of Ottoman Architecture (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015).

Portable versions of these structures arrived in the capital as well as architectural pattern books and building manuals. They came in iron-reinforced crates from northern European countries and Russia. From simple hospital barracks to much fancier, full-fledged villas, the Ottoman Turkish word for these portable buildings quickly acquired the designation kābil-i nakl (and less frequently seyyār).

Inspired by these imported architectural aids, residences large and small, portable and lightweight, stately and moored, began to compete with one another through their pronounced features and the ways in which they reflected the taste of their individual owners. Yıldız’s archives, fragmented though they may be, aid in reconstructing the story of how this flexible typology became a popular plaything among the members of the court and the bureaucratic class, and how it opened up a vibrant world of home-building—a “boundlessness of design in a country free of European architectural tradition and conventions” as architectural historian Doğan Kuban observes. In the nineteenth century, Istanbul saw an incredibly lively interest among property owners in the appearance and expressiveness of their homes. If Abdülhamid’s version of Yıldız was the trigger, it was the growing agency and creativity of a consumer class that very soon thereafter carried this diversity and eclecticism of architectural types and features over into the capital’s domestic architecture.

42 In no way were portable objects or patterns that acted as sources of permanent structures a nineteenth-century novelty. For the transmission of architectural inspiration from transferrable ephemera to buildings in the medieval world and the global residential idiom they helped create, see Scott Redford, “Portable Palaces: On the Circulation of Objects and Ideas about Architecture in Medieval Anatolia and Mesopotamia,” in Medieval Encounters, 18 (4-5): 382-412.

43 These two words meaning “portable” in Ottoman Turkish appear in the same defter of the Yıldız Palace Library that contains the volumes of Viktor Petit. The Ottoman cataloguer indiscriminately included within these bound volumes mail order catalogues and unbound plans and images of chalets and other building types. See footnote no. 9.

b. NORDIC “FRAME HOUSES” AND THE GLOBAL TYPOLOGY OF DOMESTIC BLISS

The popular British architecture journal, “The Builder,” ran a few almost inconspicuous correspondences between its readers in the winter months of 1877. It all began with a reader, initialing his name S. M. P., who wrote a short inquiry titled “The Wooden Houses of Norway.”45 Having heard of a home that was “bodily imported from Norway” to the Western Counties in Britain, he wanted to know where he could “apply to learn the result of time on the building, where a similar building can be obtained, and also whether the plan would be likely to succeed in building laborers’ cottages, where it is desirable to keep the expense as low as is reasonably possible.”46 A few short days later came a response from a “G. A. K.,” an architect practicing in Chicago, who endeavored to convince the inquirer that these “frame houses” were much cheaper and still as sturdy, and “warm and comfortable” as any brick house.47 Another response was sent which helped the inquirer to locate the said “bodily imported house” in the Western Counties: it was made for the woolen manufacturer John Fulford Vickery of North Tawton, Devon. Another advertised his services as a foreman experienced in these timber frame houses to help build the laborers’ cottages that S.M.P. so desired.48 Likely an architect worried about his profession’s potential decline if these “bodily imports” were to become marketable and therefore popular home-building choices, one Charles Pinn penned a retort, arguing that the fiscal merits of these structures were outweighed by their structural failings:

Sir—, The house erected by Mr. J.F. Vickery, at North Tawton may be considered a fancy. The idea doesn’t seem to be taken up in this part of the country, neither should I


46 Ibid.


care about recommending it to others. The house was landed at Exmouth, and there the idea met with its death-stroke, for it was found to consist of timber-squared from refuse of trees from the forest containing a very large proportion of sap. I consider this in itself sufficient to condemn it.

By the middle of March, John Fulford Vicary, the owner of the controversial house, had put an end to the debate by defending the longevity and beauty of his property: “I have lived in the house that your correspondent condemns for five years nearly. I am perfectly satisfied with it, and, as far as I am concerned, it has been a success beyond my expectations.” In his response, Vicary based his satisfaction on the historicity (read robust and long-lasting) of the construction technique as he pointed the readership back to the twelfth-century timber churches and to Norway, Sweden, Russia, Switzerland and America for the widespread nature of this rooted practice.

In less than a decade, the seemingly marginal controversy that arose among inquirers, builders, and consumers of the prefabricated timber house led to this structure becoming a globally popular consumer product. Within that frame of time, Norway’s leading architects and architectural theorists studied the Nordic house’s ethnography and lauded its medieval building techniques, style and ornaments, predictably for its time, as the Norse Renaissance. This

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50 John Fulford Vicary was a tradesman with a passion for Norse history. He wrote on the Norwegian oral tradition of epics (sagas), and popular history narratives on the life of King Olaf II (d. 1030), who was thought to have introduced Christianity to Norway, see John Fulford Vicary, *Saga Time* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., 1887). It is this special interest that he led him to inhabit a timber-frame Norwegian import. His frequent visits to Norway (then the Kingdom of Sweden and Norway) resulted in him serving as an agent in England for the Norwegian prefab producers: John Fulford Vicary, “Norwegian Timber Houses,” in *The Building News* 26, February 20, 1874, 214.


52 “Wooden Architecture of Norway,” *The Builder*, 3 November 1894. This article was, in fact, a comprehensive review of a Norwegian publication that like *L’Architecture ottoman* was the result of a collaborative historical inquiry into the fundamentals of Norse architecture: L. Dietrichstein and H. Munthe, *Die Holzbaukunst Norwegens in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart* (Dresden: G. Kühtmann, 1901). Very much like its Ottoman counterpart, this publication found its answers in medieval structures and derived its national idiom from the low-relief ornamental
quintessential Nordic structure was quickly extracted, however, from its primordial northern home to attain numerous façades, from the Swiss chalet to the Italian Tuscan villa (figs. 4.16–4.17). Its portable technology and easy cladding made it adaptable to different styles, its surface outfitted to reflect any historical period or geographical vernacular. Now recognizable to the railway traveler, tourist, and patient of European spa-towns and sanatoria, the adaptable frame house became central to any country estate whose owner sought to bring the healthy mountain experience back home. Its now cosmopolitan frame was a place that allowed for hermitic philosophizing in nature, and offered salubriousness and an illusion of travel and escape.

Nordic prefabs would become an attraction not just for the prospering middle-classes, but for the European monarchy as well. In the same long journey of 1843 that brought her to Abdülmecid’s Istanbul (and his Swiss lithographs), the Countess Ida von Hahn-Hahn would visit a small, cross-axial Nordic stave church with dragon-headed ridges in Brückenberg. In her travelogue, she remarks upon the fact that the Prussian monarch Friedrich Willhelm IV (r. 1840-1861)—like most of his European peers, an enthusiast of medieval architecture—had brought this twelfth-century building in pieces from Norway and reassembled it in his Silesian domains. The Prussian monarchs’ interest in the dragon-style Norwegian timber structures would continue into Wilhelm IV’s nephew Kaiser Wilhelm II’s architectural patronage, to which I will return later in this chapter.

carvings found in their interiors. Again analogously, this publication also introduced new buildings that were built on the principles of medieval Norse examples.


54 Hahn-Hahn, Letters from the Orient, 6. For the centrality of these churches in the imperial architectural revivalism of the Scandinavian and German countries, see Marian Card Donnelly, Architecture of Scandinavian Countries (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992), 36-37; and, Barbara Miller Lane, National Romanticism and Modern Architecture in Germany and the Scandinavian Countries (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
The Prussian ruler’s preservation of the Norwegian church was tied to the period’s prevailing architectural fascination with medieval building modes, which was in turn due to the rising conviction that they manifested the utmost structural legibility and rationality. Scholarly enthusiasts from kings to architects and preservationists studied buildings and made a case for case that they should be understood as technological achievements and therefore emulated. Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc (d. 1879) was perhaps the most influential figure to point back in time in order to locate the origins of a nation’s building technique, structural essence, and material. His theories were incorporated into various empires’ scientific quests to analyze and restore their medieval architectural heritage, and in the process, forge their national architectural idiom. Viollet-Le-Duc’s polygenist classification (Aryan/white, black, and yellow-skinned races) of historical dwelling types allotted the Aryans, the progenitors of the European nations, buildings made of wood. This connection based on natural affinities fueled Prussian rulers—who saw themselves as restorers of the pure and virtuous Gothic zeitgeist—to covet “savage” Nordic churches, but also commission their secular variants like the monumental, if deliberately rustic, log cabins.55

The nineteenth-century Ottomans were equally caught up in locating their architectural apogee in their medieval past.56 Viollet-Le-Duc’s theories were introduced into the official Ottoman architectural discourse through his disciple Léon Parvillée, a ceramics-specialist who was recruited to restore the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century buildings in Bursa, the empire’s

55 Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, The Habitations of Man in All Ages (Boston: J.R. Osgood and Company, 1876), 386-387. For historical timber structures, and chiefly for their hunting lodges, Viollet-Le-Duc asserts: “Left to the guidance of their own instincts, the Aryans always build in the same manner, and have a marked predilection for timber constructions, that they seek by preference countries that are wooded, and have a veneration for trees.”

first capital.\textsuperscript{57} Although very little is known about their production, the earliest prefabricated structures to be built in Istanbul, based upon the designs of a Levantine-Italian architect Giovanni Battista Barborini with modifications by Parvillée, were a mosque, bath, and pavilion for the Ottoman display in the 1867 World Exhibition in Paris.\textsuperscript{58} Parvillée’s assessment of early Ottoman monuments as having been built upon universal geometric principles and his alignment of their forms with those of the European Gothic tradition permeated into the language of the state-sponsored architectural treatise, the \textit{Uşūl-ı Mi‘mārī-i Osmānī / L’Architecture ottomane}, produced for the 1873 World Exposition in Vienna.\textsuperscript{59} The formal and historicized interconnections that \textit{Usul}’s collaborators established between early-Ottoman monuments and Spanish “Arab” and Gothic traditions, were studiously displayed in the formal and ornamental schemas of the Azizian and later Hamidian mosques.

If structures like the Aksaray Valide Mosque (1871) and the Hamidiye Mosque (1886) became the ecclesiastical examples of this medievalizing discourse, the court’s novel palatial structures were distilled versions of the same Romantic desire to express truth, transparency, and virtue in one’s dwellings. Loudon and Petit’s chalet and villa specimen, especially their authors’ partiality towards Gothic forms, was rooted in the period’s idealization of medieval building traditions. And, even though the Ottomans may not have intellectualized their residential typologies as intensely as \textit{Usul} did for the imperial monuments, readers of these architectural


\textsuperscript{58} For Giovanni Battista Barborini, the little-known principal architect of the Ottoman buildings of 1867, see Paolo Girardelli and Cengiz Can, “Giovanni Battista Barborini à Istanbul,” in \textit{Observatoire urbain d’Istanbul}, no. 8 (Octobre 1995): 2-7.

\textsuperscript{59} The seminal historiographical work on the Ottoman participation in the 1873 Vienna Exposition is Ahmet Ersoy, \textit{Architecture and the Late Ottoman Historical Imaginary: Reconfiguring the Architectural Past in a Modernizing Empire} (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015).
books (if not the novels and essays of Jean-Jacques Rousseau) were nevertheless aware of the cult of the virtuous mountain peasants and their timeless, hearty habitations. In fact, before a decision was made to produce an exact replica of Ahmed III’s fountain for the Vienna Exposition, Pietro Montani, a member of Usul’s production team, prepared a preliminary project of four buildings, one of which was a farmhouse modeled after the “traditional peasant homes in Thrace and the Balkans,” alongside an urban Ottoman house. Although projects for these two have not survived, it is clear that Usul’s intellectuals were deep in thought not only about the form of the empire’s civic architectural monuments, but also the aesthetic conventions of its domestic dwellings.

The idealization of an egalitarian rural life where the master and servant inhabited undifferentiated dwellings with all its moral underpinnings stirred many countries into rediscovering their own mountainous regions and their architectural vernaculars. Poles led the way by making the Zakopane style of building their emblem for domestic spaces, but Ákos Moravánszky shows that the chalet-variants would be quickly “stylized by ethnographic eclecticism” by many other nations: “Karelia for Finns, Dalarna for Swedes, Slovácko for Czechs and Moravians, and Kalotaszeg for Hungarians.” If the Gothic tradition was eagerly retrofitted by many empires into their architectural heritage because of its pristine geometric rationality, the wooden mountain cabins held a universal validity and appeal of another spiritual kind: the features of these structures were found to resemble the human anatomy. An American reader of Le-Duc, who took a tour of the most prominent prefabricated chalet producers in Switzerland, prefaced his guidebook with the French theorist’s espousal of the Alpine home as

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60 Ersoy, Architecture and the Late Ottoman Architectural Imaginary, 61.

the *Ur*-form of domestic typology.⁶² To this chalet-aficionado, it was not surprising that chalets were found over a wide swath of the world’s highest grounds, from the Swiss mountains to Kashmiri valleys and the Himalayan slopes, because more than being predecessors to Laugier’s protective hut, they adhered to human form:

The internal adjustment of the chalet…is that of an enlarged and simplified human body. The body itself is a home; with its organs, machines, tubes it may be said to be a moving home for the human spirit; and in the arrangements which Nature has planned for its adaptation to life, for its maintenance, subsistence and renewal, we may expect to find the inspiration for man’s habitations.

Externally, too, […] the part of the chalet which comes in contact with the earth being the purely utilitarian part, and the topmost part being the part of thought and retirement; the part between being that of the ordinary mechanics and intercourse of daily life.

Moreover, it is symmetrical and in its alternation of voids and wall spaces, gaily decked with nasegays, its bands and strips of wooden lacework or embroidery, its overhanging bowers, the element of feminine humanity is strongly marked. Standing on the mountainside, upright, its face shaded by the wide brim of its hat-like gable, its eyes peering across the wide valleys, the chalet has a look surprisingly and mysteriously human.⁶³

c. THE FIRST PORTABLE STRUCTURES IN THE OTTOMAN DOMAINS

Among the European imperial patronage networks of the industrializing age, Mahmud II’s court was exemplary in his anticipation of the usefulness of prefabricated buildings in answering the growing needs of the public. In his chronological history, Gilbert Herbert, the preeminent historian of the origins of prefabrication, situates Mahmud’s commission of an iron corn mill from the Scottish shipbuilder William Fairbairn (d.1874) as among the first of such large-scale purchases.⁶⁴ Entrepreneurial engineers like Fairbairn were also quick to cater to private hobbies.

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⁶³ Dana, 13.

Being at the forefront of the development of modular building technologies, owners of English shipping companies manufactured iron-framed greenhouses in the aftermath of Paxton’s iconic Crystal Palace of 1851. In continuing his interstitial role as cultural agent, Ahmet Fethi Paşa, the same figure who recruited Christian Sester for Mahmud II’s grand gardening projects, would purchase one such greenhouse from London’s Westwood and Baillie Company for Abdülmecid’s expanded Çırağan gardens. This structure was erected on the site only during Abdülaziz’s time due to delays in payment after Abdülmecid’s passing. The Ottoman official documentation related to this purchase referred to the building as a crystal palace (billâr sarây), showing the ambitions of the court in its desire to recreate world-renowned structures in its imperial gardens.

The third instance of Ottomans encountering prefabs, which was a consequence of the Crimean War (1853-1856) and therefore much more publicly visible, was the erection of the British Renkioi [Erenköy] Hospital between the adjacent neighborhoods of Kadıköy and Üsküdar. The hospital complex, constituting a large group of wood and canvas wards, was designed by the British civil engineer Isambard Kingdom Brunel (d. 1859), and was built, delivered, and assembled in the short span of five months. The initiative for its construction, replete with ventilation and drainage systems to prevent infections diseases, was undertaken by Florence Nightingale, when contagions became rampant in the Selimiye Barracks that were initially designated for treating the wounded soldiers.

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66 Ibid.

67 Christopher Silver, Renkioi: Brunel’s Forgotten Crimean War Hospital (Sevenoaks, Kent: Valonia Press, 2007). Also, for a detailed discussion of the production of military huts in England during the war, see Herbert, Pioneers of Prefabrication, 75-96.
The practicality of these portable structures continued to be of interest to the Ottomans into the second half of the nineteenth century. In 1892, *Servet-i Fünûn*, the journal that kept its readers abreast of all sorts of minute technical innovations from around the world, made the assembly of a prefab its cover story. The full-page image under the caption “Cardboard Construction” (*Muḳavvā İnşāāt*) depicts soldiers hoisting up a part of the pitched roof of a barebones military barracks, temporarily raised on wheels, which was intended as a hospital (fig. 4.18). The roof and walls appear to have been delivered in panels of adjoined square logs that were then inserted into planed and grooved frames (hence their earlier designation among *The Builder*’s correspondents from the 1870s as frame-houses). Parts that make up the frames remain in the image’s foreground. The image also highlights the fact that no additional tools were required in the process of its construction: each panel rests upon the other without any visible hinges or joineries, and the soldiers work with nothing but a few simple scaffolds.

In the explanation of its cover story, the journal launches this new building material—essentially “paper pressurized into attaining the hardness of wood”—as the one that would finally supplant iron, which up to that moment was the polestar in the production of “exemplary works of [today’s] civilization” (*demirden numûne-i medeniyet*). What the critic of the Norwegian prefabs from *The Builder* perhaps meant by “sap” was this transmutation of wood into paper into building material. Light and portable construction, the report argues, would take over from the monumental heaviness that had marked the century’s iron-clad building projects, from railways and bridges to that “famous tower in Paris” (*Paris’iîn meşhûr ḳûlesi*). It is reasonable to assume that this kind of materials-based standoff was put to the test in the 1889

68 “Muḳavvā İnşāāt,” *Servet-i Fünûn*, no. 25, 27 February 1892.

69 Ibid.
World Exposition of Paris, which the report references and where the Norwegian village constructed of timber-framed houses was a highlight that won its builders many gold medals and, for the first time, patents for their portable inventions.\textsuperscript{70} Mindful of the possibility that the prefab could easily be disparaged a makeshift folly, the Ottoman report emphasizes its efficacy in responding to urgent civic needs such as the swift erection of hospitals. The tongue-in-check tone that the journal often employed in its reception of novel technologies is also visible here in the way that the report promotes these portables to homeowners. In telling them that “they could change the location of their homes whenever they desired a change of scenery” (hāne şâhibi şıkıldığı gibi evini söküb başka tarafına götürüyor ne ʿalâ), the report’s anonymous newsagent likens the act to “turtles carrying their homes on their backs” (kâblunbâğalar gibi meskendi sırtında taşmak).

A few short years after the news item on light and portable construction appeared, the Ottomans incorporated this wartime technology into their daily lives. To treat the Ottoman soldiers who fought on the Macedonian front of the 1897 Greco-Ottoman War, Abdülhamid II set up an elaborate prefabricated hospital much like its predecessor Renkioi on the uninhabited and elevated flatlands between the Balmumcu Pavilion and his palace.\textsuperscript{71} Named the Yıldız Hospital, it was made up of fourteen barracks and employed over three hundred people including a head-surgeon, six doctors, and twenty-three pharmacists. It is unknown for how long this large complex remained intact and in the service of Istanbul’s military personnel. However, from Şerif-i Fünûn’s first-hand coverage of the site in 1897 (with extensive photographs published in two issues of the journal), we know that the sultan did not cut back on the quality of care it provided. The makeshift hospital was furnished with the latest medical equipment—the object of


\textsuperscript{71} Şakir, Sultan Hamit, Şahsiyeti ve Hususiyetleri, 365-366.
the reporter’s lengthy fascination being the x-ray machine (fig. 4.19).\(^{72}\) The journal’s photographs suggest to us that the hospital’s most important building was its operating pavilion, which unlike the simpler in-patient barracks (identical to the one depicted in the journal’s 1892 cover), boasted large windows, dado-like ornamental panels that resembled small hanging carpets at its entrance façade, and pilasters with faux-rustication (fig. 4.20). It is also not known whether these buildings were constructed locally or were imported. However, the stylistic similarities between the operating pavilion and the pavilion that was later assembled by Ottoman craftsmen to stage the initial meeting of Abdülhamid and the Qajar Shah Muzaffar al-Din—including the larger dimensions of its apertures and the placement of the main entrance on its longer side rather than along its width as can be seen in the image of the pavilion being assembled on the journal’s cover—hint at the possibility that it was locally built.

If wars convinced the Ottomans of the efficacy of prefabrication as a source of quick and affordable shelter, the colossal engineering project of the Suez Canal and the France-based company at its helm presented the Egyptian viceroys with their own imported chalet at the end of the 1850s.\(^{73}\) Ferdinand de Lesseps, the French developer of the project, installed his own chalet in the newly inaugurated town of Ismailia, which was named after Egypt’s then-governor Ismail. In fact, most of the French engineers involved in the project lived in little chalets set inside gardens in the three station towns along the canal’s north to south route, Port Said, Ismailia, and Suez.\(^{74}\)

\(^{72}\) The main article appears in Şerbet-i Fünün, no. 326 (10 June 1895), the photographic illustrations of the site and its employees are produced much later in Şerbet-i Fünün, nos. 329 to 331 (1897).

This unconventional French gift to the Egyptian viceroys, a chalet surrounded on all sides by a large iron veranda, was erected on high ground next to the Timsah Lake in the town of Suez to oversee the project and host the frequent visits of Europeans. This particular kind of chalet with a prominent veranda was intended as a viewing station—a panopticon dressed in dainty woodcarvings and iron filigree work—and emerged as the preferred style of prefabricated building for colonial settlements.

Christian Marius Thams (d. 1948), the principal Norwegian supplier of portable structures to Yıldız, presented this chalet as the colonial prototype in his mail order catalogues (fig. 4.21). Thams, a wealthy mining heir and ambitious nineteenth-century industrialist with training in architecture, operated the first large mill for prefabricated buildings that was powered by hydroelectricity. Aside from his entrepreneurial ventures, Thams also served as the Belgian Consul General in Norway, and when the Belgian King Leopold II turned Congo into his personal colony,75 it was Thams’s prefabs that supplied Nordic cottages for the colonial officers with the comforts and warmth of a home.76 Erected next to plantations or mines, they made foreign territories cozy and familiar. Thams’s “petites villas en bois” of the Free State of Congo are displayed extensively in his catalogue along with other chalet variants configured to fit


75 The most moving account of the Belgian colonial atrocities in the Free State of Congo is the fictionalized one offered by Joseph Conrad in his seminal work Heart of Darkness, initially published as a three-part serial in Blackwood’s Magazine in 1899. I have consulted Joseph Conrad, Heart of Darkness; with, The Congo Diary (London: Penguin, 2000). The narrator, who is particularly fascinated with and longs to find rivets to patch vessels and buildings up, foreshadows the impending colonization of the Congo River Basin with towns containing buildings that did not need rivets but were built from wood blocks to fit together like puzzle pieces.

necessary functions in a colonial settlement such as hospitals, schools, military barracks, and churches, all bearing what appears to be the flag of the Free State on their roofs and set in the tropical vegetation of the Congo Basin.

Yıldız’ s architectural patrons would quickly add another European supplier to their lineup of chalet exporters. A Russian polymath engineer/physician by the name Shcherbakov (Щербаковъ), who appears to have owned a facility producing mostly concrete building parts in Odessa, sold them a chalet that was then placed in the palace’s harem gardens. Although the building has not survived, Scherbakov’s chalet catalogue is listed among the books in the palace library (Odesa Şehiri’nde Sitterbăkof’un şale tarzında käbil-i nakl köşkler ‘imâline mahşüş fabrikası kataloğu), along with a document tabulating the payments to workers employed in its installation. This enterprising Russian engineer first found patronage in the Ottoman court by making a case for building a prefabricated hospital that would specialize in the recently discovered treatment of diphtheria. Three years after he presented his case for the hospital and received permission for its construction, he had already assembled the pavilion in the harem quarters (Mösyö Çerbăkof ma’rifiyle kūrulan köşk), but Ottoman officials lost sight of him shortly thereafter. It took the office of the grand vizier five years to confirm his death and recover the amount paid to him in advance of the hospital’s construction—seven hundred Ottoman lira out of a thousand allotted for its completion.


78 This catalogue is also listed in the defter is archived under BOA, Y. EE. d. 400.

79 For Shcherbakov’s portable harem structure, I have consulted BOA, Y. MTV. 169/103 and HH. d. 26595; for his negotiations to build a hospital and later disappearance, see BEO. 529/39656, BEO. 1615/121074, BEO. 1637/122729, BEO. 1821/136562, and BEO. 2025/151809.
Whenever a functional prefabricated building such as a hospital was exported to the Ottoman territories, its patrons often requested a fancier version for their personal enjoyment. The Khedive Ismail Paşa did not limit himself to his chalet in Suez, but installed another—with lace-like woodwork and a central sun motif on its gable louver—on the highest point of his English-style gardens in Istanbul’s Emirgan. The gingerbread versions of this colonial morphology quickly became the quintessential accessories to Istanbul hilly estates, which were laid out in the Romantic garden tradition. These chalets were placed next to the largest cascade or grotto, another indispensable feature of such elaborate landscape designs.

The chalet that Abdülhamid purchased from Thams was assembled on a platform right above a waterfall-fronted, faux-stone nymphaeum, one of the centerpieces of the sultan’s heavily landscaped private garden and the embarkation station for his electrical boat. Only photographs and catalogue versions of this structure remain in Yıldız’s library collection. An incomplete and undated defter of the Imperial Treasury, which itemizes the locally procured hardware for its assembly, calls it the “Swedish pavilion” (İsveç kaşri).80 A photograph, an imperial commission which was taken from across Abdülhamid’s artificial lake to foreground the pavilion over the nymphaeum, is informative in showing that this structure was one of the first to be built by Abdülhamid soon after the completion of the landscaping project in his harem gardens (fig. 4.22). This structure may have jumpstarted the sultan’s architectural program of countering Yıldız’s pre-existing masonry buildings of Tanzimat with his preferred typology.

Abdülhaimd lived in this portable cottage for a period of time while his kalfa Vasilaki and the palace’s carpentry atelier devised plans to build his more permanent Victorian residence in its place. Attempts to identify the sultan’s residence within the palatial complex—which often

80 BOA, HH.d.3026.
border on an obsession with where he might have slept—mistake this temporary structure for its more permanent successor. This Norwegian import served as a place marker and in part as a small-scale replica for the statelier building that followed. Thams’s prefabricated design would lend its irregular plan, as well as its gable and finial motifs, to the private residence that the sultan would soon inhabit with his nuclear family.

Imports as physical exempla and their sales catalogues were both studied and used as building aids by the architects, carpenters, and contractors of the Ottoman court. Depending on the financial scope of an imperial architectural project, they would be asked to construct chalets in the capital’s local building facilities or directly import them from European factories. For instance, in planning to institute a zoological garden in the capital, Abdülhamid commissioned Vasilaki to draw up a feasibility report on the chosen site giving detailed surveys of the layout of the zoo and plans for the structures crucial to the making of a pedagogical and palatably rustic environment for his public, like Paris’s acclaimed jardin d’acclimatation. Vasilaki’s site survey of 1885 for this eventually unrealized project demands that the little pavilions be made of “natural wood” (natürel odun), and the overall effect of the place be done in the “English manner” (İngilizkārī). The imperial decree requests that if it is cheaper to acquire the requisite timber structures from Switzerland than to produce and assemble them in Istanbul’s imperial foundry in Tophane, it should be done.

Soon after the arrival of the Norwegian and Russian imports, the newer chalets erected in Yıldız’s gardens began to diverge from their catalogue versions. This practice indicates that these were most likely built in the palace’s workshops or the sawmills of the imperial arsenal and foundry. The chalet known today as the Cihannüma Pavilion—that rested on the wall separating

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81 For the Ottoman zoo project, I have consulted BOA, Y. PRK. MF. 1/11.
Abdülhämîd’s harem garden from the vast park below—was modeled after one from a Franco-
Swiss company called Kaeffer Cie. et Successeurs. The marginalia on Yîldîz’s copy of Kaeffer’s
1884 catalogue clues us into the court’s selection: the page containing prefab no. 222 was
earmarked with a place holder that contained the handwritten note of its number (fig. 4.23).\(^2\) In
its Ottoman adaptation, this simple, mid-range chalet with two floors and two fireplaces, would
be raised on an elevated ground floor laid out in stone with a narrow imperial staircase, and
winged extensions on its lateral sides (fig. 4.24). The court seems to have consulted Kaeffer’s
catalogue for ideas on how to design intimate Victorian domestic spaces.\(^3\) Kaeffer’s most
expensive prefab (of 200,000 francs), a twin-chalet that was listed as containing four rooms on
each floor, twelve fireplaces, two attics, a boudoir and salon for the madam’s flowers, as well as
billiard and smoking rooms for the monsieur, was built on Yîldîz’s grounds with visible
modifications. The builders retained this structure’s stylistic eclecticism. They replicated its
Gothicized rooflines, ridge crenellations, and Baroque oeil-de-boeuf windows, eliminated an
entire floor and two side entrances, and instead added two small side balconies on the second
floor and rounded out the ones on its main façade (figs. 4.25–4.26).

In its gender-specific allotment of spaces for sociability for the male inhabitant and
private ones for the female inhabitant’s personal pastimes, this particular chalet in Kaeffer’s
catalogue resembled the traditional layout of large Ottoman mansions of the period, where a
central room or sofa divided the public quarters from the private ones. The fact that it had a
layout familiar to the Ottoman court but still preserved the intimacy of a nuclear family must

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\(^2\) This kind of taste-reflecting marginalia appears frequently on extant catalogues of chalet manufacturers. The Fine
Arts Library’s collection at Harvard University contains one such remarkable example whose pages contain the
patron’s selections and calculations on the printed plans and elevations of its chalets, Schweizer Chalet-Fabrik Chur
(Switzerland, 188?).

have appealed to Abdülhamid. The sultan had sought an analogous interior configuration in designing his private residence, where his wife had her own boudoir-like quarters with mural decorations of the four seasons on its walls.

The devastating 1894 earthquake turned these chalets into an immediate and appealing necessity inside the palace. Ayşe Sultan tells us that her father commissioned a Japanese-style kiosk to be placed above an artificial grotto in the palace’s harem gardens. She recalls this single-room structure made out of bamboo being used by her father as a bedroom (fig. 4.27). A local historian has recently linked the now non-extant structure’s bamboo supply and construction to Abdülhamid’s close ties to a Japanese teacher of tea-ceremonies, who resided in Istanbul at a period of increased diplomatic relations between the two empires, ran a Japanese goods store for over twenty years, and supplied the sultan with all sorts of rare objects from the Land of the Rising Sun—a land similarly beset by frequent earthquakes.

The post-earthquake findings of an international group of experts seem to have reinforced the overall scaling down in Yıldız’s Hamidian structures and the preference for wood as the principal building material and the chalet as its most suitable form. The comprehensive initial report written under the leadership of Demetrios Éginitis, the director of the Athens Observatory,

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85 Ayşe Osmanoğlu, 93.


expressed astonishment over the sturdiness of wooden buildings (*ahşâb ḥâneler zelzeleye ḥayretbahş derecede ûayânmuşlardir*), and reasoned that “the majority of the buildings having been of wood has reduced the scale of the calamity” (*ekser ḥâneleriîn ahşâb olmasi meşâ’iîn âz olmasna hizmet etmişdir*). On the other hand, “the well-built, beautiful and new brick and stone structures with iron reinforcements had collapsed” (*ā’lā yapılmış güzel ve yeñi ve ḥatta demîrler ile baglanmış olan kârgîr ḥâneler münkedef olmuşdur*). Two little-known chalets replete with their own gardens and glasshouses nestled behind the pavilion of the heir apparent in Dolmabahçe were constructed by Abdülhamid for his brothers Mehmed Reşad and Kemaleddin, while another one with a prominent second-story balcony was assembled for Abdülaziz’s son, Yusuf İzzeddin in the gardens of the Ferîye Palaces. The Beşiktaş mansion of Gazi Osman Paşa, the sultan’s chief chamberlain, was outfitted with one attached to the original masonry structure (fig. 4.28).

d. SCALED-DOWN ARCHITECTURE, INTIMATE DIPLOMACY

Abdülhamid began to build “bijou,” one-room pavilions not only for his private use or for earthquake safety, but also to house intimate diplomatic encounters. The best-known example

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89 Ibid.


91 Ibid., 19.

92 Ibid.

93 For an evaluation of the pronounced scaling down of Hamidian protocol into frequent *tête-à-têtes*, see Karateke, *Padişahum Çok Yaşta!*, 190-193.
of this ceremonial practice is his erection of a kiosk next to the imperial Hereke carpet factory in İzmit to receive the German Emperor Wilhelm II and Empress Augusta-Victoria on their second visit to the Ottoman lands in 1898. The extant Hereke Kiosk, a one-floor, tripartite structure with wiry bracketed double-columns that hold up broad eaves, punctuated by two low-drummed, lead-covered Ottoman domes on either end, is believed to have been built in Yıldız’s ateliers in preparation for the German royalty (fig. 4.29).

However, an article published by Le Monde illustré on the emperor and empress’s time in the factory complex, with images provided by the Swedish photographer Berggren, foregrounds another building that is morphologically a likelier candidate for the Yıldız-manufactured prefab (fig. 30). The caption to the photograph identifies this pavilion as the banqueting hall of the Hereke Kiosk. Perched on a platform resting over stakes on the shore immediately next to the domed kiosk, this new structure was morphologically a cross between the hospital barracks of Renkioi and Yıldız, but had the intricately carved triangular gable decorations of the chalet designated for İzzet Holo Paşa or the “Japanese” kiosk built after the earthquake. If, indeed, the Hereke Kiosk were the pavilion prefabricated for the imperial visit, the newspaper article would have surely included it among the documentary photographs. The Hereke Kiosk seems to have served rather as an embarkation station (formally analogous to Istanbul’s small neo-oriental ferry

94 Demirel, Dolmabahçe ve Yıldız Saraylarında Son Ziyaretler, Son Ziyafetler, 73-76.

stations like Haydarpaşa), while the simpler chalet—quickly assembled for the occasion—was where the imperial entourage lunched after visiting the factory.

A small pavilion was also custom-built in Yıldız’s Şale compound to receive the Qajar ruler Muzaffar al-Din Shah on the last leg of his European tour in 1900. Before his arrival, the shah had requested that his Istanbul visit be modeled after the highly publicized itinerary, and pomp and circumstance, of the German Emperor’s most recent stay. The Şale and its gardens were prepared to welcome him along with the capital’s cannons, imperial battalions and band, and the sultan’s dispatch vessel İzzeddin. However, for Abdülhamid, who had rekindled his role as the caliph of the Sunni Muslims, hosting the Shi’a shah proved more difficult. How was his initial encounter with a Muslim ruler of an opposing denomination to be enacted. To stress his caliphal role, he would send his princes and viziers rather than greet the shah on the Ortaköy dock. The relationship between the two states had been soured by the fact that Qajar statesmen blamed the political activism of Sayyid Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (d. 1897)—who had sought asylum in Abdülhamid’s court—for growing anti-monarchic sentiments in Iran and consequently linked it to the assassination of Muzaffar al-Din’s predecessor Nasir al-Din Shah in 1896. Moreover, Iran’s political allegiance with Russia in the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877-78 could not be untangled from the ultimately reluctant Ottoman staging of the encounter between the sultan and the shah. Nevertheless, the sultan greeted the shah in a boxy, single-room structure with art nouveau trimmings called the Persian Pavilion (‘Acem Köşkü) that would serve as a makeshift, neutral stage for their complicated alliance (fig. 4.31). It is no wonder then that in his travelogue, the Shah remarked upon the building’s placement at the “threshold” (sar-dar) of a

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96 Demirel, Dolmabahçe ve Yıldız Saraylarında Son Ziyaretler, Son Ziyafetler, 89-108.
97 Ibid.
and the photograph albums commissioned by the Ottoman court gave it the impartial designation, “the meeting spot” (müläkät maḩallî).\textsuperscript{98}

A photograph album found in Yıldız’s library and depicting Wilhelm II’s large hunting lodge located in the verdant East Prussian forest of Rominten (today a logging camp between Poland and Russia), may have augmented Abdülhamid’s interest in chalets and their portability.\textsuperscript{99} Covered by a carved wood binding with reliefs of deer antlers, rifles, pine cones and leaves, the album offers a tour of the grounds with photographs showing the building from every angle (figs. 4.32–4.33). Once the gift had arrived from Germany, it was prepared for the sultan’s private perusal. An Ottoman, who had visited the site, inserted extensive Ottoman Turkish captions on the bottom of each photograph that described the architectural vignettes. One of these captions reveals that its “pre-made parts were bought from Norway” (işbu köşküni bilcümle aksâmı Norveç’den hazırlan olarak célb olunmuşdur).\textsuperscript{100}

Behind the widespread popularity of these buildings was an idealization of rural life, stoic peasants, and their unadulterated connections to nature, Romantic sentiments that had emerged through novels, plays, and philosophical theories that foregrounded Alpine settings.\textsuperscript{101} To the developers and consumers of chalets, the organic morphology and materials of rustic residences reflected the savage nobility of their original inhabitants. Affluent estate owners and royalty, who possessed vast rural territories, identified with protagonists like the philosopher-huntsman

\textsuperscript{98} Mużaffar al-Dīn Shāh Qājār, Safarnāmah-i Farangistān: safar-i avval, 219-220.

\textsuperscript{99} During the German Third Reich, Rominten became Hermann Göring’s favorite retreat: Uwe Neumärker and Volker Kopf, Görings Revier: Jagd und Politik in der Rominter Heide (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2007). After World War II, the area was annexed to the Soviet Union. Emperor Wilhelm’s wooden hunting lodge was dismantled, taken away and re-erected in a park in East Prussia’s former capital, the port city of Königsberg (now renamed Kaliningrad): Frevert, Rominten: das ostpreussische Jagdparadies (München: BLV Buchverlag, 2008).

\textsuperscript{100} The album containing twenty-five photographs has the catalogue no. İÜMK 91380.

of Friedrich von Schiller’s play William Tell of 1804, and fashioned their recreational surroundings in the manner of these figures revived from medieval annals. It is not a surprise that the Ottoman captions also inform the album’s viewer of Wilhelm II’s inspiration: “The Emperor built this lodge in the likeness of peasant homes after his visit to Norway where he encountered and liked these structures beyond measure” (İmparâtor hazretleriniñ Norveç’e ettiği seyâhat eşnasında ziyâdesiyle beğendiği Norveç köylüleri hânelerini takilden cesüm bir orman dahilinde inşa ettirdikleri Rominten Köşkü).

Holm Hansen Munthe, a prolific Norwegian architect who is credited with the revival of the dragon-style of the Nordic Renaissance from the annals of Viking history, was selected for the privilege of fashioning a prefab as a massive hunting lodge for the Kaiser’s hideaway.\textsuperscript{102} Indiscriminately replicating versions of Muntheian architecture, the industrial impresario Thams would then include a lookalike of this wide, H-plan, log cabin in the catalogue in sultan’s possession as a reproducible “Norwegian casino-style” house (fig. 4.34).

Willhelm II’s interest in Norway’s medieval history went beyond a one-time hobby. He was an avid reader of its legendary sagas, and particularly fascinated by the thirteenth-century mythic figure, Frithjof. The emperor’s fascination with this Norse hero took the German world of arts by storm; a mammoth statue of Frithjof was erected in Norway under Wilhelm’s patronage, and epic poems, operas and symphonies were composed based on the legends surrounding his life. Wilhelm’s near self-identification with this figure was not lost on Abdülhamid, who received a leather-bound and illustrated German translation of the saga Frithiof Sage (first

published as an epic poem in serial in the 1820s by the Swedish classicist Esaias Tegnér) from the German ruler that he kept as one of the highlights of his eclectic library collection.\footnote{103}{Aykut Arkan et al., eds., 

The product of Ahmed Midhat’s observations, his monumental and richly detailed travelogue Cevelânnâme (An Account of Wanderings) that was both presented to the sultan and also published, contains an elaborate description of the oldest Norwegian portables.\footnote{105}{Ahmet Mithat Efendi, Avrupa’da Bir Cevelan (İstanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 2015), 291-296.} Urged on by the organizers of the congress, Ahmed Midhat and his trusted colleague, the brilliant Russian polyglot Olga Sergeyevna Lebedeva, whom he called Madame Gülner, visited the trifecta of buildings—a Norwegian stave-church, a store-house, and a peasant’s cottage—arranged as an open-air museum in the forest of the Oscarshall, the neo-Gothic summer palace of the Swedish court. He reported on their arduous transportation from the mountains of Norway, the manner in which they were put together from opening scupper holes to exacting notches and interlocking pieces, their incredibly well-preserved, resin-producing, fibrous wood, and the comfort of their interiors and the beauty of their ornamental carvings. His description of the interior of the peasant’s cottage with its hearth and happy accoutrements of family life, where the owner is also the builder of his own home, matches the chalet lithographs in the sultan’s library. Ultimately, for Ahmed Midhat, in
their solidity (*metānet*) and constitution (*hey’et*), these examples of Norway’s oldest construction were far superior to any of Istanbul’s masonry structures. He would go even further and consider their woodwork on par with the East’s Greco-Roman city of Palmyra (which the journalist refers to in its Arabic name *Tadmür*) and the Achaemenid capital Persepolis, two sites renowned for their stone reliefs.

e. HAMIDIAN BUREAUCRATS AND THEIR HOUSE AND GARDEN COMPETITION

This new courtly architectural practice quickly spilled out of the palace and over into the domestic lives of the Ottoman bureaucratic elite.\(^{106}\) Many of the Sultan’s ministers followed suit in adorning their newly appointed properties, all in the neighborhood of Nişantaşı, in the vicinity of Yıldız, with miniature pavilions during their time of service. Yanko Ioannidis, the palace architect, constructed the mansion of the then-grand-vizier Küçük Said Paşa located at this bureaucratic town, in the image of Yıldız: a *harem* building, a separate *selamlık*, and a series of chalets for the many offices under Said’s viziership.\(^{107}\) Inside the gardens of his urban villa, Ahmed Süreyya Paşa (d. 1923), Abdülhamid’s head-clerk, added an eccentric turreted octagonal pavilion and later surrounded it with greenhouses (*fig. 4.35*). Kamil Paşa (d. 1913), a four-time grand vizier from Cyprus, had another, more traditional structure resembling a chalet perched over a grotto in his harem grounds (*fig. 4.36*). There were even more eccentric examples, like a two-floor, semi-circular pavilion with ogee and horseshoe-arched windows and encircling their

\(^{106}\) The blending of court’s architectural taste with that of the extra-courtly vernacular had preceded in the eighteenth century, when Ahmed III was inspired to build his palaces in the likeness of the wooden townhouses of his court officials, and preferred timber over stone. As observed by Sultan Ahmed III’s court chronicler Raşid, when building new pavilions inside the Topkapı Palace, the sultan consciously chose light and affordable wood (over ashlar masonry), which to him best represented the Istanbul vernacular for the capital’s residences, “kiosks in the style of the city’s dwellings” (*şehir binası tarzında köşkler*) that he so desperately wanted to emulate. Raşid Efendi, *Tārīh-i Raşid*, cild-i sālīş (İstanbul: Maṭba’a-ı ‘Amire, 1865), 307.

\(^{107}\) BOA, Y. A. HUS. 352/22. Also see, Oya Şenyurt, Oya Şenyurt, *İstanbul Rum Cemaatinin Osmanlı Mimarisindeki Temsiliyeti* (İstanbul: Doğu Kitabevi, 2010), 152.
verandas in the estate of a female member of the court (fig. 4.37). The morphological singularity of Istanbul’s miniature pavilions and chalets, all located in one neighborhood of Istanbul, call to mind that there was a certain level of competition in the leisurely pursuits of the higher-level Muslim and non-Muslim bureaucrats that played out through garden art (fig. 4.38). This competition was not limited to products of outdoor life, but so far these photographs provide the most visible proof of a consumption behavior that is intriguingly prevalent for the period and place.

Chalets did not appeal to everyone in Abdülhamid’s court. When the sultan bestowed a Nişantaşı residence—previously inhabited by Hobart Paşa (d. 1886), the British admiral of the Ottoman fleet, and among the imperial properties (emlak-i mahşuşa)—on Yusuf Rıza Paşa, the head of the immigration commission, the latter requested the removal of Hobart’s “imported chalet” (getirtmiş olduğu şale) from the premises. Yusuf Rıza’s 1887 appeal to the imperial treasury is nevertheless informative in providing the cost of the structure (two hundred and eighty Ottoman liras) as well as its disassembly (ten Ottoman liras). Furthermore, the fact that Hobart owned a chalet before the 1894 earthquake helps break the too easy connection between the increased popularity of these portables and architectural safety, and augments the case for a burgeoning taste for their use.

Abdülmecid Efendi, the sole recipient of photographs of Yıldız’s chalets under snow, who was an amateur designer of the interiors of his homes and gardens, amassed a library and architectural archive (still intact in the Dolmabahçe Palace Museum) that contains similar

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108 For a detailed study of the location and description of these no-longer extant konaks of the Hamidian bureaucrats, see Çetintaş, 230-331.

109 BOA, Y. MTV. 28/75.
examples of European mail-order catalogues for residences and garden pavilions. His preferences were edgier than his peers. He liked the extremely rustic products, made of untreated birch and oak, of a Saxon company called Voigt, whose catalogue foreword associated the “cultured man” (*Kulturmensch*), invested in the art of horticulture, with a natural inclination towards reproducing the “free and untouched nature of the wilderness” (*der freien und berührten Vegetation in der Wildnis*) in his surroundings.\(^{110}\) The “primitive” dragon-headed log cabins of the Norwegian prefabrication company *Strømmen Traevarefabrik* seem to have had considerable attraction for this Ottoman Romantic, who kept a torn and folded page from the catalogue that displayed the company’s thirty-fifth building type (fig. 4.39).

Memoirs of Abdülhamid’s niece Mevhibe Celaleddin—whose grandfather Mahmud Celaleddin was implicated in the dethronement of Abdülaziz, and who was therefore on strained terms with Abdülhamid—provide insights into how seductive Yıldız was in the architectural and landscaping choices of her family members. Behind a small kiosk in the groves of their Kandilli estate, her father installed “an exact replica of Abdülhamid’s artificial, winding harem-side lake” (*Yıldız’daki havuzun tıpatıp eşi*), and populated it with ducks, swans, and flamingos imported from Europe.\(^{111}\) While Abdülhamid’s court overlooked (and perhaps even encouraged and financed) the imitation of its architecture in the gardens of its closest statesmen, it seems to have impressed a different protocol on certain members of the extended family who did not have the best of relations with the sultan. When Mevhibe Celaleddin’s father’s candid imitations of the palace’s garden structures like the dovecotes were noticed by the palace cronies, it was asked that they be dismantled for their presumed role in communicating with the American College in

\(^{110}\) The Dolmabahçe Museum Library has assigned this catalogue the number 2009.

\(^{111}\) Korle, *Geçmiş Zaman Olur ki*, 70-71.
Bebek through carrier pigeons.\textsuperscript{112} This event apparently did not deter him as, a short while later, he built a twenty-seven-room kiosk on the highest point of the grove with a noticeable tower following the fad for turreted pavilions like the one on Süreyya Paşa’s small Nişantaşı pavilion.\textsuperscript{113}

Towers were fast becoming competitive architectural features among Istanbul’s elite. In Abdülmecid Efendi’s architectural archives there was an unrealized and undated project to add a Gothic, minaret-like tower (with a round base, but with another sketched on the side with a square one) to be appended on the roof of his extravagantly Alhambresque mansion in Acıbadem (\textit{fig. 4.40}).\textsuperscript{114} If Süreyya Paşa’s small turret was innocuous to the court, the Hamidian vigilantes could not so easily stomach khedive Abbas Hilmi Paşa’s construction of a stately tower adorning his Tuscan villa with art nouveau features on the hills of Çubuklu. Once its intrusiveness was reported to the palace, Abdülhamid requested its height to be lowered from some three hundred steps to about half of that because it aspired to compete with the city’s minarets.\textsuperscript{115} The architectural and stylistic intent of Abbas Hilmi and his wife Princess Djavidan’s (\textit{née} Marianne May Török de Szendrő) for their Çubuklu residence was, in fact, nothing more than to replicate their beloved Alexandrian home \textit{Qasr al-Muntaza}, whose harem building supported a

\textsuperscript{112} Korle, 72-73.

\textsuperscript{113} Ibid., 73.

\textsuperscript{114} This drawing is among Abdülmecid Efendi’s undigitized and uncatalogued archives in the Dolmabahçe Palace Museum Collection, stored in one of the rooms of the palace’s Mabeyn section designated for the display of the last caliph’s private library.

magnificent hybrid of a Florentine tower and a Mamluk minaret on one end and a shorter belvedere/mirador on the other (fig. 4.41).

The khedival estate in Çubuklu was also not behind the trend in imported chalets. Like his grandfather Ismail, who had installed one on the hilltop of his sprawling Emirgan forest, Abbas Hilmi seems to have bought a prize-winning, exhibition pavilion produced in Switzerland. It landed on the shores of the Bosphorus with its “wooden fixtures, paneling, gabled roof, carved windowsills and balconies,” in a multitude of containers. Once it was erected, its interiors were fully refurbished in the “Turkish” style with marble cladding.116 This incongruity between the exteriors and interiors of chalets was particular to the Ottoman case, but these structures, whose inner walls and floors were untreated, were conducive to the decorative whims and tastes of their diverse owners. We see Abdülhamid’s catalogue-inspired Cihannüma chalet bearing decorative elements of chinoiserie in its living room, while the Şale Pavilion’s interiors were equal-part Rococo and Alhambresque. Princess Djavidan, a European gone-native, is the only commentator on these buildings in their new foreign environments. She contemplates the out-of-placeness of her husband’s hobby-home, whose “fibrous timber and interlocked joints swelled and stretched,” and remarks upon the overall experience of a shaded grove with an Alpine structure on an Istanbul hilltop as one of make-believe.117 In a few short decades the typology that Djavidan finds out-of-place is so completely acclimatized to the Bosphorus hills and shorelines that it defines what we consider today to be the unassailable representative of Istanbul’s nineteenth-century domestic vernacular.


117 Ibid., 236.
Analogous to Djavidan’s reading of her husband’s chalet as atypical of its surroundings, Ahmed İhsan, the founder of the journal Servet-i Fünün, also provides an instance of how the typology of the chalet was initially unwelcome to certain residents of Istanbul. In his autobiography, the journalist mentions a Süleyman Sudi Efendi, who with his large library of Turkish and French books would inspire Ahmed İhsan’s love of literature, who had built one of the first chalets in the suburb of Erenköy. It was a structure so unique for its time and place that according to Ahmed İhsan it managed to enrage the capital’s conservatives. It was certainly not a coincidence that when the journalist ventured into the business of construction (to which I will soon return), when news censorship under Abdülhamid II worsened, he chose to manufacture chalets, and ended up being incredibly successful.  

We have very little of written record from the period to help us illustrate the Ottomans’ interactions with these novel, experimental buildings that they crafted for their private use, let alone the intense planning that went into their stylistic choices. Although the owners of these structures were first and foremost writers who spent their lives with ink and paper, they did not reveal much in their writings about their world of objects, domestic interiors and exteriors. When they wrote—and they wrote a lot—they were focused on matters of state. Novels structured around lives in stately konaks, yalıs, and köşks, are the closest we get to an account of the centrality of these crowded, multi-generational homes in people’s lives. For instance, the grandson of Abdülhamid’s Ottoman Greek banker Yorgo Zarifis, talks about garden life in his

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118 Ahmet İhsan Tokgöz, Matbuat Hatıralarım, It is unfortunately unclear to whom the journalist refers with the term “tutucular,” but this Süleyman Sudi with his chalet and library seems to have garnered attention for his particular lifestyle.

119 Ibid., 91-93.

120 For the most comprehensive work on what homes signified for their owners in the post-Tanzimat novels, their relationship to state and society, see Handan İnci Elçi, Türk Romanında Ev (Istanbul: Arma Yayınları, 2003).
ancestral house in the shores of the Bosphorus as being spent in and around these ephemeral structures, and the fact that hiking between them was a particularly popular pastime for the women and children of the household. Impressionistic wanderings *en plein air* became a part of the summertime activities of the landed gentry.\(^{121}\)

Novels of the era are also imbued with lengthy pastoral observations of beloved hilltop sites such as Çamlıca that often reflected the inner worlds of their protagonists. Perhaps the most famous of these, Namık Kemal’s *İntibah* (Rebirth), commences with an association of the arrival of the month of spring with the budding infatuation of its protagonist Ali Bey with the devious temptress Mahpeyker in Çamlıca’s popular public park.\(^{122}\) Kasım Ayverdi’s deeply autobiographical novel *İbrahim Paşa Konağı* (The Mansion of İbrahim Paşa) reserves the wilder, unlandscaped part of the estate for the enjoyment of the women of the family. In the novel, we see them venture beyond the orchard gate of the estate to take mountain hikes in absolute silence, exhilarated by their act of trespass into the unknown wilderness. The narrator describes the seasonal change of the mansion’s flora exclusively through the eyes of these women, while the men toil away in the administrative offices of the state. Furthermore, this unconventional family saga also touches upon the expansion of the culture of *teferrüc* (strolling for pleasure) and indicates that such outings were helmed by women alone, who often flouted the boundaries of their constricted outdoor life by venturing to sites farther and farther away from their homes.\(^{123}\)

If small kiosks and pavilions served as precious rest stops in the Ottoman elites’ summer residences, the ones erected on the flatter grounds of Nişantaşı’s bureaucratic neighborhood

\(^{121}\) Yorgo L. Zarifi, *Hatıralarım: Kaybolan Bir Dünya*, 1800-1920 (İstanbul: Literatür, 2005), 137-139.

\(^{122}\) Kasım Ayverdi, *İbrahim Efendi Konağı* (İstanbul: Baha Matbaası, 1964), 163-165.

\(^{123}\) Ibid., 168.
perhaps functioned as small writing retreats. Propelled by the increase in the number of local newspapers and journals where different genres were published as serials, the late-nineteenth century saw an efflorescence in the production not only of fiction but also of gradually more introspective non-fiction. Larger numbers of men and to some extent women-of-letters wrote for a living, and increasingly felt the urge to document their lives and times during the accelerated upheavals of an empire in the late-nineteenth century. The intimate interiors of these individuals’ workspaces gained so much public attention that photographs of their study rooms occupied the front-pages of Servet-i Fünün in 1898: hücre-i iştigāl or hücre-i mütālaʿa in Ottoman Turkish described the French captions for “la cabinet du travail.” These incredibly detailed shots offered the readers an insider’s scoop on the tools of these individuals’ trades (fig. 4.42). These photographs also divulged the decorative tastes of their owners: grand and ornate Empire style desks and carefully arranged busts and portraits, overflowing bookshelves, upturned volumes, animal skins, carpets on walls, and even photographs of loved ones pasted onto brocaded curtains.

In this context, where private interiors became popular hermitic spaces for intellectual work, ministers and scribal members of the court who inhabited the palace-owned Nişantaşı garden compounds for the duration of their tenure were prolific in penning reform tracts and political memoirs. In some ways, their professional rivalry played out not only through these structures but also and more directly through their writerly output. For instance, Süreyya Paşa published his little-known Ḥayāt-i ʿOsmānī (Ottoman Existence) of 1881, a text that begins with a brief history of the Ottomans and continues with the state’s agricultural and industrial advancements, while positing the centrality of the empire’s railway systems, as a serial in the

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124 For instance the covers of Servet-i Fünün, no. 368, no. 376, and no. 378 from 1898, respectively exhibit the private studies of the artist Halil Bey, and physicians Besim Ömer Bey, and Cemil Paşa (later Topuzlu).
official newspaper Ceride-i Havadiş. Kamil Paşa was even more prolific in his scholarly endeavors: he left behind a three-volume political history of the Ottoman Empire that covered its origins up to the reign of Abdülmejid, and a contrite political memoir of his viziership under Abdülhamid. He also contributed to the genre of polemical texts by publishing a refutation of his rivals’ published memoirs that singled him out in the failings of the state. Süreyya and Kamil Paşa’s Nişantaşı neighbor Tunuslu Hayreddin Paşa (d. 1890) had perhaps the most lavish of these bureaucratic lodgings, the construction of which was never fully completed during his tenure because he kept changing his mind about its architectural and stylistic elements. Most importantly, and certainly beyond his obvious penchant for buildings and decoration, he was recruited by Abdülhamid for the position of grand vizier due to his extremely popular reform tract of 1868, titled Akwam al-masâlik fî ma‘rifat ahwâl al-mamâlik (The Surest Path to Knowledge Regarding the Condition of Countries) on the reasons and projected solutions for social, political, and economic decline in the Muslim world.

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125 This publication is mentioned in Artan’s article “Topkapı Sarayı Arşivi’ndeki Bir Grup Mimari Çizimin Düşündürükleri,” 17-18. Artan finds clues to their agency as architectural patrons in their eagerness to gauge the political atmosphere of their time, and in the rise of a kind of socially engaged introspective mood among the upper echelons of the Ottoman bureaucracy in general. Süreyya Paşa’s deeply pan-Ottomanist tract was later published as a book under the title Hayât-i ‘Osmâniye Bir Nâzar (A View on Ottoman Existence) in 1908.


127 Kamil Paşa and Mehmed Said Paşa’s (d. 1914) confrontational correspondences were collected under a single volume: see Gül Çağatay-Güven, ed., II. Abdülhamid’in Sădrazamlar, Kamil Paşa ve Said Paşa’nın Anıları, Polemikleri (Istanbul: Arba, 1921).

128 Even during Hayreddin Paşa’s lifetime his work found considerable international acclaim. The introductory chapter of his four-volume opus was translated into French soon after the Arabic original, see Le général Khéridine, Réformes nécessaires aux États musulmans: essai formant la première partie de l’ouvrage politique et statistique intitulé, La plus sure direction pour connaître l’état des nations (Paris: Dupont, 1868); I could not locate the Arabic to Ottoman translation that Artan cites in her article, commissioned by Abdülhamid in 1878, but for a discussion of Hayreddin Paşa’s political thought, and a full citation of the Ottoman text, see the “Hayreddin Paşa” section in Şerif Mardin, The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought: a Study in the Modernization of Turkish Political Ideas (NY: Syracuse University Press, 2000), 387; for the English translation of the introduction, see Leon Carl Brown, The Surest Path: The Political Treatise of a Nineteenth-Century Muslim Statesman (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967). Although he did not accept the second term of his grand-viziership, preferring instead to return to
It is tempting to compare these small hermitic spaces, constructed in the gardens of Ottoman bureaucrats to serve as rooms for the contemplation of one’s political existence and service to an aging empire, in terms of their function, with Charles Dickens’s quaint little study inside his imported two-floor chalet (fig. 4.43). Charles Fechter, a Comédie-Française actor and close friend to the writer, gifted Dickens the Swiss prefab in 1865, “which arrived from Paris in ninety-four pieces, fitting together like the joints of a puzzle, but proved to be somewhat costly in setting on its legs by means of a foundation of brickwork.” Installed in the forested gardens of Dickens’s Gadshill residence, the chalet was reached through an underground passage, and adorned with mirrors that reflected the woodland views and the river Thames, and it was where he would write during the summer months of his last five years.

Like the Ottomans, nineteenth-century Qajars also carried their political rivalries into their Tehran residences. Analogous to the emulative practices in the Ottoman capital, Nasir al-Din Shah’s two rival viziers deliberately changed the names of their sprawling garden estates not only to intimate their engagement with international landscaping trends, but also to proclaim their status among the political community in Iran. Mirza ʿAli Khan (d. 1904), a close confidant of the shah, an anti-ulema diarist, and a follower of European sartorial and domestic customs, transformed his bāgh-i Amīn al-Dawla to pārk-i Amīn al-Dawla, which was a site renowned for its diplomatic banquets and included a mansion constructed according to European plans among

Tunis, Hayreddin was not able to leave Istanbul due to the French invasion of Tunisia in 1881. It was during this time of self-imposed exile that we find Hayreddin penning his memoirs in his Istanbul home.


130 Ibid., 152.

131 Ibid.
its several amenities (fig. 4.44).\textsuperscript{132} Analogously, his younger rival in matters of economic reform, Mirza ā‘z Asghar Khan (d. 1907), who enjoyed a long period of grand viziership serving all three of the last Qajar shahs,\textsuperscript{133} converted his garden’s designation to park-i Atābak.\textsuperscript{134} Their choice of the word “park” is not surprising in a period when British economic influence dominated the Qajar market. These two influential estate-owning bureaucrats also boasted their diverging statuses through official titles. The older vizier’s title was one that was deeply rooted in the Qajar tradition: amīn al-dawla, which meant the trusted supporter of the dynasty. His younger rival ā‘z Ali Asghar invented one drawing on Seljuk-Turkic titulature, atābak-i a‘żam, which was only used during his tenure as grand vizier.

The voluminous ā‘z Ali Khan Vali album provides photographs of Mirza ā‘z Ali Khan’s Palladian villa, a multi-story structure with heavyset Doric balconies and surrounded by a vast garden. The photographs of the garden zero in on an octagonal pavilion surrounded by a light trellised portico, which is supported on a cascading rockery with a cavernous, grotto-like opening that led to its ground floor. In the photograph’s subtitle, the pavilion is called the kulāh-i farāngī (European’s hat), which is a structure that shares a resemblance with Ottoman pavilions that imitated tents and were referred to as çadır pavilions.\textsuperscript{135} In both the Qajar and Ottoman examples, it was a time-honored designatory convention to derive building names from the morphologies of other objects. Much like the Ottoman çadır pavilions that appeared in various imperial gardens (but most notably in Yıldız, Kağthane, and Maslak), the kulāh-i farāngī was a

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{134} Ali Reza Sheikholeslami, “Integration of Qajar Persia in the World Capitalist System,” \textit{The Iranian Journal of International Affairs} 12 (Spring, 2000), 290.
  \item \textsuperscript{135} The album of photographs by the Qajar governor Ali Khan Vali (1845-1902), consisting of 1,412 albumen photographs is housed in the Special Collections of Harvard University’s Fine Arts Library.
\end{itemize}
popular building attribute for a variety of Safavid and Qajar garden pavilions generally following octagonal plans.\textsuperscript{136} The competitive eclecticism of the Qajar homes and gardens were not lost on an Ottoman female journalist, who suggested that the only other city after Istanbul where the homeowners strove to make their residence singular was Tehran.\textsuperscript{137}

f. BUILDING PRACTICES, ARCHITECTURAL SOURCES, AND RESOURCES

Mail order catalogues, architectural pattern books, and building manuals in circulation in the nineteenth-century Ottoman capital, help us to make sense of the ever-problematic dearth of Ottoman architectural drawings: why do we come across so few of them in the archives, even those from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that we would have expected to survive? A few examples, though currently only anecdotal ones, elucidate aspects of this source scarcity and shed some light on how Ottoman builders engaged with these architectural aids. The first two of these examples reflect almost direct transferences from paper model to full reproduction.

Abdüllâzîz’s two forested hunting estates located on both sides of Istanbul (Ayazağa and Acıbadem), were both centered on compact neoclassical urban mansions almost identical to Yıldız’s Mabeyn Kiosk. These two sites also contained identical wooden hunting pavilions that are strikingly close to variants found in the architect Jean Boussard’s illustrated compilation of small structures (including plans and elevations) built for well-known eighteenth-and nineteenth-

\textsuperscript{136} Jennifer Scarce, “The Arts of the Eighteenth to Twentieth Centuries,” in The Cambridge History of Iran, From Nadir Shah to the Islamic Republic, vol. 7, ed. Peter Avery, Gavin Hambly, and Charles Melville (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 906-907. Using Pascal Coste’s and Eugène Flandin’s plans and illustrations found in their Monuments modernes de la Perse (1867) Scarce identifies a Zand dynasty (1750-1794) example of a kulāh-i farāngī in Karim Khan Zand’s (d. 1779) palace annex in his capital Shiraz. The designation seems also to have been used later in Qajar pavilions, and although it often seems to refer to a specific typology—an “octagonal structure with a shallow dome and overhanging eaves”—one finds it being assigned at times more indiscriminately to garden pavilions in general. For the continuing use of the pavilion designation from Zand to Qajar rule, see Penelope Hobhouse, The Gardens of Persia (San Diego: Kales Press, 2004), 125 and 140.

\textsuperscript{137} Münevver Ayaşlı, Dersaadet (Istanbul: Bedir Yaynevi, 1993), 91.
century French gardens titled *Décorations pour jardins, kiosques, orangeries, volières, abris divers* from 1881 (figs. 4.45–4.46). Sarkis Balyan derived his Ottoman commission from a fancy ibex shelter in Paris’s *Jardin des plants*. The Ottoman pavilions, like their French model, are simple square boxes with oversized hipped roofs whose hanging eaves were supported by thin columns surrounding the buildings on all sides. Even though they are formally identical to the French model, they do diverge in aspects of their ornamentation. On the small pavilions, Balyan added elaborate corbels under the eaves and wooden trellises between the columns, changed the elongated Gothic apertures of the shed to rectangular ones with shutters, and clad the exteriors and interiors, from floor to ceiling, with painted geometric patterns of ornamentation. He also lifted the heights of the two Ottoman pavilions to accommodate an entresol for musicians, which is apparent from the grilled clerestory windows on the buildings’ exteriors. Lastly, the rustic French shed with its thatched and ivy-covered roof was covered in the Ottoman version by brick tiles to provide better shelter after a hunt.

The Ottoman court’s architectural projects that serviced its own internal needs, be it for pleasure or more mundane palace functions, appear in building and site survey documents as cutouts from volumes like Boussard’s. This is, to my mind, the reason why we hardly ever find these volumes intact and complete in library collections that belonged to the members of the court. Victor Petit’s unbound lithographs in what remains of Yıldız’s library are another good example. Carefully torn and appended pages from these types of volumes appear at random in documents from the Yıldız archives that describe imperial building commissions. A laborious list of construction specs for a sizable aviary can be partnered with an illustration from an unknown French treatise on garden structures to guide the builder (fig. 4.47). In another instance, a color

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138 This eclectic assortment of construction related documents are catalogued under İÜMK 93209.
lithograph of the cross-section of a barn is bundled inside a similar building’s expense document. These blueprints traveled from the desks of the commissioners to the building sites, some survived, but most did not. The documents describing the construction of a building from its foundation to its roofing often refers its audience to numbered drawings (*resim* or *resmi alınmış plan*), which were probably displaced for closer scrutiny while building.

A set of Ottoman inter-ministerial correspondences from 1893 better reveal how court-sponsored building commissions made use of architectural catalogues in making formal selections. These documents disclose in considerable detail the architectural preparations that were undertaken for the ambitious Ottoman exposition of agriculture and industry.

To determine what the exhibition pavilions would look like, a committee was formed from the heads of the Ministry of Forestry, Mining, and Agriculture (*Ormân, Ma’âdin ve Zirâ’at Nezâreti*), as well as celebrated cultural movers of the period such as Osman Hamdi Bey, the director of the Imperial Museum, and Alexandre Vallaury, the influential local architect and instructor in the capital’s School of Fine Arts. This unrealized project—halted when the 1894 earthquake quickly turned the court’s attention to citywide repairs—was Raimondo D’Aronco’s ticket to long-term employment as architect and engineer in Abdülhamid’s court and in various other state institutions.

Before the committee decided to invite the Italian architect, who is referred to as “mühendis” in the documents, to supervise the project, they had already studied (the verb defined interchangeably by the words *taṭbîk*, *tedâkîk* and *kırâ’at*) “Italian exposition pavilions and adapted aspects from their designs with ones that were drafted locally by the ministries’ commissioned architects” (*resim ve şüret kararlaşdırılmak üzere gerek İtalyan sergileri resimlerini în ve gerek*).

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139 For the commission reports, I have consulted BOA, I..DUİT. 136/12; İ..DUİT. 136/13; İ..DUİT. 136/14; and, İ..OM..2/1312.
The commission’s local architect was most likely Vallaury, who had a hand in the project’s pre-D’Aronco phase. The committee had also predetermined the building materials: the requisite for any nineteenth-century exposition, iron, as well as brick and stone. The imperial arsenal would produce these permanent structures.

Instead of completely handing over choices of design and creativity to the imported foreign architect, state patronage relied principally on the expertise of its local actors. The foreign hire was only brought in as a consultant. Furthermore, decisions about buildings that were meant to pronounce imperial presence or a national idiom, such as exhibition pavilions (Usul being a great example of this phenomenon), required rigorous collaborations. Local experts were relied upon with openness to foreign consultation, and the building or site’s final look was a composite of carefully studied paper models and vernacular practices, and contingent upon the availability of materials, appointment of production facilities, and specific conditions of the project’s allotted site. The committee frequently uses the word birleşdirilmek, meaning “conjoining,” to describe how catalogue models and Vallaury’s plans were handled. Related, moreover, to the separation of complementary plans from their construction manuals is the interesting fact that the only available drawing of this project in Istanbul’s archives is found within Yıldız’s library collection (now a part of the Istanbul University Library) and not among the committee’s correspondences in the Prime Minister’s Archives that frequently refer to this misplaced numbered drawing.

Access to architectural catalogues and pattern books, from which a patron could pick and choose, mixing and matching various kinds of material and stylistic details for this home, was not limited to state actors. When Abdülhamid II revived the Sultanahmet School of Industry (Mekteb-i Şanāyi’), which was founded under Âli, Fuad and Midhat Paşas, the three principal
standard-bearers of the Tanzimat, to serve as a vocational arts-and-crafts school for the city’s underprivileged, its library was stocked with books for an expanded curriculum. Abdülhamid’s transformation of the school was a part of the larger goal to increase the use and circulation of local products in the empire’s territories. The students were also expected to contribute to state projects such as the construction of the unrealized 1894 exposition, as well as to sell products such as metal knobs and wooden cabinetry in local fairs held in the city’s squares. The best ones where selected to work in the sultan’s carpentry ateliers. Accordingly, the expanding collection of the school’s library included volumes in Turkish and various European languages on smithery, smeltery, turnery, carpentry, and small-scale architectural construction.

A French four-volume edition titled Petites constructions françaises from 1894 by Emile Thézard, a prolific publisher of illustrated construction manuals on everyday architecture and practical buildings, stands among the still extant but underutilized library collection in the Ottoman crafts school’s original site. In each of the pages in Thézard’s Petites constructions, a colored elevation precedes a plan, cross-section, and builder’s key (fig. 4.48). The key provides a description of the building’s construction starting from its foundation and moving up to its frame, joinery, ironwork, carpentry, glazing, and paint. Furthermore, it provides specific

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140 For the Ottoman state’s implementation of local production and kindling of demand for Ottoman goods, see Ersoy, Architecture and the Late Ottoman Historical Imaginary, 60.

141 Mehmet Ali Yıldırım, Dersaadet Sanayi Mektebi, Istanbul Sanayi Mektebi 1868-1926 (Istanbul: Kitabevi, 2013), 79-118. Yıldırım’s chronological study of the school introduces a Monsieur Servier, who was brought in during Abdülhamid’s reign specifically to transform the curriculum to a practice-oriented one whereby the graduates could be employed in the state factories and railways, and be assigned as instructors in the arts-and-crafts schools in the provinces.

142 This particular set of books is displayed in the school’s museum, Cumhuriyet Müzesi, likely for its lavish green Yıldız bindings and also because for the small museum’s curators, the colored lithographs offered more enticing displays than the more technical books in the library collection. Another Thézard publication with the price-conscious and egalitarian title “a house for all” that the museum exhibits, albeit one missing many of its pages, is the Petites villas de 3000 a 10000 fr. édifiées récemment par divers architectes: la maison pour tous.
information on materials such as their different sources of origin (e.g. “stone from Hauterive,” or “slate from Angers”), and costs.

Thézard’s particular presentation of the contents of his volumes to his readership is indicative of the very mobile process of exchange between the patron and builder: each individual page is unbound and quarter-folded hence easily transportable between home-owner and chosen architect, and between the shelves of a private library and the site of construction. Furthermore, the lacuna in the serially numbered models in each of the extant volumes in the school’s library suggest that these sheets were indeed physically removed by its students, used, and not returned.\textsuperscript{143}

Like Loudon’s volumes, Thézard’s also targets the middle class. Most of the house typologies bear the title “maison bourgeois,” and are considerably scaled-down versions of the grand townhouses and country cottages of the aristocracy, but replete with all the novelties that once defined the taste of only that specific social class. Sample structures offer myriad possibilities to customize one’s property: landscaping ideas, tower-like projections, dovecotes, hobby-rooms, ateliers, wine-cellar, Gothic to Neoclassical ornamental schemes, and even sculptural reliefs on entrance facades. In these volumes, too, the chalet-esque country-cottage continues to dominate the aesthetic of the suburban garden villa.\textsuperscript{144}

The Ottoman artisanal classes were quick to acquire the skills to read and transpose from the plans and drawings on prefab catalogues and manuals for more sophisticated residences.

\textsuperscript{143} Besides the copies found in the Crafts School in Sultanahmet, four volumes in the library of the Canadian Center for Architecture (CCA) also lacked a complete set of the original plates.

\textsuperscript{144} Two sources best document examples of the striking range of wooden residential structures, street-by-street, that populated the Islands and the neighborhood of Kadıköy, two popular suburban escapes of the Istanbul residents: see Pars Tuğlaç, \textit{Tarih Boyunca İstanbul Adaları}, 2 vols. (İstanbul: Say Yayınları, 1995); and Müfıt Ekthal, \textit{Kapalı Hayat Kutusu: Kadıköy Konakları} (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2004). For the astounding diversity found among these domestic types, also see Perihan Balcı, \textit{Eski İstanbul Evleri ve Boğazıçı Yalıları} (İstanbul: Apa Ofset Başmevi, 1980).
provided by publications like Thézard’s. However, it is important not to forget that Istanbul’s local builders were often already proficient in woodworking. For centuries, the principal structural material of Ottoman residential construction in the capital had been lumber, and its ornamental wood—the most prestigious among them being oak (*meşe*). The two consecutive construction supervisors of the German embassy’s summer residence in Tarabya, renowned German archaeologist Wilhelm Dörpfeld and his younger successor, the architect Armin Wegner, were greatly impressed, for instance, by the agility of the local Greek carpenters, who displayed fast dexterity in the layering mastic on joints and cracks and in their use of nails to hold the wood together. The German architects were also fascinated by their expert carving of the decorative façade features of these “cottage style” buildings: these foreigners left it up to their builders to make the fundamental structural and stylistic choices, and build wooden buildings over masonry ones.

Dörpfeld’s and Wegner’s observations also highlight the fact that earthquake safety was prioritized over fire safety in the city’s construction practice. The process of building in the Ottoman context was inherently one of mediation between local expertise and foreign sources, between local temperament and skill and imported forms. There was such an intense give and take between building experts and the materials involved that the end product often manifested a unique composite morphology. The origins of its individual components and the decisions that went into its composition are today hard to parse out.

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145 One of the products of local mastery is the carpentry manual produced by one of the loyal teachers of the School of Industry: Ali Tal’at, *Sanâyî’-i İnşâiye ve Mi’mâriyeden Doğramacılık, Marangoz ve Silicilik I’malatına Âid Mebâhis*, ed. Süleyman Faruk Göncüoğlu and Davut Türksever (Istanbul: İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi, Kiptaş, 2008).

146 Parts of Wegner’s detailed report on the building process with a list of local and imported building materials is provided in Martin Bachmann, “The Summer Residence of the German Embassy,” in Wooden Istanbul, Examples from Housing Architecture, 309-317.
Exactly around the time that foreign builders expressed their admiration for the expertise of Ottoman craftsmen, local building companies were beginning to attract their urban clientele with promises of machine age production. In the spring months of 1896, just in time for konâk owners to begin setting up their gardens for the summer, a sawmill and lumberyard in Ahırkapı with the ambitious name of “Ottoman House of Industry” (Dâr-âs’ânâyi-i ‘Osmâniyye) ran a large, eye-catching, illustrated advertisement in the widely circulating Ottoman newspaper İkdâm (Perseverance). The local company promoted its manufacturing services by producing a quaint image of a small chalet—formally similar to Kamil Paşa’s wooden pavilion in the harem garden of his Nişantaşı mansion—inscribed within a baroque frame (fig. 4.49). Strewn on either side of this miniature house are all its deconstructed parts and requisite tools: a workbench, carpenter’s plane, joineries, mortises, “moldings, carved wooden lacework” (silmeler ve oymalı dantelâlar), door and window frames, and the quintessential “steam operated machine” (neccâr mâkineleri) that gave the factory license to call itself a house of industry. In fact, the efficiency and precision of the “machine” (mâkine) and “technically advanced looms organized according to new methods” (munţazam ve nev-uşûl desţgâhlar) were juxtaposed here with the “hand of the craftsman” (silmeci ve ṭoγramacılârîn elî ile vûcûda getireceği ma‘mûlât), “incomparable” in its ability to systematically reproduce an ornate frame or molding (aşlâ muкâyese olunamayacağı derkârdîr). The factory makes three promises for the final product: “tastefulness” (ţarâfet), “inexpensiveness” (ehveniyet), and “speed of construction” (sur‘at-i ‘imâl).148

147 İkdâm, March 12, 1896.
148 These three requisites adopted the selling points of the Norwegian frame-houses that first popularized the idea of quick and easy residence construction: one of their many proponents in the journal correspondents of 1883, a P. Lowzow would promote their elegant lightness, attractive appearance, strength, and low-cost: P. Lowzow, “Norwegian Style of Building,” The Builder, May 26, 1883, 706.
A growing industrial enterprise, completely owned and operated by two local partners (komandit şirketi), a certain Rauf Bey and Ahmed İhsan, the journalist and owner of Servet-i Fünûn, the “Ottoman House of Industry” sourced its wood, the sturdy and resinous çığdene, from the Black Sea. Another illustration of this factory from an earlier editorial foregrounded the waterfront facility with ships carrying lumber into its ateliers (fig. 4.50). The meandering waters of the Black Sea, along with a serpentine dragon, frame the factory building with forests and cut wood on one side, and a chalet on the other. The factory also had “its own drawing offices and architects” (kendine mahşuş resimhânesi ve huşuşî miʿmârları). With its swift production and design-consultation services, the company quickly adorned the popular suburbs of Istanbul such as Göztepe, Kızıltoprak, Kuruçeşme and Büyükada with “elegant and graceful buildings and mansions” (zarîf ve laṭīf binālar ve kâşâneler). There were others that continued to import structures from Europe, like the Levantine architect Alexandre M. Raymund, whose side-job was acting as the commercial agent in Istanbul for a Swedish prefabricated house company, Hogéling & Sundström from Stockholm. Raymund advertised the company’s “salubrious, economical, urban and rural dwellings” in his French-language journal Le Génie civil ottoman for engineers and architects working in the Ottoman domains (fig. 4.51).

Istanbul’s savvy nineteenth-century urbanites, even those without ties to the Ottoman court and bureaucracy, found access to varieties of architectural styles in affordable prices when constructing their residences, and knew how to negotiate their terms. Their architectural taste was stronger and experimentally more audacious than models introduced by figures like Thézard

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149 “Dârü’s-Ṣanâyi-i ʿOsmâniyye,” Servet-i Fünûn, 12 October 1899.

150 Ibid.

151 I thank my colleague Mehmet Kentel for sharing this advertisement with me and helping me in my pursuit of all available information on these imports.
for his French bourgeois consumer. The burgeoning Ottoman middle classes were not mere copyists of foreign exempla, especially when it came to their domestic surroundings. They poured great effort into making their homes appear visually distinct. A great example of this consumption frenzy over domestic typologies is reflected in Halid Ziya’s novel Kırık Hayatlar (Fractured Lives) of 1901. The story revolves around an Istanbul doctor’s obsession over building a köşk on Şişli’s main artery to the popular public promenade, Kağıthane. To create the perfect home for his devoted wife and daughter, and also to impress the passers-by traveling to and from Kağıthane, the novel’s protagonist consults with architects, looks through architectural catalogues and also goes to study built examples in the fashionable neighborhoods of Moda, Tarabya, and Büyükada—the very places that the “Ottoman House of Industry” serviced. Once all decisions are made, the doctor’s house rises as if it were “carved out of paper like light and elegant embroidery”(kağitten oyulmuş kadar ince, hoş oya).152

For the owners of the Ahırkapı lumber factory, working from samples or patterns and plans brought in by their prospective clients (gösterilen numâne ve plan üzerine hâne inşâsi) came with a caveat: price-negotiations that were dependent on the chosen residential style (pâzârlık ile karârlaşdıracak fi’ât). By 1911, Mehmed İzzet’s Rehber showed how ingrained and systematized house-commissions had become standardized legal practices in the city by incorporating a contract template to be signed between the buyer and builder—the latter, either a master builder (kalfa) or contractor (müte’âhhid). Using images of small French urban mansions and country estates lifted from publications like Thézard’s manuals (fig. 4.52), Mehmed İzzet lists a useful step-by-step negotiation and pricing process for the home-buyer under his lengthy

152 Halid Ziya, Kırık Hayatlar, 30.
encyclopedic entry on the house (ev). However, not everything about this process was gathered from foreign manuals. In keeping with the client’s economic status, Mehmed İzzet divided the house-type into three kinds, the economical (idārel or ‘ādī), moderate (ortā), and elaborate (mükellef), which recalls the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Ottoman architects’ drafting of three alternatively sized plans for their patrons to choose from. Then he produces an elaborate matrix, in which he matches different qualities of materials, the lowest often being factory-produced, standard sized items, into the pricing on each of the three categories of houses: the most expensive house would, of course, be built with the most durable wood and with customized trimmings. The author knows the market and sourcing of local as well as imported materials (especially for wood, brick and cement), what part of the building they are best suited for, and average prices of each item per size and weight. His lengthy entry on the construction of residences not only points to the continued prevalence of timber use over stone in civil architecture at the turn of the century, but also to a firmly-established, empire-wide standardization of the size and cost of the selected materials.

CONCLUSION

Sedad Hakkı Eldem, the consummate chronicler of Ottoman garden and building typologies, coins the phrase “Erenköy Style” to describe the eclectic wooden residences that were built by the growing number of nineteenth-century homeowners in the ever-expanding suburban

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153 Mehmed İzzet, Rehber I, 231-246.


155 The clearest example that I have found on the empire-wide standardization of construction materials and a list of local suppliers is found in a work on the construction of the Hejaz Railway that was deliberately commissioned from local builders, see Alexander M. Raymund, Notes pratiques et résumés sur l’art du constructeur en Turquie. Contenant 180 croquis et 15 planches hors texte (Alexandrie: Typolithographie centrale I. Della Rocca, 1908).
neighborhoods of Istanbul. The most striking examples of wooden façade decorations among these residences were clustered in the vast gardens and orchards of Istanbul’s Asian district of Erenköy that had views overlooking its neighboring Prince’s Islands. Produced by construction companies like the “Ottoman House of Industry,” and catering to a design-savvy urban clientele, these playfully competitive, personalized structures became so localized and ingrained in Istanbul’s built environment that today they are considered the most iconic representatives of Ottoman Istanbul’s domestic vernacular. By the 1910s, characters in the most widely read novels—which were published as serials and illustrated—naturally lived in chalet-esque homes, and were often depicted in repose looking out onto their heavily landscaped gardens (fig. 4.53). Disappointingly, though, today’s heritage scholarship continues to refer to a timeless Ottoman wooden house tradition and subsumes examples that remain from the Hamidian period under the same decontextualized narratives.

The phenomenon of customizable, quick and economical construction had a much more lasting impact on the residential typologies of the United States. Twentieth-century American catalogue order homes, manufactured by lumber-rich midwestern companies like Sears, held considerable sway and reached a much larger group of consumers than in the Ottoman world. Like their European counterparts, these American catalogues received their stylistic inspirations from nineteenth-century pattern books. They were initially popularized in the United States by figures like the American landscape designer Andrew Jackson Downing. In the process of

156 Eldem, Türk Bahçeleri, ii.

157 Modest but enlightening specialized studies do exist that illustrate the startlingly variegated design choices that the nineteenth-century Ottoman consumers made; for instance, see Semra Ciner, Son Osmanlı Dönemi İstanbul Ahşap Konutlarında Cephe Bezepleri (Istanbul: ITÜ Mimarlık Fakültesi, 1982).

building, the Loudonian typologies introduced in these American books underwent marked adaptations: they were acclimatized to local taste and context via aspects carried over from colonial examples, the most identifiable feature being shingle cladding.\textsuperscript{160} Today’s colonial house, the most standard type of America’s northeastern suburbs, is the distilled—and democratizing—version of the affordable yet individualized residence consumption of the nineteenth century.


V.

“The Town and Country” (*Belde ve Şahrâ*): An Ottoman Album of Imperial Sites from 1905

Why were photograph albums of Ottoman imperial residences such coveted keepsakes at the turn of the century? The role of the photographer vis-à-vis the patron in selecting and ordering images of royal edifices within an album? How did the photographer frame his subjects of place? And, most importantly for the purpose of this study of a palace whose longest inhabitant was also the medium’s best known imperial benefactor in the Ottoman world: what kinds of meanings might have been conveyed through the photographed anatomies of the imperial royal grounds? In an attempt to elucidate a category of the still underexplored significance of photography in the late-Ottoman period, this chapter explores these intertwined questions through a previously unknown, materially lavish and representationally unusual photograph album comprising sixty-four images that display the imperial sites of Istanbul. The album is simply titled *Souvenir 1905.*

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1 Although scholarship on photographic practices in the Ottoman territories of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is still in its infancy, there are works that have begun to suggest frameworks with which some of the material could begin to be approached and, in the process, be removed from its discursively stifling designation, ‘Ottoman photography.’ This designation assumes that the very act of taking a picture is always affixed to a particular imperial identity or body, and stymies attempts at talking about the complex set of actors involved in the making even of a single image. One of these more focused studies is an inquiry into how photographs—especially portraits, and images taken outside of the studio context—functioned as consumer objects in the Ottoman world. See Nancy C. Micklewright, “Personal, Public, and Political (Re)Constructions: Photographs and Consumption,” in *Consumption Studies and the History of the Ottoman Empire, 1550–1922: An Introduction*, ed. Donald Quataert (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), 261–288. For a critique of national designations for photographic practices in the nineteenth-century Middle East, see Mary Roberts, “The Limits of Circumscription,” in *Photography’s Orientalism: New Essays on Colonial Representation*, ed. Ali Behdad and Luke Garland (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2013), 53–54.

2 The album is archived in IAK and is catalogued under Alb. 156. Throughout this chapter, I will refer to the album interchangeably as *Souvenir* and *Souvenir 1905.*
The album offers ways to answer these questions by its very focus on Yıldız: it commences with thirty images of the palace, which make up half of the album’s overall content. Moreover, it presents the last photographic trace of the imperial site before its long process of looting, reuse, and physical fragmentation, which I have detailed in the dissertation’s introductory chapter. The ordering of the photographs inside the album literally marshals these images of the capital’s subsidiary imperial estates into a deliberately constructed visual narrative. In its purposeful sequencing, the album also makes a visual claim about how Abdülhamid’s conceptualization of Yıldız as his residential complex much more forcefully than the sultan’s earlier photographic commissions where the palace was portrayed in much more circumscribed ways.

Souvenir is of a later date than the better-known and well-studied Hamidian gift albums in the collections of the Library of Congress and the British Library that represent the earlier years of Abdülhamid’s reign from the 1880s to the 1890s. In these albums, and in contrast to the Souvenir, Yıldız’s carefully selected buildings and sections are uninhabited, orderly and austere, while its newly appointed picturesque gardens, all focused around the court’s private quarters on the complex’s hilltop, are staged as

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3 For the first catalogue study of the gift-albums, see Carney E.S. Gavin, ed., Imperial Self-Portrait: The Ottoman Empire as revealed in the Sultan Abdul-Hamid II’s photographic albums presented as gifts to the Library of Congress (1893) and the British Museum (1894); a pictorial selection with catalogue, concordance, indices, and brief essays, in Journal of Turkish Studies special edition v. 12 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, Office of the University Publisher, 1989). In recent years, Istanbul’s municipality has published thematic groupings from the over thirty-thousand photographs that make up the Yıldız Library Collections, see, for instance, Photographs of Istanbul from the Archives of Sultan Abdülhamid II (Published by the Greater Municipality of Istanbul Kültür A.Ş. and IRCICA, 2007); Hakan Yılmaz, ed., The Family Album of Sultan Abdülhamid II (İstanbul: Kültür A.Ş., 2010); there are also city-specific annual publications such as Halit Eren, Sultan II. Abdülhamid dönemi fotoğraflarıyla Bursa = Bursa in photographs of the period of Sultan Abdülhamid II (İstanbul: IRCICA, 2011), and Halit Eren, Sultan II. Abdülhamid dönemi fotoğraflarıyla Manisa = Manisa in photographs from Sultan Abdülhamid II period (İstanbul: IRCICA, 2013). Aside from the on-going serializing project of the municipality, other publishing houses have produced similarly thematic publications. For example, see Mehmet Bahadir Dördüncü, ed., II. Abdülhamid Yıldız Albümleri: Mekke-Medine (İstanbul: Yitik Hazine Yayınları, 2006), and Nurhan Atasoy, ed., Yıldız Sarayı Fotoğraf Albümleri’nden Yadigar-ı İstanbul (İstanbul: Akkök Yayınları, 2007).
unpopulated, carefully groomed outdoor settings. Existing scholarship has regarded these gift-albums exclusively as part and parcel of the Hamidian regime’s eager exposition of its modernity to the Western world. Furthermore, Yıldız’s vast photographic collection (from among which images for these two sets of gift-albums were selected and packaged) has been largely interpreted as serving the purpose of intra-imperial surveillance. Having based their arguments on the hermitic tendencies of its patron and thereby collapsing layers of potential meaning and context into a single imperial intention, scholars have sadly precluded a Hamidian photograph or album from occupying any discursive existence of its own.

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4 This reading, offered by the contributors to the Imperial Self-Portrait and separately by Selim Deringil in his The Well-Protected Domains, is convincing for these gifts’ communicative function to their foreign audiences. However, some of these photographs when seen as stand-alone images or groups of images that were not purposed for a particular audience open up questions on framing, props, gestures, deliberate inclusions and exclusions that have not yet been explored except in scholarly side notes. Micklewright’s momentary digression on how to contextualize the criminal portraits found among the Hamidian corpus is certainly one example, while many patients’ photographs, propped on hospital beds in interesting angles and poses that reveal their ailments, beg for similar types of formal study. Zeynep Çelik’s essay in a recent publication calls attention to the lack of scholarly interest in the otherwise incredibly compelling images of Ottoman clinical photography and initiates one such study; see Zeynep Çelik, “Photographing Mundane Modernity,” in Camera Ottomana: Photography and Modernity in the Ottoman Empire, 1840–1914, ed. Zeynep Çelik and Edhem Eldem (İstanbul: Koç University Press, 2015), 154–203.

5 For photography’s use in state surveillance outside of the Ottoman context, see John Tagg, The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993). The authors of the Imperial Self-Portrait have made the case for the hermitic sultan’s obsessive desire to continually observe and file visual documentation of his domains; on this very subject also see Pierre de Gigord et al., Images d’empire: Aux origins de la photographie en Turquie; Türkiye’de Fotoğrafın Öncüleri (İstanbul: Institut D’Etudes Françaises d’İstanbul, 1993), 26. Tied to the conceptualization of these albums as products of imperial reconnaissance is the notion that there was never any narrative intent in the way their contents were put together.

6 Abdülhamid’s own commissions were often accompanied by descriptive (written) indexes. Although most of these indexes are today separated from their albums, a few examples have survived as a unit, for example, the albums compiled for the Qajar ruler, Muzaffar al-Din Shah’s first İstanbul visit from 1902. There was always more to imperial surveillance than just the desire to see and confirm. Some of these photographs were taken to accompany site surveys and building repairs, which were again separated over time from their descriptive documentation. When “imperial surveillance” becomes the primary explanatory focus, a large group of albums that were gifts to the imperial library, as well as a miscellaneous body of single photographs, and scrapbook-like albums made up of different media like engravings and sketches alongside photographs, are neglected. Wendy Shaw’s assessment of the early use of photography in the Ottoman Empire as a technology serving the “nineteenth-century positivist drive for information” is analogously reductive in cutting out the vibrant formal aspects and socio-historical currents that make up a
The thematic content of the Hamidian albums has helped these scholars to maintain their argument that for the sultan, photographs were a means of propagating the idea that the Ottoman Empire was swift to adopt new technologies. The court considered factories, schools, hospitals, railways and other civic feats to be crucial markers of production and efficiency. These imperial commissions for public good took center stage as visual subject matter.\textsuperscript{7} However, not much has been said about the compositional aspects of these images and the photographers’ craft in making them, which signal other orders of complexity. Take, for instance, the haunting images of male and female patients propped up on beds and willfully exposing their physical ailments in the newly built hospitals of the empire.\textsuperscript{8} Some male patients are positioned in the tradition of the grand odalisque, draped in different fabrics and playing the part of the protagonist in scenarios of lavish repose at odds with the pronounced physicality of their illnesses (fig. 5.1). Representations of male bodily ailments and their effects on masculinity can easily be explored through one particular album, while another album that combines before and after shots of patients having undergone surgery to remove abnormal growths speaks compellingly to the naturalization of the grotesque and the retention of a clinical eye (fig. 5.2). Reductive readings of this material have also rendered the incredibly cosmopolitan body of Hamidian photographers merely as seekers of “informative elements rather than


\textsuperscript{8} Of particular interest to me, in this context, are two albums in İÜMK, nos. 779–71 and 90506. What is very exciting to note here is that at the turn of the century, the Kodak Company published manuals on how to take medical photographs that could complement a study focused on these images; see Elementary Clinical Photography: As Applied to the Practice of Medicine (Rochester: Kodak, 1927). For an even earlier version of this type of manual, see Albert Londe, La photographie médicale: application aux sciences médicales et physiologiques (Paris: Gauthier-Villars, 1893).
compositionally meaningful overviews,” and mechanized composers of “static spaces” rather than artistic, romantic or sublime “scapes.”

The photographs arranged inside Souvenir stand apart from their predecessors by exhibiting a strikingly intimate picture of the last Ottoman palace. Although the palace complex had quickly established its presence as the empire’s administrative center and, perhaps more importantly, had financed much of the photographic practice of the period, in the earlier gift albums, Yıldız was nevertheless presented as an uninhabited, staged subject.

This practiced austerity in Yıldız’s early photographs should not be attributed to Abdülhamid’s elusive personality alone, or to the invisible but palpable presence of the sovereign amid his court. Rather, the photographs were often taken, more than anything, to document the completion, or near-completion, of an imperial garden retreat’s swift transformation into a palace. It is also important to note here that between the Hamidian albums and Souvenir 1905, there are no currently known photographic collections of

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9 Wendy Shaw’s assertion that because Ottoman artists lacked formal training in Western painterly conventions, their photographic representations were driven by an “innocent eye” that did not understand the medium’s artistic potential is here especially problematic. See Shaw, “Ottoman Photography,” 88-93. David J. Roxburgh has pointed out that a similar case has been made for Iranian photography and the naïveté of the “native photographers” in their inability to see beyond the conceptual and epistemological frameworks of Orientalism and colonialism: Ali Behdad, “The Orientalist Photograph,” in Photography’s Orientalism, 11-32.

10 The Qajar Shah Nasir al-Din, who was a near-contemporary of Abdülhamid, used the camera much more whimsically to capture the intimacy of his court and harem life; Jennifer Y. Chi, ed., The Eye of the Shah: Qajar Court Photography and the Persian Past (New York: Institute for the Study of the Ancient World at New York University, 2016). Unlike Abdülhamid, both Nasir al-Din Shah and his son and successor Muzaffar al-Din often posed for their portraits. On the other hand, the Qajar courts of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were as eager in compiling a comprehensive collection of photograph albums (of over forty thousand images) as their Ottoman counterparts; Mohammed Hasan Semsar and Fatima Sarayian, Golestan Palace Photo Archive: Catalogue of Selected Qajar Photographs (Tehran, 2003). Perhaps the most intimate selection of photographs of the Ottoman court appeared in the households of the extra-courtly elite, see Bahattin Öztuncay, Hanedan ve Kamera: Osmanlı Sarayından Portreler, Ömer M. Koç Koleksiyonu = Dynasty and Camera: Portraits from the Ottoman Court, Ömer M. Koç Collection (İstanbul: Aygaz, 2011).
Yıldız as a palace complex during Abdülhamid’s reign. These two sets—Abdülhamid’s first staging of his complex as a larger collection that made it into the gift-albums and the smaller, but more personal *Souvenir 1905*—are our only photographic evidence of the site’s imperial existence. The exceptional nature of *Souvenir 1905* lies not only in the fact that it acts as a visual coda to the last Ottoman palace, but also in the way that it finally disrupts the representational inaccessibility of the site.\(^\text{11}\)

Memoirs of Abdülhamid’s close family members, his *aides-de-camp*, and diplomatic visitors provide valuable insights into the life and residential world of the sultan, and bolster the photograph album’s visual narrative of the imperial architectural sites of the nineteenth century. Moreover, many of Abdülhamid’s architecture-related commissions—from the issuing of an imperial decree and the renovation of a majority of the royal residences of the capital that were in need of restoration, to the appointing of a court photographer to document these structures in their post-renovation splendor and the commissioning of a topographical map that specifically draws out the imperial structures selected for the *Souvenir*—enliven the album’s biographical undertaking.

This chapter touches upon these additional sultanic imprints on the urban landscape to contextualize the album’s storyline. If the compositional character of the images is illustrative of how these predominantly outdoor sites were used by their visitors, it also speaks to Yıldız’s centrality to the chosen buildings and their surrounding landscapes, sites that established Abdülhamid as a ruler in the guise of a wealthy landowner preoccupied with deriving both pleasure and profit from his estates. Furthermore, the album alludes to the ways in which these estates were physically

\(^{11}\) I am talking here about the controlled and limited nature of access to seeing the object and representing it rather than an ultimate invisibility.
separated from the rest of the city’s urban environment. It also exhibits how the palace and its many smaller variants deliberately maintained their visual distinction by emphasizing their status chiefly as created and ordered landscapes, much in the way that nineteenth-century parks staged their presence in cities as tracts of open country that an urbanite might unexpectedly come upon—the experience of a sahrah inside an otherwise metropolitan belde frequently alluded to by the Ottoman writers and poets of the period. Physical separators that demarcated these two zones are recurrent subjects among the images mounted in the album. Formal enclosures such as walls, hedges, and fences, which in fact were central topics in the nineteenth-century publications and correspondences of “gentlemen-farmers,” were symbols of social order that not only denoted gentility and property but also status, notoriety, and virtue.

a. ORDER, MATERIALITY, AND FRAME

Souvenir 1905 is organized as a series of coordinated interplays between Yıldız and a selection of imperial estates in ways that accentuate engagements between nineteenth-century Ottoman architecture and nature, and the desired experience of the two together,

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12 Town (belde) and country (sahra) or city and countryside were central preoccupations of the renowned nineteenth-century Ottoman poet Abdülhak Hamid Tarhan (d. 1937). He would title his first attempt at a long pastoral poem Sahra’ (1878), in which he idealized simple nomadic desert life over life in the city. Soon afterwards, he composed poems of his life in Paris, like his French counterpart Baudelaire he was both fascinated and horrified by the modern metropolis. His collection of seventeen poems published in 1885 under the title DivaneliKERIm YAHUT BELDE (My Follies, or the City) is centered on this juxtaposition. See Abdülhak Hâmid, Sahra’c, Bir manzâmedir (İstânbül: Mihrân, 1296 [1879]); and, Abdülhak Hâmid, DivaneliKERIm, Yâhîd Belde (İstânbül: Dîkrân Karabeyân 1303 (1886)). For the accessibility of this poet’s often-dense vocabulary and imagery, we owe a lot to İnci Enginîn’s work, a professor of Turkish literature, whose textual analyses have opened up the literary world of the mostly male Tanzimat writers to contemporary readers. For this chapter in particular, I have benefited tremendously from two of her works; İnci Enginîn, Abdülhak Hâmid Tarhan (Ankara: Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlğı, 1986); and, İnci Enginîn, Yeni Türk Edebiyatı: Tanzimat’tan Cumhuriyet’e, 1839-1923 (İstanbul: Dergâh Yayınıları, 2006).

in a sequence of landscape shots. In the dialogic way that it represents a catalogue of imperial structures where one site beckons the other and the process of recollection is performed in the ordering of the images, the album not only serves as an architectural archive for the palace, but also for its historically understudied formal companions like the large imperial farms of Maslak and Ayazağa (ṣifiliḳāt-1 hīmâyūn), which hosted curious stately country-home features, pleasure pavilions, and other architectural features in the garden retreats of Kağthane and Ihlamur (the latter, named Nüzhetiye, meaning a restful, recreational spot, by Abdülmecid).\textsuperscript{14} The album prompts the viewer to think of these handpicked structures relationally as their royal inhabitants and visitors experienced them as such. Continuing the tradition of their predecessors, the sultans of the nineteenth century also moved between summer and winter residences and retreats of their own choosing. These seasonal moves continued to be ingrained in the urban consciousness of their capital’s subjects.

The uniqueness of the album’s visual history lies in the fact that it is incredibly circumspect in portraying Abdülhamid II’s ideas about imperial habitation. The questions of how his royal site should appear and function were linked not only to the estates he

\textsuperscript{14} For a comprehensive archaeological/architectural history of the imperial patronage in Kağthane, see Sedad Hakki Eldem, \textit{Sa’dabad} (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1977); for cursory treatments of the pavilions of Ihlamur (Nüzhetiye) and others see the lot less comprehensive \textit{Milli saraylar} (Ankara: TBMM, 1987); and, Ahmet Ağın, \textit{Saraylarımız} (İstanbul: Tan Gazetesi ve Matbaası, 1964). Due to the fact that they are much better preserved and served as Abdülhamid’s estate, the pavilions of Maslak have received considerable scholarly attention, see Tahsin Toğral, “Maslak Kasreri Yerleşim Düzeni ve Kullanımı Üzerine İnceleme,” in \textit{Milli Saraylar Dergisi} 7 (2011): 131-150; and, Tahsin Toğral, “Maslak Kasreri Askeri Prevantoryumu Yerleşim Düzeni ve Kullanımı Üzerine Kronolojik İnceleme,” in \textit{Milli Saraylar Dergisi} 9 (2012): 95-116. The once majestic country residence and farming estate of Ayazağa is not only in terrible physical shape, but also has very little written on it; see Semavi Eyice, “Ayazağa Kasrı,” \textit{DIA}, vol. 4 (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1988-2013), 205-206; and Afife Batur, “Ayazağa Kasırları,” \textit{DBIÅ}, vol. 1 (İstanbul: Kültür Bakanlığı ve Tarih Vakfı, 1993), 470-471. For in-depth typological (but ahistorical) analyses of the nineteenth-century Ottoman pavilions, see Hasan Turhan, “Osmanlı Çağında İstanbul’da Av Köşkleri-Kasırları” (Lisansüstü Araştırma Tezi, Yıldız Teknik Üniversitesi, 1981); and, Diğdem Çelikbilek, “Beykoz Kasrı ve 19. yüzyıl Kasırları Üzerine bir İnceleme” (Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Yıldız Teknik Üniversitesi, 1988).
had experienced and resided in but also those he designed, and ruled over during his time as a prince, and wanted later to install in his palace complex of Yıldız. The album performs a very specific imperial architectural history, one that is tied firmly to Abdülhamid’s biography and his actual world of architecture.

Our first encounter with the album presents us with a great many unknowns. It is made up of sixty-four stills—each about 19.5 by 25.5 centimeters, a standard size for albumen prints. Formally and contextually, it remains separate from its quantitatively dominant distant cousins, the Yıldız photographic collections of countless albums and unbound images: there are no copies of any of this album’s contents among Abdülhamid’s vast holdings. Furthermore, its photographer is not known, and there are no guiding subtitles under any of the shots to orient the viewer about the photographed subject. The album’s provenance is also undetermined except for a monographic trace on its silk moiré-centered backboard. Its materials suggest an affluent owner (as well as a wealthy patron if we consider it to be a gift) as it bears a crowned initial “B,” is bound in rich black leather, and features generous use of shell gilding tracing the cover’s red leather rocailled perimeters, delicate foliated moldings, and fore edge (fig. 5.3). I will return to its possible provenance, and relate its content to its intended audience, after

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reviewing what the album reveals to us at first glance despite what little trace of ownership remains.

Indications as to the identities of at least two figures involved in the album’s making appear inside its luxurious cover: the bottom edge of the flyleaf bears the bookplate of the imperial bookbinder and his address in gilded Ottoman Turkish:

“mücellid-i hażret-i şehriyârî Ağüst Tarnavski, 575 numero, Teke Beyoğlu.” Had the thick flyleaf not split over time, we would have missed out on meeting another member of the bookmaker’s art. Penciled on the flyleaf’s recto side as if he were sketching his own advertisement in Greek, Ottoman and French and inscribing it in an oval vignette, is the insignia of one Miltiades [fils] Crocodilos, Relieur Doreur, Constantinople, who provides us with two dates, May 22, 1905, in Greek, and June 9, 1905, in French. These may indicate the beginning and completion dates of the gilding of the object. Tarnavski and Miltiades must have collaborated on the album, the former outsourcing parts of the task to the latter, lesser known craftsman. The Ottoman trade journal Annuaire oriental (from 1903), lists Tarnavski (aka Tarnawski) twice; in the first instance, he is named along with his business partner J. Urhan as “relieurs et fabricants de boite en carton,” and their address given as “Hamdi Pacha Han, 1. Galata,” while the second lists him as a solo agent with a separate address for the conduct of his trade: “Grande Rue de Pera, 575.”

The second address, which matches that stamped on the album, was perhaps reserved solely to service the sultan and his court. There are stylistic reasons to speculate that an elaborately embossed leather box, almost a rare piece of furniture, containing

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individually leather-bound photographs of Wilhelm II’s visit to Constantinople, found among the personal collection of the last caliph Abdülmeid Efendi (1868-1944), was a product of Tarnavski’s collaborative box manufactory with J. Urhan.\(^\text{18}\)

Among the many Abdülhamid Yıldız albums in Istanbul collections, there are now fifty-nine bearing Tarnavski’s seal. I suspect many more of these benefited from the range and creativity in cover designs, but were either left unmarked or lost their bindings in the process of the library’s dismantling.\(^\text{19}\) Judging from his appearance in the trade journals from 1881 to 1905 as the court binder, Auguste Tarnavski was certainly responsible for almost all of the Yıldız album bindings, as well as the early bindings of the *Indicateur ottoman*. The binder never once needed to place an advertisement in these trade journals for his business because the court commissions kept him occupied. The only archival document that bears his name is a petition from 1897 that he sent to the palace’s scribal offices, demanding that he receive the belated amount that was owed to him for over one hundred bindings he prepared for the imperial library.\(^\text{20}\) The same trade journals list the lesser-known Miltiades Crocodille, indexed only by his name alongside the fact that he was self-employed and residing in Enli Yocouche (yokuş in Turkish meaning ramp, thus a ramp with girth) in Fındıklı, among the congested ateliers of craftsmen spilling behind the Tophane foundries. While Tarnavski disappears from the trade journals after 1905, Crocodille, whose profession was never once fully listed,  


\(^\text{19}\) For an explanation of how the contents of Yıldız’s book collections were broken up, see Candemir, *Son Yıldız Düşerken*, 137-188.

\(^\text{20}\) BOA, BEO 996/74667.
suddenly appears in 1909 as a proud member of the stock exchange ("membré du conseil de la bourse de fonds et valeurs").

The split flyleaf also reveals that the thick sheets on which the photographs were mounted were put together by gluing together the printed sides of recycled books so that their blank, verso sides could be used for matting. The book that both Tarnavski and Miltiades used to create the blank pages of the album was about the world’s rarest known orchids, first published in 1854 under the directorship of the orchid-hunter Jean-Jules Linden and titled Pescatorea: iconographie des orchidées in memory of Jean-Pierre Pescatore (1793-1855) of St. Cloud, one of the first cultivators of this family of flowers (fig. 5.4). That the binders fitted old books for albums of similar subject matter—in this case largely a nature album—is intriguing, hinting at a highly bespoke practice in which artful secrets were inserted inside its objects.

The front board’s cloud-shaped, molded moiré insert, replicated on the back cover with the abovementioned single-letter monogram, announces the album’s title, Souvenir 1905—a caption that signals its participation in a photographic convention all too familiar for such objects, especially by that date. The viewer would expect to see the selected photographs presented in the form of an excursion; perhaps one that the album’s owner had already physically taken. By ordering the fond yet hazy memories of the sojourn into its most relevant moments and presenting them to the sightseer as a literal

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22 The fact that the book recycled to constitute the pages of an album was about gardening bolsters the suggestion I make in the following pages that the anonymous photographer was perhaps Yıldız’s last head-gardener.

23 For travel albums as complete narrative constructs, see Carol Armstrong, Scenes in a Library: Reading the Photographs in the Book, 1843-1875 (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998); in the context of the Middle East, see Nancy Micklewright, A Victorian Traveler in the Middle East: The Photography and Travel Writing of Annie Lady Brassey (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003).
reminder, the album would act as the authorial keepsake of the excursion. The inherently pedantic character of the generic travel album is limited here to the retelling of the journey through the serializing of its stills according to the original itinerary. The first image (a curious Native-American way station inside one of Yıldız’s gates celebrating an exploratory trip of discovery) and the last (a crowded group of local and foreign men and children about to get into their carriages in Kağthane on their return) deliberately bookend the trip (figs. 5.5–5.6).

Aside from its inclusion of a telos of travel, however, the album stands apart from the milieu of the photographic souvenir in the way that it represents the excursion. Most superficially, the album introduces movement not only between and through all of the images (from one site to the next), but also within a single image.24 As the actual trip once exhausted its taker, almost every image in the album is framed to elicit a jolt in the armchair traveler, who is forced to participate once again in the strenuous meanderings taken along indirect routes, steep climbs, plunging vistas and oblique approaches (fig. 5.7). It is very much a physical and experiential reminder. The album’s mobile representations of its verdant subjects are altogether distinct from the pleasant stillness that is expected of nature photography. In each vertiginous still, perspective is misaligned with the viewer’s line of vision so as to draw the gaze inward, upward, or downward.

Rather than presenting nature in a controlled, picture-perfect (read perspectively legible) manner, the photographer simulates the very experience of the photographed landscape: the deliberately coarse, overgrown terrains of the imperial estates. If the album’s main theme follows an architectural genealogy of nineteenth-century Ottoman palaces, it is

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24 A refreshing exception to this recurrent reading can be found in Esra Akcan, “Off the Frame: The Photographic City Albums of Istanbul,” in Photography’s Orientalism, 93-114.
equally about representations of nature during that period. There is an overwhelming number of shots of trees, the shadows they cast, the way they obscure routes and views, and their eerily anthropomorphic presentation (fig. 5.8).

The album also speaks to the changing nature of Ottoman outdoor promenades. Throughout the nineteenth century, the inhabitants of Istanbul increasingly began to vary the time that they spent in nature between the flat terrains of Kağıthane and much more rigorous explorations on the hilltops of Çamlıca or Tarabya. These two sites had popular, sloping public parks. The Hungarian Orientalist Ármin Vámbéry styled his regular and demanding hikes up to Çamlıca, where he taught French to an upstart paşazade from the Üsküdar shore, the “Steps to Parnassus” (Gradus ad Parnassum).25 The purported curative power of higher grounds contributed to these choices among a generation that was simultaneously intrigued by and terrified of tuberculosis and a variety of other diseases that they were told would be cured by a “change of air” (tebdil-i havâ). Mehmed İzzet’s home economics encyclopedia, mentioned in Chapters Three and Four, devotes a long entry on tebdil-i hava (better than fish oil or quinine, used to cure malaria, the author argues), dividing it between the different suburbs and public promenades of Istanbul to explicate the benefits and harms of their respective winds and water on different ailments such as rheumatism, pleurisy, gout, and heart disease.26

Affluent members of society invested greatly in converting the groves behind their seaside homes into elaborate parks, with miniature pavilions as rest stations and expanded the possibilities of the outdoors also in the private sphere. The yalis with their

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terraced backyards were conceptualized as country homes with private pleasure grounds in the style of English gardens. As I have argued in Chapters 3 and 4, Yıldız was a hallmark of that new tradition in garden life.

Souvenir 1905 depicts exactly what the experience of a private hike must have looked like. The actual topography of its photographed sites is reflected in the images. It is likely that the photographer was traversing these laborious terrains with a handheld Kodak—used globally from the 1880s onwards by both professional and amateur photographers, and advertised and sold in Istanbul from the 1890s onwards. In fact, a series of five images inside Yıldız’s park are clearly sequential snapshots. For instance, the photographer not only photographed a miniature footbridge that crossed one of Yıldız’s streams (decorated with the requisite rockeries and aqueous plants), but also his (or her) approach to the bridge, shot while walking through it, as well as the view down below (figs. 5.9–5.10). Already a decade earlier, the Mercanof camera equipment store in Istanbul’s Sultanhamamam district sponsored two journalists for the popular Ottoman newspaper Servet-i Fünun on their rail travel from Istanbul to Alpuköy in Central Anatolia by furnishing them with a small, travel-friendly Kodak (“seyâhate mahşûş ‘kodâk’ denilen fatoğraf mâkinesi”). Souvenir 1905’s photographer experiments with the aesthetics of contingency and implied movement, in the same way that journalists were able to swiftly record “important aspects” (nikât–i mûhimme) of the places they traveled along the Anatolian railroads.


28 I thank Professor Ahmet Ersoy for pointing me to this photo-illustrated article, see Ahmed Ihsân, “Haydarpâşı‘dan Alpû Köyü‘ne,” Servet-i Fünun, 1308, 76-79.
b. ABDÜLHAMID’S OWN BIOGRAPHY OF PLACES

The album’s snapshots announce Abdülhamid II’s biography of royal places by presenting all the estates in which he spent his princely years. These places would later come to inform his vision for Yıldız as his crowning glory. Rather than the formal, and largely confined spaces created for his grandfather Mahmud II and father Abdülmecid along Beşiktaş’s shores where he grew up, Prince Abdülhamid preferred to spend his time in and around the pavilions the pavilions of Kağthane, Tarabya (the grounds of which were later given to the German embassy’s summer residence), and finally those of Maslak allotted to him during his uncle Abdülaziz’s rule. Therefore, although he spent a considerable amount of time in Dolmabahçe, this site is excluded from *Souvenir 1905.*

According to the memoirs of his head-scribe Tahsin Paşa, Prince Abdülhamid preferred an active life in the imperial estates that offered access to the “great outdoors” (*faal hayat*) over a “secluded one” (*münzevi hayat*) in the Dolmabahçe Palace. In fact, during his uncle’s reign, Abdülhamid’s penchant for the outdoor sporting life must have overstepped the bounds of acceptable courtly decorum—restrictions on a prince’s social visibility were relaxed during that period, but still encouraged to be practiced in moderation. For that reason, Abdülaziz cast him out of his princely residence on the shores of Tarabya, where the time he spent on his sailboat (“*kotra*”) along the Bosphorus became too excessive, sending him to live instead in the hills of Maslak, which were

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30 *Tahsin Paşa’nın Yıldız Hatıraları*, 7-8.

31 For a discussion of the loosening in the tradition of imprisoning the Ottoman princes starting in the eighteenth century, see Tülay Artan, “Topkapı Sarayı’nda Bulunan Bir Grup Mimari Çizimin Düşünceldikleri,” in *Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Yıllık* 5 (İstanbul, 1992), 7-52.
always cooler and sparsely more populated compared to the fashionable coastline.\textsuperscript{32} His
daughter Ayşe Sultan recalls Abdülhamid looking back on his exhaustively active youth
when he was a “great swimmer, horseback rider, driver, rower, sailor, shooter, marksman,
hunter, and swordsman” (*Gençliğimde denize girer, pek iyi yüzer, ata biner, araba kullanır, kürek çeker, yelken kullanır, tabanca ile attičilik yapar, ava gider, kılıç talimleri yapardım*).\textsuperscript{33}

These country estates also taught Abdülhamid how to conceptualize his domains:
they had to be well manicured, and simultaneously yield profit. Both his daughter and
devoted scribe inform us of his love for gardening. He pruned his own roses and devised
designs for the flower parterres in his Tarabya and Maslak residences, while cultivating
rare plants from seeds that he imported from Europe.\textsuperscript{34} At the same time, prince
Abdülhamed learned to employ sections of the properties granted to him, especially the
northern pastures of his hilltop Maslak manor, which lorded over the Black Sea, for
lucrative animal husbandry and stud farming. The site’s expansive sprawl is evident in an
undated and unlabeled but cartographically precise landscaping map (fig. 5.11).\textsuperscript{35} This
specific site, important to Abdülhamid’s development as a wealthy landowner, is the first
of the subsidiary estates to follow the opening images of Yıldız in *Souvenir 1905*.

Abdülhamed’s biographers consistently portray him as the penny-pinching,
industrious antithesis to his two profligate predecessors Abdülmecid and Abdülaziz. he
was second in line to the throne after his brother Murad, and had therefore sought a

\textsuperscript{32} Ayşe Osmanoğlu, 27.

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{34} Hülagü, 151-152.

\textsuperscript{35} The map is housed in İÜMK as no. 92611.
uniquely unassuming, private working life that combined farming (çiftçilik) with mining to extract white lead (üstübeç ocağı) at his Maslak residence.\textsuperscript{36} Once he unexpectedly ascended the throne (after a series of bizarre premises on which his uncle and subsequently his brother were deposed), he therefore devised Yılınız’s gardens not only with elaborately landscaped segments attuned to the garden trends of the picturesque, but also with arable acreage that supplied goods for the large population of the palace. The brick porcelain factory inside the palace grounds, which finds its place in an oblique view in the album as well (\textbf{fig. 5.12}), also participated in the Hamidian ideals of imperial production: it allowed for self-sufficiency and not dependence on expensive imports, it met the needs of the court, and at the same time reignited a distinctly Ottoman brand of crafts.\textsuperscript{37} From a group of archival sources we gather that a partial subsistence economy was instituted for the palace’s needs with greenhouses, dairy farms, fruit and vegetable gardens, and livestock farming.\textsuperscript{38}

The inclusion in the album of the imperial estates in Karğıthane, Ayazağa and Maslak substantiates Yılınız’s Hamidian reformation as wainable terra and delightfully amusing, man-made nature. In many ways, this late-nineteenth century sultan was

\textsuperscript{36} Ayşe Osmanoğlu, 27-28; Hülagü, 215.

\textsuperscript{37} On Yılınız’s porcelain factory the archives seem to be extremely limited. Neither the many iterations of its building’s construction (pre-and post-D’Aronco), nor the patterns and drawings used for the objects (and dressing the walls of the factory in the photograph albums) are found. They are definitely not in the Ottoman Archives, the Dolmabahçe Palace that used to contain specifically the archives of the palaces, and if they were in the archives of the Topkapı Palace, I am sure we would already have a publication on them. Two works have managed to call the available material, especially through extant examples of the manufactured objects; see Önder Küçükerman, \textit{Dünya Saraylarının Prestij Teknolojisi, Porselen Sanatı ve Yıldız Çini Fabrikanı} (Ankara: Sümgerbank Genel Müdürlüğü, 1987); and Damla Acar, “Yıldız Çini ve Porselen Fabrikası’nda Endüstriyel Araçların ve Mimari Yapının Değişimi,” \textit{Milli Saraylar Dergisi} 9 (2012): 13-36. For a sampling of the factory’s high-end products, see Önder Küçükerman, \textit{Milli Saraylar Koleksiyonu’nda Yıldız Porseleni} (İstanbul: TBMM Milli Saraylar Daire Başkanlığı Yayınonu, 1998).

\textsuperscript{38} For instance, there are well-documented registers of the supply of the palace’s dairy farm containing Swedish and Egyptian cows, adjacent to the Malta Kiosk; see BOA,Y. PRK. HH. 4-7; BOA, Y. HH.d. 16848.
harking back to the garden practices of his ancestors, not only with the Topkapi-like form that Yıldız took in its multi-court, multi-pavilion layout, but also with his establishment of a self-sustaining economy of supply and demand in his palace and the other imperial estates that collectively fell under the ḥadaḵ-i hāṣṣa. Gülru Necipoğlu reminds us, for example, that an Ottoman sultan’s suburban gardens served dual-purposes of pleasure and profit—the head-gardener would sell the produce that was grown in these gardens on the market to cover the expenses of the sultan’s table.\(^{39}\)

Prince Abdülhamid’s demesne in Maslak still presents a compact rectangular unit on the hilltop. The main building is an attenuated, two-floor manor house with a simple centralized plan and pronounced Dutch gables. The arrangement of its various adjacencies retains the rectilinear plan of the site’s built-up sections. A greenhouse, fronted by an eclectic Victorianate Mabeyn Kiosk—used by his scribes and for official meetings—sits perpendicular to the left side of the lodge, while a small stream with a cascade as its centerpiece parallels it on the right, both projecting out like the manor’s two arms onto the grand entrance way. A small bathhouse and, adjoining it, rooms for the prince’s aides, are located on the manor’s sloping backyard. From the unlabeled map it appears that Abdülhamid, the amateur garden designer, introduced a miniature baroque landscape that opted for oval flowerbeds, pools, and grottos with serpentine streams ringing the main building to enhance its centrality and to separate its manicured civility from the rest of the site’s pronounced feudal rurality. The painted vignettes of bucolic Alpine vistas with snow-capped mountains, tranquil cascading streams and pleasant huts

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\(^{39}\) Gülru Necipoğlu, “The Suburban Landscape of Sixteenth-Century Istanbul,” 34. Of course, the imperial imagery of a bountiful palace garden as a microcosmic stand-in for the productivity of the empire at large is a concept that stretches far back in time; see the Sumerian and Akkadian examples through a range of representational surfaces and poetry in Irene J. Winter, *On Art in the Ancient Near East*, vol. 2: From the Third Millenium BCE (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 199-226.
found on every walled surface inside the Maslak manor indicate the source of inspiration for the colder climate of the hilltop location and for a prince that identified himself as a member of the landed gentry. The special position of this site became even more evident during his three-year Thessaloniki exile after his deposition, when he petitioned for his youngest son Abid Efendi (also under house-arrest) to be given the Maslak Kiosk. This was a paternal attempt to provide his heir with the requisite agrarian education.40

Lady Enid Layard, having been invited to accompany her husband, the British ambassador Henry Austen Layard, to an intimate diplomatic gathering in the Maslak pavilions in the early years of Abdülhamid’s reign, recounts the only known detailed description of the site in her Constantinopolitan memoirs. This invaluable narrative covers the tumultuous years of the Russo-Turkish War as a close foreign contact to the Hamidian court. Her day’s proceedings reveal a newly enthroned sultan, who still found pleasure, solace, and pride in the home of his own making. Dolmabahçe was his first sultanic residence, and although he retained it as such for less than a year, he sought out the outdoors almost every Friday after the selamlık. Once Lady Layard arrived in Maslak, she was most likely accompanied on a tour by the English-speaking court-marshall (ferik) Eğinli Said Paşa, who furnished her with information on Abdülhamid’s very hand in the making of the site’s grounds:

Thursday, 30th [August 1877]. Made bandages & visit from Mario Pasha head of medical schools here. Mrs Henry & Arthur Hanson called & stayed to luncheon. Mr Fawcett came to cut in the morng [sic] but left at 1. After lunch I had to dress at once to go with Henry to meet the Sultan at his farm at Maslak [emphasis added]. We started at 3. Mr Zarifi lent his carriage & we had 2 mounted cavasses. Maslak is only about ½ hours drive from here on the road to Pera. On the way we met two royal guards sent out to escort us. The house at Maslak is very like a small English Cockney villa. Said Pasha met us & Henry & he smoked & we had

40 Hülagü, 108.
coffee out of diamond zarfs. In about ¼ hour the Sultan sent for us. He was in a small room on the ground floor with a sofa & a few chairs in it. He shook hands with us & made us all sit down. Henry congratulated him on the late victories & he thanked me for what I had done about the sick & wounded—& then he & Henry went on to talk politics thro’ Said P. as an interpreter for nearly 2 hours. H.M. then asked us to go & walk in the grounds where we should find the grand vizier. The sultan looked worn & thin & very anxious— he said solemnly that the late victories showed that the hand of God was with the Turks in their just cause. We found the Grand Vizier Edhem P. & Server P. & Mahmoud Damat P. in a small kiosk smoking. They came out & walked about in the grounds with us till nearly 7. The grounds are very well kept the trees having been planted by the Sultan before he came to the throne [italics my own] & there are very pretty views right away to the Black Sea. There is a lovely conservatory with fountains, creepers & masses of lycopodium. Abt ¼ to 7 we were called to dinner wh [sic] was laid in a small Kiosque leading out of the conservatory there we found the Sultan & he motioned me to a seat on his right & put Henry on his left…H.M. made conversation with me all the dinner time talked of England & his visit there & was very agreeable. He noticed I drank no wine & told me he did not drink any & asked me to share some pink looking sherbet with him wh [sic] I did he constantly refilling my glass himself. It got dark while we were at table but candles were lighted, as were the lamps in the conservatory. The sound of the dripping of the fountain coming thro’ the open door was very cool & pleasant. 41

Along with its neighboring pastures in Ayazağa, Maslak and the crown’s northern lands in the capital began to be populated from Mahmud II’s reign onwards with imperial pavilions for courtly summer pastimes such as archery and hunting, as well as extra-palatial destinations where titles were granted or revoked. It was during Abdülaziz’s time that the pavilions at these sites were rebuilt, and in that process Maslak seems to have acquired a rural-manor typology that appeared to Lady Layard an “English Cockney villa.” The two similarly boxy Ayazağa lodges, one with more classical features than its more chalet-like counterpart, began to look increasingly like buildings from European country estates, clad with the faux-rusticity of brick and mortar banded facades. In the early years of Abdülhamid’s reign these two sites started to be associated with extensive farming activities. The photograph album includes images of buildings from the Maslak site—in fact, the only image in which the represented structure is experienced frontally in

41 Enid Layard, *Twist Pera and Therapia*, 54.
it is one of the Maslak manor (fig. 5.13)—certainly because it was the sultan’s previous home, while the grazing pastures around Ayazağa are incorporated as pastoral extensions of the boundless domain that was overseen by his manor.

During the early years of his rule, if Abdülhamid decided to visit Maslak, he would make sure to drop by to survey Ayazağa. Eğinli Said Paşa, Lady Layard’s guide in the Maslak residence, records in his diary entry from March 9, 1877, that after the Friday prayer, which was held at the sixteenth-century Fındıklı Mosque, Abdülhamid ordered a leisure trip out to the Maslak farm, and then to Ayazağa for dinner in the “mansion by the big pool” (büyük havzın başındaki olan köşk). The meal was succeeded by vigorous physical exercise as the sultan together with his Marshall Said Paşa rowed on the boat in the pool (ba‘de’-ta‘ât efendimizle ben havzda bulunan sandala girip birlikte kürek çekti).42 It was during these occasional visits that the sultan developed plans to connect these two neighboring sites into one agricultural space in order to extract as much use out of their vast territories as possible.

In July 1879, a French “L. Fremy” was called upon to survey the Maslak and Ayazağa estates and subsequently produce a project proposing their conversion into a school of agriculture (ferme école) with the principal structure serving as the main administrative building, where young boys would undertake a moral, physical and scholarly education by immersing themselves into the study of the Ottoman terrain (travaillant de leurs mains), caring for the animals used in its cultivation, and ultimately, learning to subsist off the land.43 In the proposal’s preamble, Fremy critiques the


43 BOA, Y. PRK. OMZ. 1/3.
Ottoman landowners’ general indifference to the heuristic potential of agricultural production for the general public, which he attributes to a lack of political motivation to care for their people (*En Turquie, les grands propriétaires n’occupant pas d’agriculture, et n'étant entraîné par aucun mobile politique*), and reminds Abdülhamid—who seems to have put the Frenchman to the task—and the sultan’s “enlightened ministers” (*éclaires*) that it is their duty (*le devoir*) to instill in their subjects a deeper connection to the land.

Fremy knew to appeal to Abdülhamid’s earlier incarnation as a bona fide *grand propriétaire*—the lord of Maslak manor—who had already reaped the edifying economic and spiritual benefits of agrarian life. To transform Fremy’s project into reality, two local agriculture experts, Mehmed Cemil and Aram, were called upon to write a quick follow up that details the available acreage (Ayazağa was made up of one hundred thousand acres, and Maslak around thirty thousand), quality of the soil (prone to erosions, but workable), and larger economic potential of the area (coal and lead mining, and timber production).

They push for a detailed topographical map to be made of the region whose boundaries they are only able to “estimate at the present time by sight lines” (*medd-i nazâr ile derece-i vusâtii*).

Imperial residences were much more than simple heraldic emblems for the sultans, and this was especially true for Abdülhamid, who most stridently publicized the symbols of his sovereignty.

For each sultan, certain structures in the vast imperial architectural heritage meant more than others. Their visits to their favorite sites drew out distinct

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44 BOA, Y. PRK. HH. 5/28. The pages of *The Levant Herald and the Eastern Express* are replete with information on the Ottoman Ministry of Agriculture’s efforts to implement a series of model farms in its provinces. On the implementation of farms for sericulture in the provinces of Adana, Aleppo, Salonica, and Hudavendigar, see *The Levant Herald and the Eastern Express*, October 8, 1900, 2.

45 Here, again, I take my cues from Deringil’s seminal work, *The Well-Protected Domains*. 
imperial routes within the city during their respective reigns. Fashioning himself as the fragile Romantic sovereign, Abdülmecid took solitary strolls and staged intimate gatherings in the pastoral setting of the pavilions of Ihlamur, while the comparatively more robust Abdülaziz, in calculated contrast to his elder brother, often satisfied his penchant for outdoor activities by hunting and wrestling in the capacious outdoor settings around his lodges in Kağıthane, Acıbadem and Ayazağa. To commemorate Abdülmahid’s two predecessors through sites closely associated with them, the album includes one of Abdülmecid’s favorite pavilions of Ihlamur, as well as images of the stud farms (hara) around Kağıthane and Ayazağa that Abdülaziz had installed (figs. 5.14–5.15). The fact that the album does not present an image of Ihlamur’s ceremonial pavilion (merāsim köşkü) with its Rococo façade and extravagant floral reliefs—a replica in miniature of Abdülmecid’s main palatial commission of the Dolmabahçe—but rather of its more subdued neoclassical twin (ma‘iyyet köşkü), designated for private use, is another telling sign that the album engaged a knowing audience (fig. 5.16). The intended viewer was someone privy to the private world of the sovereigns, who knew the functions and meanings of their estates.

c. SOUVENIR’S RECIPIENT(S)

The intimacy with which his dwellings were depicted (the selection and staging of the sites are unique, and bearing none of the formal presentations of the international gift-albums), its expensive cover done by the court binder, and the sheer quantity of stills all

46 Christopher Oscanyan, The Sultan and His People (New York: Derby & Jackson), 182-183.

suggest that the album’s commission most probably came from Abdülhamid, and that it was purposed as a gift.

The crowned monogram “B” on the album’s back cover, with a crescent and star on the crown’s crest, indicates that it was prepared for a member of the Egyptian khedival family, and the date steers our guess towards Behidje Hassan, granddaughter of the former-khedeive Ismail Pasha (r. 1863-1879). Her nephew’s memoirs paint her as an independent woman of great stature, who owned a large Alhambresque mansion in the Zamalik district of Cairo, insisted on speaking in French to the younger members of her family, propounded humility, and was married to the wealthy Prince Omar Toussoun (a grandson of Muhammad Ali and an important man of letters with deep archeological and agricultural interests). Behidje’s sartorial choices reflected her humble and inquisitive personality as she wore “the simplest gowns over her stout figure, her round homely face with no visible makeup, but her twinkling eyes not missing a thing behind her spectacles.”

Female members of the khedivial family perhaps had greater access to and familiarity with Istanbul’s royal sites than any other official visitor. Emine Sultan, Khedive Abbas Hilmi Pasha’s mother and Behidje’s aunt, was a frequent and much-beloved guest of honor in Yıldız’s mansions and gardens, for whom Abdülhamid created the intriguingly gender-bending title of Valide Paşa (literally mother of the pasha, implying the khedive’s mother). Her arrival in her yacht with a large Cairene entourage in the summer months to settle into her art nouveau shoreline mansion in Istanbul’s

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49 Hassan, 127.
Bebek neighborhood was welcomed each year with undiminished fanfare.\textsuperscript{50} The layout and way of life inside the park-like grounds of her mansion were similar to that of Yıldız. She roamed around her grove in an “old-style ox-drawn carriage” \textit{(eski tarzda yaldızlı bir öküz arabası)} and found repose in the small pavilion she built atop the site’s highest point.\textsuperscript{51} (If in line with the typology that the former khedive Ismail Paşa followed in his grove in Emirgan, this little pavilion was also in the form of a Swiss chalet.) During the celebrations of Abdülhamid’s birthdays and accession anniversaries, when all of the prominent gardens along the Bosphorus would be lit up, her park was the most extravagant: bedecked with electrical lights “the entire grove would turn into a cascade of red and green-tinted lights.”\textsuperscript{52}

While the Valide Paşa summered in Istanbul, it was also compulsory under Ottoman court decorum that she be a part of Abdülhamid’s harem’s cortège in the Friday prayer ceremonies every fifteen days.\textsuperscript{53} In her memoirs, Abdülhamid’s daughter Ayşe Sultan reminisces about the post-\textit{selamlık} leisure hours that the members of the harem took in the vast gardens of the palace, a site that the residents of the palace affectionately referred to as \textit{kir} (used in the Ottoman nineteenth century to mean the countryside).\textsuperscript{54} They were also relatively free to roam the Kağıthane promenades or any other outdoor site that struck their fancy in the immediate aftermath of the brief, but dramatic and ceremonious, public appearances of their \textit{pater familias}.

\textsuperscript{50} Refi’ Cevad Ulunay, \textit{Bu Gözler Neler Gördü?} (Istanbul: Sebil Yayınevi, 2004), 105-107.

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., 107.

\textsuperscript{52} Ulunay, 107.

\textsuperscript{53} Ayşe Osmanoğlu, 56.

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid.
We understand from the memoirs of the female court members that Abdülhamid’s public hour generated generous leeway for fieldtrips for his harem. In the section of the her memoir where Ayşe Sultan recalls the harem ladies’ extensive latitude in using the grounds in and outside the palace she also mentions that the Şale Kiosk was designated specifically for the khedive’s mother to use those Friday afternoons. Valide Paşa would later accompany her son, Abbas Hilmi, and extended family to Abdülhamid’s theater, where they were assigned their own box from which to view the performances. The large Alpine kiosk that was appointed to Valide Paşa and her entourage, was initially built for the occasion of the German Emperor Kaiser Wilhelm II’s 1889 visit, and would later be used as the royal guesthouse of the palace for all other visiting heads of state. It was situated in the immediate vicinity of the architectural triumvirate of Abdülhamid’s personal lodgings, the harem quarters, and the court-theater, while both indoor and outdoor passages would allow intimate circulation between these two spaces. The kiosk had its own stretch of well-appointed gardens and greenhouses, and functioned as a palace within a larger complex whenever it hosted royal guests. In fact, from the forty-ninth to the fifty-third photograph in the album, we are taken on a close tour around the Şale’s structure and well-manicured “picturesque” garden, which was laid out in the English tradition (ingilizkârî) (figs. 5.17–5.18).

This entire album could be assessed as a depiction of one of these Friday afternoon outings of the Sultan’s harem, to which the women of the khedive’s court may have naturally joined, and this would certainly make a conscientious royal gift for a

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55 Ayşe Osmanoğlu, 56
56 I have discussed the setting and use of the Şale Kiosk in Chapters 1 and 4.
female member of the court’s Egyptian viceroyalty. Throughout the nineteenth century, whenever the governors of Egypt paid a visit to their Ottoman suzerains—especially from Muhammad Ali to his grandson Said Paşa—they would be hosted in the Fer’iye Palaces (the name of the three structures literally meaning secondary or auxillary), built next to Çırağan to accommodate the court’s most important guests and later the princes of the court.\(^{57}\) Smaller functional adjacencies like the kitchens serving these waterfront imperial guesthouses, were located in the groves that were later absorbed into Yıldız’s park during the reign of Abdülhamid for the construction of another guesthouse (which also makes its appearance in *Souvenir 1905*). It seems that the neighborhood around the Çırağan-Yıldız imperial complex served as a second home to the Egyptian viceroys and their large entourages of family members throughout the century, even when they acquired their own waterfront estates with extensive forested hills after Ismail Paşa’s acquisition of the self-invented title of khedive.

Although the Yıldız photograph albums do not bear a copies or versions of any of the contents of *Souvenir 1905*, prints of a few of the stills—never bound but inserted into cardboard frames—have emerged from the personal archives of the last Ottoman caliph

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\(^{57}\) Emine Önel, “Fer’iye Sarayları,” *DBİA*, vol. 3 (İstanbul: Kültür Bakanlığı ve Tarih Vakfı, 1993), 294. That for a long time between Abdülmeclid and Abdülažiz’s reigns these three structures were designated for the viceroy of Egypt, from Muhammad Ali (d. 1848) to his grandson Abbas I (d. 1854) and son Saıd (d. 1863), can be gleaned in the refurbishment expenses of the Ottoman treasury. See, BOA, TS. MA. d. 333 (for Muhammad Ali, 295 (for Abbas Paşa and his mother), 2756 (for kitchen expenses during Abbas Paşa’s first visit as the newly appointed governor of Egypt in 1849). The Egyptian governors’ self-assumed khedivial title would only be recognized by Abdülažiz in 1867 only during Ismail Paşa’s reign (d. 1879), therefore the archival documentation lists his predecessors with the Ottoman title of vâlî (governor of a province). Ahmed Lütfi Efendi’s history includes Abbas Paşa’s appointment to governor after his father Ibrahim’s passing in the important events of the years 1848 and 1849. The Ottoman court sends an officer to bring the new governor from Cairo for the latter’s appointment ceremony in the capital in Abdülmecid’s imperial yacht, the Meşidiyye, and brings him to the Fer’iye Palaces, “splendidly furished with all the requisites of proper hospitality” (Levâzım-i mihmân-nevâzisi fevâkalâde tanâzım olundu). Vak’anûvis Ahmed Lütfî Efendi Tarihi 8, 1268.
Abdülmecid Efendi.58 *Souvenir*’s images, then, cannot only be conceptualized under a gendered category, compiled merely to satisfy the gaze of female members of the khedivial harem in representing their cherished outdoor pastimes. To my mind, they evidence a different kind of nomenclature among the larger Hamidian photographic project, one that yielded to a wider field of courtly gazes. I believe that these photographs were commissioned specifically for members of the extended Ottoman court, who collectively represented an imperial audience that enjoyed the closest familiarity with the photographed sites. These compilations were the sultan’s gifts to his family members—hence more immediate and personal versions of the albums prepared for international audiences—and were presented to them after their participation in religious ceremonies. For the individuals who were invited to be a part of the court processionals, these images acted as visual reaffirmations that they were an esteemed and protected part of his extended family. As intently familial souvenirs, the albums therefore participated as valuable objects in the domestic arena of court diplomacy. The sultan shared a formalized mode of intimacy through these objects and, in turn, garnered the allegiance of his family members. They were more complex, lavish variants of the carte-de-visite format and the role that it played between acquaintances, announcing personal interrelations through a reciprocal exchange of photographic portraits.

A rustic garden bench, which makes appearances in a few other post-1900 albums commissioned by Abdülhamid, is *Souvenir 1905*’s opening image and bolsters the album’s theme of intimate court diplomacy inside Ottoman imperial retreats (fig. 5.5).

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58 These unbound photographs were assigned a temporary catalogue number (11/1267) for interdepartmental use only during my visit in Summer 2013 to see Abdülmeclid Efendi’s extant library in the Dolmabahçe Palace Museum. There are plans to digitize all the archives under the library director Akile Çelik’s supervision.
Surmounted by a roof that imitated the mud roofs of Native American hogans with the feathery tips of arrows or bulrushes at its crest, and placed on elevated ground, the structure announces its presence from afar. This outdoor furniture of cement-clad iron is ubiquitous in the albums commissioned to report on the Istanbul stay of Qajar ruler Muzaffar al-Din Shah of Iran on his return from his third European visit in 1902. In the 1902 album, the shah’s entry into the Yıldız grounds is heralded by this structure, and identified in the album’s extant index as an “official greeting spot” (mülâkât maḥallī), which was placed beside the gates that opened into the gardens of the Şale Kiosk. The fact that Souvenir 1905 also initiates its garden tour with this structure signals to the viewer that a diplomatic threshold was about to be crossed: it flags the start of exclusive, privileged access reserved for diplomatic and familial acquaintances.

The second image further confirms the album’s display of intimacy with the site, wherein privileged access allowed the select visitor to not only experience the courtly and the processional, but also the folly and the unexpected (fig. 5.19). Resting over an artificial rocky base, the second structure is again of a miniature, ephemeral kind.

However, unlike its rustic neighbor that was positioned in such a way as to be seen, this

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59 The gift albums prepared for the shah’s visit are in İÜMK (nos. 90508, 90509, 90510, and 90511). The first two seem to be intended as a gift to the Shah with an official court binding, Abdülhamid’s tugra on the front cover and the crescent and star of the Qajar Shah on the back. These two also have an index titling each of the pictures. The latter two albums have simple bindings bearing the title Albums pour cartes postales. While this particular gazebo is the ninth image of the first two official gift albums, in 90510 it is presented as an oval vignette and immediately succeeds the Shah’s two portraits. Its presence in 90510 is the closest in appearance to its presentation in the 1902 album as a marker of the threshold into the Yıldız palace grounds. The Levant Herald and Eastern Express tells us that after having received a photograph album from Abdülhamid II documenting his visit, Muzaffar al-Din Shah was “so pleased with the gift that he asked for a dozen more albums, and the photographer Sami Bey [later Aköz] is now engaged in preparing the photographs.” “The Shah,” The Levant Herald and Eastern Express, October 3, 1900, 1. This must be the reason why there is considerable repetition in each of the albums housed in the Istanbul University Library. Sami was earlier appointed to accompany the German Emperor on his 1898 visit to the Holy Land, while Abdullah Frères were assigned to photograph the interiors and exteriors of the D’Aronco extension to the Şale Kiosk (expanded for the purpose of the emperor’s second visit), which changed the structure’s designation to the ceremonial apartments (Merasim Dairesi). Both of these appointments were also detailed in the same bilingual newspaper.
one is hidden among the garden’s foliage and fulfills its role as a pleasure folly waiting to be discovered. Besides the art nouveau plaques along its base, the structure’s octagonal plan and swooping roof, held up by the thinnest of columns, nod towards the chinoiserie fad of the eighteenth-century garden folly. The two structures that start off the album collectively speak to the palace garden’s twofold function. The roaming pleasure grounds for the members of the harem (instituted at this site Abdulaziz had instituted here building upon Abdülmecid’s extensive landscaping project) would sporadically be transformed into sites of intimate diplomatic visits, when these structures participated in the choreography of both. Going back to the albums created for the Shah’s visit, we see that the albums’ compilers also liked to cluster photographs of ephemeral structures within the vicinity of the Şale. Analogous to the pairing of the bench in the form of a watchtower and the chinoiserie folly in the 1905 album, the four albums made for the Shah from 1902 consistently pair the same gazebo with a square pavilion (‘Acem Köşkü) resting slightly below it, and fronted by a projecting tented entrance, all manufactured and assembled specifically for the Shah’s arrival and week-long stay in the palace grounds.\footnote{On this custom-built pavilion, see Chapter 4.}

The fact that Souvenir is in such good condition, as if untouched, suggests that it may have never come into Princess Behidje’s possession. The date of the album’s making (May to June, 1905) must have coincided too closely with the assassination attempt on Abdülhamid’s life during a selamlık ceremony on July 21, 1905, and the final product seems not to have reached a few of the extra-courtly recipient. Although the binders completed their work in the summer, the album’s photographs are likely of the past
winter: trees are all barren, there are glimpses of snow on the ground, and the group captured in the last photograph are bundled up in jackets and hats. The court ceremonies being the album’s subtext, the focus on camels in Yıldız’s grounds make it likely that the images were shot around the festive month of Ramadan—which in 1904 fell in early December—right before these animals would have been paraded off to the Holy Land, carrying the substantial yearly imperial dispensation along with a bevy of pilgrims (süre-i hümâyün).

d. SOUVENIR’S PRECEDEnTS

The anonymous photographer of Souvenir 1905 was not the first to be allowed to photograph the imperial estates of the capital. There are over twenty albums depicting Istanbul’s imperial sites in the collection of Abdülhamid II. These albums are either the sultan’s own commissions or were put together by local or foreign photographers and presented to him in the hope of securing his recognition and perhaps future employment. There is a considerable number of albums that include the same photographs arranged in different permutations, which are reproductions (şüret alma) of gift-albums presented to foreign dignitaries in the aftermath of their visits. The Muzaffar al-Din Shah albums are of this kind.

Yıldız, being the only palatial residence that the sultan inhabited in this period, is the most frequently photographed site and often serves as the prefatory image of these commemorative albums. Also among the most frequent images are the ones that show the selamlık ceremony, and the proximally situated stark marble, Balyan-built Mabeyn Kiosk, which was the main scribal office retaining all of Abdülhamid II’s political

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61 Hakan T. Karateke, Padişahım Çok Yaşı!, 206-207.
correspondences and recognized at the time by outsiders to the palace as the principal building of the large complex (fig. 5.20). Inevitably, these two images were often also paired in photographs as the gate through which the sultan emerged was adjacent to the Mabeyn and appeared in variously framed permutations around the same theme: the restrained, impregnable, white neoclassical threshold of sovereignty. There were some exceptions to the photographic rule for Yıldız and those came about when a photographer was invited indoors.

_Souvenir 1905’s_ impressionistic frames are peculiar in that they do not share anything in common with the published corpus of landscape and monument photographs from the turn of the century, and tempt us to play the admittedly dangerous connoisseurial guessing-game—to identify the hand of the artist by other means.

Available historiographies on Ottoman photography, which either highlight the biographies of specific individuals as pioneers of the profession (early foreign importers and developers of the technique, Greek and Armenian photographers of the sultans, commercial photographers serving the tourist market), or offer surveys integrating these monographic studies into a chronological order, leave us empty-handed, because they invariably elide inquiries about the formal aspects of the photographs or the photographers’ pursuits of facture.⁶²

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Moreover, Abdullah Frères, Gülmez Brothers, Sebah & Joaillier, Basile Kargopoulo, Guillaume Berggren, James Robertson, and Ali Sami (later Aközer)—all of them one-time photographers of the sultans—often etched their insignias or negative numbers on their inventories and occasionally on the hand-painted borders of their images.\(^{63}\) Leaving a mark of ownership was essential to these court-sanctioned commercial artists, because they marketed their products not only through the diversity of their genre studies—the cartes-de-visite,\(^ {64}\) costumed portraiture, scenes from everyday life, landscapes, seascapes, and streetscapes, to name a few—but also through the particular methods of framing that reflected their brands. The dates of Bogos Tarkulyan’s professional career as the owner of Atelier Phébus (1882 to 1936) correspond to the date of production of *Souvenir 1905*. By June 1905, the competitive heyday of Abdullah Frères and Sebah & Joaillier was over. Tarkulyan also shot the most intimate photographs in Abdülmecid Efendi’s collection, in which it is easy to find members of the caliph’s colorful literary salons that included Abdülhak Hamid and Recaizade Mahmut Ekrem, in garden settings.\(^ {65}\)

The Ottoman-Greek photographer Basile (Vasilaki) Kargopoulo was the first of these photographers to be granted such prestigious access. His albums in the sultan’s collection always bore the photographer’s mark to record his privileged position. He meticulously chiseled each negative with his autograph (*B. Kargopoulo* in the Latin

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\(^{64}\) For the allure of portrait photography in the Ottoman context, see Bahattin Öztuncay, *Hatra-i Uluvvet: Portre Fotoğraflarının Cazibesi, 1846-1950* (İstanbul: Aygaz, 2005).

\(^{65}\) Tarkulyan leaves behind a candid description of his time as a photographer of the Ottoman elite in Feridun Kandemir, “Febüs Anlatıyor,” *Aydabir* 7 (1 March 1936): 53-55.
alphabet), and occasionally numbered (enumerating the specific series to which it belonged) and titled what he was shooting in the lower corners of his stills. The frequency with which his autographed handiwork appears in albums of imperial places demonstrates that he was handpicked specifically for the visual documentation of the royal grounds. Indeed, a detailed receipt from 1879 that he made out to Abdülhamid’s name first lists the panoramas, stereoscopic views and landscapes of Istanbul and Yıldız that he took in July of that year.66

A biographical study of the lives of Ottoman photographers highlights a professional rivalry between the more famous Abdullah Frères and Kargopoulo that hinged on their different religious affiliations, and the respective political connotations of those affiliations during that period. Kargopoulo’s rise to fame as Abdülhamid’s court photographer follows the fall from grace of the three Abdullahs, the Armenian court photographers of the former sultan Abdülaziz, ostensibly due to the documented involvement of Kevork Abdullah—the more fervently nationalistic of the brothers—with Russian diplomats during the signing of the later unratified treaty of San Stefano (this treaty ended the 1877-78 Russo-Turkish War). In his memoirs, later compiled and published in Armenian, we find that Kevork tried to deflect attention from his political misstep by accusing Kargopoulo of colluding with the sultan’s spies to attain their vacated position.67 That the sultan, at times, selectively bestowed his artistic and architectural patronage according to the craftsmen’s ethno-political ties in times of diplomatic impasses has been outlined by Oya Şenyurt in her study of the Greek-

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66 BOA, Y. PRK. MYD. 1/33; and, BOA, İ..DH..931/73778.

67 Kevork Abdullah’s published biography is first mentioned in Bahattin Öztuncay, The Photographers of Constantinople, 232. The full citation of this understudied book is Esayi Tayets‘i, Hushagir kenats‘ ew gortsunēut‘ean nakhkin kayserakan lusankarich’ Gēorg Aptullahi (Venetik: S. Ghazar, 1929).
Orthodox Ioannidis family of builder-**kalfas** and their mediation between the Ottoman and Serbian courts.⁶⁸ At other times it was simply a question of more economical pricing that determined the decision over which artist or architect would receive the commission. Overall, trying to qualify the patronage relations in the period is a slippery inquiry, especially patronage relations that rely on favoring one ethnic group over another one. Often enough official court documentation exhibits budgetary concerns as the primary determinants of certain commissions. For example, in the early years of Abdülhamid’s architectural patronage, Vasilaki Ioannidis often receives commissions over Sarkis Balyan, the other court-favored architect of the period, thanks to his ability to finish building projects on time and under budget. A court memorandum for the building of an exhibition pavilion identifies Vasilaki as the preferred contractor, recording: “Because it has been observed many times that he [Vasilaki] is able to construct a building in seven days what other kalfas accomplish in fifteen, if this exhibition building is built through his intercession it is apparent that it would be completed in no time and submitted to the government in the desired state” (*Başka kalfaların onbes günde yapabilecekleri bir binayı yedi günde inşa etmeye muvaffak olduğu pek çok kere görüldüğünden işbu sergi binası onun vasitasıyla yapılabilecek olursa kısa bir zamanda istenen nitelikte yapıl hünkümte teslim edeceği belidir*).⁶⁹

Ultimately, what won Kargopoulo the title of court photographer seems to have been his skill in photographing vast expanses—he applied his preoccupation with the

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monumental to buildings as well as vistas. It is no coincidence that he boldly advertised his practice by always stressing his expertise: “stereoscopic and panoramic views” (vues panoramas, vues stereoscopiques) in the 1879 receipt, and, after getting the court commission, “collection of panoramic views of the interiors and exteriors of all the imperial palaces and kiosks” (collection de vues panoramique des intérieurs et extérieurs de tous les palais et kiosques impériaux) in the first issue of the Orient’s trade journal from 1880. His collections of Istanbul’s palaces and pavilions (among them Yıldız, Dolmabahçe, Beylerbeyi, Beykoz, Göksu, Kağthane, İhlamur and occasionally Topkapı) were the most frequently reproduced, and also dominated the court’s many gift-albums in diverse choreographies of ordering. The uneven negative numbers on the stills in each album speak to their continual replication and use in the 1880s and 1890s.

Kargopoulo’s images of palatial sites were often dramatic shots of the unpopulated exteriors and interiors that encompassed each structure as holistically as possible. It seems that the court commission desired the photographic representation of its structures to be simultaneously unambiguous and imposing, and not at all focused on showing their artisanal qualities in ornamental details.

For his famed grand panoramas from 1875, he had to weave individual segmented negatives into one other and manipulate the gradational tones in each one to achieve consistency in tonality in a shot that ultimately measured up to three and a half meters in length. Kargopoulo enjoyed his designation as the plein-air photographer of the court.

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71 The largest album among Kargapoulo’s court commissions is İÜMK no. 90751 with 92 stills.

72 Öztuncay, Photographers of Constantinople, 248.
from 1879 until his death in 1885. During that time he fully embraced the sartorial characteristics of his adopted artistic identity. He occasionally inserted himself into his compositions in the guise of a wandering flâneur, strolling along the scenic Bosphorus hills, or in Edirne’s old palace, dressed up in a full beard, artist’s overcoat, and top hat (fig. 21). He donned the persona of the expressionist artist upon entering the grounds of Yıldız as the first photographer to take a visual survey of the inner grounds. When we view his photographs of the site, a garden palace where landscape dictated the terms of the built environment and where nature took precedence over architecture, we see him willfully lose himself in the palace’s steep and winding woods, find momentary repose on the hilltops, shoot partial views of rustic huts by the lake, and allow the landscape to guide him through vistas that naturally break into partial views. The photographers of this particular palace, once introduced to the world within its walls, were incapable of producing comprehensive panoramas: its very particular topography forced these individuals, including Kargopoulo, the site’s very first surveyor, to take in nature’s scenes with gradients, slants, and fragments, and therefore at times to attenuate their frame. It is partly to Kargopoulo that the unknown photographer of the 1905 album owes his quixotic eye (figs. 22–23).

e. ABDÜLHAMID AND ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION

When referring to Istanbul in his collection of essays on urban history, Five Cities (1946), Tanpınar maintains that each imperial commission in the Ottoman capital evoked regality first, while all other possible associations came in second: “[A]rchitecture of empire
resembles the empire itself.” Linking edifice to empire, the historiographer reminds us of the timeless imperial mantra that a monument stands as a permanent reminder of its patron’s glory. Photography further congeals this edifice-empire analogy as documentary proof and disseminates it with a continuously reproducible claim to possession and permanence.

Not surprisingly, the very history of photography began with photographs of places. Joseph Nicéphore Niépce’s first shot was a view of his Burgundy estate Le Gras from his window, because photography of place, first and foremost, relayed a sense of immutability and trustworthy subjecthood. Moreover, the first few images of William Henry Fox Talbot’s photo-illustrated Pencil of Nature (1844 to 1846) expounded on the sun’s ability to draw on paper largely through a selection of photographs of architectural and natural sites as these subjects accommodated longer exposure times, offered up the most exciting surface textures for experimentation with light and shadow, and at the same time induced sentimental ruminations: “a time-withered oak, or a moss-covered stone may awaken a train of thoughts and feelings, and picturesque imaginings.” The contributions of their textural richness and evocations of Ruskinian emotiveness aside, nature and architecture’s stillness, in contrast to the human body, made them the two most reliable subjects for early photography. To Talbot, they were, moreover,

73 Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, Beş Şehir: Deneme (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2003), 166.


75 H. Fox Talbot, The Pencil of Nature (London: Longman, Brown, Green, & Longmans, 1844-[1846]).

76 On architecture as an early and beloved photographic subject, see Wendy Shaw, “Between the Sublime and the Picturesque: Mourning Modernization and the Production of Orientalist Landscape in Thomas
characterized by a kind of permanence affixed to cultural patrimony—echoed in Tanpınar’s crucial semiotic—best captured in the British photographer’s telling note on Plate XVIII: Gate of Christchurch, “Those ancient courts and quadrangles and cloisters [of Oxford and Cambridge] look so tranquil so solemn at the close of a summer’s evening that the spectator almost thinks that he gazes upon a city of former ages, deserted but not in ruins: abandoned by man, but spared by Time” (fig. 5.24). There is no doubt that the primary drive behind the Ottoman albums of the imperial palace was to conjure up in the viewer’s mind a meditative ground between the empire’s past and present, a place “spared by Time,” and preserved under sovereignty’s image as its very keeper.

With Abdülhamid’s accession to the throne, a project for the preservation of imperial structures in the capital was placed on the state-rebuilding agenda. Instead of commissioning grand palatial structures like his two predecessors, Abdülhamid, ever so conscious of living history’s pull on his subjects, frugally invested in reinventing the architecture of his rule. In the process he invigorated his persona as a preservationist sultan. He wanted the ancient buildings of the house of Osman to look unsullied and timeless. “Spared by time,” they had to emote the glorious imperial past, and simultaneously signal him as their caretaker. Undeniably, this preservationist aspect of his rule was in keeping with the overtly patriarchal mode with which he would choose to commemorate his sovereignty’s signs: modest, but abundant architectural markers such as clock towers and plaques on mosques and fountains diffused all the way into the empire’s smallest localities. Among the “world of symbols” that were invented and

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Allom and Reverend Robert Walsh’s Constantinople and the Scenery of the Seven Churches of Asia Minor (c. 1839),” in The Poetics and Politics of Space: Ottoman Istanbul and British Orientalism, ed. Zeynep İnankur, Reina Lewis, and Mary Roberts (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2010),123. In this essay Shaw argues the point that “in [Ottoman] photography, permanence became the province of architecture.”
displayed vicariously on the built environment, and which stood for his authority, were the ones that often tied his sovereignty to that of his earliest ancestors. Selim Deringil offers Abdülhamid’s selective accentuation and mythification of his ancestral history with restorations to the tombs of the first two sultans Osman and Orhan in Bursa, the canonization of the tomb of Ertuğrul (Osman’s father) in Söğüt through yearly reenactments of the empire’s partly apocryphal origin stories, and the site’s transformation into a mostly representative necropolis for Ertuğrul’s wife and closest military companions. The new sultan knew how to mobilize his architectural heritage. The notion of an uninterrupted link between the empire’s founding members and its contemporary reincarnation in his rule was established through Abdülhamid’s revival of key sites and edifices.

The renovation of imperial sites in the capital began with an edict dated on August 19, 1881, exactly twelve days before the fifth anniversary of his accession to the throne. This edict explicitly announces the sultan’s heritage protection plans for the imperial sites in the capital. It urges the assembly of a committee of builders consisting of “benevolently inclined Serkis Bey, the head-architect of the state, prosperous Mahmud Mesud Paşa, former head of the military, and fortunate Vasilaki Kalfa” (devlet ‘utufetli Serkiz Beg, erkân-i harbiyye re’isi sâбиk sa’ađetli Maḥmūd Mes’ūd Paṣa, ve sa’ađetli Vâsilâki Kalfâ) and “various other structural experts” (ebniye işlerine vâkif ʿicāb eden me’mûrlar) to restore, before the onset of winter, all of the “decaying” palaces and pavilions (harâba yüz tutmak dereceleri) that were erected by the sultan’s more immediate predecessors for “four to five millions liras” (dört beş milyon lirâ şarfi). The

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77 Deringil, The Well-Protected Domains, 31-32.
emphatic nature of the edict is communicated in its initiating phrase: “the noblest edifices of our most illustrious ancestors, our veritable benefactors” (ecdād-ī izām-ī velīnī’met-i āzamī āšār-ı celīlesi) are on the brink of ruin, because required upkeep was greatly ignored in the preceding years. The commission is assigned the task of inspecting the palaces and pavilions and of producing registers that disclose all the required repairs, “excluding the palace of Çırağan” (Çırāğān sāhīlsarāy-ī hūmāyūnundan mād‘ā) either because it now imprisoned his deposed and psychologically unwell brother Murad V, or because it was the most recently erected palace and did not require any urgent care. The spectral existence of Abdülaziz’s neo-Andalusian palace during its time as the site of Murad V’s house arrest is communicated in the imperial photograph albums via its puzzlingly infrequent appearances. This recurring lacuna indicates that this palace was diligently omitted from representations of the Hamidian dwellings, suggesting that its exclusion from the restoration project had more to do with its ignominious occupant than with its state of repair. There are only seven images currently identified in two Yıldız albums that contain representations of this palace. One is of a comically distant view of the European shoreline’s palaces from a hilltop across the straits where Çırağan gleams as a faint white strip, while another album has five interior shots of the palace’s ghostly main hall, all accentuating its specific ornamental scheme of horseshoe arches, cubes of elaborately carved column capitals, and abundant wooden and marble inlays.78 If the latter album’s viewer had no familiarity with the interiors of this structure there would be no way of knowing which imperial residence this set of five photographs highlighted.

78 The photographic representations of Çırağan are extremely rare in the Yıldız albums. I was able to find a single one (no. 28) in İÜMK (no. 90474) and five in album no. 90853.
Seventy-five repair and construction-related expense registers (*defters*) from 1883, each one either specific to a particular building in an imperial site (e.g. the quarters of the chief-eunuch at Yıldız or the new imperial stables in Kağıthane) or a cluster of repairs on a few buildings of an estate (e.g. Maslak and Ayazağa Kiosks and their adjacencies), minutely detail the built results of this restoration project. Just like the *Souvenir*, the majority of the preservation commission’s attention is focused on Yıldız, advising on repairs but also on the erection of brand new structures to improve on Yıldız’s only recently adopted palatial status. After having only briefly mentioned the sultan’s visits to the Yıldız mountain, Said Paşa would rather abruptly announce the imperial move in an entry from April 19, 1877, and with it, pronounce the shift in the nature of Yıldız’s designation from a mansion (*kaşr*) to a palace (*sarây*): “On this day, the imperial transfer from the Beşiktaş imperial palace to the Yıldız imperial mansion took place, and the latter was designated the Yıldız imperial palace” (*Bugün Beşiktaş saray–t hümâyunu’ndan Yıldız kasr-t hümâyunu’na bütün bütün nakl-i hümâyun vukâ’ bulup Yıldız saray-t hümâyunu ismi verilmiştir*). It could very well be that under the guise of a much broader preservation project and a claim for thriftiness—a concept greatly underscored in the laudatory advice narratives that two intellectuals of the period, Ahmet Mithat’s *Üss-t İnkılâb* (*The Principle of Revolution*) and Ahmet CevDET’s *Ma’rûzât (Submissions)* presented to Abdülhamid on his accession—the sultan was legitimizing his expenditures on his chosen, under-equipped palatial site.

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79 BOA, Y. EE. d. 1030 to Y. EE. d. 1105.

80 İngiliz Said Paşa, 142.
Whether or not economic austerity was successfully implemented, with cost-cutting measures benefiting the imperial treasury’s reserves in the initial years of his rule, Abdülhamid still managed to reinvoke the unity and sacrality of royal space through this manifold architectural agenda of photographing, surveying, describing, and restoring that accompanied the preservation project. In some ways, Kargopoulo’s diligent architectural documentation and the architecture commission’s conservation surveys were similar undertakings to the French missions héliographiques of 1851 that culled France’s best photographers to chronicle the Second Republic’s entire architectural patrimony to not only establish a historical record, but also to use photographic evidence in a large-scale conservation project.\(^2\) Souvenir 1905 represents a moment when Abdülhamid’s restoration project was complete, and the viewers of such picture albums understood the geography and content of the reigning sultan’s memoirs of place, his refuges within the capital interconnected through his personal history.

f. INCLUSIONS

The album’s images of Yıldız and its biographically linked sites plot a route around the northern and western stretches of the continually expanding capital. In fact, when the album’s destinations are plotted on a map, the physical tour takes the viewer on a wide, but easily navigable loop that emanates out of a main artery, the Büyükdere road.

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\(^1\) To my mind, these two works acted as close to the genre of the mirror for princes as possible in Abdülhamid’s transition from prince to sovereign. As a sultan, he abides by the general guidelines that the two eminent authors relay to him.

Steadily distal from the former center of the capital, Büyükdere emerged in the nineteenth century, especially in the summer months when the embassies moved down to their seaside palaces, as the new imperial land route, signaling, in the process, a change in the landscape of Ottoman political life that began to revolve around foreign affairs. During and after the Russo-Turkish War, when contact between the European embassies in Istanbul and Yıldız intensified—and which in turn allowed individuals like Lady Layard to enjoy—the scenic Büyükdere ridge connected the summer residences of foreign representatives to the palace. In the summer months it also joined the khedivial family’s mansions (and the beloved Valide Paşa) to the palace, and offered an alternative to the busy waterways of diplomatic life between the Tarabya and Kabataş docks. For instance, Georgina Müller, the wife of the German Orientalist Max Müller, when visiting Yıldız’s famed library with her husband as Abdülhamid’s personal guests, took this route (“the high-road”) from the summer residence of the British embassy and jotted down her impressions of it as follows:

> With some difficulty, we got a carriage and drove off to Yildiz [sic]. We had at first a long ascent from Therapia up the wooded valley of Krio-Nero, or cold water. Once out of this ascent we were in the so-called high-road leading along the top of the hills bordering the Bosphorus, direct to Pera. The road ran too far inland for us to see the water, but all along we had lovely views of the hills along the Asiatic shore. 

Ottoman albums began to resemble visual counterparts to specific travel routes, and to illustrate the psycho-geographies of Istanbul’s inhabitants. Looking closely at an Abdullah Frères album titled “Vues et types de Constantinople: Photographie d’après nature” from 1885, a recent study has argued that the photographed sites implied a

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83 Müller, 94-95.
panorama, along the lines of *Souvenir 1905*’s implied hilltop loop. Although the older album continues the photographic tradition of including sites from the historical peninsula, it briefly projects its lens onto the Asian shore, and incorporates a few of its vistas as seen from the European side of Istanbul. Some of these are places where the *Souvenir* travels. What tied the photographed places of the *Vues et types de Constantinople* were the steamboat routes that actually brought them physically closer during that period. This type of speedier travel and ease of access within the city, having ingrained itself in the cognitive map of the album’s viewer, would make the Abdullah Frères album read as an implied panorama of the growing city. Abdullah Frères threaded together these sites—that could now all be visited in one day—rather than focusing on a specific, more restricted segment. In the 1880s, a *Libraire Internationale Lorenz & Keil*, located in the Pera district of Istanbul, produced a pocket-map in French for European visitors to the city that precisely charts the earlier album’s implied map: “*Carte du Bosphore avec Constantinople et les lieux environnants ainsi que le trace de la communication a bateaux a vapeur.*” The map traces the ferry routes along the Bosphorus, but it was ultimately intended to provide a complete transportation network for the foreign visitors’ who sought out their representatives in the city. To that end, it marks the summer and winter residences of each of the European embassies—R for Russian, A for American, F for French, I for Italian. The Rumelian and Izmit railways are plotted on it as well as the central Büyükdere artery that offered the quickest route

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84 Esra Akcan, 106.

85 Ibid., 108.

86 The map is in the collection of the Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, and bears the ex-libris of the eminent twentieth-century Austrian historian Andreas Tietze (d. 2003).
between Pera and Tarabya. The idiosyncratic legend advises its user, desperate to contact their ambassador, that because of the frequent conferences—due, most likely, to the end of the Russo-Turkish War—they may have to rent a hotel in Büyükdere or Tarabya while waiting to be seen by their busy representative.

A court-commissioned, mammoth-sized (216 by 216 centimeters) “topographic map from 1878 that was drawn up by the military academy” (mekteb-i harbiye cenâb-i mülükânede ṭopoğrâfyā uşûlû üzere) delineates for us the very route that the Souvenir later photographs: “The imperial palace of Yıldız, imperial pavilions of Ayazağa and Kağıthane, and the extant properties around them,” (Yıldız sarāy-i hümâyûnuyla Ayâzâḡâ ve Kâğıdhâne kasr-i hümâyûnları ve etrâf ü civârında vâki’ ārâzî) (fig. 5.25). 87 If the preservationist edict from 1881 offers insight into the new sultan’s architectural interests, the map does similarly by depicting the section of the capital to which the sultan was most interested in connecting his palace. When Celal Esad (Arseven), the erstwhile Ottoman art historian, drew up bird’s-eye view images of Yıldız under siege by the Army of Action in 1909 for the French journal L’Illustration (fig. 5.26), he was able to realize them without any cartographic aids because he could summon his topographic memories of the environs of Yıldız, which he was made to draw regularly during his time at the very military academy that produced this map. 88 One can imagine this map being unfurled onto a large table in the palace library, or in the stubby Çit Kiosk right behind the Mabeyn Kiosk, where equally colossal “relief maps” (kabârma ḥarîṭa) of the empire were exhibited and scrutinized by the members of the administration. 89 The sultan would

87 This map is in housed in İÜMK and catalogued as no. 92911.

88 Celâl Esad Arseven, Sanat ve Siyaset Hatıralarım (Istanbul: İletişim, 1993), 113.
have had to walk around and hover over the massive folio to fully grasp the dizzying contour lines that marked the hilly terrain—lines which are interrupted only sparingly by the outlines and layouts of imperial residences, all of which, in turn, neatly hold the map’s peripheries. These outlines in pink are generously depicted surrounded by their extensive landscaping. On the one hand, the easily recognizable plan of the Mabeyn Kiosk delineates Yıldız; on the other, the palace’s vast grounds are disappointingly left out. In the meantime, the map accents Kağthane’s attenuated spread along the river in minute detail, as well as the configuration of Ayazağa’s pavilions—their alignment now impaired by new construction. Cultivated land is plotted as well, in small green squares in the villages of Maslak, on either side of the Kağthane creek, and in the vicinity of the Nüzhetiye Pavilions. The map completely elides the urban sprawl of Istanbul between these imperial sites except for the indiscrimitately outlined settlements in Feriköy and a speckling of police stations (karağol), inconspicuously (and unsurprisingly, given the anxieties of the Hamidian era) nestled in the entrances of the imperial residences.

Inside the pages of Souvenir 1905, this new, preferred loop along Büyükdere is rhythmically broken by a constant return to the gardens of Yıldız. Images of the main sultanic residence function as place markers and constant reminders of the palace’s centripetal presence in the newly designated imperial stretch. Photographs of Yıldız engulf the Maslak, Ayazağa, İhlamur and Kağthane sites, they punctuate the narrative and topically signal what will be exhibited next in the album—in an almost perfect a-b-a-c-a-d cadence. Thirty of the photographs are of Yıldız. Snippets of identifiable buildings, such as the turreted additions of Raimondo D’Aronco to the Şale Kiosk, or steep vistas

89 BOA, BEO. 3705/277817.
that were associated with the site thanks to earlier photographs by Kargopoulo and
landscape paintings by Şeker Ahmed Paşa and the Italian court-painter Fausto Zonaro,
help to place them.\textsuperscript{90} The fact that not every location depicted in the photographs is easily
identifiable—especially ones that relate to farming (ox-drawn ploughs, flocks of sheep)
and the menageries (zebras, springbok, and ostriches)—is partly because the album
assumes its owner’s intimacy with these places, and also because Abdülhamid saw these
sites as fluidly interconnected in function.

g. \textit{SOUVENIR’S YILDIRZ}

The first thirty photographs of \textit{Souvenir 1905} are identifiably shots of Yıldız. Among
these palace photographs, the third to the tenth image can be grouped separately as
having served a more procedural function before being serialized inside the luxurious
album. The snapshot effect of these particular images, and the way they frame the
landscaping features around an imperial structure without engaging specifically with the
building, connect them to the use of photography in practices of land-surveying (\textit{mesāḥa}).
For instance, the third image in the album, which presents the first stately structure
modeled on an eighteenth-century French urban mansion with a strangely attenuated
Mansard roof, compositionally retains a considerable distance from the building and
instead foregrounds a large pool cascading over uneven rockery. In the next photograph,
we find the photographer has turned around to complete the preceding image by showing

\textsuperscript{90} For Şeker Ahmed Paşa’s palace-centered artistic and bureaucratic life, see İlona Baytar and Ömer Faruk
Şerifoğlu, eds., \textit{Şeker Ahmed Paşa, 1841-1907} (İstanbul: TBMM Saraylar Daire Başkanlığı, 2008). For
Zonaro’s Istanbul years, see Osman Öndeş and Erol Makzume, eds. \textit{Fausto Zonaro: Ottoman Court
Painter} (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2002); and Ömer Faruk Şerifoğlu, ed., \textit{Doğumunun 150. Yılında
Osmanlı Saray Ressami Fausto Zonaro = Ottoman Court Painter Fausto Zonaro on His 150th Birth
Anniversary} (İstanbul: YKY ve TBMM Milli Saraylar Daire Başkanlığı, 2004).
us where the streaming water lands, along with the cliff-side boundary of this mansion’s garden. Another image gives us a side view of the building with an elevated, picketed circular zone ready to receive another garden *fabrique*. When they were first taken, this group of photographs in the album likely formed the visual compendium of the landscaping project of this segment of the palace’s gardens, a novel way to document the completed work to the patron or the bookkeeper. Although archives have not yet produced its accompanying project descriptions, we do know that photographs were often attached to construction and repair works on sites that belonged to the imperial treasury during Abdülhamid’s reign.

The photographer of these sites could very well have been the imperial head-gardener of the period, Charles Henry, or his French collaborative partner, the landscape artist Gustave Deroin, who was often tasked with drawing up plans for gardening projects at imperial sites.91 The fact that a gardening book was recycled for the photographs’ matting, coupled with the photographer’s eagerness to highlight the newly-landscaped grounds over the individual buildings (especially in the case of Yıldız), heightens the chance that a garden expert was involved in the album’s making. He wanted to present the imperial gardens much in the way that they were painstakingly listed in the employment registers of gardeners during this period, often hierarchically arranged with Yıldız always appearing the very top.

The opening images of the album present the newest and final section that Abdülhamid would introduce to his complex. Although, following in the footsteps of his predecessors, he for decades considered the garden settings of his palace and retreats as

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91 See Chapter 3 for information on these two people.
prime platforms for diplomatic gatherings and ceremonies, it seems that the largest of these segments—the Şale Kiosk designated for the use of the Egyptian family, but was initially built to host his closest international ally, Wilhelm II—was not deemed to be sufficient at the turn of the century. To accommodate his frequent imperial guests, he needed more space, a new structure that would be closer to the imperial porcelain factory, and provide easier access to the large park and its two other Abdülaziz-era pavilions Malta and Çadır, than the Şale, which now stood uncomfortably close to his private quarters. From its inception as a palace, Yıldız had to answer to the regular sightseeing requests of high-placed members of the European diplomatic community to see the imperial library, its adjacent museum, and the porcelain factory. The sultan cultivated a demand for access to these sites by including them in the palace tours that he granted his foreign guests: reports of these visits fed the desire of others, who saw them as sites of privileged access. Abdülhamid may or may not have wanted increased privacy in the third decade of his rule, but whatever his motivation, he created a fully self-sufficient guest zone that fulfilled both the rest and entertainment requirements of his visitors.

The gardens of the Ferîye Palaces were absorbed into Yıldız to make up a large part of this new segment’s creation. The album’s photographer documents the structures that delineate the boundaries of this newly appropriated area. The new imperial guesthouse, the album’s third image, which looks like an eighteenth-century French urban mansion, was built on the footprints of the former imperial head-gardener Christian

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92 Ottoman officials who were employed under the office of court ceremonies (ışrafı t nezâreti) repeatedly relayed requests to the palace’s administrative body (başkıbet dâ‘RESİ) that the foreign heads of state made specifically to see the library, museum and porcelain factory. The documents from Yıldız’s office of ceremonies are filed in the Prime Minister’s Ottoman Archives under iradeler (court decrees): BOA, I. DUIT. For Şeker Ahmed Paşa’s role as the head of the office of court ceremonies, see Gülsen Sevinç Kaya, “Başyaver Şeker Ahmed Paşa ve Sarayın Yabancı Konukları,” in 71-80.
Sester’s single-story home, which until the 1890s fell outside Yıldız’s imperial grounds. Sester’s residence was incorporated into this new section along with the gardens belonging to Ferʻiye and commanded the highest point of its northwesterly edge. If the photographer, or the person responsible for the commission of at least the first set of images in the album, did indeed belong to the gardening profession, the images of this site in Souvenir 1905 take on new poignancy, documenting as they do a change of hands in the gardener’s office—a transition from the German dominance in the imperial post to a French one. By reworking an area and neighborhood that was once closely associated with the earliest head-gardener, the newcomer lays claim over the sites under his jurisdiction.

This set of images not only aids in identifying the exact location of Abdülhamid’s last imperial commission inside Yıldız by providing shots of its boundaries, and of its vistas overlooking Ortaköy’s shoreline, it also reveals something about the pragmatism of architectural patronage even at the sultanic level. It seems that commissions were not always site specific. We first encounter the French hôtel-type among an eclectic assortment of residential plans, drafted in 1900 by the prolific Levantine architect Alexandre Vallaury for Abdülhamid’s five sons, and intended to be strung along the suburban garden retreat of Kurbâgâli Dere on the Asian shores of the Kadıköy neighborhood—a pleasure garden first bestowed on Abdülaziz by his brother Abdülmecid during the latter’s tenure as sultan.93 Although plots allocated for these

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93 Tülay Artan, “Topkapı Sarayı’nda Bulunan Bir Grup Mimari Çizimizin Düşündürdüğüleri,” Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Yıllık 5 (1992), 7-52. Surprisingly very little is known and written about the prolific architect Alexandre Vallaury. Still, the most comprehensive monograph on his life and work is Mustafa Servet Akpolat, “The French Origin Levantine Architect Alexandre Vallaury,” (PhD diss., Hacettepe Sosyal Bilimler Fakültesi, 1991). There has recently been a resurgence of interest in his work, for instance, see Seda Kula Say, “A Post-1908 Project of Vallaury: Customs House in Thessaloniki,” in 14th International
mansions were still evident in the Pervititch maps from the 1920s, they were never built. Instead, a modified version of the last Vallaury project was recycled for Abdülhamid’s new guest lodge that replaced Sester’s home (fig. 3.14). To fit the site’s sloping topography and orientation towards the Bosphorus, the narrower side of the planned building would be turned into the main façade of the built version. The structure retained its three stories (excluding the service floor in an elevated basement), but its attenuated attic floor in favor of blank, conical decorative projections that framed the dormer windows in the plan’s elevation. The Serlian windows in the plan would be broken up on the building’s second floor by rectangular ones. Overall, the decorative reliefs that bracketed most of the projected building’s apertures were reduced in the built version to their bare minimum: the Mansard roof lost its scaled slates and widow’s walks, the corners of each of the façade’s tripartite arrangement their brick articulations, chimney bases their reliefs in the form of vases and their second floor windows with their voussoirs. White paint replaced the banded rustication that wrapped around the projected façade, and the pilasters breaking up the series of windows on the third floor received even flatter Corinthian capitals. The internal arrangement of the rooms, especially the main halls in the original plan, were likely shrunk to fit the new, narrower orientation facing the commanding Ortaköy views of the sub-imperial yalıs appointed by the sultan to his daughters.

It is difficult to read the hand of Vallaury in these unselfconscious modifications that resulted in an idiosyncratic version of the miniature Versailles presented on paper.

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94 See Chapter 3 for further details.
The *Annuaire oriental* from 1900 lists Vasilaki Kalfa’s son Yanko ("Yanco Eff. Joannidi") as the palace’s chief-architect, and D’Aronco as his assistant; were they involved in this adaptation of a retreat for the princes to a site much more visible to an intended audience of international visitors? Vallaury and D’Aronco had a history of collaborating on civic projects in an inventive neo-orientalist idiom for the state’s ministry of pious endowments (*evkāf nezāreti*). Similar in practice to the flexibility that we observe in the use of plans and projects, the imperial commissions also accommodated collaborations between the palace’s in-house architects and independent architects like Vallaury, who was hired not only to design residences for members of the Ottoman court, but also for some of the most important civic structures of the period such as the Ottoman Bank, Imperial Museum, and Imperial Medical School.

If the first layer of meaning, especially in the opening ten shots, can be sought in the way newly built areas of the palace were documented for bureaucratic purposes, the second lies in the intention to take the album’s audience—the court’s privileged visitor—on a tour of this guest zone, illustrating how the new imperial building was physically connected to the different points of interest inside the garden. The photographer’s first stop is the porcelain factory closest to the new mansion; he then proceeds into the park to visit its ivy-covered pavilions, while painstakingly mapping the routes along the way. As he takes his walking tour, there is not only a transition from more private to public spaces, but also a visible widening of the camera lens in the scenes he captures, from specific

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95 *Annuaire oriental* (Istanbul, 1900), 24.

96 Diana Barillari and Ezio Godoli, *Istanbul 1900*, 46-64. A bilingual (English and French) newspaper reports on their court-appointed collaboration to construct a bacteriological institute in Şişli on the former grounds of the exhibition that D’Aronco was brought from Italy to build; “Bacteriological Institute,” *The Levant Herald and Eastern Express*, July 4, 1900, 2.
buildings and garden features to vaster vistas, and finally a complete picture of the cherished Hamidian estates.

h. PARTITIONS

This album neither retains the ordering impulses of its distant cousins, where each photograph validated a single fact about the empire’s many material advances and ever-stoic glory, nor does it employ the vast and austere expanses on which modernity’s objects (e.g. battleships or railways) and subjects (e.g. students or patients) were performed. Rather, it solicits an impressionistic and familial eye from its viewer, attuned to the interplay of light, color, and movement, one that is simultaneously introspective in its ability to perceive the intention behind the sequenced narrative of Abdülhamid’s private turf and personal preferences for royal dwellings in the capital. In other words, what we come to observe in the contents of this album is not a simple visual certification of a monolithic edifice or a stately, yet indistinct panoramic landscape of the capital, but rather a different mode of photographic narrative that demands that each image be associated with the following, and that the viewer intuits linkages between and perceive the imperial program behind the sites.

By calibrating the lens more pensively, compared to the reductive way in which the city’s foreign audience focused on its picturesque (where each perfectly manicured landscape pronounced an individual structure), this album asks its viewer to labor over meanings (of land), be considerably more self-reflexive (about the photographic content), and form associations (concerning empire). Its unknown photographer places Yıldız in its Hamidian architectural lineage by summoning the irrevocable link between the Ottoman
imperial edifice and the abundant verdancy of the city. Pulling from travel writings on the empire’s capital all similarly prefaced with such nature-awe, Tanpinar spoke as if to the album’s heart, when he wrote, “Istanbul is not only a city abundant in monuments and monument-like edifices, but the city’s nature aids in the display of these structures.”

The album’s shots of the particularly knobby and tufted segments of gardens and pastures signal the impending appearance of structures in such a way as to give the illusion that they were discovered during a series of nature walks. The photographer employs these nature shots to multifarious effect in order to illustrate the fact that what sustains the Hamidian house is the fecundity of its land: possession of both fertile and scenic nature supports the royal dwelling. The frequency of these shots also blurs transitions between sites represented in the album. The photographer intensifies the idea of the boundlessness of the sultan’s domains in the capital by arbitrarily ending the visit in one and moving onto another. Although they are representationally incongruous with the photographs of picturesque meanderings in the album, images of farming factor into these nature walks precisely to highlight Abdülhamid’s dual conception of beautiful and bountiful nature.

To further accentuate this duality of imperial estates containing both artificial and natural terrains, the photographer obsesses over capturing partitions between the two. From the fourth image in the album, he starts foregrounding gates, walls, bridges, and fences that distinguish the two zones in each estate (fig. 5.27). In one instance, the photographic plane is separated into two sections by a wooden partition, with what appears to be a dog scurrying out of the shot on the lower left-hand corner, while the

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97 Tanpinar, Beş Şehir, 165.
plunging vista draws the eye into the Ortaköy shoreline palaces of the immediate members of the court, including the demure, neo-classical residences of Abdülhamid’s daughter Zekiye Sultan as well as Gazi Osman Paşa (fig. 5.28). In another photograph, fences that separate Yıldız’s pastures allotted for grazing occupy the foreground of an image that intimates the outlines of a small residential pavilions in the hilly background. This peculiar fascination with the physical demarcations of land, between the urban and rural, man-made and natural, the palace and its domains, comes up frequently in the novels and memoirs of the Ottoman intellectuals of the period.

While serving as a scribe in the Ottoman embassy in London, Abdülhak Hamid, one of the most illustrious Ottoman poets of the second half of the nineteenth century, reflected upon the city’s ability to conjoin both the town (belde) and country (sahra). He observes that what separates Piccadilly Street’s prosperous (mamur) urban sprawl from the royal parks around Buckingham Palace (Green Park and St. James Park) is but a mere railing (parmaklık). It is that simple partition that sweeps the city-dweller into a civilized country living (sahra–ı medeniyet), one that performs its rusticity without any of its potentially displeasing inconveniences: “It is as if [emphasis added] those parks are like villages in every sense” (Sankı o parklar her mânâsyla rustâidir).98

In a similar vein, Recaizade Mahmud Ekrem, Hamid’s literary mentor, begins his well-known satirical novel Araba Sevdası (The Carriage Affair) from 1898 with a detailed, cartographic description of the walled exteriors of Çamlıca gardens, Istanbul’s first public park. Imagining himself as “a bird gliding over the famous hilltop” (yüksekten kuş bağışi bir nazarla bağımak mümkün olsa), Recaizade’s omniscient narrator describes

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this urban intervention as cutting an elongated, conical segment (şekl–i maḥrūṭī) out of the otherwise virgin landscape.\(^9\) The novel’s first subjects are the very partitions—walls (duvār ile muḥāf) and wires (teller uzatılarak muḥāfaża)—that mark the park’s plot and protect this “civilized country” from prying eyes, animals, and the derelict, rocky cemetery of Şārî Kāya (the Tawny Rock) on its northernmost borders.\(^10\) Here, for the first time, a public space was constructed out of land that was never inaccessible to the residents of the city. In fact, many adventurous climbers would use this very spot to survey Istanbul’s European cityscape. What mattered for the park’s builders was how this space could perform civility in nature—the peculiar, paradoxical phrase sahra-ı medeniyet that Hamid uses to describe London’s parks makes sense in this context—and for that, the borders and partitions had to be pronounced and visible. Nature’s turn to artifice must have caught Recaizade’s attention, and impelled him to write this punctilious, almost tiresome analysis of its boundaries. In fact, the first illustration of the serialized novel, which was provided by the celebrated military painter Halil Paşa (d. 1939), is a perspectival view of the park’s iron entrance gates (fig. 5.29). It is only after the narrator surveys the site’s boundaries that he walks his readers into the safety of an idyllic Rousseauian park with its “small hut-like buildings” (kulübe tarzında ufak ufak binālar), gazebos (kameriyeler), a lake (lāk), a pleasing island (dilnişin bir adacık), and “bridges molded out of irregular hedges” (şüret-i gayri muntaẓamada çitten yapılmış


\(^10\) Ibid., 3.
ṭabiʿi güzel köprüler), not in any way different from Souvenir’s photographs of Yıldız, particularly of the English-style, rustic make-believe of Şale’s environs (fig. 5.17).  

Many Ottoman literary opponents to Abdülhamid’s rule, especially following his dissolution of the short-lived first constitutional period (1876-77), saw partitions as deeply troubling metaphors. In writing about the sultan’s commission of Yıldız, they focused on his erection of imposing, impenetrable walls around its perimeters—“walls so high that only birds who trust the might of their wings can fly over” (üzerinden ancak kanatlarına güvenen kuşlar geçebilecek kadar yüksek duvarlar)—viewing these barriers as a metaphor for his descent into despotism, alienating his subjects, once and for all, from representational rights, even as he sealed himself off from their world.  

CONCLUSION

Souvenir and the twenty other albums in the imperial collection are a testament to how that royal space was continually represented and reproduced through the photographic medium. In a way, the photographic book became a new kind of imperial chronicle in the Hamidian period, during which time traditional chronicle writing came to a halt largely due to the speed with which information began to be shared, and to Abdülhamid’s decision to sustain a chronicler only on principle. His rule is only retrospectively and vitriolically elaborated by his successor’s historians.  

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101 Recâ’izade Maḥmūd Ekrem, 5.
102 Halid Ziya, Saray ve Ötesi, 193.
103 Abdurrahman Şeref, Son Vak’ anūvis Abdurrahman Şeref Efendi Tarihi: II. Meşrutiyet Olayları, 1908-1909.
It is undeniable that Abdülhamid II invested deeply in the power of the photographic image; its positivist representation, magnified by the imperial tunnel vision, was a stand-in for his carefully manipulated truth. What better represents Abdülhamid’s conception of an image than the oft-repeated quotation, recorded by his scribe Tahsin Paşa in his memoirs, in which the sultan explains his penchant for browsing images from foreign newspapers and journals: “Every image (resim) is a thought. One image can prompt (telkin) political and sentimental meanings (siyâsî ve hissî manalar) that a hundred-page text cannot. That is why I benefit more from images than contents recorded in writing (tahrîrî münderecâtlar).”

In an earlier chapter of this dissertation, I claim that certain images from his vast collection, mostly photographs but also some lithographs of paintings and engravings, which were often bound alongside their competitor medium, as primary informants of his architectural decisions. It is therefore best to understand Abdülhamid’s conception of resim as broadly and as inclusively as possible; the term should not be designated for photographs alone but applied to a larger group of visual media, allowing us, ultimately, to release the photographic medium from its role as the ultimate picture proof for the period, and to liberate the Sultan’s biography from at least one overly proclaimed fixation.

Abdülhamid may have accrued an ever-growing collection of photographs to survey the nineteenth-century world in hermetic repose. Indeed, Samuel Cox, the onetime American ambassador to Ottoman Istanbul, offers a brief vignette of the sultan quietly perusing photographs of Native Americans inside one of his Atala-inspired rustic huts in Yıldız’s parks, and describes how closely guarded the cartes-de-visite of the German

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104 *Tahsin Paşa’nn Yıldız Hatıraları*, 356.
emperor and empress on his side-table. Moreover, the sultan simultaneously created a modern visual documentary treasury, all preserved in “red-binding, so that at once the entente cordiale is established between the various volumes”\(^{105}\) and servicing the conjoined acts of collecting, compiling, and consulting. Each resim, often instrumentalized for the production of another related medium (e.g. murals, porcelain tableaus or paintings on canvas), should also be understood within this grand repository. His collection, augmented by commissions, bearers of gifts, and keepers of his library, could perhaps even be considered a monumental, comprehensive mecmû’a (an often personal album or scrapbook with mixed contents) of his nineteenth-century world-picture.\(^{106}\)

Under its voluminous and sumptuous cladding, Souvenir is a unique historical document that exhibits Yîldîz’s genealogical links to other structures among the larger repertoire of Ottoman ancestral architecture through the sultan’s intercession. Its contents stage a text-less, pictorial exchange between the palace and other deliberately selected imperial residences of the capital with which it shared structural affinities and, for its then-patron Abdülhamid, lived experiences that merited special commemorative documentation. By decoding these affinities through Souvenir’s deliberately ordered images we gather insight on the palace’s otherwise seemingly idiosyncratic configuration, various forms of its individual structures, and its use. In short, the album provides more


\(^{106}\) I was inspired to think of the immense Hamidian paper collection as the sultan’s scrapbook of sorts by a talk that Professor Ahmet Ersoy gave at Harvard’s Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, where the central visual material was the pre-and proto-photographic moment in Ottoman journalism; Ahmet Ersoy, “Beyond Ottoman Photography: Visuality, Cosmopolitanism, and the Politics of Locality in the Late Ottoman Empire” (Lecture, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, February 20, 2014). For the most recent work on earlier text-based versions of such compilations, see Hatice Aynur et al., eds., *Mecmûa: Osmanlı Edebiyatının Kirkambarı* (Istanbul: Turkuaz Yayinevi, 2011).
compelling answers than any narrative description as to why Yıldız took the shape it did in the latter half of the nineteenth century.
VI.

Epilogue

For Abdülhamid II royal spectacle came in two sharply contrasting forms: ones that were intimately private and others that were ceremoniously public. Even though he was, by and large, invisible to most of his subjects, he made sure that the pomp and circumstance of his weekly *selamlık*, where he took center stage riding alone in a carriage and donning a modest suit—a hollow if oft-reproduced image—was always a well-attended public event. On the contrary, he was much more readily available to his visiting heads-of-state, ambassadors, and delegates, especially to those with whom he was eager to form an alliance. Even his harshest critics agree that he played the game of diplomacy exceptionally well, knowing how to please his would-be allies, and skillfully but deferentially evading his contenders.¹

Though the court ceremonies and diplomatic receptions were ostentatious, grand and meticulously planned, the two structures where he presented himself most frequently—his mosque and theater—were scaled down and intimate, not unlike the typologies for administrative and residential structures he chose for his palace. From September 1885 onwards, the imperial Friday prayers took place unabated in the Hamidiye Mosque, conveniently located outside the palace and across from the Mabeyn Kiosk. Each week, people from all walks of life poured into the outskirts of the palace’s hilltop to witness their sultan and members of his family make their absurdly short descent down to the mosque escorted by an overblown military cortège. The privileged few, following the ceremony from an elevated imperial box, were allowed inside the

¹ "He has shown the perfect knowledge of the little tricks of diplomacy. He knows how to neutralize the claims of discord among them.” Dorys, *Private Life*, 75. An entire section of this work is dedicated to parsing Abdülhamid’s personality and kingship, entitled “Abdul-Hamid—The Man.”
palace to continue the festivities in the sultan’s small theater, and resume their ministerial or diplomatic appeals.

Hamidiye was conceptualized as a palace mosque, not unlike the Bezmialem Valide Sultan Mosque outside the gates of Dolmabahçe Palace. Hamidiye, too, is modest in size, not intended for large congregations, and conceptually resembles a royal family chapel—no wonder the architectural historian Doğan Kuban sees nothing in it but a Byzantine church.² Structurally, however, this devotional space derived its typology from cozy residential buildings. Its sultan’s kiosk (hünkâr köşkü) in particular, with its identical pair for the valide, both of which flank the north and south sides of the higher mosque structure, were conceived as separate, compact, residential units with canopied, double-staired entrances much like Yıldız’s many kiosks and pavilions.³ In contrast, the two portals of the mosque’s central rectangular structure were designed as monumental ivans topped with crowns of low-relief ornamentation to complement the unusual high-drummed dome.⁴ Attenuated arched windows replete with latticework grilles augment the unabashedly Gothic ornamental program that envelops the structure’s three volumes.

Situated in the transitional zone between the Mabeyn and the residential quarters, Yıldız’s tiny theater was converted from a rudimentary carriage house that once serviced the site when it was the estate for the valides.⁵ Hence, its façade is inconspicuous, as if it was squeezed

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⁴ Pertevniyal’s mosque in Aksaray exhibits the earliest experiments with the high-drum and monumental crowned portals (as versions embedded on the mosque’s façades). For a study that nestsles the Hamidiye within the late-nineteenth-century medievalizing/historicizing trend in Ottoman mosque architecture and the renovation of the empire’s earliest monuments, see Ahmet Ersoy, “Aykırı Binanın Saklı Kalfası: Hamidiye Camisi ve Nikolaos Tzelepis (Celepis),” in *Batılıla Şan İstanbul’un Rum Mimarları*, eds. Hasan Kuruyazıcı and Eva Şarlak (İstanbul: Zağrofyan Lisesi Mezunları Derneği, 2010), 112.
in between other structures and its interiors relatively underlit, adorned in pastel hues and curiously understated panels of gilded rococo acanthus scrolls. A small foyer leads to the level of the parterre for the orchestra and guests and a raised stage, whose platform bears murals depicting idyllic Bosphorus scenes—perhaps Abdülhamid’s favorite sites? The second floor, containing a gallery of boxes, rests on twelve columns. The sultan’s spacious box was located on this floor facing the stage, while, off to the side, four boxes set behind screens were reserved for the sultan’s female relatives. These women were able to access the theater without having to step outside through the hallways that opened into the residence of the queen mother on the left of the theater or the servants’ quarters on its right.

An enthusiast of Verdi’s operas and an avid consumer of quirky musical inventions such as the Aeolian pneumatic player piano, Abdülhamid was directly involved in the management of the imperial military band (müzıkā-ı hümāyūn) that subsumed the palace orchestra (led by İlyas Bey, the keeper of the sultan’s wardrobe), the theater’s Italian opera troupe (run by an Arturo Stravolo), and a polyphonic men’s chorus (chosen from among the band’s most talented voices). He preferred music in clear and upbeat major keys rather than in introverted, often darker-toned minor keys, and comedies over tragedies—he often left the theater before impending scenes of death. In his exile days, the sultan obsessively


6 Metin And, Tanzimat ve İstibdat Döneminde Türk Tiyatrosu (Ankara: Mars Basımevi, 1972), 249.
reminisced about his Italian opera troupe (he hoped they were treated well after his deposition) and its beautiful prima donna. While sultan, Abdülhamid was also keen to recruit the period’s most famous entertainers to perform on his stage, with the French actress Sarah Bernhardt topping the roster. Original Turkish plays, librettos, Ahmed Vefik Paşa’s celebrated Molière translations, and even a ballet by Ahmed Midhat were also frequently staged.

The interiors of the mosque and the theater share an uncanny resemblance, reflective of typological slippages between intimate residential spaces and austere devotional or ceremonial ones that mark Abdülhamid II’s architectural patronage. Either they were designed by the same architect or were results of collaborative planning. The identity of the theater’s architect is still contested, although anecdotes found in the buzzy memoirs of Pera’s cosmopolitan inhabitants suggest that it was Yanko Ioannidis, the son of Abdülhamid’s trusted kalfa Vasilaki. While Vasilaki held high-ranking posts within the state bureaucracy such as the head-architect of the imperial arsenal, his son took over the title of palace architect, replacing Sarkis Balyan. The designer of the Hamidiye Mosque has been identified as one Nikolaos Tzelepis (d. 1905), who hailed from a line of court-affiliated Ottoman-Greek builders, and, like most architects of the period including the Ioannidises, learned the art of his trade through an apprenticeship at the

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7 Sevengil, 122.
8 Hülagü, 298, and 307.
9 Tahsin Paşa’nın Yıldız Hatıraları, 17-20.
10 Sevengil, 150.
11 For a comprehensive biography of the Ioannidis family of architects and kalfas and their fluid positions between governmental and palatial building commissions, see Şenyurt, İstanbul Rum Cemaatinin Osmanlı Mimarisindeki Temsiliyeti, 146-155.
imperial arsenal. While designing the mosque, Tzelepis, or Nikolaki kalfa as per his designation in the official Ottoman documentation, must have been supervised by Yanko. In fact, the memoirs of an Ottoman Greek acquaintance of the Ioannidis family tell us that it was Yanko who built the wooden dome of the Hamidiye Mosque to the great satisfaction of Abdülhamid II, which won him his post as palace architect. Nikolaki himself was extremely well versed in global as well as local historicizing trends. The eclecticism observed in the Hamidiye Mosque was, in other words, not a fanciful pastiche of popular tastes, but a studied reflection of how the Ottomans interpreted their own medieval structures.

Yanko and Nikolaki conceived of the domed ceilings of both structures as stretches of sky. They are both painted blue—the mosque, being a much larger and better-lit structure, acquiring a darker shade than the small, boxy theater’s paler version—and are covered in gilded, eight-pointed stars. The airiness inside the two spaces was achieved with tapered wooden columns; in the case of the theater to hold up the second-story balconies, and for the mosque, its dome. It is unclear when the theater was built (there is an odd scarcity of documents related to its construction), but one surely inspired the other. To the sultan’s family members and court officials, who joined him in prayer inside the Hamidiye and to watch performances in the theater, the decorative and architectural continuity between the two spaces must have been obvious. The

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12 For the enumeration of the different architects and builders involved in the building of the Hamidiye and clarification on the actual designer of the structure, see Ersoy, “Aykırı Binanın Saklı Kalfası: Hamidiye Camisi ve Nikolaos Tzelepis (Celepis),” 104-117.

13 Zarifi, Hatırlarım, 341. In fact, Yanko Ioannidis seems to have been an expert in dome building. He was also appointed to construct the celebrated domed main hall of the Çağılayan (Cascade) Pavilion in Kağıthane.

14 Sevengil also asserts that Yanko Ioannidis was the theater’s architect; Saray Tiyatrosu, 118. Indeed, the trade journal Annuaire oriental when listing the high-ranking employees of the court in its opening pages confirms Yanko’s title as palace architect, so he must have had considerable oversight as to what got built in Yildiz, and he directed the work of Raimondo D’Aronco, who is listed in the same trade journal as an architect working under the orders of Ioannidis. Having discovered a renovation project for the theater at Yildiz in the D’Aronco’s archives in Udine, Afife Batur attributes the theater to D’Aronco; Batur, “Yıldız Sarayı,” DBIA, vol. 7, 523. The project was likely one of many desired undertakings that was never accomplished.
palace’s foreign guests were only able to enter the theater, when they were invited to join the
sultan and his retinue to watch an opera on the nights after the selamlık. To them, however,
access to the theater was compensation for the religious experience of the sultan’s Friday prayer
that they only partially partook of during the ceremony. Of course, the sultan’s place in both of
these buildings was on the second level, away from the prying eyes of others, and emphasizing
hierarchy. In its earlier version, the sultan’s theater box had a screen just like the cedar screens of
his elevated lodge inside the Hamidiye.

Following in the footsteps of the nineteenth-century valide from whom he inherited his
palace, Abdülhamid overemphasized the symbolism of Yıldız’s name, not just by covering the
ceilings of the two sites of his courtly spectacle with stars, but also through religious metaphors.
If, in the time of the queen mothers, the site’s celestial metaphors were derived from
astronomical or meteorological phenomena, for the sultan who always tactically underscored his
caliphal role in his symbolic choices, the references, though similarly straightforward, were
religious in nature. Abdülhamid keenly followed his mosque’s progress, asserting his desire for
its pulpit to look like that of the Grand Mosque of Bursa. He also commissioned the journalist
and tastemaker Ebüzziya Tevfik who, amidst the mid-nineteenth-century global fad for the
Alhambra, had popularized Kufic, the oldest calligraphic script widely used in early Ottoman
monuments, to inscribe Hamidiye’s dome with the first three verses of the fifty-third surah titled
“The Star” (Al-Najm).15

The Koranic passage in the dome reads: “By the star when it sets, Your Companion
[Prophet Muhammad] is neither astray nor being misled; nor does he speak from [his own]

15 On the Bursa-centered, Ottoman Kufic-revival and its Armenian pioneers, as well as on the Hamidiye’s epigraphic
program, see İrvin Cemil Schick, “The Revival of Kūfī Script during the Reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II,” in
Calligraphy and Architecture in the Muslim World, ed. Mohammad Gharipour and İrvin Cemil Schick (Edinburgh:
The Koranic exegetes have interpreted the word “star” either as a reference to the act of revealing a verse at a time (nücūm) to Muhammad or, more directly as a reference to the prophet himself, when he returned to earth following his ascent to heaven to convene with God (which the subsequent verse of the same sura highlights). The sura is hence an unusual and learned choice for the empire’s last sultanic mosque; it reflects on the very ontology of the Koran by referring to its process of revelation, while also drawing the physical boundaries of the garden-like paradise where God receives his prophet. The private assemblies to discuss Koranic passages (huzur dersleri) that the sultan hosted in his Çıt Kiosk were likely a factor in his unusual surah selection. Moreover, it has been asserted that Abdülhamid’s selection of a newly revived Ur-script to adorn his mosque augmented his claims as the religious leader of all Sunni Muslims.

Further examination of Abdülhamid II’s conception of spectacle for public effect, for instance, and the way in which he used sites inside and outside his palace to convey its potency, will deepen our understanding of Yıldız, Istanbul’s imperial topography, and the role of architecture in the performance of imperial identity. Archival documentation of these two structures is remarkably scarce, but digging deeper into the organization of the records of the palace treasury that were transferred from the Dolmabahçe Palace to the Prime Minister’s Archives—a transfer that resulted in mismatched archival numbering and incomplete indexing—may yield heretofore unstudied material relating to their construction. Moreover, I am certain

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16 I have relied on the Abdullah Yusuf Ali English translation of the Koran: www.quran.com/53.

17 Two complementary interpretations (tafsir) of this surah have informed my take on its selection by Abdülhamid II: the fifteenth-century Sunni exegesis al-Jalalayn and the seventh-century Tanwir al-Miqbas of Ibn ‘Abbas, the Prophet Muhammad’s cousin and one of the earliest Koranic scholars.

18 Schick, 133-135.
that careful study of Abdülhamid’s endowment deeds will provide further clues as to his intentions for Hamidiye as the centerpiece of his caliphate.  

Endowment deeds as sources highlighting the intentions of patrons will also prove useful in understanding the role of Yıldız’s erstwhile owners: the queen mothers. It was something of a coincidence that in reconstructing the history of Yıldız’s architectural evolution, I arrived at a clearer understanding of the valides’ rising centrality in the nineteenth century. I am more and more convinced that these women were quite consciously cast as the standard-bearers of the Tanzimat. Much more so than the statesmen who have been singled out as the primary movers and shakers in historical narratives on the period of reforms—Mustafa Reşid Paşa and his disciples Mehmed Emin Âli and Fuad Paşas, for example, and later Midhat Paşa—these women captured the hearts of their subjects through their charitable institutions. They patronized almost all of the buildings that defined the reformed face of the empire from military barracks to schools, hospitals, and mosques. Their public image was no different than that of their contemporary Queen Victoria: they were matriarchs providing for the welfare of their people. They were celebrities and tastemakers (competing in their lifestyle choices with their female relatives in the court of khedivial Egypt), and they commanded their own magnificent farming estates, which occupied the capital’s prominent hilltops to boot. Courtly women defined the empire in the nineteenth century especially in architectural and urbanizing terms, and it is vital to

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19 The endowments of the Orhaniye Mosque (the centerpiece of the barracks on the north of Yıldız) and the Hamidiye Mosque were joined with the endowment of the Ertuğrul Mosque, which also contained the convent assigned to Shaykh Zafir. See, Afife Batur, “Yıldız Serencebey’de Şeyh Zafir Türbe, Kitaplık ve Çeşmesi,” in Anadolu Sanat Araştırmaları, vol. 1 (İstanbul: İstanbul Teknik Üniversitesi Mimarlık Fakültesi Mimarlık Tarihi ve Röleve Kürsüsü, 1968): 108.

20 The work, which has coined the phrase “Tanzimat statesmen” and centers imperial and institutional transformations solely on the efforts of these individuals, is Roderic H. Davison, Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856-1876 (Princeton: Princeton University Library, 1963).
write them back into its history. After all, it is to the space that the valides created for themselves that the strangest, most headstrong sultan of the nineteenth century decided to retreat.

Lastly, it is also important to remember that what eventually became Yıldız’s immense garden, and making the complex the largest Ottoman palace to date, was part and parcel of a larger, deeply symbolic project: the version of Çırağan Palace that Mahmud II built marked the beginning of his “true” reign after his extensive restructuring of the state apparatus. The palace’s neoclassical marble columns captured the imagination of many; to a court poet they suddenly appeared as enchanting women with skins like silver, arranged side by side.21 Foreign guests at his court mentioned that the palace was destined to be the biggest one yet.22 Its hilltop garden, interpreted as a Romantic landscape, was the literal and figurative centerpiece of this new image of kingship, a space that offered up multiple viewpoints— for the site’s Bavarian landscape designer—from where the sultan as its ultimate architect could survey his capital and be seen. This garden type and its corresponding architectural typologies such as cabins, chalets, and cottages, would define the Ottoman culture of landscaping and domestic spaces for the rest of the century.

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21 This line from one of the many poems Ziver Paşa composes for the building’s completion reads: “Sîm-ten dilberleri şafbeste obnuş zann ider / Görse bir kimse sütühâ-yı ruhâmun nâ-gehân,” in Ahmed Sâdık Ziver Paşa, Dîvân ve münşe’ât, 422.

22 For Helmuth Von Moltke’s observations during the construction of Mahmud II’s construction, see Helmuth Von Moltke, Türkiye’deki Durum ve Olaylar Üzerine Mektuplar (1835-1839) (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1960), 120.
1.1 Map undertaken by Yıldız Technical University outlining Yıldız Palace’s current occupants, 2010, Istanbul.
Map undertaken by Yıldız Technical University highlighting the different sections of the Yıldız Palace complex and its adjacencies under Abdülhamid II, 2010, Istanbul.
1.3  Çadır Kiosk fronted by an artificial lake, building attributed to the Balyans, 1861-1876.

1.4  Malta Kiosk, building attributed to the Balyans, 1861-1876.
1.5 Abdülhamid II’s private residence (*Hususi Daire*), building attributed to Vasilaki (kalfa) Ionnis, 1880s, photographer unknown, Dolmabahçe Palace Museum, Abdülmecid Efendi Library, k86-26.
Twin palaces (çifte saraylar), no longer extant, built for the palace’s head-scribe and head-chamberlain in Teşvikiye built by Abdülmecid, 1839-1861.
1.7 Shaykh Zafir tomb and library fronting the Er투르ul Mosque, Raimondo D’Aronco, post-1894.

1.8 Imperial stables at Yıldız, attributed to Raimondo D’Aronco, post-1894.
1.9 Imperial library at Yıldız, photographer unknown, Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection.
1.10  Imperial tile factory at Yıldız, photographer unknown, Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection.

1.11  Imperial theater at Yıldız, architect unknown, repairs attributed to Raimondo D’Aronco.
1.12  Gāh-i ebyāţ (white palace), Gulistan Palace, Tehran.
1.13 Elevation drawing of the gallery of paintings (no longer extant) between Abdülhamid II’s private residence and the Şale Kiosk, Topkapı Palace Museum, Istanbul.
1.14 “The general plan of the railways that are conceptualized for the garden of the imperial palace of Yıldız” (Yıldız sarayı-ı hümayunu bahçeinde inşası mutasavvir olan demiryollarını harita-i umumiyesidir), Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection, 93283.
“Interior view of the imperial wagon” (rükūb-ı şâhîneye maḥsūs vágonuñ dâhîli manzarasi), Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection, 93283.
1.16 “The imperial wagon” (rümûb-i şähâneye mahsûs vâgon), Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection, 93283.
Partial layout of the Yıldız Palace complex under Abdülhamid II with emphasis on the administrative (selâmlık) and residential quarters (harem).
Enameled pen box depicting the Mabeyn Kiosk and the gate of sovereignty (*saltanat kapısı*), artist and date unknown, Yıldız Palace Museum Collection.
“Interior view of the imperial ironworks,” (ta’mirhane-i hümâyûnlarını manzara-i dâhîyesi), Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection, 90552.
1.22 Gate leading to Yıldız’s *harem* from the Mabeyn courtyard, repairs attributed to Raimondo D’Aronco.
1.23 *(from left to right)* The pedimented residence of the valide, the erstwhile Small Mabeyn, and the first, prefabricated version of Abdülhamid’s private residence, photographer unknown, Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection, 90407.
1.24 Present state of the residence of the *hazinedarusta* with a closed bridge connecting to the servants’ quarters on the right and the quarters for the sultan’s wives on the left.

1.25 Present state of the one-story quarters for the eunuchs-in-waiting, connecting to the palace theater via a gallery.
Princess Naile and Şeker Ahmed Paşa in one of the greenhouses in the harem, photographer and date unknown, Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection.
Present state of the residence of the chief black eunuch surrounded by greenhouses and the terraces of the inner garden.
Recently unearthed mural of the Ottoman domains under the entrance dome of the quarters of the sultan’s wives.
1.30  Present view of the Island Kiosk in the inner garden of Yıldız, building attributed to Raimondo d’Aronco, post-1894.
1.31 View of Yıldız’s inner garden with the Şale Kiosk in the background, photographer and date unknown, Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection, 90407.
1.32 Yıldız’s Mecidiye Portal leading from the waterfront avenue to the palace’s outer gardens.
Map with the central “pool of the valley” (*dere havuz*), the artificial lake in the inner garden and pond in front of the Çadır Kiosk.
1.34 Bridge connecting the waterfront palace of Çırağan with Yıldız’s outer garden, attributed to the Balyans, 1861-1876.
2.1 Sedad Hakkı Eldem, Reconstruction of Franz Phillip von Gudenus’s plan of the *yalt* of Çırağan in *Küşkler ve Kasırlar* (1969).
2.2  Louis-François-Sébastien Fauvel, *Vue d’un Kiosque entre Defterdar-Bournou et Kourou-Tchechmé* in Marie-Gabriel-Auguste-Florent Choiseul-Gouffier, *Voyage pittoresque de la Grèce* (1792-[1824]).

2.3  Sedad Hakkı Eldem, Reconstruction of the plan of Fauvel’s *Kiosque entre Defterdar-Bournou et Kourou-Tchechmé* in *Köşkler ve Kasırlar* (1969).
2.4 Antoine Ignace Melling, *Palais de la Sultane Hadidgé à Deferdar-Bournou* in *Voyage pittoresque de Constantinople et des rives du Bosphore* (1819).
2.5 Extant stone epitaph of Mihrişah Valide Sultan’s fountain on Serencebey Road, 1797-1798, Beşiktaş, İstanbul.
2.7 Tomb and *sebil* of Nakş-ı Dil Valide Sultan, 1817, Fatih, Istanbul.

2.8 Two extant and adjacent archery stones in Ihlamur (in Yıldız’s northeast) marking Mahmud II’s records, 1811, Istanbul.
2.10  The Bezmialem Valide Sultan Fountain, 1839, Maçka, Istanbul.

2.11  Extant wooden epitaph of Bezmialem Valide Sultan’s pavilion in Yıldız with the inscription of Raşid’s poem, Dolmabahçe Palace Museum, Istanbul.
2.12  Mıgırdıç Melkon, *Marmara Strait*, 1844 (?), oil on canvas, wood and silk, 60x90cm, Deniz Müzesi, Istanbul, 507.
2.13 Map showing the farmlands, strawberry fields, and residences of the employees of the farmstead belonging to the queen mother in the vicinity of Yıldız Kiosk, undated, Topkapı Palace Museum, Istanbul, 9494.
Bezmialem Valide Sultan’s fountain near Yıldız, 1843, which was relocated to the Topkapı district of Istanbul between the years 1957 and 1959.
2.15  Pertevniyal Valide Sultan Mosque, 1871, attributed to Serkis Balyan, Aksaray, Istanbul.
2.16 Yıldız’s Mabeyn Kiosk, 1861-1876, attributed to the Balyan family of architects, Beşiktaş, Istanbul.

2.17 Validebağı Kasrı (the mansion of the queen mother’s orchard), 1861-1876, attributed to the Balyans, Koşuyolu, Istanbul.
2.18 Contemporary view of the Yahya Efendi Tomb and Mosque, Beşiktaş, Istanbul.
2.19 Perestu Valide Sultan’s Townhouse in Maçka, date and architect unknown.
3.1 Vue du kiosque du Bostandji-Bachi à Kourou-Tchechmé [View of the Head-Gardener’s Kiosk in Kuruçeşme] in Marie-Gabriel-Florent-Auguste de Choiseul-Gouffier, *Voyage Pittoresque de la Grèce* (1782–[1824]).
3.2 Baron von Hübsch’s residence in the right foreground. Antoine Ignace Melling, *Vue de la partie Centrale de Buyuk-Déré Sur la Rive Européen du Bosphore* [The View of the Central Part of Büyükdere on the European coast of the Bosphorus], *Voyage pittoresque de Constantinople et des rives du Bosphore* (1819).

3.4 Contract signed between “Bahçivan Kretyen Sester” and Fethi Paşa, BOA, D. DRB. I 2/12.
3.5 Detail from the Ottoman Imperial School of Engineering’s 1840s reprint of the Von Moltke map in Burak Çetintaş, Dolmabahçe’den Nişantaşı’na (2010).

3.6 Çırak Palace, gouache on engraving, 52x70 cm, artist and date unknown, Milli Saraylar Resim ve Heykel Müzesi, Istanbul, 12/2838.

3.8 Միգրդիչ Մելկոն, Բեշիկտաշի պալատի վնասպան, սովորաբար, հատակագիծ, կաթ և նվագագիր, 60x90 cm, Թոփկապի պալատական թանգարան, Տաբուլա, CY 454.

3.10 Carlo Bossoli, Çırağan Palace, Topkapı Beyond, undated, tempera on linen canvas, 116x180 cm, private collection.
Sester’s Ottoman seal, “head-gardener of the waterfront palace of Çırağan,” BOA, HH. d. 18928.
3.13 Sketch map of the Ortaköy section of Yıldız’s gardens with Sester’s garden and residence highlighted, 1867(?), Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection, 93332.
The new Yıldız pavilion that replaced Sester’s residence, photographer unknown, 1902(?), Atatürk Library, Istanbul, Alb. 156.
3.16 The Sester family tomb, St. Esprit Cathedral, Istanbul.
3.17 Current view of the German Consulate’s summer residence in Tarabya with its terraced forest in the background, Istanbul.
3.18 Advertisement of the Koch nurseries in Ortaköy and Kağıthane in the *Annuaire oriental* (1898).
3.19 A section of Jacques Pervititch’s insurance maps showing the location of the Kochs’ nursery in Ortaköy on the lower left-hand corner, 1922.
3.20 Announcement of Adam Schlerff’s death in *Die Woche* (1907).
A page from a *defter* detailing the gardeners’ register, BOA, Y. PRK. SGE. 10/36.
3.22 View of a greenhouse in the garden of Şale Kiosk (Şâle ḳaşr-ı hümâyûnlarî civârîndaki limonlûgûn manzârah-ı ʿumûmiyestî), photographer unknown, undated, Istanbul University, Rare Works Collection, 90552.
3.23  Gustave Deroin’s advertisement in the *Annuaire oriental* (1893-1894).

3.24  Today’s remarkably congested surroundings and shrunken grounds of the Koubbeh Palace, Cairo.
4.1 Vasilaki Kargopoulo, *Tchair kiosque à Yeldez* (precedent to the kiosk made of twigs?), 1878, Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection, 90407.

4.2 Çit Kiosk, 1867-1876, attributed to the Balyans, Yıldız Palace, Istanbul.
4.3 “A view of the Island and Swiss pavilions from the island inside the imperial garden” (ḥadīka-i dāhilinde adadan ʿaṣr-i ʿālīleriyle İsviç kaари humāyünları manzarasi), photographer unknown, after 1894, Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection, 90552.

4.4 A neo-Mamluk console attributed to Abdülhamid II, 1901-1902, 130x236x43.5 cm, private collection, Italy.
4.5 The office of İzzet Holo Paşa in the center foreground in a photograph titled “the view in the direction of Beyoğlu from the conservatory of the new noble pavilion” (yeşiş ʹaşır-ı ‘alimi Nikki cânımkündan Beyoğlu cîhetti gîrînüşü), photographer and date unknown, Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection, 90552.

4.6 The office of the aides-de-camp on duty, attributed to Raimondo D’Aronco, after 1894, Yıldız Palace, Istanbul.
4.7 The Small Mabeyn from the lake inside Yıldız’s inner garden, attributed to Raimondo D’Aronco, after 1894.

4.8 Guillaume Berggren, view of Abdülhamid II’s private residence on the left and the Şale Kiosk at the center, 1889, Dolmabahçe Palace Museum, Abdülmecid Efendi Library, k128-30.
4.9 One of the five extant princes’ chalets, architect and date unknown, Yıldız Palace, Istanbul.

4.12 Pastoral vignettes on the ceilings of Maslak Pavilion, artist and date unknown, Maslak, Istanbul.

4.13 Victor Petit, *Châlet du lac de Thure*, undated, chromolithograph, Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection, 93220.
4.14 V. Olbrich, *Farmhouse*, undated, watercolor on paper, 29x40cm, Milli Saraylar Resim ve Heykel Müzesi, İstanbul.

4.16  “Villa Tuscan Style,” M. Thams & Cie.’s Catalogue of Norwegian Houses, after 1889, Istanbul University, Rare Works Collection, 92352.

4.17  “Villa Swiss Style,” M. Thams & Cie.’s Catalogue of Norwegian Houses, after 1889, Istanbul University, Rare Works Collection, 92352.
4.18 “Cardboard Construction” (Muḳavvā İnşāät), Front page of Servet-i Fünūn, no. 25 (1892).
4.19 “Interior view of a barrack belonging to the offices of the Yıldız Hospital, among the charitable institutions of the sultan Yıldız Hospital” (mü‘essesät-i ḥayriyet-i gâyât cenâb-i mülükâneden olan Yıldız ḥastaḫâne dâ‘irelerinden bir koğuşuñ derânu), Front page of Șervet-i Fünûn, no. 331 (1897).
4.20 The operating room belonging to the Yıldız Hospital, among the charitable institutions of the sultan Yıldız Hospital” (mü’essesät-ı hayriyet-i gâyât cenâb-i hilâfetpenâhtden olan Yıldız hastâhânesiniñ ʿameliyat dâʾiresi), ʿServet-i Fünûn, no. 331 (1897).

4.22 Swedish Pavilion (no longer extant) inside the inner garden of Yıldız, M. Thams, after 1889.

4.23 “Châlet no. 222,” Kaeffer & Cie.’s catalogue, *Châlets Suisses Bois Découpés*, 1884, Istanbul University, Rare Works Collection, 92007.
“Châlet no. 222,” Kaeffer & Cie.’s catalogue, *Châlets Suisses Bois Découpés*, 1884, Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection, 92007.

4.27  Japanese Kiosk in the inner garden of Yıldız, undated, attributed to Vasilaki Kargopoulo, Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection, 90407.
4.28 Plan and elevation of the chalet-extension to Osman Paşa’s townhouse in Beşiktaş, 1894, architect unknown, BOA, HH. d. 27830.
Contemporary view of Hereke Kiosk, attributed to Serkis Balyan, İzmit.
4.30 The actual prefabricated kiosk in Hereke assembled for the visit of the German emperor and empress, *Le Monde illustré* (1898).
4.31 Persian (ʿAcem) Kiosk at Yıldız, photographer and date unknown, Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection, 90508.

4.32 Wooden binding of the photograph album, gifted by Wilhelm II to Abdülhamid II depicting the German emperor’s hunting lodge in Rominten, photographer and date unknown, Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection, 91380.
4.33 View of the prefabricated lodge in Rominten, undated, photographer unknown, Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection, 91380.

4.34 “Casino Norwegian Style,” M. Thams & Cie.’s Catalogue of Norwegian Houses, after 1889, Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection, 92352.
Süreyya Paşa’s Nişantaşı townhouse and observation (seyir) pavilion, Collection of Nurhan Atasoy, Istanbul.

Wooden kiosk on a grotto in the harem garden of Kamil Paşa’s townhouse, Collection of Nurhan Atasoy, Istanbul.
4.37 Kiosk in the garden of Müniire Sultan’s mansion, Collection of Nurhan Atasoy, Istanbul.

4.38 Nişantaşı’s “town of pashas” with Süreyya Paşa’s property in the foreground, 1890s.

4.41 Contemporary view of Khedive Abbas II’s Qasr al-Montaza, architect unknown, Alexandria.
4.42 “The private study of the surgeon Cemil Paşa” (operâtör saʿădetlü Cemil Pāşā haţretleriniñ hücre-i mütâlaʾalari), Servet-i Fünūn, no. 378 (1898).

4.43 Charles Dickens’s Swiss chalet, Gad’s Hill, Higham, after 1865.
4.44 *Kulāh-i farāngī* (European’s hat) pavilion in the park of amīn al-dawla’s Tehran residence, ʿAlī Khān Vālī Album, Harvard University, Fine Arts Library Special Collections, Cambridge, MA.
4.45 Sultan Abdülaziz’s hunting lodge at the Validebağı estate, 1867-1876, attributed to Serkis Balyan, Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection, 90474.

4.46 J. Boussard, “shed for sheep and ibexes at Paris’s Jardin des plantes,” in Constructions et décorations pour jardins, kiosques, orangeries, volières, abris divers (1881?).
4.47 Cross-section of a stable found among a set of building construction and repair documents, undated, Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection, 93209.

Advertisement for the “Ottoman House of Industry” (*Dār-ūs 'Ṣanāyi‘-i 'Osmaniayye*), *İkdam* (1896).
“Waterfront view of the Ottoman House of Industry located in Ahırkapı” (Aḥırkapuda vāki‘ Dār-ūs‘Ṣanāyi‘-i Ṭurkāniyyi niñ deñiz tarafından görünüşü), Servet-i Fünün (1899).
Hogélin & Sundström Society’s advertisement for their inexpensive and salubrious homes, *Gênie civil ottomane* (September, 1913).
4.52 Cross-section, elevation, and plan of the “elaborate” (mükellef) residence in Mehmed İzzet’s “house” (ev) entry, Rehber-i Umür-i Beytiyye (1902).
Illustration for Halid Ziya’s novel, مَاءُ و سیاه (Blue and Black), سِرْفِتَیْ فِنْن (1897).
5.1 “Tophaneli Hasan bin Tahsin Efendi, civil agent in the service of the police force of Galatasaray, his leg injured by a bomb exploding in front of Galatasaray,” Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection, 779-71.
5.2 “Pre-and post-operation photograph of a patient with a rather large hernia” (gâyet büyük fitik ʻilletine mügte maraţiın ʻameliyâtadan akdem ve soña alınan fotoğrafı), Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection, 90506.
5.3 *Souvenir*’s Tarnavski binding, Atatürk Library, Istanbul, *Alb. 156*.

5.4 *Souvenir*’s split flyleaf displaying the recycled book and name of the gilder.
5.5 *Souvenir’s* opening shot, the ceremonial greeting spot (*mülakât ma‘allî*) in the Şale complex of Yıldız.

5.6 *Souvenir’s* closing shot, the promenade of Kağıthane.
5.7 Scene from Yıldız’s outer garden, *Souvenir 1905*.

5.8 Scene from Yıldız’s outer garden, *Souvenir 1905*. 
5.9 One of the bridges spanning the “pool of the valley” (dere ḥavūz) inside Yıldız’s outer garden, Souvenir 1905.

5.10 A shot from over the bridge depicted in figure 5.9.
5.11 Map of the Maslak estate, undated, Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection, 92586.

5.12 The imperial tile factory in Yıldız’s outer garden, *Souvenir 1905*. 
5.13 The Maslak Pavillion, *Souvenir 1905*.

5.14 The stud farm in Kağthane, *Souvenir 1905*.
5.15 The imperial farm of Ayazağa, *Souvenir 1905*.

5.16 Maʿiyyet (retinue) Kiosk in the imperial estate of Ihlamur (Nüzhetiye), *Souvenir 1905*. 
5.17 The English gardens of the Şale Kiosk, *Souvenir 1905*.

5.18 The D’Aronco additions to the Şale Kiosk called the ceremonial apartments, *Souvenir 1905*. 
5.19 Photograph of a no longer extant *choinoiserie*-inspired pavilion in Yıldız, *Souvenir 1905*.

5.20 Postcard from a Guillaume Berggren photograph depicting Abdülhamid’s *selamlık* ceremony.
5.21 Vasilaki Kargopoulo in the garden of the Edirne Palace, photographer and date unknown.
5.22 Vasilaki Kargopoulo, photograph of a no longer extant rustic hut in Yıldız’s outer garden, 1879, Istanbul University Library, Rare Works Collection, 90751.

5.23 Photograph of a no longer extant rustic cabin in Yıldız’s outer garden, Souvenir 1905.
5.24 William Henry Fox Talbot, *Gate of Christchurch*, 1844.
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5.26 Celal Esad (Arseven)’s sketch of Yıldız after the Young Turk Revolution, *L’Illustration* (1909).
5.27  Partitions separating the newly added Ortaköy section of Yıldız from the main waterfront avenue below, *Souvenir 1905*.

5.28  Picket-fences of the menagerie belonging to Yıldız’s expanded section, *Souvenir 1905*.
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