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ABSTRACT

Among the panoply of museums developed by the government of the late Ottoman Empire, those devoted to the Islamic arts reflected the construction of nationalist visions that both responded to the slow dissolution of the empire and foreshadowed Turkish nationalist responses to the religious past. While on the one hand exhibits designated as Islamic rather than Ottoman reframed the religion as belonging to the empire rather than to the Arabs, on the other hand, the same exhibits decontextualized objects from their devotional contexts and thus opened the way for a secularized vision of religious identity.

ALTHOUGH ALL TOO OFTEN relegated to the Gibbonsian trash heap of declining empires, the Ottoman Empire of the late nineteenth century had not put itself out to pasture. Over the course of a century in which it saw its own political, territorial, and economic power dwindle, it fought not only to retain its autonomy but also to forge an identity for a modern state that would emerge from the remnants of an outmoded imperial system. From 1839 on, the successive legal reforms known collectively as the era of the Tanzimat instituted new patterns of government, which included egalitarian citizenship for the many ethnicities in the empire, natural rights for those citizens, a parliamentary system that would supplement the monarchy, and an extensive bureaucratic system that would divide the functions of the government into accountable agencies and ministries. Instead of dying, the Ottoman Empire was in the process of being reborn.

During the same years, the empire found itself caught between European colonialism and the rise of nationalism, both concertedly nibbling away at its vast territories. Between the legislative reform within and the conquestatorial maelstrom without, the empire needed to construct a new identity for itself: one that would support shared interests with the growing powers of Europe, assure a national coherence to the empire's remaining territory, and project a shared identity for the peoples of the empire—in short, one that would transform the image of the Ottoman state from that of an empire to that of a nation.

Although rarely—if ever—thronged with visitors, the museums of the Ottoman Empire act as traces for the shifts and uncertainties of the identity politics of their times. Museum display was a new language of power not only in the Ottoman Empire but in America, Europe, and European colonies around the globe. By choosing certain items to collect, those in charge of museums reify the metanarratives that order societies and their material culture and subsequently determine economic, aesthetic, and ideological values for select categories of objects. When placed in contexts of display, such objects expose the power to own as well as the power to construct the narratives that link objects within the format of exhibition. Increasingly during the late nineteenth century, exhibitionary institutions like museums and world fairs displayed the bounty of wealth and progress and put them on view for the world to see.(FN1)

In response to dynamic political contingencies, the Ottoman Empire developed diverse and independent collections to display those aspects of its identity that became vital to its independence and survival. Of the numerous museums and collections that developed in the last seventy years of empire, the smallest was devoted to the Islamic arts. Through an examination of the stunted development of this museum, the

forefather of today's Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts in Istanbul, this essay considers the contradictory ramifications inherent in the collection of Islamic arts in the Ottoman Empire and the changing implications of such a collection in the construction of national identities as the empire approached the volatile years of its demise.

The collection of Islamic arts emerged against a backdrop of already established European-style institutions of display. In 1846, the Ottoman Empire began to collect and exhibit the seeds of what would become the Ottoman Imperial Museum. This fledgling museum took the form of two allied collections: one of archaeological and one of military antiquities.(FN2) The prodigious collections of antique sculptures served to foster the empire's European aspirations by forging indigenous links to the Greco-Roman heritage as well as to assert the empire's territorial right to lands claimed by European archaeologists. While at first glance these exhibitions mimicked the Greco-Roman collections of European museums, they did so in large part to question the exclusivity of the Greek heritage claimed by modern European nation-states.(FN3) As Homi Bhaba points out, such mimicry at once acts as a camouflage through which to fit into the model of dominant states and simultaneously displaces that model as a defensive position from which to counteract its dominance.(FN4)

While the antiquities collections nimbly scratched at the borders of European heritage, the military collections redrew those of the Ottoman legacy. By including enemies and armies in the tale of Ottoman history, these exhibits reformulated the Ottoman perception of history from the dynastic to the populist. Much as the reforms of the Tanzimat had functioned to create a state designed to serve rather than to dominate the people, the new history conceived of an empire that had emerged from the shared bravery and sacrifice of state and subjects alike, not simply a succession of dynastic glories. Such displays replaced the projection of dynastic immortality with one that appreciated the martyrdom of soldiers for the Ottoman nation. Thus it primed soldiers for the many wars that beleaguered the empire before its ultimate downfall: the Crimean, the Balkan, the Russo-Turkish, the Great War, and finally the War for Turkish Independence.

These new museums did little to promote the Islamic identity of the empire, even though the reassertion of the caliphate was one of the primary interests of Sultan Abdülhamid II (r. 1876-1909). In the west, as the empire lost many European territories, the sultan tried to retain some link with them by maintaining governance over Muslim minorities through his role as caliph, which the saltanate had assumed in 1517.(FN5) In the east, such assertions of caliphal power were equally important in the face of Arab nationalism, which emphatically called into question the Ottoman right to the caliphate and in doing so implicitly questioned the link between the Islamic and the Ottoman.(FN6) As Kayali points out, "by emphasizing his role as caliph, Abdülhamid generated support from Arabs, as well as from other Muslims within and outside the Ottoman Empire, at a time when the world of Islam was under Christian imperialist domination."(FN7) During the reign of Abdülhamid, the empire increasingly made use of Islamic symbolism to compete with nationalist symbols emerging throughout the empire.(FN8)

Still, even as the empire promoted its political identity as the leader of the Islamic world, it chose not to include works of art and culture pertaining to its Ottoman or Islamic identity in its museum until 1889. It was only at that relatively late date that the Council of State set out a revised administrative program for the Ottoman Imperial Museum that included a Department of Islamic Arts as one of six branches of the growing institution.(FN9) As the empire weakened during the early twentieth century, the identification of Islamic works of art became increasingly important to the

development of a sense of an Ottoman national identity. Did this imply an increasing interest in religion or in the politics of religious cohesion? Was this an “Islam” that designated religiosity or politics? The collection of Islamic arts in the late Ottoman Empire marks a moment of transition from the sectarian to the national, from the religious toward the secular, and from the imperial against the colonial.

The belated interest in Islamic antiquities at first seems ironic: the objects most readily accessible to Ottoman collectors—those in common use in mosques and elite households around the empire—were among the last to be collected. This sharply contrasts with the nineteenth-century development of museums in Europe, where galleries and museums assembled both religious and secular artworks in order to foster national spirit. The Ottoman Empire learned the art of museum-making from Europe yet denied the progressive narrative espoused by most European national museums. For example, the Louvre had been transformed into a museum as one of the first outward symbols of the new order brought about by the French Revolution. Gathering the insignia of church and crown alike for the public gaze, it declared the formulation of a new state (at least in theory) dedicated to public service. Like other universal survey museums, the Louvre developed extensive collections of Greco-Roman antiquities, which introduced an evolutionary narrative of Western heritage. Thus during their tour of the museum, visitors first encountered ancient Egypt, ancient Greece, Rome, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, and then the arts of modern Western Europe.(FN10) These categories of display established a temporal progression from the ancient to the modern that coincided with a geographic progression from the East to the West. In contrast, Ottoman museums jumped from one autonomous collection to another, each of which displayed a single aspect of the new Ottoman identity but none of which promoted a model of cultural progress with its apogee in Ottoman modernity. Thus the museum did not even try to include collections of Ottoman art to parallel the painting and sculpture galleries of the Louvre or the British National Gallery. Indeed, for many years Ottoman museums avoided the suggestion of a present moment for the empire, implying instead only multiple pasts from which it could garner various aspects of a modern identity. This disavowal of positivism coincided with a distrust of positivism as a belief heretical to Islamic norms.(FN11)

The collection of Islamic arts within the Imperial Museum was the first to exhibit such a contemporary identity. Unlike Greek antiquities or military spolia, Islamic antiquities were not only part of the Ottoman past; they were also part of the Ottoman present. The shift in interest suggested by the establishment of an Islamic arts section for the museum near the end of the nineteenth century reflects a growing interest in the immediate past of the Islamic world as well as growing nationalistic implications for this past. Certainly, this shift was not unique in Istanbul: in 1883, the Museum of Arab Art opened in Cairo, and Islamic archaeology emerged for the first time in 1885, with the excavation of Samarqand. But it was not until 1893, with the Exposition d’Art Musulman in Paris that such arts became identified with religion rather than with region.(FN12)

Why is it that, in a taxonomic system obsessed with geography and history as the primary identifiers of communal identity, suddenly religion emerged as a category? The designation of new Islamic collections allowed for the display of a new category of objects without disturbing the time/space progression established by the display pattern of universal survey museums. The positivist organization of such European museums relied on a unique and hierarchical model for progress that would have been challenged by the presentation of multiple cultures, parallel in space and time, differing yet not competing in aesthetics and values. For an object to be displayed as Egyptian,

Iranian, or Ottoman would have connoted its use in a locale with a secular history that could theoretically compete with the evolutionary model presented in the main body of the museum. Redefined as Islamic, the value of such an object came to be equated with an aesthetic practice assumed to span a wide range of histories, language, cultures, and customs—indeed, perhaps to exist outside of time and even geography. In effect, by calling these objects Islamic, museums could consider them outside of time and place. In their quest to import Western models of progress, colonial powers often favored such a perception of their newly acquired territories. Much as “Orientalism assumed an unchanging Orient,” the idea of Islamic collections assumed a temporally static aesthetic for the Islamic world.(FN13) It displayed the arts of “Islam...as a ‘cultural synthesis,’...that could be studied apart from the economics, sociology, and politics of the Islamic peoples.”(FN14) Moreover, through this designation, the word Islamic came to denote an aesthetic value as much as a religious one. By identifying objects with religion rather than with region, such displays suggested two things: that all objects, even those designed for secular use, still somehow pertained to religion (perhaps because of the description of Islam as a way of life as well as a series of devotions) and/or that devotional objects should be moved from the metaphysical to the temporal realm for the sake of their protection and preservation in museums.

Perhaps in light of the Orientalist implications of the designation Islamic, it is ironic that this new category served nationalist purposes when put into practice in the Ottoman Empire. It becomes less ironic in light of the constant slippage between European collections and their Ottoman counterparts, wherein Ottoman museums mimicked their European forebears only to subvert the assumptions of power implicit in them. Just as the archaeological collections redefined Greek antiquities as part of the Ottoman (rather than the European) heritage, collections of Islamic antiquities reasserted the political affiliation between the Ottoman Empire and Islam. In order to promote Ottoman nationalism, the affinity between Muslim Ottoman citizens and Islam had to be harnessed as an identification with the Ottoman state. An emphasis on Islam as a national characteristic could mollify the many conservatives in the empire who worried that modernization would necessarily mean Westernization and, implicitly, Christianization. Moreover, by denying a national framework to the category of objects labeled as “Islamic,” the empire could avoid the problems of Arab nationalism plaguing its integrity in the real-life, political world outside of the museum. Within the Ottoman context, Islamic collections provided a counterpoint to the growing association between Arabs and Islam. In effect, the neutralization of difference promoted by a category of art designated as Islamic supported the Ottoman cause as effectively as that of colonial European powers.

The Ottoman Imperial Museum designated an Islamic Arts Division in 1889, but the collection grew very slowly. While Hellenic antiquities were housed in the lavish new Imperial Museum, a neoclassical building built for them on the grounds of the Topkapi Palace, the Islamic antiquities moved from site to site, first to an upstairs hall of the Imperial Museum and later to increasingly independent venues. Growing in the shadow of the antiquities collections, Islamic collections were never published in catalogues, nor were they extensively publicized in newspapers. The only early description of the collection comes from a short section of an extensive 1895 article about the museum by its assistant director, Halil (Edhem):

At one time during the Middle Ages when in Europe and in Asia no trace of civilization remained and knowledge and science had become nearly completely extinct, Islam and the Arabs appeared as a vehicle for the formation of a new civilization. The advancement of knowledge and science and literature and art

spread across the world, and the Ottomans were the inheritors of this with their acquisition of the caliphate.

Since today old Arab works and old Ottoman works are among quite desirable and rare antiquities, these are also now being collected in the Imperial Museum and are being arranged for display in a special hall. In this section, the most striking item is in the corner: an ornate tile mihrāb [prayer niche] from Karaman that is from the time of the Seljuk ruler Alaettin I. Stones with Kufic writing from the time of the Ahmed al-Malik of the Umayyad caliphate; writing samples of famous calligraphers; book bindings, which are testimony to the fine handicraft of Ottoman artisans; Edirne-work cabinets; mother-of-pearl inlay bookstands; ringstones with Kufic writings; and quite breathtaking Persian carpets decorate this hall.(FN15)

In introducing the collection, Halil links its establishment with a reminder to the viewer that Europe's ascendancy depended on a history of Arabo-Islamic science, a view often promoted by conservatives within the empire.(FN16) Thus he presents the desire to remember the Islamic past as more than a simple act of self-reflection or nationalist self-promotion. From the first display of Islamic arts, the presentation of artifacts still living in the Ottoman present was also an act of resistance to European cultural hegemony. It balanced, or perhaps even completed, the Ottoman usurpation of the foundations of Europe represented by the archaeological antiquities on exhibit in the rest of the museum. Just as the wide-scale Ottoman collection and display of Hellenistic antiquities exposed the shaky foundations of an exclusive pan-European Greek heritage, Halil suggests that the collection of Islamic arts underscored Europe's actual dependence on the Islamic world for its subsequent greatness. In these paragraphs, Halil simultaneously exposes Europe's dependence on the Islamic world and the Islamic world's dependence on the Ottoman Empire in its role as protector of the caliphate. Thus he conflates the Islamic with the Ottoman, producing a national, not a religious, identifier.

Like its European counterparts, the Ottoman museum used religious objects as national identifiers only by divesting them of their religious significance. The symmetrical organization of the display and the organization of the collection by material precluded its assessment in any sort of religious framework, where disparate objects would be used together in an architectural setting for the purpose of worship (figs. 1, 2). In the museum display, only the lanterns hanging from the ceiling and the carpets covering the floor retain their original spatial function. Yet, unlike in the mosque or tomb from which they came, the carpets were roped off from the very people who would have prayed on them in religious settings. Much as the museum's primary collections enforced secular notions through the display of pre-Islamic arts, the hall devoted to Islamic arts subverted the religious content of mihrāb and Qur'ān alike, transforming them into objects for the aesthetic rather than the spiritual gaze. Carol Duncan refers to the museum as a space of secular ritual.(FN17) Indeed, while the architecture of the exterior—designed to recall a Greek temple, as the neoclassical tradition dictated for museum architecture—promoted a humanist, quasi-religious veneration of the antiquities within, the Islamic arts upstairs invested objects with a new and secular ritual: that of impartial, categorical examination.

While the inclusion of Islamic arts in the museum acknowledged their cultural value in a way otherwise ignored by the Imperial Museum, the removal of objects from religious contexts to the secular halls of a museum itself had revolutionary implications. In mosques, tombs, and dervish lodges, the objects collected by the museum had nonmaterial value associated with their function and sometimes also with their venerable association with figures from the past. Often such objects acted as relics or gained local meanings because of the legends and histories surrounding their use. In

the museum, they exchanged such value for the secular equivalents of aesthetics and historical rarity, becoming secular signs of national eminence. By redefining them as works of art to collect and display, the Islamic Arts Division of the Imperial Museum called into question the very identity of a devotional object.

Never explicitly stated, the radical implications of Islamic collections in a museum setting were not far from the consciousness of the museum's administration. As the Imperial Museum developed as a project expressing the cultural aspirations of the empire, its florescence in the late nineteenth century depended heavily on the leadership of its director, Osman Hamdi (1842-1910). Educated as a lawyer and as an artist in France, and known for his support of reformist politics, Osman Hamdi took on the roles of painter, educator, museum administrator, and archaeologist in his native land. Although neither his private nor his professional correspondence documents the motivations behind his curatorship of the museum, many of his paintings suggest his interpretations of and hopes for the collections.

It was no surprise to Osman Hamdi that the new collections promoted a radical shift in Ottoman modes of education. Whereas once Ottomans learned about religion by reading the Qur'ān, in the museum they would learn about the nation through the objects that once surrounded the transmission of religious knowledge. In his 1890 work *In the Green Mosque of Bursa*, Osman Hamdi uses a Mamluk candle holder and a lamp from the Gebze Çoban Mustafa Pasha Mosque from the museum collections, setting them in the quintessential early Ottoman mosque, completed in 1424 (fig. 3).(FN18) Here Osman Hamdi depicts himself seated, receiving the wisdom of a teacher who reads aloud to him from a Qur'ān, quite possibly one in the collection. Similarly, in the 1904 work *The Fountain of Life*, he depicts himself reading the same Qur'ān in front of a fountain in the Tiled Pavilion surrounded by objects from the museum's Islamic collection (fig. 4).(FN19) As the curator of these collections, Osman Hamdi subsumed the age-old role of religious scholar to the modern role of secular educator, suggesting this relationship by depicting its inversion in his paintings. In such self-portraits, he transposes his modern role into an anachronistic, timeless, and quintessentially Ottoman setting, emphasizing his aspirations more as an Ottoman citizen and innovator than as an aspiring European. One might even wonder whether the fountain of life in the title refers to the physical site behind him or to the activity of erudition in which he—and the museum—is engaged. Osman Hamdi's adoption of the Orientalist style of painting for his dissections of the museum, an organ of identity production, underscores both his and the museum's investment in the colonial art of mimicry.

Such strategies came at a high cultural cost, as suggested in the subtle symbolic drama of Osman Hamdi's 1901 work *Mihrāb* (fig. 5). In this painting, a woman, modeled after Osman Hamdi's wife, sits on an inlaid Qur'ān stand in front of the mihrāb. She displaces many copies of the Qur'ān, which lie disheveled at her feet. Although the incense at the foot of the mihrāb continues to burn, the candle beside it stands extinguished. All of the objects in the picture—the Qur'ān stand, the incense burner, the candle holder, and quite probably the Qur'āns as well—belonged to the growing collections of the Islamic section of the museum.(FN20) While the removal of the mihrāb and the Qur'ān stand to the museum preserved them as objects of fine art, this act simultaneously plundered their functions as aids to religious devotion. The museum saved devotional objects, but in doing so it secularized them.

Could any image be more shocking? As an allegorical representation of the museum, the painting implicates the Islamic collections of the museum in a secularist revolution that replaces religion with Western mores and a disregard of religion in favor of art and the material world, which it favors. In the museum, an aesthetic appreciation

of Islamic arts displaces the worship of the Qur'ān, just as this figure sits directly between the viewer and the mihrāb, precluding prayer. She, along with all that she represents, displaces the Qur'ān on its stand and becomes the object of devotion. In one guise, this figure, exposed in body and yet distant in her gaze, suggests the West: beautiful, alluring, distracting, and yet impassive and unattainable. Still, by placing a portrait of his own wife in front of the mihrāb, Osman Hamdi made literal the classical metaphor between the beloved and the qibla common in Persian poetry. Hafez writes, "Whoever comes to the ka'beh of your street/Is like one praying before the qibla of your eyebrows." (FN21) Furthermore, during the late nineteenth century, feminization of the national spirit (akin to the notion of the French patrie) entered the Ottoman tradition. Thus the painting implicates the museum in an act of national devotion akin to that of the personal beloved and also marked a moment of transition in the symbolism ascribed to the female form. With this tour de force of layered metaphor spanning several traditions, Osman Hamdi highlights the pivotal role of the museum in constructing a revolutionary bridge from the traditional into the modern sphere.

How did such an ideological revolution play out in the material world? Despite the radical ramifications, the new value that emerged for Islamic artifacts as aesthetic objects subject to a secular gaze resulted not from existing secular ideals but from the very practical issue of theft. At the end of the nineteenth century, European travelers and collectors alike wanted Islamic artifacts for private and public collections of Islamic art. As their price rose, local Ottoman citizens were often willing to sell the valuables of their local mosques to an increasingly lucrative market. As with Hellenic antiquities, the collection of Islamic antiquities was precipitated by the European desire for collection as much as by the ideological issues of cultural identification that followed to justify the museum's growing interests.

Scattered documentary reports of museum acquisitions provide clues about the changing modes of evaluation for Islamic artifacts. Before European collecting became an issue, acquisitions depended primarily on practical considerations in mosques. Among the first carpets included in the collections, those from the Sultan Ahmet Mosque and the mosque of the Kamiller village in the province of Izmir were removed to the museum because, in addition to being old, they were deemed unhealthy for continued use in the mosques. (FN22) In the documents concerning their transfer from mosque to museum, two types of value accrue to the carpets. Since they performed a useful function in the mosques, their removal to the museum depended on their replacement with new substitutes. The mosques were not perceived to have lost something of extrafunctional value due to the historicity of the items: new carpets could act as substitutes with no additional provisions made for their antique or aesthetic value. Indeed, in practical terms, new carpets would have greater value because of their cleanliness. The antique value of the carpets came into play only through the museum's interest in them; outside of the museum their historicity was perceived to have little value.

The value assigned to works of Islamic art shifted as reports of their theft by Europeans began to circulate. No longer left to perform their religiously prescribed functions within holy spaces, aesthetically prized historical carpets, Qur'āns, tiles, and metalwork began to develop a market among visiting Europeans, who were eager to collect during their touristic forays into the Ottoman Empire. Osman Hamdi's 1905 painting *The Iranian Carpet Seller* (fig. 6), replete with the familiar cast of museum objects, depicts a contemporary problem: unlike Hellenic antiquities, the commodification and export of which was at least partially legislated, valuable Islamic antiques were being sold to Europeans, both as touristic souvenirs and for museum collections. It was not until 1906 that a revision of the antiquities law (*Asar-i Atika*)

Nizamnamesi), drafted by Osman Hamdi, placed the same restrictions on Islamic and Ottoman artworks leaving the empire as on Hellenic antiquities, which had been fully regulated since 1884.(FN23) Like Hellenic antiquities, Islamic antiquities gained legislative interest only after they began to be smuggled out of the country with impunity.

Despite Abdülhamid's emphasis on the Islamic identity of the Ottoman state, the Islamic collections of the Imperial Museum did not flourish fully until the end of his reign. It was only during and after the constitutionalist Young Turk Revolution of 1908-10 that concern over Islamic antiquities began to enter public discourse with any frequency, in large part because of the Young Turks' interest in increased communication between the state and the populace. In 1910, newspapers began to report thefts of tiles, carpets, and kilims (flat-woven carpets) from historical sites as far afield as Konya and its environs.(FN24) As a result of such reports the museum sent a long note to the Ministry of Education emphasizing the necessity actively to collect antiquities in the museum and requiring the participation of the Ministry of Pious Foundations in the preservation and maintenance of historical sites. As explained by the note,

Since it is necessary to protect the objects of value, old and new, of the mosques in Istanbul and in outlying areas, the Ministry of Education is prepared to consider the proposition of guarding old objects in the Tiled Pavilion provided that the Ministry of Pious Foundations takes measures to preserve recent works; and in order to prevent the transfer of even one of the stolen objects from the recent theft of [various lamps and vases from several mosques of Bursa and Eskisehir] to European museums, the Ministry of Education is charged with reporting the matter to the Office of Customs under the Ministry of Finance.(FN25)

It was not so much the inherent value of the objects that led to their collection but a distaste for the idea that Europeans would benefit from their theft, collecting those objects and, after having exported them, endowing them with aesthetic and exotic value in their museums. The ideology of the Young Turks began to transform the Islamic arts collection into an overt means of nationalist expression and resistance against European cultural subsumation. In an environment pushing toward a Turkish identity independent of religion, objects that had originally had only religious value—or, beyond value, priceless—gained an aesthetic/historical value with which they could represent the country in the museum, which isolated them from their original religious roles. The danger of their loss lay not in their absence but in the degree of profit possible from those items once they entered European collections.

The new market value of such objects required local officials to take new measures concerning old sites. In this note from the Police Commissariat of Beşiktaş to the Istanbul head of police, the local police chief complains of the potential dangers brought by tourists around the historical tomb of Barbaros Hayreddin Pasha:

The standard of the tomb of Barbaros Hayreddin Pasha, in Beşiktaş, which dates from his first campaigns, is of a great historical value, and it seems that Italian visitors have proposed to buy it for 6,000 liras. Many foreigners have recently been wandering around this tomb, and the balustrade around it is getting signs of wear. We are concerned that the guardian may steal the standard because of its price; we request that, in accord with recent governmental decisions, this standard should be placed in the care of the Imperial Museum in order not to make way for the theft of a valuable historical object.(FN26)

Thefts made it necessary to assign value to objects of Islamic art that had previously never been considered in the light of commerce. "Much as some experts have declared it impossible to estimate the value of seventy-two tile pieces from the

time of the architect Sinan . . . stolen from the tomb of Sokollu Mehmet Pasha in Eyüb, it seems necessary to affix a price to them in order to serve as a basis for the legal process.”(FN27) In order to determine the value of such objects, the museum began to seek the services of antique dealers, who often were themselves involved in the shady deals of transferring stolen goods to collectors.(FN28)

The new values assigned to objects of Islamic art made it necessary for the museum to assume a more active acquisition policy. In 1910, the Ministry of Public Education decided to set up a commission under the leadership of the director of the Imperial Museum in order to determine the “appropriate methods and sturdy provisions” for the preservation of “Islamic and Ottoman arts” in the empire. For the first time, this statement provided a classificatory group for these objects that explicitly linked the sectarian term Islamic with the national term Ottoman. The commission was assigned to divide the tasks of conservation and collection such that the Ministry of Pious Foundations would be responsible for the conservation of consecrated buildings, but the museum administration would be responsible for the preservation of mosaics, tiles, and other ornaments that could be removed from the surfaces of buildings.(FN29) Thus objects whose sole purpose had been to enhance the experience of worship through their inclusion as part of consecrated buildings became officially divested of this role. They were simultaneously reduced as aesthetic and historical works as they were raised as objects of market and museum value. After the French Revolution, one of the powerful symbols of the new order had been the removal of church regalia to the secular halls of the museum.(FN30) In the Ottoman Empire, the Young Turk Revolution was slowly setting the stage for the secularist revolution that was to come only a decade later: already, objects vested with religious significance were being recontextualized in a historical and national museum collection.

With the plans for the construction of a new museum associated with the Ministry of Pious Foundations, in 1908 the Islamic collection moved from the upper corner of the archaeology museum building to the Tiled Pavilion (fig. 7).(FN31) This move was made possible by the opening of the third wing of the Imperial Museum in 1908, which provided enough new display space to hold the antiquities that had remained in the Tiled Pavilion until that time. In giving the collection of Islamic and Ottoman art its own building, the move significantly altered the spatial relation between the collection of ancient antiquities and the collection of Islamic and Ottoman antiquities. Previously, the Islamic collections had settled into the recesses of the museum building as if an afterthought. Surrounded by the fifteenth-century architecture of the Tiled Pavilion, they confronted the legacy of the ancients with a very different cultural and historical aesthetic, which represented a local, rather than an adoptive, history. Face to face on the outer precincts of the Topkapi Palace, the two buildings suggested a showdown of historical identities for the emerging Ottoman nation (fig. 8).

The growing interest in Islamic and Ottoman arts found expression not only in the preservation of consecrated sites and the objects associated with them but in a newfound interest in historical sites associated with the Ottoman family. In June 1911, the commission for Ottoman history was sent to investigate a report concerning the house that Osman had occupied in Bilecik, even though no documents could be found to corroborate the rumor that the house had belonged to Osman.(FN32) In 1911 the Ministry of the Interior sent out a directive ordering the collection of standards, weapons, shields, and military clothing from the greater Bursa region, identifying their value as both national and artistic.(FN33) As Deringil points out, at this time “a veritable cult of Ottomania was created around the historical heritage of the Ottoman dynasty, as Abdülhamid focused in an unprecedented fashion on the ‘creation myth’ of the Ottoman State.”(FN34) Along with his reassertion of caliphal presence, Abdülhamid

manifested his dynastic heritage in large part through the glorification of his forebears as political and religious heroes. The inclusion of items of dynastic significance within the Islamic framework of the museum served to conflate the national with the religious, underscoring the indivisibility of Ottoman and Islamic patriotism.

In 1914, the Islamic collections of the Imperial Museum moved to the former charitable dining areas (imaret) of the Suleymaniye complex. The new Museum of Pious Foundations (Evkaf Müzesi) opened on 14 April, a date chosen to coincide with the anniversary of the coronation of Sultan Mehmet V Reshad. In their new location, objects culled from the historical mosques and tombs of the Ottoman Empire became resituated to a liminal space between the secularist display strategy of the museum and the directorship of the Ministry of Pious Foundations, interested more in the religious than in the aesthetic value of the objects. With this return to a religious administrative framework, perhaps it is not so surprising that this museum established to protect Islamic antiquities soon lost many of its valuable carpets to thieves.(FN35)

Far from subsiding during the war years, the interest in Islamic antiquities became increasingly tied to nationalist projects and projections. In 1915, the Commission for Examination of Antiquities (Tedkik-i Asar-i Atika Encümeni) became charged with the investigation of works of "Turkish civilization, Islam, and knowledge of the nation" and with the publication of its findings.(FN36) In the same year, the commission for the protection of antiquities (Muhafaza-i Asar-e Atika Encümeni) was organized in order to supervise the national adherence to the fifth section of the antiquities law, which listed all the mobile and immobile objects to which the law applied.(FN37)

Among their most important activities, they issued a report concerning the state of the Topkapi Palace in which, for the first time, Ottoman antiquities became extensively and explicitly identified with the preservation of a national heritage, and the preservation of objects became explicitly linked to the memory of national history.(FN38) "Every nation," the commission declared, "makes the necessary provisions for the preservation of its fine arts and monuments and thus preserves the endless virtues of its ancestors as a lesson in civilization for its descendants." The Topkapi Palace was identified as uniquely important in that it was the only site where nonpublic and nonreligious architectural examples had been preserved for several centuries. The commission cast the preservation of buildings as equivalent to the preservation of four hundred years of Ottoman history, which contained the tilework, decoration, and architectural details that constituted "a national art history."(FN39) For the first time, Ottoman antiquities were designated solely in national rather than religious terms.

The continued interest of the government in Ottoman antiquities during the war, and their increasing recasting of them as Ottoman and national rather than Islamic, suggests that the value associated with these objects had acquired a thoroughly nationalist flavor. The official collection of Islamic artwork signified the rise of patriotic self-awareness in the face of imperial dissolution, reflected new reactions to emergent nationalisms in the former empire, and also foreshadowed secular notions of Islam, which would develop fully under the Turkish Republic.

Over the course of thirty years, the Ottoman government developed a collection of Islamic antiquities from two disparate and opposed paths. On the one hand, the museum divested objects originally used in Islamic practice of their religious import through the secularizing processes of museum collection, display, and aesthetic examination. On the other, objects that had originally been part of the political sphere of the Ottoman dynasty came to be honored under the rubric of the religious sphere. Both processes supported production of an Ottoman national identity through the conflation of the Ottoman with the Islamic, of the political with the devotional. Ironically,

while such a scheme of categorization emerged from within the strategies of European imperial thought, it became a strategic maneuver within the Ottoman quest for a cohesive national identity.

ADDED MATERIAL

FIG. 1. Interior of the Islamic Arts section of the Imperial Museum, ca. 1889-1908. Abdülhamid Albums, courtesy of Professor Nurhan Atasoy.

FIG. 2. Interior of the Islamic Arts section of the Imperial Museum, ca. 1889-1908. Abdülhamid Albums, courtesy of Professor Nurhan Atasoy.

FIG. 3. Osman Hamdi, *In the Green Mosque of Bursa*, oil on canvas, 1890, 81 × 59 cm. After Cezar, *Sanatta Bati'ya Açilis ve Osman Hamdi*, 727.

FIG. 4. Osman Hamdi, *The Fountain of Life*, oil on canvas, 1904. After Cezar, *Sanatta Bati'ya Açilis ve Osman Hamdi*, 714.

FIG. 5. Osman Hamdi, *Mihrâb*, oil on canvas, 1901, 201 × 108 cm. Collection of Demirbank. After Cezar, *Sanatta Bati'ya Açilis ve Osman Hamdi*, 713.

FIG. 6. Osman Hamdi, *The Iranian Carpet Seller*. After Cezar, *Sanatta Bati'ya Açilis ve Osman Hamdi*, 363.

FIG. 7. *The Islamic Collections Displayed in the Tiled Pavilion*, 1909. After Halil (Edhem), *Das Osmanischen Antikenmuseum*.

FIG. 8. Exterior of the Imperial Museum and the Tiled Pavilion, ca. 1892. Abdülhamid Albums, no. 90518, courtesy of the IRCICA, Istanbul.

FOOTNOTES

1. Among the prodigious literature in museum studies that has recently emerged, the following are of particular interest to this discussion: Carol Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Gwendolyn Wright, ed., *The Formation of National Collections of Art and Archaeology* (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1996); Daniel Sherman et al., *Museum Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994); Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge* (New York: Routledge, 1992).

2. Wendy M. K. Shaw, "Possessors and Possessed: Objects, Museums and the Visualization of History in the Late Ottoman Empire, 1846-1923" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1999).

3. Suzanne Marchand, *Down from Olympus: Archaeology and Philhellenism in Germany, 1750-1970* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 7-10.

4. Homi Bhaba discusses the mode of colonial mimicry at length in "Of Mimicry and Man," *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 85-92.

5. Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909* (London: I. B. Taurus, 1998), 46-49.

6. Selim Deringil, "Legitimacy Structures in the Ottoman State—The Reign of Abdulhamid II," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 23, 3 (August 1991): 345-59.

7. Hasan Kayali, *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1918* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 35.

8. Serif Mardin, *Religion and Social Change in Modern Turkey: The Case of Bediüzzaman Said Nursi* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 129.

9. Mustafa Cezar, *Sanatta Bati'ya Açilis ve Osman Hamdi*, 2nd ed. (Istanbul: Erol Kerim Aksoy Kültür, Egitim, Spor ve Saglik Vakfi Yayini, 1995), 547.

10. Carol Duncan, "Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship," in *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, ed. Ivan Karp and Stephen D. Lavine (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 88.

11. Deringil, *Well-Protected Domains*, 45.

12. Stephen Vernoi, "Islamic Archaeology," *Muqarnas* 14 (1997): 3, 8.

13. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), 96.
14. Said, *Orientalism*, 105.
15. Halil (Edhem), "Müze-ye Hümayun," *Tercuman-i Hakikat/Servet-i Fünun* 1313 (numero special et unique), 104.
16. Kayali, *Arabs and Young Turks*, 36.
17. Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals*, 7-12.
18. V. Bilgin Demirsar, *Osman Hamdi Tablolarında Gerçekle İlişkiler* (Istanbul: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1989), 107-8
19. Demirsar, *Osman Hamdi*, 131-33. The first pavilion of the Topkapi Palace, the Tiled Pavilion, is located directly across from the Imperial Museum building. At this time, it still housed part of the Hellenic Antiquities collection.
20. Demirsar, *Osman Hamdi*, 119.
21. Parviz Khanlari, *Devan-e Hafez* (Tehran 1359/1980), 98. Many thanks to Professor Richard Davis for providing this insight and this example.
22. Istanbul Prime Minister's Archives Documents Y.A-HUS 281:90, 28:3.1311 (8 October 1893); Y.A-HUS 327:19, 12.11.1311 (18 May 1894); *Irade-i Hususiye* 1430, 1312.Za.26 (21 May 1895).
23. The 1906 antiquities law was so comprehensive that it not only stayed in effect for the rest of the Ottoman period but was adopted by the Republic of Turkey and remained in effect with only minor modifications until 1973.
24. *Saadet* 432 (14 March 1326/27 March 1910) and *Sabah* 7376 (22 March 1326/6 April 1910).
25. Istanbul Archives of the Prime Minister BEO 276305/29 *Tesrin-sani* 1325/12 December 1909.
26. Document of 1910 cited in Zarif Orgun and Serap Aykoç, "La Fondation du Musée Turque et le Musée des Arts Turcs et Islamiques," *Collection Turcica II, Travaux et recherches en Turquie* 1982 (Strasbourg, 1984), 144-45
27. Document of 1909 cited in Orgun and Aykoç, "Fondation du Musée Turque," 130.
28. Archaeology museum document no. 37, 21 July 1325, cited in Nazan Ölçer, *Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi: Kilimler* (Istanbul: Eren Yayıncılık, 1988), 38.
29. Orgun and Aykoç, "Fondation du Musée Turque," 140-41.
30. Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge*, 167.
31. Halil (Edhem), *Das Osmanischen Antikenmuseum in Konstantinopel* (Liepzig, 1909).
32. Istanbul Archives of the Prime Minister DH.ID 28-1:21/1329.Ca.4/1 June 1911.
33. Istanbul Archives of the Prime Minister DH.ID 28-1:18/1329.R.22/15 September 1911.
34. Deringil, *Well-Protected Domains*, 31.
35. Orgun and Aykoç, "Fondation du Musée Turque," 135.
36. Istanbul Archives of the Prime Minister MV 239:22; 1333.Ca.5/19 April 1915.
37. Istanbul Archives of the Prime Minister MV 212:115/1336.L.22/30 July 1918. This document declares the establishment of this commission three years after its report concerning the Topkapi Palace. In "Türkiye'de Müzecilik," *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1984), 1465, Sumer Atasoy cites 1917 as the year in which the commission was established. Such discrepancies suggest that the commission may have been disbanded and reestablished several times during the war years.
38. At this time, the Topkapi Palace, home to the sultans until 1853, had for the most part fallen into grave disrepair. Some sections, such as the apartments of the Holy Mantle and the Baghdad pavilion, retained annual ceremonial functions. Certain parts of the harem continued to house former servants to the royal family. The grounds also included a small and short-lived ceramics museum. But the palace as a whole would not become a museum until after the establishment of the Republic.

39. Sedad Hakki Eldem, Topkapi Sarayi (Istanbul: Kùltür Bakanligi, 1982), 100-101.