OTTOMAN-ISLAMIC AESTHETICS AND VISUAL CULTURE IN PALATIAL
ARCHITECTURE AND LANDSCAPE: THE CASE OF TOPKAPI PALACE IN
THE 15TH AND 16TH CENTURIES

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ABSTRACT

OTTOMAN-ISLAMIC AESTHETICS AND VISUAL CULTURE IN PALATIAL ARCHITECTURE AND LANDSCAPE: THE CASE OF TOPKAPI PALACE IN THE 15TH AND 16TH CENTURIES

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This dissertation contributes to our understanding of the Topkapı Palace in Istanbul. Its main inquiry is how the Ottoman mindset shaped it from the 15th to the 16th century when the Ottoman Empire was strongest and Ottoman art and aesthetics matured and reached their peak. This study introduces a methodological aesthetic analysis and reveals the meanings, values, and thoughts underlying spatial preferences in this age. The factors that shaped the Ottoman mindset are grouped into political, philosophical, religious, and sufī thought systems. This study started with the premise that the dominant factor that influenced the Ottoman mindset was the Sunnite belief system, and the analysis of the Topkapı Palace is based on the theoretical framework of Islamic aesthetics. Its doctrines are discussed in terms of a detailed study of the literature on Islamic aesthetics, revealing basic concepts which are related to the spatial features of the Topkapı Palace. Since the palace is the household of the state and the sultan, the preferences for the spaces are further studied by specifically following the household aesthetics of Islam.

Keywords: Topkapı Palace, Ottoman Mindset, Islamic Aesthetics, Household Aesthetics

ÖZ

SARAY MİMARİSİ VE PEYZAJINDA OSMANLI-İSLAM ESTETİĞİ VE GÖRSEL KÜLTÜRÜ: 15. VE 16. YÜZYILLARDA TOPKAPI SARAYI ÖRNEĞİ

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Bu tez, Topkapı Sarayı'nı anlamak ve anlamlandırmak üzerine yapılan akademik çalışmalara katkı sağlamayı amaçlar, Osmanlı düşünce dünyasının Topkapı Sarayı'nın mekânlarına nasıl yansıdığını irdeler. Tez temel olarak Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun en güçlü olduğu ve dolayısıyla Osmanlı sanat ve estetiğinin olgunlaşarak doruğa ulaştığı 15. ve 16. yüzyıla odaklanır. Tez, Osmanlı hanedanının sanat ve mimaride kullandığı üslup ve mekânsal tercihleri, Osmanlı düşünce dünyasının dört bileşeni olan politik düşünce, felsefi düşünce, dini düşünce ve tasavvufî düşünce üzerinden açıklar. Bu çalışmaya başlarken, Osmanlı siyasi, felsefî, dinî ve tasavvufî düşüncesinde baskın etken Sünnî İslam inanç sistemi olarak kabul edilmiş, Topkapı Sarayı'nın analizinin İslâm estetiğinin teorik çerçevesi ile yapılması uygun bulunmuştur. Bu bağlamda, İslâm estetiğine dair temel öğretiler belirlenmiştir. Bunlar belirlenirken, İslâm estetiğine dair literatür üzerinde detaylı bir çalışma yapılmış ve konu üzerine yazılmış kaynaklardaki kavramlar belirlenmiştir. Osmanlı düşünce sistemini oluşturan her bir öğe (siyaset, felsefe, din, sufizm) estetik boyut çerçevesinde ayrıntılı şekilde incelenmiş ve saray üzerindeki mekânsal yansımaları irdelenmiştir. Tez, Topkapı Sarayı'nın devlet ve sultanın ikamet yeri olduğu gerçeğinden yola çıkarak İslâm'ın mesken estetiğinin de izlerini sürürerek mekâna dair tercihleri sorgular.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Topkapı Sarayı, Osmanlı Zihniyeti, İslâm Estetiği, İslâm'da Mesken Estetiği

To My Dear Sons Selim & Emre…

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

xvi

CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Aim and Scope of the Study

This dissertation aims to contribute to the study of Ottoman art, architecture, and landscape design by means of a theoretical approach anchored in Islamic aesthetics. In this context, the dissertation analyzes Ottoman architectural and visual culture on palatial complexes and investigates Ottoman taste and its reflection on palace architecture, interior architecture, and gardens. The study mainly focuses on the 15th and 16th centuries of the Topkapı Palace, which housed the Ottoman ruling elite during the pinnacle of its hegemony, considering that it is the most convenient period to investigate Ottoman taste and culture. Besides, as it is clearly known, cultural tastes can be followed best in palaces free from authoritarian or financial restrictions.

The study aims to decipher and scrutinize the Topkapı Palace through an aesthetical analysis. Instead of presenting only descriptive and analytical knowledge, an aesthetical study will be conducted since it examines the order and meanings in art and architecture using the mindset and value system of the founders, in our case, the Ottoman dynasty.

The goals of the study are to enhance and deepen our understanding of Ottoman-Islamic art and architecture, to crystallize the reflections of the Ottoman mindset on Topkapı Palace's spatial organization, to interpret the reflections of Ottoman visual culture in light of theoretical, historical, and critical issues, and to increase the visibility of enhanced Ottoman cultural heritage.

1.2. Aesthetical Analysis as a Methodological Tool

"Aesthetics" as a word is originated from "aisthetis" or "aisthanesthai" from Greek. The word "aisthesis" means sense, sensitive perception, and "anisthenesthai" means perceiving with senses.[1] Therefore, "aesthetics" as a discipline is considered a science dealing with sensitive perceptions. So indeed, Alexander Baumgarten; the founder and the eponym of "aesthetics" as a discipline, defines it: "Aesthetics (the theory of the liberal arts, lower gnoseology, the art of beautiful thinking, the art of the analogue of reason) is the science of sensitive cognition. He clarified "aesthetics" as "the science of sensible knowledge, and sensible knowledge as the complete thought of things beyond clear and distinct ones."[2]

Herwitz describes that taste is the central concept in its thinking about aesthetics since it allows for the invention of the term "aesthetics." Aesthetics is "the study of sensibility as a particular kind of cognition, the cognition of particular things rather than abstract concepts." Although sensibility may refer to the use of the five senses, it is something more when aesthetics is at stake. It also covers intuition, cognition, and formulation of the things which judge it as beautiful. For instance, a poem might sound well, but the origin of its taste and what makes it beautiful is its aesthetic value. These can be the message behind it, its particular twist of language, invocation of rhythm through enjambment, the pleasure offered by its strophes, punctuations of thought, its use of forms, and so on. Everything depends on the incarnations of the particularities of the poem, on how this harmony comes into existence, and on the pleasure taken in its reading and palingenesis in memory. Therefore, the term "aesthetics"; is adopted to capture the essential characteristics of sensuous experience for its own sake in the experience of the beautiful.[3]

Although aesthetics is commonly accepted as the science of beauty, it intrinsically aims to decipher, define and resolve why an object is considered beautiful by the subject.[4] Benedetto Croce defines aesthetics as purely and simply the science of

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[1] Frank Sibley, *Approaches to Aesthetics*, Collected Papers on Philosophical Aesthetics, eds., John Benson, Betty Redfern& Jeremy Roxbee Cox (Oxford, Clarendon Press: 2001), 33.
[2] Mary J. Gregor, "Baumgarten's Aesthetica", *The Review of Metaphysics* 37, no. 2 (December 1983): 357-385, https://www.jstor.org/stable/20128010.
[3] Daniel Herwitz, *Aesthetics: Key Concepts in Philosophy*, (London: Continuum Books, 2008), 22-25.
[4] İsmail Tunalı, *Estetik*, (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 2010), 15.

expression which reflects every form of apperception, appreciation, intuition, or imaginative synthesis.[5]

Sesemann contributes to clarifying the content and context of "aesthetics" by an example. He focuses on "aesthetics" as a discipline that deals with "aesthetic value," which makes it beautiful. However, the word *beauty* is to be taken in its widest meaning, which fits with that of *aesthetic value* and has to be differentiated into a narrower sense of that term addressing only a certain kind of commonly accepted beauty. He exemplifies that a caricature may be artistic and aesthetic in character and yet distorts a human being's appearance by emphasizing precisely that in it, which is unbeautiful. Therefore, the author emphasizes that the term *beauty* is used as a synonym for aesthetic value in the general course of aesthetics. He concludes that the object of aesthetics is already essentially valuable, something with a certain value (beauty). Aesthetics itself, like ethics and logic, is a purely theoretical science; it does not evaluate its objects but only analyses and elucidates those conditions on which the object's value depends. [6]

As mentioned above, aesthetics as a field of study does not focus on only clear and distinct knowledge. Therefore, aesthetical analysis as a methodological tool differs from descriptive and analytical. So, it should be clarified. Erzen claims that contrary to what is believed, it is not only related to the interpretation or perception of beauty; instead, it analyses choices of form and order, indicating values, meanings, and philosophies behind them[7].

Sesemann's explanation of aesthetical analysis is very elucidative. He clarifies that making an aesthetical analysis is like translating a passage from one language to another. It is not an easy job, and its difficulty is proportional to the difference in languages' internal structure and morphology. A good translator must first have an excellent command of both languages, the one from which and the one into which he is translating, i.e., he must not only know their lexicons very well but also have a

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[5] Benedetto Croce, "Estetica, in G. Santayana, what is Aesthetics?" *The Philosophical Review* 13, no. 3 (May 1904): 325, https://doi.org/10.2307/2176284.

[6] Vasily Sesemann, *Aesthetics (On the Boundary of Two Worlds)*, trans. Mykolas Drunga, ed. Leonidas Donskis (Amsterdam: Rodopi Publishers, 2007), 30.

[7] Jale Erzen, "Reading Mosques: Meaning and Architecture in Islam." *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 69, no. 1 (Winter 2011): 127, https://www.jstor.org/stable/42635843.

feeling for their spirit and style. Only then will he be able to put the text being translated into a garb that best suits the original and that is attuned to the nature of the language being translated into.[8] The author continues that a similar task is faced by the scholar who analyzes an artistic object with an aesthetical look. He has to translate the expressive language's immediate aesthetic perception into the logical language of abstract concepts, i.e., to delineate and to define in concepts whatever it is that beauty reveals to us/to the artist/or the owner in the direct experience of it. And just like the translator, he has to know both languages equally well; in other words, he must combine within himself both sensitivity to beauty and a capacity for theoretical insight and clarity of reflection. Such a combination of two distinct but not contrary talents makes an analysis aesthetical.[9]

Another aesthetical analysis has been scrutinized by focusing on form and content. Townsend claims that one of the most important approaches to describing what we perceive aesthetically distinguishes form and content. He exemplifies that sentences in a paragraph have a form and convey something to the reader. The form of a sentence includes its grammar and the system of meanings that are attached to each word and to the combination of words in a language. Sentences describing or asserting something begin with a noun-phrase/ verb/phrase form. That form is common to a great many sentences with very different meanings. It is elaborated into many variations that also share formal features with other sentences. For instance, the noun phrase may be a simple noun, or it may be a noun plus adjective, a pronoun, or a more complicated noun phrase. What distinguishes form in this sense is that it can be described in a way that does not require us to say what the sentence means.[10] Content is what the sentence is about. It is much harder to describe the content than forming because any description of the content will have to have content to convey what is meant. In practice, form and content occur together and cannot exist alone. However, the distinction between them is quite obvious. For instance, "That book is blue" does not mean the same thing as "That book is white," although they both share an obvious structural similarity. If we could not recognize the similarities and differences between

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[8] Sesemann, 5.

[9] Ibid, 6.

[10] Dabney Townsend, *An Introduction to Aesthetics* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 56.

sentences, we would have to learn every sentence separately to learn a language. So we commonly distinguish form from content and use the distinction to help us describe and understand what we perceive.[11]

The distinction between form and content in language implies some system of conventions created by human beings. We need not assume that some group of people at some time thought of a language in a way that we might think up a code. But differences in languages and families of languages show us that much of the form of our language could be different. The same content can appear in many different forms, and the form is, to some extent, a matter of conventions that have evolved in the course of our history.

Townsend links this form and content issue to aesthetical analyses of artistic objects. He claims that the distinction and the complementary relation between form and content in language can also be followed in artistic, architectural, and many other visual objects because it is related to how something is presented and the meaning that is embedded.[12] The author clarifies the subject via Gustave Caillebotte's painting, "On the Europe Bridge" (1876-1877) (See Figure 1.1). As seen in the painting, some formal elements strike the eye very clearly. It is divided horizontally by the bridge railing that divides the picture plane and vertically by the central bridge girder. The left side is then occupied by two heavy vertical lines- the black-clad figures of the men. The five segments in the lower right quadrant repeat the vertical lines. Two heavy diagonals cross from upper right to lower left, and one move from center left to lower right. Thus, the space is divided rigidly into horizontal and vertical sections broken by equally emphatic diagonals. These rectilinear forms are countered by the gentle curve of the bridge arcs repeated in the bridge railing. Once one becomes aware of these formal elements, they also emerge as minor motifs in the curves of the hats and the faintly visible repeated forms in the background. He analyses that these geometrical forms work to present a mechanical and industrial image. The color is similarly subdued and dehumanized. The painting is in tones of grey and black, with only a small patch of blue in the coat partially visible on the left. All three human figures are shown with

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[11] Ibid,

[12] Ibid,

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faces turned away or obscured. The form in this painting is strikingly geometrical, restrained in color, and simplified in presentation.

Figure 1.1 Painting of Caillebotte: On the Europe Bridge
Source: Dabney Townsend, "Book cover of An Introduction to Aesthetics," (drawing, 1997).

Townsend indicates that these formal, analytical, and descriptive analyses reflect only one dimension of the object that is insufficient to understand. About the content of Caillebotte's painting, he argues that it has already begun to emerge from our attempts to describe the form. Because he considers that the objects, in this case, are easily recognizable: there is a bridge (a real bridge provides the model, as a matter of fact), and there are the figures of three men. He crystallizes that the content is obviously much more than a picture of three men on a bridge. The geometrical form and the gray and black tones of the painting create a dehumanized industrial image that shows a relation between the formally dressed gentlemen in the foreground and the industrial world that produced this iron bridge. The third figure, perhaps in a worker's blue smock, introduces a slightly discordant element. The way that the left-hand figure is only partially included in the picture frame suggests an incompleteness and a disregard for the viewer, who is ignored by the scene. Caillebotte has created a scene that shows both the beauty and the lack of humanity in a monument of the industrial age. The content is an expression of complex admiration and distance that cannot be completely

captured by anything but the unique presentation of these forms. This kind of ordinary scene would not have been considered suitable for a painting at an earlier age. However, that is transformed by Caillebotte into a work of art through his use of visual forms and his ability to see an aesthetic composition in a social and industrial artifact of its age.[13] He focuses on the fact that people may not see exactly what he described, they may see less or more, but that does not matter. Constructing formal descriptions of one medium (painting in this case) in another (critical language) is difficult and subject to considerable variations. And also, viewers can see the form without describing what the painting is about. The description of the form leads directly to a description of the content. A formal description concentrates on the division of the picture layout, the deployment of the lines and shapes, and the use of color. As that formal description progresses, more and more of the elements of the picture appear in relation to the overall form, and from the formal description, a more complex content that implies "three figures on a bridge" emerges. Therefore, a simple painting using simple geometrical forms and a little color becomes fascinating and endlessly complicated. He concludes that awareness of these elements is a necessary step to see the whole picture for the critic, the viewer, and the analyst who makes an aesthetical analysis. Focusing simply on forms is never enough to understand what the art piece is about; however, it is a must to scrutinize them to understand temporal meanings and cultural codes.[14]

Fleming brings a different perspective to the relationship between form and content and aesthetical analysis. He gives an example from nature and invites his readers to consider the atomic structure of an element such as gold. He states that we can say that atomic structure is common to all elements. However, the particular order and make-up of this atomic structure are what makes gold, not lead. But gold is not the content of this atomic structure. Gold is just gold; it is a kind of thing that has an atomic structure. The atomic structure is part of a thing. Gold can be gold in no other way. He concludes that form may be simply perceived and well-known because of its conventional presentation with a history. Gold's atomic structure can be considered as its form, but it is insufficient to understand and characterize it because, in a way, it is

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[13] Ibid, 58.
[14] Ibid, 58-63.

common to all elements in nature. The aesthetical analysis deals with what makes gold "gold" but not lead, although they both share a similar atomic structure. It reveals its unique configuration system and deciphers the harmony immanent in its existence.[15]

In a review of Vincent Tomas's article "Aesthetic Vision," Frank Sibley states that many questions of aesthetics deal with the looks of things or appearances. He claims that when we see things in "ordinary vision," our attention is directed toward appearances, and we do not particularly notice the thing that presents the appearance, nor do we care what makes it appear in that way… the question of reality does not arise. However, in the special case of aesthetic vision, we try hard to see what paintings and statues are, what their characteristics are, not what they might appear to a casual or careless observer to be.[16]

He exemplifies:

> *In reading a newspaper, one commonly does not notice "how the letters look, that is, whether in The Times, a "t" appears short… or long, or whether an "o" has a fat and jolly look or a lean and hungry look. The ordinary perceiver does not notice that a dark cloud may be very like a whale. A penny from one angle will appear or look round from another, elliptical. A white dress in sunlight looks white, at another time, blue-grey.*

He concludes that people ordinarily do not notice these apparent variations of sensible qualities through an ordinary look. Attention to appearances is not a sufficient condition of aesthetic vision. He clarifies the distinction between an ordinary look and aesthetic vision with the pair of phrases "appearing so-and-so" and "being so-and-so." He states that this is the distinction between the penny which merely looks elliptical but is round, and the dress, which merely looks bluish but is white. Aesthetic vision requires attention to appearances; however, it has to scrutinize the reasons why they *appear so-and-so* to reveal why they are *being so-and-so.*

Sesemann also aims to distinguish the aesthetic eye and the ordinary look. He emphasizes that there are some qualities, typically aesthetic ones, which can be considered as the signs of an aesthetic eye. If one notices how graceful, delicate, or elegant something is or appears, this is sufficient to prove *ipso facto* that one's vision

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[15] Bruce Fleming, *The Aesthetic Sense of Life: A Philosophy of the Everyday* (Maryland: University Press of America, 2008), 51.
[16] Sibley, *Approach*, 24.

has been, to some degree, aesthetic. And there are many other typically aesthetic qualities and appearances. Many (but not all) are noted by using certain expressions metaphorically or quasi-metaphorically. If someone describes a letter as "jolly" or a painting as "warm," placid, or violent, speaks of the "dull glow" of velvet or of "rich" or "vehement" colors (as opposed to simply saying it is red, it is angular, it has a matt surface), his way of talking and the feature he has noticed again indicate some degree of aesthetic sensitivity. He concludes that if we are to discern and comment on certain qualities at all, some degree of aesthetic sensitivity is required and even vital. With perfect eyesight and intelligence, people do not see these qualities and make these comments without this sensitivity.[17]

Likewise, Henri Bergson comments on an ordinary vision that we do not see the actual things themselves; in most cases, we confine ourselves to reading the labels affixed to them.[18] Similarly, according to Roger Fry, in actual life, the normal person really only reads the labels as if they were on the objects around him and is troubled no further. Almost all the things which are useful in any way put on more or less this cap of invisibility. People with their aesthetic vision *really* see things, whereas most of us usually do not "*really see*" although we do not walk about with our eyes shut.[19]

J.O. Urmson tries to define the boundaries of aesthetic analysis. He says that many questions of aesthetics are concerned with the looks of things or appearances. Sometimes it is claimed that an aesthetic approach to things is always concerned with looks or appearances, more strongly that *only* appearances are relevant. However, in at least the simpler cases, people are interested in how the object looks, sounds, smells, tastes, or feels.[20] He expands that many judgments about the shape, color, sound, wording, subject-matter, or composition of things, including works of art, are such that it would be ridiculous to think that aesthetic sensitivity, perceptiveness, or taste had been exhibited in making them. Similarly, it would be ludicrous to suggest that aesthetic sensitivity was required to see, notice, or otherwise perceive that something

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[17] Sesemann, *Aesthetics,* 24.

[18] Henri Bergson, in Vincent Tomas "Aesthetic Vision." *The Philosophical Review* 68, no. 1 (January1959): 52, https://www.jstor.org/stable/2182546.

[19] Roger Fry, *Vision and Design* (NewYork, 1956), 25.

[20] J. O. Urmson and David Pole, "What Makes a Situation Aesthetic?" *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society Supplementary* 31, (1957): 76, https://www.jstor.org/stable/4106645.

is large, circular, green, slow, or monosyllabic. These are non-aesthetic judgments, qualities, descriptions, and concepts. On the contrary, other judgments exhibit an exercise of aesthetic sensitivity or perceptiveness. Although aesthetic sensitivity is required to see, notice, or perceive, it deals with if something is graceful, dainty, or garish or whether a work of art is balanced, moving, powerful or dense.[21] The author continues that some aesthetic judgments employ characteristically aesthetic terms (balanced, dense, harmonious, elegant, gaudy, graceful), while others do not ("there are too many characters," "it's not pale enough"). The third one includes evaluative judgments on whether things are aesthetically good, bad, mediocre or excellent, superior or inferior to others, and so on. Urmson calls this last one *a verdict*. He emphasizes that these judgments mentioned above are the most common and important components of aesthetic analysis. Making, explaining, and supporting them occupies much of an analyst's time. Aesthetics deals with a kind of perception. Therefore, to achieve this, people must *see* the grace or unity of a work, *hear* the plaintiveness or frenzy in the music, *notice* the gaudiness of the color scheme, and *feel* the power of a novel, its mood, or its uncertainty of tone. They may face these qualities at once or come to perceive them only after repeated viewings, hearings, or readings and with the help of critics.

In addition, aesthetical analysts also need to examine further aesthetic qualities through different mediums, sometimes illustrations as visual materials or auditory materials. Various relationships must be deciphered.[22]

Sheppard focuses on one of these relationships that must be scrutinized for an aesthetical analysis. She explains that it is not enough to deal with artistic or natural objects or anything that we embed an aesthetic value for making an aesthetical analysis. We do attribute expressive properties to natural objects: we say that "clouds scud *restlessly* across the sky," "the hills, fields, and olive trees make up a *peaceful* scene," or "the waves lapping on the shore have a *gentle* sound." She claims that these properties, however, are not *in* natural objects. The clouds would not be restless nor

[21] Frank Sibley, "Aesthetic Concepts," *The Philosophical Review* 72, no. 1 (January 1965): 79, https://doi.org/10.2307/2183059.

[22] John, O. Urmson, "The Methods of Aesthetics" in Richard Shusterman(ed), Analytic Aesthetics, Literary Theory, and Deconstruction.' Monist 69, (Blackwell: 1986), 27.

the landscape peaceful if no one were there to look at them. We must study ourselves, not nature, if we want an answer to why we find certain natural objects expressive. Therefore, works of art or architecture, or any other objects that we aim to make an aesthetical analysis on, we must study ourselves, not nature, at first. She clarifies that the answer will be partly a matter of psychology and mindset. And exemplifies: we may find a landscape peaceful because of the shades of green displayed in it; the question of why we find green a restful color may have roots in psychology, cultural issues, religion, or some other values.[23]

Erzen asserts that aesthetic analysis focuses on choices of form and order, indicating values and philosophies behind them. Therefore, making an aesthetical analysis of a specific culture requires scrutinizing the way a certain culture perceives and evaluates the world and the way it articulates meaning through the form of its representations of the world. The way that any culture moves in time and space displays its uniqueness and tells much about its mindset.[24]

Likewise, Sesemann asserts that aesthetic perception is both an analytic and a synthetic act, but usually, the separate steps of analysis and synthesis are not consciously comprehended by us as long as we are not immersed by the impression of beauty which has an effect upon us. This essential feature of aesthetical analysis has to illuminate why the artistic object/composition discloses itself beautiful to the perceiving subject's eye. Therefore, analyzing an object in an aesthetical way requires separating the object into its visible, formal, and invisible; contextual components, layers, and parts. If the object belongs to a specific culture, historical, cultural, and sociological layers have to be scrutinized in a way that breaks its beauty's spell to reveal the origin of its aesthetic value. He concludes that this careful analytical work, which dismantles the components of its perception of beauty, will not be in vain since it fructifies every further perceptual act, giving reflection greater clarity and deepening its content.[25]

So far, I have tried to define what aesthetic analysis is and the way of looking aesthetically. However, one more very important issue enlightens aesthetical analysis

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[23] Anne Sheppard, *Aesthetics: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Art*, (NewYork: Oxford University, 1987), 56.
[24] Jale Erzen, "Aesthetics of Ottoman Culture," *11th Int. Congress of Turkish Art*. (Utrecht 1999), 1-2.
[25] Sesemann, 25.

as a methodological tool, i.e., from what side the analysis of the object should be. Vasily Sesemann says: "as a matter of fact, art, its emergence, its being, and its effect-all this is determined by a relationship among three factors: (1)the creator of the art; (2) the viewer or the listener, who perceives the art and enjoys it; and (3) the work of art itself, in which beauty is embodied. Therefore, the aesthetic analysis can be carried out in three ways: (1) One can choose to start out with the artist himself and analyze that creative process from which the work of art emerges, i.e., analyze that internal psychic state which is the basis of his creativity, and all those reasons, ideas, and experiences that he tries to embody in his work; (2) Or one can start with the perceiver (viewer or listener) of the work bring out those features of his experience that depend on the perception of the work's aesthetic values; (3) Finally, the starting point of analysis may be the work of art, taken as an objective thing or phenomenon, whose existence depends neither on the creator nor on the perceiver."[26] And he questions the significance of each of these three ways and which of these is the most suitable method of an aesthetical analysis.

Sesemann claims that if one wishes to understand the special nature of any created thing, it is advisable to consult *the artist-creator* himself. Therefore, it seems that the artist, or more exactly, the creative psychologist, can best help us to clarify the aesthetic essence of the work of art. Because that essence is determined first of all by the task that he had set himself in creating the work or by the idea that he wanted to embody in it.[27] That idea and its manner of realization, in turn, arises from his views and his taste, from the basic tendencies of his creativity, from his temperament and character, and in brief, his entire individuality, as it displays itself at that moment in a certain special way. Therefore, it is understandable that philosophers often tried to ground the aesthetics of art in the psychology of artistic creativity, considering that recollecting the origin of the aesthetic object in thought seems equivalent to explaining its aesthetic order and value.[28]

Although this significant look at the input gained from the psychology and phenomenology of creativity seems to be very enlightening for the aesthetical analysis

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[26] Sesemann, 12.

[27] Ibid,

[28] David Cooper, *A Companion to Aesthetics*, in Sesemann, 143.

of an object, it is obvious that this method is by no means always and everywhere applicable. Because first of all, frequently and even most of the time, the creator and his creative process are unknown to us, and the only piece of evidence that we can use is the work of art itself (all prehistoric and archaic works of art and medieval ones are in this class for example). If we aesthetically evaluate works of art and try to understand them only upon becoming acquainted with their creators and their output, then the aesthetic value of such works would be totally inaccessible to us. Still, there is no doubt that they do provide us with a certain aesthetic impression that is full of clues about the sense of their style and get an idea of their merit even if we do not know their origin.[29] However, additionally, we should have become knowledgeable about the conditions under which a certain work had been created, about the conjectures and intentions of its author/artist/architect/musician, and about the events and factors that influenced his creativity. Then all of this information would help us to understand that work more deeply and accurately. In any case, the significance of this information would only be supportive and restrict itself to complementing, deepening, and enriching that aesthetic impression that has come about wholly independently of it.[30]

The author warns that it is important to keep in mind one more crucial issue. An artist's thoughts, feelings, and conjectures acquire aesthetic significance only insofar as they affect his creative process, lead him in a certain direction, and, finally, in a way that shapes the work of art itself. Only then the data gain importance for aesthetic analysis. Otherwise, "everything that happens in the artist's soul but doesn't touch on the creative process, and in a way does not affect its result, the work itself may be related with the fields of psychologist, but it is irrelevant to aesthetics because it stays outside the limits of that sphere within which is situated the aesthetic object.". Therefore, the psychology of creativity acquires an objective basis and methodological significance for aesthetics only when it ties up not just with the artist's subjective experiences but also with the work that he has created.[31] He continues that this *"the artist-creator"* method cannot be used for the analysis of natural beauty unless we look upon the

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[29] Sesemann, 13.
[30] Ibid,
[31] Ibid,

beauty of nature through the eyes of religion as God's creation in which the creator's perfection is reflected. Still, even in this case, our aesthetic arguments would arise out of the appreciation of the beauty of nature itself, whereas everything related to the act of this creation would end in metaphysical speculation based on a misty analogy with the creation of human beings. Be that as it may, to a scientific aesthetics, basing itself on an analysis of the aesthetic phenomenon themselves, such a method of inquiry, seeming non-aesthetic, super empirical considerations, would be unacceptable.[32]

Sesemann claims that those difficulties which aesthetic analysis confronts when it orients itself to the psychology (phenomenology) of creativity can be avoided if it is begun with *the viewer or listener,* or more exactly, with the impression that the work of art makes on them. This method of scrutiny has a real justification, too. The creative process ends in the work of art as its outcome. But the work of art cannot exist by itself. It needs a viewer or listener who takes pleasure in its beauty, and only from those experiences which the created work affords its observer (the perceiving subject) can one judge its aesthetic value. The artist himself envisages an "ideal viewer" (listener), and each time that he desires to test the power of his creation, he attempts to look at it from the side and find out how it will affect the viewer (listener). The artworks which are created or built by order of an owner/patron are also in this class. In this way, the aesthetical analysis starts from the perceiving subject (Ottoman Sultans in our case). The matter under investigation is the sum of those images, thoughts, feelings, and emotions that arise in his consciousness under the influence of that work of art. But these experiences depend not only on the object perceived but also on the perceiving subject, that is, on the ways, processes, and contents of his entire mental life.[33] This means that the impression received from the work of art will vary with the viewer's (listener's) individuality and nature, interests, tendencies and mindset, sensitivity and mobility, and present state and mood. Scrutinizing the whole complex of questions that constitutes the impression in question, it is possible to find a lot of elements (thoughts, images, and feelings) that are connected with the object itself only by external, accidental associations arising from the perceiving subject's individual experience. However, relying only on what the viewer or listener himself recognizes

[32] Ibid,

[33] Ibid,

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as being aesthetically valuable in his experiences is not enough since it can be more often subjective and partial. [34]

An objective criterion that allows us to confirm a received aesthetic impression is provided only by *the work of art itself* (The Topkapı Palace in our case). Only that impression, which is justified by its internal order, and its essential qualities, can pretend to have a genuine aesthetic significance. Thus, it is possible to see that the second path of investigation (the viewer/listener), like the first (the artist/creator), eventually leads to the third, which orients itself to the work of art. The work of art is the central link of the chain constituted by the artist, his creation, and the viewer (listener). On the one hand, the artist's idea is embodied in it; on the other, it yields an aesthetic impression of the observer. That's why in the aesthetic analysis of the work of art itself, we can, to a large extent, elucidate the creative process (the artist's creative intention, background, mind-set) that gave rise to it, as well as the impression that it has to evoke for the viewer/listener. In other words, the third way has the property that in pursuing it, we are able to catch any sight of the first two ways as well.[35]

Michael Bérube also describes how to make an aesthetic analysis. He argues that the analysis of any object of aesthetic perception, i.e., the perception arising from an aesthetic mindset, is always a certain expressive phenomenon, manifesting itself to us as a sensory unity. More clearly, in order to make an aesthetic analysis, on the one hand, it is necessary to throw light on the internal structure of the aesthetic object, i.e., to bring out the factors that determine its sensory unity. On the other hand, the expressiveness of the aesthetic object must be more precisely described through its components. In breaking down a work of art into its elements (a picture into separate colors or a musical composition into its tones), we are thereby canceling the aesthetic object and stepping out of the framework of the aesthetic mindset. Therefore, if we want to elucidate that structure, we have to pay attention just to those data that emerge in aesthetic perception itself and that are given to us by the aesthetic object. In this way, aesthetic analysis, which is interested in those moments on which the object's

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[34] Ibid,14.

[35] Ibid,15.

aesthetic meaning and value are grounded, differs from all other types of theoretical analysis."[36]

To sum up briefly, aesthetic analysis differs from descriptive, analytical analysis in terms of its focus on not only the visibly clear and distinct forms but also its scrutiny of sensible knowledge, the complete thought of things beyond clear and distinct ones, intuitions, and formulation of the things which makes it beautiful. The translation of the forms to meanings and contents requires knowing both sides very well and deeply, like translation from one language to another. Although some forms may seem so simple, they may carry lots of cultural codes and temporal meanings that have to be investigated to see the whole picture. Because as Bölükbaşı and Peker highlight:

> *Beyond being products of architecture, architectural objects also include the dimensions of representation and being represented. Thanks to these, the object of architecture becomes a means of communication. That is, architecture can be read as a "language" that can become a means of representation. Space, structure, and even the city represent not only itself but also other things through the language that emerges within the systems, including society, culture, use, needs, pleasure, and economy. Symbols created by the architect or the user are transmitted in time and space. In order to read these symbols correctly, it is necessary to reach the truth as much as possible, that is, the meanings attributed to the architectural works at the time they were built and the concepts behind these meanings.[37]*

Therefore, considering the special characteristics of the method of the dissertation, i.e., the aesthetical analysis mentioned above, this dissertation aims to examine the Topkapı Palace deeply. It will not only exhibit the descriptive features and forms of its structure, interior, and landscape; instead, it will try to decipher the reasons for the choices of form, style, and order, indicating values, meanings, and philosophies behind them. In other words, it aims to translate the formal and stylistic language of the palace into another, which bears values, meanings, and philosophies. Therefore, it will be possible to reveal how Ottoman values, mindset, philosophies, and cultural codes found correspondence in the palace itself. As Sesemann described, that is possible only by having a full command of both languages' ways of expression and abstract concepts.

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[36] Michael Bérube, ed., *Engaging tha Aesthetic, The Aesthetics of Cultural Studies*, (Malden: Blackwell, 2005), 21.

[37] Cemile Feyzan Bölükbaşı and Ali Uzay Peker, *Prof. Dr. Ömür Bakırer Armağanı*, ed. Ali Uzay Peker, Neriman Şahin Güçhan, ODTÜ Basım İşliği, Ankara, 2021, p.160

In addition, as Townsend mentions, the relationship between form and content is very crucial for an aesthetical analysis since forms can be considered expressions of content. Similar forms may express different contents, or forms may express similar contents in different cultures. For instance, the dome as a formal element is common in both mosques and churches; however, their contents, which are the extensions of the cultural codes they belong to, are the things that make them different. This study will scrutinize the forms used in the Topkapı Palace to decipher artistic and architectural codes of Ottoman culture through meanings, contents, and spirits. Thus, as in the gold-lead example of Fleming, this will lead us to see the unique properties of the palace that make it *the* Topkapı Palace and give us a chance to make a comparison between other palaces built in other Islamic lands and early built Seljukid and Ottoman palaces.

As Herwitz emphasized, analyzing the palace in an aesthetical way will give a chance to separate the object into its visible, formal, and invisible; contextual components, layers, and parts. Since the architectural object belongs to a specific culture, that is, the Ottoman culture in this case, historical, cultural, and sociological layers will be scrutinized in a way that breaks its beauty's spell to reveal the origin of its aesthetic value. Although it is not a descriptive study, it still needs a careful analytical approach. Because it aims to dismantle the components of its perception of beauty through the ages with great clarity in order to deepen its content, as Sesemann describes, instead of an ordinary vision, looking at the palace with such an aesthetic vision will give us a chance to present it with a sensitive aesthetical language.

As mentioned above, one important issue about aesthetic analysis is from what side the analysis of the object should be: (1) The artist/creator (the architect in this case), (2) the Viewer/Listener (the owner of the Palace; the Sultan in this case), or (3) the work itself (The Palace Topkapı in this case). As discussed, by only focusing on the work of art itself, it is possible to provide an objective criterion that allows us to confirm a received aesthetic impression. Besides, as the work of art itself is at the focal point of both the artist/ creator and the viewer/listener, the artistic/architectural piece itself seems to be a treasury that embodies all the artist's ideas, the observer's aesthetic impression carrying values of his/her background and mindset, and the artworks own artistic designative qualities. Therefore, this dissertation will focus on the third option,

i.e., *the work of art itself,* which enables you to catch any sight of the first two ways as well.

1.3. Literature Review

It is a fact that capitals and palaces, in their essence, represent great civilizations. Besides, Researchers can capture the projections of the positions of the nations in the human family, the power of the states they established, the areas of sovereignty, administrative, political, and legal identities, and aesthetic and technological maturity in the palaces they passed on.[38] When we consider Ottoman-Turkish history, the traces of most of the palaces established in the main cities of a very wide region stretching from Turkistan to India, from Iran to Anatolia, are not even accessible today. For instance, none of the palaces belonging to the Seljuk dynasty, which represented the Turkish civilization in Anatolia before the Ottoman Empire, are still standing. Even information about what happened to Bursa Palace and how Edirne Palace was destroyed is incomplete. When this case is considered, the value expressed by Topkapı Palace is understood more clearly, and the importance of the studies carried out to examine, recognize and make sense of this unique treasure of the Ottoman-Turkish civilization emerges with crystal clarity.

Undoubtedly, one of the biggest problems of the works written and studies on Topkapı Palace is determining the study's limits. As Edmondo de Amicis stated in his work describing Istanbul, written in 1874, "It is not just architectural beauty that attracts the curiosity of the whole world. The great value of the Palace is that it is a historical monument that interprets and illuminates almost the whole life of the Ottoman dynasty and carries the most special and most secret cases of the empire in a certain way on the stones of its walls and the trunks of centuries-old trees."[39] Therefore, it is not easy to define a boundary when it comes to conducting a study on Topkapı Palace. However, we can talk about the existence of a large literature that introduces the Palace in general terms, examines its architecture, spaces, and museum-quality, and discusses its *Harem* and traditional organizations.

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[38] Necdet Sakaoğlu, *Tarihi, Mekanları, Kitabeleri ve Anıları ile Saray-ı Humāyūn: Topkapı Sarayı* (İstanbul: Denizbank Yayınları, 2002), 5.

[39] Edmando de Amicis (1874), *Constantinople*, trans. Stephen Parkin (London: Alma Books, 2013), 27.

The legendary reputation of the Ottoman palace in the West has been created by the numerous written and visual depictions of European visitors since the Palace's earliest days. In addition to these foreign sources, an extraordinary richness of visual and written sources such as inscriptions in Ottoman, Arabic, and Persian languages and ceremonial books and miniatures make the Topkapı Palace one of the most detailed documented structures of the Islamic world. Among the local sources are the historical texts of Kritovoulos, Tursun Beg, Kıvāmī, Karamanī Mehmet Pasha, Mustafa Selānikī, Lokmān, Mustafa Ālī, and Peçevī, which provide fundamental information about Topkapı Palace. The law books (*Ḳānūn-nāme*) of Mehmed II and subsequent sultans, which contain rich information about the ceremony, and the treatises written by Koçi Bey on the Ottoman state organization are other texts that help comprehend the Palace.

Miniatures, especially those in *Huner-nāme*, are important elements of illustrated Ottoman historiography. While these revive the palace structures and the ceremonies performed in these structures, they also reflect the close relationship between the Palace and the ceremonies.

The permanent presence of a Venetian embassy in Pera, where Europeans lived in Istanbul, led to the predominance of Italian texts among European sources. In the second half of the 16th century, the reports of the Austrian, French, and English ambassadors were added to these texts. Among the European sources, there are also the narrations of the people in the Ottoman palace or as an officer about the Palace and its organization of the merchants who came to sell goods. The *Stato del Gran Turco* of the Genoese merchant Jacopo de Campis Promontorio, who served the Ottoman court from 1430 to 1475, falls under this category.[40]

Of the European sources, the first text describing the Topkapı Palace entirely was written by Ottaviano Bon, the Venetian ambassador in Istanbul, in 1608. When the members of the Palace went out of the house to hunt, and the chamberlain (*ketḫudā*) showed Bon the palace apartments, the ambassador was very impressed by the Palace and wrote *Descrizione del Serraglio del Gran-signore*, which gives a general

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[40] Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial and Power/Topkapı Palace in the 15th and 16th Centuries* (Istanbul: YKY, 2007), 15.

description of the architecture and institutional structure of the Palace, under the influence of this trip.

Two English adaptations of the work and its French translation, which were realized in the following years, show that Bon's work aroused interest and was loved by a wide circle.[41]

Another work about Topkapı is Jean Baptiste Tavernier's *Nouvelle Relation de l'Intérieur du Serrail du Grand Seigneur*. This work, published in 1675 by Tavernier, who came to Istanbul in 1631, sheds some light on the inner world of the Palace. The work is the story of the author's own journey, enriched with information from two exiled palace treasurers he met in India. Besides the contemporary French palaces, Tavernier found the architecture of Topkapı Palace dull and unaffected, rather focused on the functional side of the Palace and its administrative organization.

Albertus Bobovi's *Life at the Topkapı Palace* (Originally titled *Topkapı Sarayı'nda Yaşam*), published in Turkish in 2002, also contains important observations and memories of the author, who lived in *Enderūn* as a page for twenty years in the middle of the 17th century, about the mysterious world of the Palace.

Although Penzer's work, published in 1930 and introducing Topkapı Palace to the world, bears the name of *Harem*, he mentioned all the venues and organizations of the Palace and even described the palace baths, including the old Byzantine baths and the Baths of Istanbul and Bursa, expressing details that are not directly related to the Palace. Fanny Davis' *The Palace of Topkapı in Istanbul*, published in the USA in 1970, is one of the foreign sources worth mentioning. Robert Wither's *Büyük Efendi'nin Sarayı*, which contains the memories of Ottoviano Bon, and Leslie P. Peirce's *Harem-i Humāyūn*, whose Turkish translations were published in 1996, can be considered as proof of the increasing interest in Topkapı Palace in Turkey.

Ekrem Hakkı Ayverdi, the first Turkish architectural historian to investigate the formation period of the Palace, examined Ottoman architecture in his work titled *Fatih Devri Mimarisi (The Architectural Works of Art in Fatih's Era)*, which he published for the first time in 1953. The comments and observations in Ayverdi's work, who

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[41] Ibid, 16.

compiled information from Ottoman history and based his thoughts on the restoration of the Palace in 1940, were expressed by ignoring European sources. Sedat Hakkı Eldem's *Köşkler ve Kasırlar* (*A Survey of Turkish Kiosks and Pavilions*), published between 1969 and 1973, includes restitution propositions by combining a careful examination of the archaeological remains of the mansions in Topkapı Palace with information collected from both European and Ottoman visual and written sources. This important and pioneering masterpiece, supported by rich visual material, brings documents from the archives to Ottoman palace architecture studies for the first time. Additionally, *Topkapı Palace*, the joint work of Sedat Hakkı Eldem and Feridun Akozan, is architecturally a masterpiece, and İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı's *Osmanlı Devleti'nin Saray Teşkilatı* (*The Ottoman Palace Organization*) is a masterpiece in terms of organization.

Metin Sözen is another researcher who gave important sources about Topkapı Palace. His first book on this subject, *Devletin Evi: Saray* (1990) (*The Palace As Imperial Abode*), after focusing on the concept of the Palace in Turks in general, describes the Ottoman palaces by giving wide coverage to the Topkapı Palace. In his narrative, he focused on the history, general layout, and functional use of the Palace. In his work titled "*Bir İmparatorluğun Doğuşu: Topkapı Sarayı,*" which he wrote in 1998, he tried to reflect on the phases of Topkapı starting from its place in the concept of Palace, the reflection of the management style on the architectural environment, and the new function it assumed as a museum.

Ahmet Ertuğ and İbrahim Kölük's book titled *Topkapı: The Palace of Felicity*, which was published in 1991, focus on the works of art in the Topkapı Palace. While describing the original features of these works, the book aims to reveal their importance in terms of Ottoman Turkish art and universal art and aesthetics. The narrative of the work is based on giving information about the structures and art elements by following the courtyards in order, as in many sources. The book is valuable in that it reveals the connection between the physical features of the Palace and the tradition.

Written by Necdet Sakaoğlu in 2002, the book named *Tarihi, Mekanları ve Kitabeleri ile Saray-ı Humāyūn: Topkapı Sarayı* (*The Imperial Palace: Topkapi Palace with Its History, Locations, Inscriptions, and Memoirs)*, which focuses on the four centuries

of life in Topkapı Palace, describes the history and tradition, events, and memories with people from the Sultan to his inner sons and concubines, and inscriptions with places. In the writing of the work, archive documents and national and international sources describing the construction of the Palace were consulted. The work does not claim to contribute to this field by suggesting something profound and new about the architecture and decoration of the Palace. Rather, inscriptions that shed light on the history and life of the Palace were included in connection with the place and events, places that did not reach the present day were also introduced, and the narrative was supported by rich visual material.

First published in 2007, "*Architecture, Ceremonial and Power: Topkapı Palace in the 15th and 16th Centuries,*" which is a revised version of the Ph.D. dissertation of Harvard University Agahan Professor of Islamic Architecture Gülru Necipoğlu is also an original masterpiece about Topkapı Palace. In her work, the author tried to integrate the information found in Ottoman and European sources with the existing structures, provided an archaeological description of every building in the Palace, and did not attempt to make a detailed analysis of the complex institutional organization of the Palace, but rather interpreted the multi-story architectural program of the formation period of the 15th and 16th centuries in the context of its special history. Using many primary sources and archival documents, this source aimed to revive the visual and ceremonial effect of the Palace with a parade ride that provides a step-by-step tour of the buildings.

The work titled *Topkapı Palace Museum*, published by Bilkent Cultural Initiative Publications in 2010, also shows the Palace starting from the 1st Courtyard, including Harem, and then the objects used in the Palace. The book also focuses on porcelains and wares, copper and brass works, Ottoman and European Silverware, weaponry, Sultan's clothing, the Imperial treasury, and the Chamber of the Holy Relics. This resource, supported by rich visuals, is significant for its strong authoring team.

"*Topkapı Sarayı Harem-i Hümâyûnu: Harem, Padişahın Evi*" (*Topkapı Palace Sultan's Harem: Harem, Sultan's House*) published in 2012 by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism Publications, which Prof. Dr. İlber Ortaylı chairs, consists of fourteen articles specifically about *Harem*. *Harem* as the Sultan's House, the Harem organization, the tiles used in *Harem*, the curtains, the clocks, the jewelry and

ornaments of the women in *Harem*, the music, entertainment, and coffee culture in the *Harem* life make this work unique.

The book *One Empire Two Palaces:"Topkapı" and "Dolmabahçe" in the Industry and Design Competition*, written by Önder Küçükerman, published by Yapı Kredi Publishing in 2016, centers Topkapı and Dolmabahçe Palaces. The work was written based on the idea that Topkapı and Dolmabahçe Palaces, the golden rings of a 500-year-old chain in the formation of Turkish design and art heritage, are unrivaled structures that connect. According to Küçükerman, what happened during the construction of these two palaces did not remain only in architectural spaces. In the author's words, this book is a short story about the 500-year creative process of two important Ottoman palaces, synthesizing many different designs and creative activities that complement one another.

Another work, which was designed by describing Topkapı Palace by walking around the Courtyard and informing it functionally, is Ahmet Şimşirgil's "*Bir Müstakil Dünya: Topkapı Sarayı*," written in 2016. In addition to the inevitable similarity in the main lines, many national and international works about the Palace have different and important details. This work does not contain spatial analysis or contextual interpretations but rather contains the inscriptions of the Palace and fills an important gap in this regard. This work of Şimşirgil is one of the most important works for the scientific investigations of Topkapı Palace.

It is noteworthy to also refer to the master's and Ph.D. theses on the Topkapı Palace. According to the National Thesis Center of the Council of Higher Education data, 139 theses, 23 Ph.D. dissertations, and 116 master's theses were written about the Topkapı Palace.

Due to their nature, master's theses on the Palace are narrower than doctoral dissertations. The main topics covered are related to the structural transformations that took place in the courtyards over time, illumination and calligraphy studies in the manuscripts of the Quran, the binding and decoration analysis of the books in the Palace library, the tile collections of the Palace, the Palace cuisine, the examinations on Sultan's signatures, the tradition of smoking in the Palace, the image of the Palace as a museum, the Palace collections. (pocket watches, leather products, censers,

carpets, and prayer rugs), women's clothing and jewelry, children's clothing in the Palace, Baghdad and Revan Mansions, flower decorations in the Harem, the westernization process of the Palace, and the landscape analysis of the Palace.

Only 5 of the studies presented at the scale of a doctoral dissertation were carried out in the faculties of architecture, while 14 of them were written in the departments of art history, and the others were written in the departments of tourism and hotel management, literature, and textile engineering. Topics of the dissertation involve specific topics such as the analysis of the miniatures depicting the Palace life, evaluation of the porcelain collections in the Palace, Ottoman fabrics and women's clothing fashion in the Palace, analysis of the carpet and prayer rugs used in the Palace, the changes that various parts of the Palace went through over time, the tiles in the Palace, the sewing techniques used in the caftans, the Topkapı Palace as a museum and the capacity of it in terms of sustainability, the function, meaning, and historical development of the Tiled Kiosk, the visual analysis of *Harem* and the *Harem* in the Westernization period, and the Palace gates. Three dissertations analyze the Palace as a whole. The first is the dissertation titled *Topkapı Sarayının Biçimlenmesine Egemen olan Tasarım Gelenekleri Üzerine Bir Araştırma (1453-1755) (Research on the role of traditional design sources on the shaping of Topkapı palace (1453-1755)*. It aimed to show the continuity of the settlement order, selected buildings, and architectural elements of the Topkapı Palace from its foundation to the middle of the 18th century in Islamic and Turkish architectural traditions. Seçkin's dissertation was then published in a book[42] and made an important contribution to the literature. Güzide Pınar Köylü's dissertation (2003) titled *Examination of the Identity of the Turkish Garden from the Point of Space Syntax: Case of Topkapı Palace* submitted to Ankara University, and Nilay Özlü's (2018) dissertation titled *From Imperial Palace to Museum: The Topkapı Palace During the Long Nineteenth Century* submitted to Boğaziçi University are valuable works that bring a holistic view on the Topkapı Palace.

Although the main focus of the dissertation is the Topkapı Palace, and its main motivation is to contribute to academic studies on Ottoman-Islamic art, architecture,

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[42] This book has been used as a main source for the related part of this thesis.

and landscape, it would be appropriate to refer to the literature on Islamic aesthetics at this point. To that end, while analyzing the spatial preferences of the Topkapı Palace, the theoretical framework of Islamic aesthetics is used. Contributing to the literature on Islamic aesthetics, independently of the Topkapı Palace, is one of the sub-goals of the dissertation.

Compared with Islamic art in a broad sense, the number of studies on "Islamic Aesthetics" and a related field, meaning studies, are quite limited. Although there are publications in the form of partial reference in the books and academic studies as articles that can be included in this discipline, the studies in the field of Islamic aesthetics are narrow. Peker also emphasizes the limitations of meaning studies that have been studied in the history of Islamic studies and suggests that few studies focus on landscape, garden architecture, urban planning, and inscriptions. The effect of the image of Heaven, which can be associated with cosmological concepts, in the formation of Islamic art is highly discussed. However, few publications concentrate on symbolism and meaning at the scale of building and architectural form. Some of these publications have a holistic approach. Studies based on this kind of "Islamic universality" are criticized for generalizing all Islamic art and architecture that emerged in a millennium in an area covering half of the globe. Due to the popularity of spiritualist approaches to Islamic art and architecture after the 1970s, the field of meaning studies has always been seen as challenging, and historians have kept a distance from this field.[43]

In the face of the inadequacy of scientific research, Oleg Grabar says: "So little effort has been made on the meanings in Islamic architecture that their depth cannot be seen."[44]

Although aesthetics has been fully included in contemporary analytical studies on art and art theory, it still constitutes a relatively new field in the field of Islamic studies.[45]

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[43] Ali Uzay Peker, *Selçuklu Uygarlığı,* "Evrenin Binasi: Mimarîde Yazı ve Kozmolojik Anlam", , ed. Ali Uzay Peker, Kenan Bilici, Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, Ankara, 2006, p. 31.

[44] Oleg Grabar, *Symbols and Signs in Islamic Architecture*, in "Architecture as Symbol and Self-Identity", ed. by Jonathan G. Katz. Philadelphia: Aga Khan Award for Architecture, 1980, quoted by Peker in *Evrenin Binası*, 31.

[45] Valérie Gonzalez, *Beauty and Islam: Aesthetics in Islamic Art and Architecture* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2001), 19.

According to Gonzalez, there are two main reasons for this situation. The first is based on an epistemological justification and is related to aesthetics in the sense of science and way of thinking that seems to have emerged from the philosophical tradition of the modern Western world. In this sense, aesthetics is naturally understood as depending on the rules, principles, and logic of the philosophical tradition in question. Therefore, in this respect, aesthetics cannot be adapted to the thoughts and arts of other civilizations. The second fundamental reason is based on a cultural rationale and deals with the Islamic conception of the performance of the arts. The author underlines that, in fact, this understanding, which is effective in the fact that the aesthetic discipline is not taken into account sufficiently in the field of Islamic studies, is generally recognized among researchers. In Islamic civilizations, as in the Western world, one cannot talk about an aesthetic discipline whose rules are clearly defined or whose principles are revealed in philosophical texts and scientific research. Only a few researchers have taken the initiative to use aesthetics as a theory and method for conceptualizing works of art and comprehending images. Even if the issue is viewed only in terms of abstract thought, there is much to learn about Islamic artistic creation through the aesthetic approach. The phenomenological works that emerged as a result of this artistic creation provide an extremely valuable source of information within the framework of visual arts, helping to reveal the essence of an object as it appears to be abstracted from its existence and providing a deeper understanding of the most basic meanings of the works that are the subject of comprehension. In her book *"Beauty and Islam: Aesthetics in Islamic Art and Architecture,"* whose contribution to the literature is of great importance, the author states that her aim in the book is to prove this claim and thus encourage future studies.[46]

The work, one of the sources of inspiration for this dissertation, differs from many works confined to a historical, sociological, and descriptive perspective on Islamic art studies. Gonzalez does not just explain Islamic texts containing conceptual discourses about beauty; she also analyzes the embodied works of art themselves in their own context. At this point, Gonzales adds her new dimensions of thought to studying Islamic artistic production.[47] The first two chapters of the five-chapter book are

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[46] Ibid, 21

[47] Syed Nomanul Haq, in *Beauty and Islam: Aesthetics in Islamic Art and Architecture* (Takdim), 10.

devoted to text research, which constitutes the purely theoretical part. The first chapter presents an example of imagination on various approaches to beauty and aesthetic experience, based on the text analysis of four famous philosophers in the Islamic Middle Ages. The second chapter contains the analysis of the Quran and forms the basis for the next chapters. The next chapters, which are referred to as "applied aesthetics" in the book, make an aesthetic analysis of the relationship between the Al-Ḥamrāʾ Palace and the 44th Verse of *Surah An-Naml*, which was previously pointed out by Oleg Grabar and José Miguel Puerto Vilchez as having a special position in terms of Islamic arts and aesthetics and analyzed in the second chapter. Gonzalez also tackles the issue of geometric ornamentation in the field Necipoğlu pioneered academically. She also opens the purposive pattern of geometric ornaments in the Al-Ḥamrāʾ to the discussion, along with its logic in the "language of physical explanation." Gonzalez concludes her book with a chapter on the aesthetic order of the inscriptions in the Al-Ḥamrāʾ.

Oliver Leaman is a key name who writes about Islamic aesthetics with an orientalist's eye. He published his book *Islamic Aesthetics: An Introduction* in 2004. Leaman, who started his speech by saying that the main reason for writing the book was his "disappointment with the things that are said about Islamic art all the time," emphasizes the shallowness of these works, although a large number of works on Islamic art, and his own work is referred to as "a modest effort to correct these inaccuracies and establish a solid foundation for the aesthetics of Islamic art." [48] The chapters that make up Leaman's book are as follows: Eleven Common Mistakes about Islamic Art, God as Creator, Calligraphy and Symbolism, Religion, Style and Art, Literature, Music, Home and Garden, The Miraculousness of the Quran, Philosophy and Ways of Seeing, Interpreting Art, Interpreting Islam, and Interpreting Philosophy. Leaman makes a judgment, especially towards western researchers, and says, "The majority of those who write on Islamic art does not really see Islamic art as art. These people may view Islamic art as admirable, magnificent, or impressive and devote their professional life to it, but still do not see Islamic art as art." He distinguishes himself from these researchers and adds, "Islamic art is art. It is even a magnificent art, and

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[48] Oliver Leaman, *Islamic Aesthetics: An Introduction* (London: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 11.

we must create an aesthetic approach to understand it. This book is an attempt at starting that process."[49] The author argues that there cannot be an understanding of aesthetics based on countries, religions, and beliefs, and according to him, "There is no such thing as Islamic aesthetics."[50] According to Leaman, Islamic arts do not carry claimed meanings but are still art.[51]

The author of *Art of Islam: Language and Meaning* (1976), Swiss Titus Burckhardt, who took the name Sidi İbrahim as a Muslim, is also one of the important writers who wrote about Islamic aesthetics. Burckhardt claims that Islamic art is born from the marriage of wisdom and craft. Therefore, according to him, in order to make an in-depth explanation of this art, it is necessary to have a sincere and deep knowledge of both subjects. The author presents Islamic art as a derivative of the principles and form of the Islamic revelation, not as accidentally entangled appendages.[52]

Islamic Art & Spirituality, written by Seyyed Hossein Nasr, was published in 1987. Examining the relationship between Islamic arts and spirituality through different branches of art, the author also emphasizes the difference between the sacred art of Islam and traditional Islamic art. The chapters of the book include The Relation Between Islamic Art and Spirituality, The Spiritual Message of Islamic Calligraphy, The Principle of Unity and Sacred Architecture of Islam, Literature, Music, Plastic Arts, and The Spiritual Message of Islamic Arts.

Oleg Grabar and K. A. C. Creswell are also well-known and respectable writers, some of whose works can be evaluated under this title, although they are not directly on Islamic aesthetics. The article "*Islamic Attitudes toward the Arts*" in Oleg Grabar's book *The Formation of Islamic Art*, published in 1973, can be evaluated in this context. Sir Keppel Archibald Cameron Creswell's article *The Lawfulness of Painting in Islam*, published in *Early Islamic Art and Architecture* in 1937, contains some comments on

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[49] Ibid, 17-18

[50] Ibid, 23

[51] For a broad review of Leaman's book: Cihat Arınç "İslam estetiğini yeniden düşünmek: *Oliver Leaman'ın Islamic Aesthetics: An Introduction* adlı eseri üzerine". Divan: Disiplinlerarası Çalışmalar Dergisi (2006): 127-168

https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/254511

[52] Titus Burckhardt, *Art of Islam: Language and Meaning* (London: World of Islam Festival Publishing, 1976), 12.

the source of Islamic aesthetics and its general approach to figurative representation. According to both authors, the Quran and hadiths were not decisive in the attitude of Islam towards art, especially in terms of figurative representation. According to Creswell, Islam's reluctance towards images stems from certain historical conditions in the formation of Islamic thought and art. In order to answer the question of why the ban continued to exist after these conditions were lifted, the issue should be discussed from other philosophical or anthropological perspectives.[53] According to Grabar, traditional Muslim culture does not have a certain doctrine regarding its arts. After much deliberation, they did not formally reject certain creative acts, nor did they develop ideas about the possible educational or beautifying value of certain existing art techniques. At most, it can be said that the doctrines and ways of life peculiar to early Islam gave a certain direction to the artistic actions of this culture. It was about attitudes rather than doctrines and clear requirements.[54] According to Grabar, the Quran is also unsuitable for translation into visual forms because it does not follow certain narrative sequences. The liturgical and other forms of use lack the aesthetic diversity caused by using the four books of Christianity. The sole source of the Quran's aesthetic appeal lies in the music of the words when read aloud. The words about the perception of the arts in the Quran are few in number, random, insignificant, and often post-facto. Since the Quran deals with many details about life at great length, it can be deduced from all these that the problem of artistic creation and depiction in the Prophet Muhammad's lifetime was so insignificant that it did not need a certain notification and legislation.[55]

Doris Behrens-Abouseif's work titled *Beauty in Arabic Culture*, published in 1999, also contributes to the studies on Islamic aesthetics in terms of its content. The book mentions the beautiful and aesthetic thoughts of the philosophers Al-Ghazālī, Ikhwān al-Safā, Ibn Ṭufa'il, Ibn Sīnā, Ibn al-ʿArabī, and Suhrawardī. In the chapter of her book titled "The Religious Approach," the author included the search for beauty in the Quran, the thought of Al-Ghazālī, and the symbolism of light. She also touched upon the approaches of these philosophers on harmony and proportionality, which are

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[53]   Keppel Archibald Creswell, The Lawfullness of Painting in Early Islam, in J. M. Bloom (ed.) *Early Islamic Art and Architecture,* Burlington: Ashgate, 104.

[54] Oleg Grabar, *The Formation of Islamic Art* (London: Yale University Press, 1973), 82.

[55] Ibid, 64

among the basic approaches of Islamic aesthetics. The general framework of the work is devoted to the discussion of beauty and art, and in this context, studies have been made in the fields of material beauty and love, music, visual arts (Images, Calligraphy, Arabesque, and Geometry), architecture, and decoration.[56]

Touching on the Turkish authors and their works that contributed to the literature on Islamic aesthetics, Beşir Ayvazoğlu's first book, *Aşk Estetiği* (The Aesthetics of Divine Love), which was first published in 1982, is a reference work on this subject. The author of many newly published books explains why he wrote this work with these words: "When I was writing the book, I never intended to build an Islamic aesthetic. My only goal was to understand the worldview and aesthetic principles behind the products we collect under the name of "Islamic Arts" and to explain them as much as I can." Stating that there is very little written on aesthetics and that his book has become a "cult book" that has attracted great interest and is used as a textbook, the author has built all his later books on this work. However, he adds that he moved away from the subject of Islamic aesthetics due to the force of the conditions over time because he thinks that writing on this issue requires a lot of being alone, reading a lot, and thinking about it a lot.[57] The book explains the basic approaches of Islamic aesthetics, such as the prohibition of depiction, stylization, tanawwu', and avoiding tragedy.

Turan Koç is another author who has made significant contributions to Islamic aesthetics. In his book titled "Islamic Aesthetics," published in 2014, he asserts that he presents the aesthetic and artistic understanding of Islam in an as simple way as possible by getting to the root of its philosophical and theological bases in an organized manner. He states that the main purpose of the study is to reveal, in an appropriate language, that Islam has a deeply rooted aesthetic and artistic view.[58] The first three chapters of the book contain basic approaches to Islamic aesthetics. In these sections, the relationship between beauty and aesthetic experience, *tawḥīd,* and Islamic aesthetics, the place of beauty in the world, the relationship between beauty-goodness and utility, and the Quran as the lifeblood of Islamic aesthetics and art are emphasized.

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[56] Doris Behrens Abouseif, *Beauty in Arabic Culture* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1999).

[57] Beşir Ayvazoğlu, *Aşk Estetiği* (İstanbul: Kapı Yayınları, 2013), xii.

[58] Turan Koç, *İslam Estetiği* (İstanbul: İSAM Yayınları, 2017), 10.

The following chapters specifically refer to the various branches of the art of this aesthetic approach, generally focusing on calligraphy, illumination, architecture and decoration, poetry, music, painting, and manifestation. According to the author, the position of architecture in Islamic arts is regarded as essential since an architectural work that has been designed and realized to the full is an architectural work that clearly reveals the level reached by a civilization.[59] The current manifestation of Islamic architecture is based on the unity of inner intuition, knowledge, and experience shaped by Islam. The architectural work already reflects the intuition and imagination of the artist who created it about existence and life. This is why Islamic artworks created by artists from different periods, regions, and tribes, from Granada to the Java Islands, are similar, like dialects of a particular language. Despite the differences in periods and regions, what gives these works their unity is, above all, the principle of *tawḥīd*, which is observed very consciously.[60] The author's mind-opening article, which clarifies the horizons of Islamic aesthetics titled "*The Vision of Islamic Art and Aesthetics*"[61], the books such as Titus Burckhardt's *Art of Islam: Language and Meaning* that Koç translated into Turkish, and his papers on this subject are important contributions to the field.

Aesthetics in Islamic Arts: Understanding Beauty, written by Mustafa Uğur Karadeniz, is one of the most up-to-date works in this field. In his book, the author focuses on Art and Aesthetics in Islam, the basic sources of Islamic art (Quran, Hadith, Kaaba, Kelām, and Sufism), cosmological understanding, time, and space in Islamic thought, and concepts of Islamic art. The author expresses the aim of his book as "trying to reflect the unity of thought and action that makes Islamic aesthetics the aesthetics of Islam.".[62]

The book titled Art in Islam, Islam in Art, written by Nusret Çam, is closely related to Islamic aesthetics in terms of its content. The fourth chapter of the book, titled "Islam's View of Art and Aesthetics," involves the topics such as the innate sense of beauty and art in human beings, the sense of beauty in the light of the Quran, the aesthetic

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[59] Ibid, 167

[60] Ibid,166

[61] Turan Koç, "The Vision of Islamic Art and Aesthetics," Journal of Academic Studies 2, (February 2010): 35-47. https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/eskiyeni/issue/37266/430499 (accessed tarih).

[62] Mustafa Uğur Karadeniz, *İslam Sanatlarında Estetik; Güzeli Anlamak* (İstanbul: Ketebe Yayınları, 2020), 11.

world of the Prophet Muhammad, love and aesthetics as the purpose of human creation, Allāh's recommendation of beauty, and the source of essential beauty. Like many works on Islamic arts and aesthetics, this book also touches upon the issue of description. Four editions of the book have been published. The new issues the author deals with regarding the Islamic view of art and aesthetics are available in the latest edition. According to the author, the increasing interest in these issues shows that the religion of Islam can be at peace with art and art with Islam. The point is that all of our people, especially the administrators, have high aesthetic values and habits, reach an awareness of history and historical artifacts, and protect national values.[63]

The book *Our Dialectic and Our Aesthetics*, written by Seyit Ahmet Arvasi, consists of two main parts: 1) Our Dialectics and 2) Our Aesthetics. The book points out the strong connection between the Islamic faith and the Islamic view of aesthetics. Although the book contains important information, its language and approach to the subjects are somewhat far from being analytical and impartial.

Jale Nejdet Erzen, who made important contributions to Islamic art and aesthetics, is a name that should be mentioned in this regard. The author has publications on the scope of aesthetics as a discipline, aesthetic approaches in different cultures, aesthetic differences between East and West, basic approaches of Islamic aesthetics, the general character of Ottoman architecture and aesthetics, approaches of Islamic philosophers on beauty, environmental aesthetics, and modern art and aesthetics.

Ayşe Taşkent's book, *In the Pursuit of Beauty: Aesthetics in Al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā, and Ibn Rushd*, is a comprehensive work that aims to reveal the aesthetic thoughts of philosophers and their conceptions of art/artworks by centering the beauty and related concepts in the mindsets of Al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā, and Ibn Rushd. Discussing the metaphysical and ontological projections of the concept of beauty with reference to God and God's beauty is the main triangulation point for these philosophers.[64]

The book "Quran and Aesthetics," a revision of Osman Mutluel's doctoral dissertation, was published in 2010. The author states that the main purpose of his work is to reveal

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[63] Nusret Çam, *İslam'da Sanat Sanatta İslam* (Ankara: Akçağ Basım Yayım Pazarlama: 2019), 9.

[64] Ayşe Taşkent, *Güzelin Peşinde: Fârâbî, İbn Sînâ ve İbn Rüşd'de Estetik* (İstanbul: Klasik Yayınları, 2012), 4.

the basic aesthetic understanding that the Quran conveys. In his book, the author has studied the main terms and basic concepts related to aesthetics and beauty in the Quran and the basic qualities of beauty in the Quran.

In addition to the sources mentioned above on Islamic aesthetics, the Encyclopedia of Islam and the Proceedings of the Islamic Art and Aesthetics Religious Publications Congress, edited by the Turkish Religious Foundation, also make important contributions to the subject.

As highlighted in almost all the resources mentioned above, the literature specifically focusing on Islamic aesthetics is limited. Therefore, all academic studies that aim to enlighten Islamic aesthetics and their reflection on visual culture are important and valuable in terms of their contributions. These sources and articles written on this subject are used in this dissertation as Islamic aesthetics is the most important reference point to understand and analyze the Topkapı Palace.

1.4. Terminological/Conceptual Clarification

1.4.1. Palace, Ottoman Palace and Topkapı Palace

A palace is a general name given to large structures where the monarch, sultan, king, or heads of state stay, live, and work. The oldest known palaces were built in the city of Thebes by Egyptian pharaohs Thutmose III (reign 1504-1450 BC) and Amenhotep III (reign 1417-1379 BC). In particular, the likes of the rectangular garden of Amenhotep, which is surrounded by walls and composed of small and dark rooms connected by labyrinths, is also found in the eastern civilizations. Much larger palaces were built in Nimrūd, Nineveh, and Khorsābād in Assyria than those in Egypt. Sargon II's Palace (reign: 721-705 BC) was built on a platform of 9 hectares wide. Protected by two rows of walls, there were two huge halls in the center of the structure, and around them were scattered rooms and halls. Assyrians developed palace architecture significantly during the centuries 9-7 BC., and after this period, palace culture spread through Greece to Rome and all of Europe. When the rulers were believed to be divine personalities, the palace became a religious center and symbol of the power of the country. [65]

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[65] Islamic Encyclopedia, s.v. "Saray," by Zeynep Tarım Ertuğ, accessed April 16, 2021, https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/saray.

Palaces grew in importance after the first ages and were first seen in Eastern countries. In the west, as societies entered the process of nationalization, reigns and kingdoms were born, bringing with it large, ornate, rich, and luxurious palaces. The palaces, which were the focus of the administration in the east, have become small cities established for the enjoyment of the monarch with their baths, stadiums, and gardens in the Roman period. Aside from the ancient and pre-ancient palaces described in legends, many of the palaces that stand today were built in the middle ages and later. During this period, the palace structures around the city, which served as castles, were enlarged, and new ones were added after losing this function in the Renaissance. In addition to the imitations of the Palace of Versailles, a product of classical art, in Russia, Austria, and Spain, palaces; that were specifically shaped according to Baroque conception were built in Italy. In the 19th century, it was found enough only to renovate the old palaces. [66]

Regardless of the nations, geographies, or timelines in which they were built, palace structures were of capital importance since they were the best representations of the cultures they belonged to. Sözen critically explains this and claims that from a general perspective, it is seen that the history of societies is based on the relations of those who ruled and were governed for a long time, and palace structures often appear as indicators that reflect the existence of those who assumed the rule within this system. He adds that in order to define and understand the palace, which can be claimed to have an order connected with this organization within the social organization system, both in terms of quality and quantity, the units that cause the material and spiritual formation of the palace should be examined by considering the value judgments and thought system of the society at that time.[67]

Necipoğlu brings out a different perspective on the importance of researching palace architecture and states that carrying out studies on palace architecture, esp. in Islamic lands, is valuable because Islamic architectural history has been dominated by research on religious monuments. She points out that this is understandable considering the small number of palatial structures that have survived. Unlike public religious

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[66] Ibid,

[67] Metin Sözen, *Devletin Evi: Saray* (İstanbul: Sandoz Kültür Yayınları, 1990), 18.

monuments that generally continued to be used after undergoing modifications to accommodate sectarian differences, royal palaces were often abandoned or destroyed by successive dynasties as they constituted competing symbols of power. The focus on religious architecture stems from the traditional view that the visual and material culture of the Muslim world was primarily shaped by religion. Studies on palatial architecture in Islamic lands may reveal the limits of that view by exposing a palatial world of dynastic ideology, fantasy, and desire whose horizons, often rooted in pre-Islamic precedents, refused to be linked with religious culture.[68] Therefore, in order to scrutinize and understand the concept of a palace for any culture, a miscellaneous perspective is a must, but before all, trying to make an etymological definition of the word "palace" will allow the research to sit on a stable base.

The word "*sarāy*," used in English as *palace* or *court*, is of Persian origin. The word "*palace*" originated from Palatino Hill in Rome, where the emperors used to build their residences. In Italian, *palazzo* refers to palaces in European geography, while serrāre, meaning "closed in," refers to eastern palaces. When the terminological origins of the palace concept are examined, it is seen that it first appeared in Yūsuf Khāṣṣ Ḥājib's work *Kutadgu Bilig* in Turkish in 1067 and that it means "the Monarch's high location consisting of many tents, and tents where Khan, Governors, and Rulers lived."[69] It is also seen that the word "*sarāy*" was used by Turks in the pre-Islamic period as "*ordu, ordo, urda or orda*" in the native Turkish used in Central Asia.[70] The meaning of the word "*ordu*" is described by Clauson as "*royal residence,*" while some religious texts on faith refer to it as "*heavenly abode.*" In Clauson's other study titled "*Studies in Turkish and Mongolic Linguistics,*" it is stated that other words used in synonyms during the same period are "*taht, orun, örgin or örgün, and karşı.*"[71] The word "*sarāy,*" which entered Turkish in the 11th century, is known to have been the "*main*

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[68] Gülru Necipoğlu, "An Outline of Shifting Paradigms in the Palatial Architecture of the Pre-Modern Islamic World", *Ars Orientalis* 23, Pre-Modern Islamic Palaces (1993): 305, https://www.jstor.org/stable/4629439.

[69] Zafer Sağdıç," Üç Osmanlı Sarayında İşlev ve Mimarlık Bağlantısı," (PhD. Thesis, Istanbul: Yıldız Technical University, 2006), 4.

[70] Gerard Clauson, *Studies in Turkic and Mongolic Linguistics, Routledge Curzon*, (New York: Taylor&Francis Group, 2002), 24.

[71] Simge Ö., Pınarbaşı, Çağlar *Boyu Tahtın Simgesel Anlamları Işığında Türk Tahtları* (Ankara: T.C. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2004), 27.

headquarters of the ruler of the immigrants,"[72] which was mostly used as "counter" before this century. The word "*orun,*" on the other hand, was expressed by Clauson to be used in the sense of the high place or the throne.[73]

In Ottoman Turkish, it is seen that the words *ḳaṣr* and *kāşāne* are also used as the equivalent of the word "palace." The word *ḳaṣr*, which is of Arabic origin, is described in Ottoman dictionaries as "*magnificent building; the palace devoted to the use of monarchs, the palace connected and detached building*" and the word *kāşāne* as "*grand and adorned mansion; perfect house, mansion, home, housing.*" [74]Another concept to be examined on this subject is the pavilion, which is described in *Risāle-i Miʿmāriyye*, one of the most important texts about the architecture of the period, as "a small ornate building built independently or connected to a large civil structure."[75] The word *kalık*, which means "*the highest layer of the sky,*" is also used as a synonym.[76]

In Ottoman sources, the concept of the palace is described as "*Sarāy-ı Humāyūn*" (Imperial Palace) in a way that indicates belonging to the Sultan. The word "*humāyūn*" in Ottoman dictionaries refers to the blessed, sacred, belonging to the Sultan.[77]

Regardless of its etymological meaning, the palace stands as a space surrounded by some architectural elements that provide life and protection, with administration and side units. In the *ordu* that formed the administrative centers of Gokturk, Uyghur, and Karahan States, there were state administrators, sages, doctors, astronomers, and artists, and they worked in temples or *baliks* beside monarch mansions. On the other hand, it can be argued that the buildings in the feudal period settlement units in Central Asia and its environs had a protective wall around them and that these were examples for the palace structures of the Turks who were moving into the settled order with their gaudy appearance. As a matter of fact, the tradition surrounding the location of the ruler with an obstacle that would facilitate the defense has also been seen in the armies that went on the campaign. Although there is a long period of time in between, it is

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[72] Islam Encyclopedia, Saray.

[73] Gerard Clauson, *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth Century Turkish* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 37.

[74] *Ottoman-Turkish Encyclopedic Dictionary*, s.v. "Kaṣr," by Ferit Develioğlu (Ankara: Aydın Kitapevi Yayınları, 2000), 493.

[75] Tahsin Öz, *Mimar Mehmed Ağa ve Risāle-i Mi'mâriyye* (Istanbul: Cumhuriyet Matbaası, 1944), 41.

[76] Ibid,

[77] *Ottoman-Turkish Encyclopedic Dictionary*, "hümâyûn," by Ferit Develioğlu, 390.

observed that this tradition was continued in the way that Sultan's tent, which was at the head of the army, was surrounded by a curtain.[78]

The physical location of the palace in the city is another indication of the meaning and importance attached to it.[79] Cresswell asserts that in contrast to the establishment of Islamic cities such as Basra, Kufa, Shiraz, Fustat, Cairo, and Kairouan for military purposes, Baghdad and Samarra have different characters. As it is known, during the years when Islam spread rapidly, Arabs lived with their families in the strategic areas of the lands they seized, creating a protected settlement isolated from the local population. As a matter of fact, even in general publications on these issues, it is expressed that cities such as Cairo, Basra, Kufa, and Kairouan were formed not according to a specific plan but as a result of staying there for many years. However, Baghdad, the center of the state and the caliphate, and Samarra, the military and political center, fall outside this rule. Baghdad is a city with a palace and a mosque in its center, surrounded by a wall, planned in advance, and designed in one move. To be noted significantly, the palace is considered one of the buildings that form the city core.[80]

The Arabs, who had a nomadic society structure, had undoubtedly acquired their knowledge of the established order from the surrounding civilizations. The cities that Arab raiders encountered in the territory of Turkestan they were trying to capture had a three-part city plan consisting of fortresses, şehristan (*grand city*), and *rabad* (trading) sections. The palace was part of the fortress in this plan. Faced with such a city structure, which became clearer starting from the 11th century, Arab raiders would undoubtedly shape the order they witnessed. It is possible that Baghdad and Samarra were planned with a method appropriate to this understanding. To put it briefly, the Islamic city was probably formed as a result of the interpretation of the architectural elements that emerged due to the established order in the light of the thought that formed the Islamic philosophy. The palace was designed within a framework with topographic features in mind in accordance with this formalization.[81]

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[78] Sağdıç, 6.

[79] Creswell Keppel A. C., A *Short Account of Early Muslim Architecture* (Suffolk: Penguin Books, 1958), 220.

[80] Ibid,

[81] Ibid,

Apart from natural factors such as geographical location and climate characteristics, cultural and social values are also influential in the formation of palace spaces. In this respect, the open and closed areas and gardens of the palace shaped by the Islamic culture formed by the influence of the Islamic religion differentiate from other world examples, such as Western and Indian palaces. The fact that they have similar characteristics in terms of climate conditions other than religion has contributed to the formation of a number of common elements in the organization of palace spaces in Islamic countries.[82]

Regardless of the reason why the palace emerged in terms of both thought and architecture, care was given to carry the power and quality of the state on it, to be a place where the ruler continued his private life, and to include the working places of the administrators and his assistants. It also had to be gloriously decorated. Furthermore, it is seen that the architectural products emerged in accordance with the settled living order, so the phenomenon of the palace is formed and developed only in such an order.

With the Ottoman Beylik and the later Empire, it is seen that the palace architecture followed a clear line of development. The concept of government based on the central system in the transition of the state from Beylik to Empire has also been reflected in the architectural environment. In the Seljuk and Ottoman period Turkish urbanism, the development of the cities remained dependent on the natural will of the social dynamics, as there was no planned urbanism approach and no organization to meet the municipal services.[83] As a matter of fact, considering the individual architectural products and especially the palace buildings, it is indicated that the ever-evolving social hierarchy is also reflected in the shaping of art and architecture.

The Sultan and the Palace are at the head of the Ottoman central government and state. The palace, which is the residence and office of the head of state, is also the administrative center of the Ottoman Empire. As a Muslim ruler and Caliph, the Sultan is the leader of all the world's Muslims. In this respect, the palace is also the office of the caliph of the Muslims and is the showcase of this position to the whole world.[84]

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[82] Creswell Keppel A. C., *Early Muslim Architecture*, (Oxford, 1969), 381.

[83] Sözen, 27.

[84] İlber Ortaylı, *Osmanlı Sarayında Hayat* (Istanbul: Yitik Hazine Yayınları, 2008), 25.

Accordingly, it can be said that the factor of religion has an undeniable effect on the management of such a state. In this respect, in the Ottoman Empire, "palace" represents issues relevant to religion and the ongoing secular life together.[85]

Ortaylı explains that the Ottoman palace is also a science and higher education center. Inside the palace are schools that teach the members of the palace science, architecture, painting, archery, mother-of-pearl, swordcraft, religious knowledge, and other science and art subjects. *Enderūn organization*, founded by the great Seljuk and Anatolian Seljuk State organization, has served the state for centuries as a school that trains top-level bureaucrats, soldiers, and artists. The Ottoman sultans trained with the principles of Islam and Turkish culture in accordance with the method of *devshirme*, which continued from the first half of the 15th century until the end of the 17th century and raised a loyal class to them. They trained some of *içoğlanı* (*someone who performed small errands for the ruler)* in the palace and the others in the army, and then they served in the upper levels of the state. In addition, in the *Ḥarem* section, especially young girls who have been captured and bought in wars are educated in the fields of literacy, good clothing, music, tile, and calligraphy.[86] Likewise, Necipoğlu describes the *Enderūn* school as a place divided into male and female zones fronted by a walled hanging garden with kiosks which was more than just a royal residence. She deepens that in the sultan's obedient, originally non-muslim slave pages and concubines who had been converted to Islam were educated according to court culture and then married off to one another. They constituted the Ottoman Empire's artificially instituted ruling elite, which served to consolidate the absolute monarch's centralized power.[87]

One of the most important functions of the palace in the Ottoman Empire is its archival character. The documents related to the ruling states of Europe and Asia, in which the Ottoman state and this great state had a relationship, were kept in palaces, where the history of the world could not be written without examining these archives.[88]

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[85] Ibid,

[86] Ibid, 21.

[87] Gülru Necipoğlu, "Framing the Gaze in Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal Palaces," *Ars Orientalis* 23, *Pre-Modern Islamic Palace* (1993): 310, https://www.jstor.org/stable/4629455.

[88] Ibid, 23

Bursa Palace is the first known Palace in Ottoman history. This place was built at the base of the castle and was used for military and administrative affairs for many years after it was abandoned. Another of the first palaces is Edirne Old Palace. After the capture of Edirne from the Byzantines, the palace built by Murad I was near the Selimiye Mosque. These two palaces were used together from Murad I to Murad II. This tradition continued later when a new palace was built, and the Old Palace was not completely abandoned. The second palace in Edirne was built shortly after the time of Murad II on the edge of Tunca, and after the fire in 861 (1457), when Mehmed II restored the city, additions were made to this palace. Although Istanbul Old Palace was built in these years, the sultan still used Edirne Palace. The circumcision feast held here after the conquest of Istanbul is one of the signs that Edirne Palace was used for a while.[89] The Old Palace of Istanbul was built in the center of the city after the conquest. It is understood from the visual and written sources about this palace that it is architecturally simple but wide, surrounded by walls such as ramparts, and has horizontally expanding units. As with all palace constructions, additions, and repairs were carried out over time.

After the construction of the Topkapı Palace, this place was used as a kind of dynasty house. The relatives of the monarchs whose reign ended lived in this palace, and the ruling Sultan visited from time to time.

Topkapı Palace (also known as *Sarāy-ı Cedīd*) was built by Mehmed II in 1465 on an area of 70 acres on a hill overlooking the Marmara Sea and the opposite shores of today's Sarayburnu as the longest-used state center. The Tiled Pavilion, one of the first parts of the palace with its walls and monumental gates, reflects the effects of Central and West Asian palaces in terms of both architecture and decoration. In 883 (1478), the main building is considered to have been completed, and various sections were added to Topkapı Palace in every period until the beginning of the 19th century. The palace, which is shaped according to the state organization and usage, has many architectural and ornamental features. The palace has a splayed and articulated structure suitable for topography. This feature is also compatible with the

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[89] Halil İnalcık, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu Klasik Çağ (1300-1600),* trans. Ruşen Sezer (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2003), 74.

characteristic Turkish houses. It was used as a state center from the beginning until the 17th century, and all kinds of meetings and envoys related to the administration were held here. Even though this function was reduced in the 17th century with the Divān meetings and the bureaucracy units gradually being moved to the palace of the grand vizier, it was never the private living space of the Sultan.[90]

It is known that *Şehzāde* (sultan's son) palaces were used as administrative centers in the provinces until the end of the 16th century. The largest of these is the Manisa Palace, and it has a multi-unit structure with a courtyard. The expansion of the *Ḥarem* Section of the Topkapı Palace must have come to the agenda after the end of the procedure for the *Şehzāde* to rise to the Sanjak. However, when the *Şehzāde* was allowed to live outside the palace in the 19th century, they were moved to large and magnificent buildings, but they were not called palaces. Many Sultan palaces were built in various parts of Istanbul for women members of the dynasty.[91]

It was found that the grand viziers' palaces were used for official operations after the 15th century. Many works that are not finished in the palace of the Sultan (*Bāb-ı Āsāfī*) are done here, and after the grand vizier attends the meeting in the palace of the sultan four days a week from morning to noon would organize a meeting with the name of the afternoon divān in his own palace. The palace (Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art), which was built during the reign of Suleyman I (1520-1566) and known today as the *Ibrahim Pasha Palace*, is one of the most splendid grand viziers' palaces. After the 17th century, the meetings in the sultan's palace were shifted to the grand viziers' palaces. In the 19th century, this second center of the state took the name of *Bāb-ı Ālī,* and the grand vizier started to live in a separate mansion.[92]

The Ottoman palace organization has four main sections in general: private living area (*Harem*), educational space (*Enderūn*), administrative center (*Diwān-ı Humāyūn*), and service and protection (*Birūn*). The three monuments in the palace, the first gate (*Bāb-ı Humāyūn*), the second gate (*Bābusselām*), and the third gate (*Bābussaāde*), shape the structure according to the organization with the squares in front of them. The great square between the first gate and the second gate is not only a place where *Birūn* people

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[90] Ibid,

[91] *Ottoman-Turkish Encyclopedic Dictionary*, "Sehzâde," by Ferit Develioğlu.

[92] Ibid,

work but also a place where the public can enter and leave and where soldiers other than the public demand and partially participate in the ceremony, especially during the great ceremonies. In the palace, as the officials such as *matbah-ı āmire emīni* (superintendent of the Imperial Kitchens), *ıstabl-ı āmire emīni* (superintendent of horse care), *arpa emīni* (superintendent of imperial stable), doctors such as *cerrāhbasi* (chief surgeon), *kehhālbasi* (ophthalmologist), and those from the ʿulemā class such as *hünkār imāmi* (Sultan's imam) and *pādisāh ḫocasi* (Sultan's teacher) come to the palace in the morning and leave in the evening, they would be regarded from *Birūn* community. As an institution, ovens and their employees, hospitals, *naḳḳāşḫāne* (calligrapher house), architects' quarry, *Mehterḫāne* (Janissary band of musicians) and *ıstabl-ı āmire* (horse care) were considered to belong to this section. The Regiment Square between the second and the third gate is the most important administrative center of the state in two respects. The Regimental Square between the second gate and the third gate is, in two respects, the most important administrative center of the state. The first of these is the *Diwānḫāne,* where the divān meetings are held, and the second, the most important ceremonies for the state are to be held in front of *Bābussaāde* in this square. When entering from *Bābussaāde*, the Audience Chamber is located opposite, and the square here is the third courtyard where the *Enderūn* rooms are opened (*Enderūn Square*).[93]

Enderūn school is an institution where children are educated through *devshirme* (Christian conscripted to be brought up for the janissaries). These student candidates would first be taken to the Old Palace of Edirne and then sent to the New Palace of Edirne or to the Topkapı Palace. In later periods, Galata Palace or Ibrahim Pasha Palace replaced them. Although Edirne was an *Enderūn* school in the New Palace, it was not suitable for training recruits due to Sultan's use of it as a residence. This school, which primarily trained statesmen, was in the form of classes. The first ones would be taken to the small room, and those who were promoted from here would be sent to the big room. They would then be sent to other rooms. There was also the *doganci ward*, responsible for the birds in the palace, the kiler (pantry) ward, responsible for Sultan's table, and the treasurer's ward, responsible for the treasure.

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[93] İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devleti'nin Saray Teşkilatı* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1984), 15-18.

The highest class of the school was Privy Chamber, and the four great *agha,* including *silāhdār* (armorer), *rikābdār* (horse staff), *çuhadār* (footman), *dülbend agha* (laundry) or *ibrikdār* (water) served as the closest to Sultan. The Seferli guild was added by Murad IV.[94]

Harem was a separate space leaning on the right side of the second and third courtyards. Here *Vālide Sultān* (Queen Mother) and the wives, sisters, and daughters of the Sultan, who were the most prestigious of the institution, lived. The entourage of these women, who were close to the Sultan, became more and more crowded afterward. These women, who did not participate in city life, needed other people in the palace in matters such as education, entertainment, clothing, eating, and drinking. In addition, like the *devshirme* who came to *Enderūn,* Harem brought girls who had been bought as prisoners of war or concubines, and they were both serving and receiving education, as in *Enderūn. Dārussaāde* Agha took care of the employees and the needs of *Harem.*[95]

Sultan Abdulmecid built Dolmabahce Palace, which was designed as a whole in the style of European palaces, on the European coast of the Bosphorus, a little further inside the city. Spread over an area of 110 acres; the palace was used as an alternative to the Yıldız Palace until 1924. In the century when this palace was built, state affairs and bureaucracy were largely carried out in *Bāb-ı Ālī,* so it was not the only center of the state like the palaces mentioned before. The main building of the palace was designed in three sections: *Mābeyn* (Temple), the ceremonial area and *Ḥarem,* as well as the theatre, *Istabl-ı Āmire* and the treasury offices built in addition to the main building.

The abandonment of the Topkapı Palace and the transition to Dolmabahce Palace resulted in the presence of some officials in the palace organization and the fact that some of them remained as only "names." This also changed mentality and the transition from the palace traditions that have been going on since the 13th century to another structure.[96] The second-largest palace of this quest period is the Yıldız Palace.

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[94] Necdet Sakaoğlu, *Osmanlı'dan Günümüze Eğitim Tarihi* (İstanbul: Istanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2003), 73.
[95] Ibid,
[96] Sözen, 67.

It is located on an area of approximately 500,000 m2 on a hill dominating the Bosphorus between Besiktas and Ortakoy districts on the European side of Istanbul. The first structure of the palace was the Yıldız Pavilion, built by Selim III for his mother, and the palace took its name from this pavilion. One of the first important structures of the Yıldız Palace, the Great Temple, is a three-story marble building in accordance with the plan of the Turkish houses. During the same period, the palace's two other important mansions, *Çadir* and *Malta* mansions, were built similarly. During these dates, the structure expanded, and the main character of the palace emerged. This place became a complete palace when Abdulhamid II moved from Dolmabahce to Yıldız in 1877. After the settlement of the Sultan, the Small Temple, *Harem* Buildings, Concubines' Apartments, *Kizlar Agasi* Pavilion, *Cihānnumā* Pavilion, Chalet Pavilion, Yildiz-Hamidiye Mosque, *Şehzāde* apartments-pavilions, and other structures were built and enlarged. The most important buildings of the palace are the Great Temple and Chalet Pavilion, which are some of the most beautiful examples of late Ottoman architecture. The palace has three relaxation areas: the inner garden, the outer garden, and the *Ḥarem* garden. Mehmed VI Vahideddin also preferred to live in this palace, so the palace was used as the central palace of the state for forty-four years. In the Ottoman palace system, although Topkapı is composed of separate buildings, it forms a unity with courtyard mechanisms, while Dolmabahce is like a single house in the form of European palaces. The Yıldız Palace, on the other hand, can be considered a more softened and adaptable version of the sharp change in Dolmabahce Palace.[97]

As a result, historical circles are the most important values that a nation, even the whole world, has and must live up to. These places, inherited centuries ago, hold an important place in the culture. Palaces within historical circles have a distinct significance. While most of the states and empires that have existed in the past centuries and played important roles in history have not survived, many of the palace structures that have witnessed and hosted those periods are still standing. Palace structures and gardens are separated from other historical circles because they are used both as the administrative center and the monarch's residence. The palace's open and closed spaces, which typically serve to give a sense of grandeur and serve as the image

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[97] Ibid,

of power, have an important place among the immovable cultural assets in terms of reflecting both the social values and life of their times and their economic and political life in the best way.

1.4.2. Palace in Turkish and Islamic History

In Islamic states, the palace is the main hub, both as the private area where the ruler lives with his family and as the site of state affairs, and is often shaped around a courtyard with four iwans. Another building feature consists of a collection of buildings that form a facade of a square or rectangular courtyard. Apart from the courtyard where the ceremonies took place, another reception room, the part where the monarch lived, is located in all the palace arrangements.[98] Seljuks, Ghaznavids, Safavids, and Ottomans used "*otāǧ*" (state tents) as well as palaces. In addition to private living areas, these tents also had a throne room or reception room to carry out official works. An additional tent is set up for council meetings. The common feature of all these palace structures is that they are also state centers. Especially in the Ottoman palace, the second courtyard is almost entirely devoted to state affairs.

The first example of a palace in Islamic architecture was built by the Governor of Syria, Muāviye b. Abū Sufyān known as *Kubbetu'l-Hadrā* in Damascus, and it became widespread when the governors built similar buildings of the caliphate palace upon the initiation of the Al-ʾUmawīyah period. The palaces, which were built by the governors and called "*Dāru'l-Imāre*" or "*Ḳasru'l-Imāre*," were built in the center of the city and near the Friday mosque like *Muʾāviye*'s *Kubbetu'l-Hadrā. Al-ʿUmawīyah*'s fortified hunting and summer cottages in Syria and Jordan, far from the major city centers, provide more insight into the early Islamic palace architecture. These buildings, which have a square outline, look like small castles with round walls at the corners and high walls with half-round towers on the sides and generally consist of two floors with rooms in a central portico surrounding the courtyard.[99]

Both in the West and in the East, the palace structures, which the rulers gave great importance to in almost every period of history, have been considered an appearance

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[98] Mustafa Cezar, *Anadolu Öncesi Türklerde Şehir ve Mimarlık* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, Sanat Dizisi: 28, 1977), 216.
[99] Necipoğlu, *An Outline of Shifting*, 306.

of political power in the Islamic states. Even though there were differences in the styles of these structures formed by Muslim countries that have existed for centuries in a wide area from India to Spain, due to different historical processes, art perceptions and traditions, and customs, there are undeniable similarities that are based on the rules of the Islamic religion. Islam has created a great art movement in the Islamic world and has been an important factor in the emergence of new art and syntheses in different periods as a result of the change of artists between Islamic states with different architectural trends and approaches, different cultural and social needs, and developing technology.[100] Another reason for the similarities between Islamic structures and palaces is that Islamic countries extending from east to west have almost the same climatic characteristics. In these countries, which are warmer, dryer, and brighter than European countries, the fact that water (such as fountains and pools) is included in all religious and civil structures and arrangements and the fact that open sands are located due to the temperature of the air is a common feature proving this.

Although the essence of art in Muslim countries is derived from the same source, it is still seen that different views of art are formed, and this is reflected in the palace spaces. For example, in Arab art, which is filled with extreme luxury and often suffused with details, the confusion of lines affects the person, while in Iranian art, ornamentation becomes important, and works that excite the soul are designed. Besides the mysticism of the forms in the Indian works, simplicity, harmony, and avoidance of all kinds of excesses in the composition of the works reflecting the Turkish understanding of art are obvious.[101] Therefore, the determination of these understandings, which have different characteristics within Islamic art, should be evaluated not according to geographical regions but according to the states in which different views, thoughts, and tendencies are formed. This differentiation, which applies to all branches of art, also applies to architecture, where palace buildings and gardens have significant places.

The palace has examples in Turkish and Islamic history since the early middle ages as a large building complex. However, information based on sufficient archaeological

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[100] Suut Kemal Yetkin, *İslam Ülkelerinde Sanat* (Istanbul Cem Yayınevi, 1984), 44. Celal Esat Arseven, *Türk Sanatı* (Istanbul Cem Yayınevi, 1970), 92.
[101] Oleg Grabar, *The Formation of Islamic Art* (London: Yale University Press, 1973), 1-8.

data, especially those related to Turkish history, is very limited. In the 6th and 7th centuries, when the Gokturks, who were seen as the first Turkish state in history, began to dominate Turkistan and established a strong political order, the trade routes of Central Asia and the cities formed by different cultures on it were under the rule of Gokturks.[102]

The architectural order and elements of the city ruin near Lake Issyk and the wall paintings dated to the 7th and 8th centuries show the effects of the Sogdian cultural traditions in the south.[103]

It is the information obtained from written sources that "*ḫāḳān*" (khaganate) used to have summer and winter centers in Turkish society, and especially the second one contains buildings made of mud brick or wood. In the travel report of the Byzantine ambassador Zemarkhos, who visited the Western Gokturk Khan's Istämi Qaghan in 568, it was stated that the "golden throne" of the Gokturk Khanates was in *Ak-Dağ*, the summer center and that the ambassador visited the khanate on three separate tents. However, it is unclear what each of these tents represents or is used for.[104]

Beginning with the semi-settled Gokturks, the periods of the Turkic Khaganate (7th-8th centuries), and the Karluk Yabgu State (8th-9th centuries), which developed especially in Western Turkistan, are the periods in which the culture of sedentary life developed significantly. A palace was found in the middle of the city at Ak-Tepe, one of the cities of Karluk. [105]

The Khan Palace in Sharkil was built with stone and brick materials by the Khazars (6th-beginning of 11th century), who lived in the settlement areas surrounded by walls during the period they founded the state.[106]

Palace ruins have been found in the Western Black Sea and Danube tribes, from the mid-7th century to the mid-9th century, in the Danube Bulgarian cities of Dobruca,

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[102] Doğan Kuban, *Anadolu Türk Mimarisinin Kaynak ve Sorunları* (Istanbul: İTÜ Mimarlık Fakültesi, 1965), 35.

[103] Ibid, 36

[104] Bahaeddin Ögel, *Türk Kültür Tarihine Giriş* (Istanbul: KB Yayınevi, 1978), 271.

[105] Cezar, 216.

[106] Emel Esin, *İslamiyetten Önceki Türk Kültür Tarihi ve İslama Giriş* (Istanbul: Edebiyat Fakültesi Matbaası, 1978), 80.

Pliska, Preslav, and Madara today.[107] There is no clear information about the architectural orders and forms of these buildings made with stone materials.

Regarding the wooden palace in the Central Hungarian capital of Attila, it was derived from the written sources that "...there are tables, chairs, cabinets decorated with wooden carved ornaments, divided into halls with columns covered in silver and gold plates..." and a bath built by Roman Masters existed.[108]

The architectural works that can be dated precisely after the Gokturks in Central Asia are Uyghur works from the 9th century and later periods.[109] After the dissolution of the political order established by the Uyghurs by the Kyrgyz in the mid-9th century, the new state, under the rule of the Uyghurs, established in the Turfan region and consisting of the Turks, Mongols, Sogdia, and Tokhara, generally considered to be Iranian, as well as Tibetans, Chinese, and Syrians, was the most important state in this region until the mid-13th century.[110] Architectural remains from this period are found in the ruins of *Hoço* (Idikut), the center of the Uyghurs and Turfan. In addition, the architectural drawings in the Uyghur wall paintings give us information about the architectural style of that period. In these paintings, pavilion structures bearing traces of Chinese architectural tradition, palace structures surrounded by high walls, courtyards with pavilions on the gates, palace courtyards with tents, castles, houses, interior views, and similar subjects are used. What is known about the Khan Tura Palace in Hoço is that it is located in the center of the city, on a high embankment and surrounded by walls, with towers and rooms covered with domes or vaults.[111]

The Oghuz, who came to Anatolia after the adoption of Islam and were instrumental in forming Anatolian-Turkish culture here, is seen in a political order with feudal qualities. It is known that the Oghuz lived largely as nomads, owned many cities, and partly participated in city life. But we do not know about the palace structure that should be in Yengikent, their most important city, and the winter residence of the

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[107] Ibid, 81
[108] Islamic Encyclopedia, "Türkler-şehir", Part:129, 249.
[109] Kuban, 36.
[110] Kuban, 37. Esin, 120.
[111] Kuban, 36: Esin, 120: Cezar, 65.

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Oghuz Qaghan.[112] Among the Turks whose settlements were focused on trade routes, agriculture, and mining, the Gokturks and Uyghurs had a commercial relationship with China, while Western Turks were with Byzantine. The reflection of this relationship to architecture can be exemplified by the fact that Turks, who do not like to live in cities surrounded by walls, founded such cities in small numbers, mansion buildings reflecting Chinese architectural tradition, and feudal castles starting from the 6th and 7th centuries in the west. It was inevitable that the emperor's tent in the nomadic society would be replaced by the palace structures, which had different characteristics than the people's residence in the settled society, constructed in a larger way and with durable materials, and which housed all official functions.[113] However, in different cultural environments, the examples and symbols that Turkish societies consider appropriate for the monarch's residence may be different.

The universalist worldview of China, which is the "Heaven, Earth and Humanity," became the first religion of the Turks, and the Gokturks and other semi-nomadic Turkic tribes shared the same belief.[114] In terms of space, the Turkish Khan, who was considered a partner to the sky god and a ruler who had taken "gut" from him, used to sit on the summit or a sacred forested mountain called *Altın-dağ*. The Uyghurs, who were composed of different societies, continued to hold the beliefs of Buddhism, Manicheism, and Nasturi Christianity.[115]

The Chinese Palaces, which may be thought to have inspired the nomadic Turks and Uyghurs, were built in geometries that emphasized the pavilion system (see Figure 1.2). The palace at Lo-Yang, the first capital of the Chinese dynasty, was planned in the city center along with gardens with artificial lakes and hills made to create a charming setting by the Emperor's special request. In 1275, Marco Polo described the palace in the city of Han as "…reached by large marble stairs from four directions, the marble walls of the Palace are covered with gold and silver dragons. The palace structures are single-storied and have splendid roofs".[116]

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[112] Islam Encyclopedia, 250.

[113] Kuban, 41-42: Ögel, *Türk,* 214: Islamic Encyclopedia, 251.

[114] Esin, 43.

[115] Ibid, 80.

[116] Cezar, 228.
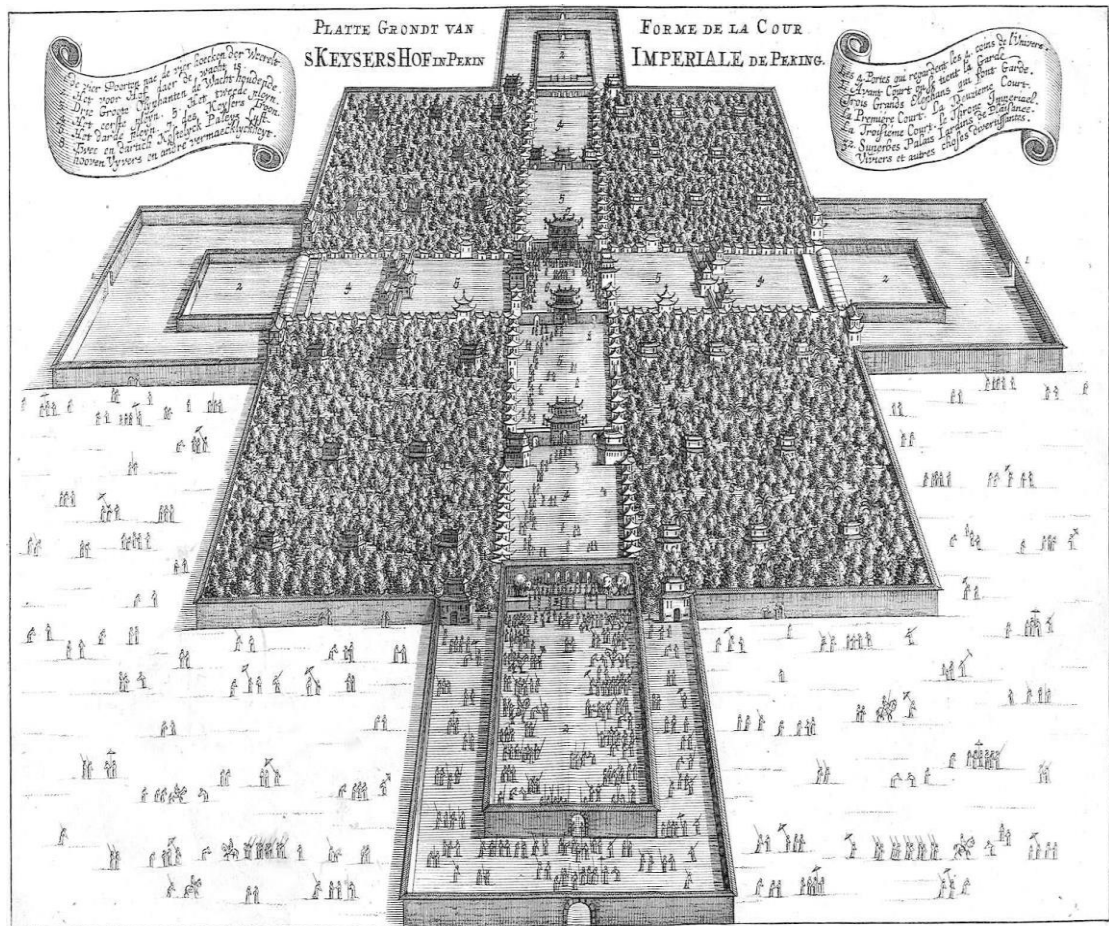
Figure 1.2 Beijing Imperial Palace layout.
Source: Abebooks, "Beijing Imperial Palace," n.d.
https://pictures.abebooks.com/47551N/16009615419.jpg (accessed April 17, 2022).

The Imperial Palace in the city of Beijing, which was the capital of the Mongols in China (1280-1468), is a 17th-century building that has been well preserved until today. It consists of symmetrically placed buildings on a longitudinal north-south axis in a large area surrounded by high walls, which is a restricted area in a courtyard order that is not separated from each other by high walls. The palace is functionally divided into two sections: the outer section, where official admissions and ceremonies are held, and the buildings of the administrative affairs and the residence of the emperor and his family are settled, and the inner section, where the promenade gardens are located.[117]

According to the information obtained from the excavations, the palace structure in pre-Islamic Central Asian cities is usually located in the citadel (*İçkale*), which is in the middle of the settlement surrounded by walls made of compressed mud brick in a

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[117] Michael Sullivan, *A Short History of Chinese Art* (Berkeley, 1967), 98.

square, quadrangular or rectangular shape. The Monarch Pavilion, consisting of small domed units around the large dome in four corners; the Monarch Palace on a high embankment in Hoço with walls, towers, and rooms covered with domes or vaults; the palace with pool in Ak-Tepe in the Western examples, palaces built with stone material in Şarkel and Bulgarian cities, and the wooden palace in the capital in central are the buildings mentioned in the period from the 6th to the middle 13th century in the non-Islamic Turks.[118]

In publications including some suggestions for theoretical reconstruction, considering the structures of square housing forms dating back to the 4th and 3rd millennium B.C. in the Khorasan and Transoxiana (also known as *Mā Warāʾ an-Nahr*) region, the cosmographic plan of four directions expressing dominance in China and the Turks, and the home of feudal lords in the Yedisu region in the 6th and 7th centuries, it can be said, in general, that the palace of the Turkish monarchs developed based on local conditions and exhibited the characteristics of the architectural tradition of the region.[119]

Despite this rather uncertain situation in the steppe and its lower belt, we know much more about the early Islamic palaces. All the palace structures known to the Islamic culture are located outside the geographical region where the religion of Islam first emerged. The palace structures found in early Islamic settlements, whose formations we can see in the 7th and 8th centuries, can be discussed in two sections: "rural mansions" and "citadel palaces." In both types of buildings, it is seen that the palace consists of a mosque, living quarters including the official function, and a bath.[120] Grabar summarizes the characteristics of the living units, including the official function of the early Islamic palace structures, as follows: "a differentiation of the interior arrangement limited to the reception hall and entrances, almost no signs of comfort, and lack of details of interior architecture such as doors, windows."[121] These consecutive phenomena in this definition for early examples of Islamic palaces are explained in two ways. First, it was stated as "adapting the new lifestyle to the existing

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[118] Cezar, 50.

[119] Cezar, 54: Esin, 47: Kuban, 47.

[120] Oleg Grabar, *The Formation of Islamic Art* (Londom: Yale University Press, 1973), 112.

[121] Ibid, 75.

forms dictionary." Early examples, which seem to be completely pre-Islamic in terms of typology, do not meet Islamic requirements. There is the view that this type of structure, which was abandoned in a short time, reflects an unorganized way of life, except for a few important ceremonies as far as is known. The second explanation is that the new rich aristocracy of Arab origin, formed as a result of the conquests, chose the architecture that best suited their needs and goals from the existing one. In this interpretation, which quotes, "A military exterior was selected because it is the most familiar symbol of power, and reception halls were chosen from among the old building units because hosting guests is the most distinctive feature of Arab customs,"[122] the effectiveness of the society's traditions is emphasized.

The most important feature of the citadel palaces of the early period is that they were built right next to the most important mosque in the center of the city, which determined the direction of movement for the Islamic city. The section devoted to official functions in these palaces occupies a more important place than those found in rural mansions.[123] They are also much more modest in terms of architectural decoration. Dār el-Imāre in Kufa, al-Manṣūr's Caliphate Palace in Baghdad, and el-Cevsaḳu'l-Ḫāḳānī in Samarra, established as a military and administrative center, is like a forbidden town in the middle of the city, surrounded by high walls. This establishment scheme would also be seen as the main feature of Islamic palace architecture in later palace structures.[124] Grabar states that "these palaces do not have functionally identifiable forms, but human activities determine the function of a certain space," which is "the characteristic of early Islam characterized as formal ambiguity."

Grabar argues that in early Islamic architecture, it is necessary to accept the idea that palace structures, which are a monarch-specific establishment, are not connected to a single culture, nor is there a "completely Islamic palace type."[125] These early Islamic palace structures, built by the caliphs for themselves, are shaped by the Roman villas tradition, which reflects the special needs and whims of the caliph.[126] Bier argues that

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[122] Ibid, 128.
[123] Ibid, 129.
[124] Ibid, 129.
[125] Ibid, 132.
[126] Ibid, 132.

the architectural impact of Sassanian palaces on early Islamic ones was probably minimal, even though their symbolic and ceremonial inspiration was undeniably strong. *Ḵawarnaq*, famed for its domed construction imitating the structure of heavens, built in *Ḥirā* by the ruler Nu'man, had been one of the strongest symbolisms in Islamic architecture. The charging of Islamic palaces with heavenly associations can also be traced back to ancient Near Eastern precedents.[127] Likewise, Necipoğlu argues that the large royal palaces from which the state was run supported an extended household and provided a setting for court rituals and ceremonies, including the administration of justice, archives, libraries, and workshops for industries such as textile making are all dated back to Mesopotamian royal palaces that would continue to play a central role in the Muslim era. Their monumental gates, official throne rooms, multi-story facades, hunting parks, formal gardens, and pleasure pavilions also found parallels in Islamic palaces. Precisely because maintaining the productivity of the land through costly irrigation work was a major function of Mesopotamian kings, gardens became associated with royal pleasure, luxury, and power. The planting of gardens, installing running water, and constructing monumental palaces had been considered the "fruits of royal authority" and found a place in Islamic palaces.[128]

The earliest example of the Islamic palaces, which is in a palace-city situation in the walled area with their extensive program order, is el-Cevsaḵu'l-Ḥāḵānī in Samarra, dated to the first half of the 9th century. Other examples of citadel palaces that grew not according to a previously thought universal plan but with appendages of the users over time include medieval structures such as Córdoba/Madīnat'az-Zahrā (10th century), Algeria / Qal'at Bani Ḥammād (11th - 12th century), Granada/Al-Ḥamrāʾ Palace (13th-14th century) that are also gradually growing building complexes (See Figure 1.3).

The Turks' encounter with Islamic communities and their adoption of Islam continued from the 7th century until the beginning of the 16th century in the political order around India and until later. The first architectural works of the Turks in the Islamic

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[127] Lionel Bier, "Pre-Modern Islamic Palaces", *Ars Orientalis*, 23, (1993): 3-24, https://www.jstor.org/stable/462944.
[128] Necipoğlu, *Pre-Modern Islamic World*, 308.

period belong to the Qarākhāniyān Khanate, founded in the middle of the 9th century, above the upper regions of the Zhou Basin, Transoxiana, Fergana, and Tarim River. Although it is known that the Qarākhāniyān Khanate refused to use the Samani palace and built new palaces, there is no detailed information about these palaces. The only known ones are the Shamsaabad Palace in an area surrounded by a wall in the south of Bukhara, the Ibrahim Khan Palace in Samarkand, and the Afrasiyab Palace.[129]

The Tirmidh Palace, described as an 11th-12th-century work, is accepted to have been built during the Qarākhāniyān Khanate period. The palace is located outside the city in a rectangular area surrounded by walls. It is a throne hall located opposite the entrance of the iwans opening to the rectangular courtyard. The iwan facade of the three-aisled hall has porticoes. The walls and support columns are decorated with brick lining.[130]
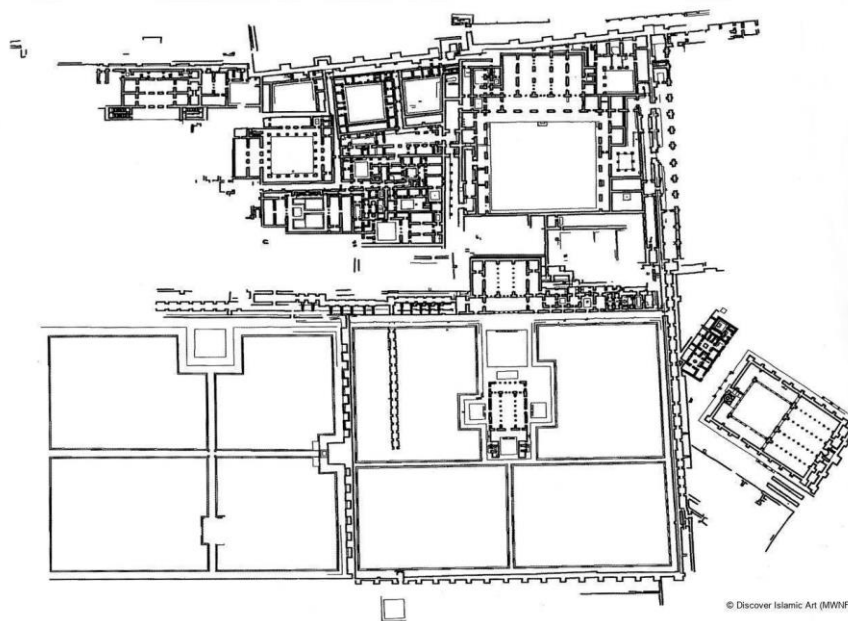
Figure 1.3 Islamic Citadel palaces.
Madīnat az-Zahrā (13th century), Córdoba.
Source: Ángela Franco "Madinat al-Zahra" in Discover Islamic Art, Museum with No Frontiers, (drawing, 2022),
https://islamicart.museumwnf.org/database_item.php?id=monument;isl;es;mon01;2;en (accessed April 16, 2019).

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[129] Cezar, 219. Esin, 171.
[130] Cezar, 220.
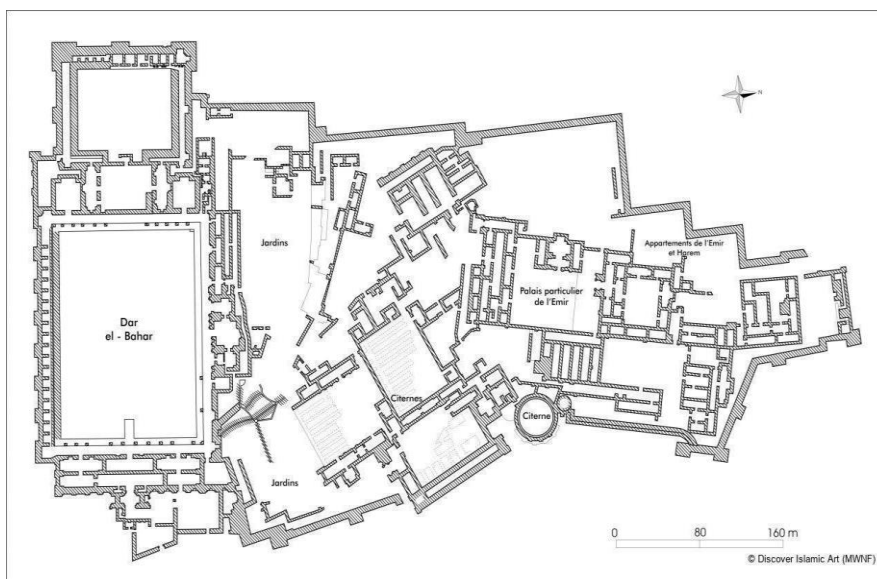
Figure 1.3 (Cont'd) Qal'at Bani Hammad (11th-12th centuries), Algeria.
Source: Ali Lafer "Site of Qal'at Bani Hammad" in Discover Islamic Art, Museum with No Frontiers, (drawing, 2022), https://islamicart.museumwnf.org/database_item.php?id=monument;ISL;dz;Mon01;4;en (accessed May 18, 2019).
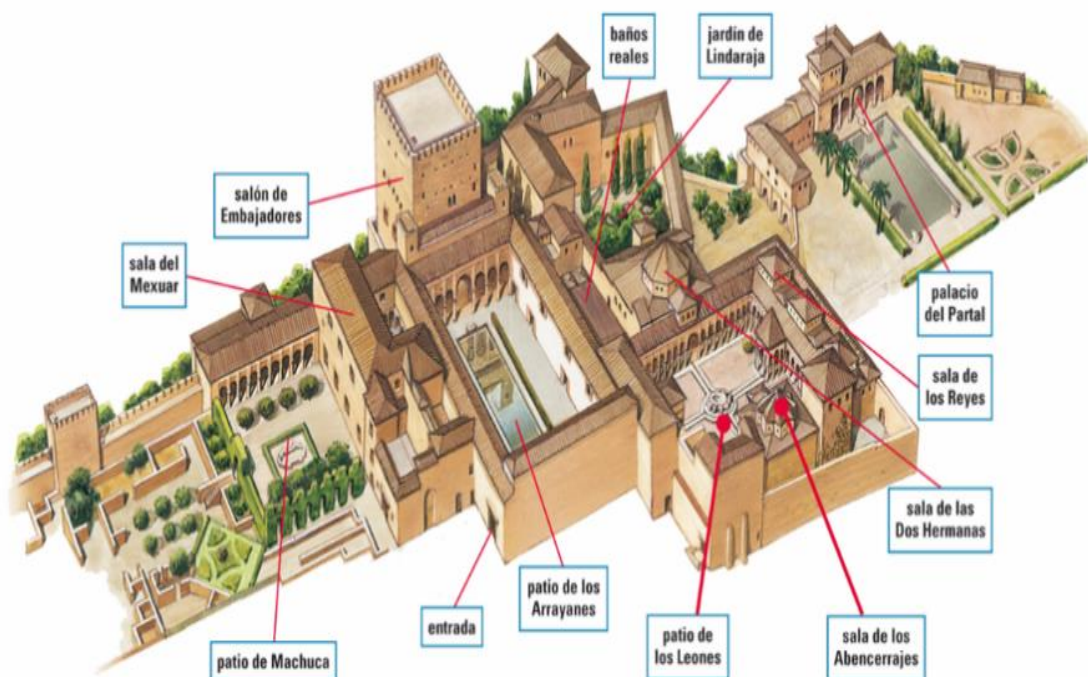
Figure 1.3 (Cont'd) Al-Ḥamrāʾ Palace (13th-14th centuries), Granada.
Source: Paula Wynne, "Alhambra Palace Layout," (drawing, 2019), https://paulawynne.com/the-luna-legacy/alhambra-palace-layout (accessed June 21, 2020).

An example of excavations from the palace structures of Turkish-Islamic architecture is the Ghaznavid palace Lashkari Bazaar (See Figure 1.4), dated to the beginning of the 11th century, near the Bust city in North India. Among the four iwans opening to the rectangular courtyard, the one in the north opens to the reception hall. The places related to the official function of the palace are arranged around small courtyards. Despite the freedom of women in the Turkish steppe life, the harem section in Ghaznavid palaces is a forbidden section with its location next to the reception hall.[131]

Another palace of Ghaznavid is the Palace of Sultan Mesud III. This palace, which dates back to the beginning of the 12th century, can be defined by four iwans opening to a central rectangular courtyard in a rectangular area surrounded by walls. The larger iwan in the south is the place of the throne.

In two known examples, the Ghaznavid palaces, where the arrangement of the throne placed on the longitudinal axis and the four iwan schemes opening to the rectangular courtyard are seen as the dominant features, are the places where the Sultan lived a glorious life away from the steppe life. The Sultan had palaces and gardens in every important city under his rule.[132] These examples take place within the Sassanid-Iranian tradition and are parallel to the Abbasid practices.

There is little information about the palace structures of the Great Seljuk State, founded in Iran in the mid-11th century. In Merv, there were the remains of a Seljuk palace dating back to the 11th-12th centuries. In the planning scheme, with four iwans opening to the central courtyard, the rooms and apartments of the palace are located in the sections between the iwans. The covering system of the palace, which has an entrance from four directions, is the vault and the dome. Merv and its surrounding area are considered to be a preliminary model for the Seljuk Palace of four-iwans housing schemes with cross vault plans.[133] In addition to Merv, there are also documents regarding the presence of mansions and palace buildings in Hamadān, Nishapur, and Isfahān, where the Seljuk Sultans lived.

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[131] Suut Kemal Yetkin, *İslam Ülkelerinde,* 115-117.
[132] Edmund C., Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids* (Beirut, 1973), 140.
[133] Cezar, 231.
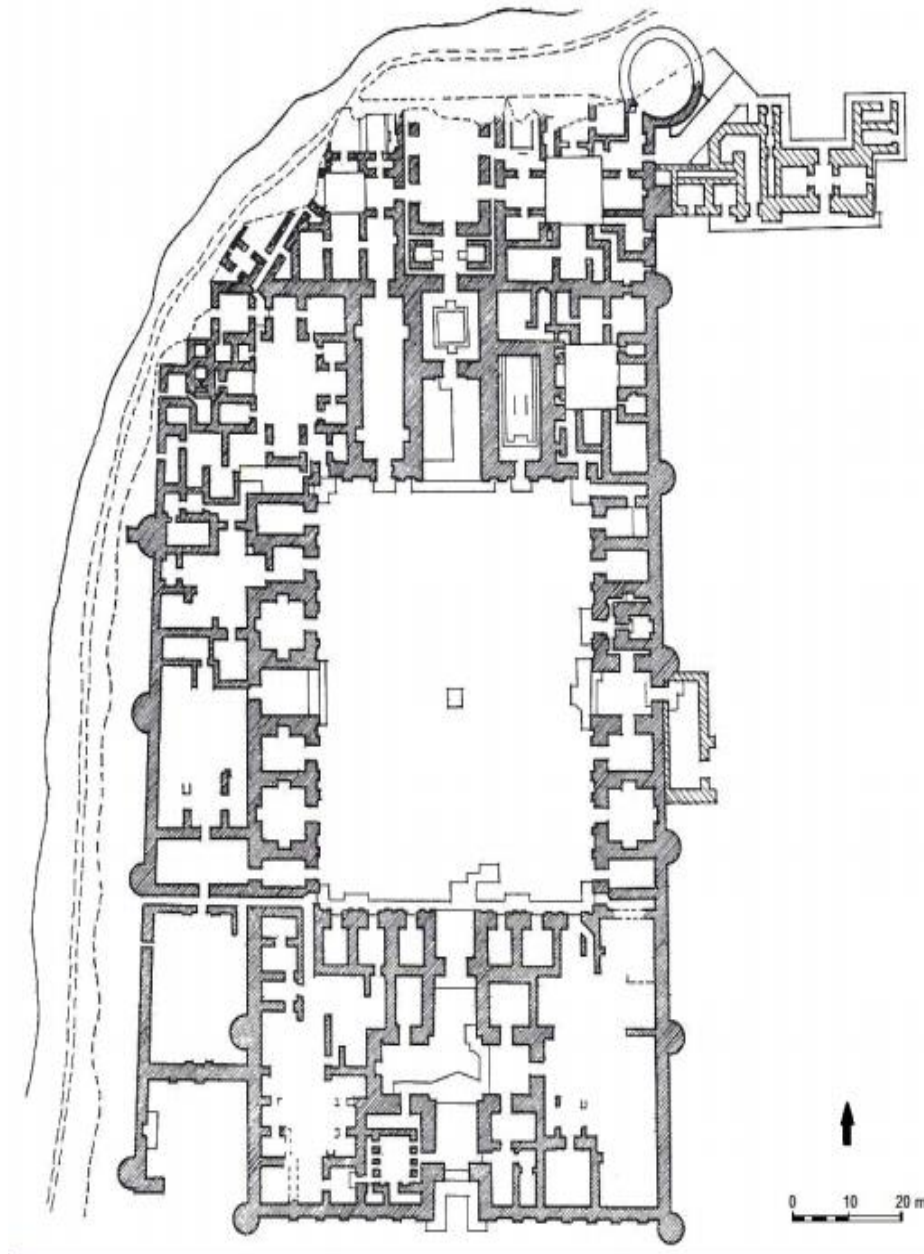
Figure 1.4 Lashkari Bazaar (11th century), Afghanistan.
Source: David Hannaford Mitchell, "Palacio de Lashkari Bazar," (drawing, February 2013),
https://davidhannafordmitchell.tumblr.com/post/43601481862/premoderno-palacio-de-lashkari-bazar-
bust (accessed February 25, 2020).

There are very few documents about the palace structures belonging to the years
following the arrival of the Turks in Anatolia. With limited data on the 13th-14th
centuries, the idea that the palace buildings of this period were not built for the purpose
of making a monumental building is common.[134] The Kubādābād Palace, which

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[134] Claude Cahen, *The Formation of Turkey, The Seljukid Sultanate of Rum: Eleventh to fourteenth century*, trans. P.M. Holt, (Harlow, England, New York. Longman, 2001), 258.

dominates the Beyşehir Lake of the Anatolian Seljuk State, is a collection of structures of different sizes and forms belonging to various functions within the castle. In addition to the palace structures of this type, which are described as a "*saray kent*" (or citadel-palace in English) with its fortification, mosque, and palace, there are also palace cities "fitted externally" in the existing settlement areas.[135] S. Unver refers to the fact that mosques, masjids, and madrasas were used as official apartments in addition to the palace buildings of the Seljuk and principalities period. The name of the city's grand mosque is mentioned as the place where administrative work is carried out and followed. The mention of the grand mosque in Kayseri in the Seljuk period with the name "Sultan Mosque" may indicate this use of palace function. Such observations signal that functional separation in the structure plan is undeveloped.[136]

Information about the palace structures of the Ottoman period, except for the Edirne New Palace and the Topkapı Palace in Istanbul, is limited. There is no visual information about the Old Palace and Bursa Palace, which could be the predecessor of Edirne Palace and, therefore, Topkapı Palace.

In three 15th and 16th centuries of documents related to the Old Palace in Istanbul, the palace was drawn as a collection of structures in the area surrounded by two walls. All three drawings show a single entrance. The *Şehzade* Palace in Manisa is also described in the documents as independent building in the courtyard layout (See Figure 1.5).

The layout of the Ottoman palace, which is observed in Edirne (See Figure 1.6) and Topkapı Palace (See Figure 1.7), is that it is located in a walled area near the city, with its widespread placement in large gardens. Edirne and Topkapı palaces are citadel palaces with two sections that can be entered and cannot be entered, including buildings related to the private life of the Sultan, buildings whose places are determined in the system of courtyards that follow each other hierarchically, and pavilion buildings where the special appreciation of the Sultan is also effective.

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[135] Uğur Tanyeli, "Anadolu Türk Kentinde Fiziksel Yapının Evrim Süreci, (11-15. Yy)," (PhD Thesis, İstanbul: Istanbul Technical University, 1987), 175.
[136] Süheyl Ünver, "Anadolu Selçuklu Devleti, Beylikleri, Resmi Daireleri ve Toplantı Yerlerine Dair," *Vakıflar Dergisi* 8, (1969): 324, http://acikerisim.fsm.edu.tr/xmlui/handle/11352/1639.
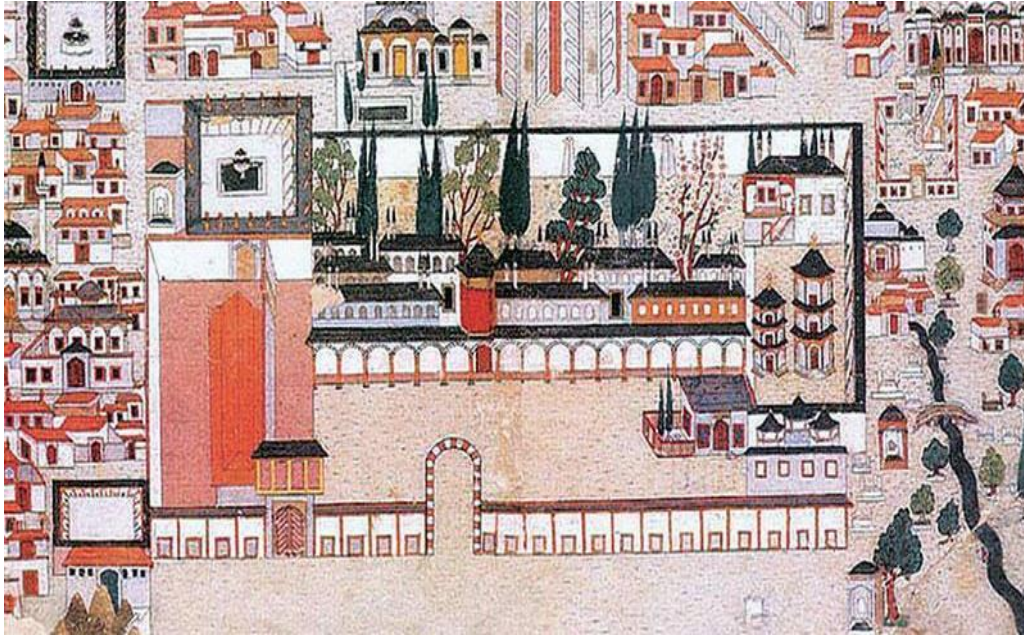
Figure 1.5 *Şehzade* Palace, Manisa.
Source: Mehmet Numan Tanır, "Manisa'da Fatih'in Eğitim Yılları," İnsan ve Hayat, (drawing, May 2016), https://insanvehayat.com/manisada-fatihin-egitim-yillari, (accessed February 25, 2022).

Figure 1.6 Edirne Palace layout.
Source: Nurhan Atasoy and Seyit Ali Kahraman, "Edirne Palace Gardens", (drawing, n.d.), https://www.doaks.org/resources/middle-east-garden-traditions/catalogue/C137 (accessed 25 February 2022).
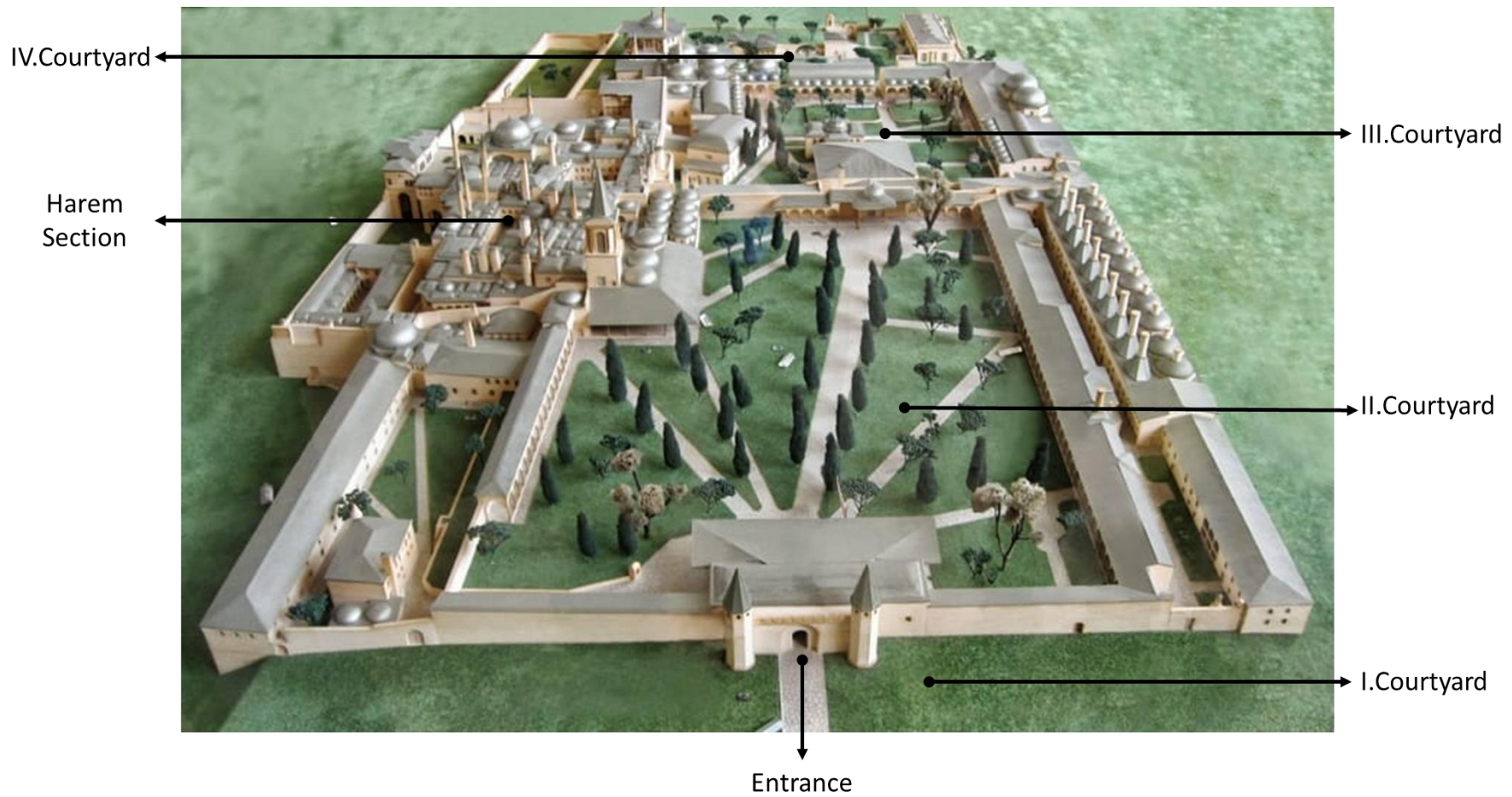
Figure 1.7 Topkapı Palace courtyard system.

In Turkish, Islamic, Turkish-Islamic, and Anatolian Turkish-Islamic settlements, the position of palace structures, their functions, and their evaluation in terms of their architectural formations can be summarized as follows:

In the old Turkish communities where the ruler was dominated by his authoritarian personality, his seat should be in the center. In China, the city of Lo-yang in the State of Chou (1050-247 BC) is considered to be in the middle of the state and in the center of the world, and the emperor was supposed to sit here. This centrist position of ruler continued unchanged in the pre-Islamic established order. The palace structure in the middle of the settlement in Ak-Tepe and Hoço, one of the cities of Karluk, maintains its central position.

Early Islamic palace structures are located outside the city as rural mansions and next to the mosque in the city center as urban palaces. The examples in Anatolia are in two different forms of application. It is located "fitted externally" to the residential area of the city with "Palace-City/Citadel Palace" formations outside of the settlement patterns. Palace structures related to the Ottoman period, as well as Bey Palace in Bursa Castle, Edirne Palaces, and Topkapı Palace, can be described as having an independent arrangement with their marginal positions. These can be attributed to the Central Asian pre-Islamic urban tradition as a location.

In the former Turkish States, the palace appears to be the sole center of the administration, as well as its function as the place where the ruler lives and as the place where the administration works and scientific works are carried out. In the Islamic period, it is known that the official function of the palace buildings outside the city, where the Sultan lived a flamboyant life, declined, while in the city palaces, this function gained weight. The subject of sharing the administrative functions of the palaces of the Seljuk and the principalities period in Anatolia by the city's grand mosque and other socio-cultural structures is in need of future research. In the examples of Ottoman period palaces, the structures related to Sultan's private life are included in the section which is forbidden to enter, as seen in the palaces of Ghaznavid and China. On the other hand, the different administrative and ceremonial functions formed their own structures.

The architectural symbolism and dimensions of the relationship between the palace and religious structure (mosque), which can be traced in the order of history, have

changed. In the Ottoman palace, where the function of the mosque structure was reduced to use only for worship, administrative and ceremonial functions dominated, although the Sultan was the official and religious leader.

To sum up, in pre-Islamic settled Turks, the architectural formations of the palace structures were generally carried out by imitating the ready forms of the cultures under their domination and the architectural tradition of the states with which they are related. However, integrating the belief system with this architecture and its symbolism needs to be scrutinized deeply for a stronger and more accurate interpretation. Similar results are valid also for the Islamic palaces. Apart from the early examples, the Islamic palaces maintained their free settlement order in the following centuries. Although a typical architectural form shaped by the Islamic faith is not observed, very specific characteristics are common in almost all of these palaces. The iwan structural plan, the plain exterior layouts, and large spaces make their point not through dominating verticality but through their horizontal expanse, numerous buildings that reflected a complex institutional organization maintained by a large staff, the choice of locations for the palaces, pure interiors, the status of *hakan* and its reflection in the palace settlement may have deeper meanings taking their roots from the Islamic belief system that should be crystallized.

1.4.3. Terminological Clarifications on Ottoman Thought and Islamic Art and Aesthetics

As the dissertation aims to make an aesthetical analysis of how Ottoman thought was reflected in the spaces of the Topkapı Palace, and it builds this analysis on the theoretical framework of Islamic aesthetics, some terminological explanations of Ottoman thought and mindset, Islamic art and aesthetics should be made to clarify how they are used in the study.

First of all, it is necessary to look for an answer to the question, "What is thought?" According to Bolay, thought is a conscious and systematic movement of concepts, dreams, and imaginations in the human mind. In a broad sense, it includes all kinds of activities of the mind, including desire and will. In a narrow sense, it is to have an idea and a judgment, such as judging someone to be wrong or judging that the world is

temporary. In absolute terms, thought is all kinds of mental and intellectual activity.[137] Descartes considers hearing as thought as well as understanding, willingness, and dreaming. According to him, all things that happen in a way that we can recognize directly from ourselves are perceived as in the scope of thought.[138] In addition to these, the perspective of Al-Jurjānī, who was influential in the Islamic world and the Ottoman Empire, is also eye-opening. He characterized thought as the saving of the "ḳalb" (heart) (regarding the meanings of objects) to achieve what is desired. According to him, the thought is the lamp with which the heart sees good, evil, benefit, and harm. Al-Jurjānī approached the issue from an informational and moral point of view, and by using the word "ḳalb" (heart) instead of the mind, he attributed a special place and importance to feeling and intuition in thought.[139] Both Jurjānī and Descartes include consciousness in their definitions. Therefore, In this regard, it is possible to define Ottoman thought as the combination of all kinds of activities, imaginations, and dreams of the national mind. It is their ideas and judgments about what is right and desirable and wrong. It is their standing point towards what is good and beautiful, and bad and harmful, considering their value system fed by their religious and moral beliefs. The term "Ottoman Thought" will be used in this context in the dissertation.

The detailed review that was conducted for the dissertation showed that there are and can be different interpretations of the scope of Ottoman thought. For instance, Bolay approaches Ottoman thought in a wider sense as he draws its boundaries as religious, political, philosophical, sufi, legal, moral, scientific, economic, technical, and historical, and literary thought. He says all these are important fields of study in the Ottoman mentality[140]. He emphasizes that since all concepts and imaginations are the materials of human thought, one can see history, society, and nature as a whole. There is such an understanding of integrity in the Ottoman view of the universe, nature, society, and history. Therefore, the Ottoman Empire had a complete consciousness of history, state, and society.[141] In parallel with this thought of self-integrity in Ottoman thought, Ahmet Yaşar Ocak approaches Ottoman thought in a denser and more

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[137] Ottoman Encyclopedia, "The Ottoman Thought in the Classical Age and the Tehafüt Ambition in the Ottomans", by Süleyman Hayri Bolay (Ankara:Yeni TürkiyeYayınları 33, 2000), 11.

[138] Descartes, *Felsefenin İlkeleri*, trans. Mehmet Karasan (İstanbul: Say press, 2018), 30-31.

[139] Şeref Cürcani, *Türk Tefekkür Tarihi*, in Hilmi Ziya Ülken, (Yapı Kredi Press, 2017), 20.

[140] Hayri Bolay, *Osmanlı Düşünce Dünyası* (Ankara: Akçağ Yayınları, 2017), 21.

[141] Ibid,

collective way. He underlines that anyone who wants to take a collective view of the Ottoman thought system should master the following four dimensions: political thought, philosophical thought, religious and sufi thought.[142] As this approach is more appropriate and applicable for the scope of the dissertation, and so-indeed it includes the keystones of Ottoman thought and mindset, in this study, the scope of Ottoman thought is accepted in the way that Ahmet Yaşar Ocak draws the boundaries.

Some other terminological clarifications should be made about aesthetics, Islamic aesthetics and Islamic art, sacred art, and religious art to better understand the language of the dissertation. The concept of "aesthetics" is being used in two ways in the dissertation. The first one is in the methodology of the dissertation, that is, "aesthetical analysis." This unique analysis intrinsically aims to decipher, define and resolve why an object is preferred to be done in that way by the subject.[143] It is not only related to the interpretation or perception of beauty; instead, it analyses choices of form and order, indicating values, meanings, and philosophies behind them.[144] Unlike only descriptive and analytical knowledge, aesthetical analysis examines the order and meanings in art and architecture through the mindset and value system of the founders, in our case, the Ottoman dynasty. The second use of "aesthetics" is in the term "Islamic aesthetics." This term has an utmost important place in the study as the dissertation aims to scrutinize the reasons for the style and spatial preferences of the Ottoman dynasty and establishes the analysis of the Topkapı Palace on the theoretical framework of Islamic aesthetics. In order to understand this concept, it is beneficial to dismantle it. Herwitz describes that taste is the central concept in its thinking about aesthetics as it allows for the invention of the term "aesthetics." He expresses that when aesthetics is at stake, in addition to qualities that the five senses can perceive, it also covers intuition, cognition, and formulation of the things which make it judged beautiful. For instance, a poem might sound well, but the origin of its taste and what makes it beautiful is its aesthetic value. These can be the message behind it, its particular twist of language, invocation of rhythm through enjambment, the pleasure offered by its strophes, punctuations of thought, its use of forms, and so on. Everything depends on the incarnations of the particularities of the poem, on how this harmony

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[142] Ocak, *Klasik Dönem Osmanlı Düşünce Hayatı*, 27.
[143] Tunalı, *Estetik*, 15.
[144] Erzen, *Reading Mosques*, 127.

comes into existence, and on the pleasure taken in its reading and palingenesis in the memory. Therefore, the term "aesthetics" is adopted to capture the essential characteristics of sensuous experience in the experience of the beautiful.[145] And as an extension of this clarification, when Islamic aesthetics is at stake, similar to any other aesthetical context, it presents a twofold aspect; conceptual-theoretical and material-practical.[146] The materialistic aspect covers qualities that can be perceived by the five senses, and the conceptual aspect deals with the formulation of the things which makes artistic/architectural objects judged beautiful and what the origin of their tastes and aesthetic values depend on, according to the general framework of Islamic doctrine. In the dissertation, this conceptual framework is established by determining basic concepts of Islamic aesthetics so that the study can be placed on stable ground.

In respect thereof, some important explanations of the terminology of Islamic art and sacred-religious art should be made to highlight how they are used in the dissertation. The term "Islamic art" not only defines the art created specifically in the service of the Muslim faith, i.e., a mosque, a tomb, and their furnishings but also addresses the art and architecture produced in the lands ruled by Muslims produced for Muslim patrons or created by Muslim artists in a way considering, carrying and reflecting the principles of Islamic revelation. A distinction should be made between the sacred art of Islam, and traditional Islamic art. Sacred art is directly related to the central practices of religion and the practices of spiritual life, encompassing arts such as calligraphy, mosque architecture, and Quranic recitation. On the other hand, traditional Islamic arts indirectly reflect all forms of visual and audio arts that reflect the principles of Islamic revelation and Islamic spirituality. Sacred art directly reflects the principles and norms that traditional art indirectly reflects. In a sense, sacred art is the heart of traditional Islamic art [147] because the origin of Islamic art and the nature of the principles that gave birth to this art should be associated with the worldview of Islam and the revelation of Islam itself. The origin of Islamic art is the inner dimension of Islam, that is, truth.

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[145] Daniel Herwitz, *Aesthetics: Key Concets in Philosophy*, (London: Continuum Books, 2008), 22-25.
[146] Valerié Gonzalez, *Beauty and Islam*, 13.
[147] Nasr, İslam Sanatı ve Maneviyatı, 12.

1.4.4. Selection of Basic Concepts of Islamic Aesthetics

One important point having utmost importance is the selection process of basic concepts of Islamic aesthetics, as these concepts constitute the solid ground for the analysis of the Topkapı Palace. While determining these concepts, a detailed study was carried out on the literature on Islamic aesthetics; the concepts mentioned in common in the sources written on the subject were determined, and they were filtered and selected according to their consistency with the main approaches of Islamic doctrine by the author of the thesis, and these concepts were presented in the light of existing literature and Islamic teachings.

Considering the high potential of the topic, although the studies on Islamic aesthetics are quite limited, many scholars have produced research that can be regarded within the scope of the study subjects of Islamic aesthetics in terms of content, and these studies have been examined within the scope of the thesis. Among these scholars, who specifically touch upon issues on Islamic aesthetics as well as Islamic arts, the ones who emphasize the general approaches of Islamic aesthetics most intensely, not only mentioning but also defining and explaining these concepts, are Beşir Ayvazoğlu, Titus Burckhardt, Jale Erzen, Doris Behrens Abouseif, Mustafa Uğur Karadeniz, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, and Turan Koç. The concepts chosen for the thesis are, to a large extent, those that these researchers commonly refer to.

The most detailed listing of the basic principles of Islamic aesthetics from the sources written by these authors is made in Karadeniz's work of *İslam Sanatlarında Estetik: Güzeli Anlamak* (*Aesthetics in Islamic Arts: Understanding The Beauty).* The work by the author is valuable in this respect. Besides, this thesis has not adopted some of the concepts that Karadeniz claims to be one of the basic approaches to the aesthetic understanding of Islam since some contain over-generalizing judgments, and some do not show full consistency with Islamic thought. For example, the author evaluated the concept of symmetry as a condition of the principle of harmony and congruity and interpreted it as one of the basic conditions of Islamic aesthetics. Although many details can be symmetrical elements in Islamic architecture, it may be too general to consider this as a general search. In terms of the general scheme, as mentioned in the modular structure principle, a search for finished, symmetrical, closed compositions cannot be considered a main approach for the whole of Islamic aesthetics. In addition

to this, the author put forward a concept that he refers to as "preventing the desire for perpetuity." He says that the artist may wish to perpetuate his name in the mortal world with his work, but this aim is not welcome in Islamic art. Because this desire will contradict the consciousness of accepting the fate of the artist. Therefore, in Islamic art, the artist does not fall prey to the desires of perseverance, both in the material he chooses and in the purpose of using it; otherwise, tragedy and tension arise. The author backs his opinions based on the expressions of the discourses of Ibn al-ʿArabī, who state that "the world is a bridge, and no house can be built on the bridge." He also emphasizes that the use of materials in Ottoman architecture was carried out with the preference of a temporary material such as wood for civil architecture in accordance with this understanding. According to the author, the use of stone as an architectural material is not only related to its durability. The stone also serves as a material chosen against the desire to live forever and, with it, the fact that it will die. With this choice, mankind thinks that he has found a solution to death in his own way. It cannot be suggested that this approach put forward by Karadeniz and the explanations put forward while trying to support this approach are in line with Islamic thought. To this end, doing any job in the best and most robust way has always been praised in the Islamic faith.[148] Besides, a hadith reports: "Work for this world as if you will never die, and work for the hereafter as if you will die tomorrow.[149]" Therefore, this concept and the way it is grounded were not adopted in the thesis. Another approach[150] that the author calls "cosmological comprehension" is a repetition of the belief system mentioned in other concepts, which explains the way Muslims see the world, and this concept is also not included in the thesis.

In addition to these, Karadeniz accepted geometry as a form of imagination and included it among the general principles of Islamic aesthetics with the concept of "*Hendesī*."[151] Considering geometry as a concept has not been adopted in this thesis, although it fits very well with the aesthetic understanding of Islam. According to this thesis, geometry is a visual language used in Islamic art. Although consensus approaches are being focused on while forming the basic concepts of Islamic

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[148] "*… do good, for Allāh certainly loves the good-doers.*" (Al-Baqarah, 2/195)
[149] Câmiu's-Sagîr, II/12, Hadith No:1201
[150] Ibid, 153
[151] Karadeniz, 134.

aesthetics, the case is different for the *Cosmic Spiral* concept. Despite the fact that this approach is a concept that is rarely expressed, it is also adopted in the thesis in terms of its relevance to Islamic thought, consistency with the principles of reverse perspective, and avoiding indoctrination.

Although there are different opinions about whether it should be accepted as a principle or not, and it may not be appropriate to generalize on the grounds that there may be differences in the practices related to the principle of avoiding depictions (aniconism), this principle has been clearly accepted when the whole of Islamic thought is taken into account in this thesis. In this respect, the differences in practices cannot change the basic approaches and essence of Islam.

One important issue that should be highlighted at this point is that we can also encounter some of the concepts about Islamic art in other cultures. The existence of some principles adopted by Islamic thought in other cultures does not result in the fact that Islamic thought is directly influenced by the same mentality as the past cultures or borrowed exactly what they have already established. When some of these concepts are examined one by one, it can be misunderstood that Islamic thought has a similar worldview to the ancient Greek, Egyptian, and Byzantine cultures on the one hand and the Far Asian cultures on the other. Interaction between cultures is inevitable, and it is not a deficiency; nevertheless, there is a feature that distinguishes Islamic art from other cultures, which also includes all principles, which is the principle of "*tawḥīd*" (oneness of Allāh). This changes the ground on which all artistic applications are built.

In this theoretical framework, which includes the basic concepts of Islamic aesthetics, created to examine the spatial reflections of the religious extensions of Ottoman thought in the Topkapı Palace, the authors whose views were examined and the approaches these authors referred to are given in the table below. Some of the authors have expressed and explained these approaches as a principle, while others have only mentioned these concepts in their narratives. The diagram of the detailed literature study conducted while creating the basic approaches of Islamic aesthetics and which concepts were created by using the works of which authors are as follows.

Table 1 Selection of basic concepts of Islamic Aesthetics

	Tanawwu'	Mod. Struct.	Tenāsub	R. Pers.	Harmony w. Nature	TensionIsns	Tevāżu-Impers.	Familiarity	Ben.-Func	Clarity	Sorrow	İḥsān and Kemāl	Ḥusn and Cemāl	Tenzīh	Styl.	Avoiding Ind./ Realism	Aniconism	Eternity-Repetition	Cosmic Spiral	Teksīf	Tawḥīd
Abouseif, D.			x				x	x		x				x		x	x				x
Alami, H.															x		x				x
Al-Faruqi,İ.		x													x		x	x			x
Al-Gazali			x				x		x			x	x								x
Al-Haytham			x																		x
Arvasi, S.					x								x								x
Atan, A.			x																		x
Atan, U.																			x		x
Atasoy, N.					x						x										
Ayvazoğlu, B.	x		x	x	x	x	x		x			x		x	x	x	x	x		x	x
Buckhardt, T.			x		x	x	x	x						x	x		x	x			x
Cansever, T.		x								x							x				x
Creswell, K.A.C.																					
Çağrıcı, M.												x									x
Çam, N.					x	x			x			x		x	x		x	x			x
Erzen, J.	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x		x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Ettinghousen, R.												x									
Florenski, P.				x																	
Garaudy, R.		x													x		x				
Gonzales, V.			x		x							x					x				x
Grabar, O.																	x				x
Grunebaum, V.								x													x

	Tanawwu'	Mod. Struct.	Tenāsub	R. Pers.	Harmony w. Nature	Tensionlsns	Tevāżu-Impers.	Familiarity	Ben.-Func	Clarity	Sorrow	İhsān and Kemāl	Ḥusn and Cemāl	Tenzīh	Styl.	Avoiding Ind./ Realism	Aniconism	Eternity-Repetition	Cosmic Spiral	Teksīf	Tawḥīd
Hodgson, M.						x				x											
Ibn Mace							x														
İpşiroğlu, M.				x										x	x		x				x
Karadeniz, M.U.	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Kılıç, S.			x																		x
Koç, T.		x	x		x	x	x		x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x
Kuban, D.							x									x					
Massignon, L.																					
Mutluel, O.									x			x	x								x
Nasr, S.H.																x					x
Ortaylı,İ.							x														
Özek,A.							x														
Özgül, G.				x																	
Peker, A.U								x						x				x			x
Popodopoulo, A.																			x		
Roger, G.																					
Sabra, A.			x																		
Saoud,R.																	x				
Taşkent,A.																					x
Uluçam, A.							x					x		x							x
Yenişehirlioğlu,F.		x																			

1.5 Approach and Structure of the Thesis

National thought has been described as "a nation's self-consciousness, identity struggle, and civilization consciousness."[152] According to Bolay, it is evident that there was a full consciousness of history, state, and society in the Ottoman Empire. It has a worldview, understanding of order, and a universal mission that comes from its historical tradition. The Ottoman mindset has a sense of integrity in its view of the universe, nature, society, and history. The Ottoman ideals and way of thinking were shaped in such an understanding. Religious beliefs, legends, historical experiences, dreams, and interpretations played a role in shaping this worldview.[153]

This dissertation investigates how the Ottoman thought system-mindset was spatially reflected in the Topkapı Palace with an aesthetical analysis. Since it was used by the Ottoman dynasty for approximately 400 years and hosted rulers with different personal characteristics in different periods during this period, it is essential to determine a specific period when it comes to a study about Topkapı Palace. In this study, the 15th and 16th centuries in which the Ottoman culture reached its peak in terms of maturity, which started to rise with the conquest of Istanbul by Mehmed II (1451-1481), continued with Beyazıd II (1481-1512) and Selim I (1512-1520), power peaked with Suleyman I (1520-1566) and lasted with Murad III (1574-1595), was chosen.

The dissertation brings a holistic perspective to Topkapı Palace. The work claims that the Ottoman mindset strongly influenced the spatial organization of the Topkapı Palace and aims to reveal this interaction/reflection. According to Ocak, four dimensions must be mastered to dominate the Ottoman mindset and intellectual life:[154]

- Politics
- Philosophy
- Religion
- Sufism

This dissertation presents an aesthetical analysis of the architectural and spatial organization of the palace and its artistic culture, including the influence of these four

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[152] Ottoman Encyclopedia, "The Ottoman Thought in the Classical Age and the Tehafüt Ambition in the Ottomans", by Süleyman Hayri Bolay (Ankara:Yeni Türkiye Press, 33, 2000), 11.

[153] Ibid,

[154] Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, "Klasik Dönem Osmanlı Düşünce Hayatı." *H.,C., Güzel et al., Ankara: Yeni Türkiye* 11 (2002): 15.

components of Ottoman thought. Through this analysis, it is aimed to crystallize the reasons for the preferences regarding the space and to give a deeper meaning to the palace.

When the foundation process of the Ottoman Empire and the primary sources of the mindset is examined, it can be seen that Islamic belief greatly influences every stage, level, and ideal of the state.

Since the dominant factor that shaped many attitudes in the political, philosophical, religious, and therefore Sufī thought of the state is the sunnī Islamic belief system, it was found appropriate in this study to base the analysis of the Topkapı Palace on the theoretical framework of Islamic aesthetics. In this context, the conceptual, basic principles of Islamic aesthetics were determined so that the study could be placed on stable ground.

Although the main objective of the dissertation is expressed as a contribution to the study of Ottoman art, architecture, and landscape design by means of a theoretical approach anchored in Islamic aesthetics, the basic/comprehensive analysis of the dissertation includes the aesthetic analysis of the Topkapı Palace in line with the basic principles of Islamic aesthetics, each element (politics, philosophy, religion, and Sufism) that constitutes the Ottoman thought was examined in detail, the following research questions were prepared to question its relationship with the spatial organization, and by seeking answers to these questions, it was aimed to reveal the reflections of these elements on the general space structure of the Topkapı Palace and the artistic and architectural culture of the palace's period in question; 15th and 16th centuries. However, separate chapters such as the Topkapı Palace / Political Thought / Philosophical Thought / Religious Thought / Sufi Thought were not given to avoid duplication in terms of content. To this end, when it comes to the Ottoman Empire, many of the answers to these questions appear to be related to religion. [155] The chapter in which the palace is analyzed based on the basic concepts of Islamic aesthetics and the aesthetics of dwelling in Islam, on the one hand, contains the spatial reflections of Religious Thought and Sufi Thought; on the other hand, they also bear the traces of the spatial reflections of Political Thought and Philosophical Thought and are designed

to include answers to their research questions. Besides, since the Ottoman State was not exactly a theocratic state, everything in Political Thought was not related to religion, and this situation was reflected in the space in the same direction. For instance, in the Islamic belief, people are equal, and there is no hierarchy based on status, but the Ottoman Empire had a spatial organization where the hierarchy based on status was strictly enforced and reflected in the space in the same way. In parts where the palace is analyzed according to the basic concepts of Islamic aesthetics and household aesthetics in Islam, the unmentioned answers to the research questions on the spatial reflections of Political Thought are discussed under the title of "Ottoman Political Thought and Topkapı Palace Spatial and Architectural Organization."

One another argument of the dissertation is that since Topkapı Palace is the residence of the state and the government, it is ultimately a house, and the household aesthetics of Islam greatly influenced this place. This influence is both spatial and organizational. As much as privacy is important in the family and in residence in the Islamic faith, it is an example of this privacy as it is so important in the Topkapı Palace and is reflected in the space in the same way.

Although numerous descriptive sources have been written about Topkapı Palace, academic work that provides a holistic view of the palace is quite limited, given its extraordinary importance of the palace. This dissertation aims to be methodologically unique as it prefers aesthetical analysis instead of a descriptive study and is original in content since it focuses on the spatial organization and architectural/artistic reflection of Ottoman thought with a holistic approach.

In this context, in the first chapter of the dissertation, the aim, scope, original contribution, methodology of the study, and a detailed literature review are explained. Additionally, in order to make a conceptual/terminological clarification, the concept of "palace" was addressed to understand Topkapı Palace, which is the focus of the dissertation, and Turkish and Islamic palaces were examined in detail to understand from which tradition of the Palace was nourished and to see where it was established in the Turkish-Islamic palaces. Moreover, essential terminological clarifications on Ottoman thought, Islamic art and aesthetics, and the selections of basic concepts of Islamic aesthetics were made. This chapter is finalized with a section where the approach and structure of the thesis are crystallized. The second chapter focuses on

the place of Islam in the culture and mindset of the Ottoman Empire. On the one hand, this chapter reveals the place of religion in the establishment, administration, and social life of the state; on the other hand, it draws the framework of the Ottoman mindset and elaborates on the interior of this framework. The third chapter is on the formation of Islamic Aesthetics. This part includes topics on the foundations, origin, and horizons of Islamic art and aesthetics and the source of beauty in Islam. Although the dissertation's main contribution is the architectural and artistic analysis of the Topkapı Palace, at a lower level, it aims to contribute to the understanding of Islamic aesthetics, which we believe is a big gap and about which very little was written theoretically and academically, considering the fact that in all Islamic geographies, art, and architecture are in an intimate relationship with the faith.[156] The fourth chapter focuses on major Islamic philosophers and their aesthetic views. This part enables us to better understand the strong philosophical background of Islamic aesthetics, although there have been ongoing debates about its existence.

When the literature on Islamic aesthetics is reviewed, it can be concluded that the theories are primarily explicitly developed for sacred art and architecture, and this local view inevitably prevents the principles of this aesthetics from being understood in all its dimensions. However, the dominance of a particular aesthetic view, which is effective in many art branches such as architecture, miniature, ornament, music, and poetry, is the first feature that stands out in the aesthetics of Islamic arts. The concepts and principles of Islamic aesthetics in the literature were not evaluated under concrete and consistent titles, which prevented the evaluation of Islamic aesthetics as a whole. Therefore, it is vital to carry out conceptual studies to determine both the aesthetic background of Islamic arts and architecture and follow their traces in the arts they dominate, which is one of the main objectives of the dissertation. In this context, after the theoretical framework is created, the fifth chapter, the basic concepts drawn from this theoretical framework, were included in order for the analysis to be on solid ground. The basic concepts created in this section were compiled by conducting detailed research on the varied sources written on the subject's literature. Then, commonly mentioned and accepted concepts were determined, and finally, they were

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[156] Titus Burchardth, *Art of Islam* (Westerham: World of Islam Festival Publishing, 1976), 11.

elaborated by making various additions in light of Islamic doctrine. The sixth chapter is on the aesthetics of households in Islam. Since Topkapı Palace is the residence of the state and the ruler, it can also be considered a big household. By examining the Quran and the Sunnah, which are the main sources of Islamic aesthetics, by revealing the characteristics of a beautiful household in this belief system, the study attempts to reveal and make sense of the reasons for spatial and organizational preferences in the palace. The seventh chapter is on the visual language of Ottoman-Islamic art and aesthetics. This part aims to present how Islamic aesthetics reflect on art, architecture, and decorative programmes visually. In that chapter, symbolism, which must be emphasized in Islamic arts, is emphasized, and the subjects of calligraphy, geometry, and floral ornamentation, which can be described as essential Islamic arts, are discussed. As these applications are commonly used in Topkapı Palace, this detailed study will pave the way for resolving the meanings embedded in the palace. The architectural structure, the interiors, the gardens, the inscriptions, tiles, geometrical designs, floral elements, and even colors used in the palace will be investigated in a cultural context within the visions of Islamic art and aesthetics to understand their symbolic meanings and depth.

As Sesemann suggests, performing aesthetic analysis is like doing a translation between two languages, and for a good analysis, one must know both languages well. Especially if the analysis of a work of art belonging to a culture is to be made, the mentality, values, and traditions of that culture should be known in depth so that the analysis of the art object itself, which is the second language in this metaphoric approach, can be made.[157] In this direction, until the end of the seventh chapter, the thought system and values of the Ottoman Empire are discussed as the first language to be translated. The eighth chapter, *Aesthetical Analysis of the Topkapı Palace*, specifically focuses on the Topkapı Palace. This part is the main contribution of the thesis as it scrutinizes the reflection of Ottoman thought on the Palace's spatial organization. In this chapter, firstly, the spatial and functional presentation of the palace was made, and the construction process and its contribution to the imperial image to be created were included. Then, in the context of other palace traditions, it

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[157] Sesemann, 1-2.

was found out where Topkapı Palace was located. Thus, it is aimed to present a wide range of information about the palace. The aesthetical analysis of Topkapı Palace, which is intended to make an important contribution to the dissertation, according to the twenty-one defined concepts of Islamic aesthetics, also constitutes the essence of this chapter. The palace was analyzed according to each of these principles. While the analysis of some principles requires assessing the palace as a whole, in others, it is necessary to determine a specific area because the artistic and architectural structure of the palace is multi-layered and very rich in content, and some principles need to be clarified through a specific example. While examining the spatial equivalents of some principles such as aniconism, stylization, and eternity/repetition, the Privy Room of Murad III, which was built in the 16th century (1579) and believed to reflect the unspoiled elegant Ottoman taste, was chosen. The analysis of the spatial and artistic equivalents of all these concepts is made through the visual language of Islamic art, which includes calligraphy, floral patterns, geometry, and various symbolic meanings. Besides, the palace will be analyzed in terms of Islam's household aesthetics. All these analyses together will aim to exhibit the intended contribution of the thesis.

This thesis does not claim that the whole spatial and organizational design of a palace like the Topkapı Palace, which was built and used for many years and was also the residence of sultans with different personal characteristics, was shaped entirely within a religious framework. Many factors, such as the cultural values of the states that have formed over time, the behavioral practices that have developed or had to form within the framework of the conditions, the preferences of the people who run the state, or the spirit of the time have a role in the preferences of the state. It would not be right to reduce the preferences strictly and clearly to a single reason. This dissertation has been written with this awareness. This dissertation aims to reveal the influence of the mindset, which is believed to have been shaped by religious beliefs and values, on the spatial and organizational formation of the Topkapı Palace as the residence of the Ottoman Empire and its sultans for many years, which was known to be very important for religious sensitivities and considerations from the establishment stage. It also suggests that the spatial preferences and design of the Topkapı Palace are influenced by the religious perspective of the state and rulers and aims to reflect the traces of this influence with the aesthetic understanding of Islam.

Research Questions:

● Hierarchy is significant in the Ottoman State administration. Is it also possible to see this in spatial organization, design, and use? Are the status differences reflected in the space in the same way?

● The Ottomans are extremely practical and pragmatic in state administration. They have a style of action that evaluates the situation according to the conditions and requirements, keeps up with the change, and determines their direction according to the needs. Is it possible to see the effects of this way of thinking and behavior in the construction process of the palace and the formation of its spaces?

● There is no religion-world separation in Islam, and although they can be separated when necessary in the Ottoman mindset, religion, and state are not considered wholly isolated from one another. How is this reflected in the space? Were the spaces and arrangements in the palace, which cannot be defined as a religious structure, thought and designed parallel with this mindset? To what extent are religious elements present and essential in the palace, which cannot be defined as a religious building?

● The Ottoman Empire is neither a theocratic nor a secular state. Although religion occupied a significant place in the Ottoman Empire, it is a state that separates the state from religion when appropriate, as can be understood from the fact that *Shaykh al-Islam* is not a member of the *Diwān-ı Humāyūn* (Imperial Council). It is known that the *sharīʿa* is not strictly enforced while governing the state, and although there is always a concern for conformity with Islam in the decisions taken, there are stretches, improvisations, sometimes disguising, and adaptations according to the needs with the help of customary laws. Is it possible to see the effects of this mindset in the formation process of architectural spaces? When it comes to personal tastes, are places built that may actually be against religion? Is there always a concern that the venues are in accordance with Islam, as in the administration? How does this mindset manifest itself in the balance between worldly grandeur- Islamic humility/modesty in the palace? Do they leave out the Islamic principle of humility when necessary?

● It is believed that the Sultan received the holy and the authority to rule from the supreme creator. Therefore, he is held above everyone and everything. Is *Ḥarem*, as Sultan's private residence, spatially separated from the rest of the palace in accordance

with this view, and does it reflect the segregated position of the sultans? Does his residence have similar characteristics to everyone else because he is ultimately a servant like everyone else, or does it have superior architectural and artistic features?

● The concept of justice is very important and even the most important.[158] Does this have a reflection in space, and in what way?

● Islamic philosophy focuses on the Divine. Parallel to this, can it be said that there is religion, god, and servitude consciousness at the center of the spatial organization of the palace?

● Is the search for "beautiful" and "aesthetics" in the created spaces considered beautiful to the extent that it reminds them of God, as in philosophy? Can it be suggested that this search is dominant in architectural and ornamental choices/elements?

● In the creation process of philosophical thought, it was emphasized that everything should be done for a reason and should have a benefit. When it comes to Topkapı Palace, has the issue of intent and benefit/functionality been equally important?

● Education has always been important for the Ottomans. Does the spatial organization of the palace reflect this?

● While Ottoman scholars and clergy were producing religious works, they always worked on making commentaries, updates, and practical and pragmatic comments on old writings instead of creating original new works. Rather than the thought that the new can be better, respect for the old and closeness to the familiar are the immediately apparent approaches. Is it possible to see the traces of this mentality in spatial and artistic productions?

● Is the palace beautiful/good/useful according to the opinions of sufi scholars? Is the beauty of the Palace compatible with the beauty understanding of Islamic philosophers?

● How do we evaluate and interpret the palace according to beauty in Islam and basic concepts of Islamic aesthetics?

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[158] It is a common discourse of the Ottomans that they put justice above everything else. However, it can always be questioned whether many of the steps taken are fair.

CHAPTER 2

2. CLASSICAL OTTOMAN CULTURE AND MINDSET

2.1. Perception of Faith and Place of Religion under the Ottomans

Religion, which is among the privileged topics in cultural and sociological studies, has an important place in all societies as it has given its believers a system of values and symbols in the processes of transformation that societies have undergone throughout history, giving them a common thought. The concept of religion has existed since the earliest periods of humanity and made people feel its influence both on the structure of the mind and in their activities.[159] Religion, a tool of social change, is perceived as a phenomenon that preserves old values rather than revealing new ones.[160] It also plays an important role in society and social life, and it has been influential in all sociological processes of humanity. In that sense, religion both influences social institutions and ensures the continuity of these institutions by giving meaning to all symbols and perceived as their source.[161]

It is a sociological fact that communities, which have been exposed to a certain belief and culture for hundreds of years, are influenced by other beliefs and cultures they encounter over time. A new religion that enters the life of a society cannot completely eliminate the effects of the previous religion it replaces. The two interacting religions

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[159] Mustafa Keskin, "A Generality Over the Relations of Religion and Society," Journal of Academic Researches in Religious Sciences 4 / 3 (June 2004): 8, https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/52582.

[160] Ibid, 16.

[161] Yasemin Apalı, "Religion and Mentality In Terms of Sociology of Knowledge." *Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli University Journal of ISS* 5, no. 1 (2015): 196, http://acikerisim.nevsehir.edu.tr/bitstream/handle/20.500.11787/6223/yasemin%20apal%c4%b1.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

and cultures open up a new cultural development path for society. Elements of the new culture find the chance to live as much as the dominant culture allows, and while some old habits are abandoned in favor of the new culture, some continue to be kept alive by adapting to the new culture.[162] This has been a determining factor for the Turks, who have a nomadic lifestyle and are constantly moving towards new geographical areas. For this reason, the effect of religion on the cultural and social life of Turks who encountered Islam and later converted is a significant phenomenon. In this context, the religious lives of the Turks for a long time and the stages of introduction to Islam are of great and historical importance in terms of shaping their culture.[163]

It is necessary to know the religious and cultural life in pre-Ottoman Turkish societies to understand the religious structure in the Ottoman Empire. Turks showed great respect for religion and made great efforts to dominate all areas of life and also ensured that it was carried in harmony with the deep-rooted traditions of the state. The unity of customs and religion in the administrative tradition seen in all Turkish states from the past continued its existence in other Turkish-Islamic states and the Ottoman.[164]

2.2. The Role of Religion in the Formation of the Ottoman State

Revealing the course and institutional status of political-religious relations in the Ottoman Empire requires considering the Ottoman power structure. How are the Ottoman power structure and practices conducted? Is the state subject to religion, is the religion subject to the state, or is there a division of labor between the two where independence applies? What is the relationship between legal status and religious status? Does the principle of separation of forces exist, and how does it work if it exists? Under the influence of which traditions and structures from which civilization areas was the Ottoman power structure institutionalized, and how did it proceed? The answers to these questions can make it possible to understand and interpret the relationship between religion and the state in the Ottoman Empire.

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[162] Erdal Taşbaş, "The Place of Religion in Classical Period Ottoman Empire and Community Life," *The Journal of International Social Research* 11/57 (June 2018): xxx, https://www.academia.edu/76803335/Klasi_k_D%C3%B6nem_Osmanli_Devlet_Ve_Toplum_Hayati nda_Di_ni_n_Yeri_.

[163] Ibid, 147.

[164] Bahtiyar Murat Aras, "Relationship between Religion and State in the Ottoman Empire, " *Cappadocia Journal of History and Social Sciences* 2 (2014): 71, https://cahij.com/?mod=makale_tr_ozet&makale_id=23047.

Religions with masses of believers become institutions by gaining a bureaucratic structure over time.[165] Institutionalized religions also increase their function while gaining continuity by establishing organic ties with other institutions of society. Institutionalized religions are considered to have social functions such as mentality, integration, control, regulation, socialization, and cultural transfer between generations. In traditional societies, religions also have an important political function, such as "legitimizing powers."[166]

In the formation of traditional Ottoman political institutions and the functioning of the system, Islam, the religion of the dominant mass, had a defining function. In the Ottoman Empire, the source of sovereignty was considered divine, and the ruler at all levels used to legitimize their power by confirming themselves to the religious authorities and incorporating religious motives into their practices. The Ottomans inherited this tradition from the Turkish and Muslim states before them and developed it with new institutions that were needed in their era.

Karatepe suggests that in Mecca, where Islam was born, although there was a very close relationship and solidarity among the first Muslims, the number of Muslims was not enough to establish an official and bureaucratic institution. For this reason, bureaucratic institutionalization started in al-Madīnah after the Hijrah. In the first year of the Hegira, the Prophet Muhammad laid the foundations of the Islamic state by making a contract between Muslim and non-Muslim communities in al-Madīnah. According to this contract, each of the communities of different faiths would be free in their internal affairs, depending on their own leaders, and the Prophet, who was the leader of the Muslim community, would also serve as the head of state. Thus, in the city-state of al-Madīnah, Prophet Muhammad gathered all kinds of religious, political, and administrative powers such as the judge, imam, army command, and collecting and spending state revenues.

The administrators appointed by the Prophet in the provinces also fulfilled the religious, political, and administrative duties of the judge, mufti, imam, and commandership.

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[165] Ottoman Encyclopedia, "Osmanlı'da Din- Devlet İlişkisi," by Şükrü Karatepe (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Press 6, 2000), 56.
[166] Ibid,

This practice did not change during the four great caliphs; both the heads of state and other appointed officials carried out all religious, political, and administrative duties together.[167]

Based on the practices of the Prophet Muhammad and the four great caliphs, it is seen that there is no distinction between "religious and state" in the Islamic state. Managers, who perform legislative, executive, and judicial duties, also have duties related to the people's ability to live by their beliefs and to fulfill their worship. The source of legitimate power is to act in accordance with the will of Allāh and the Sunnah of the Prophet.

Since Islam imposes provisions on every aspect of individual and social life, the state, which is the highest level of organization of social life, cannot go beyond the scope of the religious organization. However, in the Quran, a state model similar to the one described in law books is not shown. Instead, higher and unchangeable principles such as dominating the will of Allāh, being just, preventing sedition, observing the council and consultation, obeying the law, paying homage to people, abolishing cruelty, and protecting beliefs were mentioned. In Islamic thought, the state model was determined by the experience and the current needs of the day based on these principles.[168]

During the establishment of the Islamic state, two separate centers of authority and organization that held political power and religious power did not emerge, and despite the changes that occurred in the later periods, there was no power struggle between religion and the state in Islamic societies. It is accepted that the first change in terms of founding principles started when the Al-ʿUmawīyah took power in Damascus. Al-ʿUmawīyah rulers generally kept themselves independent of religion and used Islam as a means of legitimizing their power against the people. The Abbasids reorganized the state order, taking Byzantine and Sassanid institutions as an example, and in this new arrangement, the caliph again had religious and political authority. However, as the state grew and became more complex, most of the powers were transferred to the viziers and council. Islam started to gain power in unofficial circles with the influence of science and thought movements that got stronger at that time. The caliph, who shared his administrative duties with the council and his viziers and his religious duties

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[167] Ibid,

[168] Ottoman Encyclopedia, "Osmanlı'da Din-Devlet İlişkilerinin Teorik ve Teolojik Bağlarıyla Uyumu," by Yümni Sezen (Ankara:Yeni Türkiye Press 6, 2000), 45.

with scholars and civic thinkers, lost much of his power. Education, civil jurisdiction, and regulation of civil relations were completely under the control of the scholars. Having lost much of its political and religious authority in the last years of the Abbasids, the caliphate turned into a symbolic authority, distributing offices to the Buyids and Seljuk sultans.[169] In this period, worldly and political authority first passed into the management of Buyids and then Seljuk sultans. By distributing religious titles and symbols to the sultans, the caliphs turned into an authority that legitimized political power. In this new practice, not only did the religious authority and political authority separate from each other, but also the power that took over the political authority began to use the religious authority for its own benefit.[170]

The symbolic religious leadership of the Abbasid caliphs continued when the *kayi* tribes were placed on the Byzantine border as a frontier. The caliphs affirmed the legitimacy of their power by giving Anatolian Seljuk sultans *ḫilʿat* (caftan) turban, scepter, and religious titles such as "*sultan-ı ġālib*" and "*sultan-ı ḳāhir.*" [171] The sultans, in turn, showed respect to the caliph and loyalty to the Sunni Islamic belief. Sunni Islam was taught, and a culture of devotion to the caliph was imposed in the madrasas established in the cities and large settlements under the direct control of the Seljuk sultans. On the other hand, Shiite-western Islam and heterodox sects bearing traces of Asian culture were more common at the ends where Turkmen tribes from Asia were settled and in rural settlements where madrasas were not effective. The warrior spirit of these marginalized masses was motivated by their desire to conquer new countries and looting, and they were made to fight Byzantium.[172] The decent agreement between fathers, abdals, Khorasan Dervishes, and Veteran (Ghāzī) Dervishes, who were the spiritual leaders of these heterodox masses mentioned in the rising period of the Ottoman Empire, with the Ottoman sultans who embarked on conquest movements against Byzantium was a feature that stood out in terms of the religion-state relationship in the establishment of the state.[173] In this period, with the development of Islamic institutions, the belief that the struggles at the extremes were

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[169] Ibid, 57.

[170] Ibid,

[171] Ottoman Encyclopedia, "Osmanlı'da Din-Devlet İlişkisi," by Şükrü Karatepe, 57.

[172] Ibid,

[173] Taşbaş, *The Place of Religion*, 148.

made for the sake of religion began to be established, and these advanced movements had a religious meaning. These Veteran organizations were in line with the goals of the Ottoman sultan and gave legitimacy to their movements on Byzantine borders. Acting on this idea, this religious legitimacy always came to the fore in the enthronement ceremonies of the Ottoman sultans, and they were given the title of veterans with a ceremony.[174] As the Ottomans succeeded against Byzantium, the Ottoman country became attractive to those who were not satisfied with the opportunities and administration of their country in different parts of the Islamic world. Veterans, scholars, dervishes, sheiks, and fathers, who were the leaders of the masses who escaped from the Mongolian oppression, gathered around Osman I before the conquest of Bursa and supported the newly formed "ideal of holy war" of the state. The principals and other rulers of the rising period used titles that had religious connotations to impose Islam's spirit of jihad on the masses. It was for this purpose that Ertuğrul, Osman, and Orhan Beys were called "*ghāzīs*" in the sense of fighting for the sake of religion.[175]

The Ottoman Empire, built on the idea of conquest, declared the lands of the local elites who opposed it since its foundation, in accordance with the Muslim traditions, as a "*dāru'l-ḥarp*" (abode of war).[176] Non-Muslims living in the Balkans, which was declared as *dāru'l-ḥarp*, preferred Ottoman rule over Catholic rule. The Balkan peoples perceived the Ottoman Empire as an ally against the strict practices of the Latin Church. Before the Ottoman progress, the Bulgarian King made efforts to catholicize the peoples in this region through the Latin Church, but the tolerance-based practices of Murad I, who conquered these lands, were welcomed by the locals.[177] As stated by Ocak, the Ottoman Empire, which conquered new lands, found it necessary to apply religious tolerance in these places in order for the indigenous peoples to be satisfied with the new administration and not engage in activities against the state. With this mentality of tolerance and the fact that churches gradually lost their prestige

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[174] Selahattin Döğüş, "Anatolian Gazis From Osman Gazi to Gazi Mustafa Kemal," *Afyon Kocatepe University Journal of Social Science*, 9 / 1 (2007), 28, http://hdl.handle.net/11630/3667.

[175] Ottoman Encyclopedia, "Osmanlı Devleti'nde Din-Devlet İlişkileri Üzerine Bazı Notlar," by Davut Dursun v.6 (1999), 71.

[176] Metin Heper, "Osmanlı'da Devlet Geleneği," *Türkiye Günlüğü* , v.13 (1990), 139. http://www.turkiyegunlugu.com.tr.

[177] Muammer Sencer, *Osmanlı'da Din ve Devlet* (İstanbul: Toplumsal Dönüşüm Yayınları, 2002), 78.

over the people since the 17th century, a rapid Islamisation movement was experienced in some Christian communities.[178]

Although the Sultans of the rising period adopted Sunni Islam in general, they also approached religious understandings other than Sunnism with tolerance. In addition to the religious understanding close to the state order represented by those who grew up in madrasas, the aforementioned Bektashism, Mevleviyeh, and many other sects had the opportunity to develop and spread in the Ottoman Empire. Tolerance for these sectarian organizations outside of Sunni Islam continued as long as they remained outside of political activities. Despite the opposition of the ʿulemā during the Bayezid I and Sheikh Bedreddin's Rebellion, seizing many foundations in their hands and giving them to the military class to establish the administrative system are examples of this because the sultan prioritized the needs of the military and the interests of the state above all other issues.[179]

During the establishment and first organization of the state, religious and sect leaders, each representing the masses, were highly respected, and most took part in the government. Sheikh Edebali became the first mufti of the Ottoman Empire. Dursun Fakih, as the first Muslim judge of the state, read the first sermon in Karacahisar on behalf of Osman I, one of the important elements of state sovereignty in the Islamic state tradition. With the sermon he read, he declared that the community ruled by Osman I was an independent state. Orhan I, on the other hand, appointed the famous Sufi scholar Dawūd al-Qayṣarī to the *madrasa* established following the conquest of Iznik. The cult leaders, who took an active role in the rising period, even had a say in the election of a *bey*. Some of the villages conquered after the victory was allocated to the members of the sect and dervishes who came from various parts of the Islamic world and fought in the rising-period wars. Orhan I allocated most of the captured villages to the dervishes who participated in the conquest of Bursa. Dervishes contributed to the reorganization of the society according to Muslim-Turkish traditions and to the execution of public services such as education, development, transportation, and security through the *tekke* (dervish lodges) and *zāwiya* (central dervish lodges)

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[178] Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, "Türkiye'de Siyasi ve Toplumsal Uzlaşma Problemi ve İdeolojik Çatışmanın Merkezindeki İslam," *Türkiye Günlüğü* 42, (1996), 6. http://www.turkiyegunlugu.com.tr.

[179] Halil İnalcık, *Osmanlı'da Devlet, Hukuk, Adalet* (İstanbul: Eren Yayınları, 2005), 31.

they established in these villages.[180] Most of the "foundation villages" that still exist in Western Anatolia and Rumelia are the foundations of the dervish lodges and *zāwiya* of the sheiks and dervishes who fought in the conquests during the rising period.[181] All these indicate that during the first establishment and organization period of the state, religion played a very important role, especially through the leaders of the sect, dervish lodges, and sects were effective in the administration of local public services, and that politicians protected and watched over the members of the sect.

Considering the religious understanding of this period, it is observed that important sects such as Khalwatiyya, Bektashism, Rifa'i, and Mawlawiyya were common in Anatolian cities. These sects have an important quality as being a form between the state and society in the Ottoman Empire. The sects, which were effective in the conquest and Islamization activities of the state during the establishment phase, and which were a shelter, included those who could not adapt to various sects of Islam. Sects, which are places where educational and artistic activities are also performed, developed their own teachings by keeping the pre-Islamic faith remnants and Islam together and were involved in governing in some way.[182] For example, the sects that entered the Guild of Janissaries through Bektashism and the artisans' organization through the Ahi community strengthened their position between the people and the state. For these reasons, the sects assumed functional roles in the formation of the understanding of Islam in the Ottoman Empire and in all values of the society.[183]

The function of these urban-based sects was to protect the existing social order, as stated before. The Bektashis especially had great benefits in the Ottoman conquest movements on the one hand, and on the other hand, they were effective in the spread of Turkish culture, and, therefore, they were protected and supported by the state.[184] However, the situation changed after a while, and the influences of heterodox Islam were abandoned. The reason for this is that there is not much room for law in mystical

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[180] Ottoman Encyclopedia, Osmanlı'da Din-Devlet İlişkisi, by Şükrü Karatepe, 58.

[181] Ömer Lütfi Barkan, "Kolonizatör Türk Dervişleri", *Vakıflar Dergisi* 2, İstanbul in Karatepe, (1974), 58.

[182] Taşbaş, 148.

[183] Hatice Kelpetin Arpaguş, *Osmanlı Halkının Geleneksel İslam Anlayışı ve Kaynakları* (İstanbul: Çamlıca Yayınları, 2001), 41-43.

[184] Aras, *Relationship*, 71.

and unruly heterodox understanding since law and legal order are among the sine qua non of the Ottoman Empire.

Although the sects, which can be called the true "civil" religious communities of Islamic societies, at times reached the power to influence and direct even the strongest political leaders, they remained completely outside the official bureaucratic organization of the state. The sects were not designed as a central and distinctive organization, as do churches and monasteries in the West. The state is likely to have prevented such a development considering the danger of rivaling political power. As a result, religious sects and orders remained as local and regional organizations that were disconnected from each other. [185]

The Ottoman Empire, as the greatest defender of the Islamic world against Christianity, fought with the West for centuries and confidently preserved this role until the 17th century.

2.3. Ottoman Religious Culture

When the Ottoman Empire, which has a military structure, is examined within objective criteria, it can be seen that it has a very close relationship with the Sunni-Hanafi version of Islam.[186] The Ottomans took on religious color in the first rising stage as a principality and included religion at the institutional and bureaucratic level with its nationalization. They also designed their administration within the scope of the religious field from the Sultan to the lowest level and unit and tried to shape their institutions according to Islamic principles like the Muslim states before them.[187] In this regard, the *Tanzimat Fermanı* (Imperial Edict of Reorganization) clearly reveals the relationship of the Ottoman Empire with religion, starting with the following statement: "All the world knows that in the first days of the Ottoman monarchy, the glorious precepts of the Quran and the laws of the empire were always honored…"

Besides, İnalcık states that due to the close relationship of the Ottoman Empire with Islam, the Ottoman lands are expressed with such descriptions as *Memālik-i Islâm*,

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[185] Ottoman Encyclopedia, "Osmanlı'da Din- Devlet İlişkisi," by Şükrü Karatepe, 58.

[186] Ejder Okumuş, *Klasik Dönem Osmanlı Devleti'nde Din-Devlet İlişkisi* (Ankara:Lotus Yayınevi, 2005), 12.

[187] Ahmet Mumcu, *Tarih Açısından Türk Devriminin Temelleri ve Gelişmesi* (İstanbul : İnkılap Kitabevi, 1990), 76.

Caliph-Sultan, the *Islamic Sultan*, *armies the Caliph of the Muslims*, and ʿ*Asākir-i Islām*.[188] In this case, as Palmer indicated, "the Ottoman Empire, which is founded as a military establishment devoted to spreading the religion of Islam by conquering the lands of the infidels and fulfilling the sacred order of *Kelimetullāh (*word of Allāh*)*,"[189] and the Empire has a religious character that is intertwined with Islam and Islamic Law.[190] Karal and Karatepe also suggest that although the Ottoman Empire seems to be influenced by the old Middle Eastern traditions, Central Asian Turkish states, and Byzantines, it has the quality of being a religious state under the rule of Muslims[191]. In other words, Yücekök expresses that even though the state concept and the institution have an important place in the Ottoman Empire, which was founded on the foundations of the religion of Islam, religious rules have a determining position on the power structure. He also emphasizes that the state was important for the Ottomans but for the preservation and maintenance of Islam as a religion.[192] According to İnalcık, the people must be protected and satisfied for the state, which guarantee of the survival of Islam in society, to preserve its existence. In order for the people, who were a kind of trust of Allāh to the Sultan, to protect the state and to develop relations between the people and the state on a healthy ground, it was necessary to protect and live the Islam that the people believed and wanted to live in by the state. Ultimately, Islam had effective functions in establishing good relations between the state and the people. Due to these functions, the Sultan was obliged to carry out his administration according to Islamic principles.[193] In this respect, it can be underlined that the classical period Ottoman political structure and institutions, which constitute one of the most important sections of Islamic civilization, are essentially based on Islamic law and political institutions.[194] Islamic law and religious decisions are a central source of reference and legitimation that prevents objections to the Ottoman Empire. In short, the Ottoman

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[188] Halil İnalcık, *Padişah* (İstanbul: MEBİA, 1993), 491.

[189] Alan Palmer, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu, Son Üçyüzyıl, Bir Çöküşün Yeni Tarihi,* trans. Belkıs Çorakçı Dişbudak (İstanbul: Sabah Kitapları, 1993), 5.

[190] Okumuş, "*Klasik Dönem*", 77.

[191] Enver Ziya Karal, *Osmanlı Tarihi, Islahat Fermanı Devri*, v.6 (Ankara: TTKY, 2007), 26. Şükrü Karatepe, *Osmanlı Siyasi Kurumları (Klasik Dönem),* (İstanbul: İşaret Yayınları, 1989), 57.

[192] Ahmet Yücekök, *100 soruda Türkiye'de Din ve Siyaset* (İstanbul: Gerçek Yayınları, 1983), 29.

[193] İnalcık, *Padişah*, 495.

[194] Karatepe, "*Osmanlı*", 17. Hayreddin Karaman, "Osmanlı ve İslam", *İzlenim*, v.35, July 1996, 4-5. https://katalog.idp.org.tr/yazilar/1348502/osmanli-ve-islam. Okumuş, "*Klasik Dönem*", 79.

Empire, which has a traditional political structure, is a state that basically derives its legitimacy from religion, Sunni Islam. Therefore, the principle of legitimacy is of great importance in Ottoman political logic since the principle of legitimacy enables the society to have the belief that state action realizes its rights. [195]

Thus, because of the mentioned religious nature of the economic system of the Ottoman Empire, it can be said that although there are some exceptions, religion had a decisive role in the economic system, the land order that constitutes the infrastructure of the economy, the tax and legal system, and in short in all institutions and organizations that affect the functioning of the state.[196]

In the Ottoman Empire, there was no religion-state dilemma in accordance with the political tradition that it inherited from the previous Islamic-political tradition. The distinction between religion and state did not exist in practice nor in the world of mentality. There was no such understanding that the representatives of the two or both were separated from each other or independent of each other.[197] The Ottoman sultan was both a religious and a secular personality. From this point of view, it can be argued that religion and the state were twins in the classical or traditional Ottoman political system, and the administration was ensured by combining the rational measures of religious politics.

It is necessary to mention the role of religion in restricting the Sultan in the Ottoman Empire. Although some tried to emphasize the arbitrariness of the government since the state was governed by sovereignty, it does not seem possible to talk about the existence of such a system. In fact, the Ottoman Empire was limited by a certain set of rules determined by Islam with all its rulers and administrators, including the sultan. When looked at carefully and objectively, even Sultan, who has the greatest powers, is observed to be controlled and limited by a few rules, laws, and sectors.[198]

Limiting the ruler's power and authority is important in terms of preventing arbitrariness, injustice, and cruelty in administration. Especially in a state such as the

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[195] Huricihan İslamoğlu, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Devlet ve Köylü* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1991), 33-40.

[196] Okumuş, *Klasik Dönem*, 80.

[197] Bernard Lewis, *İstanbul and the Civilization of the Ottoman Empire* (Oklahama: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982), 3.

[198] Karatepe, *Osmanlı*, 101-102.

Ottoman Empire, where the distinction between religion and state is not fully valid and there is a transitional relationship between the two, it is of great importance in terms of preventing the government from arbitrarily exercising its powers in the name of religion.[199]

According to İnalcık, *sharīʿa* and laws, to which the Ottoman administration was officially affiliated, limited the will of the administration and the sultan and enabled him to rule in justice.[200] The sultan counts himself as the head of the state, not the owner. Although he could sometimes use his sultanate side and behave arbitrarily, he used to receive a *fatwā* from the Shaykh al-Islām for the legitimacy of his actions.

However, when his actions were not accepted, he could act with the *fatwā* of the Shaykh al-Islām himself.[201] Thus, the absolute power of the Sultan to have or to prohibit was standing within the *sharīʿa* boundary.[202]

Similarly, Uzun Çarşılı stated that the Ottoman sultans wanted the application of Islamic law and the rule of the Islamic order in cases where direct power relations were not in question, and therefore they chose to receive a *fatwā* from the Shaykh al-Islām regarding the compliance of the regulations they made with *sharīʿa*. Besides, he said that the Shaykh al-Islām were either appointed by the sultan or the grand vizier, who had full authority in the executive affairs of the sultan and were dismissed in the same way. By giving the authority to appoint and dismiss the Shaykh al-Islām, it was stated that the political and administrative authority was superior to the religious-scientific authority. In the dismissal and killing of the grand viziers, the balance between these two positions was established by receiving a *fatwā* from the Shaykh al-Islām.[203]

Karatepe thinks differently from İnalcık and Uzunçarşılı. According to him, the most important *fatwā* given by the Shaykh al-Islām on political issues are those related to the dethronement of the sultan, the dismissal of the grand viziers, and the political murder of high-level state officials. To this end, all of these issues are related to actual situations and consist of the approval of a pre-decided practice to the supreme authority

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[199] Ibid,

[200] İnalcık, 495.

[201] Ibid,

[202] Ibid, 495.

[203] İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Devleti'nin İlmiye Teşkilatı* (Ankara: TTK Press, 1984) 191.

to gain legitimacy. Therefore, whether they had legal reasons or not, the sultans had no difficulty in finding a legal and religious basis for their political decisions. It is not beneficial for the Shaykh al-Islām to resist this issue. Therefore, the sultan has the chance to receive a *fatwā* he wants from the new official he will fulfill by dismissing the current Shaykh al-Islām.[204]

Some of the *fatwā* given by the Shaykh al-Islām were "special *fatwā*" related to the religious-legal problems of Muslim subjects. Some of them were "general *fatwā*" on issues such as war and peace decisions by the sultans, enactment of laws, imposition of taxes and penalties, and political murder. While the special *fatwā* raised the prestige of the *Ilmiye* class in the eyes of the people, the general *fatwā* made the Shaykh al-Islām stronger against the political power. However, it should be noted that the Shaykh al-Islām was a civil servant who came to power with the will of the political power

and also worked under their command. There was no worldly superior authority and sanction that forced the sultan, who was the sole owner of the political power, to obey the *fatwā* of the Shaykh al-Islām.[205]

In the Ottoman administrative system, which was organized on the basis of military requirements, the entire public bureaucracy, including the ʿ*Ilmiye* class, was considered to have a military status. In spite of this, the fact that they ruled in religious and legal fields and had the authority to supervise helped the ʿ*Ilmiye* to rise in the face of political power. Although the other military ruling classes had no guarantee against political power, the ʿ*Ilmiye* class enjoyed partial autonomy and freedom. Since the judges, muftis, and scholars working under the Shaykh al-Islām and their organization were salaried officials of the state, they could not become independent against the political power and rise to the position of an alternative to the government. The organization of Shaykh al-Islam, which carries out services for Muslim subjects and its dependent ʿ*Ilmiye* class, took part in the state bureaucracy even during the strongest periods of the Ottoman Empire. The reason is that the state regarded itself as loyal to Islamic beliefs and ideals despite all its wrong and incomplete practices. According to Karatepe, political authority always controlled religious authority, and an organized

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[204] Karatepe, 60.
[205] Ibid,

religion-state conflict was not allowed. From time to time, the ʿIlmiye class allied with the army and opposed some practices of the state. However, this opposition was aimed at preserving their current status and vested rights rather than seizing power.[206]

At this point, it is necessary to underline some important points about law and functioning in the Ottoman Empire. As it is known, two separate laws were applied in the Classical Ottoman Empire, one of which is Islamic, and the other is customary. While Islamic law could be applied widely in all areas of private law, the customary law consisting of the Sultan's will and decree was applied more effectively in the fields of public law. According to Okumus, it is not possible to separate the fields of customary law and Islamic law with strict boundaries. In this sense, the legitimate source of the customary law is not the sultan himself but the *fatwā* of the person who is at the head of the Islamic law or the scientific-religious hierarchy in the Ottoman Empire, namely the chief mufti. In other words, customary law has to be in accordance with Islamic law.[207] In order to legitimize the laws, decrees, or statutes they issued, the sultans felt the obligation to obtain a *fatwā*, true or false, according to Islamic law, from Shaykh al-Islām, who was perhaps the most influential and most important seat in the state, and that it was in accordance with *sharīʿa*. Naturally, the sultans, in order to meet the needs of the state, imposed several laws and orders of their own will, relying on the executive authority when necessary. However, it was imperative that these customary laws not contradict *sharīʿa*.[208] The sultans resorted to legitimizing even some practices such as brotherly slaughter, which was deemed contrary to *sharīʿa*, or the regulation of the land regime, which is often discussed as not being regulated according to Islamic principles.[209] Whether the content of the implementations made at these points or the content of the enacted laws is correct or suitable for Islam, it can be said that the legitimacy source of public law in the Ottoman Empire is Islamic Law.

This aspect of the Ottoman Empire could be explained by the position of the head of state or ruler in Islamic law. As stated before, according to Islamic law, the legislative,

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[206] Ibid,
[207] Okumuş, 83.
[208] Halil İnalcık, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu, Toplum ve Ekonomi* (İstanbul: Eren Press, 1988) 319.
[209] Karatepe, 133.

executive, and judicial power belongs to the head of state. The person who runs the state can use these powers either directly or by delegation. This authority belongs to the sultan in the Ottoman Empire. Adopting this principle, the sultan abides by the legitimacy of Islamic law in legislative, executive, and judicial affairs.

Undoubtedly, the sultan was who stayed at the top of the social and political hierarchy in the Ottoman Empire. In other words, in the traditional understanding of the Ottoman Empire, the state authority was gathered in the person of the sultan.[210] However, this supreme position and standing did not mean that he could do what he wanted without question. According to Okumuş, he was also known as the Caliph or *Imām-ul Muslimīn*. These adjectives had also developed a mechanism that prevented the Sultan from acting at will and was responsible against the law. The Sultan's reign took the legitimacy of the sultanate from the caliphate. For this reason, the caliphate and sultanate were mentioned together. Above all, the Ottoman sultan, who was the caliph of Islam, had the duty and authority to arrange all kinds of deeds in this world according to the sharīʿa to bring the believers to eternal salvation in the hereafter. When this authority did not comply with the obligation and responsibility, although there were exceptions, the ʿulemā class and janissaries used to take action, and the sultan was deposed and sometimes even murdered if necessary. The important thing here was the acceptance by the scholars that the caliph-sultan acted against the law. In such a situation, the Sultan was warned and punished in various ways. Although the sultan was authorized in matters such as appointing the grand vizier and Shaykh al-Islām, whom he had assigned by dividing his powers, to exile, and even to condemn him to death, he was rewarded when he acted irresponsibly and with his own will for the reasons explained.[211]

There are also different opinions regarding the title and responsibility of the Ottoman sultan as caliph. Arsal says that when the Ottoman Empire annexed Egypt in 1517, Al-Mūtevekkil, who was known to be the caliph in Egypt, was brought to Istanbul and transferred the title of the caliphate to the Ottoman sultan. From this date on, the Ottoman sultans were mentioned as the religious leaders of the whole Islamic world.

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[210] Halil İnalcık, "Sened-i İttifak ve Gülhane Hatt-ı Hümayunu ve Tanzimat'ın Uygulanması ve Sosyal Tepkileri", *Belleten* 28, (October, 1964): 617.
[211] Okumuş, 89.

However, there is no evidence that the Ottoman sultans who ruled the state until the period of decline attached great importance to this title and acted like caliphs because the classical period Ottoman sultans did not act as theocratic state administrators. To this end, even though the Ottoman Empire is a religious state, it is not a theocratic state in which religion and state are not separated.[212] According to Aras, there is a big difference between the caliphs of previous Islamic states and the sultans of the Ottoman Empire, who were claimed to have seized this title after the conquest of Egypt. Besides, the power source of the caliphs of the Islamic states, which also had the title of the head of state, was the spiritual side, while the power source of the Ottoman sultans continued on a political and military basis. In other words, while the Ottoman sultan was accepted as the political leader of all Muslims, there was no leadership in terms of religious authority since it was the Shaykh al-Islām, not the sultan, who made decisions and made discourses in the Ottoman Empire. This situation continued for a long time when the Ottoman Empire was strong and in the following period, but it changed with Abdul Hamid II, who used the caliphate as a religious symbol.[213]

Demir emphasizes that even though it is accepted that the caliphate has similarly evolved, and this case makes the sultan's authority even more sacred, the sultanate is an earthly institution, and this quality has not changed. Demir explains that the sultan's right to govern the state is a right that is not absolute and is limited by sharīʿa law. The departure of the caliph from sharīʿa law requires his dismissal from office. When viewed in this way, it is obvious that the Ottoman state system was not in a fully theocratic structure.[214]

2.4. The Place of Religion in Social Environment

When the social, economic, and political conditions available to people become unbearable in the face of the difficulties of worldly life, religion has an attractive effect

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[212] Sadri Maksudi Arsal, *Teokratik Devlet ve Laik Devlet* Tanzimat I, (İstanbul: Ministry of National Education Publications, 1999), 155.

[213] Aras, 72.

[214] Hande Seher Demir, "Klasik Dönem Osmanlı Devleti'nde Din-Devlet İlişkilerinin Laiklik, Sekülerizm, Teokrasi ve Din Devleti Sistemi Kapsamında İncelenmesi," *Ankara Barosu Dergisi* 3, (May 2013): 282, https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/abd/issue/33812/374426.

on them as a spiritual refuge. However, with the proliferation of communities around religious sciences, the refuge sought in religion is not only spiritual but also economic and political power. When we look at the position of religion in the Ottoman Empire, where politics was not independent of religion, it is seen that it assumed an intermediary role between social and local forces and the political structure. For this reason, it is necessary to determine correctly what religion meant for the Ottoman state administration and its subjects. With respect to this, while there is only a belief that is believed and desired to be put into practice in the public sector, administration, and politics beyond this become involved in the state administration; thus, it can be suggested that there was a religious development process in the forms of folk religion and official religion in the Ottoman Empire. In addition to that, among the official religion and folk religion understanding, two Islamic conceptions of Islam, which can be called madrasa and dervish lodge Islam, are represented by ulemā and *sufis*.[215]

The Ottoman Empire, which developed under completely unique conditions, presented an understanding of the law that exceeded the sharīʿa rules. At this point, the understanding we came across was the "customary" one, as mentioned before. In other words, it was the authority of the ruler to impose state law on the basis of his own will in areas where the sharīʿa did not provide clear rules and thus could not be resolved. This meant that the Ottoman sultan gained absolute authority in the state administration. The implementation of custom is not observed for the first time in the Ottoman Empire. Customs are also known to exist in previously established Turkish states.

According to Karpat, although the sharīʿa formed the basis of the laws of the Ottoman Empire, in the execution of the state affairs, the political and social conditions of daily life were acted upon rather than religious provisions. However, the Ottoman Empire officially attempted to comply with the sharīʿa. Although the elements that constitute the source of the Ottoman laws are sharīʿa, law, and customs, the customs and laws of the people came to the fore as the determinants of the daily life of the people. In this respect, it would not be correct to call the Ottoman state and social structure a theocratic order.

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[215] Arpaguş, *Osmanlı Halkının*, 88.

The Ottoman sultan, who also had the title of caliph, was not only a ruler in charge of practicing religion; on the contrary, the sultan was, above all, the representative of the state.[216]

Berkes argues that the reason why the Ottoman Empire was seen as a religious state both in Turkey and in the West is the misconception given by the image that emerged during the Ottoman modernization period. The fact that every reaction that occurs in the face of modernization movements is always of a religious nature or the use of religion by a certain segment in the face of modernization was the main factor in the formation of such perception.[217]

It is also claimed that there is much data that support the judgment that the Ottoman Empire was a religious state; which has different opinions about whether it is a religious state due to its various practices. The Ottoman Empire, which took its legitimacy from religion in the period from its rise until the *Tanzimat Reform Era*, adopted a state understanding that was not independent of Islamic law. The existence of Islamic law alone points to a system in which law is intertwined with religious rules. In other words, although it was customary law, Ottoman legal rules were largely influenced by religious rules.[218] The most important proof that the Ottoman Empire, which regulates its administration, social life, and its own legal rules by obtaining religious references, cannot have a secular state structure is that it derives its legitimacy from the Islamic religion. On the other hand, issues such as Islam being the official religion of the state, religion being the source of legal rules, and Muslims having more privileged rights than non-Muslims are features that support the view that the Ottoman Empire is not a secular state.[219]

According to Aksin, although the rights granted to Muslims and subjects belonging to other religions were different, the Ottoman country was never seen as an uninhabitable place for non-Muslims. However, neither the tolerance shown in the approach to other religions nor the application of sharīʿa rules is sufficient to speak of a secular Ottoman

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[216] Kemal Karpat, *Osmanlı Geçmişi ve Günümüz Türkiye'si : Tarihsel Süreklilik, Kimlik Değişimi ya da Yenilikçi Müslüman Osmanlı ve Türk Olmak* (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi University Press, 2004), 19-54.

[217] Niyazi Berkes, *Türkiye'de Çağdaşlaşma* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Press, 2004), 153.

[218] Demir, *Klasik Dönem*, 282.

[219] Ibid, 277.

social structure. In the secular state understanding, there is only one egalitarian rule of law, to which individuals from all layers of society and nationality that constitute the state are bound. Nevertheless, in the Ottoman legal order, there was no single legal legislation that applied to Muslim and non-Muslim people.[220]

The people living in the Ottoman lands are divided into two basic classes: Muslims and non-Muslims who believe in the book sent by Allāh. Both the rights and obligations of these two classes are not equal. The beliefs and lifestyles of non-Muslims are tolerated, as well as the security of life and property, freedom of worship, and education rights. However, in return for all these good practices, they have to pay a tax. Although the dhimmis have religious tolerance and their own religious leaders, they have faced some restrictions in social life. For example, the color and height of their homes should have been different from those of the Muslims, as they often had to live in places reserved for them on the outskirts of the city. Additionally, the different colors of the headscarf they wear and the towels they use in the baths are some examples of discriminatory understanding based on belief. For such reasons, it is not possible to claim that the Ottoman Empire had a secular social structure. On the other hand, it is obvious that the Ottoman state system cannot sit on a theocratic ground. Although state politics and Islam were intertwined in the Ottoman Empire, it cannot be said that it was a true sharīʿa state. Although religion seems to have significant effects on political life, clergymen were not included in the state administration. The most important indicator of this is that the Shaykh al-Islām, who is the head of the religious scholars, is not among the members of the *Dīwān-ı Humāyūn* (Imperial Council) and has no jurisdiction. Moreover, the *fatwā* given by the Shaykh al-Islām does not necessarily concern political power. [221]

After completing the foundation stage with religious teachings, the Ottoman Empire started to emerge as a result of the administrative and political structures that it created in parallel with the expansion of its lands during the reign of Bayezid I. Then, conquering Istanbul and making it the capital became a turning point for the Empire because in the history of the Ottoman Empire until the conquest of Istanbul, there was

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[220] Sina Akşin, "Osmanlı Toplumu Gerçek Anlamda Bir Statü Toplumudur, " *Türkiye Günlüğü* 11 (1990), 42

[221] Ibid, 281-282.

no question of Islamization in masses and cosmopolitanization of the state.[222] However, in the Ottoman Empire, which turned towards centralization after the conquest, the ruler-ruled difference began to become clear and settled, and this situation was reflected in the religious understanding. According to Kelpetin Arpagus, the mystical religious understanding at the beginning started to be replaced by the book of Islamic *fiqh* (law). Based on these developments, it is seen that the Ottoman Empire assumed a centralist and statist structure in the rising period to the extent that there was no state in the history of Islam except for the Al-ʾUmawīyah. However, although the Ottoman Empire adopted the Islamic identity, it preferred a centralist approach to maintain its unique order. Turkish culture and Byzantine influence lie behind the reasons for the prevalence of this centralized situation.[223]

Dursun also has similar ideas to Kelpetin Arpagus about the centralist structure of the Ottoman Empire. He says that in the ancient Turks and later in the Seljuks and the early Ottoman period, the rulers ruled their country by dividing it between their brothers and sons. It is clear that the princes, who took over the authority to govern a region of the country during the implementation of this system called *ülüş* (means sharing), acted as an "*emr*" (ghāzī) acting on their own rather than a "governor" attached to the center. For this reason, the Old Turkic states give the appearance of a federal or confederal structure rather than a monarchy with a predominant centralist structure, the appearance of a weak state in which political power is not concentrated in the center but is often short-lived due to these characteristics. It is observed that this structure continues in the Seljuks. It is known that the division of the country's lands among the dynasty members played an important role in the dissolution of the Great Seljuk Empire and, similarly, in the collapse of the Mongol Empire. This practice, which weakened the power of the khan in the center, evolved into a "mutual power" structure with the Ottoman Empire in time, and the power of the center increased more than ever. The Ottoman Empire, which accepted Islam, sought to integrate the old Turkish traditions with the Islamic traditions in their own way.[224]

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[222] Barkan, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda*, 133.

[223] Arpaguş, 88.

[224] Ottoman Encyclopedia, "Osmanlı Devleti'nde," by Davut Dursun, 67-68.

Fuat Köprülü, on the other hand, described the Great Seljuk Empire and the Anatolian Seljuk Empire as the states that followed "a centralist state with orderly and robust institutions." He emphasized that in these states, a developed public law and political and administrative structures institutionalized with this law were formed. Köprülü also emphasized that these states, whether in terms of public law or political and administrative institutions, were shaped by the rich corpus of Islamic law and values and therefore placed the Ottoman Empire on the continuation of the Great Seljuk, Anatolian Seljuk, and Anatolian Turkmen Principalities.[225]

As stated earlier, there is another factor that contributed to the formation of political structures and institutions in the Ottomans. That is the influence of Byzantine political structures and institutions that existed in those lands before the Islamization of Anatolia. The issue of the influence of Byzantine institutions on Ottoman institutions and political power structure has been the subject of extensive discussion.

There is no doubt that Byzantine and Ottoman-Turkish cultures, like all different cultures that lived together and had mutual relations in certain periods of history, influenced one another. Before the conquest of Istanbul, the Turks had been neighbors with Byzantium for three centuries and lived together with the Christian people on the lands conquered from Byzantium.[226] It is generally accepted that the political and administrative institutions of the new empire established in the capital of Byzantium after the conquest of Istanbul, especially the palace organization and other organizations, were affected by Byzantium.[227] Karatepe suggests that there are two

views on the transition routes of this influence, one of which emphasizes the Ottoman-Byzantine relations directly, and the other argues that the effect previously came through Turkish and Muslim states.[228]

According to a group of orientalists led by Herbert Adams Gibbons,

> *Turks are a tough and military nation that is not interested in law, politics, and administrative sciences. The beys of Ertugrul Gazi, who were placed on the Byzantine border by the Seljuk Sultan, were unaware of the settled culture, like the nomadic Turkish communities in the Asian steppes. So much so that when*

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[225] Fuad Köprülü, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Kuruluşu* (Ankara: TTK Yayınları, 1984), 65.

[226] Karatepe, 61.

[227] Ibid,

[228] Ibid,

they conquered Bursa and Edirne and made them their capital, they could not yet fully adopt a settled culture. It was not possible for such a community, unaware of the state and political culture, to establish one of the largest empires in the world.[229]

Gibbons argued that, based on the assumption that the Turks were nomadic communities lacking political culture, the Ottoman Empire was founded by a new race consisting of the mingling of native Christians and nomadic Muslim Turks. According to him, this new race embraced the courage and militancy of the Turks, as well as the settled culture and state administration tradition of Byzantium. Although it is known that the local Christian people were Muslims in masses during the rising period and they encountered Turkmens, the main claim that Gibbons tried to prove is that the Ottomans were not a new state but the heir of the destroyed Byzantium. According to this claim, when the Ottomans conquered Istanbul, they were put into the centuries-old legacy of Byzantium. According to this claim, when the Ottomans conquered Istanbul, they were placed in the centuries-old heritage of Byzantium. They adopted the culture and civilization of Christian Byzantium, taking the administrative organization and presence of the Byzantine Palace. To this end, Byzantium, defeated at the front, prevailed in the cultural plan and won the chance to continue its military, administrative, political, and social institutions under an Islamic color.[230]

Fuat Köprülü strongly opposes these views outlined above, arguing that the influence of Byzantine institutions on Ottoman institutions is originated in the earlier Muslim states. According to Köprülü,

> *Ottoman political-administrative institutions were not obtained from Byzantium. The reason is that in the 14th century, when it came into contact with the Ottomans, Byzantium was no longer that majestic Eastern Rome. It was a medieval feudal state whose borders were narrowed, its organization was corrupted, and it did not reflect the memories of the magnificent old empire even in its shadow. Therefore, there was a deep and real contradiction, rather than superficial similarities, between the Ottoman understanding of government that is united around a strong central authority and feudal Byzantine.*[231]

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[229] Adam Gibsons Herbert, *The Foundation of the Ottoman Empire* (London, 1968), 30.

[230] Ibid,

[231] Fuad Köprülü, *Bizans Müesseselerinin Osmanlı Müesseselerine Tesiri* (İstanbul: Ötüken Publications, 1981), 204.

The famous Byzantine historian George Ostrogorsky also makes similar determinations about the situation of Byzantium in that period:

> After Suleiman Pasha moved to Gallipoli, the lands of Byzantium in the Balkans began to be conquered by the Turks. The excellent administrative organization of the state was corrupted, incomes decreased, and the treasury was empty. Once the symbols of the state's strength and greatness, the posts were merely titles, and even what the civil servants did was forgotten. It was clear that the state, whose institutions were so corrupted, was on the verge of collapse. The question was only whether the remains would pass to the Turks or to another Christian state.[232]

As Gibbons and other orientalists claimed, the founders of the Ottoman Empire were not nomads unaware of their state and political culture but represented a rich political culture that passed through the Al-ʾUmawīyah, Abbasid, Sassanid, Byzantine, and Seljuks. The period when Byzantine influence on this culture was intense was the Anatolian Seljuk period. Köprülü states that in this period, Seljuk-Byzantine relations got so close that Byzantine princes were encountered in Konya palace, and Seljuk princes were encountered in the Byzantine palace. There were Byzantine Christian Greeks in the administration and service of the Seljuks as well as Muslim Turks under the protection and service of Byzantium.[233] From this period on, local Greeks began to become Muslims. Just as the pagan Turks, who were Muslims, brought shamanist elements from Central Asia to Islam, the Byzantine indigenous people, who adopted Islam, may have transferred some Christian elements to Islam. It is also difficult to claim that this influence seen in the civilian sector has no effect on politics and administration.[234]

According to Mustafa Nuri Pasa, the Ottomans were affected by Byzantium both directly and indirectly. It did not contradict the Ottoman Empire, which is a synthesis bearing the traces of Greek, Latin, Roman, Slavic, Sasanian, Arab, and even Turkish cultures and civilizations, which is the biggest representative of Byzantine, Eastern, and Western civilizations. The Ottomans preserved local customs and traditions in the laws they prepared for *sanjaks*. Thus, some Byzantine institutions had the chance to

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[232] George Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, trans. Fikret Işıltan, (Ankara: TTK Yayınları, Ankara:1981), 490. in Karatepe, "*Osmanlı*", 66.

[233] Köprülü, "*Bizans*", 220.

[234] Speros Vryonis, *The Byzantian Legacy and Ottoman Forms* (Washington D.C: Dumbarton Oaks Paper, 1969), 23-24.

be renewed. Some central administration procedures were also adopted as an inevitable requirement of being an empire. "When the throne of Istanbul was conquered, the decoration, grandeur, gaudiness, and ceremonies of the statesmen increased. The interrogators, *solaklar* (Sultan's guards), *peykler* (messengers), regiments, all kinds of clothes, and even the term "*efendi*" (master) were taken from Byzantium.[235]

Besides, there were some who claimed that the religion-state relationship in the Ottoman Empire was established according to the Byzantine model. However, this is a very biased assessment from a distance. However, on closer inspection, it can be seen that there is no similarity between these two systems as much as said.

First of all, there is a religious institution in Byzantium, which represents religion on its own, with hierarchies and statuses, albeit affiliated with the state. While this institution was previously independent and strong against the government outside the state, it gradually lost its power and came under the control of the state. However, in the Ottoman Empire, the ʿIlmiye organization was not a religious institution, and it was never an independent religious organization outside the state. The Shaykh al-Islām, the *muftī*, the *ḳāḍī*, and scholars who work in the scientific organization are not people with religious qualifications. These are civil servants who perform the services given to them within the state bureaucracy.[236]

Secondly, the alternative to the state-controlled Orthodox church is the Roman Catholic Church, which has an independent organization against the state. If, in Byzantium, the church behaved quicker and got stronger against the state, then it would take the state under control. There is no such alternative for the Ottoman ʿIlmiye organization. Without the state, the organization of the Shaykh al-Islām does not have a meaning and personality on its own. For this reason, the Shaykh al-Islām and ʿIlmiye organization could not be taken from Byzantium. Additionally, the Shaykh al-Islām is not the state organization of an independent religious organization that existed in the previous periods of Islamic history. In any period in the history of Islam, there has not

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[235] Mustafa Nuri Paşa, *Netayicü'l Vukuat.* ed. Neşet Çağatay (Ankara: TTK, 1979), 67.
[236] Ottoman Encyclopedia, "Osmanlı Devleti'nde," by Davut Dursun, 68.

been any religious organization independent of the state, such as the church in the West.[237]

The Ottoman sultans transformed their state from a nomadic frontier principality to inheritors of the religious structure that Byzantine and Latins had previously raised in their lands. With the sultans making the expansionist tradition of Islam as a basis for their own ideologies, the flexibility of the Ottomans in terms of religion was an important factor in their adaptation to new conditions and their longevity. With the conquest of Istanbul, the local people, who were Christians, were allowed to continue to live there, and efforts were made to ensure that those who fled could return. Implementing its policies in Istanbul, the Ottoman Empire employed many Byzantines into the service of the state, regardless of religion.[238] During the reign of Mehmed II, no community had to worry because of their differences, neither their religion nor their national identity, since there was no intervention of the state in their traditions and beliefs.

Non-Muslim subjects of the state were inspected four times a year by Ottoman officials. The aim was to ensure the well-being of people by making sure they were not oppressed.[239]

It should also be noted that there was a difference between Muslims and Non-Muslims in terms of social status in the Ottoman Empire. Stratification by status in the Ottomans distinguished Muslim subjects from non-Muslim subjects. In this sense, even the richest non-Muslim subject is inferior to a poor Muslim subject in terms of social status in the community. According to Bilgiseven, this difference in reputation and status, which comes from the difference in religion, is due to the non-Muslims' disbelief in the creed of *tawḥīd*, which has the potential to prevent all kinds of commercial and economic abuse.[240]

The most criticized issue regarding the time of Mehmed II's reign is that he destroyed the Turkish aristocracy and enabled non-Muslims in the state administration. Turkish

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[237] Karatepe, 63.

[238] Daniel Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge University Press: 2012), 34.

[239] Taşbaş, 154.

[240] Amiran Kurtkan Bilgiseven, *Genel Sosyoloji*, (İstanbul: Divan Press, 1982), 57.

aristocratic families are people who have a say in terms of religion as well as politics. Sultan Mehmed II avoided the influence of aristocratic Turkish families by electing high-level state officials from his *kapıkulu* (sultan's household troops). Thus, the sultan, who would not be faced with the pressure of any class in the state administration, consolidated his power by having a mere say in the administration. There was another measure taken by the Sultan for the survival of the state, which has been discussed for a long time, whether it is suitable for religion or not. This measure is the legalization of fratricide. When Orhan I took the throne, his brothers helped him in state affairs. During the reign of Murad I, the Ottoman sultans killed their relatives who rebelled against their rule. The fights for the throne rose after Bayezid I, and with the regulations made in the period of Mehmed II, the practice of fratricide became legal.[241]

Sencer explains that the scope of political murder in the Ottoman legal understanding gradually expanded. With this expansion, Mehmed II had the notables of the state killed, including Çandarlı Halil Pasha, Rum Mehmet Pasha, and Mahmut Pasha. While doing this, a *fatwā* was received. When the customary law was applied in these death decisions, the satisfaction of the public was also tried to be achieved by attributing the religious meaning to these actions through a *fatwā*.[242]

As the Ottoman Empire got stronger and extended to wide geographies, the need for people who had madrasa education increased to the same extent. The position of *madrasa* in society has also strengthened. Contrary to the previous Turkish states, the Shaykh al-Islām in the Ottoman Empire gained the title of a religious leader by keeping it in the capital, and the religious leaders in other cities were attached to the Shaykh al-Islām with the title of *muftī*.[243]

With the rising of the Ottoman Empire, some measures were taken in the period of Suleyman I to strengthen the Sunni understanding, which became more and more influential and became the belief system of the state. Within the framework of these measures, those who do not obey the religious requirements or disrespect the religion would be punished. It was made obligatory to build mosques in villages, and dervishes

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[241] Ibid,

[242] Sencer, *Osmanlılar'da Din,* 68.

[243] İnalcık, *Sened-i İttifak*", 56.

who were not members of the Sunnī understanding were driven out of Istanbul. In addition, courses related to sciences such as mathematics, theology, philosophy, and the thought of life were removed from the curriculums of *madrasas* on the grounds that they harmed religion.[244]

In the following periods, the religious weight in the life of the state and society gradually increased. In this regard, Koçi Bey Reports, which include the deterioration in the state administration and what needs to be done to eliminate them, were prepared in 1631 and presented to Murad IV. The desire to return to the rise of the Ottoman Empire was mentioned in these reports, and the corruption that came after Suleyman I was tied to abolishing the *sharīʿa*.

Although breaking from religion is considered a cause of decline, the religious approach in the 17th century is much more prone to *sharīʿa* rule than in the classical period.[245]

In conclusion, for Turks, who have a long history, the concept of religion has always had an important place in state administration and social life. This situation did not change with the acceptance of Islam by Turks, who reflected traditional practices and religious rules to social and political life without ignoring them, and traditional legal rules and religious law coexisted in Muslim Turkish states. Likewise, when the Ottoman Empire became a state from a principality, it followed the Seljuk State, which had both customary and Islamic legal systems, to complete its institutionalization. Religious elements were brought to the fore in the historical records regarding the establishment of the Ottoman Empire. On the other hand, the influence of heterodox Islam, which contains elements related to the Old Turkic belief, during its establishment period is also quite great. The Ottoman Empire, which expanded in the West direction since its establishment, undertook successful conquest movements, and this situation caused it to be seen as a *ġazāʾ* state that swung the sword in the name of Islam. With the rise of the Ottoman Empire, which became a great empire by making non-Muslim masses its subjects with conquests, the weight of religious rules with Sunni Islamic content increased both in the state administration and in social life, and

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[244] Hüseyin Yurdaydın et al., *Düşünce ve Bilim Tarihi (1300-1600). Türkiye Tarihi II, Osmanlı Devleti 1300-1600*, ed. Sina Akşin (İstanbul: Cem Press, 2002), 207-271.
[245] Yılmaz Kurt, *Koçibey Risalesi (*Ankara: Akçağ Press, 1998), 156.

the religious law started to gain importance. On the other hand, the Ottoman Empire, which, as a great empire, accommodated societies with different beliefs and renewed its own institutions according to modern conditions, paid attention to implementing customary law as well as religious law in social life.

The Ottoman Empire, which gradually became the biggest power of the Islamic world against the West, has a legal structure in which *sharīʿa* rules are valid. In this respect, although it is seen as a religious state because the only law is not religious law, an understanding of administration that is far from a classical *sharīʿa* state emerged. The Ottoman, which also applied the customary law in the state administration and social spheres, ensured that the non-Muslim nations that were subordinate to it could fulfill their religious beliefs. Despite this tolerant management mentality and the existence of customary law, the Ottoman Empire entered an important stage in which religious fanaticism increased since the rise. After the period of rising, the Ottoman Empire was more strictly bound to Islam and the rules of the religion, and the religious element started to take its place in the state administration.[246]

In the Ottoman Empire, which constitutes a very good example of the balanced organization of religion and political relations, the lack of a power struggle between the representatives of the religion and the state and the fact that the sultan's authority is not discussed by the ʿulemā are the most defining features of this system. From the very beginning, a balance between religion and the state was maintained, and social dynamism was achieved in harmony, not in a conflict between religion and the state.

The state, which is a set of constantly changing institutions, is expected to be organized differently in every age, nation, and cultural environment. Accordingly, the form and organization of the state are determined by the requirements of age, the culture of the people, the political and economic relations, and the necessities of time and geography. All the Muslim states established in history adopted institutions from other states and developed them further by adapting them to their bodies. The Ottomans also established their own political and administrative institutions by renewing the old Turkish and Islamic traditions, which they took over through the Seljuk and Abbasid states, with the customs of the local people who lived in the countries they conquered.

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[246] Taşbaş, 156.

The religion-state relations in the Ottomans were influenced by the old Turkish traditions, medieval Islamic institutions, and Byzantine relations and revealed a unique form of organization. The processes and institutional structure revealed by these relations neither fully comply with the old Turkish traditions nor the medieval Islamic structuring and the Byzantine example. It is a picture of a new formation that is more or less different from these but also adopts its colors.[247]

As in the previous Muslim states, the political power in the Ottoman Empire was based on religion. Civil institutions and traditions such as the economic and social structure of the society, production relations, family structure, education, training, arts, science, health, and nourishment were completely shaped based on Islamic belief. In a way, Islam had become the identity of society, and even if the rulers wanted to, they could not remain indifferent to this identity. Despite that, customary law based on pre-Islamic Turkish traditions and local practices of the conquered countries was more effective, especially in the formation of central government institutions, general administration, and politics. However, since Islam constituted the identity of the society, in order for even the customary law to gain legitimacy, the opinions of the Shaykh al-Islām were asked.[248]

Although the Ottoman Empire was centralized and authoritarian in politics, it was pluralistic and non-governmental in social organization. One of the most important elements of Ottoman civil society was sects. They were religious civil organizations

that carried out some economic and social public services as well as religious services. However, they were constantly excluded from bureaucracy and politics. In this respect, there was a partial religion-state separation in the Ottoman Empire.[249]

The Ottoman system was a system of balance. There was a delicate balance in relations between religion and state, between political authority and religious authority. Although political authority was above everything else, there was no arbitrariness and absoluteness in every field. At least some of the religion was organized within the state administrative structure, and the public service areas of education, distribution of

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[247] Karatepe, 65-66.
[248] Ibid, 66.
[249] Ibid,

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justice, information consultation, and administration of religious rules were used by scientists and scholars. Sultan was the protector of both the servants and the *ulemā*. His authority was more limited vis-à-vis the ʿ*ulemā*, and it was out of the question for the *ulemā* to interfere with the *sharīʿa* that appeared in their jurisdiction. The Sultan could not punish the members of the *ulemā* for "political murder" and strengthened his various actions with *fatwā* given by the Shaykh al-Islām.

The authority to appoint and dismiss the Shaykh al-Islām at the top of the ʿ*ulemā* was the political and administrative authority, but the *fatwā* authority of the Shaykh al-Islām brought it into balance.[250]

Examining the Ottoman religion-state relations in terms of the way of government is also important in understanding the dynamics of the classical period. It is not possible to claim that the Ottoman Empire was theocratic because, in the theocratic state, religious power is the sole owner of sovereignty. In the Ottoman Empire, although the state and religion or politics and Islam are intertwined with each other, this system should not be interpreted as the theocratic *sharīʿa* state. The reason is that in the Ottoman Empire, clergymen are not included in politics and state administration, and the *fatwā* given by the religious authority does not bind the political power. The Ottomans were not theocratic since a clergy or a council of clergymen did not govern the society, the ruler was not a clergyman, legal expansions and customs took place in practice, and nobody, including the ruler and ʿ*ulemā,* did not speak of holiness, innocence, and infallibility.[251] It cannot be said that it is a secular state, just as it is not a theocratic state. That is to say, it is seen that the acceptance and practices were adopted in the Ottoman Empire in terms of the requirements that it is against the elements that the state, which is accepted as the founding elements of a secular state, does not find the source of legitimacy in religion, it does not have an official religion, the state is neutral towards all religions, the state approaches all religious members equally and does not take the source of the legal rules from religion, and the religious institutions and state institutions are separated from each other. The Ottoman Empire was not a secular state, as equal rights were not recognized for all faith members. The understanding of tolerance towards all beliefs prevails in the Ottoman Empire.

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[250] Ottoman Encyclopedia, "Osmanlı Devleti'nde," by Dursun, 72-73.
[251] Ottoman Encyclopedia, "Osmanlı'da Din-Devlet," by Sezen, 53.

However, this tolerance lacks the guarantees of equal rights and freedoms. In this context, the system to which the Ottoman Empire is closest is the religious state system.[252] The criterion distinguishing religion from theocratic is hidden in its legal nature.[253] The Ottoman Empire is a state of law in which "the state abides by the predetermined rules" that places universal human rights, freedom of religion and conscience, places justice above everything and gives importance to the principles of equity and freedom.[254] The Ottoman Empire took its legitimacy from the religion of Islam in the period from its first establishment as a principality to the declaration of the *Tanzimat Fermanı* (Imperial Edict of Reorganization). The fact that the Ottoman Empire has a state understanding that is intertwined with Islamic law and the effectiveness of the religion of Islam in the formation of legal rules supports this argument.

2.5. Ottoman Thought and Intellectual Life

The analysis of Ottoman intellectual life is important in understanding and interpreting the architectural works and the arts performed during this period. In this regard, without mastering the intellectual system, interpretation, and explanations, studies could be insufficient. According to Ocak, anyone who wants to take a collective view of Ottoman intellectual life should master the following four dimensions: politics, philosophy, religion, and Sufism.[255]

2.5.1. Political Thought

As mentioned in the Ottoman religion-state relationship, the Ottoman political thought tradition has a background nourished by the classical Muslim state understanding.

According to the Ottoman, there is a "state" above everything. Without the state, the rest is unimportant. Sultan is holy, and religion is the most sacred, but both the sultan and the religion are trampled when there is no state. Although this issue is not pronounced much, this is the Ottoman consciousness. The state was established to

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[252] Demir, 286.

[253] Ottoman Encyclopedia by Sezen, 50.

[254] Ibid,

[255] Ocak, *Klasik Dönem Osmanlı Düşünce Hayatı*, 27.

keep its Muslim subjects, *ummah*, and nation alive, to serve, and to make them happy. The sultan is the indispensable unifying symbol of these. He is also the caliph, and he is the pillar of independence, power, and Islam. He is also *Ẓillullāh*, meaning the Shadow of Allāh, and is holy. He receives the governing authority from Allāh and reminds the people of this every Friday through his imams. By saying, "Don't be proud, my Sultan, Allāh is greater than you!" his servants remind him of the only rules he has to follow, that is, the rules of Allāh. Henceforth, religion ceases to be between the conscience and the creator, and it becomes a bureaucratic element itself and turns into an institution whose sanctions are carried from the other world to this world.[256] The sultan may be damaged to keep the state strong and standing. Religion cannot be offended, but instead of religious provisions, provisions adapted for the state can be introduced. With these judgments, religion can stand stronger.[257]

In the Ottoman Empire, religion and the state are one body, and religious and political authority presents a single structure. Therefore, every opposing movement to power finds itself against the most prevalent ideology of the time, namely the *sharīʿa* (religious law). When *sharīʿa* and political power are accepted as the same thing, every belief and every thought outside of the *sharīʿa* is perceived as a potential danger that would destroy the Ottoman dynasty's existence. Being a non-Muslim is to benefit from Ottoman tolerance. However, if you are a Muslim, this tolerance is not valid. For the same crimes committed by a non-Muslim and a Muslim, a Muslim receives twice the punishment of a non-Muslim. A non-Muslim can convert, but a Muslim cannot be an apostate; if he does, he pays his punishment with his life. In this context, while the Ottoman policy of religious tolerance covers non-Muslim subjects, the same does not apply to other sects of the official ideology and different beliefs and faiths. Nevertheless, the important factor is not religious tolerance or intolerance, but the matter is that the state's official ideology is religion.[258]

According to Yilmaz, Ottoman political thought is a continuation of the Islamic one.[259] The Ottomans are the most powerful and complementary link in terms of influence

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[256] İlber Ortaylı, *Osmanlı'yı Yeniden Keşfetmek* (İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2007), 109.

[257] Yılmaz Öztuna, *Osmanlı Devleti Medeniyeti Tarihi* (İstanbul Ötüken Yayınları, 2006), 147.

[258] Barış Akagündüz, "Osmanlı Ulemasının Devlet Hayatı Üzerine Etkileri (1451-1512)." (Mater's Thesis, Kırıkkale: Kırıkkale University, 2008), 155.

[259] Öztuna, *Osmanlı Devleti*, 147.

and coverage of the *al-Khulafāʾ al-Rāshidūn* (The Rashidun Caliphs), Al-ʾUmawīyah, Abbasids, and Seljuks in terms of strength and continuity among the state, whose number has exceeded two hundred and fifty in the history. The fact that this lineage is listed as *Āl-i Resul*, *Āl-i Seljuk*, and *Āl-i Osmān*, the Ottoman countries are named as "*Memālik-i Islām*" and their rulers as "*Pâdişâh-ı Islām,*" their greatest scholars as "*Shaykh al-Islām*," their soldiers as "*Asākir-i Islām*" or "*Asâkir-i Mansūre-i Muḥammediyye*" shows the main source of the Ottomans. They found the political philosophy, practical advice, and practices of Muslim thinkers ready to reach a certain level of maturity.[260]

According to Ocak, it is a fact that this tradition started with translations from classical Muslim and Eastern political thought works. The famous *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, translated from Pahlavi into Arabic in the 9th century by Abdullah Ibn al-Muqaffa', was transferred to Anatolian Turkish by order of Umur of Aydın, and this prose translation, which was not liked by Murad I, was turned into the verse by his order. The translation of the same work from Persian in the 16th century during the reign of Suleyman I, this time under the name of *Humāyūnnāme*, shows how much this work was valued in the Ottoman bureaucracy. Besides, the *Qābūs-nāma* written in Iran in the 11th century and the *Aḵlāq-e jalālī* written for the Aqqoyunlu ruler Ozun Hasan using the work of Nasiruddin Tusi's *Akhlāq-i Nāsirī* in the 15th century also attracted great attention in the Ottoman Empire. In this way, Ottoman political thought began with translation literature, and from the 15th century on, it began to produce its first products with a number of treatises, most of which were written by high bureaucrats who served in the state. The common feature of these works is that they are pragmatic and mostly small works based on their professional experience, unlike those previously written by Al-

Ghazālī or Ibn Taymiyyah, which propose utopian ideas often impossible to apply. In these works, the authors also presented examples from Plato, Aristotle, or Alexander the Great and Nushirvan, ancient great Islamic caliphs, in keeping with tradition.[261]

It is significant to note that a historical background of Ottoman political thought was expressed in these works mentioned by Ocak. This background consisting of the

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[260] Akagündüz, *Osmanlı Ulemasının Devlet Hayatı*, 35.
[261] Ibid, 17

synthesis of ancient Turkish, Indian, Iranian, Greek, and Islamic political thought traditions, is noteworthy in understanding the systematic problems that Ottoman political thought focused on and discussed. The political thought in question handles Ottoman society in two main parts as the ruler and the ruled. In this context, the ruler is concerned about the mutual duties, rights, and responsibilities of these elements of the society, which are classified as rulers, army, treasury, and *re'āyā* (subject to a person or a state). In his work titled *Akhlāq-i Alā'ī*, Ķınalızāde formulated the political thought of Islam as follows:

> *It is justice that ensures the order, salvation, and happiness of the world. The world is a garden, and its wall is the state. It is the law of Allāh that establishes the order of the state. The law of Allāh can only be protected by the sultanate. Power and authority can only be handled by the army. The army survives only with its property. It is the people who collect the property. The people are ruled only by the justice of the Sultan of the world.*

This formula is the main mechanism of the Ottoman political understanding, and as it can be seen, it is the same as the classical Eastern political understanding in the political thought literature that was formed before in the Islamic world.[262] According to Lewis, this reflects that the Ottoman political thinkers, despite the passing of hundreds of years, repeated the ideas in the works of classical Islamic authors without much consideration of the conditions of their time and without any serious contribution. For this reason, when a comparison is made between them, there is almost no fundamental difference in method and opinion. Only the order of the topics discussed changes based on time and place. In almost all of them, the ruler's duties and responsibilities to the people, the duties of the people to the ruler, the necessity of absolute obedience, and how the army and the treasury should be kept and managed are repeated with similar suggestions.[263]

If this political literature is examined in general, the image that emerges is as follows: most Ottoman political thinkers are figures of high bureaucracy belonging to the managerial profession. They occasionally included their own experience in their work and gave a number of recommendations. Their advice consists primarily of theoretical and general rules such as respecting justice, not tyrannizing the *re'āyā*, and assigning

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[262] Ibid, 18

[263] Bernard Lewis, "Ottoman Observers of Ottoman Decline," *Islamic Studies* 1 (1962), 71-87.

the job to the competent. However, very few systematic, viable, and concrete proposals and ideas about implementing them in practice exist. In this sense, the main shortcomings were that they made almost no observation and analysis of the political, military, economic, and social developments that took place in the West, similar to the ideas of Western ambassadors and observers in the 16th and 17th centuries that examined and analyzed the Ottoman Empire from various angles. It is not difficult to understand the reason for this. Like the Ottoman order, they were people of a mentality that had dominated the world for centuries and believed that it was the perfect order of the world and that it would remain that way until doomsday. For this reason, their gaze was directed not on the West but on themselves.[264]

In short, Ottoman political thought reflects a pragmatic tradition of politics that focuses on everyday issues rather than a theoretical political understanding based on a philosophical basis. In contact with events, the Turkish-Islamic thought that directs politics can draw sudden and serial conclusions from them for its own continuation.

2.5.2. Philosophical Thought

Whether there was a philosophical thought tradition in the Ottomans is a matter of debate. There are two opposite opinions on this point. Those who defend the existence of philosophical thought in the Ottoman Empire, regardless of whether there was a systematic debate environment and whether certain successive literature presented in this environment could be mentioned or not, a number of passages whose current philosophical quality can be discussed in works created in any field or they simply show their ideas as examples. Those who propose the contrary argument defend their views by taking into account a philosophical tradition of thought in the Western sense.[265]

According to Ocak, it is impossible to mention an original philosophical movement or a tradition of debate, considering that the Ottomans took over Islamic thought during the period of stagnation that has been going on since the 12th century. Even if it does not cover the whole of Ottoman thought, it is necessary to talk about a significant Al-

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[264] Ocak, 18.
[265] Ibid, 17.

Ghazālī influence and to question how much philosophical thought can develop under this influence. However, although there was no lively and creative philosophical environment of thought in the pre-Al-Ghazālī Islamic philosophical tradition, it should not be assumed that there was no philosophical thought and understanding in the Ottomans altogether. It is possible to observe the existence of a metaphysical, philosophical thought in which the concepts of god, humans, and existence are at their center in the Ottoman Sufism literature.[266]

According to Bolay, Ottoman thinkers valued knowledge about the senses but said that this knowledge and reason were insufficient to reach certain truths. In the light of Islamic thought, they included four different means of knowledge: senses, reason, intuition, and religion, and used these means to reach knowledge.[267] Science and knowledge-related activities are always about something, directed towards something. Being related to something means an activity that has a subject. The subject is something that is "present" or "should be." It should also be emphasized that in the Ottoman Empire, it was seen that wisdom and knowledge were accepted as an "ability" (endowed with talent and power). This is a key concept. Al-Taftazānī and the Ottoman scholar Kesteli also consider all disciplines as an "ability." The fact that science is an ability shows that it occurs in the human mind, does not exist outside of human beings, and is a synthesis, while it also makes one think that it has a functional side. Therefore, Ottoman thinkers did not attach importance to science and knowledge that would not be applicable.[268] We see that the philosophy of knowledge is given an important place in works related to logic, philosophy, mysticism, theology, and language in Ottoman intellectual life.

It can be said that a movement in the philosophical field in Ottoman thought took place in the period of Sultan Mehmed I in parallel with the movement in the scientific field. In this regard, in his period, tolerance and knowledge accumulation increased, the economy got stronger, and thus, great financial resources and support could be given to science and intellectual development. Undoubtedly, this is closely related to the personal character and characteristics of the sultan. Mehmed II is a mighty soldier and

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[266] Ibid, 18.
[267] Ottoman Encyclopedia, *The Ottoman* by Bolay, 102.
[268] Akagündüz, 148.

a man of culture with a broad vision who aspires to world domination. He gave great value and honor to scientists in his time. He stated that those who finish the complex could even be accepted to the *nişānci* (sealer) position, which is one of the important civil services of the state, in order to increase the demand for education in the Islamic-Ottoman social complex. This situation showed its effect in every field, and scholars were trained in every field. He was a ruler who was keen on philosophical issues and loved conversation and discussion with people with great knowledge of philosophers' thinking systems. He had people make scientific and intellectual discussions in his presence and followed these conversations with the awareness of attention and benefit. Throughout his life, he kept his scientific attire and established an enormous university to support the development of science and scholars. In his youth, it is known that he was interested in discussions among theologians, invited and listened to those who were familiar with the philosophy of Zenon and Aristotle in order to develop scientific and philosophical debates[269], read and discussed the Arabic translations of these works, and even enjoyed discussing the religions other than Islam such as non-Sunnah sects and their beliefs.[270]

According to Ayverdi's report, Mehmed II visited the Byzantine patriarch in his office and was welcomed with a ceremony in line with the Byzantine tradition, and he certainly had long philosophical permissions with the patriarch. Tansel, on the other hand, mentions that Sultan Mehmed II had such a great knowledge to dispute with the scientists of his time and adds that in his eyes, the value of science and scholar was above all else. When the greatest viziers came to his presence, trembling, they often saw a scholar sitting next to him and speaking freely and comfortably. Whether a scholar of oriental or western, Muslim or Christian, it was the same for Mehmed II. No matter how much Akshamsaddin or Molla Gurani received compliments from him, the poet and philosopher George Amiroutzes from Trabzon and Gennadius Scholarius did not receive fewer compliments.[271] Due to this exceptional personality of Sultan

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[269] Kritovulos, *Fetih 1453*, trans. Mustafa Demirer, (Ankara: Panama Yayıncılık, 2019), 32.

[270] Turks Encyclopedia, "İlim ve Sanat Tarihimizde Fatih Sultan Mehmed," by Süheyl Ünver, 11 (2005), 210-217.

[271] Selahattin Tansel, *Osmanlı Kaynaklarına Göre Fatih Sultan Mehmed'in Siyasi ve Askeri Faaliyetleri* (İstanbul: MEB, 1971), 9.

Mehmed II and his interest in theology and philosophy, a certain philosophical activity can be mentioned in the Ottoman period in connection with theology issues.[272]

According to Bolay, it is known that the Ottoman Empire had a very lively intellectual life and discussion environment in the 15th and 16th centuries, although the research was limited and inadequate. Scholars discussed social, moral, and other issues by correspondence with treatises. However, it is important to what extent the freedom of thought necessary for the development of the environment of thought was in the Ottoman Empire. The fact that those who oppose the rules introduced by Islam from time to time are not intervened before they become disturbing to society's life indicates the existence of such an environment. Nevertheless, the words of Goethe can be credited with regard to freedom of thought: "Muslims used to start their philosophy teaching with the following principle: There is nothing that cannot be said otherwise. That was how they activated the students' minds. This put the students in suspicion as to finding the truth. As a result of the suspicion, the research brought them to the truth they knew and comforted them."[273] Similarly, Akagündüz says that according to Islamic thinkers, religion is the source of nature, man, wisdom, and science; the highest truth is in religion, and science must prove the sublime and correctness of religion.[274] Cevizci also states that God is the main concern and subject of Islamic philosophy from the beginning. While philosophy in Europe was based on humanism by turning from God to nature and humanity, Islamic philosophy was based on theism and tried to understand God. According to this philosophy, there are actions to believe first, then know, and finally think wisdom.[275]

Ocak's thoughts are similar to those of Bolay, Akagündüz, and Cevizci. Ocak says that due to the authentic personality of Mehmed II and his interest in theology and philosophy, a certain philosophical activity can be mentioned in connection with the issues of theology in the Ottoman period at that time. The philosophical perspective of Fakhr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī, the important school of the Ottoman Empire, is suitable for such activities, and it manifested itself in the *tahāfut* (incoherence) discussions in this

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[272] Ocak, 20.
[273] Ottoman Encyclopedia, *The Ottoman* by Bolay, 13.
[274] Akagündüz, 15.
[275] Ahmet Cevizci, *Orta çağ İslam Felsefesi Tarihi* (Bursa: Asa Kitabevi, 2001), 95-96.

period. In Ottoman philosophical thought, we see that the debate on whether the mind or revelation will know the truth in the relationship between God-human-being between Al-Ghazālī and Averroes continues. On the order of Mehmed II, the leading scholars of the period participated in this discussion by writing a work. Among them, Alāaddīn al-Tūsī and Muslihiddīn Bursevī, nicknamed *Ḫocazāde*, are well-known. Later, it is seen that in the 16th century, Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Kemāl and Muhyiddīn Karabakī and a couple of people whose names are not so well-known joined them, and these discussions continued with Mestcizāde Abdullah Efendi in the 18th century. According to Ocak, it should be questioned whether all these can show the existence of a truly philosophical thought tradition in the Ottoman Empire. This is because philosophy is a set of questions or questions posed with rational judgment after a systematic thought and intellectual movement, and it is a method-based philosophy based on reasoning.[276] According to him, it can be said that Al-Ghazālī actually initiated these debates on *tahāfut* (incoherence) at the time rather than a philosophical tradition in the real sense and that they are nothing more than a theological tradition that criticizes the philosophical approach towards proof that the truth can be known not only by reason but mainly by revelation.[277]

On the other hand, claiming that Ottoman philosophical thought was worthless and insignificant and that it did not mean any value in terms of Islamic thought's general history is an excessive and unrealistic attitude. When it comes to the Ottoman scientific and intellectual life, it would be the best approach to consider and evaluate it by considering its own conditions and then placing it in the life of Islamic science and thought of which it is the successor.

2.5.3. Religious Thought

As David Easton expresses, every political system must be supported by a political group or group that clearly demonstrates its support for the system, believes that the system is legitimate, and shows emotional affinity to the system to respond to the demands of society and to survive. It would become easy for the state not based on

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[276] Süleyman Dönmez," Felsefe Nedir, Ne değildir", *Bizim Dergah Aylık Fikir Dergisi* 64 (Ankara:1993), 58.
[277] Ocak, 18.

such a political group to collapse.[278] There was such a group in the Ottoman Empire, and it played an important role in the protection of the political system by supporting the state and even owning the state. There were definitely other support groups and institutions, but the Ottoman Empire's close relationship with religion made the ʿulemā the dominant position at this point. The Ottoman Empire was founded on Islamic thought, and the source of the production of religious thought in the Ottoman Empire was undoubtedly the ʿulemā.[279]

In the mental world of the classical Ottoman state and society, the perpetuity of *sharīʿa* is science. The survival of knowledge is with the ʿulemā. The order of the ʿulemā is important for the religion of the state. Based on this understanding, the Ottoman Empire, which had an intimate relationship with the religion of Islam, gave special importance to the ʿulemā, who held the power of knowledge and led the scientific-religious leadership of the society, and the sultans showed great interest to the ʿulemā.[280] According to Islamoglu, religion is the cement that enables the sultans and ruling classes to reconcile with each other and with the people in the Ottoman Empire, and the basic elements of this cement are the ʿulemā.[281] Just as Islam played an essential role in the Ottoman Empire's relationship with the people, the ʿulemā also had an important function and a strong position in its relationship with Islam.

As it directly deals with practical life, two traditional branches of science, which the Ottoman scholars have focused on intensely, and which have had the most opportunity until then, come to the fore: *Fiqh* (Law) and *Kelām* (Theology). It is certainly necessary to add *tafsīr* (interpretation of the Quran) and hadith (the Prophet Muhammad's sayings) besides these, but they are a little more secondary to these two branches.

According to İnalcık, it is a fact that the Turkish and Arabic *fatwā* collections produced by the Ottoman scholars constitute an important contribution that cannot be underestimated in the practical field of Islamic law.[282] The source of this knowledge

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[278] Easton David, in Okumuş, 98.

[279] Ocak, 19.

[280] Okumuş, 99.

[281] Huricihan İslamoğlu, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Devlet ve Köylü* (İstanbul: İletişim Press, 1991), 35.

[282] Halil İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire, The Classical Age:1300-1600*, (London:1973), 174.

was the madrasas of Middle Eastern cities such as Cairo, Damascus, and Aleppo in the field of *fiqh*, and rather some madrasas in Transoxiana in terms of *kelām*. While *fiqh* (law) was used to regulate and govern the Empire's organizations and institutions, it was an important tool in producing the ideology of *kelām*. These two traditional disciplines were the most popular interests in Ottoman madrasas because the achievement of the high bureaucratic positions of those who were educated in *madrasas* depended on their ability to develop themselves skillfully in at least one of these two areas. Therefore, apart from basic education programs in Ottoman madrasas, medicine, which is directly related to human health, calculus (mathematics) and *hendesī* (geometry), which are closely related to daily life, and ʿ*ilm-i nücūm* (astronomy), it is essentially with *fiqh* and *kelām* which consisted of *tafsīr*, hadith, and moral sciences that supported both.[283]

Ocak claims that although there is an intensive and comprehensive education in *madrasas*, we are not in a position to say that the Ottoman scholars were concerned about making breakthroughs in these scientific disciplines and that they felt the need to compile original works, except for one type of exception from time to time. Since they rather are concerned that they will serve the purpose of preserving the existing social order without deterioration and the smooth administration of state affairs, they preferred to annotate the works of *fiqh* and *kelām* written by Hanafī and Māturīdī scholars after Al-Ghazālī (called *muteahhirīn* meaning the subsequent), who lived three or five hundred years before them, to write a commentary on them, and to write commentary and footnotes on them.[284]

In this sense, did the fact that the Ottoman ʿ*ulemā* worked on works written in the past rather than producing original ones lead to the emergence of works that did not have any benefit and did not contain contributions? Akagündüz argues that these works, written by Ottoman scholars, made a significant contribution to the practice field for a long time until the 18th century for the centuries when the Ottoman Empire existed, nurtured the empire's ideology, realized its organization, and helped to solve daily legal problems. Therefore, it is not possible to claim that it is worthless and unimportant. However, it cannot be said that the works made a similar contribution to

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[283] Akagündüz, 154.
[284] Ocak, 20.

the Islamic sciences when they were first written since this literature of the Ottoman period is available and has been taught in Ottoman madrasas for centuries. It is seen that it did not bring serious and important innovations neither in terms of content nor methodology and nor did it take steps to reflect on the Islamic world.[285]

The Ottoman ʿUlemā was closely interested in the structural characteristics of the scientific and cultural centers in the Islamic countries (Baghdad, Aleppo, Damascus, Cairo, Iraq, Syria, and Egypt), where they went for education and specialization. The Ottoman scholars who visited these cities took back two schools in the field of religious thought to the Ottoman country. The first of these was the Fakhr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī school, which the Ottoman central administration would always preferred while establishing the Ottoman religious bureaucracy, and the other was the Ibn Taymiyyah school, which started to make itself felt like a reaction to this first, especially from the 16th century. The Fakhr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī school, based on reason, was strongly followed by the famous scholars of the post-Al-Ghazālī period from the 12th century to the end of the 14th century. These were the scholars of *tafsīr*, hadith, *fiqh*, and *kelām* of the *ahl as-Sunnah* (followers of Sunnah*)*, whose books were taught in Ottoman *madrasas* for centuries, explanations and footnotes were written on them (commentary and footnotes).

Consequently, Ottoman religious thought was widely influenced by two pragmatic concerns: meeting the state's bureaucratic needs on the one hand and preventing the degradation of the beliefs of the people on the other. *Kelām* (theology) and *fiqh* (law) remained the two favorite scientific disciplines for hundreds of years to refute the movements outside the *ahl as-Sunnah* and strengthen the *ahl as-Sunnah* and to condemn these movements in terms of the law. The Fakhr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī school had an important place in Ottoman religious thought. However, the personalities raised here were not original like the ʿulemā who formed the pre-Al-Ghazālī tradition, but rather followed in their footsteps, so to speak, and made religious sciences "traditional" by doing science in line with their ideas.[286]

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[285] Akagündüz, 184.
[286] Ibid: Ocak, 21.

2.5.4. Sufi Thought

In the classical period of Ottoman intellectual life, the idea of Sufism, as stated in detail in the previous chapters, is in close relationship with religion on one side, philosophy on the other, and political thought that works with them. The Ottoman sultans showed a close interest in scientific sects and *Sufis*; thus, a *Sufi* clan formed as a school. Thus, a politicized "Ottoman Islam" emerged at the same time. For this reason, it is important to understand Sūfī thought. The reason is that if we ignore the father-in-law of Sheikh Edebali as much as Osman Ghazi during the establishment process of the Ottoman Empire, if we disregard that Sultan Murad I was also a person who assumed the role of the father of the Ahis, and again if we neglect that Bayezid I was in close relationship with Amir Sultan, the famous Sufi of the time, to have him as a groom, and finally if we try to understand Mehmed II without taking his teacher and Akshamsaddīn into account, we will find it difficult to discover the secret that made the Ottoman the Ottoman Empire.[287] In light of the information given in the previous chapters, examining the thoughts of the scholars of Sufism in the next chapter will enable us to crystallize Ottoman Sufi thought.

Although classical Ottoman thought mainly focused on religion, politics, philosophy, and Sufism, legal thought, moral thought, scientific thought, economic thought, technical thought, historical thought, logical thought, and literary thought are also important fields of study in the Ottoman mentality. As Bolay emphasized, more than two thousand moral treatises written in the Ottoman period have been identified. There are already many political treaties. However, there are perhaps more books written on science, technique, and technology. What is written in the field of medicine are the most advanced ideas and practices of their time. Matrakçı Nasuh and Taqī al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Maʿrūf, Hezarfen Hüseyin Efendi, or others represent practices of thought that express action in practice, seeking to achieve functional goals. This rise of the Ottoman Empire can be regarded as an indicator of its strength in ethics, politics, science, technical thought, and practice. In this regard, it is beyond imagination to reach an architect Sinan's technique even with today's resources. With its rich life of

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[287] Ottoman Encyclopedia, "Osmanlı'nın Temelindeki Manevi Harç: Kuruluş Döneminde Anadolu'da Tasavvuf", by Osman Türer, 4, (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, 1999), 375.

thought, the Ottoman was perhaps the most advanced state in the world in putting what they thought into practice.[288] It was rationalist and mentalist. Practicality, taking theory out of practice, and paying attention to the fact that the knowledge produced is livable and applicable were important elements of the Ottoman mentality world. With these features, the colorful and rich Ottoman thought has an important place in our history of thought.[289]

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[288] Ottoman Encyclopedia, *The Ottoman* by Bolay, 13.
[289] Ülken, *Türk Tefekkür Tarihi*, 17.

CHAPTER 3

3. FORMATION OF ISLAMIC AESTHETICS

3.1. Aesthetic Thought in Prophetic Teaching

Aesthetic thought is a phenomenon as old as human history due to its aesthetic concern. Thus, the effort to cover the intimate places in Adam and Eve's story with a suitable object is associated with this concern. The search for the suitable expresses aesthetics intertwined with functionality. The human being created in the most beautiful way[290] finds/does what suits him/her and takes pleasure from it since man has an aesthetic sensitivity.[291] According to Koç, this sensitivity is embodied in works of art. Because of this relationship, works of art are seen as the concreteness of aesthetic experience, which is related to every aspect of life and has a wide dimension in this respect within a certain language and style.[292] Therefore, aesthetics should be considered in relation to the concept of humans. In line with this opinion, Sena and Yetişkin emphasize that getting rid of ugliness, befitting, perceiving beauty, choosing the beauty, imitating the beauty, building the beauty, and getting pleasure and delight from the beauty are the preferential actions of every human being. Hence, aesthetics, in general, can be seen as an effort to analyze the beautiful idea of the functional, to determine the character of the beautiful, and in particular, to determine the theories put forward for each of the fine arts and the principles of the art to which the beautiful belongs, with its character.[293] According to Ünal, aesthetic thought is in direct relation to beautiful and ugly judgments. Because attaining good and ugly judgments is

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[290] Quran (Diyanet), At-Tin, 95/4. https://kuran-ikerim.org/meal/diyanet/tin-suresi, (07 December 2020).

[291] Yavuz Ünal, Nebevi Öğretide Estetik Tasavvuru, TDV İslam, Sanat ve Estetik, 6. Dini Yayınlar Kongresi Bildiri Kitabı, p.52.

[292] Turan Koç, *İslam Estetiği* (İstanbul: 2010), 17.

[293] Cemil Sena, *Estetik: Sanat ve Güzelliğin Felsefesi* (İstanbul: Remzi Press, 1972), 9.
Hülya Yetişkin, *Estetiğin ABC'si* (İstanbul: Say Press, 2009), 15
Yavuz Ünal, "Nebevi Öğretide Estetik Tasavvuru," VI. Religious Publications Congress 1 (2004), 52.

possible by using the values owned as premises, for this reason, it is necessary to evaluate the aforementioned judgments together with their premises and the antecedents together with the sources that feed them, that is, their background. In this case, aesthetics should be defined as the science of the details that lead to the judgment of the works, not nature nor the rules of the technical effort made to achieve beauty in the works of art. However, reducing the concept of aesthetics to artistic activities narrows its frame. It is necessary to evaluate aesthetic thought not only with artistic products but also with the main references that shape the view, feelings, and perceptions that reveal it.[294] Therefore, it is critical to examine the aesthetic thought in the Prophetic teaching to make the aesthetic analysis of Islamic art products. To this end, it should be noted that the expression "*Prophetic Teaching*" is used in return for the Islamic perspective, so it does not mean the explanation of the issue only with hadiths. According to the *Ahl al-Sunnah* creed (followers of sunnah) adopted by the Ottomans, the Prophetic Teaching includes the integrity of verses and hadiths.

It is necessary to know that in the Prophetic teaching, the one who makes his life more beautiful, and therefore who will be awarded the greatest prize, is "the one who makes the most beautiful" rather than the one who does it. The reason is that the cause for the creation of life and death is explained in the verse as "*He is the One Who created death and life in order to test which of you is best in deeds. And He is the Almighty, All-Forgiving.*[295]" According to Ünal, this emphasis shows that the category described as good and beautiful is not uniform. In other words, he reveals that there are layers of meaning regarding any phenomenon that can be defined as beautiful, more beautiful, and the most beautiful. The Creator, who creates people to serve as a servant, wants beauty to appear, encourages the better, and makes a special plan to encourage this and distinguish those who intend and make an effort from others. For this reason, a believer becomes more beautiful as he becomes more into Islam, and *iḥsān (beneficence)*, which is regarded as a peak, makes not only himself but everything related to him more beautiful.In another verse, "… *And do good, for Allāh certainly loves the good-doers,*[296]" people are ordered to do their job in the best way possible.

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[294] Ünal, Nebevi Öğretide Estetik, 52.
[295] Quran, Al-Mulk, 67/2.
[296] Quran, Al-Baqarah', 2/195.

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Besides, the Prophet Muhammad said in one hadith, "*Almighty Allāh will be pleased that you do your work soundly and well,*[297]" in another one, "*Allāh has made beneficence obligatory in everything.*[298]" "*İḥsān*" is the equivalent of doing his job in the best way in every field in Islamic teaching.[299]

Although the works or a work that is revealed is done in the best and most robust way, one more important point is emphasized, which is why the work is done. The Prophet underlined this with his hadith saying, "*Deeds are judged by their intentions.*" The prophetic teaching, which sets the world as the field of action and the hereafter as the place of reckoning and response[300], determines the action, not word, as a sign but attributes its value to intention. In this case, it must be related to the Creator and the purpose of creation in order for the action to work. What makes any action beautiful and meaningful is the harmony of all these elements.[301]

In this regard, it is important to mention the total beauty or aesthetics of which the Muslim individual is the smallest part. Considering the bigger picture, the harmony, congruity, and elegance in the universe delight the Muslims who have an Islamic view and even lead them to be connected with a faith close to the power that does it. However, the concept of aesthetics gains depth and perfection thanks to the internal order of the different realms and their integration and harmony with other realms. For example, the animal kingdom is divided into thousands of subsets, each subset creates harmony within itself, and the chain between these subsets does not oblige any species or genus to extinction but rather feeds them. In this cycle, while it feeds another one, it is also fed by the other. Relations with upside-down, parallel, close, and distant neighbors and even enemies are organized. However, everything is part of a system. The harmony and congruity in this circle astonish those who can notice.[302] A different and special situation arises when it comes to human beings who are an important part

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[297] Islam Encyclopedia, s.v. "Şuabü'l-Îmân" by Bekir Topaloğlu (Istanbul: TDV Press, 2010): 219, https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/suabul-iman--beyhaki (accessed 10 December 2020).

[298] Müslim, Sayd, 57.

[299] Mustafa Uğur Karadeniz, *İslam Sanatlarında Estetik- Güzeli Anlamak* (İstanbul:Ketebe Yayınları, 2020), 149.

[300] Quran, Necm (An-Najm), 53/31. "To Allāh ˹alone˺ belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth so that He may reward the evildoers according to what they did, and reward the good-doers with the finest reward".

[301] Koç, *İslam Estetiği*, 55. Ünal, *Nebevi Öğretide Estetik*, 54.

[302] Ünal, 54.

of the universe and have the ability to invert thanks to their mind since, according to the prophetic teaching, the purpose and nature of creation are different. It was arranged according to the purpose of his creation, the request was conveyed to him, and responsibilities were assigned to him. As a willed being, man is demanded not to attain other deities by diving into temporary power, pleasure, and joy and to maintain and develop this harmony in the universe as the caliph of his Lord. The universe is based on harmony and beauty, and in order to ensure its continuity, people have been given responsibility in every aspect of life, both in word and deed. The verse "*And when you are greeted, respond with a better greeting or at least similarly*[303]" emphasizes the importance of turning towards something more beautiful, even in the finest details of daily life. In this teaching, there is no option of not receiving greetings because it is a sign of arrogance and unwanted morality. The emphasis and expectation of attitude, which does not leave this modesty and always tries to do better, apply to all actions. Man's attire, attitude, look, words, and the way he relates to all beings in the universe, in short, everything must be based on beauty and live in harmony.[304]

As an illuminating example, the aesthetics of the word depends on being easy to pronounce and meaningful, neither more nor less, with the most appropriate words. The following verse refers to the aesthetics of the word in the context of the Quran: "*And in no way did We teach him (The Prophet) poetry; and in no way does it behoove him. Decidedly (this revelation), it is nothing (else) except a Remembrance and an evident Quran.*[305]" The emphasis on the quality of advice implies the importance of being simple and understandable, underlining the functionality and the obviousness. It also emphasizes that the word of Allāh, who is the most perfect, should not be reduced to the beauty or harmony of words and types, as in poems, that meaning is more valuable than form.

Consequently, aesthetics and beauty, goodness, usefulness, and functionality are intertwined concepts in Prophetic teaching. This teaching attributes the best and the most beautiful in every field as a responsibility to human beings and evaluates the value of this with the lofty intentions behind the actions taken. Man is always expected

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[303] Quran, An-Nisa, 4/86.
[304] Ünal, *Nebevi Öğretide Estetik*, 54.
[305] Quran, el-Yasin, 36/69.

to behave in the best and most appropriate way to maintain harmony and congruity in the universe. Based on this, the Prophet said, "*I was sent to perfect good character.*" and stated the reason for his existence was to supply the beauties that emerged in the process from Adam to him and strived to reveal the concrete, the best example of this.

3.2. Spirituality and Islamic Art

The shortest and easiest way to understand a culture and a world is to understand the art of that culture. Art as an expression of the understanding of truth and the aesthetic sensitivity that has a very close connection with it offers enormous possibilities in this regard. It can be suggested that Islamic art, which is a manifestation of Islam's understanding of life and truth, in short, of worldview at various language and expression levels, is one of the most direct ways of understanding Islam. Islam, or religion in general, transforms into a language that appeals to all humanity through art. An architectural work, an artistic object, and a piece of music representing the world to which it belongs are the greatest examples of this. In this context, it is not possible to think of Islamic art and aesthetics independently of Islam's understanding of humans, the world, and life. In other words, Islamic art is an expression of a civilization rising above Islamic principles and beliefs. To this end, civilization is defined as a power or worldview that gives the same direction and the same sensitivity in the material and spiritual fields of society, such as thought, emotion, morality, literature, art, science, and technique.[306]

The relationship between religion and art in Islam has been in a tremendous balance from the very beginning. To put it more clearly, religion has been an inexhaustible source of inspiration for Islamic art, and art has never dared to use religion. Throughout history in Islam, religion as religion and art as art have performed their duties as interrelated but still independent institutions.[307] In other words, art has always been aware that it is art and has never attempted to take the place of religion and stand against it as an element of opposition. Besides, it is a distinctive feature of Islam that there is no discrimination between religion and secular.[308]

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[306] Koç, 15.

[307] Mehmet Aydın, *İslam'ın Estetik Görüşü*, (İstanbul: Kubbealtı Akademi Press, 1986), 10.

[308] Koç, 16.

According to Koç, religion is not an art, yet it is an art to live by hearing, thinking, and enjoying. This is an experience that can be acquired by being a person who realizes the beauty, delicacy, and deep perception aspect of Islamic belief in all its dimensions. In this context, it is necessary to see Islamic aesthetics as an aesthetic that never disengages from metaphysics.[309]

Although there are certain differences in form and nature, it can be said that faith, morality, art, and thought go hand in hand in all religions. In Islam, the views and approaches about aesthetics and art are parallel to this, even if it cannot be said that they have been studied in detail yet. The artworks related to poetry, architecture, calligraphy, and illumination and the language used by great metaphysicists and thinkers when explaining cosmological issues can be perceived as evidence that art and religion are intertwined in Islam. Indeed, as in natural phenomena, seeing the aesthetic element in all kinds of affairs and relationships is extremely important for Islamic art as well as for general Islamic thought. The expression "*I like not those that set [i.e., disappear],[310]*" which expresses the attitude of Prophet Abraham in the Quran, confirms the aesthetic dimension of faith.

Researchers such as Grabar, Leaman, Kuban, Creswell, Herzfeld, and Hodgson ignore the relationship between Islamic civilization and the arts. According to Hodgson, "Islamic civilization as it embodies is far from being an explicit expression of the Islamic belief." [311] Oleg Grabar also generally has a negative approach to the theoretical dimensions of Islamic arts. For example, due to the lack of clarity about the origin of the "muqarnas" style, his following statements clearly reveal this approach: "How is it possible for someone to start discussing Islamic architecture when there is no information about the unique, most original form of Islamic architecture?"[312] Both Hodgson's determination and Grabar's approach are based on Islamic art from their own sources, which means evaluating in a way that is far from the essence. These and other researchers, who do not want to admit that Islamic art developed as a result of the belief in Islam, want to perceive Islamic art only as the founder of the art developed

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[309] Koç, 18.

[310] Quran, Al-An'am:76.

[311] Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *İslam'ın Serüveni*, trans. A. Eker, M. Bozkurt et al., (İstanbul: Yeni Şafak Newspaper Press, 1995), 141.

[312] Grabar, *The Formation of Islamic Art*, 171.

in their own geography. However, Islamic art derives its form and meaning from its own belief system and spiritual values. Form and meaning are not independent of one another in Islamic art. Islamic thought precedes a meaning (oneness), and form is the name of the ground on which this meaning comes into being. All these require searching the aesthetic background of Islamic art, and understanding the dynamics of belief and action of the religion of Islam. [313]

Nasr also boldly expresses the relationship between Islamic art and its spirituality and argues that if one looks at the various manifestations of Islamic art over a wide span of time and space, a need arises for an inquiry about the source of the unifying principles of this art. Whether in the courtyard of the Delhi Mosque or the courtyard of the Al-Qarawiyyin Mosque in Morocco, despite the local differences in the materials used, structural techniques, and the like, one feels in the same artistic and spiritual universe. The formation of this artistic universe, with its distinctive characteristic, different features, and formal harmony, which determine the distinctions of cultural, geographical, or temporal nature, needs a reason: this art cannot be explained merely as a product of change or a combination of historical factors.

Although it is now evident that early Islamic architecture was heavily influenced by Sassanid and Byzantine techniques and models, and by Roman techniques and models in urban planning, and even Abbasid court music was inspired by Sassanid music, the analysis, and source of Islamic art is not only a matter of material, and these information does not reveal the origin of Islamic art. This is rooted in the fact that, like any other sacred art, Islamic art is what a certain religious unity has achieved with the material in question rather than the material used. Even if the stone blocks used in church construction are taken from a temple, no one can see a Byzantine church and a Greek temple the same. Likewise, the Al-ʾUmawīyah Mosque in Damascus reflects a spiritual environment that is nothing more than Islamic, regardless of what the historical origins of the building are. Therefore, the problem of the origin of Islamic art and the nature of the principles that gave birth to this art should be associated with

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[313] Karadeniz, *İslam sanatlarında Estetik*, 18.

the worldview of Islam and the revelation of Islam itself. The origin of Islamic art is the inner dimension of Islam, that is, truth.[314]

Tatar also asserts that it is a generally accepted basis that the ways in which the belief of oneness is handled in theological, philosophical, and mystical contexts have a determining effect on the production of artworks in the traditional Islamic world. According to him, the overlap of the analysis of Islamic art with the metaphysical character of classical Islamic thought is the strongest basis for the legitimacy of the close relationship between Islamic art and spirituality. The main emphasis of these interpretations is that classical Islamic arts always tend to abstract and go beyond the mimetic understanding of art seen in the Western world, that is, the understanding of the depiction and representation of concrete entities by stylizing and abstracting natural entities. Thus, it is referred to classical Islamic arts transform the eyes from the mortal to the permanent, to the unity of God, and to the source of beauty. It is pointed out that this situation causes the artist not to draw attention to himself in his work, and since the ultimate beauty belongs to God, the work of art is a tool that draws attention to this beauty. Thus, it is certain that it was performed with an instrumental approach, as it was always at the center of classical Islamic arts to emphasize a lofty aim (*telos*), divine unity, and beauty. As there is always a process from concrete to abstract, the meaning of traditional and sacred Islamic arts is aimed to be revealed by ascending to the most abstract, namely Allāh, His unity, and beauty. Tatar defines the formation process and form of this art as a kind of "intellectual ascension," and the works of Islamic art are defined as tools (*Buraḳ*) that prepare man for spiritual ascension with their concrete existence.[315]

According to Burckhardt, Islamic art emerged directly from Islamic spirituality. Although Islamic art originated from the Quranic revelation and was shaped by its peculiar characteristics, this connection with the form of Islamic revelation does not lose anything from the fact that the origin of this art lies in the inner content and its spiritual dimension.[316]

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[314] Seyyid Hüseyin Nasr, İslam Sanatı ve Maneviyatı, trans. Ahmet Demirhan (İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 1992), 12.

[315] Burhanettin Tatar, "Tevhid-Sanat İlişkisi Üzerine Felsefi Notlar, İslam, Sanat ve Estetik, " TDV 6. Religious Publications Congress Proceedings (İstanbul, 2013): 58-61.

[316] Titus Burckhardt, *The Art of Islam* (London, 1976), 39.

Koç interprets the relationship between Islamic art and Islamic spirituality through the experience of faith. According to him, the experience of faith is also an aesthetic experience. The first and direct object of this experience is the realm with all its facts and events. The universe, which has received the verse "So wherever you [might] turn, there is the Face of Allāh." (Al-Baqarah', 115), is the treasure of eternal aesthetic contact with this value it carries. Wherever one turns, wherever one looks, he will observe the signs of the Creator. As a matter of fact, the use of the word realm, which means "sign" for the universe, is because of this; that is, it points to the Creator. This is how a believing Muslim perceives life, people, the world, in short, existence. Mosques, palaces, fountains, calligraphy, illumination, and other works of art, which are called works of art, are aesthetic objects that emerged as first-hand interpretations of such an understanding and experience. To put a finer point on it, this deep understanding of truth and what life is, in turn, paved the way for the emergence of such works. Thanks to these bonds with spirituality, they also gained their identity of being "work." Accordingly, these works can be interpreted and understood as intended for Topkapı Palace in this thesis, but by standing somewhere as aligned as possible with the faith experiences of those who put them forward.[317]

In addition to the tasks or functions that these works will fulfill in daily life, what lies behind their emergence as an aesthetic objects is that they take their basis from the belief system they belong to, from the concept of existence, and the understanding of truth.[318] St. Thomas's saying, "*Ars sine scientia nihil*" (Art without science is nothing), is very reflective of Islamic art.[319] While these works are a means of facilitating life with their present form, position, and image and serving the purposes of their making, they are also works that have emerged as an aesthetic expression of the perception of truth. With this meaningful value they carry, they are the language of perfection because perfection corresponds to the culmination of spiritual pleasure and understanding in the Islamic aesthetic understanding. They are beautiful and majestic because they reflect the manifestation of beauty. They are valuable because they have the characteristic of being a language that opens to being/existence and the experience

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[317] Turan Koç, "İslami Estetik Telakkide Varlık, Bilgi, Değer," TDV 6. Religious Publications Congress Proceedings (İstanbul, 2013), 79.
[318] Ibid,
[319] Burckhardt, *The Art*, 196.

of presence. All Islamic works of art that emerged as the work of such aesthetic sensitivity exhibit unique features, especially in their representative examples, reflecting the individual interpretations and contributions of genius and thus gaining the identity of being work.[320]

Nasr also states that Islamic spirituality is also associated with Islamic art through its various prayers that shape the minds and souls of all Muslims, including artists and craftsmen. He adds that five-time prayer, which separates the night from the day and systematically disrupts the stifling dominance of dreams on the soul, the proximity to the virgin nature, which is the masjid only imitated by the mosques in Muslim and city towns, constant references to the truths about the hereafter in the Quran and the impermanence of the world, the continuous repetition of Quranic verses that shape the souls of Muslims in a mosaic of spiritual behavior, the emphasis on the protection of Allāh, which prevents the emergence of any Promethean humanism, and many such factors are closely related to the unique nature of Islam that shapes and continues to shape the soul and mind of every Muslim.

In the education and training of human beings as homo Islamicus, the servant and deputy of Allāh (Abdullah, *caliphullah*), Islamic spirituality has influenced Islamic art through the training of certain attitudes in the minds and spirits of those who produce Islamic art. According to the author, if a traditional Muslim finds an enormous statue of Michelangelo boring and the Rococo churches suffocating, it is because of the sense of submission to God created in his soul by Islamic spirituality and the fear of man's self-glorification despite the Divine Being.[321] To sum up, the deeper the subtleties of Islamic art are examined, the more obvious the strong relationship between this art and Islamic spirituality becomes. Whether it is a mosque, a palace, or a fountain, either used by religious scholars, the palace dynasty, or the peasants, traditional Islamic art certainly derives its origin from the western dimension of Islam, an inspiration from the Quran and the Prophetic teachings. Comprehending Islamic art completely requires perceiving that it is an aspect of Islamic revelation and a tool that brings man closer to the original rank of the Creator. In this understanding, everything in the world is a verse, a sign, briefly, a language. The important thing is to engage in a discovery

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[320] Koç, 79.
[321] Nasr, 20-21.

activity that will capture what is behind this language, the sign, the implication, and what is associated with it.

3.3. Basic Sources of Islamic Art and Culture

Art gains meaning in the cultural universe to which it belongs. In order for this art to be understood, the codes of this culture must be well known. If it is Islamic Art in question, we should first focus on the impact of the main sources of the Islamic religion on this art. Considering Islamic art with an approach away from Islamic thought means ignoring the holistic view (*tawḥīdī naẓar*) that is primarily present in the tradition.[322] The basic sources of Islamic art can be examined under five headings: the Quran, Hadith, Kaʿaba, Kelām, and Islamic Sufism in general.

3.3.1. Quran

In the Islamic belief system, Muslims have to believe the Quran without question. The Quran is uncreated, and as a timeless attribute of God, it is immutable.[323] Abouseif explains the relationship between the Quran and Muslims belonging Sunni belief system. She underlines that although there are some anthropomorphic attributes of God formulated in the Quran, such as His sitting on a throne and having hand and face, hearing and seeing-, may be difficult for a believer to perceive without asking how (*bilā kayfa)*, they have to be taken on faith.[324]

Massignon further says that "the Quran is to Muslims what Jesus, and not to Bible, is to Christians. God manifests himself in His book and in His creation. The universe, with its beauty and perfection, is full of signs that reveal the Creator. These signs are directly legible and perceivable by the faithful; they need no religious authority's mediation. To recognize God's signs is a matter of cognition (*Ma'rifa)*".[325] Thus, he emphasizes how the Quran is the main direct source of faithfuls' minds and perceptions of life.

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[322] Karadeniz, 31.
[323] Abouseif, 13.
[324] Ibid,
[325] Louis Massignon, *La Passion d'al-Hallaj*, in Abouseif, 14.

According to Koç, in Islamic civilization, the principle that determines the form and content of art activities from the beginning is the Quran.[326] Karadeniz suggests that the main source of Islamic belief is undoubtedly revelation. The revelation of the Quran in Mecca, Prophet Muhammad's hadiths, his sunnah, and especially his migration to al-Madīnah was decisive in the formation of Islamic art in a doctrinal sense. Another factor affecting the art of Islam is the close acquaintance of Muslims with Byzantine and Sassanid culture with the conquest activities undertaken during the Era of the Four Caliphs. To this end, even though there is a cultural and, therefore, artistic interaction, it would not be a correct approach to think that Islamic art followed in their footsteps and remained in their shadow. The reason is that, although Islam benefited from the tradition before it, it determined its own principles, developed new perspectives, and created a new understanding of art. However, not even a century after the Hijra, Islamic art showed itself by giving examples of original Islamic architecture that was born with its own principles. In brief, Islamic art was born from Islamic thought, and Islamic aesthetics was fed from this source. When looking at the aspects of Islamic thought reflected in art, it can be seen that the Quran and the hadith are at the center.[327]

The suras and verses that are read during prayers five times a day and written on the walls of the mosques, *madrasas*, and other architectural works, the prayers, and supplications made in the language of the Quran are a clear indication that the Quran penetrated every aspect of Muslim life by verse. This spiritual vibration that the Quran makes in the life of a Muslim also manifests itself in Islamic art. In fact, according to Koç, it is possible to see all Islamic art as a revelation of this vibration emanating from the Quran, for each branch of art in its own kind.[328]

Koç emphasizes a point that when dealing with the issue of Islamic aesthetics, we first need to consider the language and style of the Quran. However, the Quran is not a book that can be a model for any artwork, neither in terms of form nor content, since it is not a work of art as we know it. The language and style of the Quran do not allow it to carry it to a visual level, and as its style does not contain a narrative sequence, composition, and copyright principle that can be transformed into art cannot be derived

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[326] Koç, 61.
[327] Karadeniz, 31.
[328] Koç, 62.

from it. Additionally, the compulsion of the verses and suras of the Quran has always been seen as evidence of the inimitable nature of the Quran. It has been sent for a functional purpose and presents its message to those who believe in it in the most effective and miraculous way possible. It does not have a fixed rhythm, either. The narration sometimes reaches a peak, sometimes rhymes, but suddenly the acceleration or velocity changes, other times, the whole sura resembles a deep and calm flow, and sometimes we encounter unexpected ends. On the other hand, all Islamic arts are based on a certain order, harmony, and clarity. Therefore, according to Koç, the relationship between Islamic arts, primarily visual arts, and the Quran is not at a formal level but

at a spiritual level. To put it more clearly, it is necessary to search for the connection of Islamic art with the Quran in the layers of meaning that lie beyond its grammatical structure in the devotion and loyalty of this art to its truth.[329]

Karadeniz, on the other hand, has a different perspective from Koç on this issue. According to him, the Quran did not only affect Islamic art in terms of meaning but also in terms of content. The decisive role of revelation in the harmony of form, content, and meaning also manifests itself in the model forms of art. In that regard, in the Quran, in which there are no identical stories, there are stories that are similar to each other. This similarity between stories is compared to the blessings of heaven. According to Karadeniz, the verse "And give good tidings to the ones who have believed and done deeds of righteousness that for them are Gardens from beneath which Rivers run. Whenever they are provided with any produce therefrom (once) as a provision, they will say, "This is the (same) as we were provided earlier." And they are brought (them) in (perfect) resemblance[330]" provides a metaphor for reminding the "repetition," that is, the "known" in Islamic art. The artist, who pursues a "dream of heaven" both in architecture, miniature and poetry, seems to be inspired by this verse. A familiar feeling and longing are the most obvious examples of Islamic art.[331]

Titus Burckhardt also emphasizes that the language of the Quran is at work everywhere in the Islamic world, similar to Koç and Karadeniz. However, unlike them, he thinks that the Quran affects Islamic arts formally. According to Burckhardt, a large part of

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[329] Ibid, 62-63.

[330] Quran, Al-Baqarah' , 2/25.

[331] Karadeniz, 33.

a Muslim's life is full of verses, prayers, and dhikr taken from the Quran, and countless inscriptions, tablets, or dedicated writings bear witness to this. The spiritual vibration of the Quran, making its presence felt everywhere, inevitably determines the style and measure of Islamic art, so the plastic art of Islam is clearly a reflection of the Quranic speech. Besides, it is quite difficult to comprehend the principle that connects this art to the text of the Quran at the level of formal structures. For there is a rule neither in its bringing together irrelevant subjects in an unusual nor in its oral presentation, its strong and harmonious style avoids all measurement patterns, it is not possible to predict what will appear before us, and it changes its speed and breath in a very striking and unexpected way, and it slows down suddenly. Burckhardt claims that there is no such thing as a Quranic style that can be easily transferred to art, and there is surely a state of mind that is cultivated by the recitation of the Quran and that supports certain formal manifestations while preventing others. For example, Arabic art, like poetry and music, as well as plastic arts, repeat certain forms and show sudden and unexpected changes against this repetitive background. However, similarly to Koç and Karadeniz, Burckhardt thinks that the deepest link between Islamic art and the Quran is another kind of connection. This lies not in the form of the Quran, but in its truth, in its essence, that does not create form, and more specifically, in the understanding and creed of unity. Islamic arts, including all plastic arts, are essentially the projection or manifestation of Divine Unity in certain aspects.[332]

According to Garaudy, one of the most important forms that Islamic art takes from the Quran is the "modular building principle." He compares this modular system in the Quran with Western thought. While the form of the structure, the organic unity established with these forms, and the integrity of the elements are the locomotives for Western art, Garaudy suggests that the beauty of the Quran, like the beauty of its verses, arises from the unconnectedness of the sections, that is, not being connected with each other. According to him, the unity of meaning of each verse itself is for a duty of worship and an incitement to action. This stylistic feature is similar to the extension of each part of the mosque in all directions. This feature also sets an example

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[332] Titus Burckhardt, *İslam Sanatı Dil ve Anlam*, trans. Turan Koç (İstanbul: Klasik Publishers, 2013), 81.

for each couplet of an ode, which is a form of poetry, to have a unique unity of meaning.[333]

The Quran is the first and most important model of the content and form of fine arts. Islamic art, which takes its legitimacy both from the Quran as the supra text and from the Prophet to whom it was revealed, will not be transferred to other sources in terms of meaning and form in terms of expression possibility. According to Seyyed Hossein Nasr, the most important Islamic arts are reading the Quran, writing the Quran, and establishing a place where the manifestations of the divine word can be shown, that is, the construction of a mosque. Thus, with the Quran, the ideal ground has emerged for the birth of many arts, such as poetry, calligraphy, music, architecture, and decoration in Islamic aesthetics. [334]

The Quran does not distinguish between beautiful and good and regards these two as one[335], and chooses the beings that it qualifies as beautiful from objects known, recognized, and close to man. This is an emphasis from the Quran on the concept of *contemplation* in Islamic art. This is about the fact that the Quran and the art that emerged from it are oriented towards life: *"Who has created the seven heavens one above another, you can see no fault in the creations of the Most Beneficent. Then look again: "Can you see any rifts?" Then look again and yet again; your sight will return to you in a state of humiliation and worn out. And indeed, We have adorned the nearest heaven with lamps."*[336] This verse, which orders man to pay attention to the near sky, also commands *contemplation*, which is an aesthetic experience. Besides, while emphasizing that the heavens and the earth were created in a unique way in the Quran, the expression "*bediu's-samavati vel ard* [337] *(He is the Originator of the heavens and the earth)*" should also be emphasized. The word "*bedi*" is the aesthetic word for its Turkish equivalent, and this can be evaluated as another effect of the Quran on aesthetics. This attention to the sky in the verses not only determined the meaning dimension of the art but also affected the dimension of its form. These and similar

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[333]Roger Graudy, *İslam'ın Aynası Camiler*, trans. C. Aydın (İstanbul: Istanbul Turkish Literature Foundation Yay Press, 2013), 111.

[334] Seyyid Hüseyin Nasr, *İslam Sanatı ve Maneviyatı*, 14.

[335] Koç, 71-72.

[336] Quran, Al-Mulk, 67/3-4-5.

[337] Quran, Al-Baqarah', 2/117.

verses in the Quran have also been the source of ornamental motifs in Islamic art, and the presence of star-based geometric motifs in ornaments has been associated with these verses.[338]

Since the Quran has the purpose of being instructive and moral, apart from its own text, there is no certain rule in its narrative order. While the verses and chapters enliven the feelings of the listener, it does so without evoking moods that are contrasting and dramatically stimulated. It does not resort to *indoctrination* to influence people against their will.[339]

Oleg Grabar emphasizes that the Quran is not suitable to be translated into visual arts because "it does not follow certain narrative sequences." Grabar also states that there is no integrity of subject and expression in the Quran.[340] Although this situation is evaluated as a negative feature by the author, it is actually a highly effective and appropriate laconic feature in the eloquence of the Quran. This situation is entirely due to the fact that the Quran does not aim to create a psychological effect, magic, and suggestion in its addressee through fiction. Hence, the Quran calls its interlocutor to a heartfelt surrender, preserving the vivid state of his mind and will. One of the important concepts of Islamic art, "*avoiding indoctrination,*" is a principle created with the influence of the Quran in this sense.

3.3.2. Hadith

Hadiths are practical road maps for the application of religion to life. The place of hadiths in Islamic teaching is like their place in Islamic arts. The verse "*... whatsoever the Messenger (Muhammad) gives you, take it, and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain (from it), and fear Allāh.*"[341] determined the limits of this framework.

The Prophet Muhammad exhibited examples that reveal the principles of Islamic art both in his simple life and in his words. It is possible to say that the hadiths are a source of Islamic art, in line with Islamic thought, which does not separate art from life. To

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[338] Karadeniz, 35.
[339] El-Faruki,193-194.
[340] Oleg Grabar, *İslam Sanatının Oluşumu*, trans. Nuran Yavuz (İstanbul: Hürriyet Foundation, 1988), 83-85.
[341] Quran, Al-Hashr, 59/7.

this end, it can be said that the hadith "*Allāh has made it mandatory beauty in the creation of everything*" determines the legitimacy point of Islamic arts and aesthetics. Besides, the Prophet Muhammad's hadith, "*The entire earth has been made a place of prayer,*" is effective in determining the limitlessness of the concept of space in Islamic arts and in the multi-functional use of space. Another Prophet's prayer, "*Oh Allāh, show me the true truth (nature) of things,*" emphasizes that reality is not just what is seen, that we should be deceived by images, and the value of reaching the invisible behind the main visible.[342]

It is seen that the hadiths that Gibb describes as "the most characteristic of Muslim literary activities"[343] are effective in the aesthetics of Islamic arts, especially in literary arts. This influence also manifested itself in Islamic aesthetic principles. Zamakhshari also said, "Allāh, the Almighty, has churned this Arabic language and gave its cream and oil to Muhammad,"[344] and this emphasizes that the hadiths are essence and plain. Undoubtedly, the word of the Prophet is a point of beauty that has been praised in prophetic teachings.

Hadiths can be verbal as well as actions. In other words, not only what Muhammad said but also the deeds he actually performed are regarded as hadiths. Aydın recounted that the Prophet "had a deep pleasure in looking at the flowing water and grass."[345] The frequent use of the depiction of plants and grass in both Islamic works of literature and decorative arts can lead to the idea that these hadiths also penetrated art by affecting the taste of Muslims who followed the Prophet's footsteps.

In a hadith in Sahih Bukhari, he said, "The Prophet led us in prayer and then went up to the pulpit and beckoned with both hands towards the qibla of the mosque and then said, *"When I started leading you in prayer, I saw the display of Paradise and Hell on the wall of the mosque (facing the qibla). I never saw good and bad as I have seen today."* He repeated the last statement thrice." According to Karadeniz, this hadith is almost like the source of decoration and description in Islamic arts. Muslim artists, both poets, architects, and miniaturists, have depicted this paradise in their works, just

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[342] Karadeniz, 39.

[343] Hamilton A. R. Gibb, *Arap Edebiyatı*, trans. Onur Özatağ (Ankara: Doğu Batı Press, 2017) 18.

[344] Karadeniz, 39.

[345] Aydın, *İslam'ın Estetik Görüşü*, 9-24.

as they wanted to remember the paradise mentioned in the hadith of the Prophet. Similarly, the hadith *"Between my house and my pulpit lies a garden from the gardens of Heaven, and my pulpit stands on my pool"*[346] is regarded as a good source for the mosque to become a heaven dream. The fact that mosques resemble heaven, even the outer and open courtyards of sultans' mosques in the Ottoman Empire were called heaven, and the verses depicting heaven engraved on the courtyard doors are always the result of this dream.[347]

Seyyed Hossein Nasr also emphasizes that Prophet Muhammad is the source of Islamic art, but his emphasis is in a different direction. According to him, the first of the two sources of Islamic art is the Quran, with its sacred existence and inherent reality, and the second is the real essence of the spirit of the Prophet, who is an invisible entity in the Islamic world. This essence maintains its presence invisibly in the hearts of the believers and in the air they breathe, always searching for Allāh and trying to reach Him. The origin of the spirit that reveals Islamic art is the essence of this prophet. According to him, it is incomplete to seek the influence of the Prophet on Islamic art only in verbal and actual expressions.[348]

3.3.3. Kaaba

The foremost sacred architecture of Islam is the Kaaba, the point where the divine axis cuts the earth. This oldest temple, according to Islam, was rebuilt by the Prophet Adam himself and then by Prophet Abraham, and it is the reflection of the divine temple on the earth and in the human heart. The harmony in the dimensions, stability, and symmetry of the Kaaba, the center of the Islamic cosmos, is reflected in the sacred architecture of the whole Islamic world.[349]

Kaaba, which means "cube-shaped object" in the dictionary, has taken its name from its own geometric structure. The fact that all Muslims in the world turn to its side in prayer, turn around it for circumambulation on pilgrimage, and being one of the most

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[346] İmam Müslim, *Sahih-i Müsim Tercüme ve Şerhi*, trans. Ahmed Davutoğlu, İstanbul: Sönmez Press, 2018), 1391.
[347] Karadeniz, 41.
[348] Nasr, *İslam Sanatı ve Maneviyatı*, 15.
[349] Nasr, 55.

frequently mentioned structures in the Quran made the Kaaba a sacred structure for the religion of Islam. In this respect, it can be accepted that it is the most sacred structure made by the man on earth.

Although the mention of the Kaaba as an architectural structure among Islamic arts is open to discussion, the concepts of direction/orientation/center emerged with the Kaaba and have been directly effective in terms of being a source for Islamic art. In addition to these, it presented the *reverse perspective*, which is a new and unique principle of perspective in Islamic art.[350]

According to Karadeniz, the fact that the Kaaba is in the center both during circumambulation and prayer has determined the non-perspectivity in Muslim craftsmen. The position of the Kaaba in qibla and circumambulation has also affected Islamic art, which adopts the principle of perceiving life as a whole. Accordingly, the reason for the non-perspectivity in Islamic arts is a conscious choice and stems from this multi-perspective central position of the Kaaba in qibla and circumambulation. Those who *tavaf* (circumambulate) see the Kaaba from a different place, with a different chiaroscuro, with different sensations and emotions, that is, with a different look, with every new step they walk around. This position of it has prevented the person from developing a perspective by taking his own place at the center and looking from only one point. Thus, a person will not be able to build a perspective and a consciousness of truth by looking at the fixed place he is standing; on the contrary, he will "see" with the consciousness of the truth by being equipped with *contemplation* in walking.[351]

Cansever also expresses that the Kaaba is the source of the richness of meaning that exists in Islamic art. According to him, seeing a different face, a different light, and a different shape at every step during circumambulation is a sign that the Kaaba actually emphasizes the eternity and immutability of Allāh.[352]

According to Koç, the Kaaba, as a reflection of the spiritual attitude of Islam, is a manifestation of eternity and infinity in the context of space, as well as being a

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[350] Karadeniz, 41-42.

[351] Ibid,

[352] Turgut Cansever, *İslam'da şehir ve Mimari* (İstanbul: Timaş Press, 2014), 50.

designated place and center.[353] It can be thought that the geometric composition in Islamic arts was also inspired by these characteristics of the Kaaba. This hollow cube-shaped structure served as a source for Muslim artworks to express possibilities with geometric compositions.[354]

3.3.4. Kelām and Islamic Sufism

Every piece of art is a reflection of an ontology view. According to Karadeniz, the idea of the existence of the idea that art emerged is effective in many qualities, from the material it uses to image perception. When it comes to Islamic art, it is necessary to know the ontology of Islam. Although there are different views on Islamic ontology in terms of the purposes of philosophy, theology, and Sufism, the knowledge and existence views of this inner understanding are basically the same, and they are all synthesized with the understanding of unity. Cündioğlu suggests that there were direct reflections of this understanding of existence in Ottoman society. Therefore, all of these understandings have an effect on the mentality of the classical period.[355]

Kelām: Kelām defends that the science of the world and the outer world, which is called the universe, has a real existence. Even if it is not possible to fully know and comprehend this external world, it is attempted to reach the creator of the being based on this real-world and certain information about it. This realm is the work and result of the supreme creator. If human knowledge is not certain in this regard, but if it is doubtful, it is impossible to prove the existence of Allāh with rational evidence. Therefore, the science of Kelām aims to eliminate the assumption by evaluating the existence of the world as evidence and witness to the existence of Allāh to reject and deny skepticism. Principles such as *contemplation, clarity-comprehensibility, and avoiding indoctrination* in Islamic art agree with this view since these concepts have emerged with the aim of eliminating doubts and suppositions and pointing out the truth clearly.[356]

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[353] Koç, 20-21.
[354] Karadeniz, 43.
[355] Ibid, 44.
[356] Ibid,

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Islamic Sufism: Sufism aims to show the mortality of property, to be freed of the bondage of the visible, and to be content with only the Creator. It adopts the notion of comprehension by intuition and discovery, as opposed to the knowledge obtained through reasoning and teaching. In this teaching, the mind alone is incapable of achieving a feat; it has to take intuition with it.

According to Al-Ghazālī, if there are two realms, there must be two eyes. The apparent eye is to see the realm of feeling and martyrdom, and the internal eye is to see the realm of representation. The road that takes people to perfection is through combining the apparent and the internal. Man needs an internal eye to rise, and this eye's vision can be met with the concept of intuition. While Al-Ghazālī talks about the flaws of the "eye," he also mentions the existence of another eye with "perfection" in human beings; this is prudence. The flaw of the seeing eye also requires a "metaphor" for the expression of the truth. Metaphor is the bridge to truth. He characterizes the realm of sensation as a ladder to the realm of the mind. If there is no connection between the emotional world and the mental world, it will be impossible to approach Allāh.[357]

According to Izitsu, the main goal of Sufism is to be freed of the inadequacy of reason and emotion, to remove the dream curtain called the world, and to reach the truth beyond it. The essence of existence is hidden behind the scenes. For the manifestation of truth, the veils of reason and senses must be opened.[358]

According to Sufism, there is no repetition in the manifestation of Allāh since there is always a different appearance in the world. "Art" based on contemplation is also the search for manifestations of Allāh. The artist also explores the occurrences of Allāh in the universe through signs.

The purpose of art in Islamic art is not human-oriented. Man must combine all his actions at one point. This goal is also the reason for human existence. The holy hadith "I was a hidden treasure; I loved to be known. Hence I created the world so that I would be known." determined the understanding of love in Sufism. Thus, the world becomes a place where the truth is manifested like a mirror. Searching for beauty in

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[357] Al-Gazali, *Nur Metafiziği (Mişkatü'l Envar)*, trans. A.C. Köksal (İstanbul: Büyüyen Ay Press, 2017), 27.
[358] İzitsu Toshihiko, Kur'an'da Allah ve İnsan, trans. S. Ateş, Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Press, Ankara:1975, 51

this realm is similar to the search for truth in Sufism. This search has been influential in Islamic arts to avoid depiction and adopt the stylization form. Thus, the fact that the truth is beyond the visible, transcendent from it, was also met in art.[359]

3.4. The Origin and Horizons of Islamic Aesthetics and Art

Art derives from the word "-*sanaa*" in Arabic, and it is described as "the attainment of a certain competence," "the ability to shape something freely according to its own internal laws,"[360] or "expressing the events and beauties that people see, hear, feel and imagine in a way that creates an aesthetic excitement in people."[361] Islamic art, on the other hand, is expressed as a spectacle activity that reflects the Islamic culture and thought, belief and worldview, and the vision of the universe with all its radiance and harmony, and a march to beautify the world.[362] In another definition, art is "a step-by-step effort to reach absolute beauty in a way that a person has achieved in his own subjectivity by avoiding all objective values."[363] The main sources of Islamic art and aesthetics to realize these purposes are the Quran and Prophetic abundance. Islamic art is Islamic art not only because Muslim artists produced it but because it was born out of Islamic revelation.[364]

According to Nasr, Islamic art emerges from a worldview and is based on a certain worldview. It finds its most concise expression in "*tawḥīd*" (oneness of Allāh). In this thought system, no shape or form is permanent, and only Allāh is Eternal and almighty. In this respect, parallel to the understanding of the Islamic worldview of the place where the man came from and they will return, Islamic art also seeks good ways to show the place where man belongs. This art unites believers in a deeper dimension by embodying the sense that people ultimately belong to Allāh.[365] Similar to Nasr's opinion, Atan said, "When the Quran is examined, it is seen that everything goes towards unification in accordance with the creed of oneness, and Islamic art interacts

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[359] Karadeniz, 48.

[360] Bedia Akarsu, *Felsefi Terimler Sözlüğü* (İstanbul: İnkılap Press, 1998), 146.

[361] Nusret Çam, *İslam'da Sanat, Sanatta İslam* (Ankara: Akçağ Press, 2012), 2.

[362] Nasr, 141.

[363] Seyyid Ahmed Arvasi, *Diyalektiğimiz ve Estetiğimiz* (İstanbul, 1986), 10.

[364] Sadık Kılıç, *Sanat ve Estetiğin Dini İslami Temelleri* (İstanbul: TDV 6 VI. Religious Publications Congress Proceedings, 2013), 51.

[365] Nasr, 27.

with it while moving towards true Unity. Therefore, Islamic art is stripped of all temporary values in the motif, pattern, and composition used by aesthetics and turned into real existence; it is to go towards the One." He also combines this argument with Abū Ḥafṣ 'Umar an-Nasafī's idea of Being: "Being is one, not more than one. It is also the existence of Allāh. There is no other entity other than the existence of *Huda*, and it cannot exist." This opinion is also known as the view of the Sufis, who accept the doctrine of the "Unity of Existence."[366] The unity of form and purpose in Islamic art is an indicator of both the devotion to the truth and its integrative feature. The principle of oneness, in its essence, brought unity to the arts of all Muslim communities and made this art the language of the truth they believed in.

Koç states that Muslim artists have created unprecedented works in the world on how to express the metaphysical truth through the material and in artistic forms in line with the transcendental aesthetic understanding to which Islamic art is attached. In its traditional expression, this situation means the imitation of meaning and constitutes the intellectual or conceptual aspect of Islamic art. This art is the manifestation of the divine dimension on a concrete and sensible level. Therefore, attempting to understand and evaluate Islamic art in isolation from Islam's understanding of existence and knowledge is the same as misunderstanding or not understanding it at all.[367] In any case, Islamic aesthetics cannot be abstracted from metaphysical questions and problems.[368] Yıldırım said, "The metaphysical incarnation of the Muslim artist will lead us to the invisible behind the visible. Thus, we conclude that art is a transcendent search for truth. Considering that this transcendental reality can only be expressed with high-level abstractions, it can be said that art is the high-level aesthetic abstractions made in the way of reaching Absolute truth."[369] İpşiroğlu's "Art does not give what is visible; its function is to make it visible, that is, to visualize the thought."[370] statement confirms Koç and Yıldırım.

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[366] Uğur Atan, *İslam Görsel Sanatına Kuramsal Bakış*, İslam, Sanat ve Estetik (İstanbul: TDV VI. Religious Publications Congress Proceedings, 2013), 354.

[367] Koç, 51.

[368] Ahmet Atan, *İslam Sanatında Özgünlük ve Evrensellik*, İslam, Sanat ve Estetik (İstanbul: TDV VI. Religious Publications Congress Proceedings, 2013), 133.

[369] Mustafa Yıldırım, *İlk Dönem İslam Sanatının Oluşumu*, İslam, Sanat ve Estetik (İstanbul: TDV VI. Religious Publications Congress Proceedings, 2013), 102.

[370] Nazan İpşiroğlu and Mazhar İpşiroğlu, *Sanatta Devrim* (İstanbul Remzi Press, 2002), 13.

According to Karadeniz, the view suggested by Islamic art is a brilliant realm because the concept of the individual is pushed out of art. The individual's fights with himself and his claims full of "courage," which can be the product of a contradictory mood, cannot find a place for himself in Islamic art. This aesthetics, which opposes an understanding that confines art to the tides of the individual, derives its bright side from the fact that nature, in which it does not struggle, is considered not as an enemy to be conquered but as a "verse/sign" that points to the truth. Understanding nature as a sign turns into a process of contemplation and perception in human beings. Since all these are done with the consciousness of worship, art also gains a transcendent dimension and turns into a deed that brings man closer to the Creator. This partnership established between art and life brings together the artist and the addressee of the work of art in common sense.[371]

Similarly, Koç emphasizes that for the Muslim, art transforms into a language that reminds the divine to the extent that it is freed from the influence of individual, subjective inspiration, or affections. According to him, the most distinctive feature of this art is that it is impersonal. In other words, the artist's individual characteristics are avoided before the universal character of the work. In this understanding, the artist does not see himself as the only agent of his work. On the contrary, he can make himself and his work an occasion to manifest the divine will.[372]

Even with the aesthetic meaning of art, the fact that the person is not evaluated in a superior and distinguished place apart from other works and actions is a result of the envision of life as a whole in Islam. The artist does not create his works for the expression of his own feelings. With the expression of a common identity that emerged in the tradition, the artist does not separate from the interlocutor and the work of art from life. Art is not superior to other deeds of its performer. The fact that the artist does not stand out and does not form a privileged group of artists is also a result of this humble attitude. Art is directly part of morality. Aesthetics is also not seen as a separate philosophical discipline in Islamic thought, and it is included in disciplines related to aesthetics, metaphysics, logic, and morality.[373]

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[371] Karadeniz, 13.

[372] Koç, 25.

[373] Karadeniz, 14.

There is no distinction between "art" and "fine arts in the classical period aesthetics. "Beauty is good; good is beauty" understanding summarizes the aesthetic perception of that period. The attitude that identifies with "*auto-telos*" in modern aesthetics emphasizes the individual and does not see the beauty, and the good cannot find a place in Islamic aesthetics.[374] Erzen confirms that beauty and good are in unity in Ottoman aesthetics. The author expresses that ethical and aesthetic values are considered in relation to each other in the sects and unions that art men belong to and that the correspondence of the beauty and the good are separated from each other in discrimination. However, in the Middle Ages, still in the Renaissance and in the Ottoman world, beauty is the image of good and something that belongs primarily to God and the truth.[375]

An understanding that is in close relation with truth and goes beyond the sense, feeling, sensation and meaning of the concept of "aesthetics" is required to make sense of "beauty" in Islamic aesthetics. Art, which gains a transcendent nature through its relationship with the truth, is the representation of the raw material in an ideal form and meaning. The use of the concept of art in the sense of being skillful in any job, performing that job in the best way, and seeking perfection in it is an important delicacy that enables the understanding of the utility and functionality of art in Islamic aesthetics. In this teaching, art is the source of all beauty and the way to *Cemāl*, who

is the only Beauty. The artist, acting with his principles in the footsteps of the revelation, is also the person who expresses the truth that he makes contact with the sign of nature in an art form.[376]

Another duty of art in Islam is to stimulate human consciousness and to communicate with it in a state of consciousness. This level of communication is important in understanding the "search for wisdom" task attributed to art in Islam. Art is not a meaningful act anyway; it takes its meaning from its emphasis on wisdom. Thus,

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[374] Ibid, 15.

[375] Jale Erzen, "Osmanlı'da Estetik Kategoriler," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 1, (1987): 12, https://scholar.google.com/citations?view_op=view_citation&hl=en&user=J0_pjZUAAAAJ&citation_for_view=J0_pjZUAAAAJ:5nxA0vEk-isC (accessed 10 September 2021).

[376] Koç, 40.

consciousness can reach the wisdom indicated by the beings that it finds ordinary by remaining in the position of its witness.[377]

The understanding and consciousness that every moment is a new creation or that creation continue uninterruptedly are always at work in Islamic art. This constantly renewed understanding of creation suggests the feeling and dynamism that the representations will be constantly renewed within the framework of certain principles. Art takes place in this feeling, inspiration, and understanding. It is possible to see that this art, which gives importance and priority to quality, tends to openness and proportionality in all its manifestations. This art, striving to achieve the perfect, is a bright art that aims to achieve unity and lightness in the whole.[378]

In terms of its general characteristics, the way Islamic artwork is not an imitation nor depiction of nature but the arrangement of the environment within the framework of the understanding of truth to which it is attached. As Erzen expressed, the Ottoman understanding of creating the beauty around it was "to adapt to the beauty of the world."[379] Therefore, as stated by Koç, the important thing in a fountain, a water bowl, a book volume, or an article is to achieve perfection in accordance with the nature of the subject being studied. In this respect, this art refrains from adding to a work of art an element foreign to its nature.[380]

Islam fiercely opposes any kind of art that attributes divinity to any being, whether human or natural. Since *tawḥīd* and *tenzīh* are the basic principles that Islam emphasizes with importance and priority, Allāh kept away from the depictions and similes of the prophets and even the great saints and avoided even hints in this regard. This understanding is a very important condition that guides the life of the Muslim artist. The orientation of Islamic art to arts such as calligraphy, illumination, arabesque, or miniature is a result of its spiritual purpose. Therefore, to consider this as a depiction ban imposed to prevent idol worship would be at least an incomplete explanation. The Muslim artist tries to reveal this beauty by shaping the object that is

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[377] Kılıç, *Sanat ve Estetiğin*, 32-51.

[378] Koç, 25.

[379] Erzen, *Osmanlı'da Estetik*, 5.

[380] Ibid,

already beautiful in its essence because it is an offering of Allāh. Thus, it aims to make the beauty of the Creator more sensible.[381]

Considering this feature of Islamic art, it can be said that it is the art oriented toward the abstract in terms of its main direction. In other words, Islamic art tends to represent ideas, not objects. Hence, according to Nasr, Islamic art always tries to create an environment in which the importance of the temporary and transitory nature of material things is underlined. Material existence is actually an illusion that will return to its soil, and its tangible feature will disappear. While performing these ideas artistically, the artist tends towards abstraction and stylization, in other words, stylization. The principle of oneness is at the center of the perceptions and understandings of Muslim artists, and it has always maintained the understanding that nothing in nature can fully represent or symbolize Allāh. In this respect, the artist turned to an original solution to reveal the inexpressiveness of the divine and the fact that the truth can never be shown as it is, which is the principle of repetition. For instance, to present stylized floral ornamentation in an endless repetition means to completely detach it from the consciousness of reality.[382] Abstraction, stylization, and repetition, which means detaching things from their material and sensory ties, are manifestations of the principle of oneness, which is actually the whole meaning of Islamic art.[383]

3.5. Beauty and Islam

Truth, beauty, and goodness are ultimately one and the same thing: what is beautiful is true, what is true is beautiful, what is both true and beautiful is pleasant and good, pleasant and good is proportional, proportional is moral, and moral is harmony.[384]

To understand beauty is to understand existence. Islamic thought, which perceives beauty as a part of morality, was born and developed as an activity of understanding. Understanding that thought is an expression of the consciousness of belonging, not the ambition of possession. This relationship has created the perception of beauty in

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[381] Kılıç, 35-38.

[382] R. Al-Faruqi, *Islam and Art, Studia Islamica*, ed. R. Brunschvig, (Paris: 1973), 90-91.

[383] Quran, an-Nasr, 53-62.

[384] Anthony Shaftesbury in Hakkı Hünler, *Estetiğin Kısa Tarihi* (Doğubatı Press, 2011), 216.

Islamic thought. In this teaching, beauty already exists as a given, and it cannot be invented and created afterward. It is up to the artist to pursue the beauty that exists as a given. [385]

The understanding of beauty is directly related to the understanding of being. The concept of beauty in ancient Greece and the Middle Ages, therefore, parallels the understanding of God. Beauty is not limited to aesthesis (*aisthesis*) or sensible things, as it is today, and its meaning field is discussed in a scope that goes beyond the realm of feelings. This shows that beauty is considered a transcendent concept. Beauty in Islam has some influences from the Greek aesthetic and artistic views, but it is not blindly followed by or overshadowed by these influences and views. On the contrary, it was enriched with original additions and evolved into a unique artistic understanding. [386]

In that case, it can be useful to study the subject in more detail to reveal the original aesthetic view of Islam because of its beauty. As stated in the previous chapters, beauty is an inherent value of Islam, and in this respect, it is extremely important. According to Al-Ghazālī and Ibn Sīnā, the essence of beauty is acceptance and submission of perfection, and everything has its own form or style of perfection. However, outer beauty is just a guide to the true beauty of something. The eye can only perceive outer beauty, and to penetrate the essence of something is a feature and privilege belonging to the heart. Knowledge also has an important place in perceiving concepts such as the experience of beauty, perfection or clarity, or harmony. [387] Nevertheless, being aware of things that are beyond the scope of the five senses can bring a person to the level of perfect human beings and make them truly perceive beauty. [388]

According to Ibn Sīnā, "*The beauty (cemāl) and splendor (bahā) of all things consist in that everything has to be as it has to be.*" [389] According to Al-Ghazālī, "*The beauty and goodness of everything lie in the realization of its unique competence as much as*

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[385] Karadeniz, 9.

[386] Ibid, 17.

[387] İlhan Kutluer, *İslam Entelektüel Geleneğinde Estetik Perspektifler* (İstanbul: TDV VI. Religious Publications Congress Proceedings, 2013), 65.

[388] İmam Gazali, *İhya-ı Ulumidin, IV.* trans. Ali Süleyman (Kahire, 2005), 357-363.

[389] Valerie Gonzales, *Beauty and Islam* (London: I.B. Tauris Publisher, 2001), 33.

possible.''[390] Therefore, the features that make a horse beautiful do not make a person beautiful. According to the philosopher, four conditions are necessary for something to be beautiful: *Flawlessness, Moderation (harmony and congruity), Order, and Purposefulness (pursuit of a good existence).* [391] The basis of this view is thought to be the verse: "*Who has created seven skies, one over the other. You will see nothing out of proportion in the creation of the Rahmān (the All-Merciful). So, cast your eye again. Do you see any rifts? Then cast your eye again and again, and the eye will come back to you abased, in a state of weariness (Al-Mulk, 3-4).*

Beauty is a divine attribute in Islamic thought. With the principle of oneness, it is suggested to see that all beauty belongs to Allāh, that nothing but Allāh is truly beautiful, or that it is beautiful to the extent that it acts as an instrument for His beauty. Affifi also mentions that Ibn Arabī, who was one of the boldest figures of Islamic mysticism and whose impact was particularly pronounced in eastern Islam and Turkey, saw the world as consisting of a visible exoteric and an invisible part. The philosopher states:

> *The visible physical world mirrors the invisible. God is the invisible world, and He is reflected through His creation in the visible world. Following Platonic concepts, according to which love is the prime mover of all things toward the beautiful and the eternally perfect, he conceived beauty as the cause of all love. One loves God because He is beautiful., and He loves us and all His creation because He loves beauty. He is Himself the lovable lover and beloved and thus the origin and the end of the cosmos. God's beauty is the source of all beauty, the physical, spiritual, and intellectual. He should be worshiped through all forms of beauty, including the temporal one. Beauty is powerful and attracts love and desire; the sympathy between humanity and the universe is based upon love (ishq).*[392]

A more detailed examination of the relationship between Islam and beauty is discussed in the following subheadings.

3.5.1. Interrelatedness of Beauty, Goodness, Usefulness

According to the ancient philosophers, the intellectual activity of humans can be considered in three basic categories: The search for truth, beauty, and good. These

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[390] Kutluer, 63.

[391] Atan, *İslam Sanatında*, 138.

[392] E. A. Affifi, *The Mystical Philosophy of Muḥyid Dīn-Ibnul 'Arabī* (Cambridge:1939), 173.

three basic activities lead to three types of judgments: Cognitive, aesthetic, and moral/ethical judgments. These judgments expressed are also three basic branches of philosophy: metaphysics, aesthetics, and ethics. Metaphysical existence is about aesthetic beauty, and ethics is about good/right virtues. Ethics and aesthetics, which were initially included in philosophical disciplines, later separated from philosophy and formed their own concepts and had the distinction of being separate branches of science. Both question the same categories: Aesthetics question sensory-emotional values, also referred to as judgment of emotion/liking, and ethics question moral values.[393]

It can be suggested that there are two basic approaches regarding the relationship between ethics and aesthetics or the concepts of good and beautiful. First, it has been thought that there is a strong affinity between beauty and good value since antiquity. In this understanding, beauty and indirect art must be dependent on morality, and even the duty of art is to spread the basic principles of morality and defend their validity. The second approach is to evaluate ethics and aesthetics completely separately. In this distinction, the thought of protecting the independence of ethics from aesthetics and the good from beauty has been an effective factor. Hence, it was argued that beauty and art should remain independent and autonomous in the face of such an understanding of morality, drawing attention to the danger that beauty loses its autonomy and art becomes a mouthpiece of morality.[394]

In the thought of Plato, one of the ancient philosophers, three terms, beauty, good, and righteousness, were considered to be identical to each other. When the philosopher discusses beauty, it is not about physical beauty but about the beautiful habits of the soul and the beauty of actions. In this trio, which is also known as Plato's trio, "good" is the most basic. Ethical and aesthetic values and truth and justice forms are derived from "good." Plato's philosophy emphasizes the "Unity" and "Goodness" of Absolute Beauty.[395]

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[393] Ayşe Taşkent, Estetik ve Etik Değerler Bütünlüğü (İstanbul: TDV VI. Religious Publications Congress Proceedings, 2013), 74.

[394] Ayşe Taşkent, *Güzelin Peşinde (Fârâbî, İbn Sînâ ve İbn Rüşd'de Estetik)* (Klasik Publishers/ Islamic Philosophy Series, 2013), 57.

[395] Necla Arat, *Etik ve Estetik Değerler* (İstanbul: Telos Yayıncılık, 1996), 88.

According to Aristotle, although aesthetic experience is a sensual experience, the aim of art is to reach a moral sense of cleansing that is to be achieved by the effect of tragedy. The positive effect of this on the audience is important in terms of moral improvement.[396] As Plotinus inherited from the Greek tradition, he emphasized that right, good, and beautiful are identical to one another and that these three concepts are very closely related to the sensible world and human beings. According to him, the purpose of art is related to the transcendent and spiritual realm behind the sensory level. Art also covers a wide area from the sensory realm to the moral realm. The aesthetic experience has been considered a means to reach God, the One, and the Good in the philosopher's system, and it has gained a moral meaning by being handled in a manner similar to the mystical experience.[397]

The relation of beauty to good or aesthetics with morality manifested itself not only in antiquity or the Middle Ages but also in 18th-century moral philosophy. According to Shaftesbury, "*Beauty is virtue and goodness.*" Beauty is good, and good is beautiful. This view also affected Kant. While Kant determines beauty as a purely aesthetic being, he separates beauty from the pleasant and the good directly. According to him, although the beautiful is different from the moral good, they can be immersed in a certain relationship. In this sense, beauty is the symbol of moral good in the sensible world. [398]

Taşkent emphasizes that the conceptual convergence of beauty and good is also important in the thought system of Islamic philosophers and states that Islamic philosophers regard the concepts of beauty and good as related concepts, although they do not see them as identical. This approach can be clearly seen, especially in the thoughts of Al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā, Averroes, and Al-Ghazālī. The inclusion of the good as an ethical concept in the aesthetic thoughts of philosophers can be regarded as a general reflection of Ancient and Medieval thought. Islamic philosophers not only associated beauty and aesthetic interest with moral/ethic values but also associated the concept of beauty with the beauty of God. Philosophers also describe God as the

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[396] Ibid,
[397] Ibid,
[398] Taşkent, Estetik, 75.

Absolute Goodness, which they define as the owner of *cemāl*, *bahā*, *zynah*, and *ḥusn*.[399]

It can be clearly seen that the terminology of Islamic philosophers is a reflection of the terms related to aesthetic thought in the Quran. Many concepts related to beauty are used in the Quran, such as *beauty, bahā, ḥusn, zate, behche, iḥsān*, and *zynah*. Influence in the face of aesthetic attitude or beauty, on the other hand, is expressed with concepts such as continuity, *taʿaccub* (mazedness), and *lezzetū'l ʿayn* (liking of the eye). In the Quran, these concepts related to beauty are used both for the beauty of the material form and for the spiritual beauty that expresses moral virtues (beautiful patience, beautiful migration, treatment with beauty, release with beauty). [400]

The relationship between aesthetics and morality in theology and mystical thought can be determined. According to *Al-Muʿtazilah*, one of the first theology schools, what is beautiful in the view of religion is also beautiful in the mindset. Ahl as-Sunnah says that religion is the criterion for determining the beauty and the ugly in the moral field as well as in the aesthetic field. According to the Sufi perspective, beauty and ugliness/evil in things are subjective, not objective. In fact, there is no absolute ugliness and evil in beings. Being is ontologically perfect. Hence, being consists of the images of divine beauty and the merits of his beauty in terms of being evidence of the oneness of Allāh. This belief is also based on the Hadith Qudsi, "I was a hidden treasure, and I wished to be known, so I created a creation (mankind), then made Myself known to them, and they recognized Me." In Sufi literature, "absolute beauty" is an eternal attribute of Allāh. He first saw this beauty in Himself and then wanted to exhibit it concretely in His art in objects. Reflection of this divine beauty, the cosmic personality, which is perfect for humanity, reached its peak in Prophet Muhammad. Muslim Sufis linked the phenomenon of beauty with the divine understanding of beauty and morality. Besides, the most beautiful of all created said, "I was sent to perfect good character." Absolute beauty is achieved through moral purification (*catharsis*) and disciplining the soul. [401]

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[399]Ibid,

[400] Ibid, 76.

[401] Ramazan Altıntaş, *İslam Düşüncesinde Tevhid ve Estetik İlişkisi* (İstanbul: Pınar Publishers, 2002), 29.

The unity of the relationship between ethical and aesthetic or good and beautiful values expressed in Ancient Greek, Middle Ages, 18th century, and Islamic thought tradition is to make it clear that it is impossible to consider these two areas independently from each other in terms of history and process.

In the Islamic understanding, moral and natural beauty is considered in connection with the charity of Allāh. The balance between beauty and good derives its ultimate value from their relation to Truth or right. Indeed, the acceptance that beauty is separate and independent from the good causes enormous contradictions in terms of the Islamic understanding of truth. Based on this, there is a very close connection between beauty, good, knowledge, and truth in Islamic understanding. Aesthetic experience derives its richness from the undifferentiated integrity of these values. As Al-Ghazālī expressed, there is knowledge in aesthetic experience, there is the state, and there are acts. Therefore, separating them from each other will definitely take something away from their values. At this point, the example given by Koç is very revealing. Koç emphasizes that ethics and aesthetics are seen as completely independent from each other in the dominant approach to modern understanding. Good and beauty are separate values in such an understanding. First of all, according to this understanding, beauty is a matter of feeling and senses, while good is a matter of behavior. This understanding, for example, also indicates that if a bomb is made beautifully and attractively, it should be evaluated regardless of its destructive effects or malicious use; in other words, we have to call such a bomb "beautiful." Even if we accept for a moment that the bomb use which results in killing people and destroying families, is beautiful, would it be unnecessary to question what purpose this object was made for? Undoubtedly, when we call such an object "beautiful," we feel that something inside us is damaged.[402] With this bomb example, Koç shows the false consequences of separating the good and the beautiful, or, if we deepen it, seeing beauty as something purely sensual and visual. Therefore, the Islamic understanding of aesthetics is not built on this mistake.

In Islamic aesthetics, "beauty" has a close relationship with the "good" as well as with the "useful." Likewise, no distinction is made between what is beautiful and what is

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[402] Koç, 87.

useful in the Quran. In accordance with this understanding, the skill in Islamic art lies in realizing the aesthetic solution of a certain problem together with the technical solution. In this understanding, knowledge or science and art form the two sides of the same tradition. For example, a belt should be pleasing to the eye as well as its strength and availableness. Thus, a structure should serve its purpose in a useful way, should be solid, and appeal to the senses. A work can only gain its qualification of beauty in this way. In the Islamic understanding of aesthetics, beauty, and usefulness constitute two separate aspects of perfection, and they always go hand in hand. Beauty, goodness, and usefulness meet each other in a balance and are never seen as separate spaces from each other. It is this approach that gives this understanding its distinctive feature.[403]

3.5.2. Beauty as a Mirror of Knowledge and Truth

The essence of art is beauty, and beauty in Islamic art is a quality that points to the truth with both its apparent and inward dimensions. Pure beauty has never been a goal in Islam. The effort to achieve perfection and compliance with the truth observed during the emergence of work brought beauty with it. The main consideration in the emergence of these works is that the work is good, correct, truthful, and perfect. Moreover, pure visual beauty was seen as something relative, related to shape, so the aesthetic concern that could only appeal to the eye remained secondary.[404]

Ahmet Atan also emphasizes and explains that Islamic aesthetics are measured by the power of representation it carries rather than physical reality: the image is earthling, mortal, and transient, according to Islam. This point of view completely overlaps with the understanding of Sufism. From a Sufi perspective, the image is not important. The truth and reality behind the visible image are important. It is the fact that the truth is whether it is Islamic or not. An image that is contrary to the Islamic faith, but has attractive features in the image, although it qualifies as an aesthetic, becomes a relative beauty that has no relation to Islamic aesthetics. The beautiful who is prone to decay cannot be included in the Islamic aesthetics circle. Unless the definition of beauty, which rotates on the axis of mundane values, does not coincide with the existence of the eternity of the afterlife, it cannot find its place in the definition of Islamic

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[403] Ibid, 87-88.
[404] Koç, 83.

aesthetics. In this context, beauty is a concept in which beings that contain a series of sacred secrets within the circle of Islamic values are loaded with magnificent works that reflect the glory and beauty of Allāh. Beauty is not only the opposite of ugly but also a divine secret.[405]

Many Western-originated aesthetic theories are based entirely on "image." However, Paul Klee defends the opposite of this view, similar to Koç and Atan. He emphasizes the importance of essence as well as form, saying, "Art does not reproduce the visible; rather, it makes visible." This theory completely coincides with Islamic art and aesthetics because, among the features that add aesthetic value to an object, there are invisible elements that add meaning and depth to it as well as are visible.[406] The basis of Islamic aesthetics is its strong ground built in relation to this truth.

3.5.3. Grandeur as a Sign of Absolute Beauty and Sublime

Although delicacy, round and soft lines give a sense of elegance in general, we experience a similar state of wonder and chill in the face of splendor, grandeur, and sublimity that deeply affect us. The phenomena and events of which we are astonished or sacred works of art such as the Suleymaniye Mosque evoke an aesthetic feeling. The sense of splendor and grandeur felt by such works and events creates a deep sense of admiration and awe towards the will that is effective in their emergence and in the expression of the emotion and thought they instill. Such a feeling expresses an aesthetic excitement inculcating enormous power. This is a feeling close to the experience of being before and in the presence of the sublime. The theme of great oceans, majestic mountains, and endless skies are the clearest examples suggesting the existence of something indestructible. To this end, the sublime forces our dream to the utmost and surpasses it, and the experience of contact at such a moment brings us together with the eternal in a place, according to Koç.[407]

Al-Ghazālī makes an enlightening clarification about the relationship between beauty and grandeur by differentiating aesthetic and intelligible beauty. He discusses that through sight, hearing, touch, and taste, only exoteric beauty is sensed, but there is also

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[405] Atan, *İslam Sanatında Özgünlük*, 133-135.
[406] Paul Klee in Atan, 135.
[407] Ibid, 90.

the beauty of abstract things, which is perceived by "inner sight" (*baṣīra bāṭina).* The beauty of the outer appearance, which can be seen with the bodily eye, can be perceived by children, animals, etc., whereas the beauty of the inward form can only be perceived by the eye of the heart and the light of the inner vision of man alone. He furthers: "Inward vision is stronger than outward vision because the heart is more sensitive than the eye, and because the beauty perceived by the heart is more powerful than the beauty perceived by the eye. The beauty of proportion or pure color is perceived by sight, but the beauty of majesty, grandeur, superiority, and all that is included in inner qualities is perceived by the sense of the heart."[408] Thus, he highlights the superiority of inward vision and grandeur as one of its components.

In this experience, we feel a kind of helplessness, feel crushed, and become insignificant in the face of our sensitivity and imagination. However, the contemplation and consideration of these events also drown us with great pleasure. In addition to the feeling of helplessness it gives, any perception of perfection, greatness, grandeur, and height is an enjoyable experience, and being in such places opens us up to other worlds. The reverberation of the mountains, the falling of the stars, or the sublime feeling inspired by such a view, which is also mentioned in the Quran, introduces us to the existence of an omnipotent Power. Hence, there is a sense of beauty in the fascination with the sacred. In other words, the feeling and experience of awe, peace, respect, and beauty is indiscriminately a wide gateway to the experience of the sublime and sacred. This experience draws us beyond physics and leads us to thoughts that dig into the secret of existence.

In the Quran, there are many examples of doomsday depictions that open to this sublime experience, such as the verse, "*Surely, what you are promised must come to pass. So when the stars are put out, and the sky is torn apart, and the mountains are blown away*" (Al-Mursalat, 77/7-10).

The grandeur and dazzling of the great mosques are an important manifestation of this experience of sublimity, peace, and awe at the artistic level. Virgin nature is an exhibition of beauty throughout. It is possible to see a reflection of this experience in

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[408] Abu Hamid Muhammed Ghazālī, *The Alchemy of Happiness*, trans. C. Field and E. Daniel (London:1991), 20,156.

every manifestation of Islamic art. Hence, such an experience constitutes the essence of the feeling that the world is seen as the perfect presentation of Allāh and that it is face-to-face with His dignity. Consequently, grandeur, power, force, and all kinds of greatness and glory that arouse such feelings are the marks of perfection and beauty.[409]

3.6. Time and Space in Islamic Thought

Perceptions of time and space and their imaginations play active roles in the formation of thought and an understanding of art that develops under the influence of that thought.

In this sense, time is a concept that draws attention to the basic views about the existence of being. In this context, in order to understand Islamic art and aesthetics, it is necessary to examine and know its conception of time. According to Karadeniz, Islamic thought was influenced by the views about the concept of time, just as it was influenced by the previous theories about the existence of the universe, but reached a different time imagination by interpreting it from its own belief perspective.[410]

According to Aristotle, time is an infinite and constant expansion. He treats time as a state of continuity and always shapes it with movement, arguing that time never has a beginning. Similarly, Ibn Sīnā explicitly relates time and movement. He sees that time as the sum of the continuous circular motion, and therefore it can be divided into moments by our flow of time. Ibn al-ʿArabī also agrees with Aristotle's conception of infinite circular time and the idea that time is a measure of motion. However, while Ibn al-ʿArabī claims that time was created together with the world, Aristotle claims that there is no starting point in time and in the world.[411]

In Islamic thought, it is discussed over the discussions whether time can be divided or not, whether it has been created or not. These debates have been included in Islamic art with the concept of "moment," which is expressed as atomic parts of time that can no longer be divided. Al-Kindī thinks that time consists of units called moments and rejects the concept of infinite time. According to him, each moment is a ring that

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[409] Ibid, 91.
[410] Karadeniz, 73.
[411] Hacı Muhammed Yusuf, *İbnü'l Arabi- Zaman ve Kozmoloji*, trans, K. Filiz (İstanbul: Nefes Press, 2013), 47.

connects the end of the past with the beginning of the future. This, on the one hand, expresses that time is always made up of finite slices that begin and end; on the other hand, it emphasizes that the "moment" is created permanently.[412]

According to Al-Ghazālī, there is no physical time yet before the original existence of the realm. Therefore, time and duration are also created. Al-Ghazālī implies that there are two concepts of time: one is natural time that begins with the creation of the realm, and the other is supernatural time that exists eternally.

Massignon, who made important contributions to the Islamic philosophy of art, states that there is no survival in Islamic theology and that only moments exist. According to him, these moments do not even have a linear order, and they are intermittent. A linear understanding of time is not seen in both the compilation of the Quran and the order of the stories. This situation, in which there is no chronology, is parallel to the idea that time is circular and repeats itself. If Allāh so wishes, it is also possible for moments to return.[413]

Karadeniz asserts that, the Islamic artist, who knows that time is a composition formed by recreating "moments" every time, reflected this in his works. Based on the concept of "moment," the *familiarity, repetition, and modular structure* principles in Islamic art were directly influenced, and it found the opportunity to express itself in works of art in every field. The idea that the new is more valuable than the old has no place in this conception of time. There is a continuous circular movement and creation. Repetitive time will always make the "old" new. The search for authenticity here is a futile endeavor.[414] Similarly, Tanpınar emphasizes the same point when he says, "Islamic civilization has remained loyal to its own golden age, the Age of Gold, which it formed around until the end.[415] Erzen's opinions in her work *Çoğul Estetik* are also worth mentioning at this point:

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[412] Islam Encyclopedia, s.v. "Zaman" by İlhan Kutluer (İstanbul: İsam Press, 2013), 111-114, "https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/zaman (15 December 2021).

[413] Louis Massignon, *İslam Sanatlarının Felsefesi*, trans. B. Toprak, (Ankara: Hece Publishers, 2006), 11-32.

[414] Kardeniz, 74.

[415] Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, *19. Asır Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi* (İstanbul: Çağlayan Publishers, 1988), in Karadeniz, 79.

> *In Islam or pre-modern cultures, the past is considered as an ideal time that was once and will be repeated. Time is a mythical phenomenon, a destiny, a promise. For it, it is not important to freeze the past as it is because everything is constantly being recreated. Things of the past do not need to be hidden, so there is no need for a museum. Time will take care of the past and the future.*[416]

In another article, she emphasizes that time is not perceived as a linear progression in the Ottoman understanding fed by Islamic culture and that time is spiral and circumferential, in other words, circular, like space. According to her, time is constantly repeated in a new way, but each time it is new, but not by leaving the previous one behind or evolving to a further point. It is possible to see the spatial reflection of the same concept in the space arrangements in the complexes, in the structures of the architectural structures, or in the two-dimensional compositions in miniatures.[417]

On the other hand, Henri Corbin argues that Islam is transhistorical and transhistorical when comparing the conception of time between Islam and Christianity. According to Corbin, the lineage of prophecy and the fact that each prophet followed and acknowledged his predecessors shows that the truth is repeatedly reminded. While the birth and spread of the Christian consciousness focus on the event that took place in the first year of the history of Christianity, the religious consciousness of Islam focuses not on a historical event but on a transhistorical event. This event is the orientation of the divine question, "*Am I not your Lord?*" (A'raf, 7/172) to the human spirits that existed before the earthly realm. The positive outcry that answered this question led to the conclusion of an eternal loyalty pact. All prophets from the time period reminded this word of loyalty to humanity. This agreement, which takes place between God and people in the realm of Spirits, which can be regarded as such a beginning of time, saves people from being caught up in the unknown whirlpools of time. Man, who is assured of the truth at the beginning of time, will find tranquility in surrender.[418]

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[416] Jale Erzen, *Çoğul Estetik* (İstanbul: Metiş Publishers, 2016), 48.

[417] Jale Erzen, *Osmanlı Estetiği*, Osmanlı Ansiklopedisi 10, Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Publishers, 1999), 42.

[418] Henri Corbin, *İslam Felsefesi Tarihi* (İstanbul: İletişim Publishers, 2013), 90.

After crystallizing the perception of time in Islamic thought, scrutinizing the perception of space will be beneficial and complementary. Space means "the place where being occurred" in the dictionary.[419] In the ancient Greek philosophy that developed until Plato, the discussions about the nature of space were mostly around the concepts of occupancy-emptiness. For Plato, space is primarily the place on which becoming and degradation take place. According to Aristotle's understanding of the universe, which Islamic philosophers accepted as its main framework, there are two types of space. The first of these is the general space (*topos koinos*) in the sense of the common place where all objects are located, and the other is the special space in the sense of its own boundary that a particular object has. For instance, a bookshelf, the general space for a book contained in it, the physical limit of the book in question, becomes its special space.[420] On the other hand, Al-Kindī defined space as "the boundaries of objects," and this definition was seen as the same as Aristotle's explanation of "the boundary of the object surrounded by the surrounding object" for space.[421] Besides, Al-Fārābī describes space as the outer surface of the object surrounded by the inner surface of the surrounding object. According to him, since there is nothing outside the universe that surrounds it from the outside, the universe has no place. Al-Fārābī emphasizes that there is no fullness and emptiness beyond the universe. According to Ibn Sīnā, there is no gap both inside and outside the universe. Therefore, the void in which nothing is supposed to exist is not a really mere absence but something that has character, quantity, and gems.[422]

According to Tatar, the existence of different ideas about space has continued its effect until today. According to this, from Aristotle's concept of space developed with reference to the place-holding properties of objects to the concept of space described by Descartes as an extent, Newton's understanding of space as the place where God performs the act of creating something, Kant's space is "receiver, carrier, preserving

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[419] Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, "space", https://www.ldoceonline.com/dictionary/space (accessed April 12, 2019).

[420] Islam Encyclopedia, s.v. "Mekân" by İlhan Kutluer (Istanbul: İslam Publishers, 2003), 28.

[421] Şaban Haklı, "İslam Felsefesinde Mekân ve Boşluk Tasavvurunun Kozmolojiye Tatbiki," *Hittite University Journal of Theology Faculty* 6, (February 2007), 51, https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/85847.

[422] Ibid, 53-54.

what is inside," and it has had effects right up to the handling of some kind of container or pool image.[423]

Tatar expresses that there are abstract space imaginations other than physical space and says that Eliade's interpretation of sacred space makes the perception of space in the conception of art and the understanding of the imaginations that develop on it eventful. According to this, the sacred space is a kind of extreme time (the beginning of which cannot be determined) that can gain intensity thanks to the manifestation of "reality" or "sacred," that can immediately separate from hollow spaces and allow human beings to establish a close relationship with reality. In other words, sacred space is a "speaking space" as a kind of axis or center around which known daily time or history revolves. For example, the constant repetition of certain rituals on certain days of the year and at certain times of the day is a resistance to the destructive or harmful effects of the sacred space and daily time. That is, the sacred space always keeps man in a close relationship with the "truth" against the tendency of time to distance man from his origin (his original connection with the sacred). In this respect, it is a kind of anti-time (non-temporal) space.[424]

After discussing the ontological dimensions of space in Islamic philosophy, it is essential to touch on its reflected part in Islamic art. According to Nasr, the hadith "*The entire earth has been made a place of prayer*" (Muslim, 522) offered quite extensive expansions to the artist regarding the perception of space in Islamic art. In this way, space was not divided and remained a part of universal integrity. The understanding of monotheism has also been determinant in this understanding of space because instead of fragmented space, an unlimited understanding of space takes its source from unifying and integrating the power of the concept of oneness. Nasr claims that the nomadic spirit of Islamic art is also influential in the perception of space. According to him, this nomadic spirit, by the effect of wandering through the vast areas of virgin nature, gives rise to a deep intuition that will understand the existence of the invisible in the visible, as is the case with all nomads. Islamic art has always

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[423] Burhanettin Tatari, "Tarihsel Mekân Fenomenolojisi: Bir Giriş Denemesi," *Milel ve Nihal* 4, (June 2007): 19-29, https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/109470.
[424] Ibid, 21-22.

preserved this nomadic spirit and presented nature as a large garden in which the signs of an invisible gardener always exist.[425]

According to Karadeniz, space in Islamic culture should also be influenced by the concept of "emptiness," which deals with so that it is not reduced to a single function or limited. Just as the entire earth is a place of prayer, the house rooms are also suitable for multi-purpose use. You can sleep in a room, host guests, pray and eat. You can see this in the classical period Ottoman structures, which we will discuss in detail in the following chapters, in the often inseparable whole of function and form. Nasr also described this space as "a non-physical space that is not created by human desires and whims, but has ontological reality." Ornamentation, miniature, and poetry in Islamic arts also focus on this limitless space for themselves.[426]

What Massignon said about the "garden" in the Islamic civilization also shows the traces of the idea of unity in "space": "The first thing the eye grasps here is the nature as we see it, and it is the rejection and denial of the material realm. This, unlike landscaped gardens, is such a delusional nature that leads us to the Oneness and to the heart and root of all our ideas. This is the rest of the thought within itself wherever it is."[427] In the author's determinations, the "rest of the thought within itself" and finding silence evoke the feeling of eternity provided by inactivity. Thus, the journey from the realm of emotion to the realm of example will find its way in this "space."[428]

The relationship between the perception of space and the image of heaven in Islamic thought is also high. According to Eliade, the longing for eternity originates from the longing for heaven. The emphasis and search for unlimited space are also related to this heavenly place. The words garden and gate are mentioned in verse "*Gardens of Adn (Eden) whereof the gates are open for them*." (Sad, 38/50) in the Quran, can be thought to be turned into important metaphors in Islamic art and caused them to become widespread.

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[425] Seyyid Hüseyin Nasr, *İslam Kozmolojisi Öğretilerine Giriş*, trans. N. Şişman (İstanbul: İnsan Press, 1985), 22.
[426] Karadeniz, 86.
[427] Massignon, 11-32.
[428] Karadeniz, 87.

In classical Turkish poetry, it is important to note that the places where the lover lived are often expressed in a way that reminds them of the garden. Words such as "*Gül-zār, Gül-istān, Gülşen, lale-zār, şukūfe-zār*" are examples of this (*zār* means garden in Persian). It is stated in poems that these places are as beautiful as heaven. Places worthy of beloved are only as beautiful as this paradise.[429] The lover himself is also depicted with garden elements. The lover's height is cypress, her hair is hyacinth, and her cheek is a rose. It is a garden where all beloved beauties are gathered. The mention of garden metaphors while talking about the Absolute Beautiful in poetry is related to the "garden," signifying the position of humans against the world and the universe.[430] In parallel with the emphasis on heaven above, Massignon mentions that the garden is a realm of dreams for Muslims, away from the rush of the world.[431] Celal Esad Arseven pointed to this reality, saying, "Garden was a realm for Turk and a realm of pleasure and inspiration."[432]

The perception of empty space open to human intervention led to the emergence of perspective in art. The perspective, which interprets the whole space from a single point of view, is an incomplete view, although it is an expression of an illusion of domination.[433] It is seen that Islamic art and imagination, which does not make the space passive in front of people, observe the principle of harmony with nature in its arrangement. Similarly, Ayvazoğlu emphasizes that the topography does not deteriorate while constructing a Turkish house, and as little excavation work is done, similarly, there is little intervention to nature in the arrangement of the garden. According to him, the planting of flowers in Turkish gardens in clusters of the same genus and the same color, not mixed as in French gardens, is to perpetuate the memory of the endless daisy and poppy fields in the mountains and steppes.[434]

The perception of space in Islamic art was formed in parallel with his perception of the world in cosmology. In Islamic cosmology, there is an imaginal world called "an

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[429] Mustafa Nejat Sefercioğlu, "Divan Şiirinin Çevreye Bakışı," *Türk Kültürü İncelemeleri* 1, (2000), 73.

[430] D. Fairchild Ruggles, *İslami Bahçeler ve Peyzajlar*, trans, T. Tükel (İstanbul: Koç University Publishers, 2017), 119.

[431] Massignon, 21.

[432] Celal Esad Arseven in Beşir Ayvazoğlu, *Güller Kitabı* (İtanbul Ötüken Publishers, 1999), 6.

[433] Karadeniz, 88.

[434] Beşir Ayvazoğlu, *Güller Kitabı* (İstanbul: Ötüken Press, 1999), 35.

intermediate contact zone between the realm of emotion and the spirit realm alone, that is, the immaterial realm." Everything and event in this world is the emergence of the imaginal world and imagination from there. The idea that there are real representations of things, like the imaginal world outside the world of feelings, has caused people to move from the horizons of material existence and worldly consciousness, from time, space, color, and form to an intermediate world where all these come into being.[435] The beauty of beings in this world is temporary; there is a limited beauty that emerges from the imaginal world. What is expected from the artist is to pursue unlimited beauty by following this limited beauty. Thus, Islamic art is the product of such a "dream."[436]

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[435] Nasr, 224.
[436] Karadeniz, 90.

CHAPTER 4

4. MAJOR ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHERS AND THEIR AESTHETIC VIEWS

Aesthetic works were not produced by major Islamic philosophers. Their texts, however, do incorporate themes that modern philosophers may investigate under that heading.[437] Islamic thinkers explored the notion of "beauty" in arguments about God and His characteristics concerning His creation. They appear to be influenced by Neoplatonic literature, such as Aristotle's pseudo-Aristotelian Theology, a collection based on Plotinus' Enneads. Furthermore, they incorporated some of Plato's beliefs on literature and imitation, notably those found in the Republic.[438] On the other hand, Hamdouni Alami highlights the following points:

> *…it was the Muslim world first to rediscover Greek philosophy and science found at the center of the Neoplatonic view, and Europe only learned Greek philosophy and science later and through Islamic authors. Needless to say, prior to imparting the Greek intellectual inheritance to Europe, Islamic philosophers had already established their perspective of cosmological correspondence, which was a synthesis and development of all scholarly sources available to them.[439]*

Based on this background, the deeply rooted view that Islamic art developed without a solid historical background and reached a peak throughout the thirteenth century is a constructionist approach that disagrees with the historical relationship of the intellectual and artistic realms in the Islamic world and opposes the complexity of its development.[440] To this end, as Valéri Gonzalez points out, Muslim intellectuals have debated the binary conceptions of beauty and ugliness since the beginning of the Middle Ages, either directly or indirectly.

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[437] Routledge Encyclopedia of Islamic Philosophy, s.v. "Aesthetics in Islamic Philosophy," by Deborah Black (1998), 75-79.

[438] Ibid,

[439] Mohammed Hamdouni Alami, *The Origins of Visual Culture in the Islamic World: Aesthetics, Art and Architecture in Early Islam* (I.B. Tauris, 2015), 13.

[440] Ibid, 3.

As a result, aesthetics was as much a component of classical Islamic philosophy as it was of Middle Ages Christian thought, as seen by the vast corpus of literature authored by the Scholastics.[441]

It is pretty necessary to focus on the ancient and medieval sources in the subject of aesthetics historically to reflect the depth and deep roots of Islamic aesthetics, as well as the contribution of Muslim thinkers that expanded and furthered the previous arguments. Prior to delving into the perspectives of Islamic philosophers and their thoughts on aesthetics, the perspectives of ancient Christian philosophers Plotinus (205-270) and St. Augustine will be briefly explained because they are critical in understanding the legacy of Greek aesthetic theory, the impact of which was felt intensely throughout the medieval era. The concept of beauty is a central part of Islamic design and visual culture, and an examination of the ancient Christian and medieval Islamic sources could offer a valuable perspective on the continued importance of aesthetic themes in Islamic art.

Plotinus: (205-270)

Plotinus is often regarded as the father of Neo-platonism, and his significance in comprehending Late Greek aesthetic philosophy is vital. He calls the term "*mimesis*" into doubt and requests: Is mimicry a copying or interpreting act? Plato, the first philosopher before Plotinus, argued that "an image-maker, a representative, understands only the appearance, while reality goes beyond him," thinking that an artist acts as a copier. He also claims that something is more beautiful when removed from its 'formless' matter. The finest artists do not just copy what they see but go above and beyond. He believed that because beauty is a divine essence and an expression of the Absolute, there can only be one absolute source of creativity: the One. Only the One is truly emanative and consequently non-imitable. The primary beauty is God. Although ugliness might be formal, an immoral spirit is equally ugly. Because beauty originates from God, the soul's becoming lovely is likened to him.

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[441] Gonzales, *Beauty and Islam*, 5.

Peker establishes that there is a hierarchical order in this idea. At the bottom are ugliness and immortality, which man can overcome. To that end, Plotinus' aesthetic philosophy influenced medieval conceptions of beauty.[442]

St. Augustine: (354-430)

"Invisible things of God are known and seen via the formed things,"[443] the Bible says. As a result, the universe is considered a sign of God. This broad idea, according to Peker, molded the Christian world's perception of beauty. According to St. Augustine, beauty is a creation of God, and artists and connoisseurs of exterior beauty get their standard of evaluation from a beauty greater than souls. He expressed that the more measure, beauty, and order in created things, the better they are, while the less measure, beauty, and order in made things, the worse they are. Based on this idea, the three components of beauty that we discover in all created things are measure, beauty, and order.[444] According to Emmanuel Chapman, unlike Plotinus, St. Augustine believed there could be no ultimate ugliness since there is beauty wherever life is. Despite his belief that created things get their beauty from God, St. Augustine nonetheless attributes total beauty to God. From individual creatures to God, there is a hierarchy of goodness and beauty, in his opinion.[445]

Art, like aesthetic judgment, requires divine illumination, according to St. Augustine. The artist cannot create like God, but he may continue, complete, and finalize God's creation.[446] While Plotinus considers the material world to be fundamentally ugly, St. Augustine claims that God's creation is imperfect, and it is man's responsibility to complete it.[447]

Al-Kindī, Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna), Ibn al-Haytham, Ibn Ḥazm, Ibn Rushd (Averroes), Al-Ghazālī, and Al-Fārābī are the most notable Medieval Islamic philosophers with novel

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[442] Ali Uzay Peker, "The Concept of Beauty from the Plotinusto St. Augustine and Ghazzali and Art of Abstraction in Medieval Eastern Mediterranean, " *International Congress of Aesthetics Aesthetics Bridging Cultures* (2007), 2.
[443] Ibid, 3.
[444]Ibid, 3.
[445] Emmanuel Chapman, *Saint Augustine's Philosophy of Beauty* (New York: Sheedand Ward,1939), 75.
[446] Ibid, 77.
[447] Peker, *The Concept of Beauty*, 112.

concepts on beauty, aesthetics, and perception. All of these philosophers follow the "meta-aesthetics" school of thought, founded on the medieval view of beauty, in which the episteme (the object of knowledge) does not exist in isolation but only within the religious, ethical, and ontological order.[448] In order to investigate these philosophers' perspectives on beauty, aesthetics, and perception, a holistic approach is needed. Each of their theories is briefly detailed in the following part.

- **Ya'qūb ibn 'Isḥāq al-Kindī: (b. Baghdat AD. 813, d. AD. 866)**

Al-Kindī made outstanding contributions to the theory of vision and optics in terms of the aesthetics theory. The epistemology of these two philosophies regarded perception as the primary premise of all livelihoods since the radiation of all things gave them the ability to create and re-create.

According to Al-Kindī's ontology, everything interacts with one another, and in nature, he sees unlimited radiation of force power. On the other hand, according to Lindberg, such seamless integration of everything globally through ray emission resembled an extensive terrestrial network.[449] Based on this argument, perception necessitated points of view and interpretation because appearance was not an objective actuality. He based his optics theory on such perceptual criteria.

Many later Renaissance intellectuals were influenced by Al-Kindī, and his theories were also a significant source of inspiration for Maurice Merleau-work Ponty's on phenomenology.

- **Abū Naṣr Muḥammad b. Muḥammad Al-Fārābī: (b. Vesic AD. 872, lived mainly in Baghdad d. Damascus AD. 950)**

Al-Fārābī has achieved his most fundamental contributions to philosophy. He was the first to distinguish between existence and essence, giving metaphysics substance. Another novel insight of his was the distinction between contemplative and practical

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[448] Gonzales, 41.

[449] David Lindberg, *Theories of Vision from Al-Kindī to Kepler*, (London: The University of Chicago Press, 1967), 18.

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consciousness. He has also had a significant impact on the school of thought that believes human intelligence is derived from God.[450]

Al-Fārābī's major accomplishment was music, encompassing medieval musical ideas, but we also know of his immense understanding of mathematics. In keeping with his Sufi and mystical heritage, his proponent notions have been 'inner light' and 'inner awareness.'

Since he was heavily influenced by Plato and Aristotle, his *Theology* exhibits a synthesis of religion and philosophy. The concept of intelligible beauty is mentioned in Al-Fārābī's *Al-Madīna Al-Fāḍila* (The Virtuous City) in relation to God's names and characteristics. He mentions "beauty" (*Al-Jamāl*), "brilliance" (*Al-Bahā*), and "splendor" (*Al-Zīna*) as celestial names. Even though the implications of these adjectives are associated with visual and hence sensible themes, Al-Fārābī contends that beauty in all things is fundamentally ontological. The more flawless a creature becomes, the more beautiful it evolves. He concludes that God, whose existence is of the highest quality, is the most beautiful of beings.[451] Moreover, God's beauty transcends every other beauty because it is essential, not accidental, and His beauty is the source of his own, but created beauty is the result of accidental and corporeal characteristics that are not one with their own constituents. Lastly, Al-Fārābī defends that pleasure and beauty are inextricably linked; therefore, God's joy, like His beauty,

is beyond our comprehension. Unlike ours, God's joy is continuous rather than discontinuous because His awareness of beauty is the result of an endless and unbroken act of contemplation.[452]

While Al-Fārābī's opinion about beauty appears to be a Neoplatonic expansion in this context, the growth of the relationship between beauty, perception, and enjoyment represents a more appropriate aesthetic in his account, according to Black. In God, like in the earthly world, beauty is primarily found in things that acquire proper

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[450] Henry Corbin, *Islam Felsefesi Tarihi (Histoire de la Philosophie Islamique)*, tran. Hüseyin Hatemi, (İstanbul: İletişim Publishers, 1986), 285.

[451] Al-Fārābī (870-950), "*Al-Madīna Al-Fāḍila (The Virtuous City)*," ed. and tran. R. Walzer, Al-Fārābī on the Perfect State (Oxford: Clarendon Press,1985) in Routledge Encyclopedia of Islamic Philosophy by Deborah Black.

[452] Ibid, 2.

completeness. When that beauty, whether tangible or intellectual, is contemplated, it becomes a source of pleasure for the one who sees it.[453]

- **Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Haytham: (b. Basra AD. 965, worked under the Fatimid Caliph Al-Ḥākim, d. Cairo AD. 1039)**

Ibn al-Haytham, a.k.a. Alhazen in Latin, is well renowned for his magnum opus in perception: Kitāb al-Manāẓir (Book of Optics). His theory of perception is highly detailed, and it entails a radiation process that begins with the eye, interacts with the object, receives color and light from the object, and then returns to the eye and ends in the mind. As a result, perception co-occurs in the eye and mind. Ibn al-Haytham's thesis was different from previous theories that regarded radiation as only a process from the eye to the object, with no consideration for the mind or brain. Ibn al-Haytham moved beyond the object to investigate how the human brain interprets angles, refractions, and other features of optics.

His theory makes no mention of divinity playing a part in aesthetics. As a result, he differs from other medieval thinkers. His philosophy's central pillars have been light, perspective, and intuitive theory of understanding. Even a youngster can detect and appreciate beauty because color and light can activate perceptual mechanisms in children. His idea is intertwined with Ibn Sīnā's opinions.[454]

- **Abū Muḥammad ʿAlī ibn Aḥmad ibn Saʿīd ibn Ḥazm: (d. Cordoba, 1064)**

Treatise on Practical Morals (Risala fi Mudawat al nüfus), The Ring of the Dove (Tawag al-hamama), and A Treatise on the Art and Practice of Arab Love are defined as the Works of "ontology of eroticism in literary terms" by Ibn Ḥazm.[455] His writings focused on morality and human love, and he considered love and beauty a unified phenomenon. For him, religious love and animistic desire after the good (*al-ḫayr*) were interwoven, and beauty was not one-dimensional. It was made up of material, spiritual, and ethical dimensions.[456]

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[453] Routledge Encyclopedia of Islamic Philosophy, s.v. "Aesthetics in Islamic Philosophy," by Deborah Black, n.d, http://www.muslimphilosophy.com/ip/rep/H020 (accessed April 12, 2019).

[454] Jale Erzen, *Conceptions of the Aesthetic in Islamic Philosophy* (Ankara, 2015), 8-9.

[455] Gonzales, 8.

[456] Ibid, 8.

Ibn Ḥazm was fully aware of and appreciated material/physical beauty, but he built a quasi-hierarchy that builds from sensual beauty (similar to Plato's *Symposium*) and culminates in spiritual beauty.[457] Hence, flawless beauty is moral beauty, implying a "passion controlled by reason." Consequently, beauty comes from knowing the difference between right and evil and continually believing in the truth.[458] Ibn Ḥazm was not, however, a transcendental philosopher. His school of thinking was centered on the 'manifest' (*ẓāhirī*) rather than the transcendent.

God's beauty, unlike concrete beauty that may be examined in human terms, was not conducive to such an investigation. His beauty, he claimed, could only be appreciated in abstraction. He distinguished "perceptible beauty," which was lovely and mild to the senses, from "sublime beauty," which can only be recognized by souls (*maḥṣūṣ fi'l-nufūs*). The individuals' empathy and affection were stimulated by sublime beauty, which was more than soft and lovely. Ibn Ḥazm thought that love between two lovers was the highest form and essence of beauty, surpassing all other joys and delights.[459]

- **Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Sīnā:** (b. Bukhara AD. 980, d. AD. 1037)

Kitāb al-Shifāʾ (Book of Healing), Ibn Sīnā's magnum opus, demonstrates how he was a genuinely universal Middle Age philosopher, as *Shifa* dealt with not only medicine but also logic, physics, and metaphysics. The richness and complexity of his mind are imaginable. Ibn Sīnā, like neo-Platonists, prioritized the spiritual and metaphysical aspects of beauty over physicality. He was an "essentialist," according to Valerie Gonzales, since he felt that everything embodied a spiritual essence, ultimately God's beauty/qualities, which made everything whole.[460]

True beauty, he believed, could not be attained without putting sensual pleasures on the back burner. We can only comprehend beauty through intellect, intuition, and emotion.[461] It would be incorrect to assume that senses had no role in Ibn Sīnā's perception of beauty, as the following quote demonstrates: "For all suitable beauty and

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[457] Ibid, 9.
[458] Ibid,
[459] Ibid,
[460] Corbin, 308.
[461] Gonzales, *Beauty and Islam*, 5.

goodness that one perceives (*kull jamāl mulā'im wa khyr mudrak*) that one loves, and desires (*mahbūb wa maʿshūq*) the principle of perceiving them (*mabdaʿ idrākihi*) relies on the senses (*ḥiss*), imagination (*khayāl*), the estimative faculty (*wahm*), conjecture (*ẓann*) and the intellect (*ʿaql*)."[462]

- **Abū l-Walīd Muḥammad Ibn ʾAḥmad Ibn Rušd:** (b. in Cordoba, d. Marrakesh 1198)

Summary of the Book of the Soul (Talkhis Kitāb al Nafs) and Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics are two of Ibn Rushd's essential writings. We can see from his writings that he prized beauty, grandeur, and order above all else and that he felt beauty could be examined using reasoning drawn from God's creation. In Ibn Rushd's mind, cognizance and reflection are so crucial, and his philosophy is based on Aristotle's "mimesis," which allows one to think about unspoken truth and harmony principles. Besides, he thought that the artist could only reveal God's beauty and not truly create. At best, all art was a "recreation," an imitation, a counterfeit of God's perfection and beauty. Ibn Rušd used the closeness of works of art to nature as a criterion for beauty because nature was God's ultimate creation, expressing his beauty. He considered nature as God's perfect system and art as an endeavor to achieve that perfection.[463] For the Aristotelian Ibn Rushd, just as light makes colors visible without being itself visible, God is light. He is the source of all sensible experience that is never enveloped in veils of light.[464]

- **Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad aṭ-Ṭūsiyy al-Ghazālī: (**b. in Meshed, 1058- d. Baghdad, 1111)

His principal writings, *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* (The Revival of Religious Sciences) and *al Munqidh min aḍ Ḍalāl* (The Deliverer from Error), primarily focusing on the Muslim religion, make him one of the greatest mystics of Orthodox Islam.

The true nature of things, according to Al-Ghazālī, could only be realized via a "spiritual journey" because the eye could only interpret things at their face value and

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[462] Ibid, 14.

[463] Ibid, 16.

[464] Abouseif, 33.

could never penetrate the essence of things.[465] Al-Ghazālī, on the other hand, was not an essentialist and recognized that essence could not simply be assumed to be necessary and permanent. Instead, he had a skeptical mindset, allowing for uncertainties, and made an effort to prove mystical knowledge, comparable to David Hume experimentally. After all, God has the ability to will anything, and these ambiguities preclude an essentialist perspective.[466]

The glories of the corporeal world, according to Al-Ghazālī, are expressions of absolute beauty in various degrees. He contrasts visible and hidden beauty, claiming that the heart conceives better than sight. According to him, the beauty of objects cannot be appreciated with the senses since the senses are insufficient to grasp the object's beauty. He says that the heart's eye, or *basira*, is the only way to see beauty.[467] Virtue determines beauty (*kemālāt*).

In this sense, like Plotinus and St. Augustine, he creates a hierarchical gradation. To that end, beauty is a moral standard that might vary depending on its owner's qualities.[468]

Al-Ghazālī also wrote about "*Samāʿ*" (music listening), which requires mystical reasoning rather than assuming a fixed, unchangeable primary feature. As a result, he possessed the attributes of both a philosopher and a mystic.

- **Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Rūmī (Mawlānā):** (1207-1273)

Rūmī is a Persian Sunni Muslim poet, scholar, scribe, theologian, and Sufi mystic. The most famous work of Rūmī is undoubtedly the *Maṭnawīye Maʿnawī*. It is a broad interpretation of the Quran. In *Maʿnawī*, which consists of approximately 36 thousand lines of poems, Rūmī deals with the vast ocean of the world of the soul and the journey of the human towards this world. According to Nasr, it is unlikely that an important religious and spiritual issue, whether doctrinal or influential, was not dealt with in Rūmī's writings in one way or another; for this reason, *Maʿnawī* is called the sea of ingenuity (*deryā-yı maʿrifet)*. It offers broad implications for exposing the unique

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[465] Corbin, 319.
[466] Ibid, 320.
[467] Peker, 113.
[468] İmam Gazzali, *Ihya-i Ulumuddin 9*, 328, as cited in Peker, "The Concept of Beauty", 113.

poetic teachings and secrets of the spiritual path, as well as the path of Divine Unity, in the form of poetry and music, and to study the life, works, and teachings of the unique master, to reach the depth of the relationship between Islamic art and spirituality.[469]

Rūmī is from the Sufi school in terms of interpreting beauty. According to him, Allāh is the absolute beauty. All beings receive their beauty from Him. Therefore, the beauty of beings is a reflection and manifestation of divine Beauty. Their degree of beauty is equal to their share of divine Beauty. This is why the beauty of Allāh is portrayed in the universe. Love also emerges as a result of this beauty. Therefore, it is essential to look at beings with love. All the views of this school were embodied in Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī. Details of Rūmī's love aesthetics can be summarized as follows.

In light of the Quran and hadiths and in parallel with the thinkers before him, Rūmī believes that the sense of beauty is *fiṭrī* (innate) in humans and that human beings who are natural are always looking for and inclined towards beauty. Like beauty, its opposite, ugliness, is an innate feeling, and one always wants to escape from the ugly. According to him, both the beauty in human beings and the beauty existing in the outer world originate from the beauty of Allāh, and it connects this with the hadith "Allāh is beautiful and loves beauty."[470] The following lines are also used in the *Ma'nawī*:

> *He was showing unto you hideous forms in a dream: you were shrinking back from them, and they were your form, like the Ethiopian who saw in the mirror that his face was ugly and defecated on the mirror! (Ma'nawī, IV., 2490)*

> *I said, "If I am beautiful, I shall receive this from him; and if not, he has indeed laughed at ugly me. The plan is this, that I look at myself otherwise, he will laugh at me: how shall I buy? "He is beautiful and a lover of beauty: how should a fresh young man choose a decrepit old woman? (Ma'nawī, II, 77-79)*

Rūmī thinks that beauty can be handled in two ways: Absolute beauty and relative beauty. For him, absolute beauty is only the beauty of Allāh because He is the Being whose beauty is inherent. All other beauties are relative, and they are beautiful to the extent that they can share in the beauty of Allāh since their beauty did not emerge from their own existence. Absolute beauty manifests itself in every being. According to this Sufi school represented by Rūmī, when one looks at the world, one will enjoy this

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[469] Nasr, 158, 169.
[470] İsmail Yakıt, "Mevlana'da Aşk Estetiği", *Mevlana Araştırmaları Dergisi* 1, (2007), 36.

beauty and find beauty in everything. He will love everything that is visible and invisible, be it human, animal, or plant. Even the ugly ones are intrinsically beautiful in appearance. By returning to self, man manifests divine beauty and love in himself.

> *Through the working of the Jealous One, they behold the beauty of God in the faces of the houris, like the moon in water. His jealousy is against a lover and sincere; His jealousy is not against a devil and beast (Ma'nawī, VI, 3646-3647)*

According to Rūmī, human beings, who are under the spell of Allāh's manifestation in the world, find themselves in an elusive ball of admiration. From the reflection of divine beauty to the realm, the fire of love, which is inherent like beauty, awakens; this fire becomes more intense and eventually turns into love. This love will take him to his beloved.

According to Yakıt, Rūmī also adopts how human beings are accepted as microcosmic beings in Turkish Islamic thought. In this understanding, human beings are treated as if they are directly in the universe rather than being a part of the universe. A person who has reached the consciousness of unity by passing through could reach a deep pleasure by getting his share of Allāh's manifestation both in the universe and in himself, His love and manifestation. This pleasure will gradually bring him closer to Allāh, leaving behind all human concerns and striving to reach Him.[471] This is the aim of Islamic arts in itself.

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[471] Ibid, 42.

CHAPTER 5

5. BASIC CONCEPTS OF ISLAMIC AESTHETICS

There are certain approaches/principles that Islamic aesthetics and art always prioritize. This dimension, which constitutes the essence of the relationship of religious sensitivity and understanding with the metaphysical or beyond, is set on in all aesthetic perceptions and artistic activities. This dimension is, at the same time, a ground on which the meaning of existence is opened to human comprehension. It is also the ultimate reference frame of Islamic aesthetic sensitivity and art, and it constitutes an original and vivid example of the integration of religion and art. The distinctive feature of Islamic art lies in its sincere and close relationship with this dimension. Therefore, according to Koç, these principles form a paradigm about the extent to which a certain aesthetic understanding is Islamic and serve as a very important criterion for the value or success of the work of art and its activities.[472]

We can encounter some of the concepts of Islamic art in other cultures. According to Karadeniz, the existence of some principles adopted by Islamic thought in other cultures does not result in the fact that Islamic thought is directly influenced by the same mentality as the cultures of the past. When some of these concepts are examined one by one, it can be misunderstood that Islamic thought has a similar worldview to the ancient Greek, Egyptian, and Byzantine cultures on the one hand and the Far Asian cultures on the other. Nevertheless, there is a feature that distinguishes Islamic art from other cultures, which also includes all principles, which is the principle of "*tawḥīd*" (oneness of Allāh).[473]

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[472] Koç, 47.
[473] Karadeniz, 97-98.

All the principles that Islam emphasizes primarily and fundamentally have a direct or indirect reflection on the Islamic aesthetic sensitivity and understanding of art. It is important to determine and explain its principles and conceptual characteristics to better understand Islamic art. However, when we consider the studies on Islamic art, we observe that the principles of this art are handled scattered in many of them, and how these principles are reflected in various branches of art is not clearly expressed. In this part, the basic principles of Islamic art and aesthetics are analyzed to understand Islamic art and aesthetics and to trace this art in various structures in the Topkapı Palace for this study. This conceptual plane that is tried to be created aims to settle the analyzes to be made on stable ground. The concepts pointed out below were compiled from the varied written sources as an outcome of a deep study of the literature on Islamic aesthetics, filtered by the author of the thesis, and are presented in the light of the existing literature and Islamic teachings.

5.1. Oneness (*Tawḥīd*)

Tawḥīd (oneness of Allāh) means to accept through mind and heart that Allāh is one and only. Therefore, oneness is the essence of Islam. This idea of unity in Islamic thought is reflected exactly in all the elements that arise from it. The wisdom in the multitude of existence in Islam is understood with the unity of the creator. Despite the abundance of existence, the harmony and order seen in them have been regarded as evidence of the unity of their creator. In this belief, the aesthetic values of Islamic art are also a result of the manifestation of *tawḥīd*.[474]

The principle of *tawḥīd* is the unity of thought and action that turns the art of Islam into the art of Islam. The inclusion of art in morality in Islam, an appreciation of beauty, good, and useful, the unity of meaning and form, the purpose of performing art, the value of the invisible behind the visible, and the modest avoidance of the depiction of the invisible sublimity, the message conveyed by art is everything, and the effort to express it clearly and understandably are always reflections of the principle of *tawḥīd* to art.

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[474] Kılıç, 51.

The reflection of the idea of *tawḥīd* coming from the Islamic belief in the art within the framework of this principle is also the source of the mention of aesthetics of Islamic arts.[475]

5.2. Variation (*Tanawwu'*)

The various and diverse features of Islamic art itself stem from its understanding of "existence." According to this, Allāh is the "Necessary Being" (*wâjib al-wujūd*), and human beings and other creatures are beings that cannot exist by themselves and have finiteness. What is expected of man is that he is always conscious of his own mortality in front of the creator.

"*Every being on earth is bound to perish. Only your Lord Himself, full of Majesty and Honor, will remain forever.*" (Ar-Rahman/26-27)

In that case, Islamic art must also state that Allāh is eternal and the creatures are mortal. Without imitating nature, its temporality should be emphasized, and the motifs taken from it should also be presented in style so that the emphasis on mortality is realized. Not worshiping a form, fixing a form, or not freezing it is a requirement of this understanding of art. By avoiding the idea of "fixing and controlling," Islamic art takes advantage of the depth offered by variation through improvisation.[476]

Variation can be seen in many branches of Islamic art. For instance, different maqams in Islamic music can be memorized and played differently according to the conditions. Erzen says that although a different mode is used for each presentation in oriental music, how the chosen mode is applied or interpreted depends on the situation and atmosphere of that day, as in jazz. Similarly, in Islamic architecture, if a building is implemented according to a predetermined plan, the site, topography, and local traditions that are valid for that structure are effective in how this plan is interpreted. Moreover, the buildings are designed to be interpreted by the time-changing atmosphere and mood.[477] Erzen explains these variations, which he calls "spatial and temporal conditioning," with the lifestyle of a culture that respects the changes of time.

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[475] Karadeniz, 238-239.
[476] Ibid, 212-213.
[477] Erzen, *Reading Mosques*, 128.

According to her, music is not molded by notation, and architecture is not fixed by plans. This situation shows that the artist is aware of constantly changing conditions and creation.[478] According to the author, this "lack of frame" is an indication of the preference for a more open and fluid layout in architecture, music, or miniature art, as the plan can be adapted to the needs of the story.[479]

Karadeniz also indicates the reflection of the principle of variation on architecture as follows: Since the plan drawings are not common in architecture, the construction process is always based on a certain typology, and it takes place on the condition that it is reshaped in the structure against the characteristics of the place, the wishes of the client, and other special situations. Although there are special plan types for mosques in classical Ottoman architecture, it is seen that many special features during the construction process of the building are improvised based on the conditions.[480]

The reflection of this principle on miniature art has been in the form of diversification of certain compositions specific to certain periods by making small changes in details according to changing stories.

The astonishment of the 18th-century Ottoman intellectual and bureaucrat *Yirmisekiz Mehmed Çelebi Efendi* that the opera he watched in Paris was played unchanged every time is related to this principle. The Ottoman intellectual has gotten used to being different in plays such as *Karagöz* (Shadow Play*)*, *Ortaoyunu* (Light Comedy), and *Meddah* (Encomiastic) each time the game is played.[481]

In accordance with the variation principle of Islamic aesthetics, it does not act with an unchanging, fixed, and frozen design and plan. Therefore, change is essential. Any composition that works with a fixed and completed plan and emphasizes permanence does not find a place in this thought.

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[478] Erzen, *Çoğul Estetik*, 57.

[479] Ottomans Encyclopedia, s.v. "Ottoman Aesthetics," by Jale Nejdet Erzen, (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Publishers, 2015), 45.

[480] Karadeniz, 214.

[481] Beşir Ayvazoğlu, *Aşk Estetiği* (İstanbul: Ötüken Press, 1999), 104.

5.3. Modular Structure

The concept of modular structure can be expressed in the sense that "the parts that are in a whole/unity form a whole/unity within themselves" in a way that includes all Islamic arts, although it is used specifically for architecture. It is thought that the compilation of the Quran constitutes an example of the emergence of the modular structure principle as a form. The Quran consists of sentences called verses, which are not compositional in themselves but are integrity are also a part of the whole to which they belong. It can be seen that even in the suras formed by the verses in the Quran, there is actually no unity of the subject. Although the suras have a name, these names are not generally like a title that summarizes the whole sura. Rather, sura titles seem more like a preferred nomenclature to distinguish one sura from another. This form in the Quran has spread throughout Islamic art.[482] The modular structure principle also influenced Classical Turkish poetry. The couplet unit in Turkish poetry is a reflection of this principle. The couplet is a meaningful, lively, and satisfying unit in its own right, which seems to be both a part of the verse form to which it belongs and independent from it.[483]

Ismāʿīl Rājī al-Fārūqī similarly says and adds that the Islamic artwork consists of multiple figures and units that combine to form larger designs, and each of these modules is an important part of a larger design, as well as arrangements that carry the measure of perfection and peak, allowing itself to be perceived as a meaningful, lively and satisfying unit.[484]

Turgut Cansever expresses the modular structure principle as "tectonic" in the architectural context and says that in the Islamic world, the environment is the collectivity of independent units (tectonics). This collectivity and units take place in infinite space. A human travels all around the collectivity and its units and gets to know them within the dimensions of time and space. The fact that the traditional Turkish house is built in a form that can be added on and continuously expanded according to the needs of the inhabitants reflects this structural form preference.[485]

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[482] Karadeniz, 160.
[483] Karadeniz, 161.
[484] Al-Faruki, 188.
[485] Turgut Cansever, *Şehir ve Mimari* (İstanbul: Ağaç Publishers, İstanbul, 1992), 14.

The determinations of Yenişehirlioğlu describing the modular structure in Suleymaniye Mosque can also be an explanatory example at this point:

> *(.) Division of surfaces continually into fragments, the repeating of the formal expression of these fragments in terms of surfaces, the functional ties between. fragments, repeating of volumes, their symmetrical position, their rhythm, are factors that seem to give the Suleymaniye Mosque the fourth dimension; this is because the observer perceives the integrity of function and form of the architectural elements subconsciously; he gets hold of this visual integrity by perceiving the composition as one form.*[486]

Karadeniz explains that the "lack of integrity" brought about by the modular structure principle is one of the most important criticisms relevant to the Islamic arts. However, according to the author, the reason for this conscious choice is that the Islamic artist knows that there is no perfection in this mortal realm. This awareness renders his work far from an aim of integrity to claim perfection. For this reason, the works have an open composition by showing a structure that is suitable for taking attachments. This idea of "open composition" is a reflection of avoiding the claim of excellence.[487] This view indicates inconsistencies in itself. Thus, although man cannot claim perfection in the belief of Islam, the sacred book sent by the Creator, which is absolutely perfect and omnipotent, reflects the modular structure principle and has an open composition instead of creating a closed composition in itself. Therefore, it cannot reflect the fact that the Islamic artist sees "integrity" as perfect and adopts the modular structure as a principle since he cannot have such a claim. On the contrary, the idea that the definition of perfection is not a closed unity for the Islamic artist, but the modular structure principle itself, which reflects the compilation of the Quran and is familiar with the idea of open composition, seems more consistent.

5.4. Harmony and Congruity (*Tenāsub*)

The doctrine of harmony and proportion has been a universal formulation of aesthetic statements applicable to all arts as well as to human beauty. This principle was adopted in all periods and in the context of various disciplines, particularly in music and

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[486] Filiz Yenişehirlioğlu, "Classical Period of Ottoman Art," *The Turks, Yeni Türkiye Press* 3, (2014), 931.
[487] Karadeniz, 163.

calligraphy.[488] In the *Ikhwān Al-ṣafā's* beauty concept, which is based on Pythagorean ideas of mathematical proportions, the proportionality of elements defines the beauty of music, calligraphy, painting and sculpture, the efficiency of medicine, the goodness of a character, and the taste of food. They interpret geometry as the basis of all sciences since it established a relationship between the position of objects in addition to allowing the mind to think in abstract terms, therefore leading to its rapture and purification. [489] Likewise, *Birūnī* considered music and poetry among the mathematical sciences considering their impacts on the soul, which loves harmonious mathematical compositions.[490]

Most Arabic thinkers defined harmony as "the optimal proportions that make something beautiful."[491] Al- Baghdādī acclaimed the beauty of the Sphinx of Giza for its harmonious proportions. Al-Jawziyya also confirmed the role of proportions in human beauty.[492] Likewise, Al-Haytham says:

> *Proportionality (tenāsub)alone may produce beauty, provided that the organs are not in themselves ugly, though not perfect in their beauty. Thus, when a form combines the beauty of the shapes of all its parts and the beauty of their magnitudes and their composition and the proportionality of parts in regard to shape, size, position, and all the other properties required by the proportionality, and moreover, when the organs are proportionate to the shape and size of the face as a whole- that is a perfect beauty. A form that has some of these properties to the exclusion of others will be considered beautiful in accordance with what it has of the beautiful properties.[493]*

Al-Haytham, who was a physicist and mathematician, makes mind-opening interpretations. He furthers that seeing an object is not only a visual process; instead, it includes mental mechanisms, too. The properties of the object that is perceived by sight do not produce beauty in all situations but in some rather than others. Proportionality is one of these properties. Sight perceives only the displayed features of the objects without analyzing them; it is the mental faculty of discriminating through analogies that perceives beauty. Therefore, the perception of beauty is an outcome of

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[488] Abouseif, 37

[489] Ikhw*ān Al- ṣafā,Rasā'il. 4 vols.Beirut in Abouseif, 37*

[490] Abouseif, 38

[491] Ibid,

[492] Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, Rawdat al-muḥibbin, Cairo in Abouseif, 38

[493] Abdelhamid Sabra, *The Optics of Ibn al-Haytham* (Kuwait- 1983), 205.

an intellectual process, including the ability to judge or distinguish objectively, making use of memory. [494]

In parallel with Haytham's vision, Kılıç asserts that when the aesthetic feeling, which is a mental and spiritual vibration, is reflected on an object, what is expected from that artwork is that it reflects the idea of mental and spiritual integrity, that it is far from the feeling of emptiness and meaninglessness, and it provides a surge of aesthetic pleasure and sublimity in the individual. [495]

There are many verses that make up this framework of meaning mentioned in the Quran:

"He is the One Who created seven heavens, one above the other. You will never see any imperfection in the creation of the Most Compassionate. So look again: do you see any flaws?" (Al-Mulk/3)

"Now, perhaps you 'O Prophet' will grieve yourself to death over their denial, if they ˹continue to˺ disbelieve in this message. Do they not look at the sky above them? - How We have made it and adorned it, and there are no flaws in it?" (Qaf /6)

"As for the earth, We spread it out and placed upon it firm mountains, and caused everything to grow there in perfect balance." (Al-Hijr/19)

While these sentences show that there is no crack, openness, gap, emptiness, aesthetic flaw, and ugliness in Allāh's cosmic creation, they also refer to what should happen in human creation and artistic activity by analogy. Accordingly, the things that should not be included in the artwork are aesthetic emptiness, disproportionality, and disproportion. Being harmonious and temperance are the features that should be found in an artwork.[496]

Al-Ghazālī also emphasized proportionality, harmony, congruity, and order while counting the four conditions necessary for something to be aesthetic (1-Flawlessness, 2-purposefulness, 3-moderation (harmony and congruity), 4-order). According to the philosopher, one of the factors that make something beautiful is proportionality; being proportional means the harmony of the being within itself. Temperance is a state of being balanced, moderate, non-extreme, and natural. Order or harmony also raises existence to an acceptable level. Balance and order are two important concepts related

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[494] Sabra, 203

[495] Kılıç, 47

[496] Ibid,

to each other. There may be a balanced disorder or a balance that looks like a disorder. This is like five fingers on a hand. Even if the fact that neither of them is the same size is considered intemperance or irregular, there is balance in a way it should be. Although there is an image that can be interpreted as irregular or disorganized in the universe, there is an extraordinary balance. All these set and reflect the general rules of aesthetics.[497]

Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī also confirms that although there is no symmetrical relationship, a fine balance that looks like irregularity can also be harmonious in any design. He exemplifies this through a piece of jewelry. His perception of harmonious composition also includes dissimilar elements, which he calls "the affinity of contraries."[498] He clarifies further:

> *This harmony of composition manifests itself in all crafts and artistic activities which are associated with subtlety, fineness and skill. In the images prıduced in such crafts it is always the case that the more widely different in shape and appearance their parts are and the more perfect the harmony achieved between these parts, the more fascination on the images will possess and the more deserving the praise for their skills of their creators.[499]*

On the other hand, contrary to the views of Al-Ghazālī and Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī, Karadeniz proposes that symmetry is a necessary principle for beauty when the beauty in heaven is described in the Quran with the expressions of "*thrones, neatly lined up*" (At-Tur/20), "*fine cushions lined up*" (Al-Ghashiyah/15). claims to be a necessary principle. He also believes that the order of the verses, one after the other as a form in the Quran, also evokes the concept of symmetry. According to the author, the search for harmony in architecture is carried out with symmetry and proportional integrity, as the arches and porches seen in Islamic architecture are also lined up one after the other, the half-dome and minarets have a symmetrical form in the *Selāṭīn* mosques (mosques built by the sultans during the Ottoman Empire), and the symmetrical relationship achieved by repeating the patterns in the decoration. Hence, the designer who wants to create a good and reassuring design works according to a symmetrical model. Thus, the desire for order and the interest in the concepts of monumentality is met, and the

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[497] Gazali in Ahmet Atan, 138.

[498] al-Jurjānī, *Abd al-Qāhir*, Beirut, 1995 in Abouseif, 38.

[499] Kamal Abu Deeb, Al-Jurjānī's Theory of Poetic Imagery (London: Cambridge: 1979), 282.

restlessness that can be heard from uncertainty and chaos is not encountered.[500]At this point, the author's views can be questioned. Although many details can be symmetrical elements in Islamic architecture, it may be too general to consider this as a general search. In terms of the general scheme, as mentioned in the modular structure principle, a search for finished, symmetrical, closed compositions cannot be said for the whole of Islamic aesthetics.

5.5. Reverse Perspective

Perspective, or with proper naming, central perspective is what Belting puts it, "I see it like this here and now."[501] The perspective contains contradictions about reality, despite all its claims. This can be explained as follows: while perspective gives the impression that reality consists only of what is seen, it makes people think that there is no reality other than what is seen.

Contrary to what is claimed, the central perspective presents not the "real" but an "image" perceived from a particular point of view as real. Therefore, the resulting image is not the original image of the world stemming from its own reality.[502]

Although every culture that does not adopt the central perspective has been accused of primitiveness, ignorance, and incompetence, the Reverse perspective, which is the opposite of the Central perspective, is not primitive incompetence but even a sign of "a stage of superior maturity" according to Florenski, considering the advanced understanding of geometry developed in the Ancient Egyptians and Chinese. Cultures that prefer the reverse perspective turn to it as an indicator of their way of perceiving and understanding the world.[503] While thinking styles center the individual and the place he looks at, perceiving the images created with perspective as a means to establish control over the truth, in cultures that do not define the individual and the truth through the individual since it does not center the individual and the place where

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[500] Karadeniz, 210-211.

[501] Hans Belting, *Florance and Baghdat, Renaissance Art and Arab Science* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 89.

[502] Karadeniz, 224.

[503] Pavel Florenski, *Tersten Perspektif*, trans. Y. Tükel, (Istanbul: Metiş Publishers, 2013) 51-53.

he stands, perspective image is proof that the truth cannot be captured. Hence, in these cultures, any value is attributed to the invisible rather than the visible.[504]

Sayın also suggests that the perspective is known in Islamic thought, but with the awareness that it is the product of a completely different culture, tending towards the reverse perspective. According to him, this preference stems from a certain view of art and nature. Muslims refrain from imitating nature with the delusion of arrogance.[505]

The central perspective in Islamic aesthetics is the work of a one-sided perspective and is incomplete. Therefore, no matter how much it is tried to be reflected as an objective concept, it is actually subjective as it takes place where the subject stands at the center. On the other hand, the reverse perspective is a way of perceiving the world from the point of view of known truth, centering neither the subject nor the object.[506]

The reverse perspective principle is also reflected in Islamic architecture. In this architecture, the works do not have a façade or front that can be dominated by a single glance. The fact that the façade, which is given importance in terms of architectural appearance in Ottoman mosques, is not on the axis of the mihrab, but the side facades, as seen in all large mosques, is also related to the reverse perspective. In order for these works to be perceived and experienced, a linear view from one point is not enough, and it is necessary to walk around to perceive and experience the structures. According to *Cafer Efendi*, who wrote a book about the Sultan Ahmed Mosque, of which Sedefkar Mehmed Agha was the architect, the most important feature of this mosque is that it looks different from every point of view.[507]

Although it is known that the qibla axis is important in miniatures as well as in mosques, the highlighting of the side facades and the fact that they are shown with both facades, although only one facade is viewed from the opposite, is the product of this understanding.[508] Erzen exemplifies this situation with the Suleymaniye Mosque. She says that although the building is perceived as a whole from afar, it feels like a

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[504] Erzen, *Çoğul Estetik*, 53-54.
[505] Zeynep Sayın in Pavel Florenski, "Tersten Perspektif ", presentment.
[506] Karadeniz, 228.
[507] Erzen, *Reading Mosques*, 129.
[508] Ibid,

labyrinth as you approach it and that access to the mosque and the experience of worship is only possible after wandering in spirals.[509]

The absence of a certain focal point of stylized plant motifs in a geometric order in the decoration is also the reflection of the reverse perspective in this art.

It would not be wrong to claim that Islamic art, which does not reduce sight to looking, has preferred reverse perspective instead of central perspective because it does not consider only the seen as valuable.

5.6. Harmony with Nature

Imitation of nature is not considered in Islamic art. Thinking that this claims to be a kind of divinity, nature is regarded as a sign that will remind people of Allāh. So, it is stated in the Quran that the facts and events in nature are a verse and a sign. In this sense, nature is an open book. Man feels close to Allāh in nature. Therefore, many sages always turned to nature, searched for it, and found themselves in it. To see the wisdom in creation frequently in the Quran, those who think nature are encouraged to contest. In short, there is a very close relationship between nature and wisdom.[510]

Although nature is not imitated in Islamic art, order and harmony in nature determine the artist's view of art and aesthetics. He includes this order and harmony in his art in principle. While taking his aesthetic understanding from nature, he tends towards stylization as an indicator of human incompetence. He knows that the more his work reflects the order and harmony in nature, the more *beautiful* it will be because beauty takes all its meaning from *al-Jamāl*, who is also the creator of nature. This consciousness enables the artist to create works in harmony with nature in a way that is at peace with himself (stresslessness).[511]

Ibn Ḥazm also brought an important perspective to the literature on this subject. The philosopher considered harmony within the concept of justice and defined this concept as "the most appropriate place of an object in a certain whole and stated that an object in nature or a work of art is beautiful as much as it obeys the order in the universe." In

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[509] Ibid, 130.

[510] Koç, 93.

[511] Karadeniz, 170.

this sense, it is essential for objects and works of art to be in harmony with nature for a beautiful experience.[512]

Tanpınar also draws attention to the harmony of the East with nature while evaluating the views of nature between East and West. According to the author, the East accepts nature as it is, unlike the West, which seeks opportunities for perfection in nature, and has the most comprehensive information about it, eventually making it beyond recognition. He also borrows elements of nature that he will use in his art.[513] According to Karadeniz, there is indeed borrowing from nature. In this sense, borrowing prevents ownership and claiming rights. Therefore, the artist sees nature as a trust from Allāh and establishes a relationship with it within the framework of a sense of responsibility. He acts with the consciousness of understanding and comprehending the signs on it without claiming possession and right of disposition.[514]

The relationship that a culture establishes with nature is also a part of that culture's imagination of life.[515] The principle of harmony with nature shows itself in a stylized way in many branches of art. The effect of the garden metaphor in classical Turkish poetry is evident, and it takes a significant part of its basic images from garden elements. As an extension of harmony with nature, in Islamic architecture, it is seen that the building was built in harmony with it without changing the topography as much as possible. In this understanding, the field arrangement and building design emerged in a way that completely takes into account the values dictated by the environment.

The statements of Erzen explaining the relationship between Ottoman culture and nature are also noteworthy in this matter:

> *As we may infer from several forms of the products of the Ottoman culture, nature and culture are not contrary to one another. In such an integrative approach, man is in his own domicile encircled by its surroundings. Thus, his culture permanently refers to nature. The work and product of man derive its forms and meaning references directly from a perfectly-designed and jointed body, the nature. Man is born in a World wherein everything has been predestined. So, he is not capable of creating his own World. The fact that*

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[512] Valeria Gonzales, *Güzellik ve İslam-İslam Sanatı ve Mimarisinde Estetik*, trans. Muhammet Fatih Kılıç (İstanbul: İstanbul Küre Publishers, 2020), 26-30.

[513] Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, *Edebiyat Üzerine Makaleler* (İstanbul: Dergah Publishers,1977), 128.

[514] Ibid,

[515] Erzen, *Osmanlı Estetiği*, 40-41.

architectural texts dictated by Mimar Sinan (Architect Sinan) make references to God, the Prophet (Muhammad) and the Sultan, puts forth the evidence that he introduces his architecture to a predestined world which obliges the adaptation of the human being. (...) In such a Medieval World man learns from nature and is trained by nature. Man is not dominant therefore he is obliged to obey its rules. In such cultural environments, landscapes are barely affected.[516]

5.7. Tensionlessness

In Islamic aesthetics, what unites artists in a common view of art is their belief in a common worldview. Hence, we cannot speak of a different worldview for different artists. In Islamic art, the artist is not a subject. Before the artist comes an understanding of art determined by tradition and that tradition. The artist gets all his value from his harmony with this given world. "Confusion," such as breaking and opposing it or embarking on new quests, is not tolerated in this mentality. Therefore, the artist both avoids the anxiety and desire to create something new and avoids the arrogance/conceit that can be caused by originality and keeps himself and his art away from the tension that will be caused by confusion.[517]

Koç says that "tensionlessness" is directly related to the way the Muslim artist grasps time and adds that the perception or understanding that time is progressing in a linear fashion, as it is today, is the source of drama and conflict. Hence, this causes tension in the mental world of man. An artist who sees time as an artificial composition of moments and believes that moments are under the will of Allāh[518] will not experience tension. Taking a moment as a basis without separating it from the whole it belongs to is a state of enlightenment and happiness. In fact, Islam itself is about to surrender. It is certain that art that is performed with this tranquility of the soul will also be free from tension.[519]

This perception of time, which provides being tensionless, was also expressed by Erzen. The author emphasizes and adds that in the realm that belongs to God, time is only thought in spirals and cycles, so it is a movement toward the future, and the new

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[516] Ottoman Encyclopedia, "Ottoman Aesthetics", by Jale Erzen, 288-289.

[517] Karadeniz, 131.

[518] Quran, "But you cannot will to do so, except by the Will of Allāh, the Lord of all worlds." (At-Takwir/29)

[519] Koç, 191.

cannot be thought of as more important than the old. She also explains that the thought and belief that man can offer the world something new or original is something that develops with enlightenment.[520]

The tranquility and harmony in Islamic art emerge as a result of the artist performing his work with brackets. Qualities such as the absence of sharp lines in decorations, lack of perspective, imitation, and avoidance of depiction limit the will of the artist, and confusion and tension are replaced by a repetitive grace.

The principle of tensionlessness is provided by the simplicity and abundance of light in architecture. These elements give the space integrity, continuity, and fluency. The windows in the mosques, which are at the human level, provide serenity by not isolating the interior space from the outside and by seeing the daylight of the congregation, hearing the sounds from nature, and thus integrating with space. Erzen describes this atmosphere and makes some determinations with the following words:

> *(...) The external and internal spaces were in continuity. We can make the generalization that the interior parts were rectangular spaces and were covered by a semi-globe. The simplicity and abundance of light give space, completeness, and continuity, and the movement towards the dome, rather than an emphasized axis, attracts the sight upwards. In Ottoman architecture, the internal spaces are not ornamented in a way that would hide the structure. The effects of the adornments generally lessen the effect of the wall, draw attention to the structure, and eliminate the tension by means of creating harmony between the horizontal and vertical elements.[521]*

5.8. Humility and Impersonalism (Tevāżu)

Literally, the word humility, which means "belittling one's own dignity and degree, submission to someone," is the opposite of arrogance and means that the person cleanses himself from feelings and behaviors humiliating others, to be humble.[522]

There are many verses in the Quran that condemn arrogance and boasting, and this also shows that humility is a moral duty. In this case, being arrogant in oneself is, first of all, disrespectful to Allāh. Therefore, in many verses, those who become arrogant are criticized heavily, and it was stated that the real reason why Satan was expelled

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[520] Ottoman Encyclopedia, by Erzen, 291.

[521] Ibid, 295-296.

[522] TDV Islam Encyclopedia, s.v. "Tevazu", n.d., https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/arama/?q=tevazu&p=t (accessed May 21, 2020).

from Allāh was his rebellion with conceit (Al-Baqarah'/34; Sad/74). As it is clearly stated in the Quran, "*Assuredly, Allāh knows what they conceal and what they declare. Indeed, He does not like the arrogant.*" (An-Nahl/23).

Islamic art also takes this sensitivity into consideration, as it does not separate art from other human actions. In Islamic art and architecture, it is the result of humility that the works lack splendor and excessive vanity and that they take their liveliness and light not from the intensity of colors but from their simplicity.[523]

All sources confirm that the mosque of the Prophet of Islam and his companions were very humble constructions. However, Abouseif states that architecture and decoration developed as a non-dogmatic and non-sacral orientation. Its evaluation, along with that of other visual arts, was confined to its patrons, the ruling aristocracy, who commissioned the majority of artistic products. It thus belonged to the realm of statecraft or *siyāsa,* as a form of political status symbol that was always acknowledged as a necessary part of Muslim politics. The religious establishment did not play a significant role in the patronage of religious institutions; even foundations dedicated to saints and *Sufis* were usually sponsored by the ruling class. Architecture belonged to the realm of politics.[524]

There is an important point in the Islamic belief about humility, which is mentioned by the Prophet. The point is that Prophet Muhammad does not find it appropriate for one to go too much to humiliate himself in humility.[525] Al-Ghazālī also stated that while dealing with the issues of humility/arrogance in the thought of Islam, the main humility is the humility of a person towards his peers and those who are inferior to him and added that showing humility to the oppressors and the rich will harm one's religion. In a hadith, it is expressed that "*Returning your brother's arrogance with arrogance is an act of charity.*" Again, in the Quran, it is indicated that the community of believers praised by Allāh are *"humble with the believers but firm towards the disbelievers.*" (Al-Mai'dah/54).[526] A related example of this issue is as follows:

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[523] Karadeniz, 131.
[524] Abouseif, 126.
[525] Ibn Mace, 21.
[526] Gazali, *Ihya-u Ulumiddin*, 310.

When the Byzantine Emperor Justinian I opened the Hagia Sophia to visit in 537, the rumor that he was prostrating by saying, "Solomon, I have passed you," referring to the al-Masjid al-Aqsā that Prophet Solomon had built in Jerusalem, has simmered with Architect Sinan for many years and when the Selimiye Mosque was completed in 1575, he stated the following:

"The non-Muslims who say "A dome like the dome of Hagia Sophia has not been built in the Islamic State" and the architects of the unbelievers who say "*We have a victory over Muslims*" remained in the heart of this poor me. Working and endeavoring in the mentioned mosque building, with the help of the gracious Allāh, I showed power in the time of Sultan Selim Han and made this lofty dome six *dhira* (unit of length from fingertips to elbows) higher than the dome of Hagia Sophia and its circumference four *dhira* wider." The attitude that is the pride of those who maintain their humility in terms of their own self but who are arrogant to glorify their religion towards non-Muslims, as well as always strive to do the best and reach the ideal, is the expression of the Muslim mentality to make sense of architecture.[527]

A concept that can be considered under the heading of humility is *Impersonalism*. The concept of *impersonalism* means that the artist performs the art expected of him in a modest way without being personally owned. He does not reflect his own psychology in his work, avoids drama and conflict, and does not see his work as a product of tragedy. To make it clearer, humanism does not recognize any higher value or principle than the individual; unlike humanism in Islam, unconditional surrender to the will of Allāh is essential. This basis also determines the basic characteristic of each behavior. Islamic art is also formed on an unrelated plane from the personal mood of the artist. The psychology of the artist and the mood swings in Islamic art are not reflected in the artwork.

Indeed, all these are general characteristics expressing the artist's view of life in the classical period. The prevalence is related to the principle of *impersonalism* regarding not knowing to whom many works belong to the culture, the absence of author records in many artworks, and the need to hide behind humility and attributes such as

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[527] Abdüsselam Uluçam, "Müslüman Zihniyet Kalıpları ve Mimarlığını Anlamlandırma," *TDV VI. Religious Publications Congress Proceedings*, (2013), 221.

despicable, poor, helpless, as Architect Sinan did in the quotation above when he mentions the name of the artist in prose works. In Islamic aesthetics, the artist is not a subject. Before the artist comes a tradition and an understanding of art determined by that tradition. The artist takes all his value from his harmony with this given world. Conflicts such as breaking it, opposing it, or embarking on new pursuits are not tolerated in this mentality.[528]

It is possible to see the tradition of the artist taking care to impersonalize himself in architecture. Unlike Renaissance architects, there is very little information about architects in Islamic culture. Biographies written about both Mimar Sinan and Sedefkar Mehmed Agha do not contain detailed information about personal details, artistic views, and psychologies, and the ones written about them are many times similar. Since Mimar Sinan did not add an inscription to his works, his works are known only from the lists he has included in his biography.[529]

Burckhardt also expresses that Islamic art is about being calm and sees the reason for this tranquility as the exclusion of subjective impulses in Islamic art. According to him, Islamic art contains only elements that are valid for all time instead of dealing with psychological problems.[530]

One very important point that should be underlined at this point is that although Islamic art is independent of the inner world of the artist who performs it, and the main case for him is to reflect a certain message and worldview in the best way, it would be too big a generalization to say that the work is completely independent of the artist who performs it. Thus, every artist, even if he has a known message, inevitably interprets it in his own "unique" way. This principle of impersonalism does not mean that artists do not have their own style.

Rather than the artist and the upheavals in his inner world, what is at the forefront of the art activity is the aim of the work itself and the best reflection of a worldview in a known range.

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[528] Karadeniz, 131.

[529] Ibid, 126.

[530] Titus Burckhardt, *Aklın Aynası: Geleneksel Bilim ve Kutsal Üzerine Denemeler*, trans. H. Önkal, İstanbul: Kubbealtı Akademik Press 18, 1, (1997), 46-63 in Karadeniz, 129.

5.9. Familiarity

All arts can be named a "journey." While modern art is a journey to the unknown, to the mysterious, Islamic art is a journey to a familiar range. While the "journey to the unknown" inevitably causes tension, Islamic art gives people confidence, like a shelter and a familiar harbor. Just as Islamic arts do not pursue innovation, they do not consider repeating the past as a fault. On the contrary, the feeling of familiarity that arises with the concept of repetition is sought after in this art. Abouseif clarifies the origin of this approach and explains:

> *…The preservation and transmission of the Prophet's traditions and the early history of the Muslim community were matters of major concern to the religious authorities. Islamic ideals aspired to the restoration of original Islam as it was the time when the Prophet and his companions governed the life of the first community. As a result, Muslim society has always been guided by the obligation to know and study its past. The study of history, which can be supported by several passages in the Koran inciting the believer to look into the past for models of behavior, is a moral duty… The focus on the past and on the origins of Islam, along with the closing of the door to individual reasoning, contributed to the static character of Islamic cultures. Nostalgia determined many aspects of culture. Van Grunebaum uses the term "chronological primitivism" to characterize the Arab-Islamic image of the world[531], which looks back to the golden age and finds decline or moral decay in the present. The Arabic language, which is the pride of Arabs, is believed to be represented in its unsurpassable beauty in the Koran, and therefore it was, and still is, the model for literary excellence. This nostalgia approach led to lack of flexibility, and even to hostility toward radical innovation and free thinking.[532]*

In almost every branch of Islamic arts, the constantly repeating form and meaning features stand out. This is not because these masters of art have to repeat each other in imitation since they lack artistic creativity. Contrarily, the aim is to specifically seek and find associations and motifs that will remind a known and recognized sensation, a taste that has been tasted before.

It is also important at this point that aesthetics in Islamic art is not a beauty that is created, or invented but discovered and perceived. Beauty takes this striking feature from its perfection. Since beauty is flawless in quality and free of all incomplete attributes, it is not possible for the artist to add anything to it or to reproduce it. Hence,

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[531] Von Grunebaum in Abouseif, 16.

[532] Abouseif, 15-16

the journey of art in Islamic art begins and continues in a familiar beauty universe. Thus, this art rotates on the axis of discovery, not creation. However, as also Karadeniz emphasizes, it would not be correct to consider this art as stuck in the past and its influence; it should be seen as a reflection of a vision as this art traces an age-old truth.[533]

Erzen confirms that this principle was reflected in the architectural forms of the Ottoman Empire. The author emphasizes that people always feel themselves in a familiar space, regardless of the specific characteristics and differences of the space entered, due to the fact that architectural spaces in the classical period were always structured with a certain modular system, regardless of their function. A basic baldachin structure is applied in a very basic variety, either open on all sides, open on one side, or closed on one side. She expresses that it is used either as a monumental place like a mosque or as a semi-outdoor space like a porch, or as a small structure protecting the top of a staircase.

Additionally, it can be said that the architects' and bosses' repetitions of the buildings they built in the past, sometimes remaining the same in size, are due to this sense of familiarity, which is mentioned in the Ottoman architectural tradition.[534]

The works in Amasya, which Peker focused on in his article titled "Creativity in Ottoman Architecture," also bear traces of this approach and confirm it. While emphasizing that many architectural works were presented with a new system in the development process of Ottoman architecture, the author also draws attention to structural similarities. The author also underlines that although Yorguc Pasha Mosque in Amasya comes after Bayezid Pasha Mosque chronologically, it is like a return to the Seljuk madrasah, where there is no last congregation place, and the tomb and the masjid are articulated to the structure and made a part of it at the same time. According to the author, this mosque represents "looking back." He considers Yorguc Pasha Mosque as a reinterpretation of the Seljuk tradition with the new design possibilities provided by the new construction techniques brought by Bursa-type mosques. With his detailed analysis of this mosque, the author emphasizes that some buildings, such

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[533] Karadeniz, 106.
[534] Ibid, 197.

as the Yorguc Pasha Mosque, cannot be placed chronologically in the "evolutionary process" created in the history of Ottoman architecture, highlights that this process should also be questioned, and lays the groundwork in this direction.[535]

Among these repetitions, the relationship between Sultan Selim Mosque and Sultan Bayezid II Mosque in Edirne was found to be as remarkable as the relationship of twinship.[536] It is possible to evaluate this repetition or even repeating the same in Ottoman architecture as a reflection of the concept of familiarity in Islamic art to architectural art.

5.10. Clarity / Intelligibility

Islamic art, which derives from the creed of Islam, adopts the aesthetic doctrine of the Quran, as well as its evident and intelligible character. Also, Abouseif mentions that the language of the Quran is direct and concrete; it does not use metaphysical terms.[537] In the Quran, in verse "*These are the verses of the Book; the clear Quran.*" (Al-Hijr, 15/1) and many other verses, clarity and intelligibility are emphasized. Hodgson states that "The Islamic faith is famous for being intelligible. (…) Actually, it is possible to explain its most basic elements quite simply." and explains the Islamic belief's stance regarding the simple expression.[538]

The principle of clarity in the Islamic creed has influenced Islamic artists in many ways, from theme to form. In this understanding, art does not progress in the ambivalence of a search. It is the safety of believing in the truth and the artist's progress in a known range that is the essential matter. Thus, in this art, the artist cannot reflect the labyrinths of his own personality into his art, and he refrains from including his own personality confusion in his art for the sake of clarity and comprehensibility.[539]

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[535] Ali Uzay Peker, *Türkler*, Osmanlı Mimarisinde Yaratıcılık: Amasya Örneği, ed. Hasan Celal Güzel, Kemal Çiçek& Salim Koca, Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, 2014, V.12 p. 59.(Peker's this questioning reminds perception of time in Islamic thought; that is spiral not linear.

[536] Doğan Kuban, *Osmanlı Mimarisi* (İstanbul: Yem Publishers, 2007), 231.

[537] Abouseif, 13.

[538] Marshall Hogsson, G.S. İslam'ın Serüveni, trans. A.Eker, M. Bozkurt et al. (İstanbul: Yeni Şafak Newspaper Press: 1995), 98.

[539] Ibid,

Cansever also claims that this concept, which takes its essence from the Quran, turned into an Islamic rule and covers all areas of life. According to him, it is necessary to present a world that all can understand. Considering that this is reflected in architectural forms, Cansever emphasizes that if each of the forms has a message, it is a duty to reveal them so clearly that there is no room for doubt and illusions.[540]

Thanks to this principle, in Islamic art, it is prevented from stripping the will of its addressee and affecting it with a kind of illusion. Therefore, according to Islam, the truth of the message must be presented directly with its own specific gravity. It should not be affected by the way it is presented. Thus, dignity is preserved without disregarding human will.[541]

Lotman's statement about the poetry understanding of the classical period is directly related to the principle of clarity-intelligibility of Islamic art:

> *Not a single Eastern poet tried to impress the reader by highlighting his originality because the effect of the unexpected, which played such a big role in modern art, was of no value back then. The writer knew what to say and how to say it, and the reader was well aware of what he had to hope for. He was reading a text containing generally accepted ideas of the author, not original. As a rule, a literary work would quote a general thesis suitable for one or another genre or label. Any attitude that reflects originality would be rejected by medieval aesthetics. (..) There is complete harmony between the medieval writer and the reader, moreover, the author's "structure" often completely coincides with that of the reader, and the relationship between the two is such that there is a priori and potentially complete mutual agreement.[542]*

Karadeniz comments that it expresses the obstacle, directness, and sincerity between the artist and the interlocutor of the work of art. From this point of view, it is possible to think that a "complete agreement" between the artist and his interlocutor is achieved by the sense of security and confidence given by the principle of clarity and intelligibility.[543]

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[540] Turgut Cansever, *Osmanlı Şehri* (İstanbul: Timaş Publishers, 2010), 138.

[541] Ibid, 100.

[542] Elizbar Javlidze, "*Ortaçağ Türk Şiiri Çalışmalarının Metodu ve Tipolojisi Üzerine*" trans. M.Ş. Yılmaz, ed. Mehmet Kalpaklı, Osmanlı Divan Şiiri Üzerine Metinler, (İstanbul: YKY Press, 1999): 182.

[543] Karadeniz, 101.

5.11. Beneficence - Functionality

Islam, according to the principle of *tawḥīd*, sees life as a whole. For this reason, concepts such as beauty, benefit, and purpose are evaluated as a whole. In this understanding, beauty is good, and good is beneficial. Beauty also encompasses truth. Benefit and functionality do not lie outside of beauty either. It exists as part of its perfection.[544]

The fact that there is no distinction between arts and crafts in the classical period is an indicator of this. While expressing the aesthetic understanding of this period, Erzen said that God's creation could only be imitated with craft and technical skill. The man was showing his admiration by imitating God's creation and trying to imitate what He did. Considered a perfected craft, the purpose of art was to enhance the product of man and make them compatible with God's perfection.[545]

In the Quran, which is ontologically and semantically the main source of Islamic art and aesthetics, in many verses some of which are presented below, good, beautiful, true, and beneficial words are used interchangeably, and beauty comes into being by combining the meanings expressed by these words. [546]

"We have not created the heavens and earth and everything in between without purpose." (Sad, 38/27)

"We did not create the heavens and the earth and everything in between for sport. We only created them for a purpose, but most of these pagans do not know." (Ad-Dukhan, 44/38-39)

"He created the heavens and the earth for a purpose. He shaped you in the womb, perfecting your form. And to Him is the final return." (At-Taghabun, 64/3)

People can see the consciousness of creating "for a reason" in all types of this art. Mutluel also underlines that in the Quran, beauty is often expressed together with life-oriented and purposeful concepts such as good, useful, and beneficial. In line with this, the author emphasizes that this style of expression should also be perceived as a sign that beauty should be perceived not only as a viewing material but also as a way of life.

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[544] Ibid, 120.

[545] Erzen, *Ottoman Aesthetics*, 292.

[546] Osman Mutluel, "Kur'an-ı Kerim ve Estetik," (PhD Thesis, Ankara: Ankara University SSI, 2008), 143.

According to Karadeniz, another sign that Islamic art is life-oriented and based on a purpose is that it is based on the human scale. In Renaissance church architecture, human beings are not included as a measure, whereas the scale of even the largest Ottoman mosque is human.[547]

Another indication is that in the Ottoman Period, Turks perceived beauty and goodness together in their practical lives based on the principle of benefit. While the Greeks and Romans erected a triumphal arch as a memory of victory after the wars they won, the Ottomans built a mosque or garden to seek social benefit. Grand Mosque of Bursa built after the Battle of Nicopolis, Baghdad and Revan Mansions built after the conquest of Baghdad and Revan cities, Tokat Garden built after the conquest of Tokat by Mehmed II are some examples of this. Works made for public benefit, such as mosques, bridges, and fountains built for charity and to earn rewards after death, are also examples of the relationship between Islamic art and benefit.[548]

5.12. Sorrow

The source of sorrow in Islamic aesthetics is the longing for heaven, which is always imagined as a garden.[549] It is a natural result of living in this realm as it is impossible for grief to be absent in a world of corruption where there is no stability. In this thought system, there is always an uncertainty of deserving heaven and God's sake at the end of life and this prevents real inner peace and consequently, results in sorrow. Prophet of Islam; Muhammad, who is also mentioned as the Prophet of sorrow, said, "*This world is like a prison for the believer*."[550] However, this sorrow never leads him to

melancholy because like all the believers, the Islamic artist is expected to be in somewhere between hope and fear. Therefore, the Islamic artist is hopeful, pursuing his longing which makes him sad.[551]

Karadeniz asserts that a relationship is always established between the longing for heaven, the source of sorrow in Islamic aesthetics, and the spring season. The reason

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[547] Karadeniz, 122.
[548] Çam, 99.
[549] TDV Islam Encyclopedia, s.v., "Hüzün," by Mustafa Çağrıcı, accessed June 4 2021, https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/huzun.
[550] Müslim, 2956.
[551] Karadeniz, 92-93.

is that the spring season, which is a symbol of heaven, reinforces this longing. Spring, like heaven, is seen as a temporary season that has been tasted before but is gone. Every time spring is out, and it is missed like heaven. It always reminds us of heaven, and its ending is always sorrowful. Hence, spring is the dominant season in Islamic art in poetry, architecture, miniature, and decoration.[552]

Similarly, Erzen states that "the heaven that is hoped to be regained" is reflected in the aesthetics of Islam and claims that, according to Islam, humanity has spoiled the perfect world bestowed by God. With the sorrow of this, it is desired to reintroduce heaven, which is the image of every ideal place, in the mosques, with calligraphy, decoration, the shape of the building, and some aesthetic designs, and to represent it in some way.[553]

When the principle of "sorrow" in Islamic aesthetics is considered with the principle of "familiarity," it becomes even more meaningful. In this context, Islamic arts are formed, developed, and completed within a familiar meaning universe.

5.13. Beneficence and Maturity (*İḥsān* and *Kemāl*)

The word *iḥsān* (beneficence) is generally used in the sense of "doing a job in the best way, doing kindness and grace," Another factor that is as important as the formal beauty in *iḥsān* is the intention and power behind the work done. While the wisdom in the creation of the universe is emphasized in the Quran, it is stated that human beings were also created for beneficence:

"He created the heavens and the earth for a purpose. He shaped you ˹in the womb˺, perfecting your form. And to Him is the final return." (At-Taghabun, 64/3)

It is important that the word expresses both the action and the phenomenon of beauty in shape. Therefore, the Islamic artist, who evaluates all his values from a single point of view, aims to build his art on the concept of "*iḥsān*."[554]

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[552] Ibid, 147.

[553] Erzen, *Reading Mosques*, 127.

[554] Ibid, 149

According to Çağrıcı, in order for a person to reach the level of beneficence in his work, he must know well what he should do in his work and transform this knowledge into action in the best way, which is defined as the highest quality that action can achieve. Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib also drew attention to the importance of this concept by saying, "People gain value according to the way they do their work with beneficence."[555]

The concept that combines good, beauty, and wisdom in Islamic thought is *iḥsān* because an act derives its highest level from its relationship with good, beauty, and wisdom. As Koç and Çağrıcı assert, *iḥsān* derives its aesthetic meaning from the understanding of beauty in Islam. The fact that a work is related to *iḥsān*, that it has the characteristics of beauty, delicacy, grace, deep understanding, high sensitivity, decency, and diligence, and under the light of the revelation of that work, it can only be possible if it is done the way Allāh wants it to be done. Allāh is the measure of what is beautiful, good, and right. The thing that makes an action beautiful and the most beautiful (*iḥsān*) is the intention of the person who performs that action. Therefore, an act that is not done with the understanding of Allāh and the consciousness of worshiping Him will not be beautiful either. [556] *Kemāl* is a concept that can be considered in relation to *iḥsān*. The lexical meaning of *kemāl* is "completeness, maturity, and competence,"[557] and to have all parts of something complete, sufficient, and in place."[558] The fact that *kemāl* is the basic quality of beauty in Islamic art can be thought of as collecting all the good qualities possible. Ibn Sīnā says, "the beauty and splendor of everything are how everything should be,"[559] and thinks that everything has a form or style of perfection in its own right. According to Al-Ghazālī, what makes something beautiful is that it has *kemālāt* (perfections), that is, competence and perfection. The imperfect cannot be beautiful; the beautiful cannot be imperfect. The reason is that deficiency is a flaw; what is a flaw is ugly. Something reaches the

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[555] Mustafa Çağrıcı, "İhsan", *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, İsam Publishers, İstanbul:2000 https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/arama/?q=ihsan&p=m (accessed June 04, 2021).
[556] Koç, 52-53.
  Çağrıcı, 546.
[557] TDV *Islam Encyclopedia*,
[558] TDK *Dictionary*
[559] Gonzales, 30.

pinnacle of beauty and beneficence only when it collects all the possible *kemālāt* within itself. If it has some of it, it is as beautiful as it has. The horse and the literature examples he gave in this regard are worth mentioning.[560]

> *The beautiful horse is that which combines everything that is characteristic of a horse with regard to appearance, body color, beautiful movement, and tractability; beautiful writing combines everything that is characteristic of writing, such as the harmony of letters, their correct relation to each other, right sequence and beautiful arrangement. The beauty of each object lies just in its characteristic perfection.*

According to the philosopher, the perfection of everything is based on its own creation. The truest perfection is peculiar to Allāh.

5.14. Charm and Beauty *(Ḥusn* and *Cemāl)*

The concept of *ḥusn* is generally used for beauty in the aesthetic sense that appeals to the eye. Koç states that the word "*ḥusn*" means facial beauty, external beauty, and "*cemāl*" is used as the beauty of morality and behavior, but over time both have started to be used interchangeably.[561] In any case, these two words are related to the "beauty" of the work created in Islamic arts. Although detailed information was given in the previous chapters about the nature of "beauty" in Islamic aesthetics, beauty in Islamic art shortly derives its meaning from the hadith of "Allāh is Beautiful, and He Loves the Beauty."[562] The association of beauty with Allāh in the hadith necessitated the consideration of it in an ontological context both in Islamic art and in theology and mysticism. This ontological context resulted in seeking and contemplating beauty between Allāh, the realm, and man. This ontology of beauty has also determined its nature. Therefore, beauty can be understood with the concept of perfection. The fact that a being has the *kemāl* (maturity) quality is that nothing can be taken from it, and nothing can be added. The beauty of everything is possible by having the things that are possible and worthy of *kemāl*. When a being collects all the perfections that can be found in him, he reaches the pinnacle of beauty.[563] Beauty is also identical to

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[560] Richard Ettinghousen, "*Ghazzali on Beauty.*"In *Art and Thought, Issued in Honor of Dr. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy on the Occasion of His 70th Birthday*, ed. K. Bharatna Iyer, pp. 160-165, London/Luzac, 1947. Repr. in Islamic Art and Archeology, Collected Papers, p. 18.

[561] Koç, 74.

[562] Müslim, 147.

[563] Gazali,

righteousness and goodness in Islamic art. Therefore, a creature must be complete, absolute, and solid in both form and substance to reach beauty.[564]

5.15. The Cosmic Spiral

The spiral is the main form on which the concepts of time and space and, therefore, the arts are based in Islam, as it is both three-dimensional and has no beginning, and is eternal.[565] Compared to the approach of influential linear perspective and symmetry perspective in Western culture, the arrangement of auditory and visual forms in Islamic culture is inspired by the spiral form. When listening to Islamic music, endless repetitions, and wandering voices are heard. Similarly, spatial analysis of mosques and religious sites reflects that both structural elements and spatial units are arranged in a curvilinear fashion and surround each other like halos created by falling stones.[566]

According to Erzen, the curvilinear circulation specified for mosques is also valid for the arrangement of circularly supported structural elements of many buildings. Especially in examples where the dome covers a large opening, the structural elements surround each other, providing a large opening and creating the balance that supports at different heights. In complexes that contain different public buildings, such as

mosques, madrasas, tombs and baths, these structures are generally placed in a circular manner. Suleymaniye Mosque is the most obvious example of this complex structure.[567]

Spiral form application has perceptual and semantic functions both in the architectural structure itself and in the placement of structures in a complex. One of them is the idea that it is not appropriate to enter the sacred areas straight and suddenly, and it is more appropriate to approach them with respect by walking around these structures rather than entering directly. The less obvious meaning of using the spiral is related to the perception and experience of space. With circular movements such as the whirling of dervishes and the circumambulation of the Kaaba by Muslims, space is perceived

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[564] Ahmet Atan, 135.

[565] Alexandre Popodopoulo, *L'Islam et l'Art Musulman*, (Paris: Mazenod, 1976), in Erzen, *Reading Mosques*: *Meaning and Architecture in Islam*, 122.

[566] Erzen, *Reading Mosques*, 128.

[567] Ibid,

differently than linear circulation. While circular motion integrates the body with space, linear motion is more about passing through. Due to the forms of circulation offered by the spiral movement, the perception of the movement of the body while navigating these places provides the aesthetic quality of Islamic Architecture and cities and constitutes a real metaphor.[568]

5.16. Densification (*Teksīf*)

Densification can be expressed as a kind of intensity of meaning and expressing so much with little. Since every work in Islamic art is fed from a single rich source, the belief of Islam on *tawḥīd*, each piece carries all the traces of that rich source. Therefore, even small works have an intense sense of meaning.

The densification principle is a natural consequence of the modular structure principle. Thanks to this principle, each piece looks as if it is a separate whole, and all the features of beauty are hidden in each piece. In this thought system that seeks knowledge at one point, the density of the less is preferred to the disorganization of the many. It is essential to densify less.

The concept of familiarity, which is an important principle of Islamic art, is also closely related to densification. The reason is that the densification is the reconsideration of the previously accepted general principles and subjects with the joy of the previously tasted tastes in each artwork. Densification is a natural result of stylized style. Each artwork in Islamic art is a sample that reflects the aesthetic principles and understanding of the beauty of Islamic art. This principle is reflected differently in every art. The frequent use of motifs and forms in architecture, miniature, and decoration in an open and closed composition is due to the density and integrity of the meaning they carry. Each unit exists as a part of it, as well as representing and constituting the whole. It is possible to follow the traces of the principle of densification in arabesque decoration that gives the feeling of infinity on a limited surface in the form of an architectural structure that has a multi-functional feature and similarly repeats in many works, in the stacks of calligraphy art with visual but

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[568] Ibid,

multidimensional content, and miniature motifs that provide the perception of the entities in a way that reflects their representations in the real world.[569]

5.17. Stylization

It is not possible to visualize God for an Islamic artist who has an abstract belief in Allāh because He is far beyond the feelings and imagination of an ordinary person. Man tries to know Him only through his works and attributes. For this reason, Islamic visual artists reflect his works and the feeling and excitement he feels towards Him artistically with the stylization method arising from the unity of thought.[570]

It is understood that abstract understanding, starting from the point of infinity of monotheism, tries to avoid matter and catch the metaphysical world to reach real existence and unity. Although there are figures in nature-themed works in Islamic art, it is seen that they are stylized. Stylization is different from the "abstraction" method developed in Western art. In this method, the subject (artist) and the object are bracketed, and new motifs and figures stylized from natural forms are created. This method is generally understood as a kind of simplification activity in art.[571]

Although Ayvazoğlu expresses that abstraction and stylization are different concepts, he sees the abstract in Islamic art as one of the natural consequences of stylization. According to him, the metaphysical meaning of stylization is related to the enraptured view of things. He explains this as ignoring the objects by brackets, that is, trying to reach the essence by peeling the object from its objective qualities. Ayvazoğlu also states that since the essence (Absolute Truth) is not expressible, it is necessary to start from the thing taken in parentheses. He underlines that some kind of geometry could be achieved as a result of stylization.

Abstraction is the fact that in this geometry process, things become more and more unrecognizable; that is, the sides that are comprehended by senses are bracketed.[572]

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[569] Karadeniz, 198-199.

[570] Çam, 71.

[571] Karadeniz, 240.

[572] Ayvazoğlu, *Aşk Estetiği*, 119.

Garaudy figures that abstraction is not usable for Islamic art. For the author, abstraction is a kind of escape from a perceptible reality by creating another world. That is why abstraction is at opposite poles with Islamic art. According to him, stylization, which is not an alternative to the world of senses and mind, coincides with Islamic art. Islamic art expresses the transcendence of Allāh, the existence of what lies beyond and transcends the world of the senses and mind. According to this, stylization, which can be explained as a sign of transcendent realities without creating an alternative world, is also compatible with the asymbolic feature of Islamic art. On the other hand, abstraction contrasts with Islamic art, as it also bears a kind of symbol quality by establishing an alternative world.[573]

For the Muslim artist who is looking for a transcendent presence that will not change and disappear, stylization is an appropriate style to express a limited extent of the permanent concept behind appearances. It is also more suitable for the spirit of Islamic thought than abstraction. For this reason, the extra details were sorted out, such as decoration, miniature, poetry arts, and architecture, and lean forms were directed. Besides, the transformation of natural forms into geometric forms cannot be considered independent of this understanding.

5.18. Avoiding Depictions (Aniconism)

"The soul of love is lost by meeting,
Once the eye sees, what is left?"

Aniconism, i.e., "opposition to the use of icons or visual images to depict living creatures or religious figures," is one of the most important themes, and it is claimed that no discussion is complete without a discussion of figurative painting in Islamic arts.

Although the principle of prohibition of depictions in Islamic art derives its justification from some hadiths, it should also be considered a natural result of Islamic thought. Prophet's related remarks are:

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[573] Roger Garaudy, *İslam'ın Aynası Camiler*, trans. C. Aydın, (İstanbul: Turkish Literature Foundation Press, 2013), 50.

"On the Day of Judgment artists will be asked to recreate their own artistic works, and when they fail to do so, they will be severely punished."

"Those who will be most strictly punished by God on the Day of Judgment will be the painters and the sculptors."

Some researchers similarly think that the prohibition of depiction is a measure taken against the danger of idolatry. Beşir Ayvazyoğlu states in his work titled *Aşk Estetistiği* (The Aesthetics of Divine Love) that the prohibition of depiction was put forward with the aim of eliminating idolatry habits altogether, and he agrees with the comments that this ban can no longer be in question after the mental level rises.[574] In another work titled *Geleneğin Direnişi* (The Resistance of Tradition), he states that the prohibition of depiction in the opposite of these views is directly dependent on the basic principle and the attachments; according to him, this principle has kept Muslim artists from mimes, away from the descriptive, anthropomorphist understanding of art, and directed them to be abstract. Abstraction, on the other hand, enables objects to be transformed into a kind of geometry by simplifying them so that the objects of the visible world gain a representation character by moving away from their individual characteristics one by one.[575]

Garaudy suggests that Islamic art is the expression of a vision with its own aesthetic principles. According to him, the avoidance of depiction in Islamic art was adopted as a way out against the aesthetic prohibitions of religion and was not born as an indispensable style or developed under the influence of some ideas of its time. On the contrary, it is a conscious orientation that takes its form and meaning entirely from its own aesthetic doctrine. Although there is no command in the Quran that figurative art is forbidden, the spirit of Islam is completely against such an understanding of art.[576]

While İpşiroğlu claims that painting is banned because it is incompatible with Islamic religious principles, he underlines that it is not without reason that the ban became widespread in Islamic countries in a short time, although it is not included in the Quran. [577] However, it can already be observed that the prohibition of interpretation of aniconism has not affected Islamic art to the full extent. We can see murals and

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[574] Ayvazoğlu, 37.

[575] Beşir Ayvazoğlu, *Geleneğin Direnişi* (İstanbul Ötüken Publishers, 2000), 14-15.

[576] Garaudy, 52.

[577] Mazhar İpşiroğlu, *İslam'da Resim Yasağı ve Sonuçları* (İstanbul YKY, 2018), 31.

sculptures of human beings and animals in the early Al-ʾUmawīyah (661-750) castles and secular buildings. A beautiful example can be Qusayr Amra for its interior murals, which are the earliest Islamic paintings that have survived. There are several frescoes spreading across its walls, ceilings, and dome in a variety of bright colors. The depictions of these frescoes condense around the themes of hunting, dancers, musicians, acrobats, drinking parties, classical mythology, and everyday scenes of craftsmen and workers. Besides, in the early Abbasid period (750-847) in Samarra, murals of dancing girls and statues existed. During the late Abbasid period (847-1258), various art schools thrived in Iraq. Thousands of miniatures, including figures of humans, animals, and beasts, were painted between 1256-1924 in Iran, Afghanistan, India, and the Turkish Ottoman Empire during the reigns of the Ilkhanids, Timurids, Safavids, and Mughals[578]. In this sense, we see that the Prophet also behaved in that direction. He let his wife Aisha use a cushion decorated with animal figures in her room. Pictures of living beings seem to be allowed anywhere except in places of worship in order to sever all ties with idolatry.

The distance between Islamic art and the use of figures is not only because of the Prophet's remarks. Hamdouni Alami emphasizes that the Semitic people of the Middle East had no common naturalistic figurative tradition in their art even before Islam. He crystallizes that the pre-Islamic Arabs in the Arabian Peninsula imported most of their idols from abroad. The image was never a natural means of expression for them. Their keen interest in the poetic is evidence of that. The author claims that an Arab could summarize a whole doctrine into a brief verbal formula ("I witness there is no deity but God and Mohammad is His Prophet). To him, a figurative painting or any form of the image seemed like a "disquieting and crude physical manifestation of the spirit."[579]

According to Karadeniz, explaining the prohibition of depiction as a measure against the danger of idolatry is far from explaining the essence of the issue. The author likens this to claiming that Muslims fast during Ramadan to understand the plight of the poor. According to him, avoiding depiction is a kind of exquisite discipline of the artist, just as fasting is a worship that includes the poor and the rich and aims to educate the soul

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[578] Ibid,15.

[579] Mohammed Hamdouni Alami, *Art and Architecture in the Islamic Tradition: Aesthetics, Politics and Desire in in Early Islam* (NewYourk: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 89.

in essence. To this end, avoiding depiction is the name of the principle that frees the soul from the delusion of arrogance.[580] In this context, Michelangelo's thought that he was competing with God to create such a convincing image in his paintings, and he asked for forgiveness from him[581] is an explanatory example that can make sense of avoiding depiction.

The belief in the impossibility of reaching the truth and the Absolute, and the endeavor to go beyond the visible is also reflected in other branches of Islamic art. Islamic artists believe that portraits cannot represent people throughout their lives. There is a constant change in the creation[582]. The physical appearance of a person always changes during his/her lifespan. Therefore, for the Islamic artist, portraying anything, even in exact visual likenesses, is somehow meaningless, deficient, and deceptive as it can never be possible to reflect reality. This is why Islamic artists prefer miniature painting, which prefers to represent persons or subjects through symbols. The use of geometry and floral arabesque is also closely related to this thought.

As it can be understood from the explanations above, the reason why Islamic artists do not prefer figural paintings is not their inability to imitate nature. Von Grunedam presents a comprehensive view of Islamic aesthetics as he argues that the lack of imagery was due to the position of man in the Islamic religion. He articulates that an important aspect of Muslim theology was the prominence of the attributes separating God; the creator, and man; his favorite creature. Man is guided by and subject to his fate. Therefore, he cannot reach the position of a God, which other religions say he can attain. The main principles of Islamic art are the declared truths that "there is no god but Allāh" and "nothing is like unto Him." His realm is neither space nor time, and He is known by ninety-nine attributes, including the First and the Last, the Seen and the Unseen, and the All-Knowing. The author crystallizes that this can be the main division in the philosophy and approach towards art between Muslims and non-Muslims. With this approach, Muslim art did not need any figurative representation of these concepts. How can he depict God if he believes that He is Unseen and nothing is like unto Him? Any artistic expression of these, either in nature or human forms,

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[580] Karadeniz, 183.

[581] Erzen, *Çoğul Estetik*, 22.

[582] Ibid, 3.

211

would weaken the meanings and the essence of the Muslim faith. He concludes that Islam was the only religion that did not need figurative art and imagery to establish its concepts, and Muslim artists engaged in expressing this truth in a sophisticated system of geometric, floral arabesque, and calligraphic patterns consciously.[583]

5.19. Eternity-Repetition

In Islamic art, *tawḥīd*, repetition, and eternity require to be handled together because in Islamic art, combinations attached to each other, structural modules that seem to go towards eternity, always use repetition to provide the feeling of eternity.[584]

According to Karadeniz, the concept of repetition functions as an expression of the deep-rooted belief in the eternity of true existence through the infinite continuation of a certain model or pattern. According to the author, the knowledge that Allāh is eternal and infinite influenced the Islamic artist, who took it upon himself to find directions that would remind him of Allāh and emphasized eternity in the ornaments of his art to refer to the eternity of the creator.[585]

The meaning that Ismā'īl Rājī al-Fārūqī attributes to the source of the eternity-repetition principle is different. The author says claims that the Muslim artist has always maintained the understanding that nothing in nature can represent or symbolize Allāh. In this respect, the artist needed to do something more to demonstrate the inexpressiveness of the divine and to ensure unnaturalness. The authentic solution of Islamic art on this issue was to represent, for example, a stylized plant or flower in an almost infinite order of repetition by denying all individuation, thus completely removing naturalism from consciousness. According to the author, the artist expresses with the right that something that is not really natural is not necessarily repetitive. To this end, if eternity and inexpressiveness can attain an aesthetic expression through the repetition of something that is not natural, it is quite possible that the result can be reached in *tawḥīd*. This is because the infinity and unspeakability, which are the

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[583] Rabah Saoud, "Introduction to Islamic Art", February 24, 2010, https://muslimheritage.com/introduction-to-islamic-art (6 July 2021).

[584] Isma'īl Rājī al-Fārūqī, *İslam Kültür Atlası* (İstanbul: İnkılap Publishers, 1999) 188.

[585] Karadeniz,168.

content of artistic representation, will present themselves as a feature of the unnatural.[586]

With similar views to Ismāʿīl Rājī al-Fārūqī, Atan emphasizes that *repetition* is the necessary element to create an eternity effect in Islamic visual arts. According to him, strengthening of abstraction is provided by this method because the motif, which gives a concrete image when alone, is contrary to the general view, disrupts the integrity of the system, and takes it away from the context of reality.[587]

It is also worth mentioning the striking statements of Koç on this subject. The author describes the eternity-repetition principle as "*the dissolution of matter*." According to him, the eternal continuation of a certain model or pattern is an expression of the deep-rooted belief in the eternity of true existence and is the neglect of temporary existence. By showing only a part of a pattern that exists in its full form only in eternity, the Muslim artist himself relates a static, limited, and apparently specific object to eternity. This is the dissolution of matter, one of the most fundamental principles of the Islamic style. Decorating any surface with any pattern that opens to infinity serves this purpose, that is, to hide and melt the substance. In architectural works that meet with such an understanding of decoration, solid walls disappear behind the plaster and tile ornaments.

However, the intention of the artist is also important in this sense. Therefore, avoiding decoration and leaving the stone as a stone to convey the universal message, especially as in the Anatolian Seljuk works, is likewise Islamic.[588]

5.20. Avoiding Indoctrination

Indoctrination means taking away from the will of the interlocutor in art and directing him with a kind of influence and magic without confronting him with the truth in a simple way. In Islam, any attempt to abolish the freedom of will, which is the basis of the life of worship and moral principles, is not tolerated. Man is expected to keep his consciousness permanently. In the Quran, the following verse for those who expect a miracle from the Prophet Muhammad indicates the need for a person to simply

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[586] Ismaʿīl Rājī al-Fārūqī, *Islam and Art*, *Studia Islamica*, ed. R. Brunschvig , (Paris, 1973), 90-91.
[587] Uğur Atan, 358.
[588] Koç, *İslam Estetiği*, 165.

confront the truth and accept it with his own will, without the need for a miracle to believe:

"The disbelievers say, *"If only a sign could be sent down to him from his Lord." You O Prophet are only a warner. And every person had a guide"* (Ar-Ra'd/7). In this belief system, "surrender" through a miracle is not an attitude expected from a human being, who is the most glorious of those created by Allāh (*eshref-i maḥlūḳāt*) and who is given a will.

Islamic art, which takes its essence from Islamic thought and doctrine, naturally avoids the concept of indoctrination. Therefore, Islamic art also avoids the creation of a situation or an environment that does not exist under the direction of someone else. It is not tolerated in Islamic aesthetics to try to influence the interlocutor through the reconstruction of life, resorts to various means, play games, and create an effect on the individual through provocation rather than persuasion. Indoctrination is also an expression of distrust in the message.

The architectural effects of indoctrination are seen especially in medieval Christian architecture. Cansever asserts that while gothic cathedrals can be observed from various angles from the outside, the horizontal axis from the entrance to the altar and the vertical axis from the floor to the ceiling direct the movements of people by domination. He underlines that this attitude is diametrically opposed to Islam's understanding of conscious human and artistic work. However, Christianity and the arts that develop within it try to effectively keep the consciousness of human action and movement under control. For this reason, the art of depiction in Christianity has been used as a means of influence since the 10th century, which is never seen in Islamic history. It tries to achieve this by restricting human freedom of movement and directing it through depiction. Thus, man is pushed into a passive spectator position. According to the author, the situation is exactly the opposite in Islamic art. In Islam, human beings have been given the opportunity to be active spectators by allowing them to realize Allāh, to observe life and all aspects of art within the movement. Thus, human beings are in the position of an independent decision-makers in the unity of the time-space-plane. People of this level of consciousness are expected to constantly

struggle to get to know Allāh better. As a result, art becomes an integral part of life and beliefs rather than being spectacular. [589]

What St. Bernard said for Medieval Christian art emphasizes how appropriate it is to avoid indoctrination in Islamic art, avoid depiction, and be asymmetrical.

> *When you look at it, you see a delightful depiction of a saint or saint, as if the more vividly portrayed the saints, the more saints they seem. People rush and kiss them, they are asked to make donations, and they admire the beauty rather than respect the sacred. (...) Here an animal with a snake tail, here a fish with an animal head. This is half a horse and half a female goat animal, and here is an animal with horns in the shape of a horse. In short, so many, so many kinds of interweaving are seen everywhere that it is more enjoyable to spend the whole day admiring such a painting rather than reading books and thinking about the law of God.[590]*

The fact that Dogan Kuban draws attention to the fact that Mimar Sinan's works do not include illusion[591] is an indication of the principle of avoiding indoctrination in Islamic art. While Kuban calls Hagia Sophia "a hybrid of Byzantine decoration with a static Roman space design," he emphasizes that Architect Sinan "did not fall into the trap of that mysterious splendor."[592]

Justice-Realism is also an approach that should be considered under the title of avoiding indoctrination. The concept of *justice* in Islamic art emerges during the use of art materials in the artwork. Seyyed Hossein Nasr expresses this quality, to which Turgut Cansever refers to the concept of "justice" with the concept of "*realism.*" Accordingly, a material in the art should be used in a way that does not hide its identity. Removing the material from its visible identity is the result of the use of art with the intention of influencing the addressee. In Islamic art, which equates human will with its dignity, the first step to be taken into consideration is this principle of *realism*.[593]

Turgut Cansever focuses on the concept of *justice* together with the concept of *tawḥīd* and "the responsibility of "putting everything in its place" (justice) given to human beings in Islam should be understood and fulfilled in the context of *tawḥīd*. Absolute

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[589] Cansever, *İslam'da Şehir*, 62-63.
[590] Umberto Eco, *Ortaçağ Estetiğinde Sanat ve Güzellik*, trans. K. Atakay, (İstanbul:2016), 26-28.
[591] Doğan Kuban, 260.
[592] Ibid, 284.
[593] Karadeniz, 102.

submission to the will of Allāh must also be carried out on the same basis."[594] According to him, Islamic architecture and art are used as "whatever it is" without falling into *lavish* (Gothic art) and *tephrite* (Renaissance art), in accordance with the principle of *justice*, without denying the quality of the material and putting excessive emphasis on their importance. In the Renaissance, if a stone was located in the building as a rock, this stone would be cut, arranged, and put into a frame in the Süleymaniye Mosque; that is, the stone would not be destroyed.[595]

Koç also suggests that an object must not exist as something other than itself so that it does not become an icon. Thus, the material that finds its place by preserving its identity does not appear as an element of opposition to the natural order, and on the contrary, it yields to the rhythm and harmony of nature. For this reason, in Islamic art, architectural details and ornamentation function not as a cover to cover the flaws of the building but as elements that complement the original body. [596]

Seyyed Hossein Nasr describes this principle with the concept of "*realism.*" According to Nasr, this realism means using every material in art as what it is, not as it appears or as it is shown. Considering hiding or distorting the quality of the material as an intervention to the natural beauty Allāh has given to that material, Nasr says:

> *Even the physical forces and rules to which the materials used by the architect are subject, in a way that allows them to reveal the qualities that Allāh has given them, should respect these qualities; thus, it should be ensured that they take their share of the harmony and beauty that symbolize creation.[597]*

Karadeniz emphasizes that this principle of *justice-realism* is a natural result of the principle of harmony with the nature of Islamic art. To this end, destroying the identity of the material and making it unrecognizable is also a challenge. According to him, this attitude can be interpreted as an understanding that thinks that beauty can be invented, not discovered, trying to reach this goal by distorting the identity of the material.[598]

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[594] Cansever, 15.

[595] Faruk Deniz, "Sanat Tarihine Mimarlıktan Bakmak," *Turgut Cansever's PhD Thesis, Turkish Studies Literature Journal* 7, no. 13 (2009): 457.

[596] Koç, 152-155.

[597] Nasr, 83-84.

[598] Karadeniz, 104.

Erzen explains the application of this principle of Islamic aesthetics by exemplifying it with Ottoman mosques and asserts that in Ottoman architecture, interiors are never decorated in a way to hide the structure. The effect of the decoration is to reduce the wall effect and emphasize the structure and eliminate the tension by establishing the harmony of the horizontal and vertical elements. Especially in domed buildings such as mosques and baths, the most important phenomenon affecting the quality of the space is taken in from all directions, and thus a clear atmosphere is created.[599]

The interpretation of Abouseif conforms to Erzen's perspective. She says that all over the Muslim world, ornament did not conceal the framework. Instead, it emphasized the connection between vertical and horizontal elements, articulated links and joints, and framed accesses and openings. Even in the Dome of the Rock, the Alhambra, or the Madrasat al-*Aṭṭārin* in Fez, where ornamentation is heavily applied, it was applied not uniformly but in relation to architectural structure.[600]

5.21. Incomparability *(Tenzīh)*

The principle of *tenzīh* has emerged with the idea of *tawḥīd*. According to this, the unity of Allāh and the impossibility of another being similar to him required him to be glorified beyond all other beings. According to the principle of *tenzīh*, both nature and the work of art in which it is used must indicate that beauty does not arise from itself but from the form and meaning of Allāh. Nature, which is a mortal being, can only find a place in Islamic art in a geometric and stylized way with the effect of the concept of *tenzīh*; thus, it is shown that it cannot be a final reality. The belief that nothing in nature can represent Allāh and whether His true existence and nature can be fully known or perceived by no other creature other than himself[601] is a requirement of the *tawḥīd* belief. The reading of nature as a simple sign is a step that takes it to Allāh by transcending it through glorification. The eternal and inexpressible nature of Allāh made it possible to see nature as a tool. This idea realizes the Islamic artist using nature without symbolizing it while taking nature as a material, with the concept of *tenzīh*.[602]

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[599] Erzen, *İslam Estetiği*, 46.

[600] Abouseif, 152

[601] Quran, "No human vision can encompass Him, whereas He encompasses all human vision: for He alone is unfathomable, all-aware." (En'am, 103).

[602] Karadeniz, 217.

CHAPTER 6

6. HOUSEHOLD AESTHETICS IN ISLAM

Another aspect that this study focuses on to accurately analyze, understand, and interpret the Topkapı Palace, the home of the Ottoman Sultan and the Ottoman Empire, is household aesthetics in Islam. Although the basic principles of Islamic aesthetics are somehow reflected in all Islamic arts and architecture, several special approaches specific to different types of structures deserve to be emphasized. Although Topkapı Palace is a complex of buildings with different functions, from state offices to places of worship, from madrasas to libraries, from mansions to reception halls, when evaluated collectively, it is ultimately a house: the house of the state and the Sultan. Therefore, as it is enlightening to analyze households in the Quran and the Sunnah to understand the structures built with the Islamic mindset, in this chapter, the aesthetics of household in Islam, which means the conditions for a house to be "beautiful" and "good," will be examined.

6.1. Household in Quran: Privacy

The source of the religion of Islam is the revelation and the source of Islamic aesthetics. In the Quran, which is the source of revelation, it is seen that there are some rules about the Islamic dwelling, indirectly, if not directly. In the Quran, the "home" where the person lives and shelters is referred to as "*mesken*" (مسكن) and "*bayt*" (البيت). While the word "*mesken*" is mostly used to denote the geography and homelands of the ancient tribes, the word "*bayt*" is used to mean "house." It is seen that the verses on this subject mostly focus on the concept of "privacy."

"O you who have attained faith, do not enter houses other than your own houses until you announce your presence and greet their inhabitants with the greeting of peace. That is better for you, that you may remind yourselves." (An-Nur/27)

"But if you find no one in them, then do not enter them until you are given permission. And if it is said to you, "Turn back," then turn back; it is purer for you, for Allāh is All-Knowing of what you do." (An-Nur/28)

According to Özek, the importance of the house in Islam is closely related to the importance of the family. There are also extensive explanations about family law in the Quran. A home is a resting place for people. An issue that closely concerns the home and family is the environment. The exact and balanced implementation of the relationships of the individuals living in the household with each other and the relationships of the individuals with their environment may definitely vary according to time and place. The arrangement of these situations is left to the sunnah and the understanding of Muslims.[603]

6.2. Household in Hadiths and Sunnah

When the understanding of the household of the Prophet Muhammad is examined, we come across a very rich material that is very clear.

It is possible to understand the importance that Prophet Muhammad gave to the household from the hadith, *"Four things are part of happiness: a righteous spouse, a spacious household, and a comfortable mount."*[604] While the hadiths introduce the bad household, they emphasize the following characteristics:

- Being narrow, which is expressed in two ways:

1) The scarcity of the rooms to be used,

2) Narrowness of the field.

- Bad neighbors.

- Being far away from the mosque, where the call to prayer cannot be heard.

- Bad place and weather.

- The house is unpleasant; not aesthetically pleasing.

- Being in an area that does not meet health conditions.

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[603] Ali Özek, *Kur'an'a Göre İslami Mesken veya Bir Müslümanın Evi Nasıl Olmalıdır? Mesken ve Mesken Mimarimiz*, eds., Turgut Cansever, Saadettin Ökten, Ali Özek et al., (İstanbul Ensar Publishers, 1995), 5-27.
[604] Müsned, 1/168.

Based on this, the characteristics of a good household are being wide (number of rooms and large area), good neighbors, proximity to social facilities, especially the mosque, good geographical condition (airy, sunny), pleasing to the inhabitants, and being in a suitable area for the health.

6.2.1. Dimensions: Width and Height

The most emphasized feature of a good household in hadiths is its width. A hadith reported that

"*The happiness of a person depends on the righteous neighbor, comfortable mount, and large dwelling.*"

The number of rooms in the household must be sufficient, depending on the number of inhabitants. In Surah An-Nur, it is ordered that adolescent children and other elders in the family ask permission when entering their parents. In this case, it is imperative to provide a width that will protect privacy. A hadith reports that:

"*A person should get permission from his child, no matter how old, from his mother, brother, sister, and father when entering into their room.*"

Therefore, the number of rooms in the household depends on the number and gender of the family members. A separate room is required for parents and for each child that reaches adolescence. At least a separate room for girls and a separate room for boys is essential.

Another factor that determines the number of rooms is the guest because, in many hadiths, the Prophet Muhammad orders the guest to be served. In a hadith, he says:

"*There are three beds in a person's house: one for the man, one for the woman, one for the guest, and the fourth one for the devil.*" In another hadith, it is reported that "*All things have a zakat, and the zakat of the house is offering.*" In line with these hadiths, the source works state that it is sunnah to have a room in the house so that guests can stay and treat them.

Apart from the sleeping and guest room in terms of function, it is also rumored that in the Prophet's house, there is an upper room called "*meshrūbe,*" which is climbed by stairs, a business room used as a study room.

Although it is not a definite order, it is understood that the Prophet ordered the presence of a masjid in Muslim houses. Some of the Companions consulted the Prophet by stating an excuse in this regard, and the Prophet gave legitimacy to the people of the house to pray in the place they wanted to see as a masjid. Islamic scholars have also found it appropriate to have a masjid in homes.

While the Prophet encourages that the houses should be wide, he does not want them to be high.[605] It is stated that the highness of his own rooms, which he himself built in, is low enough to be touched by hand.[606] According to another narration, the Prophet did not consider it appropriate for the houses to have more than seven rows, according to rumor, and 10 rows.[607] The reason for this was explained as waste, causing arrogance and non-compliance with privacy.

6.2.2. Fluidity (*Seyyāliyet*)

Fluidity is one of the basics in the Prophet's understanding of household.[608] This basis becomes clearer if it is explained by the principle of the large house. As mentioned above, in the household aesthetics of Islam, the house is regarded as large, and this width depends on the number of people living in the house. However, the family's population is not fixed. Those who were born, died, separated, reached adolescence, and guests staying temporarily increase, decrease, and expand the family's population. In this case, what should be taken as a basis for planning the house poses a problem. Basing on the largest case can be both materially impossible and wasteful. Taking the narrowest position as a basis does not meet the family's needs and can also cause waste, as it may cause much more additional costs because it is not initially planned.

The extensive household concept and advice of the Prophet cover both the area and the number of rooms. He solved this problem based on its surface measurement and established a household layout that would increase and decrease the number of rooms

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[605] Özek, 23.

[606] Buhari, 160.

[607] Sorularla İslamiyet, "Şu üç şey Âdemoğlunun saadetindendir; saliha bir hanım, geniş ev, rahat binek." last update: May 20, 2022, https://sorularlaislamiyet.com/su-uc-sey-ademoglunun-saadetindendir-saliha-bir-hanim-genis-ev-rahat-binek-musned-1168-hadisi-0 (accessed August 27, 2021).

[608] Özek, 24.

as needed. An example of this can be seen in his own application. In the narration, he uses the extension of the room by setting up a tent in the room when the need arises and making a partition with a mat.[609]

6.2.3. Furnishing and Decoration

While expressing the understanding of the Prophet's household, the issues of furnishing and decoration are also topics that should be considered. The Prophet is sensitive in two aspects: 1) Simplicity and 2) The house is free from non-Islamic cultural elements.

Simplicity is a dominant feature in both furnishing and decoration. The Prophet avoided luxury, vanity, and waste. There are enough items in his house to sustain his life.

It is legitimate to lay the carpet on the floor, but it is not welcome to hang it on the wall. The Prophet Muhammad was not only opposed to the covers with pictures on the wall but also to the colorful, "attention-grabbing, binding to the world," decorated, embroidered covers. In a rumor, the Prophet, who was invited by his daughter Fatima, sees a curtain decorated with embroidery on his door, stops, counts the colors, and says, "*I wish it was one color.*" On another occasion, he orders his wife, Aisha, to take down a colored curtain that she hangs. When asked why, he said, "*The world means nothing to me, and so does embroidery... Because this reminds me of the world...Because the depictions on it distract me during prayers.*"[610] It is known that the Prophet deemed unnecessary household items *makrooh* (reprehensible) for showing off and did not approve of them.[611]

The fact that the house is far from non-Islamic cultural elements has a special place in understanding the residence of the Prophet Muhammad. While he saw no harm in taking the foreign technique, he strongly opposed the elements representing foreign culture.[612] His wife, Aisha, states that the item with a cross on her definitely spoils the

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[609] Ahmed Ibn Hambel,

[610] Tirmizi, 133-Buhari, 93.

[611] Özek, 26.

[612] Ahmet Özek, *Hz. Peygamberin Hadislerinde Medeniyet, Teknik ve Kültür* (İstanbul: Cihan Publishers, 1984), 154-171.

cross. It is also known that he forbade sculpture and depiction against idolatry, which was the opposite of the belief of *tawḥīd* (oneness) he brought in that period.

6.2.4. Household in Macro Plan

It is seen in the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad that the household was not only discussed in the micro plan but also in the macro plan. In other words, he perceives the household as a part of the whole city and evaluates it together with other establishments such as the geographical area on which it is established, neighboring houses, roads, water facilities, masjid, school, historical artifacts, greenfield, sports facilities, and children's garden. The neighborhood issue is touched upon in many hadiths, and the conditions of good relations with neighbors are highlighted.

"Do not block your neighbor's air by raising your building high without his permission."

The fact that the houses are not built higher than the neighboring houses is an issue that the Prophet insisted on. He argued against those who had more floors to their building without permission and had it demolished without compromise. He also said,

"Every building will bring bad consequences to the one who built it, except that (which is necessary)."[613]

It was mentioned that one of the depictions of the Prophet about the bad house was being too far from the mosque to hear the call to prayer. In this regard, he said,

"The superiority of the house close to the mosque over the far is like the superiority of the veteran over the resident."[614]

In addition to these, the Prophet Muhammad gave importance to the protection of historical artifacts. Abdullāh ibn `Umar narrates an old, fortified building called *Atam* in al-Madīnah, which resembles a castle. The Prophet forbade it to be destroyed, and he said, "These are the adornments of al-Madīnah."[615] The Prophet also underlined the importance of the green field in the city. The hadith,

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[613] Ebu Davud, Edeb, 160.

[614] Ahmed Ibn Hanbel, 387.

[615] Ibn Hacer, 454.

"If the Resurrection were established upon one of you while he has in his hand a sapling, then let him plant it," clearly exhibits his approach to greening the environment.

6.2.5. Spirituality in the Household

Islam is a religion that involves daily life. For this reason, according to this belief, the house where a Muslim lives should be a suitable place in terms of its environment, structure and plan, arrangement, layout, and furnishing to live his belief properly. The house must be protected from all kinds of harams, a place where prayers are performed in order for it to be a good place; in other words, Islam must be practiced in all aspects. For this reason, it was not welcome to have a mattress, carpet, and pillow made of silk and pots and pans made of gold and silver at home.[616]

Besides, an important point is that the house is considered a place to sleep, eat, rest, or safety and that such an atmosphere is not actually prevailing. Prophet Muhammad said, *"Do not turn your houses into graves."* He enlightened this statement with the following hadiths:

"Surely, the devil runs away from the house where the Quran is recited in it."[617]

"If a person recites the Quran in his house, the house expands against his people, and the Angels are ready there, the devils run away, and the good increases. And when the Quran is not recited in a house, it narrows to its owner, and the angels leave it, and the Devils invade it, and the good decreases. Perform your supererogatory prayers in your homes, do not turn them into graves."[618]

To sum up, we can analyze household aesthetics in Islam by examining verses in the Quran and the hadiths and Sunnah of the Prophet. While Quran focuses particularly on privacy, Prophet Muhammad gives detailed information for a house to be beautiful in Islam. He underlines that in addition to having a spiritual atmosphere as a result of praying and Quran recitation, a house should be large enough for a changeable population, low in height to avoid arrogance, simple in terms of decoration and furnishing, free from non-Islamic elements, respectful to its environment and cultural heritage around, close to green areas and masjids.

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[616] Heysemi, 145, 146, 175.

[617] Muslim, 212-Tirmizi, 2.

[618] Buhari, 52.

CHAPTER 7

7. ISLAMIC BACKDROP OF OTTOMAN ART & ARCHITECTURE

Art, as a display of aesthetic sensitivity, provides peerless possibilities to understand a culture or a civilization. In this respect, the easiest and the shortest way of understanding the world of culture and civilization is to focus on its art since any civilization, in all its manifestations, represents the worldview that it belongs to. [619]Architecture, which cannot be separated from art, is also a social act, and as such, it cannot be divorced from a culture's view of the grand scheme within which it exists.[620] Therefore, in order to understand any architectural piece, it is necessary to scrutinize the cultural values, present social system when it was built, meanings that were attributed to that structure, and cosmological meanings that the structure itself carries.

Yıldırım explains that Ottoman art can be considered a branch of Islamic art which can be studied from the late 7th century onwards until the modern era covering a wide geography. She focuses that Islamic art displays varying and unique characteristics in all these lands based on cultural, historical, political, and social contexts. However, some general principles reflecting the sensitivities and preferences of a Muslim society can be found in all.[621] Since Islamic art as a term covers a long period and wide geographies, studies focusing on a specific period and geography may provide an opportunity to see the individual specialties of culture within Islamic art. Therefore, Ottoman art is an example of this phenomenon. Similarly, Sözen links Islamic art with Ottoman art and declares that the contribution of the Ottoman Empire, not only to architecture but to all fields of Islamic art, is notable. He states that, like architecture,

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[619] Turan Koç, "The Vision of Islamic Art and Aesthetics," *Journal of Academic Studies* 2, (February 2010): 1, https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/eskiyeni/issue/37266/430499 (January 01, 2021).

[620] S. Gulzar. Haider, "Islam, Cosmology and Architecture" in *Theories and Principles of Design in the Architecture of Islamic Societies,* ed., M. B. Ševcenko (Cambridge: Massachusettes: MIT, 1988), 74.

[621] Ayşin Yoltar Yıldırım, *Ottoman Decorative Arts* (Ankara: Ministry of Culture Publications, 2011), 5.

the decorative and minor arts developed as parts of the historical process, crystallizing into new forms and creating stylistic synthesis in parallel with the dominant political, social, economic, and cultural trends of the time.[622]

This chapter aims to analyze the impact of Islamic background, seen in Ottoman art and architecture in a cultural context within the visual language of Islamic art, and to understand their symbolic meanings.

7.1. Decorative Arts and Religious Symbolism

Symbolism is "the physical interpretation of a feeling, thought, idea, or theme. It is an idea registered in terms of symbols. Symbolism is the representation of a thing through the use of symbols. The expression of the essence of things, or thoughts, by the use of certain signs, conventional and typed, is termed symbolism. A symbol is regarded by general consent as naturally typifying or representing or recalling something, especially an idea or quality, by possessing analogous qualities or by the association in face or thought. Symbolism is generally a thought or a feeling represented in terms of symbols, which cannot be expressed otherwise."[623] Abdullah and Khan give purity as an example of this term. They explain that purity can not be explained as it is. It has to be supported by some mediums like the white color of flowers, paradise gardens in Islamic buildings, or some culturally specific symbols. Hence, the symbol conveys the feelings to a person who is aware of that feeling and those symbols. Therefore, a person experiences the feelings, thoughts, or ideas behind a symbol when the person is aware of those symbols and ideas. These symbols are carried along through the ages in the form of traditions, motifs, and decorative programmes.[624]

As it was widely explained in the previous chapter, Islamic art deals with the unseen, sacred, and meanings. It is through metaphors, representations, references, and symbols that this meaning is constructed.

Therefore, it is crucial to focus on the symbolic meanings of forms that are used in Ottoman-Islamic art and architecture to make sense of any artistic/architectural piece.

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[622] Metin Sözen, *Arts in the Age of Sinan* (Ankara: Ministry of Culture Publications, 1988), 11.

[623] Tabish Ahmed Abdullah and Sufiullah Khan, *Symbolism in Islamic Architecture*, ed., S. M. Akhtar, *Islamic Architecture at the Cross Roads*, Wellworth Books International (New Delhi: 2011), 127.

[624] Ibid, 128.

7.2. Visual Language of Ottoman-Islamic Arts and Architecture

Islam is said to be the religion of "Unity," and this concept of unity is essentially related to Love. When the relation of religion with art is considered, Islamic art, both in its origin and historical manifestations, displays an inseparable unity with religion instead of a sole relation.[625] Accordingly, the way to understand what Islamic art is requires an understanding of the essence of Islam.

Erzen asserts that in Islam, almost all art has been in the service of the faith and is generally applied as decoration. Thoughts on beauty are also always related to religious meaning. Decoration serves as an effort to express admiration for the beauty of the world and to adorn man's world in a way that is worthy of God's creation. Hence, decoration is not a surface addition. Instead, it is an expression of a deep need to respond to the admiration of God's created world.[626] Likewise, Yıldırım explains that Ottoman decorative arts present a large part of Ottoman art. In Europe, decorative arts usually refer to the decoration of functional objects, not huge sculptures and architecture. However, this division is not valid in Islamic art and also in Ottoman art. Hence, he claims that Islamic art can be divided into two main areas; architecture and arts.[627] Although the term "decorative arts" is usually associated with the latter, architectural decoration is also a common application in Ottoman architectural culture.

Çağman indicates that Ottoman art has a special place within Islamic art, particularly where architecture, decorative arts, and miniature paintings are concerned. The earliest products date back to the 1300s. With the expansion of Ottoman territory and economic power, it became truly imperial art. She emphasizes that the attitude of Ottoman artists to proportion and the filling of the ground differs from the approaches of decorative artists in other Islamic countries. Ottoman artists gave special importance to preserving the balance between motifs and ground and keeping decoration under control. The preference for larger motifs produced by areas of pure color without

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[625] Koç, 10.

[626] Jale Erzen, "Islamic Aesthetics: An Alternative Way to Knowledge," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 65, no. 1 (Winter, 2007): 70, https://www.jstor.org/stable/4622211.

[627] Yıldırım, 8.

further details achieved an elegant and meaningful effect that could be grasped by the observer at first glance.[628]

Similarly, Erzen focuses on the fact that in Ottoman architecture, the interiors are not profusely decorated so as to hide the structure. The decoration is often to lighten the effect of the walls, but the structural features are designed to stand out through decorative articulation to soften the tensions by creating a balance between the vertical and horizontal, dark and light, inside and outside, square and the circle.[629] Likewise, Tanman states that the decorative arts in Ottoman architecture are used at moderate intensity without overshadowing the design of the space and the façade.[630] Therefore, Ottoman art considerably diverged from other parts of the Islamic world (esp. from the Timurids and Safavids of Iran with their designs of extremely small and densely packed motifs, which many times resulted in no more than a display of skilled craftsmanship) in terms of its taste and aesthetic. The desire to leave empty spaces and the effort to provide a balance in decoration provided varied dimensions to Ottoman art. In its nearly six hundred years of continuity, the new style was unafraid of color and powerful in conception with its diversity of motifs, compositions, and expressiveness.

Sözen crystallizes that the decorative arts have maintained an extremely varied repertoire in the Ottoman Empire. He crystallizes that geometric patterns suggesting infinity and unity, nature-originated decorations including floral motifs, trees, and fruits, and calligraphic decorations were ubiquitously used in Ottoman architectural decoration through the mediums of metalwork, stonework, woodwork, ceramics, tiles, and manuscripts. The reflections of these decorative programs were also observable in everyday objects such as textiles and carpets, kaftans, and jewelry.[631]

As Sözen, Erzen, and many other scholars argue, calligraphy, geometry, and floral ornamentation are the three main Islamic arts that can be seen in both huge architectural structures and small daily objects. Their influences have spread to all

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[628] Filiz Çağman, "Behind the Ottoman Canon: The Works of the Imperial Palace", in *Palace of Gold and Light: Treasures from the Topkapı* (Istanbul: Ministry of Culture Publications, 2000), 46.
[629] Erzen, "Aesthetics of Ottoman Culture", 4.
[630] Baha Tanman, *Ottoman Architecture and Decorative Arts in the 16th and 17th Centuries, Exhibition in Ottoman Art, and Architecture in Hungary and in the Centre of the Empire* (Istanbul: Istanbul 2010 Avrupa Kültür Baskenti Ajansi, 2010), 47.
[631] Sözen, 9.

Islamic lands. The symbolic meanings of these decorative programs will be scrutinized in the context of Ottoman-Islamic aesthetics through the selected examples. Besides, the symbolisms of the center, square and circle, hexagon, vertical axis, dome, star and crescent, colors (white, green, black, and red), number seven, water, arches, and central courtyard will be explained.

7.2.1. Calligraphy

Writing is an indispensable tool for permanence and communication anytime, anywhere. It provides the transfer of thoughts to certain signs and is almost a preserved visual state of sound.[632] Calligraphy, as the Islamic art of writing, without a doubt, is the most original and important contribution of Muslims to visual arts.[633, 634] It is considered to be the purest of all Islamic arts since it originated and developed completely within the borders of Arab culture.[635]

Calligraphy occupied a unique place in Islamic art. As Welch points "Arabic script is the central form of Islam's art and was the first and foremost of its characteristic modes of visual expression.[636] It is the most abstract manifestation of language, giving material form to concepts, knowledge, ideas, and above all, the words of God.[637]

Since painting and various figurative elements are not adopted in Islamic architecture, calligraphy, and abstract decorations are significant, especially in prayer buildings. Another reason for the writing to be significant is the importance attributed to the holy book, the Quran, and the hadiths, which are the words of the Prophet Muhammad. The person who reads the texts becomes the direct addressee of Allāh and Prophet Muhammad. Thus, it leaves a divine effect on the visitor through writing.[638]

Oleg Grabar emphasizes that calligraphy has a very symbolic meaning and says:

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[632] Cemile Feyzan Bölükbaşı and Ali Uzay Peker, *Prof. Dr. Ömür Bakırer Armağanı*, ed. Ali Uzay Peker, Neriman Şahin Güçhan, ODTÜ Basım İşliği, Ankara, 2021, p.161

[633] David James, "Calligraphy-The Geometry of the Spirit," September/October 1989, https://archive.aramcoworld.com/issue/201106/2012.calendar.word.htm (accessed August 20, 2021).

[634] Michael Levey, *The World of Ottoman Art* (London: Thames and Hudson,1976), 12.

[635] James, 18

[636] Anthony Welch, Calligraphy in the Arts of the Muslim World (NewYork:1979), 22

[637] Sözen, ,73.

[638] Ibid,

Beyond its iconographic and literal significance, calligraphy serves a more aesthetic purpose in Arab-Islamic art. Besides hailing the blessings of God, the aim of the calligraphy was to evoke the key Muslim idea that all creations and all acts occur only by the will of God. The means by which the evocation occurs is the Word, whose presence must be the constant accompaniment of man's life." "Appearance is the expression, not of the object, but of the Word"-the Word of Mohammed, or the Word of God, meaning the Word representing the idea. Therefore, appearance and image, letter and picture, are the same.[639]

Similarly, James states:

For Muslim calligraphers, the act of writing – particularly the act of writing the Quran or any portion of it – was primarily a religious experience rather than an aesthetic one. Most Westerners, on the other hand, can appreciate only the line, form, flow, and shape of the words that appear before them. Nevertheless, many recognize that what they see is more than a display of skill with a reed dipped in ink: Calligraphy is the geometry of the spirit.[640]

Erzen explains that calligraphy, used for decorative and adornment purposes, was usually a passage from the Quran, which is the word of God. As such, it was the highest form of art that originated in the creation of God, not in the human world.[641] The holy image of the text attributed a special meaning to all forms of the written word. As the absolutes of God were expressible only through words, not images, the Quran manifests these truths and hence tends to be the focus of the artistic endeavor.[642]

Besides, since the first verses of the Quran are:

"*Read (O Muhammad!)in the name of your Lord who created. He created man from a clot. Read! and your Lord is the Most Honorable who taught with the pen*"[643]

reading, words, and pen can be considered important themes that support the art of writing.

The great power of the word, which can be considered as the expression of God, can be intensely felt in all contexts, from architectural decoration to coins, from fabrics to household objects in Ottoman culture. Although they were written in the 1800s[644], the

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[639] Oleg Grabar, "Architecture and Art", in *The Genius of Arab Civilization*, ed., John R. Hayes, (London: Eurabia, 1983), 98.

[640] James, 25.

[641] Erzen, Aesthetics in Ottoman Culture, 7.

[642] Uğur Derman, *The Art of Calligraphy in the Ottoman Empire* (Manchester: FSTC Limited, 2007),3.

[643] Quran, 96:1-4.

[644] http://www.bursaulucamii.com/husnuhat.html, accessed (February 07, 2023).

columns of the Great Mosque interiors in Bursa and Edirne are noteworthy in terms of their calligraphy decorations (See Figure 7.1, Figure 7.2). Like painting or sculpture in other cultures, calligraphy became an aesthetic medium in its own right. When executed on a large scale, inscriptions became architectural elements of mosques, palaces, fountains, and tombs.[645]

Figure 7.1 Bursa Great Mosque - Columns with calligraphy decorations.
Source: Aivita Arika, An interior view of Great Mosque (Ulu Cami). People are visiting Great Mosque, which is the largest mosque in Bursa, Shutterstock, February 04, 2017, https://www.shutterstock.com/tr/image-photo/bursa-turkey-february-04-2017-interior-669103774 (accessed May 16, 2022).

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https://www.yollardan.com/edirne-eski-cami-hat-yazilari-bilgileri/ (accessed February 07, 2023).
[645] Jale Erzen, "Gardens and Flowers in Ottoman Culture", *Working Paper* (1999), 3.

Figure 7.2 Edirne Great Mosque- Attractive calligraphy decorations.
Source: Türkiye Kültür Portalı (TKP), "Eski Cami- Edirne," (photo, 2014), Ministry of Culture Publications 3, https://www.kulturportali.gov.tr/turkiye/edirne/gezilecekyer/eski-ulu-cami (accessed May 16, 2022).

7.2.2. Geometry

Geometrical patterns lie at the heart of Islamic design and have been used in Islamic art for centuries.[646] For centuries, Islamic geometrical patterns have been used as decorative elements on walls, ceilings, doors, domes, and minarets.

Abdullahi and Embi interpret that the use of geometrical design provided an alternative to the prohibited depiction of living creatures. As the depiction of living creatures was forbidden in religious architecture, using abstract geometrical forms was very meaningful. In contrast to portrayals of living creatures, which divert attention to the desires of creatures rather than the will of God, geometric forms encourage spiritual contemplation because of the symbolic meanings they bear. Thus, geometry became the center of the art of the Muslim world as it allowed artists to use their imagination

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[646] Sheila R. Canby, *Islamic Art in Detail* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2005), 20.

and creativity freely. Prohibition of the depiction of living creatures resulted in a new form of art based wholly on mathematical shapes and forms, such as circles, squares, and triangles.[647]

Although Abdullahi and Embi hint that the evolution of Islamic geometrical design is resultant of a search for an alternative way of figural representation, it seems not to be so. As Wijdan Ali suggests, "from the very beginning of Islamic art, the arabesque and the geometrical design have developed alongside figurative art, rather than as a reaction to it, which signifies the development of a new and independent form of surface decoration. It should always be remembered that abstraction in Islam was born not because of the lack of skill on the artist's part nor out of religious proscription, but mainly from a rejection of materialism with all its transient qualities."[648]

In parallel with Ali's perspective, Peker says:

> *In Islamic geometric decoration, an "infinite pattern" consists of an interlaced line passing over and under it forming intricate patterns. Every part is subordinated to the pattern, which exhibits unity in multiplicity. This atomic representation well accords with the view that the center is One, which is everywhere, but also distinct and beyond. Infiniteness is a guise of all-encompassing God and His Intellect, who manifested His beauty through the created world. Geometry was the most appropriate way of presenting His infinite existence and Intellect in and out of the created world. It is a curtain or a screen that only the mind passes through for higher dimensions[649]*

Apart from the perspectives of Wijdan Ali and Peker on the appropriateness of geometric design to the essence of Islam, Erzen makes an analysis why it well suits the Islamic belief system. She emphasizes that most decoration, when contemplated, becomes a realm of movement, and that is true also for abstract geometric styles, as well as florid arabesques. When we look at these abstract geometric styles, we see new forms emerging, coming to the fore, and some forms receding in constant reversal. This repetition points to the principle of constant change. She claims that this way of decoration has a very symbolic meaning as it represents the idea of creation in Islam:[650]

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[647] Ibid, 244.

[648] Wijdan Ali, *The Arab Contribution to Islamic Art from Seventh to Fifteenth Centuries* (Cairo: Cairo Press: 1999), 63.

[649] Ali Uzay Peker, "The Concept of Beauty from Plotinus to St. Augustine and Ghazzali, and Art of Abstraction in Medieval Eastern Mediterranean" XVII. Congress of Aesthetics: Aesthetics Bridging Cultures, Congress Book 1, ed., Jale Erzen (Ankara: SANART, 2008), 114.

[650] Erzen, "Islamic Aesthetics:An Alternative", 72.

The world is intense in motion, ascending towards the vertical axis. The universe is being recreated at every moment. There is continuous instantaneous expansion and contraction; all things return to God and emerge from God constantly.[651]

She adds that the repetitive character of many elements in Islamic architecture constitutes the perceiver's doubts about what is real. In addition to the repetitions, mirrors and mirror-like reflections, which are commonly used in Islamic architectural works as decorations, are also tools for displaying the world's many different appearances. Multidimensionality can be considered as a way of implying the impossibility of knowing what reality is. Erzen associates this with the impossibility of knowledge about the Absolute because the Absolute manifests himself in infinite ways. She comments that God cannot be known except for the ninety-nine names attributed to God.[652]

Another element that causes confusion between appearance and reality is the use of lattice screens made of wood or metal. Bakhtiar emphasizes that typically screens have beautiful patterns as the changing effects of lights and shadows create a playful image. Likewise, the world is shown through a veil. Like many patterns used for decoration, screens reflect Islamic beliefs about how one perceives the world: as moving and as through a veil.[653]

Bakhtiar asserts that apart from calligraphic styles, almost all Islamic decoration can be interpreted in abstract terms such as dark/light, full/void, symmetrical/repetitive, etc. The duality of dark and light can be an example of that. She says:

"darkness and light are the archetypal symbols of Sufism because they are natural, immediate self-expressions of an experience of the Divinity. They denote the stations of annihilation (fanā) and subsistence (baqā)."[654]

Erzen stresses that this important principle is reflected in architecture with the use of muqarnas, where light and dark are constantly in play or with the screen windows (See Figure 7.3). She adds that the Ottoman mosque, which is designed to receive as much

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[651] Ibid,

[652] Ibid,

[653] Lale Bakhtiar, *Sufi*, (Singapore: Thames and Hudson, 1976), 24.

[654] Ibid, 17.

light as possible, can be another example that we can see the obvious use of the symbolism of light.[655] (See Figures 7.4 and 7.5).

Figure 7.3 Play of dark/light in Muqarnas.
Source: Hüdai Sırrı Şenalp, "The Evolution of Ottoman Muqarnas," September 2012, Hassa Architecture, https://www.hassa.com/en/kirkambar/article/evolution-ottoman-muqarnas (accessed May 16, 2022).

Figure 7.4- 7.5 Light as a decorative program in Ottoman mosques (Left: Sultan Ahmed (1609-1617), Right: Suleymaniye (1551-1557)).
Source (Left): İslam ve İhsan (I&I), "Sultanahmet Camiî Tarihi", (photo, June 09, 2021), https://www.islamveihsan.com/sultanahmet-camii-tarihi.html (accessed May 17, 2022).
Source (Right): TKP, "Süleymaniye Camisi – İstanbul," (photo, 21 May 2013), Republic of Turkey Ministry of Culture and Tourism, https://www.kulturportali.gov.tr/turkiye/istanbul/gezilecekyer/suleymaniye-camii, (accessed May 17, 2022).

This spiral geometric relationship is the basic pattern of all abstract decoration in Ottoman architecture in the 15th and 16th centuries. The site organization of the

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[655] Erzen, Conceptions of the Aesthetic, 3.

Imperial Complex of Suleyman I is a dramatic example of these structures with its central dome and cubic mass, the surrounding galleries, circular pathways, and the other complex structures enveloping them (See Figure 7.6). Apart from the general layout of the religious complexes, this relationship can be found on doors, on the minbar, or on many other decorated surfaces. The Ottoman mosque and its decorations are perfect expressions of the synthesis of the world of man and the realm of God. She concludes that this polarity can also be understood as the harmonic unity of practicality and spirituality, mind and body, or earth and world. [656]

Figure 7.6 Suleymaniye Mosque.
Source: Burcu Turhan, "Maneviyatın ve Maddi İhtişamın Zirvesi Süleymaniye Camii", (photo, Februay 2017), İstanbul Tarih, http://www.istanbultarih.com/maneviyatin-ve-maddi-ihtisamin-zirvesi-suleymaniye-camii-213.html (accessed May 21, 2022).

The use of geometry as a decorative art is seen not only on the spheres of the dome but also on the mihrabs and minbars. The woodwork minbar of *Rüstempaşa* Mosque may be a good example. The use of a circle in the vertical axis is noteworthy. (See Figure 7.7.)

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[656] Jale Erzen, "İslam Felsefesinde Estetik Kavramlar", Lecture Notes, (2011), 7.

Figure 7.7 The use of geometry on the minbar of *Rüstempaşa* Mosque (1553).
Source: Ne Nerede (NN), "Rüstem Paşa Camii," (photo, August 15, 2017),
https://www.nenerede.com.tr/ilan/rustem-pasa-camii-13 (accessed February 22, 2021).

Apart from this spiral effect of geometric decoration, which is understood and valued as a cosmic and spiritual form that also hints at the skies, the heavens, and the One, the symbolism and the relations between the circle and the square, the symbolism of the center and the symbolism of vertical axis also constitute basic metaphors in the structure and decoration of Islamic art and architecture and deserve further explanations.

7.2.2.1. The Symbolism of the Square and the Circle

Erzen focuses that apart from the cosmic spiral, the relations between the circle, the square, and the triangle constitute a basic metaphoric form in the structure and decoration of Islamic religious buildings. She clarifies that the circle symbolizes the perfect form and relates to the heavens and God, while the square, with its four directions, relates to human existence and the world. This relation can be observed in the basic forms of mosques. The spherical shape of the dome and the prismatic shape of the building are symbolic representations of the square moving within the circle.

The author evaluates this relation as a perfect expression of the synthesis of the world of man and the realm of God. She dramatically associates this harmonic unity of

polarity with the relations of practicality and spirituality, mind and body, earth and world.[657]

Similarly, Grupico states that among the shapes in cosmological thought, the circle, having no beginning and no end, reflects perfection, the eternal, and the heavens. The square, having four sides like the four points of a compass, reflects the earth and the universe. He concludes that the unity of God and man can be identified by these shapes coming harmoniously in the religious buildings.[658]

7.2.2.2. Symbolism of the Centre and Vertical Axis

The thirteenth-century Sufi Abd al-Salām makes an interpretation of the analogy between the human body and a "prosperous kingdom;" he says that when, at the beginning of terrestrial history, God decided to create the form of Adam. He constructed it in the form of a prosperous city, including many well-designed and perfect buildings that demonstrated the power of the Builder. Therefore, He revealed symbols that signify that the Maker is One. At the center of this city, He erected the palace of the kingdom, which He called the heart (al-qalb). He made the entire city revolve around this center and set the order of everything to be dependent upon it. This metaphor finds references in many structures and images of the time. First of all, it finds direct expression in the House of God, Kaaba, which is the heart of the entire Islamic world.[659] Ikhwān Al-Ṣafā writes that:

> *The House al-bayt in the middle of the Holy Mosque, the Holy Mosque in the middle of Sanctuary al-Haram, the sanctuary in the middle of al-Hijaz, al-Hijaz in the middle of the Islamic countries, is in the likeliness of the earth in the middle of the atmosphere, the atmosphere in the middle of the lunar sphere, the lunar sphere in the middle of celestial spheres. Those who pray in the horizons oriented towards the House are in the likeliness of the planets in the spheres; their radiations are directed towards the center of the earth. And the rotation of the heavens with their planets around the earth is in the likeliness of the rotation of the ambulant around the House.*

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[657] Erzen, *Reading Mosques*, 127.

[658] Theresa Grupio, "The Dome in Christian and Islamic Sacred Architecture" (Forum on Public Policy, 2011), 1-14. The Dome, 3.

[659] Samer Akkach, "Analogy and Symbolism: An Approach to the Study of Traditional Islamic Architecture", *The Islamic Quarterly* XXXVI, no. 2 (1992), 87.

Akkach relates that every traditional Islamic-built form that is laid around a central point may be seen as an architectural expression of this metaphor. The symbolism of the architectural center is an extension of the symbolism of the "geometrical" point: The center embodies the formless, intelligible point making visible the invisible reality of the single indivisible substance.[660]

Akkach furthers that the center was traditionally viewed as the terrestrial trace of the heavenly ray, that is, the place where an imaginary cosmic pole pierces the horizontal expanse of earth, connecting the celestial, the terrestrial, and the infra-terrestrial worlds. The cosmic pole is expressed in an architectural form by an imaginary vertical axis that connects the higher center of a building - the apex of a dome, an oculus, etc. - to a corresponding lower center; or by an imaginary line that links the center of an open courtyard or a city to the center of heaven. Spaces in traditional Islamic buildings, cities, and gardens, whether concentrically or linearly ordered, are developed about a central vertical axis. The idea of axiality is also expressed in traditional Islamic architecture by vertical architectural elements such as minarets, towers, or tomb-towers, which exist throughout the Islamic world. Therefore, it can be claimed that the common use of such vertical elements, minarets, towers, and tomb-towers serve as tools directing man and reminding him of the heaven which all Muslims aim to reach. Dome*s* serve as transitional elements between the celestial and the terrestrial worlds. (See Figure 7.8).

The cosmic axis is associated with the idea of the center of the world and of the mountain where heaven and earth meet. This is most evident in the Kaaba, which passes the cosmic axis and penetrates the seven layers of heaven and the seven layers of earth (See Figure 7.9).

The centrality of the Kaaba was traditionally proven by its relation to the pole star and to the *Jabal Abū Qubays*. The position of the Kaaba was seen as the terrestrial center because it was viewed as corresponding to the position of the pole star, which was seen as the celestial center.[661]

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[660] Samer Akkach, "In the Image of the Cosmos Order and Symbolism in Traditional Islamic Architecture" *Part 2*, *The Islamic Quarterly* XXXIX, no. 2, (1995), 93.
[661] Akkach, *In the Image*, 94.

Figure 7.8 Minarets emphasizing vertical axis.
Source: Ekşi Sözlük (ES), "Camii Mimarisinde Minareler Neden Var?", (photo, January 14, 2019), https://seyler.eksisozluk.com/camii-mimarisinde-minareler-neden-var (accessed February, 2021).

Al-Kisā'ī says: "In Tradition, it is said: the Polestar proves the Kaaba to be the highest situated territory on earth, for it is opposite the center of heaven." He further explains:

> *"In the center of this moving part of heaven is a fixed star which does not move, and this is the Polestar, around which the Bear and the rest of the stars turn. People have agreed on this point that whoever places himself opposite the Polestar has at the same time the direction of the Qibla because this star is above the Kaaba, without ever moving. The Bear may move somewhat, but the Polestar never does. If now the Polestar, which is the center of heaven, around which the other stars turn, is above the Kaaba, this fact proves that what corresponds with the center of heaven is most likely to be the center of the earth; consequently, the Kaaba is the center of the earth."[662]*

Kaaba was seen as the place where the cosmic axis penetrated the terrestrial world and was thus seen as being closer to heaven than any other spot on earth because it is linked directly to the center of heaven by a perpendicular. Likewise, the Prophet's wife, Aisha, says that she never saw heaven nearer to earth than she saw it in Makkah.[663] A prophetic tradition describes the location of the Kaaba as being at the midpoint of an axis that penetrates the seven heavens and seven earths.[664]

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[662] Al-Kisā'īsayn, "cited it in Akkach", 95.
[663] Al Azraqi, "cited" in Akkach, 95.
[664] Samer Akkach, "In the Image", 101.

Figure 7.9 Kaaba and its vertical axis penetrating the seven heavens
Source: Mustafa Canbaz., "Lightfull Kaaba2: Kaaba light falling, people all over the world are worshiping", (photo, n.d.), https://www.pond5.com/stock-footage/item/909896-lightfull-kaaba2 (accessed April 15, 2021).

The vertical axis signifies the pathway of ascent, which leads upward "through the confining carapace of the physical world, passing beyond its limits and bounds to the Infinite and time to the Eternal. The cosmic axis is the line of communication between heaven and earth and the thread of continuity between the Divine and the human levels of existence. The heart of the traditional Islamic city was always occupied by the

mosque, which is the place where God and man communicate and where one is directly related to heaven. And most mosques have at least one minaret and one *dome* which symbolize the cosmic axis." [665]

7.2.2.3. The Symbolism of the Triangle, Square, Hexagon, Octagon, and Star

Symbols can give voice to verbal explanation, but the verbal explanation can in no way breathe symbols. The symbols inherent in Islamic patterns and geometry are directed towards an undifferentiated unity. The triangle, by tradition, is symbolic of human consciousness and the principle of harmony. The square is the symbol of physical experience and the physical world or materiality.

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[665] Abbas Daneshvari, *Medieval Tomb Towers of Iran: An Iconographical Study* (Lexington: Mazda Publishers, 1986), 45.

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Hexagon, which has been widely used as a symbol in Islamic architecture, refers to heaven. Peker states that the hexagon embodies perfect proportionality. If we circle a hexagon, the radius of the circle equals the length of each side of the hexagon. Hence, the total length of the sides of a hexagon is six times the Radius of the circle. Twelve and twenty-four-pointed stars can also be produced by dividing the Radius in this way. The hexagon is also the one-dimensional projection of the "cube" shape. When the hexagonal composition is turned into a cube, it gains three-dimensionality. Square-shaped paths are formed between the cubes. It should also be added that the cube has six surfaces. [666] The author focuses on the fact that the world was created in six stages. But this is not the reason for number six's perfection. Instead, as the number is perfect, God brought the world to perfection in six days.[667]

Another symbol frequently used in Islamic art is the star. It has been the chosen motif for many Islamic decorations. In Islamic iconography, the star is a regular shape that symbolizes equal radiation in all directions from a central point. All regular stars- whether they have 6,8, 10, 12, or 16 points- are created by a division of a circle into equal parts. The center of the star is the center of the circle from which it came, and it points to the touch circumference of the circle. The rays of a star reach out in all directions, making the star a fitting symbol for the spread of Islam.[668]

Octagon is the symbol of recreation. It is the symbol of the eternal swing of the heavens. Eight is the number passed through seven heavens. So it has been considered as the number of heaven.

In the belief of Muslims, eight angels hold the throne that surrounds the world. These eight angles correspond with eight parts of space and alphabetical groups in the Arab alphabet.[669]

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[666] Ali Uzay Peker, 2009, "*Anadolu Selçuklu Mimari Tasarımını Etkileyen Evren ve Estetik Anlayışı*," (Cosmology andAesthetics in Seljuk Architectural Design in Anatolia] Anadolu Selçuklu Şehirleri ve Uygarlığı Sempozyumu 7-8 Ekim 2008, Bildiriler) Symposium on Anatolian Seljuk Cities and Civilization, Communications, ed. A. Esen, Haşim Karpuz, O. Eravşar (Konya: Selçuklu Belediyesi) p. 93.

[667] Hrabanus Maurus in Ibid, 93.

[668] Abdullah and Khan, 134.

[669] Momeni, K., et al., "Investigating the Symbolic Role of Figures in Contemporary Architecture of Iran, in the Proceedings of the National Congress of Architecture, Culture and Urban Management," 16. Scientific Educational Center Karaj Municipality Office Applications and Architectural Vision, Karaj, 2013.

7.2.2.4. The Symbolism of Number Seven

Most cultures in the world hold certain numbers to be especially significant, even symbolic, and they reflect this in their religions. In the Islamic tradition, the number seven is of particular importance. Abdullah and Khan explain that some of its significance stems from the ancient Sumerian Babylonian civilizations, which identified seven planets and framed seven days of the week around them. And very early among Middle Eastern people, seven became known as a "perfect" number, symbolic of completeness and goodness.[670]

One favorite event/story that is also mentioned in the Quran may be the reason for the popularization of the number seven in Islamic societies; the Miraj, the ascension of the Prophet Muhammad. According to Islamic belief, the Prophet Muhammad ascended into the seven heavens during his lifetime in Jerusalem, either physically or spiritually, and came into direct contact with the Divine.[671]

Legion examples can be cited to show how Muslims strengthen the significance of the number seven in practice and belief. For example, Muslims perform tawaf or circumambulation around the Kaaba seven times. Hell has seven doors, while heaven has eight doors. The fundamental expression of the Muslim faith, the *shahadat,* is composed of seven words in Arabic. There are also seven styles of Arabic calligraphy (*kūfic, dewāni, thuluth, naskh, muḥaqqaq, riqʿa, rayhānī*). Hence, the number seven has great symbolic value as an expression of Muslim belief and the miracles of God.[672]

Consequently, not only the circle symbolizing centrality, heavens, and God, squares symbolizing human existence and the world, octagonal shapes symbolizing eight gates of heaven, or other shapes symbolizing other meanings can not be random; each of them has rich meanings and seems to have correspondences in Islamic cosmology.

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[670] Abdullah and Khan, 133.

[671] Ibid,

[672] Ibid, 134

7.2.3. Floral Ornamentation

Cansever claimed that the Ottoman man displayed a unique character differing from other cultures with his own conception of the world, life philosophy, and the values behind these.[673]

Erzen explains that while in some cultures, reason, and rationality gave a self-confidence that detaches them from nature, in Ottomans, it was different as synesthetic approaches were at stake, opposite to analytical ones. This approach resulted in a set of aesthetic principles in which several senses worked together, and meanings arose not from rational but sensational tendencies, which made him/her feel like part of nature.[674] In this world, nature and culture were not in binary opposition. The work and product of humanity found their meaning in an already designed and perfected environment. In such a world, man is not the master of nature; instead, he is the subject who has to adapt to the perfect natural beauty that was created by God. So indeed, the Topkapı Palace was placed in nature in a harmonic way that adapts well to the existing topography. Minimal manipulation and intervention were the main attitudes towards nature since it was considered to be the reflection of the beauty of God as He is the source of all beauty, and therefore, the beauty of nature is the reflection of His beauty. Hence, nature was almost sacred. [675]

Apart from the sacred position of nature, it was also associated with heaven. As it is known, paradise represents beauty and happiness in almost every culture.

In the Muslim belief system, heaven is thought of as an extraordinarily beautiful garden, which is the promised abode for the Muslims who obey the rules of God. Therefore, it is the ultimate goal and can be considered the zenith of beauty.[676]

Erzen explains that the representations of heaven as the ideal space in mosque interiors are to emulate paradise. In the mature period of Ottoman tile design, there was a rich naturalism that created patterns of flowers, trees, or landscapes. In the tile revetment on the portico wall of Rüstem Paşa mosque, the whole panel is decorated with flowers

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[673] Cansever, 27.
[674] Jale Erzen, *Gardens and Flowers in Ottoman Culture*, 2.
[675] Ibid, 3.
[676] Atasoy, 87.

and trees that show no exact symmetry or repetition like their original existence in nature.[677] (See Figure 7.10).

Figure 7.10 The floral tiles in *Rüstempaşa* Mosque (1553).
Source: Caner Cangul, "Rüstempaşa Camii Çinileri", Photo, (photo, February 8, 2017),
https://www.istanbulium.net/2013/02/rustem-pasa-camii-cinileri.html (accessed December, 2021).

Accordingly, man's contribution is only being the eye and consciousness of nature for the admiration of God. As the floral elements, trees, and landscapes are integral parts of heaven, Muslims and, thus, the Ottomans used these motifs in their mosques as they are considered to be the heavens on the earth (See Figure 7.11).

As heaven can be considered as the peak point of beauty, the Ottomans used these paradisiac motifs not only in the architectural elements but also in the very abstract designs of the carpets, textiles, metal works, and the highly elegant kaftans of the sultans (See Figure 7.12, Figure 7.13 and Figure 7.14). It is possible to observe that both in the interior decorations of mosques or in the Ottoman sultans' elegant kaftans, there is no rigid symmetry or strict order or a sense of completeness in the application of these floral nature motifs. This attitude is due to the fact that the Ottomans did not aim to shape or manage nature. Instead, they adapted to nature in a respectful way

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[677] Erzen, "Aesthetics of Ottoman Culture", 4.

because of the meanings that they embedded in it; it was the creation of God reflecting His Cemāl, beauty.

Figure 7.11 Colorful glasswork in Suleymaniye Mosque having both floral motifs and calligraphy.
Source: José Luiz, "File: Stained glass window at Süleymaniye Mosque.jpg," (photo, September 15, 2011), last edited on November 6, 2020, Wikimedia Commons.
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Stained_glass_window_at_S%C3%BCleymaniye_Mosque.jpg (accessed December 05, 2020).

Figure 7.12 Sultans' Kaftans with floral motifs emulating paradise gardens that symbolize *Beauty of God.*
Source: Palace Art Foundations, "Palace of Gold& Light- Treasures from the Topkapı / İstanbul," Curator: Tülay Artan, (photo, 2000), 115-116.

Figure 7.13 Floral motifs in carpets.
Source: Palace Art Foundations, "Palace of Gold& Light- Treasures from the Topkapı / İstanbul,"
Curator: Tülay Artan, (photo, 2000), 152.

Figure 7.14 Floral motifs in metal works.
Source: Palace Art Foundations, "Palace of Gold& Light- Treasures from the Topkapı / İstanbul,"
Curator: Tülay Artan, (photo, 2000),, "Floral motifs in metal works," (photo, 2000), 171.

7.2.4. The Symbolism of Water

Water is the prominent element that was created by God before the creation of the heavens and the earth. This is stated in the Quran, "*And it is He who created the heavens and the earth in six days, and his Throne was upon water.*"[678] The rain, rivers, and fountains are the types of water mentioned in the Quran to represent God's generosity. The most common of these expressions, "Gardens underneath which rivers flow," is stated more than thirty times in the holy book.

The Quran uses several metaphors using water to symbolize heaven. Therefore, as it has a paradisiac symbolic value, it is an essential element of Islamic design, especially in Islamic gardens.

Water is a powerful symbol of rebirth and quickening, and it is commonly used in Quran:

"And He it is Who sends the winds as heralds of glad tidings, going before His mercy, and we send down pure water from the sky." (Al-Furqan, 48)

"That with it We may give life to dead land, and slake the thirst of things we have created, cattle and men in great numbers." (Al-Furqan, 49)

Likewise, Abdul Latiff et al. underline that by flowing in all parts of heaven, water brings coolness, peace, and soothing thirst. Besides its pleasant sight and sound that give pleasure and comfort to human beings, thus, directing them to a feeling of contemplation, it represents life and mercy.[679]

The authors continue that water is rich in terms of symbolism. They say, "the presence of water in any part of the world would trigger the tranquility and serenity from the inner part of the human heart. It is the essential source of movement in the Islamic garden which is determined by gravity. Therefore, in order to avoid stagnation, it must move continually. Water in motion is tireless and ever-changing, and it brings constant life and interest to the environment. In the Islamic garden, it is exuberant, turbulent, and gushing, with much visual turmoil, yet, it can also be captive and contained, soothing, and quietly gleaming in the sunlight.[680]

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[678] Quran, 11/7.

[679] Zainab Abdul Latiff, Yazid Mohd Yunus and Md Azree Othuman Mydin, "Symbolism and Role of Water in Traditional Islamic Gardens," Research Journal of Fisheries and Hydrobiology 11 no. 3 (2006), https://www.researchgate.net/publication/306017140_Symbolism_and_Role_of_Water_in_Traditional_Islamic_Gardens (accessed April 10, 2019).

[680] Ibid,63

Rabbat further claims that water's fluidity and purity made it an image of the soul. So in the gardens, water forms the symbolic center, the basis of design. It divides the garden into formal sections, flowing through narrow channels, implying, as it did the passage of time, as distinct from the sea, which suggested timelessness and symbol of eternity.[681]

To sum up, water is one of the most crucial elements in Islamic designs due to its rich symbolic value resulting from being a prominent element of heaven. It symbolizes life, rebirth, quickening, peace, serenity, tranquility, constant life, timelessness, and eternity.

7.2.5. The Symbolism of Colours

The color white is believed to symbolize purity and peace. Many Muslims wear the color white when they attend Friday prayers as it is sunnah. The color green has a special place in Islamic belief, and it has been associated with Islam in many countries. It is used in the decorations of mosques, the bindings of the Quran, the silken covers for the graves of Sufi saints, and in the flags of various Muslim countries. There are two different points of view about why green has a special place in Islam. First, it was Prophet Muhammad's favorite color, and he wore a green cloak and turban. Second, it is believed that it symbolizes nature and life, hence the physical manifestation of the Divine. In the Quran, it is said that:

"Those are the ones for whom there are eternal gardens, rivers flowing beneath them. They will be adorned therein with bracelets of gold, and they will be dressed in green garments, made of fine silk and thick silk, reclining therein on couches. Excellent is the reward and beautiful is the Paradise as a resting-place." (Al-Kahf, 31)

Therefore, green is also associated with heaven. It is also known that crusaders avoided using any green in their coats of arms in order not to be mixed mistakenly with Muslim opponents in the heat of battle.[682] All these explanations can enlighten why the flag of the Ottoman Empire was green. (See Figure 7.15)

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[681] Nasser Rabbat, "The Palace of the Lions, Alhambra and the Role of Water in its Conception." In Environmental Design: Journal of the Islamic Environmental Design Research Centre 2, ed., Attilo Petruccioli, 64-73. Rome: Carucci Editions, 1985.
[682] *Ibid, 71*

Figure 7.15 The Flag of the Ottoman Empire.
Source: Deviant Art (DA), "Ottoman Empire Green Flag (Osmanli Yesil Sancak)," (photo, July 13, 2016), https://www.deviantart.com/ottomanpictures/art/Ottoman-Empire-Green-Flag-Osmanli-Yesil-Sancak-621253478 (accessed June 1, 2022).

The color black is considered to be the color of mourning. It is often worn by Shi'a Muslims who mourn the death of Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī, killed at the Battle of *Karbalā*. Although the colour red has no special significance in Islam, it is commonly used on the flags of Muslim countries. (See Figure 7.16). Besides, the Red Crescent is the Muslim equivalent of the Red Cross.[683]

Figure 7.16 Conquest flag of Mehmed II.
(Inscription: "*Surely, We have granted you an open victory*" (Al-Fath, 1).
Source: Fikriyat (FI), "Osmanlı Sancakları ve Anlamları", (photo, September 28, 2018), https://www.fikriyat.com/galeri/tarih/osmanli-sancaklari (accessed June 1, 2022).

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[683] Nasser Rabbat, "The Palace of the Lions, Alhambra and the Role of Water in its Conception." In Environmental Design: *Journal of the Islamic Environmental Design Research Centre* 2, ed., Attilo Petruccioli, 64-73. Rome: Carucci Editions, 1985.

CHAPTER 8

8. AESTHETICAL ANALYSIS OF THE TOPKAPI PALACE

Until this chapter of the dissertation, in order for the aesthetic analysis of the Topkapı Palace to be done correctly, first of all, the meaning of the "palace" as a concept was discussed, the understanding of the palace in the Turkish and Islamic history and later in the Ottomans was emphasized. Thus, it was aimed to make a conceptual clarification. Later, it was aimed at mastering the world of thought and values of the state, and in this context, Islamic codes in the world of Ottoman thought and mentality were highlighted. Then, the formation of Islamic aesthetics and its visual language was framed. From this chapter onwards, it is aimed to reveal the traces of the Ottoman mentality in Topkapı Palace's spatial preferences and organization. In this context, first of all, the spatial and functional presentation of the palace is made, the construction process and its contribution to the imperial image to be created are included, then it is discussed where the Topkapı Palace is located in the context of other palace traditions, and thus broad basic information about the palace is presented. In order to make the aesthetic analysis correctly, it is necessary to have a good command of the visible face and basic information about the palace.

After providing strong basic information for a correct understanding of the palace, the reflection of Ottoman Religious Thought and Sufi Thought on the space will be examined based on the basic twenty-one concepts of Islamic aesthetics, and the reflections of these concepts in the palace spaces will be traced. These analyzes will also shed light on Ottoman Political Thought and Ottoman Philosophical Thought, as the Ottoman thought system is a whole that can be considered consistent within itself. However, when it comes to the Ottoman Empire, all kinds of spatial preferences are not related to Ottoman Religious/Sufi Thought, as the state was not governed entirely by religious principles, and everything could not be explained by religion. Therefore, analyses that fall outside this scope are presented in a separate chapter. Another

theoretical framework deemed appropriate for the analysis of the palace, the aesthetics of the household in Islam, aims to deepen the aesthetic analysis of the palace. It is aimed that the analyzes and comments made in this chapter constitute the main contribution of the dissertation.

8.1. The Topkapı Palace: Description

Topkapı Palace consists of four courtyards surrounded by *Sūr-ı Sultānī* as the original Palace settlement (See Figure 1.7). The First Courtyard, which is bounded by the topography, between the main entrance gate of the palace, *Bāb-ı Humāyūn* (The Imperial Gate) and *Bābusselām* (Middle Gate), is a waiting place in its original use, while the Second Courtyard, entered by *Bābusselām* in the palace complex, is a courtyard surrounded by high hearths, with introverted planned formal functioning structures in the 16th century and later on. In the palace complex, *Bābusselām*, is a courtyard surrounded by high walls and inwardly planned, officially functional buildings. The kitchen block related to courtyard ceremonies and Ḥas Aḥır buildings is arranged around small courtyards connected to the Second Courtyard. Ceremonial events such as *culūs* (enthronement), ceremonies at festivals, distribution of ʿulūfe (service pay), foot council, and traditional events were organized in this courtyard, the last part of the palace in which the public can enter.[684] In these first two courtyards, the architectural effect, apart from the doors, cannot be said to have been studied in detail. The Tower of Justice, which symbolize the existence of the Sultan, is in the background as if they symbolize the expression of the powerful political organization on which the simple appearance of the Second Courtyard is based.

The third courtyard entered by *Bābussaāde* (Gate of Felicity) is the Enderūn section of the palace, which the public cannot enter. The Audience Chamber, where the Sultan accepted the council members and the envoys, was arranged along with the *Bābusselām* at the entrance of the Third Courtyard. The other buildings in this courtyard are pavilion structures that are related to the private life of the Sultan and are shaped with planning principles that open to the courtyard and the exterior. The connection of the Third Courtyard with the Fourth Courtyard terrace and gardens at

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[684] Uzunçarşılı, "*Osmanlı Devletinin Saray Teşkilatı*", 9-16.

different levels was not provided by door structures but by two steps with stairs and slopes. Since this part of the original palace settlement in the inner castle form has lost its original form, it is difficult to suggest anything without archaeological research and archival work.

Located to the northwest of the longitudinal settlement of the Topkapı Palace in the north-south direction, the *Ḥarem* consists of two sections: The *Ḥarem-i Humāyūn* where the Sultan lived and the *Ḥarem* apartments where the palace women lived.

The function diagram of the Topkapı Palace in the context of the courtyard system shows a linear feature. This linear index, which will be the basis for the typological description of the layout, is arranged in practice with slightly shifted axles from one another. The Topkapı Palace, which has a monumental appearance in its position and dimensions, is in a hierarchy of successive door structures and courtyards from general to special, from monumental to the human dimension.[685] (See Figure 8.1).

8.2. Construction and Creation of an Imperial Image

The conquest of Constantinople had given rise to the ambition of transforming the ruined city, which Mehmed II maintained during his lifetime, back into its former status, that is, the capital of a world empire.[686] After the conquest (1453), when he first entered Constantinople, he first visited Hagia Sophia and then the Great Palace of the Byzantine Empire, located in a region close to it (See Figure 8.2).[687] As he did not repair the now-ruined Great Palace built by Emperor Constantine in Horse Square, there was no attempt to use the Blakhernai Palace near the Golden Horn, where the Byzantine rulers moved in the 11th century. However, when he saw it, he had the fascinating Hagia Sophia transformed into a mosque of *Selāṭīn* (mosques built by Ottoman sultans), and after less than a month in the city he conquered, he returned to

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[685] Mualla Anhegger, *Topkapı Sarayı'nda Padişah Evi (Harem)* (İstanbul: Sandoz Kültür Press, 1986), 2.

[686] Çiğdem Kafescioğlu, "The Cambridge History of Turkey, 2: The Ottoman Empire as a World Power:1453-1603," ed., Suraiya N. Faroqhi and Kate Fleet (Cambridge University Press, 2013), 19-21.

[687] Gülru Necipoğlu, "From Byzantine Constantinople to Ottoman Konstantiniyye: Creation of a Cosmopolitan Capital and Visual Culture Under Sultan Mehmed II., From Byzantion to Istanbul-8000 years of a Capital," (2010): 263, https://www.academia.edu/42026186/From_Byzantine_Constantinople_to_Ottoman_Konstantiniyye_Creation_of_a_Cosmopolitan_Capital_and_Visual_Culture_Under_Sultan_Mehmed_II.

Figure 8.1 Model of the Topkapı Palace showing functional floor plan.

254

the newly completed Palace in Edirne, which was still the Ottoman capital at the time, with plans to restore the ruined city to the glory it had experienced in the Golden Age of the Byzantine Empire and to make it his own capital.[688]
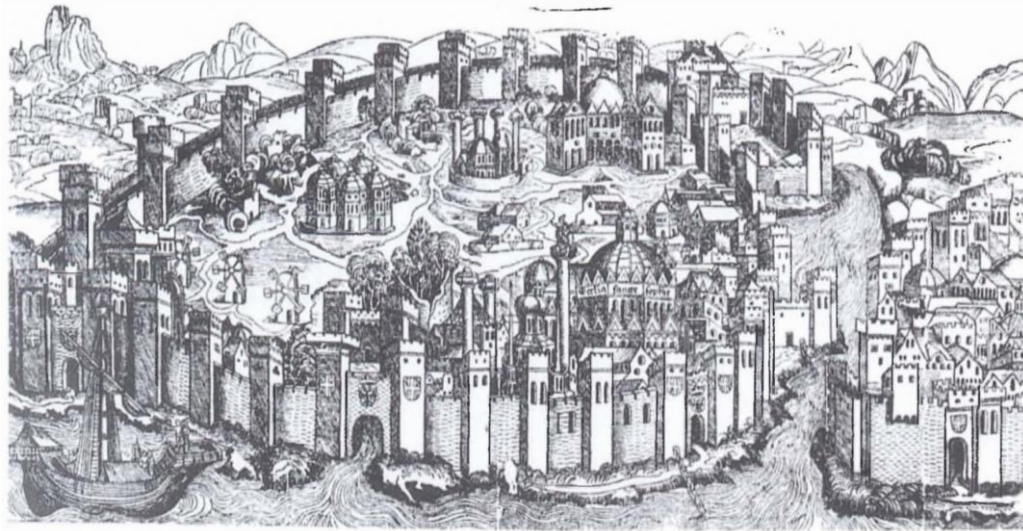
Figure 8.2 View of Byzantine Constantinople.
Source: Gülru Necipoğlu, "*Constantinople"* in Architecture, Ceromonial and Power, (drawing, 2007), 4.

The following year, Fatih built a palace in the place of the monastery on the site of the Forum Tauri of Emperor Theodosius I, where the headquarters of Istanbul University is located today. The contemporary Greek historian Kritovoulos of Imbros, who dedicated his work to Mehmed II, said that Mehmed II had come back to the city about a year after he went to Edirne Palace and ordered a palace to be built and that he stayed in the city only to inspect the buildings being built, as quickly as possible. Also, he gave orders about the buildings and the work to be done about the new ones. By 1455, the Sultan had found the palace successfully finished, and he had shown his satisfaction with the works with generous gifts.[689]

The contemporary chronicler, Tursun Beg, said that the first palace built in Istanbul had a well-preserved harem, beautiful apartments, and pavilions for the Sultan and his inner inhabitants, rooms suitable for official negotiations and hunting grounds. Giovanni Maria Angiolello, who lived in this palace between 1474 and 1481, confirmed this description, and Giovantonio Menanivo, who lived in the Ottoman

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[688] Ibid.

[689] Kritovoulos, *History of Mehmed the Conqueror (1451-1467)*, trans. Charles Riggs, (Princeton, 1954), 140.

palace between 1505 and 1514, said that there were 25 different structures inside the palace. He also stated that there were ostriches, peacocks, and other exotic birds in the garden and that the outer wall had a length of 2 miles, contrary to popular belief. Mehmed II resided in this palace during his time in Istanbul until the New Palace was built. After the transition of the Sultan to the New Palace, this Old Palace was given to the use of the Enderūn people until the period of Suleyman I. According to 16th-century archive documents, it was used by the families of deceased Sultans and their retainers.

Shortly after this palace was finished, Mehmed II decided to build a new palace. After the construction of this palace, known as the Topkapı Palace, which was called *Sarāy-ı Cedīd-i Āmire* or the New Imperial Palace until the 19th century in the Ottoman sources, the palace at Theodosius Forum was called *Sarāy-ı Atīk* or Eski Saray. For this new project, Mehmed II had chosen a Byzantine acropolis, which the people called *zeytunluk*, but partially turned into a residential area and spread over an area of 592,600 square meters.

This area was chosen after consulting with engineers and consultants who traveled to other countries, saw the palaces of many rulers, checked whether the area was sufficiently wetland, and researched the construction costs.[690]

Bidlīsī, who wrote his history in the early sixteenth century, indicates that other preparations were additionally made for the construction of the palace in the selected area. After the Sultan bought the land he needed from Muslims and non-Muslims, he ordered that the foundations be corrected, and a series of terraces were built to cover the retaining walls of the old acropolis on the steep slope descending from the hill to the sea. This terracing work is also seen in the maps of Istanbul published by Giovanni Andrea Vavassore and Wilhelm Dilich.[691]

The Main Palace was built on the highest area on the ridge of the hill. Starting from the Hagia Sophia Mosque and extending to Sarayburnu from the main gate, three consecutive courtyards formed the entire palace. The Court of Justice (*Dīwān-ı Adl*) and Sultan's private apartment (*Dāru'l-Ḥilāfe*) were located in the second and third

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[690] Ibid, 149.
[691] Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial and Power*, 29-30.

courtyards. The inner center of the palace, *Enderūn,* was surrounded by gardens filled with pavilions. After the construction of the buildings and gardens, The Imperial Gate (*Bāb-ı Humāyūn*), which had a monumental gate and an outer wall, was built. It is stated in the important documents that the construction of this main gate was completed between November and December 888 Ramadan (November 1478). When the outer wall was finished, an additional forecourt was formed with this wall to the palace's second and third courtyards, which included administration and residential buildings. In time, the palace complex was formed by three consecutive courtyards, a hanging garden adjacent to the third courtyard, and an outer garden surrounded by walls with pavilions, which were opened to each other by three main gates. The first two of these courtyards were reserved for the administration buildings and the foreign services of the courtiers, who arranged Sultan's relations with the outside world. The Third Door separated the public exterior from the private interior. In the third courtyard behind this gate were apartments where the Sultan lived and arranged in two separate sections for men and women. This special section, completely unique to the Sultan, was opened to a small fourth courtyard with hanging gardens and an outer garden with pavilions.[692]

Necipoglu states that the date 1459 given by Kritovoulos can be accepted as the foundation of the whole complex since it is the oldest source. She adds that Evliya Çelebi also read the same date (863/1458-59) in an inscription, which is no longer in place today, on the road of *Bāb-ı Humāyūn*.[693] Kritovoulos says that the Sultan ordered the construction of a mosque in the middle of the city that year that could compete with the largest and most beautiful temples of the region in height, beauty, and size and a palace on the cape of Old Byzantium, which stretched out to the sea, which would be grander than all the previous palaces and would outshine them in appearance, size, cost, and grace. These ambitious projects, representing the religious and administrative power of the Sultan, were part of a plan to "make Istanbul the richest, most powerful and most famous city in all respects" as it was before. Thus, it was intended to strengthen the autocratic image of the Sultan.[694]

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[692] Metin Sözen, *Bir İmparatorluğun Doğuşu: Topkapı* (Istanbul Hurriyet Press, 1998), 20-24.
[693] Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial and Power*, 32.
[694] Kritovoulos, 140.

In the chapter in which he describes the year 1460, Kritovoulos states:

> *When the Sultan came to Constantinople and rested a little, he turned his attention to the situation of his country and to order and repair everything on his side, especially to the things related to his palace (…). He enjoyed the construction of the buildings he built in his name -the mosque and the palace. He was interested not only in the necessary materials but also in the elaborate collection of the most expensive and least available ones. He invited the best workers from everywhere, bricklayers, stonemasons, carpenters, and people experienced and expert in this kind of work. The Sultan built magnificent and spectacular buildings that would compete with the greatest and most superior structures of the past in all respects. For this reason, he had to observe very carefully the workers who would work in their buildings and the qualities of the materials to be used. On the other hand, he was also busy with big expenses and payments. There were many foremen to supervise these jobs who were extraordinarily knowledgeable and experienced in such matters. He was not content with the existence of these people, but he himself often supervised the work, and he did everything very ambitiously and with great appreciation in a way that was completely worthy of the ruler. His attitude was always like this.[695]*

According to Kritovoulos, the first few years of work on the palace were spent in preparation for this enormous structure, such as recruiting skilled and competent craftsmen and creating the project. After choosing the ideal location for the palace, the first construction plan of Topkapı Palace can be said to be divided into two main phases: the Second Courtyard with administrative functions, completed between 1459 and 1468, and the Third Courtyard with buildings related to Sultan's private life are in the first phase, while the outer walls (land walls) and the outer garden mansions, completed between 1470 and 1478, constitute the second phase.[696] The first two-part scheme is the continuation of the palaces of Mehmed II and Murad II in Edirne, where there is no first courtyard. Topkapı Palace, which became a three-part with the

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[695] Ibid,

[696] Ekrem Hakkı Ayverdi, *Fatih Devri Mimarisi* (İstanbul: İstanbul Fetih Derneği Neşriyatı, 1953), 294.

completion of the outer walls in 1478, consists of a system of courtyards that follow each other in a hierarchical order from general to private in accordance with the operating scheme determined in Mehmed II's *Ḳānūn-nāme,* which was formed between 1477 and 1481.[697]

Mehmed II's New Palace, the first of which has two laws relating to the organization and functioning of the state and the other to the law of selfhood, was built in the same period as the provision of central administration in the state structure and the expansion of the borders of the country.[698] Although the population of the palace in this period was recorded to be 726 people, it is seen that he planned the original layout of the Topkapı Palace according to the courtyard layout and ceremonial functioning of a comprehensive Imperial Palace.[699]

An important question about Topkapı Palace is why it is necessary to build a new one so soon after the completion of the magnificent palace. Ayverdi claimed that the Sultan left the Old Palace because its position prevented expansion.[700] Metin Sözen suggested that the construction of this first palace was completed in as little as a year and that the necessary environment for state affairs could not be provided, thus necessitating a new and more comprehensive palace structure.[701] Tekindağ asserted that the palace was built as a fortified fortress against a Venetian naval attack[702], while Fanny Davis wrote that the palace location was chosen to make it a fortress "capable of protecting the whole city."[703] On the other hand, Kuban made some inferences about the reason for the construction of the area selected from the characteristics of the palace. According to Kuban, considering the general purpose of the construction of the city walls, it can be argued that the same purpose was effective in the selection of the site of the palace complex, where a great empire would be ruled in the coming centuries. This area, which is located at the most strategic point on the Bosphorus and where all three seas can be kept under control, is certainly the place where the attacks from both land and sea can be observed best. In addition, the fact that the main settlement of the palace

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[697] Ahmet Şimşirgil, *Bir Müstakil Dünya: Topkapı* (Timaş Publishers, 2016), 14-17.

[698] Ibid, 41.

[699] Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial and Power,* 8.

[700] Ayverdi, 17.

[701] Sözen, *Devletin Evi Saray*, 9.

[702] Tekindağ, Ş. in Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial and Power* ,34.

[703] Fanny Davis, *The Palace of Topkapı in Istanbul* (NewYork, 1970), 128.

was established at the highest point of topography in the entire area, the presence of gardens in the descending topographic slope around the palace buildings, and the presence of walls in the flat area make the presence of a defensive purpose in architectural settlement planning.[704]

However, it is clear that the construction of the palace had much deeper reasons and meanings if examined in detail. Contrary to what Ayverdi claimed, the Old Palace was built on flat and wide land, easily spread out. Even after the construction of the Bayezid Complex (1507-07) and then Suleymaniye Complex (1550-1557) on the Old Palace site, its width surprised the 16th-century historian Lokman.[705] Although Sözen's claim is partly true, it was also unlikely that this was the main reason since the width of the palace grounds was in line with the new conditions that could develop in the process. In fact, problems of expansion and construction were much more relevant to the New Palace, where much of its land had to be supported by terraces and underground vaults. The claim that the New Palace was built as a military fortification by the Conqueror, who felt that the Naval War with Venice would begin from 1463 to 1478, is also unlikely. Necipoğlu first states that this possibility is not possible when looking at the construction process that is going on and that the distinguishing feature of all the other castle constructions of the Sultan is that they are finished quickly; most of them started and finished within a year. Moreover, the Palace project was started before the Venetian war broke out, while the outer castle walls were added in January 1479 while peace talks were underway with the Venetians. In addition, the castles built in Çanakkale (*Dardanelles*) in 1461-1462 and the ones built in the Bosphorus before also made a castle in Istanbul unnecessary. Given Angiolello's rhetoric that the four castles, with the cannons placed in front of the city walls and rising in the middle of the sea, protect these four castles so much that even an uninformed bird cannot fly, it was clear that there was no need to build the New Palace as a fortress. If the Sultan and his retinue needed shelter against possible danger, the Yedikule next to Altınkapı, which was built by Mehmed II together with the Old Palace, was appropriate. Reflecting on the ideal Italian design principles, this star-shaped castle contained luxuriously

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[704] Doğan Kuban, *Architecture of the Ottoman Period, The Art and Architecture of Turkey*, ed., E. Akurgal, (New York, 1980), 137-169.

[705] Lokman bin Seyyid Hüseyin, "Hünername 2", in Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial and Power* 34.

furnished apartments that could be taken refuge in case of an attack involving the Sultan's treasures.[706] According to the late 16th-century historian Muṣṭafā Ālī, the New Palace was built to declare Sultan's fearless self-confidence, let alone for defense purposes. There were rumors that Christians of Galata (*Pera*) had Fatih built Yedikule and the Old Palace surrounded by crowded city centers because they were afraid of a crusade attack.[707] Built in a hurry, airy mansions justified Muṣṭafā Ālī's statement. Noting that the elite palace complex may be a shelter and defense, it emphasizes that the outer walls of the palace are distinctive from the locality of the people.

The ambitious construction program of the palace first reflected the influence of the Sultan's new image of reign as Constantinople returned to the Ottoman capital. Kafesçioğlu emphasizes that unlike his ancestors, who ruled only a small principality, Mehmed II (Figure 8.3) ruled over an empire extending from the Balkans to Eastern Anatolia, and there was no limit to his goals. With his conquests, he abolished anyone who could claim rights in the rival Muslim principalities and the Byzantine throne. The self-esteem of his achievements led him to regard himself as the heir to the Eastern Roman Empire and his desire to rule the entire world. The conquest of Constantinople provided Mehmed II with new claims as heir to the Byzantine Empire and placed the Ottoman State in the European political orbit. The Europeans strongly believed that Mehmed II wanted to conquer Italy in order to resurrect the Roman Empire and reunify Constantinople and Rome, to consolidate the Mediterranean basin under a single rule. This passion reached its peak with the conquest of Otranto in 1480. The conquest led the Sultan to be open to cultural developments in contemporary Italian palaces and made him one of the most important personalities of the Renaissance.[708]

Necipoğlu states that European historians, diplomats, and humanists were aware of his passion for the West. Babinger quoted that the French diplomat Philippe de Commynes regarded him as the greatest ruler to have reigned in the last century, placing him in line with Louis XI and Matthias Corvinus as one of the three wisest and most valiant monarchs of the age. In the cosmopolitan palace of Fatih, scientists and Eastern and

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[706] Ibid,

[707] Gelibolulu Mustafa Âlî , Nushatu's-Selatin, in Necipoğlu, *Architecture*, *Ceremonial and Power,* 34.

[708] Kafescioğlu, 20.

Western artists found tolerant patronage and a working environment reflecting Sultan's rich tastes and the worldview that befits the universe empire he wanted to create.[709]

Figure 8.3 The portrait of Sultan Mehmed II.
Source: Mehmet Selim Sırrı, "Fatih Sultan Mehmed Han'ın Portresi", July 2009. Yedikıta. https://yedikita.com.tr/fatih-sultan-mehmed-hanin-portresi/ (accessed June 3, 2022).

The human scientist Lauro Quirini claimed that Sultan Mehmed wanted to rule the whole world and all peoples, to be recognized as a second Alexander, and claimed that he had acquired the habit of listening to Arrianus every day, which is thought to be the most accurate description of Alexander's life. The Italian historian Giacomo Languschi said that two Italian courtiers read to him the books of Herodotus, Diogenes, Livius, Quintus, and Curtius when he got tired of listening to Alexander. He added that Mehmed II intended to create a united world empire under a single religion and Ruler, reversing his goal of moving from West to East, in line with Alexander's conquests.[710]

The ideal of being the conqueror of the world led Mehmed II to develop an imperial image different from his ancestors. Indeed, the palace historian Bidlīsī points to the increase in majesty and splendor of the reign. According to Bidlīsī, besides the Sultan's Noble glory, gold and silver spent on the Old Palace are not as important as a straw.

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[709] Necipoğlu, *From Byzantine*, 264.

[710] Süheyl Ünver, *İlim ve Sanat Tarihimizde Fatih Sultan Mehmed* (İstanbul: İstanbul University Publisher, 1953), 8-12.

Although the Old Palace was large enough to accommodate the increasing number of courtiers and officials, it was not enough to meet the constant wonder of grandeur, which goes along with the dreams of the Sultan. Neşrī[711] also confirmed that Sultan needed a new Palace because the Old Palace did not satisfy the Sultan and said that he moved the throne center to a place called "*Olive Grove*" because it did not please him.[712]

For the palace, a very special part of the city that sees the Sea of Marmara and the Bosphorus at the same time was selected. Starting right next to the Hagia Sophia Mosque and occupying the Sarayburnu Peninsula, the place that Mehmed II selected was a site that oversees the three seas (See Figure 8.4). The cape, including the ancient Acropolis, was covered with large olive groves and trees in every period of Byzantium.[713] According to Aslanapa, the Topkapı Palace, which is best placed on the land, is unique. The first construction of the palace, which spans an area of about 700,000 square meters from the side of the Hagia Sophia Mosque to Sarayburnu, began during the reign of the Mehmed II, and a large group of buildings was formed with the structures added by each Sultan. The triangular area was selected from a very special part of the city that can oversee the Marmara and the Bosphorus at the same time. This hill of the city, which is an olive grove area, was surrounded by a 1400-meter-long wall. This fortification wall, known as *Sūr-ı Sulṭānī*, built in 1478, joined the old Byzantine city walls surrounding the city along the Golden Horn and Marmara shores. There are large doors on the city walls, such as the Otluk Gate, the Demir Gate, and *Bāb-ı Humāyūn* (*Imperial Gate*), and there are five side doors between them. The main entrance of the palace is *Bāb-ı Humāyūn*. When one of the buildings on the coast, Topkapı Coast Palace, burned in 1863, the structure bearing the name *Sarāy-ı Cedīd* or the New Imperial Palace was called the Topkapı Palace.[714]

The selection of the famous Acropolis of ancient Byzantium for the location of the New Palace has very distinctive symbolic meanings. In *Kal'atü's Sultâniyye*, one of

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[711] Neşrī is the pseudonym of an Ottoman historian and politician whose identity is not known exactly. It is known that he witnessed the reigns of Mehmed II and Suleyman I.

[712] Önder Küçükerman, Sanayi ve Teknoloji Yarışında *Bir İmparatorluk İki Saray: Topkapı ve Dolmabahçe* (İstanbul: YKY, 2007), 26-28.

[713] Necdet Sakaoğlu, *Tarihi, Mekanları, Kitabeleri ve Anıları ile Saray-ı Humāyūn: Topkapı Sarayı* (İstanbul: Denizbank Publishers, 2002), 16-20.

[714] Oktay Aslanapa, *Osmanlı Devri Mimarisi* (İstanbul İnkılap Kitabevi, 1986), 29.

Diegesis's adaptations for Mehmed II in 1480, it was emphasized that the New Palace was built on the site of the Byzantine Acropolis, which used to be walled, meticulously guarded, with a magnificent rise next to the ruins of the palace adjacent to Constantinus Hippodrome.[715]

Figure 8.4 Special location of Topkapı Palace.
Source: Nimina," Topkapi Palace," (photo captured from video, n.d.),
https://footage.framepool.com/en/shot/747025032-topkapi-palace-golden-horn-marmara-sea-bosporus
(accessed June 4, 2021).

Bidlīsī and Tursun Beg describe the Byzantine acropolis, on which the palace was built, on the tip of the peninsula (*berreyn ü bahreyne müşrif*), which extends into the water at the junction of the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea and overlooks two continents and two seas.[716] In the inscription of *Bāb-ı Humāyūn*, Mehmed II is described as "*sultan'ül- berreyn ve'l bahreyn*," the sultan of two lands and two seas, and this shows that he uses this magnificent area as a symbol of world sovereignty.[717] A century later, the Venetian ambassador Constantino Garzoni still emphasized the strategic and symbolic advantages of the land of Topkapı with the following words: ... everyone agrees that this land is the most beautiful, most convenient and miraculous place in the world because it looks like a key to rising along the coast of Europe, to the side of Asia and unlock these countries, and has a natural dominance of both continents; and dominates both of these seas since it is on the Bosphorus in a way that

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[715] Necipoğlu, *Architecture*, *Ceremonial and Power*, 137.
[716] Ibid, 37.
[717] Ortaylı, *Osmanlı Sarayında*, 25.

easily prevents the transition from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean. The French explorer Tavernier wrote in 1675 that Sultan could see both Asia and Europe, which reflects the domination from his Palace.[718] Diegesis, on the other hand, claims that there was once a mansion built by the ruler, the Prophet Solomon, surrounded by gardens, and further glorifies the Sultan and the divine connotations of the palace.[719]

It was unthinkable for a sultan who took such care in choosing the location of his palace not to be included in the construction program. It is also known that Mehmed II paid special attention to architectural projects. Indeed, Tursun Beg narrated that the construction program of the palace was determined by the Sultan himself: "*izdiyâd-ı mevâdd-ı saltanatı iktizâsınca*," the New Palace was built as the inspiration of the architecture of Sultan's own mind in order to fulfill the requirements of the Sultan's "*kendü akl-ı kamili mi'marının*" that is, to meet the increasing splendor of his reign. While it is known that the plan of Rumelihisarı (*Rumelian Fortress*) was drawn by the Sultan, it is conceivable that Sultan Mehmed himself designed his own palace, although it is unknown to what extent. This side of the New Palace, which was conceived in the mind of its owner and then made perfectly real by competent and skilled craftsmen, is extraordinary.[720] It is stated that Mehmed II managed his palace with zeal and supervised it with the help of expert journeymen. It is also reported that the frequent handing out of grants to particularly good and hard-working workers also encouraged them to finish the structure at a record-breaking time.[721]

According to Kemālpaşazāde, Ḳıvāmī, and Kritovoulos, another issue that supports Mehmed II's interest in the construction process is related to the history of the palace's construction. Because the most intense production periods coincided with the mid-1460s and 1470s, during which Mehmed II abandoned his campaigns and devoted himself to cultural affairs and planning the organization of the state.[722] As an outward-oriented, visionary, and merit-oriented personality, he invited masters from various

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[718] Jean Baptiste Tavernier, *Nouvelle Relation de l'Intérieur du Serrail du Grand Seigneur*. Paris, 1675. in Sakaoğlu, *Tarihi, Mekanları, Kitabeleri,* 20.

[719] Ibid,

[720] Tursun Beg, *The History of Mehmet the Conqueror*. Fascimile with commentary by Halil inalcık ve Rhoads Murphey, (Minneapolis and Chicago, 1978), 44.

[721] Sakaoğlu, *Tarihi, Mekanları, Kitabeleri,* 31.

[722] Necipoğlu, *From Byzantine*, 263.

countries for his project during these years.[723] Architects and engineers came from Arabic, Persian, and Ottoman (Greek) countries, and Kemālpaşazāde cited the European-style towers in the palace as a reference to European architects.[724] Necipoğlu states that it is common for the Sultan to have consulted Italian architects for his palace, as we know that he applied the principles of Italian architecture in the star-shaped Yedikule.

There is very little information in Ottoman sources about the architects of the Sultan, who cared so much about architectural projects and decorations. The 15th-century historian Rūḥī Edrenevī wrote that the journeyman in charge of the complex was Sinan Usta and that he may have worked in the palace until 1471, the date of his death. He also stated that another artist, named Müslihuddin Usta had built Fatih's palace in Tunca in Edirne and his Old Palace in Istanbul. According to Necipoglu, it is not realistic that the Sultan commissioned the architect of these palaces for his new palace, which is obvious that he did not satisfy himself. According to Rūḥī, the construction of the New Palace in Istanbul, including the mansions and the surrounding *Ḳalʿatü's-Sulṭāniyye*, was led by a master of science and architecture, Murad Kalfa, who remained in the service of Sultan Mehmed II for 28 years and was appointed as the chief architect of the palace during the reign of his son Beyazid II.[725] According to Necipoglu, it is this wise master who transferred his architectural dreams for the Palace of Sultan Mehmed to the defined instructions that the masters can fulfill and who is said to have built many mosques and castles, about whom we do not know much. However, this joint work and cooperation were dominated by the Sultan, who held all the reins and was marked by his own special appreciation.[726]

A very important feature of the architecture of Mehmed II's Palace was that it was designed as a structure that coincided exactly with the imagination of the Sultan and served the correct transfer of the image of the state center in the world of thought. So much so that the New Palace, which is far from the crowded center of the city,

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[723] Filiz Çağman and Zeren Tanındi, *Portreler* (Istanbul:YKY, 1984), 15: Necipoğlu, *Architecture*, 38: Sözen, *Bir İmparatorluğun Doğuşu,* 22.

[724] Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial and Power,* 43.

[725] Ibid, 46

[726] Ibid,

surrounded on two sides by the sea and on the third by high walls, was designed to provide and reflect the impenetrability of the Sultan.[727]

Bidlīsī wrote that Mehmed II asked Aqqoyunlu Prince Ugurlu Mehmed Mirza, who sought refuge in the Ottoman Palace after the failure of gaining his father's throne, about the splendor and details of the Mamluk Palace in Cairo and the Aqqoyunlu palaces in Tabriz and Isfahan, where he stayed for a while before coming to Istanbul, and that Mirza said that the Sultan's Palace was superior in terms of details and splendor, but his enthusiasm decreased when it came to the palace itself. He said that the reason for this is that the rulers of Iran found it appropriate and even necessary to build palaces outside the city, away from the flock of people; otherwise, they would be open to constant observation and contact, and this would soon wipe out his statuesque. Otherwise, it would not be appropriate for the glorious palaces of the sultans to be located very close to the crowded neighborhoods of ordinary people. The dwellings of the owners of power and ruling should be built in a pleasant area, away from the crowds of the people, and kept away from the public except on special days planned for the distribution of justice. Although it may be thought that the ruler's distancing from the public might be planned with security concerns, Bidlīsī states that this distance is not suitable for the security of the Sultan but because of his holiness. Since this spiritual being, endowed with divine light, could not live among ordinary mortals in the crowded center of the city, it would be fitting that the place where he would live should be a place free of all kinds of dirt and blessed like heaven. Although this dialogue, according to Necipoglu, links Iran to the idea that the ruling class should be far from the people, the main inspiration for this idea should be the impossibility and sanctity of the Byzantine Empire. The reason is that Mehmed Mirza's arrival coincides with Sultan's previous decision to make the New Palace outside the city center. His ideas may, therefore, have only influenced the construction of the outer walls.[728]

Sultan Mehmed formalized the tradition of seclusion, which is a kind of isolation from the people, with the *Kānūn-nāme*. This code of law is a protocol that determines the main officials of the state administration and religious hierarchy, their rank, salary,

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[727] Sözen, *Devletin Evi Saray*, 65.
[728] Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial and Power,* 40.

promotion and punishments, their behavior to the Sultan, and each other, in other words, a dynasty law governing the Ottoman court.[729] During the early stages of his reign, Sultan Mehmed followed the old dynastic traditions by appearing before the courtiers at mass feasts, but it was not mentioned in the *Kānūn-nāme* that the Sultan would appear regularly among the people. On the other hand, it is stated by hierarchical order rules that state leaders and courtiers will celebrate the ruler during the holidays, while it is noted that the Sultan will appear in the court to sit on the throne only twice a year.

The palace architecture was created to work in conjunction with the palace protocol. One of its evidents is the *Arz Odasi* (Audience Chamber). This change in the protocol mentioned above was made at the same time as the construction of the audience chamber in the third courtyard. This building, which was an innovation brought to the palace architecture by the Sultan, was used by the leading *diwān* members to supply important state affairs to the Sultan. Mehmed II said in his *Kānūn-nāme* that: "*First, let an Audience Chamber be built. Let myself sit behind the curtains and present my viziers, soldiers, bookkeepers, and retinue four days a week.*" Thus, the Audience Chamber was used as a means of further separating the Sultan from the people, making it a privilege by saying that only high-ranking officials could come to his presence on a regular basis. Government officials, who were formerly met in the open in the second courtyard, could then talk in the private room in the third courtyard.[730]

Although Sultan Mehmed no longer attended the ceremonies in the second courtyard, he had a caged window opened to the diwān, where he would sit behind the scenes and watch the diwān meetings without being seen. It is emphasized that the ceremony of observing the works of diwān through a caged window was constructed to ensure that the position of the Sultan was always felt and that the foundations of the rule were strengthened. The cage enabled the unseen but omniscient ruler to check how the officers of the *Diwān-ı Humāyūn* (Imperial Council) were doing their jobs and whether the reports they submitted in the supply room were accurate.[731] With its well-established imperial iconography, this ceremonial window was reminiscent of the ones

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[729] Ortaylı, *Osmanlı Sarayında*, 51.
[730] Şimşirgil, 15.
[731] Ortaylı, *Osmanlı Sarayında*, 85.

used in the domed gatehouses of Byzantine, Abbasid, and Fatimid Palaces.[732] It inscribed Sultan's invisible gaze on the facade of the Imperial Gate (*Bāb-ı Humāyūn*), thus implying his symbolic presence even when he was absent.[733]

Sultan Mehmed's caged *Diwān-ḫāne* in the second courtyard and the Audience Chamber in the third courtyard consisted of two main structures in which the palace protocol stated in the *Kānūn-nāme* was applied. The Second Courtyard, which was entered by *Bābusselām* (Gate of Salutation), was the most important courtyard in terms of the function of the palace, surrounded by walls on four fronts. As *Kānūn-nāme* before, the buildings required by the palace functioning, determined by the Fatih's *Kānūn-nāme* were placed in the layout of Edirne Palace Regiment Square. It was described by Kritovoulos as the contemporary of Fatih that on the right side of the courtyard, there were the kitchens separated from the Second Courtyard by a wall, which are named *Ḫāṣ Aḫırlar* (Imperial Stables), separated from the courtyard by a wall on the left, followed by the Tower, *Ḳubbealtı* (Imperial Council) building, and porticoes.[734]

In the second courtyard, the only space for the use of the sultan was the "throne site," which was created in front of the *Bābussaāde* (Gate of Felicity) with expanded portico eaves. After entering *Bāb-ı Humāyūn* with a parade to the first courtyard, which was not present in the Ottoman palaces before Topkapı Palace, the statesmen, and courtiers would leave their horses in front of the second gate and wait here when necessary. The envoys were accepted by the grand vizier and other diwān members in the Second Courtyard, and then they were entertained at banquet tables prepared in the kitchens located in the same courtyard. After the feast, they were allowed to meet the Sultan in the Audience Chamber. The Third Courtyard, which would not allow entering into the palace, was the courtyard of the Fatih Pavilion, the Bath and *Has Room* (Privy Chamber), the *Enderūn* School, Ward, and Masjid regarding the private life outside the Audience Chamber, where the Sultan accepted the grand viziers and ambassadors. The Fourth Courtyard and Towers and the *Ḥarem* settlement were the architectural elements of the foundation scheme of the Topkapı Palace during the period of Mehmed

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[732] Necipoğlu, *Framing the Gaze in Ottoman*, 304.

[733] Ibid,

[734] Uzunçarşılı, 984.

II. All these structures contributed formally to functional processing based on the system of courtyard ceremonies.[735]

The construction of the New Palace and the writing of the *Kānūn-nāme* took place during the period of empire-building and centralization of power, culminating in the image of the New Sultan conceived by Mehmed II. The construction of the outer wall separating the palace from the city, the Audience Chamber separating the ruler from the servants, and the cage-latticed separating the members of the *Sulṭān-i Dīwān*, naturally brought a stricter distance. He would no longer sit at banquets or appear regularly in public audiences as he used to do. Except for the two religious holidays in which he agreed to give public audiences, he would remain in seclusion, "hidden like a pearl in the depth of the oyster shell," only receiving privileged dignitaries and ambassadors in his private audience hall four times a week.[736] With the absolute proof of the authority of the central government, it was not necessary for the Sultan to prove his autocratic power by regularly going to the courtyard, and it was sufficient for the state administrators and Sultan's troops to offer their allegiance to their distant Rulers twice a year symbolically at the holidays. While this reflected a radical break from the past, it was a powerful symbol of a new era of the Empire.[737]

The ruler's gaze, architecturally framed by grilled windows, view-commanding private kiosks, and belvedere towers signifying his power to see without being seen (or to be seen only as a shadowy silhouette), emphasized the unbridgeable distance between the ruler and the ruled. This master-slave relationship upon which its rigidly centralized organization was based had constituted the major difference between the Ottoman court and its Islamic contemporaries in the east. The Safavid and Mughal rulers could not afford to remain invisible. The privilege of the gaze was not theirs alone. Their more accessible palaces emphasized the reciprocity of the gaze between the ruler and the ruled.[738] To provide spectacular vistas of the surrounding metropolis to its privileged inhabitants and to be viewed as an unreachable aesthetic object became the two central themes informing the design of the palace, in turn.[739]

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[735] Ibid,

[736] Necipoğlu, *Framing the Gaze in Ottoman*, 303-342.

[737] Ibid, 305.

[738] Ibid, 306.

[739] Ibid, 305.

Various rulers who came after Mehmed II had modified it but chose not radically alter its original conception. They tended to protect the New Palace as they adopted the original plan since they considered it as a kind of "*babaevi*" (family home).[740] During the 16th century, the Sultans added new structures to the palace to make room for the growing population and to expand their own structures, but the basic plan formed by Mehmed II remained the same.[741] Although sometimes more monumental buildings were constructed in the three main courtyards, where the relation of one structure to the other was determined by function and arrangement requirements, many of them were rearranged or decorated according to new tastes without changing their functions. Contemporary historians attribute the Topkapı Palace as the work of Mehmed II in its entirety.[742]

Sultan Beyazid II, who ruled between 1481 and 1512 after Mehmed II, did not make major changes to the palace during his reign. The sources mention only the public buildings he built, which were mostly damaged after the earthquake (1509), the outer walls on the seaside, and the repair of several structures in the third courtyard. Apart from these repairs, Beyazid's architectural activities were limited to the few garden mansions he built in three palaces (Edirne Palace, Old Palace, and New Palace) that he inherited from his father.[743]

Sultan Selim I, who spent most of his short reign (1512-1520) on eastern and southeastern expeditions, also had limited contributions to palace architecture. In Topkapı Palace, the biggest change made during Selim I's reign was the conversion of the *Has Oda* (Privy Chamber) to the *Hırka-i Saâdet Dairesi* (Pavilion of the Sacred Relics) for the holy relics brought to Topkapı Palace after the Egyptian expedition. Apart from this, he just built a new seaside mansion in Sarayburnu.[744]

The reign of Suleyman I (1520-1566) was a period in which important expeditions were made in the east, west, and south, great successes were achieved, and at the same time, many buildings in Topkapı Palace took new forms or were rebuilt with a

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[740] Ibid, 303.
[741] Islam Encyclopedia, "Topkapı Sarayı" by Ertuğ.
[742] Ibid, Davis, 128.
[743] Islam Encyclopedia, "Topkapı Sarayı" by Ertuğ.
[744] Ibid,

monumental scale. Sözen says that the most comprehensive renovation and expansion of the New Palace were during this period.[745] This project was realized during the Grand Vizier of Ibrahim Pasha (1523-1536) at a time when the Empire was then well settled and strengthened after the great military victories. During this period, the empire expanded to both East and west and dominated Hungary, Azerbaijan, Mesopotamia, Egypt, most of North Africa, the Black Sea, and the Arabian Peninsula. He could also lay claim to the Islamic caliphate as protector of Holy structures in Makkah, Madinah, and Jerusalem. This period, when the Ottoman political and financial power reached its peak, was an era of splendor in wealth not seen before. Therefore, the present state of the palace, as it was during the reign of Sultan Mehmed II, had to be extensively renovated in order to represent a reign of this magnitude.[746]

The extensive renovation of the New Palace was undertaken by the chief architect Alāaddīn, also known as Acem Ali, under the direction of Ibrahim Pasha. Alāaddin enlarged the service buildings of the first courtyard (1525-1529), built a new outer Treasury and a *Dīwān-ḫāne* adjacent to the Justice Tower, and rebuilt the supply room in the third courtyard, creating a large-scale arrangement. Alāaddīn also expanded the Harem section and added new mansions to the hanging garden next to the third courtyard.

At the end of the reign of Selim II, who ascended the throne after Suleyman I, a great fire broke out again, and although this fire did not affect the inner palace, it almost destroyed the kitchens of the second courtyard. The expansion of the kitchen units and the renovation of the Sultan bath in the *Selamlık* section of the third courtyard was given to the chief architect Sinan.[747]

In the time of Murad III, the successor of Selim II, *Harem* was enlarged and renovated. A new *Has Oda* (Privy Chamber) with a new throne room and his majesty's bath was built, and housing sections and baths were added for the growing population. Apart from these, Sultan Murad had built several new mansions on the beach.[748]

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[745] Sözen, *Devletin Evi Saray*, 75.

[746] Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial and Power*, 49.

[747] Islam Encyclopedia, "Topkapı Sarayı" by Ertuğ.

[748] Ibid,

By the end of the 16th century, these new buildings, built repeatedly in the first courtyard and *Harem* to meet the need arising from the increase in the population of the palace, had given the New Palace its exact form and brought it closer to its present state. The basic buildings built by Sultan Mehmed II were either completely rebuilt or renovated. The section of the *Ḥarem-i Humāyūn* was also moved out of the designated boundaries of the Third Courtyard by the expansion of Ḥarem and the addition of new mansions in the gardens and on the beach.[749]

Just as all these buildings within the Palace were not intended as just ordinary structures when they were first built during the reign of Mehmed II, they were designed to serve the implementation of the palace protocol and to reflect the imagined Imperial image, the architectural changes made after the second half of the 16th century were now mirrors of another way of life in the palace. These architectural changes heralded not only the increasing political influence of women and eunuchs in *Ḥarem* but also the change in the lifestyles of the Sultans. Then the Sultans started to prefer a comfortable life in their palaces to military activities. During the time of Sultan Mehmed, Topkapı Palace served as a seasonal stop where the Sultan and his retinue could rest between the wars, but then it became a permanent residence. The 16th Century Palace, where a growing population used to live, was a very self-sufficient private space, very close to the outside world. The Sultan was also drawn to this spacious and elegant interior.[750]

It is remarkable that Topkapı Palace remained loyal to the original plan set by Mehmed II and preserved its major structures, resisting the changes and major innovations brought about by more than a century. Necipoglu commented that the palace remained the same in general terms, indicating that: "The 16th-century rulers consciously began to represent the continuity of their dynasties by not choosing to completely change the basic order of Fatih's palace and adhering to the main lines of the furnishing rules of this palace. This attitude was an example of respect for the "*Kānūn-ı Kadīm*" (Ottoman Laws), which is the keystone of *Āl-i Osmān's* (Ottoman Dynasty) claim of legitimacy."[751]

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[749] Ortaylı, "*Osmanlı Sarayında Hayat*", 121: Necipoğlu, 54: Sözen, "*Bir İmparatorluğun Doğuşu Topkapı*", 76.
[750] Ibid,
[751] Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial and Power*, 53.

It is clear that Sultan Mehmed, the founder of a palace with a sharp vision, a very wide horizon, and a palace that glorifies the uniqueness of the Ottoman dynasty, thought of Topkapı Palace for the next generation after him. This dilemma can be clearly observed in the *Kānūn-nāme*, which represents a break from the past and allows changes to be made after itself when the time is right while also suggesting the continuation of the tradition:

> *This law is the law of my ancestor and grandfather, and it is even my law. My descendants should also abide by these laws.*
>
> *So much effort was given to order the Sultanate. My descendants, who would come from now on, should work to improve the conditions.*

In parallel with the development of the empire over time, the increasing splendor of the official ceremonies and the monumentalization of the structures that make up the stage for these magnificent displays were, in fact, in accordance with Mehmed II's *Kānūn-nāme* and did not change the structure of the order.

During the reign of Suleyman I, the palace architecture was greatly renovated, and some changes were seen in the palace ceremonies. The main reason for this was that palace protocol and architecture were dependent on each other from the very beginning. During these years, the palace protocol and ceremonies were becoming richer with new details along with its venues so as to attract the attention of foreign diplomats. Tommaso Contarini wrote in 1528, "What I used to see in terms of grandeur cannot be compared to what I see now; now everything is extraordinarily splendid; they also made many beautiful decorations."

In fact, these ceremonies, which were extensions of the palace practices to the city of Istanbul, were demonstrations that transformed the deified Sultan, accompanied by courtiers, rulers, and Janissaries, who were ranked according to their positions in flamboyant clothes, into a symbol of power for the people to watch.[752] As Grabar crystallizes, "the implication in almost all Islamic palaces is that their recognition as monuments of official power lay less in their individual architectural characteristics than in their general presence as walled enclosures, separating the world of power from the world of the common man.[753] The power of palaces in Islamic lands cannot be

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[752] Ibid, 55.
[753] Ibid,

defined according to purely cosmetic levels such as degree of decoration, amounts of expensive materials used, and variations in size. The originality of Islamic architecture of power would be less in its forms than in the breadth of its uses. Topkapı Palace in Istanbul, which bears all Islamic architectural motifs, was still in use at the end of the 19th century. Surrounded by high walls, entered through one major formal gate, and impressively located on a hill over the Bosphorus, it consists of a large number of pavilions, formal as well as private dwellings, reception halls, treasuries, and practical establishments such as kitchens. It was built over the centuries, without formal compositional order but according to a subtler order of ceremonial and practical use. The quality and excitement of the Topkapı, just as in earlier palaces, can only be appreciated from within, from living there and participating in palace activities, not from its forceful impacts on the surrounding world, like Versailles or the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg.[754]

8.3. Palatial Settlement in Anatolian Turkish-Islamic and Islamic Traditions and The Place of the Topkapı Palace

The first Ottoman palace, the Bey Palace in Bursa, was located in the old Byzantine inner castle. We have no knowledge of the layout of the palace scheme and the building style. Among the palace structures related to the later periods, the Old Palace in Edirne, built by Murad I, was a structure arranged without a yard or a garden.[755] The Old Palace was the first palace building built in Istanbul after the conquest. It had two sections surrounded by walls and was organized into groups of buildings.[756] In the Old Palace, which is depicted in G. A. Vavassore's woodwork dated 1572, there are two groups of buildings consisting of domed and roofed buildings, one of which is against the entrance, in the outer section surrounded by walls. After this section, where a relief column and a remnant are also shown, is the inner section surrounded by a wall supported by buttresses. In this section, the entrance of which is not visible, a three-story structure with free-standing buildings is seen (Figure 8.5).[757] The Old Palace in

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[754] Oleg Grabar, *The Architecture of Power: Palaces, Citadels and Fortifications*, in Architecture of the Islamic World, ed., Gerorge Michell (London, 1978), 65–79.
[755] Ayverdi, 295.
[756] Ibid
[757] Uğur Tanyeli, *Anadolu'da Türk Saray*, 41.

Matrakçı[758]'s drawings contains a hexagonal inner section surrounded by a wall in the middle of a rectangular area, which is depicted as a garden and surrounded by a high wall. The entrances of the outer and inner sections are not in the same direction. The buildings in the interior are shown as being positioned consecutively starting from the entrance (Figure 8.6).[759] The Old Palace seen in *Huner-nāme* [760] is described as having two sections in a quadrangular shape separated by a wall. The Palace has only one entrance. The buildings in the outer section are shown in free order, while the buildings in the inner section are shown as structures drawn to the edges of the courtyard with a structure in the center.

The most distinctive feature of the Old Palace, where no differentiation can be indicated to determine the function diagram, is that it has two sections intertwined.[761]
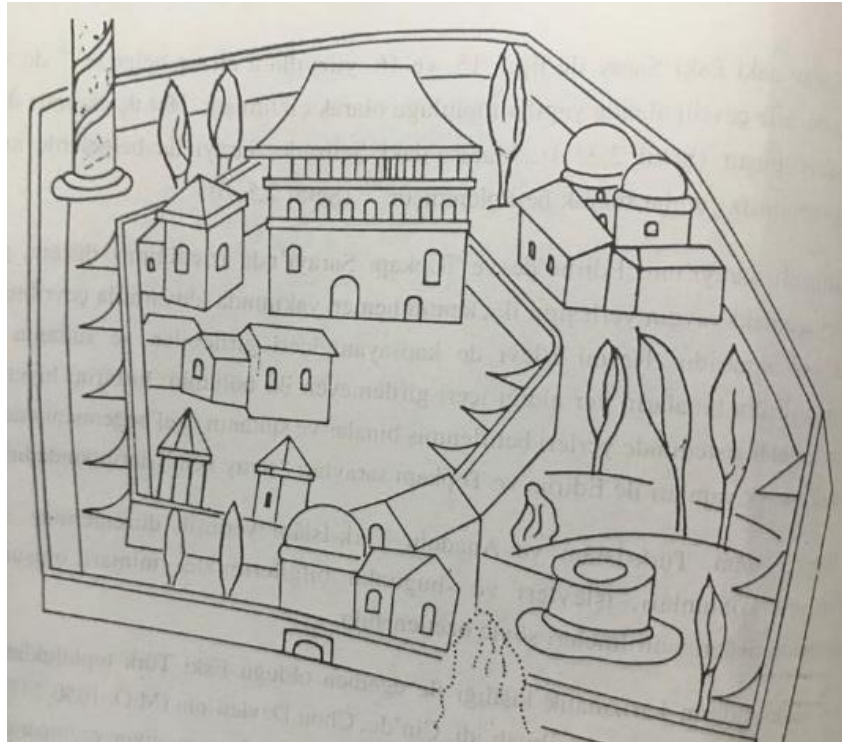
Figure 8.5 Old Palace in Istanbul, G. A. Vavassore.
Source: Nadide Seçkin, *Topkapı Sarayı*, (drawing, 1998), 26.

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[758] *Matrakçı Nasuh* was a 16th century Ottoman statesman, mathematician, teacher, historian, geographer, miniaturist. After being recruited by Ottoman scouts in Rumelia, he was educated in various fields, served several Ottoman sultans, and became a teacher at Enderun School

[759] Ayverdi, 117.

[760] The *Hunernāme* is the largest and one of the finest illustrated works containing historical paintings from the Ottoman classical period, written by Seyyid Lokman in 1580s.

[761] Nadide Seçkin, *Topkapı Sarayı'nın Biçimlenmesine Egemen Olan Tasarım Gelenekleri Üzerine Bir Araştırma* (Ankara: Atatürk Cultural Center Presidency Publications, 1998), 20.
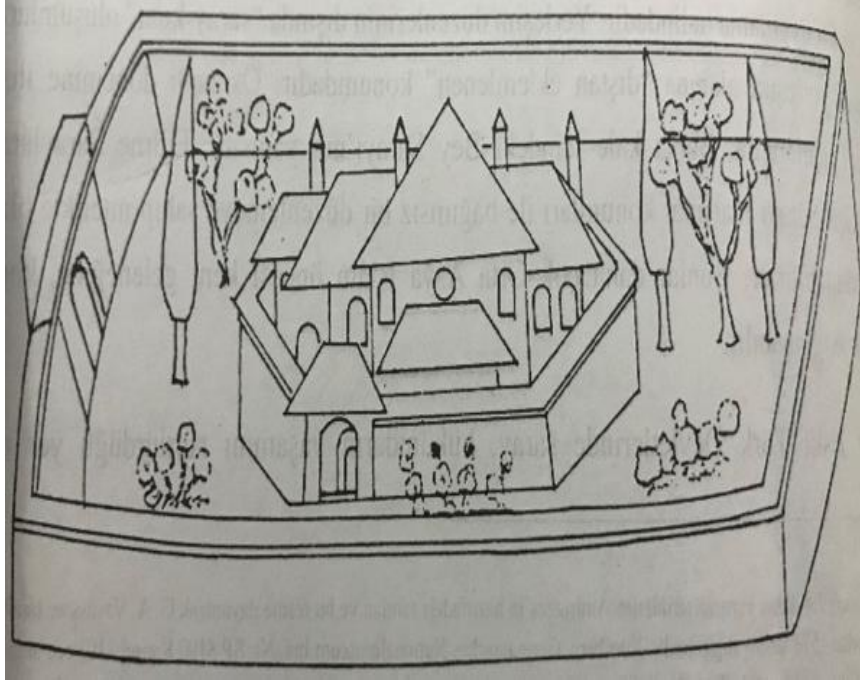
Figure 8.6 Old Palace in Istanbul, Matrakçı.
Source: Nadide Seçkin, Old Palace in Istanbul, (drawing, 1998), 26.

The Şehzade Palace in Manisa and the Edirne Yeni Palace, which were built during Murad II's reign, provide important data on the layout and shaping of the palace ten years prior to the construction of Topkapı Palace. Arseven explains that in Manisa Palace, the first courtyard is seen as providing official duties. The various structures in the garden, which are surrounded by windowless walls parallel to this courtyard, must be related to the private use of *Şehzade*. The quarried units, such as madrasa rooms, around the portico courtyard, which is located in the background of the section entered by a pavilion door on the left side of the settlement, may be places of residence for the women of the palace. With this view, *Şehzade* Palace in Manisa consists of official and private sections that can be entered and not entered. The differentiated position in the capital palace is not seen, especially in the arrangement of the official structures.[762]

The New Imperial Palace in Edirne , whose construction was started by Murad II in 1450 and whose first scheme was completed by Mehmed II in 1454, is located in a large and wooded area to the west of the Tunca River outside the city.[763] Some of the buildings of the palace associated with the courtyard ceremonies system, the *Enderūn-*

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[762] Celal Esad Arseven, *Türk Sanatı Tarihi* (Ankara: MEB Press, 1956), 637-638.
[763] Osman Rıfat, *Edirne Evleri ve Konakları* (İstanbul Erler Press, 1983), 26-35.

i Humāyūn and *Ḥarem-i Humāyūn,* are known to have been built during the reign of Mehmed II. In the 16th century and later, additional construction works continued to the original structure, such as the pavilion structures, the wards of the palace officials, the works related to the plumbing of the palace, and the construction of bridges and roads.[764]

In the New Imperial Palace in Edirne, the courtyards are in the form of smooth quadrangles, while the buildings in these courtyards are placed in a parallel or perpendicular position to the edges of the courtyard. The palace is surrounded by a 3-meter-high wall. Rıfat clarifies that since the First Courtyard entered from *Bāb-ı Humāyūn* in the Topkapı Palace is not available here, the palace is entered directly from *Bābusselām*. The first courtyard, which is also referred to as Regiment Square/Alay Square due to the ceremonial distribution of monthly fees in this courtyard, is the preparer of the second courtyard of Topkapı Palace in terms of the functions and locations of the doors, kitchen complex, and Domed Chamber buildings, except the Diwān Gate in the layout. The second courtyard entered from the first courtyard with *Bābussaāde* is known by the name of Kum Square. This courtyard, which contains the supply room (Audience Chamber) at the axis of *Bābussaāde* and a terrace with pool to its northwest, the seven-story Ḳaṣr-ı Sultan building and the Kum Ḳaṣr, which includes the library, *diwān-ḫāne*, *Taht-ı Humāyūn,* and *Cihānnumā* (pinnacle) sections, is entered from the outside by an Iron Door. The exact equivalent of the Ḳaṣr-ı Sultan building, which contains many functions and multi-storied buildings, which we do not know exactly in its original form, is not found in Topkapı Palace. With today's data, it is known that Fatih Kiosk and Has Oda (Privy Chamber) met some of these functions.[765]

Since the Third Courtyard of the palace is located to the west of the First Courtyard, it is not connected with the Second Courtyard to the north. This courtyard, also called Divān Square, is connected to the First Courtyard by a Diwān Gate. We have no explanatory knowledge of the existence of this courtyard in the 15th and 16th centuries and how it was used in relation to the layout and palace ceremonies.

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[764] Ibid, 23
[765] Ibid, 24.

It is known that *Enderūn* and *Ḥarem* structures were found in the Fourth and Fifth Courtyards in the first diagram of Edirne Palace. Their location in the settlement plan is to the west of Kum Square, which is considered the Second Courtyard, and they are arranged in connection with a single pass. *The Ḥarem* section consists of the *Ḥarem-i Humāyūn* and *Ḥarem* apartments, which are neatly arranged around a rather large courtyard compared to other parts of the palace. The portico layout of the buildings designed to the edges of the courtyard is also a very used architectural arrangement in Topkapı Palace as the preparatory front space at the entrances of the building or the sections where the buildings open to the courtyard. [766]

Topkapı Palace Ḥarem, which took its present appearance approximately 400 years due to reasons such as the desire of a sultan who wants to sit in a new apartment built according to his own tastes and housing of the increasing harem population, should be evaluated under different conditions than Edirne Palace Ḥarem.

The layout of Edirne Palace has a function diagram that closes in on itself (See Figure 8.7). The function scheme of Edirne Palace consisting of side-by-side courtyards, which can be regarded as the preliminary model of Topkapı Palace in the arrangement of the courtyard system and especially of the formal functioning structures, is separate from the function scheme of Topkapı Palace in linear order. In such an analysis, the *Şehzade* Palace in Manisa also shows the characteristic of Edirne Palace.[767]

Despite this difference in the location of the courtyards relative to each other, Manisa, Amasya, Edirne palaces, and Topkapı Palace have common characteristics since they all have two-part layouts consisting of spaces that can be entered and not entered.

The palace at Bakhchysarai in Crimea (See Figure 8.8), as a major Khanate Center, can be considered a regional structure inspired by Topkapı. The boundaries of the first courtyard, which do not match the geometric definition of this, were created with buildings and walls that were brought side by side without any architectural unity between them, as was the case in the later periods at Topkapı Palace. [768]

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[766] Ibid,

[767] Ibid,

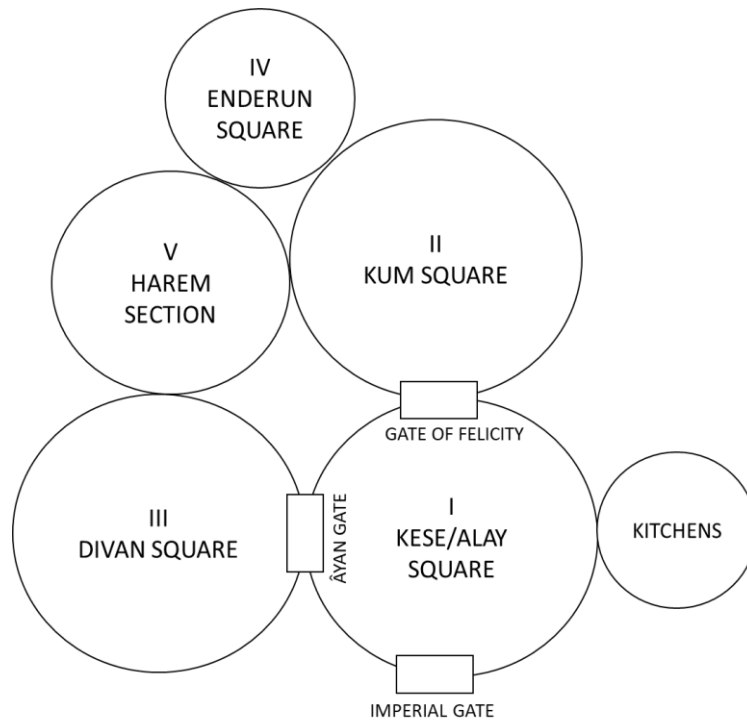[768] Sedat Hakkı Eldem, *Köşkler ve Kasırlar* (Istanbul DGSA Press, 1973), 126-127.

Figure 8.7 Edirne Palace function diagram.
Source: Drawn by Filiz Kölmek (inspired by Seçkin's drawing) "Edirne Palace" (drawing, 2022).
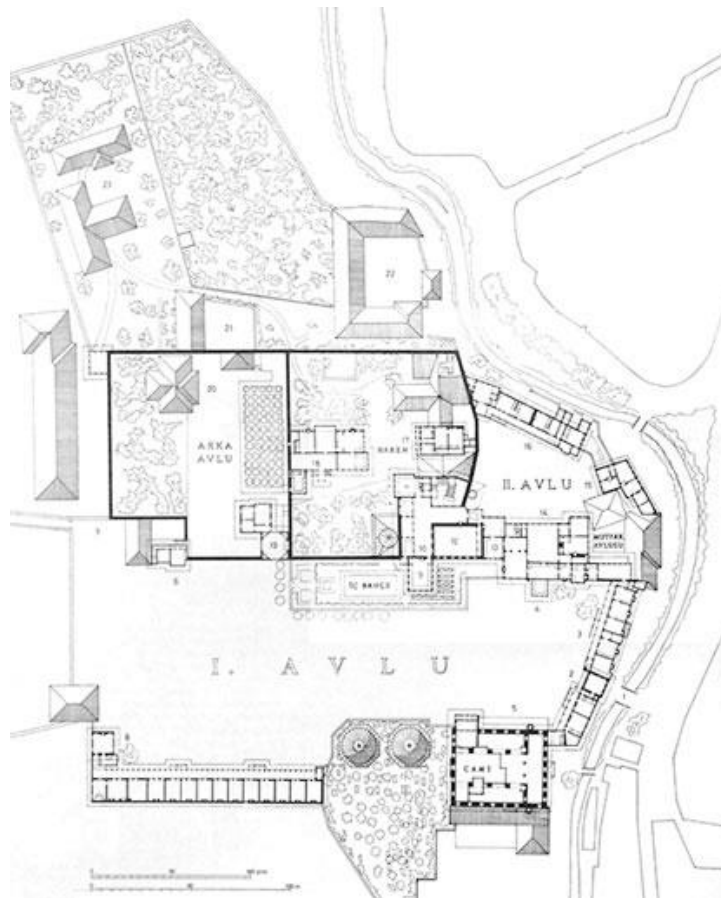

Figure 8.8 Settlement plan of Bakhchysarai, Crimea.
Source: Nadide Seçkin, "Bakhchysarai," (drawing, 1998), 41.

The First Courtyard, also called the Great Courtyard, is arranged in a position to meet the Second, Third, Fourth Courtyards, and *Ḥarem* section. The Second Courtyard, which is entered by a large internal door and is also called the envoys' courtyard, has a Domed Chamber and the wardens and rooms of the officials. The kitchen complex is located in the lower right corner of the Second Courtyard, with buildings placed quite cramped around the kitchen courtyard with a fountain. The *Ḥarem* Courtyard, located next to the Second Courtyard, is entered directly from the Fourth Courtyard and the Old Palace Courtyard by a passage not directly from this courtyard. The Palace, which opens to the east of the riverfront with kitchen and ward buildings, is separated from the city settlement by a wall without bastion on the other three facades.[769] As in Topkapı Palace, Bakhchysarai has the first two courtyard layouts that the public can enter, but there is no successive courtyard system with linear features.

Information on Didymóteicho, Yenisehir, Gallipoli, and Plovdiv, palaces without government headquarters, is insufficient as to the layout of these palaces except that they were planned within the city walls.[770] It is learned from the records in Selçuknameler that the Anatolian Seljuk Sultans resided in the palace buildings in the different seasons of the year, in the appropriate regions of Anatolia for that season.[771] Of the palace structures related to this period, from the information given by Ch. Texier (1833-37), we learn that there are independent mansions and mosques located in the center of the city on a hill as high as an acropolis, without adhering to a certain order.[772] It is stated that the most important of these buildings of the pavilion type is Sultan's *selamlık* apartment. J. Strzygowski likens the tower-pavilion located on one of the inner fortification towers' beautiful landscape to Iranian entertainment pavilions made on stepped terraces for viewing.[773]

There is no information about the palace in the inner castle in Alaiye, which the Sultan used as a winter palace, and the palace in Antalya. Our knowledge of Kubādiye and Kubādābād palaces, one of Sultan's summer palaces, has been clarified by excavations

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[769] Seçkin, 48.

[770] Ayverdi, 482.

[771] Zeki Oral, *Kayseri'de Kubadiye Sarayları, Anadolu'da Selçuk Sarayları*, 68 (Ankara: TTK Press, 1953), 501.

[772] Friedrich Sarre, *Konya Köşkü*, 6 (Ankara: TTK Press,1989), in Zühre Sözeri, "Yorum ve Süreklilik açısından Topkapı Sarayı," (PhD Thesis, Istanbul: Yıldız Teknik University, 1995), 27.

[773] Ibid, 28.

and surveys. It is not yet clear whether a castle exists in the vicinity of Kubādiye Palace, located at the foot of a mountain overlooking the Kayseri plain. According to written sources, there are beautiful mansions, various buildings, *selamlık*, *haremlik*, and other apartments in the palace within the orchards, and all have the appearance of a city.[774] The official functioning structures of the palace appear to be defined, though not as much as those of the Ottoman palace. The information that public affairs were carried out in an iwan and the Sultan accepted his guests in a place called *Selamlık Sofa* shows that there is such a functional separation even though the boundaries are not determined. The residence of Erzincan ruler Alaeddin Davutshah in the tents prepared shows that Kubādiye's sultan and palace people are sheltered, and the palace-city program, which is organized with administrative functions, meets these needs with temporary solutions.[775]

The Kubādābād Palace, built by Sultan Kayqubad in 1236 on a plain dominating Beyşehir Lake, is composed of independent structures in which no specific order can be seen in their settlements, as it is understood from today's ruins, in an area surrounded by walls[776] (See Figure 8.9). In the palace plans prepared under the supervision of the Sultan, it is known that the sultan determined the location of the rooms with a sketch. The palace structures include rest mansions and complements, with buildings described as Grand Palace, Small Palace, and Dockyard. The throne hall of the Great Palace, which opens to Beyşehir Lake with a large terrace behind it, is reminiscent of the Leşker-i Bazar throne hall with the iwan layout opening to the reception hall. A similar arrangement can be seen in the opening of the reception hall of the Diocletian Palace in Split to the gallery on the seafront[777] (early 4th century AD).

The palace structures of the Anatolian Seljuk period are seen in a free settlement order where a clear hierarchical division can be observed in the walking trail between Grand and Small Palaces, courtyards, and door orders. How the officially functioning

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[774] Oral, 506-509.

[775] Ibid, 508.

[776] Rüçhan Arık, *Kubadabad: Selçuklu Saray ve Çinileri* (Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Cultural Publications, 2000), 25-26.

[777] Katherina Otto Dorn and Mehmet Önder "Kubadabad Kazıları 1965 yılı Ön Raporu," (Ankara: TTK Press, Ankara:1967), in Arık, 27.

buildings, mansions, harem buildings, and other buildings for the private use of the sultan are located in the palace settlement has not yet been revealed.
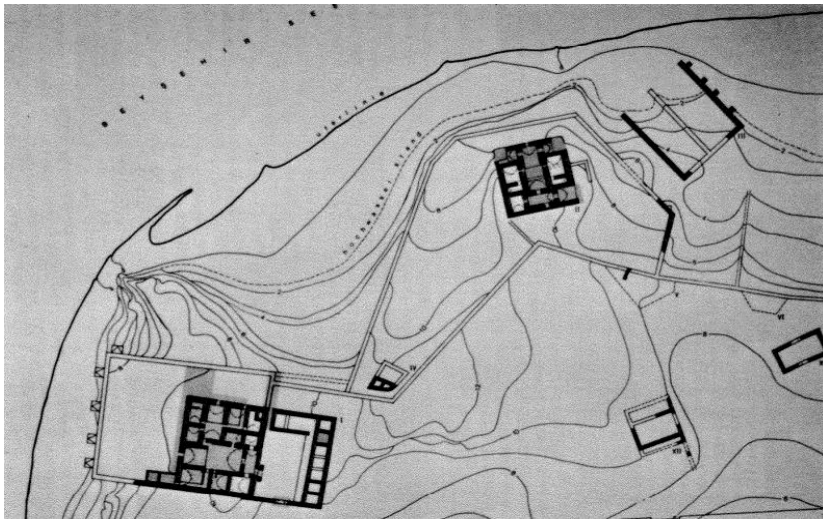
Figure 8.9 Plan of the main area in Kubādābād, showing the large and small places.
Source: Scott Redford, "Thirteenth Century Rum Seljuq Palaces and Palace Imagery," Ars Orientalis 23, (drawing, 1993), 230, https://www.jstor.org/stable/4629450.

Some elements of the Seljuk period structures and their relations with the Eastern Islamic world are clear. However, at least in terms of functional and hierarchical regulation, a backward view starting from the Roman era can also be useful. Seçkin explains that in the Roman palace buildings, the distinction between the official and private parts is observed starting from the 1st century. In Domitian's (81-96) Palace on Palatine Hill, the official and private sections are definitely divided. The emperor's private residential buildings are at the foot of the hill, while the palace's official functioning structures are arranged on the hill. The two sections are linked together by a narrow staircase. The Hadrian's Villa in Tivoli, dated to the beginning of the 2nd century, is also divided into formal and private apartments in a wide-spread settlement. Axially arranged units are in the appearance of being grouped together without adhering to a particular order[778] (Figure 8.10).

The Great Palace of the Byzantine Emperors in Istanbul was located in the area between the Hippodrome, Hagia Sophia, and the Sea of Marmara. The original layout of the Grand Palace, of which very few parts are visible today, is not known for certain. In the theoretical restitutions related to the palace scheme, units with successive

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[778] Giedon, S., *Architektur und das Phanomen des Wandels, Verlag Ernst Wasmuth Tubingen* (Berlin:1969), in Seçkin, 57.

courtyards were designed in parallel to the Hippodrome.[779] The Grand Palace is reminiscent of Hadrian's Villa in Tivoli with this layout. The palace can be defined in three main sections. The first section is the Halke part, and it includes palace officials' rooms, with arched roads, a courtroom, an admission room, a banqueting room, and religious buildings. From the Dafne section, where religious and official buildings were located, the Emperor's lodge overlooking the Hippodrome was being passed. There were admissions halls here. The section of the palace called the Holy Palace is the part where the Emperor's throne is located and where the Emperor accepts the celebrations and guests on special occasions and meets the official order of the palace.
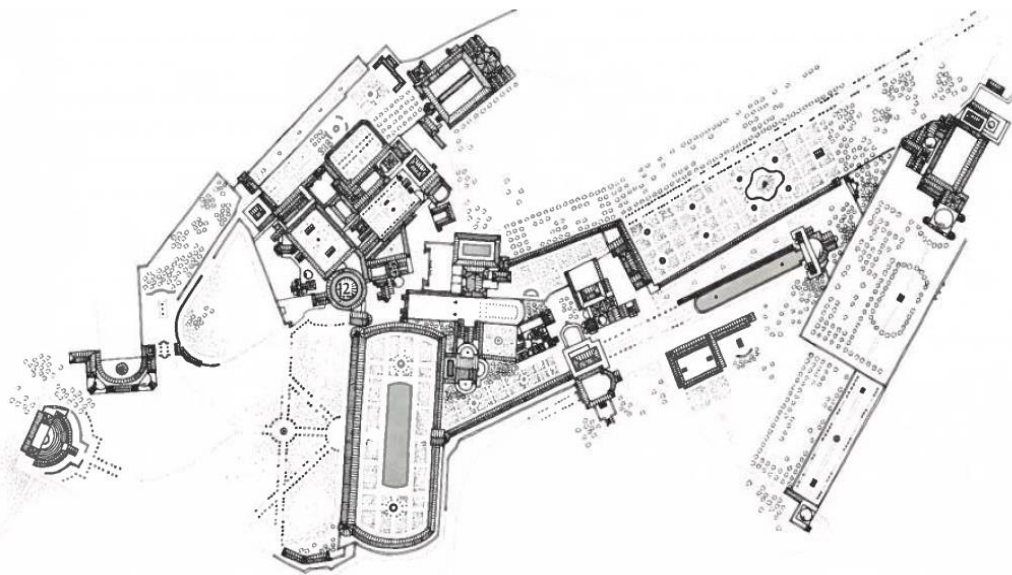
Figure 8.10 Hadrian's Villa, Tivoli.
Source: Pressbooks (PB), "Hadrian's Villa, Unknown Designer, Classical Roman, TIVOLI, Italy, 110 AD", (drawing, n.d.),
https://ohiostate.pressbooks.pub/exploringarchitectureandlandscape/chapter/hadrians-villa (accessed July 10, 2021).

The Grand Palace did not consist of buildings whose locations were determined and differentiated according to a defined scheme but was expanded with similar functioning structures added over time.[780]

The Blachernae Palace, built as a summer palace at the beginning of the 6th century and used permanently starting from the 11th century, had a widespread settlement in the Ayvansaray area of the Golden Horn, like the Grand Palace. This palace complex,

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[779] Semavi Eyice, "İstanbul'da Bizans İmparatorlarının Sarayı: Büyük Saray", *Journal of Art History Studies* 1/3 (Istanbul:1986), 3-36.
[780] Ibid, 194.

which includes the courtyards, colonnaded courtyards, the emperor and his family's wards, religious buildings, and holy springs, has continued to expand into the 15th century with the added buildings.[781] It is not known how the palace settlement surrounded by high walls is determined according to a functional scheme.

Among the early Islamic palace structures, H̱irbete'l-Mefcer, Qaṣr ʿAmrah, Ḳaṣr al-Hayr al-Sharkī and Ḳaṣr al-Gharbī, Mshetta, Ḳaṣr et-Ṭūbā, and Homet el-Mefcer are the most important palaces built outside the city by the Al-ʾUmawīyah caliphs who chose desert life (Figure 8.11). This palace typology, which is not always experienced, has a certain comfort, is very limited in terms of the management function, and reflects the special taste of the caliph, which is not observed in the later periods of Islam. The inner partitions of these structures, which are surrounded by walls and generally form a square with a 70 meters edge, differ in design.[782]
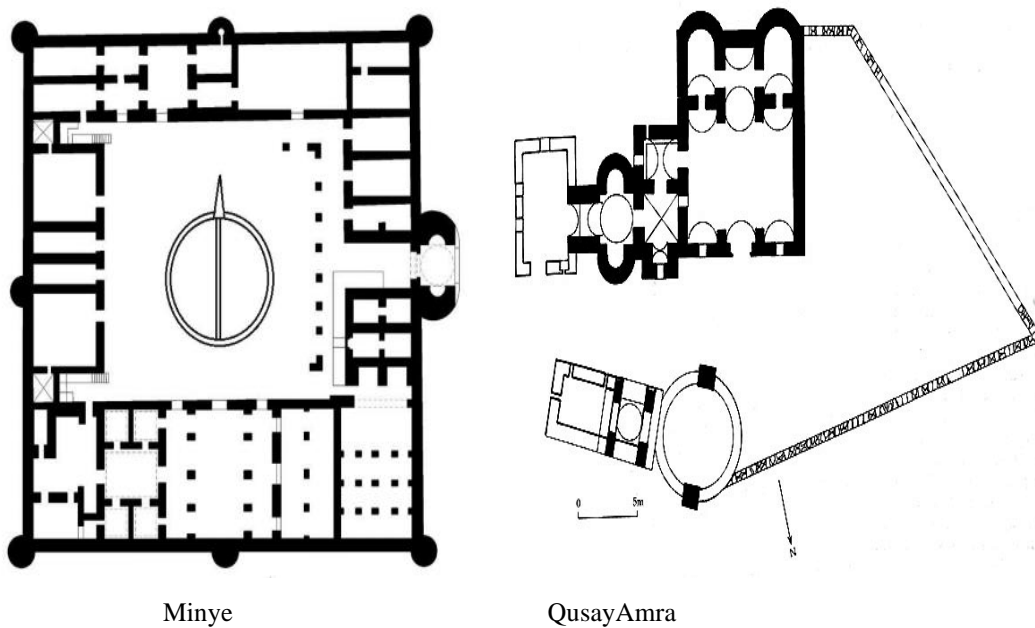
Minye   QusayAmra

Figure 8.11 Early Islamic Al-ʾUmawīyah palaces
Source (Minye): Sanatın Yolculuğu (SY), "Hırbetü'l Minye Sarayı," (drawing, February 13, 2019), https://www.sanatinyolculugu.com/hirbetul-minye-sarayi/ (accessed April 1, 2022).
Source (QusayAmra): Magda Sibley, "Qusayr Amra Early Umayyad Bath built Between 712 and 715" (drawing, January, 2006), ResearchGate GmbH. https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Qusayr-Amra-Early-Umayyad-Bath-built-Between-712-and-715Source_fig2_242180069 (accessed April 2, 2022).

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[781] Celal Esad Arseven, *Eski İstanbul, Abidat ve Mebanisi, Şehrin Tesisinden Osmanlı Fethine Kadar*, İstanbul, in Seçkin 181.

[782] Oleg Grabar, in Cresswell, M. Berchem, *Early Muslim Architecture*, I., (NewYork: Hcher Art Books, 1979), 110.
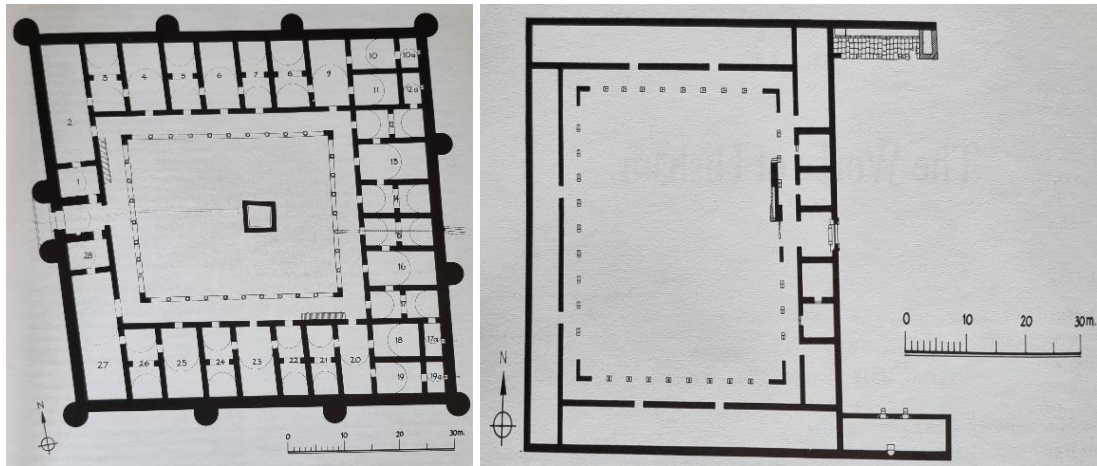
Figure 8.11 (cont'd) Qasr al-Hair ash-Sharqī-Qasr al-Hair al-Gharbī

Source: KAC Creswell and James W. Allan, *A Short Account of Early Muslim Architecture*, "Qasr al-Hair ash-Sharqī", (drawing, 1989), 155.
Source: KAC Creswell and James W. Allan, *A Short Account of Early Muslim Architecture,* "Qasr al-Hair al-Gharbī", (drawing, 1989), 136.
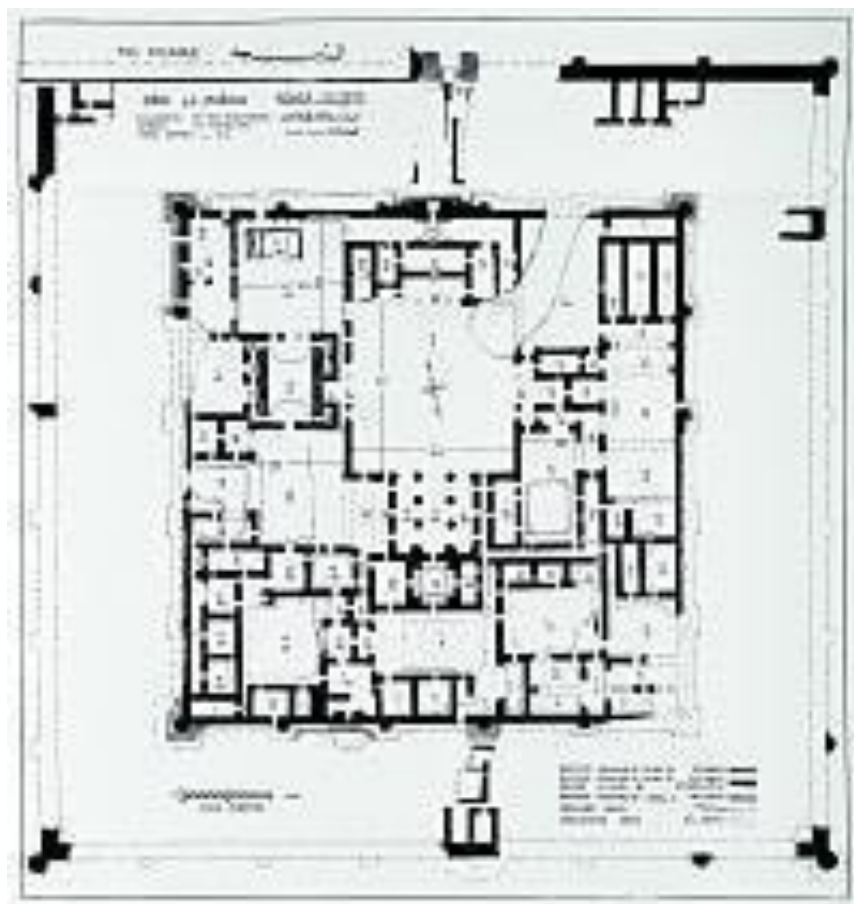
Figure 8.11 (cont'd) Dar Al-Imara
Source: Bloomsbury Architecture Library (BAL), "Searching: Abbasid," (drawing, n.d), https://www.bloomsburyarchitecturelibrary.com (accessed April 4, 2022).
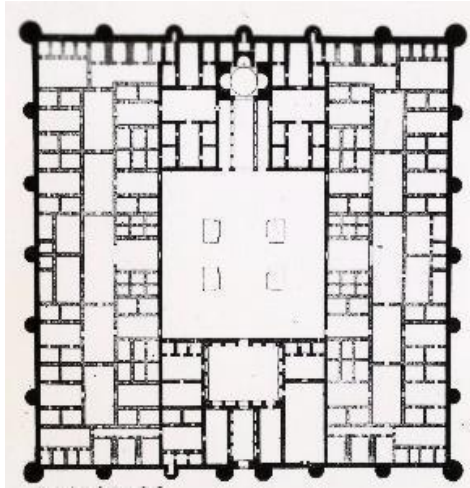
Figure 8.11 (cont'd) Mschatta   Ḳaṣr et-Tûba
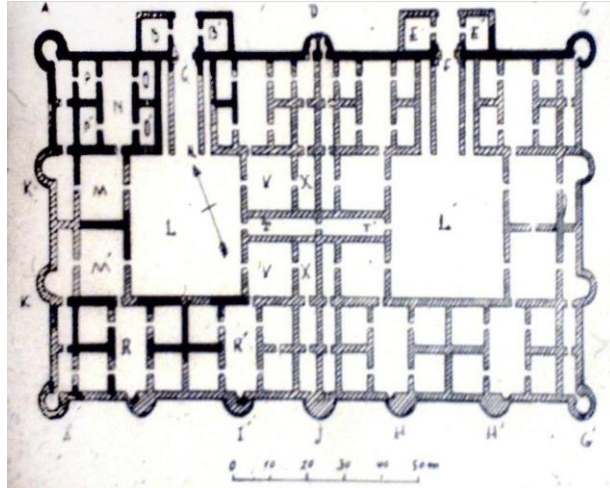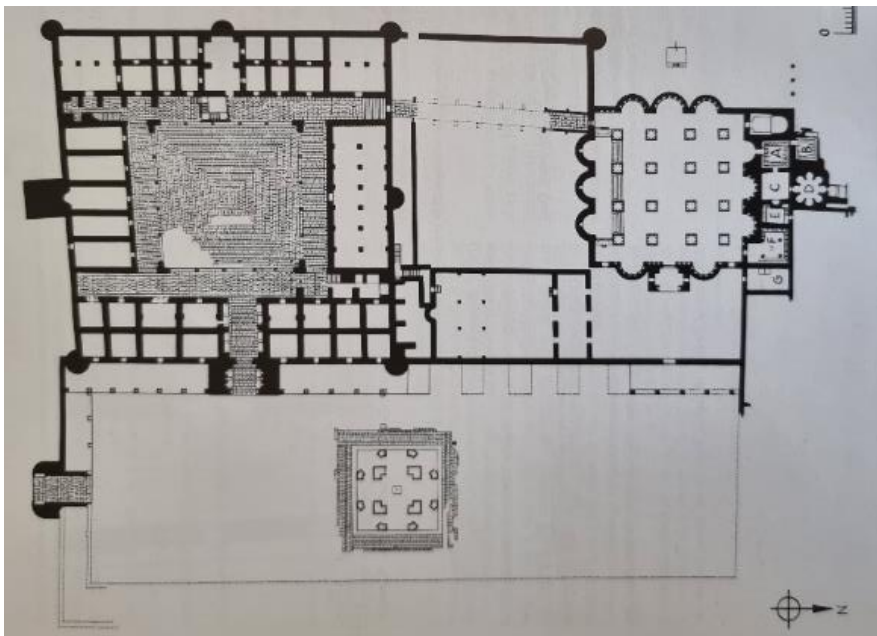
Figure 8.11 (cont'd) Ĥirbet'el-Mefcer

Apart from Qaṣr 'Amrah, the main palace building consists of a meeting place and a
hammam; the other buildings consist of units arranged around a courtyard in the
middle. The function of the large room opposite the entrance of the palace in Minye is
unknown, and the meeting room of the three-part hall to the south has a mosque in the
southeast corner. One of the early structures, Qasr al-Mshatta, is incomplete, but its

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functional division is the most developed. The basilica hall, which is located on the axis of the entrance complex and ends with a three-part throne, opens to the courtyard. The *bayt* (residential suites) on both sides of the throne hall is symmetrically planned.[783]

The common planning principles of the structures of this period can be determined as the perimeter wall supported by round towers, the only entrance marked in the middle of the facade, the meeting-reception hall with the throne of the Caliph, the mosque and other apartments and rooms organized around the central courtyard. Functional forms of the palace layout and single spaces or groups of spaces are not seen outside the

throne hall of Qasr al-Mshatta. The ceremonial palace operation in Al-ʿUmawīyah palaces by the Bedouin's method based on equality should be the reason for the formation of these undifferentiated space practices in the palace layout.[784]

Ĥirbet'el-Mefcer has a layout that integrates a square pavilion, a mosque, and a bath complex as separate structures, and a courtyard with a portico with a pool in the middle. The palace had two throne rooms above the entrance and in the bathhouse. Although the architectural forms are of Roman and Byzantine origin, the decoration related to material, technique, and depiction art is of Sassanid origin.[785]

In addition to these structures of the Al-ʿUmawīyah palaces, which are described as "rural mansions," there are also "city palaces," such as Dār el-Imāre in Kūfa, which have a more formal official function[786] (See Figure 8.12-8.13). The entrance axis was determined in the palace surrounded by two walls. The main official unit, with an

iwan-like basilica-type hall and a domed room, is emphasized in the palace plan. The idea that courtyard units can be used as living, *dīwān,* or official apartments can be solved by archaeological studies and research.

What is known about the palace structures in the cities of Merv, Baghdad, and Raqqa established in the years following the transition of the caliphate from the Al-ʾUmawīyah to the Abbasid is very limited. In Merv, Dār el-Imāre, built by Caliph Abū

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[783] Creswell and Berchem, 577.

[784] Ibid, 578.

[785] K. A. C. Creswell, A *Short Account of Early Muslim Architecture* (Suffolk: Penguin Books, 1958), 211.

[786] Grabar, *Early Muslim Architecture*, 127.

Muslim, is a square building next to the city mosque, whose edge crosses 200 meters (See Figure 8.12). The square covered by the dome in the center is where the caliph is located. This place has doors in four directions. Through the doors, the vaulted iwan leads to the square spaces.[787]

The palace, built by the second Abbasid caliph Mansur in the center of Baghdad with a round plan, is again described as a square building whose edge exceeds 200 meters.

It was active in the city skyline with a height of more than 40 meters, including the green dome with its equestrian statue on the square throne hall where the 2/3 ratio vaulted iwan was opened.[788]

Apart from the early city palaces, which we know from the descriptions in the written sources, there are Abbasid palace structures that are organized in larger sizes, more and more, in accordance with the ceremonial functioning, formed by the Persian tradition of deifying Kings.[789] Ukaydir, El-Cevsaku'l-Hākānī, Balkuvara, and Kasrü'l-Âşık are the most important ones. The entrance is important as a building or complex of buildings in these palace buildings, where an axial arrangement is determined as the main principle. Ukaydir is a planned building complex with a large area surrounded by walls with entrances from four directions, along with the south entrance. There is a ceremonial courtyard at the entrance axle and the reception hall, which opens to the throne room. The entrance block of the mosque is arranged like a portico opening to the courtyard. The interpretation that the units that are symmetrically placed in the

general layout, consisting of groups of rooms opening to the central courtyard, may be living units is accepted by today's data. During the excavations in 1965, a bathhouse was found near the mosque.[790]

El-Cevsaḳu'l-Hāḳānī, a large area surrounded by high walls in the middle of the city of Samarra, was a restricted area. At the entrance axle of the building was a cruciform throne with a central dome at the end of a series of doors divided by open spaces. Among the arms of the cruciform were baths, a mosque, and living units. El-Cevsaḳu'l-

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[787] Creswell and Berchem, 3.

[788] Ibid,

[789] Ibid,

[790] Grabar, 116-118.

Hāḳānī is a palace-city with buildings consisting of many structures of various sizes and increasing over time in the walled area with only one entrance.[791]
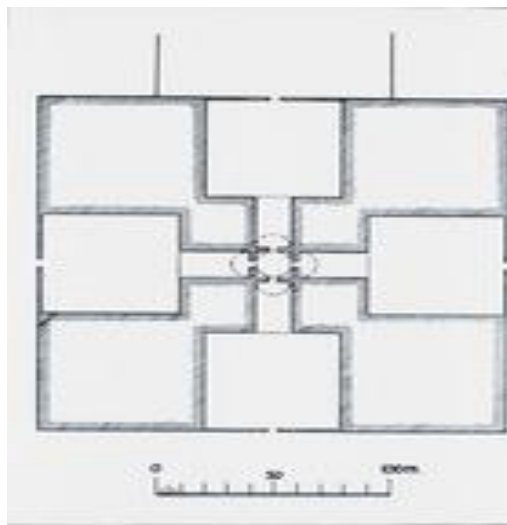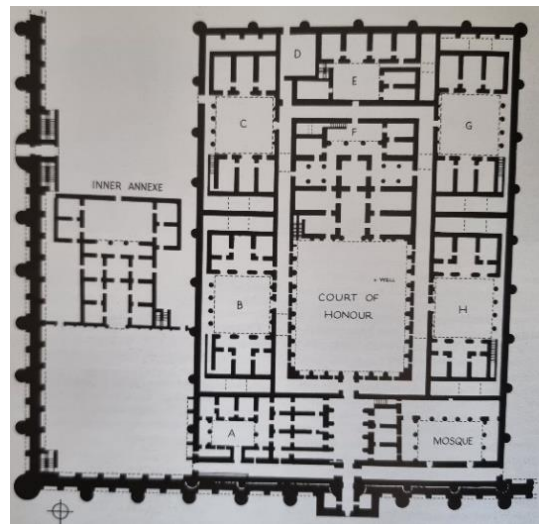
Dar Al-Imara   Ukhaidir Palace

Figure 8.12 Early Islamic Abbasid palaces.
Source (Dar Al-Imara): MIT Libraries (MITL), "Dar al-Imara of Abu Muslim at Merv," (drawing, n.d.), https://dome.mit.edu/handle/1721.3/23260 (accessed April 6, 2022).
Source: KAC Creswell and James W. Allan, *A Short Account of Early Muslim Architecture*, "Ukhaidir Palace/ Samarra", (drawing, 1989), 250.
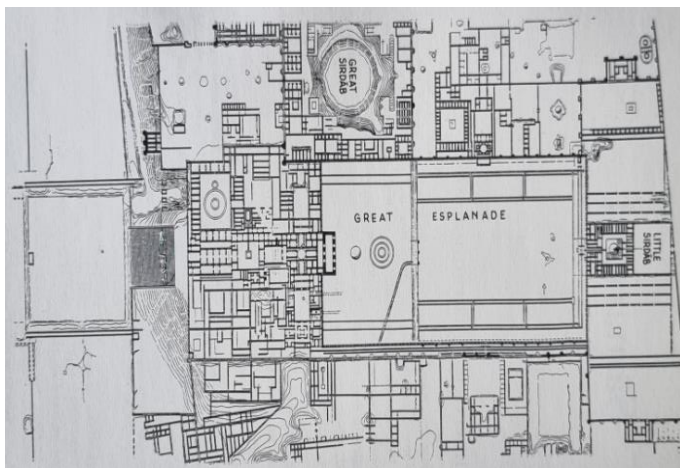
Figure 8.12 (cont'd) el-Cevsaku'l-Hākānī/ Samarra   Balkuvara Palace/ Samarra
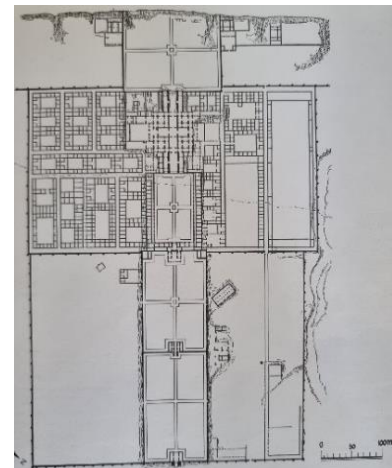
Source: KAC Creswell and James W. Allan, *A Short Account of Early Muslim Architecture*, "el-Cevsaku'l-Hākānī/ Samarra", (drawing, 1989), 332.
Source: KAC Creswell and James W. Allan, *A Short Account of Early Muslim Architecture*, "Balkuvara Palace/ Samarra", (drawing, 1989), 364.

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[791] Creswell and Allan, 265-307.
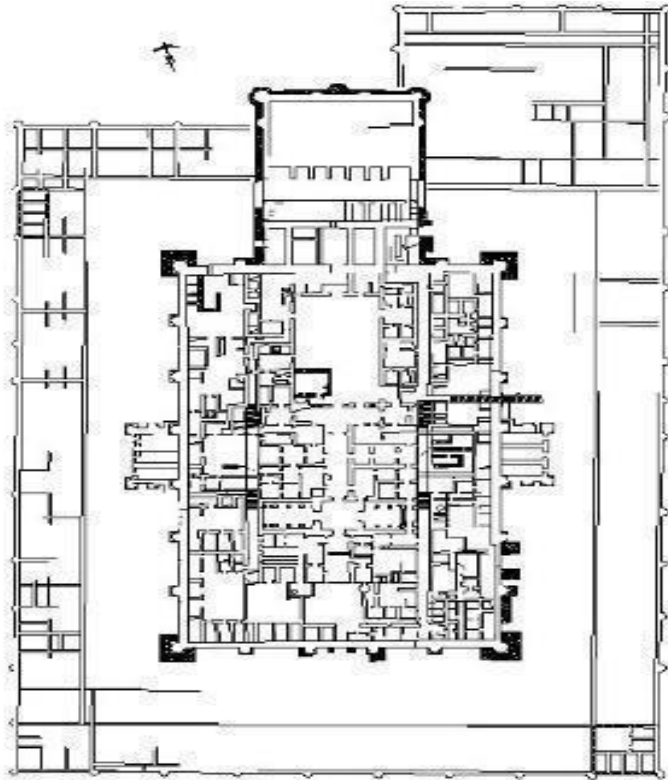
Figure 8.12 (cont'd) Qasr Al- Love.

Source: SY, "Kasrul Aşk," (drawing, September 20, 2020),
https://www.sanatinyolculugu.com/kasrul-ask (accessed April 6, 2022).

Balkuvara Palace (mid-9th century) in Samarra, compared to the El-Cevsaḳu'l-Hāḳānī, has a more distinctive and geometric layout. On the main axis are monumental gates, followed by a series of four-sectioned courtyards reminiscent of Persian *carbag* (rectangle garden consisting of four parts), the iwan, the cross-plan scheme throne complex, the iwan opening to the riverfront, and the four-section courtyard all describe the Balkuvara Palace. The apartments are arranged around courtyards of various sizes and are located around the third courtyard and throne hall.[792]

The palace structures of the Egyptian Mamluk period are located in the city. The boundaries of its location form the outline of the palace. The main features of these city palaces, which are planned to be mainly "inward" due to the conditions of the place where they are built, have a multiple-story exit from the road to the courtyard or directly to the main floors with an iwan and nonlinear entrance, generally, with a gallery courtyard, barn, cellar, watery spaces on the ground floor, and some examples include "*mandara*" and iwan as greetings. The most important place on the upper

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[792] Creswell and Allan, 363.

floors is "*kaa*." The other spaces are connected to the *kaa* at the same level or upper level through indirect or direct transitions.[793]

Sultan Salih's Palace, located on the island of Roda on the Nile in Cairo, is of four iwans with groups of three columns in front of the "*kaa*" and iwan, entered by a nonlinear passage from the courtyard. The *kaa* opens to the courtyard and the Nile in three directions. The passage, created in the symmetry of the entryway, separates the inner courtyard from the Nile Front[794] (Figure 8.13).
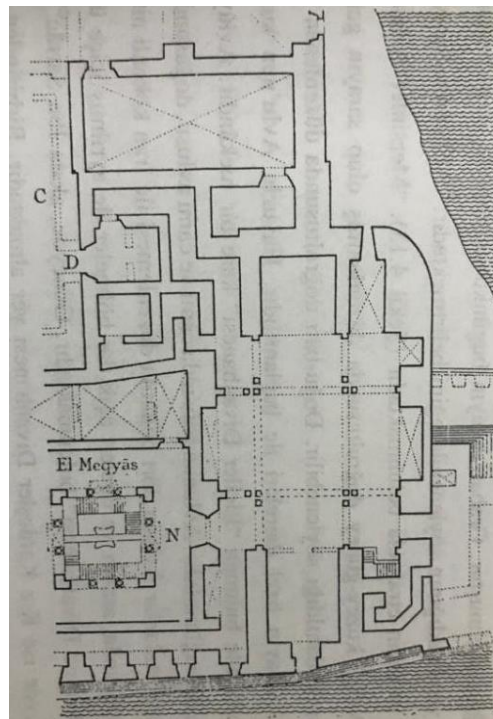
Figure 8.13 Sultan Salih Palace.
Source: Nadide Seçkin, "Sultan Salih Palace," (drawing, 1998), 53.

In the general settlement of Qalʿat Banī Hammād in Algeria (11th century), in the north-south direction, the official section is arranged in the southernmost, east-west direction. The official section called Qalʿat al-Baḥr (Citadel of the Sea) is entered from the east by a monumental gate. The entrance order is a nonlinear type. Through a domed entrance and transverse halls, there is a section of reception spaces at the end of a rectangular pond with a portico. This section is in the form of a very large room or courtyard with reception halls on the sides. The west courtyard on the entrance axle

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[793] Günkut Akın, *Asya Merkezi Mekan Geleneği* (Ankara: Ministry of Culture Publications, 1990), 23.
[794] Keppell Archibald Cameron Creswell, *The Muslim Architecture of Egypt* (NewYork: Hacker Art Books, 1978), 321.

should be of special use. In spite of the geometrical arrangement in the official part of the palace, the other parts consist of building groups with and without courtyards placed in a free position.[795]

Madīnat az-Zahrā located in the west of Córdoba, the former administrative center of the al-ʿUmawīyah caliphs in Spain (the first half of the 10th century), had a graded arrangement on a sloping terrain, with buildings on the upper level connected to the palace and the palace, gardens on the middle level, and private buildings on the lower level. We see this kind of distinction in which the private and official parts of the palace are planned at different levels in the Palatine Palace of Rome.[796]

The Al-Ḥamrāʾ Palace, which was founded in 1238 in the capital of the Nasrid in Granada, is located in the area surrounded by the walls built by the Al-ʿUmawīyah in the 9th century.[797] Grabar asserts that it is not possible to make a precise chronology of the Al-Ḥamrāʾ Palace as in Topkapı Palace. Most of the functions that would feed it have been destroyed in the vicinity of the Al-Ḥamrāʾ, which is both a fortress and a palace. Grabar states that with the present state of the palace, it can be said that it was not originally built according to a plan. The principal buildings of the Al-Ḥamrāʾ Palace are located around two courtyards (See Figure 8.14). "Court of the Myrtles" or "Court of the Pond" is arranged in a north-south direction, and it can be said that the palace was used for general reception ceremonies. The "Court of the Lions," which is arranged in the east-west direction, is connected with the private apartments of the palace. Located in the Comares tower to the north of the "Court of the Pond," the "Hall of the Ambassadors" is a square venue. It is connected to the courtyard by the "Court of the Pond." To the west of the courtyard is the mosque, and the courtyard of the mosque and to the east is the bathhouse. The "Court of the Lions" is of Iranian origin with a four-part arrangement. To the east of the courtyard is the "Royal Court," which consists of three intertwined rooms separated by narrow compartments and open fronts. To the south is the Hall of Ibn Sarrac in the axis, and to the north is the Hall of the Two Sisters. Functional analysis of the Al-Ḥamrāʾ Palace consisting of independent units, as G. Marçais and O. Grabar point out, is based on uncertain

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[795] John Hoag, *Western Islamic Architecture* (NewYork: George Braziller, 1977), 112-114.
[796] Ibid, 472-473.
[797] Oleg Grabar, *The Alhambra* (Massachussetts Cambridge, 1978), 233-237.

interpretations.[798] Today there is a possibility that the Palace of Charles V, which was located to the south of the Court of the Pond, was demolished, and it was rebuilt in the Tower of Justice of the Al-Ḥamrāʾ Palace.
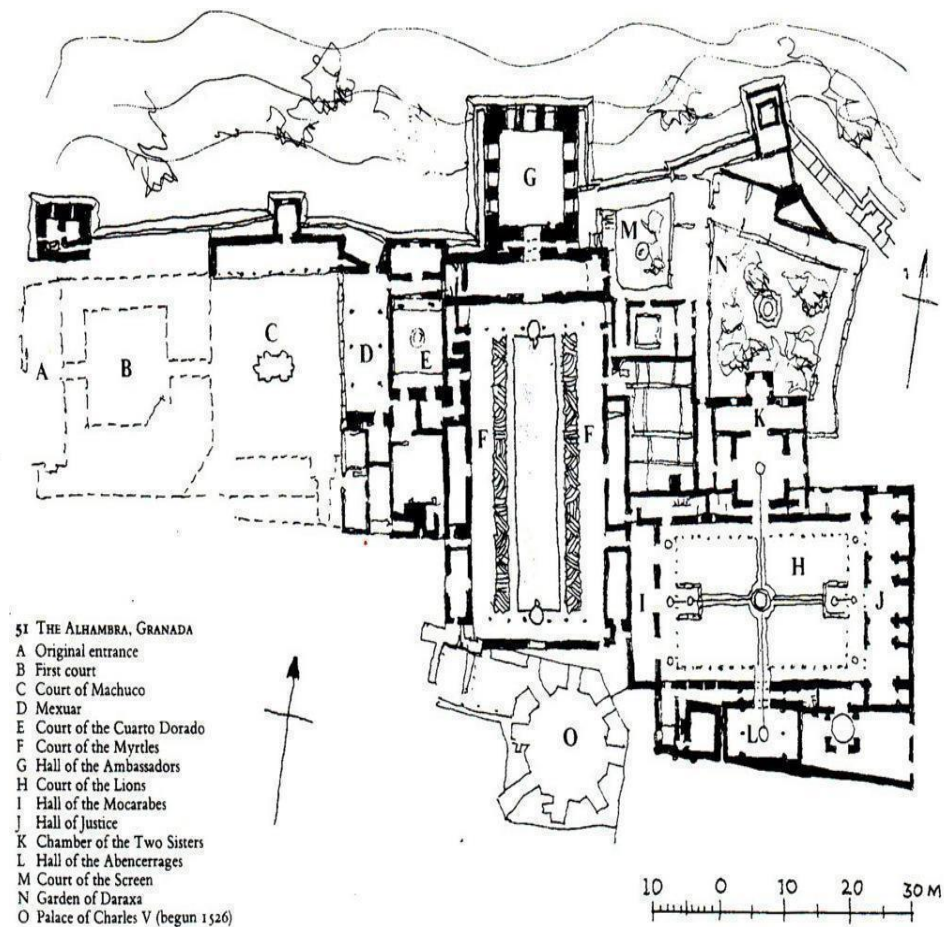
Figure 8.14 Al-Ḥamrāʾ Palace plan.
A: Original Entrance, B: First Court, C: Court of Machuco, D: Mexuar, E: Court of Cuarto Dorado, F: Court of the Myrtles, G:Hall of the Ambassadors, H:Court of the Lions, I: Hall of the Mocarabes, J: Hall of Justice, K: Chamber of the Two Sisters, l: Hall of the Abencerrages, M: Court of the Screen, N: Garden of Daraxa, O: Palace of Charles V
Source: Marten Kuilman, "DOC35/4787-Plan of the Alhambra, Granada", (drawing, October 19, 201), Flickr. https://www.flickr.com/photos/quadralectics/21690484443 (accessed April 6, 2022).

The only characteristic that can be determined by today's information about the general layout of the palace structures of the Central Asian Turkic states is the planning order in which the central position of the units related to the ruler and the dominance of the four directions are expressed.

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[798] Georges Marçais, *L' Architecture Musulmane D'Occident* (Paris:1954), in Grabar, The Alhambra, 238.

Lashkari Bazaar of Ghaznavid palaces (11th century) is the first known application in palace architecture of the four iwan scheme, which opens to the courtyard in the middle, in the area surrounded by walls in three directions except for the riverfront. This scheme is a cruciform plan with spaces opening in four directions to the central space at the entrance. A square plan covered with a dome opening to the courtyard in front of the entrance axis, and the riverfront is probably the throne hall. The official and special units in the northern section of the palace are also the plan schematic with an iwan, which opens to the central courtyard.[799]

In Lashkari Bazaar and other Ghaznavid palaces, the exact protocol was followed in the courtyard ceremonies. The Sultan and the officials of the bureaucracy, and the military commanders would form a group and stand apart from the other people. The use scheme, which would require the four-iwan settlement scheme, evokes the belief that the Iranian Sultanate tradition was adopted in Ghaznavid. [800]

Today, the palaces of Timur and his successors, who were only informed from the descriptions in the written texts, consist of carefully constructed buildings within the vast gardens defined by the word "vineyard." R.G. de Clavijo was in 1404 in Samarkand and depicted Timur's palace as surrounded by mudbrick walls with towers around the corners, orchards, and various other trees in the large gardens, tile-covered pavilions, promenade paths, rivers, water depots and monarch palace in the center. The building where the reign was living was on top of a hill that was surrounded by deep, water-filled trenches. To reach this hill, two stairs would be reached from two separate places and a ladder. The building at the top was in the shape of a small castle. Palaces built-in similar circles in Samarkand, Herat, Tabriz, and Yazd cities were generally planned in geometric layouts, approached with high door structures planned in iwan, two or three storeys high, with tiled facades and galleries overlooking the surrounding gardens.[801]

The exact axiality seen in the religious building plan arrangement of Indian architecture is not seen to the same extent in the palace buildings. In Fatehpur Sikri, a

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[799] Cezar, 234.

[800] Clifford Edmund Bosworth, in Seçkin, 68.

[801] Lisa Golombek and Donald Newton Wilber, *The Timurid Architecture of Iran and Turan*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1988), 174.

geometric layout is seen in smooth quadrangular courtyards that are not on the axis of each other (See Figure 8.15). In the second half of the 16th century, Akbar's central position, showing himself as the prime minister of God in the world and the only representative of His wishes, is very evident in the *Dīwān-ı Ḫāṣ* or private meeting hall where he resides.[802]
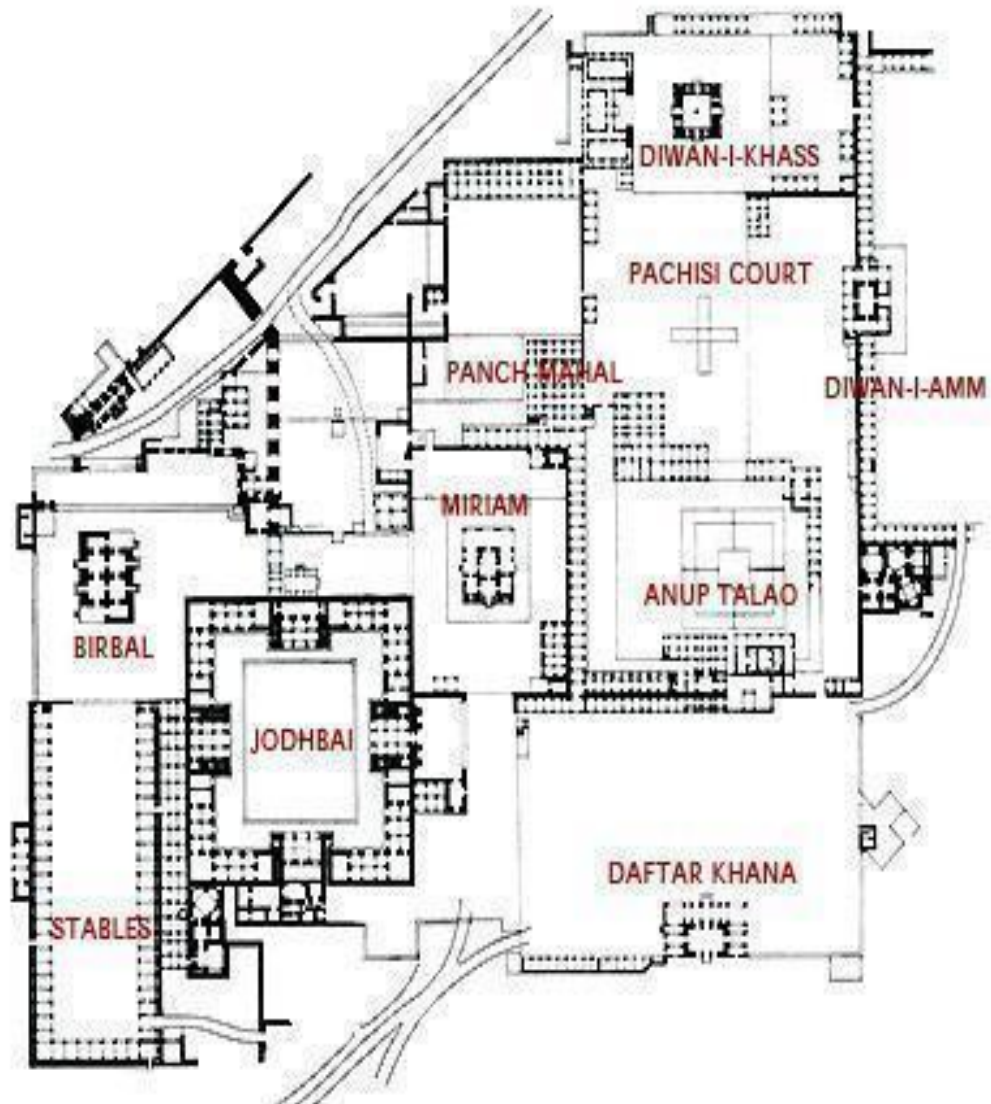
Figure 8.15 Fatehpur Sikri layout.
Source: Architect Shantanu Khandkar (ASK), "Fatehpur Sikri," (drawing, n.d.),
http://islamicarchitectureinindia.weebly.com/fatehpur-sikri.html (accessed April 6, 2022).

Visitors could enter the palace via the Agra Gate from the northeast and then directly into the large courtyard where the Dīwān-ı ʿĀm building is located. Dīwān-ı ʿĀm is

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[802] Attilio Petruccioli, *Fatehpur Sikri* (Berlin: Ernst & Sohn, 1992), 8.

like the royal lodges in the west. A small number of people, other than the reign, could have used the canopy. The small door behind Dīwān-ı ʿĀm opens to the private part of the palace. The island in the middle of the square pool, where the monarch lives, is accessed by four bridges in four directions. Akbar's private meeting room, Dīwān-ı Ḫāṣ, contains the central column and the throne above it, which grows in a square space with radial and curved supports. Akbar probably enters the building from the west, rising to the throne level with a ladder within the wall thickness on the left side. This quota replaces the throne connected with diagonal bridges with the northwest bridge.[803]

To the west of Akbar's private apartment is the Ḥarem. The Panch Mahal building at the northeast corner of the harem is a five-story Baradari. The people of the harem watch all the palace activities from the floors of this Baradari.[804]

Akbar was aimed at the Hindu-Islamic form in his architecture. He began to think of himself as the organizer of the world with his religious belief, a combination of many religions. His palace was interpreted as "a reflection of the genius of the one who made it" in Fatehpur Sikri.[805]

The palace layout in the Agra Castle is arranged in a polygonal area with uneven edges supported by round tower walls (See Figure 8.16). There are courtyards and building groups that are not on the same axis again from the entranceway on the axis shifted from the entrance door. Diwān-ı Am, where the public can also enter, is located opening to the large courtyard at the entrance. The forbidden sections of the palace were placed behind this courtyard without any particular axiality.[806]

Among the Indian palaces, the Red Fort in Delhi (See Figure 8.17), which dates back to the first half of the 17th century,[807] where the entrance axis is important and symmetrical facades in the courtyard layout are applied to the settlement of Fatehpur Sikri, is differentiated from Agra settlements.

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[803] Petruccioli, 18-29.
[804] Ibid, 41.
[805] Ibid, 47-51.
[806] Rafique Ali Jairazhboy, *An outline of Islamic Architecture* (Londra:1972), 69.
[807] Hoag, 385.
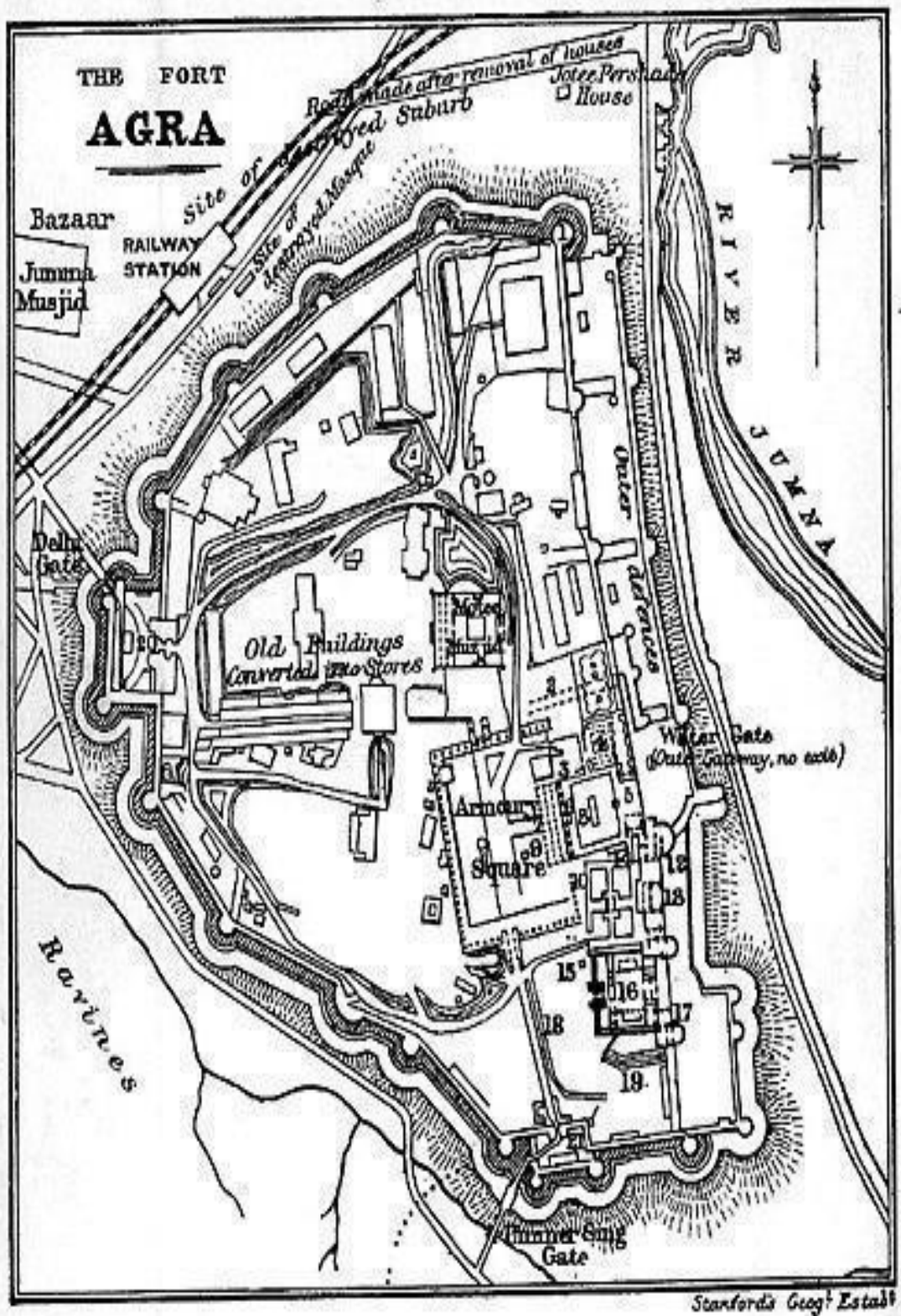
Figure 8.16 Agra Fort Palace.
Source: Wiki Wand (WW), "Agra Fort," (drawing, last edited on June 23, 2022),
https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Agra_Fort (accessed April 6, 2022).
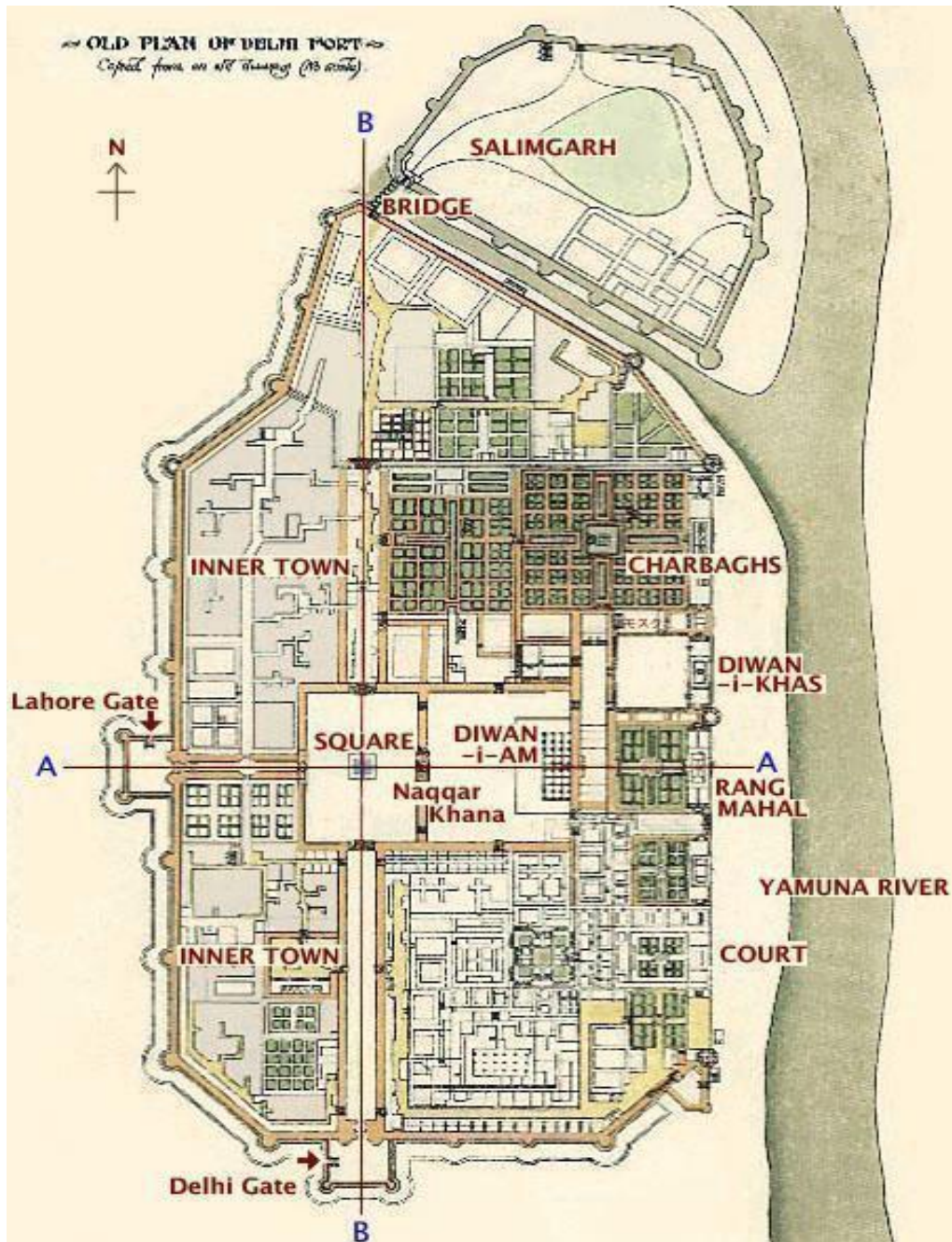
Figure 8.17 Red Fort Delhi Palace.
Source: Takeo Kamiya, "The Delhi Fort (Lal Qila, or Red Fort)," (drawing, n.d.),
http://www.kamit.jp/02_unesco/20_delhi/red_eng.htm (accessed April 6, 2022).

In conclusion, the Topkapı Palace is a palace that is arranged with axes slightly offset from each other; its spatial and functional separation is arranged with courtyards, and its borders are formed by being surrounded by walls. The Palace, which has a monumental appearance in terms of location and size, shows a hierarchy from the general to the specific, from the monumental to the human dimension, in successive gate structures and courtyards. The Şehzade Palace in Manisa and the Edirne New

299

Palace, which were started to be built during the reign of Murad II, formed the premise of the palace layout and formation in the construction of the Topkapı Palace. Şehzade Palace is similar to Topkapı Palace in that it consists of official sections that can be entered and special sections that cannot be entered. Edirne Palace, on the other hand, is a palace that pioneered the Topkapı Palace with its courtyard structure and functional scheme, *Enderūn* and *Ḥarem* structures, as discussed in detail in the previous sections. The cloistered facade layout of the buildings drawn to the side of the courtyard, the front preparatory area at the building entrances, or the sections that feature the transition space between the buildings and the courtyards existing in Edirne Palace are the architectural arrangements frequently used in the Topkapı Palace. The function diagram of the Edirne Palace, which consists of side-by-side courtyards, differs from the linear layout of the Topkapı Palace. This diagram shows the characteristics of the Şehzade Palace. Although the positions of the courtyards in relation to each other are different, Manisa, Amasya, Edirne, and Topkapı Palaces are similar in terms of their two-part layout, which can be entered and not entered. Even though Bahçesaray does not have a linear courtyard system, it has an arrangement where the public can enter the first two courtyards, as in Topkapı. Kubādiya Palace has familiar features with its beautiful mansions in gardens, and various buildings with functional separations, although not as much as in the Ottoman Palace, with *ḥarem* and *selamlık* apartments. Besides, Kubadābād Palace is similar to Topkapı Palace in terms of its position overlooking Beyşehir Lake, its hierarchy among palace structures, and its free regular formation in an area surrounded by walls, but there are not many mosques as in the Topkapı Palace in the Kubadābād palace campus. In the city of Samarra, el-Cevsaḳu'l-Hāḳānī, which is a "palace-city" consisting of many structures such as living units, baths, and mosques, and gradually increasing over time in the area surrounded by walls, and Belkuvārā Palace with its monumental gates and courtyards on an axis are structures that can be associated with the Topkapı Palace. In terms of layout plan, in the area surrounded by walls, in the directory of palace structures that have the quality of "palace-city" with their increasing buildings over time, Roman palaces on the Palatine hill, Madīnat az-Zahrā, Qalʿat Banī Hammād, and Al-Ḥamrāʾ Palace in distant regions and different architectures are also structures that can be followed in an application continuity extending to the Topkapı Palace.

8.4. Ottoman Political Thought on Topkapı Palace Spatial and Architectural Organization

One of the four basic issues (political, philosophical, religious, Sufi thought) that needs to be addressed to analyze the reflection of the Ottoman thought system on the spatial organization, architecture, and artistic culture of the Topkapı Palace is the relationship and reflections between the political thought system and spatial organization. Although the reflection of Ottoman Religious Thought and Sufi Thought shed light on Political Thought, when it comes to the Ottoman Empire, all kinds of spatial preferences can not be related to Ottoman Religious / Sufi Thought as the state was not entirely based on religious principles. For instance, in Islam, regardless of status, all people are equal, whereas it is known that there was a sharp hierarchy in the Ottoman political state administration. In this context, "hierarchy" is one of the main issues to be focused on. Can we see the reflection of this political attitude in spatial organization, design, and use? Do status differences manifest themselves in the spatial organization in the same way? If the sultan's position is above all people, are the places used and lived by the sultan so different? The answers to such questions guide the discussions in this regard.

In the Ottoman Empire, the power and authority of the sultan were endless. The fate of the state, the security of property, and the life of all its Muslim and non-Muslim subjects depended on the sultan's command. Within the borders of the Empire, there was not a single force that could stand in the way of the sultan's will. This endless power and authority of the sultan found its full consistency during the reign of Mehmed II and continued for centuries.[808] This was evident in the spatial organization of the Topkapı Palace, which hosted the absolute power and superiority of the Sultan. The palace once served as a large stage where an introduction was put into practice, which was bound by the rules down to the smallest details. The symbolic language of this ceremony emphasized the exalted position of the sultan. This strict order, shaped by Mehmed II and developed by Suleyman I, emphasized the sultan's distance from the outside world and clearly separated the accessible and impenetrable areas of the palace. The architectural elements of the palace, which consisted of a series of

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[808] Koçu, 50.

courtyards that became more and more private and ended with an inaccessible sultan's residence, were perceived in parade order, forming a coherent whole with the binding of time and space dimensions. This parade ceremony, which was determined by the rules, brought the sultanic iconography of the palace architecture to the fore and added a storytelling dimension to the spaces arranged in a hierarchical order by drawing the visitor from one ceremony station to another.[809]

The first two courtyards, which housed various administrative units, functioned as a theatrical stage for ceremonies in which the hierarchy of status of the state was strikingly represented, both to impress foreigners and to strengthen the ideology of the absolute monarch inside. While it was a stage where the power of the palace dynasty was represented, the administrative center of the empire, the educational institution, and a residence for the sultan, it was also a building complex that housed thousands of residents hierarchically grouped according to internal (private) and external (public) services.[810]

In 1588-1591, Moroccan ambassador Abu'l-Ḥasan al-Tamgrūtī also expressed his surprise at the rigidity of law and order and the hierarchical order and said that all affairs of the Empire, internal or external, were regulated by laws and written laws among the Turks. The Grand Vizier must follow these rules to the letter. Thanks to these rules, he does not need to consult the Sultan except for very important matters. Drawing attention to the strict hierarchy and complex dress code obeyed by the Ottoman state, al-Tamgrūtī adds that no one should behave in the same way as his or her superior, whether it is to be in line while walking, to wear a turban with the same characteristics, to wear a dress, or to sit at a similar table. He underlined that nowhere else has he seen such careful attention to the signs of priority of individuals.[811]

This strict hierarchical structure in the state administration was also found in the entire spatial design of the Palace. As explained in the previous chapters, it was defined who could pass through which gate of the palace, who could go where by horse, who could leave on foot, and how far. The horse-approach distance to the middle gate would vary

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[809] Necipoğlu, *Mimari, Tören ve İktidar,* 20.
[810] Ibid,
[811] Tamgruti, 61-63 in Necipoğlu, *Mimari, Tören ve İktidar,* 99.

depending on the person's rank. In the schematic plan made by Albertus Bobovius, it was seen that even the patients were divided into sections depending on their status.[812]

Another place where hierarchical positioning is clearly shaped depending on status is *Dīwān-ı Humāyūn*. Ortaylı also confirms this case and argues that the places where the members who will participate in the council meetings will sit and stand in *Kubbealtı* are clearly determined in accordance with the rules of etiquette. Grand Viziers and viziers used to sit on the sofa opposite the door. Just above this cedar is the *Ḳaṣr-ı ʿAdil*, the cage-latticed where the sultans followed the *dīwān* meetings. *Ḳāḍī'asker* (military judge), treasurers, *Reīsulkuttāb* (head clerk), and *Dīwān-ı Humāyūn* clerks, who had previously entered *Kubbealtı*, would stand in front of the *Reīsülküttāb* board between the second dome and the third dome and wait for the viziers in rows. When the viziers arrived, they would all enter the *Dīwān-ḫāne* by saluting; everyone would go to the place where their office was in accordance with the Ottoman order rules and wait for the grand vizier to come. When the news came to the Grand Vizier that the *dīwān* was meeting, the grand vizier would come to the palace with his *ketḫudā* (chamberlain) and his entourage. In *Dīwān-ḫāne*, viziers were lined up on the right side of the sofa where the grand vizier was sitting, the *ḳāḍī'askers* were on the left, and the treasurers were sitting towards the entrance of the door. The *Nişāncı* (calligrapher) court was in front of the bookkeepers. The clerks who kept the minutes of the meetings and prepared the documents to be written used to sit on the floor around a low table in the sections of *Kubbealtı* allocated to them.[813]

In parallel with the status, *Ḥarem* was undoubtedly one of the places where the spatial hierarchy could be observed most clearly. According to Necipoğlu, Ḥarem, also named "*Dārussaāde,*" is the greatest pleasure for only one person since it was designed to give a taste to the Sultan. Everyone else was gradually deprived of the pleasures and privileges he could enjoy. Only he and the eunuchs could come and go from the men's and women's quarters, which were closely guarded and strictly separated. The hierarchical order of the inner palace reflected an obsession with limitation and classification of ranks, which only the sultan could transcend. The sultan himself occupied the largest rooms, the highest domes, whose lantern domes accentuated the

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[812] Ibid, 77.
[813] Ortaylı, *Osmanlı Sarayında,* 48-49.

silhouette of Ḥarem. These were separated from the other rooms with their rich building materials and ostentatious decorations, their flooring, thrones, hearths, and fountains, as well as their location with the most beautiful view. The tiled sultan's mansions, open to light breezes and equipped with *kevser-i zamzam* (Zamzam Well), were a stark contrast to the dark, windowless, inward-looking, and unadorned rooms where eunuchs and concubines were taught humility and obedience.[814]

In terms of importance, the sultan's chambers were followed by those of the widowed sultana, who was glorified for her role as a mother (hence her fertility that sustained the dynasty). Emphasized by a lower dome without a lantern, these apartments were smaller and less spectacular than those of the Sultan. Although princely apartments had domes, their location reflected the secondary roles of their inhabitants, and they were located on the edge of the women's apartments, between those of the Sultan and the *Valide Sultan*, but without courtyards. The mothers of the princes lived in even smaller rooms. Only the first *haseki's* apartments had a dome, but it was smaller than that of the *Valide Sultan*. At the southernmost end of *Ḥarem*, adjacent to the stables, was the flat and roofed concubine ward. The architecture of the uninterrupted façade of Harem articulated the status hierarchies of its inhabitants and could be read like a narrative from afar.[815]

Anhegger also emphasizes the hierarchy in *Ḥarem* and its clear reflections on the space and adds that life in Harem started with the morning prayer. *Valide Sultan* used to have their breakfast in her own flat, *Ḳāḍī Efendi* and *Gözdes* in their rooms, and Masters, Journeymen, and Concubines in their apartments after the morning prayer. Only in the Valide Sultan's apartment, the beds, dining, and prayer places were separate. In the *Ḳāḍī Efendi's*, *Haseki's*, and *Gözde's* room, there was only one space but three different functions together. The only woman who had her own kitchen was *Valide Sultan*. The Housekeeper's Room, also called *Ketḫudā*, Warehouse, Waiting Room, and Pantry were annexed to the Valide Sultan's apartment. On the ground floor of this apartment, which also has a very large bath, there were places where more than one hundred Concubines, working under the command of Valide Sultan, lived. The Valide

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[814] Ibid, 232.
[815] Ibid, 232.

Sultan's apartment was the largest and most important place among the *Ḥarem* buildings, after the sultan's rooms.[816]

Anhegger suggests that the spatial hierarchy is reflected in the living spaces of all people with different statuses in Ḥarem, and for example, when the aged *Karaağa* retired, he was either sent to Egypt or voluntarily lived in the room in the *Karaağalar* Apartment in Ḥarem. Retired *Karaağa*'s apartment was on the upper floor of the flat. A novice *Karaağa*, who was in charge of his service, was sitting in a small room just across from his room. The size difference between the retired *Karaağa*'s apartment and the novice *Karaağa*'s apartment, even on the floor bricks, reflected the social status of both people.[817]

Another issue that we can examine in the reflections of the Ottoman political mindset on space is justice. It is one of the fundamental issues, perhaps even the most important, of the Ottoman political system. Because, as Reşad Ekrem Koçu stated, the endless power and authority of the Ottoman sultan were limited by two conditions imposed by the Islamic Sharīʿa for the sultan's license: to be a sultan, first "wise" and then "being just" were necessary. The one whose insanity and cruelty were constant would be dethroned.[818] In many inscriptions, there are expressions that justice is above everything, and it is always referred to the sultans being just when praising them. The inscription of the Gate of Curtain in the shadow of the Tower of Justice, where the sultans secretly visited the city: "*Indeed, Allāh commands you to return trusts to their rightful owners; and when you judge between people, judge with fairness.*" is a perfect-match example for this (See Figure 8.18).

The importance given to justice in the Ottoman Empire clearly expresses itself in the venue design of the Palace with the *Adalet Kasrı* (Justice Pavilion) (See Figure 8.19). The main part of *Kubbealtı* and the monumental tower rising in connection with Harem are also known as *Ḳaṣr-ı Sultani* and *Ḳaṣr-ı ʿAdil*.[819] Complementing the *Kubbealtı* in the background, the 42-meter-tall Tower of Justice with a square plan, pointed hood,

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[816] Anhegger, 32.

[817] Ibid, 59.

[818] Koçu, 50.

[819] Şimşirgil, 52.

four windows on the upper floor, and corner columns can be seen from every corner of Istanbul and from the sea. In a way, it is also the symbol of the palace.

It was first built during the Mehmed II period, and then it was an open and independent structure. Later, when *Kubbealtı* was built, it became integrated with it and took its current form for the last time during the reign of Mahmud II.[820]
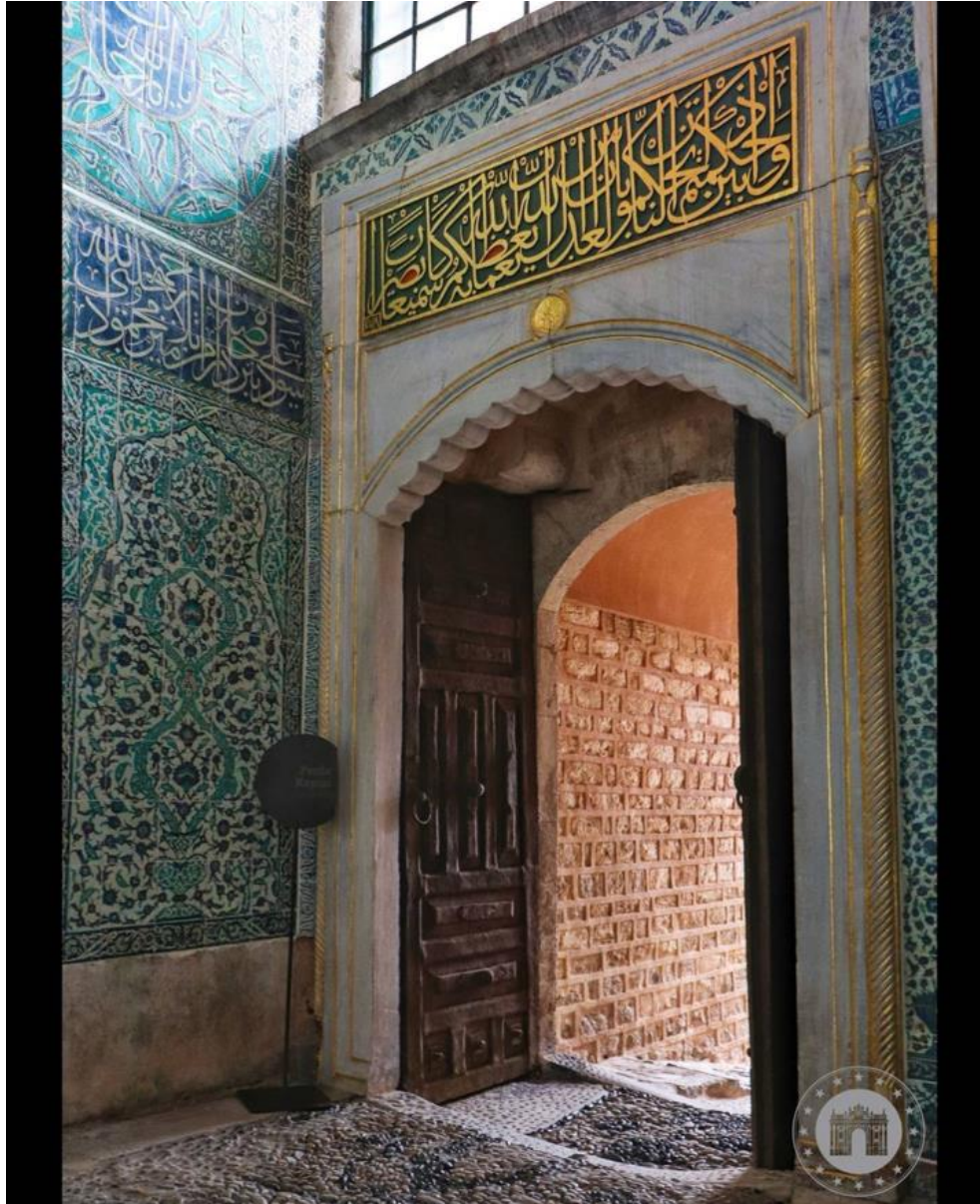
Figure 8.18 The inscription of the Gate of Curtain in the shadow of the Tower of Justice, where the sultans secretly visited the city: "Indeed, Allāh commands you to return trusts to their rightful owners; and when you judge between people, judge with fairness." (An-Nisa, 58).
Source: National Palaces Topkapi Palace (@topkapi_sarayi), "Page of the National Palaces Topkapı Palace," Instagram Photo, January 7, 2021, https://www.instagram.com/topkapi_sarayi.

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[820] Sakaoğlu, *Tarihi, Mekanları, Kitabeleri*, 101.

Figure 8.19. Justice Pavilion (*Adalet Kasrı*).
Source: National Palaces Topkapi Palace (@topkapi_sarayi)," Justice Pavilion" (photo, 2021).

Its gate is inside the Ḥarem gate, where the *Kara Ağalar* (Black Eunuchs) are on guard. On the gate door, the following hadith is written: "*Acting with justice for one hour is better than seventy years of supererogatory worship.*"

The tower is reached by a 105-step ladder. The cage-latticed on the second landing of the staircase overlooks the *Kubbealtı* hall. As stated above, the sultans followed the council meetings held in *Kubbealtı* from here, starting from Mehmed II. The *Kubbealtı* building, where state affairs are discussed and decisions are taken, is called the Justice Pavilion because of its oversight. The tower was used to watch over the city and to control the palace surroundings during riots. The eunuchs kept watching day and night, observing the whole palace, *Ḥarem*, and even Istanbul. The tower symbolizes the fair structure and attitude of the Ottoman Empire in a striking way.[821] (See Figure 8.20)

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[821] Şimşirgil, 52
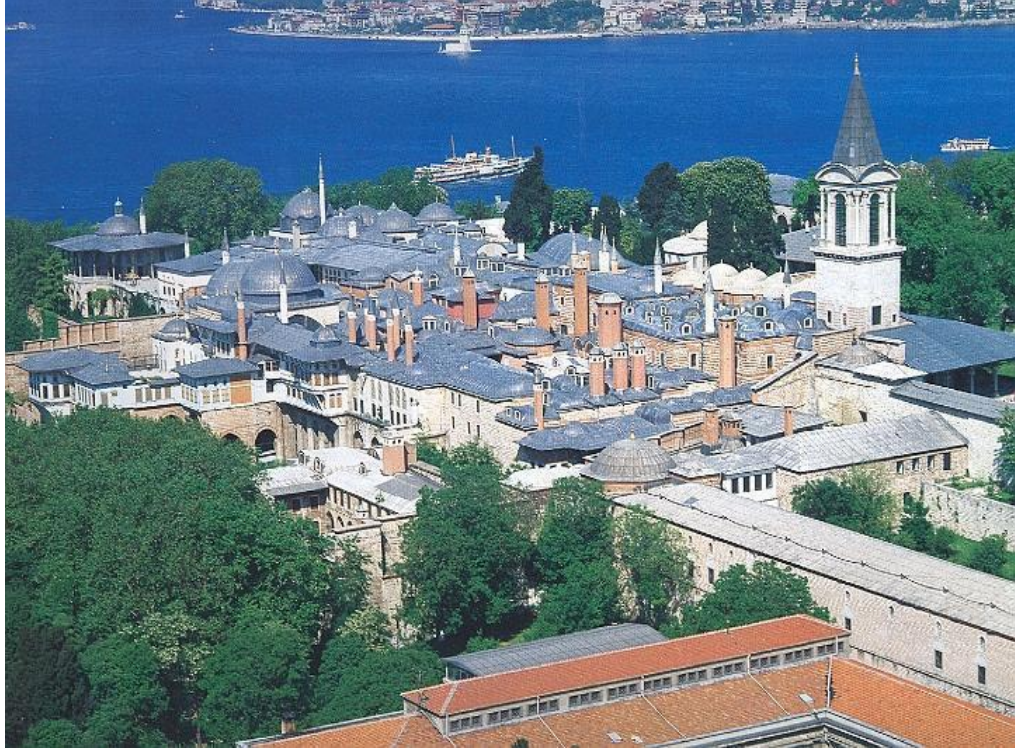
Figure 8.20 The Tower of Justice symbolizes that justice is above everything with the height of its structure.
Source: Şehr-i İstanbul, "İstanbul'da Adalet Sancağı: Adalet Kulesi- Topkapı Sarayı", (photo, August 01, 201), http://sehr-istanbul.blogspot.com/2011/08/istanbulda-adalet-sancag-adalet-kulesi.html (accessed April 1, 2022).

The high tower, known today as the Tower of Justice, stands out in the second courtyard as an architectural symbol that most clearly reflects Sultan's justice among all the buildings around it. Although it is not known exactly when the building was called the Tower of Justice, the poet Cafer Çelebi (1459-1515) suggests that this tower had a symbolic connection with the justice of the Sultan from the very beginning. The poem expresses that every glass of the palace is an eye to watch the world and ceremonies of grace, and every tower is a language that praises the just sultan.[822] Like the tower mansions of the walls surrounding the palace gardens, the second courtyard symbolizes the eternity of Sultan's justice and, rising above the silhouette of the palace, emphasizes the stamp of the second courtyard, where all the administrative buildings related to the concept of justice are located. According to Necipoğlu, the cage lattice of the *Adalet Kasrı* overlooking the *dīwān-ḫāne* and the viewing pavilion

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[822] *"Nedür her cam bir çeşme-i cihan-bin*
Temaşa itmeğe tertib-ü ayın
Nedir her küngüre ser ta kademdil
K'ider medh ü senayı şah-ı adl", Şimşirgil, 96.

308

at the top of the tower represent not only the existence of the Sultan, who, although invisible, has the knowledge of everything but also the invisible absolute power.[823]

Another place reflecting the importance given to justice by the Ottoman Empire was the *Kâğit Emini Kulesi* (Clerk's Tower), also known as the *Deāvī Pavilion*. In the days when this palace was a council, a vizier on duty would come every day, collect the petitions of the people, listen to the plaintiffs and summarize the issue and present it to the council. This procedure allowed cases to be dealt with expeditiously. The *Deāvī Pavilion*, which is thought to be one of the most important works reflecting the Ottoman fair administration, does not exist today.[824]

Another important feature of the Ottoman Empire is that it has a cosmopolitan structure. Sultan Mehmed II, who set out with the dream of becoming a world empire, had a good attitude towards non-Muslim subjects, even if they were not equal to Muslims, always gave importance to different cultures and views, and was intellectually curious about them. Ortaylı, Şimşirgil, Okumuş, and many authors associated this attitude of the Ottoman Empire with its "tolerance" by comparing it with other states in the same period. Necipoğlu and Küçükerman, on the other hand, did not do so but perceived it as a normal, pragmatic, and symbolic extension of the dream of becoming a world empire. In any case, the Ottoman Empire had a cosmopolitan structure. While revealing the reflection of the Ottoman mentality on the spaces of the Topkapı Palace, it would be appropriate to examine whether this political structure also corresponds to the spatial organization of the Topkapı Palace.

Küçükerman deals with the influence of foreign elements in the palace through the *Ehl-i Ḥiref* organization and states that the Topkapı Palace created a crucial environment for change and design. The first industrial and artistic products in the Ottoman period were generally an extension of the Anatolian industrial heritage. Without a doubt, a new empire would also take their precious places, products, and design icons in a new direction because, in Istanbul, it was necessary to create a competitive power in design and production against a very wide environment in terms of international product values. For this purpose, an order that can be called "Palace

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[823] Necipoğlu, *Mimari, Tören ve İktidar,* 119.
[824] Şimşirgil, 30.

Designers" was established together with the Topkapı Palace. Defined as "*Ehl-i Ḥıref*" or "Master in Art," this special staff, supported by the palace, consisted of "real masters" at the highest level of each profession. The major source of these carefully selected people was the "*Lonca*," the production system in Istanbul, and the Grand Bazaar, their production center. However, when necessary, the best masters from abroad would come or be brought to take their places in the *Ehl-i Ḥiref* organization. In other words, there were successful people from different countries among the *Ehl-i Ḥiref*. Besides, the thick walls surrounding the New Palace of Mehmed II, which cannons could not penetrate, were open to artists from different countries as well as their own skilled masters. As a matter of fact, at the request of Sultan Mehmed in 1478, King of Naples Ferdinand sent the artist Constanza da Ferrara to Istanbul, and he should have painted Mehmed II's medallion and the portrait of the Conqueror in the album in the Topkapı Palace Museum. It is known that the artist Gentile Bellini, who was sent to Istanbul between 1479-1480 by the Doge of Venice at Mehmed II's request, made many paintings, including wall paintings, in a period of about a year. These artists, who came during the period of Mehmed II, probably had an impact on Ottoman artists, perhaps also contributing to the development of portrait-making in Turkish miniature art. Inviting foreign painters to make portraits in the palace continued later on. Küçükerman relates that all the designs pioneered by the *Ehl-i Ḥiref* were closely linked to the implementation of the Topkapı Palace layout. In response to product changes inside and outside the country, the products approved in the Palace were sometimes produced as an architectural space, sometimes as a tile, sometimes as a carpet, fabric, or jewelry, and reached everywhere as a kind of message. Hence, while the Topkapı Palace was undergoing major changes, it was actually turning into a kind of design exhibition with the new skills or common products of these local and foreign masters.[825]

On the other hand, Necipoğlu approaches the subject with concrete architectural structures and argues that when the main structures of the New Palace were completed, Mehmed II ordered the construction of three pavilions in different architectural styles to represent the countries he added to the world empire in the outer garden. Angiolello

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[825] Küçükerman, 41-48.

described the three pavilions of Mehmed, which can be seen on the map of Vavassore (See Figure 8.21), as follows:

> *Around the palace is a garden that embraces all the three courts mentioned above… In this garden are some small vaulted churches, and the Grand Turk has had one of them, which is decorated in mosaic, repaired. And in this garden, there are three pavilions about a stone's throw distant from one another, and they are built in various modes. One is built in Persian mode, decorated in the mode of the country of Karaman, and is covered with the wattle and daub; the second is built in the Turkish mode, and the third in the Greek mode, covered with lead.*[826]

Figure 8.21 The New Palace in Vavassore's map of Istanbul.
Source: Wyświetl Użytkownika, "Theodosius Forum," (drawing, October 11, 2020), https://turkisharchaeonews.net/object/theodosius-forum (accessed March 18, 2022).

While Tursun Beg describes the outer garden, he mentions two pavilions close to each other built in different styles for Mehmed II. One of them is a "glass palace" built in the style of Iranian shahs and contains art that the mind cannot comprehend. The other one opposite it is a pavilion built in the Ottoman style. This pavilion is also a wonder of time and contains the science of geometry.[827]

According to Necipoğlu, Mehmed II's three pavilions can be seen as architectural equivalents of the three crowns symbolizing his victories against the Byzantine, Trabzon, and Karaman empires in his medal and portrait (See Figure 8.22).

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[826] Angiolello in Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial and Power*, 210.
[827] Ibid, 267.

Figure 8.22 Gentile Bellini, The Portrait of Mehmed II, 1480.
Source: National Palaces Topkapi Palace (@topkapi_sarayi), "Page of the National Palaces Topkapı Palace," Instagram Photo, June 17, 2021, https://www.instagram.com/topkapi_sarayi.

It can be thought that the invitation of the Sultan to a Venetian builder and Florentine woodworkers in the winter of 1480 may be related to an Italian-like pavilion project in terms of techniques and decorations to be made in the palace. The fact that Gentile Bellini spent that year in the palace to decorate the rooms of the palace supports this idea. Of these three pavilions of Mehmed II, only the Tiled Kiosk has survived to the present day. It is an Iranian-style building, which is not familiar to the Ottoman architectural tradition, and was built in the Timurid style. According to Necipoğlu, these structures, which were built in Ottoman, Persian-Karaman, and Greek styles,

must convey a claim of victory that reflects the multinational character of the Conqueror's universal empire. These neighboring pavilions represent the Ottoman, Karaman, and Byzantine countries that were united under a single empire.[828]

Another structure of the palace that combines the styles of different cultures is the Inner Treasury. The architectural eclecticism of the Inner Treasury combines the different styles that Sultan Mehmed II liked. In addition to typical Ottoman Islamic elements consisting of interpretations of Timurid ornamentation repertoire, such as pointed and Bursa profiled arches, muqarnas, Persian poems, and woodwork decorated in the carving technique with complex arrangements of Arabic phrases and geometric-vegetal motifs, foreign details were also used. The foreign elements in the structure, which blends the Ottoman style with Byzantine and Renaissance Italy-inspired details, are as follows: a marble portico with ion-type volute capitals connected by arches and bordered by unusual half-columns at both ends, a balcony reminiscent of round-arched Italian *loggias* carried by identical columns and half-columns, and the Italian-style black and white checkered marble floors, Byzantine-style ceiling adorned with figured gold mosaics. It is thought that an Italian architect (probably Filarete) may have contributed to the undisputed Italian style composite ionic capital colonnades since the full and half capitals were not reused but were custom-made for the building (See Figure 8.23).[829]

Necipoğlu highlights that this hybrid building is a product of Mehmed II's eclectic imagination and reflects the theme of universal sovereignty, which also determines the quality of the extraordinary collection he collected in his treasury. In this structure, where architectural and ornamental elements inspired by various sources are freely used, doors, windows, and niches are distributed asymmetrically on the walls. The wall sections of the interiors and the marble doors on the courtyard facade are unlike any other. These architectural features bring to mind Kritovoulos' statement that all sultan's apartments were built according to the "principle of diversity." It is possible to see this syncretism, which goes beyond the tradition, in the portraits made under the auspices of Mehmed II, combining the realistic approach of Italian painting art with the understanding of miniature and the schematic style of the Iranian painting tradition.

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[828] Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial and Power,* 268.
[829] Ibid, 181.

This similarity proves once again that Mehmed II made a conscious effort to create an iconography that would reflect the universality of the idea of empire.[830]

Figure 8.23 Detail of the Ionic colonnade of the Treasury-Bath Complex.
Source: Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial and Power: Topkapı Palace in the 15th and 16th Centuries*, "Treasury-Bath Complex," (photo, 2007), 182.

8.5. Basics of Islamic Aesthetics and Topkapı Palace

All the principles that Islam emphasizes directly or indirectly reflect the Islamic aesthetic sensitivity and understanding of art. The distinctive feature of Islamic art lies in its sincere and close relationship with this dimension. To better understand Islamic art, one needs to determine and explain its principles and conceptual features. According to Koç, these principles serve as a key criterion for the value or success of the work of art and its activities and establish a paradigm for the extent to which a certain aesthetic understanding is Islamic.[831] What these principles are, where they are placed in Islamic teaching, from which sources they are fed, how they are reflected in various branches of art and architecture, and why they were chosen have been discussed in detail in the Basic Concepts of Islamic Aesthetics part of the Islamic Aesthetics chapter. Hence this part attempts to uncover the spatial reflections of

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[830] Ibid, 182.
[831] Koç, "*İslam Estetiği*", 47.

Ottoman Religious Thought and Sufi Thought on Topkapı Palace by tracing the basic principles of Islamic art and aesthetics.

8.5.1. Oneness (Tawḥīd): The Origin of Islamic Doctrine and Its Reflection on the Topkapı Palace

Tawḥīd is the essence of Islam. The principle of *tawḥīd* is the unity of thought and action that makes Islamic art the art of Islam. In Islam, giving place to art in morality, an evaluation of the beautiful, good, and useful, being a whole with meaning and form, making art with a purpose while performing, the value of the invisible behind the visible, and avoiding the depiction of the invisible sublime with modesty means that the message conveyed by art is everything. The fact that it is on top of it and the effort to express it clearly and intelligibly are always reflections of the principle of *tawḥīd* on art. The reflection of the concept of *tawḥīd*, which originates from the Islamic belief, on art within the framework of this principle is also the source of mentioning an aesthetic of Islamic arts.[832] Examining the reflection of this principle on architecture and art through the Topkapı Palace is the sum of the content of all analyses made under the title of "Basics of Islamic Aesthetics and Topkapı Palace," which is filtered from the Islamic understanding of beauty and aesthetics. All these concepts stem from the understanding of *tawḥīd,* and their results are aimed at reaching *tawḥīd*. Therefore, it would be correct and sufficient to claim that the way the whole of the basics of Islamic aesthetics was reflected in the Palace was the reflection of the principle of *tawḥīd* in the Palace.

8.5.2. Variation (*Tanawwu'*): Formation of the Palatial Settlement in the Course of Time

The only eternal thing in the Islamic faith is the Creator's essence, and everything else is mortal except Him. Man is expected to be constantly conscious of this situation. Not worshiping the form, not fixing a form, or freezing it are the requirements of this understanding of art. Islamic aesthetics does not act with an unchanging, fixed, and frozen design and plan, following the principle of variation, that is, *tanawwu'*. Hence, change is essential. Any composition that works with a fixed and completed plan and

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[832] Karadeniz, 238-239.

emphasizes permanence does not appear in this mindset.[833] Parallel to this mindset, as Erzen emphasizes, in Islamic architecture, even if a building is implemented according to a predetermined plan, the site, topography, and local traditions applicable to that building are influential in how this plan is interpreted. More than that, the buildings are designed so that they can be interpreted according to the atmosphere and mood that changes based on the relevant time. This "lack of frame" indicates the preference for a more open and fluid order, as the plan can be adapted to the needs of the story in architecture, music, or miniature art.[834]

The fact that the Topkapı Palace has a modular, tectonic structure is closely related to the principle of variation, not the overwhelming verticality of a single monument built at once, but the fact that the structures, which are the indicators of a complex

institutional organization, move horizontally, spread over time, on the land on which they are built. Yahya Kemal Beyatlı confirms that Topkapı Palace was constructed in accordance with the principle of variation by noting:

> *Most palaces were built at a certain time by a certain architect for a certain creator. They are a monolithic mass that bestows an era. Topkapı Palace is not a monolithic building, not even a building; it has been transformed, piece by piece, addition by addition, in different periods... Every Sultan has a room, and they are like a vivid depiction of each Sultan.[835]*

Burcu Özgüven's article titled "Ottoman Encampment and Urban Settlement: A Comparative Evaluation" is an illuminating piece in this regard. The author explains that the Topkapı Palace was not built as a monumental block at one time but as a collection of eclectic buildings over time, compared with the Ottoman camp tradition, and examines the reasons behind this similarity. The author notes that when we talk about the Ottoman palaces, specifically the Topkapı Palace, a question always arises: Why did the Ottoman sultans, whose magnificence exceeded borders in the 15th and 16th centuries, patronize a group of small and modest buildings instead of a high and impressive, monumental palace like their western contemporaries? The author explains that even though foreign guests arriving at the Ottoman Palace express that they were most impressed by the sultanate ceremonies, they describe the Topkapı

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[833] Karadeniz, 212-213.

[834] Ottomans Encyclopedia, "Ottoman Aesthetics", by Erzen 45.

[835] Yahya Kemal Beyatlı, *Aziz İstanbul* (Ankara: MEB Press, 1989), 117.

Palace as a collection of small buildings that are decorated but scattered over a large area. So indeed, the Topkapı Palace resulted from a design that grew over three hundred years like a living organism, beginning with elementary pavilions, developing with the addition of further components as architectural symbols of diversifying function and frequently changing owing to earthquakes, fires, or other destruction. Particular elements of this complex give the impression of a vast village, where the pattern was fixed not by regular streets but by spontaneously erected imperial pavilions.

The author explains the similarities of the Palace settlement, which developed as a modular structure, with the encampment order and attempts to illuminate the reasons for this scattered and gradual order. She mentioned that the first reason was the Ottoman mindset and its reflection on space. Other reasons are the importance and priority of being functional as an extension of the nomadic culture and the concern of not making the settlements very legible and perceptible at once in terms of security. The author's statements confirm the reflections of the Topkapı Palace and the principle of *tanawwu'* on which this thesis focuses. The author reports that according to the Ottoman mindset, the worldly life in Islamic belief is unimportant and temporary. All human beings are temporary and guests in this world; only God's essence and His decree are permanent. Ottoman settlements were also affected by this Muslim worldview, that is, by being mortal and having permanent thoughts. For example, wealthy people are encouraged to build religious complexes such as foundations in the name of Allāh, mosques, and madrasas providing religious education are indispensable elements of Ottoman cities. According to the author, the emphasis on the temporality of the world is even reflected in the material choices of the buildings. While religious buildings, which are desired to exist until the end of the world, are made of stone, which is a durable building material, houses are made of wood and adobe. Religious buildings are located in the city center, and interestingly, religious buildings such as mosques and madrasas create a vertical and dominant image in the city's silhouette, while the scene of temporary daily life, the urban order, moves horizontally away from the emphasis of permanence.[836]

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[836] Burcu Özgüven, "Ottoman Encampment and Urban Settlement: A Comparative Evaluation, The Ottoman House" ed., Stanley Ireland and William Bechhoefer, The British Institute of Archeology and

Considering the construction of the Topkapı Palace, we can see that it was formed precisely in accordance with the principle of variation. The Palace, whose foundations were laid by Mehmed II in the middle of the 15th century, continued until the final construction of the Mecidiye Mansion, which was added by Abdulmejid I in the middle of the 19th century. The sultans who ascended the throne after Mehmed II made additions such as wards, rooms, mansions, mosques, and libraries in the Palace. The Palace has constantly changed according to its users' conditions, needs, and tastes. It has never served as a closed composition, and although its basic shape was preserved, it has never been in a fixed form. Whatever the current conditions required, the Palace spaces were kept in motion by considering the changing tastes according to the spirit of the period as an improvisation.

The fact that the spatial formation of the Topkapı Palace is compatible with the principle of diversity in this way is also consistent with Ottoman Political Thought. As explained in the relevant chapter, the Ottomans were extremely practical and pragmatic in state administration. There is a course of action that evaluates the situation by the conditions and necessities, adapts to changes and directs itself according to the needs, creates a customary law according to the needs of the time, and determines its direction when necessary, instead of just following the definite provisions of the *sharīʿa* laws. Hence, the construction process of the palace and the formation of its spaces are an extension of this mentality.

8.5.3. Modular Structure: Topkapı Palatial Settlement as an Open Composition (Unity in Diversity)

In Islamic aesthetics, Islamic artwork consists of multiple figures and units that combine to form larger designs. According to this principle, which is expressed in terms such as tectonic and open composition, each module is an important part of a larger design as well as being a meaningful, lively, and satisfying unit on its own, the environment in the Islamic world is the collectivity of independent units, that are the

tectonics. The fact that the traditional Turkish house is built in a form that can be added to and expanded according to the needs of the occupant reflects this structural form preference. The modular structure is the arrangement that allows this perception and carries the measure of perfection and summit, according to Al-Fārūqī.[837]

As previously noted, the Topkapı Palace is not a building complex built and finished in one go, and it was formed from time to time with additions made according to needs. Especially during the reign of Suleyman I, with the expansion of the state and the increase in the number of Palace servants necessitated the construction of new buildings. During the reigns of Sultan Murad III and Mehmed IV, further additions were made to the structures built by Mehmed II. Despite this, according to Ortaylı, the additions made in the Palace almost complement each other.

From a general perspective, the Palace structures are both singularly exquisite and collectively a rare and unique work of art. It is clear that the Palace, which forms a unity with Hagia Sophia, adds an incredible richness to the appearance of the neighborhood.[838]

Sakaoğlu has similar ideas with Ortaylı. Expressing his evaluations comparatively with Indo-Turkish palaces, the author suggests that There are many similarities between the "outer palace," "inner palace," and "ḥarem" triple plan of the Indo-Turkish palaces and the *Sarāy-ı Humāyūn* (Topkapı Palace), which gives plan freedom and fluidity that differs from the axial and symmetrical palace architectures with its general plan. However, the Topkapı Palace developed as a whole heterogeneous building and was enriched with new pavilions according to the taste or needs of each Sultan. Besides, as a result of materials and traditions, it is seen that a unique silhouette is provided, which, when viewed from afar, evokes a sense of integrity and beauty in terms of architecture and aesthetics, resulting from the repetition of the same styles with different interpretations in each pavilion or annex.[839]

Küçükerman explains the modular structure of the Topkapı Palace with the phrase "Turkish house in the Palace" and defines its similarity with the traditional Turkish house with the following words:

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[837] Quran, Al-Faruki, 188.

[838] Ortaylı*, Osmanlı Sarayında*, 23.

[839] Necdet Sakaoğlu, *Tarihi, Mekanları, Kitabeleri ve Anılarıyla Saray-ı Hümayun: Topkapı Sarayı* (İstanbul: Denizbank Yayınları:2002), 19.

Along with the Topkapı Palace, the characteristics of the identity that we call the "traditional Turkish house" today were also defined, and, in a way, the design principles were determined. The two traditional space elements that we call "house" and "room" today used to mean "the house itself" in the tent space. Even the word "room" meant "home." From this point of view, it is as if the "tent" of centuries had stepped on the ground for the last time on the Topkapı Palace land and stood still, with its fundamental principles, spatial elements, and cultural identity but this time permanently. In general, the house is a building that is "connected with nature" and has different parts within itself. On the other hand, the traditional Turkish house space was the product of a unique building concept consisting of houses that came together and stopped. It created its new form in Anatolia with this interesting identity. It was resolved as a "community" of "houses" with different functions under a "roof."[840]

On the other hand, Doğan Kuban claims that the tectonic formation needs a social, cultural, and philosophical illumination specific to the Topkapı Palace. He tries to explain this situation with the necessity of looking at it as behavioral and functional planning that is open to change, and he thinks that this discontinuity is worth examining as a cultural attitude. According to Kuban, the Topkapı Palace consists of elements that were built in various periods and that destroyed or disfigured the previous ones while being built. Therefore, there is no unchanging architectural scheme. In Topkapı, no axial arrangements fit a general geometric scheme or elements, such as a regular and large architectural core. Ḥarem grows with labyrinth-like appendages and has a general unconstructed layout. He adds that this phenomenon of constant change in the Palace reflects that both the sultans and the people perceived Topkapı as a city, not as a single structure.[841]

Kuban's many similar views on this issue and Islamic architecture stem from his ignoring the aesthetic principles of Islamic art and architecture, the reflections on space and form, and the meaning behind the visible. The situation he negatively refers to as "an order without a general organization" seems to be the organization itself.

The Topkapı Palace is an excellent example of the modular structure principle of Islamic aesthetics, as also agreed by Ortaylı, Sakaoğlu, and Küçükerman. While the structures of the Topkapı Palace, which have been shaped eclectically over time, are whole within themselves, on the other hand, although the construction process has

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[840] Küçükerman, 68.

[841] Kuban, *Osmanlı Mimarisi*, 411-412.

spread over long centuries, they are perceived as harmonious parts of a large whole with the repetition of the same style with different interpretations.

8.5.4. Harmony and Congruity (Tenāsub): Concordance and Beauty of Spaces and the "Affinity of Contraries" in the Palace

While the verse "*He is the One Who created seven heavens, one above the other. You will never see any imperfection in the creation of the Most Compassionate. So, look again: do you see any flaws?*" (Al-Mulk/3) shows that there are no cracks, gaps, openness, voids, aesthetic defects, or ugliness in Allāh's cosmic creation, it also refers to what should happen in human creation and artistic activity by analogy. Al-Ghazālī also listed the four conditions necessary for something to be aesthetic as proportionality, harmony, congruity, and order. Congruity is the state of being balanced, moderate, unextreme, and natural. Balance and order are two important concepts related to each other. There can be a balanced disorder or a balance that appears to be disorderly. The perfect balance created by the union of five fingers of different sizes, on the one hand, is an example of this. Another view, which was explained in detail in the Basic Concepts of Islamic Aesthetics[842], is that symmetry and congruity integrity are indispensable for the search for harmony in architecture. In this context, can we say that the buildings in the Topkapı Palace are in harmony and congruity with one another both externally and in terms of size? How accurate is the view that symmetry is necessary for achieving harmony in architecture? How can we evaluate the Palace from this perspective?

As discussed earlier, *Sarāy-ı Humāyūn* has plan freedom and fluidity that differs from axial and symmetrical palace architectures with its general plan. The Palace, which developed as a whole of heterogeneous buildings, was enriched according to the taste or needs of each Sultan. However, as a result of traditions and materials, it is seen that a harmonious and congruent original silhouette was provided within itself, which arose from the repetition of the same styles with different interpretations in each addition, evoking a sense of integrity and beauty in terms of architecture and aesthetics when viewed from afar. (See Figure 8.24)

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[842] Karadeniz, 210-211.

Figure 8.24 Harmonious beauty of *Saray-ı Humāyūn*
Source: Source: Yenen, "Topkapı Palace" (photo, accessed January 2, 2021).

The French traveler and painter Josephus Grelot does not agree with these opinions. He writes that the Palace gardens are not like the gardens of the Tuilleries, Versailles, and Fontainebleau, or other palaces in France, and adds that there are no pavilions in *Hasbahçe* that resemble the structures of the Louvre and Escorial, underlining the only feature of this glamorous and untidy site that reflects the most beautiful view in the world.[843] Similarly, Salamon Schweigger writes that he does not like the random plan of the courtyard, comparing small and low buildings as if they have fallen out of a bag.[844] These assessments are not surprising for those who look for magnificence in the overwhelming verticality of a single monument and order only in symmetry.

Eldem and Akozan assert that the Islamic and Turkish palaces outside the Ottoman Empire are generally axial and symmetrical, and they add that the freedom and fluency of plan, which is unique to Ottoman architecture, can be seen in large soup kitchens,

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[843] Josephus Grelot, *İstanbul Seyahatnamesi*, trans. Maide Selen, İstanbul: Pera Publishers, 1998), 42.
[844] Salamon Schweigger in Necipoğlu, *Mimari, Tören ve İktidar*, 98.

322

and finally in palaces, which are a branch of residential architecture. The authors emphasize and explain that symmetry was not sought even in the early foundation stages of the palace, and the *Yeni Saray* (the New Imperial Palace) was built by separating from the city with the construction of the land walls in 1478. A plain, which was the highest point of the region thus formed, was reserved for the inner palace. The sections created there were separated by walls, and structures that exceeded these walls according to time and place were added. The construction of this first core was shaped according to the perpendicular principles (orthogonal) but not on an axis (axial). The sections were surrounded by high walls, pillars, or both and enriched with the main door and auxiliary doors, depending on their condition and characteristics. However, from the very beginning, there is a deviation in this orthogonal system. The western facade, facing the Golden Horn, was separated from 90 degrees in places due to the formation of the land and was oriented slightly to the northeast. The main entrance of the Palace is through the Middle Gate at the end of the outer court, passing through *Bāb-ı Humāyūn*. These two gates are not connected by any axis concern, and the connections were created by a broken path. This road passes through one side of the outer court, which has two sections. The middle door can only be seen after advancing in this square for a while.[845] (See Figures 8.25-8.26)

The absence of the search for symmetry in the formation of the Palace is evident not only in the general plan but also in the structures. Although the information note of the gate says the opposite, *Bāb-ı Humāyūn* is also an asymmetrical building in terms of its plan (See Figures 8.53-8.54). Even in such a building with a relatively simple function and plan and a small volume, the architects of the period did not feel the need to connect the plan to symmetrical and axial order. However, the building carries a specific order and discipline in terms of its organization and facades. In the plan, which is in the form of a long rectangle, the asymmetry is started from here, with the passage not being placed in the middle. Thus, the Gatekeeper Apartments on both sides of the door were of different sizes. Both sides have separate staircases, similar to each other, and they reach the mansion floor by passing through the mezzanine. This floor is not available today.[846]

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[845] Eldem and Akozan, 65.
[846] HT, *Topkapı Sarayı havadan görüntülendi*, 68.
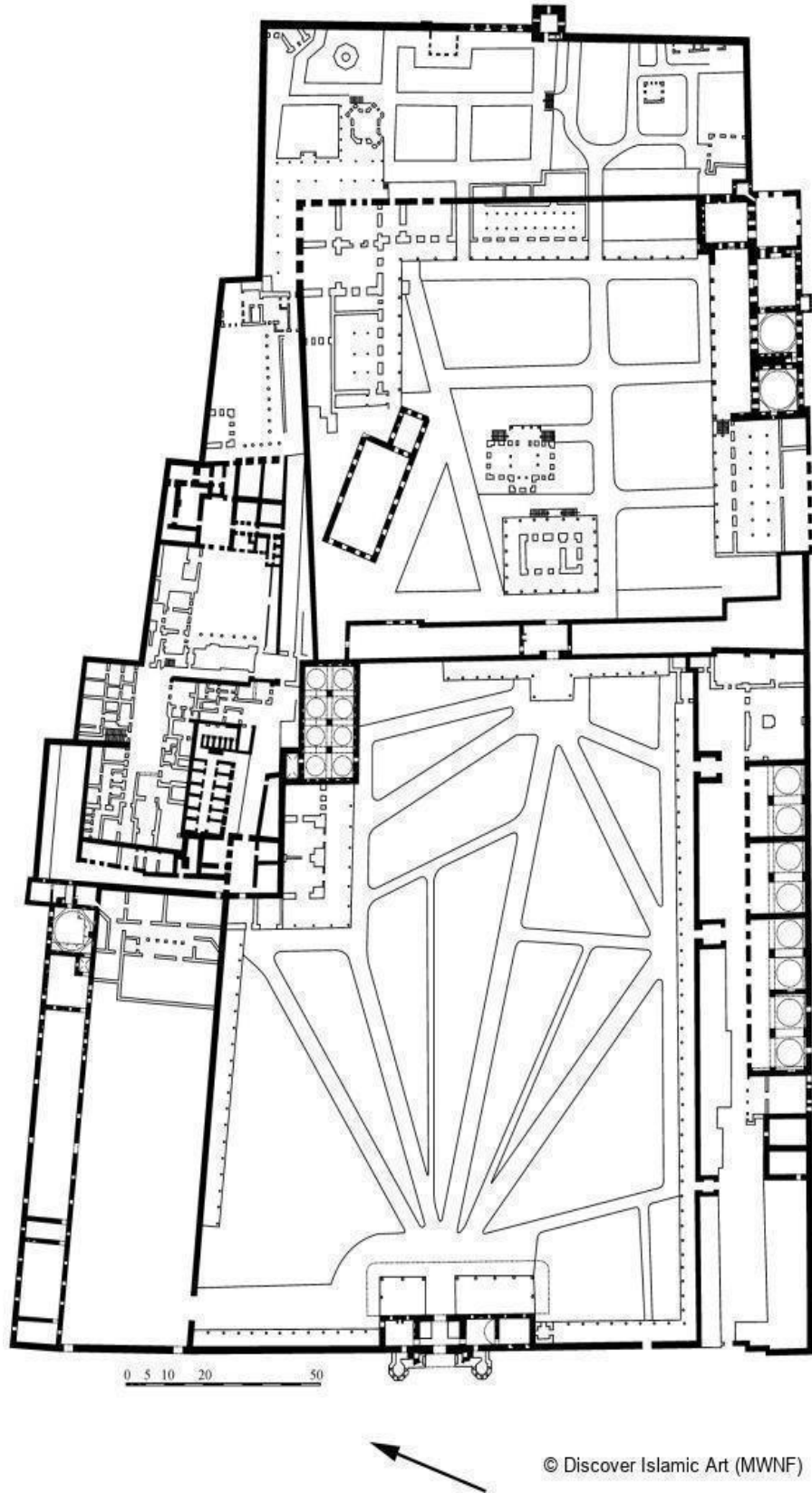
Figure 8.25 Axial plan of Topkapı Palace.
Source: Semra Daşçı, "Topkapi Palace," (drawing, 2020),
https://islamicart.museumwnf.org/database_item.php?id=monument;isl;tr;mon01;24;en&cp (accessed
March 30, 2022).

Figure 8.26 Aerial view of Topkapı Palace.
Source: Haberturk (HT), "Topkapı Sarayı havadan görüntülendi", February 12, 218. https://www.haberturk.com/tarihinin-en-buyuk-restorasyonunu-geciren-topkapi-sarayi-havadan-goruntulendi-1834491 (accessed May 27, 2022).

After carrying the simplicity of the time of Mehmed II until the 16th century, The Middle Gate *Bābusselām* was not found sufficient to serve the Palace and was subjected to various additions in time to become more ostentatious and magnificent. In this door, the plan is in the form of a long rectangle. The door was also not in the middle, so the number of rooms on either side was one on the left and two on the right.[847]

Necipoğlu also mentioned that there was no search for symmetry in the first design of the Palace and underlines and explains that Mehmed II's understanding of harmony and congruity was shaped by the "principle of diversity" since, among the courts of the New Palace, his unique taste was most evident in the third court. The apparent differences in the design and materials of the individual buildings showed that it was preferred to provide visual integrity with diversity. The architectural eclecticism of the *İç Hazine* (Inner Treasury) combined the different styles that Sultan Mehmed II liked and pointed Bursa-profiled arches, muqarnas, Persian poems, and Arabic sentences, complex arrangements of geometric-vegetal motifs, interpretations of Timurid ornamentation, Ottoman-Islamic elements as well as Italian style arches, Byzantine

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[847] Ibid, 70.

style ceiling adorned with figured gold mosaics were all used together. This hybrid building was a product of Mehmed II's imagination and reflected the theme of universal sovereignty. In this structure, where architectural and ornamental elements inspired by various sources were freely used, doors, windows, and niches were also distributed asymmetrically on the walls. The wall sections of the interiors and the marble doors on the courtyard facade are unlike any other. These architectural features also confirm Kritovoulos's statement that all sultan's apartments were built according to the "diversity principle."[848]

In short, it cannot be said that the Topkapı Palace has been a symmetry concern since the first time it was built by Mehmed II. The Sultan shaped the palace according to his own taste with the principle of diversity. Besides, since the palace is not symmetrical, it is not devoid of harmony, congruity, integrity, and a planned design. Just as the five fingers of one hand are different from each other but in harmony and congruity, the spaces of the palace and the general campus are in harmony as a whole, with their harmonious structures in scale, the design language fed from the same source as a style, and the functional buildings that serve its purpose in complete congruity. As the *Harem* section hosted sultans with different personality traits and was, therefore, the section most affected by personal tastes and was less legible than other sections due to excessive additions, when evaluated as a whole, it had less harmony and congruity than the rest of the palace.

8.5.5 Reverse Perspective: Experiencing the Palace from Diverse Angles

According to Islamic aesthetics, the central perspective is the product of a one-sided view and is incomplete. Hence, although it is reflected as an objective concept, it is actually subjective because it centers on where the subject stands. On the other hand, reverse perspective is a way of perceiving the world from the point of view of a known truth, which centers on neither the subject nor the object. This concept and perspective were also reflected in Islamic architecture. In Islamic architecture, the works do not have a facade or front that can be dominated with a single glance. A linear view from a single point is not enough for these works to be perceived and experienced. It is necessary to walk around the structures to experience and perceive them. The

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[848] Necipoğlu, *Mimari, Tören ve İktidar*, 132, 181-182.

reflection of the principle of reverse perspective on architecture supports the state of being in contemplation, which is expected from the Muslims to keep their consciousness constant. The fact that stylized plant motifs in a geometrical order do not have a particular focal point in the decoration is one of the reflections of the reverse perspective on Islamic art.

We can analyze the reflection of this principle on the Topkapı Palace by focusing on the facades of the buildings. The facades of the *Arz Odası* (Audience Chamber) located in the *Enderūn* Courtyard of the Third Court, where the issues decided in the *dīwān* were presented to the sultan by the grand vizier, constitute an excellent example in this regard. Although the Audience Chamber was first built during the reign of Mehmed II, it was destroyed in the earthquake of 1509 and was rebuilt during the Suleyman I period. Having undergone various repairs in the following periods, it received the attention of the sultans as it was also the reception hall for their guests who came to the palace. The only sign of the splendor of the Audience Chamber in this period was the fountain on the side of the room facing *Bābussaāde* (Gate of Felicity). The front of the Audience Chamber was decorated with tile panels. On the Audience Gate, next to the fountain, is the *Basmala* of Sultan Ahmed III. There are expressions praising Sultan Abdülmejid I in the *tughra*-shaped (Sultan's signature) inscriptions on the *Pişkeş* Gate on the left. Ortaylı also emphasized that in order to perceive this structure, which reflects the original style of Ottoman architecture with its muqarnas capitals and arches made of red-white stones on top, and to see its architectural beauty, one should not pass by the building but walk around it.[849] (See Figures 8.27)

Another example is the *Çinili Köşk* (Tiled Kiosk), the first structure of the Palace. It was built in the Timurid style, which was a foreign style to the Ottoman architectural tradition. Necipoğlu says that it may have been built to express Mehmed II's project of conquering the whole world within the scope of competition with Islamic capitals that share the international Timurid culture. The arch and vault shapes of the building are Timurid elements that are foreign to Ottoman architecture. Unlike the Ottoman buildings, which were built with an alternating technique consisting of chipped stone and brick rows, the outer walls were built with bricks, and the windows and iwans

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[849] Ortaylı, *Osmanlı Sarayında*, 86.

were divided into panels with cut stone frames and borders. The east and west facades were decorated with glazed bricks. The pediments of the arched windows on the east facade facing the square were made with the tile mosaic technique. This main facade with a portico is differentiated from other facades by its marble coatings and more elaborate decorations to a certain extent.[850] (See Figures 8.28-8.29)

Figure 8.27 Different facades of the Audience Chamber.
Source: Sessiz Tarih (ST), "Arz Odası Nedir?", April 17, 2014.
http://www.sessiztarih.net/2014/04/arz-odasi-nedir.html (accessed May 4, 2022). Arz Odası,
Wikimedia Foundation, last modified December 02, 2020, 06:35,
https://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arz_Odas%C4%B1 (accessed May 4, 2022).

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[850] Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial and Power,* 274.
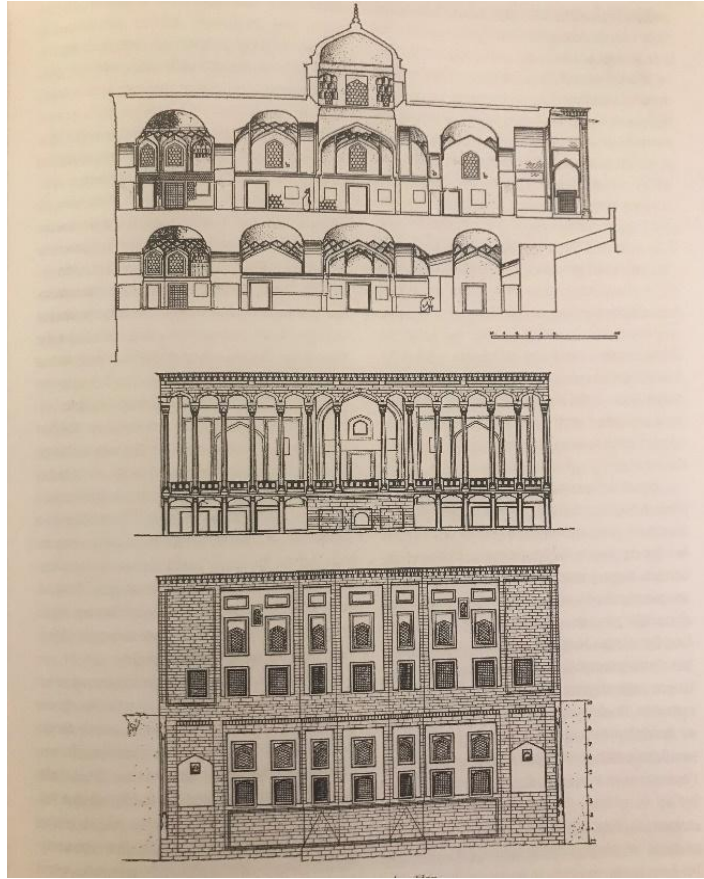
Figure 8.28 Elevation and facade drawings of Tiled Kiosk.
Source: S. Hakkı Eldem and Feridun Akozan, *Topkapı Sarayı: Bir Mimari Araştırma*, "Tiled Kiosk,"
(drawing, 1982), 50.

Figure 8.29. Different facades of the Tiled Kiosk.
Source: Şark Çelebi, "Çinili Köşk," (photo, April 17, 2017), https://gezilecekyerler.com/cinili-kosk
(accessed March 24, 2022).

It is possible to see notable examples of the different facades of buildings in the courtyard where the Privy Room is located. These buildings, which rise above high retaining walls and vaulted basements, have monumental exteriors with floor-to-floor windows, balconies, lead domes giving striking silhouettes, chimneys, and conical tower pavilions. On the other hand, the cozy and friendly atmosphere created by the single-story interior facades facing the cloistered courtyard contrasts with the monumental exteriors that were turned to the outside world.[851] (See Figure 8.30)

Eldem's following statements about the Second Court and the *Kubbealtı* are striking in that they show the reflections of the reverse perspective on the palace spaces:

> *When you enter through the Middle Gate, you can watch the square under the shadow of a large canopy. Previously, these large eaves did not exist. The Dīwān Room (Kubbealtı), which led to the formation of the square, is in the left corner in front of us, that is, not opposite at eye level. For an eye with classical western upbringing, the presence of a passage instead of a building here, Bābussaāde (Gate of Felicity), can be considered misleading because this door is actually the door that leads to the Audience Chamber behind it. Therefore, just across the axis of view is the Sultan's reception hall, which constitutes the peak of the visit. Nevertheless, this place cannot be seen as a building; it remains hidden between the pillars.*
>
> *In eastern palaces, unlike this principle, axes are strictly respected. Even pavilion-shaped buildings follow each other on an axis. However, this naturalness and subtle feeling in the Ottoman palace could not be realized with limited knowledge and artificial behavior in other eastern palaces.*
>
> *Here, we can see a mature example of this understanding in the second court. The Dīwān place is not in the middle, but on the left, in the corner, not on the road. Choosing the side corners, not the middle, in plans and spaces is a special value of Turkish civil architecture.[852]*

Another example is the *Çinili Köşk* (Tiled Kiosk), the first structure of the Palace. It was built in the Timurid style, which was a foreign style to the Ottoman architectural tradition. Necipoğlu says that it may have been built to express Mehmed II's project of conquering the whole world within the scope of competition with Islamic capitals that share the international Timurid culture. The arch and vault shapes of the building are Timurid elements that are foreign to Ottoman architecture. Unlike the Ottoman buildings, which were built with an alternating technique consisting of chipped stone

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[851] Necipoğlu, *Mimari, Tören ve İktidar*, 132.
[852] Eldem and Akozan, 65-66.

and brick rows, the outer walls were built with bricks, and the windows and iwans were divided into panels with cut stone frames and borders. The east and west facades were decorated with glazed bricks. The pediments of the arched windows on the east facade facing the square were made with the tile mosaic technique. This main facade with a portico is differentiated from other facades by its marble coatings and more elaborate decorations to a certain extent.[853] (See Figures 8.28-8.29)

Figure 8.30 Aerial view of the *Harem* section with contradictory interior and exterior facades.
Source: Şerif Yenen, "Topkapı Palace" (photo, accessed January 2, 2021).

Necipoğlu's narrations about the Audience Chamber and the Sultan's Reception Hall partially confirm Eldem and are as follows:

> *The Sultan's throne was placed in the corner of the Audience Chamber to increase the dramatic effect of the initiation ceremony. Its placement, visible from the Sultan's window, not only allowed Him to watch the entrance to the Third Gate but also gave those who waited at the entrance the opportunity to see the Sultan, who was framed by the window and sitting motionless like an icon. To Europeans accustomed to a certain sense of central axis and symmetry, the position of the throne in a corner must have seemed strange. Indeed, two fanciful European engravings showing a Sultan sitting on a majestic throne placed in the middle, under a European baldachin, with dazzling perspective views on either side, on the threshold of His palace, must have been the result of an effort to correct this inconsistency.[854] (See Figure 8.31-8.32-8.33-8.34-8.35)*

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[853] Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial and Power,* 274.

[854] Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial and Power,* 145.
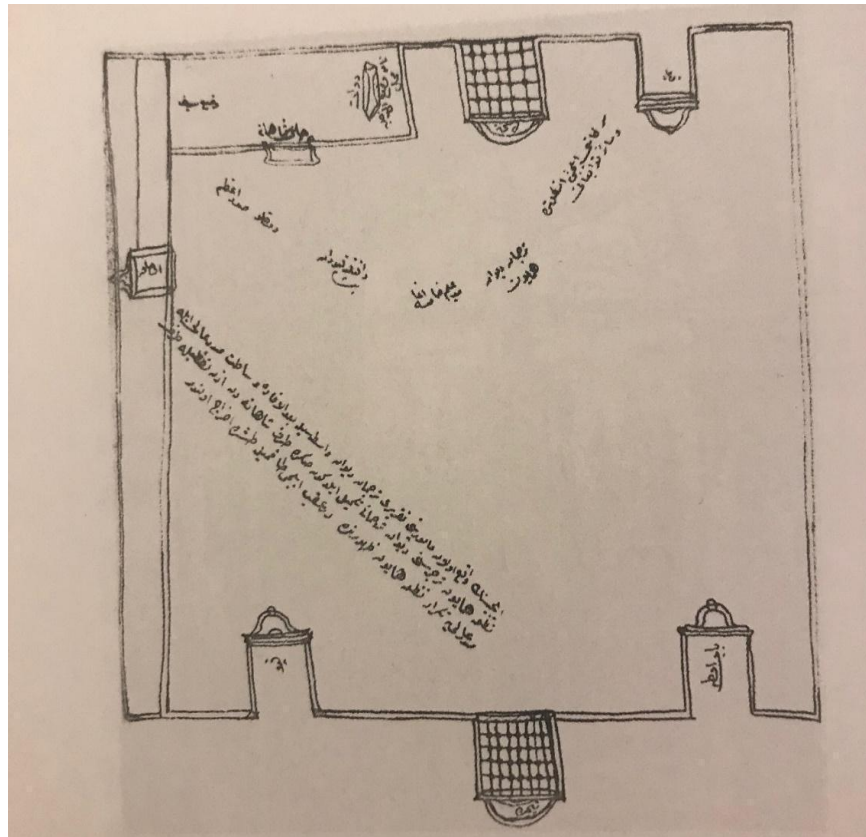
Figure 8.31 Schematic plan of Privy Chamber (with an explanation of a well-known ceremony).
Source: Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial and Power: Topkapı Palace in the 15th and 16th Centuries*, "Privy Chamber," (drawing, 2007), 146.
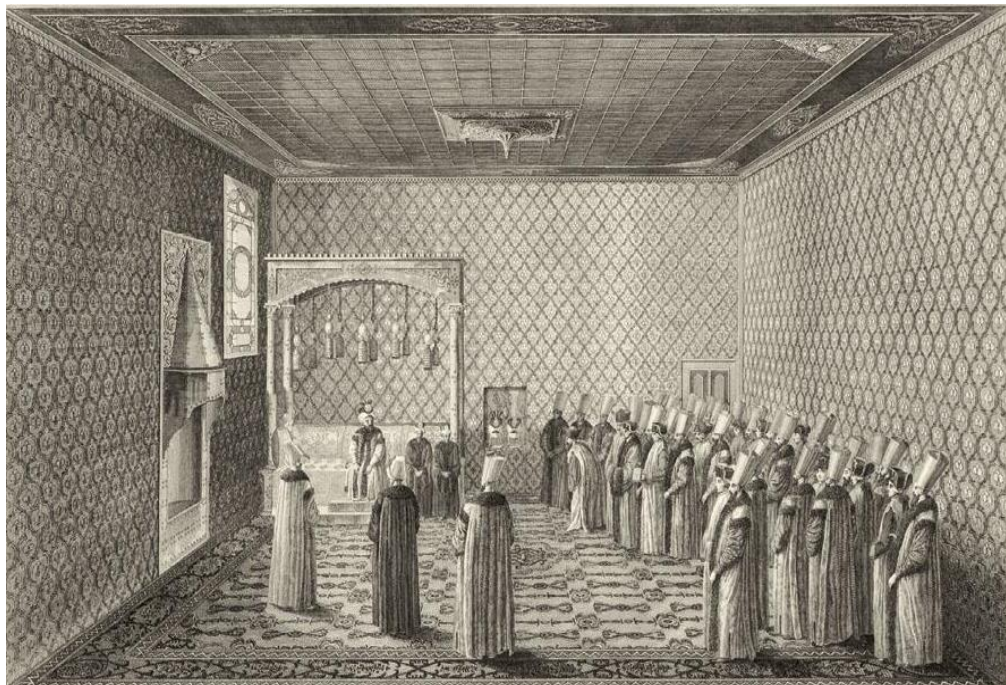
Figure 8.32 A Gravure depicting a ceremony in the Audience Chamber
Source: Metin Sözen, Bir İmparatorluğun Doğuşu Topkapı "A Gravure by Le Barbier depicting a ceremony in the Audience Chamber (drawing, 1998), 96.

Figure 8.33 A ceremony in the Audience Chamber and its illustration
Source: Derya Dok, "Arz-Odası-Resim-Topkapı-Sarayı.jpg", (drawing, October 28, 2019),
https://www.deryadok.com/2019/11/03/gezi-gunluklerim-topkapi-sarayi/arz-odasi-resim-topkapi-
sarayi (accessed May 27, 2022).
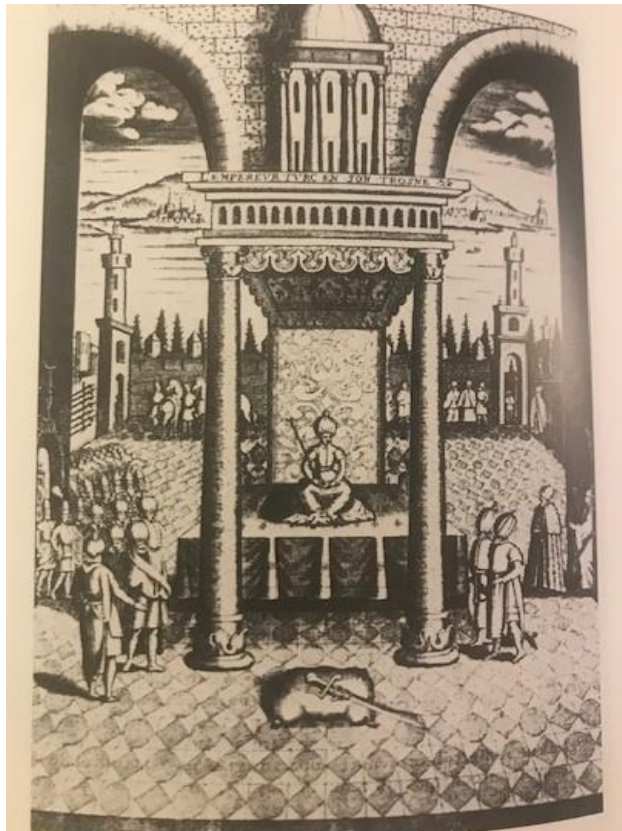
Figure 8.34 An enthroned Sultan, with the third court seen in the background.
Source: Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial and Power: Topkapı Palace in the 15th and 16th
Centuries* "An enthroned Sultan", (drawing, 2007), 144.

333

Figure 8.35 Anonymus sixteenth or seventeenth-century variant of the same print.
Source: Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial and Power: Topkapı Palace in the 15th and 16th Centuries* "An enthroned Sultan"*, (drawing, 2007), 147.

To sum up, since Islam is a belief system that believes in the invisible behind the visible and tries to reach it, it cannot reduce the gaze to the visible. For this reason, the central perspective, which is a prisoner of a single point of view, has no place in Islamic aesthetics. Instead, the concept of reverse perspective, which centers on neither the subject nor the object, and which is a way of perceiving the world from the point of view of known truth, has been adopted. The reflection of the principle of reverse perspective on architecture supports the state of being in contemplation, which is expected from the Muslims to keep their consciousness constant. Accordingly, in order to perceive and experience the structures, it is necessary to wander around them. The fact that the facades of the buildings in Islamic architecture are not the same is also related to this principle. In the examples given above, such as the Audience Chamber, the Tiled Kiosk, or the Privy Room in the Topkapı Palace, the facades are different from each other, as if they are an indication that you cannot dominate the whole with a single glance. Moreover, choosing the side corners rather than the full view axis in the positioning of buildings or specialized spaces, which Eldem mentioned about the

334

location of *Kubbealtı* when entering through the Middle Gate, and Necipoğlu exemplified by the positioning of *Hünkâr* in the Audience Chamber. The fact that the expectation is not met at the time of gaze and the state of consciousness is preserved can also be associated with the concept of reverse perspective.

8.5.6. Harmony with Nature: Topkapı Palace as an Observant Design of Divine

In Islamic art, nature is viewed as a sign that will remind Allāh. The order and harmony in nature determined the artist's view of art and aesthetics. Ibn Ḥazm claims that an object or work of art in nature is beautiful to the extent that it obeys the order in the universe. In this sense, the objects and works of art need to be in harmony with nature to experience beauty.[855] In the Quran, those who make sense of seeing the wisdom in creation are often encouraged to contemplate nature. While being in harmony with nature is perceived as respectfulness to the Creator's work and not trying to dominate it with humility, how was the Ottoman's perception of and relationship with nature? Were the design characteristics of Ottoman gardens shaped by their mindset and Islamic belief system? Can it be said that the Topkapı Palace settlement was concerned about harmony with nature?

A Garden described as a confined field has turned into a space with defined boundaries, planned and organized for specific aims by people and become a living area in which people can get closer to nature and integrate with it. The design of gardens started with the desire of people to arrange the environments where they live and varied according to society and have always been changing during history.[856]

Atasoy explains that, quite naturally, Ottoman gardens are thought of first within the general framework of Islamic gardens. However, the Islamic world extends over three continents, and its culture is an issue that has grown up over centuries. She analyses that during the early Islamic period, there was a rich garden culture, including pools and architectural elements that had been created on the banks of the Tigris River, where one may suppose that the conditions for gardens were hardly very suitable.[857]

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[855] Gonzales, *Beauty and Islam*, 26-30.
[856] Erol Erhan and Şahin Candan, "Design Characteristics of Turkish Culture," *Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi Orman Fakültesi Dergisi Serisi* A, (2009) 170.
[857] Atasoy, *A Garden for the Sultan*, 27.

When the particular features of "Islamic gardens" in places like Persia, Spain, and India are examined, it is clearly seen how impossible it is to discover one specific schema that covers them all. Although they have some common specialties from the standpoint of religious concepts, after all, these are the gardens that were created in different parts of the world with different climatic and soil conditions taking their roots from different cultures. Therefore, Ottoman gardens cannot be put into the same category as any of these others.[858] Although they serve the same purpose as gardens in other Islamic lands, creating a resemblance image to Qoranic heaven of flowing water and abundant trees, Ottoman gardens do not look like Esfahan or Agra, which cover huge areas of land. Atasoy claims that just as Ottomans elevated the tent-dwelling culture of their nomadic ancestors to the level of imperial tents, in the creation of their gardens, they exhibited the same skill in adapting their nomadism to their new found conditions.[859] On the other hand, Ottoman gardens were directly influenced by the culture of Byzantine gardens. Necipoğlu states that created by a sedentarized ruling elite, the gardens built in the 16th century Istanbul combined elements from the last remnants of the Greco-Roman villa tradition inherited from Byzantium with Islamic practices already available in Anatolia or imported from the Turkmen-Safavid territories in the east.[860] She continues that; therefore, it can be argued that the gardens of Istanbul often shared a close similarity with the antique prototypes that the contemporary gardens of Italy were trying to emulate.[861] This was a garden culture that featured pools and fountains but lacked the solidity of formal layouts. The Ottomans were talented at taking elements from other cultures which they came in contact with and reinterpreting the elements that suited their traditions and, consequently, creating a new-brand synthesis. Their approach to gardens was that they should be a part of nature by planting them with flowers and trees; their concern was only to enrich and beautify what nature had already provided.[862]

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[858] Gülru Necipoğlu, "The Suburban Landscape of Sixteenth Century in Istanbul as a Mirror of Classical Ottoman Garden Culture", ed., Attilio Petruccioli, *Muqarnas* 7, (1997): 35, https://www.academia.edu/42537554/The_Suburban_Landscape_of_Sixteenth_Century_Istanbul_as_a_Mirror_of_Classical_Ottoman_Garden_Culture.
[859] Atasoy, *Has Bahçe*, 27.
[860] Necipoğlu, The Suburban, 32.
[861] Ibid, 32.
[862] Atasoy, *Has Bahçe*, 21.

As it seems impossible to draw a strictly defined portrait of gardens in all Islamic lands, Çalış Kural focuses on some garden approaches in different Islamic lands and mentions some common features. She points out that Islamic gardens are all private heavens, fragments of paradise gardens planted on earth. Enclosed with walls, inaccessible to outsiders, Islamic gardens were designed as private spaces where utility and symbolism come together in an aesthetic vision of Islam.[863] The author investigates that gardens also became agents for the construction of urban environments that served as a display of imperial glory. She exemplifies that Ottomans built garden pavilions to mark their conquests. Ottoman gardens were used to display war trophies. The garden kiosks and pavilions of the Topkapı Palace each symbolize a conquered nation or city. [864]

Kural explains that when creating their own gardens, instead of staying connected to a particular set of fixed rules, the Ottomans pursued practical solutions that suited the topography, dimensions, climate, and in general, the current conditions of the place where the garden would be. For instance, instead of building watercourses, they created gardens where running water already existed. They ornamented what nature had already provided. Their additions and interventions, however, were not according to a rigid plan. They act in sensitivity to preserve the look of a setting that might have developed naturally.[865]

Likewise, Ahmet Refik focuses on how we do know that they made the best possible use of available land when determining where a garden should be. In addition, the location and the construction of the garden architecture, the places of terraces and embankments, and the layout of watercourses were never haphazard. Although Ottoman gardens lacked a strict formal organization, that does not mean they were disorganized and randomly selected. In order to understand why Ottoman gardens did not conform to the plans and attitudes of Islamic or other cultures' gardens, it is

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[863] Deniz Çalış Kural, "Real and Imaginary Paradise(s) on Earth: Manifestations of Nature in Islamic Cities," *Nature and the City: Beauty is Taking on a New Form,* Yearbook of the International Association for Aesthetics: Proceedings of the Bologna Conference 17, (2013): 51, https://www.academia.edu/25842424/Deniz_CALIS_KURAL_Manifestations_of_Nature_in_Islamic _Cities_in_Nature_and_The_City_Beauty_is_Taking_on_New_Form_edited_by_Jale_Erzen_and_Ra faele_Milani_Sassari_Italy_Edizione_Edes_Editrice_Democratic_Sarda_2013_49_57 (accessed July 16, 2021).
[864] Ibid, 51.
[865] Ibid, 53.

sufficient to look at the examples of the palace and privy gardens that they created in different places and how they conform to their locations. Nurhan Atasoy enlightens this issue by emphasizing that while the Ottomans were creating their gardens, instead of designing gardens in accordance with the strict, predetermined rules, they brought solutions suitable for the topography, favorable area, and climate. In short, the conditions of the land determined where the garden would be created. Ottoman palace gardens and private gardens in various parts of the city served as examples in this regard. The palace in the city of Bursa, which has plenty of water inside the castle, the garden of the New Palace in Edirne that was created in a special area between the rivers, the gardens of the Topkapı Palace, which spreads down from a hill surrounded by the sea on three sides, the gardens of the Üsküdar Palace, which overlook the Marmara Sea from a little high, are always the ones that live in harmony with nature. Such gardens were intended for the use of the palace residents, and their dimensions were not on a grand scale as the ones open to the public. They were small and intimate, which is more parallel with Ottoman lifestyles. However, what was expected from gardens was that they should be functional as well as beautiful because an important feature of Ottoman gardens was that they were planted not just with flowers but at the same time with fruits and vegetables serving as *bostān*.[866]

Likewise, Ayvazoğlu states that the Turkish garden is functional and pure in design, and it is a living area.[867] According to Erhan and Candan, the most characteristic feature of Turkish gardens is their being natural. There is not a defined dominant axis covering the whole garden except for small-scale gardens. In those small-scale gardens, the axis is around a pool or the structure itself. That formal structured design is softened in other parts of the garden and becomes very informal.[868]

Öztan Bilaloğlu describes that Turks have a tendency and ability to fulfill all their needs for living in a garden, such as eating, drinking, resting, enjoying, and sleeping. The small structures in the exterior in which they can eat and rest work together with the structure in harmony. In sloppy topographies, terrace gardens exist and are used

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[866] Atasoy, *Has Bahçe*, 240.
[867] Bahar Ayvazoğlu, "Nerde O Eski Bahçeler, O Eski İstanbul," (İstanbul Yapı Kredi *Sanat Dünyamız Kültür Dergisi,* (1995), 44.
[868] Erhan and Candan, 170.

for different purposes. Hence, the very basic characteristic of Turkish gardens is that they are not symmetrical based in any sense. These circumstances result in gardens not being areas only to be watched but, at the same time, spaces in which people live. Respect for nature, delight in natural forms, and orders resulting from nomadic lifestyles can be followed in garden design[869]. Likewise, Aslanoğlu Evyapan says that Turks give special importance to living in exterior spaces as they were accustomed to because of nomadic lifestyles. Whether they were choosing land for a small house or an imperial palace, they cared about the location, topography, and view of the land.[870]

Erzen also states that instead of building water channels, the Ottomans built their gardens where there were rivers, developed gardens by planting many trees, and even arranged beds for their flowers, but they left them naturally developed with the additions and interventions they made without putting them in a strict order, but they are not irregular either. In Ottoman aesthetics, man does not dominate nature and must conform to nature. In such cultural settings, landscapes receive little intervention. The references to Allāh, the Prophet, and the Sultan in the texts written by Sinan the Architect about architecture show that he presents his architecture to a world ready beforehand and needs to adapt.[871]

Evyapan defined Turkish gardens as pure but rich in context. She states that the gardens can sometimes be a vineyard or hunting ground, or a space linked with a small forest. They can be either small or large but always dim and shady, keeping from the sunlight.[872]

Aydın also states that the Ottoman gardens are designed considering a good view, fresh air, healing water, hunting opportunities, etc. Although the gardens are designed separately in the West in a formal design, many times, the plans of the Ottoman gardens are not designed on paper but on the lands according to the topography and the functions that they serve.[873]

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[869] Öztan Bilaloğlu, "Kahramanmaraş'taki Tarihi Konutlarda Türk Bahçe Kimliğinin Belirlenmesi Üzerine Bir Araştırma," (PhD Thesis, Ankara: Ankara University, 2004), 41.

[870] Gönül Aslanoğlu Evyapan, "Eski Türk Bahçeleri ve Özellikle Eski Istanbul Bahçeleri," (PhD Thesis, METU:1972), 13.

[871] Erzen, *Aesthetics of Ottoman Culture*, 2.

[872] Evyapan, 14.

[873] Raif Aydın, "Tarihi Türk Bahçeleri İstanbul Örneği," (Master's Thesis, İstanbul: İTÜ: 1993), 70.

Tazebay and Akpınar deepen the issue and explain that as many other fine arts and architectural styles are affected by cultural issues in history all around the world, Turkish gardens are the important representatives of Turkish cultural richness, geographical, philosophical and religious interactions, and their own beliefs. They assert that it is possible to define two main types of Turkish gardens that are completely different from each other. The first is the exterior gardens with large scales communed with nature-like excursion spots. The second is the inner gardens communicating with architecture like houses or palace gardens. The closeness of the inner gardens to the house itself is one of the most specific qualities of Turkish gardens. Their closeness gives an image that they are the components of a whole, and the inner gardens are the parts of the houses allocated to spend time in the open air. Whether exterior gardens or inner courtyard gardens, they synthesize interior and exterior.[874] Cerasi furthers and clarifies the gardens from a different perspective considering the position of women as an extension of the Ottoman mindset about privacy. He focuses on the fact that the residences housed privacy in a mysterious way with the ordering of space. The enclosing of the outer world within the courtyard, and the ground floors without windows were giving in to the continuation of the garden wall. While men got in contact with the city through roads, streets, mosques, and squares, the courtyard and gardens kept women isolated from the world outside by means of walls which at the same time served as the window opening to the outer world.[875] The gardens emerged as livable places where activities such as resting, eating, sleeping, exercising, playing, and growing plants were all possible. Considering the somehow restricted worlds of women, the gardens served as relaxation and recreational areas for women.[876]

The integration of the Ottomans with nature is not only in the choice of location but also in the details both in the Topkapı Palace and in other unique gardens. In written sources, private gardens in cities such as Istanbul, Edirne, and Bursa are often mentioned with the mansions inside, and these mansions are one of the most important elements of the garden. In addition to those that can be considered large architectural

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[874] İlkden Tazebay and Nevin Akpınar, "The Garden in Turkish Culture", *Türk Dünyası Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 54, no. 54 (June 2010): 247, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/294459915_The_Garden_in_Turkish_Culture.
[875] Maurice Cerasi, *Osmanlı Kenti* (Istanbul: YKY, 2001), 124.
[876] Alarslan and Adiloğlu, 75.

structures, garden kiosks can also be small in size. Atasoy asserts that the garden pavilion, whose location was determined by choosing the most suitable place to watch the surrounding landscape properly, was elevated with a few steps even when it was a single story (See Figure 8.36). The author emphasizes that the most important feature of the mansions is that they are open to their surroundings and integrate with the garden, like a part of nature.[877]

Another sign that Topkapı Palace reflects the principle of harmony with nature is the presence of animals in the Palace. In Ottoman palace life, animals were also seen as a part of the palace. In the Black Eunuchs' Ward in the Topkapı Palace, there was even a special cat door for cats to enter and leave easily. In palace life, shelters were planned not only for cats but also for birds. Food and water were left in special birdhouses on the palace walls. Birdhouses were built especially on the south facades of the buildings and on higher elevations so that the birds could be placed safely. (See Figure 8.37)
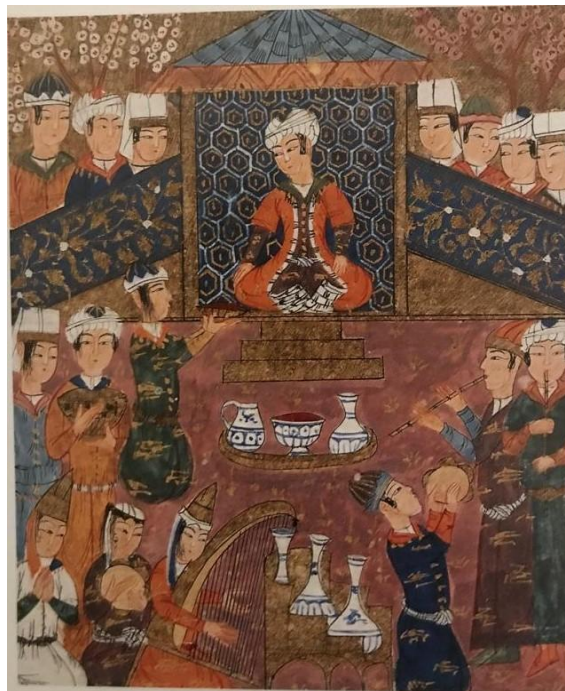
Figure 8.36 One-person garden pavilion, integrated with the garden from the reign of Mehmed II (1451-1481), elevated from the ground by three steps, is located in the middle of the stage, and the walls of the pavilion are covered with hexagonal wall tiles, which are common in this period. On both sides of the mansion, the walls adorned with plant motifs form a corner that highlights the figures of nature.
Source: Nurhan Atasoy, *Has Bahçe*, "*The garden pavilion*", Kâtibi Külliyatı, TSM R989,93a, (drawing, 2016). 28.

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[877] Ibid, 28.
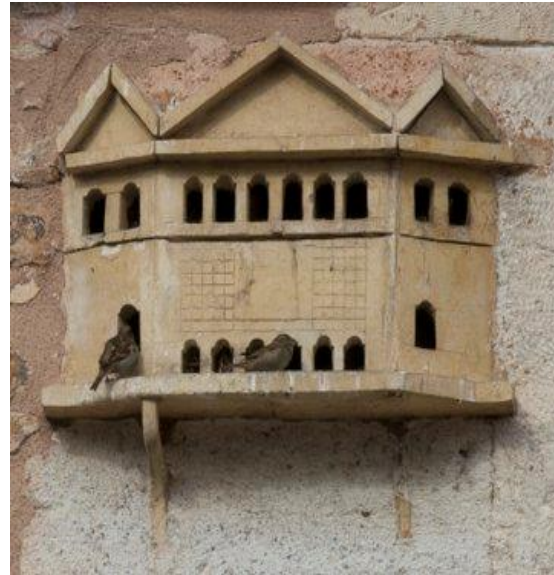
Figure 8.37.Birdhouses on the South Facade of *Darphane-i Amire* in Topkapı Palace.
Source: Milli Saraylar, "Birdhouses," (photo, March, 2020),
https://twitter.com/millisaraylar/status/1237287981586751488/photo/1 (accessed March 7, 2023).

Necipoğlu also underlines the harmony of the Topkapı Palace with nature. She argues that Mehmed II's New Palace had an outward emphasis, unlike the closed fortified architecture. Views from the surrounding landscape were incorporated into the Palace. It was designed to establish an aesthetic connection with nature through the *asmabahçe* (hanging garden), a marble hall with a pool. The descriptions of Mehmed II's New Palace made by Ottoman writers of the period are filled with descriptions of the Sultan's viewing places, tower pavilions, and windows, which benefit from the

breathtaking view of the old acropolis. Bidlīsī describes the Palace as a collection of viewing pavilions from which the sultan could watch every corner of the growing capital and the sea overflowing with ships from all over the world. The poet of the same period, Cafer Çelebi, likened the windows of the heavenly palace "overlooking the sea" in a high place to eyes watching the whole world.[878]

Another statement of the author is an opposing view from Erzen, Atasoy, Karadeniz, and many other writers. Necipoğlu claims that the hanging gardens on the outer terraces reflected the idea of man's domination over nature, which we always encounter in the design of the New Palace, where nature and architecture are intertwined. At the top of the hill, Sultan's palace ruled almost the plant, animal, and mining realms, namely nature, with the flowers, fruits, vegetables, animals, and stored raw materials collected from the whole empire in the outer garden.[879]

This view of Necipoğlu is too sharp-cut an inference. The fact that the sultan is in the highest position in terms of location in a palace built in harmony with its existing sloping topography does not indicate that it reflects the theme of dominating and ruling nature. This attitude seems to be completely opposite to the Ottoman mindset.

To summarize and interpret, as mentioned in detail above, Ottoman gardens have always been designed to fully benefit from the features that nature offers them and to be whole with it. The location of the palaces was chosen in such a way as to integrate, harmonize, and benefit from the rich treasures of nature, instead of choosing any place and constructing water channels or making artificial gardens created by human hands independent of nature. The situation also applies to the Topkapı Palace. Perhaps the most distinctive feature of the palace's location is that it dominates a unique view. However, the fact that it progresses horizontally with its large land and the buildings are not densely distributed gives the feeling as if we are a part of this land. The human-scale windows of the buildings are like a tool for the integration of humans and nature and their harmony with nature. This palace, overlooking the sea, is a palace that reflects the principle of harmony with nature of Islamic aesthetics, where interference with nature is minimal, with its breathtaking outward-facing location selection and

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[878] Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial and Power,* 132.
[879] Ibid, 254.

windows that bring nature into the interior with a frame, viewing kiosks, and tower kiosks. It is clearly seen that the mentality in the construction of the palace is not to dominate nature but to integrate and benefit by respecting it.

8.5.7. Tensionlessness: Serenity and Balance in the Palace

Since the artist advances in a known range of Islamic art, he is free from anxiety, personal confusion, and tension. This brings peace and tranquility to Islamic art. In decoration, the absence of sharp lines in ornaments, lack of perspective, and avoidance of imitation and depiction limit the artist's will, leaving the place of confusion and tension to a repetitive elegance.[880] In architecture, the tensionlessness principle is ensured by the simplicity and abundance of light. These elements give the space unity, continuity, and fluency. The windows at the human level ensure serenity by ensuring that the interior space is not isolated from the outside and the community can see the daylight, hear the sounds of nature, and thus integrate with the space.[881]

Küçükerman, who carefully examined the meticulous spaces of the Topkapı Palace, also describes the state of balance, serenity, and tranquility in the Palace buildings by associating them with the light filtering through the windows. The author says that when looking at the lights coming from the windows of the elaborate spaces of the Palace, these can be seen as the creative works of a tradition. Moreover, he adds that 500 years ago, there was an interesting race between walls and windows in the Palace. Thick and solid walls in state-owned buildings tried to cover large spaces. Glass masters, on the other hand, were trying to pierce these walls and bring the most colorful lights inside. In short, there was a great race in unequal conditions between light and fragile glass against heavy and solid walls. The rivalry between these two created the Ottoman spatial identity, industry, art, and ultimately "Light on the Top" in the spaces of Topkapı Palace (See Figures 8.38-8.39-8.40-8.41-8.42). Giant and elaborate but dark and massive spaces that were gifted to Istanbul could be illuminated and colored by the light filtering through the windows, thus bringing new interpretations to the space.[882]

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[880] Karadeniz, 131
Koç, *İslam Estetiği*, 191.
[881] Karadeniz, 132
Erzen, Osmanlı Estetiği, 124.
[882] Küçükerman, 58.
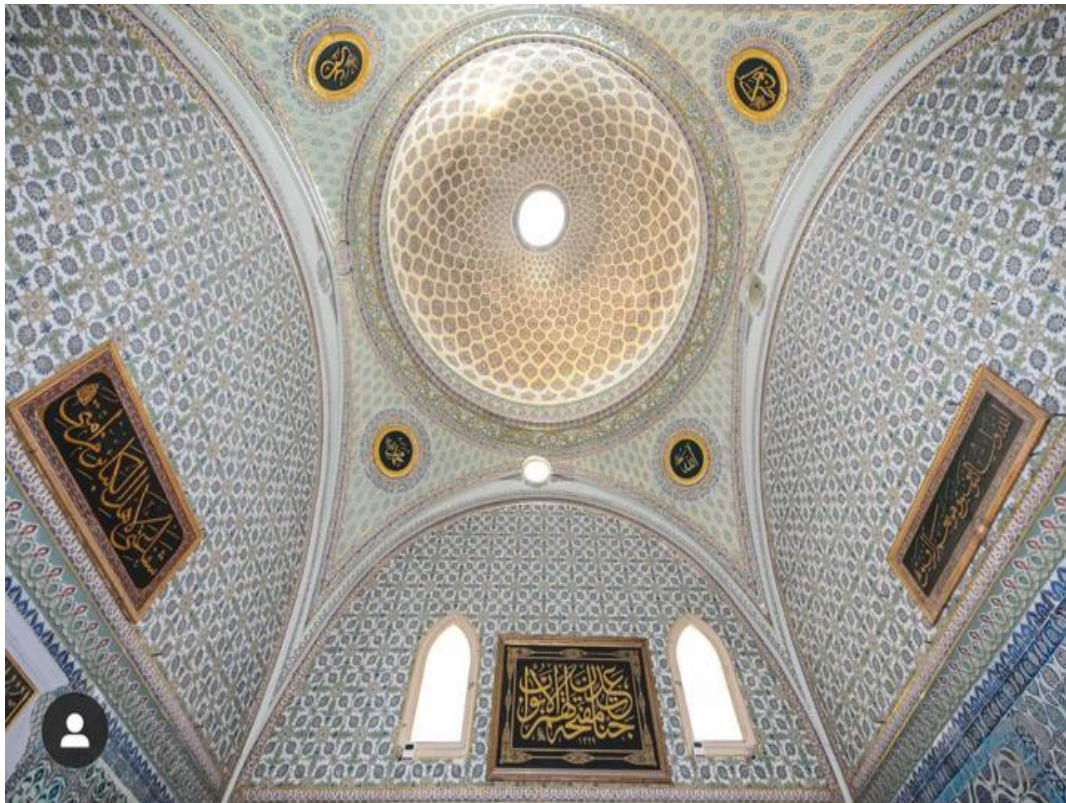
Figure 8.38 The domes of the Murad III Privy Room and *Şadırvanlı* Sofa with their lights at the top.
Source: National Palaces Topkapi Palace (@topkapi_sarayi), "Page of the National Palaces Topkapı Palace," Instagram Photo, March 28, 2021, https://www.instagram.com/topkapi_sarayi.

Figure. 8.39 Dome and passage of the Hammam of Sultan presenting one of the most important themes of Ottoman space tradition.
Source: Önder Küçükerman, *Sanayi ve Teknoloji Yarışında Bir İmparatorluk İki Saray: Topkapı ve Dolmabahçe*, "The Hammam of Sultan", (photo, 2007), 58.
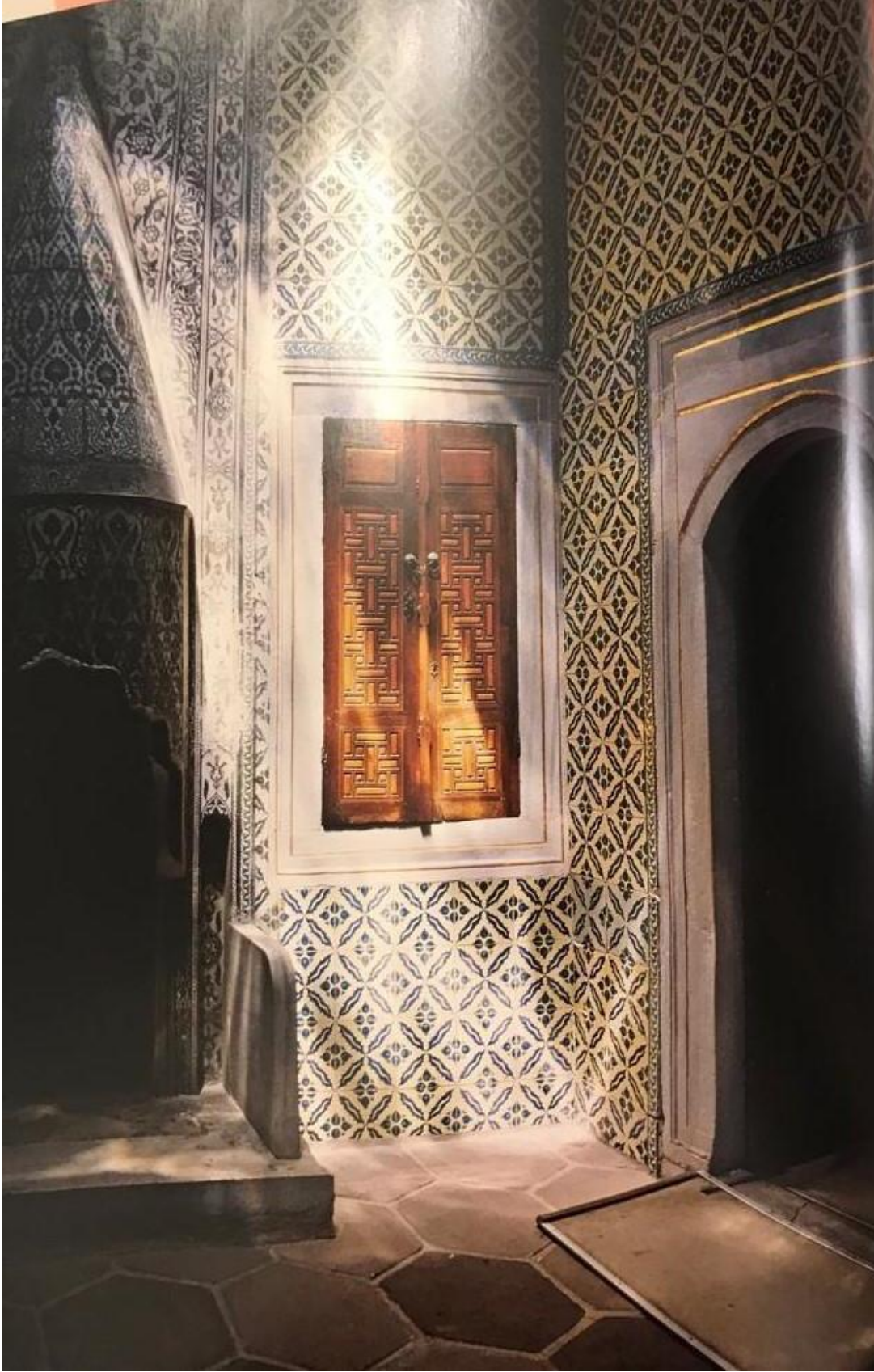
Figure 8.40 Entrance of Valide Sultan Room (Room of Queen Mother) and the beam of light
Source: Önder Küçükerman, *Sanayi ve Teknoloji Yarışında Bir İmparatorluk İki Saray: Topkapı ve Dolmabahçe*, "Room of Queen Mother," (photo, 2007), 59.
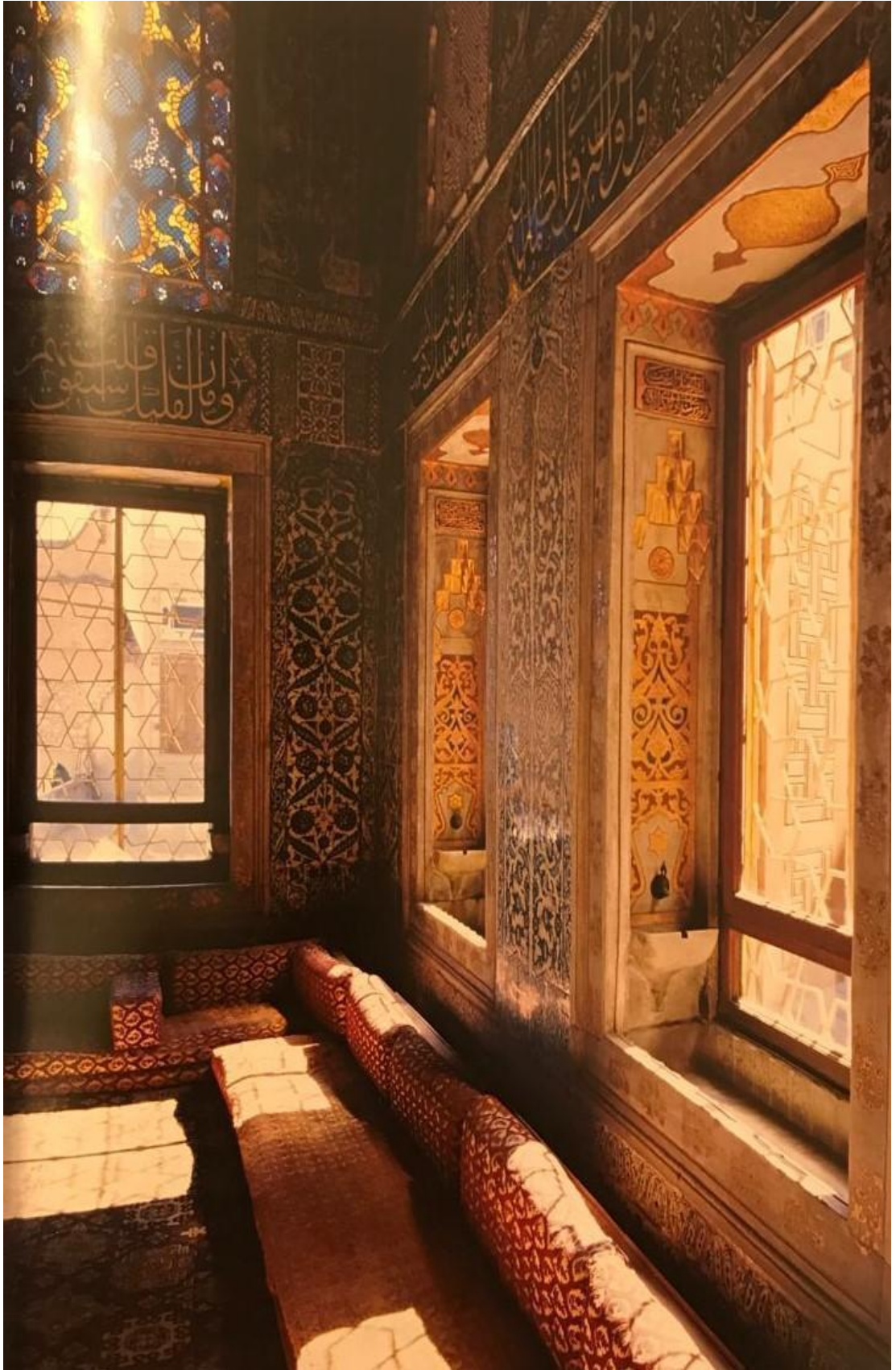
Figure 8.41 Gleaming lights from the windows of the Twin Kiosk.
Source: Önder Küçükerman, *Sanayi ve Teknoloji Yarışında Bir İmparatorluk İki Saray: Topkapı ve Dolmabahçe*, "Twin Kiosk," (photo, 2007), 60.
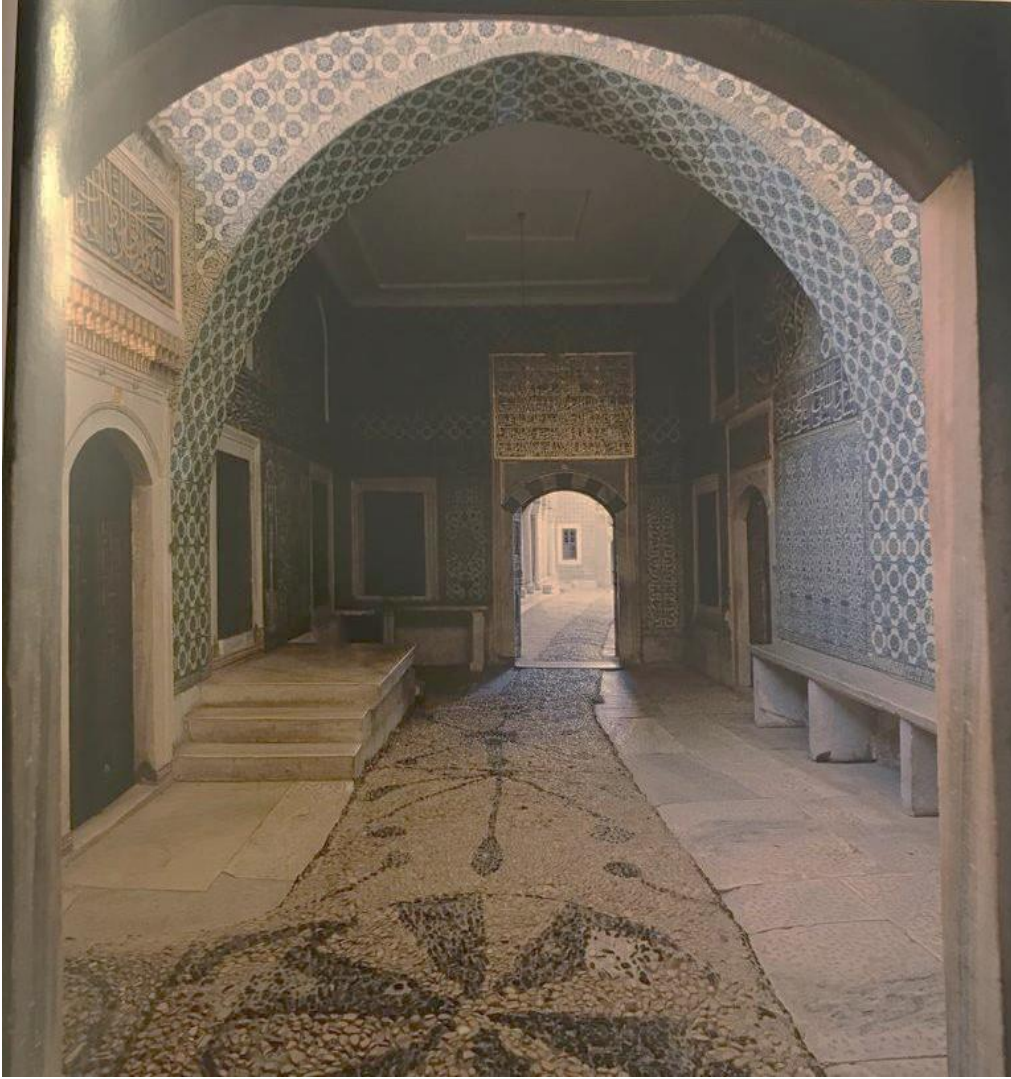
Figure 8.42 Entrance of the *Harem* section and *Light at the Top*.
Source: Önder Küçükerman, *Sanayi ve Teknoloji Yarışında Bir İmparatorluk İki Saray: Topkapı ve Dolmabahçe*, "Entrance of the Harem," (photo, 2007), 62.

Similarly, Necipoğlu emphasizes and describes the serene atmosphere of the mansions in the Palace, with their rich fabrics, carpets, tiles, works of art exhibited in niches, bronze hearths, wooden shutters inlaid with mother-of-pearl, doors and wooden ceilings with abundant gilded painted embroidery since these mansions were like a display window, a place where the decorative arts of the time are exhibited. (Emphasizing that it gives an idea of what the old mansions in which they were built instead of Baghdad and Revan mansions were built) The outer walls were covered with marble up to a certain level, and the upper part with precious tiles (See Figure 8.43). The interior walls were adorned with tile panels depicting flower gardens throughout. This arrangement made the distinction between interior and exterior space,

nature, and art invisible. The use of water also played a key role in these illuminated and fountain rooms, where indoor and outdoor spaces meet.[883] (See Figure 8.44)

Figure 8.43 Baghdad Kiosk having floral tiles on the exterior walls.
Source: Diyadinnet (DD), "Bağdat Köşkü," (photo, December 12, 2020),
https://www.diyadinnet.com/bilgi-1796-bagdat-kosku (accessed May 27, 2022).

Figure 8.44 Revan Kiosk and its pool.
Source: Eski İstanbul Fotoğrafları Arşivi, " Revan Kiosk ", (photo, 1918)
http://www.eskiistanbul.net/5098/topkapi-sarayi-revan-kosku-ve-sunnet-odasi-1918, (accessed April 6, 2023).

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[883] Necipoğlu, *Mimari, Tören ve İktidar*, 244.
(Although these Baghdad and Revan Mansions were built after the 16th century, they are placed in order to give an idea about the old mansions in which thet were built instead of them)

Deshayes de Courmen's descriptions of the Crystal Mansion, one of the earliest buildings next to the *Has Room*, of which no traces exist today, are also worth mentioning in terms of describing the tensionlessness, fluency, and unity with nature sought to be captured in the palace spaces:

> *One of the mansions was built on the edge of a small pool; the floor rising on the vaults is covered with colorful marble mosaics. In its upper part, there is a room whose ceiling rests on eight marble columns; the rest is completely open to daylight as it is covered with very thin crystal panels… Clear water can be seen pouring into the pool with a sweet murmur from the thirty-two fountains here. The wooden ceiling of this room is decorated with mother-of-pearl and precious stones: its top is covered with gilded silver plates, and it is so filled with turquoise, ruby, and other precious stones that no one has seen anything more dazzling.*[884]

In addition, the serene atmosphere of the Privy Room of Murad III, the sample examination area chosen for this thesis, is worth mentioning as it is felt at the first entrance to the room. While the windows at the human level establish a fluid relationship between the exterior and the interior, the *Iznik* tiles adorned with flowers surrounding the windows integrate the interior and exterior space on the one hand and the user and nature on the other. In this room, which shows the peak of Ottoman architecture and art reached in the 16th century with Architect Sinan and the deep taste in ornamentation, there is a monumental marble fountain decorated with flower motifs, which is unique in *Ḥarem*. According to Ortaylı, this fountain, designed to create a beautiful splash of water in the room,[885] serves as a complement to a calm and tensionless atmosphere, as Necipoğlu emphasizes. While the deep windows covered with tile decorations provide permeability between the interior and the exterior with the light and colors they add to the room, the "light at the top" at the peak of the dome establishes a relationship between the interior and the exterior, as well as between the terrestrial and the ethereal realm.

Carved and gilded wooden seating in the corners on the right side of the entrance, door, and cupboard wings, stepped windows, and triple niches with marble arches on both sides of these windows balance the sense of loss that the high domed ceiling can give and reduce the tension by drawing the space to human scale. As the floral

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[884] Ibid, 245.

[885] Ortaylı, *Osmanlı Sarayında*, 184.

embellishments repeat the familiar and a lettering belt that circulates throughout the room, *Āyāt Al-Kursī* (verse 255 of the second chapter, Surah Al-Baqarah' of the Quran) also contributes to the serenity and spiritual atmosphere of the place.[886]

We can say that a reflection of the tensionlessness principle in the palace is provided by the solid/void ratio between the buildings and open spaces. While the area covered by the palace is approximately 700,000 square meters, the buildings cover approximately 80,000 square meters of this area. The remaining important part is reserved for private gardens. These gardens, which are decorated with tulips, hyacinths, lilies, and roses, benefit from the calming effect of water at every scale, with fountains, pools, and a sea connecting two continents. Thus, the general image of the palace is a collection of mansions and low-rise buildings interspersed with gardens full of flowers on a hill overlooking the sea instead of being an overwhelming pile of buildings. In parallel with this, the feeling it gives is not a feeling of loss in a space that is not at a human scale but a feeling of tensionlessness in a space designed with the human scale in mind and integrated with nature.

8.5.8. Humility and Impersonalism (*Tevāżu)*: Paradox of Humility and Splendor in the Topkapı Palace

The reflection of humility in Islamic art on architecture and decoration is that the works are far from the glamor and excessive ostentatiousness, that they take their vitality and light from their simplicity and purity, not from the intensity of colors, and that they take their magnificence from the solemnity of their simplicity, not from the shine of the material used.

Different evaluations can be made about whether the principle of modesty-humility in Islamic aesthetics is reflected in the Topkapı Palace. Hence, if this analysis is made by comparing the palaces of different states in the same period, separate data will emerge if it is done by comparing the power of the state with its spatial preferences on humility, and if we focus only on the Palace and the intentions and preferences about

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[886] Undoubtedly, this evaluation of tensionlessness and calmness is somewhat relative. Although it is accepted as an objective and generally accepted assessment that the light filtering through the windows breaks the solidity of the walls, for some, this room can be also considered as far from serenity because it is far from simplicity. It might be thought that it is tiring that there are no undecorated spots on both the walls and the dome. Besides, the evaluation that the verses of the Quran create a spiritual atmosphere is completely valid only for people who belong to the Islamic faith.

magnificence without making any comparisons, it will reveal a different data. Additionally, we can obtain different analyzes if we focus on the visible face of the Palace, which is open to everyone and has a representative value, and *Ḥarem*, which is the residence of the Palace residents and where they can choose only according to their own taste and mentality.

According to Ortaylı, the religious factor has an undeniable effect on the understanding of the administrative center of the Ottoman Empire. With this aspect, the Topkapı Palace is an essential example of magnificence and humility, the understanding of religion, and the world understanding together in the Ottoman Empire. As a Muslim ruler and caliph, the Sultan is the leader of all Muslims worldwide, and this must be demonstrated through representation. In this respect, the Palace is also the seat of the caliph of the Muslims.[887] The author suggests that the tales of Palace squandering and Harem, which are often discussed in the context of the Ottoman Empire, are exaggerated approaches expressed by those who want to slander the past. The Topkapı Palace is relatively small compared to the enormous palaces of the French and Russians. However, it is beautiful with its pleasant gardens, exquisite architecture, and impressive location intertwined with nature, giving it magnificence from anywhere in Istanbul. It has a natural beauty and magnificence. As some people think, there is no exaggerated luxury and wastefulness in the Palace. Even Suleyman I, who had a work like the Suleymaniye Mosque built, which fascinated all places for centuries, did not think of leaving the Topkapı Palace, and with his extraordinary power, it was out of the question for a genius like Architect Sinan to build a more flamboyant palace.[888]

Eldem and Akozan also compare the Topkapı and Indian palaces. They compare the outer court of the Topkapı Palace, which is between the Imperial Gate (*Bāb-ı Humāyūn*) and the Middle Gate, Gate of Salutation (*Bābusselām*), and the entrance of the Delhi Palace, and they report that if we compare this preparation section in the Topkapı Palace with the Delhi Palace, we can see a big difference. In fact, although both dynasties claim to be world-class, the importance, power, and size of the Ottoman Empire are incomparably superior to that of the Mughal dynasty, but in terms of building and environment, it is in no position to compete with any second-and third-

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[887] Ortaylı, *Osmanlı Sarayında,* 25.
[888] Ibid, 33.

degree Indian Palace, put aside the Delhi Palace. Against the mighty, dominant, and disciplined architecture there, there is a romantic, natural, and free atmosphere here, and it looks like a village square. Arriving at the Middle Gate, the contradiction grows, and the Gate of Salutation (*Bābusselām*) looks pretty modest and insignificant in the face of the enormous castle gates in India.[889] And they go on to explain that the Imperial Gate (*Bāb-ı Humāyūn)* is large enough to take an important place among the regular gates of various Turkish palaces. Nevertheless, it cannot match any of the great gates of Indian palaces in terms of size, materials, and artistry. The *Eyyubi Gıyaseddin Gazi* (13th century) structure and the *Nurettin Zengi* (12th century) structure in Aleppo have similarities with the first gate of the Topkapı Palace in terms of outlines. But here, too, it lags in terms of weight, materials, and artistry. Despite all this, the Imperial Gate (*Bāb-ı Humāyūn)* still occupies an extraordinary place among such Ottoman structures, which were already small and modest. Its architecture is straightforward and free from any unnecessary additions. Leaving aside the marble arches and coatings made later, the architecture of the reign of Mehmed II appears with all its simplicity and nobility. In this state, the Imperial Gate (*Bāb-ı Humāyūn)* shows its existence with the other gate buildings we have compared, not with its material but with its moral value and high architectural quality.[890]

Another comparison belongs to Tavernier. It is also worth mentioning what the 17th-century French traveler Tavernier said about the Topkapı Palace, which we know was getting more and more splendid after the 15th century. He does not even mention the state of the Palace in the 17th century with grandeur.

> *The Sultan's Palace (Topkapı Palace), which I will explain in detail, is the reigning palace of the Ottomans. The Sultan had many palaces in Bursa and Edirne. Compared to the size of the Sultan, these palaces are extremely ordinary residences. Before we leave Istanbul, we see three different palaces, each containing different beauties … The third Palace whose story I have told is the Grand Palace (Topkapı Palace). As the name suggests, this grand word alone is enough to set it apart from the rest. I will not dwell too much on the structure of the buildings, as they do not show any significant characteristics. I will talk more about the special ceremonies in the apartments of the Palace …[891]*

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[889] Eldem and Akozan, 65.

[890] Ibid, 68.

[891] J.B. Tavernier, *Topkapı Sarayı'nda Yaşam*, trans. Perran Üstündağ, (İstanbul Çağdaş Press,1984), 14.

Although some scholars and some opinions find Topkapı Palace as a humble reflection of the Ottomans' religious views and mentality, Necipoğlu does not see this view as satisfactory because Ottoman sources do not find the Palace modest at all. On the contrary, the Palace is a source of pride and a symbol of the empire's greatness in all these sources. Mustafa Ālī, one of the 16th-century historians, emphasizes that conspicuous consumption and display of wealth are indispensable elements of a high position in Ottoman society and adds that neither the Sultan's Palace is appropriate for a poor nor a poor cell for a sultan. According to him, the world ruler should show off by having the Sultan's Palace built on a huge area because the Sultan's Palace displays the greatness and "honor of the sultanate" of the Ottoman dynasty. The monarch was expected to live in a Palace that reflected his glory, and the Topkapı once fulfilled that expectation, although it is hard to imagine for the eyes that look from today.[892] Therefore, it could not be said that the Palace was tried to be built modestly.

One of the places that showed the Palace's grandeur most strongly was the second court. It was used to impress the ambassadors representing important rulers with the power of the Sultan, as well as to be a venue where justice and state administration was carried out four days a week. A ceremony called the "court of victory" was held for the ambassadors, in which they had to be ready by standing in regular rows in the places reserved for them by wearing the most beautiful uniforms of all the people at the gate. For this specially staged show, the second court was adorned with precious carpets, curtains, and precious fabrics extracted from the Outer Imperial Treasury. The wealth of these items would depend on the status of the embassy, and the ambassadors of countries considered unimportant were received without much preparation. After the grand vizier received the ambassador in the *dīwān-ḫāne* (banquet hall), he was offered a meal from the Palace kitchens as a sign of Sultan's hospitality (See Figure 8.45).[893] The degree of abundance at the table also varied according to the importance given to the guests. Insignificant ambassadors were not deemed worthy of eating at the same table as the viziers, and their meals were served outside. The ambassador was finally brought before the Sultan in the third court.[894]

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[892] Necipoğlu, *Mimari, Tören ve İktidar,* 14.
[893] Ibid, 93.
[894] Ibid, 94.

Figure 8.45 The banquet of the Austrian ambassador Hans Ludwig von Kuefstein at the Audience Chamber in 1628.
Source: Tekindağ, . in Gülru Necipoğlu, *Mimari, Tören ve İktidar: 15. Ve 16.Yüzyılda Topkapı Sarayı*, "Audience Chamber" (drawing, 2007), 93.

The general lines of the ceremonial order, which was regulated by the *Kānūnnāme* (Sultanic Law) of Mehmed II, did not change throughout the 16th century. After Suleyman I rearranged the second court, these rules were elaborated with great care and surpassed all Palaces with their splendor, giving the Sultan a "Magnificent" reputation in the West.[895] Sultan Suleyman's new *Diwān-ḫāne* building was built with more valuable materials and on a more monumental scale than that of Mehmed II. High marble columns and lead-covered domes replaced the simple wooden cloisters and hipped roof of the old *Diwān-ḫāne*. (See Figure 8.46). Venetian ambassador Pietro Bragadino, who visited the Topkapı in 1526 and had previously seen the Mamluk Palace in Cairo, found the Ottoman Palace much richer and more beautiful, with horses covered with jewels, courtiers in gold woven fabrics, and precious silks.[896] Schepper, one of the first to describe the Audience Chamber, describes the building in 1533 as follows: The emperor (Suleyman) was seated on a high throne covered with gold-

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[895] Ibid, 118., The wooden bench under the portico seen in 16th century miniatures is the seat of the chief scribe. High-ranking officials used to sit on the red wooden benches that run along the portico. The iron cages and all the wooden details of the *Divānḫāne* were painted red. The railings around the grassy areas in the second court, the curtains hanging on the porticoes, and the carpets laid on the floors were red, the reigning color unique to the sultan's tent. The dominance of red must have created an impressive contrast with the green of the garden outside. (Necipoglu, 118).

[896] Bragadino, "Sommario", Albéri'dé, 106, in Necipoğlu, *Mimari, Tören ve İktidar,* 95.

weaved cloth and innumerable precious stones. There were priceless pillows around it. The room walls were covered with mosaics of dark blue and gold plates, and the outside of the furnace was made of gilded sterling silver. Water was gushing from the wall fountain on one side of the room. A golden tankard was attached to this small fountain next to the throne.[897] In 1567, Marc' Antonio Pigafetta thought that the numerous gatekeepers standing in complete silence and obedience constitute the unique size and splendor of the Ottoman Palace, while another Venetian ambassador, Andrea Badoaro, concluded that no palace in the Christian world is equal to the pomp and grandeur of Topkapı by comparing it with the palaces he had seen throughout Europe in 1573.[898]

Figure 8.46 Splendid *Divānḫāne* in Topkapı Palace.
Source: Mustafa Cambaz, "Topkapı Sarayı- Divanhane", (photo, February 14, 2010),
https://www.mustafacambaz.com/details.php?image_id=22573 (accessed August 14, 2021).

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[897] Schepper, 172-173 in Necipoğlu, 138. According to Necipoğlu, the Audience Chamber, which does not have original decorations and furnishings, now gives a misleading impression of simplicity. The rich decorations in the years when it was used had the opposite effect. The marble cladding, starry ceilings, elegant tiles, precious furnishings, rare fabrics, and jewel-inlaid gilded items that made the building a legend are missing today. The sounds of water emanating from its fountains can no longer be heard, its rich curtains, its dark, mysterious view where gold and precious stones shimmer in the faint light filtering through the stained glass windows can no longer be seen. This building was the place to finally meet the majestic Sultan, the main target of each ambassador's progress through the increasingly private thresholds and courts of the Palace. The effect of its shining and richly decorated interior architecture was dazzling. Despite its small size, this miniature structure did not express humility, but, on the contrary, an unwavering trust in the Sultan's majesty.
[898] Ibid,

However, Necipoğlu also narrates the expression of an unknown Venetian ambassador in 1579, stating that the magnificent majesty of the Ottoman Palace and its richly dressed courtiers were much more impressive than the architecture of the Palace, which created an incredible astonishment, is generally accepted image in Europe. Sixteenth-century writers Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, Du Franse-Canaye, and Michael Heberer von Bretten criticize the second court's lack of monumentality. His contemporaries Salomon Schweigger shared the same view and disliked the random layout of the court, likening the diminutive and low buildings as if they had fallen out of a bag.[899]

Another place where its splendor, designed to be exhibited, stands out is the Palace garden. Atasoy says that the Ottoman rulers used golden thrones in ceremonies, according to the examples of thrones and miniatures that have survived. She notes that the thrones used by the sultans in their private lives were very simple, except for the ceremonial thrones such as the golden feast throne of Sultan Murad III from the end of the 16th century or the mother-of-pearl jewelry throne belonging to Sultan Ahmed III.[900] Existing examples of fixed thrones are the throne in the Audience Chamber and those in the Murad III Mansion and Abdulhamid I Chamber.

Another place where the humility of the Palace can be analyzed is the *Ḥarem* chamber. We can think that the *Ḥarem-i Humāyūn* was one of the places most affected by the sultans' personal preferences and different characters, as it was Sultan's private residence and living space. Although we are talking about a common Ottoman mindset, the sultans' perspectives on worldly life, comforts, and splendor are different. For example, some researchers think that there was no women's section in Mehmed II's New Imperial Palace because only a small inner court was reserved for women during his period, which shows how minor the role of women and self-indulgence in his general mindset and design was. Contrary to the three main courts, which were arranged as wide and airy spaces, it is seen that the women's sections, which are squeezed into narrow borders, are strikingly separated from all other parts of the Palace with different functions. During Mehmed II's period, Harem was as simple as everywhere else in the Palace, and it took its splendor not from gaudiness but the

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[899] Necipoğlu, *Mimari, Tören ve İktidar* ,98.
[900] Nurhan Atasoy, *Has Bahçe: Osmanlı Kültüründe Bahçe ve Çiçek* (İstanbul: Kitap Press, 2014), 33.

simplicity, sobriety, and quality of space. From Suleyman I onwards, Harem was enlarged and ultimately changed by the following Sultans. During the reign of Suleyman I, Harem was moved to the Palace and turned into a permanent residence, and the splendor of the furnishing was constantly increased. In the relevant period, there can be no talk of humility in Harem. On the contrary, the edict of Selim II for a room to be built in Harem in 1567 is worth mentioning at this point:

> *... To the Chief Architect... You drew a picture of the room I wanted to be built in a suitable place in my Palace in Istanbul and sent it. You shall design the room shown in the picture hastily, in accordance with the manner I have accepted, without the excessive expense and in an obnoxious way...[901]*

The Harem of Murad III's reign, on the other hand, was completely different. During his reign, it was enlarged on an unprecedented scale. A Jewish doctor named Salomone wrote, "this Sultan contributed more to the Palace than any Sultan who had ever come before him; he decorated the Palace with gilding and splendid splendor by equipping it with *Diwān-ḫāne*, baths and fountains, porticoes, and gardens." An English traveler, John Sanderson, made a similar observation in 1594:

> *At one of the corners of the city, at a point at the mouth of the strait that separates Asia and Europe, there is a charming residence (Topkapı Palace) built by Mehmed II, enlarged and decorated by all his successors. It is so filled with beautiful palaces, magnificent gardens, marble pools, beautiful fountains, and flamboyant baths that it would be foolish to describe them, especially when the current Sultan Murad has begun to adorn it with such splendor because he alone has built more here than any of his predecessors.[902]*

Consequently, there are different opinions about whether the palace reflects the principle of modesty in Islam, and various evaluations can be made from different perspectives on this issue. If we compare the Topkapı Palace with its contemporary palaces, we can express the idea that it is relatively small and modest compared to the enormous palaces of the French and Russians. Likewise, comparing it with the Delhi Palace belonging to the *Babüroğlu* family in India, whose power was much less than that of the Ottoman Empire, the Topkapı Palace is rather modest considering the extraordinary power of the Ottomans that transcended the continents. However, when we consider the palace on its own instead of making comparative inferences, we

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[901] Küçükerman, 74.

[902] Necipoğlu, *Mimari, Tören ve İktidar*, 223.

believe that it would not be correct to evaluate the Topkapı Palace as a modest palace. Undoubtedly, the Ottoman sultans could have built more magnificent palaces with their increasing power and wealth over time if they wished. However, it is evident that even Mehmed II, who sought magnificence in simplicity, quality of space, and materials, had no reservations about the modesty and cost-effectiveness of the palace. During the reign of Suleyman I, the magnificence peaked when *Ḥarem* was moved to the palace. Murad III's fondness for pleasure is well known. There are statements that only Selim II had such a concern. Therefore, the Ottoman sultans were not fed by the indoctrination of Islam to be modest and reflected this mentality in the place where they lived. Hence, the Topkapı Palace does not reflect the principle of modesty in Islamic aesthetics. Although Ortaylı states that the Topkapı Palace has the value of representation because it is the seat of the caliph of the Muslims and that it is

magnificent and outstanding because it should be represented, this is not a very consistent argument because the parts of *Ḥarem* that are not open to representation are also highly magnificent.

Although Islamic aesthetics does not reflect the principle of modesty in the spatial preferences of the palace, it can be considered that this situation is actually a reflection of Ottoman Political Thought. The Ottoman State was not a theocratic state, after all. Although religion occupies a vital place in the state administration, as it can be understood from the fact that Sheikh-ul Islam is not a member of the *Dīwān-ı Humāyūn*, it is not a state where religion and state do not separate when appropriate. It is known that the *sharīʿa* is not strictly enforced when administering the state, and although there is always a concern for conformity with Islam in the decisions taken, there are stretches, improvisations, sometimes disguising and adaptations, with the help of customary laws, depending on the case. Parallel to this, considering that the palace is not a religious structure, it can be thought that the bending of rules and truths is reflected in spatial preferences in this way, even though there is no religion-world distinction in Islam when it comes to personal tastes and pleasures.

Although the palace does not fully reflect the views of Islam on modesty, it does reflect it in one respect, which is that according to Islamic belief, it is right to be arrogant to the one who is arrogant. A dignified stance and a strong representation are expected from non-Muslims as well. Indeed, we have discussed in the previous chapters how

much importance is given to the splendor of the Audience Chamber, where ambassadors from foreign countries are kept and hosted in the palace. Additionally, it is known that the ceremonies showing the power and discipline of the Ottoman Empire coincided with the arrival of ambassadors from foreign countries, and it is a behavior that overlaps with this mentality.

After discussing and interpreting the Topkapı Palace in terms of humility, we can scrutinize it in terms of another concept that is also in relation to it. That concept is Impersonalism. When the concept of impersonalism is at stake, in Islamic aesthetics, the artist is not a singular subject. Before the artist comes a tradition and an understanding of art determined by that tradition. The artist also derives all of his value from his harmony with this given world. The concept of impersonality means that the artist modestly performs the art without owning it, which is expected from him not to reflect his mood and vacillations in his work. In other words, the artist or the architect is expected not to come to the fore, not reflect his depressions and tastes on his work, and only serve the primary purposes of Islamic art with his style. In this context, although the construction of the Topkapı Palace took many years, how important was the architect of the Palace at the first stage of its construction? Is the architect of a vital palace like Topkapı known? If it is known, how much did he reflect his tastes in his work? Who has the most effective say in the design of the Palace? How did the design and construction process work? How important are the actors in this process? Such questions may reveal the reflection of impersonality in the Topkapı Palace.

It is known that Mehmed II paid particular attention to architectural projects. He personally took care of the construction program of the Palace, and the Palace took shape under the supervision of the Sultan.[903] In *Târîh-i Ebü'l-Feth*, which is the first and foremost source about the construction of the Palace, Mehmed's contemporary Tursun Beg gives the following information in brief:

> *After the conquest, His Holiness the Conqueror said to his viziers, commanders, and soldiers that from now on, Istanbul would be my seat of the throne, and he wished that the walls would be repaired, that beautiful palaces and pavilions would be built suitable for work, residence, and services. He wanted there to be a sofa room for meetings, squares for sword and javelin competitions, and even hunting grounds on the palace grounds. For this*

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[903] Sakaoğlu, *Tarihi, Mekanları, Kitabeleri*, 17.

purpose, he enlightened the architects he had brought from Arabia, Iran, and Anatolia with his architectural knowledge. He put doors between them. He had vineyards, orchards, and rose gardens built between the walls and the palace, and he had fountains, pools, and chat rooms built.[904]

Although the exact extent is not known, it is thought that the New Palace was formed in the mind of its owner, Mehmed II, and then brought to life by construction masters. Kritovoulos also recounts that Sultan Mehmed enthusiastically directed the construction of his Palace, supervised the construction by expert journeymen, and gave frequent bounties to the hard-working workers, encouraging them to finish the palace with record speed.[905] Another aspect that supports Sultan's direct interest in the construction of the palace is the construction history of the Palace. The most intense production periods coincide with the middle of 1460 and the end of 1470 when Mehmed II left his expeditions to rest and devoted himself to cultural affairs and the organization of the state. During these years, he invited masters from various countries.[906]

Necipoğlu, as if confirming our expectation, emphasizes that there is little information about the architects of Mehmed II in Ottoman sources and that there is no clarity on this issue. According to the historian Rūḥī, who wrote at the end of the 15th century, the entire construction of the New Palace in Istanbul, including its pavilions and the surrounding *Kal'atü's Sultāniyye*, was directed by a master named Murad Kalfa in the service of the Conqueror for 28 years and was appointed as the chief architect of the palace during the reign of his son Bayezid II. Rūḥī states that he is a master in the sciences and unique in the art of architecture and argues that Sultan Bayezid is the head of the palace architects. According to Necipoğlu, it was this master who is said to have built many mosques and castles, most probably we do not know much about, who conveyed Mehmed II's architectural dreams into clear instructions that the masters could realize. The palace they unearthed together is "a product of the marriage of the maker and the maker: joint children." However, the Sultan dominated this cooperation, held the reins, and his unique taste left its mark on the result.[907]

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[904] Sakaoğlu, *Tarihi, Mekanları, Kitabeleri,* 18.

[905] Kritovoulos, 149.

[906] Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial and Power,* 38.

[907] Ibid, 39.

The expressions used by Eldem and Akozan while questioning the completely different architectural characters of the two corners of the Enderūn court, the Treasury and the Privy Room apartments, are worth mentioning in terms of emphasizing the relationship of the architects of the period with their works and the principle of impersonality:

> *…The big difference between these two buildings, in our opinion, can be explained as follows, closest to the truth: there are big differences between the dates of construction, these differences may be 15-20 years during the reign of Mehmed II. A second thought is that the building may have been completed during the reign of Bayezid II. However, this does not resolve the issue because the main feature of the building is in the plan. The plan, on the other hand, must have been implemented on the lower floor, at least in the time of Mehmed II. The third thought that architects are not the same artist does not fit the view and attitude of the period on the profession. It is unacceptable for architects to have such different understandings as individuals and to apply them to two corners of the same courtyard…*

To sum up, the sultan himself, who had a particular interest in architecture, had the most significant say in the design of the Topkapı Palace, the main lines of which were built during the reign of Mehmed II. Our knowledge of the first architects of the Topkapı Palace, which is the most important structure in Ottoman architectural history, is very limited. The contribution of this master, who is thought to have directed the project of the palace, whose name is estimated to be Murad Kalfa, and who is mentioned to have unique abilities in the field of architecture, is limited to realizing the sultan's mind, according to the rumors on the subject.

This principle of impersonalism does not mean that artists do not have their own style or they are totally invisible. It would be too big a generalization to say that the work is completely independent of the artist who performs it. Thus, every artist, even if he has a known message, inevitably interprets it in his own "unique" way. Rather than the artist and the upheavals in his inner world, what is at the forefront of the art activity is the aim of the work itself and the best reflection of a worldview in a known range. Similarly, in the Topkapı Palace, actors other than the sultan are in the background according to the building itself and the message it gives.

8.5.9. Familiarity: Topkapı as an Extension of Palatial Spatial Traditions

Considering that every art is a journey, while every artistic product belonging to modern art is a journey to the unknown and mysterious, Islamic art is a journey to a familiar and known destination. Based on this idea, Islamic arts do not seek innovation continuously, nor do they see repeating the past as a defect. It would not be correct to consider this art stuck with the past, the old, and its influence. It is also not true that the reason for the repetitive form and meaning feature that is striking in almost every branch of Islamic arts is that these artisans had to repeat each other with imitation because they lacked artistic creativity. It is a reflection of a vision and a worldview.[908] We can analyze whether the Topkapı Palace, an architectural, and artistic work, was affected by this mindset by seeking answers to some questions. Can we suggest that familiar elements and features were used in the design of the Topkapı Palace? Are there any familiar elements from the old Turkish-Islamic palaces or spatial traditions that have been transferred to the New Palace? Are there repetitions of the Edirne Palace and Kubādābād Palace elements, which were used and perceived familiar before, in the functional and spatial organization of the Topkapı Palace? Or is it right to think this Palace was built with a completely new vision?

In the context of old Turkish-Islamic palaces, a detailed analysis of where the Topkapı Palace was located and from which palace traditions it was affected was discussed under the relevant sections of this study. In this section, we will specifically focus on the Ottoman palace used simultaneously with it, detail the common features of Edirne Palace, which is still in use when the Topkapı Palace was the administrative center of the state, and Kubādābād Palace of the Seljuk's, and analyze whether familiar elements and features were reflected in the New Palace. We will also touch on some singular, specific elements.

Edirne Palace is the first palace built as a permanent ruler after Bursa. Since the Byzantine Palace protocol did not yet play a role in establishing this palace, it had

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[908] We can show that progress in the known range is an element of the Ottoman mentality and that it is preferred in every field by referring to a way of doing business called the "Gedik System." Küçükerman explains as follows: "According to this system, every producer within the borders of the Ottoman Empire had to use both a certain quality of material and a certain production technique, and sell what he produced at a certain price, for centuries, and this was the case that "all kinds of production made according to a known method, it was necessary to ensure that it was always done like this." . Küçükerman, "*Bir İmparatorluk İki Saray*", 67.

more Turkish features than the Istanbul Palace. The location chosen for the palace campus, on the one hand, is a large plain through which the Tunca River flows, and on the other hand, it is a gentle slope. The chosen location is strikingly neither a ridge that could be a castle nor a dominant hill. However, it is a region with a water element like the Topkapı Palace in its general composition, opening to the valley from the southwest and harmonizing with nature.[909]

The palace is almost like an encampment with its wide and flat squares and building groups in this vast area. Turkish features, namely the tendency to spread over large areas, avoiding any restrictions, and leaving large spaces between buildings, are also present in this palace, the predecessor of the Topkapı Palace.

It is known that the Edirne Palace, which was built by Sultan Murad II, the father of Mehmed II, on the edge of the Tunca River and only a few remains today, was magnificent and was influenced by the plan of this palace when Topkapı was first built. The plan of the palace consists of apartments devoted to state affairs among various courtyards and gardens, buildings, and pavilions to be the residence of the ruler, and buildings reserved for officials living in the palace. The buildings were scattered over a large area. (See Figure 8.47)

The main parts are also found here. *Divān* rooms on one side of the Alay Square, the kitchen and stables on the other, *Bābussaāde* (Gate of Felicity) is the pioneer of the division in the Topkapı Palace. After *Bābussaāde*, there is also the Audience Room in this palace. However, here the second square, or *Kum Meydanı* (Sand Square), is crowned with an element that is unique to there and not found in the Topkapı Palace, which is the *Cihānnumā Kasrı* (Panorama Pavilion).[910] Eldem and Akozan claim that the *Arz Odası* (Audience Chamber) in the Topkapı Palace is very similar to the one in Edirne Palace when it was first built, and they are almost the same in terms of their plans. Both buildings were previously surrounded by wooden posts. However, while the number of perimeter poles is 35 in Edirne, it is 24 in Topkapı.[911]

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[909] Eldem and Akozan, 64.

[910] Eldem and Akozan, 64.

[911] Ibid, 64.

Figure 8.47 Edirne Palace settlement.
Source: Nurhan Atasoy and S.A. Kahraman, "Edirne Palace Gardens," (drawing, n.d), (accessed February 10, 2020).

The Topkapı Palace also bears traces of one of its predecessors, Kubadâbâd Palace (see Figure 8.48). Although the remains of this Seljuk Palace in Beyşehir, Konya, are quite limited, some basic design ideas can be traced. The location of this palace, which was praised by the Seljuk historian Ibn Bībī saying, "Heaven is either here or under here," is overlooked by Lake Beyşehir (then named Buhayre-i Gurgurum). While Seljuk Sultan Alā ad-Dīn Kayqubād I was resting near the Beyşehir Lake on his return from the military expedition, he ordered his architect (Sa'd al-Dīn Köpek) to build a palace there. According to the historian of the period, Ibn Bībī, the Sultan wanted a palace to be built that would resemble paradise in beauty, and he determined the plan himself and made explanations on it, as Mehmed II did.[912] The fact that the location of the palace was built on a sloping land overlooking a water element, that the palace was surrounded by walls and privatized and privacy was ensured, was a collection of structures with different functions scattered over a wide area (mainly the Great Palace and the adjacent Harem, Küçük Palace, Shipyard, Turkish Bath, Hunting Lodge), the fact that the Great Palace, the residence of the sultan, has a hierarchical structure in the palace campus, which manifests itself both with its location and typology, the descriptions and emulation of the beauty of the palace related to heaven, and the careful decoration as can be understood from the original tiles[913] are the features that we can see in the Topkapı Palace, too.

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[912]Rüçhan Arık, *Kubad Abad*. (Istanbul, Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2000), 43-56.
[913] Ibid,

In addition to the relations between the predecessors of *Saray-ı Humāyūn*, the application of the familiar, and the transfer of the familiar, different reflections of the principle of familiarity can be observed. Namely, the original plan determined by Mehmed II resisted the significant innovations that lasted for a century, and despite

the changing tastes, the main structures in this plan were preserved, the spatial organization was almost never changed consciously except for minor updates, and the Ottoman Sultans preferred to proceed in the familiar range.
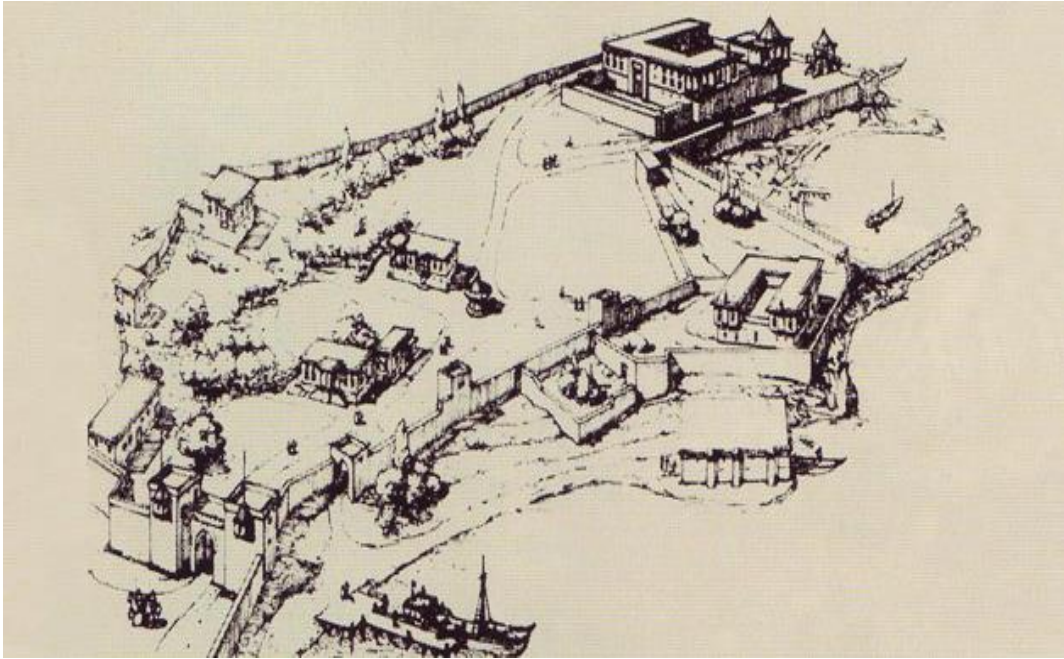
Figure 8.48. Depiction of Kubādābād Palace Complex

Source: Ömer Çetinkaya, "Anadolu'nun Tam Ortasında Gözden Kaçan Bir Selçuklu Şaheseri: Kubādābād Sarayı", (drawing), (accessed February 15, 2023)

https://www.gazetebilkent.com/tarih-2/cetinkaya/anadolunun-tam-ortasinda-gozden-kacan-bir-selcuklu-saheseri-kubadabad-sarayi/

The Topkapı Palace, which was established by Mehmed II as the center of a world empire, can be thought of as being built with a brand-new vision, with its uniqueness in the image and its spatial organization, and it can be considered to be moving in the familiar range with its elements that continue the tradition. As mentioned in the previous sections, the repetition of the encampment tradition in the Second Court of the Palace, the common features shared with the old Turkish-Islamic palaces, the similarity with the Edirne and Kubādābād Palaces, and the fact that the Fatih Mansion was built according to the Turkish house plan support this view.

In addition to these, another point to note regarding the principle of familiarity is that people feel in a familiar place, regardless of their characteristics and functions, of architectural spaces in the classical period, which Erzen expressed. The author explains this with the diversity provided by the modular structure principle and argues that "a basic baldachin structure is applied with a very basic variety such as either open on all sides, open on one side, or closed on one side." She adds that "it is used either as a monumental structure like a mosque, or as a semi-outdoor space like a portico, or as a small structure protecting a staircase."[914]

Besides the author's expressions about structural features which give a feeling of familiarity, repetition of similar basic decorative elements (calligraphy, geometry, and ornamental design) in the interiors can also be the reason for a familiar ambiance as they are fed from the same origin; *tawḥīd*.

It would be appropriate to remember and to mention again that the familiar tendency not to chase the new, not to see repeating the old as a defect, and to advance in the known range has a place in Ottoman Sufi Thought. Ottoman scholars and clergy, while producing religious works, always focused on making commentaries, updates, practical and pragmatic comments on old writings instead of delivering original new works. Rather than the thought that the new can be better, respect for the old and closeness to the familiar are the immediately obvious approaches. The spatial and artistic productions of the Topkapı Palace, which are fed by the tradition mentioned above, and the studies of scholars on ancient works instead of producing original works can be considered self-consistent manifestations and extensions of the same mindset.

8.5.10. Clarity/ Intelligibility: Lucidity of Spatial and Functional Divisions and Message of the Palace

Islamic art originating from the Islamic creed adopts its aesthetic doctrine by interacting with the Quran, so it also possesses clarity and intelligible qualities. In this art, the suggestion of being open in expression influenced the Islamic artist in many ways, from theme to form. Cansever also notes that this concept turned into an Islamic

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[914] Erzen, *Islamic Aesthetics,* 71.

rule and covers all areas of life and emphasizes that this is reflected in architectural forms as well. According to the author, if each form has a message, it is a duty to present them most clearly.[915]

Whether the principles of "clarity and intelligibility," which are among the foundations of Islamic aesthetics, are present in the Topkapı Palace as an architectural work of art can be analyzed through several questions. Does the Topkapı Palace have clarity and intelligibility as a spatial organization? Can it be said to have an easily recognizable and clear functional schema? Does the Palace express itself clearly with hierarchical and spatial divisions? Is there a message that it wants to convey with its existence, and can it be said to express it clearly? What is the perception of palace users and guests (local/foreign) on this issue?

In terms of its functional design and, accordingly, its spatial design, the Topkapı Palace, as an extension of the Turkish palace tradition, is based on a system in which various and large building units are connected to each other by courtyards, and one of these courtyards to the other is usually accessed through doors on an approximate axis.[916] The critical sections lined up on the courtyards in Topkapı Palace are grouped into three large groups: the Outer Court (*Birūn*), the Inner Court (*Enderūn*), and the *Harem*. These parts of the Palace are surrounded by palace gardens, courtyards, and the *Sūr-ı Sulṭānī* (The Walls of the Sultan) at the outermost. (See Figures 1.7-8.1).

According to another principle customary in the Palace, the first courtyard is considered the outer courtyard. When naming starts from the Middle Gate (*Bābusselām*), then courtyards are named as the second courtyard, third courtyard, and fourth courtyard (See Figure 1.7).[917] Based on this principle, Küçükerman explains the main sections of the Palace, depending on its primary functions:

First Court: The sections outside the "Official Palace" and connect with the city are called "First Court." In this court, a "Complaint Pavilion" (no longer available) where war preparations were made and the petitions of the people were delivered, and porticos, gardens, *Has* Garden, St. Irene Church, the Mint Buildings, the palace

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[915] Cansever, "*İslam' da Şehir"*, 138.

[916] Sözen, 36.

[917] Sedat Hakkı Eldem and Feridun Akozan, T*opkapı Sarayı: Bir Mimari Araştırma* (Ankara: Ministry of Culture Publications, 1982), 65.

hospital, ovens, orchards, wells, javelin squares, woodshed, and boathouse were located. It took names such as "First Place," "Regiment Square," "Political Square," and "Janissary Square."

The rules indicated that anyone could enter the section between the "*Bāb-ı Humāyūn*," that is, the Imperial Gate, which is the main entrance of the First Court, and the "Middle Gate," the entrance to the Second Court, on horseback or foot, but no one could ride a horse, pollute the courtyard, or speak loudly. Those who came for business were waiting in this square, where sports competitions and javelin shows were held, also. Sometimes, while the terrible hum of the people occupied in the uprisings reached the sky, the heads thrown from the inside were put on spears and carried around the courtyard as a warning or deterrent to others. In short, this space was a private and open environment designed for all kinds of communication between the Palace and the public.

Second Court: State affairs were carried out in the area called "Second Court." Only the Sultan could enter this courtyard, where the *Kubbealtı*, *Adalet Kasrı* (Tower of Justice), and the Treasury were located. The gate that led to this place was called *Bābusselām*, that is, the Middle Gate or "*Bāb-ı Ālī*."

Third Court: The "Third Court," on the other hand, was defined as the "*Ḥarem-i Humāyūn*," which was the area belonging to the Sultan and was designed in accordance with this purpose. It was entered through *Bābussaāde*, that is, the Gate of Felicity. This door was the point where the vital contrast between inside and outside emerged most strongly. This gate, which connects the second courtyard to the "*Enderūn* Square," was the beginning of secrecy and high privacy. In this courtyard behind the Third Gate, which separates the public outer space and the private interior space, there were the apartments where the Sultan lived, arranged in two separate sections for men and women. This particular section, entirely unique for the Sultan, opened onto a small fourth courtyard with a hanging garden and an outer garden with pavilions sprinkled inside. "*Enderūn*" meant a school where the sultans and their servants lived, studied, and trained the ruling class for the Empire. In the past sources, "*Dāru'l-ʿIlm*," that is, the place of science, was written on this door during the reign of Sultan Mehmed II. The official life of the sultan, his administrative relations, and the reception of the ambassadors took place in the *Ḥarem-i Humāyūn* (See Figure

8.49). The "*Has Oda* (Privy Room)," where the Sultan spend the night, "*Silahtar Hazinesi* (Treasury Ward)," "*Enderūn* School," and "*İç Hazine* (Private Treasure)" were also located here. The "Imperial Harem" was the section where the sultan lived with his family apart from his official life. For this reason, there is no clear information in the sources about the way of life in these exceptional places. *Ḥarem* structures and spaces are generally from the period of Sultan Mehmed II. Later, the first additions were made during the reign of Suleyman I. Nevertheless, the form seen today was formed during the reign of Sultan Murad III. Although the functions of courtyards and squares have shown limited changes over the centuries, they have remained essentially the same.[918]
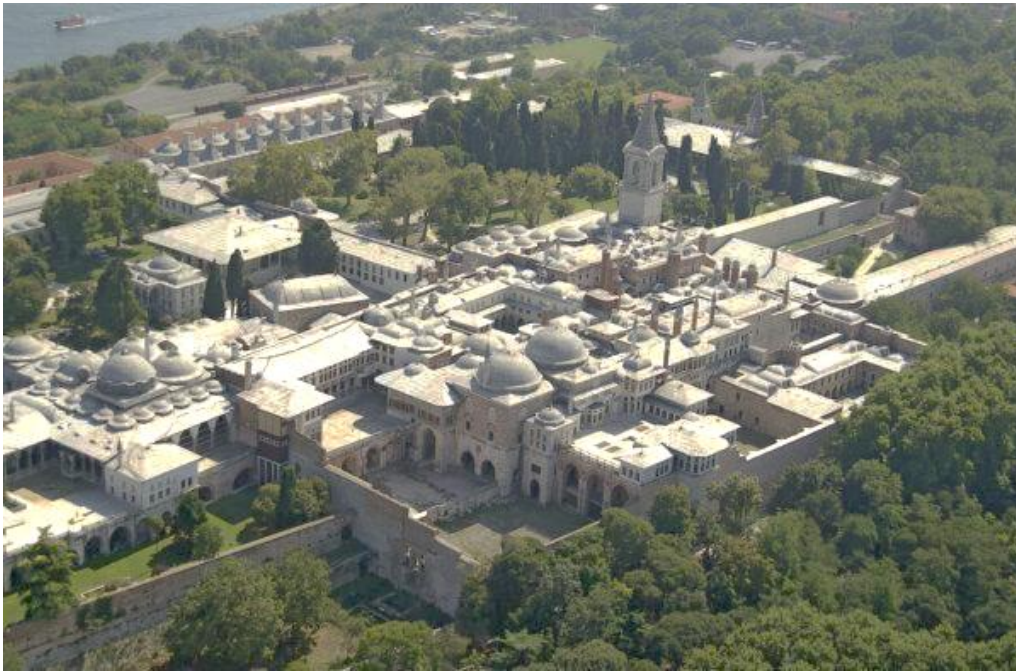
Figure 8.49 Aerial view of the *Harem* section in the Topkapı Palace.
Source: Şerif Yenen, "Topkapı Palace," (photo, n.d.), https://serifyenen.com/tours/topkapi-palace (accessed December 9, 2021).

Although an easily perceptible and clear functional scheme of the Palace and a clear spatial separation in parallel with it are clearly visible, it is difficult to say that each section is equally intelligible and understandable as a spatial organization. According to Koçu, the *Ḥarem-i Humāyūn* in the Topkapı Palace is a separate realm. It is a labyrinth made of apartments, halls, rooms, corridors, baths, stony rooms, sofas, stairs,

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[918] Önder Küçükerman, *Sanayi ve Tasarım Yarışında Bir İmparatorluk İki Saray: "Topkapı" ve "Dolmabahçe"* (İstanbul Yapı Kredi Publishers, 2007), 33-37.

and passages built in different periods, and the person who enters the Palace gets lost in the first step (See Figure 8.50). Next to a dazzling, magnificent hall, a narrow and dark corridor, or a dim staircase, a low-ceilinged room is what you encounter. In this respect, in the *Ḥarem-i Humāyūn*, which is a collection of contrasts, not a single individual other than Sultan's own soul was considered, and the people of the *Ḥarem* only found shelter. However, even if this place is a secluded room, it is embroidered and illuminated like lace: the most elegant, thinnest, and most beautiful tiles are covered with whitewash on the walls.[919]
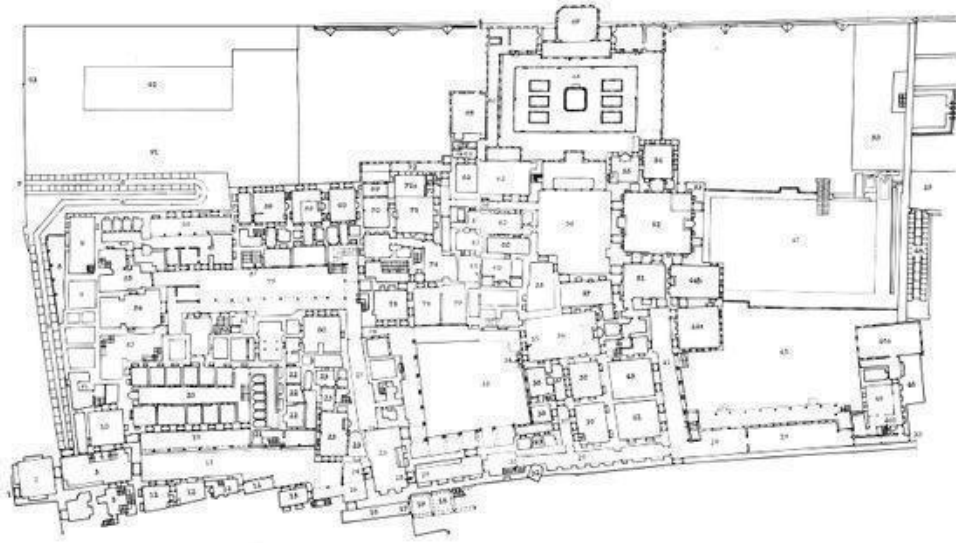
Figure 8.50 Complex plan of the *Harem* section.
Source: Necdet Sakaoğlu, *Tarihi, Mekanları ve Kitabeleriyle Saray-ı Hümayun*, "Harem Section" (drawing, 2002), 309.

According to Sakaoğlu, although *Ḥarem* is perceived as narrow, complex, and devoid of an easy-to-read layout compared to the parts of the Palace that give spacious layouts and in such a complex pattern that those who enter without a guide can find their way out, in fact, it is ordered and harmonious according to the living levels and duties of the classes it hosts, and it had a settlement system based on protocol and discipline principles. In other words, although it was perceived as having a complex structure as a spatial organization, the reflection of the hierarchical order of the space was quite clear and intelligible. For example, while the kitchen, pantry, bath, laundry, toilet, patients' room, and dormitory units, which were the sections where the eunuchs and concubines lived, each gave a ward layout, the apartments reserved for the Sultan and

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[919] Reşad Ekrem Koçu, *Topkapı Sarayı* (İstanbul: Doğan Book, 2004), 167.

his family had meticulous and richly decorated designs. According to the author, although the places in the Palace, especially in Harem, have undergone significant changes and become more complex with various repairs and additions over time, the Palace roughly maintained its place and general lines since the Fatih Mansion, *Has Oda* (Privy Room), Kubbealtı, and kitchens, which are the triangulation landmarks of the Palace planned by Fatih, and the *Çinili Köşk* (Tiled Kiosk) below preserved their original plan. The Palace has more or less preserved its original plan, as they have preserved its place and general lines. When evaluated as a whole, the simplicity and singularity approaches of the architecture of Mehmed II's period seem to have been influential in the entire Palace.[920]

Besides points of view about the spatial clarity of the Palace, Necipoğlu, on the other hand, made mind-opening comments on the messages given by the precise spatial organization and decoration of the Palace and the meanings of these messages. According to her, the Palace once served as a large stage where a particular organization, bound to the minor details, was put into practice. The symbolic language of this ceremony emphasized the exalted position of the Sultan before the state officials, ambassadors, and the public. This strict order, shaped by Mehmed II and developed by Suleyman I, emphasized Sultan's distance from the outside world and clearly separated the accessible and impenetrable areas of the Palace. The architectural elements of the Palace, which consisted of a series of courtyards that became more and more private and ended with an inaccessible Sultan's residence, were perceived in a parade at first glance, forming a coherent whole with the binding of time and space dimensions. This parade ceremony, determined by the rules, brought forward the *Sultanic* iconography of the palace architecture and added a narrative dimension to the spaces arranged in a hierarchical order by drawing the visitor from one ceremony station to another.[921]

In addition to the message that the hierarchical spatial organization gave about Sultan's position, another clear message given by the existence of the Palace was about the choice of location. The choice of the famous acropolis of ancient Byzantium as the site for the construction of the Palace also had a clear symbolic meaning. Tursun Beg and

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[920] Sakaoğlu, *Tarihi, Mekanları, Kitabeleri*, 310.
[921] Necipoğlu, *Mimari, Tören ve İktidar*, 20.

Bidlīsī described the Byzantine acropolis as "*berreyn ü bahreyne müşrif*," that is, a place at the end of a peninsula that oversees two continents and two seas, extending to the water at the junction of the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. At the first entrance of the Palace, the inscription on the *Bāb-ı Humāyūn,* that is, the Imperial Gate, which was completed in 1478, described Mehmed II as the "sultan of the two lands and the khan of the two seas," indicating that he used this magnificent area as a symbol of world domination. [922] (See Figure 8.51).

> *By the Grace of God and by His approval, the foundations of this auspicious castle were laid, and its parts were splendidly joined together to strengthen peace and tranquility by the command of the Sultan of the two Continents and the Emperor of the two Seas, the Shadow of God in this world and the next, The Favorite of God on the Two Horizons, the Monarch of the Terraqueous Orb, the conqueror of the Castle of Constantinople, the Father of Conquest, Sultan Mehmed Khan, son of Sultan Murad Khan, may God make eternal his empire, and exalt his residence among the most lucid stars of the firmament, in the blessed month of Ramadan of the year 883.*

Figure 8.51. *Bāb-ı Humāyūn* and Its Inscription
Source: Şimşirgil, "*Bāb-ı Humāyūn* in Bir Müstakil Dünya", (photo, 2016), 27.

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[922] Ibid, 37.

A hundred years later, the Venetian ambassador Costantino Garzoni was still emphasizing the strategic and symbolic advantages of Topkapı's land: "Everyone agrees that this land is the most beautiful, most favorable, and most miraculous place in the world because it rises on the edge of Europe, next to Asia, and it looks like a key to unlock these countries and has a natural command of both continents; and, since it is above the Bosporus, which can easily prevent the passage from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean, it dominates both of these seas.[923] (See Figure 8.52)

Similarly, Josephus Grelot wrote in his Istanbul travel book that the Palace gardens resemble neither the Tuilleries, Versailles, and Fontainebleau gardens nor the gardens of other palaces in France and that there are no mansions in *Hasbahçe* (Gülhane Park) that resemble the structures of the Louvre and Escorial, and that this is the only place in this gloomy and disorderly area. He said that its feature reflects the most beautiful view of the most special place in the world.[924]

Figure 8.52 Strategic Location and Good View of the Topkapı Palace.
Source: Nicole Kançal Ferrari, "Topkapi Palace," (photo, 2019), https://istanbultarihi.ist/692-topkapi-palace (accessed December 9, 2021).

To summarize and analyze the palace according to the principle of clarity/intelligibility, it is clear that the Topkapı Palace has a distinct functional design scheme and, in parallel, a unique spatial separation. What functions were performed in which parts of the palace, who could enter where, when, and how are so clear and understandable that there is no question mark? However, it cannot be said precisely

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[923] Necipoğlu, *Mimari, Tören ve İktidar*, 37.
[924] Sakaoğlu, *Tarihi Mekanları*, 25

that every section is clear and understandable in the same way as a spatial design. Especially the *Ḥarem* section has a pattern that is far from easy to understand spatially, as it is shaped eclectically according to the tastes of different users in different periods. In addition to this, despite all its complexity, *Ḥarem* is ordered and harmonious within itself; according to the living levels and duties of the classes it contains, it has a sharp hierarchical layout system based on protocol and disciplinary principles. Furthermore, although there were sections that became complicated with some additions and repairs over time, the palace has largely preserved its original schematic plan, as the general lines planned in the time of Mehmed II were preserved, and although it gets complicated in details, it is still readable and clear as a whole. The message that the palace wants to convey with its existence, which is another subject, is perhaps the most transparent and open point of the palace. Both the location of the palace and the inscription in *Bāb-ı Humāyūn* are quite enlightening at this point. The fact that the palace is located on a hill that unites two unique continents in the world is a perfect match location for an empire that has the ideal of dominating the world and is a considerable message, as mentioned above, for the perception of foreigners in this direction. Besides, the inscription of *Bāb-ı Humāyūn*, which is the first entrance gate of the palace, is striking in terms of the clear messages it gives. The reason for the existence of the palace, the beliefs behind it, the values, what kind of an ideal it hosts, and what kind of power the sultan is positioned in according to the mindset of the state can be regarded as the most explicit messages given by the palace.

8.5.11. Beneficence-Functionality: A Multifunctional Design

In Islamic aesthetics, good, beautiful, and useful concepts are evaluated at unity. In this understanding, what is beautiful is good, what is good is useful, and good without use cannot be beautiful. Usefulness and functionality are the conditions of beauty and exist as part of the perfection of the work of art. In this sense, examining the extent to which "being functional" and "providing the necessary benefit" are considered in the formation of Topkapı Palace helps us analyze whether this principle is reflected in the Palace.

This analysis can be started even with the reason for the construction of the Palace. As mentioned above, after Mehmed II conquered Istanbul, he immediately had a palace

built in the area where today's Istanbul University is located. However, this Palace needed a new and more comprehensive palace structure since it could not provide the necessary and sufficient environment for state affairs and could not accurately reflect the image of the Empire. Therefore, the Palace was built from the very beginning to fulfill the necessary functions and provide the necessary benefit. Additionally, the construction of the Palace was not completed in one go. It was formed from time to time with additions. During the reign of Suleyman I, the expansion of the state and the increase in the number of its servants necessitated the construction of functionally new buildings. Additions were made to the construction of the Palace so that it could fulfill the function of representing the increasing power of the state.

While the Palace was a stage where the power of the dynasty was represented, the administrative center of the Empire, the educational institution, and a residence for the imperial family, it was also a building complex that housed thousands of residents grouped according to private and public services. There was a reciprocal link between the architectural-spatial organization of the Palace and its decoration and the central state it served, and Topkapı Palace as a whole represented the Ottoman imperial tradition created in the 15th century and consolidated in the 16th century. With its architectural framework fixed depending on its function and its repetitive and unchanging presence, Topkapı Palace embodied a political structure and a concept of domination that became almost synonymous with the Ottoman administration.[925] Thus, as a Palace, it undoubtedly provided the necessary benefit, and with the additions to it, it fulfilled its functions every time.

While the principles of functionality and beneficence are important in the whole of the Palace, it is possible to see the traces of this mindset in buildings and gardens on a smaller scale. For example, *Bāb-ı Humāyūn*, the monumental gate of the palace opening to the city, was not designed as a monumental gate that only allowed the Palace to pass. Its name is a door; in fact, it is a gate, and this gate is a building consisting of two domed wards on either side of the gate, a cellar, three guardrooms on a mezzanine floor with stairs on both sides, two footpaths and a bathing cubicle, and an upper floor that no longer exists (See Figure 8.53-8.54).

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[925] Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial and Power,* 20.

377
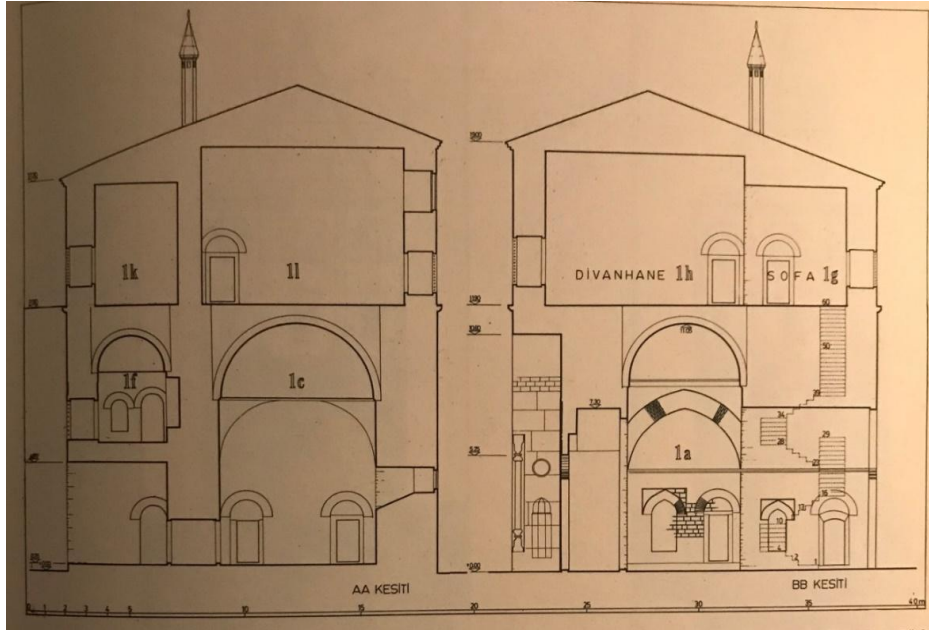
Figure 8.53 Restitution of *Bāb-ı Humāyūn* I.
Source: S. Hakkı Eldem and Feridun Akozan, *Topkapı Sarayı*, "Bab-ı Hümayun"(drawing, 1982), 21.
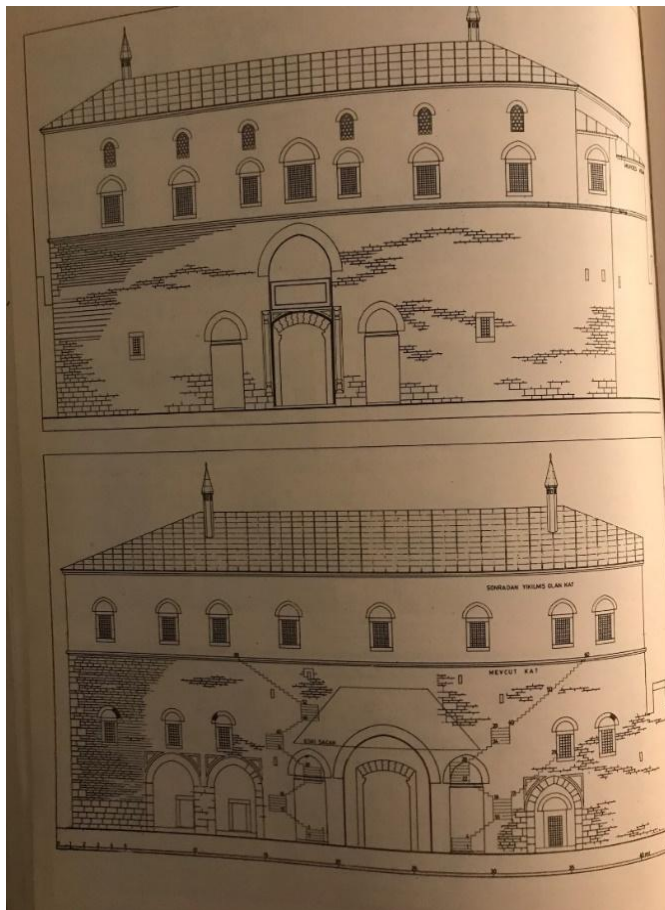
Figure 8.54 Restitution of *Bāb-ı Humāyūn* II.
Source: S. Hakkı Eldem and Feridun Akozan, *Topkapı Sarayı*, "Bab-ı Hümayun"(drawing, 1982), 22.

It is also said that the upper floor may have been a pavilion reserved for the Sultan. In an engraving made by Melling at the beginning of the 19th century, this upper floor has two rows of windows overlooking Hagia Sophia Square and seven huge windows in the lower row (See Figure 8.55-8.56). This bright and spacious place made us think that it could be a mansion.[926] Based on this background, the monumental door was strengthened and enriched with spatial benefit and function, apart from a symbolic meaning and a singular function.[927]

Figure 8.55 Square in front of *Bāb-ı Humāyūn* by Melling.
Source: Necdet Sakaoğlu, *Tarihi, Mekanları ve Kitabeleriyle Saray-ı Hümayun*,"Bāb-ı Humāyūn",(drawing, 2002), 28.

Figure 8.56 *Bāb-ı Humāyūn* by J. Grelot
Source: Necdet Sakaoğlu, *Tarihi, Mekanları ve Kitabeleriyle Saray-ı Hümayun*,"Bāb-ı Humāyūn",(drawing, 2002), 29.

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[926] Koçu, 23.
[927] Sakaoğlu, *Tarihi, Mekanları, Kitabeleri*, 28-29.

Like the *Bāb-ı Humāyūn*, the *Orta Kapı* (Middle Gate-*Bābusselām*) is a building that includes rooms, sofas with fireplaces, cellars, and prisons. It was first built during the Mehmed II period, rebuilt in its current form during the reign of Suleyman, and repaired many times in the following periods.[928] (See Figure 8.57)

Figure 8.57 Middle Gate.
Source: Necdet Sakaoğlu, *Tarihi, Mekanları ve Kitabeleriyle Saray-ı Hümayun*, "Middle Gate," (drawing, 2002), 56.

Besides, the gardens of the Palace were not only used for visual feasts but also occasionally added functionality. It is known that the palace gardens, some of which are privy gardens, were built in sets in accordance with the slope of the land, and some were planted as flower gardens and some as vegetable gardens to be used in the palace kitchen.[929]

Considering that works made for the benefit of the public, such as mosques, bridges, and fountains, which were made for charity and to earn rewards after death,[930] they are also an example of the relationship between Islamic art and beneficence, the fountain that Sultan Suleyman had built at the entrance of the *Arz Odası* (Audience Chamber) is also within this scope when evaluated together with its inscription. The fountain and

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[928] Ibid, 82.
[929] Atasoy, 258.
[930] Çam, 99.

its epitaph (See Figure 8.58), which he had built as a charity for himself and as a life for the people of the *divān* are as follows: [931]

> *"Sultan of the World, Solomon of the Age*
> *Fountainhead of generosity, and the sea of beneficence*
> *Had this fountain built for charity*
> *As the water of life for the people of the divān."*

Figure 8.58 Fountain of Audience Chamber.
Source: Filiz Kölmek, "Fountain of Audience Chamber" (photo, 2020).

From this perspective, functionality is a crucial element in all the buildings that were built according to the need over time from the decision stage regarding the construction of the Topkapı Palace. Care was taken to ensure that the buildings were always built to provide the necessary functional benefit. In addition to its functions as the administrative center of the state and the residence of the sultan, the palace represents a world empire and hosts a well-defined ceremony. Since it fulfills these functions successfully, it has preserved its existence and importance for many years. In addition, even the gates of the palace, which are not necessarily multi-functional, have been designed by adding more daily functions as well as creating a border and threshold. This attitude is consistent with the importance given to utility and functionality in

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[931] Şimşirgil, 74.

Ottoman Philosophical Thought because, as discussed earlier, in the production process of philosophical thought, it was emphasized that everything should be done for a reason and that it should have a benefit. Ottoman thinkers did not attach importance to science and knowledge that would not be applied.[932]

8.5.12. Sorrow: Longing of Heaven in the Spatial Preferences of the Palace

The source of sorrow in Islamic aesthetics is the longing for heaven, which is always imagined as a garden. Considering the principle of "sorrow" in Islamic aesthetics with the principle of "familiarity," it becomes even more meaningful since Islamic arts are formed, developed, and completed within a familiar world of meaning. To this end, the definition of beauty in the Muslim mentality is somehow related to heaven. After all, heaven is the greatest reward to be deserved by the servant who successfully completes his entire earthly life and therefore is the pinnacle of beauty. When talking about the beauty of something or describing any beautiful place, we often come across the expression "heavenly." So, do we see the images of heaven with this longing in the Topkapı Palace? Can we talk about a relationship between the abundance of mosques in the Palace settlement and the longing for the familiar realm?

Heaven represents beauty and happiness in almost every culture. In the Islamic belief system, heaven is thought of as an extraordinarily beautiful garden. Therefore, in the creation of earthly gardens, undoubtedly, one of the aims is to relate heaven to this world.[933] In the concept of heaven, there is an attempt to conform to the various scriptural descriptions of heaven, such as "a garden of palms and grapes, and rivers come gushing out amidst them." When referring to a particularly beautiful garden, calling it a "garden of heaven" was generally sufficient. The Quranic description of heaven had a great influence on the landscaping of Islamic gardens in general.

There are repeated verses in the Quran explaining heaven's rivers. Water, river, creek, and stream are mentioned in the Quran, and those who succeed in entering, have a

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[932] Akagündüz, 148.

[933] The statement that the palace gardens are tried to be associated with the gardens of heaven should not be understood as an attempt to imitate. "Imitation" is already completely opposite to the aesthetic understanding of Islam because in no way can a person attempt to imitate something created by Allāh, cannot achieve this, and cannot even make such a claim. The relationship here should only be considered inspirational, with the most beautiful place to be reached.

chance to benefit from them. Water and water motives are significant and stand out as architectural details like drinking fountains, public fountains, *selsebīl*s, and ponds.[934]

Among the heavenly blessings, some specific fruits of dates, grapes, pomegranates, cherries, and bananas are mentioned in the Quran. None of the fruits are forbidden to the choosers, and residents of heaven will have them without any difficulty.

Fruit and flower patterns of heaven imagery are considered to be exemplary of Islamic space descriptions. Hence, key structures of religious architecture, such as mosques, tombs, and palaces, were related to heaven and furnished with heaven images on wood and stone work symbolizing fertility, power, and infinity.[935] Grapes, pomegranates, dates and date trees, apples, figs, grapevine branches, cypresses, fruit trees, and flowers like tulips, carnations, and roses became indispensable elements of the composition. People believed that the annual flowering and dying of plants was a reflection of human nature, but the promise made by Islam to the Muslims about the resurrection would lead to eternal life in heaven.[936]

The heaven houses are also noteworthy in terms of their correspondence to Ottoman gardens' architectural elements. Uludas and Adiloğlu state that house, room, kiosk, palaces, gardens, throne, and marquee are cited in the Quran as residences of heaven.

These residences are limited in the world; however, in heaven, they will be in their most perfect and magnificent conditions. In hadiths as well, kiosks that were built by the sea sides are mentioned.[937]

According to Atasoy, the gardens created for pleasure were undoubtedly intended to create paradise on earth since paradise is described as an extraordinarily beautiful garden in the holy books. The concept of heaven would first try to fit the descriptions described in the holy books.[938] Dealing with the main elements of heaven in the

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[934] Salih Okumuş, "Kur'an'da Cennet Kavramı", (PhD Dissertation, İstanbul: Marmara University, 2007), 96.

[935] Burcu Alarslan Uludas and Fatos Adiloğlu, "Islamic Gardens with a specia l Emphasis on The Ottoman Garden: The sense of Palace Between Reality and Imagery", *Online Journal of Communication&Media Technologies* 1 (October 2015): 62, https://doi.org/10.29333/ojcmt/2345.

[936] Ibid,

[937] Ibid, 64.

[938] Atasoy, *A Garden for the Sultan*, 211. (This dissertation does not share Atasoy's perspective about a direct intention of creating paradise on earth. The intention can only be providing a relation between heaven and earthly gardens.)

Quranic descriptions and then the images of heaven in the Ottoman gardens could help us more clearly see and interpret the images, emulations, relations, and pursuits of heaven in the Topkapı Palace. Some verses in the Quran that contain the description of heaven are as follows:

"Indeed, the righteous will be in a secure place: Within gardens and springs, Wearing [garments of] fine silk and brocade, facing each other. Thus. And We will marry them to fair women with large, [beautiful] eyes. They will call therein for every [kind of] fruit - safe and secure. They will not taste death therein except the first death, and He will have protected them from the punishment of Hellfire. As a bounty from your Lord. That is what is the great attainment". (Ad-Dukhan, 51-57)

"Indeed, the righteous will be within gardens and springs, [Having been told], "Enter it in peace, safe [and secure]." And We will remove whatever is in their breasts of resentment,1 [so they will be] brothers, on thrones facing each other. No fatigue will touch them therein, nor from it will they [ever] be removed." (Al-Hijr, 45-48)

"Allāh has promised the believing men and believing women gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they abide eternally, and pleasant dwellings in gardens of perpetual residence; but approval from Allāh is greater. It is that which is the great attainment." (At-Tawbah, 72)

"There will circulate among them young boys made eternal. With vessels, pitchers and a cup [of wine] from a flowing spring, No headache will they have therefrom, nor will they be intoxicated, And fruit of what they select, And the meat of fowl, from whatever they desire." (Al-Waqi'ah, 17-21)

"Indeed, the righteous will be in a secure place." (Ad-Dukhan, 51)

"Within it are couches raised high, And cups put in place, And cushions lined up, And carpets spread around." (Al-Ghashiyah, 13)

"But those who believe and do righteous deeds - We will admit them to gardens beneath which rivers flow, wherein they abide forever. For them therein are purified spouses, and We will admit them to deepening shade." (An-Nisa, 57)

"For them therein is fruit, and for them is whatever they request [or wish]." (Ya-Sin, 57)

"And We will provide them with fruit and meat from whatever they desire." (At-Tur, 22)

"And those who have believed and done righteous deeds - We will surely assign to them Paradise [elevated] chambers beneath which rivers flow, wherein they abide eternally. Excellent is the reward of the [righteous] workers."(Al-'Ankabut, 58)

We find some of the elements of heaven mentioned in the Quran in the Ottoman gardens. Atasoy crystallizes that the gardens created by the side of the water or cool pool-sides with canopies, ponds created by dikes, the aforementioned trees, flowers, and dried fruits together with kiosks, palaces, and thrones are the indispensable

elements of the Ottoman gardens. She points out the basic elements of Ottoman gardens as follows: [939]

a. **Garden Kiosk:** When the *hasbahçe*s in cities like Istanbul, Edirne, and Bursa are explained in textual materials, it is usually associated with the architectural elements that they include. The most important of them is considered to be the kiosks *(bahçeköşkü)*. The Ottoman garden kiosks exhibit an enormous amount of diversity in their architectural features, and they range in size; from modest bows to luxurious pavilions. The main feature of garden kiosks was that they were elevated, even if it was just a one-story building, so as to offer the best possible view. (See Figure 8.59)

b. **Garden Thrones:** On the basis of the surviving examples and the examples in miniatures, Ottoman sultans were seated on magnificent thrones that were often ornamented with jewels and covered with precious metals (See Figure 8.60). But with the exception of these ceremonial thrones, the furniture that they sat on during their private lives was quite simple. Ottoman thrones were usually designed to be portable so that they could be set up where and when they were needed.[940]

Figure 8.59 Raised garden kiosk for a single person designed in the period of Mehmed II to benefit from the view and integrate with nature.
Source: Nevai Hamse, "Raised garden kiosk" H802,134a in Nurhan Atasoy, *Has Bahçe*, (drawing, 2002), 17.

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[939] Atasoy, *Has Bahçe*, 27-53.
[940] Ibid,

Figure 8.60 Levni's depiction of Ahmed III on his jewelled garden throne.
Source: Nurhan Atasoy, *Has Bahçe*, "Ahmed III in A Garden for the Sultan" (drawing, 2002), 21.

c. **Cypresses and Fountains:** Cypresses and fountains consisting of a pool with one or more jets are the two invariable elements of Ottoman gardens.[941] So indeed, Eldem also emphasizes that water is the permanent element of gardens with diverse species. Sea, river, pool, or in the simplest form, a fountain always takes place in Turkish gardens.[942]

d. The use of water in Ottoman gardens was generally in hexagonal forms or in *şadırvans*. Therefore, in the inner courtyards, usually rectangular, square, or hexagonal-shaped fountains are placed (See Figure 8.61).

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[941] Ibid, 43,

[942] Sedat Hakkı Eldem, *Türk Bahçeleri* (Istanbul: Ministry of Culture Publications, 1976), 15.

386

Figure 8.61 Rectangular and hexagonal shaped fountains and inner courtyards.
Source: Atasoy, "*Inner courtyards* in A Garden for the Sultan" (drawing, 2002), 31.

On the other hand, the concept of water has gained a sacred status in the belief system of Ottomans. Gardens emulating the heaven image developed and shaped by water compositions.

There are many miniature images as evidence of the common use of cypresses. For decades, the cypress tree has been much beloved throughout the Mediterranean region. The tree was an important element of Byzantine gardens. Among the Ottomans, it was particularly popular. There are many narratives mentioning the importance of cypresses, among which the most dramatic is about the Arsenal grounds. After the conquest of Istanbul, Mehmed II ordered that a garden be created at the spot where he had made his first encampment during the siege. At Mehmed II's order, twelve thousand cypresses were planted in a special order. The sultan himself planted seven of them with his own hands, and his personal mentor Akşemseddin also planted one. According to Evliya Çelebi, the silver cypress took root here after Aksemseddin planted one. [943]

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[943] Evliya, in Atasoy, *A Garden for the Sultan: Gardens and Flowers in the Ottoman Culture* (Istanbul: Aygaz, 2002), 45-46.

e. Flowers in the Gardens: Flowers have special importance in Ottoman gardens. The ones that are sweet-smelling and easy on the eye are preferred in a pure context in terms of colors and species.[944] Atasoy emphasizes that although flowers were cultivated by the Ottomans before the time of Süleyman the Magnificent, the artistic renaissance that took place during the sultan's reign made itself felt in the case of horticulture as well. The love of flowers that penetrated Ottoman society manifested itself not just in the gardens but in every aspect of art in the form of a classical "floral style" in which many distinguished works were produced. Almost all of the foreigners who visited the Ottoman Empire commented on the abundance of flowers in their writings and emphasized that this was a feature of Ottoman gardens.[945] Indeed, nearly all of the single-figure portraits depict the subject elegantly holding a flower.[946] (See Figure 8.62).

Figure 8.62 Portrait of Sultan Mehmed II holding a flower in his hand.
Source: Metin Sözen, *Bir İmparatorluğun Doğuşu: Topkapı*, "*Portrait of Mehmed II*", (drawing,1998), 44.

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[944] Gönül Aslanoğlu Evyapan, "Anatolian Turkish Gardens," *Journal of METU Faculty of Architecture* 1, no. 1 (1975), 5-21, https://open.metu.edu.tr/handle/11511/51426 (accessed May 23, 2021).

[945] Atasoy, *A Garden fort he Sultan*, 46-48.

[946] Gül İrepoğlu, *Levni: Nakış, Şiir* (Istanbul: Renk,1999), 20.

f. Menageries and stables: From documents, it is known that various kinds of animals were kept in palace gardens. All of these were not domesticated, but a few of them were wild animals that were kept under zoo-like conditions. Another element of these gardens was the stables, horses used in hunting or in sports like jeering.[947]

Atasoy reveals that the principal features shared by Ottoman *hasbahçe*s- the gardens reserved for the sultan's private use- that can be identified are; a high enceinte-like wall, trees planted along the wall, several varieties of trees, but invariably at least a few cypresses and with a preference for trees that bloom in spring; flowerbeds arranged in rectangles and around the bases of trees, a garden kiosk; a throne, chair, or stool for the sultan to sit on as circumstances dictated with a pool and fountain before it; wild animals symbolizing the sultan's status as a ruler over three continents; stables for recreational horses.[948] As can be seen clearly, there are many common features between Ottoman gardens and heaven depictions in the Quran.

In the manuscript written in 1537 by *Matrakçi Nasuh*, Istanbul is described as a city where the greenery attracted all the attention despite the buildings being strengthened with an imperial character. Contrary to his inscriptions, the cypress gardens, blossoming trees, and flowers dominated the whole city in Nasuh's paintings. From the fifteenth century onwards, Istanbul and its surrounding had been depicted with blossoming gardens, which hints at the heaven promised in the Quran. The use of the heavenly descriptions was not only an emphasis on the beauty of the Ottoman capital located in the historical peninsula but also the character of the empire itself. The historical peninsula reflected the Islamic heaven with the expression of cypress trees, blossoming trees, and flowers, whereas Galata, the non-Muslim district, was represented with so many densely packed buildings.[949]

The theme of heaven is also frequently encountered in the descriptions of the outer garden of the Topkapı Palace constructed by the Ottomans. Bidlīsī praises the "heaven-like" terraced garden filled with fountains, vineyards, and mansions descending to the sea in layers. The author states that the reflection of the Garden of Eden on earth is

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[947] Atasoy, *A Garden for the Sultan*, 53.

[948] Ibid,

[949] Çiğdem Kafesçioğlu, "The Ottoman Capital in the Making: The Reconstruction of Constantinople in the Fifteenth Century," (PhD Thesis: Harvard, 1996) 23-30.

completed when the Sultan visits this divine garden with his handsome boy and beautiful concubines, who always evoke the youthful boys and *houris* (girls).[950] Tursun Beg says the following while describing the construction of the Palace:

> *He brought in skillful architects and engineers from Arab, Persian, and Greek people and built a lofty palace on that beautiful and refreshing plot in a short time, in accordance with the architecture of his own perfect mind. Fine arts were used for this palace. It was free from all imperfections. Every mansion was gorgeous and enviable. Every field was spacious, and clear, and every fountain was like Khidr water. It was as if the Kawthar River flowed from it. (...) he had a magnificent glass palace in the middle of this garden and a pavilion in the Ottoman style opposite it.*
>
> *Everyone asks: Is this Paradise or Iram?*
> *Iram says: Is this the beautiful one, me, Iram?* [951]

While *Kemalpaşazâde* praises the elaborate fountains and round marble pools reminiscent of those in heaven, Cafer Çelebi depicts roses, tulips, and basils admiring their reflections in these mirror-like pools. The court poet of Mehmed II, Hamidi, likens cypress and pine trees to cypress trees with ruby and pearl fruits and emerald leaves and the lawns arranged with decorative beds to the special fabrics of heaven.[952]

The following description of the outer garden by Kritovoulos in 1465 evokes the gardens of heaven with the images it contains:

> *Very large and beautiful gardens were built around the palace, overflowing with various plants and trees that bore beautiful fruits. There was cool, clear, and drinkable water flowing all around, and lush and beautiful woods and lawns. There were also flocks of both domestic and songbirds chirping and cheering on all sides and various animals, some domestic and some wild, that fed here. In addition to these, many ornaments and various decorations were made that Mehmed II thought would bring beauty, pleasure, happiness, and joy.* [953]

The inscriptions in the palace also crystallize the relationship established between heaven and the palace. If we refer to these inscriptions, the verses on the inscription of *Bāb-ı Humāyūn* (Surat al-Hijr, 45-48) are a reference found in other texts, and it seems

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[950] Bidlīsī, Tercüme-i Heşt Behişt.
[951] Şimşirgil, 14.
[952] Necipoğlu, *Mimari, Tören ve İktidar*, 254.
[953] Ibid, 255.

to have been chosen to emphasize the relationship between *Bāb-ı Humāyūn* and the gates of heaven, and between *Saray-ı Humāyūn* and the gardens of heaven:

> *Indeed, the righteous will be within gardens and springs, [Having been told], Enter it in peace, safe [and secure]." And We will remove whatever is in their breasts of resentment, [so they will be] brothers, on thrones facing each other.*

Another common image that can be thought to be established between the Palace and heaven is related to *Bābusselām*, which also means the Gate of Salutation, and it can be thought of as a reference to the peaceful image of heaven that the official visitor will encounter when he crosses the threshold of the second court.

Necipoğlu thinks that the most preferred name for the Third Gate is *Bābussaāde* (Gate of Felicity), which is related to the image of heaven. This name implies that Sultan's private palace was like heaven and blessed with servants, concubines, ever-flowing fountains, gardens, and mansions.[954]

On the inscription of the door on the Golden Road in *Harem (*See Figure 8.63), the 73rd Verse of Surah Az-Zumar reads: "… *Peace be upon you; you have become pure; so enter it to abide eternally therein*…". With this verse, *Harem*, which is the private residence of the Sultan, refers to the promised heaven in which to live in comfort and peace forever. On the inscription of Murad III Privy Room, it is written:

> *The Righteous Sultan Murad ordered and had it built,*
> *This pavilion was constructed with abundance.*
> *It has an amber place, with a soul caress wind and Kawthar water,*
> *Likened to heaven is this place.*
> *The sun illuminating the world is its ornament, and the stars the wings of its door. The shimmering moonlight would only suit it if it had a cup.*
> *With a secret prayer, Hatefi said the date,*
> *Blessed be the sultan of the world to always stay in this room (See Figure 8.64)*

Besides, according to Atasoy, although the room known as the *Valide Sultan* Room visiting the Topkapı Palace *Ḥarem* Room surprises those who visit with its small dimensions when we evaluate this place from the Ottoman mindset, this place is like heaven with the flowers on the wall tiles. In fact, many mosques, palace rooms and halls, tombs, and other similar structures in Ottoman architecture were turned into gardens of heaven, as in the example of Valide Sultan Room.[955] (See Figure 8.65)

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[954] Ibid, 125.
[955] Atasoy, 332.

Figure 8.63 Inscription on the Golden Road in *Harem*.
Source: National Palaces Topkapi Palace (@topkapi_sarayi), "Page of the National Palaces Topkapı Palace," Instagram photo, January 04, 2021), https://www.instagram.com/topkapi_sarayi.

Figure 8.64 Inscription on The Privy Room of Murad III
Source: Ahmet Şimşirgil, "*The Privy Room of Murad III* in Bir Müstakil Dünya: Topkapı" (photo, 2016).
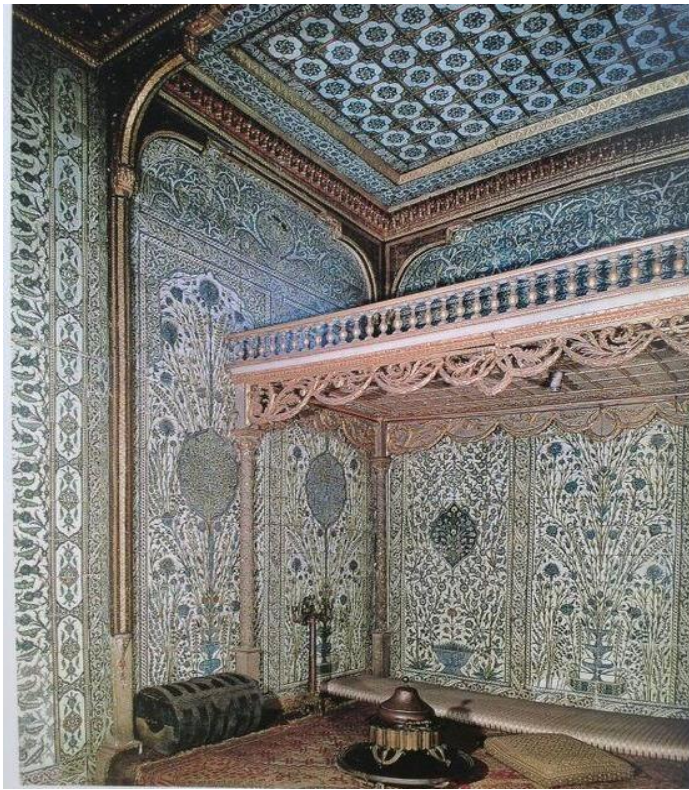
Figure 8.65 Paradisiac floral tiles in Valide Sultan Room.
Source: Ayşegül Abalı, "Topkapi Sarayi Valide Sultan Yatak Odasi 17. yy. Iznik", Pinterest Photo, n.d., https://tr.pinterest.com/pin/537687642989559634 (accessed July 10, 2021).

Tents, defined as architectural elements created with fabric, also exhibit a garden of heaven with flower motif embroideries inside. Whether the destination was a place of pleasure in the countryside or a battlefield, the Ottoman rulers and their surroundings took the beauty with them and lived in them, with their places like the flowered heaven created.[956]

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[956] Atasoy, *Has Bahçe*, 332.

In addition to these, the abundance of mosques on the Palace campus can be interpreted as an effort to get closer to the familiar and longed-for realm. There were ten mosques, three open-air prayer places, twenty-two fountains, six pools, seven pavilions, and around four hundred rooms and halls on the palace grounds.[957]

8.5.13. Beneficence and Maturity (*İḥsān* and Kemāl): Designing and Building the Best in terms of Beauty, Functionality, and Cultural Envoy

İḥsān is used to mean that a job is done carefully in the best and most beneficial way. In Islamic aesthetics, based on the verse "*So Allāh gave them the reward of this world and the good reward of the Hereafter. And Allāh loves the doers of good.*" [958], it is given importance to do a job in the best way. In this context, can we suggest that the Palace was tried to be built with care and in the best possible way? Is it possible to claim that the Palace was built with such an intention, with the consciousness of servitude and with the understanding of Allāh, when what makes an action beautiful is the intention of performing that action, and the measure of "good, beautiful, and beneficial" is its relationship with wisdom? Discussing the answers to these questions may pave the way for revealing the reflections of Beneficence (*İḥsān*) on the Topkapı Palace.

Kritovoulos, for 1459, which is accepted as the first date when the Palace started to be built, shares that in that year, the Sultan ordered a mosque built in the middle of the city that could "*compete with the largest and most beautiful temples in the region in height, beauty, and size, and a palace on the promontory of ancient Byzantium stretching out towards the sea, more magnificent than all previous palaces and outshining them all in appearance, size, cost, and grace.*" According to Necipoğlu, these two ambitious projects, which represent the spiritual and administrative power of the mighty Sultan, are part of his plan to make Istanbul the wealthiest, most vital, and most famous city as it used to be.[959] Kritovoulos also describes the year 1460 as follows:

> *When the Sultan came to Constantinople and rested for a while, he turned his attention to the situation of his country and to putting everything in order and*

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[957] Şimşirgil, 16.
[958] Quran, Ali-İmran/148.
[959] Necipoğlu, *Mimari, Tören ve İktidar*, 32.

repairing everything around, especially to things related to his own Palace (...) He was enthusiastically directing the construction works of the buildings he had built in his name: the mosque and Palace. He was concerned with the careful collection of not only essential materials but also the most expensive

and scarce. He was inviting the best workers from all over, masons, stonemasons, carpenters, and those who were experienced and skilled in such type of construction work.

The Sultan had magnificent and worth-seeing buildings built that would compete in every respect with the largest and most impressive structures of the past. Hence, he had to carefully consider the workers who would work in his buildings and the qualities of the materials to be used. On the other hand, he was also concerned with large expenditures and payments. They had many journeymen supervising these works, men with extraordinary experience and knowledge in such matters. Not content with this, he would inspect the work himself frequently, and he would do everything very assertively and with perfect taste, utterly worthy of the ruler. Such was his attitude on the matter.[960]

Similarly, Tursun Beg also reports that the architects and engineers came from Arabic, Persian, and Ottoman (Greek) countries to have Sultan Mehmed's palace built in the best and most beautiful way:

After the conquest, His Holiness the Conqueror said to his viziers, commanders, and soldiers that from now on, Istanbul would be his seat of the throne, and he wished that the walls would be repaired, that beautiful palaces and mansions would be built suitable for work, residence, and services. He also demanded a banquet hall for meetings, squares for sword and javelin competitions, and even hunting grounds on the palace grounds. For this purpose, he enlightened the architects he had brought from Arabia, Iran, and Anatolia with his architectural knowledge. He ordered that a great palace be built in this beautiful, secluded place, reflecting all kinds of artistic achievements, that every mansion be a home for the beauties, and that every pavilion should be so beautiful as to make the heavenly mansions jealous. Istanbul flourished and became famous with this Palace, the like of which was never seen by Iranian shahs, Roman emperors, or Chinese khans. It was free from all imperfections. Its every field was spacious and clear, and every fountain was like the water of Khidr. It was as if the river of Kevser was flowing from it. The wall that he had built around him was reinforced with bastions in Turkish and Frankish styles from time to time. He put doors between them. He had vineyards, orchards, rose gardens, fountains, pools, and chat rooms built between the wall and the Palace.[961]

In addition to these, Necipoğlu also tells about the care shown in the construction of the Palace by referring to the European architects and artists who were brought to make

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[960] Kritovoulos, in Necipoğlu, *Mimari, Tören ve İktidar*, 147-149.
[961] Şimşirgil, 14.

the Palace the best. According to some written Russian sources, the Bolognese architect-engineer Aristotle Fioravanti, who went to Russia in 1475 to work in the Kremlin, was invited to Istanbul by the sultan to work in the Palace before this date. In 1480, decoration artists and a builder were summoned from Florence and Venice. Gentile Bellini also came to Istanbul with his two assistants in these years to draw portraits of Mehmed II and the courtiers. Although it is not certain, there are data that Filarete was also interested in the construction of Sultan Mehmed II's Palace.[962]

It is pretty apparent how carefully the planning and construction process of the Palace was made, considering the effort made to make it the best. However, it is more difficult to say clearly what kind of intention the Palace was built, whether it was built with the consciousness of servitude and worship or not. Inscriptions, which are important sources that we can look at about the formation of palace spaces, are enlightening elements on this subject. It is written on the entrance gate of the Palace, that is on the inscription of *Bāb-ı Humāyūn* (See Figure 8.66), which is the Imperial Gate:

"The Sultan of the two Continents and the Emperor of the two Seas, the Shadow of God in this world and the next, the Favorite of God on the Eastern and Western Horizons, the Conqueror of Constantinople, Sultan Mehmed Khan, son of Sultan Murad Khan, may God make eternal his empire, and exalt his residence among the most lucid stars of the firmament."
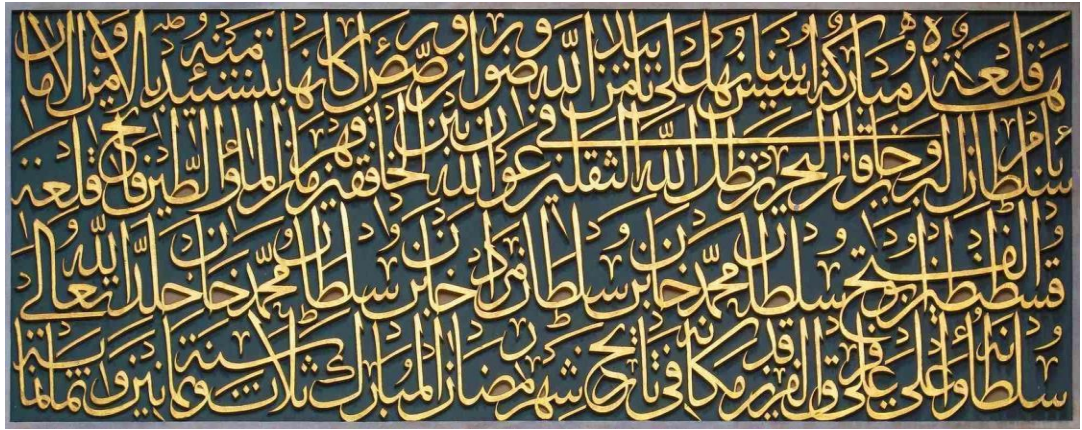
Figure 8.66 Inscription on *Bāb-ı Humāyūn*.
Source: Ahmet Şimşirgil, *Bir Müstakil Dünya: Topkapı*, "Bāb-ı Humāyūn". (photo, 2016), 181.

On the door, the following is written:

"The Sultan is the shade of God on the earth where all who are oppressed seek shelter." (See Figure 8.67)

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[962] Necipoğlu, *Mimari, Tören ve İktidar*, 38-39.

Figure 8.67 Inscription on the outer part- right side of *Bāb-ı Humāyūn*.
Source: Ahmet Şimşirgil, *Bir Müstakil Dünya: Topkapı*, "Bāb-ı Humāyūn", (photo, 2016), 26.

In the upper middle of the door (See Figure 8.68), there are the 45-48th verses of Surah Al-Hijr:

"Indeed, the righteous will be within gardens and springs. It will be said to them, "Enter in peace and security." We will remove whatever bitterness they had in their hearts. In a friendly manner, they will be on thrones, facing one another. No fatigue will touch them there, nor will they ever be asked to leave."[963]
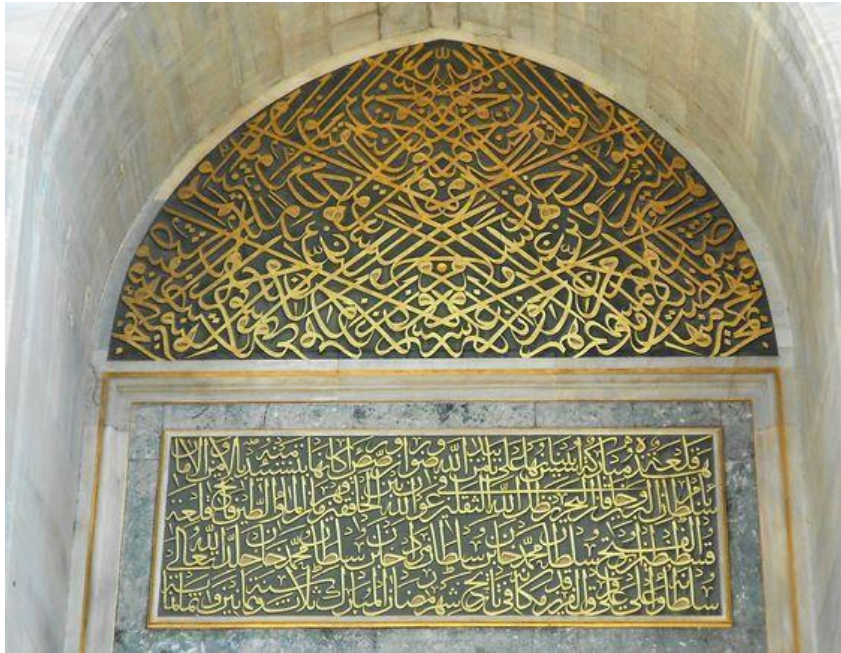
Figure 8.68 Inscription on the *Bāb-ı Humāyūn*
Source: Filiz Kölmek, "Bāb-ı Humāyūn", (photo, 2020).

Undoubtedly, it would not be correct to claim that every addition to the Palace built by every sultan who hosted it over the years was made with the same spiritual consciousness and intentions. However, it is seen in the *Bāb-ı Humāyūn* inscription

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[963] Şimşirgil, 26: (Hicr/ 45-48).

that the spiritual values of Sultan Mehmed II, who was the first owner of the Palace and the reason for its existence, had an essential place in his intention to build the Palace.

Although inscriptions on the inner part of the Second Gate, *Bābusselām,* do not belong to the 15th or 16th centuries (1758), it can be beneficial to underline considering that it is also an extension of the Ottoman mindset and directly addresses the servitude consciousness. Inscription on the inner-upper part of the gate is (See Figure 8.69):
"Gardens of Eternity, whose doors will (ever) be open to those who do everything for the sake of Allāh" (Sad, 49-50)

Figure 8.69 Inscription on Bābusselām.
Source: Ahmet Şimşirgil, *Bir Müstakil Dünya: Topkapı*, "Bāb-ı Humāyūn". (photo, 2016), 34.

Kemāl (maturity), being the basic quality of beauty in Islamic art, has been described as collecting all possible good qualities in himself. According to Ibn Sīnā, the beauty, and splendor of everything are that everything is exactly as it should be. According to Al-Ghazālī, however, something reaches perfection, that is *iḥsān*, and is at the peak of beauty only when it gathers the possible perfection in itself. The maturity of everything is according to its nature. What makes a horse beautiful does not make a person beautiful. In this context, counting the characteristics that a palace should have, such as considering the conditions to include traditional and cultural features that will nourish its ties with its past, being a cultural heritage for the future, representing its state to the world, fulfilling its functions functionally, being aesthetically elegant and beautiful, is the Palace built on maturity?

It is known that the Edirne Palace, which was built by Mehmed II's father, Sultan Murad II, on the edge of the Tunca River and only a few remains today, was magnificent and was influenced by the plan of this palace when Topkapı was first built. Like the Edirne Palace, Topkapı Palace, as an extension of the previous palace tradition of the state, consists of apartments devoted to state affairs among various courtyards and gardens, buildings, and mansions that would be the residence of the ruler, and facilities reserved for officials living in the palace. The buildings were scattered over a large area.

It is a fact that the Ottoman State philosophy and subject relations played a significant role in determining the plan of the Topkapı Palace, which developed and grew for centuries. Remarkably, the original plan determined by Mehmed II resisted the great innovations that lasted for a century, and the main structures in this plan preserved their existence despite changing tastes. Despite all the changes, the Palace complex has always carried the traces of its founder. Thus, by choosing not to completely change the basic order of Mehmed II's Palace and to abide by the main lines of the official rules of this Palace, the succeeding sultans consciously reinforced an imperial tradition, which started to represent the continuity of their dynasties, in the spatial dimension, through the Topkapı Palace. According to Necipoğlu, this attitude is an example of respect for the "*Ḳānūn-ı Ḳadīm*" (customary law), which constitutes the keystone of *Āl-i Osmān's* claim to legitimacy.[964] It should be accepted that Mehmed II, who had keen foresight and a vast horizon, built a Palace that glorified the uniqueness of the Ottoman Dynasty with his attendance. The fact that he also thought of his Palace for his next son can be clearly seen in the introduction of his law, which represents breaking away from the past in many respects and recommending the continuation of the tradition:

"This code is the law of my ancestors and grandparents, as it is mine. Your sons and grandsons shall be responsible for this, too."[965]

On the other hand, he also dreamed of a universal empire project to be completed by his successors and legitimized the changes to be made after him, and approved of

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[964] Necipoğlu, *Mimari, Tören ve İktidar* ,48.
[965] Leysizade, 29 in *Necipoğlu, Mimari, Tören ve İktidar,* 48.

future reforms, saying: *"So much of the state of the sultanate has been given order. May even the sons of the sons who came after now wish to reform."*[966]

Thus, although the times and conditions changed, the changes needed in parallel with the increasing power of the dynasty, the growing pomp for the official ceremonies around the outer and inner *dīwān-ḫānes*, and the monumentalization of the structures that set the stage for these splendors, did not radically change the general structure of the Palace. While traditional elements were protected with respect, they were also carried to the future and handed over as cultural heritage.

While the Palace claimed to have unique architectural features with a brand-new vision, on the other hand, it felt its strong commitment to its roots in the spatial dimension. The Second Court was modeled after the traditional plan of the administrative division in the tent-palaces of the Ottoman Sultans. Spandugino argues that the executive courtyard was connected to Sultan's private apartment by a large portico with a door in these tent palaces. The second courtyard of Mehmed II's New Imperial Palace transformed the traditional layout of the tents into permanent architectural forms[967]. In plan, it is almost the same as the courtyard of his Palace in Edirne; in fact, both were built according to the organizational principles of the camp. According to Küçükerman, this tent tradition played the most influential and vital role in the design of the Topkapı Palace spaces and identity for centuries.[968]

Sakaoğlu additionally asserted that one of the key features of the Palace was that it set an example with the dimensions and features that would respond to the residence culture developed by the Turks in Anatolia and the private and official lives of the sultans. Besides, the author emphasized the lodge tradition as another element of the Palace that comes from the past, nourished the tradition, and carried it to the future, and added that it was written in Ottoman historical sources that Mehmed II, who determined the working rules of the *dīwān* in his *Kānūn-nāme*, also presided over the sessions for the first time. According to the rumor, after a session, he was enraged by the rude behavior and rhetoric of someone who came from Anatolia to tell his troubles. When the Grand Vizier Gedik Ahmed Pasha told the Sultan that it would be more

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[966] Ibid,
[967] Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial and Power*, 86.
[968] Küçükerman, 56.

appropriate to listen to his servants from behind the cage from now on, this order was changed, and a caged inner window was built right above the *Dīwān-ḫāne* head sofa, and a small box was built behind it (See Figure 8.70). In the first period of the Ottoman Empire, there were such lodges peculiar to the Sultan in Bursa and Edirne palaces, and this tradition had already existed in the Seljuks. It is known that the sultans came to this lodge from time to time and watched the sessions, and sometimes they intervened in negotiations and decisions by tapping on the cage, and in the victorious *divāns*, the grand vizier watched the ambassador's reception from the cage called *Ḳaṣr-ı ʿAdil*, and sometimes they signaled the end of the session by drawing the embroidered cage curtain.[969]

Figure 8.70 Cage-lattice of the Sultan ın *Dīwān-ı Humāyūn* as an extension of Lodge tradition
Source: Filiz Kölmek, "*Dīwān-ı Humāyūn*", (photo, 2020).

The Fatih Mansion (Enderūn Treasure), which is considered an example of splendor, was built at the bottom right corner of the Third Court and at the most dominant point of Sarayburnu and was built according to the principle of the Turkish house plan. It

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[969] Sakaoğlu, *Tarihi, Mekanları, Kitabeleri,* 105.

consists of four halls, a patio with a covered fountain in the middle between the two halls, and an iwan. The iwan of the Fatih Mansion, which was completed in 1462-1463, facing the Marmara and the Bosporus, is strong enough to represent his delicate and high artistic taste.

It is crystal clear that the Topkapı Palace was planned to represent a world empire since its very first construction. Sultan Mehmed II, the owner of the Palace and who had the most say in the design, had a Palace built in the most beautiful place in the world that could be chosen for a world empire, as many people agree on it. As Tursun Beg underlined, he built a unique Palace in beauty and splendor, with extensive functions consisting of various units of the Ottoman state administration, working areas and private spaces, gardens, squares, sports fields, hearths, and wards. The period when the Palace was first built was primarily designed for the administrative center of state affairs and the protection of the treasury. In later periods, new functions were added with the permanent relocation of *Ḥarem* to the Palace. The fact that the Palace was used for many years despite the increasing power and claims of the state and that it can set the stage for all its attendances is undoubtedly proof that it fulfills its functions efficiently.

Lastly, in order to explain the importance and beauty that the Palace gives to representation, it would be appropriate to include the descriptions of foreigners about the Audience Chamber and the meeting place of the ambassadors with the Sultan. Italian writer Paolo Giovio, in his biography of Alvise Gritti, son of the Doge of Venice, who served as a jeweler in the Palace of Suleyman I, wrote that the walls of some rooms in the Palace of the Sultan were covered with gold plates inlaid with jewels. Gyllius, who wrote in the 1550s, mentioned the sparkling jewels in the Audience Chamber, which he described as "a small room made of marble, adorned with gold and silver, shimmering with diamonds and precious stones, and adds: "This Audience Chamber consists of marble columns with their capitals and pedestals

completely covered with gold gilding. It is surrounded by a portico that it carries." In many texts written in the relevant years, ruby, emerald, and pearl inlaid decoration details were mentioned.[970] (See Figures 8.71-8.72)

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[970] Necipoğlu, *Mimari, Tören ve İktidar,* 138.
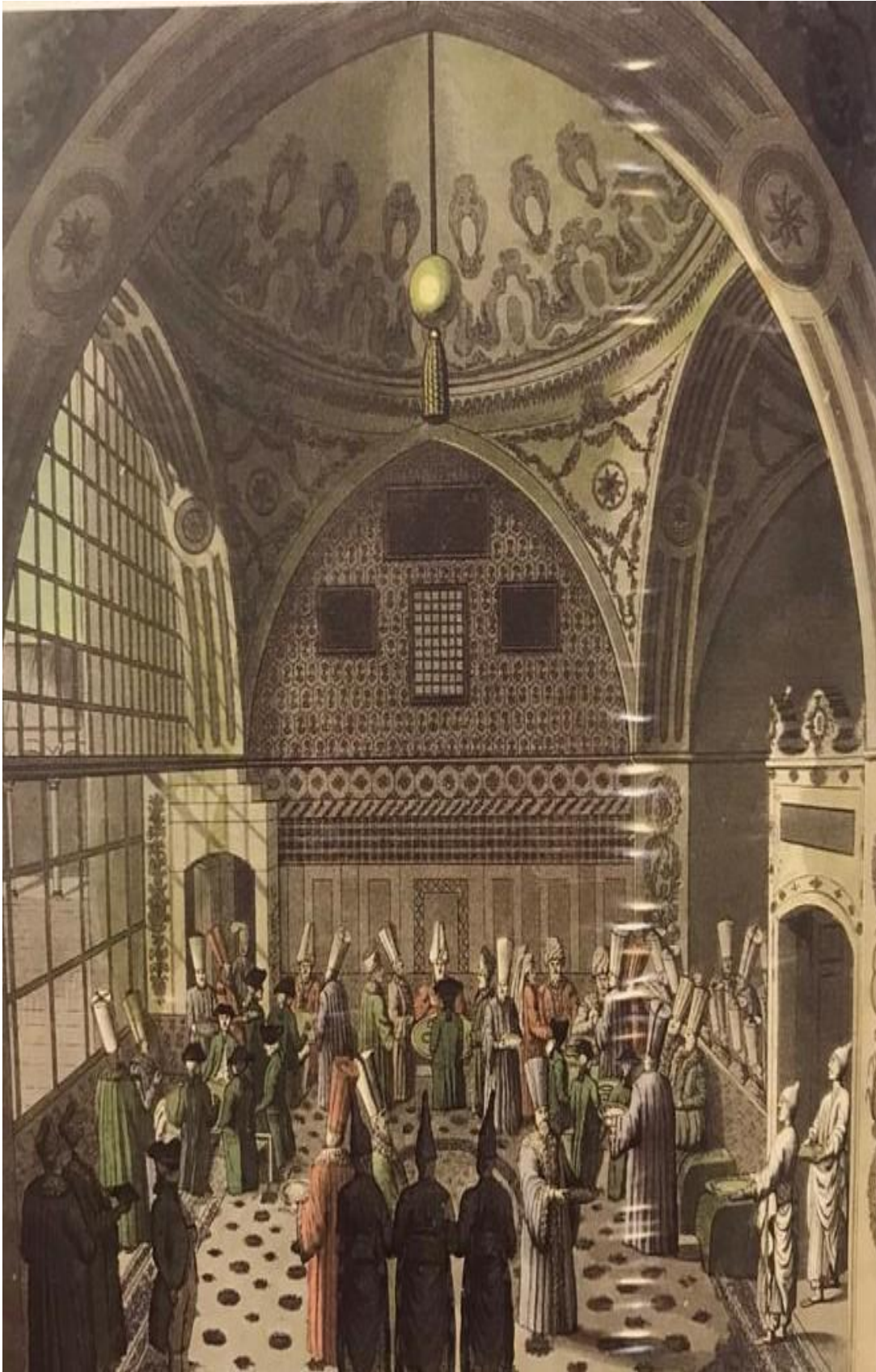
Figure 8.71 A dinner arranged for the European ambassadors in the Audience Chamber.
Source: Necdet Sakaoğlu, *Tarihi, Mekanları, Kitabeleri ve Anılarıyla Saray-I Hümayun*,"A dinner preparation," (drawing, 2002), 107.
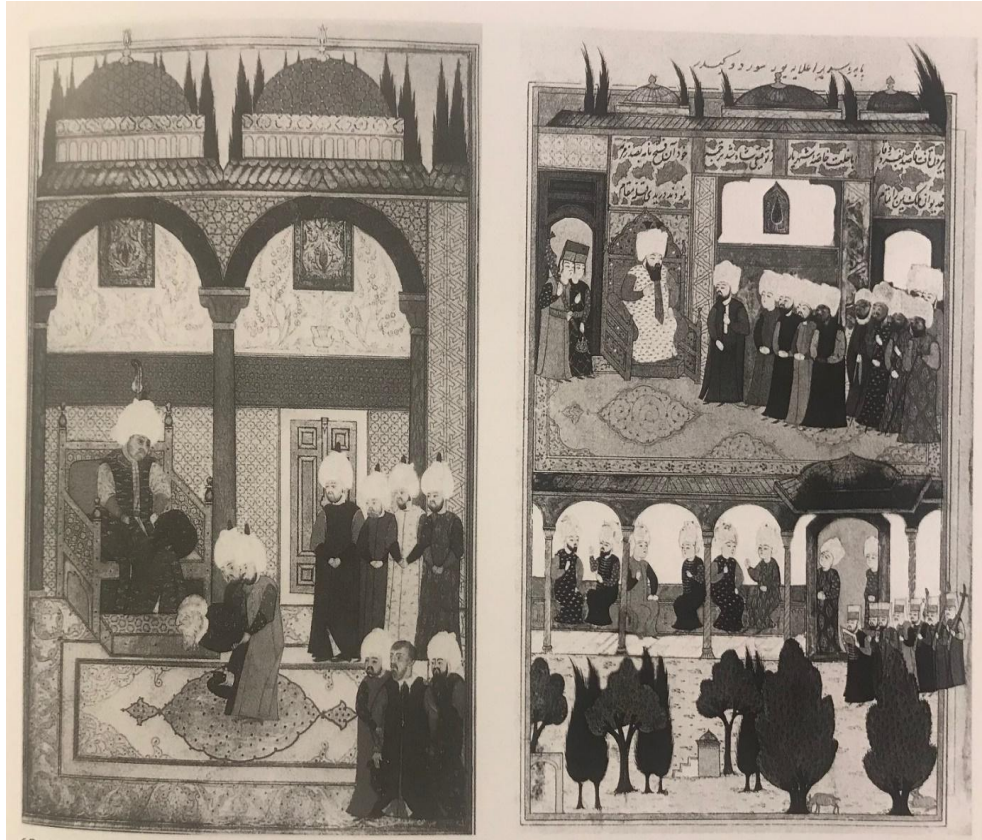
Figure 8.72 **Left:** Selim II. Receiving the Austrian ambassador in the Audience Chamber, furnished with jewel-embroidered carpets, *Nüzhetü'l Esrar der Sefer-i Zigetvar,1568-69.* **Right:** Murad III receiving the Morrocan ambassador, *Şehinşahname, 1592.*
Source: Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial and Power,* (drawing, 2007), 141.

8.5.14. Charm and Beauty (*Ḥusn and Cemāl*): Beauty Inside and Outside-Formal Beauty and Structural Strength of the Palace

While the word *ḥusn* (charm) is generally used as an external beauty that appeals to the eye in Islamic aesthetics, *cemāl* (beauty) expresses inner beauty. Since these two concepts complement one another and cannot be considered separately, they are also used interchangeably. After all, both concepts are related to the beauty of the resulting work. On the other hand, being beautiful includes some conditions, such as being good and useful, being beneficent, having good intentions in the creation of the work, and associating it with the Creator, as discussed in detail in the previous parts. A being reaches the pinnacle of beauty when it gathers all the perfections possible in itself. Therefore, for a building to be beautiful, it must be of a complete, solid construction both in form and substance. Can we assert that the Topkapı Palace is stylistically aesthetic, structurally sound, complete, and perfect while fulfilling the functions defined for it?

In the previous sections, detailed information was given about the nature of "beautiful" in Islamic aesthetics and the external beauty of the palace, in particular the Topkapı Palace. Under this section, analyses will be made on the structural soundness of the Palace as a work of architectural art. However, we can refer to the narratives of Kritovoulos to emphasize its external beauty once again.

Kritovoulos, who lived during the conquest of Istanbul, gives valuable information that sheds light on this period in his work, which covers the first seventeen years of Mehmed II's thirty-year reign. While talking about the works of the Ottoman ruler right after the conquest, the author reports that the Sultan chose the most beautiful place in the center of the city to have his Palace built. There are many talented and knowledgeable people in commerce and other subjects that Mehmed II had migrated to Istanbul from other cities. He asks the wealthy of the city to build beautiful and big houses for them, and he starts the construction of a mosque in his name. He also orders the Palace to be built in Sarayburnu, which he wants to be much more beautiful than the previous ones. Kritovoulos adds:

> *How Sultan's palace was completed is related to the fact that the Sultan had spent the winter in Byzantium. Among other things, he was concerned with the festivities, restructuring, and beautification of the entire city. He especially focused on the Palace, a magnificent building. It was a Palace whose appearance, enjoyment, structure, and charm could rival those of famous and magnificent old buildings and landscapes. He built towers of unusual height, beauty, and sublimity in them, separate apartments for men and women, bedrooms, recreation rooms and sleeping quarters, and many other beautiful rooms. There were also various exterior pavilions, passages and entrances, halls, porticoes, gates, patios, ovens, and baths with remarkable designs.*
>
> *There was a great wall that contained all this. As I said, all of them are decorated with a variety of gorgeous ornaments and colors, in the abundance of gold and silver, inside and outside, using precious stones and marbles, ingeniously, comfortably, lightly, with the highest abilities and passion, considering the diversity, beauty, size, and splendor. Relief stone, plasterwork,*
>
> *and engravings were best done with fine taste. Beyond that, all the spaces were very carefully covered with large amounts of lead. All of them were adorned with lots of other bright and tasteful decorations.[971]*

As for the structural strength of the Palace, it reflects the power and wealth of the Ottoman Empire. From the very first construction phase, the best materials were

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[971] Kritovoulos, *History of Mehmed*, 207-208.

sourced worldwide. Strong materials such as stone, marble, and lead were transformed into elegant architectural structures with delicate and ingenious engineering calculations in skillful hands. Kuban also emphasizes that Ottoman architecture had two main concerns. The first of these was perfection in terms of construction, and the second was elegance.[972]

These features of the Topkapı Palace are also mentioned in the literary works of the relevant period. During the reign of Suleyman, the unprecedented wealth and splendor required the extensive renovation of the Palace. Because, as it was during the reign of Mehmed II, the existing palace was pale in the face of Sultan's magnificence. Chief architect Alaaddin undertook the construction of the renovation of the New Palace on a large scale. The chief architect, also known as *Acem Ali*, enlarged the service buildings of the first court, carried out a major reorganization of the second court where the *Dīwān-ḫāne* was built, and rebuilt the Audience Chamber in the third court. He also expanded *Harem* and added new pavilions to the *Asmabahçe* adjacent to the third court. In the *Dīwān* of the Ottoman poet Helākī, it is written that the Sultan settled in the house of bliss "*like a mansion of heaven in grace, like a castle of fate in solidity.*"[973] In the Persian *Şehinşāh-nāme* of Loḳmān, who praises the construction campaign related to the enlargement of *Ḥarem* during the reign of Murad III, there is a section about the renovation of the Palace. According to this chapter, one day, while the Sultan was walking from his *Ḥarem* to the *Dīwān-ḫāne* in the second court when he looked at the walls and gates built by his ancestors on solid foundations in the style

of "*ṭarẕ-ı ḳadīm*" (ancient style), he concluded that *Ḥarem* was very small. Thereupon, he ordered *Ḥarem* to be enlarged and rebuilt with one row of stones and one row of bricks.[974]

In addition, the gilded epitaph of *Bāb-ı Humāyūn*, which can be seen on the first step of the palace, bearing the signature of the calligrapher Ali b. Yahya es-Sufi, the following is written:

> *By the Grace of God and by His approval, the foundations of this auspicious castle were laid, and its parts were splendidly joined together to strengthen*

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[972] Doğan Kuban, *Osmanlı Dini Mimarisinde Dış Mekan Teşekkülü* (İstanbul: Güven Press, 1956), 102.
[973] Necipoğlu, *Mimari, Tören ve İktidar*, 48.
[974] Ibid, 214.

peace and tranquility by the command of the Sultan of the two Continents and the Emperor of the two Seas, the Shadow of God in this world and the next, The Favorite of God on the Two Horizons, the Monarch of the Terraqueous Orb, the conqueror of the Castle of Constantinople, the Father of Conquest, Sultan Mehmed Khan II, son of Sultan Murad Khan, son of Sultan Mehmed I, may God make eternal his empire, and exalt his residence among the most lucid stars of the firmament, in the blessed month of Ramadan of the year 883.[975]

The Topkapı Palace experienced two major disasters. The first was the severe earthquake in 1509, which was called the "Little Apocalypse" during the reign of Sultan Bayezid II and continued with aftershocks for five days. This was a natural disaster, and as a result, most of the sea walls of the Topkapı Palace, *Yedikule*, and *Sūr-ı Sultānī* from the sea to the garden gate were destroyed. In Istanbul, the people were afraid, and they started to live in tents and shelters in the gardens; the Sultan went to the "cracked" rooms in the Palace Garden and departed for Edirne ten days later. The second major disaster was the fire that started with the ignition of the chimney during the daytime barbeque in the last year of the reign of Selim II. The fire was prevented from spreading towards *Ḥarem*, but the kitchens, *Ḥalva-ḫāne* (confectionery kitchen), and cellar were burned. A few days after the fire, Architect Sinan (1490-1588) prepared new building plans for the burned areas and expanded the kitchens.[976] Due to both crucial events, some changes were made in the palace spaces. As a result of these disasters, especially during the earthquake, the destruction of the buildings in the Palace may raise questions about the durability of the buildings. However, with today's data, it does not seem possible to predict whether the reason for this high level of destruction is that the structures were not built strong enough or that the earthquake was so severe that it would destroy every structure, even if it were built with the highest engineering skill of that day.

8.5.15. Cosmic Spiral: The Circulation in the Palace Settlement

The spiral, being unbeginning and endless, is accepted as the form on which the concepts of time and space are based in Islam.[977]According to Erzen, this principle is also a source for Islamic art and architecture. The circularly supported structural

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[975] Ibid, 65.

[976] Küçükerman, *Sanayi ve Tasarım*, 100-101.

[977] Erzen, *Reading Mosques*,129.

elements of many buildings, the examples where the circular dome form covers large openings, also affect the circulation within these structures. The spiral form application has different perceptual and semantic functions both in the architectural structure itself and in the placement of building ensembles such as *kulliyes* (social complex). This circulation offers an experience of perceiving the space with circular movements instead of going straight through. Semantically, it is not appropriate to enter the sacred areas straight and abruptly, and it is thought that it is more appropriate to walk around these structures and approach them with respect rather than entering directly. The reflection of the cosmic spiral on the space is closely related to the reverse perspective and symmetry issues in Islamic aesthetics, which was explained in detail before.

Considering the reflections of the cosmic spiral, which is an expression of Islamic aesthetics, in the Topkapı Palace, we must first focus on the circulation of the palace campus. Does the campus have a linear or spiral organization, or if neither, what circulation does it offer? Is the circulation and movement style directed by the palace an experience of integrating with the space, or is it oriented towards progressing and arriving linearly?

As noted, Topkapı is not a palace built and finished in one go, consisting of a single massive and dominant monumental structure. It is a collection of buildings located in large courtyards, which have had different owners and users over a long period, and were built eclectically in line with the tastes and needs of these users. Its general plan has plan freedom and fluidity that differs from axial and symmetrical palace architecture. In Eldem's words, "there is an almost romantic, natural, and free atmosphere."[978] Even though the sultan, who is the peak of the whole palace, is reached as people go through the courtyards that follow one after the other in the Palace, and the spatial hierarchy is felt, the circulation is not linear, as we can see from both the bird's-eye plan and our experience of visiting the Palace. To this end, the Palace does not have a strict axial order.

Besides, as in the example of Suleymaniye Mosque (See Figure 8.73), the structures cannot be suggested to be clearly interspersed circularly. However, it can be claimed that the mode of circulation and movement guided by the Palace offers an experience

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[978] Eldem and Akozan, 65.

of integration with the space, not just passing away. Spiral circulation is an example of the fact that the exteriors of the buildings are not uniform and that it is necessary to walk around the building to experience these structures fully, as in the example of the Tiled Kiosk and the Audience Chamber (See Figures 8.27 and 8.29). This experience, which provides a different visual experience on every side and keeps the state of consciousness constantly awake, undoubtedly allows for integration with the space rather than passing by as in advancing linearly.

The fact that the facades are different is not only about the external facades. Likewise, there is no symmetry in the interior facades. Additionally, with the effect created by the circular dome form, the movement inside the buildings is not linear but spiral, providing at perceiving and integrating the space. The Audience Chamber and Murad III's Room are good examples in this regard.

The location of the *Divān* Room in the second court and the position of the sultan in the Audience Chamber again embody this circulation style. Eldem and Akozan describe a large square when visitors enter from *Bābussaāde* (Gate of Felicity). The *Dīwān* Room (Kubbealtı), which led to the formation of the square, is on the opposite left corner, that is, not across it. For an eye with classical western upbringing, the fact that there is a passage instead of a building here, such as *Bābussaāde*, can be considered misleading because, in fact, this door is the door that leads to the Audience Chamber located behind it. Therefore, the sultan's reception hall, which constitutes the pinnacle of the visit, is not located directly across the axis of view. At this point, we can see a mature example of this understanding in the second court. The sofa is not in the middle but in the left corner; that is, it is not on the road. It is in a position accessible by walking around. The position of the sultan in the Audience Chamber is also in the left corner, not in the middle (See Figures 8.31-8.32-8.33). This positioning and the way it dictates is also said to be a semantic metaphor; rather than entering the holy areas straight and abruptly, it is more appropriate to walk around and be approached with respect. [979]

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[979] Erzen, *Reading Mosques*, 129.

Figure 8.73 Suleymaniye Complex and its circulation.
Source: Hurriyet, "Süleymaniye Camii Nerede? Süleymaniye Camisi Tarihi, Özellikleri, Hikayesi ve Mimarı Hakkında Bilgi", (photo, September 19, 2020), https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/seyahat/suleymaniye-camii-nerede-suleymaniye-camisi-tarihi-ozellikleri-hikayesi-ve-mimari-hakkinda-bilgi-41612862 (accessed November 2, 2021).

8.5.16. Densification (*Teksīf*): Densification of Meanings on Palace's Art and Architecture

Densification is a kind of density of meaning, to say a lot with little. Each work in Islamic art comes from a single rich source, and since the belief of *tawḥīd* in Islam nourishes it, every piece carries great traces of that rich source. Hence, even small works have intense semantic integrity. Each work is a sample that reflects the aesthetic principles and understanding of the beauty of Islamic arts. This principle is a natural consequence of the modular structure and familiarity principles. In this respect, the Islamic artist reconsiders previously accepted general principles and subjects with the joy of previously tasted pleasures in each work of art and reinterpret them with the familiar visual language of Islamic arts with his stylized style. The fact that motifs and forms, repeated in architecture and decoration, are used so frequently in open and

closed compositions is due to their density and integrity. Although each unit represents and constitutes the whole, it exists as a part of it.

The densification of meaning in artistic products originating from Islamic art is not unique to architecture, either. It is seen that the helmet belonging to the 16th century on display inside the Palace also has an ornament from the same source, containing intense meanings from the familiar range. A helmet from the 16th century reflecting calligraphy and repetitive floral ornamentations in Figure 8.74 is a good example since it contains basic Islamic ornamentations as in the decorative programs used in the spaces of the palace. (See Figure 8.74).

We can observe the reflection of this concept on Topkapı Palace in Murad III's Privy Room, which was chosen as the sample place. The reflection of this concept will be examined deeply in the case study.

Figure 8.74 A helmet from the 16th century reflecting calligraphic and repetitive floral ornamentations.
Source: İlhan Akşit, *Byzantine and Ottoman Artefacts*, "16th century helmet" (photo, 2005), 48.

8.5.17. Avoiding Indoctrination: Justice/ Realism-Using the Material as What it Really is

In Islamic thought, it is not tolerated to create a deceptive effect on the individual through provocation. Man is expected to keep his consciousness permanently. In line with this thought, Islamic art naturally avoids the concept of indoctrination, which means taking away from the will of the interlocutor in art and directing him with a kind of influence, magic, and illusion without confronting him with the truth in a simple way. Therefore, considering clarity/intelligibility while designing spaces, designing asymmetrical facades inside and outside to keep the minds conscious, and avoiding depictions are some approaches that we can see in Islamic arts and architecture. The reflections of this concept will be analyzed deeply in the case study sample area: The Privy Room of Murad III. However, the related concept of justice/realism should be analyzed in various spaces of the palace.

The concept, which Cansever refers to as "justice" while Nasr as "realism," is about using materials in art and architecture, meaning to use every material as it is, not as it appears or shows, but as it is what it really is. The use of material outside of its reality contradicts the nature of the material and is not welcome because it is misleading. The fact that ornamentation is not used in architecture to hide the structure is also related to this concept. In this context, can we claim that the material in the palace buildings reflects exactly what it is? Do the decorations have a function to hide the structure, or can we argue that the materials and decorations used in the structure are for harmony and congruity while respecting the reality of each other? These questions can help us understand whether this concept was manifested in Topkapı Palace.

Concerning this issue, Kuban states that there is no predetermined union between construction and decoration in the whole of Ottoman architecture. According to the author, the decoration was never so conspicuous in size, color, and plasticity that it attracted the eye. It is always felt that the decoration was added later. While the decoration characteristic carries the characteristics of Islamic decoration, it is similar to Gothic architecture in that the structure appears completely as it is from the outside. Decoration does not play a prominent role in exterior architecture. The decorative

effect in exterior architecture, if any, is achieved with architectural elements. In this respect, it deserves the title of organic.[980]

Similarly, the detailed and clear expressions used by the foreigners who came to the Palace about the material while describing the structures of the Palace suggest that the material was used as what it really was. On the right side of the Third Court, Menavino described the bath, which was used as a place for both bathing and entertainment during the reign of Mehmed II, as follows.[981]

> *...In another part of the Palace, there is a bathhouse with a pile of rooms filled with hot and cold water on each side. It is so large that two hundred people can fit inside it. The bath is wholly round and vaulted; its dome-shaped roof is covered with lead. Its floor is covered with green-white marbles and tiny black marbles arranged in different patterns. In the middle is a white marble pool, the size of two men, with cool water flowing from its skillfully made grooves.*

Thoms Dallam, who brought the organ to the Palace as the British ambassador and stayed there for a while because it took a long time to set up, also uses the following expressions.

> *... we transported our instrument from the ship to the Palace of the great sultan and started to install it in this magnificent Palace... Giant doors, made entirely of iron, were opened by two men called Persian boys... I am sure there is no other door as safe as this anywhere in the world. Entering through the second gate, there were no gardens but magnificent buildings. The fronts of many of these buildings are paved with marble and similar stones. When I entered the building where I was asked to install the gift instrument, I saw that it looked like a church. There were smaller buildings built inside this building, covered with various carvings and decorations, and painted in gorgeous colors, which were intriguing... This building itself has a series of marble columns with bases of yellow copper and gilding. The fourth side of the building, which is closed and adjacent to another building, is made of stones so bright that the passerby can see his own reflection.[982]*

The visuals of some of the buildings built in the 15th and 16th centuries of the Palace are also worth examining to see the reality of using materials (See Figure 8.75-8.76-8.77). In all of these three examples in the figures, the materials that are used are crystal clear and visible. Brick, marble, and tiles on the facade of the Tiled Pavilion; brick,

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[980] Doğan Kuban, *Osmanlı Dini Mimarisinde İç Mekan Teşekkülü* (İstanbul Güven Press, 1958), 101-102.
[981] Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial and Power,* 168.
[982] Norman Mosley Penzer, *Harem,* trans. Doğan Şahin, (İstanbul: Say Press, 2000), 35.

marble, and lead materials on the Kitchen structures; and lead domes of the Topkapı Palace *Ḥarem* Section are some examples of using the material as what it really is.

Figure 8.75 Definable materials on the facade of the Tiled Pavilion.
Source: Filiz Kölmek, "Tiled Pavilion" (photo, 2020).

Figure 8.76 Brick, marble and lead materials on the Kitchen structures.
Source: Filiz Kölmek, "Kitchen structures" (photo, 2020).

Figure 8.77 Lead domes of Topkapı Palace *Harem* Section.
Source: Palace Art Foundations, *Palace of Gold& Light- Treasures from the Topkapı / İstanbul* , "Harem," (photo, 2000), 17.

When we examine the Topkapı Palace, we can see that this approach is valid for the period subject to the thesis. When we examine the Room of Murad III, it can be seen that the relationship between structure and decoration does not fall within the boundaries of each other. Although the interior of the room reflects the decorative designs of Islamic art from the floor to the dome, there is no illusion to hide the structure. *Iznik* tiles, which attract attention at the first entrance to the room, mother-of-pearl, ivory, and tortoiseshell inlays on the crown wings of the room, carved wooden sitting *shirvans* decorated with gilding and marble in the corners on the right side of the entrance, marble fountain and triple niches with marble arches on both sides of the windows both provide accurate and clear information about the use of materials and makes its presence felt in harmony with the structure, but without interfering with its field. (See Figure 8.78).

Figure 8.78 Harmony between visible structure and ornamentation in the Privy Room of Murad III.
Source: Filiz Kölmek, "Murat III Privy Room", (photo, 2020).

Apart from these, there is also information that the use of materials was not the same after the period in which the Palace was formed. During the reign of Sultan Abdulaziz (1861-1876), renovation work was carried out after the upper mansion of the *Bāb-ı Humāyūn* burned down. According to the information in the Encyclopedia of Islam, it is deduced from an old photograph that the façades, which were made of stone, were decorated with imitation stone and plastered in strips of imitation brick with geometric ornaments in between.[983]

Although not built in the 15ᵗʰ or 16th centuries, material use in Revan Mansion (1635) is worth mentioning at this point as it shows Ottoman's tendency to use varied construction materials and to show them clearly. With 25 different types of natural stone, it is one of the buildings where natural stone species are used the most. (See Figure 8.79)

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[983]   Semavi Eyice, "Bāb-I Humāyūn" (Istanbul: TDY Publications, 1991), v4, 359-361. Https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/saray (accessed March 6, 2022).
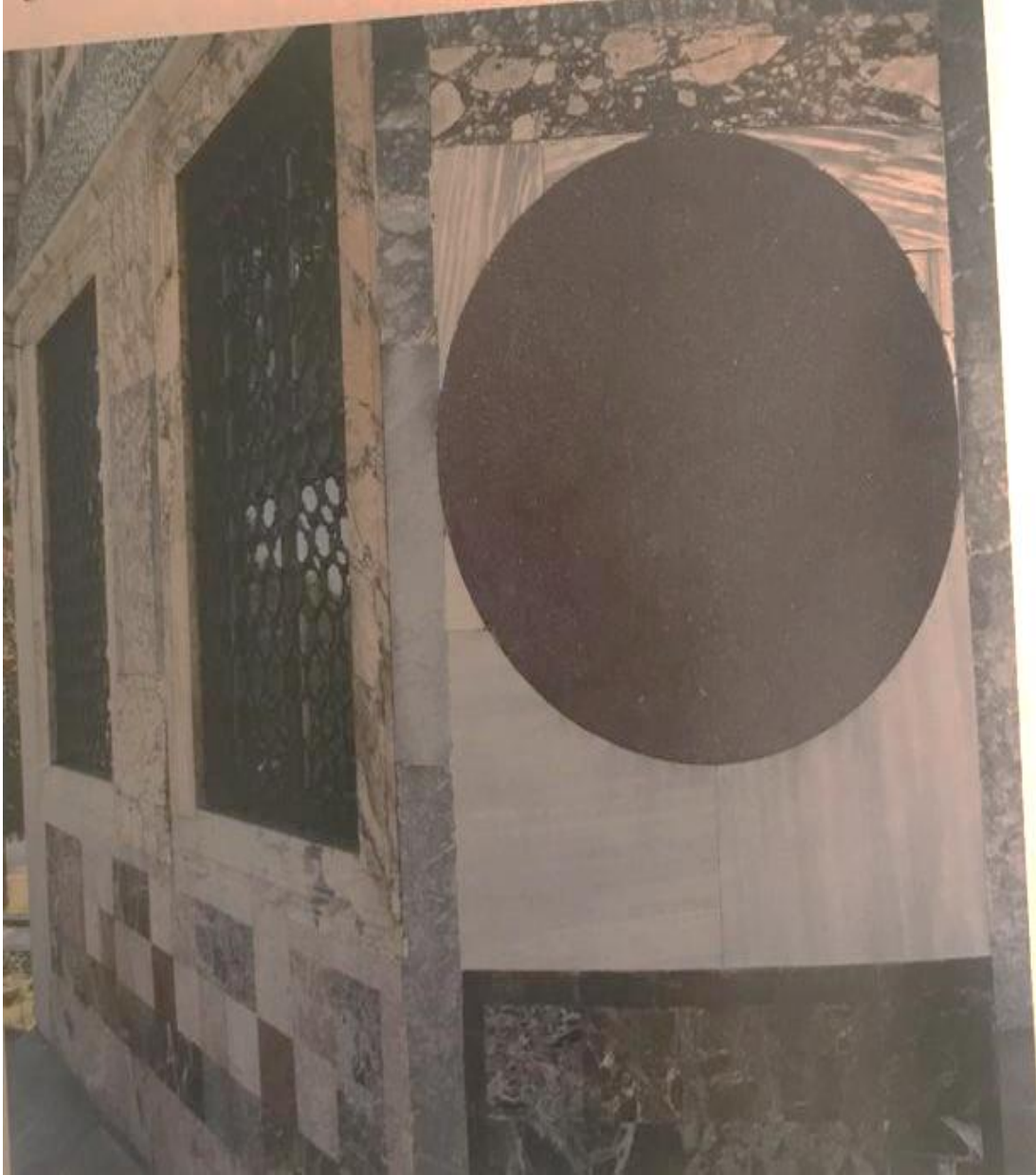
Figure 8.79 Use of varied natural stone species on the facade of Revan Mansion
Source: Önder Küçükerman, *Sanayi ve Tasarım Yarışında Bir İmparatorluk İki Saray*, "Revan Köşkü, (photo, 2007), 40.

8.6. A Case Study: Murad III Privy Room as a Stylised and Eternal Realm

Islamic art is the expression of a vision with its aesthetic principles. Avoiding indoctrination in Islamic art was adopted as a way out against the aesthetic prohibitions of religion and was not born as an essential style or developed under the influence of some ideas of its time. On the contrary, although the principle of avoiding indoctrination in Islamic art derives from some hadiths, it should also be considered a natural consequence of the Islamic mindset. Although there is no clear order in the

Quran that figurative art is prohibited, the spirit of Islam is completely against such an understanding of art.[984] For the Muslim artist, who seeks a transcendent being that does not change and will not disappear, stylization is appropriate to express the permanent concept behind appearances. In this belief system, trying to express a Creator, who is unique and beyond human imagination, without stylizing, causes weakening its meaning and depth and reducing it to a human scale. To this end, the unity of Allāh and the impossibility of any being equal or similar to Him necessitate *tenzīh* (incomparability) from all other beings. According to the principle of incomparability, both nature and the work of art in which it is used as a material must point out that beauty arises from the form and meaning of Allāh, not from them. Nature as a mortal being can only find a place in Islamic art in a geometric and stylized form with the effect of the concept of *tenzīh*, thus showing that it cannot be a final reality. The belief that nothing in nature can represent Allāh and that his real existence and nature cannot be fully known or perceived by any being other than His essence[985] is a requirement of belief in *tawḥīd*. Reading nature as a simple sign is a step that leads to Allāh by transcending it through *tenzīh*. The infinite and inexpressible nature of Allāh has enabled Islamic artists to see nature as a tool. Taking nature as a tool and using it without imitating realizes the concept of *tenzīh*.[986] The Islamic artist uses eternity and repetition to refer to the eternal and everlasting nature of Allāh, to reveal the inexpressibility of the divine as per the principle of transcendence, and express its unnaturalness properly through the dissolution of matter. Therefore, as Grunebaum underlines, Islam is the only religion that does not need figurative art and imagery to establish its concepts, and Muslim artists engaged in expressing their beliefs and truth in a sophisticated system and visual language of geometry, floral ornamentation, and calligraphic patterns.[987]

In this section, the principles of stylization, aniconism, eternity and repetition, incomparability, and avoiding indoctrination will be discussed together as they are closely related. Not only these concepts but also the reflections of other concepts of Islamic aesthetics in this sample area will be touched upon. As stated in the "Approach

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[984] Garaudy, 52.

[985] Quran, "No vision can encompass Him, but He encompasses all vision." (Al-An'am, 103).

[986] Karadeniz, 217.

[987] Gustav, E. VonGrunebaum, 4.

and Structure of the Thesis" part, the Privy Room of Murad III,[988] which has a critical and unique place in the Palace, was chosen to analyze the reflections of these principles on the Topkapı Palace. First of all, the reason for choosing this room will be expressed, then the descriptive, tangible features of the room will be emphasized since, as Townsend and Sesemann reported,[989] aesthetical analysis is like translating one language into another. In order for the semantic contents to be revealed and interpreted correctly, the visible forms must also be analyzed. After the descriptive analysis, this special room will be examined in terms of calligraphy, floral design, geometry, and other symbolism elements, and the reflections of the Islamic aesthetic concepts will be clarified.

Murad III's Privy Room is the first place in many respects. This pavilion, built by Architect Sinan in 1579, is the first known Sultan's Chamber in the Palace. It was used as the official and private office of the sultans. It is the largest private room in the Palace and is the oldest pavilion of *Harem*.[990,991] This bedroom is the only room in the entire Palace in which the original interior design of the 16th century and Iznik tiles are intact.[992,993]

Murad III's Privy Room is one of the most magnificent places of Ottoman architecture as well as *Ḥarem*. According to Reşad Ekrem Koçu, this room is the most magnificent structure not only of the *Ḥarem-i Humāyūn* but also of the entire Topkapı Palace. It is the loftiest work of 16th-century Turkish building art with its unique beauty, which is worshiped as a residence.[994] Ortaylı also confirms that this building, together with

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[988] Until Sultan Murad III, all sultans, except Suleyman I, lived their daily lives in the Privy Room, which is located in the corner of the Third Court (*Enderūn Court*), which is reserved for men, in the direction of the Golden Horn. However, Sultan Murad III, who ascended the throne in 1574, showed a very different behavior from his ancestors during his 21 years of reign. He was a pleasure-loving person who did not want to leave the palace, let alone go to war, leaving the administration to his mother Nurbanu and his sister. Under these conditions, "*tarz-ı kadîm*," meaning "ancient style" became popular in the *Harem*. The Sultan ordered the chief architect Sinan and had a *Harem* built between 1578-79, reflecting all the splendor of the Ottoman Empire. (Önder Küçükerman, p. 107). According to Lokman, the architect first brought in expert craftsmen to prepare the stone and lime to be used, and when the necessary materials were prepared, the construction started at an auspicious hour, and the old structure was pleasantly changed from top to bottom (Necipoğlu, 215-216). Murad III's Privy Room is the most prominent building known as the "Murad III's Bedroom" that has survived this change.

[989] Townsend, 56: Sesemann, 5.

[990] Ortaylı, *Osmanlı Sarayında,* 184.

[991] Şimşirgil, 146.

[992] Engin Yenal, *Bir Kent İstanbul ve 101 Yapı* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Press, 2000), 40.

[993] Necipoğlu, *Mimari, Tören ve İktidar*, 217.

[994] Koçu, 206.

Architect Sinan, shows the peak of Ottoman architecture and art in the 16th century and the deepest peak in the understanding of decoration.[995] Uzunçarşılı thinks that this room, which is decorated with tiles, is the most magnificent part of the New Palace.[996] Eldem also made the following comment about this room,[997] "Murad III's Privy Room is one of the most magnificent buildings, perhaps the first, not only of *Ḥarem* but also of the Topkapı Palace." [998] Sakaoğlu also emphasizes that this pavilion is unique because it has the characteristics of being the structure of Sinan the Architect, the oldest and most remarkable pavilion of the *Mābeyn-i Humāyūn*, the largest and most elaborate of Sultan's domed space forms in the palace, and the most original and perfect place of the Ottoman palace architecture.[999] (See Figures 8.80-8.81-8.82).

The Privy Room of Murat III has two floors. It is a place like no other in the palace, with both summer and winter mansions under the same roof. The room is surrounded by four Sultan's pavilions and a swimming pool, together with the *Hünkar Sofası* (Imperial Hall). The lower cottage (Serap Mansion) has a pool. There is an ornamental pool in the middle of this place, which the sultan uses in the summer.

It was also called the *Havuzlu Köşk* (Pool Pavilion) because of the swimming pool it has (See Figure 8.83). Due to the very slope of the land, it was necessary to raise the structure on heavy stone pillars at the height of thirteen meters. A large pool was placed between the feet of the planned pavilion by making use of the existing topography, and the section overlooking the Golden Horn was transformed into a summer mansion. The pavilion could only survive for a few years as the only independent structure because, in 1580, the "*Hünkâr Sofası*" was attached to the south facade, and in 1667, the "*Veliahd Dairesi* (Apartments of the Crown Prince)" was added to the north end of the entrance. On the facade of the Golden Horn, the *Yemis Odası* (Fruit Room) and the library of Sultan Ahmed III were built in 1715.[1000]

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[995] Ortaylı, *Osmanlı Sarayı*, 84: Şimşirgil, 146.
[996] Uzunçarşılı, 30.
[997] Sakaoğlu, *Tarihi, Mekanları, Kitabeleri,*371.
[998] Eldem in Küçükerman, *Sanayi ve Tasarım*, 110.
[999] Sakaoğlu, *Tarihi, Mekanları, Kitabeleri,*371.
[1000] Küçükerman, 108.
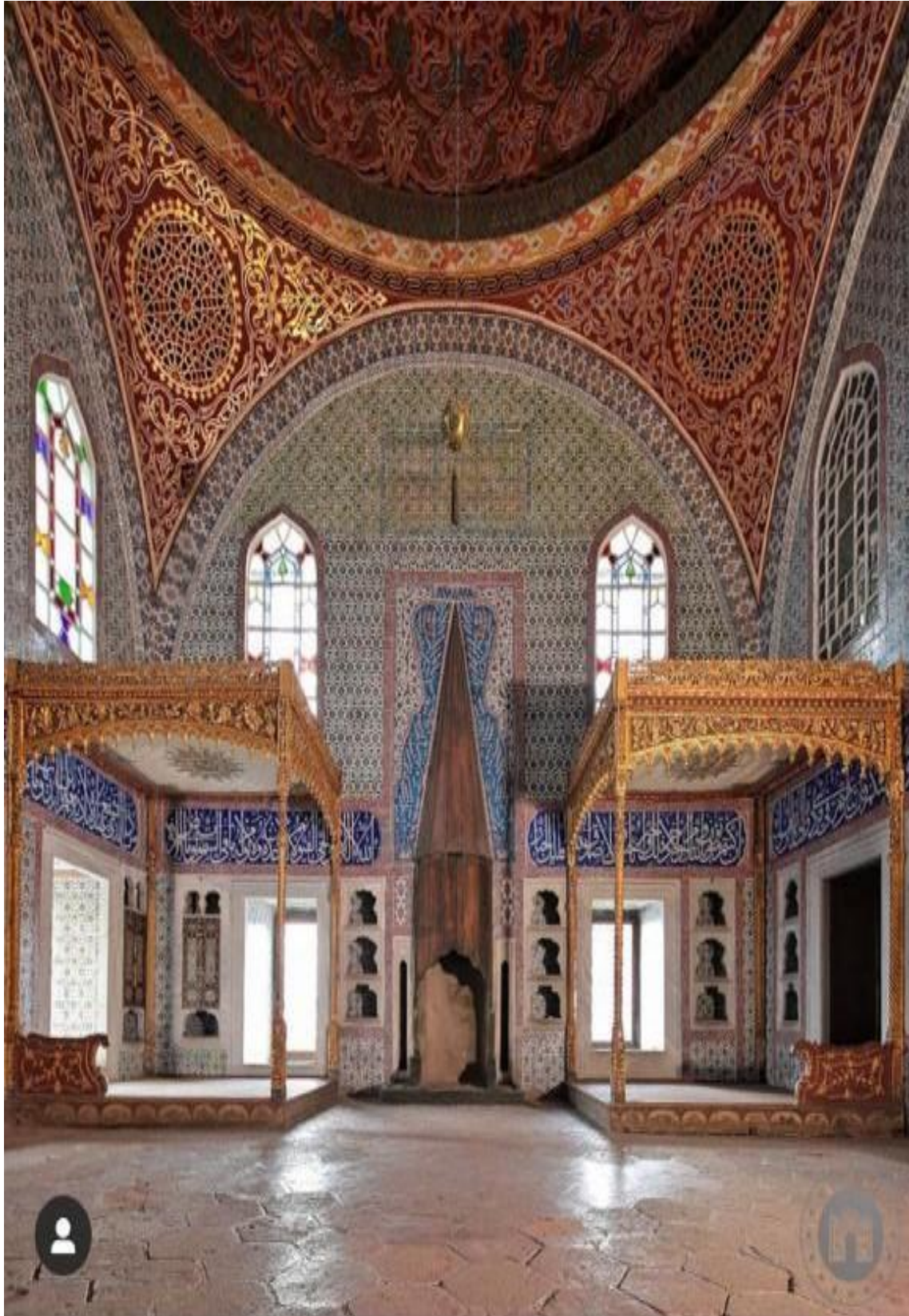
Figure 8.80 Interior views of Murad III Privy Room, Fireplace on the North face
Source: National Palaces Topkapi Palace (@topkapi_sarayi), "Page of the National Palaces Topkapı Palace," Instagram Photo, December 17, 2021, https://www.instagram.com/topkapi_sarayi.

Figure 8.81 Fountain (Marble Selsebil) on the South face
Source: Filiz Kölmek, "Privy Room of Murad III ", (photo, 2021).
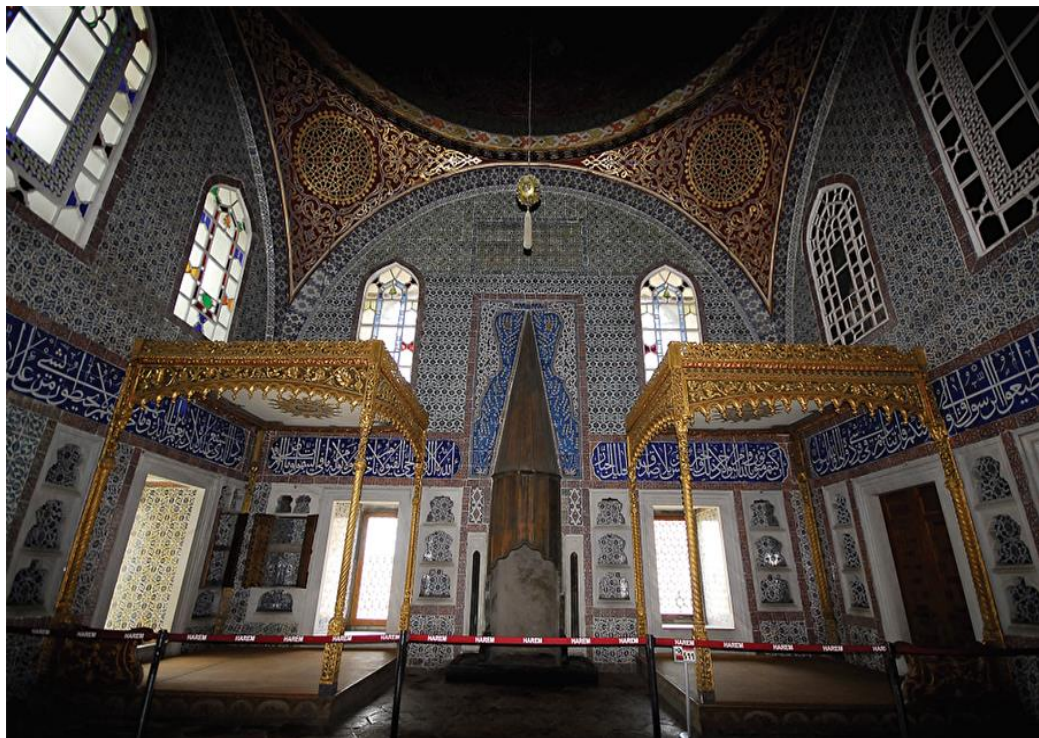
Figure 8.82 Murad III Privy Room representing a good example of classic Ottoman decoration, showing tiled walls separated by a calligraphic frieze, mother-of-pearl-inlaid doors, painted pendentives, a painted decoration surrounding the dome, and the dominating fireplace.
Source: Filiz Kölmek, "Privy Room of Murad III ", (photo, 2021).

Figure 8.83 Pool of Murad III Kiosk.
Source: Necati Orbay in Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Cremonial and Power: Topkapı Palace in the 15th and 16th Centuries*, "Pool of Murad III Kiosk", (photo, n.d.), 219.

The entrance of the room is through the *Çeşmeli Sofa* (Sofa with Fountain) and the Ante-Chamber, which passes through the Imperial Hall. It is also connected to the Imperial Hall and the Privy Room of Ahmed I with a door.

The windows of this room, which are seated on four big arches within four walls, with a square base and covered with a large dome, are above human height. In its original state, this dome had a bright lantern, as in the dome in the Privy Room and in the most respectable Sultan's pavilions. Just like in *Dīwān-ḫāne*, Privy Room, and Sultan's pavilions, a tasseled, gilded ball hanger hangs from the middle of the dome (See Figure 8.82). The upper windows are double-glazed as in the old style, and the colorful pieces of glass are pleasing to the eye. The lower part of the walls is left to rich tile decoration, doors, cabinets, and cells.

The marble crown door of Murad III Privy Room, which is entered from the Ante-Chamber, has a simple construction. The wings of the door should be inlaid with mother-of-pearl, ivory, and tortoiseshell. *Kelime-i Tawḥīd* (the phrase to testify Allāh's Oneness) is read in the form of a plate on its top (See Figure 8.84). The

423

inscription on the pink-white porphyry marble arch of the door tells that this room was built by Murad III in 1578 (See Figure 8.84). Architect Sinan, the great artist of the century and the chief architect of the period, also mentions this bedroom of Murad III among his works in *Teẕkīretu'l-Bunyān* (Book of Constructions).

Figure 8.84 Murad III Privy Room marble entrance door
Source: Database for Ottoman Inscriptions (DBOI), "III. Murad Hasodası giriş kapısı kitabesi", n.d. http://www.ottomaninscriptions.com/verse.aspx?ref=list&bid=3070&hid=5193 (accessed July 20,

Figure 8.84 (cont'd) Kelime-i Tawḥīd on a plate at the top of the entrance door.
Source: Database for Ottoman Inscriptions (DBOI), "III. Murad Hasodası giriş kapısı kitabesi", n.d. http://www.ottomaninscriptions.com/verse.aspx?ref=list&bid=3070&hid=5193 (accessed July 20, 2021).
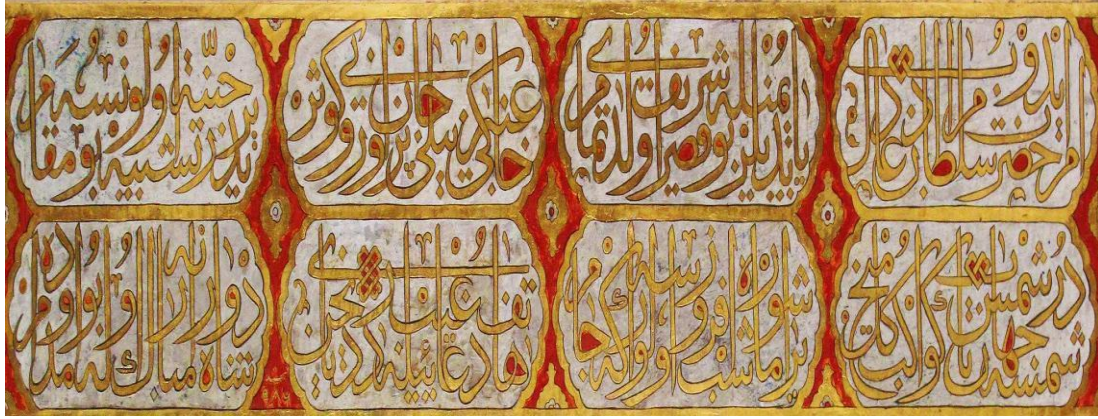
Figure 8.84 (cont'd) Main Inscription of Murad III Privy Room [1001]
Source: Database for Ottoman Inscriptions (DBOI), "Main Inscription of Privy Room of Murad III," n.d. http://www.ottomaninscriptions.com/verse.aspx?ref=list&bid=3070&hid=5193 (accessed July 23, 2021).

The interior is covered with *Iznik* tiles from the 15th century, the highest period of Ottoman tile art. There are built-in wardrobes with mother-of-pearl inlay on the walls. The inside of the dome is decorated with navy blue and gold gilding in relief. In the middle of the dome, the names of Allāh are inscribed with gold gilding on a round parchment background (See Figure 8.85). Between the deep rectangular windows with marble jambs, there are triple niches with marble arches that match perfectly. Its windows, dome, door, and cabinet wings, fireplace, and fountain are examples of the Ottoman style. The careful decorations on the cabinet doors, windows, and borders and the height and splendor of the dome indicate that the room belongs to a sultan. According to Eldem, the beauty of smoothness and proportion seen in the tiles of this place is not seen in any of the places decorated with tiles. The tiles covering the building, lower windows, and cell walls are always embroidered and colored. The arches are also covered with good-quality tiles.[1002]

[1001] Emr idüp Ḥażret-i Sulṭān Murād-ı ʿādil
Yapdılar yümn ile bu kaṣr-ı şerīf oldu tamām

Ḫāki 'anber yeli cān-perver ü ābı kevs̱er
Yeridür cennete teşbih olunsa bu maḳām

Şemsedür şems-i cihān-tāb kevākib gül-mīḫ
Yaraşur māh-ı şeb-efrūz olursa aŋa cām

Hātif-i ġayb du'ā ile didi tārīḫin
Şāh-ı devrāna mübārek ola bu oda müdām

[1002] Ibid, 112.

Figure 8.85 The Dome of Murad III Privy Room.
Source: National Palaces Topkapi Palace (@topkapi_sarayi), Instagram Photo, December 20, 2021

The square planned room is covered with a large dome with a diameter of 11 meters. The ball hanging down from the dome symbolizes being in one of the places of the ruler. In the corners on the right side of the entrance are carved wooden seating areas (*shirvan*) decorated with gold gilding. A large and beautiful fireplace is in the middle of these two resting places (See Figure 8.86). There is a bed in the corners on both sides of the fireplace. The upper parts, seated on four delicate gilded and carved wooden columns, are also carved and gilded. The wooden ceilings of the bedrooms are decorated with fine and elegant *kalem işi* using pleasant colors. The inner part of the fireplace, against the wall, is covered with tiles. The light added to the room by the deep windows covered with tile decorations decreased over time due to the new unique rooms built around it.
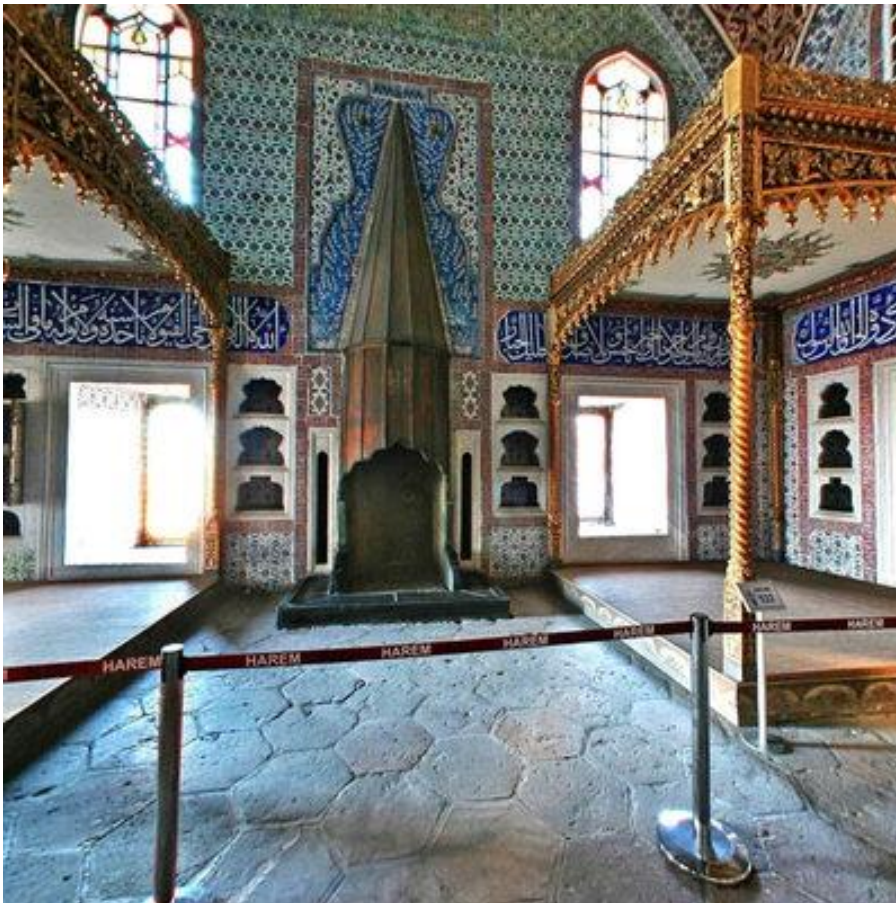
Figure 8.86 The Fireplace of the Murad III Privy Room.
Source: National Palaces Topkapi Palace (@topkapi_sarayi), Instagram Photo, December 20, 2021

In the middle of the wall opposite the fireplace, there is a monumental marble fountain with three taps and three troughs, with a unique *selsebīl* (a tiered, ornamental fountain), whose front is decorated with colorful tiles. There are three troughs, which expand

from top to bottom in the form of stair steps, and a beautiful bronze faucet on top of each trough. Water is poured from the first trough to the second, from the second to the third. A picture of tulips, hyacinths, and carnations in flower bottles was painted on both sides of the faucet of the upper trough with gold gilding and paint. These are also magnificent works in terms of pen workmanship. The troughs are designed to create a nice splash of water in the room. The harmonious sound that comes out and echoes when water is poured from the fountain not only refreshes the soul but also turns into a functional element by preventing the conversations made inside from being heard by that outside.[1003] (See Figure 8.87)

Figure 8.87 Marble *selsebīl* of the room.
Source: Metin Sözen, *Bir İmparatorluğun Doğuşu: Topkapı*, "Marble *selsebīl*," (photo, 1998), 74.

Āyāt Al-Kursī (The Throne Verse) and the 57th verse of Surah *an-Nisa*, which begins with "*Ya eyyühellezine amenu...*, (and those who believe)" are written on the four sides

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[1003] Ibid,

of the wall with a clear and thick inscription on the tiles with a blue background and white writing (See Figure 8.82).

Murad III's bedroom, with its magnificence and elegance, is also the strongest structure of the *Ḥarem-i Humāyūn*. From this distinguished room, one goes to Sultan Ahmed I's library room and from there to Sultan Ahmed III's dining room. It connects Sultan Ahmed III's dining room to the *Hünkâr Sofası* (Imperial Hall) with a door.

According to Koçu, the door and cabinet wings inlaid with vineyard and mother-of-pearl, the cells with monolithic marble facades, the most beautiful tile panels of the 16th century, the exquisite decoration of the windows with a plaster frame made of colored glass, the decoration of the dome, the fountain, and the fireplace, and the bed areas are very mature, and they have been placed so harmoniously with the power of artistic taste that you are enchanted by this beauty and splendor, stepping into the room from the threshold, and contemplating its surroundings with an insatiable taste.[1004] Similarly, for this room, Eldem argues, "When one enters through the door and looks up and down, the proper arrangement of colored tiles, fireplace, fountain, and beds surprise people and give a good pleasure to the soul."[1005] Necipoğlu also agrees that despite its thick walls, its elegant proportions, original *Iznik* tiles, arched marble niches, and mother-of-pearl inlaid window shutters and decorated interior make this building an eye-catching example of classical palace architecture.[1006] The room is indeed striking in terms of the visual richness and orderliness it offers when entered through its door. (See Figures 8.88-8.89)

Penzer also described this room as follows:

> *Apart from the throne room, Murat III's room is the largest room in Selamlık. How big a dome it is can be clearly seen in one of the photos I took. It is a gorgeous room. The models of the wall tiles are divided by niches that are carved in groups of three, a flamboyant and waterfall-like wall fountain, and on the chimney side, two cedar-shaped elevations with a canopy. As for the fireplace, the upper parts of its chimney are about 7 meters high, resembling a minaret. To put it in a way that Westerners can understand, it is fine craftsmanship resembling a sharpened pen. Also noteworthy are the sills surrounding the room, which are carved in a deep Kufic style.* [1007]

[1004] Koçu, 206-207.

[1005] Eldem, in Küçükerman, 110.

[1006] Necipoğlu, 220.

[1007] Penzer, 248.

Figure 8.88 The bronze chimney piece of Murad III Privy Room, noticeable tiles of plum blossoming around the cone, the tiled wall nishes, and the inserts for fireplace instruments.
Source: Filiz Kölmek, "Piece of the Privy Room of Murad III", (photo, 2021).

Figure 8.89 An attractive view showing the richness of details.
Source: Metin Sözen, *Bir İmparatorluğun Doğuşu: Topkapı*, "III. Murad Odası" (drawing, 1998), 78.

After focusing on the reason for choosing Murad III's Privy Room in detail, its originality, and its descriptive features, it would be appropriate to continue the aesthetic analysis of the space through the principles of stylization/aniconism, repetition/eternity, incomparability, and avoiding indoctrination of Islamic aesthetics. Thus, the reflections of these principles on the Topkapı Palace will be seen through a sample.

Calligraphy, geometry, and floral ornamentation, the applications of which can be seen from large architectural objects to small daily objects, are the three basic Islamic arts, as stated in the "Visual Language of Ottoman-Islamic Arts and Architecture" chapter. There is no use of sculpture or copy in this art. As a reflection of the principle of *tenzīh*, indeed, there are no imitations, depictions, icons, or statues in Murad III's Privy Room. When one enters the room, the most dominant art content is the floral-patterned tiles and the calligraphy that circulates throughout the room. (See Figure 8.90) Continuous inscription lines of the *Āyāt Al-Kursī* written above the lower windows, each of which has marble niches on both sides, surround the room. In the calligraphy written in white on blue, there are the verses of the *Āyāt Al-Kursī* and the 57th verse of Surah *an-Nisa*. The calligraphy line, which circulates throughout the room in the form of a border strip, does not only have a visual or semantic contribution. Additionally, it is also important in terms of Islamizing the space.

It clearly expresses the identity of a composition in which it is included. It can be thought that these selected verses also hint at the design idea of the space. In this respect, it will be useful to mention their meanings.

Meaning of *Āyāt Al-Kursi*

In the name of Allāh, the Most Gracious and Merciful.

"Allāh! There is no god 'worthy of worship' except Him, the Ever-Living, All-Sustaining. Neither drowsiness nor sleep overtakes Him. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. Who could possibly intercede with Him without His permission? He fully knows what is ahead of them and what is behind

them, but no one can grasp any of His knowledge—except what He wills to reveal. His Seat encompasses the heavens and the earth, and the preservation of both does not tire Him. For He is the Most High, the Greatest."[1008]

[1008] Kur'ân Yolu, "el-Bakara 2/255" (accessed October 20, 2021).

Figure 8.90 Calligraphic lines and floral ornamentations of the room.
Source: Metin Sözen, *Bir İmparatorluğun Doğuşu: Topkapı*, "Caligraphic lines," (photo, 1998), 75.

The Meaning of Verse 57 of Surah *an-Nisa*

"As for those who believe and do good, We will admit them into Gardens under which rivers flow, to stay there forever and ever. There they will have pure spouses, and We will place them under a vast shade."[1009]

As can be seen in the verses chosen for calligraphy, Sultan's room is associated with heaven. The outstanding *Iznik* tiles, which stand out when you enter the room, crystallize that they are emulated by the gardens of heaven with floral ornamentations on them. In this mindset, the definition of beauty is measured by its resemblance to heaven. To this end, heaven is the ultimate goal, the greatest reward, and the pinnacle of beauty for Muslims. This longing and quest are reflected in the space, as mentioned in the principle of sorrow, by placing images of heaven and inscriptions, as in the Privy Room of Murad III.

The reflections of the principles of infinity and repetition can be seen in the floral ornamentations on the tiles. The tiles located both under the second-floor colored windows and next to and below the triple marble niches are very striking in this respect. It is seen that the beginning and the ends of the patterns are not decorated in

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[1009] el- Nisâ 4/57.

such a way as to take or center the motifs exactly, and the composition is not constructed with such a concern. Thus, it gives a feeling of eternity, not completion. On the one hand, it can be thought that it refers to the principle of *tanawwu'* through unframedness and improvisation.

In the Privy Room of Murad III, another element of heaven is water. Water, which is mentioned in many verses of the Quran and is an important element of heaven, also symbolizes rebirth. The use of water as an element of heaven is vital in terms of the serenity and peace it gives to the environment, which is often mentioned in the descriptions of heaven. The *selsebīl* inside the room is important regarding its contribution to the desired ambiance. Directly opposite, in the middle of the north wall of the room, there is a gilded brass stove surrounded by *Iznik* tiles decorated with elegant plum flowers. The mutual use of fire and water can also be considered an element of balance and a reference to the principle of tensionlessness.

It is immediately striking that the interior facades of the room, like many other rooms, are not symmetrical within themselves. Therefore, in order to perceive space, the eye, and the body must make circular movements. While this circulation refers to the cosmic spiral principle, it also fulfills the objectives of the principle of avoiding indoctrination. In this way, the gaze is not gathered at a single point; the consciousness has to be constantly awake to perceive the space at every point. Another feature that provides this situation is that although the room is located high, the human scale has always been preserved. From the highest point of the dome to the ground, the space is also vertically graded many times. Thus, the state of consciousness was not destroyed, the eye was not directed and imprisoned at certain points by preserving the human scale, it was allowed to perceive the whole space, and the contemplation was not disturbed. All these are reflections of the principle of avoiding indoctrination. Manipulating the mind with illusions and unnecessary pomp cannot find a place for itself in this mindset and the spaces created in this direction.

The general plan of the Privy Room of Murad III is a circular dome on the square ground (See Figure 8.91). These geometric forms and their combinations are powerful metaphors in Islamic aesthetics. The circle is associated with the Creator, as it has no beginning and no end, expressing the idea of centrality (the spreading of everything

from a single point). The square, on the other hand, expresses the four directions with its four sides and thus symbolizes the world and the existence of human beings on earth. As a structural form, a circle within a square symbolizes the integration of man with the Creator. The circulation of human beings in such a space with the light that refers to the light of the Creator filtering from the top of the circular dome creates a real metaphor.
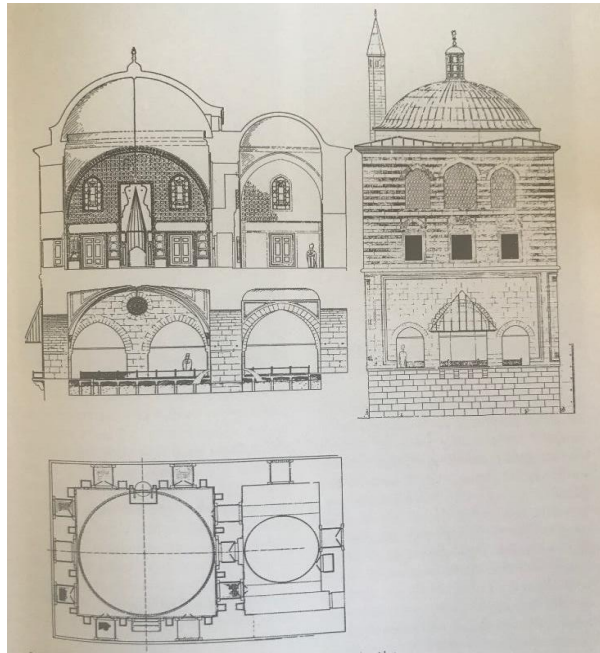
Figure 8.91 Plan and Elevations of Murad III Privy Room
Source: S. Hakkı Eldem and Feridun Akozan, Topkapı Sarayı: Bir Mimari Araştırma, "Privy Room of Murad III", (drawing), 184.

The symbolism and meanings of the dome are very strong. It can be said that both the Privy Room of Murad III and its dome are elegant and powerful in terms of their height, splendor, intense ornamentation, orderliness, and aesthetic value (See Figure 5.78). The heights of the domes throughout the Palace were planned higher in Sultan's rooms compared to the other rooms. There can be two reasons: First, height is associated with splendor, and it is usual that Sultan's places were required to be made more magnificent. Glory, on the other hand, is associated with beauty in Islamic aesthetics, as mentioned in the relevant section. The second is the relationship of the dome with the vertical axis. Vertical elements such as minarets, tomb towers, and domes were frequently used in Islamic architecture and served as architectural tools that reminded people of heaven in terms of symbolism and directed them to him and the Creator. Domes were used as transition elements between the celestial and

terrestrial worlds. The vertical axis, in which the dome connects with the direction given by its form, is considered a cosmic axis. This cosmic axis is the line of communication between heaven and earth and the thread of continuity between the Divine and the human level of existence. This metaphor seems to be strengthened by the light at the top of the dome in the Privy Room of Murad III. It is striking that there are names of Allāh written in calligraphy around this light, which is a metaphor for the light of Allāh, which is often mentioned in the Quran. The repetition, which is also created by the red and leaf embroidered decorations, the color of the sultanate of the Ottoman Empire, refers to eternity with the effect of narrowing due to the form of the dome and its combination with light. Besides the preference for the circular form associated with God in the geometric decoration of the pendants, the use of green color by contrasting with the red in the center and thus strengthening the emphasis is another important and notable emphasis in terms of symbolism. (See Figures 8.80- 8.82-8.88-8.92)

Just like in *Divānḫāne*, Privy Room, and other *Hünkâr* pavilions, a tasseled and gilded ball hangs from the middle of the dome. According to Lokman, this sphere, which goes by the name of *Tob-ı Müzehheb*, represents the earth, and the chain on which it hangs is the "*rişte-i ʿaql* (rope of reason)."[1010] The hanging of this rope on the dome in Sultan's places evokes the idea that Sultan's decisions, based on his mind, are trying to be made in the way Allāh wills, with justice, by clinging to His rope.

The Privy Room of Murad III also reflects the principles of harmony with nature and tensionlessness. The massive mass of the building is balanced by two layers of windows. While the light coming from both the facade windows and the top of the dome creates a tension-free and balanced environment, the cells that merge with the lower windows and sitting places also ensure not to be separated from nature, to unite and integrate with it. Besides, the flower motifs on the tiles, which refer to the gardens of heaven, also carry an outdoor element to the interior. Thus, a transition, integration, and harmony between the interior and the exterior are achieved. The fact that the pavilion was built in such a way as to benefit from the topography is a sign that it is in harmony with nature.

[1010] Lokman, in Necipoğlu, *Mimari, Tören ve İktidar,* 120.
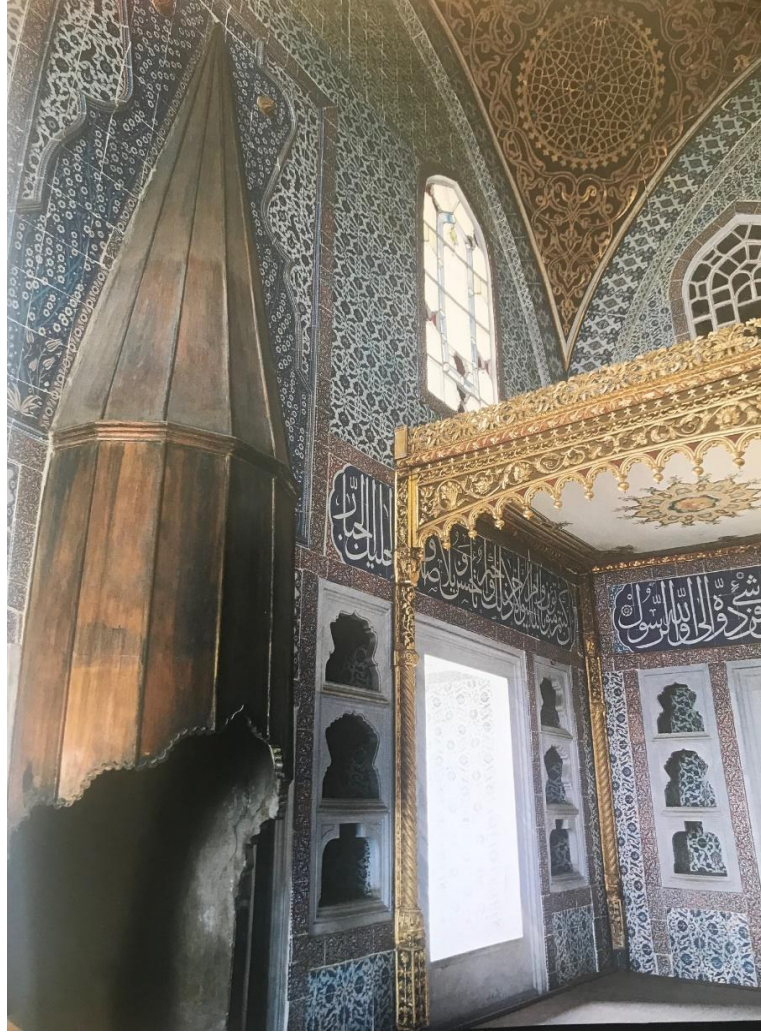
Figure 8.92 Use of circular geometric design on the pendentives.
Source: Filiz Kölmek, "Circular geometric design" (photo, 2021).

Just as the whole of the Palace bears intense traces of Islamic aesthetics, it is obvious that even Murad III's Pavilion and his Privy Room are fed from the same rich source and carry familiar traces alone, too. And this is the reflection of the concept of *Teksīf*, the densification of meanings, expressing so much with little. The room was designed by Architect Sinan, the most masterful architect of the state, in a way to properly reflect Sultan's place and fulfill its functions, and according to what Lokman said, expert craftsmen were brought in to prepare the materials to be used during the construction process, and it was built with care.[1011] It is eye-catching both with its architecture and decoration and is mentioned as the pinnacle of the art and architecture of the culture it belongs to. With these aspects, the room is the reflection of the principles of *iḥsān*,

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[1011] Lokman in Necipoğlu, *Mimari, Tören ve İktidar,* 216.

perfection, harmony, and congruity. The room's plan is a circular dome on a square base and is extremely clear, open, and understandable. The room reflects the principle of *tanawwu'* and modular structure, with additions that are integrated into itself according to the needs of the time. A domed throne room was added to the Privy Room of Murad III a few years after its completion, and then a small pavilion for Ahmed I was added in front of the western facade of the room.[1012] As a reflection of the principle of incomparability (*tenzīh*), there is no depiction in the decoration of the room. Since it is aniconic, floral design, geometry, and calligraphy are oriented. There are no images or statues. There is a stylization in which nature is used as a tool as a source and inspiration. It complies with the principle of harmony with nature by effectively using the existing topography in the design. Floral ornamentations reflecting the principle of eternity and repetition on the tiles, the emphasis on heaven in the verses written in calligraphic lines, the symbolism of heaven on the hexagonal pavements on the floor, the use of water as a design element in the form of a *selsebīl* all refer to the principle of sorrow; longing for heaven. The fact that the interior facades of the room are different from one another and that they are not symmetrical carries the traces of the principles of avoidance of indoctrination and reverse perspective as it requires keeping the consciousness open, while it reflects the principle of the cosmic spiral by causing circular movement of the eye and body to perceive the room. The balance of the massive mass with the staggered two-floor windows and the light in the middle of the dome, and the use of decoration in a way that balances the structure without hiding it, refers to the tensionlessness principle.

Apart from the fact that the whole room has such high densification of meaning, even its dome alone has meaning densification in itself, and it reflects the principles of beneficence/functionality, sorrow, *tenzīh*, eternity and reputation, *ḥusn* and *cemāl*, harmony& congruity, avoiding indoctrination, densification, tensionlessness, and stylization.

Any other single item that we will examine in the room will also have semantic densification as it is fed from the same rich source, an example of which is the marble fountain. (See Figure 8.93)[1013]

[1012] Necipoğlu, *Mimari, Tören ve İktidar,* 220.
[1013] Topkapı Palace, ed., İlhan Akşit, Akşit Kültür, (İstanbul: Turizm ve Publishers,2005), 85.
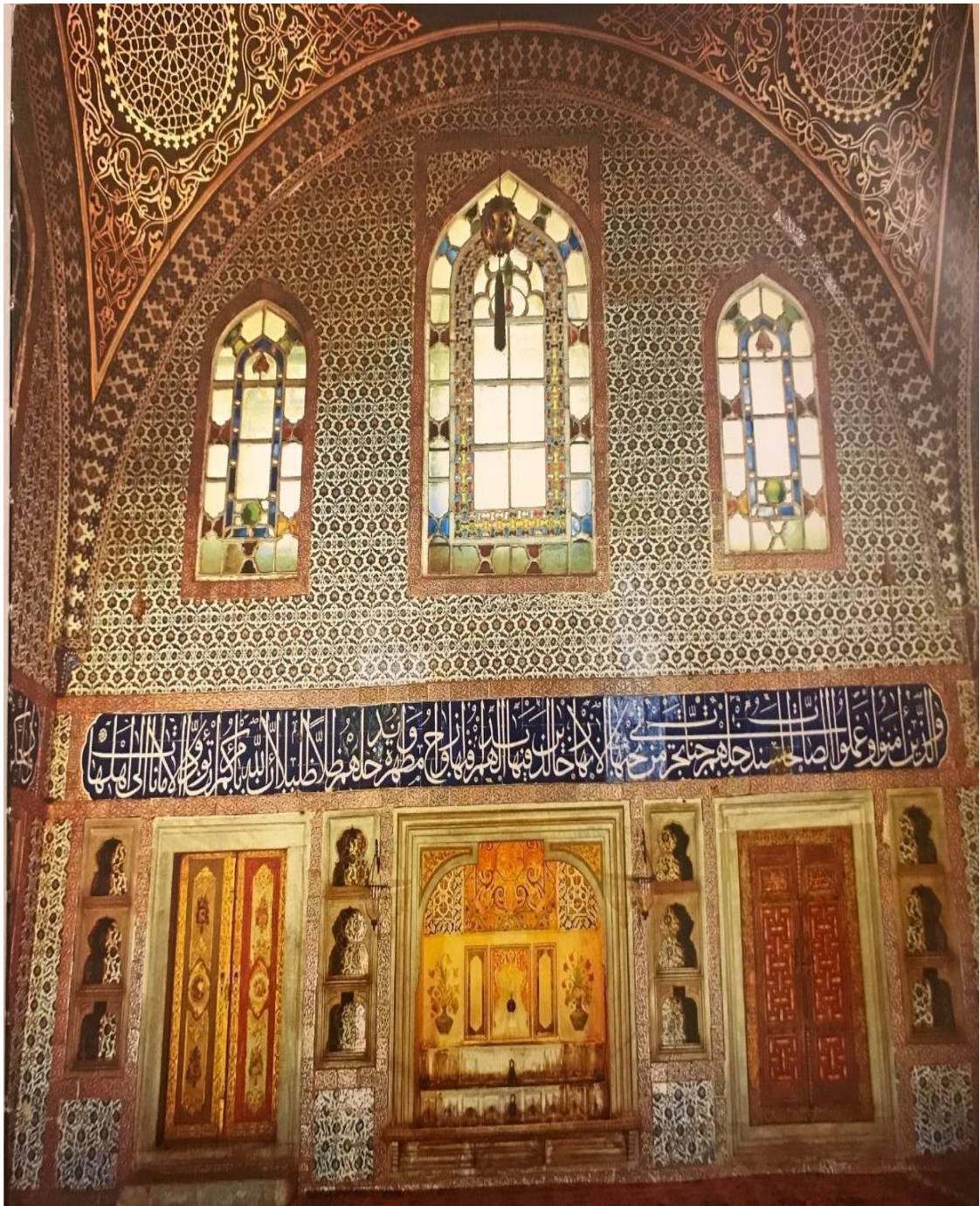
Figure 8.93 The south interior face of the room reflecting dense meanings.
Source: İlhan Akşit, *Topkapı Palace*, "III. Murad Room" (photo, 2005), 66.

Another issue that can be emphasized about the room is the hexagonal slab on the floor (See Figures 8.80 and 8.94). The hexagon is a symbol of perfection, heaven, balance, and harmony.[1014] It is noteworthy that this shape was chosen in terms of complementing the meanings of the room.

[1014] Abdullah and Khan, 134.

Figure 8.94 Hexagon floor coverings.
Source: Filiz Kölmek, "Hexagon floor" (photo, 2021).

8.7. Aesthetical Analysis of the Topkapı Palace in terms of Household Aesthetics of Islam

In this study, which aims to analyze the spatial preferences of the Topkapı Palace through the Ottoman mentality and mindset, we have revealed the traces of religious/Sufi thought in the palace through the fundamental approaches of Islamic aesthetics. In addition to these, the dissertation claims that the household aesthetics of Islam also influenced the spatial preferences of the Topkapı since the palace could ultimately be considered a residence. This part aimed to make sense of the spatial preferences of the Topkapı Palace through the aesthetics of households in Islam and deepen the analysis.

While analyzing the Topkapı Palace, which was the administrative center of the Ottoman Empire and the residence of the sultan, it is important and necessary to examine the aesthetics of households in Islam. In accordance with this approach, Ortaylı considers the Topkapı Palace as a house in his work titled *Private and Royal Life in the Ottoman Palace* and asserts that the Topkapı Palace is the residence of the Ottoman sultans. It was built by Mehmed II, the conqueror of Istanbul, in 1460, and with some additions, Ottoman sultans and palace people lived there until the middle of the 19th century. Due to the state protocol and ceremonies of the 19th century, the

palace had become insufficient, and although the Turkish sultans moved to the Dolmabahçe Palace on the Bosporus from the beginning of the 1850s, the Imperial Treasury, Sacred Relics, and Imperial Archives were preserved there even after the palace was abandoned. It preserved its protocol as a "father's house" until the abolition of the Ottoman monarchy in 1922. Topkapı is the home and largest palace of the former empire with its modest but magnificent structure, pleasant gardens, and unique location, the richness of its treasures, and archives. It is also both an administrative campus and a sultan's house for the Ottomans. In this respect, it is both a residence and a place of duty for a sultan.[1015]

Necipoğlu similarly argues that the third court is the place where *Enderūn* resided with the sultan's family and inner household and added that the young male and female subjects chosen to be educated here were married to each other and learned to serve faithfully under the strict discipline of the eunuchs and trainers before they were promoted to bureaucratic positions in the central administration of the empire. Thus, the author emphasizes that *Enderūn* was both a royal residence with the Sultan as the head as a father and a palace school for the ruling elite. In this environment, the sultan would develop paternal ties with the future rulers of the empire.[1016]

Mualla Eyüboğlu Anhegger, who was responsible for the repair of the *Harem* of the Topkapı Palace, which is the original example of the palace architecture of the Ottoman Empire, also built her narrative in the whole of her work, *Topkapı Sarayı'nda Padişah Evi (Ḥarem)* (Sultan's House in Topkapı Palace (Ḥarem)), in which she compiled these works she had done for many years, over the size of the palace as a residence.

Therefore, even though buildings serve many different functions, the Topkapı Palace is a house, after all, when evaluated collectively as the house of the state and the sultan.

8.7.1. Privacy

Revelation, which is the source of Islam, is also the source of Islamic aesthetics. It is seen that most of the verses in the Quran, which is the source of the revelation, can be

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[1015] Ortaylı, *Osmanlı Sarayında*, 13-22.
[1016] Necipoğlu, *Mimari, Tören ve İktidar,* 129.

associated with the aesthetics of the household in Islam, concentrate on the concept of privacy, as explained in detail in the relevant chapter of this study. Parallel to this, almost all of the works written on life in the Topkapı Palace have given extensive attention to the strict privacy of the palace. Ortaylı and Penzer clarify the privacy in the palace by referring to the meaning of the word "ḥarem." Ortaylı says that *harem* means forbidden and secret in Arabic. The word *maḥrem* derives from this. It is the most heard, spoken, albeit most misunderstood place of the Topkapı Palace. It is the foremost part of the Palace and state protocol because it is the house of the sultan, and the mother of the sultan is at the head of the sultan's house. In the Topkapı Palace, *Ḥarem* represents the secret and closed part of human life.[1017] Penzer also underlines that the meaning of the word *ḥarem* should be clarified to understand *Ḥarem*, which has the permanent interest of the researchers. The author explains that *harem* is derived from the Arabic word *ḥaram*, which means something sinful to do, as opposed to *ḥalal*. In other words, what is allowed to be done in certain places is forbidden and sinful in this area. Due to the sanctity of the places mentioned, the word haram also means "holy" and "protected." The functional use of the word is the place belonging to women in the Muslim household because it is *ḥaram* or a place of refuge for women. The Ottomans softened the word even more and turned it into the *ḥarem,* and by adding the suffix "*lik*," they offered the word "*ḥaremlik*," which is used to mean the place belonging to the women of the house.[1018]

Küçükerman explains that the concept of privacy is reflected in the Palace with the first choice of location. He refers to Tursun Beg, who says, "… His Highness the Conqueror… He ordered that a great palace be built in this beautiful secluded place, reflecting all kinds of artistic achievements, that every mansion should be a home for the beauties, and every pavilion should be so beautiful as to envy the mansions of heaven." Emphasizing that the New Palace was initially designed for the purpose of conducting state affairs and hiding the treasury, he underlines the importance of the fact that it is surrounded by walls. Hence, it is crucial to maintain the internal order by keeping the palace life and organizations within a specific limit and controlling the relations of the palace people with the external environment. The importance of these

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[1017] Ortaylı, *Osmanlı Sarayında*, 145.
[1018] Penzer, 17.

walls of the Palace increased even more in terms of "privacy," especially during the reign of Suleyman I when the *ḥarem* room in the *Beyazıt* region was moved to the Palace. Thus, at night and out of service, 26 iron-winged doors opening to the outside and inner courtyards used to be bolted shut, while the walls and towers were protected by the "Bostancı Guild."[1019]

In a similar vein, Penzer associates the reason for Mehmed II's move from the Old Palace, which was his first residence, to the New Palace, and the choice of location for this palace with privacy. According to the author, the Sultan lived in the old palace for about ten years, although it is uncertain. In this process, the need for a new palace arose, as it was understood that the palace was too small to be used both as a private house and as a place where official works were carried out, primarily due to the continuous development of the newly established *Enderūn*. The desire for greater privacy may also have been a determining factor in making this decision. The new place should have been suitable for expansion by any means, providing complete confidentiality and easy-to-take security measures. For all these reasons, the Byzantine acropolis on the first hill was chosen as the ideal place to stand out. The first thing that was done to ensure complete secrecy was to build a solid inner wall around the summit of the hill on which the palace would sit and build high and solid walls, starting from the hill in the Golden Horn and reaching to the Sea of Marmara, to completely separate the palace area from the other parts of the city.[1020]

Reşad Ekrem Koçu reveals the privacy in the Palace, associating it with attendance. The author says that when entering from *Bābussaāde* (Gate of Felicity), the term "eyeball to eyeball" fully describes the scene since the *Arz Odası* (Audience Chamber) comes out immediately. This is where the sultan received viziers, state officials, and foreign state ambassadors. According to the protocol, the people could enter *Bābussaāde*, but they could not see any part of *Enderūn*. In a place other than the Audience Chamber, even the grand vizier could not see the sultan if he did not have permission, and even the grand viziers could not take their steps inside the threshold of *Bābussaāde* unless they were admitted to the presence. However, on condition that Sultan's name was confirmed and invited, any person would be taken inside

[1019] Küçükerman, 28.
[1020] Penzer, 65.

Bābussaāde under strict supervision and taken to whichever apartment of *Enderūn* where the sultan was waiting for him. Two exceptional cases of this situation were recorded throughout the history of the Topkapı Palace: The first was in the military revolution in which Osman II (Osman the Young) was deposed, and the revolutionaries dared to cross *Bābussaāde* and enter *Enderūn-i Humāyūn*.

Also, Alemdar Mustafa Pasha, who raided the palace by staging a *coup d'etat* to put the revolutionary sultan Sultan Selim III back on the throne, broke the door wings of *Bābussaāde* and entered *Enderūn*.[1021]

Similar to Koçu, Şimşirgil also mentions the privacy that makes one feel better in the Palace starting from *Bābussaāde* and asserts that the part of the Palace called *Enderūn* starts from *Bābussaāde.* Both *Harem* of the Palace and the highest school of the state are located in this section. Since this part was considered the sultan's house, no one could go beyond there. Therefore, the soldiers, the people, and all Ottoman subjects gave an atmosphere of holiness by showing respect to this door that opened to the privacy of the sultan. Even the rebellion and revolutionary movements of the soldiers ended in front of this door, and the sultan was expected to go out and listen to their problems. Throughout Ottoman history, this gate got trespassed twice.[1022]

On the other hand, Anhegger describes the high privacy in the Palace through the lives of the people of *Ḥarem* and argues that the sultan's private life was lived with his family in *Ḥarem*, where the sultan's mother, children, *haseki* (chief consort of an Ottoman Sultan), favorites, and members working under their command lived. The head of the administration of the house was the sultan's mother, *Valide Sultan* (Queen Mother). The officers working under her were always female members. As they were specially raised in the Old Palace, these women were taken from the market at a young age or brought to the palace as war booty and trained by the Female Palace Masters. They always slept and lived in the palace. The size, decorations, and annexes of their rooms and wards reflected their rank or importance in the palace. Their relations with the city, connections with the Old Palaces, and communication and correspondence were only possible through *Kara Ağalar* (Black Eunuchs). Without the mediation of

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[1021] Koçu, 72.
[1022] Şimşirgil, 57-58.

the *Kara Ağalar*, the black eunuchs of *Ḥarem*, all women, including the *Valide Sultan*, could relate neither to the Official Palace nor to life outside the Palace.[1023]

Anhegger underlines and crystallizes that privacy, which is of significant importance in palace life, was also reflected in the spaces and elucidated that the living order in the sultan's house consisted of a *ḥarem* for women and a men's *selamlık*, as in any Muslim house. The pavilions belonging to sultans and princes should be described as *selamlık*. There is a passage from these pavilions to *Ḥarem*, near the *hasekis* or favorites, through secret passing without being seen by anyone. However, there is no unannounced or secret passage to the Apartments of the *Valide Sultan* and the Apartments of the Concubines. There is no passage between the Apartments of the Concubines and the Sultan's Pavilions and the Apartments of the Princess. The Apartments of the Stewardesses separate the Apartments of the *Valide Sultan*, the Sultan's and Prince's Pavilions from the Apartments of the Concubines. Notably, the Apartments of Concubines in this apartment were placed in such a way as to prevent the concubines from having secret relations with the Sultan and the princes. According to the author, this situation makes us think that, apart from *Hasekis* and *Favourites*, it is desired to prevent the unauthorized or unaware relations of the Sultan with the concubines.[1024]

Ḥarem has a position that distinguishes itself from other places in the Palace with high privacy, and it also has a privacy hierarchy within itself, especially for the sultan. Although the relations between the sultan, the prince, and the *haseki* are not known with definite documents, according to Anhegger, the architectural volumes in the palace show that the sultan and his princes and *hasekis* could have easy and unseen relations in the first eight years after the birth of the prince. The connection between the Privy Room and the apartments of the Princes and the adjacent Birth and *Haseki* Rooms is direct and straightforward. After the apartments of *Favorites* were built in the 18th century, the *Haseki Sofa* in this apartment allowed the Sultan and the *Hasekis* to meet without the supervision of the *Valide Sultan*.[1025]

[1023] Mualla Eyüboğlu Anhegger, *Topkapı Sarayı'nda Padişah Evi (Harem)* (İstanbul: Sandoz Kültür Press, 1986), 26.
[1024] Ibid, 29.
[1025] Ibid, 109.

It would be appropriate to include the discourses of foreigners who came to the palace, from an outside perspective, about privacy in the palace. Domenico Hierosolimitano, an Italian doctor who worked in the palace during the reign of Murat III, is one of the seven doctors in the palace who was in charge of looking after the Sultan and is the third person in seniority. One of his observations about the palace is as follows:

> *…a corridor from the square leads to another garden where the sultan's rooms are located. These rooms, whose keys are only for black girls and women who want to serve the sultan, are reserved for the use of the sultan only. (…) on one side, there are 40-44 independent apartments, each of which has baths and fountains and which do not see each other. The Sultan could pass through the secret corridors and reach the room he wanted without seeing the others. Another part of the women's apartments is where the sultan's children - only men - were raised. Girls lived with their mothers, and boys were taken from their mothers when they were six years old and brought up in separate rooms under the supervision of teachers who would train them. Constructed with astonishing intelligence, each of these spacious apartments had their own halls, bedrooms, baths, fountains, flower gardens, and bird gardens, without using human figures, but only embellished with flower paintings, embroidered curtains, precious carpets, threaded cushions, and pillows and there were sofas made of ivory and sandalwood embroidered with large corals, which cost ninety thousand akçes.*[1026]

Thomas Dallam (1599), the first Christian and organ-builder master at conveying his personal observations about any part of the palace other than those employed in the service of the palace, gave the following statements in his observations:

> *…The 11th day was Tuesday. We carried our instrument from the ship to the palace of the great sultan and started to install it in this magnificent palace. At every door of the palace, although the doors were always closed and no one could enter and leave as they wished, there was a large Turkish man called the Kapucu (Gatekeeper), who had the authority to question every passerby...* [1027]

The importance of privacy in the palace is also reflected in the inscriptions. The *Ḥarem-i Humāyūn* gate, which is called the *Cümle Kapısı* (Main Entrance) today, is the gate that separates *Ḥarem* from the Eunuchs section. This door opens to the *Nöbet Yeri* (Sentry Post), where the three main parts of *Ḥarem* are connected. The door, a domed and arched open landing, is entered through a symbolic empty arch made of marble, with an intricate *Rūmī* pattern and latticework. On this arch is the first part of the 52nd verse of Surah Al-Ahzab with *jeli thuluth* calligraphy (See Figure 8.95):

[1026] Penzer, 31-32.
[1027] Ibid, 35.

"*O you who have believed, do not enter the houses of the Prophet except when you are permitted…*"

Thus, by reminding the verse that it is forbidden for people other than those who are allowed to enter the house of the Prophet Muhammad, it is emphasized that it is forbidden to enter the house of the sultan and even a Muslim without permission.[1028]

Figure 8.95 Calligraphy on the *Harem-i Humāyūn* Gate[1029]
Source: DBOI, "Ayet kitabesi (Perde Kapısı - the Harem-i Humāyūn Gate)", (accessed July 21, 2021).

8.7.2. Dimonsions: Width and Height- Horizontal Diffusion of the Palace

• **Width:**

While the most mentioned subject about the aesthetics of the household in the Quran is privacy, more detailed information about the aesthetics of the household is given in the hadiths. Prophet Muhammad listed the characteristics of a good dwelling as being large (many rooms and large area), having good neighbors, being close to social facilities, especially the mosque, having an excellent geographical position (airy, sun-drenched), pleasing the residents, and being in a region suitable for his health. The width is the most emphasized issue in the hadiths about a beautiful dwelling. As

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[1028] Şimşirgil, 131.
[1029] DBOI, "Ayet kitabesi (Perde Kapısı - Harem Cümle Kapısı)", (accessed July 21, 2021).

explained in detail in the relevant section, what is meant by a large dwelling is that the number of rooms is sufficient depending on the number of residents, having separate rooms for parents, daughters, and sons, having a guest room to treat them, and the presence of a business room that can be used as a study room, and although there is no definite, strict order, there should be a *masjid* (place of worship).

Considering the Topkapı Palace from the above-mentioned aspects, it would not be wrong to claim that it has all these features. *Sarāy-ı Humāyūn* covers an area of approximately 700,000 square meters. Buildings cover approximately 80,000 square meters of this area. An essential part of the rest is reserved for private gardens. The geographical position and location of the palace is undoubtedly an airy, sun-drenched place suitable for the health of the residents. According to Edmondo de Amicis, this is "the green hill full of dreamy mystery and promise," while in the interpretation of Abdülhak Şinasi Hisar, it is "one of the most beautiful places in the world, at the point where Marmara expands."[1030] (See Figures 8.96-8.97). Strictly in line with the advice in the hadith, the places of men and women are separated as *haremlik* and *selamlık*. Service buildings and rooms are adequate and fully equipped, depending on the number of residents. On the palace grounds, there are around four hundred rooms and halls, twenty kitchens, six pools, two water scales, fourteen baths, two hospitals, two

pharmacies, five schools, twelve libraries, seven pavilions, seven treasury, ten mosques, three prayer places, eight ward, twenty-two fountains, eleven wells, and two cisterns.[1031]

Moreover, when the Palace is considered a whole residence, the administration buildings can be compared with the study room called "*meşrûbê*" in the residential aesthetics of Islam. Specifically, the sultan's study room is the Privy Room. According to Ortaylı's narrative, the Privy Room was a study room generally used by sultans in winter. Primarily Mehmed II, Sultan Bayezid II, Sultan Selim I, and Suleyman I spent a significant part of their daily lives there. Due to the multitude of state affairs, they would sometimes spend their nights here.[1032]

[1030] Sakaoğlu, *Tarihi, Mekanları, Kitabeleri,* 13.
[1031] Şimşirgil, 16.
[1032] Ortaylı, *Osmanlı Sarayında*, 111.

Figure 8.96 Topkapı Palace and its airy settlement.
Source: Asma Abbas, "Topkapı Palace", Pinterest Photo, n.d.
https://tr.pinterest.com/pin/547117054716867554 (accessed April 17, 2022).

Figure 8.97 Topkapı Palace and its outstanding location.
Source: Aydinlik, "Topkapı Sarayı dünyanın en güzel sarayı seçildi", (photo, September 03, 2021),
https://www.aydinlik.com.tr/haber/topkapi-sarayi-dunyanin-en-guzel-sarayi-secildi-255907 (accessed
October 19, 2021).

In a hadith, one of the necessary conditions for a house to be beautiful is that it should be in a way that the people who live in it will be pleased and live in it in peace. Anhegger emphasizes this point precisely. According to the author, contentment within *Harem* was paramount, although all women, including the *Valide Sultan*, could not have a relationship with life either in the Official Palace or outside the palace without the mediation of the *Ḥarem*'s Black Eunuchs. And she adds:

> *The Harem Apartment, which was the sultan's house, was built by well-known architects and craftsmen of the time to be likened to a paradise with rivers flowing around it. Even though it was disconnected from the world, the architecture of the inner world of Harem was shaped with the aim of making the inhabitants comfortable, happy, and giving pleasure. In this house, which was decorated and meticulously furnished by well-known artisans-painters, calligraphers, ceramists, and mother-of-pearl, order, tranquility, and peace could be achieved without music. Swimming pools, the murmurs of streams, the sounds of birds, the scent of flowers coming out of the pots placed in the windows, the hanging gardens, and the various beats of precious clocks were all aimed at this purpose.[1033]*

Similarly, Sakaoğlu says that the *Harem* of the Imperial Palace was an institution in itself with its apartments, wards, baths, infirmary, treasury library, and masjid, and the organizations formed for them, covering many rooms around large stony areas. Concubines and eunuchs undertook all kinds of services in this secret world, which was planned according to the happy lives of the sultan on the throne and his mother, the *Valide Sultan*, the *hasekis*, the princes, and the sultanas (the sultan's daughters).[1034]

- **Height:**

While the Prophet Muhammad encourages houses to be wide, he does not want them to be high in height. The reason for this is mentioned as waste, causing arrogance and non-compliance with privacy. The Topkapı Palace, too, represents the empire's power, not with the overwhelming verticality of a single monument but with a vast land spread over structures that indicate a complex institutional organization.[1035] The buildings are not planned very high in general, nor are they too low. Additionally, the height is scaled many times and drawn to the human scale, as examined in the example of Murad

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[1033] Anhegger, 26.
[1034] Sakaoğlu, *Tarihi, Mekanları, Kitabeleri,* 278.
[1035] Necipoğlu, *Mimari, Tören ve İktidar,* 20.

III's Privy Room. The tallest building on the palace campus is the Tower of Justice, which conveys that justice is above everything. In the buildings belonging to the Sultan, the domes are constructed high. The reason for this may also be that the Sultan was seen and glorified as "the shadow of Allāh on earth," as stated in the inscription of *Bāb-ı Humāyūn*.

8.7.3. Fluidity (*Seyyāliyet*): A Processional Construction

Another essential element in the household aesthetics of Islam is mobility. This principle is closely related to the recommendation that the house should be spacious. Evaluation of a house as large depends on the number of people living in it, but the population of a house is variable, not fixed, as there are newborns, deceased, departed, and temporary guests. Taking the broadest case as a basis may be materially impossible and wasteful. Taking the narrowest case as a basis, both do not meet the need and may cause waste, as it may cause much more additional costs because it is not considered from the beginning. Prophet Muhammad solved this problem based on the household area and provided expansion and privacy by making various partitions in the room as the need arose. This element in the household aesthetics of Islam also fully coincides with the *tanawwu'* (variation) and modular structure principles of Islamic aesthetics and arts. The Topkapı Palace was also formed over time on a horizontal ground by cutting out a large land area from the city and taking it. As explained in detail in the section examining the reflections of the principles of *tanawwu'* and modular construction on the Topkapı Palace, the Palace was not built and finished in one go; it was formed with additions made from time to time. Especially during the reign of Sultan Suleyman, the increase in the number of palace servants with the expansion of the state brought along the necessity of constructing new buildings, and thus, new spatial analyzes and additions were made in the palace according to the changing needs. During the reign of Murad III, who had the highest number of children (more than 100 from around 40 different mothers in various sources), there were major structural additions to the sultan's house, *Ḥarem*, and the entire palace. Additions continued in every period. Besides the Pool Pavilion of Murad

III, Pavilions of Murad IV, Mehmed IV, Osman III, the Pavilion of Ahmed I, and the Fruit Room of Ahmed III was built.[1036]

8.7.4. Furnishing and Decoration: Simplicity and Splendor

Another issue that needs to be emphasized in household aesthetics in Islam is furnishing and decoration. The restrictions and recommendations on this issue focus on two issues: simplicity and the house being free of non-Islamic religious elements. What is meant by simplicity is to avoid ostentatiousness and extravagance in the furnishing and decoration of the house and avoid elements that distract attention while worshiping and that bind the worldly life. These suggestions and recommendations are in perfect harmony with the principle of modesty. If we evaluate Topkapı Palace in these matters, we can say that first of all, the palace is free of elements that symbolize different religions, such as the cross, unique to and identified with non-Islamic religions. Although Byzantine influence can be observed in the architecture of the palace, its architectural details, and design ideas, it would not be the right approach to interpret this situation as the use of non-Islamic elements. Instead, it may be more accurate to perceive it as a reflection of cultural cosmopolitanism and integrating a state that strives to become a world empire. It is clear that sculptures and depictions belonging to non-Islamic cultures and which do not conflict with the mindset of these cultures are not used in the decorative programs in the palace. Instead of them, the main decorative programs of Islamic arts, fed by Islamic doctrine, floral design, geometry, and calligraphy, were used. As for the simplicity of the palace, it would not be correct to claim that it is in complete harmony with the aesthetics of the household of Islam. As discussed in the subject of humility, although the Topkapı Palace is simpler compared to the existing world palaces used in the same period, or it is known that it can be built more magnificently against the might of the empire, when evaluated structurally alone, it cannot be argued that it has a simple, unpretentious furnishing, and decoration that is free from glamorous elements, avoids the use of different and eye-catching colors and refrains from inclining towards worldly life. The magnificence elements in the palace were also detailed and described in the previous chapters.

[1036] Anhegger, 27.

8.7.5. Topkapı Palace in Macro Plan: Considering the Palace in Its Surroundings

In the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad, a household is not only handled at the micro level but also at the macro level. In other words, he looks at the household as a part of the city as a whole and evaluates it together with the geographical area on which it is built. Suggestions and recommendations on this issue included that it is not kept high from the neighboring houses near the houses, not far from mosques and masjids so that the call to prayer can be heard, giving importance to greenery and protecting historical monuments. The Topkapı Palace has no neighbors when it is considered a building complex, as it is a campus surrounded by castles built on a cape (Sarayburnu) that is closed to itself and opens to the sea. Moreover, the heights of the buildings on the campus are located close to one another. In many mosques on the palace campus, the azan is recited, so it is a good place in this respect. The relation of the palace with green is such that it reminds of the gardens of heaven. The area covered by the palace is approximately 700,000 square meters. While buildings cover only 80,000 square meters of this, approximately 620,00 square meters are reserved for green areas and private gardens. As for the preservation of historical artifacts in the palace campus, it should be noted that the Ottomans never touched many of the Byzantine artifacts in the palace, both during the construction and later periods, and some of them were preserved in their places. Giant column capitals in front of the Baptismal Pool and kitchen sections in the Lala Garden are listed as some of these structures. According to Şimşirgil, this is the clearest indication that the Ottomans did not have any historical heritage obsession. This respect for the legacy that preceded it is proof of owning a great civilization and human heritage. Again, the Hagia Sophia Mosque, located just outside the Topkapı Palace, provides the most striking example of this thought and behavior open to the world. Until then, Mehmed II could have turned the world's largest and most famous temple into a mosque, if he wanted to, by naming it after himself as a symbol of the conquest. However, he did not change the name or structure of the temple, which he turned into a mosque, out of respect for the heritage of humanity.[1037]

[1037] Şimşirgil, 17

Ortaylı also confirms the information given by Şimşirgil with the following statements and says that the area where the Palace is located was also the administrative center of the Old Byzantium, and the Topkapı was built on the former Byzantine Palace. It is known that the stones and columns remaining from the Byzantine Palace were used in the construction of the palace. Today, the water cistern from the Byzantine Palace on the road to *Bābussaāde* (Gate of Felicity) in Topkapı still exists and is protected. The giant column capitals in the kitchen section of the palace are the column capitals of the obelisk bearing the Justinian monument, which was previously located in front of Hagia Sophia. The Baptismal Pool in the Lala Garden is also a Byzantine artifact. All these are good examples of the fact that the Ottomans did not have any historical heritage obsession, which contains important messages against some of the excesses seen in today's society. This respect for the legacy of the past is also proof of owning a great civilization and humanity heritage.[1038]

The oldest building in the palace, bearing traces of Byzantium, is Hagia Irene (See Figure 8.98). This Byzantine church in the palace courtyard is 1200 years older than the Topkapı Palace and 200 years older than Hagia Sophia since its first construction dates back to the 4th century. According to Sakaoğlu, there was a reason why Sultan Mehmed II did not convert this dilapidated church into a mosque while he was building the *Şūr-ı Sulṭānī*, but included it in the palace courtyard. As a matter of fact, it is seen that in the second half of the 15th century, it was allocated to the storage of weapons recovered in wars and old unused weapons. Every sultan who ascended the throne would also come to Hagia Irene as part of his tours to get to know the palace, were informed about the characteristics of the booty weapons, and gave orders for their protection.[1039]

Necipoğlu also refers to the Byzantine elements preserved in the Palace but associates them with being symbols of power and victory. According to the author, ancient artifacts were displayed in the outer garden as symbols of power and victory. Among these ancient artifacts are the sarcophagi, baptismal vessels, and the Column of the Goths still standing in front of the hanging garden of the Third Court, which must have

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[1038] Ortaylı, *Osmanlı Sarayında,* 22.

[1039] Sakaoğlu, *Tarihi, Mekanları, Kitabeleri*, 65.

been collected from the Church of the Holy Apostles, where many of the Byzantine Emperors were buried and was demolished to make room for the Fatih Complex (See Figure 8.99-8.100). The column in the figure has also been preserved as a victory monument to remind us that Mehmed II built his palace on the walled acropolis of Byzantium in the past. An example of the many Byzantine sarcophagi used as fountain troughs could still be seen in the middle of the 17th century next to the Column of the Goths. Most of these sarcophagi were taken to the Archeology Museum in the outer garden of the palace, across from the Tiled Kiosk. Like the pavilions that Mehmed II had built in the outer garden, these ancient cultural monuments complete the garden's natural collection by conveying a consistent message of strength.[1040]

Figure 8.98 Hagia Irene.
Source: Hurriyet, "Aya İrini Kilisesi Nerede ve Nasıl Gidilir? Aya İrini Kilisesi Tarihi, Hikayesi ve Ziyaret Saatleri", September 16, 2020. https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/seyahat/aya-irini-kilisesi-nerede-ve-nasil-gidilir-aya-irini-kilisesi-tarihi-hikayesi-ve-ziyaret-saatleri-2020-41613202 (accessed March 20, 2022).

[1040] Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial and Power*, 262.
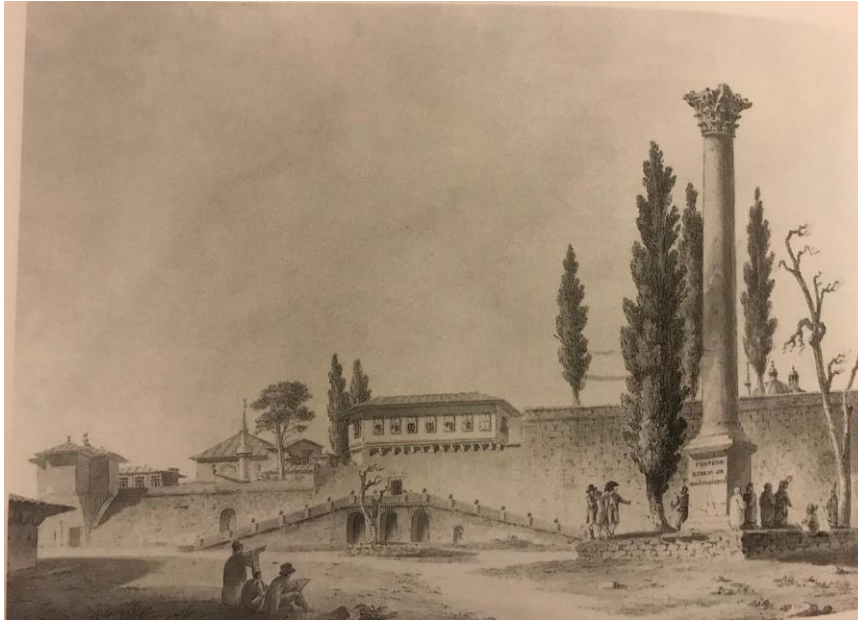
Figure 8.99 Gardens of the Seraglio with European visitors inspecting the Column of the Goths.
Source: Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial and Power, Topkapı Palace in the 15th and 16th Centuries*, "Gardens of the Seraglio," (drawing, 2007), 250.

Figure 8.100 Photograph dated 1852 shows the third court's hanging garden, some of the mansions that have disappeared today, and the Column of the Goths in front of it.
Source: *Architecture, Ceremonial and Power, Topkapı Palace in the 15th and 16th Centuries*, "Hanging garden," (photo, 1852), 251.

8.7.6. Spirituality: Recitations of the Quran and Houses of Prayer in the Palace

Another essential point that the Prophet Muhammad recommended for a house to be beautiful is that it should not be used only to sleep, eat, rest, and safety but to create and maintain a spiritual environment in the house. He illuminated this advice with the

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hadith, "*Do not turn your houses into graves. Indeed, Satan runs away from the house in which the Quran is recited.*"[1041] If we try to evaluate Topkapı Palace from this point of view, it is known that the Quran is constantly recited in accordance with the advice of the Prophet. The importance of the Chamber of the Sacred Relics and the organization of important events in this room during Ramadan are also related to the significance given to spiritual values. The transfer of the caliphate to the Ottomans during the reign of Selim I and the gathering of Sacred Relics in a special room of the Palace made this place a crucial and spiritual center for the entire Islamic world. Yahya Kemal Beyatlı's article titled "A Day Near the Caliphate," which he wrote in Ileri Newspaper on February 14, 1921, is worth mentioning in terms of revealing the Quran recitation in the Topkapı Palace and the spiritual atmosphere it added to the Palace:

> *While I was visiting the Yerevan Kiosk, I heard a deep voice of the Quran. Suddenly, I saw Islamic architecture in its entirety because, like a spirit in Islamic architecture, a voice of the Quran on a lectern is definitely needed. This architecture looks dry when there is no sound. I told this idea to my guide, Lütfü Bey. And I asked where this Quran sound came from.*

> *He said, "From the Chamber of the Blessed Mantle (Hırka-i Şerif)!" I slowly approached the window where the sound was coming from. I looked and saw a green, spiritual circle, a hafiz with his back to the window, reads with the rest of a soul immersed in the other world, while another hafiz waits in a corner with his eyes closed, counting beads.*

> *I asked my guide Lütfü Bey. When is the whole of the Quran recited (khatm) in the Chamber of the Blessed Mantle? Lütfü Bey smiled and said in my ear: 'Every day! Every hour! Day and night for four hundred years, in a nutshell…'*

> *I was listening with my eyes closed in amazement. Lütfü Bey gave some information: "Selim I brought the Blessed Mantle, which is the sign of the caliphate, and other Sacred Relics, by sending with khatms to Istanbul from Egypt, on the night he arrived in Istanbul, he placed it in a high position in the Palace. While the chief architect and masters were busily building the place to be entrusted, he stood up until morning, regardless of the fatigue of the voyage. That night, he arranged a duty to recite the Quran day and night, and appointed forty hafiz, the fortieth of whom was himself. From that day until this moment, the Quran is recited non-stop for a second in this circle. These hafizes are forty people. They always perform their duties in turn. Today is the watch of these two hafizes," he said.*

> *Tonight, at this hour, while I am writing these lines here, the Quran is recited in the Chamber of the Blessed Mantle. It has been recited incessantly for four hundred years.*

[1041] Muslim, 212-Tirmizi, 2.

Since that day, this thought has been hanging in my memory like a clock regulator. Since that day, I have heard how deep a foundation the caliphate has in the Turkish heart. I did not know that in Istanbul, which is the seat of the caliphate (capital city), there is a voice of the Quran that has not stopped next to such a chamber for four centuries. Many Turks, even many Istanbulites, do not know about this. Revolutions, dethronements, and bloody incidents in this palace for four hundred years could not silence the voice of the Quran even for a moment. After realizing this incident, I settled this doubt of why we cannot be expelled from Istanbul. "This state has two spiritual foundations: The call to prayer that Mehmed II recited from the minaret of Hagia Sophia is still being recited. The Quran that Selim I recited in front of the Blessed Mantle is still being read! This state has two spiritual foundations: the azan recited in Hagia Sophia, the Quran recited in the Chamber of the Blessed Mantle.[1042] (See Figure 5.94).

Figure 8.101 Quran Recitation in the Chamber of the Sacred Relics.
Source: Ahmet Şimşirgil, *Bir Müstakil Dünya: Topkapı,* "Chamber of Sacred Relics",(photo, 2016), 127.

Şimşirgil refers to the information given by Mehmed Khalifa to explain the spiritual atmosphere in the Palace. He states that in addition to the recitation in the Privy Room, the Quran recitation and prayers are frequently repeated in daily life, and he narrates the following:[1043]

As it is known, the most honorable and lofty of the rooms in the venerable harems of our blessed sultan is the Privy Room, where the Blessed Mantle of

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[1042] Fikriyat, "Yahya Kemal'i Derinden Sarsan Olay: Hırka-i Saadeti Ziyareti", December 12, 2020. https://www.fikriyat.com/galeri/tarih/yahya-kemali-derinden-sarsan-olay-hirka-i-saadeti-ziyareti/4 (accessed October 1, 2021).
[1043] Şimşirgil, 81-82.

His Holiness is located. Forty glorious zülüfkesan aghas are at the service of the blessed sultan day and night. They constantly turn head to the Blessed Mantle and pray for their wishes for the world, the hereafter, and the Islamic sultan. The number of people in this chamber is forty.

(…) After each chambered fulfills their duties with the manners and morals they are assigned to, each of them does not waste a minute in their flats; some write calligraphy, some work on memorizing the Quran and tajwid, and some do the best in religious sciences. He made an effort to learn and teach in a way that, according to their old customs, in summer and winter, half an hour before the evening prayer, everyone would perform an ablution, sit in their places and recite the Quran until the adhan time. After performing the sunset prayer, they would stop the Quran recitation until then, close to isha prayer, and repeat their ablution. Then, they would sit until the night prayer with manners and morals.

Besides, it can be thought that ten mosques, three prayer places, and thirteen libraries in the campus contribute to the spiritual atmosphere that is expected to be created, in addition to the Quran recitation that continues non-stop in the palace.

CHAPTER 9

9. CONCLUSION

The Topkapı Palace, which hosted a powerful empire with a deep-rooted civilization for centuries, continued its existence as a "family home" and later as a museum. Historical literature introduces the Topkapı Palace in a functional framework. However, considering the extraordinary importance of the palace in Turkish architectural history, studies with a pluralistic perspective are quite limited. Many past studies have an explanatory quality within the historical context of the palace functionally and spatially and possess a methodologically descriptive narrative. Necipoğlu's "*Architecture, Ceremonial and Power- Topkapı Palace in the 15th and 16th Centuries*" is different from these works. However, this precious cult work also makes sense of the spatial organization and decoration of the palace, to a large extent, in terms of power and rulership, and traces the imperial symbolism it contains. It is vital to develop new perspectives to understand and make sense of a palace with varied contents like the Topkapı Palace. Spatial preferences are multi-layered, and so is the analysis of the spaces.

Unlike previous studies on the Topkapı Palace, this dissertation examines the Ottoman thought system, which is believed to have a worldview, a peculiar understanding of order and unity in its view of the universe, nature, and society[1044]. These were reflected spatially in the Topkapı Palace. In this aesthetic analysis, the framework of the Ottoman thought system is considered with the elements of politics, philosophy, religion, and Sufism, which Ahmet Yaşar Ocak drew the boundaries of.

The dissertation brings a holistic perspective to the Topkapı Palace. It claims that the spatial organization of the Topkapı Palace was strongly influenced by the Ottoman thought system and aims to reveal this interaction/reflection. Since it was used by the

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[1044] Bolay, 23.

Ottoman dynasty for approximately 400 years and hosted rulers with different personal characteristics in various periods during this long time, it became necessary to determine a specific period when it comes to the Topkapı Palace. In this study, the 15th and 16th centuries, the period when the Topkapı Palace was first shaped, and its spatial character settled with the conquest of Istanbul began to rise, when the power peaked with Suleyman I, and the Ottoman culture reached its peak in terms of maturity, are selected.

The aesthetic analysis is chosen as the most appropriate method for this study because of its relation to the subject that the dissertation focuses on. In that sense, although aesthetics are generally perceived as the science and interpretation of the beautiful, it is actually not only related to the interpretation or perception of beauty. It analyzes choices of form and order, indicating values, meanings, and philosophies behind them.[1045] In order to understand and interpret an artistic/architectural piece belonging to a particular culture, it is necessary to know its cultural codes, mentality, and temporal meanings.[1046] It is not enough to interpret an art/architectural element just by looking at the forms. In line with this perspective, aesthetic analysis is not only about looking at an object and making its visual narrative but also about seeing, analyzing, and interpreting it with the reasons that create it and give meaning to it. This study crystallizes the preferences regarding palatial space and attaches profound meanings to it. An aesthetic analysis of the Topkapı Palace has not been made before. While it is known that places are definitely affected by the mentality and life perspectives of those who brought them into being, we cannot say that we understand a place without aesthetic analysis, particularly if it is a palace environment. For this reason, the dissertation provides an original contribution as it methodologically uses aesthetic analysis and as it is a unique study in terms of its focus on the spatial organization and architectural/artistic reflection of the Ottoman mindset.

In the dissertation, the reflections of Religious/Sufi thought, which are two of the components of the thought system of the Ottoman Empire, are examined based on the theoretical framework of Islamic aesthetics. This framework is also used as a tool to clarify the reflections of Ottoman political thought and philosophical thought on the

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[1045] Jale Erzen, Reading Mosques, 127.
[1046] Townsend, 56.

palace spaces. While the belief in Islam is a crucial force that has shaped the structure of the state since its establishment, examining the reflections of this belief on the spatial preferences of the palace is very important in terms of understanding and making sense of the palace. Since the dominant factor that shaped many things in the political, philosophical, religious, and, therefore, sufi thought of the state is the Sunni Islamic belief system, it was found appropriate in this study to base the analysis of the Topkapı Palace on the theoretical framework of Islamic aesthetics. Hence, the basic conceptual approaches that appeared in Islamic aesthetics are collected and explained in this dissertation. While determining these concepts, a detailed study was carried out on the literature of Islamic aesthetics, the concepts mentioned in common in the sources written on the subject were determined, and these concepts were presented in the light of the existing literature and Islamic teachings. This study, which has not been done before, is one of the main contributions of the dissertation.

In addition, the detailed analysis of the Privy Room of Murad III, which was determined as a case study, is also a significant contribution in terms of showing how Islamic aesthetics is conveyed through the visual language of Islamic arts in architectural structure, interior space, and decoration. There are examples of such analyses of the relationship between architecture and meaning made on sacred architecture, which is directly related to the central practices of religion and the practices of spiritual life. However, there is no such clear-cut religion-world distinction in Islam. Islam is a way of life, a worldview, traces of which should not be sought only in mosques. It is expected that this analysis, which has not been done before, on the spaces of the Topkapı Palace, which is an example of Islamic architecture, if not within the framework of sacred architecture, will begin to analyze, understand, and make sense of the spaces that can be accepted within the framework of Islamic architecture.

Although the basic principles of Islamic aesthetics are partially reflected in all Islamic arts and architecture, some particular approaches specific to different building types deserve to be emphasized. Although the Topkapı Palace is a building complex with different functions, from state offices to places of worship, from madrasahs to libraries, from mansions to reception halls, when evaluated collectively, it is ultimately a house; the house of the state and the house of the sultan. Hence, the interaction of the palace with household aesthetics in Islam was also examined to deepen the connection of the

palace spaces and their construction with Islamic belief. This analysis is also a first-time of its kind.

The originality and uniqueness of the palace, which is revealed through these analyzes of the Topkapı Palace, emphasizes Ottoman aesthetics and contributes to the studies on it, on which little has been written.

There are very few academic studies conducted to comprehend and make sense of the Topkapı Palace, including analysis, observation, and commentary on the entire palace, written in English, nourished by the culture of the geography it is located in, and familiar with the belief system that it belongs to. Therefore, the language, perspective, and methodology of the dissertation have fundamental importance.

Although the main objective of the dissertation is to contribute to the academic studies of Ottoman-Islamic aesthetics, art, and architecture in the general framework and the Topkapı Palace in particular, besides this, the study aimed to contribute to the studies of Islamic aesthetics, which can be considered as an almost untouched field, on which little has been written, according to the working potential it contains at its core. Almost all of the studies in English on this subject, with a few exceptions, have been carried out by researchers who are unfamiliar with this belief and culture, and it seems that many of them are insufficient to comprehend the essence of the subject. Contrary to what Leaman suggests, [1047] there is, of course, such a concept as Islamic aesthetics. Or, contrary to Grabar's claims,[1048] the reason for the unique preferences of Islamic artists regarding art should not be explained as the obligatory results of some inadequacies. The discourse "there is nothing Islamic in Islamic art[1049]" claimed by Allen and refuted by Peker[1050] is entirely invalid. Or, the claim of Hagedorn, "From the beginning,

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[1047] Leaman, 23

[1048] Grabar claims that Byzantine art was so complete and superior so that, th Muslims had to emulate it. To the question of why the Muslims did not adopt the figurative art, Grabar argues that they had to give it up due to the superiority of the Byzantine art which they could not compete with.

Oleg Grabar, "The Umayyad Dome of the Rock in Jeruselam", in *Studies in Medieval Islamic Art* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1976), 35.

[1049] Terry Allen, "The Arabesque, the Beveled Style, and the Mirage of an Early Islamic Art," in *Tradition and Innovation in Late Antiquity,* eds. F.M Clover and R.S. Humphreys, (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 221.

[1050] Ali Uzay, Peker. "The Concept of Beauty from Plotinus to St. Augustine and Ghazzali and Art of Abstraction in Medieval Eastern Mediterranean" XVII. Congress of Aesthetics: Aesthetics Bridging Cultures, Congress Book 1, ed. Jale Erzen (Ankara: SANART, 2008), 109.

thoughts on beauty, harmony, and proportionality in the Islamic world were borrowed from the pre-Islamic period,"[1051] should not be claimed that easily. For this reason, it was given the importance that this study on Islamic aesthetics should contribute to the literature. The contributions that the dissertation provides are the theoretical framework created on the basic concepts of Islamic aesthetics and the examination of the existing literature on the ideas that these concepts are fed in the Islamic faith. These concepts, which have been discussed broadly, serve as a fundamental criterion for the value or success of the artwork and its activities, as well as creating a paradigm for how Islamic a certain aesthetic understanding is.[1052] Apart from contributing to the literature with this theoretical study, it has also been one of the aims to create a stable ground for analyzing architectural works in Islamic geography.

In order to highlight the findings of the analysis, we can clearly say that the Ottoman political and philosophical thought is seen to be reflected in the Topkapı Palace strongly and strikingly in a spatial and design sense as it was claimed. Just as hierarchy and status were sharply defined in Ottoman political thought, the situation in palace spaces was also crystal clear. This strict hierarchical structure first shows itself in the courtyards of the palace campus. The series of courtyards, which turn into more and more special structures, emphasize the exalted position of the Sultan and is the clearest reflection of the hierarchical order in the spatial organization of the palace. While the palace functions as the administrative center of the empire, an educational institution, and a residence for the sultan, it also hosts thousands of people grouped hierarchically according to internal (private) and external (public) services. *Harem*, which is the sultan's house, is one of the places where the hierarchy can be observed spatially most clearly. Everyone else is deprived of these tastes to a strict degree according to their status.[1053]

The reflections of Ottoman political thought on space were not limited to hierarchy; another important reflection was related to the concept of justice. As emphasized in

[1051] Annette Hagedorn, İslam Sanatı Estetiği- Tarihi ve Avrupa Sanatı Üzerindeki Etkisi, ed. Jale Erzen and Pelin Yoncacı ((Ankara: Goethe Institut Türkiye'de Modern Sanat ve İslam Estetiği Congress Proceedings, 2005), 31.
[1052] Turan Koç, *İslam Estetiği*, İsam Yayınları, İstanbul. p. 47.
[1053] Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial and Power*, 215-217: Anhagger, 73.

many inscriptions, justice was above everything in the Ottoman Empire. [1054] The importance given to justice was embodied in the Justice Pavilion, which was higher than all the other buildings in the spatial organization of the palace. (See Figures 8.19-8.20).

Another feature of Ottoman political standing is its cosmopolitan structure. This mentality manifests itself with the principle of diversity in the palace of Mehmed II[1055], who set out with the intention of establishing a world empire and always gave importance to different cultures and different ideas.[1056] Each of the three pavilions in the outside garden was designed in different styles, including Persian, Ottoman, and Greek styles, and the Inner Treasure, which is a hybrid building and also a key symbolic structure that reflects Mehmed II's dream of universal sovereignty, where architectural and ornamental elements fed from various sources are freely used, is the extensions of this mentality.

It is noteworthy that the Ottoman religious/sufi thought, which is the focal point of the thesis, reflects itself quite effectively in the spatial and organizational design of the palace. This reflection also carries traces of political and philosophical thought. The overlapping of religious, sufi, political, and philosophical thought with each other in many respects can be considered a sign of the consistency of the Ottoman mentality within itself.

The reflection of Ottoman religious and sufi thought on the spatial organization of the Topkapı Palace was scrutinized through the determined basic concepts of Islamic aesthetics because, as Koç highlights, these concepts serve as a key criterion for the value or success of the artwork, as well as creating a paradigm for how Islamic a certain aesthetic understanding is fed by the Islamic mindset.[1057]

In order to touch upon the outcomes of this analysis, we should mention the findings briefly. The first of the concepts which should be adverted at the beginning is the main source of all others; *tawḥīd*. Islamic art arises from a worldview and is based on this

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[1054] It is a discourse of the Ottomans that they put justice above all else. However, it can always be questioned whether many of the steps taken are fair.
[1055] Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial and Power*, 38.
[1056] Halil İnalcık, *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, C.7, p.534.
[1057] Koç, *İslam Estetik,* 80.

certain reference. This finds its most concise expression in "*tawḥīd*." In this mindset, this art unites its believers on a deeper level by embodying people's sense of their ultimate belonging to Allāh.[1058] All the basic principles of Islamic aesthetics, which were determined to analyze the spatial reflections of Ottoman religious/sufi thought on the Topkapı Palace, are essentially reflections of the principle of *tawḥīd* since it is the essence of Islam, the unity of thought, and action that makes Islamic art the art of Islam.

The first analysis made as an extension of the *tawḥīd* principle in the analysis of the palace is the spatial reflections of the **tanawwu'** principle. Finished compositions emphasizing permanence concerning the fact that everything is ephemeral except for the Creator's essence do not find a place in this argument. This is exactly how the construction process of the Topkapı Palace was shaped. From the time the foundation of the palace was laid during the reign of Mehmed II until the last building, Mecidiye Mansion, which was added in the 19th century, the palace has never been in a fixed form with a closed composition. Whatever the current conditions required, new additions were made as improvisation, and the spaces of the palace remained in motion. Hence, this behavior can be an extension of Ottoman political thought because Ottoman political thought was also practical and pragmatic. Instead of acting with fixed provisions, it adopted behavior that evaluates the current conditions, takes a position accordingly, and produces rapid solutions according to the conditions of the period. In relation to this principle, the palace is in line with the **modular structure** concept, which means that "each module is itself a satisfying unit, as well as an important part of a larger design,"[1059] is another design component that manifests itself clearly in the Topkapı Palace. The palace developed as a heterogeneous collection of buildings, enriched with new modules over the years according to the needs of each period and the taste of each sultan, and took its final form. The buildings of the palace are both unique and beautiful individually, and when evaluated collectively, as a result of the materials used and the repetition of the same architectural/artistic styles with different interpretations in each addition, it is a work of harmonic and original beauty in itself. **Tenāsub (harmony and congruity)** principle, which is common in also other

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[1058] Nasr, 27.

[1059] Al-Fārūqī, 188

design traditions embodied in the palace in line with Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī's interpretation, a piece of jewelry, and the affinity of dissimilar elements. With its free plan that differs from strict axial and symmetrical palace designs, the campus consists of heterogeneous buildings that have grown eclectically over time. However, it has a harmonious and congruent original silhouette, which arises from the repetition of the same styles with differences in each addition, evoking a sense of integrity and beauty in terms of architecture and aesthetics when viewed from afar. One of the most distinctive features of Islamic art and aesthetics from other arts is that it has adopted the principle of **reverse perspective**. Islamic art, which does not reduce the sight to the gaze, does not accept the central perspective and turns to the reverse perspective because it does not see only the seen valuable but also the invisible behind the scenes. Therefore, in Islamic architecture, the works do not have a facade or a significant front that can be dominated with a single glance. This course of action also supports the permanent preservation of the state of consciousness expected of a Muslim. The different facades of the Audience Chamber, Tiled Kiosk, and Kubbealtı in the Third Court are examples of this (See Figures 8.27-8.29). The fact that the interior facades in the palace rooms are not symmetrical can also be considered a reflection of this principle.

In Islamic aesthetics, nature is regarded as a sign that reminds of Allāh. As Ibn Hazm states, in this belief, an object or work of art in nature is beautiful to the extent that it obeys the order in the universe. In this regard, artworks must be in **harmony with nature**.[1060] In line with this approach, perhaps the most distinctive feature of the Topkapı Palace's location is that it dominates a unique view. The low density of buildings interspersed on a horizontal terrain causes them to feel as if they are part of the land. The Topkapı Palace, with its garden pavilions, which are positioned by choosing the most suitable place and raising a few steps so that even when it is one-story and small, the surrounding landscape can be observed properly, human-scale windows that bring nature into the interior with a frame that allows the integration of people and nature in the buildings, viewing and tower pavilions, is a palace that reflects the principle of harmony with nature quite well. The mentality in the construction of

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[1060] Gonzales, *Beauty and Islam*, 27.
    Abouseif, 44.

the palace is not to dominate nature but to integrate, adapt, and benefit by respecting it. Another principle to which harmony with nature contributes is the principle of **tensionlessness.** This principle is ensured by the simplicity, balance, and abundance of light in architecture. The lights filtering through the domes or windows and therefore softening the massive spaces of the palace, floral patterned tiles in the interior, bringing nature inside, and contributing to a tensionless atmosphere, a free plan composition instead of an axial plan with sharp lines, the gardens taking up much more space in full/empty ratio of the campus than the massive structures, the use of the calming effect of water abundantly both indoors and outdoors are elements that contribute to a serene, tensionless ambiance are the items that are the spatial reflections of this principle in the Topkapı Palace. The most controversial principle, which has a very important place in Islamic aesthetics and whether the Topkapı Palace has this feature or not, is the principle of **tevāżu (humility)**. The palace is rather modest when compared to contemporary French and Russian palaces or the Delhi Palace in India, which is much less powerful than itself. However, written sources show that the sultans did not have such a concern for modesty, except for Sultan Selim. The palace was built most beautifully and uniquely possible. Therefore, it cannot be said that the sultans were fed by the inculcation of modesty in the Islamic faith and reflected this in the places they established. The discussions on the palace's being a medium for displaying the grandeur of Islam to the non-Muslim world can not be a valid justification at this point. Because the *Harem* section, which is closed to the outside and open only to its inner realms, was tried to be made extremely magnificent, although it does not have a representative value. In contrast to humility, the concept of **familiarity** was embodied in the palace visibly. Established by Mehmed II as the center of a world empire, although the Topkapı Palace expresses that it was built with a brand-new vision, with its uniqueness in terms of the image it gives and its decoration that fits perfectly with its spatial organization, it seems to have progressed in the familiar range with the traces it carries from the past while continuing the tradition. The common features as the repetition of the tent structure of the encampment tradition in the Second Court[1061], the spread on a wide and flat land shared with the old Turkish Islamic palaces, and the dimensions and layouts of the structures designed to move the eye not vertically but

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[1061] Özgüven, *Ottoman Encampment*, 18.

horizontally, the palace campus consisting of complex buildings that can serve many functions, having a wide area, being designed to host staff, having simple interiors, the strong and inaccessible position of the emperor being evident with his position in the palace campus and its similarities with Edirne and Kubādābād Palaces and the fact that the Fatih Mansion was built according to the Turkish house plan support this argument. These reflections of the familiarity principle, which is based on not chasing the new, not repeating the old as a fault, and advancing in a known range, can also be considered as the extentions of Ottoman philosophical and sufi thought. Ottoman scholars and clergymen, while performing their works, worked on making commentaries, updates, and practical and pragmatic comments on old writings instead of giving original works. Rather than a search for the new, respect for the old and closeness to the familiar is the prominent approach. The artistic and architectural productions of the Topkapı Palace, which are nourished by tradition, and the studies of scholars on ancient works instead of producing original works can be considered as self-consistent manifestations of the same mentality. The concept of **clarity,** which emerged from the Islamic belief's clear and intelligible quality and the related verse, "These are the verses of the Book; the clear Quran.", manifests itself in many ways in the palace. The clear message that the palace conveys with its existence in a unique position in the world on a hill that connects two continents, the message that is given on the inscription of *Bāb-ı Humāyūn* enlightening the beliefs, the values, what kind of ideal the palace hosts, and how the sultan is positioned according to the thought system of the state, the palace's clear functional and spatial separations are the reflections of this principle on the Topkapı Palace. However, it would not be correct to say that each section has the same clarity as a spatial design order. Especially the *Harem* section has a spatial pattern that is far from easy to read, as it has been shaped eclectically according to the tastes of different users over the years. Nevertheless, it has a very clear hierarchical layout based on protocol and discipline principles, compatible with the life levels and duties of the classes it hosts. An important concept that has a remarkable place in all Ottoman Islamic/Sufi thought and philosophical thought is **beneficence/functionality**. In Islamic aesthetics, what is beautiful is good, what is

468

good is useful, and good without use cannot be beautiful.[1062] Therefore, benefit and functionality are the conditions for beauty and the perfection of a work of art. The Topkapı Palace literally carries the principle of benefit-functionality. The fact that it was not completed in one go and that it has an eclectic structure that developed over time is also proof of this. It fulfilled the functions of being the administrative center of the state, education center, and residence of the sultan so successfully that it could be used for a long time, like four centuries, and represented the mighty Ottoman Empire to the world. This principle can also be considered an extension of Ottoman Philosophical Thought. Because of that, the science that does not benefit from the production process of philosophical thought has been avoided. As Ibn Sīnā underlined, philosophy and literature should be purposeful and didactic, not only impressive and pleasing.[1063] One of the main themes of Islamic aesthetics is the longing for heaven, which is always imagined as a garden. This longing results in **sorrow**. The description of all that is desired to be made beautiful involves being "heavenly." The endeavor to relate beautiful spaces to heaven often manifests itself in the Topkapı Palace as well. Descriptions of the palace gardens and inscriptions are full of expressions of being "heaven-like." Besides, the images of heaven in the Quran, mansions with rivers flowing under them, shade, fruits, houris and young servants, comfortable environments, and rivers have some correspondences in the Topkapı Palace. Floral patterns used on tiles refer to the gardens of heaven. In addition, the abundance of mosques, which can be considered transitional spaces for reaching heaven through praying, on the palace campus can be interpreted as an effort to get closer to the longed-for universe. The concepts of *iḥsān,* which means doing a job with care, trying to do it in the best way, and *kemāl,* which according to Ibn Sīnā and Al-Ghazālī, is the position that everything should be exactly as it should be,[1064] were also embodied in the palace. In the narratives of Kritovoulos, who witnessed the periods when the palace was built, it is clearly seen that Mehmed II tried to build his palace in a magnificent and worth seeing the way that would compete with the largest and most superior structures ever built. For this, the most special materials have been procured from

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[1062] Arat, *Etik ve Estetik Değerler*, 88: Taşkent, Estetik ve Etik Değerler Bütünlüğü, 75-76: Altıntaş, *İslam Düşüncesinde Tevhid ve Estetik İlişkisi*, 29: Koç, *İslam Estetiği*, 87.
[1063] Abouseif, 183
[1064] Gonzales, *Beauty and Islam*, 30.

many parts of the world and entrusted to the most skillful hands. To this end, while the palace contains traditional and cultural elements that a palace should carry, keeping its ties with its past and culture strong, it also has the characteristics of being a cultural heritage for the future, representing the state to the world, fulfilling its functions functionally, and being aesthetically elegant and beautiful. Consequently, it will not be wrong to say that Topkapı, as the palace of a world empire, has all the features to make a palace beautiful. One other concept of Islamic aesthetics which suggests a certain course of action is the **cosmic spiral**. The spiral, being beginningless and endless, is accepted as the form on which the concepts of time and space are based in Islam.[1065] This principle also constitutes a source for Islamic art and architecture. When the circulation of the Topkapı Palace is evaluated from this point of view, it does not have a linear circulation, as can be felt both from the bird's eye plan and from the palace circulation experiences, even though it reaches the sultan, who is the head of the whole palace, with the courtyards lined up one after the other. The palace does not have a strict axial plan either. Besides, a distinct circular formation cannot be mentioned, as in the example of the *Suleymaniye* Mosque. However, the form of movement directed by the palace offers an experience of integrating with the space. Spiral circulation is an example of the fact that both the exterior and interior facades of the buildings are not the same in every direction and the necessity of walking around them to fully experience these structures. The location of the *Dīwān Room* in the Second Court, and the position of the sultan in the Audience Chamber, again remove the movement of both the eye and the body from linearity, embodying the spiral movement.

The principles of **stylization, aniconism, eternity and repetition, avoiding indoctrination, and incomparability (*tenzīh*)** of Islamic aesthetics are discussed together in the dissertation as they are closely related. In order to analyze the reflections of these principles (together with the other ones) on the Topkapı Palace through the visual language of Islamic art, the Privy Room of Murad III, which was built in 1579 at a time when Ottoman aesthetics had matured, was chosen as a case study (See Figure 8.80). Considered one of the most magnificent and remarkable

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[1065] Popodopoulo, 16.

places not only of the Haram but also of the entire Topkapı Palace[1066], this room is the only place in the whole palace where the original interior order of the 16th century and *Iznik* tiles have not been disturbed.[1067] This place, built by Architect Sinan, is the first known Imperial Hall. It is the largest Privy Chamber in the palace and is the oldest mansion of *Harem*. This is the reason why this room was chosen for the case study.

The Privy Room of Murad III is significant in that it reflects Islamic art and aesthetics deeply and intensely (See Figures between 8.80-8.94). There is a large pool at the feet of the mansion, which is planned by making use of the existing sloping land. It has a clear plan, a square base, and is covered with a large dome. A gilded ball with tassels hangs from the center of the dome. The height and splendor of the dome are remarkable, in the middle of which the names of Allāh are inscribed with gold gilding, indicating that this place belongs to a Sultan. The upper windows of the room are well above human height, and the colorful pieces of glass create a visual feast. The lower parts of the walls are divided into rich tile decorations, doors, and cells. There is no use of sculpture or copy in Islamic art. Calligraphy, floral ornamentation, and geometry, which can be seen from large architectural structures to small daily objects as a reflection of the principle of *tenzīh*, are the three basic decorative programs of Islamic arts and embodies in the Privy Room of Murad III. There are no copies, depictions, icons, or sculptures in the Privy Room of Murad III. When you enter the room, the most dominant art content is the calligraphy that circulates throughout the room, including *Āyāt Al-Kursī* and Verse 57 of *Surah an-Nisa*. Calligraphy written in white on blue does not only contribute to the space visually or semantically. This horizontal calligraphic line, which is placed at eye level and surrounds the walls of the room, creates a balance between horizontal and vertical elements (high dome) of the space. It converts the room to a human scale and decreases the tension of the space.

The reflections of the principle of eternity and repetition are visible in the floral ornaments on the tiles. Despite all the orderliness of the tiles in the room, the beginnings and ends of the patterns are not decorated in such a way as to take the motifs fully or to center them, and the composition is not constructed with such a concern. Thus, it gives the feeling of eternity, not completion. Although the Privy

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[1066] Ortaylı, *Osmanlı Sarayında*, 184.: Şimşirgil, 146.: Koçu, 206.
[1067] Necipoğlu, *Mimari, Tören ve İktidar,,* 217.

Room of Murad III, with interior facades different from each other, is quite high, the space is also leveled vertically from the top of the dome to the ground. Thus, the state of consciousness was not destroyed, the state of contemplation did not deteriorate, the eye was not directed and imprisoned to certain points by preserving the human scale, and the perception of the whole space was allowed. The spatial preferences that keep this state of consciousness alive can be defined as the reflections of the avoiding indoctrination principle. Manipulating the mind with illusion and unnecessary pomp is not welcome in the spaces created in this mindset. The design decisions and decorative programs that are valid in the whole Topkapı Palace can be seen only by reducing the scale in a room chosen as a sample, like the Privy Room of Murad III, or that many aesthetic analyzes of the whole Privy Room of Murad III can be seen in the *selsebîl* or dome, which is a singular element in the room. No matter how small the scale is, the meaning density is high. Its equivalent in Islamic aesthetics is the principle of ***teksīf*** (densification). This concept is also visible both in the Privy Room of Murad III and the whole Topkapı Palace.

In addition to analyzing the reflection of Islamic belief and thought on the palace spaces through the basic principles of Islamic aesthetics and revealing this effect, it was found appropriate for this dissertation to examine the palace specifically, with the household aesthetics in Islam since the Topkapı Palace is the home of the state and the ruler. It is seen that the verses in the Quran that can be associated with household aesthetics concentrate on the concept of privacy. In almost all of the works written on life in the Topkapı Palace, the strict privacy rules in the palace are mentioned, and it is underlined that especially the "*Harem*" (meaning "protected" and "sacred") section, which derives its name from the same origin as this concept, was designed delicately with a great glimmer of intelligence. The first thing that was done to ensure complete privacy was to build walls outside the palace and to build a solid inner wall on the ground on which the palace would be placed. In addition, connections between the spaces of people who can communicate with each other are skillfully provided with courtyards, passages, corridors, and doors. The importance given to privacy is also reflected in the inscriptions. While the Quran mostly focuses on privacy regarding the aesthetics of the dwelling, this issue is discussed in detail in the hadiths. Prophet Muhammad listed the characteristics of a good dwelling as large (in terms of surface

area, the number of rooms is sufficient for parents, girls, and boys, a guest room, study room, and a masjid, although there is no definite order), having good neighbors, being close to social facilities, especially the masjid, being in a healthy and pleasant geographical location, being beautiful (airy and sunny), giving pleasure to the occupants, not being high in height on the grounds of avoiding waste and causing arrogance, being established step by step according to needs (*seyyāliyet*-fluidity), being simple and humble in terms of furnishing and decoration, being free from non-Islamic elements, and having a good spiritual atmosphere[1068]. With its very large square meter area, of which only buildings cover 80,000 square meters, it is one and only geographical location that is undoubtedly airy, sunny, and healthy; its own rich social facilities with separate sections for men and women, around four hundred rooms and halls, baths, kitchens, hospitals, schools, libraries, mosques, mansions, and Privy Room as study rooms, and its gradual establishment process, the Topkapı palace absolutely carries reflections of household aesthetics of Islam.

Two debatable issues about this reflection can be height and simplicity. Although the buildings are not high, they are not low either. The domes are high, especially the buildings belonging to the sultan. The reason for this preference should be the characterization of the sultan as "the shadow of Allāh on earth." In the high domed sultan's spaces, the human scale is still tried to be preserved by staggering the walls. The Topkapı Palace also represents the empire's power, not with the overwhelming verticality of a single monument, but with a vast land spread over many buildings with different functions. Therefore, the total look is not vertical, but it is horizontal. Furnishing and decoration are also issues that need to be emphasized in this regard. The discourses of the Prophet Muhammad on this subject focus on simplicity and the house being free from non-Islamic religious elements. The response to these suggestions in the palace, which are also related to the principle of modesty, is partial, and it cannot be said that they found a full response. The palace is indeed sterile in terms of symbols unique to non-Islamic religions, symbolizing different religions, like the symbol of the cross, and it is free from the elements identified with them. However, it is not possible to suggest that the palace was simple, as recommended by the Prophet,

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[1068] İbrahim Canan, *Hz. Peygamberin Mesken Telakkisi*, in ed., Turgut Cansever, Saadettin Ökten, Ali Özek et al., *Mesken ve Mesken Mimarimiz* (İstanbul: Ensar Press, 1995), 26.

and that it was far from showing off in a way that would prevent it from inclining towards worldly life. Although it is simpler compared to the world palaces that existed at the same time, and it is known that a more magnificent one could be built with the extraordinary power of the empire, it cannot be claimed that the Topkapı Palace has a simple, unpretentious furnishing and decoration that is free from glamorous elements, avoids the use of different and bright colors, and refrains from inclining towards worldly life.

Thus, the dissertation revealed the effects of the political, philosophical, religious, and Sufi thought that formed the Ottoman thought system, on the spatial and organizational design of the Topkapı Palace, with the theoretical framework of Islamic aesthetics as claimed, and humbly showed that the Topkapı Palace was strongly influenced by the household aesthetics of Islam.

Touching upon the planned future work areas, the Topkapı Palace is an Islamic palace, after all, but it differs from many other palaces in Islamic geography. In parallel, comparative studies can be carried out on the interpretation of Islamic aesthetics on different palaces in Islamic geography. Differences in interpretations, similarities, and their possible reasons can be analyzed and compared in the context of the culture and mindset of the geography to where the palaces belong. Therefore, each culture's interpretation of Islamic aesthetics reveals its uniqueness in the general framework of Islamic aesthetics.

Although the dissertation analyzes the reflection of Ottoman political/philosophical/religious/Sufi thought on the palace spaces in detail, since it is the first study in this field, the analysis can be deepened and developed through collaborative studies with colleagues from related disciplines.

The analysis of the Privy Room of Murad III, which was chosen as a case study, can also be made for different spaces or rooms of the palace. Thus, the analysis of the palace can be deepened and contribute to the current academic studies.

The basic principles of Islamic aesthetics are undoubtedly not only reflected in architecture. Tracing Islamic aesthetics in Ottoman figurative art, calligraphy, poetry, literature, music, and other arts may be other future fields of study.

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APPENDICES

A. CURRICULUM VITAE

Emine Filiz KÖLMEK

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Birth	: 6 April 1983
Mobile	: +90 532 745 21 09
E- mail	: filizkolmek@gmail.com

EDUCATION

- 2023   Department of Architecture, PhD. (CGPA: 4.00/4.00)
  Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey

- 2013   Interior Architecture and Environmental Design, MFA (GPA: 3.61/4)
  Bilkent University, Ankara, Turkey

- 2007   Landscape Architecture and Urban Design, BA. (GPA: 3.09/4)
  Bilkent University, Ankara, Turkey

- 2001   Science High School (GPA: 4.95/5)
  Private Çağrı Science High School, Ankara, Turkey

EMPLOYMENT

- 06/2013 -   **Landscape Architect and Urban Designer** (on sabbatical leave since 7/2019)
  Ankara Metropolitan Municipality, Department of Special Projects and Transformation

  ▪ Managing the landscape and urban design program of New Mamak Urban Transformation Project (the biggest and the most comprehensive urban transformation project of Turkey)
  ▪ Settling the disputes in the expropriation program of Dikmen Valley Project, Ankara
  ▪ Developing new urban transformation projects

500

- 10/2007 – 06/2013 **Urban Designer**
  Başkent Natural Gas Distribution Company, Ankara, Turkey

  ▪ Maintaining appropriate enlargement of the natural gas network in compliance with the city development plans
  ▪ Integration of new pipelines to GIS of the gas distribution network and metropolitan city infrastructure database
  ▪ Coordination of network connection applications

PUBLICATIONS & PAPERS

- E. F. Kölmek, Ottoman-Islamic Aesthetics and the Visual Culture in Palatial Architecture and Landscape: The Case of Topkapi Palace in the 15th and 16th Centuries, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey, May 2023 (PhD Dissertation).
- E. F. Kölmek, Arts and Decoration in the Arab World, le cenerentole dell'arte, Academy of Fine Arts of Naples, 2017 (Article in an edited book)
- E. F. Kölmek, Social Determinants of Environmental Concern: Çukurambar Case, Bilkent University, Ankara, Turkey, July 2011 (MFA Thesis)

AWARDS & HONORS

- Completion of PhD courses with 4.00 CGPA
- Ranked 1st in MFA Graduation
- MFA Scholarship by Bilkent University (tuition)
- Ranked 4th in BFA Graduation
- In Dean's High Honor and Honor Lists, Bilkent University
- BFA Full Scholarship by Bilkent University (tuition + monthly stipend)

INTERESTS

- Professional : Islamic aesthetics, Islamic art and visual culture, Ottoman-Islamic architectural culture, Islamic palatial architecture, cultural tastes in interior and landscape design, cultural sustainability and architecture, Anatolian Seljuk architecture, Ottoman art and architecture in the 18th Century, urban transformation and recreation projects

- Personal : Travelling, photography, cinema, horse riding, piano, reading

B. TÜRKÇE ÖZET/ SUMMARY

Büyük uygarlıkları başkentler, onların özünde de saraylar temsil eder. Ulusların insanlık tarihi içindeki konumları, devletlerin politik, siyasi ve kültürel kimlikleri, egemenlik alanları, sanatsal ve estetik eğilimleri konusunda da saraylar derin izler taşır. Sarayların bu denli kültürel miras olma özelliklerine rağmen, Osmanlı-Türk tarihine bakıldığında, çok geniş bir coğrafyanın başlıca kentlerinde kurulan sarayların bile çoğunun bugün izlerine rastlanmadığı görülmektedir. Bu durum göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, yüzyıllarca köklü bir medeniyete sahip güçlü bir imparatorluğa ev sahipliği yapmış, sonrasında bir "baba ocağı", daha sonra da müze olarak varlığını kadim şekilde sürdürmüş Topkapı Sarayı'nın ifade ettiği değer daha net anlaşılmakta, Osmanlı-Türk uygarlığının bu eşsiz hazinesini irdelemek, tanımak ve anlamlandırmak üzere yapılan çalışmaların önemi ortaya çıkmaktadır. Topkapı Sarayı'nı avlu avlu gezerek işlevsel çerçevede tanıtan, mimarisi, mekanları, içinde barındırdığı sanatsal koleksiyonları, müze niteliğini inceleyen, haremini ve geleneksel örgütlenişini konu alan yerli ve yabancı geniş bir literatürün varlığından söz etmek mümkündür. Ancak yine de sarayın mimarlık tarihimiz açısından olağanüstü önemi düşünüldüğünde, bütüncül bir bakış açısıyla yapılan çalışmalar kısıtlıdır. Yapılan çalışmaların birçoğu sarayı işlevsel ve mekansal olarak tarihsel bağlamı içerisinde açıklayıcı bir niteliğe sahiptir ve metodolojik olarak betimleyici bir anlatıya sahiptir. Bu tez ise, Topkapı Sarayı'na dair yapılmış çalışmalardan farklı olarak, tarihi geleneğinden gelen bir dünya görüşü, nizam anlayışı ve evrensel bir misyonu olan, evrene, tabiata, topluma ve tarihe bakışında bir bütünlük anlayışı olduğuna inanılan Osmanlı düşünce sisteminin Topkapı Sarayı'na mekansal olarak nasıl yansıdığını estetik bir analiz ile irdelemeyi amaçlar. Estetik analizin bu çalışma için en uygun metot olmasının sebebi tezin tam da odaklandığı konuyla olan ilişkisidir. Zira, estetik genel olarak hep güzelin bilimi ve yorumlanması olarak algılansa da, zannedilenin aksine, estetik sadece güzelin yorumu ve algılanması üzerine değildir. Estetik analizin ne olduğunu bir örnekle netleştirmek gerekirse, Townsend'in form/içerik örneği oldukça açıklayıcıdır. Bir paragraftaki cümlelere bakıldığında form olarak hepsi bilinen harflerden oluşur ve cümlelerin yapıları; özne, tümleç, yüklemin sıraları pek çok zaman aynıdır. Ancak

cümleleri birbirinden ayıran ve onları derinleştiren, anlam içerikleridir ve sadece formlara bakarak bir sanat/mimari öğeyi yorumlamak hiçbir şekilde yeterli değildir. Belirli bir kültüre ait bir sanatsal/mimari parçayı anlayabilmek ve yorumlayabilmek için onun sahip olduğu kültürel kodları, zihniyet dünyasını ve zamansal anlamları bilmek şarttır.[1069] Estetik analiz bir objeye sadece bakmak ve görsel anlatısını yapmak değil, onu var eden ve anlamlandıran sebeplerle birlikte görmek, analiz etmek ve yorumlamak ile ilgilidir. Böylece tez, Osmanlı düşünce dünyasının sarayın mekansal kurgusuna ve mimari/ sanatsal yansımasına odaklandığı için içerik olarak, betimleyici bir çalışma yerine estetik analiz tercih ettiği için de metodolojik olarak özgün ve bütüncül bir çalışma olmayı hedeflemiştir.

Osmanlı hanedanı tarafından 400 yıl gibi bir süre kullanıldığından ve bu uzun süre içerisinde farklı dönemlerde, farklı kişisel özelliklere sahip hükümdarlara ev sahipliği yaptığından, söz konusu Topkapı Sarayı olduğunda, spesifik bir dönem belirlemek zaruri olmuştur. Bu çalışmada, Topkapı Sarayı'nın ilk şekillendiği ve mekansal karakterinin yerleştiği dönem olan, İstanbul'un II. Mehmed tarafından fethiyle yükselişe geçilen ve I. Süleyman ile gücün zirve yaptığı; Osmanlı kültürünün olgunluk açısından doruğa ulaştığı 15. ve 16.yüzyıllar seçilmiştir.

Tez, Topkapı Sarayı'na bütüncül bir bakış açısı getirir. Topkapı Sarayı'nın mekansal kurgusunun Osmanlı düşünce sisteminden güçlü şekilde etkilendiğini iddia eder ve bu etkileşimi/ yansımayı ortaya koymayı hedefler. Osmanlı düşünce sisteminin çerçevesi ise Ahmet Yaşar Ocak'ın sınırlarını çizdiği siyaset, felsefe, din ve tasavvuf öğeleriyle ele alınmıştır. Tezin amacı sarayın mimari ve mekansal kurgusu ile artistik kültürüne dair, Osmanlı düşünce dünyasının bu dört bileşeninin etkisini içeren bir analiz yapmaktır. Bu analiz vasıtası ile de mekana dair tercihlerin sebeplerini kristalize etmek ve sarayı daha derin şekilde anlamlandırmak hedeflenmiştir.

Devletin siyasi, felsefi, dini ve dolayısıyla tasavvufi düşüncesinde en büyük ve pek çok şeyi şekillendiren baskın etken sünni İslam inanç sistemi olduğu için, bu çalışmada da Topkapı Sarayı'nın analizinin İslam estetiğinin teorik çerçevesi baz alınarak yapılması uygun bulunmuştur. Bu bağlamda, çalışmanın sağlam bir zemine oturtulabilmesi için ise İslam estetiğine dair kavramsal temel ilkeler belirlenmiştir. Bu

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[1069] Townsend, 56.

ilkeler belirlenirken, İslam estetiğine dair literatür üzerinde detaylı bir çalışma yapılmış, konu üzerine yazılmış kaynaklarda ortak olarak bahsedilen kavramlar belirlenmiş, ve bu kavramlar da mevcut literatür ve İslam öğretisi ışığında detaylandırılarak ve yorumlanarak ortaya konulmuştur. Bunun yanında, Osmanlı düşünce sistemini oluşturan her bir öğe (siyaset, felsefe, din, tasavvuf) tezin kapsamı bağlamında ayrıntılı şekilde incelenmiş, mekan kurgusuyla ilişkilerini sorgulayabilecek araştırma soruları hazırlanmış ve bu sorulara cevap aramak suretiyle saray üzerindeki mekansal yansımaları irdelenmiştir.

Tezin temel amacı İslam estetiğinin teorik çerçevesi baz alınarak Osmanlı sanatı/estetiği ve mimarisine katkıda bulunmak olarak ifade edilse de ve tezin temel/ kapsamlı analizi Topkapı Sarayı'nın İslam estetiğinin temel prensipleri doğrultusunda estetik analizini içerse de, bir alt tabakada bu konuda büyük bir boşluk olduğu görülen İslam estetiğinin kendisine dair kapsamlı bir çalışma yapılmıştır. Bu konuda İngilizce dilinde yapılan çalışmaların hemen hemen hepsi bu inanca ve kültüre yabancı Batılı araştırmacılar tarafından yapılmıştır ve pek çoğunun bu inanç sistemine aşina olmadıkları için konunun özünü kavramakta yetersiz kaldıkları görülmektedir. Bu açıdan İslam estetiğine dair yapılan çalışmanın da literatüre katkı sağlayacak şekilde olmasına önem verilmiştir.

Tezin bir diğer iddiası da Topkapı Sarayı'nın devletin ve padişahın ikametgah yeri olduğu için nihayetinde bir mesken; ev olduğu ve bu meskenin İslam'ın mesken estetiğinden de etkilendiği, ondan izler taşıdığıdır. Bu etkilenme ise hem mekansal hem de kurgusal boyuttadır.

Osmanlı politik ve felsefi düşüncesinin Topkapı Sarayı'na mekansal ve kurgusal olarak güçlü ve çarpıcı şekilde yansıdığı görülmektedir. Osmanlı politik düşüncesinde hiyerarşi ve statü nasıl keskin çizgilerle belirginse saray mekanlarında da durum aynı şekilde kristal berraklığındadır. Bu katı hiyerarşik yapılanma öncelikle kendisini saray yerleşkesinin avlularında gösterir. Gittikçe özelleşerek Sultanın yüceltilmiş konumunu vurgulayan, padişah konutuyla son bulan avlular dizisi sarayın temel kurgusunu oluşturur ve bu temel kurgu hiyerarşik düzenin sarayın mekansal organizasyonuna en net yansımasıdır. Sarayın girilir ve girilmez alanlarının birbirinden net şekilde ayrışması, hangi kapıdan kimlerin geçebileceği, kimin nereye kadar yaya olarak geçip

kimin atı ile nereye kadar ilerleyebileceği bile katı kurallarla belirlenmiştir ve mekanlar da bu katı kurallara hizmet ederek ev sahipliği yapar. Böylelikle saray, bir yandan imparatorluğun yönetim merkezi, eğitim kurumu ve padişah için bir konut işlevi görürken bir yandan da iç (özel), ve dış (kamusal) hizmetlere göre hiyerarşik olarak gruplaşmış binlerce kişiye ev sahipliği yapar. Hiyerarşi sarayın tüm birimlerinde kendini o denli gösterir ki saray hastanesinde hastalar bile statülerine bağlı olarak ayrılmış bölümlerde tedavi görürler.

Hiyerarşinin mekansal olarak en net izlenebildiği yerlerin başında padişahın evi olan Harem gelmektedir. Şüphesiz bu bölüm, en büyük zevki yalnız Sultan'a tattırmak için tasarlanmıştır. Sultanın kendisi kubbeleri en yüksek, fenerli kubbeleriyle en geniş odalarda yaşarken bu odalar, en zengin yapı malzemeleriyle inşa edilmiş, en gösterişli süslemelerle bezenmiş, en kaliteli döşemelerden koltuklarla donatılmıştır. Ilık esintilere açık, en güzel manzaralı odalar sultanın seyir zevki için konumlanmıştır. Sultan için tasarlanmış bölümler, tevazu ve itaatin öğretildiği hadım ve cariyelere ayrılmış karanlık, penceresiz ve süslemesiz odalarla kesin bir zıtlık oluşturmaktadır. Onun dışındaki herkes bu tatlardan statülerine göre derece derece yoksundur.

Osmanlı politik düşüncesinin mekana yansımaları sadece hiyerarşi ile sınırlı değildir, bir diğer önemli yansıma ise adalet kavramıyla ilgilidir. Pek çok kitabede vurgulandığı üzere Osmanlı'da adalet her şeyin üstündeydi. Adalete verilen önem, sarayın mekan kurgusunda tüm yapılardan yüksek olan, kendini belirgin şekilde gösteren Adalet Kasrı ile vücut buluyordu.[1070] İstanbul'un her köşesinden görülen, bir bakıma sarayın simgesi olan Adalet Kasrı daha sonraları Divanhane ile birleşmiştir. Divanhaneye bakan kafes penceresi ve kulenin tepesindeki seyir köşkü görünmez olmasına rağmen her şeyi gören Sultanın, görünmez mutlak gücünü de temsil etmektedir.

Osmanlı siyasi görüşünün bir diğer özelliği de kozmopolit bir yapıya sahip olmasıdır. Bir dünya imparatorluğu kurmak niyetiyle yola çıkan, farklı kültürler açık ve farklı düşüncelere her zaman önem vermiş II. Mehmed'in sarayında bu zihniyet, kendini çeşitlilik ilkesiyle gösterir. Dış bahçede yer alan, II. Mehmed'in hayallerindeki cihan imparatorluğuna kattığı devletleri sembolize eden üç kasrın her biri İran, Osmanlı ve

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[1070] Adaleti her şeyin üstünde tuttukları Osmanlılara ait bir söylemdir. Bunun yanında atılmış adımların pek çoğunun adil olup olmadığı sorgulanabilir.

Grek tarzı olmak üzere farklı üsluplarda dizayn edilmiştir. Bu köşklerden sadece Osmanlı mimari geleneğine yabancı bir tarz olan İran tarzı, Timuri üslubunda yapılmış Çinili Köşk günümüze ulaşabilmiştir. Necipoğlu'nun ifade ettiği gibi köşklerin dışında, farklı kültürlere ait üslupları birleştiren bir başka yapı da İç Hazine'dir. İtalyan tarzı olduğu tartışmasız kompozit iyonik başlıklı revaklar, İtalyan tarzı siyah-beyaz kareli mermer zeminler, figürlü altın mozaiklerle bezeli Bizans üslubu tavan ile sivri ve Bursa profilli kemerler, mukarnaslar, Farsça şiirler, Arapça yazılan hat sanatına ait öğeler, geometrik-bitkisel motifler, oyma tekniğinde bezenmiş ahşap işleriyle bu yapı, Timuri süsleme dağarcığının yorumlarından oluşan Osmanlı-İslam öğeleriyle, Bizans ile Rönesans İtalya'sından esinlenen ayrıntıların uyumlu bir şekilde bir arada cisimleşmiş halidir. Bu melez bina II. Mehmed'in evrensel egemenlik düşünü yansıtan, çeşitli kaynaklardan beslenmiş mimari ve süsleme öğelerinin özgürce bir arada kullanıldığı önemli sembolik bir yapıdır.[1071]

Bunun yanında *Ehl-i Hiref* denilen, sanatında üstad olarak tanımlanan saray tasarımcıları da kozmopolit ve dışa dönük bir dünya görüşünün uzantısı olarak yabancı ülkelerden gelen başarılı kişileri de barındırmaktadır ve bu kişiler de bazen bir mimari mekan, bazen bir çini, bazen bir halı, kumaş ya da mücevher olarak tasarımlara katılmaktadırlar.[1072]

Tezin odak noktasını oluşturan Osmanlı dini/tasavvufi düşüncesinin sarayın mekansal ve organizasyonel kurgusunda kendini oldukça etkin bir biçimde yansıtması çarpıcıdır. Bu yansıtma aynı zamanda politik ve felsefi düşünceden de izler taşır. Dini, tasavvufi, politik ve felsefi düşüncenin birçok açıdan birbirleriyle örtüşmesi ise Osmanlı zihniyetinin kendi içindeki tutarlılığına bir kanıt oluşturur. Devletin siyasi, felsefi, dini ve tasavvufi düşüncesinde en büyük ve pek çok şeyi şekillendiren baskın etken Sünni İslam inanç sistemi olduğu için, bu tezde de Topkapı Sarayı'nın analizinin İslam estetiğinin teorik çerçevesi baz alınarak yapılması uygun bulunmuştur. Zira bir kültürü, bir dünyayı anlamanın en kısa yolu o kültürün sanatını anlamaktan geçer. İslam'ın hayat ve hakikat anlayışının, kısaca dünya görüşünün çeşitli ifade düzeylerindeki bir yansıması olan İslam sanat ve estetiğinin de, hem İslam'ı hem de bu inancın tezahürü olan sanatsal ürünleri anlamanın en dolaysız yollarından biri

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[1071] Necipoğlu, *Mimari, Tören ve İktidar*, 181.
[1072] Küçükerman, 43.

olduğu söylenebilir. Zira İslam veya genel olarak din, sanat ile bütün insanlığa hitap eden bir dil kazanır. Ait olduğu dünyayı temsil eden bir mimari eser, bir sanatsal obje, bir musiki bunun en güzel örnekleridir. Söz konusu İslam sanat ve estetiği olduğunda, herhangi bir mimari ya da sanatsal eseri İslam'ın insan, alem ve hayat telakkisinden bağımsız düşünmek mümkün değildir. Çünkü İslam sanatı, İslam ilke ve inançları üstünde yükselen bir medeniyetin dışavurumudur.[1073]

İslam sanatı bir dünya görüşünden doğar ve belli bir dünya görüşüne dayanır. Bu da en özlü ifadesini "tevhid" de bulur. Bu düşünce sisteminde hiçbir şekil ya da suret kalıcı değildir, yalnız Allah daim ve Bakidir. Bu bakımdan, İslami dünya görüşünün, kulların geldiği ve tekrar döneceği yere ilişkin kavrayışına paralel olarak İslam sanatı da, insana ait olduğu yeri göstermenin güzel yollarını arar. Bu sanat, insanların nihai anlamda Allah'a ait oldukları duygusunu somutlaştırmak suretiyle inananlarını daha derin bir boyutta birbiriyle birleştirir.[1074]

İslam sanat ve maneviyatı arasındaki bu yakın ve derin ilişki sebebiyledir ki dünyanın bambaşka uçlarındaki camilerde, kullanılan malzemede ve yapısal tekniklerdeki yerel farklılıklara rağmen, insan kendini aynı sanatsal ve manevi evrenin içinde hisseder. Bunun sebebi ise şüphesiz hepsinin aynı kaynaktan; tevhid inancından besleniyor olması ve aynı dünya görüşüyle; İslam vahyi ile ilişkilendirilmeleridir. İslam sanatının kökeni ise İslam'ın batıni boyutu; yani hakikattir. Böylece İslam sanatları, gözleri fani olandan kalıcı olana, Allah'ın birliğine, güzelin kaynağına çevirir. Bu ise sanatçının eserlerinde kendisine dikkat çekmemesini de beraberinde getirir. Erişilebilecek nihai güzellik Allah'a ait olduğu için sanat eseri bu güzelliğe dikkat çeken aracı konumundadır. Bu sanata ait eserler ise, Tatar'ın ifadesi ile, somut varlıklarıyla insanı manevi miraca hazırlayan birer araç "Burak" olarak nitelenmektedir.[1075]

İslami inancın arka planında olduğu sanat eserlerinin birer estetik nesne olarak ortaya çıkmalarının arka planında yatan sebep, dayanaklarını ait oldukları inanç sisteminin varlık tasavvuru ve hakikat telakkisinden almalarıdır. "Eser" olma hüviyetlerini de maneviyat ile olan bu bağları sayesinde kazanmışlardır. Dolayısıyla, bu eserler, bu tezde de Topkapı Sarayı için hedeflendiği üzere, ancak onları ortaya koyanların iman

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[1073] Turan Koç, *İslam Estetiği*, p. 15
[1074] Nasr, *İslam Sanatı*, 27
[1075] Tatar, *Tevhid-Sanat Üzerine Felsefî Notlar*, 60.

tecrübelerinin mümkün olduğu kadar hizasında bir yerlerde konumlanarak yorumlanabilir ve anlaşılabilirler.[1076]

İslam estetiği ve sanatının her zaman göz önünde bulundurduğu, ona temel teşkil eden belli bir takım ilkeler vardır. Koç'a göre, bu ilkeler, belli bir estetik anlayışın ne ölçüde İslami olduğu konusunda; İslam düşüncesinden beslendiği konusunda bir paradigma oluşturduğu gibi, sanat eserinin değeri ya da başarısı ile ilgili olarak da çok önemli bir kıstas görevi görür. İslam'ın önemle ve öncelikle üzerinde durduğu bütün ilkelerin İslami estetik duyarlılık ve sanat anlayışında, dolaylı ya da dolaysız, bir yansıması vardır.[1077] İslam sanat ve estetiğini anlayabilmek ve çeşitli yapılarda, bu tezde Topkapı Sarayı'nda, bu sanatın izini stabil bir zemin üzerinde sürebilmek için İslam estetiğine dair kavramsal temel ilkeler belirlenmiştir. Tezin Saray-ı Hümayun üzerinde yaptığı bu analiz vasıtası ile mekana dair tercihlerin sebepleri ve dayanakları kristalize edilmiş ve böylece sarayı daha derin şekilde anlamlandırmak mümkün olmuştur. Böylece de Osmanlı dini/tasavvufi düşüncesinin Topkapı Sarayı'na mekansal olarak ne şekilde yansıdığı ortaya çıkarılmıştır.

Bu ilkelerden ilki clarity/intellegibility ilkesidir. İslam inancından doğan İslam sanatı, estetik doktrinini İslam'ın temel yazılı kaynağı Kur'an'dan aldığı için onun apaçık ve anlaşılır olma niteliğini de benimser. Hicr Suresi'nde de "Bunlar kitabın; apaçık Kur'an'ın ayetleridir." ayeti açık ve anlaşılır olmaya vurgu yapmıştır. Hodgson'un da dediği gibi "İslam inancı kolay anlaşılır olmasıyla ünlüdür." [1078] Cansever özünü Kur'an'dan alan bu kavramın hayatın her alanını kapsadığını ve mimari formlara da yansıdığını vurgular. Biçimlerin, formların bir mesajı varsa onları en açık şekilde ortaya koyması bir görev niteliğindedir. Bu ilkenin Topkapı Sarayı'na açık şekilde yansımıştır. Sarayın var oluşuyla vermek istediği mesaj belki de en net ve açık olduğu noktadır. Sarayın, iki kıtayı birleştiren bir tepede dünya üzerinde eşsiz bir konumda yer alması cihana hakim olma idealine sahip bir imparatorluk için kusursuz bir lokasyondur ve bu konumun verdiği mesaj çok önemlidir. Ayrıca, Bab-ı Hümayun'un kitabesinde yer alan sarayın var oluş nedeni, bunun arkasındaki inançlar, değerler, nasıl bir ideale ev sahipliği yaptığı, devletin düşünce sistemine göre padişahın nasıl bir

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[1076] Koç, *İslam Estetik Telakkide Varlık, Bilgi, Değer*, 79.
[1077] Ibid, 80.
[1078] Hodgson, *İslam'ın Serüveni*, 98.

güçle konumlandırıldığı sarayın yine verdiği net mesajlardandır. Bunların yanında, sarayın net bir işlevsel şeması ve buna paralel olarak net bir mekansal ayrışması olduğu açıkça görülmektedir. Sarayın girilebilir ve girilemez alanları, hangi avluya kimlerin ne şekilde nereye kadar girebileceği kesin sınırlarla net şekilde bellidir. Ancak, bunların yanında, mekansal tasarım düzeni olarak her bölümün kendi içinde aynı netlikte olduğunu söylemek doğru olmaz. Özellikle Harem bölümü, yıllar içerisinde farklı kullanıcıların beğenilerine göre eklektik olarak şekillendiği için mekansal olarak kolay okunabilirlikten uzak bir örüntüye sahiptir. Yine de kendi içerisinde, barındırdığı sınıfların yaşam düzeylerine ve görevlerine göre uyumlu, protokol ve disiplin ilkelerine dayalı çok net bir hiyerarşik yerleşim düzenine sahiptir. Saray yüzyıllar boyunca sürekli ek aldığı ve onarımlar gördüğü için bir miktar karmaşık hale gelse de II. Mehmed zamanında planlanan genel çizgiler korunduğu için ilk şematik planını büyük ölçüde koruduğundan bir bütün olarak değerlendirildiğinde hala okunaklı olduğu söylenebilir.

Bir diğer ilke olan aşinalık ilkesi de sarayda vücut bulmuştur. Modern sanatın bilinmeyene, yeniye doğru bir yolculuk olmasının aksine İslam sanatı tanınan; aşina olunan bir menzile yolculuktur. İslam sanatları yenilik peşinde koşmadığı gibi eskiyi tekrar etmeyi de bir eksiklik olarak görmez. Zira, İslam sanatında estetik yaratılan, icat edilen bir güzellik değildir. Güzelin kaynağı bütün noksan sıfatlardan münezzeh tek bir varlık olduğu için, sanatçının ona bir şey eklemesi ya da çoğaltması da mümkün olmaz. Bu yüzden İslam sanatı aşina olunan bir güzellik evreninde başlar ve yola devam eder. Bu sanatta amaç, bilinen ve tanınan daha önce duyulan bir hissi hatırlatacak çağrışım ve motiflerin izini sürmektir. II. Mehmed'in bir dünya imparatorluğunun merkezi olarak kurduğu Topkapı Sarayı, verdiği imaj açısından eşsizliğiyle ve mekansal kurgusuyla bire bir örtüşen teşrifatıyla yepyeni bir vizyonla yapıldığını ifade etse de, bir yandan da geleneği sürdüren; geçmişten taşıdığı izlerle aşina olunan menzilde yol almış görünmektedir. Ordugah geleneğinin çadır strüktürünün II. Avlu'daki tekrarı, eski Türk İslam sarayları ile paylaşılan; geniş ve yayvan bir arazi üzerinde yayılma, yapıların boyutlarının ve yerleşimlerinin gözü dikeyde değil yatayda ilerletecek şekilde kurgulanması, saray yerleşkesinin pek çok işleve hizmet edebilecek şekilde kompleks binalardan oluşması ve geniş bir kadroya ev sahipliği yapabilecek şekilde tasarlanması, yalın iç mekanlara sahip olması,

imparatorun güçlü ve erişilmez pozisyonunun saray yerleşkesindeki konumuyla kendini belli etmesi gibi ortak özellikleri, Edirne Sarayı ile benzerlikleri ve Fatih Köşkü'nün Türk evi planına göre yapılmış olması bu görüşü destekler.

Bunun yanında, Topkapı Sarayı'nın öncülleri ve ardılları ile aşınalık ilkesi arasında bir başka ilişki de söz konusudur. II. Mehmed'in belirlediği özgün planın yüzyıllar boyunca süren büyük yeniliklere direnmesi ve değişen beğenilere rağmen plan içerisindeki başlıca yapıların korunması, mekansal organizasyonun küçük ölçekteki güncellemeler dışında bilinçli şekilde neredeyse hiç değiştirilmemesi ve muhafaza edilmeye çalışılması, Osmanlı Sultanlarının aşına oldukları bilinen menzilde ilerlemeyi tercih etmeleri olarak yorumlanabilir.

Bunların yanında, sarayın modüler yapılar şeklinde eklektik olarak inşa edilmiş olmasının bir sonucu olarak, belli formların sürekli tekrar edilmesiyle, farklı yapılarda bile insanın kendisini tanıdık bir mekanda hissetmesi durumu söz konusudur.[1079] Tekrarlanmasıyla aşınalık hissi veren yapısal özelliklere ek olarak, iç mekanda kullanılan temel dekoratif programların da aynı olmasının ortak bir ambiyans yaratması sebebiyle, bu aşınalık hissine sebep olduğu söylenebilir.

Yeninin peşinde koşmamayı, eskiyi tekrar etmeyi bir kusur olarak görmemeyi, bilinen bir menzilde ilerlemeyi esas alan, İslam estetiğinde ve dolayısıyla Osmanlı dini düşüncesinde yeri olan aşınalık ilkesinin, Topkapı Sarayı'nın mekanlarındaki yansımasının aynı zamanda Osmanlı Sufi düşüncesinin ve Osmanlı Felsefi düşüncesinin uzantıları olduğu düşünülebilir. Zira Osmanlı ilim ve din adamları da eserlerini icra ederken, orijinal eserler vermek yerine eski yazılanlara şerhler, güncellemeler, pratik ve pragmatik yorumlar yapmak üzere çalışmışlardır. Yeniye dair bir arayıştan ziyade, eskiye saygı, aşına olunana yakınlık göze çarpan yaklaşım biçimidir. Topkapı Sarayı'nın gelenekten beslenen artistik ve mimari üretimleri de, ilim adamlarının orijinal eserler vermek yerine eski eserler üzerine çalışmaları da aynı zihniyetin, tezahürleri olarak değerlendirilebilir.

"Bir bütün, birlik içinde yer alan parçalarının kendi içlerinde de bir bütün oluşturmaları"[1080], "her modülün daha büyük bir tasarımın önemli bir parçası olduğu

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[1079] Erzen, An Alternative Way to Knowledge, 71.
[1080] Karadeniz, 161.

kadar, kendisinin de başlı başına doyurucu bir birim olması" gibi anlatımlarla ifade edilebilecek, tektonik ya da açık kompozisyon gibi terimlerle de beraber kullanılan "modüler yapı" ilkesi Topkapı Sarayı'nda belirgin şekilde kendini gösteren bir başka ilkedir. Bilindiği üzere Topkapı Sarayı, tek seferde yapılıp bitirilmiş, kapalı bir kompozisyona sahip bir yapı topluluğu değildir. Saray heterojen binalar topluluğu olarak gelişmiş, her dönemin gereksinimine ve her padişahın beğenisine göre yıllar içerisinde yeni modüllerle zenginleşmiş ve nihai halini almıştır. Ancak yine de kullanılan malzemelerin ve mimari geleneklerin bir sonucu olarak, her eklentide aynı üslupların farklı yorumlarla yinelenmesinden doğan, uzaktan bakınca mimari ve estetik açıdan bir bütünlük arz eden ve güzellik duygusu uyandıran özgün bir silüetin sağlandığı görülmektedir. Sarayın yapıları hem tekil olarak eşsiz ve güzel hem de toplu değerlendirildiğinde kendi içinde uyumlu ve özgün bir güzelliğe sahip bir eserdir.

Modüler yapı ilkesiyle ilintili bir başka ilke *tenevvü* ilkesidir. İslami inanç sisteminde yaratıcının zatı dışında her şey fanidir. Bu inanışla paralel olarak insandan da bu durumun daimi şekilde bilincinde olması, forma tapmaması beklenir. Bir formu sabitleyip dondurmamak bu sanat anlayışının gereğidir. Kalıcılık vurgusu taşıyan, sabit ve tamamlanmış bir planla işleyen herhangi bir kompozisyon bu düşüncede yer bulmaz.[1081] Topkapı Sarayı'nın inşa sürecini düşünecek olursak tam da *tenevvü* ilkesi gereği teşekkül ettiğini görürüz. Sarayın II. Mehmed döneminde temelinin ilk atıldığı zamandan, 19. asırda ilave edilen son yapı Mecidiye Köşkü'ne kadar saray hiçbir zaman kapalı bir kompozisyona sahip, sabit bir formda olmamıştır. İçinde bulunulan dönemin şartlarına, gereksinimlerine beğenilere göre çeşitli eklemeler almıştır. Mevcut şartlar neyi gerektiriyorsa, doğaçlama olarak yeni eklemeler yapılmış, sarayın mekanları hareket halini korumuştur. Bu davranış şeklinin Osmanlı politik düşüncesinin de bir uzantısı olduğu düşünülebilir. Zira Osmanlı politik düşüncesi de pratik ve pragmatiktir. Sabit hükümlerle hareket etmek yerine mevcut şartları değerlendiren, ona göre pozisyon alan, dönemin şartlarına göre seri çözümler üreten bir davranış şekline benimsemiştir.

İslam estetiğinde güzel olan iyidir, iyi olan faydalıdır, faydasız iyi güzel olamaz. Dolayısıyla fayda ve işlevsellik güzelliğin ve bir sanat eserinin kemal niteliğine sahip

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[1081] Ibid, 212.

olmasının şartlarındandır. Topkapı Sarayı'nın İslam estetiğinde önemli bir yeri olan fayda-işlevsellik ilkesini ise gerçek anlamıyla taşıdığı görülmektedir. Sarayın inşasıyla ilgili ilk karar aşamasından itibaren yapılar zaman içerisinde hep ihtiyaca binaen yapılmıştır ve işlevsellik hep çok önemlidir. Tek seferde yapılıp bitirilmemesi, zaman içerisinde gelişen eklektik bir yapılanmaya sahip oluşu da bunun kanıtlarındandır. Devletin yönetim merkezi, eğitim merkezi, padişahın konutu olma işlevlerini o kadar başarılı bir şekilde yerine getirmiştir ki, dört asır gibi uzun bir süre kullanılabilmiş ve kudretli Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nu dünyaya temsil edebilmiştir. Söz konusu temel işlevlerin dışında, çok işlevli olması gerekmeyen avlu kapıları bile günlük işlevler yüklenerek daha faydalı hale getirilmiştir. Saray bahçesi de sadece görsel amaçlı değil, saray mutfağına mahsul sağlayacak şekilde bostanlar içermektedir. Fayda ve işlevsellik ilkesi ve saraya yansımaları Osmanlı felsefi düşüncesinin bir uzantısı olarak kabul edilebilir. Zira, felsefi düşüncenin üretim sürecinde de fayda vermeyen ilimden kaçınılmıştır.

İslam estetiğinde oldukça önemli bir yeri olan, Topkapı Sarayı'nın ise bu özelliği taşıyıp taşımadığı en tartışmalı ilke tevazu ilkesidir. Tevazu kelimesi kibrin karşıtı olup kişinin başkalarını aşağılayıcı duygu ve düşüncelerden kendini arındırması, alçakgönüllü olmasıdır.[1082] İslam sanatı da sanatı, insanın diğer eylemlerinden ayırmadığı için bu hassasiyeti gözetmekte, mimari özelinde de, eserlerin şaşaadan uzak ve aşırı gösterişten yoksun olması, canlılık ve ışığını renklerin yoğunluğundan değil sadeliğin ihtişamından almasıyla hayata geçirmektedir. Topkapı Sarayı dönemdaş saraylarıyla ya da kudreti kendisinden çok daha düşük Hindistan'daki Delhi Sarayı ile karşılaştırılırsa oldukça mütevazıdır. Ortaylı'ya göre ihtişamını yalınlığından ve enfes konumundan alan sarayın bu sadeliği politik düşüncesiyle de paralel olarak Osmanlı'nın din ve dünya hayatı arasında kurduğu dengeyi yansıtmaktadır. Bunun yanında, yazılı kaynaklar padişahların Sultan Selim dışında böyle bir mütevazılık kaygısı olmadığını gösterir. Saray mümkün olan en güzel, en benzersiz şekilde inşa edilmeye çalışılmıştır. Dolayısıyla, padişahların İslam inancındaki mütevazılık telkininden beslendiği ve bunu kurguladıkları mekanlara yansıttıkları söylenemez. Sarayın bir temsil değeri olması gerekçesi de burada geçerli

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[1082] TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi, Tevazu.

bir argüman değildir. Zira, dışarıya kapalı sadece kendi iç alemlerine açık Harem bölümü de son derece ihtişamlı yapılmaya çalışılmıştır.

Yapılan bir işin özenle yapılması, en güzel şekilde yapılmaya çalışılması, iyi bir niyetle ve gerekli faydayı sağlayacak şekilde yapılmaya çalışılması anlamana gelen *ihsan* ilkesi, özünü "Yaptığınız işi güzel yapın; Allah işini güzel yapanları sever" (Bakara, 2/195) ayetinden ve "Yüce Allah, yaptığınız işi sağlam ve iyi yapmanızdan hoşnut olur"[1083] hadisinden almaktadır. İslam estetiğinin bu *ihsan* ilkesi Topkapı Sarayı'na yansımış olan bir başka ilkedir. Sarayın inşa edildiği dönemlere şahitlik eden Kritovoulos'un ve Tursun Bey'in anlatılarında II.Mehmed'in sarayını daha önce yapılmış en büyük ve en üstün yapılarla her bakımdan yarışacak, görkemli ve görmeye değer şekilde inşa ettirmeye çalıştığı açıkça görülmektedir. Bunun için dünyanın pek çok yerinden en özel malzemeler tedarik edilmiş, en usta ellere emanet edilmiştir. İslam estetiğinde bir eseri ihsan üzere yapan en önemli etkenlerden biri de o eserin yapılış niyetidir. Niyetin güzelliği ise içinde kulluk ve ibadet bilinciyle yapılmasıyla ölçülür. Uzun yüzyıllar boyunca farklı inanç seviyelerinde ve kişilik özelliklerine sahip padişahlar tarafından yönetilen sarayın teşekkülünün ardındaki niyetlere dair analiz yapmak mümkün değildir. Saraya eklenen her yapının kulluk bilinciyle yapıldığı da iddia edilemez. Ancak sarayın ilk sahibi ve varlık sebebi II. Mehmed'in sarayı inşa niyetinde manevi değerleri önemsediği Bab-ı Hümayun kitabesinde açıkça görülmektedir. Bunun yanında, sarayın hem ilk hem de sonradan eklenen yapılarında, tefrişinde, dekorasyonunda ve bahçelerinde İslam inancına ait pek çok öğe bulunması kulluk bilincinin önemsendiğini düşündürür.

İhsan ilkesiyle ilintili sayılabilecek bir ilke de *kemal* ilkesidir. *Kemal,* İbn-i Sina'ya göre her şeyin nasıl olması gerekiyorsa tam olarak öyle olmasıdır. Gazali'ye göre ise mümkün olan tüm kemalatı kendisinde toplamasıdır; her şeyin kemalatı ise kendisine göredir; bir atı güzel yapan bir insanı güzel yapmaz. Bu değerlendirme estetik güzelliği açısından bir miktar göreceli olmakla birlikte, Topkapı Sarayı'nın bir sarayı güzel yapacak özelliklere sahip olduğu görülmektedir. Zira saray, bir sarayın taşıması gereken, geçmişi ve kültürü ile bağlarını güçlü tutacak şekilde geleneksel ve kültürel öğeler içerirken geleceğe yönelik de kültür mirası olabilmek, devletini dünyaya temsil

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[1083] Beyhâkî, Şu'abu'l-Îmân, 4/334.

etmek, fonksiyonel olarak işlevlerini yerine getirmek, estetik olarak zarif ve güzel olmak özelliklerine sahiptir.

İslam estetiği sanatsal ve mimari ürünlerde kullanılan malzeme ile ilgili olarak bir perspektife sahiptir. Cansever tarafından "Adalet"[1084], Nasr tarafından "gerçeklik"[1085] gibi kavramlarla ifade edilen bu prensibe göre her malzeme kendi tabiatında olduğu gibi; gerçekten ne ise o olarak kullanılmalıdır. Olduğunun dışında bir görüntüye büründürülerek kendi gerçekliğinin dışına çıkmamalı, yanıltıcı bir görüntü de vermemelidir. Mimari yapılarda, dekorasyonun strüktürü saklamayacak şekilde ikisinin de birbirlerinin gerçekliğine saygı duyarak var olmaları da bu kapsamda ele alınmıştır. Teze konu dönemde yapılan yapılarda bu hassasiyeti gözlemlemek mümkündür. Saraya çeşitli sebeplerle gelen yabancıların saray mekanlarını anlatırken malzemeye dair kullandıkları net ifadeler, her malzemenin kendini olduğu gibi yansıttığını doğrular. Bunun yanında, tez için seçilen örnek bölüm; III. Murad Odası'nda da strüktür ve dekorasyon arasındaki ilişki bu ilkeyle uyumludur. Zira, odanın iç mekanında İslam sanatlarının dekoratif programları yoğun şekilde kullanılmış olsa da strüktür ve dekorasyon ilişkisinin birbirlerinin sınırlarına girmediği, varlıklarını ayrı ayrı muhafaza ettikleri söylenebilir.

İslam estetiğinin ana temalarından biri de hep bir bahçe olarak hayal edilen cennete duyulan özlemdir. İdeal olarak düşünülen, İslam yolunda geçirilmiş bir hayatın en büyük ödülü ve güzelliğin zirvesi olarak kabul edilen cennet bir şekilde temsil edilmek istenir. Güzel yapılması arzu edilen her şeyin betimlemesi "cennet gibi" olmayı içerir. Topkapı Sarayı'nda da cennete öykünme sık sık kendini gösterir. Sarayın bahçelerinin betimlemeleri ve kitabeler "cennet benzeri" olma ifadeleriyle doludur. Cennete duyulan özlemin ve bunun yarattığı arayışın bir diğer yansıması kendini saray yapılarında kullanılan dekoratif programlarda gösterir. Çinilerde kullanılan floral desenler cennet bahçelerine atıf yapar. Ayrıca, saray yerleşkesinde bulunan camilerin çokluğu da özlemi duyulan evrene yakınlaşma çabası olarak yorumlanabilir.

Sarayda bahçelere bu denli önem atfedilmesi sadece cennete duyulan özlemle ilgili değildir. İslam sanatında ve estetiğinde tabiata Allah'ı hatırlatacak bir işaret gözüyle bakılır. İbn Hazım'ın da ifade ettiği gibi bu inançta doğadaki bir nesne ya da sanat

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[1084] Candever, *İslam'da Şehir ve Mimari*, 15.
[1085] Nasr, *İslam Sanat ve Maneviyatı*, 84.

eseri evrendeki düzene itaat ettiği ölçüde güzeldir. Bu anlamda sanat eserlerinin tabiatla uyumlu olması şarttır.[1086] Tabiat ile uyumlu olmak, bir nevi, Yaratıcının eserine saygılı olmak, alçakgönüllülükle ona hükmetme çabasına girmemek olarak algılanır. Osmanlılar da Topkapı Sarayı ve diğer saraylarındaki yer seçimlerinde insan eliyle oluşturulmuş suni bahçeler yapmak ya da su kanalları inşa etmek yerine doğanın zengin hazineleriyle bütünleşecek, uyum sağlayacak ve ondan faydalanılabilecek şekilde yerler seçmişlerdir. Topkapı Sarayı'nın konumunun en belirgin özelliği belki de eşsiz bir manzaraya hakim olmasıdır. Yapıların yatay bir arazi de düşük yoğunlukla serpiştirilmiş olması, onların arazinin bir parçasıymış gibi hissedilmelerine sebep olur. Tek katlı ve küçük olduğunda bile çevredeki manzaranın layıkıyla izlenebilmesi için en uygun yer seçilerek ve birkaç basamak yükseltilerek konumlanan bahçe köşkleri, yapılarda yer alan insan ve doğanın bütünleşmesine imkan sağlayan; doğayı bir çerçeve ile iç mekana taşıyan insan ölçeğindeki pencereleri, seyir ve kule köşkleri ile Topkapı Sarayı, tabiat ile uyum ilkesini iyi yansıtan bir saraydır. Sarayın inşasındaki zihniyetin tabiata hükmetme değil ona saygı duyarak bütünleşme, uyum sağlama ve faydalanma şeklinde olduğu görülmektedir.

Tabiat ile uyumun katkı sağladığı bir diğer ilke gerilimsizlik ilkesidir. Gerilimsizlik ilkesi mimaride sadelik ve ışığın bolluğuyla sağlanmaktadır. İnsan ölçeğini esas alan pencereler, iç mekan ile dış mekanın bütünleşmesini, cemaatin gün ışığını görmesini, doğadan gelen sesleri duyarak tabiat ile bütünleşmesini sağlamakta ve dingin bir atmosfer oluşmasına katkı sağlamaktadır. Topkapı Sarayı'nın mekanlarını incelediğimizde de bunun yansımalarını görmek mümkündür. Küçükerman'ın "Tepedeki Işık"[1087] olarak nitelendirdiği ve Osmanlı mekan kimliğinin önemli bir ayrıntısı olduğunu belirttiği kubbelerden ya da pencerelerden süzülen ışıklar, sarayın görkemli ve masif mekanlarını yumuşatmakta, renklendirmekte ve onları tabiat ile bütünleştirerek mekana yeni boyutlar getirmektedir. Bunun yanında, sarayın köşklerinde de dış mekan ile iç mekanın, bazen insan ölçeğindeki alçak pencerelerle iç mekanı dış dünyaya açarak bazen de çiçek desenli çinileri iç mekanda kullanarak tabiatı içeri almak suretiyle, bütünleştiği ve bu dengenin gerilimsiz bir atmosfere katkı sağladığı söylenebilir. Sarayı daha üst bir ölçekte değerlendirecek olursak, keskin

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[1086] Gonzales, *Güzellik ve İslam*, 27.
[1087] Küçükerman, 58.

hatlara sahip aksiyal bir plan yerine serbest bir plana sahip olması, yerleşkenin dolu/boş oranında bahçelerin masif yapılara oranla çok daha fazla yer kaplaması, suyun dinginleştirici etkisinin gerek iç mekan gerek dış mekanda bolca kullanılması sarayda gerilimsiz, dingin bir ambiyansa katkı sağlayan öğelerdir.

İslam sanat ve estetiğini diğer sanatlardan en belirgin şekilde ayrıştıran özelliklerinden biri tersten perspektif ilkesini benimsemiş olmasıdır. İslam estetiğine göre, merkezi perspektif, iddia edilenin aksine, "gerçek"i değil, belirli bir bakış açısından algılanan bir "görüntü"yü gerçek olarak sunar, tek taraflı bir bakışın esiridir ve eksiktir. Görme olayını bakışa indirgemeyen İslam sanatı sadece görüleni var ve değerli görmediği için merkezi perspektifi kabul etmez ve tersten perspektife yönelir. Bu anlayış mimariye de yansımıştır. İslam mimarisinde eserlerin tek bakışla hakim olunabilecek bir cephesi veya ön yüzü bulunmaz. Eserlerin algılanabilmesi ve deneyimlenebilmesi için etraflarında dolaşılması gerekir. Bu hareket tarzı Müslümandan beklenen bilinç halini daimi şekilde korumayı da destekler. Saraydaki yapıların cephelerine baktığımızda gerçekten de tek bakışla hakim olunabilecek şekilde tasarlanmadığını görürüz, zira cepheler birbirlerinden farklıdır. III. Avlu'da yer alan Arz Odası, Çinili Köşk, Kubbealtı bu yansımanın örneklerindendir. Saray odalarındaki iç cephelerin simetrik olmaması da bu ilkenin yansımaları olarak düşünülebilir.

Kur'an'da pek çok ayette zikredilen, analoji yoluyla da beşeri yaratım ve sanatsal etkinlikte nelerin olması gerektiğine dair gönderimde bulunulan bir diğer ilke ahenk-uyum ilkesidir. "O ki yedi göğü tabaka tabaka birbiriyle ahenkli olarak yarattı. Rahman olan Allah'ın yarattığında hiçbir düzensizlik görmezsin! Haydi gözünü çevir de bir bak, hiçbir çatlak görecek misin?" (Mülk/3), ayeti ve bu ayetle benzer temalara sahip pek çok ayet bu ilkenin kaynağını oluşturur. Osmanlı felsefi düşüncesinin önderi sayılan Gazali de bir şeyin estetik olması için gerekli dört şartı; kusursuzluk, amaçlılık, ölçülülük (ahenk ve uyum), ve nizam (düzen) olarak sıralamıştır. Bazı yazarlar simetriyi uyumun bir şartı olarak gördüğü için bu kavramların yanında simetriyi de sayarlar. Ancak bir elin beş parmağı arasında nasıl simetrik bir ilişki olmamasına rağmen uyum ve denge varsa, düzensizlik gibi görünen ince bir denge her türlü tasarımda da söz konusu olabilir. Topkapı Sarayı da aksiyal ve simetrik saray mimarilerinden ayrılan bir plan serbestliğiyle bu tür bir dengeye sahiptir. Yerleşke zaman içerisinde eklektik olarak çoğalan heterojen binalardan oluşsa da her eklentide

aynı üslupların farklı yorumlarla yinelenmesinden doğan, uzaktan bakılınca mimari ve estetik açıdan bütünlük ve güzellik duygusu uyandıran uyumlu ve ahenkli özgün bir siluete sahiptir. Saray II. Mehmed döneminde ilk inşa edildiği zamanlardan son zamanlarına kadar hiçbir zaman ahenk, uyum ve bütünlüğünü simetrik tasarımlarda aramamıştır. Zaten açık bir kompozisyon kurgusuna sahip bir sarayın simetri kaygısıyla inşa edilmesi mümkün görünmemektedir. Günümüzde bilgilendirme panolarında simetrik bir düzene sahip olduğu yazılan Bab-ı Hümayun bile aslında asimetriktir. Saray ahenk ve uyumunu, II. Mehmed'in evrensel egemenlik düşüyle de örtüşecek şekilde, çeşitli kültürel kaynaklardan esinlenmiş mimari ve süsleme öğelerinin yapıların iç mekan ve dış mekanlarında özgürce birlikte kullanılmasından almaktadır. I. Süleyman döneminde ise II. Mehmed'in çeşitlilik ilkesinin yansıması olan yabancı öğeler yok denecek kadar azınlıkta kalmıştır. Ancak bu dönemde de Osmanlı üslubu artık iyice şekillenmiştir ve olgunlaşmıştır. Her yapı kendi içerisinde ahenge sahiptir ve büyük bir bütünün simetrik olmayan fakat birbirleriyle uyumlu parçaları olarak algılanmaktadır. Saray, ölçek olarak birbiriyle uyumu yapıları, üslup olarak aynı kaynaktan beslenen tasarım dili ve amacına tam uyumlu şekilde hizmet eden fonksiyonel yapılarıyla, bir bütün olarak ahenk ve uyum içerisindedir. Bunun yanında, farklı kişilik özelliklerine sahip padişahlara ev sahipliği yaptığı ve dolayısıyla kişisel zevklerden en çok etkilenen bölüm olan Harem, maruz kaldığı yoğun eklemelerle okunaklılığı da diğer bölümlere nazaran daha az olduğu için, sarayın geri kalanına göre ahenk ve uyumu daha az görünmektedir.

İslam estetiği sadece dış güzelliğe önem vermez. Bu inanışta, iç güzellik ve dış güzellik bir bütündür. Hüsn kelimesi genel olarak göze hitap eden dış güzellik olarak kullanılırken, cemal güzelliğin iç boyutu ile ilgilidir. *Husn- Cemal* olarak ifade edilen bu iki boyutlu güzellik, dış güzelliğin, iç güzelliğin, ahlakın, iyinin, doğrunun beraber ele alınmasını gerektirir. Bu ikilinin mimariye yansımasında ise bir eserin güzel olabilmesi için hem biçimsel olarak hem de öz olarak tam, eksiksiz ve sağlam bir inşa üzerine olmalıdır. Sarayın görünen yüzüne dair bir estetik ve güzellik kaygısı olduğu II.Mehmed'in yoğun ilgisinden bilinmektedir. Ayrıca Kritovoulos'un II.Mehmed'in sarayın inşası ve yapısı hakkında anlattığı gözlemler[1088] Topkapı'nın içinin-dışının

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[1088]"…Özellikle sarayı tamamladı, çok güzel bir bina… Görünüşü keyfi, yapısı ve cazibesi, ünlü ve muhteşem eski binalar ile yarışabilecek bir saraydı. (…) Dediğim gibi, hepsi çeşitlilik, güzellik, boyut ve ihtişam göz önünde tutularak altın ve gümüş bolluğunda, içinde ve dışında değerli taşlar,

güzel olmasına ne kadar önem verildiğine ışık tutmaktadır. Sarayın yapısal olarak da devletin gücünü ve zenginliğini yansıtacak şekilde güçlü ve iyi yapıldığı görülmektedir. Taş, mermer, kurşun gibi güçlü malzemelerin en iyileri dünyanın dört bir yanından temin edilmiş, usta ellerde ince ve dahice mühendislik hesaplarıyla zarif mimari yapılara dönüşmüştür. Sarayın sağlamlığı ile ilgili akıllara gelebilecek bir soru yaşanılan iki büyük felaket; 1509 Depremi ve II. Selim dönemindeki yangında sarayın yapılarının gördüğü büyük zarar ile ilgili olabilir. Ancak bugünkü verilerle, bu yüksek tahribatın sebebinin yapıların sağlamlığıyla ilgili bir noksanlıktan mı yoksa depremin o günkü en yüksek mühendislik becerisiyle dahi olsa her yapıyı tahrip edecek şiddette olmasından mı kaynaklandığını söylemek mümkün görünmemektedir.

İslam estetiğinde belirli bir hareket tarzını öneren bir kavram kozmik spiraldir. Spiral başlangıçsız ve sonsuz oluşuyla İslam'da zaman ve mekan kavramlarının temelini aldığı şekil olarak kabul edilmektedir.[1089] Erzen'e göre bu prensip İslam sanat ve mimarisi için de bir kaynak teşkil eder. Yapıların dairesel şekilde desteklenmiş yapı elemanları, kubbe formunun büyük açıklıkları örttüğü örnekler, bu yapılar içerisindeki dolaşımı da etkiler. Gerek mimari yapıların kendisinde gerekse külliyeler gibi yapı topluluklarında spiral form uygulamasının farklı algısal ve anlamsal işlevleri vardır. Topkapı Sarayı'nın dolaşımı bu açıdan değerlendirildiğinde, birbiri ardınca sıralanan avlularla bütün sarayın zirvesini teşkil eden padişaha ulaştırsa da gerek kuş bakışı planından gerekse saray dolaşımı tecrübelerinde de hissedileceği üzere lineer bir dolaşıma sahip değildir. Sarayın aksiyal bir planı da yoktur. Bunun yanında, Süleymaniye Cami örneğinde olduğu gibi belirgin bir dairesel teşekkülden bahsedilemez. Ancak sarayın yönlendirdiği hareket şeklinin mekan ile bütünleşmeye yönelik bir tecrübe sunduğu söylenebilir. Yapıların gerek dış cephelerinin gerek iç cephelerinin her yönde birbiriyle aynı olmaması, bu yapıların tamamıyla deneyimlenebilmesi için etraflarında dolaşılması gerekliliği spiral dolaşıma örnektir. Ek olarak, dairesel kubbe formunun da yarattığı etkiyle yapıların içindeki hareket de lineer değil mekanı algılatmaya ve bütünleşmeye yönelik spiral bir yönlendirmeye

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mermerler kullanılarak, dahice, rahatça, hafifçe, en üstün yetilerle, tutkuyla işlenmiş, son derece güzel, çeşitli süsleme ve renklerle bezenmiş ve inşa edilmişti. Kabartma taş ve alçı işleri ile kalemişleri, ince bir zevk ile en iyi şekilde yapılmıştı. Bunun ötesinde, tüm mekanlar son derece dikkatli bir şekilde, çok miktarda kurşunla örtülmüştü. Tümü çok sayıda parlak ve zevkli süslemelerle donatılmıştı." (Kritovoulos, *Fetih 1453*, 207.)
[1089] Popodopoulo, A., L'Islam et l'Art Musulman, 16.

sahiptir. Divan Odası'nın II. Avlu içindeki konumu, padişahın arz odası içindeki konumu yine hem gözün hem bedenin hareketini lineerlikten uzaklaştırarak, spiral hareketi somutlaştırır. Eldem ve Akozan' ın anlatımıyla, "II. Avlu içerisindeki Divan Odası (Kubbealtı), karşıda değil sol köşededir, yani yol üstünde göz hizasında değildir. (…)Şu halde bakış aksının tam karşısında, ziyaretin zirvesini teşkil eden, hünkarın kabul salonu bulunmaktadır fakat bu yer, bina olarak görülemez, direkler arasında gizli kalır. (…) Plan ve mekanlarda ortanın değil yan köşelerin seçilmesi, Türk sivil mimarisine ait özel bir değerdir."[1090] Arz Odası içinde padişahın konumu da yine ortada değil sol köşededir. Bu konumlanma ve yönlendirdiği hareket şeklinin de anlamsal bir mecazı olduğu aşikardır; kutsal alanlara dümdüz ve ani bir şeklide girilmez, dolaşarak saygı ile yaklaşılmaları daha uygundur.[1091]

İslam sanatı, bir tasavvurun kendi estetik ilkeleriyle dışavurumudur. Bu sanatın en ayırt edici özelliklerinden biri anikonik olmasıdır. Ancak bu anikoniklik yani tasvirden kaçınma zaruri bir tarz olarak doğmuş, bir beceri eksikliğinden kaynaklanmış ya da dinin estetik yasaklarına karşı bir çıkış yolu olarak belirlenmiş değildir. Bilakis, gerekçesini bazı hadislerden almakla birlikte, Kur'an'da figüratif sanatın olduğuna dair net bir emir yoktur. Bu tutum, İslam düşüncesinin tabii bir sonucu olarak görülmelidir. Zira bu inanç sisteminde, eşi ve benzeri olmayan insan tahayyülünün çok ötesinde bir Yaratıcı'yı stilize etmeden ifade etmeye çalışmak, O'nu insan ölçeğine indirmeye; anlamını ve derinliğini zayıflatmaya sebep olur. İslam sanatçısı, tenzih ilkesi gereği, Allah'ın ifade edilemezliğini ortaya koymak, ezeli ve ebedi olmasına atıfta bulunmak ve tabii olmayışı hakkıyla ifade etmek için sonsuzluk ve tekrarı kullanır. İslam estetiğinin stilizasyon, anikonizm, sonsuzluk ve tekrar, tenzih ve telkinden kaçınma ilkeleri birbiriyle sıkı bir ilişki içinde olduklarından tezde beraber ele alınmıştır. Bu ilkelerin ve daha önceki ilkelerin, Topkapı Sarayı'na İslam sanatının görsel dili aracılığıyla yansımalarının estetik analizini yapabilmek için ise, Osmanlı estetiğinin artık iyice olgunlaştığı bir dönemde; 1579 yılında yapılan III. Murad Odası seçilmiştir. III. Murad Odası pek çok bakımdan ilk olma özelliği taşıyan, saray içerisinde önemli ve özgün bir yeri olan bir mekandır. Mimar Sinan tarafından yapılan bu mekan bilinen ilk Hünkar Odası'dır. Saraydaki en büyük Has Odadır ve Harem'in

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[1090] Eldem and Akozan, 65-66.
[1091] Erzen, Reading Mosques, 129.

en eski köşküdür. Sadece haremin değil bütün Topkapı Sarayı'nın en görkemli ve dikkat çekici yerlerinden biri olarak kabul edilen bu oda, bütün sarayda 16.yüzyıldaki özgün iç düzeni ve İznik çinilerinin bozulmadığı tek yerdir.[1092] Mevcut eğimli arazisinden istifade edilerek planlanan köşkün ayaklarında büyük bir havuz yer alır. Kare tabanlı, büyük bir kubbeyle örtülüdür. Özgün halinde pek çok saygın hünkâr köşkünde olduğu gibi, kubbesinde bir aydınlık feneri bulunur. Kubbenin tam ortasından püsküllü yaldızlı bir top sarkar. Ortasında altın yaldızlarla Allah'ın isimleri yazılı olan kubbenin yüksekliği ve ihtişamı bu mekanın bir padişaha ait olduğunu anlatır. Odanın üst pencereleri insan boyunun çok üstünde olup camların rengârenk parçaları görsel bir şölen yaratır. Duvarların alt kısımları zengin çini tezyinatına, kapılara, hücrelere ayrılmıştır. Eldem, Necipoğlu, Koçu, Ortaylı ve pek çok yazar kalın duvarları ve güçlü strüktürüne rağmen zarif oranları, Özgün ve düzgün dizilimli İznik çinileri, kemerli nişleri, sedef kakmalı pencere kepenkleri ile bu yapının klasik dönem saray mimarisinin göz alıcı bir örneği olduğu konusunda hem fikirdir. Oda gerçekten de sunduğu görsel zenginlik, muntazamlık ve anlam yoğunluğu açısından çarpıcıdır.

III. Murad Odası İslam sanat ve estetiğini derin ve yoğun şekilde yansıtması açısından çok önemlidir. İslam sanatında heykel ya da suret kullanımı yoktur. *Tenzih* ilkesinin bir yansıması olarak büyük mimari yapılardan küçük günlük objelere kadar görülen kaligrafi, floral bezeme ve geometri üç temel İslam sanatıdır. III. Murad Odası'nda da herhangi bir suret, tasvir, ikon ya da heykel yer almaz. Odaya girildiğinde en baskın sanat içeriği bütün odayı baştanbaşa dolaşan hat yazısı; Ayet'el Kürsi ve Nisa Suresi 57. ayetlerdir. Mavi üzerine beyaz yazılmış kaligrafik hat mekana sadece görsel ya da anlamsal bir katkıda bulunmaz. Bunun yanında, mekanı İslamlaştırması açısından da önemlidir. Zira kaligrafi bütünüyle İslamiyet'e özgüdür ve tüm kaynağını İslam inancından alan tek sanattır. Dolayısıyla, içerisinde yer aldığı bir kompozisyonun kimliğini net şekilde ifade eder. Hüsnü hat için seçilen bu ayetler anlamlarına bakılırsa odayı cennetle ilişkilendirmektedir. Bunun yanında, odaya girince yoğun şekilde göze çarpan İznik çinileri de üzerlerinde yer alan floral desenler ile cennet bahçelerine öykünüldüğünü düşündürür. Çünkü cennet, Müslümanlar için nihai mükafat, varılabilecek en güzel yerdir.

[1092] Yenal, 40: Necipoğlu, *Mimari, Tören ve İktidar*, 217.

Çinilerin üzerinde yer alan floral bezemelerde sonsuzluk ve tekrar ilkesinin yansımaları görülmektedir. Oda içerisinde yer alan çinilerin tüm muntazamlığına rağmen, desenlerin başlangıç ve bitişlerinin motifleri tam alacak ya da ortalayacak şekilde bezenmediği, kompozisyonun böyle bir kaygıyla kurgulanmadığı görülmektedir. Böylece bitmişlik değil sonsuzluk hissi vermektedir. Ayrıca doğada bulunamayacak şekilde sonsuz bir tekrar, maddenin gerçekliğinden sıyrılmak suretiyle manaya varma çabası olarak yorumlanabilir. III. Murad Odası içinde kullanılan bir diğer cennet öğesi de sudur. Yeniden doğuşu sembolize eden ve cennet tasvirlerinde sıklıkla değinilen su öğesinin kullanımı, yine cennet betimlemelerinde bahsedildiği gibi ortama verdiği dinginlik ve huzur açısından önemlidir. Bir su elemanı olarak selsebil ile bir ateş elemanı olan altın yaldızlı pirinç ocağın karşılıklı duvarlarda bulunuşu bir denge unsuru olarak görülebilir.

Bütün iç cepheleri birbirinden farklı olan III. Murad Odası'nın yüksekliği oldukça fazla olmasına rağmen, kubbenin en üst noktasından zemine kadar mekan dikey doğrultuda da kademelendirilmiştir. Böylece bilinç hali yok edilmemiş, temaşa hali bozulmamış, insan ölçeğinin korunması suretiyle göz belli noktalara yönlendirilip hapsedilmemiş, mekanın bütününü algılamaya izin verilmiştir. Bu bilinç halini canlı tutan mekansal tercihler telkinden kaçınma ilkesinin yansımaları olarak düşünülebilir. İllüzyon ve gereksiz şatafatla zihnin manipüle edilmesi bu düşünce dünyasında yaratılan mekanlarda hoş karşılanmaz.

Odanın genel planı kare zemin üzerine daire kubbedir. Daire başı ve sonu olmaması, merkeziyet ve her şeyin tek bir noktadan yayılması fikirleriyle Yaratıcıyı ifade eder. Kare ise dört kenarı ile dört yönü, böylece dünyayı ve insanoğlunun yeryüzündeki var oluşunu temsil eder. Bu güçlü metaforlara sahip formların yapısal olarak bu şekilde birlikteliği insanın Tanrı ile bütünleşmesini temsil eder. Kubbenin tepesinden süzülen, dikey aks aracılığıyla kozmik eksene ve Yaratıcının nuruna atıfta bulunan ışık ile insanoğlunun cennet imgeleriyle dolu kare planlı böylesi bir mekanda dolaşımı gerçek bir mecaz oluşturur. Bu kozmik aks ve mekansal dolaşımla dünya ve cennet, insan ve yaratıcı, ilahi ve dünyevi kavramları arasında bir süreklilik ve bağlantı sağlanmış olur.

Odanın zemini için seçilmiş altıgen formlu döşeme ise odanın bütününün verdiği mesaj ile uyumlu olması açısından kayda değerdir. Zira altıgen, mükemmelliğin,

cennetin, dengenin ve uyumun sembolüdür.[1093] Odanın içerdiği anlamları bütünlemesi bakımından bu şeklin seçilmesi önemlidir.

İslam sanatı tek bir kaynaktan; *tevhid* inancından beslendiği için bu sanata dair her parça neşet ettiği inançtan yoğun izler taşır. Bu durum büyük mimari yapılar için de küçük sanatsal objeler için de böyledir. İslam estetiğindeki karşılığı ise *teksif* ilkesiyledir. Topkapı Sarayı'nın bütününde geçerli olan tasarım kararlarının ve dekoratif programlarının, III. Murad Odası gibi örnek olarak seçilmiş bir oda da sadece ölçeği küçülerek görülmesi ya da III. Murad Odası'nın bütününe dair yapılan pek çok estetik analizin odadaki tekil bir unsur olan selsebilde ya da kubbede de geçerli olması bu durumun örnekleridir. Ölçek ne kadar küçülse de anlam yoğunluğu yüksektir. Topkapı Sarayı gibi III. Murad Odası'da en iyi malzemeler ile en usta ellerde, özenle inşa edilmiştir. Bu özellikleriyle *ihsan*, *kemal*, ahenk ve uyum ilkelerini, planının net olmasıyla açık ve anlaşılır olma ilkesini, zaman içerisinde üzerine ekler almasıyla *tenevvü* ve modüler yapı ilkesinin izlerini taşır. Doğanın kaynak ve ilham açısından araç olarak kullanılmasıyla stilizasyon, odanın tasarımında herhangi bir tasvir bulunmamasıyla tenzih, suret ve heykel kullanılmadığı için anikoniktir. Mevcut topografyadan faydalanarak havuzlar üzerinde yükseltildiği için doğa ile uyumludur. Yapının dış cephelerinin birbirinden farklı olmasıyla tersten perspektif, iç cephelerinin farklı olup bilinç halini ayakta tutmasıyla telkinden kaçınmak ve sunduğu hareket yönlendirmesiyle de kozmik spiral ilkelerine atıfta bulunur. Kademelendirilmiş iki kat pencereler, kubbenin tepesindeki ışıkla masif kütlenin dengelenmesi, tezyinatın strüktürü saklamadan onu dengeleyecek şekilde kullanılması ise gerilimsizlik ilkesine referans verir. Saray içerisinde incelenebilecek her yapı ya da daha küçük ölçekli strüktürler, sadece kubbeler ya da objeler bile bu anlam yoğunluğunu taşıyacaktır.

Osmanlı dini/tasavvufi düşüncesinin Topkapı Sarayı'na mekansal yansımalarını analiz etmek için belirlenmiş İslam estetiğinin bütün temel ilkeleri özünde *tevhid* ilkesinin yansımalarıdır. Zira tevhid, İslam'ın özü, İslam sanatını İslam'ın sanatı haline getiren düşünce ve eylem birliğidir.

İslam inancının ve düşüncesinin saray mekanlarına yansımasını İslam estetiğinin temel prensipleri aracılığıyla analiz edip bu etkiyi ortaya çıkarmanın yanında, sarayı

[1093] Abdullah and Khan,134.

spesifik olarak, İslam'da mesken estetiği ile de irdelemek bu tez için uygun bulunmuştur. Zira, Topkapı Sarayı devletin ve hükümdarın evi olduğu için, nihayetinde büyük bir mesken olarak da düşünülebilir ve İslam estetiğinin temel prensipleri tüm İslam sanatları ve mimarisine bir şekilde yansımış olsa da farklı yapı tiplerine özgü bir takım özel yaklaşımlar üzerinde durulmayı hak eder. Bu yolla, saraya dair mekansal tercihlerin analizi, yorumlanışı ve anlamlandırılışının derinleştirilmesi amaçlanmıştır.

Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun yönetim merkezi ve padişahının ikamet yeri olan Topkapı, devletin evi ve en büyük sarayıdır. Topkapı sarayı üzerine kapsamlı çalışmalar yapan Ortaylı, Necipoğlu, Anhegger, Penzer gibi pek çok yazar, eserlerinde sarayın bir mesken olma özelliği üzerinde de durmuştur. Ortaylı, Osmanlı monarşisinin 1922'de kaldırılmasına kadar sarayın bir "baba ocağı" olma protokolünü muhafaza ettiğini, Necipoğlu, Harem bünyesindeki Enderun'un, Sultanın bir baba olarak başı olduğu bir hükümdar konutu olduğunu ve burada imparatorluğun gelecekteki yöneticileriyle babalık bağları geliştirdiğini söyler. Anhegger eserini *Topkapı Sarayı'nda Padişah Evi (Harem)* olarak adlandırmıştır. Penzer de *Harem* adlı eserinde sarayın yine bir mesken olma özelliği üzerine çokça bilgiler vermiştir. Dolayısıyla, bünyesindeki yapılar pek çok farklı işleve hizmet etse de toplu şekilde değerlendirildiğinde Topkapı Sarayı devletin evi, Harem bölümü de spesifik olarak padişahın evidir.

İslam öğretisinde mesken estetiği hadislerde daha geniş şekilde açıklanmakla birlikte hem Kur'an da hem hadislerde değinilen bir konudur. Kur'an'da mesken estetiği ile ilişkilendirilebilecek ayetlerin mahremiyet kavramı üzerinde yoğunlaştığı görülmektedir.[1094] Topkapı Sarayı'nda yaşam üzerine yazılmış eserlerin hemen hepsinde de saraydaki katı mahremiyet kurallarına değinilmekte, adını da bu kavramla aynı kökenden alan özellikle "Harem" ("korunan", "kutsal" anlamlarına gelen) bölümünün büyük bir zekâ parıltısıyla ince şekilde tasarlandığına değinilmektedir. Sarayın daha ilk yer seçiminde gözlerden uzak olacak bir yerde konumlanmasına önem verilmiş, tam bir gizliliğin sağlanabilmesi için yapılan ilk şey sarayın dışına surlar

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[1094] *"Ey iman edenler! Kendi evlerinizden başka evlere geldiğinizde, haber vermeden ve izin almadan, izin verildiği takdirde de selam vermeden girmeyiniz! Bu şekilde davranmak sizin için daha hayırlıdır. Herhalde bunu düşünüp anlarsınız."* (Nur/ 27)

örmek ve sarayın oturtulacağı zemin üzerine sağlam bir iç duvar örmek olmuştur. Kanuni Sultan Süleyman zamanında Beyazıd'daki harem dairesinin Topkapı'ya taşınmasıyla mahremiyet daha da arttırılmıştır. Sarayın kendi iç mahremiyet kuralları da oldukça sıkı ve nettir. Bab-üs Saade'den itibaren bu kurallar kendini iyice hissettirmektedir. Devletin en büyük eğitim merkezi olan Enderun Mektebi'nden itibaren bu kısım padişahın evi sayıldığından kimseler bu kısma geçememektedir. Bu kapı adeta padişahın mahremiyetine açılmakta ve bu da bu kapıya herkesin saygı duyduğu bir kutsiyet atfetmektedir.[1095] Harem'in kendi içinde de ayrı mahremiyet kuralları mevcuttur ve bu da mekanlara yansımıştır. Kadınlar ile erkeklerin alanları; haremlik (Valide Sultan ve cariyeler için ayrılan bölümler) ve selamlık (padişah ve şehzadelerin yaşadıkları kasırlar) birbirinden ayrıdır. Bunun yanında birbirleriyle görüşebilen kişilerin mekanları arasında geçitler, koridorlar ve kapılarla bağlantılar ustaca sağlanmıştır. Örneğin; padişah, şehzade ve hasekilerinin, şehzade doğumundan sonraki ilk sekiz yıl için kolayca ve kimseye görünmeden ilişki kurabilmelerine imkân sağlayacak mimari hacimler Anhegger tarafından saptanmıştır.[1096] Mahremiyete verilen önem kitabelerde de yansıma bulmuştur. Harem-i Hümayun kapısı üzerindeki kitabede yer alan "Ey iman edenler! Size izin verilen vakitten başka zamanlarda Peygamber evine girmeyin!" (Ahzab, 52) ayetiyle peygamberin evine izin verilenler dışındaki kimselerin girmelerinin yasak olduğuna dair ayet hatırlatılarak, padişahın ve hatta bir Müslümanın evine de izinsiz girmenin yasak olduğu vurgulanmış olmalıdır.

Kur'an mesken estetiğine dair en çok mahremiyet üzerinde dururken hadislerde bu konu oldukça ayrıntılı şekilde ele alınmıştır. Hz. Muhammed iyi bir meskenin özelliklerini; geniş olması (yüzölçümü olarak fazla, oda sayısının ebeveynler, kız çocuk ve erkek çocuklar, misafir odası, çalışma odası ve kesin bir emir olmamakla beraber mescid için yeterli olması), iyi komşulara sahip olması, başta mescid olmak üzere ictimai tsesislere yakın olması, coğrafi vaziyetinin iyi (havadar ve güneş alan) olması, oturana keyif vermesi, sıhhate uygun bir bölgede olması olarak sıralamıştır.[1097] Topkapı Sarayı'nın bu özelliklerin hepsini yansıttığı söylenebilir. Saray sadece 80.000 metrekaresini yapıların kapladığı çok geniş bir metrekareye sahip, coğrafi vaziyeti ve

[1095] Şimşirgil, 57-58.
[1096] Anhegger, 26.
[1097] İbrahim Canan, Hz. Peygamberin Mesken Telakkisi, in ed. Turgut Cansever, Saadettin Ökten, Ali Özek vd., *Mesken ve Mesken Mimarimiz*, Ensar Neşriyat, İstanbul: 1995, 26.

konumu şüphesiz havadar, güneş alan, oturanların sıhhatine uygundur. Pek çok yerli ve yabancı yazar da sarayın konumlandığı noktayı dünyanın en özel tepelerinden biri olarak nitelemişlerdir. Kadınlar ve erkekler için ayrı bölümler olan haremlik ve selamlık, dört yüz civarında oda ve salon, hamamlar, mutfaklar, hastaneler, okullar, kütüphaneler camiler, kuyular, çeşmeler ve köşkleri ile kendi zengin ictimai tesislerine sahiptir, hizmet binaları ve odalarıyla tam donanımlıdır. Bunun yanında, sarayın bütününe bir mesken olarak bakıldığında yönetim binaları hadisteki *mesrube* denilen çalışma odalarıyla örtüşebilir. Spesifik olarak padişahın çalışma odası ise özellikle II. Mehmed'in, Sultan II. Beyazıd, I.Selim ve I. Süleymanın'ın günlük yaşantılarının önemli bir kısmını geçirdiği, devlet işlerinin çokluğundan bazı zamanlar burada geceledikleri bilinen Has Oda'dır.[1098] Hadiste bir meskenin güzel olabilmesi için gereken şartlardan biri de oturanların hoşnut olacağı bir yer olmasıdır. Anhegger harem için tam da bu noktaya vurgu yapar ve der ki dünya ile ilişkisi kesilmiş olsa bile Harem'in iç dünyasının mimarisi, içinde yaşayanları rahat ettirmek, mutlu kılmak ve zevk vermek için biçimlenmişti.[1099] Sakaoğlu da benzer şekilde tahttaki padişahla annesi valide sultanın, şehzadelerin ve padişah kızlarının mutlu yaşantılarına göre şekillenmiş bu gizli âlemin her türlü hizmetinin de cariyeler ve harem ağalarının üstlendiğini belirtir.[1100]

İslam peygamberi, evlerin geniş olmasını teşvik ederken boyca yüksek olmasını israftan kaçınma, kibre sebebiyet verme ve mahremiyete uygun olmama gerekçeleriyle tavsiye etmemiştir.[1101] Topkapı Sarayı da tek bir anıtın ezici dikeyliği ile değil farklı işlevlere sahip pek çok yapının yayıldığı geniş bir araziyle imparatorluğun gücünü temsil etmektedir. Bununla beraber, yapılar çok yüksek değilse de alçak olduğu da söylenemez. Özellikle padişaha ait yapılarda kubbeler yüksektir. Bu tercihteki sebep padişahın "Allah'ın yeryüzündeki gölgesi" olarak nitelenmesi olmalıdır. Yüksek kubbeli padişaha ait mekanlarda yine de insan ölçeğinin, duvarların kademelendirilmesi suretiyle korunmaya çalışıldığı görülmektedir.

İslam'ın mesken estetiğinde esas olarak belirlenmiş önemli bir husus da *seyyaliyet* dir. Konu bağlamında kullanımı ise evin geniş olması ile ilgilidir. Bir evin geniş olarak

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[1098] Ortaylı, *Osmanlı Sarayında*, 111.
[1099] Anhegger, 26.
[1100] Sakaoğlu, *Tarihi, Mekanları, Kitabeleri*, 278.
[1101] Özek, 23.

değerlendirilmesi içinde yaşayan kişi sayısıyla yakından ilgilidir oysa evin nüfusu doğanlar, ölenler, ayrılanlar, misafir gelenler olduğu için sabit değildir. Olması muhtemel en kalabalık halini esas almak da en az kişi sayısını esas almak da kendi içinde imkânsızlıklar ve sakıncalar içerebileceğinden Hz. Muhammed bu durumu evin yüz ölçümünü geniş tutarak çözmüş, ihtiyaç çıktıkça odalarda bölüntüler yaparak gerekli genişlemeyi ve mahremiyeti sağlamıştır. Meskenlerde tek seferde en baştan her şeyi planlayıp yapmaktansa zaman içerisinde ihtiyaca binaen şekillendirmek israfı da önlemek açısından daha uygun bulunmuştur. Bu tutum İslam estetiğinin tenevvü ve modüler yapı ilkesi ile bire bir örtüşmektedir. Topkapı Sarayı da tam olarak bu şekilde; kentten geniş yüz ölçümlü bir arazi kesip alınarak yatay bir zemin üzerinde zaman içerisinde ihtiyaca binaen yeni eklemelerle teşekkül etmiştir. Harem içerisinde III. Murad Havuzlu Köşkü'ne eklenen kasırlar, I. Ahmed Köşkü ve III. Ahmed Yemiş Odası bunun küçük ölçekli bir örneğidir. İhtiyaç olmadan yeni yapı yapılmaması da "Bilin ki, zaruri olmayan her bina, sahibine bir vebaldir." [1102] hadisiyle örtüşmektedir.

Tefriş ve tezyinat da bu konuda üzerinde durulması gereken konulardandır. Hz. Muhammed'in bu konudaki söylemleri sadelik ve evin İslam dışı dini unsurlardan arınmış olması üzerinde yoğunlaşır. Mütevazılık ilkesiyle de ilintili olan bu telkinlerin saraydaki karşılığı kısmidir, tam karşılık bulduğu söylenemez. Saray gerçekten de haç sembolü gibi, farklı dinleri sembolize eden, İslam dışı dinlere özgü; onlarla özdeşleşmiş unsurlardan arınmıştır. Bazı mimari ayrıntılar ve tasarım fikirlerinde Bizans etkisi görülse de bunları İslam dışı öğelerin kullanımı olarak değil, kültürel kozmopolitliğin bir yansıması, cihan imparatorluğu kurma gayesindeki bir devletin bütünleştiricilik gayreti olarak yorumlamak daha doğru görünmektedir. Bunun yanında, sarayın İslam peygamberinin tavsiye ettiği üzere sade; dünya hayatına meyledilmesini engelleyecek şekilde gösterişten uzak olduğunu söylemek mümkün değildir. Kendisiyle aynı dönemde mevcut olan dünya saraylarına kıyasla daha sade olsa da, imparatorluğun olağanüstü kudretiyle daha görkemlisinin yapılabileceği bilinse de, Topkapı Sarayı'nın sade, gösterişten uzak, göz alıcı unsurlardan arınmış, birbirinden farklı ve parlak renk kullanımından kaçınan, dünya hayatına meylettirmekten imtina eden bir tefrişe ve tezyinata sahip olduğu söylenemez.

[1102] Ebû Dâvud, Edeb 169, (5237).

Hz. Muhammed'in bir evin güzel olması için üzerinde durduğu bir diğer konu da evdeki manevi ortamdır. Bunu da "Evlerinizi kabirlere çevirmeyin, Kur'an okuyun, Kur'an okunan eve şeytan girmez."[1103] hadisiyle açıklamıştır. Bu hadis, Topkapı Sarayı'nda yüzyıllardır tam karşılığını bulmakta, peygamberin tavsiyesine uygun olarak Mukaddes Emanetler bölümünde daimi şekilde Kur'an tilaveti yapıldığı bilinmektedir. Bunun yanında, I.Selim döneminde hilafet makamının Osmanlılara geçmesiyle kutsal emanetler sarayın özel bir odasında toplanmış ve bu da Topkapı Sarayı'nı tüm İslam âlemi için önemli bir manevi merkez haline getirmiştir. Kur'an ve manevi değerler ile kurulmaya çalışılan bağ, sadece bir kişinin daimi şekilde Kur'an okuması ve Mukaddes Emanetler bölümünde belirli günlerde yapılan Hırka-i Şerif ziyareti gibi bir takım ziyaretler ile sınırlı değildir. Kur'an tilaveti, ezberi ve ilmi saray halkının gündelik hayatının da önemli bir parçasıdır. Bunların yanında saray yerleşkesinde bulunan sayıca çokça caminin, namazgâhın ve kütüphanenin de tavsiye edilen manevi havaya katkı sağladığı düşünülebilir.

Hz. Muhammed söylemlerinde meskeni sadece mikro planda ele almamış, makro ölçekte onu şehrin bütününün bir parçası olarak da değerlendirmiştir. Bu bağlamda, evlerin yakınlarındaki komşu evlerle yakın yükseklikte olmasına, ezan sesi duyulabilecek şekilde cami ve mescitlere yakın olmasına, yeşilliğe önem verilmesine ve tarihi eserlerin korunmasına önem verilmesini tavsiye etmiştir.[1104] Topkapı Sarayı kendi içinde kapalı bir yerleşke olduğu için komşusu yoktur ancak yerleşke içerisindeki yapılar, adaletin her şeyin üstünde olduğunu sembolize eden Adalet Kulesi hariç, birbirlerine yakın yüksekliktedirler. Saray bünyesinde yer alan on camide ezan sesleri duyulmakta, yerleşkenin çok büyük bölümünü kaplayan yeşil bahçeleri cennet bahçelerini anımsatacak boyuttadır. Saray yerleşkesindeki tarihi eserlerin korunmasına gelince, Osmanlılar sarayın gerek inşası gerekse sonraki dönemlerde burada mevcut olan pek çok Bizans eserine hiç dokunmamışlar, bazılarını yerlerinde muhafaza etmişlerdir. Lala Bahçesi'nde yer alan Vaftiz Havuzu, mutfak bölümlerinin önünde yer alan dev sütun başlıkları, Bab'üs-Saade'ye giden yol üzerindeki Bizans Sarayı'ndan kalan hala mevcut ve koruma altında olan su sarnıcı ve saray avlusunun içinde, yapılışı 4.yüzyıla dayanan Bizans kilisesi Aya İrini yüzyıllarca korunan,

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[1103] Müslim, 212- Tirmizi, 2
[1104] Ebu Davud, Edeb, 160.: Ahmed Ibn Hanbel, 387.

Osmanlıların kültür miraslarına gösterdiği saygının nişanesi olan yapılardır. Topkapı Sarayı'nın hemen dışında yer alan Ayasofya Cami de, o vakte kadar yer yüzünün en büyük ve en şöhretli mabedidir. Ancak II. Mehmed, tam olarak kendi kişiliğine yakışır şekilde insanlık mirasına duyduğu saygı gereği, camiye çevirdiği mabedin ne adını ne de yapısını değiştirmiştir.

Böylece tez, Osmanlı düşünce sistemini oluşturan politik, felsefi, dini, sufi düşüncelerinin Topkapı Sarayı'nın mekansal ve organizasyonel kurgusundaki etkisini İslam estetiğinin teorik çerçevesi ile ortaya koymuş ve tezin iddia ettiği şekilde Topkapı Sarayı'nın, İslam düşüncesinin mesken estetiğinden güçlü şekilde etkilendiğini de, naçizane, göstermiştir. Topkapı Sarayı üzerine yapılan pek çok çalışmanın yanında hem konu hem de metodolojik olarak özgün, içerik olarak da geniş ve zengin olmaya çabalamış bu tez kendi mevcut içeriğinden, daha önce yapılan çalışmalarda üzerine spesifik olarak odaklanılmamış, Osmanlı düşünce sisteminin (politik, felsefi, dini, sufi) her bir bileşeninin saray mekanlarına yansıması ve III. Murad Odası'nın estetik analizine dair ayrı yayınlara kaynak olmayı hedeflemiştir.

Planlanan ileriki çalışma alanlarına da değinmek gerekirse; Topkapı Sarayı neticede bir İslam sarayıdır ancak İslam coğrafyasındaki pek çok saraydan da tezin ilgili bölümlerinde değinildiği üzere farklılık gösterir. Buna paralel olarak, İslam estetiğinin, İslam coğrafyasındaki farklı saraylar üzerindeki yorumlanışı üzerinden karşılaştırmalı çalışmalar yapılabilir. Yorumlanışlardaki farklar, benzerlikler ve bunların olası sebepleri karşılaştırılan sarayların yer aldığı coğrafyanın kültür ve düşünce dünyası bağlamında analiz edilebilir.

Tez, Osmanlı politik/ felsefi/dini/ tasavvufi düşüncesinin saray mekanlarına yansımasını detaylı şekilde analiz etmeye çalıştıysa da, bu alanda yapılan ilk çalışma olduğu için, disiplinler arası çalışmalarla analiz derinleştirilip geliştirilebilir. Örnek yer olarak seçilmiş III. Murad Odası'na dair yapılan analiz sarayın farklı mekanları için de yapılabilir. Böylelikle saraya dair analizler derinleşerek mevcut akademik çalışmalara katkı sağlanabilir.

İslam estetiğinin temel prensipleri şüphesiz sadece mimariye yansımamıştır. İslam estetiğinin Osmanlı resim sanatı, hat sanatı, şiir sanatı, edebiyat, musiki ve diğer sanatlarda da izini sürmek, ileriki çalışma alanları olabilir.

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