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### Article

## The leading example of western-influenced structures in Ottoman architecture – “Çit Kasrı” at the Yıldız Palace and its repairs

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### ABSTRACT

Çit Kasrı which is one of the important buildings in the Yıldız Palace was constructed in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. It was probably designed and built by Sarkis Balyan, during the reign of Sultan Abdülaziz. The building is known as the “Çit Kasrı” because of the cloth material called “chit” that covered the interior walls. The ambassadors and officials of foreign states were received in this building.

The Kasrı is a single-story building of masonry construction with a partial basement. It was built generally of imported materials. In Ottoman architecture; cement materials, prefabricated imitation stone elements, and interior space decoration covered with silk cloth were certainly used for the first time in this building.

The building was repaired in 1982–1983 by the Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture. It was vacated in 2017 as part of the project to reunify the Yıldız Palace. Today, the building, which is currently idle, is waiting to be repaired and reused.

This study's aim is to reveal the original values of Çit Kasrı which is in a new restoration process, to evaluate the last restoration, to share the information obtained from this restoration and the current conservation problems of the building with the academic community, and to provide data for the new restoration planned in the future. The research is based on the survey drawings of the building before the restoration, the information obtained from the building during the repair, and the photographs taken before and after the restoration.

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### INTRODUCTION

Located in İstanbul's Beşiktaş district, the Yıldız Palace represents the last Ottoman palace created during a progression that continued from the 16<sup>th</sup> century to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The palace grounds originally served as a hunting area reserved for the reigning sultan,

but with later additions of pavilions, summer palaces, and buildings serving government and defence purposes, the area began to take on the appearance it retains even today. The palace was organised in the traditional multi-unit arrangement; however, it was constructed in a Western style. It extended over time beginning with the construction of such important buildings as the Grand Mabeyn, the Malta

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and Çadır Kiosks, and the Çit Kasrı, which were built during the reigns of Sultan Abdülaziz (1861–1876) and occurred Sultan Abdülhamid II (1876–1909). Abdülhamid II both lived on these palace grounds and ruled his Empire from the same complex (Batur, 1994). Sultan Vahdettin (1909–1922), also used this complex as the hub, but following the close of his reign, the palace remained empty for some time. In the Turkish Republic period (1923–) the Palace grounds were divided and its facilities were allocated for the use of various official organisations (Bilgin, 1982). Today the responsibilities for a large section of the palace buildings have been transferred to the Ministry of Culture and the Office of the Presidency and efforts to reunify the whole are ongoing.

To determine the identity of Yıldız Palace, it is necessary to investigate the buildings that make up the Palace in detail and to share the information obtained. This is why this article about the Çit Kasrı in the Yıldız Palace has been prepared. Çit Kasrı is one of the leading examples of the Westernisation period. The aim is to reveal the original values of Çit Kasrı, which is in a new restoration process, to evaluate the repair it underwent between 1982 and 1983, to share the information obtained from this repair and the current conservation problems with the academic community, and to provide data for the new restoration planned in the future. The research is based on the survey drawings of the building before the restoration, the information obtained from the building during the repair, and the photographs taken before and after the restoration. This article consists of the following sub-headings respectively; “Introduction, Yıldız Palace’s Site Organization, and Çit Kasrı, History of Çit Kasrı, Architectural Forming, Repair Efforts, Comparison of the Çit Kasrı with the Same Period Buildings, Conservation Problems, and Conclusion”.

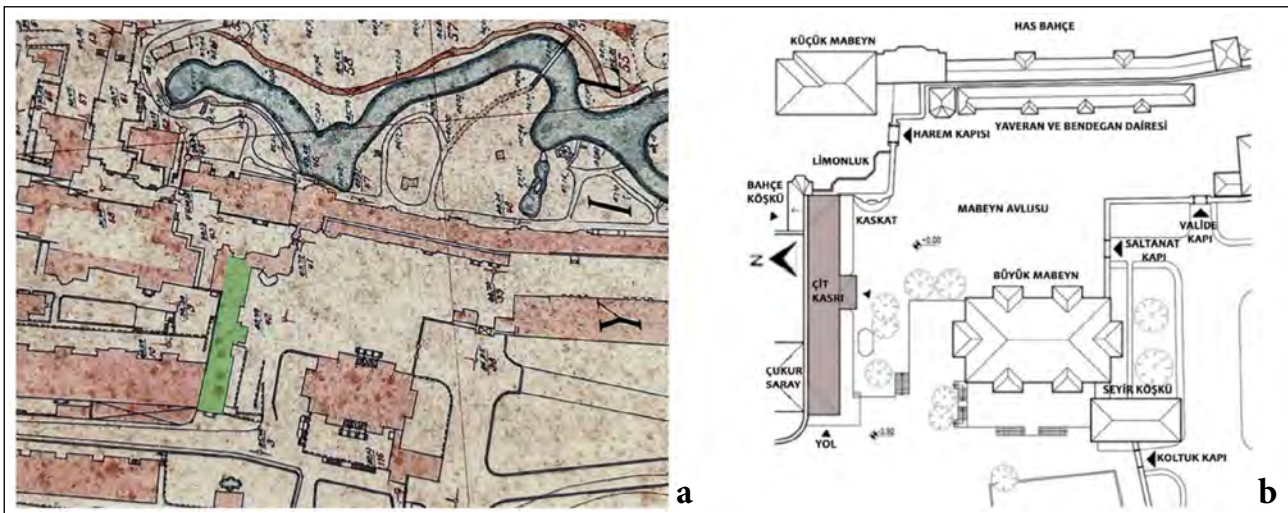
## YILDIZ PALACE’S SITE ORGANISATION AND ÇİT KASRI

The Yıldız Palace grounds include both the official section in which state business was conducted and the “harem” section belonging to the sultan and his family. These buildings and spaces were surrounded by tall walls and further isolated by the use of outer gardens or courtyards. Most of the official state and palace administrative buildings were situated in the first (Mabeyn) courtyard. The official buildings which included the Grand Mabeyn, Çit Kasrı, Yaveran Office, Silahhane, etc., were arranged in a ring around the Mabeyn Courtyard (Figures 1a and b). The Harem buildings and spaces are located in the second courtyard.

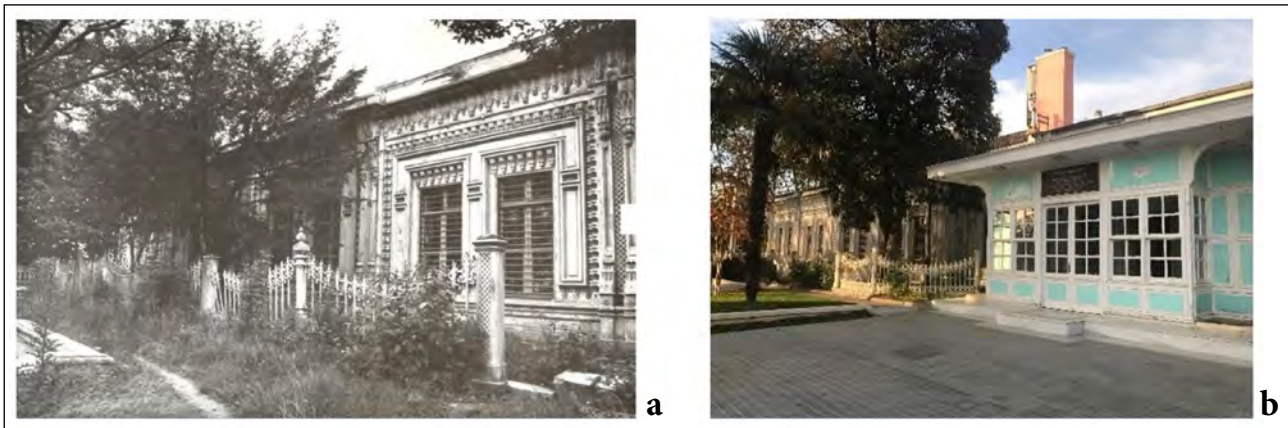
The Çit Kasrı is a rectangular, one-story, masonry building that is situated to the north of the Grand Mabeyn (Figures 2a and b). The first module on the western side of the building is aligned in a west-east direction and was constructed as a two-story building due to the slope in the levels of the land. The Çukur Palace and the Harem Wall lie to the north of the building, while a road leading to the Palace’s Koltuk Gate is on the west; the Harem Courtyard is to its east. At the end of the 19th century, the Kaskatlı Harem Wall was added to the southeast corner, a wood-framed Garden Kiosk to the northeast corner, and a Greenhouse to the eastern face of the building (Batur, 1985).

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF ÇİT KASRI

Both the Grand Mabeyn Kiosk and Çit Kasrı were designed and constructed by Sarkis Balyan, the palace architect during the reign of Sultan Abdülaziz (1861–1876) who was assisted by his brothers. While the exact construction date remains uncertain, it is believed to have been built directly after the construction of the Grand Mabeyn, which was built in 1866 (Tuğlacı, 1981). The Çit Kasrı



**Figure 1.** (a) A map of Yıldız Palace, 1926–1928 (Dağdelen, 2005). (b) The layout plan of the Çit Kasrı, 2021, (Erdem).



**Figure 2.** (a) Çit Kasrı, the southern facade, 1982 (İlhan). (b) The main entrance from the courtyard, 2017 (Erdem).

took its name from the kind of cloth known as “çit” that was used to cover the interior walls. The building was used during the Ottoman period as a reception area for foreign ambassadors and important government transactions (Ezgü, 1962; Tuğlacı, 1981). Sultan Abdülhamid II also used this space to host fast-breaking meals during the month of Ramadan. The decision to enter the 1896–1897 Turkish–Greek War was taken in this building. It was also used for the questioning of Mustafa Kemal in 1905 and Sultan Vahdettin’s meeting with the English ambassador took place here (Sevgin, 1966). The Çit Kasrı also was used for different functions during the early Republican period, serving as the Military Academy Library until 1977 (Batur, 1985). In 1982, an agreement reached between the Turkish Government and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation transferred the use of the building to the Research Center for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA). The first restoration of the building in the Republican Period was carried out in 1982–1983 (IRCICA, 1982). Following its restoration, the Kasrı which was used until 2017 as a research library and an exhibition-conference hall by IRCICA, was vacated as part of the project to reunify Yıldız Palace. Today the building is in a process of a new restoration.

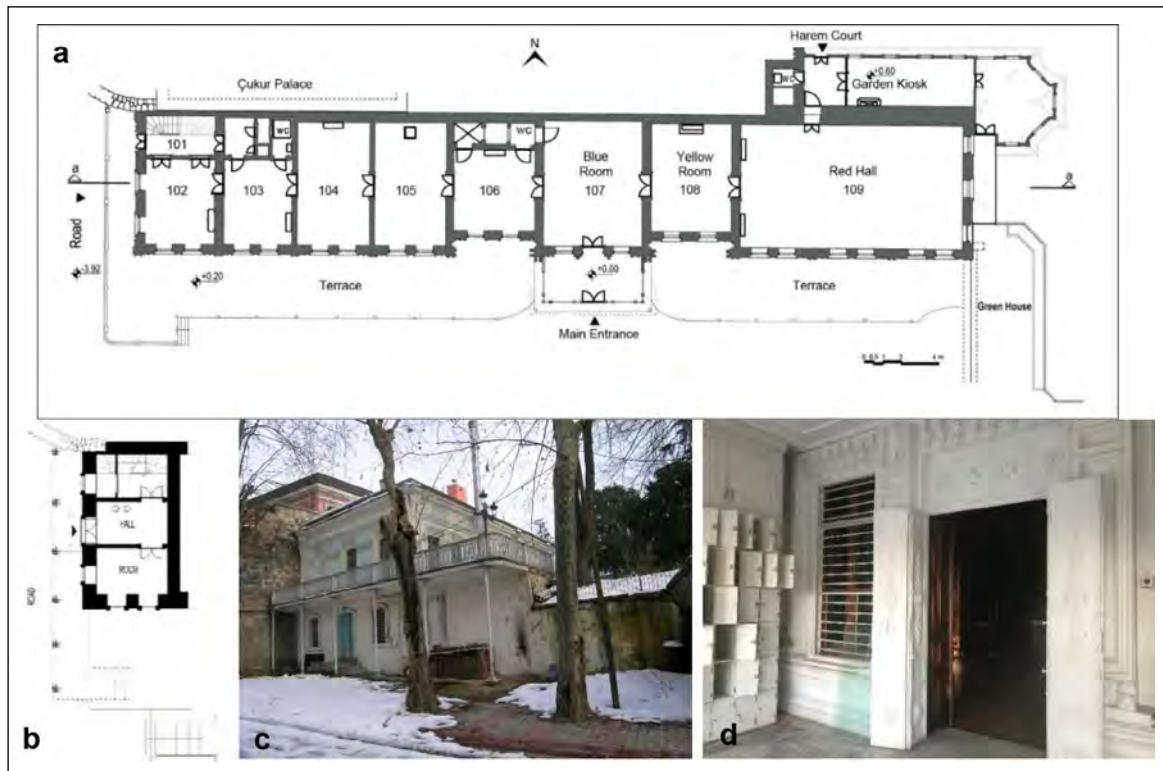
## ARCHITECTURAL FORMING

### Plan Characteristics

The Çit Kasrı’s main floor at the same level as the Mabeyn courtyard consists of eight adjacent rooms of various sizes that gradually increase in splendour from the west straight to the east (Figure 3a). In its plan; a passage between the rooms is not provided with the traditional solution of an inner or a central hall /sofa; rather, the rooms themselves are interconnected with access gained through double doors cut through the rooms’ dividing walls. The first module on the western side of the main floor includes a lower floor at the ground (Koltuk Gate road) levels. This basement

floor according to the road level consists of an entrance hall, a small room, and a staircase hall (Figure 3b) Also, it is fronted by an entrance portico with cast-iron pillars. This portico also serves as the weight-bearing element for a terrace that extends in front of the west side of the main floor (Figure 3c).

Çit Kasrı’s main entrance (Figures 2b and 3d), which has an organic relationship with the Mabeyn courtyard, opens onto the Blue Room, situated between the rows of rooms (Figure 4a). Two rooms lead off the Blue Room to the east and five rooms to the west. The end room (Red Room) is the largest and most decorated of the rooms and served as a space in which Sultan Abdülhamid received guests and important state business was discussed (Figure 4b). The second entrance door on the north wall of the Red Room allowed the sultan to personally pass from the Red Room to the Garden Kiosk and, from there, to the Harem courtyard (Figure 4c). It is believed that the third entrance door that leads directly to Kasrı’s basement floor especially served as an entry for foreign guests and ambassadors (Figure 3c). According to this hypothesis, the visitors who entered the Çit Kasrı from the basement floor door would access the upper floor via a wooden staircase after their entry had been approved by Chief Mabeyinci (government spokesman) and after passing through the adjoining rooms they would finally come face-to-face with the sultan (Tuğlacı, 1981). However, some also say that the starkness of this basement level denies this possibility. Another possibility was that the ambassadors were granted entry through the main door which opens onto the blue room. The supposition that this entry was used by the foreign ambassadors is strengthened by the fact that a toilet holding a marble sink decorated with stalactites is located in the north-western corner of the Blue Room onto which the entry opens (Figure 4f). It is also clear that an additional door opened up onto the upper floor of the Çukur Palace, but that this door was later entirely closed off.



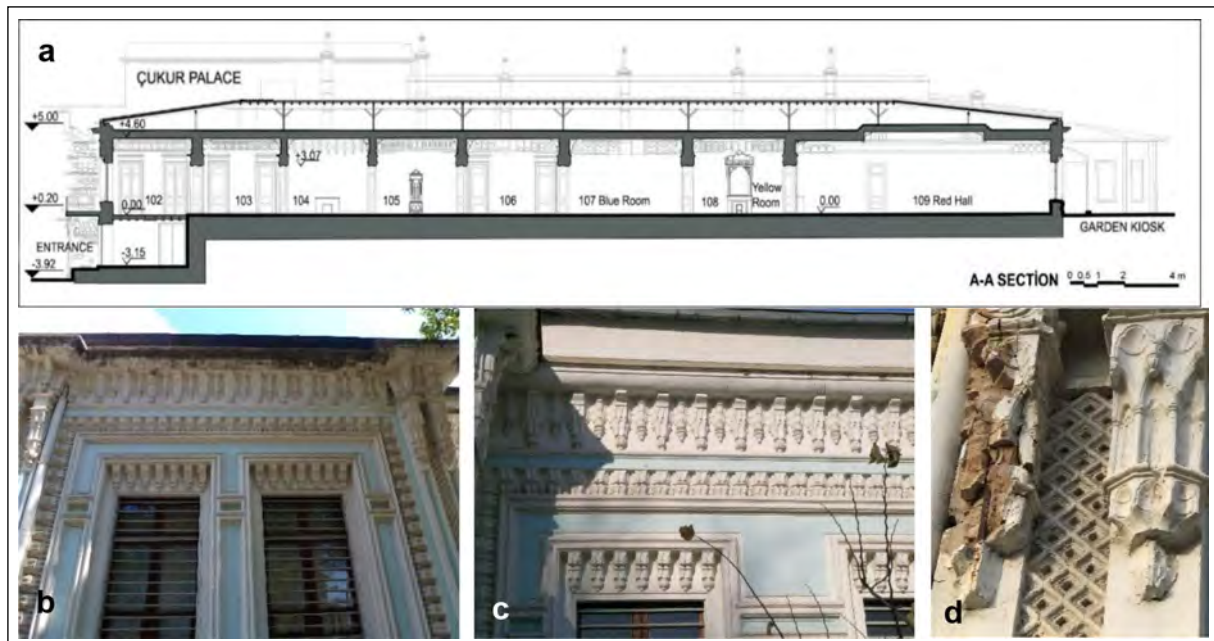
**Figure 3.** (a) The main floor plan of the Çit Kasrı, (b) The basement floor plan, (c) The Western facade from the road, 2006, (d) The main door from the Mabeyn Courtyard, 2017 (Erdem).



**Figure 4.** (a) The Blue Room, (b) The Red Room, (c) The Harem gate on the northern wall of the Red Room, (d) Çit Kasrı and The Kaskadlı Harem Wall, 2017, (e) The Garden Kiosk and the Greenhouse, 2014, (f) The WC with a marble sink, 2017 (Erdem).

Abdülhamid II used the main entrance of the Çit Kasrı when he was returning from the Friday Prayer Services, but on other days he entered the building by passing through the

Garden Kiosk from the Harem Courtyard or through the Greenhouse (Ezgi, 1962) (Figure 4e). While we don't know how protocol arrangements between foreign representatives



**Figure 5.** (a) Longitudinally section, (b) Facades were designed as modules with stalactites, (c) The small prefabricated elements on the facade, (d) The big prefabricated element was anchored with an iron hook, 2017 (Erdem).

and Ottoman officials of the state were when the Ottoman Sultan was accepting the ambassadors in the Red Room.<sup>1</sup> Also, we do know that the floor of the Red Room wasn't divided to include an upper platform that raised the sitting sultan to a height higher than the ambassadors who stood on the lower platform.

The building has two toilets on the main floor, one opening into Room 103 and the other, with a marble sink, opening into the Blue Room. In addition to these toilets, there was another toilet, said to be designated for the private use of Sultan Abdülhamid II that was located in an extension built in front of the Harem Gate of the Garden Kiosk.

The balcony located to the building's west was encircled by a wrought iron spiked fence between the iron bollards (Figure 3c) Also, the building's southern side has been isolated by the iron spiked fence with the marble and wrought iron bollards leading from both sides of the entryway (Figures 2a and 4d). This fence serves to buffer the building from the Mabeyn Courtyard.

### Structural Characteristics and Material Usage

While the Çit Kasrı can be described as being a one-story building, a section on the west was built with two stories (Figures 3c and 5a). All of the walls of the main floor and diving walls of the basement floor have been constructed of factory-produced perforated brick, while concrete-based

plaster was used to bind the bricks and the plasters. The walls are quite thick, having been built with a thickness of 65 centimetres including plasters, however, the thickness of some dividing walls of the rooms on the west change by 20 and 35 centimetres. Brick material was imported from Marseille. The external faces of the main walls were given some decorative attributes by being coated with pre-made unit elements (stalactites) with pozzolanic cement mortar. (Figures 5b and c) The small unit elements were secured on the outside of the main walls with cement plaster, while the big elements were anchored with cast iron hooks (Figures 5c and d). Also, the profiled mouldings were created with cemented mortar.

The outer walls of the basement floor have been built with rubble stone and are 90 centimetres thick with plasters. The entrance to the basement level is faced with an entry porch overhang supported by wrought iron columns (Figure 3c). The roof of this overhang also serves as a support base for the upper balcony. Steel beams and arches were used to support the main floor of the building's two-story section, while wooden beams were set on the ground to form the flooring of the one-story section. These tarred, wooden beams were seated on a connecting layer of five-six-centimetres thick mortar mixed with lime, while coal dust was used to fill the openings between the beams, thus preventing the seepage of ground moisture into the building. The beams were first covered with thick slat raw flooring and then this flooring

<sup>1</sup> At the end of Conqueror Sultan Mehmed II's reign, the Sultan accepted ambassadors in the newly completed Arz Odası. The Sultan sat cross-legged on a flat throne but would rise to his feet to greet the ambassadors before again sitting down. During the reception, the ambassadors remained seated at a level that was lower than the level of the Sultan's throne. During and following the period of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent, the sultans no longer rose to their feet to greet and honour the guests. Sources tell us that the ambassadors were made to stand during the reception, and the Sultan didn't speak with them (Necipoglu, 2014).



**Figure 6.** (a) The wooden mosaic parquet, (b) The red fabric with yellow stars, 2017, (c) The Pattern of “chit”, the original cloth, 1982, (d) The yellow fabric with blue stars, (e) The blue fabric with yellow stars and oilcloth ceiling, (f) The ceiling molding with corbels, 2017 (Erdem).



**Figure 7.** (a) The door made up of mahogany and walnut, (b) Mahogany rosettes on the walnut veneer panels, (c) The brass knocker instead of the silver and bronze knocker, (d) The porcelain stove of Room 105, (e) The fireplace in Room 104, 2017 (Erdem).

was completed with wooden mosaic parquet with star motifs (Figure 6a).

Before being coated with silk and satiny material, the internal faces of the walls were planned with modules and borders between modules. To accomplish this, wooden lathes were nailed onto the plastered walls, and then narrow wood strips were nailed to the stretched satin cloth (Figures 6b, d, and e). Only a small piece of the original, yellow-Bordeaux cloth with stylised floral motifs known as “chit” and dating to the construction period of the Çit Kasrı has remained extended (Figure 6c). The other pieces of the cloth were found to consist of silk satin cloth woven with blue and yellow

stars on a yellow, blue, and red ground that belongs to the Abdülhamid period. From the colours of these fabrics, we can assume that the borders were made up of yellow, blue, and red. The edges of the fabric borders were bounded by the door frames, wooden baseboards, and ceiling moulding (koltuk silmesi) encircled by cording (Figures 6f and 7a).

The Çit Kasrı ceilings of the main floor were created with wooden beams and cladding. After that, the technique of painting on the oilcloth (toile cirée) was used on all the ceilings. These paintings also used gilded, moulded strips of wood to depict various geometric motifs. The decorated ceilings were connected to the fabric-covered walls through



**Figure 8.** (a) West side of the southern facade, 2006, (b) The main entrance, southern facade, 2017, (c) Greenhouse (eastern face) 2018, (d) Southwest corner of the Çit Kasrı, 2017, (e, f) The western facade from the road, 2006 (Erdem).

the use of wooden corbels (*furuş*) of the ceiling mouldings. The plastered areas between the wooden corbels were decoratively painted (Figure 6f).

The windows and doors were constructed of both mahogany and walnut. Solid mahogany was used for the window woodwork, the casings, and corniches of the doors, and in the making of the decorative rosettes and wooden strips. While mahogany veneer was used for the door frames and wings, and walnut veneer was used for the door panels (Figures 7a and b). The door knockers were cast from an alloy of silver and bronze (Figure 7c), while brass casting was used for the door latches, bolts, keys, and locksets.

Although the central heating system was used in the Küçük Mabeyn and Cihannüma Kiosk, which were built before the Çit Kasrı, Çit Kasrı was heated with fireplaces and porcelain stoves for an unknown reason. Each room of the Kasr had its fireplace, except Room 105, which had a porcelain stove (Figures 7d and e). From the pipe holes in the wall, we can assume that the Blue and Red Rooms had also been equipped with porcelain stoves. Generally speaking for the fireplaces, both coloured marble and imported tiles were used (Figure 6b).

#### Facade Characteristics

Because its north wall is attached to the Çukur Palace, the Harem Wall, and the Garden Kiosk, Kasr has only three exposed faces. These exposed facades were designed as modules and were decorated with imitation stone elements (Figures 8a, b, and d). Stylized Turkish-Islamic motifs

(stalactites and tassels) were used in the decoration of these imitation stone facings (Figures 5b and c). Each room facing the long southern/ entrance facade serves as a single module, while the red room of the building represents three modules. On the southern facade, each module is delineated by two windows, while the entry module has a double entry door set between the two windows. The modules were perpendicularly limited with imitation stone pilasters. Besides, at the eaves level, over and under the windows, and on both sides of the pilasters, were also decorated with faux stone elements consisting of stalactite and tassels. Because of the old photo in the past and the screw holes, we understand that the rectangular, winged windows once had wooden shutters, but they no longer exist (Figures 10 and 12a). For security purposes, the horizontal iron grills are placed in front of the windows (Figures 5b and 8d). The original windbreaker (Figures 9, 10) that fronted the main entrance module, had been constructed of iron (Ezgü, 1962), but had since been replaced twice by a wooden counterpart in the Republican period (Figures 2b and 8b).

On the side facades, the pilasters were used only at the beginning and end of the facade. From the road level, the western side facade reflects the appearance of a portico (Figures 8e and f). The Greenhouse, which was an addition built during the Abdülhamid II period, blocks a view of the building's eastern face, but the original facade design is visible from inside the corridor of the Greenhouse (Figure 8c). In the past, the building was roofed with lead, but today it is covered with corrugated asbestos cement sheets.



**Figure 9.** Çit Kasrı, 1900s, taken by Abdullah Freres.



**Figure 10.** A view of the Çit Kasrı, probably in the 1930s, (İstanbul Üniv. Kütüphane ve Dokümantasyon Daire Başkanlığı) taken by photographer Hakkı (Moda Müzayede, 2018).

## REPAIR EFFORTS

### Repairs Made During the Ottoman Period (1883)

A document numbered 5-106/82 was found in the Ottoman State Archives (IRCICA, 1982) and entitled, “*Yıldız Sarayı Alisi Bahçesi derununda Çit Kasrı Hümayunu / The Çit Kasrı of the Royal Garden of the Yıldız Palace*” provides information relative to the “the quantities and costs of the material used in the construction of the foundation walls by using new stones and unadulterated binding, the construction of new wooden flooring over this foundation floor, and manufacture of window panes and baseboards”. Despite this information, this brief document does not shed light on which parts of the building were repaired and why such repair had been carried out.

In the reign of Abdülhamid II, the original fabrics that belonged to the period of Abdülaziz were replaced with fabrics with star patterns. The hand-drawn decorations of the Abdülaziz period, which are among the wooden corbels on the ceiling mouldings, were closed with cardboard that was covered with silk fabric. There is no written document regarding these repairs; however, the differences can be seen in the photographs taken in 1982 (Figures 11b and c).

### Repairs Made During the Turkish Republican Period

#### *The State of the Building Before the 1982–1983 Restoration*

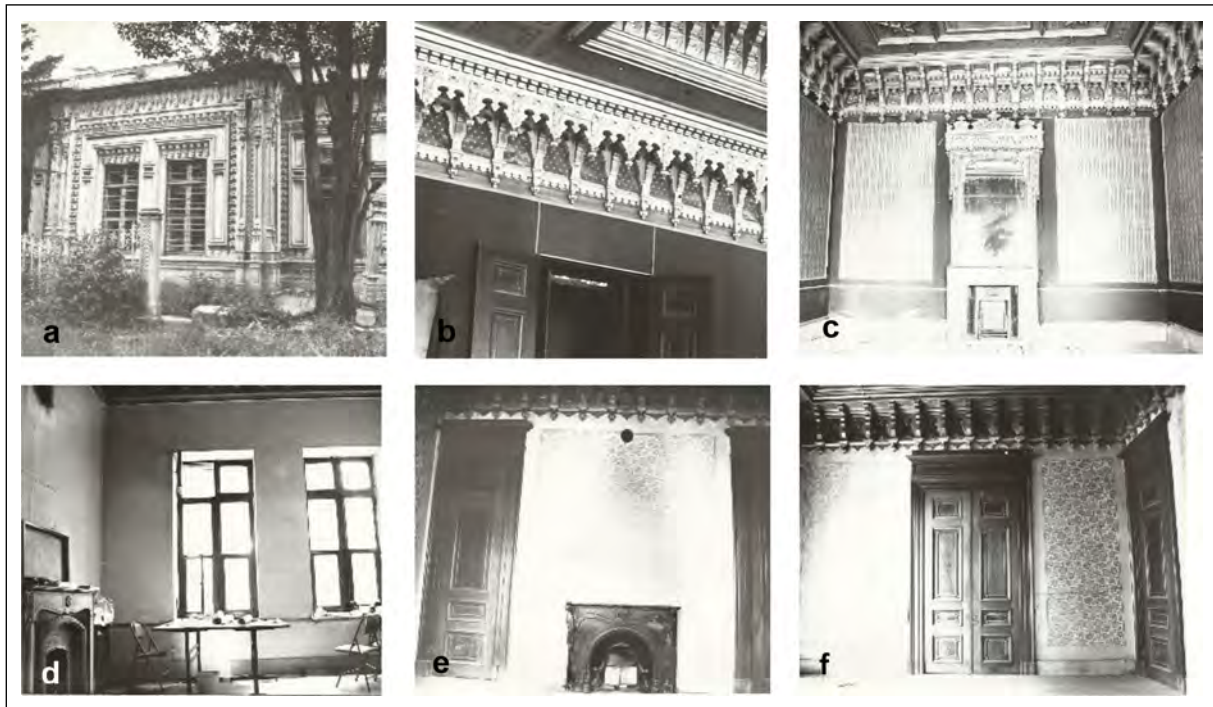
Upon being relinquished by the Military Academy during the 1977 reclamation of Yıldız Palace facilities, the Kasrı remained unoccupied for five years and began to deteriorate during this period (Figures 11a, d, e, and f). In 1982, the Turkish government and the Islamic Conference Organization entered into an agreement that would allow the building to be used by an Islamic History, Art, and Cultural Research Center.

It was at this point that photographs taken in 1982 and an architectural survey plan drawn of the Çit Kasrı

demonstrated that the building had lost some of its original features. An example of this was the fact that only a very small piece of the “çit” fabric, from which the building got its name, had been found (Figure 6c). The pieces of fabric with stars used during the reign of Abdülhamid II were found in the space between wooden corbels on the ceiling mouldings (Figures 11b, c). The usage pattern of the fabric coverings on the walls was only discovered on some of the walls found in the Yellow Room (Figure 11c) and Red Hall. However, since this was not the original fabric on the walls of the other rooms, the relationship between the main module and the border that encircles it has been preserved. A fabric that appears to be a worn piece of lining or a later paper covering material was found on the other interior walls of the structure (Figures 11d, e, and f).

The doors, window frames, ceilings, fireplaces, and ceramic stoves (Room 105) have retained their original features, while only a small part of the original star-design parquet flooring remains in Rooms 101, 102, and 106 (Figure 6a). The floors of the other spaces had been covered with a xylolith coating and tile mosaic (Room 107). The wooden staircase that connects the basement to the upper floors has partially rotted out, and two of the windows on the southern wall of the basement floor have been covered in a soil-based filling. The original toilet sinks and marble floors of all of the WCs remain. However, none of the original metal elements of the doors and windows, including locks, bolts, armatures, and lock mirrors, are extant. Also missing are the wooden window shutters that were once used in this building. The chandelier hooks in the ceiling are evidence that chandeliers were used to illuminate the spaces, but none of these chandeliers was found, and their original type is not known. The eaves moulding detail of the western and southern facades





**Figure 11.** (a) The southern facade, (b) The fabric with the stars between the corbels, Red Room, (c) The geometric design of fabric covering the walls, Yellow Room, (d) Room 102, southeast corner, (e) Room 102, southeast corner, (f) Room 106, the western wall, 1982 (İlhan).

was probably changed by the army (Figures 12a, b). The building's original windbreak and the lead roof were most likely removed during the period the building was used as a military academy, at which point the roof was covered with asbestos cement.

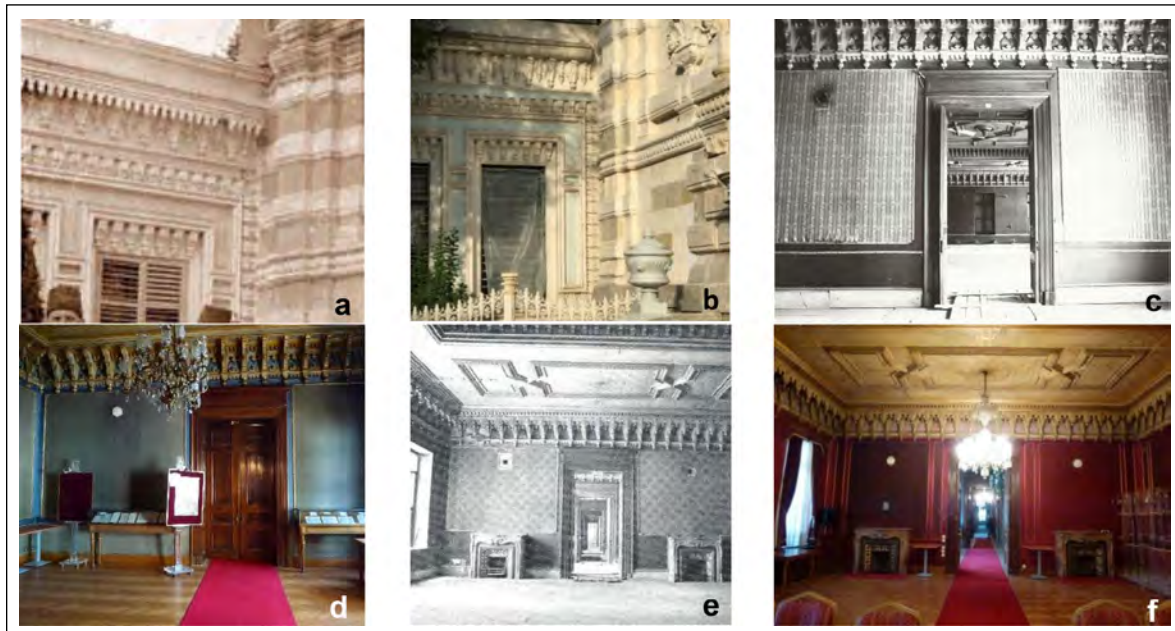
#### **Restoration Implementation (1982–1983)**

The restoration was carried out under the supervision of MS architect Nevzat İlhan, a graduate degree holder in restoration, and an instructor at Yıldız University, with the assistance of MS architect Ayten Erdem. The ASER Company, led by MS architect Erdoğan Tolga and Asaf Çakır, carried out 1982–1982 restoration implementation. The first stage of the restoration began in November of 1982 and was devoted to solving the structural problems evidenced in the building. This stage was completed in April of 1983. It was at this point in the restoration that the first international symposium hosted by IRCICA was held in this setting. Following this symposium, attention was turned towards both landscaping the building's immediate surrounding grounds and finishing up other needed work. This restoration was then completed in August of 1983. The western section of the building was allotted as a library devoted to the needs of researchers, while the eastern section (Yellow Room and Red Room) was designated to serve as meeting, conference, and seminar halls (Figure 4b). The Blue Room that buffered these two sections and which also served as a pedestrian entry passage into the Mabeyn

courtyard was designated to serve both separate sections (Figure 4a).

During this restoration, an extra effort was directed toward researching both the date that the wall fabrics had been hung and how they had been implemented. The walls of the meeting rooms located in the eastern section pointed to the fact that the fabric primarily dated from the period of Abdülhamid II and consisted of a fine satin cloth with yellow and blue star motifs on a red, yellow, and blue ground. It was decided to re-weave this fabric with polyester. The way the fabric had been fixed to the wall was determined by closely observing the nail holes remaining in the underlying lathes. The relationship between the star module and the satin border was thus re-established. The geometric designs used on each of the walls were recorded and drawn during the process of this implementation, and wooden strips were fixed accordingly over the plaster. This step was followed by stapling the fabric onto the lathes. These were further fixed in place by using bright golden-coloured strips (Figures 12c–f). The walls of the western section, which was to be used as a library, were covered in the determined arrangement by using fabric available in the current marketplace (Figures 7d and e).

While the ceilings had preserved their original appearance, they had been seriously darkened and dirty by the smoke from the room's stove. These ceilings were carefully cleaned using pure yellow soap (Figure 13a). The hand-drawn designs between the wooden corbels on the ceiling



**Figure 12.** (a) Detail of the eave moulding with tassels in 1909 (Bardakçı, 2015), (b) Eave moulding detail, 2017 (Erdem), (c) Yellow Room, before the restoration, 1982 (İlhan), (d) Yellow Room, 2017 (Erdem), (e) Red Room, before the restoration, 1982 (İlhan), (f) Red Room, 2017 (Erdem).

moulding were taken by copying and repainted. The missing plaster tassels were also added. Care was taken to ensure that the differences between the original and the later added elements were obvious.

Because replacing the missing star-shaped floor parquet proved impossible, the floors in the library were covered in plain carpeting, while those in the yellow and red salons were covered with herringbone-designed oak parquet flooring (Figure 12d and e). The extant door and window metal components that were made from silver were used as models, but the original silver was replaced by brass elements.

To locate the central heating system appropriate for the needs of the Kasrı, an excavation was made under the terrace to the south of the building, where a siphon cistern from the first half of the twentieth century was found and the closed basement windows were exposed. After the excavation, the fuel tank, furnace, and other heating equipment were all installed in an underground chamber in this area. The siphon cistern was used as a water tank, and the filled parts in the closed windows were removed. The connection between the heating centre and the basement floor was provided with the help of these windows.

Because the building's original illumination chandeliers had not been found, researchers decided to investigate the chandeliers extant in other buildings of the palace. A three-armed and badly damaged chandelier found in the Grand Mabeyn was repaired and hung in the Yellow Room (Figure

13b). New chandeliers were hung in the other rooms (Figure 13d and e). An original glass lamp shade was found in the palace and was used as a model for new shades made and embossed with the AH (Abdülhamid) emblem.

The missing prefabricated elements on the exterior facades were re-manufactured by taking moulds from the original elements, and the facades were repainted in their original colour. It was not preferred to reconstruct the wooden shutters of the windows, which are not available today, and the wooden windbreak in front of the main entrance module, which is an annex of the Republic period, has been preserved. The corrugated sheets on the roof could not be removed because of the cost of the original lead coating. The remains of the original mosaic parquets were preserved but could not be reproduced due to a lack of time.

During the restoration period, it appeared that utilising this building for the library and conference hall purposes was appropriate for the building's function. Retrievable compact type libraries were used for the library function. However, as years went by, the library was overfilled with book donations made to the IRCICA. Soon, the entire western section was stuffed with books and bookshelves, thus robbing the space of its fine aesthetic features (Figures 13c–f).

### COMPARISON OF THE ÇİT KASRI WITH THE SAME PERIOD BUILDINGS

Most likely in the 1870s, Çit Kasrı was designed and



**Figure 13.** (a) The ceiling of Room 106, (b) The chandelier was brought from the Grand Mabeyn, 2017, (c) Compact type book cabinets in Room 105, (d) The other side of Room 105, (e) Blue Room (Main entrance hall), (f) Room 106 and the book cabinets, 2017 (Erdem).

constructed by Sarkis Balyan and his brothers. Kasr is distinguished in terms of plan layout, construction technique and use of materials, facade formation, and interior decoration from the Dolmabahçe Palace, Çırağan Palace, Beylerbeyi Palace, Grand Mabeyn, Çadır Kiosk, and Malta Kiosk which were constructed by the same architect in the same period. In all these buildings, traditional plan types with sofa were applied, stone and marble were used on the exterior walls, blend bricks were used on the interior walls, the facades were shaped with neoclassical, baroque, gothic, sometimes partially orientalist styles, and the interior spaces were decorated with stucco, painted decoration, wall paintings, “selsebil”, wooden panelling and the technique of painting on oilcloth (toile cirée) on the ceilings (Ertaş, 1993; Dursun, 2019).

The Çit Kasrı, on the other hand, was designed in a plan without a sofa. Moreover, while in traditional forms the room's doors were situated in a corner of the room in a way that would ensure privacy, here double-wing doors were placed in the centre of the dividing wall that opened directly into the room. The factory bricks and cement materials were used on all its walls, and its facades were decorated with prefabricated artificial stone elements made of stalactites and tassels (Turkish-Islamic motives). The Kasr's two-story section utilised arched flooring (volta), which at that time represented a new and modern construction technique that could replace the traditional Ottoman use of wooden beams to support the building's floors. The most important feature of the building is that the interior walls were covered with silk satin fabric.

## CONSERVATION PROBLEMS

Çit Kasrı has undergone various changes until today, and it hasn't completely preserved the qualities of the period it was built. Changing the fabric coverings on the interior walls during the reign of Abdülhamit II, and adding new structures (Garden Kiosk and Greenhouse) to the northern and eastern facades of the building caused it to partially lose its original qualities, but also enabled it to gain new qualities reflecting the period of Abdülhamid II. The fact that the building was not used in the last years of the Ottoman State and between 1977–1982 years accelerated its destruction. Also, ordinary repairs during the period of the Military Academy caused the building to lose its original qualities. Especially the original star-shaped parquet, fabric coverings, iron windbreak, wooden window shutters, lead coatings on the roof, and tasselled eave mouldings on the southern and western facades were lost in this period. In the 1982–1983 repair, some original elements could not be rebuilt due to financial reasons and a lack of time. Kasr has vacated again in 2017 to integrate Yıldız Palace and repair it. At this date, some rooms of the building started to get water due to the destruction of the corrugated sheeting on the roof over time, and stains and abrasions occurred on the decorated ceilings and wall fabrics.

Today, because approximately 40 years have passed since the restoration, there is also wear on the fabric coatings. Mortar spills are also seen in the prefabricated elements on the south facade of the building. Not using the building accelerates its destruction.

## CONCLUSION

The Çit Kasrı, one of the leading structures in which traditional practices were abandoned in terms of plan organisation, construction system, material use, and inner space decoration, retains traces of Turkish-Islamic architecture on its facades. It is believed that it was the first building in Istanbul to utilise cement, prefabricated elements, faux stone, and fabric in its construction and decoration. The building was constructed of factory-manufactured, perforated brick and cement. It is also one of the first examples where prefabricated stone unit elements were used for decoration on the exterior. What's more, serving as an innovation, the interior walls of the Kasr were decorated with a fabric covering. In other words, Çit Kasrı appears as an exceptional structure that shows the important stages in Ottoman architecture with all these features.

The 1982–1983 restoration preserved the building's unique features, historical evidence, authenticity, aesthetic, antiquity, and rarity values, and allowed them to remain for years. Today this building, which is currently idle, is waiting to be repaired and reused. The new repairs that are planned to be made in the future should ensure that the building regains its original qualities. For this purpose, first of all, the roof should be repaired and covered with lead sheets like the Seyir Kiosk. The worn fabric coverings should be renewed in the same geometric order on the walls, the original mosaic parquets should be reproduced, and the damaged prefabricated elements on the exterior should be repaired. The changed eave mouldings should be repaired. Original elements should be preserved unchanged, such as the ceilings, doors, fireplaces, sinks and etc. The wooden windbreak, which was preserved as a period annex in the 1982–1983 repair, lost this feature as it was completely renewed after the repair. Reconstruction of the windbreak in its original form, using old photographs, should be thought. All attachments required for the new function should be retrievable. It would be the right approach to consider the new function as a museum and art centre since the Çit Kasrı is a structure worth seeing and exhibiting.

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