



# A Reevaluation of the Architectural Historiography of the “Tulip Period”

Mimarlık Tarih Yazımında “Lale Devri”

Nilay ÖZLÜ

## ABSTRACT

Early-18<sup>th</sup> century is accepted as a significant turning point in the Ottoman history, due to the intellectual and cultural transformations and social developments taking place in political, economic, artistic, and architectural fields of life. This era, corresponding to the reign of Ahmet III and grand vizierate of Ibrahim Pasha, was later defined as the “Tulip Period” and attained contradicting meanings. Especially the novel architectural forms of the period and their source of inspiration became a point of discussion. Offering a historiographical perspective, this article articulates the changing meanings and contradicting connotations attributed to the so-called Tulip Period, during the late-Ottoman and early-Republican periods. Court poetry of the early-18<sup>th</sup> century provides us clues for understanding the contemporaries’ perception of their environment, which took the city and its architectural elements as a subject, praising their novel forms, innovative designs, unseen beauties, and unique ornamentations. Young Turk era marks a turning point in the perception and instrumentalization of the past and it introduced a critical perspective towards the “Tulip Period”, which was defined as the beginning of Westernization and divergence from the Classical Ottoman art and architecture. This narrative adopted by the early-Republican architects associated the era with corruption and decline. Scrutinizing texts written by Ottoman and Republican architects, the article takes this transformative era of encounter, ambiguity and hybridity as an immanent experience of Early Modernity.

**Keywords:** 18<sup>th</sup> century; architectural historiography; early modernity, early Republican; novelty; Tulip Period; visibility.

## ÖZ

Sosyal, politik, ekonomik ve kültürel dönüşümlere paralel olarak mimari, sanat ve edebiyat gibi alanlarda pek çok gelişmenin yaşandığı XVIII. yüzyılın başları, Osmanlı tarihinin kırılma noktalarından biri olarak kabul edilmektedir. Üçüncü Ahmet’in saltanat ve Damat İbrahim Paşa’nın sadrazamlık dönemine denk gelen bu dönem daha sonra tarihçiler tarafından “Lale Devri” olarak tanımlanmış, farklı ve çelişkili şekillerde yorumlanmıştır. Özellikle ortaya çıkan yeni mimari formlar ve bu eserlerin ilham kaynakları pek çok tartışmayı da beraberinde getirmiştir. Bu makale, tarihyazımın bir bakış açısıyla “Lale Devri” olarak adlandırılan tarihsel aralığın, geç Osmanlı ve erken Cumhuriyet dönemlerindeki yansımalarını, değişen ve çelişen anlamlarını irdelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu dönemde, özellikle İstanbul, küçük ölçekli ancak gösterişli pek çok yapı ile donatılacak, yeni bir mimari dile sahip bu eserler kent mekanını olduğu kadar sosyal hayatı da dönüştürecektir. Dönemin Divan edebiyatında yeni, özgün ve orijinal olana duyulan merakın ve yapılı çevreye dair ilginin izlerini takip etmek mümkündür. Ancak, İkinci Meşrutiyet ile birlikte “Lale Devri” terimi icat edilecek ve bu dönem, Batılılaşma ve Klasik Osmanlı mimari ve sanat geleneklerinden kopuş ile ilişkilendirilecektir. Erken Cumhuriyet döneminde radikalleşerek, “Lale Devri” mimari ve sanatta yozlaşma ve gerileme ile özdeşleştirilecektir. Mimarlık tarih yazımında öne çıkan bu tip söylemleri irdeleyen bu makale, bu dönemi, erken modernitenin belirsiz, hibrit ve tekin olmayan doğası ile karşılaşma zemini olarak ele almaktadır.

**Anahtar sözcükler:** On sekizinci yüzyıl; mimarlık tarihyazımı; erken modernite; erken Cumhuriyet; yenilik; Lale Devri; görünürlük.

Barakat Postdoctoral Fellow, Oriental Institute, University of Oxford, UK – Altınbaş University Faculty of Engineering and Natural Sciences, Istanbul, Turkey

**Article arrival date: April 15, 2020 - Accepted for publication: December 10, 2020**

**Correspondence:** Nilay ÖZLÜ. e-mail: nilay.ozlu@gmail.com

© 2021 Yıldız Teknik Üniversitesi Mimarlık Fakültesi - © 2021 Yıldız Technical University, Faculty of Architecture

## Introduction

The scalpel staggered in the chest of Turkish Art by Marquis (De Bonnac) during the Tulip Period has relapsed. The sultan, together with the Marquis, (...) undertook an artistic competition with the Persian Shah and introduced a new art. The art of the Tulip Period.

The masterpiece of this period was the Sultan Ahmed's fountain at Hagia Sophia. Until yesterday, this edifice was accepted as a masterpiece; it is everything but a fountain. The small domes on its roof were inspired by mosques. Tulip and hyacinth motifs, piercing its stones, were inspired from Persian illustrated manuscripts. Yet, the main architectural element, the keystone of the rear arch, was disregarded. Every period reflects the character it deserves through its edifices (Ziya, 1934, pp. 51–54).<sup>2</sup>

According to official Turkish historiography, “Westernization” in the Ottoman empire started during the reign of Ahmed III (1703–1730), following the post of Yirmisekiz Mehmet Çelebi, the first Ottoman ambassador to France. Mehmet Çelebi was impressed with French architecture and garden design, and he is believed to have brought plans and drawings of French palaces with him, which resulted in the introduction of foreign elements to Turkish art and architecture, destroying its “pure” and “noble” character. During the reign of Ahmed III, the years from 1718 to 1730—beginning with the Treaty of Passarowitz and ending with Patrona Halil rebellion and corresponding to the grand vizierate of Damat İbrahim Paşa—are known as the “Tulip Period” (Refik, h.1331 [1915]).<sup>3</sup>

Turkish Scholars have long claimed an association between the Tulip Period with both Westernization and

the start of an Ottoman decline, but recent scholarly works on the 18<sup>th</sup> century, questioning such hackneyed claims, position the Tulip Era as a part of the Early Modern history and as a period of transition, novelty, and experimentation (Artan, 1989; Abou-El-Haj, 1991; Hamadeh, 2002; Tanyeli, 2006b; Sajdi, 2007, Hamadeh, 2007; Erimtan, 2008; Hamadeh, 2008; Faroqhi, 2016; Rüstem, 2019). Under the light of recent and revisionist studies, the 18<sup>th</sup> century is accepted as one of the most remarkable epochs of the Ottoman Empire, thanks in part to the incredible shift in the quantity and quality of cultural and architectural productions (İrepoğlu, 1999; Uğurlu, 2012, pp. 11–22). The cultural and artistic impacts of this period continued during the reigns of Mahmud I (1730–1754) and Selim III (1789–1807) and paved the way for extensive reforms and the modernization movements of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore, in line with the global historical narrative, the 18<sup>th</sup> century is accepted as a period of “Early Modernity” in the Ottoman context (Hamadeh, 2004, pp. 32–51; Salzman, 2000, pp. 83–106).

Focusing on the changes and transformations that took place in the urban landscape of the Ottoman capital during the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, this research scrutinizes concepts of visibility and novelty and the changing perceptions of them in the Early Modern Ottoman world, which led to the transformation of architectural, literary, artistic, and urban practices. Additionally, this article is an attempt to reassess the architectural historiography of the so-called Tulip Period, and it offers a critical reading of changing architectural discourses from the Ottoman period until the Republican era. After giving a summary of the historical developments of the period and introducing the major architectural innovations of the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, this article will present how people of the time perceived those novelties. For example, the poetry of the time provides us hints about the changing meaning of the built landscape during this period and exemplifies the glorification of novelty and innovation during the Early Modern period.

The later part of the paper will scrutinize the changing architectural discourses from the late Ottoman era to the Republican period. This historiographical survey commences with snapshots from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, discussing the perception and presentation of the architecture of the early 18<sup>th</sup> century as glorified masterpieces of Ottoman architectural patrimony. This narrative sharply contrasts with the emerging discourses of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, during which the nationalist ideologies of the Young Turks dominated the political and cultural scenes. The architects of the Turkish Republic inherited this nationalist discourse, rejecting the plural and hybrid architectural language of the Tulip Age, in their search for a pure and genuine essence of “Turkish architecture.”

<sup>1</sup> I thank the Barakat Trust for supporting my postdoctoral research at the University of Oxford, during which I developed this article. I am also grateful to Irvin Cemil Schick for helping me with the English translations of Nedim's poetry. I am thankful to anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments on the earlier versions of this manuscript.

<sup>2</sup> “Lâle devrinde Marki (De Bonnac) in, *Türk sanatının sinesine soktuğu neşter hâlâ ilerlemekte devam ediyor.*

*Siyaset komisyoncusu Marki ile, İran şahına sanat rekabeti yapan padişah ortaya yeni bir sanat koydular. Lâle devri sanatı.*

*Memleket her sahada Arap ve Acem kültürünün esaretini kabul etmişti. Şairlerden yazdığı eserde en az Türkçe kelime bulunan en büyük sanatkârdi. En süflî kölelikten, en yüksek sadrazamlığa kadar her vazifeyi Türkten gayri unsurların yapabileceği kanaati memleketi girmişti.*

*Memleketin her sahasında olduğu gibi sanat sahasında da padişah emrediyor, padişah düşünüyor, hiçbir karaktere sahip olmıyan bu yabancı sanatkârlar da kozmopolit bir sanatı Türk memleketinde yerleştiriyorlardı.*

*Bu sanat devrinin şaheseri, Ayasofyadaki Sultan Ahmet çeşmesidir. Daha dün gelinceye kadar büyük bir sanat eseri sanılan bu eser; bir çeşmeden başka her şeydi. Çatısının üzerindeki kubbeciklerle camilerden bir parça almıştı. Taşlarını delik deşik eden lâle, sümbül çiçek resimleriyle Acem basması kitapların müzehhep kabından bir parça almıştı. Fakat arka taraftaki kemerin kilit taşı - asil inşaat elemanı - bile ihmal edilmişti. Her devir lâyık olduğu karakteri eserleriyle gösterir.”*

<sup>3</sup> The term “Tulip Period” is an anachronistic definition, and it became associated with the era of Damat İbrahim Paşa—Grand Vizier and son-in-law of Ahmed III—after its invention by Yahya Kemal [Beyatlı]. Later, Ahmet Refik's [Altınay] book *Lale Devri*, published in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, popularized both the term and the era.

## Historical Background

The transformations of the 18<sup>th</sup> century can be related to several internal and external developments of the preceding century, which was a difficult and complicated period for the empire. During the 17<sup>th</sup> century, following several embarrassing military defeats and economic turndowns the once mighty Empire experienced, Ottoman elites started to question the corruption of the state and the military system (Kafadar, 1997, pp. 30–75). The absolute authority of the sultan and centralized power of the state floundered with the increasing economic troubles and political instabilities, which, in turn, generated discontent amongst the public, causing several janissary uprisings and rebellions (Quataert, 2005, pp. 42–44). By the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Ottoman sultans had been residing in Edirne for several decades so that they could stay away from the chaotic problems in the capital. The 17<sup>th</sup> century was a painful time for the Ottoman Empire in many respects, and “the need for change gradually arose, spurring socio-political transformations” (Mc Gowan, 2004, pp. 637–758).

In 1703, the janissaries revolted once again, marched to Edirne, unseated Mustafa II, and enthroned Ahmed III (1703–1730). The janissaries then demanded that the new sultan return to Istanbul and make himself and his sovereignty “visible” to his subjects (Shaw, 1997, pp. 234–240). This period, starting with the reign of Ahmed III, is accepted as an important turning point in Ottoman history. According to Shirine Hamadeh (2008, p. 36), during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the transformation of the Ottoman economic system, the increasing mobility of social and professional groups, and the improved circulation of goods created social and financial developments, which in turn increased relative wealth and changed personal consumption levels. In addition to the changing economic policies of the state, the role of global market forces and a period of peace also stimulated the Ottoman economy (Quataert, 2005, p. 46). The decentralization of power from the court to *ayans*<sup>4</sup> transformed the Ottoman taxing and revenue system as well (Mc Gowan, 2004, p. 637–758). The sultan’s diminishing control over the remote lands of the empire forced him to search for new tools and techniques to sustain his authority and legitimacy (Quataert, 2005, pp. 43–44). Distributing wealth to a larger circle of elites and making this wealth visible by the promotion of conspicuous consumption were political strategies to keep the urban public under control. This policy proved to be effective; it transformed the cultural practices, recreational habits, and consumption patterns of the urban elites within the first quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The sharp distinction between the court and the urban middle class was disappearing and

becoming more indefinable in this period of transformation (Hamadeh, 2008, pp. 6–8).

## The Emergence of a New Visual Regime

The beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century was marked with the inauguration of a new visual vocabulary in the Ottoman capital. The previously restricted visibility of the ruler and his domains became visually, symbolically, and physically more accessible for his subjects. This new visually available regime contradicted the classical Ottoman idea of a secluded and semi-sacred sultan; instead, it promoted the power and sovereignty of the ruler through his public visibility (Necipoglu, 1986, pp. 303–42; Necipoğlu, 1991, pp. 15–21). Architecture, fashion, poetry, public spaces, spectacles, and movement became tools for promoting the visibility of the ruling elite to confirm their existence and their authority in the Ottoman capital (Faroqhi, 2014, pp. 27–28; Stephanov, 2018).

With Ahmed III’s return to the capital, large-scale renovation and rejuvenation projects were initiated in Istanbul as visible signs of his authority and sovereignty. The physical landscape of the city was transformed, monuments were restored, public waterways were recovered, more than 200 fountains were built, a fire department was established, public spaces and gardens were planned, and many new palaces were constructed. In addition to the renovation of the existing structures, numerous waterfront palaces and mansions were erected on the shores of the Bosphorus and the Golden Horn by the royal elite in a short period of time (Hamadeh, 2008; Erdenen, 2003). Different from the large-scale monuments of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, a number of smaller monuments and secondary elements, such as fountains, doors, and gardens, were designed with remarkable elaboration and elegance (Cerasi, 1999).

Following the grand vizierate of İbrahim Paşa in 1718, changes in every field of life became more apparent, especially for the Ottoman ruling class and for the emerging elites. The cultural and intellectual life of the city also progressed with the establishment of the first printing press, the foundation of public libraries and the translation of several Arabic, Persian, and Latin works of linguistics, history, and geography. Several independent libraries were erected by the royal family and the Ottoman elites, which established a new architectural typology (Sezer, 2016, pp. 19–20). As a part of the renovation program of Ahmed III, a free-standing library was erected inside the Enderun court of the Topkapı Palace in 1719. Previous to this library, in 1704, a small reading room was designed in the Harem section of the Topkapı Palace for Ahmed III. This small chamber, known as the Fruit Room (*Yemiş Odası*), reflected the changing decorative and artistic taste of

<sup>4</sup> *Ayan*: Regional authoritative families holding the economic and political control of the fertile lands.



**Figure 1.** Bab-ı Hümayun (Imperial Gate) to Topkapı Sarayı, with the Fountain of Sultan Ahmet III, c. 1810 (Unknown artist, Watercolor, Victoria and Albert Museum, SD.1261).

the era, with realistic figural representations of flowers in vases and fruit bowls on lacquered wood panels (Sakaoglu, 2002). These naturalistic figures became the leitmotif of the Tulip Period and were used in fountains, illustrations, paintings, and murals.

The decoration program of the two freestanding fountains, one in front of the Imperial Gate (*Bab-ı Hümayun*) of the Topkapı Palace and another in Üsküdar, built by Ahmed III in 1728–29 (h.1141), also reflected the new aesthetic understanding of the time (Hamadeh, 2002, pp. 139–163). The fountain of Ahmed III, critically positioned between Hagia Sophia and the Imperial Gate of the Topkapı Palace, has a unique place in Ottoman architectural history, not only due to its unusual scale, novel form, and characteristic decoration but also due to its prominent location and architectural features (Peker, 2002, pp. 139–163) (Figure 1). Its construction was celebrated by Nedim, the renowned poet of the Tulip Period, in *Tarih-i Çeşme-i Çar-Erkan der-Pişgah-ı Bab-ı Hümayun* (The history of the fountain with four corners next to the Imperial Gate), which praises Ahmed III for erecting this unique and previously unseen fountain.<sup>5</sup> This novel typology, defining a public space around the fountain that enhanced social, physical, and visual interactions among the citizens of Istanbul, was emulated by the Ottoman elites and by the succeeding sultans as well.

Such cultural, intellectual, and social transformations and developments characterized the Tulip Period, which was defined as a “period of relaxation and experimentation” (Murphey, 1999, p. 116). A festive way of living, conspicuous consumption habits, public

<sup>5</sup> Nedim, *Tarih-i Çeşme-i Çar-Erkan der-Pişgah-ı Bab-ı Hümayun*.  
Alemin hakını Sultan Ahmed-i ali-himem  
Kim sada-yı şevket ü şaniyle pürdür şeş cihat  
Görmemiştir dide-i tac u serir-i saltanat  
Böyle sultan-ı melek-hu husrev-i kudsi sıfat.

recreational practices, and intellectual meetings and discussions became more and more frequent in the daily lives of the Istanbul intelligentsia. However small, this elite crowd enjoyed the economic resources of the empire and proved to be very effective in reshaping the cultural codes of society. With the changing visual regime, the traditional seclusion of the sultan was replaced with a celebration of his existence via public spectacles and urban projects.

The *Surname* (the book of festivities) depicts the increased visibility and pomp of the court during the reign of Ahmed III (Atıl, 1999; Vehbi et al., 2000; Tulum, 2008).<sup>6</sup> This impressive work depicted, in detail, the fifteen-day-long circumcision ceremonies of the four princes; it was enriched with 137 miniature folios created by the renowned illustrator Levni. The *Surname* can be interpreted as a tool for making the sovereignty and supremacy of Sultan Ahmed III and his grand vizier İbrahim Paşa visible; furthermore, novelty, innovation, and originality are all valued within its text. For instance, the presents offered by İbrahim Paşa and the other Ottoman elites were depicted in detail, and most of the presents were praised for their novelty and uniqueness, never before have been offered, or even seen at the Ottoman court (Tulum, 2008).<sup>7</sup>

The sartorial codes of Ottoman elites also started to transform during this era, especially as fashion became an effective medium for visibility (Simmel, 1957, pp. 541–558). Over the course of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Ottomans started to present their wealth and status with carry-on items, such as jewelry, guns, or clothing items (Tanyeli, 2006a, pp. 333–349). In her letters, Lady Mary Montagu (1820, p. 19) depicted her visit to Hafize Sultan and portrayed the sumptuous jewelry on Hafize Sultan’s clothing with these words: “[H]er whole dress must be worth a hundred thousand pounds sterling. This I am sure of, no European queen has half the quantity; and the empress’s jewels, though very fine, would look very mean near hers.”<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> *Surname* is a common name given to texts depicting major celebrations and festivals, such as royal weddings, accessions, and circumcisions. Composed of verse and prose, this unique style reflects the cultural habits and traditions of its era.

<sup>7</sup> The presents of İbrahim Paşa, in particular, were described thoroughly; the embroidery on the jewelry drawer presented to Sultan Ahmed III was defined as never seen before (*nadide*) and was sublimed with these words (Tulum 2008, p. 488):

No master had ever drawn such illustrations; (*Çekmemiş böyle bir nakş üstad* what a beautiful drawer it is, your highness *Ne güzel çekmece hümayun-bad*) For instance, the dagger adorned with diamonds and rubies, which was presented to Prince Süleyman, was praised as beyond comparison (*misli nadide*) and the book presented to the third prince was defined as one of its kind and matchless (*bi-mümasil ü müdani*). Some other presents were appraised as unique (*yegane*), created as new (*nev-zuhur*), never seen before (*bi-nazir*), and without a similar, one of its kind (*bir misli dahi na-peyda*) (Tulum, 2008, 492–497).

<sup>8</sup> Lady Mary Montagu was the wife of the British ambassador who served in Istanbul during the reign of Ahmed III. Her letters from Istanbul are important historical documents, portraying the Tulip Period from a female perspective. She visited the dethroned Sultan Mustafa’s wife Hafize Sultan in her house and wrote about this visit in detail (Montagu and Koçu, 1939).

### Changing Architectural Vocabulary

Architecture, as one of the most effective symbols of power and prestige, was especially utilized to promote the imperial family and its power, and the city was reconstructed with gardens, fountains, palaces, libraries, and public spaces throughout the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. These public scenes became places “to see and to be seen” for the Istanbulites and facilitated the interaction between royals and commoners. The emergence and spread of public spaces also changed the living and socializing habits of the Ottomans, and the ways they perceived and experienced the city. Coffee shops, fountains (*meydan çeşmesi*), public squares, and recreational areas changed the social and physical structure of the Ottoman capital (Sajdi, 2007, pp. 33–35; Hamadeh, 2008, pp. 48–49).

Numerous waterfront palaces, kiosks, and mansions were erected by the royal family and Ottoman dignitaries. These timber structures along the shores of the Bosphorus and Golden Horn transformed the urban fabric of the city with their public visibility and new aesthetic codes (Artan, 1989, pp. 35–36).<sup>9</sup> In 1718, the Tersane Palace was remodeled, and it played a significant role during the circumcision festivals of 1720 (Atl, 1999; Tulum, 2008) (Figure 2).

The desire for novelty also transformed the imperial palace of Topkapı, rendering it visible to all Istanbulites, as several timber waterfront mansions were built beyond its sea walls (Artan, 2006, p. 99). Erected at the most visible part of the royal precinct, the new waterfront kiosks of the Topkapusu Summer Palace (Topkapusu Sahilsarayı) at the Seraglio point contrasted with the secluded and introverted character of the Topkapı Palace that is hidden beneath high walls and evergreen cypress trees (Tozoğlu, 2020, pp. 165–192). These new additions to the Topkapı Palace also differ from the traditional royal kiosks in terms of style and material. According to Yavuz Sezer, rococo architectural style—a leitmotif of European artistic influence—was first utilized in the Mahbubiye Palace during the reign of Mahmud I, in the Topkapusu Waterfront Palace (Sezer, 2016, p. 162). Thus, the use of Western decorative elements commenced in the Ottoman palace and was later emulated by the elites, becoming an architectural style that would be defined as Ottoman Baroque (Artan, 1989, p. 58; Rüstem, 2019, pp. 4–9, 99–100).<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> According to Artan (1989, pp. 35–36) between 1720 and 1723 numerous royal pavilions and mansions, such as Hürevabad, Şevkabad, Neşatabad, Kasrı Cihan, Hürremabad, and Hayrabad, were constructed by the Golden Horn. In addition to summer palaces such as Emenabad, Neşatabad, and Şerefabad, which were built along shores of the Bosphorus.

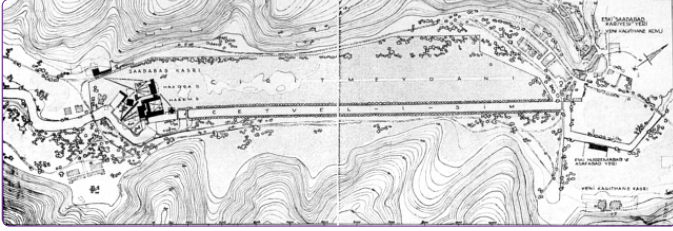
<sup>10</sup> Another addition to the Fourth Court of the Topkapı Palace, the Sofa Kiosk was a timber pavilion, reflecting the novel architectural style of the 18<sup>th</sup> century with its lightness, large windows, and Baroque and Rococo decorative elements. Another novelty is the sultanic pavilion known as the Kiosk of Osman III, which was actually built by Mahmud I. The kiosk, raised over an impressive substructure to form a marble terrace, was an unusually salient addition to the Imperial Harem.



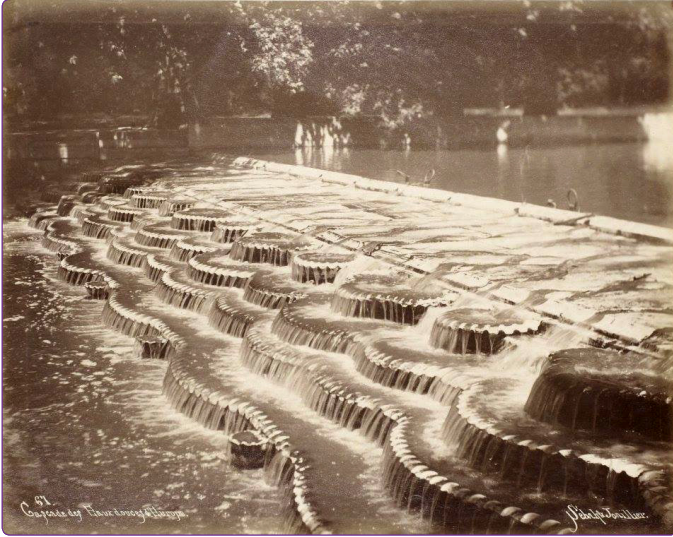
**Figure 2.** Ahmed III watching the performances at the Golden Horn in the Aynalıkavak Palace during the circumcision festival of 1720 by Levni in *Surname-i Vehbi*, TSMK 93a - 92b (Tulum, 2008).

Apart from the palaces and kiosks along the Bosphorus, the imperial palace and gardens of Sa’dâbâd at Kağıthane, built for Ahmed III by İbrahim Paşa, were embodiments of the changing mentality and artistic taste of the era. Although the Kağıthane commons had been a public recreational area for some time, the royal interest in the area started by the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. According to Sedat Hakkı Eldem, Sa’dâbâd Palace was composed of a harem, a *selamlık* (male section), a mosque, a garden pavilion, a fountain, and a large pool, which was connected to Kağıthane stream by a one-kilometer long canal, known as the Silver Canal (*Cedvel-i Sim*) (Eldem, 1977). This canal, which was landscaped with marbles and elaborated with artificial cascades and jet fountains, was the distinguishing feature of Sa’dâbâd (Figures 3–4). Ottoman elites were encouraged to build pavilions around the Kağıthane stream, forming a royal satellite, yet the area continued to be frequented by the inhabitants of Istanbul for recreational purposes (Rüstem, 2019, p. 26).

The imperial palace of Sa’dâbâd was defined as “*tarzları na-dide*” (built in a hitherto unseen style) and as having a “*tarhları matbü u pesendidide*” (beautiful and admirable layout); it is one of the main identifiers of the Tulip Period, reflecting the sensual pleasures and architectural refinement of its time (Hamadeh, 2004, pp. 32–51; Hamadeh, 2008, pp. 218–19). As a tool for making the sovereignty and the grandeur of the sultan visible, unlike the traditional palaces surrounded by high walls, this royal palace, and garden were designed to be visible by the public. The display of this imperial edifice, with its elaborated architecture, landscaped gardens, pools, fountains, and canals, was a political strategy of the Ottoman court to increase its public visibility and esteem. It was not only the architectural components that were visible; the changing



**Figure 3.** Restitution plan of Sa'dâbâd circa 1720-21 (Sedad Hakki El-dem, 1977).



**Figure 4.** Artificial cascades on the canal, photographed during the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Photograph: Sébah et Joaillier).



**Figure 5.** Ottoman men and women enjoying the Kağıthane Commons during the 19<sup>th</sup> century (İstanbul Üniversitesi Nadir Eserler Kitablığı, II. Abdülhamid Albümü, 90763).

recreational habits, luxurious consumption, eating habits, and changing relations of men and women were also displayed (Hamadeh, 2007, pp. 277–312). These public

spaces, especially gardens and commons located on the shores of the Bosphorus and Golden Horn, were places to socialize, to see, and to be seen, in resonance with their European counterparts (Girouard, 1985, p. 181) (Figure 5).

### Affirmation of Novelty and Innovation

In contrast with the previous periods, beginning with the 18<sup>th</sup> century, new values such as visibility and novelty began to be appreciated by the Ottoman ruling elite. This epistemological shift toward uniqueness and originality can best be observed through the literary works of the period. The Tulip Period was a time of high productivity in literature and poetry, which were particularly promoted by the sultan and by his grand vizier İbrahim Paşa. Intellectual meetings, known as *helva sohbetleri*, were held by the royals of Istanbul at the prosperous mansions located on the shores of the Bosphorus. The literature of the era carries vital importance: it not only holds artistic value but also can be used as a tool for understanding people's perceptions of their era. Poetry and prose of the time reflect interpretations of the changing urban landscape of Istanbul and perceptions of emerging novel aesthetics.

Eighteenth-century poetry takes Istanbul and its changing urban fabric as a major theme, offering praise and appreciation. Although the classical Ottoman periods of the late 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries were particularly productive in terms of Divan literature, there exists only a small number of oeuvres related to Istanbul. It is even more exceptional to come across pieces depicting specific buildings or monuments. Asaf Halet Çelebi's (2002) anthology "Istanbul in Divan Poetry" (*Divan Şiirinde İstanbul*) provides us an understanding of how the city itself became a central theme in Ottoman poetry. The natural and urban landscapes of Istanbul were seldom mentioned in court poetry prior to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, since architecture or built environment were not considered to be sources of artistic inspiration until then. However, by the turn of the century, there appear countless examples referring to the built environment and depicting architecture in detail. All of a sudden, man-made elements were considered almost as important and as delightful as nature itself, and the beauty of the buildings, gardens, or fountains was described as holy and heavenly.

For instance, a short passage from the renowned Qasidah by Nedim, *Der Vâsf-ı Sa'dâbâd-ı Nev-Bünyad* (On the Qualities of the Newly-Built Sa'dâbâd) is dedicated to the Sa'dâbâd Palace (Macit, 1997, p. 76). The poem describes and praises the qualities of the new buildings in Sa'dâbâd: the New Palace (*Kasr-ı Cedid*), the bridge with a ceiling, the Pavilion of Paradise (*Kasr-ı Cinan*), the fountain of light (*Çeşme-i Nur*), and the Silver Canal (*Cedvel-i Sim*).

Nedim’s poetry continues in the same fashion, celebrating the kiosks and the pavilions at Sa’dâbâd and even admiring its columns with glory. It is not difficult to notice that the words and phrases of appreciation were concentrated around the themes of novelty, uniqueness, and visibility. The new buildings of Sa’dâbâd, the innovation of the beautiful pieces of work, the distinctiveness of the pavilion, and the matchlessness of the fountain were addressed by Nedim:<sup>11</sup>

List one by one the names of the beautiful works built there, thus exciting friends.

Taking pen in hand upon that noble command,  
this is how I have described that glorious new work.

How well situated is that covered bridge,  
eyeing the beautiful boys who have come to stare at it.

The Pavilion of Paradise has no equal in the world;  
I do not even know if there is anything comparable to it.

If it is the Fountain of Light, it interprets the Qur’anic  
Verse of Light;  
what if it found fame and glory in the Silver Canal?

Court poetry of the era provides us an understanding of how novelty and uniqueness became prominent values in the worldly perception of life. Nedim’s poetry, in particular, not only praised novelty but was itself innovative, as it introduced new orders to the strict canons of Divan literature (Macit, 2000). In addition to Nedim’s poems, the works of several other poets, such as Sabit, Sami, Fenni, and Süleyman Nahifi, reflect the Ottomans’ changing perceptions of novelty and originality by praising them as desirable and esteemed features.

Shirine Hamadeh argues that the “emphasis on novelty was a reflection of the rapidly changing landscape of Istanbul” and that this indicated a “significant turning point in the Ottoman’s interpretation of their built environment” (Hamadeh, 2008, pp. 236–237). It was not just that only architectural or aesthetic novelty was being praised; any kind of uniqueness or innovation was held in high esteem. Novelty became an intrinsic value of the time and also highlighted other values. For example, the novelty of depicting the built environment in literary works was also a reflection of sensual delights and worldly pleasures.

<sup>11</sup> Qasidah by Nedim: *Der Vâsî-ı Sa’dâbâd-ı Nev-Bünyâd* (On the Qualities of the Newly-Built Sa’dâbâd)

*Anda icâd olan âsâr-ı cemîlin yek yek  
Nâmını yâd kılub şevka getir yârânı  
Ben de ol emr-i şerîf üzre alub deste kalem  
Böyle vâsî eyledim ol nev-eser-i zî-şânı  
Ne münâsib yere durmuş o tavanlı köprü  
Cümle gözden geçirür seyre gelen hûbânı  
....  
Yok bu dünyâda hele Kasr-ı Cinânın misli  
Bilmezem var mı cihân içre dahı akrânı  
Çeşme-i Nûr ise Nûr âyetin eyler tefsîr  
Cedvel-i sîm ile bulsa n’ola zîb ü şânı.*

The poetry of the era also emphasized the visibility of architecture and the built environment. In Süleyman Nahifi’s Qasidah, the word *icad* was used several times to identify the earthly beauties of Sa’dâbâd, together with its contemplation (*temaşâ*) and depiction (*resm*):<sup>12</sup>

Look at it from every direction and draw the appropriate lesson;

see this newly-built royal dwelling whose shadow is like the phoenix’s

Its plan is heart-refreshing and the style of its foundation is without equal;

see the aiding favor of the chosen heart and the art of creation

### Question of Authenticity versus Imitation

As explained in the previous section, the Ottomans of the early 18<sup>th</sup> century were aware of the originality of the architectural edifices adorning their capital and praised their novelty. Apparently, the contemporaries of the Tulip Period did not question the origins of these innovations that were changing their built environment. Yet, there is an ongoing debate by modern historians about the unusual architectural features of Sa’dâbâd and its sources of inspiration. Although the sources of the period do not provide any clues about the design process of the royal complex, historians of the later period argued that Sa’dâbâd was inspired from French imperial palaces. According to this discourse, the first Ottoman ambassador to France, Yirmisekiz Mehmed Çelebi—very much impressed with French palaces and gardens—brought several books that included the plans and depictions of these gardens, which became the model for Sa’dâbâd (Rado, 2006). In fact, the chronicles of the period include detailed depictions of the royal gardens, fountains, canals, jet fountains, and landscaping elements as seen by the diplomatic envoy and his entourage during their visit to France. For instance, state chronicler Raşid illustrates the gardens of the Palace of Versailles, providing meticulous details, especially about the layout and organization of water features (Raşid Efendi and Özcan, 2013, pp. 1261–1263).

According to Turkish architectural historiography, following the visit of Yirmisekiz Mehmet Çelebi to France in 1720, Western elements were introduced to Ottoman architecture and the rupture from the traditional canons of Ottoman art and architecture commenced (Erimtan, 2007, pp. 47–49).<sup>13</sup> Therefore, the Tulip Period was believed to

<sup>12</sup> Süleyman Nahifi, Qasidah (Çelebi, 2002, p. 125).

*Su-be-su eyle temâşâ dîde-i ‘ibret ile  
Bu hümâ-sâye hümâyûngâh-ı nev-icâdı gör  
Vaz’-ı resmi dil-küşâ vü tarz-ı tarhı bî-bedel  
Himmat-ı sadr-ı güzîn ü san’at-ı icâdı gör.*

<sup>13</sup> The late Ottoman and early Turkish discourses on the Tulip Age are scrutinized in detail by Erimtan, (2007).



**Figure 6.** The kiosks by the Kağıthane river with Ottoman baroque architectural features, photograph from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (Photograph: Sébah et Joaillier).

mark the inauguration of Westernization in the Ottoman Empire, with the infiltration of European cultural, artistic, and architectural elements into the Ottoman world (Andıç and Andıç, 2006; Hamadeh, 2008, p. 226). Contrary to such claims, the Ottoman sources, while glorifying the innovative and novel forms of 18<sup>th</sup>-century architecture, did not mention their alienation from tradition or their foreign origins (Hamadeh, 2004, pp. 32–51) (Figure 6). Raşid, in his account depicting the inauguration of the Sa'dâbâd buildings at Kağıthane, praises the complex as “a piece of paradise” built at “a land of recreation for all—rich and poor,” without providing any clues about its foreign characteristics or origins.<sup>14</sup>

Finalization of the buildings of Sa'dâbâd and the imperial visit to this location.

Regarding the renovation and renewal of the area, which is a land of recreation for all—rich and poor— with its fresh air, there has never been such a beautiful place, a piece of paradise, in the one-of-a-kind Kağıthane, within which the area of the large river was cleaned and reorganized, the surrounding buildings were refurbished and renovated, and even more, the beauty of this work became an inspiration for the engineers (Raşid Efendi and Özcan, 2013, p. 1311).

<sup>14</sup> “Hitâm-ı binâ-yı Sa'dâbâd ve teşrîf-i hümâyûn be-mahall-i mezbûr Vakt-i ta'mîr ü iltifâta gelince Kağıdhane nâmıyla nûzhet-gâh-ı hâss u âm olan mesîre-i dil-nişîn-i hâtır-güşâ bir kişverde nazîri olmayan mevkî-i behcet-efzâ ve mevâzî-i nûzhet- peymâdan olup, bu âna gelince böyle bir câ-yı behîşt-âsâ ve me'vâ-yı letâfet-nümânın mahrum-ı iltifât u i'tibâr olması lâyük u sezâ-vâr olmadığı muharrik-i himmet-i Âsaf-ı âlf-mikdâr olmağın, mevkî-i merkûmda câri olan nehr-i kebirin mecrâsı tanzîf ü tathîr ve mevâzî-i lâzimesi binâ vü ta'mîr olunmak üzere tetmîm ve mühendisân-ı kâr-şînâsa sûret-i tarh u resmi ta'lim ü tehfîm buyuruldu.”

Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the pluralistic and playful architectural language of the 18<sup>th</sup> century continued to be celebrated as an integral part of Ottoman architectural patrimony. For example, the Fountain of Ahmed III, which was accepted as the leitmotif of the aesthetic program of the Tulip Period, was cherished as one of the finest and most authentic examples of Ottoman art and architecture. Similar fountains were erected at various prestigious spots of the capital, and the artistic vocabulary of the period became widespread (Şahin, 2009, pp. 193–195).

The fountain remained as a monumental stage for ostentatious state ceremonies and processions throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, and 19<sup>th</sup>-century sources reflect the significance attributed to this monument. For instance, according to an archival document from 1855, during the restoration of the Fountain of Ahmed III, it was requested that the original form and decorative features of the edifice be preserved (BOA A.MKT.NZD.151.90, 6 L 1271 / 22.06.1855).<sup>15</sup> Even before the emergence of the consciousness for the preservation of old monuments, this decree reflects the significance given to the Fountain of Ahmed III. Being an object of interest for foreign visitors and Ottomans alike, the fountain was depicted numerous times in various mediums, such as in engravings, paintings, and photographs.

Starting with the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, world's fairs became significant and competitive venues for representing the cultural heritage and architectural traditions of each participating nation (Çelik, 1992). Ottoman participation in world's fairs was important for positioning the empire as a world power and for displaying its rich cultural heritage. It is no coincidence that the Ottomans built a one-to-one scaled model of the Fountain of Ahmed III for the World's Fair in Vienna in 1873 (Çelik, 1992, p. 63; Ersoy, 2015, p. 57). Located at one of the most visible spots of the fairground, the fountain was positioned as an ultimate representation of Ottoman architecture and imperial identity (Figure 7). In addition to erecting replicas of certain architectural typologies, such as the Bosphorus House, a coffee house, the Imperial Treasury, and a Turkish bath, the Ottoman government decided to distinguish itself with three academic volumes representing the cultural, historic, and architectural richness of the empire (Ersoy, 2009, pp. 117–127). One of these volumes, *Usul-i Mi'mari-i Osmani / L'Architecture ottomane / Die Ottomanische Baukunst* (De Launay and Montani, 1873), offers an academic and conceptual examination of the Ottoman architectural tradition. This high-quality volume,

<sup>15</sup> “Bab-ı Hümayun haricinde vaki sebîl ve çeşme harablaşması ve bir müddet daha tamir olunmadığı halde külliye harab olacağı bedihi bulunmuş olduğundan heyet-i haliyesi bozulmayacak ve resmine halel gelmeyecek suretde zikr olunan sebîl ve çeşmenin tamiri...”



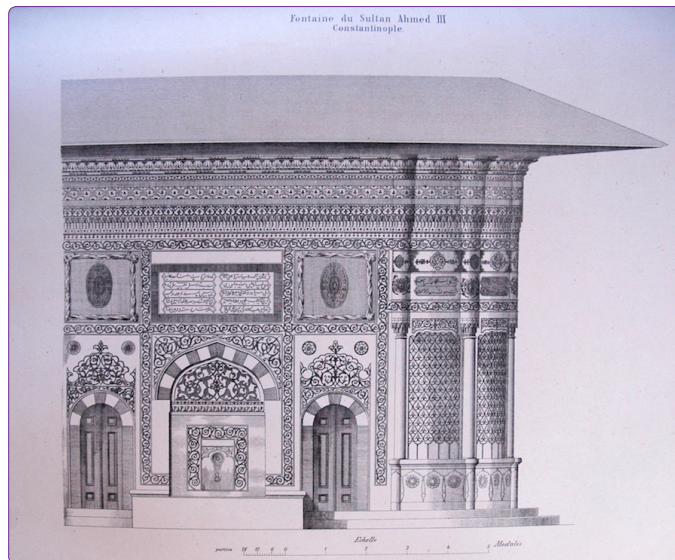


**Figure 7.** A real-size replica of Ahmed III's Fountain in the Vienna World's Fair of 1873 (“Brunnen von Sultan Ahmed II.,” Wiener Weltausstellung 1873, Wiener Photographen-Association, 12427065).

printed in three languages—Ottoman Turkish, French, and German—included measured drawings and an architectonic analysis of Ottoman architectural grammar, mostly depicting monuments from the early Ottoman era and the classical Ottoman period. *Usul-i Mi'mari-i Osmani* also included detailed drawings of the Fountain of Ahmed III, with a special emphasis on its decorative program (Ersoy, 2015, pp. 18–22) (Figure 8). The book defined the fountain as “a splendid monument of Ottoman art” and added that several other fountains followed the “artistic and architectural genre of this magnificent edifice” (*les magnifiques édifices de ce genre*) during the same period (De Launay and Montani, 1873, pp. 59–62).<sup>16</sup> According to the authors of *Usul-i Mi'mari-i Osmani*, Ottoman art, which was full of vitality during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, faded due to the introduction of European styles during the 19<sup>th</sup> century:<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> “Ce splendide monument de l'art ottoman est du, comme on le sait, au Sultan Ahmed III, qui l'a créé et dessinée lui-même et l'a orné de vers de sa composition, sculptés en lettres d'or sur les plaques de marbre dont les quatre faces de la fontaine sont enrichies.”

<sup>17</sup> “On voit que, il y a à peine plus de cent ans, l'art ottoman était encore à Constantinople même, dans toute sa plus grande vigueur. L'état d'affaiblissement dans lequel il semble être tombé actuellement n'est, suivant nous, qu'apparent, et ne tient absolument à d'autre cause qu'à l'engouement des riches Ottomans pour les choses dites à la Franka.”



**Figure 8.** Architectural drawings of Ahmed III's Fountain in *Usul-i Mi'mari-i Osmani*, Plate III (Marie de Launay and Pietro Montani, *Usul-i Mi'mari-i Osmani / L'Architecture Ottoman*, Istanbul, 1873).

We can see that, just over a hundred years ago, Ottoman art was still in Constantinople in all its greatest vigor. The state of weakening, in which it seems to have fallen at present, according to us, is due to the obsession of the rich Ottomans for the things *a la Franca* (De Launay and Montani, 1873, p. 59).

Later, for the 1889 World's Fair in Paris, Alexandre Vallauray designed the Tobacco Pavilion for the Ottoman section, which took the Fountain of Ahmed III as a model. Yet again, the Turkish Pavilion built for the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893 took its inspiration from the renowned fountain. A 1/20 silver model of Ahmed III's Fountain was also displayed in the Ottoman section (Ergüney and Kara Pilehvarian, 2015, pp. 224–240). During the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Ottomans not only appreciated the early 18<sup>th</sup>-century edifices but also glorified them as representations of their imperial architectural heritage.

### Historiography of the Tulip Era

The perception of the 18<sup>th</sup> century started to change by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, especially following the Young Turk revolution of 1908. Influenced by the nationalist and militaristic ideologies of the Committee of Union of Progress, the cultural context of the period transformed. Instrumentalizing history for their political agenda, the Young Turk intellectuals reinvented the early 18<sup>th</sup> century (Cephanecigil, 2009, pp. 61–66). Following the introduction of the description “Tulip Period” by Yahya Kemal [Beyatlı], popular historian of the time Ahmet Refik [Altınay], wrote a historic novel with the same title and popularized the term. According to his novel, *Lale Devri* (1915), the period from 1718 to 1730, beginning with the

Treaty of Passarowitz and ending with the Patrona Halil rebellion, is defined as the “Tulip Period” in Ottoman history (Refik, h.1331 [1915]). Altınay depicts this era as a period of peace, luxury, conspicuous consumption, and prosperity under the rule of an extravagant sultan, Ahmed III, and his enlightened grand vizier, İbrahim Paşa:

While Sultan Ahmed III spent his evenings with pleasure and debauchery, and his days practicing archery at Tersane Gardens, Karaağaç Kiosk, Sa’dâbâd, or Ok Meydanı; his grand vizier İbrahim Paşa was occupied with state affairs, trying to discipline and control the ostentatious pleasures of the palace (Ahmet Refik and Gürlek, 1997, p. 69).

The Young Turk intellectuals depicted the era as ambiguous: modernization and deterioration and decline and progress were superimposed. Various portrayals of Ahmed III and İbrahim Paşa ranged from noble statesmen with modernizing endeavors to degenerated hedonists imitating the West. The Tulip Era, as a romanticized and exoticized representation of a pompous past, became so popular that an Ottoman silent movie named *Binnaz*, produced in 1919 by Ahmet Fehim, was set up in the era. The 45-minute-long movie depicted a love triangle, representing the sensual pleasures, flamboyant lifestyle, and artistic delights of the Tulip Period (Tongo, 2011; Çeliktemel-Thomen, 2013, pp. 57–59). The depiction of the Tulip Period as an era of experimentation and alienation from the canons of the Classical age was also adopted by art and architectural historians.

A pioneering art historian of the late Ottoman and early Republican eras and professor of architectural history at the School of Fine Arts, Celal Esad [Arseven] was the first to introduce the concept of “Turkish Art” (Kuban, 1962, pp. 18–20). In his seminal study published in 1928, Arseven defined the art and architecture of the Tulip Period as a distinct era in Ottoman history, which lasted from 1703 to 1730. According to Celal Esad, the design of Sa’dâbâd was inspired from French gardens, based on Yirmisekiz Mehmet Çelebi’s accounts of Paris. Arseven (1939, p. 175) also emphasized the distinction between the classical Ottoman architecture and the decorative language of the Fountain of Ahmed III, without discrediting the latter.

The designation of the so-called Tulip Age as one of ambiguity by late Ottoman historians gave way to a more rigorous critique of the era by early Republican intellectuals, who glorified modern architecture (*Yeni Mimari*) and rejected the Ottoman architecture after the “glorious” 16th century, portraying the following centuries as a time of ostentation, indulgence, and corruption under flamboyant rulers who had luxurious and lavish lives (Bozdoğan, 2007, pp. 199–221). Reflecting the dominant nationalist ideology of the time, Early Republican architects condemned the

Tulip Era as a period of corruption and divergence from the canons of classical Ottoman art and architecture, due to the immersion of Western elements. In this respect, architectural journals of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century played a significant role in shaping the architectural discourse (Cephanecigil, 2009, pp. 61–66; Altan, 2009, pp. 121–130). The dominant narrative was voiced by the first architectural magazine of the time, *Mimar*. The journal, which started being published in 1931, was renamed *Arkitekt* in 1935 and remained as the major architectural publication of the Republic up until 1980. The magazine voiced the official narrative of the newly found Turkish state and its search for a “new, genuine and modern” architectural vocabulary for the Turkish nation (Altan, 2009, pp. 121–130). The editorial written for the tenth anniversary of the Turkish Republic in October 1933 in *Mimar* magazine encapsulates the common architectural ideology of the Early Republican era:<sup>18</sup>

However, in the Tulip era, this great art [Turkish art] was turned upside down by the influence of the Western art introduced to the country with the projects brought by the French envoy in Sadabad. During the era of Selim III, Mahmut I and Aziz, bastard arts such as Baroque and Empire dominated the artistic milieu of the country. The need for Westernization asserted itself in every field in the country ([Abidin and Ziya], 1933, pp. 263–264).

This Early Republican discourse reflected the desire for discovering the “authentic and pure” origins of Turkish art (Bozdoğan 2001; Bozdoğan, 2007, pp. 199–221). While glorifying the Classical Ottoman period as the “Golden Age,” this nationalist narrative disowned the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries as a period of decline and corruption (Özlu, 2017, pp. 1442–1444). Modernist architects of the Early Republic rejected Early Modern modes of experimentation and transformation and labeled them as foreign to Turkish art and architecture, as expressed by Behçet Ünsal in 1935:<sup>19</sup>

Following the reign of Ahmed III, our architecture got lost, decadence started. Volutes and scrolls introduced to our architecture by Bellini, distracted the pleasure of our eyes. This sense of foreignness erased the local artist; together with the local artist, genuine art had also faded (pp. 182–187).

Maintaining a hostile approach towards the so-called Tulip Age, Republican architectural historians continued criticizing it as an era of decline, corruption, and imitation. According to them, the pure and rational

<sup>18</sup> “Fakat bu büyük sanat [Türk Sanatı], lale devrinde Fransa elçisinin getirdiği projelerle Sadabatta memlekete sokulan garp san’atı tesirlerle kökünden sarsıldı. Selim Salis, Mahmut evvel, Aziz devrinde Barok, Ampir, gibi piç sanatlar memleketin sanat sahalarına hakim oldular. Memleketin her sahasında garplileşmek ihtiyacı kendini göstermişti.”

<sup>19</sup> “Üçüncü Ahmetten sonra, mimarlığımız kaybolmuş, (dekadence) başlamış. Bellininin mimarlığımıza soktuğu; enginar yaprakları ve kumaş kıvrımları, zevk gözlerimizi bozmuş. Bu yabancı duygusu yerli artisti ortadan kaldırmış, yerli artistle yerli ar da göçmüş.”

Turkish architecture of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries lost its essence due to “Westoxication.” For instance, an article by Mimar Necmettin Emre published in 1941 condemns the architecture of the 18<sup>th</sup> century with such words:<sup>20</sup>

The Baroque style, which infiltrated in Istanbul during the reign of Ahmed III, continued until the era of Mahmud II. This new style, not only dismissed the Turkish style and Turkish architects, but the Turkish artisans as well (pp. 234–235).

The dominant discourse for rejecting the immediate Ottoman past and glorifying the Classical era continued up until the 1960s. The next generation of historians, while recognizing the sociopolitical developments and cultural achievements of the era, also voiced their criticisms toward the ruling elite of the Tulip Period. Münir Aktepe, in his book scrutinizing the causes of the Patrona Halil uprising, which brought an end to the Tulip Period, accused Ahmed III and his grand vizier, İbrahim Paşa, of debauchery and extravagance, emphasizing the vast amounts spent for their novel architectural program. Construction of pleasure gardens and luxurious palaces—instead of public buildings or mosques—created economic troubles and resulted in discontent among the population (Aktepe, 1958, pp. 41–45).

On the other hand, the second generation of architectural historians of the Republic conceptualized the 18<sup>th</sup> century as a remarkable and stimulating period, while repeating the critiques about the ostentatious lifestyle of the ruling elite and infiltration of Western forms in Ottoman architectural vocabulary. For instance, recognizing the innovative aesthetic and decorative program of the era, prominent architectural historian Oktay Aslanapa (1986, p. 373) defines the Fountain of Ahmed III as a “rich and brilliant work of art”. Yet, Aslanapa also emphasized Tulip Era’s divergence from the Classical architectural vocabulary, underlining the superiority of the 16th century Ottoman art and architecture in comparison to that of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In a similar manner, renowned art historian Semavi Eyice (2014, p. 136) defined Sa’dâbâd as a product of its time, a fine example of a new garden tradition that disseminated from Asia to Europe. Eyice recognized the hybrid and novel forms and concepts of the period that took their inspiration from both East and West. Beliefs in the ambiguous nature of the Ottoman past remained in place until the dominant nationalist discourses were gradually challenged by a new generation of architectural historians, who acknowledged the unique character and diverse architectural language of the era (Figure 9).

Recent studies on Ottoman history make a critical evaluation of the Westernization theories and offer new



**Figure 9.** Drawing of the Fountain of Ahmed III by Ali Saim Ülgen (SALT Research, Ali Saim Ülgen Archive, TASUDOC0965).

perspectives for the 18<sup>th</sup>-century developments, arguing that the tenure of İbrahim Paşa was a period of prudence rather than debauchery (Erimtan, 2007, pp. 41–62; Karahasanoğlu, 2014, pp. 57–105). Many scholars argue that there exist multiple inspirations behind the cultural and intellectual transformations of the era. While Shirine Hamadeh (2004, pp. 32–51) emphasizes the Persian-Safavid influence on Ottoman art and architecture, due to the long-lasting competition and interaction between Ottoman and Persian cultures, Ünver Rüstem (2019, p. 31) reemphasizes the European influence on the emerging new architectural language. According to Rhoads Murphey (1999, pp. 116–139), the transformations of the period cannot be related solely to Western influence but could be explained by the changes in the internal dynamics of the empire. Acknowledging the Western and Persian inspirations during the reigns of Ahmed III and Mahmud I, Soner Şahin (2009, p. 192) suggests an evident Byzantine and Mughal influence on the architectural vocabulary of the period. Deniz Çalış (2007, pp. 238–266) relates the developments of the era to a new interpretation of the concept of novelty. Çalış (2007) argues that the concept of novelty had more established connotations in the

<sup>20</sup> “Üçüncü Ahmet zamamında İstanbula sızan Barok, İkinci Mahmuda kadar devam etti. Bu yeni cereyan Türk sitilile beraber Türk mimarlarını, Türk işçisini de nisyan köşesine attı.”

Ottoman world and states that “it was a quality attributed to all practices developed outside the domain of orthodox traditions and exercised in the domain of Sufi tradition and practices” (p. 250). Therefore, a new understanding of the physical and symbolic world had emerged by the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, and neither the constructions of the “Orient” and “Occident” nor the deep distinction between them had yet been established.

### Conclusion: Early Modern Expressions of Life and Space

The early 18<sup>th</sup> century, as presented above, had been subject to various interpretations and different contextualizations in Ottoman and Turkish architectural historiography. The short-lived period known as the Tulip Era marked a turning point in Ottoman artistic and architectural idioms. Contemporaries of the period glorified such novel forms and transformations that took place in the urban and cultural landscape of the capital, and in a similar manner, the 19<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman elites cherished the edifices of the previous century as celebrated exemplars of Ottoman art and architecture. Replicas of the 18<sup>th</sup> century edifices were displayed at world’s fairs, representing Ottoman cultural identity and imperial heritage. The perception of the 18<sup>th</sup> century started to alter by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, especially following the Young Turk revolution. Popular historians, such as Yahya Kemal and Ahmet Refik, defined the reign of Ahmed III as the Tulip Period as closely associated with luxury, leisure, beauty, and joy, emphasizing its divergence from the military and political accomplishments of the classical era. This discourse was adopted by Republican era intellectuals, who voiced a critical perspective, associating the period with Ottoman decline and aesthetic corruption under the influence of Western forms.

Yet, recent studies show that the early 18<sup>th</sup> century needs to be evaluated from a global perspective, transcending the boundaries of nationalist discourses. In this respect, Rifa’at ‘Ali Abou-El-Haj’s groundbreaking work, *Formation of the Modern State* (1991), positions the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman state as a product of the Early Modern European world, opening ways for new conceptualizations for architectural history. Rejecting the idea that Ottoman state and society were essentially unique, Abou-El-Haj (1991, p. 6) suggests that “Ottoman history is comparable and commensurable with other histories”. Considering that canons of the previous eras had transformed throughout the world during the Early Modernity, it is important to position and reconsider the Ottoman empire within a wider and more global framework. It was not only the Ottomans that were under the influence of their Eastern and Western rivals, but Europeans also embraced and appropriated foreign and exotic cultures. For instance, *Turquerie* developed into a widespread artistic and cultural movement

in Europe, where Ottoman objects and fashion became prestige items during the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Tongo and Schick, 2019). During their search for the exotic and different, Europeans appropriated not only oriental objects, but took inspiration from Asian and Egyptian cultures as well.

Similar to their European counterparts, in the Early Modern context, Eastern and Western practices, regional and imperial traditions, and local and foreign identities were equally attractive for the Ottomans, who started adopting new cultural codes and consumption habits. Turgut Saner (2006) argues that new forms used in architecture during the 18<sup>th</sup> century did not aim an identification with the European culture, on the reverse “new styles were accepted because of their formal exoticism and beauty” (p. 162). The Ottomans’ interest in all things different, exotic, or novel was reinforced by their affection for precious gifts and luxurious items such as Chinese and Japanese porcelains, Dutch tulips, English fabric, Persian architecture, and French gardens (Salzmann, 2000, p. 83–106; Faroqhi, 2016, pp. 15–20). In a rapidly globalizing world, where international and even intercontinental trade flourished and travelling became easier, ideas, art forms, and consumer goods from myriad geographies became widely accessible. The strict canons of the Ottoman way of living and thinking started to transform, and interest toward different cultures—either Eastern or Western—flourished in this period of change and experimentation. As suggested by Tülay Artan (2006, p. 87), the boundaries between the local and the imperial, monumental and residential, and center and periphery were blurred during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when it became “more difficult to sustain a single corporate identity, a relatively homogeneous Ottoman-ness.”

The Early Modern world witnessed fundamental changes in society, religion, and everyday life, while maintaining strong continuities with the previous periods. In the context of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, worldly modes of thinking and the mundane pleasures of daily life were confidently emphasized in the literature of the time. Among several similar examples, a song from Nedim (in Macit, 1997, p. 264) evidently depicts the changing mentality of the age. Instead of going to the Friday prayer, he proposes going to Sa’dâbâd with his lover in secret:<sup>21</sup>

Get permission from the mother for the Friday prayer;  
refrain from the complaints for one day  
Reaching the piers from hidden ways;  
let us go to Sa’dâbâd my slender beloved

Nedim’s poetry not only portrays the changing values of the time but also positions Sa’dâbâd as a space of

<sup>21</sup> İzn alub Cum’a nemazına diyu maderden  
Bir gün uğrullayalım çarh-i sitem-perverden  
Dolaşub iskeleye doğru nihan yollardan  
Gidelim serv-i revanım yürü Sa’dâbâde.

liberation, away from the controlling gaze of the authority. The discourse of the time reflects a mental shift, a change in modes of living and thinking, and a departure from tradition. But these sets of transformations and hybridities should not be confined under terms such as Westernization, modernization, or decline; rather, they should be interpreted as part of the Ottoman encounter(s) with “Early Modernity.” The changing consumption habits, social practices, and artistic tastes of the Ottoman elites slowly modified their perceptions, leaving the strict canons and traditions of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries behind. During the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, an affirmation of change and the desire to display this transformation vividly, by a group of Ottoman elites, should be regarded as a transition into modernity. In this respect, the reading of Ottoman history should be liberated from nationalist interpretations, as well as normative definitions and dichotomies, such as Eastern/Western, traditional/modern, Oriental/Occidental, or authentic/imitation. As suggested by Gülrü Necipoğlu and Sibel Bozdoğan (2007), a new and inclusive understanding of architectural history, exempt both from the limitations of the nationalist discourses and all-encompassing narratives of Islamic architecture, needs to be developed. A reading of early 18<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman architecture should refrain from imposing historical stereotypes and national boundaries, but situate the period within a global sociopolitical and cultural context, addressing the interrelated position of the Ottoman Empire in the shuffling world order.

## References

[Abidin, S. & Ziya, A. (Eds.)] (1933). Cumhuriyetin On Senelik San'at Hayatı. Mimar, 9-10, 263–264.

Abou-El-Haj, R. A. (1991). Formation of The Modern State: The Ottoman Empire, Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries. State University of New York Press.

Aktepe, M. (1958). Patrona İsyanı 1730. İ.Ü. Edebiyat Fakültesi.

Altan, E. (2009). Cumhuriyet Dönemi Mimarlığı: Tanımlar, Sınırlar, Olanaklar. Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi, 7(13), 121–130.

[Altınay] A. R. (1331 [1915]) Lale Devri: 1130–1143. Kitabhane-i Askeri.

Altınay A. R., Gürlek, D. (1997). Lale Devri. Timaş Yayınları.

Andıç, F. & Andıç, S. (2006). Batıya Açılan Pencere Lale Devri. Eren Yayıncılık.

Arseven, C. E. (1928). Türk San'atı. Türk Ocakları Merkez Heyeti.

Arseven, C. E. (1939). L'art Turc: Depuis son origine jusq'a nos jours. Devlet Basımevi.

Artan, T. (2006). Questions of Ottoman Identity and Architectural History. In D. Arnold, E. A. Ergut, & O. B. Turan (Eds.), Rethinking Architectural Historiography (pp. 85–109). Routledge.

Aslanapa, O. (1986). Osmanlı Devri Mimarisi: Orhan Gaziden Başlıyarak Sonuna Kadar Padişahlara Göre Gelişmesi. İnkilap Yayınevi.

Atıl, E. (1999). Levni and the Surname: The story of an eighteenth-century Ottoman festival. Koçbank.

Artan, T. (1989). Architecture as a Theatre of Life: Profile of the Eighteenth Century Bosphorus [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Bozdoğan, S. (2001). Modernism and Nation Building: Turkish Architectural Culture in the Early Republic. University of Washington Press.

Bozdoğan, S. (2007). Reading Ottoman Architecture Through Modernist Lenses: Nationalist Historiography and The “New Architecture In The Early Republic. Muqarnas, 24, 199–221.

Cephanecigil, G. (2009). Yüzyıl Dönümü Süreli Yayınlarında Mimarî Geçmiş. In A. Cengizkan (Ed.), Mimar Kemalettin ve çağı: Mimarlık, toplumsal yaşam, politika (pp. 61–66). TMMOB Mimarlar Odası.

Çelik, Z. (1992). Displaying the Orient : Architecture of Islam at Nineteenth-Century World's Fairs. University of California Press.

Çerasi, M. (1999). Tarihselcilik ve Osmanlı Mimarisinde Yaratıcı Yenilikçilik / 1720-1820. In N. Akin, A. Batur, & S. Batur (Eds.), Osmanlı Mimarlığının 7 Yüzyılı “Ulusalüstü Bir Miras” (pp. 34–42). YEM Yayınları.

Çalış, B. D. (2007). Gardens at Kağıthane Commons During the Tulip Period (1718-1730). In M. Conan (Ed.), Middle East Garden Traditions: Unity and Diversity (pp. 238–266). Dumbarton Oaks Publications Harvard University Press.

Çelebi, A.H. (2002). Divan Şiirinde İstanbul, Hece Yayınları.

Çeliktemel-Thomen, Ö. (2013). Binnaz. In E. Atakav (Ed.), Directory of World Cinema: Turkey (pp. 57–59). Intellect.

De Launay, M. & Montani, P. (1873). Usul-i Mi'mari-i Osmani / L'Architecture ottoman.

Eldem, S. H. (1977). Sa'dâbâd, Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları.

Emre, N. (1941). Mimar Vedad'ın Sanat Hayatı. Arkitekt, 9-10, 234–235.

Erdenen, O. (2003). Lale Devri ve Yansımaları, Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları Vakfı.

Erimtan, C. (2007). The Perception of Saadabad: The ‘Tulip Age’ and Ottoman–Safavid Rivalry. In D. Sajdi (Ed.), Ottoman Tulips, Ottoman Coffee : Leisure and Lifestyle in the Eighteenth Century (pp. 41–62). I.B. Tauris.

Erimtan, C. (2008). Ottomans Looking West?: The Origins of the Tulip Age and its Development in Modern Turkey, Tauris Academic Studies.

Ergüney, Y.D. & Kara Pilehvarian, N. (2015). Ottoman Representation in Nineteenth Century Universal Expositions. Megaron, 10(2), 224–240.

Ersoy, A. (2009). XIX. Yüzyılda Osmanlı Mimarlık Tarihi ve Kuramsal Söylemin İnşası. In A. Cengizkan (Ed.), Mimar Kemalettin ve çağı: Mimarlık, toplumsal yaşam, politika (pp. 117–126). TMMOB Mimarlar Odası.

Ersoy, A. (2015). Architecture and the Late Ottoman Historical Imaginary: Reconfiguring the Architectural Past in a Modernizing Empire. Routledge.

Eyice, S. (2014). Dünden Bugüne Kağıthane. In M. Armağan (Ed.), Masaldan Gerçeğe Lale Devri (pp. 125–144). Timaş Yayınları.

Faroqhi, S. (2014). Travel and Artisans in the Ottoman Empire: Employment and mobility in the early modern era. I.B. Tauris.

Faroqhi, S. (2016). A Cultural History of The Ottomans: The Imperial Elite and Its Artefacts. I.B. Tauris.

Girouard, M. (1985) Cities and People: a social and architectural history. Yale University Press.

- Hamadeh, S. (2002). Splash and Spectacle: The Obsession with Fountains in Eighteenth-Century Istanbul *Muqarnas*, 19(1), 123–48.
- Hamadeh, S. (2004). Ottoman Expressions of Early Modernity and the “Inevitable” Question of Westernization. *The Journal of the Society of the Architectural Historians*, 63(1), 32–51.
- Hamadeh, S. (2007). Public Spaces and the Garden Culture of Istanbul. In V. H. Aksan & D. Goffman (Eds.), *The Early Modern Ottomans Remapping the Empire* (pp. 277–312). University Press.
- Hamadeh, S. (2008). *The City’s Pleasures Istanbul in the Eighteenth Century*. University of Washington Press.
- İrepoğlu, G. (1999). *Levni: Painting, poetry, color*. Society of Friends of Topkapı Palace Museum.
- İstanbul Üniversitesi Nadir Eserler Kitaplığı, II. Abdülhamid Albümü, 90673.
- Kafadar, C. (1997). The Question of Ottoman Decline. *Harvard Middle East and Islamic Review*, 4 (1-2), 30–75.
- Karahasanoğlu, S. (2014). İstanbul’un Lale Devri mi? Tarih ve Tarih Yazımı. In M. Armağan (Ed.), *Masaldan Gerçeğe Lale Devri* (pp. 57–106). Timaş Yayınları.
- Kuban, D. (1962). Celal Esad Arseven ve Türk Sanatı Kavramı, *Mimarlık*, 72, 18–20.
- Macit, M. (1997). *Nedim Divanı*. Akçağ.
- Macit, M. (2000). *Nedim Hayatı, Eserleri ve Sanatı*. Akçağ.
- Mc Gowan, B. (2004). The Age of the Ayans 1699-1812. In H. İnalçık, D. Quataert (Eds.), *An Economic and Social History of Ottoman Empire*, vol. 2 (pp. 637–758). Cambridge University Press.
- Montagu, M. W. (1820). *The Letters of Lady M.W. Montagu during the Embassy to Constantinople, 1716-18*. John Sharpe.
- Montagu, M. W. & Koçu, R. E. (1939). *1717-1718 de Lâle Devri Başlarında Türkiye*. Çığır Kitabevi.
- Murphey, R. (1999). Westernisation in the eighteenth-century Ottoman empire: how far, how fast? *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*, 23, 116–139.
- Necipoğlu, G. (1986). Framing the Gaze in Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal Palaces. *Ars Orientalis*, 23, 303–42.
- Necipoğlu, G. (1991). *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power: The Topkapı Palace in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*. Architectural History Foundation; MIT Press.
- Necipoğlu, G. & Bozdoğan, S. (2007). Entangled Discourses: Scrutinizing Orientalist and Nationalist Legacies in the Architectural Historiography of the “Lands of Rum”. *Muqarnas*, 24, 1–6.
- Özlü, N. (2017). *Architecture: Turkish*. Encyclopedia of Romantic Nationalism in Europe. Amsterdam University Press, 1442–1444.
- Peker, A. U. (2002). Western Influences on the Ottoman Empire and Occidentalism in the Architecture of Istanbul. *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 26(3), 139–63.
- Rado, Ş. (2006). *Paris’te Bir Osmanlı Sefiri Yirmisekiz Mehmet Çelebi’nin Fransa Seyahatnamesi*. İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları.
- Raşid Efendi, Özcan, A. (2013). *Târîh-i Râşid: (1115-1134)*. Klasik.
- Rüstem, Ü. (2019). *Ottoman Baroque: The architectural refashioning of eighteenth-century Istanbul*. Princeton University Press.
- Sajdi, D. (2007). *Ottoman Tulips, Ottoman Coffee: Leisure and Lifestyle in the Eighteenth Century*. I.B. Tauris.
- Salzmann, A. (2000). *The Age of Tulips Confluence and Conflict in Early Modern Consumer Culture (1550-1730)*. In D. Quataert (Ed.), *Consumption Studies and the History of the Ottoman Empire 1550-1922* (pp. 83–106). SUNY Press.
- Sakaoğlu, N. (2002). *Tarihi, mekanları, kitabeleri ve anıları ile Saray-ı Humayun : Topkapı Sarayı*. Denizbank A.Ş.
- Saner, T. (2006). *Exotic Yet Local: A Brief Essay on the Reception of European Styles in the Ottoman Architecture of the 18th Century*. In A. Hagedorn (Ed.), *The Phenomenon of “Foreign” in Oriental Art* (pp. 157–165). Reichert.
- Sébah, P. & Joaillier, P. *Cascade des Eaux deuces d’Europe*, 67.
- Sezer, Y. (2016). *The Architecture of Bibliophilia: Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Libraries* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- Simmel, G. (1957). Fashion. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 62(6), 541–558.
- Stephanov, D. (2018). *Ruler Visibility and Popular Belonging in the Ottoman Empire, 1808-1908*. Edinburgh University Press.
- Şahin, S. (2009). *Değişim Sürecinde Osmanlı Mimarlığı III. Ahmet ve I. Mahmut Dönemi (1703–1754)* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. İstanbul Teknik Üniversitesi.
- Tanyeli, U. (2006a). *Osmanlı Metropollerinde Evlerin Konfor ve Lüks Normları*. In S. Faroqhi, C.K. Neumann (Eds.), *Soframız Nur Hanemiz Mamur, Osmanlı Maddi Kültüründe Yemek ve Barınak* (pp. 333–349). İstanbul, Kitap Yayınevi.
- Tanyeli, U. (2006b). 18. Yüzyılda İstanbul: Başkalaşımın Eşiğindeki Kent. *Voyvoda Caddesi Toplantıları 2005-2006*, Salt Archive. <https://archives.saltresearch.org/handle/123456789/143173> (Reached at 26.04.2020)
- Tongo, G. (2011). In Search of a New Past: Representation of the Tulip Period in a Late Ottoman Film *Binnaz* (1919). 26th Middle East History and Theory (MEHAT) Conference, University of Chicago.
- Tongo, G. & Schick, İ.C. (2019). *Turquerie*. Pera Museum Blog. <https://blog.peramuzesi.org.tr/en/sergiler/turquerie> (Reached at 21.09.2020)
- Tozoğlu, A. E. (2020). *The New Visual Culture in Eighteenth-Century Istanbul: Building up New Shore Kiosks and Gardens on the Outskirts of the Royal Palace*. *Middle Eastern Studies*, 56(2), 165–192.
- Tulum, M. (2008). *Vehbi Surname Sultan Ahmet’in Düğün Kitabı*. Kabalcı Yayınevi.
- Uğurlu, H. (2012). III. Selim’in İstanbul’u: Siyasi ve Askeri Dönüşümler Işığında İmar Faaliyetleri [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. İstanbul Teknik Üniversitesi.
- Unknown artist. (c. 1810). *Bab-ı Hümayun (Imperial Gate) to Topkapı Sarayı, with the Fountain of Sultan Ahmet III*. Victoria and Albert Museum, SD.1261.
- Ülgen, A. S. *Drawing of the Fountain of Ahmed III*. SALT Research, Ali Saim Ülgen Archive, TASUDOC0965.
- Ünsal, B. (1935). *Ar ve Memleket Mimarlığının Kronolojisi Üzerine Düşünceler*. *Arkitekt*, 6, 182–187.
- Quataert, D. (2005). *The Ottoman Empire 1700-1922*. Cambridge University Press.
- Vehbi, E. A., Tulum, M., Kuban, D., & Yerasimos, S. (2000). *Sûrnâme: An illustrated account of Sultan Ahmed III’s festival of 1720*. Ertuğ & Kocabıyık.
- Wiener Photographen-Association. (1873) *Brunnen von Sultan Ahmed II, Wiener Weltausstellung, 12427065*.
- Ziya A., (1934). *Sanatta Nasyonalizm*. *Arkitekt*, 2, 51–54.