

THE OTTOMANS AT WORLD'S FAIRS: DISPLAYING IMPERIAL PATRIMONY

Nilay Özlü

Altınbaş University, Istanbul
University of Oxford

The world's fairs were among the most popular international events and worldwide spectacles of the 19th century, at which a wide array of countries would promote their industry, technology, progress, and culture. Starting in 1851 with the Great Exhibition in London, the world's fairs provided stages for displaying industrial and technological developments, raw materials, local products, and cultural heritage. As István Ormos has phrased it,

“the aspects of public relations, politics, education and even scholarship emerged and gained considerably in importance in the context of world's fairs. World's fairs became important means of spreading the image of a given country all over the world in the aspect which the given country or its leading circles preferred to display themselves” (Ormos 2016: 115).

Consequently, various countries re-discovered, re-defined, and re-presented their identities to be able to display themselves for an international audience. Timothy Mitchell defines these grand spectacles as “the world as exhibition”, referring to “the world conceived and grasped as though it were an exhibition”, in which the “non-West” was object to the critical gaze of the “West” (Mitchell 1989: 222). Zeynep Çelik brings the notion of the “fair as a microcosm” into the discussion, defining the experience as “an imaginary journey around the world, [in which] foreign and especially non-Western societies were often represented in phantasmagoric images, themselves determined by Western legacies” (Çelik 1992: 2).

The world's fairs that emerged as an outcome of the new imperialist world order were among the most important showcases of progress, development, and self-display. Enhancing peaceful interaction and commercial ties between nations, these exhibitions also fostered economic, cultural, and technological competition. Participation in the world's fairs was equally important for non-European countries such as Egypt, Tunisia, and the Ottoman Empire. Through their contributions to those

Author's note: I would like to express my gratitude to the Barakat Trust for supporting my post-doctoral research at the Khalili Research Centre, University of Oxford. I am also grateful to the editors for their insightful comments that helped me improve this article.

‘microcosms’, those countries would aim to secure their position in the realms of the ‘modern’ world, and thus the exhibitions also became an arena of competition among them. The Ottomans took part in most of the early world’s fairs with increasing budgets and enthusiasm, including the London Great Exhibition in 1851, the Paris Universal Exhibition in 1867, the Vienna world’s fair in 1873, and the World’s Columbian Exhibition in Chicago in 1893. In addition, they also organised a national exposition in Istanbul in 1863 and planned another in 1894, though the latter was eventually cancelled due to a devastating earthquake in Istanbul. Their aim with investing in such costly projects was to showcase the image of a long-lasting yet modernising empire, one that was active in the networks of the global economy and thus part of the ‘civilised’ world.

The Ottomans’ participation in world’s fairs has been studied from a variety of perspectives by architectural and cultural historians of the 19th century. This article particularly investigates the sources of inspiration for Ottoman pavilions, including how the Ottomans considered their imperial heritage as illustrative of the modernising world. In this respect, I argue that the Topkapı Palace, which was accepted as the architectural, ceremonial, and artistic embodiment of Ottoman patrimony, became a source of reference for self-representation. Therefore, I shall discuss how the imperial pavilions and royal collections of the Topkapı Palace provided inspiration for the repertoire of the imperial imagery.

Even though, the Topkapı Palace was gradually abandoned as the residence of the Ottoman dynasty during the 19th century, the sultanic pavilions, as well as the treasury collections kept within them, became construed as abstract forms of Ottoman heritage reminiscent of a glorious imperial past. Consequently, they were ideal candidates to be decontextualised and recontextualised as part of the spectacle at the world’s fairs. I shall argue that the way the Ottomans co-opted their so-called ‘classical’ architecture demonstrates their conscious policy of self-display, in which the use of their dynastic heritage emerged as a new form of identifying and representing themselves to the outside world. In particular, I shall focus on the General Exposition in Istanbul in 1863 and the world’s fairs in Paris (1867) and Vienna (1873).

1 The Ottoman General Exposition in Istanbul

After modest participation in the Great Exhibitions in London in 1851, later in Paris in 1855, and again in London in 1862, the Ottoman government decided to organise a small-scale national exhibition in Istanbul in 1863 (Batur 1995; Akyürek 2011). The Ottoman General Exposition (Sergi-i Umumi-i Osmani) was intended to stimulate the national economy and local industry, yet a limited number of international companies were also invited to participate (Yazıcı 2010: 139). The exposition took place at the Hippodrome in Istanbul, which was a central, historically

and politically significant, location within the *intra muros* city. The exhibition hall, designed by the French architect Auguste Bourgeois (1821–1884) and decorated by Léon Parvillée (1830–1885), occupied the northern edge of the Hippodrome, opposite the Sultan Ahmet Mosque (Batur 1995). The Piedmontese architect and painter Pietro Montani (1829–1887) also took part in the project and designed an additional building known as the Imperial Chamber (Daire-i Hümayun), which was attached to the main exhibition space (Yazıcı 2003).

The book *Coup d'œil général sur l'Exposition Nationale à Constantinople*, attributed to Pierre Baragnon (1830–1904),¹ provides detailed information about the exhibition, and suggests that the main hall took early Ottoman architecture as its model. Indeed, it has been argued that the façade of the exhibition hall emulates the Çinili Köşk (Tiled Pavilion), a kiosk located within the outer gardens of the Topkapı Palace (figs. 1–2).² The *Illustrated London News*, giving a detailed description of the exhibition hall, praised Bourgeois for designing this “little temple of industry” and defined its style as “mauresque”. Notably, as Edhem Eldem has demonstrated, the style of the Çinili Köşk was also conceived as “*édifice mauresque*” at the time (Eldem 2018, 334). The architect of the hall, Bourgeois, is known to have had a special interest in the architectural patronage of Mehmed II (r. 1451–1481), who erected the earliest parts of the Topkapı Palace, including the Çinili Köşk (Ergüney and Kara Pilehvarian 2015).



Fig. 1. The exhibition hall, Ottoman General Exposition, Istanbul, 1863 (Abdullah Frères Photography).

¹ Although the book is anonymous, except for the initials S.P.B. at the end of the preface, Edhem Eldem has pointed out that its author was Pierre Baragnon, the editor of *Journal de Constantinople*; Eldem 2018: 334.

² *Coup d'œil*, 3–10; Saner 1995: 617–618; Aoki 2002: 135.



Fig. 2. The Çinili Köşk (Tiled Pavilion), garden of the Topkapı Palace.
(Photo by Basile Kargopoulos, c. 1870.)

The Ottoman General Exposition in Istanbul was inaugurated by Sultan Abdül-aziz (r. 1861–1876) and Khedive Ismā‘īl (r. 1863–1879) on 27 February 1863. Over the five months during which the exposition was open, it attracted around 150,000 visitors. More than 10,000 items were on display, exhibited in separate sections such as architecture, machinery, raw materials, textiles, crafts, and fine arts. According to the local newspaper *Mir’āt*, items belonging to nine different categories were displayed in the exposition, and one of the categories was defined as “gold and silver products, enamel objects, all kinds of jewellery, coral, gilded and ungilded silver sets, and similar objects.”³ According to a short article published in *Le Monde illustré*, the display of objects brought from the Imperial Arsenal and the Imperial Armoury was popular among the visitors. However, it was the large vitrine displaying the carpets from Smyrna (Izmir), silks from Bursa, jewellery, precious stones, an assortment of stools, elegant bridles, and harnesses that the crowds were most curious to see (*Le Monde illustré*).

Some of the exhibited objects came from the personal “storage” (*gardemeuble*) of the sultan (“Exposition nationale”). Indeed, a special section was dedicated to the display of items from the Imperial Treasury collection. Precious jewellery and other lavish objects, such as necklaces, brooches, bracelets, belts, combs, aigrettes, swords, jugs, and writing sets from the Topkapı Palace were displayed in a special cabinet within the exposition. Notably, even though the treasury collection in the

³ “Sergi-i Osmani”, 15: “Altun ve gümüş mamül ve mineli eşya ve her türlü mücevherat ve envai mercan ve yaldızlı ve yaldızsız gümüş takımları ve emsali”.

Topkapı Palace had been displayed for distinguished foreign visitors since the mid-19th century, the Imperial Treasury remained closed for Ottomans (Özlü, 2018, 353–354). Only as an exception, within the scope of the Ottoman General Exposition, were items from the treasury collection brought to a public space and made available for admiration by local and foreign viewers alike.

Even though the exact location of the treasury display is not marked in the exhibition hall's plan published in *Mir'āt*, the book *Coup d'œil* gives a list of 42 treasury objects displayed in the Ottoman General Exposition (Appendix), and states that those valuables were brought to the exhibition hall every morning, and brought back to the Imperial Treasury in the Topkapı Palace every evening (*Coup d'œil*, 29). The public display of the imperial treasury was an indicator of the importance given to the exposition by Abdülaziz, as well as of the changing meaning of the royal collections. Being a point of attraction for tourists visiting Istanbul, the imperial palace and its collections were positioned as objects of self-display, celebrating the richness and glory of the Ottoman Empire:

“A few steps further, dazzling irradiations, emanating from the jewels of His Imperial Majesty, fix the gaze. There are riches of which the reveries of Arab poets can scarcely give a faint idea: diadems, necklaces in which the pearls and emeralds vie, in brilliance and size, with diamonds of the most sparkling shine, a box with brilliants of inestimable price and of magical craftsmanship, a *tchibouk* in enameled gold around which ravishing arabesques of jewels run and intertwine in capricious meanders, an emerald mounted in a brooch whose surface could be minimum of 5 centimeters to 4, and under which hangs a pear-shaped pearl that is at least two centimeters in size. In the midst of all these treasures shine the Imperial aigrettes, which seem to be preserved as a reflection of the Imperial Majesty of the Sovereign.”⁴

Thus, with the public display of the private collections of the imperial family, the treasury collection began to epitomise a collective Ottoman past, enhancing the image of ‘oriental splendour’. The Ottoman General Exposition emphasised not only the financial and historic value of the objects, but also their artistic aspects and craftsmanship – as fine products of the palace artisans (*ehl-i hiref*). That is, the

⁴ *Coup d'œil*, 27: “A quelques pas plus loin, d'éblouissantes irradiations, émanées des bijoux de Sa Majesté Impériale, fixent le regard. Là sont des richesses dont les rêveries des poètes arabes peuvent donner à peine une faible idée: des diadèmes, des colliers où les perles et les émeraudes rivalisent d'éclat et de grosseur avec des diamants aux reflets les plus étincelants, une boîte en brillants d'un prix inestimable et d'un travail féerique, un tchibouk en or émaillé autour duquel de ravissantes arabesque de pierreries courent et s'entrelacent en capricieux méandres, une émeraude montée en broche, dont la surface peut avoir au minimum 5 centimètres sur 4, et sous laquelle pend une perle en forme de poire, d'au moins deux centimètres de grosseur. Au milieu de tous ces trésors resplendent les aigrettes Impériales, qui semblent avoir conservé comme un reflet de l'Auguste Majesté du Souverain.”

national exposition in Istanbul provided a chance for experimenting with techniques of displaying the Ottoman artistic heritage, which would then be advanced in the later world's fairs of Paris, Vienna, and Chicago.

2 The sultan in Paris in 1867

One of the world's fairs in which the Ottomans took part was the 1867 Exposition Universelle in Paris. Sultan Abdülaziz accepted the invitation of Emperor Napoleon III (r. 1852–1870) to attend the opening ceremony. During his one-and-a-half-month journey, the sultan visited France, Belgium, England, Prussia, and Austria, becoming the first Ottoman ruler to pay a diplomatic visit to Europe. In Paris, the sultan attended the ostentatious opening ceremony of the Exposition Universelle together with Khedive Ismā'īl, and visited the Ottoman pavilion (Çelik 1992: 32–37).

The Ottoman pavilion in Paris was more grandiose and attractive than any of its predecessors, designed as a small neighbourhood reflecting the social and cultural life in the empire. Spurred on by Abdülaziz's attendance, the preparations started months in advance. Thousands of items were sent to Paris, including industrial and commercial products, and a separate section was created for fine arts. In the first gallery of the Ottoman pavilion, valuable arms and armours were on display,⁵ while the fine arts section presented paintings by Osman Hamdi (1842–1910) and Amadeo Preziosi (1816–1882) (Karaer 2003: 80; Ersoy 2015: 119). Being the largest among the 'Eastern powers', the Ottoman pavilion attracted the praise of the French artist Adalbert de Beaumont (1809–1869), who wrote that it exceeded expectations.⁶

⁵ These objects probably came from the collections of the former St. Irene Church.

⁶ De Beaumont 1867: 147: "A côté de la Perse se trouve la Turquie. Cette année, au lieu de la place trop modeste qu'elle occupait en 1855, elle couvre le plus grand espace de toutes les puissances d'Orient. On s'imaginait généralement en France qu'à part les pantoufles et les tuyaux de pipe, l'essence de rose et les pastilles du sérail, il n'y avait plus rien à demander à l'industrie de ces contrées. La Turquie nous prouve que, si ses fabriques ne sont plus aussi nombreuses et aussi occupées qu'elles l'étaient jadis, elles n'ont pas encore perdu complètement ce sens de la couleur et de la ligne qui placera toujours la fabrication orientale, si primitifs qu'en soient d'ailleurs les procédés, au-dessus de tout ce que produit à grand renfort d'inventions et de machines notre Europe civilisée!"

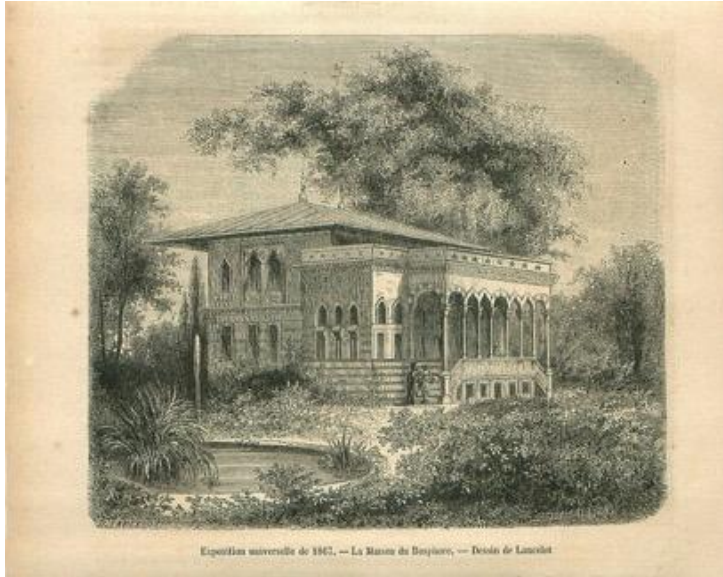


Fig. 3. Engraving of the Bosphorus House, Ottoman pavilion, Exposition Universelle de 1867, drawing by M. Lancelot (*Magasin Pittoresque* 388).



Fig. 4. The triumphal gate erected in honour of the sultan, Ottoman pavilion, Exposition Universelle, Paris, 1867 (*Le Monde illustré* 11).



Fig. 5. The Middle Gate of the Topkapı Palace, early 20th century (author's collection).

Even though the Ottoman Empire was in the process of rapid modernisation, rather than focusing on novel forms of architecture, the commissioners preferred to represent the empire through its traditional building types. In fact, almost all countries attending the world's fairs commissioned pavilions representing their traditional architecture with a sense of historicism (Ormos 2014: 57–58). Leon Parvillée was one of the architects of the Ottoman pavilion, which comprised a mosque, a house (fig. 3), a Turkish bath, and a fountain (Barillari and Godoli 1996: 42; Aoki 2002: 22; Çelik 1992: 61, figs. 24–25). These buildings were influenced by the Green Mosque (Yeşil Cami) in Bursa, the Haseki Bath at the Sultanahmet square of Istanbul, and the Çinili Köşk in the Topkapı Palace, monuments that epitomise the classical Ottoman architecture of the 15th and the 16th centuries. In addition, a triumphal arch was placed at the entrance of the Ottoman section in honour of Sultan Abdülaziz. This imperial gate, depicted on the cover page of *Le Monde illustré*, made a clear reference to the Middle Gate (Bab-ı Selam) of the Topkapı Palace, flanked by two towers with conical caps on either side (figs. 4–5). It also held the imperial *tughra* ('calligraphic monogram') of Abdülaziz, marking the entrance to the domains of the sultan.

Abdülaziz's European tour made a personal impact on the sultan himself. He was greeted with great enthusiasm in Paris, London, Berlin, and Vienna, and attracted huge public interest. Attending numerous exhibitions, concerts, museums, and balls,

Abdülaziz became fully aware of the importance of creating a self-representative ‘Ottoman identity’ in the new, competitive, and capitalist world order. He surely noticed that even his own image as an ‘Oriental ruler’ was a representation of his cultural and political identity (Karaer 2003: 76; Çelik 1992: 36).⁷

3 The 1873 Vienna World Exhibition

During the later years of Abdülaziz’s reign, in 1873, the Ottoman Empire contributed to the World Exhibition in Vienna. Since the government was not entirely satisfied with their previous display in the 1867 Paris exposition, the Ottoman project in Vienna was highly ambitious, aiming to “create the desired image of technical competence and cultural gravity” (Ersoy 2015: 57). The area of display was three times larger than the previous one, and preparations started as early as 1871 under the supervision of Minister of Public Works İbrahim Edhem Pasha (1819–1893). His son, Osman Hamdi, who would later become a renowned archaeologist and painter, was the exhibition’s chief commissioner, while the Piedmontese architect Pietro Montani designed the Ottoman pavilions. A series of correspondence between Vienna and Istanbul shows that the Ottoman government was closely following the preparations taking place in Vienna.⁸ According to Ersoy,

“[t]he Vienna Exhibition was designed with the typical ambition to achieve an exhaustive representation of the world for Western audiences. But due to its geographic location and the historical legacy of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, situated “at the center of the world,” as the organizers claimed, between the East and West, the exhibition aimed to outshine all prior events of its kind in bringing together a richer and more comprehensive vision of the entire Orient. The Vienna Exhibition, therefore, was envisioned as an intense-encounter arena not only for the western European and the German-speaking lands but also for myriad participants from beyond the eastern banks of the Danube, from the Ottoman Empire and Iran to Russia, China, and Japan” (Ersoy 2015: 31).

Despite the Ottomans’ financial struggles at the time, the government decided to emphasise the artistic, cultural, and intellectual heritage of the empire via a series of semi-academic publications. Three volumes – *Usul-i Mimari-i Osmani*

⁷ According to the European press, the ‘Western’ appearance and sophisticated manners of Abdülaziz became a point of disappointment among people who were hoping for an Oriental despot in exotic clothes and surrounded by concubines; Karaer 2003: 76.

⁸ The Ottoman archives hold the correspondences, mostly written in French, between the commissioner of the exhibition Osman Hamdi, the Ottoman ambassador to Vienna Cabouli Pasha, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Rachid Pasha. See especially BOA.HR.ID.1218.47; BOA.HR.ID.1218.57; BOA.HR.ID.1218.60.

(*L'Architecture ottomane*), *Elbise-i Osmaniyye (Les Costumes populaires de la Turquie en 1873)*, and *Le Bosphore et Constantinople* – were prepared for the Vienna Exhibition, highlighting the cultural diversity and architectural richness of the empire. The production of these volumes was evidence of Ottoman determination to display its cultural and historical assets for an international audience, aiming to create a positive and respectful image in the eyes of Europeans.⁹



Fig. 6. Replica of the Fountain of Ahmed III, Ottoman Pavilion, Vienna World Exhibition, 1873 (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, 63694-STE).

⁹ For an in-depth discussion of these books and the Vienna exhibition, see Ersoy 2013; Eldem 2014a–c, 2015.

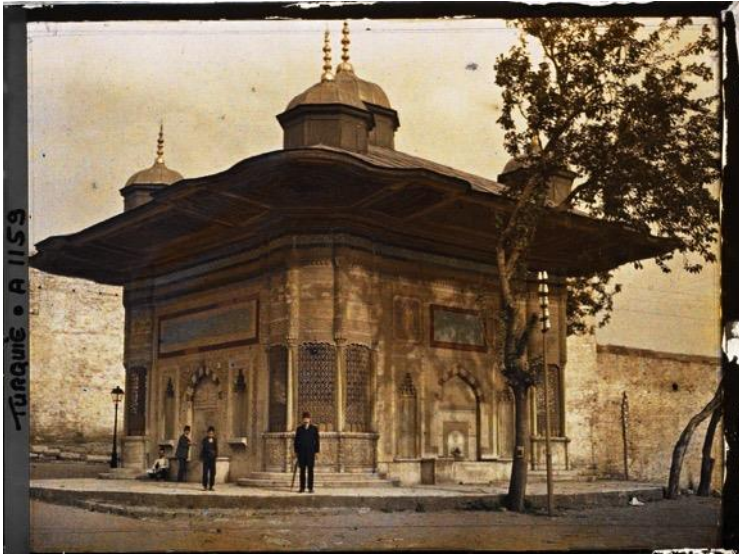


Fig. 7. Fountain of Ahmed III, Istanbul (Musée Albert Kahn, Archives de la Planète, A1159).

The Ottoman pavilion, comprising seven structures, was aimed at reflecting the dynasty's architectural patrimony. Almost all nations participating in the Vienna world's fair designed neighbourhoods representing their traditional culture and identity. According to Ormos,

“it became popular to erect copies of town quarters as temporary structures made of ephemeral construction materials. As a rule, these copies of town quarters did not aim at full accuracy; rather, they were meant to evoke the atmosphere of a given city. This they hoped to achieve by creating ensembles consisting of true copies of genuinely extant buildings, of buildings assembled from relatively true copies of sections of buildings, or of completely fictitious buildings erected in a given style” (Ormos 2016: 116).

Within the Ottoman neighbourhood, a marketplace (*bedesten*), a coffee house, a Turkish house, and a fountain were erected (Çelik 1992: 63; Ergüney and Kara Pilehvarian, 2015) (fig. 6). While most of the buildings were designed to resemble their originals in a smaller scale, a real-size replica of the fountain of Ahmed III (r. 1703–1730), located across to the Imperial Gate of the Topkapı Palace in Istanbul (fig.7), was constructed with painstaking attention to its details, workmanship, and decorative elements. However, one of the most interesting sections of the Ottoman neighbourhood was a small pavilion referred to as the Imperial Treasury (*Hazine-i Hassa*).

A document dated 1872 details the costs of the aforementioned publications and of the special building that would be constructed to keep the items coming from the

Imperial Treasury.¹⁰ This kiosk, designed by Montani, was modelled after a classical Ottoman mausoleum (*türbe*), combined with an Orientalist repertoire. As seen in its elevation design, today in the Ottoman archives (fig. 8), it was a small, yet elegant structure featuring a polygonal site plan, and a central dome. Its central exhibition space was raised on a shallow basement accessible through stairs on two sides (Ersoy 2015: 82–87). Notably, instead of conventional materials such as wood, plaster, or *papier-maché*, that were generally used for quick and cost-effective construction of the temporary pavilions at world's fairs, Montani preferred to use stone and iron for this building. According to *The Times*, the exhibition space comprised cast iron elements produced in advance and assembled at the site, resting on a stone basement. Even though the opening of the building was delayed due to its costly and time-consuming construction, the use of enduring materials, such as iron and stone, must have provided extra security for the invaluable treasury collection (“The sultan’s treasure”).



Fig. 8. Elevation of the Imperial Treasury, Ottoman pavilion, Vienna World Exhibition, 1873 (BOA PLK.p.01022)

¹⁰ BOA A.MKT.MHM.443.58 (13 December 1872): “Hazine-i Hümayunda mahfuz olup Viyana’da açılacak sergide ibrazı mukteza-i irade-i seniyyeden olan asar-ı nefisenin muhafazası için ve Fenn-i Mimari-i Osmani namıyla Türk ve Fransız ve Alman lisanlarınca tanzimi iktiza eden ve memalik-i şahanenin her cihetinde mutavattın tebaa-i Müslime ve gayri-Müslimenin kıyafetlerini maruf olmak üzere [...] tertibi mukarrer bulunan kitabın mecmu-i mesarifi olup [...] 120.000 kuruşun Hazine-i Celilece ifası.”

A register in the Topkapı Palace Archive provides a list of the treasury items sent from Istanbul to Vienna. According to this document, a total number of 120 items including antique arms and armours, jewelled and gold inlaid objects, shields, the armour of Mehmed II from his mausoleum, and other objects such as plates, pitchers, basins, and metalwork from the Imperial Treasury were sent to Vienna as requested by the Minister of Public Works Edhem Pasha and the exhibition committee (fig. 9).¹¹ That is, for the first time, items from the Imperial Treasury collection were taken outside of the empire and displayed abroad as a part of a world's fair.

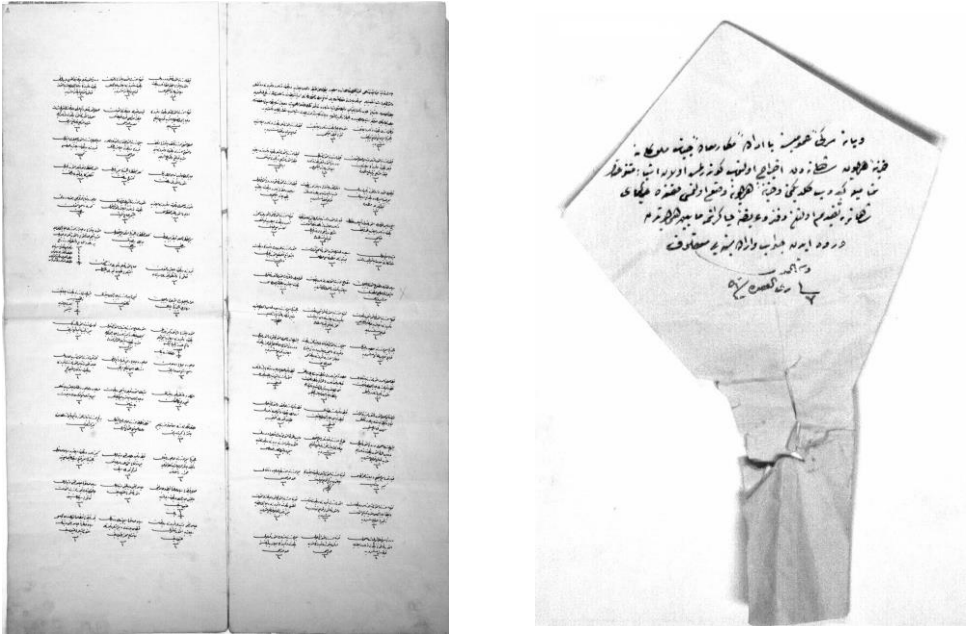
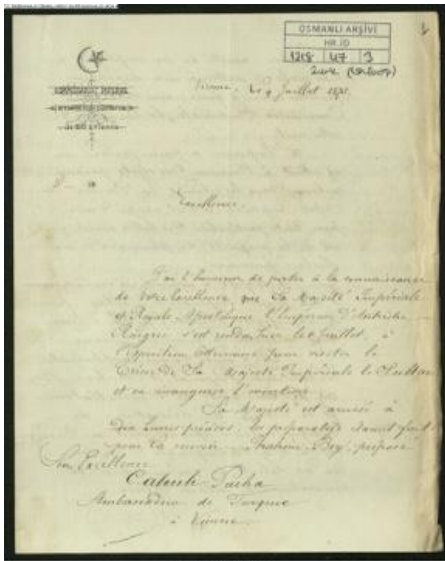


Fig. 9. Listing of the treasury items sent to the 1873 Vienna World Exhibition (BOA.TS.MA.D.993.01)

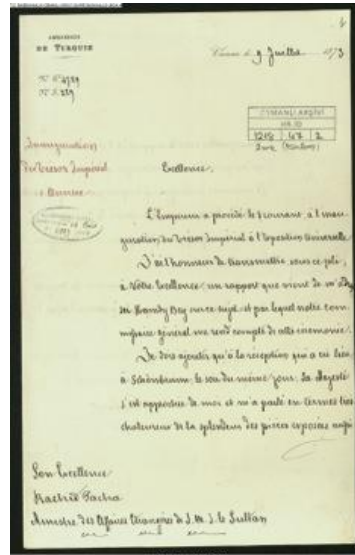
¹¹ BOA.TS.MA.d.993.01 (4 June 1873): “Ba-irade-i seniyye-i cenab-ı şehinşahi Hazine-i Hümayun-ı Şahanade mevcut bulunan esliha-i atika ve elmas ile müzeyyen ve yakut ve zümrüt ve firuze [...] ve altın işlemeli eşya-i nefise ile bu defa ba-irade-i hazret-i şehriyari Fatih Sultan Mehmed Han Gazi Türbe-i Şerifesinden gelmiş olan zırh takımları ile bazı eski maden ve mürettebatı ve tabak ve legen ve ibrik gibi buna mumasil eşya-i saireden Nafia Nazırı Devletli Ethem Paşa ve Viyana sergi komisyonu azasından bazı bendelerinin marifetiyle eşya-yı mevcuttan bi’l-ifraz tahrir olunup Viyana sergisine gönderilecek eşyaların miktarı mubeyyin defterdir.”

Ceren Göğüş's master's thesis compiles news from the Austrian press about the Ottoman participation in the Vienna Exhibition, and provides detailed information about the transfer of treasury items to Vienna. According to the Austrian newspapers, the collection, which had never before left the Topkapı Palace, was kept in the treasury room of the Hofburg Palace until the completion of the Ottoman pavilion (see Göğüş 2006, 179). Due to some financial burdens and technical problems, the completion of the iron treasury kiosk was delayed, and the opening ceremony was finally held on 9 July 1873, five weeks after the inauguration of the world's fair. According to Ottoman archival documents, the Austro-Hungarian emperor Franz Joseph I (r. 1848–1916) attended the opening ceremony, and expressed his appreciation for the elegance and good taste of the construction. A letter from Osman Hamdi, who was the exhibition's commissioner, describes that

“the emperor seemed really interested in examining the precious objects contained in the windows of the Imperial Treasury, and was particularly occupied with the fine arms, many of which belonged to our illustrious sovereigns” (fig. 10).¹²



BOA HR.İD.1218.47.00047.003



BOA HR.İD.1218.47.00047.002

Fig. 10. Letter from Osman Hamdi to Ottoman Ambassador to Vienna Cabouli Pasha (BOA HR.İD.1218.47_03) / Letter from Cabouli Pasha to the Minister of Foreign Affairs Rachid Pasha (BOA HR.İD.1218.47_02)

¹² BOA HR.İD.1218.47 (9 July 1873): “L’Empereur a paru prendre un virai intérêt à l’examen des objets précieux contenues dans les vitrines du Pavillon du Trésor Imperial et s’est occupé d’une façon toute particulière des belles armes qui ont été la propriété de plusieurs de nos illustres souverains.”

The Austrian press celebrates the richness and beauty of the treasury collection with admiration. An article in *Fremdenblatt* emphasises that the display was only a small portion of the actual treasury collection kept in Istanbul. Visitors to the actual Imperial Treasury in the Topkapı Palace in Istanbul, according to the author, could witness thousands of precious stones, jewellery, helmets adorned with pearls, and little mountains composed of thousands of swords and armour (Göğüş 2006: 183). An article published in *The Times* mentions that the Ottoman treasury was finally displayed after a long period of delay, and gives a detailed description of the items in Vienna, highlighting the chain armour and Persian helmet once owned by the Ottoman sultan Murad I (r. 1362–1389), and the throne of the Persian ruler Nādir Šāh (r. 1736–1747). The author emphasises the difficulty of seeing these valuable objects in the Topkapı Palace, and celebrates their display in Vienna:

It is not many years since even the most powerful protection could not procure you access to see the Treasury of the Ottoman Sultans in the old Seraglio. It was jealously guarded from the eye of the stranger [...] The restrictions have been relaxed, indeed, of late, for how could they resist the spirit of the times. Still, [...] in spite of the *firman*, [...] there will be a sort of general conspiracy to allow him to see as little as possible [...]. As their jealousy is not confined to the treasury, but is extended even to such harmless things as the library, not to speak of the archives. Under these circumstances, the sending of a portion of the Imperial Treasure to the Exhibition and there exposing it to the gaze of the multitude was a considerable concession to the spirit of the age ("The sultan's treasure").

According to the Austrian press, the opening of the Imperial Treasury display attracted immense attention from the public, and the entrance tickets were sold-out before noon. Indeed, the help of police forces was needed to control the crowds of visitors. The collection was initially kept open only three days a week and only for three hours each day. Hence an article complains that it was not possible to enjoy the beauty of the collection due to the constant crowd of people within the kiosk, demanding the exhibition to be kept open for longer than three hours. Eventually, responding to the general demand of visitors and the Austrian press, the Ottomans decided to keep the treasury exhibition open every day of the week (see Göğüş 2006: 183).

The Ottomans succeeded in attracting international attention by their contribution to the Vienna World Exhibition, displaying their imperial patrimony in various forms. Apart from evoking their imperial identity by replicating traditional Ottoman building types, the three academic volumes also accentuated the deep-rooted cultural, architectural, and ethnographic assets of the empire. The treasury collection, on the other hand, was a powerful manifestation of imperial longevity and prosperity. This renowned collection was exhibited in a unique pavilion, which was, in fact, a bijouterie box, as well as a product of the self-orientalising exhibitory order.

4 Conclusion

The 19th-century world's fairs provided stages for the participating countries not only to exhibit their industrial productions and technological advancements, but also to rediscover and represent their national identities and collective past. The Ottoman Empire “went to considerable pains to fabricate an ideal vision of itself as a world-class empire”, that is, to find its cultural and artistic heritage that would appeal to international audiences (Ersoy 2015: 50). In that context, the palatial architecture and imperial collections of the Topkapı were re-evaluated through different lenses, forming a purportedly ‘authentic’ representation of an idealised past, epitomised in the classical period of Ottoman art and architecture. Thus, while searching for leitmotifs of their own heritage, the Ottomans resorted to their imperial past as an expression of splendour and glory.

The Topkapı Palace, due to its relatively well-preserved architectural features and rich royal collections, became a source of inspiration for the Ottomans. Various kiosks, gates, towers, fountains, decorative and architectural elements, tiles, patterns, artefacts, and the imperial treasures in and around the Topkapı were reproduced, imitated, and displayed at the international exhibitions held in London, Paris, Vienna, and later in Chicago. Consequently, the public interest in the palatial collections – alongside the Ottomans’ experience in exhibiting them at worlds’ fairs – would eventually encourage setting up their permanent display in Istanbul. That is, the competitive praxis of self-display within an international context laid the foundation for the eventual museumification of the Topkapı Palace.

REFERENCES

A. Primary sources

- BOA = Archival documents in the Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Cumhurbaşkanlığı Devlet Arşivleri (Republic of Turkey Presidential State Archives), Istanbul.
- TSMA = Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Arşivi (Topkapı Palace Museum Archive), Istanbul.
- Coup d’œil général sur l’exposition nationale à Constantinople*. Istanbul: n.p. 1863.
- “Exposition nationale à Constantinople”. *Le Monde illustrée* 7 (312), 4 Avril 1863, 215.
- “The Ottoman Exposition, Constantinople”. *Illustrated London News* 1198, 11 April 1863, 416.
- “Sergi-i Osmani Nizamnamesinden Hülâsa Me’ali”. *Mir’at* 1, Ramazan 1279 (1863). 15.
- Le Monde illustré* 11 (535), 13 July 1867.

“Exposition universelle de 1867”. *Le Magasin Pittoresque*, ed. Edouard Charton, Paris: Aux Bureaux d'Abonnement et de Vente, 1867.
 “The Sultan’s Treasure”, *The Times*, 7 August 1873. 4.

B. Secondary sources

- Akyürek, Göksun. 2011. *Bilgiyi Yeniden İnşa Etmek: Tanzimat Döneminde Mimarlık, Bilgi ve İktidar*. Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları.
- Aoki, Miyuki. 2002. “Léon Parvillée: Osmanlı Modernleşmesinin Eşiğinde Bir Fransız Sanatçı”. PhD Dissertation, Istanbul Technical University.
- Barillari, Diana and Ezio Godoli. 1996. *Istanbul 1900: Art-Nouveau Architecture and Interiors*. New York: Rizzoli.
- Batur, Afife. 1995. “19. Yüzyıl Uluslararası Sanayi Sergileri ve Osmanlı Sergi Yapıları”. In: *9. Milletler arası Türk Sanatları Kongresi: Bildiriler = 9th International Congress of Turkish Art: Contributions*. 299–310. Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı.
- de Beaumont, Adalbert. 1867. “Les arts décoratifs en orient et en France: Une visite à l’orient a l’exposition universelle”. *Revue des deux mondes* 72. 138–160.
- Çelik, Zeynep. 1992. *Displaying the Orient: Architecture of Islam at Nineteenth-Century World’s Fairs*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Eldem, Edhem. 2014a. “Elbise-i Osmaniye’yi Tekrar Ele Almak”. *Toplumsal Tarih* 248 (August). 26–35.
- _____. 2014b. “Elbise-i Osmaniye’yi Tekrar Ele Almak: 2”. *Toplumsal Tarih* 250 (October). 46–50.
- _____. 2014c. “Elbise-i Osmaniye’yi Tekrar Ele Almak: 3”. *Toplumsal Tarih* 252 (December). 72–77.
- _____. 2015. “Elbise-i Osmaniye’yi Tekrar Ele Almak: 4”. *Toplumsal Tarih* 253 (January). 42–53.
- _____. 2018. “Ottomans at the Alhambra, 1844–1914: An Investigation into the Perception of Al-Andalus by Ottoman Subjects in Times of Modernity”. *Turcica* 49. 239–359.
- Ergüney, Yeşim D. and Nuran Kara Pilehvarian. 2015. “Ottoman Representation in Nineteenth Century Universal Expositions”. *Megaron* 10 (2). 224–240.
- Ersoy, Ahmet A. 2000. “On the Sources of the ‘Ottoman Renaissance’: Architectural Revival and Its Discourse during the Abdülaziz Era (1861–76)”. PhD Dissertation, Harvard University.
- _____. 2013. “A Sartorial Tribute to Late Tanzimat Ottomanism: The Elbise-i ‘Osmānniye Album”. *Muqarnas* 20. 187–207.
- _____. 2015. *Architecture and the Late Ottoman Historical Imaginary: Reconfiguring the Architectural Past in a Modernizing Empire*. Farnham: Ashgate.

- Göğüş, Ceren. 2006. "19. yy. Avusturya Gazeteleri Işığında Osmanlı İmparatorluğunun 1873 Viyana Dünya Sergisine Katılımı". Master's thesis, İstanbul Teknik Üniversitesi.
- Karaer, Nihat. 2003. "Sultan Abdülaziz'in Avrupa Seyahati İle Osmanlı ve Batı Kamuoyundaki Yankıları". PhD Dissertation, University of Ankara.
- Mitchell, Timothy. 1989. "The World as Exhibition". *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 31 (2). 217–236.
- Ormos, István. 2014. "Cairo in the New World: Facets of Max Herz Pasha's 'Cairo Street' at the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago". In: *History and Islamic Civilization: Essays in Honour of Ayman Fu'ād Sayyid* edited by Obada Kohela, 53–68. Cairo: al-Dār al Misriyya al-Lubnaniyya.
- _____. 2016. "Between Stage Décor and Reality: The Cairo Street at the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 at Chicago". *The Arabist: Budapest Studies in Arabic* 37. 115–134.
- Özlü, Nilay. 2018. "From Imperial Palace to Museum: The Topkapı Palace During the Long Nineteenth Century". PhD dissertation, İstanbul: Boğaziçi University.
- Saner, Turgut. 1999. "A 19th Century Interpretation of Çinili Köşk (İstanbul) in an Orientalist Manner". *Turkish Art: 10th International Congress of Turkish Art = Art Turc: 10a Congrès international d'art turc*. 615–623. Geneva: Foundation Max van Berchem.
- Yazıcı, Nurcan. 2003. "Bilinmeyen Yönleriyle Mimar Montani Efendi". *Arkitekt* 70 (495). 42–47.
- _____. 2010. "The First Ottoman Exhibition Building in Atmeydanı and the Collaboration of Architects Bourgeois–Parvillée–Montani". In: *Hippodrome/Atmeydanı: A Stage for Istanbul's History = Hippodrom/Atmeydanı: İstanbul'un Tarih Sahnesi* edited by Brigitte Pitarakis, II, 128–151. İstanbul: Pera Museum.

APPENDIX

The list of items brought from the Imperial Treasury to the Exposition General in Istanbul in 1863. (*Coup d'œil général sur l'exposition nationale à Constantinople*. Istanbul: n. p. 1863, p. 28–29.)

1. Une émeraude de mille quatre-vingt-dix drachmes, de forme carrée arrondie aux quatre coins.
2. Une autre émeraude de quatre cent quatre-vingt-dix drachmes.
3. Un broche (*kerdanlik*) ornée de deux-cent quatre-vingt gros brillants et ayant au milieu un brillant de trente-quatre carats et deux turquoises.
4. Une broche ornée de brillants ayant au milieu un brillant de trente carats.
5. Une broche ayant au milieu un brillant de trent-six [*sic*] carats.
6. Une broche ayant au milieu un brillant de vingt carats et ornée de deux roses hollandaises et d'un grand poinçon de diamants.
7. Trois broches ornées de brillants et ayant chacune au milieu un brillant de vingt-cinq carats.
8. Une broche en forme d'oiseau ornée de brillants.
9. Une broche en forme du soleil ornée de brillants.
10. Une broche ornée d'une grosse perle et de brillants en poire.
11. Une paire de boucles d'oreilles ornées de perles.
12. Une broche et des boucles d'oreilles ornées de deux émeraudes et de brillants en poire.
13. Une chemisette (*ghiokouchlik*) ornée de brillants et ayant au milieu un brillant de cinquante carats.
14. Une autre chemisette ayant au milieu un brillant de vingt-six carats.
15. Une paire de boucles d'oreilles avec deux brillants de vingt-huit carats.
16. Une chemisette ornée de brillants.
17. Un bracelet orné de brillants et au milieu une hyacinthe.
18. Un bracelet orné d'un gros brillant et de plusieurs autres plus petits.
19. Un brillant chatoyant (*akarsou*).
20. Un poignard orné de brillants et d'une émeraude de trois-cents carats.
21. Un poignard orné de brillants et ayant au milieu un gros saphir.
22. Un poignard orné de brillants et ayant au milieu un rubis.
23. Un poignard monté en ivoire.
24. Un peigne orné de gros brillants.
25. Une porte aigrette (*sarghoutch*) en or, orné de brillants.
26. Deux porte-aigrettes en argent, ornés de six brillants.
27. Neuf porte-aigrettes ornés de rubis, de diamants et d'émeraudes.
28. Trois dagues (*khandjer*) ornées de diamants et d'émeraudes.
29. Une dague montée en corail.
30. Un carquois orné de diamants, de rubis, d'émeraudes et d'améthystes.

31. Deux sabres antiques ornés de diamants.
 32. Trois *tchibouks* de cerisier ornés de pierres précieuses.
 33. Deux miroirs montés en jaspe et ornés de rubis et de diamants.
 34. Deux pendants en émeraude appartenant au Trône Impérial.
 35. Un flacon (*sourahi*) en or, orné de rubis et de diamants.
 36. Un flacon et une coupe ornés de rubis et diamants.
 37. Un flacon en cristal orné de rubis.
 38. Une massue (*topouz*) en jaspe.
 39. Une autre massue en cristal.
 40. Un *machraba* et une coupe antique en argent.
 41. Une écritoire turque en jaspe ornée de rubis et de diamants.
- Deux autres écritoires dont une en cristal, ornée de rubis et d'émeraude